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LIVING IN A WAR ZONE

INFORMATION PACK *on the north of Ireland*

This information pack has been produced by the Women & Ireland Network, a national organisation made up of representatives from local Women & Ireland Groups. We meet quarterly to discuss our local work, share information and to organise the International Women's Day Delegation to Belfast and Derry in March.

If you would like to be put in touch with your local Women & Ireland Group, or would like more information about the Network then please contact:

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LIVING IN A WAR ZONE



INFORMATION PACK

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Women & Ireland Network Information Sheet 1.

Brief outline of events in the north of Ireland since 1967

- 1967 Civil Rights movement founded campaigning for: one man, one vote; abolition of the Special Powers Act; reform of local government; an end to housing and job discrimination.
- 1969 Squatted council houses in campaign against homelessness and allocations to Protestants.
NOVEMBER: O'Neill offered end to business vote plus points system for housing. Loyalist hostility. Civil Rights marches continues and subjected to attack by Loyalists and RUC.
- 1969 **JANUARY:** Loyalists ambushed civil rights march and followed with attacks on Bogside.
APRIL: First death when RUC killed a Catholic in the Bogside.
Campaign for housing and jobs grew.
AUGUST: Loyalist march followed by RUC attack on the Bogside and the declaration of Free Derry. No presence to defend the community.
British sent in troops to Derry and then Loyalists attacked and burned out the Lower Falls. Troops sent into Belfast and established 'Peace Line'.
Reforms announced: one man one vote.
B Specials replaced by the Ulster Defence Regiment.
- 1970 Provisional IRA founded in split from Officials and began to build republican army.
JUNE: First IRA action, defending Short Strand from Loyalist attack. Followed by British Army occupation of the Lower Falls, killing 5, and imposition of curfew. Broken by women's march into the Lower Falls.
- 1971 **FEBRUARY:** First British soldier killed by the IRA.
JULY: 2 youths shot dead by the British army. No inquiry and SDLP withdrew from Stormont. (Ulster parliament controlled by Unionists)
AUGUST: Internment without trial, house raids. Interrogation and torture of those held.
Rent and rate strike by nationalists in response. Payments of debts Act to penalise them.
- 1972 **JANUARY:** Bloody Sunday. 14 peaceful demonstrators shot dead by paratroopers. Demands now shifting from reform of the state to its abolition and for Irish reunification and independence.
MARCH: Stormont suspended and replaced by Direct Rule from Westminster. Led to spate of sectarian murders of Catholics.
IRA in talks with British government: ceasefire announced. Special category status for republican prisoners. Ceasefire ends in resumption of bombings by IRA.

- 1972 Troops move into nationalist 'no go' areas and occupy schools, factories, build forts, set up intensive surveillance.
- 1973 Sunningdale agreement to set up power sharing executive. SDLP cooperates.
- 1974 Unionists withdraw from assembly. Ulster Workers Council organises strike which destroys executive. UDA bombing campaign in South. IRA bombs in Britain. Prevention of Terrorism Act passed. Emergency provisions Act replaced internment by criminalisation. Diplock, no jury courts set up.
- 1976 Special category status abolished for prisoners. Prisoners refused to wear prison clothes in Blanket Protest.
- 1977 Ulsterisation: RUC and UDR given leading security role.
- 1978 Blanket Protest escalated to Dirty Protest. Britain found guilty in European Court of Human Rights of 'inhuman and degrading treatment'.
- 1981 Hunger Strike for political status by prisoners in Long Kesh. 10 men died. Election of Bobby Sands as MP for South Fermanagh and Tyrone 6 weeks into fast. Plastic bullet deaths, including several children in the following months.
- 1982 Increase in shoot-to-kill incidents by RUC undercover squad. Power sharing assembly set up with legislative but no executive powers. Boycotted by Nationalists. Use of informers in supergrass trials begins. Sinn Fein begins to stand in local elections. Strip-searching introduced in Armagh Gaol.
- 1986 Anglo-Irish agreement. Official consultation with Dublin on security; South accepting partition. Boycotted by loyalists. Women prisoners moved to Maghaberry Gaol. 60+ people acquitted who had been convicted on word of informers.
- 1988 Sinn Fein banned from speaking on radio or television. Gibraltar 3 murdered by SAS. Extradition of escapees by Southern government back to north.
- 1989 Loyalist sectarian killings based on leaks from security forces. Escalation of house raids. PTA made permanent.
- 1990 Shoot-to-kill campaign against civilians and IRA activists. Dessie Ellis on hunger strike against extradition. Extradited to England.

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LIVING IN A WAR ZONE

Women & Ireland Information Sheet 2

Summary of organisations

ROYAL ULSTER CONSTABULARY

Armed police force set up 1922. Never more than 10% Catholic.

ULSTER DEFENCE REGIMENT

Regiment of the British Army. Serves only in the north of Ireland. Set up when B Specials disbanded in 1970. Many members also in Loyalist paramilitary groups. Almost no Catholics since internment introduced. In July '91 it was merged with the Royal Irish Rangers and renamed as the ROYAL IRISH REGIMENT.

B. SPECIALS

Part time auxiliary paramilitary force set up in 1920. Recruited from UVF and Orange Order they were entirely Protestant. Disbanded 1969 as result of Civil Rights protests. Members joined the UDR.

STORMONT

Seat of the Northern Ireland parliament until it was abolished in 1972 and replaced by direct rule from Westminster.

SINN FEIN 'OURSELVES ALONE'

Republican party whose politics have varied since its establishment in 1907.

Currently the political wing of the provisional IRA.

Nationalist, supporting armed struggle, and now socialist.

Gerry Adams is President, and also their only MP.

Has local councillors in Northern and Southern Ireland, who are active in local politics, and 1 MP, Gerry Adams, who does not take his seat in Westminster. In 1988 they decided to stand for parliament in Ireland, overturning abstentionism.

IRISH REPUBLICAN ARMY IRA.

Underground guerrilla movement of which membership is illegal. Fighting for a united 32 county Ireland. Campaign against RUC, British Army and the British State.

SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC AND LABOUR PARTY

Other main nationalist party. Founded in 1970, represents mainly the catholic middle class. Has power shared with Unionists in 1974. Reformist. Has MPs in Westminster. Favours British withdrawal but is anti-IRA.

ORANGE ORDER

Politico-religious organisation. Dedicated to Protestant supremacy and the link with Britain. NO-one who is Catholic or has close catholic relatives can join. Strongly represented in Unionist Party and mobilises mass Protestant activity through parades.

ULSTER UNIONIST PARTY

Main party for unionists. Set up with close links with Conservative party to oppose Home Rule and keep Ireland and especially Ulster British.

Formed a government of new state in 1921 and ruled till Stormont suspended 1972.

Orange Order is directly represented on its council.

DEMOCRATIC UNIONIST PARTY

Founded by Paisley 1971; right wing loyalist party. Closely associated with his Free Presbyterian Church.

ULSTER DEFENCE PARTY - UDA

Loyalist paramilitary group. Heavily armed. Carries out attacks on catholic civilians in sectarian assassination campaigns. Political links with the extreme right wing Vanguard party.

ULSTER VOLUNTEER FORCE UVF

There have been 2 organisations called this.

1) Set up 1913 as a private army by the Unionists to resist Home Rule. Disappeared after 1922 campaigns against Catholics around the time of independence for the south.

2) 1966 - name revived by group carrying out 2 sectarian killings against Catholics. Bombing campaign against O'Neill's reforms which toppled him. Since then, largest loyalist paramilitary force, still involved in sectarian killings and opposition to Anglo-Irish agreement. Links with British National Front.

ULSTER FREEDOM FIGHTERS UVF

Probably the name used by UDA murder gangs.

NATIONALISTS:

People who want an independent and united Ireland.

REPUBLICANS

People who think this is only going to be possible if armed struggle is part of the campaign.

LOYALISTS

People who want to keep the north of Ireland British so as to maintain Protestant majority rule and privilege.

THE NORTH MAY BE CALLED ULSTER, THE 6 COUNTIES, NORTHERN IRELAND OR THE NORTH OF IRELAND, depending on who is talking.

THE SOUTH MAY BE CALLED THE REPUBLIC, THE FREE STATE, EIRE, 26 COUNTIES OR SOUTHERN IRELAND.

NIO is the Northern Ireland Office, set up to rule directly from London.

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Women & Ireland Network Information sheet No.3

Raids and collective punishment

"I was upstairs, my daughter was in the bathroom, and a friend was watching my 2-week old son in the living room. I heard the smashing of glass and screams from down stairs and then a man ran into my bedroom and put a gun to my head. He shouted he'd kill me if I moved. I thought it was a Loyalist attack"

The speaker is Elizabeth Donnelly, a woman living in the Ardoyne district of North Belfast. The attackers were members of the British security forces and the RUC. They went on to make the 3 women lie on the floor at gun point while they searched the house.

This is an experience which has been shared by many of the nationalist community of the north of Ireland. Since 1969 government statistics show that each nationalist home has been raided twice on average. Homes in target areas have been raided far more often than this.

WHY?

If we look at when and where the raids are carried out it's difficult to accept that there is any security justification. In 1988 there was a massive increase in the number of raids, showing a definite policy decision. RUC statistics show that in 5 weeks 1,100 homes were raided often with completely excessive force - eg: pneumatic drilling 5 foot down in a kitchen floor in a raid which lasted 30 hours. A Tyrone family were kept under house arrest for 3 days while their farm machinery and turf supplies were destroyed and sewage pipes ripped up.

At the other extreme the RUC or army don't even pretend to search for arms and explosives - which is the only legal excuse for raids. They illegally search for and take away personal documents and photos.

SO WHAT IS THEIR REASON?

One - along with raid blocks, stop and search (including several recent cases of sexual abuse of women) - is to punish the nationalist community. Peter Brooke, the 'Northern Ireland Minister' has even talked about nationalists as the 'terrorist community'.

Raids have also been used to harass particular individuals, say activists in campaigns supporting prisoners. Incriminating material has been planted in houses during raids; one woman got a 5 year prison sentence for material found in a house that she hadn't yet got the key for!

Since 1989 there has been a particularly sinister development. Families have been informed that one of their names has been found on a loyalist death list. Raiding parties have followed collecting details of who sleeps where, drawing plans to show what security arrangements they have such as iron doors at the bottom of the stairs. And the raiders take letters and documents and photos which could be used to identify and to find out about people's movements.

Kathleen, an elderly widow, had a son murdered by loyalists and has been told that another is on their death lists. The RUC raided her house in the early hours of one morning. They smashed mirrors and pictures, tore beds and furniture, punched holes in her kitchen wall and then;

"The RUC filled a carrier bag with personal documents and family photos which they took away. I was questioned about the whereabouts of my son and details were taken of security arrangements which I intended to install following the threat of a loyalist attack. I firmly believe, like many other families in a similar situation, that we are being targeted to intimidate us into dropping pending collusion cases against the RUC."

After raids like these people live in fear that the information will find its way to the loyalist death squads - as is already known to have happened in the cases of the 'missing files' - and cannot sleep securely in their own homes.

So raids are used to punish and intimidate a whole community for its refusal to accept British occupation and its continued support for those working for a united Ireland. And the British are trying to carry out the threat of Brigadièr Kitson when he wrote of defeating 'Guerrilla fighters' who are living in nationalist communities:

"If you can't kill the fish, you have to poison the water".

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Women & Ireland Information Sheet 4

The Border

The Berlin Wall has fallen, amidst the rejoicing of our politicians and media. One Border closer to home is ignored. It directly affects the lives of 5 million people. People have died as a direct result of its presence. Fergal Caraher, killed in January 1991 by British Soldiers, lived on a small farm which was bisected by the Border. Aiden McAnespie, killed on his way to work by a British soldier in 1988, lived one side of the Border and worked on the other.

This Border costs the British Government £700 million annually to maintain, excluding the direct costs of the British Army. It divides a country. It is the Border separating the six north-eastern counties and the rest of Ireland.

THE CREATION OF THE BORDER

Until 1921 there was no Border in Ireland. In December 1920 the British government could not defeat the armed independence struggle in Ireland. It passed the Government Of Ireland Act, dividing Ireland into two: the 26 Counties, now called the Irish Republic, and the 6 counties.

The Border was drawn in order to create the largest possible area that would have a unionist majority, unionists being people who wished to remain subject to British rule. In 1920 only two counties, Antrim & Down, had a clear unionist majority. Such a small area was not politically or economically useful to Britain, so the Border was drawn to give the unionist minority the largest controllable area. Thus the present 6 counties of Northern Ireland, with its two-thirds unionist majority, was created.

This politically created, unnatural Border took no account of existing community and trading patterns. It was drawn through the middle of villages, farms and houses.

In 1921 the majority of industrial manufacture took place in Belfast. The Border divided the country economically, separating the manufacturing area from the mainly agricultural area, separating towns from their customers, and ports such as Derry from their suppliers. In 1922 the British Government presented the Border as temporary, but by 1926 the Border had become permanent. The British Government expected to obtain income from Northern Ireland for the British Treasury.

CLOSING THE BORDER

Until 1974, there were many roads crossing the Border, used daily by people going to and from work, shopping, visiting relatives. There were few checks. The Border runs through areas whose main industry is agriculture, where small farmers have land both sides of the Border. In 1974, the British Army blew most of the Border crossings up.

This has had a huge impact on people's everyday lives. For example, until 1974 there were 15 roads crossing the Border between Roslea & Caledon. The British Army blew up 14 of these roads. All traffic was funnelled through Auchanacloy checkpoint. The British Army search all vehicles and passengers, subjecting them to many hours delay. Local Community groups trying to re-open three crossings have been stopped by a large force of British soldiers landing from helicopters.

Access to Derry City is funnelled through one checkpoint. Recently community associations re-opened roads blown up by the British Army in 1974.

In Armagh, a predominantly nationalist area, there are 4 major British Army posts and 20 smaller ones in an area only 20 by 15 miles square. The 4 major posts have cameras, infra-red lights, and heat seeking equipment, so that the community is under surveillance day and night. All the posts are supplied by helicopter, usually in formation. In June 1989, plain clothes RUC personnel raided homes in Crossmaglen, Drumintree, Silver Bridge, Killevey and Meigh, battering down doors with sledge hammers. In February 1990 the Greencastle and Loughmacrory areas were subject to "extensive land searches" and the residents held under curfew for a week.

MAINTAINING THE BORDER

Communities working on re-opening roads have their successes destroyed within days by the British Army. Nationalists in rural communities are subject to daily high-tech surveillance and harassment. The extent of repression needed to maintain the Border illustrates its artificial nature.

Since 1974, costs in government services, which included the Royal Ulster Constabulary, have risen 30%, and costs in public administration and defence, which include the Ulster Defence Regiment and prison services, have risen by 25%. At the same time, employment in manufacturing has decreased by 45%. Since 1974 the British Government has halved the number of regular Army personnel in the 6 Counties, and doubled the number of locally recruited security forces, increasing the protestant community's dependence on income from the huge security industry.

The 6 County state continues to disenfranchise and discriminate against Catholics, whereas the 26 County state has never discriminated against protestant, or any other religion. The highest unemployment rates within the present United Kingdom boundaries are suffered by Catholics in Northern Ireland.

Britain initiated this Border in 1923, and has maintained it by force and political and economic manipulation ever since. It is time that the British Government adopted a commitment to the re-unification of Ireland. The majority of British people consistently support Irish re-unification and British Withdrawal in all popular opinion polls. The £700 millions a year spent now in repression and force could be used to support British military and political withdrawal from Northern Ireland and the re-unification of Ireland.

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Women & Ireland Information Sheet No.5

Collusion between British forces and Loyalist para-militaries

British Forces

10,000 members of **THE BRITISH ARMY** - sent to North of Ireland in 1969 by the British Government.

13,000 (full and part-time) members of the **ROYAL ULSTER CONSTABULARY (RUC)** - the predominantly Protestant Police force, formed after partition of Ireland in 1920.

6,000 members of the **ULSTER DEFENCE REGIMENT (UDR)**:- Locally recruited regiment of the British army. It replaced the B-Specials in 1970. It claimed to be a less sectarian force than the notorious B-Specials, but of the UDR's initial 2,400 recruits 1,200 came from the B-Specials. Renamed as the **ROYAL IRISH REGIMENT** July '91.

LOYALIST PARAMILITARY FORCES.

ULSTER DEFENCE ASSOCIATION (UDA):- a legal Protestant paramilitary organisation.

ULSTER FREEDOM FIGHTERS (UFF):- alias name for the UDA.

ULSTER VOLUNTEER FORCE (UVF) - outlawed loyalist group.

PROTESTANT ACTION FORCE (PAF) is another name the UVF go by.

WHAT EVIDENCE IS THERE OF COLLUSION?

*** DUAL MEMBERSHIP OF THE UDR/RUC AND ILLEGAL PARA-MILITARY GROUPS eg THE UVF.**

This means information is easily passed to para-military groups. For example, in March 1990 Sam Marshall was shot dead after reporting to Lurgan barracks as condition of bail, at a time only known by him and the RUC. The death squad clearly had access to this information.

*** LEAKED INFORMATION FROM BRITISH INTELLIGENCE FILES TO PARA-MILITARY ORGANISATIONS**

This information is used to target nationalists for assassination by Loyalist paramilitary organisations. In October '89 the Stevens Enquiry was set up to investigate. It was estimated that personal details of over 2,000 nationalists were in the hands of Loyalist Paramilitaries. These documents went missing from UDR, RUC and Army bases. Gerry Collins (Dublin Foreign Affairs minister) said "The report...confirms the involvement of the UDR in collusion."

On October 8th 1989 28 UDR men were arrested, relating to the leaking of information. Only 2 were charged - the other 26 were released and no further Crown Forces members were to be arrested.

During the Stevens Inquiry Peter Brooke issued no less than 7 statements on the UDR regiment and its continued central role in British strategy.

*** KILLINGS BY GANGS WHICH INCLUDE MEMBERS OF THE CROWN FORCES.**

In a recent investigation of 113 killings by pro-British loyalist death squads it was found that 18 (16%) were carried out directly by members of the crown forces or by gangs which included members of the crown forces. In the 1970's there was a series of 19 murders by the Shankill Butchers, one of whom was a UDR soldier.

There have been 21 prosecutions of members of the security forces for killings using firearms while on duty. 19 were found not guilty. One was convicted of manslaughter and given a suspended sentence. The 21st, Private Ian Thain, was found guilty of murder and given a mandatory life sentence. It later emerged that he had, without publicity, been released from prison after serving less than three years and reinstated in the Army.

*** USE OF WEAPONS/UNIFORMS FROM THE CROWN FORCES.**

Arms have 'gone missing' from UDR stocks and later been identified as weapons used in assassinations by Loyalist paramilitaries. In 1974 Mr and Mrs Devlin were murdered by a man in army uniform who stopped their car in the road - he shot them with a sterling sub-machine gun, standard British army and UDR issue.

*** ABSENCE OF CROWN FORCES WHEN LOYALIST PARA-MILITARY ATTACKS ARE CARRIED OUT IN NATIONALIST AREAS.**

Over the last 20 years loyalist gunmen have murdered over 800 people - many of these killings in areas heavily patrolled by members of the British Forces. Yet these killers appear to have freedom of movement, giving rise to the belief that gunmen were acting on information about patrolling.

*** DEATH THREATS FROM THE ARMY/UDR/RUC.**

Crown Forces issue death threats to individuals who are later killed by loyalist para-militaries. For instance, a wooden cross with 'Larry Marley R.I.P.' on it was put in Larry Marley's garden by British soldiers. He was later killed by a Loyalist death-squad.

*** INFORMATION GATHERED AND PASSED ON IN HOUSE SEARCHES.**

Houses which have recently been raided by the Crown Forces have then had attacks from loyalist para-military organisations, where the layout of the house is clearly known.

SINN FEIN SURVEY.

An investigation commissioned by Sinn Fein into 113 killings by pro-British loyalist death-squads over the past 10 years revealed that in 70 (62%) of the 113 cases collusion was a factor.

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