IRISH STUDIES IN BRITAIN

SPRING/SUMMER 1988 No. 12 ISSN 0260–8154

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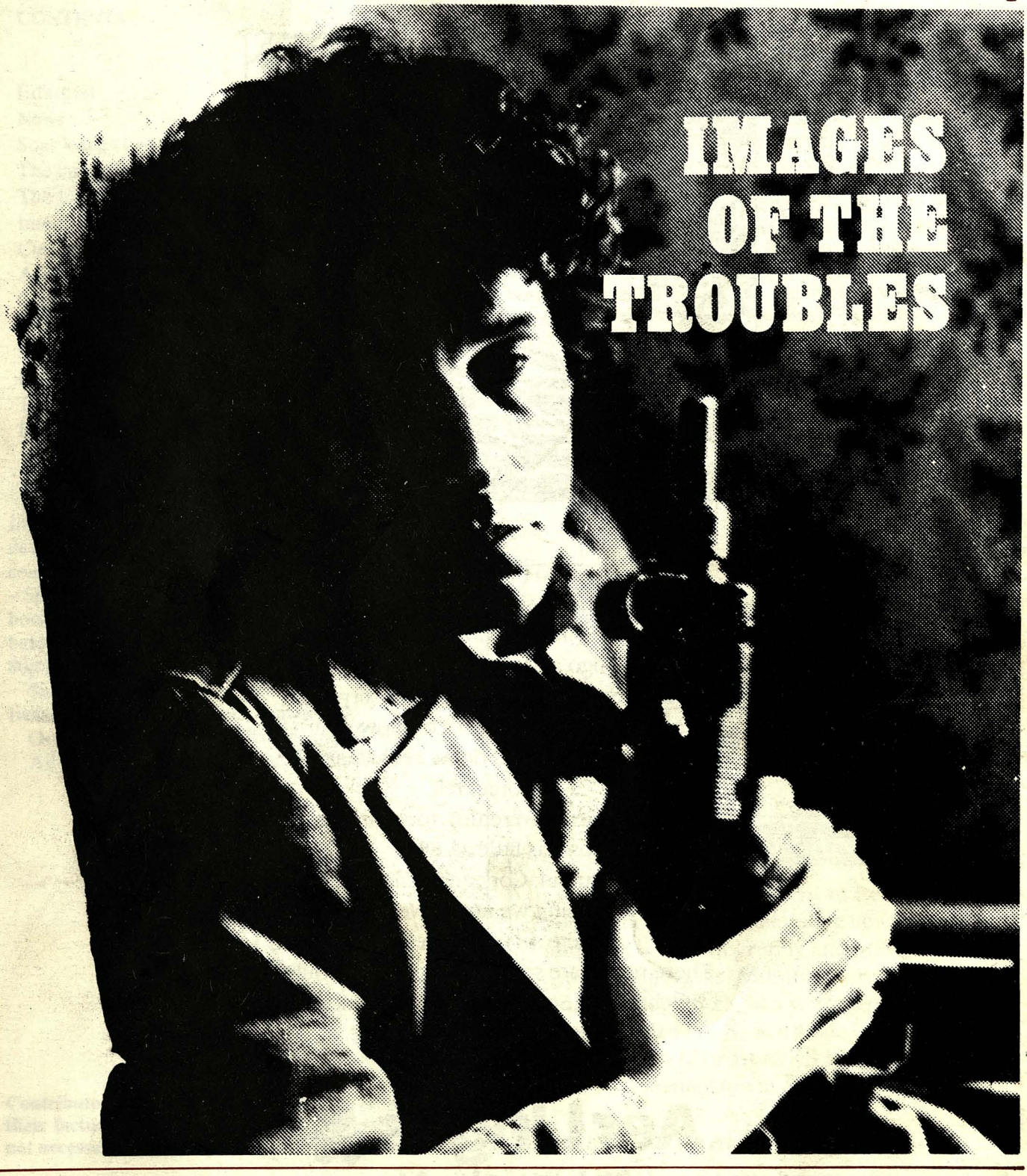

IMAGES OF THE TROUBLES

INSIDE: Cinema of the troubles, breakthrough at Liverpool, Theatre, Davitt in Oxford.

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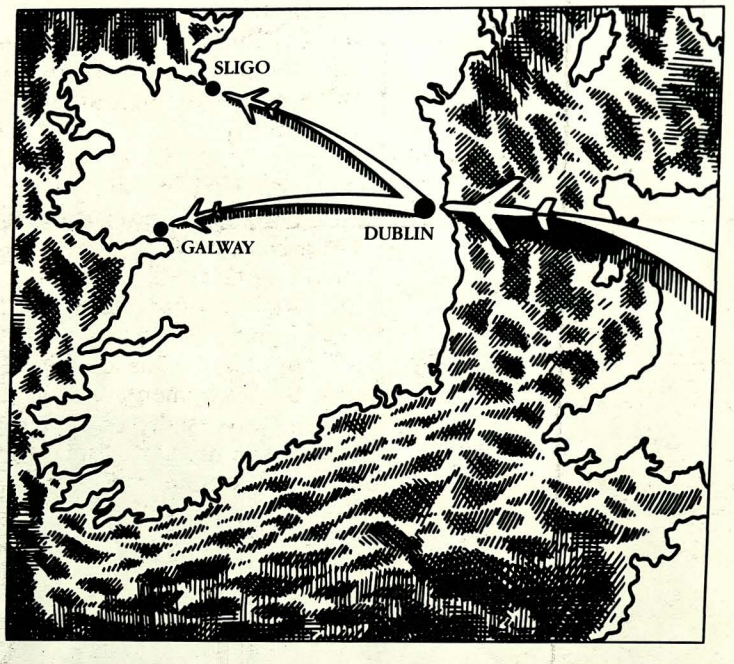

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IRISH STUDIES IN BRITAIN

No. 12 Spring/Summer 1988 ISSN 0260-8154

CONTENTS

Irish Studies in Britain promotes and publicises the development of all aspects of Irish Studies in this country. It is published regularly (usually twice a year – Spring and Autumn) and is available from selected bookshops or in the case of difficulty from the address below. Price 75p (95p including postage); 80p Republic of Ireland (including postage £1.00).

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EDITORIAL

The news that an institute of Irish Studies is to be opened at the University of Liverpool (see page 9) is to be greatly welcomed. As Dr. Patrick Buckland explains in his article, the Institute will be the academic centre for Irish studies in this country. This overdue breakthrough should provide a major fillip to all those who have been striving for Irish studies to be given the stature that it deserves. Funding for the Institute will come primarily from private sector. In conjunction with the British Association for Irish Studies, there will be a major attempt to tap into the Irish business community for the long term funding of the Institute. It is to be sincerely hoped that the response will be a generous one, the project clearly deserves such support. The high hopes for the Institute stand in sharp contrast to those other Irish projects which are in danger because of the changing climate of British local government. Particularly in London the high hope of the GLC has been replaced by an atmosphere of doom and gloom. The Irish in Britain History Centre has folded and with theILEA being broken up, the implementation of the plans of the Irish working group must sadly be in some doubt. Likewise the Irish Studies centre at North London Polytechnic, has as yet, not secured long term funding. The need for Irish studies to look outside LEA's for funding is now a real necessity. All eyes must be on Liverpool. We wish them well.

NEWS

BRITISH ASSOCIATION FOR IRISH STUDIES

The BAIS has continued to go from strength to strength. Following their highly successful 1987 concerence, there have been a further range of activities. In London there was a short lecture series, comprising such diverse figures as Michael Farrell, Paul Bew, Michael Laffin and Sean MacReamoinn. The central position of the BAIS in the future development of Irish studies has been recognised by the DES who have recently awarded them a grant of £30,000. If you have not already joined the BAIS, do so now. Send

£12.00 ($20) Waged
£7.50 ($12) Unwaged

Dr. Shaun Richards,
Treasurer,
British Association for Irish Studies
c/o Humanities Department,
North Staffordshire Polytechnic,
Beaconside,
Stafford ST18 0AD.
Tel: 0785 523311 ext. 318.

NORTH LONDON POLYTECHNIC

The 'Irish Studies Centre' at the Polytechnic has continued to flourish. Most notably they hope to launch next October a half degree in Irish studies. Meanwhile an introduction course is being run from February until June, which will cover history, sociology, politics and literature in the Irish context. Further information can be obtained from Mary Hickman. Meanwhile the Irish in Britain research forum continues. Forthcoming speakers include:

MONDAY 14th MARCH 1988 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.
Mary Lennon
Author of the forthcoming book 'Across the Water', on the migration of Irish women
'Irish Women: Experiences of Migration'

MONDAY 18th APRIL 1988 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.
Alan Clinton
Irish Studies Centre
'Housing Conditions of the Irish in Britain'

A series of papers based on talks given at the Forum will begin to be published during 1988.

FURTHER SEMINARS PLANNED FOR LATER THIS YEAR INCLUDE:
Laura Marks of Wolfson College Oxford on experiences of childbirth among Jewish and Irish women; Ellen Hazelkorn of the Dublin Institute of Technology on the British and Irish labour movements; Doreen McMahon of Nuffield College Oxford outlining new work analysing data on the migrant population.
Polytechnic of North London, The Marlborough Building, 383 Holloway Road, London N7 0RN Tel: 01 607 2788 ext. 2336.

IRISH IN MANCHESTER HISTORY GROUP

The Group wishes to bring together all those with an interest in the history of Irish people in Manchester; to build up an archive of original historical material; to promote and encourage research; and to hold regular meetings and talks. Membership is free and open to anyone with an interest in sharing their reminiscences and offering their experiences or enthusiasm in order to widen our knowledge of the Manchester Irish communities.

If you are interested, please contact Michael Herbert at 218 Maine Road, Moss Side, Manchester M14 7WQ.

MANCHESTER IRISH EDUCATION GROUP

It's all happening in the North West. On Saturday March 19, the Education group in conjunction with the British Association for Irish Studies is holding a national conference on Irish Studies at Manchester Polytechnic. This promises to be a major event and if you are interested in attending, please contact Ms. J.L. Wallwork, Cataloguing Department, John Rylands University Library of Manchester, Oxford Road, Manchester M13 9PP. The phone number is 061 275 2000 ext. 3289

INFORMATION ON IRELAND

The London based publishing group have produced a new edition of 'They shoot Children', their powerful report on the violent and tragic history of the use of plastic bullets in Northern Ireland. The booklet is available from good bookshops for 75p or for £1 from Information on Ireland, PO Box 958, London W14 0JF.

NORTHAMPTON CONNOLLY ASSOCIATION

The Association have produced a fascinating compilation of Irish poetry entitled "Beyond the Shore: The Irish within us". It comprises 47 poems by the first and latter generations living in Britain, France and the USA. It can be obtained from the NCA, 612 Meshaw Crescent, Abingdon Vale, Northampton NN3 3NG and costs £3.00.

POLITICAL STUDIES ASSOCIATION

The Irish Studies group of the PSA is organising a session at the PSA conference at Plymouth Polytechnic from April 12 to 14. Speakers include Professor C. O'Leary and Jennifer Todd, and the subjects discussed will cover the broad brush of the contemporary Irish political scene, north and south. Further details can be obtained from The Convenor, Neil Collins, Magee College, University of Ulster, Northland Road, Londonderry BT48 7JL.

IRISH LANGUAGE TEACHING PACK

An excellent new pack has reached the ISIB offices. The book and tape are written by Maire Muiread, who was previously a headteacher in the Gaeltacht. She is now a deputy headteacher with ILEA. The pack is suitable for beginners and can be obtained for £5.00 from Craigmore, 1 Clifford Avenue, Chiselhurst, Kent BR7 5DY.

THE 4th NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON IRISH DIMENSIONS IN BRITISH EDUCATION – 1987

On 14th February 1987 the Irish Studies Workshop at Soar Valley College organised and hosted the 4th annual National Conference on Irish Dimensions in British Education. This year the Conference aimed at involving teachers, parents, first and second generation Irish, Irish community organisations and interested academic institutions. We had two guest speakers: *Dr. Roy Foster* of Birkbeck College (University of London) and *Dr. Roger Austin* (Education Faculty, University of Ulster at Coleraine).

Roy Foster looked in depth at '*Anglo-Irish Relations from the 1880s to the 1980s*', analysing political and constitutional stratagems and attitudes to such ideas in both Ireland and Britain. In his introduction, Dr. Foster remarked that "An intractable colonial problem has been replaced by an intractable post-colonial problem ... More recently, the Hillsborough agreement has appeared as a constitutional realignment which may resemble in its importance the 1921 Treaty, or even the Act of Union." This talk was especially useful for teachers of and lecturers in history and politics, providing a broad analytical sweep of the major developments in Anglo-Irish relations over the last century. In concluding, Dr. Foster remarked:
"Hillsborough attempts, as so often over the last century, to reconcile idealized aspirations and irreducible political realities; it has attempted to do so with some subtlety, and a greater degree of constitutional innovation than on many previous occasions. This alone makes its shaky progress worth watching. But more is at stake than simply a speculative interest in constitution-mongering. The alternatives make it clear that what must be embraced is an acceptance of necessary limitations, and that such an acceptance must be made openly. And the only way that this may be made palatable is possibly by looking at history, and confronting the chaos that opened up when that effort, and that acceptance, were deliberately repudiated."

The second guest speaker, Dr. Roger Austin, dealt in some detail with the new *European Studies: Ireland and Great Britain* of which is Project Director. This is a six-year curriculum development initiative involving 18 secondary schools, 6 each in England, the Republic and N.Ireland. The Education Departments of all 3 area are involved in the development, which is aimed at humanities generally, with special reference to values education and information technology.

Essential to the Project is the joint investigation of historical and geographical topics by all participants; this will be achieved by means of both electronic mail and residential contact. Obviously, an enormous amount of money is being invested in information technology alone; one would hope that other schools in England which have been developing an Irish dimension before this initiative started, and have done so without virtually any injections of resources, will receive some tangible spin-off. In this respect, it appears to be the case that earlier work is not being built on as a foundation; also, some may argue that this Project ignores fundamental issues, such as the position of one Irish community in Britain vis-à-vis multicultural and anti-racist concerns. It may be that the ideological backcloth to the Project (asuming that all such initiatives are not acidents) prefers to situate the activity in an inter-European rather than a post-colonial framework which would then remove it from the current debates amongst the Irish in Britain on such matters as "revisionism". It will be interesting in time to evaluate the outcome for the schools involved, and for any "ripple" effects.

The attendance at this year's event was up to expectations, levelling out at around the 170 mark. We were pleased to have registrations from a cross-section of interests, and were especially heartened by the increase in attendance from those in higher education. Enquiries reached us from the University of Uppsala in Sweden, and from Tokyo; the Irish Studies movement is obviously coming of age.

Many of the participants indicated that they enjoy the seminars and workshops as much as the main guest contibutions. We could not hope to summarize adequately all of these activities, but this list might help to convey the varied offerings available:

JONATHAN MOORE: *Adult Education _ The Next Step*; improving the quantity and quality of Irish Studies Courses; asessing and overcoming the problem in this.

NOEL O'CONNELL: *The Irish Language _ 1886 and 1986*; to contrast the present hopeful state & revival with its virtual disappearance in 1886.

DR. ALAN CLINTON: The work of the *Polytechnic of North London's* Irish Studies Centre and its future development.

MARIANNE ELLIOTT: The work of the *Conference of Irish Historians* since 1976; its relevance to H.E. and wider developments in Irish Historiography.

SEAN HUTTON: *Recovering the Past _ Explaining the Present*; a description of History Workshop & Irish History Workshop Project & reflections on Irish Historiography.

SIOBHAN UI NEILL: *Teaching Irish Language*; courses, resources, problems of organisation, new developments.

DR. ROGER SWIFT: *Primary sources* for the study of the historical experience of the Irish in Britain.

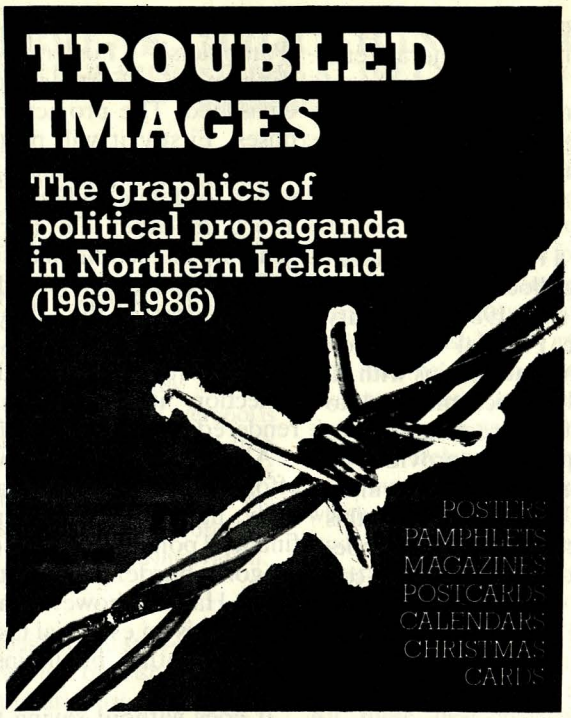
HILDA McCAFFERTY: *ILEA* and its attempts to meet the needs of the Irish community in inner London – the local politics of the situation.

DAVID CAIRNS & SHAUN RICHARDS: *Sean O'Casey and the A level Syllabus*; not only informative but entertaining.

RUTH DUDLEY EDWARDS: Are Academics Elitist? How can they be helped to deliver what Irish Studies students need?

All of the Workshops were well attended, especially the two dealing with Irish Language concerns. (There were so popular that we decided to run a special in-service Training Day for Irish Language Teachers last June; this attracted 32 people from around the country – and also a GRIST grant from the LEA. The tutor was Siobhan Ui Neill).

Another highly popular workshop was that which featured the work of the Irish Studies Centre at North London Polytechnic. This workshop defined what it envisaged as being 'Irish Studies' – especially welcome in the sense that it clearly wants to "link this to the needs and desires of the Irish Community." (This should, presumably, be well accepted by Mr. Baker and colleagues, the current champions of consumer power and pressure!) Alan Clinton went on to develop the Irish Studies Centre's plans on teaching methodology and structures, research and resources.



THE STREET LITERATURE OF THE TROUBLES

by Robert Bell

Robert Bell describes the Northern Ireland Political Collection, a remarkable collection of more than 35,000 items relating to the current troubles assesmbled by Belfast's historic Linen Hall Library. Since 1984 Robert has been Supervisor of the collection.

In 1969 Jimmy Vitty, Librarian of Belfast's Linen Hall Library, was sitting in a city centre bar when he was handed a 'Barricades Bulletin'. Initially, he threw it from him. Later he thought better of it and retrieved the item from the floor. Over the next pint, or so the story goes, the decision was made that the Library would collect the political ephemera of the Troubles. Whatever the mechanics it was an inspired decision.

Volunteers from the Library staff began regular vists into barricaded parts of the city, both Protestant and Catholic and soon unearthed a wealth of 'hidden literature'. A retrospective round-up of material was made back to 1966 to include the inception of the Rev. Ian Pailsey's *Protestant Telegraph* and of the Campaign for Social Justice in Northern Ireland's *Campaign Newsletter*. No one suspected that twenty years on, as the Library celebrates its own bi-centenary, that the province would still be in the grip of 'The Troubles' or that the Linen Hall's Northern Ireland Political Collection would expand to more than 35,000 items.

No other institution attempted to make a systematic collection of these local publications until the mid 1970s but by that time crucial early items and runs of newspapers and magazines were unavailable.

Today the Linen Hall's collection can be properly be seen as unique. Most of the material is not contained in any other public repository and given the nature of publishing organisations and the limited runs of many items it is inconceivable that such a collection could be assesmbled retrospectively. Further, and scandalously, the literature, including even the majority of substantial pamphlets, it is not recorded in any of the supposedly definitive bibliographies, that is on a UK basis the *British National Bibliography, in Northern Ireland the Northern Ireland Local Studies List* and in Ireland as a whole the *Irish Publishing Record*.

The collection covers an area of active and ever widening general, academic and public interest far beyond Irish shores. It is a rare day indeed when it is not consulted by someone. Frequently it is being consulted by several researchers at the same time. Over the past year alone it has attracted academics from Adelaide, Natal, Sardinia, Boston, Alabama, Aarhus (Denmark), Barcelona and Paris, not to mention those from British and Irish universities. It is often consulted by the media, recent clients including Radio Telefis Eireann (TV and Radio), BBC (NI), BBC (London), Granada TV, The Guardian, New Society and the Belfast Telegraph. Further and perhaps more crucially the collection is open to and often used by the citizens of Belfast and the North regardless of political persuasion or religious creed. The collection of political periodicals now numbers some 600 titles with over 12,000 issues. These range from a single issue of roughly duplicated broadsheets to complete runs of such papers as *An Phoblacht†Republican News*, or *Loyalist News*, and includes publications from the political parties, paramilitaries, the security forces, the Northern Ireland Office as well as communist, anarchist and fascist groups and those dedicated to 'peace'.

A collection of books, pamphlets, reports, etc. now approaching 3,000 titles is accessible via an author, title and subject card catalogue. 2,500 posters, hundreds of Christmas cards, postcards and a slide collection of the wall murals record the graphics of political propaganda. The Library staged an exhibition of this type of material in central Belfast last year under the title 'Troubles Images'. The response from the media and the general public was astonishing and plans are being made to tour the exhibition in Britain, Europe and North America. As a result of this exhibition an ever increasing number of art students and academics have made use of the collection in furtherance of

undergraduate and postgraduate degrees.

The collection houses over 20,000 more ephemeral items such as leaflets, handbills, election material, badges and even defaced coins. These, though not as yet individually catalogued, have been roughly organised by publihsing organisations such as the UDA, Sinn Fein, Democratic Unionist Party etc. or by theme, for example Hunger Strikes.

In the early days of the collection a remarkable amount was achieved without specific staffing allocation. Sheer size now requires particulr provision and since 1984 the Library has employed a Supervisor of the Political Collection whose job is to develop and maintain relationships with all those organisations who publish Irish political material, to develop cataloguing systems and offer direct support to clients. In recent years additional support was provided by the Government's Action for Community Employment Scheme but with the termination of this scheme this autumn, management of the collection remains a shoe-string operation. Nonetheless major plans for the collection are in hand. The microfiche of virtually the entire collection is now well advanced. This microfiche publication covering 1966-1985 is designed to supercede an earlier and more limited microfiche collection 'Northern Ireland Political Literature 1968-75'.

The first phase of the new project, 'Political Periodicals', should be on sale by early 1988 followed later in the year by 'Pamphlets', Posters and Graphics' and finally 'Ephemera'. Further possibly bi-annual updates are envisaged. The project will, it is hoped, serve three purposes. Firstly it will protect hard copies from extensive wear and tear. Secondly it will ensure access to a much wider academic audience and not simply to those who can afford the expense of a trip to Belfast. And thirdly it will generate an income to ensure the future of the collection.

The Department of Education (Northern Ireland) has recently granted the Library funds to initiate a programme of computerisation. In this the Political Collection will have high priority and it is the Library's intention that both the collection itself, and microfiche editions should be rendered accessible by high quality catalogues and indexes.

All this implies additional labour intensive and costly effort for a library which, as an independent and charitable body, has to raise its own funds. Viewed from a purely financial point of view the collection has been a serious and on-going burden to an institution that can ill afford it. The Linen Hall has however taken the view that, whatever the cost, this is an essential task, particularly in the light of the failure of other public institutions to collectin what is a crucial area.

It goes without saying that the Linen Hall would welcome any offers of help with this work. Equally we welcome visitors or enquiries by telephone or letter.

IRISH BREAKTHROUGH IN LIVERPOOL

THE NEW INSTITUTE OF IRISH STUDIES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF LIVERPOOL

Patrick Buckland

A major breakthrough is about to occur in Anglo–Irish relations. The University of Liverpool is establishing an Institute of Irish Studies which will help make the study of Ireland and Anglo-Irish relations an integral part of the educational system in England Wales.

The Institute, the first on the 'British mainland', draws on academic staff in the Faculties of Arts, Law, Science, and Social and Environmental Sciences in the University as well as Irish specialists in the neighbouring colleges, particularly Chester College and Liverpool Institute of Higher Education. Liverpool is favoured by proximity to Ireland, the presence of a large Irish population, and a strong tradition of the study of Ireland in the University and colleges. Above all, there is on the part of the seventeen members involved in the Institute a proven record both of research excellence and of academic leadership and innovation.

THE INSTITUTE'S PROGRAMME

The Institute's programme is an ambitious but realistic response to a widely felt need to put the development of Irish Studies in Britain on a firm basis, a need most clearly articulated by the energetic British Asociation for Irish Studies. Key elements in the programme include half a BA degree in Irish Studies, a part-time MA in Modern Irish Studies, and a development plan for Irish Studies in schools and colleges.

DEGREE COURSES

Both the MA and MA programmes will encourage the systematic and scholarly study of Ireland and its relations with the wider world, past and present. The approach will be multi-disciplinary and comparative, thus enabling students to distinguish between enduring and temporary features of the Irish experience, and to identify what is distinctive about Ireland and what Ireland has in common with other societies.

BA IN COMBINED HONOURS

The three-year undergraduate programme is an 'Irish pathway' through the BA in Combined Honours, one of the longest established Combined Honours programme in the country. Equivalent to half a degree, it will allow students to take five courses in Irish art, history, literature, politics, and social change. There will also be an opportunity to follow a 'non-Irish' course, such as, for example, Dark Age Britain, the city in Europe and aspects of modern British history, to help put 'Irish Studies' in perspective. Politics and Irish Studies, English and Irish Studies, and History and Irish Studies are expected to be popular combinations in the BA in Combined Honours.

MA IN IRISH STUDIES

The two-year, taught, part-time MA will encourage the advanced, scholarly study of modern Ireland and provide a springboard for research. A compulsory, double first-year course, probing the personality of modern Ireland, will provide a framework for more specialised work in the second year. Then students can concentrate on either the humanities or social sciences, or mix the two, when choosing their disssertation topic and two options. At first the options will be perceptions of the Irish in Britain, modern Irish literature, religion, violence in modern Ireland, and religion, law and politics in modern Ireland.

IRISH STUDIES IN SCHOOLS

Perhaps, however, the most exciting innovation is the establishment of a joint education programme with the British Association for Irish Studies. A genuine collaborative enterprise between the university, the teaching profession in schools and colleges, and representatives of the Irish community in Britain, it will give Irish Studies a higher profile in schools and colleges. The intention is at first to exploit the public examination system in England and Wales. Groups are already developing a GCSE syllabus in Irish suitable for England and Wales; a modular GCSE in Irish Studies, encompassing archaeology, economics, history, literature and language, politics, religion and social studies; and AS level in Irish history and literature.

It may be that there are sufficient 'initiatives' in schools at present. Nevertheless, intrinsic interest apart, the study of Ireland should be promoted in schools and colleges on broad educational grounds. Ireland and Ireland's relations with Britain form an important, and often neglected, part of the 'British experience' which is the object of study in schools and colleges. Moreover, the study of Ireland and Ireland's relations with the wider world illustrates a number of general concepts and issues of intellectual interest and contemporary concern, not least multi-culturalism, democratic change, and economic decline and development.

RESEARCH

All these developments are underpinned by wide-ranging research activity of the highest calibre. The Institute's research programme is concentrating at first on the study of early Irish society, Anglo-Irish relations, the Irish in Britain, and modern Irish literature and drama. It will foster new developments and encourage, where appropriate, collaborative work. New ground is being broken, for example, in a study of the impact of EEC social security legislation on the Irish community in Britain and also in a major collaborative study of the issues raised by the exploitation of the Irish Sea, involving scientists and planners in England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

NEED FOR PRIVATE FUNDS

Liverpol University is committed to the development of Irish Studies, but the full development of the Institute depends upon adequate funding. Public funding may become available. The British government is concerned to develop Irish Studies in Britain, and the UGC has described as 'admirable' Liverpool's proposed institute. However, the Institute is determined to make itself independent of the vagaries of the public funding of higher education in Britain. It is actively seeking private funding from individuals and organisation with an enduring and benevolent interest in Ireland and Anglo-Irish relations.

IRELAND'S OPPORTUNITY

The development of the Institute of Irish Studies at Liverpool must be a matter of urgency for all concerned with Ireland and relations between Britain and Ireland. The moment must be seized. The time right for the establishment of the first Institute of Irish Studies in England, Scotland and Wales. Interest in the study of Ireland has been growing. The educational system in Britian is in flux. Sufficient funds must be raised to secure the place of Irish Studies in the British education system and thus promote the mutual understanding and respect which are so vital to the peace of both Britain and Ireland.

ENROLMENT FOR COURSES AT LIVERPOOL UNIVERSITY.

The Institute is now considering applications for admission in October 1988 to courses leading to BA (Combined Honours) and the part-time MA in Irish Studies. For further details of the degrees and the work of the Institute, please contact:

Dr. Patrick Buckland, Director-Designate, Institute of Irish Studies, University of Liverpool, P.O. Box 147, Liverpool L69 3BX. Tel: (051) 709 6022, Ext. 2944.

INSTITUTE OF LINGUISTS - BRITISH ASSOCIATION OF IRISH STUDIES

JOINT PROPOSAL FOR AN IRISH LANGUAGE TRAINING AND QUALIFICATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

1. Background

The Institute of Linguists was founded in 1910 as a professional asociation of practising linguists in all walks of life, in order to stimulate and encourage the use of foreign languages in Britain. Since that time it has become the foremost specialist body providing qualifications in practical language use in the UK. It organises public examinations at five levels, from beginners to advanced, besides a number of specialist qualifications, such as those for translators, community interpreters and bilingual workers. The Institute is also responsible for running language examinations on behalf of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Home Office. In all, some 50 languages are currently examined by the Institute.

For the past 5 years or so the Institute has had a particular interest in promoting and supporting Britain's community language. A number of important initiatives have been taken in this area, such as the Community Interpreting Project, concerned with developing a reliable national service of interpreters working with the legal services, local authorities and the health service; and the Bilingual Skills Certificate, providing a foundational training for bilingual workers in the community. The full range of public examinations for learners of Britain's community languages is also provided, these are increasingly popular. The examinations are designed mainly for learners in further and adult education, in contrast to the normal school examinations run by GCE Boards. The two higher levels of examination — the Intermediate Diploma and Final Diploma — give access to Associate Membership (A.I.L.) and Full Membership (M.I.L.— of the Institute respectively, thus conferring professional linguist status on the holder.

The Institute has offered Irish examinations on demand for the past 20 years or so, but only a small number of candidates have sat the examinations. A link has now been established with the British Association of Irish Studies, to provide the qualifications, linked with courses in Irish being organised around Britain on a more regular basis.

2. The Proposal

The basic proposal is for the development of a linked training and qualifications package which will boost the status of Irish language learning in the UK.

Irish language learning is a vital part of maintaining the cultural heritage of people of Irish origin living in Britain: maintenance of an ethnic culture nearly always depends on the maintenance of the language through which the culture is expressed. That this is a popularly held view is evidenced by the current upsurge of interest in Irish language learning in the UK. The bulk of learners are second or third generation Irish who have only English as a mother tongue, but who wish to live out their cultural heritage more fully.

This enthusiasm for learning Irish is reflected in a comparable enthusiasm for teaching the language on the part of an increasing number of part time teachers in Britain. There are currently about 40 teachers giving lessons in Irish in mainland UK, and the number of learners is probabaly between 1,000 and 2,000. In London alone 16 courses are known to be running in colleges, schools and adult education institutes.

While the growth of Irish language teaching is impressive, and the enthusiasm of the teachers heartening, it is clear that there is a great need for consolidation of effort, coordination, development of teaching materials and the status provided by appropriate qualifications.

In December 1988 the Institute will offer, in collaboration with the British Association of Irish Studies, the following examinations:

Preliminary Certificate
Grade I Certificate
Grade II Certificate

These examinations are set according to a syllabus and standards which are common to all languages. The Preliminary Certificate is a simple test of speaking, listening and background knowledge which may be taken after about 150 hours of tuition. Grade I is equivalent to a good 'O' level, or GCSE Grade 3 or above. Grade II is equivalent to 'A' level.

The Irish examinations, as all the Institute's examinations, are aimed mainly at the adult learner, and concentrate on practical, everyday language.

If you are studying Irish at an adult education or evening class, you should ask you teacher which examination you should take.

Where can I sit the examination?

Most colleges of further and adult education are registered examination centres of the Institute of Linguists, and would be prepared to enter you for the exam. You should speak to the member of college staff responsible for examinations about this. If a number of people want to enter the examinations at the same college, they become a group entry. The Institute operates its own examination centre in London where anyone may take any Institute examination.

If you college is not a registered Institute of Linguists centre, they can ask us for an application form to become one.

How do I enter?

Give your name to the person in charge of examinations at your centre well before the closing date. This person will ask you to fill in an official entry card (we ask centres some time before hand how many entry cards theythink they will need). When you have filled in the card, give it, together with your entry fee, to the examinations officer to return to us by the closing date. You may be asked to pay a special "centre fee" in addition to your standard entry fee.

The closing date for group entries through a centre is 15 October.

The closing date for individual entries is 30 September.

If you are an individual entry, you will probably sit the examination at our London centre. Write to us asking for an entry card; you will have to return it to us with your fee

(and the additional fee for the London centre) by the closing date.

When you have entered we will give you a candidate number and return a portion of your card to you (via your centre if you are entering through a college). This will tell you when and where to report to take your oral test. Make sure you arrive at both the oral and written parts of the examination on time.

When does the exam take place?
The written examinations will take place on Wednesday 7th December 1988.

The timetable for the written parts is as follows:

	Part II	Part III	Part IV
Preliminary	11.15 – 11.35	13.30 – 14.00	
Grade I	10.15 – 11.00	13.50 – 15.00	15.00 – 16.00
Grade II	9.30 – 10.00	10.30 – 12.00	13.60 – 16.00

The oral examinations will take place within 5 days of the written parts; you will receive details of the exact time of your oral test when you entry card is returned to you.

What is the fee?
The for Winter 1988 session the fees are:

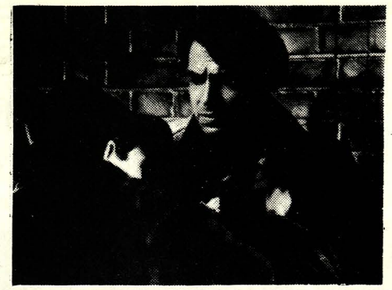
	Entry Fee	London Centre Fee
Preliminary Certificate	£12.00	£6.50
Grade I Certificate	£16.50	£6.50
Grade II Certificate	£21.50	£7.00

Where can I get further information?
You can order copies of the syllabus, past examination papers and additional guidance notes from the Institute on the yellow order form. Past papers in Irish are only available for Preliminary level; papers for all levels are, however, available in all the common European leaguages for comparison.

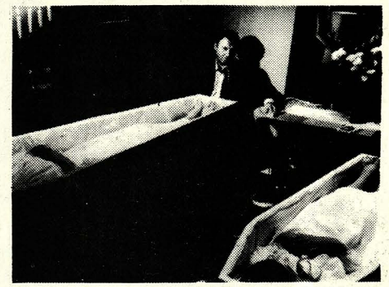
The Informer

Cal

Ascendancy



Odd Man Out



Hennessy

The Outsider

THE CINEMA OF THE TROUBLES

Jonathan Moore

The most stereotypical image of Northern Irish political violence in the modern cinema is contained within the last few frames of the 1979 film, "The Long Good Friday". The gangster Harry Shand, played by Bob Hoskins, is held by the IRA in the back of a car. All one sees of the IRA man is a face which has a cold, calculating stare on it. This image is central to the overall cinema picture of the troubles. Violence in Northern Ireland is the result of sinister, slightly unhuman men. Politics doesn't really come to it.

This vision of the troubles was clearly to be seen in a short season of films on the troubles screened at the National Film Theatre last summer. The season was chosen by the distinguished film critic Quentin Falk and his choices are unsurprising. In terms of drama there was very little for him to choose from. There are only two major films which have been ommitted. Pat Murphy's "Maeve" and the Welsh language movie "Boy Soldier". What is left falls clearly into the typical image of Irish violence. There is little attempt to analyse the reasons behind it, it can best be explained in terms of individual character and revenge.

A quick glance at Falk's selection bears this out. Included is the 1975 British film "Hennessy", which tells the tale of a Northern Nationalist, played by Rod Steiger, whose family is killed by the British army. Hennessy had previously refused to involve himself in Republican violence but now he seeks revenge, and the rest of the film involves his futile plan to blow up Parliament. The central problem of all this is not only the total lack of suspense and tension in the plot, it is the view that personal bitterness and revenge is the central factor in Northern violence. In the same genre as this is Neil Jordan's "Angel". This is altogether a better film, there being no doubt about the quality of Stephen Rea's central performance. However once again, the driving force behind the violence in the film is revenge. Danny (Rea) is driven by the senseless murder of a young girl by Republicans, into a gruesome trail of carnage and violence. According to the director, "Pull out a gun and things cease to be in your control."

The problem with all such depictions of violence is that the audience is left with an image of violence as thoroughly apolitical. Violence is seen as a force that is outside political sense and which is always destructive. This may be a comforting thought, but it hardly helps us to understand the real forces underpinning the movement of Irish history. The question that really remains is why so many ordinary people are prepare to resort to violence.

In many ways the lack of such films is surprising since post 1969 Ulster surely contains many of the vital ingredients that make up successful commercial films; violence, passion, courage, barbarism, intolerance, decency and indecency. Yet so little has been produced. This has not always been the case. Hollywood had previously made a series of films about Irish history; "The Informer", "Captain Boycott" and "The Plough and the Stars". Romantic and soapy such offerings may have been, but they are a lot better than anything that has been made post 1969 in the States.

The recent controversy about Mike Hodges' film "A Prayer for the Dying" may throw out some light on why Hollywood has rarely dared to tread on the modern Irish troubles. The film was originally meant to get behind Republicanism by examining the dynamics of the process. It was above all supposed to explain what made Republicans tick, and do so in a vaguely sympathetic manner. However this version of the film never saw the light of day, what emerged was a version of "Rambo goes to Belfast". Quite simply the American producers believed Hodges' original film was too long, too complex and too uncommercial.

Clearly there is a problem here, any serious attempt to analyse the Northern tragedy has to get beyond images of deranged bombers and embittered madmen. However in the context of the Englishspeaking cinema, thoughful political films are rare. There are exceptions to this. The most notable example is "Maeve", which focuses on the traditional these of an emigre returning, this time to her native Belfast. Maeve wants to confront the complex realities that face her. As a recent book on the Irish cinema* has argued; "Instead of giving way to the kind of generalities which smooth over the complexities of the Northern conflict, "Maeve" focuses on the social and political issues, locating them in their precise historical and territorial contexts."

Unfortunately as Quentin Falk was only too ready to admit, such cinema does not put "bums on seats". At the end of the day cinema has a duty to make a commercial return. Perhaps that is the central problem.

A compromise was reached with "Cal", Pat O'Connor's stylish 1984 movie starring John Lynch and Helen Mirren. The film was not only complex and political but commercially successful as well. It places the character of Cal in the context of an ex-IRA volunteer who is trying to escape from his past. However in Ulster the past is too powerful to escape from and he is engulfed by it.

Art has a responsibility to explain the present, but cinema appears unwilling to take on this responsibility. The Irish cinema is too small and the American cinema too interested in action for action's sake. It ought to be left to the British cinema but here another problem arises. The self-censorship on the Irish question which dominates most sections of the British arts and media scene will not go away. The paranoia about the showing of "Real Lives at the Edge of the Union" on BBC in 1985, is but one example. The film was not banned because it would act as a recruiting message for the IRA, no-one who has seen it would claim that. It was banned because it attempted to explain why two ordinary men, Sinn Fein's Martin McGuinness and the DUP's Gregory Campbell, were in violent opposition to each other. The idea of rationally explaining actions which can all too easily be identified as irrational, was something which went against the stereotype and therefore was a threat. In such a cultural context, the journalist, the film maker or the playwright is swimming against the tide if he is to make a serious contribution to the debate on Northern Ireland. It is usually far easier to keep your head down.

*Kevin Rockett, Luke Gibbons and John Hill **Cinema and Ireland** (Croom Helm, 1987)

STILL DESPERATELY SEEKING AN IRISH FEMINIST PLAYWRIGHT

Ann Rossiter, Chris Panks and Mary Sexton

Anne Devlin

Jointly organised by Camden Adult Education Institute and the Irish Studies Centre at the Polytechnic of North London, the first ever course on **Feminism and Ireland** has just come to a successful conclusion. Although many issues central to Irish women both in Britain and Ireland were covered, Anne Devlin's stage play, "Ourselves Alone" was studied in depth. Interest in the play was fuelled by a proposal for its inclusion on an ILEA GCSE literature syllabus from Chris Panks, who attended the course. The play was assessed in particular for its presentation of the women characters, but also for any insights it might provide the British school or college student on its setting – Andersonstown, West Belfast in the post-Hunger Strike period. Reproduced here is a short extract from a class discussion between Chris Panks, Mary Sexton and Ann Rossiter, the course tutor.

Chris: As a representative from Hammersmith and West London College on an ILEA Literature Consortium comprising twelve Inner London Colleges, this year I submitted a list of twenty-six female dramatists, Black and white, in an attempt to have implemented the ILEA's guidelines on anti-racism and anti-sexism. There had never been a female dramatist on the Consortium's curriculum before, nor indeed a Black one, male or female. Outside the ILEA the situation is hardly better with onlyone female dramatist, Shelagh Delaney, represented on the GCSE Boards' lists for England and Wales. Having finally wrested the concession of one woman being allocated a place, it was hard to choose. I decided on Anne Devlin's "Ourselves Alone" partly because its English production in 1985 was critically acclaimed, and also because the number of prestigious awards it received would help heighten its acceptability. For myself, it was important not only to have a female dramatist, but a play about women written from their own viewpoint and in a contemporary political situation.

Ann: In this respect the play seems to have all the necessary ingredients: three women talking and joking amongst themselves have the stage for a considerable part of the time. All are from a Provisional IRA family. Josie, the most committed is an arms courier; her sister Frieda, hairdresser and would-be singer, is disaffected and turns her back on her family and the Provos; Donna, the sister-in-law, is political but inactive, passively absorbing and mediating her sisters' opposing positions while waiting for her man to be released from the Kesh. Patriarchy in differing forms is represented through the male characters – oppressive father, husband, brothers and perfidious lovers. All the major political issues of Northern Ireland are present – religion, sectarianism, nationalism, anti-nationalism and socialism. With such a dynamic mix, does this play provide a window on the world of Republican women in the 1980s?

Mary: Unfortunately, I feel that all the characters, male and female, conform only too well to the usual stereotypes associated with Northern Ireland, and the student may well believe that the views offered by Anne Devlin are universally true of Republican women's conditions in the ghettoes of West Belfast. My concern stems from the way in which the Irish are generally portrayed in the teaching of history, sociology and current affairs in British schools. As a women from Northern Ireland with two children being educated here, I face this problem on a personal level. Both children have had to confront the standard view of, say, the Great Famine being the result of primitive Irish agricultural practices, the conflict in Northern Ireland as merely an outgrowth of religious fanticism, and women there as the passive recipients of male violence and the dictates of religion. Even when aware of alternative analyses, it takes a confident and assertive pupil to challenge the teacher's authority on such matters. So, any British student is likely to arrive at this play with a fixed set of assumptions about the Irish which unfortunately will not be challenged. All the female characters seem ultimately to lead into a dead end.

Chris: This is a position I have also arrived at on a closer reading of the play. Initially, I was attracted by the women characters – their sharp, witty dialogue through which they confront the gender issue; the fact that women were centre-stage in a situation such as "the Troubles", where they might well be marginalised. Although the playwright clearly set out to depict three very different women, they all end up in very much the same boat. All are shaped by their relationship with men, confined to the passive role of victim of romantic love, which appears more oppressive even than the British state. The politics of each is "personalised", not in the feminist sense of seeking to understand and change the power relations in all aspects of a women's life, but in the reactionary sense of trivialising her political beliefs by making romantic love almost her only motivation and grounding. Josie's activism is obliterated by her representation as the dupe of two men, Cathal ("six months ago I'd have died for you") and Joe, by whom she's pregnant but of whom she makes no demands ("You don't have to worry about me, Joe, I've got two

hearts.") But her brave stand, alone with her future child-to-be, is undercut by a vision of dependency, as she is taken away under the dubious 'protection' of her father. Frieda, too, despite her seeming independence and swagger, dreams eternally of romantic love ("I'd like to think if I loved someone I'd follow that person to hell.") Donna, whose house is their meetingplace, is equally masochistic; she seems to see love as an eroticization of pain ("We're all waiting for men, Josie.") Her door is kept open to Josie, not so much out of sisterliness, but because "you have Liam's eyes." These women, albeit warm, witty, defiant and dogged are all ultimately defeated: Josie, betrayed, retreats from the political arena to rear her baby and plant a garden; Frieda removes to England where she can "sing her own songs", and Donna, despairing of happiness, resumes yet again her endless wait for Liam, who has been re-arrested. There is no vision of collective action or autonomous sense of women acting together – they can agonize but not organise.

Ann: I am very surprised at a seemingly feminist play concentrating exclusively on the defeat of women, both at a personal level and in the wider context of Northern Ireland, when the reality in the Catholic ghettoes is somewhat different. Regardless of her political position, I think the playwright could hardly ignore the fact that from July 1970, when 3,000 ordinary working class women broke the Falls Road curfew imposed by the British army, large numbers of women have been at the forefront of social and civil liberties agitation. In retaliation against the introduction of internment without charge or trial in 1971 women organised a rent and rates strike which involved 23,190 households at its peak. So successful was it that the state introduced the Payment for Debt Act 1971, under which Family Allowances were the first state benefits to be confiscated, a clear attack on the women concerned. Then there were the women-dominated campaigns against the use of CS gas and rubber bullets, against the house searches (of which there were 203,349 between 1971and 1974) and the activities of the Relatives Action Committees in the lead-up to the hunger strikes of 1981/83. Even the Peace Women who came into being in Andersonstown, do not feature. Indeed, little or none of this activity touches the women in "Ourselves Alone". We do hear bin lids being rattled by women vigilantes announcing the army's presence, but in the distance. Josie, who might realistically have been a member of Women against Imperialism, the nationalist-feminist grouping, confines herself to a mere fantasy world in which she become her man's "warrior lover, fighting side by side to the death."

Mary: Without doubt many of the conflicts involved in male/female relationships raised here are real, but sadly the opportunity for a dynamic portrayal is squandered. If the women are weak and vulnerable, the men are uniformly brutal. Whether their brutality is innate or derives from the war is not made clear. Whichever way, this image neatly fits the stereotype of Republican men. On reading this play the student must surely condone Josie's comments, which might well be the play's message, "when the British withdraw we can be human." Anne Devlin is one of the first **published** women playwrights writing about contemporary political events in Ireland, but I believe she has not given dramatic expression to the voices of change which are so many Irish women's today.

Ourselves Alone with **A Woman Calling** and **The Long March** is published by Faber & Faber at £4.95.

CAPTAIN BOYCOTT IN THE 1980's
Theatre-in-Education and Irish Studies
Brian Keaney

When I was first approached by David Zoob of the Electric Theatre Company, a theatre-in-education group based in south east London, and asked to write "a piece about Ireland", I was delighted, despite the vagueness of the request. In nearly ten years teaching in ILEA, I had seen no theatre-in-education that dealt with the Irish experience. David Zoob explained to me that they had just finished touring a play looking at the rise of Fascism, centred around the siege of Cable Street, and they wanted another piece which was similarly rooted in a particular event while casting light on a historical movement. They also wanted, he added, a play that gave the audience the opportunity to judge and assess its characters.

I went away and had a long look at the new GCSE History syllabi and then I cam back to David with a number of suggestions. One of these was the ostracism of Captain Boycott in County Mayo in 1881. Some of the other events I had picked on seemed a bit esoteric but the Captain Boycott affair, I felt sure, would be familiar to most people. To my suprise David Zoob had never heard of Charles Cunningham Boycott and was completely ignorant of the origin of the word which is used with tireless regularity in the media and in everyday conversation. Neither had the other members of the company.

A little more research indicated that the events on the Lough Mask estate which highlighted the evils of rack-renting were practically unknown to anyone who was not either a History scholar or of Irish background. The reason for this soon became clear. Very little has been written about Captain Boycott since Phillip Rooney's romantic novel of the same name, subsequently made into a film. The first encyclopaedia which I consulted informed me that boycotting was "a pernicious form of selective dealing developed by tenant-farmers in the West of Ireland in the 1880's." It was admittedly a fairly dusty tome but its attitude of righteous indignation at such near Bolshevism was echoed more faintly by other reference books. At best I found pasing mention of his ruin in History text-books dealing with "the land-question" in Ireland.

The obvious place to start for me, as a writer of fiction not a scholar, was with the historical romance. It was an entertaining jaunt in which Charles Boycott, a tight-lipped Englishman, falls in love with a young woman. The child of a disgraceful passion between a Society Lady and Lord Erne's groom, she is intelligent, since and beautiful; butthe shame of her birth is widely known. The match is forbidden by Boycott's wealthy and wizened mother who will only release the money that he urgently needs to solve his deepening financial crisis if he makes a suitable marriage.

Needless to say, this is all charming nonsense. Boycott was already married when he came to Ireland, a country in which his mother never set foot. My first difficulty was to establish a more credible character for Boycott. Clearly he was not the man of Rooney's romantic imagination; neither could I believe in him as a tyrant who took delight in other people's misery. From Joyce Marlow's study, "Captain Boycott and the Irish' I learnt that he was not very good at communicating with people, and there is a suggestion that this was to blame for some of his problems.

In the museum of the British Library I discovered a record of the correspondence between Lord Erne, the landlord, and the tenants of Lough Mask estate. Here was something much more specific. Boycott, they complained, had fined tenants a penny per head for every one of their hens that trespassed on his grass farm. A man who charged hens with trespass was more than just the victim of his own taciturnity. When the pillars of his gate were knocked down he went to court and was empowered to levy a charge on his tenants for their repair and for his legal costs. The tenants protested bitterly that the damage had been done by a stranger since it happened on market day. The truth was impossible to establish but the parallel with some contemporary industrial dispute over the rights of the management to seek redress against workers immediately struck me. I began to feel justified in casting Boycott as a primitive Thatcherite.

It was essential, however, that the play should not be primarily concerned with Boycott's downfall. He was, in a sense, a man in the wrong place at the wrong time. It was more important to show the development of the Land League and the way in which misfortune created the conditions which enabled it to size upon the imaginations of tenant farmers.

Halloran, the man at the centre of the play, is not a political animal. He has time for the land League only in so far as it serves his purposes. When the play opens he is casting envious eyes on his neighbour's farm. I wanted the audience to realise that the oratory of Parnell was directed as much against the landgrabbers within the tenant community as against the landlord. It was when a man took a cottage from which another had been evicted that Parnell ordered his followers to shun him "in the shop ... on the fair green ... in the market place ... and even in the place of worship."

The central theme of the play, then is the tension within the tenant community. When everyone is in the same boat they can choose to row together or fight for possession of the best seats. The chief difficulty I encountered in presenting this was the problem of making it comprehensible to school students, most of whom are utterly ignorant of Irish history. Boycott imported Protestant labourers from the North to do the work no local people would do. To convey the reality of this outrage without simplifying cultural issues was daunting. Parnell himself was a Protestant of course; but what do the terms Protestant and Catholic mean to the average English teenager? No more, perhaps, than shadowy notions about terrorism and bigotry on the streets of Belfast. How was I to get over this without producing a text burdened with unlikely expositional dialogue, the sort of script in which everybody conveniently explains their own personal history to everyone else?

Part of this problem was overcome by the device of Sergeant Benthan, a soldier from Stepney Green. He is the piggy-in-the-middle who begins firmly convinced that the Irish are mad and is slowly won over to a more qualified position. Part of it will also, hopefully, be solved by the workshops with which the play ends. Unlike Performance Drama, Theatre-in-Education is primarily conceived of as a teaching aid. At the end of the play certain issued remain unresolved. The actors, remaining in role, invite the audience to question them, to discuss motivation and possible solutions. They argue with the audience, often in such heated debate that the students forget that these are, after all, only actors.

THE MAKING OF "IRISH NIGHT"

Patrick O'Sullivan

Late in 1986 I was approached by the Bradford-based Major Road Theatre Company. The idea was that I should act as consultant or adviser to a project they were planning.

Major Road is a small touring company. The Hull Trucking Company, of which you may have heard, is the same kind of beast. Major Road is what theatre folk call a hire-and-fire company. There is a small administrative team, led by Graham Devlin, the Artistic Director. The Company has no permanent theatre of its own, but takes drama out to a remarkable variety of venues. Each project, each play, is built from scratch; the writer is hired, the cast, the musicians, the stagehands are hired. And ultimately fired. That is the way of theatre folk. All you with tenured university posts, think on.

Major Road has a tradition of using what are essentially the techniques of oral history to construct plays. Real people are interviewed about their real life experiences, and those interviews are recorded. What those real people have said, in their words, is used to make a play. This play is not simply a drama documentary. The aim is to create a vital theatrical experience, the kind of experience that only theatre can give. But that experience, remains firmly based on what real people have really said about their real lives. And part of the project, for Major Road, is to take those experiences back to the people, to give the communities, as it were, a gift of their own history. The performance of the play leads to discussion ... and argument.

Recent projects have included "Echoes from the Valley", about mill-workers in Airedale, and "From Hand to Mouth", about village life in the Yorkshire Dales. "Echoes from the Valley", written by Garry Lyons, toured extensively in England and the United States. Another Garry Lyons play, "Mohicans', about punks in Leeds, has just been filmed by Yorkshire Television.

Graham Devlin and Garry Lyons had pondered for some time the possibility of making a play about the experiences of Irish people in England. As the name "Devlin" suggests, they had both found that when they explored their own origins they found some Irish there. Such is the reputation of the Company that no sooner was the project announced than interest was aroused. The highpoint of the first tour of this (as yet unwritten) play was to be a full month, December 1987, at the Tricycle Theatre, Kilburn. Alas! The Tricycle Theatre burnt down this summer. A sadness, yes, but also, let me say, a personal insult.

I was interested in Major Road's way of working. It offered much to historians, those "captives of the pre-existing sources". To sociologists it offered a way to the heart of the debate; to activists a way of giving that debate back to the community.

The method we used in this project was based on Daniel Bertauz's nice mix of oral history and life history models: or, if you will, oral history and social work models. We used what Paul Thompson calls "an especially searching type of interview": two interviewers, one an "insider", the other an "outsider". I was the insider and Garry Lyons, the playwright, the outsider. In some interviews with women Marise Rose, Major Road's own researcher, was the outsider and Ann O'Grady, of the Irish in Britain History Centre, the insider. We covered the spread of generations and opinions, we covered the debate.

What debate? My feeling was that many interesting things were happening in Irish communities; things to do with being a more confident people in a perhaps less confident, but anyway more ethnically diverse, Britain. There seemed to be an exploration, a re-negotiation, of the whole business of "Irishness". There are signs in the formal literature: I cite Philip Ullah's "Second-generation Irish youth: identity and ethnicity". Sometimes our interviewees would pause and say, "In my opinion *The Irish Post* has a lot to answer for ..." Yet the very success of *The Irish Post* is a sign of change.

Another new thing, of course, is the newest wave of young immigrants. I don't think the implications of that wave have been absorbed by the Irish communities in Britain. Indeed, the implications are loaded with terrible anguish and joy, as I can confirm from my researches in London and Dublin. This new wave explodes into our complacency. What is demanded is examination not only of the facts of emigration but of emigration as ideology. And here I have in mind a recent paper by Kerby A. Miller, "Emigration as Exile: Cultural Hegemony in Post-Famine Ireland."

The play is now written, the cast of young Irish musicians and performers is hired. The first tour is arranged. Note, with a gulp in the throat, as yet no London venue. The first aim of the play is to put the debate on the stage and give it back to the Irish communities. But will they respond? Perhaps that is the second part of the research.

Were there any surprises? Yes, there were, many, but they should be saved for the play, and more formal papers. But I'm, afraid, as we plan a play that is about the joy of being Irish, what I recall now are the tears. Interviewees would become tearful halfway through the interview, and at the end would thank us for taking their lives seriously. And once, during an interview with a group of hopeful young people recently arrived from Ireland, I glanced across the room and saw my collaborator, Garry Lyons, weeping quietly in the corner.

"Irishnight"
a play with music
written by Garry Lyons in collaboration with Patrick O'Sullivan

SOCIAL STUDIES AND THE IRISH CRISIS

Alan Morton — Edge Hill College

Over the last two decades the interventions of the British State in the North of Ireland have been exceptional. We need only refer to Internment (1971), Direct Rule (1972), The Diplock Report (1973), and the Prevention of Terrorism Act (1974) to understand some of the earliest policy decisions which have set in motion a range of institutionalised strategies which have had a profound influence on a broader authoritarian shift within the British State in general, that is the 'normalisation' of special powers. Incredibly these developments, with their histories set in colonial rule, have received scant attention in the course profiles of most academic institutions outside Ireland. Whilst other contradictions of the British State have been extensively examined by social science, the Irish dimension has remained relatively invisible. The failures of journalists in the face of misinformation and obsessive state secrecy have been documented at length, but there has been little debate about the limitations of academic work. It can be suggested that academic analysis has contributed to, if not compounded, the problem of neglect by choosing to ignore vital developments within the British State. It is often argued that this neglect reflects a profound disinterest by students in Irish affairs. At Edge Hill College in recent years, there is ample evidence that students of all ages and backgrounds in higher education urgently require that this complexity, these controversies of state policy, be seriously addressed within a social sciences context. What follows evidences these developments.

1n 1984 the first part-time M.A. course in 'Crime, Deviance and Social Policy' began with 30 students. After a first year foundation course involving studies in Social Theory, Research Methods, History and Social Policy, students opted for two subjects from a choice of five options. The most popular choice was the course on Criminal Justice which comprised four related blocks; Policing, Women and the Law, Ireland and the Normalisation of Special Powers and Crises within the British Prison System. Unit three of this course surveyed the political and economic management of Ireland since the 12th century; the partition of Ireland and the construction of a para-military state in the six counties; the 1960's Civil Rights Movement and the response of the Protestants; the escalation of violence; the army in aid of the civil power; riot control and media management; British political policy and military strategy. The central concern of the course was to contrast the shaping of 'emergency legislation' with the sacrosanct tradition of the rule of law and the concept of British justice.

The literature on Northern Ireland, let alone the wider canvas of 'Britain and Ireland' runs into several thousand entries as an examination of the 'Social Science Bibliography of Northern Ireland, 1945-1983' (1983), edited by Bill Rolston, makes clear. It is important to stress that the influences on this course have been many and from a variety of disciplines and perspectives. However, it is possible to acknowledge the importance of certain work for course development. The initial stages were grounded in the work of Boyle, Hadden and Hillyard (e.g. 'Law and the State', 'Ten Years on in Northern Ireland'), and owe a particular debt to Paddy Hillyard's later work connecting Northern Ireland to policing in England. Other important influences were the writings of the British Society for Social Responsibility in Science group with the publication of 'The Technology of Political Control', by Ackroyd et al, as something of a watershed. The work of Phillip Schlesinger ('Putting Reality Together', 'Televising Terrorism'), Liz Curtis and the Information on Ireland Group, Walsh and Gifford on the law and state policy in Northern Ireland, added momentum to the course. The major debt to course development is owed to the various publications of the Conference of Socialist Economist writers, Liam O'Dowd, Bill Rolston and Mike Tomlinson (e.g. 'Between Civil Rights and Civil War'). More recently the critical political and economic analysis of C. Desmond Greaves and Anthony Conghlan (e.g. 'Fooled Again') have helped create an understanding the location of British policy within a wider European and international context.

This course did not emerge overnight. It's origins lie within the diversification of a College no longer solely committed to teacher training but the preparation of students for work in a wider range ofprofessions and occupations. This can be traced back to the mid 1970's when a sociology course focusing on 'Contemporary Social Issues' began to critically consider news construction and necessarily ran head on into the debate about the media and Ireland. To treat such a debate in isolation from historical, political, economic and legal analysis seemed manifestly unsatisfactory to both staff and students alike. The enthusiasm for course development saw one lecture on the media in 1978, become a term's course on Northern Ireland by 1984, and parallel with this development came the emergence of Critical Criminology courses. The inspiration here was Phil Scraton and his work spearheaded developments in Criminology at both undergraduate and post-graduate levels (see such publications as 'Causes for Concern', 'The State of the Police', 'In the Arms of the Law' and 'Law, Order and the Authoritarian State') and it was he who encouraged the more extended consideration of emergency legislation and the normalisation of special powers. Such developments necessitated the construction of a two term undergraduate third year course which saw students from the 'Criminology' and 'Contemporary Issues' options jointly following a 44 hour block of lectures dealing with both the history and contemporary analysis of the relationship of 'Ireland and the British State'. In line with the frequently expressed needs for courses which do not pathololgise the Irish and their history, this course could be retitled 'Ireland's British Question'. It is taken mainly by English students, some of whom have Irish family connections, as a course drawing on a mainly Merseyside/Lancashire catchment would suggest, but the distinctive feature of the work is the systematic examination of the record of the British state. The popularity of the course would seem that it opens up public debate about issues to which most British people are seemingly denied access. In the three years it has run between 20 and 40 students have regularly followed such work, and the momentum for further development within the degree programme has been built by fieldwork trips to Dublin and Belfast.

Here then is the evidence of Edge Hill's ten year period of curriculum development. A further indication of the demand for such work is that the applications from people in a range of public service professions for the next M.A. course beginning in 1988 has already reached 100 and the official publicity has yet to be circulated. The location of Irish Studies within the wider context of an analysis of the British State would seem to be the lesson to be drawn from this case study.

DAVITT IN OXFORD

John Dunleavy

VISIT OF MICHAEL DAVITT TO OXFORD. This individual will lecture on Home Rule at the Clarendon Rooms, next Tuesday evening, under the auspices of the Russell Club

Oxford Times, 13.III.1886

The prospect of a visit by the 'father ofthe Land League' elicited mixed reactions from the city and the university. Responding to an invitation from university Liberals, Davitt was the guest of Harold Spender, a student at University College. Davitt had enjoyed sympathy and support from a section of the university since the 'land war' had brought him to national attention. But not everyone regarded Davitt in the same light as Spender and the Russell Club: The *Oxford Times* was one of a number of journals which disapproved of him. Others went much further in their hostility, denigrating him and all he stood for. *Punch*, which had a long record of antagonism to Ireland, did not hesitate to ascribe much of the unrest in the sister island to the Land League.

Few people were neutral in their attitude to Davitt: he was either loved or loathed. The Land League, his own creation, an extra-Parliamentary force, had been suppressed in 1881, and Davitt acquiesced in this a year later when he threw in his lot with the Parnell-sponsored National League, which was subordinate to the Parliamentary Party. Davitt, the ex-Fenian who had served two terms of imprisonment, was drawn into the constitutional movement. As the unrest continued, the London *Times* became convinced that although the Land League was no more, it was now operating by other means, whether it be the National League, the House League, or whatever. As the originator of 'Leaguery' Davitt was singled out as a dangerous man, and *The Times* embarked on a vendetta against him which they pursued until the day he died.

The announcement of Gladstone's acceptance of the principle of Home Rule early in 1886 came as welcome news to Davitt and other recent converts to the constitutional cause. Precise details of the bill were still not known when Davitt spoke in Oxford on March 16, but the speculation was intense. Feverish debates had been in progress among the Irish Nationalists since the winter, and Davitt proved to be one of the most assiduous protagonists. Home Rule was not independence, falling far short of what many Irishmen desired, but Davitt made it clear in his speeches that he felt inclined to believe the measure was the most that could be expected from Westminster in the circumstances. The refusal of Lord Hartington to serve in the Government, and the imminent departure from the Cabinet of Chamberlain and Trevelyan no doubt encouraged many Nationalists in their conviction that Home Rule would assume a form acceptable to most of their fellow-countrymen.

Excitement had been rising steadily since Gladstone had resumed the premiership in January: by March, with details of the Home Rule Bill expected any day, the political temperature appeared to be nearing boiling point. The foresight of the Russell Club in engaging the services of Davitt – the man the *Oxford Times* considered to be the real power in Irish politics, capable of manipulating even Parnell – was looked to with eager anticipation. Sufficient tickets were sold to fill the Assembly Room. Those who went along to the meeting expecting to see a "political firebrand" (to borrow a label from the *Oxford Times*), or even a creature resembling Punch's strange hybrid were to be disappointed. The late T.W. Moody, in *Davitt and Irish Revolution*, describes Davitt as being possessed of a tall, lean figure, large expressive brown eyes, jet-black hair and beard, who had an alert, soldierly bearing' physically he was very impressive on the platform. As a speaker, however, Davitt was a comparative novice, having only developed the technique of what he termed lecturing since his release from penal servitude in 1877. Possessed of a deep, resonant voice, contemporaries remarked on his pronunciation with broad vowel sounds and the blurred 'r' which owed more to his long residence in Lancashire than to his native Mayo.

In his speech Davitt vindicated Ireland's claim to self-government, and was especially keen to allay the fears of the British public as to the consequences of Home Rule. Far from speeding the disintegration of the Empire, Home Rule would strengthen its unity, he asserted. The religious minority could be protected if it was felt necessary by special safeguards, with power to intervene being rserved by the Westminster Parliament. As for Ulster Davitt expressed amazement at the licence enjoyed by Lord Randolph Churchill during his recent forey into the province: for using less violent tones he had been sent to prison! Davitt ridiculed the idea that the Irish did not really want Home Rule which he ascribed to the effectiveness of the propaganda of the Loyal and Patriotic Union. The recent election had resulted in the return of eighty-five Nationalists, and only eighteen candidates opposed to Home Rule: who could seriously claim that Ireland's mood was not for Home Rule? Gladstone's plan was not solely political: there was to be a Land Act as well, and Davitt regarded this as a vital accompaniment to the settlement, otherwise a fundamental cause of the discontent would remain. Davitt was plainly gratified with the reception he received, and he admitted in his concluding remarks that he had come to Oxford with some misgivings at having to face

what was likely to be an audiencemade up of "terrible dons" and "awful critics", whereas he was greeted with understanding. A number of dons were present, as were no fewer than eighteen female students: a noteworthy item a century ago!

The *Oxford Magazine* considered that Davitt had enjoyed a good reception: how could it be otherwise, the journal enquired, when "Oxford men are always ready to hear a straightforward man, whom they can trust, and who speaks them fair." *The Oxford Times*, on the other hand, was not quite so pleased. Conceding that Davitt had "acquitted himself adroitly ... he was moderate ... and he presented the best case he could. The meeting – a packed one, by the way – listened to the Lecturer patiently, applauded sometimes, and behaved in an exemplary manner." But was it really necessary, the editor enquired, to accommodate "the ex-convict" in a college? While the subject of the meeting was enough to make that "loyal and patriotic Englishman" Lord Russell ... turn in his grave.

That there were Oxonians who shared the sentiments of the *Oxford Times*, Davitt was to discover on his return to University College. Before the morning Davitt was to learn that some Oxford men preferred to employ non-intellectual means to show their disapproval of him. One of the weapons employed by his adversaries was that of "screwing up" the outer door to college rooms where he was believed to be staying. Once secured, the perpetrators asembled in ther quadrangle with whistles, trombones, horns, cymbals, tambourines, trumpets, rattles, bells, and drums, and proceeded to serenasde the overnight guest with what one observer described as a most discordant and unearthly noise. Later, when it was realised that Spender, but not Davitt had been "screwed up", the band re-assembled outside his window, repeated their earlier performance, and rounded off their programme with 'God save the Queen.'

Davitt liked to speak of his brief though stormy political career, and no doubt the aftermath of his Oxford visit fell into the latter category. In retrospect, given the highly-charged political climate in 1886 he did quite well, He had found it hard to get a hearing in some places, while his meetings had been broken up by free fights on a few occasions. The last week of university term is traditionally the time when students like to let off steam and indulge in "frolics", and it could have been that Davitt came in for rather more attention than if he had chosen to come at some other time. Davitt's hopes were high on coming to Oxford that reason and justice would lead to Home Rule, putting an end to the Anglo-Irish difficulty: the rejection of Gladstone's scheme a few weeks later ensured the continuation of strife and sporadic violence.

TÍR GAN TEANGA, TIR GAN ANAM

Seoirse Ó Broin

Inniu feictear an fhadhb in Eirinn-cé sinne agus cá bhfuil muid ag dul. Maith go leor, tá cuid mhór daoine ar a sáimhín suilt ag fáil airgid as an Chómhargadh nó áir ar bith eile gur féidir déirc a fháil.

Ach cá bhfuil ár mbród? Bhfuil na daoine óga ag fágáil na tíre ag dul buíochas a thabhairt don tír nach bhfuil saor na Gaelach? Nach suarach an scéal é a bheith i dtuilleamaí teanga eile, córais eile. Tá 'inneall an dúnmharaithe', a labhair Mac Piarais air ag obair anois ag milleadh na féinmhuinine a bhí againn go gcaithfimíd ar n-oidhreacht a dhíluacháil chun coinneáil suas leid an chonairt, mar a luaigh Percy French sa amhrán 'Mountains of Mourne' – Chuir mé gártha molta, Dia ár sábhail, ar nós gagh duine eile.

Nach bhfuil sé amaideach nuachtáin ghallda shuaracha ag teacht isteach in Eirinn níos saoire ná na nuachtáin dhúchasacha a bhfuil cáin orthu? Tá sé cosúil le fear atá tuirseach den bheanchéile deas atá aige, go hifreann leis an dílseacht!

Sa tír seo Sasana, fosta, tá an dearcadh céanna ag déanamh dochair. Ar shiúl leis na bláthanna, cuirimíd concréid síos, níl am againn bláthanna a chothú agus tá easpa na háilleachta ag cur daoine in ospidéil meabhair, agus i bpriosúin de thoradh slada.

Is fearr an tsláinte ná na táinte! Sin cuid den fháth do mbíonn Eireannaigh sa tír seo ag fulaingt go minic le meabharghalar. D'fhág siad tírdreach álainn le cónaí i bhrochóga gruama i Londain, gan cuidiú ó ghaolta nó chomharsana.

Cuidíonn an dearcadh Gaelach leis an áilleacht, is fuath leis an tsaint atá ceangailte le neamhshuim den duine agus den timpeallacht. Cad is fiú corp gan anam-tír gan teanga? Féach an Eireann indiaidh Acht na hAondachta, conas a thárla an Gorta mór, agus b'fheidir go bhfuil ceacht le foghlaim as an stair. Caillteanar an Ghaeilge ag an am chéanna leis an sprid agus acmhainn na beatha.

BOOKS

RECENTLY PUBLISHED BOOKS

Seachrán Ruari agus Dánta Eile by Sean Hutton (Coiscéim, £2.00)

Reviewed by Robert Welch

Seán Hutton's *Seachrán Ruairi agus Dánta Eile* has won the O Riordáin Prize. Hutton is a poet who has been working steadfastly in Irish for many years now and this new collection shows him to be a writer who is pithy, straightforward, precise and, on top of that a careful craftsman. He keeps his eye on the object, so that his objectivity, his desire to convey the correct contour of a thing, or a state, or a feeling, acts like a filter so that the emotion runs true and clear. The opening poem of the volume, entitled 'Athchuairt' ('Revisit'), is a kind of intellectual and psychic cleansing. Using the idea of clearing away trees that have become overgrown around a house, the poem opens out to light, clarity and turns aside from rumour, shade, whispering and fear. It is a brave poem, accurately stated, and is a prelude to a collection which tries, continuously, to clear away rubbish, debris, cliché and fear in order to see things for what they are. A series of poems describe personal reactions to city life and to contemporary society and Hutton discovers a capacity to celebrate some surprising aspects of urban life, aspects which often evoke unease rather than joy. He celebrates, for example, the rowdiness and anarchy of punks:

> Tá na barbaraigh ag scaaileadh múin
> le geatác meirgeacha na Cathrach

My translation:

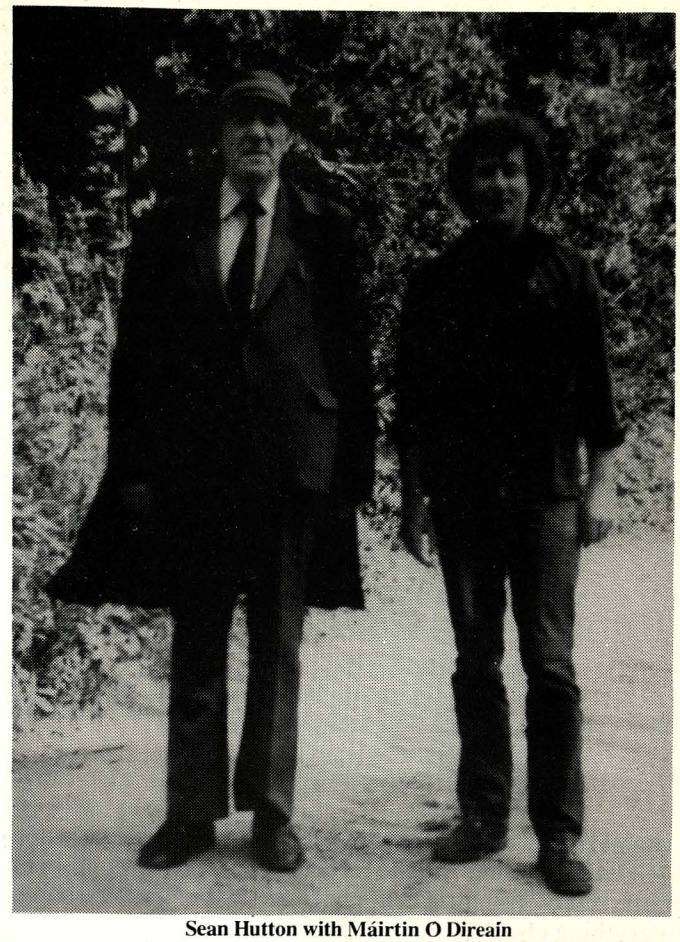
> The barbarians are pissing against
> the rusty gates of the City...

Or in 'Na Balbháin Fhireanna' ('Mute Males') he writes of how grace and beauty manifest themselves in the agitated inarticulacy of young men out on a spree. I give the whole poem in my, very imperfect, translation:

'Mute Males'

> At the corner outside Ann's Cafe
> the mute teenage gang of plunderers
> speaks an heroic patois of terse signs:
> In the mime, zips are opened, organs
> directed, there's pushing, then a waterfall's
> released. Keeping up this pantomime
> one handsome, forceful mute extends
> his hand, to escort the beauty who's
> carrying fish and chips, in a perfectly
> abrupt mimicry of Chaplin.
> The eloquent muteness of the violence
> halts all affectation of speech in
> this harsh company, around which
> is fluttering the banished dove of gentleness.

A quiet and incisive poem reveals Hutton's distrust of subjectivity and narcissism. The falls is envisaged a solitary affair, with Eve away. When she's away, Onan has a free hand:



Sean Hutton with Máirtin O Direain
One of the founders of modern Gaelic poetry.

'The Fall'

> The garden was
> the place where it happened:
> an orchard,
> and Eve away.
>
> The murmer of the stream
> from the sources,
> the slow eyes gazing into
> the reflection's perfect ease.

At this point the mood of the collection changes and poems turn to more public concerns. A superb poem, about Hugh O'Neill ('Sionnach na Fódea) in exile in Rome reminds us how O'Neill refused to despair and how, with his drop taken, he'd look forward to better days for Ireland. Another poem, 'Duine dár Laochra', describes a visit to Captain Dermot MacManus in 'Harrogate an ghalántais' ('Harrogate of the Grandeur') where the old patriot had a statue of Pan and an AE painting on the wall. This poem is tactful, honest, human and clear-eyed at once. Some fiercely political poems follow which, almost entirely, keep the didactic under control in order that the human voice remains dominant.

The book's second half, from which it derives its title, follows a stroll ('seachrán') or ramble that Roger Casement made through Dublin in 1911. An account of this walk was published in *The Black Diaries* (1959). Hutton's aim here is in line with the rest of the collection and this series of poems bring the personal and the political into focus in a narrative where past and present, individual and social can fuse, and they do so very effectively.

Here are measured, passionate and strong poems about Sir Edward Carson, Douglas Hyde, The Unknown Gombeen, James Connolly, Michael Mac Liammoir and Hilton Edwards. The atmosphere of this sequence is strong; in that Hutton can convey the inner mood of city as it strikes him and yet relate that to how the city of Dublin affected others in the past. One of the loveliest poems, and my own favourite in the book, is 'Bothar Burlington II' ('Burlington Road II') which I give in my own, again halting, translation:

'Burlington Road II'

Here, amidst the high glass buildings,
the droning beehives of usury,
where windows, like hundreds of eyes,
stare down, suspiciously,
there's a nineteenth century lane
with deep doors and heavy supports:
makeshift unbeautiful resting places
for Diarmuid and Gráinne.

A monumental arch
without ornament or inscription
in the middle of a secluded lawn
the same height as a person:
a memorial for this pair?

Sean Hutton is a poet of depth, sensitivity and clarity. He stresses the value of the objective and knows one of poetry's secrets, that it is things of life that have to be sung. Everything else depends on that.

Robert Welch is Professor of Literature at Ulster University.

LettersFrom the New Island: Fintan O'Toole 'The Southern Question' (Vol 1, No 1); Colm Toibin 'Martyrs and Metaphors' (Vol 1, No. 2); Michael O'Loughlin 'Frank Ryan: Journey to the Centre' (Vol 1, No. 3). Raven Arts Press 1987. ISBN 1 85186 035 5/6/7, £2.50 ea.

Peter Breen

'Letters from The New Island' is an attempt by Raven Arts Press to publish a series of pamphlets which will stimulate cultural and political debate within the Republic of Ireland. Judging by the first three pamphlets the series has been motivated by a disenchantment with not only the depressed state of contemporary political entity. Indeed, the 'New Island' of the title appears to be an image of disassociation arising out of a desire to place the polemical consciousness of the pamphlets within the bounds of a new political vision.

In 'The Southern Question' O'Toole takes has his theme the enduring disparity between the imagery of Irish political rhetoric and the political realities of the Republic. In modern political life it is Charles Haughey who is presented as the villainous practitioner of this deceitful art. O'Toole argues that Irish politicians have for too long conceived of Ireland in terms of an imagery of faith and devotion to land, church and nation. It has been used by successive generations to conceal the failures of the political economy manifest in recurring employment and emigration, urban deprivation, the lack of indigenous industries and the multinational expropriation of revenue. Believing these abstractions of nationhood to be under increasing presure due to their exclusivity and unreality, the writer's hope is for a political rhetoric which will coincide with political realities. Only when this becomes the case can the Irish Republic move beyond an abiding sterility.

A different kind of failure is discussed by Colm Toibin in 'Martyrs and Metaphors'. He argues that Irish literature, despite widespread acclamation, has failed to create a fiction capable to depicting a future vision of Ireland. Modernism, the one vigorous literary movement in Ireland this centry, hermetically sealed itself off from the public world by concerning itself with states of mind rather than states of Ireland.

Unfortunately, the quality of his discussion is undermined by the fragmentary and capricious nature of the pamphlet. The caprice is evident in such idiosyncratic and largely unsubstantiated statements as 'The most influential figure in shaping the Irish political psyche has been Thomas Moore' and 'The take-over of the GPO and the publishing of a poem are similar forms of (political) action.' And quite what all this artistic expression has to do with martyrs and metaphors is never clearly explained. One is left to deduce the possibility that just as acts of martyrdom in Irish history constitute political narrativesso the writing o a visionary narrative may be construed as a political act.

The figure of Eamon de Valera casts a shadow across all of the published pamphlets. For O'Toole and Toibin he is the chief spokesman for an insular and repressive Ireland. Michael O'Loughlin in 'Frank Ryan: Journey to the Centre' is more elaborate in his criticism. He reprsents de Valera's evolution from nationalism and the presidency of Sinn Fein and the Irish Volunteers to chief statesman of an insular and restrictive Republic as a retreat from a potentially liberating political vision. Frank Ryan is presented as a contrasting version of Irish political development.

Ryan's nationalism evolved to incorporate socialistic and international issues into his political consciousness. Marginalised in Ireland he went to fight in the Spanish civil war and so moved into the centre of European politics. Eventually he was to die in exile in fascist Germany. No more, on the one hand, than a 'footnote' in Irish history, on the other he is an alternative version of Irish political identity. O'Loughlin would like to see the marginalised politics of Europe challenge the insular and narrow hegemony in the Irish Republic, to develop a new political centre on what is now the periphery.

One can't help but compare this pamphlet series to that of its Northern Ireland predecessor, the Field Day pamphlets. While the Raven Arts essays do not match the incisive artistic appeal of the Field Day series whose writers include Seamus Heaney and Tom Paulin, they are nonetheless to be welcomed for their stimulating contribution to the political and cultural debate in Ireland. I await with interest the next additions to this series.

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