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IMAGES IN CONFLICT : VISUAL  
IMAGERY AND THE TROUBLES IN  
NORTHERN IRELAND (1968 - 1981)

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Boru was chosen to feature on its coinage, its uniforms and its printed documents.<sup>1</sup>

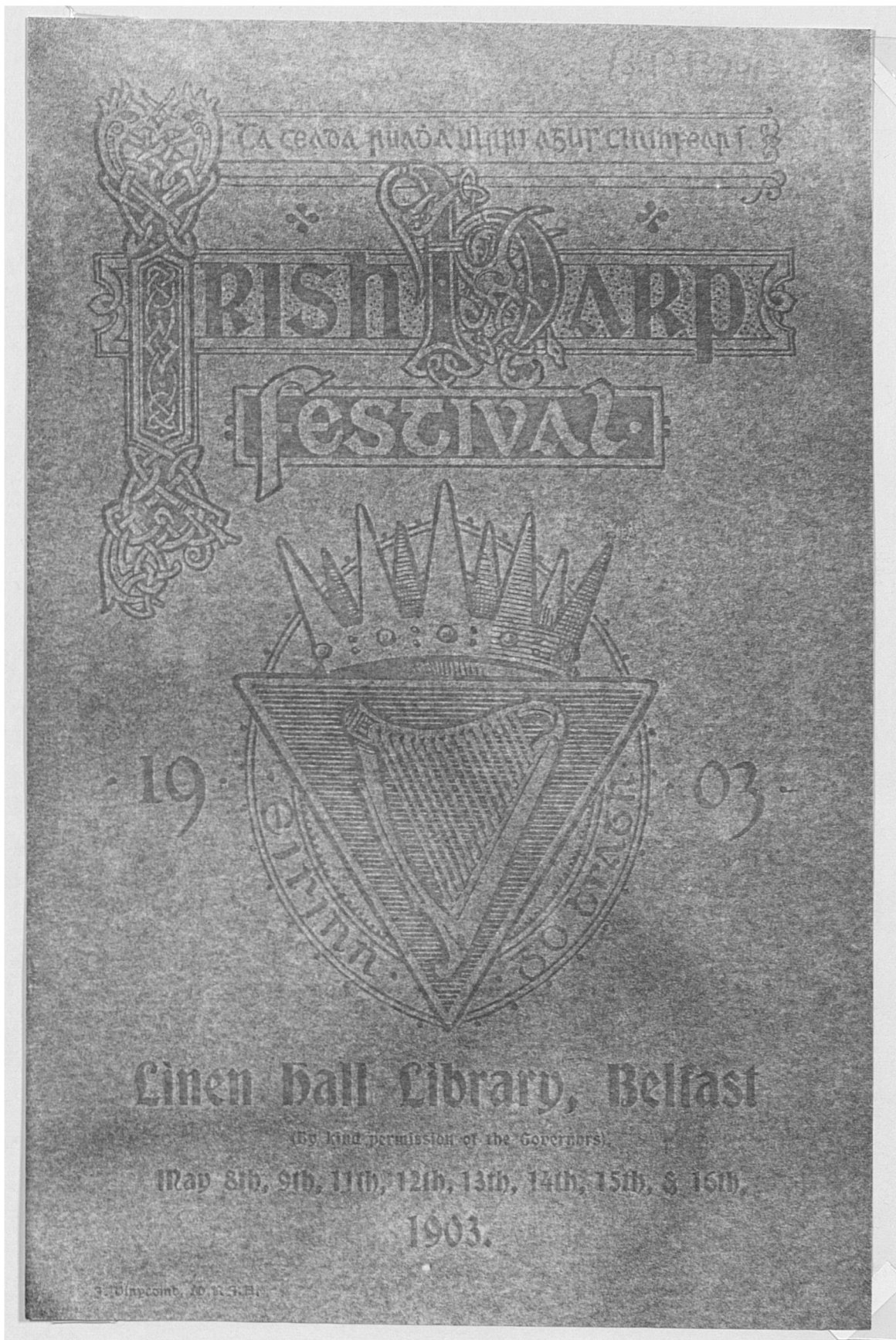
It remains debatable however whether much of this nineteenth century harp symbolism was familiar in the north of Ireland. Neither the Repeal Association, nor the Fenians, nor the Land War, nor the 1916 Rising had much direct influence there. Flags and banners with harps on them were being carried by the ribbonmen from the 1830s to the 1870s,<sup>2</sup> and harps were also featured in their personal regalia (ill 126 ), but otherwise it was probably commercial harp emblems which were most familiar in the province prior to the 1890s. Belleek pottery was manufactured there, and Waterhouse replicas were regularly shown in the industrial exhibitions held in Ulster in the latter part of the century. Illustrations in Belfast-printed books appear to confirm a relatively non-political use of harp-imagery in the north during this period. Thus in 1850 it was splendidly fused with Belfast's industrial traditions in the head-piece to Davis, the Belfast Man's Journal (ill 141 ), where a harp made from the tools of the linen industry glows refulgently, and in 1852 it was one of the usual set of polite symbols of nationalism featured on the cover of Lays from Erin, published by the Belfast firm of Marcus Ward.<sup>3</sup>

A distinct change can be seen taking place with the advent of the Celtic revival in the closing years of the century. Northern antiquarians sought to provide Irish nationalists and republicans of the period with suitable harp symbolism. On John Vinycomb's cover for the programme of the Irish Harp Festival in 1903 a harp decorated with Celtic interlace is surmounted by the Irish rather than the British crown (ill 142 ) and

1. Sheehy, op cit, p. 12 and p. 175. Several designs incorporating the harp were also submitted for the State's new stamps. See Feldman, op cit, pp 67-71.
2. See above, pp. 423-429,
3. In the Linen Hall Library, Belfast.



141. Heading from Davis, The Belfast Man's Journal,  
5 Jan 1850/steel-engraving/actual size/Linen  
Hall Library, Belfast.



142. John Vinycomb /cover of the Programme of the Irish Harp Festival in the Linen Hall Library, Belfast in 1903/Actual size/Linen Hall Library, Belfast.

a few years later F.J. Bigger was advising the Irish Volunteers on the design of their green harp flags.

Various authorities were consulted about the design of these flags, notably Dr George Sigerson. Sigerson's advice that the maiden harp should be used was taken up with enthusiasm by the O'Rahilly, who described it as the "mystic harp of Dagda".<sup>1</sup> However the few Volunteer national flags which survive all bear the plain harp following the suggestion of Bigger. Two of these belonged to Northern units. Professor Eoin MacNeill, the chief-of-staff, presented the Belfast Regiment in January 1915 with a green colour bearing a golden harp "beautifully worked by the members of Cumann na mBan, in whose name the flag was presented".<sup>2</sup> And in Derry a flag donated by a relative of MacNeill and designed by Bigger, showing both a Celtic harp and the red hand of Ulster, was presented to local Volunteers in Celtic Park in September 1914.<sup>3</sup> It is now in the National Museum in Dublin (ill 143 ).

In the aftermath of the 1916 rising the harp, like the old green symbolism, waned in popularity as a public image amongst Catholics in Northern Ireland, as well as in the south. However it continued to be featured in the symbolism of the Ribbonmen's successors, the Ancient Order of Hibernians (ill 128), and it became a potent private emblem for successive generations of Catholic internees, north and south of the border.<sup>4</sup> Undoubtedly part of the reason for its popularity with them was its suitability as a subject for carving out of the bone, wood, or lead which were the easiest materials for them to procure. But it must also have appealed to these detainees by virtue of its oft-repeated, semi-mythical association with the concept of Irish freedom, intertwined now,

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1. Hayes-McCoy, *op cit*, pp. 199-200.

2. *The Irish Volunteer*, vol 2, new series, no 10, 6 Feb 1915, quoted Hayes-McCoy, *op cit*, p. 203.

3. *Derry Journal* 21 Sept 1914, and Hayes-McCoy, *op cit*, p. 204.

4. See below, p.517ff.



143. F.J. Bigger/Flag presented to the Irish Volunteers in Derry in Sept. 1914/household paint on poplin/ 42 x 42 ins (106.7 x 106.7 cms)/Department of Defence HQ, Dublin/Photo: National Museum of Ireland.

as on occasion in the past, with the desire of individual Irishmen for their personal liberty. Private significance endorses and strengthens public meaning, and gives a symbol that aura of associations that is as important for its potency as the direct interpretations with which it has been endowed.

Celtic imagery : a native, national tradition?

It is not only green imagery and harps which have been employed by Catholics in Northern Ireland as symbols of their political identity during the past thirteen years. They have also used the kind of ornament to be found in the artifacts of the Celtic period, as a means of demonstrating their status as inheritors of a long tradition of what is seen by them as an Irish national culture.

There can have been very few pieces of republican internee craftwork produced since 1971 which have not carried a piece of Celtic interlace on them. This form of decoration was employed on the earliest products made in 1971 and 1972, and it was still in use in the early 1980s, when harps and crosses were being gradually usurped by jewellery boxes and coffee tables. It has also adorned objects as diverse as Christmas cards<sup>1</sup> and republican banners.<sup>2</sup> Symbols and figures from Celtic mythology have made intermittent appearances as well (ill 165 ).<sup>3</sup> Such imagery was known in Northern Ireland's Catholic community prior to 1968. On Hibernian banners, for example, Celtic interlace has frequently been used for the border decoration (ill 20 ). Nevertheless it is clear that there was a major

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1. For the use of Celtic imagery in Provisional Sinn Fein Christmas cards see the advertisement for Green Cross Christmas cards in An Phoblacht/Republican News, Dublin, 6 Dec 1980, p. 13.
  2. There is a photograph of a Provisional banner from Newry, decorated with Celtic interlace, in Republican News, Belfast, 22 June 1974, p. 4. I saw a banner from Rostrevor with similar decoration being carried in the Official Republican parade to Bodenstown in June 1975.
  3. In November 1974 the Official Sinn Fein newsheet, United Irishman, advertised a Christmas card showing Celtic heroes.

revival in interest in Celtic visual traditions in the late 1960s and early 1970s. It was described to me by republicans as a form of solidarity, a gesture of identity, "a political culture."

The Celtic imagery used on republican products since 1968 therefore poses two questions. Why in the first place do Northern Ireland Catholics regard it as peculiarly their own? And why was there such a revival in use of it following the outbreak of the present conflict in the province?

It will be my argument in the next six sections of this chapter that Celtic imagery is not, as implied in its current political use in Ulster, a native national heritage, but that it was part of an international culture, imported into Ireland by early invaders, and subsequently made into a national tradition by a long historical process, in which dissemination of information, and validation by a range of political and cultural organisations and movements, were of key importance. What I am trying to indicate, as in the sections on green imagery and harp symbolism, is that national traditions are not received, or recovered, but constructed by a variety of groups and individuals, who are affected by international political and cultural developments, as well as those within their own eventual nation, and that an understanding of this process of construction provides the answers to the questions posed above.

In this first section the nature of Ireland's original Celtic traditions will be discussed. It will be seen that they were by no means the native product of the country's earliest inhabitants, but were part of an imported, international culture. Moreover, although the perpetuation of Celtic traditions and imagery in Ireland were for long fostered by the country's specific political and cultural history, that continuity was subsequently enormously eroded by the impact of English and Scottish

colonisation, and the bitter conflicts of the seventeenth century.

It now seems well established that some of the cultural artifacts and practices which to this day strongly influence the thinking of Irish nationalists, and are habitually considered Celtic by them, were well-developed before the Celts ever arrived in Ireland. Extraordinary veneration for the dead, and a feeling for the land as a place of holiness and refuge, both seem to have developed at this time and, associated with them, a reverence for the stones set up by the pre-Celtic megalithic tribes. At Dunloy in Co Antrim, for example, children were forbidden to play in the vicinity of some old stones because "the fairies lived there." Subsequently these stones were found to be a prehistoric burial cairn, known now as 'Doey's Cairn.'<sup>1</sup> Similar raths, cromlechs and standing stones are still taboo to the majority of country people, who will refuse to move or destroy them, preferring to leave them alone, or in the case of standing stones, to incorporate them as they are into a wall. This is in striking contrast to the way later constructions have been plundered for building materials.<sup>2</sup> Few of these pre-Celtic monuments carry ornament however, and the most spectacular decorated stones of this period, in the burial mounds along the Boyne valley, were lost to view until the end of the seventeenth century.<sup>3</sup>

When the Celts eventually came to Ireland between 600 and 200 BC, they built on the traditions already established by the previous megalithic invaders. They also brought with them an art which was not national but international, part of a European cultural world which stretched from the western shores of Ireland to the Middle East, and from Spain to Scandinavia. Early Irish Celtic artifacts were part of the La Tène culture which

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1. Jeanne Cooper Foster, Ulster Folklore H.R. Carter, Belfast, 1951, pp. 82-3.

2. Ibid, p. 55.

3. On the rediscovery of the Irish passage graves in the Boyne Valley and elsewhere, see Michael Herity, Irish Passage Graves, Irish University Press, Dublin, 1974, pp 8-23.



flourished throughout the continent in the late Iron Age. Later Celtic craftsmen were influenced by classical civilization - the Tara brooch (ill 154 ) is based on Roman designs, and the Lisnacrogher scabbard adopts the classical lyre motif (ill 144 ). They were also stimulated to their highest achievements in metal-working by the Anglo-Saxons. Possibly through them, they were aware of the 'animal style' of steppe-land metal-work which the Scythians brought to Europe. The traffic was by no means one-way. Irish artifacts were frequently exported, and in the later Christian period, from the 7th to 9th centuries, Irish missionaries and their pupils in Scotland, England and elsewhere, put into circulation superbly-illustrated manuscripts which fused the traditions of their homeland with those of the local area (ill 145 ).<sup>1</sup>

Besides attributing to Irish Celtic art a nationalism which it did not possess, later commentators have tended to be fairly selective when outlining its chief stylistic characteristics. The main stress has consistently been on the interlinked phenomena of hair-spring spirals, multiplicity, intertwining and shape-shifting. Historically the spirals were a very early motif, which can be seen inscribed on stones in pre-Celtic Neolithic graves of ca 3000 to 2000 BC, as at Newgrange in the Boyne Valley and Knockmany in Co Tyrone.<sup>2</sup> Multiplicity and intertwining are most strongly apparent in the manuscripts of the late Christian period, where shape-shifting also reaches extravagant heights, as animal,

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1. Pigott, op cit. Bruce Arnold, A Concise History of Irish Art, Thames & Hudson, 1969, pp. 11-12, 14, 27 and 32-43; F. Saxl and R. Wittkower, British Art & the Mediterranean, Oxford University Press, 1948, section 2 ; Liam de Paor, "Culture and Isolation", Irish Times, Dublin, 30 Nov 1976, p. 10; and ibid., "Two Streams in European Art", Irish Times, Dublin, 11 Jan 1977, p. 8.
  2. Arnold, op cit., p. 13 and Laurence Flanagan, The Antiquities of Northern Ireland, Northern Ireland Tourist Board, Belfast, n.d.



144. Details of scabbard plates from Lisnacrogher Bog, Co Antrim/300-150 BC/bronze/each scabbard - plate approximately 15 x 2 ins (38 x 5 cms)/Ulster Museum/Postcard: UM



145. Book of Kells, initial letter of St Mark's Gospel/ca end 8th century/ink and watercolour on vellum / 12½ x 9¼ ins (31.1 x 23.5 cms)/Library of Trinity College, Dublin/Postcard University of Dublin





146. Decorated Celtic disc from the River Bann near Coleraine, Co Londonderry/1st-2nd century AD/bronze/diameter 4 ins (10.5 cms)/Ulster Museum/postcard: UM.



147. Janus figure/3rd cent BC - 5th cent AD/Caldragh  
Graveyard, Boa Island, Co Fermanagh/Stone/28½ x  
18<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub> x 12 ins (72.5 x 46 x 30.5 cms).

vegetable and abstract forms merge and flow one from the other. They can already be seen in embryo however, some six or seven centuries earlier, in objects such as the 'Bann disc', where taut elegant spirals based on vegetable forms end in lively ducks' heads (ill 146 ).<sup>1</sup> Another aspect of shape-shifting appears in the Boa Island figures, of uncertain date, ambiguously facing both ways (ill 147).<sup>2</sup> It also features frequently in Irish Celtic mythology, where gods and heroes change with bewildering rapidity into a variety of birds and animals.<sup>3</sup>

Parallels for all these characteristics can be found elsewhere in the Celtic world.<sup>4</sup> Both the Irish and the English however have persisted in seeing them as peculiarly Irish. Denis Ireland's comment on "...that magic of the Gaelic mind that it is never very sure which world it is talking about - this world, or the next, or the one beyond that again,"<sup>5</sup> is but one of a long litany of similar remarks. There are historical reasons why this should be so. The Celtic period lasted far longer in Ireland than in most places. The island was not, like the rest of Britain, subjected to Roman rule, and although it shared with the mainland the unwelcome experience of Viking and Norman invasions, their impact was patchy.

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1. Piggott, op cit, no 168. See no 14 for a similar English design of roughly the same period.
  2. John Sharkey, Celtic Mysteries, Thames & Hudson, 1975, p.7, and ill 22; and Hickey, op cit, pp. 17-18 and ill 3.
  3. Proinsias MacCana, Celtic Mythology, Hamlyn, 1970, pp. 50-1, 55 and 131-2.
  4. Spiral-carved stones can be found in the Gavrinis passage-grave in France (Sharkey, op cit, pp. 78-9); the complexities of Irish illuminated manuscripts are rivalled by Danish, Anglo-Saxon and Scythian metalwork such as can be seen in the objects found in the Sutton Hoo ship burial (ibid, ill 44 & 55); two-headed figures occur in Germany and in Celtic Gaul (ibid ill 18 and pp. 84-5 and Hickey, op cit, pp 17-18); and shape-shifting is a general feature of Celtic literature, which can be found, for example, in the Welsh Mabinogion.
  5. Denis Ireland, From the Jungle of Belfast, Blackstaff Press, Belfast, 1973, p. 136. See also MacCana, op cit p. 11.

Invasion of another kind, by Christian missionaries in the fifth century, was peaceful. After initial attempts to impose a centralised Roman pattern of organisation by bishoprics they adapted themselves to existing conditions, by using the decentralised, local unit of the monastery. It seems likely that when Christian monks came to write down Celtic mythology they filtered out many of the more organised and therefore threatening beliefs preserved by the druids, but in other ways pagan Celtic culture was handed on to Christian tradition. Pagan deities became Christian saints; Brighid became St Brigid. And just as the early pagan Celts established many of their ritual centres like Tara and Navan Fort on existing megalithic sites,<sup>1</sup> so now their mounds and monuments attracted to them the churches and High Crosses of their Christian successors, and they in their turn became the focal points for later church-building and graveyards. So it is that in some remote areas like the counties of Cavan, Fermanagh and Tyrone, Celtic traditions of carving seem to have been handed on from one generation to another up to the present day.<sup>2</sup>

This kind of continuity can be seen very clearly at places like Boa Island, in Co Fermanagh, and at Clogher Cathedral in Co Tyrone. At Boa, on a small island in the Fermanagh lakeland, the strange, probably pagan Celtic Janus figure (ill 147) may at one time have supported a cross, and is now surrounded by later Christian graves. At Clogher, the Church of Ireland cathedral stands on a hilltop, less than half a mile from a great hill fort with a Celtic barrow-grave at its foot (ill 148).<sup>3</sup>

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1. E. Estyn Evans, The Irishness of the Irish, Irish Association, Belfast, 1968, p. 6.
  2. Hickey, op cit. passim.
  3. On the history of this graveyard see J.I.D. Johnston, Clogher Cathedral Graveyard, Graham & Sons, Omagh, 1972.





148. Clogher Cathedral graveyard, Co Tyrone, 1981.  
a : View of hill fort  
b : Celtic high crosses  
c : Tombstone of Cally Cassidy d:781  
Photos: B. Loftus.



In the graveyard are two Christian Celtic high crosses (ill 148 ), and several eighteenth century tombstones whose carving incorporates what seem to be crude version of the interlace and bulging-eyed figures to be found in the complex decoration of such monuments (ill 148 ).

In this Clogher graveyard there are also to be found a fine group of late seventeenth and early eighteenth century planter tomb-stones, carved with heraldic devices of English and Scottish planters (ill 83 ). They are a salutary reminder that although many Celtic and pre-Celtic monuments survived in Ireland by virtue of their isolation and sheer immovability, many others, notably the churches of the Christian period, disappeared or fell into decay, as a result of the destruction and neglect caused by the English colonization of Ireland. The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries with their successive waves of English and Scottish plantations, and their bitter political and religious conflicts, were particularly destructive, and Northern Ireland was one of the areas worst affected.<sup>1</sup> The virtual halt to all Catholic church-building also entailed a grave erosion of native stone-carving traditions. A few local carvers probably survived, by working on planter houses, and cutting their tombstones for them. It was probably they who were responsible for the few mass-stones or Catholic memorials which survive from this period. But with the exception of these kinds of isolated instances, the continuity of imagery and practice in Irish stone-carving seems to have virtually disappeared. Indeed in Co Cork in the 1920s, stonecutters recalling the background to their craft, asserted that in the eighteenth century the native Catholics looking for tombstones were forced to turn to the English stone-masons imported to work on planter houses.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Thomas P. Kennedy, "Church Building", in Patrick J. Corish (ed) A History of Irish Catholicism, vol 5 fasc 8, Gill & Macmillan, Dublin, 1970, pp. 1-8 and Patrick J. Corish, The Catholic Community in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries, Helicon, Dublin, 1981, p. 58.
  2. Seamus Murphy, Stone Mad, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1966, pp 200-201.

There is a sense in which one can speak of a hidden, native tradition of art in Ireland, just as one can speak of a hidden, native tradition of language and literature.<sup>1</sup> To this day the country is remarkably full of Celtic and pre-Celtic monuments. Some of these, notably the High Crosses, are a permanent if weather-worn repository of exquisite carving, including the elaborate interlace so often thought of as characteristic of Celtic art. Moreover Christianity's absorption of Celtic culture led not only to the creation of superb works of art such as these crosses, but also to a general tolerance of earlier, pagan objects.

However, for these works to act as embodiments of a generally-accepted national culture, they had to be known and recognised as such by a wide section of the population, either as part of a working, living tradition, or as a reassembled, re-evaluated dead civilization. Neither was really possible in the period between English colonisation and the antiquarian revival of the late eighteenth century. Some of the most important Celtic and pre-Celtic monuments, such as Newgrange and the other Boyne valley graves, had disappeared from view. Smaller items were also lost, or hidden away by hereditary keepers, or preserved by the colonisers in private or semi-private collections of antiquities. The skills developed for the manufacture of these major and minor arts gradually disappeared or were turned to new imported styles. Native stone-carving traditions were vastly eroded during the plantation period; the few pieces of metalwork still produced for the Catholic church were in newer European styles;<sup>2</sup> and only a few manuscript-makers lingered on,

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1. Daniel Corkery, The Hidden Ireland, Gill & Macmillan, Dublin, 1967, and O Snodaigh, op cit.
  2. Arnold, op cit pp. 58-60 and Peter Harbison, Howan Potterton and Jeanne Sheehy, Irish Art and Architecture, Thames & Hudson, 1978, pp 111-115.

working for the remnants of the Gaelic nobility who survived into the middle ages,<sup>1</sup> or on more plebeian documents like the Council Book of the town of Galway, which dates from 1632.<sup>2</sup> Celtic artifacts and imagery were not to become widely available again for recognition and reworking until antiquarians, for the most part English or Anglo-Irish, sought them out, put them on display to the public, and published reproductions of them.

#### Early revival by the Anglo-Irish colonists

This process of rediscovery of Celtic traditions by Ireland's colonisers can be seen as early as the sixteenth century, when Queen Elizabeth's Primate, Archbishop Ussher, presented the Book of Kells (ill 145 ) to the newly-founded Trinity College in Dublin. In the seventeenth century the Cromwellian Bishop of Meath followed suit by adding the Book of Durrow to the College's collection. But few of the Catholic Irish can have seen the manuscripts there. The College was staunchly Anglican and Catholics were debarred by law from taking degrees.<sup>3</sup>

This reservation of Celtic imagery to an educated Anglo-Irish elite remained true when the first real revival of interest in it commenced in the mid-eighteenth century. This revival formed part of the European-wide development of scholarly and artistic interest in antiquities, most particularly in ruins, which appealed to the growing taste for the picturesque. It was not noticeably nationalist in inspiration, and the

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1. See for example the use of interlace in the Book of Ballymote compiled about 1390 at the residence of Tomaltach MacDonagh, Lord of Corann, and now owned by the Royal Irish Academy, Dublin. An illuminated initial from it is illustrated in Brian de Breffny et al, The Irish World, Thames & Hudson, 1978, p. 97.
  2. A page-heading from this book, using interlace decoration, is reproduced in ibid, p. 117.
  3. Arnold, op cit p. 22 and p. 39.

publications it occasioned were directed towards a limited aristocratic market. Industrialisation was not yet sufficiently developed to foster wider dissemination of the imagery recorded in them. Moreover the collections of Celtic artifacts which were formed at this time remained debarred to the general public. It was only in a handful of buildings that Irish Catholics could witness the revival of Celtic forms, though not, as yet, of Celtic decoration.

A growing private interest in Ireland's native artistic traditions was evident amongst members of the Anglo-Irish ruling class and their associates from at least the 1740s. In 1744 for example John Carpenter, later to be Archbishop of Dublin, and an active campaigner for the repeal of the penal laws against Catholics, used Book of Kells type lettering on the title-page of a miscellany of Irish poems which he compiled.<sup>1</sup> And from the 1750s onwards the French Huguenot artist Gabriel Beranger started to make drawings of the antiquities of his new homeland. His work was noticed and used by General Vallancey, the Irish scholar and map-maker of the Board of Ordnance, and William Burton Conyngham, a great patron of art and architecture. With other scholars such as Charles O'Connor and Edward Ledwich, they formed a circle which encouraged and employed a vast number of professional and amateur artists, who produced a whole range of watercolours of Irish antiquities.<sup>2</sup> From approximately the 1790s this interest became more widespread, as the works of these artists were published in guides to Ireland and its antiquities, such as The Post-Chaise Companion (Dublin, 1786), The Compleat Irish Traveller (London 1788) and Francis Grose's The Antiquities of Ireland, (London, 1791). Ancient ruins and wild countryside were the main constituents of the "picturesque", which was so eagerly sought out by the cultured aristocracy at this time,

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1. In the National Library of Ireland in Dublin.

2. Anne Crookshank and the Knight of Glin, The Painters of Ireland, c. 1660-1920, Barrie and Jenkins, 1979, pp. 62-3.

so it is not surprising to find a contemporary painting by William Ashford of Tourists visiting Cloghoughter Castle<sup>1</sup> or, a little later, a title-page vignette in The Scientific Tourist through Ireland (London, 1818), which shows a traveller sketching a group of ruins, including a high cross and a round tower, while his companion looks on (ill 149).

Two other important developments at this time were the establishment of the first public collections of Irish antiquities, and the beginnings of a deliberate revival of native Irish architecture. The Royal Irish Academy was founded by Charles Vallancey and Lord Charlemont in 1785, and the museum in Trinity College, Dublin, which was begun soon after the completion of the grand front of the college in the mid-eighteenth century, numbered some 1,200 items by 1818, including objects of later nationalist significance like the so-called harp of Brian Boru (ill 130).

Meanwhile the picturesque taste was encouraging the use of ancient Irish forms in both secular and ecclesiastical architecture. Irish round towers were chosen for the Marquis of Waterford's (uncompleted) memorial to his eldest son in 1794, and Slane Roman Catholic church in 1802.<sup>2</sup> These were still however isolated examples of architectural revivalism, with little impact on Ireland's native Catholic population. By the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the Catholics were providing themselves with chapels or mass-houses, except in very poor areas of the North and West, where open-air altars or Mass-stones were employed. However few of these buildings seem to have had any architectural pretensions or form of decoration.<sup>3</sup> This led John Gamble, in his record of the travels he made through the North of Ireland in 1818 to comment

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1. Ibid, cover illustration.

2. Paul Larmour, paper on Celtic Revivals, delivered to the Institute of Irish Studies, Queen's University, Belfast, 28 February 1978.

3. Corish, The Catholic Community in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries, p. 33.



*Antiquities in Ireland*

149. C. Warren/Frontispiece to The Scientific Tourist through Ireland, John Booth, 1818/copper-engraving/actual size/Belfast Central Library.

ruefully,

"In Ireland, the Catholic religion is unhappily stripped of all that graceful drapery and splendid decoration, which make it so dear to the fancy, and consoling to the heart."<sup>1</sup>

Ireland's Catholic population still lacked access to their Celtic traditions, the political and religious freedom and determination to exploit them, and the finances required for such exploitation.

#### The beginnings of nationalist culture, ca 1820-1850

The second stage in the revival of native Irish imagery can be seen as lasting from approximately 1820 to the 1850s. During this period archaeological exploration of the Celtic heritage improved enormously, and information about its artworks began to be available to a wider public. Irish nationalists also began to see the Celtic relics as a vital part of their country's cultural tradition. Yet for various reasons, a generalised nationalist pride in this pre-English heritage did not as yet develop. Those reasons are pointers to the factors which interplay with political developments in the genesis of a sense of national culture.

It was during these years that men like George Petrie laid the foundations of Irish archaeology. A sense of the revolution in Irish culture that they achieved is well conveyed in the following account of their work for the Irish Ordnance Survey between 1835 and 1842.

"Trinity College professors, learned clergymen, poets, artists and other intellectuals participated in the studies the Ordnance Survey conducted. They saved artifacts of former ages from destruction and placed them in museums. They searched for Irish manuscripts at home and abroad and founded societies to publish them. No sooner were the texts

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1. John Gamble, Views of Society and Manners in the North of Ireland, in a series of letters written in the year 1818, Longman, 1819, p. 262.

in print than poets, story-tellers and artists seized on the characters and episodes of Irish history and legend as subjects for works of the imagination. The Government undertook the publication of the ancient Brehon Laws and reorganised the Record Office. Studies in the old Irish language and culture sprang up in Maynooth College, established for Catholics in 1795; in the College of St Columba, a preparatory school for prospective clergymen of the Church of Ireland, founded in 1843; in the Queen's Colleges opened in 1849; and in the Catholic University, of which Dr. John Henry Newman became rector in 1852."<sup>1</sup>

Also during this period there was a deliberate attempt to communicate information about the monuments and artworks of the Celtic era to a wider public than the Anglo-Irish aristocracy or intelligentsia. George Petrie was particularly aware of this need, as a subsequent President of the Royal Irish Academy later recalled:

"he largely helped towards achieving the great problem of our day - the reconciliation of the cultivated intelligence and loyalty, with the popular aspirations and sympathies of the country."<sup>2</sup>

(Indeed it was typical of the man that he should have broken off his connection with the Royal Hibernian Academy in 1858-9, over their decision to discontinue the cheap evening opening of their exhibition to the working-classes, which had originally been adopted on his suggestion).<sup>3</sup>

The chief way in which Petrie achieved this popularisation was by his contributions to Caesar Otway's Dublin Penny Journal (1832-3), and

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1. Grace J. Calder, George Petrie and 'the Ancient Music of Ireland', Dolmen Press, Dublin, 1968, p. 9.
  2. William Stokes, The Life and Labours in Art and Archaeology of George Petrie, LLD, MRIA, Longmans, 1868, p. 394.
  3. Ibid, p. 70.



his editorship of its successor, the Irish Penny Journal (1841). Both short-lived, and both said to have been more popular in England than Ireland, they nevertheless represented a determined effort to communicate with the general public, and carried a wide range of information about Irish literature, music, history, art, antiquities, natural history, traditions and national emblems. The attempt had been made before - the Belfast Monthly Magazine some twenty years earlier had carried much material of this kind, including articles on the Celtic remains at New Grange, the Harp of Brian Boru, and the Round Towers of Ireland - but the style in which this material was now presented was completely new. The newspaper format and vigorous, broad-sheet style, wood-engraved illustrations were far more likely to appeal to popular taste than the sober book shape and few, mean line illustrations of the earlier magazine. Petrie himself was responsible for a considerable part of both text and illustrations, but he also used work by a number of friends and colleagues. These included the Northern artist, Andrew Nicholl. His frequent and spirited contributions meant that Ulster antiquities were well-represented.<sup>1</sup> However most of the pictures in these publications were more romantic than accurate. The image shown here (ill 136 ) is no exception.

These journals were short-lived and had only a small circulation in Ireland. Nevertheless it seems that they were influential. Paul Larmour believes for example that the Dublin Penny Journal provided the visual model for the doorway of Father Horgan's round tower, constructed between 1836 and 1845 at Ballygibbon in Co Clare.<sup>2</sup> And I think it is highly probable that the Dublin Penny Journal woodcut of the national emblems

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1. On Nicholl, see above, p.286. Petrie had at least one imitator in Northern Ireland, who in 1846 produced the Belfast Penny Journal, a National Miscellany of Original and Selected Literature. Selected Reading for leisure moments interesting to all - offensive to none. It appears to have run for only one volume and contained no illustrations.
  2. Larmour, op cit.

was the source for the "ancient Irish cap, shield, and battle axe, copied from the originals in the Museum of Trinity College" represented on the Dublin Barbers' banner carried in 1869,<sup>1</sup> and for the Irish harp leaning against an oaktree, with a round tower and ecclesiastical ruins in the background, shown on the Housepainters banner in 1875.<sup>2</sup>

The use of journals such as these to communicate historical and archaeological information to a middle-class readership was not peculiar to Ireland. Indeed the Dublin Penny Journal was partly inspired by the success of similar English ventures, such as the Penny Magazine for the Diffusion of useful Knowledge, which used improved printing technology to exploit the interest of a reading public which had been greatly increased by the spread of both voluntary and state education. In Ireland however the middle-classes now assumed a particular cultural and political importance because, following the Act of Union in 1800 and the loss of an Irish parliament, the Anglo-Irish landlords who had formerly patronised the artists and antiquarians and figured large in political leadership, were increasingly absent from the country.<sup>3</sup>

It was from the ranks of the middle-classes that were drawn the most culturally active Irish nationalists of this period, the members of the Young Ireland movement. These were a group of mainly youthful Irishmen who supported Daniel O'Connell in his campaign for the repeal of the Act of Union between Britain and Ireland, and eventually, frustrated by his cautious methods, led an abortive rebellion in 1848. It has been argued

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1. Weekly Freeman's Journal, 16 Oct 1869, p. 2.

2. O'Connell Centenary Record, Joseph Dollard, Dublin, 1878, p. 156.

3. Sheehy, op cit, p. 8.

that, as a result of the influence of contemporary, romantic, revolutionary nationalist movements in Europe, members of this group attempted to achieve a nativistic return to Ireland's Celtic past, somewhat similar to the contemporary revival of Aryanism in Germany. According to this theory, both movements challenged their culturally dominating neighbours (France in the case of Germany, England in the case of Ireland) by recourse to early heroic myths, whether of Siegfried or Cuchulain, by transformation of the formerly under-privileged into the new elect, and by a reversion to primitive religion.<sup>1</sup>

However the treatment of the Celtic tradition in both the writings and visual images associated with the Young Ireland movement was less clear-cut and less influential than this argument would imply. Certainly numerous articles in The Nation, the Young Ireland newspaper which commenced publication in 1842, urged the Irish people to preserve their ancient monuments. And certainly these comments reached a very wide audience. It has been estimated that in 1843 about 10,000 copies of each issue of the paper were sold, and each copy was probably read, listened to or discussed by a group of people.<sup>2</sup> It is also known that the paper's attitude to Irish antiquities had some influence. The architect J.J. McCarthy told the Young Irelander Gavan Duffy that he was first inspired by The Nation to revive the Irish Gothic in ecclesiastical buildings.<sup>3</sup>

Moreover, sections of Ireland's Protestant population at this time seem to have felt that the revival of interest in Irish antiquities was

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1. Giovanni Costigan, "Romantic Nationalism: Ireland and Europe", Irish University Review, Dublin, vol 3 no 2, Autumn 1973, pp. 141-152. and William Irwin Thompson, The imagination of an insurrection, Harper Colophon, New York, 1967, pp. 31-2 and pp. 236-8.
  2. Figures given in Duffy, op cit, vol 2, Appendix, p. 227. See also the frontispiece to this volume, which reproduces M.J. McManus' painting Reading the Nation (in the National Gallery of Ireland).
  3. Duffy, op cit, vol 1, p. 127.

generating too much national sentiment. It has been suggested that this, rather than financial reasons prompted the government to close down the Ordnance Survey of Ireland in the late 1830s.<sup>1</sup> And several commentators on Irish affairs in this period believed that Orangemen were turning against the country's Celtic monuments. The journalist and cartoonist Watty Cox was much given to the use of visual and verbal hyperbole in his attacks on Ireland's English and Protestant rulers, but it is interesting that he chose to represent the "characteristic employment" of Orangemen in 1814 as an attack upon a Celtic cross (ill 150 ). And in 1843 it was reputedly "some drunken Orangemen" who broke off a small part of the stone cross in Clones, much to the disgust of the (presumably Protestant) agent of the local landlord, who felt it was as worthy of preservation as the Barbarinic (sic) vase.<sup>2</sup>

But it is significant that it was Irish Gothic, not Irish Celtic or Romanesque architecture which The Nation inspired J.J. McCarthy to revive. Gothic was the style in vogue in Britain, and McCarthy, like many Irish architects, still followed British fashions, because he felt that not enough was yet known about his country's native traditions of architecture.<sup>3</sup>

What was still lacking were accurate, mass-produced reproductions of Celtic art and architecture. The Nation carried no illustrations, and the few contemporary prints of Celtic antiquities like the Dublin Penny Journal wood-engravings (ill 136 ) were more remarkable for their romantic feeling than for the information they provided. This was the case even with the works of so painstaking a scholar as George Petrie. A striking instance is

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1. Sheehy, op cit, p. 20.
  2. O'Mordha, op cit, pp. 48-9.
  3. Sheehy, op cit, p. 69.



150. Orangemen attacking a Celtic cross/illustration in Watty Cox's Irish Magazine, Feb 1814, opp p:49/ copper-engraving/actual size/Queen's University Library, Belfast.

the painting of The Last Round of the Pilgrims at Clonmacnoise he prepared in the late 1830s, for reproduction as a print (ill 151 ) by the Royal Irish Art Union, an organisation loosely connected with the Young Ireland movement.<sup>1</sup> Although Petrie had made over three hundred drawings of the monuments at Clonmacnoise in 1818, and had painted an earlier version of this picture in 1828, in this print he subordinated accurate details to a generalised romanticism, in which the grouping of the monuments is altered in order to obtain a more dramatic effect. This was quite deliberate, as his accompanying letter to the Royal Irish Art Union makes plain.

"I trust also that it will be apparent that my aim was something beyond that of the ordinary class of portrait landscape, and, therefore, more difficult of attainment. It was my wish to produce an Irish picture somewhat historical in its object, and poetical in its sentiment - a landscape composed of several of the monuments characteristic of the past history of our country and which will soon cease to exist, and to connect with them the expression of human feelings equally belonging to our history, and which are destined to a similar extinction."<sup>2</sup>

This was the kind of vague nostalgia for the past which was also to be found in the poetical works of Thomas Moore.<sup>3</sup> It was indeed common throughout Europe, as the growing pace of the industrial revolution made people increasingly aware of the destruction of past traditions. For Celtic culture to inspire the Irish public to stronger feelings of nationalism, it was necessary that it be presented in images or writings which inspired greater pride in its distinctive achievements. Such

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1. See below, p. 689-690.  
 2. quoted Sheehy, *op cit*, p. 22.  
 3. See above, pp. 150-151.





151. George Petrie/Pilgrims at Clonmacnoise/ca 1838/  
watercolour/24 $\frac{3}{8}$  x 38 $\frac{1}{8}$  ins (67 x 98 cms)/National  
Gallery of Ireland/Photo: NGL.

images and writings were not provided by the Young Ireland movement, for various reasons. The artists to whom they turned for their imagery were not totally committed to Irish nationalism; the members of the movement did not have a single-minded interest in the Celtic tradition; and Irish industry had as yet neither the desire nor the capacity needed to produce accurate and impressive reproductions of Celtic artifacts.

Thus, when Frederic Burton designed the frontispiece to The Spirit of the Nation, a collection of writings from the Young Ireland newspaper published in 1845, he presented the movement with an assemblage of figures and ornament which he believed to be typical of the Celtic period. These included a hiberno-romanesque arch and some Celtic interlace (ill 152). But as with the Petrie print, the detail is generalised and the overall content more literary than visual. Moreover it was Burton's only design for the Young Ireland group, done out of friendship for its leading member, Thomas Davis, rather than from any political or artistic commitment of his own. He was a Unionist himself and seems to have been as interested in the ethnography of Germany as that of Ireland.<sup>1</sup>

Much the same was true of Petrie. He was certainly friendly towards the Young Irelanders - he knew Thomas Davis and both read and contributed to The Nation.<sup>2</sup> He also had links with earlier traditions of Irish nationalism, for his father, James Petrie, a miniature-painter, had carried out a number of portraits of the leaders of the rebellions in 1798 and 1803, such as Lord Edward Fitzgerald and Robert Emmet, a fact which

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1. Sheehy, op cit, p. 7 and pp. 41-3 and Cyril Barrett, "Irish Nationalism and Art 1800-1921", Studies, Dublin vol 64 no 256, Winter 1975, p. 404.

Slightly more accurate and detailed Celtic interlace and hiberno-romanesque ornament can be seen in Burton's frontispiece to the 1847 reprint of Leabhar na gCeart (The Book of Rights) a tenth century Gaelic manuscript. This is reproduced as the frontispiece to James Carty, Ireland from Grattan's parliament to the great famine (1783-1850), Fallon, Dublin 1952.

2. See Sheehy, op cit, p. 30.





152. Frederick Burton, engraved by Mrs. Carolyn Millar/  
Frontispiece to The Spirit of the Nation, illustrated  
in Cyril Barrett, "Irish Nationalism and Art,  
1800-1921", Studies, Dublin, Winter 1975, p.395.

made some suspect that he was in league with the United Irishmen and resulted in his being temporarily imprisoned. Indeed the young George Petrie is said to have witnessed the tears of Miss Curran on seeing his father's posthumous portrait of Emmet.<sup>1</sup> Yet he, like his father, was a Protestant and a loyalist and remained so throughout his lifetime. It is a tribute to his talent for friendship, his passionate scholarship, and his deep love for Ireland, that he nevertheless was on the best of terms with Catholic colleagues, (he even painted an altar-piece of the Crucifixion for the Roman Catholic chapel at Kinnegad), and that he had a far greater practical understanding than the highly nationalist and theoretical Young Irelanders, of both the need to bind together all classes of the Irish people, and of the means required to do it.

The political and artistic uncertainty of the Young Irelanders can be seen in the Repeal Association membership cards commissioned by them. The most elaborate of these features a glowing Irish harp, and a heap of trophies which includes a "Celtic" crown (ill 137 ).<sup>2</sup> But the remaining imagery is not in the least Celtic, consisting as it does of portrait heads of historic Irish leaders set in a Gothic framework. Indeed the Young Irelanders laid as much stress on the Anglo-Irish nationalism of the eighteenth century as the Celtic period, hoping that the volunteer and United Irish movements would continue to inspire Protestants and Catholics to unite in the fight for repeal of the Union. And when they did attempt to commit Irishmen at large to identification with pre-English traditions,

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1. Stokes, op cit, pp. 388-9, and Walter G. Strickland, A Dictionary of Irish Artists, Maunsel, Dublin, 2 vols, 1913, entry for George Petrie. On James Petrie's portraits see below, pp. 722-723.
  2. This crown was based on the cap-like object illustrated in the Dublin Penny Journal of 25 August 1832, which was described as an ancient Irish crown, made of gold, discovered in Co Tipperary in 1692.

by providing them with a supposedly Celtic "Milesian cap", shoddy workmanship and lack of general interest brought the scheme to nothing. The prototype, which was designed by Charles Gavan Duffy and the painter Henry McManus, and presented to Daniel O'Connell at the monster meeting at Mullaghmast in 1843, is a splendid green velvet affair with a border embroidered with gold shamrocks.<sup>1</sup> O'Connell was pleased to wear it, but it provoked damaging rumours in England that he had been offered and accepted the crown of Ireland.<sup>2</sup> And the mass-produced cap which, it was hoped, would replace articles of foreign manufacture on the heads of O'Connell's supporters, proved a most unsatisfactory object:

"in the fabric employed for common use - a sort of grey shoddy relieved by a feeble wreath of green shamrocks - it bore an awkward and fatal resemblance to a night-cap."<sup>3</sup>

Despite much advertising by various manufacturers in The Nation, it never became popular, except with Punch cartoonists.<sup>4</sup> Irish peasants preferred their serviceable if oft-ridiculed caubeens to this awkward albeit Celtic headgear.

Interest in Ireland's Celtic imagery had spread during this period, and there had been attempts to cultivate wider awareness of it, and to associate it with a sense of Irish nationalism. But these aims were difficult to achieve at a time when means of communication and reproduction

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1. It can be seen in the 1798 room of the National Museum in Dublin.
  2. Sheehy, op cit, pp. 38-9.
  3. Duffy, op cit, vol 1, pp. 170-171. The crown on which the cap was based was preserved in Trinity College, Dublin. Duffy's proposals and the development of the project are recorded in The Nation, Dublin, 5 Aug 1843, p. 681; 12 Aug 1843, p. 693 and p. 697, and 26 Aug 1843, p. 725. Another example of an adornment given to O'Connell is the sash presented to him at the time of the Clare election in 1828 and preserved at his home, Derrynane, in Co. Kerry. It has a fine repertoire of nationalist symbols (Hibernia with banner and harp, shining cross, wolfhound, O'Connell, red hand and shamrocks), but it was made in Glasgow by Alexander Grant.
  4. Advertisements for the cap can be found on the front pages of The Nation, 7 Oct 1843 and 27 Jan 1844.

were inadequate to bring the general population to a realisation of the importance of the Celtic tradition, and that tradition received as yet no firm validation from artists, the state, the Catholic church, or the outside world.

#### Dissemination and validation, 1850s - 1880s

It was only in the next stage of the Celtic revival, which lasted approximately from the 1850s to the 1880s, that the Irish public began to be at all familiar with the true splendours of their Celtic heritage. Only then could they see the original relics more openly displayed in exhibitions which could be easily reached by the first form of speedy mass transport, the railway. Only then could they realise, as they witnessed the impression made on foreigners by the masterpieces of Celtic art, that this heritage could raise their national status in the eyes of others. Only then could they appropriate this heritage to their own persons in the form of relatively accurate reproductions. And only then could they see it validated by the approval of the (British) State, and by incorporation in some of the popular artifacts associated with their religion.

In the 1830s the indefatigable George Petrie had already begun to reorganise the Royal Irish Academy's notable collection of antiquities. Now, in the mid-nineteenth century, such spectacular additions as the cross of Cong (1839), the 'Tara' brooch (1868) and the Ardagh chalice (1868), made both native and visitor aware of the richness of Ireland's Celtic heritage. Even Thomas Carlyle, whose comments on his Irish tour of 1849 were in general noticeably sour, praised the RIA collection as

"really an interesting Museum, for everything has a certain authenticity, as well as national and other significance, too often

wanting in such places."<sup>1</sup>

Indeed increasing State support for the collection reflected the (British) government's growing awareness of its importance. Following the Academy's move to its present premises in Dublin's Dawson Street in 1852, a new extension to accommodate the Museum and Library was built by the Office of Public Works in 1854, and in 1860 the Academy was granted the right to acquire all objects of antiquity found as treasure trove in Ireland. A poster bordered with engravings of such objects was prepared to encourage owners of new finds to make them known to the Academy. Official state preservation of the immovable relics of Ireland's past came a little later. When the Church of Ireland was disestablished in 1869, the ancient monuments formerly in its charge were placed in the care of a national monuments section set up in 1874, under the Commissioners of Public Works. All it was empowered to do was to make the repairs necessary to render buildings safe and prevent them from disintegration, but under the supervision of the architect T.N. Deane, this narrow brief was well fulfilled.<sup>2</sup>

Recognition of the importance of Ireland's artistic past was also made at this time by Britain's men of learning. In 1857 the British Association met in Dublin and the seventy members of its Ethnographical Section then made a trip to the Aran Isles to inspect the antiquities there.<sup>3</sup> Meanwhile English architects were studying early Irish buildings and ornament, and incorporating elements from them in their own designs.

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1. Thomas Carlyle, Reminiscences of my Irish Journey in 1849, Sampson, 1882, quoted in Sheehy, op cit, p. 17.
  2. Sheehy, op cit, p. 64.
  3. Sheehy, op cit, pp. 26-7.



Pugin, who did much work in Ireland in the 1840s, was particularly impressed by the native traditions and strongly critical of the failure of the Irish to revive them.

"If the clergy and gentry of Ireland possessed one spark of real national feeling, they would revive and restore those solemn piles of buildings which formerly covered that island of saints, and which are associated with the holiest and most honourable recollections of her history. Many of these indeed were rude and simple; but massive and solemn, they harmonized most perfectly with the wild and rocky localities in which they were erected. The real Irish ecclesiastical architecture might be revived at a considerably less cost than is now actually expended on the construction of monstrosities; and the ignorance and apathy of the clergy on this most important subject is truly deplorable."<sup>1</sup>

At the time of writing, this was a fair comment. But by the 1860s the native revival of early Irish architecture and ornament, particularly in ecclesiastical buildings, was well under way. Architects like Thomas Newenham Deane, J.J McCarthy and the Northerner W.H Lynn, both restored and imitated early Irish churches. Lynn's most interesting Celtic revival work is St Patrick's Church of Ireland church at Jordanstown, Co Antrim, built between 1865 and 1868. Although not entirely conforming to early Irish models, considerable care was taken over the accuracy of many of its details, notably the round tower belfry, whose form and position was adapted from the one on Teampul Finghin at Clonmacnoise.

The desire to return to early Irish forms in church buildings was not simply a matter of the whim of architects, although on the whole they

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1. A.W.N Pugin, An Apology for the Revival of Christian Architecture, J. Weale, 1843, p. 23, p. 13, quoted Sheehy, op cit, p. 63.

seem to have dictated the choice of style to their clients. At Jordanstown the brother of the clergyman was interested in Irish archaeology, and had some influence on the design of the new church. And it is clear from the booklet published for the inauguration of the building, that there was a desire to prove by the use of this early imagery the Church of Ireland's claim to earlier national traditions than the Church of Rome. The Irish saints such as St Patrick and St Brigid in the church's stained glass windows are described as having lived when "the Church of Ireland formed... no integral part of the Church of Rome."<sup>1</sup>

Roman Catholic apologists responded in kind. The Irish Catholic Directory of 1845 merged religious, nationalist and artistic aspirations.

"We hope yet to see the day when the zealous piety of the people, guided by educated taste, will once more cover the face of the 'Island of Saints' with structures that shall emulate the sacred splendour of the august fanes which were the boast of 'Cashel of the Kings' or of holy Mellifont, and whose ruins remain to attest the ruthless atrocity of our Saxon invaders."<sup>2</sup>

As yet however Roman Catholic churches did not return to early Irish sources. Various reasons for this can be put forward. In the first place there seems to have been a continuing tendency in the Catholic community to view the Gothic style so enthusiastically revived by many mid-nineteenth century architects, as the style of pre-Reformation, pre-plantation, Catholic Ireland. (There may have been an element of practicality in this. As Paul Larmour has pointed out, the small scale of the few surviving Irish Romanesque churches made them awkward models for the large-scale buildings

1. W.J Smythe, A Notice of St Patrick's Church, Jordanstown, printed privately 1868, quoted Sheehy, op cit, p.67. This account of the Jordanstown church is based on Sheehy, pp. 66-69 and Larmour, op cit.
2. Quoted Sheehy, op cit, p. 69.

needed to house Ireland's thronging congregations).<sup>1</sup>

In the second place native traditions of stone-cutting were so eroded,<sup>2</sup> that English carvers and stonemasons, like the father of the 1916 leader Patrick Pearse, flocked to Ireland to work on the new churches.

"Many of them set up their shops in Brunswick Street, (now Pearse Street), Dublin, and most of the men I worked with had served their time there. John Broe, Mark Barnes, Edgar Barnes, Louis Free, Harry Thompson, the Tomlins, the Smiths, James Walton, William Mervin, are names that bespeak their origin."<sup>3</sup> These men were trained in the Gothic Revival style so predominant in late nineteenth century England.

Thirdly, the taste of the Irish Roman Catholic clergy, most of whom had trained on the continent, was for the decorative styles of France and Belgium and Italy.<sup>4</sup> What this meant you can find out by reading the comments of the critics of The Nation on the ecclesiastical art shown in the Irish nineteenth century industrial exhibitions, or by walking into almost any Irish Catholic church decorated between 1850 and 1910, whether on the scale of Armagh Cathedral or St Malachy's Church in Belfast (ill 153 ). What you will see there will be Gothic taken to wedding-cake extremes, everything pierced and frilled, colour run riot in painted decorations, inlaid marble, mosaic and, later in the century, stained glass; pictures in the styles of the High Renaissance, large complex scenes of the life and death of Christ, full of noble, ponderous poses and rich sombre colour; and sculptures laden with intense emotion, whether the

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1. Larmour, op cit.

2. See above, p. 465.

3. Murphy, op cit, p. 5.

4. Paul Cullen, who headed the Catholic hierarchy in Ireland throughout this period, constantly emphasised the links between the Irish church and Rome, and replaced locally-known clergy, appointed through a system of nepotism, with scholars or monks who were strangers to their diocese or parish (Joseph Lee, The Modernisation of Irish Society, 1848-1918, Gill & Macmillan, Dublin, 1973, pp. 43-5.)





153. Thomas Jackson, Piccioni family, et al/Interior of St Malachy's Catholic Church, Belfast/ca 1844/Photo: B. Loftus

sensitive suffering of a marble Pieta by a fully-fledged artist, or the plaster pieties of mass/<sup>-produced</sup>figures of the Virgin and the Sacred Heart. Much of this imagery was imported from abroad; some was produced by foreign immigrants (such as the Piccione family, Catholic refugees from Austria, who provided the sub-Bassano Nativity scene in St Malachy's); and some by Irish artists who lived and worked in Europe, like the sculptor John Hogan, who spent much of his life in Rome (ills 50 & 58 ).

Fourthly it was the policy of the Catholic Church under the successive leadership of Dr. Crolly and Dr Cullen to place the basic needs of its members before aesthetic considerations. Chapels were built in large numbers, and many of them were lavishly decorated, but others, like the cathedral at Armagh, remained incomplete while the collections raised towards their construction were diverted to the relief of those suffering the impact of the Great Famine in the 1840s.

If Ireland's Catholic clergy were, for these various reasons, somewhat tardy in patronising the revival of early Irish art forms, her businessmen did much to foster their popular appreciation, both through their sponsorship of the industrial exhibitions which became as popular in Ireland as elsewhere at this time, and by their reproduction of the masterpieces of Celtic ornament.

The immediate stimulus for Irish industrial exhibitions was the Great Exhibition held in London in 1851 at which native products had made a poor show. Their more general context was

"the widely held belief that industrial exhibitions somehow caused economic growth. This idea was first made explicit in France at the end of the eighteenth century and subsequently it spread to other parts of Europe and North America through the exhibitions of machines and products held by mechanics' institutes and societies 'for the encouragement of

arts, manufactures, and industry,' such as the triennial series of exhibitions started by the Royal Dublin Society in the 1830s. The spectacular success of the first international exhibition in 1851 gave a great impetus to the exhibition movement, and in the second half of the century governments and groups of businessmen throughout the world held scores of exhibitions, largely prompted by the belief that they would bring economic benefits through increased tourism, greater trade and the exchange of information and ideas."<sup>1</sup>

The first such exhibition in Ireland was held at Cork from June till September 1852. Although attendances were relatively small, about 140,000 compared to the six million and more who visited the Great Exhibition, the enterprise must be accounted a successful venture for a country whose population and energies were still depleted by the impact of the Famine. The city of Cork thrived, exhibitors sold their wares, and visitors from outside the city appear to have been attracted in fairly considerable numbers. Of the 140,000 attending the exhibition 10,000 were local schoolchildren, but the remaining 130,000 exceeded the contemporary population of Cork by some 50,000. Even allowing for repeated visits by local inhabitants it seems likely that the exhibition attracted several thousand visitors, a supposition confirmed by A.C Davies' assessment of the increased activity in the city at this time.<sup>2</sup>

Davies also believes that railways and tourism were closely linked to the Dublin exhibition of 1853, in which Thomas Cook played a part, and that the exhibition's sponsor and underwriter William Dargan, may have regarded his loss as an investor necessary to generate railway

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1. A.C Davies, "The First Industrial Exhibition: Cork 1852", Irish Economic & Social History, Dundalk, vol 2, 1975, pp. 47-8.
  2. Ibid, p. 49 and pp. 58-9. and W.E. Vaughan and A.J. Fitzpatrick, Irish Historical Statistics, Population 1821-1971, Royal Irish Academy, Dublin, 1978, p. 32.

business.<sup>1</sup> Again the attendance figures are hard to break down, but suggest a fair number of outside visitors. The total of just under a million, spread over three months, was about four times the city's population at the time.<sup>2</sup> Approximately the same numbers attended the 1865 Dublin exhibition.<sup>3</sup>

These industrial exhibitions were not confined to the south of Ireland. Belfast had its own exhibition in 1852 which, while not strictly speaking industrial, demonstrated very well the multiple ways in which such events encouraged the growing awareness of the riches of Ireland's Celtic art. Titled The Collection of Antiquities and other objects illustrative of Irish History, it was organised by members of the Belfast Natural History and Philosophy Society, and displayed in their museum on the occasion of the 22nd meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science in Belfast. Many of the objects on display had only recently been discovered and something of the excitement they generated can be gathered from the following entry in the exhibition catalogue:

"20. The Bell of St Muran. A most remarkable object; it is incased in silver, elaborately ornamented, and set with precious stones. Found in the hut of a poor fisherman in Inishowen, Co Donegal, in September 1850."<sup>4</sup>

Also discovered in 1850 was the so-called Tara brooch, the most exquisite piece of Celtic jewellery which survives. The links between the Celtic

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1. Ibid, p. 49, note 14.

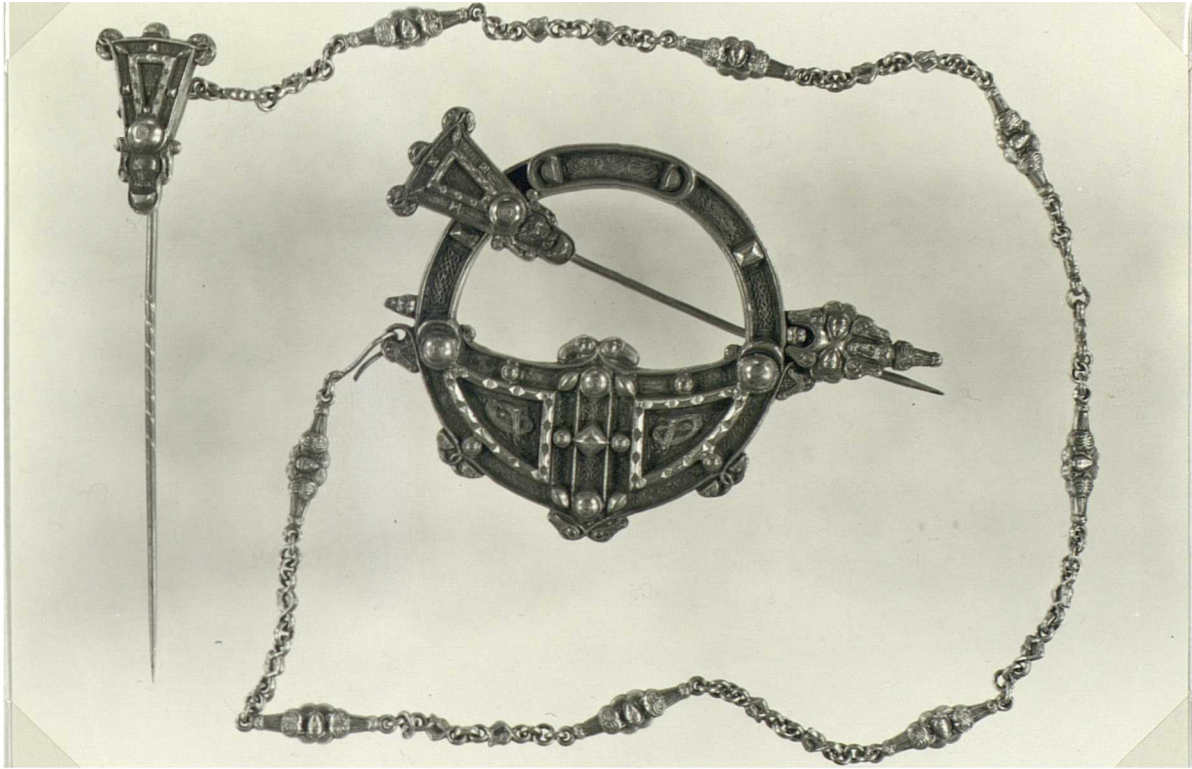
2. Mark Bence-Jones, "Ireland's Great Exhibition", Country Life, 15 March 1973, pp. 667-8 and Illustrated Record & Descriptive Catalogue of the 1865 Dublin Exhibition, p. 6.

3. Illustrated Record & Descriptive Catalogue, p. 556.

4. Descriptive Catalogue of the Collection of Antiquities and other objects illustrative of Irish History, exhibited in the Museum, Belfast, on the occasion of the 22nd Meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, September 1852, p. 24 and pp. 54-5.

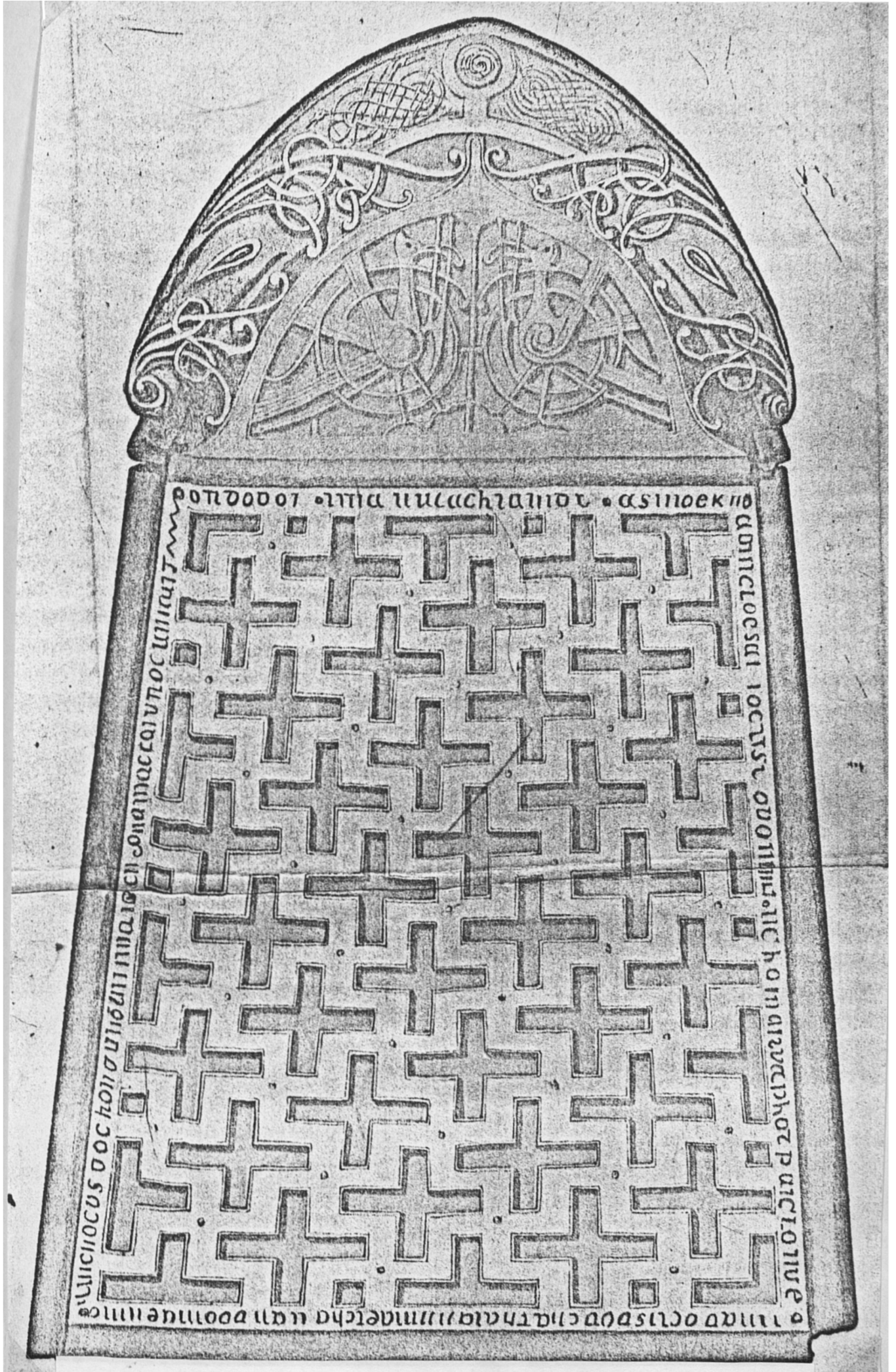
revival and Irish industry at this time are indicated by the fact that the brooch was lent by the Dublin jewellers Waterhouse & Co, who also displayed their copies of similar brooches owned by the Royal Irish Academy, which they had been manufacturing since 1842. Their subsequent replicas of the Tara brooch (ill 154 ) had an enormous success. Queen Victoria bought two copies and there were numerous imitations and adaptations.<sup>1</sup> Northern manufacturers were not to be outdone. The Belfast printers, Marcus Ward & Co, displayed five chromo-lithographs of the Bell of St Muran (ill 155 ),<sup>2</sup> showing off their expertise in a relatively new technique which made possible for the first time the widespread commercial exploitation of colour illustrations in books and journals. Only with the aid of colour was it really possible to begin to appreciate the beauties of Celtic art, particularly as displayed in manuscripts and metalwork, and in the 1850s and 1860s books and journals adorned with such lavishly produced illustrations played an important part in the development of Irish pride in the artifacts produced by their Celtic ancestors. George Petrie's Irish Ecclesiastical Architecture Anterior to the Anglo-Norman Invasion (1854), Sir William Wilde's Descriptive Catalogue of the Antiquities in the Museum of the Royal Irish Academy (1857-62), Henry O'Neill's The Most Interesting of the Sculptured High Crosses of Ancient Ireland (1857), Samuel Ferguson's The Cromlech of Howth (1861), and the first series of the Ulster Journal of Archaeology (1853-1862) were all publications of this kind which helped to generate both international and

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1. The Illustrated Record and Descriptive Catalogue of the 1865 Dublin Exhibition, pp. 283-5 and Sheehy, *op cit*, p. 87. Waterhouse & Co eventually donated the Tara brooch to the Royal Irish Academy in 1868.
  2. Five Chromo-Lithographic drawings representing an Irish Ecclesiastical Bell, Marcus Ward, Belfast, 1850. The preface to this publication states: "In presenting to the public the present work the publishers had two objects in view, first to bring under their notice one of the most ancient, curious and valuable reliques of Irish Antiquity at present in existence, by accurately drawn and coloured representations; and secondly to produce a specimen of Irish Lithography at once tasteful, elegant, useful and instructive..."



154. William Waterhouse/copy of the "Tara" brooch/  
ca 1850 - 1875/silver/diameter  $3\frac{1}{2}$  ins (6.9  
cms)/Ulster Museum/Photo: UM





155. Illustration of the Bell of St Muran/ca 1094-1105/  
in Five chromo-Lithographic drawings representing  
an Irish Ecclesiastical Bell, Marcus Ward, Belfast,  
1850/actual size/Linen Hall Library, Belfast.

local enthusiasm for the beauties of Celtic art.<sup>1</sup>

It is difficult to gauge precisely what sections of society were most caught up in this local enthusiasm. The opening issue of the Ulster Journal of Archaeology stressed that the taste for antiquarian studies

"exists in a much lower grade of society than would be anticipated. It is not by any means rare in Ulster, to meet with men in the humbler walks of life who possess considerable knowledge of historical and antiquarian lore. During the last twenty years, articles relating to matters of the kind, have appeared in local newspapers, from various quarters..."<sup>2</sup>

Judging by the lists of subscribers to the Journal however, it was landlords and businessmen who were now most active in promoting archaeological study. While they strove to encourage industrial development, they simultaneously recoiled from the loss of pre-industrial Irish culture which that development entailed. Robert S. McAdam, ceaseless campaigner for the Gaelic language, chief organiser of the Belfast exhibition of 1852 and financier-cum-editor of the UJA, wrote:

"We are on the eve of great changes. Society in Ulster seems to be breaking up. Old things and old notions are passing away so rapidly, that the events appear to be but the shifting scenes in the drama of a night. The retired glen, where lately the shepherd held undisputed sway, is now invaded by the Engineer with his army of railway excavators. Before long, the puffing and snorting Locomotive will rush wildly over the path where Fin MacCool followed the flying deer... We stand, as it were, at the threshold of a new social edifice, in process of erection and

1. See Etienne Rynne "The Revival of Irish Art in the late Nineteenth and early Twentieth Century", Topic, Washington, Pennsylvania, Fall 1972, p. 31.
2. Ulster Journal of Archaeology, 1st Series, vol 1, 1853 p. 7.

not yet completed; while around us lie scattered the ruins of the ancient structure fast hurrying to decay. Before these are altogether swept away, let us gather a few fragments."<sup>1</sup>

His words are given added interest if one knows that in 1835 he and John MacAdam set up the Soho Foundry in Townsend Street in Belfast.

However, men and women in humbler walks of life were also influenced by the new publications and industries associated with this phase of the revival of Celtic imagery. Henry O'Neill's book on the high crosses helped to stimulate the widespread reuse of this form for graveyard memorials. It was by no means the only source for these monuments. In some areas local carvers produced high crosses with religious and political scenes which perpetuated that charming primitive tombstone style kept tenuously alive by preceding generations.<sup>2</sup> And in Cork Seamus Murphy's stone-cutter friends thought that high cross monuments came in with the Fenians, and that the way was paved for them by crosses imported from Italy.<sup>3</sup> But undoubtedly it was O'Neill's publication which provided clear models for the bulk of the rapidly increasing output of these crosses. Indeed the manufacture of these monuments became a veritable industry, with substantial exports to England, America and Canada by the end of the century.<sup>4</sup> In Ireland high crosses were employed by both Protestants and Catholics, but were particularly favoured in the Catholic community, especially as memorials to parish priests.<sup>5</sup>

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1. Ibid, pp. 7-8.

2. Examples are the 1870 memorial to Fr Sheehy at Clogheen, and the Scully cross at Cashel. I am grateful to William Garner for information on these.

3. Murphy, op cit, pp. 201-2.

4. Sheehy, op cit, p. 73.

5. For evidence of early Protestant use of Celtic cross memorials see R.S.J. Clarke, Graveyard Inscriptions, Ulster-Scot Historical Society, Belfast, 1966, vol 2, p. 53 and vol 8, p. 92. Also Welch photographs WOI/54/25, WOI/67/13 and WOI/76/1. On the use of Celtic crosses for memorials to parish priests, see Murphy, op cit, p. 89.

What the redevelopment of the high cross form clearly demonstrates is the complex interplay of factors involved in the genesis of the concept of Celtic imagery as the Irish national style. Native stone-carving traditions, influenced by surviving Celtic monuments, and developed through work for the English and Scottish planters; improved archaeology and printing techniques, resulting in publications like O'Neill's book; and the development of industrial mass-production - all these contributed to a revival of Celtic imagery which was employed by Protestants and Catholics alike. But both at the time and subsequently, it was the Catholics who took the high cross form to themselves because of its traditional association with their religion, and its growing value as evidence of a pre-English, native culture. They did not merely use this image. They appropriated it.

#### Return to handcraft, 1890s-1921

In this process of appropriation art fashions as well as politics continued to play a part. Much of contemporary republican feeling for Celtic imagery centres around pride in its continuing use in hand-made, craft products, which are seen as a challenge to the mass-produced images of the British and the Ulster Protestants. This emphasis originated in the period between approximately 1880 and 1920, and was strongly endorsed again in the 1960s. At both times this was a development linked to the art fashions of the western world, as well as to local events in Ireland.

By the 1880s earlier enthusiasm for the revival of Celtic imagery by Irish industrialists was being replaced in certain quarters by profound unease. This changed attitude is particularly evident in the report on the Cork Industrial Exhibition of 1883.<sup>1</sup> This publication lamented Irish manufacturers' continuing taste for the national emblems

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1. 1883 Cork Industrial Exhibition, Report of the Executive Committee, Awards of Jurors and Statement of Accounts, Cork, 1886.

or Paddy and the Pig imagery, urged the employment of good Celtic designs, and commented on the general lack of a relationship between art and industry. To a large extent the criticisms were justified. Following their initial production of fairly accurate replicas of historic Celtic imagery, Irish manufacturers became half-hearted and slipshod in their use of this tradition. This becomes very apparent if one examines the output during this period of two Northern firms, the Belleek pottery in Co Fermanagh, and Sharman D. Neill's metalwork establishment in Belfast.

Although Belleek adopted a new trade-mark in 1891, in which a rather mean piece of Celtic interlace and lettering replaced the national emblems, those emblems still featured largely on their wares. Occasionally they were artistically revamped, as when an Art Nouveau emphasis was given to the sinuous locks of a harp-playing Hibernia, on a butter-plate of this period. Occasionally archaeological forms were combined with existing imagery, as in a shamrock flower-pot of about 1890 which is shaped in imitation of an Irish Bronze Age cauldron.<sup>1</sup> More characteristic however was the elaborate centrepiece, all harps and wolfhounds, designed for the Paris Exhibition of 1900 by Fred Slater from Stoke, the factory's modeller from 1894. It was not until the 1920s that a new series of embossed and printed Celtic designs were produced, by Madam Bereniuxs or Boroniuz, a Hungarian.<sup>2</sup>

The Belfast metalwork firm of Sharman D. Neill showed more enthusiasm for Celtic design, exhibiting for example a magnificent silver casket executed in "Opus Hibernicum" at the Belfast Art and Industrial Exhibition of 1895. Yet in the official catalogue of the same exhibition

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1. In the National Museum, Dublin. See Irish Art in the Nineteenth Century, p. 110.
  2. Sean McCrum, The Belleek Pottery, Ulster Museum, HMSO, Belfast, n.d. pp. 17-18, 212 and 58 and plate 37.

they were also advertising "Souvenir Spoons and Novelties. The Irishman, the Irishwoman, Pig, Wolf-Hound, Round Tower, Shamrock etc, etc, from 4/6 upwards. Irish Jewellery, Bog Oak (Gold Mtd) etc etc."<sup>1</sup>

In part however the comments made in the report on the 1883 Cork exhibition should be seen as a result of the influence of the Arts and Crafts movement, which was then sweeping Europe. This movement encouraged a retreat from the horrors of industrial mass-production to the 'honesty' of craft, not in the Protestant Ulster sense of trained skill and dexterity allied to machine techniques, but in the meaning given to it by William Morris of hand-made work, carried out with a respect for both materials and the dignity of the worker. It made a strong impact on James Brenan, head of Cork School of Art and one of the organisers of the 1883 exhibition. Brenan trained at South Kensington when Arts and Crafts theories were very much in fashion and was active in promoting them in Ireland, encouraging his students to help develop better, ie more "Irish" designs in the local handicraft industries of lace-making and wood-carving.<sup>2</sup>

Lily Yeats, another indefatigable supporter of the Celtic Revival, had even closer links with the Arts and Crafts movement, for in 1887 she was introduced by her brother, the poet William, to the Morris household. When she returned to Dublin in 1901 she joined the Dun Emer Industries, founded by Miss Evelyn Gleeson, where she conducted embroidery classes while her sister Elizabeth supervised the hand-press. Later the two sisters carried on this work under the name of the Cuala Industries. The

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1. Official Catalogue of the Belfast Art and Industrial Exhibition, held in Linen Hall and Grounds, open April 11th 1895, no 4566 and p. vii. Irish Bog Oak jewellery bulked large in this exhibition, alongside the more recently developed Connemara Marble jewellery and the new category of Souvenirs.
  2. 1883 Cork Exhibition, Report, pp. 274-5.



Dun Emer/Cuala products, which also included tapestries and carpets, attempted a bold, simplified development of Celtic motifs and of traditional religious subjects. Like the workshops founded by Morris they encountered endless financial problems.<sup>1</sup>

It is indeed easy to dismiss much of the Celtic craftwork produced in this period as the work of a self-conscious, middle-class elite, consumed by a small circle of equally middle-class admirers, and with little real impact on the bulk of Ireland's population. However its effect was greater than one might suppose. Hand-crafted Celtic imagery became part of the symbolism employed by both the leaders and the rank and file of the newly-revived Irish republican movement; it was presented to the general public in a wide range of exhibitions; it soon featured in the teaching of Irish art schools; it influenced the development of cottage industries in Ireland at this time; it affected Irish museums during the period when they were finally incorporated in the public apparatus of the state; and it was most effectively employed in the artifacts used by the Catholic Church.

While, as we have seen, the members of the newly-revived republican movement continued to employ such hackneyed symbols of Irish nationalism as the harp, or the colour green, every account of Irish political and cultural life during this period makes plain the close, personal links between those involved in the revival of Celtic craftwork and those who sought to achieve an independent Irish republic. To take but one example, when Patrick Pearse established his school, St Enda's, on the outskirts of Dublin, in order to rescue Irish youths from what he saw as

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1. Elizabeth Boyle, The Irish Flowerers, Ulster Folk Museum, Holywood & Institute of Irish Studies, Belfast, 1971, p. 76 and Irish Art 1900-1950, Rosc exhibition catalogue, Cork, 1975, p. 10 and p. 94.

the iniquities of the English education system, he was strongly supported in this venture by the leading lights in the Celtic craftwork revival. Jack Yeats and AE (George Russell) presented pictures to the school, and the northerner John Campbell provided illustrations to some of the books by Pearse which would have been familiar to the pupils. Pearse himself saw Irish nationalism as a continuous tradition rooted in the country's Celtic Christian past

"Irish nationality is an ancient spiritual tradition, one of the oldest and most august traditions in the world".<sup>1</sup>

This close involvement of the Celtic craftwork revival and Irish republicanism was not confined to a small elite of important artists and political leaders. Virtually all the political and semi-political organisations of Irish republicanism in this period adopted Celtic imagery. The Fianna, the republican boy-scout movement, initiated by Bulmer Hobson and developed by Countess Markievicz, employed the supposedly Celtic sunburst flag; the medals of the Gaelic Athletic Association were decorated with Celtic interlace; and the certificates awarded to students of Irish by the Gaelic League were similarly adorned.<sup>2</sup>

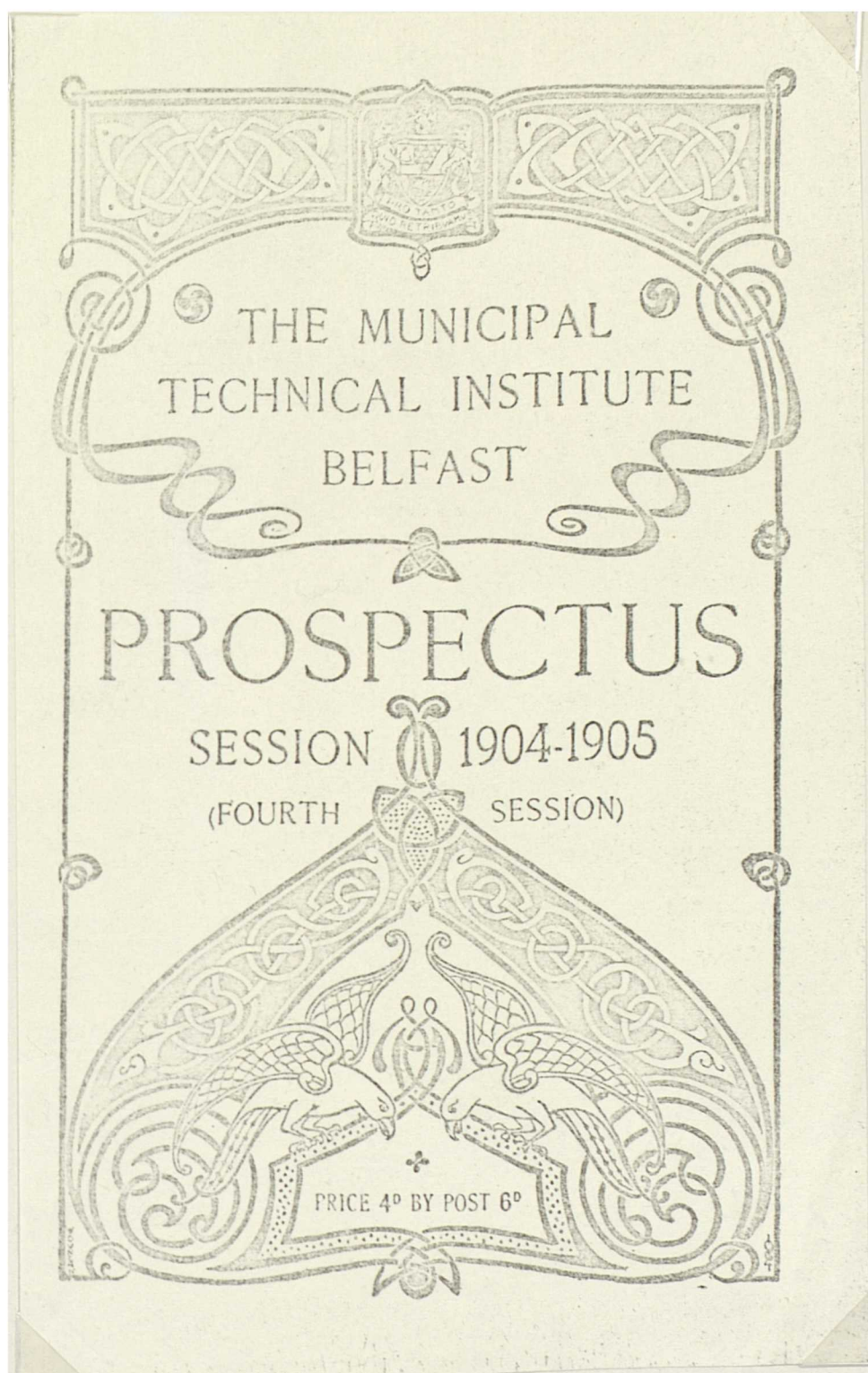
Meanwhile those who had no involvement with these organisations were also being confronted with Celtic craftwork imagery in a wide range of situations. To some extent the multiplicity of these contacts has been concealed by the vagaries of Irish historical evidence and research. It is only in recent years that the revival of Celtic visual imagery at the turn of the century has received anything like the scholarly attention lavished on the simultaneous literary revival. And it is only as a result of such research by people like Jeanne Sheehy, Cyril Barrett,

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1. "Ghosts", Political Writing and Speeches, Dublin, 1962, quoted in Mary C. Bromage, "Image of Nationhood", Éire-Ireland, Irish-American Cultural Institute, Minnesota, vol 3 no 3, Autumn 1968, pp. 11-26.
  2. I am grateful to Paul Kerrigan for showing me examples of these.

and Hilary Pyle, that the role of exhibitions in the visual revival is becoming apparent. Indeed, I suspect that the range and impact of such displays may still be underestimated, given the general lack of preservation of art exhibition catalogues in Ireland. Often one has to return to memoirs of the period or to the contemporary journals to recover information about events like the Irish Week held in the Ulster Hall in Belfast from 2-7 August 1909. At this exhibition the Belfast Municipal Technical Institute showed students' work; John Vinycomb his illuminations; Joseph Dempsey his designs, illuminations and lithographs; Robert Day of Belfast, his woodcarving and modelling; the Dun Emer Guild, hand-tufted rugs and carpets, tapestries, embroidered curtains, hand-bound books and painted articles; Youghal Art Metal Workers, hand-wrought articles of brass, gilding, metal and copper; Sharman D. Neill (with their usual lack of taste) Irish Spinning Wheels and Bog Oak Carvings; the Cuala Industries, Artistic Embroideries, hand-coloured prints of Irish life and hand-printed books; Miss E.K MacDermott of Belfast, Art and Craft Work; and the Irish Art Association, also of Belfast, wood, china and leather decorated with Celtic and Floral Designs.<sup>1</sup> This roll-call of names indicates the extent of the impact of the Celtic Revival in Northern Ireland during this period.

Some indication of what the students from the Belfast Technical College may have displayed at this time is obtainable from the college prospectuses (ill 156 ).<sup>2</sup> Between approximately 1904 and 1910 both the designwork illustrated and the covers, which were always the work of the students, show the strong influence of the Celtic craftwork revival.

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1. Exhibition of Irish Manufactures in the Ulster Halls, Belfast, 2-7 Aug 1909 (Irish Week), Catalogue and Daily Programme.
  2. The Celtic craftwork revival also influenced the Dublin School of Art where classes in stained glass under A.E. Child were initiated by 1903.



156. Cover of the Prospectus of the Municipal Technical Institute, Belfast, 1904-1905/actual size/Belfast College of Technology Library.

These designs also make plain the extent to which these young artists had their interest in Celtic imagery stimulated by the Art Nouveau movement which swept Europe in the 1890s. In their work, as in that of such leading figures in the revival as the stained glass artist Harry Clarke, it is often difficult to tell whether one is looking at a piece of Celtic interlace, or the whiplash tendrils and sinuous lines characteristic of Art Nouveau. Yet again international art fashion validated the return to native traditions.

It was a student at the Belfast College, John Campbell, whose black and white illustrations formed the most distinctive northern contribution to Celtic revival imagery of this period. In the pages of Ulad, the short-lived magazine launched by Bulmer Hobson's Ulster Theatre in November 1904, and in a number of collections of traditional songs and contemporary poems, he provided images of Celtic heroes, the men and women of '98 (ill 55 ) and romantic Irish peasants often surrounded by strongly handled Celtic interlace. These images with their bold use of black are exceedingly striking but can only have been seen by a very limited circle, judging by the relative scarcity of these publications.

However the Celtic revival craftwork of this period did permeate wider circles than those of republicans and art world enthusiasts. Moreover its impact was extended beyond these limited if influential groups, by virtue of its absorption into three main transmitters of public culture, museums, industry and religion.

It was during this period that national and local government bodies finally shouldered the responsibility for administering Ireland's major museums and for making their collections accessible to the general populace. In 1890 both the National Museum in Dublin and the Belfast Museum and Art Gallery opened their doors to the public. However it was

some time before either organisation made any adequate presentation to Irish visitors of their Celtic heritage. In Dublin internal and external criticism of the National Museum's low status, lack of finance, poor exhibition spaces, badly-organised displays and inadequate storage was soon the commonplace in Irish cultural life which it has remained to this day. And in Belfast local cultural activists such as F.J. Bigger and William Gray could be found protesting about the sale of local antiquities to the British Museum in the early years of the century.<sup>1</sup> Indeed Northern enthusiasts for Celtic imagery could as yet only see original exemplars of it displayed in occasional exhibitions such as the 1895 Belfast Art and Industrial Exhibition,<sup>2</sup> or in private collections such as that kept by Bigger in his ever-open Belfast home, Ardrigh.<sup>3</sup>

All this changed in the years between 1906 and the outbreak of the First World War. During this period the Museum collected Celtic artifacts, exhibited Celtic revival artwork and published information and comments on both. The change seems to have been due to the arrival of a new and energetic curator, Arthur Deane, in 1905. Certainly it was in 1906 that Irish Antiquities began to feature well amongst the museum's acquisitions,<sup>4</sup> and in the following year Deane's Quarterly Notes, published initially in the Belfast Evening Telegraph, then reprinted by the Museum, included frequent articles about and illustrations of Celtic objects, together with a short note on a piece of Celtic art illumination lent to the Museum by its designer, Joseph Dempsey.<sup>5</sup> By 1908-9 the publications also included postcards. These were chiefly bought by visitors to Belfast and amongst

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1. These included the bronze bell of Ballymena and copies from objects in Dublin collections such as the shrine of St Patrick's Bell, the Cavan Torc and the Dalriada Brooch.
  2. Official Catalogue, p. 295 ff.
  3. See the catalogue of the sale of the house's contents by Nicholl and Ross on 21 Sept 1927. The Linen Hall Library's copy is particularly interesting as it is annotated with comments on the lots and their purchasers.
  4. City of Belfast Public Library, 18th Annual Report, 1906, p. 20.
  5. Belfast Municipal Art Gallery and Museum, Quarterly Notes, no 5, March 1907.



the most popular was a photograph of the Museum's cast of the Monasterboice Cross.<sup>1</sup> The possibilities offered by the ornament on the Cross were spelled out by W.J Fennell in an article in Quarterly Notes in June 1909:<sup>2</sup>

"This form of Irish ornament knows no bounds and acknowledges no limits, either in its power of design, or in its application to any material or almost any subject. We see it in perfect harmony in carpets, tiles, table-cloths, piano backs, in needlework of all kinds, book covers, metal work, jewellery, etc, and where the spirit of art has been expressed, the effect has always been of the harmonious kind which true art alone can create. How far this spirit can be carried into modern work has been well shown in our local School of Art, under the guidance of its accomplished head master, Mr Dawson."

A year previously the Museum had received a more direct example of modern application of the High Cross tradition, in the shape of the Cross of the Gael, donated by F.J Bigger, and encompassing a bewildering variety of religious symbolism.<sup>3</sup> Further casts were acquired by the Museum in 1909-10, this time reproductions of the Cross of Cong, the Ardagh Chalice and the Tara brooch, and pamphlets about the Irish antiquities in the Museum were distributed during the Irish Week in Belfast in 1909.<sup>4</sup> However this gradual tribute to the Celtic past was not enough for some enthusiasts. In 1911 one Alec Wilson, in an address given in the Public Library, stressed the need for a local archaeological collection, and suggested that the museum should reconstruct the dwelling of a local Celtic chief. He believed this should include banners with the devices of such Ulster heroes as Finn MacCool - he instanced the Sun, the Red Hand and the Candle of Battle as

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1. City of Belfast Public Library, 20th Annual Report, 1908-9, p. 22.
  2. no 17, p. 11.
  3. Belfast Municipal Art Gallery and Museum, Quarterly Notes, no 9, June 1908.
  4. City of Belfast Public Library, 21st Annual Report, 1909-10, p. 26 and p. 30. On the Irish Week, see above, p. 496 .

suitable emblems - and would present concrete evidence of the existence of civilization in Ireland before the arrival of the Normans. Wilson also suggested a display on the history of Irish ornament, and that the museum entrance hall should house, "a great heroic-sized statue of Cuchulain" as a symbol of Ulster.<sup>1</sup>

For Ulster's rural inhabitants debates about the contents of the Belfast Museum must have been largely irrelevant, but even they were brought into contact with the Celtic craftwork revival during this period. Very occasionally the cottage industries which were widely promoted at this time made use of Celtic designs. Thus the "art-needlework" sponsored by Mrs Ernest Hart in Donegal following the potato failure of 1879, employed patterns taken from the Book of Kells and other early Irish manuscripts.<sup>2</sup> More importantly the Catholic Church made widespread use of Celtic revival craftwork for objects ranging from stained glass windows to altar plate and vestments. Not only did certain Catholic churches become veritable shrines of Celtic Revival imagery (Loughrea Cathedral and the Honan Hostel chapel in Cork are the leading examples), but craftwork in this idiom was scattered across Ireland, so that it became part of the environment of Catholic worshippers, even in fairly remote villages. In the chapel down the street from where I live, there is a very fine Celtic revival stained glass window, and there were others, until a parish priest in the inter-war years saw fit to cover them with Italian mosaics.<sup>3</sup>

It should by now be apparent that seeing, using or making Celtic revival craftwork were experiences shared by a fairly large proportion of

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1. Alec Wilson, The Scope and Value of an Irish Provincial Museum, an Address delivered to the Central Public Library on 8 Feb 1911, Belfast Museum and Art Gallery.
  2. See Diarmuid O'Muirithe, A Seat Behind the Coachman, Gill & Macmillan, Dublin, 1972, p. 177, and Boyle, op cit, p. 74.
  3. There is a useful list of Celtic Revival stained glass windows in James White and Michael Wynne, Irish Stained Glass, Gill, Dublin, 1963, pp. 50-69.

Irishmen and women in the period between approximately 1880 and the First World War. It is debatable however whether many amongst them, apart from a small number of ardent republicans, saw in these artifacts a nationalist challenge to British rule. Many of those who promoted and used them were Unionists and Protestants. F.J Bigger was a passionate sponsor of Celtic revival craftwork. He also edited the resuscitated Ulster Journal of Archaeology, attended Celtic festivals preceded by a piper, entertained the young people of Belfast to evenings of Irish poetry and music at Sean's Castle in Ardglass, and provided endless assistance to the cultural activities of his republican-minded friends.<sup>1</sup> Yet he was himself a Protestant and for all his sentimental Irish nationalism, seems to have been appalled by the 1916 rising.<sup>2</sup> Celtic ornament was used not only in Catholic churches of this period but also in the great hall of Belfast's Presbyterian Assembly's buildings completed in 1905. Celtic interlace appears on the corners of the damask design made at this time by young Bridgett of the firm of Orange banner painters (ill 92 ). Celtic illuminated addresses were presented not only to the republican Countess Markievicz but also to the Home Ruler, Joe Devlin and the Unionist leader, Carson.<sup>3</sup> And any reservations that were expressed about Celtic revival imagery at this time seem to have resulted from uneasiness about its airy-faery, slightly decadent aura, rather than opposition to its political connotations. Thus in 1905 the northern illustrator John Campbell wrote from Dublin to F.J Bigger

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1. Bulmer Hobson, Ireland Yesterday and Tomorrow, Anvil, Tralee, 1968, passim, and Jack Loudan, "Bagpipe Dances in the Glare of the Beacon Fires", Daily Express, 15 March 1934.
  2. Obituary in the Belfast Telegraph, 9 Dec 1926, p. 9 and leading article in The Irish Statesman, Dublin, 18 Dec 1926.
  3. The Markievicz address is preserved by the Irish Transport and General Workers Union in Liberty Hall, Dublin. The Joe Devlin address, which was presented to him by the Lisburn branch of the Ancient Order of Hibernians in 1908, is on display in the local history galleries of the Ulster Museum. The presentation to Carson of a copy of the Solemn League and Covenant" illuminated on vellum with a rich Celtic design" is recorded in T.M. Johnstone, Ulstermen: Their Fight for Fortune, Faith and Freedom, Belfast 1914, p. 44.

"I have been here now for a fortnight and am getting habituated to my work. Miss Gleeson asked me over last evening to Dun Emer and I saw there much to interest and much to educate. I don't think much of the Dublin philosophy: one would want a fez and a bhang-pipe to understand it."<sup>1</sup>

Yet Campbell had no reservations about illustrating works by Patrick Pearse such as his Poll an Phiobaire, published by the Gaelic League in 1906.

Indeed, even after the agreement of Westminster to Home Rule in 1912, and the republican Easter Rising in 1916, there was little Unionist or Protestant revulsion from the imagery of the Celtic craftwork revival on account of its association with a nationalism to be enforced by the English government, and a republicanism now seen to be militant and rebellious. It is true that R. Ponsonby Staples, an eccentric member of the Anglo-Irish aristocracy in Ulster who had previously advocated the introduction of Home Rule, drew a savage cartoon of Celtic nationalism's cult of the blood sacrifice (ill 157), which

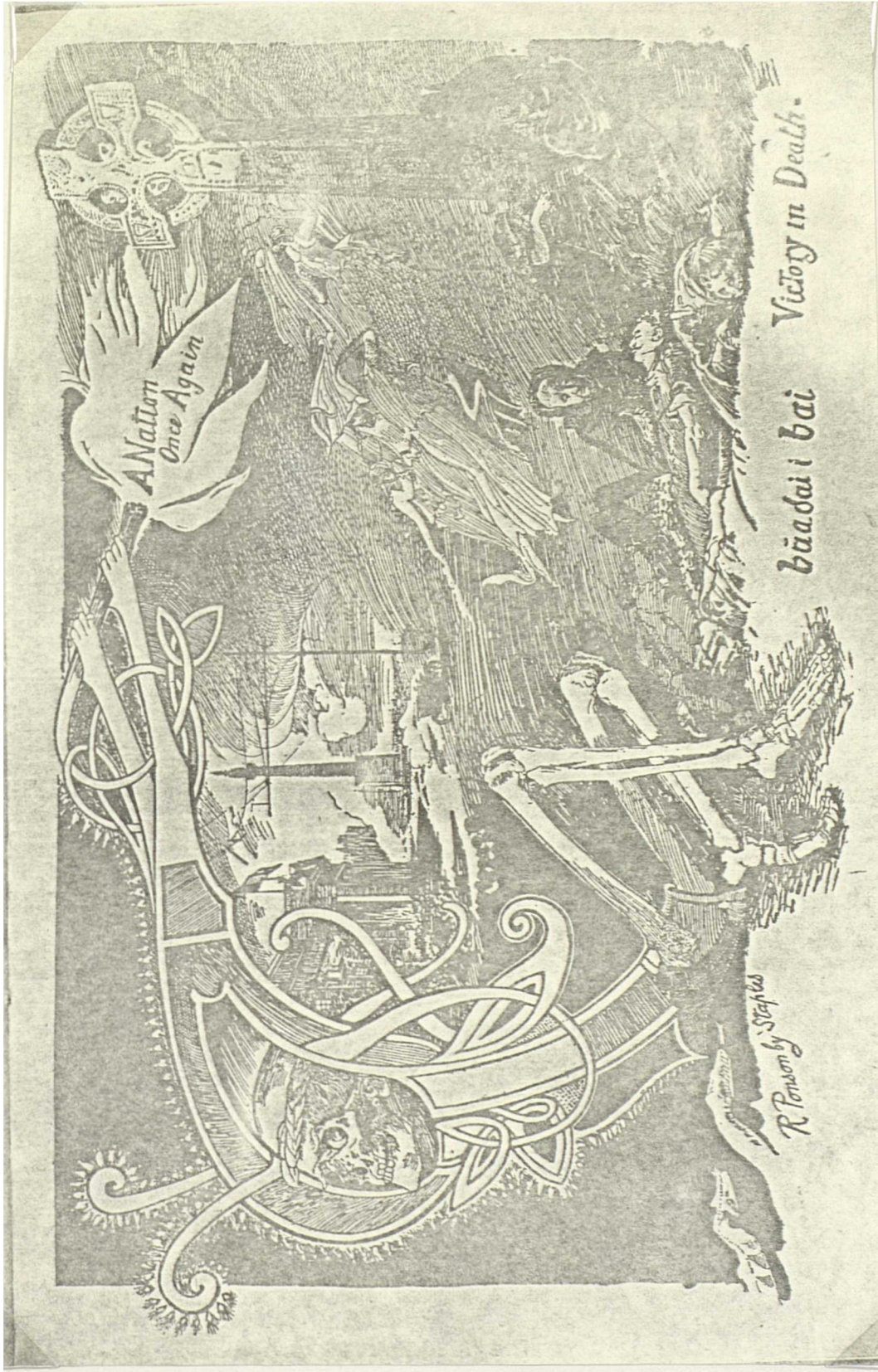
"had the distinguished honour of being considered too dangerous for publication by the late Irish government in Dublin Castle."<sup>2</sup>

Yet in strongly loyalist Hillsborough the memorial to the men who fell in the First World War employed the Celtic Cross format. Celtic imagery was still by no means completely appropriated to a separatist, national concept of Irish history.

#### State support? 1921-1968

Indeed, even after partition, international art fashions continued to have

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1. Letter in the Bigger collection in the Central Public Library in Belfast. Bhang is a word applied to both Indian hemp and hashish.
  2. R. Ponsonby Staples, Catalogue of Drawings and Paintings, Alpine Club, ca 1924. On Ponsonby Staples' political attitudes see the papers in PRONI T1988.



157. R. Ponsoby-Staples/Victory in Death/Caroon  
illustrated in Catalogue of Drawings & Paintings,  
Alpine Club, ca 1924/Linen Hall Library, Belfast.

as much almost/effect on the popularity of Celtic imagery as did political developments. The new Irish State did employ a certain amount of Celtic design in its official imagery, but between the 1930s and the 1950s, it turned, like state institutions and cultural groups throughout the Western World, to the traditions of classicism. Popular organisations like the Gaelic League and Irish dancing groups continued to use Celtic ornament, but it was only in the 1960s that there was a general revival in interest in such imagery, north and south of the Irish border, stimulated initially by international cultural fashions, and then fostered by political and social developments in Ireland.

Celtic imagery was not much used by Irish republicans in the immediate aftermath of the 1916 rising. Some of the posters commemorating its heroes carry a little, rather mean Celtic decoration,<sup>1</sup> but the majority of them concentrate on the photos of the dead men, or the semi-religious image of Ireland rising from the grave (ill 56 ).<sup>2</sup> In 1922 the Irish Government commissioned from Art O'Murnaghan the Book of the Resurrection as a Republican memorial and to celebrate independence, but it was never completed, although O'Murnaghan's decorations for it are undoubtedly some of the most superbly innovative reworkings of Celtic ornament that exist.

However Celtic imagery was employed for some of the official symbolism designed for the Irish Free State in the early years of its existence. In 1922 the first series of stamps issued by it included the

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1. See the posters in the Imperial War Museum, London.
  2. The posters carrying group photographs of the First Dail or Irish Parliament set up by Sinn Fein in 1919 also used borders of Celtic interlace.



supposedly Celtic "sword of light" emblem, and a Celtic high cross (ill 158).<sup>1</sup> This latter design was especially requested by Arthur Griffith, the original co-ordinator of the Sinn Fein movement which formed the vanguard of Irish republicanism from 1905, and first president of the new Irish state. It had previously been employed on a Sinn Fein label issued in 1907 (ill 159). Besides being used to raise funds it was sold at 2/6 a gross - this label had a propaganda function

"It is to make the sign of Irish nationhood to other Irish nations that this stamp was designed. It is fulfilling that design as the Finnish stamp some years ago fulfilled a like design in calling the attention of the world to the fact that Finland was no province of Russia but a nation despoiled but separate and distinct, asserting its individuality and defending its liberties against foreign despotism."<sup>2</sup>

Now, in 1922, the issuing of the real stamp turned the propaganda gesture into reality.

Also in 1922, the Garda (Police) crest, adapted by Herbert Painting from the design of John F. Maxwell, employed Celtic elements.<sup>3</sup> In 1924 the Tailteann Games medal was decorated with interlace; in 1925 a metalwork casket worked in the Celtic idiom by the talented Mia Cranwell was presented to the Irish Senate, to hold the original roll of the first Senate of the Irish Free State;<sup>4</sup> in 1929 the Official Handbook of Dublin Civic Week was adorned with designs by Art O'Murnaghan; and Murnaghan was called upon again for the brilliantly eccentric decorated cover of Saorstát Éireann, the handbook of the Irish Free State, published in 1932.<sup>5</sup> But despite proclamations of political leaders such

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1. Feldman, op cit, pp 14-15 and 73-4.

2. Quotation from a Sinn Fein newspaper of 1908, given in The "Sinn Fein" Revolt Illustrated, Hely, Dublin, n.d.

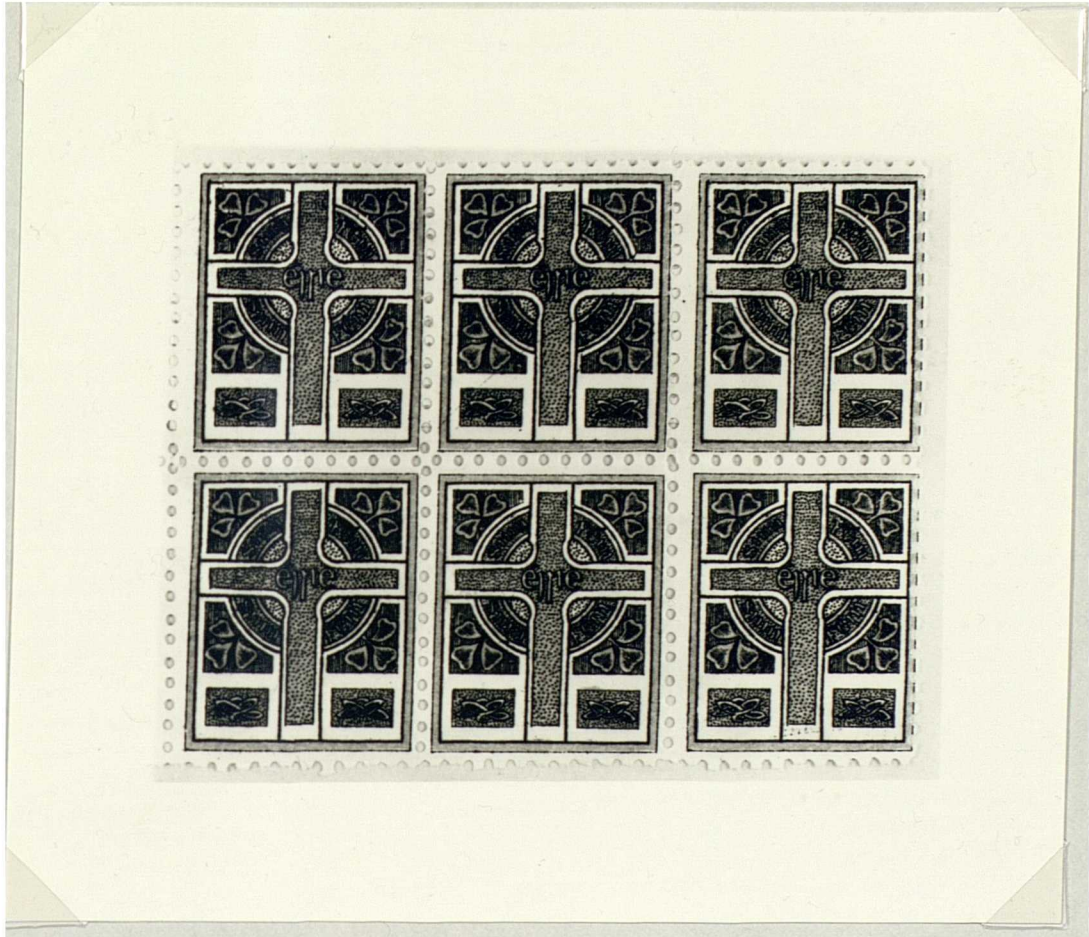
3. Letter from Gregory Allen to The Irish Times, Dublin, 21 July 1978, p. 9.

4. Sheehy, op cit, p. 169.

5. Talbot Press, Dublin.



158. Miss L. Williams/Stamp from the first permanent series issued by the Irish Free State between 1922 and 1937/1 x  $\frac{3}{4}$  ins (2.4 x 2.1 cms)/National Museum of Ireland/ Photo: NMI



159. Miss L Williams/Sinn Fein propaganda label/  
1907-1916/lithograph/1 x  $\frac{3}{4}$  ins (2.5 x 2.1  
cms)/National Museum of Ireland/Photo: NMI

as De Valera's

"We realize that our nation is an ancient nation."<sup>1</sup>

not all Celtic Revival artists found the new State sympathetic to their work. The window illustrating Irish authors, commissioned by the Irish government from the master of Celtic Revival stained glass, Harry Clarke, for installation in the International Labour Organisation building in Geneva, was eventually turned down by them. The reasons for this are obscure, although it was rumoured that the government ministers who viewed the completed work felt there was too much nudity in it.<sup>2</sup>

By the late 1920s international fashions also appear to have been affecting the decline in use of Celtic imagery by the Irish Free State. Thus the choice of animal designs for the coinage issued by the State in 1928 appears to have been inspired as much by the currency employed by Ancient Greeks, as by Ireland's status as a largely agricultural nation. The committee which ran the competition for the coinage designs was headed by W.B. Yeats, who was a leading figure in the Celtic literary revival, and intimate with those who led the Celtic craftwork movement. He was however deeply impressed by a fine coin showing a horse's head issued in the Greek colony of Sicily. Photographs of similar coins were sent to all the competitors.<sup>3</sup> It seems reasonable to surmise that this readiness to turn to classical rather than Celtic images was at least partly affected by the general convention that state symbols should aspire to the classical models provided by Greece and Rome, and the

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1. Éire, no place of publication, 11 Oct 1924, quoted Bromage, op cit, p.12.
  2. Nichola Gordon Bowe, Harry Clarke, exhibition catalogue, Douglas Hyde Gallery, Dublin, 1979, pp 123-4 and Oliver St John Gogarty, As I was going down Sackville Street, Sphere, 1968, p. 41. The window is now in the Municipal Gallery of Modern Art in Dublin.
  3. Brian Cleeve (ed) W.B. Yeats and the Designing of Ireland's Coinage Dolmen Press, Dublin, 1972.

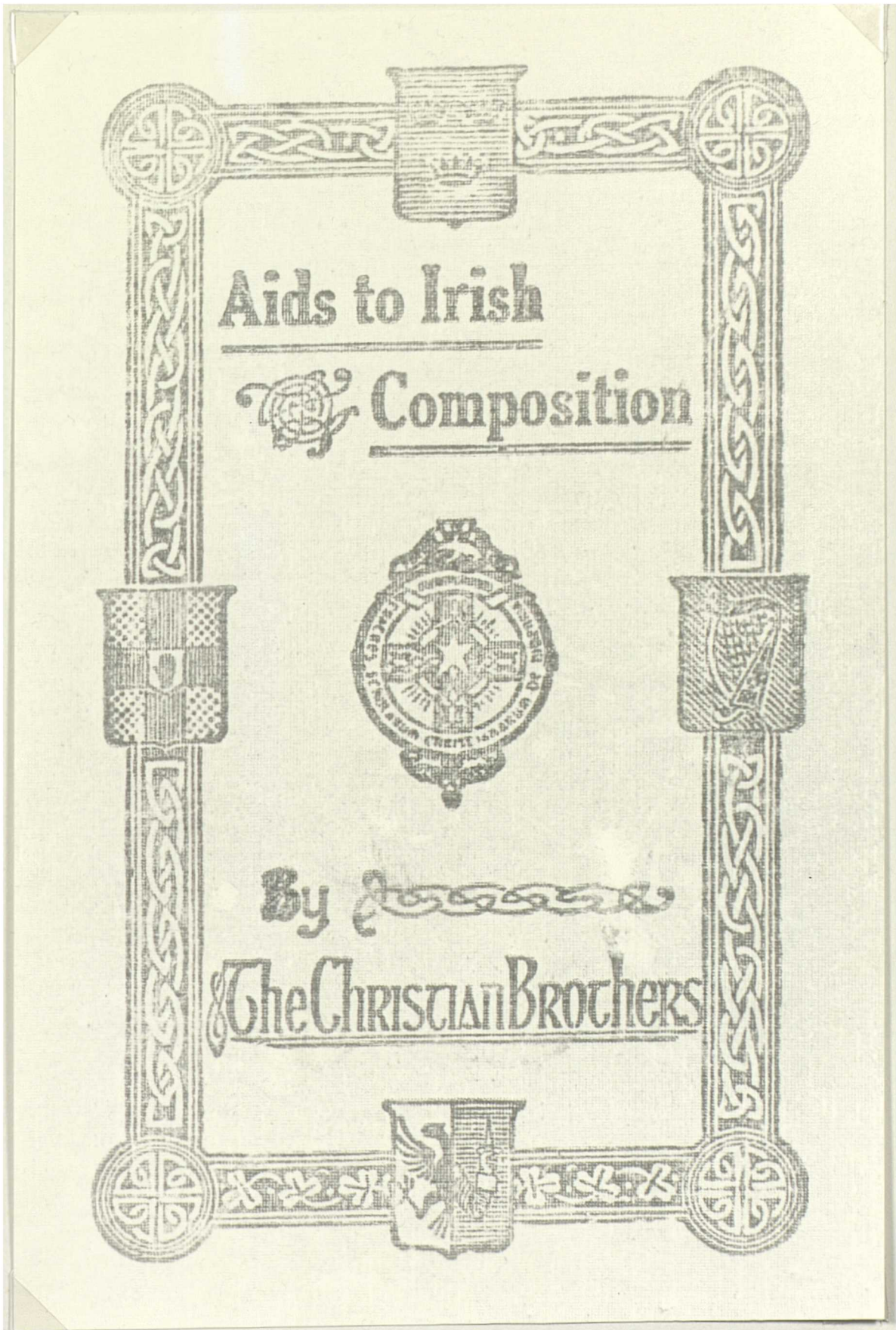
strong revival of classical culture taking place in Europe at this time.

Indeed from the 1930s to the 1960s Celtic imagery largely went out of fashion in Ireland. Only in the popular publications and emblems associated with organisations like the Gaelic League (ill 160 ), and Irish dancing associations, did this imagery remain in circulation. Thus when the Belfast Gaelic College was formally opened on St Patrick's Day in 1929 the decorations in the hall included an illuminated scroll bidding a 'Cead Mille Failte' and streamers adorned with artwork by that long-time devotee of the Celtic revival, Mr Joseph Dempsey.<sup>1</sup> And the costumes used by participants in the Irish dance movement which developed in this period were lavishly decorated with Celtic interlace (ill 161 ).

The revival of Celtic craftwork in the late 1960s, like previous revivals, was due as much to international as local factors. As in the mid-nineteenth century developments in colour printing had an important influence. Francoise Henry's scholarly works on Irish Celtic art, first published in the 1940s with boring if accurate black and white illustrations, were now made available, at a reasonable price, with superb colour plates, which revealed some of the splendours of the works they described.<sup>2</sup> They were followed by a number of other similar works, ranging in scale from relatively cheap publications like John Sharkey's Celtic Mysteries<sup>3</sup> to the Thames and Hudson facsimile reprint of pages from the Book of Kells in 1976. As in the mid-nineteenth century too, the marked increase in urbanisation and commercialisation in Europe during the 1960s led to a nostalgia for primitive culture. Ireland and its antiquities became once again a fashionable retreat for world weary artists and seekers after cultural truth, a development assisted by a period of relative affluence

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1. Irish News, Belfast, 18 March 1929, p. 5.
  2. Francoise Henry, Irish Art in the Early Christian Period (to 800 AD), Methuen, 1965; Irish Art during the Viking invasions (800-1020 AD), Methuen, 1967; and Irish Art in the Romanesque Period (1020-1170 AD), Methuen, 1970.
  3. Thames & Hudson, 1975.





160. Cover of Aids to Irish Composition by the Christian Brothers, M.H. Gill, Dublin, 1946/7 x 4<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> ins (17.8 x 12 cms)/Photo: Peter McGuinness.





161. Irish dancer/1982/Photo: Down Recorder.

and cheap travel. This process was also duplicated within Ireland. As the country's economy boomed, and an increasing section of the younger population was drawn from the country into the businesses of the Dublin area, they too began to value their rural and Celtic roots.

Seeing their Celtic relics so valued by outsiders the Irish also began to realise once again their potential for both commercial and political validation, at home and abroad. Irish craftwork, often looking to Celtic models for inspiration, began to enjoy a new boom. It was promoted both by local entrepreneurs and by the Irish state, which backed ventures like the Kilkenny Design workshops established in 1965. The Irish state also began to collect and display original Celtic artifacts as a means of national promotion, a process probably encouraged by increased national consciousness following the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the 1916 Rising. In 1967 there was hot competition between Northern Ireland and the Republic for acquisition of the Killymoon hoard of Celtic gold objects (it went to the Republic). In the same year the Rose 67 display of Celtic artifacts in Dublin made an enormous impression on local and foreign visitors alike. Irish art-critics were moved to the kind of paeans of nationalistic praise which can be found in the passage by Anthony Butler quoted at the beginning of this chapter.

And in 1977 a major exhibition of Celtic objects, titled The Treasures of Ireland, was sent to the United States for an eighteen-month tour. Both the exhibition organisers and the Minister for Education stressed its value in promoting an image in America that would counteract the current association of violence with Ireland.<sup>1</sup> When the exhibition returned home it was put on show in the National Museum.

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1. Caroline Walsh, "Art treasures to be shown in US", Irish Times, Dublin, 30 June 1977, p. 9.

Many of the objects in it had long been on view there but, possibly as a result of the vastly improved display, and possibly because of the attention given to the exhibition when it was in America, it now attracted enormous attendances. In 1980 the finding of the Derrynaflan chalice was also greeted with enormous publicity in the Irish press. The National Museum claimed that when the Treasures exhibition and the chalice were on display during the first six months of 1980, they attracted 100,000 more visitors than during the same period in the previous year.

Simultaneously the Irish state began to employ Celtic designs for its own official imagery. Both in the decimal coinage of 1971, and in the £1, £5 and £10 notes issued between 1976 and 1978, there has been a heavy emphasis on Ireland's Celtic heritage. While the silver decimal coinage retained some of the animals used in the 1926 Metcalfe designs, those chosen were the noble salmon, bull and snipe. Of these the two former have strong Celtic associations.<sup>1</sup> The lowly pig and hen were dropped from the copper coinage and replaced by designs reminiscent of the Book of Kells. Similarly, on the notes, heavy use was made of Celtic ornament from the Book of Kells and other manuscripts. In addition the figure of Lady Lavery as Mother Ireland (ill 60 ) was replaced on the £1 note by Queen Maeve (ill 162). These notes attracted much comment, mostly adverse, at the time of their issue. The grimness of the faces portrayed was the chief source of irritation, but there was also criticism of the apparent desire to retreat to the remote past, avoiding all reference to recent or contemporary Irish history.<sup>2</sup>

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1. In Celtic literature the salmon is the symbol of wisdom, while the bull plays a prominent rôle in the Ulster saga of the Tain bo Cuailnge.
  2. John Boland, "Nought out of ten", Hibernia, Dublin, 7 Sept 1978, p. 15, Liam de Paor, "A Look at the New Fiver", Irish Times, Dublin, 19 Oct 1976, p. 8; and "An Irishman's Diary", Irish Times, 29 Oct 1976, p. 11.





162. £1 note issued by the Irish Republic in 1976/actual size/Photo: Peter McGuinness.

Possibly as a result of this increase in information about and pride in Ireland's Celtic artifacts, possibly because of the increase in Irish nationalism following the fiftieth anniversary of the 1916 Rising, Irish artists and designers began once again to re-use Celtic imagery in their work. Oisín Kelly's monument for the Garden of Remembrance in Dublin's Parnell Square, unveiled in 1971, used the old Celtic myth of the Children of Lir for its theme (ill 163). And once again, younger artists found their taste for Celtic decoration confirmed by international art-fashion, this time the 1960s craze for the gyrating, twisting designs of psychedelia, which were often rooted in the Art Nouveau tradition, and as sympathetic to Celtic design as that earlier fashion. Jim Fitzpatrick's comic-strips, posters, books and record-sleeves depicting mythical Irish heroes and heroines in this style (ill 164 ) were particularly influential. Indeed during the early days of the present troubles in Northern Ireland, Fitzpatrick went on to design a number of posters for Sinn Féin in which this hyped-up Celtic style was used to depict republican heroes like Kevin Barry or MacCormac and O'Brien.<sup>1</sup> And his Celtic heroes and heroines were later transcribed by republican internees onto their craft products (ill 165 ).

The makers and users of these internee crafts turn to Celtic imagery as their own native, national tradition, not because it formed such a tradition from its early existence, and was then transmitted to them by a process of handing-down or rediscovery, but because it was constructed into such a tradition by successive generations of Irish men and women, drawn from very different walks of life, and motivated by a considerable

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1. In the Imperial War Museum, London, and the Linen Hall Library, Belfast.



163. Oisín Kelly/*The Children of Lir*/1966-1971/*The Garden of Remembrance, Parnell Square, Dublin*/bronze/Photo: Commissioners of Public Works; Ireland





164. Jim Fitzpatrick/Ériu, cover of *Celtia*, De Danann Press, Dublin, 1975/coloured photo-gravure/actual size





165. Republican internee crafts/1982/Falls Road, Belfast/  
Photo: B. Loftus.

variety of political, cultural, social and economic beliefs and interests. In this process of construction certain developments were crucial. In summary, they were:

the absorption of Celtic imagery by Christianity on its arrival in Ireland;

the growth of a general awareness of the craftsmanship of smaller Celtic artifacts, such as manuscripts and metalwork, which was made possible by developments in their exhibition, publication and reproduction;

the sense of a disappearing and valuable past, which came with various waves of industrial and commercial development;

the validation of Celtic imagery by the British and then the Irish state, the Catholic church, and various international art-fashions;

the appropriation of Celtic imagery to political ends by a small group of extreme nationalists and republicans;

and the growing awareness, shared principally by businessmen and politicians, but also common to a large section of the population, that the Celtic heritage was a means of raising Ireland's status in the eyes of outsiders, most particularly the English.

All these factors were present in the 1960s and it is doubtful whether without them the political revival of Celtic imagery in Northern Ireland in the early 1970s would have taken place. But that revival was also crucially related to the specific traditions of the republicans involved in Northern Ireland's present troubles, and the particular political and social situation which they found themselves as the result of that involvement. Their localised reworking and reappropriation of Celtic

imagery, of green emblems and of harp symbolism, their part in the construction of a tradition, will be described in the sections that follow.

#### Green displays since 1968

the various displays of green imagery To the outside observer relying on media reporting/in Northern Ireland may well appear to have become more republican and more militant since 1968. And that observer may well be tempted to see these developments as a general reflection of increased republicanism and militancy in the province's Catholic community during the past thirteen years, and particular evidence of the rise to power of the Provisional IRA in this same period. However on closer inspection the situation appears more complex.

Since the beginning of the present troubles republican symbols have become more popular amongst large sections of Northern Ireland's Catholic population, at the expense of traditional green imagery, but the use of those symbols has in some ways become less militant than before, particularly since the late 1970s. For the motivations leading people to employ the emblems of republicanism during this period have been various. For many, they continue to be a potent way of asserting one's political identity and of challenging those who deny it. For others they are a useful means of presenting a strong image of republicanism, both to Northern Ireland's Catholic community, and to the world media-men. Yet at the same time the use of these symbols can pose too high a risk to the security of active republicans. Employed too aggressively they will also deny the republican self-image of an unostentatious people opposed to the imperialist panoply of Britain. And such emblems can never entirely obliterate the simpler symbolism associated with the old St Patrick's Day traditions, the imagery of nineteenth century Irish nationalism, and the rituals of the Catholic Church.

It is certainly true that traditional green processions went into decline during the early years of the present troubles. Hibernian parades were abandoned altogether between 1969 and 1975. The Order was already much diminished (Richard Rose in his 1966-7 survey of attitudes in Northern Ireland found that 69% of the Catholics interviewed stated they did not know what the AOH stood for),<sup>1</sup> and it was felt that the move might help to reduce tension in the province. Since 1975 a few AOH parades have been held each year on St Patrick's Day and 15 August, but they have not attracted a large turnout. For the vast number of Northern Ireland Catholics who are not members of the AOH, it has remained customary to attend mass on St Patrick's day, wearing the shamrock. But it was only in 1977, after a long lapse, that they began to participate again in St Patrick's day processions in Belfast and a number of the province's major towns. Moreover their involvement remained far from enthusiastic, particularly when contrasted with the support given to the large and colourful parades mounted in Dublin during these years.

Not only have green processions declined since 1968. The republican flag-waving and demonstrations which they have tended to attract from the 1950s onwards have also become more noticeable. Thus in 1981 and 1982 several of the parades held by the Ancient Order of Hibernians were attended by tricolour-waving youths, who shouted republican slogans at the police and finally engaged in full-scale rioting.<sup>2</sup> Tricolours have also been displayed at the Belfast St Patrick's Day parades, and these have regularly included groups protesting on behalf of republican

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1. Richard Rose, Governing without Consensus, Faber, 1971, p. 260.
  2. See Andrew Pollak, "AOH marchers flee as police are stoned", The Irish Times, Dublin, 17 August 1981, p. 5 and "Battles flare after parades", News Letter, Belfast, 18 March 1982, p. 1.

prisoners (ill 117 ).

Indeed tricolours have been much in evidence during the past thirteen years. Some of the usages of them have been repetitions of well-established rituals. To see an Easter parade headed by the flag, or a republican coffin draped with it has been nothing new. There are also lengthy precedents for using the flag as a symbolic retaliation to Orange marches, as at Unity Flats on 12 July 1969;<sup>1</sup> or in Castlewellaan at the time of a loyalist parade in June 1981.<sup>2</sup> But it has been new to find the tricolour carried in the streets as a fighting flag,<sup>3</sup> repeatedly flown from houses and painted on walls in republican areas (ill 38 ),<sup>4</sup> and worn as a badge by youthful supporters of the republican movement.<sup>5</sup> While the availability of tricolour badges was due to Provisional Sinn Fein's readiness to market any kind of image with which they could win support and funds,<sup>6</sup> and their use was clearly related to the current badge-wearing craze amongst Western youth,<sup>7</sup> the increase in these previously little-known forms of tricolour display indicated that in certain areas during the past thirteen years there have been Northern Ireland Catholics who have been willing to identify publicly with republicanism in a far more assertive fashion than the sporadic, often semi-legitimised tricolour displays known in the province since partition.

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1. Deutsch and Magowan, op cit, vol 1, p. 34.
  2. "Police arrests after tricolour appears at loyalist parade", Down Recorder, 14 Jan 1982, p. 11.
  3. A typical photo of rioters waving a tricolour at soldiers is in the Provisionals' newsheet Republican News, Belfast, 16 Aug 1975, p. 1. For use of the tricolour in the Belfast riots of August 1969 see above, p. 336.
  4. eg in the Catholic areas of Derry, in Ballymurphy in West Belfast, in Newry and in Crossmaglen.
  5. Frank Burton, in The Politics of Legitimacy, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978, p. 61, describes tricolour badges as being widely worn by youths in the "Anno" area of Belfast in 1973-4.
  6. The Republican News for Dec 1970 - Jan 1971 claimed that tricolour badges were on sale in Ballymurphy.
  7. See above, p. 340.



Moreover since 1968 tricolours have been used in these areas to appropriate government property to an extent never previously known. Kerb-stones, phone-boxes and post-boxes have all been decorated in this way. One might attribute this paintwork to imitation of a long-existing loyalist tradition,<sup>1</sup> or to the general urge of the graffiti artist to desecrate these kinds of objects because they are easily available symbols of public order, attacks on which break none of the strong taboos on violation of private property, taboos which may well be reinforced by fear of private anger and vengeance. That some element of this generalised youthful urge is involved seems to emerge from criticism of such tricolour graffiti by older and often more middle-class republican leaders. (In issue no 7 of Tattler, the newsheet of Ballymurphy's Provisional Sinn Fein in the early 1970s, an article entitled "Our Pavement Artists" was strongly critical of this practice on the grounds that it degraded the national flag, and Maire Drumm told me early in 1974 that she was strongly opposed to such paintings, felt they were sectarian, and would certainly not allow her house to be disfigured in this way.)

However other related incidents seem to indicate a more general desire to appropriate public property to a proposed Irish Republic. The sporadic hoisting of the tricolour over the public library in the Falls Road<sup>2</sup> is a typical example. It appears to be closely related to memories of the flags raised over public buildings in Dublin at the time of the Easter Rising in 1916, most particularly the tricolour flown over the GPO, after it was commandeered by the rebels as their headquarters. As the library building is next door to the Provisional Sinn Fein's

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1. See above, pp. 304-305.

2. See for example "Symbol of Resistance" and "Flying the Flag" in An Phoblacht/Republican News, Dublin, 20 Sept 1980, p. 1 and p. 2.

Belfast office it is an appropriate as well as a convenient contemporary substitute for the GPO.

The way in which the tricolour and other Irish flags have been carried at republican Easter parades since 1968 may also appear more militant than was customary previous to the present troubles. And indeed, both the Provisional and the Official IRA have sought from 1970 onwards to impress their supporters and the world-media with a smartly turned-out paramilitary colour party and guard of honour (ill 115 ), and a volley of shots over the republican graves in Milltown Cemetery. It seems however that it was the Official IRA rather than the Provisionals who started the process of stepping up the military appearance of their Easter parades, with the darkgreen battle dress tunics worn by their colour party at the Derry demonstration in 1970.<sup>1</sup> And by the mid-1970s both republican factions were modifying the use of military imagery in their parades, although for somewhat different reasons.

From 1975 the Official IRA have ceased to parade at Easter. Their political wing, the Republican Clubs/Workers Party, have continued to commemorate the men who died for Ireland, but they have been headed by a civilian colour party, have abandoned the military ceremony of firing a gun salute over the graves, and lay personal not official wreaths.<sup>2</sup> And even the Provisionals have reduced some of the military elements in their commemorations in recent years. Since the mid-1970s they have abandoned their previous practice of marching in formation by organisations and areas, because it provided the security forces with too much information.<sup>3</sup>

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1. "Violent scenes in Derry and Lurgan", "Hour separates 'rival' Republican parades", Irish News, Belfast, 30 March 1970, p. 1 and p. 5.
  2. Conversation with Brendan Heaney, 20 May 1982.
  3. Conversation with Tom Hartley, 29 April 1982.

Moreover members of Provisional Sinn Fein repeatedly emphasise that there is no such thing as an IRA uniform, that it is created only for occasions such as Easter parades and funerals, and that military regalia is something alien to Irish Catholics, who see it as part of an elitist British tradition. Indeed this claim is readily endorsed by the nature of the Easter parades. Apart from the colour party, the guard of honour and the generally not very numerous bands, the vast majority of those attending display little more than a single emblem. This is generally a paper Easter lily (ill 116), mass-produced in the Republic of Ireland.<sup>1</sup> Acquiring and wearing the lily is a serious business. On both sides of the border sellers and wearers of it have frequently been fined or imprisoned, for contravening regulations about street sales, or committing an act likely to lead to a breach of the peace.<sup>2</sup> And the style in which an Easter lily is worn tells the viewer whether its owner is a supporter of the Officials or the Provisionals. When in 1969 the republican movement split into two separate wings, the Officials chose to stick the lily to the coat lapel, while the Provisionals opted to use a pin. The Officials continue to be known as "Stickies" or "Sticks" to this day, though an attempt by them to have the Provisionals called "Pinheads" never caught on.<sup>3</sup>

Yet the Easter lily also recalls older, less militant traditions shared by all Northern Ireland Catholics. It has a religious association with the feast of the Resurrection, and is highly reminiscent of the simple personal emblems worn or carried by all Roman Catholics on other religious feast days, such as the ashes of Ash Wednesday or the palms of

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1. See the advertisement in Republican News, Belfast, 22 March 1975, p. 2.
  2. James Bowyer-Bell, The secret army: a history of the IRA, MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass, 1974, p. 121 and p. 347, and "Fined £10 for selling lilies", An Phoblacht, Dublin, 6 July 1977 p. 3.
  3. Note on "Rusty Guns" in Jim McCorry, Sam Smyth and Marion White, love orange love green, Whitcor Publications, Belfast, n.d., ca 1974.

Palm Sunday, or indeed the shamrock of St Patrick's day. Like them it is an emblem of commitment to a single, simple belief, shared by all, regardless of their worldly status. And it also recalls the simple green ribbons or rosettes, worn by nineteenth century Irish Catholics to symbolise their identification with Irish nationalism. Indeed such images can still be seen emerging in the Easter parades. Many of those attending will wear as well as their lily a green or tricolour rosette on which a religious image is often depicted (ill 116). The imagery employed in the processions of Northern Ireland's Catholic community since 1968 derive from wide layers of historical action and interaction as well as from specific, narrow symbolic traditions and the pressure of political events during the past thirteen years.

It is in fact a curious irony that whereas Northern Ireland Protestants attribute a passion for regalia and imagery to the province's Catholic population, it is they, rather than the Catholics, who exhibit the most elaborate display of symbolism in their public parades. That this is the case is partly due to the constant attacks on green imagery by Northern Ireland Protestants during the past two centuries. Because of this, much of the traditional political symbolism of the province's Catholics is to be found not in their public parades, but within the privacy of their homes.

#### Internee Traditions

If you walk into a house belonging to a Northern Ireland Catholic who supports the republican cause, you will almost invariably find scattered around it some of the craft products made by internees and prisoners since the beginning of the present troubles. Most likely there will be a carved wooden harp or a painted handkerchief (ills 118 & 119), lovingly

displayed, and members of the household may own pieces of decorated leatherwork, such as a belt or purse or bag.

In these republican internee crafts the harp and Celtic interlace have been the two most popular kinds of imagery. Other symbols have been employed, such as Mother Ireland, Roisin Dubh (the little red rose), the Phoenix, the heroes of 1916, chained hands, barbed wire hearts, prison hut interiors, guns and gunmen. But the harp and the Celtic interlace are definitely the most popular.

The style of republican internee crafts is almost as important to their makers as their symbolism. Whereas loyalists take a pride in the almost industrial neatness of their internee products<sup>1</sup>, republicans emphasise the hand-crafted nature of their work. A former internee stressed to me the difference between the mass-produced items made for sale by organisations like Green Cross, for which a certain amount of division of labour was usual<sup>2</sup> and the personalised, lovingly-made presents for the immediate family and close friends. And in the home of another ex-internee, the pieces of craftwork made for his mother were tellingly juxtaposed, not only with the prizes won by various members of the family and pieces of brassware and Capi de Monte figures, but also with traditional examples of Irish craftwork, such as cut-glass and Belleek pottery (ill 165 ). It remains true that, as the long years of internment passed, the work of republicans acquired an increasing technical refinement which brought it very close to the output of loyalist internees. Thus in this home there was a very marked difference between the crude model piano produced by the internee during the early part of his five

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1. See above, pp. 369-374.

2. "The artistic ones drew the designs, the handy ones made things up, and the hopeless ones just painted on decorations." (Conversation with ex-internee, 4 March 1982).

years of internment, and the painted glass pieces he made with such painstaking care just before his release. Nevertheless the terms in which this progressive refinement is discussed reveals a very different sense of cultural tradition from that to be found amongst loyalist internees. One young man who was in Long Kesh for six months in 1972 described it as like living a monastic life, with the time to concentrate on what one was doing.<sup>1</sup>

Clearly the makers of republican internee crafts have seen their work as a continuation of the traditions of nationalist and republican imagery described in this chapter. Their harps are national symbols of Ireland, often accompanied by the slogan "Irish freedom", their Celtic decoration is part of "a political culture", their stress on handicraft and monastic devotion harks back both to the scribes adorning illuminated manuscripts like the Book of Kells,<sup>and</sup> to the craftwork revival of Celtic design at the beginning of this century. But their use of these images and stylistic approaches are also conditioned by strong local traditions, and by the functions served by internee crafts during the present troubles.

When internment was introduced in Northern Ireland in August 1971 it instantly revived memories for the province's Catholic population. This was a government weapon which had been frequently used against Irish republicans by Britain, the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland since 1916.<sup>2</sup> It carried cultural and practical traditions. The early internees, who included many men from Northern Ireland, had whiled away their time producing craft items, which both expressed their republican sentiments, and formed suitably symbolic gifts for relatives and friends in the

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1. Conversation on 1 April 1982.

2. See John McGuffin, Internment, Anvil, Tralee, 1973.



outside world. Their output included Christmas cards covered with Celtic interlace twined round swords and tricolours,<sup>1</sup> "Tara" brooches cast from lead stolen from laundry pipes, or, during a riot, the prison roof,<sup>2</sup> bones carved in the shape of a Celtic cross or harp (ill 166 )<sup>3</sup> and handkerchiefs painted with such emblems as the harp and shamrocks (ill 140 ), the tricolour, or the heart and arrows and cross, a form of popular art probably imitating the work of British soldiers during the First World War.<sup>4</sup> It was not long before this kind of material was being produced commercially as well, in order to raise funds for internees and prisoners and their dependants.<sup>5</sup>

When internment was in effect reintroduced in Northern Ireland in 1971 the return to these craft traditions was at once easy, culturally appropriate and practically feasible. Many of the objects produced by Northern Ireland internees in the 1940s and 1950s were still on display in Catholic homes in the province; a number of their makers were included amongst the new batches of internees and prisoners; it was also possible to see some of the earlier republican internee crafts enshrined in the 1916 room of the National Museum of Ireland in Dublin from 1966 onwards; and a former employee of that museum told me that he supplied pictures of 1916 material to the new republican internees. It was therefore both

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1. See the Sinn Fein Christmas card for 1917 in the 1916 room of the National Museum.
  2. The National Museum of Ireland in Dublin has a "Tara" brooch cast from lead from the roof gutters of Belfast Gaol in 1918, on the reverse of which is inscribed "A Souvenir of the siege in Belfast Gaol, Christmas Week, 1918, S.O Muineacháin." (EW 1712). The Museum also has two "Tara" brooches and a harp brooch cast by Liam Shaw from the lead piping of the prison laundry (EW 36).
  3. On display in the 1916 room of the National Museum. The cross was carved from a meatbone by a prisoner in Frongoch internment camp in Wales in 1916 (EW 174) and the harp (ill 166 ) by the Belfast man Sean O'Neill during his internment in Ballykinlar, Co Down, probably in 1921, "with a broken pen knife, a nail and some patience". (EW 194)
  4. Besides the example illustrated here, The National Museum has a Maryborough (Portlaoise) handkerchief of 1921 painted with the tricolour, heart pierced by crossed arrows, harp and cross. Handkerchiefs painted or embroidered by British soldiers for their sweethearts during the First World War are preserved in the Imperial War Museum in London.
  5. There was a Green Cross fund in operation in 1942. See Farrell, op cit n. 170.



166. Sean O'Neill/Harp carved in Ballykinlar prison camp, ca 1921/Bone/ $13\frac{1}{4}$  x  $7\frac{7}{8}$  ins (33.5 x 20 cms)/National Museum of Ireland/Photo: NMI.

practically and emotionally easy for republican internees to produce their craftwork. And indeed some of their products have borne a very close resemblance to earlier work of this kind (ills 118 and 119).

This is not to deny the impact of the wider developments described above. The publications of the 1960s and 1970s have for example been used by these internees. Several of them mentioned to me that they had consulted a black and white book on Celtic design, which was most likely George Bain's Celtic Art: The Methods of Construction, reissued by MacLellan in 1972. And clearly Jim Fitzpatrick's books and posters were influential.

Local traditions have been of major importance however, and so have the local functions performed by republican internee crafts in Northern Ireland during the present troubles. These crafts have been made for three different kinds of recipient. The earliest pieces were intended as gifts for relatives and friends, indeed a significant proportion have continued to be made with this purpose in mind. A certain number of them have also been donated to individuals and groups supporting the republican cause, whether in Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland, Britain or the USA.<sup>1</sup> And the vast majority have been produced for sale, the profits going to aid prisoners' relatives and provide capital for businesses employing ex-prisoners and internees. Thus in the early 1970s a group of Provisional internees from Andersonstown succeeded in raising £3,000 in three months with their craftwork. This provided the initial capital for the Andersonstown Co-Operative, which eventually included a number of businesses employing ex-internees.<sup>2</sup> It is doubtful however whether the

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1. See "Irish Resistance Travels to Detroit", Loyalist News, Belfast, Belfast, 6 Oct 1973.

2. Barry White, "From the Kesh to the Co-op", Belfast Telegraph, 30 June 1976, p. 12.

funds realised by internee crafts have been of much assistance in the support of prisoners' relatives. Green Cross 73, the leading organisation providing financial aid to relatives of Provisional prisoners and internees, paid out over £1m to them between 1973 and 1978, which appears to have been largely raised by door-to-door collections and overseas donations.<sup>1</sup> And a source in Provisional Sinn Fein described the funds raised by sale of internee crafts as "minimal. Nevertheless the quantity of internee craftwork produced for this purpose must have been considerable, for Tim Pat Coogan claims that one of the concessions granted to Long Kesh's republican compound prisoners (as opposed to those in the H-blocks) by the British Government in 1975, and still in force at the time he was writing, was

"full tool kits and work benches for the making of handicrafts for the Green Cross and Irish Republican Prisoners Welfare Committee, and the right to ship these handicrafts in bulk - a van load at a time - to the outside."<sup>2</sup>

This argues a fairly considerable output. The ways in which internee crafts have been appropriated by their owners is as significant for the construction of tradition as the intentions with which they have been made. Some have employed them as a form of identification with specific political aims in Northern Ireland's Catholic community. When Gerry Fitt accepted a gift of a Long Kesh harp in 1973<sup>3</sup> he did so as a man strongly opposed to internment but also to militant republicanism. Others have used the crafts owned by them to publicly challenge the republican cause by display

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1. "One Million Pounds paid out in 5 years", An Phoblacht/Republican News, 27 Jan 1979, p. 4.

2. Tim Pat Coogan, On the Blanket, Ward River Press, Dublin 1980, p. 61.

3. The Times, 28 Nov 1973.

in a front window or on the street. Most have kept them within their homes as symbols of private identification with a relative or friend.

Yet these private displays have also expressed communal identity. In some strongly republican areas of Belfast, by the latter years of the troubles virtually every street had seen at least one man "lifted", and if those men made craftwork presents for the usual number of relatives, friends and neighbours, nearly every house in each of those streets would have received at least one such object.<sup>1</sup>

The manner of private display has also linked internee crafts with wider, older traditions. Their association with other forms of Irish craftwork and with the prizes won by members of the family, proclaims a pride in a cultural heritage and a continuing achievement (ill 165 ). And they are taken into homes where it is customary to employ religious images like a crucifix, or a statue of the Virgin, or a coloured print of the Sacred Heart not, as many Protestants believe, as objects of worship, but as reminders of religious beliefs and focuses for religious devotion. The internee images which sit alongside them perform a very similar function. They identify the owners with the Christ-like sufferings of the internees and prisoners, and remind them that the ultimate goal of all they jointly undergo is the political resurrection of their native land. Indeed many of them are Celtic crosses to which are attached little photographs of republicans who have died in the present conflict.<sup>2</sup>

Yet they are not always so solemnly regarded. Frank Burton records one humorous Belfast republican who commented

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2. In one republican home I have seen a similar association of religious and political display. Among the items tucked into the frame of a Sacred Heart print was the phoenix badge of the Provisional IRA.
  1. On the very considerable impact of internment on the Catholic community see Ian McAllister, The Northern Ireland Social Democratic and Labour Party, Macmillan, 1977, p. 103.

"I tried to make harps and that in Long Kesh but they always came out as titties and fannies."<sup>1</sup>

And a young republican woman, herself the owner of a memorial cross commemorating a young man she had known, told me that she and many others had packed away most of their internee crafts because they no longer had room to display them.<sup>2</sup>

The way in which green emblems, harp symbolism and Celtic ornament have been employed by Northern Ireland Catholics during the present troubles shows that they are not simply the product of history, or of political circumstances. They continue to be constructed by a wide range of groups and individuals for a variety of purposes, and to absorb meaning from use and association, as well as from specific intentions.

Artists and the visual traditions of Northern Ireland's Catholic community since 1968

While harps, shamrocks and green symbolism have been noticeably absent from the work of Irish artists during the past thirteen years, Celtic visual traditions have had a strong appeal for many of them, particularly for a number of painters and sculptors in the Republic who have made works about the Northern Ireland conflict. One cannot simply attribute this selective use of Celtic visual traditions to the greater artistic prestige accorded to Celtic imagery since its earliest revival, or to the wider range of visual possibilities opened up by it, for the fashion for pop art, which encompassed Irish artists in its orbit from the mid-1960s onwards, might well have encouraged some exploration of harps, shamrocks

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1. Burton, op cit, p. 116.

2. Conversation 4 March 1982.



and republican flags, in the style of a Jasper Johns or a Kenneth Noland. Moreover, while the status of Celtic art both internationally and nationally does appear to have encouraged Irish artists of this period to draw on it in their work, other factors appear to have been more crucial.

Certainly international art fashions helped to validate Celtic imagery at this time. In the late 1960s its decorative patternings proved highly congenial to Irish hard-edge abstract painters, and in the late 1970s the general enthusiasm in Western Europe for exploration of the continent's pre-Christian traditions, mythologies and artifacts re-directed attention to the numinous symbolism of the Celtic world in Ireland. Meanwhile, closer to home, government bodies in the Republic in the late 1960s began to encourage the work of artists and designers turning to these traditions. Availability of information was also important. There can be no doubt that the increasing number of cheap, well-illustrated publications on Celtic art and mythology helped those artists and designers to plunder their riches. However most of them had begun to do so before such works were widely available. What seems to have been crucial in provoking their interest was the ironic ambiguity inherent in Celtic imagery, particularly in Celtic imagery dealing with violence, such as the carved heads found in various Celtic shrines of the pre-Christian period, and the elaborate Ulster saga called the Tain Bo Cuailnge. This mode of dealing with the complexities of human conflict proved very attractive to artists from Ireland's Catholic community attempting to grapple with the Northern Ireland troubles, especially those distanced from their immediate impact by class or geographical position.

In the 1950s a number of Irish artists began to demonstrate a renewed interest in the Celtic tradition. F.E McWilliam, the Ulster Protestant emigré sculptor, used a Celtic heroine Princess Macha (ill 167)



167. F.E. McWilliam/Princess Macha/1957/Bronze/96 ins  
(244 cms) high/Altnagelvin Hospital, Derry.

for the sculpture commissioned from him for Altnagelvin Hospital in Co Derry in 1957. She and other figures he made round about this time were covered with a kind of encrusted decoration derived from Celtic interlace. Also during this period, Louis le Brocquy, an emigré painter from the Republic, began his long series of paintings of heads, whose ambiguous multi-faced nature has been greatly influenced by the two and three-ways facing carved heads to be found at pre-Christian Celtic sanctuaries (ill 147) and by the more general ambivalence of the Celtic mind.<sup>1</sup> And back home in Ireland the sculptor Oisín Kelly was using Celtic themes and imagery from the early 1950s onwards.<sup>2</sup>

These artists discovered the Celtic traditions not through their schooling, but through their private researches in which they made use of the increasing number of well-illustrated publications on Irish Celtic art.<sup>3</sup> Brian Ferran, a Northern artist who was later to make great use of Celtic imagery, recalls of his Catholic schooldays in Derry in the late fifties that there was no instruction in Celtic mythology or imagery, and that he eventually gave up painting for a year in order to pursue his interest in the subject.<sup>4</sup>

By the late 1960s however these private ventures were receiving public validation. Young artists like Micheal Farrell and Patrick Scott, who moved between Ireland, Europe and America, found in the international fashion for hard-edge abstract painting a way of approaching the decorative patterns of Celtic art. Farrell made skilful play with Celtic rings, spirals and interlace designs, and Scott produced abstract two-dimensional

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1. See Richard Kearney, "Joyce and Le Brocquy: Art as otherness" The Crane Bag, Dublin, vol 6 no 1, 1982, pp. 37-8 and p. 40 no. 33.
  2. See The Work of Oisín Kelly, Sculptor, exhibition catalogue, The Arts Councils of Ireland, Dublin, 1978.
  3. See above, p. 506.
  4. Conversation 21 July 1975.

versions of the hieratic imagery of Celtic manuscripts and goldwork.

This abstract exploration of Celtic decoration was continued in the late 1970s by the young Northern artist, Felim Egan.<sup>1</sup> Simultaneously artists exploring Celtic traditions were beginning to receive encouragement from state bodies in the Irish Republic, stimulated to an emphasis on national cultural traditions by the fiftieth anniversary of the 1916 Rising.

Whereas in 1957 McWilliam's Princess Macha had been generally greeted with uncomprehending anger, in 1966 Oisín Kelly was commissioned to make a sculpture of the Children of Lir (ill 163 ) for Dublin's garden of Remembrance for the victims of the 1916 Rising, and in 1965 Brian Ferran was awarded a prize by the Arts Council in the Republic for one of his paintings of the Celtic saint Columcille. So delighted was Ferran by this that he reckoned Celtic inspired paintings were his forte, and concentrated on them for the next three or four years.

In many of the paintings he did at this time Ferran was developing from his Celtic sources images of ambiguous heroes, whether the saint and warrior Columcille or the half-majestic, half-comic figures of the Ulster cycle known as the Tain Bo Cuailnge, (an excellent translation of which, illustrated by Le Brocquy, was published in a limited edition by the Dolmen Press in Dublin in 1969, and in a cheap and widely-available paperback by the Oxford University Press in 1970.) This theme became of obvious relevance to the political situation in Northern Ireland following the outbreak of the present troubles. At first Ferran developed it in a series of paintings about Orangemen.<sup>2</sup> Then in the mid-seventies, he turned again

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1. See Dorothy Walker, "Indigenous Culture and Irish Art", The Crane Bag, Dublin, vol 1 no 2, 1977, pp 47-51 and ibid, "Traditional structures in recent Irish art", The Crane Bag, vol 6 no 1, 1982, pp 41-44.
  2. See above, p. 376.

to Celtic imagery, using it now with a more romantic intensity. The gold, red and black that he adopted from Celtic manuscripts and metalwork for these paintings have a pictorial grandeur that counterbalances the toylike appearance of the heroes, just as the actual solemnity of their greatest deeds, alluded to by Ferran in the quotations he included on the picture surface, is poised against their visually comic actions. Sometimes indeed the paintings of this period toppled over into romantic prettiness, in stylised designs like Innocent (1977-8) in which a skein of black geese fly across a deep red sun. In others however, particularly those based on the Tain, romanticism and playfulness were subsumed into fierce, locking compositions, where jarring elements tangled together in combat.

The other artists using the ironic ambivalence of Celtic images of violence in their handling of the Northern Ireland conflict have all been based in the Republic. The southern sculptor Edward Delaney<sup>1</sup> has found considerable inspiration in Irish mythology, which he sees as replacing a now-dead Christianity as a source of ideas and symbols. It was through Irish legends that he came, obliquely, to deal with the Northern situation. A series of drawings on the theme of Cuchulain the Hunter led to an interest in groups. He felt that people in groups performed extraordinary actions and generated moments of drama. Always discontent with purely formal work, he was drawn to Jack Yeats' paintings of race-meetings, but finally started to develop this group theme in relation to the peace women, in a series of small sculptures produced between 1976 and 1980. Although he had personal knowledge of the North he was, in these works, exploring changes in the South as much as developments there. Troubled with a sense of growing chaos in Irish society, he saw a disturbing parallel between people at Dublin bus-stops, stepping out into the road to look for buses which never came, and the Peace People, marching and

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1. The following discussion of Edward Delaney's work is largely based on a conversation with him in April 1980.

looking for something which would never happen. Watching people talking together as they waited endlessly, or girls thumbing lifts home he sensed a breakdown of previous dignity and reserve. And so his groups hover and teeter, hesitating and questioning, involved in action and inaction of whose meaning they are far from sure.

This sense of society in a process of breakdown was closely linked to Delaney's deep interest in the cyclical theories of Vico, theories which form the basis of Joyce's Finnegan's Wake. In 1970 he explained these theories as follows, in a letter to an inquirer.

"Briefly, Vico believed that the history of humankind was an endless circle:

- (1) Hieratic - the rule of the Priests
- (2) Aristocratic - the rule of the Nobility
- (3) Democratic - the rule of the People
- (4) Chaotic

Joyce gives indirect acknowledgement to Vico in the first line of Finnegan's Wake - 'commodius vicus of recirculations.' The theme of the original ballad Finnegan's Wake, is concerned with the revivification of a the dead man. Joyce also likes to play upon/theme of the return of the heroic era 'Finn Again.'

Personally, I am disturbed by the present travail of the world, and I sometimes fear that we may be approaching chaos."<sup>1</sup>

When Delaney moved on from the small Peace Women Groups it was in accordance with this cyclical pattern. Never in personal contact with the Northern violence, and normally uninterested by the media images of it, he had been deeply struck by the pictures of Bloody Friday. In 1979-80 he expressed his reactions to them in a large composition of fragmented

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1. Edward Delaney, letter to Mr Doran, 28 March 1970.



bodies (ill 168 ). This in turn evolved into a still larger piece titled King and Queen.<sup>1</sup> The Democratic had yielded to the Chaotic which in turn had yielded to the Hieratic, and the sculptures charting this progress had embodied not static stages but a sense of inevitable development. The peace groups are both movingly democratic and frighteningly on the edge of chaos; the Bloody Friday group is both shattered and grand; the King and Queen drip past horrors.

Delaney, like so many Irish sculptors before him, is primarily inspired by literary themes, but has been able to handle them with a far greater technical expertise and interest than his predecessors. His studies in Germany and Italy left him unmoved by the content of the European sculptural tradition, but deeply excited by its technical resources, particularly the lost-wax process of casting bronzes. On his return to Ireland he set up his own foundry, using this process, and has continued to experiment with it ever since. This constant play with materials and forms both feeds off and supports his cyclical development of subject-matter, in a way which would not have been possible for Irish sculptors of a previous period, lacking control of their own technical resources.

The most thoroughgoing application of Celtic themes to the Northern violence has been made by Michael O'Sullivan. Like Edward Delaney he sees such mythology as replacing outmoded biblical themes as a source of artistic inspiration. Like Delaney too he has been captivated by the complex use of various mythologies in James Joyce's Finnegan's Wake. He himself has travelled widely to places like Greece and Crete and

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1. Shown in The Delighted Eye exhibition at 52 Earlham Street in London in 1980.



168. Edward Delaney/Bloody Friday piece/1979-80/  
bronze

Scandinavia, and has made considerable study of their mythologies, relating them to the Celtic traditions in Joycean fashion. His travels and studies abroad have also given him a good acquaintance with international trends in modern art, so that he has found support for his absorption in the mythical and magical properties of natural objects in the work of artists like Joseph Beuys. His first major works along these lines were statues and environments celebrating the earth-mother and recreating groves of wisdom.<sup>1</sup> Political and mythological themes began to intertwine fairly early on. Round about 1974 he made a piece relating to the Koreans' discovery of tunnels under their border. It was a construction centring on a flimsy Japanese gateway, a meditation on the insubstantiality and symbolic nature of all such territorial definitions.

However it was not until about 1976 that O'Sullivan began to use his mythological explorations to deal with the Northern conflict. He himself had no contact with the North since 1969, and his knowledge of events there was based on avid media consumption. For some time he had been playing around with mazes and considering related themes of forgery and deception. In connection with this, he was interested by a possibly forged Greek figure of a horse which he had seen in New York. He made a picture in which it featured along with a bullet, a racing ticket and the head of Christopher Ewart-Biggs, the British ambassador to the Republic who was blown up by the IRA. Already the main themes of his Northern series were established: the ambivalent role of the horse in Irish history and Irish society, in turns victim, hero, villain; lead,

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1. Shown in his exhibition, Nemeton, at the Project Art Gallery in Dublin, in November 1975. See Dorothy Walker, "Druid's Grove", Hibernia, Dublin, 14 November 1975, p. 25.

with its implications both of true measurement and of violence; and the one-eyed man puzzling things out, whether Ewart-Biggs with his eye-patch, or Polymetheus, or O'Sullivan himself (his name in Gaelic means one-eye).

For over two years O'Sullivan continued to develop these themes, eventually producing an exhibition called Epona, consisting of some twenty pictures, together with a number of sculptures made of wooden jumps, orange and green camouflage netting and so on. This was shown in Minneapolis in May 1978, at the Project Gallery in Dublin, October 1978,<sup>1</sup> and in the Without the Walls exhibition at the ICA in London in March 1980. Much of the work seemed to operate at a jokey level. O'Sullivan at one stage toyed with the idea of taking a wooden Trojan horse with a bullet hidden in it across the Irish border, declaring the bullet at the customs. Realising this might not be appreciated, he abandoned the project, but several of his pictures have sections apparently conceived in the same mood, like the female Provisional centaur, complete with black beret and dark glasses. In many cases too, he turned sections of the pictures upside-down, to convey an other-worldly atmosphere.

Yet at the same time these works were closely tied to real events and to specific acts of violence in the North. If O'Sullivan saw something on the 6 pm news which interested him he would often switch on again at 9 pm to make sketches of the event. Particularly horrifying events like the Ewart-Biggs bombing, the Herrema kidnapping, and the killing of an Ulster Defence Regiment woman soldier in front of her child drove him to produce pictures. But he held no particular political views on the North, finding himself as confused as anyone. His aim was to produce multi-level

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1. See Brian Lynch, "Jumps", Hibernia, Dublin, 12 Oct 1978, p. 20.

works reflecting life's complexity. This he certainly achieved. For example in Man reading, Macha, Castledawson, Horsebox Bomb, the reading man appears in a series of three little rooms but is absent in the fourth, recalling a similar Magritte painting of a disappearing man; Magritte is also recalled in the wooden horse breaking in through the wall, for one of his paintings, titled Secret Agent, showed a blond horse looking in the window of a room; the television refers to the way northern events have largely been known through the media, while the little man wears an orange and green bowler, in allusion to processional regalia there; in other sections of the picture Macha, forced to race the King's horses, gives birth to centaurs and puts a curse on Ulster, a real-life horsebox bomb sits menacingly in the main street of Castledawson in Co Derry, and Titania and Bottom are presented in a lined, vaginal horseshoe. Sex and violence, innocence and guilt, history and contemporary events are tangled together in a fashion which closely relates to the complexity of Northern events.<sup>1</sup>

Brian Ferran, Edward Delaney and Michael O'Sullivan have all found in the ambivalent ironies of Celtic imagery a way of handling the present violence in Northern Ireland. This use of Celtic tradition has been facilitated by their own researches, by the increased availability of information on the Celtic world, and by its validation by international art fashions and national organisations, but most especially by their own status as artists distanced from the immediate impact of the conflict, whether by social status, as in the case of Ferran, or by geographical

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1. Information on Michael O'Sullivan largely derived from a conversation with him on 16 April 1980.

position, in the case of Delaney and O'Sullivan. An artist's use of his country's traditional imagery in handling a crisis in its political history like the Northern Ireland conflict, remains conditioned, though not determined, by wider political, cultural, economic and social factors than those immediately inherent in that particular imagery and specific political crisis.

### Protestant Reactions

In the course of this chapter it has become apparent that certain symbols have at times been held in common by Northern Ireland's Catholic and Protestant communities. In particular the imagery of the Orangemen has overlapped with that of the "ribbonmen" and their successors in the Ancient Order of Hibernians. Thus the red hand, red heart and red cross are featured on Hibernians' sashes (ill 128) as well as those of the Orange Order and the Royal Black Preceptory. Such shared symbolism may be explained in part by the use of common sources (such as freemasonry), in part by imitation, and in part by the employment of the same manufacturers of regalia.

Indeed to this day banner-painters and drum-painters in Northern Ireland work happily for both orange and green clients (ill 169 ). There is one sole exception to this rule. Although the firm of Bridgett's in Belfast now paints banners only for Orangemen and their brethren, in earlier years it did make green banners,

including the one of Michael Dwyer (ill 127 ), carried in the Belfast centenary celebrations of the 1798 rebellion.





169. John Jordan of Cookstown painting drums with his daughter.

Some continuing overlaps of orange and green symbolism can therefore be attributed to the employment of the same drum and banner-painters. But it is important to be wary about the meaning of shared emblems. The banner of one Orange lodge, Ireland's Heritage LOL 303, unfurled in 1970,<sup>1</sup> features the usually green symbols of the Irish harp, Celtic crosses, the emblems of the four provinces of Ireland, the Tara brooch and a map of the whole of Ireland (ill 170 ). Members of this lodge have also been known to parade to church on St Patrick's Day, wearing the shamrock on their sashes.<sup>2</sup> As soon as they learnt of this banner's existence the Republic's Department of Foreign Affairs featured it in their bi-monthly Bulletin,<sup>3</sup> as evidence of the shared traditions of Protestants and Catholics in Ireland. But lodge officials angrily repudiated this.<sup>4</sup> Indeed the harp in their banner was firmly crowned and the motto of the lodge was "Occupy till I come." Established in the late 1960s, just before the outbreak of the present troubles, it was closely linked with Tara, an extreme Protestant organisation which sought the banning of all Roman Catholic education in Northern Ireland.<sup>5</sup> Its adoption of the native Irish emblems should not be seen therefore as a gesture sympathetic to the traditions of Northern Ireland Catholics, but as part of the attempt by some Northern Ireland Protestants in recent years to claim for themselves an Irish heritage and legitimacy antedating those of the Catholic population.

Similar motives have prompted the adoption by certain loyalist

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1. "Ireland's heritage banner unfurled", Belfast Telegraph, 29 June 1970, p. 7.
  2. Photo in The Orange Standard, Belfast, April 1973, p. 6.
  3. In July and August 1970.
  4. See The Orange Standard, Belfast, July 1975, p. 7.
  5. Ed Moloney, "Top Unionists knew of scandal for years", and David McKittrick, "Army knew 'housefather' homosexual", Irish Times, 17 Dec 1981, p. 8. The lodge was disbanded in 1981 because of the alleged involvement of its founder, William McGrath, in the Kincora scandal.





170. Banner of Orange Lodge no 1303, Ireland's Heritage/  
12 July 1973/Belfast/oil paints on silk/approxima-  
tely 72 x 48 ins (183 x 122 cms)/Photo: Richard  
Deutsch/Copyright: National Museum of Ireland.

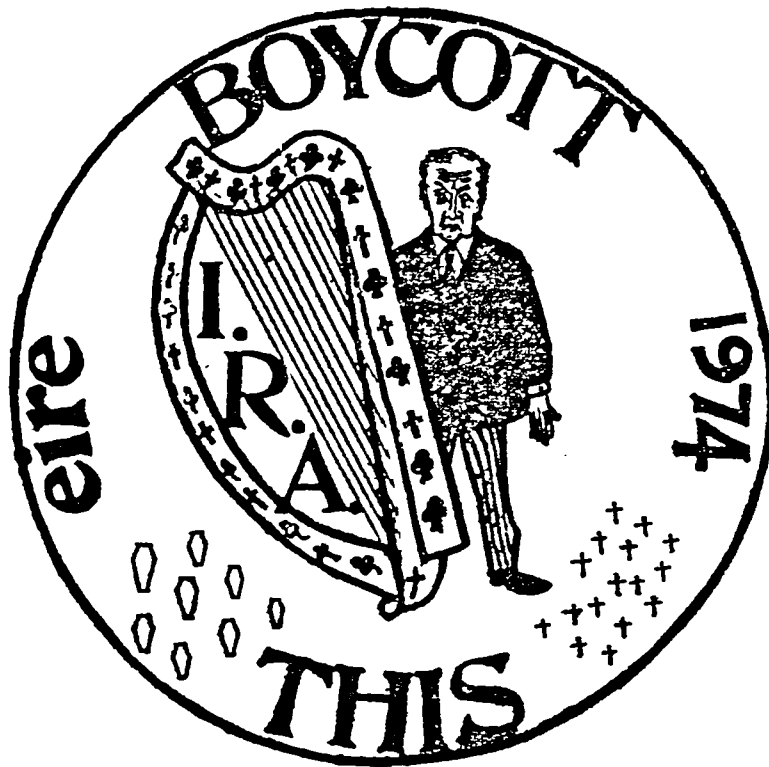
paramilitary leaders of Celtic heroes like Cuchulainn and Finn MacCool. Thus the Ulster Defence Association leader Andy Tyrrie has on his wall a photograph of the statue of Cuchulain in the Dublin GPO/, because of his belief, based on Ian Adamson's book, The Cruthin: The Ancient Kindred<sup>1</sup> that Ulster Protestants are descendants of some of the earliest settlers in Ireland.

Moreover these recent appropriations by Orangemen and loyalist paramilitaries of the symbols of Ireland's green traditions run completely contrary to the general attitude of most Northern Ireland Protestants since 1968. For the most part they have emphatically rejected the symbolism employed by the province's Catholic community. Harps in particular have been a target for attack by them. In the early 1970s loyalist newsheets urged a boycott of the Irish Republic's "harp money" (ill 171 ), mocked the Long Kesh Freedom Harp taken to America to help raise funds for republican prisoners,<sup>2</sup> and even went so far as to show the red hand of Ulster smashing an Irish harp (ill 100).

Finally it is necessary to emphasise that the meanings of symbols employed by both green and orange groups during the past thirteen years have been crucially determined by the rhetorical style with which they have been handled. Thus when the Ireland's Heritage lodge featured emblems like the harp and shamrock in their symbolism they did so in a precise, legitimising fashion, very different from the diffuse, emotive handling of these images by members of Northern Ireland's Catholic community.

Indeed it is now possible to outline the very different rhetorical

1. Nosmada Books, Newtownards, 1974.
2. Loyalist News, Belfast, 6 Oct 1973.



171. Cartoon urging boycott of the Irish Republic's currency in Protestant Telegraph, 21 June 1975, p.5/actual size/Linen Hall Library, Belfast.

messages encoded in orange and green symbolic usage. Whereas orange symbolism is that of a polity which is composed of an agglomeration of individuals, and constantly reaffirms their public pride in a formalised status quo, green imagery is that of people unified by a simple emblem of nationality and/or religion, preserving their symbols in the privacy of their homes, and pushing forward a militant vanguard striving to change the status quo. Whereas Orange symbols employ a rhetoric of exclusion and purging, green symbols propose an all-embracing inclusion. And whereas Orange symbols are separate and distinct, green symbols tend to merge. The land is a woman, the woman is a harp.

### Conclusions

It is now possible to offer some answers to the questions posed at the beginning of this chapter, some explanations of why green imagery, harp emblems and Celtic ornament have been important political symbols for Northern Ireland Catholics during the present troubles, and why they have employed them with rhetorical emphasis on their ambiguous, arty, hand-crafted, secret, simple, all-embracing, military nature.

These symbols do not have a clear basis in a native, national past. Some, like Celtic ornament, embody traditions of earlier invaders, some, like the shamrock and harp emblems are a relatively late development, some, like Celtic ornament again, are not truly national but international. However it is certainly true that these symbols were well-established in Ireland, and had acquired strong political or religious significance, prior to the period of major English colonisation and rule of the country. But for them to have national significance certain developments were necessary, which fortuitously took place during the period of English, Protestant dominance. They had to be disseminated, validated and



appropriated. The simple availability and political overtones of shamrocks, harps and Celtic monuments prior to the late eighteenth century was not sufficient to endow them with national significance. That significance required a country-wide, shared awareness of their validity as general emblems of the political and cultural status of the Irish people.

Validity of these symbols came through recognition by scholars, representatives of the state, religious bodies, political organisations, and endorsing groups in the art world (museums, art galleries, exhibitions, critics, art-publishers and artists themselves.) Their dissemination was achieved through collections, publications, reproductions and mass-production. And their widespread appropriation became possible through assimilation to existing myths, shared display at mass assemblies, shared visiting to symbolic repositories, and shared understanding through printed explanations and mass education systems, whether formal (schools, universities, art-colleges), or informal, (the Gaelic League, the Gaelic Athletic Association, Irish dance organisations).

These developments, which took place between the end of the eighteenth century and the present day, were the preconditions for green imagery, the harp emblem and Celtic ornament becoming national symbols. But the selection of these particular symbols, and the way in which they are used now by Northern Ireland Catholics, is the result of a series of choices. Some of their ambiguous, arty, hand-crafted, secret, simple, all-embracing and military nature derives from their original essential identity, but most of it has been acquired through a succession of actions by a variety of groups and individuals.

Ambiguity was a characteristic of Celtic culture, but it has also accrued to these symbols because of their use by so many different

political groups in Ireland, and their employment with a deliberate vagueness, to escape censure, and to attract the support of a wide range of opinion.

Art was very much a part of the original Celtic ornament and Irish harps, but it has also been re-emphasised in their subsequent use, because of the Catholic association of art with religion, and the repeated linking of these images with international cultural movements.

Celtic ornaments and harps were also hand-crafted, but the importance of that association has received subsequent additional re-endorsement as a result of the relative lack of machine industry in Ireland's Catholic community, the emphasis on the value of the simple life by the Catholic religion, the opposition of the noble peasant to the wicked industrial imperialist, the repeated nostalgic rediscoveries of Irish traditions by city-dwellers within and without Ireland, the development of handcraft products to appeal to the tourist and emigré market resulting from that rediscovery, and the practical and emotive situation of successive generations of Irish Catholic prisoners and internees.

Secrecy was a characteristic of Ireland's pre-English, pre-planter, decentralised culture, but it has also derived from the persecution of Irish Catholics, their associated difficulty in making public displays, particularly in Northern Ireland, the lack of media attention to such displays in post-partition Ulster, the emphasis of the Catholic religion on the importance of the home, and the impact of the present troubles in the North, forcing large sections of the Catholic population to huddle together in isolated communities or prisons or internee camps.

Simplicity and an all-embracing emphasis were not really pre-Plantation characteristics at all, but more the result of a whole range of subsequent developments and actions. These included: the general

impoverishment of the Irish Catholic community; the relative lack of the kind of industrial experience which reinforced notions of hierarchy, exclusivity and individual skill amongst the Orangemen; the growing mass assertion of nationhood in the nineteenth century, facilitated by improved communications; the reaction against the uniformed splendour of British rulers; the Catholic Church's stress on unity rather than division, and on equality in the eyes of God, rather than on the individual's right to follow his own conscience (seen in this light, wearing the shamrock appears a very similar form of inclusive symbolism to the Catholic practices of wearing ashes on the first day of Lent or carrying palms on Palm Sunday - both involve rich and poor alike in a single symbolic act of identification); and the constant emphasis on the winning back of something that had been lost, rather than on the purging away of something that had infiltrated the defences, which in its turn was related to a whole gamut of religious and political ideology inherited by Irish Catholics.<sup>1</sup>

And finally the military nature of much of the green imagery employed in Northern Ireland today derives not simply from the Celtic emphasis on warfare, but also from successive Irish rebellions, the impact of widespread jingoism on Irish republicans in the period leading up to the Rising in 1916, the internal conflicts within the republican movement following 1968, the desire to win international publicity, the predilection of the media for paramilitary pictures, and the assimilation of world-wide freedom-fighter imagery from the 1970s onwards.<sup>2</sup>

Green imagery, like orange, is formed from layers of meaning. These have been laid down by a series of actions which still continue. They

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1. One can cite at random the experience of Catholicism's use of the sacrament of penance, the memory of the loss of lands during the English and Scottish plantations, and the desire to recover an Irish parliament.
  2. See below, p. 663.

have also been absorbed from other parts of the lives of the imagery's makers and users. People bring to the symbolism they employ their totality of concerns, whether political or cultural, religious or economic.

## CHAPTER 6: POLITICS

So far this thesis has concentrated on analysis of traditional political symbols in Northern Ireland. Both their historical evolution and their role during the present troubles have been discussed, in a manner which emphasises the total context of their operation. Using such an approach towards these symbols has already suggested interrelationships between types of visual imagery normally located within separate and discrete categories. It has become apparent that labels such as fine art, folk art, popular imagery, mass media and visual propaganda often derive less from the material under consideration than from the attitudes, prejudices and training of observers.

The two chapters which follow should not therefore be seen as separate discussions of "political propaganda" and "fine art works". Rather they should be read as further approaches to the visual imagery associated with the Northern Ireland troubles, approaches made from different points of entry. Thus while this chapter is focussed on the posters and press advertisements put out by political organisations in Northern Ireland between 1968 and 1981, this material is constantly related to existing visual traditions, to other visual imagery of the same period and to the social and political developments which took place during this time. This political imagery is not however simply read off visual influences or social and political processes, as is generally the case in the small number of publications dealing with the visual publicity issued by political parties and state organisations during this

century.<sup>1</sup> Instead it is analysed in a way that takes into account how political publicity is actually produced. For this reason I will now devote a few pages to constructing a basic model of this process of production.

Contrary to the impression given by the majority of the existing publications on this subject, political publicity is very rarely the work of one single person. Most posters or advertisements involve the collaboration at the very least of a commissioner, a designer and a printer, all of whom make their mark on the final image. And in post-war years advertising agencies have increasingly been employed for the manufacture of political publicity. Their role has generally been to contrive for the commissioner an overall theme and visual coherence for a series of images related to a particular issue, and to supervise the work of the designers and printers (or in the case of television the film-makers).

These collaborative teams, who may be assembled for a single poster, or work together for years on end, produce political imagery in response to challenges. Such challenges may derive from events, from unrest among the supporters of the commissioner, or from opponents. The response of the collaborative teams may be conditioned by a number of factors such as wider political, economic or social circumstances, existing visual traditions, other visual exemplars, the practical means available and the expectations of those involved about how their images should be produced.

It will become apparent in the discussions that follow that one of

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1. For a useful list of these publications see Gary Yanker, Prop Art, Studio Vista, 1972, p. 253. Yanker's own book is a very useful international survey of political posters.



the expectations increasingly held by producers of political publicity in Northern Ireland during the past thirteen years has been that such publicity should be produced in a modern, professional fashion. Because several recent analyses have posited the interrelationships between traditionalism and modernisation as matters of considerable significance for overall political developments in Northern Ireland during this period, it is necessary to digress briefly on this subject.

Modernisation is one of those concepts so absorbed into current thought, that it may appear to need no explanation. It is however a fairly precise term, most frequently employed by historians and sociologists, as a summary description of certain generally agreed characteristics. It implies differentiation and specialisation of the activities of individuals and institutions, instead of the merging of different roles in the life of an individual or an institution; open recruitment to such specialised activities, rather than "ascriptive" recruitment determined by an existing social position; a use of technology, as opposed to ritualised artisan methods of production; a commitment to dynamic change, in place of maintenance of the status quo; an intensification of central power, at the expense of local autonomy; an accompanying awareness of the need to woo public support, rather than a confident reliance on an ascriptive public support regarded as the automatic result of existing social structures; a stress on civic duties and media communication, as opposed to personal, face-to-face relationships and contacts; and an inclination towards secular rather than religious ideology.<sup>1</sup>

It is clearly useful to have a shorthand term for these characteristics. The problems begin however when they are seen as the result of an

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1. S.N. Eisenstadt, Modernisation: Protest and change, Prentice-Hall, New York, 1966.

ineluctable (and often by implication, desirable) monolithic, overall, irreversible process dictated by economic and social developments and inevitably displacing traditionalism. This is what Eisenstadt does when he sums up modernisation as

"the process of change towards those types of social, economic and political systems that have developed in western Europe and North America from the seventeenth century to the nineteenth and have then spread to other European countries and in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to the South American, Asian and African continents."<sup>1</sup>

And this was what Michael Farrell did when he discussed the role of modernisation in recent political developments in Northern Ireland. In his Northern Ireland: The Orange State,<sup>2</sup> Farrell suggested that from the early 1960s two crucial developments took place in the province. It was his view that as international businesses moved into Ulster at this time, the Unionist government was forced to adopt a centralised programme of modernisation to cater to their needs in terms of factories, roads, housing and so on, and to moderate sectarian policies which would have appeared both displeasing and outmoded to such cosmopolitan operations.<sup>3</sup> Farrell also argued that during this same period a new generation of Northern Ireland Catholics, who had benefited from the provisions of the Butler education act of 1944, were putting increasing pressure on the Unionist government to grant them the economic, civil and political rights consonant with citizenship in a modernised state.<sup>4</sup>

In effect Farrell was seeing such modernisation as took place in Northern Ireland in the early 1960s as the direct result of economic and

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1. Ibid, p. 1.

2. Pluto Press, 1976.

3. This view was also proposed by Eamonn McCann, in War and an Irish Town, Penguin, 1974, p. 208.

4. Farrell, op cit, chapter 10.

social developments, and as inevitably opposed to the province's traditional sectarianism. This view has been challenged in two subsequent publications on the Northern Ireland question. Paul Bew, Peter Gibbon and Henry Patterson, in their The State in Northern Ireland 1921-1972<sup>1</sup>, see the modernisation of this period as a response to conflict within the province's Protestant community, and as capable of coexistence with traditional sectarianism, a point considerably elaborated by Liam O'Dowd, Bill Rolston and Mike Tomlinson in their Northern Ireland: Between Civil Rights and Civil War.<sup>2</sup>

In the discussion which follows I intend to handle the concept of modernisation in a way very similar to that to be found in these last two books. I shall describe as modernised those forms of political publicity which are handled by specialised professionals, rather than viewed as one of a number of tasks undertaken by one member of a political organisation; distributed to such professionals in an open market, rather than allocated to people with whom the organisation has pre-existing political or social links; produced with up-to-date technology, rather than according to time-honoured artisan practices; constantly changing rather than repeating a set formula; centrally rather than locally organised; produced to woo a wide audience, rather than to remind existing followers of their traditional beliefs; concerned with a public image, rather than relying on forms of personal contact; and employing secular rather than religious imagery.

However, as elsewhere in this thesis, I shall be arguing that these characteristics are by no means ineluctable, pervasive or irreversible.

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1. Manchester University Press, 1979.  
2. CSE Books, 1980.

Instead it will be my contention that their appearance in political publicity since 1968 has been the result of a whole series of decisions; that their incidence in such imagery has been patchy; that they are by no means totally opposed to traditional forms and procedures and indeed frequently hybridise with them, and that they have often been reversed. The political publicity issued in Northern Ireland between 1968 and 1981 will be discussed as the work of a number of producers responding to specific challenges and to the overall context in which they find themselves, not as the result of political, social, economic or visual developments.

This discussion will commence in the next section with an outline of Political imagery in Northern Ireland prior to 1969. Then the challenges thrown up by new groupings in the Catholic community will be analysed in a section titled The Civil Rights Movement, People's Democracy and This will be followed by a discussion of Unionist and government publicity, 1969-Republican Clubs 1968-72. / After this the imagery issued by the various 1972. branches of security and government under British rule will be examined in a series of sections on The British Army, The Ulster Defence Regiment, The Royal Ulster Constabulary, Prison Officers and Government imagery from March 1972 to December 1981. Subsequent sections will deal with the alterations in visual publicity made by Northern Ireland political groupings following the introduction of Direct Rule. I shall look first at Unionist publicity between March 1972 and December 1981. Then I shall turn to the output of Alliance , before considering the publicity issued by The Social, Democratic and Labour Party and Republican Clubs/The Workers Party from 1973 to 1981. Finally I will discuss the imagery employed by the political wing of the Provisional IRA in Provisional Sinn Fein 1969-1981, before ending with some brief Conclusions.

Political imagery in Northern Ireland prior to 1969

During the first twenty years or so following the establishment of Northern Ireland as a political entity in 1921, virtually no visual imagery was issued by any of its political groupings. Political activity in the province rapidly settled into a static, traditional, accepted mould, in which such imagery was superfluous. The government was the Unionist Party, and the composition of that party remained virtually unchanged between partition in 1921, and the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939. Craig's tenacity had replaced Carson's theatricality; a large proportion of seats went uncontested, whether in the Stormont<sup>1</sup>, local council or Westminster elections; and indeed nearly half the Unionist members of parliament elected in 1921 were still sitting in 1940.<sup>2</sup>

Virtually no challenge to this status quo was offered by Catholic politicians. They were in a perpetual minority, reinforced, particularly at local government level, by gerrymandering. Moreover, with voting taking place almost entirely according to sectarian identity, there were very few floating voters to whom they could appeal. Most electoral contests were a foregone conclusion, based on the known sectarian balance in the constituency, and very rarely did it seem worthwhile wasting time, money and effort on fielding a candidate doomed to certain defeat.

"In only twenty-four of the forty-eight territorial seats which existed between 1929 and 1969 was there ever a contest between a Unionist and a declared anti-partitionist candidate, and only four of these seats were so contested more than four times in ten general elections. Out of 542 possible contests in territorial constituencies, including by-elections,

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1. The seat of the Northern Ireland parliament.  
2. O'Dowd et al, pp. 10-11.

Unionists and anti-partitionists opposed one another directly on only sixty-three occasions, seventeen of which were three- or four-cornered contests. Unionists won 47 per cent of their victories without any contest, anti-partition candidates 40 per cent."<sup>1</sup>

With this Catholic acceptance of the status quo, went an almost total lack of the organisational structures employed by most modern political parties, structures which both support and require the use of public communication. Neither the Nationalist Party, which represented Catholic rural interests from time to time in the Stormont parliament, nor the various republican socialists, who stood in Belfast's Catholic constituencies, had a party headquarters or a full-time, paid organiser. Nor were there any constituency organisations of the kind to be found in Britain. Instead there were Catholic registration committees, which organised and checked the registration of every available Catholic vote. Moreover, following their election many Nationalist MPs refused to take their seats at Stormont, for reasons both political and practical, and hence the possibility of further political communication with their constituents was considerably diminished.<sup>2</sup> No posters or leaflets used by Catholic political groupings appear to survive from the period before the early 1960s, and it seems highly likely that few if any were ever used.

Previous to the late 1940s and early 1950s, the same was true within the Unionist camp. A Propaganda Department was established by the Ulster Unionist Council in 1920, and issued leaflets and literature in the 1920s and 1930s, attacking the evils of socialism, but it never favoured visual imagery, and became moribund after the long years of easy power.

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1. E. Rumpf and A.C Hepburn, Nationalism and Socialism in twentieth-century Ireland, Liverpool University Press, 1977, p. 186.
  2. Ibid, pp 187-188.



This situation appears to have changed round about 1945, when the Unionist Party began to employ a fairly wide range of posters. This innovation seems to have been linked to the replacement of the old guard Unionists by a new cabinet formed under Sir Basil Brooke, later Lord Brookeborough, in May 1943. Brooke and his supporters came to power largely because of two forms of discontent with the previous administration within the Protestant electorate. On the one hand there was frustration at bad social conditions and lack of government action to improve them, which had resulted in a small number of electoral victories for Protestant labour candidates; and on the other hand there was the kind of jingoism and chauvinism that was expressed by the government's main critic, Edmond Warnock, when he complained about lack of energy in the war effort, and about immigration of Southern workers into the North.<sup>1</sup>

Most of the early posters used by the Unionist Party under the leadership of Brookeborough appear to have been designed to woo the jingoist dissenters, for they endlessly repeated a few well-tried images which derived from the struggle against Home Rule in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The run-away favourite was the design in which a photograph of the candidate was superimposed on a Union Jack and accompanied with the slogan "Win With (candidate's name)" (ill 172). So popular did this poster become that it has remained in use from 1945 to the present day and is simply known amongst Ulster Unionists as "The Win-With poster."<sup>2</sup>

Part of the appeal of this poster has been due no doubt to the ease with which it can be produced (the Union Jack design can be printed in advance and the photo and slogan of the local candidate added when

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1. On political developments within Northern Ireland at this time, see Farrell, *op cit*, pp 158-162.
  2. Conversation with John Laird, 3 Jan 1980.



172. Ulster Unionist election poster/1960s/printed Brough Cox & Dunne Belfast/photo-litho/red, blue & black on white/19½ x 14½ ins (49.5 x 37.5 cms)/Linen Hall Library, Belfast/Photo: Peter McGuinness.





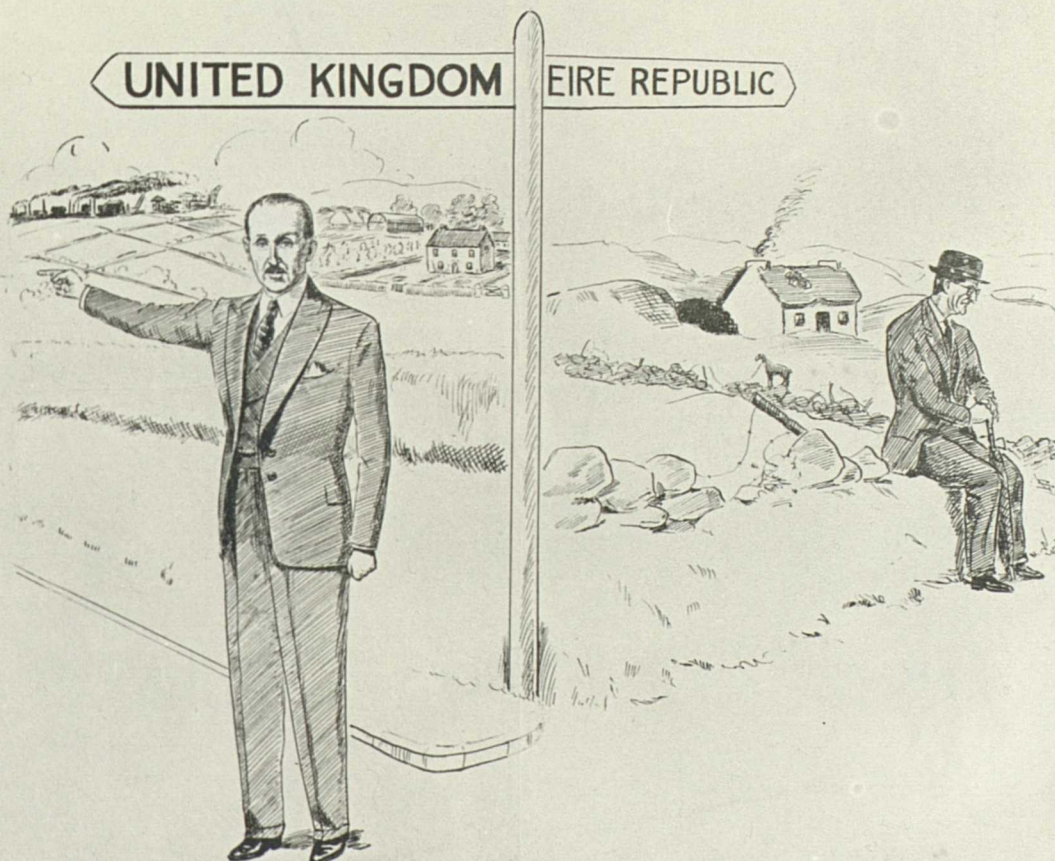
173. Ulster Unionist Election posters in Belfast 1954/  
Radio Times Hulton Picture Library/illustrated  
on p.45 of The Irish Question, produced by Holmes  
MacDougall, Edinburgh, for the Schools Council in  
1977.



# WHICH IS YOUR ROAD

UNITED KINGDOM

EIRE REPUBLIC



# VOTE UNIONIST

Issued by the Ulster Unionist Council, and printed by John Cleland & Son, Ltd.

174. Ulster Unionist election poster/1950s/printed  
John Cleland, Belfast/red, blue & black on  
white/lithograph/17 x 13 ins (43.2 x 33 cms)/  
Linen Hall Library, Belfast/Photo: Peter  
McGuinness.

needed). Its simple and repeated assertion of support for the British link and the local candidate must also have appealed to a community obsessed with tradition, leadership and imperial power, and highly mistrustful of anything remotely arty. And it was an image directly descended from the visual propaganda issued in the Ulster Unionist fight against Home Rule, recalling as it does Sir Edward Carson's endless appearances in front of the Union Jack, whether at vast demonstrations, or in such mass media products as postcards, press photographs and propaganda stamps (ill 96). It is a design which carries with it historical overtones of power, crowds and determined resistance.

Other Unionist posters of this period also returned to anti-Home Rule imagery, with literal-minded scenes of Britannia holding the chains linking Ulster to Britain, and a stage Irishman stepping off a cliff and falling into an Irish bog (a comment on the foolishness of having anything to do with the Republic).

By the early 1950s these jingoistic Unionist posters were joined by designs which appeared to aspire to a certain degree of modernism in both their imagery and their manner of production. Drawings of children were used, with slogans like "Our Destiny is in Your Hands"; the Prime Minister, Lord Brookeborough, was shown as a goalkeeper saving a ball with the similar "Keep Ulster's Future in Safe Hands" (ill 173 ); a train headed towards Britain and prosperity; and a signpost pointed the difference between Britain's factories and prosperous farms and the Irish Republic's broken down cabins./ Most of these designs appear to have been supplied by the firm of John Cleland, which printed the bulk of

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1. All these posters are in the Linen Hall Library in Belfast, with the exception of the goalkeeper design.

Unionist publicity from this period until the early 1970s. However at least one of the designs making use of children was provided by an advertising firm, Wells Advertising.

These posters would appear therefore to endorse the theories concerning the impact of modernisation on Ulster politics propounded by Patterson, Bew, Gibbon, O'Dowd, Rolston and Tomlinson. With their emphasis on the prosperity engendered by the link with Britain, they seem to support their shared thesis that such modernisation as was undertaken by the Unionists at this time, was largely designed to draw back to the party the support of working-class Belfast Protestants who were shifting their allegiance to the Northern Ireland Labour Party (NILP) in a period of high unemployment. Moreover the element of modernisation in their design and production seems to have been a response to the NILP's skilful use of publicity at this time. Although I have seen no posters or pamphlets issued by the NILP in these years, it is certainly true that from the late 1940s onwards they were making very effective general use of modern forms of publicity to present a far larger challenge to the Unionists than was warranted by the small size of their party. In particular Sam Napier, appointed the party secretary in 1949, succeeded in winning the support for the NILP of Belfast's evening newspaper, the Belfast Telegraph, and in interesting members of the British Labour Party in the problem of unemployment in Northern Ireland.<sup>1</sup>

These posters also seem to confirm the thesis of Bew, O'Dowd et al, that the modernisation undertaken by the Unionists at this time did not preclude the continuance of traditional sectarian attitudes and tactics.

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1. John Graham, The Consensus-Forming Strategy of the Northern Ireland Labour Party 1949-1968, MSc Thesis, Queen's University, Belfast, 1972, pp. 8-23.



The forward-looking children are backed by the Union Jack or the red hand of Ulster, and the signpost and train images both look a little less modern if one remembers their popularity in the kind of evangelical picture parables hung on the walls of numerous Ulster Protestant homes from the late nineteenth century onwards.<sup>1</sup>

Indeed in the signpost symbol, which was to constantly reoccur in the political imagery of Ulster's various unionist parties from this time onward, it is possible to see a direct descent from the seventeenth century sources of Orange symbolism described in Chapter 4. For this reason it is worth considering its background in some detail.

Ultimately this symbol derives from a wide range of popular images dealing with the theme of man's pilgrimage through life, and the choice of paths available to him. These images seem to have made their first significant appearance in England in the early seventeenth century. In 1613 the London populace watching the entertainment devised by Thomas Middleton for the Lord Mayor, could see a figure representative of their city telling the mayor of the difference between the multiple paths of Error and Truth's single and sacred way.<sup>2</sup> And at approximately the same time illustrations of this concept began to appear in a number of publications aimed at the popular market. In Orbis Pictus, the little illustrated Latin textbook by John Amos Comenius, first printed in English in 1659, and widely disseminated thereafter, the discourse on Moral Philosophy is accompanied by a scene in which a young man is bidden to choose between the broad and narrow ways by the figures of Virtue and

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1. One might assume the signpost to be a natural political symbol, regardless of local tradition. However it appears in none of the posters illustrated in Yanker, op cit, and it has not struck my eye in the thousands of political posters I have viewed in English, German, Austrian and Russian collections.
  2. David M. Bergeron, English Civic Pageantry, 1558-1642, Edward Arnold, 1971, p. 184.

Vice (ill 175 ). It is quite possible that this very popular book was imported into Northern Ireland.<sup>1</sup> Meanwhile Arthur Dent's The Plain Man's Pathway to Heaven, first published in 1601, went through 25 editions in forty years. It is known that it appealed to John Bunyan, whose own Pilgrim's Progress, first published in 1678-84, went through 22 editions by 1699.<sup>2</sup> Illustrations from Bunyan's work were often produced as prints in the eighteenth and the nineteenth century, and there is even a child's jig-saw map of Christian's travels, produced by John Wallis in London in 1790.<sup>3</sup> During this period the pilgrim figure also featured largely in early masonic images, including those used in Ireland.<sup>4</sup> It seems likely that it was via these images that the symbol of the pilgrim with his staff was transmitted to Orange Order symbolism, which has employed it constantly from the Loyal Orange Boyne Society folding picture of the 1790s (ill 77 ), to the present day Orange Arch (ill 71).

Both Bunyan and the pilgrim-path theme continued to be generally popular in Northern Ireland, as in the rest of Britain, in the nineteenth century. The Irish student of the Apocalypse who provoked John Gamble's reflections on that book's popularity in 1818,<sup>5</sup> also quoted Pilgrim's Progress to him, and in 1822 J. Thomson's frontispiece vignette for William McComb's Belfast-published The School of the Sabbath showed "Faith and Love, leading between them a poor child to the cross and while one is directing his eye to the means of salvation, the other is pointing him to the realms of eternal glory." However the really widespread knowledge of pilgrim and paths imagery in Northern Ireland almost certainly dates from the late nineteenth century, with the introduction into numerous Ulster

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1. See above, p. 207. Temple Smith, 1978,
  2. Peter Burke, Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe,/p. 226.
  3. British Library, C110. C.20
  4. They appear on a number of Irish masonic jewels of this era reproduced in J.H. Lepper and P. Crosslé, History of the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of Ireland, Dublin, 1925, vol I p. 292 and between pp. 344-5.
  5. See above, p. 250.



*This Life is a way,  
or a place divided into two  
ways, like  
Pythagoras's Letter Y.  
broad, 1.  
on the left-hand track;  
narrow, 2. on the right;  
that belongs to Vice, 3.  
this to Virtue, 4.  
Mind, young Man, 5.  
imitate Hercules;  
leave the left hand way,  
turn from Vice;  
the Entrance, 6. is fair,  
but the End, 7.  
is ugly and steep down.  
Go on the right hand,  
though it be thorny, 8.  
no way is unpassable to virtue;  
follow whither Virtue leads*

*Vita hæc est via,  
five Bivium,  
simile  
Litteræ Pithagoricæ Y.  
latum, 1.  
sinistro tramite,  
angustum, 2. dextro;  
ille Vitii, 3. est,  
hic Virtutis, 4.  
Adverte, juvenis, 5.  
imitare Herculem;  
linque sinistram,  
aversare vitium;  
Aditus speciosus, 6.  
sed Exitus, 7.  
turpis & præceps.  
Dextera ingredi,  
ut ut spinosa, 8.  
nulla via in via virtuti;  
sequere quâ viâ ducit virtus  
through*

175. Moral Philosophy/ill on p.139 of John Amos Comenius's Visible World translated into English by Charles Hoole, S. Leacroft, 1777/wood-engraving/actual size/Queen's University, Belfast.

homes of the immensely popular print, The Broad and Narrow Way (ill 176).

In its current form this print appeared in Germany in the early 1860s, then in Holland a few years later. There it was seen by the English preacher Gawin Kirkham, who sold some 4,000 copies of the Dutch print in Britain, toured a large-scale, painted replica of it round the country, and then issued an English version in October 1883. 50,000 copies were sold within five years, and the print has remained on the market ever since.<sup>1</sup> It can still be found in a great many Ulster homes, and something of its influence on the attitudes of its owners is conveyed in Robert Harbinson's description of its irruption into his boyhood.

"Gauguin's bodies were stripped from the walls of my bedroom and hidden away. Instead I nailed up a reproduction of The Broad and Narrow Way .... The moral pointed was simple and aimed at simple people. Two roads wound up from the foreground, to end in their respective dramatic climaxes - one in death and damnation, the other in life and salvation. And those two alternatives, we believed, confronted every human being. Mankind must choose..."<sup>2</sup>

The signpost image and the general attitude of mind associated with it, continued to be intertwined with the political thoughts and imagery of Ulster Protestants in the 1950s and 1960s. In the early 1950s the Brookeborough government issued its signpost poster. In 1956 a cabinet minister in that government asserted that "the fundamental conception of the Ulsterman" is the right to think for oneself, to speak for oneself, the right to differ from one's neighbours, "the right - to use Bunyan's famous words - 'to be a pilgrim.'"<sup>3</sup> And in the 1960s the reuse of the

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1. This history of The Broad and Narrow Way is based on Gawin Kirkham's History and Explanation of the Picture 'The Broad and the Narrow Way' Morgan & Scott 1888, kindly supplied to me by the publishers.
  2. Robert Harbinson (Bryans), Up Spake the Cabin Boy, Faber, 1961, p. 140.
  3. Northern Ireland Government, Why the Border must be, Belfast, 1956, pp. 9-11, quoted in M.W. Heslinga, The Irish Border as a Cultural Divide, Van Gorcum, Assen, 1971, p. 63.





176. The Broad and Narrow Way/four-coloured photo-gravure/18<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> x 14<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> ins (47.5 x 37.7 cms)/ Collection B. Loftus/Photo: Maire Concannon/ Copyright: Marshall, Morgan & Scott.

signpost image was one of several indications that Terence O'Neill's premiership (1963-1969), was less modernising than has been suggested by a number of commentators,<sup>1</sup> and was motivated more out of a continuing concern to maintain the support of the party's traditional following, than to woo international industrialists or Northern Ireland Catholics demanding their civil rights.

Within that traditional following there were three main groups who threatened O'Neill. There were the members of the Unionist Party who were discontent with what they felt to be his liberal tendencies; there was Ian Paisley and his street demonstrations of hardline Protestant fervour; and there was the Northern Ireland Labour Party. In terms of publicity, the first two groups laid heavy emphasis on the use of the Union Jack,<sup>2</sup> while the NILP continued to challenge the Unionists with traditional images produced with some feeling for modern standards of design and communication.

By 1959 the NILP had lost the backing of the Belfast Telegraph,<sup>3</sup> but they showed their continuing ability to win public support with some significant electoral victories between 1958 and 1962. Some of the posters and leaflets used in this period are contained in the party's files deposited in the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland.<sup>4</sup> They are clear, lively, simple and well laid-out pieces of publicity, devoid of sectarian imagery, and many of them were designed and printed by a Belfast printing-firm, selected on the open market, largely because of its ability

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1. Notably by O'Neill himself in his Autobiography, published by Hart-Davis in 1972.
  2. See above, pp. 335-336.
  3. Graham, op cit, p. 81.
  4. In D2704.



to meet deadlines.<sup>1</sup> To this extent NILP publicity was significantly modernised in contrast to that issued by the Unionists. But the party was still unable to achieve one single, centralised theme, partly because of the very disparate elements involved in it, and partly because of its persistent lack of adequate funds. And traditional images continued to obtrude in some of these semi-modernized communications. In 1964 the title of its manifesto was Signposts to the New Ulster.<sup>2</sup>

The extent to which Unionist publicity under O'Neill met these challenges within the Protestant community by reiteration of traditional themes and modes of operation, can best be appreciated by looking at the posters issued by the party in the Stormont election of February 1969. In this election O'Neill was not only faced with unrest within the Protestant community; he was also confronted with the increasingly militant demands of Northern Ireland Catholics for both legislation and action to improve and safeguard their civil rights. But the publicity produced for O'Neill was not designed to woo those Catholics. Both the imagery and the style of production used for it was familiar. There was the traditional Win-With image albeit with a forward-looking slogan (Go ahead with O'Neill - Vote Unionist). There was a photo-poster showing a child and urging consideration of Ulster's future. There was a factory design accompanied by the slogan "Vote for Industrial Expansion. Forward Ulster." And there was a signpost poster.<sup>3</sup>

The genesis of these designs confirms how unmodernised the workings of Unionist Party publicity remained. The first three posters appear to

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1. Conversation with Douglas McIlldoon, former secretary to the NILP, in July 1982.
  2. Graham, op cit, p. 95.
  3. See the photographs in the News Letter, Belfast, 5 Feb 1969, p. 7 and 22 Feb 1969, p. 6. The factory poster is in the Linen Hall Library.

have been prepared by the printer, John Cleland, for the Unionist Party secretary Jim Bailie. Bailie, who had worked for the party since 1942, and was appointed secretary in 1962, controlled its central publicity throughout the 1960s and early 1970s. According to a later employee of the party, Bailie and Cleland were close friends and the usual practice was for Cleland to submit half a dozen designs for a poster, from which Bailie would select what he wanted.

The signpost poster seems to have evolved in a slightly different but equally traditional fashion. On 9 December 1968 O'Neill made his famous Ulster at the crossroads speech in which he announced a number of reforms designed to placate the Civil Rights protesters. The following day the pro-O'Neill News Letter reported this with a drawing of a crossroads sign marked in one direction "Road of Extremism - To Chaos and Confusion", and in the other "Road of Moderation and Co-operation." It was this design which was used for the election poster in February 1969. (It should be remembered that the News Letter's editor at this time was also the chairman of the Unionist Party's Political Education and Publicity Sub-Committee).

The lack of a modernising attitude to publicity during the O'Neill era appears to be further endorsed by the scarcity of government as opposed to party publicity issued at this time. Apart from a few road safety advertisements which were generally part of United Kingdom campaigns, and Ulster Commentary, a glossy, fifties-style monthly magazine, produced by the Northern Ireland Office, and emphasising the more pleasant and Protestant aspects of life in the province, there seems to have been no attempt to invest in visual publicity at a time when it could well have been employed to woo local support for government plans, and outside interest in Northern Ireland as a location for industry or holidays.

In the late 1960s and the early 1970s the outbreak of violence in Northern Ireland, and two specific developments connected with it, were to present enormous challenges to the Ulster Unionists' reiteration of long-accepted imagery, produced in a ritualised traditional fashion. In the first place there was the skilful manipulation of various kinds of publicity by new political groupings within Northern Ireland's Catholic community. And in the second place there was the growing impact on the province of the large-scale, sophisticated advertising which was increasingly being employed by various branches of the British government. It is the first of these developments which will be examined in the section which follows.

The Civil Rights Movement, People's Democracy and Republican Clubs, 1968-73.

As we have already seen, virtually no party political imagery appears to have been produced within Northern Ireland's Catholic community between partition in 1921 and the outbreak of the present troubles in 1968. Moreover Northern Ireland Catholics were also extremely under-represented in the Northern Ireland Civil Service,<sup>1</sup> so that they can have had little or no experience of dealing with the small amount of government publicity produced prior to the 1970s.

Therefore when various political groupings emerged in Northern Ireland's Catholic community in the late 1960s and early 1970s, they turned for their symbolism either to the example of organisations outside the province, or to the political imagery used by Irish Catholics prior to

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1. Bew et al, op cit, pp 76-8 and O'Dowd et al, op cit, p. 15 and pp. 59-60.

partition. In this section we will consider three such groupings who chose the former option. These were the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association (NICRA), People's Democracy (PD), and the Republican Clubs.

NICRA was a new loose coalition of various political interests, which mobilised during this period a very large proportion of Northern Ireland's Catholic population, and a small number of Protestants, in a campaign to win better civil rights for Catholics within the Northern Ireland state. PD was also a new organisation, composed principally of student Marxists. During its period of involvement with NICRA in late 1968 and early 1969 it encouraged that organisation to adopt a programme of militant street demonstrations in the pursuit of its aims. Then, after putting up candidates in the Stormont election of February 1969, PD became increasingly involved in supporting republican organisations during the late 1960s and early 1970s. The Republican Clubs were an old organisation, which acted as the political wing of the IRA, and had been banned in 1967 by the Unionist government. Following the split in the republican movement at the end of 1969, Republican Clubs acted as the political wing of what came to be known as the Official IRA, and aligned itself with socialist policies.

All these groups modelled the bulk of their imagery between 1968 and 1973 on that produced by revolutionary factions, student protest groups and civil rights movements active in Britain, America, Western Europe and the Middle East in the 1960s. This has wrongly been interpreted by some right wing observers as evidence of the presence in Northern Ireland of agitators seeking to provoke an international socialist revolution.<sup>1</sup> There were links between organisations in the Catholic

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1. Ian Greig, Today's Revolutionaries, Foreign Affairs Publishing Co, Richmond, 1970, pp 92-3.

community and various political groups outside the province from the mid-1960s, but these connections were exceedingly haphazard and disorganised. This will become clearly apparent if the main outside contacts of relevance to the production of political imagery by PD, NICRA and Republican Clubs during this period are listed in a roughly chronological sequence.

From 1966 there were a number of informal contacts between the London-based International Socialists and various political activists in Northern Ireland, notably the young socialists in Belfast who were later to form the leadership of People's Democracy, and the Derry socialists like Eamonn McCann who were to play a prominent role in political activity in that city in 1968-9.<sup>1</sup> And by October 1968 anarchist groups in London were taking a strong interest in events in Northern Ireland, and urging their members to provide materials and personal support for the activities of PD.<sup>2</sup>

The first outsiders to provide practical help to the new groupings within the Catholic community appear however to have been French students who had participated in the events of May 1968. They came to Northern Ireland early in 1969, bringing with them examples of the simple silk-screen posters used in their mini-revolution, and instructions on how to create local examples. Although apparently those instructions were in French, the students seem to have had a direct influence on two poster-makers active in Northern Ireland during the late 1960s and early 1970s. They taught one of the girls in the textile department at the Belfast College of Art how to convert her silk-screen for making quick posters.

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1. Paul Arthur, People's Democracy 1968-73, Blackstaff Press, Belfast, 1974, pp. 24-5.
  2. Ibid, p. 30 note 6 and Greig, op cit, pp. 64-5.

She came from Derry and was later responsible for a number of the posters put out by the socialists there in 1969. And in Belfast they met a young art-student who was to make silkscreen posters for the Republican Clubs in 1971 and 1972.<sup>1</sup>

In the summer of 1969 further practical assistance was given by the International Socialists in London, who printed leaflets and broadsheets for People's Democracy in Belfast and the socialists in Derry. Sarah Wilson of the London Poster Workshop Group also helped out in Derry. According to Eamonn McCann's account of the activities of the Derry Citizens Defence Committee during August 1969 she

"appeared complete with a silk-screen. We found her a hall to work in, and helped by a team of children, she produced a series of striking and effective posters which soon festooned the area."<sup>2</sup>

Meanwhile the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association, in which People's Democracy played an important role between October 1968 and the spring of 1969, was building up support groups for itself in America and Europe. The American group was particularly important, for it provided the bulk of NICRA's funds, enabling it in April 1969 to establish an office and employ a full-time organiser. In 1971 the Americans also provided NICRA, somewhat by accident, with a cartoonist. He was Dan O'Neill, who had previously drawn the Mickey Mouse cartoon-strip for the Little Red Book. He was one of a group of members from the American support-group making a visitation to NICRA, and, as often happened, he stayed on in the province for a while to give some practical assistance.

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1. Mike Catto, Art in Ulster: 2, Blackstaff Press, Belfast, 1977, p. 128; conversation with Mike Catto 29 July 1977; and conversation with a former designer of Republican Clubs posters on 31 Jan 1974.
  2. McCann, op cit, p. 66.



His cartoons were chiefly employed in NICRA's newsheet, but one of them was featured on posters advertising civil rights marches in 1971. It showed a soldier carrying a gun with the barrel tied in a knot.<sup>1</sup>

Finally in 1972, a London friend of one of the poster designers then working for the Republican Clubs lent the organisation an industrial silk-screen, apparently out of personal sympathy rather than political commitment, for he was a member of the Labour Party, rather than one of the New Left organisations more frequently involved with republican and socialist groupings in Northern Ireland.<sup>2</sup>

What emerges from this history of the contacts between the image-makers in NICRA, PD and Republican Clubs and political groups outside the province is that such contacts were few and haphazard. In the case of PD and Republican Clubs, the practical assistance rendered by members of outside organisations was valuable but not crucial. And in the case of NICRA, the contributions made by the cartoonist Dan O'Neill formed a small and relatively unimportant part of the imagery which they put out during this period. Far more important for all these organisations, were the images and political ideas gathered by designers in Northern Ireland from a knowledge of outside political groups derived from books, the mass media and the general mood of their generation at that time.

Indeed the earliest images used by these new groupings appeared well before the advent of assistance from French or English poster-designers. Between October 1968 and January 1969 a number of simple placards were used in demonstrations by People's Democracy. Most of

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1. Conversations with Madge Davison, secretary of NICRA, 21 Jan 1974 and 27 May 1982. The Dan O'Neill posters are in the Linen Hall Library.
  2. Information from a former designer of posters for the Republican Clubs, 1 April 1982. This silkscreen led a chequered existence. In the mid-1970s it was used by a freelance printer who worked for a number of political groups in Northern Ireland, and it was then reclaimed by Republican Clubs, who took it to their print-works in Dublin.

these featured a simple hand symbol accompanied by a brief, punchy slogan such as "One Man, One Vote" (ill 177) or "Craig Out."<sup>1</sup> Some showed a boot trampling democracy underfoot.<sup>2</sup> These crude, effective designs, printed with a silkscreen, were clearly influenced by the French posters of May 1968, which deliberately espoused such simple images and means of manufacture, in the pursuit of maximum impact and democracy of both communication and production.<sup>3</sup> They were the work of John D. Murphy, a printer who was a prominent member of People's Democracy. Looking back on them some seven years later, he believed he had seen the French posters on television, and had taught himself the necessary techniques from books.<sup>4</sup>

Others who observed or produced such images in this period confirm that the way in which outside influences reached Murphy was fairly typical. Mike Catto stresses the importance of the mass media in disseminating knowledge of the imagery of May 1968;<sup>5</sup> and a designer who worked for Republican Clubs in the early 1970s told me that he owned copies of books which illustrated the French posters, explained the political concepts underlying their mode of design and gave instructions in the basic techniques required for their production.<sup>6</sup> He also possessed a book illustrating the posters produced in Cuba following the revolution

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1. See the photographs in the News Letter, Belfast, 7 Dec 1968, p. 1 and 9 Dec 1968, p. 1.
  2. See the photograph in the News Letter, Belfast, 17 Oct 1968, p. 8.
  3. There may also have been some memory in them of a striking poster produced for the German Communist Party by John Heartfield, the outstanding anti-Nazi propagandist and master of photo-montage. (The poster is illustrated in Yanker, op cit, p. 46.) An exhibition of Heartfield's work was shown in London in 1967-8 by the Arts Council of Great Britain. The hand emblem has however been commonplace in political posters used throughout the world since at least the First World War (Yanker, op cit, p. 34).
  4. Conversation in May 1976.
  5. loc cit
  6. The books in question were Atelier Populaire, Texts & Posters, Dobson Books, 1969 and Jean Cassou et al, Art and Confrontation, New York Graphic Society, ca 1968.



177. Civil rights and People's Democracy Protestors/  
Oct 1968/Photo: Topix/reproduced on p.54 of The  
Irish Question, produced by Holmes Macdougall,  
Edinburgh, for the Schools Council, in 1977.

there in 1959.<sup>1</sup> Indeed by the early 1970s there seems to have been a widespread superficial knowledge in the province of imagery associated with political struggles elsewhere. In 1972 an interned member of the Provisionals pinned up a Che Guevara handkerchief above a press-photo of his own organisation's leaders,<sup>2</sup> and in 1973 a hand-done poster for Provisional IRA Easter week commemorations featured a Che Guevara-type freedom fighter.<sup>3</sup>

The awareness of outside political symbolism amongst the image-makers working for NICRA, PD and Republican Clubs during this period may have been fleeting, fragmentary and superficial, but it did help to foster interest in totally new forms of publicity in Northern Ireland's Catholic community. Indeed the study of developments outside the province was evidence of innovation in itself. And it encouraged the production of images by NICRA, PD and Republican Clubs which were modernised in both their interest in the creation of a public image, and their use of non-traditional symbolism.

From their study of publicity elsewhere, these groups came to realise the value of a public image, and particularly of an international public image. This was a publicity weapon hitherto virtually ignored by both communities in Northern Ireland. NICRA in particular circulated its imagery very widely in the attempt to swing international opinion behind the causes it espoused. Thus its anti-internment posters were produced in foreign language editions (ill 178 ), and linked the campaign on this issue to international events.<sup>4</sup> In taking this course of action

1. Dugald Stermer, The Art of Revolution, Pall Mall, 1970.  
 2. Army record photograph N1-72-6-8/35 in the Imperial War Museum, London.  
 3. In the Linen Hall Library.

4. Such as the poster urging a boycott of Britain at the Olympic Games, in which a pair of hands is manacled with the linked rings of the Olympic symbol, and Britain is awarded 1st, 2nd and 3rd medals for 1000 internees, Bloody Sunday and lack of freedom. This poster is in the Linen Hall Library.



# irland

Kampen för medborgerliga  
rättigheter fortsätter

MÖTE MED KEVIN MC CORRY  
från medborgarrättsrörelsen  
i Nordirland

Stockholm

Åsö gymnasium

torsd. 3 maj, kl 19

Uppsala

Universitetet, Sal X

fred. 4 maj, kl 19

Irländsk musik



Arr: Irlandgruppen

178. Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association/poster advertising meetings in Sweden addressed by NICRA spokesman, Kevin McCorry/1972-3/black on yellow lithograph/17<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> x 12<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub> ins (45 x 30.8 cms)/Linen Hall Library, Belfast/Photo:Sean Watters.

NICRA was very largely influenced by the example of the black civil rights movement in America.

A number of the image-makers working for these groups also learnt from the example of groups outside Northern Ireland how to develop certain forms of modern political symbolism previously unknown in the province. These were: perversions of government imagery; militant visualisations of social issues; and designs making a humanitarian appeal for support for prisoners.

Some of the perversions of government imagery were simply borrowed from groups elsewhere. Thus the Union Jack/swastika emblem used by NICRA members in 1971 to symbolise their support for the anti-internment rent and rates strike,<sup>1</sup> and their opposition to the Unionist government's Ulster '71 celebrations,<sup>2</sup> was originally put into circulation by the Troops Out movement in Britain in 1969.<sup>3</sup> But other images of this kind used in Northern Ireland were innovatory in their own right. Particularly effective were the Republican Clubs' adaptation of a government newspaper advertisement in August 1971 (ills 180 and 181), and NICRA's new version of the royal coat of arms, first used on the cover of their pamphlet Proposals for Peace (ill 179) issued in March 1973.

Indeed it is important to emphasise that the relationship between the imagery employed by groups like PD, NICRA and Republican Clubs, and similar visual propaganda elsewhere, was not one of simple cause and effect. The example of outsiders opened up certain forms and techniques of political propaganda for these Northern Ireland groups, but their

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1. The writer was given stickers bearing this emblem which were said by the donor to have been issued by the Derry Civil Rights Association in August 1971 as part of their anti-internment campaign.
  2. A poster using this emblem in an attack on Ulster '71 is illustrated in Civil Rights, Belfast, 24 Feb 1973, p. 7.
  3. Conversation with Jack Clafferty, February 1980.





# PROPOSALS FOR PEACE

DEMOCRACY AND COMMUNITY RECONCILIATION

Presented  
to the People of N. Ireland  
by N.I.C.R.A.  
March 1973

BELFAST  
N. I. C. R. A. OFFICE, 2, MARQUIS STREET  
20 p.

72 ANONYMOUS

*Judge, Jury and Executioner:  
Don't Fraternise*

c1971; screenprint on paper,  
original paper size 76.2 x  
50.8 cms; reproduced by  
courtesy of the Trustees of  
the Imperial War Museum

# JUDGE JURY AND EXECUTIONER



# DON'T FRATERNISE

180. Peoples Democracy poster/as reproduced in Mike Catto, Art in Ulster: 2, Blackstaff Press, Belfast, 1977, p.127.



His job is difficult enough !  
Help him and the others in the  
Security Forces **by keeping**  
**off the streets at night**

Issued in the interests of public safety by the Ministry of Home Affairs

181. Government of Northern Ireland, Ministry of Home Affairs/advertisement in the Belfast Telegraph, 12 Aug 1971, p.5/16 x 8<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> ins (40.6 x 21 cms)/ Photo: B. Loftus.

development of them was often idiosyncratic. In particular they made frequent and effective use of political cartoons and caricatures. This is very apparent in such PD posters as The Mad Major, or The Malone Road fiddles while the Falls Road burns (ill 182). (Both were endlessly reprinted, according to John D. Murphy.) Cartoons were also frequently featured in the posters issued by Provisional Sinn Fein at this time, and the numerous newsheets produced by political groups in both communities, particularly in the early 1970s.<sup>1</sup>

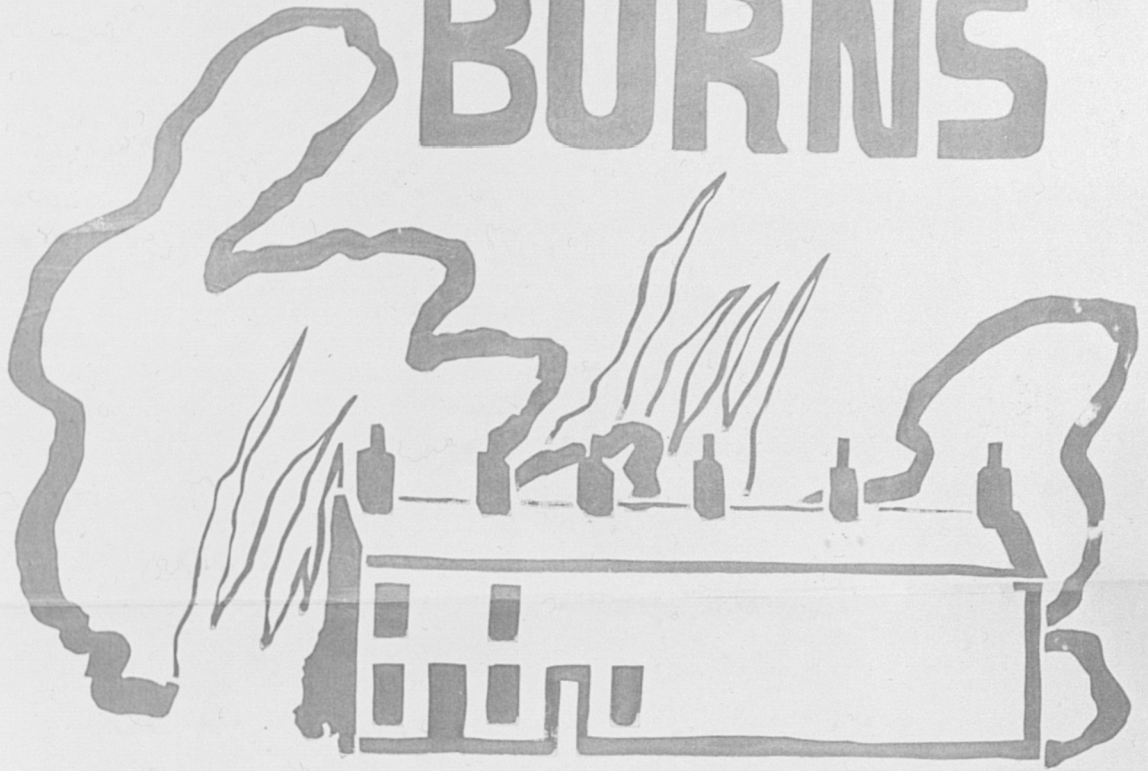
Nevertheless some of the imagery produced by PD, NICRA and the Republican Clubs depended heavily on outside examples. The PD and Republican Clubs publicity dealing with social issues in Belfast, such as a proposed increase in the cost of bus-fares,<sup>2</sup> housing, a dock strike and the threat of a ring road round the city (ill 183),<sup>3</sup> were virtually unprecedented in the province's political publicity, by virtue of both their subject-matter and their aggressive imagery, in which fist after fist descends on the targets of the campaigns. They drew strongly on the posters employed in France in May 1968. And NICRA's anti-internment posters and Christmas cards both borrowed and imitated the emotive, starkly black and white graphic imagery of barbed wire fences and figures clutching prison bars, used the world over by political and humanitarian groups of every description, since the time of the Cold War (ills 184).

New too was the aggressive fashion in which these and more overtly political posters were employed. In Belfast not only did they appear at

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1. On the Provisionals' posters, see below, p.663 ff. I hope to deal with the newsheets elsewhere, in a study of press pictures relating to the Northern Ireland troubles.
  2. A PD campaign organised by John D. Murphy in November 1968. He supplied cards, stickers, 5,000 leaflets and 400 posters (Arthur, op cit, p. 95 and conversation with John D. Murphy, May 1976).
  3. Posters on all these issues were produced by the Republican Clubs and can be found in the Linen Hall Library.

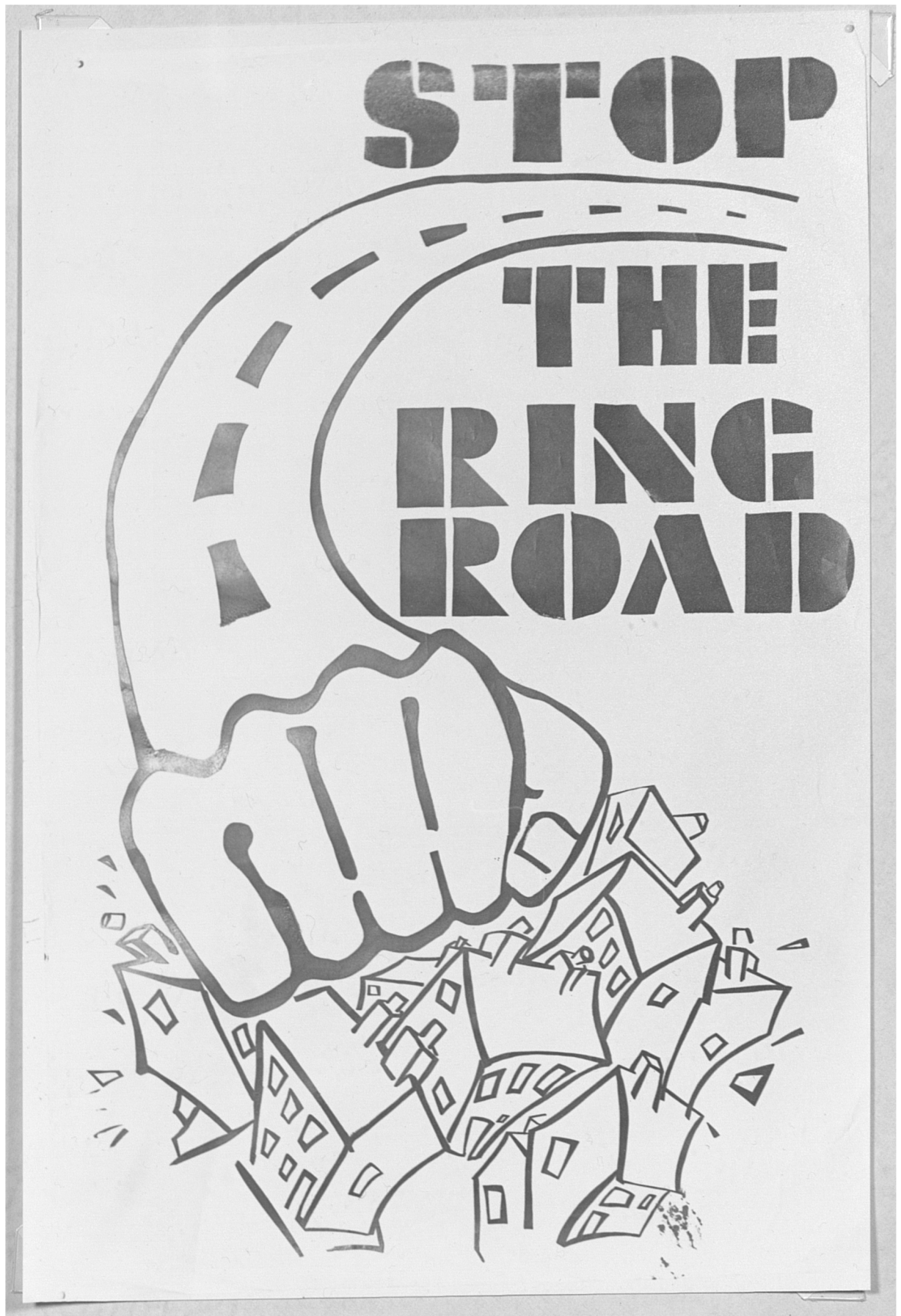


# THE FALLS BURNS



# MALONE ROAD FIDDLES

182. Peoples Democracy poster/1969/red on white/silk screen/29 x 19 ins (73.7 x 48.2 cms)/Linen Hall Library, Belfast/Photo: Peter McGuinness.



183. Republican Clubs/poster opposing proposed Belfast ring road/ca 1973/blue on white/silk screen/30 x 20 ins (76.2 x 50.8 cms)/collection: B. Loftus/ Photo: Pete McGuinness.



NORTHERN IRELAND CIVIL RIGHTS ASSOCIATION

*CHRISTMAS 1972*



END REPRESSION  
END INTERNMENT

184. Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association/Christmas card/1972/black and white/lithograph/actual size/collection: B. Loftus.

demonstrations, or in windows and on walls in strong republican areas, but they were also occasionally posted in areas of maximum government power, such as the entrance gates to the parliament buildings at Stormont.<sup>1</sup> Posters were also distributed to branches of all three of these organisations outside Belfast. Attempts by British soldiers to remove such placards led some fly-posters to mix with their paste powdered glass, in the shape of ground-up light-bulbs and even, on occasion, rat poison as well.<sup>2</sup>

Yet simultaneously the influence of outside political organisations on these groups led them to use imagery which appeared in some respects to be the very reverse of modern. Thus a number of their designers absorbed from their study of recent international leftwing imagery the concept of visual propaganda which rejected technology and by simplicity of means and message allowed the democratic involvement in its manufacture and use of rank-and-file supporters of a political cause, without any specialised training. This was an idea which had been promoted by a number of political groups in Britain and Western Europe during the 1960s,<sup>3</sup> but which failed to make a widespread impact in Northern Ireland until its exemplary promotion by the French "revolutionaries" of May 1968. While NICRA followed established political practice by employing a single designer whose images were commissioned and vetted by their executive committee,<sup>4</sup> the designers working for both PD and Republican Clubs made efforts to ensure democratic involvement in the images they were producing. In the case of PD, this was an aim shared by the group as a whole, for

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1. There is a photo of PD members plastering posters on the front entrance to Stormont in the News Letter, Belfast, 25 Oct 1968, p. 2.
  2. Conversation on 1 April 1982.
  3. See Peter Stansill and David Zane Mairowitz (eds) BAMN, Outlaw manifestoes and Ephemera, 1965-70, Penguin, 1971.
  4. In practice this process was less formal than it appears in theory, for the designer was himself a member of the NICRA executive committee.

much of its general political activity in the early days was deliberately modelled on the kind of democracy aspired to in France in May 1968.<sup>1</sup> Indeed John D. Murphy, who provided the equipment and technical instruction required for the printing of most of the posters used by PD in Belfast prior to his internment in August 1971, acquired from some of his political colleagues the idea of teaching a wide range of people to use simple silk-screens, so that they could give an effective public image to the political ideas and actions they supported. He held silkscreen workshops<sup>2</sup> which attracted a reasonable attendance, including a number of republican women, and it seems clear from my own difficulties in establishing who printed which PD posters, that a fair number of people involved with the organisation tried their hand at this kind of publicity.<sup>3</sup> Moreover a designer who made a number of PD posters between 1969 and 1971 recalls that the cheapest possible materials were used - such as inks made from wallpaper paste and dyes - so that the posters could be made almost anywhere. He and others would move round from flat to flat in Belfast, sometimes producing as many as twenty or thirty designs in a week, generally in very short runs, as the paper stencils most frequently employed tended to disintegrate by the time a hundred posters had been printed.<sup>4</sup> These techniques clearly had a particularly strong appeal for the members of PD who worked with republicans behind the barricades in Catholic West Belfast in 1968 and 1969. They were also very attractive to Republican Clubs, who, as an

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1. See Arthur, *op cit*, pp. 21-2 and 30-31; also Michael Farrell's claim that the formation of PD was considerably influenced by the Sorbonne Assembly (*New Left Review* no 55, 1969, quoted in James Thompson, *The Civil Rights movement in Northern Ireland*, MA Thesis, Queen's University Belfast, 1973, p. 88).
  2. There is an advertisement from one such workshop in PD's newsheet, *Free Citizen*, 30 Jan 1970.
  3. Conversation with John D. Murphy, May 1976. It must be remembered however that former PD members are often extremely nervous about discussing their past activities and tend therefore to a certain vagueness about the involvement of themselves and others in this field.
  4. Conversation 1 April 1982.

illegal organisation during this period, (the ban imposed on them in 1967 was not lifted until 1973), were forced to operate in a clandestine fashion.

Between 1970 and 1972 cheap silkscreen posters were made by at least three different designers working for the Republican Clubs. One had formerly done this kind of work for PD; a second learnt the necessary techniques from John D. Murphy (whose equipment was made available to Republican Clubs at this time); and a third appears to have picked up his skills from the books he owned, a year's art-school training and employment in the field of graphic design. These designers, like John D. Murphy, ran silkscreen workshops in which they tried to pass on their skills to others, and for a while groups initiated by them in the New Lodge and Markets areas of Belfast did turn out their own posters. However they found it increasingly difficult to convince the leadership of the Clubs that this kind of publicity was important and merited adequate financial support. Nevertheless their personal convictions about the importance of images and art produced for and by the people remained strong at the time when I talked to them many years later. Indeed two out of the three were still pursuing these aims in a non-political setting.<sup>1</sup>

This deliberate adoption of ostensibly traditional, unspecialised modes of artisan production by designers whose technical training<sup>2</sup> and political involvement made them very much members of the modern world places a very large question mark beside the all-too-frequent rigid opposition of modernisation and traditionalism. So too does the new interest by their political groups in that 'traditional' vehicle of

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1. Conversations on 31 January 1974, 5 February 1981 and 1 April 1982.

2. See below, p. 575.

political feeling, the march, to which they turned initially in imitation of the civil rights movement in America.

Indeed a major part of the attraction of NICRA and PD, and to a certain extent Republican Clubs during this period, was the sense of enjoyment derived from such street action. A designer who joined PD fresh out of school in the autumn of 1969, and then switched his allegiance to Republican Clubs two years later, had vivid memories of the social life which for him was the great attraction of the PD marches. Every march was followed by parties and pub sessions, which were both vastly enjoyable and important occasions for sharing and exchanging political ideas.<sup>1</sup> And the marches themselves created a strong feeling of solidarity and achievement, particularly for members of PD, who carried great displays of well-made placards and banners<sup>2</sup> as well as the red flags of socialism and the black flags of anarchy. John D. Murphy recalled the sense of euphoria engendered by one such march.

"I remember particularly on one march to Dublin which was really a very marvellous thing, the proliferation of red flags. I remember walking underneath the canopy over the customs-post ...singing the Internationale, with the red flags, and the banners and the placards and a few trendy lefties who had come over from London, and people were quite gaily dressed in the oldfashioned sense of the word, and there was quite a magnificent sort of feeling about the thing, there was the sound of the singing resonating off the canopy, and the weather was fantastic, and just the whole thing was so heady..."<sup>3</sup>

The same kind of euphoria and sense of achievement must also have

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1. Ibid.

2. Every PD branch had its own banner; many of them were produced by a solicitor who used a form of iron-on material to achieve highly professional results.

3. Conversation May 1976.

been experienced by NICRA members participating in such marches, for Madge Davison recalls ruefully that the NICRA banners were always stolen as souvenirs after the march was over.<sup>1</sup>

Much of the sense of achievement engendered by these marches also derived from their progression through areas hitherto regarded as the territory of Northern Ireland's Protestants and therefore debarred to Catholic demonstrations. But herein lay one of the root causes of the disintegration of NICRA and PD, for it was fatally easy for both Protestants and Catholics to see these marches as part of the traditional challenge and counter-challenge made by orange and green parades. This tendency was apparent from very early on. In July 1968 the civil rights march from Coalisland to Dungannon was attended by bands playing Catholic and nationalist tunes.<sup>2</sup> By the time of the march from Belfast to Derry in 1969, Protestants were strongly resisting the routing of the marchers through Protestant-dominated towns.

In part the decline of PD and NICRA can be attributed to this appropriation of modernised civil rights imagery to Northern Ireland's traditional sectarian conflict. However, for the image-makers working for these groups, this process was more gradual than the sudden death in 1969 usually described by commentators.<sup>3</sup> The appropriation of civil rights marches to sectarian conflict, and the subsequent re-emergence of militant republicanism in 1969 were crucial, but so too was the introduction of internment in August 1971. It frightened off many of the PD image-makers, and drove the remainder into the arms of Republican Clubs or Provisional Sinn Fein. It also enabled the alignment of NICRA's civil

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1. Conversation 27 May 1982.

2. Thompson, op cit, pp. 57-8.

3. eg Bew, Gibbon and Patterson, op cit, p. 172.



rights style internment protests with traditional, patterned reactions to the plight of republican prisoners. It is significant that of the anti-internment posters produced by NICRA, the most popular was one which simply carried photographs of women internees. It was reprinted five times. As the usual NICRA run for a poster during this period was 10,000, this was evidence of remarkable popularity. Indeed, many women members of Provisional Sinn Fein were cutting off references to NICRA and placing the poster in their windows. It may simply have been popular with them because of its human appeal, or because some of the women represented on it had been involved with the republican movement. But it should also be remembered that photo-posters of dead or imprisoned republicans had been traditional from 1916 onwards.<sup>1</sup>

PD never really recovered from internment, but NICRA continued to be active in the early 1970s. For the image-makers working for them and for Republican Clubs, final disillusionment came in 1973 and early 1974. NICRA decided to end all marches in 1974, because they were being used as cover for attacks on the security forces by the Provisionals, and people's lives were being put at risk. Placards for such demonstrations were therefore no longer required, and the money needed for visual propaganda was also running out. For the few items they produced after this time, NICRA turned not to their own designer, but to images supplied by the print co-operative now producing their work, and to the very effective symbols being produced by the Troops Out Movement in England.

For Republican Clubs this was a time of bitter splits and feuds, when even being a poster-designer could get you killed. Embezzlement was

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1. Conversations with Madge Davison, secretary of NICRA, 21 Jan 1974 and 27 May 1982. The most popular poster used by NICRA for its annual commemorations of the Bloody Sunday shootings in Derry, was also one which simply featured photos of the thirteen victims.

also rife, and the organisation was increasingly coming under the control of an authoritarian Dublin leadership, which saw the proliferation of small local groups and democratically structured operations as a threat to their attempt to build a legal political party, which could participate in the series of elections in 1973-5. The image-makers of the early years left, for these reasons and because of personal developments in their own lives. The hopes and enjoyment of the late 1960s had disappeared, here as throughout the western world. The political party was over, and there was a polarisation between those who stuck to a grim political struggle, and those who turned to community activities of various kinds as fields of greater personal and social reward.

It is worth considering finally the kind of social class to which these image-makers belonged, for there is considerable controversy about the social background to the new political groups which developed in the Catholic community in the 1960s.

Recently Paul Bew, Peter Gibbon and Henry Patterson have questioned the generally accepted theory, that the civil rights movement occurred largely because of the growth of a Catholic middle-class, hastened by the improved educational facilities following the Education Act of 1944, and willing to seek reforms within the Northern Ireland state.<sup>1</sup> While these authors' stress on the importance of the facilitating circumstances which enabled the radical elements in the civil rights movement to emerge to prominence appears entirely valid, as does their stress on the simultaneous growth in the proportion of the manual workers in the Catholic community, whose discontent formed the basis for mass support of the civil

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1. op cit, pp. 163-172.

rights campaign, their attempt to disprove the widespread existence of a more radical leadership in the Catholic middle-classes in the late 1960s and early 1970s, appears to be based on shaky foundations.

Certainly those involved in the making of images for PD, NICRA and Republican Clubs in the period between 1968 and the end of 1973 were a new generation, largely encouraged in their design skills and political attitudes by new opportunities in education and employment briefly available in the late 1960s. Of the seven designers known to me who worked for these groupings, two were trained architects, two had some form of art training, and one had been to university. Moreover they could turn to three new, radically-oriented Catholic printers who established themselves between the mid-1960s and early 1970s, availing themselves of the cheap technology which was developed at this time. And these printers themselves were willing to aid the new political groups with designs and technical advice. These were very different figures from the doctors, lawyers, publicans and newspaper-owners who formed the backbone of traditional Irish nationalism in the north.<sup>1</sup> It was not education and jobs as such which were important for access to new ideas about politics and imagery, but particular kinds of education and jobs, closely related to the general though brief expansion in the media and the visual arts which took place during this period. Bew and his colleagues, by basing their analysis on statistics, major political developments, and the occasional general comment made by observers at the time, have missed limited but crucial cultural developments which took place during this period.

The imagery of PD, NICRA and Republican Clubs at this time was something generally very new in Northern Ireland politics. Its makers

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1. Rumpf and Hepburn, op cit, pp. 188-9.

were a new generation, with a certain degree of professional training in the field of design and communication. They broke with traditionalism in their interest in developments elsewhere; in their awareness of the need for a public image, particularly an international public image; and in their adoption of new forms of political symbolism. They were able to do so because of a conjunction of circumstances. For a brief space in time there was an opportunity to both train and find work in new areas of design of communications; there was a vacuum in political imagery caused by the lack of publicity traditions in the Catholic community, and the confusion in the republican movement; and there was a strong media interest in student and civil rights movements, which PD and NICRA turned to particular advantage.

The intervention of these groups in the visual publicity of Northern Ireland's Catholic community was limited and brief, and not all of their approaches were quite as modern as they sometimes appeared. While their rejection of technology for unspecialised democratic artisan production was less a reversion to local traditionalism than an assimilation of the rejection of the excesses of modernisation elsewhere, local factions soon appropriated the new imagery to traditional ends, or produced their own versions of traditional political symbolism. But the posters and leaflets put out by PD, NICRA and Republican Clubs during this period had a lingering effect on subsequent imagery employed by Northern Ireland Catholics, and provided a strong challenge to the publicists of the Unionist Party in the Protestant community.

#### Unionist and government publicity, 1969-1972

By the second half of 1969 it was evident that the largely traditional attitude towards publicity hitherto held by successive Unionist governments

in Northern Ireland was no longer adequate. The civil rights movement of the late 1960s and the eruption of violence in Derry and Belfast in 1969 had a four-fold impact on the Unionists in this respect. They were in themselves evidence that the long-standing political status quo in the province had been massively disrupted; they threw up propaganda challenges; they attracted an increasing amount of attention from local and international mass-media, then enjoying a period of rapid expansion; and they placed a heavy onus on the British government to become involved in Northern Ireland affairs.

A number of moves were made therefore, to improve Unionist and government publicity at this crucial juncture. In the summer of 1969 a young journalist "of standing and experience in his profession" was appointed Public Relations officer for the Unionist Party, to project a good party image to the national newspaper and television companies worldwide.<sup>1</sup> In September of the same year the Stormont government produced its first piece of visual propaganda, designed to turn support away from the civil rights movement. Titled Ulster: The Facts, it contrasted the famous Clive Limpkin picture of Bernadette Devlin smashing paving-stones in Derry<sup>2</sup> with a photo of an injured RUC man, and commented on the disparity between Devlin's student grant and the policeman's pay. And in December 1969 a Northern Ireland Community Relations Commission (NICRC), was established. It was answerable to a Minister of Community Relations appointed at the same time, and its brief included the preparation of publicity material.

These initiatives may well appear like attempts at modernisation, with their stress on public relations, employment of a professional

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1. John F. Harbinson, The Ulster Unionist Party 1882-1973, Blackstaff Press, Belfast, 1973, p. 47.

2. Reproduced in Clive Limpkin, The Battle of Bogside, Penguin, 1972.

journalist, use of the media, and communication with the general public. However the first two moves, which had been organised by the Unionists themselves, rapidly succumbed to traditional attitudes. The new Unionist Public Relations officer resigned in August 1970

"because of alleged interference by members of the Executive Committee and the Publicity Sub-Committee"<sup>1</sup>

The Ulster: The Facts leaflet displayed its roots in popular Protestant imagery with its very emphasis on factuality and an either/or judgement. The Stormont government produced no further visual propaganda until the summer of 1971. Only the Community Relations Commission, established by the British government, attempted for a brief period to use modernised imagery to counter the poor publicity surrounding the Unionist government.

The appointment of the NICRC and the Community Relations minister was announced in August 1969 by James Callaghan after his visit to riot-torn Derry and Belfast.<sup>2</sup> Both the Minister and the eight Commissioners were from Northern Ireland, but it was soon clear that they were turning for inspiration to parallel operations elsewhere, notably the race-relations programmes in Britain and America (one of the Commissioners, Maurice Hayes, had visited the United States, where he had been impressed by responses to black violence).<sup>3</sup> The influence of such outside exemplars on the Commission's publicity is apparent from both the quantity and the nature of it. It is clear from the minutes of the NICRC that its members were from the very start much concerned with the visual appearance of the material they put out. At the first meeting they declared that a

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1. Harbinson, loc cit.

2. O'Dowd et al, op cit, p. 151.

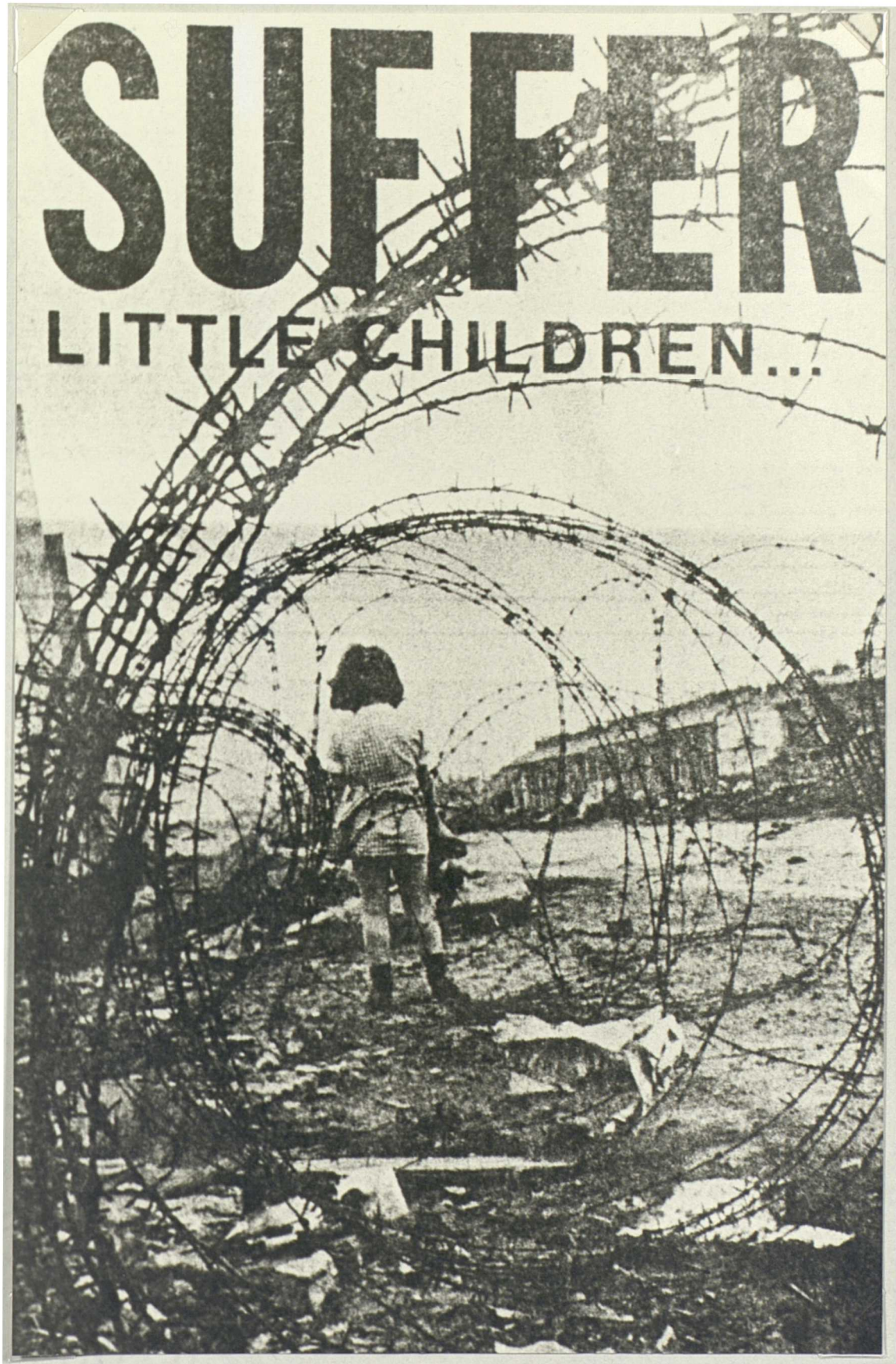
3. Ibid, p. 152.



proposed leaflet giving information about legislation should be "colourful and arresting"; at the second, after viewing a design for a symbol for the Commission's notepaper, they said they would prefer "something simpler and more visually compelling".<sup>1</sup> The same concern for direct and effective imagery seems to have been carried through into the Commission's advertisements inserted in the local press in July 1970, in an attempt to induce calm at a time when sectarian feelings normally ran high. These designs, which were prepared by the/<sup>Belfast</sup> advertising agency A.V Browne, successfully fused traditional and modern imagery, employing both the gospel quotation "Suffer little children" and that modern symbol of peace, the dove. They also kept a strong grip on reality. It is instructive to compare their totally convincing little girl behind the barbed wire (ill 185), with the cutely-posed middle-class miss used in the 7 Years is Enough campaign in 1976 (ill 186). The same strong common-sense can be found in the newspaper advertisement issued by the Commission in September 1971, which carried a photo of bomb blast victims, juxtaposed with four views on violence. The picture they chose is both moving and dignified, stimulating careful reflection, rather than angry reaction.

These campaigns were expensive however. The estimates for the July advertisements totalled just over £7,000 and out of a total expenditure of approximately £50,000 in their first year of existence, the NICRC spent just over £9,000 on advertising and publicity.<sup>2</sup> The Commissioners were sceptical whether this expenditure was worth it, despite being frequently

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1. Northern Ireland Community Relations Commission, Minutes, 22 Dec 1969, 8:9 and 22 Jan 1970, 3:3
  2. NICRC, Minutes, 9 June 1970, 4:5, and 3 July 1970, 16:3; and First Annual Report, March 1971, p. 32.



185. Northern Ireland Community Relations Commission/  
detail from advertisement in the Belfast Telegraph,  
10 July 1970, p.5/size of whole advertisement 16 x  
7½ ins (40.7 x 19 cms)/Photo: Maire Concannon.





For seven years the men of violence have given us nothing — but more violence. In seven years more than 1,600 are dead, as many as 17,000 have been injured or maimed for life and hundreds are in prison.

The Security Forces are doing all in their powers to deal with the men of violence. We must as a community reject the criminals.

For how long are our children to be raised in violence?

To suffer the effects of violence?

To look forward to nothing but more violence? —

IT'S OUR CHOICE — BUT...

**7 years  
is enough**



186. Northern Ireland Office/full-page advertisement in the Belfast Telegraph, 21 Oct 1976, p.5/26 x 16½ ins (66 x 42 cms)/Photo: Maire Concannon.

urged to undertake more work of this nature, particularly on television. Consultation with those dealing with race relations in England led them to believe that such advertising required extensive preliminary research to ensure that it would not be counter-productive, and that the large sums of money involved might be better spent otherwise.<sup>1</sup>

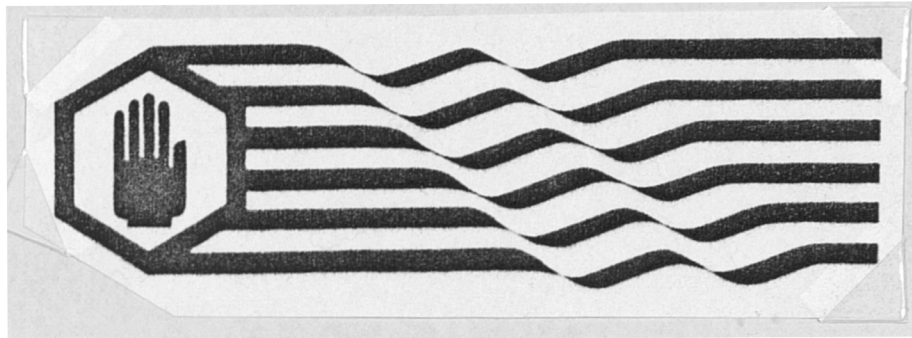
The NICRC was a hybrid organisation, half-British, half-Ulster. In its publicity it was willing to employ local religious traditions. But otherwise its attitude was totally modern, with its stress on professionally-produced imagery, appealing to the widest possible public, and developed with a careful eye on similar initiatives elsewhere.

A similar hybrid operation, this time with local traditionalism predominant, was Ulster 71. This massive exercise, originally conceived by Terence O'Neill,<sup>2</sup> before the seriousness of Ulster's internal dissensions was apparent, was intended to celebrate the first fifty years of Northern Ireland's existence in a manner analogous to the Festival of Britain in 1951, or the Canadian Expo of 1967. It centred round an exhibition in Belfast's Botanic Gardens, although numerous local festivals, sporting and cultural events came under its umbrella. The visual imagery of Ulster 71 was created by both local and British hands. Ralph Dobson, a local designer, was responsible for the Ulster 71 symbol, presented to the world early in 1970 (ill 187). Robert McKinstry, a local architect, had overall responsibility for the layout in the Botanic Gardens. Peter Daniell and Giles Velande of the Central Office of Information designed the main exhibition. Local artists Desmond Kinney, Colin Middleton, Ralph Dobson, David Crone, T.P Flanagan and Denis McBride, were commissioned to

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1. NICRC, First Annual Report, p. 12.

2. Ray Managh, "Ulster's 'Expo' Dream Fades", Belfast Telegraph, 18 Feb 1970, p. 4.



187. Ralph Dobson for the Government of Northern Ireland/  
Ulster 71 symbol/red on white.

paint landscapes representative of the six counties for this exhibition. In addition three landscapes by Ulster artists were reproduced on the stamps which the Post Office issued to commemorate the event. Leaflet and newspaper advertising was designed partly by the Central Office of Information and partly by local firms.

It is scarcely surprising that with so many hands involved, the visual image which came over was far from uniform. The exhibition symbol, with its heavy stress on the red hand, was neatly summed up by one commentator as

"a red and white variation on the kind of motif that some firms use to sell tractors and fertiliser,"<sup>1</sup>

the sort of motif you might expect in farming Ulster, with its numerous agricultural shows. The main exhibition was a glossy and sophisticated production which attempted to avoid political controversy, but nevertheless was heavily weighted towards the visual traditions of the majority (while the design was carried out by the COI, the story-line was composed by the local committee). The slogans in the Tunnel of hate were carefully emasculated, and referred to universal, rather than Ulster problems; the figures in the Hall of Fame stressed figures linked with British rather than Irish traditions, Lord Montgomery rather than Ian Paisley or Bernadette Devlin; and the general emphasis on maps, landscapes and industry reflected the preoccupations of the Protestant rather than the Catholic community.

The same bias can be found in the publicity for Ulster 71. The COI's cool and classy brochure did make gestures to the minority, with its illustrations of a dolmen, a high cross and St Columba, but the fussy,

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1. "Ulster 71", Fortnight, Belfast, 28 May 1971, pp. 14-15.



badly-designed and over-coloured leaflet produced locally showed no awareness of minority traditions. This overall bias toward the Protestant community was perhaps only to be expected in an event commemorating one of their great historic triumphs.

Ulster 71 was an easy target for scorn. Most of its attackers concentrated however on its inopportune timing, rather than its actual content. Cartoons and comments in the independent magazine Fortnight, Free Citizen, the organ of People's Democracy, and in the Loyalist News, all pointed out that the real imagery of Ulster in 1971 consisted of flying stones and rubber bullets.<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless Ulster 71 proved to be genuinely popular. The Belfast exhibition was open from 14 May to 19 September. During that period it was visited by over 700,000 people. Even allowing for miscounting, repeated visits, a certain number of foreigners and 16,000 schoolchildren, this is a staggering total for a province with a population of 1½ million, and provides some justification for the expenditure of over £800,000 on the total project.<sup>2</sup> The reasons why so many came can only be guessed at - lack of entertainment elsewhere, a central exhibition full of light and colour and movement, an overall site which included a restaurant and a funfair, all seem to be possible reasons.

The troubles did make an impact however. The exhibition had to be closed for a day because of a bomb scare, and attendances slumped dramatically during the troubles which followed the introduction of internment, falling from 45,730 in the week ending 7 August to 10,953 in

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1. Ian Hill, "Ulster 71", Fortnight, Belfast, 8 Jan 1971, p. 5; cartoon, Free Citizen, Belfast, 5 Feb 1971, p. 1; G. Ruddy, "Slums 71", Free Citizen, 14 May 1971, p. 1; "Strolling through the park", Free Citizen, 21 May 1971, p. 1; and cartoon, Loyalist News, Belfast 10 July 1971, p.3.
  2. If anything, the proposed budget was underspent because a too-cramped preparation schedule prevented the full implementation of a number of projects. See Report on the Organisation and Administration of Ulster 71, Appendix K.

the week ending 14 August, and only really returning to an average figure in the final week.<sup>1</sup>

Clearly by the summer of 1971 the British government at Westminster and the Unionist government at Stormont were collaborating on publicity material for Northern Ireland to an extent previously unknown in the province. Possibly as a result of this, possibly due to direct pressure from the British Army, or possibly because Brian Faulkner, the new leader of the Unionists, was highly publicity-conscious,<sup>2</sup> the Stormont government responded to events between June 1971 and March 1972 with a series of advertising campaigns.

In June 1971 they began to issue posters and advertisements warning of the dangers of firebombs. One design showed the different devices used; another stressed that the bomber might be any one in a crowd.<sup>3</sup> The posters were produced in large quantities<sup>4</sup> and continued to be widely displayed for many years. Two months later, in the aftermath of internment, the Ministry of Home Affairs issued an advertisement showing a soldier on guard on a street corner, and urging support for him (ill 181).

Between August 1971 and February 1972 Brian Faulkner was given a free hand in Ulster by the British. After the disaster of internment, which was his policy, carried out in opposition to the wishes of the Army, the measures taken by the Ulster premier were increasingly desperate.<sup>5</sup> The shrill tone of Stormont propaganda during this period expresses panic at the all too apparent "successes" of the IRA, and the increasing rumours of transfer of power to Westminster (from early 1972 the British army were

1. Ibid, Appendix G.

2. See Bew et al, op cit, p. 183.

3. News Letter, Belfast 25 June 1971, p. 5 (photograph); 3 July 1971, p. 6 (advertisement) and 6 July 1971, front page (advertisement).

4. Richard Deutsch and Vivien Magowan, Northern Ireland 1968-73, A Chronology of Events, vol 1, 1968-71, Blackstaff Press, Belfast, 1973, entry for 15 June 1971, p. 110 states that the government printed 40,000 posters describing fire bombs or incendiary devices.

5. Bew et al, loc cit.

indeed pressing hard for the transfer of security powers).<sup>1</sup> A particularly hard-hitting campaign of newspaper advertisements was issued in November and December 1971. Using drawings for the most part, it savagely attacked the IRA's claims, sometimes comparing them to what the government had to offer (ill 188). Posters were also used and, in March 1972, just before the introduction of Direct Rule, a fat, glossy booklet titled The Terror and the Tears, entirely compiled of newspaper photos of the effects of IRA violence (ill 189). Quarter of a million copies were issued, much to the distaste of the British government.<sup>2</sup>

Technically the visual propaganda of the Faulknerite period was modern, with its use of an advertising agency, and its appropriation of mass media imagery. But its content and much of its style remained very traditional. Not only was some of this publicity produced with a strong sectarian bias (The Terror and the Tears, for example, totally ignored loyalist violence in the province, such as the bombing of McGurk's bar in December 1971, in which 15 people were killed). Protestant popular imagery was also used in it (in one of the photos in this booklet a Union Jack lying in the debris of a loyalist politician's home is singled out for attention) and its emphasis was often on themes dear to the hearts of the Protestant not the Catholic community. Thus, the stress in the advertising campaign of Nov-Dec 1971 on the modern material benefits (shops, factories etc) being lost through IRA violence, would have had far more appeal for Ulster's Protestants, taught by their politicians since the turn of the century to see industrial prosperity as the result of the link with Britain, than for the province's Catholics, adhering to a concept of green and rural Ireland, island of saints and scholars.

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1. David Bleakley, Faulkner, Mowbrays, Oxford, 1974, pp. 104-105.  
2. See The Times, 27 August 1974.

**The IRA has the  
final solution  
to the housing  
shortage...**



**but you can't  
live there**

*Terrorism hurts everybody*

Issued by the Government of Northern Ireland

188. Government of Northern Ireland/anti-IRA advertisement/issued Dec 1971/22½ x 8¾ ins (57.2 x 22.2 cms)/Imperial War Museum 3814/Photo: IWM.

## The scars of violence

On Wednesday morning August 25, 1971, hundreds of people, most of them women and girls, were at work in Belfast at the head quarters of the Electricity Board for Northern Ireland.

Just before 11 a.m. the busy switchboard operator took a call. "There's a bomb in the building", said an anonymous voice. The alarm was sounded. But before the employees could even hope to get outside to safety there was an explosion inside the building. Harold Briggs, 23, lay dead. Thirty-five others were badly enough injured to require emergency hospital treatment. Many of them were teenage girls, some bleeding profusely from severe gashes to their faces—the effects of which may in some cases be permanent. Pictured here are some of the victims.



More than a million pounds worth of property and 500 jobs went in smoke and flames in Belfast Dublin Road on the afternoon December 6, 1971. Gunmen entered the premises, he up staff and planted three bombs which exploded and then caused fires which spread to surrounding property. Among the buildings damaged was the Salvation Army Club. A few hours later, as six Salvationists tried to save their furniture and equipment, a wall collapsed and buried them. Sixty-one year-old Mrs. Mary Isobel Thompson, Blythe Street, Belfast, was killed and the five others taken to hospital.



189. Government of Northern Ireland/pp 8-9 of the photographic booklet The Terror - and the Tears issued in March 1972/13½ x 17½ ins (34.2 x 44.5 cms).

In March 1972, Direct Rule of Northern Ireland from Westminster was imposed by the British Government. The Unionists continued to produce publicity material as a political party, but from this date until the present day, with the exception of the brief period in 1975 when the province was ruled by the Northern Ireland Executive, all government imagery in the province has been produced under British supervision. In order to analyse its nature, impact and significance, it is necessary to begin by looking at the publicity issued by the various branches of the security forces in Ulster.

#### The British Army

By no means all of the publicity issued by British government organisations involved in Northern Ireland since 1968 has been modern in either style or content. Indeed it is arguable that the visual imagery produced in the province by the British army, since it was brought in during the summer of 1969, has asserted traditional themes and styles very similar to those to be found in the popular symbolism of the Protestant community. This is partly because of the nature of the Army's visual interventions in the province. None of its highly modernised recruiting advertising, familiar in newspapers and television in mainland Britain, is carried in Northern Ireland's media. Instead the Army's visual impact in the province has been made through its actual physical presence, and the operational publicity it has issued since 1969.

It could be argued that the practical considerations surrounding both of these are sufficient to explain their emphasis on imagery which is traditional in both style and content, and that in the kind of guerilla conflict which has taken place in Northern Ireland during the past thirteen years, the Army's stress on small-scale, factual, impersonal



images, produced in an amateur fashion and directed at an immediate, limited audience, is what one might expect. I shall argue however that this style of imagery derives not only from such practical considerations, but also from an ideological stance adopted by the British Army throughout most of this century, which has been reinforced by the increasing use of technological warfare, and by the political situation within which the Army has operated in Ulster.

The visual imagery employed by a government to validate itself in the eyes of the governed, is not confined to such transient forms of propaganda as the newspaper or the poster. Those in power can also appropriate to themselves the symbolic imagery associated with more permanent state institutions, such as the monarchy, the Church, the army, and the police-force. Conversely the mode of operation and day-to-day appearance of such institutional bodies crucially affects the citizen's perceptions of the nature of both his (permanent) state and his (temporary) government. This is particularly so in Northern Ireland, where, as we have seen, there are long-standing traditions of street-level ritual.

During the early years of the present troubles, the most noticeable face of government for many Northern Ireland citizens was the British Army. At the beginning of 1969 the existing garrison in Northern Ireland numbered approximately 2,400. In August of that year the first British soldiers were put onto the streets, to curb the rapidly-escalating violence in Belfast and Derry. By December there were 8,000 of them in the province, by the end of 1971 there were over 13,000, and by the end of 1972 between 15,000 and 16,000. Not until the middle of 1975 was there a drop-back to 14,000, a figure which remained fairly steady until January 1978, since when there has been a gradual decrease to the present (1982) level of 10,500.<sup>1</sup>

In a province with a population of 1½ million, these figures indicate a very considerable army presence. It is fair to say that this presence has been throughout the troubles strongly concentrated in Belfast, Derry and the border areas. There are many parts of Ulster where British soldiers have rarely been seen during the past thirteen years or so. But this localised impact of the Army has been modified in two main ways, by the obligation felt at certain times to show a presence in areas which have suffered terrorist attack, and by the army's mechanised penetration of daily life in the shape of helicopters, town-centre barriers and so on.

The over-riding image projected by the British Army in Northern Ireland has been one of containment and insulation, increasingly effected by sophisticated technological means. When the Wilson government sent British troops into Northern Ireland in 1969, its aim was one of minimum intervention. The soldiers were to separate the warring communities and to contain Catholic revolt, not to smash it.<sup>2</sup> The new arrivals wore the ordinary steel helmet and uniform and carried little in the way of extra protection, apart from flak-jackets, wooden batons and small riot shields. Compared to the helmeted, visored and gas-masked RUC, they appeared almost innocent. By a year later however they were encased in a formidable carapace of Makrolon plastic, their faces protected by visors, their bodies by large riot shields, and their legs by shin-guards. They used CS gas, batons and rubber (later plastic) bullets, and they moved around in heavily-armoured vehicles, which dwarfed the small streets and country lanes of Northern Ireland. The research for much of this equipment seems

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1. The troop-levels for 1969 to 1977 are those given in David Barzilay, The British Army in Ulster, Century Services, Belfast, vol I, 1973, p. 1 and vol 3, 1978, p. 235. Barzilay's figures are those given to the press in Army information sheets, on which I have based the level for 1978. Later figures from Army information at HQNI, Lisburn.
  2. Bew et al, op cit, pp. 181-2 and The New Technology of Repression, Lessons from Ireland, British Society for Social Responsibility in Science, 1974, p. 21.

to have started very soon after the Army first arrived in Ulster, but approval for its use in a large-scale and aggressive fashion appears to have been closely linked with the Conservatives' return to power in June 1970.<sup>1</sup>

By the end of 1972 the technology of containment was extended into the lives of virtually all Ulster citizens, not just those who lived in the most troubled areas. Helicopters increased from six in 1969 to twenty-nine in October 1972,<sup>2</sup> and seemed to chatter constantly overhead; the central security ring in Belfast was established in 1972, following the IRA's spate of bomb-attacks in the first half of that year,<sup>3</sup> and other, lesser barriers served to shut off outlying areas of Belfast and the shopping centres of country towns, according to security needs. Trying to drive to a known destination often felt like fighting one's way through a constantly shifting maze of dead-ends.

From at least 1972 pictorial propaganda in the shape of leaflets (ills 190 - 194) and, more rarely, posters (ill 195) and newsheets, became an additional element in the Army's visible presence in Northern Ireland. The immediate impact of this material was very localised, for it was almost entirely confined to the troubled areas of Belfast and Derry, where army units would follow up incidents with leaflets pushed through doorways at night, or handed out at vehicle check-points. However the kind of imagery employed in this material was to have a far wider effect, by virtue of its influence on other security and government publicity issued in the province.

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1. Bew et al, op cit, p. 183, The New Technology of Repression, pp. 21-6, and Barzilay, op cit, vol 1, pp 69-77.
  2. Barzilay, op cit, vol 1, p. 173.
  3. Ibid, p. 58.

The British Army has projected itself since the outbreak of the Second World War as reluctant to engage in propaganda, an activity which is normally represented to the public as dirty, and the monopoly of the enemy of the moment.<sup>1</sup> As we shall see, this picture is something of an illusion, designed to veil the actual propaganda activities of the Army. Nevertheless it is worth stressing that soldiers have continued to view such activities as not quite the done thing, and definitely inferior to physical action. In 1974 a leading civilian press officer at the army headquarters in Northern Ireland said to me

"I would like to see the recognition of information as a completely justifiable and indeed essential part of any modern fighting force, which at the moment in the British Army it isn't quite ... it's still a bit undignified ... You see, the Army at the moment, on the information side is half military, half civilian. The Army people posted to do information work are normally untrained officers, often towards the end of their career, put in because you know, what shall we do with poor old Joe, let's post him to PR, you know, and get him out of our hair. This occasionally happens, but I think one's got to recognise that influencing the public opinion is something which is an essential part of the soldier's armoury, as much as his rifle or his tank. But we haven't yet got to this stage."<sup>2</sup>

The persistence of this attitude during the period of British Army involvement in Northern Ireland appears to be confirmed by the series of publications by army officers in recent years which have stressed the importance of proper study of the demands of guerilla warfare, particularly

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1. See Joseph Darracott and Belinda Loftus, Second World War Posters, HMSO, 1972 and Philip Elliott, "Information, Propaganda and the British Army", The British Media and Ireland, Information on Ireland, n.d. ca 1979, p. 36.

2. Conversation 11 Jan 1974.

in the areas of intelligence and propaganda.<sup>1</sup> Clearly they felt these subjects were not receiving the attention they deserved.

The history of the Army's actual involvement in this field is, as one might expect, difficult to ascertain. The few details which are public knowledge are contained in Peter Watson's book, War on the Mind<sup>2</sup> and in a number of press articles. The picture which emerges from these sources is as follows.

Psychological warfare as now practised by the British Army was largely developed in the aftermath of the Second World War, initially by the Americans and then by the British themselves. In 1950 the US Army established a psychological warfare school at Fort Riley, which was transferred in 1952 to Fort Bragg, where it has remained ever since. During the 1950s the British Army in Malaya were also becoming interested in psychological warfare. From the early 1960s both British and American activity in this field developed very rapidly, as a result of the demands of paramilitary warfare, and a growing recognition of the importance of cultural engineering. In 1961-2 the study of counter-insurgency was introduced at Fort Bragg and a number of British officers were given training in this field by the Americans. Watson's description of this training is important, because, with considerable modifications, it was to provide the model for the training later given to British soldiers and civilians working in Northern Ireland.

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1. See Frank Kitson, Low Intensity Operations, Subversion, Insurgency, Peacekeeping, Faber, 1971, especially pp. 77-9, and pp. 188-9; Brigadier J.M Calvert, contribution to a seminar on The Role of the Armed Forces in Peacekeeping in the 1970s, held at the Royal United Services Institute for Defence Studies on 4 April 1973, (p. 11 of Report); and Robin Eveleigh, Peace Keeping in a Democratic Society, The Lessons of Northern Ireland, C. Hurst, 1978, (but written in 1975), especially p. 37 ff. Both Kitson and Eveleigh served in Northern Ireland in the early 1970s.
  2. Hutchinson, 1978.

"First, the plans and operations department outlines the way persuasion campaigns should be co-ordinated - when leaflets should be used, or forged money, or armed patrols; the social science section explains how psywar material should be tailored to an area, how audiences differ in their social and psychological make-up, what symbols or allusions to apply in what circumstances; the command staff section deals with how best psywar units are to be organised, what the optimum size is, how near they should be to one another, how long it takes to produce a magazine, and the propaganda department explains how propaganda is written and tailored for different audiences."<sup>1</sup>

It seems however that the British Army's application of such psyops training remained limited until the early 1970s. When Kitson published his book in 1971, he claimed that there was only one Army psyops team in existence,

"which is operating at the moment and is subsidized by the government of the territory in which it is deployed. A small number of civilian teams are also being raised for use by the same government in its own territory. The only reserve team is one which is being formed as part of an infantry battalion. If required for an operation it would have to be divorced from its parent unit which therefore has all the inconvenience and work of raising and training it, without any prospect of benefiting from the arrangement. No unit relishes the prospect of losing an officer and eleven good men at short notice."<sup>2</sup>

It seems reasonable to suppose, as Watson did, that the territory referred to by Kitson was Northern Ireland.

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1. Watson, op cit, p. 378.  
2. Kitson, op cit, p. 188.



There was a rapid increase in British psyops training early in 1972. There are strong indications that this was precipitated by the marked deterioration in the image of both Army and government in Northern Ireland, largely the result of Brian Faulkner's introduction of internment in August 1971, and the shooting dead of thirteen civilians by British soldiers in Derry on 30 January 1972, the day which became known as Bloody Sunday. Not only was the selection of internees inaccurate and inept; not only was it true that shooting by some of the soldiers in Derry, in the words of Lord Widgery,

"bordered on the reckless".<sup>1</sup>

The government and Army were also completely unprepared for handling the publicity which these events attracted. Thus, according to Robin Eveleigh, the army failed to put out a press statement about the Bloody Sunday shootings until late at night, by which time the press and TV reporters and cameramen had already issued their version of what had happened.<sup>2</sup>

Certainly, according to documents seen by Peter Watson, psyops courses were being held at RAF Old Sarum by February 1972. These courses appeared to be modelled on those at Fort Bragg, but were less academic and shorter, lasting under two weeks.

"one restricted British document I have seen shows that an average course consists of some fifteen or sixteen members, including one from the Green Jackets, two from the Ministry of Defence, one from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, a Squadron Leader from RAF Abingdon, and captains from the Royal Marines and the Royal Artillery. This particular course was addressed by Mr. Keith Belbin, of Coleman, Prentice and Varley, the advertising agency, who spoke about recruitment, and Peter Bartlett, on

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1. quoted in Barzilay, op cit, vol 1, p. 35.

2. op cit, p. 42.

target analysis with special reference to the use of Hong Kong by China. In addition R.M Farr spoke on attitude change - Mr Farr being a psychologist, and for a time an official of the British Psychological Society. But perhaps the star was Lt Col B.R Johnston, described as the 'foremost British authority on military psyops.' He spoke on 'military information policy in low intensity operations' - mainly in Northern Ireland."<sup>1</sup>

A fairly considerable number of servicemen and civilians were trained in psyops at Old Sarum in the mid-seventies. During the financial year 1973-4 the figures were 637 servicemen and 107 civilians, for the year 1974-5, 634 and 77, and for the year 1975-6, 587 and 80.<sup>2</sup> The civil servants included members of the Northern Ireland Office, and an officer who served in the information policy unit in the British army headquarters in Northern Ireland between 1974 and 1976 is known to have been trained at Fort Bragg.<sup>3</sup>

The visual propaganda produced for the Army by the soldiers and civilians trained in this way falls into three main categories, photographs supplied to the press, leaflets openly distributed as the work of the Army, and black or undercover propaganda. The press photographs I hope to deal with elsewhere, in a separate study of press pictures relating to the Northern Ireland conflict. Here I would like to concentrate on the acknowledged leaflets, and such black propaganda as has come to my attention. I shall first of all give a brief history of the Army's use of such material, and then discuss the more general implications of the imagery employed in it.

The use of publicly distributed pictorial leaflets by the Army in Northern Ireland appears to date from the summer of 1972. (The earliest

1. Watson, op cit, p. 379.

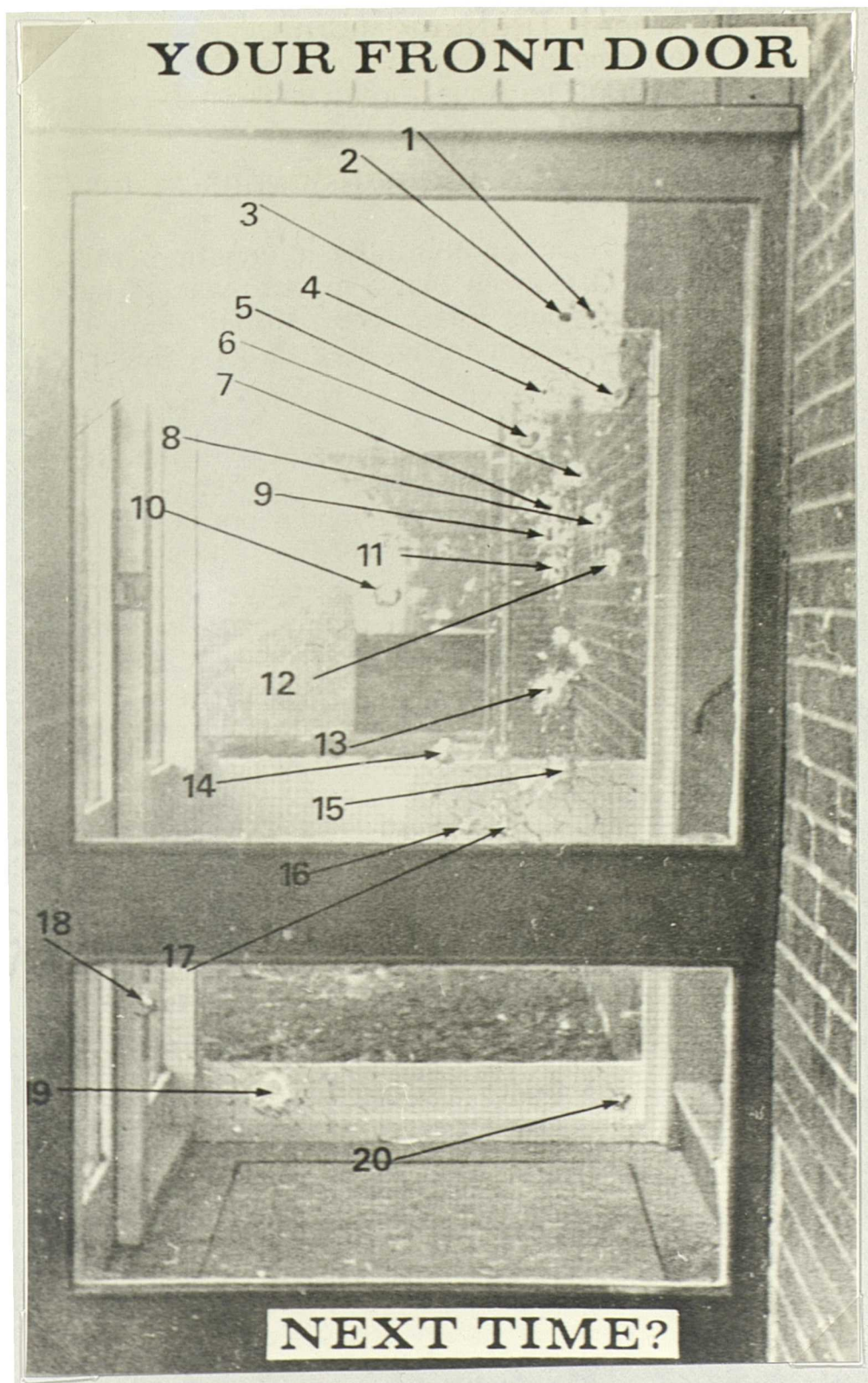
2. Figures given in a written reply by the Under-Secretary for the Army to a question tabled in the Commons by Mr Tom Litterick, Labour MP for Sellyoak, and reported by Conor O'Clery in "Psychological warfare training given to 262 civil servants, MPs told", The Irish Times, Dublin, 28 Oct 1976.

3. Ibid.

example I have seen is an appeal to parents in Derry to stop their children throwing stones at the army, in the wake of Operation Motorman, which took place in July 1972). The use of such material seems to have reached a peak in 1973 and 1974, and to have gradually declined thereafter. The vast majority of these leaflets have on one side a photograph of a weapons find, or the aftermath of a bomb or gun attack (ill 190 ), with on the other a short message to citizens in the area, stressing the danger to them of the terrorists' actions, and urging them to assist the army. Robin Eveleigh, an officer with experience of service in Northern Ireland, provides some of the thinking behind these leaflets, which is worth quoting at some length.

"The terrorists' acts of terror back up a stream of interlinked propaganda which the terrorists put out, and must put out if they are to succeed in demonstrating their power and justifying themselves. In Ulster this propaganda included television appearances, press statements after incidents, and a stream of handbills pushed through letter-boxes. While the terrorist propaganda campaign on television and in the press was very clear in its targets and purposes, the handbill campaign combined with such local newspapers as The Republican News was less generally appreciated on the Government side. The great strength of the latter was that it dealt with local issues of the conflict. By local, I really mean local: the issues that affected one of the areas consisting of only a few streets, such as 'The Rodney' or 'The Old Beechmount', that had a definite corporate village identity and would act more or less as one community.

One of the curious effects of civil disturbances and terrorist activity is that perspectives become shortened in time and distance. In normal times even local political issues are seen in relation to their effects over years; they are seen in such terms as where the new



190. Leaflet issued by the 3rd Battalion The Royal Green Jackets in the Beechmount area of Belfast following a shooting incident on 28 July 1973 in which bullets passed through the entrance to old age pensioners flats/ $7\frac{3}{4} \times 4\frac{3}{4}$  ins (19.7 x 12.1 cms)/Collection: B. Loftus/Photo: Maire Concannon

comprehensive school will be built, or when the new by-pass road will be opened. In disturbed times there are so many crises that the neighbouring suburb of Andersonstown, let alone Derry, seems a world away from the Upper Falls. Few think beyond next week's protest march, or tonight's bomb threat, or last week's atrocity. This means that local propaganda, or rather propaganda interpreted into local terms, becomes all-important in winning or losing the support of the population in the disturbed areas. Let us suppose that a Catholic was shot in the Springfield Road by a presumed Protestant gunman. The IRA would not see this as the terrible assassination of one of their kith and kin, but as a heaven-sent chance to win a propaganda victory, as an opportunity to be exploited in public relations terms. They would therefore, without troubling to check any of the supplementary facts, probably put out an immediate statement that the Army had connived at the shooting because the victim was a Catholic, or, if it had not actually been involved in the murder, that the Army had at best been criminally negligent of Catholic lives compared with its high concern for Protestant lives. This statement would be telephoned to the press and television but, more important, a sheet of typescript presenting their version would be duplicated and quickly pushed through the letter-boxes of people in the area likely to be emotionally upset by the murder. Ministers making statements in London or Stormont about "The Irish Dimension" or religious leaders calling for restraint have no effect on this sort of issue. The compliance, if not the loyalty, of the Catholic population in the immediate vicinity of the shooting would be lost to the Government if the Army could not immediately show, in precise local terms, who was doing what at what time, and what its performance had been in relation to the

intersectarian conflict, to prove that it had done its best to prevent Catholics from being murdered. What is more, the Army's answer would have to be pushed through the same letterboxes as the IRA's handout, and read out to the protest-delegation of Catholic women that would be sure to arrive at the Springfield Road Police Station within the hour....

Moreover, this local propaganda effort must be continuous. There will be an event tonight and another tomorrow morning and another tomorrow night, year in and year out. The propaganda battle in an insurrectionary campaign is like a tug of war with public opinion as the tell-tale handkerchief in the middle of the rope. If either side relaxes or stops pulling, the handkerchief will flash to the opposite side, and it may never return. Propaganda, like intelligence in a counter-terrorist campaign, is seldom a question of 'scoops' and 'coups' but one of working hard and incessantly to gain and keep the support of public opinion, a sort of war of attrition of little fights and little victories that add up in the end to overall victory or defeat."<sup>1</sup>

There were occasional exceptions to the basic type of leaflets used in this propaganda warfare. There were a few which employed photographs of children to make an emotional plea for an end to violence (ill 191 ). In 1975 a drawing as opposed to the usual photo, was used on a card urging people to "break the web of violence" (ill 192 ).<sup>2</sup> And on at least one occasion an Army unit issued a leaflet challenging the veracity of a press-photograph. The incident is worth discussing in some detail because it makes clear the dubious benefits of such propaganda exercises.

On 19 April 1973 a thirteen year old boy was accidentally shot dead

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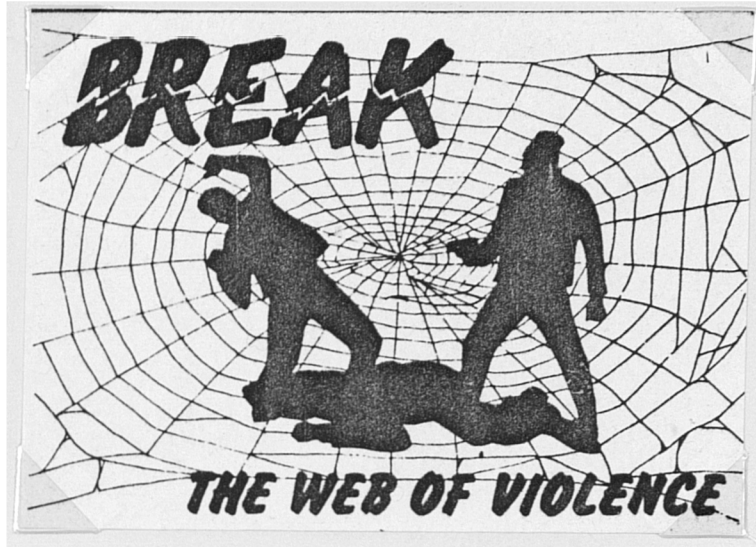
1. Eveleigh, *op cit*, pp. 39-40.

2. See Malcolm Nicholl, "New 'Beat the Killer' Drive", *Daily Mirror*, 18 June 1975, p. 1. According to this article troops were handing out 5,000 of these cards after a weekend of violent incidents.





191. British Army leaflet issued in Derry in November 1973/7<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub> x 5<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub> ins (18.8 x 13 cms)/Collection: B. Loftus/Photo: Maire Concannon.



192. British Army card issued in 1975/actual size/  
Collection: B. Loftus.

**SPOT THE MISTAKES**

**British soldier's Armalite**



The British Army claims that they could not have shot 15-year-old Anthony McIlroy, killed in a gun battle in the Ardoyne, Belfast, on Friday, because the bullet extracted from his body had been fired with an Armalite rifle, which they claim they do not own. The above picture was taken by Colman Burke on Friday in the Ardoyne. It shows a British soldier with an Armalite rifle.

SUNDAY PRESS 22 April 1973

**ANSWERS OVERLEAF**

**THE MISTAKES**

1. This type of combat jacket is not worn by members of the Parachute Regiment who wear a jumping smock with elastic, not buttons, at the cuffs.
2. This is an infantry style helmet with a visor which is not worn by parachute soldiers or their attached personnel.
3. It is compulsory for all soldiers to wear a flak jacket. The model is not wearing one.
4. The rifle shown is a Japanese Armalite which the British Army does not possess.
5. This photograph was taken near to the model: the muzzle, in the foreground, and the wall, in the background on the left, are out of focus. There is no foreshortening of the image which there would have been if a telephoto lens had been used. This is a deliberately posed photograph.

Issued by Headquarters Northern Ireland

193. Leaflet issued by the British Army in the Ardoyne area of Belfast in April 1973/8<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> x 6 ins (21 x 15.2 cms)/Collection: B. Loftus/  
Photo: Pete McGuinness

in an exchange of fire between gunmen and members of the Parachute regiment in the Ardoyne area of Belfast. Rumours rapidly circulated that he had been killed by a bullet from an Armalite rifle, a weapon frequently used by the Provisionals, but not part of British Army equipment.<sup>1</sup> Then, on 22 April, the Dublin-based Sunday Press carried a photograph which purported to show a member of the Paras carrying an Armalite, implying that British soldiers were using the gun in order to discredit the Provisionals, and were therefore quite possibly the killers of the boy. A leaflet pointing out the mistakes in the photo (ill 193) was rapidly produced by the Army and circulated in the area.

In a subsequent interview with a local reporter, officers from the Parachute Regiment claimed a propaganda victory.

"We were able to dismiss the photograph very easily said Spacie (Col Keith Spacie, CO of 3 Para). It helped us enormously in showing Ardoyne people there was more to all this talk about the Paras than met the eye."<sup>2</sup>

The officers also claimed that they were able both to undermine criticism about their house-raids, and to deflate exaggerated press accounts of protest meetings, by making video films of what actually took place.<sup>3</sup>

A somewhat different picture emerges however from both the Provisional propaganda, and the comments of the inhabitants of the Ardoyne at this time. Not only did the Volunteer, the Provisional newsheet in nearby Andersonstown, issue a counter challenge to the Army's re-interpretation of the Sunday Press photo (ill 194). People in

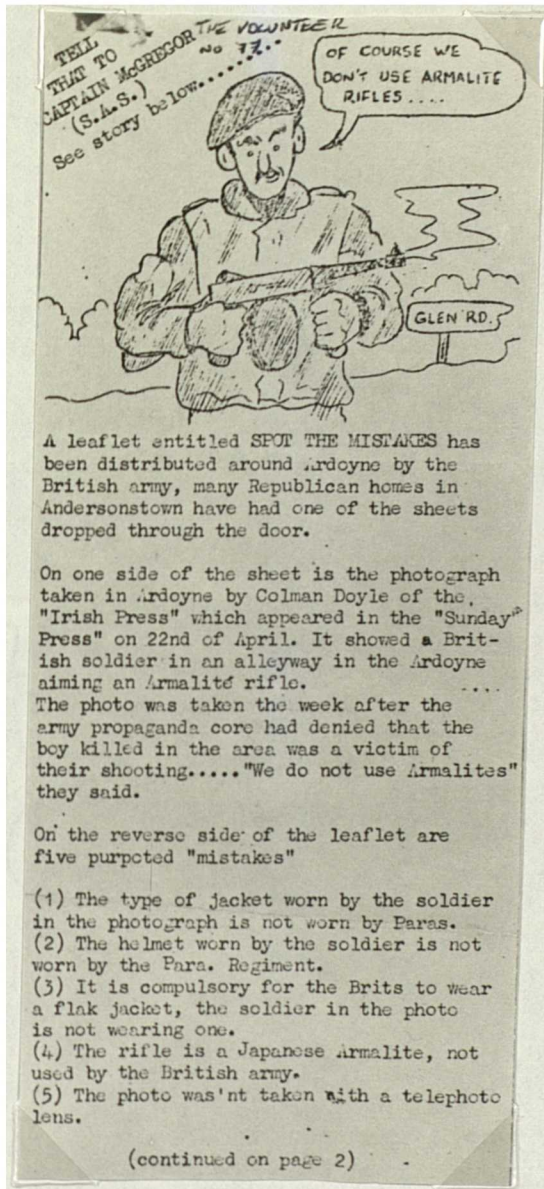
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1. In fact the bullet seems never to have been identified.

2. John Burns, "The Paras in Ardoyne, Belfast Telegraph, 25 July 1973, p. 8.

3. Ibid.





MISTAKES (continued from front page)

Taking the "mistakes" in order....

(1) and (2)... To claim that the Paras don't wear this type of jacket or helmet' is absurd. Anyone who has lived in an area where the notorious Paratroopers were stationed would know that this regiment are the most undisciplined of all the British.

People who live in Turf Lodge and the "Murph" will remember Paratroopers wearing U.D.A. type slouch hats when on patrol. Some members of army foot patrols wear black "polar neck" sweaters, others wear standard army gear.

(3) It is compulsory for British soldiers to wear flak jackets, the soldier in the photo is not wearing one.... Again, this is an equally absurd statement. All Paras wear their flak jackets UNDER their smocks, have a look when you see them again. The soldier in the photo is obviously wearing a loose smock type overcover

(4) The rifle is a Japanese Armalite, the British army don't use this gun.... Of all the statements made by the Lisburn F.R.O.'s this is the craziest. I quote from a national paper which carried the story of the S.A.S. man having the charge of possessing a Thompson machine-gun dropped...

"Withdrawing the charge of having the Thompson without the authority of the Secretary of State, Mr. Alisdair Frazer said that since the accused were last before the Court information had been given by the military authorities to the Director of Public Prosecutions which showed that the sub-machine gun was at "all times officially held and accounted for as an item of army equipment"

This statement was the first breakthrough in the tightly guarded secrecy which surrounds the S.A.S. As both men were wearing civvies and driving through a Catholic area with a captured Thompson sub machine gun, we must accept that they were an SAS assassination squad. So to claim that the Brits don't "use Armalites" is laughable.

(5) The photo was taken with an ordinary camera.... Who said it was't? Are the army in effect saying that if anyone tried to take a picture of a soldier from close range that they would stop them (or shoot them?)

Thousands of photographs appear in all the national and international newspapers of soldiers on patrol.

What has happened is that the Paras were caught with their pants down and are worried, no one will believe anything they say from now on.

SINN FEIN

the area also mocked the Army's use of videos.

"It is significant that they didn't film the first raid', said one man with heavy cynicism. 'They filmed a lot of their activities, but not all.'"<sup>1</sup>

And a researcher living in Ardoyne while the Paras were stationed there, was heavily critical of their use of propaganda leaflets.

"The absurdity reached its height when the Paratroopers were running amok one day and posting cards through residents' doors offering their assistance in any way they could help the next."<sup>2</sup>

In 1974 and 1975 the Army also put out a number of posters, leaflets and newsheets which fell into the category of black propaganda. All were intended to discredit terrorist organisations. Some were clearly meant to be taken as the work of those organisations themselves. A classic example of this kind of material was the Army variation on the Provisional IRA's Freedom 74 poster (ill 228 ) which, with its added slogan "but not through the barrel of a gun" was plastered round streets in the Lower Falls area. Other images simply concealed their Army origin, like the poster of the Provisional leader David O'Connell issued shortly after

1. Burns, loc cit.
2. Frank Burton, The Politics of Legitimacy, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978. Burton calls the area in which he conducted his research Anro, but there seems virtually no doubt that it was in fact the Ardoyne. The period covered by his study includes the March-July 1973 tour by the Paras in the area. Other hostile reactions to army propaganda are recorded in both Army and republican sources. The 1972 volume of the Royal Green Jackets journal Chronicle, recorded that after the killing of one of "A" Co in Beechmount Avenue in Belfast, "That evening 'A' Company turned out in force, leaving only the guard platoon in base, to tour the Beechmount streets gathering information on the Corporal Morrill incident, and distributing leaflets exhorting the inhabitants to help the security forces. Within the space of about fifteen minutes there was a sudden stream of hysterical complaints through police 999 calls, community leaders and direct to Battalion HQ, that 'the military were running amok and smashing up every house in the Beechmount.'" (p. 121). And in late 1976 a cartoon by Oisín in the largely pro-republican Andersonstown News mocked the slogan "Help us to help you" then stencilled on army land-rovers, by showing the Army "helping" to smash windows (vol 8 no 7, p. 4).

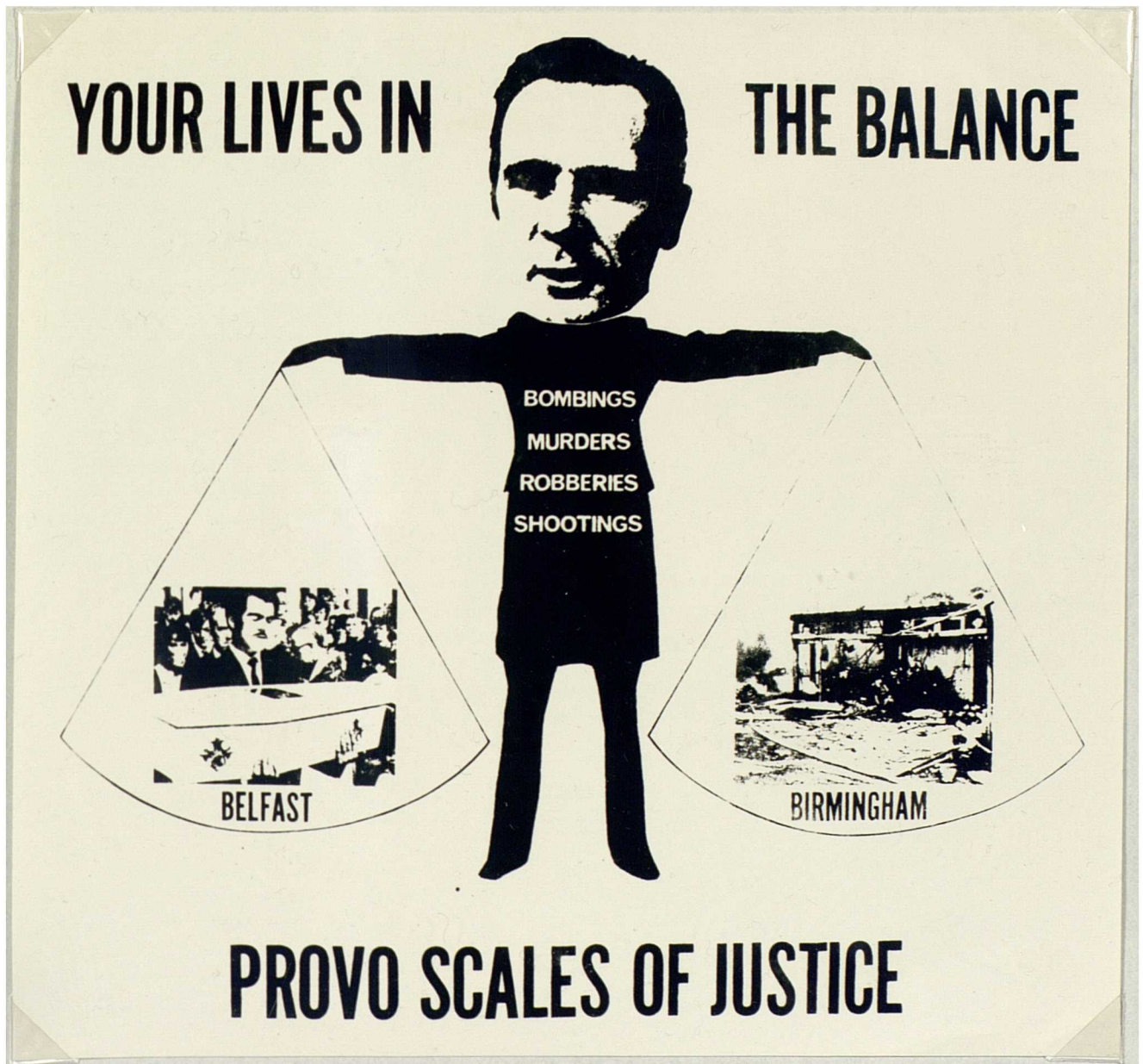


the Birmingham bombs in November 1974 (ill 195).<sup>1</sup>

By the latter half of 1974 the British Government was attempting to impose stronger controls on the Army's use of black propaganda in Northern Ireland. Following the return to power of Labour in the election of February 1974, Merlyn Rees replaced William Whitelaw as Secretary of State for the province. It was his policy in the summer of that year to attempt to negotiate a ceasefire with the Provisional IRA. In pursuit of this end he started to gradually phase out internment, and authorised a go-between to meet with the Provisionals. Many senior army officers were opposed to these moves, and there is evidence that black propaganda by the Army was used to discredit Rees's actions. The Secretary of State was not slow to take revenge. By the end of the year Colin Wallace, the senior press officer at the Army headquarters, who was behind much of the anti-Rees propaganda, was removed to England.<sup>2</sup>

This did not mean that propaganda of this kind came to an immediate halt. Rather there seem to have been a number of successive moves by

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1. See "Falls District hit by black propaganda", Andersonstown News, Belfast, 7 Dec 1974, p. 1 and Robert Fisk, "Britain ends 'black propaganda' campaign by Army in Ulster", The Times, 25 March, 1975, p. 6. Other items believed to have been Army black propaganda were a series of leaflets in 1973 and 1974 purporting to come from a left-wing Loyalist organisation, The Ulster Citizen's Army. (See David McKittrick, "Accused UDA sees British Armyhand", The Irish Times, Dublin, 16 Nov 1974, p. 5 and "Former British Army PRO jailed", The Irish Times, 21 March 1981, p. 1 and p. 5); forged editions of the Provisional newsheets The Vindicator and Nation, believed to have been produced by soldiers of the Gloucestershire Regiment, in the latter part of 1974 (Robert Fisk, "Gloucesters produce forged news sheets to confuse IRA supporters", The Times, 11 Dec 1974, p. 2); a fake IRA recruiting leaflet containing an attack on their violence, sent through the post from Britain to several women members of Provisional Sinn Fein during the same period (ibid); and a leaflet titled The Covenanters, containing attacks on the violence of the UDA and the UVF by an apparently fictitious Protestant group in Ulster (David Blundy, "The army's secret war in Northern Ireland", The Sunday Times, 13 March, 1977, p. 6.).
  2. Blundy, op cit, and McKittrick, "Former British Army PRO jailed".



195. British Army poster issued in November 1974/black and white/13 x 16 ins (33 x 40.6 cms)/Collection: B. Loftus/Photo: Maire Concannon.

the British Government to curb and control Army activity in this field. At the end of 1974 a joint committee of representatives from the Northern Ireland Office, the RUC and the Army discussed ways of discrediting politicians judged hostile to Government policy;<sup>1</sup> in November 1976 it was reported that Rees had again a head-on clash with the Army over psyops training;<sup>2</sup> and in February 1977 his successor Roy Mason decided to vet all the output of the Army's press office.<sup>3</sup>

The clamp-down seems to have affected overt as well as black propaganda. The number of leaflets declined gradually from 1975 onwards, and increasingly they were being produced in large runs for use by the RUC in province-wide appeals, rather than in the local context formerly favoured by the Army. An Army press-officer who talked to me at the Lisburn headquarters in June 1979 attributed this change in output to a deliberate stress by the Labour government on the economics rather than the politics of Northern Ireland, and to the belief held by them that in some cases the old-style army leaflets raised rather than reduced the level of violence. It should also be remembered that this was the period during which Mason was trying to "Ulsterize" the Northern Ireland conflict, by switching security supremacy from the Army to the RUC, and by seeking to have the authors of political terrorism treated as ordinary criminals.

However, discussing the Army's visual imagery in Northern Ireland purely in relation to political developments conceals much of its real role in the enactment of the troubles. Only if one considers the style of that imagery, and the reasons for that style does it become possible to assess the wider impact of the Army's pictorial propaganda on its

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1. Blundy, *loc cit.*

2. O'Clery, "MPs to visit centre for psychological warfare".

3. Anne McHardy, "'Black propaganda' blue-pencilled", The Guardian, 26 Feb 1977, p. 1.

producers, on the audience for which it was intended and on other image-issuing organs of government in Northern Ireland.

The overwhelming impression given by the visual imagery put out by the British Army in Northern Ireland is one of neatness and factuality, everything charted and enumerated, with rarely a human face in sight, and a strong emphasis on the technology of war (in this respect it needs to be stressed again that The Next Victim, Break the Web of Violence and Your Lives in the Balance are exceptional rather than typical Army images). In part this style of presentation is deliberate, in part due to purely practical considerations, and in part to the general ethos of British soldiers serving in Northern Ireland.

The deliberate intention was stated to me by a press officer at Army headquarters in Lisburn at the beginning of 1974. He continually stressed the need for "effective" rather than "glossy" images in the Army's output of leaflets and posters. His attitude was

"We are not in the propaganda business over here. We are in the information business and we deal straight in facts."<sup>1</sup>

One may see either as cause or result of this attitude, the slowness of the Army press-office to acquire both adequate printing equipment and staff draughtsmen for the production of propaganda material. Initially they had to make do with a roneo machine, then old offset-lithos and then finally a new offset machine. Acquisition of this was greatly speeded up by the launching of Visor, the newsheet of the Army in Northern Ireland, in January 1974. Indeed it is necessary to stress that these machines have by no means been solely devoted to the production of Army propaganda. They have also been used to print operational information

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1. Conversation on 11 Jan 1974.

(which naturally has top priority), Visor and all the tickets, posters and programmes required for the Army's own sporting and social events. Draughtsmen were as slow to materialise as adequate machines. At the time of my visit to the Army press office at the beginning of 1974, virtually all the Army leaflets were photographic, because there were no artists available for this kind of work. It was also argued to me that photographs of local places were invaluable in winning local support, especially as "the principle is that the camera doesn't lie."<sup>1</sup> However, even if one remembers the draining of human appeal imposed by the need to shield serving soldiers from terrorist attack with a cloak of anonymity,<sup>2</sup> the generally impersonal style of the army's photographic leaflets requires some additional explanation.

Indeed, when drawn and designed leaflets and posters began to be used from late 1974 onwards, it is significant how they too deviated very little from either English or loyalist visual traditions in order to win the hearts and minds of the republican communities at which they were aimed. The only true exception to this rule that I have seen is the Victory 74 poster. Your Lives in the Balance is something of a borderline case. Its photo-montage style was reminiscent of some of the illustrations in Free (later Unfree) Citizen, the newsheet of the increasingly republican People's Democracy. And its scales-image was not totally alien to republicans. It had been incorporated in the symbol of the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association in 1973, and it was one of the symbols used in a Christmas card issued by Provisional Sinn Fein in 1972 (ills 179 and 227).

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1. Ibid.

2. The only Army leaflet I have seen carrying a recognisable photo of a soldier was issued in Belfast's strongly loyalist Sandy Row.

Nevertheless the most prominent usage of this symbol in 1974 had been in the posters produced by the loyalist coalition of the UUUC at the beginning of the year, a usage which undoubtedly referred back to the significance of the scales in Orange Order imagery.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, when in 1976 the security forces issued a leaflet warning of the dangers to children in republican West Belfast of terrorist explosives, the image featured on it was an hour-glass, with the slogan "It's just a matter of time" - again a symbol familiar to loyalists from Orange Order imagery, but virtually unknown in the visual traditions of the republican community. Moreover this design had the kind of linear sparseness and neatness common to both traditional loyalist imagery and Army diagrams.

It seems likely that some part of the symbolism and stylistic traits of Army leaflets can be attributed to ideas or designs offered by locally-recruited civilian employees, most of whom, if not all, must have come from the loyalist community. However the neat and impersonal style of the leaflets is too pervasive to be reducible to this alone. It appears to indicate a more general army ethos which can not be shaken off despite the familiarity with republican imagery of propaganda-producers at headquarters and local unit level.<sup>2</sup> In this context I think one must remember certain facts. The lives of British soldiers are based on order. Their preparatory training for service in Northern Ireland teaches them to regard the local inhabitants, particularly the republican community, as enemies.<sup>3</sup> And their service in the province involves for the most part a curious combination of closeness to and

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1. See below, pp. 643-4.

2. See the quotation from Robin Eveleigh's book above, p. 594. The press officers at Lisburn who talked to me in 1974 and 1979 were clearly very familiar with the newsheets, posters and leaflets produced by political and paramilitary groupings of every description.

3. See Information on Ireland, op cit, p. 7, p. 14 and p. 24.



distance from the people amongst whom they live and move. Much of their time is spent collecting and studying information on every conceivable detail relating to the lives of local inhabitants, yet from the early 1970s onwards their personal contact with those inhabitants has been kept to a minimum.<sup>1</sup> Not only has their acquaintance with Northern Ireland generally been limited to four-month tours. (Only in the late 1970s was a gradual return to the pre-1969 / two year tours instituted.) Their simultaneous surveillance of and insulation from local life has also been greatly increased by the kind of technological developments described above. And finally in order to convince themselves, their political masters and the world at large that they are making some kind of progress, the British soldiers in Northern Ireland compile endless charts and graphs based on "security statistics."

The traditionalism of Army imagery in Northern Ireland, with its emphasis on limited, direct, factual communication, produced in an amateur fashion, is not just the result of immediate practical circumstances. It is related to the general ethos of the British army, to its political role in Ulster and, paradoxically, to the increasing importance of modern technology in its operations there.

Moreover this Army imagery has implications extending far beyond the immediate circumstances in which it is employed. It can be argued that its stylistic characteristics have had a strong influence on the more general role of the British government in Northern Ireland in the past thirteen years. It seems more than likely for example that these characteristics have encouraged approval for the kind of actions which

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1. Kevin Myers, "How the Army learnt its bitter lesson in Ulster", The Observer, 11 August 1974, p. 5 and below, p.

can be sealed over with a clean, orderly, antiseptic image,<sup>1</sup> and that they may have influenced other government organisations to put forward a similarly neat and dehumanized view of the province's violence.

#### The Ulster Defence Regiment

In some respects the imagery put out by the province's own Ulster Defence Regiment appears to differ very strongly from that issued by units of the mainland British Army serving in Northern Ireland. It has often seemed less traditional, with an emphasis on professionally produced designs appealing to a wide public.

These apparent divergences between UDR publicity and that of the remainder of the British Army can be related to the different practical roles played by them in the province. The UDR is a new regiment, launched in the early months of 1970, to act as a largely part-time local force of peace-keepers. It does not carry with it, therefore, the body of regimental tradition generally so strong in the rest of the army. Its sphere of action has lain in the countryside, rather than in the cities, and it has never been used in riots or scenes of violent confrontation. Thus its members are most publicly familiar from countryside road checks, and apart from hurtling round small country lanes in noisy landrovers at great speed, they have made little use of that carapace of technology so frequently associated with the British soldiers. Indeed, as members of the regiment generally serve in their own locality, they have been encouraged to cultivate a civilian rather than military appearance, in an attempt to make them less obvious off-duty targets for local terrorists.

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1. Interrogation techniques are a case in point, as indicated by Watson, op cit, p. 36.

Their hair can be worn at normal length, and they can leave off their berets in order to avoid a tell-tale band of untanned forehead.

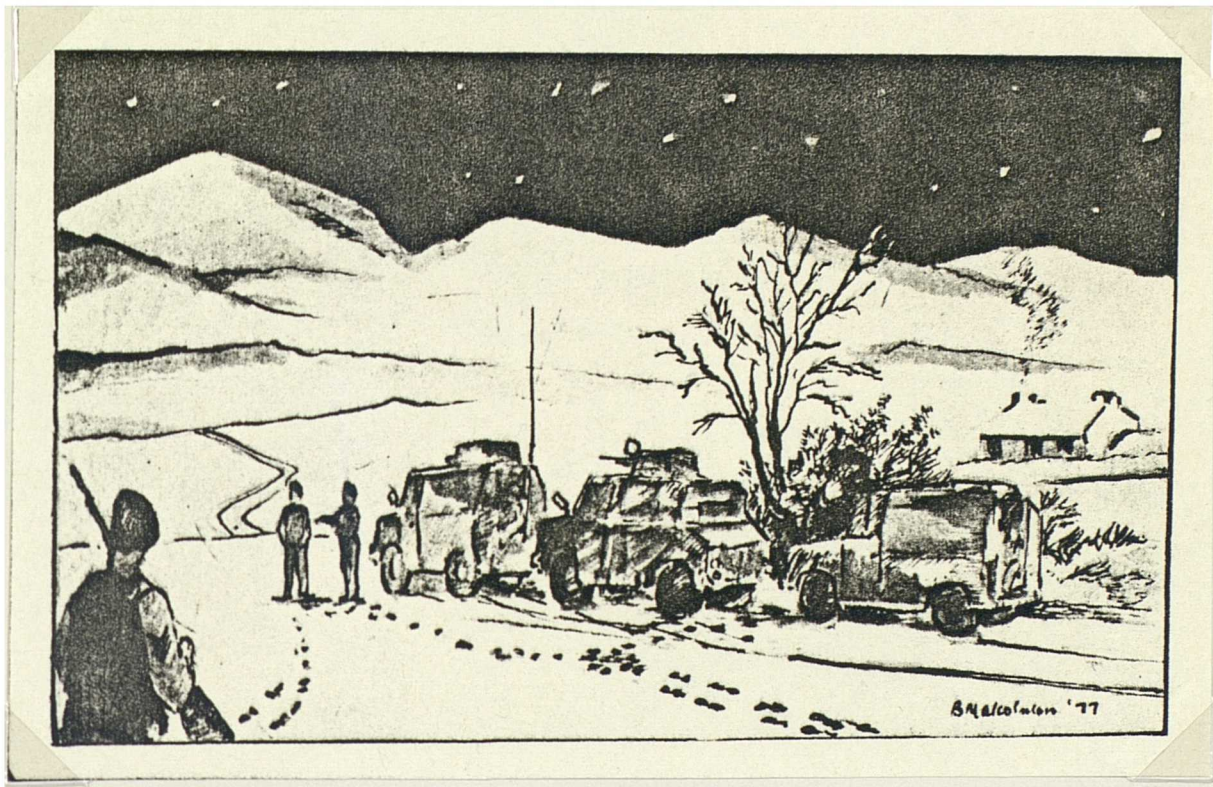
The UDR has also differed from the mainland army units serving in Ulster in its general avoidance of direct, operational publicity. Indeed the only examples of this kind of material known to me are the Christmas cards handed out by members of the 3rd (County Down) Battalion to motorists at vehicle check-points in 1976 and 1977 (ill 196). Designed by one of the Battalion's clerical officers and produced at the regiment's own expense, these were intended to be a small act of courtesy to motorists stopped in this way.<sup>1</sup> It is open to conjecture however what proportion of the 2,000 or so printed each year were actually handed out. UDR check points have been a regular part of my existence over the past five years, and never once have I received one of the normal printed courtesy cards supposedly handed out at them.

By far the most familiar form of visual publicity issued by the regiment has been that associated with its recruiting campaigns. At first sight these campaigns appear to have been conducted in a strongly modernised fashion. Ostensibly they have appealed to the widest possible audience, being carried by all the local newspapers as well as the province's two television companies. And both the scale on which they have been employed, and the mode of their production, has appeared to align them with modern rather than traditional publicity.

From the time of the regiment's original launch in 1970 its use of recruiting advertising has been very heavy, and by 1979 it was disposing of some £200,000 per annum, in order to maintain a regimental strength

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1. "Christmas treat for drivers as UDR hand out cards", Belfast Telegraph, 23 Dec 1977, p. 3.



196. Christmas card handed out by the 3rd (County Down) Battalion of the Ulster Defence Regiment at road checks in 1977/actual size/collection: B. Loftus.

of approximately 8,000, of which about 2,000 were full-time soldiers. This would be equivalent to an expenditure of £5m per annum in the United Kingdom as a whole, which would be a totally unheard-of figure. £3m was at the time of writing the maximum ever spent on a UK advertising campaign. Moreover, not only has the sheer amount of UDR advertising been vast, but so too have been the audiences reached, given Northern Ireland's enormous consumption of the media. In addition the impact of the UDR recruiting campaigns on that audience has been increased by the style of their insertions in the media. Press advertisements, which we are considering here, are used as a back-up to television commercials. They are therefore most frequently reinforcing an existing message. And their own relation to the rest of the newspaper in which they are employed (ill 197), serves to emphasise their aura of importance and professionalism. They are nearly always within the news rather than the advertising section so they reach the reader whether he or she is looking for a job or not, and they carry a news, ie reality aura about them. They are very large (nearly always full-page or  $\frac{2}{3}$  page) which would seem to emphasise their importance, although there is now a belief that full-page advertisements tend to be more easily skipped than smaller ones. They are highly professional compared to the other advertising and news imagery adjacent to them. And while the agency labours to ensure they do not get juxtaposed with other security advertisements by the RUC, the prison service or the Northern Ireland Office, there is some evidence that they are assimilated by the viewer to a kind of blurred imagery of government power. In 1977 for example the UDR used an advertisement showing unused and used bullets with the slogan "Help us to find them like this before they end up like this." Subsequent research revealed that a fair proportion of newspaper readers thought the advertisement was put out by



# No CIA link arms dealer

FORMER secretary John Banks denied, at the Old Bailey arms trial yesterday, that he received money from American sources, the Secret Service or the CIA.

Banks who arrives and leaves the court under police escort, said: "I have never met any such person in the country or people posing as CIA or Secret Service."

He also denied having money intended to pay the mercenaries he helped recruit to fight in Angola for the FLNA.

Banks, an arms dealer who gave no address beyond saying he came from Cambridge, denied being disconcertingly discredited from the Parachute Regiment in 1969. He left the army, he said, because his services were "no longer required."

Quizzed by Mr. Rock Tansley, counsel for John Higgins, one of four men accused on charges under the Prevention of Terrorism Act, Banks said he was prepared to be of assistance to protect the lives of himself and his family and to provide bodyguards and protect the sovereignty of England and the Queen.

The court was told yesterday that Banks denied to turn informer when he accepted a commitment of arms he was asked to negotiate were destined for Northern Ireland.

**Carbines**

The man on trial are Higgins (44), an electrician, and Eric Fair's chief representative in England, of London, Beck, Edward Capley (43), unemployed, of Hibernia, Birmingham; Gerald Smith (42) a structural engineer, and James Davidson (32), a housepainter, agent, both of Paddington, London.

Higgins and Capley face charges involving some money paid in connection with arms services and trying to obtain walk-talkie radios for the same purpose.

Higgins, Smith and Davidson are charged with supplying John Banks, Michael McKee and Stanley Taylor to one 1,000 rifles, 2,000 magazines, 40,000 rounds of ammunition, 1,000 bayonets

and cleaning kits for use in acts of terrorism.

Banks admitted that he had served as a mercenary in four countries and had been arrested in Zurich as one stage because he was alleged to have been part of an assassination squad.

When Mr. Tansley asked him if they had let him go, he replied: "Yes, because it was finished."

He had never been, he said, a director of Security Advisory Service, although he had worked for the firm. The directors included Michael Johnson, who had died in Angola, Barry Maddison, Roger Fry and a man called Frank Paris, he said.

**Bodyguard**

Paris had worked for him, particularly, as a bodyguard and adviser.

In a new series of briefing sessions in Britain to set out a similar job to Secretary and the Liberal Party's education spokesman on education, says it was primarily incorporated to provide bodyguards and security services.

The PLNA, he said, was not to recruit mercenaries in the country, but to combat terrorism wherever it existed in the world, including Britain. It was primarily incorporated to provide bodyguards and security services.

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# FORD FUND PAYS OUT

Mr. Walter Crothers (left), Plant Manager at Ford Motor Co. (Autolite), hands over a cheque to the value of £500 on behalf of the employees to Mr. Kenneth Fallon, chairman of the Labour Multiple Sclerosis Group. Looking on are members of the fund raising committee at the plant.

# FISH WAR (OF WORDS) IN THE COMMONS

THE FIRST combats of another kind of fish war were heard in the Commons yesterday — over mackerel, not cod.

Liam Wallace (Lab.) moved that the Government should order the West into a zone reserved for Scotland — Scottish question actually — and find a broader solution.

There was no reason why boats should not fish legally for mackerel in the area, said Mr. Brown, who agreed that the mackerel should be preserved.

The Cornish fish was returned to Mr. Douglas Henderson (Conservative) E.J. who asked what was Mr. Brown going to do about the "appealing fines" levied on some of his constituents in a Cornish town last week.

One of the magistrates had "indicated a preference" before the case began and the local fisheries officer had said "we was to get the Scots."

**SACK BAD TEACHERS, SAY LIBERALS**

BAD TEACHERS should be dismissed and school heads should have 10-year contracts, the Liberal Party's education spokesman said yesterday.

In a new series of briefing sessions in Britain to set out a similar job to Secretary and the Liberal Party's education spokesman on education, says it was primarily incorporated to provide bodyguards and security services.

# TUC TO PUBLISH BUDGET AIMS IN ECONOMIC REVIEW

THE TUC General Council yesterday gave its approval to publication at the weekend of their economic review for 1977 in the spirit of the shadow of some members as to whether it was worth the economic committee of the TUC will meet the Chancellor Mr. Healey on Friday to discuss the proposals for Budget changes which the review contains.

The Government's reaction could be vital in deciding whether the TUC can secure union acceptance of a third round of pay restraint.

One of the key suggestions being made in the review is that the economy should be relaxed through tax cuts amounting to £2,000 million. It also suggests price increases, a greater role for the National Enterprise Board, and sector price controls.

On price controls the council today welcomed the Government's proposals for changes published yesterday.

"They are very much in line with what we have been urging on the Government," said TUC General Secretary Mr. Len Murray afterwards.

He also made it clear that the Council was very much against any relaxation of dividend restraint. He said: "The Council believes that any money generated in industry should be used for new investments, for increasing stocks, and should not be distributed to dividends."

The General Council is to give financial support to the Post Office unions in their appeal to the House of Lords against the recent decision of the Appeal Court of Union of Post Office workers proposed boycott of mail for South Africa.

# Law must protect 'silly girls' — Judge

A "SELFISH LOVER" who made a young girl pregnant was told by an Old Bailey judge today: "There are cases when it must be shown that people who do this must NOT be let off."

There has recently been strong criticism of leniency shown in under-age sex cases.

But today Mr. Justice Clegg said David Griffiths, aged 24, divorced with three children: "The law is intended to frighten off people who take advantage of silly girls. She was only 14 and you know it."

Three factors led to a nine-month sentence on Griffiths, said the judge.

"One of the most selfishness that no pretensions were used. Secondly, you gave her no support when she must have been in some distress when she knew she was pregnant."

"Third, is the important response when questioned by the police. You said, 'Yes, so what?'"

"I intend to show you what," said Mr. Justice Clegg, the High Court judge who two weeks ago sentenced the IRA bombers at the end of the Balcombe Street siege trial.

Griffiths, of Traver Road, Walthamstow, London, pleaded guilty to four counts of unlawful sex with the girl.

The judge added: "You were old enough to know her and you recklessly made her pregnant by selfishness. There are cases when it must be shown that people who do this must not be let off."

"I have come to the conclusion that this case needs a sentence of imprisonment."

Griffiths was jailed for nine months on each count, to run concurrently.

Mr. David Pagan, prosecuting, said Griffiths met the girl in a pub in East London and began to go out with her. The girl said she was reluctant to have sex the first time but they continued to have intercourse.

"On only one occasion was a contraceptive used. The parents met Griffiths and pointed out the girl's age and said they disapproved of him going out with their daughter."

But because it was obvious they were fond of each other they allowed the relationship to continue.

"The girl had an abortion last July. When police questioned Griffiths, he had said: 'Oh yeah, so what?' and counsel said: 'That's all.'"

Miss Zoe Smith, defending, said: "After the relationship had progressed he discovered she was only 14. It was very wrong of him to continue until it became a physical relationship. He did not believe the girl was pregnant."



**What's missing from this picture?**

In a word, you. Only one man in seventy in Northern Ireland has stepped forward to join the UDR.

We've got the equipment to beat the terrorists. All we need is the men.

Everyday equipment used by the UDR.

1. Land Rover.
2. Calthrop, or spiky chain for immobilising cars.
3. Crash barrier and stop sign.
4. Man pack radio.
5. C42 radio for Land Rover.
6. WTS radio, long range, for H.Q.
7. Pocket phone.
8. No. 2 uniform.
9. Self-loading rifle.
10. Browning 7mm pistol.
11. Sterling sub machine gun for close-quarter defence.
12. Light machine gun.
13. M.G. Magazine box.
14. Combat & flak jacket, protective helmet and visor.
15. Metal detector for weapons searches.
16. Search kit.

Please send me details and an enrolment form to join the Ulster Defence Regiment. Post to UDR Applications, Headquarters Northern Ireland, Magheravernie Road, Lurgan, Phone Lurgan 79550 (24 hours)

Name (Mr/Mrs/Ms/L)

Address

8218

**Ulster Defence Regiment**  
It's time you joined the UDR. And you know it.

**Hotpoint FAIR EXCHANGE**

£66 for your old washing machine...

At all the Best Buy Stores. Liberate your old washing machine from the way you use it.

Why should we want your old machine? We don't really! But we're prepared to take it off your hands if you buy one of these Liberator now during the self-seek selling period.

This helps spread sales more evenly over the year and, to us, it's worth helping you out with your old machine in return.

Of course, you also have the comfort of our fast service. Free new service within three working days of your call or we pay for our engineer's time. And, at your request, we'll supply an engineer free of charge to check the installation and explain how to get the best out of your new automatic.

**Hotpoint Fosters**

ELECTRICAL DISCOUNT STORES

ARDS SHOPPING CENTRE. Tel. N°ords 812833

197. Ulster Defence Regiment recruiting advertisement in the Belfast Telegraph 24 Feb 1977, p.5/size of page 24 x 17 ins (61 x 43.1 cms)/size of advertisement 15 3/4 x 11 ins (40 x 28 cms)/Photo: Pete McGuinness.



the police, appealing to civilians to report arms finds.

The massive, professional aura surrounding UDR recruiting advertisements derives not only from their scale and relative context, but also from the manner in which they have been produced. Two main groups have been involved in the organisation of the UDR campaigns, the army itself, and the advertising agency it has employed. Up till about 1974, the army's brief was drawn up at the Ministry of Defence in London, albeit in close consultation with the regiment and the Northern Ireland Office. Since then it has been provided by the Ulster Defence Regiment from Northern Ireland. At no time however do the officers responsible appear to have received any specific training for the job (although the UDR officer I spoke to in 1979 had experience of selling products in his previous job in a chemicals company). Their speedy rotation has also prevented them from establishing any long-term control over the campaigns.<sup>1</sup> In contrast, the same London agency has been employed throughout, for all except the advertisements in the province's local newspapers.<sup>2</sup> Its suggestions are the subject of long-winded and complicated assessment by a number of army and government organisations,<sup>3</sup> and at times there have been suggestions that advertisements have been either softened or hardened to fit with the Northern Ireland policy of the party then in power at Westminster. Nevertheless the overriding impression conveyed by those involved is that the agency, by virtue of its long-term and professional involvement in the UDR advertisements, has been the force largely responsible for both the imagery and the highly polished style employed in them.

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1. This posting is for the two years normal for any officer assignment in the British Army.
  2. These have been handled by a Northern Ireland firm. Information on the London agency is based on a conversation with one of its members on 14 Aug 1979.
  3. The initial brief is submitted from the army to the agency, which then holds its own internal deliberations before presenting its suggestions first to the Central Office of Information, the Ministry of Defence and the politicians in England, and then to the Ulster Defence Regiment and the Northern Ireland Office in the province. The whole process from first brief to finished advertisement takes approximately three months.

In the early years of the regiment's existence this imagery also appeared to be adopting a modern rather than a traditional approach, by conveying a human, rather romantic picture of the soldier's life, very different from that generally used in either the operational or recruiting publicity employed by mainland units of the British Army. The violent impact of the troubles was admitted. In August and September 1973 for example, advertisements were used which carried drawings of people injured by bomb blast, and in February 1978 a photograph of UDR members on joint patrol with the regular army in a country village, specifically referred to dangers of which only the local men would be aware. The anonymity resulting from the need to avoid recognisable photos of men serving in the regiment,<sup>1</sup> was circumvented by the use of carefully-posed location shots taken by commercial photographers, or by pictures made in England using actors (the latter were cheaper and easier to do but not totally satisfactory).<sup>2</sup> Sometimes a silhouette was employed, and in at least one instance resulted in a romantic image very similar to that to be found in IRA posters issued not long before (ills 198 and 228).<sup>3</sup> However I was assured by the officer in charge of UDR recruiting that this resemblance was fortuitous, not intentional.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s this modernised use of imagery with a wide public appeal began to falter. Increasingly the UDR recruiting advertisements of this period adopted instead the technological coldness and the traditionalism to be found in other British Army publicity. Weapons were neatly laid out for inspection, with no image to


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1. Such photographs can only be taken with the permission of the men concerned.
  2. Conversation with the officer then in charge of UDR recruiting, 29 Nov 1979.
  3. A photographic version of this image was used in a number of subsequent UDR advertisements, eg Belfast Telegraph, 17 March 1976, p. 8.

**HELP US  
TO ACHIEVE  
PEACE  
IN YOUR AREA  
JOIN THE UDR**

Please send me details and application form to join the Ulster Defence Regiment.  
Post to: UDR Applications, Headquarters Northern Ireland, Magheralave Road, Lisburn.  
Phone Lisburn 79550 (24 hours).

Name (Mr/Mrs/Miss) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

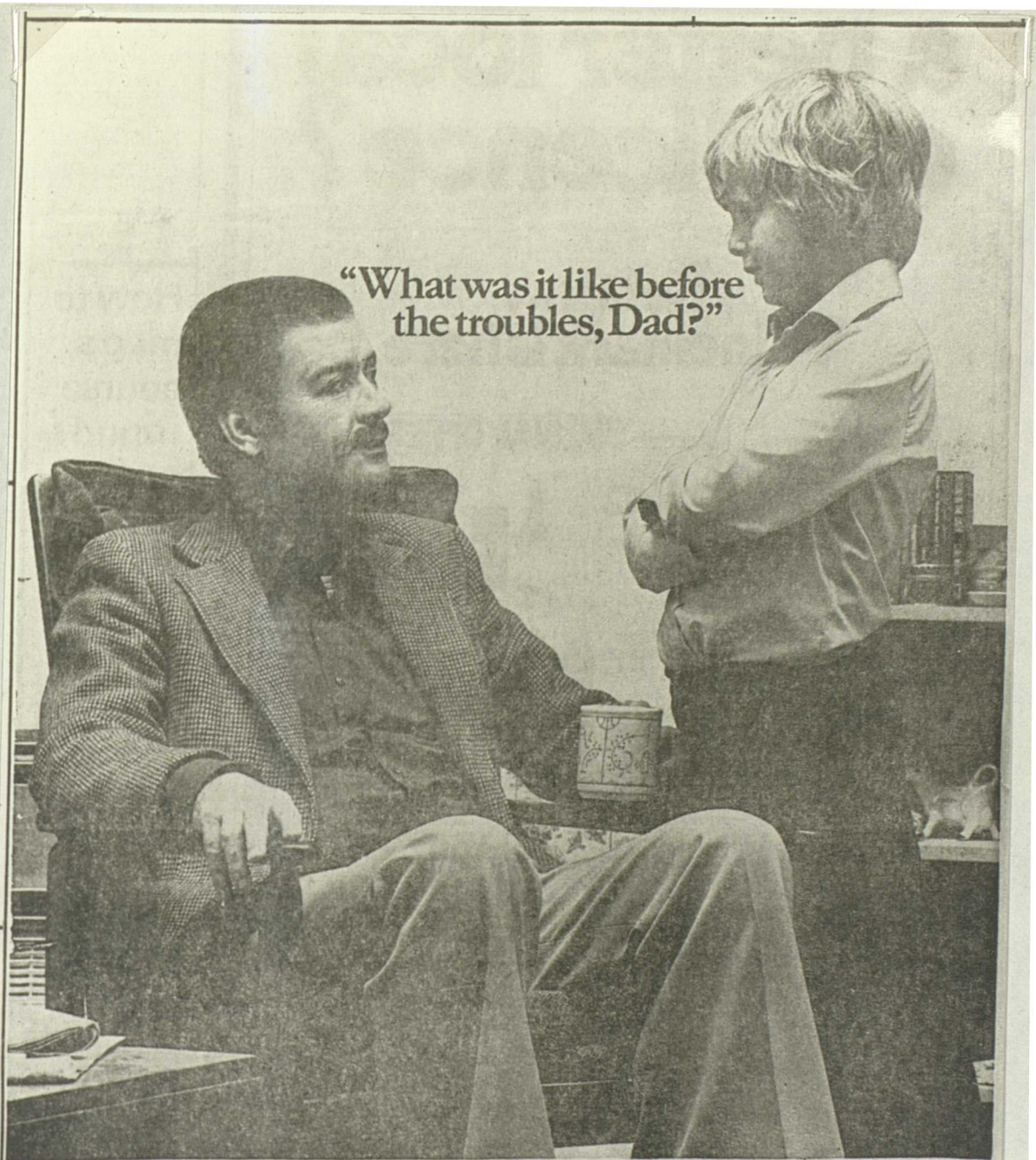
**Ulster Defence Regiment** 

198. Ulster Defence Regiment recruiting advertisement  
in the Belfast Telegraph, 18 Nov 1975, p.13/6 x  
9<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> ins (15.2 x 23.5 cms)/Photo: Pete McGuinness.

suggest the real nature of the damage inflicted by them (ill 197 )<sup>1</sup> - very similar images can be found in both British army leaflets issued in Northern Ireland<sup>2</sup> and the booklets designed to tell English recruits about the nature of service in the province. A cute little boy asked his well-dressed father what it was like before the troubles (ill 199 ) - the image referred to the British First World War recruiting poster which asked "Daddy, what did you do in the Great War?" (ill 200 ). The slogan had been used by both the IRA and the UVF in their recruiting campaigns, but the middle-class scene illustrating it, as the agency responsible later admitted, can have had little appeal for the working-class audience at which they knew they had to aim.<sup>3</sup> Views of neatly-hedged, well-tilled fields accompanied appeals for men and women to protect the province's peaceful farmlands from violence.<sup>4</sup> But this was an English image, scarcely likely to appeal either to Northern Ireland Protestants, who tend to see their land as property to be defended and exploited, symbolically represented by the map of Ulster, or the province's Catholics, who traditionally feel that the wilderness of all-Ireland, not the tilled fields of lowland, Protestant Ulster are their refuge and their homeland.<sup>5</sup> Indeed the agency responsible for the advertisement later commented that people in Northern Ireland failed to understand the association made in it between peace and the countryside. Only occasionally were the old-style romantic, hard-hitting and widely-appealing images to be found<sup>6</sup> -

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1. For further examples of this type of advertisement see Belfast Telegraph 24 Feb 1977, p. 5 and 1 July 1977, p. 5. A similar image used in 1980 is illustrated and attacked in Steve McBride, "Arms and the UDR", Peace by Peace, Belfast, 5 Sept 1980, p. 3.
  2. See above, p. 594.
  3. This advertisement met with other problems as well. The wife of the man who appeared in it insisted his face should be made unrecognisable, hence his resemblance to a waxworks dummy.
  4. eg Belfast Telegraph, 23 May 1978, p. 12. This theme had been used earlier in television commercials for the UDR in 1974, opening with "a wide panorama of Ulster taken from the air, a snatch of orchestral music, and an English voice which began 'Your country'".
  5. I hope to discuss elsewhere the use of land imagery in relation to the Northern Ireland conflict.
  6. See Sunday News, Belfast, 4 March 1979, p. 7.





“What was it like before the troubles, Dad?”

There are thousands of young people in Northern Ireland who have never known what it's like to live in peaceful times.

Which is why we urgently need men to join the UDR on a part-time basis.

The more men who join now, the sooner we can help bring this senseless violence to an end.

**Sooner or later it's got to stop. Join us and help make it sooner.**

Please send me details and application form to join the Ulster Defence Regiment.  
Post to: Headquarters UDR, Freepost (No stamp required), Lisburn,  
Co. Antrim BT28 1BR or call Freephone 700.

Name (Mr/Mrs/Miss) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

HB 3N 2G

**JOIN THE UDR** 

199. Ulster Defence Regiment recruiting advertisement, Sunday News, Belfast, 25 March 1979, p.4/14 x 9<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> ins (35.5 x 24.7 cms)/Photo: Pete McGuinness.





200. Parliamentary Recruiting Committee/recruiting poster 1914-1918/colour lithograph/30 x 20 ins (76.3 x 50.8 cms)/Imperial War Museum.



and they were there not because of a desire to bridge the sectarian divide, or to make members of the regiment more acceptable to civilians, but because of a realistic assessment of the dwindling labour pools from which the regiment could recruit, and the morale problems of those already recruited. According to the officer in charge of UDR recruiting in 1979, older men had already had ample opportunity to join the regiment and the middle-classes had remained consistently apathetic towards it. The target audience had therefore been reduced to working-class youths, a group whose services were also being solicited by numerous other security forces in the province and who were likely to be put off by the complaints of existing UDR members about the boredom of their work. Hence the continuing use of a certain amount of romantic, hard-hitting advertisements.

What we see in the UDR advertisements of the late 1970s and early 1980s is the kind of modernised sectarianism discussed by writers like Bew, Gibbon and Patterson. It resulted from both the political context in which the UDR has operated, and the manner of production of its visual imagery.

For by the mid-1970s the overwhelming Protestant membership of the regiment made any consideration of a wide-ranging appeal for recruits in their advertisements pointless. The avowed intention in the establishment of the UDR had been to provide a local non-sectarian peace-keeping force. Increasingly however the regiment has become a Protestant organisation. Whereas at the time of its launching in April 1970 20% of its recruits were Catholics, by November 1971 the figure had dropped to 8% and by 1979 it was a mere 2%.<sup>1</sup> This shift in the sectarian balance of UDR membership

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1. See the table in O'Dowd et al, op cit, p. 185.

can be attributed to a number of factors. On the one hand there were the IRA assassinations of Catholic recruits to the regiment, particularly in the period following the introduction of internment in August 1971, and the constant criticism of the UDR by Catholic politicians, notably members of the SDLP. On the other hand there was the absorption into the regiment of large numbers of the B-Specials (the Protestant police reserve force disbanded in 1970 for its heavy-handed attitude to civil rights demonstrations),<sup>1</sup> the clear evidence that a small proportion of Protestant UDR members were committing sectarian offences while protected by their uniform, and the less clear evidence that Protestant paramilitaries were members of the regiment and stole weapons from it.<sup>2</sup>

As far as those in charge of the recruiting policy of the regiment were concerned, by the late 1970s Catholic mistrust of it, and the continuing attacks on those who did join, rendered appeals for Catholic recruits both futile and cruel. The motions were still gone through to a certain extent. Advertisements were still inserted in the province's Catholic newspapers, and the national firms who have surveyed attitudes to recruitment for the regiment every two years or so since 1974, have visited Catholic as well as Protestant homes all over the province. But in both cases the Catholic response has been minimal.

So it has been that since the mid-1970s, while modernised modes of production and distribution have continued to be used in the recruiting advertising of the Ulster Defence Regiment, that advertising has discontinued the use of romantic, hard-hitting imagery with a wide public appeal, except in paradoxically limited circumstances, and has been increasingly dominated by the kind of technological coldness and

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1. Approximately half the recruits in April 1970 were former B-Specials.
  2. For evidence on these matters see O'Dowd *et al*, *op cit*, pp 185-6; Barzilay, *op cit*, vol 1, pp 154-7; W.D Flackes, Northern Ireland: A Political Directory, 1968-79, Gill & Macmillan, Dublin/St Martin's Press, New York, 1980, p. 204; Derek Brown, "The UDR", The Guardian, 17 Nov 1975; John Hume, "An In-Depth Look at the UDR", Social Democrat, Belfast, July-Aug 1976, /<sup>and</sup> Northern Ireland Community Relations Commission, Minutes, 26 March 1970.

traditionalism to be found in the publicity of the main body of the British Army.

#### The Royal Ulster Constabulary

When the present troubles commenced Northern Ireland already had two security forces in existence, the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC), and the Northern Ireland Prison Service. Both however were totally unprepared for the image-making demanded by events from 1968 onwards. Because of this inexperience their dependence on English expertise in this field has been considerable. However, their publicity, like that employed by the Ulster Defence Regiment, has frequently applied a gloss of English-style modernism to symbolism derived from local political traditions.

The RUC has produced two main kinds of visual imagery since 1969, operational publicity (such as "wanted" posters or leaflets appealing for information) and recruiting advertisements. In both areas the troubles have necessitated speedy and massive developments. Prior to 1969 there was no RUC information department. The necessary staff and equipment for the production of posters and leaflets simply did not exist. Therefore most of this kind of material was initially produced for the police by the British Army. Gradually the RUC developed their own set-up, particularly after they were given senior status to the Army at the beginning of 1977, and an efficient department was established which could design and produce everything except full-colour posters and leaflets. However, as late as February 1978, it was the Army which produced the leaflet issued by the police after the La Mon bombing. And the leaflets and posters produced by the RUC themselves continued to bear a strong resemblance to those issued by the Army. Both forces have

generally supported their appeals for information with neat, factual, impersonal photographs and drawings of the weapons of violence, and their impact on inanimate objects (ills 190 and 201).

One can put forward several reasons for this strong stylistic resemblance. Clearly both administrative convenience and the desirability of a continuous and strongly recognisable "house style" must have encouraged the RUC to perpetuate the Army's way of handling this material. Equally clearly one must allow for the tendency of all security forces to gravitate towards publicity which will express both to themselves and to those they aspire to control, an orderly and authoritative image. Moreover, it must be realised that those in charge of Army and RUC operational publicity in Northern Ireland come from very similar backgrounds. The head of the RUC information department had seven years experience with television and newspapers before his employment by the police in 1969. Most of those handling Army publicity in the province were also previously journalists.

However there is evidence that the similarity of RUC and Army operational publicity is attributable to more direct influences. Not only has there been the practical cooperation between the Army and the RUC outlined above. I was also informed by a reliable source in January 1974 that representatives from the Army, the RUC and the Northern Ireland Office were meeting in a joint counter-propaganda committee. How long this committee was in existence and how long it continued to exist I do not know. But it is my belief that as a result of these kinds of collaboration Army attitudes to operational publicity were absorbed by the RUC. Thus, when I talked to the head of the RUC information department in 1979, he emphasised, in terms virtually identical to those employed by Army publicists, the need for straight-

# DEFEAT INCENDIARIES



**BE VIGILANT  
SEARCH OFTEN**

Issued by the RUC 147/77

201. Royal Ulster Constabulary poster/1977/red and black on white/photo-gravure/11<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> x 8<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> ins 20.8 x 21 cms)/Collection: B. Loftus/Photo: Pete McGuinness.

forward imagery, and avoidance of flashy and gimmicky material, which he described as

"the decorative icing on an unwholesome cake."<sup>1</sup>

And in order to achieve this he, like his army colleagues, employed artists and photographers with no specific training in publicity work.

This is not to deny the impact of local factors on the RUC publicity. This head of information is from Northern Ireland. He has a strong belief in the value of indigenous rather than imported ideas and has made little study of the use of such publicity in areas outside Northern Ireland. Army publicists on the other hand are to some extent conditioned by experience in guerilla wars elsewhere and by the theories of British and American psywar experts.<sup>2</sup> Moreover there is an awareness in the RUC information department of the need to project an image of the police-force as a long-term authority working in the local community and answerable to it, whereas the Army is theoretically something of an outside force, called in for temporary service and answerable to the citizens of Britain as a whole, rather than Northern Ireland alone. For these reasons RUC publicity has tended to be less experimental and more centrally controlled than that issued by the Army. Local branches of the RUC, unlike local army units, have not been able to produce publicity items on their own initiative. But the actual end result of this is that RUC leaflets and posters have adhered to, and therefore reinforced what one might term the central style of army publicity, with its emphasis on neatness, and technological warfare.

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1. Conversation 19 April 1979. See above p. 601 for very similar comments by an army press officer,  
2. See above, pp. 590-591.



The RUC's recruiting advertising, like its operational publicity, has grown enormously since the early years of the present troubles. Between 1970 and 1979 the size of the force was more than doubled from 3,500 to 7,500, in order to cope with the increasing demands of the violence in the province. The advertising employed to attract these new recruits was also vastly increased. In 1970 the RUC's recruiting budget was approximately £2,000. With this they produced a few posters and little more than three careers features during the year. By 1978-9 they were spending £160,000 a year on press advertising alone, and were employing an advertising agency to design a virtually non-stop series of highly professional recruiting campaigns involving both television commercials, which fall outside the scope of this study, and press advertisements (ills 202 and 203).

These advertisements, like those issued by the Ulster Defence Regiment, appear to have developed an English-style repertoire of imagery and slickness of approach, very distant from local visual traditions. The thrills of modern equipment, the rewards of a good career, and service to the community in a time of conflict are the three themes which have constantly alternated. Skilfully laid-out photographs and drawings have stressed the involvement of the police with the community (ill 202) rather than their role as symbols of authority. The strong narrative line of these advertisements and the professionalism of their layout is made more apparent by their context. Unlike the UDR recruiting advertisements they are confined to the classified rather than the news sections of the local papers. However within that context their illustrative content, their professionalism, their variety and their constant appearance makes them both dominant and authoritative. Indeed few other job advertisements in the Northern Ireland press aspire to

# People will look to you for help and guidance



Once you put on a police officer's uniform, people will turn to you when they need help or guidance.

During your police career you will be faced with many different situations and people will look to you to take control and sort things out.

You will be doing a very responsible job and one that at times will make great demands on you. One that will test your initiative, courage and ability to the full.

But that's what police work is all about—helping, advising and protecting people and that is why it is such rewarding and fulfilling work.

It is well paid too. A Constable starts on a basic salary of £2,775 p.a. In addition there is a special duty allowance of £183 p.a. and free accommodation or a housing allowance of up to £659 p.a.

There are also excellent opportunities for overtime which can increase earnings considerably.

If you want a fulfilling and rewarding career, fill in the coupon and we'll send you full details.

**A necessary and worthwhile job.**

Please fill in this coupon and post it to  
The Careers Officer, R.U.C. Headquarters, Brooklyn, Knock Road,  
Belfast, BT5 6LE. Telephone 760131

NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
(Mr Mrs. Miss)

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

BIRTH DATE \_\_\_\_\_ HEIGHT \_\_\_\_\_

**RUC** BTH5 \* Minimum height Men 172 cms (approx 5'8")  
Women 162 cms (approx 5'4")

**The Royal Ulster Constabulary**

202. Royal Ulster Constabulary recruiting advertisement in the Belfast Telegraph, 6 April 1978, p.19/13½ x 5¼ ins (34.3 x 13.3 cms)/Photo: Maire Concannon.

anything more than a simple logo or possibly a small drawing. The only real visual challenges to this police imagery are those advertisements issued by the Northern Ireland Prison Service. These, as we shall see, are uninventive and repetitive. They serve therefore as a refrain to the police advertisements rather than as a distraction from them.

The modernised, professional, wide-appealing appearance of the RUC's recruiting advertisements, is due to developments within both the police force and local advertising during the past twelve years. In the wake of the Derry riots of August 1969 it was apparent to James Callaghan, then the British Home Secretary, that the RUC were undermanned, overarmed and largely mistrusted by the Catholic community. His response to the situation was to seek an improvement in the RUC's acceptability by injecting it with a large dose of English-style professionalism. He placed at their head Sir Arthur Young, formerly of the City of London Police, and commissioned Lord Hunt to prepare a report on the force. The implementation of its recommendations resulted in an unarmed police force modelled on those in Britain, and responsible to a Police Authority representative of the whole community, rather than to the Ministry of Home Affairs at Stormont. The commissioning of recruiting advertisements has been one of the tasks of this authority. The arms soon returned, but the influence of English-style professionalism continued, particularly in the period between 1976 and 1979 when Sir Kenneth Newman, formerly of the London Metropolitan Police, was the Northern Ireland Chief Constable.<sup>1</sup>

The same increase in professionalism has been apparent in the advertising agencies employed to design the RUC's recruiting campaigns. In 1973 a switch was made from the then slightly old-fashioned agency

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1. See David Leigh, "Why Newman is new head of the Met", The Observer, 21 March 1982, p. 2.

which had for long handled the bulk of government and Unionist Party advertising in Northern Ireland, to a newer, younger group whose members, although all originating from Northern Ireland, had media-experience outside the province.

Nevertheless the apparent modernised slickness of RUC recruiting advertisements has not precluded the inclusion in some of them of imagery derived from local, political traditions. The hard-hitting "We can do without you" campaign of Autumn 1976, which aimed at eliminating unsuitable applications, made sharp use of negative copy, but carried the kind of isolated visual images beloved of the Orange Order, easily accessible to Protestant eyes, but alien to Catholic vision. One indeed, the link in the chain symbol (ill 203), carried definite Orange and Unionist overtones. Originally a symbol employed by the Freemasons, it was adopted from them by the Royal Black Preceptory as an emblem of one of their degrees. In this context it symbolises the bond of brotherhood. From the beginning of this century Ulster Unionists have also employed chains to represent the strength of the links between Northern Ireland and Britain.<sup>1</sup> For Catholics on the other hand, chains have traditionally represented the fetters of bondage which they seek to break.<sup>2</sup>

It must be stressed that this is an isolated example of traditional symbolism emerging in the RUC's recruiting advertisements. But if one considers the wider field of traditional styles of seeing, it becomes evident that there has been a distinctly Protestant air about much of the police advertising. This was particularly the case before the mid-1970s, when the content of the advertisements laid heavy stress on career-

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1. In the Linen Hall Library for example there is a Unionist postcard dating from the period of the Home Rule struggle, which shows John Bull on a map of England holding a rope securing Northern Ireland. In the 1950s the theme was taken up again in a Unionist poster showing Britannia securing Northern Ireland with chains. See above, p. 551.
  2. See above, p. 127, p. 137 and 416 and below, p. 642.

# We can do without you!

If you don't like  
being part of a team

If you judge a man by his colour, class or creed.  
We can do without you.  
If you think that keeping physically fit  
is a waste of time.  
We can do without you.  
If you only want good pay  
but not the hard work  
that goes with it.  
We can do without you.

**But if you think like us,  
we urgently need you-now!**

On joining you will earn  
£2,400 p a with a special duty  
allowance of £183 and an  
accommodation allowance of  
up to £464  
Prospects are good too -  
everybody has the same  
opportunities for promotion

Please fill in this coupon and post it to The Careers Officer,  
R.U.C. Headquarters, Brooklyn, Knock Road, Belfast, BT5 6LE

 NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
BIRTH DATE \_\_\_\_\_ \*HEIGHT \_\_\_\_\_

**RUC**

\*Minimum height: Men 172 cm, women 158 cm. Women 162 cm, women 154 cm

**THE ROYAL ULSTER CONSTABULARY**

203. Royal Ulster Constabulary recruiting advertisement in the Belfast Telegraph, 24 Sept 1976, p 11/  
9<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> x 4<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> ins (24.8 x 12.5 cms).

prospects and splendid equipment, while the imagery presented as exemplars fervently neat and clean-cut young men and women.

It could be argued that practical factors had some effect on this choice of style. It has certainly been true that reportage photos of police dealing with members of the public do not easily survive the poor reproduction available in the Belfast Telegraph, the paper which provides the RUC with the greatest response to their recruiting advertisements. Moreover using photos of the general public in police advertisements also poses problems. Victims of violence and their relatives may not wish to see their suffering re-presented to the world. The figure of a woman shopper dazed by a bomb, used in an advertisement in summer 1977,<sup>1</sup> had to be carefully retouched to avoid identification. Anyone photographed in such a way as to link him or her with violence is also in a position to sue those reproducing the photo.<sup>2</sup> People seen from above or behind or in misty focus avoid such legal problems, but muffle the impact of the advertisement.

However if one looks at the RUC's recruiting advertisements from approximately 1975 onwards, it is clear that these limitations were more apparent than real, for in these later years, alongside the old-style neatly paraded figures pursuing good careers, there were numerous scenes showing the police working in and for the community (ill 202).

Such imagery would certainly have proved more appealing to the Catholic middle-classes whose field of employment has lain very much in such community-serving areas as teaching, medicine and the law.<sup>3</sup> Yet it

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1. eg in the Belfast Telegraph, 18 July 1977, p. 9.

2. See "Sidelines", Fortnight, 5 March 1976, p. 19, re civilian disquiet about inclusion in an RUC recruiting advertisement. For the advertisement itself see Belfast Telegraph, 2 March 1976, p. 13. Preserving the anonymity of the police themselves does not seem to have been an overriding preoccupation. Thus in 1978-9 full-face photos of real-life policemen and women were increasingly used in advertisements despite a high level of attacks on the force.

3. On the dominance of certain class groupings and occupations by Protestants and Catholics in Northern Ireland, see Bew et al, op cit, p. 167 and O'Dowd et al, op cit, pp. 59-60.



seems that the choice of these scenes was fortuitous. Neither the police-authority spokesman, nor the members of the advertising agency believed that at any time they had tailored the style or content of their images to appeal to a Catholic audience.

In part this attitude seems to have derived from despair about the possibility of attracting Catholic recruits to the force. Certainly the proportion of Catholic recruits dropped from 40% in 1970 to 10% in the late 1970s.<sup>1</sup> This seems to have been attributable less to terrorist attacks on Catholic RUC men, than to a continuing Catholic mistrust of the police, particularly after the revelations about their abuse of interrogation techniques following the introduction of internment in 1971 and again in the late 1970s.<sup>2</sup> Significantly the police authority spokesman who talked to me about the recruiting advertisements felt that they were valueless until recruits to the force were more effectively screened.

In part too the lack of desire to produce recruiting advertisements with imagery appealing to Catholics has derived from what one might call a semi-modernised attitude to advertising which has involved the expenditure of a great deal of money and skill with little attempt at self-assessment. Some of the motions have been gone through. The advertisements have been inserted in Catholic as well as Protestant newspapers, despite occasional protests by republicans.<sup>3</sup> A Catholic has been part of the Police Authority team commissioning the advertisements. But he was also from a police family. He could see nothing Protestant or offensive in the link-and-chain advertisement and his assessment of

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1. Statement by Sir Arthur Young recorded in the Northern Ireland Community Relations Commission minutes for 10 Feb 1970, and estimated figure given in Barry Whyte, "How the Catholics are learning to live with the RUC", Belfast Telegraph, 2 Aug 1977, p. 8.
  2. Whyte, loc cit.
  3. See "Irish News nothing but a mouthpiece for British propaganda", Republican News, Belfast, 8 May 1976, p. 1 for an attack on the Irish News, Belfast's Catholic daily newspaper, for carrying RUC recruiting advertisements.

the neat and clean image projected in the early 1970s was that it was due to an over-preponderance of elderly policemen assessing the advertisements rather than to any sectarian imbalance. Further checks on the cross-community appeal of the RUC's advertisements have been minimal. Apart from assessment of the coupon-response to them there have been no audience surveys matching those carried out for the Ulster Defence Regiment. And the force was deliberately excluded from the remit of the Fair Employment Agency, established in 1976 to combat sectarian discrimination in job-recruitment.<sup>1</sup>

Resistance to external, independent assessment of its activities is not unique to the Royal Ulster Constabulary. It has in recent years been a strong characteristic of a number of regional police forces in mainland Britain. Nevertheless the RUC's apparent lack of interest in assessing the appeal of its public imagery, seems to be a further aspect of the continuing assertion in that imagery of a strong element of traditionalism, only partly modified by modernisation of production, and indeed in some respects actually strengthened by that very modernisation, involving as it has done a strong element of the kind of neat, laconic, self-referring designs favoured by the English security forces.

#### Prison officers

Like the other security forces in Northern Ireland the Prison Service has needed to find a large number of recruits as a result of the present troubles. Whereas prior to 1969 the province had a low and relatively stable prison population, between 1969 and 1978 the daily average of those

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1. O'Dowd *et al*, *op cit*, p. 25. The only RUC recruiting advertisement affected by government legislation of this type was one issued in December 1976, which contravened the Sex Discrimination Act. It was withdrawn.

in jail rose from 617 to 2,947, almost a five-fold increase in ten years.<sup>1</sup> A considerably enlarged prison staff was needed, rising from 224 in 1969 to approximately 2,500 in 1979.<sup>2</sup>

However unlike the province's other security forces the Northern Ireland Prison Service did not appeal to the recruits it needed with large-scale advertising campaigns employing modernised imagery and style of production. It was only in 1973 that the Service began to use advertisements at all, and although an agency has been employed,<sup>3</sup> the advertisements they have produced have displayed little concern with such modern considerations as attractive design, professional layout, and imagery of wide appeal. Both their content and design has been boring and unappealing, and these characteristics have been emphasised by the endless repetition of each design. One particular advertisement, carrying nothing more riveting than a drawing of the head and shoulders of a prison officer, was used at least 75 times in the Belfast Telegraph over a nine-month period from September 1973 to June 1974.

Why is this so? Clearly the Northern Ireland Prison Service, of all the security forces in the province, has had the greatest need to protect its members with a cloak of anonymity. Prison officers have been the frequent target for IRA attacks, particularly since the start of protests about the removal of Special Category status in 1976. Between then and January 1980 eighteen prison officers were killed. Loyalist paramilitaries have also made a series of less publicised attacks on prison

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1. Figures given in Committee of Inquiry into the Prison Service, Report, Cmd 7673, HMSO, 1979, p. 41 quoted in O'Dowd et al, op cit, p. 179. The biggest increase resulted not from the introduction of internment and detention between 1971 and 1975 but from the imposition of lengthy sentences from 1974 onwards.
  2. Tim Pat Coogan, On the Blanket, Ward River Press, Dublin, 1980, p. 1.
  3. The following discussion is limited by the difficulty of assessing the agency's role, consequent on their refusal to grant me an interview.

warders.<sup>1</sup> This situation makes the use in recruiting advertisements of drawings or of photographs using models very understandable. But it does not explain why they have been so boring, with their lifeless displays of tradesmen's tools, stiffly posed figures, secondrate cartoon strips and uninspiring articles of uniform (ill 204).

An explanation offered by a Northern Ireland Office civil servant responsible for prison officer advertising was lack of finance.<sup>2</sup> The funds allocated for all Prison Service advertising in TV, press and radio rose from £40,000 in 1973 to approximately £180,000 in the late 1970s, and were then reduced by the general cuts in government spending in 1979 to approximately £120,000. These are not over-generous sums when compared to what has been allocated to the UDR and the RUC, and set against a background of rapidly increasing costs. Indeed by the late 1970s it had become so expensive to produce a television advertisement that the Prison Service could only afford one a year. This in turn affected press advertising, which is normally used as a follow-up to a television commercial. Nevertheless it is arguable that some of the funds lavished on endless back-up insertions in the press could have been spent on changing and revitalising the material being inserted.

It is my hypothesis that the poor and distinctly unprofessional handling of the prison officer advertising has been due not so much to these practical reasons as to the way in which the advertisements have been produced and the attitudes of those involved in their production.

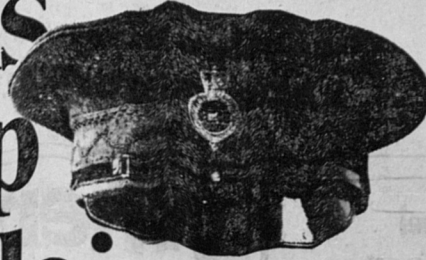
Prison officers, unlike their colleagues in the Ulster Defence Regiment and the Royal Ulster Constabulary are not formally involved in the commissioning of the advertisements appealing for new recruits to

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1. Ibid, pp. 181-2.

2. Conversation on 20 Dec 1979.

The man  
 who wears  
 this  
 cap  
 is doing a  
 really  
 worthwhile  
 job...



... and getting well paid for it too.  
 As an officer in the Northern Ireland Prison Service with  
 pay and allowances he can now earn over £3500  
 a year. The Prison Service has a lot to offer, security  
 of employment, good pay, prospects of promotion, an  
 attractive rent allowance and job satisfaction.

If you are in good health between 21 and 50, 5'6"  
 or over and would like further information on  
 the opportunities in today's Prison Service,  
 telephone Dundonald 4522, extension 22  
 or fill in and post the coupon NOW!



**Northern Ireland Prison Service**

To: PRISON STAFFING OFFICER, DUNDONALD HOUSE, UPPER  
 NEWTOWNARDS ROAD, BELFAST BT4 3SU.

Please send me further information on today's opportunities in the  
 Northern Ireland Prison Service.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Age \_\_\_\_\_ BT

Block capitals please

204. Northern Ireland Prison Service advertisement in  
 the Belfast Telegraph, 2 June 1976, p 17/13½ x  
 5¼ ins (34.3 x 13.3 cms)/Photo: Maire Concannon.

their ranks. These advertisements are organised by the Northern Ireland Office in collaboration with an advertising agency. Both the NIO and the agents survey the officers' opinions from time to time, and there is some evidence that those opinions are taken into consideration. In recent years for example the advertisements have laid increased stress on the variety and comradeship of the prison-officers' job. This is in line with the request of the prison-officers association for an emphasis on career rather than cash. However at least one researcher<sup>1</sup> has suggested that members of the Northern Ireland prison-service have regarded its recruiting advertisements as misleading, have mocked them with cartoons, and have finally expressed their disgust at the gap between image and reality with a very high drop-out rate. (This drop-out rate is all the more remarkable when one remembers the extremely high wages paid to prison-officers in Northern Ireland, and the general lack of employment in the province).<sup>2</sup>

What seems to be in operation here is a kind of superficial modernisation, whereby some of the formal processes associated with up-to-date professionalism, such as the use of an advertising agency and opinion surveys, are employed without due regard to the object of the exercise, namely the production of advertisements which will attract into the prison service suitable recruits. This pseudo-modernism is eloquently summed up in the description of this recruitment advertising to me by its Northern Ireland Office organiser as "a management function". The end is swallowed up in the inadequately understood means.

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1. Mark O'Neill, "Hard times for Her Majesty's Prison Service", Irish Times Dublin, 7 Dec 1977.

2. Coogan, op cit, p. 198 and p. 225. Local gossip has it that prison officers are men who can afford to keep two women.



Government imagery from March 1972 to December 1981

Following the introduction of direct rule by the British government in March 1972, the citizens of Northern Ireland were confronted with a considerable quantity of government advertising as well as the security forces publicity already described. Analysis of these advertisements is best achieved by first setting them in their political context, and then assessing the wider changes in emphasis implicit in them.

In the two years that followed the introduction of Direct Rule the most noticeable pieces of government publicity were inserts placed in the local newspapers. Titled The Facts, these used numerous charts and graphs to demonstrate the success of the government and the security forces in combating the IRA's campaign of violence, then at its height (ill 205).

Individual items were also used to capitalise on the general revulsion caused by some of the terrible incidents which took place during this period. After a series of car-bombs had killed 11 and injured many others in Belfast on 21 July 1972, government leaflets and handouts remorselessly reiterated the horror of the day which became known as Bloody Friday. Thus, one of the leaflets was folded so that at first glance you saw the apparently innocuous sentence "Friday July 21st was a lovely summer afternoon in Belfast...", then the bitter follow-up: "...for 9 people it was the last one - the IRA killed them", then the notorious photographs of pieces of bodies being put into polythene bags, ending with the punchline "Reject the IRA NOW!" And a tabloid hand-out produced after the same event used clocks for the total countdown and a map pin-pointing the bombs as well as newspaper photographs of the dead,



the injured and the shattered buildings. In this imagery as on the day itself, there was no escaping the dreadful violence. Similarly after the bombing of the little village of Claudy on 31 July, the government issued in vast numbers a photographic leaflet titled simply Death of a Village.<sup>1</sup>

Finally, from the end of 1972, a series of posters and newspaper advertisements urged the public to give information about terrorist activity to certain telephone numbers linked to recording machines, thereby protecting their own anonymity. The visual imagery employed in this Confidential Telephone campaign consisted mostly of telephone dials, although one series contrasted the finger on the dial with the finger on the trigger.

All these government advertisements issued during the first year of Direct Rule could be described as forms of operational publicity, designed to cope with the ad hoc needs created by a massive wave of violence. They tally therefore with the belief of recent historians that the Conservative Government introduced direct rule as an interim measure, and intended to keep British involvement in the province as minimal as possible.<sup>2</sup> By 1973 however the Conservative administration was actively involved in attempting to stimulate the revival of a reformed political assembly in Northern Ireland,<sup>3</sup> and was issuing publicity material in support of this initiative. In order to achieve a fairer balance between in the province, and in particular to give middle-ground parties parties/a greater chance of electoral success, a system of proportional representation was introduced for all local elections, whether to the

1. Sean McStiofain in his Memoirs of a Revolutionary (Gordon Cremonesi, Edinburgh, 1975, p. 300) asserts that 200,000 copies of this leaflet were distributed.
2. Bew et al, op cit, pp. 184-5.
3. The political initiatives of 1973 and 1974 are conveniently summarised in Flackes, op cit, pp. 187-8.

newly reorganised district councils, or to the freshly constituted Northern Ireland Assembly. Innumerable press advertisements and leaflets wooed the Northern Ireland electorate to the PR system with a little smiling face which proclaimed "PR is as easy as 1, 2, 3", before explaining how it operated (ill 206).<sup>1</sup>

From May 1973 to June 1975 the political scene in Northern Ireland was dominated by a series of elections, and by successive attempts to form a viable local administration.<sup>2</sup> It is scarcely surprising that government advertising was markedly absent during this period of political activity and uncertainty. Rare exceptions were the series of leaflets and press advertisements which contrasted the IRA's words and actions in the wake of the bombs in Birmingham on 21 November 1974, which killed 19 people and injured 182, and the similar series of advertisements inserted in the Northern Ireland press between December 1975 and February 1976, countering IRA publicity about the plight of their prisoners with information about explosives finds and the deaths of young IRA volunteers who blew themselves up.<sup>3</sup>

By the spring of 1976 it was clearly apparent that all attempts at re-establishing a local assembly had failed, and there followed a long succession of government advertisements aimed at turning the province's population away from support of the men of violence. In May of that year, two full-page advertisements challenged parents to check on their children's possible involvement with violence. One was a mock-up of a Wanted poster, inviting the insertion of a child's photograph into its empty frame;<sup>4</sup> the other a carefully posed photograph of a shadowy man

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1. Deutsch and Magowan, op cit, vol 1, p. 220, entry for 22 Sept 1972, state that approximately 500,000 of the PR booklets were to be distributed, ie about 1 leaflet for every 2 voters in Northern Ireland.

2. Flackes, loc cit, and pp. 166-174.

3. Conor O'Clery, "The art of black propaganda", The Irish Times, 7 Feb 1976.

4. Belfast Telegraph, 6 May 1976, p. 9.

c/1.44.



**P.R.**  
**is as easy**  
**as 1,2,3..**

HOW TO VOTE  
UNDER PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION

206. Northern Ireland Government Information Service/  
illustration to booklet on proportional  
representation/Summer 1973/actual size/Linen  
Hall Library, Belfast



instructing a group of children.<sup>1</sup> In August another full-page advertisement stressed the achievements of the security forces, and urged support for them.<sup>2</sup> And in October and November the massive 7 Years is Enough campaign was launched, backing television commercials with a series of poster hoardings, and full-page press advertisements.<sup>3</sup> The hoardings carried a photograph of the campaign slogan daubed onto a wall in imitation of Northern Ireland's ubiquitous political graffiti. The advertisements used a grainy photograph of a small girl squatting amidst the Belfast rubble (ill 186 )<sup>4</sup>, a drawing by the local cartoonist Rowel Friers of a masked terrorist handing bricks and bottles to a procession of children,<sup>5</sup> and a collage of newspaper headlines referring to the local "Mafia", who it was alleged, were profiting from the troubles.<sup>6</sup> These advertisements were clearly capitalizing on the longing for peace expressed in the demonstrations of the Peace Movement from August onwards. They may also have been influenced by letters in both the local and national press, urging the open use of advertisements to appeal for peace in Ulster.<sup>7</sup>

The same kind of campaigns continued during the next two years. Throughout 1977 large advertisements repeatedly stressed the achievements of the security forces, often with photographs of arms finds.<sup>8</sup> And in 1978 the Check on your Children campaign again urged parents to make sure members of their family were not involved in violence, this time using a

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1. Belfast Telegraph, 14 May 1976, p. 7.
  2. Belfast Telegraph, 9 Aug 1976, p. 7.
  3. For a description of the television commercials see Chris Ryder, "Ulster: Psyops", Sunday Times, 7 Nov 1976, p. 12. According to Ryder this campaign cost the Northern Ireland Office £45,000.
  4. Belfast Telegraph, 21 Oct 1976, p. 5.
  5. Belfast Telegraph, 29 Oct 1976, p. 5.
  6. Belfast Telegraph, 9 Nov 1976, p. 5.
  7. See the letter from Naomi May in the News Letter, Belfast, 30 Sept 1976, p. 5.
  8. eg Belfast Telegraph, 4 April 1977, p. 5; 5 April 1977, p. 5; 12 Oct 1977, p. 7; 14 Oct 1977, p. 7; 18 Oct 1977, p. 7 and 20 Oct 1977, p. 5.



number of variations on a basic motif symbolising the parent's protection of the child (ill 207).<sup>1</sup>

In 1979 there appeared to be a considerable decline in such government campaigns, possibly as a result of expenditure cuts imposed by the new Conservative administration. There were a handful of newspaper advertisements prior to the EEC elections in June, giving information about the method of voting,<sup>2</sup> and in the following year two publicity booklets provided the press with neat and clean views of the interior of the H-Blocks (ill 208), then the focus of the IRA's dirty protest and hunger-strikes. As other views of the cell-interiors were almost unobtainable, these pictures were widely reproduced. Apart from these images, no other government advertisements seem to have been issued during this period.

Charting the use of government publicity in this way gives some indication of its relationship to political events since the introduction of direct rule. However it does not convey what styles of imagery have been used, and why, and what the wider role of these advertisements has been in political developments since March 1972.

In certain respects these advertisements have a close stylistic resemblance to other Protestant political publicity in Northern Ireland during this period, with their overall air of factuality, their use of press-photographs of the results of violence (as in the leaflet issued after the Birmingham bombs), and the adoption of semi-commercial symbolism (as in the Check on your children campaign, the logo for which not only resembled that contemporaneously employed by the Department of

1. Belfast Telegraph, 28 Feb 1978, p. 5; 10 March 1978, p. 7 and 19 June 1978, p. 5. A wall-poster was also issued.

2. eg Sunday News, Belfast, 3 June 1979, p. 12.

# PARENTS



# CHECK ON YOUR CHILDREN

ISSUED BY THE NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE.

207. Northern Ireland Office/Check on your children/  
advertisement in the Belfast Telegraph, 3 March  
1978, p.13/actual size.



208. Northern Ireland Office/Photo of interior of H-block cell in the Maze Prison/1981.

Manpower Services,<sup>1</sup> but also had a family likeness to the kind of abstract emblems generally fashionable during this period for large firms, local councils and so on). This stylistic bias is to an extent attributable to the type of personnel employed in the making of these advertisements. Throughout this period the Northern Ireland Office civil servants and the advertising agency staff handling government publicity have been local men and women. It is a fair certainty that the civil servants have been overwhelmingly drawn from the Protestant community;<sup>2</sup> and from my encounters with members of advertising agencies I believe the same is true of them.

This Protestant element in the style employed in the government advertisements appears to have been partly modified by English-style modernisation and professionalism. It is undoubtedly true that the large sums allocated to Northern Ireland Office advertisements by the Direct Rule government, particularly when added to those distributed to the security forces, encouraged a rapid growth and professionalisation of advertising in Northern Ireland during these years. Prior to March 1972 very little was spent on government advertising; by 1974 the Northern Ireland Office was receiving £80,000 for this purpose (of which about 60% went on the Confidential Telephone campaign); and by 1978 it was allotted £150,000.<sup>3</sup> The impetus to modernisation and professionalism that this expenditure constituted can be ascertained from the changes which took place within both the NIO and the agency handling its advertisements between 1972 and 1981.

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1. See the advertisement by the Department in the Belfast Telegraph, 21 March 1978, p. 17.
  2. On the lack of recruitment of Catholics to the Northern Ireland Office Civil Service see Bew et al, op cit, pp. 76-8 and O'Dowd, op cit p. 15 and pp. 59-60.
  3. Conversation, 30 May 1979.

One agency was responsible throughout this period for all the NIO advertising.<sup>1</sup> Theoretically agencies are chosen on the basis of surveys by the Northern Ireland Office and the Central Office of Information, and lip-service is paid to the idea of shifting work around from one to another so as to avoid complacency. However in reality, of the government and security groupings employing local agencies, only the RUC have changed theirs. In the small Northern Ireland advertising market the specialised knowledge required is difficult to replace. Indeed the Northern Ireland Office spokesman who talked to me in January 1974 told me that he relied very heavily on the ideas put forward by the agency, and I gained the same impression from his successor in 1979. However by then significant personnel changes had occurred in both the NIO and the agency. At the Northern Ireland Office the elderly, conservative man I had spoken to previously had been replaced by somebody younger, with a stronger interest in modern forms of advertising. And at the agency the person most closely responsible for the government advertisements was no longer the middle-aged man with the longing to lash out at the IRA, but a young, cool and sophisticated woman, with media experience in New York, and no strong feelings about the Northern Ireland conflict. It was her international professionalism which was stamped on government advertisements at this time. Not only did she decide the theme, approach and media for a campaign, but at times it was she rather than her team of five local artists who actually roughed out the imagery to be used. She became very involved in the Check on your children campaign and designed the logo herself. Originally she drew a black parent with a child, but thought

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1. Ibid.

it looked too dominating. In the final version she saw the child as a shadow and a question mark with the parent a power of light. She reasoned that the symbol had to be abstract, because if the parent was shown a woman fathers would think mothers were responsible for the children, and vice-versa.<sup>1</sup>

However it is significant that the kind of modernised image selected by this woman was exactly that type of neat, impersonal, isolated symbol traditionally favoured by members of Northern Ireland's Protestant community, but not their Catholic counterparts. Indeed, this Protestant form of vision appears to have actually been reinforced by some of the advertisements issued by the government, by virtue of their adoption of the semi-modernised, semi-traditional visual style particularly favoured by the British Army. Thus the Army's passion for military technocracy and neat charts recording the containment of violence seems to have had a strong impact on The Facts inserts of 1972-3 (ill 205), and also on the advertisements of 1976 and 1977 recording the achievements of the security forces. Some forms of modernisation are capable of reinforcing traditionalism.

Nevertheless it appears to have been the modern scale and slickness of the advertising issued by the Direct Rule government, not its continuing traditionalism, which have been most evident to the eye of the viewer. It is indeed important to emphasise these characteristics and the way they were fostered by increased expenditure.

The Northern Ireland Office spokesman who talked to me about their advertising in 1979 admitted that the security successes advertisements of 1976 and 1977 grew too big because the money was there to buy a full page

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1. Conversation 2 August 1979.



when a half-page would have done, although he also stressed that when speed was essential, it was often easier to buy and lay out a full page than a section of one.<sup>1</sup> Plentiful finance encouraged advertising overkill. He also agreed that the little girl in the 7 Years is Enough advertisement (ill 186 ) was too neat and upmarket, for all her dishevelled looks and bare feet, but pointed out that it was no longer possible to use the kind of direct imagery employed in the Northern Ireland Community Relations Commission advertisement of 1970 (ill 185). People had become too aware of the repercussions of being shown in government propaganda, and eventually the girl used was the daughter of a friend of a friend. Increased advertising sharpened the critical perceptions of its audience, who therefore required more careful and sophisticated imagery.

What the Northern Ireland Office publicists apparently failed to recognise however was how greatly the impact of these professional, impersonal, overblown advertisements was magnified not only by their scale and repetition, but also by their association with the very similar advertising of the security forces, and the lack in the province of home-grown commercial advertising of this standing. In theory the agencies preparing government and security advertisements are meant to ensure that they are not jammed together on a newspaper page or in a television commercials break, but in practice they often fail to do this. And in newspapers the cumulative effect of such advertising may often be increased by the news material adjacent to it, so that a single page may contain a photograph of a victim of the troubles, an advertisement for

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1. Conversation 30 May 1979.

the confidential telephone, and a recruiting advertisement for the Ulster Defence Regiment or the Territorials (ill 209).<sup>1</sup>

In the frequent public response by Northern Ireland's political groupings to the Northern Ireland Office advertising it has generally been the large-scale slick campaigns of the late 1970s which have attracted the greatest antagonism in the Protestant as well as the Catholic community. Practical reasons may be suggested for this. As we shall see, most local political groups had developed a more sophisticated approach to publicity by this period, and the general lack of political action rendered the field of propaganda more attractive for manoeuvre and counter-manoeuve than it had been in the politically hectic period between 1968 and 1975. Nevertheless it does seem that some of the reactions against the government campaigns were specifically provoked by their large-scale, modern slick nature, and that this was more offensive to most inhabitants in Northern Ireland than traditionalism, even the traditionalism of one's political opponent.

Indeed even prior to the introduction of direct rule this seems to have been the case. No counter-propaganda appears to have been attracted by either the PD and NICRA posters, or the hard-hitting advertisements and the Terror and the Tears booklet issued by the Faulkner government. The first such counter-response known to me is the Republican Clubs poster in the summer of 1971 urging people not to fraternise with the Army (ill 180). This was a straight take-off of the Ministry of Home Affairs advertisement of the same time urging support for the Army (ill 181 ), with a significantly large-scale, well-designed image of a British soldier. In 1973 and 1974 there were a number of Republican posters responding to the Confidential Telephone campaign. I myself saw posters in Ballymurphy which used a telephone symbol with the slogan

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1. This is less possible on television as the IBA code dictates that advertisements may not be shown adjacent to programmes relating to them.

SEE THE NEW  
**YASHICA MG-1**  
CLARKES (CHEMISTS)  
8 DONGALL SQ. WEST BELFAST  
Tel. 27256

Belfast  
**652155**  
Confidential Telephone



A recent photograph of Mr. Ewart-Boag.

# BRITISH AMBASSADOR MURDERED IN DUBLIN

By Michael Devine, Laurence White,  
Oliver McGuckin and Chris Kelly

THE British Ambassador to the Republic, Mr. Christopher Ewart-Boag, was killed in a terrorist's booby-trap explosion as he drove from his home into Dublin today.

A girl secretary, Miss Judith Cook (25), was also killed instantly in the explosion, and her boss, Mr. Brian Cullinan, aged 41, the top British civil servant in the Republic, was critically injured.

Mr. Ewart-Boag's driver, Brian O'Driscoll, was also seriously injured in the blast which occurred just 100 yards from the Ambassador's residence at Glasnevin, sandwiched in the Dublin mountains.

The attack, which is understood to have been a suicide bomb, was the first used by Mr. Ewart-Boag on his first day as British Ambassador in Dublin.

The explosion killed a large party of 100 at the car's second stop at a restaurant. An eyewitness said he never saw the car before it was hit and it was about 20 yards away. The car was left gutted and the wreckage was scattered over a large area.

## Embassy was a frequent terror target

THIS IS NOT the first time that British Embassy staff have come under attack in Dublin, and in February 1975 the Embassy building in Marlborough Square was bombed, resulting in a British man being killed and several others injured.



The remains of the Ambassador's car protruding from the crater.

## At Stormont talks three weeks ago

By John Wallace, our Political Editor

THREE WEEKS ago Mr. Ewart-Boag visited Stormont Castle for lengthy discussions with Mr. Merie Ross and the top officials of the Northern Ireland Office.

This was immediately before his appointment to Dublin.

As well as the beginning of the month he attended the weekend conference at the University of Ulster, which was held at the British Embassy in London.

There he met many of the leading political figures from Northern Ireland and the Republic and made an extensive speech in which he spoke of how much he looked forward to becoming Ambassador in Dublin.

For a top diplomat he had the unique distinction of having one of his secretaries killed in the course of his job, and it is not clear if he was aware of this at the time.

## Politicians condemn outrage

SWIFT condemnation of the killings has come from politicians in both parties in Ulster.

Mr. Ernest Bain, leader of the DUP, said: "I am disgusted at this outrage. It should be a salutary lesson to the IRA."

A spokesman for the Alliance Party said: "We are absolutely horrified at this senseless deed. It is a most appalling and ghastly crime."

The party's leader, Mr. Oliver Napier, said: "My reaction is that I am horrified and I believe that it is necessary for local co-operation between the Government of the Republic and the British Government to eradicate terrorism."

The Rev. William Bend, deputy leader of the DUP, said the British Government's reaction to this atrocity would reveal whether or not they would eventually surrender to IRA blackmail.

He added: "We deplore the brutal bombing which has resulted in the death of the British Ambassador, but we must assume the responsibility for the IRA's actions."

Mr. James Allister, DUP deputy leader, said the British Government should not take any action which would reward the IRA's "suicide" bombers.

He said: "It is not the business of the British Government to take any action which would reward the IRA's 'suicide' bombers."

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## GET A GREAT START IN LIFE

INSIDE TO-DAY

Beer cans, Americans, blackout, trips to Dublin...

JOIN AN IRISH REGIMENT

TELEPHONE: BELFAST 21344  
HOLYWOOD 5717  
LONDONDERRY 2932  
POSTTOWN 2470  
OMASH 2258

See further details.

## WEATHER

FORECAST for tonight and tomorrow - Mostly clear, with perhaps a little rain at night. Maximum temperature 19 C; minimum 12 C. Wind: north-west, light or moderate. Outlook for Friday: rather cloudy; some rain or showers.

LETTERING TIME - 10-11 pm till 11.55 am. High temperature: 15.5 and 14.5 pm.

The Moon - New Moon, July 27; First Quarter, August 2.

## CO-OP BOMB DAMAGE SALE

Last Three Days

PAINT ROLLER and TRAY only 95p

DULUX MAXIMUM COVER EMULSION 2 1/2 litre SELECTION OF HALF PRICE £2.75

Co-op Davey Stamps

Amey Building, Deep St.

Belfast Co-operative Society Ltd, York Street, Tel. 21355

Tonight's TV Page 8

"Confidentially Touts<sup>1</sup> will be shot"; Derry came up with the slogan "A finger on the trigger keeps the finger off the dial", a neat reversal of one of the government slogans in the campaign; the Linen Hall Library has a number of republican careless talk posters dating from this period; and others are recorded in Frank Burton's book on the "Anro" area of Belfast in these years.<sup>2</sup> Some of these posters were used again during the recent wave of informing by republicans. All can be seen as response to what has been a very real problem for republican groups in Northern Ireland since the mid-1970s. But they were also a retaliation to the most large-scale, professionally produced campaign used in the NIO advertising of this period.

Opposition to subsequent NIO campaigns seems to have derived from the same mixture of operational requirements and antipathy to the large-scale, slick image projected by those advertising British direct rule. The Proportional Representation campaign attracted the opposition of Northern Ireland loyalists because they feared it would favour the Catholic population. In October 1972 the Protestant paramilitary Ulster Defence Association collected and burnt government literature about the new voting method.<sup>3</sup> They also issued a poster urging members to send PR literature back to Stormont, or to hand it over to their area UDA.<sup>4</sup> And the Revolutionary Marxist Group's vicious parody of the Northern Ireland Office publicity (ill 210 ), appears to have been a fairly typical republican reiteration of the traditional opposition to British involvement in Ireland, as revamped by the Troops Out Movement in England. But the

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1. Informers.

2. Burton, *op cit*, p. 111. See also below, pp. 666-7.

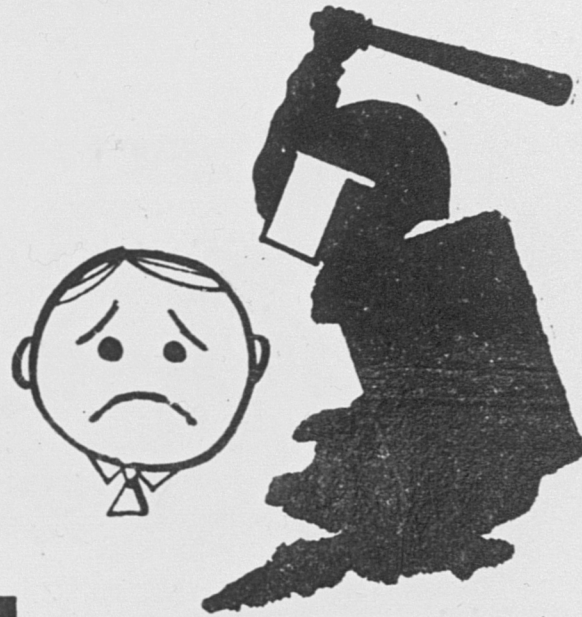
3. Deutsch and Magowan, *op cit*, vol 2, entry for 4 Oct 1972, p. 224, and entry for 6 Oct 1972, p. 225.

4. In the Imperial War Museum, London.



**Don't Vote for**

**COLLABORATION**



**is as easy  
as 1,2,3....**

**British Strategy**

Revolutionary Marxist Group — Belfast

210. Revolutionary Marxist Group/Poster opposing Proportional Representation/1973/red & black on white/silkscreen/11<sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub> x 8<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> ins (29.5 x 20.8 cms)/Linen Hall Library, Belfast/Photo: Peter McGuinness.

widespread dislike of the 7 Years and Check on your children campaigns, Paisley's use of the 7 Years slogan on a poster during the Loyalist strike of 1977, and its remodelling in the Falls Road slogan "700 years is enough" all seem evidence of a more general antipathy to such large-scale, omnipresent, slick government imagery. And indeed it is arguable that the totalised, technological professionalism exuded by government and security advertisements in Northern Ireland since 1972, coupled with the dominance of employment in the province by government and security organisations,<sup>1</sup> must have played a large part in producing that characteristic Northern Ireland atmosphere of the late 1970s in which apathy, resignation, irritation, and stifled violence were equally mixed. The British professionalism was for some admirable, for many reassuring, but for few likable.

These conclusions may appear too vague and too subjective. They can however now be tested out by examining the imagery produced by political groups in the province, after the introduction of direct rule. It will be seen that they too have increasingly aspired to professionalism, although not solely as a result of confrontation with the government and security advertising. Other factors have played a part as well. The momentum of the troubles has thrown up a new generation of political activists, hardened and impatient with the amateurism of their elders. After a period of political experiments and diversity, financial exhaustion and boredom have reduced such initiatives, and political groupings have reformed and reasserted their centralised control over their supporters. An increasing awareness of the value of outside support has opened eyes to imagery and styles elsewhere. Nearly everyone

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1. In O'Dowd et al, op cit, p. 59 and p. 179 it is suggested that by the late 1970s 40% of all employees in Northern Ireland were employed by the government, and one in every 38 people in the province were involved in some kind of security activity.



in the political publicity business in Northern Ireland has grown older and smarter.

Unionist publicity between March 1972 and December 1981

The development of Unionist publicity after the introduction of Direct Rule can be seen as falling into two successive phases. In the first phase, from March 1972 to the end of December 1973, a massive amount of imagery was generated, much of which appeared to break with old traditions. And in the second phase, from January 1974 to December 1981, there was a considerable decline in output, and a marked return to traditional imagery. One can see these two phases as the simple result of such political events as the spate of polls in Northern Ireland in 1973-5, the increasing strength of rightwing Unionism in 1974, and the subsequent declining hopes for the return of a local political forum. However a more fruitful approach is to relate Unionist publicity in this period to a number of wider developments.

The first important political images issued by the Unionist party after the introduction of direct rule were the photographs of the casualties of IRA violence, inserted in local and British newspapers in March 1972, and issued in booklet form in August of the same year. These formed a striking contrast to the charts and graphs placed in the same papers by the Direct Rule government at this time.<sup>1</sup> By 1973 however the party was issuing very different publicity.

In March 1973 the Border Poll asked the Northern Ireland electorate to decide whether they wanted the province to remain part of the United

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1. See ill 205.

Kingdom, or to be joined with the Republic of Ireland. Unionist posters urged the voters to "keep the link" with Britain. Two designs were used. One showed the Union Jack and the Ulster flag in the shape of a handshake, the other, titled British Connection, showed them held together by a stylised chain-link (ill 211).<sup>1</sup> 18,000 of these posters were sent out, and 500,000 Keep the Link leaflets - and reprint orders were received.<sup>2</sup>

This Border Poll propaganda was followed by the party's publicity for the local government elections in May of the same year. The two posters issued then employed photographs of children and old people, accompanied by the slogan, "Think of their future" (ill 212).<sup>3</sup> Meanwhile, a newspaper advertisement used a photograph of the Unionist leader Brian Faulkner, speaking at a microphone, to boost its Peace, Order and Good Government manifesto.<sup>4</sup> This slogan was used again in June in the party's campaign for the elections to the proposed Northern Ireland Assembly. This time it accompanied a Union Jack map of Northern Ireland. The design appeared both on a poster<sup>5</sup> and a newspaper advertisement.<sup>6</sup> A further poster carried a drawing of Faulkner<sup>7</sup> and some of the Local Government election posters were pressed into service again. Stick-on lapel badges were also used by the party for the first time for this election campaign. These showed a clown face, children and a man. Finally in November and December three advertisements stressed the party's achievements during the year. One showed Faulkner, tieless and informal, working at his desk (ill 213). The other two had the

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1. Both these posters are in the Linen Hall Library, Belfast.
  2. Photo, News Letter, Belfast, 7 March 1973, p. 2.
  3. Both are in the Linen Hall Library.
  4. Belfast Telegraph, 29 May 1973, p. 7 and 30 May 1973, p. 12.
  5. In the Linen Hall Library.
  6. Belfast Telegraph, 25 June 1973, p. 5.
  7. In the Linen Hall Library.



211. Ulster Unionist Party/Border Poll poster/1973/  
red, blue, black and white on blue/lithograph/  
27½ x 18½ ins (69.8 x 47 cms)/printed by W & G  
Baird, Antrim/Linen Hall Library, Belfast/Photo:  
Peter McGuinness.

**Think of their future**



**Vote  
Unionist**  
**Local Govt. Elections May 30th**

Published by The Ulster Unionist Party, 3 Glengall Street, Belfast  
Printed by Brough, Cox & Dunn Ltd, 46/48 Clifton Street, Belfast BT13 1AJ.

212. Ulster Unionist Party/Local elections poster/1973/  
yellow and black on white/photo-litho/18½ x 12½  
ins (47 x 31.8 cms)/Linen Hall, Library, Belfast/  
Photo: Pete McGuinness.



**The foundations  
have now been laid...**



Issued by the Unionist Party PR. Dept., Glengall Street.

213. Ulster Unionist Party/Advertisement in the Belfast Telegraph, 26 Nov 1973, p.3/10½ x 7 ins (26.8 x 17.8 cms)/Photo: Pete McGuinness.

Unionist team standing round a table considering plans; this image was accompanied by the Union Jack map of Northern Ireland.<sup>1</sup>

Compared to previous Unionist publicity, the quantity, range and sophistication of this material is striking. What were the reasons for this change to a distinctly modernised style?

Events certainly played a part. But it was their cumulative impact, rather than their individual effect which was important. For nearly five years the Unionist Party had seen itself repeatedly cast in the role of blundering traditionalist, while its opponents were represented as modern, effective and outward-looking. Increasingly the Unionists blamed their own poor publicity for this situation. Indeed their publicity had been characterised by traditionalism and inefficiency, although the image projected of them was equally the result of the prevalent media fascination with leftwing protest groups. Direct rule was the final blow to the Unionist Party's self-esteem. The implication was that the party was unfit to govern Northern Ireland, and that its fifty years rule of the province were valueless. The series of electoral hurdles imposed by the Westminster Government in 1973 were therefore a challenge to it to prove otherwise, and the party looked to skilful publicity and the projection of "a fresh image"<sup>2</sup> to present that proof.

Part of the incentive for the Unionist party's new look publicity had also been provided by a practical consequence of the introduction of direct rule. The Unionists could no longer turn to Stormont civil servants for assistance in this field, and therefore in 1972 they set up a Publicity and Research Committee which raised its own funds.<sup>3</sup> This in

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1. Belfast Telegraph, 3 Dec 1973, p. 9 (repeated 7 December, p. 5) and 14 Dec 1973, p. 11.
  2. It was this phrase which Sam Butler, the party's press-officer from 1972-4 constantly used to sum up for me the nature of Unionist publicity during this period.
  3. See the fund-raising advertisements in the Belfast Telegraph, 17 March 1972, p. 8, 12 April 1972, p. 3 and 20 June 1972, p. 9.



itself had important consequences, for it meant that Unionist publicity was freed from interference by more conservative members of the party, and that in particular the old-style poster-producing combine of Jim Bailie and John Cleland<sup>1</sup> was by-passed. Moreover it is clear from the recruitment policy of the committee, that the intention was to fight the publicity campaigns of this period with exactly the kind of personnel who had so effectively pushed the Civil Rights movement, People's Democracy and the Social Democratic and Labour Party into the limelight. A group of young, bright university graduates were employed.<sup>2</sup> Amongst them was Sam Butler, officially appointed to be the party's press-officer in mid-1972, but soon to control all its visual publicity as well. The pressure of events added to his power. Technically his decisions were meant to be referred back to the publicity committee, but as poll followed poll, he often acted on his own initiative for the sake of necessary speed.

Like many of his counterparts in NICRA, PD and the SDLP, Butler had no previous experience of publicity, and like them he turned to examples elsewhere. A history graduate at Queen's University, Belfast, he consulted friends who were artists, studied publicity produced by Northern Ireland groups as diverse as the Provisional IRA, the Alliance Party and the Northern Ireland Labour Party, and looked at some of the recent political imagery produced in Britain, the Netherlands and Israel. Fortuitously, he also found a ready source of ideas in Jim Ruthenbury, a young artist who had recently joined the Unionist Party's advertising agency, after working on Trudeau's campaigns in Canada.

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1. See above, p. 558.

2. Brian Faulkner, Memoirs of a Statesman, ed John Houston, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1978, p. 175.

The influence of this outward-looking approach on the Unionist publicity of this period is apparent. The Border Poll posters (ill 211) were deliberately artistic productions, well printed on high-quality paper, in the hope that they would appeal to young people's contemporary craze for collecting posters.

"We did it on art paper, on poster paper, because we wanted to try to sell it to young people as an art poster for their walls. I've been trying to change the party image from the old-fashioned fifty-year old image to a new, trendier image. And we've got the advertising agency on it, and we try to get this across that we're a new-image party."<sup>1</sup>

The local government election posters were partly based on designs used by the Conservative Party in mainland Britain in 1970.<sup>2</sup> The stick-on lapel badges were an early response to what was to become a craze of the mid-1970s.<sup>3</sup> And both the sheer scale of the Unionist campaigns during this period and the expenditure lavished on them appear to indicate the party's desire to make an appeal to a wide section of the party's electorate.<sup>4</sup>

Those responsible for the Unionist Party publicity of this period appear therefore to have abandoned traditionalism in their open recruitment of professional expertise, their willingness to look at similar work elsewhere, their desire to achieve a new image, their emphasis on good design and their heavy expenditure on large campaigns designed to woo the electorate, rather than confirm the loyalty of an

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1. Conversation 15 Jan 1974. The design qualities of these posters certainly won them admiration in unexpected quarters. A young man with art-school experience, who had previously made posters for the Republican Clubs, and was by this time working on publicity for community groups, praised these posters to me.
  2. These posters are reproduced in Yanker, *op cit*, p. 118, no. 412.
  3. See above, p. 340.
  4. The newspaper advertisements issued in November and December, which formed only part of the massive output of publicity by the Unionist Party in this year, may have cost as much as £5,000.

existing following. But how modern were the images they produced? Taking each of the poster campaigns of 1973 in turn, it becomes apparent that beneath the gloss of sophistication there were some very traditional symbols.

The flags and maps in the Border Poll posters (ill 211) are explicable if one remembers their political context. But the link and handshake symbols used with them show the persistence of traditional Protestant elements in this supposedly new-style Unionist imagery. The link, as we have seen, has a long association with both Orange Order and Unionist symbolism. (Indeed when Sam Butler found himself short of posters for the Border Poll campaign he simply pressed into service some of the 1950s Unionist Keep the Link posters showing Northern Ireland linked to Britannia with chains.) It is not an emblem likely to appeal to Northern Ireland Catholics who have traditionally seen chains as a symbol of bondage.<sup>1</sup> Indeed it is clear from an image in the Provisional newsheet Vindicator (ill 214), that this was the interpretation placed on the Border Poll poster. The accompanying text comments that the link with Britain is seen by nationalists as "the chains around us." The handshake, though unrelated to specific Orange or Unionist traditions, and not unknown in the imagery of the province's Catholic community,<sup>2</sup> is part of that network of popular symbolism which has been shown to be closely associated with the Protestant way of seeing.<sup>3</sup> The children and old people represented in the local government election posters were influenced not only by Conservative Party publicity in Britain, but by a

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1. See above pp. 127, 137 and 416.

2. It is a symbol used by the Ancient Order of Hibernians, and a tricolour Union Jack handshake featured in the winning design in the children's peace poster competition organised in 1973 by the largely Catholic Irish National Teachers Organisation.

3. It has long been used in the "hands across the sea" tattoos to emblemise friendship between nations (Ronald Scutt and Christopher Gotch, Skin Deep, Peter Davies, 1974, p. 104); it was used on an anti-Home Rule postcard in the early years of this century (PRONI, D 1724); the design has been repeated in a loyalist internee handkerchief design, titled We are the People in which Ulster shakes hands with Scotland (photographed by Conrad Atkinson); and it has been absorbed in local commercial imagery as the emblem of the Ulster Bank, designed by the agency which handled the Unionist publicity.



# THE VINDICATOR

'The man dies, but his memory lives. That mine may not perish, that it may live in the respect of my countrymen I seize upon this opportunity to VINDICATE myself...

## BORDER POLL



That much publicized, much talked about Border Poll is upon us now. This very expensive piece of British legislation is a great waste of time and will prove to be a very costly item indeed for the British taxpayer. Its result is a foregone conclusion, and its whole operation epitomises the 'head in the sand' mentality of the British Government to the Irish Question. When will they ever learn".....

The MAP here is part of the Unionist Party propaganda - VOTE to maintain the British link. It is an unfortunate drawing for it also shows clearly the reason behind the Nationalist boycott

of this ludicrous poll. It also shows clearly the reasons behind the 'troubles' existing in the North of Ireland since 1969 - the link with Britain, seen by the Nationalist as the chains around us. The grip of England on the North-east corner of Ireland is lessening daily with every bomb and every bullet, with every British soldier who dies. Britain longs for the day when she can get rid of this bad apple. She longs for the day when she can return her soldier boys back home. She knows that this must be her last conflict in Ireland, this must be the end - she cannot afford to sustain another campaign in 10 years' time.

The BORDER POLL then is purely an exercise designed to fulfill the criterion of history and to make some interesting calculations for the academicians, with the Irish people as the guinea-pigs. The Unionists see the POLL as a 'declaration of intent' by the British Government on their behalf. The fools, the fools, do they not realise that Polls, Whitepapers, Green papers are no indication of the British thought. Too many promises have been seen to be broken.

The time has come for us all to wake up, the Irish Question can only be solved by Irish men without British interference.



whole series of Unionist posters of the post-war period.<sup>1</sup> And the new-style "Peace, Order and Good Government" slogan employed in the Assembly elections campaign was accompanied by a very old-style symbol, the Union Jack in the shape of Northern Ireland. Only the newspaper advertisements used at the end of the year, with their informality and their lavishness, appear to be truly modern in both style and content. And even then one must remember that the Unionist Party's apparently modern scale of operations during this year were at least partly attributable to local conditions. With political meetings never a feature of local electoral contests, and party political broadcasts recently banned,<sup>2</sup> the massive use of posters and newspaper advertisements had come to seem very important.

The "new image" of Unionism in this period was very superficial. Modernisation of style and production methods hardly reduced the use of traditional content at all. Yet even these superficial changes were resented by the more conservative elements of the Unionist Party, particularly the local constituency associations. They felt, with some justification, that their wishes were being bypassed by the new publicity set-up, and that the posters produced during this year, though well-designed were ineffective at street level. And they hated seeing their traditional symbols being altered in any way. They complained for example, that the flags in the Border Poll handshake poster were the wrong way round, and that the Union Jack hand looked like a gun. Sam Butler's comment on the attitude of the local constituency associations sheds light on both the superficiality of his own modernisations, and

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1, See above, pp. 551 and 557.

2, The Times, 21 June 1973.

the intransigent traditionalism of most party members in their attitudes towards political symbolism.

"Depending on how old the association is, if it's running into the 45-60 age group, we get complaints because we've dropped the Union Jack or we've dropped Keep the Link or we've tried to move away from red, white and blue. The younger people appreciate little subtle changes, appreciate new design ideas and new ways of putting the Union Jack and the link across...even the older people are beginning to realise the importance of some of our fresh image."<sup>1</sup>

Partly as the result of the kind of tensions described here, the Unionist Party split in 1974, and both sections reverted to more traditional imagery. The Faulknerite Unionists continued for a while to produce election posters and leaflets which used modernised versions of traditional imagery, supervised by Sam Butler until his departure in 1976. Thereafter they tended to move away from red, white and blue to the blue and yellow associated with English conservatism. But at the same time the design element in their publicity output virtually disappeared and their few newspaper advertisements had long since abandoned visual content, or reverted to the old-style line-up of photographs of all the party's candidates in an election.<sup>2</sup> This half of the Unionist Party, which became known as the Unionist Party of Northern Ireland, finally disappeared in 1981.

Meanwhile the other section of the party, generally known as the Official Unionists, have returned to both traditional imagery and traditional styles of production. They have produced no theme posters

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1, Conversation 15 Jan 1974,

2. See the party's advertisement for the Convention election of May 1975 in the Belfast Telegraph, 29 April 1975, p. 5. My information on this party's publicity is largely derived from a conversation with its publicity officer, Mr. Cummings, on 30 Jan 1980.



for election campaigns, returning instead to the old Win-With designs supplied by printers. And their newspaper advertisements have also been prepared without the help of an agency, and have generally employed the old-style line-up of candidates.<sup>1</sup>

The reversion to old-style imagery and methods has not simply been the result of a reassertion of power by more traditional sections of the Unionist Party. Other factors have also been influential. With the split in the party, the three-day week in 1974, the spate of polls which continued until 1975, and the steep rise in the cost of publicity from the mid-1970s onwards, it became far more difficult to both raise and spend the funds necessary to produce professional, modernised imagery. And with the declining hope of establishing any local political forum after 1976 interest in producing such publicity was virtually extinguished.

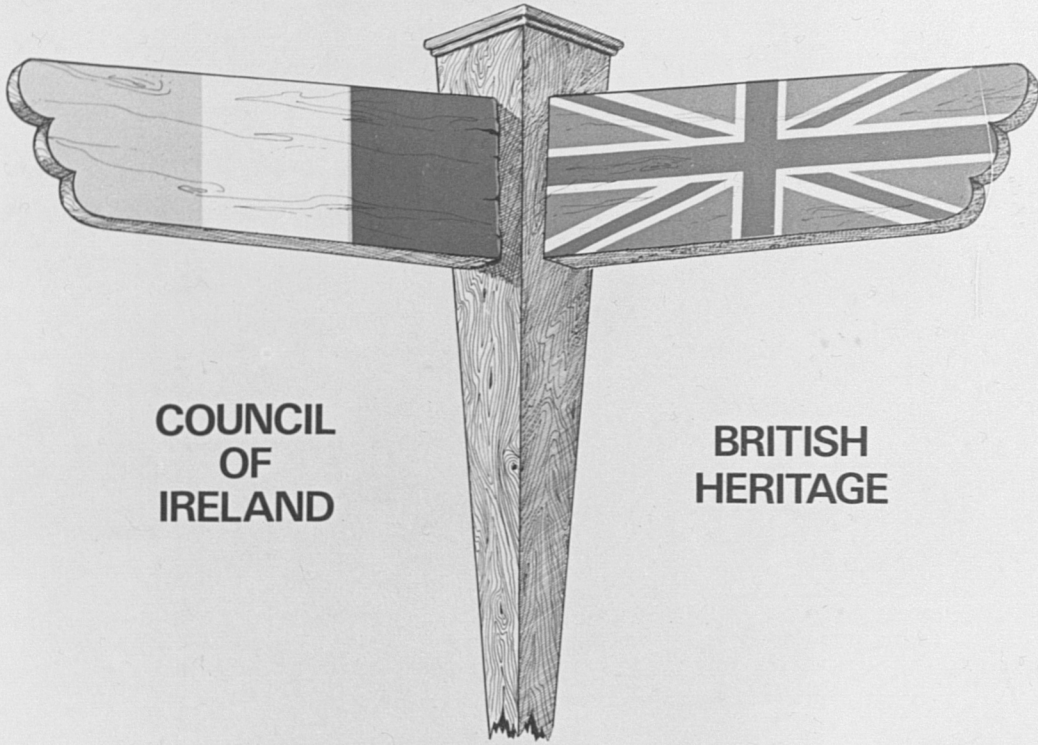
Yet it is important not to underestimate the strength of conservative Unionist reactions to the changes in imagery introduced by Butler. This strength of feeling can to some extent be gauged by the three posters issued by the United Ulster Unionist Council (UUUC) early in 1974. These showed a signpost whose two arms are a Union Jack and an Irish tricolour pointing respectively to the British Heritage and the Council of Ireland (ill 215 ); a pair of scales in which the tricolour and the Union Jack are being weighed, accompanied by the slogan "In the Balance"; and an hour glass in which the Union Jack is running into the tricolour, with the warning "Time is running out."<sup>2</sup>

The UUUC was a coalition formed by the Democratic Unionist Party,

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1. See the party's advertisement for the Westminster election of May 1979 in the News Letter, Belfast, 2 May 1979, p. 4. My information on this party's publicity is largely derived from conversations with John Laird, its publicity officer for 1974-5, on 3 Jan 1980, and with his successor Ian Elliott on 6 Dec 1979.
  2. All these posters can be seen in the Linen Hall Library, Belfast.

UNITED ULSTER UNIONIST COUNCIL

**You Can't Have  
It Both Ways**



COUNCIL  
OF  
IRELAND

BRITISH  
HERITAGE

**SAVE ULSTER – SIGN THE PETITION**

**SAT. 26<sup>th</sup> JAN. & SAT. 2<sup>nd</sup> FEB.**

215. United Ulster Unionist Council/Poster opposing the proposed Council of Ireland/January 1974/red, blue, black, yellow and green on white/lithograph/17 x 13 ins (43.2 x 33 cms)/Linen Hall Library, Belfast/Photo: Pete McGuinness.

the Ulster Vanguard movement and the section of the Unionist Party later to be known as the Official Unionists. The purpose of this coalition was to fight what they saw as the threat to the identity of Northern Ireland involved in the proposed Council of Ireland.<sup>1</sup> The posters were used in a campaign urging Northern Ireland loyalists to sign a petition against the Council, and subsequently in the Westminster election of February 1974, which was largely fought on this issue. In this context, as at the time of the Border Poll, the emphasis on flag imagery is not surprising. But the other imagery and the style of handling of these posters is firm evidence of the persistent strength of traditional imagery in Protestant Ulster, for all the superficial modernisation of the Faulkner era.

As we have already seen,<sup>2</sup> a long and strong tradition of popular Protestant imagery lies behind the signpost symbol. And much the same is true of the scales and hourglass posters. Both are images whose long-standing meanings in Orange symbolism and associated popular traditions emphasise the importance of choosing. The hour-glass is emblematic of mortality, a reminder that time passes, and action must be taken, and the scales refer not only to the important decisions of justice or the careful evaluations of merchants, but also to Daniel's ominous interpretation to Belshazzar of the writing on the wall, as "you will be tried in

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1. The Council of Ireland was a proposal made at the Sunningdale Conference of 6-9 Dec 1973, which established the political framework for the power-sharing Executive expected to rule Northern Ireland under the leadership of Brian Faulkner. The Council was to be composed of equal numbers of members from north and south of the Irish border, and was to supervise cross-border co-operation in areas such as trade, industry, tourism, sport and the arts (Flackes, *op cit*, pp. 132-3.).

2. Above, pp. 553-556.

the balance and found wanting."<sup>1</sup>

Moreover it is not only the imagery in these posters which allies them so clearly to Orange traditions, but also their visual style and manner of production. They are, like the Orange Cross prisoners emblem (ill 104), painstakingly neat, the wood on the signpost carefully grained, the work of men for whom godliness, political pride and industrial craft are closely allied. And indeed the design for the signpost poster was reputedly first produced by a young industrial employee who was a member of Ulster Vanguard, and printed by the Puritan Printing Co, owned by the Reverend Ian Paisley's Free Presbyterian Church.

1. The hour-glass has been a common emblem of mortality, particularly since the death-obsessed seventeenth century. It was well known in Irish masonic imagery (for example it appears in the floorcloth of Antrim Lodge no 313 preserved in the Masonic Museum in Rosemary Street, Belfast), it appears frequently in Orange symbolism from the early nineteenth century (the earliest such appearance known to me is on the Orange mug in the National Museum, Dublin), and is still to be found in the Orange Arch chart of symbols (ill 71). Reputedly it and the balance and chain are the emblem of a Royal Black Preceptory degree (Gray, op cit, p. 216). The scales are also a symbol of mortality and occasionally appear on eighteenth and nineteenth century Irish tomb stones (Ada K. Longfield \*Some Irish Churchyard Sculpture, Gifford & Craven, Ballycotton, Co Cork, 1974, p. 28, and F.J. Bigger and Herbert Hughes, "Armorial Sculptured Stones of the County Antrim", Ulster Journal of Archaeology 2nd series, vol 6, 1900, p. 164). However they were probably absorbed into Orange symbolism from Irish freemasonry. They are featured on late eighteenth century Irish masonic items (such as the Henry Monro jugs, dated 1790, in the Ulster Museum, Belfast), and appear frequently in Orange charts of emblems, from the Loyal Orange Boyne Society folding picture of 1798 (ill 77) to the present Orange Arch (ill 71). The connection of the scales in such symbolism with Daniel's interpretation of Belshazzar's dream, was suggested to me by the late Aiken McClelland and appears to be confirmed by the use of the phrase "Brother, thou hast been weighed in the balance and not found wanting", in the ritual of introduction to the purple order, the higher grade of orangeism (Report from the Select Committee appointed to inquire into Orange Lodges, Associations and Societies in Ireland. Parl Papers, 1835, vol 15, Appendix, p. 71). The biblical reference is Daniel 5, 27-28.

\* [Mrs H.G. Leask],

In summary these posters are most striking for their factuality, their minimalism, their use of the opposed tricolour and Union Jack, and their repetition of images deriving from Orange symbolism and popular religious traditions. All these characteristics ally them very closely with the other political imagery employed by Vanguard and the Democratic Unionist Party, the two right-wing loyalist groupings who had joined the Official Unionists to form the UUUC. Since their inception both groups have favoured the street-level imagery of flags and Orange banners.<sup>1</sup> The slightly more sophisticated media of the poster, the leaflet and the press advertisement have either been ignored by them, or converted into flags, orange emblems, visual parables, or sermons.

Their election posters and leaflets have almost invariably employed the Win-With formula, prominently featuring the Union Jack. The exceptions to this are the manifesto issued by the Vanguard Unionist Progressive Party in 1973,<sup>2</sup> and the poster issued by the Democratic Unionists before the Border poll in the same year.<sup>3</sup> Both add to the Union Jack a scattered array of images bearing a remarkable resemblance to the Orange Arch (ill 71). A further reprise of Orange symbolism can be found in the DUP's party symbol (ill 216), which has been in use since approximately 1975. Not only is this a very loyalist triumph of superimposition. It also draws on Orange sword symbolism.<sup>4</sup>

Religious imagery pure and simple was adopted in 1976 when the Ulster Unionist Action Council (UUAC) issued their Direct Rule Toll poster (ill 217). The council was yet another loyalist coalition,

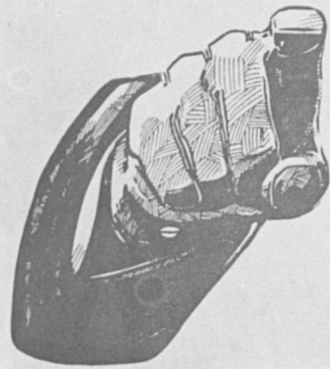
- 
1. See above, pp. 334-336.
  2. Collection of the writer.
  3. Linen Hall Library, Belfast.
  4. See above, p. 253 ff.



216. Symbol of the Ulster Democratic Unionist Party/  
1975.



**HOW MUCH  
LONGER  
BEFORE**



**YOU**

**JOIN THE  
DIRECT RULE  
DEATH TOLL**

**RESTORE  
DEMOCRACY**

**SAVE  
ULSTER**

forward by action

UNITED UNIONIST ACTION COUNCIL

to victory

Printed by Puritan Printing Co. Ltd., 71 Ravenhill Rd., Belfast BT6 5DQ. Published by UUAC, 1a Ava Avenue.

217. United Unionist Action Council/Poster opposing Direct Rule/1976/red and blue on white/lithograph/17<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> x 11 ins (44 x 28 cms)/Printed by the Puritan Printing Co, Belfast/Linen Hall Library, Belfast/Photo: Pete McGuinness.

this time led by Ernest Baird and Ian Paisley, and the poster deliberately referred back to a Thou Shalt Not Kill poster, issued by Paisley's church, which in turn looked back to the age-old Protestant image of the finger of God. And in 1977 the DUP issued an election advertisement which eschewed all principles of design and publicity in favour of a lengthy political sermon.<sup>1</sup>

Indeed it has been these rightwing loyalist groups which have maintained the street-level "Orange" style of political imagery, although it has been the rival Official Unionists who have supposedly been more closely linked with the Orange Order.<sup>2</sup> The importance of Orangeism in shaping loyalist imagery and attitudes in Northern Ireland can only be understood if one looks at its pervasive influence, as well as its specific political links.

Yet once again the circle of argument must be completed, for one cannot simply characterise the Democratic Unionist Party and the groups associated with it as the champions of traditionalism and opponents of modernisation. The Direct Rule Toll poster (ill 217 ) may have owed as much to the trendy variations on Kitchener's pointing finger prevalent from the late 1960s, as to traditional representations of the finger of God. And Peter Robinson, the DUP's General Secretary since 1974, claimed to me that he had made changes in the party's poster-publicity which could only be interpreted as a form of modernisation. He used more colour, improved the layout, and experimented with dayglo (for the Common Market campaign of 1979). With his business background he constantly changed artists and printers, shifting round in order to get

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1. News Letter, Belfast, 18 May 1977, p. 3.

2. See above, p. 351ff.

competitive prices. To him posters are the cheapest way of getting an uncensored message direct to the people, and he wants as many of them as he can get for the money he has. In his own election campaign in East Belfast he used seventeen thousand posters, one for every four electors, plastering them on every lamp-post in a vast brainwashing exercise. He knew that he was totally unknown, and was prepared to antagonise people in order to make his presence felt (he used several different designs to break the monotony). When the party is concerned Robinson has generally produced at least 140,000 posters for a province-wide campaign, and has been prepared to put them all over the city, including strongly republican areas like Andersonstown and the Falls Road, which he postered for the European elections. He finds in fact that it is normally other Unionists rather than republicans who are responsible for pulling down the party's posters.<sup>1</sup>

In conclusion therefore I would argue that Unionist publicity was to a certain extent modernised in the period following the introduction of Direct Rule, largely as the result of the impact of outside influences, of which the British Government was probably the most important. But this modernisation did not oust traditionalism. It simply combined with it in a number of rather strange hybrid forms, in which the old "Orange" imagery continued to be enormously important. Modernisation and traditionalism are not simple opposites. Nevertheless Protestant Ulstermen continued to be very sensitive about any tampering with their traditional images that did take place, and this is additional proof of how important those images have remained.

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1. Conversation, January 1980.

## Alliance

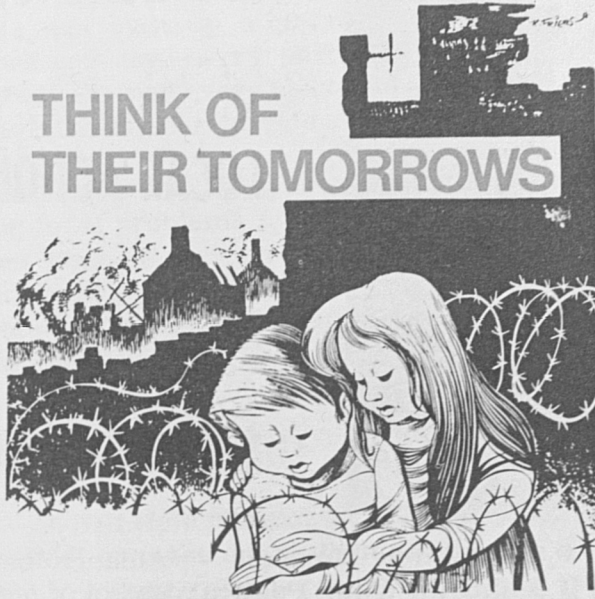
In April 1970 a new political party appeared in Northern Ireland. It called itself Alliance and was launched by members of the New Ulster Movement, a political pressure group chiefly composed of former supporters of Terence O'Neill. Alliance pledged itself to seek support from both sections of the community in order to campaign on social issues, while continuing to recognise the existence of the Northern Ireland state.

The first visual publicity issued by the party, apart from its newsheet Alliance,<sup>1</sup> appears to date from April 1972. In that month it issued two posters, for use by local canvassers seeking members for the party.<sup>2</sup> One simply represented the party symbol, the Celtic A, with the slogan "The First Sign of Hope", but a rather more ambitious design, produced by the Belfast Telegraph cartoonist Rowel Friers, appeared on the other. Later in the year this design was used again on one of three leaflets to be used in the canvass for party members (ill 218). The other two carried respectively drawings of the jobs for which the party was campaigning, and a stark photograph of burntout houses, with the stern injunction "Think for yourself", reinforced by arrows, directing the reader on into the leaflet (ill 219). In the closing months of the year the party also issued t-shirts and badges carrying the party symbol, and a Christmas card with a Rowel Friers drawing of a dove and barbed wire.<sup>3</sup>

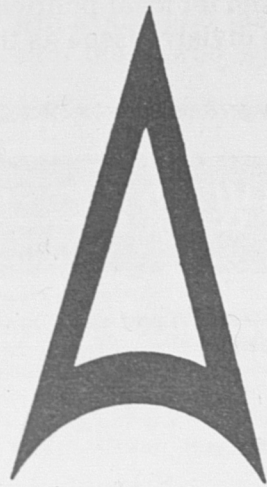
In 1973 Alliance contested its first elections. Well-designed leaflets accompanied the usual photos of candidates and the party symbol

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1. Launched in February 1971. I hope to deal with political newsheets elsewhere in a separate study of press imagery and the Northern Ireland conflict.
  2. Advertised in Alliance, Belfast, April 1972, p. 7.
  3. For a reference to the Alliance t-shirt see Belfast Telegraph, 23 Sept 1972, p. 1. The Christmas card was advertised in Alliance, Nov 1972, p. 8 and there was comment in Alliance, Dec 1972, pp. 2-3 on the party badges.

THINK OF  
THEIR TOMORROWS



**.... Act today**



**ALLIANCE**

**IS FOR YOU**

218. Alliance party leaflet/1972/red and black on white/  
lithograph/8<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> x 4<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> ins (21 x 10.7 cms)/Collec-  
tion: B. Loftus/Photo: Pete McGuinness.



# THINK FOR YOURSELF



DO YOU WANT ...

.. PEACE ?

.. EQUAL JUSTICE FOR ALL?

**Are You Going To Get What You Want?**

219. Alliance party leaflet/1972/black and white/photolithograph/8<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> x 4<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> ins (21 x 10.7 cms)/Collection: B. Loftus/Photo: Pete McGuinness.



with neat drawings relating to the social issues on which the candidates pledged themselves to act. The posters employed seem mostly to have been simple fluorescent affairs, with the party symbol printed in black on the lime green which was henceforward used by Alliance in all its electoral campaigns. The newspaper advertisements for the polls this year and in 1974 also seem to have been fairly straightforward displays of photographs of the party candidates, although their clear design and layout set them apart from the similar advertisements traditionally used by the Unionist Party.<sup>1</sup> However in 1975 the party issued a major series of press-advertisements before the elections to the proposed Northern Ireland Convention. These advertisements again relied on the talents of Rowel Friers. The first blow was delivered with a cartoon showing Catholic and Protestant politicians marching away from each other, "with one strong voice", while the caption read "You know this can't work. Alliance can!" This was a deliberate attack on the Social Democratic and Labour Party which had proclaimed that it provided "one strong voice" for Northern Ireland's Catholic population.<sup>2</sup> This image was followed by a succession of advertisements in which mothers (ill 220), fathers and young people drawn by Friers proclaimed that they knew Alliance was right.<sup>3</sup> Alliance in North Down also issued an advertisement showing a map of their electoral area with Friers cartoons of their local candidates.<sup>4</sup> Altogether the party's advertising campaign in this election was remarkable for the number of advertisements used, their size and their prominent placing in newspapers.

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1. See the Alliance advertisement in the Belfast Telegraph, 9 Oct 1974, p. 3.
  2. Belfast Telegraph, 16 April 1975, p. 13.
  3. Belfast Telegraph, 25 April 1975, p. 11, 28 April, p. 7, 29 April, p. 7 and 30 April, p. 11.
  4. Belfast Telegraph, 30 April 1975, p. 2.



# MOTHERS KNOW...

*there is no future for their children in  
strife and bitterness. They know that  
Protestants and Catholics must learn  
to live together, work together, build  
together.*

220. Alliance party/Detail of advertisement in the Belfast Telegraph, 29 April, 1975, p.7/size of full advertisement  $17\frac{1}{2} \times 6\frac{7}{8}$  (44.5 x 17.5 cms)/  
Photo: Pete McGuinness.

Alliance continued the combination of simple, fluorescent election posters and bold, large, well-placed and frequently repeated press advertisements in the late 1970s and early 1980s. In the 1977 District Council elections the advertisement showed a handshake, with the slogan "Put it there!"<sup>1</sup> In the 1979 Westminster election campaign a map of the province with photos of the party's candidates was used;<sup>2</sup> and for the 1979 EEC election a large photograph of the party leader Oliver Napier was employed with the slogan "Who else can speak for all of us?"<sup>3</sup>

It would be quite easy to attribute the characteristics of Alliance publicity to the party's political needs. Thus the posters, leaflets and badges issued in 1972 can all be seen as necessary aids to the recruitment of members, and the establishment of an image for a party which had to build itself up from a very small base.<sup>4</sup> Similarly the lack of traditional orange and green imagery can be attributed to the fact that Alliance from the outset established a firm position on the constitutional question, and that once done, sought to draw its support from both Catholics and Protestants. And finally the very large-scale publicity employed by the party from 1975 onwards can be claimed as part of a continuing attempt to woo further voters to support of its aims.

But these explanations of Alliance publicity are not really adequate. It is only if one considers the images put out by the party as a sometimes unthinking projection of its members' characteristics, and as a response

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1. Belfast Telegraph, 13 May 1977, p. 3. The advertisement was repeated on 16 and 17 May.
  2. Belfast Telegraph, 1 May 1979, p. 9, repeated next day.
  3. Belfast Telegraph, 5 June 1979, p. 5, repeated next day.
  4. Brian Wilson in his M Sc study of Alliance makes it clear that the party conducted an exceedingly energetic and successful recruiting drive in 1972, and that many of the members so recruited had no previous political involvement. See Brian Wilson, "Party Organisation", Alliance, Belfast, Dec 1977, pp. 4-7.

to certain expectations about political publicity as such, that some of their puzzling characteristics become more easily understandable.

The basic puzzle is why a party committed to campaigning on social issues, and constantly in need of greater working-class support, failed to generate more down-to-earth imagery. What immediately strikes one about the membership publicity of 1972 for example, is that almost all of it presented a neat, sanitised view of what was going on in Northern Ireland. Contrast for example Rowel Friers' drawing of children with barbed wire (ill 218) with the one prepared two years earlier by the Northern Ireland Community Relations Commission (ill 185). Moreover the items actually sold to members were often very expensive and always painfully self-conscious. It is hard to keep a totally straight face when considering a photograph of one of the party's secretaries showing off "the new in-gear for the swinging Alliance teenager"<sup>1</sup> or contemplating an advertisement for "most attractive hand-wrought silver badges. Large £4.00. Small £2.50."<sup>2</sup> In a word this imagery was middle-class.

Now that is scarcely surprising, given the overwhelmingly middle-class composition of the party's membership, and its leadership's lack of previous political experience.<sup>3</sup> What is surprising is that the same kind of imagery continued to be projected in the very professional advertisements issued from the mid-1970s onwards.

Indeed there is a kind of double surprise involved in those advertisements, for they were being produced with extraordinary lavishness at a time when other political parties in the province had run out of

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1. Alliance, Dec 1972, p. 3.

2. Alliance, Oct 1973, p. 8.

3. Wilson, op cit and "Left and Right", Alliance, Feb 1978, p. 6.

funds and interest. There are, I believe, a number of reasons for this. In the first place the fact that the party's membership was middle-class assured it of a continuous supply of money for publicity, raised through a fighting fund. Secondly, that middle-class membership, and particularly the very high proportion of well-educated professionals, resulted in the development of a minutely-organised, centralised party machine.<sup>1</sup> And thirdly, from August 1974 onwards, Alliance had in their General Secretary, John Cushnahan, a representative of those well-educated middle-class professionals who had a passionate if amateur interest in every detail of publicity design.<sup>2</sup> Although an advertising agency was employed by the party from at least early 1974, it was he who roughed out the designs for advertisements, decided their page position, their size and so on.<sup>3</sup>

Why then were these advertising campaigns not more carefully aimed at bringing to Alliance the working-class support it so clearly needed? The answer lies partly I think in Cushnahan's own delight in political infighting. A great many of these advertisements were intended as attacks on rival parties in the province<sup>4</sup> rather than as appeals to the electorate. And this in turn is linked to Cushnahan's strong belief that the electorate can never be successfully wooed by such advertisements. It is his belief that however professional such publicity is, it is far less important that the candidate's self-projection as honest and reliable, whether at the doorstep or on the television screen. For him the advertisements have been necessary simply in order to keep pace with

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1. Wilson, "Party Organisation", *loc cit.*
  2. Cushnahan took a B.Ed at Queen's University, Belfast, and after a teacher-training course at St Joseph's College of Education was vice-president for the National Union of Students, before teaching in Northern Ireland. See Bathoe Raisford, "Man with a Mission", *Alliance*, Belfast, March 1976, p. 6.
  3. Conversation with John Cushnahan, 26 March 1982.
  4. See the advertisement of 16 April 1975, attacking the SDLP, described above.

other parties and to maintain Alliance's political credibility.<sup>1</sup>

Alliance's publicity imagery was not only the product of specific political needs. It was also a projection of the party's middle-class ethos, propelled by the availability of money, by a modernised concept of advertising as image-making rather than product-selling, and by the example of other government and political organisations. Events, authors, conventions and competitors are all necessary to the understanding of political propaganda.

The Social Democratic and Labour Party and Republican Clubs/The Workers Party 1973-81

From the welter of social and political change in Northern Ireland during the late 1960s there emerged two political parties which sought to represent both Catholics and Protestants in the various political forums available to the province's population, but which tended in actuality to act as spokesmen for the Catholic community. One was the Republican Clubs, which was legalised in 1973. After various changes of name it finally came to be known as the Workers Party. The other was the Social, Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP) formed in August 1970. Their political success differed widely, for whereas Republican Clubs/The Workers Party found it hard to attract electoral support in Northern Ireland, the SDLP established itself as the leading voice for Catholics in the province. Both however adopted a very similar course in the development of their visual propaganda. This was marked by a rejection of the new images and styles of production introduced by groups like PD and NICRA in the late

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1. Conversation with John Cushnahan, 26 March 1982. Placing advertisements with the local papers is also acknowledged to be a useful way of ensuring adequate news coverage by them.



1960s, and a stress on centralised professionalism, which was finally achieved in the late 1970s, with imagery modelled on that used by political parties in the Republic of Ireland and the EEC.

When the SDLP was formed in August 1970, in an attempt to provide a united opposition party which would speak for the majority of the Catholic community in Northern Ireland, and it was hoped, a section of the Protestants, three out of the six MPs who led it in the early days had a background in the civil rights movement, and from then until the present day the majority of its elite have shared a similar social background to the more militant radicals of the late 1960s, educated at university and working in urban middle-class jobs, particularly teaching.<sup>1</sup>

Yet the party displayed none of the skill in handling publicity which had been such a feature of NICRA and PD. The timing of its launch appears to have been dictated by the availability of suitable media coverage<sup>2</sup> but it was not until the late 1970s that it developed anything much in the way of a visual image.

One might well be tempted to attribute this deficiency to political circumstances. Following the introduction of internment in 1971 the SDLP refused to take part in Northern Ireland's political system until power-sharing became a possibility in 1973, and then it was involved in a spate of elections which stretched its financial and organisational resources to the limit. But the party did enjoy a measure of financial backing during these years - by 1972 an important fund-raising group had been established in the Republic of Ireland, and in 1974 a grant of £11,000 was made by the Rowntree Trust<sup>3</sup> - and it was able to issue a fair amount

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1. Rumpf and Hepburn, op cit, p. 194 and Ian McAllister, The Northern Ireland Social Democratic and Labour Party, Macmillan, 1977, pp. 67-77.
  2. McAllister, op cit, p. 33.
  3. Ibid, pp. 42-47.

of publicity material. Indeed there was a strong emphasis during this period on the use of newspaper advertisements, and numerous policy documents were also issued.<sup>1</sup>

Clearly the SDLP at this time lacked neither the means nor the will to issue publicity as such. Yet, apart from a decision on the party colours of red and green in 1973,<sup>2</sup> the visual content of this material, and indeed of all the party's publicity issued prior to 1979, was extremely limited and poorly organised.

When the newspaper advertisements in these years carried a visual content, generally photos of election candidates, its design and layout was almost invariably entrusted to the newspaper itself. The sole exception appears to have been an advertisement inserted in the Irish News prior to the Assembly elections of 1973, which was laid out by a professional designer who was a party member, and therefore willing to accept a greatly reduced fee.<sup>3</sup> And when policy documents or material used internally by the party included some form of visual imagery, this was invariably provided by the printer employed by the party from its establishment, using the kind of ready-made imagery to be found on transfer-sheets issued by companies like Letraset. Typical examples are the Know where you stand image employed in the party's newsheet Social Democrat<sup>4</sup> and in an advertisement in the Belfast Telegraph<sup>5</sup> prior to the District Council elections in May 1977, and the cover of the party's document on economic analysis and strategy, issued in October 1976 (ill 221).

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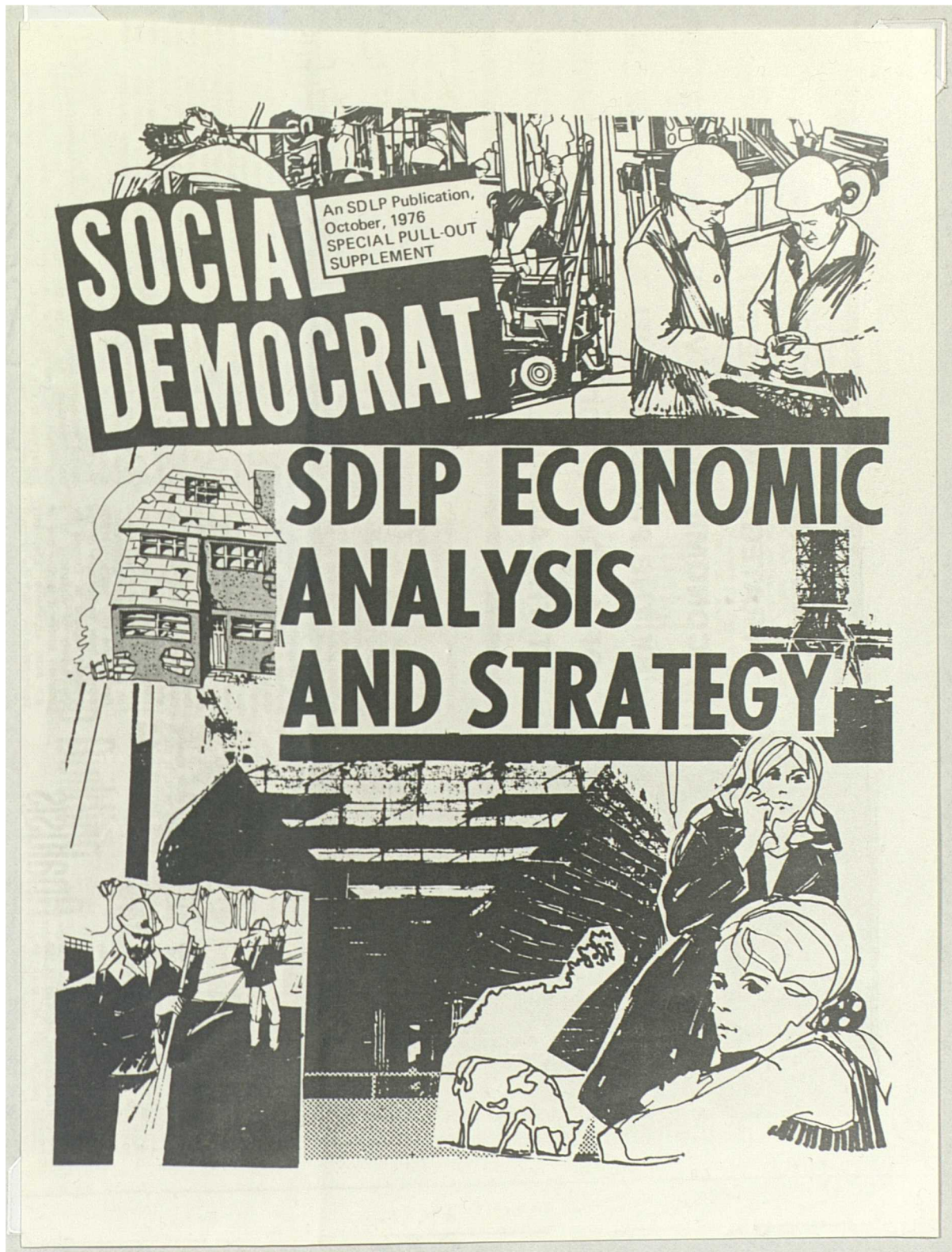
1. Ibid, pp. 50-53.

2. The red symbolises socialism, the green Irish nationalism.

3. Conversations with party secretaries John C Duffy (22 Jan 1974) and Brid Rogers (27 May 1982).

4. May 1977, p. 7.

5. 14 May 1977, p. 7.



221. Social Democratic and Labour Party/cover of pull-out supplement from Social Democrat, Oct 1976/black and white/lithograph/11½ x 8¾ ins (29.2 x 22.2 cms)/printed by Ronan Press, Lurgan/Collection: B. Loftus/Photo: Pete McGuinness.

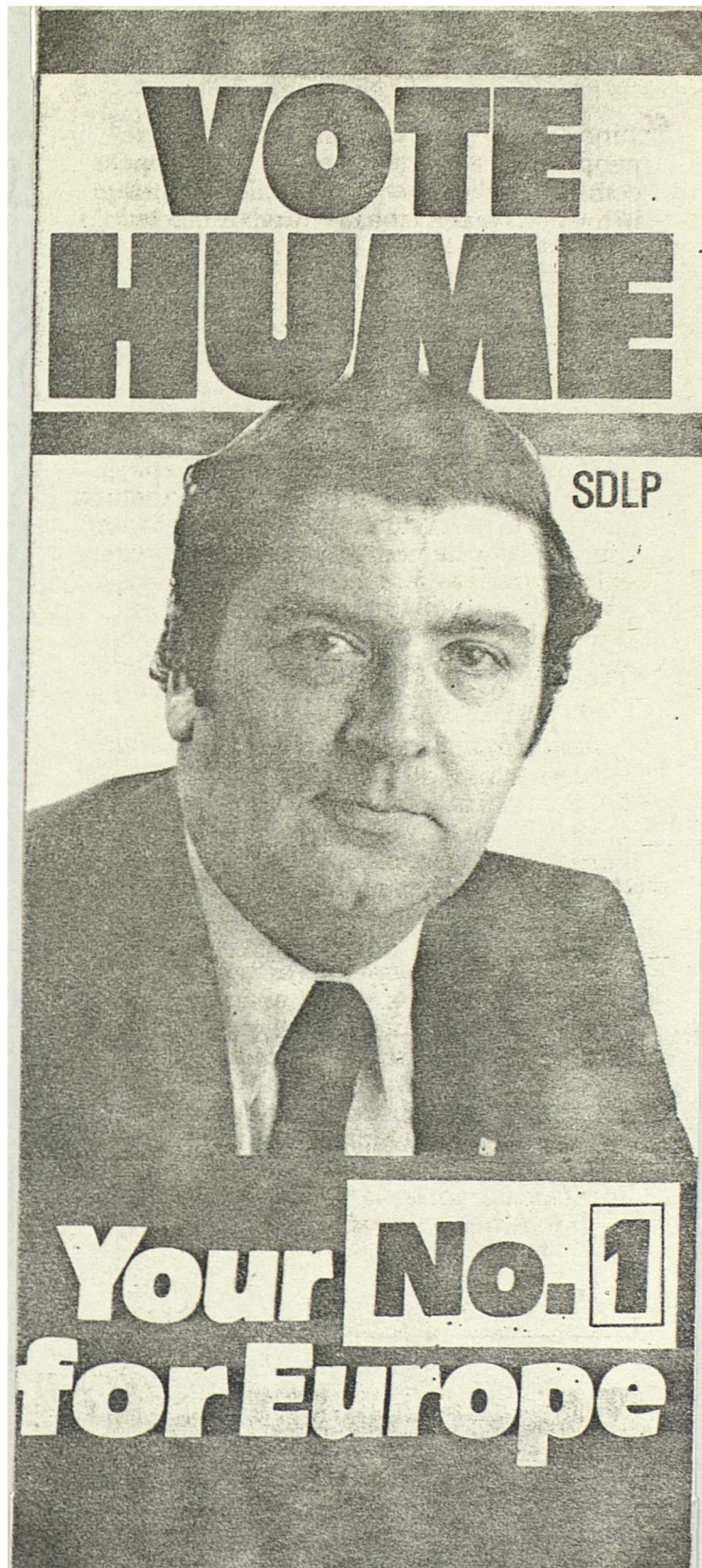
The reasons for the SDLP's lack of interest in its visual image during this period are various and interconnected. There was the lack of a party political tradition in Northern Ireland's Catholic community;<sup>1</sup> there was the fact that none of the design-orientated members of the civil rights movement appeared to have been absorbed into the party; there was the strong teaching element in both the party's elite and the ordinary membership, which inclined it to a belief that publicity consisted in finding the right slogan, the right words with which to attract public support; and there was the need to build up the ground-structure of the party, which kept its attention focussed on the minutiae of political life within Northern Ireland, rather than on outside contacts.

For both within and without the SDLP there is general agreement that their much-improved visual publicity in the late 1970s and early 1980s was largely the result of contact with and study of political parties in Britain, the Republic of Ireland and the EEC. Indeed the very effective publicity supporting John Hume's successful campaign for a seat in the European parliament in June 1979 (ill 222) was designed by a publicity firm in Dublin, and backed with funds from the European socialists, to whom the SDLP had become affiliated in 1976. In subsequent campaigns the SDLP continued to employ professional designers. Thus in May 1981 a Northern Ireland advertising agency provided for them a single strong image for all the leaflets, posters and stickers used by the party during the local government elections, ensuring that it projected itself visually as well as verbally as a strong, united team.

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1. See above, p. 548ff.





222. Social Democratic and Labour Party/Leaflet used in the EEC elections of June 1979/red, green and black on white/lithograph/actual size/printed by Ronan Press, Lurgan/Collection: B. Loftus.

A number of important differences between Republican Clubs/The Workers Party<sup>1</sup> and the SDLP might well lead one to expect a strong element of dissimilarity between the imagery produced by the two organisations. Unlike the SDLP, the Republican Clubs at the time of their mobilisation as a political party in 1973, provided some basis for local organisation with their various cumanns or clubs which had long been the focus of political, social and cultural activities in republican areas in Northern Ireland. (Thus one of the designers who worked for Republican Clubs in the early 1970s estimated that there were approximately thirty such cumann then active in Belfast, with an average active membership of thirty).<sup>2</sup> The Republican Clubs also differed from the SDLP in that in 1973 it deliberately rejected the radical imagery supplied to it by a number of young designers in Belfast,<sup>3</sup> and established its own Dublin-based printing company Repsol. This was intended to service the propaganda needs of an organisation fighting its political campaigns on an all-Ireland basis, but while the SDLP maintained itself as an effective voice for Northern Ireland Catholics, the appeal of Republican Clubs gradually dwindled in the province, in contrast to its establishment as a small but powerful party in the Republic by the early 1980s.

Yet despite these differences the Northern Ireland section of Republican Clubs/The Workers Party came to employ political imagery very close to that used by the SDLP, and arrived at it by a remarkably similar process of development. Like the SDLP its visual material between 1973

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1. Much of my information on the visual imagery used during this period by Republican Clubs/ The Workers Party is derived from a conversation with Brendan Heaney on 20 May 1982.
  2. Conversation 1 April 1982.
  3. See above, pp. 573-574.



and 1977 was limited and poorly organised. In 1973 its election publicity was designed by the same printers as the SDLP and used much the same kind of mass-produced imagery as was supplied by the firm to that party (ill 223). And from the mid 1970s a number of posters were designed and used in the North, although printed in Dublin. The first of these, issued in 1974 and 1975, attacked internment and military repression of the Catholic population in the North with images of Long Kesh, an armoured car, and silhouettes of members of the security forces dragging a figure along the ground.<sup>1</sup> The second series consisted of two posters opposing sectarianism. One illustrated the slogan: "Sectarianism kills Workers", with the image of a gun; the other showed a hand with pliers killing a snake, accompanied by the message "Workers kill Sectarianism" (ill 224).<sup>2</sup>

While these were forceful designs they did not help to build a coherent image of a political party. As with the SDLP this was not achieved until the late 1970s. In the 1970 EEC elections a single effective design was provided for the party's leaflets and newspaper advertisements by the Dublin printing company (it adopted the government image of a hand placing a voting paper in a ballot box by redesigning it with a starry plough on the paper).<sup>3</sup> And in a number of local government elections in the North in 1981 the leaflets employed were finally co-ordinated with those used in southern elections, sharing the same party colours (red and green) and clear, well-designed layout, to convey the image of a unified party (ill 225). As with the SDLP

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1. Both these posters can be seen in the photograph of the party's 1974 Ard Fheis (Annual Conference) in The Irish People, 6 Dec 1974, p. 6. The second one is in the Linen Hall Library.
  2. There is a photo in Eolas, Dublin, Jan 1977, p. 2 which shows this latter poster being posted in Belfast by members of the Republican Clubs.
  3. The newspaper advertisement version of this can be seen in the Belfast Telegraph, 5 June 1979, p. 10.

# Education

*Comprehensive Education  
must be introduced.*

*Integrated Education  
Must be introduced.*

*The education system  
must be democratic-  
ally controlled by  
parents, educationalists and pupils.*



## UNEMPLOYMENT AND INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT



Ireland North and South have 100,000 registered unemployed.

This is the highest unemployment rate in Europe.

To provide Full Employment the State Sector of industry must be expanded.

State mining and smelter industries should be established.

Closures, mergers and rationalisation of industry must be controled.

The capitol exported from Ireland, £1,700 million in 1971/72 must be used for industrialisation and expansion of industries, such as food processing, electronics and pharmaceuticals.

# Civil Rights is still the issue

**INTERNMENT MUST END!**

Repressive legislation must be abolished.

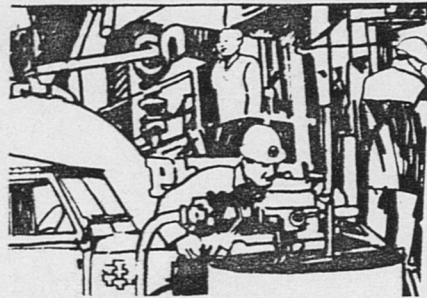
An amnesty must be introduced for all Political Prisoners.

Amnesty must be introduced for all on Rent and Rates Strike.

British troops must be withdrawn to barracks.

The Judiciary must be reformed.

A new police force must be established under local civilian control;



## OIL AND MINERAL RESOURCES

Because of her Mineral and Oil resources Ireland is potentially one of the richest countries in the world.

The 26-County Government have handed over a £20 billion mining/metallurgical industry to American and Canadian firms.

The last Stormont Government gave large tracts of the Six Counties and Off-Shore Drilling Rights to the same companies.

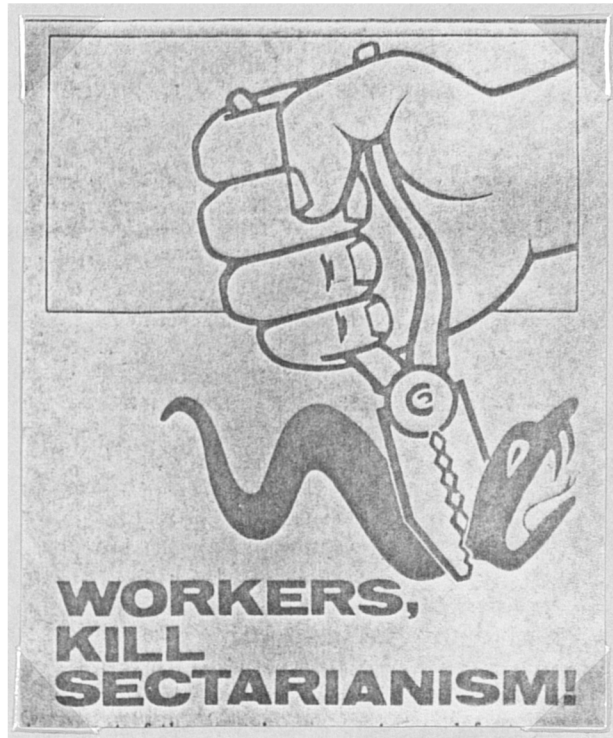
All Mineral and Oil resources must be nationalised and developed by the State on behalf of the people.

PROFITS . . .

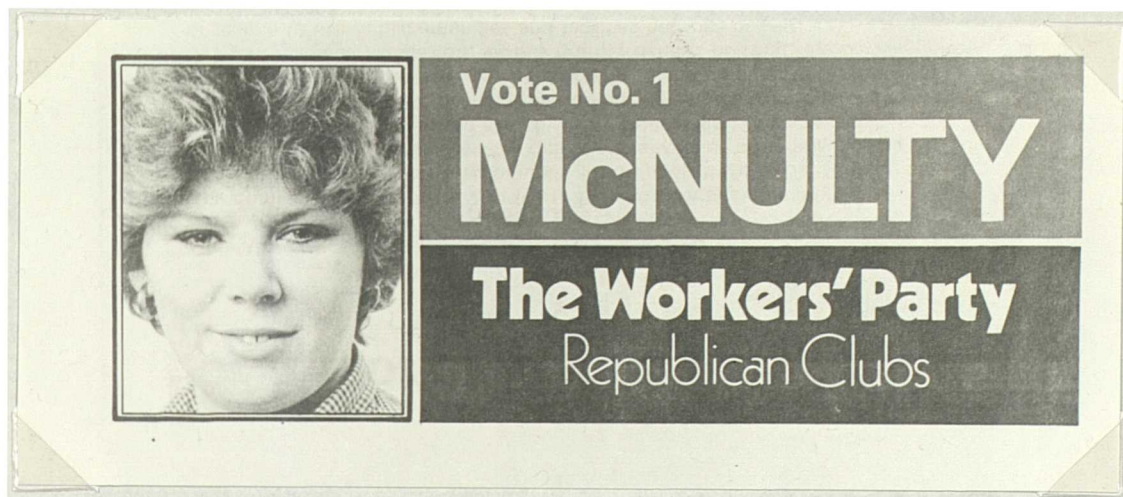


REPUBLICAN CLUBS

223. Republican Clubs/Leaflet used in the Assembly elections in 1973/black and white/lithograph/actual size/printed by Ronan Press, Lurgan/Collection: B. Loftus.



224. Republican Clubs/Anti-sectarianism poster, illustrated in United Irishman, Aug 1976, p.11.



225. The Workers' Party, Republican Clubs/Leaflet used in the local government elections in May 1981/red and green on white/lithograph/3<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> x 8<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> ins (9.5 x 21.5 cms)/Printed by Repsol/Collection: B. Loftus/Photo: Pete McGuinness.

the emphasis was on a centralised professional image, in this case mostly derived from the experience of fighting elections in the Republic.

Like political parties in the Protestant community, both the SDLP and Republican Clubs/The Workers Party have gradually modernised their publicity during the past thirteen years, but for them the process has been slower than for their Protestant counterparts. This is due to a number of factors. In the first place the lack of political publicity and of the organisation needed for its production prior to 1968, was even more noticeable amongst Northern Ireland's Catholics than amongst the province's Protestants. In the second place the SDLP's decision not to participate in the province's politics while internment was in force, and Republican Clubs illegality prior to April 1973, considerably delayed their development of the publicity machinery normal to an active political party. They did start to build this machinery during the spate of polls and negotiations in 1973-6, but they had far more building to do than the various Unionist parties and Alliance. Thirdly, both the SDLP and Republican Clubs were limited in the imagery they could employ, with their determination to pursue the Irish dimension, while rejecting militant republicanism and recruiting across the sectarian divide. And fourthly both parties failed to absorb the talented designers who had previously worked for NICRA, PD and Republican Clubs. In the case of the SDLP this seems to have been fortuitous, while the Republican Clubs deliberately rejected the anarchic and localised though talented designers who had previously worked for them in Northern Ireland.

The result of this somewhat slow progress towards modernisation was that in the mid-1970s both parties tended to produce a small amount of would-be modernised imagery in a traditional fashion, relying on party members and friendly printers for their designs. It was only in the late 1970s, and largely as a result of contact with political processes

in Europe and the Republic, that they finally began to produce centrally co-ordinated, professionally-produced, well-designed and widely-disseminated imagery.

#### Provisional Sinn Fein 1969-1981

Even Provisional Sinn Fein, rarely participating in the electoral process, bitterly opposed to virtually every other political organisation in Northern Ireland, and stressing their links with earlier traditions of Irish republicanism, have to a certain extent modernised their publicity since 1968, sometimes in ways very closely parallel to those of the province's more orthodox political parties.

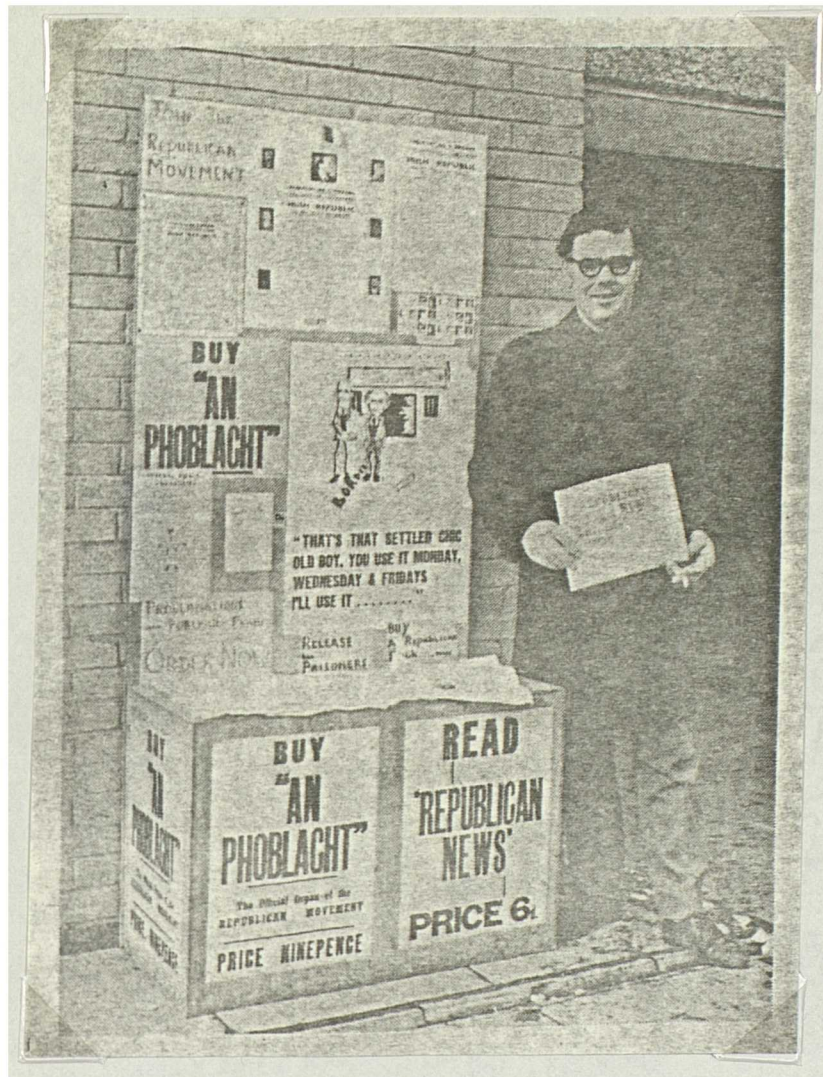
Admittedly the visual publicity produced by them during the first three or four years of their existence<sup>1</sup> was meagre and lacking in coherence. Indeed it was only gradually that locally-devised imagery replaced material produced in the Republic. According to Maire Drumm, a printed poster from Dublin was used for the first protest march she led, and only subsequently did the Provisionals in Belfast start producing their own posters.<sup>2</sup> Most of these were designed by a couple of young cartoonists who worked on the small newsheets produced by the local Provisional cumann (clubs). A typical example of this kind of poster can be seen in a photograph of a stall selling republican newspapers in Ballymurphy in January 1971 (ill 226). It attacks the use of internment by the governments of both Northern Ireland and the Republic, with a cartoon of their then prime ministers, Major Chichester-Clark and Jack Lynch.

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1. For a brief history of Provisional Sinn Fein, and its military wing, the Provisional IRA, see Flackes, op cit pp. 111-120.

2. Conversation 29 Jan 1974.



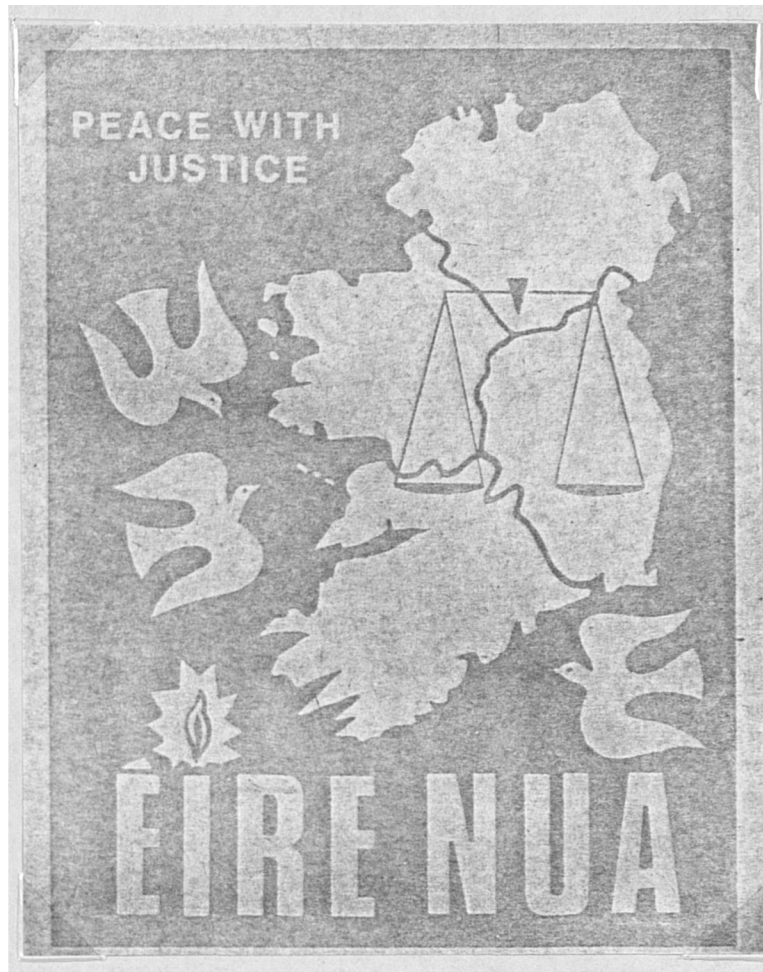


226. Provisional Sinn Féin newspaper stall in the Ballymurphy area of Belfast/Photo reproduced in An Phoblacht January 1971, p.1.

As this photo makes plain, the Provisionals were also continuing to use the imagery of the 1916 rebellion during this period, for among the other posters on the stall there is a traditional design incorporating the Proclamation of the Irish Republic with photographs of its signatories and the Irish tricolour. 1916 imagery, such as the Easter lily, or the IRA volunteer raising the Irish tricolour in front of the blazing Dublin GPO while he tramples the Union Jack underfoot, was also widely featured on the Christmas cards produced in this period by both Provisional Sinn Fein and the Provisional IRA. These were sold in aid of the republican movement's internees and prisoners, and it was natural enough that the experience of internment should turn memories back to symbolism associated with the dead, interned and imprisoned republicans of 1916.<sup>1</sup>

However internment seems also to have encouraged Provisional Sinn Fein to employ the kind of symbolism used across the world to attract attention to the plight of prisoners, and now imported into Northern Ireland by groups like the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association (NICRA) and the Association for Legal Justice.<sup>2</sup> Hands grasping prison bars began to be featured on the internee cards, and in 1972 the Provisionals issued a Christmas card incorporating with traditional republican symbolism the doves and scales imagery used by groups like NICRA (ill 227). They did not however choose to employ the imagery of the French posters of May 1968, possibly because it was so widely used by the Republican Clubs, from whom they had split so decisively in 1969.

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1. See above, p. 517ff. A few of the republican Christmas cards during this period also used Celtic designs.
  2. A body set up in 1970 which has investigated allegations of ill-treatment against the security forces and monitored the operation of legal processes in Northern Ireland (see Flackes, op cit, p. 22).



227. Provisional Sinn Fein Christmas card/1972/illustrated in An Phoblacht, 24 Nov 1972, p.3.

Indeed the Provisionals' deployment in this period of limited quantities of imagery, produced to meet specific needs in an ad hoc fashion, was probably largely due to their rejection of the Republican Clubs' emphasis on social and political issues and international support, in favour of an intense military campaign, which appeared for a while to be highly successful.

By the mid-1970s however this attitude had clearly changed. It was obvious that there would be no early end to the military campaign. A new, younger, highly politicised generation, who had joined the movement in 1969, began to control the production of visual propaganda in the North. Tom Hartley, one of the leading organisers of Provisional propaganda in the North in recent years, made plain to an Irish Times reporter in 1980 the far greater sophistication of these new men.

"What you have now is 40 years experience taking its effect. The old Republican survivors couldn't achieve anything like bringing out a book or producing a poster. The new ones know where they are going and they see that talk is cheap; talk is gone; back-slapping is gone. There's a more sophisticated type of Republican coming. Not that the old romantics weren't important...they created the lineage and traditions. But this war is a young man's war, a young woman's war."<sup>1</sup>

Both in Belfast and the Republic there was a far greater emphasis by these new men and women on imagery as such, a rejection of the old ad-hoc style of production in favour of a more organised, centralised and professional process, and a much stronger awareness of the need to associate the republican struggle with that of liberation groups

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1. Olivia O'Leary, "Provisional Sinn Fein - the gun", The Irish Times, Dublin, 19 February 1980, p. 11.

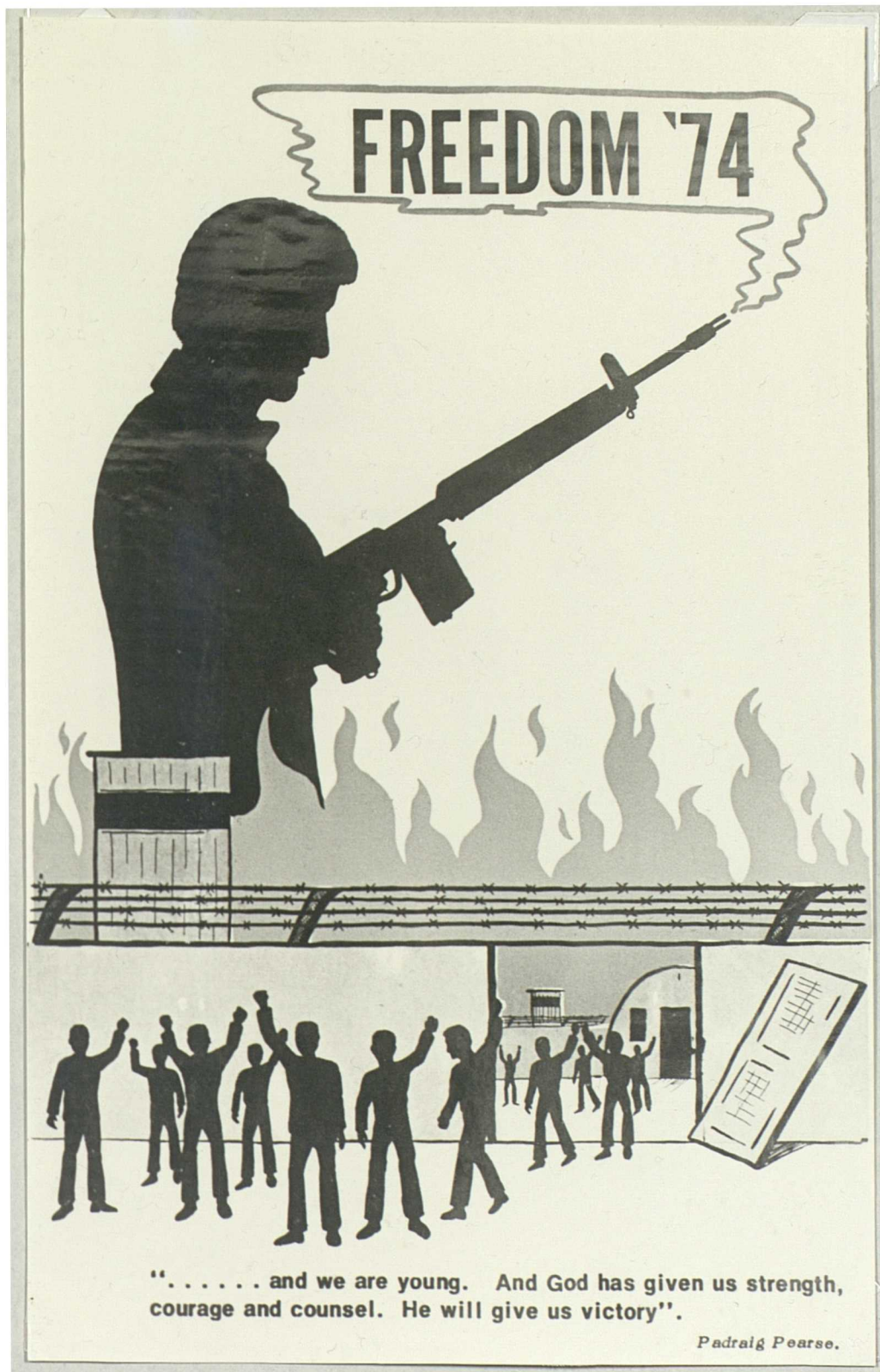
elsewhere. In Belfast this conscious politicisation, professionalisation and pursuit of a public image with an appeal beyond the confined circles of Irish republicanism, was undoubtedly encouraged by the legalisation of Provisional Sinn Fein in 1974, the series of talks with the British Government in 1974-5 and the establishment of the "incident centres" in 1975.

It was during this period that the Provisional IRA produced numerous posters depicting their members as freedom fighters, with slogans such as "Victory to the IRA, 1974" (ill 228).<sup>1</sup> Spokesmen for Provisional Sinn Fein told me that there was no influence on those posters by images produced by revolutionary groups elsewhere, with the exception of the adoption of one Cuban design.<sup>2</sup> It is known however that the Provisionals had direct contact at this time with groups like the Libyans and the Basques,<sup>3</sup> and by the late 1970s they were regularly exchanging literature with these and other organisations, such as SWAPO and the Eritreans.<sup>4</sup>

The other main type of poster used by the Provisionals between approximately 1972 and 1974 was also produced by the IRA and designed to discourage the careless talk and informing which were a major problem during this period. Two much-used designs were "the split Brit" in which a British soldier is shown dressed half in uniform, and half in civvies, listening to pub-conversation,<sup>5</sup> and the image of a woman with her finger to her lips, juxtaposed with a coffin.<sup>6</sup> These posters were

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1. There are examples of most of these posters in the Linen Hall Library.
  2. Conversation 27 March 1981.
  3. See Flackes, op cit, p. 115.
  4. Conversation with a member of Provisional Sinn Fein in Dublin, April 1980.
  5. Illustrated in An Phoblacht, Dublin, 15 Feb 1974. See also above, pp. 634-635.
  6. Both these posters are in the Linen Hall Library.





228. Provisional IRA poster/1974/green, orange and black on white/lithograph/26<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> x 17<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> ins (68 x 45 cms)/Linen Hall Library, Belfast/ Photo: Pete McGuinness.



occasionally reused, when the need arose, in later years, notably in late 1981 and early 1982.

In the late 1970s this process of professionalisation continued in both Dublin and Belfast. In both centres the process for commissioning and approving posters was formalised according to standard bureaucratic procedures; in both centres the technology employed was updated, with offset litho replacing silk-screen or letterpress;<sup>1</sup> and in both centres a far greater amount of posters and other forms of visual propaganda was produced. In Dublin there was also a growing emphasis on the use of poster-campaigns linked to specific themes like Troops Out or the H-block prisoners; and on occasional gestures towards social and political issues, such as an anti-litter poster produced in 1977 which makes incongruous use of the young couple originally featured on the cover of the Eire Nua programme in June 1972, and the series of photo-posters attacking the coalition government which ruled the Republic between 1974 and 1977.<sup>2</sup> The traditional images associated with 1916 also continued to be issued in the South,<sup>3</sup> as did the freedom-fighter designs<sup>4</sup> and a certain amount of posters using variations on Celtic interlace.<sup>5</sup> Much of the design-work for these posters was done by art-teachers involved in Provisional Sinn Fein. Meanwhile in Belfast few series of posters were produced, apart from the photographic posters showing British soldiers on the streets of Northern Ireland, with a simple slogan, often taken from the writings of James Connolly (ill 229). Instead there was

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1. In Dublin the Provisionals acquired their own press; in Belfast commercial firms are employed.
  2. These posters are in the National Library, Dublin.
  3. Thus in 1975 Sinn Fein in Dublin re-issued a 1925 poster urging republicans to wear their Easter lilies. 1916 Proclamation posters, stickers of the burning GPO and Phoenix-symbol carrier bags were also part of the regular stock.
  4. See the posters and badges illustrated in An Phoblacht, Dublin, 8 March 1978, p. 6; 3 May 1980, p. 12; and 10 May 1980, p. 12.
  5. Such as the two Eire Nua designs, incorporating the emblems of the four Irish provinces, which are in the National Library, Dublin.



229. Provisional Sinn Fein/Photographic poster/ca 1976/black and white/lithograph/17<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> x 25<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> ins (45 x 64.2 cms)/Collection: B. Loftus/Photo: Pete McGuinness).

a deliberate emphasis on a quick turnover of short-run<sup>1</sup> posters which would be effectively used in the streets rather than kept for the personal collection. Indeed on at least one occasion such posters were designed as weapons. In February 1976 an IRA poster on a roadside wall near Middleton in Co Armagh was wired to a booby-trap bomb.<sup>2</sup> Many of the designs used in the North during this period were related to the campaigns in support of republican prisoners, particularly the H-block hunger-strikers. The elegant Celtic victim posters during the prison protests in 1976 (ill 27) were increasingly supplanted by harsh, crude drawings of emaciated figures huddled in blankets. These figures also appeared in the H-block murals,<sup>3</sup> and in republican Christmas cards of this period, where they can be seen praying at the crib, alongside more familiar designs such as the sword of freedom, the shackled hands and the prisoner behind his bars.<sup>4</sup> And advertisements were taken in the Irish News in support of these campaigns, despite rising costs.<sup>5</sup>

In many ways indeed it seems that events in Northern Ireland since 1968, and the role played by Provisional Sinn Fein within them, have reinforced their use of images reiterating the traditions of militant Irish republicanism. But Sinn Fein have to a certain extent modernised their publicity during the past thirteen years, for reasons very similar to those affecting more orthodox political organisations. They were affected by the publicity produced by NICRA, PD and the Republican Clubs; they were encouraged to limited forms of political activity by the

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1. Generally 5,000.
  2. See "Poster bomb latest Provo terror ruse", Belfast Telegraph, 5 Feb 1976, p. 1, and photo in Visor, Lisburn, 12 Feb 1976, p. 1.
  3. See ill 19.
  4. See the Green Cross 73 cards reproduced in An Phoblacht/Republican News, Dublin, 24 November 1979, p. 10.
  5. Whereas in the mid-1970s a full-page advertisement in the Irish News cost £400, by the early 1980s the price was £700. In the summer of 1982 the paper's new editor announced that advertisements by the Provisionals would no longer be accepted.

British government in the early 1970s; some of their publicity has been a reaction to the massive campaigns initiated by that government in Northern Ireland; they learnt from their contacts with political groups elsewhere; and like virtually every other political grouping in the province they acquired a new generation of activists, impatient with the mistakes and the traditionalism of their predecessors, eager to try out new forms of publicity, proud of what they described to me recently as their "propaganda-machine."

### Conclusions

Political imagery in Northern Ireland has been transformed since 1968 by a series of actions which have resulted in something very similar to the modernisation described at the beginning of this chapter. Prior to the present troubles there was very little political publicity produced in the province, in itself evidence of traditionalism, and that which was produced was also markedly traditional in its repeated assertion of accepted symbols for a faithful following, in images produced by friends of the issuers, with old-fashioned design and technology. Much of this has changed during the past thirteen years. Indeed by the late 1970s virtually all political groupings in the province, from the Northern Ireland Office to Provisional Sinn Fein, were highly aware of the need for publicity, producing far more of it, appealing to a wider audience, and using more professional designers and forms of technology.

Yet at the same time a significant proportion of the images issued in this modernised fashion have remained strongly traditional. In the Protestant community symbols derived from Orange traditions have frequently been employed, sometimes knowingly, sometimes in an unconscious fashion. And in republican organisations in the Catholic community

traditions of 1916 and the suffering hero theme have often been revived.

In part one can attribute this continuing traditionalism to the political polarisation caused by the conflict of the past thirteen years, and to repetition of particular patterns of opposition in this conflict, notably the introduction of the old anti-republican weapon of internment.

But it is also apparent that modernisation can actually reinforce traditionalism, that the two are in fact not totally opposed modes of behaviour. In particular the partly-modernised, neat, technological imagery of the British Army seems to have actually reinforced the existing traditional predisposition of Northern Ireland Protestants to a neat, fragmented, dehumanized, industrialised mode of vision. That this should be the case makes it seem more accurate to think of modernisation as a theory or expectation which is often subtly pervaded by the traditions of those who entertain it, and is open to further hybridisation with traditionalism, rather than as an ineluctable, unvarying progress away from such traditionalism.