

Northern Ireland Report

Published February 11, 1992

Number 2

IN THIS ISSUE

SECTARIAN VIOLENCE

U.S. INVESTMENT

SINN FEIN SPEAKS

BETWEEN: ANOTHER CASUALTY?

NEWS

OH MY DARLING CLEMENTINE

On January 20th British Prime Minister John Major rejected the resignation letter of Northern Ireland Secretary Peter Brooke. Brooke offered his resignation after enraging Unionists by appearing on an Irish television show singing a folk song only hours after seven Protestant workers were killed by an Irish Republican Army bomb attack. Brooke was encouraged by show host Gay Byrne into singing "Oh my darling Clementine."

The construction workers, who had been warned that their work in support of British forces makes them legitimate targets for IRA actions, were killed on their way home from working on a British Army Base. They were killed by a roadside 600lb bomb detonated by remote control.

IPLO TO ESCALATE OPERATIONS

The Irish People's Liberation Organization has said that it plans to escalate military and political operations in 1992 according to *The Irish Times*.

The IPLO, which split from the Irish National Liberation Army in 1986, has had limited paramilitary operations in the North since its inception. In six years of existence they have been responsible for 18 murders including loyalist politician George Seawright. Last summer the RUC accused the IPLO of conspiring with loyalist paramilitaries in drug trafficking in Northern Ireland.

The *Irish Times* reports that the IPLO consists of "only a handful of members in their 30's or 40's, with a group of 20 or 30 younger activists." The newspaper also quotes an IPLO spokesman who said that the IPLO plans "to improve its efficiency and spread its range of targets." In addition, the organization is set to increase political activity under the name of the Republican Socialist Collective. Sinn Fein has called for the IPLO to disband describing the organization as a "criminal gang."

Joe Doherty and Irish Americans

On January 15th, the Supreme Court ruled against Joe Doherty. The justices ruled 5-3 that he is not entitled to a new asylum hearing and that Dick Thornburgh did not abuse his right of office by overriding a previous decision of the Board of Immigration. The decision will most likely send Doherty back to Britain to serve out his life sentence. Here, the decision stands to warn future political asylum seekers that U.S. foreign policy stands before any consideration of human rights.

Joe Doherty's cause was supported by many individuals, all of whom deserve credit for the battle that they waged. They fell one vote short of success, but that should not lessen their sense of accomplishment; in post-Reagan America, where jingoism is veiled as conservatism, the cards were stacked against Doherty and his supporters from the very beginning.

Unfortunately the last months of Doherty's battle were marred by the controversy that arose from Doherty's criticism of the IRA in his *Irish People* ('The voice of Irish Republicanism in America') column. The controversy revealed a fundamental problem in the debate on Ireland in America. A problem that, despite temporary resolutions, will not go away.

The *Irish People* serves a necessary function for Americans interested in Irish affairs. By republishing much of *An Phoblacht/Republican News*, the 'voice of Irish Republicanism in America' allows one to cut through the normal rubbish written on Ireland. Compared to the *Echo*, *Voice* and the mainstream media, the *Irish People* offers a more realistic picture of the conflict, but that does not excuse it from being belligerent or arrogant.

The episode started when Joe Doherty mildly criticized the IRA's autumn bombing of a military base that was reported throughout the world's media as a hospital bombing. The editors at the 'voice of Irish Republicanism in America,' with their unbending faith in the IRA, could not accept this and Doherty was fired. A few weeks later, after much gleeful laughter by the *Echo* and *Voice*, and perhaps the rumored spanking by Sinn Fein, Doherty reappeared and all "philosophical differences" were resolved.

Continued on page 2

Continued on page 3

News, continued from front page

NELSON TO EXPOSE BRITISH COLLUSION

The trial of former Ulster Defense Association member and government informer Brian Nelson on 34 charges, including the murder of two Catholics, began January 22nd. The trial was expected to reveal embarrassing information on the tactics of the British Intelligence in Northern Ireland.

The BBC programme **Panorama**, which interviewed Nelson, reports that Nelson's military handlers attempted to convince the UDA to bomb the Irish Republic, in hopes of facilitating the prosecution and extradition republicans. The trial was also expected to reveal that British Intelligence selectively concealed information on paramilitary operations, obtained by informers, from the RUC, effectively sanctioning murder at their whim.

The January 30th edition of **An Phoblacht/Republican News** reports that British authorities dropped 15 charges against Nelson in return for a guilty plea. This last minute deal protects Nelson's British Army handlers and their political supervisors.

IRA BOMBS LONDON

The IRA, for the second time in less than a year, placed a bomb at the center of the British government on January 10th. A briefcase, containing a 5lb bomb, exploded in Whitehall, 300 yards away from the Prime Minister's residence. The bombing displayed the ability of the IRA to strike within Whitehall security, and raised concerns for politicians during the upcoming elections when they would be exposed to potential foul play. Prime Minister Major later said that the IRA bombing has only reinforced Britain's determination to defeat them and that the British in no way will be bombed out of their normal lives.

The IRA complemented their bombing in London with a series of bombs in Belfast. A van containing a 600lb bomb heavily damaged offices around the Windsor House, an office building on Bedford Street. Two other car bombs, a 500 and 800lb, were also exploded in the city center with no injury, but substantial damage to business. It has been estimated that 600 jobs were lost because of the bombings in Belfast city center. Such attacks are used by the IRA as a form of economic pressure on the British Parliament, recent bombings have been said to have caused 46 million pounds of damage to the British economy due to the British policy of economic reimbursement.

BRITISH INCREASE MILITARY PRESENCE

In response to increased bombings in Belfast and London over the last two months of 1991, the British government has chosen to increase their military presence in Northern Ireland.

Brian Mawhinney, the government's security minister, has announced the deployment of an army battalion of some 500 troops. This increase would make the strength of the security forces in Northern Ireland consist of more than 30,000 troops: 17,500 soldiers, 6,000 from the Ulster Defence Regiment and another 13,000 from the Royal Ulster Constabulary including reserves.

Unionists met with Prime Minister Major in mid January to voice their concerns on security in the six counties. They have asked for tighter measures, including additional forces and internment, to police the province. The Unionists want the border between the North and the South to be sealed in all but a few places. Another proposal put forth by Unionists was surrounding nationalist areas with checkpoints and administering strict curfews on the populations.

GREEN WAR: FROM DERRY TO MAYO

Environmental groups in Derry city scored a victory in successfully stopping the Du Pont chemical company from establishing a toxic waste incinerator on the edge of the city.

Meanwhile, citizens in County Mayo have less to cheer about. Gold deposits in southwest Mayo threaten one of the few unspoiled areas in Europe. The Mayo Environmental Group has started a campaign attempting to ban mining from the area. The government believes that as many as 250 jobs will be lost if the ban is implemented. The Mayo Environment Group disputes this claiming that if mining is allowed more jobs will be lost due to changes in tourist activity.

1992 BEGINS AS 1991 ENDS

The year 1991 was one of the bloodiest in the over twenty year conflict in the North. By years end, some 94 people were killed in relation to the conflict. Of those, 75 people were considered civilians (including paramilitaries), that would be the highest total in fifteen years.

BETWEEN: ANOTHER CASUALTY?

The tragic situation in the North of Ireland has resulted in countless casualties over the last 22 years. Innocents are often caught in the crossfire and defenders of human rights often experience as much persecution as those directly involved in political change. One such organization that has been caught in the crossfire is named **Between**.

For over twenty years **Between**, a non-profit program based in Cork, has offered a brief respite from the conflict for families of both republican and loyalist prisoners. While co-habiting away from the war torn North, both loyalist and republican families are given a chance to learn about each other's realities. This process of mutual understanding, many feel, is essential to any hope of peace and reconciliation.

As with many charitable endeavors, the program has emerged and grown primarily through the dedication, and tenacity of its staff. Funding has always been in short supply. Occasionally, **Between** staffers have sought to increase awareness of, and thereby financial support for, their efforts by making direct appeals to the public, including the U.S. public.

Given its need to maintain the confidence and respect of both communities, **Between** cannot remain silent or ignore the realities of its constituency.

To remain effective, it has always been important for **Between** to remain impartial and sensitive to the needs and concerns of

both communities in the North. By definition this involves being sensitive to two traditions with very different circumstances and concerns. In republican areas, the British army is a constant, often abusive and coercive presence. In loyalist areas, it very rarely appears as such. Although army abuses do occur in loyalist areas, they do so with far less frequency and intensity. Hence, given its need to maintain the confidence and respect of both communities, **Between** cannot remain silent or ignore the realities of its constituency.

Such was the case when **Between** staff member Cristoir de Baroid embarked on a fund-raising trip to the U.S. in the spring of 1990. At the time, in republican areas of the North, neighborhoods were under levels of

Continued on page 8

BRITAIN IS TO BLAME

by Conor Foley

Sectarian violence in the north of Ireland reached its highest level in years over last summer.

Seven Catholics were killed, in separate attacks, by loyalist paramilitaries in August and a minibus full of republican prisoners relatives was raked by machine gun fire. The IRA responded by killing a UDA member, another whom they claimed was in the UVF and a third alleged UVF member in early September.

The proximity of crown forces members to so many of the loyalist attacks has intensified claims about their collusion in them. This has not yet been conclusively proven but there is little doubt about the approval with which many soldiers and police greet such attacks.

At the end of August, the front doors of houses in west Belfast were daubed with swastikas and slogans during British army operations in the area. Notes were pushed through letter boxes threatening named people, gloating about a recent loyalist bomb attack nearby and warning: "The final solution for all Taigs is coming. Belfast's night of broken glass [is] a short time away. A force within in a force BNP." [British National Party - eds.]

Tensions are even higher in rural areas, particularly where prime military responsibility rests with the Ulster Defense Regiment.

Houses in West Belfast were daubed with swastikas and slogans during British army operations in the area.

The mid-Ulster area around Tyrone continues to be a cockpit of much of the violence. It was here that the minibus attack took place and it is believed that UVF gangs based in this area have also been responsible for attacks as far away as Belfast.

The mid-Ulster UVF seemed to ignore the cease-fire called by its Belfast leadership during the Brooke talks and continues to operate with autonomy. Its leaders are well known to local republicans, it is regarded as basically an adjunct to the UDR and RUC.

Nationalists claim they are regularly threatened by UDR patrols, either that the UVF will kill them or that the soldiers themselves will be "wearing balaclavas" the next time they meet. Two Sinn Fein members killed in the area in August had received such threats shortly before their deaths.

The UDR also appear to have stepped up provocative patrolling in the Tyrone area. In one incident in early September an elderly woman, Bridget McCaughey, collapsed after being held at a checkpoint for three hours on her way home from mass. One of her sons, Martin McCaughey, was killed by the SAS last October and a close family friend died in the Cappagh pub attack in March which it is widely believed was carried out with UDR collusion. The day before her ordeal another son was beaten up by a UDR patrol.

During the same week a man was beaten unconscious at a UDR checkpoint in nearby Galbally. When two friends tried to help him a shot was fired and they were arrested and charged with assault. The patrol then put out a statement alleging they had been attacked which most of the media dutifully reported.

It is difficult to understand any justification for using the UDR, whom the Queen presented with colors last June, to patrol nationalist areas such as Tyrone. By making one community responsible for policing the other, in such an intimate way, the British government are ingraining sectarian hatred that may take generations to remove.

Conor Foley is the national organizer for the Connolly Association. The CA has been campaigning for over 50 years for Irish re-unification. The Association can be contacted at 244-246 Grays Inn Road London WC1.

Doherty, continued from front page

What were these philosophical differences? Why can't the **Irish People** admit what everyone else knows? Joe Doherty, a former member of the IRA, serving time in jail because of that membership, was fired because he criticized IRA tactics to the displeasure of a bunch of Americans playing revolution three thousand miles away from the war.

This is the fundamental problem that inhibits other Ameri-

can groups and organizations from sympathizing and promoting Irish Republicanism. Irish Americans, or any Americans who organize around Irish issues, have yet to develop any real movement that can sustain dialogue, debate and analysis. Irish-American activists have suffered from intellectual paranoia, associating any criticism of the IRA as a form of treachery.

In Ireland where censorship and oppression are very real, within the Republican movement there is much debate. With the **Starry Plough** and the

Iris Bheag papers, Sinn Fein has a forum for analysis and debate on all issues; this is the forum where future party policies are developed. But here, in America where there is little danger from oppression and overt censorship, there is no need for such paranoia.

This is not to condemn the **Irish People**, but to suggest that if the Irish conflict is going to be taken seriously by the left, a group that can honestly rally around it in a common cause, then publications like the **Irish People** must drop this zealous, and sometimes embarrassing,

commitment to every IRA action.

The **Irish People** should be commended for its work on the part of Joe Doherty, the MacBride principles and Irish freedom in general. However, it is time for Irish-Americans to transcend their simple support for the IRA, and begin to support the ideals of Irish Republicanism, such as socialism and anti-imperialism, in their own country as well as in Ireland. As Joe Doherty is deported, we all must remember his most important contribution, highlighting the extent of U.S. injustice.

U.S. INVESTMENT IN THE NORTH OF IRELAND

By Bill Rolston and Mike Tomlinson.

The focus of this article is on one set of multinationals in the North of Ireland, those based in the U.S.. These firms provide approximately 9,500 jobs in the North, about 8 per cent of the manufacturing workforce. They range from giants like Ford Motor Company, Du Pont and Hughes Tool Company to lesser known multinationals such as Perfecseal and Interface Flooring.

These firms are frequently in the news in relation to the activities of the MacBride lobby in the U.S.. MacBride activists seek to ensure that the companies guarantee fair employment in the North. Before we can decide whether they do or not, we will look at two questions. Why do the U.S. firms come to the North, and more to the point, why do they stay?

Why They Come

If the glossy brochures of the Industrial Development Board (IDB) are to be believed, U.S. multinationals, like John Wayne in *The Quiet Man*, come to Ireland because it a beautiful, peaceful place with green, rolling hills and simple, friendly people. Images of urban poverty and political violence are suppressed. In this fairy tale world the mystery is not why anyone in their right mind would invest here, but why they would ever want to go away again. As Industry Minister Peter Viggers put it in October 1988: "The biggest problem American companies face is when they try to relocate key executives away from Northern Ireland its quality of life -- its schools, leisure facilities and unspoiled countryside -- is so high, people don't want to leave."

Behind the fantasy, the hard-headed U.S. business executives know the real reason for coming. Peter McKie, managing director of Du Pont, put it simply in February 1990: "A multinational company like Du Pont does not operate on sentiment, but on achieving profitability." There are many factors which guarantee such profitability - the existence of a workforce with a fair productivity record, a relatively low strike

rate, and relatively low wage levels, a package of government incentives which are paraded as among the best in Europe, the ability to dump dirty industry, etc.. In fact, the ultimate irony is that Du Pont's current pursuit of profitability is behind its proposal to build a toxic waste incinerator on the banks of the Foyle thus doing its bit to destroy the idyllic image created by the IDB. The trouble with a lot of foreign investment is that it does not stay very long. The Northern Ireland Economic Council examined all state assisted foreign firms in 1984 and concluded that "in almost 60% of cases, the average duration of employment was less than five years." They added that U.S. firms have proven to be the least stable, the most likely to leave after only a short time.

"A multinational company like Du Pont does not operate on sentiment, but on achieving profitability."

Of course, there are exceptions to the rule. Du Pont has been in Derry since 1960, and Ford in West Belfast since 1965. For such firms, clearly, the profitability spoken of by Peter McKie has remained intact. Not the least reason for that is the continuing state support these firms receive.

In 1986/7, to take just one financial year, nine U.S. firms (Du Pont, Fisher Body, Ford, Gallaher, Lee Apparel, Mueller, Perfecseal, Sherwood Laboratories and United Technologies) received 43 million pounds of state subsidy. Together they employed approximately 6,500 workers.

Between 1985/6 and 1987/8 the state subsidies given to U.S. firms in the North were enormous. At the top of the league table of continuing subsidization were Du Pont (with 26 million pounds), Ford (17.8 million pounds), and Gallaher's (American Tobacco Company) (8.5 million pounds).

The Benefits of U.S. Investment?

In many cases such subsidies provided money for expansion, new equipment, etc.. But the end result of subsidization in many cases was a net loss of jobs. For example, Ford invested approximately 80 million pounds in the last five years, 30 million pounds of which was given by the state, and in the process laid off 700 people.

The government's response is that a net loss of jobs is better than no jobs at all. Logical as that may be, the question remains: could such amounts of money not be better spent, whether on community-based initiatives or on direct state manufacturing employment which has a better record of employment durability and where the profits could remain in this society?

Equally important is the question of the location of the jobs which do materialize. In looking at locations in terms of travel-to-work, there were approximately 9,500 jobs provided by U.S. firms in the North and the unemployment rate was officially 15.4% as of June 1990. Some travel-to-work areas (Craigavon and Ballymena) had unemployment rates below the average, but a higher proportion of U.S. jobs than they would have had if the jobs had been distributed evenly throughout the North. One area (Belfast) had below average unemployment and a lower proportion of U.S. jobs than would have happened had distribution been even. Only one area (Derry) had above average unemployment and a higher than proportionate number of U.S. jobs. And the bulk of the travel-to-work areas (Coleraine, Magherafelt, Cookstown, Dungannon, Omagh, Strabane, Fermanagh, and Newry and Mourne) had above average unemployment and a lower than expected proportion of U.S. jobs.

Where unemployment was highest, for the most part, there were fewer jobs resulting from U.S. investment than would have occurred if the distribution of those jobs had been even throughout the North. The main exception is Derry, where one firm in particular, Du Pont, with 1,650 employees,

makes all the difference to the final picture. For the most part, the lower the unemployment in the area, the higher the level of U.S. investment. The main exception is Belfast, but the picture for this area is distorted by the inclusion of part of County Antrim and most of County Down, where U.S. investment has been slight. In fact, Belfast city itself has done well from U.S. investment. The split between East and West of the Bann is also clear in this figure.

The conclusion is obvious. If the British government was serious about prioritising areas of social need, U.S. investment would be channelled into areas where unemployment was highest. In fact, the investment has been going to where it is less needed. The result is that areas like West Belfast, where unemployment is massive, benefit little. West Belfast has Ford Motor Company and European Components. Both have been there for a long time. In both employment levels are falling. New U.S. investment in the area, such as American Monitor, has not survived long. And despite all the hype to the contrary, De Lorean was not a West Belfast firm.

There are undoubtedly a number of reasons for the uneven spread of jobs. But not the least of them is that the technology parks and the best infrastructure are in places like Ballymena and Antrim, not West Belfast. The sitting of such incentives is not arbitrary but comes from decisions made by the IDB and Department of Economic Development.

Justice and Jobs

The relevance of the location of jobs resulting from U.S. investment becomes even more crucial when the record of U.S. firms in relation to fair employment is considered. At first sight the record appears to be quite respectable; overall, as the Investment Responsibility Research Centre in Washington, D.C. reveals, U.S. firms in the north employ about 35% Catholics. If this figure was correct, it would not be too far away from estimated proportion of Catholics in the workforce overall.

However, the figures are deceptive. Firstly, in as far as the record even appears to be good, this is due less to altruism than the activities of MacBride activists. Secondly, the broad figures say nothing of the rank of Catholics in the U.S. firms. That

gap is rectified by considering the recent findings of the Fair Employment Commission, which showed that Catholics are still as under-represented in top positions as they ever were. In U.S. firms in the North (unlike Japanese ones, for example) top management is local and it is at the level that the sectarian imbalance is most obvious.

Thirdly, the picture presented by all U.S. firms conceals the fact that some companies have more representative work forces than others. For example, Du Pont would have a workforce exactly representative of the Derry travel-to-work area if it employed four or five less Catholics. But to achieve 'fair employment' in Ballymena, Gallaher would need to have 90 more Catholics on the payroll. So the two largest US employers are not achieving the same level of fairness in employment. Similarly, U.S. companies in the Belfast area which are responsible for about 40% of all the employment by U.S. firms, vary widely in their representativeness. Ford's in West Belfast has 61% Protestants, but European Components in Dundonald does not have 40% Catholic representation. Belfast-based companies such as Bowring Martin, IBM, Digital and Otis (a subsidiary of United Technologies) have significantly under-representative workforces, as do Sherwood Medical (Ballymoney) and Hyster (Portadown).

Relying on multinationals for employment creates a form of dependency.

It has already been shown that U.S. companies generally avoid the areas of highest unemployment in the North. But when they do locate in such areas (eg Derry and West Belfast), it appears that they achieve more representative workforces. From the available evidence, there are strong indications that U.S. firms have the best record on fair employment when they locate in high unemployment (typically nationalist) areas. This means that the most effective positive action U.S. companies can take to break the sectarian conflict employment patterns of the North is to locate in areas of highest unemployment.

The issue of representativeness is further complicated by the segregation of jobs by

sex. Lee Apparel has a 47% Protestant workforce by virtue of a predominantly male, Protestant plant at Newtonards and a female, Catholic plant in Derry. A company with split sites like this can claim to be fair while in fact having a sharply segregated workforce by sex and nominal religion. Similarly, a company on one site may be representative by religion yet exclusively male.

Depending on Multinationals?

But surely, as was said earlier, multinationals work on their own logic of profitability and cannot be influenced in relation to location or any other matter by such a small organization as the IDB. There is a great deal of truth in this. U.S. and other corporations in the North establish branch plants. The core of the corporations' operations, including the crucial element of research and development, remains abroad. The host country's role is to assemble components. Such employment is precarious; it can disappear overnight when rationalization, diversification, recession or liquidity problems require head office to close down a branch plant or two.

Despite this, the record of the MacBride lobby proves that it is possible to influence the decisions of even the largest multinationals. Consequently, it would seem that there is some scope for the IDB to be proactive in relation to areas of high unemployment such as West Belfast. What difference, for example, would a prestige technology park in West Belfast, such as was promised in 1987, make to the location decisions of U.S. and other multinationals? What are the chances of success in an all-out effort to persuade a major U.S. tenant into the Springvale site to take the place of the major U.S. tenant (Mackies, owned by Lummus) currently vacating the site?

Relying on multinationals for employment creates a form of dependency. But, if a decision is taken to attract multinational investment, then there is a duty to follow that up with efforts to ensure that employment is created where it is most needed. Such a principle should be at the forefront of IDB strategy. It is not.

Bill Rolston is a professor of Sociology at the University of Ulster - Jordanstown. Mike Tomlinson is a professor at Queens University -Belfast.

NIR INTERVIEW: TALKING WITH RICHARD MCAULEY, PART I

Richard McAuley is Sinn Fein's Director of Publicity for the Six Counties. NIR's John O'Connor and Leueen Molloy interviewed McAuley at Sinn Fein's Belfast office on the Falls Road in mid-December.

In media reports and books on Ireland, the terms nationalist and republican seem to be used interchangeably. Is there a difference between the two?

RM: Yes, there is, there's big difference I think. Nationalism is, for most of us, a desire for a national identity, to see Ireland as a nation state with its own right to determine its own future. Nationalists would be satisfied having achieved national self-determination, and then would sit back and allow whatever political forces to emerge to get along with running the business of the island. Republicans would like to see a certain type of society in Ireland; we would like to see certain policies and Ireland developed in a particular way. So we want to be one of those political forces that's in there when Britain goes, in there mapping out the shape and form of that new Ireland. Republicanism has always tended to be, in Irish terms, radical, certainly in this century, to be Left oriented. Much of the language at times could, I suppose, be described as socialist, but it's a socialism that is particular, peculiar perhaps, to Ireland. With some influences from outside but we would take the view that each country, each nation, has to decide for itself what it wants. It's all well and good other countries doing their bit, that's fine, and if there are any lessons to be learned then certainly we look at those and see if there is any to be learnt, but primarily we have to build from our own experience and we have try to move forward on the basis of that experience. In old Republican lectures, Republicanism is usually broken down into what were described as the "isms." The "isms" collectively, nationalism, secularism, non-sectarianism, socialism, anti-imperialism, and separatism, all those elements together when combined, in a useful format, were supposed to make up republicanism.

With British forces occupying a part of the Ireland, that is an obvious form of imperialism. What is Sinn Fein's position on another form of imperialism, multinational corporations?

RM: Sinn Fein, I think, has been one of the parties in Ireland that has been at the fore of what little opposition that there has been to the exploitation of Irish resources. By resources, I mean not just the mineral or physical resources but also human resources; the exploitation of those resources by governments and companies outside of Ireland. There's a tendency to focus on multinationals because they're the most obvious offenders, but the fact is in the South something over 50% of the Southern economy is controlled, directly or indirectly, by British companies. Not all of them are multinational, some of them are very small. The same can be seen up here, where, I'm not sure of the exact number of American firms

here, but they're not all multinational companies. I think we're going to see fewer multinationals looking to Ireland over the next ten years then we did in the '70s or the '80s, but they're certainly a very important factor in draining capital resources out of Ireland. At various times some people have tried to estimate the amount of money leaving the country, usually its put in the range of some million pounds a year. And for a economy our size, in particular, that's a crippling process that can only be dealt with by government exercising greater control. And there's a catch 22 situation because multinationals do provide jobs. They bring some investment in terms of capital that initially enters the country; they certainly bring expertise which may not exist in the country and they bring in wages. But there's a catch 22 for any government that wants to try and improve the quality of life of its community, of it's people, while at the same time wanting to keep them from being exploited. There would have been a time, when I think, Sinn Fein probably would have taken a view of total opposition to multinationals without question, just stop them from coming in altogether. I think the party's attitude has probably changed a wee bit over the last few years. The recognition that no country, particularly in this time of the 20th Century, can stand on its own and can shut out the rest of the world and just get on with trying to develop itself. We have got to find a balance between allowing some of those companies to come in and even keeping the ones that we have got so their not flying off somewhere else where they think they can make a bigger profit. Getting them to stay at least long enough so that the experience and expertise that they bring doesn't go when they go.

"Much of the language at times could, I suppose, be described as socialist, but it's a socialism that is particular, peculiar perhaps, to Ireland."

What other struggles does Sinn Fein identify with around the world?

RM: If you walk out the front door and cross the road, you've got a very large mural of Nelson Mandela. A few years ago when the Israelis first invaded Lebanon and went as far as West Beirut, people in West Belfast, people in Nationalist areas in particular, very much identified with Palestinians. And there were murals all in support of the Palestinians. People may not have a intimate knowledge of those struggles, and why things are happening the way they are, but there was a natural emotion which stirred people into supporting the Palestinians. If you go to the White Rock road, there is at least one very large mural on a building supporting the American Indians and at times in the Conway Mill Education Center they've had meetings where people from El Salvador and Nicaragua have come along and explained what's going on in those countries. These are just some examples of situations that we would instinctively find ourselves in solidarity with. There are at times problems for the leadership of other struggles to identify with our struggle because of the way our struggle is presented. It creates political difficulties for them, but I find in dealing with other

people who are members of liberation movements or movements involving struggles in other countries that they have no difficulty at all relating to our struggle even to the difficulties and problems we have within our struggle, even when things go wrong, they say things go wrong in their struggles. It would nice if they didn't but human nature and human involvement in these things being what it is, they do happen. So broadly we would support, identify and sympathize with people everywhere in the world who are struggling for freedom, probably one of the greatest groups is women.

At last years Ard Fheis, a motion was put forth by a section from Cork calling for the organization's policy on abortion to be "in support of a woman's right to choose." Sinn Fein President Gerry Adams voted the resolution down. How then does Sinn Fein support the struggle of women?

RM:If you talk to our people in these communities and ask them about abortion, 95% of them, men and women, will oppose it. It has to do with a whole range of things, not the least of which is the fact that the churches, Protestant and Catholic, have always had such a strong influence. In the day-to-day life of the communities, the churches have shaped the way people have seen particular problems. Surprisingly over the last twenty years, despite the attitude of the church towards violence, mainly the Catholic church's attitude to us, to the IRA, they haven't had the sort of impact that maybe twenty years ago, maybe 40 years or 50 years ago they would have had. Times have moved on, situations do change, people's attitudes do change, but currently at least in regard to this particular issue there's a very deeply felt opinion that abortion is not something that the community wants to see introduced. They don't support the idea of a women's right to choose.

Within the party there have been years of discussion around the issue. Motions are put into the Ard Fheis, one year a motion went through that seemed to support a women's right to choose and the next year that was changed. It was all done entirely within the party, at the Ad Fheis, the way it should be done, open debate, open discussion and people voted on it, and that's the way to get things done, especially as a way to change people's minds, hopefully by putting forth the arguments. Adams has his own view, as I have, as any individual within the party has, and he has the right to express that view. The party then, democratically, chooses which of the proposals, amendments or motions it wants. You may not like it at times, I might not like it at times, but that's how we do it in the party and despite that, I think Sinn Fein has the most progressive position of any party on this island on the issue of abortion. It may not be as progressive as some would like it to be, but within the Irish context it is as progressive as we can get it at this point of time. Ten years from now, five years from now the situation may change, but it's going to be a gradual process, no sudden change of attitude. It's always going to be a very emotional issue and because of it's nature we have to be very careful about.

People see us at times being accountable to them and they make a darn good effort to make us accountable in a whole range of ways. One way you see that happening effectively is where you get local community pressure for the IRA to take action against criminals.

It was used in several elections as a big stick to beat us over the head with and it worked very effectively. It did, at least in some of the rural areas, cost us votes in those elections. So we have to be very cautious of that problem, but ultimately those decisions are taking place in open debate and that is how policy is made.

In a recent interview Gerry Adams stated that the West Belfast seat is the "people's seat." Is that Adam's personal view or the position of the party?

RM:Sinn Fein, like every party, has its own policies, and if someone is elected to council or to Westminster or to wherever, they would be in there arguing for those policies to be implemented. But at the same time, I think, we have a relationship with our base that is much firmer and much better than any of the other parties on this island have. And I think our policies represent more accurately what our community wants to see. We make an effort to produce policies that are not just what we think is good for our people, but are policies that have been developed in consultation with them, with councilors and others. Working within the community, knowing what the problems of the community are, listening to those problems, listening to some solutions that the people in the community want. This process helps the party to develop policies which reflect people's needs. So in that sense the party is very much linked to what the people want. That is not necessarily to say that all of policies are likely to be policies which people out there would appreciate. I'm sure we have some policies that they either don't understand because they have no interest in the issue and just don't worry about it. Or perhaps we have a policy that they would not necessarily agree with, but that doesn't affect our relationship. It's a

difficult one to explain, without bringing you into a room with 400 local people and listening to their complaints and problems and having to explain what we're doing and what we are not doing and so on. It's just the way things have developed, particularly over the last twenty years. People see us at times being accountable to them and they make a darn good effort to make us accountable in whole range of ways. One way you see that happening effectively is where you get local community pressure for the IRA to take action against criminals. Which is not something the IRA particularly wants to have to do. They are not a police force; they are not trained in that way. They don't have the resources and backup that the state has in dealing with criminals, either in terms of putting someone in prison, keeping them there or trying to provide them with financial help or counseling. They don't have the finances or facilities, and would much prefer if they didn't have to deal with the problems. But if there's a community pressure where people are saying we don't support the RUC, we don't support the institutions of the state, we don't want to use them. We have a problem here and you have to do something about it.

Ireland: Past and Present

HISTORICAL REVIEW, Part II

1918-1923: In the wake of the Easter Rebellion (1916), rising nationalist sentiment results in Sinn Fein winning 73 of 105 Irish seats in the December 1918 Westminster general elections. On January 21, 1919 the 73 Sinn Fein representatives meet in Dublin and declare independence, forming a sovereign legislature, the Dail. Britain refuses recognition, and war ensues.

Over the next year-and-a-half the Dail's armed affiliate, the Irish Republican Army (IRA), fights a highly successful guerilla war, forcing Britain to grant 26 of Ireland's 32 counties a measure of independence in 1922, under the title of the Irish Free State. The remaining six counties, containing the bulk of Ireland's industrial capacity, form a new entity - Northern Ireland. The partitioning of the country occurs despite overwhelming opposition from the Irish people, and their elected representatives. Three predominantly nationalist counties are carved from Ulster's nine counties transforming a precarious 56%-44% loyalist (loyal to the British Crown) majority into a 66%-33% majority. Henceforth, the "democratic will" of this carefully constructed "majority" becomes a key component of British policy regarding Northern Ireland.

Far from soothing tensions within Ireland, partition sparks renewed violence. In the Free State, political divisions develop over both partition, and the stipulation that "independence" is conditional upon remaining within the British Commonwealth. Divisions escalate into civil war, with the IRA splitting into "pro" and "anti" treaty factions. Although greatly outnumbered, with British military backing, pro-treaty forces ultimately prevail in 1923.

In Northern Ireland, to defend against both internal and external enemies, special police and militia are created, armed with sweeping powers of arrest and detainment - including the power to indefinitely intern without trial. Mob violence against nationalists is openly encouraged by leading loyalists, including Prime Minister James Craig. Between 1920 and 1922, 453 people die in Belfast alone. Gerrymandering and voting restrictions limit nationalists to control of 3% of local councils, despite comprising 33% of the population. Lastly, loyalist politicians such as Basil Brooke (Prime Minister 1943-63) urge employers not to hire Catholics "99% of whom are disloyal". With no work, and no real political expression, Catholics emigrate. The result: through the Unionist party, loyalists rule uninterrupted from 1920, until Westminster abolishes Northern Ireland's parliament in 1972.

1948-1962: In 1948, the Free State declares itself the Republic of Ireland, breaking all connection with Britain. Britain responds by passing the Ireland Act (1949) codifying the "loyalist veto": Northern Ireland will remain a part of the U.K. until the majority votes otherwise. In the North, nationalist aspirations surface again in 1955 as Sinn Fein polls 55% of the nationalist vote. Interpreting the results as a mandate for action, in December 1956 the IRA begins a bombing campaign in the North. Over the course of the Border Campaign (1956-62) IRA attacks cost the governments of Northern Ireland and Britain millions of dollars, but popular support fails to materialize. In February 1962, the IRA calls a cease fire. It engages in no further military actions for the remainder of the decade, turning instead toward a strategy of grassroots political organizing.

1966-1969: Changes in the global economy create the need for a more "modern" face on Unionism. In the hope of attracting global investment to replace the declining traditional shipbuilding and textile industries, friendly overtures are made toward the Republic, to bolster the attraction of the island as a whole. At the same time, militant loyalists, fearing increased relations with the Republic could result in Irish unity, begin to arm.

Discontent grows within the nationalist population as well. In 1967, the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association (NICRA) is formed, to challenge rampant discrimination in housing, employment and voting through non-violent disobedience. However, conditioned by decades of government anti-Catholic rhetoric, the loyalist population views NICRA as an IRA front. Loyalist mobs, openly aided by police and state militia, begin attacking NICRA marches.

On August 12 1969, Northern Ireland explodes. Nationalists in Derry's Bogside area riot in response to a provocative loyalist march, driving out police, and erecting barricades. Rioting quickly spreads to Belfast where loyalists attack and burn hundreds of Catholic homes. The statelet descends into chaos. As a result, on August 14, 1969, British troops are re-deployed onto the streets of Northern Ireland. The army's mission, as British Home Secretary James Callaghan stressed, is "to prevent a breakdown of law and order." But the "order" which the British government sought to preserve was in fact beyond retrieval. The status quo had become totally unacceptable to one third of the state's residents. Within a year the British were to learn the extent of that opposition, and of the folly of creating such an entity in the first place.

Between, continued from page 2

army harassment not experienced in years. **Between** felt the need to convey to U.S. audiences the extent of that repression; to that end Mr. de Baroid brought with him newspaper clippings and photographs which documented serious injuries received during the random firing of plastic bullets and physical assaults by soldiers (including pictures of one West Belfast youth receiving multiple glass-inflicted cuts on his face).

Mr. de Baroid's actions did not go unnoticed by the British government, which routinely monitors any such endeavor concerning their occupation of Ireland very

closely. They soon petitioned the European Community, the Irish government, and the International Fund For Ireland (IFI) - all of whom provided **Between** with some measure of financial assistance - to suspend aid to **Between** due to its "political" involvement. **Between** had committed the ultimate crime of reporting to the world the unsavory realities of which it knew. As a result, all aid was unceremoniously suspended.

However, **Between's** efforts are highly regarded in too many circles, both in Ireland and abroad, for attempts at financial asphyxiation to succeed. A campaign to re-instate funding was initiated, and through the dogged persistence of people like Mr. de Baroid, and countless others, IFI and Irish

government funding was restored in the fall of 1991.

Unfortunately, problems remain: the EEC has refused to resume aid, and the Irish government has withdrawn **Between's** tax exempt status. The plight of **Between** serves as reminder of how difficult it is to avoid the crossfire that defines Northern Ireland. Yet the organization's unrelenting commitment to work for peace and reconciliation, as well its determination to pursue that goal free of censorship, can only serve to inspire those devoted to do the same.

*For more information about **Between** one can write to DUNLAOI, 8 North Mall, Cork*

NORTHERN IRELAND REPORT - P.O. Box 9086 Lowell, MA 01853 Telephone: (413) 746-4876 SUBSCRIPTIONS: (10 issues) \$20.00

EDITORIAL/PRODUCTION COMMITTEE - Jim & Veronica Dee, Emily Kawano, Joe Fitzgerald, Beth Bandy, Leueen Molloy, Pierre Laliberte, Tim & John O'Connor.

SPECIAL THANKS - Tim O'Connor, Joe Fitzgerald, Marie Smyth, Bill Rolston, Conor Foley, Mike Tomlinson, Gary Malaney, and to pizza makers everywhere.

NIR welcomes all submissions, contributions, letters, and reaction.

Title: Northern Ireland Report, No. 2

Date: 1992

Downloaded from the Irish Left Archive.

Visit www.leftarchive.ie

The Irish Left Archive is provided as a non-commercial historical resource, open to all, and has reproduced this document as an accessible digital reference. Copyright remains with its original authors. If used on other sites, we would appreciate a link back and reference to the Irish Left Archive, in addition to the original creators. For re-publication, commercial, or other uses, please contact the original owners. If documents provided to the Irish Left Archive have been created for or added to other online archives, please inform us so sources can be credited.