
Materials

Workers' Party of Ireland

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Provo Pogrom : pamphlet

Sinn Féin The Workers' Party

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PROVO POGROM

THE ATTEMPTED POGROM:

What is now recognised as an all out pogrom against the very existence of the Republican Movement commenced in Belfast at 6pm on the evening of Wednesday October 29th, with twenty armed Provisional gangs striking simultaneously over a wide area. In what was a carefully planned and co-ordinated attack Republican Club member Robert Elliman was shot dead and eighteen other Republicans wounded mostly at their homes in the Andersonstown, Beechmount, Markets, Twinbrook, Ormeau Rd. New Lodge Rd., Ballymacarret, Whiterock and Lower Falls and Newington areas of Belfast.

On the following day the attacks continued with unabated ferocity. That day saw the death of six year old Eileen Kelly, murdered when two gunmen called to her father's house. The gunmen were told by his wife that John Kelly, a Republican Club supporter, was not at home but they pushed past her firing into the house. Young Eileen was shot dead where she sat on the settee in the living room. In other shooting incidents on the same day five other Republican Club members were shot and wounded by Provisional gangs who ranged freely through the various areas while the British Army turned a blind eye.

Since then another six people — either members or those connected in some way with the Republican Clubs — have been murdered. On Friday 31st October Tom Berry a member of the Republican Clubs was shot dead by the Provisionals in the Short Strand area. On Monday November 3rd the Provisional murder campaign took on a new and sinister development. Largely as a result of security precautions organised by the Republican Clubs, the Provisional murder gangs were finding it difficult to track down Club members, so they turned their murderous attentions to former members of the organisation. On that night 22 year old Jim Fogarty, a former member of the Republican Clubs was shot dead in his Ballymurphy home.

Attacks on Republican Club members and supporters continued all through the following week. The next fatality came on Sunday November 9th when John Kelly, a young member of the Clubs was shot dead near his Newington home. Kelly was on his way to meet his

girlfriend when he was fired on. As he lay wounded on the ground a Provisional gunman calmly walked up and fired several shots into his head and body.

REIGN OF TERROR

Tuesday, November 11th, produced the bloodiest results of the pogrom with 3 separate killings. The first to die was Jackie McAllister. He was not a member of the Clubs. His mother was. She had stood in the 1973 Local Government Elections as a Republican Clubs candidate and she had recently travelled to Dublin to ask Ruairi O Bradaigh and the Provisional leadership to call off their gunmen. This was O Bradaigh's answer to Mrs. McAllister.

Later that day Provisional gunmen called to the workplace of 18 year old Colm Casey. The Provisionals accused him of being a member of the Republican Clubs. Casey told them that he had dropped out of the Clubs in 1974, but as his horrified workmates looked on he was forced to kneel on the ground and was shot several times in the back of the head as he pleaded for the right to live. The final victim of that day of Provo savagery was John Brown, a member of the Clubs in the Markets area, who was machine gunned to death as he opened his front door. In the same attack his 16 year old brother also a member of the Republican Clubs was shot and wounded.

In addition to the fatal incidents listed above, over 30 members or supporters of the Republican Clubs were wounded in the period of the attempted pogrom. Some are still seriously ill in hospital.

In their two week reign of terror, the Provisionals indulged in intimidation on a scale not experienced in Belfast since the sectarian clashes of 1969. Dozens of families were forced to leave their homes by Provisional gunmen. In most cases they were the families of members or supporters of the Republican Clubs. Innocent women and children were forced to suffer, because their husbands or fathers or mothers were members of the Republican Clubs.

WHO ARE THE PROVISIONALS ?

The Provisional Organisation was formed in 1969 following a breakaway by right wing and militarist elements from the Republican Movement. These elements joined with others who had either been expelled or had left the Movement in the 1960s. Most of these resignations had been caused by the development within the Republican Movement of socialist politics during that period. The Provisionals rejected the socialist politics of the Republican Movement and wanted to launch a military campaign in the North.

Part of the early financing for the Provos came from elements in the Fianna Fail Government. This fact was highlighted by the Republican Movement at the time, and was later borne out at the famous Arms Trial of 1970, at which two former members of the Fianna Fail Government, Charles Haughey and Neal Blaney, were charged together with a prominent Belfast Provisional, John Kelly, with attempting to import arms. During the trial some of the facts about the relationship between the Provos and Fianna Fail emerged. But on Friday, 1st December 1972, speaking in the Dail, Neal Blaney admitted that he had helped to bring the Provisionals into existence. (See Official Dail Report, Vol. 264 No.4.)

THIS IS THE ORGANISATION THAT IS TRYING TO SMASH THE REPUBLICAN CLUBS

READ THE NOVEMBER ISSUE OF
THE UNITED IRISHMAN FOR
FULL DETAILS OF THE BELFAST
POGROM.

The United Irishman,
30 Gardiner Place,
Dublin 1.

THE REPUBLICAN CLUBS

The Republican Clubs are the Northern Cumainn of Sinn Fein. In the 1960s in an attempt to get around the ban on Sinn Fein in the Six Counties, the Northern Cumainn changed their names to Republican Clubs. The name continued after the ban on Sinn Fein was lifted, but the Republican Clubs are an integral part of the Sinn Fein organisation and come under the authority of the Sinn Fein Ard Comhairle just as the Sinn Fein organisation in Dublin or Cork does.

The Republican Clubs are working by political means for the creation of a united democratic socialist Republic in which the working people will own and control the wealth and resources of the country. The Republican Clubs want to create a secular state, where religious differences between Irish people will be abolished.

To further their aims the Republican Clubs have, during the past 3 years contested 5 separate elections — 2 Westminster Elections, the Convention Elections, the Assembly Elections and the Local Government Elections. There are nine Republican Clubs Councillors in the North. Members of Republican Clubs are involved in all aspects of the people's political and economic struggle. Members of the Republican Clubs were deeply involved in the formation of the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association. Republican Club activists are also involved in tenants and residents associations, co-ops, and farmer's groups.

Within the last two months the Republican Clubs, recognising that sectarianism is one of the major obstacles to progress, have launched a massive Anti-Sectarian Campaign. During the campaign, which is still going on despite the Provo attacks, 500,000 leaflets will be distributed, many thousands of posters put up, and public meetings held in a wide variety of areas.

This is the organisation that the Provo leadership has decided to try to smash.

“In the case of the kidnapped Dutch industrialist, Dr. Herrema, Ruairi O Bradaigh quite rightly condemned the kidnappers who are former members of the Provos, and he made a touching appeal for this man's release pointing out that the persecution of Dr. Herrema ‘served no useful purpose at this time’.

Contrast this with Mr. O Bradaigh's silence when a six year old child of a Belfast working class family was murdered. No appeal came from Mr. O Bradaigh to the childkillers to halt their murder campaign, in fact the organisation of which he is President left no doubt but that the murderers had its full support.”

WHY THE PROVISIONALS TRIED TO SMASH THE REPUBLICAN CLUBS

The combination of a number of factors led to the Provo decision to launch their attempted pogrom against the Republican Clubs.

During recent months, the Republican Clubs have experienced increasing political support in all areas of Belfast. Particularly well received was the Anti-Sectarian Campaign which was organised by the Clubs. The campaign was directed against all those involved in sectarian activities and this included the Provisionals. The campaign, which won widespread support in all areas of Belfast, resulted in the further isolation of the Provisionals from the people.

In addition to this, the Provos have always opposed the socialist policies of the Republican Movement. They also bitterly resented the refusal of the Republican Movement to be drawn into their bloody and pointless war. At the same time there was increasing pressure on the Provo leadership to break their ceasefire with the British Army. Much of this pressure came from Provo 'hardmen' recently released from Long Kesh. What better way, the Provo leadership thought, to maintain their ceasefire but at the same time allow their madmen to let off steam, than by allowing them to turn their guns on true Republicans.

The Provos were also anxious to show the British Government that they were capable of policing nationalist areas. All of this, coupled with the realisation that they could expect the co-operation of the British Army, led the Provisional leadership to believe that the time was right to wipe out the entire Republican Club organisation in Belfast.

WHAT THE REPUBLICAN CLUBS SAID ABOUT THE ATTACKS

In a statement issued on the evening of the first wave of attacks, the Six County Secretariat of Republican Clubs said:— "Our earnest wish is that no Republican will be provoked into senseless retaliation by these murderous attacks." This sentiment has been repeated in successive statements issued both from the Republican Clubs in Belfast and the Sinn Fein Ard Comhairle in Dublin. The only demand the Republican Clubs have made of the Provisionals is that they should call off their campaign of murder and intimidation and leave our members to pursue their legitimate political activities.

WHAT THE PROVISIONAL LEADERSHIP SAID

The Provisionals on the other hand, have given no indication that they are willing to call off the attacks. Speaking in Belfast on November 3rd, Malachy Foots, spokesman for the Northern Provisionals, said that his organisation was committed to getting rid of the Official Republican Movement. In a statement issued from their Kevin St. Headquarters on the previous day, the Provisional Ard Comhairle pledged full support for the actions taken by their members in Belfast. Ruairi O Bradaigh, the Provisional leader travelled to Belfast to express the support of their leadership, and indeed to encourage his assassins to even greater acts of appalling viciousness.

"Sectarianism Kills Workers"

It is now clear that the only consistent and determined opponent of British Imperialism and fascist sectarianism in Ireland is the Republican Movement. The Republican Clubs have recently exposed the fascist sectarianism and collaboration with the Brits. by the Provisionals. This activity brought down upon their heads the full wrath of the Provisional leadership.

The Provisionals' sectarianism has recently been exposed by their actions in organising groups to tear down Republican Club posters which carried the simple slogan — "Sectarianism Kills Workers" — It is further significant that their collaborators in this work were roving patrols of the British Army.

Anti-Republican, Anti-Working Class:

Bob Elliman, Tom Berry and John Brown, were murdered and over 30 of their comrades injured in defence of working-class politics and working-class unity and anti-sectarian principles. A clear line must now be drawn between the left and the right and no spurious arguments should be made about Provisionals fascists and sectarian bigots being part of the anti-Imperialist struggle when in fact they are part of the anti-republican and anti-working class struggle.

Tomas Mac Giolla.

Uachtaran, Sinn Fein.

THE PROVISIONALS SINCE 1971

The main achievement of the Provisionals during the past four years has been to destroy the revolutionary fervour of the Irish people, which in the period between 1969 and 1971, had the British Government reeling, Stormont on its knees and the Dublin Government in total confusion. The sectarian nature of the Provisional's campaign has solidified Loyalist working class opinion against the idea of a Democratic Socialist Republic. The indiscriminate nature of their violence and their blatant disregard for human life, sapped the will of the anti Unionist people to resist.

In 1971, following the introduction of internment without trial, all anti Unionist groups gave an undertaking that there would be no talks with the British Government until the last internee had been released. The Provisionals were the first to break this pledge, when in the summer of 1972, the Provo leadership was flown in an RAF plane to London to talk with Whitelaw and other British Tory Government ministers. This allowed the SDLP 'off the hook' and opened the way for them to 'share power' with Brian Faulkner and the Unionist Party.

Many innocent Catholic and Protestant workers have lost their lives as a result of the Provisional violence. Among the particularly vicious actions carried out by the Provisionals since 1971 were the bombings of Claddy and Coleraine, McGuirk's Bar, the Abercorn Restaurant, Birmingham, etc. Thirteen people died in the wave of Provisional bombing attacks in Belfast in July 1972 on what has become known as 'Bloody Friday'. Numerous Protestant workers have become victims of the Provisional campaign of sectarian assassinations. Among those was Samuel Llewellyn, a Protestant from the Shankill Rd. who was murdered by the Provisionals while delivering hardboard to the Falls Rd. to repair bomb damage on homes in the area. The identity of the Provisional who murdered Samuel Llewellyn is a matter of common knowledge in Belfast, but the killer was smuggled to freedom in the South by the Provisional leadership.

This is the organisation that is trying to smash the Republican Clubs!

This is the organisation that has accused the Republican Clubs of "criminal activity".

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP

1. Spread the information contained in this bulletin as widely as possible.
2. Send a message of solidarity to the Belfast Executive of Republican Clubs, 40 Cyprus Street, Belfast 12, Ireland.
3. A special fund has been set up to help the relatives of the victims of the attacks of the past few days. The situation is so critical that there are almost hourly reports of new attacks, woundings and beatings. Most of those involved have young families. Send your subscription to:

Belfast Victims Fund, International Affairs Bureau,
30 Gardiner Place, Dublin 1. Ireland.

All subscriptions received will be receipted in writing:

WHERE WAS THE BRITISH ARMY?

While these attacks were taking place, the British Army in Belfast were adopting a remarkably low profile. It is now generally accepted that the first wave of attacks, in which up to 90 Provisional gunmen participated, could not have taken place without the previous knowledge and consent of the British Army. It is likely that the British Army were warned in advance through the Incident Centres and agreed to keep away.

In some cases there is direct evidence of collaboration between the Brits and the Provos. In the White-rock area seven families were warned that unless they signed the Provo 'amnesty' they would be driven out. In Twinbrook, following a Provo bomb attack on a Republican Club, the British Army demolished the building despite protests from Club members and members of the public that the structure could easily be made safe. Minutes before he was shot dead, the British Army called at the home of Jim Fogarty in Ballymurphy. Where they clearing the way for the Provo murderers?