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NOW

BRITISH ARMY POSTER

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TOO BLOODY
LONG

ANARCHY 22

CONTENTS

PERSPECTIVES FOR IMPERIALISM IN IRELAND	1
RIOT AT HULL JAIL	7
UP THE PROVOS : THE FIGHT GOES ON :	10
THE POLITICAL SITUATION NOW	13
LETTER	16

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PERSPECTIVES FOR IMPERIALISM IN IRELAND

"If you remove the English army tomorrow and hoist the green flag over Dublin Castle, unless you set about the organisation of the Socialist Republic your efforts would be in vain.

"England would still rule you." She would rule you through her capitalists, through her landlords, through her financiers, through the whole array of commercial and individualist institutions she has planted in this country and watered with the tears of our mothers and the blood of our martyrs.

"England would still rule you to your ruin, even while your lips offered hypocritical homage at the shrine of that Freedom whose cause you had betrayed."

James Connolly wrote those words in January 1897 and today his words ring the same bold truth as they did 80 years ago. Perhaps with hindsight the relevance of Connolly's prophesy is all the more potent.

In 1916 Connolly and Pearse and the other revolutionary adherents of the Proclamation set out to establish an independent 32-County Irish Republic - the history of the Rising is well known, but today we live with the legacy of those who subverted that ideal. There is not yet an independent Irish Republic, the Irish people are not yet masters of their own destiny and our land still knows no peace.

In the North, British rule is in the form of direct political and economic control but in the south imperialist control is none the less complete despite the fact that men of Irish birth nominally hold political power. The economy of the Free State is firmly tied to that of Britain; a reality much in evidence in this present capitalist crisis which affects all our lives, banks, insurance companies, chain stores, building societies, manufac-

turing industries, export and import markets etc., are all dominated by and hooked on to the British economy. (The extent of imperialist domination of the Irish economic substructure is a field which although it is generally acknowledged to be extensive, requires detailed research as yet not adequately undertaken by any students of Irish social and economic history.)

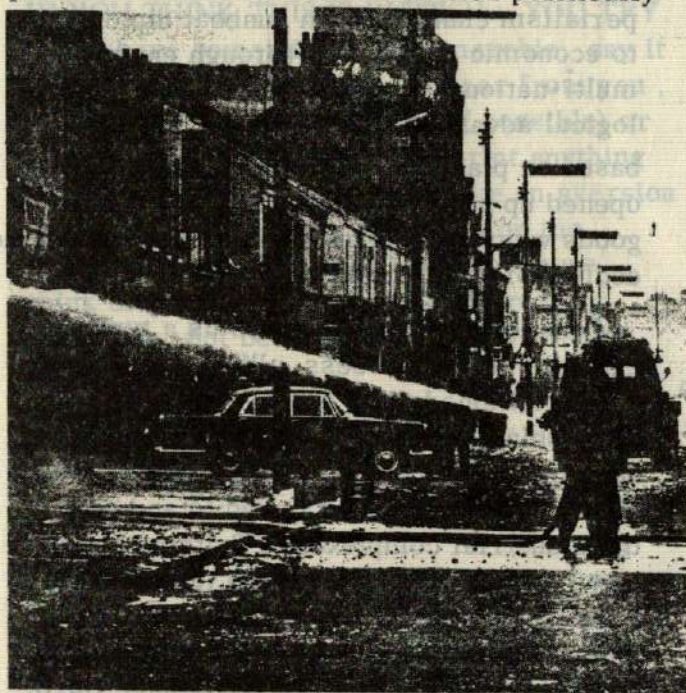
Thus since the time Connolly wrote the passage above Ireland's subjection to British, and latterly European imperialism has not lessened, it has only changed in form.

But this is not to say that changes have not taken place since the early 1900's. The old British empire has contracted to a very few colonies as the nature of worldwide imperialism changed from gunboat diplomacy to economic domination through enormous multi-national companies. As well, technological advances producing new products based on plastics and electronics have opened up new markets and new demands for goods which has meant for some countries the decline of traditional industries.

The north of Ireland gives us a typical example of this process. When the country was partitioned the 6 counties had several flourishing industries, shipbuilding, engineering, textiles and rope-making. These industries were firmly linked to and part of the industrial complexes of Britains Mersey and Clyde and for this reason (as Michael Farrell ably demonstrates in his book "The Orange State") industrialists in the north of Ireland and Britain played the Orange Card, fuelled sectarianism and unionism and achieved their aim of maintaining direct economic and political control over what was then an important economic unit to the British capitalist class. The ministries of suc-

cessive unionist governments lorded over by industrialists and businessmen such as James Craig, John Andrews and latterly Brian Faulkner to name but a few, gives testimony to the financial dimension of their unionism.

At that same time developments south of the border saw the birth of the Free State and repression of Republicans and by 1922, although the spirit of revolutionary republicanism was still strong, the reality was that power in both parts of Ireland was firmly in the hands of elements who would ensure capitalist stability. In the north the Unionist masters benefited greatly from capitalism and the British link, and in the south the gombeen class of landowners and small capitalists sought to wring what they could from the Irish working class through their new-found political power. Britain too was happy, revolution was averted in Ireland, Britain's traditional markets were preserved and she still controlled politically



After the battle, Ballymacarret, June 1970.

as well as economically Ireland's industrial heart.

As long as that situation prevailed

British imperialism was content to allow the Unionists in the north to keep their house in order by whatever means they saw fit. Minority political opposition by the Nationalist Party was rendered ineffective whilst all other forms of protest were ruthlessly suppressed. The history of the 1920's, 30's, 40's and 50's have yet to be adequately documented but nonetheless the subjection of the Catholic population of the north was virtually complete. Since the end of World War II however, change of a fundamental nature has been taking place within the northern economy. The traditional industries no longer played the vital role they once did in Britain's economic strategy. The shipyards lost their leading world role and the work-force of 20,000 had been reduced to half that by the late 1960's and indications are that it will fall even further. The linen and textile industries could not compete with the new artificial fibres, based on the petrochemical industries which Ireland did not have. The engineering and rope-works declined whilst Britain developed within her own shores mass production of motor vehicles and a massive electronics industry. Thus as the structure of British industry changed and its dependence on the petrochemical, light engineering and electrical components industries grew, Britain's economic interest in the north of Ireland also changed.

Throughout the late 1950's and 60's Stormont ministers sought to accommodate to these changing circumstances by offering grants to industrialists to set up shop. They succeeded to a certain extent in places such as Larne, Newtownabbey, Carrick, Antrim, Ballymena, Monkstown; areas where they ensured jobs for their traditional voters. But this investment was not of the type which ensured imperialist dependence on the N.I. economy. I.C.I., Rolls Royce, British Enkalon, Michelin etc., all had duplicate factories outside Northern Ireland which meant that their investment here, whilst certainly

large, was not crucial. Subsequent events have shown this to be true, as far as Rolls Royce, Courtaulds, S.T.C., International Computers etc., are concerned.

This time, the mid-1960's also saw the birth of the civil rights movement, which essentially sought reform within the 6-County state. Such demands, it is now history, met with the full resistance of the Unionist state and the movement developed into a rebellion by the minority. As sectarian riots threatened widespread civil strife and possible southern embroilment (when Jack Lynch threatened to "not stand idly by") the British government sent troop reinforcements, not as they said to protect the citizenry, rather their main preoccupation was to preserve capitalist stability within Ireland.

And so with British troops on the streets and the Catholic minority increasingly throwing their support behind their defenders, those who kept alive the spirit of revolutionary republicanism, the IRA, the resurgence of the centuries-old war was inevitable. The British Home Secretary Maudling declared war on the IRA in 1970 and now, six years later, British ministers realise they are not any nearer winning that war.

The Stormont Parliament has been abolished, the Assembly and the Convention have been relegated to the dustbins of history and still British politicians bleat the tired old platitudes about finding a "solution". But what they mean by a solution entails some form of institutions and arrangements where Ireland as a whole is kept within the capitalist bloc, where incipient civil unrest is kept to a level that it does not threaten the social structure and where the revolutionary tradition to achieve social change is effectively checked. In essence Britain's interest in Ireland is as it was at Partition:- to preserve capitalist stability within Ireland and ensure that the Irish economic and political system

remains securely linked to British economic strategy. The importance of this imperialist domination has taken on a new dimension because of the changes which have taken place in Britain's world role.

The Empire where the sun never set and the blood never dried has gone and new economic and political relationships have had to be forged in Europe. Ireland in this context is of more than a little importance. As a full member of the EEC, Ireland has the same rights as all other full members, but an Ireland which is economically subservient to the British market will ensure that Britain has effectively a second voice in matters of importance to Britain's economic well-being. Thus the significance of Ireland to British imperialist interests has changed over the years but not diminished in importance.

Ireland has strategic relevance for Britain's national defence, she is a major trading partner and source of cheap labour and thus vital to Britain's economic interests, and thirdly, Ireland is a crutch for Britain's European strategy. But all this is dependent upon capitalist stability within an Ireland where time and industrial and economic changes have made the old imperialist reasons for Partition obsolete.

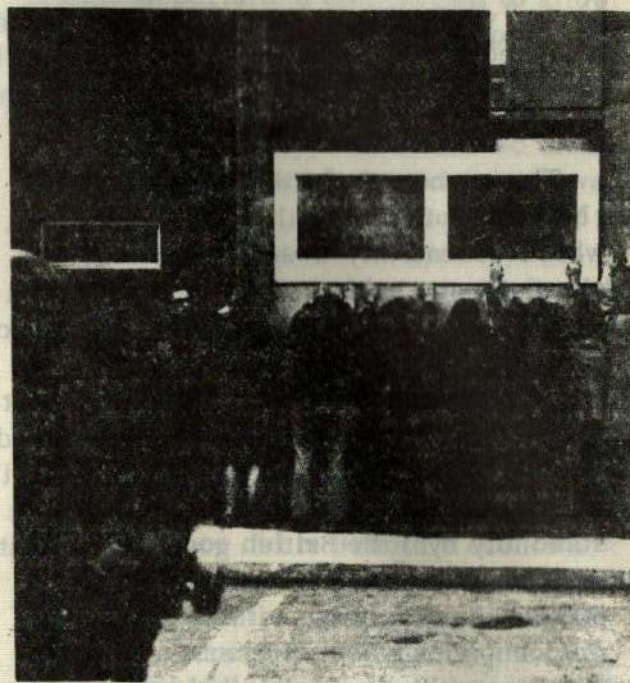
The system would have carried on had the Catholics accepted their subservient position within the Unionist state and forsaken their nationalist aspirations; they didn't and their demands for civil rights threatened Unionist hegemony. The Unionists resisted with violence, this in turn led to civil strife, political instability and the presence of British troops on the streets of the North. From there re-emerged the guerilla war led by the Provisionals to settle the "national question". Because of these events and their threat to capitalist stability and the changed nature of economic relationships between Britain and Ireland some factors are emerging which hint that a major change of imperialist strategy is under way,

the primary aim of which is to re-establish stability suitable to British interests.

In 1972 the British government were forced to abolish the Stormont Parliament. They hoped that by assuming direct control of the situation they would dismantle the sectarian nature of administration in N. Ireland and thus wean the support of the Catholics from Provisional military action. They adopted the analysis that the civil unrest stemmed from the alienation of the Catholics from holding any real power within the Unionist state and the discrimination built into their system. At that time the British thought that by setting up structures where power was shared by both communities and where built-in imbalances were ironed out, then much would be achieved towards ending the civil unrest. The setting up of the Sunningdale talks and the Assembly headed by a power-sharing executive with its sop to nationalist aspirations embodied in a Council for Ireland followed on from this thinking.

The Provisionals rejected the Assembly, but the loyalists wrecked it through their fascist strike at the root of which lay their determination not to share power with Catholics, even establishment politicians, under any circumstances. The convention talks saw the next British attempt to find a "solution", but here again they were thwarted primarily by the intransigence of the loyalists with their insistence that the Catholics should exist in Northern Ireland under their terms. This is not to say that had some form of power-sharing been adopted the Provos would have laid down their arms - indeed the certainty is that they would not - rather it is to suggest that the post-Stormont British strategy was wrecked, not primarily by the pro-nationalist Catholics, but instead by those who swore loyalty to Britain.

Britain was thus left in the position where she had to consider that one of the greatest obstacles to long-term stability



'Peacekeeping'

in Ireland was a force which she had in fact created as part of her imperialist ambitions of the first decades of this century:- those people nurtured on a diet of loyalism laced with sectarian intolerance. The sectarianism which imperialism had fostered for its own ends in an earlier era has remained as a stifling residue, whilst the economic basis for its *raison d'être* have evaporated. Loyalism as far as imperialism is concerned has outrun its historical usefulness.

Accepting that this is the case, to achieve its long-term imperialist aims Britain is faced with the dilemma of how to appease the nationalist guerilla army whilst not bringing the loyalists into mass open conflict. A variety of theories has been put forward of possible British political initiatives in this situation, but few of these have any hope of achieving the stability desired by capitalism and imperialist ambitions.

Talk of independence for Ulster has been aired much of late, particularly by loyalist paramilitaries. Exactly what this would entail is open to conjecture, but it would

be somewhat optimistic to suspect that this proposition would achieve stability in either the long or short term. It is difficult to envisage the loyalists entering structures which would ensure Catholic participation in such a state.

If Catholic participation is not sought then any attempts to compel them or subject them to fascist domination would be resisted. Such events would bring about the Lebanese situation which imperialism wishes to avoid at all costs, as this would bring about greater southern involvement, increased guerilla activities on the British mainland, and political instability of a much greater level than the present. Also an independent Ulster would not be acceptable to the Republican Movement whose centuries-old struggle must continue. Another possibility talked about and indeed sought is that of an immediate British political and military withdrawal, but again this would not bring the stability sought by the imperialists. Here they and the Catholics would have to contend with a mass rebellion by the loyalist paramilitaries, led by mutinous forces in the RUC, and UDR.

A return to the old Stormont situation has been mentioned as a possibility and that the present Peace Movement is being courted to bring about a climate where this can happen. But again, should this be the case, we are back in a pre-1969 situation, hardly a basis for future capitalist stability and doubtful anyway, considering the advanced state of the nationalist rebellion.

Power-sharing we have mentioned but this is not to say that the British may not try yet again to re-introduce the concept in some form or other, whilst at the same time allowing other forces to take their sway. And many signs indicate that movement of those forces is already well advanced.

Ireland in general has fared badly in the present capitalist recession, but in particular N. Ireland has fared even worse. Many firms which were subsidiaries of British industries have been forced to close and trends indicate that there is much worse to follow. Firms such as Rolls Royce, Standard Telephones, Courtaulds, I.E.L., Government defence factories, are much-publicised examples, but many smaller firms manufacturing from shoes to shirts to ceramics to bric-a-brac have been forced to close their doors, bringing the dole queue here to nearly 15% of the working population. But rumours floating amongst trade unionists suggest that many more closures are in the pipeline. The work-force of the shipyard is expected to be reduced to 5,000, and the nature of its work changed from shipbuilding to maintenance. The remaining S.T.C. factories are expected to wind up their operations and Plessey is also threatened because of Post Office cutbacks. I.C.I. is constantly trimming its work-force, Mackies are threatening layoff. Throughout the whole industrial sector firms are being forced to cut back on production and recruitment. The primary



reason for this is the current recession forcing the British economy, but in order for these firms to take advantage of any economic recovery they must invest in new plant and equipment. In the north of Ireland there is no sign of much major investment which can only mean that in the



future the industries which remain here will become less competitive and ultimately wind up their operations. This starvation of investment in an area where labour costs are amongst the cheapest in Europe, and where industrial unrest is virtually nonexistent, goes deeper than simply the economic recession. It reflects as well the concern of capitalists at the political instability which could threaten any investments they might make.

Thus if investment does not come from private enterprise and if the N.I. economy is to survive at the level of a complex industrial society, then investment must come from government. But it is unlikely that any British government would be able to hand over the additional massive capital injections needed and allow at the same time political and social institutions which in the long term will not resolve the current instability and its cyclic violence every

decade. So the economy of N. Ireland, at present run down because of the capitalist crisis, is unlikely to recover when that crisis abates and the result will be what Gerry Fitt once prophesied when he said of the loyalists, "if they won't share power, they'll share poverty". And poverty the future will hold for a small industrial area, with few natural resources and starved of the necessary investment.

The consequences of such a development in terms of jobs and prospects would be catastrophic. The present high rate of endemic unemployment would climb to a much higher level as those manufacturing industries employing skilled and semi-skilled workers which at present are concentrated in the loyalist communities wind up. The nature of unemployment, the brunt of which has been borne by the Catholics throughout the existence of the N. Ireland state would be altered and not directly discriminate - a development which would in effect dissolve the economic basis for loyalism. Such a development is unlikely to take place overnight, but instead is more likely to be a gradual process of creeping economic inertia affecting workers at individual and factory levels - a process which is unlikely to heighten sectarian conflict, but instead increase individual despondency and a search for alternatives.

To bring about this situation, the British need do no more than they are doing at present, that is, hold the situation in what local politicians see as a political limbo and allow economic forces to take their course. In a future economic desert where emigration, traditional to the Catholics, becomes traditional to the Protestants as well, where the economic basis for loyalism is no longer tangible in terms of skilled jobs and the security that entails, it is likely that new political circumstances will be precipitated. One change is sure to be that membership of organised loyalist bodies such as the

Orange Order will no longer ensure economic advantage and thus a cornerstone of loyalism and unionism will be fundamentally weakened. Another change over a period of years is likely to be demographic in that young Protestants as well as Catholics will be forced to seek employment and better prospects elsewhere, thus altering the pattern of emigration which ensured Unionist population majority.

Harold Wilson, some five years ago, stated that Ireland should be united within 15 years, but at that time not many took his words seriously. However if the present tightening of the economic screw continues, in a decade from now it is just possible that social and political conditions will have altered sufficiently to allow imperialism to chart out new political arrangements for Ireland.

Exactly what these would be is impossible to predict, but one could speculate that some form of federalism for Ireland as a whole, having built-in safeguards for minorities, and existing within the context of closer political union with Europe is not out of the question. For imperialism the hope would be that some such arrangement would quell the recurring tide of revolutionary nationalism, whilst at the same time, having broken the back of militant loyalism using that force, economic pressures, which was a major factor in its creation. Stability thus would be achieved within Ireland, and her position within the western capitalist bloc ensured, thus securing long-term imperialist aims.

If this pattern of development outlined or something akin to it does take shape, capitalism and imperialism in Ireland will be as entrenched as ever and likely to be sitting on a more stable foundation securely within the super-power bloc of the EEC. It is the opinion of this author that the present guerilla war has forced British imperialism to review its overall strategy towards Ireland and that talk of this review has

given rise to optimism about a British withdrawal. However it would be a mistake to assume that Britain has now decided to wash her hands of the Irish "problem" - her imperialist ambitions remain as before. We are living through a period where the imperialist arrangements which served at the time of Partition now lie at the root of the current unrest. If present economic trends continue we are likely to see a revision of those arrangements and if events develop as sketched here, we would do well to remember Connolly's warning.

REV O'LUTION

RIOT AT HULL JAIL

Last year in these islands saw the longest, hottest summer in living memory. Dagenham car workers, black youth in Notting Hill, and fascist and anti-fascist demonstrators all let their anger explode. Resistance in Northern Ireland continued, especially in prisons, with sit-ins and riots.

In English jails, with the increase in political prisoners and "lifers", and the overcrowding (pop. 40,000, built for approx. 30,000), the tension inside seems to be increasing daily.

We are due for a wave of demos in prisons like the ones in '72 involving tens of thousands of cons. In this, maybe Hull was only the beginning....

Tension grows

Hull was a "hard", maximum security prison, with a tough prison officer regime and increasing use of solitary confinement as punishment for those cons who refused to submit to the screws' every command.

Most cons worked in the Mill - producing furniture for the Shah of Iran's jails. Charming, like digging your own grave.

They averaged 92p a week wages. The angry resentment and frustration was fuelled when, due to drastic cuts in screws' overtime, many visits and leisure activities were scrapped.

The screws' brutality increased - beatings, strippings, possessions smashed - and it seems they wanted to provoke a confrontation to justify their own overtime grievances. They got a whole lot more than they bargained for.

The Riot

On Tuesday August 31st, Artie Clifford, in solitary, was beaten by 4 screws. Another con, a cleaner, was watching and spread the news outside the unit. About 100 cons that evening spontaneously marched to the governor who refused to see them. They were told to "go to bed". But when confronted by this angry crowd, the screws ran off. This left the wing under prisoner-control, so naturally they began to smash it up (what else can you do with a prison.)

Having made barricades, they used the roof to get into 3 of the 4 blocks, releasing all comrades in solitary (including Clifford), and taking control of the canteen and screws' offices. There was great joy all round. This turned to rage when the screws' files on them were found and handed out to each man. "Psychopath", "misfit", "manic-depressive", "will be a cabbage when we finish with him" - every friendship according to the screws was "conspiratorial and hatched out of criminal tendencies".

This really shattered all the illusions many of the cons had had about prisons being "fair". It stank. So they smashed up the whole fucking joint.

The screws, in riot gear, kept well away and guarded the admin block where the Home Office dossiers, the real dynamite, were to be protected at all costs.

To boost their morale, the prisoners spent Wednesday and Thursday morning on the roofs - making banners, cheering and shouting to excited kids in the flats opposite. The demonstrators' solidarity was tremendous, and they shouted to news reporters the truth about prison life, the screws, the files, the work and that they would never again take such shit. "Fuck the Shah of Iran."

180 men took part in these protests and on Friday morning (September 3rd) they voted to negotiate an end to the siege. There was little else they could do. They negotiated through Mr John Prescott,* the local MP, and began to come down in batches.

"Most of us were sick as hell, but happy too because everyone was really beautiful with each other. Wishing each other luck, promising to meet on the roofs of some other jail, helping each other down, saying goodbye to all the kids."**

A final chorus of "Auld Lang Syne" and the demo was over.



Aftermath

Then the screws took over - the demonstrators were viciously beaten up, split up and sent to dispersal prisons around the country, thrown into solitary, and again beaten continually. Their property was smashed or stolen, and they were warned to keep their mouths shut. Only letters smuggled out of the jails have revealed the extent of the disgusting and vicious

punishment inflicted upon them by the screws.

In an internal Home Office "enquiry" into the riot, prisoners have been told that any false allegations against screws would mean further punishment, and they were refused legal representation.

The Home Office answer to the cons' grievances was to discipline 138 of them, most losing up to one year's remission, some 2 years, and many will suffer long periods of "loss of privileges" - solitary confinement without books, papers, letters and fags. Two at least have been charged with "incitement to mutiny" - Jake Prescott & Alec Goodman.

This witch-hunt is an insult to the courageous protests made by the prisoners. A genuine independent Public Enquiry into the conditions that led up to the riot and the events after is being demanded. Some of the men are trying to prosecute screws, and a defence group has been set up. The government will try to hush up their enquiries like with previous similar ones, but the anger and energy at Hull could not be suppressed, and the destroyed shell of the prison stands as a monument to the defiance of human beings in the face of institutionalised terrorism.

Some Conclusions

Hull was not and is not unique - the conditions are similar all over Britain and indeed the world. Quite a few prisoners here see themselves as victims of the system, and young "lifers" are learning from them. All have little to lose.

Capitalism is in crisis and the welfare state is being slashed. The ruling class know that they face confrontations in the near future and are preparing for them - tightening up the jails, streamlining the police, laws and courts, turning the British Army, during its occupation of Northern Ireland, into an anti-insurgent force. Nationalism and corporatism are growing in an attempt to divert us from seeing the

true nature of our lives - wage-slaves and order-takers, mere numbers in a computer, consumer fodder, in a meaningless and endless struggle just to live.

Well, we cannot be fooled or intimidated. Our desire is always for freedom and we will fight for it. Anarchists see the forms that the state uses to maintain its power and privileged classes, and we are disgusted by them - POLICE, PRISONS, COURTS, POLITICIANS, BUREAUCRATS, ARMIES and the WAGE SYSTEM.

We shall destroy these structures and begin to create a free, harmonious, libertarian world.

Our solidarity and good wishes to the Hull prisoners, and the millions of people in jails throughout the world.

E. Sivell

*Not to be confused with prisoner Jake Prescott, Angry Brigade defendant, who was involved at Hull.

**From "Hull '76".

PAMPHLET - "Hull '76" from PROP,
339a Finchley Road, London NW3.
HULL DEFENCE GROUP - c/o Rising
Free, 142 Drummond Street,
London NW1.

HAPOTOC - an international anarchist
organisation, concentrating on solidarity
with prisoners. Box 10638, Amsterdam.
BLACK CROSS - aid to anarchist prisoners,
123 Upper Tollington Park, London N4.

while there is a lower class,
.... I am in it

while there is a criminal element
.... I am of it

while there is a soul in prison
..... I am not FREE

UP THE PROVOS ! THE FIGHT GOES ON !

"They will never understand why I am here". So said Connolly in the ruins of the GPO in 1916. Irish socialists and anarchists have become accustomed to comrades in England and Britain asking them the same thing ever since. Indeed, over the past few years we have become so pissed off with the lack of genuine (as opposed to vicarious) interest about Ireland, to say nothing of the monumental ignorance displayed about the situation which emanates from the so-called left and the "revolutionaries" in England that we have tended to completely ignore the plethora of garbage which comes from Freedom - "isn't it terrible that working people are getting killed" - Black Flag - "it's only a religious/nationalist war" or a host of other IS/IMG type sheets - "it's



Two 'leading Provo officers' arrested.

all so complicated that all we can say is that we think that the troops should get out and the working class, Catholic and Protestant, should form trade union militias" etc. To be candid, I see no real reason why I should revise that opinion; however, I have been asked by some old comrades why I, as an anarchist, support the Provos? OK, here's why.

1) In N. Ireland today the level of state repression, as compared to the Marcusian "repressive tolerance" which you in England and Europe experience is immense. The jails are full of political prisoners, torture (despite anything you may have heard to the contrary) is endemic, murders by the police and army almost a weekly occurrence - for instance, in the last three weeks alone a 13-year-old boy killed by a plastic bullet in Turf Lodge fired, callously and deliberately by one of your gallant boys in khaki and a 12-year-old girl shot dead on her way to school by a Para in South Armagh, a 17-year-old shot and seriously wounded in Belfast, a lorry driver shot and seriously wounded at a check point, a pregnant woman hit and injured in Belfast, two duck shooters "mistakenly" shot near Newry - the list is almost endless. In addition, we have daily harassment of men, women and children in their own streets and homes by the soldiers of the Crown. The 4 am arrest, beating and hour house wrecked as you are dragged off to be interrogated - then, after 72 hours incommunicado, release onto the streets, only to have the same thing happen again the next week. This is commonplace. The Brit propaganda squad at Lisburn have come up with a series of TV and newspaper ads on the theme that "7 years is enough". We agree, but we also think that 700 years is too fucking much!

2) In addition to the menace of an overtly repressive state which has given its paid

mercenaries licence to run riot - 6 soldiers were charged with arson and one with "manslaughter" two days ago in a belated attempt to deny that they were acting under official sanction - we have the threat of the Loyalist paramilitary assassination squads. These groups, who do the Brit's dirty work are not just "poor confused workers", they are armed fascists who make the NF seem like boy scouts. Sectarian assassinations of Catholics every week by the "UFF" - which is a front for the "legal" UDA and the "legal" UDA and the "illegal" UVF continue as the fascists attempt to terrorise working-class Catholics into the "Peace at any price" movement where they can tout for Jesus. If it is all right to oppose fascism in England, how much more necessary is it to oppose its infinitely stronger and better-armed version in N. Ireland?

3) But why support the Provos, aren't they reactionaries? In the main, no. A few of the older figures, though by no means all, could be classified as such, but the bulk of the younger volunteers and officers, particularly those coming out of Long Kesh university, are radical left-wingers. Within

the last six months in addition the editorship of Republican News, the official paper of the Provisionals, has been taken over and run by people of a left-wing disposition, as a reading of the paper recently clearly shows - moreover, and an encouraging sign, the circulation has gone up 7,000 copies a week since the changeover. Secondly, like it or not, the Provos are the only force who have consistently and with great courage fought against the Army, the State and all its agencies since 1972. They have fought, they have suffered but they have continued to oppose this most blatant manifestation of British Imperialism. The Officials - "the Stickies" - have not only given up, kept up their ceasefire - i.e. surrender to - the Army, but through their Stalinist and reformist leadership have become active counter-revolutionaries. The IRSP has spiralled up its own (or Costello's) asshole despite having some genuine socialist revolutionaries in it. The PD and its offshoot the Red Republican Party are minuscule and totally insignificant. There is, unfortunately, no anarchist movement, so "what can a poor boy do etc.?" Personally I can't, because of some differences, join the Provos, but I can and do respect and critically support them. I think you should too. Five years ago people were sagely saying that N. Ireland was the testing ground for the British State's war machinery and that what was happening in Belfast



would in ten years be happening in Birmingham. Have you forgotten that? Kitson hasn't. Only the ineptitude and innocuousness of the splintered Left in Britain has saved it so far - but if it ever posed a real threat? As Fanon said, "no one can give you your freedom, you have to take it for yourself". We in Ireland have learnt that the hard way; there is a very very long way still to go but at least we've started. Can you say the same thing?

4) We are conscious of course that very soon the struggle will have to be fought in all 32 counties. The extreme right policies of British lackeys like Cosgrave, Cooney and the self-proclaimed fascist Donegan will have to be fought in the streets, in the countryside, in the jails, in the factories. This necessitates a united 32 counties fighting movement - and who better than the Provos in the present situation? In addition to the atrocious conditions in the North, with men naked 24 hours a day in their cell, without even a blanket in protest at the attempt to take away political status, we have the inhuman conditions in the jails in the South, especially Portlaoise, where men have to eat off the floor, being denied tables, stools, chairs or beds. But the fight will go on.

Finally, if any of you want something practical to do, what about the Irish prisoners in England? Many of you will have no doubt helped or applauded the work being done for Spanish prisoners by Black Cross and allied groups, but what about the prisoners on your own doorsteps? At present more than 80 men and women are serving sentences in English prisons, many on trumped-up charges, for political offences connected with the present British trouble in Ireland. Three have already died in jail - Michael Gaughan on 3rd June 1974 while being force-fed in Albany; Frank Stagg on 12th February 1976 while on hunger strike in Wakefield - where the prison governor and over 40% of the screws are members of the NF; and Noel Jenkinson, murdered in

the top security unit at Leicester on 9th October 1976.

Noel Jenkinson had been badly beaten on three occasions and had spent six months in solitary. Frank Stagg spent nearly three years in a cell stripped of all furniture and heating. Michael Gaughan contracted pneumonia after a forcefeeding tube punctured his lung.

According to figures released by the Home Office, 46 Irish prisoners have been held in solitary confinement in the past 12 months, "for their own protection" - and against their will. The Home Office also admit to 38 of them having been beaten in prison, sometimes from other prisoners, goaded on by the screws, but generally by the screws themselves - yet all screws, like the Winson Green savages, are acquitted of causing these "mysterious injuries". Liam McLarnon has spent two years in solitary. Gerry Conlon has spent nearly a year. In Albany in September Sean Campbell, who was fitted up by the late tout Lennon, had an arm, a leg, a finger and several ribs broken, Father Fell got a broken nose; Eddie Byrne was beaten unconscious in Liverpool in May 1975, Sean Kinsella had a broken arm; Brendan Dowd had all his teeth kicked out; at the same time in Manchester Paul Norney and Noel Gibson were severely beaten; in Winson Green in November '74 Tony Madigan, Ray McLaughlin, Gerry Young, Gerry Small and Jimmy Ashe were all viciously beaten by screws; in the same month John Walker, Billy Power, Gerry Hunter, Hugh Callaghan, Noel McIlkenny and Paddy Hill were beaten by both police and warders - these were the men set up for the Birmingham bombings - for evidence of their innocence see the recent issue of The Leveller. Paul Hill has now been beaten in Birmingham, Guilford, Wandsworth and Hull. In November '75 Kevin Murphy was attacked in his cell in Parkhurst with an iron bar. So it goes. These are literally just a few examples of the kind of treatment meted out to "paddies" in British jails. Kept in solitary,

even when on remand, denied visits, letters, parcels, papers, books, company they are the forgotten prisoners, and the most vulnerable to repression and racism.

During the period 1972-75 according to government figures 27 soldiers convicted of crimes in Ireland were moved to serve their sentences in England. In the same period 22 civilian prisoners were also transferred from Ireland to England. Only 4 Irish political prisoners have been moved from England to Ireland, Dolours and Marian Price, Hugh Feeney and Gerry Kelly, after they had endured an incredible 205 days force feeding while on hunger strike. All other Irish political prisoners have been refused this simple request. Is it too much to ask so-called libertarians to campaign for the transfer of Irish political prisoners, at present being brutalised in English jails, to jails in Ireland? There they can at least band together with their comrades to ensure that they are not brutalised and their relatives can visit them. To you, it may seem a "reformist" demand; to them, it is possibly a matter of life or death. How many more Jenkinsons, Gaughans or Staggs must there be?

If you are interested, contact and support the Prisoners Aid Committee, c/o 142 Drummond St., NW1.

I'll conclude with what many of you will, if you've even bothered to read this far, consider yet more emotional Irish romanticism. A quote from Connolly's statement to his court martial, before he was shot in a chair. He said: "Believing that the British Government has no right in Ireland, never had any right in Ireland, and never can have any right in Ireland, the presence, in any one generation of Irishmen, of even a respectable minority, ready to die to affirm that truth, makes that Government forever a usurpation and a crime against human progress. I personally thank God that I have lived to see the day when thousands of Irish men and women, boys and girls, were

ready to affirm that truth, and to attest it with their lives if need be."

Apart from the reference to God, I have to admit that I, as an Irish anarchist am forced to agree with that.

UP THE REVOLUTION!

UP THE PROVOS!

Sidney Street

THE POLITICAL SITUATION NOW

media attacks

At this point in time "public opinion" is swerving rapidly away from the ruling Labour government into support for Thatcher's reactionary Tory party; a glimpse at recent by-election results will confirm this trend. There also appears to be, less notably, more "apathy" with less and less people bothering to vote at all, no matter how great the range of candidates. It's little wonder that "public opinion" has swung to the right, what with the performance of this miserable government and the lack of a clear revolutionary alternative, but the main factor, I think, is due to the carefully orchestrated offensive by the media, aimed at certain sections of the working class, mostly the weaker sections. The headlines about "Social Security scroungers" are leading into a questioning of the whole SS system by large parts of the population - "Why work when you can earn more on the dole?" This doesn't mean that people are beginning to question the nature of work and the welfare state, it means a general feeling against claimants, a feeling that is beginning to erode the Labour party's electoral base among the working class, not only to the Tories but also the Nat-Front and Nat-Party. Other attacks by the media, on immigrants, have resulted in some of the worst civil disturbances seen in Britain for some



New Tory front-bencher

time, with racist killings, demonstrations, counter-demonstrations, vigilante patrols, a high amount of votes picked up by fascist candidates. But this has blown up in the faces of the media somewhat as the immigrants and their supporters have taken to the streets and fought back, as in Southall, Birmingham, Blackburn, Bradford and the East End (to mention but a few examples). The campaign against the young working class by the media (and police) has only just got underway, but it appears to be comprehensive, to say the least: "Get tough with"...football hooligans, punk-rock fans, schoolkids, muggers...the range is endless. But the most vicious attacks are, as always, reserved for the more militant sections of the working class like for instance the miners, car workers or whoever in fact has initiated industrial actions; the attacks are made not only by the media (which back the Tories at the moment) but by the government and the unions. Perhaps though the most imaginative tactic shown by the media and the ruling class is the attack on the left. The left, whether it's marxists in the Labour Party, Communists or Trots, have no real mass following in this country, despite what they or the media may say. What makes them seem dangerous is that on occasion they appear at trouble spots, or even cause trouble in order to advertise themselves; they also have many members "strategically placed" thus giving an impression of strength. While the left may have some nuisance value they do not constitute as yet a real threat to the system. The bourgeoisie, its media, its political parties, and the unions, have to some extent succeeded in dividing and fooling the working class, but for how long?

rulers

If the working class of Britain at the moment appears weak and divided in comparison with, say, the workers of the continent, what about the rulers and potential rulers? They too are divided, divided on how best to attack and control the working class, on how to "deal" with the unions, on how to face up to the crisis, divided on issues like



Politicians



Humans

devolution, which although it has little to do with class can only add to their troubles. Capitalism, in order to survive, must drastically change its form. The more realistic spokespeople for the capitalist system, like Benn, realise that the only way to breathe any life back into the decaying monolith is to extend state control over finance, the money markets, increase public spending and nationalisation - in fact speed up the trend towards state-capitalism. However, the conservative-minded people who run the economy and the state (or who aspire to do so) are unable to (for a variety of reasons) and can only attack the living standards of the working class by public spending cuts, wage control etc. - all these people seem to be able to do is look backwards. People like Benn are, after all's said and done, a minority even in their own party. The rage at the moment among Tories is "monetarism" and the next government, which will surely be Tory, will be strongly monetarist. Thatcher has included

people not only like Keith Joseph in her shadow cabinet, but with the recent reshuffle has included hardened reactionaries like Rhodes Boyson and John Biffen, who not only are dedicated monetarists but have Neanderthal social policies, which 100 years ago would have seemed backward. Even Heath is now considered a moderate compared with these pigs. But remember this, no matter how much the ruling class and its various factions are unable to act in their own long and short-term interests, be they economic or social, they all agree on one thing: more laws, more police, more powers for the state against the working class, more "law and order".

time

More and more are turning away from the established political parties, if they begin to take things into their own hands; this could be good or bad from our point of view, it depends on what they do, but one thing is



Lor n' order

sure, the forces of "law and order" will get the full backing of the state, whatever happens. See how quickly they move when the system is attacked by the militant and strong sections of the working class, but perhaps by the weaker sections also, like the low-paid or unemployed. Again, it seems only a question of time. With food selling at

astronomical prices during Christmas, this is the sort of price we can look forward to in the future - how much more can people take? Not much more we think.

ourselves

The anarchist movement will only become stronger when sections of the working class launch their offensive against the system, and only if it takes advantage of the situation thrown up by the struggle. Right now, anarchists must form more local groups, drag inactive comrades back into activity, and attempt to reach larger sections of the working class especially among young workers and the unemployed, also with the rank and file of some of the left groups and even in some cases the deluded youngsters and "backward" workers that support the Nat-Front and Nat-Party. It must be recognised that in some areas the NF and NP seem to be the only credible alternative; bad as this is, it must be faced up to and acted on accordingly. Anarchists must be able to back up their words with action when the time arises. There must be more co-ordination between anarchist groups, more communication, more ideas, suggestions and initiative if we are to become a real threat to the established order. One of the most amazing things of last year has been the actions of young workers. From street-fighting to the rejection of bourgeois "culture", the young workers have shown that it's going to take more than a few newspaper headlines to drive them back. While the young are not all becoming revolutionary overnight, some of them seem to be groping in the right direction. 1976 saw amazing events at Southall, Bradford, Notting Hill, Birmingham involving the young. Workers at Fords Dagenham went "beyond the bounds" as did the prisoners at Hull - right on to them! The remainder of the 70's will see more, many more such events.

M.P.W. Jan '77

LETTER

Dear Comrades,

If, as many people believe, this particular capitalist crisis will force the state to drop its liberal facade and some kind of Chilean-type reaction occurs, then now is the time to stop playing at being revolutionaries and for the academic discussion to stop, we must prepare to defend ourselves. Personally, I believe this is the last Labour government we will see in its present form, that is, making any pretence of representing progressive thought and social democracy. The survival of this government depends on how long the bourgeoisie believes the Labour Party can rely on the support of the working class in its bid to convince workers to accept wage restraint (wage reductions in real terms), cuts in housing, medical services, nurseries, public transport, more unemployment, etc. etc. in the "national interest".

Should there be a right-wing reaction to the workers' outrage at being shat upon, people who are committed to social change and in particular anarchists in this country are extremely vulnerable. All our lives we have lived in a relatively liberal society. We can print our papers which are read by no-one but ourselves, we can hold meetings. We can complain, strike, or picket. We openly proclaim our views. We have never known the fear of betrayal, or legal (?) torture, or dawn raids by secret police who have no fetters of legality. Our experiences of oppression range through degrees of relative mildness. It all sounds very melodramatic, but will it in one, two or three years time?

We must now take the most basic steps to defend ourselves. Comrades who have gone through the mis-education mill and come out clutching degrees etc. should use them to get employed as any type of civil servants with access to information (i.e. social workers have access to files on "social deviants"). Council workers

higher up in the hierarchy than the average clerk will eventually be useful. It is possible for people without previous convictions to get employed in police stations without actually joining the police (typists, telephonists and even cleaners); all could have access to unguarded information. Those from bourgeois backgrounds should use them to gain information and respectability (I know of people whose relatives are high-ranking army officers, business executives and even an ex-Cabinet minister).

Even without assuming that sooner or later we will be required to have identification cards, we will need the means to produce false identification and those of us who are artists will be useful in this respect. Organisations/groups must be prepared to go underground and any records of members/subscribers etc. should be, if not destroyed, at least kept away from the centre of the group. We should be able to arm ourselves quickly, so now is the time to make contacts and perhaps even get the weapons which may be necessary to defend ourselves.

Finally we must seriously think (and act) about appropriating the funds to make the survival of any kind of coherent libertarian movement possible. Many people will no doubt believe that I'm being paranoid and the blinkered view that "it won't happen here" is still prevalent, even among the left, but only by remaining at large (out of a prison camp) and able to protect ourselves will we be able to continue to work towards an anarchic society.

Fraternally,
Lisa Luchkovsky

The annual report of a large public company, Dunford and Elliott, bemoans the fact that the salaries of its directors are "significantly reduced by the effect of high taxation" and then goes on

to reveal that the lowest paid director had an after tax salary of just over £2.2 millions and the highest paid had his remuneration reduced significantly to a measly £11 millions. (Shame)

ADS PAGE - the Anarchist Dalton's Weekly

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More details from :

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