

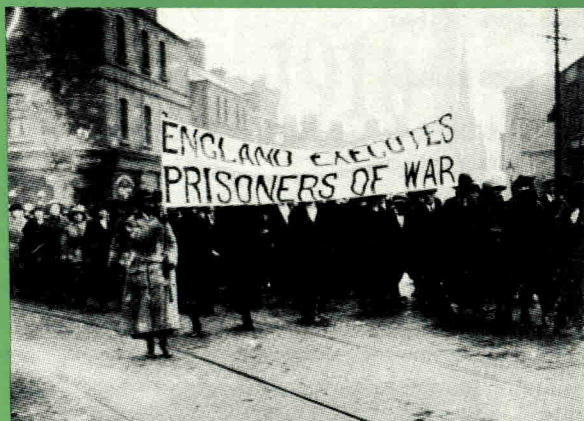
An Pobal Éirithe

The Risen People



No 5

75p



From 1916

To 1991



75 years of struggle!

● *Getting Votes For Exiles - Raymond Crotty*

● **Women and 1916**

● **A Visit to Palestine**

● **IBRG Review**

● **An t-Éirí Amach agus Gael Londain**

**Special
Supplement:**

**A Further Bibliography of the
History of the Irish in Britain**

The Magazine of the Irish in Britain Representation Group

Príomhált

Another goal of the Irish community in Britain has been achieved with the release of the Birmingham Six. As the men walked to freedom, Irish people everywhere celebrated their long awaited victory while ordinary English people asked *"what is wrong with the legal system in this country?"*

In the same week, we heard that the poll tax was to be scrapped. These two events are further proof of the power of ordinary people to move governments and achieve justice. Without the two campaigns, the Birmingham Six would still be in jail and the Poll Tax would continue unchallenged.

The use of this power must be maintained and focused. The judicial system has not changed and will not reform itself. No reforms will ever guarantee justice for Irish people on political charges because the roots of this injustice lie in the relationship between Britain and Ireland and Britain's occupation of the North of Ireland. Innocent Irish people - and people from other ethnic groups, including working class British people - continue to be jailed and campaigns on their behalf and pressure for reform must be maintained.

Our main focus however must continue to be the ending of British control in Ireland. This year we celebrate the 'Spirit of 1916', as we mark the 75th anniversary of the Rising which led to the ending of direct British rule in the twenty six counties.

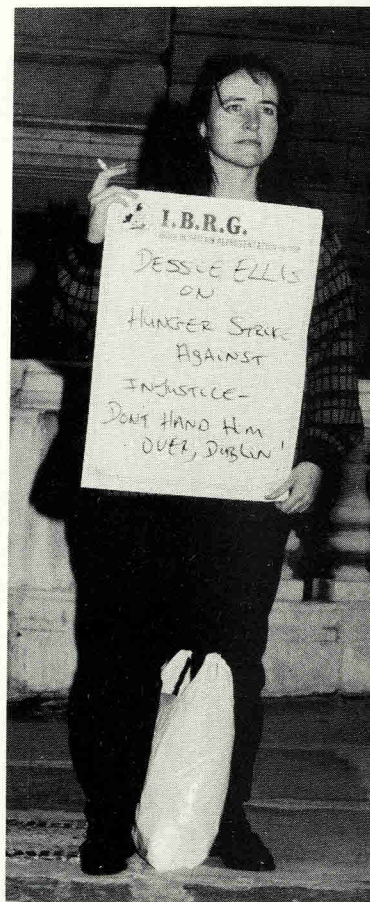
In the spirit of 1916, inspired by the freedom of the Birmingham Six and the knowledge of the power of ordinary but determined people, let us rededicate ourselves to the only goal which will guarantee justice for Irish people - ***self-determination for the Irish people as a whole.*** ▲

The editorial board reserves the right to edit journalistic articles and to refuse to print articles.

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The editorial board respects and upholds the rights of all people and will especially promote the rights of all Irish people including heterosexual women and men, lesbians and gay men, travellers and settled dwellers regardless of class, religion, race, colour, ethnic group, nationality, citizenship, place of birth, age and disability. Any article which contravenes this policy will be rejected.

THE WOMEN OF 1916



Somebody (probably a man) once said that the achievements of women are highly acclaimed at the time of their action, but are rarely remembered afterwards and are very rarely recorded.

This statement almost certainly applies when the events of Easter Week, 1916 are recalled. All too readily we talk about Pearse and Connolly - the 'Men of Easter Week', the 'Boys of the Old Brigade'. But very little is ever said of the women who were active during that week. I remember a woman telling me how angry she was on a visit to Kilmainham jail, when the guide passed by the cells where the Cumann na mBan women had been kept, with barely more than a passing acknowledgement of their existence.

One of the striking features of 1916 and the War of Independence that ensued, was the part played by the women of Cumann na mBan and the Citizen Army. Some, like the Countess Markievicz and Margaret Skinnider, took an active part in the fighting of Easter Week. Some loaded ammunition into the guns and stayed by the men's side throughout the week. Dr Kathleen Lynn served as medical officer with the battalion in the College of Surgeons. Others, like Louise Gavan Duffy, stayed in the GPO all that week, helping the men fight in every way they could. Most acted as auxiliaries, having been specially trained in nursing and first aid. A small number were given the dangerous duty of carrying dispatches from post to post. Each woman who took part in Easter Week remembers her role with pride and some were frustrated that they couldn't do more.

The following is an attempt to record the events of the Rising through the eyes of

three women active during that week. This has been put together from reminiscences in a radio interview made some fifty years later, when they recalled the roles they played during one of the most significant weeks in Irish history.

If these stories are recounted in a matter-of-fact way, this is how the women themselves told them. The danger they were operating under is barely mentioned, but we can take it as fact that there was risk of arrest or death every time they stepped out into the street.

Leslie Price

Leslie Price, later to become Bean de Barra, after marrying General Tom Barry, was one of those who were given the job of delivering dispatches throughout the week.

Leslie's family were a strong nationalist one who were, however, never very communicative about their beliefs. Her mother and father were strong Parnellites and when he died they turned their attention to Sinn Féin. When the Volunteers started in 1913, her two brothers joined at the first meeting. At the time Leslie was at the Dominican Training College in Belfast. She returned to Dublin in 1915.

During that year, Leslie attended O'Donovan Rossa's funeral with her family. Standing at the corner of the Mater hospital she saw the funeral procession coming by and recalled: *"I saw Tom Clarke, Pearse and all the Volunteers carrying rifles and I said to myself, this looks serious. It was the serious look of the men and of course, Pearse's oration at the graveside that did it."*

On the following Tuesday night Leslie was received into the Ard-Chraobh of Cumann na mBan in Parnell Square, by Mrs. Tom Clarke.

One of the things she was taught in Cumann na mBan was first aid and nursing. Prior to the Rising the women were busy making field dressings and had extra classes in first aid, although they were completely unaware of the imminence of the Rising. It was also at this time that they initiated the Defence of Ireland Fund, which organised the collection for the army and the equipping of the Volunteers.

Leslie knew something was going to happen on the Thursday before Easter Saturday as, when leaving the Ard - Chomhairle (executive committee) that

evening a prominent member in the organisation said to her: *"You know, Leslie, the Rising is to take place on Saturday."* It came as a complete surprise to her.

On Easter Saturday Leslie's two brothers were out and about Dublin, gathering in arms and so on for their own men. That same day everyone was aghast at the countermanding order of Eoin MacNeill, which was printed in the Independent newspaper.

The following day, Leslie received a note from the secretary of Cumann na mBan telling her not to leave home and to stand by for that day and the next. About 10.00am on Monday morning she received another note, this time telling her to report to the corner of Blessington Street, which she did immediately. There she found other women of Cumann na mBan waiting for orders. They waited and waited until after noon, when Leslie became so fed up that she decided to go down to the GPO and see what she could do there. Accompanied by a friend, she entered the GPO where she saw Tom Clarke and Séan MacDiarmada in a small office. He beckoned them in and told them immediately that they were going to be couriers.

Leslie's first task was to go to the Hibernian Bank at the corner of Abbey Street and take charge of Cumann na mBan there. They spent Monday afternoon making tea for the Volunteers. That same day the man in charge of the unit at the Bank, Tom Weafer, was shot as Leslie was standing alongside him at the window.

Every night when it got dark, Bríd Dixon and Leslie used to be sent with ammunition and dispatches to Ned Daly in the Capuchin Hall in Church Street and they would then take messages from him to Tom Clarke. The men had broken cavities in the walls from the GPO to where Arnotts now stands. Leslie and Bríd would climb through the cavities and come out onto the street. On the second night there Séan MacDermott gave them two officer's canes with steel tops and they were told to use them if anyone touched them. The two women were made officers during the week, but not in recognition of their bravery. The only place they could get something to eat after returning from their deliveries was the commissariat, but only officers could go in there so Séan MacDiarmada said they were to become officers. Leslie always said afterwards that they were made officers on the "battlefield".

On the Thursday of Easter Week Tom

Clarke called Leslie to him and told her to go to Marlborough Street Church and bring back a priest. As she made her way through the streets some women shouted at her: "Go home girl, you'll be killed. The British are in the Education Office." But she carried on and when she reached the presbytery she banged on the door with the heel of her shoe. For many years afterwards Leslie remembered her anger at the priest when he refused to go with her because the GPO was full of socialists and communists who didn't really want a priest. He did eventually go with her, but it took her a long while to forgive his attitude towards the men and women who were fighting.

On Friday evening everyone was called before Pearse and told to line up. He told them they had to evacuate all the women. They were extremely reluctant to leave, but followed orders. After taking the wounded to Jervis Street hospital they came across a barricade of British soldiers. They were called up by the officer in charge and were told they were all prisoners and were to be taken to Broadstone. There they were questioned. Whilst marching to Broadstone, Louise Gavan Duffy had whispered a story to all the women, to say that they were students from the nearby Eccles Street convent, who had been hijacked by the Volunteers and told to go into the GPO. This they all did and were released. They made their way to the convent just in case they were followed, where the nuns gave them tea and cakes.



GPO, O'Connell Street

After the Rising, the women organised parcels of food and clothing to take up to Richmond Barracks. All the widows rallied round. Tom Clarke, who in Leslie's eyes was the best man Ireland had ever produced, had left some small amounts of money with his wife and with this they organised collections and revitalised Cumann na mBan.

Leslie became Director of Organisation for Cumann na mBan and she travelled throughout the country, helping to organise the resistance movement. It was through this that she met General Tom Barry, who was the leader of the West Cork Flying Column and a legendary hero of the war against the Black and Tans. The couple were married in 1921. Tom Barry took the Republican side in the Civil War and was imprisoned in the Curragh for a while. Later the Barrys settled in Cork, where he was appointed a general superintendent with the Cork Harbour Commissioners in 1927. Neither of them ever wavered in their republican beliefs and allegiance.

Leslie was a member of the Irish Red Cross society from its inception in 1939 and became chairwoman in 1950. She was decorated by the Irish, German, Italian and Dutch governments for her outstanding service to the society and in 1978 she received the International Committee's highest award, the Henri Dunant medal. She was also national president of Gorta until her resignation in 1968, was an active worker in the Gaelic League and chairwoman of Erinville Hospital for five years. The National University of Ireland conferred the honorary degree of LL.D on her when she was in her seventies.

Leslie Bean de Barra died in her eighties in poor health on 9 April 1984, four years after her beloved husband. Remembered more for her work with the Red Cross and Gorta, it's a pity that no awards were bestowed upon her for her part in the Rising, nor was there any real recognition for the dangerous work she carried out during Easter Week.

Like Leslie Price, Julia Grenan was a member of Cumann na mBan who came out in Easter Week and was given the duty of carrying dispatches from post to post. She was, however, one of the women who were not evacuated from the GPO and who stayed until the final surrender.

Julia heard about the Rising on Easter Saturday night, when she was visited by Roddy Connolly who told her the operation was definitely on. He mobilised Julia and her lifelong friend, Elizabeth O'Farrell for Liberty Hall, where the Citizen Army were in occupation. Being members of Cumann na mBan, this surprised Julia and Elizabeth, especially when they got there and James Connolly told them they were to be attached to the Citizen Army.

"We saw no objection to this", said Julia, betraying something of her feelings towards Cumann na mBan and the Volunteers, "because the Volunteers weren't taking any notice of us: they didn't care whether we were there or not."

On the Monday morning at about 3.00am, Máire Peroltz and Charlie Power came to the house with dispatches, of which Julia got three messages. She was to go to Dundalk and Carrickmacross with dispatches for Patrick Hughes.

Julia went to 7.30am Mass on Easter Monday morning and then went to catch the Northern train. On the train she saw a group of young girls, one of whom was Nóra Connolly, the daughter of James Connolly. Knowing that Nóra was also on active duty, Julia went over to her when she got out at Dundalk, as Nóra was leaning out of the window and she said: "I hope that the next time that we meet, it will be in a free Ireland."

Having completed this mission successfully, Julia then went on messages around Dublin. One job was to take a dispatch to the Four Courts. She later found out that these were orders to blow up the Linen Hall.

On another occasion, Julia had to take a letter to the Commander of the British Forces in Ireland, saying that the British had blown up a Red Cross Unit on the far side of O'Connell Street and that if this happened again, something would happen to the British hostages they were holding.

The day James Connolly went out and came back wounded, they knew nothing about it until he was brought back in. He told them he had gone out to place three

men in outposts in Middle Abbey Street and on his return, while stepping back to see if the men were in their positions, was shot. One of the first comments he made when he was brought back in was to Julia. He said: "*When I was lying there in the lane I thought of how often you two went up and down there and nothing ever happened yez!*"

At the end of the week, when the GPO was evacuated, Julia, Elizabeth and Winifred Carney were told to stay behind. When they too evacuated with the remaining men, they ran from the Post Office, zigzagging across the lane and into a house on the corner of Moore Street, where they found James Connolly lying on a stretcher. While Elizabeth was delivering the message of surrender from Pearse to the Commander of the British Forces, Brigadier-General Lowe, Julia was doing her best to nurse James Connolly. She recalled him handing over his command to Séan McLoughlin, just before the final surrender.

After the surrender on O'Connell Street, Julia was arrested and spent Saturday 29th April on the plot of grass in front of the Rotunda hospital along with 400 prisoners in a space that could properly accommodate less than half that number. Afterwards, she was confined to Kilmainham Jail. During her imprisonment, she heard volleys of rifle fire on four consecutive mornings, as the leaders were being executed.

Julia was released on 9th May and afterwards she lived quietly with her comrade, Elizabeth O' Farrell. They collected money regularly for Republican prisoners and their families and they attended every Republican function in Dublin.

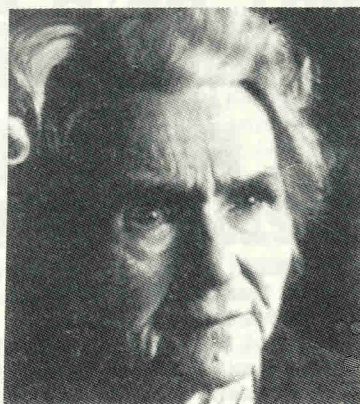
Julia Grenan died in her late seventies on 6th January 1972 in St. Monica's Nursing Home. She is buried in Glasnevin Cemetery in the same grave as Elizabeth O' Farrell. They are buried near the Republican plot, not in it, because they would admit of no compromise with the Republican ideal and to them the Republican plot was a compromise. Their grave faces that of O'Donovan Rossa, a fitting place for two women who devoted their lives to the Republican cause.

Nóra Connolly-O'Brien

Nóra Connolly, the daughter of James Connolly, shared her father's ups and downs to the full. When she was a small

child he would take her with him to political meetings in Dublin. Later, when the family emigrated to America, Nóra worked as a milliner in New Jersey. They then moved to New York where Connolly founded the Irish Socialist Federation. He started a monthly journal, 'The Harp' and Nóra became business manager, looking after the affairs of the paper while her father was away on frequent lecture tours.

The Connollys returned to Dublin in 1910. While canvassing for elections, Nóra saw for herself the poverty and misery of the working classes living in the tenements. She recalled telling her father how horrified she was by the conditions and he replied: "*It is because of these things that we are working. We have to change all that.*"



Later, when the family moved to Belfast, Nóra worked in a warehouse. She organised the Belfast branch of Cumann na mBan and joined the girls branch of the Fianna. With some friends she founded the Young Republican Party and designed and made their banner, a rising sun on a green background with the name of the party in white letters.

After the Howth gun-running in 1914, Nóra was sent to America to the heads of the movement there. Her father told her: "*Five people are in danger of being hanged if the message is discovered - one of them will be yourself.*" Nóra accomplished her mission successfully.

Another time she was sent to England to find Liam Mellows and bring him back to take part in the Rising. He had been deported from Ireland after a term of imprisonment. She found him near Stoke-on-Trent and arranged his return to Ireland disguised as a priest.

As a member of the Citizen Army, Nóra saw the role of women as far more equal than the women of Cumann na mBan. Their influence of the Citizen Army gave the women far more equality than in later

years. The women in the Army were drilled with the men, listened to the same lectures and paraded together. Nóra saw the Volunteers as more secretive and not inclined to include the Cumann na mBan women in their plans.

During Easter week, Nóra was outside of Dublin. She had been sent to the North with various messages, hoping to get the sympathisers to rise out. She spent most of the week very frustrated.

"*I remember being in Coalisland in an hotel*", she recalled, "*and a man rushing in saying, 'Where are the first-aiders?'*" Nóra stood up and she was told a man was wounded. It turned out that he had only shot himself in the thumb. After bandaging him up another man clapped her on the shoulder and said "*You're the one for us.*" "*Fine*", said Nóra, "*but how do you know but that I want to make holes, not plug them!*" He smiled and said "*Come with us and we'll let you do both.*"

While waiting for the word, the local organiser in Coalisland had gathered all his group in a big barn. Men were sitting everywhere with rifles and bandoliers. They were all waiting for the word, but of course it never came.

When Nóra decided to make back for Dublin with her sister, Ina, they got as far as Dundalk by train and then had to walk, as only the military were allowed on the trains. They spent the night in a field, shaking with the cold. Near Balbriggan they took off their shoes and stockings, plunged their feet into the cool earth and dozed off. They were awakened the following day by the thunder of gunfire.

When the sisters reached Swords they were met by a platoon of British soldiers coming towards them, carrying their gun carriages and rifles. Nóra recalled saying to her sister: "*Ina, Ina, they are marching away. They must be winning in Dublin.*"

"*The picture in my mind was of a success that seemed so possible, so real.*" Unfortunately, the sad and brutal reality was waiting for them in Dublin.

They finally reached Dublin on the Saturday. Limping into Drumcondra, Nóra decided to go to the home of family friends, the Ryans. There were many people standing at doors and looking towards the city. There was a horrible smell of burning in the air.

When Nóra asked the Ryans what was happening, she was told: "*They're all surrendering.*" "*My father?*" she asked. "*He's wounded. He's dying*" was the reply. Nóra saw her father twice before he was

executed, the last time on the night before his execution, when she had to calm her distraught mother who found it hard to believe that her wounded and dying husband would be executed.

Nóra found the aftermath suffocating. "You were never free of the power of the enemy that had defeated you" she said of the atmosphere on the streets of Dublin.

After Easter Week, Nóra went to America and told her story of the Rising to huge, enthusiastic meetings. When she landed in England on her way home, she was served with an order forbidding her to go to

Ireland. She remembered that the Lord Lieutenant had written: "It is utterly impossible and extremely inadvisable to allow you to return to Ireland." She evaded the prohibition by disguising herself as a boy and hiding in the dark, stuffy forecabin of a cargo steamer during its 35-hour passage across the Irish sea.

She was active in the General election of 1918 when Sinn Féin swept the country. Then came marriage not long before the Treaty of 1921 and imprisonment in Mountjoy and Kilmainham jails during the troubled times that followed.

Like Leslie Price and Julia Grenan, Nóra Connolly-O'Brien was vividly aware of her own role in the Easter Rising, but saw it all as her duty rather than any act of heroism. She would glow with pride at any mention of her father and this pride comes out in her writing in 'Portrait of a Rebel Father'.

It is to be hoped that sometime in the future more will be recorded about the parts played by the women of 1916 and that they will be remembered alongside the men in prose, poetry and song. ▲

Linda O Saobhair

Proclamation of the Irish Republic Easter Monday, 1916

POBLACHT NA H EIREANN. THE PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT OF THE IRISH REPUBLIC TO THE PEOPLE OF IRELAND.

IRISHMEN AND IRISHWOMEN: In the name of God and of the dead generations from which she receives her old tradition of nationhood, Ireland, through us, summons her children to her flag and strikes for her freedom.

Having organised and trained her manhood through her secret revolutionary organisation, the Irish Republican Brotherhood, and through her open military organisations, the Irish Volunteers and the Irish Citizen Army, having patiently perfected her discipline, having resolutely waited for the right moment to reveal itself, she now seizes that moment, and, supported by her exiled children in America and by gallant allies in Europe, but relying in the first on her own strength, she strikes in full confidence of victory.

We declare the right of the people of Ireland to the ownership of Ireland, and to the unfettered control of Irish destinies, to be sovereign and indefeasible. The long usurpation of that right by a foreign people and government has not extinguished the right, nor can it ever be extinguished except by the destruction of the Irish people. In every generation the Irish people have asserted their right to national freedom and sovereignty; six times during the past three hundred years they have asserted it in arms. Standing on that fundamental right and again asserting it in arms in the face of the world, we hereby proclaim the Irish Republic as a Sovereign Independent State, and we pledge our lives and the lives of our comrades-in-arms to the cause of its freedom, of its welfare, and of its exaltation among the nations.

The Irish Republic is entitled to, and hereby claims, the allegiance of every Irishman and Irishwoman. The Republic guarantees religious and civil liberty equal rights and equal opportunities to all its citizens, and declares its resolve to pursue the happiness and prosperity of the whole nation and of all its parts, cherishing all the children of the nation equally, and oblivious of the differences carefully fostered by an alien government, which have divided a minority from the majority in the past.

Until our arms have brought the opportune moment for the establishment of a permanent National Government, representative of the whole people of Ireland and elected by the suffrages of all her men and women, the Provisional Government, hereby constituted, will administer the civil and military affairs of the Republic in trust for the people.

We place the cause of the Irish Republic under the protection of the Most High God, Whose blessing we invoke upon our arms, and we pray that no one who serves that cause will dishonour it by cowardice, inhumanity, or rapine. In this supreme hour the Irish nation must, by its valour and discipline and by the readiness of its children to sacrifice themselves for the common good, prove itself worthy of the august destiny to which it is called.

Signed on Behalf of the Provisional Government,

THOMAS J. CLARKE.

SEAN Mac DIARMADA.

THOMAS MacDONAGH.

P. H. PEARSE.

EAMONN CEANNT.

JAMES CONNOLLY.

JOSEPH PLUNKETT.

Education to the People!

What happens when people try to control their own education - to learn what they want to learn, meet whoever they want to meet, do the courses they want to do and manage the whole apparatus of information?

Well, it varies. In the Tennessee Highlander Folk School they got bombs through the windows; in a little known experiment in Ireland early this century they got abuse, threats, scandal - mongering and freezing out.

In West Belfast we got abuse, accusations, threats, denial of government funds and loss of reputation. In a way we did not do all that badly. Those who control money, power and education cling on to them like pit bull terriers, with a grip they seem unable to loosen even if they wanted to.

In Ireland most primary and secondary level education is controlled by the churches. This is true not only of 'denominational' systems but of the state systems as well. Change would be difficult not only because of the bull terrier grip but because at this time the policy of government is to allow the churches to control education because this keeps it safe from novel ideas. One can, however, try making changes within the adult education system.

That is what we tried to do. We hoped that if adults could get the feel of making decisions about their own learning, they would eventually ask: *"If we can do this for ourselves, why can we not do it for the children as well?"* If you get to that point you have a fighting chance of making some changes.

The West Belfast experiment in popularly controlled education reached a peak enrolment of about 400 adult students doing 'A' and 'O' Level courses. There was also a popularly controlled informal education programme which included theatre, writing groups, lectures/discussions and so on. When it became clear that the experiment was not going to go away or to fail the authorities reacted by changing their policy on adult education in West Belfast.

For years the policy had been to refuse all requests for a college of further education in the area. There was no need for it, they said and anyway there was no money for it. However, when the people's own education project attracted up to 400

students the policy suddenly changed. The Church made a building available and the State spent a couple of million pounds and a new college of further education was opened. There was money after all. Before long the numbers enrolling were so great that they were talking about opening yet more space for them. Clearly, there was a need as well.

The pattern of reaction by education authorities then was clear. Any experiment in popular control of education will be frozen out, brought into public disrepute ('commies', provos' or whatever the current term of abuse may be). If it persists it will be threatened: public funding will be withdrawn and agencies willing to help threatened with loss of jobs if they do; there may be, as in Tennessee and Belfast, physical harassment and the threat of further violence. If the project still persists then the State, with, in Ireland, the help of the churches, will parallel the efforts of the people by setting up institutes which they would otherwise have refused. The education provided will be satisfactory in so far as state education can be satisfactory.

What then happens to the experimental projects which the people themselves have created and managed?

If they can survive - and indications are that they can if they have the will to do so - some people will still go to them because they feel unhappy about 'going back to school' in a state or church institution. And with the state taking on 'O' and 'A' - Level classes people can create even more experiments in informal education, making decisions about whom they shall meet, what they shall read, what their theatre will be like.

In West Belfast the people not only succeeded in creating an admirable and exciting formal and informal education programme, they also forced the Government and the Church to provide pre-school playgroups, adult education, theatre, accommodation for writers' groups etc.

The lesson was clear - education authorities may not facilitate people who ask for relevant education, especially in poor areas, but they will certainly hasten - expensively - to parallel what the people have provided for themselves, in order to control and regulate it.

That is, provided a bomb through a window does not settle the matter as it did in Tennessee...or soldiers at the door as in Belfast. ▲

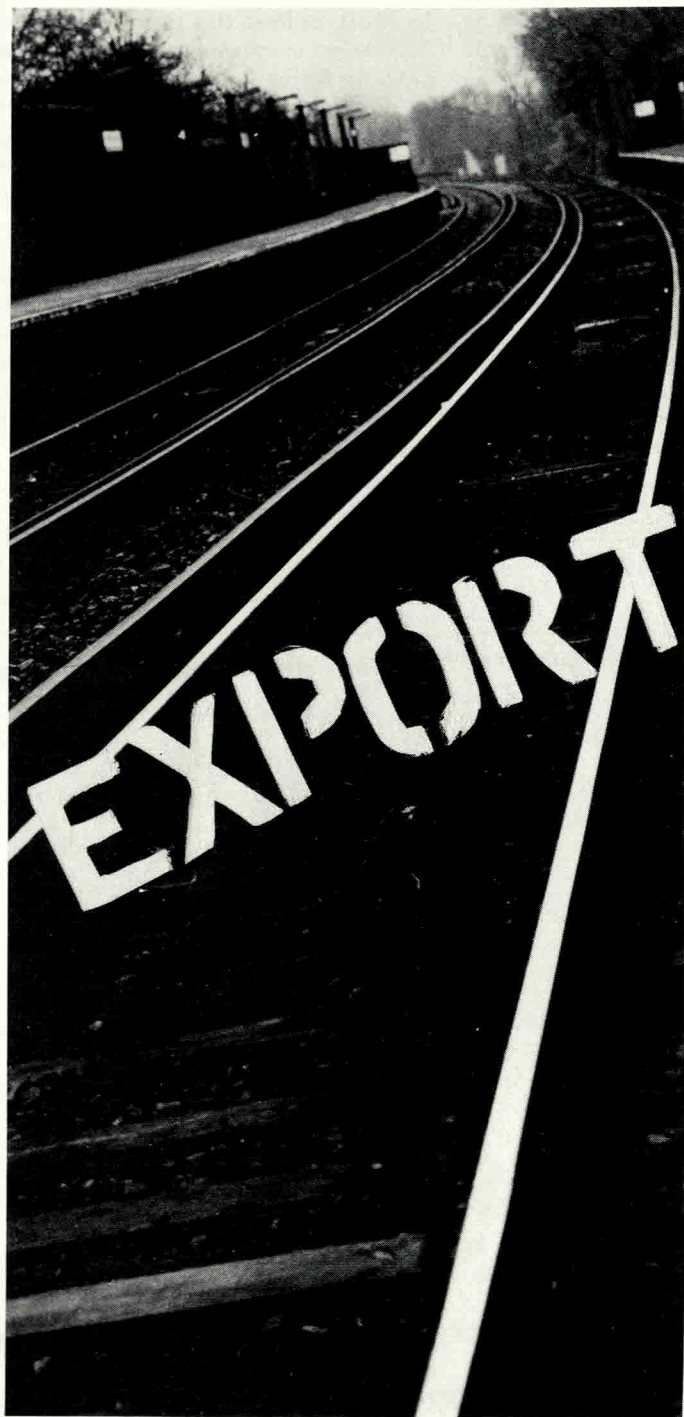
Des Wilson



GETTING VOTES

Emigration has been a fact of life for hundreds of thousands of Irish people over the last 150 years. For more than a century, almost half those born in Ireland have emigrated. Those left at home have been forced to bear the economic, political and social cost of this loss while those of us who have come to Britain face the reality of living and dying in a hostile place, subjected to discrimination and anti-Irish racism.

In an article which will be serialised over two issues, Raymond Crotty, economist and author, examines the history, causes and the cost of this emigration. He argues that an end to forced emigration of this scale will be more easily achieved when we have gained the vote for exiles in elections in Ireland.



Gabrielle Humphreys

The Nature of Irish Emigration

Emigration on the scale and of the duration that has been experienced in Ireland is unique. Almost half those born in the 26 Counties of the Republic since 1864, when the registration of births and deaths was introduced, have emigrated. Emigration probably averaged at least as much in the preceding half century, which included the Great Famine when it was particularly heavy.

No change occurred in the rate of emigration following political independence. Approaching two million people have emigrated from the area of the Republic since 1922. The rate of emigration since the last census year, 1986, has been well above the long term 'normal'. Since the census, 224,000 were born in Ireland while 134,000 have emigrated. That represents an emigration rate equivalent to 60% of the birth rate, compared to a long term average of 45% of birth rate. That level of emigration is causing the population to decline, giving rise, as in the 1950's, to the spectre of 'the vanishing Irish'.

Emigration from Ireland ceased on only two occasions during the past 175 years. It did so for a couple of years around 1930 when, following the 'Wall Street Crash' of 1929, there was massive unemployment in the USA and Britain. More remarkably, there was net immigration of 109,000 in the period 1971-1979, between censuses.

That intercensal period was characterised by massive State borrowing and deficit expenditure. Successive Irish governments spent borrowed funds as if, as they say, 'money was going out of fashion'. The State during those years borrowed, over and above what it paid out in interest on existing debt, the equivalent of 4.7% of GNP (Gross National Product) each year.

That rate of borrowing and spending, which relatively was without parallel even in wartime Britain or the USA, created in Ireland the jobs that kept people at home

FOR EXILES

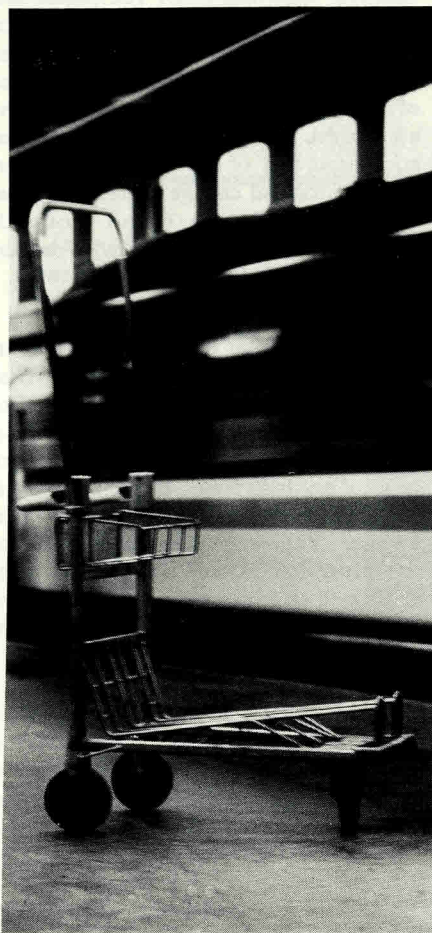
and attracted back many who had left. It also resulted, on top of the debt that had been accumulated by consistent, though more moderate, borrowing since 1948, in a State debt which, relative to GNP, is the largest and most expensive in the world. Annual interest payments on that debt are equivalent to 10% of GNP.

Interest payments now exceed what the State, with its credit reduced by past borrowing, is any longer able to raise in fresh borrowing. Since 1986, the State has been paying annually to the rentier holders of debt, some £1,500 million more than it has been able to borrow. Between 1948 and 1986, the State, through its borrowings over and above what was required to pay interest on existing debt, added to demand the equivalent annually of around 2% of GNP (and 4.7% in the 1970's). Since 1986, because of the excess of interest payments over what it can borrow, it has been reducing demand in the economy by the equivalent annually of around 7% of GNP.

This transformation in the role of the State, from being a net contributor to being a net reducer of demand, is the principal reason for the upsurge in the rate of emigration - from the long term equivalent of 45% of the birth rate to 60% now.

Each year now over 4.5 million people leave the Republic of Ireland by air and sea. (Many more do so by rail and road to Northern Ireland.) The number leaving is about 50% above what it was a decade ago and it is likely to increase by another 50% or more during the next decade. That massive, rapidly growing international mobility is a reflection of rising living standards which obtain in Ireland as throughout the western world.

Most of those leaving are Irish residents going abroad on holidays; or non-residents returning to their homes after holidaying in Ireland. Many more people are going abroad on business or to undertake contract work or to study. Most of these outward movements, which reflect rising living standards, are desirable. Most of them are offset by corresponding inward movements. But Ireland's tragedy is the shortfall between the outflow and inflow of people. That shortfall, to repeat, has



Gabrielle Humphreys

amounted to almost two million people since 1922. These are all people for whom, unless conditions change greatly from what they have been for 175 years, there will be no "bás in Éireann" (death in Ireland).

It is very misleading to think that, because many - perhaps most - of those emigrating intend/hope to return to live in Ireland, that they will do so. The facts of Irish emigration for 175 years are that people do not do so. Almost half of those born in Ireland die elsewhere. It is no less misleading to think that, because there was substantial net immigration in the 1970's, a similar pattern may recur in the next, or some subsequent decade. The net immigration of the 1970's was the result of massive deficit financing, which cannot be repeated and which gave rise to a State debt that now greatly exacerbates all those conditions which, for 175 years, have driven out half the Irish.

Emigration is Self-Sustaining

A process which, for 175 years, has removed almost every second person from

Ireland, and continues to do so, is clearly self-sustaining. While exceptionally severe emigration in one period may be followed by lower emigration in the subsequent period, because fewer potential emigrants are left, viewed over a longer period, one decade's emigration has had no obvious impact on emigration in the following decade. Emigration in the 1990's is as severe as it was in the 1980's. Important features of Irish emigration give it its self-sustaining character.

Consider the 'cost' of emigrants. The Irish people and Government spend annually about 85% of gross national product on consumer goods and services. (The other 15% is invested). Part of that consumption may be regarded as maintaining the workforce. Another part represents the consumption by older, retired persons of wealth they saved during their working lives. The remaining, third part, of total consumption represents the investment in young people which prepares them for a later productive life.

People who were less than 20 years old accounted for 56% of the total Irish population in 1986. It is assumed that, on average, each of these 1,983,00 young people consumes in food, clothing, housing, education, medical care etc. £3391 annually. This is 70% of the average annual national consumption per person of £4844. It implies that the remaining 1,558,000 people who are over 20 years, consumed on average £6693 annually, or just twice as much as young people.

These figures, which seem reasonable, imply that the equivalent of 33% of GNP is annually invested in young people - a figure that takes no account of the priceless, tender, loving care showered on the young by their parents. Over the long haul, 45% of these young people have emigrated permanently from Ireland, representing an annual loss equivalent to the 15% of GNP invested in them. This is the same proportion of GNP that is used for gross fixed capital formation. That is to say, Ireland, for 175 years has been spending as much of its wealth in rearing people for emigration as it has invested in factories, houses, offices, roads, transport equipment, farm equipment, farm livestock etc. etc. With 60% of those born emigrating in more recent years, the loss of wealth to the economy is now equivalent to almost a fifth of all that is produced annually.

Emigrants take with them more than the wealth that has been invested in them; they remove also the wealth that they will produce in future. Expenditure of that future wealth would have been the principal demand for the goods and services produced by the people remaining in Ireland. But with so much of national demand removed through emigration, Ireland is forced to depend on export markets to a greater extent than every other country apart from the city states of Hong Kong and Singapore. By losing the demand of those who emigrate, which would have been sure and certain, the economy is forced into dependence on unsure, uncertain, distant markets.

Economic Development

Ireland's original and patently unsuccessful venture into economic planning, which was published by the Department of Finance 35 years ago, put the point about the loss of demand well, as follows: 'The common talk amongst parents, in the towns as in rural Ireland, is of their children having to emigrate as soon as their education is completed in order to secure a reasonable livelihood. To the children themselves and to many already in employment, the jobs available at home look unattractive by comparison with those obtainable in such variety and so readily elsewhere'. That situation is unchanged 35 years on. People leave because the economy is small, unproductive and lacking opportunity. Because people leave, the economy remains small, unproductive and lacking opportunity. And so it has been for 175 years.

Emigration on the Irish scale broadens, deepens and smoothen the channels of emigration flow. Past emigration facilitates present and future emigration. Risks and uncertainties are reduced. The presence abroad of many earlier emigrants enables recent ones to join communities that have some familiar features, at least. The high performance of the others abroad also ensures a ready reception for more recent Irish emigrants. Above all, Ireland's great economic loss has contributed substantially to the economic strength of the receiving countries. That strength, in turn, enables the receiving countries to produce goods and services at lower cost than Ireland can, handicapped as it is by the haemorrhage of emigration. It means that, under free trade, those countries supply one-third of all the goods, including food, consumed in Ireland. The equivalent proportion in Britain is only 10%.

The Politics of Emigration

The economic cost of emigration, in terms of the unrequited outflow of human capital, of keeping the home market small and unrewarding, and of improving the relative efficiency of recipient and competing countries, has been enormous. That economic cost, however, has been dwarfed by the political cost. Almost half of seven generations, over 175 years, have emigrated. There has left, with this less contented half of the population, every pressure for real change in Ireland. Those who sought change, found it outside Ireland; by and large, those who remain, accept things as they are.

One manifestation of the loss of pressure for change was the dominance of Irish politics, for a century between the securing of Catholic Emancipation by Daniel O'Connell and W.T. Cosgrave, the first head of an Irish State, by a mixed bag of individuals whom Cosgrave's son, Liam, another Taoiseach, would have described as 'blow-ins'. Cosgrave shared with O'Connell an 'absolute assurance about his own identity' (Oliver MacDonagh *The Hereditary Bondsman*, p.3).

That assurance was not shared by the 'blow-ins', who included the Welshman's son, Thomas Davis; the Anglo-American Protestant, Parnell; Pearse, the son of an English monumental sculptor; De Valera, born in America of a Spanish father; the Labour leaders, Connolly, born in Edinburgh and Larkin born in Liverpool; the English-born Desmond Fitzgerald, father of the late Taoiseach, Garret Fitzgerald. For all of these and their ilk, 'nationalism centred on the question: *Who am I? For O'Connell (and Cosgrave), that was never a question; for if it were, the answer would have been self-evident.*' (MacDonagh pp3-4)

The remarkable stability of Irish politics during the 70 years of independence is a further reflection of the release through emigration of pressure for change. The two major centre parties, Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael, have secured between them on average 80%, and never less than 59%, of the seats in the 25 Dáils elected since 1922. There have been only eight heads of government, one of whom was the son, another the son-in-law of former heads.

The opposition emigrates. If Government makes conditions sufficiently difficult, enough people will emigrate and ensure the Government's re-election. There were six changes of government following the 17 general elections that took place between 1922 and 1973. Emigration was a the 'normal' rate of almost half the birth

rate during that 51 year period. There were, by contrast, five changes of government in the seven general elections between 1973 and 1987. This fourteen year period was characterised by low emigration and, as already noted, net immigration between 1973 and 1979. The people, during these years, registered their dissatisfaction with government by changing it, rather than by emigrating.

Also, as noted, emigration since 1986 has increased to above its 'normal' level. One electoral reflection of that was that the Fianna Fáil Government was able to retain office in that election, although only with the support of the Progressive Democrats.

As emigration continues at well above the 'normal' level of 45% of the birth rate, the opinion polls register a high degree of satisfaction with government among the residual population. This suggests that, following the aberration of the 1970's, the situation has returned to 'normal' with respect to a high level of emigration and a high degree of political stability.

Those Irish who most desire change leave Ireland. Because they leave, little is changed. Because little is changed, many are dissatisfied and leave. Politically as well as economically, the system is inherently self-perpetuating.

Other Effects of Emigration

Two further important consequences of emigration may be noted. One of these is the cultural impact. Ireland is the only European nation that aspires to independence in which the lingua franca has been imposed by colonial masters; it has not evolved from within the nation itself. The decline in the use of Irish has coincided largely with massive emigration. Arresting that decline and the re-establishment of a vibrant, indigenous culture are unlikely while emigration persists at the 'normal' Irish level. People, particularly those who are young, are unlikely to value and cherish a culture that is abandoned by the half of the population which must look for a livelihood in another culture.

The second non-socio-economic consequence of emigration to note is the persistence of partition and its consequential evils. Protestants and Catholics, Unionists and Nationalists in the North are united in their unwillingness to be absorbed into an Irish Republic that denies an acceptable living to half its people.

Had Irish governments succeeded in ending mass emigration (and the mass

(Contd on page 19)

(Contd from page 10) poverty and unemployment which give rise to it), it is inconceivable that partition would have persisted in its present, entrenched form. But the persistence of emigration and the defects in the body politic which give rise to it ensure also the persistence of partition and the violence which inescapably follows from it. The Republic secures 'peace' at the cost of forcing out the less contented half of its people and of perpetuating violence in the North. As Tacitus wrote long ago: 'they have created a wilderness and they call it peace'.

Reducing the Cost of Emigration

There is no way to reduce the economic cost of emigration. Rather, as average living standards continue to rise because those on low incomes leave, the 'cost of producing' young emigrants will also rise. A way does, however, exist to reduce the political cost of emigration. That way is to secure for emigrants the vote in Irish elections. That extension of the franchise would enable emigrants to express their dissent from the manner of government of Ireland in a way that is politically more constructive than emigrating. Being a vote for change in Ireland by persons sufficiently dissatisfied to emigrate, the emigrant's vote would help to loosen the consensus favouring the status quo of the half of the Irish who remain there.

Precisely because their vote is likely to be a vote for change, the conservative political establishment is unwilling to extend the franchise to emigrants. Emigrants should be under no illusion that appeals to reason, to equity, to the practice of other countries, or similar representations will ever be conceded. At best, they will be listened to patiently by politicians who have no intention of conceding the vote. The history of the dissemination of political power, in Ireland and elsewhere, together with an appreciation of the existing political situation in Ireland, make clear that the franchise will be extended to emigrants only when they mobilise economic power to reinforce their appeals to reason, equity or precedent. It is fortunate that the economic power is available in large measure to emigrants. ▲

Part two of this article will appear in the next issue of An Pobal Éiríthe, where Crotty argues for the Irish in Britain to mount a boycott of Irish goods to pressurise the Irish Government into granting the vote to emigrants.

The Experience of Occupation - Palestine

In June of 1990, a women's delegation from Britain visited Palestine. They met with Palestinians living in the Gaza strip, visited projects, co-ops and refugee camps and spoke to peace campaigners and other activists in Israel.

Laura O' Sullivan reports here on the experience of those living under occupation.



I have always wanted to visit this part of the world, partly because of the struggle which the Palestinians are engaged in and also because of two Jewish people I have been close to, both of whom visited Israel at different times. One came back marvelling at the great things that his people were achieving. My other friend felt that she was in an armed camp surrounded by hostile countries. My friends' reactions were to do with the way they dealt with their own people's often tragic history and their experience of anti-semitism. My experience would no doubt be different: having an understanding of Irish history and having visited the Six Counties I would have an insight into colonisation and what it is like to have to live in a land that is occupied.

We flew overnight and so were driving through the West Bank to East Jerusalem in the early hours of the morning. My fatigue probably helped make it an emotional journey. Travelling through an occupied country, seeing signs of occupation all around me, the Israeli settlements on the hills, made me think of techniques England used to colonise Ireland. As the days passed by we saw signs of the devastation that had been caused. Travelling through the Gaza Strip, our taxi driver pointed to a group of trees nestling

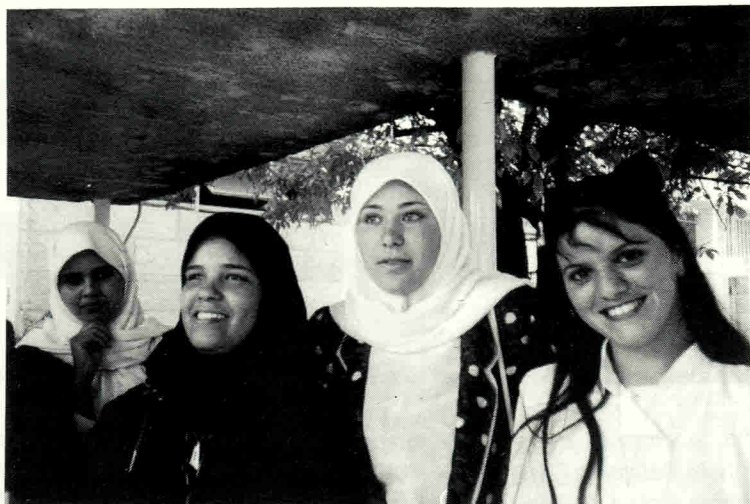
in a valley. He told us that there had once been a Palestinian village there - the Israelis had destroyed it. Later, he pointed to an area where there had been woodland belonging to Palestinians - all the trees were gone.

In the refugee camps we saw houses which the Israelis had destroyed, now replaced by tents. The Israelis did this as punishment for the messages painted by Palestinians at night in their villages to provide news of the struggle and any action people should take. Or it might be punishment for throwing stones at soldiers. Palestinians would have to pay the Israelis for the 'pleasure' of having their homes bulldozed. Children showed us the plastic bullets that are fired at them, just as children had done when I visited the Six Counties.

The Israeli State

Everyone we met in Palestine had their own tale to tell about how the Israelis treated them. In the West we are led to believe that Israel is a democracy. In a democracy the rights of minorities should be upheld. However, this rarely happens. In Israel it is the East European Jews that have all the positions of power and influence. We met Black and oriental Jews who complained about their unequal position. Ethiopian Jews who have emigrated to Israel have been used in the army as cannon fodder.

Israel is a military state where each citizen serves a couple of years in the army.



Laura Sullivan

Women at college - West Bank

The women's faces glowed with happiness as they told us these stories.

The first place we visited on the delegation was a child counselling centre in East Jerusalem. They told us of some of the positive changes that the Intifada has brought to the children. They recognise that they have a Palestinian identity, a separate history and that they were born in Palestine. Children we met told us proudly about the Intifada and how important it is. The children are taking on the soldiers by throwing stones, burning tyres and checking cars at check-points in the Gaza Strip, as Israeli secret police often disguise themselves as journalists. The children are taking the lead on the streets of Palestine like they did in the struggle in South Africa.

Women may be exempted if they are married. Men also serve for a few weeks each year.

We attended a Women in Black picket held in West Jerusalem every week to protest at the occupation of Palestine. Across the road from us, some Israelis held a counter-demonstration. Their slogans were vicious and racist. An elderly Jewish woman who had emigrated from Eastern Europe told me that most of the Israelis across the road were American settlers who lived in the occupied territories. She said they supported the policy of the removal of the Palestinians. Later that day I saw soldiers in a square performing dance to folk music watched by families. This amusement was organised by a right wing political group. I noticed that there were no police anywhere. I was told that they have secret police and I had seen signs of this at the picket earlier.

As we drove around the West Bank we saw settlers carrying guns. The human rights organisation we visited, 'Al Haq', told us they had recorded 40 incidents of wilful killing of Palestinians. These included an incident outside their offices in Rumulla. Settlers had shot into a crowd. Soldiers arrived and refused to arrest the settlers. (It is rare for settlers to be charged for shooting a Palestinian). A field worker at the project who intervened was taken away by the soldiers. He was tortured and his testicles were crushed.

Palestinians can be held under administrative detention which can go on indefinitely. It is used in a similar way to internment in the Six Counties

The Israelis' brutal treatment of the Palestinians is also reflected in the lack of health care. We visited the family of a Palestinian killed in struggle in Nabulus. Their 13 year old son had been shot by

soldiers. They took his body away and removed the organs before giving it back to the family. We visited a hospital run by the Israelis in Gaza. It contained 250 beds for the whole population in South Gaza and there were only eight surgeons serving four orthopaedic wards. There was no disinfectant and it smelt because of a sewage problem. The hospital was also short of medicine.

Resistance

I have tried to highlight the nature of the Israeli State and the atrocities that the Palestinians are forced to endure. However, to talk only about this would be doing an injustice to the Palestinian people I met. The women and children we met have a spirit that endures; they are angry but they laughed a lot too. They are angry that the world is silent to their fate, angry at the way they are described by the Israelis as terrorists.

Many of the men are in prison so the women are taking on new roles. The Women's Committees are setting up co-ops involved in everything including growing vegetables, biscuit making, producing honey from grapes, making yogurt and rearing animals. They are involved in creating nurseries so women can work outside the home, in Trade Unions mobilising women workers, in summer camps for children and in the organisation of literacy classes. There is a determination to keep the equality they have gained. Women had their tales too of how they had challenged the soldiers. One woman spoke of how she stopped a soldier beating a boy by repeatedly shouting "Don't beat him, he is my son." Another told us how a group of women persuaded some soldiers to bring back an electricity pylon they had confiscated. Their men had looked on having told them they shouldn't ask for too much.

When returning home, my bags were searched three times at the airport. I was questioned separately by three different people all asking the same questions. "Did I meet any Arabs? Did I ever leave my bags unguarded?" Then I still had to go through the electronic scanner which checked for bombs. One delegate said that it was as if they thought that we carried the bombs in our heads.

After going to Palestine I attended a conference in August 1990 at the Europa Hotel in Belfast. This conference was organised by the people of Ballymurphy and speakers attended from around the world. This was a major achievement for a small community. Twenty-one years ago there was barely a tenant's association in Ballymurphy; it was the kind of place that everyone wanted to move away from. Now there are over eighty community projects, organising the same variety of activities and services as those organised by the community in Palestine, with the people providing what the State does not.

In struggle, people's initiative comes to the fore. There is enormous skill and enterprise lying dormant in communities. In each country, the occupier mounts what seems to be an insurmountable campaign to curb all uprising. They use propaganda, impose high taxes, shut down co-ops, remove funding from community projects and employ censorship, imprisonment and curfews. In Palestine and Ireland the struggles will continue because of the determination, resilience and very spirit of two peoples who refuse to be silent and to be crushed. ▲

The Irish in Britain made many advances in 1990 and the IBRG played its part in the community's struggle for equality and justice.

Campaign work throughout the year focused on the major issues of concern to our community in Britain:

In January we

- ◆ helped to organise and mobilise for the annual Bloody Sunday march in London.
- ◆ called for the release of Martin Foran and for an enquiry into the forensic evidence used in all Irish political trials
- ◆ spoke to over 100 students at Cardiff University on the Birmingham Six and the PTA
- ◆ won an apology from Friends of the Earth over their use of anti-Irish jokes in a fundraising publication
- ◆ condemned Carol Thatcher for her anti-Irish comments on television



Gabrielle Humphreys

**Bloody Sunday March
London 1991**

In February we

- ◆ won ethnic minority status for the Irish community in Lambeth in South London
- ◆ had a complaint to the Press Council against the Sunday Express over their false story of Irish Chunnel workers funding the IRA turned down
- ◆ put forward draft guidelines to the National Union of Journalists (NUJ) on reporting on PTA arrests

IBRG Review of 1990

In March we

- ◆ held our third annual St. Patrick's Day march calling for the release of the Birmingham Six and the Winchester Three and for the repeal of the PTA
- ◆ had our 9th Ard Fheis in Birmingham
- ◆ attended a conference on Racism in Prisons at Long Lartin Prison
- ◆ supported the launch of the Repeal the PTA Campaign
- ◆ had a complaint to the Press Council against the Daily Express over their false story of five Irish men arrested at Cheltenham being an IRA unit turned down
- ◆ attended a picket of Downing Street on the anniversary of the Gibraltar Three

◆ challenged RTE on their advertising in the Sun newspaper

◆ challenged Strawberry Hill College over anti-Irish racism in their college magazine

◆ organised a 'round robin' of Irish community organisations over the naming of individuals in the television programme "Who Bombed Birmingham"

In April we

- ◆ supported pickets at the Appeal Court for the Winchester Three
- ◆ called for Tom King's resignation following the release of the Winchester Three
- ◆ supported the Camden Irish Consultative Conference
- ◆ organised an Irish film season in Haringey
- ◆ took part in the Haringey Irish/Black communities weekend of activities



In May we

- ◆ took part in the Birmingham Hunger Strike Commemoration March and spoke at the rally
- ◆ participated in a picket of the Irish embassy calling for the release of Brian Keenan
- ◆ made a detailed submission to the European parliament's Enquiry into Racism and Xenophobia in Europe

In June we

- ◆ took issue with the police over their video surveillance of Fleadh '90 in Finsbury Park, North London

◆ called again for the vote to be given to Irish emigrants

◆ with other Irish community organisations called for recognition of the Irish in the 1991 census and for the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) to give full recognition to the needs of our community

In July we

◆ took a Birmingham Six banner to the London Irish Festival Parade to protest at the decision of the Festival's organising committee not to give a stall to the Birmingham Six Campaign

◆ participated in the London Irish Youth Festival and the Southwark Irish Festival

◆ lost a complaint to the Press Council against the Daily Mirror over an article by Joe Haines on the Birmingham Six

In August we

◆ challenged Haringey Council over their withdrawal on political grounds of funds to the local IBRG project

◆ drew attention to the fact that while several London Boroughs had doubled the numbers of ethnic minority staff in their employ, the British Government had during the last twenty years failed to end sectarian discrimination in employment in the Six Counties.

In September we

◆ called on the British Government to end its discrimination against the Irish language and to include it in the National Curriculum and led a campaign on the issue - getting questions asked about it in the European Parliament, persuading the Irish Government to raise the matter with the British through the Inter-governmental body

◆ organised a season of films on Ireland for the Autumn in Haringey, North London

◆ challenged the British government over their vetting of Glór na nGael

◆ set up committees to commemorate the 75th anniversary of 1916 in Britain

In October we

◆ won a Press Council decision against the News of the World over their distortion of figures on deaths in the war in Ireland

◆ held a major national Irish education conference in Haringey, North London

◆ took issue with the media over its coverage of the PTA arrests at Stonehenge

◆ supported the NUJ day of action against censorship on Ireland

◆ supported the Terence Mac Swiney commemoration Mass and the Mac Swiney Rally in Brixton, South London



Gabrielle Humphreys

Free Des....

In November we

◆ organised four pickets of the Irish embassy in London over the extradition of Dessie Ellis to Britain

◆ held our fourth annual Welfare Conference in Lambeth, South London

◆ supported the annual Plastic Bullets picket in London

◆ attended pickets at Paddington Green over PTA detentions

◆ organised the third annual Manchester Irish Film Festival

◆ organised a series of meetings on the PTA in Manchester, Bolton and Blackburn

◆ spoke at the National Union of Students (NUS) conference on anti-Racism at Newcastle University

In December we

◆ made a submission to the proposed new union, (NALGO/NUPE/COHSE) calling for the inclusion of the Irish community in their equality programme

◆ called for the full registration of Irish voters for future British elections

We also spoke at public meetings from Brighton to Blackburn on Ireland and the Irish in Britain throughout the year. We responded to over a hundred requests from students, journalists, television and radio researchers for information about our community in Britain, the PTA and anti-Irish racism. We ran community projects in Haringey and Lambeth in London and took part in various campaigns from the Repeal the PTA campaign, to campaigns for Travellers' rights. We also took up a number of cases of discrimination against Irish workers and continued to challenge anti-Irish racism in the media.

We have a full programme for the rest of 1991 which marks the 75th anniversary of the 1916 Rising, the 10th anniversary of the Hunger Strikes and of the forming of the IBRG. Many of the issues taken up by the IBRG years ago are now part of the political agenda of the Irish community in Britain: the repeal of the PTA, the release of the framed prisoners, the fight against anti-Irish racism, recognition and funding for Irish community initiatives and recognition of our language and culture, British withdrawal from Ireland and Irish government action to stop emigration. ▲



1916 **Spirit of 1916** 1991
75th Anniversary of the 1916 Rising



**Want to find out more about the IBRG or to join the Group?
See Back Page**

An t-Éirí Amach agus Gael Londain

Tá sé soiléir ó chuid drámaí Shakespeare go raibh an Ghaeilge le chloisint aige i Londain. Bhí fadhb ionannais ag an gCaptaen MacMorris: "What ish my nation?" i Henry V. Le linn ré Eilís bhí nós ann iallach a chur ar taoisigh Éireannacha a mic a chur go Sasana chun iad a ghalldú. Níor éirigh leis an mbeartas sin i gcónaí. Ba dhaltaí mar sin iad Aodh Rua ó Néill agus Dónal ó Súilleabháin Béara cur i gcás.

Mar iad cumhachta na trí ríocht bhíodh Londain ag tarraingt na céadta Albannach, Breatnach agus Éireannach. Mhéadaigh an córas sin i 1800 leis an Acht Aontacht (An Bhreataina Mór agus Éire). Le linn an Ghorta Mhóir tháinig na sluaite daoine bochta go Londain. Ansin ag d'éireadh na haoise sin bhí an státseirbhís á dhaonlathú agus ba shin é tarraingt mhór eile go Londain d'Éireannaigh chliste óga.

Cuireadh craobh de Chonradh na Gaeilge ar bun i Londain bliain i ndiadh an ghluaiseacht a bhunú i mBaile Atha Cliath. Ba Fhínín an Dr Mark Ryan agus é ina sheanfear i 1893 agus é ar na daoine ar chuir craobh Londain an Chonartha ar bun. Uaireanta bhí duine ina bhall den Chonradh, de na Fíníní (Bráithreachas Poblachtach na hÉireann) agus de Chumann Lúthchleas Gael. Ba mhar thoradh léacht a thug an Dr de Híde inar nocht sé cuspóir chun Ghabháil na hÉireann a scaoileadh a cuireadh Conradh na Gaeilge ar bun. Chuir Pádraig Mac Piarais mana cosúil le sin roimh na hOglaigh ag uaigh Uí Dhonnabháin Rossa mar "Éire, ní amháin saor ach Gaelach chomh maith." Nuair a bhris an chéad chogadh domhanda amach bhí John Redmond, ceannasaí an phartaí Fénrialach, sásta bheith ins sháirsint

earcaíochta ar son Arm na Breataine. Ghlac formhór des na hOglaigh eagraithe i Londain freisin ach lean an mhórchuid d'iad siúd ina "n-antóiscigh."

Le deireanas bhí iarracht ag na Sealadaigh teach an phríomhaire a phléascadh le moirtéir, ach cuid de shean-traidisiún ab ea é sin. Faoi urchar méaróige den mhoirtéir sin rinne na Fíníní iarracht Scotland Yard a phléascadh breis is 6 scór bliain ó shin. Ba é an t-éacht sin a chuir tús leis an Roinn Speisialta toisc nach raibh na gnáth-bhleachtairí cleachtaithe leis a leithéid de ghnó.

Ba é Michéal O Coileáin duine de na státseirbhíshigh óga a tháinig go Londain. Níos deanaí ceapadh é mar chisteoir an Bhráithreachais le haghaidh Dheisceart Shasana (Londain san áireamh). Bhíodh mana ag an Bhráithreachais gurbh ionann deacracht Shasana agus deis na hÉireann agus mar sin bhí sé socraithe acu nach ligfí d'éireadh leis an gCogadh Mór gan iarracht saoirse na hÉireann a bhaint amach. Bhí a fhios ag an gCoileáineach nach mbeadh sé ró-fhada go mbeadh an iarracht sin ar siúl agus mar sin chuaigh sé go Baile Atha Cliath i mí Eanáir, 1916. San am céanna chuaigh a lán Oglach ón mBreatain Mhór agus dream Londain ina measc go Baile Atha Cliath agus bhí campa acu i gCinnmhuighe.

Bhí an sloinne O Connor ag duine de na hOglaigh sin a maraíodh sa troid. Thug na Seaicíní "Cockney" nó "Gorblimey" air. Is dócha gurbh iad na hOglaigh Chinnmhuighe sin go mórmhór a spreag an líne sin san amhrán náisiúnta: "Buíon dár slua thar toinn do ráinig chugainn."

Ba é Joseph Mary Plunkett an sínitheoir deireannach d'Fhógra na Poblachta. Ceapadh Michéal O Coileáin mar aide-de-campe dó. Lámhadh an Pluincéadach chomh maith leis na sínitheoirí eile agus daoine eile nach iad. Phós sé i bpriosúin cuid uaire roimh a bhású. Imtheorannaíodh an Coileáineach i bhFrongoch agus ansin cuireadh i bpriosúin é. Rinne sé sár-obair i gCogadh na Saoirse. Ina dhiaidh an sos cogaidh bhí sé ina cheannasaí ar thaobh an tSaorstáit. Maraíodh é i gCogadh na gCarad i 1922.

Nuair a bhí na daoine trí chéile fós le dúnmharú na sínitheoirí cuireadh seó-triail ar bun san "Old Bailey" agus crochadh Ruairí Mac Easmuinn i bPriosúin Pentonville. Idir a eachtraí sa Chongó, sa Bhrasáil, sna Stáit agus sa Ghearmáin, bhí sé ina bhall de Chonradh na Gaeilge, Londain.

Duine eile ó Londain a bhí sa cheann-cheathrú in Oifig an Phoist ab ea Deasún Mac Gearailt. Tógadh i Londain é agus i gCogadh na Saoirse bhí cúram bolscaireacht aige. Bhí an gnó sin an-éifeachtach aige gí go raibh cinsireacht dhocht i bhfeidhm. Thall i Sasana bhí gluaiseacht "The Irish Self-Determination League" ann ag cuidiú leis. Bhí Art O Bhriain ina uachtarán agus i slite bhí an conradh cosúil leis an IBRG. Ní ba dhéanaí bhí Deasún ina aire rialtais den Saorstát.

Ar feadh tamaill bhí Mabel McConnell mar rúnaí G. B. Shaw. Bhí iarracht aici spiorad Éireannach agus Gaelach a bhrú air, ach ní raibh suim aige i dteanga "that nobody in the world understands". Phós Deasún í agus chuaigh siad go Ciarraí chun snas a chur ar a gcuid Gaeilge. Tháinig meath mór ar a sliocht ó shin. Is é an t-iolrachas a bhunú in Éirinn an phríomhaidhm ag a mac, Gearóid, an t-Éireannach is gile le Bean an Tuíodóra. Is iolrachas dochreidte é agus Béarlóirí Caitliceacha, Protastúnacha agus Aindiachaithe san áireamh ach gan cearta teanga ag lucht na Gaeilge. I gcomhrá le duine ón mBBC le déanaí dúirt an Gearailteach gurbh é an polasaí ab ansa leis mar Thaoiseach an Stáitín Sé Chontae a dhaighniú (to prevent it being destabilised)!

Bhí tionchar mór ag Gaeil Londain ar athbheochaint agus fás na scríbhneoireacht Gaeilge, ach sin scéal eile. Mar sin féin ní ceart gan tagairt a dhéanamh d'údar amháin, Pádraig O Conaire. Chaith sé cuid blianta sa státseirbhís agus Chonradh i Londain. Muna raibh sé páirteach san Eirí Amach scríobh sé leabhar gearrscéalta ina thaobh: "Seacht mbua an Eirí Amach". Tá sé i gcló fós measaim.

Pádraig O Conchúir



Construction Safety Campaign (CSC) - Fighting for the Safety of Irish Migrant and Other Workers



One area of concern to the CSC has been the high number of migrant Irish workers killed in site accidents in England. This has led to the CSC attending many activities of Irish interest (meetings, festivals etc.) to highlight the problems of the industry. These moves have been welcomed by Irish construction workers and the Irish community in general, and has led to the fruition of two projects involving the CSC and Irish groups.

The first is a booklet called **Slaughter on Britain's Building Sites** by Conor Foley. This booklet gives a graphic description of the horrors of working in the construction industry in Britain - from unlawful employment to the accident rate - and is a must for anyone considering travelling to England looking for work, and even for those already working here, wherever they come from.

The second is a project funded by the Irish Government to highlight Britain's construction problems. This is a photographic exhibition of aspects of life and death in the industry, including shots of young trainees, women construction workers, victims of site accidents and the relatives of people killed on site. The collection has been photographed by David Hevey, a well-known photo-journalist, and is there for the use of community groups, local authorities, trades unions etc. The idea is to show it in as many different places as possible to strengthen people's awareness of the dangers of construction work.

The CSC realise that these are just small steps along the way to turning the accident figures around, and having full worker-participation in safety on site through their trade union safety representatives. But they know that every little helps. This can best be illustrated by the decision of the Coroner at St. Pancras recently to refer the case of the young men killed in the Watney Market Sewer disaster to the Director of Public Prosecutions to see if the employers should be prosecuted for manslaughter. The CSC feel this is in no small way associated with their holding protests outside coroners' courts in London, as well as from getting the issue covered in the media. The walls of Jericho may not be crumblingbut the CSC have moved a brick or two, in the fight to stop people having to risk, life, limb, disablement and disease just to earn a wage. ▲

Mick Holder

Slaughter on Britain's Building Sites is available from the Connolly Association, 244/246 Gray's Inn Road, London WC1 Tel: (071) 833 3022

Exhibition on Construction - Joan Flynn AGIY 5-15 Cromer St. London WC1 Tel: (071) 278 1665

Construction Safety Campaign c/o Isle of Dogs Neighbourhood Centre, Unit D, Great Eastern Enterprise, Mill Harbour, London E14 9XP
Tel: (071) 538 0507

We Are

Jim Corbett

We are the living and the breathing
We are you and your grieving
We are your son and your daughter
We are what you fought for
We are fathers and mothers that left our shore
We are the cockney kid knocking at your door
We are the geese blown far and wild
We are your child that had a child
We are the swans that sing so sweet
We are your spirit that won't be beat
We are you when you cried and cried
We are Irish and full of pride
We are all those that left our shore
We are the cockney child knocking at your door

Reviews

Books

Reviews

West Belfast

Danny Morrison (£5.95) Mercier Press

West Belfast is Danny Morrison's first novel. Born and brought up in the area, he gives us an insider's view of a community that has faced oppression and discrimination and yet has managed to retain its spirit and identity. The story begins in 1963 and takes us through the lives of two working class young people, John O'Neill and Angela McCann, as they grow up in Belfast.

John leaves school at 16 years and eventually finds work in an engineering firm. He is daily harassed by one of the other workers, a Loyalist, and as events at work come to a head so do events on the street, as the Loyalists threaten the Catholic community during the October 1964 election. John becomes active in the defence of the Divis Street Sinn Féin headquarters. Morrison graphically describes the near riot as the RUC break into the HQ and seize the tricolour. It is certainly in these scenes that the book comes alive as Morrison slowly builds up a picture of the growing harassment of the nationalist community and their determination to fight back;.

"In the past few days he had learnt more about the history of the Nationalists since partition, than in all the other years. He thought about what partition had done to them. They had turned in on themselves, attacked their own nationalism as obsolete, as a liability. They accepted defeat."

Through John's character Morrison analyses the reasons, both historical and political, as to why young Irish people join the Republican movement.

Unfortunately this book is essentially flawed by the crude stereotypes of the women characters. Whilst John is shown to

be sensitive, loyal and a 'good man', Angela is portrayed as devious, shallow and transparent. The only approved role for Irish women in the novel is that of Catholic mother, such as Catherine O'Neill, John's mother, who believed *'in doing as much for her children as possible... they were entitled to be not quite spoiled but certainly served well, to be able when they were older to look back at a happy childhood and to be inclined to perform the same function for their own family.'* Angela is the exact opposite. She rebels against the trainee mother role laid down by her family and crosses the line between good girl and bad girl. Her relationship with John is her only chance of redemption. As Morrison comments about her aunt:

"She had been rebellious and shameless. But time had worked it out of her system and she had eventually settled down, so there was no reason why Angela couldn't do the same."

Angela comes to her senses, throws up boring John and heads to England for some fun. Unfortunately, in this essentially Catholic morality tale, Angela is forced to come home, is reconciled to family life and repents her sins, visiting John in Long Kesh where he is a prisoner.

Reading this book made me feel very angry because of the way in which the author has ignored the crucial role that Irish women have played in the Nationalist struggle from Ann Devlin to Mairéad Farrell - all those women who have been ignored and marginalised in history books and novels such as this. Perhaps this book should be renamed **West Belfast Men** and if the reader wants to read about the real world for women and not the Mills and Boon fantasy portrayed in this book, they should read Peggy Deery, by Nell McCafferty. Better still, buy Danny a copy with love from the women of Ireland. ▲

Charlotte Despard

Margaret Mulvihill (£7.95) Pandora Press

Charlotte Despard is one of a series published by Pandora Press celebrating the lives of women who were involved in the Irish struggle throughout the 19th and 20th centuries.

In common with other women of this period of Irish politics such as Eva Gore-Booth and Constance Markievicz, Charlotte was born into the aristocracy. The first half of her life was a comfortable one with marriage, travel and the writing of novels. Her husband's death acted as a catalyst from enforced solitude; she threw herself

into working and living in Battersea with the Irish poor. No Lady Bountiful, Charlotte recognised the harsh poverty derived from the position of these people in the sweated industries. She set up a mini welfare state with free medical care, youth clubs and cheap food. It is hardly surprising that living and working with the poor, Charlotte became a socialist. This led naturally to her involvement in one of the major issues of that period: the suffragette cause. Charlotte joined the Women's Social and Political Union, becoming joint honorary secretary. At the age of 63 years Charlotte went out campaigning for the vote and spent her first period in jail.

Charlotte has many links with Ireland: her forbears were Irish, her late husband was Anglo-Irish and in 1917 she helped Irish political prisoners Maud Gonne and Countess Markievicz. Ironically, at the same time, Charlotte's brother was Viceroy of Ireland, imprisoning the very people she was involved with and generally carrying out British policy, i.e. repressing any nationalist organisations. This did not stop Charlotte and in 1921 she moved to Ireland permanently to take up the struggle there.

Ireland at this time was in the middle of a Civil War between the pro and anti-Treaty forces. Charlotte, now in her eighties, tried with no luck to get an amnesty. As president of the Women's Prisoners' Defence League, she tried to improve the conditions of prisoners and to find out information for their families. Living now with Maud Gonne, she provided a refuge for ex-prisoners, men on the run and Cumann na mBan. When Maud Gonne was imprisoned, Charlotte went on hunger strike outside the prison until Maud was released.

In the thirties Charlotte was involved with the Workers' Party of Ireland, gave support to the National Union of Unemployed Workers in England and visited Russia. In 1934 Charlotte moved to Belfast to take part in the Belfast Unemployed Workers Movement, despite being blind and almost crippled with arthritis. Charlotte died in the North in 1939, but it was in Glasnevin Cemetery in Dublin, near Constance Markievicz that she was finally laid to rest.

Charlotte's life is a testimony to the important role that many women have played in politics generally and Irish politics in particular. This book, like the subject, is intensely interesting and is enjoyable to read. ▲

Bernadette Hyland

Ten O Books p

In the last couple of years many books by Irish writers on all aspects of Ireland have been published.

Bernadette Hyland

lists her personal favourites, (not in order of preference but alphabetical by author) ▼

1. The Politics of James Connolly

Kieran Allen Pluto Press (£9.95)

Desmond Greaves produced the definitive work on James Connolly and it will be hard to beat his high standards but Kieran Allen has written a fresh and controversial study of the great man.

2. The Journey Home

Dermot Bolger Viking (£13.99)

A good book for the year of the 75th anniversary of the Easter Rising. It is the story of the urban poor in the Ireland of the 90's, of political corruption, violence and murder and of the search for a home by the youth of Ireland. A shocking but realistic portrayal of the lives of the dispossessed of Dublin.

3. The Hollow Ball

Sam Hanna Bell Blackstaff Press (£4.95)

Bell wrote the novel *December Bride* which is now a successful film and this book returns to his study of the Protestant working class community in Ireland. Belfast in the 1930's is his subject and he traces the lives of two friends and how they seek escape from poverty, one through radical politics and the other by becoming a footballer. Bell skillfully reveals the price that many working class people pay in order to escape unemployment and despair.

4. These Obstreperous Lassies

Mary Jones Gill & McMillan (£12.95)

The history of the Irish Women's Worker's Union which was formed in 1911 to fight for the rights of working class women and includes the story of women such as Helena Moloney who were active in the 1916 Rising and who saw the importance of linking the issue of equal rights for women with the national question. A heavy going but stimulating study of women's politics in Ireland from 1911 to 1984.

5. The Fading Shrine

Moy McCrory Jonathan Cape (£12.95)

This is Moy's third book and first novel. I am a McCrory fan but was a bit disappointed by this book, maybe because the story of nuns of a past era reminds me too much of my own bad experience of going to a convent school. It is a thought-provoking book with an imaginative story that grows on you.

6. Amongst Women

John McGahern Faber & Faber (£12.99)

McGahern has ruffled many feathers in Ireland in the past because of the controversial nature of his novels. This one has produced much critical acclaim on both sides of the water. Another book that looks at the legacy of the War of Independence, this time concentrating on the life of Moran, an old Republican. It is the study of a man who was a guerilla leader and how he comes to terms with the 'peace' and his peace of mind. Beautifully written and deserving of the publicity it has received.

7. Models for Movers

Ide O' Carroll Attic Press (£6.99)

Ide is an emigrant herself - to the USA - and in this book tells the story of the hundreds of thousands of Irish women who have gone to North America. Included are many different but poignant stories of

these women who undertook a hazardous journey to freedom, both politically and socially. The only criticism I have is that Ide is very uncritical of America, but otherwise this is a fascinating book.

8. Through Connemara in a Governess Cart

E. Somerville and V.M. Ross Virago (£4.99)

First published in 1893, this is a hilarious account of the women's travels in Connemara. Virago have reproduced in the book the cousins' sketches of the various places and people they met up with. A good book to take on holiday to the West of Ireland.

9. Maude Gonnet: Ireland's Joan of Arc

Margaret Ward Pandora (£8.99)

Yet another book about Maud Gonnet well worth a read. Margaret has produced a very detailed study not only of the woman but of the politics of the period. This is one of a series by Pandora on Irish women, others worth looking at are Eva Gore-Booth and Esther Roper by Gifford Lewis and Charlotte Despard by Margaret Mulvihill.

10. My cousin Justin

Margaret Barrington Blackstaff Press (£4.95)

First published in 1939, this is the story of the lives of young people caught up in the Irish Civil War and the way in which war affects people's minds long after their physical injuries are healed. A very thought-provoking book and one which made me search out some of her other books. Let's hope Blackstaff reproduce more of her writings. ▲

Letters

A Chara

I have to reply to the article by Virginia Moyles in An Pobal Éiríthe entitled "The Catholic Church". The article indicates that the Irish people have been prevented from reaching their full potential by their religion, or should I say the teachings of their priests. If that were true, non-Christian countries, uninhibited by any religion, should now have standards of living beyond all expectations and should be experiencing a life-style free from oppression, exploitation et al. Alas, not so: these countries are faced with economic chaos, the consequences of years of godless materialism. Eastern Europe having emerged from the dark age of communist rule and an oppressive tyranny greater than Dante could ever imagine for his "Inferno", have now to contend with grave economic and financial problems and are slowly returning to the Christian religion which formerly formed part of their tradition. Instead of answering seriatim the points raised in the article against Catholic dogma, I make the following points:-

- a) God created a wonderful world and gave us ten commandments to obey. We must love God and love our neighbour, no more, no less.
- b) Alas, problems and suffering are in the world. The question is, are these caused by God, by the behaviour of man or by forces of evil?

- c) We must not meekly accept poverty or oppression, we are commanded to 'subdue the earth' and that is what life is about.
- d) Oppression of the poor and defrauding a labourer of his just wage are two of the deadly sins which cry to Heaven for justice. Irish history bears witness to our people's long fight against these degenerate practices.
- e) Irish liberation does not mean trusting our individual thinking and acting accordingly. There must be a consensus in order to decide policy - the converse is anarchy.
- f) Catholicism is a religion, not a supermarket where one can accept or reject as one considers appropriate.
- g) Children must have guidelines, not a free rein, otherwise they will not know wrong from right, where to start or where to stop.

Finally, it is my experience that non-practising Catholics appear to have a guilt complex in that they are unable to totally abandon their religion. In some strange way they appear to be reluctant to say "good bye" or throw away the map - just in case! Long may it be so; alas, where would they go? ▲

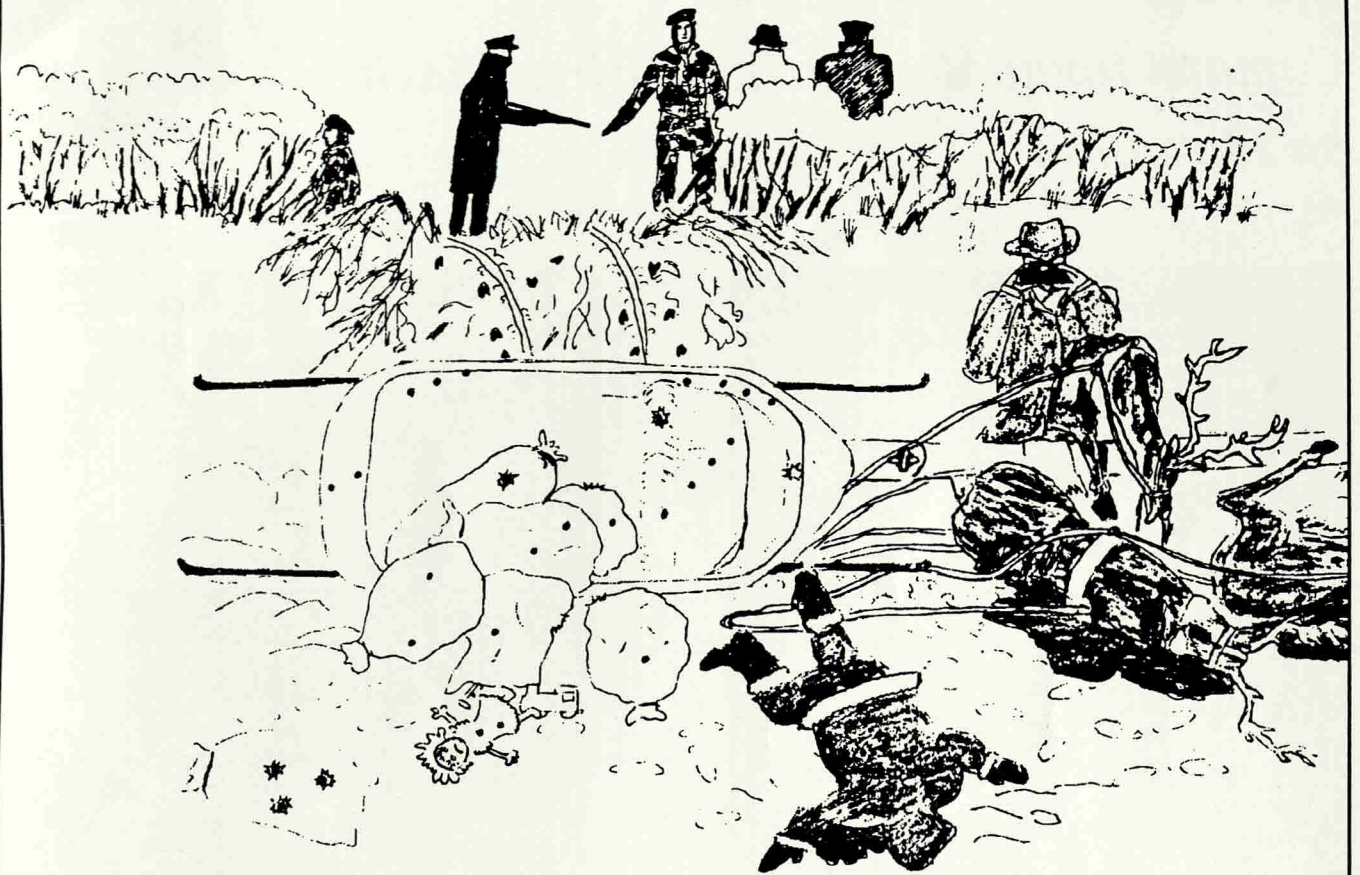
M. E. Cahill

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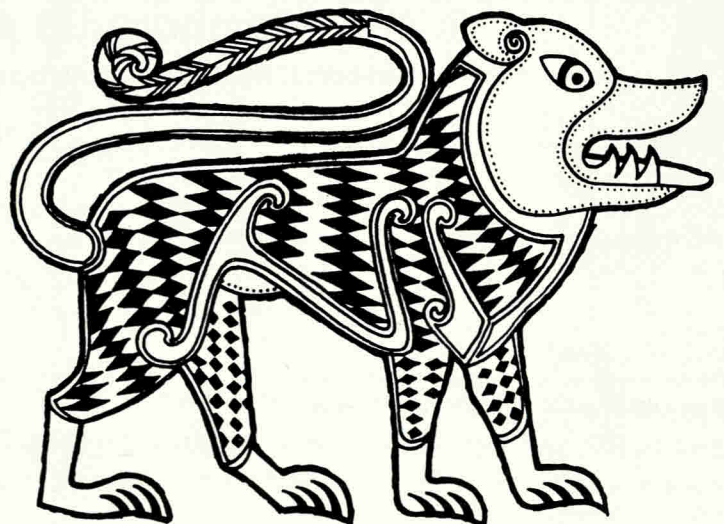


A SUSPECTED TERRORIST WAS SHOT DEAD LAST NIGHT AS HE CRASHED THROUGH AN RUC AND ARMY CHECKPOINT. SECURITY FORCES SAY HE IGNORED WARNINGS TO STOP AND OPENED FIRE ON THEM. THE WEAPON HAS NOT AS YET BEEN FOUND.

**Irish Prisoners' Bookclub
c/o Green Ink Bookshop
8 Archway Mall
London N19
Tel: (071) 263 4748 ▲**

The Irish Prisoners' Bookclub was set up recently to provide educational materials and books for Irish prisoners in jail in Britain and Northern Ireland. All a prisoner has to do is to write to the Bookclub at the above address, giving details of the book/s s/he wants.

The Bookclub depends on donations and money raised at benefits in order to be able to offer this service to prisoners. Contributions from readers of An Pobal Éiríthe would be very welcome. We would also welcome any help with fundraising. Contact us at the above address. All cheques/postal orders payable to Irish Prisoners' Bookclub. ▼



Irish in Britain Representation Group

Cumann Ionadaíochta na n - Éireannach sa Bhreatain



WHAT WE STAND FOR

Equal rights for the Irish in Britain



An end to all racism including anti-Irish racism



Equal rights for Irish women, lesbians, gay men and Travellers



An end to the racist PTA laws



Freedom for all framed prisoners



An end to censorship, propaganda and anti-Irish racism in the media



Recognition for the Irish as an ethnic minority



The vote in Ireland for the Irish in Britain



Irish unity and self-determination and the ending of British imperial interference in Ireland



An end to British Human Rights abuses in the North of Ireland



The transfer of Irish prisoners home to serve their sentences near their families



The promotion of Irish culture and language in Britain

Seasann muid ar son ceartanna ar chothrom do na Gael sa Bhreatain



Críoich le ciníochas, frith-Éireannachas san áireamh



Ceartanna ar chothrom do mhná, leispiacha, hómáighnéasacha agus don lucht siúil



Críoich le dlíthe cosúil leis an 'PTA' ciníoch



Saoirse do na cimirí frámála uilig



Críoich le cinsireacht, bolscaireacht agus ciníochas frith-Éireannach ins na meáin chumarsáide



Aitheantas ar na Gael mar mhionlach eitneach



Guth i dtoghcháin na hÉireann do na Gael sa Bhreatain



Aontacht agus féinrialtas in Éireann, agus críoich le cur isteach impiriúilach na Breataine



Críoich le íde na Breataine ar chearta daonna i dTuaisceart na hÉireann



Aistriú do chimí Éireannacha go príosúin sa mbaile in aice lena gcuid muintir



An Ghaeilge agus cultúr Gaelach a chothrú sa Bhreatain

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Please return to Lambeth IBRG, 245 a Coldharbour Lane, London SW9 8RR Tel: (071) 326 4740

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Address.....

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I would like to subscribe to the IBRG magazine An Pobal Éirithe ☐

I would like to join the IBRG and enclose the appropriate fee: £1 unwaged ☐ £5 waged ☐

Signed.....