

# **Britain's Military Strategy in Ireland**

## **The Kitson Experiment**



**Roger Faligot**



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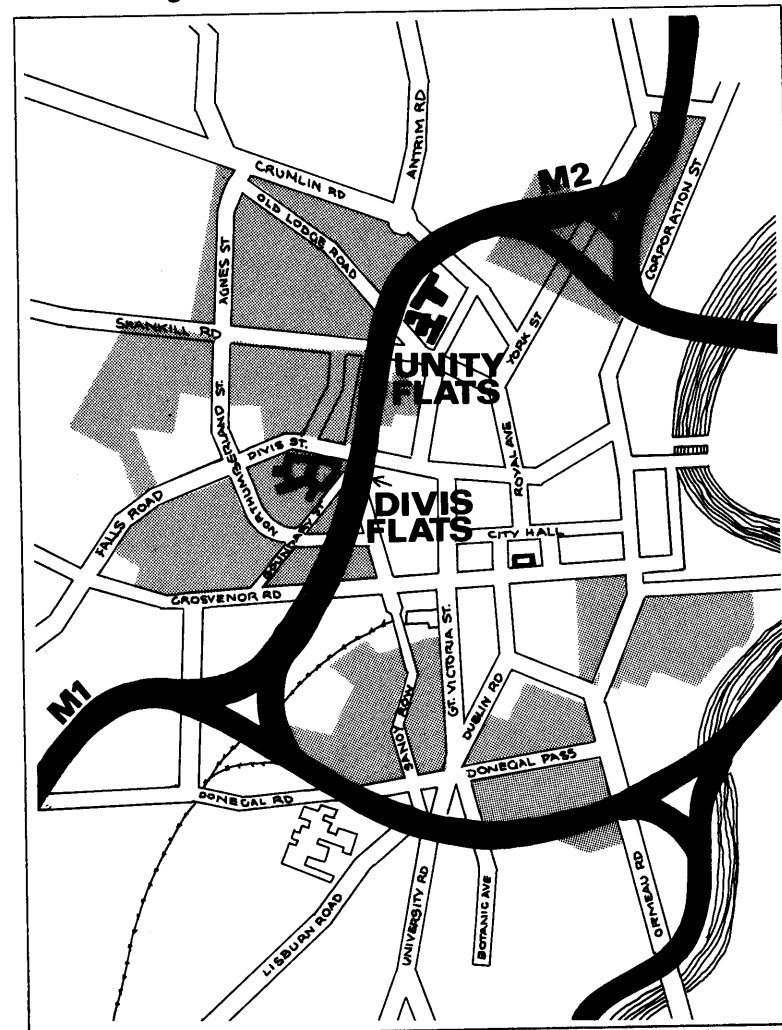


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#### Belfast Ring Road Planned to Divide 'Strategic Districts'



# Introduction

*Furthermore, Ireland is the only pretext the English government has for retaining a big standing army, which, if need be, as has happened before, can be used against the English workers after having done its military training in Ireland.*

*Lastly, England today is seeing a repetition of what happened on a monstrous scale in Ancient Rome. Any nation that oppresses another forges its own chains.*

Karl Marx  
28 March 1870

A man has declared war on Europe; a free Europe; a special war. A man distinguished by his rich military experience; his political outlook on warfare: and by his militaristic conception of politics.

With a vast experience of colonial wars in Africa and Asia he drew up plans to crush, control, channel and abort social movements that the authorities considered dangerous potentials for violent social conflict. For the first time methods that had been used against the Malayan *maquisards*, the Kenyan nationalists, the Algerian fighters, or the Vietcong were to be adopted on a broad scale in Western Europe.

The popular, nationalist uprising in Ireland more than ten years ago was unique, insofar as it emerged out of a long history of colonialism to land on the door-step of Europe of which it was geographically, economically and politically an integral part.

The man, British General Frank Kitson, was offered Ireland as a testing-ground for his theories, which, though initially considered by many as bizarre were, nevertheless, progressively adopted and eventually accepted by the British army and subsequently within NATO. Control of populations, psychological warfare; the use of special units and the overall expansion of intelligence services; the development of a new technology providing for containment, if not destruction, of any expression of civil disobedience, of political, trade-union, nationalist, feminist, or ecological opposition, including urban guerrilla warfare, constitute the diverse elements of these theories. 'Special' warfare is fought with computers and helicopters; intelligence and the quick access to it are its trump cards. The target: the urban populations.

A war of computer and helicopter, but above all, a set of principles which reflect the growing importance of the army in any counter-insurgency system, as well as the integration of a politico-military apparatus which, prior to any potential uprising, offers a systematic surveillance of men and ideas, the infiltration and manipulation of political groupings, the trade-union movement, the media, the social services, and ultimately the paralysis and the neutralization of potential dissidents and opponents.

Ireland has fallen victim to a conspiracy of silence not only in an effort to isolate the men and women who, for centuries (and especially since the new phase of resistance that began over a decade ago) have risen to seek their



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national and social emancipation. This silence, instead, aims to conceal the ominous, growing strategic interest vested in Ireland; an interest revealed by the massive presence of NATO submarines there.

The original feature of the special warfare in Northern Ireland stems from the fact that it came into full operation about five years after guerrilla insurgency had started. In continental Europe the reverse was true. The original side concerning Europe is underlined by the reverse. This system is emerging before the social or political forces of nationally oppressed European nations have (with the notable exception of Corsica and the Basque country) been developed into full-fledged urban guerrilla warfare born out of popular support and threatening the status quo.

The counter-insurgency experiment extended to Italy, West Germany or Spain enriches the Kitsonian theory with new experience, but only Ireland has so far offered a field for total experiment, where all the special warfare techniques are fully utilized.

This situation stems from the tormented history of Ireland, where there has never been any democratic tradition since the Anglo-Saxon conquest; and from Europe's passive acceptance of Britain's imposition of specific legislation to ensure a permanent state of virtual siege against the nationalist population, and the use of every weapon to destroy their political and military organizations. Ireland has the unhappy privilege of serving as a military laboratory, with her people as guinea-pigs.

Because they speak English, are white, and an integral part of Europe, the Irish people provide a model internal enemy. Their history and culture distinguish them from mainland Britain and Europe, and it is because of this that they are allowed to die in silence: they are both a distant, terrorist enemy — strangers — and yet our own shadows. An unprecedented opportunity is thus present for experimenting with the techniques of political-military control of all peoples.

The long-standing British obsession with the Irish 'problem', from Cromwell's New Army (which Kitson likes to recall was founded to 'suppress the Irish') to present day political police or the secret service, is today reflected in a total commitment to the destruction of Irish resistance.

The British occupation of Ireland is not solely to facilitate political and military research, but for good economic, political and strategic interests. It is not suggested that future modern social or political conflict in Europe will necessarily follow the Irish pattern, but the global purview of special warfare, as well as its techniques, weapons and the tactical means employed, offer valuable capital, feasibly to be of use elsewhere.

To enable this situation to be clearly appreciated, each of the individual components which go to make up the counter-insurgency game in its present context, are analysed in this book. But the sinister reality of the special war in Ireland is that these components are combined and deployed simultaneously.

In April 1973, during one of those numerous counter-insurgency and terrorism seminars for which the British have an especial affection, the

chairman of a session on 'the role of armed forces in peace-keeping for the 1970s', organized by the Royal Institute for Defence Studies, stated:

... if we lose in Belfast we may have to fight in Brixton or Birmingham. Just as Spain in the thirties was a rehearsal for a wider European conflict, so perhaps what is happening in Northern Ireland is a rehearsal for urban guerrilla war more widely in Europe, and particularly in Great Britain.

This book has been written to illustrate this statement.

# 1. The Theory of Counter-Insurgency: Frank Kitson's Theories

*Low Intensity Operations – Subversion, Insurgency and Peace-keeping*, by Brigadier Frank Kitson is a master-book on a new concept of political-military counter-insurgency which unfolds in Western Europe, at the start of the 1970s.<sup>1</sup>

This book provoked many contradictory reactions from various army circles. The Conservative Party Minister of Defence, saw it as 'a book written by one of the best experimental officers in the counter-insurgency field . . . of a great assistance to troops in the field'. This assessment was shared by the Chief-of-Staff, Sir Michael Carver who wrote the complimentary foreword: 'Nobody could be better qualified than Brigadier Frank Kitson to write on this subject. He has had a wide experience both of operations and intelligence against terrorists and in the different field of peace-keeping.' Perhaps the quarrel was between traditionalists and modernists? In 1973, General Frank King, Chief-of-Staff of the British Army in Northern Ireland, echoed the opinion of that faction of the military hierarchy who believed in traditional means to counter an insurrection: '*Low Intensity Operations* is nothing but a precise and methodical summary of everything which has been said before on the subject.'<sup>2</sup>

The book provoked a storm in a teacup; but there was agreement on one point: it presented the sum-total of all counter-insurgency experiments and, above all, a synthesis of the tasks ahead for the armies in Western Europe. The Left was mainly worried by the fact that Kitson did not hide the crude fact that these techniques might soon be applied in Britain. 'The purpose of this book is to draw attention to the steps which should be taken now in order to make the army ready to deal with subversion, insurrection, and peace-keeping operations during the second half of the 1970s'.<sup>3</sup>

The *real* role of the army in Ireland and its *potential* role in Great Britain are inseparable. Step by step, technical experiments here, are adopted there and soon elsewhere; Ireland as an experimental field was a godsend to counter-insurgency strategists. She belonged to Europe and yet was separate from it because of her geographical isolation, her economic underdevelopment, the originality of her culture, her traditions and history. The British played upon this unique ambiguity, which they had created: Northern Ireland is simultaneously foreign – thus, military methods can be used against her

people without shocking British public opinion – and an integrated part of the United Kingdom. Also, there is a sizeable Irish community on British soil. More than anyone else, the Irish are the *internal enemy* that enables the infiltration into Great Britain of techniques used in their country. These were probably some of the decisive factors that impelled the British Army Command to promote a young officer like Kitson to the command of the 39th Brigade in Belfast in order to enable him to put the theoretical principles and technical suggestions contained in his blueprint into practice.

In his book Kitson brought together the experiences of three distinct sources: French and British post-war decolonization, and the Second Indo-Chinese War, which the Pentagon strategists had led and lost, after having carefully drawn upon: 'The experiences of other colonial powers, particularly France and Great Britain, in fighting national liberation movements, were carefully analysed for possible application to the emerging American counter-insurgency apparatus.'<sup>4</sup>

## The French Contribution

Colonel Roger Trinquier is the only French officer quoted by Kitson. Abundantly and rightly so; Trinquier was highly appreciated in Anglo-Saxon countries. In 1964, U.S. intelligence services wanted to hire him as an adviser in the Vietnam War: 'In February 1964, I received a letter from the Institute for Defence Analyses, from Stephen Enke, one of the President's assistants who wanted to meet me in Paris. I was not unknown by the American secret services.'<sup>5</sup> Although he refused the assignment he nevertheless worked in liaison with the U.S. Army Special Warfare School.

His career in Indo-China and later in Algeria was remarkable. In Indo-China, as the French army was running towards disaster, the French intelligence service, the *Service de Documentation Extérieure et de Contre-Espionnage* (S.D.E.C.E.), in May 1953 asked him to form the 'Action Service Indo-China' otherwise called Groups of Airborne Mixed Commandoes (G.C.M.A.), The Socialist chief of S.D.E.C.E., Henri Ribièrre, his deputy Colonel, Fourcaud, and Mr Pignon, French High Commissioner in Indo-China, entrusted Colonel Grall, and then Roger Trinquier, with setting up anti-Vietminh maquis behind their lines. Represented by covert actions expert Colonel Landsdale, (who had just been successful in suppressing nationalist movements in the Phillipines) the C.I.A. bargained for their help on condition that the C.I.A. could supervise the operations, knowing that they would take over from the French soon enough.

G.C.M.A.s sought to obtain support from the mountains populations, the 10,000 strong local tribe, the Meos, who were easily won over against the Vietminh. Déodat Puy-Montbrun, one of the G.C.M.A. officers recalled:

The G.C.M.A. met with total success as far as infiltration, contacts with minorities, internal sabotage and destructions, sea-borne and counter-



guerrilla operations were concerned, creating a climate of uncertainty, and the manipulation of pacification agents. Many villages were rallied and populations organized for self-defence.<sup>6</sup>

G.C.M.A. general missions were clearly defined as:

special commandos, guerrilla warfare, counter-guerrilla operations, infiltration, penetration raids, psychological operations, reconnaissance and targetting of coasts, 'hot points', setting up of maquis, contacts with the sympathizing elements and pacification, just [the same] as sabotaging of communications, kidnappings and executions in Vietminh areas.<sup>7</sup>

Obviously, with that type of special operations and organization, G.C.M.A. units strongly resembled the British Special Air Service (SAS) in fact, 'expanding their activities, the G.C.M.A. was supplemented by a paratrooper battalion led by Captain Le Borgne, a former SAS [member], and transformed into a commando group' which 'exchanged specialized officers with the British SAS in Malaysia, and with the United States special forces.'<sup>8</sup>

Trinquier's military successes were, however, negated by the May 1954 Geneva agreements between the French and the Vietnamese. On 21 May 1954, the S.D.E.C.E. decided that 'in case the present Geneva negotiations led to a ceasefire, it must be considered that the maquis will, if not cease their activities, at least become "sleepers" which could be reactivated if need be.' Feeling betrayed by the politicians, Trinquier short-circuited the French secret services and in the same month created a 'Committee for the Liberation of the Higher Red River', which represented the 'Meo resistance' facing the Vietminh national liberation movement. The Meos were not won over politically, however, but economically: the G.C.M.A. were buying their opium. Trinquier tried to explain later that:

This was fitting into the project of creating pockets with the means of action, behind the Vietminh lines . . . . Touby Lyfoung, the traditional chief of the Meos, brought the help of his people with solid warrior traditions. But he expressed one economic condition: to provide him with the means to sell the opium crops of his country.<sup>9</sup>

Trinquier's 'Liberation Committee' earned him ten days of house arrest, because he 'had taken initiatives of political importance which had no character of urgency and without his superiors authorization'. In February 1955, back in France, he took part in training sessions. He had left the Meos behind in utter dismay, and the maquis collapsed; in 1958, Ho Chi Minh's government extended special status to ethnic minorities in Vietnam.

But, by the end of 1954, when the Algerian war of independence began, Trinquier discovered that special operations of the Indo-Chinese type would not suffice. They needed adaptation to urban conditions.

The role of pacification devolved upon the army was going to raise new problems to the military [tactics] with which they were acquainted. The use of policing powers in a large city was unknown to them. Algerian rebels were, for the first time, using a new weapon: *urban terrorism*, never used in Indo-China.

. . . The essential weapon which had ensured surprise and success had been terrorism. We understood its strength, since we had abandoned the game in Morocco in 1954 where there were only 100 organized terrorists. Terrorism as used by the rebels had become a war weapon.

As often recalled, modern warfare aims at the conquest of populations. Terrorism is the best fitted weapon for that purpose. In the past, it was aimed at important people in a given country; today, it has changed its objective. It does not strike blows at the top of the State, but at its defenceless base, to ensure that the State will loose all contacts with its citizens and that its mechanisms do not work any longer. Intermediary officials, people who facilitate the exercise of the power are murdered first: a policeman on the beat, an official in his office or at home, the postman, the teacher, etc. will be the first targets of terrorism. Then the ordinary man will be the target. In the street, while working, everywhere he is under the threat of violent death. He loses confidence in the security forces who are now unable to ensure law and order.

Once this result has been achieved, the terrorist may live like a fish in water, among a population he has subjugated to his will. They provide his logistical support, his security being a mass of people among which he can vanish in case of danger.

This is an unrivalled advantage but also a grave drawback: people who shelter the terrorist know him. So they can, at any time, give him away to the security forces if they are given an opportunity to do so. It is possible to withdraw this crucial support through a strict control of populations.

These were the two basic principles which led the activities of the 10th Paratroopers Division in Algiers to thus ensure total victory.<sup>10</sup>

Counter-guerrilla warfare; the reconquest of the population through psychological and psycho-social actions; the narrow control of populations (by the method known as *ilôtage* or *screening*, installed by Trinquier in March 1957 under the 'Urban Protection Apparatus' (D.P.U.) of the Greater Algiers); integration of intelligence and operational tasks, such were the nodal points of the actions undertaken in Algeria. To those theoreticians, the strategical axis of counter-insurgency, Trinquier recalls, amounts to 'carrying the revolutionary war into the enemy camp'.<sup>11</sup>

On the ground, General Massu's directives at the beginning of the Battle of Algiers, on 11 March 1957, translated the general orientations of these techniques into action: 'Tracking down the main F.I.N. networks, keeping in mind the elimination of their chiefs, their collectors, their killers, and

preventing the reconstitution of dismantled cells, as well as the resurgence of terrorism.<sup>12</sup> General Massu avoided signing orders concerning the methods used to obtain 'operational intelligence'. To destroy the political-military apparatus of the National Liberation Front (F.L.N.) became the chief means to 'free the population from the hold of terrorism'. But to destroy an organization of 5,000 men and women, and isolate them from their people, the French army had to combine psychological operations with screening and intelligence gathering.

Other specialists of counter-insurgency besides Trinquier, included General Beaufre, author of *The Revolutionary War*, and Colonel Château-Jobert, known as 'Conan' in the British SAS during World War II, who stressed the need to use the enemy's techniques against himself. The crucial importance of intelligence in a counter-insurgency war justified the use of torture. A university teacher, Pierre Vidal-Naquet, explained in his book *Torture in the Republic* how this was organized. The book was banned in France but, significantly, was published by Penguin in England.

Vidal-Naquet stressed that 'the real work of repression was not undertaken at the level of sub-sections, but by the regional Algiers-Sahel district section, led since 10 June by Colonel Godard, the real master of Algiers.' A 'Brains-Trust', (General Massu liked to use this English term), was placed under the authority of Lieutenant-Colonel Trinquier, head of the 'action-intelligence' service which centralized information and took key decisions. Trinquier justified the use of torture, as he had done throughout his book *Modern Warfare*, from which Frank Kitson drew many of his ideas. He went further (as he had in Indo-China), and organized dissident groups within the Algerian national liberation movement, under the supervision of S.D.E.C.E, in particular the group headed by Bellounis, who was subsequently liquidated by Trinquier, as he had become a dangerous witness of French covert actions.<sup>13</sup>

The heart of the theory of counter-insurgency thus emerged as the rationalization of a set of para-military means: special operations, torture; provocations; manipulation of fake dissident resistance groups which act to discredit the genuine liberation forces; psychological operations; and, to articulate them around two interconnected objectives: the reconquest of the population, and the isolation and subsequent destruction of the armed resistance. To win the psychological war, it became of the utmost necessity that responsibility for the para-military measures used by the counter-insurgency forces should rest with their enemy, or at least that public opinion should be convinced of this.

Roger Trinquier defended the 'right to torture' thus:

... he [the insurgent] must know that once captured, he will not be treated like an ordinary criminal, nor like a prisoner-of-war.

In fact, the security forces who have arrested him do not seek to punish him for a crime for which he has no personal responsibility but, as in any other war, the destruction or submission of the opposing side.

Thus, he will not be asked many details about the attacks he may

have been involved in, often going back far into the past with no immediate interest, but rather precise information on his organization. In particular, every man knows his chief; therefore firstly his name and address must be obtained from the captured insurgent, so that we can proceed without delay to his arrest.

During these interrogations, the prisoner will not, of course, be assisted by a solicitor.

If he gives information without causing problems the interrogation will be short; otherwise, the specialists will, by employing all means, have to extract his secret. Like a soldier, he must face sufferings, and maybe the death he has so far escaped.

Thus, this must be known by the terrorist who will have to accept it as an inherent fact of his state and the means of war which, knowingly, he and his chiefs have chosen for themselves.<sup>14</sup>

In Ireland, not only the use of torture, but also the reasons for it were modified, as most of the intelligence came from surveillance and computers. We shall see how Kitson, whilst adopting Trinquier's definition of 'subversion', underlined the need for the type of low-intensity intelligence that enables a precise profile of the enemy, his/her organization and routine to be portrayed. Nonetheless, he drew upon the lessons of the Algerian war, especially regarding the psychological operations necessary in support of special operations in the various phases of counter-insurgency.

## The U.S. and Special War in Asia

The Pentagon gave the best definition of counter-insurgency as accepted by Kitson and his Western European colleagues: 'Those military, para-military, political, economic, psychological, and civic actions taken by a government to defeat subversion insurgency', while insurgency is defined as: 'a condition resulting from a revolt or insurrection against a constituted government that falls short of civil war. In the current context, subversive insurgency is primarily communist inspired, supported or exploited.'<sup>15</sup>

The U.S. General Westmorland's explicit statement:

I believe that the prospect of many 'Vietnams' in the entire world presents a real danger for all freedom-loving peoples. This is why I consider that techniques of insurgency warfare must be top of the list among our defences against the dangers we will have to face. This being said, we cannot expect to find identical models or always to employ similar techniques.<sup>16</sup>

Those techniques clearly indicated a field of action beyond the Vietnam scenario, and as in Algeria, included a set of forces to implement psychological warfare. Westmorland, and most Pentagon strategists, emphasized the need for integration of political and military means.



Political action is most important. At all levels of public administration, government institutions and organs must show, as much to the farmer as to the shopkeeper, that their government protects them . . . .

A military operation is but one of the various ways of combating communist insurgency. Experience taught us that the psychological influence of military activity must be subject to particular attention if we are to succeed. Every event in people's daily life exerts an influence on them. Each important military action must be judged in relation to the influence it will exert on people's behaviour.

Thus co-ordination of political-psychological means with military operations and of intelligence information, constitute the main elements of counter-insurgency warfare. Westmorland, together with the U.S. 'Brains-trust' agreed with Roger Trinquier on the fundamental principle guiding counter-insurgency: 'Troops and units must use the guerrillas home as their home, learn the guerrilla's methods and use them against him'.

The difference between the second Indo-Chinese war and the Algerian situation stems, not from the principles that suited special warfare, but rather from the amplitude of the energies devoted to that special war on the Indo-Chinese front to turn the Southern population against the National Liberation Front. Consequently, all technological, scientific and economic resources were organized around the special warfare apparatus. 'The Community of Counter-Insurgency' was set up under the aegis of President Kennedy and the Pentagon with its roots in research centres, universities and study groups, and with the help of psychologists, anthropologists, all types of teachers, professors and students of human sciences working, consciously or not, for the military research centres that would feed the war in Vietnam.

So anthropological studies on the evolution, changes, social, cultural and political structures of a given South-east Asiatic population, were analysed by the Pentagon and prepared the ground for the intervention of the 'Green Berets'. It will be remembered that the Phoenix Plan, which, according to former C.I.A. Director William Colby, planned the physical elimination of 50,000 alleged cadres of the Vietnamese Communist Party or the National Liberation Front, was based on anthropological and sociological studies pinpointing structures of consanguinity on direct line and family relations within Vietnamese society.<sup>17</sup> Other projects, of a more 'military' nature, have consisted in carrying out a synthesis of various French and British counter-insurgency operations since World War II.

But on the battlefield, new technologies, essentially due to developments in the field of electronics, brought special warfare to a point of no return. The use of computers on a mass scale, the constitution of an 'electronic battlefield', mostly through detection and surveillance of the enemy, the utilization of biological and chemical weapons, the development of ballistics with a new generation of assault rifles, the use of helicopters — already initiated in Malaya and Algeria — were the elements of the U.S. heritage which were to figure in the organization of special warfare in the Western European

context, as it emerged in Ireland or the Basque country. From a strategical standpoint, it is important to recall how the Stanley-Taylor plan, approved by the Kennedy administration at the end of 1961, foresaw 'special warfare led by the Saigon army under the command of U.S. advisers',<sup>18</sup> otherwise known as 'Vietnamization'; which to a more limited extent was akin to the strategy that the British attempted to practise in Northern Ireland in 1975.

## The British Counter-Insurgency Experience

Since the end of World War II, the British army has been involved in more than 50 'limited conflicts' or 'counter-insurgency campaigns'. On several occasions with the fall of Fascist regimes, Great Britain intervened to prevent the emergence of Left wing governments; the Greek civil war was a clear illustration of this bias. But the major campaigns were waged against nationalist movements, in pursuit of which the British sharpened their counter-insurgency techniques: in Palestine (1946-48); Malaya (1948-60); Kenya (1952-55); Oman (1957-59); Cyprus (1954-58); Aden (1963-68), and again in Malaya (1963-66), and more recently Oman and Dhofar and, of course, Ireland.

Frank Kitson was a Military Intelligence Officer in Kenya from 1953 to 1955; a Company Commander in Malaya in 1957, and Second-in-Command of a battalion in Cyprus from 1962 to 1964, within the framework of the UN contingent. Such were the experiences he had in mind in 1970, whilst completing his counter-guerrilla manual before taking command of the 39th Brigade in Northern Ireland. Kenya and Malaya had features in common with Indo-China; Cyprus, on the contrary, was essentially an urban insurrectional battlefield. Yet from the jungle to the town, the same guidelines presided.

In Kenya, British forces undertook to crush the Land Freedom Army, organized around the Kikuyu tribe to which Jomo Kenyatta belonged. To create loyalist forces and preserve their domination the British made use of other tribal groups. Internment camps were opened and 90,000 Kenyans were detained before the end of the operations in 1960. Psychological warfare was introduced on a massive scale, starting with the catchword 'Mau-Mau' given to the nationalist fighters by the British. The 'Security Forces' killed 10,000 Africans, and torture was widely used.<sup>19</sup>

Frank Kitson, as he explained at length in his earlier volume *Gangs and Counter-Gangs*, working for the Military Intelligence in liaison with the Special Branch, experimented with new types of special operations, very similar to Trinquier's and his French G.C.M.A. He set up 'pseudo-gangs', groups of Loyalist Kenyans, in the shape of mobile columns not only to track down Land Freedom Army guerrillas, but also to perpetrate acts to discredit them.

By 1953, Kitson was attached to the Special Branch, as an intelligence officer but he realized that little information filtered through to him, whereas he aimed 'to provide the security forces with the necessary information to destroy the "Mau-Mau" in the Kiambu and Thika districts'. In pursuit of this

he extracted information from prisoners 'interrogated in depth', in a special centre built for this purpose. Operation number two was the 'turning over' or conversion of captured L.F.A. militants, whom he then organised into a wide-spread network of touts, spies and informers who brought back bits of information that provided a vast jigsaw puzzle which allowed him to piece together profiles of the Nationalists, their routine, their moves, and their relationship to the village populations. The third step was infiltration of his 'Mau-Mau' into guerrilla groups, with the task of distorting their actions in order to discredit, isolate, and ultimately destroy them.

Sometimes Kitson took part in night raids with his body blackened. Some of these groups organized ritual killings of British colonial settlers to enhance the bloodthirsty and irrational image which British propaganda sought to project around the world, thus stressing, for the benefit of international public opinion, the peace-making and civilizing mission of Her Majesty's army.

Kitson's 'pseudo-gangs' also enabled the British to obtain from the various peoples what was called 'contact information', in order to localize and destroy pockets of resistance. Most of the British Army Command, particularly General Erskine, not only tolerated, but followed with great interest, the progress made by young Captain Kitson. He was consequently put in charge of training sessions to instruct 'how to manipulate informers, lead pseudo-gangs and treat prisoners'.

The quest for intelligence prepared the ground for larger scale offensive operations in the forests. 'I felt that a proper centralized control of organization and training would help develop what was clearly to constitute the means of destroying the "Mau-Mau" in the forests' he said later. This experience was obviously valuable 20 years later in Ireland.

Malaya offered a new field for experiment. There Kitson met such prominent counter-insurgency strategists as Richard Clutterbuck and Sir Robert Thompson. It was a different set-up from Kenya, however, due to the more modern and sizeable nature of the insurgency movement and the complexity of Malay society.

The Malay Communist Party (M.C.P.), led by Chin Peng, presented a much better structured movement, both politically and militarily than had the Kenyans. Ironically, it had been partly equipped and trained during the anti-Japanese resistance, by the British 'Special Operations Executive' sponsored Force 136. Politically taught at Mao Zedong's school of 'protracted guerrilla warfare' and with strong roots in the 'mass movements' (*Min yüen*) in the Peninsula, the Malay Races Liberation Army should have been in a position to push the British out of Malaya. But the M.R.L.A. suffered from a grave failing: it was essentially based on the Chinese population, and there, as in many other parts of the world, Britain was able to nurture ethnic divisions, against the popular movement for independence.

In Malaya, the British, in combining a whole set of techniques, demonstrated the first example of homogeneous and systematic counter-insurgency operations. Firstly, the state of emergency, which lasted for 12 years, allowed the proscription of political parties and trade unions. 35,000 people were

interned without trial, and 30,000 inhabitants of Chinese extraction were expelled from the country. Then the 'strategic hamlets', later imported into Vietnam by British advisers, were introduced. The idea was to deport the populations on the skirts of the jungle — mostly sheltering guerrillas — into 'protected villages'. In *The War of the Flea*, Robert Taber recalled that:

A massive and costly resettlement programme removed more than half a million Chinese squatters, mostly tin mine and rubber plantation workers, from their shacks on the fringe of the jungle to protected villages, where they could be kept under surveillance and at the same time offered advantages intended to woo them from their political connexion with the insurgents.<sup>20</sup>

Isolating the partisans from the population, the occupation forces deprived them of foodstuff (strict control was imposed on the transportation of food and, for the first time, defoliants were used to destroy the crops) but also of information, of protection and of new recruits. The development of intelligence in the Malayan campaign was equally a determining factor. The Special Branch, trained by the British became, according to Richard Clutterbuck, 'the decisive element to face the insurgency, performing security and intelligence tasks'.

As far as psychological warfare was concerned, the British organized a 'campaign to win hearts and minds', to convert the population into supporting the counter-insurgency apparatus, using such local means of propaganda, as popular theatre or flying paper kites. Psychological operations were also geared towards turning over former M.R.L.A. guerrillas and to convincing world opinion. Besides minor reforms and political actions aimed at cutting the ground from under the guerrilla's feet and preparing for the transfer of colonial power to a neo-colonial elite, the chief weapon that ensured victory for the British was the co-ordination and unification of civil and military command structures.

In Cyprus, from 1962 to 1964, Kitson took part in the pacification exercise under the supervision of the UN, the end product of a military campaign engaged in ten years earlier by the British. The occupation forces had fought there against an extreme Right-wing nationalist force, EOKA (Ethniki Organosis Kypriou Agoniston) was led by General Grivas (known only to the British as *Digenis* — the Chief), who was seeking to achieve *Enosis*, that is unification with Greece, in spite of the Turkish population. Earlier, during the 1939-45 war and the Greek Civil War, he had led a group code-named *Xhi* which had organized anti-Communist commandos against the E.L.A.S. partisans.

This situation presented a politically motivated climate different from other national liberation war theatres, but all the same, to the British army it was a counter-insurgency operation against a guerrilla force that enjoyed considerable popular support. The determination and ruthless actions against them by EOKA surprised the British army, the police and the administration.

By autumn 1955, Sir John Harding, resorted to methods that were familiar by now:

It was an old routine, pioneered in other colonies. A State of Emergency would be declared: villages and towns curfewed by day, and by night; collective fines would be levied; the public finger-printed, identity cards issued . . . Already a Detention of Persons law had been introduced, permitting people to be held without trial, and there was evidence that it was being abused. Blank orders were being sent out to the towns. One had been filled in with a dead man's name, another with that of a boy of thirteen. Nearly 100 people had been detained, and in a country with only a hundredth of Britain's population that was a lot: it was as if 10,000 families had been deprived of a father or brother; and the allowances made to dependants did not replace the weekly pay packet.

EOKA did not wait for the Field-Marshal to begin. They blew up a police station and shot an R.A.F. officer who was sitting on the balcony of his home in Famagusta. It was the first attack of its kind by EOKA gunmen on a Briton. 'I am incensed!' Harding declared. 'You may quote me!' A ten-day curfew was clamped on Famagusta and 25,000 people were shut indoors from dusk to dawn. A similar curfew followed in Limassol, which had a population of 35,000. Soon one lost track of which towns and villages were under curfew and which were not.

The State of Emergency was duly declared and with it came 'emergency regulations': carrying arms brought the death penalty; sabotage or the possession of explosive meant a life sentence; boys under 18 could be whipped; public meetings were banned; strikes made illegal.<sup>21</sup>

So numerous techniques already in use in Asia and Africa had come nearer to home — to Europe. Pseudo-gangs in Cyprus were called 'Q-Gangs', and infiltration missions against EOKA supplemented operations to exacerbate tensions and clashes between Turks and Greeks in the island, thus justifying British presence.

Again, psychological operations were not neglected. For instance Grivas' Diaries were captured by the army, expurgated and rewritten by the army propaganda services and published in the press. The former editor of the *Times of Cyprus*, Charles Foley gave a vivid description of these operations:

No effort was spared by the Secretariat to win over the foreign press with titillating stories. Sometimes, for the benefit of American correspondents, 'captured documents' which they were not allowed to see confirmed that EOKA was modelled on communist lines and that an increasing number of young Communists were joining it. The official introduction of sex into the Cyprus problem was another product of this period. Reporters were invited to 'Operation Tea-Party' in the

Central News Room and offered libations of everything but tea together with a handout declaring that schoolgirls had been 'required to prostitute themselves with fellow-members of EOKA'. A later pamphlet described the sexual relations of such girls with members of the killer groups in one (unnamed) town, alleging that one of them had her first lover at the age of twelve.<sup>22</sup>

Doubtless the fertile imagination of the British psychological warriors will not be neglected in Northern Ireland.

After special warfare experiences on the Asian-African battlefield, the Cyprus campaign had thus brought Frank Kitson face to face with subversive warfare on the edge of Europe, in the essentially urban environment of Nicosia, Limassol or Famagusta. He still needed to move into the very heart of Europe. The first and last of Britain's colonies, Ireland, was about to offer him an unique opportunity.

### Low Intensity Operations

The essence of 'Kitsonism', as expressed in *Low Intensity Operations* is crystal-clear: the army must be geared towards, and prepared for facing popular movements long before they have taken the shape of a violent uprising. Kitson's strategic vision assembled itself around three phases which he saw in the development of subversion: 1) a preparatory phase; 2) the non-violent phase, and 3) an open insurgency phase.

The preparatory phase of a potential insurrection gave the authorities time to ensure unity of the military and civil structures (army, police, administration) which would have to hit back at revolutionary movements that usually, are united. This unity is generally manifest in popular movements, most notably 'national liberation movements', but not in small and atomized grouping, such as the Quebec Liberation Front, and the Breton Liberation Front which, although expressing the feelings of an oppressed population had neither a political-military apparatus nor enjoyed mass support; and it is less the case for urban guerrilla groups submerged in isolation, such as the Red Army Faction in West Germany.

But Kitson essentially dealt with popular movements and proposed an, at any rate, narrow liaison between the executive power, the military, the police, and the co-ordination at all levels of civil and military administrations. This was one of the major problems faced in Northern Ireland. During his sojourn there, Kitson established good contacts at the top, but not until 1973, was an operational integration of structure and division of labour initiated.<sup>23</sup> Simultaneously, a programme of reforms would be undertaken to absorb the popular discontent upon which an underground movement is based.

Kitson suggested, in view of previous colonial experience, a rigorous system to collect and analyse elementary intelligence which would enable a

chart of the guerrilla organization to be drawn up; who's who in the movement; links between military organization and political apparatus; information on sympathizers, supporters, their routine, details of their professional and personal life and so on. In other words, all intelligence which, *later*, would help to predict potential reactions either when these people may have gone underground, or during interrogations.

Psychological Operations – Psyops – are part of the system *before* the emergence of subversion, or an offensive phase of conflict has begun. Kitson has drawn considerably on lessons from the French-British past colonial adventures and confessed he had been profoundly influenced by the French Psychological Warfare school, led by Trinquier, Beauffre, Lacheroy and others. In the preparatory phase, public opinion must be psychologically prepared, to reject the guerrillas, when necessary, and to demonstrate either hostility or at least disinterest. Simultaneously, the army, too, must be psychologically ready, and even prepared to intervene in their own country. The British army was exercised in a counter-insurgency capacity in Britain in 1974, in the London tube stations and at Heathrow Airport.

*Phase Two*: the non-violent phase consists of demonstrations – mostly peaceful – on the lines of civil disobedience and non-cooperation. Yet this phase does not exclude '*limited acts of violence*', either on the fringe or totally independent of popular demonstrations. However, Brigadier Kitson stressed that, inherently, the causes for such a situation were subversive, and he attempted to provide an answer in that context.

In this scenario, the police must be capable of containing the situation; if they cannot, then the authorities should not hesitate to add to, or even substitute them with military intervention forces. At this time, it is still possible to make the 'judicious promises of concessions' which may help to defuse a popular uprising. But, Kitson, advises, let us not wait too long! Simultaneously, psychological means must provide for fragmenting the group and isolating the 'leaders' from the 'masses'.

Intelligence gathering on such occasions is extremely important: public rallies and demonstrations fall under close photographic surveillance. Moreover, the 'security forces' will be able to act more openly and arrest people in the streets; detain them for long enough to extract intelligence; engage in searches from house to house. These operations are often known as 'fishing-trips'.

Kitson thus defined the diverse missions that counter-insurgency should undertake:

Although with an eye to world opinion and to the need to retain the allegiance of the people, no more force than is necessary for containing the situation should be used, conditions can be made reasonably uncomfortable for the population as a whole, in order to provide an incentive for a return to normal life and to act as a deterrent towards a resumption of the campaign. Having once succeeded in providing a breathing space by these means, it is most important to do three

further things quickly. The first is to implement the promised concessions so as to avoid allegations of bad faith, which may enable the subversive leadership to regain control over certain sections of the people. The second is to discover and neutralize the genuine subversive element. The third is to associate as many prominent members of the population, especially those who may have been engaged in non-violent action, with the government. This last technique is known in America as co-optation and is described by Messrs Hoch and Schoenbach as 'drowning the revolution in baby's milk'.<sup>24</sup>

*Phase Three*: armed or open insurgency, when the armed uprising, the guerrilla warfare, takes on the shape of a popular war against the established power. Then, Kitson suggests the articulation of all the means already mentioned, around plans of special warfare. Intelligence, for instance, becomes operational and integrated within *Special Forces* or *Units* who ensure intelligence collection through infiltration of the insurrection movement, and also lead paramilitary operations with psychological aims, – such as discrediting the resistance – through the creation of pseudo-gangs whose mission is, above all, defined as '*identifying and eliminating the enemy*'.

## Counter-Revolutionary Operations

An appendix to Kitson's military training manual entitled *Army Land Operations Manual, Counter-Revolutionary Operations*, Vol. III, defines more precisely the type of actions in which the counter-insurgency forces would indulge in the given scenarios. This training manual, subject to the confidential 'D-Notice', was written in 1969, and in the light of the experience gained in Northern Ireland, revised at least in 1971 and 1973. It proposed a survey of the sequences described by Kitson as the various insurrectional phases.

In the foreword, experience gathered by the British army is recalled:

Between the end of World War II and 1 January 1969, Britain's forces have had to undertake a wide variety of military commitments, and only in Europe, after the formation of NATO, has there been any real stability. Fifty-three of these commitments have been of the counter-revolutionary type, with only Korea and the short Suez campaign falling outside this category.

The manual distinguished four separate categories of involvement in which the British army could find itself: internal security; counter-insurgency; anti-terrorist operations, and limited warfare.

The Palestinian campaign, the 'State of Emergency' in Malaya in its ultimate phase, were, like operations in Cyprus and Kenya, described as 'anti-terrorist operations'. Algeria and Indo-China, until the French defeat of Dien

Bien Phu in 1954, were the theatres of counter-insurgency campaigns. Limited war — large scale operations stopping short of a nuclear conflict — could take on the proportions of the Vietnam war, up to 1975. Obviously some of these differences can be seen as academic, since, for instance, General Van Giap trapped the French with his divisions in a conventional warfare operation at Dien Bien Phu.

But, whatever the degree of expansion reached by the 'subversive' war, the manual analyses the operations from the classical standpoint of counter-insurgency shared by Colonel Trinquier and Brigadier Kitson. 'The fundamental concept [is] the working of the triumvirate, civil, military, and police, as a joint and integrated organization from the highest to the lowest level of policy making, planning and administration.'

A military 'Director of Operations' then supervises a 'National Plan' which sets out six specific requirements of counter-revolutionary operations:

- a) the passing of emergency regulations to facilitate the conduct of a national campaign;
- b) various political, social and economic measures designed to gain popular support and counter or surpass anything offered by the insurgents;
- c) the setting up of an effective organization for joint civil and military control at all levels;
- d) the forming of an effective, integrated and nationwide intelligence organization, without which military operations can never be successful;
- e) the strengthening of indigenous police and armed forces, so that their loyalty is beyond question and their work effective. This is often easier said than done;
- f) measures of control designed to isolate the insurgents from popular control.

These political-military choices have increasingly become all too concrete during the last 13 years in Ireland and, step by step, familiar also to the British and other European populations.

It is thought by the army, that the best way to bring these operations to a successful conclusion, is by:

- 1) dealing with civil disturbances resulting from labour disputes, racial and religious antagonism and tension or social unrest;
- 2) dealing with riots and civil disobedience, with or without the political undertones which savour of revolt or even rebellion;
- 3) countering terrorism by individuals and small groups in the form of sabotage and assassinations, particularly in urban areas.

Finally, the operations are best orchestrated by special units of the British army. These 'special units', especially the SAS, have played a growing role in the special war against the Irish population. The *Manual* so defines the SAS mission orders:

SAS squadrons are particularly well suited and equipped for counter-

revolutionary operations. Small parties may be infiltrated or dropped by parachute, including free fall, to avoid a long approach through enemy dominated areas, in order to carry out any of the following tasks:

- a) the collection of information on the location and movement of insurgent forces;
- b) the ambush and harassment of insurgents;
- c) the infiltration of assassination and demolition parties into insurgent held areas;
- d) border surveillance;
- e) limited community relations;
- f) liaison with, and organization of, friendly guerrilla forces operating against the common enemy.<sup>25</sup>

## Kitson in Ireland

Brigadier Frank Kitson was stationed in Ireland to allow him to put into practice the key principles contained in *Low Intensity Operations*. Indeed, the real situation did not entirely follow his blueprint. The distinct phases he had visualized simply overlapped in Ireland, where, as he was posted in 1970, armed insurrection was already the order of the day.

In Phase One, the nationalist (or Catholic) population had criticized the social and political discrimination of which they had been the victims since the 'partition of the country in two separate units'. Meanwhile, the traditional organization of resistance to British presence, the Irish Republican Army, following military defeat in the Border campaign (1956-62) in which it had struck guerrilla blows without stimulating popular support, had undergone a reappraisal of its past activities, and leant towards exclusive political action; hence it took part, in the late 1960s, in the peaceful movement to obtain civil rights for the nationalist population in the North, the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association (NICRA).

In Phase Two (1968-70), NICRA organized popular and peaceful demonstrations in an effort to obtain, from the Northern Ireland Unionist government, parity of treatment with the Protestant or Unionist community. The Unionists, a minority in Ireland but a majority in the Ulster six counties, hesitated to make concessions, and finally, the hard-liners organized large-scale attacks against Catholic demonstrations, and later, Catholic areas. The mainly Protestant recruited local police — the Royal Ulster Constabulary — and the armed auxiliaries, the B-Specials, took part in these pogroms which sparked off militant self-defence in the Nationalist ghettos.<sup>26</sup>

The Irish Republican Movement, which had always represented the ancient claim to national emancipation and reunification of their country, was splintered in two by this crisis. Their military section, the IRA, found itself unable to perform its usual function as a militia in defence of the nationalist ghettos in Northern Ireland. There was then a split in the political wing, Sinn



Féin, and in the IRA, so that there were two Sinn Féins and two IRAs – the 'Officials' and 'the Provisionals'. The former stated that they maintained a firm, Marxist influenced socialist stand, whilst the latter tended to be more in the Republican tradition, maintaining the primacy of armed struggle in their overall strategy. These positions, however, underwent spectacular changes; the Provisionals became radicalized towards the Left, becoming full-fledged Socialists, while the Officials, having abandoned armed resistance by 1972, suffered a split on their Left, which gave birth to the Irish National Liberation Army (INLA), and became an electoral party. For the British strategists, however, these changes were hardly perceptible at first, since both movements engaged in armed actions.

In July 1969, British troops were sent to Northern Ireland ostensibly to 'protect the Catholics', but above all to contain the conflict, and prevent nationalist discontent from erupting into a major, direct confrontation with the Northern Ireland authorities, and consequently threaten British interests.

The IRA then developed their large-scale armed campaign, and when Frank Kitson took over command of the 39 Infantry Brigade in Lisburn, Phase Three of his scenario had been largely entered into. It was too late to think about concessions to defuse the conflict. All available forces had to be involved to wage special war against the Irish resistance.

Reluctantly, Kitson took part in the internment raids on 9 August, 1971. Not that he had any sympathy for the hundreds of Irishmen interned that day, but the operation seemed too hasty and ill-prepared, the arrests carried out with no real knowledge of the IRA infrastructure and with poor quality intelligence. Internment without trial intensified popular support for the IRA, while the Nationalists barricaded their districts and managed their 'liberated areas', which became a real sanctuary for the IRA.

In December 1971, in the Lisburn army headquarters, 'counter-insurgency experts' and officers in charge of the 'security forces' in Northern Ireland attempted to draw a balance-sheet of the operations undertaken against the IRA. It was decided to launch a policy of isolating the Republican Army within the nationalist community, combining a policy of repression from the front within the framework of 'Direct Rule from London' and a programme of housing and employment reforms, and equal opportunities for both communities.

Frank Kitson dissociated himself from this line of approach. He declared that the situation had developed to such a point that, in order to isolate the IRA, it would be necessary to: spark off a split within its ranks; initiate a fake peace movement; ensure selective arrests of Republican cadres contrary to the internment policy, which, partly through lack of hard intelligence, was so indiscriminate that it strengthened, rather than weakened resistance; set up pseudo-gangs (both Loyalist and Republican), to be involved in infiltration of diverse groups, manipulating loyalist gangs and orchestrating a campaign of assassinations that would terrorize the population; (mainly through SAS and other special units) wage a massive psychological war to discredit the IRA, and, in the short-term try and split them between Left/Right, 'Doves'/Hawks',

North/South, and military/political axes.

This programme seemed too extraordinary and ambitious, but some suggestions were retained – the propaganda war and the invasion of the no-go areas to engage in control of populations – but the Conservative Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, William Whitelaw, adopted overall a more traditional plan. 'Direct Rule' was introduced in March 1972, and by January, brutal repression iced the cake of an indiscriminate policy of internment without trial; on Bloody Sunday, the British Paratroopers shot 14 people dead in Derry, an act shattering to world opinion. On a political level, a reforms programme based on the co-operation of Catholic and Protestant political parties, 'power-sharing', was introduced in 1973, to be destroyed the following year by the Loyalist Ulster Workers' Council general strike.

Yet some of Kitson's most brutal suggestions were kept in mind: the assassination campaign against Catholic civilians, and the propaganda war to break up the IRA from within. But the Brigadier had not succeeded in convincing his superiors of the need for a co-ordinated counter-insurgency offensive which alone, in his view, could dismantle the Irish resistance.

On 22 April 1972, he was returned to Britain by helicopter . . . and carried on his irresistible military ascension. But, gradually, his ideas made headway in Northern Ireland; from 1975 onwards, they were totally implemented and his theories reached the top circles in the British army, research centres, lobbies and think-tanks within NATO and the ruling classes in Europe, beginning with West Germany, where he continued his career.<sup>27</sup>

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Between 1972-74 he was Officer Commanding the Warminster Infantry College in Wiltshire. There is a two-year blank in his biography from 1974 until January 1976, when he was promoted Major-General, 2nd Division British Army on the Rhine, which he reorganized while stationed in Lübeck. In January 1977, he published *Bunch of Five*, a study of diverse counter-insurgency campaigns in which he took part, but the book was discreet about Ireland. In October 1977 Major-General Kitson was given command of the Staff College at Camberley. In February 1980 he received the Order of Knight Commander of the Bath (KCB), and the following month became Deputy Commander-in-Chief of United Kingdom Land Forces and Inspector General of the Territorial Army and Cadets, with the rank of Lieutenant-General. Promoted to full General in July 1982 he became Commander-in-Chief, United Kingdom Land Forces.

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13. In his interview with the head of the French counter-espionage agency, the DST Mr Roger Wybot, the French journalist Philippe Bernert gave details of this, 'elimination'. See Philippe Bernert, *Roger Wybot la bataille pour la DST*, (Presses de la Cité, 1975) p.450.
14. Roger Trinquier, 'Guerre moderne', in *Guerre, Subversion and Révolution*.
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  23. See Richard Clutterbuck, *Protest and the Urban Guerrilla*, (Cassells, 1974); *Living with Terrorism*, (Faber and Faber, 1975); Lt.-Colonel Graham, 'Low Level Civil-military Coordination in Belfast, 1970-73'. *RUSI Journal*, September 1974.
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  25. *Land Operations*, Vol.III; 'Counter-revolutionary Operations, 1st Part, Principles and General Aspects', (Ministry of Defence, 29 August 1969).
  26. From Kitson's point of view, the first armed actions still belonged to the 'non-violent phase' or at least to the transition towards a situation of a more generalized 'open insurgency'.
  27. Kitson's rushed departure was certainly due to disagreements with William Whitelaw, and the GOC Harry Tuzo, who, unlike Edward Heath, did not hold Kitson in high esteem. But perhaps there was a more personal reason. The Official IRA leader in Belfast, 'Big' Joe McCann had set up an elaborate surveillance system on Kitson, most probably with a view to killing him. McCann had personally watched Kitson's wife as she rode around isolated ways around Lisburn, and Frank Kitson himself as he drove about in his black limousine. Did Kitson know about the threat which hung over him? Was he directly responsible for the assassination of Joe McCann, on 15 April 1972 (a week before his departure) in the Markets area of Belfast? If so, was he tipped off by two SIS agents, Keith and Kenneth Littlejohn, who had infiltrated the Official IRA and befriended people close to McCann? Whatever the case, the rushed and hushed-up departure of Kitson seems strange.
- In May 1972, when the Official IRA embarked on an unilateral truce, they announced their decision to suspend military operations, except in case of self-defence, but stressed that this halt in their activities did not include Frank Kitson.

## 2. Special Units, Special Operations and the SAS

To carry the special operations required by counter-insurgency through to a successful conclusion, the British cannot rely solely on regular troops. 'An elite anti-guerrilla regiment', 'a special anti-terrorist unit', such are the labels given to the spearhead of the British counter-insurgency system — often compared to the U.S. Green Berets — the Special Air Service (SAS).

From their foundation, the SAS shrouded themselves in mystery and thus to scrutinize their organization or real activities is difficult. Names of soldiers and officers are not published; neither are their photographs released, and officially, the SAS serve in regular units or simply appear in the *General Army List*. The publication of the names of fallen SAS during the Falklands/Malvinas crisis, with mention of their original regiments is something new.

In most countries where the SAS intervene, they wear 'Allied Forces' uniforms; losses are accounted for by traffic accidents in Hong Kong or West Germany, and their bodies are secretly buried in a special plot in the cemetery of St. Martin's church, near their Hereford base. They probably reach the top of the army on the salary list, yet volunteers are few. In 1973, for instance, while the strength of the active service regiment, the 22nd SAS, was 600 men, only 450 answered the call.

Tradition has it that the SAS had been formed in 1941, during the World War II. In fact, their roots are much deeper in British history, a history full of private armies set up and organized by the British ruling class to protect their interests, and to crush the Irish rebels.

An elite regiment — such as the SAS — is characterized by the particular talents of its members as well as their special recruitment. One of the three SAS regiments, the 21st SAS Regiment (Artists), founded in the aftermath of World War I, is a reserve regiment of the Territorial Army mainly allotted the task of intervening as necessary on the British mainland. The direct ancestor of the 21st SAS was a Territorial regiment, the Artists Rifles, founded by Edward Sterling, in 1860, as an elite unit chiefly comprising members of the professions and artists, who volunteered to train and take part in the activities of the regiment; they bought their own uniforms and weapons, and paid a substantial entry fee. All these measures naturally, limited membership to those classes with private means.<sup>1</sup> The Artists Rifles were thus closely linked to the ruling class, whose interests it would defend

in case of internal conflicts; at the same time it constituted an 'Officers' Factory' for recruitment into other regular regiments in the event of international warfare. In many respects, this regiments may be compared with the French National Guard of the 1830s. From its origins, function of the SAS has presumably been aimed at suppressing popular uprisings in Britain. It is still proper to say to-day that:

The SAS Officer corps contains three main castes of British society: the English aristocracy and its traditional involvement with cavalry and guards regiments; the professional home counties upper and middle class, strong in the 21st SAS . . . and Scottish lairds, like David Stirling, with a strongly rooted tradition of private clan armies.<sup>2</sup>

Until very recently the SAS were the only units in which soldiers were not directly recruited from civilian life, but from other regiments, going through numerous selective tests, and holding the minimum rank of sergeant. The British public know neither their names, nor their faces.

Often when a soldier leaves his original regiment, his comrades do not know to where he is transferred, and official records will indicate that he is still attached to his old regiment. This explains why, in Northern Ireland, the IRA have captured or killed so many soldiers whose official posting did not accord with the presence of any regiment in the country. The Guards Division remains an SAS recruiting nest, especially for Irish assignments, in so far as this Division contains one Irish regiment and Irish regiments are not supposed to serve in their motherland.<sup>3</sup>

### Who Dares, Wins

*Who Dares, Wins*, is the official SAS motto, with a winged dagger as a symbol for the *sand commandos*, and an *esprit de corps* said to combine audacity, cunning and ruthless determination. Few regiments have set up such an image of themselves vis-à-vis the public; an image carefully camouflaging their real function.

Their founding in 1941, was a psychological exercise in deceit: they were neither 'airborne' nor 'paratroopers'. But the British General Staff aimed to lure the 'Desert Fox', Marshall Rommel, into believing that the British had a paratrooper division in Northern Africa.

David Stirling, a Scottish laird of strong anti-Communist persuasion — Major Mallory in the film *The Guns of Navarone* — organized the Long Range Desert Group and the Special Air Service Regiment to infiltrate the German Afrika Korps lines and engage in hit-and-run operations. By 1942, the 1st SAS had grown to include 50 officers and 450 men. They were given special assignments of infiltration, and sabotage, such as the blitz attack on the Heraklion airport in Crete in order to destroy Luftwaffe fighter planes that threatened allied convoys in the Mediterranean. Adolf Hitler, in his own way,

paid tribute to the SAS: 'Captured SAS troops must be handed over at once to the nearest Gestapo unit . . . these men are very dangerous . . . they must be ruthlessly exterminated.'

The French extreme Right-wing historian of the SAS, Jean Bourdier, echoes this sentiment, recalling that they represented the eternal values of Old England:

Soldiers of the Special Air Service and the Long Range Desert Group consider themselves — and are they not right to do so? — as the best, the salt of the earth, or at least of the desert; they cannot but deserve well. This frame of mind partly echoes the extraordinary acts of collective and individual heroism which they accomplished, with a supreme gallantry, keeping, in the worst dangers and sufferings, a distance from the event which is typically British.<sup>4</sup>

But in fact the SAS is first of all the Dirty Tricks unit of the Secret Intelligence Service of the Foreign Office, rather than a regiment chiefly set up to fight Nazi expansionism in Europe and elsewhere. Before their official founding one of their future squadrons — 'G' Squadron of the Guards — fought in Finnish uniform in 1940, against the Soviet Union. After the war, their first task, 'under the command of Earl Jellicoe' was to help smash the ELAS Greek Communist *maquis*. Another squadron chased the Kurdish nationalist fighters led by General Barzani. The SAS was eventually dismantled and its component parts returned to their regular units, or to civilian life, often to intelligence postings.

With the uprisings of colonial peoples, however, the experience accumulated by the commandos during the 1939-45 war was too precious to be ignored by the British General Staff in planning the forthcoming counter-insurgency campaigns, and the 21st SAS saw the light of the day, though confining themselves to territorial tasks. Thus occurred an unprecedented fact in British military history: from a 'territorial' matrix a regular unit, the modern 22nd SAS was born in 1950, and included among its ranks Mike 'Mad' Calverts ex-Malayan Scouts. The 22nd SAS, today mainly present in Oman and Ireland, took an active part in all the post-war colonial campaigns. A third, reserve, regiment finally emerged: the 23rd SAS. Founded from the territorial 'Common Reconnaissance Unit', it originated in the war-time special escapes unit, the Intelligence School 9, otherwise known as MI9.

One characteristic feature of the SAS regiments is that no barrier exists between operations carried out as a regular venture organized by the British Army General Staff, and those commissioned by the secret service, whether military intelligence or SIS. In some cases, this amounts to direct recruitment of mercenaries through agencies, in the oldest tradition of the 'wild geese'. In others it is a matter of delegating a special unit to foreign armed forces.

During the Indo-China war, SAS members were individually transferred — through the British military attaché in Saigon, Colonel John Waddy — to Australia and New Zealand SAS squadrons, as an auxiliary force for the U.S.

expedition there, Lieutenant-General Peter Walls who, from 1977, was Commander of the Rhodesian armed forces had led the Malayan Scouts and SAS from 1953 to 1956. Major Ron Reid Daly was in charge of organizing the Rhodesian SAS unit or Zealous Scouts. In Oman, the 22nd SAS officially fought against the PLFO until 1972, but carried on until at least 1976, under General Tim Creasy. They still do, but as military attachés and under-cover advisers.

There is also, in Dhofar, a British SAS commando unit. Under the name of British Army Training Team (BATT), it comprises about 500 men and constitutes one of the Sultan's army's elite troops. Not to mention several field artillery units, an engineers' battalion, another special unit, the Sound Ranging Battery, and a group called 2 IT (i.e. 2nd Information Team), or Psyops, whose role under BATT guidance is to launch psychological warfare. Their HQ is in Um-El-Ghauref.<sup>5</sup>

In 1977, General Timothy Creasy, the new Commander-in-Chief of the British forces in Northern Ireland responsible for attempting to speed up the 'Ulsterization' process (i.e. to hand over counter-guerilla activities from the army to the locally recruited forces, the UDR and RUC) had been a specialist in covert actions in Oman from 1972 to 1975. Born in 1923, his career is full of colonial adventures, especially in Kenya. In 1956, he held a senior position in the 39th Infantry Brigade in Northern Ireland and briefly took part in actions against the IRA 'Border Campaign'. He is held responsible for the defeats suffered, from 1972 to 1975, by the Omani nationalists in Dhofar, which partly explains why he was chosen for a Northern Ireland assignment (1977-79), plus the fact that he was stationed in Bradbury Lines, Hereford, that is, the 22nd SAS headquarters.

As soon as he was posted in Ireland, *Times* reporter Tony Geraghty properly noted:

What is certain is that the Oman campaign gave the General a freedom to isolate and attack his enemy in a way which would be unacceptable in the UK. Areas of countryside were controlled by the army and air force using electronic ground sensors and aerial bombardment, to cut enemy supplies along lines developed by the US in Vietnam. Equally effective was the recruitment of enemy guerrillas — 'surrendered enemy personnel' through financial and other inducements, including an amnesty.

Ulster's war is also being fought electronically, but in a way which keeps the army as invisible as possible. Urban military intelligence, tracking thousands of vehicles and individuals with the aid of computers and data analysis, has not, so far, been Creasy's kind of war.<sup>6</sup>

Creasy, said to be a personal friend of Kitson, perfectly understood the strategy unfolded in Ireland since 1970, notably the diverse SAS operational flexibility. From his Oman experience, however, he clearly had a propensity

to look for overall military command of the situation in Ireland, to the distaste of the police force, the Royal Ulster Constabulary.

Before being transferred from Oman to Northern Ireland, an SAS member must wait on average four months, to follow crash courses and adapt to the urban setting, to learn about Irish history and politics, and to lose his suntan. The Irish of the nationalist ghettos of Belfast are not suntanned. They never enjoy holidays abroad.

### 1970: The First SAS are sent to Ireland

With the return to power of the Tories in June 1970, a green light was given to send the first small SAS detachment to Ireland. On 3 July, the first full scale military engagement between the IRA and the British Army – the most prolonged street-fighting engagement since the 1916 uprising in Dublin – offered a convenient excuse. Edward Heath's Cabinet agreed to send 45 SAS soldiers attached to the headquarters of the 39 Infantry Brigade to cover Belfast outside their usual operational sphere. The Commanding Officer of 22nd SAS, Colonel Paddy Watts, supervised the training of his men, as well as several officers from the Combined Intelligence Services due to serve in Ireland.<sup>7</sup>

The SAS training was peculiar in that they were to fight in Western Europe for the first time since the Second World War. Sabotage, close-combat, handling of explosives, cyphering and decyphering, were nothing out of the ordinary for special commandos. But in addition, they had to undergo courses in Irish politics and history, and a basic Gaelic vocabulary, applied sociology referring to the Derry and Belfast ghettos, and studies of the IRA charter. They learnt, as much as up-to-date intelligence allowed, 'Who was who in the IRA?'; watched films of civil rights demonstrations, and memorized pictures of known leaders of the Republican movement. After a six-week spell, the SAS were switched to the Dungeness peninsula in Kent, where they familiarized themselves with urban guerrilla tactics, walking about in mock-villages and streets modelled on Belfast. The final phase led the selected soldiers to Port Erin, in the Isle of Man, where the SBS (Special Boat Service) instructors trained them in naval patrol techniques, as they would need to know how to move about on Lough Neagh and Lough Carlingford, the two major lakes situated between the northern and southern parts of Ireland.

By the end of 1970, their training was complete, and Watts sent his men to join the 39 Infantry Brigade, to follow the instructions of Brigadier Kitson. The clandestine introduction of the SAS into Northern Ireland was not instantly noted. But gradually, disturbing facts suggested their presence. Until 1976 London simply denied that the SAS operated in Ireland. Yet the IRA Chief-of-Staff of the time, Sèan Mac Stiofain, recalls in his *Memoirs* how his intelligence department concluded with certainty that the SAS were present:

We had received intelligence reports as early as May 1971 that the

notorious British SAS was operating under-cover in Belfast. During the summer and autumn of 1972 plain-clothes squads were clearly established as being involved in shootings or killings in Ballymurphy, Andersonstown, Leeson Street, New Lodge and the Falls Road. Their cars were often given way by the speed with which they were passed through British checkpoints . . .

At the end of August vigilantes were on duty in Greencastle, a Catholic area in north Belfast where several shooting attacks had recently been made on people from cars. During the night they stopped a car with three men in it and took one of them out. The others drove off, firing a shot as they went. The detained man had an army-issue automatic pistol in a shoulder holster. Asked to identify himself, he said he was Peter Holmes and was a member of the SAS stationed at Palace Barracks. He was disarmed and sat down at the side of the road until a British military patrol arrived and the vigilantes handed him over.<sup>8</sup>

During this same month of May 1971, Republicans became certain that the SAS had provoked armed clashes between the Official and the Provisional IRA. On 23 October, a 31 year-old Britisher, David Seaman, called journalists to an impromptu press conference in Dublin. To their dismay, he revealed that, until that day, he had been a member of the Special Air Service, which he asserted, had been active in Northern Ireland since the beginning of 1971, notably engaged exploding random bombs in order to destroy IRA credibility. He stated he did not wish to be part of it any longer and was ready to 'tell everything' very soon about the SAS involvement. To do so, he thought it useful to go back to the North to check some facts. In January 1972, his body was found in a ditch, near the border, in county Armagh. What else might Seaman have revealed?

What has since been documented is that 40 or so SAS were preparing the ground for an all-out use of their units in a fight employing all means against the IRA. In this, they followed Kitson's principles. Some SAS were detached to regular units, on patrol, to screen nationalist ghettos; others were dispatched to all nerve centres of the counter-insurgency machine: the transmissions and signals, the military intelligence units of the Defence Intelligence Staff, in liaison with the security service MI5, or in psychological operations unit (Psyops).

But first they formed totally autonomous field intervention units. These groups, comprising three or four men, who were often of Irish extraction, or came from Irish regiments, undertook 'contact intelligence'; they were organized in small mobile units known as the Military Reconnaissance Forces (MRF). The MRF do not satisfy themselves with intelligence work only, but also set Loyalist and Republican pseudo-groups to infiltrate or subvert their enemy's operations. At that time, the SAS also sent members to the Intelligence Corps, the regular field regiment involved in military intelligence. Since 1971, the military intelligence service under Colonel John Burgess had tripled.



Besides the analytical work, photographic interpretation tasks, and contact intelligence and infiltration operations, SAS and military intelligence used women, especially since 1975, usually recruited from the Women's Royal Army Corps (WRAC), and by 1980, SAS women were sent to Ireland as a special unit. The most spectacular example of MRF operations to date remains the 'Four Square Laundry' episode.

### Military Reconnaissance Force and the 'Four Square Laundry'

On the morning of 2 October 1972, a laundry van bearing in large green letters the words FOUR SQUARE was driving as usual in the Twinbrook Republican area of Belfast. As it drove through Juniper Park, a blue Ford car slammed its brakes fully on only some yards away; two men sprang from the car and machine-gunned the van, killing two British agents who were lying on the top roof in a compartment specially designed as an observation post. The driver, 'Bobby Jones', drew his Browning automatic pistol from his holster, only to fall on his driving wheel. 'Bobby Jones' "sister" who was collecting dirty linen from a client as the attack occurred, became hysterical, and several women attempted to calm her down.<sup>9</sup>

The two members of the Special Intelligence Unit of the Provisional IRA got quietly back to their car, which had been hijacked in the city centre only some hours earlier. They knew the witnesses would not remember their faces. They sped away. The IRA had shot dead three MRF members whose contact intelligence mission was to collect as much information from the 'insurgents or their sympathisers' as possible.

It was an application of the principle that any roundsman's business is excellent cover for this kind of work, but it was very sophisticated besides, Seán MacStiofain wrote later. Laundry vans are usually big, so there was a good excuse to have a vehicle capable of holding several men and their equipment.

Four Square did business as a real laundry. The van toured Nationalist areas in Belfast soliciting custom and making collections and deliveries. The washing was put out to another laundry on contract, and customers seemed to find the prices reasonable.<sup>10</sup>

Intelligence was collected in many ways: the 'laundry people' would chat with women and obtain apparently insignificant bits of information, but of great importance when pieced together. Meanwhile, the two agents hidden under the van roof took pictures of the houses, their occupants, the streets and vehicles.

Once back from their tour, laundry lists were compared with previous ones concerning a given family. A difference in the size of men's shirts could indicate the presence of a 'second man'; a woman whose husband was gaoled or had been killed who gave men's clothes for laundering, or had an extraordinary

amount of laundry, could inadvertently give away the presence of an IRA volunteer 'on the run'. Scientific analysis of clothing may, besides, indicate traces of blood, gun-powder, explosives; a spot of gun-oil on a pillow may betray the presence of a hidden weapon that a resistance man wanted to keep within reach whilst in bed.

On a large scale, this type of investigation could prove to be extremely fruitful. The MRF could then suggest immediate operational utilization of this intelligence, or else engage in a deeper surveillance of a suspect house, which might lead to a significant capture.

The Four Square Laundry operation was highly sophisticated, and it took several months for the IRA to unmask it. The British admitted to the death of 'Sapper Jones' the driver, and the aim of his operation. Doubtless as Mr MacStiofain pointed out, they were convinced this cover had been blown and considered that such an admission procured a propaganda bonus and gave the impression that the operation had been successfully terminated. Nevertheless, the British failed to admit that not one but five MRF soldiers were executed on this October day in Belfast. Three in the laundry van, and two more in the 'Gemini Health Studios' on Antrim Road.<sup>11</sup>

### Massage Parlours and Operation Lipstick

On 2 October 1972, while the IRA ambushed the laundry van, two other MRF members were killed in massage parlours in Antrim Road. These were the 'Gemini Health Studios', which advertised in the *Belfast Telegraph* as employing 'very attractive masseuses'. The exact function of these massage parlours in the city centre and east Belfast was described as follows: 'It has been suggested that cameras were used by hidden agents to record people in compromising situations and blackmail them afterwards to spy on the IRA.'<sup>12</sup> This sounds absurd but it is a fact that several people subsequently recruited by the MRF had been 'caught in the act', and blackmailed, or bought by the British army, or given to understand they would get a remission for minor crimes committed if they co-operated. However visible this may seem to be, in the hour which followed the IRA storming of the Gemini Health Studios, the British army surrounded the area, and there were many eye witnesses who saw the army hurriedly dragging out cameras and tape-recorders.

Prostitution rings were likewise used by the army. In the autumn of 1973, 'Operation Lipstick' illustrated the use of sex for intelligence aims. An Irish-born woman and member of the WRAC, sold cosmetics from door to door, using her contacts to organize 'pantie parties' in West Belfast, until the whole scheme was uncovered and publicised in the *Andersonstown News* community weekly. This type of operation was not used exclusively by the British. In March 1973, four NCOs from Lisburn headquarters were lured by three Cumann na mBan women (the IRA's feminine wing) who offered to spend the night with them.<sup>13</sup>

In February 1976, the British Secretary of State to Northern Ireland,

Merlyn Rees, denied, in the House of Commons, the claim by Labour Left-wing MP, Ms Joan Maynard, that 'two brothels and a beauty salon had been established in Belfast with the view of collecting intelligence data.' We have seen that the British government was lying, as they lied when, until 1974, they denied that the MRF existed outside Kitson's fertile imagination. But their activities grew more sinister.

On 27 September 1972, for instance, the passengers in a civilian car shot two Catholics in Falls Road, Belfast, near the M1 motorway. Daniel Rooney, 19 years old, died of his injuries in hospital, while his 18 year-old friend, Brendan Brennan, was seriously injured. In a statement released the following morning, the British army admitted that a 'surveillance patrol' was responsible: 'At 12:15, this morning, five shots were fired at a 'surveillance patrol' in the Saint James' Park area [Falls Road]. Fire was returned immediately and two people were hit. The security forces suffered no loss.' This laconic statement differed curiously from those by local witnesses who all emphasized that no shot had been fired on the car, and that the two young men were unarmed. But above all, the British had now admitted that irregular units did exist and roved through the Catholic ghettos.

The Officer Commanding, 3rd Battalion Royal Green Jackets, Lieutenant-Colonel Robin Eveleigh, has since achieved notoriety in the anti-terrorist field with his book *Peace-Keeping in a Democratic Society*; he was then in charge of the area where the shooting occurred, and in the course of a BBC television interview, insisted that 'Rooney was a notorious IRA sniper', adding that Brennan was a member too, and both got just what they deserved. More importantly, he acknowledged that 'plain clothes patrols do operate the district but their work is reconnaissance, to know what the IRA is doing.'

The task of the MRF units as defined by Kitson was 'to apply themselves to the problem of destruction of the armed groups and their supporters [which] essentially consists in finding them.' British army special units must really know the areas in which they operate; not just superficially, but in depth. In 1972 five to ten years were needed to render the mass of intelligence data operational, especially with the later introduction of computers. The involvement of MRF units, comprising some SAS elements and also individual soldiers from those Irish regiments selected for under-cover work, as well as turncoat IRA volunteers, was essential to make up for lost time in intelligence gathering. None the less, these units did not indulge in intelligence missions solely to feed regular units with information required to arrest people. They acted independently from the Military Intelligence Headquarters, at different times under the control of MI5 or MI6, and including access to the Prime Minister's office, through the Chief of Secret Service (MI6) or the Director of Security Service (MI5). And some activities, theoretically covered by the highest authority, slipped from intelligence tasks to covert actions.

A vivid account of these operations was provided in 1978 by a former member of the MRF who was active in Ireland in 1972:

I was an infantry NCO. I served in the British army for 12 years. I have considerable experience of internal security in aid of the civil power, having carried out police action in six different territories, as well as having served three tours of duty in Ireland. The role of the British army in the six counties, as propounded by the capitalist press, is one of keeping the peace. My experience of that role in practice, however, is one of repression through fear, terror and violence.

Let me give you some examples. During early 1972 I was posted away from my battalion to a unit in Ireland as a military reconnaissance force, or MRF. I was based at the army HQ, 39th Infantry Brigade Group, Lisburn. We operated in plain clothes, in civilian vehicles . . . teams of from two to four members, each . . . a senior NCO or subaltern. Although it is not normal practice for members of the WRAC to even do weapon training, some women worked with us. We were instructed in the use of the Russian AK47 assault rifle, the armalite, and a Thompson submachine gun. All these weapons are favoured by the provos. I will leave to your imagination why Brigadier Kitson thought this was necessary, as these weapons are not standard issue for the British army. We used the Browning pistol and the Sterling submachine gun only.

One day in April 1972 I was on plainclothes surveillance duties with two other soldiers. We drove along Whiterock Road, Upper Falls. We had a death list with names and photos, with the orders, 'Shoot on sight'. One of the soldiers saw James [name inaudible], a man on the list, and another whose name I forget. We swerved our car in front of them . . . and leapt out, drawing our pistols, and opened fire. They tried to run down an alley. We ran . . . after them and the patrol commander gave the order 'bullets'. I scored several hits myself, both men were severely wounded. We radioed for a uniformed patrol. When it turned up their commander said to ours, 'You stupid bastards, you've shot the wrong fuckers.' The army issued a press statement alleging that the men had shot at us and that the army had a pistol to prove it. This was a lie. Both men were brothers on their way to work, innocent men going about their lawful business.

In May 72 another MRF patrol assassinated a man called McVeigh, with the intention of blaming the Protestants and taking the heat off the army. A month later the MRF shot three taxidriviers in Andersonstown. A Thompson was used. A sergeant of the Military Police called Williams did the shooting. The Patrol Commander was called Captain MacGregor, of the Paras.

When soldiers are on rifle ranges in Germany or England, it is normal practice to keep a couple of clips of ammunition for the paddies. This is illegal, but the NCOs turn a blind eye. These spare rounds can be used to replace any used rounds in Ireland when on patrol.

Baton rounds are doctored with bits of metal and razor blades to cause even worse injury. Uniformed patrols hang around school gates

gates for the aggro. People are provoked when soldiers deliberately kill pets. The glorious Gloucesters love this . . .

I could go on and on with examples. If the army are fighting for peace in Ireland, they might just as well have sexual intercourse to protect their virginity.

Most soldiers are not sadists when they join up. Most are unemployed lads attracted by three cooked meals a day and the adventure. Soldiers have no rights. The officers come from a different class. Constant drill orders and brainwashing, coupled with constantly carrying a loaded rifle, leads to frustration. This comes out in the violent behaviour in the ghettos of Ireland.

Anyone who calls for withdrawal to the barracks can never have been to Belfast, Derry, Crossmaglen or Newry. Or if they have, they must be nuts, or naive. The barracks are stuck in the middle of the Catholic ghettos. The soldiers would still be used as a threat. Our boys should not be used to bolster up the corrupt Orange system.<sup>14</sup>

On the afternoon of 22 June 1972, three Black taxi drivers were chatting near their car on Glen Road, in the Andersonstown district of Belfast. A blue Ford Cortina drove up the road towards the city centre, machine-gun fire mowed down the three men and a fourth who was standing on his doorstep. It was the Army Publicity Centre in this case, who stated that 18 shots were fired in this incident, which the security forces were not involved in. Only minutes after the shooting a Second Field Regiment patrol came along the road and found nothing.

Within a couple of hours, a new statement was issued that contradicted the previous one: this time a civilian car driven by soldiers had been a terrorist target. Such contradictory statements are a daily occurrence in Belfast, but this time the propaganda services had gone too far, and the authorities had to find a way out. Two soldiers were charged and, seven months later, on 27 February 1973, 29 years old Captain James Allister McGregor and 25 years old Sergeant Clive Graham Williams, appeared before a Belfast court; both were charged with illegal possession of weapons and ammunitions, and Williams alone was charged with attempted murder of the three taxi drivers. According to the verbatim transcript, when arrested Williams stated 'that ammunition had nothing to do with me. It belongs to the Police at Castle-reagh and was issued by the Special Branch.'

The weapon was a Thompson machine-gun but, at that time, only Sterling 9mm machine-guns were issued by the army. The Thompson gun, a low-velocity weapon, was part of the IRA mythology of the 1920s, and reminiscent of the 1930s gangster feuds in the US, where it was nicknamed 'The Chicago Piano'. Indeed, the IRA had been able to get some of these weapons, thanks to the support of the Irish-American community, but in the 1970s, they had opted for lighter, more precise, high-velocity rifles. McGregor was a paratrooper, but attached to the Thiepval Barracks, in Lisburn, although no paratrooper regiment was stationed in this military nerve-centre, which

shelters British Army Headquarters in Northern Ireland. Williams' unit was not identified during the trial.

On 2 May, the Court ruled that the Crown did not consider it necessary to sue the two men for illegal possession of arms and ammunition. McGregor was freed, and later awarded a Military Cross for bravery. Williams was still under an attempted murder charge; he was freed on bail and came again before the Court in June 1973. He then stated that he belonged to the Royal Military Police, and in June 1972 was an officer commanding a Military Reconnaissance Force unit, attached to the 39th Brigade. He described the MRF as a unit formed to carry out surveillance in the ghettos. At the time of the shooting, this unit numbered 40 men, he himself was responsible for 15 people in his unit, who patrolled in a civilian car, by squads of two or four.

Williams also explained that on the morning of 22 June 1972, he had taken fresh NCO recruits for a briefing, and then 'took them to the Kinnegar firing-range to familiarize them with general weapons and those used by terrorist organizations – particularly the Thompson sub-machine gun.' He also went so far as to acknowledge that on 22 June, his unit was put on standby. Williams concluded by saying that he had maintained continual radio contacts with his operation HQ, probably Lisburn, and with another car in the same district, and that his patrol car only retaliated to what he had thought was a 'terrorist attack'.

Clive Graham Williams was acquitted of all charges laid against him.

The short-lived truce between the IRA and the British began at this time, and precisely because of this crucial political development, the identification of McGregor and Williams as MRF members takes on a more sinister dimension.

The area selected for the shooting, Andersonstown in West Belfast, was a good choice for two reasons: it was a very strongly Republican area in which the Provisional IRA First Battalion found it easy to operate; it was also the eye of the storm during the short-lived truce with the British authorities.

'On the surface, the incident appeared to be part of an internecine IRA', noted Irish journalist Gery Lawless, 'the day after the Provisionals declared their ceasefire last June'.<sup>15</sup>

These types of incidents went on and led up to a final clash, and the end of the truce, in Lenadoon Avenue on 9 July.

## Special Units

No doubt the MRF units were akin to those envisaged by Kitson to respond to 'the sort of situation in which troops are deployed rapidly and unexpectedly into an area where no intelligence organization exists'.<sup>16</sup>

Consequently he concluded that:

An effective way of dealing with this problem would be to establish a unit which could carry out the two separate functions of setting up or

reinforcing the intelligence organization and of providing men trained in operations designed to develop information by special means. If a unit of this kind were formed the element designed to set up or reinforce the intelligence organization would consist of a number of officers available to move at short notice when needed. These men would be majors or captains and they would be backed by a number of other ranks to act as drivers and clerks. The unit could be a relatively large one in which case there might be three or four groups each consisting of a major and several captains, the major being intended for deployment to a provincial or county intelligence headquarters, and the captains to districts: a unit of this size would be commanded by a lieutenant-colonel or senior major who could deploy to the intelligence headquarters of the country concerned.<sup>17</sup>

Kitson drew up the charter of such an organization. The overall unit chiefly comprising SAS or similarly trained Officers and NCOs. The MRF unit was akin to his Special Technical Groups, to which individual soldiers coming from various regiments stationed for special purposes in Northern Ireland belonged. This Special Unit was totally autonomous of the military hierarchy. The SAS would mainly supervise, and collate intelligence but they could also take part in MRF covert action.

Kitson's ideas were acted upon to the letter. The MRF later renamed 'Special Duties Teams' were broken into cells of one junior officer, two sergeants and a private, autonomous from the normal military command structure, and under the supervision of the MRF Tactical Development Section. Special equipment was also developed by the MRF Equipment Research Section at Thiepval Military Camp, with officers and technicians drawn from the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers (REME), the Royal Corps of Signals, and other scientific officers attached to the Ministry of Defence. But they also specialized in 'kills', or in 'Hot Lips' tactics of hiding soldiers in empty buildings for a kill, as in the case of IRA leader Jim Bryson, in 1973.

Two journalists with the Unionist *Belfast Telegraph*, Martin Dillon and Denis Lehane, recalled in 1973: 'Thus, it would seem that at the time of the assassinations, there did exist a structure within the Army that would fit the apparent description of assassination squads, and which did have, at least some justification for such a policy in military terms behind them.'

But in his book Kitson does not refer to political assassination as a specific policy, and this is perfectly consistent. The primary concern of Kitson is with:

... military intelligence and the Army's preparedness to fight a psychological as well as a military campaign. It is clear that assassination for political purposes does come within the terms of reference given by Kitson to his Special Units, but the question one has to answer in Northern Ireland is whether this did indeed occur.<sup>18</sup>

The reader should find enough elements here to form his/her own judgement.

## The Pseudo-gangs

The organization of pseudo-gangs illustrated the most disquieting activities of the SAS and MRF. As in Kenya or Cyprus, their aim was to discredit the resistance actions. In 1972, they contributed towards the stimulation of a real psychosis of 'a war of religion', whose image was intensified by propaganda organs and some of the British media. It was no coincidence that the year 1972 saw the irruption on the Irish scene of so-called 'sectarian murders' whose main victim was the Catholic population.

Up to Spring 1972, both IRAs had waged a vigorous military campaign. Internment without trial whipped up the support traditionally enjoyed by the Republican Movement among the nationalist population. One of their chief war objectives — the abolition of the Unionist Stormont parliament — was achieved by March.

Moreover, the British received a psychological checkmate in the aftermath of the Bloody Sunday killings of civilians in Derry in January. The Officials had called a unilateral truce in May, and the Provisionals increased their prestige by taking part in a bilateral ceasefire, in which they proved they could be reasonable negotiators, while the Conservative government conceded, after a protracted hunger-strike, a sort of political status to the Republican prisoners.

The Republicans also benefited from the fact that nationalist ghettos had become 'no-go' areas, socially independent and a natural sanctuary for IRA operators. Consequently, the British government gave the green light to the reconquer of the no-go areas by high level military means. in 'Operation Motorman'. The assassination campaign — projecting an image of religious conflict and re-establishing the concept of the British army as 'neutral party' whose role was to separate the two communities — originated in this context.

In 1972, 125 civilians fell victims of 'sectarian murders'; about 40, were assassinated in July, before 'Operation Motorman'. According to RUC figures, more than 90% of the victims were Catholics, which does not mean that all the others were Protestants, or had been killed by the IRA. Characteristically, appalling, motiveless murders occurred in what was then known as the 'Murder Mile' in North Belfast, around the district of Baltic Avenue and Atlantic Avenue, off Antrim Road. At nightfall, Catholics were murdered, apparently without reason; in some case, corpses were dumped in Protestant ghettos. It often seemed that these were ritual killings, at times they were accompanied by mutilations; they terrorized the nationalist population. Most of these murders were either directly committed, or indirectly instigated, through 'pseudo-groups', or 'counter-gangs' in the Kitsonian terminology.

Three types of 'pseudo-gangs' can be distinguished: a) The Special Units of the British Army. As already described they were recruited from among individual SAS personnel and other specialized units, such as the MRF. In 1977, David Blundy of the *Sunday Times* described 12 separate incidents, one of which was the sending of special troops of paratroopers to launch bombing attacks in the Border counties, which could later be attributed to the IRA. 'An army officer has told the *Sunday Times* that the idea of sending

in a team of paratroopers who would commit 'unexplained bombings' was discussed at an intelligence briefing at army headquarters in Lisburn, early in 1974.<sup>19</sup>

It also emerged that these units recruited local Northern Irishmen, and some instances turncoat IRA sympathizers or volunteers. For instance, Séamus Wright, who disappeared from his Leeson Street home in 1972, claimed later that he had 'lived and worked with a dozen local men in Palace Military Barracks, all blackmailed or bribed into joining the MRF'; another, Louis Hammond, joined the Provos after officially 'deserting from the army', but was in fact a MRF operative, later unmasked by the IRA. Many of those people, in spite of British claims to the contrary, were often 'local hoods', petty criminal elements blackmailed by Military Intelligence or RUC Special Branch, rather than actual IRA operatives.

*Times* reporter Tony Geraghty, however, in his detailed study of the SAS, *Who Dares Wins* mentioned a specific case of recruitment of IRA personnel by British intelligence:

By the Spring of 1971, following the emergence of the hard-line Provisional IRA and a bombing campaign averaging two explosions daily, the authorities had become desperate to penetrate the terrorist network. The Army did so by adopting the 'counter-gang' tactics developed, during Kenya's Mau-Mau campaign by Kitson. Ten proven IRA activists, including one who was a recently demobilized soldier of the Royal Irish Rangers, were arrested and given the choice between long terms of imprisonment or under-cover work for the British army. They opted to join the British. Commanded by a Parachute Regiment captain they were known as the Special Detachment of the Military Reconnaissance Force (or more colloquially, as 'Fred's'). Their guard were ten volunteers for plain-clothes duty from the British army. The 'Fred's' lived in one half of a semi-detached married quarter in the heavily-guarded Hollywood Barracks at Belfast, while their British guard occupied the other half.<sup>20</sup>

b) In a broad sense, the second type of pseudo-gangs are Loyalist para-military groups, such as the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF), Tara, the Red Hand Commandos, recruited from the most extreme section of the Loyalist population. The UVF, or the Ulster Defence Association (UDA), by far the single largest loyalist armed militia, although formally independent, owe much of their training and supply of intelligence to the British, and especially the RUC and UDR regiments, with whom — as various court cases have demonstrated — they often share dual membership. The manner in which assassination campaigns have been switched on and off is revealing: in 1972; in the summer of 1976, prior to the foundation of the Peace Movement; and in 1980, at the height of the pre-hunger strike national campaign for political status.

An outstanding, though not isolated case emerged in February 1981, when the Intelligence Officer of the UDA Brigade in Derry turned out to be a Military

Intelligence officer, supplying information on local Republicans and feeding a hit-list.<sup>21</sup> This stresses an important fact to bear in mind, the infiltration and manipulation of Loyalist groups which still retain a high degree of independence.

c) The mixed gangs fall into the third category, small Loyalist groups, infiltrated or manipulated by the British, who often built them up from nothing. A notorious case was that of the Irish Freedom Fighters (IFF), who simply vanished following accusations by Republicans that it was a totally British inspired gang. These groups are mainly recruited in Protestant ghettos. They possibly most closely fit the definition of 'counter-gangs' employed by Kitson in Kenya; armed groups recruited among the Loyalist population, which operate independently but yet under strategical British army control. They strongly resemble the MRF-led units, except that there may not be any British soldier involved.

The first two categories present some disadvantages: SAS or MRF men may be captured, and become a considerable embarrassment to the authorities, or even — like David Seaman, sickened by the tasks he was asked to perform — desert and reveal their real role. Loyalist para-military groups such as the UVF, which the British army partly helped to organize, who arm themselves and spy on the nationalist population, are difficult to control and, acting on their own, motivated by their hatred of the Catholics, can also at times be an embarrassment to British army activities, both politically and psychologically. This is why in 1976, with the emergence of the Peace Movement, the Army and the RUC dismantled several UVF sections.

The safest formula for a pseudo-group would thus be a counter-gang created by *ex nihilo*, or the manipulation of a para-military organization by the secret service, who can dispense with them if necessary.

### The Case of Séamus (Shay) O'Brien

The following case gives a fair idea of how a counter-gang is set up and how best recruit its members.

After two years of marriage, Séamus O'Brien, a 24 year-old Catholic from the Turf Lodge area of Belfast, suddenly left his wife, Sheila, at Easter 1973. He did not go very far, however, but went to live with Ann, a young Protestant girl he had met some months earlier in a disco at the city centre. She lived in Larne, the Protestant harbour, approximately 15 miles north of Belfast. Séamus 'forgot' his Christian name, which sounded 'too nationalistic', and replaced it by 'Shay'.

In May 1974, as the Loyalists had organized their general strike to bring down the power-sharing constitutional scheme, the couple moved nearer to Belfast, to Bangor, in the ultra-Loyalist area of Kilcooley. Séamus' life revolved around the circle of friends of his girl-friend at various Loyalist para-military clubs.

'Bobby', a former British soldier from East Belfast, led the Bangor section



of the Red Hand Commandos which were linked to the UVF (unlike the Belfast RHC which was connected with the UDA). He met Shay and said he knew all about him: for instance about his two brothers, one of whom was connected with the Official IRA, the other with the Irish Republican Socialist Party. But Shay need not worry, Bobby would not say anything, he shared Shay's socialist ideals. 'In fact, I am working myself, inside the Red Hand Commandos for quite another organization, with socialist aims, the People's Revolutionary Army', said Bobby.

This new grouping, of which no-one had ever heard, was intended to stop sectarian killings, and was as much opposed to the Loyalist groups as the IRA was. So Bobby was trying to collect information which would lead to the elimination of all those who indulged in such killings, and who prevented the emergence of an inter-community socialist force.

'Bobby', of course, worked for British intelligence. He suggested to Shay O'Brien that he should go back to Turf Lodge, to establish contacts with the People's Liberation Army (PLA), the armed group close to the IRSP, and forerunner of the Irish National Liberation Army. One of Shay's missions would be to supply pictures of Loyalists held responsible for killings of Catholics and to build up links with Bobby's group, the 'PRA'.

So there was O'Brien, forging an alliance between an all too real Republican group and a ghost organization, the brainchild of the British secret service. If the PLA leaders had been naive enough they could, through the British, have sparked off a campaign against Protestants who, though picked up at random, could be held responsible for sectarian attacks. The PLA would thus have discredited itself and provoked a backlash from the Loyalists.

Soon 'Bobby' gave O'Brien ammunition and a P38 pistol to demonstrate his *bona fide* status to the Republican group. At the beginning of 1975 as a feud developed between the Official IRA and its splinter organization the IRSP, 'Bobby' indicated to O'Brien the whereabouts of Official IRA arms dumps which the PLA could raid and, significantly, insisted that in exchange for ammunition the 'Socialist-Republicans' of the PLA should give him information on the Provisional IRA.

Séamus (Shay) O'Brien went to live at Short Strand, a small Catholic enclave near the Belfast docks, 'Bobby' introduced him to Brian, a friend 'linked to a British Marxist organization' who offered him money for any information he could obtain, saying, 'We have lots of money to help socialism in Ireland'. He said that there would be no socialist revolution there, as long as 'republican' and 'socialist' groups, by their very existence, obstructed working-class unity. Brian was employing the usual jargon of the British Left, but by this time O'Brien must surely have realized that he was working for MI5, but realized that he could not back out.

Following a series of wrong moves, inevitably the attention of the IRA intelligence was drawn to him. He sealed his own fate on the day that, at the instigation of his 'case officers', he submitted a detailed account of Ian Paisley's movements to the IRA, and thus became a target for assassination.

## Very Special Operations

At the end of 1972, as the Irish parliament, Dail Eireann, was about to vote on a legislation against Republicans, bombs went off in Dublin, killing two bus conductors and injuring 100 people. The SAS were suspected of operating there, in their capacity of 'active service' for the SIS, or MI6, whose Dublin network was unmasked in conditions detailed in chapter 4.

But Dublin was shattered a second time, 18 months later, in May 1974. Loyalists workers struck in the north to bring down the 'power-sharing' executive: booby-trapped cars exploded in the heart of the Irish capital without warning, as people came from work at the end of the day; nearly 30 civilians were killed.

Cars had been stolen from east Belfast in a UDA stronghold; yet they were hijacked by a SAS unit in the context of an operation said to have been planned by Brigadier Watts himself, with an obvious double aim: to discredit the UDA leaders, among whom Glen Barr and Andie Tyrie were now posing as politicians rather than para-military personnel, whilst stimulating further harassment against Republicans by the Dublin government. On the ground, the operation was led by SAS Captain David Ash; he had distinguished himself as an 'in-depth interrogator' in Palace Barracks in Hollywood and was once charged for torturing a British soldier. Yet, not long after the Dublin bombings he was transferred back to Britain and awarded a 'Military Cross' for his work in Northern Ireland; he was then attached to The Warminster Infantry School, at that time directed by Frank Kitson.

On numerous occasions, Loyalists have warned the population against the SAS and that they operated under the disguise of already existing groups. In March 1974, a group, so-called the 'Ulster Citizen Army' (referring to Socialist-Republican James Connolly's 'Irish Citizen Army' earlier in the century) stated that a secret faction existed within the UDA; they sent a communiqué to the press stating that:

The Ulster Freedom Fighters (UFF) operate under the control of the SAS. Numerous sectarian killings have been perpetrated by the SAS using the name of the Ulster Freedom Fighters. Consequently, the UCA threatens to launch retaliatory actions against British interests, if this state of things does not cease.

The statement was signed 'J. Moore, Area Commander' and followed a series of events which indicated that the SAS did not simply eliminate Republicans, but also Loyalists who were considered to be a nuisance.

Six months earlier, a UDA leader, Tommy Herron, was assassinated only a few yards from the movement's headquarters in east Belfast. The UDA, and more generally the Loyalist groups, prime of all the Reverend Ian Paisley, categorically denounced 'British agents' in this case. In May 1976, a Protestant who lived in the Andersonstown Catholic ghetto was shot dead as being one member of the gang that had murdered Herron. His name was Gregory

Brown, and in addition to him the gang comprised a Catholic, a woman and an RUC detective whose name the authorities knew perfectly well. This was a typical mixed 'counter-gang'.

Herron's death was very significant: on the one hand he was held responsible for forming the Ulster Citizen Association, as a faction within the UDA, which had launched a short war on the British army in 1972 in the Shankill area. Moreover, Tommy Herron — as had Ernie 'Duke' Elliott, another UDA leader also assassinated in mysterious circumstances — had undertaken to open up a line of communication with Republican organizations. When the image of an 'inter-community war' is projected abroad, it should be remembered that if Loyalists should attempt to set up a dialogue with Republicans, even in a limited way, they are 'eliminated' by British intelligence.

Again, in 1974, a former SAS, Albert Baker, was sentenced to life imprisonment. He came from Newtownards Road, east Belfast, and had infiltrated the UDA on behalf of the British and in 1972 and 1973 had taken part in bank robberies and assassinations of Catholics which he confessed to 'having committed with the agreement of the British'. During his trial, he went on to explain that UDA leaders are untouchable, provided they follow British orders 'which was not the case for Tommy Herron whom the SAS have killed', he added. Baker confessed to having murdered four Catholics in the framework of his 'infiltration operations'; he was sentenced to 92 years imprisonment. A senior civil servant in William Whitelaw's administration had visited him in gaol on several occasions. The day after he had been sentenced, he was flown to Britain; to-day he is not to be found in any British prison.

Links between the Loyalist groups and the British army special units were generalized, and many assassinations of *selected* Nationalists could not have taken place without information supplied by the British. Lack of such information is partly the reason why Loyalist commandos fall on any victim who is unfortunate enough to walk at night in the wrong area. Dual membership has facilitated this situation; many RUC and UDR elements have been shown, in Court, to belong to the UVF or UDA, which explains why the nationalist population cannot trust to the impartiality of the security forces.

Early in 1972, for example, a British officer approached a UVF commando for information on young Aine Walsh, from Braemar Street whom, because they thought she was high in the IRA, they wanted killed. The fact that she was one of the first girls interned in Armagh jail in 1973 perhaps saved her life, although she was ill-treated inside.

The UVF leader, Jim Hanna, was in permanent contact with two Military Intelligence Officers attached to the 39th Brigade, Captains Anthony Box and Anthony Ling, as well as Lieutenant Alan Holmer, who tried to have him promoted within the UVF hierarchy. The irresistible ascension of 'their man' was facilitated by the arrest of some other activists. Jim Hanna then took over responsibility for directing UVF operations, but he probably went too far when he started opening discussions with Cathal Goulding and other Official IRA leaders. On 2 April 1974, Jim Hanna fell under a hail of bullets in Shankill Road. The UVF claimed responsibility for the attack, but the

following month, the UVF announced that he 'was assassinated last month in Belfast by the British army'.

Unfortunately, examples of this type abound. In 1980, the selective assassinations against public activists of the National H-Block Committee, starting with the murder of Miriam Daly, and the attempt on Bernadette Devlin/McAliskey early in 1981, underlined the closeness and interpenetration of extreme Loyalist hit-teams and SAS-type actions.

From 1972 to 1975, the assassination campaigns were obviously fed by Loyalist fanaticism, or the setting up, *ex nihilo*, of pseudo-gangs. Kitson had defined the aims perfectly: to lead the population into rejecting the resistance movement and expressing a desire for normalization, including army and police screening of the ghettos, a return to the pre-1969 situation, when the Nationalist population started to campaign against discrimination and for their civil rights. As far as psychological warfare was concerned, these operations constituted an effective distortion of the situation, especially for foreign consumption, projecting the irrational image of a war of religion, and concealing the real causes and consequences of the Anglo-Irish conflict.

In March 1974, the Dublin daily, *Irish Press*, which belongs to the de Valera family, ripped the veil of silence which surrounded the SAS, and in an editorial defined their role: as 'a clandestine agency specializing in counter-insurgency' whose members performed various functions: 'intelligence agents, experts in interrogations and infiltration, specialists of counter-terrorism . . . agents provocateurs or simply executioners'. 'It was part of their technique and training to exacerbate a situation' such as the Northern Irish conflict. The editorial concluded: 'The use of such commandos necessarily constituted a worsening of the conflict between the forces of occupation and all sections of the civilian population'.

### Official SAS Deployment in January 1976

The tactical use of the SAS was not sufficient; individuals could still be sent for 'kills' and other black operations. But after the truce with the Provisional IRA during 1975, British authorities decided to engage in the 'Ulsterization' phase of the conflict, which theoretically, implied the progressive replacement of British troops by RUC and UDR contingents in 'security operations'. One way to make the British army relatively invisible was to fully deploy undercover specialists to take over certain tasks from the regular army. It also included 'SAS-type training' for other units attached to the regular army, including, it is thought, one UDR specialist unit. Hence the strategic decision to send one of the three squadrons of the 22 SAS regiment which landed on Northern Ireland on the night of 11-12 January 1976:

A detachment of 150 men came from the 600-strong Special Air Services regiment, ordered to Northern Ireland by Downing Street, began landing late last night under cover of darkness at a disused

wartime airfield on the County Down coast and was immediately airlifted into County Armagh. [wrote Chris Ryder and Tony Geraghty, in *The Times*.] Some are this morning beginning a week's duty along the border in South Armagh; others are deployed in what is known as the murder triangle — an area in the North of the county which has also been the scene of a large number of sectarian killings. The SAS men attached to 3rd Brigade Headquarters at Lurgan, are watching suspects and isolated houses and farms where the residents are considered liable to murder attempts. The teams are also in position along key roads. Each is equipped with a so-called 'bingo-book', containing lists of wanted men and vehicles and suspect addresses.

They also carry standard army rifles, hand-guns, smoke grenades and signal pistols. Infra-red night sights and image intensifiers for night vision are fitted to their weapons. In addition to radio, they carry two sophisticated technical aids — *Iris*, an infra-red intruder detection system, effective over three miles by remote control, and ground surveillance radar, a three-piece portable unit with a scanning range of 10,000 metres.<sup>22</sup>

The French correspondent for *Le Monde* in London, Jean Wetz, noted that:

the SAS, who are viewed as the best British counter-guerrilla specialists, will intervene in Northern Ireland. Announcing their decision, on Wednesday 7 January, the London authorities did not say how many SAS would be sent to Ulster. On several occasions already, IRA spokesmen have condemned the presence of these elite troops in Northern Ireland, where they have perpetrated covert assassinations. None of this information has ever been confirmed . . . But one leader as moderate as Mr Gerry Fitt, the SDLP MP, went as far as saying that, for most citizens, the SAS is the equivalent of the American CIA.<sup>23</sup>

The deployment of the SAS was at first confined to South Armagh, an IRA fortress, the 'Free Republic of South Armagh'. But, in conformity with the Ulsterization plan, the British government extended the deployment of SAS to the whole six counties of Ulster. On the border, SAS patrolled in uniform, the uniform of the regular units they were tactically attached to. In urban areas they went sometimes in plain-clothes, generalizing MRF units experimented five years earlier under a new name: Special Duties Teams. Another SAS long-range mission became frequent: deep penetration, in civilian clothes and unmarked cars, well-armed, into the South of the border.

From 1973 to May 1976, the Foreign Affairs Department in Dublin recorded 304 violations of Southern Ireland's border by the British army. Most of the time the SAS were not involved, but this figure stressed the lack of respect for Southern Irish territorial integrity. From 1976 onwards, SAS units based in Bessbrook, not far from the border, crossed it to try and

kidnap or murder Republicans. On 12 March 1976, the SAS kidnapped Seán McKenna, in the South; he was the son of one of the internees in the 1971 raids who had gone as a witness to the European Court of Human Rights. In 1980, McKenna Jnr. became one of the Long Kesh hunger strikers for political status.

In May 1976, the Irish police arrested nine SAS soldiers who had been sent to track down half-a-dozen members of the Irish Republican Socialist Party who had tunneled their way out of the Long Kesh detention camp to freedom and safety in the South. In spite of flagrantly violating The Hague and Geneva International Conventions by not wearing uniform, these under-cover British soldiers, with strong pressure from London, were acquitted a year later. In comparison, an IRA Volunteer caught in similar circumstances would have been sentenced to 10 years imprisonment. In the two years since the SAS deployment in 1976, internment without trial was partially replaced by summary executions of real or alleged Republican guerrillas.<sup>24</sup>

Needless to say, although in some cases, for example, that of the murder of John Boyle, SAS personnel have appeared in Court, no one has ever been sentenced. The SAS not only screen cities; they may stay entire weeks in a derelict house, under a roof, to monitor the population of a street or a district with sophisticated devices. The Provisionals have admitted that in 1978 SAS saturation plus the temporary absence of explosives and the reorganization of the IRA into cells, did reduce IRA operations, mainly in cities, especially Belfast. Additionally:

. . . the third reason for the reduction in activity is simply the extended and more sophisticated nature of British surveillance. The fact of the matter is that it is increasingly difficult to operate with impunity, especially in the Belfast area, which is thick with under-cover British operatives. There are three British army helicopters in the air for most of the time in constant touch with plain-clothes units on the streets. There are soldiers staked out in hiding places throughout the city and suburbs. This makes operations much more difficult than was thought conceivable a few years ago.<sup>25</sup>

In the countryside, SAS members may be 'buried' for as long as a month. As early as 1976, the IRA used electronic detectors to locate high frequency radios (ZB298) connecting the SAS in their hide-out with their HQ. They arrive at night at a selected spot they think proper for surveillance, dig a hole, and entrench themselves with radios, canned food, weapons, and a telescope equipped with a light-intensifier to penetrate the darkness. They are also equipped with protective portable radar at night, and could provoke direct intervention by helicopter against a mobile Republican active service unit. Consequently, especially in South Armagh, IRA Volunteers adopted the same methods used by the SAS to successfully track down the SAS!

A third type of SAS mission may involve liaison between regular units, the police and the SAS. This was mostly an intelligence assignment; the

odyssey of Captain Nairac illustrated this.

On the night of Saturday 14 May 1977, at closing time in the Three Steps public house near Drumintee, in South Armagh (one of the areas where the British army, permanently harassed by IRA units lost, proportionally, the highest number of men). Robert Nairac had been quietly drinking, alone. He had just exchanged a few words with two girls beside him.

Although he claimed to be from Belfast, and had some sort of accent to support this, Robert Laurence Nairac was 'a foreigner'. He came out of the Three Steps around 11pm, just before it closed, and reached his car. Two men jumped on him and, after a short fight, he was led away. Some hours later, a press statement was telexed around Press Agencies: 'An officer with the Grenadier Guards was kidnapped in South Armagh: Captain Robert Nairac, 29 years old, has been missing since Saturday night.' On May 17, the *Daily Mail* carried a front-page story with the headline: 'Murder of a Secret Agent – IRA kill undercover man from the Guards.' It sounded like a James Bond story:

The undercover career of the Oxford-educated Brigade of Guards officer turned secret agent ended when the enemy penetrated his cover in a lonely village pub . . . He volunteered for the twilight world of army intelligence, operating in territory the IRA considered its own, the bandit country of South Armagh.

He swapped the image of cavalry twill trousers, tweed jacket and tailored shirts for a dirty beard and a bird's-nest hair-style, and began drinking in the tiny crowded bars of the villages nestling in the rugged hills of the Ulster-Eire border.

Captain Nairac, secret agent, rarely shaved and when he did he kept a droopy Mexican style moustache. When he set out on his last mission he was wearing a worn, blue donkey-jacket, grey trousers and scuffed suede shoes.

His official title was Brigade Staff Liaison Officer. In reality his task was to infiltrate the IRA's heartland, pick up the gossip and identify the gunmen.

He had perfected a Belfast accent, although his normal voice was what his friends described yesterday as 'standard BBC English'.

He came and went as he pleased, chatting to farmers and their workers in street markets, chatting up local girls in the pubs and trying to pass himself off as a stranger willing to do odd jobs.

For a year Captain Nairac worked from the overcrowded Army base in a converted mill at Bessbrook, County Armagh. He was known only to top Special Branch men, to Army Intelligence and to the men of the Special Air Service with whom he worked.<sup>26</sup>

This admission of SAS work was rather unique. Even his Commanding Officer, Brigadier Woodford admitted that Nairac was 'doing SAS work'. Later, the Army information services insisted on the fact that he did not

belong to SAS but to Grenadier Guards, a rather academic distinction since many NCOs and officers of this regiment constitute part of 'G Squadron' of the SAS 22 regiment. This unexpected reaction by the British authorities possibly stemmed from the fact that the headquarters of general staff feared that the capture of Captain Nairac would spark off a series of embarrassing revelations about special units under-cover activities; they, therefore, decided to cut the ground from under Republican propaganda.

Within 48 hours of Nairac's disappearance, the IRA issued a statement, congratulating its 1st Battalion, of the South Armagh Brigade who had blown a major link of the secret service in the area:

Captain Robert Laurence Nairac was an SAS man and had been operating in the South Armagh areas for some time.

We arrested him on Saturday night and executed him after interrogation in which he admitted he was in an SAS Unit.

Our Intelligence Department had a number of photos in their possession and the late Captain had been recognized from them.<sup>27</sup>

Nairac presumably admitted that he was a senior officer in SAS; he was found to possess a 9mm Browning pistol and two rounds of ammunition. According to Republicans, he was usually dressed as an ordinary civilian and spoke with a 'convincing Portadown accent'. At the time of his 'arrest', he said he was a member of the Official IRA, a cover which did not hold much water. He probably admitted that the SAS had planned and carried out the murder of IRA Captain Peter Cleary, on 15 April 1976, and that he personally had taken part in the planning.

Captain Nairac had been educated in Oxford, then went to Sandhurst, where Brigadier Kitson himself had trained him in counter-insurgency techniques. In 1969, he was transferred to the Guards, and the Provos noticed that the Regiment he was supposed to belong to was not stationed in Ireland, a supplementary proof of his covert activity. As for his ultimate fate, the Republican statement simply ran:

Unemployment didn't force Nairac from his aristocratic home in Gloucestershire into the arms of the British army and the SAS. Kitson's grandiose and imperialist ideas were there throughout. He was the prime motivator in his own death. He certainly didn't love Ireland, as his sister said, but loved the sick excitement, and counter-insurgency escapism which the occupation of Ireland gave him.

Most ordinary Brits are reluctant to serve in Ireland, preferring instead the leisurely life of a posting in Singapore or on the Rhine.<sup>28</sup>

Captain Nairac's death shocked public opinion. In Northern Ireland, it showed that SAS activities could be checkmated, and in England, that Her Majesty's elite soldiers were not invincible. A sentiment reinforced when another SAS man, Paul Harman, was killed at the end of the same year.

In February 1979, Nairac was posthumously awarded a George Cross, for his '... acts of the greatest heroism in circumstances of extreme peril [that] showed personal courage second to none'.<sup>29</sup> However, the body of 'Captain Courage', as the *Daily Mail* called him, was never found. Although Republicans were convicted for his 'murder' on the sole evidence of blood stains in a border spot, the British Army was never able to supply Nairac's blood group.

Whatever the circumstances of his disappearance, his real activities seem to have been mysterious. In March 1979, the official magazine *Soldier* stated that, by 1973, 'he spent a lot of time on the peace line between the Shankill and Ardoyne working with the "Local Fianna and Tartan gangs"'. One suggestion was that Nairac did not work for the SAS, but an even more secretive small unit, answerable only to the Director-General of Secret Intelligence Service in London, then, Sir Maurice Oldfield.

If that is indeed so, it would make some sense as to why Robert Nairac — by all accounts a sensible, brave and always security conscious officer — should have behaved in the rash, out-of-character way he did: going into a virtual no-go area, maintaining a high profile, begging for trouble, [suggested the Dublin magazine *Magill*.] On the day he died, he had no military back-up, no army unit waiting ready to save him from the danger he was courting. The SAS did not even know he was in the area. He had, in fact told nobody in the Army that he was going on such a foolhardy mission.

But if he was working for a special SIS unit — then his actions, however incredible and foolish they would later seem, would make some sense . . . .

Was he merely 'honeybait', part of a wider counter-intelligence snare devised by some shadowy spy-master in London to trap an important IRA leader?<sup>30</sup>

The question remains open, and indeed it would not have been the first case of a SAS or other specialized soldier being seconded for SIS work.

There was less mystery, however, about the death of one of his colleagues, Captain Herbert Westmacott, officially of the Grenadier Guards, but in fact SAS, who was killed by an IRA unit when he tried to storm a house, in May 1980. One of Westmacott's companions, SAS sergeant George Fairbrother was withdrawn after the disastrous operation just in time to join the SAS's storming of the Iranian embassy in London.

## The SAS in Britain

The SAS Special Operation Group (SOG), led by Captain Jeremy Phipps, ended the Princess Gate siege in front of world cameras in May 1980, a month after this book was first published in France. It did much to embellish the legend of the shadowy force and provided a well serviced publicity

operation. But it stressed another fact: the SAS did not confine their intervention to distant countries nor Ireland, they were ready to operate within Britain, thus confirming the general trend of the Irish conflict; methods used there could be employed here.

Already, in August 1974, *The Times* revealed that 45 members of the SAS, were secretly withdrawn from Northern Ireland, to train other soldiers in Britain in counter-insurgency techniques, and they, in turn, were posted to Ireland.<sup>31</sup> But this training was not intended solely to combat the IRA. As early as 1970, the Home Office had sent Scotland Yard Commissioner, Robert Mark and former commanding officer of 22 SAS, Major-General Anthony Deane-Drummond to study anti-riot techniques on a world basis. By 1972, with the Conservative government's creation of a national security committee, renamed Civil Contingency Committee, assigned to the SAS a special duty of fighting 'international terrorists'.

Their own 'SAS Group Intelligence' based in the Duke of York Barracks in London, prepared contingency plans involving, among others, answers to hi-jackings. Units were on a 24 hour stand-by, both in London and in the Hereford regimental headquarters, while, in 1975, it was learnt that a special desk was set up in the Operations Room of the Ministry of Defence, enabling the SAS to put on a red alert at any time. In January 1975, as a British Airways jet was hi-jacked to Stanstead, the SAS were deployed, but did not intervene as the hi-jacker surrendered after some negotiations. The following year, releasing his extremely-well researched book *Political Police in Britain*, Tony Bunyan revealed in the course of a press conference that 'the SAS were operating in London. Mr. Bunyan, said that SAS patrols were part of the security forces' contingency planning for dealing with terrorism; he also claims that SAS men were brought in on March 28th, 1974, when an attempt was made to kidnap Princess Anne.<sup>32</sup> It was revealed later that the SAS had trained jointly with SIS operatives and that together they patrolled London in unmarked cars. This was not really new; it was widely known that as far back as the late 1940s joint training facilities had been provided in the SIS training centre at Fort Monkton, at Gosport, Hampshire. In November 1975, the SAS were ready to act in the Balcombe Street siege, in which an IRA unit was entrenched in a house with hostages, but they surrendered before any blood was shed.

The growing importance of the SAS was manifested by the fact that besides having direct access to the Prime Minister's office, the 'SAS Director' (beginning with Brigadier Watts) was present at all Defence Intelligence Committee meetings, just as were the heads of the three main intelligence agencies, the MI5, SIS and the Defence Intelligence Staff.

By April 1979, no doubt after the killing of former MI9 leader Airey Neave, the SAS were drafted in to ensure protection during the electoral campaign. Members of the 23 SAS provided stewards especially for Conservative meetings in the London area; 21 SAS watched Ministry of Defence buildings while the 22 SAS soldiers ensured close protection of VIPs.<sup>33</sup>

One feature of SAS activity that gained prominence in the media on several occasions was their training. Survival exercises, resistance to torture



and covert operations training had unfavourable publicity, especially because they indicated the type of methods used against the Irish. In February 1975, *The Times* gave vivid accounts of SAS training the previous year, when a 'prisoner' was stripped and left naked in the snow, or another officer was thrown into a river with a rope attached to his feet, and almost drowned. 'Hooding' techniques were also practised, the same ones which had been used against Irish detainees in the internment raids of August 1971, and condemned by the European Court of Human Rights in 1978.<sup>34</sup>

If every single accident had been recorded by the press, which is unlikely, it would be seen that half-a-dozen SAS soldiers died in training in the year 1979-80. Most notably, in April 1979, military authorities admitted to the death from exposure — two months previously — of SAS Major Michael Kealy, during a 40 mile march in freezing weather.<sup>35</sup>

## SAS Around the World

Since the 'reorganization' of its regiments in the 1950s the scope of SAS activity has been international. As officially seconded units or as individuals, the SAS operated in former colonies; many who drifted away from SAS regimental structure slipped into mercenary activities, for example, during international mercenary recruitment by the CIA, the SIS, the French SDECE, and the South Africans to combat the MPLA in Angola in 1975 and 1976. They also serviced comparable regiments in Commonwealth countries. But a new phenomenon emerged from the Irish war: the hiring of SAS expertise in counter-insurgency operations and joint training with major Western countries' forces; for example, in France.

In March 1976, the official French army magazine *TAM (Terre-Air-Mer)* stated that it was 'now a tradition to welcome British units for joint training.' In this context, the 9 RPC, an elite paratrooper regiment based in Toulouse invited the 22 SAS: joint manoeuvres took place in the Aude and Ariège valleys. 'Operation Decipher' was supervised by General Caillaud officer-in-command of the 1st Brigade of the 11th Paratroopers Division, the rapid intervention force sent on several occasions to Africa by Giscard d'Estaing, whence the French secret service SDECE draws its 'Action Service'. The 9th RPC was led by Colonel Granger, who was an officer with the elite regiment 1st RCP in Algeria during the war, while '140 British commandos' — a squadron — belonging in the majority to 22 SAS were under Colonel Jeapes'. Anthony Jeapes saw action most notably in Oman. 'For the 9 RCP paratroopers, it meant fighting in the framework of their military instructions, to measure up their physical endurance and fighting determination, in front of an adversary who would, with great skill, use all the tricks of a guerrilla.'

Colonel Jacques Granger afterwards emphasised that:

this exercise indeed permitted us, on the one hand, to establish relations with those inhabitants in the area whom we wished to 'insert'

within the regiment's apparatus as regards intelligence, and on the other hand, allowed a vast liberty of manoeuvre to all elements involved in the operation.

The author of the article insisted on the good relationship that ensued between the commandos and the local population:

It was equally a success as far as relationship with the Ariège population went, since they willingly played the game. To such an extent that one wonders if collaboration between the regiment and the population had not become reassuring complicity.<sup>36</sup>

It is from the Irish brackens or the concrete jungle of Belfast, that this 'reassuring' exercise derives all its meaning. This was by no means a unique venture: on the clock erected in 1950 in the SAS Hereford base, are engraved the names of those who died. Major R.M.Pirie (1972); Sergeant S.H.Johnson and Corporal F.M.Benson, in 1978, 'did not beat the clock', according to SAS jargon; they were killed in France.

But SAS personnel abroad did not restrict themselves to 'dry run' exercises. In December 1975, two of them were sent as 'technical advisers' to the Netherlands, where a South Moluccan commando had held 24 people as hostages for 12 days in the Groningue-Zwolle train. The SAS did not intervene directly, but in the aftermath they helped to set up an 'anti-commando intervention brigade in Holland'.<sup>37</sup>

On 27 May 1976, the *Daily Express* confirmed that SAS had been sent to Holland with a new type of CR gas, and had trained the Dutch police in its use against the South Moluccans. During the kidnapping of Hans Martin Schleyer, and especially the hi-jacking of a Lufthansa Boeing by a mixed commando of the Palestinian Liberation Popular Front (External Operations) and the Red Army Faction, the SAS played an important role on two accounts: first as advisers to the West German anti-terrorist group, GSG9 as: 'two members of the SAS collaborated in their capacity of technical advisers, to the storming plans, probably at the request of James Callaghan himself.'<sup>38</sup> Secondly, by providing the 'stun grenades' used by the GSG9:

The stun grenades used by the West German commandos were, in fact, provided by British special forces. Two specialists belonging to the British Special Air Service were in Mogadiscu to give advice to the commandos who have arrived from Bonn.

For a long time, such grenades have been stockpiled in Britain and they have been subject to experiment by the 22 SAS, from which are drawn, when needed, anti-terrorist action groups.<sup>39</sup>

Henri Pierre, *Le Monde* correspondent in London noted that:

despite the Prime Minister, M.Callaghan's statement on 18 October, modestly playing down the British contribution to the commando

operation in Mogadisciu, most British papers praised the special grenades used by the German intervention unit . . . Two members of the SAS had been sent to Mogadisciu to advise the German commandos.<sup>40</sup>

Those two 'advisers' had very interesting backgrounds. Both, Major Alastair Morrison and Sergeant Barry Davies, had been touring Ireland. The latter was a lucky man. In 1972, in Belfast, Davies, with a Captain Dent was 'captured by the enemy' as they attempted to cross a barricade at the junction of Leeson Street and Falls Road. Leeson Street was then an Official IRA stronghold, so the Officials requested that the men be handed over to them by the Provos. After some negotiations, Dent was led away and shot dead by the Provisionals in Sultan Street. Davies was interrogated by the Officials and they shot him at Cairns Street, leaving him for dead. But he was only injured. Six months later, the Irish edition of the *Daily Mirror* carried a front-page story on Davies: 'The Man the Provos Claim to have killed', either because Davies did not know the difference between the IRAs, or because, since the Officials had ceased their military activities it was better to blame the Provos. Sergeant Davies was awarded an MBE for 'Services to Community Relations in Northern Ireland'.

In March 1978, the SAS continued touring Europe: this time, the leader of the Italian Christian-Democrats, Aldo Moro had been kidnapped by the Red Brigade. Two SAS advisers, (the same ones?) were sent to Rome on 20 March. Their presence — in view of the conclusion of this case — was useless. According to Italian sources, they even went back to Britain raging against the Italian security service, led by General Dalla Chiesa, which they thought inept. Fabrizio Calvi, wrote in *Libération*:

In well informed circles in London, it is said that the two Special Air Service men lent to Italy during Aldo Moro's kidnapping came back furious and there was no question that the British would help the Italians in any future anti-terrorist struggle as long as they did not change their ways of operating.<sup>41</sup>

In 1980, the SAS operation that broke the Iranian embassy siege, code-named 'Nimrod', even fascinated the Americans. True, Colonel Charlie Beckwith, of the US Special Forces, an honorary member of the 22 SAS, who had been despatched to Hereford for training in 1962, had suffered a serious setback. His 'Charlie's Angels' and the CIA had just been crushed in the middle of the Iranian desert as they were attempting to rescue the Tehran US embassy hostages. In August, it was learnt that a 100-strong detachment from Special Air Service 'has been at America's top-secret counter-terrorist camp at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, the headquarters and training base of the United States "Delta" team, which had failed in the combined services attempt to rescue Iran's American captives.'<sup>42</sup> Interestingly, eight men from the West German 'Grenzschutz gruppe 9' (GSG9) with whom the SAS worked in the Schleyer case, had just left Fort Bragg. But the most recent

and significant export of SAS expertise applied to a conflict very similar to the Irish war.

In the war between the Spanish forces and the two Basque nationalist underground movements, ETA-military and ETA-politico-military, Madrid had asked for help from the British. British and Spanish Intelligence had tried for a long time to establish whether or not there were links between the IRA and the ETA. In Dublin, the man representing the Spanish intelligence service, (DGS) Senor Jose Antonio Sierra — officially 'Cultural attaché' — held frequent meetings with his SIS counterparts, among whom was Bernard Coleman, who, by 1976, was Consul-General in Bilbao.

In 1979, counter-insurgency experts from the Spanish army came to Belfast; and on May 30th, 1981, it was reported from Madrid: 'William Whitelaw, the Home Secretary, said here today that members of the SAS will be sent to Spain to exchange information with Spanish police units fighting terrorism.' Indeed, the SAS helped to organize a unit of 58 men, the 'Gruppo Especial de Operaciones' led by Captain Ernesto Garcia Quijada, as well as rural units, 50 men strong, the 'Unidades Anti-Terroristas Rurales'. But as the status of autonomy for the Basque country was negotiated, a local Basque force was due to replace the Guardia Civil, a move similar in the Spanish state to the 'Ulsterization' policy in Ireland.

In August 1980, Basque MPs revealed that:

Britain's SAS commandos have taken on a new enemy, the Basque separatist guerrillas in Northern Spain.

The MPs say they have been refused permission to inspect the top-secret establishment just outside Vitoria, capital of the Basque province of Alava, where they allege Special Air Service specialists are training members of the new Basque security force.

The new force, it appears, is to be a para-military police unit composed entirely of Basques, with special responsibility for the security of Basque regional government installations and leaders.<sup>43</sup>

The training took place in an isolated farm at Berroci, 15 miles from Vitoria. For a start, 25 young Basques, mostly from the moderate Basque National Party (PNV) were trained by six instructors who had been in the Special Boat Service, the naval section of SAS, who had specialized in protecting North Sea oil rigs. They had been hired through a London-based security firm *Argen*, run by a former Rhodesian security expert, John Fairer-Smith. But whether directly, or through the channel of British security service overseas sales department, the results of experiments of the special operations in Northern Ireland, were utilized yet again in another European counter-insurgency battlefield.

## References

1. In 1893, a breakdown of the Artist Rifles gave the following social

- spectrum: artists (painters and sculptors) 4.54%; lawyers: 12.39%; civilian engineers: 5.99%; architects: 11.79%; doctors: 11.33%; any other professions: 54.96%.
2. Duncan Campbell, 'The Pedigree Dogs of War', in *Time Out*, No.433 21-27 July 1978.
3. The Commanding Officer of the 22nd SAS, J.P.B.C.Watts, was transferred to Oman in April 1979, to lead the Sultan's Land Forces against the Peoples' Liberation Front of Oman (PFLO). His successor is Colonel Peter Edgar de la Billière. At the beginning of 1976, 'G' Squadron of the 22nd SAS was sent to Ireland, led by Major H.M. Rose (officially Coldstream Guards) himself an Oman veteran, with Captains Wyndham (Irish Guards) and Holmes (Scots Guards).
4. Jean Bourdier, *Les Commandos du Désert*, (Presses de la Cité, Paris, 1977) p.223. In 1944, there were five SAS regiments: two British, two French (to become the 2nd and 3rd RCP active during the Algerian war), and the 5th SAS Belgian regiment.
5. *Oman En Lutte*, news bulletin, Paris, June 1978 No.6. Around this time the OC 22nd SAS was Peter Edgar de la Cour de la Billière, in charge of BATT in Sudan, since 26 March 1977, which the Numeiri regime required as it was facing 'internal subversion'.
6. Tony Geraghty, 'Tough Guy's Trickiest Job', in *The Times*, 6 November 1977.
7. J.P.B.C. 'Paddy' Watts was a Major in Oman from 1958 to 1959, commanding the D squadron of the 22nd SAS against the national liberation movement. In 1972, the *Army List* described him as 'an officer in the Royal Irish Rangers'; he became Officer Commanding of the 22nd SAS regiment on September 26, 1975. On April 29, 1979, Brigadier Watts was promoted to the rank of Major-General to take command of the Sultan of Oman's Land Forces.
8. Sean MacStiofain, *Memoirs of a Revolutionary*, (Gordon Cremonesi, London, 1975) pp.320-21.
9. 'Bobby Jones' was, in fact, an Irishman named Ted Stuart, a member of the MRF stationed at Palace Barracks. His 'sister's' real name was Sarah Warke, a corporal in the WRAC who, in 1973 was awarded a Military Medal *in absentia*. Yet, she was presented to the Queen by the Duke of Edinburgh, in his capacity as Honorary Director of British military intelligence, at Buckingham Palace in 1977.

Stuart and Warke, posing as brother and sister, had rented a flat in Antrim Road and the Four Square offices were located on the 1st floor of an evangelic bookshop in College Square East. On Sunday mornings Sarah Warke used to take part in Salvation Army services.
10. Sean MacStiofan, op.cit., p.319.
11. *Ibid.*
12. *Scottish Sunday Mail*, 8 October 1972.
13. *The Irish Times*, 14 February 1976.
14. This testimony was made public in June 1978, during a seminar on 'The Role of the British Army' organized by the United Troops Movement in Bristol, and published in their monthly paper *Troops Out!*, July 1978.
15. Gery Lawless, 'Army Murder Men Caught', in *The Red Mole*, 19 May 1973.
16. Kitson, op.cit., p.191.
17. *Ibid.*
18. Martin Dillon, Denis Lehane, *Political Murder in Northern Ireland*, (Penguin, 1973) p.318.
19. David Blundy, 'The Army's Secret War in Northern Ireland', *The Sunday Times*, 13 March 1977.
20. Tony Geraghty, *Who Dares Wins, The Story of the SAS, 1950-1980*, (Fontana-Collins, 1981) p.186.
21. *The Irish Times*, 22 February 1981.
22. *The Times*, 11 January 1976.
23. *Le Monde*, 9 January 1976.
24. Between April 1976 and the end of 1978, 'selective' summary executions were not particularly selective, as witness the number of civilians mistakenly killed: Niall O'Neill (Belfast; mistake); Peter Cleary (15 April 1976, IRA Staff Captain, South Armagh; unarmed, at his fiancée's home); Séamus Ludlow (12 May 1976, Louth, South of the border, unarmed; mistake); Séamus Harvey (16 January 1977, Crossmaglen, unarmed), Michael McHugh (21 January 1977, young Catholic forester, Co Tyrone, unarmed); 18 year-old Frank McKibbin (17 April 1977, Ardoyne, Belfast; carrying an air-carbine for rabbit-hunting); Danny McCooley (20 May 1977, killed during interrogation); Colm McNutt, IRSP and INLA member, (12 December 1977, killed in his car in Derry, unarmed); 20 year-old Paul Duffy (26 February 1977, IRA Volunteer, East Tyrone, unarmed); John Collins (8 May 1978, Belfast, unarmed); Denis Heaney, William Mealy and Jim Mulvenna (21 June 1978, IRA Volunteers, carrying a bomb, held no weapon); William Hanna (Loyalist activist, in the same incident in the hail of SAS gunfire); 16 year-old John Boyle (11 July 1978, Co Antrim, unarmed; mistake); James Taylor (September 1978, Protestant, duck-hunting; mistake); Pat Duffy (25 November 1978, Derry, IRA auxiliary, unarmed). These violent deaths call for several comments. 1) None of these people, whether Republican Volunteers or civilians, had been in a position to fire a weapon or defend themselves in any way; these incidents were not the results of crossfire. 2) These killings strongly suggest premeditation, but because of the poor state of British intelligence, or accuracy in the actions of the SAS, 'mistakes on the person' officially account for half of those killings; 3) the SAS contravened British army internal regulations as codified in the yellow card laying down the circumstances and conditions under which a soldier is allowed to fire his weapon; 4) they contravened international conventions (in particular, by wearing plain-clothes, or using irregularly issued weapons) and notably the 1978 Additional Protocols of the International Geneva convention on the status of guerrilla fighters.

In 1976, two priests, Fathers Denis Faul and Raymond Murray, published detailed witnesses' accounts and documents on Peter Cleary, who 'was killed as he tried to escape', and the kidnapping of Sean McKenna, and explained how international conventions have been constantly violated by the British army and the SAS. (Denis Faul, Raymond Murray, *SAS Terrorism, The Assassins Glove*, 1976).
25. *Magill*, August 1978. As in an interview by the Author, published in

- Le Matin de Paris* (29 March 1978) the IRA insisted on their reorganization in small cells, abandoning the old-style command structures, with battalions and companies.
26. *Daily Mail*, 17 May 1977.
  27. *Republican News*, 21 May 1977.
  28. *Ibid.*
  29. *Daily Telegraph*, 13 February 1979.
  30. *Magill*, June 1979.
  31. *The Times*, 14 August 1974.
  32. *The Irish Times*, 23 April 1976; see also Tony Bunyan *The History and Practice of the Political Police*, (Quartet Book, London, 1977) and also *State Research Bulletin*, especially No.18 (June-July 1980) 'How SAS ended the Princess Gate Siege'.
  33. *Private Eye*, 13 April 1979; *Sunday World*, 8 April 1979.
  34. *The Times*, 25 February 1975.
  35. *Daily Telegraph*, 20 April 1979.
  36. *Terre-Air-Mer Magazine*, 25 March 1976.
  37. *L'Aurore*, 17 January 1976.
  38. *Le Monde*, 20 October 1977.
  39. *Ibid.*
  40. *Ibid.*
  41. *Libération*, 17 July 1978.
  42. *Daily Telegraph*, 30 August 1980.
  43. *The Observer*, 10 August 1980.

### 3. Psychological Warfare and Black Propaganda

Psychological warfare is a key factor in the counter-insurgency effort that is supported by the British army, the RUC, the civil administration in Northern Ireland, and the Foreign and Commonwealth Offices and their related departments. The aim of this special type of military activity is to discredit and isolate the Irish resistance movement and convince international public opinion — particularly the Irish exile communities — that British 'peace-keeping' operations in Ireland are justifiable.

Frank Kitson, in accordance with the theory of 'psychological action' in the Algerian war, upheld the need to integrate psychological warfare within the apparatus for special war in Ireland. To kill an IRA Volunteer is irrelevant; what is important is to win over large sections of the population and persuade them to accept the necessity of killing this IRA man in order to uphold and defend 'law and order'. In other words, the population is the main target.

Kitson also acknowledged that it is essential to obtain a degree of complicity from the media, which, in the long-term could well fall under the control of the army. Since psychological warfare was subordinated to a political-military strategy, a growing militarization of the media should occur. The government 'must also promote its cause and undermine that of the enemy by disseminating its view of the situation, and this involves a carefully planned and co-ordinated campaign of what for want of a better word must regrettably be called psychological operations.'<sup>1</sup> Kitson described the means necessary for success:

The next area in which the army can make a contribution before the outbreak of violence lies in the field of psychological operations and propaganda, where the government not only has to counter the steps which the enemy are taking to get their cause across to the population, but also has to put across its own programme in an attractive way. There are three aspects to this business. In the first place, careful assessments and appreciations have to be made by trained men and presented to the government leadership at the various levels so that policy can be laid down. This policy then has to be turned into specific propaganda material such as films, broadcast programmes, newspaper articles,

leaflets and so on. Finally, the material has to be disseminated by mechanical means, that is to say by broadcasting, printing, or by the projection of films on the screens. In the defensive context mechanical devices are also required for locating illegal enemy broadcasting stations and for jamming them, and for monitoring enemy propaganda so that it can be correctly countered.

In order that these three functions can be carried out, a psychological operations organization is required analogous in a sense to the intelligence organization, although it need not be nearly so large. This organization should be planned on the basis that it must provide operations teams at every command level, responsible for drawing up assessments for the benefit of the appropriate committee or commander and responsible also for translating that policy into specific material. The head of each team would of course be the psychological operations adviser to the committee or commander concerned. In addition to these teams a number of psychological operations units of various sorts will be required whose job is to handle the mechanical processes involved in detection and dissemination, and which can be sent to local areas to work under the direction of the appropriate team if required, but which would more normally work under central direction.<sup>2</sup>

## Black Propaganda

During World War I, Britain launched the first centre for psychological warfare. Adolf Hitler, in *Mein Kampf* praised the British specialists in propaganda, swearing that in future he would surpass them:

Propaganda was seen there as a first-class weapon, while at home, it did not represent much more than the last piece of bread of politicians without position, or the vein in newspapers offices for modest heroes . . .

Yet its results, everything considered, were equal to nothing . . . In 1915, the [British] enemy undertook their propaganda among us. From 1916 onwards, it was intensified to the extent of becoming a real flood at the beginning of 1918. Little by little, the army started thinking the way the enemy wanted.<sup>3</sup>

In effect, the British War Office had set up a special department in Wellington House, with, in its ranks, numerous writers who willingly lent their pen to the service of war propaganda. Among the most famous were G.K. Chesterton, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, John Galsworthy and Thomas Hardy.

Journalists and intellectuals joined in the defence of the Empire. The mass scale of this propaganda caught Germany unawares: in 1918, on a weekly basis, the British despatched through the Intelligence Service, 2,000 balloons

each carrying 1,000 leaflets. In a single month of that year, 5,360,000 leaflets were dropped into Wilhelm II's vacillating Reich; they mainly contained military news. These leaflet-dropping operations — a prefiguration of 'Black Radios' in the next world war — were called 'white propaganda' by Whitehall leaders. Misinformation and rumour — in war just as in peace — constituted 'black propaganda'. For instance, a fake issue of the *Daily Mail*, dated 12 September 1916, gave the impression to the German general staff that the British were on the verge of landing on the Belgian coast, an operation similar, although in a very limited way, to propaganda exercises prior to D-Day in 1944.

The propaganda department at Crewe House in Mayfair, near the MI5 headquarters, was led by Lord Northcliffe, with Sir Stuart Campbell, editor of *The Times*, as assistant. Especially busy with black operations, was Colonel George Cockerill, a senior operative of secret intelligence, and a former chief of army intelligence during the Boer War. Attached to the War Office, this department numbered 18 officers in 1914, and in 1918 had 6,000 employees:

The secret service also exerted control over the press, enjoyed the right to censor mail and telegrams. The propaganda and counter-propaganda section acted to influence newspaper staff, it operated in allied and neutral countries and distributed brochures and leaflets in enemy countries, to undermine the morale of the population, especially at the end of the war.<sup>4</sup>

But psychological warfare with political aims really took off in the aftermath of the first world war, when British intelligence agencies concentrated their attacks both on Bolsheviks and Irish nationalists. In both cases, psychological operations in support of military operations, were not confined to the enemies — neither the Irish Republican Army nor the Soviet Republic — but rather to the British people themselves to procure their support for psychologically interventionist politics. But the 'enemy within' was detected. Trade-unionists, Communists, the Irish people, became prime targets for the security services, MI5 and the Special Branch. Propaganda followed the same direction. 'The most urgent task for the secret service, and particularly counter-espionage, after the first world war, amounted to combatting Bolshevism in England and Sinn Féin terrorism in Ireland', explained Richard Deacon, calling as witness the head of Special Branch, Sir Basil Thompson: 'In February 1919 was reached the peak of the revolutionary threat in Britain. Everything played into the hands of the revolutionaries. Many soldiers became impatient, as demobilization went very slowly.'<sup>5</sup>

Indeed, British propaganda, after having stressed the alleged war-time complicity of the German Kaiser and the Irish nationalists, switched to another explanation: Bolshevik subversion was at the root of the Anglo-Irish war. For instance, a book *Red Terror and Green*, by Richard Dawson (interestingly enough this was reprinted — the first time since 1920 — as a paperback in 1972) attempted to show that Lenin and Trotsky pulled the strings of the

Irish independence war from the Kremlin. Dawson reiterated a warning which had been echoed up to the present: 'A Bolshevik Ireland would be a constant menace to the social and industrial peace of Great Britain.'<sup>6</sup> It would be improper to mention 'Black' anti-Bolshevik operations in Britain and omit mention of a masterpiece of forgery published in the *Daily Mail*, on 25 October 1924: the famous Zinoviev letter.

Sidney Reilly, a British intelligence agent prominently involved in anti-Soviet activities has often been said to be the author of this manipulation; whoever was responsible, a letter signed by Zinoviev, on behalf of the Komin-tern, dated, 15 September 1924 was allegedly sent to Arthur MacManus calling on British Communists to launch an armed struggle in Britain, as well as to provoke subversion in the army and navy. This accusation was all the more well-timed since two months earlier, John Campbell, the editor of the Communist Party's paper, *The Workers' Weekly* had been arrested under the Incitement to Munity Act, 1797. One paragraph of this letter was especially relevant to our study:

Armed warfare must be preceded by a struggle against the inclinations to compromise which are embedded among the majority of British workmen, against the ideas of evolution and peaceful extermination of capitalism. Only then, will it be possible to count upon the complete success of an armed insurrection. In Ireland and the colonies the case is different; there is a national question, and this represents too great a factor for success for us to waste time on a prolonged preparation of the working-class.<sup>7</sup>

The Zinoviev letter had been published at the instigation of the MI6 and the Conservative Party in the electoral campaign following the censure of Ramsay MacDonald's Labour Party in Parliament. It certainly had a devastating effect, facilitating an overall Conservative victory. In this case, it was not solely a case of discrediting the Communists, but Labour Party members who had engaged in trade relations with USSR. But the MI6 or SIS had acted very much on their own.

This unauthorized action by the Foreign Office was no accident [wrote Tony Bunyan], the top administrator at the Foreign Office, Sir Eyre Crowe, the Permanent Under-Secretary, and Sinclair, head of MI6, were convinced that a new Labour Government would seek to limit the work of the secret service.<sup>8</sup>

With World War II, psychological warfare took on its modern form. Radio enabled the more rapid spread of information and misinformation. The BBC became militarized. It is naturally difficult to accept that the 'tool of liberation', London's voice in nazi-occupied countries, and often the main means of liaison with the resistance movements, could have become a 'tool of oppression'. But then the relationship between the military-political apparatus

and the media in the fight against the nazis, corresponded to the interests of Britain. After the war the enemy could take on a new face; it was difficult to abandon the use of 'black propaganda' and misinformation.

The history of 'black propaganda' during the war whether by radio or other means was abundantly described by those, such as Sefton Delmer who were involved, or by historians, such as Anthony Cave-Brown, in his *Body-guard of Lies*. Suffice it to recall that the various special propaganda tasks were attributed to the Political Warfare Executive (PWE) in liaison with co-ordinating intelligence bodies.

Before the war, Sir Stuart Campbell, who organized the 'Electra House' Group, the centre for 'black propaganda', had carefully studied nazi propaganda, as demonstrated by Dr Goebbels, and researched means to counter it. In 1939, he became Director of Propaganda in Enemy Countries. R.H. Bruce-Lockhart, who had previously been involved in the USSR, was in charge of propaganda at the Foreign Office. These two sections then fused with SO1, the propaganda and subversion section of the Secret Intelligence Service, and formed the PWE, which worked together with the Special Operations Executive (SOE) that directed underground warfare in occupied countries in Europe and elsewhere. From this time, the British subordinated psychological warfare to the military and intelligence community and the Foreign Office.

### Anti-Irish Propaganda

Orations, speeches, pamphlets — ink gushed forth to justify the English presence in Ireland, and above all, to depict the Irish as a simple-minded, rough, even wild people; by nature violent and rebellious, given to idleness and drunkenness.

The Irish, as pictured in the English press had been presented in a fearful light since the 18th Century: caricatures of limping peasants, wild beings half human, half ape; picture postcards of the 19th Century showed clumsy, sullen peasants, often hairy, dressed in green, with a beery face under a beribboned hat, armed with a shillelagh (stout, wooden cudgel). By contrast, it should not be forgotten, that books about Irish history or in Irish were proscribed. Here is the famous portrait of the Irish, published in 1862 in the English humorous magazine, *Punch*:

A creature manifestly between the gorilla and the negro is to be met with in some of the lowest districts in London and Liverpool by adventurous explorers.

It comes from Ireland, whence it has contrived to migrate; it belongs in fact to a tribe of Irish savages: the lowest species of Irish Yahoo.

When conversing with its kind it talks a sort of gibberish. It is, moreover a climbing animal, and may sometimes be seen ascending a ladder laden with a hod of bricks.



The Irish Yahoo generally confines itself within the limits of its own colony, except when it goes out of them to get its living. Sometimes, however, it sallies forth in states of excitement, and attacks civilized human beings that have provoked its fury.<sup>9</sup>

This colourful description was not exceptional and belongs to a latest racialism of which 'Irish' jokes are another blatant example.

But within the Irish jungle, some of the better off managed, none the less, to reach the highest distinctions. Such was Charles Parnell, the 'Uncrowned King of Ireland', a leading Westminster parliamentarian strongly in favour of Irish autonomy, and against whom the secret service launched a campaign. On 6 May 1882, the Viceroy of Ireland, Lord Frederick Cavendish, and his secretary, were murdered in Phoenix Park, Dublin. These killings had been committed by a splinter group from the revolutionary *fenian* movement, the *Irish Republican Brotherhood*, to some extent the ancestor of the IRA; they were known as *The Invincibles*.

British intelligence agents were extremely active at that time. For instance, Thomas Beach, alias Major Henri LeCaron, who later published his memoirs as *Twenty-Five Years in the Secret Service*, had managed to infiltrate and move up to the top of the Irish organization in the United States, Clann na nGael. Simultaneously, in Paris, a team of agents provocateurs directed by the British secret service spent their time selling 'secret information' to gullible journalists concerning Fenian leaders who often sojourned in the French capital. Among them, Richard Pigott, a master in forgeries, blackmail, pornography and owner of fake Fenian papers, sold to *The Times*, of London, false letters purporting to have come from Parnell, in which he expressed support for the Phoenix Park murderers. In the subsequent imbroglio, and before an enquiry commission Pigott confessed to his counterfeits, and leaving a written confession escaped to Spain, where he committed suicide in mysterious circumstances.

All the same, following the scandal surrounding his decision to marry Kitty O'Shea his divorced mistress, Parnell fell. Later he was made a great romantic figure, but his fate also illustrated the persistence which, in the Victorian and post-Victorian era, British intelligence made use of and whipped up scandals related to intimate matters in an effort to eliminate political adversaries, primarily the Irish. They repeated their feat in 1916, against Roger Casement, a leader of the Nationalist uprising who had been arrested on a ship bringing arms from Germany to Ireland, and subsequently convicted and hanged in Brixton prison. The Director of Naval Intelligence, Sir Reginald Hall, whose services had captured the boat, thanks to an interception of signals, circulated intimate diaries said to belong to Roger Casement, in which there were overt expressions of his homosexuality, which did great disservice to pleas of clemency on his behalf, as much in post-Victorian Britain as in Catholic Ireland.

These dubious and controversial diaries, concerning Casement's alleged

homosexual adventures in Southern America, were deliberately distributed to the American press to smother calls for clemency in favour of Casement. It was a mean and despicable and totally unjustified venture on Hall's part, even in the name of total war. If, as some keep on asserting, these Diaries were a forgery, it is an even bigger stain on Hall's name. The Diaries carried all signs of having been forged to add obscene remarks.<sup>10</sup>

With the War of Independence from 1919 to 1921, anti-Republican propaganda expanded. In 1921, as an IRA victory was daily becoming more probable, 'British propaganda services were not inactive', recalls the French historian, Pierre Joannon. 'Basil Clark, a former journalist in London, promoted information chief, inundated foreign reporters with biased statements.' A government White Paper dealt at length with gossip about the famous 1918 German plot. Another shed light on the diabolical collusion of Sinn Féin with the Bolsheviks; Collins was accused of being connected with the German Free Corps. Laying himself open to ridicule, a senior police serviceman went so far as to publish a pedantic book on the criminal psychology of the average Irishman, who is introduced as an innate psychopath with strong, latent criminal tendencies. The Nationalist demand is described 'as a manifestation of pure hysteria.'

Michael Collins is crowned 'Public Enemy Number One', depicted as a tortured mind, Machiavellian and pitiless, animated by a fierce hatred of anything English. The most extraordinary fables about him are spread around.

The Foreign Office sends Saint-George's cavalry everywhere; to the Americans, it says that the Irish revolt, in principle, resembles the secession of the Southern States Confederation. And, in Lloyd George, the tamed press praises a new Lincoln. In the Vatican corridors, it is hinted that the IRA are but a bunch of Godless characters and Communists. To the French, are exposed with a luxury of gory details the atrocities the Sinn-Féiners committed.<sup>11</sup>

Plus ça change . . .

But British propaganda always was fascinated by the ritual pledges of initiation into secret societies, projecting upon their enemies an image of irrationality, as was seen in Kenya with the 'Mau-Mau'. So, in the first world war, the British propagated the existence of a fake oath of allegiance to Sinn Féin, with the aim of emphasizing the hatred felt by Irish separatists against the Protestant community. This forgery was again disseminated by the British army in 1969 and 1970, and was published in 1967, in Ian Paisley's *Protestant Telegraph* part of this so-called oath of allegiance read:

These Protestant robbers and brutes, these unbelievers of our faith, will be driven like the swine they are into the sea, by fire, the knife, or by

poison cup until we of the Catholic faith and avowed supporters of all Sinn Fein action and principles, clear these heretics from our land . . . .

At any cost we must work and seek, using any method of deception to gain our ends towards the destruction of all Protestants and the advancement of the priesthood and the Catholic Faith until the Pope is complete ruler of the whole world . . . .

We must strike at every opportunity, using all methods of causing ill-feeling within the Protestant ranks and in their business. The employment of any means will be blessed by His Holiness the Pope.

So shall we of the Roman Catholic Church and Faith destroy with smiles of thanksgiving to our Holy Father the Pope, who shall not join us and accept our beliefs.

This text would be laughable if it did not sadly reflect the way some Loyalists in Northern Ireland and a section of the British forces visualized the conflict, as well as the lack of efficiency of the psychological warfare apparatus at the beginning of this conflict in the early 1970s.

It was thus vital to radically reorganize the earlier methods, and to set up a really operational service, to train professional and proficient psychological warriors.

### Psyops: Psychological Operations

Since 1973, selected members of the civil service and army, were consequently trained in the techniques of Psychological Operations, the acronym of which was 'Psyops'. Until March 1979, training sessions were organized by the Joint Warfare Establishment (JWE) at Salisbury, Wiltshire, and then moved to Latimer, Buckinghamshire, near the National Defence College, under the command of Brigadier G.D.J.R. Russell, who had succeeded Air Vice-Marshal Frederick Hazelwood, (1974-76), and Major-General Patrick Owns (1976-79). Members of the three services, of various ministries, and particularly members of the Information Department from the FCO, went through JWE courses, as did all members of the Information Policy Unit, based at British army HQ, Lisburn, in Northern Ireland, led, until August 1976 by Lieutenant-Colonel Jeremy Railton, then by Lieutenant-Colonel James Barden, both of whom had been at Old Sarum's Psyops school. (Railton's predecessor, from 1973, was Major Richard Stannard who subsequently left the army and was hired by Ian Smith's government to lead Psyops in support to the Rhodesian army.)

Following an investigation by the Dublin-based *Irish Times*, the Ministry of Defence (MOD) confirmed that senior civil servants had attended the courses since 1973, in particular those from the Ministry of Defence and the Foreign Office, but that this was in the context of NATO training, and had nothing to do with Northern Ireland. The *Irish Times* published a series of documents providing detailed information on the Salisbury courses. The

foreword of this confidential document, entitled 'Training in Psychological Operations: Introduction' stated:

The study of Psychological Operations (Psyops) and its effect on military operations, both in general and individually, is the responsibility of the Joint Warfare Establishment. The establishment also runs courses to teach the principles and techniques of Psyops in the military field for officers of all three services, for officers of the Commonwealth and Allied armed forces and for representatives of British government ministries.

Psyops was defined as: 'a flexible instrument which can be adapted to all forms of warfare and counter-insurgency', and was:

. . . divided into [categories of] strategic psychological warfare and psychological consolidation. Psyops in an internal security (IS) or counter-revolutionary situation, though closely resembling those in consolidation fall into a special category and are considered separately. Community relations are a form of psychological consolidation but related to peace-time conditions. In practice, the difference between the various divisions is not always easily defined as they merge into one another. This is another reason why Psyops campaigns must be planned at a high level and a common policy followed at all levels.

Once again, the concept of a single command structure (as urged by Kitson) which would prevent clashes between Psyops initiated by the Foreign Office and, for example, the media was revealed.

The document defined psychological warfare in the following terms:

The primary aim of psychological warfare is to support the efforts of all other measures, military and political, against an enemy, to weaken his will to continue hostilities and reduce his capacity to wage war. Psychological warfare relates to an emergency or a state of hostilities, and it is with the further subdivisions of strategic *psywar*, tactical *psywar* and psychological consolidation that its employment can best be examined.

Strategic *psywar* pursues long-term and mainly political objectives. It is designed to undermine the will of an enemy or hostile group to fight, and to reduce the capacity to wage war. It can be directed against the dominating political party in the enemy country, the Government and/or against the population as a whole, or particular elements of it. It is planned and controlled by the highest political authority.<sup>12</sup>

The MOD maintained that no link existed between Psyops and the Lisburn propaganda centre. Yet this clearly inferred the potential organization of a Psyops campaign in a friendly country, which could cover the UK itself. It

also indicated the links existing between the Psyops Committee, the Prime Minister's office, and the armed forces director of operations. This Committee would include members of the Foreign Office, the Government Information Service, the Home Office, and the Special Branch 'along with representatives from Psyops staff, Army Press Relations and Intelligence, and the armed forces commander'.

Psyops units were thus 'sponsored', equipped and manned by the army, but were otherwise independent units with one officer and up to a dozen other ranks and civilians; their primary purpose was the 'dissemination of propaganda' 'most profitably used in a counter-insurgency situation'.

As this document was leaked in 1976, it was generally considered that Psyops in Northern Ireland had suffered numerous setbacks following incidents such as the burning down of a sports club belonging to the Gaelic Athletic Association and the murder, by the British army in August 1976, of 12 year-old Majella O'Hare.

It was indeed ironical that revelations on the Psyops school of the Joint Warfare Establishment should occur at a time when the biggest Psyop since the beginning of the conflict — the Women's Peace Movement — was launched.

On 27 October 1976, however, Mr Robert Brown, Under-Secretary of State for the Army stated in the Commons, that over three years, only 260 members of the armed forces had undergone training in the *psywar* centre. This was a pious lie. The British had experimented with Psyops techniques, then called 'polwar' (Political War), since 1952. In fact, Psyops, as part of an overall counter-insurgency strategy, had already been co-ordinated in a specific situation: for instance Sir Hugh Carleton Greene, who, in 1969 was Governor of the BBC, was Head of the Emergency Information Services, in Malaya in 1950-51; and when it was founded the Salisbury Psyops School was known as the 'Doctrine Development School'. F.H. Larkin, of the British Army Operational Research Establishment, was the first to set up Psyops teams, each consisting of nine members. Over the years, the central themes of the seminars and training sessions, showed that such a situation as exists in Ireland was central to the preoccupation of the *psywar* operatives.

In 1972, Lieutenant-Colonel B.R. Johnston led courses on 'Military information policy in low intensity operations' in Salisbury. Present at one of the secret seminars in October 1972 were prominent specialists, such as Keith Belbin, from the publicity agency, Coleman, Prentice and Varley, which ran electoral campaigns for the Conservative Party, as well as R.M. 'Bob' Farr, a psychologist and former member of the British Psychological Society, Alan Protheroe, a Major in Army Intelligence and in 1979, BBC News Editor, and BBC 3 Controller Ian McIntyre, who was commissioned in the Intelligence Corps in the late 1950s. According to a *Sunday Times* journalist 'these operations are part of an agreement between the United Kingdom, Australia and the United States, who exchange this type of information'.

Under-Secretary Brown admitted that a smaller number of British officers did follow courses at the US Army Institute for Military Assistance in Fort Bragg, Carolina, but refused to say the exact number of those who, trained

in the US, had served in Ireland. In fact, Lieutenant-Colonel Railton, in charge of military propaganda in Northern Ireland until August 1976, at the time of the birth of the Peace Movement, had been trained in Fort Bragg.

Fort Bragg Special Warfare School — founded by John Kennedy as he wanted to personally supervise all aspects of the war in Indo-China — offered:

... courses on counter-insurgency operations, psychological warfare, and related subjects. Most of the students are U.S. military personnel who have been assigned to military missions, or Special Forces units in Third World areas; however, several hundred Latin American officers have also received training at the school. In 1963, Assistant Secretary of State Edwin Martin reported that Latin American military personnel were receiving training at Fort Bragg in riot control, counter-guerrilla operations and tactics, intelligence and counter-intelligence, and other subjects which will contribute to the maintenance of public order.<sup>13</sup>

Fort Bragg also shelters the HQ of the American Special Forces, the 'Green Berets' often compared to the British SAS.

According to MoD official figures, in 1973, 637 officers and 105 civilians had taken part in Psyops courses at Salisbury; in 1974-75, 634 officers and 77 civilians; and in 1975-76, 587 officers and 80 civilians; in other words, a sum total of 1,858 officers and 262 civilians. At the end of his book, Frank Kitson noted that the West German army had approximately 3,000 *psywar* officers in 1970, and suggested that numbers within the British army should be increased.

In providing the figures quoted above, Robert Brown was attempting to dissuade observers from thinking that the decreasing numbers corresponded to a turning point in the Irish conflict. He stated that the size of the Information Policy Unit based in Lisburn, had been reduced, and acted mainly as Press Relations Office for the army, maintaining a 24 hours a day press office, and publishing a journal, *Visor*, for the armed forces in Northern Ireland.

In fact, from 1973, under the command of directors in charge of propaganda in Lisburn, Peter G. Brodrick, Major Stannard, and Lieutenant-Colonels Railton and Barden, the Information Policy Unit had more than 40 Press Officers, seconded by a 100 secretaries, and supplemented by 12 RUC Public Relations Officers and 20 people from the Northern Ireland Office, which meant that 172 people were in charge of directing psychological warfare in Northern Ireland.<sup>14</sup>

### Psyops Against the IRA

In Northern Ireland, examples of black propaganda (as Republicans call it, using the old British intelligence phrase) or Psyops are legion. For example, fake literature, purported to have come from the IRA, admitting that the British Army was winning the war, and aimed at demoralizing the nationalist

population. In 1974, the Provisionals had stuck up all around the place a poster showing an armed and masked IRA Volunteer surrounded by children, with the words: 'VICTORY 1974'. Lisburn experts produced a similar poster subtitled, 'But not through the barrel of a gun', but the intention miscarried; children delighted in scribbling out the first two words!

The same year, a series of four posters appeared, anonymously, on walls in West Belfast and the city centre. These four, black posters exhibited a revolver with the barrel turned towards the passers-by. Each was entitled 'The Killer's Code' and bore a separate injunction:

1. Torture, tar, bullets and bombs are the ways to keep people on our side.
2. Any Roman Catholic who doesn't do what he's told must be threatened first – and then shot.
3. Men, women, children, babies – it doesn't matter who we kill, only how many.
4. Never shoot a man on his own. Let his wife and children see just how brutal we are.

At the bottom of the posters the same slogan appeared: 'SAY NO TO THE IRA.'

Psychological consolidation operations could be more diverse than may be supposed: leaflets and resistance papers, produced by the army, were meant to sow confusion among the Republican population. After some unhappy military operation on the part of the IRA – which possibly caused some civilian deaths – a false press statement; a counterfeited leaflet, claiming responsibility without compassion for the victims and their family, or any expression of regret, issued, apparently by the IRA, may marginally and temporarily modify the attitude of some, less militant, Republican supporters. Army publicity services, have been used to inundate newspapers with letters signed 'A Derry Mother of six, disgusted by the violence'. In 1970, at the beginning of the present campaign, such letters manifested an absence of understanding of the Nationalist psychology, to the extent that even pro-British editors preferred not to publish them for fear of laying themselves open to ridicule.

The Psyops units of the army did, however, increase their knowledge of the ghettos. Wall frescos, representing symbols of the 1916 Easter Rising, portraits of Republican heroes, such as James Connolly, were covered with whitewash in 1972 after Operation Motorman, to be replaced by 'pop' stars. These operations were aimed at depoliticizing the urban environment. With the emergence of the Peace Movement, in the summer of 1976, some teams were spotted in Belfast at night, with brush and paint, replacing political slogans, with graffiti such as 'Jane loves Séamus'.

The Manual of Counter-revolutionary Operations, and Kitson, had defined what they saw as consolidation operations to be undertaken during the initial non-violent phase of a given conflict. Psyops must consolidate the relationship

between the population and the armed (or 'security') forces and play a visible role, on the lines stressed by the authors of *The Technology of Political Control*:

According to the Army Land Operations Manual, the army should hold displays and participate in local sporting and civic events. In addition, individual troops should be encouraged to perform 'spontaneous' acts of kindness. Thus, it recommends that the troops should exercise courtesy on the roads, give simple aid to individuals (helping a fisherman with a damaged net) and show kindness to the old people and children, and respect for religious leaders. This of course has the added advantage of encouraging the individual soldier to believe that he is fighting on the side of benevolence. In Northern Ireland the army [under the direction of Kitson] initiated a system of community liaison officers – 'Mr Fixit' – to improve relations with the community.<sup>15</sup>

For foreign journalists visiting the country, army press services always produce a few pictures of children playing with or talking to soldiers. One such picture, showing the unfortunate Captain Nairac with kids in the Ardoyne area of Belfast, was circulated three months before he was kidnapped. Actually, children in nationalist areas surround soldiers to insult them, but the latter try to obtain bits and pieces of information about the children's older brothers, and besides, they know that with youngsters around them they will not be the target of an IRA sniper. At Christmas, British Army Santa Claus' distribute sweets . . . .

Yet the problem of the British occupation forces in Ireland has no solution: they can hardly 'win hearts and minds' of a population which they ruthlessly oppress, though it is a different matter with Loyalists. But when counter-insurgency technicians' summing up of their aim is 'winning the population in order to win the war', it can only be seen as corresponding to the relationship existing between the Nationalist population and their natural protectors, the Republican forces. Indeed, at the end of 1973, the IRA had produced an internal manual of good conduct, and general recommendations regarding relations with the civilian population, for the Volunteers.

Black Propaganda was not directed solely at Republicans. By the end of 1974, a committee comprising the Northern Ireland Office Press attaché (personally nominated by Harold Wilson), Michael Cudlip, an officer in charge of army information, and the brains behind psychological warfare, Lieutenant-Colonel James Railton, published a confidential report à propos a campaign against extreme Loyalist politicians and organizations. The memorandum was sent to senior army officers, civil servants and members of the Royal Ulster Constabulary who, because of their interrelations with the Loyalist community, opposed such a campaign.

It went ahead anyhow, but James Railton's Information Policy Unit embarked on it alone. Fake Loyalist papers, coming from a ghost group 'The

'Covenanters', or the 'Tara Group' were circulated denouncing the excesses of Protestant militias, UVF or UDA, exacerbating conflicts between them. At that time, Information Policy Unit officers went around chatting with Irish and British journalists, feeding them with nonsensical stories, such as the one about alleged presumed involvement of William Craig in the kidnapping of West German honorary consul and director of the Gründig firm in Northern Ireland, Thomas Niedermayer, in December 1973; another time, an off-the-record briefing hinted that Ian Paisley was linked to the small Tara group, which an anonymous Loyalist stated was 'riddled with homosexuals and Communists'. Some journalists, such as Chris Ryder, eagerly published these stories. By February 1976, Paisley said, that in his opinion a psychological warfare operation had been launched against him.

In 1974 and 1975, the Information Policy Unit went a bit too far. One of its key brains had to be rapidly transferred back to England. He was Major Colin Wallace, who achieved notoriety in March 1981, when he was gaoled for 10 years in Lewes, Sussex, for killing his mistress's husband. But, a former intelligence and army public relations officer, he had a remarkably long spell in Ireland; he ran Psyops in Lisburn, from 1968 until 1975. With the army invasion of Northern Ireland, he started by sending pictures and reports to British newspapers about 'the marvellous job our boys are doing in Northern Ireland', and increased the sophistication of black propaganda to the extent of entirely discrediting his service in the eyes of the press. He was behind the 'black' operations on the two prominent Loyalist politicians, William Craig and Ian Paisley. In these cases, the British were trying to undermine extreme Loyalists to the benefit of moderate Unionists.

But for Colin Wallace and his kind, the main target remained the Irish Republican Movement, as is clearly witnessed by the case of Maria McGuire.

### The Case of Maria McGuire

On October 1st, 1972, in view of the behaviour of the British press, the Provisional Republican Movement, through their 'Irish Republican Publicity Bureau' in Dublin, announced that they would boycott all interviews requested by the British media, whether for radio, television or newspapers. 'The propaganda war now being waged against the Republican Movement exceeds anything waged by British Information Service since World War II', the Bureau stated. 'This is an indication of how seriously the British view the military situation in the North.'

The Republican statement accused the *Sunday Times* of having published a fake interview with Sinn Féin President, Ruairi O Bradaigh, and mentioned a recent article by Paul Ferris in *The Observer* which asserted that the author had interviewed Seán MacStiofain, at the time Provisional IRA Chief-of-Staff for over an hour and a half. The statement asserted that:

MacStiofain has categorically denied giving an interview to Ferris. Both

of these incidents are, of course, part of a black propaganda war that the British counter-revolutionary forces are forced to use now that they realise that they cannot defeat the Republican Movement by military repression.

It should be remembered that, less than a year earlier, during a conference in Thiepval Barracks, Frank Kitson had come to the same conclusion and told his colleagues so: military repression would not be enough, one of the axes of the campaign against the IRA should be an attempt to ensure dissension, still better a split, within the IRA. On this point he was understood.

In August following Operation Motorman, the target of psychological warfare became Seán MacStiofain; with the ultimate aim of eliminating him from the IRA leadership. By September, the campaign was launched with an article from Ewan Rowan in *The Observer* entitled 'Macstiofain's English Years', insisting on the 'British' childhood and infancy of 'John Stephenson' as his name stood before he joined the Republican Movement and became a keen Irish speaker and linguist. As far back as the 1920s, similar campaigns had been launched against Republicans who were half English, half Irish, such as Erskine Childers, the father of one of Ireland's Presidents of the Republic. Then the two fake articles were published in the *Sunday Times* and the *Observer*.

Maria McGuire, a 23 year-old university graduate and linguist, joined Sinn Féin during the summer of 1971. In a Movement whose members were mainly recruited from among the poorest layers of society and which thus lacked intellectuals, and at a time when the new, young socialist guard, which to-day presides over the destinies of the IRA, had barely emerged, Maria McGuire inevitably attracted attention. Her political promotion within the movement was partly due, it seems, to her friendly relations with some leaders.

As Seán MacStiofain recalled later in his *Memoirs of A Revolutionary*:

She had to serve as a probationary member of Sinn Féin for a few weeks in a Dublin *úmann*, and was never a member of any other branch of the Republican Movement. To be more specific, in spite of the claims she made later, or which the British made for her, she was emphatically never a member of the IRA, except in her own dramatic imagination. She assisted Sinn Féin publicity in a minor capacity, and also worked for the Comhairle Uladh (Council of Ulster) committees . . . . As she was fairly articulate, she was allowed to try her hand at public speaking on such occasions.<sup>16</sup>

Nonetheless, Maria McGuire hit the headlines at the end of 1971, when she was involved with Daithi O Conaill in an attempt to buy and transfer weapons from Amsterdam to Ireland, from the Czechoslovakian firm 'Omnipol'. As she had played some role in the temporary animosity within the Republican leadership, following upon this failure, she suddenly vanished,

flew to Britain, and wrote a series of articles in *The Observer*, headlined 'I Accuse Seán MacStiofain'. These articles, with the help of Colin Smith, were later expanded into a book, entitled *To Take Arms – A Year in the Provisional IRA*. These revelations were designed to indicate that if MacStiofain left or was expelled from the IRA, they would agree to a cease-fire. In it, O Conaill was portrayed as a 'moderate', a 'dove' while MacStiofain was a 'hawk', an authoritarian dictator within the IRA, always involved in a power-struggle for his own benefit. She went as far as claiming that Daithí O Conaill even envisaged having his rival killed. In the rather tormented microcosm of the Army Council of the IRA, it seemed that fraternal relations were not cultivated. In all this Maria McGuire had been a young idealist, and a romantic woman who, drawn into this fascinating world, suddenly awakened to reality. As she pointed out:

I am, I suppose, a defector. I have left my family, my friends and the movement I believed in – the Provisional IRA. But defectors in the cold war between East and West always find another country to welcome them. There is no such sanctuary for me. The Provisional IRA believe that I have betrayed the movement in its fight against British economic and military control of Ireland. But in leaving the Provisionals I have not gone over to the British. I am still as opposed to their methods and policies in Ireland as ever. I am now effectively a stateless person.<sup>17</sup>

It was, of course, important that 'Operation Maria McGuire' did not seem to be directly controlled by British Intelligence. Curiously, it reminded people of an old book inspired by the British against the Irish, known as the *Awful Disclosures of Maria Monk*, which narrated Maria Monk's sufferings, during a residence of five years as a novice and two years as a 'black nun', in the Hotel Dieu nunnery at Montreal; the book, initially published on the East coast of the United States in 1836, ran to 20 successive editions and 300,000 books sold, as it described the horrors to which priests and nuns lent themselves in the Irish Catholic monasteries, in an attempt to whip up anti-Irish feelings.

The disclosures of Maria McGuire were a fine piece of propaganda. A fact which Seán MacStiofain admitted himself:

Fact, fiction and 'black' material were plausibly interwoven in the 'revelations'. Anyone who knew the game could see their purpose immediately. It was simply another attempt to discredit the leadership and encourage disunity in the movement.

But there was a more disturbing side to the whole business. Among the material there was a good deal of fact based on confidential information she had no right to have. There had been a breach of security at the top of the movement, and an inquiry was inevitable. It was long and involved, but inconclusive. Both of the people who had worked closely with her denied passing such information to her, and there was no evidence to prove their responsibility. I, for my part, accepted that

neither of them had been involved in a plot to kill me, as the 'revelations' had hinted.

The psychological warfare specialists who tried to exploit Maria McGuire had failed to understand something that goes very deep in the psychology of the Irish people. They cannot stand a traitor.<sup>18</sup>

Was Maria McGuire a SIS agent when she joined Sinn Féin? Or was she contacted later? While British Intelligence – if it had not been the instigator – knew of the 1971 Dutch gun-running venture beforehand, the circumstances surrounding this failure and her return to Ireland without interference still raises many questions. On 6 September 1972, London-based Irish journalist Gery Lawless publicly challenged her, at an Anti-Internment League Meeting in Brighton, to deny:

- 1) That she received a four figure sum from the *Observer* for her disclosures to date.
- 2) That her disclosures have been circulated throughout the world by the *Observer* Foreign News Service, the editor of which, Ronald Harker, admitted in a letter to the *Irish Press* on 30 November 1971 that it receives a subsidy from the British Foreign Office.
- 3) That the firm handling of the placement of her forthcoming book is headed by the former head of British Intelligence in North Africa, France and Spain, the man indeed who replaced Philby as head of British Intelligence in the Middle East.
- 4) That her agents are negotiating for her to receive a five-figure sum for the publication of her book.<sup>19</sup>

She did not answer these questions. The man at whom Lawless pointed his finger was Patrick Seale who had replaced Philby as *Observer* correspondent in Beirut; the Foreign Office department which subsidized the publication of McGuire's disclosures was the Information Research Department, the political Psyops outfit, funded by the Secret Service Budget, then headed by Tom Barker who, in 1976, was seconded to the Northern Ireland Office.

Using Maria McGuire and her revelations in a campaign against MacStiofain was not solely to create diversions and resentment in the bosom of the Republican Movement and sow confusion among their supporters. There was something more sinister than that: preparing public opinion to accept the fact that the Chief-of-Staff of the IRA had to be killed. The two SIS operatives, Keith and Kenneth Littlejohn, who were arrested in Dublin around that time, admitted that they had attempted to murder him on several occasions. A similar selective press campaign, preliminary to political assassination; literally 'character assassination', was employed in several cases, for example, in the murder of Sinn Féin leader Maire Drumm, in Belfast in 1976, and the following year of Séamus Costello in Dublin.

In 1972, the British achieved partial success. 'Termination with extreme prejudice', in British intelligence parlance, was not used against Seán



MacStiofain; however, the Dublin authorities managed to arrest him, and thus he was replaced in the Republican leadership. He stayed out of the movement until 1979 but, contrary to British hopes, his absence did not lead to a less vigorous campaign on the part of the IRA. Maria McGuire is said to be back, alive and well, in Ireland.

### The British Press and the Irish Conflict

The psychological war waged by the Army and the Foreign Office Information Department, would have no impact without the complicity of the media, which involves most British papers: *The Guardian*, has long been an honourable exception, thanks to its Belfast correspondent, Simon Winchester. But to echo the editor of the Dublin *Sunday World*, Eamonn McCann's view, the Irish war rang the knell of liberalism in Britain, and the difference between *The Guardian* and other British newspapers reports on Ireland is now very slight. Which does not mean it is indifferent to torture in Argentina, or apartheid in South Africa. The National Union of Journalists has tried to correct misreporting on Ireland, but with little success.

The peculiar situation of the British press, vis-a-vis the conflict in Ireland, has done nothing to help the British public really understand what is at stake. Philip Elliott, Research Fellow in the Centre for Mass Communication Research, University of Leicester, in his paper 'Misreporting Northern Ireland' tried to strike at the roots of the British media attitude:

Censorship of the news from the province became an issue in the early years of this decade, as soon as the British Army went in. The army and its political masters worked out a *modus vivendi* with the news media, partly by teaching army officers how to deal with the press, an activity sold to us as 'public relations' but known to them as 'psychological warfare', and partly by putting pressure on the broadcasting authorities to be careful, a process which they describe as 'exercising firmer editorial control' but which to others smells of 'censorship'.

He also drew attention to the invidious manner in which news on Ireland is presented:

Politicians and public leaders have repeatedly defined Ulster violence as senseless and horrid. Indeed, the relationship is often expressed as casual. It is senseless *because* it is horrid. The Prime Minister's lament for the British Ambassador killed in Dublin, 'When will this senseless killing stop?' summarizes this view.

It is a view that appears to be sustained by reporting, which records successive incidents in isolation and deals with them in terms of the immediate horror and suffering involved . . . The other influence the authorities exercise over the reporting of Northern Ireland is through the official public relations services, particularly that run by the British

Army. This provides information fast in the form journalists need to write the type of story I have outlined above.

Compared to the usual practice of government information services, both the speed and the professionalism are unusual . . . Evidence has accumulated of journalists being deliberately and repeatedly misled, mainly to implicate the IRA in violence carried out by Loyalist extremists . . . Army public relations, therefore, have made some attempt to achieve the conventional objectives of propaganda in war-time — to identify, vilify and isolate an enemy, and to show us how his vicious, aggressive and futile behaviour is being patiently restrained and controlled by the bravery of 'our side'.<sup>21</sup>

Philip Elliott concluded his report by comparing the war in Ireland with those in Algeria or in Vietnam, rightly distinguishing four main parties to the conflict: 'the "good", the "bad", the "others" and the "ugly"'. In each case, the 'others' have been the indigenous non-combatants, in Ulster often described as 'moderates' or the 'middle-ground' the 'bad' have been the insurgent guerrillas; the 'good' the forces of the imperial power; and the 'ugly' the Loyalist or settler groups who took up arms unconstitutionally to win attention.<sup>22</sup>

Obviously, one of the most decisive facets of the psychological battle consists in narrowly controlling information for foreign consumption. In this, the British receive unexpected help from the fact that foreign correspondents seldom stay in Ireland, but usually report from London, rushing to Belfast when Lord Mountbatten was killed or when Bobby Sands was elected as Fermanagh-South Tyrone MP. Consequently their information depends upon other British newspapers, British Army and MoD press services, the NIO and RUC press relations officers, and Foreign Office related propaganda departments which, in turn, are supplemented abroad by the BBC, particularly BBC External Service, and Reuters: In 1979, it was estimated that Reuters was sending one and half million words a day to 155 countries, while the US agency, UPI, telexed only 90 countries, and the Agence France Press (AFP) around 80. Likewise Reuters deploy the largest number (155) of correspondents around the world, against 110 by Associated Press, 110 for AFP and 62 for UPI and is the largest agency by volume of words sent, (17 millions).

A quasi-monopoly of Irish news by Reuters, the absence of Irish newspapers abroad, the exceptional posting of correspondents from the foreign press, give strange results: in France, for instance, with the notable exception of the 1981 H-Block Hunger-strike, reports of the Irish conflict consisted only of a short rewriting of Reuters telexes. In any case, for a long time, many foreign correspondents visiting Belfast did not go further than the Europa Hotel lounge to meet with officers from the Army's Information Policy unit. In part, this explains the wall of silence which for so long has surrounded the Irish war, and made the emergence of movements like 'Women for Peace' easier.

An incident revealing the degree of inaccuracy and absence of checking on sources of information occurred in September 1977 in France. An AFP telex announced that a Breton trawler, *Kernano*, had been shipwrecked after being rammed by a Greek submarine which was transporting weapons for the IRA. Most Paris papers told the story at length, hinting at the usual KGB connection, until on 12 September, the AFP journalists in Brittany, whence the information had come, confessed that it was 'bumpf'; they had been celebrating the departure of one of their colleagues and had conceived this story as a practical joke.<sup>23</sup>

Although particularly hard on his British colleagues, Dublin-based *Sunday World* editor Eamonn McCann was quite entitled to state that

We — that is those who have followed closely the pattern of reportage over the last seven years — *know* that the media have been active participants in the war, not disinterested observers of it. And that they have managed so to distort the reality that the overwhelming majority of British people are in the end *unable* to examine the issues objectively . . . . The corruption and death of liberalism follows directly from acceptance of Britain's 'right' to be in Ireland at all. History has proved not once but over and over again — that the artificial state of Northern Ireland cannot be maintained except by force of arms. To support the maintenance of the State it is therefore to accept the necessity for violence — whether this is acknowledged or not. Thereafter it is all a matter of degree. No newspaper which supports the British troops in Ireland can afford to tell the truth.<sup>24</sup>

Biased reporting of British papers and other information sources as far as Ireland is concerned, was encouraged by the traditional incestuous relationship prevailing between the press and the intelligence community. On 22 December 1975, the *Washington Post* revealed that all London dailies had some journalists on their staff who were in the pay of British intelligence, and that, according to a commentator of one of the most distinguished British papers, were partially staffed by writers subsidized by the 'SIS military intelligence unit'. A Fleet Street editor was quoted as saying that the SIS had on its payroll more than half the staff of a certain newspaper. Some weeks later, a new shock wave hit the British media as the Frank Church Senate Commission, which investigated the activities of the CIA, announced that the American agency had manipulated Reuters. But in fact this was nothing new, in his UNESCO-sponsored report 'Free Flow of News', Richard Fletcher pinpointed the interconnection between SIS and Reuters:

For over 30 years the British Secret Intelligence Service (SIS) ran a world-wide network of news agencies which, at their peak, had some 250 employees and for 15 years acted as sole agents for Reuters in the Middle East. The whole operation — funded from the Secret Vote and latterly controlled by the Foreign Office's Information Research

Department (IRD) — must have cost many millions of pounds and completely overshadows any CIA propaganda activities so far revealed.<sup>24</sup>

## Daily Black Propaganda

Former internee and Belfast journalist John McGuffin, in his book *Internment!* described, in practical terms, the use of British army propaganda by the media:

From the beginning [of internment] the vast majority of the daily newspapers, in addition to both the BBC and ITV, slavishly accepted as gospel, statements by the Unionist government and the British Army. It became definite policy for most newspapers that 'our army' could do no wrong. Thus, for example, the *Daily Mail* on 19 August 1971 had the headline 'Army shoots Deaf-mute Carrying Gun'. The inquest subsequently showed that Eamonn McDivitt of Strabane at no time had a gun and that the soldiers, who gave evidence anonymously, contradicted one another. The *Mail* made no apology. Similarly, everyone shot dead by the soldiers must, of necessity, have been a gunman or mad bomber — even the unarmed 13 killed by the Paras on 'Bloody Sunday'. And, if that fails to convince, obviously, he or she must have been shot by the IRA or 'in crossfire'. John Chartres of *The Times* even invented a new category: thus Danny O'Hagan of the New Lodge Road, shot by the army on 31 July 1970, was an 'assistant petrol bomber'. As Eamonn McCann pointedly asked 'What do "assistant petrol bombers" do? Hold coats?'<sup>26</sup>

McGuffin recalled the bizarre story written by Joe Gorrod and Denzil Sullivan published on 23 October 1971, on the front page of the *Daily Mirror*, 'Red Assassin shot dead in Ulster'. It told the story of how 'soldiers in a patrol which stalked and killed a terrorist sniper identified him as a Czechoslovakian. He carried a Russian-made Kalashnikov AK 47 rifle, one of the most deadly ever produced and one most favoured by assassins.' But they were unable to say when and where this incident occurred; the British army finally admitted in the *Sunday News*, that it was 'a bit of fantasy going round for the past year'. Indeed, the Army propaganda services did not seem to be short of 'fantasies' which gullible or unscrupulous journalists, with their editors' agreement, were willing to splash in the columns of their papers, as it was simply part of the 'war effort against the IRA'.

ITN's second item on 23 August 1972 was a story about three little girls, aged eight, who had been used by the 'unscrupulous IRA' to push a pram containing a huge bomb towards a military post at the back of the Royal Victoria Hospital in Belfast. The 'chivalrous soldiers were shocked and refused to fire, even at the risk of their own lives'. It was subsequently admitted by the British Army Press Office that the entire story was totally

untrue. But ITN carried no denial.

Similarly, the same week saw the *London Evening News*, and the *Sun* — both unobtainable in Ireland — carrying lead stories about IRA gunmen bestially raping young girls at gunpoint in the Markets area of Belfast. Gruesome details were given to titillate jaded English palates. The Black propaganda squad would appear to have gone a little too far that time in alleging that no fewer than four of the girls had become pregnant. Realizing, perhaps, that the 'super-potency' of the IRA in the area would be regarded with pride by some, the army got the RUC to issue a statement admitting that the story was completely false.<sup>27</sup>

In all these cases, the press actively support the armed forces. In some cases, though less often, it engaged in specific character assassinations, as for example, the vendetta led by *The Observer* against Seán MacStiofain has shown. Comparisons between reporting the Irish conflict and the French-Algerian war are interesting. British journalists should reflect upon how many editors or journalists of British tabloid or quality newspapers or magazines, have appeared in Court because they reported all sides of the conflict, independently of the British establishment.

There is a joke in Irish press circles that goes: 'I never remember which is which: *The Observer* is MI6, and the *Sunday Times* is MI5 — or is it the other way round?'

### Journalist Soldiers

Even worse than a reporter handing over information to the security service as a *quid pro quo* for some inspired scoop, or newspapers providing cover for SIS case officers, British under-cover agents were to pose as journalists in order to infiltrate and spy on the Nationalist areas. The story broke in 1976, when the British army admitted on 16 February, that they used fake press cards in Northern Ireland for emergency purposes. A spokesman from the Army stressed that they were used only in certain types of missions, where no other method was possible to procure the information they needed. In other words, fake press cards were used in intelligence-gathering operations by army under-cover operatives.

*The Times* correspondent in Belfast, Robert Fisk, published an article exposing this situation. Indeed, British journalists no more wished to see British soldiers impersonating members of their profession in the course of their intelligence operations than did the IRA. Especially as already some journalists had been blacklisted by the IRA, as were BBC senior journalists Martin Bell and Brian Walker later that year. *The Times* suggested that soldiers in plain-clothes, carrying press cards, had been operating in the border areas and even South of the border. This confirmed an allegation by the Provisional IRA that in September 1975, one of its units had intercepted

a car at the border with a uniformed British army officer and two 'journalists' who had flashed their press cards. The fortuitous arrival of a helicopter allowed the three to make good their escape before the IRA learnt more about it.

'Special Correspondents' of the army, carried press cards from a London Agency, Inter Press Features, 142 Fleet Street, London EC4, whose director, Jack Aitken, a part-time journalist with the *Sunday Express*, said he knew nothing about it: On one occasion at least, an officer introducing himself as a journalist with Inter Press Features had gone to Dublin, and visited the *Irish Press* photographic archives, displaying a keen interest in pictures by Colman Doyle, who has covered almost every Republican event since the beginning of the conflict, including many IRA war episodes.

Among the four 'journalists' identified by Robert Fisk, two often drove to the South of the border to take pictures. And it is well worth remembering that this occurred around the time when the SAS were deployed in South Armagh, and that several kidnappings and killings of Republicans subsequently took place on both sides of the border; one of the victims had last been seen in Dublin in December 1975. The British Army finally admitted that two of the men mentioned did indeed belong to the Army Photographic Department, stationed in Lisburn barracks. Army intelligence operatives, it seems, did not confine themselves to operations in Northern Ireland: at a time when the SIS, alongside the CIA, were fairly active in Portugal, as the scarcely fictional novel *The Infiltrator* by *Guardian* correspondent in Lisbon, Martin Walker, well recounted, Inter Press Features 'special correspondents' had been visiting Portugal and interviewing the Left-wing leaders, and such people as Major Otelo de Carvalho.

When questioned by the NUJ General Secretary of the National Union of Journalists (NUJ) Kenneth Margon, Roy Mason, then Minister of Defence, simply admitted the facts:

I entirely accept that this action could have jeopardized the personal safety of reporters and called into doubt the validity of real press cards.

The use of cards by army information staff arose out of an unauthorized, but perhaps understandable wish to provide a degree of protection for soldiers in plain clothes.

He added that he gladly gave a categorical undertaking that the practice would not be resumed under any circumstances.<sup>28</sup>

### The BBC and Commercial Channels

Reporting on the Irish situation in the main TV channels failed to measure up to the international reputation for liberalism, objectivity and fair-play which they enjoyed for coverage of other foreign news. In a way, as far as the BBC is concerned, it seemed that it succumbed to the twin cardinal sins

of 'militarization' of the Irish conflict and censorship.

This militarization began in World War II. As early as 1941, the BBC was involved in a large-scale psychological war, under the dual control of the War Office and the Foreign Office. By June 1941, the Minister for Information, Duff Cooper, had suggested that a united propaganda approach be envisaged. This was rejected, in spite of the creation of a committee, with representatives from the Foreign Office, the War Office and the Central Office of Information, under the supervision of Robert Bruce Lockhart, and linked to the Political Warfare Executive, which we have already described. The centralization was badly needed because of the clashes between SIS and SOE, and different standpoints towards information on places like Yugoslavia or Greece, whether news came from the Foreign Office, Whitehall or the Cairo British Army Headquarters.

By 1942, the BBC transmitted 78 daily news bulletins over 150 hours in 40 different languages. When the war ended, some of the understandable impetus in fighting fascism, was reorientated towards the new enemy as the Cold War emerged. It was no accident that the BBC External Services were supervised and funded, up to the present day, by the Foreign Office. The head of anti-German black radio operations Sefton Delmer, revealed at the end of his memoirs, how experience gained during the war was used in other parts of the world, and gave the example of anti-Nasser radio operations from Cyprus in 1956.<sup>29</sup> And the External Services higher spheres enjoyed intimacy with the intelligence world: their managing director from 1972 to 1981, Gerald Mansell, had been an intelligence officer during the war, and had moved to MI4(a) section of Military Intelligence until he joined the BBC in the early 1950s.

The role of the British media in the Irish conflict was that of participants, not observers. Consequently, news items have been screened and systematically censored. It would take volumes to list programmes and films commissioned, and then 'edited' or simply withdrawn by the BBC directorship. This occurred because of political and other external pressures, but also partly as a case of self-censorship.

The most spectacular cases included the commissioning of a film *The Sense of Loss* in 1972, by prestigious continental film-maker Marcel Ophüls, subsequently withdrawn by the BBC. Another film, by Brian Phelan, *Article 5* about torture in Ireland was banned in 1976. In the document *British Media and Ireland*, Paul Madden listed 14 programmes on Ireland, banned, censored and delayed by the BBC, eight by Thames TV, two by ITV, one by ATV and one by Granada. This is probably why journalist Jonathan Dimbleby was audacious enough to reveal, during the 'Frost Show' on BBC 2 in August 1976, that the Independent Broadcasting Authority and the BBC had sealed a pact to ensure that the 'enemy' would be unable to speak on British TV, in other words, the British public would not have an opportunity to know what was really at stake in Ireland, and what the views of the Republican Movement were, and then form their own judgement.

Even straight historical programmes relating to Ireland were banned, as was the case in February 1973, when Sir Lew Grade, chairman of the ATV

network dismissed Kenneth Griffith's film *Hang Out Your Brightest Colours*, which told 'The Life and Death of Michael Collins', who was a prominent IRA leader in the Independence War, and had signed the Treaty that gave birth to the Free State in 1922. In June 1978, the IBA banned a programme on Thames TV related to the findings on the use of torture in Northern Ireland by Amnesty International. Ironically, the BBC's 'Nationwide' showed extracts from it. A month earlier, Colin Thomas, who had directed a documentary on daily life in Derry *The Irish Way* resigned rather than cut it.

The scissors and paste syndrome in fiction and documentary programmes has been widespread. The news programmes proper have also been under strict scrutiny and control from various government departments. The influence of the D-Notice Committee, officially known as the 'Defence, Press and Broadcasting Committee', headed since 1980 by the former Director of Intelligence Services, Rear-Admiral William Ash, cannot be discounted; nor can the Official Secrets Act, and the selective use of the Prevention of Terrorism Act, 1974, which, in certain cases almost transforms a journalist into a police auxiliary.

While I was researching for this book, at the end of 1979, Scotland Yard Anti-Terrorist Squad officers with a warrant, came to Paris to question me about an interview, published in *Paris Match*, I had had with the Irish National Liberation Army following Airey Neave's murder. They wanted me to help to identify the people whom I had spoken with in Ireland; presumably not realizing, as would the French police; that according to the French Journalists' Charter, this would constitute a breach of professional secrecy and result in expulsion from the profession. And rightly so.

Finally, there are disturbing facts such as the senior positions held within the audio-visual media by people from the intelligence world, thus restricting the credibility and objectivity of reporting on a situation when the army and intelligence services, who still maintain links, are involved. Waldo Maguire, BBC Controller (1966-72) is a former member of the Intelligence Service, War Office and Foreign Office; BBC Defence correspondent, Christopher Wain is an Intelligence Officer (TA); in 1976, Parliamentary correspondent, Peter Hill was a Territorial Naval Intelligence officer, while BBC News Editors Derek Amore and Alan Protheroe, were respectively a former SAS member and a Major in Army Intelligence. As already mentioned, Alan Protheroe was not only a DIS major, but spent a fortnight every year lecturing at the psychological warfare Joint Warfare Establishment. Significantly, in 1978 he lectured on 'The Role of the Media in a Divided Society'.<sup>30</sup>

### Psyops Against the Hunger-Strike

The two successive hunger-strikes by Republican prisoners in the H-Blocks of Long Kesh and Armagh gaol in the winter of 1980 and the spring and summer of 1981, totally changed the range of British Psyops on an international scale. Moreover, with the election of Bobby Sands as MP for South-Fermanagh/Tyrone, world media maintained scores of reporters in Belfast, thus for the

first time for many years, provided information stemming from other than British sources. Sending emissaries throughout the world, the Irish Republican Movement whipped up international support from all political, trade-union and humanitarian quarters on a scale unknown since the 1920s. Wide-spread reporting, petitions, pickets, demonstrations and phone harassments of British embassies and consulates created a new situation, which the Foreign Office found difficult to cope with. Little wonder that within the British establishment, they were much keener to bring about successful negotiations, in spite of Margaret Thatcher's intransigence.

Simultaneously, a major counter-propaganda campaign was launched by the Overseas Information Department, renamed in 1981, 'Information Department', and led by Keith McInness. But since its inception in 1947, until 1977 when, because he had spotted too many ultra-Right wingers, David Owen reduced it in size, it was known as the Information Research Department (IRD), briefly mentioned above. Originally founded by Leslie Sheridan, an SIS operative, (whose fame stemmed from the fact that he recruited Kim Philby into the SIS) and Christopher Mayhew, it was meant to organize widespread psychological operations against Communism.

As Chapman Pincher defined it:

for many years the FO [Foreign Office] operated what was really a psychological warfare branch under the cover name of the Information Research Department (IRD). Its main purpose was to counter Soviet bloc propaganda and to disseminate information and misinformation to undermine Communism in Britain and elsewhere, and particularly to expose Communist front organizations for what they are . . . Various journalists were recruited to work for the IRD, which was largely financed by the CIA.<sup>31</sup>

True, but IRD, then OID, was funded by the 'British Secret Service Budget' and staffed partly by SIS personnel. Indeed, the former Director of Secret Intelligence Service, Sir John Rennie (from 1969-73) had been head of the IRD in the 1950s. Besides setting up news agencies, courting journalists to provide them with IRD material, and publishing books, this Department worked through the Information Officers in diplomatic missions throughout the world. In 1979, the head of OID, James Allan, was a senior SIS officer, who, in 1975, had been involved in the negotiations with the IRA during the truce. One OID operation he supervised was illustrated by the leak of a March 1980 internal memorandum to 21 Information Officers in capitals around the world, asking them to organize the blacking of Arthur MacCaig's film on Ireland, *The Patriot Game*. Part of the memo reads:

While the film attempts to be a narrative of the years from 1969 to 1979 and includes scenes of everyday life in Catholic Belfast, and interviews with leading Republicans, it also discredits the Army by including, out of context, scenes of action and violence in which British soldiers

are involved. The film in general gives the picture of a romanticized Provisional IRA and totally ignores the views of the Protestant community.

As a result of the presentation of 'The Patriot Game' on numerous European TV channels, and of the publicity success of the Hunger-strike, the government decided to commission a film against the IRA made by Colin Still of the Central Office of Information. Meanwhile, a crisis unit had been set up in November 1980 to devise psychological operations that would bolster Britain's image abroad and promote anti-Republican propaganda. The Foreign Office sent 15 Psyops specialists to the British Information Service in the United States, who, in June 1981 received the help of 'two senior government officials . . . [who] . . . left for the US yesterday in a new attempt to halt the flow of IRA propaganda and to see that Britain's case gets a better hearing.'<sup>32</sup>

In the meantime, 50,000 copies of a report entitled *H-Block the Facts* were distributed to the press the world over, making H-Blocks sound like holiday camps.

But in spite of this effort, and the build-up of the formidable psychological warfare apparatus as visualized by Frank Kitson, international public opinion was for the first time, able to learn some of the facts, and to see the British presence in Ireland for what it was.

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## 4. The War of Intelligence Services

The British Intelligence community is known the world over as the 'Intelligence Service'. Even the *Great Soviet Encyclopedia* uses, in Russian phonetics, the English words. As the oldest of such organizations on the planet, it obviously underwent numerous changes before regrouping to become the three main agencies in charge of intelligence and counter-intelligence to-day. And, in the present century, one relevant factor influencing change has been the constant setbacks to British intelligence in Ireland.

In the age of computerization, 80% of intelligence stems from the systematic analysis of a huge mass of printed documentation; monitoring radio programmes world wide enables international economic and political developments to be assessed and analysed, and radar, satellite and other interception operations, (known as Elint, Electronic Intelligence) all contribute data for analysis. In a limited war, such as in Ireland, the use of *Elint* has become increasingly important, particularly in regard to special operations — whether or not involving electronic and other methods of surveillance — on the urban battlefield.

But in conflict involving guerrilla warfare, *Humint*, Human Intelligence is just as important, especially in a country with a strong oral tradition, close communities with large families, and constant reference to the previous generations that fought against the foreign oppressor.

The Security Service, commonly known as MI5, was founded in 1909 by Captain Vernon Kell, and is now under Home Office control. Technically in charge of counter-spying and much concerned with Soviet bloc intelligence, as the years went by, MI5 chiefs concentrated their attention on internal security which, they argued, was threatened as much by social conflicts on the mainland as by the Irish rebellion. Consequently, trade-unionists, Left-wingers within the Labour Party, Communists, members of the New Left, Scottish and Welsh nationalists, the Irish community in exile, students unions, foreign students who sought refuge in Britain, were recorded in the MI5 registry, which already by 1961, according to Chapman Pincher, included 2,000,000 name index cards. The extent to which anti-Communist paranoia seems to have spread within MI5 was well illustrated when, in July 1977 Harold Wilson let it be known that he feared he had been under MI5 surveillance, including the 'bugging' of his office, from 1969 to 1974. At the



time, MI5 was headed by Michael Bowen Hanley who, in 1978 was replaced by a former Ambassador to USSR, Sir Howard Frank Trayton Smith. Howard Smith possessed two special characteristics: first, he was on the Retired List of the Foreign Office while being attached to MI5, which seems very unlikely except that it indicated the Labour Party's distrust of MI5; and secondly, officially 'UK Representative to Northern Ireland' from 1971 to the Fall of the Stormont Parliament in March 1972, he was in effect the intelligence co-ordinator there.

Expanded since 1979, from 1 to 4 Curzon Street, London, the MI5 headquarters house the three main departments of the security service:

1) Headquarters staff responsible for the collation, recording and assessment of intelligence; 2) the field force of under-cover agents and those engaged on surveillance duties; 3) the scientific and technical branch. Under the Director-General there are at least six departmental heads: the Directors of the Counter-espionage Branch, the Protective Security Branch, the Counter-sabotage Branch, the Counter-subversion branch, the Scientific and Support Services Branch, and a Director for the Registry and Administration. The first four of these Branches are divided into Sections: then Sub-Sections [or 'desks' as they are commonly referred to]. For example, one section, 'K.9' is reportedly concerned with investigating defectors (including resignations) from MI5.<sup>1</sup>

In 1980, MI5 numbered around 2,000 people.

Until 1949, when the Republic of Ireland was declared, MI5 was officially in charge of Southern Ireland, although during World War II SIS personnel were also posted there. Its prerogatives extended to Northern Ireland, and, in the IRA Border Campaign which started in 1956, as Roger Hollis, the controversial head of MI5 took over, the counter-spies played a particular role. Graham Mitchell, Deputy Director-General and Director of Counter-espionage supervised the operations, whilst an MI5 senior officer was seconded to the RUC Special Branch to organize the 1957 anti-IRA raids. According to the *Sunday Times* 'Insight Team', 'he got the files on IRA men into superlative order, so that the 1956-7 internment round-up really did net the IRA activists'. Since the beginning of the latest phase of the conflict, an MI5 team has been attached to Lisburn Barracks, whilst the overall intelligence co-ordinator was in turn an MI5 or SIS senior officer. The latter's presence always created problems because MI5 felt that only *they* should act within the United Kingdom, while SIS countered that as the situation also involved a foreign country, the Republic of Ireland, their presence was unavoidable. In 1970, however, MI5 has only two agents in Northern Ireland.

It was obvious that with the internationalization of the conflict and the IRA's support from exiled communities the SIS would be called upon to contribute their expertise. The SIS, otherwise known as MI6, and sometimes as DI6, based in Century House, Westminster Bridge Road, London, was, in 1980, directed by Arthur Temple Franks and since 1982 by Colin Figures.

Since the 1920s, it has played a considerable role in monitoring the IRA, attempting to organize covert operations against the Republican Movement, and also against Southern Irish politicians. Thus, Britain's Dublin embassy was always saturated with SIS operatives, under the customary cover of counsellor, 1st, 2nd and 3rd secretaries and various attachés. But even ambassadors had important intelligence functions. As the *Irish Press* editor, Tim Pat Coogan put it:

An obvious centre of activity was, and is, the embassy. Sir John Peck, who had the doubtful privilege of having his embassy turned down after Bloody Sunday, had an intelligence background in the Middle East – though neither he nor the Irish saw any reason why this should prevent him settling down subsequently to an enjoyable retirement in Dublin. A successor of his, Christopher Ewart-Biggs, was of course, apparently struck down because of intelligence considerations.<sup>2</sup>

In 1970, Peck's predecessor, Andrew Gilchrist, was a former Major in the SOE-sponsored F136 in Asia, and in 1973 his successor, Arthur Galsworthy, a former Major in the Intelligence Corps.

Peter Carter, a counsellor in Dublin, was head of the SIS station from 1965 to 1968. In 1967, he supervised the Operation 'Fenian Gun Co Ltd', in Birr, County Offaly, a firm headed by a former British war-time agent named Kavanagh, in which three SIS men went undercover to monitor alleged IRA gun-running, which seemed to indicate that, between two IRA military campaigns, British intelligence still remained on stand-by. Incidentally, Carter was subsequently expelled from Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) 'for spying activities' in 1969, when he headed the 'residual staff of the British High Commission'.

Southern Ireland is an easy target for SIS activities because of the vast number of retired World War II military and intelligence personnel, the Anglo-Irish families and other British financial and industrial interests. Besides Republican activities, they also keep an eye on the Soviet embassy and various Socialist countries trade missions. Other targets are the small Communist Party of Ireland, various Arab cultural centres, any institution which may be seen as a potential intermediary between the IRA and the outside world, especially the Eastern European and Middle Eastern countries. Since the 1970s SIS stations around the world, in particular in America, Australia, Canada, Europe and The Middle East, have been on alert for any logistical support, financial or otherwise, that might be provided for the Irish Republican Movement. Another mission of importance together with the Psyops sections of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office is geared towards counteracting the political influence of Irish Republicans abroad.

The third section of the British Intelligence community is the Defence Intelligence Staff (DIS), headed, since the beginning of 1979, by Air Marshal Sir John Aiken, but because of his fragile health it seems, since January 1981, to be actually directed by his Deputy Chief of Defence Staff (Intelligence), Lieutenant-General James Glover. Frank Kitson was another candidate

for the No.2 position at the time, but Jim Glover had been Commanding Officer of the Land Forces in Northern Ireland prior to this appointment, and more importantly, until 1979, Brigadier on the General Staff (Intelligence) in the DIS. In this position he had written a comprehensive intelligence memorandum on the IRA, entitled 'Northern Ireland: Future Terrorist Trends', in which he had expressed the opinion that the British Army could not defeat the IRA within the near future. This document was leaked to press and is published as an appendix to this book.

The DIS is divided into various sections in accordance with its services. The most important is Army Intelligence or the Intelligence Corps, from which Field Intelligence Officers are drawn and attached to all regiments stationed in Northern Ireland. Each visiting battalion includes an intelligence section with three officers, six NCOs and 25 ORs (ordinary ranks). Each Brigade Area (three in all) has a permanent intelligence unit of 20 men headed by a major. Military Intelligence officers are based in Castelreagh RUC station whose role as a 'Special Military Intelligence Unit' headed, since February 1982 by Lieutenant-Colonel A. Whipp is to second the RUC Special Branch in prisoners' interrogation. The overall intelligence effort on the military level is co-ordinated by the Lisburn Barracks Intelligence Headquarters of about 60 men, under a lieutenant-colonel or a colonel drawn from DIS; in 1981 it was Colonel Richard Lea, a former Commanding Officer of the 21 SAS regiment.

The other Defence Intelligence Staff directorates include 'Service Intelligence', headed by Air Vice-Marshal M.J. Armitage, who among other duties supervises the activities of service attachés, who perform open spying activities. In Dublin, Brigadier F.G. MacMullen, the military attaché, had stayed in Ireland for the unusually long period of ten years before being replaced by Brigadier W.P.W. Robertson. The main building of the MoD also houses the 'Management and Support of Intelligence' section of the DIS, led by Rear-Admiral John Robertson; a 'Scientific and Technical Intelligence' section, headed by Dr Frederick Johnson; and an 'Economic Intelligence' Department headed, since 1970, by another civilian, Walter Rudkin.

Thus, the DIS is by far the largest single intelligence agency with 90 departments, which includes specialized sections such as the 'Submarine Periscope Photographic Branch' or the 'Air Photographic Interpretation Branch'. Coupled with SAS elements either seconded to DIS or acting as an executive arm of SIS, they play a prominent role in the war waged on Northern Ireland.

The general military intelligence effort in Northern Ireland is co-ordinated with MI5 and SIS work at several levels, as instigated by Kitson. The SIS, has about 20 operatives, and one of its officers is attached to the Lisburn Army headquarters, while a senior officer, under the cover of the Political Secretariat, is based in Stormont Castle, and, in 1980 was the Chief of Intelligence, Northern Ireland, David Wyatt. Yet in the past, MI5 people such as Dennis Payne have fulfilled this role. With the intention of easing relations between the army — then led by General Creasy — and the RUC, and also between

MI5 and SIS, the position of overall Co-ordinator of Security was created in 1979 and held by the former SIS director, Maurice Oldfield. He was replaced, in May 1980, by a former co-ordinator of intelligence in the Cabinet Office, Sir Francis Brooks Richards. Prior to the fall of Stormont, however, Security Co-ordinators were senior SIS or Foreign Office personnel transferred from the Foreign Office to the Northern Ireland Office ('seconded to NIO') as UK representatives to Northern Ireland. First came Sir John Oliver Wright, who, from August 1969 to March 1970, was, among other things, engaged in negotiating the removal of Belfast Falls Road barricades, and the Labour Party's Northern Ireland reforms programme.

As the *New Statesman* put it, 'Sir Oliver Wright represented MI6 (SIS) as Political Adviser to the Northern Ireland Command.' As the IRA soon discovered, the cover for MI6 staff was the 'Political Secretariat'. This led to one of the less fortunate of bureaucratic acronyms, for Sir Oliver's first message from Downing Street began: 'Instruction; from Prime Minister: to Panic . . .'<sup>3</sup> Wright became later Ambassador to Germany in 1975. In March 1970, he was replaced by the late Ronald Burroughs, the son of a missionary in Tibet, whose obituary in *The Times* of May 1980, recalled that his position 'involved liaison on all aspects of security in the Province', (this was during a period that saw the growth of both IRAs). He dealt with 'security arrangements between London and Stormont, which culminated in the resignation of Major Chichester-Clark as Prime Minister, in March 1971.'<sup>4</sup> Howard Smith was, then, the last holder of the post, from 1971 to the introduction of Direct Rule in March 1972 — after the IRA had gone on the offensive, internment had been introduced and Paras had shot civilians dead on Derry's Bloody Sunday. The structure described earlier then came into being, with Frederick Allan Rowley — whom Maurice Oldfield named as one of his deputies in SIS two years before his retirement — as First Chief of Intelligence, until 1973. Obviously, the intelligence and security personnel in Northern Ireland, as in any other operational area, liaise constantly with the Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC). This Committee was headed by Sir Antony Acland, until autumn 1981 when he became Permanent Under-Secretary of State in the Foreign Office; his department is partly a cover for SIS. He was replaced after the Falklands invasion by Patrick Wright. At the same time, Antony Duff was co-ordinator of Intelligence and Security in the Prime Minister's office.

Under these circumstances why was this mammoth intelligence organization unable to crush the resistance of the Irish? Indeed, accustomed to more conventional intelligence operations, vis-à-vis the Soviet KGB for example, as in many cases in the past, British Intelligence found itself unable to combat an essentially popular movement, which by its very nature also has its ears and eyes in all social, political and national milieux and does not underestimate their enemy.

### The British Secret Service in Ireland

At the very beginning of the Irish war of independence, in 1919, when the

IRA really became organized, the British set up vast intelligence networks – sometimes operating in combination, sometimes separately – to track down the Irish Republican Army. In 1920, they included 10,000 men of the Royal Irish Constabulary, with their own contingent of security officers commissioned to collect information about suspects and their movements, and about people who were thought to be strangers in a particular area. To these, should be added a special unit from the Dublin Metropolitan Police, the 'G Division', which co-ordinated the work of approximately 1,000 agents. As Richard Deacon put it:

Just as it is today, these police services, separated and at times rival to the secret service, generally known as the Intelligence Service, of which one section operates from Dublin Castle, set up since the 17th Century had a dual aim: to unmask the plots organized by the Irish insurgents, and then watch closely the links between the Irish and the French intelligence, a problem on the minds of the British authorities for many years.<sup>5</sup>

While an integral part of the United Kingdom, Ireland, it seems, has always been seen as a foreign nation by the British governments, as all intelligence agencies, including those usually active abroad were operating there. By the end of the Crimean war, in 1855, the first military intelligence corps was born. By 1905, under the name of Department of Military Operations and Intelligence this was split into three sections which constituted the embryos of the present-day Intelligence Service. The Military Intelligence Department, established in 1919, organizes espionage and counter-espionage operations under the supervision of the War Office. But, Military Intelligence 6 (MI6/SIS) founded by 1911, loosened their links with the War Office and worked increasingly under the control of the Foreign Office, which provides finances, cover and political direction: Captain Mansfield Cumming, (known as 'C' was chief of MI6/SIS from 1911 to 1924. One of his achievements was the organization of the international network of cover for SIS chief intelligence officers as Passport Control Officers in British embassies; an arrangement that operated throughout the period between the two world wars. The third agency – MO5 in 1919, becoming MI5 by 1924 – whilst under the leadership of Captain Kell severed connections with the War Office. They were then to be responsible to the Home Office; to this day, however, 'attached to War Office' or 'attached to MoD' in *Who's Who* or *Kelly's Handbook*, is a euphemism for joining MI5. No powers of arrest were vested in MI5 – this was in the hands of the Special Branch. There had, indeed, been rivalry, about the distribution of power in security policy, between MI5 and Special Branch which, until its director, Basil Thompson, (who was very active against German espionage and Irish nationalists) was dismissed, when supervision for the Special Branch was returned to Scotland Yard. From then on, MI5 undertook the direction of surveillance operations against trade-unionists, socialists and foreigners, with prestige targets such as the Comunist International

and the Irish Republicans. In 1920, however, faced with the recently-born Irish Republican Army, MI5 and the Special Branch co-operated on the British mainland to crush the Irish offensive. The Special Branch had, in fact, been founded at the turn of the 19th Century, as the Special Irish Branch to combat the Fenian revolutionaries.

In Ireland itself, all the intelligence services were combined under the leadership of Brigadier-General Sir Ormonde de l'Epée Winter, whose official title was 'Deputy Chief of Police and Director of Intelligence, Ireland'.

Early in 1920, a professional soldier of the Blimp empire-building school was appointed Director of Intelligence for the Crown forces, [wrote James Gleeson]. He was Sir Ormonde Winter, a martinet, who was not prepared to stand any nonsense from the 'damned shiners', nor, for that matter, from any of the 'damned Irish'. He had had experience of intelligence work in India, and he quickly set about installing what he considered to be the normal measures and procedure. He classified the normal channels as: agents obtained by the local police; agents recruited in England and sent to Ireland; persons giving information when under arrest with a view to escape punishment; 'moutons' [stool-pigeons] placed in cells with the rebels; interrogation of prisoners; listening sets; censorship of letters of prisoners in gaol; Scotland Yard's CID for information about activities in England and elsewhere; captured documents; the Dublin District special military intelligence branch.

Naively, he explained afterwards, that the only channel that was at all successful was the 'captured document' one.<sup>6</sup>

The main historian of the British secret service, Richard Deacon, confirmed British intelligence's lack of efficiency when he said that 'the story of the secret service in Ireland in the immediate post-war period is one of almost constant failure, due to an irresponsible political leadership, to amateurish mistakes and a total lack of co-ordination between Dublin Castle and Whitehall.'<sup>7</sup> Above all, this failure was due to the fact that the secret service thought they were dealing with a small, fragmented movement, essentially interested in individual terrorism and secret plots, while in fact they met with a large popular movement, and a comparatively superior intelligence service: countless eyes and ears carefully following any move of the occupation forces.

In 1920, British intelligence was not able to finance the vast network of paid informers such as they had relied upon for centuries. They were infiltrated by IRA intelligence and lost many agents. The Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC) stations in the countryside were besieged and destroyed by the guerrilla forces. By the summer of 1920, the police were no longer in a position to screen the countryside in order to provide the British army with operational intelligence. Even worse, some members of the RIC were beginning to supply information to the IRA General Headquarters, and locally, to all Brigade Command Staff throughout the country. Michael Collins,

Adjutant-General of the IRA and their Director of Intelligence, simply had elite agents belonging to Dublin G-Division executed, and information from that quarter thus became scarce.

On the British Army side, like to-day, each regiment had an Intelligence Officer seconded to it, and theoretically backed-up by police forces. In practice, unlike the locally recruited RIC, they had little knowledge of Irish topography, the psychology of the men and women they fought, their methods of organization, and even less the faces of the men they were to track down.

A people's army, the IRA, were alert to what was happening on every street corner, pub, church or market-place, deep inside the civil service, newspapers offices etc. The Sinn Féiners had recruited numerous civil servants within the British administration; confidential documents vanished. Some members of the British secret service had joined the IRA; Mick Collins had at least one top intelligence source, a 'mole' known only to him, inside Dublin Castle, the British HQ; another famous intelligencer, Erskine Childers — whose son later became President of the Irish Republic — had served in Naval Intelligence before joining the IRA, but in spite of his execution by the Free State forces during the Civil War, there had been some doubt about his real allegiance.

French journalist and novelist, Joseph Kessel, started his career by reporting on Irish affairs during the Independence War. In the first volume of his autobiography, *Le Temps de l'Espérance*, he recalled that:

Sinn Féin has set up one of the best intelligence services in the world. The network has maintained its base at the heart of the enemy country, in London, where thousands of Irish people live.

How many times has the British government sent agents, informers, agents provocateurs under all kinds of disguises? They always failed. They have been almost immediately unmasked.<sup>8</sup>

The repeated failure of traditional intelligence methods against the Irish led to reorganization. Firstly, the 2,300 Black-and-Tans and 1,500 Auxiliaries — among whom were numerous criminal elements recently demobbed after the first world war — who were sent to Ireland in August 1920 created terror there. The 'Auxies' had their own intelligence service. In addition, Mansfield Cumming, (head of SIS since 1911) and Special Branch Director Basil Thompson, set up special units to combat the Republicans and seek information on them. Some of these acted autonomously, and were similar to the Military Reconnaissance Force of 1971. From within Auxiliary units what came to be known as 'Murder Gangs' were set up; their prime objective was to fight back Collins' own special unit, known as 'The Squad'. In addition, were the 'Permanent Raiders', drawn from these British army officer corps who had just returned from the campaign launched against the young Soviet Republic. Meanwhile the 'Anti-Sinn Féin Societies' were counter-gangs meant to 'execute two Sinn Féiners for each soldier of the Crown killed'.

By mid-1920, the intelligence service had been reshuffled and took part in assassinations staged to discredit the IRA. In August, the British Secretary of State in Ireland, Sir Hamar Greenwood, said in the Commons, that a real haemorrhage had struck the Royal Irish Constabulary, in that a great many of its numbers, members went over to the IRA with information and weaponry. Piaras Beaslai, a member of the IRA GHQ from 1918 to the truce of 1921, and Publicity Director of the revolutionary army later remembered:

The British government had now flooded Dublin with Intelligence Officers who moved among the people in the guise of civilians. These men were for the most part English, and lacked the necessary knowledge of Ireland and Irish conditions to do their work effectively, and reports sent in by them and intercepted by us showed a ludicrous ignorance of what it was their business to know. Some Secret Service men wisely drew their money and did nothing. One of these actually stayed in Vaughan's Hotel, at a time when it was frequented daily by Collins and other heads of the [Republican] Army, and even met and conversed with some of them, without showing any curiosity as to who or what they were. Others, however, were very active, and even, in a few cases dangerous. One English agent named Jameson, who had previously posed in labour circles in England as a 'red' revolutionary, came to Ireland, and actually got in touch with Collins, and at first even won his confidence. This man was ultimately unmasked, and met the fate of a spy. After his death the English authorities frankly admitted that he was a Secret Service agent, an admission which caused much indignation in English labour circles, where he had acted the part of an agent provocateur.<sup>9</sup>

### The 'Cairo Gang' and Bloody Sunday

The failures of the intelligence service thus called for new initiatives. In Ireland, by the end of 1920, two rival governments opposed one another. The British administration, in spite of their militias and their regular army, felt the growing influence of the underground Republican Parliament, *Dail Éireann*, and its army, the IRA. The 'Cairo Gang' — which Collins' men used to call 'The Particular Ones' — was, therefore, given the task of physically eliminating the leading Irish Republicans. They were under-cover agents recruited from the Colonial Services, in particular from Egypt, hence their name, although some were former soldiers from the Russian campaign, where British Intelligence had attempted to assassinate Bolshevik leaders, including Lenin himself.

In September and October 1920, under assumed names, independently, sometimes with their wives, these Military Intelligence men slipped into Dublin. They rented flats in Mount Street or Baggott Street, or simply settled down in luxurious hotels, such as the Shelbourne or the Gresham.

Usually under the guise of salesmen they were able to melt into the population, regrouping in small units as their given mission – the assassination of Republicans – needed. They had no direct connection with Dublin Castle, but liaised directly with Whitehall, sending in their coded reports and receiving orders. Their controller was none other than the Chief of British Combined Intelligence Services in Ireland, Brigadier General Ormonde Winter. The group leaders were known as Bennett and Aimes, while the Chief Intelligence Officer was Lieutenant-Colonel D.L. MacLean, formerly from the Rifle Brigade. Their English accents did not help these agents, so several Irishmen were drawn into the operation. Another key agent was Major G.O.S. Smyth, who volunteered for intelligence work in Ireland; he had learnt in Cairo, that his brother, Colonel G.I.B.F. Smyth, RIC Divisional Commissioner in Munster, had been killed by the IRA in July 1920.

In October 1920, the Cairo Gang assassinated 17 members or supporters of the Republican Movement. Numerous clues led Collins to think that the British secret service were mounting their murder campaign to disrupt the political-military Republican machine. Collins usual sources of information within Dublin Castle, Eamonn Broy and David Nelligan, for once found themselves unable to supply any detailed information about the murder gang. (Collins had planted 'moles' in the very heart of the enemy apparatus, for instance, Mrs Frances Brady-Cooney, who died in 1977, had worked at the War Office in London, and was working for the IRA, but she seemed unable to provide any clue in this case either.)

Yet, even facing independent units, IRA Intelligence was far too wide to remain checkmated; Dublin was enveloped in their net. As early as 1919, Collins had founded a regular Intelligence Department. Liam Tobin was made Chief Intelligence Officer and worked with remarkably efficient officers who had undergone on-the-spot training, such as Tom Cullen and Frank Thornton.

In opposition to the variations of British intelligence was the IRA Intelligence system [directed by] Michael Collins. Each Brigade had its own Intelligence Officers who could make use of copious local information. At IRA Intelligence headquarters there was no interlapping and no red tape. Information passed to and fro from the outside areas to Dublin and from Dublin throughout Ireland, but the effectiveness of the system was naturally dependent on its thorough organization in any given brigade area. Indeed, every member of the IRA was an unofficial intelligence agent.<sup>10</sup>

In July 1919, a year before the introduction of the Cairo Gang, the IRA had formed a group called 'The Squad', under the aegis of the Intelligence Department but acting autonomously and in charge of the execution of British agents, informers and *agents provocateurs*. Their activities have been well illustrated in literature by Liam O'Flaherty's *The Informer*. Twelve men, commonly called 'The Twelve Apostles' were led by Commandant Michael McDonnell, seconded by Pat Daly, who later succeeded him. Michael Tobin

directly supervised this ruthless commando. It was a sign of the IRA strength that Tobin's HQ was in Crowe Street, only a few hundred yards from the gates of the Castle, the nerve-centre of British occupation in Ireland. The Republican special service had totally disorganized British intelligence, especially the G-Division so feared and hated by the Dublin people. Piaras Beaslai recalled the circumstances under which the IRA expanded their Intelligence Department.

A good Intelligence Officer is born, not made, but even the man with a great deal of natural instinct for detective work requires to be taught a great deal of the technique of the business.

The knowledge of exactly what information is required, and how to set about obtaining it, the skill in worming information from confiding enemies, the power to perceive the importance of seemingly trivial and irrelevant matters – these were only a portion of the qualifications required.

Office work was almost as important as outside work. The co-ordination of the information obtained, the systematic and carefully planned filing of information, documents, photographs, the accumulation of a mass of information, readily accessible when required, with regard to any person or thing, which was likely to be of value to the IRA in their struggle with their enemies – this indoor work was as essential in its way as the more picturesque work out of doors.

In July, 1919, 'The Squad' was formed, a body that played a big part in the subsequent fighting in Dublin. The Squad consisted of a small band of Volunteers attached to the Intelligence Department, specially selected for dangerous and difficult jobs. The first commanding officer was Michael McDonnell. The second in command was Patrick Daly, who afterwards succeeded him as 'O.C.'

The activities of the Intelligence Department continued to expand. The keys to police, official and military cipher codes were obtained, and gradually a system was established by which English official messages were tapped at various postal centres and decoded. Copies of the necessary codes were sent to Intelligence officers in the country to enable them to deal at once with matters urgently concerning their own units.

By the end of 1920, Battalion Intelligence Officers were appointed in every active area in Ireland. These reported to their Brigade Intelligence Officer who, in turn, reported to Intelligence Headquarters in Dublin, the letters and reports being, of course, conveyed by 'secret post'. Michael Collins was in regular communication with every active Brigade Intelligence Officer in Ireland, and his files show in what an elaborate manner he entered into every detail of their work.<sup>11</sup>

It should also be noted that in Britain, an important communications network led by Sam Maguire continuously sent intelligence to the IRA, as well as the United States.

So inevitably, at the end of 1920, bits of information about the Cairo Gang were assembled. The first tip-off came to the IRA GHQ one morning in November: a Patrick MacMahon, who had been drinking heavily, had boasted in front of a girl who was a Loyalist, that he belonged to His Majesty's Secret Service and had come to Dublin to hunt down the IRA. MacMahon, whose real name was Lieutenant Angliss, had been in the expeditionary force in Soviet Russia, and now lived in Lower Mount Street, Dublin. He was the first link of the chain, and IRA surveillance of him led them to a series of British agents. Collins short-listed 25 of them, and suggested to GHQ, led by Cathal Brugha, that they should be executed. Due to lack of confirmation of their real position ten names were struck off, the others were sentenced to death. On 20 November 1920, the Intelligence Department's 'Squad' put the final touch to the operation: the next day, Sunday 21st would be D-Day. One of Collins' moles in the Castle confirmed that the date was good, as all the intended victims should be at home. On that Sunday morning, around nine o'clock, eight hit-teams burst into the hotel rooms and lodgings of the British agents: 14 were executed.

British forces reacted in a less selective way, when, in reprisal, during the same afternoon they shot dead people attending a football match in Croke Park. The day entered memory as Bloody Sunday, but for the rest of the Independence War, the British intelligence network had been wiped out.

There was an epilogue to this story. Two years later, as Civil War broke out as a result of the Anglo-Irish Treaty, Michael Collins had become Commander-in-Chief of the newly born Free State forces. Unlike some of his government colleagues, he attempted to negotiate a truce with his former comrades of the IRA, now outlawed and hunted down as 'Irregulars' or 'Die-Hards'. One such initiative led him to his native County Cork, where he was ambushed on 22 August 1922, and killed with a shot in the head, by — it was said — a unit of the IRA. But considerable controversy over contradictions in the testimonies of witnesses followed, and many people thought British Intelligence had been responsible. Disturbing facts included the escort, mainly drawn from ex-British soldiers, and the exact role of his aide-de-camp, Major-General Emmett Dalton who left the Free State army after Collins' death, and having previously been in the British Army rejoined it on the side of Military Intelligence in World War II. Was Collins murdered by British Intelligence, as a recent, fine work of investigation by John Feehan, *The Shooting of Michael Collins: murder or accident?* strongly suggests? If so, it was doubtless designed as much to avenge the Cairo gang as to prevent a reconciliation, as Collins was flirting with the idea of amalgamating the IRA and the Free State troops to move on and take over the North.

### Northern Ireland: The Search for Intelligence

In 1969, in Northern Ireland, the close-knit British secret service found themselves in profound disarray. Like Leprechauns, IRA units sprang from

nowhere. British information was terribly out-dated: at times as far back as the 1920s. Republicans who had taken part in the IRA campaigns in the late 1930s, and late 1950s had their names on the card index system, but that was about as far as it went. Many were much too old to engage in armed activities, although they could talk for hours of their early adventures. Moreover, the RUC intelligence was full of biased information, gathered in great haste in a most unprofessional way, just in time for the usual offensive measure introduced in every anti-IRA campaign: internment without trial.

The RUC Special Branch and the Director of Military Intelligence in Lisburn, had short-listed potential targets as early as March-April 1970, and could not have known much about the split in the Republican Movement and the differences between Provisionals and Officials, since even Republican supporters were not too sure. Who was in which organization? How did their respective command structures work? What of the organizations' charters? What was the exact relationship between Sinn Féin and the IRA, if any? Intelligence Officers read anything they could find about Ireland and the IRA, in particular Tim Pat Coogan's *The IRA* and J. Bowyer Bell's *The Secret Army*, as well as Intelligence Summaries (Intsums.) on the previous 1956-62 Border Campaign. A couple of intelligence officers got on with crash courses in Gaelic, for which Scottish officers would possibly have been better prepared.

In general terms, British Intelligence surmised that they would find Official IRA cadres inside the Northern Irish Civil Rights Association (NICRA), and Provisionals among those veterans of the previous campaigns who had been rejecting the ten-year evolution towards Marxism and electoralism on the part of the majority leadership within the IRA. This was not totally untrue, but did not compensate for the dearth of records for the young recruits. And, as usual, conspiracy theorists prevailed, trying to locate a foreign hand emerging from the direction of the Soviet bloc, in an insurgency situation which owed its existence to the social conditions, the denial of human rights, and the unsolved national question in Ireland. As experience was gained, Military Intelligence and the SIS analysed bank accounts, Republican contacts with international national liberation movements, family relationships, political and social conditions of the Nationalist community, as well as their 'cousins' in the South. Despite such activities, it took Military Intelligence five months to learn, for instance that in March 1971 Joe Cahill had become Provisional IRA Belfast Brigade Officer-in-Command, following the arrest of Billy McKee. In April 1971, a 'joint internment working party' was set up by the RUC Special Branch and Military Intelligence.

Filling the gaps was difficult. In the new housing estates — such as Ballymurphy and Andersonstown, both Provisional strongholds — the police had almost no informers, and the Army had found it hard to set up an intelligence network. Although in the end relied it (and still relies) upon two MI5 men imported for the task, its intelligence remained an odd mixture of low-grade observations by soldiers on the



streets — which houses were frequented in a locality, for instance — plus information from two sources close to the top Provisional leadership which were useless except as the broadest strategic outline. On middle-grade, tactical intelligence — operational personnel, bombing targets and the like — the Army was poverty-stricken. And while the RUC Special Branch had been knocked into fairly good shape by Scotland Yard men in 1970, it was still feeling its way . . . .

Much of the working party's time was spent sorting through thousands of photographs taken by Army cameramen at riots, funerals, demonstrations and meetings, and comparing the participants with pictures on RUC police files. (Most of the work was done at the RUC headquarters in east Belfast.) 'The sort of thing that used to happen', an Army man explained 'was that we would pick up some new name' or address. And the RUC would say: 'Oh, he drinks with So-and-So; try him. Or, last time round, that house was used by So-and-So'.<sup>13</sup>

Kitson, borne upon the Conservative Party electoral wave, came to bring this anarchy back into proper order. He wanted to introduce computers, but this dream was realized only six years later. Nonetheless, he supervised the centralization of a vast data bank — in small cardboard files. Intelligence Corps officers and NCOs worked hard on photographic archives, analyses of prisoners' interrogations, and IRA charters. The Republican press, *The United Irishman*, *An Phoblacht*, *Republican News*, were carefully read, a true mine of information; careful study of the semantics of the articles, the 'uncoding' of the author's pseudonyms, the translation of articles written in Gaelic, the comparative studies of obituaries gave an overall idea of political relationships within each movement. For instance, the speech delivered by Seán Garland of the Official IRA, in 1972, at the annual Wolfe Tone commemoration at Bodinstown, revealed the precarious equilibrium achieved between two tendencies within the Official IRA Army Council, one favouring a ceasefire, the other an alliance with the Provos. The speech, on 'The building of a revolutionary party' had indeed been written by Seán Garland and Seamus Costello, who, opposed to the truce, founded a more radical movement two years later.

Yet 'contact information' was 'irreplaceable'. Kitson plunged his MRF units into the ghettos, whether disguised as ice-cream salesmen or under the cover of the massage parlours, but also, Field Intelligence Officers screened Nationalist ghettos with ordinary patrols, going from pub to pub to stare at local customers. Added to *Humint*, technical surveillance, phone-tapping, the use of helicopters and video-cameras, then computers revolutionized operational intelligence in a counter-insurgency context. The relationship between the quality of information and the speed of access to it was able to be better co-ordinated. For instance, by 1973, finger-prints on captured weapons were systematically analysed and filed. Under the aegis of Colonel George Styles, in 1974, the Army developed a Bomb Intelligence Unit designed to study the make-up of bombs, the chemical composition of the

explosive, the nature of the detonators, etc., and thus to determine the origins of the bomb, or according to Colonel Styles' phrase, the 'signature'. As a bomb intelligence officer in Northern Ireland put it:

If five different men are given the same materials and the same detailed instructions to make a bomb, then each bomb will be different. Some men will crimp a wire, others will twist it, other men will use different techniques for doing the same job and when it comes to terrorist bombs the situation is the same. We can tell if a bomb which turned up in Londonderry has been made by the same man who made one which was used in an attack in Belfast.<sup>14</sup>

This section was later renamed Weapons Intelligence Unit and, based in Lisburn, studied the precise use, the origins, and the transfer, of the weapons found in possession of Republicans and Loyalists.

Since 1970, as we have seen, the Intelligence Corps based in Lisburn trebled in size, mostly to feed the computers introduced in 1976 with data relative to the IRA, but also the whole nationalist population. This is one of the reasons which led the IRA to restructure itself in 1977-78 along the Algerian FLN model, with small cells rather than the old local structures (battalions, companies, sections, etc) which, if they provided a closer relationship with the population, were open to large-scale raids and dismantling of units.

As early as 1970, Kitson had figured out the destruction of the three battalions of the Provisional Belfast Brigade in the order 1-3-2. That is to say, the 1st Battalion which covered Andersonstown was badly hit; then the 3rd Battalion covering enclaves such as New Lodge, which for a short period in 1974 was leaderless; the 2nd Battalion was never dismantled. But around 1974-75, it became clear that British Intelligence had made inroads inside the Belfast command structure of the IRA, in at least one case.

But what was true of the IRA in the 1920s proved to be correct to the present day. The war of wits, the battle between the British and the Republican intelligence, had increased in sophistication on both sides. Also, as the British had demonstrated their ability to reshuffle their intelligence, they came up against total reorganization on the part of the IRA, which had also undergone a process of constant politicization. The standard IRA Volunteer was no more a romantic young fellow who joined the 'Old Belfast Brigade', as a reaction to the introduction of the British army in his/her ghetto, but someone with long-term political ideals and who realized that the war would be protracted. Even the British were aware of this, as the internal memo, Document No.37, written in 1978 by Military Intelligence Brigadier Glover, (published here as appendix), clearly witnessed.

### The Littlejohn Saga

Around midday, on 12 October, 1972, three men irrupted into the home of Noel Curran, the director of the Allied Irish Bank in Grafton Street, Dublin. His family were kept hostage whilst, under the threat of arms, Curran went

and opened his bank's vaults; £67,000 was stolen. At the time it was the most sensational robbery following a spate of such incidents, which the IRA called 'expropriations' to finance their war effort in the North. Oddly enough, the men involved had a distinct English accent and did not care about revealing their faces. They operated calmly, almost casually, as if nothing could happen to them. This hold-up crowned a series of similar unexplained incidents on the border, including an attack on two police stations in County Louth, on 22 September 1972, in the aftermath of the British Operation Motorman.

Both the Officials and the Provisional IRA denied any involvement in the matter and announced that they would investigate the incidents. After the Grafton Street raid, the Dublin police rapidly identified the three actors: two British brothers, Keith and Kenneth Littlejohn and Barney Mathers; in their flat in Dublin they also discovered, £11,000 from the robbery, five guns, and false beards. The Irish CID also found out that they were now living in a London flat, at the home of Robert Stockman. But their Scotland Yard colleagues did not seem too eager to proceed with their arrest, in spite of the pressure from Dublin. When at last the police burst into Stockman's home and arrested all those present, including Kenneth Littlejohn (but not, at that time, Keith) and his wife Christine, it came as a total surprise. Littlejohn claimed that it was 'Just an error!' He strongly urged Chief Detective Inspector John Parker to phone the man in charge of the Irish Desk at Special Branch, Inspector Cameron Sinclair.

Sinclair did not deny that he knew Littlejohn, but seemed to demonstrate no special interest in his arrest. That must have been the first hint for Littlejohn that he had been 'dropped'. Keith Littlejohn in turn was arrested, and as the two were in Brixton gaol within three weeks, Dublin made a representation to have them extradited. Their lawyers opposed it on the ground that their offences were of a political nature. By 20 December what became known as the Littlejohn saga began.

Two men had just been arrested in Dublin by the Irish Special Branch and charged with stealing State secrets: John Wyman and Patrick Crinnion. The following day, Peter Hughman, the Littlejohn's lawyer wrote to Lord Carrington, then Secretary of State for Defence, to announce that his clients had been charged for activities carried out in the capacity 'of British intelligence agents'. Moreover, Kenneth Littlejohn identified John Wyman, of Swan Walk, Chelsea, as 'Douglas Smythe' his SIS case officer.

Wyman, also known as Michael Teviott, was an important cog in the well-oiled machine of British Intelligence in Southern Ireland at a time when the Dublin administration did not want to be seen to collaborate openly with London against the IRA. Hence, the importance of the Irishman arrested with him the same day, Sergeant Patrick Crinnion, whom the Courts liked to describe as a 'filing clerk' in Dublin Castle. But in fact, he was a former correspondent for *The Observer*, recruited by the SIS, who became a double agent. He was appointed as assistant to the Chief of the Irish Special Branch, Superintendent John Fleming, in charge of the anti-subversive section C3,

which had access to all files and dossiers on the Irish Republican Movement. In fact, his chief's real allegiance had been questioned. So, besides seeking information about the IRA, the Wyman network's chief aim was to push Jack Lynch's government into full co-operation with London.

In this climate, more than a fortnight earlier, on 1 December, on the eve of a vote in the *Dail Eireann* on new, harsh legislation against Republicans — the Offences Against the State Amendment Act — two bombs shook Dublin. On Friday night, 1 December, two booby-trapped cars exploded at the heart of the City, in Sackville Place and Liberty Hall, the Trade-union house, killing two bus conductors and injuring 73 people. Less than an hour later, the exceptional legislation was voted through in the *Dail Eireann*.

### The Wyman Network

The information which subsequently filtered through made it possible to piece together the jig-saw puzzle that the then Director of SIS, Sir John Rennie, had contrived. Neil Blaney, TD, and former Minister gave his impression about the bomb blasts: 'The timing of the explosions on the night of the *Dail* debate is now too much of a coincidence. The whole thing was part of a British plot to discredit the IRA.' Seán MacBride, the Nobel Peace Prize winner and leader of Amnesty International, echoed this sentiment:

Many of us are worried at the lack of explanation of events here. Bombs in Dublin and other activities might be directed from Britain. [As for] the explosion at Liberty Hall — I cannot conceive that anybody would want to destroy Liberty Hall, but that it was engineered by the British secret service to force the government to take action against the IRA.

More than six months later, on 21 August 1973, the *Dublin Evening Herald* asserted that:

A full dossier, compiled by the Special Branch in Dublin Castle, has been handed to the Government. It contains information that two of four men working under the code names of Fleming and Thompson, who stayed in the Belgravia Hotel in Belfast, were, in fact, members of the Special Air Services section of the British Army.

From whence they drove down to Dublin with the two booby-trapped cars to place them strategically at the city centre some hours before the Parliamentary debate.

An interesting incident supported this allegation. Some time before the blasts, an Englishman called a taxi in the city centre and asked to be driven to Enniskillen in the North, whatever the fee. But in Enniskillen the man refused to pay; instead he produced a gun and told the taxi-driver to return to Dublin. Terrified, the man rushed back to Dublin and told his story to

the Gardai. The policemen did not take him seriously, so finding Sinn Féin (the Officials) in the telephone directory, he called in Gardiner Place and asked to see someone in the IRA. Within hours, an Army Council man listened to him and took notes — just for the record.

Six months later, on 13 August 1973, and a week before the *Evening Herald* disclosures, our taxi-driver bumped into his dishonest client at the races in Dundalk. The latter was arrested, and found to be in possession of documentation showing he was a British Major Thompson — and a member of the Conservative Party. Major Thompson, the British officer who had fled from Dublin a couple of hours before the Dublin blasts, was released with excuses, on 16 August 1973, at 3am, and sent back to the North. If the full story were to be known, it would seem a classical example of a SAS active unit supplementing a SIS operation on the covert action side.

Meanwhile, Wyman was still in full control of his SIS network, of which the Littlejohns were only twin pawns on the Irish chess-board. He liaised frequently with an SIS officer, Andrew J. Johnstone, who worked undercover as 1st Secretary at the newly-built Merrion Road embassy. He had had an active career in trouble spots, Vietnam, Egypt, Aden, Gibraltar and Cambodia, and was erased from the Diplomatic Service List in 1973. The two men met in safe houses and at Johnstone's flats in Wellington Road, Dublin, and in Castlecomé, County Kildare, or else at the home of another member of the network, a former Colonel with the Royal Marines, named Simpson, who lived in Sandymount, Dublin. Significantly, the SIS Chief of Station in Dublin, John Williams, as 'Counsellor to the Embassy' was seconded the same year to the Northern Ireland Office, before ending his career working for the Department of Environment.

But, obviously the SIS network must have been much bigger, and as Kenneth Littlejohn liked to laugh: 'Watergate was a joke compared to our story; at least there no one was ever killed . . .'

### The Littlejohn Disclosures

Once the SIS had lost two key operators, Wyman and Crinnion, it was clear that they would rather exchange them against the Littlejohns. The two brothers soon understood that there would be a deal between Dublin and London, provided the whole scandal was hushed up; indeed in February 1974, Wyman and Crinnion were sentenced in camera to three months imprisonment, which they had already undergone. On the 13 February they were flown to London. The following month, the extradition order was granted and the Littlejohns were sent to Dublin on 19 March. Their trial was set for July the following year. Consequently, they decided to tell their story to the press: how they had been recruited by Her Majesty's Secret Service, to infiltrate, spy upon and discredit the Irish Republican Movement.

Kenneth Littlejohn was born in Scotland in 1941 and his family settled in Birmingham five years later. Leaving school, he was attracted by the Army.

He served two years in the Paratroopers before being court-martialled, for larceny, at Warwick in 1959 and subsequently dismissed with ignominy.

For small thefts and robberies, Kenneth travelled from gaol to gaol. His part in a £38,000 robbery from a Midland's firm on 27 August 1970, was more serious however. His particulars and identikit were distributed throughout the United Kingdom. Yet, at the end of 1970 he surfaced in Dublin and registered a women's underwear company — Whizz Kids Limited of London whose directors were Kenneth Austen, alias Littlejohn, and Robert Stockman. He settled down in Cahirciveen, County Kerry, in the South West, seeming to be affluent, although his economic venture soon failed. Leaving his debts behind him he reached Dublin, rubbing shoulders with the cream of the Anglo-Irish upper class. Significantly, by mid-1971, his name disappeared from the police wanted list in the *London Gazette*.

In the meantime, his younger brother Keith, born in 1946, introduced Kenneth to Pamela, Countess of Onslow, whom he had encountered when she was visiting the jail to which he had been sent for a theft in 1967. Keith was obviously on intimate terms with Lady Pamela, who belonged to an ancient Anglo-Irish family, the Dillons. Her husband, from whom, she was separated, ranked among the upper hierarchy of the Conservative Party and was no stranger to the Intelligence world. During the Second World War, the first training centre of the French Section of the Special Operations Executive (SOE) was housed in Wanborough Manor near Guildford, which has been in the Onslow family since the 17th Century.

The consequence of this meeting between Kenneth Littlejohn and the Countess of Onslow was that Lord Carrington authorized his Defence Under-Secretary, Geoffrey Johnson Smith to meet the two brothers in Lady Pamela's Kensington flat, at 12 Calcott Street. In the course of this initial meeting, Kenneth revealed that he possessed information about an assassination attempt which had been prepared against the Stormont interior minister, John Taylor. The Official IRA was planning the assassination under the supervision of one of their chief commanders in Belfast, Joe McCann. Taylor did, indeed, narrowly escape assassination in Armagh on 25 February 1972, while McCann was killed by the British Army in the Markets area of Belfast in April.

In view of the British government's position in the whole saga, it is worth remembering the statement issued, in August 1973 by the Ministry of Defence part of which read:

The facts are as follows: the younger Littlejohn mentioned to Lady Onslow, who had met him in her capacity as a prison visitor, that his brother had information about arms and sources of arms for the IRA which might be of great interest to Her Majesty's Government . . . In view of the information which the elder Littlejohn appeared to possess, Lord Carrington arranged that Mr Johnson Smith, who was then an Under-Secretary of State at the Ministry of Defence, should see Littlejohn in order to ascertain what kind of information he could, in

fact, pass on. This was the only occasion on which Mr Johnson Smith met any member of the Littlejohn family. Because of what he had to say, the elder Littlejohn was then put in touch with the appropriate authorities.<sup>15</sup>

The 'appropriate authorities' were naturally the SIS, and Kenneth met his controller 'Douglas Smythe' alias Wyman, and another Century House senior desk officer 'Oliver'. Both men were impressed by Littlejohn's information and asked him to attempt infiltration of Official IRA circles on the border. Although they belonged to SIS, they provided him with an emergency phone number, where he could reach Special Branch Officer Sinclair.

So early in 1972, the two brothers settled in 'Smuggler's Cottage', in Clogherhead, County Louth. It was not far from the border, especially from Dundalk, then nicknamed 'El Paso', because numerous Republicans came there for a rest. The Littlejohns' task was clearly defined: to strengthen their connection with the Official IRA, possibly infiltrate them and create incidents to generally discredit the Republican Movement.

Their initial contact was a man called Barney Mathers, who had been expelled from the IRA because he had engaged in criminal activities. It was difficult to assess to what extent the Littlejohns managed to penetrate the IRA's inner circles. Many witnesses have died, been gaoled or have emigrated. In a statement dated 11 August 1973, the Official IRA denied that the brothers had had any success.

Kenneth and Keith Littlejohn were not at any time members of the Irish Republican Army, although their activities in South Down, Armagh, and Louth were closely observed by members of the IRA engaged in intelligence and counter-intelligence operations.

Watch was maintained on the Littlejohns because of the nature of their contacts . . . British intelligence operations in Ireland have been stepped up since 1969. The Littlejohns operated on one level – the deliberate fomenting of conflict and situations which would lead to the discrediting of the IRA. They were agents provocateurs acting on instructions to create a situation in which increased repression would be accepted by the Irish people.

Yet in *The Plough*, a restricted publication of a dissenting group of the Officials, usually sold around South Down and South Armagh in the mid-1970s, had a different assessment of the nature of penetration operations by the Littlejohns, in connection with their investigations on Joe McCann's death:

Joe McCann was shot dead by British paratroopers in April 1972, as he walked unarmed through the Markets area of the city. His death was not only the work of those who fired the shots, but of those who had followed his movements and watched his every step.

At the time of his death, Joe travelled regularly from Belfast to Dublin and back. Often his route took him through Rostrevor, where he stayed many times overnight. At this same period in Rostrevor two other gentlemen were in residence. They were English and the local people knew them as Keith and Kenneth Austen.

The brothers spent their time in the company of a group of local criminals who were in the Official IRA at that time. Because of the ability to spend large sums of money, the brothers were very popular in the village and Kenneth even managed to have two steady girl friends from Rostrevor. The brothers had a connection with Rostrevor as a member of their family is married to the sister of one of the criminal gang. The local people did not question what the brothers were doing in the village. The local gang did not question them either as they simply regarded them as fellow criminals and the police records of both parties would bear this out.

A report on the activities of both groups was sent to IRA headquarters but no notice was taken of either the brothers or the local criminals who acted under the banner of the IRA.

It is not [definitely] known if Joe McCann actually came face to face with the brothers, but it is highly unlikely that they could have missed each other, as all three drank in the same pub at about the same time. There was certainly some contact between McCann and the Littlejohns because, as he claims himself, Kenneth had advance notice of the attempted assassination of John Taylor, which, he says, was carried out by McCann.

If McCann was involved in the Taylor affair it is highly unlikely that he told Kenneth Littlejohn, but it is quite probable that he did confide in some of the local 'Republicans' who often arranged military affairs for him. They, knowingly or unknowingly, passed this information on to the Littlejohns who in turn informed the British government.<sup>16</sup>

To pass on information 'to whom it may concern', the two brothers did not need to go very far: Lady Pamela owned a residence in Rostrevor, while her brother, Michael Eric Dillon, a former Major in the British army, lived in Termonfeckin, County Louth, at a short distance from Clogherhead, where the Littlejohns had initially settled down, and where McCann used to sojourn. Also they were in permanent contact with another member of the Wyman network, who often came down from the North, Captain G.C. Van Orden of the Intelligence Corps, said to be responsible for the kidnapping operation of a Republican, Sean Collins, in Dundalk, in order to have him interned in Long Kesh. Captain Van Orden, whom the Littlejohns named as 'Captain Van Dorn', was subsequently awarded an MBE for unspecified services in Northern Ireland, and since April 1982, attached as Staff Officer to the Intelligence Centre.

By mid-1972, John Wyman gave the two brothers a list of Republican leaders whom they were to murder, as Kenneth explained:

One of my main functions was to assassinate a man called Shamus [sic] Costello, who was the effective number one of the Officials, and who had been trained in Moscow. I was also to assassinate another high-up member in the Officials, Seán Patrick Garland, who I believe was trained in Cuba.<sup>17</sup>

Littlejohn then alleged that former Official, Barney Mathers, was allowed to escape arrest following a bank robbery 'simply so that he could lead me closer to Costello and Garland'.

In view of the subsequent murder of Seamus Costello in Dublin in October 1977, this confession is particularly sinister. British Intelligence at that time seemed to regard the Official IRA with particular interest, because they saw it as 'Marxist', and Littlejohn's disclosures were riddled with mentions of communist connections which simply did not exist, but certainly pleased his masters. He suggested that SIS felt that the Official IRA perspective was to bring about a Cuba on Britain's doorstep. Yet, following the Official IRA ceasefire in May 1972 – to which, incidentally McCann, who had been murdered a month earlier, had been hostile as was Seamus Costello who broke off with the Officials two years later – the Provos became the main target, beginning with their Chief-of-Staff:

I [Kenneth Littlejohn] was also told to assassinate MacStiofain in the summer of 1972, just after Operation Motorman. Keith and I waited in a car outside MacStiofain's house, which is at Navan, Co. Westmeath, but we never saw him. The instructions we were given were that MacStiofain's body was to be blown up so that it was completely unrecognizable. We should also take his car to Dublin airport, and thereafter money would be sent from Canada to his family so that it would appear that he had absconded with IRA funds. They would also spread rumours to this effect, which they had previously attempted to do so.<sup>18</sup>

Indeed, failing to assassinate the IRA leader, as we have seen, a major propaganda campaign was embarked on against Seán MacStiofain in the autumn of 1972.

Nonetheless, as early as March 1972, booby-trapped parcels – which resulted in slight injuries – were sent to his home, as well as to the Official Sinn Féin President, Tomas MacGiolla, the Official IRA Chief-of-Staff, Cathal Goulding, and Provisional Sinn Féin President, Ruairi O Bradaigh. The parcel which Cathal Goulding received had been sent through the Dunleer post office, County Lough, not far from the Littlejohn's Clogherhead headquarters.

But in the aftermath following the sentence of 20 and 15 years in gaol meted out to Kenneth and Keith respectively, they confessed to other misdeeds, including petrol-bomb attacks against Louth and Castlèbellingham, as well as a hold-up, in the same style as the one in Grafton Street, in Dungannon and Newry.

There were, however, epilogues to the Littlejohn saga. Firstly, under mysterious circumstances, Keith and Kenneth Littlejohn escaped from Mountjoy prison in March 1974. Some journalists saw the hand of the 23 SAS, who specialized in escapes; the younger brother injured his leg during the escape and was recaptured. But Kenneth made good his escape: he went to Amsterdam, and then to Birmingham, the city of his childhood, where he had good friends. He stayed there with a well-known police informer who was also a member of the National Front.

On 21 November 1974, bombs exploded in two Birmingham pubs killing 21 and injuring 162 people. These blasts, for which the IRA denied responsibility, led to the introduction of the Prevention of Terrorism Act. Several local Irish Republicans were arrested and convicted but they always claimed that they were innocent. Yet some days later, Scotland Yard arrested Littlejohn in Birmingham and sent him back to an Irish gaol. The man with whom he had been staying, police informer and NF member Thomas Watt, later became a key prosecution witness in the Birmingham bombs trial.

On 19 September 1981 Kenneth and Keith Littlejohn were released by the new Irish Conservative coalition government, headed by Garret Fitzgerald. They had served seven years in jail, and were released on humanitarian grounds, which was rather incongruous as the Republican hunger-strike in the North had just ended with ten prisoners dead. No humanitarian considerations were extended to their plea – not for release, but for simple human rights and political status. Were two British spies worth more than ten Republican prisoners? wondered people in Belfast and elsewhere.

Once out of gaol, Kenneth Littlejohn reiterated, in a BBC TV interview, that he had been working for British Intelligence, 'cleared' by the SIS to commit murder and rob banks in Ireland, and that London had 'let him down' over the incident which led to eight years imprisonment. 'It was the British that betrayed me. The agreement was that if I got back to England I would be safe; if I was caught in Ireland I was on my own. I got back to England.'<sup>19</sup>

But after all, the Littlejohns had nothing to complain about. They were to publish sensational memoirs; they were better off than some of their earlier targets or associates, who had since died violently. Take 'Oliver' for instance, who was obviously a superior to 'Douglas Smythe' who controlled the Littlejohns activities. As Kenneth recalled in his 1973 confessions:

Douglas and Oliver were fully aware that the IRA members with whom I had been staying had been committing a number of bank raids in the North and the South of Ireland. I was told to do nothing to stop this, partly because it might break my cover and also because they were happy for pressure to be brought to bear on the Lynch government to tighten up control on the IRA . . . I should mention that I met Douglas and Oliver at Mr Foggs, a bar in Regent Street off Piccadilly Circus, when I came to London, and on one occasion I also met Douglas at Buswells Hotel in Dublin . . .

My last meeting was with Oliver on 19 October [1972], early on the

same day I was arrested. I met him in Trafalgar Square that morning, underneath the statue of the Admiral.

Oliver had an ordnance survey map of County Down, on which Littlejohn was meant to pinpoint IRA arms dumps. The latter claimed that on this occasion, Oliver offered to pay him £5,000. Who was 'Oliver'? A man one would hardly expect in this story since he was officially posted to Europe: his name according to the Dublin magazine *Magill*, was Christopher Ewart-Biggs.

Intelligence services have leaked the word that in their encounters with the SIS, the Littlejohn brothers met Ewart-Biggs. At one such meeting, Lord Carrington is reported to have dropped in. Another meeting is alleged to have taken place at a favourite SIS watering hole. The Volunteer pub in London's Baker Street.<sup>20</sup>

### The Death of Christopher Ewart-Biggs

On Wednesday, 21 July 1976, the sun was already shining when, around 9.30am, Christopher Ewart-Biggs left his Glencairn mansion in his Jaguar, together with Brian Cubbon, a Permanent Under-Secretary of State, NIO, and the latters' secretary, Judith Cooke. The car was escorted by Irish Special Branch officers. Ewart-Biggs had arrived in Ireland, and presented his credentials to President O Dalaigh, only two weeks earlier. He was going to meet the Foreign Affairs Minister of the time, Garret Fitzgerald, with whom he hoped to discuss the release of nine SAS soldiers who had crossed the border in an anti-Republican covert tracking operation, and had been arrested by the Irish police. So they drove off from the Sandford residence to the British embassy, ten miles away. But within the first 200 yards a massive blast demolished the road under the car. A remote-controlled landmine had exploded, triggered off by a group which immediately drove off in a Cortina. Mr Cubbon was badly hurt, Judith Cooke died instantly, while Ewart-Biggs reached the hospital only to die.

Two months later, in an interview with the *Sunday Independent*, three IRA senior officers claimed that *they* had killed Ewart-Biggs.

We make no apology for it. He was sent here to co-ordinate British Intelligence activities, and he was assassinated because of that, and in retaliation for the murder of Peter Cleary in Crossmaglen, and for the activities of the SAS in South-Armagh.

They also stressed that they did not think Brian Cubbon would have been in the Ambassador's car: 'Actually we thought that the Six-County British Army Director of Intelligence would be present, but of course he wasn't.'

Obviously, political circles in Western Europe, especially the Irish and

British, were shattered. In France, where Ewart-Biggs had taken up his last ambassadorial posting, the myth that he was a liberal, a diplomat and a gentleman was echoed. The front page editorial in *Le Monde* stressed that:

Rarely had a diplomatic couple so well succeeded in Paris. Full of intelligence, attentive and charming, Christopher and Jane Ewart-Biggs had left in France many friends who are sorry and appalled by this horrific death. Need we add that the new ambassador was a liberal and the contrary of a colonialist and imperialist mind, and that he had taken on his new position with the hope to contribute towards a solution to the Irish tragedy.<sup>21</sup>

If such was the case, it would be yet another story of someone who was liberal and anti-colonialist towards all countries except Ireland. His 'contribution to a solution to the Irish tragedy' started with the outrageous defence of the captured SAS soldiers who, within the framework of Special Operations, had murdered so many civilians.

Born in 1921, Christopher Ewart-Biggs was educated at Oxford, and served in the army in the Middle East, a region in which he maintained a keen interest, but where he lost his right eye at the battle of El Alamein, hence the distinctive black eye-shade. He ended the war as an Arab Affairs Officer in 1945 and a Lieutenant-Colonel and Deputy Chief secretary. After a spell in the British administration in Cyrenacia, he finally joined the Foreign Office in 1949. The following year, he attended courses at the Middle East Centre for Arab Studies (MECAS), which, until it moved back to England in 1979, had, since 1947, been in the small hill village of Chemlane, set amid olive groves, 15 miles from Beirut. Under control of the Foreign Office, it did not produce only the 'ABCD diplomats', the men who rotate round Amman-Beirut-Cairo and Damascus; nor was it called the 'British spy-school' because the SIS officer working for the Soviets, George Blake, was attached to MECAS in 1960, or because at about the same time, Kim Philby used to drop in to hear a lecture or have a few drinks. The Lebanese left-wing leader Kamal Joublatt, had even called for its closure some weeks before his death. In fact:

MECAS has always been financed and run by the Foreign Office, and a good proportion of its students have been destined for the Foreign, Consular and Colonial services, as well as for work with the Secret Service and Military Intelligence Departments.<sup>22</sup>

Ewart-Biggs' first posting was as Political Officer in Qatar, and he pursued his Middle East specialization, even writing two novels on the subject, under the pseudonym of Charles Elliott. At a press conference in Dublin, the day before his death, he stated he had been threatened by the OAS in 1961, when he was Consul in Algiers. This was so, the French counter-intelligence *Direction de Surveillance du Territoire* (DST) had been able to ascertain that British



Intelligence was spying on the French army and supporting the Algerian National Liberation Front. In September 1961, some policemen leaked the information to the OAS, who murdered two of Ewart-Biggs associates. It was not in the cause of anti-colonialism, but in defence of British interests against the French: In Ireland, Ewart-Biggs found himself in the reverse position, fighting the IRA and receiving help from the Northern Irish OAS — the Loyalist para-militaries. No principles were involved. He had undergone a short spell in the Rome NATO Defence College prior to his Algerian mission, and from 1965 to 1969, he was head of the Permanent Under-Secretary of State for the Foreign Office's Department which, based at Century House, partly covers the SIS. This particular post involved liaison between the Foreign Office and the SIS. This explains why, as Chapman Pincher recalled, when the new Secretary of State for the Foreign Office in 1966, George Brown, made the unusual request to visit the SIS headquarters he was:

appalled to find that the man who called for him at his house in the cover car was the most recognizable Whitehall 'spook' — Foreign Office parlance for an Intelligence man. He was the late Christopher Ewart-Biggs, sadly assassinated later by the IRA, who wore a black patch over one eye.<sup>23</sup>

A Counsellor in the Brussels embassy (1969-71) and then ambassador in Paris up to 1976, he retained a senior regional responsibility for intelligence, coupled with ordinary diplomatic work.

When he died, the Foreign Office, with the help of international media attempted to cover up his long-standing intelligence career. But to no avail, never since 1920, had the IRA struck so precisely at the heart of the British secret service.

### Further Intelligence Losses

The friendship between Richard Sykes and Ewart-Biggs, went back to their school days. Consequently, Sykes had a particular interest in carrying out the enquiry on the late British ambassador's assassination, and was also engaged in intelligence to combat the IRA.

Yet, an ambassador to the Netherlands since 1977 he, in turn, was killed on 22 February 1979. Since the late 1930s, The Hague had been a regional SIS headquarters, and the following year the IRA claimed responsibility for this assassination too. The list published of those attending his memorial service included all top intelligence and security officers, among whom were SIS directors, John Rennie and Maurice Oldfield, MI5 director Howard Smith, and other security co-ordinators, such as Clive Rose, Antony Duff, and Francis Brooks-Richards. As the *Daily Telegraph* said on the day following his murder:

Sir Richard, who had been a diplomat in Cuba, Peking and Washington, was an acknowledged security expert. He was responsible for an internal

Foreign Office report on the safety of British diplomats following the killing in 1976 of the British ambassador to Eire, Mr Christopher Ewart-Biggs. At about 9am, yesterday Sir Richard was just about to step into his Rolls-Royce for the five-minute journey to the embassy when the two gunmen opened fire. He and his 19 year-old footman, Mr Karel Strub, were both hit in the head by bullets.<sup>24</sup>

When asked, 'Why did the IRA kill Sir Richard Sykes, the British ambassador to the Hague?', an IRA Army Council representative answered the Belfast journalist Ed Moloney:

We have carried out bombings and shootings in Germany over the last two years as well. Last Spring we executed Sir Richard Sykes. He was involved in intelligence gathering against our organization but he was also a leading propagandist in the same way as Peter Jay was in America. Sykes was also the man who conducted the investigation into our attack on the British ambassador to Dublin — Ewart-Biggs. Sykes was a very important person.<sup>25</sup>

Following his death a new SIS Regional Chief arrived in March as 'Counsellor' to The Hague Embassy. Roger Hervey had been previously 1st secretary to the Political Adviser, Singapore and Deputy Head of the Permanent Under-Secretary of State Department at the Foreign Office since 1976.

But the IRA never said whether or not they were responsible for a shooting incident in Brussels on the same day which resulted in the death of a Belgian banker, Mr Henri Michaud. The Belgian police thought he had been mistaken for the head of the UK permanent delegation to NATO, Sir John Killick, or his deputy, Paul Holmer, who both lived in the neighbourhood. Paul Holmer had been head of the Security Department to the Foreign Office, while Sir John Killick spent 'most of his time liaising with the US military and intelligence establishments.<sup>26</sup> With a long career in intelligence, going back to the wartime he was an Airborne Division Field Security Officer and, as Captain, commanded the 89 Paratrooper Security Section at Arnhem. He had earned the reputation as a tough man since 1971 when, four days after presenting his credentials as Ambassador to Moscow, 105 alleged Soviet intelligence agents were expelled from England. Significantly, later in 1979, in the aftermath of Lord Mountbatten's killing he declined the job of Security Co-ordinator in Northern Ireland, which went to Maurice Oldfield.

However, on 29 March, the main Brussels daily, *Le Soir*, published a story from the usually well-informed police specialist, René Haquin:

We have learnt that the Ambassador to the Hague, Sir Richard Sykes, had actively taken part in the dismantling of a Provisional IRA network in Ireland before being sent to The Hague. A terrorist who had been arrested in Ireland would have, to preserve himself, given indications

relating to IRA weapons supplies, in particular from Antwerp and Rotterdam. The arms smuggled for the IRA partly came from West Germany. It was due to this information that one of the Provisional IRA chiefs, Seamus Twomey, arrested and then freed by a commando using an helicopter, had been recaptured in 1977.

Twomey had been the brains behind arms supplies networks organized in Europe for the benefit of the IRA. In 1977, the Irish government requested that the British dismantle secondary supply networks reorganized in Europe. The man chosen to take on responsibility for this work was none other than the Ambassador Sir Richard Sykes, and the London government decided to second him with Mr Paul Holmer, who officially came to reinforce the British mission to NATO in Brussels. Mr Holmer, in particular, had been given the task of watching IRA supply lines from West Germany.

The special operations of both diplomats shed a strange light on the attacks in The Hague and Uccle (Brussels), although the police cannot state with certainty whether there is a link between them.<sup>27</sup>

The day after this article was published, Airey Neave, Conservative spokesman on Northern Ireland died when his car booby-trapped by the Irish National Liberation Army (INLA), exploded as he drove out from the House of Parliament garage. A wartime officer with MI9 and celebrated as a hero for his escape from Colditz, he also held strong anti-Republican views, which many observers understood to stem from an anti-Irish bias. A normal posting for him, with a Tory electoral victory, would have been Northern Ireland, yet it was revealed that he would have been selected as intelligence services co-ordinator.<sup>28</sup> It was later alleged by a former SIS operative, Lee Tracey, that a week before his death Airey Neave had been discussing plans for the assassination of Tony Benn and the setting up of an underground force of para-military opposition against a Labour victory. But it was Airey Neave who was assassinated; and a month later the Conservatives won the election, with, as Prime Minister, the woman whose campaign for election as Party Leader had been masterminded by Neave who headed her private office from 1975 to his death. No doubt, Margaret Thatcher was deeply affected.

The day following her election as Prime Minister she requested the directors of SIS and MI5, Arthur Franks and Howard Smith to brief her on the Intelligence situation. Apart from the Neave killing, unlike her Labour predecessors, she had always maintained an interest in intelligence matters. Indeed, Labour Prime Minister James Callaghan had allowed the then SIS director, Maurice Oldfield, to brief Mrs Thatcher when she and her Party formed the Opposition.

Both D-Gs [Director-generals] briefed the new Premier on their anti-terrorist operations. Mrs Thatcher learned, undoubtedly for the first time, the full extent of SIS penetration into Ulster.

The briefing by the Intelligence directors followed the same pattern

as that given to her predecessor when he came to office: it was non-specific in terms of actual cases, but highly detailed in explaining the basic *modus operandi* of MI5 and MI6 operations . . . What fascinated seasoned SIS watchers is whether Mrs Thatcher broke with tradition and quizzed her intelligence chiefs on some of the SIS's more notable failures, such as inability to penetrate the Bogside, or infiltrate known IRA rest-and-recreation areas along the border.<sup>29</sup>

The killing of Airey Neave was rapidly overshadowed by the assassination of Lord Mountbatten later during the summer, reminding the British government that the IRA was the main force to deal with. Yet, the personal involvement of Mrs Thatcher with Airey Neave led to an unprecedented move. An intelligence Cabinet sub-Committee was set up to hunt Neave's killers. The then Paymaster General, Angus Maude, an extreme Right-wing Minister liaising with the Co-ordinator of Security and Intelligence in the Cabinet, Francis Brooks Richards, headed it. He promised unlimited financial resources to capture Neave's killers. However, an accurate assessment of the strength and membership of the INLA had been one of the blind spots of Military Intelligence, represented in Northern Ireland by 12 and 14 Companies of the Army's Intelligence Corps. In his assessment of Republican forces (Document No.37), which had just been leaked to the press by the IRA in May 1979, Defence Intelligence Staff Brigadier Jim Glover showed equal lack of knowledge of the tightly organized underground army. Information was similarly scarce from the Anti-Terrorist Squad, Scotland Yard, SIS or MI5. A year later, the Dublin weekly *Hibernia*, stated that it had received confidential reports showing that if the INLA unit responsible could not be found, other sections of their movement would serve as acceptable substitutes.

In May 1980, Francis Brooks Richards moved to Belfast as Security Co-ordinator. Within a month, Miriam Daly, a Queen's University lecturer and former President of the Irish Republican Socialist Party (IRSP), which was close to the INLA, was brutally murdered. In her mid-40s and a mother of twins aged ten, she was shot five times in the head in her Belfast home. She had been tied to a chair, and a pillow used as a silencer. The professional style of the murder (the phone had been cut off) totally strange to the usual Loyalist killing methods, as well as the weapons used, pointed to a possible army under-cover involvement. Indeed, Bernadette Devlin/MacAliskey suggested it bore all the characteristics of a SAS operation.

In the updated version of his book *The British Intelligence Services in Action*, Kennedy Lindsay, who was hostile to Republican politics, linked Miriam Daly's murder to Airey Neave's:

One of the more recent instances was the assassination in the summer of 1980 of a woman of considerable personal prestige and social standing and whom an Irish republican terrorist organization regarded as its intellectual 'patron'. The killing caused acute apprehension in at least one section of the security forces where it was feared that it had placed

the leaders of the terrorist organization in a position where they would feel that they had no alternative but to retaliate by the counter-assassination of the government's most prestigious woman, Margaret Thatcher, the Prime Minister. A parallel was drawn with the CIA's assassination plots against Fidel Castro and other Soviet protégé national leaders, which had placed the persons who ordered the assassination of President Kennedy in a position where they felt they had no alternative. Airey Neave, Margaret Thatcher's colleague and intelligence expert, had been assassinated in the previous year and no one doubted that she could be equally vulnerable.<sup>30</sup>

The parallel drawn by an author, who had many inroads into official sources, was interesting because, no one could fail to compare the CIA to the SIS or any other British related intelligence agency.

The more so, when, in October 1980 two other Belfast IRSP leaders, Ronnie Bunting and Noel Lyttle were murdered in their beds by a group of men who had moved into the house after opening up the front door with a sledge-hammer. Ronnie Bunting's wife, who was injured at the same time, later asserted this was the work of the SAS:

The attack was too well planned, carried out by men who were cool and calm and knew what they were doing . . . They wore those green ribbed pullovers with suede patches on the shoulders and ski-type masks which covered their whole faces, with only holes for the eyes.<sup>31</sup>

She added that they spoke with English accents. This was all the more disturbing since, five days later, on 20 October, a similar raid occurred, at a Provisional Sinn Féin Advice Centre where a meeting to plan publicity strategy for the prisoners' hunger strike was being held. The description given by the *Daily Telegraph* of this raid was just as instructive:

The troops, who wore balaclavas and blue anoraks with orange armbands, and carried automatic weapons and sledge-hammers, seized three men and one woman in the two houses, according to a security statement.

Official sources would not say whether SAS troops had been involved, but neighbours said that uniformed soldiers and policemen did not arrive until later and a regular major was told to 'go away' by one of the raiders.

The armed men did not identify themselves, but all spoke with English accents. They arrived in a convoy of four cars and a van and surrounded one house before breaking in the front door.

A 14 year-old girl, Aisling Berkery, and her mother Maura, were tied up by troops but later released. One shot was fired and a youth was later treated for a hand injury.<sup>32</sup>

So the SAS, or at least 'irregular' British soldiers, had used the same method

of entering the house as in the Bunting killings, and tied up women as Miriam Daly had been tied. One witness recalled that at least one masked man carried 'a handgun with a silencer': was it an army issue 9mm pistol with silencer as shells found later proved was used to kill Mrs Daly? Was the SAS involved in the IRSP leaders killings? And if so, was it under direct Cabinet Office supervision, as SAS are often used in political murders? Was this the retaliation for the death of Airey Neave and part of the under-cover war in Northern Ireland?

Only a thorough investigation could tell. As in many former British colonies the Intelligence war effort had taken a new and deadlier turn, and with Margaret Thatcher in power, the British government was as firmly behind the intelligence community when they undertook covert operations, as perhaps never before since World War II.

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## 5. Control of Population

Operation Motorman, in August 1972, really enabled the British army and the RUC to lay the foundations for an urban counter-insurgency infrastructure. In the past, in Derry City for instance, checkpoints, ramps and barbed wire formed a belt round the no-go areas established by the dominant Nationalist population. On 31 August 1972 at 4 am., 21,000 British soldiers with Chief-tain tanks, invaded the Nationalist areas, in Operation Motorman, led by Lieutenant-General Harry Tuzo. This was the largest single British military operation since the Franco-British expedition on the Suez Canal in 1956.

It was also a co-ordinated operation with the allied forces in Southern Ireland: soldiers and Gardai were deployed to check any southward escape line which may have been used by IRA Volunteers. British soldiers saturated Belfast, Derry, Lurgan, Armagh, Newry and Coalsisland. London could tolerate the dual power situation no longer. Hence the total militarization of the nationalist ghettos to ensure that a sanctuary in Republican controlled areas would not be reorganized in the future. A string of military forts at the heart of these districts was built on at strategic points where the 'pacification' units would be stationed.

Ramps and wire delayed any vehicle driving past an army fort or RUC station, and these were carefully protected by fences against attack by grenades or other projectiles. A network of iron barriers and checkpoints close-in the city centre; all strikingly reminiscent of the situation in Algiers in 1960.

As the IRA used their women's units to plant incendiary devices in stores, anyone entering the 'protected' area was led through search points, watched by special teams, the police and the army. In the following years, iron curtains, literally, surrounded the Belfast city commercial centre; the times when buses were allowed to enter were strictly regulated, and, of course, anyone entering the area was carefully searched, and his/her bag checked with electronic detector. The separation of ghettos was reinforced by 'Peace Lines', a euphemism for walls and walled-up houses which institutionalized the geo-political division between Nationalists (Catholics) and Loyalists (Protestants).

The systematic screening in urban areas shows sharp contrast with the more enlightened dispositions in rural areas, most notably in the border counties countryside, in the 'Republican strongholds' which the British army call

'bandit country'. Yet, the British army, particularly with special units such as the SAS, attempted as far as was feasible to close down the border areas so as to check traffic, and the cars driving in and out on minor roads, and they never hesitated to use their alleged rights of hot pursuit deep into the South, at times clashing with the Southern Irish Army.

By the autumn of 1972, the British army attempted to close down all secondary roads. The Army General Staff even considered erecting electrified fences, as the French had done on the Moroccan and Tunisian borders of Algeria, but the Irish border is so arbitrary that this would have meant cutting off and splitting fields, gardens, and even houses in two. The barriers they did erect were promptly dismantled by the local farmers. The laying of land-mines to destroy IRA vehicles was also contemplated, but this project too, was quickly abandoned. The army organized frequent patrols on land and water (the border toughs were screened by the Special Boat Service, the SAS-related naval unit) and by air. The priority was for surveillance and detection systems.

In fact, the population control in Northern Ireland included a set of social, police and military screening techniques which should have immobilized the nationalist population and isolated their armed vanguard, the Republican resistance organization. This entailed saturation and harassment of the ghettos on a massive scale, alternating with selective intervention in a district, a street, a house, a family, or an individual. This continual alternation of tactics created instability, and anxiety in the population. In these operations, the Army supervised all forms of control: social, political, economic, cultural, medical and recreational.

Harassment took various forms: raids officially designed to uncover weapons, or activists 'on the run', but whose widespread, repeated and systematic use served also to harass and terrorize the population and to collect 'low intensity' intelligence; *screening*, arrest and detention with interrogation of people without charge, from between several hours up to seven days; curfews, or ringing round an area, district or set of streets, as happened in Lower Falls in 1970 or in Turf Lodge during the summer of 1977; targetting or zeroing-in, which amount to techniques of dispersed information and data gathering with computers to draw up a routine profile of alleged members of an illegal organization, but more generally of a whole community; and finally, at the beginning of 1976, the end of internment without trial saw the emergence of remand periods in prison prior to trial, which, in effect, amounted to selective internment, with some people being gaoled for up to two years before being acquitted.

These are daily operations in Northern Ireland but must be seen in conjunction with a series of other techniques of population control in the context of the counter-insurgency apparatus, some aspects of which are not readily apparent. First and foremost, it is a matter of creating favourable conditions towards 'a return to normal', that is to ensure an economic and political stability of the type known prior to 1969, while destroying the roots of the present upheaval. In Northern Ireland, these measures would include a

solution to the housing, and unemployment problems, or at least to give the impression of an attempt to solve them if only to divert endeavours by the resistance movement to stimulate self-managed projects, whether creches, co-ops, playgrounds, or clubs and sports associations. In a city like Belfast, urban redevelopment is geared towards rebuilding the town in such a way as to break the backbone of the guerrilla movement, by military plans which include the building up of 'strategic districts'.

In 1971, following the introduction of internment without trial, almost all the Nationalist ghettos entered a phase of civil disobedience, refusing to pay rates and taxes, until the prisoners were released. From the outset, 26,000 Catholic families were involved in this form of protest. Figures are startling: according to the authorities, 95% of the Newry population were involved, 98% in the Creggan area of Derry; 90% in the Brandywell and Bogside areas of Derry; 80% in Andersonstown, Belfast and 80% in Coalsisland. This phenomenon of civil resistance sparked off a Bill by the Unionist Stormont government of the time, the Bad Debt Act, which allowed money owed to be deducted from the unemployment benefit, industrial accidents, and maternity benefits, old age pension, and widowers' allowances of those who had participated in the strike. Long after it was over, the Social Services bodies organized a vast investigation of those people who requested allowances.

The British Society for Social Responsibility in Science in 1974, noticed that:

the State had developed four basic control strategies: 1) Increasing control through cash benefits — like the Bad Debt Act and the attack on the miners' social security. 2) Increasing control through housing — through the Housing Finance Act. 3) Increasing control over mobility — through the Immigration Act 1971 which creates second class citizens, similar to the Common Market 'guest workers'. 4) Increasing control through information: before delivering any services, the Welfare State (whether the Department of Health and Social Security or the local personal Social Services) requires information from people. There are precious few limits on who has access to this information and for what ends: Information gathered by social workers, believing they are helping their clients, can be used to bring together information about particular communities, or about people within them.

The computer makes it possible to deal with large quantities of low grade data, and as Brigadier Kitson points out, the Social Services collect (and can be used to collect even more) suitable material.<sup>1</sup>

Since 1974, means of control have been expanded; new legislation, such as the Prevention of Terrorism Act, have reduced the free circulation of men and ideas within the 'United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland', increasing the powers of discretion and surveillance into all aspects, even the most intimate, of anyone's life. All this has been centralized, thanks to computers.

Since 1977, in the perspective of the Ulsterization of the conflict, but also tactically around the time of the launching of the Peace Movement, British authorities put forward projects for a massive five-year investment in Northern Ireland, of about £1,000 million. It was meant to whip up the economy, promote 1,500 jobs a year, as well as modernize the energy resources, and primarily, lay the ground for a new situation favourable to multinational investment into Northern Ireland. This was something of a vicious circle. Roy Mason, Secretary of State to Northern Ireland and his economic 'expert', Lord Melchett, hoped to see foreign capital flowing in to reduce the economic causes of the conflict, but knew full well that multinationals would scarcely invest in Northern Ireland in the face of the Provisional IRA. In 1976, counter-insurgency strategists had hoped to see a lull created by the emergence of the Peace Movement to narrow down armed hostilities to 'an acceptable level of violence' and then induce multinational into investing there.

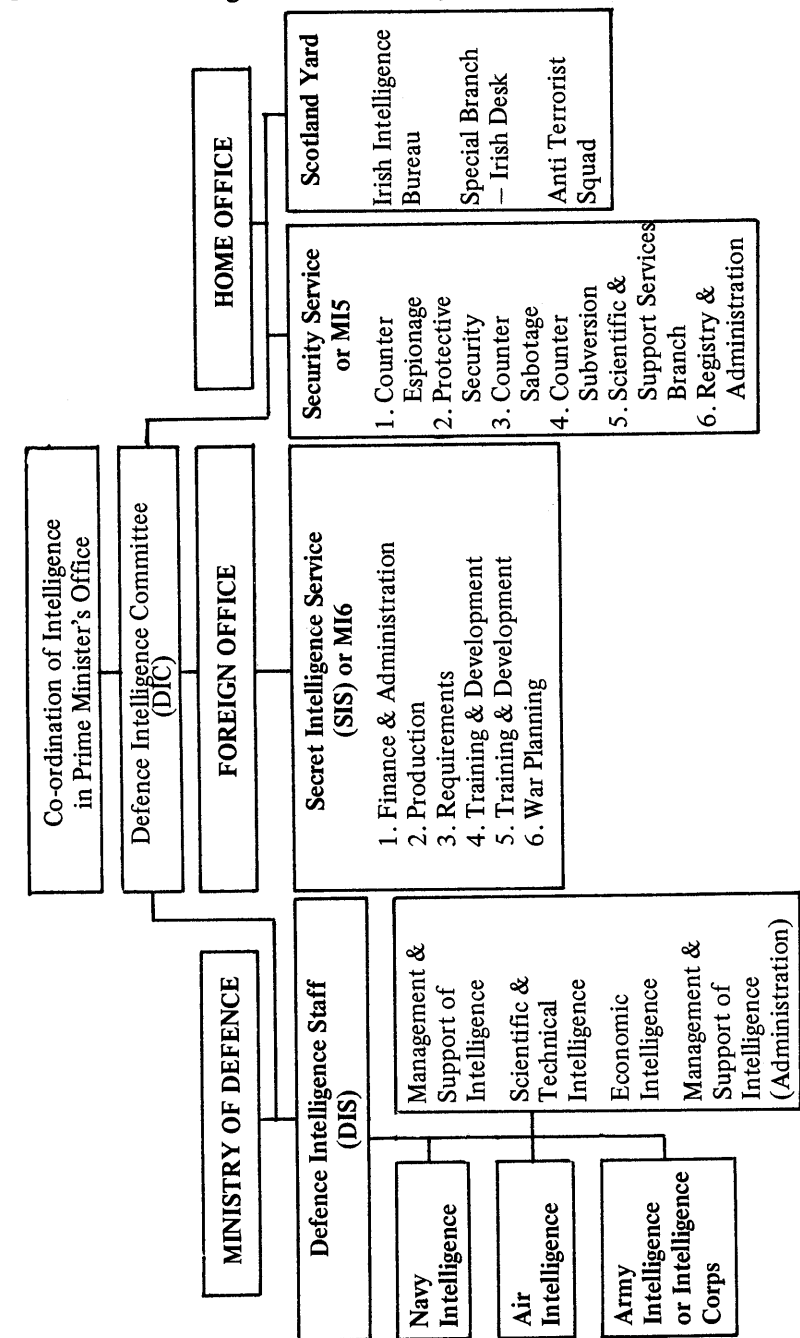
As Roy Mason announced his financing project, Evelyn de Rothschild's Economist Intelligence Unit asserted that these measures 'should restore some confidence in quarters which have been predicting a British pull-out, and any reduction in unemployment, especially in the Catholic 'black-spot' areas, could ease political discontent by channelling political energy into work rather than violence.'<sup>2</sup> In August 1977, the *Economist* gave an overall view of the problems facing Northern Ireland:

The province has become a disaster area. Unemployment has tripled in the past three years to 13%, about twice the British national average. By 1980 it could climb to 18% Business confidence has been destroyed by both recession and terrorism.<sup>3</sup>

### The Strategic Districts

On 23 February 1974, the Commission for Community Relations announced that from 1969 to 1973, 60,000 people had been forced to move from their homes in Northern Ireland: this constituted the *largest population exodus in Europe* since World War II. For most of them, Nationalists, their streets had been burnt down during the 1969 pogroms; but in large areas like Belfast, the city redevelopment scheme, with negligibly better housing conditions, could not hide the fact that it was aiming at the destruction of militant ghettos and deportation of their population to the outer circle of the city. This policy was derived from the 'strategic hamlets' set up in Vietnam, and before that by the British in Malaysia, who were the first to experiment with its efficiency. In 1962, a British mission, led by General Robert Thompson, former Defence Permanent Secretary in Malaysia, was sent to second Diem, in order to extend his experience into South Vietnam. As Kitson put it, this was to 'dry up the ocean in which the fish — that is the guerrilla — swims'. Naturally, in Belfast, one of the oldest industrial cities, the intensive IRA

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bombing campaign and the urban counter-insurgency scheme made it difficult for the population to refuse redevelopment.

Two projects showed the way by the mid-1970s. Firstly, the construction of a ring-road, composed of sections of the M1 and M2 motorways, that would surround the city centre, running through, and breaking up working-class areas, both Catholic and Protestant (see the map). This scheme dated back to 1946, on the basis of an initial project elaborated by the Army in 1943. Besides fragmenting and isolating the ghettos from the city centre, the introduction of a fast road enabled the security forces to intervene more rapidly. Other disadvantages for the Republicans included the destruction of houses and whole, indeed, often insalubrious, districts in order to rehouse people outside the city. Additionally, this motorway ensured the end of a popular means of transport backed up by the resistance movement, the famous People's Taxis or Black Taxis. As the buses stopped serving Nationalist areas by 1972, 600 old cabs were bought in Britain and organized as a co-operative, transporting people cheaply, on marked routes inside Nationalist areas. By 1974, the Falls Taxi Association was founded and employed up to 900 drivers, amongst whom were numerous jobless, freed detainees and prisoners. From 1976 onwards, the British authorities tried to dismantle this cohesive factor existing within Nationalist communities. (Incidentally, with the success of the Black Taxis, and the destruction of more than 300 buses since the outset of the conflict, the Shankill Loyalists in turn, managed to buy 200 taxis). As the French architect, François Lèlievre noted:

Numerous key roads are now transformed into motorways and simultaneously re-elevated to permit added surveillance on the district thus dominated. Take for instance, Suffolk Road, which is connected at right angles to Glen Road, which overhangs the Lenadoon area; this has been re-elevated and its direction altered, even though it was perfectly suitable to traffic in the past. South of the M1 Motorway this same surveillance is possible, as a new ring-road has been drawn eastward, leading to Kennedy Way. In this new district, peace lines have been charmingly replaced by cul-de-sac type urbanism which means that a group of houses may be easily controlled.<sup>4</sup>

A typical example of a strategic district was the development scheme of the Poleglass-Lagmore Complex, south-west of Belfast, designed in 1973, and planned for 50,000 displaced people, with new roads, among which was an extension (M11) to the ring-road already mentioned, as well as six new schools, a commercial and social centre (recreational facilities, crechès, etc.). This project was linked to the estimated creation of 3,000 new jobs, in west Belfast, and it was intended to be a mixed district of Protestants and Catholics, but all Loyalist politicians opposed both this aspect of the scheme, (which would have been comparable to another district similarly designed, Twinbrook) and to the construction of a large, solely Nationalist area, as

this would have meant a new 'pond' for the IRA 'fish'. In fact, the contradiction inherent in this counter-insurgency scheme is crystal-clear: displacing nationalist-minded populations, who, though living in healthier conditions, would still be concentrated in a confined area, would not help to destroy the pockets of resistance but only move them elsewhere.

In smaller areas or enclaves, for example, New Lodge and Unity Flats, the British attempted to lay the ground for depriving the Nationalists of the management of social, cultural or recreational activities. With the help of the Peace Movement in 1976-77 they attempted to cut the ground from under the feet of the 32-county Irish sports federation, the Gaelic Athletic Association, whose Constitution proscribes membership of British soldiers and favours British withdrawal and the unity of Ireland. In other cases, the Royal Ulster Constabulary, with around 60 Community Relation Officers in 1977, operated RUC youth clubs and 'Blue Lamp Discos', welcoming, according to police figures, 30,000 teenagers a month. As the police themselves explained: the organizers of these ventures,

continually emphasise that they are policemen first and community relations officers second, and that the Community Relations Branch is just another specialized unit which a modern police force requires if it is to serve the community properly by reducing or preventing the production of irresponsible citizens.<sup>5</sup>

Playgrounds were also considered, as Major John Smith of the Royal Marine Commandos elaborated in 1972, in a memo entitled 'Operation Playground' (11 September, 1972, Army Document 40 RM 7/11/58) whose full text is published in the appendix to this book.<sup>6</sup> This suggested the designing of playgrounds, mainly for Unity Flats and New Lodge areas as a 'joint military, RUC and civil project'. The aim was dual: to create an open area for children's games while at the same time containing this area, preventing the free movement of guerrillas around the area. So, as Major Smith saw it, New Lodge was a deprived area, where children had no play facilities, and they should be provided, *but* clearly in the framework of counter-insurgency plans. The whole scheme would be under military tactical supervision and he described the aim of the mission as follows:

To improve the environment for the children of Unity, New Lodge, Tiger Bay and Duncairn Gardens in the short term, with a view in the long term for the decent people of the area to control affairs and oust the gunmen and terrorists.

## Computers

As early as 1971, Kitson suggested the introduction of computers storing data banks which the Army and other security forces could use:

All that would be necessary would be a central computer to store all the information held in all the branches of the intelligence organizations throughout the country, and for each member of the intelligence organization to be equipped with some form of wireless which would enable him to contact the computer from anywhere in his area. By this means the interrogator in the forward area could, in theory get the information which he needs in order to break down the prisoner without delay. In practical as opposed to technological terms, the whole idea in the form suggested would almost certainly founder because of the cost, and because of the difficulty of teaching low level members of the intelligence organization how to work a computer by remote control, in addition to all the other things they would learn.<sup>7</sup>

By April 1977, with the introduction of a central computer the already impressive quantity of information concerning the population of Northern Ireland became systematized. In January 1976, before resigning, Harold Wilson announced the introduction of a SAS squadron in South Armagh and the future employment of this key computer, which, he added, would process information on weapons, vehicles, suspects and any other matter, and replace the manual filing system. The British Army would have to wait a year before this computer was serviced because of the impressive quantity of data to be processed on a million and a half people in Northern Ireland, as well as others in the South and the Irish in Britain. These data included names, descriptions of people, work places, car registrations, crime records, and details of trials and political activity since the beginning of the conflict in 1969, and even during the previous IRA campaigns. In other words, the information was relatively basic but indispensable to setting-up a comprehensive system to outstrip the guerrilla force.

This computer system was linked to entry check-points in both Britain and Northern Ireland, and allowed immediate information to be obtained on a suspected person. Thanks to this scheme, dozens of Irish citizens and others have been expelled from the mainland, since the introduction of the Prevention of Terrorism Act that followed the 1974 explosions in Birmingham, which certainly played their role in speeding up the process of introducing computers to exploit quick intelligence.

As early as 3 December, 1974, the *Financial Times* published a most revealing article under the title, 'A Computer Programme to Hunt the Bombers':

The method involves the ruthless use of computers and the information stored inside them . . . in normal times I would vigorously oppose it. When we have just read of a new bombing outrage in which more innocent victims have been killed, sheer anger and frustration often lead us to consider forms of police action that at all other times would be abhorrent. Assume, for the sake of argument, that a new Extra Special Branch of the Secret Service were set up, armed with the

over-riding power to requisition data from any computer anywhere in the country . . . First they would start with profiles of would-be IRA recruits . . . then requisition the census records of all persons either born in Ireland or with Irish parents . . . This would be cross-checked and brought up to date by National Insurance payments at the DHSS . . . plus records of rent and rate collecting by local authorities . . . records of car ownership and licences . . . cross-checked with Family Allowances . . . and the 'Hospital Activity Analysis' kept by the NHS . . . and records of mental illness.

The author lists another 12 major computer networks available to the police before concluding: All this can be done by using software now in existence and information already collated. The only thing necessary is Parliament's approval . . . Anyone would find it hard to argue against such a proposal, particularly if it were made at the time of a fresh attack.

This was precisely how the computer network developed in Northern Ireland in the subsequent three years. In 1974, the Army already had a computer manned by the Intelligence Corps, at the Lisburn headquarters, that had cost the British tax-payer £500,000.

On 5 December, 1974, *The Times* correspondent, Robert Fisk noted that this system was 'the most advanced to be adopted by the security forces in Northern Europe'. Experiments had already been carried on in Britain for a short time: without being aware of it ordinary people had their car registrations noted and recorded on computers.

A civilian expert on counter-insurgency and an associate member of the Institute for the Study of Conflict, Professor Paul Wilkinson, recalled that 'a vast amount of intelligence gathered by means of "P-Tests", "random personal details" by late 1974 on 40% of the population was stored in the centralized master intelligence computer at Lisburn Army Headquarters'. This information was supplemented by 'head-checks' conducted to scrutinize all occupants of a house; and extensive open and covert photographic surveillance as well as random house searches. A specialist on terrorism at Cardiff University, Professor Wilkinson delivered two lectures in Strasbourg at the Council of Europe Conference on European response to terrorism, (12-14 November 1980) in the course of which he stated that in 1974, 71,914 houses had been searched, 1,260 guns and 26,120lbs of explosives had been found.<sup>8</sup>

In April 1977, Gerry Fitt, MP and leader of the SDLP, expressed surprise that 'if you live in a working-class Catholic area you are liable to have information collected on you — if you live somewhere like the Malone Road you are not subjected to this.' He reinforced the point of his objection to the computer manned by the army at Thiepval Barracks, in concluding: 'It's like something you'd find in the Soviet Union or South Africa — Big Brother is watching.'<sup>9</sup>

The day after this parliamentary intervention, by coincidence, the

Guernsey link with the central computer was used in the application of the Prevention of Terrorism Act. Four girls from Armagh, Bernadette McConville, Una McCann, Mauriette Heany and Irene Loughran, had gone there to find seasonal work, as many Irish youngsters often do. They were arrested under the terms of this special legislation, with no charge preferred against them, detained for several days and then expelled and sent back to Northern Ireland. The Independent Nationalist MP Frank Maguire, raised the matter, stressing that this action was because a relative of one of the girls 'was currently imprisoned on a terrorist-type charge'. It was, he said, the first known example of 'Big Brother' — the British Army's new computerized information network — in action.<sup>10</sup>

The new element in this intelligence network, and a danger to all civil liberties, lay in the fact that the data recorded and used was no longer concerned only with 'known terrorists' or 'suspects', but a third category: 'potential terrorists'. Considering the conception which prevailed over the counter-insurgency strategy, this category could include the whole nationalist community.

In common with the official recognition of the introduction of the SAS, the computer used in the war against Irish Republicans was utilized long before it was officially acknowledged. Nevertheless, only after the 1975 Truce, with the new Ulsterization phase, did computer techniques take on their full importance. In Thiepval Barracks at Lisburn, half a million files were on record, that is, around one third of the total number of the Northern Irish population or the equivalent of the total number of adults in the nationalist community, plus sections of the extremist Loyalist groups. The computer system was linked to the Operations Rooms of the divisional headquarters of the three Army Brigades active in the North (8th Brigade in Derry, 3rd Brigade in Lurgan, and 39th Brigade in Lisburn) and to control sections of each battalion, known as Forward Operational Control (FOC). Each battalion had access to VDUs (visual display units) equipped with transmitters and receivers, which allowed them to send and receive information without risk of Republican interference, as in the past. Each Company or sub-unit HQ could thus request and receive all necessary operational information from the central computer by radio from Intelligence clerks in charge of each battalion's Forward Operational Control. Exactly as Kitson had suggested.

'Big Brother's' 500,000 files were separated into four distinct, though interconnected sections: Firstly, the *P-Section*: referring to all personal details, age, address, physical description, special characteristics, routine, places usually frequented, details of all recorded moves (e.g. place and time of passing through a mobile or static check-point), and all additional information and cross-references to family, parents and friends.

The second section was patterned directly on the filing system inaugurated by Colonel Trinquier in Algeria. His screening method, in the framework of the 'Urban Protection Scheme', simply modernized by way of electronics and replaced the index-card files.<sup>11</sup> This entailed filing street names, from street

directories, electoral lists and phone books, and observation by patrols on the ground. The name and occupation of the subject are noted, as well as the reference code concerning all inhabitants supposed to live under the same roof, as well as details of alleged or expressed political opinions. A door-to-door census was set up by soldiers who endeavoured to note everything, including the family dog's name. Frequent searches allow an up-dating of information. There is a special distinctive coded note for each house, giving the colour of the paint on the door, or even wall-paper in a key room.

The third section is a vehicles index. Prior to this integrated system, this was the only computerized filing system manned by the RUC. Today, the police, in turn, have access to Army data. The colour and registration number, are noted, as well as a coded reference to the way this car must be treated when passing through a check-point. All cars are involved here; even the religion of the owner is noted. The Army explained that it was important to be able to locate a car which may be a stranger to an area, and could be booby-trapped. This index is, of course, linked with the P-section data, thus enabling the car owner's name to be instantly traced.

The fourth section is complementary to the vehicle index. This is the VCP, Vehicle Check-point Index, giving the times and places of cars checked by RUC or Army Patrol, in mobile or static check-points, where cars are stopped at random. The registration is recorded and checked against the VCP index. This provides valuable information: it allows for the reassembling of the whole pattern of a vehicle's movements, actual journeys and a profile of potential activities. Thus, permutations of the four sections can be made to exploit intelligence according to the operational need.

In addition to the Lisburn military computer system, all information netted by Social Services, beginning with the Northern Ireland Health Service, is added to the Army data. At the end of 1978, social workers received precise directives on the way to fill-in Personal Data Forms for each person dealing with the Social Services. This file included date of birth, sex, marital status, profession or unemployed situation, with a reference number, as well as a *geocode* of seven numbers which enabled the computer to locate any address within the vicinity of half-a-dozen houses in a street. This was exactly what Colonel Trinquier had organized in Algeria, except that he had no help from computers.

In 1978, John McGuffin who was the first to publish an article, 'Big Brother Is Here Too', referring to this filing system, noted that superficially, all this resembled what Kitson called 'low quality intelligence', but, when connected to other information sources, a very comprehensive profile emerged on any given person within the State.

The link-up between the Health Department and other Social Services, had been envisaged in a memo written by Sir Roland Moyle, Minister of State in Northern Ireland (1974-76) then Minister of State for the Health Service until 1979. This memo dealt with the development of Personal Health and Social Services in Northern Ireland, and in paragraph No.58, entitled 'Research and Intelligence', stressed that his department had

established a research and intelligence unit led, in 1978, by Dr R. Walby, whose ultimate aim was to equip itself with a computer to satisfy all those workers within the services, 'and many outside' 'all those who need access to the same data banks'. It was to be geared towards offering computerized data banks with up-to-date files on 'health and all vital events of the population'; although restricted and confidential, this information would be accessible to all 'authorized users'.

Obviously then the army and the police benefited from medical evidence and related information. To take but one instance: in November 1977, during the course of a raid against the Short Strand area of Belfast, a dozen young Nationalist women were arrested. The RUC Special Branch was able to make use of the information they had acquired about a miscarriage one of the women had suffered six months earlier, in a manner that brought her close to a nervous breakdown, and finally pressurized her into signing a confession in which she said she had belonged to Cumann na mBan, the IRA's women's wing, and had taken part in military operations against the British Army. At the beginning of the 1960s, the US Navy presented Belfast Queen's University with a DEUCE computer. It was increasingly used to store 'sociological' and 'ethnological' data about Northern Ireland ghettos, of a great interest for counter-insurgency experts, mostly in the Army. On the night of 21 January 1979, the IRA blew it up and then explained that:

An active service unit of the Irish Republican Army successfully carried out the attack on the computer banks of Queen's University, Belfast. We would point out that contrary to media reports, less than 50% of the computer work had any relationship to the university; the bulk of the users of the computer were Brit government bodies. A warning was given and there was no civilian casualties.<sup>12</sup>

The British public remained incredulous and insensitive to the computer octopus embracing Northern Ireland, failing to reflect that its expansion would inevitably lead it to British soil. In February 1979, for example, shortly after the IRA had destroyed the computer at Queen's University, details were provided in Westminster about the utilization of computers in Britain. In addition to the Hendon Police central computer a new one was set up in West London, capable of processing large quantities of information about 1,300,000 people. The Scotland Yard computer in Hendon, was inaugurated in 1977, and comprised five sections: a) frauds; b) drugs; c) illegal immigrants; d) serious crimes, usually dealt with by the CI section of Serious Crimes Squad; and finally, e) subversives, dealt with by the Special Branch.

The 'subversives' were the Irish Nationalists, the far Left and extra-Parliamentary Left, and also Welsh and Scottish Nationalists, feminist and gay groups, and people suspected of espionage — although this task devolves on MI5, whose F-Branch is in charge of 'terrorists'. Half the information stored in the national computer is used by the Special Branch which, by

1976, held 850,000 name index files and 300,000 dossiers. Contrary to Home Office denials, the political section in Scotland Yard did open files on suspects and 'potential terrorists', including trade-union, feminist and ecologist movements. In addition, the chief of operations at the national computer, Geoffrey Cole, admitted that in the course of broadcasting the TV programme on BBC 2, 'Man Alive' (France's equivalent is '*L'inspecteur mène l'enquête*' and Germany's is '*Referenz X.Y.Z.*') viewers' phone calls were recorded at the TV telephone exchange and later stored and analysed by computers.

### Auditory Surveillance

The British Army often totally empty a flat or a house while they search it, or the inhabitants may be confined to one room. This always provides a nice opportunity to plant 'bugs' and other electronic listening gadgets.

On 11 June 1976 a unit from the Third Parachute Regiment burst into the Newry home of David and Eilish Morley. Mrs Morley was led away to Bessbrook headquarters, and the children were locked in the kitchen, while soldiers searched the house.

On 12 July 1976, one of the Morley's children was in the garden playing with his transistor radio set when he suddenly heard his mother on the wavelength. A search of the house revealed a listening device in the living room. At the time David Morley was detained in Long Kesh where he was the Provisional Republican Prisoners Officer-in-Command, and his home, as usual, was a meeting place for local Sinn Féin organizations. When this incident was revealed at a press conference, the British Army refused to comment. This is but one case among many illustrative of how intelligence is obtained by electronic surveillance. This is complementary to the usual practice of phone-tapping Republicans and others within the Northern Irish population. Theoretically, phone-tapping had to be approved by the Secretary of State in Northern Ireland, unlike the rest of the 'Kingdom'. Phone-tapping was simply integrated within the framework of the co-ordinated counter-insurgency.

In Britain, the Prime Minister or Secretary of State must be convinced of the need to obtain information relating to a criminal procedure before authorizing the Post Office to intercept a line. In 1957, the Birkett Report suggested that in order to obtain a 'green light' for phone-tapping, firstly, a serious criminal offence must be involved; secondly, all other, traditional means of investigation must have failed, and finally that there was good reason to think that a phone-tap would procure information leading to charges. Yet the extent of interference already exceeded these limits in the field of counter-espionage and terrorism, that is for MI5 and the Special Branch. The suggestions made in the Report in respect of these matters were that: evidence of dangerous espionage or subversive activity must exist, of such a nature as would endanger national security; or that the amount of

information thus collected would enable the security services to fulfil their tasks. In ten years, from 1946 to 1956, phone-tapping operations in Britain rose from 73 to 241; no figures are available from 1956 when, among other events, the IRA Border Campaign began. The safeguards which had operated to preserve the right to privacy of British citizens melted away in the course of the present counter-insurgency campaign against Irish Republicanism.

Up to 1971, the RUC Special Branch carried out phone-tapping in Northern Ireland. Following the introduction of internment without trial, in August 1971, the British Army, realized that its intelligence data was out-moded, biased, and prejudiced by the political sentiments of the Protestants who largely provide the political policing contingent. Again, much information dated back to the 1920s, the late 1930s, and particularly the 1950s Border Campaign. Military Intelligence were thus allowed to annex responsibility for auditory surveillance from Special Branch, and, by 1972 had organized probably one of the most intensive and systematic phone-tapping operations in Western Europe. Republicans and Loyalist para-militaries were not the sole targets of the Intelligence Corps: Northern Irish MPs, journalists, church leaders, civil servants, and even the police came under surveillance.

During the autumn of 1973, the editor of *The Times*, William Rees-Mogg, 'killed' a story by John Marston on the extent of 'Army phone-tapping in Belfast':

Over the past five years hundreds of telephones have been tapped at the instigation of the security forces. According to sources inside the Post Office, the lines of such men as Paddy Devlin (SDLP Chief Whip) and even Tom Conaty (a Roman Catholic member of the Advisory Commission set up by Whitelaw) have been 'adapted' at the Balmoral Exchange in Belfast to enable them to be tapped. Apparently not even a Roman Catholic priest described as an 'outspoken critic of the IRA' — Father McNamara of St Theresa's Church in Glen Road, Belfast — has escaped such attention.

Other prominent figures whose phones have reportedly been interfered with in this way include Westminster MPs Bernadette MacAliskey and Frank McManus, and leading politicians in the Social Democratic and Labour Party vanguard, and Ian Paisley's Democratic Unionist Party. Leading Republicans, such as Mrs Marie Drumm and Mrs Mary McGuigan have had their phones tapped, along with UDA leaders like Jim Anderson and the late Tommy Herron. Phones in clubs, public houses and known meeting places also apparently receive similar treatments.<sup>13</sup>

The nerve-centre for phone-tapping operations in Belfast was at Churchill House, in Victoria Square, where in 1973, 150 phones were tapped on a 24-hour a day basis: 'One method is to record telephone conversations onto a 35mm multi-track magnetic tape with a time strip attached. Codes are used to indicate the tapped lines, and some can be monitored by earphones as well

as recorded'. Another method consisted of using the Trunk Offer Facility (TKO) built into the exchange system. Originally the TKO allowed an operator to cut into a call to warn that a trunk call was on the line; using this 'Facility', Military Intelligence can quickly listen in to conversations, and monitor phones in any area of Belfast.

As a journalist who specialized in Irish matters, Chris Doherty, noted:

That phone-tapping is a key source of intelligence in the North is obvious: that it has been extensive scarcely needs saying. But the remarkably wide scope of Army phone surveillance, known to its practitioners as 'landline intercept', has been astounding.<sup>14</sup>

This was indeed true, but in spite of a widespread proliferation of tapped lines, disparity existed between the enormous effort undertaken by Army Intelligence Special Branch, and the Post Office Special Investigation Branch (SIB) and the value of the results obtained by this disquieting process. Partly, because qualified personnel with the ability to understand and select what was of importance from miles of soundtrack were needed and, being a member of intelligence services does not necessarily imply the possession of a high standard of intellect. And partly because the underground resistance was fully aware that the telephone was an enemy, and therefore they avoided it, and instead communicated orders and instructions by other means, including human 'post-boxes'. Nonetheless, even trivial telephone conversation can provide valuable data, especially when assembled with other information already recorded on computers.

But in the 'Big Ears' war, the IRA too, went on the offensive. In the early 1970s, the Provisional IRA in Derry organized press conferences on several occasions for selected journalists to listen to recordings of phone conversations from the British Army HQ of the 8th Brigade. Numerous technicians and post office engineers have been interned over the years. In the past the Official IRA specialized in intercepting telex lines, and swapped information with the Provisional IRA who tapped British Army phones. The Official IRA wired

... a little-used telegraph line and teleprinter in a Belfast business office into selected circuits in the military TASS (Teleprinter Automatic Switching Service) system which links all British Army battalion forward operations rooms in Lisburn HQ. Thus, it was that the Officials often read the intelligence precis which is 'broadcast' on the TASS network each morning *before* some army battalion commanders. Their favourite messages, though, were the daily request lists from battalions for permission from 'higher information' [Lisburn] to raid named houses, and giving reasons for the raids.<sup>15</sup>

But it was a traumatic shock in May 1974 during the Ulster Workers' Council general strike, for the British to discover in Myrtlefield Park, Belfast, an upper class area, in a house which sheltered the Provisional IRA Director

of Operations, Brendan Hughes, a so-called 'Scorched Earth Plan' to burn down Belfast. It was, in fact, an IRA contingency plan in case of Loyalist pogroms, but the MI5 distorted its intention, in order to fool Harold Wilson and his colleagues, and justify a non-intervention policy on the part of the British Army vis-à-vis the Loyalist UWC strike.

The British government gave less prominence however, to the fact that stocks of sound-tracks were also found in the house, with recordings of conversations of prominent government officials, dating back to 1971. In spite of scrambling devices all their phones had been tapped by the IRA who had managed to obtain a scrambler designed in the Dollis Hill Post and Telecommunication Research Centre. There were some red faces when details emerged of conversations between Howard Smith, (then UK representative to Northern Ireland and later head of MI5) from the luxury Conway House Hotel, Dunmurry, and his Whitehall controller, Sir Philip Allen, the Permanent Under-Secretary of State at the Home Office.

### Sociology in the Service of Counter-Insurgency

Military screening and technical surveillance do not constitute the only means of counter-insurgency. The evolution of a community cannot simply be analysed through the mathematical manipulation of phone calls. Direct repression would be ineffective unless simultaneously combined with comprehensive political approach designed to destabilize support to the resistance movement, and to divert the ghettos which back-up the IRA and the INLA. The inferences and interpretations relating to the Northern Irish battlefield that are provided by sociologists and social workers, are part of the same strategy.

There is no doubt that these specialists in the social field have been influenced by a key 'think-tank', the Institute for the Study of Conflict, based in London and led by Brian Crozier and Robert Moss, whose links, both with the CIA and the SIS, have long been illustrated in the British and international press. In 1978, this Institute comprised key Cold Warmongers and intelligence-gencers, such as Professor Leonard Schapiro, once a member of the Intelligence Division of the Control Commission in Germany; Rear-Admiral Louis Le Bailly, a former Director General of Intelligence with the DIS from 1973 to 1976; Sir Edward Peck, former head of the Joint Intelligence Committee, and the late military correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph*, Brigadier W.F.K. Thompson. Richard Clutterbuck, in 1970 a founder member of the ISC which was then financed by the CIA front, Forum World Features Limited, left it in disagreement, while latecomers include General Harry Tuzo, a former GOC and Director of Operations in Northern Ireland, and Paul Wilkinson. As early as 1972, the ISC expressed interest in the Northern Irish question; Robert Moss published *Urban Guerillas* in which the IRA figured prominently and the *Conflict Studies* No.17 'Security in Ulster' played a role in the decision to launch Operation Motorman by the summer. This was

supported by a study published in 1971 as the *Ulster Debate*, which was freely distributed by the British embassy and consulates in the United States; this publication consisted of contributions by 14 intelligence experts and academics, including Leonard Schapiro; Lord Chalfont, whose long-standing intelligence record has frequently been celebrated; the historians J.C. Beckett and F.S.L. Lyons, and the Prime Minister of Southern Ireland since 1981, Garret Fitzgerald, with a foreword by Brian Crozier.

*Ulster Debate* clearly urged direct confrontation with the Nationalist ghettos, and the destruction of the IRA by the counter-insurgency techniques outlined by Kitson, Clutterbuck or Trinquier. The ISC (whose research director, Peter Janke, produced another study on the IRA in 1979), as far as counter-insurgency is concerned plays the role of a conveyor belt, not only of extreme Right-wing views within the Anglo-American counter-insurgency community, but also towards NATO countries and Western Europe. Its tone is more political than Kitson's technical views, in so far as it reduces the Irish conflict to an episode of the general East-West conflict, stressing how the IRA is manipulated by the KGB. Did the KGB manipulate the Irish who fought back Cromwell's army?

Superficially, sociologists in Ireland analysing the 'social profile' of entire communities, and the side-effects of the war, were a different kettle of fish. They had initiated contacts with all social, political, religious and cultural groups, offering new solutions which, without denying the existence of a resistance, reduced it to an accessory factor, either cultural, religious or even ethnic and economic, which initiated problems that could be solved only within the framework of the Six County unit, into which Northern Ireland has been partitioned since 1922.

The social profile of a community facilitated the determination of how leadership operated within a district; or 'problems' and 'contradictions' which opposed the 'Northern Irish (Nationalists and Loyalists combined) versus the Rebels/Subversives/Terrorists. Psychological explanations were also provided to shed light on the conflict. This type of research mainly presented a formidable amount of data which was simply added to the data banks of the Ministry of Defence, the Psychological Warfare Centres, and the British Army Headquarters' Intelligence section.

Social workers, sociologists, Queen's University professors, American and foreign academics and students did not provide the RUC Special Branch or Army Intelligence with operational intelligence. Their work was one of synthesis and helped in a totally different way. Indeed, the vast majority were quite genuinely unaware that their studies would be scrutinized by the counter-insurgency community, as an Italian researcher, Paolo Pisto, who wrote a MA thesis at Essex University *Operation Motorman in Ballymurphy* pointed out to me. After returning to Italy he wrote a book describing and denouncing Kitson's theories as applied to the nationalist Ballymurphy district of Belfast. But he could be sure that his MA thesis had been read and analysed by Army Intelligence. Similarly, in the United States, Michael T. Klare outlined how the Pentagon commissioned and funded Research Centres



in the context of the Indo-Chinese war effort. In this, incidentally, the Americans benefited from the earlier anthropological and sociological studies undertaken by the British in South East Asia, in particular during the Malayan emergency.

In the 1970s, the MoD spent £2 million a year to fund university research, including 600 projects on computers, radar and medical research, all with military aims in view. Likewise, following the introduction of internment in Ireland, specialists of 'conflict theories' were sponsored to write theses and studies on the ghettos. The Psychology Department of Queen's University was financed by the MoD, and studies in other fields such as geography (*Rathcoole: A study in Social Relationship*)<sup>16</sup> and social studies (*Sandy Row: A study before redevelopment*),<sup>17</sup> in Nationalist areas carried out after Motorman were particularly significant.

In January 1972, in the Republican stronghold of the Andersonstown area of Belfast, a large scale operation was mounted, with the infiltration, and eventual destruction of the 1st Battalion of the Provisional IRA Belfast Brigade, high on Military Intelligence's list of objectives. In the same year the Northern Ireland Research Institute (NIRI), affiliated to the London based Conflict Research Society, was founded and based at 167 Lisburn Road, Belfast. The London group, described as a charitable and non-profit-making society and financed by the World Council of Churches, SODEPAX, Cadbury, and the Ariel Foundation, was a cover for British Intelligence operations. NIRI expanded its influence through the Northern Ireland Community Relations Community and their magazine, *Community Forum*.

The Director of NIRI, 25 year-old John Burton, had studied in University College, London, before researching into such conflicts as those in Cyprus and Ireland. Between 1968 and 1970, working closely with the Foreign Office, he interviewed Northern Irish politicians about their projects; the results provided material for a book *Ulster: A Case Study in Conflict Theory*, published in 1971, under the names of R. Elliot and R. Hickie. The pseudonym of the co-author concealed the identity of another important NIRI member, John Darby. In the years to come, John Burton was to develop the idea of Ulster Independence which made inroads into leading Loyalist circles in 1976. He unfolded his theories during seminars organized by the two 'pacifist' groups, the Corrymeela and Glencree Reconciliation Centres, who later played an instrumental part in founding the Peace Movement, and were financed by some of the bodies that subsidized NIRI, and which had factories in Ireland, such as Cadbury and Rowntree.

John Burton's approach sounded Left-wing, and he claimed to be a Marxist. The Research Centre also included 'two revolutionaries', Gill and Kathleen Boehringer, who claimed that they wanted to help and advise the Irish Republicans. Gill Boehringer, officially a sociologist, had studied criminology at Oxford and later in East Africa. He made a careful study of the attitudes of the Andersonstown population towards the RUC, while Kathleen analysed the discrimination practised against Catholics employed in factories. In 1973, Gill Boehringer published an article in the *Andersonstown News* entitled

'Andersonstown Policing Survey', which suggested that the population utterly rejected the RUC, and that the IRA, and/or other vigilante groups supervised by the IRA, policed the area.<sup>18</sup> This suggestion took on a new dimension in 1975, during the bilateral truce between the IRA and the British authorities; the latter were keen to freeze the situation by integrating the Republican Movement into a respectable and repressive force within their own areas; and clearly some leaders, such as the Belfast commander at the time, Séamus Loughran, did fall into this trap temporarily. This proposal was expanded by some other proponents of 'conflict theory'. For example, the psychiatrist Morris Frazer, who studied the effect of the war on Northern Irish children, in his book, *Children in Conflict*, concluded that mixed Protestant and Catholic schools were necessary for the well-being of the children; but he also stated that:

As for the policing in the Catholic areas — it is unfortunate, but still a fact of life — that the Protestant-dominated Royal Ulster Constabulary are unlikely to be accepted for some time. It is also a fact that no efficient force for the maintenance of law has ever been imposed on a community. The only interim solution would be *de facto* recognition and training of street vigilantes for local policing duties. There are precedents for this.<sup>19</sup>

The logical conclusion of Boehringer or Morris would naturally lead to a situation where the locally-recruited police would be controlled by the RUC command structure. (In 1980, such a police force, recruited from moderate nationalist circles was mounted in the Basque country to combat the underground ETA.)

Meanwhile in 1972, NIRI members initiated an in-depth study of population movement following the introduction of internment in 1971. This 'research unit' was led by John Darby and Geoffrey Morris who, after a new enquiry in 1973, published their conclusions as *Intimidation in Housing* (1974). These investigations covered St. Agnes Parish and the Turf Lodge areas of Belfast, and were all the more important as there had been no population census since 1961. Previous attempts to carry out a census had been resisted, sometimes in a spectacular way; as recently as 1981, during the Republican prisoners' hunger strike bonfires were set alight with census forms.

Burton, Boehringer, Darby and their fourth accomplice, John Bailey (who had carried out a survey on street fighting in Derry in 1969), offered their services to the ghettos, at a period when community organizations and Republican-inspired co-ops and self-managed economic and social ventures blossomed. This offer was vague enough to obtain some assent from various community quarters, and with the Saint Agnes Parish priest they set up the Andersonstown and Suffolk Promotion Association.

The NIRI was then in a position to screen districts which the police dared not go near, from within, and obtain detailed information on 1,551 Catholic

families, including their ages, names, profession if any, electoral attitudes, political stance, and so on. The saddest aspect of it all was, that under cover of magazines like *Community Forum*, and the local *Andersonstown News*, and various Queen's University Departments, moderate members of the civil resistance in the area, and genuine students, were actively involved in many of these investigations, social census and profiles, which were intended to feed the Army computers.

Their classification of people living in the ghetto, their analyses of the internal conflicts, the dynamic laws which prevailed over human, cultural, political and social relations within the fighting community, led them to draw the following conclusions:

- a) The main enemy to good relations within the community was the individual wholly dependent on social welfare (a 'sponger' to recall Harold Wilson's phrase, who drew all possible social benefits from State Welfare agencies and had time to take part in 'subversive activities'). This enabled an identikit of the 'standard terrorist' to be constructed, and also projects for social development, rehousing, deportation of population outside the 'sensitive areas' to be launched, as well as jobs created with the object of destroying the support basis of the urban guerrillas.
- b) NIRI should participate in community life with the object of indirectly suggesting official projects that would result in the self-help organizations, sponsored by the Republican Armies, becoming superfluous.
- c) Republican structures already in existence (creches, playgrounds, cultural centres, housing committees, etc.) should be infiltrated and diverted from their purposes.
- d) The creation, by moderate elements, of structures to rival the social and economic co-ops sponsored by the resistance movement. (Whatever the initial motive, the appropriation of a Peoples' Co-op in 1975, by the former Belfast Sinn Féin organizer Séamus Loughran, is a good example of this.)
- e) Use of IRA prestige in the ghettos, (as long as the RUC remain unacceptable to Catholics) to encourage them to 'police' the Republican areas, thus returning Northern Ireland to an acceptable level of violence, and a measure of economic stabilization. This was partly what the British had in mind when during the 1975 truce with the IRA when they agreed to introduce the 'Truce Incident Centres'.<sup>20</sup>

Taking into consideration that Kitson's counter-insurgency theories were based upon his colonial campaigns, and not on Northern Ireland, these conclusions coincided admirably with his schemes. Instead of confronting armed resistance directly, the four sociologists, and many others, favoured 'soft counter-insurgency', by way of penetrating popular structures and 'taming' the Republicans, or at least attempting to deny them the leadership of those structures.

But following the 1975 Truce and the resumption of armed hostilities, the occupation forces combined these tactics with brutal, although more selective, repression.

## Visual Surveillance

After experiments in the border areas, methods of visual surveillance were used in the cities too. In 1978, in their forts and observation posts, the British Army had introduced video-tape cameras into Belfast to record all passing cars. From the film obtained, trained Intelligence Officers, are able to note all suspect cars and construct a profile of their movements; and also spot stolen cars, which the IRA may use in an operation.

Experiments with video-tapes were first carried out in West Belfast, and recorded information was integrated into the central computer at Lisburn. In areas where the local people had detected spy-cameras, it was noted that foot patrols diminished in numbers. Some of the cameras were equipped with zoom lenses and even night-sight devices, working 24 hours a day. In addition to still spy-cameras, by 1978 the British Army had generalized the use of video-tape cameras in helicopters hovering over funerals, demonstrations and riots, and were able to select the picture of one particular person, and transmit it to a control screen at the British Army HQ.<sup>21</sup>

Infra-red detection systems were also used but with limited success. In June 1976, the British authorities admitted that a plane equipped with this device flew over Long Kesh in an attempt to detect any escape tunnels, nevertheless 9 IRSP prisoners did escape around that time. More recently, infra-red cameras were used to discover whether vegetation had been trampled, or ground had been turned over, either to hide anti-tank or anti-personnel mines, or arms dumps. Even prior to Operation Motorman in July 1972, Canberra planes from the RAF were equipped with infra-red cameras in an effort to detect arms dumps, and to fly over Long Kesh and Maggilligan Camp, County Derry. Around the same time, at the request of the RUC, the MoD experimented with, and developed, a new system of infra-red surveillance which shed no visible light — thanks to a special filter — but facilitated vision through TV cameras. The notorious Military Reconnaissance Force (MRF) technical unit, based at Thiepval Barracks, Lisburn, adopted this technique in 1975.

At the outset of the conflict, camera surveillance was marginal. Whilst the Official IRA still battled on, a camera was directed, from the Northumberland Street barracks, in the Upper Falls section of West Belfast, to a pub, The Old House and recorded anyone going in and coming out. Kitson himself praised the advantages of night surveillance:

An area in which technological developments may produce a very important advantage for those engaged in counter-insurgency concerns the development of night fighting equipment. Rural insurgents have always made maximum use of darkness to offset their weakness and attacks on the posts of government forces, ambushing, and food collection is normally carried out at night. The same can be said for the movement of messengers and commanders. Troops armed with portable radar, image intensifiers and FEBA [Forward Edge of the Battle Area] alarms will have a greatly increased capacity for countering enemy

moves of this sort providing that the equipment is issued in sufficient quantities, and that the men are well trained in its use.<sup>22</sup>

Kitson referred here to the rural guerrilla warfare, which, although never given prominence, always posed serious problems for the British Army, notably in the counties of Armagh, Fermanagh and Derry. And most of the equipment owed a lot to the same generation of the US weapons that had been used in Vietnam. For example, 'Twiggy', an image intensifier mounted on a tripod, which allowed night observation up to 2,000 metres, was useful in open fields to localize the moves of suspected enemy units. IRIS (Infra Red Intruder Alarm System) uses an infra-red beam projected between transmitter and receiver sets. The interruption of the beam starts off an alarm system, with maximum effect at 200 metres, although it can be utilized up to three kilometres.

The ZB 298 Radar, can be split into three portable units and facilitates the reception of a visual or audible signal triggered-off by human movement at a maximum distance of 10,000 metres. Obviously this proved to be very useful on border areas, such as South Armagh, especially for under-cover SAS units. Of course, this equipment cannot differentiate between types of living beings, and this has led to the sad death of dozens of cows, or even an exchange of firing between trigger-happy British units and the Irish Army.

The GS 20 Radar (Mk.1) used by the British army in 1979, was one of the latest gadgets in counter-insurgency technology; it was produced by a Scottish firm, based in Linlithgow, Micro-wave and Electronics Systems Ltd. Fixed on a moving vehicle or immobile, it can determine precisely where a projectile is shot from, and locate a sniper; night and day, it can also simultaneously locate two snipers situated in two different sites.

As in the 'big-ears war', technical escalation recognizes no boundaries, as was exemplified in September 1978, when it became clear that the IRA had acquired three sets of infra-red detection binoculars, which rendered the British Army's infra-red radars, or IRIS sets useless.

### The So-called 'Soft' Weapons

The use of means of population control is primarily political and not technological. For instance the 'baton-round' the ancestor of 'rubber' and 'plastic' bullets was invented by the British Army in Hong Kong in 1958 but, Jonathan Rosenhead noted in the *New Scientist* in 1976:

One lesson we should have learnt from the experience of Northern Ireland since 1968 is, that these technologies are not introduced for humanitarian reasons, or because of technical military considerations. The design and employment of the weapons is imbued through and through with politics. Thus the original wooden 'baton-round' used by the Hong Kong police was held to be unacceptable for use closer to

home, in Ireland. This was not because of differences in bone structure between Chinese and Caucasians; it was because of differences in *political* structure. A liberal regime in an advanced Western country has to impose stricter limitations on the brutalities it inflicts on its citizens. So the rubber bullet, and after it the plastic bullet, were developed specifically for use within the United Kingdom.<sup>23</sup>

In effect, the rubber bullet was introduced at the same time as Ted Heath became Prime Minister in 1970; the plastic bullet, although introduced in 1973, was not generally used until 1976; with its maximum use coincident with the emergence of the Womens' Peace Movement, and then during the 1981 Republican prisoners hunger-strike.

The rubber bullet was introduced into Northern Ireland with a major offensive of 11,000 British troops against the Nationalist ghetto in 1970, when an illegal curfew was imposed on the Lower Falls area of Belfast from 3 to 7 July. This was essentially a weapon designed for indiscriminate use to disperse crowds during demonstrations or riots. Between July 1970 and December 1974, 55,688 rubber bullets had been fired.

Most people outside Ireland seem to have the idea that rubber bullets are some kind of squashy pea-sized pellet. This is far from the case. Rubber bullets are made of black rubber, rather harder than that in car tyres. The bullet itself is a blunt nosed cylinder 5¼ inches high and 1½ inches in diameter, weighing over 5 ounces, and is fitted into a cartridge with a small gun-powder charge. It can be fired from either the US-designed Federal riot gun, or from a standard 1.5 inch signal pistol (produced by Schermuly Ltd. of Dorking) modified with a lengthened barrel. This is the same riot gun used to fire CS gas cannisters. Rubber bullets have a muzzle velocity of 160 miles per hour. The bullet is unstable in flight, and highly inaccurate.<sup>24</sup>

When used during street confrontations these bullets should not be fired from less than 20 metres. They were meant for use in the first non-violent phase considered in Kitson's scenario. In fact, the rubber bullets were dangerous, the more so when soldiers stuck nails into them or replaced them with radio batteries. Emily Groves, of Andersonstown, mother of 11 children, lost her sight when a soldier shot a rubber bullet at her point-blank; she had committed the unforgivable crime of playing a Republican song on her tape-recorder. The death of 11 year-old Francis Rowntree in April 1972, was reported thus by a witness:

Frank and I had just come out of the Divis Flats. We approached the corner of Whitehall Place. As we rounded the corner, we could see the back end of a Saracen sitting jutting out from the corner. The next thing I heard a bang, Frank fell backward, his feet sticking out at the corner. As the bang came, I noticed splinters. This object, whatever it was,

disintegrated. I think it was a battery, because the stuff looked like the black carbon.

From 1 January to 20 October 1973, four children were killed and six blinded by these projectiles.

This concentration of deadly incidents coincided with a toughening-up of the British Army in 1974, when they publicly stated that they thought they had destroyed the IRA infrastructure and that only a last thrust was needed to put an end to IRA activities. But, at the end of 1974, when the Truce was declared between the British and the IRA, (and observed by the latter at least) the rubber bullet gave way to the plastic bullet.<sup>25</sup> Apparently: 'When technical officers realized that the rubber bullet was not so discriminate as they would have liked, they set about developing a second 'bullet that would hit the target and not somebody else.'<sup>26</sup>

This was the plastic bullet, introduced after Operation Motorman in August 1972, widely and fully used in February 1973: but by December 1974, only 259 had been fired compared with the 60,000 rubber bullets used up to that time. More selective, the plastic bullet was also more deadly, neither was it very popular with the Army before 1976, probably because it was impossible to insert metal objects into them. Its massive use accorded with the prevailing frame of mind vis-à-vis the political construction of the Peace Movement — Ulsterization — whose prime aim was the criminalization of the resistance and their prisoners, and more selective military operations. With the same dimensions as the rubber bullet, except for its final cone, the initial speed of the plastic bullet was never given, but its higher velocity and accuracy was obvious. Its most frequent use was simply for a soldier to aim and shoot at a civilian, knocking him senseless, whilst a snatch-squad — usually belonging to the RUC or the Special Patrol Groups — rushed to arrest him.

Jonathan Rosenhead was not far off target when he wrote that:

the rubber bullet, when used as directed, is an indiscriminate weapon, ricochetting unpredictably. It is a weapon of popular intimidation. But, by 1976, the political and tactical nature of the war in Northern Ireland was changing. The climate was one in which the Peace Movement could take root and show some signs of sapping Catholic support for the IRA. Hence a more selective weapon, which can be aimed at 'ringleaders', could be less counter-productive.<sup>27</sup>

Once more, children were the prime victims. In October 1976, the Royal Welsh Fusiliers, saturated the Turf Lodge area as means of reprisal against the women there, who utterly rejected the Womens' Peace Movement. On 4 October, two British soldiers took for target 13 year-old Brian Stewart, and shot a bullet in his head. There was no riot, the boy was alone. He died in hospital on 10 October.

Theresa Dempsey, from Norglen Parade, Turf Lodge, was one witness:

On the 4 October, 1976 at about 6.40 p.m. I went to put a shovel of coal on the fire. When I opened the door I heard what sounded like a bin lid. I put the shovel down and went down the path to see if anything was wrong. At that time I noticed what I took to be a normal patrol of British Soldiers leaving the area. However, they seemed to hang about for a while. I went up the cul-de-sac. At this time there were about five soldiers that I could see. Two of them walked over to the side of the street where I was standing and one of them proceeded to lift his plastic bullet gun. He took an aiming position. There was a car beside him and he was aiming over the top. I thought this was to frighten some child as I could not see any children but thought they were about. The soldier who seemed to be in control stood behind the first soldier and pointed. The next second there was a bang and someone squealed. I ran over to the soldiers shouting: 'you are supposed to aim at the ground not straight ahead.' The one whom I took to be in charge said the children should not throw stones. I can honestly state that I did not see a stone land while I was there and I was about four yards from the soldier who fired.

Another neighbour, Frank Diamond, succinctly rounded-off the dozens of other statements on the killing:

At around 6.20 p.m. on October 4th I was standing at my own doorway which is approximately 30 yards from the corner of Monagh Crescent. A foot patrol was moving down Norglen Road (four men). There were no more than 10 children in and around Monagh Crescent corner. They were not in a group.

The soldiers were walking backwards down Norglen Road. I heard a plastic bullet being fired. I saw a young boy falling to the ground on the footpath at the corner of Monagh Crescent and Norglen Road. A member of the patrol ran up to him and attempted to pull him by the leg down the street.

There was a couple of children around the boy. I feel the soldier who attempted to pull the boy away saw the blood pouring from the boy's head realised it was very serious, he retreated and backed down to his patrol. I ran over to the corner and other neighbours lifted and carried him into Magees house in Monagh Crescent.

I went into the house with the child, I could see he was seriously wounded on the left temple. It was an open wound approximately 2" above his left ear. The top part of his left ear was black. Right above his left ear there was an immediate swelling.

We tried to stop the blood flow until the arrival of an ambulance. The child never spoke a word at all although his eyes were opening and closing. He did not appear to be conscious.

The boy appeared to be in a fit. His legs and arms were twitching and he was vomiting continuously until he was carried into the ambulance.

The ambulance man looked into the boy's eyes and said 'I think this lad has a fractured skull.'

As far as I am concerned this is a true version of what happened at my corner. I already appeared on the BBC television news today stating that I did not see any stone-throwing prior to the boy being shot.<sup>28</sup>

Well, nothing very unusual in Belfast, local people overcome by war-weariness, may say. Nonetheless, it provides some idea of 'soft' or 'less lethal' weapons in action.

## 2, 3, 5-T Defoliants Against the IRA?

On 18 August 1976, the Northern Irish Ministry of Agriculture and the British Army denied that the chemical defoliation of 100 acres of bracken in South Armagh had been carried out in order to hamper IRA activities in the area. Yet on the same day, the Dublin *Evening Press* noted that: 'Senior army officers in the North are privately saying that the removal of the bracken will help them enormously in their fight against the IRA'.<sup>29</sup> Indeed, South Armagh, in spite of the deployment of SAS units there earlier that year, remained a Republican stronghold. And it was true that in some areas, tracking down the guerrillas by helicopter was hampered by abundant vegetation, where it was possible to hide and set up an ambush against British military convoys, as the 1979 Warrenpoint ambush subsequently demonstrated.

According to the *Evening Press* report the defoliant code-named 'Agent Blue', was the same chemical used by the Americans in Vietnam and it was

... used in the North of Ireland for scrub control. It is a weed killer and is generally known as a bramble, brushwood and nettle killer. It contains highly toxic dioxin, the chemical which caused the Seveso disaster, and a scientist with the Northern Ireland Ministry of Agriculture said today that if significant quantities of dioxin were present it could have very dangerous side effects.

Europeans had only recently begun to be aware of the lethal potentialities of 2, 3, 5-T Trichlorophenol; an awareness aroused more by the Italian catastrophe in Seveso than by its massive and systematic use as a defoliant in the Vietnam War from 1963 onwards, where it aimed at 'unmasking military forts and allowed observation and firing' but also to destroy crops in an attempt to starve the Vietcong. Although a chemical agent acting primarily against vegetation, among human beings it provokes 'digestive disorders, pulmonary lesions, bronchial-constriction, mouth haemorrhages, haematemesis', with gravest consequences among children and aged people.<sup>30</sup>

2, 3, 5-T, sprayed from British Army helicopters was used before, and probably after, August 1976. Apart from the military advantage in the course

of counter-insurgency operations, there could have been another explanation. By the autumn of 1976, a young microbiologist attached to Liverpool University, arrived at Crossmaglen. Stephen Fletcher was provisionally seconded to Royal Marine Commandos stationed in South Armagh. Was he in charge of surveying and studying the consequences of the freshly released defoliant? In this exercise of 'chemical counter-guerrilla', were the Irish the guinea-pigs in yet another experiment in new techniques of repression?

Perhaps it was significant that the microbiologist Fletcher, was attached to the Liverpool University which in 1974, was the recipient of an annual grant of £5,516 from the Ministry of Defence, as well as subsidies from the US Army to develop research into malaria.

## Riot Control

Besides rubber and plastic bullets, Northern Ireland has been the testing-ground for many generations of weapons, vehicles and gases, aimed at controlling riots. Water-cannons, which moved slowly and had only a short range, were found to be out-moded for use in Northern Ireland, and were abandoned after being used at the time of Civil Rights Movement. The 'Paddy-Pushers', a sort of military bulldozer and carrier of a mini-barricade, could push back demonstrators while protecting soldiers on foot, already belonged to a new generation of counter-insurgency vehicles, as did the new 'Salamander' water-cannon carriers, introduced when, in the early 1970s the Army was the main riot-controlling force. Fast vehicles designed for 'internal security', as well as the helicopter, introduced a new dimension of rapid intervention when the urban guerrilla warfare spread and led to a situation demanding the ability to surround and quickly screen an area, and to locate and fight back an IRA unit. The impetus to make selective arrests, to charges designed to split demonstrations and isolate groups of demonstrators, was also reinforced.

Development in the use of gas followed the same pattern. In 1968, the use of tear-gas (CN) seemed to the authorities to be futile. When the Nationalist population in Derry were under severe attack from the Loyalist para-militaries and the B-Specials, during the 'Bogside Battle' in August 1969, a decision was made to use CS gas which had been developed during the Vietnam war. This coincided with the decision to send large contingents of the British Army to Northern Ireland. In Derry, the Bogside area was saturated with CS gas. In 1970, 10,000 gas cannisters and 2,500 grenades were thrown, almost exclusively into the Catholic ghettos. Considering the use of CS gas in conjunction with other events, such as the illegal curfews, the introduction of rubber bullets, then the internment without trial, enables us to appreciate the true nature of the conflict: to 'contain' discontent by indiscriminate means and, to recall Kitson's phrase, to make the life of the local population so miserable that their over-riding wish is for a return to 'normality'.

The British christened their gas 'CS smokes' in order not to contravene the terms of the 1925 Geneva Convention which proscribed the use of

chemical weapons, although paradoxically, nothing prevents a government using them against their own citizens.

Use of the gas this way is deliberate. It serves as one means of collective punishment for *all* the people of an area in which political demonstrations are occurring — whether 'violent' or otherwise. Many other examples could be given of Army harassment of population in Catholic areas — the goal is the demoralization of the population within which the guerrillas move. Gas is a very useful tool for this purpose because it singles out for its worst effects the weakest members of the population, those likely to be least involved in the conflict. Any chemical weapon will have its greatest effect on the elderly or sick (particularly those with lung or breathing disabilities, common in the climate and poverty of Ireland), pregnant women and young children — just those not involved in the front line of the conflict.<sup>31</sup>

### The Counter-Guerrilla Arsenal

From 1970, but particularly from 1972, with the expansion of offensive guerrilla warfare, numerous weapons were designed and experimented with to checkmate bomb attacks, sniping, and other means of ambushing the occupation forces. By the end of 1978, there had been seven generations of small remote-controlled robots to defuse bombs. 'Wheelbarrow' also known as 'Goliath', was equipped with a camera which allowed the technician behind his control screen to manipulate the articulated arms to move an object away or defuse a booby-trapped car. These robots had a series of arms, pincers, and sensors, to deal with explosives. In September 1978, the Israeli Security Services ordered 30 such robots from Britain in order to combat PLO bomb attacks in Jerusalem.<sup>32</sup> Stun Grenades, used by the 22 SAS in Mogadisciu in 1977, barbed ribbons, transparent anti-riot shields, explosives detectors, etc., the anti-terrorist industry in Britain, coupled with the numerous security firms, has been especially booming, as contracts signed each year during the Aldershot exhibition can demonstrate. Increasingly, weapons used in Ireland have been introduced on to British soil. Anti-riot shields were used for the first time during the Lewisham demonstrations against the National Front in 1977.

The fulfilment of the prophecy that the battle of Belfast would expand to Birmingham and Brixton started in 1981. Britain has also been the spearhead of technical changes in the international concept of counter-guerrilla operations, thanks to her Northern Irish experience. A journalist with the popular Paris weekly *Le Nouvel Observateur*, Fabien Gruhier, drew a particularly grim conclusion on the use of Ireland as a testing-ground:

In the light of what is taking place in Northern Ireland, one should remember that the British police are not exactly altar-boys and that

crowd control with more or less lethal weapons presents a threat for the citizens of all democratic countries.

Unlike General Pinochet in Chile, they cannot fire on the crowd with live ammunition, the political leaders of democratic nations must spare the opposition. Thus present-day technology offers an arsenal of refined gadgets to crush the egg, popular opposition with impunity. With weapons whose prime danger stems precisely from the fact that they are 'not dangerous', that they are experimented with in Britain and the United States in very special laboratories.

The testing-ground which yesterday was provided by Vietnam, is now to be found in Northern Ireland.<sup>33</sup>

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## 6. Special Legislation and Political Prisoners

The Law should be used as just another weapon in the government's arsenal, and in this case it becomes little more than a propaganda cover for the disposal of unwanted members of the public. For this to happen efficiently, the activities of the legal services have to be tied into the war effort in as discreet a way as possible.

Frank Kitson<sup>1</sup>

The essence of a law of exception is to abolish the narrow frontier between the judiciary and the police, and often the military and politics too. Detention due to special powers, interrogation under special circumstances — during a prolonged arrest; sentencing in special courts without a jury and by a judge influenced by a pro-British stand: such are the means whereby a man or a woman is extracted from the Nationalist ghettos to be drawn into the H-Block cells of Long Kesh or in Armagh gaol. Brutal methods, inhuman and degrading treatments, not to say torture form an integral part of the pattern, although the ultimate aim underwent changes.

In 1971, the aim was one of experiment when a few human guinea-pigs were used to develop sensory deprivation techniques, and to obtain tactical intelligence needed by the authorities in order to act promptly. For example, how does the structure command work in your area? Who is the officer in command next above you? Where are the arms dumps in this area? The British tried to recover lost time, but also to terrorize the population, whilst filling in their abysmal lack of intelligence concerning the Nationalist ghettos.

In 1982, to some extent the computer system made torture useless as a means to obtain tactical information. As internment without trial ended in 1975, ill-treatment and harassment in the course of interrogations 'in depth' had become systematic by the end of 1976 and in 1977, but with a politico-military purpose: to extract incriminating confessions, with the object of obtaining a quota of sentences, and thus 'dispose of unwanted members of the public'. These techniques of coercion, the use of torture and the diverse methods of population control already mentioned, would be inconceivable without solid backing from the special legal system.

## Exceptional Legislation

The special laws stemmed directly from the 1922 Partition of Ireland into two artificial states. Designed to suppress all political or military opposition to the division of Ireland, and *inter alia* towards discrimination against the nationalist minority in Northern Ireland, these laws thus institutionalized discrimination, as a reading of the Special Powers Act reveals. Already, in 1922, the Civil Authorities Act was introduced, conferring exceptional powers upon the police and the army who were allowed to:

- 1) Arrest without warrant.
- 2) Imprison without charge or trial or recourse to habeas corpus or a court of law.
- 3) Enter and search homes without warrant, forcibly, at any hour of day and night.
- 4) Declare a curfew, and prohibit meetings, assemblies (including fairs and markets) and processions.
- 5) Punish by flogging.
- 6) Deny claim to a trial by jury.
- 7) Arrest persons it is desired to examine as witnesses, forcibly detain them and compel them to answer questions, under penalties, even if their answers may incriminate them. Such a person is guilty of an offence if he refuses to be sworn or answer a question.
- 8) Do any act involving interference with the rights of private property.
- 9) Prevent access of relatives, or legal advisers to a person imprisoned without trial.
- 10) Prohibit the holding of an inquest after a prisoners' death.
- 11) Arrest a person who, 'by word of mouth', spreads false reports or makes false statements.
- 12) Prohibit the circulation of any newspaper.
- 13) Prohibit the possession of any film or gramophone record.
- 14) Arrest a person who does anything 'calculated to be prejudicial to the preservation of peace or maintenance of order in Northern Ireland and not specifically provided for in the regulations'.
- 15) The Act allows the Minister of Home Affairs to create new crimes by government decrees.

This Act was accompanied by a list of proscribed organizations; they were of course all organizations associated in one way or the other with the Republican Movement.

In 1963, the South African Prime Minister Vorster, referring to the Special Powers Act in Northern Ireland, said that he regretted being unable to benefit from such an extended legal arsenal! A decade later, in 1973, new legislation amended the Special Powers Act, this was the Emergency Powers Act, which simply adapted the Special Powers Act to the needs of the British Army and the RUC in their new counter-insurgency role.

It provided that the RUC could arrest any suspect without warrant and

that a person arrested could be kept on remand (this was extended to a seven-day period with the 1974 Prevention of Terrorism Act). The RUC could refuse to allow solicitors, friends and relatives to visit the prisoner, and even make it awkward for doctors to attend. The police were entitled to take fingerprints or photographs of a suspect without asking permission from their superiors. The British Army was empowered to arrest any suspect and to keep him/her for four hours (in practice, any detained person is usually handed over to the RUC who can then keep them in gaol for seven days); finally, people could be interned or imprisoned without judgment.

The last clause was that of internment without trial, which came into full force on 9 August 1971, when the Stormont Prime Minister, Brian Faulkner, obtained permission from London to open concentration camps. In 1975, following the truce with the IRA, this measure was abolished and juryless courts were introduced, as had been suggested in 1973 by the Diplock Commission. Meanwhile from 1971 to 1975, 1,800 members of the Nationalist community had been imprisoned without trial. This was to be distinguished from those who had been sentenced for actions of resistance to the British presence, some of whom were gaoled several times, according to the terms of Strasbourg International Court of Human Rights, many were victims of 'inhuman and degrading treatments'.

Most internees in this period were interned two or three times on average. 200 Loyalists were interned, never for more than a year, while the Loyalist para-military organizations were found responsible for almost the totality of civilian killings, beside the 200 people killed by the 'security forces'. During the same time, 5,000 people had been arrested and detained for from three to seven days, at the rate of about three persons a day.

The Courts where people suspected of 'terrorist activities' were judged were established in 1973, following the Diplock Commission Report. The main recommendation of this Commission was that the Court charged with judging persons accused of known 'terrorist crimes' (membership of an illegal organization — which then included Sinn Féin — possession of explosives, or weapons, attacks against the security forces, or economic targets) should sit without jury. This recommendation was justified by two reasons, supposedly ensuring impartiality in the search for justice; on the one hand, members of the jury may be intimidated by para-military organizations, on the other, in the past, the jury had been essentially (not to say exclusively) selected from the Protestant community, whose deliberations would, inevitably, be biased.

In fact, the juryless Courts, and the introduction of the Emergency Provisions Act, corresponded precisely to the phase suggested by Kitson: that the judiciary should be integrated within the counter-insurgency war effort. The composition of the Courts reinforced this sentiment, as the careers of those involved demonstrate. Sir Robert Lowry, who was an officer in the British Army during World War II, in 1971 became Honorary Colonel with the Royal Irish Rifles; Sir Edward Warburton-Jones, a former Unionist MP for Derry (1951-68), admirably illustrated how the system of discrimination against Nationalists should be upheld. Sir Ambrose McGonigal, was an officer with

the Special Boat Service, the naval section of SAS; Basil Kelly was a former Unionist MP, then Attorney-General (1968-72) and the main legal adviser to the Stormont government at a time when it launched internment without trial. John McDermott was also an Attorney-General and MP, as was Walter Topping who, besides representing the Unionist Party was also a former Colonel in the British Army and a Foreign Affairs Minister in the 1950s. Finally, Robert Babington, elected as Unionist MP for South Down, was also a Judge in the special juryless Courts. In this context, it is easy to envisage the kind of impartiality that can be expected by Irish nationalists.

## **Prisoners and Criminalization**

In June 1972, less than a year after the opening of the camps, Conservative Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, William Whitelaw, was forced to concede a special category status for the prisoners, following a 35-day hunger-strike led by the former Provisional IRA Belfast Brigade Commander Billy McKee. At that time there were 120 prisoners who had received sentence, 80 Republicans and 40 Loyalists, but also hundreds of internees. In March 1976, when political status was withdrawn after the end of internment, 1,500 sentenced prisoners had benefited from special status, of which 900 were Republicans (mostly Provos, but also IRSP and some Officials) and 600 were Loyalists (half of them were UDA, and the rest mostly UVF and members of smaller groups). In addition, 1,300 'Ordinary Decent Criminals' were held. (In comparison, in 1969, before the beginning of the present armed conflict there were in all 600 prisoners). In Crumlin Road gaol, Belfast, also in March 1976, 360 men awaited trial, and in Long Kesh, on top of the 1,100 'political' prisoners, 100 other prisoners were waiting to appear before the Courts. In the Magiligan Camp, in County Derry, 675 prisoners were detained, and finally, 82 women were in Armagh gaol and 58 teenagers in Millisle Borstal, County Down.

The increase in numbers of those who were captured and obtained political or 'special' status was significant. 120 in 1972, 1,000 by the end of 1974 and 1,500 in February 1976 — precisely when this status was abolished. The withdrawal of political status was effective at midnight on Sunday, 29 February 1976. Whoever was arrested after this date was no longer a 'political' but 'common criminal'. He or she could no longer enjoy the advantages that had been earned with such difficulty, such as political association within the camps; access to reading matter and the radio; the right to visits; a free choice regarding work, and freedom to wear personal civilian clothes. The denial of this status withdrew the distinction between 'common criminals' and 'political prisoners'; from 1 March 1976, captured Republicans had to wear prison uniform, be confined in small, individual cells, and work 40 hours a week.

The criminalization of prisoners obviously represented a turning point, for Republicans as much as for the British government. The Gardiner Commission Report on the 'suppression of terrorism' and on means whereby to

achieve it, had already suggested the withdrawal of political status in December 1975.

Yet it would be wrong to suggest that this was solely a British decision. In May 1975, a confidential report by the Institute for the Study of Conflict, mainly distributed to the Western intelligence agencies, and the NATO sub-Committee on Intelligence, proposed that political status should be withdrawn from guerrilla groups in Western Europe. The West German government advised the British to start with Irish Republicans: this would allow the fight against terrorism to be co-ordinated. From the British standpoint, such a move answered an urgent need, to depoliticize the conflict and to eliminate any conception of the conflict in Northern Ireland as that of a national liberation movement, and to justify the attempted withdrawal of the British regular troops from the area, and their replacement by an 'internal security force proper' — that is, the RUC police and the Ulster Defence Regiments.

The criminalization process would make way for a unification of special legislation on both sides of the Irish border. By denying political status, it was assumed that the political motivations underlying acts of protest, on the Irish pattern, would simply vanish, and by extending this principle into the European arena, the introduction of the European Anti-Terrorist Convention, whose prime movers and architects were Chancellor Helmut-Schmidt and President Giscard d'Estaing would be easily facilitated. Also, as far as the international collaboration of police forces was concerned, the 'depoliticization' of crimes allegedly committed by armed political groups, allowed these dossiers to be dealt with by INTERPOL, which by its charter, proscribes intervention in political affairs. As the INTERPOL No.2, at the headquarters in Saint-Cloud near Paris, was Director-in-charge of Police Operations, Deputy-Superintendent Raymond Kendall, seconded from the British Special Branch, this expansion of responsibility would be all the more easily initiated.

## **Kieran Nugent**

In a totally different context, in 1917, the British had engaged in the same manoeuvre to deny political status to the IRA prisoners. Throughout the years, the men and women whom they had treated as 'criminals' had become heroes, had freed half of their country, and become international figures of considerable stature, such as Eamonn De Valera or Seán MacBride. So, in the 1970s, they must have expected some resistance to a similar move; but not so persistent and determined.

The first prisoner to be sentenced after 1 March 1976, was Kieran Nugent. He was the first Republican to be locked away in the new buildings in Long Kesh camp, which was (known in Britain as the Maze Prison), constructed in the form of a letter 'H', hence the name 'H-Block'. Nugent immediately declared that the prison warders would have to 'nail the prison uniform on his back', as he refused to wear it. They stripped his clothes off, and, as he still refused to wear the uniform, he was thrown naked into his cell, and

except for a blanket, naked he remained for the next two years. By then, however, 300 other Republicans had joined him in the 'Blanket Protest' as it was known, for this was their only uniform. All reading material, including (though not immediately) the Bible was proscribed; no association with the growing numbers of prisoners who filled the H-Block was tolerated; they received no mail, no newspapers, no parcels and their mattress was withdrawn during the day.

The determination of these men — and later women from Armagh — which became a symbol in the ghettos and abroad, cannot be understood without knowledge of the history of constant aggression against the nationalist ghettos that the British troops had been engaged in since 1969; nor, indeed, without recalling the seven previous centuries of British conquest and colonization of the whole of the island.

Sinn Féin, of which Kieran Nugent was a member, and the Relatives Action Committee, explained who he was or rather, how one becomes a Kieran Nugent:

Kieran Nugent is 19 years old, and lived with his parents, 5 sisters and 4 brothers in the Lower Falls, Belfast.

On the 20th March 1973, when 15 year old Kieran was standing with a friend talking at the corner of Merrion Street and Grosvenor Road, a car drew up alongside them, and a man asked them street directions. The occupants of this car then opened fire with a sub-machine gun and Kieran was badly injured, 8 bullets in his chest, arms and back. His young friend, Bernard McErlean, also aged 15 was killed.

From the time of this shooting the British Forces of Occupation selected Kieran for special attention, the harassment of himself and his family began in earnest. Everywhere he went the Brits chased him, making his life a complete misery. The family home was raided scores of times. On 3 or 4 occasions the house was wrecked by the British raiding parties. In one particular raid the Brits planted 4 live rounds of ammunition, and a second raiding party, coming immediately afterwards, found the ammunition and arrested Kieran's father; he was subsequently released.

When he was 16 year old he was arrested by the British Army and held on remand in Crumlin Road prison. He remained in custody for 5 months. When he eventually came to trial the case against him was withdrawn. After release he was again not allowed to pursue a normal life and once more he was on the run from the British Army; who sought him day and night. Kieran lived from hand to mouth, taking shelter from anyone sympathetic enough to give it. In one particular incident whilst he was being chased by the Brits Kieran jumped from 5 floors up in the Divis Flats Complex, breaking both legs. He lay in agony for several hours afraid to cry out in case the Brits found him. A passer-by eventually discovered him and he was admitted to hospital. He remained in hospital for 19 days, subsequently spending

many months in plaster of paris. Owing to these injuries Kieran Nugent cannot wear ordinary boots or shoes, wearing sandals at all times. He is at present awaiting an operation to correct the deformity of his feet caused by the fractures to his legs.

Kieran was interned by Merlyn Rees on 9.2.75 and spent 9 months in Cage 4, Long Kesh until his release on 12.11.75.

Kieran was sentenced on the 14th September, 1976 to 3 years imprisonment. From this time he has been deprived of political prisoner status and is housed in the cell block at Long Kesh Concentration Camp. On Thursday 16th September 1976 he agreed to a visit with his mother, which meant he had to wear prison clothes. During the visit he removed garments and stated that he was not a criminal and that the Brits would have to nail the clothes on his back. From that day none of his family have seen him.

Nugent was eventually freed in May 1979, but his companions continued to resist.

In November 1976, Connolly Brady became the first Derry prisoner to follow in Nugent's footsteps. He was also a member of the Irish Republican Socialist Party, so that from that date, Provisionals and the smaller IRSP presented a united front in the quest for official recognition.

Irish Republicans argued that, in the course of the struggle for the complete independence of Ireland, the Irish Republican Movement, born in 1798, never accepted that their prisoners should have any other than political status. Theoretically, in June 1977, the additional Protocols I and II to the Geneva Convention signed on 12 August 1949, should have allowed them 'Prisoner-of-War Status', which they have also demanded.

## International Law and Criminalization

Indeed, as the British tried to criminalize the Irish Republicans, the International Red Cross protocols expanded, *de jure*, the status of prisoner-of-war to captured members of liberation movements.

In view of Protocol I, (Part 1, & 4):

The situations referred to . . . include armed conflicts in which peoples are fighting against colonial domination and alien occupation and against racist régimes in the exercise of their right of self-determination, as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and the Declaration on Principles of International Law Concerning Friendly Relations and Co-operation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

In the Irish case, the Republican forces (Irish Republican Army and Irish National Liberation Army) fight with the admitted aim of establishing a 32-county united Ireland, and thus the achievement of self-determination for

the Irish people as a whole. Incidentally, the Right of Sovereignty of a United Ireland is embodied in Article 2 of the Southern Irish Constitution: 'The national territory consists of the whole island of Ireland, its islands and the territorial seas'. The two Republican forces (IRA/INLA) constitute the latest link in a long chain of national uprisings organized by the Irish Republican Movement. Additionally, the term 'racist', in its broad sense, could well apply to the Stormont regime from 1922 to 1972, with the same rationale as that underlying the UN Assembly decision that 'Zionism is a form of racism'. Violation of the right to self-determination and the institution of an artificial state in 1922, with the presence of more than 10,000 troops, is 'foreign occupation'.

Article 43 (Section II of Protocol I) defines the 'Combatant and Prisoner-of-War Status' as follows:

The armed forces of a Party to a conflict consist of all organized armed forces, groups or units which are under a command responsible to that Party for the conduct of its subordinates, even if that Party is represented by a government or an authority not recognized by an adverse Party.

Without establishing a government-in-exile or other governmental structure (such as the PLO for the Palestinians) Republican forces can claim that they regroup 'organized armed forces, groups or units' under a 'responsible command structure'. With some variations, the IRA and the INLA possess similar structures (Brigades, Active Service Units, etc.) with rigorously defined command levels (Army Council, General Headquarters) including surveillance and disciplinary departments.

'Any combatant', as defined in Article 43, 'who falls into the power of an adverse Party shall be prisoner of war', states the Article following. Therefore, when Britain detains individuals, and the reason for their detention is membership of Republican forces or involvement in co-ordinated actions, acting within the framework of the structures mentioned above, these individuals could claim to be classified as prisoners-of-war. Paragraph 3 of this same Article 44, covers guerrilla warfare, to which the application of this status also applies. As the guiding principles of any guerrilla force entail close contact with the civil population, the Red Cross Protocol added that:

Recognizing, however, that there are situations in armed conflicts where, owing to the nature of the hostilities an armed combatant cannot so distinguish himself, he shall retain his status as combatant, provided that, in such situations, he carries his arms openly: a) during each military engagement; and b) during such time as he is visible to the adversary while he is engaged in a military deployment preceding the launching of an attack in which he is to participate.

The Red Cross International Committee, during the report on this Article,

admitted that this paragraph was open to misinterpretation. Indeed, the Palestine Liberation Organization set up a press conference during the debates in Geneva, in order to state that they interpreted it to mean that when they carried their weapons during an attack, they should do so openly. There was no reason to suppose that what applied to the Palestinian fedayeen did not apply to IRA Volunteers.

This was partly the reason why in January 1978, on the occasion of the commemoration of Bloody Sunday in Derry, the IRA demonstrated in force, with masked, but uniformed Volunteers, ostentatiously carrying their new US M-60 machine-guns in front of news reporters and TV cameras.

As the *Sunday Times* reporter Chris Ryder noted:

On January 29 nylon-masked Provos brandishing M60 guns posed for television crews in Londonderry. This propaganda exercise and a similar one in Belfast two weeks earlier symbolise the Provos' new strategy — to be recognised at the United Nations as a legitimate 'national liberation army', with prisoner-of-war status for captured members.

The IRA hopes to benefit from last June's updating of the Geneva Convention on the humanitarian laws of war. Its Protocol II deals with rebellions and guerrilla warfare — and recognises for the first time that guerrillas are legitimate combatants. They can now obtain PoW status, provided they have carried weapons openly, even if in civilian clothes, before and after an attack (hence the television appearances). A guerrilla is entitled, under the rules, to follow a daytime occupation and become a nighttime gunman. But PoW status can be obtained only if the United Nations recognises the cause as legitimate.

Britain abstained during some votes at the conference which drafted the new protocols and has so far not ratified the revised convention.

But sympathetic lawyers have advised the Provos that they have a case. That is why they have concentrated recently on attacking the security forces, which they will claim to the UN are forces of occupation.<sup>2</sup>

Paragraph 5 of Article 44 recalls that 'any combatant who falls into the power of an adverse Party while not engaged in an attack or in a military operation preparatory to an attack, shall not forfeit his rights to 'be a combatant and a prisoner of war by virtue of his prior activities.' Article 45, also stipulated that an individual who fell into the hands of an adverse Party was presumed to be a prisoner-of-war, and protected by the Convention No.3 of August 1949, relative to 'Treatment of the Prisoner-of-war'.

Article 75 of Protocol I was clearly relevant to prisoners in the Long Kesh H-Blocks and Armagh cells, as it proscribed:

(a) violence to the life, health, or physical or mental well-being of persons, in particular: (i) murder; (ii) torture of all kinds, whether physical or mental; (iii) corporal punishment; and (iv) mutilation;

(b) outrages upon personal dignity, in particular humiliating and degrading treatment, enforced prostitution and any form of indecent assault.

Article 75 echoed Article 5 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which, as the conclusions of Amnesty International and the Strasbourg European Court of Human Rights clearly demonstrated, was systematically violated in Ireland. Paragraph 4 of Article 75 was particularly apt in view of the introduction of special courts since 1973, before which members of the Republican organizations appeared: '4(b) no one shall be convicted of an offence except on the basis of individual penal responsibility.' This is significant for convictions and sentences obtained solely on the basis of confessions made by (or extracted from) a suspect, on the simple charge of membership of a military or political organization, on the basis of having him/her take responsibility for a collective action. Likewise Article 4(f): 'No one shall be compelled to testify against himself or to confess guilt,' echoes the cries and protestations of those tortured in the Belfast or Derry RUC Interrogation Centres.

These various legal dispositions have not so far been applied to Irish Republicans, nor to the Polisario Front, or any other liberation movements. Their application depends upon a quasi-diplomatic recognition by other 'neutral parties', that is bodies representing other countries who would be willing to sponsor the rights of the Irish Republican forces before the international arbitration structures; such as the Organisation for African Unity (which sponsored other non-African movements in the past such as Pathet Lao), the Non-Aligned Countries or the UN Decolonization Committee.

Regarding international recognition, the Irish Republicans insisted on the distinction between urban guerrilla groups and national liberation movements which practise guerrilla methods of warfare. In practical terms, this implies a fundamental difference between the IRA, and the Basque ETA on the one hand, and the West German Red Army Faction or the Italian Red Brigades, on the other.

In France, for instance this was legally recognized in the case of Basques and Irishmen. In September 1978, two alleged ETA partisans, Martin Apaolaza and Miguel Giocoecha who had killed two Civil Guards were not extradited to Spain, as the Aix-en-Provence Court decided that their acts had been political, since they had been 'committed in the context of the struggle led by a section of the Basque population aiming at getting political autonomy'.<sup>3</sup> Two months later, the same Court gave a similar ruling in the case of an Irishman, James McCann who claimed to be a member of the IRA, and whom the Germans were seeking to extradite because he had allegedly taken part in a bomb attack in 1973 against the British Army HQ in Mönchengladbach. McCann was not a member of any Republican organization, but rather involved in more enigmatic activities related to drug smuggling. What mattered then however, was that in rejecting the extradition order the Court believed they were dealing with an IRA Volunteer. They observed that

McCann could not be extradited because the bomb blasts in the British barracks had been

perpetrated solely in the context of the political struggle of the Northern Ireland opponents to the British power. Hence it follows, according to the circumstances in which they were carried out, that the offences mentioned must be considered as political offences.<sup>4</sup>

Of course, with the coming to power of the Socialist administration in France in 1981, the position on extradition was returned to a traditional one of a systematic right of political asylum. French Law had recognized the political character of the Irish conflict.

Obviously one question hangs over the problem of granting prisoner-of-war or political status. If it is granted to the Republicans, it would mean that the two conflicting parties, members of the Irish Republican Movement and the British Army, would qualify for recognition as such, but what of the Loyalist groups? So far, with the exception of a handful of individuals, UDA or UVF members do not request political status. According to the terms of the Red Cross Protocols, they could never be recognized as a liberation movement, nor would they seek it anyway. But oddly enough, the Red Cross Protocol would apply to them if they were recognized as a para-military force auxiliary to the British forces, which, in effect they have been since their inception. They would have 'combatant' status if officially incorporated within the British war machine, as Article 43 (Protocol 1, & 3) saw it: 'Whenever a Party to a conflict incorporates a para-military or armed law enforcement agency into its armed forces it shall so notify the other Parties to the conflict.' Only one group could never qualify for political status, in spite of the Littlejohn brothers claim, and that is spies.

Whatever is the case, in practical terms, by 1978, the prisoners in Long Kesh H-Blocks, Crumlin Road Gaol and Armagh Prison felt that in order to make their plight recognized it was essential to intensify their protest.

### **The No-Wash Phase**

In April 1978, the 300 prisoners in H-Blocks 3 and 5 engaged in a new phase of protest at the withdrawal of political status: the No-Washing Non-Cooperation phase.

Two prison chaplains, Father Denis Faul and Father Raymond Murray, described the situation by the end of April as the prisoners had escalated their protest by refusing to wash, to clean out their cells or empty their latrines, by refusing to leave their cells or to co-operate in any way with the prison staff:

There is an all pervading stench of urine in the Blocks. Excreta is thrown out the windows; urine is being emptied on the floors and in some cases on the mattresses.



All furniture has been removed from the cells or has been broken. All that remains is the bunk beds, one above the other for the two cell mates. The cells are stained with urine, papers and fluff are on the floor; there is a stench in the cell and from the inmates. The cell measures 10' x 6' x 9' high.

The men have begun to put off a stench since the weather became warm. Their feet are very dirty and they have beards; they have lost a lot of weight; either the food is insufficient or badly cooked or interfered with or they cannot eat it in the smelly and unhygienic conditions of the cells.

All clothes have been removed from the cells. The men must come to Mass on Sundays in Blue Towels. Before they enter the canteen chapel, they must enter a small room and take off the towel and allow their dirty bodies to be inspected back and front. This, most of them refused to do and were not at Mass; it is only a matter of time before there is no one at Mass.

The men are in their cells all day; they have no books of any kind, not even the religious ones: no papers or magazines: no TV or radio: no newspapers: no exercise; few visits; no pens or writing material. Banging on the doors at night results in loss of sleep.

Complaints have been made about the alleged beating up of James Anthony McCooney during the week-end of April 16-17. Reports say his eye was badly bruised and his lips were burst. When a clerical visitor asked to see him on Wednesday 19 April he was told that he had gone to an outside hospital and that he was as epileptic and had fallen. Few are prepared to believe this.

Another prisoner Sean Campbell said he was beaten up on March 11 at the start of his hunger and thirst strike and he claims that the authorities are refusing to admit his solicitor Paschal O'Hare contrary to the 1975 decision of the European Commission of Human Rights. His request to see the Governor was avoided by telling him he must put on his clothes to see him. A great many rights, letters, visits to medical men, etc., can be taken off the prisoners by insisting on them wearing the clothes. Gerry McDaid, Billie McDonagh and Kieran Nugent also alleged beatings.

Prisoners on protest are described in official notices in the prison as 'Strippers' or 'Streakers'; these official references are inaccurate and gratuitously insulting.

One can sense the strain under which the prisoners are labouring and indeed the extra tension on everyone in the prison. It is a situation that should call forth the maximum humanitarian and Christian concern from all concerned people.

The situation is going to go on for a long time, maybe two years, maybe more: negotiators, mediators are needed to resolve the situation before innocent young lives are lost or are driven into Mental Hospitals.

In angular, cramped and nervous handwriting on a sheet of 'Government Property' toilet paper, a typical letter smuggled out by an H-Block prisoner to his family in the summer of 1978 is reproduced here:

Dear Mother and Father,

Just a few lines to let you know how I am keeping and what conditions are like in here. As you probably already know we are locked up 24 hours a day and we don't get exercise. All the furniture has been removed from the cells so now we sleep on the mattress on the floor. The only things that are in our cells are two slop pots and the water gallon. Our cells are approx. 8' x 8'. They were planned for to house one prisoner and there is two to a cell. Here the cells stink of decaying food which could not be eaten as most of it is uneatable anyway and the maggots crawl all over the floor. We are at present on a dirt strike which has been going on for over three months. We don't wash or slop out pots, mop or brush out cells so you should have a good idea what state the cells are in. The screws come in at periods and kick over the slop pots spilling the contents over the floor and mattress. The water gallons are taken out of the cells after breakfast and fresh water brought around later. I have found some things in my water; beans, maggots and pieces of wire. This happens with the dinner as well. This is done by the Loyalists as they do orderlies up here. They get away with almost anything. The screws turn a blind eye. The other night when tea came round one of the lads in a cell across from me noticed that there was a spittle in his tea. He rang the bell and the screws came round with the orderly. He told them he had a spittle in his tea. Then things go out of hand and the orderly got a cup of tea thrown around him. Then four more orderlies came running down with brush shafts and gave the Republican a hammering. He was then taken to the boards but the orderlies stayed in the Block.

Our cells and ourselves got a wash with the high pressure hose when they hosed down the yard. A lot of cell windows are broken by the force of it and the cells flooded. This is done by the screws and orderlies and everyone is catching colds and flues and a few lads have collapsed at Mass and there is a lot of skin disorders. The rats are running about the yard and they jump up on to the windows. Although things are bad in here I am keeping well myself so don't worry and tell everyone I sent them my best regards so I'll close this short note now.  
From your loving son,

Little by little, increasingly hostile reactions to the way that Irish political prisoners were treated by the British began to shatter the wall of silence, but even then, the International Red Cross was prevented from visiting them. In July 1978, however, the Primate of All Ireland, Cardinal Tomas O Fiaich was 'luckier'; he was allowed to visit the H-Blocks. On 30 July, he published a statement which gave a vivid account of the state in which the prisoners

found themselves after two years of struggle:

There are nearly 3,000 prisoners in Northern Ireland today. This must be a cause of grave anxiety to any spiritual leader. Nearly 200 from the Archdiocese of Armagh are among the total of almost 1,800 prisoners in the Maze Prison at Long Kesh. This is the equivalent of all the young men of similar age groups in a typical parish of this diocese . . .

Having spent the whole of Sunday in the prison I was shocked by the inhuman conditions prevailing in H-Blocks 3, 4 and 5, where over 300 prisoners are incarcerated. One would hardly allow an animal to remain in such conditions, let alone a human being. The nearest to it I have seen was the spectacle of hundreds of homeless people living in sewer-pipes in the slums of Calcutta. The stench and filth in some of the cells, with the remains of rotten food and human excreta scattered around the walls, was almost unbearable. In two of them I was unable to speak for fear of vomiting.

The prisoners' cells are without beds, chairs or tables. They sleep on mattresses on the floor and in some cases I noticed that these were quite wet. They have no covering except a towel or blanket, no books, newspapers or reading material except the Bible (even religious magazines have been banned since my last visit); no pens or writing material, no TV or radio, no hobbies or handicrafts, no exercise or recreation. They are locked in their cells for almost the whole of every day and some of them have been in this condition for more than a year and a half.

The fact that a man refuses to wear prison uniform or to do prison work should not entail the loss of physical exercise, association with his fellow prisoners or contact with the outside world. These are basic human needs for physical and mental health, not privileges to be granted or withheld as rewards or punishments. To deprive anyone of them over a long period — irrespective of what led to the deprivation in the first place — is surely a grave injustice and cannot be justified in any circumstances. The human dignity of every prisoner must be respected regardless of his creed, colour or political viewpoint, and regardless of what crimes he has been charged with. I would make the same plea on behalf of Loyalist prisoners, but since I was not permitted to speak to any of them, despite a request to do so, I cannot say for certain what their present condition is.

Several prisoners complained to me of beatings, of verbal abuse, of additional punishments (in cold cells without even a mattress) for making complaints, and of degrading searches carried out on the most intimate parts of their naked bodies. Of course, I have no way of verifying these allegations, but they were numerous.

In the circumstances, I was surprised that the morale of the prisoners was high. From talking to them it is evident that they intend to continue their protest indefinitely and it seems they prefer to face

death rather than submit to being classed as criminals. Anyone with the least knowledge of Irish history knows how deeply rooted this attitude is in our country's past. In isolation and perpetual boredom they maintain their sanity by studying Irish. It was an indication of the triumph of the human spirit over adverse material surroundings to notice Irish words, phrases and songs being shouted from cell to cell and then written on each cell wall with the remnants of toothpaste tubes.

The authorities refuse to admit that these prisoners are in a different category from the ordinary, yet everything about their trials and family background indicates that they are different. They were sentenced by special courts without juries. The vast majority were convicted on allegedly voluntary confessions obtained in circumstances which are now placed under grave suspicion by the recent report of Amnesty International. Many are very youthful and come from families which had never been in trouble with the law, though they lived in areas which suffered discrimination in housing and jobs. How can one explain the jump in prison population of Northern Ireland from 500 to 3,000 unless a new type of prisoner has emerged.

## **The Hunger-Strikes**

In the following two years, pressure mounted from within the H-Blocks to resort to the ultimate means of action which, generation after generation, the Irish Republicans had employed to further their claim to be categorized as political prisoners: the hunger-strike. Outside, the families, the National Smash H-Block Committee and the Republican Movement, attempted to convince the prisoners that this desperate step could be avoided through more extensive publicity, organized on an international basis. Frustration spread among prisoners; the discreet talks between Cardinal O Fiaich and the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Humphrey Atkins, failed, and the prisoners felt that all other means of protest had been exhausted. On 27 October 1980, the Prisoners' Officer in Command, Brendan Hughes and six of his companions, Tom McFeeley, Ray McCartney, Leo Green, Tommy McKearney, John Nixon and Seán McKenna embarked upon hunger strike 'to demand that we not only be recognized and treated as political prisoners, but as human beings.'

Although they were fasting in an attempt to gain political status, in order to make their claim clear to the public, both in Ireland and abroad, they put forward practical demands which received support not only from Republican sympathisers but also from general liberal opinion. These demands were simply stated as the right to wear their own clothes; to refuse penal work; to organize their own work, studies and leisure, to meet and associate freely with the other prisoners; to receive visits, letters and parcels once a week, and the reinstatement of full remission, lost because of the H-Blocks protest.

On 18 December, after 53 days on hunger-strike, Seán McKenna received

the last rites, and three women from Armagh jail joined in the protest. Their comrades then decided that the proposals put forward by the British administration, (significantly, in conjunction with Foreign Office representatives, who knew better than any other government officials, that the hunger strike had received tremendous international publicity) were acceptable, consequently they halted their hunger-strike. During the next three months, however, as all prisoners stopped their no-wash protest as well, none of the demands which the British seemingly had accepted were implemented. This provoked a fresh crisis and on 1 March 1981, Bobby Sands, one of the prime negotiators, initiated a new hunger-strike protest.

The following month, 30,492 people in Fermanagh and South Tyrone constituency elected him as their MP to Westminster, thus providing publicity on an international scale, without precedence since Terence McSwiney, the Mayor of Cork's hunger-strike in 1920. In spite of the limited intervention of the Irish Prime Minister, Charles Haughey, and of the European Commission on Human Rights, Margaret Thatcher made no concessions. When Bobby Sands died on 5 May, his name became the symbol of resistance against oppression throughout the world, from Nicaragua to Iran, in the Eastern Socialist countries as much as in Western Europe, not to mention the USA, where the sympathy of the Irish-American community for the Republicans had never been so strongly expressed since the early 1970s. Yet Frank Hughes, Raymond McCreesh and Patsy O'Hara soon followed Bobby Sands to the grave. On 11 June, nine prisoners stood as parliamentary candidates for the general election in the South, which — since Britain's Partition of Ireland did not affect the fact that any Irish person could be elected in any part of the island — they were fully entitled to do. Paddy Agnew topped the poll in Louth, while Kieran Doherty was elected for the Cavan/Monaghan constituency. In all other areas the prisoners got considerable support gaining up to 20% of the votes. A month later, Joe McDonnell died in turn, followed by Martin Hudson, and in August, by Kevin Lynch, Kieran Doherty and Thomas McElwee. But as pressure from abroad continued to mount, the British Conservative administration remained determined not to recognize the political nature of the struggle. Surprisingly, the necessity to concede political status was voiced from some Loyalist quarters; perhaps because even though Loyalists never participated in such protests, their prisoners had in the past, always benefited from Republican prisoners' victories and the question of political status applied to them too.

On 20 August 1981, Owen Carron, Bobby Sands' electoral agent was elected as MP in Fermanagh/South Tyrone, standing as an H-Block candidate, thus demonstrating the solidarity of the nationalist community's support for the prisoners and for the Republican Movement; this was embarrassing for London, for the argument had always been that the IRA was a 'minority terrorist faction' which could claim no legitimacy. On the same day, Micky Devine was the tenth hunger-striker to die. Church and family pressure was high then, and several protesters, who had replaced their fallen comrades, abandoned their fast. At that time too, the Republican leadership and, more

importantly, the prisoners, felt that temporarily, they had failed.

The prisoners decided to call off their hunger-strike in September, expressing the sentiment that they could achieve very little more for the time being. The British were confident that they had defeated the Republican prisoners, but was it not rather self-defeat? The victory they thought they had achieved turned out to be the most significant international victory ever achieved by the Irish Republicans, a turning point in advancing the cause of Republicanism abroad, which was certainly of greater significance world-wide than such spectacular events, as the killing of Lord Mountbatten. They had also shown that they were prepared to use the 'democratic British process of elections', and successfully at that. But the British government still refused to recognize the political nature of the conflict, even when the IRA resumed military activities in the heart of Britain, blasting the Irish Guards' bus in Chelsea, and attacking General Stuart Pringle of the Royal Marines in November 1981.

When the H-Block prisoners abandoned their hunger strike they published a statement in which they set out to explain their position. The conclusion, in part, read:

There were several reasons given by our comrades for going on hunger-strike. One was because we had no choice, no other means of securing a principled solution to the four-year protest. Another, and of fundamental importance, was to advance the Irish people's right to liberty. We believe that the age-old struggle for Irish self-determination and freedom has been immeasurably advanced by this hunger-strike and therefore we claim a massive political victory. The hunger-strikers, by their selflessness, have politicized a very substantial section of the Irish nation and exposed the shallow, unprincipled nature of the Irish partitionist bloc . . . . Lastly we reaffirm our commitment to the achievement of the five demands, by whatever means we believe necessary and expedient. We rule nothing out.

Under no circumstances are we going to devalue the memory of our dead comrades by submitting ourselves to a dehumanizing and degrading regime.

Are these the words of criminals?

### **Special Powers in Britain: The Prevention of Terrorism Act**

On Thursday night, 21 November, 1974 bombs exploded in two Birmingham pubs; 21 people were killed and 160 injured. The blasts were attributed to the Provisional IRA which, it is true, had launched a military offensive on British soil, but its Army Council hesitated to accept responsibility and virtually denied any involvement whatsoever. They simply stated that the IRA was carrying out an investigation and that their policy had never been to

attack 'non-military targets without prior warning'. In ultimately denying responsibility for this incident the IRA leadership indicated that this lay with British Intelligence forces.

The arrest in Birmingham, some days later, of Kenneth Littlejohn, the man from the SIS who had already been involved in a network held responsible for the December 1972 Dublin explosions, seemed to support this possibility. Sinn Féin leaders underlined the fact that many Irish people had died in the bombing attacks on the *Mulberry Bush* and the *Tavern In The Town* on 21 November, and that both inns often lent their back-rooms for socialist meetings. Whatever was the truth, such a disaster considerably disturbed the traditional supports of the Republican Movement, although only temporarily.

The truce between the IRA and the British authorities that followed was perhaps a manifestation of the mutual embarrassment of both parties. The IRA certainly thought a lull was needed, and that any other tragedy comparable to the Birmingham incident should be strictly avoided, whilst the Labour administration in Britain at that time seemed to be terrified by the idea of a determined, indiscriminate *blitzkrieg* by the IRA on the 'British mainland'.

Reaction in Britain was fierce. Anger, fear and hysteria, swept across the whole island, whilst added impetus was given to some neo-nazi groups stimulation of the traditional, latent anti-Irish species of racism. The media largely echoed these sentiments. Interestingly, in view of the status and recognition which Republicans sought to achieve, *The Times* editorial on 23 November acknowledged the fact that a state of war existed:

This is an Act of War: there are times when the emotional response to a public event is also the soundest one. The natural response to the murders in Birmingham is one of anger and determination . . . only the most effective counter-measures will satisfy public opinion . . .<sup>5</sup>

Indeed the Labour government announced by 26 November, that anti-terrorist legislation was being prepared which would include a ban on the IRA and confer wider power of arrests and detention upon the police. It was no surprise then, that on 28 November, an Anti-Terrorist act was rushed through the Parliament without major obstacle. 14 Left-wing Labour MPs opposed it on the grounds that it presented unforeseeable risks to freedom in Great Britain, besides the fact that the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) constituted a real declaration of war against the Irish community exiled in Britain. In fact, the introduction of the new legislation simply extended and complemented that already in existence in Northern Ireland. As legal minds noted, it was a synthesis of the Northern Irish legislation and the Prevention of Violence (Temporary Provisions Act), implemented in England during the short-lived IRA bombing campaign in 1939.

With the first wave of Irish bombs in March 1973, the authorities had already prepared a projected legislation. The then Conservative Home Office

had presided over the elaboration of contingency plans to counter terrorism 'on the mainland'. The Provisional IRA had waited for five years in the new phase of the Anglo-Irish conflict before opening up a 'second front', after a defensive period in 1972. Nonetheless, Britain had her own 'subversives' with the Angry Brigade, and the Official IRA had blown-up the Aldershot Barracks early in 1972, as a reprisal for the Derry massacre by the British army.

The ban on the IRA, restriction on travel between the two islands and, by the summer of 1974, the idea of 'deporting suspects' had already given rise to the drawing up of a list of potential suspects by both the Home Office and the MoD. All these measures were embodied within the PTA. It proscribed the Irish Republican Army, illegal in Northern Ireland, but curiously, until then, legal in Britain. Scotland Yard considered that this ban, though popular among ordinary law-abiding British citizens, would turn out to be of little use. The ban, which applied to the Provos as much as to the Officials, who had been inactive since 1972, was opening the way to the criminalization of any political demonstration of support for the Irish Republican Movement. It created a new concept of moral complicity with terrorism which had spread since the case of the lawyer of the Red Army Faction, Klaus Croissant in West Germany; the imprisonment of Professor Negri in Italy because of his theoretical writings; and the journalist, Xavier Vinader's sentence of seven years imprisonment in Spain, for publishing an interview with a policeman who named Spanish anti-Basque fascists, some of whom were later assassinated by the ETA-Militar.

The political groups, (Provisionals) Sinn Féin and Clann na h-Eireann, linked to Sinn Féin (Officials) The Workers' Party, in Ireland were not banned, but in its first section the new law made it an offence to collect money, make speeches and generally disseminate propaganda in favour of the Republican Movement. For instance, James Fegan, from Glasgow, was sentenced on 10 February 1975, to six months imprisonment for soliciting support for the IRA by offering posters for sale. Allegedly he was going from table to table, in the Braemar Bar, London Road, asking people if they wished 'to buy a poster to support the boys'. The poster he produced read: 'JOIN THE PEOPLE'S ARMY THE PROVISIONALS', but he also had others in his bag which said 'BRIT THUGS OUT' and more incriminatingly 'VICTORY TO THE IRA'.

Catherine Scorer, of the National Council for Civil Liberties, in her report on the PTA identified the main issue at stake:

The ban on the IRA has inevitably led to the curtailing of legitimate political activity by a number of groups who campaign peacefully for the unification of Ireland. The passing of the Act created an unease — in part justified — that a person could be charged for his or her beliefs rather than for a criminal action. Since November 1974, both Sinn Féin and Clann na h-Eireann, which pursue political campaigns for similar objectives to those of the Provisional and Official IRA respectively,

restricted their political activity for fear of a charge under the Act (and also, of course, because a large number of the leadership of both organisations had been excluded from Great Britain). Moreover, no one was sure how the courts would interpret the sections relating to support. The atmosphere at that time can be gauged from press reports that people were afraid to be associated with anything Irish. Even Irish harps had apparently been destroyed!

NCCL has been consulted by many different groups on issues which range from selling Easter Lilies (which commemorate the Rising of 1916 in Dublin) to raising money for prisoners' families and selling Sinn Féin newspapers. Although there have been no prosecutions for the selling of Republican papers, which would not be illegal unless they openly supported the IRA, a large number of people have been arrested and interrogated when the police find them doing so.<sup>6</sup>

Brian Rose-Smith, a lawyer who constantly defended victims of the PTA gave a final touch to the picture of all the political and human consequences of the new law for the Irish community:

The overall effect has been a reduction in the political activity of the main Republican political organizations, Sinn Féin and Clann na h-Eireann, whilst there has been an unofficial censorship imposed on the discussion of Irish affairs where other than an establishment view is being put forward. Shortly after the 1974 Act was passed one brewery wrote to its tied public houses and advised that licencees could make themselves liable for prosecution if they permitted on their premises such activities as the sale of newspapers, raffle tickets and news sheets, collection of money, 'use of rooms for meetings, dances (or) singing of songs of an IRA nature' and the display of flags, banners, postcards and advertisements. The activities specified were vague, and the result was that many public houses and clubs refused access to collectors, even those from genuine charities, and the use of their rooms for political meetings.<sup>7</sup>

Again, it is necessary to underline the role of a section of the PTA on the media. The expansion of the concept of 'moral complicity' in a country where public opinion was already ill-informed about the Irish conflict had the disastrous effect of self-imposed censorship in the British media. The commercial channels were advised by the broadcasting authorities to avoid presenting interviews favourable to the Irish prisoners during the hunger-strike that ended in the death of Frank Stagg, in February 1976. Section Two of the PTA foresaw the possibility of deporting Irish people from Britain to Ireland — North and South — or from Northern Ireland to Britain. As far as deportation to Northern Ireland is concerned, no one could fail to notice that this 'province of the United Kingdom' has a very special status. Nevertheless, this measure meant that the freedom of movement of Republicans,

supporters of Irish separatism, or even suspects, was restricted; this both constituted a threat and facilitated the use of a further form of harassment against political activists in Ireland. It proceeded from the same standpoint as did internment without trial in the years from 1971 to 1975; a deportation order could be issued solely if a suspect was, in the opinion of the Home Secretary, 'any person who is or has been concerned (whether in Great Britain or elsewhere) in the commission, preparation or instigation of acts of terrorism . . .', and no further evidence was required.<sup>8</sup>

Theoretically, any person threatened with deportation can appeal within 96 hours. But the Home Secretary himself could decide whether there was any reason for him to reconsider his initial decision. Less than an hour after the introduction of the PTA, the Irish Desk of the Special Branch presented Roy Jenkins with a list of people who were suspected of belonging to a 'terrorist organization', whether Official or Provisional IRA, and should thus, be deported. This was contradictory: if an Irish person was 'guilty of the offence of membership of the IRA' then he would surely have been prosecuted; the expulsion order was involved precisely because no evidence of guilt could be produced.

Naturally, the first deportees were carefully selected: they were members of high-ranking political cadres of the Republican Movement. The authorities thereby hoped to dismantle the movement in Britain, force it to go underground, and thus justify the newly introduced legislation even more convincingly. The first to be expelled were three top Provisional Sinn Féin leaders, Brendan Magill, the organizer in Britain, Séamus McGarrigle, his deputy, and Seán Greely, the President. The first two were not even in Britain at the time, but in Ireland attending the funeral of Lieutenant James McDaid of the Birmingham IRA, who had blown himself up with his own bomb whilst on active service in Coventry on 14 November. The others, Danny Ryan, Gerry Doherty, James Flynn and Brendan Phelan, belonged to the non-combatant Official Republican movement, which, at this time, with the formation of the Irish Republican Socialist Party, had suffered a sizeable split, but the majority of whom in the Clann na h-Eireann in Britain were hostile to the Provos.

The expulsion threats against the Irish community enabled the Special Branch to obtain a great deal of information. The third part of the Act expanded the powers of arrest, and permitted detention up to 7 and 12 days, with no right for the suspect to contact his/her family, friends, or even a lawyer. These clauses were supplemented by the right to body-search, and to search cars and houses. This constant harassment, akin to the Northern Irish political climate, was in an attempt to persuade the Irish living in Britain to abandon their support for those political organizations favouring the unification of Ireland, and it also procured a quantity of low-grade intelligence on the Irish community in exile for the Hendon Police Central Computer. As in any counter-subversive war, every citizen from the insurgent country became *the enemy*. Each Irish man or woman was metamorphosed into a suspect.

With the modified version of the PTA adopted in 1976, another Article (11) concerning 'information about terrorism' made failure to provide information about suspected acts of terrorism an offence. This was a thinly-veiled call to recruit informers. The correspondent in Belfast for the Paris daily *Libération*, Alain Frilet, learnt the application of this Article the hard way. On 27 April, 1978, he was arrested in his Belfast flat by the Army and RUC, and charged with 'non co-operation with the police, possession of illegal documents, and membership of the IRA'. The last charge was a legal move to prevent him asking for release on bail. But the other two were motivated by the fact that he possessed photographs (published in *Libération*, and in *Republican News* and throughout the world through his Photographic Press agency SIPA) of the commemoration ceremony for Derry's Bloody Sunday, on 28 January, when nylon-masked and uniformed IRA Volunteers flashed their brand-new M-60 heavy machine guns around. Many other journalists were on the scene, as well as a British TV crew, but although they took exactly the same photographs they had no problems. With the backing of the French Union of Journalists, Frilet was subsequently released on bail and returned to France. It had escaped no one that he had been singled out for arrest under the PTA because his reporting was critical to British policy in Ireland. Furthermore, he was the only French journalist assigned permanently to Belfast, and it was well worth disposing of this 'unwanted member of the public' who was a useful informant on the ground for many Paris papers.

In the case of Peter Grimes, a new dimension was added to the PTA section on complicity. He was a National Organizer for the IRSP Support Group, a gardener and a shop-steward with the TGWU, who lived in East London. On 30 September 1976, six uniformed policemen burst into his flat saying they were looking for weapons; all they found was a toy pistol belonging to Grimes' nephew. Nevertheless, the men from the Yard took him to Bethnal Green police station where two Special Branch officers offered him money if he would inform on the IRSP: 'You can stay in the IRSP and help us in providing names, places, dates, phone numbers or anything else which would be of any help . . .' one of them suggested. 'What will happen if I refuse?' Grimes asked. 'You'll get into trouble . . . ' Such was roughly the gist of the conversation. Peter Grimes asked for time to think it over, and meantime made a substantial report to his political friends.

Eight months later, in May 1977, a man named Con Mallon made contacts with the IRSP, stating that he supported them, and offering to build a section in Ramsgate, Kent. As did all other members of this party in Ireland, Mallon sold their paper *The Starry Plough*, or collected money for the families of Irish political prisoners. He confessed to Grimes that he had been cashiered from the British Paratrooper Regiment for publicly criticizing British policy in Ireland. He also said he knew five people who were ready to join the Irish Republican Socialist Party. It was then decided, as was customary, to verify Mallon's identity. By the end of August, Peter Grimes was again arrested, taken back to Bethnal Green police station, charged under the PTA, held in custody for seven days incommunicado, and interrogated in four-hour

spells. His girl friend, and his father were also held, but released without any charge after four days. The charge finally laid against Grimes was that 'between the 13 July and the 26 August you have been in possession of information of a nature constituting material assistance to prevent acts of terrorism without transmitting them to the police.' The information that Grimes allegedly failed to divulge stemmed from the fact that Armalite rifles and explosives had been found in the garden of Con Mallon, (whose real name was Harry Driver) who had turned prosecution witness and had been released on bail. Although finally freed, Peter Grimes had to report to the police daily, his passport was withdrawn and he was forbidden to 'contact members of his party, the IRSP'.

In fact, the infiltration of Republican groups or the work of agents provocateurs had been considerable in England. At Easter 1974, the Irishman Kenneth Lennon was found in a Surrey ditch with three bullets in the head. He had been manipulated by the Special Branch to penetrate Sinn Féin and persuade some of their members to rob a bank, and then to organize the escape from prison of members of the IRA. The IRA was not responsible for his death; some days earlier he had gone to National Council of Civil Liberties and revealed his undercover activities leading to the conviction of Irishmen; he told them that he felt threatened by his employers.<sup>9</sup> In November 1974, there was another case when two people appeared before Durham Crown Court accused of plotting to kill an Army colonel; one of the accused, Barry Reid; told the court he had posed as an IRA sympathizer.

In May 1976, as in the case of Peter Grimes, the targets were senior Republicans, but this time from Sinn Féin. John Higgins and Eddie Caughey were arrested, allegedly in an attempt to buy 100 M-1 carbines, ammunition and radio-sets from their co-accused partner, John Banks. Banks had turned Queen's Evidence, which was hardly surprising, he was, at the same time, involved in recruiting mercenaries for Angola on behalf of SIS and the CIA through his organization, SAS (Special Advisory Service) and stated during his trial: 'My chiefs in Scotland Yard were fully aware of it and told me how to operate'. He also maintained that he worked for Military Intelligence, under a Major Cardwell who sent him to . . . Sahara to take pictures of IRA training camps, both on the Algerian and Libyan sides'. One of his controllers, he said, was a Special Branch officer, Ray Tucker. During the trial, Higgins lawyers argued that he simply wanted to buy a transmitter-receiver radio, and that the prosecution was based solely on the words of an agent provocateur and that the deal, if it ever occurred, never materialized. But the concept of conspiracy could be introduced, even if one of two people was simply luring the other on behalf of British security services. And Higgins was National Organizer for Sinn Féin in Britain, with strong links with the trade union movement, which explained why on 6 April 1977, he was sentenced to five years' imprisonment for being in possession of six sets of 'walkie-talkies' that may have been used in connection with acts of terrorism in Britain, and to have been soliciting 100 M-1 carbines from John Banks.

While terrorizing the Irish community, the whole of the special legislation



was aimed at confining them in a ghetto situation, while intensifying the intelligence-gathering, the surveillance, and reducing the political, social and cultural life of that community. But it also growingly muzzled British elements of the Left or the far Left who, with independent information on the conflict, tried to launch a public debate on the Irish question and propose that British troops be withdrawn from Northern Ireland.

Officially, the Prevention of Terrorism Act had been rushed through Parliament with the fight against the IRA in mind, but in this respect it was not particularly effective. Republican offensives in Britain were not reduced but took on a more efficient form. Numerous Active Service Units continued to operate after 1974, and when they were dismantled, it was not thanks to the special law. For these units were quite separate and autonomous vis-à-vis the Irish community, and avoided these Irish areas that the Special Branch, or Mike Richards' Anti-Terrorist Squad, held under close surveillance.

This can be confirmed statistically. For example, following upon the introduction of the PTA, from November 1974 to February 1975, almost 200 people were arrested, and then, in view of the Truce in Ireland, this number was reduced. According to Home Office statistics for the period between 1974 and 1976, it was estimated that 1,000 people were arrested each year, in other words under three a day. From November 1974 to November 1981 5,200 people were detained under the provisions of the PTA.<sup>10</sup> During the first two years that the PTA was operated, the highest number of arrests, 3,235 took place, but of these only 142 were actually charged and only 20 sentenced for offences related to the provisions of the Act, and, in fact, no sentence was meted out before the renewal of the Act in 1976.

Brian Rose-Smith's conclusions were well-founded when he noted that

what the Act has undoubtedly done is to suppress political activity. It has also established a number of dangerous precedents in the extraordinary powers granted to the police which might well become accepted as the norm with the consequent extension to 'ordinary crimes'.<sup>11</sup>

The IRA offensive campaign stopped in 1977, but this was because of a tactical decision on the part of their leadership, not through the ability of the British forces to capture their Volunteers. Around the Christmas of 1978, the Provos organized an offensive on British soil. This enabled Merlyn Rees, when he proposed a renewal of the PTA before the Parliament to state, 'We can be in no doubt that the Provisionals are ready to inflict heavy casualties and damages on our property.' Less than a week later it was not the IRA, but the INLA that struck at the heart of the system, blowing up Airey Neave's car as he drove out from the Houses of Parliament Westminster underground garage. Again, by Christmas 1979, there was a couple of IRA bombs in London, and the following March, the INLA bombed the Army's Support Weapons Wing on Salisbury Plain. In the meantime, as already mentioned, the IRA shifted the emphasis of extra-Irish operations

to the Continent, striking in Holland, Germany and Belgium. But following the end of the second hunger-strike, in November 1981, new Active Service Units were at work in London. In all these operations, with one exception, no IRA or INLA Volunteer was captured and prosecuted. The exception was the arrest of Republicans who had attempted, by means of a helicopter, to effect the escape of a prominent Republican, Brian Keenan, who had been arrested in Northern Ireland, and transferred to a British gaol in December 1979; but the alleged head of the team, Gerry Tuite, subsequently escaped from Brixton prison the following year. He was rearrested in Southern Ireland, and made legal history in July 1982, while being the first Republican to be tried — and sentenced to ten years imprisonment — for alleged violent activities in Britain.

However, it showed that the PTA was rather more effective in monitoring the Irish community's activities, than in combating the armed Irish groups. As may have been expected, the boomerang effect of counter-terrorist operations was not confined to the Irish population. In November 1981, following several IRA attacks, Scotland Yard launched a wide screening operation, seeking to search 300,000 garages, lodgings and premises which it was thought may have sheltered IRA commandos or a stock of explosives. This time, the war that the British public wanted to ignore was turned against themselves.

The National Council for Civil Liberties had long predicted this unavoidable cycle by raising objections to the implementation of the Prevention of Terrorism Act in the following terms:

- i) The police already had ample powers to arrest people they suspected of a terrorist offence.
- ii) Extended powers of arrest for questioning are likely to encourage the police to indulge in 'fishing trips' (arrest and interrogation of unlikely suspects) in order to gather low-level intelligence.
- iii) Prolonged periods of detention of arrestees not suspected of any particular crime will have no meaning without a widespread disregard of the Judges Rules.
- iv) The hardening of attitudes amongst the police, who have tended to treat all arrestees as terrorists, together with the stigma of arrest of suspects from neighbours, will lead to an anti-police reaction from some members of the Irish community.
- v) The power to photograph and fingerprint every person arrested under the Act and retention of these by the police is a serious infringement of privacy for innocent people.
- vi) The existence of the Act creates the impression that the police have general powers of detention for interrogation in cases unconnected with terrorism. The police seem to have on occasion taken advantage of this misunderstanding by the public.
- vii) The complaints system, where the police investigate complaints against themselves, is unsatisfactory.<sup>12</sup>

## Torture and Sensory Deprivation

Special legislation naturally concealed the physical and psychological violations practised upon those who fell into the hands of the 'security forces' during the course of a prolonged detention. Political prisoners were not cut up with a fret-saw as in Argentina, since the proximity of Ireland to the European centres, and the existence of television and satellites would not allow for such acts. Yet, a level of torture, beyond 'degrading and inhuman treatments', became a common occurrence. In 1971, during the introduction of internment without trial, the British forces used torture not only to obtain operational intelligence, but also to experiment with new techniques of sensory deprivation.

Lord Caradon, a veteran in the Campaign of Palestine and in the fight against the EOKA guerrillas in Cyprus, summed up the traditional viewpoint of the military hierarchy:

As a general rule, counter-espionage and intelligence services are of prime importance in the fight against organized violence, as in Northern Ireland. In a context of insurgency, intelligence sources are dual. On the one hand, informers are scarce when the majority of the population support the rebels, and the information they give is often dubious. Besides, they are often outside the decision centres of the rebellion. Captured rebels constitute another source for intelligence. They are rarely prepared to talk, unless they are tortured or submitted to ill-treatment, and even in this case, the information they provide may be deliberately erroneous. One should also bear in mind that a prisoner may not know anything interesting. But without information extracted from the prisoners, the authorities lack intelligence. The rebels have the advantage of being on the offensive; the authorities are less capable of efficient actions.<sup>13</sup>

The use of torture in 1971 and 1972 was differentiated, and, aside from torture, thousands of people were arrested and submitted to 'interrogation in depth'. In the six months following Internment, in August 1971, 2,357 persons were arrested and 1,600 of those freed after interrogation. Likewise, during the emergence of the Peace Movement, in 1976 and 1977, 3,042 and 3,444 people respectively were arrested under similar circumstances. In 1971, the massive use of torture was also designed to terrorize the nationalist population.

At 6.30am on 11 August 1971, 12 men from various areas in Northern Ireland were driven off in a lorry to the Ballykelly special army buildings. They did not know where they were, as previously they had been flown by helicopter. They were known for their Republican sentiments, and Army intelligence clearly wanted to obtain information about the IRA, but simultaneously they meant to engage in the experimental techniques which they had rehearsed at the Maresfield Military Intelligence Training Centre, in April

1971. The two officers in charge of the operations were Lieutenants Alan Horner and Timothy Goulding. Intelligence officers, from the RAF and the Navy, with the help of CID policemen, but above all from the RUC Special Branch and the Special Patrol Group, took part in the experiments.

During the Court of Human Rights trial in Strasbourg much later, the main torturers were identified only by code letters. Some of them, such as the RUC Special Branch officer in Omagh, Peter Flanagan, were later executed by the IRA. The man in charge of the Special Patrol Group was Superintendent J.I.C. Gilchrist. Numerous Special Branch officers who took part in the torture were later promoted: C.H. Rodgers, W.J. Hood, M.J. Slevin, Harry Taylor and S.H. Kyle. Kyle admitted that during the tortures in Palace Barracks, there was a Military Reconnaissance Force (MRF) present at the time — in fact it was led by a SAS squad under Major A.H. Watchus, an intelligence expert. Some witnesses said they had seen Frank Kitson himself supervising some interrogation sessions.

The 12 detainees were stripped, scrutinized by doctors, and photographed; hoods were pulled over their heads, and they were propped against the wall, spreadeagled, in a search position. For 24 hours they neither ate nor slept; they were frequently beaten-up, and when left alone a tape-recorder emitting an intolerable noise brought them close to insanity. Of the 12 'guinea-pigs', the testimony of Pat Shivers from Toomebridge, gives a vivid account of what they suffered:

5.00 a.m. knock at door. Got up, opened door. Soldier there 'You have five minutes to get dressed,' — six or seven soldiers around the house. Marched to army jeep, drove around in circles for about one hour. Did not know where jeep was going. Overheard, it was going to Ballykelly. In Ballykelly interrogated. Taken into another room. Blanket with two holes in it, and somebody identifying. Voice said 'all right'. Taken into big hall, saw four other detainees there. Recognised Dan McCloy, another named McCoy, another named Graffin — all of Toomebridge district. Sat there, well apart for one hour guarded by six or seven soldiers. Nobody spoke, marched together to thirty-six seater bus. Set off down the road about one mile. Seemed to change mind, turned again. Next, heading for Magilligan Camp. Three or four others got in bus with hands tied behind their backs. Hands released as they got into bus.

Sat in bus for about three hours. Taken from bus into Nissen huts. Met a lot of other prisoners (approx. 30). Stayed there until called out for grub in sixes. Talked to Brian Corr while in hut, about McKenna. We were confused. Surprised to see each other. After grub, interrogated by two detectives. Asked were you in the IRA. Also about arms. Back into hut until tea time about 6 or 7 p.m.

Men being sorted into different huts. Four in a hut. Myself Michael Montgomery, Michael Donnelly and P.J. McClean in a hut by ourselves. Looked out, soldier outside staring in at me. Asked me how many

soldiers did I shoot. Uniformed RUC around huts. All ranks from constable to high ranking officers, laughing among themselves and apparently in high spirits. Seem to be discussing something relating to prisoners. Got foreboding, prisoners, prisoners, prisoners getting uneasy. P.J. McClean said to take it easy and stop pacing the floor.

Everyone went to bed. Lights controlled from outside stayed on. As night passed, soldiers got more and more restless outside the hut. Also police and alsatian dogs. Noise started about 12 o'clock. Running batons against side of Nissen huts to keep us awake and to inspire terror. Could not sleep. Noise continued till daybreak.

Heard Scottish accent. 'Right you bastards. I'm up. Get up there.' All got up and dressed. Door opened and taken to canteen. Beans, sausage and bread. Taken back to hut. Heard helicopter coming overhead, landed in field nearby. Could see helicopter and about six plain clothed men in the distance. Plain clothed men also beside us. Four blue bags produced and put over our heads. Short of breath because of bag. Then released from handcuffs which connected one to the other and hands handcuffed to front individually. Then run across field to 'copter. Landed, did not know where. Lorry backed up to 'copter. Taken out and thrown into back of lorry, like a sack of potatoes. Lorry smelt of cow dung. Driven in lorry for about 100 yards. Pulled out of lorry (bag still over head) marched into some sort of building. Stripped naked, examined by doctor. Bag still over head. Put lying on bed and examined. Army overalls (I later discovered) put on me. Taken into room. Noise like compressed-air engine in room. Very loud, deafening.

Hands put against wall. Legs spread apart. Head pulled back by bag and backside pushed in. Stayed there for about four hours. Could no longer hold up arms. Fell down. Arms put up again. Hands hammered until circulation restored. This happened continually for twelve or fourteen hours, until I eventually collapsed. Thinking now that Paisley had seized power in some way and that I would be executed or tortured to death. Started to pray very hard. Mouth dried up. Couldn't get moisture in mouth. Pulse taken. Thought of a youngster who had died at six months old, started to pray that God would give me strength that I would not go insane. Fell down several times more. Slapped back up again. This must have gone on for two or three days. I lost track of time. No sleep. No food. Knew I had gone unconscious several times, but did not know for how long. One time I thought, or imagined I had died. Could not see youngster's face but felt reconciled to death. Felt happy.

During this time not one word spoken at all. No words had been spoken since I left Magilligan. Bag still over my head. I did not speak — just prayed out loud. Noise all the time. After collapsing on final occasion, I felt somebody working my body up and down as if to revive me and restore circulation. Seemed to rise again and go against wall again. put my hands up.

I was dragged into a room by the bag over my head, and a voice in my ear asked me if I had anything to say. These were the first words since I left Magilligan — I reckoned about two or three days previous. Hands pushed against the wall until I collapsed again. Fell with face against wall. Fell against pipes at floor level. Pulled up again and threw face against wall until my body sore. Then arms out again, head well back and something like a ruler stuck into my back to force it straight.

Shoes slipped on at this stage. Then taken out and thrown into back of lorry. Half carried, half pulled out again. Heard noise of helicopter. Boarded again. Did not know how long helicopter stayed in the air. Can't recall. Could hear someone moaning beside me. Taken off helicopter into back of lorry. Very roughly handled.

Taken out of lorry by two or three men. Hunched and made to run over something like corrugated iron. Head beaten against wall. Brought into building. Sat in chair. Bag taken off head. First thing I saw was RUC Officer — Head Constable, I thought from two stars on shoulder. Might be able to recognise him again, seemed to be plain clothes secretary sitting behind him. Looked horrified when he saw me. Scum over my lips from lack of water and of thirst. Must have looked terrible. Read out paper. I know I looked terrible. Later it was a detention document. I tried to speak. Could only manage to whisper. 'Why did you do this to me?' Man behind me holding bag, pulled my hair back, said: 'Speak up, can't hear you.' 'I can't hear you.' I reached over for document to look at it. Eyes blurred, could not read it properly. Taken from me by man behind. Shoved it in my breast pocket. Bag pulled over my head again. I was pulled out at running pace. Run about 50 yards. Thrown into back of lorry again. Seemed to be Police or Military in the back. All punching me in ribs and knee caps. I could see what appeared to be Army or Police boots by toecaps. Got a heavy crack at side of face. Passed out.

When I came to, I was in the helicopter again, heading I knew not where. Lorry backed up again. Taken into noisy room. Some room where I had been before. Same treatment. Hands up — feet apart. Getting weaker. Did not feel hungry now but had nothing to eat for many days. I had lost count of days. Hands hammered until blood came again. Collapsed. Hands taken up loosely as I lay on the floor, let drop to see if I was out.

Sat on backside in straight position with protruding pipe at floor level cutting into base of spine. Arms, legs, and knees now numb and stiff.

Taken into room. Bag taken off head for second time. Detective of Special Branch there before me, with a cup of water sitting on the desk. Men who had taken bag off my head slipped out the door behind me. My voice was nearly gone. Told me to take a drink to water. I drank a mouthful — my first in about four or five days.

Started asking questions. Could not answer. No voice and half hysterical. My lips sticking together with scum. He got angry and told

me to speak up. Began asking questions about IRA activity and arms dumps around Toome. I did not know what he was talking about. I had no knowledge of anything. After about half an hour he said: 'I am going to send you in there again', which he did.

By this time, I was at the end of my tether, my whole body, my arms, legs started to tremble uncontrollably. I passed out again. After this Doctor wrapped me up in blankets. Carried me out to what appeared to be a small surgery. I lay there shivering and shaking. Took my pulse. Felt behind my ankles. Got excited, took some blood pressure twice by tourniquet method. (Belt around arm inflated with air). Put something in my mouth. I thought it was a drug and spat it out. The second time he said: 'Keep that in your mouth as I am only taking your temperature.' He spoke with an English accent. Bag still half over my head. Could not see him. Now gave me mug of hot liquid. They held my mouth and forced it in. Taken into another room. Put lying on floor. Lay there. Started to sweat heavily. Dungarees became sticky. I could not sleep. My body was sore all over. Bag still over my head, I lay there for a long while. Can't recall. Then taken out. Marched around the room a few times and up a hallway. Taken into interrogation office I discovered later.

A different Special Branch man interrogated me. Asking me about Civil Rights, Roddy McCorley [Memorial] Fund, Credit Union and my views about politics. Asked me whom I voted for the last Stormont Election. Insisted I was connected with one of two IRA groups. Taken out again. Bag over my head and put into a cell. Sat there on ground. No furniture, no blankets. New appearance. Half slept, shivered from cold for some hours, can't recall exactly.

Detective came in again. Put bag over my head. Interrogated again. Some questions, my religion, took ages of all my children. My wife's name and address. Where she was born, where I was born etc. Name and address of all my friends. Offered me a cigarette, I took it.

Put back into cell with mattress on the floor. Lay there for a while. Taken out again and interrogated. Lost count of these interrogations. Perhaps four or five times. Same questions. According to Branch men, all my friends were in the IRA. At last interrogation Branch man turned very nice. I told him I was going to see my own doctor (MacCaughey) because I had no faith in the doctor who would put me through all this agony. I thought at that time I was a physical wreck. Told me I could stay in cell with no bag on me, provided I lay with my head turned against wall – possibly so that I would not identify men who put bag over my head when they came again.

They offered me stew – meat and potatoes, which I refused. Asked me had I a bad stomach. Then I was brought hot coffee which I took. One piece of marmalade jam – which I took. Then he told me I would get a shave and clean up in the morning. I was going to Belfast Prison – which I did not mind.

Could not sleep well. In the morning I was taken into a room. Got shaved, feet washed. Chalk marks washed off back of my hands. My feet and hands had been numbered when I was against wall. Hands, feet and back of dungarees had been marked. They seemed to have been changing these marks from time to time. Saw number four on back of hands. I think the soles of my feet were marked similarly. Now washed off. Shaved myself.

Taken out and into cell. Clothes brought in for my identification. Taken out and then brought in again. Put them on. Took belt off me. My trousers would not stay up – they used to without the belt. Knew then I had lost weight.

I was told to walk up and down to get blood circulating in my body. I was very weak. Detective came in again and put bag over my head. Taken to see doctors, and helper, tells me to strip. Given full examination. Weighed me. To my amazement I weighed only 115 lbs. I knew I was 9 stone 2 lbs. when I was arrested from scales in my house.

Went to put my clothes on. Detective said I had to go through another procedure. Took me naked into another room with a photographer with the Detective standing beside me. Told me to turn around. Taken again. Clothes put on. Back to the cell.

Bag over my head again. Lorry - 'copter. Over an hour in helicopter. Taken into police jeep. Taken through hole in wall. Taken to reception, weighed again. Doctor saw me that night. I asked what day it was. Tuesday. I had been eight days in custody. I am now detained at Crumlin Road Jail - "C" Wing.

N.B. I could recognise and identify two of the Branch men who interrogated me. I had never seen them prior to my interrogation and I do not know their names.

Signed: Patrick Shivers

Witness: B. McGrath Phs. M.P.S.

Five techniques were used: standing position in front of a wall; wearing of hoods, disorientating noise, deprivation of sleep, and restricted diet. Each one may not be understood as a form of torture, but subjecting the men to all five at once provided the necessary ingredients for sensory deprivation.<sup>14</sup> Destroying the logical sequential chain of thoughts, of sentiments and feelings, inevitably provokes hallucinations. To deprive the brain of sensory stimulation, sugar and oxygen, induces confusion resulting in losing all sense of time, of place, sometimes of one's own identity. Theoretically, these techniques may have facilitated interrogation, but in practice, some prisoners did not even remember their own name. The Parker Report on these experiments, published in March 1972, stated that these methods had helped to identify some 700 members of both the Provisional and the Official IRA. Subsequent operations by the British army proved that this was more than an overstatement: the volume of received intelligence was exaggerated in an attempt to justify the use of torture.

The British psychiatrist, Tim Shallice, felt that the purpose of the sensory deprivation exercise in 1971 was two fold; that the techniques were meant to elicit information and to implement in-depth sensory deprivation experiments. The latter were then put in practice in West Germany when in Stammheim, members of Red Army Faction were guided. According to French psychiatrist, Dr Gérard Hof, a programme of sensory deprivation confinement had been developed by a Dr Hutter under CIA supervision in Germany. Dr Hof himself had been gaoled in Wittlich for issuing a dud cheque, and, as he was both a radical and a psychiatrist, and therefore someone who conceivably was best equipped to resist psychiatric assault of this nature, he became a prestigious 'guinea-pig' for Doctor Hutter.<sup>15</sup>

The epilogue to the use of torture in 1971 is known. The European Court for Human Rights in Strasbourg, after a long investigation which suffered many pressures, decided in January 1978 that 'only inhuman and degrading treatments' had been meted out to the Irish prisoners.

In the following years, certain variations were adopted in the treatment of prisoners. For instance, new means of psychological pressure, such as those developed by the old Portuguese Special Branch, PIDE; for example, false recordings of a political party cell meeting or cries of torture, were employed in order to disorientate the detainees. In 1972, at least 30 cases of the use of drugs whilst in custody were recorded in Ireland. For instance, Francis McBride, after drinking a cup of tea in the Ballymoney police station where he was interrogated, became sick and suffered hallucinations. Similar symptoms, like a 'drug overdose' were detected in Newry.

But essentially, the experimental programme of sensory deprivation of the Irish detainees had stopped. This had been operated, not solely to combat the IRA, but also to gear British soldiers towards resistance in the event of interrogation methods. Interestingly enough, these experiments had been sponsored by NATO, under the code-name 'Operation Bluebird'. Information obtained during the summer of 1971 helped to constitute special cells in West Germany, and even the Quartiers de Haute Sécurité (QHS) in French prisons, but these latter were abolished in 1981 by the new Socialist government. But to some extent, these techniques were applied in constructing H-Block cells in 1975, with their brilliant white paint, permanently lit neon lamps and resultant sensory isolation.

The introduction of the computer reduced the importance of torture in information gathering. Consequently, by 1977, the new wave of ill-treatments and brutalities against the Nationalists during detention had a double intent: to terrorize the nationalist population (through reprisal raids) but above all to extract signed confessions which would secure a conviction and sentence by the special courts. It simply replaced, in a more selective way, internment without trial. According to Queen's University's Department of Law, in Belfast, 94% of the cases brought before the juryless courts concluded with a prison sentence. Between 70% and 90% of these convictions were based upon self-incriminating confession obtained during interrogation by the RUC, during which Amnesty International in a report in 1978, concluded, many

suspects had been subjected to duress and violence.

The modification of the use of torture in this field is aptly illustrated by the following account of the raid carried out by the British Army in November 1977, in the small enclave of Short Strand, Belfast, and the ordeal of eight young women of this area.

The tactics generalized by the British Army during the Jubilee Visit to Ireland of Queen Elizabeth, was massive saturation of an area, rapid joint punitive operations by police and army 'lifting' of a series of pre-selected people, as we have already seen in the case of Turf Lodge.

On Monday 7 November, 1977, eight women from Short Strand were arrested and detained for 72 hours. Of the eight, six were freed on Thursday, five of whom took part in a press conference (the sixth suffered a nervous breakdown). The other two, Ann Fegan and Mary McCann, were charged with membership of the Women's Army, Cumann na mBan, and possession of incendiary devices and firearms. They denied any involvement: 'We have signed a confession under duress', they said. In fact, Ann Fegan attempted to commit suicide by opening her veins with a plastic knife. Another detainee, Geraldine Crane, was arrested with her two-and-a-half year-old son, and signed a confession only when threats to the child were made alternated with proposals that she would receive money if she would inform for the Special Branch.

Rita Higgins, from the Relatives Action Committee declared: 'Already the security forces have cleared the young men out of the area — there are 26 men in gaol at present because they have signed false statements. Now the women and girls are being concentrated on.'<sup>16</sup> It was part and parcel of the policy of 'reprisals against a civilian population' to hold them all responsible for the activities of the 'insurgents'. The British and the RUC operated in rotation for the saturation of such ghettos; in August 1977, Turf Lodge, and then Short Strand, were for a time, neutralized and isolated from the other ghettos; in such cases, pressure is eased in an attempt to break up traditional solidarity between the nationalist ghettos. Short Strand was convenient in this respect as, like the Markets Area, it had been partly depopulated with the Belfast redevelopment scheme. So in this case, the use of torture had to be seen from several angles, from the intelligence gathering standpoint, the extraction of a forced confession, and ultimately terrorization of a whole community.

The most disquietening aspect of the Short Strand story, was the arrest of a 16-year-old girl who was denied the use of a sanitary towel whilst she was menstruating, and was abundantly beaten and threatened until she gave information on her elder sisters who were suspected of being members of Cumann na mBan and to have planted incendiary devices in Belfast city centre. Though this was not typical it nevertheless, illustrates the extent to which the British forces and their auxiliaries were prepared to go, just as had been the case in Aden and Malaya, or for the French troops, in Algeria.

The arrest of a 19-year-old Mary McCann, from Queen Street, Short Strand, was 'typical'. There can be no better illustration of what British

presence in Northern Ireland means, than to let her describe in her own words the ordeal she suffered:

On Monday 6 November 1977 I was lifted at 6 a.m. by the RUC at my home and was brought to Castlereagh RUC Interrogation Centre.

*1st interrogation* I was in about half an hour when the first interrogation started. At the beginning they shouted and pushed me. Two men were interviewing me. They were in plainclothes. They started pushing me about, shouting at me, saying I did Elliot's. I said I didn't. He says, 'That wasn't the only job you did. You did other jobs. We just didn't pick your name out of a hat. We have information.' That went on for about 3½ hours pushing and shouting at me. Then they brought me back up to the cell. They said I would be raped and nobody would know about it because I was only a wee slut anyway. One of them said he would get two men in to rape me and he wouldn't be surprised if he went into the room and my clothes were lying in one corner and me in the other.

*2nd interrogation* This was by a man and woman in plainclothes. Different man. The woman pulled my hair, kept on doing it and asking me was it hurting me. He slapped me on the ear once and told me I would be as well admitting everything because they could extend the thing to seven days. I said — 'I'm not in anything. I never done anything.' He said, 'That's a lot of shit, you wee whore you.' I says, 'I don't know anything.' They said, 'You did Elliot's. We know you did Elliot's.' They were at me for about one hour. Before they moved out they made me stand facing the wall, face in the corner.

*3rd interrogation* This was a different two, can't remember what they looked like. They came in immediately after the others. They came up behind me and started hitting me slaps on the back of the head. They said they hadn't started yet and if I didn't start talking they would get very angry. Then the man pushed me and hit my head against the wall. I just said, 'Alright I'll sign.' As I said that the man and woman walked in again. They had a statement written out and all. While I was signing it, the woman was still pulling my hair. After signing the statement they sent me back up again.

*4th interrogation* The next interview was about a quarter to six that night, about an hour after the other one, still Monday. They brought me down again same man and women. They said, 'You have signed for doing a job, doing Elliot's.' They then wanted to know about Cumann na mBan. I said, 'I don't know anything about them.' Then they started again, beating and pulling my hair. He says, 'Just tell us and you'll be finished here.' I says, 'I have nothing to do with any organisation.' He says, 'Don't give us that lot of shit, you wee whore you.' I says, 'I don't know anything.' He just kept on. That interview went on for about 1½ hours. Then they brought me back up to the cells.

*5th interrogation* At about ten o'clock that night I was brought down for another interview by another man this time. There were two men in the interview. First the young man started nice saying, 'You might as well start getting your plate cleared,' he put his arm around my neck and says, 'Come on, tell us the truth, Mary.' I said, 'I don't know anything. I have told you the truth.' Then he hit me a big slap on the back of the neck. Then the other one tried to break my wrist, pushing it back. Then they brought me back up to my cell. Lasted about 1½ hours. About 11.30 when I got to the cell.

*6th interrogation* Next morning the interview started about 11. It was the same young fellow as the night before and a different man. The big fella started messing me about, pushing me and slapping me on the back of the head. He said I had been in Cumann na mBan, and there was nothing I could do to deny it because they had witnesses who would go to court. Then he says, 'Get up you are too comfortable sitting there;' he started slapping me about the shoulders. He just kept on repeating about ten times — 'You are in Cumann na mBan.' Then I just said after a while, 'Alright I am.' Then they started saying 'You are OC in it.' I said, 'I'm not'. I said, 'I am not in it.' He says, 'You made a verbal statement.' I said, 'That's because you were beating me'. That was Tuesday.

*7th interrogation* I had another interview about 4 p.m. Lasted 1½ hours, two men trying to be nice, soft talk. I said, 'I don't know anything.' Up to cell.

*8th interrogation* Another interview that night, about 9. It was two girls. The fat one started off calling me a fat whore, 'You murderess.' I said, 'You're not so thin yourself.' The other one got up and ran across to the other end of the table and caught me by the hair. She said, 'Look, all your mates have squealed on you. You might as well tell the truth.' I said, 'Nobody could have told on me. I haven't done anything.' She says, 'Sure you signed a statement.' I said, 'That was under duress.' She says, 'Do you think the judge will believe that?' She says, 'We're going out now and you're asking for this.' They went out.

*9th interrogation* Two men came in. This is Tuesday night. The same man who was with youngish fella and another completely new man. The fat man sat at the end of the table on my side. He had a statement already written out sitting in front of him. He said, 'Look we know you carried a gun in 1977. We were told.' I said, 'I never carried anything.' He said, 'You did. You know you did. We have it down here in black and white.' Then he asked me did I ever kneecap anybody. I said, 'No'. He says — 'And what did you take this gun from Unity Flats for to Lagan Bank Road, how do you know that wasn't to kneecap somebody?' I said I never carried any gun. He said — 'How would you like to be kneecapped?' I never answered him and then he started kicking me on the knees. I think it was on that night when he was kicking me on



the knees that I signed. Went on up to cell. It was about a quarter to twelve.

*10th interrogation* The next day, Wednesday, I was interviewed at 11 a.m. Two men that was there before. About 1½ hours. Asked me about Cumann na mBan and who was in it. I said I didn't know. He said 'You better tell the truth'. Mostly all questioning, few slaps on head.

*11th interrogation* About 2.30 p.m. Other two men who had been in before but different from morning. Questioning same. 1½ hours. Few slaps on back of head, neck, and pulling hair.

*12th interrogation* About 5.30 p.m. Man and woman who had been in before. Woman with dark eyes. Then another woman came in and sat in back of room. She was taking down notes. Woman was pushing me and pulling my hair, wanted to know did I know anybody in Cumann na mBan, 'not going to help yourself'. I said I didn't know anything and the only reason why I signed the statement was because I had to do it. He said, 'If you don't know about it tell us.' I said, 'No'. He said, 'That proves you are a hardened terrorist.' She says, 'All your wee unit has squealed on you.' She came over and hit me a slap on the face. She said, 'What are you smirking at?' I said I had no unit. Back to cell.

*13th interrogation* Brought me down about 9.30 that night. Same man and woman. He says, 'This is your chance to help yourself, just give us a few names.' I says, 'I don't know any names.' He says, 'Come off it.' I said 'I don't know anything. I'm telling the truth.' That ended the interview. I was brought to Townhall Street on Thursday morning, about ten to six in the morning. Charged about 8 o'clock, saw my solicitor after I was charged, about 8.20 a.m. I was seen by doctors at Castlereagh, on Tuesday night, by a police doctor and another doctor, Dr . . . sent in by Mr . . . Then on Wednesday night seen by another independent doctor sent in by Mr . . . and a police doctor. I was seen by Dr . . . in Armagh Prison on Thursday 10th November at 6.30 p.m. He took note of the bruises on my two knees, front of my leg, right leg, and further down on my left leg, the lump and bruise over my left eye, bruises on my left arm above and below the elbow, both swollen wrists, and the bruises on my right wrist.

Signed Mary McCann  
11th November 1977

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13. In *Après-Demain*, revue mensuelle de la Ligue des Droits de l'Homme (Paris) April 1974.
14. See John McGuffin, *Internment!* (Anvil, 1973) and *The Guineapigs*, (Penguin, 1974). He was interned in 1971.
15. Gérard Hof wrote a book about his ordeal: *L'obligation sensorielle* (Barbare, Paris, 1978).
16. The Queen's University figures were quoted in *The Sunday Times*, 23 October 1977.

## 7. Autopsy of the Women's Peace Movement

In practical terms the most promising line of approach lies in separating the mass of those engaged in the campaign from the leadership by the judicious promise of concessions, at the same time imposing a period of calm by the use of government forces backed up by statements to the effect that most of the concessions can only be implemented once the life of the country returns to normal. Although with an eye to world opinion and to the need to retain the allegiance of the people, no more force than is necessary for containing the situation should be used, conditions can be made reasonably uncomfortable for the population as a whole, in order to provide an incentive for a return to normal life and to act as a deterrent towards a resumption of the campaign. Having once succeeded in providing a breathing space by these means, it is most important to do three further things quickly. The first is to implement the promised concessions so as to avoid allegations of bad faith which may enable the subversive leadership to regain control over certain sections of the people. The second is to discover and neutralize the genuine subversive element. The third is to associate as many prominent members of the population, especially those who have been engaged in non-violent action, with the government. This last technique is known in America as co-optation and is described by Messrs Hoch and Schoenbach as drowning the revolution in baby's milk.

Frank Kitson, *Low Intensity Operations*, p.87

From August to December 1976, Ireland hit world headlines anew. The previous year, a veil had been drawn over the Truce and negotiations between the IRA and Harold Wilson's Labour government. As the conflict was temporarily halted, world media said little about the prolonged political discussion in an attempt to find a political solution. Once it became obvious that the British authorities did not take the truce talks seriously enough to bring them to a successful conclusion, and as the British army harassment of the Nationalist ghettos increased, it seemed to Republican leaders that they had no alternative but to resume armed hostilities. But in August 1976, the media eagerly leapt on news of the Peace Movement which, sprang up like a

Jack-in-a-Box, claiming to offer a new solution, whilst rejecting political and military ones, and above all rejecting *violence*.

The demonstrations during the autumn 1976 were all the more important since, they gave the impression of fostering a *consensus*. The press, seconded by the British army propaganda services, gave even greater prominence to the newly-born movement. Some measures clearly amplified this situation: in Southern Ireland, for instance, by October the Provisional Sinn Féin as a political party was banned from appearing on TV or radio. The initial success of the Peace Movement stemmed from a series of interconnected facts.

Because of the ceasefire embarked upon in 1975, a substantial section of the Nationalist population was weary of the war and thus through the Peace Movement expressed their reluctance to continue the struggle. Additionally, forces said to be on the Left and with no specific sympathy for British rule in Ireland, such as the Trade Unions or the 'Official' Sinn Féin, (who claimed to have disbanded their 'Official IRA') tendered their unconditional support to the Peace women. Yet, even during the initial demonstrations, cautious observers should have noted the indisputable fact that the majority of the women from the Nationalist ghettos, those who suffered most from British presence and from the conflict, were absent. Whilst they were abroad, the two stars of the Movement, Mairead Corrigan and Betty Williams, said they were campaigning against all forms of violence; but they turned a blind eye to internment camps, torture, and the activities of the 15,000 British troops and their auxiliaries, the Ulster Defence Regiments, which, to them apparently did not constitute aspects of the violence they were crusading against. Better still, the Peace Movement threw a smoke-screen over the new British strategic ploy: 'Ulsterization'.

As the spotlights were trained on to the Peace Movement, virtually no one mentioned the tactical moves initiated during the autumn of 1976 to implement the Ulsterization policy, these were: the frontline position of the RUC police force and the back-up role of the British army; the introduction, on a massive scale, of plastic bullets; the 'criminalization' of the resistance, especially the withdrawal of the political status in gaols, the systematic use of torture, and the official extension of SAS activities, that had been announced earlier that year.

Abroad, numerous well intentioned people supported the Peace Movement, and this — particularly when those involved belonged to charitable and humanitarian groups that condemned infringements on freedoms elsewhere — reinforced its credibility. Their blindness partly stemmed from the adroitness with which the British services for a time concealed that the Women for Peace Movement, was the brain-child of the counter-insurgency community, with the massive help of the media, southern Irish firms and multinationals, but also from the US and various European governments, and all those who had a vested interest in opposing the Nationalist resistance, from the Official Sinn Féin to the Loyalist groups. In such an operation, the time factor proved to be crucial.

## The Roots of the Peace Movement

The Women for Peace Movement was conceived by men. In the secrecy of Lisburn Barracks, as early as December 1971, Frank Kitson had dreamed up the creation of a movement for peace which would stimulate the *political* isolation of the IRA from the population of the ghettos. The idea was all but new. In Vietnam, the CIA engineered pacifist movements hostile to the NLF, while in Algeria a decade earlier, the wives of French Generals Salan and Massu initiated a short-lived movement for reconciliation between women from the European and Muslim communities.

This was one of Kitson's many projects which held the attention of the General Staff. By May and June 1972, small women's peace groups were formed, which later provided the backbone for the 1976 Movement in Belfast, 'Women Together', led by Monica Patterson, and the Women's Peace Committee founded in the aftermath of the Official IRA's killing of a Derry born soldier serving in the British army. Of the latter, Seán MacStiofain, then Chief-of-Staff of the Provisional IRA recalled:

On May 21 in Derry, a young local man named William Best, who had joined the British army, was executed by members of the NLF. He was stationed abroad with the Royal Irish Rangers, one of the regiments the British could not trust for work in the North, and had come home on leave to see his mother. My information about the Ranger Best case was that, while on leave, he had frequently been out at night stoning British troops, was not going to return to his base in Germany, and intended to remain in the Free Derry area.

There was a fierce reaction to the killing. The NLF attitude was that he was a member of the army that had committed the Bloody Sunday massacre in that very place, but it was an attitude I could never share myself. If the IRA knew that Ranger Best was not going to report back, he would surely have told the NLF the same thing when they took him away. At any rate, Free Derry had the spectacle of two hundred women marching in protest to the local NLF headquarters.

This reinforced the 'peace at any price' brigade to a considerable extent. There were counter-demonstrations, including a very large one by Provisional volunteers and supporters. But political opportunists of all hues jumped on the bandwagon and used the Ranger Best business to back the calls for a ceasefire by the IRA, who had nothing to do with it. This stupid killing had given them a chance to promote division and dissension in the midst of the most successful no-go area in the entire North.<sup>1</sup>

Miriam Daly, a teacher in Queen's University, later a leader of the Irish Republican Socialist Party, and murdered in June 1980 by — so her friends believe — the SAS, had this to say about 'Women Together' at the time:

Women Together has never condemned the violence of the British

army, the immorality of internment without trial, the torture of prisoners, the tyrannical laws, the biased administration of justice, or the un-Christian abuse of power exercised by the Stormont regime with the consequent suffering experienced by a whole community.<sup>2</sup>

These groups soon became marginal, first of all due to lack of coherence. The situation in Derry was different from Belfast, because of the Catholics/Protestants ratio and the fact that barricades remained standing in the 'no-go areas' where Operation Motorman was operating at the end of July, in what was known as 'Free Derry'.

Theresa Boyle and Margaret Doherty, members of the Women's Peace Committee in Derry which claimed to have collected 4,000 signatures urging the IRA to cease hostilities, spoke thus to a French journalist:

I was talking recently with some women in the Belfast Lower Falls area and they were totally against any kind of peace before certain conditions were met. They also pointed out what happened when they took their barricades down and the British army took over complete control of the community and raided . . .

*Theresa:* This is the difference between Derry and Belfast. When the barricades came down there was Stormont in power.

*Gretta:* Also, we don't want the barricades to come down. We asked the boys to stay behind the barricades on the defence. We just want the violence to cease, but to be on the defence . . .<sup>3</sup>

Some weeks later in Operation Motorman, British Centurion and Chieftain tanks smashed Derry's barricades.

But these first groupings of women were pilot-balloons. The prevailing political context at that time did not allow the British to fully engage in a full-scale movement which could have had any effect in bringing the IRA military campaign to a halt. Yet, in Operation Motorman they had fulfilled their limited role in promoting the proper climate for a major British operation, the biggest since the Korean War.

In 1976, the world press often stressed the spontaneous nature of the Peace Movement's birth. Indeed, it was attributed to the revulsion of two strong-minded women, Betty Williams and Mairead Corrigan, vis-à-vis the tragic death of three children following a car crash after its driver, IRA Volunteer Danny Lennon, had been shot dead by the British army. Yet, facts show that any similar incident, would have had the same results. The general framework necessary to the emergence of such a movement already existed. Everyone was already on stage, it was necessary only to ring up the curtain.

By the end of the IRA ceasefire, at the beginning of 1976, all the psychological warfare experts had simultaneously engaged in operations designed to 'criminalize' the Irish resistance. They worked alongside the brains-trust on Ulsterization headed by the NIO secretary John Bourn; and a senior RUC Jack Hermon; the GOC's Intelligence Officer, Lieutenant-Colonel Sidney

Hawker; the Chief of Intelligence drawn from MI5, Dennis H. Payne; his Lisburn intelligence controller, Ian Cameron; and the SIS representative and architect of the 1975 truce, James Allan. Their offensive included the withdrawal of political status for the prisoners and for Psyops to 'depoliticize' the conflict, to portray Republican leaders as Mafia-type 'Godfathers', and solely define IRA activities as 'hi-jacking', 'kneecapping', engaging in 'rackets', and in brief, 'terrorizing' their own supporters.

Major articles then appeared in the press both South and North of the border, calling on the IRA to abandon their struggle; inflating the importance of the would-be respectable (Official) Sinn Féin who, according to their own claims, had disbanded *their* IRA and wished to seek power only through the ballot box, whilst no longer challenging the division of their country. Ciaran McKeown, who was senior correspondent in the North of the *Irish Press* and the real instigator of the Peace Movement, published a series of articles in June 1976 asking the Provos to surrender.<sup>4</sup>

Finally, since 1974, but especially during the 1975 Truce, a widespread network of institutes, reconciliation centres, conflict research groups, both nationally and internationally, had become particularly active on the Irish soil. Some were clearly religious institutions, linked to international organizations; others were charity foundations, or foundations set up by various multinationals with interests in Ireland who hoped to see the situation 'coming back to normal'. They offered substantial advantages: as soon as the Peace Movement got off the ground, they could provide extensive communication networks on the international scene. Certainly it was in the international arena that the Peace Movement earned a prominent publicity victory against the IRA. Also, the Movement could be funded from foreign sources, without any suggestion of the involvement of the British authorities.

### A Network of Pacification Centres

On 20 August 1976, the Unionist daily *Belfast Telegraph* stated that £250,000 had been injected into Ireland to finance 'reconciliation projects'. Active on both sides of the border these included: Witness for Peace, Corrymeela, Pax Christi, Fellowship of Reconciliation, 'Quaker's Peace Point, Glencree Centre for Reconciliation, Action for Peace, Good Neighbours, Dublin Friends, Peace Committee, and so on.

These organizations were usually run by old-age pensioners whose origins were clearly middle-class, and who, whether they belonged to the Catholic or Protestant faith, were very much influenced by their respective Church hierarchies. They supplied the muscle that shaped the network of associations for the Peace Movement. These groupings initiated 'encounters', research projects, conferences on the roots of violence, on 'community relations' and 'reconciliation', together with the remaining forces of the former attempts to set up a peace movement in the past.

At first sight, the most prominent feature common to all groups was to see the conflict, and to seek a solution solely within the framework of Northern

Ireland. If it was only an intercommunity conflict (whether social, religious or tribal) it could not have been a national liberation war, which over-rode Partition, and involved the participation of all the Irish against the British forces and the Loyalist community (whose ancestors were settlers) who, in the short-term, were auxiliary to the British oppression of the Nationalist population. The underlying principle guiding these organizations, the master idea which later guided the actions of Women for Peace and took roots within the Loyalist community based upon the idea, advocated by some UDA leaders, of an 'Ulster Nationalism', was based on this misconception.

Take Corrymeela (the Hill of Harmony) as a typical instance: on 13 and 14 November 1976, they played host to a conference of Loyalist paramilitaries who favoured an 'Independent Ulster' which could lead jointly to smashing the Nationalists and severing links with Britain, on the Rhodesian UDI model.

Corrymeela was founded in 1965 by two pacifists, Ray and Kathleen Davey, and inaugurated at Easter 1966 by the then Unionist Prime Minister, Terence O'Neill, who spoke on the occasion of the 'reconciliation of Ulster's Catholics and Protestants'. Corrymeela soon emerged as a point of encounter which would initiate a 'sense of identity' for the people of Northern Ireland, while short-circuiting the demands of the Catholic minority in the North for civil rights and the unification of the island, and promoting a solution within 'Ulster's framework' alone.

When the present conflict erupted, the Daveys, like so many social-workers, orientated their actions towards getting people off the streets, by such means for example as holiday camps for the young, often with good intentions, but in effect demobilizing the ghettos. Numerous conferences were organized, clearly aimed at forging an 'intercommunity consensus', which in turn, would bring Northern Ireland back to 'normality'. In itself, this would be commendable, if it did not ignore the political and social roots of the conflict. Topics discussed during these conferences were: 'Two cultures'; 'Ireland, a New Beginning'; 'Schools in Northern Ireland'; 'Policing the Community'; 'Mixed Marriages'; 'Ulster politics and Christian Morality'; 'Violence'; etc. Ventures such as Corrymeela naturally drew support from the Northern Irish and British Establishment, given concrete form by donations from the Rotary and the Lions Clubs in Ireland and Holland (facilitated by the historical connections between the Orange Lodges of both countries).

As early as 1973, Corrymeela had attempted to launch a peace campaign with the help of 'William Whitelaw, a former Secretary of State for Northern Ireland who himself almost succeeded in reaching the impossible of persuading numerous politicians to bury their differences'.<sup>5</sup> The Centre helped set up the Dublin Corrymeela Group in the South, and in 1974 the Glencree Reconciliation Centre led by Judith Hayes was initiated. The ultimate aim of these communities was clearly defined 'to seek a consensus in Ulster':

Corrymeela is a microcosm of society itself. Corrymeela's searching for identity, its communal challenge and its ultimate striving for individual

inner peace is not easy to portray . . . . The Irish situation has been a test case for the Christian message. The Corrymeela message has been this – can the Christian message break through the structures – political, social and ecclesiastical, that imprison society in general, and in so doing bring liberation and hope for every man and woman?<sup>6</sup>

As soon as the Peace Movement emerged, Corrymeela came to its rescue: they lent their Belfast headquarters, and helped to obtain funds; so also did the Glencree Reconciliation Centre. Significantly, as early as February 1976, the Glencree Reconciliation Centre, based in Harcourt Street, Dublin, and in Enniskerry, launched an important programme of 'searching for actions towards peace' in the next five years.<sup>7</sup> The organizers, high up in the Wicklow Mountains, outside Dublin, explained their projects thus: 'Training of groups for peace; hospitality for those living in conflict areas; studies on conflicts and peace; cultural and religious reconciliation; community work among the young'.

In 1976, the group's organizer, Judith Hayes, set up 'holiday camps for young people and children from urban areas such as Belfast, Cork, Derry, Dublin, Galway, Limerick, Newry and Portadown'.

The first week of the summer seminars from 25 to 31 July was held under the aegis of a more telling title: 'Civil Rights and Counter-Terrorism'. But probably the first sign indicating the launching of the Peace Movement was a seminar, organized by the Glencree Reconciliation Centre, in March 1976 on 'Non-Violent Approach for Social Change', with Brigadier Michael Harbottle, (a former British Chief-of-staff for UN forces in Cyprus, since lecturer in Bradford University on 'Peace research') as the main speaker. In a way, Brigadier Harbottle was somewhat critical of the British forces in the North:

I don't propose entering into a discussion of the present military operation in Northern Ireland but I must challenge the initial concept of the military intervention and the form it took. In 30 years of experience of internal security operations, the British army has not changed its methodology or tactics from those employed in 1946 in Palestine, despite the fact that Palestine, Cyprus, Aden and East Africa produced inconclusive military results and no military solution. It is not, therefore surprising to me that the British army is experiencing the same difficulties in Northern Ireland as it did on previous occasions.

A specialist of 'soft counter-insurgency', Harbottle added that:

A senior official of the Ministry of Defence, when pressed recently by me, as a member of a formal delegation, to consider the need for preparation and preparedness of the armed forces for roles concerned with the peaceful control of violence in community conflicts, replied to the effect that his military experts were of the opinion that nothing special in the way of preparation was required, that the soldier could adjust

to the requirements of the situation as he found them. In other words, he 'could pick it up as he went along'.

His conclusion gave a hint of events to come later that year:

The third-party, or impartial peace-keeper, maintains communications with all parties all the time, including the most extreme and most violent elements. He is, therefore, better able to judge the respective issues in question and to assess the structural problems that need corrective attention before the required peaceful solution can be achieved. This is where he needs the help of a peace builder to tackle the socio-economic problems that are the very causes of the manifest violence; in removing these one can go some way along the road to securing conditions where violence itself is seen to be counter-productive.<sup>8</sup>

### The Peace Movement: Phase One

The Women's Peace Movement sprang into life in a spectacular manner, and during the first six months of its development operated on show business techniques.

On 10 August 1976, a British army patrol chased a Cortina driven by an IRA Volunteer, Danny Lennon, with a passenger by his side; as they drove to Finaghy Road North, Lennon was shot and killed by a member of the patrol. Driverless, the car swerved wildly straight on to the pavement, mowing down Mrs Maguire and her three children. Two of them, Andrew and Joanna, died instantly. Within an hour, British Army telexes issued their version: a cross-fire shooting incident between them and the IRA had caused the tragedy. Only the following day was a more sober version released: the IRA did not kill the children, Danny Lennon was already dead but the car ran amok. The difference may seem of little significance: what difference did it make since, anyway, the accident provoked the decision by Mairead Corrigan, (the children's aunt) and Betty Williams to launch the Peace Movement?

A couple of years later, numerous enquiries allowed a full picture of the succession of events to be presented. Firstly, Lennon and his passenger had only a dismantled rifle in their car and were in no position to fire it; secondly, according to various statements, including those of Mrs Maguire, who has since committed suicide, and to the indications that filtered down from the post-mortem examination carried out on the children (the exact findings of which the authorities always declined to reveal) her children had been hit by British army SLR bullets, before the car actually crushed them. This meant that the British did fire indiscriminately at civilians, a fact which deserves remembering in view of the way the incident, justifying the birth of the Peace Movement, was presented. Thirdly, an armoured Ferret vehicle was blockading the street which would have forced Lennon to stop his car, and, either attempt to

run away (most unlikely in view of the local topography) or to surrender to the troops. Thus, the firing on the car was futile.

But the decision to shoot accorded with larger design: to attempt to create a serious incident around 9 August, the commemoration day of the 1971 internment raids and usually a date for confrontation between the Nationalist population and the army. The most influential woman on the Republican side, Vice-President of Sinn Féin, Marie Drumm, was also arrested for the occasion; from the dock some weeks later she claimed that the Peace Movement was 'instigated by the British army'. Subsequently she became the target of a publicity campaign which reached its peak with her assassination, in a hospital bed in Belfast, by a Loyalist hit-team, who, it was thought in press circles, had been directly manipulated by the British. It is more than merely symbolic that this prominent Republican woman leader was murdered, whilst two other women were promoted into the forefront precisely to combat the IRA.

All circumstantial evidence showed that the British General Staff, at the time of the Fifth Anniversary of Internment, were looking for a grave confrontation as an objective basis for the launching of the Peace Movement. The timing was flexible between four to six weeks, not longer. The first prisoners to be gaoled and to see their political status withdrawn would be in the H-Blocks by September, and clearly one could expect a renewal of street protests and marches of an intensity unknown since 1972. A pre-emptive strike became crucial before the end of this 'hot' summer.

But the tragic death of the Maguire children — and of Danny Lennon whom the Peace Women were soon eager to forget — remained for all to witness. This particular incident was not predictable; any other would have done just as well. But the spontaneity of the birth of the Peace Movement is much less credible: especially in view of the lives of their leaders, who were not exactly ordinary women from the Nationalist ghetto areas, Republican at heart, and simply war-weary and appalled by the latest IRA actions.

Elizabeth Williams, was born in 1943, of Catholic origin, and married a British commercial naval engineer of Presbyterian persuasion, from whom she was separated in 1980. Her biographers tend to overlook the fact that she belonged to the Alliance Party. This was an essentially Protestant political party which, without great success, sought to regroup the middle-classes of both communities and, with colleagues from the Social Democratic Labour Party, was somewhat at the centre of the 1973 British constitutional project of power-sharing by way of promoting a federal solution involving the various moderate elements hostile both to the extreme Loyalists and the Republicans. Betty Williams' natural aggressiveness was not fully reflected by this conciliatory image, which the Alliance Party, and later the Peace Movement, sought to publicize.

But this aggressiveness was admirably complemented by Mairead Corrigan's shining smile — which seemed always to seduce rather than convince. Born in Divis Street, in January 1944, Mairead had worked for Guinness' Brewery since 1965, as a confidential secretary to the Managing

Director. Since she had been a 14 year-old, she had been an activist with the Legion of Mary, and was widely known for her strong stand against the extension of the abortion legislation to Northern Ireland.

But it was not too difficult to spot the real brain behind the *Women's Peace Movement*: Ciaran McKeown. A theoretician, architect and political commissar of the Movement, he was first and foremost a journalist who knew full well the mechanisms of the Anglo-Saxon and Irish media community. Working for the *Irish Press* (the Dublin pro-Fianna Fail daily owned by the De Valera family) in Belfast meant that he stood at the junction of the British and Irish media. As stated earlier, in June 1976, McKeown had published premonitory articles against the Provisional IRA, calling for a ceasefire under the title 'Self-Doubt threatens Provo strategy'. He preferred to remain in the shadows whilst pushing his two women companions into the limelight.

A Catholic, born in Derry in 1943, McKeown belonged to that generation who benefited from the post-war Labour legislation which gave them access to university. This generation gave birth to other, more credible civil right fighters, in particular, Bernadette Devlin. By 1966, McKeown had become President of the National Union of Students at Queen's University, Belfast. Oddly enough, in the following year the US magazine *Ramparts* revealed that in 1950, the Anglo-American intelligence services had founded the International Student Conference (ISC) and funded various students' associations to combat communist influence. A report even mentioned that not only did the CIA and SIS attempt to manipulate students' associations in the United Kingdom, but, in the 1960s, with the help of the Foreign Office they managed to promote their own candidates to the Chairmanship of the NUS or to recruit candidates already elected. Many, subsequently, became either senior diplomats or SIS officers. Two former NUS Presidents are now leading operatives of SIS: Margaretta Ramsey, since April 1981 First Secretary at the Helsinki Embassy, worked in Century House, the SIS headquarters in London, while Dennis Grennan is credited with setting up the Ariel Foundation, and was involved in major SIS operations in Africa, from Zambia to Angola. Other leading student union officers, such as Geoff Martin and Maurice Foley, not only worked for SIS but also with the Institute for the Study of Conflict (ISC). Foley was also involved in Ariel, which was active in Northern Ireland, and in 1970, in the funding of the Social Democratic Labour Party. In 1979, Martin became EEC Information Officer in Ulster. But contrary to Republican rumours, McKeown may have been an exception within the NUS leadership of the time.

He sounded radical, flirted with Official Sinn Féin at a time when its armed wing, the Official IRA, was active, then with the Leftist People's Democracy. When he contested the 1973 election in Southern Ireland as an Independent candidate, he got 87 votes. The Peace Movement seemed the first movement of importance in which McKeown could be an undisputed leader, providing some impetus in the direction of a new political party he visualized in 1977, in his theoretical pamphlet *The Price for Peace*. But for the time being, the media and McKeown joined efforts to promote the two



women stars, providing a distinctly feminist overtone for foreign consumption.

The third child of the Maguire family had died of his wounds, and her aunt, Mairead Corrigan, burst into tears in front of the TV cameras; Betty Williams went from door-to-door suggesting 'a demonstration against violence' to her neighbours. Petitions against violence were signed. The first steps of the infant Peace Movement seemed clearly like reproaches and hostile cries to the IRA. The media, in publicizing how many people turned up for the funeral of the young Maguires did not care to acknowledge that just as many attended the funeral of Danny Lennon, former internee, Volunteer of Company B, 1st Battalion, Belfast Brigade of the IRA. In fact, most people attended both sad ceremonies, but the whole event was orientated to suggest that the death of the Maguire children was simply a direct consequence of the IRA campaign. In the initial demonstrations, 10,000 then 20,000 people marched behind the Peace banners. To counter them, Sinn Féin started its own campaign Peace With Justice.

Who was not for peace anyway? But what peace? Whose peace? The return to the 'peaceful' situation prevailing before 1969, when Union supremacy had frozen the aspirations of the nationalist minority? And what of an amnesty for all prisoners? What about the withdrawal of British soldiers who screen the Republican ghettos and only them?

The sole point of reference had been the 1975 truce, when Republicans protected the ghettos, which for once, had experienced some measure of calm, quietness, 'some peace'. Initially the British troops did not go near the Nationalist ghettos, in conformity with the Labour government's options. Then, inevitably, the military began to break the truce. By June 1975, the Truce Incident Centres, manned by Sinn Féin, recorded dozens of incidents. The guerrilla war burst out anew, and perhaps the Republicans made a mistake in not explaining their reasons for renewing hostilities clearly. The Nationalists became confused. A state which the British fully understood how to cultivate and increase.

The euphoria occasioned by the peace demonstrations, however, had initially opened up a new situation. The media gave excessive coverage to the two women, TV cameras followed them everywhere, they gave dozens of interviews a day, and even their hairdressers were put on stand-by for any TV appearance. A brains-trust, remembering how, seven years earlier, the world press and media had built up Bernadette Devlin, was at work on Betty Williams's and Mairead Corrigan's image.

Following the initial gatherings, the Peace Movement decided to organize a vast rally on 28 August, to take place in Belfast's Shankill Road, the big Loyalist counterpart of the Nationalist ghettos. Another demonstration was due to take place simultaneously in Dublin. Two days earlier, the two women leaders published a statement which constituted an orientation for their movement. After two weeks, they said, they had learned that 'Northern Ireland is a real minefield'. They thanked the media for their coverage, and suggested that 'the honeymoon would not last long'; facing widespread

criticisms in Ireland, they wished to answer three decisive questions: Was the IRA the target for their campaign? Did they benefit from any para-military — obviously Loyalist — protection? What was their attitude vis-à-vis the 'security forces'? (i.e. the British army and the RUC).

Because of the circumstances at the start of the campaign, we have been accused of being against only the violence of the IRA. We say now, for all time, that our peace drive is against all violence, and in the words of our declaration, 'we reject the bomb and the bullet and all the techniques of violence'.

We have also been accused of accepting 'protection' from another para-military organization. As peace people we have asked for the protection of God in our efforts and we are prepared to accept all the risks that our effort may imply. We do not wish to be involved in accepting or rejecting, or praising, or condemning the changeable stances of any para-military organization . . . . There are also those, on both sides, who want to drag us into condemning or supporting the security forces either in general or over particular incidents . . . . We have been overwhelmed by the amount of work for peace that is necessary and we are now saying that we are not going to get into any of these political-security questions.<sup>9</sup>

Playing on the precarious equilibrium of ambiguities which allowed them to concentrate their attention on the IRA, and obtain the protection and approval of the Loyalist UDA for the Saturday march in their realm, the Women for Peace remained vague on the subject of the British army, thus excluding them, *de facto*, as one source of violence. Yet only four days after the death of the Maguire children and Danny Lennon in Belfast, the 3rd Parachute Regiment in South Armagh, killed without justification a 12 year-old girl on her way to confession, Majella O'Hare. The British army, as usual, first claimed that the child had been accidentally killed in an exchange of cross-fire between themselves and the IRA. Two priests, Father Denis Faul and Raymond Murray subsequently produced and published the accounts of 15 witnesses clearly showing that there had been no such incident, but that the girl had been killed by an Armalite rifle, a weapon used by the IRA, while the standard British army rifle was a SLR. But the Armalite rifle was used by the Paras, as was proven during the Paras' trial for the murder of Majella O'Hare, a crime for which, needless to say, they were acquitted. This incident, four days after the birth of the Peace Movement, whether intentional (as the use of Armalite strongly suggests) or not, would have emphasized the need for a movement against 'senseless violence' while pointing a finger at the IRA in a strongly Republican border area.

Mss Corrigan and Williams declined to demonstrate against the 'Paratroopers violence' as Sinn Féin invited them to do; they gave their reason in the statement already mentioned: 'We have to avoid being diverted from the peace drive into involvement in the cross-fire of those engaged in propaganda

from any side, and we do not have the resources to investigate every incident and then condemn the culprits.'<sup>10</sup> Their position gradually regressed until it was limited to a blanket condemnation of the IRA. Less than two months later indeed, the *Daily Mirror* could rightly print this front page banner headline: 'WE BACK THE ARMY, SAY PEACE WOMEN'.<sup>11</sup> Mairead Corrigan's and Betty Williams' stance was quite clear from then on: 'We totally support law and order in Northern Ireland. The RUC and other security forces are the legitimate defenders of law and order'.<sup>12</sup>

The Shankill Road march on 28 August was impressive, with around 20,000 demonstrators, of whom less than 20% — mostly old-age pensioners, nuns, and members of diverse Catholic associations and organizations — were behind nationalist area banners. The working-class was not at the rendezvous, at least, not from the nationalist ghettos. The workers from the nationalist ghettos will never come to the Shankill until the conflict is resolved. During the week leading up to the rally, the Ulster Defence Association, responsible for most sectarian murders of Catholics, with the small UVF, had offered their support to the demonstration. Every 30 yards, Loyalist para-militaries flanked the demonstration which was already well protected, as the *Irish Times* Belfast reporter, David McKittrick noticed: 'Large contingents from the army and police were discreetly placed nearby in armoured vehicles in parallel streets, but the opposition to the march which was feared never materialized'.<sup>13</sup>

In its final edition on 28 August, the headline of the *Belfast Telegraph* read: 'The incredible day of Shankill', stating that this had been the first united demonstration since the intercommunity marches against unemployment in 1932, which, significantly had been organized by the unions, the Communist Party and the Republicans. But the climate was different, and unity was soon fragmented as both Catholic and Protestants churches cried 'Wolf' and rumoured that the whole scheme was a 'Communist Plot'.

Billy Simpson, of the *Belfast Telegraph* introduced the Peace Women to his readers thus:

They've been threatened. Taunted. Abused. Insulted. In the patriotism of insanity the bombs and bullets of the past seven cruel years have killed and maimed them. Their husbands. Their children.

The men of violence fear them as they do no other army. And politicians, whose fame and careers were built on hate, tremble before them.

In two short weeks the women of Ulster — the housewives and mothers and schoolgirls, Catholic and Protestants — by their courage and determination have given hope to a people who had forgotten how to hope. They have stood up and cried, 'No more'. No more death. No more hate. No more terror. No more fear.<sup>14</sup>

Near its editorial, the *Belfast Telegraph* published another article which epitomized what the Peace Movement meant to the Unionist ascendancy of

which this Belfast daily is the mouthpiece 'Peace marchers from Andersonstown said today they were "sorry", while with thousands of others, Catholics and Protestants, walked shoulder to shoulder along Shankill this afternoon up to the rally in Woodvale Park.'

'Sorry', read the banner from a contingent from the Falls Road: what had the Nationalists to be sorry for vis-à-vis the Loyalists? Because they rebelled in 1969, in an attempt to win civil rights so far denied? Because they had repelled the Loyalist mob who burnt their streets, and then the British army? Because they had fallen victims of the majority of civilian killings organized by Loyalist para-militaries?

That afternoon on the Shankill, there was something in the atmosphere that spelled condemnation of the Peace Movement, once the euphoria of the big marches had faded away. A forerunning sign, only the previous night, in the Catholic enclave of Unity Flats, on the edge of Shankill, a group of Loyalists had burnt alive a whole Catholic family.

Meantime, in Southern Ireland, the Dublin peace demonstration had another meaning. The middle classes were supporting the most conservative and pro-British of political parties since the end of the Civil War in 1923, and the Blueshirts fascist movements of the 1930s. Within the framework of increased collaboration with British policy in Ireland, the coalition government's measures included the death sentence by hanging, meted out to two libertarian Republican militants, Noel and Marie Murray, the introduction of new legislation handing over policing powers to the army, and the use of torture against Republican suspects, well described the following year by Amnesty International. Over the previous ten years, the Republican Movement had never been so deep in the trough of the wave.

## The Peace Movement: Phase Two

The great publicity success of the Women for Peace Movement marked a new phase: that of foreign travels, of propagation abroad of two master principles: 1) the need to reach a consensus, the unification of all communities and all classes to isolate the 'terrorists', the 'men of violence', and simultaneously to attain this on an international scale; and, 2) that the resolution of the conflict in Northern Ireland, lay only within the boundaries of this territorial unit, called incorrectly, 'Ulster'. The demonstration organized in London highlighted this second phase. While early supporters of the Peace Movement in Ireland began to question the real aims of the Movement this final great Women for Peace march provided a spring-board for foreign involvement. Officially, the Peace Movement decided, to call a halt to big demonstrations and to ask the IRA to accept a ceasefire.

For the first time in four years, Scotland Yard and the Home Office allowed a demonstration related to Ireland to take place in London's Trafalgar Square. Since 1974, movements, advocating the withdrawal of British troops from Ireland, such as the Troops Out Movement, had always

been refused the right to march. Snipers from the Special Patrol Group took up positions on the roofs of Canada House and the National Gallery to protect the march. The two leaders said that they hoped 50,000 to 100,000 people would turn out for the march. Before the demonstration even started, the evening papers went as far as publishing the figure of 50,000 marchers. Most observers noticed only 5,000 at Speakers' Corner, and most papers favourable to the movement, such as the *Daily Telegraph*, quoted the figure of 15,000.

But numbers were not as significant as the nature of the participants. The most striking feature seemed to be ignored: nowhere was the Irish community to be seen. One newspaper of the exiled community, *The Irish Democrat* explained why:

There have been complaints by some of our English friends that the Irish community in Britain have shown themselves lukewarm towards the Women's Peace Movement. This is quite true . . . The enthusiasm of the British government made them suspicious. The ban on talking about Ireland in Trafalgar Square was hastily lifted. The BBC couldn't find epithets complimentary enough for the 'courageous women'. Again, all the emphasis is on Nationalist violence; there is still little said about Unionist extremist violence.<sup>15</sup>

The only Irish present joined Bernadette McAliskey and some hundreds of members of the Troops Out Movement who chanted slogans to drown the Peace Women's speeches.

The British who took part in this rally did not originate from the working classes either. The notabilities gathered on the rostrum in Trafalgar Square illustrated which social classes saw a promising venture in the Peace Movement. Ecumenicalism prevailed: Cardinal Hume, Archbishop of Westminster side-by-side with the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Coggan and Dr Huxtable, Moderator of the Federal Council of Free Churches. John Biggs-Davidson, a Conservative expert on Ireland and cousin to the British diplomat and SIS 'spook', Christopher Ewart-Biggs, who, six months earlier had been killed in Dublin. Since 1974, Biggs-Davidson had been Conservative Shadow Minister for Northern Ireland, and a strong partisan of harsh methods, including extensive deployment of the SAS; significantly, he was later replaced by Airey Neave the former head of MI9 who was killed by the INLA. Airey Neave thought well of the Peace Movement: 'The Peace Movement in Northern Ireland [he said] has provided a splendid opportunity to mount a more effective counter-campaign against expert left-wing propaganda'.<sup>16</sup>

Ewart-Biggs' widow, Jane, was there too; she had been chosen to head the British section of the Peace Movement. Lord Longford, a Labourite and former Secretary to the Colonies, President of the National Bank Limited and author of various historical books on Ireland who had also shared Mairead Corrigan's previous hobby: to step up the anti-abortion lobby, and former Liberal spokesman on Ireland, Clement Freud, a Territorial Army officer of

the Royal Ulster Rifles and one of the controversial Presidents of the Playboy Club of London, were also present. The entertainment world was also represented. 'Pacifist singer' Larry Adler, known for his tours in Korea to boost the morale of British soldiers during the war in the 1950s, or more recently the Israeli regiments during both Israeli-Arab wars in 1967 and 1973. Actress Diana Rigg of the spy TV series *The Avengers* rubbed shoulders with Joan Baez. She was the star of the show and had declared wholehearted support for the Peace Women. Later, Bernadette Devlin wrote a letter, to her asking wherein lay the logic of demanding the GI's withdrawal from Vietnam, and backing the continued presence of British soldiers in Ireland. As in Ireland, the Great Orange Lodge in Glasgow, the Clann na h-Eireann, counterpart of Official Sinn Féin in Britain, welcomed the Peace Movement. Songs, prayers and 'reconciliation' speeches, intermingled with pro-Republican slogans from the Troops Out contingent, the London Peace rally proved the first important failure. Yet, as French journalist Richard Deutsch, in his book devoted to the Peace Women, rightly noted: 'Preparations had been militantly led in London by a team of businessmen, the Pax Christi representatives and many volunteers'.<sup>17</sup>

Back in Ireland, phase two, theoretically consisted in organizing those who had taken part in the demonstrations into 'Peace commandos' to draw a vast web over all the other Six Counties of Ulster. Officially 170 sections were organized and from December 1976 formed a network of 'community groups, co-ops and social work groups' which could bring the situation *back to normal*. Again, the old idea of organizing parallel economic and social ventures with counter-insurgency consequences, was creeping back. Ciaran McKeown, faithful to his old socialist flirtation, gave a slightly Left wing tinge to the old venture. Waging psychological war on the IRA, he announced that the crusade should extend to social evils, since these provided fertile ground for the development of 'terrorism'. This could have been solved by investments and setting up new firms, mostly US, which the Peace People intended to request from Western governments and multinationals.

But the main objective, through its octopus-armed network, remained to defuse the Irish conflict. The Peace people organized leisure centres, rehabilitation schemes for ex-prisoners and 'dissidents' from insurgent ghettos. In Belfast, Derry or Strabane, the Peace Centres took charge of a wide range of activities: youth clubs, football teams, help to 'victims of terrorism', the organization of visits to the political prisoners with an attempt to draw them away from their respective organizations. This latter activity proved to be a total failure on the Republican side, with IRA or IRSP prisoners, but interestingly enough, the Women for Peace scored some success on the Loyalist side, as witnessed by articles or letters from UVF prisoners in the Peace Movement's paper *Peace by Peace*.

Then came the totally unpopular calls to inform on Republicans: 'We have called on people to inform on the whereabouts of arms and ammunition; and after next month we propose to ask people to inform on the movement of those who continue to engage in terrorist violence'.<sup>18</sup> Betty Williams again hit

the headlines by stating that if her son had belonged to the IRA, she would have betrayed him to the security forces. She and her partner Mairead Corrigan called, too, on people to defect, claiming that 'escape networks for IRA defectors' had been set up through West Germany and New Zealand. Slowly distributed to the press, these stories ensured permanent publicity but made little impact otherwise. The job creation scheme was a good example. The Women for Peace made a great fuss about creating new jobs to deter terrorism, but between 1976 to 1979, only 30 were created, in a glass factory in Coalsisland.

While rank-and-file members of the movement worked hard to organize charity activities, and Ciaran McKeown developed his new philosophy in *Peace by Peace*, Betty Williams and Mairead Corrigan, were scarcely seen on the ground in Belfast. A more adventurous mission lay in store for them: to travel abroad to seek political and financial support, under the benevolent eye of the world's cameras.

### International Support

The support afforded to Women for Peace seemed to come from rather diverse groups. They had worked in the direction of governmental and extra-governmental institutions in Britain, the US, Australia, Canada and New Zealand — the main English-speaking countries with a large Irish population, where the Republican Movement had strong influence and support. They also approached international inter-religious organizations, with international social democrat groups offering a Left-wing cover, and with feminine, if not feminist, groups. An ambitious world-wide project. Most surprisingly, they drew support from those Left wing or progressive forces, which, because of their lack of knowledge of the Irish conflict, failed to recognize the movement as a facet of a propaganda war launched against a national liberation movement.

The extent of financial help from Britain is difficult to ascertain. British strategists had insisted that British money should be seen to have come directly from the mainland, in order to avoid discrediting the Peace Movement. So, the National Westminster Bank, the Rowntree and Cadbury Foundations, among others, channelled funds to the movement through the non-violent centres such as Corrymeela or the Glencree Reconciliation Centre. Queen Elizabeth herself, gave a donation — though a small one. Help came rather in the political and practical sense: the loan of minibuses, cars, buses, or trains to transport demonstrators around, military and police protection of marches, and everything to ensure the success of public interventions. To organize numerous journeys abroad, and the publication of *Peace by Peace*, the Movement had to deal in large sums, whose final destination, was, in 1978, at the heart of a crisis which led to the departure from the leadership of Betty Williams and Mairead Corrigan.

In December 1976, the movement officially proclaimed they had gathered £500,000: £200,000 from the Peace Prize funded by Norwegian newspapers;

and £200,000 from West Germany, Ireland, Britain and other donations from individuals or groups from other countries.

This amount did not figure at all in the financial report published in the Movement's journal, from 26 August 1976 to 28 February 1977, which published foreign donations as £34,707, and donations from Britain and Northern Ireland of £14,042, totalling £51,221. If the figures quoted by the *Irish Times* are to be believed, 90% of the funds were not mentioned in the financial report given to the press. The latest financial report in our possession shows that the majority of money came from abroad, and most importantly from the US. Of course, the crisis initiated by the use of these funds, and amplified by press speculations, are mainly the concern of the Women for Peace movement. But, as *The Guardian* mentioned at the time, if the full extent of funds had been concealed, it increased the unease of those well-meaning supporters of the movement, and began to seriously undermine their credibility.

The extraordinary amount of travel; the publication of a fortnightly journal; and the renting of 'Freidheim', their headquarters, suggested the existence of considerable funds. Some firms offered gifts in kind: for example, Guinness' maintained the high salary and loan of a sports car to their director's secretary, Mairead Corrigan.

As the special correspondent for the Catholic French daily, *La Croix* put it:

It is, indeed, no secret that large sums of money have come across from Norway, Germany, and the US. This money is intended to pay the three leaders' salaries from January [1977], all three having abandoned their jobs; to pay the renting of their offices and phone, the printing of their magazine and to finance extensive travels. But above all, to build, according to Betty's dream, a vast playground for the children from the ghettos, or else a rehabilitation and care centre for the victims.

But as early as November 1976, Paddy Devlin, then a SDLP leader, accused the Peace Women of '... receiving large sums of money under false pretences from Social Democratic sources in Western Europe to be used against the Social Democrats in Northern Ireland'.<sup>19</sup>

Paddy Devlin naturally had in mind Helmut Schmidt of West Germany, a good target for the Women for Peace, as he was waging the ultimate struggle against the Red Army Faction led by Andreas Baader and Ulrike Meinhoff. Also West German economic interests in Ireland were not negligible, and to ice the cake, the West German Consul and industrialist, Herr Niedermayer had, some years earlier died in captivity, after being kidnapped, it was thought by the IRA. The Irish resistance presented a serious impediment to the concept of an all-Europe anti-terrorist drive, in which Britain and West Germany were the leading countries.

So the Peace people frequently visited Germany and were welcomed by all shades of opinions: the West German Women's Association, led by Frau Erika Voges; the World Organization of Mothers of All Nations (WOMAN), led by

Carola Von Hake, from Hannover; whilst Annmarie Renger, Vice-Chairwoman of the Social Democratic Party in the Bundestag, got the support of the Right wing CDU to propose the Women for Peace for a Nobel Prize. Leading writer, Günther Grass, expressed his support, as did former Chancellor Willy Brandt.

The United States was obviously the first choice for campaigning. The American government had a vested interest in Ireland. But a strategical about-turn occurred, primarily because it was feared that an independent Ireland would present an unacceptable threat at the core of the NATO defensive system. NATO strategists had long convinced themselves that Ireland would constitute a 'back-door' for the USSR, in a new order of battle. Successive British governments had urged the White House to find means to eliminate the financial and arms supplies for the IRA that emanated from the Irish community in the USA, which had also developed a wide intelligence network there, contrary to inter-agency agreements. The Peace Movement presented a fine opportunity to manifest interest in the resolution of the Irish conflict whilst isolating the IRA.

Thus, the CIA had a role to play in preparing the ground for successful Peace tours in the States, to ensure that the press extended favourable coverage, to break-up the Irish lobby, and isolate those, such as Paul O'Dwyer, favourable to the independence formula.

Secret services were able to fund the Peace Movement through various Centres for the Studies on Conflict and Peace, charity groups and lobbies, as well as getting the support of influential people who made it possible for the Peace people to elicit promises from multinational firms to invest in Northern Ireland, as a step towards containing social unrest. The activities of the US intelligence agency and the Peace people converged towards what was then called the 'Carter Initiative on Northern Ireland'; a purely psychological operation by the end of 1977, when Jimmy Carter ensured that US investments would pour into the North, so that a 'peaceful situation' and 'the reconciliation of both communities' would occur.

It proved to be a real, though short-lived, success for the Women for Peace to attack the traditional support from the US-Irish community for the IRA. Betty Williams and Mairead Corrigan called on the Irish-Americans to stop sending funds to Republicans, allegedly through associations like *Noraid*, and attempted to disrupt the Irish lobby. Quite plainly, a paradoxical situation emerged; Irish Americans initially gave some money to the Peace people, who seemed congenial, whilst continuing to help the Republican Movement whose ultimate objectives remained legitimate.

As early as September 1976, Mairead Corrigan and Betty Williams had cordial relations with Peter Spicer, the US Consul in Belfast, who established the links between the Peace Movement and the US State Department, and the US intelligence community. In October, the US trips were organized by Ciaran McKeown, Peter Spicer and Allard Kenneth Lowenstein who, 'had a background of covert activities with the CIA, going back to the Biafra war in 1967'.<sup>20</sup>

The importance attached to the operation can be judged by the fact that

in 1977, Peter Spicer was replaced in Belfast by a senior CIA officer, Charles Stout, who took a keen interest in the Movement. Of course, he had just come from Santiago de Chile where, in 1973, the 'Saucepans Women's Movement' had played a great role in the overthrow of President Allende.

Charles Stout had a fascinating biography: as early as 1968 he was mentioned in the East German book by Julius Mader, *Who's Who in the CIA*, and in 1967 by the Italian press as being a senior case officer in charge of organizing the 'strategy of tension' there. This small, stout, bespectacled and moustached man was born in 1928 in Missouri and had been in the US army in Italy after the Second World War, before entering the State Department, where he was listed as 'an intelligence and research analyst', in the Intelligence and Research (INR) agency founded in 1945 by Harry Truman. In the 1950s he was posted in Mexico, then Yugoslavia, where his position as 'political officer' hardly concealed his CIA activities which he carried on in Italy in the late 1960s and early 1970s. In 1969, he was a 'political officer' in the Rome embassy, at the time when his ambassador, Graham Martin with Kissinger's consent, but against the advice of CIA Chief of Station, Gerry Miller, funded the Italian Secret service General Vito Micelli, and other fascists, who attempted coups in both 1969 and 1973.<sup>21</sup> But by April 1970, Charlie Stout had left Italy to teach in the Pentagon, then in the National War College. In the aftermath of the fascist group in Chile, he was sent to the CIA station of Santiago, and three years later to Ireland.

Stout's arrival in Belfast in August 1977, coincided with a new interest by the US administration in Ireland. The frequent encounters between the Women for Peace and their US friends could not go unnoticed. Betty Williams for instance, who wrote a diary in the Movement's paper *Peace by Peace*, noted on 26 September 1977: 'US connection: visited the US Consul Mr Charles Stout at home and have met various officials from London and Washington'.<sup>22</sup> The same week, Mairead Corrigan received a letter from the director of Dupont de Nemours, Mr D Shapiro, who had been contacted to invest in Ireland 'if peace prevails'.<sup>23</sup> This was one of the operations organized by the intelligence agencies. Dupont de Nemours were no strangers to counter-insurgency in Ireland, partly because the Derry Brigade of the Provisional IRA had shot the British manager of the US petrochemical firm, Jeffrey Agate, in February 1977.

US intelligence support for the Peace Movement became crystal-clear by December 1977, as an article in *Peace by Peace* stressed that:

Mr Charles Stout, the US Consul lately posted in Belfast, came last week to the 'House of Peace' to speak with Betty and Mairead. Mr Stout, who until lately was based in Chile, stressed the sympathy he felt for the work undertaken by the Peace People, and his will to help in strengthening the support extended by his predecessor, Peter Spicer.

'Mairead and Betty' did not resist the pleasure of being photographed with Stout, when, in his Consulate in Queen's Street, he gave them a congratulatory

telegram from Jimmy Carter in respect of their nomination as candidates for the Nobel Peace Prize. To close the circle of US backing to the Peace Movement, as soon as he was posted as US ambassador to London, Kingsmann Brewster travelled in private to Belfast to meet the two women and stated that: 'New investments from US industrialists in Ireland depended upon prospects of political stability here, and of a better US economy.'<sup>24</sup>

The return to normality sought by US firms was not restricted to Northern Ireland. On the contrary, the South had become their stronghold. According to *The Economist*, with 198 investment projects from 1970 to 1976 (£265 millions and 31,000 jobs created) the US multinationals were only second to British investments and just ahead of West German firms. To these foreign industrialists, Irish Republicanism was just as much as threat in the South, and in case of victory in the North they expected that the whole of the island would become a socialist country. So the Peace women received 'substantial support' from SFADCO (the Shannon Free Airport Corporation) the Shannon Airport Duty Free area, a state-sponsored body established in 1959 by the Dublin government.<sup>25</sup>

The whole scheme seemed to fall apart, however, and in February 1979, the final donation came from the New York Ford Foundation which offered £47,500 to the Movement '... because of the recent renewal of terrorism in Northern Ireland, which, after several months of relative quiet undermines the Peace Movement.'<sup>26</sup> Significantly, the President of the Ford Foundation at the time was George McBundy, the former National Security adviser of the Kennedy administration who, in the early 1960s, as revealed by the Frank Church Commission, had supervised the CIA assassination plots against Fidel Castro, Patrice Lumumba and other Third World leaders.

### Phase Three: The Decline

A year and a half after the foundation of the Movement, the McKeown-Williams-Corrigan trio was evicted from its leadership. By April 1978, they announced they would not stand for election to the Executive Council in the following October.

This news provoked some sensation in Northern Ireland where the activities of the organization are growingly criticized, especially since Mrs Williams and Mrs Corrigan accepted the £40,000 Nobel Peace Prize they were offered last autumn for themselves.<sup>27</sup>

Indeed, by deciding to keep the Nobel Prize money for personal use, they drove another nail into the coffin of the Peace Movement. The once enthusiastic *Sunday Times* mentioned that 'the change from a street movement to a formally constituted organization with its headquarters and secretarial staff led people to suggest that the founding members were making gains out of the Ulster people's sufferings.'<sup>28</sup>

In addition to a notable decline, and a credibility gap between the Peace leaders and their supporters, drastic political changes dismembered the Movement. On the one hand, since its inception they have been unable to conceal the plight of the political prisoners, around which a new sizeable body of sympathy has gathered. The Peace Movement tried to jump on the bandwagon and, by the winter of 1978, stated that they were in favour of an 'emergency status' for the H-Block prisoners. On the other hand, for a Movement which claimed to oppose violence, it was extraordinary that they did not criticize the infliction of torture, which, in 1977, was systematically practised to an extent unknown until then. Their co-winner for the Nobel Peace Prize in 1977, Amnesty International, however was strongly critical, and their enquiries led them to conclude that ill-treatment was systematically meted out to members of the Republican population held in custody. The Peace Movement eventually published a document, at the end of 1978, entitled 'The case for the Replacement of the Emergency Provisions Act by Normal Judicial Process', demanding the reform of the exception laws.

Possibly more striking, was the take-over of the leadership by Loyalist personalities, and the growing influence of these groups which, rubbing shoulders with the Peace Movement, sought to resurrect their political virginity. A common denominator was: a political project within the framework of the 'Ulster State', or even the prospect of unilateral independence for the Irish Province. For example, in June 1977, the Peace Women made great publicity out of the membership of Hilary Herron, the widow of Tommy Herron, the leader of the Ulster Defence Association assassinated by British agents in 1973; and of the moral support of Gusti Spence, the first UVF leader who, whilst serving a life sentence in Long Kesh for the motiveless killing of Catholics, had worked out a model of 'Ulster socialism' which seemed a Left cover for the eventual secession of Ulster.

Again, in April 1977, David Payne, former member of the Inner Council of the UDA and Officer-in-Command of its North Belfast Brigade, offered to help the Movement. The same month, two prominent members of the Unionist community walked into the leadership of the Movement. One was Jim MacIlwainne, former trade union delegate in the Sirroco Works factory in Belfast, one of these fortresses where Catholics are systematically rejected if they apply for work. He had played a notable role there during the Ulster Workers' Council general strike of 1974, launched at the initiative of the Loyalist para-military groups to prevent the introduction of the 'power-sharing' policy between Catholic and Protestant moderates. He, too, had belonged to the UDA. The new chairman of the Peace Movement was Peter McLachlan, the 'financial brain' of the movement, but above all a member of the Unionist Party and close friend of Brian Faulkner, the man who had introduced internment without trial. Thus, too Ciaran McKeown, the architect of the Peace Movement's political and administrative machine, and leaders of the UDA, such as Glen Barr, who foresaw the eventuality of constitutional independence for Ulster also now converged upon it.

During spring 1979, leaders of the Peace Movement, and of the UDA,



Glen Barr, Andie Tyrie and Tommy Lyttle, organized discreet meetings in order to plan common political activities. The UDA, responsible for the murder of hundreds of Catholic civilians, put on a new face. Many members involved themselves in social work, while others formed the 'New Ulster Political Research Group' which, in March 1979, launched a constitutional programme for the independence of Ulster, a policy of rejection of the British presence while preserving, with the help of foreign investments, the Loyalist supremacy over the nationalist population of Northern Ireland.

Thus, from a seemingly spontaneous mass movement, essentially launched in an effort to isolate the IRA, the Peace Movement had become transformed into a political party which offered an *alternative policy* to the Republican project of the reunification of the island in a socialist context. This was far from the time when women prayed together that the 'men of violence' would surrender their weapons.

### Success or Failure?

In attempting to slot the Women for Peace Movement into their overall counter-insurgency plans, British experts knew they were igniting dynamite, the consequences of which they could not easily control. Was it just a new tactical move to obscure the stakes of the conflict, or a more sizeable smoke-screen to cover-up a strategic turn in the Irish war? The use of women in a counter-insurgency process was virtually new, and difficult to implement in Ireland.

The image of the Nationalist woman is sometimes difficult to apprehend through the various facets of the religious influence, the Republican tradition, and the relationship to violence imposed by the history of Irish oppression. Never more than today, with the exception of the Independence war from 1916 to 1923, have women played such an active role against the British occupation forces, a logistical, political and military role. Demonstrations, organization of support committees, holding and transporting weapons, attacks against economic targets, are among the frequent actions taken by a generation of young women, who are less influenced, than are their elders, by the religious traditions. In many ways, the image of the mother, whose sons have been killed by the British, as in Republican songs and Irish ballads or the 'Mater Doloris' in Seán O'Casey's plays, belong to the past, although various British propagandists and intellectuals still project this picture.

But as the Peace Movement emerged abroad, an inversion of the situation was presented by the media to public opinion: a) the conflict was a war of religions led solely by *men*; and b) women rejected women's violence. This led some Left-wing feminist papers to state mistakenly that the women were rebelling because they were not allowed to take part in the armed struggle.

In November 1976, Miriam Daly, who was about to take part in a television debate in Paris on Ireland, in an interview with the author said:

Women have taken part on an equal footing with men in the armed

resistance, but the centre of resistance in Belfast, and indeed in Northern Ireland, is family resistance. The revolutionary unit in fact is basically the family, either the nuclear family or the extended family. People operate from their houses, they are supported by their wives, mothers, uncles and children. So consequently to say that men rather than women, take part is an absolute nonsense. It is community resistance and as the Irish community is organized on a family basis consequently it is family resistance.

There have been women Volunteers, there are women who are taking part in the armed struggle, but women have supported the men, they have supported the prisoners and they have in fact undertaken whatever was required of them within the present given social structures in Northern Ireland. So it is absolutely foolish to regard this [the Peace Movement] as a confrontation between women and men.

If you ask me why the Peace Movement should have arisen at this time, I would regard it as part of the psychological operations being carried out by the British army who, this summer, opened up a new branch of psychological warfare in Lisburn.

The Peace Movement is not new. This is the third attempt at such a movement that has been launched by the British army. This one has been more successful because it has learnt the lessons from the previous mistakes. Again, more resources have been thrown into it, particularly international support, and certainly the media have been tamer and have co-operated in building up Mairead Corrigan and Betty Williams and Ciaran McKeown's personalities to an extent that they have never done in the past.<sup>29</sup>

The relationship of women from Protestant districts to the Loyalist organizations is different from the Nationalist women's attitudes to the Republican armies. It is no accident that women's rights, if not feminist ideas, have only emerged within the ranks of the Republican movement. The exclusion of Catholics from employment broke up and changed the family structure; Catholic women in Derry, for example, can usually find some work, unlike their husbands; the Protestant family, especially of the middle classes, is closer to the type which prevails in Britain. The near fascist Loyalist ideology prevailing within the Protestant working class, prevents any questioning of the traditional role of women within the family structure. Aggressiveness and activism, however, cannot be excluded from their attitudes and, initially, in addition to the middle class, they produced important contingents of the Peace Movement.

The decision to organize the largest march, on 28 August 1976, on Shankill Road, expressed a dual preoccupation: Loyalists would extend military protection to it, and thus would largely take part, as they saw the Peace Movement as a tool to defeat the IRA. On the contrary, in the Nationalist ghettos, animosity vis-à-vis the Women for Peace, from women themselves was all too visible. One episode illustrates this fact. With the birth of the Peace Movement,

British soldiers replaced their rubber bullets by the plastic bullets on a massive scale, which inevitably resulted in tragic incidents. On 4 October, in Turf Lodge, a West Belfast Nationalist district, British soldiers fired on a 13 year-old boy, Brian Stewart, who was alone at the time, and had taken part in no demonstration. He was hit in the head and died six days later. Most women in Turf Lodge demonstrated in protest. During a meeting to which Betty Williams came, she was asked to condemn British troops, and when she refused, she would no doubt have been beaten up, had not Republican stewards intervened to lead her out to safety.

The Saucepans' Women's Movement in Chile does not represent the same approach as that of the Women for Peace in Ireland, except that in both cases, military strategists played on the role of *women as militants against popular movements*. A Brazilian counter-insurgency expert who claimed he had 'taught the Chileans how to use women against Marxists' said after the overthrow of Salvador Allende:

Women constitute the most efficient weapon in politics . . . They have time; they are gifted with a great emotional ability and can be mobilized very quickly. If you want, for instance, to spread the rumours that the President likes the booze, that he has got health problems, uses women. The day after, the rumour will have spread round the country . . . The use of women consists in making the Military believe that they benefit from a very impressive support from the population.<sup>30</sup>

In Northern Ireland the extent of the mobilization of women could be judged by demonstrations of opposition to the British, but no coherent ideology, or class interest, cemented the various sections of the Peace Movement, except the hatred of the IRA. For some people, the Peace Movement was essentially a pacifist movement. Yet it did not condemn all types of violence; nationalist ghettos had already experienced non-violence in 1969, as their population campaigned for Civil Rights and met with Loyalist violence; or, as they peacefully marched on 30 January 1972 in Derry, the para-troopers opened fire on them. They knew what non-violence meant. Others saw in the Peace Movement an ecumenicalist movement that drew together the most religious sections of both communities and seduced public opinion abroad, where the conflict was so often presented as a religious war. Yet others abroad saw it as a 'feminist movement' which epitomized the irruption of women into Irish politics. But it is necessary to remember the essentially conservative outlook of these women, their hysterical opposition to contraception or abortion, providing the perfect image of the traditional woman.

Lastly for those others, to whom, if they did not genuinely belong to a Left-wing movement, they brought fresh hope to those forces who looked for a peaceful situation in which to exercise their socialist strategy. Many Left-wing forces in Europe fell into the trap, the more so as Official Sinn Féin (which still maintained the image of a Left-wing party, and later changed its name to 'Sinn Féin the Workers' Party' and again changed it to 'Workers'

Party') unconditionally supported the Peace Movement and announced that 'Peace is the most revolutionary demand in Ireland'.

The official line-up of the Peace Movement with the British authorities, the regression of large demonstrations, the growing politization to the benefit of Loyalist para-military elements suddenly interested in a political solution which envisaged an Independent Ulster, and the final divisions initiated by the star-system enjoyed by Betty Williams and Mairead Corrigan, put an end to their saga. Yet for some months, they had provided a smoke-screen, for the real situation, and helped to criminalize the Resistance.

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# Postscript

This book was first published in France, in 1980. While it was undergoing translation and updating in 1982, many facets of the Kitsonian strategy were further implemented with several tactical changes being introduced at the same time.

In Ireland, the new IRA reorganization and offensive, the spate of hunger-strikes and the duel with Margaret Thatcher at the beginning of 1979, led to 'Ulsterization' being partly abandoned and a return to more conventional counter-insurgency operations. The British army and local forces, UDR and RUC, as well as the Intelligence Services, were better co-ordinated. At the same time, the apparent outcome of the 1981 Republican hunger-strike gave the impression that the 'criminalization' of prisoners was successful. Against this must be balanced the fact that in many countries there was international recognition of the Republicans who were seen as a broad-based nationalist movement, and even as a liberation force.

Meanwhile many of the seeds sown in the mid-1970s have bloomed: the intelligence and computer programme certainly provided an up-to-date picture of the 'Insurgents', their modus operandi, their structure, etc. and even seemed to make headway, notably after the end of the hunger-strike. In late 1981 and early 1982, the idea that several Republican Volunteers, in both the IRA and the INLA, had been 'turned over' and now worked for the RUC and British Intelligence, was reflected widely in the British press. Was it just part of a war of words?

In December 1981, the Republican press detailed the case of Christopher Black, a former Republican prisoner arrested by the British army 'who was apparently blackmailed into co-operation with the RUC during interrogation at Castlereagh barracks', and 'has been held responsible for a series of raids and arrests throughout north Belfast', and they concluded:

This RUC tactic of press-ganging compromised people into working for them in return for immunity has resulted in the IRA unearthing and executing a number of informers in its ranks over the last two years, and has also seen prosecutions against three Ardoyne men in 1980 and against 14 men in this year's M-60 trial (although the men escaped from Crumlin Road Jail before sentencing), based on allegations of informers

who, along with their unfortunate families, were shipped out of the country after the trial.<sup>1</sup>

The new tactics demonstrated greater knowledge on the part of the British counter-insurgency forces, but equal sophistication to respond on the part of the Irish, as was stressed by the fact that finally, it made little difference to the extent of their guerrilla activities.

As *The Guardian* mentioned early in 1982:

The result, according to Republican sources, was a reorganization of the IRA's intelligence apparatus along the conventional lines of the national intelligence agencies, with internal discipline being hived off from the responsibilities of brigade intelligence officers, and the creation of a counter intelligence section, the 'security department'.<sup>2</sup>

In the intelligence and propaganda war against Irish Republicanism, London received wholehearted support from the US agencies, under the Reagan administration. Most notably, the FBI and Immigration departments intensified their activities against 'material and logistical help' provided by the Irish-American community to the Republicans.

Likewise, the shaky Dublin governments headed in turn by Fine Gael and Fianna Fail leaders, Garret Fitzgerald and Charlie Haughey, increased their support for British intervention. They essentially locked up the border, and implemented stricter judicial measures. For the first time, a Republican activist was sentenced in a Dublin court for alleged offences committed in Britain; Gerry Tuite had escaped from a British prison a year before and was recaptured in Ireland and sentenced to ten years imprisonment in connection with bombing incidents in Britain. In Constitutional Law, it meant that Britain was thus able to extend her criminal jurisdiction, i.e. special powers, to a foreign country. (It was the first practical example of a much wider judicial process, the New European Legal space, where *anyone* could be tried *anywhere* for an offence committed in another country; it also partly abolished the residual notion of political asylum as so far understood in France, for instance.)

On a second level, the Special War process had long extended its attributes to Britain. This latest trend was reinforced. Two recent instances of techniques of control of the population, used in Britain are relevant.

In November 1981, following a spate of IRA attacks against military buildings and personnel inside London, the Anti-Terrorist Squad (ATS) launched a long search, officially for 'an IRA cache of 500lb of explosives'. During a week of operations by 16,000 police officers, two bodies were found. One was a suicide, and the other resulted in a murder enquiry concerning the body of a West Indian woman that was found in a garage. Commander Michael Richards, then the head of the ATS, said that 251,000 lock-up garages had been searched in the first week, and that 124,000 more still remained to be searched.<sup>3</sup>

It was significant that, although missing or stolen property was recovered from 127 garages, and 82 people were arrested on various petty criminal charges, *none of these incidents had any connection with Irish affairs.*

This Belfast-type screening operation was possible after the hysteria which followed the IRA bombings, but in March 1982, in Southampton, 2,000 lock-up garages were searched by 150 policemen, and this time the search was unrelated to any Irish republican military operation . . .

In the same month of March, Duncan Campbell in the *New Statesman* unearthed yet another spy-scandal. It had nothing to do with the Soviet KGB . . . He established that a top-secret computer system worth £20 million was being run by MI5 at MoD's premises, linked to the MI5 Curzon Street headquarters. It was an ICL 2960 computer, whose massive memory-bank of 100 disc store units was capable of storing personal dossiers on 20 million people (in addition to more than 1,300,000 Special Branch files already on computer at New Scotland Yard). The Minister of Defence admitted that 'these computers were used in the intelligence field'.<sup>4</sup>

There are not 20 million Irish citizens! The chicken had come home to roost!

The general expansion of counter-insurgency methods to Britain, including war-games related to Scottish and Welsh nationalism, should also be analysed in the context of the growing weight of the military lobby in British society, especially noticeable in the New Cold War, in the Neutron Bomb and US/Soviet missile debates, including also the Falklands military expedition, with a particular interest in the activities of the special forces, such as SAS and SBS.

Finally, one should mention the British counter-insurgency experience abroad, primarily in Europe. Its spearhead is the NATO special forces battle school known officially as the '*International Long Range Reconnaissance Patrol (ILRRP) School*' at Weingarten, Southern Germany, that is now training 800 military students a year in counter-guerrilla techniques perfected in Northern Ireland. Established in 1978, and directed by a former SAS officer, Lieutenant-Colonel Peter Walter, the school is run jointly by the British, the Germans and the Belgians, and trains members of NATO Special Forces in all the urban warfare tactics.

France has demonstrated more reluctance, — especially since the coming to power of the Socialists in May 1981 — to be fully part of the European counter-insurgency tacit treaty. Nonetheless, in March 1981, it was disclosed by *Le Monde* that several French regiments were trained by the British at their '*Fighting City*', near Olympia Stadium in West Berlin, in the methods of urban counter-insurgency.<sup>5</sup>

The most notable example of exporting British 'Special War' abroad, however, stemmed from the decision by the Spanish government on 23 March 1981, exactly a month after the foiled ultra-right wing coup, to send the Spanish army into the Basque country to collaborate with the Guardia Civil in the '*anti-terrorist struggle*'. This happened as a result of inability to cope with the underground movement, *Military ETA* and *Politico-Military ETA*, and

also to appease high-ranking army circles. Simultaneously, it was learnt that a co-ordinated body would lead counter-insurgency operations, the MULC (*Mando Unificado de Lucha Contraterrorista*). It was headed by the notorious Intelligence General Commissioner, Señor Manuel Ballesteros, seconded by the Colonel Andrés Cassinello Pérez, who can rightly be nicknamed 'The Spanish Kitson'. The author of a handbook, '*Operaciones de Guerrillas y Contraguerrillas*', he was trained with the Anglo-Saxon school of counter-insurgency, most notably in the US Fort Bragg school. Thanks to British help and exchanges of techniques (no doubt prompted by the fact that it has long been argued that the IRA and the ETA had also exchanged expertise), the Spanish immediately set out to organize a unified approach to combatting the nationalist movement in Euskadi. As we have seen, Frank Kitson had been arguing for this for years, until it was adopted in Northern Ireland.

A secret army manual, code named 0-0-2-5 and entitled '*Orientaciones, subversion y contra-subversion*' outlined the methods employed by the Spanish Army in 1981, although it was written in February 1977. It bears striking resemblances to British guidelines, particularly on the need for psychological warfare, the setting-up of an 'anti-subversive anthropological' unit, the co-ordination of intelligence services (which in Spain tended to oppose one another in the post-Franco era, and in some cases were involved in conspiracy to revert back to a fascist state . . .).

The introduction of computers, the use of helicopters in the screening of urban areas and to close the border with Northern Euskadi (that part of Basque country within French boundaries), the organization of 'pseudo-gangs', the extension of the use of torture, as under Franco, all this is familiar to the Irish.<sup>6</sup> Differences exist between the more industrialized Euskadi and Ireland. Euskadi is less geographically indentifiable, not being an island and being partitioned between two alien states, Spain and France. Also the tradition of the Spanish army, which never fought fascism but upheld it during World War II, is different from the British. But in the main, General Frank Kitson can be proud of himself: his brain-child in Ireland now has a twin Big Brother in Southern Europe.

## References

1. *An Phoblacht/Republican News*, 3 December 1981.
2. *The Guardian*, 27 March 1982.
3. *The Daily Telegraph*, 23 November 1981
4. *New Statesman*, 'The MI5 Computers', 5 March 1982.
5. *Le Monde*, *Combats de rue à Berlin*, 28 March 1981.
6. Punto Y Hora, *Un año de intervencion militar en Euskadi*, 26 March 1982.

# Appendices

## Appendix 1

The Centre for the Study of Conflict was one of the numerous 'conflict research' ventures led by John Darby and partly financed by the Ariel Foundation, a British intelligence front.

## Appendix 2

Operation Playground concerns the organization of play centres for the young in the Unity Flats and New Lodge areas of Belfast, in 1972, the brainchild of the 40 Commando Royal Marines.

## Appendix 3

Letter of support from the US Director of Du Pont de Nemours to Mairead Corrigan, an encounter facilitated by the CIA in Belfast.

## Appendix 4

The Defence Intelligence Staff report, written by Jim Glover, since 1980 the No. 2 of Military Intelligence, on the assessment of the war in Northern Ireland since 1980.

## Appendix 1: Document on the Centre for the Study of Conflict

### The New University of Ulster

Coleraine Co. Londonderry Northern Ireland BT52 1SA

Telephone: Coleraine 4141

Telegrams: 'University Coleraine'

### Centre for the Study of Conflict

In 1972 a Register of Research into the Irish Conflict was published (compiled by John Darby, Northern Ireland Community Relations Commission Research paper) with the aim of helping researchers to locate recent publications and to find out what research work was being carried out.

Since 1972 the range of publications and on-going research into the Irish conflict has vastly increased and we would like to produce an updated register to cover the period 1972-1979.

It can reasonably be argued that every social scientific study of Northern Ireland is relevant to the local conflict. Consequently, as in the previous register, we would like the scope of what is 'conflict-related' to be very broadly interpreted. The register will include both research in progress and research completed. We enclose examples and blanks of the proposed format.

If you know of any faculty members or post-graduate students who have completed, published or started research since 1972 into the Irish conflict (or whose recent research might provide comparative information), we would be very grateful if you would pass on to them the enclosed sheets.

Please accept our apologies for not acknowledging replies. We will, of course, inform every contributor to the new register of its publication, which we hope will be during 1980.

Thank you.

John Darby (Lecturer in Social Administration)  
Nicholas N. Dodge (Lecturer in Sociology &  
Social Anthropology)  
A.C. Hepburn (Senior Lecturer in History).

## Appendix 2: Operation 'Playground'

*Restricted*

HQ  
40 Cdo RM (Main)  
BFPO 801

4ORM 7/11/58

Belfast 21143

Distribution below:

September 1972

### *Operation Playground*

#### References:

- A. Map Series GSGS 5160 Belfast 1 Edition 1 GSGS
- B. NI G Memo 4/72 4ORM 5/7/21 dated 22 June 1972

#### *Situation*

1. The Catholic enclaves of Unity and New Lodge and the Protestant districts of Tiger Bay and Duncairn Gardens are areas of social need.
2. They are also areas of recent lawlessness and serious interface provocation, rioting and shootings.
3. The decent people of the whole area are tired of the troubles, sickened by the recent bomb outrages and murders, and genuinely fear for their children. They despair that:
  - a. They are brought up only to know violence.
  - b. They have no opportunities to develop in decent surroundings.
  - c. They are liable to death or injury from bomb, the gun, vehicle or stone throwing.

#### *Mission*

4. To improve the environment for the children of Unity, New Lodge, Tiger Bay and Duncairn Gardens in the short term, with a view in the long term for the decent people of the area to control affairs and oust the gunmen and terrorists.

#### *Execution*

5. *General.* The operation will be a joint military, RUC and civil project. The project will concentrate on ages under three, three to five, five to eight and eight to fifteen. The projects will mainly be run by voluntary agencies and the good people of the area, particularly the women over 30.

6. *Existing Projects.* A list of existing projects is shown in Annex A. These projects are mainly expensive, long term and part of the town development plan for the area. Regrettably they do not fulfill the present need because:

- a. The present troubles aggravate the situation.
- b. The Catholic children have restricted access to normal playing fields, parks and facilities.
- c. The time taken and expense required to build full facilities.
- d. The limited number of trained youth leaders.

7. *Under Threes.* The main project for under threes is baby sitting groups organised by streets, by mothers committees, supervised by Belfast Welfare. The details of a baby sitting group is at Annex B. One baby sitting group is planned for each street and at least one per high rise flat.

8. *Three to Five.* The main project for the three to fives is pre-school play groups supervised by Belfast Welfare, assisted by Save The Children Fund and NSPCC, but organised by the local people. One pre-school play group is planned for every area and one for each high rise flats. The details of a pre-school play group is at Annex C.

9. *Five to Eight.* There are two projects for this age group:

- a. *Play Centres.* These play centres are organised by field workers eg Community Development Officers and Voluntary Services Bureau, assisted by the local people. One centre is proposed for every area and one per high rise flats. The details of a play centre is at Annex D.
- b. *Play Sites.* The play sites are simple "bomb" site play areas, erected by government, military and police. The children entertain themselves. The details are at Annex E.

10. *Eight to Fifteen.* There are two projects for this age group:

- a. *Play Centres and Play Sites.* The same centres and sites are used for this age group either at different times or with extra supervision.
- b. *Other Activities.* A range of other activities are organised on more manly lines in the parks, military and RUC establishments to train these age groups for their future lives. The details are in Annex F.

11. *Limited Access Streets.* Another method to limit dangers from bomb, gun and vehicles and to separate the children from vehicles is limited access streets. These allow limited access to delivery vans and the cars of occupants in the street, but they enable children to walk in safety and troops to patrol on foot. A suggested plan is shown at Annex G.

12. *Locations.* The location of all these projects, baby sitting groups, play groups, play centres, play sites and limited access streets is held at Tac HQ. The suggested environmental improvement boundaries in which Coys are to concentrate on are shown on Annex G. The number of facilities planned for each area is given in Annex H.



13. *Staffing.* The staffing of baby sitting groups will be local mothers, grandmothers and pensioners. Play sites need no staff, but the staffing of play groups and play centres will be based on:

- a. Local women trained and paid by NSPCC on a basis of one supervisor to three houses. These will be assisted by local mothers and old people as unpaid assistants.
- b. Pensioners, normally retired servicemen, who will be paid a small wage by the Cdo CR Grants. These men will hold the key, act as vigilantes and clean the premises.

14. *Finance.* The payment of baby sitting groups can be arranged by local mothers committees assisted occasionally by the Cdo CR Grant. The cost of play sites will be normal ground rent paid by Defence Land Agents. The financial plan of the houses and staff required for play groups and play centres is attached at Annex J, but is based on rents paid by Defence Land Agents, wages paid by NSPCC and amenities provided by Grant in Aid.

15. *Timings.* The progress of Op Playground will depend upon opportunities, local reaction, and the security situation. Coys are to ensure that a firm foundation is laid before the handover to the relieving Bn and are to concentrate on:

- a. At least two play sites in each area.
- b. Completing the training of supervisors, forming mothers committees, getting estimates of repairs and ensuring that work is in hand for at least one combined play group and play centre in each area.
- c. At least one baby sitting group in each area.
- d. Regular weekly and weekend activities for the children.
- e. At least one limited access street, especially where it will counter IRA and UVF activity and is the wish of the good people of the area.

#### *Service support*

16. *Stores.* Limited defence stores, large tyres and equipment are available on demand from the QM. Most of the stores must be provided by the voluntary effort of the local people.

17. *Transport.* Service transport may be used under the conditions given in Reference B.

#### *Command*

18. *Cdo CR Committee.* The Cdo CR Committee will be the main controlling agency.

19. *Coy CR.* A Coy CR Officer and a Coy CR project Nco are to be appointed to supervise projects.

20. *Communication.* Communication is to be maintained with the local people. Talk to them, particularly:

- a. The good people, family men and women, mothers over 30 and pensioners.
- b. The children concentrating on the under 8s.
- c. The friendly local shops, these, with the "pubs", are centres of local chatter.

C J Smith  
May RM  
for CO

#### *Annexes:*

- A. Existing Projects.
- B. Temporary Baby Sitting Groups.
- C. Temporary Pre-School Play Groups.

Appendix 3: Letter of Support  
for the Peace Movement from  
the US



E. I. DU PONT DE NEMOURS & COMPANY  
INCORPORATED  
WILMINGTON, DELAWARE 19898

CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

Ms. Mairead Corrigan  
Peace People  
224 Lisburn Road  
Belfast, BT9 6GE  
Northern Ireland

September 23, 1977

Dear Ms. Corrigan:

Many thanks for your letter of September 9  
and for your kind words.

When I told you during our brief meeting  
that we would consider new investment opportunities  
in Northern Ireland, I meant it. You can be sure  
that we will. \*

I do appreciate your inviting Mrs. Shapiro  
and me to Northern Ireland, and I wish we could be  
there. Unhappily, we will be unable to make it this  
year.

Thank you for your good letter and kind wishes.

Sincerely,

*I. S. Shapiro*  
Irving S. Shapiro

ISS:es

\* Perhaps Sooner than later.  
*I.S.S.*

Appendix 4: Defence  
Intelligence Staff Report



File

Covering Secret

DGOS/DDGOS  
FIRST SIGHT

INTERNAL

Initial External Distribution  
Action Info

DGOS

DDGOS

AA & QMG

ORD 1 B.M.  
DLA A Jm 19/1.

Secretariat Comments NORTHERN IRELAND FUTURE TERRORIST TRENDS

There is no need for you to read this study report  
although it does make interesting reading. You  
may wish to glance at the Annexes and  
conclusions and recommendations starting  
at PAR 8

DGOS/DDGOS Comments

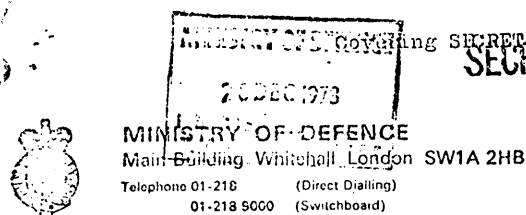
*DLA must see this*

Two points emerge:

- ① We will be committed to EOD in the  
present state for some time to come.
- ② Priority targets (Minister, C.A., C.A.O. etc) are

Covering Secret

at mid. ...



SECRET

Date No. 35/182

QMG Secretariat

MOD Form 102

Your reference

See Distribution

Our reference D/DINI/2003

Date 15<sup>th</sup> December 1978NORTHERN IRELAND FUTURE TERRORIST TRENDS

1. An earlier study dealing with the future organisation of military intelligence in Northern Ireland, the circulation of which was very limited, identified the need for the study of likely future trends in terrorist tactics and weaponry which is attached. It has been cleared by the Director General of Intelligence on the one hand and by the Vice Chief of the General Staff on the other. The Commander Land Forces and the Director and Coordinator of Intelligence in Northern Ireland were both consulted during its preparation.

2. The paper is designed to sketch as best we can the terrorist background against which Combat Development and Operational Requirements Staffs, those involved in research, and perhaps others can develop the counter measures that we will need in Northern Ireland over the next 5 years. I hope you will find it useful.

*J. H. Glover*  
J. H. GLOVER  
Brigadier  
BGS(Int) DIS

*Covering*  
*8/135*

Covering SECRET

Reference D/QMG Sec/20/1/3

*2* *1*

COSLOG

DGTM

DGOS ←

DGE ME

DCT

NORTHERN IRELAND: FUTURE TERRORIST TRENDS

Reference:

A. D/DINI/2003 dated 15 Dec 78

A copy of Reference A together with the paper to which it refers is attached for your information.

*4* Jan 79

*A M Whyte*  
A M WHYTE  
Major  
QMG Secretariat  
MB Ext 7434

SECRET

R/DINI/2003

OMG Secretariat  
MOD Form 102

3/135  
325/1823

NORTHERN IRELAND FUTURE TERRORIST TRENDS

INTRODUCTION

1. Throughout the present Northern Ireland campaign there have been many changes in both the tempo and nature of terrorist activity. A variety of causes, political, operational and logistical have precipitated these fluctuations which frequently have also been forced upon the terrorists by Security Force action. But beneath the changes a definable process of evolution has been taking place.
2. The paper (1) which examined the Future Organisation of Military Intelligence in Northern Ireland saw the need for a study to identify future trends in terrorist tactics and weaponry for the guidance of combat development and operational requirements staffs.
3. In its study of the Threat the same paper assessed that the Provisional leadership is deeply committed to a long campaign of attrition. The Provisional IRA (PIRA) has the dedication and the sinews of war to raise violence intermittently to at least the level of early 1978, certainly for the foreseeable future. Even if 'peace' is restored, the motivation for politically inspired violence will remain. Arms will be readily available and there will be many who are able and willing to use them. Any peace will be superficial and brittle. A new campaign may well erupt in the years ahead.
4. In 1977 PIRA adopted the classic terrorist cellular organisation in response to their difficulties. But at other times their tactics and weaponry have changed for reasons that cannot be forecast, such as the influence, often transitory, of individual leaders and the professional ability of key terrorists. Also an isolated incident, such as "Bloody Sunday", can radically alter support for violence. Thus forecasting has often to be based on speculation rather than hard intelligence. Nevertheless there are trends in terrorist weaponry and tactics which can be identified. We need to project these as best we can if we are not to fall behind in devising counter measures.
5. In the paper we have focussed on the Republican threat which is harder and more sophisticated than that posed by Loyalist paramilitaries. It follows that we do not consider the implications of a resurgence of serious inter-sectarian strife.

AIM

6. The aim of the paper is to examine the likely trends in the tactics and weaponry of Irish Republican terrorists up to the end of 1983.

SCOPE

7. We consider first the aspirations of the Republican terrorists with a brief examination of the political changes which might affect their campaign. We next examine their resources and the main constraints under which they operate. We then, after discussing the terrorists' organisation, seek to determine the

Notes: (1) D/DINI/2002/K dated 28 Feb 78

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strategy they are likely to adopt and consequently the targets they may select. Terrorist weaponry and tactics are then examined with a view to assessing the likely developments during the next 5 years.

8. We have imposed the following limitations on the paper:

- a. Irish terrorism in Great Britain is outside its scope.
- b. Its technical content does not go beyond that needed to formulate the broad parameters of equipment which may lie within the terrorists' grasp.
- c. It stops short of examining possible countermeasures demanded by the developing trends.

3

TERRORIST ASPIRATIONS AND LINKS

THE PROVISIONAL IRA

9. The Provisional Movement is committed to the traditional aim of Irish nationalism, that is the removal of the British presence from Ireland. The PIRA leadership is dedicated to the belief that this can only be achieved through violence. It follows that the Provisionals will strive to continue the struggle in some form or other while the British remain in the Province. Meanwhile their immediate aims are to achieve:

- a. A declaration of intent by the British to withdraw from Northern Ireland.
- b. An amnesty for all "political" prisoners, including the release of all PIRA prisoners in gaol on the mainland.
- c. The recognition of the right of the Irish people to decide their own destiny, free from British interference.

THE OFFICIAL IRA

10. The traditional aims of the Official IRA (OIRA) are similar to those of the Provisionals. But the Officials are Marxist whereas the Provisionals are motivated by an inward looking Celtic nationalism. The Officials' political stance appeals more to middle class and intellectual groups than that of the Provisionals. OIRA has preserved a cease fire since 1972 and has striven, with a modicum of success, to expand its influence through legitimate political activity under the names "Sinn Fein The Workers Party" and "The Republican Clubs". It devotes much effort to maintaining links with left wing subversive organisations in Europe. Although there is no sign that OIRA will alter its stance during the next 5 years, it is nevertheless ready to re-enter the campaign.

EFFECTS OF POSSIBLE POLITICAL CHANGE

11. In considering the will of the Republican terrorists and their supporters to continue the present struggle we need to examine the likely developments in the political life of the Province. The following are perhaps possible scenarios:

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a. The present form of government may continue. We would then expect there to be a general atmosphere of political calm, though politicians would be frustrated. Government policy would be principally one of containment and the underlying problems would remain unsolved.

b. The current system of direct rule may be modified by introducing another elected upper tier of local government.

c. The Government may achieve its aim of restoring devolved government in the near future, although this seems unlikely.

d. The concept of independence might take firmer root. But the 2 communities interpret the objective differently.

e. A new party based on socialist policies transcending sectarian barriers may emerge. But similar attempts since 1922 have always ended in failure. In Ireland the appeal of sectarian and nationalistic sentiment has always been stronger than that of left wing ideology. The continuing polarization of the population on sectarian lines only emphasises the improbability of such an initiative.

12. Only the first alternative, continued direct rule, offers any real prospect of political calm and hence waning support for the terrorist during the next 5 years. Under any other scenario Republican fears of a Protestant ascendancy being re-established would enable PIRA to pose as the defenders of the minority interest. Even if the present system of government is maintained the current muted support for the forces of law and order will remain delicately balanced and susceptible to any controversial government decision or Security Force action. We see no prospect in the next 5 years of any political change which would remove PIRA's *raison d'être*.

#### FUTURE TERRORIST GROUPINGS

13. We expect the Provisionals to remain the dominant terrorist organisation throughout the next 5 years. PIRA may well gain further support from the Irish Republican Socialist Party (IRSP), the splinter group from OIRA, which has recently been trying to improve its operational capacity. If the Provisionals and Officials combined to form an active alliance not only would they pose a far more powerful threat but they would also probably attract more tangible support from international terrorist groups. However there are fundamental political differences between the 2 movements and bitter animosity between individuals and family groups. Rivalry is sharp and they are unlikely ever to settle their differences. The prospect of the Provisionals substantially increasing their strength through alliances with other groups in Ireland is thus remote.

14. The Provisionals have some elusive links with overseas terrorist movements, notably the PLO, and possibly other European groups, which are built up on a mutual interest in weapons and in violence for its own sake. These contacts provide a potentially rich source of weapons and of an exchange of ideas on terrorist techniques. However there are no signs that PIRA has either the intention or the ability deliberately to foster them.

#### TERRORIST RESOURCES

##### MANPOWER

15. The Provisionals cannot attract the large numbers of active terrorists they

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had in 1972/73. But they no longer need them. PIRA's organisation is now such that a small number of activists can maintain a disproportionate level of violence. There is a substantial pool of young Fianna aspirants, nurtured in a climate of violence, eagerly seeking promotion to full gun-carrying terrorist status and there is a steady release from the prisons of embittered and dedicated terrorists<sup>(2)</sup>. Thus, though PIRA may be hard hit by Security Force attrition from time to time, they will probably continue to have the manpower they need to sustain violence during the next 5 years.

#### 16. Calibre of Terrorist

a. Leadership. PIRA is essentially a working class organisation based in the ghetto areas of the cities and in the poorer rural areas. Thus if members of the middle class and graduates become more deeply involved they have to forfeit their life style. Many are also deterred by the Provisionals' muddled political thinking. Nevertheless there is a strata of intelligent, astute and experienced terrorists who provide the backbone of the organisation. Although there are only a few of these high grade terrorists there is always the possibility that a new charismatic leader may emerge who would transform PIRA yet again.

b. Technical Expertise. PIRA has an adequate supply of members who are skilled in the production of explosive devices. They have the tools and equipment and they have the use of small workshops and laboratories.

c. Rank and File Terrorists. Our evidence of the calibre of rank and file terrorists does not support the view that they are merely mindless hooligans drawn from the unemployed and unemployable. PIRA now trains and uses its members with some care. The Active Service Units (ASUs) are for the most part manned by terrorists tempered by up to ten years of operational experience.

d. Trend in Calibre. The mature terrorists, including for instance the leading bomb makers, are usually sufficiently cunning to avoid arrest. They are continually learning from mistakes and developing their expertise. We can therefore expect to see increased professionalism and the greater exploitation of modern technology for terrorist purposes.

17. Popular Support. Republican terrorists can no longer bring crowds of active sympathisers onto the streets at will as a screen for gunmen. Indeed there is seldom much support even for traditional protest marches. But by reorganising on cellular lines PIRA has become less dependent on public support than in the past and is less vulnerable to penetration by informers. The hardening segregation of the communities also operates to the terrorists' advantage. Although the Provisionals have lost much of the spontaneous backing they enjoyed early in the campaign, there is no sign of any equivalent upsurge of support for the Security Forces. There are still areas within the Province, both rural and urban, where the terrorists can base themselves with little risk of betrayal and can count on active support in emergency. The fear of a possible return to Protestant repression will underpin this kind of support for the Provisionals for many years to come. Loyalist action could quickly awaken it to a much more volatile level.

Note: (2) Statistics of Prison Releases at Annex A.

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FINANCE

18. PIRA is probably now more dependent on a steady source of income than it was when mass popular support provided a momentum of its own. Activists expect regular pay and are not content with low quality weapons. But we cannot accurately judge the extent to which they line their own pockets. However, recently a much firmer discipline has been exercised and we expect this to continue. Although we have but fragmentary knowledge of income and expenditure we can draw some deductions on PIRA's financial state.

19. Income

a. Commercial Activity. Incompetence and dishonesty have been hallmarks of the Provisionals' commercial undertakings. The Hire Bus Cooperatives, which started in 1974/75, have been unprofitable and drinking clubs have been little better. None of PIRA's numerous commercial ventures seem to bring in much income with the possible exception of the "Black Taxi". But Police activity is now inhibiting the use of the latter.

b. Theft. Armed robbery within Ireland is almost certainly the greatest source of income for PIRA. In the North since 1971 thefts have been running at some £500,000 per year. In the South up to 1976 the annual loss was about £700,000 but in 1977 it was over £900,000 and the figure for 1978 was already close to £1M by mid-June. The proceeds of the theft of readily marketable goods also sometimes go to the Provisionals. We estimate that income from theft is running at at least £550,000 per year and that occasional spectacular raids will provide additional infusions of ready cash.

c. Racketeering. The main continuing forms of racketeering are protection payments from shops and businesses, and fraud involving dole money and 'lost' pension books. We estimate that the annual income through this is about £250,000. Unless PIRA step up extortion and terrorism we would expect this figure to decline over the next 5 years in the face of RUC countermeasures.

d. Remittances from Overseas. The Provisionals have had some success in obtaining funds from overseas groupings of people of Irish descent. The Irish Northern Aid Committee (INAC) in the USA, with a subsidiary in Canada, is the largest source. It currently declares support (for prisoners aid) at a rate of \$55,000 per year. Actual remittances are probably at least 25% higher. Some aid is also received from Australia and New Zealand. We doubt whether PIRA receives financial aid from Libya or any other overseas government. We assess that the total income from overseas is about £120,000 annually.

e. Green Cross. Green Cross is the name given to aid for Republican prisoners and their families. Much of the money from overseas is raised on this pretext. Collections for it in Great Britain, the Republic and Roman Catholic areas in the Province probably amount to some £30,000 annually.

20. Expenditure

a. Pay. The largest item of expenditure is probably pay for terrorists and for those who work full or part time for Provisional Sinn Fein (PSF). A report of June 1978 indicates that normal terrorist pay is now £20 per week

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(as a supplement to the dole). We estimate that some 250 people would draw this and perhaps 60 would get £40 per week (£7,500 per week, £800,000 per year).

b. Other Costs. Apart from arms expenditure the Provisionals have to bear the cost of their prison welfare work including payment to prisoners' dependants, travel and transport costs and propaganda expenses especially the Republican newspapers whose sale does not cover their cost.

21. Tentative Balance Sheet. Despite our scanty knowledge we suggest the following balance sheet for PIRA:

<u>a. Income</u>	
Theft in Ireland	£550,000
Racketeering	£250,000
Overseas Contributions	£120,000
Green Cross UK and Eire	£30,000
	<u>£950,000</u>
<u>b. Expenditure</u>	
Pay (@ £7,500 per week)	£400,000
Travel and Transport Costs (@ £1,000 per week)	£50,000
Newspapers and Propaganda	£150,000
Prisoners, dependants welfare	£180,000
	<u>£780,000</u>
<u>c. Available for arms, ammunition and explosive</u>	<u>£170,000</u>

22. Future Finance and Capacity for Arms Purchase. In the years ahead the Provisionals will probably have difficulty in maintaining some of their sources of income. We do not expect them to be able to make good any deficit from overseas. They may well therefore have to rely increasingly on armed robbery. However, if they are forced to make economies the Provisionals would only cut back on arms expenditure as a last resort. Indeed we believe that the purchase of arms will continue at roughly its present level<sup>(3)</sup>. Acquisition, possibly even through gift, of a few costly prestige weapons such as surface to air missiles cannot be ruled out.

Note: (3) Guide of Cost of Weapons is at Annex B.

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EXTERNAL SUPPORT FOR TERRORISM OTHER THAN FINANCE

5

THE REPUBLIC

23. Republican sentiment and the IRA tradition emanates from the South. Although the Fianna Fail Government are resolutely opposed to the use of force, its long term aims are, as Mr Lynch himself admits, similar to those of the Provisionals. Any successor to Lynch in the ruling party will probably follow at least as Republican a line of policy. Fine Gael, though traditionally less Republican, is also now committed to a roughly similar line. We have no reason to suspect that PIRA obtains active support from government sources, or that it will do so in the future, but the judiciary has often been lenient and the Gardaí, although cooperating with the RUC more than in the past, is still rather less than wholehearted in its pursuit of terrorists.

24. The headquarters of the Provisionals is in the Republic. The South also provides a safe mounting base for cross border operations and secure training areas. PIRA's logistic support flows through the Republic where arms and ammunition are received from overseas. Improvised weapons, bombs and explosives are manufactured there. Terrorists can live there without fear of extradition for crimes committed in the North. In short, the Republic provides many of the facilities of the classic safe haven so essential to any successful terrorist movement. And it will probably continue to do so for the foreseeable future.

UNITED STATES AND CANADA

25. Supporters of Republicanism in Ireland have exploited the fact that the Irish/American vote is important to United States politicians. Although by no means all expatriate Irish are sympathetic to the Provisionals, powerful lobbies have been built up to give political encouragement to Republicans in Northern Ireland and to criticise British policy. Propaganda is eagerly exploited to gather support for the Provisionals in both the USA and Canada. Since 1972 the United States has become PIRA's main weapons source, either through purchases or through thefts. Despite several successful prosecutions arms are still reaching the Province; we do not know whether in a steady trickle of small consignments or whether in bulk, but suspect the former. We believe that the Provisionals will be able to maintain political, financial and material support from North America at about the current level.

SOVIET PLOD

26. Although the Official IRA adheres to orthodox Marxism there are no indications of any substantial link between the Soviet Union and either wing of the IRA. Nor do we anticipate any links developing in the next 5 years. However we expect arms of Soviet origin to continue to arrive in the Province through various proxy sources.

THE MIDDLE EAST

27. The Middle East terrorist organisations, notably the PLO have such a wealth of arms available that they could easily supply PIRA without detriment to their own capability and without necessarily obtaining the support of their sponsor governments, such as Syria and Libya. The 'Claudia' shipment of March 1973, involving some 5 tons of arms of largely Soviet origin, did not implicate the

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Soviet authorities. Further proof of Middle East involvement was given when the 'Towerstream' (ex-Cyprus) consignment was intercepted in Antwerp in November 1977. The weapons, though mainly old, were serviceable and of types still very much in demand by terrorist groups. They included RPG7 anti-tank rockets, mortars and military explosive. The Middle East is a potentially valuable source of weapons in the years ahead.

FUTURE EXTERNAL SUPPORT

28. For future political support and encouragement the Provisionals will continue to look mainly to the United States. There are signs that they are also working up support from people of Irish extraction in Australia and New Zealand. PIRA will probably also try to extend their links to subversive groups in Europe and the Middle East. But the Provisionals fear that close association with other political ideologies would tarnish the essential Irishness of their movement. They will therefore probably refuse any material support which comes with political strings attached. To sum up, a shortage of arms has never inhibited PIRA and is unlikely to do so in the future.

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THE TERRORIST ORGANISATION<sup>(4)</sup>DUBLIN LEADERSHIP

29. The heart of PIRA lies in Dublin and is based on the Provisional Army Council (PAC), the decision making body responsible for general policy, and "GIQ" responsible for the more detailed staff functions such as finance, arms supply and training. The PSF is controlled by the Ard Comhairle (Party Executive). A number of individuals are members of two, or even all 3, of these organisations, and the inter-relationship between the groups probably varies from time to time. The PSF seem firmly subordinated to PIRA though political considerations could in future demand a higher priority. We know little of the detailed working of the hierarchy in Dublin. In particular we have scant knowledge of how the logistic system works, nor do we know the extent to which the older, apparently retired, Republican leaders influence the movement. Since members of the senior leadership can seldom, if ever, be tied to actual terrorist crime they will probably continue to enjoy a free hand. But if sterner measures by the Irish Government forced the leadership underground the latter would probably adapt to the new situation and continue the struggle.

INTERMEDIATE AND LOWER LEVEL OF COMMAND

30. There has been considerable turbulence among the leadership at the lower levels through the campaign. Relationships between the various groups have altered with the changing personalities. The Northern Command concept has probably been accepted and, although the leadership is still fluid, the chain of command is effective. However, the prime architect of the new cellular system based on Active Service Units (ASUs), there was a partial reversion towards the traditional brigade organisation. Indeed this lack of leadership continuity seems endemic to the Provisionals and is exacerbated by Security Force attrition.

SYSTEMS OF COMMUNICATION

31. One of the weaknesses of the Provisionals' organisation is its communications.

Note: <sup>(4)</sup> PIRA Organisation Chart is at Annex C.

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The leadership has always tried to exercise tight control both over policy and over the allocation of weapons and funds. Thus detailed instructions frequently have to be passed through several links both within the Republic and in the Province. The cell system probably exacerbates the problem. Certainly response times seem slow. We suspect that the terrorists fear to pass explicit information on the telephone. The main system of communication is therefore probably by courier, though meetings of leaders are held both North and South of the border and some members of the leadership travel widely themselves. Sinn Féin Centres provide convenient meeting places. At the tactical level there is some use of short range radios. Indeed the Provisionals' communications will probably remain vulnerable to interdiction by the Security Forces for many years yet.

#### FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

32. We believe that the terrorist organisation will continue to depend for policy and material on the South. The Dublin leadership will continue to exercise overall control even if it has to operate more covertly. Northern Command will be retained; but the middle level of command will remain fluid. The expertise of the ASUs will grow and they will continue to be PIRA's prime offensive arm. At the lowest levels there will remain a lunatic fringe of young hooligans who will only occasionally be involved in terrorism but who will keep old sectarian fears alive. They will inhibit the return of public confidence.

#### TERRORIST STRATEGY AND TARGETING

##### BACKGROUND

33. From the start of the present campaign to about the end of 1973 much of the terrorist violence was indiscriminate. Large blast bombs were often detonated in shopping areas causing heavy civilian casualties. There were frequent "cowboy" shootings and sectarian attacks. But recently there has been a marked trend towards attacks against Security Force targets and away from action which, by alienating public opinion, both within the Catholic community and outside the Province, is politically damaging. It is also arguable that PIRA still sees itself as an 'Army' and clings to the remnants of what they believe to be a military code of ethics. This constraint is often blurred and its force will probably continue to decline but there have, for example, been few attacks on the families of either soldiers or RUC.

34. PIRA strategy is based on the premise that a campaign of attrition, with its attendant costs in both lives and money, will eventually persuade HMG to withdraw from Northern Ireland. The Provisionals probably aspire to raising the tempo of their operations to such a level that the normal processes of administration and government break down. But having failed to achieve this in the earlier part of the campaign, they probably realize that they now have little hope of success. Indeed, they may accept that to raise the level of their activity beyond a certain point would evoke such intense response from the Security Forces that their organisation would suffer disproportionately to the success achieved. Irish terrorists have usually been careful to preserve their personal safety, and the strength of the organisation during the next 5 years is likely to remain such that the leadership will wish to avoid action that could put large numbers of its men at risk. A further influencing factor is that the PIRA leadership appreciate that their campaign will be won or lost in Belfast. Although operations elsewhere are important, and in the Border area easier to achieve, success in Belfast is critical.

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#### PROPAGANDA

35. Propaganda has an important bearing on PIRA strategy. The leadership is becoming increasingly sensitive of the need to avoid alienating support not only in the Roman Catholic areas of the Province but also in the Republic and among those of Irish extraction overseas. The Provisionals continue to justify their activities by claiming that they are merely reacting to the Security Forces and that violence is the only response to the repression of the Catholic community in Northern Ireland. In the interests of publicity PIRA may well stage a few spectacular attacks to indicate that their normal lower posture stems from restraint rather than weakness. On the other hand, we cannot exclude the possibility that PIRA, like terrorists in West Germany and Italy, might reject the fruitless quest for popularity and accept that they can achieve more if unfettered by pursuit of a favourable public image. The balance of probability however is that propaganda will continue to influence strategy and the selection of targets.

#### ATTACKS ON PEOPLE

36. General. Members of the Security Forces are likely to continue to be the main targets for terrorist attack. But PIRA have never yet sustained their attacks for long on any one branch, eg the Army, UDR, RUC, RUC Reserve and Prison Officers. However, as they become more sophisticated and as they become more perceptive, PIRA may try to implement a more systematic campaign of assassination. Other potential assassination targets are:

a. Men of Influence. PIRA have not mounted sustained attacks on the men of influence such as politicians, top government officials, members of the judiciary, and senior members of the RUC and the Army. But the Provisionals may decide to target them in the future in imitation of terrorism in West Germany, Italy and Spain.

b. Collectors of Intelligence. The terrorists are already aware of their own vulnerability to Security Force intelligence operators and will increasingly seek to eliminate those involved.

c. Businessmen. Attacks on businessmen are politically damaging and are thus unlikely.

d. Internal. The disciplining of those who have committed crimes, either against their own terrorist organisations or who act as common criminals, and those involved in inter-factional feuds will probably continue.

37. Kidnap. Kidnapping for both financial and political bargaining has been favoured by many other terrorist organisations. But it forms no part of traditional IRA tactics. Both the Niedermeyer and Herrema incidents, the only pre-planned kidnaps in this campaign, were carried out by maverick groups without the authority or subsequent support of the leadership. Those involved lacked the skill to carry the kidnap through to the bargaining stage. In Ireland prominent personalities are generally well guarded and PIRA may appreciate that neither HMG nor the Government of the Republic would readily submit to this kind of coercion. Kidnap however provides excellent publicity and might be attempted by PIRA under special conditions such as an attempt to gain concessions. Opportunity kidnap of Security Forces may continue but in general the risk is low.

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38. Security Force Installations. Security Force bases and installations such as permanent check points and radio re-broadcast stations provide prestige targets for the terrorist. He will undoubtedly wish to improve his capability to attack them.

39. Commercial property. Attacks on commercial property present PIRA with a predicament. On the one hand they may alienate public opinion yet on the other they inflict high cost damage and they expose the inadequacy of the Security Forces. This dilemma was highlighted by the Provisionals' ban on commercial bombing imposed after the La Mon attack in February 1978. A ban which was lifted as the public's memory of the incident started to fade.

40. Public Utilities and Government Offices. During the current campaign there have been few attacks against public utilities. However, sustained and systematic attack, particularly on the electricity supply system, could be very damaging and would tie down large numbers of the Security Forces. While the terrorists remain short of commercial explosive their ability to attack steel and reinforced concrete targets is limited. But this could be offset by a detailed knowledge of the layout of public utilities which would then reduce the amount of explosive needed. Also PIRA have probably refrained from sustained attacks on such targets because of the political damage that would result from imposing indiscriminate hardship on members of both sections of the community. But the Provisionals may overcome this inhibition in the future. Meanwhile they will continue to seek forms of attack, such as the bombing of administrative offices, that will embarrass the authorities without causing disruption to the consumer. Government offices will probably also be selected for attack.

41. Transport. Trains and railway lines have been attacked fairly frequently during the campaign and large numbers of buses have been burned. Attacks of this sort are difficult to counter and involve little risk to life. They will probably continue. Air traffic constitutes a prestige target. The Provisionals would probably not wish to shoot down a civil aircraft but the same restraint does not apply to a military aircraft. And PIRA might well wish to disrupt travel arrangements at Aldergrove where even relatively unspectacular activity could result in intimidation of travellers and pilots with all the attendant publicity.

#### HIJACKING

42. The hijacking of vehicles for the immediate use of terrorists continues to be an almost daily occurrence in Northern Ireland. Small aircraft have been hijacked 3 times, twice to drop primitive bombs and once to provide a means of escape for prisoners. Hijacking with a view to taking hostages has not been attempted nor have there been attacks of the kind mounted by the South Moluccan extremists in Holland to hold hostages in a train, school or office block. The Provisionals probably rate the chance of a successful outcome to any hostage-taking operation as low and therefore not worth either the risk or the adverse publicity. We expect the existing pattern of hijack activity to continue.

#### LIKELY TRENDS IN STRATEGY AND TARGETING

43. Although PIRA is likely to follow an erratic path in the years ahead we expect to see a continuation of the general trend towards more precise targeting and greater expertise. Propaganda considerations will probably still influence

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targeting. But a change in leadership might radically alter this. We expect PIRA to attempt to acquire the skills and weaponry needed to refine their attacks on:

- a. Members of the Security Forces.
- b. Security Force bases and installations.
- c. Public utilities, communications, government offices and transport.
- d. Any other targets specifically linked with British rule in Northern Ireland.

#### TACTICS AND TYPES OF ATTACK

##### MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF PIRA TACTICS

44. The principle that the terrorist must have a safe method of escape is the dominant feature in PIRA tactics. PIRA very seldom plan operations that involve high risk and if in doubt they abort the mission. Shooting attacks are mainly conducted on the "shoot and scoot" principle. Indeed there is a discernible pattern in PIRA tactics. Successful techniques are frequently repeated and the same targets are often attacked several times. We must therefore be prepared for PIRA to use any technique which has proved successful in the past, regardless of how long ago.

##### FACTORS AFFECTING WEAPONRY (5)

45. Developments in weaponry for a terrorist organisation usually follow a somewhat random pattern. The terrorist can only be partially successful in acquiring equipment to suit his needs. He will often have to accept any weapon he can get and bend his tactics to exploit it as best he can. Thus, apart from finance, changes in the terrorist armoury will depend on:

- a. The need to meet specific operational requirements.
- b. Evolutionary improvement of existing home made devices. This is dependent on the skill and initiative of those working for the terrorist organisation.
- c. The need to find an alternative weapon, or system of attack, if the Security Forces produce a satisfactory countermeasure or succeed in cutting off the supply of either the weapon itself or a critical component. (For instance the adoption of improved forms of home-made explosive following our success in cutting off commercial explosive supplies). Such changes, though born of weakness, can lead to the adoption of improved systems or weapons.
- d. The more or less chance availability of weapons through theft or from supplies that other terrorist organisations are prepared to make available.
- e. Availability of weapons on the open market.
- f. The desire for prestige weapons for propaganda and publicity purposes even though in practical military terms they may be of little use.

Note: (5) Estimate of Current PIRA Arms Holdings - Annex D.

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g. The limitations imposed by his meagre resources, the difficulties of maintaining a complex weapon and little access to spare parts. The terrorist therefore looks for simple cost-effective systems.

46. Additionally the terrorist will always seek to acquire weapons which are simple and easy to conceal.

#### FIREARMS, MORTAR AND ROCKET ATTACK

47. Handguns. PIRA hold a variety of handguns divided fairly evenly between revolvers and pistols. The handgun is chiefly used for close quarter assassination and punishment shootings. As far as we know PIRA have not used silencers. The efficiency of the standard modern handgun is adequate for terrorist needs. In the early years of the campaign handguns were often used from the cover of a crowd. But the terrorist is unlikely to regain the kind of mass support needed for this tactic. We would not expect him to give higher priority to the acquisition of new handguns than he does today.

#### 48. Rifle, SMG and Machine Gun.

a. A wide variety of small arms is available to terrorists in Northern Ireland, many of which, being old or somewhat unsuitable, are kept in reserve or for use by less experienced men who may lose them. For small arms attacks the terrorists' main needs are:

(1) A highly portable, easily concealed combat weapon mainly for use at ranges up to 150 metres. The 5.6mm (.223in) Armalite satisfies this requirement and to a large extent obviates the need for a SMG. There is no shortage of these weapons and a steady trickle of new ones reach the Province. PIRA also have a few Soviet AK47 assault rifles (AK47), another very useful short range weapon. But machine pistols effective at up to 200 metres are even more attractive weapons. The Israeli Uzi, the Czech Scorpion and the Polish M63 are useful examples which PIRA could probably obtain with little difficulty.

(2) A sniping rifle providing a good chance of a first round kill at ranges of up to about 300 metres. Light weight and ease of concealment and semi-automatic action are again desirable. The M742 Remington Woodmaster (.3006in) meets these requirements and the weapon is plentiful in Ireland. There are many other common hunting rifles commercially available which have a similar performance.

(3) A heavier rifle for long range engagements which also fires an armour piercing round. The World War II .30/.3006 Garand, of which the Provisionals have an adequate stock, meets this need.

b. The Machine Gun. This is a prestige weapon but its size and weight make it difficult to remove or hide after an incident. Maintenance and spare parts present problems and for good performance the firer needs professional training. The weapon is likely to prove unreliable in terrorist hands. Its use, particularly in urban areas, involves considerable risk to the local population. While it is potentially an effective weapon in a rural ambush and for covering an escape across the border, we believe that its acquisition will not produce any important changes in terrorist tactics or capability.

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c. Sights. Until recently PIRA's shooting attacks have been inaccurate. Zeroing of weapons has been poor. But simple telescopic sights have been fairly frequently used. Marksmanship has now improved probably due to better training. Improved sights may be acquired since they and image intensification equipment can now be obtained in many countries. A system for illuminating the point of impact on a target using a helium/neon visible laser is commercially available in Switzerland and could be improvised by PIRA from equipment readily found in technical college laboratories. There is thus much scope for improving the performance of snipers. As PIRA become more tightly grouped and more professional in their approach we would expect to see developments along these lines.

#### 49. Mortars

a. The mortar provides the terrorist with the safest and most effective method of attack on hard targets such as Security Force bases and vital areas such as Aldergrove Airport. The Provisionals have developed a succession of effective improvised mortars culminating, so far, with the Mk 9. This is simple to make and fires a bomb weighing some 40lbs containing 15-20lbs of explosive. It has been used twice at ranges of 100 and 165 metres but has been tested by RARDE to ranges in excess of 300 metres without failure.

b. Future Use. The Provisionals may have been deterred from using mortars by lack of success (in 71 attacks between 1973 and January 1978 no member of the Security Forces has been killed). But intelligence indicates that PIRA have not abandoned their use altogether, new types may even be under development. We would expect to see more attacks with the Mk 9 against those targets that can be safely approached and more use of light weight mortars such as the Mk 6 which has a range of 1200 metres. PIRA may well acquire commercial mortars which would enable them to attack from ranges of some 3000 metres. For instance, commercial mortars were found in the consignment discovered in Antwerp in November 1977 and they can be obtained with comparative ease on the open (arms) market.

#### 50. Anti-Armour

a. Rifle. The .30/.3006 Garand armour piercing round has been largely ineffective against armoured vehicles used in Northern Ireland since the up-armouring of the Saracen and Humber. The 8.62mm armour piercing round for the Kalashnikov has a lower performance than the Garand round. Indeed there seems little scope for PIRA to improve on the Garand in the small arms field.

b. RPG. RPG-2 and the earlier marks of RPG-7 although obsolescent in most armies are effective anti-armour weapons. Large stocks of them exist in many parts of the world. So far PIRA's inadequate training has resulted in the mishandling of the RPG-7, but this could change. The RPG-7 range of 500 metres against static targets also makes it a useful weapon against buildings such as Security Force bases and prison walls. If Irish terrorists are successful in tightening their links with more sophisticated groups they could well obtain the RPG-7 in useful quantities. The Antwerp arms haul of November 1977 contained 36 of these rockets and 7 launchers.

c. The Bombard. Between September 1974 and May 1976 PIRA made 3 attacks using a stand-off anti-tank bombard launched from a steel tube buried in a

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hedge and containing a conical warhead filled with 6lb of commercial explosive. Tests by INEE showed this weapon to be effective against the rear doors of the Saracen and large areas of the Hummer. Up-armouring has since reduced the risk but the Provisionals have not used the bombard subsequently. There remains a possibility that the Provisionals will return to this form of attack.

d. Wire-guided Weapons. There is no role for wire-guided anti-tank weapons in Northern Ireland against vehicles. In view of their cost we doubt if PIRA would obtain them for use against buildings.

51. Anti-Aircraft. PIRA's attacks on aircraft have been few and ineffective. Small arms fire and the RIG-7 have been the main methods. The MCO machine gun is a potentially useful weapon against helicopters given a suitable mounting or specially constructed fire position. We believe that it has been used in this role but so far without effect. We know that PIRA has long wished to obtain land-held anti-aircraft missiles. The black market price for the SA-7 in 1976 was £7,000, seemingly within the Provisionals' grasp. Very little training is needed for successful use of SA-7. Once the sensor is locked on a target an audible signal is given and the firer has only to release the missile. It is a very attractive weapon for the terrorist. As the earlier types of missiles are superseded in Middle East and other armouredies there is the possibility that some SA-7s may reach PIRA's hands.

52. Grenades. The IRA have produced some 30 kinds of improvised grenade and in late 1977 2 types of Russian military grenades were used. Commercial grenades also formed part of the Claudia shipment. Grenades have never been particularly effective in Northern Ireland and we have no reason to think they will become an important part of Irish terrorist weaponry in the next 5 years.

53. Likely Trends. (6) The Provisionals may well acquire machine pistols but the Armalite and the Remington Woodmaster are suitable weapons for close quarter and sniping use. We expect the main development in the next 5 years to be better sights including possibly a laser sighting aid and night vision aids. Weapon handling and tactics used particularly in rural attacks will probably improve. The Provisionals may attempt to step up their use of mortars. They may re-adopt the Mk 6 or a similar weapon for ranges up to 1200 metres and the Mk 9 for ranges under 300 metres. Similarly PIRA will probably continue to attempt to obtain commercial mortars. The RIG-7 may well reappear for attacks on armoured vehicles and possibly on Security Force bases or prisons. Although in general we expect the Provisionals to concentrate on simple weaponry, some anti-aircraft missiles may be in their hands before the end of the period.

#### EXPLOSIVE ATTACKS ON PERSONNEL AND VEHICLES

54. Desired Weapon Characteristics. The terrorist will wish to have explosive devices satisfying the following criteria:

- The explosive should be stable in storage, in transit and, when placed, impervious to weather conditions.
- The bomb should be initiated so that it will secure a kill on the target but not against an unintended victim.

Note: (6) Summary of Conclusions on Weapons - Annex E.

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c. It should be quick and simple to lay and conceal. There should be a minimum demand on the skill of the terrorist involved in placing or initiating it.

d. The components should be cheap, readily available, and if possible not such as to call suspicion on the owner. As far as possible they should be undetectable to search instruments.

#### 55. Method of Initiation.

a. Victim Operated. PIRA have shown much ingenuity in devising victim operated or booby trap devices. Discriminate attack has been achieved by exploiting some unique or habitual activity carried out by the target or by luring the target into a suitable place for attack. The Security Forces can be attacked by these methods in situations where civilians are unlikely to be endangered. The techniques are too many to list and there is no discernible trend. But as electronic intruder alarms become even more common and readily available, new techniques are open to the terrorist. Items of electronic equipment operated by the Army such as search devices could themselves be exploited as triggers for devices.

b. Land Line. Land line provides a reliable method of initiation but problems of concealment render it impracticable in many situations. The firer must normally remain at fairly close range and is therefore vulnerable.

c. Radio Control. Radio controlled bombs were first seen in 1972 but there has only been a gradual increase in their use. The McGregor 273Ma radio sold for control of model aircraft and boats has normally been used. The main refinement has been the use of pulse coding of the firing message. Further refinements readily open to the terrorists are changes of frequency band, including perhaps the use of medium wave. Short range line of sight radio is adequate when the radio operator is himself watching the device. If he were further away using a more powerful radio he would need an observer. The use of this extra man, who must be in communication with the firer, adds to the complexity of the firing procedure with consequent opportunity for error. Thus there may be little incentive to obtain a more high powered set with a view to remote firing. The devices used so far bear the stamp of being made by one man or under the supervision of one man. But only comparatively simple skills are needed. We would not expect PIRA to have great difficulty in expanding production and we expect this to happen. If and when the terrorist believes that we can defeat the McGregor he will probably turn to other types of radio. Indeed he may do so at any time merely to enhance his capability.

#### -EXPLOSIVE ATTACKS ON PROPERTY

56. Desired Weapon Characteristics. Many of the characteristics of the anti-personnel and anti-vehicle bomb are needed for bombs directed against property. Additionally the terrorist needs a device that can be quickly or covertly placed and a system of initiation, usually time delay, that will enable him to escape and, in some types of attack, ensure that the explosion takes place at a suitable moment. The terrorist has found that fire damage is generally most cost-effective than blast damage particularly against commercial property. The most easily concealed incendiary weapon is the cassette incendiary. However to be effective

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it must be placed amongst readily combustible material in a place where the resultant fire will not be quickly discovered. Thus, although useful against shops, it is inappropriate for attack on PIRA's higher priority targets. The cased blast incendiary is suitable for use against a wider range of targets. But at present, starved of commercial explosive, the terrorist lacks an effective method of cutting steel. For attack on public utilities he will wish to develop a way of doing this by means of a quickly emplaced charge.

57. Tactics of Emplacement. The main trend in emplacement is towards easing the job of the terrorist who places the device. The cased blast incendiary can be hung on the security grille of a door or window. The more traditional technique which is still in use is to take bombs into buildings either concealed in bags or by forced entry often using firearms. Although little used in recent years, large bombs in cars provided an effective blast weapon and can be delivered either by the terrorist himself or by coercing an innocent driver to deliver it. This is known as the "proxy bomb" technique and normally involves the taking of a hostage. The question of remote delivery of weapons has been considered earlier in the paper. Availability of long delay timers makes it feasible for bombs to be emplaced at a target before suspicion arises, even during the construction phase of a building or at a site to be visited by a VIP. Such bombs were used at the time of HM The Queen's visit to the Province in August 1977. It is a method that may well be used in the future and since such a bomb could be so deeply concealed as to be virtually undetectable, could possibly be used in conjunction with political demands as an alternative to taking a hostage.

58. Methods of Initiation. Some of the methods of initiation used for personnel or vehicle targets can be used against property. Terrorists have used chemical delays, many types of clock, the "Parkway Timer" (sold as a reminder for expiry of a parking meter) and more recently the electronic delay timer. The latter can be built from readily purchasable items by anyone able to follow a circuit diagram of a relatively simple kind. Such systems are very accurate and can produce delays of weeks, or, with a power source of long duration, even years. We would expect to see more use of these long delay timers particularly with a view to causing explosions at sensitive moments such as the time of a VIP visit.

FUTURE TRENDS IN THE USE OF EXPLOSIVE

59. Ingredients for the manufacture of home made explosive are simple, plentiful and untracable. Other bomb-making components will also remain readily available. But the Provisionals have been slow to exploit the effective techniques for explosive attack that we know to be within their knowledge and competence. We believe that, possibly aided by external contacts, their performance will improve. In particular we would expect to see developments on the lines of:

- a. More use of radio controlled devices.
- b. More use of small blast and blast incendiary weapons that are quick and easy to emplace.
- c. The development of effective methods of cutting steel.
- d. More use of long delay electronic timers.

CHEMICAL AND BIOLOGICAL ATTACK

60. Since 1970 there have been several low grade reports that terrorists have

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intended to sabotage water supplies using chemicals. Suitable pollutants could easily be obtained but PIRA would have difficulty in making any such attack selective. Indiscriminate sabotage of this sort would be against their interests.

61. Contamination of food supplies to Security Forces from civil contractors by either chemical or biological means would be possible. The contractor would of course be readily identified and there are practical difficulties in making such an attack sufficiently effective to be worthwhile.

62. The Provisionals have used bottles of ammonia and acid as a form of chemical grenade but with little effect. They could also use large containers of chemicals to assist in some complex operation such as gaining entry to a defended location or in a prison escape. Again there are practical difficulties and there are probably few situations in which there would be any strong incentive to use such a technique.

NUCLEAR ATTACK

63. It is beyond the capability of Irish terrorists to obtain a nuclear weapon of fission or fusion type or even components of such a weapon. Nor do we expect them to establish links during the next 5 years with any organisation which could help them to obtain such a device. Anyway they would not stage an incident in any part of Ireland which might produce nuclear pollution. Thus we believe that the contingency planning covering nuclear incidents elsewhere in the United Kingdom will embrace the small risk from Irish terrorists.

CONCLUSIONS

64. The Provisionals' campaign of violence is likely to continue while the British remain in Northern Ireland. During the next 5 years we see little prospect of change in the inter-relationship between the various terrorist groups in Ireland but we expect PIRA may become gradually more influenced by overseas terrorist groups. We see little prospect of political development of a kind which would seriously undermine the Provisionals' position. (Paragraphs 9-14).

65. PIRA will probably continue to recruit the men it needs. They will still be able to attract enough people with leadership talent, good education and manual skills to continue to enhance their all round professionalism. The movement will retain popular support sufficient to maintain secure bases in the traditional Republican areas. (Paragraphs 15-17).

66. We believe there is little chance of the Provisionals receiving increased financial aid from overseas. They may have difficulty in maintaining some of their other sources of income and they will probably have to rely increasingly on armed robbery. The purchase of arms will continue to command a priority call on funds. But they will probably be unable to afford extravagant weapons, although we cannot exclude the possibility that they make a few prestige purchase such as the RPG-7 and SA-7. (Paragraphs 18-22).

67. We believe that the Republic will continue to act as a haven for terrorists and that they will continue to receive arms through Eire, particularly from the USA and through contacts with overseas terrorist groups. We believe however that there is little risk of any foreign government giving active support to PIRA. (Paragraphs 23-28).

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68. We expect the Provisionals' organisation to retain its current higher command structure in the Republic, its "Northern Command" and its increasingly professional ASUs. The middle level of leadership is likely to remain unstable and the link between the top leadership in Dublin and the active terrorist groups on the ground may weaken. (Paragraphs 29-32).

69. The Provisional campaign over the next 5 years will probably be one of attrition rather than of intense activity, though the tempo of operations will fluctuate as in the past. (Paragraphs 33-34).

70. Propaganda considerations will frequently dictate PIRA strategy both in avoiding action that would alienate public opinion and in mounting spectacular attacks that would capture the Press headlines. (Paragraph 35).

71. We foresee a continued trend towards greater professionalism and selectivity in targetting. We believe that PIRA will concentrate its attacks on members of the Security Forces and their bases and at the infrastructure of Government including the public utilities. (Paragraphs 36-43).

72. The desire to save their own skins dominates PIRA tactics. Nevertheless there are traceable patterns of terrorist activity including a tendency to resort to methods that have been successful in the past. The Provisionals are probably content with their current armoury but they may attempt to acquire machine pistols. We expect to see improved sniper techniques using advanced weapon sights. PIRA will continue to use improvised mortars at infrequent intervals and may also endeavour to obtain standard military mortars. There will be a strong incentive to acquire anti-tank and even anti-aircraft rockets. (Paragraphs 44-52).

73. The well tried methods of attack using improvised explosive devices will continue. The variety of victim operated devices may increase by the use of commercial intruder alarm systems. We would also expect to see more emphasis on radio controlled devices, improvised explosive methods for cutting steel and long delay electronic timers. (Paragraphs 53-60).

74. We believe that Irish terrorists are unlikely to use chemical, biological or nuclear methods of attack during the next 5 years. (Paragraphs 60-63).

RECOMMENDATIONS

75. We recommend that the findings of this paper be used as the basis for further study aimed at:

- a. Developing concepts of operations that will enable us to keep ahead of the terrorist.
- b. Identifying any hitherto unforeseen gaps in our current equipment holdings and equipment development programme.
- c. Identifying areas in which further analysis both of terrorist techniques and of the degree of success of our own countermeasures could usefully be undertaken.

76. We further recommend that this paper should be reviewed and updated annually to provide continuing guidance to interested departments.

J M C

November 1978

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avec Remi Kauffer, aux editions Lesfargues, Lyon:

*Euskadi-la-Spirale*

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## **Britain's Military Strategy in Ireland**

The Kitson Experiment

ROGER FALIGOT

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**Roger Faligot** is a well-known Breton-French journalist and author who lived in Ireland for several years as correspondent for the French daily, *Liberation*. He is one of France's leading specialists on modern Irish history. His particular interest is the operations of the great powers' secret services and special forces, and the threat they pose to human liberty on the one hand, and national independence on the other. He writes for *Le Monde Diplomatique*, *Paris Match*, *Le Matin*, and the *Sunday Tribune*.

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