

# Northern Ireland Report



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## NEWS

### Questionnaire to Nationalists

Hundreds of nationalist families in Belfast received a leaflet entitled "Are you Irish?" The leaflet contains six questions that attempt to determine whether the individual is Irish. The questions included:

1. Is the Irish tricolour your flag?
2. Is the soldier song your national anthem?
3. Is the Irish language your native tongue?
4. Is Irish gaelic football your sport?
5. Is Dublin your capital city?
6. Is the Irish culture your culture?

Following the questions the leaflet states: "If you have ticked **NO SIX TIMES** you are definitely **NOT IRISH!** (This leaflet is a non-violent protest against all things Irish.)" Although the leaflet claims to be a "non-violent protest," it does however contain the symbol for the Red Hand Commandos and comes at a time of much loyalist paramilitary action. The leaflet also contains the verse: "Glory to the Leopards/The roses red and white/Glory to the Thistle/and the Lion in all its might/Glory to the Dragon/and the Leek that stands so tall/But the Red Hand of Ulster/Is the oldest symbol of all."

### Butcher to be Released

The pending release of 'Big Sam' McAllister, a former member of the notorious Shankill Butchers, has caused an uproar among many nationalists. The *Andersonstown News* reports that McAllister is expected to be released within six months under the approval of the Secretary of State. The Shankill Butchers terrorized nationalists during the late 1970s, they were responsible for some 19 murders, most victims were either Catholic or mistaken as being Catholic. All their victims were brutalized before death, often times being butchered with a meat cleaver.

The group was lead by UVF member Lenny Murphy who was executed by the IRA, reportedly with the assistance of loyalists, in the early 1980s after being released from prison. Of the eleven members of the Shankill Butchers who were

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## British and Irish Cowardice

In Northern Ireland, this fall was nothing less than extraordinary -- with both the possibilities of peace and the horrors of war being clearly evident. As such, the North was rediscovered by the world's media, who emphasized the most recent acts of "savagery" and "carnage" over the development of a serious peace initiative. Lost in these reports was the fact that peace and justice in Northern Ireland can be considered only within a context that acknowledges and reinforces Britain's border.

The North's roller coaster ride covered much ground. First, after six months of discussion, the SDLP's John Hume and SF's Gerry Adams developed a set of proposals that would have settled on a method by which "all parties" would be invited into a process of resolution. What agreement was actually reached between the two remains a mystery as they refused to divulge any details. The Hume/Adams initiative -- apart from being a first step toward a potential peace breakthrough -- also edified (or would have) the nationalist voice in the North, making it more difficult for London to paint the Irish war as simply the work of religious zealots. As a result of Hume/Adams, loyalist gunmen intensified a largely random campaign against nationalists, wounding and killing many with little or no political outcry.

Second, as Adams was trying to make peace, and Dublin was looking for a reason to dismiss Hume/Adams (and once again abandon all northern nationalists), the IRA -- in a stupid and irresponsible action -- targeted the UDA Shankill Road headquarters, killing 9 innocent people and wounding many others in a premature explosion. Predictably, loyalist gunmen immediately struck back attacking nationalists randomly, killing seven and injuring 11 on Halloween night.

Finally, and most important, as people were still being buried in the North, John Major announced that the Tory government supported a six point peace plan offered by Irish Republic Prime Minister Albert Reynolds and Foreign Affairs Minister Dick Spring. This peace plan, which hints at the possibility of unity, stresses majority consent, offers to amend the South's constitutional claim on the North and demands the cessation of all violence before negotiation. In short, after rejecting Hume/Adams, the British and Irish governments offered nothing new to the tired and embittered people of the North.

This flat out rejection of Hume/Adams (whatever its merits, and it had to have some given the political risks involved for both Hume and Adams) by the London and Dublin governments sent Northern nationalists a clear message: peace and justice in the North is only possible within a British framework. Who are the extremists in the Irish war? History will no doubt show that they wear business suits as often as they wear masks.

arrested only three, other than McAllister, remain in prison, they are: Robert 'Basher' Bates, second in command to Murphy, was sentenced to 16 life sentences; William Moore, who received 14 life sentences and is under orders to serve his "natural life" in prison; and, Benjamin Edwards, who was sentenced to three life sentences but was recommended for twenty years.

## Thatcher on Failed Agreement

Calling herself "profoundly unionist," former British Prime Minister Lady Margaret Thatcher writes in her first published installment of her memoirs that the Anglo-Irish agreement failed because it did not establish security assistance from the southern Republic. In the first installment, published in a London newspaper, Thatcher said further that the agreement was part of a British policy to push the Irish government against the IRA.

Thatcher further wrote: "In dealing with Northern Ireland, successive British governments have studiously refrained from security policies that might alienate the Irish Government and Irish nationalist opinion in Ulster, in hope of winning their support against the IRA. The Anglo-Irish Agreement was squarely in this tradition." In an interview Thatcher later said, "our policy must never give the impression that we are trying to lead the unionists into United Ireland either against their will or without their knowledge."

## No Trial for Police

After a four day trial, a British judge has ruled that the case against three police officers accused of criminal conduct during the investigation and subsequent frame up of the Birmingham Six was to be dropped. The judge ruled in favor of a defense argument that publicity surrounding this case would result in an unfair trial for the police officers who were facing charges.

John Walker, one of the Birmingham Six whom spent sixteen years in prison for a crime they did not commit, told the *Derry Journal* that he was not surprised that the case was dropped but that he did not expect it to be dismissed after only four days. He said: "These type of things always happen in Irish cases. The sooner people realize that this is the only way Irish people are going to be treated in England the better." British Labour MP, Chris Mullin, who campaigned for the release of the Birmingham Six, said that dropping the case was "a characteristic British solution when something crops up."

## Lengthy Jail Term

A lawyer representing two Derry men who were convicted of planting firebombs in Britain has condemned the jail sentences the two men received. Greg McCartney, representing thirty-nine year old Eamonn O'Donnell and twenty-three year old Sean Cruickshank, said that the twenty and fifteen year sentences were "malicious and unbelievable." The two men pleaded guilty to planting nine incendiary devices in Leeds City Centre during June 1992 while operating for the Irish National Liberation Army. Of the nine devices planted only four exploded causing up to \$75,000 in damages. McCartney pointed out that in a similar case committed by animal rights activists, in that case the defendants received no more than ten years. He said: "It seems that in cases involving Irish defendants judges are always prepared to impose heavy and unbelievably harsh sentences." In sentencing the two men, Justice MacPherson said that the people of Leeds can expect "long term protection from the both of you."

## IRA Man gets 734 Years

A confessed IRA man, Tony Doherty, was sentenced to two life sentences and 734 years in concurrent sentences at the Belfast Crown Court on October 6th. Doherty has admitted to being involved in the murder of Ulster Democratic Party members Cecil McKnight and Gary Lynch in 1991, as well as 72 other offenses. The Judge called Doherty a "cynical, ruthless killer" who has a "profound and abiding commitment to

terrorism." During the proceedings, the Judge listened to a reading of Doherty's criminal activities which lasted from early 1989 to August 1991 when he was arrested.

Doherty admitted to the killing of McKnight out of revenge for the UFF murder of Sinn Fein councillor Eddie Fullerton a month earlier. McKnight was believed to have been a leader of the Derry branch of the UFF. He also claimed to be the driver of the get-away car in the murder of Lynch, who was killed because he was a pall bearer at McKnight's funeral. Other offenses Doherty was sentenced for included: 14 IRA plots to kill police officers, 21 firearm offenses, 14 explosives offenses, eight false imprisonments, four robberies, one wounding offence, one charge of collecting information and IRA membership.

## IRA Warns Pubs

Pub owners in nationalist areas of Belfast are being warned by the IRA to increase security. Due the recent spat of indiscriminate shooting by loyalist paramilitaries on pubs in nationalist areas, the IRA has told many pub owners to increase security or close their bar. Many pubs in the city are already protected by security precautions such as double doors, buzz entry and video cameras.

## Derby House Debate

Despite the friendly talks being held between John Hume and Gerry Adams, SDLP and Sinn Fein councillors continue to bicker on. Speaking of the recent Loyalist murder of Jason McFarlane, who was killed while playing pool at the Derby House pub in Belfast, SDLP councillor Hugh Lewsley condemned the UDA but said that the IRA was "lending credence" to increased loyalist violence. Lewsley said that the IRA had made the Derby House pub a legitimate target for Loyalist paramilitaries when a get-away car previously used by the IRA was abandoned near the pub. "That only leads credence to the loyalists who did this dastardly deed," he said. He further added that loyalists paramilitaries are

becoming "more daring and more professional."

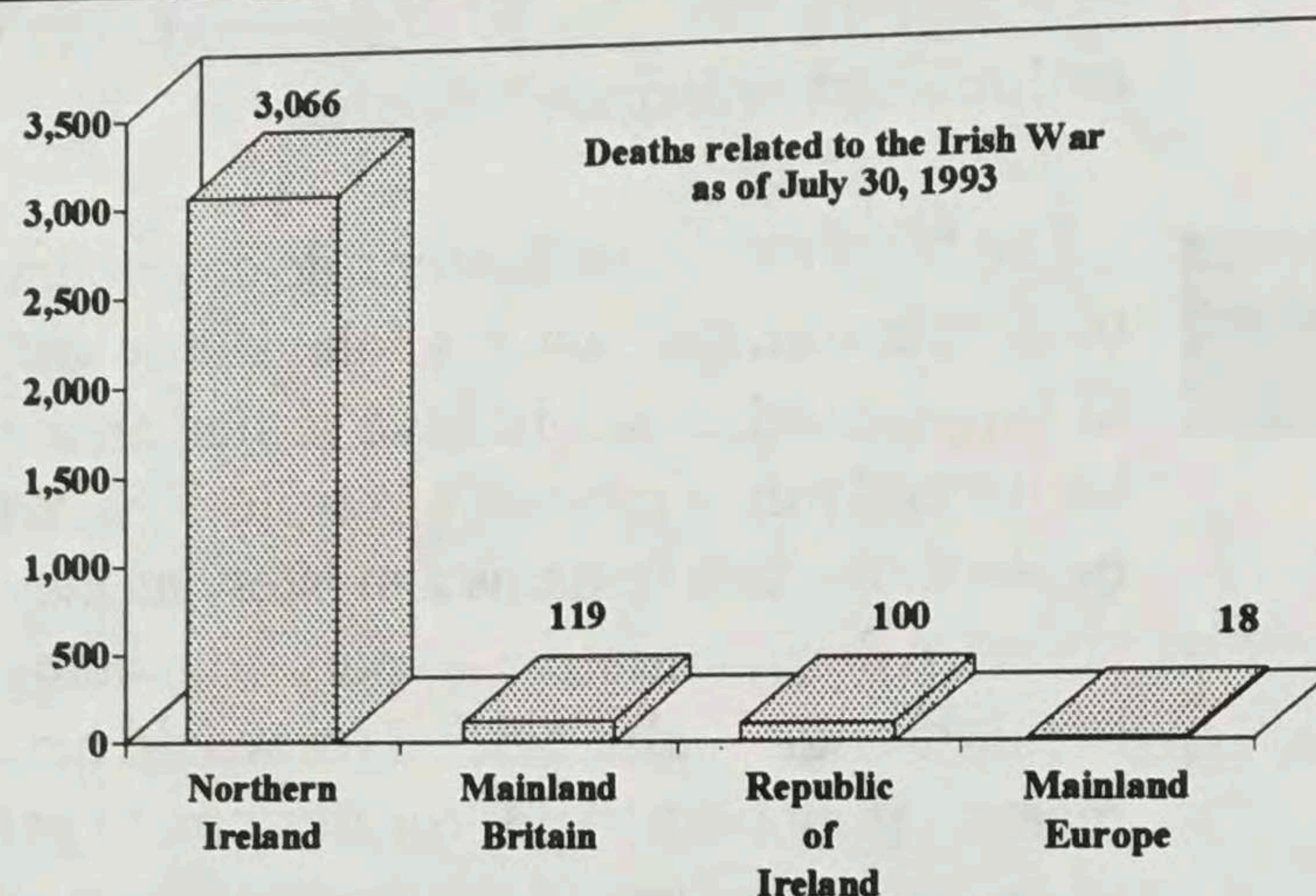
Sinn Fein councillor, Michael Ferguson, was outraged by Lewsley's comments. Ferguson said: "These thugs who carried out this type of attack will be delighted to hear their cowardly attack described as 'daring' and 'professional'...It doesn't take either daring or professionalism to walk into an open bar and gun down two boys playing pool. As Hugh Lewsley well knows the talk of the UDA being motivated to attack the Derby House because a car is parked is utter nonsense. The UDA and UVF need no excuse to slaughter Catholics and never have...Even they admit it was a case of the nearest available Catholic."

## A Feast of Flak

Flak jackets manufactured in the United States will soon be worn by British soldiers in Northern Ireland. The jackets, costing some \$1,200 dollars a piece, will be used by patrols that have recently come under repeated attack from IRA snipers. British troops have been under heavy fire from an IRA sniper unit that is reportedly using a Barrett Light Fifty rifle which is deadly from distances as far away as a mile. The sniper team is said consist of at least three marksmen and the area around Crossmaglen has been dubbed "sniper's alley" by British soldiers.

**"You have never seen children like we've produced in this generation. And they will eat the British empire alive." -- Bernadette Devlin McAliskey, *CovertAction*, Summer 1993**

## WHERE 3,303 HAVE DIED



(SOURCE: Focus, September, 1993)

## PEACE BREAKTHROUGH?

"Our discussions, aimed at the creation of a peace process which would involve all parties, have made considerable progress. We agreed to forward a report on the position reached to date to Dublin for consideration. We recognize that the broad principles involved will be for wider consideration between the two governments. Accordingly, we have suspended detailed discussions for the time being in order to facilitate this. We are convinced from our discus-

sions that a process can be designed to lead to agreement among the divided people of this island, which will provide a solid basis for peace. Such a process would obviously also be designed to ensure that any new agreement that might emerge respects the diversity of our different traditions and earns their allegiance and agreement." -- *John Hume (SDLP) & Gerry Adams (Sinn Fein), September 25, 1993.*

### IRA Retirement

In an interview with London's *Financial Times*, Sinn Fein President Gerry Adams said that he could foresee the eventual retirement of the Irish Republican Army. Adams said that if the present peace process succeeds he "would like to see the IRA in permanent retirement." He further clarified that the IRA is not the only armed force in Northern Ireland that would need to be demilitarized in a peace settlement. He said: "We are trying to take the armed element out of the conflict -- all aspects of it and not just the IRA. British forces are one element and the loyalists paramilitaries are another."

### Mandela Endorses Talks

Nelson Mandela, President of the African National Congress and recent winner of the Nobel Peace Prize, has endorsed the Hume/Adams talks while visiting Dublin. After requesting and receiving a briefing with Irish *Taoiseach*, Albert Reynolds, Mandela expressed to Reynolds his support of the talks and his hopes that they may lead to a larger peace. However, Mandela refused to make a public statement of support for the two parties conducting the talks because he said it would be interfering into another country's affairs "without having detailed information about the state of affairs in that country." He further said, cautiously, "All I would want to say in a general way, without specifically referring to any particular organization, is that the method of peaceful resolution of conflict is about the best." In the past Mandela had been criticized for making statements that indicated support for Sinn Fein and the IRA.

### Hume Wanted to Meet Loyalists

Former Derry City Councillor and Unionist Democratic Party member Ken Kerr has said that he was approached by SDLP's John Hume earlier in the year in order to arrange a possible meeting with Loyalist paramilitaries. However, the paramilitaries refused to meet with Hume. Kerr said, "The paramilitaries refused to even consider meeting Mr. Hume, in fact they treated the invitation with utter contempt." SDLP's Pat Devine said if that if Hume had attempted to speak with paramilitaries it would have been consistent with his attempts to find a lasting peace.

Speaking of the recent Hume/Adams talks, Kerr went on to say: "We believe that the recent action taken by two of the groups involved in the Pan Nationalist Front is the ultimate proof that Ulster is on the verge of being betrayed by those who we once looked upon as friends... The SDLP and Sinn Fein, along with anyone who accepts a pact -- a pact forged in hell and built on the bodies of Ulster Loyalists -- forget one important point: the Loyalist paramilitaries."

### Criticism of O'Brien

In an attack on the level of debate in the Irish media over the Hume/Adams talks in the North, the Chairman of the Oireachtas Foreign Affairs Committee, Brian Lenihan, strongly criticized Irish conservative icon Conor Cruise O'Brien. Lenihan called the *Irish Independent* columnist "a terrorist intellectual who increasingly employs rhetorical devices, labels and slogans that are as undemocratic and 'hate filled' as the very 'men of violence' he so often condemns." Lenihan claimed that debate in the southern Republic on the North has increasingly broken from reality because columnists have followed the lead of O'Brien. He concluded that O'Brien was an "intellectual godfather."

### UUP MP calls for Loyalists Cease-Fire

Ulster Unionists Party MP for Strangford, John Taylor, has called for an end to Loyalist violence. Taylor, indicating that recent talks between John Hume and Gerry Adams may result in an IRA cease-fire, believes that loyalists should make a pre-emptive strike by calling one first. Taylor said: "The UVF/UFF have made their point. They should now reflect upon the present political situation. As a result of the Hume/Adams talks, the IRA is being condemned...for continuing its campaign of terrorism. In fact, it has increased that campaign in recent weeks. This increase could well be a forerunner to a cessation of violence. The UVF/UFF should isolate the IRA further by seizing the initiative and announcing a cessation of their campaign now. Pressure on the IRA to stop their killing campaign would then become massive."

### Dublin Support???

After being briefed by SDLP's John Hume, *Taoiseach* Albert Reynolds and *Tánaiste* Dick Spring have given the Hume/Adams peace talks cautious support. Reynolds nod of support comes with the stipulation that the process of achieving peace includes motions that will create an end to violence and not just another temporary cease-fire. He further stated that he would meet with British Prime Minister, John Major, in Brussels on October 29th, and at that time perhaps the two would discuss developments in Northern Ireland.

### An Act of Self-Determination

Sir Patrick Mayhew, Northern Ireland Secretary, said that he is attempting to re-establish the talks between Northern Ireland's "constitutional" parties. He said that he regrets that the attention being paid to the Hume/Adams talks may be inhibiting his initiatives to bring the parties back to the negotiating table. Mayhew also warned that if the Hume/Adams talks continue to hinder his initiative than it would be better if they were stopped. In speaking of the future of the North, Mayhew said that a change cannot come from anything but an act of self-determination. He said, "The act of self-determination which could confirm or alter Northern Ireland's constitutional position as part of the United Kingdom has to be the self-determining act of the people of Northern Ireland. That is the cardinal, fundamental principle. It is one to which the British government will always hold. They will always back the democratically expressed wishes of the people living in Northern Ireland."

"The leadership of Oglaiigh na hEireann [IRA] welcomes this initiative. We are informed of the broad principles which will be for consideration by the London and Dublin governments. It is unfortunate that the British government reaction to this initiative, so far, has been negative and has fueled unionist reaction. Nonetheless, if the political will exists or can be created, it could provide the basis for peace. We, our Volunteers and our supporters have a vested interest in seeking a just and lasting peace in Ireland. Our objectives which include the right of the Irish people to national self-determination are well known. Our commitment remains steadfast."

## THE CERTAINTY OF WAR

### The Shankill Road Bombing

In an atmosphere reminiscent of the mid-70s, the North was ripped by violence during the last week of October, leaving twenty three dead and scores wounded. The most devastating attack, a premature explosion of an IRA bomb aimed at the headquarters of the UDA/UFF on Belfast's Shankill Road, left 10 dead and 57 wounded. The bomb, estimated by some sources to have contained 20 lbs. of semtex, exploded in an area packed with shoppers around 1:15 pm in Frizzell's fish shop, located beneath the UDA/UFF headquarters. Those dead included two girls aged 7 and 13, four women and three men. Reports indicate that the intended targets of the bombing, the UDA/UFF leadership, escaped serious injury. Among the dead was IRA Volunteer Thomas Begley, one of the bombers involved in the leadership-sanctioned attack, which the IRA later stated "went tragically wrong" -- a statement little welcomed among the families of the dead.

Lost in the avalanche of condemnation following the Shankill bombing was the fact that the bombing itself was a response to an dramatic upsurge in random killings by loyalists. As Belfast-based journalist Jack Holland told *NIR* "Working class Catholics regret the Shankill bombing occurred -- they don't want to see innocent Protestants killed. But there was a growing sense in Catholic areas that something like that had to be done. Catholics have been under sustained attack all year. I keep a log book of the violence and the violent incidents created by the UFF far outnumber anything done by the IRA." Loyalist attacks had increased since the announcement in April that the leaders of the two main nationalist parties, the SDLP's John Hume and Sinn Fein's Gerry Adams, had entered into negotiations aimed at resolving the conflict. On September 25th, when the two announced they had reached agreement on a peace proposal, loyalists ratcheted up the violence still further.

Recent loyalist targets have included Catholic taxis and worker's vans, resulting in fatalities, and only averting mass murder by virtue of weapons malfunctioning during the attacks. Loyalist paramilitary leaders in claiming responsibility for the attacks have boasted about carrying out "attempted mass murder," and have received only gentle chiding from Unionist politicians. One member of the Ulster Unionist Party, John Taylor, summed up the unionist establishment's tacit backing of the killing campaign by stating, "In a perverse way this is something which may be helpful because they [Catholics] are now beginning to appreciate more clearly the fear that has existed within the unionist community for the past 20 years."

### Loyalist Reaction

Following the IRA's Shankill Road blunder, loyalist paramilitary response to the bombing was not long in coming. Within hours a Catholic man delivering chinese food in loyalist South Belfast was shot. He died two days later. The same evening a number of random gun attacks on Catholics were reported, and six Catholic homes in Lisburn were firebombed. On October 25th the UVF killed a 72-year-old Catholic in Glengormley, north of Belfast. The victim was a member of the Gaelic Athletic Association, who had survived a murder bid ten years ago. Two more Catholics were gunned down on the morning of October 26th as they arrived for work at a municipal sanitation depot in West Belfast. In claiming responsibility for the attack, in which they fired over sixty bullets, the UFF said, "our attacks will widen and intensify." Two days later loyalist attacks continued in Lurgan, where the UVF shot dead two brothers watching television during their 11 year-old sister's birthday party. Related anti-nationalist violence also erupted during the funeral of the IRA's Thomas Begley, in Belfast's Ardoyne neighborhood. During funeral observances outside the Begley home, a person described as a "republican" was shot in the stomach by a British soldier. The soldier also fired bullets that entered a number of nearby homes in Ardoyne, some narrowly missing occupants. He was later charged with attempted murder.

The most gruesome loyalist attack in years followed a week later on October 30th in the village of Greysteel, northeast of Derry city. As hundreds gathered at a local pub, two UFF gunman entered, hollered "Trick or Treat" and began firing indiscriminately, even stopping at one point to re-load. Seven people were killed and 11 wounded. Although the area is pre-dominantly Catholic, the bar was considered "mixed" and two Protestants were among the dead, including one ex-member of the Ulster Defense Regiment. Claiming responsibility for the massacre, the UDA/UFF claimed "This is a continuation of our threat against the Nationalist electorate that they would pay a heavy price for last Saturday's slaughter of nine Protestants." Again, Jack Holland pointed out to *NIR* that "Nearly 50% of all the attacks carried out by the UFF this year have been frustrated just by the fact that their guns weren't working. This is one example where their guns didn't jam and seven people were killed and several others were very, very badly wounded and might die."

**"If Mr. Adams has any proposal to end the violence, let him get on and do it. If he doesn't, he should say nothing about it. But I think that the people in Northern Ireland who over the years have seen their friends, their relatives, their families murdered by IRA violence, to hear him suggest that provided there is a political dividend for him he can stop that killing will be something they would regard as outrageous. And so do I." -- British Prime Minister John Major**

**"Belfast Brigade IRA today targeted a regular meeting of leading UFF activists at the Shankill UDA HQ. Eight hours after the operation not all of our Volunteers have been accounted for.**

**Since warnings were to have been given to allow for the clearance of Frizzell's shop and the immediate vicinity we can only conclude, at this stage, that some of our Volunteers are among those who were tragically and unintentionally killed by a premature detonation of this device.**

**We regret all innocent deaths and understand the grief felt by the loved ones of all those who died today. We reiterate our policy of not allowing ourselves to be dragged down the cul-de-sac of sectarian warfare. Today's operation was targeted specifically on those directly involved with loyalist death squads. It went tragically wrong." -- Oglaiha na hEireann [IRA] October 24, 1993**

### Hume/Adams: Another Casualty

Among those condemning the Shankill bombing was Sinn Fein's president Gerry Adams, whose party defends the IRA's guerrilla war against British occupation of 6 of Ireland's 32 counties. In a BBC interview (see page 5) Adams stated "I don't think that what happened, no matter about the intentions, can be excused." He went on to state that the bombing was a "A disaster for everyone involved, not least the IRA itself." Yet, Adams refused to shrink from his role as leader of the republican movement, carrying the coffin of Thomas Begley during part of the IRA man's funeral procession. While such a direct identification with the bomber sent both the unionist and British establishments ballistic, many feel it reinforced his ability to deliver an IRA ceasefire should the Hume/Adams initiative bear fruit.

Many feel that the failed IRA bombing has allowed both the British and Irish governments to squirm off the hook, and reject any peace initiative involving the republican movement. Both Albert Reynolds and John Major have publicly rejected the still secret Hume/Adams initiative, proposing instead a six-point plan for dialogue (see page 5) and support for reviving the long-dead Mayhew talks. Finally, in a response representative of the sincerity of British efforts to resolve the conflict, British Home Secretary Michael Howard issued an exclusion order barring Adams from Britain again, creating the farcical spectacle of excluding a supposed British subject from "mainland" Britain. The Labour Party's Tony Benn had invited Adams in hopes of getting him to address Parliament directly on the Hume/Adams initiative.

For his part, the SDLP's John Hume has continued to frame the initiative as the most serious prospect for peace in 20 years. Following a November 4th meeting with Major, Hume told reporters if Major agreed to the proposal there could be peace "within the next week." While still remaining hushed about details of the plan, Hume stated the plan included "a process involving both governments and all parties that would lead to agreement among the divided people of our island -- an agreement which does not threaten any of the traditions but has to earn their allegiance and agreement." Speaking to *NIR*, Sinn Fein's publicity officer in the Six Counties sounded a similar theme, stating "there is a realization in this situation that not everybody is going to get what they want. And that people will have to accept less than what they would want, certainly initially; including everybody -- including republicans, including unionists. That's the essence of dialogue. That's the essence of compromise and agreement."



## EXCERPTS FROM A BBC INTERVIEW

*Sinn Fein President Gerry Adams was interviewed by the BBC on October 24, 1993*

**Gerry Adams, can you give me your reaction to yesterday's bomb attack and the killings on the Shankill Road?**

I was shattered when I heard the news yesterday and my heart goes out to them, to the families of those who have been killed, of all the people who have been killed. My attitude is simply that no matter what the intention was, it was a great tragedy, a devastating human tragedy.

**Do you condemn it?**

I am very measured in how I deal with these issues as you may know. I don't think that what happened, no matter about the intentions, can be excused. I think that those who are in positions of leadership in the IRA, no matter what pressures maybe on them from the loyalist killing campaigns, that they have to be aware that how they respond to those pressures could end up as it did yesterday.

**Are you saying it was wrong?**

Of course it was wrong.

**What has yesterday's bombing done to this peace process which you and John Hume want to see established?**

Well, I think it has made a situation which is already difficult, perhaps all the more difficult simply because those who were opposed to the initiative that Mr. Hume and I have taken, may well use whatever happened yesterday as an excuse to attempt to sink our initiative. I am speaking here particularly about the British government. The British government has been opposed to this, as it appears to me, from the start. They certainly, in terms of their public statements have dismissed it or been insulting about it or refused to come on board, so far.

**You see, you're talking peace, you have a dialogue going with John Hume, you have produced peace proposals. What could the IRA be thinking of since they backed those proposals while continuing their campaign?**

I don't want under any circumstances to be justifying what happened yesterday. And I said many times that those in positions of leadership within the IRA need to be mindful of how they deal with the loyalist killing campaign. But one has to look at the public responses, and there is public outrage, which I accept. I accept it especially from the families of those who have been killed or injured but I do not so easily accept the sanctimonious statements from political leaders, including the likes of John Major and others. Because the reality is that there have been Catholics killed on an on-going basis and in a very intense way for the last number of years and all of those who are being and been so outspoken about yesterday's incident were silent and have been silent about those killings. My position on loyalist actions and actions which many times are supported or arranged by their cohorts in the British forces, is quite clear and a matter of public record... the tragedy of yesterday could quite cynically be used by a Mayhew or a Major to divert or cul-de-sac or stop the initiative which Mr. Hume and I are engaged in and I think that would be the most awful of all tragedies.

**What kind of a response do you want from the governments to the proposals you and John Hume put to them?**

Well, I want a positive response. How that is composed, the nitty gritty of it, is of course a matter for both governments to work out. Let me say that on reading one of this mornings newspapers that an exclusion order has been served upon me before yesterday's bombing on the Shankill Road and that exclusion order was to prevent me from going to London to speak about this peace initiative. Now if that is true, and I certainly haven't received an exclusion order yet, but if it is true, that is exactly the sort of response we don't want -- A British government moving to prevent the likes of me from articulating a peace process directly to the British people and alerting them to the potential possibility there is for moving forward. But what we want in the meantime is a positive response that they're going to come on board and be part of trying to build a peace process.

**How flexible would you be in the way you approach that?**

I can be as flexible as the response permits me. I am quite prepared, as I've said before, to go to the IRA with a mind to making proposals about how they conduct their campaign. I obviously want that to be a worthwhile prospect. I don't want to be going back and forth and making meaningless statements or gestures or requests. I want to be in a position to make a definitive proposal to the IRA which will allow us to move forward. That's the type of response I'm looking for. And let me say so if I may, I would be quite satisfied that despite all that Mayhew is saying and all that Major is saying that they know--more or less--and I would be very disappointed if they didn't know--precisely what was required here. And I agree totally with Mr. Hume when he stood up in the British House of Commons the other day and called upon the British Government to hurry up and give a detailed response.

**Are you saying to me that if the governments accept the proposals which you and John Hume have put to them that you could find yourself in a position where you could advise the IRA or suggest to them even that their campaign could end?**

Without telling you the detail of what has been agreed, I can tell you that if the British government responded to those positively that I would be quite pleased to go to the IRA and make that proposition.

**And advise them to stop?**

Absolutely.

**You believe, therefore, if the circumstances were right, and the British government accepted these proposals, you could deliver the IRA?**

Absolutely. I think that the process that John Hume and I have worked upon, of which Dublin is fully informed on, that if the British government take on board what is being put to them, that it is my belief the IRA would positively respond. I think the British government have been playing with the issue.

**Is it possible, Gerry Adams, what could happen is that there would be a split in the IRA?**

No, not at all. Absolutely not. I will be part of no split in republican ranks. I have worked out with Mr. Hume an agreement and I have to stress that Dublin is fully informed of this, which I am satisfied would have the support of the IRA. And I have said repeatedly that I will not mislead people about the IRA and neither will I mislead the IRA.

**Do you think the British government will accept these proposals?**

On the evidence to date, I have to say and I hope I'm wrong, that I'm very concerned about the British government's commitment to building peace in this country.

**Are you optimistic or pessimistic then?**

I am hopeful that reason will prevail I am concerned that, for example, sometimes one is to some degree a victim of history, that we have a John Major who has done a deal with the OUP, who appears to be trying to reach a similar understanding with the DUP, and who in my view, is generally or specifically aware of what we're talking about. He, Major, can still stonewall all of this in the face of everybody believing they know what's happening. And I just think it would be an awful tragedy if what has the greatest potential to move forward, fails because of party political or leadership difficulties for the British Tory government. Let me say, having said all of that, John Hume and I have agreed a number of propositions and I remain committed to them no matter what the response of Dublin or London to them we still need peace and I remain absolutely committed to continuing this process however long it takes. It is my sense that if the British government, as I have said, responded positively, that I can bring the IRA along with me. That's my sense of where I'm at. If the British government don't respond positively, it is still my firm commitment to attempt to move this forward no matter what happens in the meantime. I think that people who were killed on the Shankill Road, including the young IRA Volunteer, deserve nothing less than that -- a commitment to try and build peace out of all the war and all the tragedy as a result of the conflict.

### THE BRITISH/IRISH SIX POINT PEACE PLAN

1) the people living in Ireland, North and South, without coercion, without violence, should be free to determine their own future.

2) that freedom can be expressed in the development of new structures for the governing of Northern Ireland, for relationships between North and South, and for relationships between our two islands. For many of us, of course, the freedom to determine our own future by agreement should ideally lead to the possibility ultimately of unity on this island.

3) no agreement can be reached in respect to any change in the present status of Northern Ireland without the freely expressed consent of a majority of the people of Northern Ireland -- free from coercion or violence.

4) let us once and for all accept here that if we talk about the freedom of Unionists to give their consent to constitutional change, we must also recognize the freedom of Unionists to withhold their consent from such change, unless and until they are persuaded by democratic political means only.

5) if we believe in consent as an integral part of any democratic approach to peace, we must be prepared at the right time and in the right circumstances to express our commitment to that consent in our fundamental law.

6) we must be prepared to say to the men of violence that they can come to the negotiating table, that they can play a peaceful part in the development of Ireland's future -- if only they would stop the killing and the maiming and the hurting. We will make a place, and we will develop structures, to bring in from the cold those who have lived in the shadow of their terrorism -- we are prepared to begin that process the moment that a total cessation of violence makes it possible for us to do so.

## NIR INTERVIEW:

### TALKING WITH IRISH POW POL BRENNAN

*NIR's John O'Connor recently interviewed Pol Brennan over the phone from the Santa Rita Jail. Mr. Brennan, who escaped from the H-Blocks with 38 other men in 1983, was interned for 11 months in 1974-75 and participated in the blanket and dirt protests during the late seventies and early eighties. He was arrested in San Francisco this past January on passport violations. Presently, Mr. Brennan is fighting British extradition back to the six counties. Jim Smyth and Kevin Barry Artt, also H-Block escapees, are also fighting extradition warrants in CA.*

**You grew up in Ballymurphy during the sixties, what was that like?**

Ballymurphy in the 1960s was a depressed area. There were no social amenities such as community centers or leisure centers that they have today. There were no activities for kids -- we had to play in the streets. Medical facilities were at a minimum; we had one doctor's office and one dentist's office for the whole area. There was never much work in the area, there was no industry up where we lived, it was more or less devoid of industry -- probably intentionally. Unemployment was certainly very high. During the early part of the '60s, I wouldn't say that there was a lot, but we had Protestants who lived in the area. I guess around 1969 and the early '70s, with the beginning of the troubles, the area became polarized, and people started moving out.

In the early '70s I lived in England for a bit, and I saw a marked difference in the area from before I left to when I came back. At the time I went, there was massive rioting going on for months and months -- and I certainly witnessed that. But when I came back in early 1972 there was a remarkably changed atmosphere in the area. The republicans had taken control, whereas before I left there wasn't much evidence of that. I guess during the time I was gone the whole area metamorphosized from just being what you would call a working class area to an area where republicans were giving a lead.

**What impact did witnessing the riots have on you?**

Well you know what happens when you get armed soldiers and cops at the top of your street. The riots lasted for a couple of months. Everyday you had rioting, fighting, CS gas, rubber bullets and that kind of stuff. The British took a lot of casualties then because everyone was shooting wildly at them, but of course nothing changed. A little later on in the early '70s, Ballymurphy was certainly an economically depressed area, yet I saw a lot of community activity, people were mobilizing in the '70s. Ciaran de Baroid mentions this in his book *Ballymurphy and the Irish War*, which I highly recommend, it's an excellent historical book, but it is also a really good social study and commentary on the development of a small area in a conflict. He chronicled the development of community spirit in that area, better than I could do here.

**Do you come from a republican family?**

No, we were not brought up in any kind of political ideology, that came after, from just living there. The troubles politicized a lot of my family. My family votes Sinn Fein now. A lot of people voted SDLP before the hunger strikes and during the early 1970s -- the whole H-Block situation politicized my parents and my family, as well as many others.

**How would you define Irish republicanism?**

You can really break it up into the isms as they call them: nationalism, secularism, anti-sectarianism, cultural separatism, anti-imperialism, and socialism. I think that about covers it as far as what it means as an ideology. Now, not everybody who calls themselves a republican

would adhere to all of these, but for me it entails all of these different things. I'm sure that there are still some bigots around. Republicans are a diverse bunch. It is the younger element now who have been politicized since the last campaign, they moved politically toward the left. Anti-imperialism is certainly a central element of our republican ideology

**How has republicanism developed over time?**

Well, a lot of politicalization occurred while in prison. When we were on the blanket, there was a lot of the political activity and development. There was a lot of learning during internment. It was almost like a political university, you might say. People with time on their hands needed to understand the politics and economics of the situation, and the other aspects of it. When we were on the blanket we certainly had a lot of political lectures. Certainly the jails had a big impact on politicalization of, not only people in Sinn Fein, but all of the people involved.

**How many years were you on the blanket protest?**

I was arrested in September 1976, did about a year or so on remand, and then was sentenced in October 1977 -- if my memory serves me. From then on, right through to 1981, I spent my time on the blanket protest and the no-wash protest. So from 1977 directly through to 1981.

**Why the blanket and dirt protests?**

The protests were about fighting the criminalization policy, which was one of a three-pronged attack against the republican movement in the mid 1970s. The strategies the movement were struggling against entailed the policies of Ulterization, Normalization and Criminalization. Criminalization was the process of criminalizing republican and loyalist activists and prisoners. Anybody who was arrested after March 1st, 1976 faced the loss of political status. Going on the blanket was a direct result, or a direct reaction to the criminalization policy of the British government.

**You shared a cell with hunger striker Bobby Sands for a time, what was he like?**

Sands was a multifaceted and multitalented person. Had he not died on the hunger strike, I am convinced he would have made a name for himself somewhere down the line -- within political circles. He had an enormous amount of energy. He was always doing something, writing poetry, writing articles. He was someone you could talk with -- and he could talk you to death. He had an enormous amount of energy -- sometimes it was negative energy. He was very argumentative about what he felt was right -- even if it turned out he was wrong. I remember a discussion we had once about what Albert Einstein was famous for. Bobby said he was famous for the splitting of the atom, and I told him he was famous for his theory of relativity. He was certain that he was right, he was incredulous! He certainly was a very dynamic personality. But what really can you say about someone who may never have died except for British policy and Margaret Thatcher. His and the other deaths were a great loss to all then. It was devastating.

**Where do you see the republican movement in 1993, is it progressing?**

During the early '80s, the movement gained from the momentum of the hunger strikes and the H-Block protests. Sinn Fein has gained a

lot of stature and matured enormously since that time. Pragmatism has been injected into the movement because of the realities of the early '80s.

What you are seeing now is a reversal of the traditional problem of the republican movement. Historically, the armed struggle always led the politics. The armalite in one hand and the ballot in the other hand was a compromise, I think the movement is trying to move beyond that. The political element has taken the lead now in the struggle. The armed struggle is now augmenting the political struggle (sometimes negatively). But the armed struggle is certainly still ongoing. I think what you are seeing now is that the Brits are very weary about the political strides that have been made. Evidence of this would be the number of Sinn Fein politicians being murdered -- there is more than enough evidence of that.

Certainly they are moving forward. If they get the chance you might see the lessening, or suspension, of the armed struggle in lieu of an even more political direction -- if they get the chance. London and Dublin could give them a chance, but are they going to grasp the opportunity instead of ignoring it?

**Does Britain still want to still control the six counties?**

The British are somewhat unsure of their long term policy in Northern Ireland; especially vis-a-vis the relationship with the EC. What you are also seeing is that the present strategy in the North has run out of steam as far as the British are concerned. The three pronged attack of the mid 1970s: Ulsterization, Normalization and Criminalization has more or less petered out. The result of this was the Anglo-Irish Agreement which was basically a sop to the southern free state [the Irish Republic -- eds.].

**Why doesn't the republican movement work more toward northern consent?**

This is a desirable situation, but republicans will never be able to convince the unionists in Ireland that their best interests lie in a unitary state, a united Ireland. London, and perhaps Dublin and Brussels, could and should contribute to this. This is where the pressure of convincing must come from. It is only through this that a majority consent will be obtained, I think. But that may be closer than one might imagine if the present population trends in the north continue. It's no longer the 2 to 1 ratio. If the present projections hold up -- in 2015 to 2030 there will be a fifty-fifty split. Based on that alone, I think, the British are faced with a problem down the road. What the British should do with the Dublin government is actively seek majority consent together. You know, there is only something like a 7 or 8 percentage point difference in the population totals between Nationalists and Unionists at the moment. Certainly now is the time to switch policy and go in that direction.

**What do you see as the source of recent increased loyalist violence?**

What we are seeing now is the kind of political, military policies being applied that are the direct result of counter insurgency strategies developed by the British over the years, during their colonial wars. They were in some forty or fifty colonial wars before they came here. So they certainly had a lot of experience in dealing with that. Brigadier General Frank Kitson, probably their greatest anti-insurgency specialist, developed the use of modern day strategies and counter insurgency forces. A lot of the loyalist death squads meet his description of counter insurgency forces. They are really death squads by proxy. Of course, it is just an extension of Kitsonian theories.

**You have written in your *Irish People* column "Northern Irish Notes" that the United Nations may have a role to play in any political solution in the North.**

Well to a certain extent, since both the London and Dublin governments seem incapable of solving it by themselves, the UN could and should be involved at least by sending a special envoy to set up a peace process. There are things they could do, especially conflict resolution and human rights. The EC also should be included in some of this. Through all of this, I think, Sinn Fein and the republican movement must be given an equal place at the table -- otherwise there would not be much of a chance for a lasting peace. It would be a bit like the white South Africans holding peace talks and not inviting the ANC.

**What do you think of the Southern governing coalition?**

I don't think it really matters who is in power in the South. They are pretty much two sides of the same coin, as far as the North is concerned. But having said that, I do see a role for them in any future solution to the problem. But they must be pressured into doing it. They need a good strong push. Certainly Dublin must begin to flex its muscle if it is to be taken seriously, but so far they don't seem to have the gall to stand up and be counted. To this extent the Anglo-Irish Agreement satisfied them -- it was enough to set aside any criticism they were coming under from southerners. But due to the lack of any real initiative, they should be pressurized into inviting the UN and the EC in to help start a peace process, which they seem incapable, or unwilling to, initiate.

**What is your reaction to the Hume/Adams peace initiative?**

The Hume/Adams initiative is clearly cause for some hope, and it is of major significance in that solidifies the nationalist/republican tradition for the first time since the late sixties. Whether or not it is successful at this time remains to be seen and depends on a number of factors. But it has already had the positive effect of showing the world that it is not the republicans that are holding back the peace process. The ball is firmly in the Brits court and so far they have been negative. The events of this past week -- with the Shankill Road tragedy -- is also a great set back, although by all accounts it appears to have been a premature explosion having killed and injured IRA personnel along with the civilian deaths and injuries. That fact may have softened the blow to loyalists, but sadly innocent Catholics have already died in retaliatory strikes by death squads. It is a big setback and I hope we can recover soon. The darkest hours are just before dawn. I'm still optimistic on some levels.

**Do you think you will see a British declaration of withdrawal in your lifetime?**

Making political predictions in light of what has happened in the past ten years is risky business at best. But London is going to have to bite the bullet sometime. The only question is whether it will be sooner rather than later. In the end, the truth is that unionism is a dying ideology, it has had its day. We need all the help we can get. I just hope the British don't prolong the agony, and that they wouldn't leave something like a Bosnia. How they leave is what is very important.

**How long were you living in California before your arrest?**

I came here in late 1984 after having hid in Ireland for a year or so. After couple of months of manhunts over there, I decided to leave. When I was arrested in January I was happily married and just lying low. It seems just like yesterday that I was back in Ireland. I can remember everyplace I was and everybody that I met -- I came across some wonderful people. I certainly have suffered from some homesickness, the years have just slipped by.

**How where you making a living?**

I have had a number of odd jobs. I have some building skills, and I got into remodeling, which was my main income. I certainly worked very hard at it.

**How does your case differ from Joe Doherty's, Artt's or Smyth's?**

Both Smyth's, Artt's and my case come under the 1986 treaty that was structured specifically to make extradition of people such as ourselves easier. Margaret Thatcher, at the time, was on a personal crusade against republicans. This also was a consequence of allowing US planes to use British airspace and bases for the attack on Libya back in the mid 1980s. This resulted in President Reagan's promise to hand back anyone caught over here, and I guess they had Joe Doherty in mind. Both Artt's and my own case have been effectively stalled until after the Smyth case has run its course and been resolved. This is, of course, the test if you like. His trial starts in mid September and will run for about four weeks. With another couple of months for appeals, and what have you, it will end most likely early next year.

**Is prison much different here than in Northern Ireland?**

Well, prison is prison wherever you go, but it is vastly different. The level of violence and racial tension in the American prison system is a factor. I've talked to enough old cons to know that overcrowding is a big problem here. I think you are going to see a lot more incidents like you saw in Ohio state. There is something seriously wrong when a society needs such a huge penal system. America has now the biggest penal system in the world, more than the former Soviet Russia, more than South Africa.

**Do you think that your case will differ from Doherty's because of Clinton?**

Well, it could make a difference if enough pressure is applied to Clinton and his administration to initiate several policies promised to the Irish-American community during the campaign. He pretty much did a one-eighty on most of them. He certainly paid lip-service to us before the election as he courted the Irish voter. You know that after the visit from John Major he seemed to step back from his promises, especially on the special envoy. It remains to be seen, certainly more pressure can be applied.

**What can interested individuals do to help?**

People should start organizing and look at what is being done in their names over the extradition issue. This extradition case has implications that go beyond just the Irish cause. Any political refugee who is being sought in another country can just automatically be sent back. Traditionally, this country has been a place of refuge for people escaping oppressive regimes. Certainly many Irish republicans have thought of it in this sense.

**What gets you through each day?**

I take it one day at a time. Sometimes I'm up, sometimes I'm down. I read a lot, I'm writing a lot now. [Mr. Brennan has a regular column in the *Irish People* and appears often in the *Anderson Valley Advertiser* --eds.] I just wrote a big article this week that I hope will be published. I keep busy on that score.

Pol Brennan can be contacted at the following address:

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**A DAY IN THE LIFE OF AN IPOW**

(excerpts from *A Day of Life in Santa Rita* by Pol Brennan)

"...I arrived here on Jan 20, 1993 after my arrest by federal agents earlier that day. It was around 6:30 pm and my immediate priority was to make a phone call to my wife Joanna at home to find out what had happened after I was arrested. Telephone calls are allowed within the American penal system, a luxury not afforded me back in 1976 in Belfast, Northern Ireland when I was busted on explosives charges..."

"...I spent the next four days in F-Pod, the only white guy there. F-Pod was the only all-black pod in area 4. Keeping a low profile, I read books mostly. No one bothered with me, but a few were understanding enough to offer books and toiletries not given me upon my arrival as required, so my time spent there although apprehensive was uneventful...After the fourth day I was moved over to the west side and deposited into B-Pod where I have since experienced the bleak essence of this institution called Santa Rita. Yesterday was a typical day..."

"...At 4am in the morning loud speakers in our cell in an overly loud voice demand that we get up and get dressed for breakfast. Twenty minutes later when she (the voice is female) decides to unlock the cell doors from her control tower, 25 bleary eyed men emerge almost still asleep, clad in the yellow garb of "Alameda County Jail" which is emblazoned in bold black lettering on the tunic and pants with the letter "P" at the bottom. "P" for prisoner? "P" for peas in a pod? ..."

"...Door Check, Door Check," screams the voice over the loudspeaker again. We suffer this manipulation every hour on the hour. They do this by subjecting us to this routine throughout the entire day on the spurious excuse of security reasons. If it is not completed, everything is turned off -- TV, radio, phones, which naturally causes friction with the inmates here. Door checks are the opening of cell doors for 10 minutes every hour, removing freedom of moving between our cells and the common association area immediately outside the cell doors, within the 14 cell unit/pod. It's also used by the deputies as a leverage for running the place at their whim..."

"...Everyday has the exact same structure and is broken up between free time in the morning the 8:30am through 2:30 period and the evening meal period, half an hour long, anytime between 4:30 and 7:00pm, depending on the rotation, after which "pod time" is announced again over the speakers, big brother-style again; telling us that nothing goes on until all doors are closed. So starts the evening: Dinner was as uninspired as breakfast, only a little more varied at times. Beans with bologna cubes, mashed potatoes and an indistinguishable vegetable mixture so overcooked as to be tasteless, with a spoonful of lettuce and a 2nd carton of milk for the day. Those who can afford it try to augment such paltry fare with commissary from the vending machines, vastly overpriced junkfood make up most of it. I have lost about 10lbs since my arrival which I think is normal here..."

"...If nothing else, my time here has been an education about the criminal justice system of this country, and more so of the federal government's hamfisted "War on Drugs" which, for all their fine statistics, they're really losing, as evidenced by the quadrupled prison population and an equally evident illegal drug market unaffected by either more interdiction or indictments of suppliers. What can they really expect from a drug-dependent society weaned on alcohol, tobacco, and legal narcotics of every kind imaginable? ...This place is a sad testimony to the society that necessitates its existence. The societal rules that channeled the majority of the people here are sometimes as much to blame as the crimes they committed that sent them here. I see despair and hopelessness about the future everyday in Pod 4 and throughout this facility. I spent a total of seven years in Northern Ireland's prisons, one year of internment and six years in the H-Blocks (four of those on blanket protest) with many nostalgic memories. But this place of Santa Rita is one place I won't ever wax nostalgic about..."

(From: the *Anderson Valley Advertiser*, August 25, 1993. The AVA can be obtained from PO Box 459, Boonville, CA. 95415.)

Donations for Pol Brennan's defense fund should be sent to his wife: Joanna Volz, 2111 Stuart St., Berkeley, CA. 94705.



# The Use of Excessive Force in the Siege at Tiger's Bay

## A Loyalist Perspective

The recent use of gross and excessive force by the RUC and security forces in the Tiger's Bay siege [5/17/93 -eds.] has been condemned by all sections of the loyalist community.

However, unlike the condemnations of excessive force used against republicans, Sinn Fein and the Pan-Nationalist Front welcomed the shooting of a young Loyalist counter-Republican/terrorist operative, even though the man could easily have been arrested. If, as police allege, his accomplice was later arrested following the siege of Tiger's Bay (I understand sources have suggested the man arrested was not the same man involved in the attack on the New Lodge Sinn Fein office) both could have been arrested without a shot being fired. It must also be noted that the Anglo-Irish commission did not protest or raise the matter with the British government as they undoubtedly would have in cases involving republicans. Can we expect loyalists to receive justice from Dublin?

Before juxtaposing two of the better known of numerous sieges involving republicans where police and security forces permitted priests of the Catholic church to intervene and negotiate peaceful outcomes, it is worth briefly discussing the role and the function of the Pan-Nationalist Front as they appear to the loyalist people. Sinn Fein, the SDLP and the Eire government are all seen in many loyalist quarters to be supporting the so called republican "armed struggle" against the Protestant people of Ulster. It is obvious that in guerrilla campaigns, smaller combat units would not normally stand a chance against better equipped and trained forces who invariably outnumber them. In order to be afforded any chance of mounting a successful campaign the guerrilla forces must receive support not only from their local communities, but also on a wider front.

The role of the Pan-Nationalist Front is to limit the force used against the guerrillas. This is usually done by first insisting that the forces of law are restrained by the implicit morality of their country and culture. They insist, for instance, on the yellow-card restriction, minimum use of force, and protests are lodged at the highest level for every minor infringement of the moral code. That is why loyalists perceive the attacks on the Pan-Nationalist Front to be a vital element of their counter republican-terror campaign.

This was why the young Ulster Freedom Fighters mounted their attack on the New Lodge Sinn Fein office.

The calls for the army to shoot loyalists by the Pan-Nationalist Front and the lack of condemnation by them of the excessive use of force emphasizes all of the above assertion. This, without doubt, also highlights the success of their role in the guerrilla war, and must also call into question, the efficacy of the part played by the British Army member who fired the shot which wounded the young Freedom Fighter. Not only did he play into the hands of the IRA and their Pan-Nationalist cohorts -- he also struck a blow against those who are doing that which rank and file security members say must be done.

The freedom fighters were "fighting fire with fire," and at the moment loyalist paramilitaries are the only units -- (perceived by their own community) -- who are engaged in a pro-active campaign against the IRA and Pan-Nationalist Front. Two reasons have been suggested for the increased use of excessive force against loyalists. The first is the need to appease republicanism and the Dublin government. Secondly, the RUC and the security forces, who themselves call for proactive strikes against terrorism find themselves used more to "tie the hands" of loyalists until the Pan Nationalists achieve their objectives.

This event had occurred a few years ago in Londonderry: Police had surrounded a house where a family had been held hostage by an IRA murder gang. The republicans were not stormed, nor was any force used against them. In this instance the RUC decided to use the services of priests to mediate. The commander agreed to pull his men back from the scene and the IRA murder gang made a successful escape from the scene. Even though it was believed at the time this was because one of the murder gang was a high placed RUC informer, this theory has now been discounted. It seems the softly, softly approach demanded by the Pan-Nationalist Front in dealing with republican terrorists was observed by the RUC on this occasion accounts for their actions.

The excessive use of force against loyalists can be traced back to the signing of the Anglo-Irish Agreement which effectively gave Dublin more say in the day-to-day running of Ulster than the elected majority. However the softly, softly approach adopted by the Security Forces against republican murder gangs

has been around for years. The best known of these is perhaps the capture of the notorious M60 murder gang led by Joe Doherty.

On 5/2/80, Joe Doherty and the M60 gang, who were known to have terrorized Security Forces in Belfast for quite some time by ambushing patrols using a 1,000 round per minute M60 machine gun, were surrounded by two SAS teams under the command of Captain Herbert Westmacott. Satisfied that the gang could not escape, Westmacott, bravely, but somewhat naively in hindsight, approached the house to reason with the IRA murder gang in the hope of saving their lives by offering a peaceful outcome. The IRA responded by fatally wounding the officer with a burst of machine gun fire.

Given the presence of soldiers highly skilled in close-quarter armed combat techniques, the refusal of the offer to surrender, and the murder of the SAS Captain, it would have been a situation where extreme and prejudicial force could have been constructively used. As it turned out, the M60 gang in accordance with Pan-Nationalist Front tactics asked for, and received, a priest to take their surrender. In the case of the young loyalist in the recent Tiger's Bay siege, the offer by the ministers would have prevented not only risk to life, it would also have prevented the world media for seeing the RUC operate in a loyalist (i.e. non-hostile) area. As for the blatantly zealous way the excessive force was used -- this could clearly be seen. So out of control were the Security Forces, that one local newspaper described how a plain-clothed Policeman was injured when he fell off a wall after a soldier opened fire on him, at the rear of the seized house in Tiger's Bay.

The different approach to Protestant loyalists and Catholic republicans adopted by the security forces since 1985 can clearly be seen by the juxtaposed incidents above.

Why were the ministers refused the same right to mediate that the Catholic Priests are always granted? Why was C.S. gas used? Why was the young loyalist shot when he posed no threat to anyone at the time the soldier opened fire? Finally, in the light of all of the above, the security forces must ask themselves: why are they doing exactly what the Pan-Nationalist Front requires them to do in order for the IRA to achieve its objectives?

*(Reprinted from the July issue of New Ulster Defender, a magazine of the Ulster Defense Association [UDA].)*

## The One-Sided Nature of the Constitutional Debate

by Robert Ballagh

At this stage, anyone could be excused for thinking that Articles 2 & 3 of the 1937 Constitution represent the main obstacle to peace and progress in Ireland. It seems that a consensus has already developed which takes the view that every challenge to Articles 2 & 3 constitutes news, whereas any defense of the Irish constitutional position is deemed as non-newsworthy. In my opinion, this bias is fundamentally undemocratic, since, in the first place, it ignores the fact that a majority still rejects any interference in the articles, but, worse still, it allows the media to renege on its responsibility to fully and objectively inform the public on all aspects of the constitutional debate. I remain convinced that the full exposure of all relevant information is the only guarantee of effective participation in the democratic process. The one-sided nature of the coverage of the constitutional question to date is not only undemocratic but, in fact, flies in the face of reality.

Articles 2 & 3 do not exist in isolation, they represent just one side of a constitutional conflict between two sovereign governments. Articles 2 & 3 stand in direct opposition to the British claim to sovereignty in Ireland, which was enacted by the British government in 1920. Section 75 of the Government of Ireland Act stated that "notwithstanding anything contained in the Act, the supreme authority of the Parliament of the United Kingdom shall remain unaffected and undiminished over all persons, matters and things in Ireland and every part thereof." This claim to sovereignty over all of Ireland persisted until 1949, when it was amended to cover simply the northern state and as such it remains in force to this day.

If we accept the dual nature of this conflict of sovereignty, then we must accept that any unilateral abandonment of Articles 2 & 3 will leave the British claim unchallenged, and as a consequence we will be saying to the world at large that the British claim to sovereignty in Ireland is superior to any Irish claim. This is the reality. Worse still, the retrospective effect of such a capitulation would be the acceptance that the United Irishmen had no right to rebel against British rule in Ireland, that the likes of Robert Emmet and Lord Edward Fitzgerald were no more than common criminals and that the British authorities were quite entitled to court martial and execute the organizers of the 1916 as perpetrators of act of high treason.

Many of those who challenge Articles 2 & 3 frequently assert that the articles represent an exceptional claim that is aggressive in nature. In my opinion, nothing could be further from the truth. Articles 2 & 3 are a normal statement of national sovereignty, such as can be found in other national constitutions but tailored, of necessity, to the abnormal situation created by the British presence in Ireland. It's interesting to look at the example of Germany which, like Ireland, suffered the imposition of partition and to examine how the German people responded to their particular situation. In 1949 the constitution of the Federal Republic of Germany was adopted and Article 23 of that constitution reads: "for the time being, this Basic Law shall apply in the territory of (naming those states comprising West Germany). In other parts of Germany it shall be put into force of their accession." It doesn't take a constitutional lawyer to recognize that this article follows closely Article 3 of the Irish Constitution and it was this very legal provision that permitted the easy re-unification of Germany without reference to any possible objections within Germany or within the European Community.

At present when the international situation is so fluid and unpredictable, surely it would be foolish in the extreme to interfere with fundamental principals in order to pursue some imaginary short term gain. Over the years the citizens of the Federal Republic of Germany saw no reason to abandon their claim, circumstances proved their judgment to be both correct and prudent. Why should we do otherwise.

To my mind the inclusion of Articles 2 & 3 in the 1937 Constitution was simply the recognition of an existing reality and as such, contrary to the protestations of some, does not represent an aggressive territorial claim. Simply put, Article 2 says that Ireland is the island of Ireland, a fact readily accepted by both nationalists and unionists before partition, and Article 3 accepts, with some reservation, the present limited sovereignty of the Irish Parliament. These are hardly aggressive sentiments, particularly when contrasted with the wording of Section 75 of the Government of Ireland Act, and whereas the Irish claim has never been more than a "de jure" one; for over 70 years, the British claim has been a "de facto" claim backed up by discrimination, oppression and a massive force of arms.

The main argument employed by those who are opposed to Articles 2 & 3 is that their removal will, somehow or another, help to

eliminate violence and at the same time mollify unionist opinion. There is no evidence whatsoever to support this view, which appears to derive its strength, as such, from uncritical repetition. At best it would seem to represent wishful thinking, rather than critical analysis. The unionist mantra-like demand for the removal of the articles is of recent origin and grew for the response to what they perceived as a weakness in southern attitudes to re-unification. Put simply, they are seeking to exploit the less than enthusiastic support for Irish unity expressed by some of the parties in Dail Eireann. However, we should be quite clear that their attitude is not one of reconciliation but quite the opposite -- they are delighted to be able to take advantage of the current confused position in the ranks of what they perceived as the common enemy namely the representatives of the southern state.

The argument that the removal of Articles 2 & 3 will lead to a unilateral cessation of violence is totally bogus. The IRA has never sought to use Articles 2 & 3 to justify their campaign which they argue is caused by the British military presence in the north of Ireland, therefore it is highly unlikely that the deletion of the articles will cause them to call a cease-fire. In the north, amongst nationalists I've detected a desperation, a feeling of abandonment at the prospect of the articles being dropped. One could argue that from their point of view this would amount to the final betrayal. The signing of the Anglo-Irish Treaty, over 70 years ago, delivered northern nationalists into a hostile state which practiced massive discrimination against them, yet in spite of their justified anger at this betrayal, they endured almost half a century of suffering before they rose up, in 1968, with a peaceful civil rights campaign. Tragically, they were met by the full force of a violent state, and this action set in train the cycle of violence and repression which continues to this day. We, in the south, muttered something about "not standing idly by," but, unfortunately, we did stand by and abandoned the nationalists to their fate -- another betrayal.

At this stage, I'm convinced that the nationalists in the north will not tolerate another betrayal, yet what course of action will be left open to them? Make no mistake about it, if the peaceful path to re-unification by constitutional means is blocked, then the only remaining path will be the path of violence. This time, if we once again abandon northern nationalists, we will deliver them into the hands of the IRA, because they will be the

only organization left actively pursuing nationalist aspirations. Also I believe that the anger of the nationalists will be directed not only at the state that will hold captive but also at those who will have committed the final act of betrayal -- the southern electorate. The removal of Articles 2 & 3 far from leading to peace will, in fact, contribute to an escalation of violence both in the north and in the south.

For northern nationalists Articles 2 & 3 represent much more than words on a dusty old piece of paper -- they represent a badge of identity, a badge that clearly states that they are an integral part of the historic Irish nation. These feelings are deeply held and are accepted as spiritual values, like a sense of national identity, a cultural belonging, are difficult to access. In essence they represent an abstraction; however, there are other more concrete issues that, with certainty, will effect nationalists in the fall out from any possible renunciation of Articles 2 & 3. One immediate effect will be the withdrawal and cessation of the Irish citizenship of all persons born of the territory of Northern Ireland. The current legal basis of Irish citizenship and the right to hold an Irish passport stems from the Irish Nationality and Citizenship Act of 1956, which relies on Article 2 for its definitions of the national territory. Remove Article 2 and the entire legal basis of the citizenship of people born in the North vanishes and with it the ancillary rights to apply for and to hold an Irish passport. The fact that so many nationalists in the north hold Irish passports is ample proof that they cherish this right of citizenship. Of course, these rights extend to all people born in the north, and we have seen, in the recent past, two celebrated examples of people from a Protestant background who enjoyed the benefits of Irish citizenship.

Undoubtedly, Lebanon hostage Brian Keenan's release from cruel captivity was expedited by his possession of an Irish passport. If we drop Articles 2 & 3 and future Brian Keenans will be left to languish indefinitely in his lonely prison cell. Everyone will remember the outpouring of joy and pride that greeted the triumphant return of Wayne McCullough from the Olympic Games, yet it must be accepted that if Articles 2 & 3 are abandoned there will be no legal justification for the inclusion of anyone born in the north of Ireland in any future Irish Olympic team.

The abandonment of Articles 2 & 3 will mean that northern nationalists will have no choice but to become full citizens of the United Kingdom and if, against all the odds, they decide to gracefully accept this destiny, I believe that we will have the responsibility to seriously question the nature of the state to

which they will have consigned. Unlike citizens of most other democracies where each and every individual can aspire to the highest office in the land, northern nationalists will be second class citizens -- only a Protestant can become Prime Minister of the United Kingdom. Also the nationalists will be asked to give their loyalty to a state where the Head of State must be the Head of the Church of England Bishops have seats as of right in the House of Lords. John Hume put the case for constitutional reform in Britain very succinctly when he said, "Could you imagine if the Cardinal Archbishop of Armagh had to be President of Ireland or the Catholic Bishops had seats as of right in the Seanad?" Yet northern Catholics will be expected to put up with such sectarianism in the structures of the state which will demand their full loyalty.

Will any Irish Minister be bold enough to suggest publicly that changes will have to be contemplated in the sectarian constitutional arrangements in Britain before British Ministers call for changes to the constitution of Ireland?

Recently we have heard several southern politicians expressing the view that, given the chance, the south will be "generous" as regards the constitutional claim. To my mind this represents an extraordinary definition of "generosity," since I have always believed that you can only be generous with something that you exclusively possess. We must never forget that our claim to sovereignty, as expressed by Articles 2 & 3, is shared with over 400,000 northern nationalists who, in spite of having very strong opinions on the matter, will have no say whatsoever in any possible constitutional referendum in the south. This abnormal situation again points out the fundamentally un-democratic nature of the campaign against Articles 2 & 3.

Finally, it is my opinion that any ill-considered meddling with Articles 2 & 3 could open up a veritable Pandora's box of future complications. I can't but think of a parallel with the Eighth Amendment to the Constitution which, even though it was devised by the wisest legal minds in the country, led to such a confused legal jumble that we now have to vote in three referenda and adopt new legislation in the forlorn hope of patching up the mess. I'm convinced that any interference with Articles 2 & 3 will lead inevitably to challenges in the courts on issues such as citizenship and questions of definition of nationhood which could provoke totally unforeseen consequences.

I'm absolutely certain that now is not the time to contemplate constitutional change. When the time comes when all Irish people of

all political, religious and cultural backgrounds sit down together to discuss a democratic framework for living together in peace and harmony, then that will be the time for the forming of a new constitution which will respect the values of all Irish people traditions.

*Robert Ballagh is an internationally known artist and is the chairperson of the Irish National Congress.*

## ROBERT BALLAGH

"...it is difficult to understand how the mere mention of four small numbers -- 1, 9, 1, 6 -- could strike such fear into the hearts and minds of civil servants, bureaucrats, businessmen and politicians alike... We are not just celebrating the Rising of 1916 and the men and women who took part in it. We are also celebrating their ideals and vision; their valour and self-sacrifice; their commitment to freedom and justice. Their actions in 1916 derived from a long and bitter history of oppression. Their vision derived from a belief in the ultimate destiny of the Irish nation to be free, sovereign and independent. If we step back even one inch from that vision we will be betraying not only the men and the women of 1916 but also the destiny of the Irish nation..."

*(FROM: Mr. Ballagh's address at the 75th anniversary of the Easter Rising on April 6, 1991. Over 10,000 people attended the Dublin commemoration)*

"...it is the people whose homes, school and church were damaged to whom the IRA has to listen and has to answer. It certainly doesn't have to answer Councillor Brid Rogers or Cardinal Cahal Daly -- though they represent important aspects of opinion. It certainly doesn't have to answer to the British government or the RUC. But it has to listen to the nationalist people who will decide what actions are pardonable." -- *Danny Morrison, AP/RN, December 19, 1991.*

**NIR WELCOMES ALL SUBMISSIONS, CONTRIBUTIONS, LETTERS AND REACTION**

## IRELAND: PAST AND PRESENT

### In the Wrong Class

by Kieran Allen

The Opsahl Commission has been working for the last year to come up with proposals for solving the Northern Ireland conflict. Three thousand people sent in suggestions and public meetings and hearings were held to get advice. Tragically, their report comes nowhere near offering any solution.

The starting point for the report's author is that in every normal society the middle class exercise leadership over their communities. The barristers, the managers, the auctioneers -- all of what is sometimes rudely called the "chattering classes" -- are engaged in the business of politics. Their involvement lends an air of stability and helps smooth over conflicts. But according to Opsahl "there has been a withdrawal of the middle class from politics" in the North.

It is almost as if their life support machines were cut off. There is no forum where they can practice their skills. This means that "they never learn how to compromise and make trade-offs which are the hallmarks of a functioning democracy."

Opsahl wants to re-activate this layer of society. But the middle class often lead highly individualized lives. They are cut off from the great masses of people in their large suburban detached houses and work in small self employed offices or as part of large hierarchies. Their main claim to political activity is that they represent "their community" by virtue of a shared religion or culture.

This is not a problem for Opsahl because they see the solution to Northern Ireland be-

ing a political structure that recognizes the *division* between both communities. They want a situation whereby "each community has an equal voice in making and executing laws or a veto over their execution." Opsahl naturally hopes that these vetoes will be handled sensibly by practical middle class leaders who are trained in the art of compromise.

In reality it is a proposal for the Lebanization of the North. After the French army withdrew from Lebanon they left behind a structure where Muslims and Christians had to be both represented in government. For a long period Christians held the key post -- until the demographic balance swung too dramatically against them. This suited the traditional leaders and bigots on both sides. They could represent themselves as defenders of "their community" putting one over or gaining more resources than the rival communities. Being middle class politicians they could, for a period, play this game and still practice the art of compromise with their mirror image opponents. That is until 1976, when it fell apart in the orgy of violence that has made Beirut famous.

Opsahl would naturally discount such a comparison. But it remains the case that they cannot see a way out other than institutionalizing communal politics within the North. In reality, Opsahl tells us more about the frustrations and the ambitions of the North's liberal middle class than anything else.

What is striking about the report is the glimpse it gives of how puny the aspirations of this class are compared to their forefathers who established the United Irishmen two hundred years previously. Then there was an ambition of uniting Catholic, Protestant and Dissenter in a broader movement that swept

away the muck of the ages. There was little talk of preserving and institutionalizing communal identities.

But then the middle class was a revolutionary class determined to remove an old aristocracy that Thomas Russell called "the fungus productions which grow out of the diseased state of society."

The one area that was not mentioned in Opsahl was the possibility for working class unity. It is true that the violence is mainly concentrated in working class areas. North and West Belfast, for example, account for 40% of all the killings in Northern Ireland.

But working class people also share a common interest. They may be facing Tory attacks on their social welfare benefits. Or they may be one of the 44% of workers who are employed in the public sector and are facing Tory threats of privatization. Conditions now for workers unity are more favorable than at any time since the troubles began. Protestant workers are finding they face the same dole queue, low wages and rotten conditions as their Catholic counterparts.

The type of future that capitalism offers is summed up in one statistic: in the Shankill Road only 4% of children passed their 11 plus in 1987 under the North's rotten Tory system of education.

People are not necessarily aware of their common interests. But they are sometimes forced to fight together. It is the task of socialists to build and to promote the interests of class over community.

*Kieran Allen is a member of the Socialist Workers Movement and is the author of the pamphlet Is Southern Ireland a Neo-Colony?*

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**"It is the oppressor that always determines the response of the oppressed." -- Nelson Mandela**

**"I do not condemn those people. That's not to say I support violence. It was a terrible thing, but the American Civil War wasn't won with feather dusters." -- Bernadette Devlin McAliskey, asked about the IRA Warrington bomb at the extradition hearing of H-Block escapee Jim Smyth**

**"They are the scum of the earth...Some of them appear to be psychotic killers." -- Sir Hugh Annesley (head of the RUC - the N.I. Police), on the UFF gunmen who killed seven in a Greysteel pub.**



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