

inside story

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Belfast Europa

An Army spokesman said today that rubber bullets were used in Andersonstown, Belfast. No casualties were reported... (see page one)





Mrs Groves, blinded by a rubber bullet: why didn't this photograph appear?

COVER STORY

What do the papers say? -What the Army tells them

The media coverage of events in Northern Ireland has been so blatantly biassed in favour of Stormont, Westminster and the Army that recently even journalists have protested. But the lies continue.

As well as the scale of the slaughter, something else distinguished Derry's Bloody Sunday from earlier atrocities committed by the British Army: the fact that a number of British journalists were there on the spot when it happened. They and their editors did not have the option which they normally exercise: to depend for the basis of their report on whatever story is manufactured by the Army PROs.

Of course the Army press boys did their usual job of covering up: no one in

Northern Ireland is admitted to be dead unless he's in the IRA - or killed by an IRA bullet. But this time it didn't sound quite as convincing as usual.

Because, alongside Army statements - 'There is no shadow of doubt whatsoever that the Army fired only at established targets after first being fired on' - newspapers the next day published bits like: 'A photographer who was directly behind the Parachutists when they jumped down from their armoured cars said: "I was appalled. They opened up into a crowd of people. As far as I could see they didn't fire over people's heads at all.' The Times

There were journalists behind the Army when they opened fire - and journalists in front. Simon Winchester, who is by no means a popular figure in civil rights circles, wrote in the Guardian: 'Paratroopers



WILLIAM NASH



HUGH GILMORE



MICHAEL McDAID



JAMES WRAY



PATRICK DOHERTY



KEVIN McILHENNEY



JOHN

Was the Army to blame

GUILTY

Bogside accuses troops

By DAVID TATTERSALL and JOE CORROD

A BLUE and white banner drenched with blood became a shrine for the people of the Bogside yesterday.

The Civil Rights emblem lay on the pavement outside Rossville-street flats, where most of the victims of Sunday's demonstration died.

It marked the spot where a young demonstrator was shot while he was carrying it.

Throughout the day the people of the Bogside crowded around the banner in their hundreds.

In the centre of the emblem was a pile of stones topped by a small pot of flowers—a simple mark of the Catholic district's grief at what local people were terming an "Army massacre."

Crowded

At one point about 200 people crowded into the tiny West End Hall, near Free Derry Corner, to hear some of the relatives of the thirteen dead men

tell their stories of "bloody Sunday."

James McGuigan spoke of his 31-year-old brother Bernard. He said: "Bernard was never a member of any illegal organisation. He was just a family man with six children."

"He put his hand in the air and waved a white handkerchief as he went to help another man who had been hit."

"The soldiers shot him through the head."

Michael McKinney's 27-year-old son William, a newspaper compositor, was another who died.

Raised

Mr. McKinney said: "William had a movie camera, and he was taking pictures of the demonstration."

"People told me later that he was shot while both his arms were raised in the air."

Dr. Kevin Swords, who is attached to the Gransha Hospital in Londonderry, attended several of the dying and injured men.

"I came across one very young boy lying on the

ground," he said. "There was a big hole in his stomach and his guts were coming out."

Father-of-four Jimmy Wray said his eldest son, James, 22, was shot in the back.

"He was just lying on the ground for cover," Mr. Wray claimed. "He was killed by a coward's bullet."

As the victims' relatives accused the Army, a bitter Catholic backlash erupted in Belfast, with an orgy of bombing, burning, hijacking and shooting.

At least sixty cars and lorries were grabbed by rioters and many were set on fire to be used as blazing barricades in the Falls-road area.

Shooting went on throughout the day, and 18-year-old Private Terence Brennan, from Portsea, Hants, was seriously wounded by a sniper's bullet. He was hit in the neck.

Two civilians were also wounded in gun battles.

They were taken to a hospital where a policeman was fighting for his life

after being caught by the blast of a 100lb. gelignite bomb which destroyed a British Home Stores branch

The constable — whose leg had to be amputated — was evacuating people from a nearby baker's shop when the bomb went off.

Ten other people were hurt in the blast. Later, a cinema was set ablaze.

Then another bomb went off at a cafe in Victoria-street, half a mile from the department store blast.

No one was hurt because the two gunmen who planted the bomb gave people plenty of time to escape.

ANGRY CROWD LAY SIEGE TO EMBASSY

THOUSANDS of students and factory workers laid siege to the British Embassy in Dublin yesterday in a day of protests throughout the world against the Londonderry shootings.

The demonstrators

cheered wildly as bottles were hurled through embassy windows and petrol bombs were thrown.

Window frames were set alight, but no great damage was done.

At CORK and DUNDALK, in the Republic,

thousands of workers joined protest marches.

And maintenance and refuelling workers at Shannon Airport voted not to service British aircraft.

In NEW YORK, a group of demonstrators "invaded" the British Consulate and started a sit-in in protest against "internment, brutality and murder."

The shootings were described by VATICAN RADIO as "most grave, bloody events."

Vigil

In MOSCOW, the Soviet news agency Tass said the deaths showed that the British Government "does not intend to solve the Ulster problem in a peaceful way."

In Downing-street last night, 300 demonstrators burned a Union Jack and kept a torchlight vigil.

At YORK, several students were arrested after scuffles with police outside an Army careers office

Lynch recalls his envoy from London

By WILLIAM WOLFF

Diplomatic Correspondent

EIRE'S ambassador in London, Dr. Donal O'Sullivan, was dramatically called home yesterday in protest over Britain's handling of Irish affairs.

His recall, for an indefinite period, was ordered by the Republic's Premier, Mr. Jack Lynch.

He said in Dublin that he was not breaking off diplomatic relations.

But the move would bring home to the British

Government the seriousness of the situation.

Premier Lynch is also planning an international campaign to whip up support against Britain.

He is sending his Foreign Minister, Dr. Patrick Hillery, on a tour of Britain's new allies — the six Common Market countries.

Then Dr Hillery will fly

to New York to get an anti-British campaign going in the United Nations.

After a three-hour emergency Cabinet meeting yesterday, Mr. Lynch said he was "fully satisfied that there was an unprovoked attack by British troops on unarmed civilians. He demanded an immed-

iate withdrawal of British troops from Ulster, an end to "harassment" of Catholics, and an end to internment without trial

In a broadcast on Irish radio last night, Mr. Lynch promised financial help to Catholics in the North.

He said that subject to the approval of Eire's Parliament, public money would be provided to finance political and peaceful action designed to obtain their freedom from "Unionist mis-government."



'Balanced' coverage: if the IRA had shot down 13 unarmed men would the Mirror have asked who



YOUNG



GERALD DONAGHY



GERALD McKINNEY



BERNARD McGUIGAN



MICHAEL KELLY



JACK DUDDY



WILLIAM McKINNEY

...ne for Bloody Sunday?



NOT GUILTY

'Four of the dead were wanted men'

By ALAN GORDON

FOUR of the people killed in the battle of Londonderry were on the list of wanted IRA men, the Army claimed yesterday.

Another had four nail bombs in his pocket, said a Ministry of Defence officer.

The officer, Colonel Harry Dalzell-Payne, said the paratroops who took part in the action were fired on first.

And he denied reports that the troops fired wildly.

Targets

"The terrorist fire was totally indiscriminate as far as we are concerned," he added.

During the fiercest ten minutes of the battle, the paras fired 164 high-velocity bullets and 106 rubber bullets, but only at "identifiable targets."

There were eighteen separate engagements. Nine bombers were fired at. Two were killed and seven injured.

Nine gunmen were fired at by paras. Two were killed and four hit.

If the troops fired wildly, Colonel Dalzell-Payne asked, why were no women

or children killed — only men?

Troops would not fire at random, he said, because they had "some bloody good NCOs, and some chaps who know the form."

The colonel, who is attached to the directorate of military operations dealing with Ulster, described the build-up to the battle.

He said weekend intelligence indicated to Whitehall that the march was very likely to be exploited.

There were strong indications that both hooligans and gunmen might be present.

A total of 2,500 troops were, therefore, called in

The colonel said the crowd of marchers had grown from about 800 to some 3,000 by the time it reached the Army barricades.

Pressure

There were some 2,000 troops at the twenty-four barricades. Missile throwers put Barricade Fourteen under "unacceptable" pressure, the colonel said.

The paras were ordered to cut their way through the wire of the barricades and grab as many hooligans as they could, he went on.

The first shots were fired by civilians at 3.51 p.m., but the troops did not return the fire.

Four minutes later a high-velocity bullet was fired at paras cutting through the wire. A few moments later a corporal and a soldier fired at a man preparing to throw a nail bomb. The man fell and was dragged away.

During the 10-minute battle which followed, the paras fired only at identified targets.

This, the colonel said, was within the terms of the Law and the Army "Yellow Card," which specifies that shots may

only be fired in self defence, or if another person is threatened.

There were seven occasions when the troops did not return terrorist fire.

They did not use their high-velocity lead bullets until lead bullets were fired at them, Colonel Dalzell-Payne said.

But they fired rubber bullets when they went through the barrier.

"This probably explains why the uninitiated think the paratroops fired first," he said.

But there is a marked difference in the reports of guns firing bullets and guns firing rubber bullets."

'DANGER ON THE MARCH'

THE ban on processions in Ulster must be respected by all who want to avoid further tragedies, the Stormont Government said last night.

A statement issued after a special Cabinet meeting said that the ban, which had been imposed in the interests of the whole community, would be "maintained and enforced."

The statement went on:

"There have been many specific warnings about the consequences which can flow from defiance of the law, and as recently as Saturday a Joint Army-RUC statement pointed out that 'attempted marches often end in violence which must have been foreseen by the organisers and clearly responsibility for this violence and the conse-

quences of it must rest fairly and squarely on the shoulders of those who encourage people to break the law."

The Civil Rights Association is planning another march in defiance of the Ulster Government's ban in the border town of Newry, Co. Down, on Sunday.

The Ulster Government said that it fully supported

the Westminster decision to hold an inquiry into the Londonderry shootings.

● In Belfast last night a top IRA man was arrested as he stepped from a ferry from Scotland.

The IRA officer, with another man, was recognised boarding the ship. A radio message was flashed to Belfast.



was to blame?

piled out of their vehicles, many ran forward to make arrests, but others rushed to the street corners. It was these men, perhaps 20 in all, who opened fire with their rifles. I saw three men fall to the ground...

'Army snipers could be seen firing continuously towards the central Bogside streets and at one stage a lone Army sniper on a street corner fired two shots towards me as I poked my head around a corner. One shot chipped a large chunk of masonry from a wall behind me.'

But even after Bloody Sunday, when the Army version of what had happened was flatly contradicted by everybody who was there - except the Army - the media insisted on 'balancing' their follow-up coverage. 'Was the Army to blame for Bloody Sunday?' asked the Mirror on the Tuesday - and recorded two verdicts across its centre spread: 'GUILTY - Bogside accuses troops' and 'NOT GUILTY - "Four of the dead were wanted men".' And This Week on the Thursday 'balanced' an eye-witness account by a Welsh ex-soldier - with denials by the Paratroopers themselves.

This should not have surprised anybody who works in journalism or is in the habit of comparing what appears in the papers or is broadcast on TV or radio with what actually happens. And, above all, it certainly would not have surprised the working-class Catholics of Northern Ireland.

One of them, Mrs Groves, of 79 Tullymore Gardens, Andersonstown, Belfast, doesn't get to see television or the papers nowadays: she lost the sight of both her eyes when a Paratrooper fired a rubber bullet into her face at point-blank range.

The incident happened on the morning of 4 November, 1971. A military search was in progress in her area. One group of soldiers had completed their work and left. Then the Paras moved in.

Mrs Groves opened her window. She was told by a Paratrooper to 'close your fucking window'. She did not. She was then shot in the face. The rubber bullet collapsed the bridge of her nose and blinded her for life.

Many Catholics listening to their radio sets afterwards heard an Army voice say on a walkie-talkie: 'I hope we killed the cunt.' But the incident was not reported in Britain: the photograph on the inside cover was sensational enough for the

British press - who were at the time busy publishing pictures of tarring and feathering - but it showed an atrocity committed by the wrong side.

The list of Army atrocities similarly not reported or distorted by the British media includes:

Bernard Watt, 28, and James Saunders, 19 both shot and killed on 6 February, 1971 in Belfast

As Private Eye revealed, the papers got their 'information' that the two men were members of the IRA direct from an Army hand-out. 'Watt, an unemployed labourer from Hooker Street, Belfast was neither a member of the IRA nor of any political party. Saunders was never a member of any wing of the IRA.

'Watt was shot down after he had joined a crowd of rioters. He had no weapons except stones. Saunders had been engaged in an unreported fight between Protestants and Catholics in Louisa Street. He too had no weapon except stones, and was hit by an Army bullet when the Army joined in on the Protestant side.

'He fell, wounded in the chest, at the junction between Louisa Street and Glenview Street and dragged himself to Mayfair Street where he was picked up by a Knights of Malta ambulance. The Army, which had complete control of movement in the streets at the time, kept the ambulance from moving out of the area for half an hour, at the end of which Saunders died.'

Seamus Cusack and Desmond Beatty shot and killed on 8 July, 1971 in Derry

As Eamonn McCann wrote in his pamphlet The British Press and Northern Ireland 'There were numerous civilian eye witnesses to each killing and these were unanimous that neither was armed. Yet a number of papers quite automatically reported an Army press statement as straight news.'

William McKavanagh shot and killed on 11 August, 1971 in Belfast

McKavanagh was described by the British press as a 'gunman' - which is what the Army said he was. An Irish reporter later put a different story to an Army press officer who replied: 'There was a lot of confusion

about that night. In fact there was no sniper shot on Inglis's factory, that is correct.' No British newspaper printed this statement.

There are a few examples - by no means an exhaustive list. As Eamonn McCann wrote in the introduction to his pamphlet, 'The real, sustained and systematic distortion began when British soldiers came onto the streets and by the middle of 1970, when the troops were in almost constant conflict with Catholic working-class neighbourhoods, most papers had in effect stopped carrying the news. They were vehicles for propaganda. Some incidents were ignored. Others were invented. Half-truths were presented as hard fact.

'As far as the British press was concerned the soldiers could do no wrong. Residents of Catholic working-class areas in Belfast and Derry could see rubber bullets being fired at point-blank range, the indiscriminate batoning of bystanders and rioters alike, men being seized and kicked unconscious and then let go. As time went on and weaponry escalated some witnessed the reckless use of firearms, the casual killing of unarmed people, sometimes at a range of a few yards.

'They experienced the offensive arrogance of soldiers on patrol, the constant barrage of insult and obscenity - and in the British press they read of Tommy's endless patience under intense provocation, of his restraint in the face of ferocious attack, his gentlemanly demeanour in most difficult circumstances.

'The real, sustained and systematic distortion began when British soldiers came onto the streets' - but long before then the British press had been hard at work covering up for Stormont and Westminster. In 1969 Monica Foot and Neil Lyndon wrote a report for the Free Communications Group on Northern Ireland press coverage, concentrating on the events of 12-15 August, 1969. The report was not published by the FCG but a cut version of it appeared in Ink on 7 January, 1971.

'On the night of 14 August Patrick Rooney was murdered in his Belfast home - killed by a bullet which was travelling in a straight line waist high to a man. Only the police and the B specials had loaded high-velocity rifles in the streets. The Times reported the death next day - but made no attempt to say who fired the fatal shot. What it did say was that the police

were trying 'to trace the parents' of Patrick Rooney who were with him when he was shot.

'Few papers showed any interest in the street fighting and atrocity in Belfast during 15 August,' says the report. It calls the 1969 Ulster coverage 'a collation of half-lies, distortions and evasions'.

The Guardian published a story on 15 August 1969 from 'Our Man in Front Line of Siege'. He was not there because he'd gone to the riot - but because the riot had come to him: a petrol bomb was thrown through the window of the City Hotel, Derry and stones followed. As the authors of the report observe, 'Journalists are an idle bunch. They were virtually all inside the City Hotel. Their day's work done, their copy filed, they showed small interest in what was going on down the road.'

Compare this with the account of an INSIDE STORY correspondent who spent a week in Belfast late in 1971: 'In a war zone one expects to find reporters and camera crews - at least I did - but there was none to be found. In all the time I was there I didn't come into contact with a single one. So I started asking around. "Didn't you know? They don't come round here much these days," they said, smiling at my ignorance.

'A little investigation led me to the luxurious Europa Hotel in the city centre. There they sip their drinks and wait half-heartedly for news of the next incident when they make the quick phone call to Army HQ for the inevitable statement on who bombed/shot whom.

'As I boarded the plane to take me home to London, there they were again in their mohair suits and Austin Reed fur coats, puffing cigars - looking rather like American businessmen on the way back from a successful sales conference in Las Vegas. They were comparing notes on the food and service at the Europa: obviously they'd had a pleasant trip - though perhaps the drive to the airport was the slightest bit uncomfortable with all those soldiers lining the Crumlin Road.'

On 15 October, 1971 the Sunday Times published a 'scoop' story on the torture of internees. This was the first the British public had heard of torture, though it had been common knowledge in Ireland for nearly two months.

Some of the Sunday Times statements had

IRA launch fund-raising campaign in Britain and tell factory workers . .

'KILL A BRITISH SOLDIER'

By **NICK DAVIES** and
STANLEY BONNETT

THE IRA has launched a massive fund-raising campaign among factory workers in England.

Trade unionists are being urged to seek support for the campaign in factories throughout the country.

At some meetings workers have been called upon to take violent action.

Release

The task they are set: "Do a good deed for the day—kill a British soldier."

The campaign's aims are to fight for the release of all internees in Ulster, and the withdrawal of British troops from the province.

Its leaders charge that atrocities are being committed by British troops and that internees are being tortured—accusations which have already been officially denied.

Scotland Yard are keeping a close watch on developments, and in London last night Special Branch officers were interviewing IRA sympathisers involved in the propaganda drive.

It was the introduction of internment on August 9 which led to the setting-up of the campaign, run by the Anti-Internment League.

The League's national organiser is



John Gray . . . He is leading the campaign against internment.

25-year-old John Gray, a Belfast and Oxford graduate.

He claims the support of both the Official and Provisional wings of the IRA.

Mr. Gray said yesterday: "I am not a member of either the military or political branch of the IRA, but we are working with them in a united front."

"We have the active support of the International Socialists, the International Marxists, the Northern Ireland Civil Rights' Association and the Northern Ireland People's Democracy, a left-wing movement."

"Many branches of the British

Communist Party are also with us in our struggle."

Mr. Gray estimates that the league has printed and distributed 380,000 leaflets and 15,000 posters.

More than 300 meetings have been held throughout Britain, and active branches have been set up in Birmingham, Newcastle upon Tyne, Southampton, St. Albans, Leicester, Coventry, Cardiff, Hayward's Heath in Sussex and many London boroughs.

It is at these meetings, attended by up to 500 people, that violence against British soldiers has been openly advocated.

Horrified

Some people have been horrified by these appeals, and amazed at the reaction of the audiences.

Speakers tell of "atrocities" and "torture" committed by British troops, and call for the killing of British soldiers.

Often the audience claps and cheers. At every meeting there is a collection which, the organisers say, is for the families of men interned in Ulster.

In a factory in the London area of Acton twenty-five workers have agreed to "adopt" three Ulster internees.

Mr. Gray said: "The workers are sending them parcels of books, cigarettes and food—and are getting letters back from them."

"The letters are not heavily censored and are very useful for propaganda purposes."

Mr. Gray denied that any money raised at meetings in England had gone to buy arms or ammunition.

He said: "That would be impossible. But we can get money. When we wanted money for something this week I was able to raise £100 in three days."

been taken by the Association for Legal Justice in Belfast and distributed to the press by 20 August. By the end of the month these accounts had been published in Irish newspapers. In the first week of September all British papers - including the Sunday Times - were sent a 10-page dossier on torture produced by the Anti-Internment League.

The Sunday Times has since won a special award for its reporting of events in Northern Ireland. Which is rather like giving the world heavyweight championship to a man with one hand firmly held behind his back - when everybody else refuses to use either hand.

The Anti-Internment League in Britain has had its fair share of press distortion, particularly from the Daily Mirror. As Seven Days reported on 5 January, the Mirror's front page story on 17 December - and the follow-up next day - consisted mainly of sensationalist lies and trivial errors of detail.

After the first article Gordon Lennox (incidentally, also the subject of the Seven Days Aden torture story) phoned the Mirror, discussed its report with Nick Davies, one of the men who'd written it, and described an AIL meeting he'd been to in Notting Hill. Lennox was understandably astounded when the following day's Mirror carried the account by Davies of the Notting Hill meeting. It was not just that it was wholly inaccurate but Davies had specifically told Lennox that he had not been there.

Since then the matter has been reported to the Press Council - and on these grounds the Mirror has refused to comment. However, as Seven Days observes, 'If the matter was "sub judice" it is surprising that two Mirror men visited Lennox, took him to the pub and tried to persuade him to drop his allegations ...'

British TV and radio have distorted events in Northern Ireland in just the same way as the press. It's now common knowledge that the BBC imposed a ban on interviews with the IRA in April; that the BBC refused to mention the torture of internees until after the Sunday Times story had been denied by Faulkner; that even then the BBC would not permit interviews with priests or doctors who could corroborate the accounts of internees; that programmes as a whole have had to show 'the BBC's detestation of terrorism'.

BBC coverage in Northern Ireland

LETTER TWO

An open discussion for BBC News and Current Affairs Staff at

THE COMMITTEE ROOMS
OLD TOWN HALL
FULHAM BROADWAY
LONDON S.W.6
at 8 o'clock
on Monday January 10

We believe that the BBC's high standards should prevail in Ulster as they do in every other part of the world. We in the BBC must resist any attempt to censor or hold back news and current affairs items.

Hardly anybody from
the BBC turned up for this meeting

The New Statesman on 31 December 1971 published a long, anonymous piece, obviously written by someone inside the BBC, which gave numerous examples of the censorship and distortion of news. A few weeks before Private Eye had shown - with extensive quotation from the minutes of the BBC News and Current Affairs meetings - how censorship is applied.

The meetings are chaired by the editor of News and Current Affairs, Desmond Taylor, an Ulsterman and a strong Unionist 'not unsympathetic to the Orange Order'. BBC stories on Ireland are checked by Waldo Maguire, the Controller of BBC Northern Ireland, who is also a Unionist. And in the summer of 1971 the meetings were attended by Martin Wallace, a third Unionist, specially brought over from BBC Belfast to 'oversee' Irish programmes.

Meanwhile, over at ITV, Brum Henderson, managing director of Ulster TV, is not only himself a Unionist: his brother, Captain Bill, is chairman of the Unionist Party Publicity Office. Ulster TV shows only those current affairs programmes which will not offend the Brothers Henderson. And on the Guardian the deputy editor, John Cole, is a staunch Unionist best known

BBC coverage in Northern Ireland: Call for a work ban by BBC staff sent to Northern Ireland To take effect after January 10

Producers, reporters and technicians are meeting increasing pressure to hold back or censor news and current affairs items from Northern Ireland. The integrity of journalists trying to do a difficult job is being openly challenged. Pressure is applied in a variety of ways. We mention just some of them.

- 1 Programmes are refusing to make items they feel will not get on the air because of pressure from outside and within the BBC.
- 2 Programmes are refusing to put out material produced by BBC producers and reporters sent to Northern Ireland.
- 3 Pressure comes from heads of departments in BBC Northern Ireland and in England who now openly act as censors. We recognise that they are subject to pressures to censor programmes but we demand this should be resisted strongly.
- 4 There is now an 'unofficial' list of reporters and producers who are now banned from working in Northern Ireland. Some have been told they are not 'welcome' because of the 'controversial' nature of programmes they have been responsible for in the past.
- 5 BBC Northern Ireland is now withdrawing permission for reporters and producers to talk with some civil rights leaders and some Roman Catholic priests. Presumably it is felt by Broadcasting House Belfast, that any Ulster Catholic must be an IRA supporter. We also question strongly the open ban on interviewing IRA leaders, who we feel, must have some contribution to make about future developments within Northern Ireland.
6. There is pressure on producers and reporters who are sometimes made to feel they may lose their jobs if they make 'controversial' items even though they are of legitimate concern.
- 7 Several news and current affairs programmes are holding material that has not been shown. Reasons given for this are usually that the material could offend various interests inside Northern Ireland.

Reporters and producers are not biased against any side in the complex Ulster situation. We demand only that we are allowed to work in an open and free manner, disciplined by normal journalistic and BBC standards. We emphasise that increasing censorship is not just being exercised within the BBC; Independent Television and the Press are also experiencing the corrupting and self-defeating hand of censorship.

We are calling for a total ban on BBC staff visiting Northern Ireland if BBC censorship and pressures are not lifted immediately. We have the support of an increasing number of like-minded people within the BBC. We believe that the ban should take effect from Monday January 10 1972 if our demands are not met. Naturally we hope that the ban will not be necessary.

A meeting in London the venue to be announced later—will take place at 8 o'clock on January 10.

We have not signed this letter for reasons outlined in paragraph six. We are certain that you will be the first to understand our anonymity.

This call for a work ban, sent out before the letter on the previous page, was a flop

outside the paper for editing O'Neill's speeches - and inside it for ensuring that it expresses his views.

It was in fact ITV that produced the first signs of concerted opposition to this wholesale management of news. When South of the Border a Granada TV film on Ireland made by World in Action was banned by the ITA - at first merely on the basis of a written report - the Granada journalists took the initiative and called a protest meeting at the ICA on 22 November, 1971.

They were also worried by the general threat of external censorship: Maudling was seeing both Hill of the BBC and Aylestone of the ITA around this time 'to inform them of the concern of some Conservative MPs about Northern Ireland coverage'. The meeting was attended by some 200 people. Most of it was taken up with accounts of how the news was already distorted and suppressed inside newspapers, the BBC and the 'independent' TV companies - but the new threat of direct interference from the government ensured that the word 'censorship' would be used in all resolutions on the subject from now on.

The ICA meeting deplored 'the intensifying censorship in the television, radio and press coverage of events in Ireland' and added: 'We pledge ourselves to oppose it.' How far has this opposition - promised with such emotional fervour - actually got? How much has the 'censorship' of the media been reduced by the efforts of journalists?

Sadly, the answer must be: not at all.

It's quite true that a number of resolutions have been passed in the chapels, shops and branches of the National Union of Journalists, the Association of Cinematograph, Television and Allied Technicians and the Association of Broadcasting Staff; that the Federation of Broadcasting Unions has written to the BBC and the ITA; that an NUJ delegation has been to see the Newspaper Proprietors' Association.

It's also true that on the Guardian a group of journalists wrote to the editor suggesting that they meet him to discuss the paper's editorial policy on Ireland. The editor, Alistair Hetherington, replied that he and his senior colleagues knew the situation in Ireland well enough and saw no need for consultation with journalists.

And it's true that in the BBC an anonymous group called for a work ban from 10 January and then organised 'an open

discussion for BBC news and current affairs staff' in Fulham Town Hall that night. There was no work ban and hardly anybody from the BBC turned up for the meeting.

Between 22 November and mid-February there has been no meeting of those who came together at the ICA. The two groups which might have been expected to take the initiative - the Free Communications Group and the 'rank and file' of the NUJ, which had a conference in Manchester on 20 November only two days before the ICA meeting - have not called a further meeting.

Which leaves us with the unions - or rather their executives. A protest meeting, officially sponsored by the NUJ and the ACTT, was half-organised - and then called off - in mid-January. Now the position is that a meeting will be held if and when there's a new 'incident'. Presumably that means: if and when the editor of the Daily Express is arrested and jailed. Which is unlikely.

For, as has occasionally been pointed out, official censorship is not the main enemy: the main enemy is the day-to-day management of news from Ireland and the self-censorship of everybody involved in the news and current affairs process, including sub-editors and reporters on the ground. The struggle against this enemy is unlikely to appeal to the executives of journalists' unions: they are disinclined to risk their successful collaboration with management - and their own jobs - by adopting a radical political role.

Lower down the hierarchy there are weaknesses too: one resolution recently passed by the London Radio and TV Branch of the NUJ condemns suggestions that BBC staff have 'conspired to censor news from the province (of Ulster) or have deliberately slanted TV and radio news or current affairs output to favour one side or the other'.

And even in the heady atmosphere of that original ICA meeting there were clear signs that the anti-censorship campaign lacked support in vital areas. No one from a mass circulation Sunday or daily rose to attack the policy of his paper. And Alan Brien of the Sunday Times and Andrew Wilson of the Observer assumed in their complacent liberal way that the trouble was all in radio and TV: their newspapers were doing a grand job on Ireland.

Finally - as Bernard Falk of 24 Hours said at the time - 'Journalists are the

worst trade unionists. We've no guts and we don't speak with one voice - how many of you would come out and support me if I got the sack tomorrow?'

On the morning of Derry's Bloody Sunday the Sunday Times published a thoughtful piece by Murray Sayle on the censorship of reports of the India-Pakistan war. He quoted a Pakistani PRO - 'But British television accepts censorship in Ulster. That's your war, this is ours' - and concluded: 'I am ashamed to say I had no answer to that one.'

Had Murray Sayle added that the British press - including his own newspaper - also accepted that it had a part to play in the Ulster war effort, the Sunday Times subs would certainly have proved the point by deleting the extra bit. But further proof was not far away.

By the week after the Derry Massacre a team of Sunday Times reporters - led by the tireless Murray Sayle - had assembled evidence that for weeks before the shooting the Army had planned to provoke a confrontation with the IRA. The plan was that rubber bullets would be fired at the crowd and that, when the IRA started shooting back, the Paratroopers would be ready for a shoot-out with the gunmen. When the IRA did not react and open fire, the Paratroopers opened up anyway - and killed 13 unarmed men.

The Sunday Times of 6 February did not include this report: the editor, Harold Evans, said that it would be a breach of the Tribunals of Inquiry (Evidence) Act 1921, which governs Lord Widgery's inquiry. There followed, according to one senior editorial executive, 'the worst dispute I've known in five years on the paper'. But the article was not published.

Even if it had been, it would not have removed the responsibility of the British media for what happened in Derry. For, by their sustained and systematic distortion of events in Northern Ireland, the media have encouraged Stormont, Westminster and the British Army in the belief that they can get away with - murder.

The responsibility for Bloody Sunday lies not only with Mulikner, Heath and Tuzo but with the editors and managers of the newspapers, radio and TV. And not only with them but with the journalists who - like the soldiers in Northern Ireland - have generally carried out their orders.

One man who finally quit

In the week after Bloody Sunday John O'Callaghan, who'd worked for the Guardian for 11 years, resigned. Here he explains why.

If a couple of British papers and a broadcasting channel had shared the Sunday Times' occasional scepticism about the performance of the British army in Northern Ireland the slaughter in Derry on Bloody Sunday might have been averted. It is hardly possible to believe that, if those commanding the troops knew that a section of the press would be continuing a rigorous scrutiny of their behaviour, they would have felt able to embark on the adventure that led to the death of 13 people on the Bogside streets.

It was the pressure of this reflection that caused me to resign from the Guardian. In such a newspaper's leader writing room it ought to be axiomatic that soldiers are too blunt a weapon for use on British suburban housing estates with any hope of success.

And it should have also been the Guardian's automatic posture that confronted with the instruments of state violence, virtually beyond such law as remains in Ulster, the people's only defence would be the press. If you believe only half the stories about military brutality, the failure of the press to monitor the activities of the troops more closely, and to report the feelings of the Catholic community more often remains a gross dereliction of duty.

To point up the contrast between what might have been expected from the Guardian and what actually has happened here are two quotations. David Ayerst in his official history of the Guardian says of 1916-22 that the British government 'regularly suppressed or distorted half the facts - the atrocities committed by its own servants - while giving great prominence to murdered policemen.'

'It became the prisoner of its own propaganda, and could only be freed to make peace if English people were told the truth. This truth telling was the Manchester Guardian's most important contribution to the peace making. At first the British people did not want to know

what was happening in Ireland. But when they realised what was being done, they were certain it must stop.'

Instead of pioneering the truth telling about the atrocities this time, the Guardian leaders made excuses for internment. When it became clear that premeditated atrocities were part of the internment package, the Guardian's comment on the Compton report was 'Vigorous and tough interrogation must go on. Discomfort of the kind revealed in this report leaving no physical damage cannot be weighed against the number of human lives which will be lost if the security forces do not get a continuing flow of information.'

Apart from the sickening quality of the bully's aside - 'hit them where it won't show for too long' - the military must have felt that in the light of the Guardian's previous tradition the open encouragement of vigorous and tough interrogation amounted to what one can only call a licence for mayhem.

Given that the whole institution of the Guardian was geared to this outlook it is no wonder that nobody had gone out looking for atrocities, or paid particular attention to those who claimed that they were taking place. What was sought more eagerly was material confirming the evil of the IRA, and supporting the proposition that the tough and vigorous methods by 15,000 British soldiers were bringing the victory so insistently predicted and unambiguously demanded in the leader columns.

Only when this policy had become bankrupt, even to those seeking to endorse it in Northern Ireland, did the reporting move unapologetically into the mainstream which events dictated. This can be said to date from a week before Bloody Sunday. Which was too late. But although the Guardian has been bad, particularly in view of expectations, the press as a whole has done badly.

The press corps in Ulster lives and works very largely from the Europa Hotel which is the newest and costliest in Belfast: its clientele has been almost exclusively journalists for the crisis period. This lack of individual offices in the city and the need to concentrate in one place has given the Army public relations permanent access to newspapermen - it makes the job of getting the message across easier for the Army, and reduces the need

for a journalist to leave a warm armchair to interview screaming harridans in some blacked out Catholic ghetto on a rainy night.

Overall the spirit of the journalistic operation is exactly that which prevailed in the Federal Palace Hotel, Lagos, during the Nigerian war. 'The natives are fighting it out ... not our responsibility ... can't get near the front ... have to put out what the Army says in the daily check call to military headquarters.'

Intense competition for readers among newspapers has made them less rather than more adventurous. It matters more - for a weary reporter's peace of mind - that all the stories filed should be the same, rather than that they should be right. When the executives pore - as they do - over the first editions of all the rival papers, life is easier if everybody has sent over much the same account of events.

Various components - reliance on Army PR, the association with previous colonial wars, the need not to be scooped - have resulted in undistinguished writing from Ireland (the Sunday Times excepted). There is no 'other side' in the Irish crisis: the British press had a duty to give as much coverage to the reactions of Catholics (and Protestants and soldiers, for that matter) as it has done to Army bulletins.

We get now to what alternative leader policy the Guardian might be expected to have adopted. Its central concern would have been to insist that in 50 years Stormont has managed a grossly unjust society and one that cannot pay its way. This fundamentally affects any 'right' Unionists can claim from their numerical superiority. Secondly, the alternative policy should have called the backlash bluff from the start. Not by daring the Protestants, or condoning the IRA, but by examining and re-examining the fears that give sustenance to the backlash - fears of Rome Rule.

It would be found, I think, that these fears lack any kind of substance. Where they have the shadow of substance every pressure to remove that shadow from the Republic's constitution should have been urged. This is the central cancer that ought to have been attacked. The IRA, violence, civil disobedience, and Bloody Sunday are consequences only of this evil at the core.

Deserters in Dublin
TWO young British soldiers who deserted in Belfast on Tuesday said at a Dublin Press conference yesterday they disagreed with what the Army was doing in Ulster. Private Colin Demet, 19, of Manchester and Michael Harkins, 22, of Liverpool, both of the Queen's Lancashire Regiment, said they had handed their weapons to the IRA, who had arranged their journey to Eire, but they had no intention of joining the movement.

How many more?



Although they're ever anxious to tell you the latest news about high recruitment figures, the men in the Ministry of Defence public relations office don't exactly have at their fingertips the latest figures on desertions from the services or absences without leave. The only figures available at the time of writing were: from March 1970 to March 1971 486 men left the Navy and 506 came back (so the Navy actually gained); 1679 left the Army and 1483 came back; 485 left the Royal Air Force and 456 came back.

The National Council for Civil Liberties has for years been campaigning against the regulations which compel boy servicemen

to serve long engagements once they've signed on. Although there were some changes last year, these affected only new recruits. 'Cases of servicemen writing to us are still coming in at the same rate as before,' say the NCCL. 'The difference is that more are deserters rather than writing from within the services.'

As more people - civilians and soldiers - are killed in Ireland and as the campaign to withdraw the troops intensifies, disaffection in the Army will inevitably increase. A leafleter recently in Belfast reports: 'The soldiers I personally met wanted to be as far away from Northern Ireland as possible.'



Leafleters in Belfast: left, the city centre; above, inside an Army barracks

To
**BRITISH CIVILIANS
 AND SOLDIERS**

**AN APPEAL TO END REPRESSION AND
 BLOODSHED IN NORTHERN IRELAND**

It is time to recognise that there can be no military solution to the problems of Northern Ireland. Every killing, whoever commits it, causes more anguish and bitterness. Suspicion and tension between the two communities increases. The guns and weapons of the British Army, of the Ulster Volunteer Force, of the Irish Republican Armies, cannot bring peace.

But Britain has a particular responsibility for the crisis. We cannot claim to have all the answers to the terrible and complex problems that exist in Northern Ireland. We do, however, urge that certain steps should be taken.

1. End internment and release all political prisoners
 Internment is unjust. Innocent people have been arrested and held for long periods of time. Even the Compton Commission established that such hours at a time with sacks over their heads and a continuous hissing noise, and a diet of bread and butter.

Below we publish two statements by reluctant servicemen, one of whom served in Ireland, but first - an interview with an ex-soldier just back from there.

Lance Corporal John Woodman, who was born and brought up in Blackpool, where his family still live, signed on in 1963 at the age of 18 for nine years in the Army. He served in Germany and Libya, went on an initiative trip to Expo 67 in Montreal and was posted to Northern Ireland in the spring of 1969 - a few months before the Army 'went in'. He started a regimental newspaper and as a photographer saw a lot of action. In this interview he describes the Northern Ireland conflict from the soldier's point of view and says why he's glad his nine years are over.

Why did you join?

To make a break, to get away from the routine of a provincial town.

What did you expect from Army life?

Travel ... mucking around like a toy soldier, doing the things soldiers expected to do. Nobody ever joins the Army expecting to kill people. Nobody joins out of blood lust with the idea they're going to be given a gun and allowed to kill other people. They join to make a living, learn a trade, bring up a family. You don't have this conception of wielding a baton or shooting a gun. If it was war, of course, you would. But a peacetime army is just another unit.

What was Northern Ireland like when you first went there?

An easy place, a routine, humdrum existence.

And then?

I did all the things a soldier's expected to do. I was attached to a water cannon in

Belfast, I commanded scout cars on the border, I helped to man road blocks, I was in the pre-internment swoop, I trained with a riot squad.

These are about 30 strong - sniper, baton men, rubber bullet men, gas men, a photographer, officers. They're all armed and not supposed to shoot till an officer gives the order - but on the ground it's different. You train with a bunch of other soldiers acting like a mob - throwing stones. You just beat each other up.

Once when I was with a water cannon we refused to turn it on the crowd because we could see women and children - and that jet of water really lays you out.

I didn't like what was going on around me. I could see the situation deteriorating all the time. But you'd get somebody important saying the Army was winning, there was a light at the end of the tunnel - the same sort of thing you heard about Vietnam. There is no light at the end of the tunnel, there is no military solution: we weren't fighting a battle - we had no aim. Edward Kennedy wasn't all that wrong about Northern Ireland being Britain's Vietnam.

What about internment?

The Army didn't want internment. We felt it was just not productive - not justified in terms of the situation. After 9 August, when internment started, things got terribly depressing. Internment worsened things considerably.

You really took your life in your hands when you went out. You were involved 24 hours a day. You couldn't shrug off being a soldier, you couldn't shake off the knowledge that, even when you just went shopping or drinking or to the cinema, somebody might put a bullet in your back. It was an endless round of standby, patrol, confrontation, shooting.

We were only supposed to shoot according to the famous yellow cards. I've got all of them and it's interesting how they escalate...

I think in the circumstances the soldiers do act reasonably. If a gang of people is throwing stones at you, you're going to get a little antagonistic and retaliate. I had stones thrown at me in a rural town and I was incensed. And in action - a baton in your hand or firing rubber bullets - you obey instructions.

Did anybody question the orders?

We didn't question our orders. This is Army training - no, I don't think it's brainwashing. Of course we talked about rights and wrongs off duty, but we didn't criticise our superiors.

We just felt bitter at being personally involved. We didn't want to appear in a British city street with batons in our hands facing civilians. We were in an intolerable position: we weren't happy doing the job we were called on to do. The whole situation brutalised everyone - soldiers, civilians: made you callous.

Hearing another soldier had got killed turned you off, made you feel sick at heart - aware that people hated you in this bit of the UK just for wearing the Queen's uniform. You got so you just shrugged off another Boggie killed.

You can't be expected - and you're not taught - to think right may be on their side. You're simply there to make people obey the law - and if you've got to baton people to keep the peace you do. Your concern is for your family, for your future, for carrying out your orders.

You feel just the same whether it's a Catholic or a Prot crowd throwing stones at you. You're in the middle. It simply doesn't matter which flag is being waved. But you do feel something - not exactly exhilaration - when an IRA man gets shot. He's the enemy: he's the man with you in his sights. The fact that he may represent a section of people isn't important.

What are your feelings now?

I'm glad to be out. I didn't like being a target for assassination. Soldiers are the real internees in Northern Ireland. They are the victims of the situation in every respect. They don't want to be there, they're not interested in taking anybody's side.

My feeling now is that the Army is only an extension of a political party. And they're all in entrenched positions - IRA, Catholics, Prots, soldiers are all brutalised.

My solution would be to pull the Army out, put in a United Nations force and scrap Stormont. At the very least the control of the Army should be transferred to Westminster where it belongs, not left at

provincial level - in the hands of the Northern Ireland Security Committee, presided over, as far as I can see, by the Prime Minister ... and the county security committees of local commanders, acting in consultation with the RUC and the UDR. They seem to decide policies on the ground.

I was 17 years old when I signed on with the Army. Since then I have discovered many aspects of Army life and policy which I do not completely agree with. I appreciate that these considerations should have been evaluated by me before I pledged myself to the services of Her Majesty - but at 17 the full significance of what lies ahead is not immediately apparent.

The situation now, as it stands, is that I have been AWOL for a period of just over three months. I am not by any means a conscientious objector. One has to fulfill a certain role however objectionable it might be, but the manner in which these duties have to be accomplished is at times revolting to me.

As a soldier I am not permitted an identity. I am a number and forced by regulations to comply with every order, whatever it might be - whether in my eyes it's right or wrong. As a human being I am entitled to express my feelings but NOT whilst I am a soldier.

Service in Ireland changed the whole complexion of things. Prior to my posting there I made repeated requests to be allowed to stay on in Germany. Verbal promises that this would be possible were given to me. When these were broken I lost what faith I had. I was on leave prior to my absence without leave and as a last resort made another request to be relieved of duty in Ireland. This too was refused me.

Being thoroughly disillusioned I reacted in the only manner available to me, by going AWOL. By doing so I hoped I could draw attention to my plight.

This soldier returned to his unit on 4

January

After being sacked from my job as a junior reporter on a nearby provincial newspaper, I decided in November 1966 that I would give the Forces a try.

I investigated all the services and chose the Royal Marines. The appeared to be the toughest and most glamorous - strong

factors in an impressionable 17 year old's mind. My father was not in agreement and refused to give his consent. This served only to strengthen my desire. So I killed six months in a railway booking office until I reached the responsible age of 17½ and was able to commit myself for the next 9½ years.

Ten days after I was old enough I arrived at Deal in Kent full of enthusiasm for my new career. 9 years didn't seem all that long and anyway I was sure to like the life. Amidst the continuous merry-go-round of drill, PT, weapon training etc I rarely paused to think of other things. Towards the end of the first three months we were told of the £20 discharge option. A few of the blokes utilised the offer, including one fellow who'd walked 50 miles on flat feet to prove his capability for the Marines. I was too keen and hardly considered the opportunity. In February 1968 I marched off the parade ground at Lympstone in Devon, a fully trained Royal Marine Commando.

Next came a four month long signals course, followed shortly by a parachute course. I was very proud and keen.

By this time it was October 1969 and life was suddenly less hectic now that I'd finished training. With the opportunity to sit back and reflect came the nagging doubt that soldiering wasn't really me. Various other factors assisted my gradual disillusionment. Promotion was a question of seniority and not merit. I had also become interested in left wing politics through an old school friend. I began to lose my positive drive and my copious enthusiasm began to wane.

Late in 1969 I was told that I would be drafted to Singapore in the following May. I like travel so I decided to wait and see if a foreign commission altered my feelings. Waiting proved difficult, my morale sank and I was in a continual state of mental conflict. I got drunk regularly and managed to acquaint myself with Plymouth courts after one drunken evening.

Singapore came and my remaining hopes of a marine career evaporated. I finally accepted that I didn't fit in the service and that I should strive to get out. Taking the plunge I requested discharge on self-betterment grounds - only to be told that no such grounds officially existed. I wanted to return to full-time

education and qualify myself for a more rewarding occupation. I tried studying whilst abroad but too many complications, not least my state of mind, prohibited any real concentration.

Soon after my initial discharge request I asked to be removed from the roster of candidates for promotion. From then on I openly displayed my dissatisfaction with service life. What really frustrated me was the authorities' refusal to recognise incompatibility as a reason for discharge. I was unable to apply for release as my grievances did not officially exist. Once I asked the doctor if I could see a psychiatrist; he saw my point but said that I'd be wasting my time. Like most of the hierarchy in the marines he could see the faults but accepted them for fear of being labelled a bad officer.

After 18 months in Singapore and Hong Kong I returned to England during November 1970. I had also applied for my discharge on compassionate grounds as my parents who were separated for various reasons were now getting divorced. This too failed.

Arrival in this country didn't change my feelings at all: in fact things became harder to tolerate. I overstayed Easter leave by three days. When I was charged and fined a mild £10 I told my company commander that I intended to repeat the offence. He considered that I was quite responsible when I joined the Marines and therefore should not complain. I didn't agree.

When that episode was over I made the greatest effort possible to try and reconcile myself to another two years in the Marines until I could buy myself out. It was the hardest thing I've ever attempted. The self-conflict that I experienced as I continually compromised is more than I can relate. The resultant effect on my personality and my social life was near-disastrous. I know that if I had continued with that course of action I would eventually have lost my own self-respect. But for the remainder of 1971 I followed that course with the inevitable self-recriminatory consequences.

On 17 December 1971 I went on Christmas leave fully intending to return and go on a month long trip abroad. But on the eve of my return I lay awake all night and decided not to report back for duty. I'd already forewarned the Marines of the possibility of this occurrence -

not least by twice writing to the Ministry of Defence via the National Council for Civil Liberties. I've also contacted my MP to no avail. Since I've been absent I've written again to the Ministry of Defence and phoned them direct. All they can do is quote the rules and advise me to return to my unit.

I believe that it is morally necessary to introduce a system whereby incompatibility is recognised as reason enough for release. If something like that were introduced I doubt that a large percentage of men would leave the forces. But there must be some way out for the person who changes his mind - and with the present youthful recruitment this is inevitable.

I intend to return to my unit tomorrow after three weeks and two days. My punishment should be not more than about a month in detention quarters. A new experience - but to what purpose? As for the future I doubt that I will be released for another year. I also doubt that I will settle down and serve it.

John Burton gave himself up on 25 January.

Charged with being absent without leave, he was not detained but fined £50.



Reluctant Marine
John Burton

Why I was sacked by the BBC

Northern Ireland is not the only issue to
have provoked political disagreement
inside the BBC during the past year. Below
is an article by Frances Howard who was
sacked last August.

A few months ago 22 members of the BBC television staff were forcefully retired. They consisted of researchers, producers and film editors, mainly employed in the Features, Documentaries, and Current Affairs departments. They were all employed on three-monthly to yearly contracts, and had worked at the Beeb for at least two

years. This system of employment by contract is standard practice. It means, amongst other things, that if a contract is not renewed redundancy payments are not required.

Each of the 22 'sacked' was just straightforwardly told in a letter from the department organiser that his contract would not be renewed - but given no actual reason other than 'You will of course appreciate that the present circumstances of the Corporation compel a fairly severe appraisal of people and staffing needs'

Despite this apparent belt-tightening in the Beeb, at least five of the sacked have already been replaced and two of the film editors were invited back because of 'a desperate shortage of staff'.

Now I doubt whether the particular circumstances of my sacking were any different from the other 21. But I did manage to extort a few words from my editor on the subject: 'You know, you get far too involved in your stories,' he said, 'it only makes for unsound editorial judgement.'

Then he finally let the cat out of the bag and told me that my politics were a bit far-out and that perhaps I let them influence my work just that little bit too much. 'You cannot let your feelings interfere with your work here,' he concluded, 'balance is absolutely essential.'

When I went on to inquire about a colleague sacked at the same time from 24 Hours, his comment was even more amusing: 'I know he's supposed to be a good film director, but why did he let his hair grow that long? You can't go around looking like that in the BBC.'

Yet another of the 22 was supposed to be guilty of 'Marxist tendencies'. He was given the boot only days after completing a highly successful series for Further Education which received rave reviews from the critics.

The truth behind the whole affair is, in fact and not unexpectedly, that it's part of the repressive backlash going on inside the disgusting organs of Auntie. What the sackings had in common was long(ish) hair with the occasional badge and a general concern that television be used realistically and truthfully to put over news and current affairs instead of using the truth to make good television. Good television usually means entertaining propaganda for the establishment.



BRITISH BROADCASTING CORPORATION

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11th August 1971

Dear Frances,

I'm very sorry to have to tell you that it seems unlikely that Current Affairs Group will be able to offer you an extension to your contract when it expires on 3rd September.

You will appreciate that the present circumstances of the Corporation compel a fairly severe appraisal of people and of staffing needs. I am sorry to have to say that we do not feel able to pursue your employment on a staff basis any longer.

I think it probable that you have a certain amount of leave outstanding. Perhaps you will let Tony Holloway know what the position is so that he can make the necessary arrangements for you to be paid.

I am sorry that I shall be on leave when you receive this letter and unable to speak to you immediately. I hope that it does not come as too great a shock, however unwelcome it may be.

Yours sincerely,

(Glynne Price)

Disaster for the NUJ

Over Northern Ireland 'militant' journalists
have so far threatened the news managers
with little more than a resolution or two:
how's the NUJ on bread-and-butter issues?

Sad but true: Your average out-of London journalist - whose daily job involves dissent - is a conformist dedicated to free enterprise. For journalists have traditionally aspired to the status of professional men ... and deplored such proletarian impertinences as strikes.

Result (for years) was a pusillanimous union leadership, therefore a lousy basic wage, therefore a general reliance on private enterprise - writing for other newspapers, agencies, TV and radio - for beer money.

But over the past three years, younger journalists have belatedly realised you don't make the boss pay up by reasoning or collaborating with him - but by collective industrial action. And a new generation of novice militants has upturned the status quo by demanding the National Union of Journalists leadership get up off its knees and fight.

The 1969 Prices and Incomes Board report on journalists' pay signposted the road ahead: shop floor bargaining - 'house agreements' - to break the grip of a miserly minimum rate. And several strong chapels of the NUJ won significant improvements.

Newspaper managements both within and without Fleet Street got the message - and counter-attacked by welding a house agreements ban on to every deal involving the minimum rate. House agreements became symbolic to the NUJ. And two important policy changes were rammed through the union's last delegate meeting.

First, new consultation machinery was set up: 'joint standing committees' covering both national and provincial newspapers, which gave the rank-and-file a voice in framing pay claims AND a few seats at the negotiating table. Second, union leaders were explicitly forbidden to accept any wages package that deepfroze house agreements.

This was the background to the critical battle for a new pay structure in the provincial press, begun last September against the Newspaper Society ... the thickest wallets and so the bloodiest minds in the industry.

It seemed, at first, that democratic belligerence was working. The provincial press lords lined up their usual propaganda - collapse of circulations, advertising and profits - and their usual strategy - procrastination. The NUJ negotiating team didn't budge.

Then some London militants produced a superbly expedient formula for industrial action that seemed to mean no journalist could lose ... selective guerilla strikes in union strongholds, backed up by a £1-per-week-per-member levy to pay strike wages.

Mandatory union meetings throughout the country turned in the provincial journalists' first-ever strike vote. And London journalists discarded their traditional indifference to the provinces and weighed in with support by word and money.

So the Newspaper Society tried solidarity-busting: an attack on the validity of the 28-days' strike notice; sporadic attempts by individual companies to settle; a whispering campaign to persuade senior staff they would lose long-service payments if they struck; public declarations - swallowed whole by national newspapers - that the NUJ front was crumbling; and, finally, an identical letter to every provincial journalist, threatening not only a lock-out but the sack for all who did not sign an anti-union pledge.

They miscalculated - for these tactics alienated the most loyal company servants ('After all my years!') and hardened up the tough printing unions ... who can of course really stop the presses. A union victory seemed certain.

And yet the final settlement of the dispute was, for the NUJ, near-disastrous. The wage rise - though the biggest ever screwed out of the Newspaper Society - was way below the original claim. There were no improved rates for juniors, no agreement over freelance feature and photography rates, no extra holidays. And on the first page was the very condition that had been specifically outlawed, a ban on house agreements.

What went wrong? The answer seems to lie partly in the psychological dynamics of the negotiating-room - which nobody has yet studied - and partly in the inexperience of the militants on the NUJ team.

After all, they were faced with a double enemy: not just the bosses, but the appeasement squad on their own side, the NUJ executive. Whatever happened (and the militants themselves don't know) the final offer was put to ballot - an invitation to grassroots waverers to opt out of striking. Which they did.

<p>Glengarnock Close all except rail mill in 1976</p>	<p>Ironmaking etc -</p>	<p>Steelmaking C. 6 x 115 ton OH furnaces - 1976</p>	<p>Primary Forming etc C. 42" Cogging Mill</p>	<p>Secor E.</p>
<p>Lanarkshire Close 1974</p>	<p>-</p>	<p>C. 6 x OH furnaces - '74</p>	<p>C. 43" Blooming Mill - 1974</p>	<p>C.</p>
<p>W. Hartlepool Close 1974</p>	<p>C. Blast furnaces - 1974 C. Coke Ovens -1974 C Sinter Machine</p>	<p>C. 5 x 360 ton OH furnaces - 1974</p>	<p>C. Slabbing Mill - 1974</p>	<p>C. C</p>
<p>Teesside: Clay Lane Cargo Fleet Close</p>	<p>C. 3 Blast furnaces - 1978 C. 2 x Blast Furnaces - 1971 C. 1 x Sinter Machine - 1971</p>	<p>C. 6 x OH furnaces -1971</p>	<p>C. 40" Cogging Mill - 1974</p>	
<p>Skinningrove Close in '71 except for section mill rolling special sections</p>	<p>C. Blast furnaces - 1970/71 C. 1 x Sinter Machine</p>	<p>C. 4 x OH furnaces -1970/71</p>	<p>C. 42" Blooming Mill -1970/71</p>	
<p>Barrow Close 1974</p>	<p>-</p>	<p>C. 1 x 25 ton arc -1974</p>	<p>C. Continuous Casting plant -1974</p>	
<p>Brymbo Close 1976</p>	<p>C. 1 x Blast Furnace - 1976</p>	<p>C. 6 Arc furnaces - 1976</p>	<p>C. 32" Cogging Mill - 1976</p>	
<p>Irlam, Warrington and Monks Hall Close 1974 (latest proposal is for closure of iron and part of steelmaking in '72/3 and remainder in '73/4)</p>	<p>C. 4 x Blast Furnaces -1974 C. Coke Ovens -1974 C. Sinter Machine -1974</p>	<p>C. 10 x OH furnaces - 1974</p>	<p>C. Cogging Mill -1974</p>	
<p>Openshaw Close 1971</p>	<p>-</p>	<p>C. 8 x Arc furnaces -1971</p>	<p>C. 28" Bloom/Sl Mill -1971</p>	
<p>Shelton</p>	<p>-</p>	<p>-</p>	<p>-</p>	

A page from the BSC Confidential Report: 'C' means

Primary Rolling etc
Billet/Bar/Rail Mill

Transfer of senis.
Blooms from Tees-
side

2 x Section Mills -'74

Light Plate Mill - '72/3
Heavy Plate Mill - 1974

[See Lackenby/
Redcar]

C. 21" Section Mill -1974
C. 32" Section & Rail Mill
- 1974

Blooms from Tees-
side.

E. 36" H Section Mill
C. 18" H Section Mill

C. No. 3 hot strip mill -'74
C. Light Section mill -'74
C. 2 x Double Duo mills -'74
C. Billet Mill - 1976

C. Heavy & Light Section
mill - 1974
C. 36" Billet Mill -1974
C. 21" Billet Mill - 1974
C. 31" stand Rod Mill -1974
C. Rod Mill (W) -1974
C. M. Section Mill (W)-1974
C. 3 x Section Mills (Monks
Hall) -1974

C. 3 x bar mills -1971
C. Sheet/Plate Mill -1971

closure by 1980-81.

Confidential steel appeal

Five months ago the New Statesman concluded an article on the effects of Common Market entry on the steel industry with the following paragraph:

'Far more significant is the (British Steel) Corporation's 1971-81 development plan, which is still shrouded in secrecy. It takes EEC entry for granted and assumes that any really major steel expansion will have to be sited in the South East of England or in North West Europe. For Scotland, Wales, the North West and other established steelmaking areas, the plan postulates a rate of redundancy that can only be described as horrific. The plan has not yet been shown to even the most biddable trade union officials. If, when they see it, any of them are still in favour of EEC entry, they will need to have their heads examined.'

Recently a copy of a BSC Confidential Report on plant closures in the steel industry came - as they say - into our hands. Could it be that this document has something to do with the BSC's secret development

plan? The redundancies proposed are certainly as 'horrific' as the New Statesman suggests. Below we outline some of the implications of the Confidential Report, which is in tabular form - see left.

The following BSC works will still be operating in 1980-81:

Cleveland
Consett & Jarrow
Craigneuk
Hallside
Lackenby/Redcar
Llanwern
Park Gate
Port Talbot/Trostre/Velindre
Ravenscraig
River Don
Scunthorpe
Shelton
Stockbridge
Tinsley Park

TO BE KEPT OPEN

The following BSC works will close between now and 1980-81:

Bilston, Wolverhampton, Birchley
Barrow
Clydebridge & Clyde Iron
Clydesdale
Corby
Dalzell
Brymbo
East Moors
Ebbw Vale
Glengarnock
Grimethorpe
Irlam, Warrington & Monks Hall
Lanarkshire
Openshaw
Panteg
Shotton
Skinningrove
Steel, Peech & Tozer
Teesside Cargo Fleet
Teesside Clay Lane
Tollcross
Trafford Park
West Hartlepool
Workington

CLOSED BY 1980-81

In its 1970-71 annual report the BSC said of its General Steels Division - whose main areas of concentration are Scunthorpe, Teesside and Scotland - that there were 'considerable operational problems deriving in some measure from the Division's heritage of old plant. 70% of the Division's crude steel, for example, came from open hearth furnaces, with operating costs substantially above those of modern basic oxygen plants... The main contribution

to improved costs will come from the concentration of production on the most efficient units.'

With the present state of the world steel market, including the closure of the United States to Japanese steel - which now seeks substitute outlets in Europe - all steel-makers are thinking in terms of drastic cuts and re-organisations in production. The British steel industry also has the EEC's pricing rules to adjust to.

The logic of steel industry development in Europe and Japan is that bulk, crude steelmaking should shift from traditional ore-field and industry-based sites to coastal regions - and into very large units using basic oxygen processes. Small scale units of production, based on inland sites, using older and considerably slower processes are not the order of the day. In fact they are doomed.

In Europe De Wendel have announced that they will shift their production of steel from the Lorraine to Fos, near Marseilles, on the Mediterranean Coast. In Britain the same ruthless policies are also being applied - as the BSC Confidential Report makes clear.

In Scotland, for example, practically all steelmaking is open hearth. The only LD* plant is Ravenscraig, which is part of the BSC Strip Mills Division. According to the Report the Clydebridge and Clyde Iron, Clydesdale, Dalzell, Glengarnock, Lanarkshire and Tollcross works will ALL close. And, with only Ravenscraig remaining open, crude steel will in fact be imported from other steelmaking areas in the UK.

What will all this mean in human and political terms? In the current year 20,000 steel workers are being given notice of closures. In 1969 the BSC was talking in terms of cutting back about 50,000 of its labour force. The figure over the next 10 years must be at least twice that.

In 1969 it looked as though redundant steel workers might be taken on in production somewhere else. Today nobody can pretend that this is likely. The workers being made redundant by BSC are faced with a desperate situation - not least because by their nature many of the redundancies are hitting areas already badly hit by unemployment.

* LD - Linz/Donau, a modern steel-making process

Could it happen here?

One of INSIDE STORY'S industrial correspondents reports on what the German bosses can teach Mr Robert Carr.

Mr Robert Carr, the Secretary for Employment, is due this month to visit West Germany, Holland and Brussels to sample industrial relations within the Common Market. And one of the Continental delicacies which he will be offered a taste of is the system of worker participation which operates in West Germany.

Could it be imported to Britain? Could it be adapted to operate here? These are the questions which will be intriguing Mr Carr.

For the system is far from what is envisaged as workers' control. The simple fact is that in Germany co-determination has been so turned round on the worker that, while he has a measure of say in the management of his firm, the hands of his union are securely tied.

This is shown by the recent metal workers strike - the first stoppage the industry

has had for nine years - when the workers went back with an increase of just seven per cent, one per cent more than the increase in the cost of living.

When one considers that the metal workers' union IG Metall is the biggest in the Western world with a membership of 2.2 million, it becomes clear that, size for size, West Germany's trade unions are vastly weaker than their counterparts in this country.

The reason for this is all too clear - for much of the power of unions in Germany has been handed over to works councils under Germany's Works Constitution Act. Yet the councils, as bargaining units, have not made much use of the rights they have.

German management is unable to dismiss a worker without prior agreement of the works council, whose members are elected from the shop floor. If the council objects, the worker must be retained on the payroll until all procedures of labour courts are exhausted, a process which can last two or three years.

On hiring, works councils have the right to insist that a post be filled from inside the company and not from outside - provided that the right man is available from within. They must also be consulted on promotion.

If major redundancies are proposed, the works council must be consulted, and a 'social plan' agreed. This provides for redundancy payments, retraining and resettlement. If it is not agreed by the council then the issue goes to outside arbitration.

Councils also have the power to object to job-evaluation schemes and new piece-work agreements, again with the right to resort to arbitration if no deal can be reached. It's clear that most of the council's powers relate to personnel policy, matters which any good shop steward in Britain can easily handle. Since they are not the prerogative of the unions in Germany, the unions' only real function is to bargain on pay - and this is done at national level.

It is the old policy of divide and rule: for German management it has worked satisfactorily for years. As a line of communication, the works council is ideal from management's point of view, providing a ready-made channel for influencing the plant rank and file.

And German workers have accepted this state of affairs. A German Ministry of

Labour official says: 'German labour law suits the character of the Germans. You cannot export the system. For example, if you cross the country to France, you meet a different type of worker and you need a certain tradition before this type of law can work.'

In Germany, you see, every worker feels a middle class man and not a member of the proletariat. On Sunday, walking down the street, it is impossible to tell who is a doctor, dentist, lawyer, labourer or factory worker.'

Ideologically and theoretically it is all wrong. But it succeeds in Germany where work is the opium of the masses and trade unions are regarded by two thirds of the labour force as organisations they just don't want to know. At the same time, it is clear that there has been a deliberate campaign in Germany by both Government and employers to encourage this attitude of mind.

By means of laws to introduce compulsory profit sharing, special savings agreements, housing subsidies and such like, they have, if not exactly feather-bedded the worker, at least cushioned him financially. What they have achieved, in fact, is a nation of Little Capitalists.

But there are now distinct signs that this - for the employers - cosy state of affairs may be about to undergo slow but significant change. Two things are worrying the German employers confederation.

First of all there is concern that the revised Works Constitution Act, which passed through the Upper House last December, may pave the way towards a real measure of workers' control. They fear that, if Herr Brandt's Social Democrat party obtains an overall majority in next year's elections, unions could well succeed in their aim of achieving parity of representation on the supervisory boards of directors of joint stock companies.

At the moment, this further aspect of workers' participation is carefully controlled by management in most cases so that workers can only nominate one third of the directors of supervisory boards. In three industries, however - coal, iron and steel - there is parity of representation, and the unions would like to see this extended.

Naturally, this is something which the German employers' confederation oppose: 'We don't think extension of parity is possible

or desirable. It is a power question and not to the advantage of the individual worker. We believe that the shareholder has the right to decide who runs the company, as he has to bear the financial consequence, but we are prepared to go along with co-determination on the old basis - that is a good partnership.' Quite so.

But there is also another and, to the employers, equally ominous threat developing in the background. It is the growing feeling of militancy apparent in some quarters - a feeling expressed by some members of the IG Metall executive who say that there will have to be more and more strikes in future if the union is to achieve its aims. Coming after an era during which there has been a remarkable absence of even unofficial strikes, this is revolutionary thinking indeed for a German union.

And since the Communist Party was legally recognised two years ago - on the principle, one feels, that the enemy you can define is easier to deal with than the one in the shadows - employers have been alarmed by its increasing industrial strength. So much so that the employers confederation have set up a special 'anti-subversive' department to identify and keep watch on industrial trouble-makers - a sort of civilian Special Branch.

So far, they say, this undercover squad has had great success. 'We have had two instances recently at Opel and Mercedes factories where Communist agents moved in to invite workers along to outside meetings,' said an employers confederation spokesman.

'They also tried to stop a company assembly and distributed foreign language leaflets, for there are numbers of foreign workers at both plants. In all cases they were stopped in time, but we fear things will get worse. However, we are watching the situation.'

There are now 500 Communist works papers circulating in Germany, with a readership between them of two million. The employers are hitting back with their own propaganda campaign through house journals and the press to persuade the workers that they are far better off at work than on strike.

And the works councils are an important weapon in spreading that propaganda, making sure that it gets down to the shop-floor worker. They are useful tools for the employers, an observation which Mr Carr is sure to appreciate during his tour ...

Inside two South London Schools...

In recent months the newspapers have given a lot of space to 'violence in schools' - to incidents in which secondary school children have attacked one another or their teachers and to 'surveys' which have purported to ask the question: how violent are our schools?

The National Association of Schoolmasters has used the violence issue to attack the raising of the school leaving age. And various other people - including groups of grammar school parents opposed to comprehensives - have added their voices to the general outcry.

It has generally been taken for granted that 'violence in schools' means the children attacking one another or their teachers. But, as is clear to anyone who has ever taught in a secondary school - or attended one for that matter - violence does not start with the pupils.

Caning and other forms of physical punishment are still widely used by teachers. But that is not all - and it is not even the main point. For both the children and their teachers are victims of an education system which is geared at its best to produce obedient exam fodder - and at its worst to contain in slum conditions the future unemployed. To condemn acts of violence by children without questioning the daily violence that is done to them is gross hypocrisy.

Below we publish two articles about secondary schools in South London. The first is an interview with a teacher in a boys' grammar school.

Is there more violence in schools now than there used to be?

I remember at school fights taking place, boys being injured in the eye - I remember being injured in the eye myself in a fight. I remember as a junior school child being frightened to death of a small group of secondary boys who waited outside the school gates to do us.

Caning went on in my grammar school. I remember quite distinctly as a second former being hit across the head for talk-

ing going up the stairs and my head being banged into the tiled wall. Quite definitely I remember that - and hated that teacher from then on. Boys were thumped in the back and one member of staff used to bring a coat hanger into school.

What about the grammar school where you now teach?

There have been incidents ever since I first went there - things like 'We're going to meet so-and-so's gang at 4 o'clock and do 'em up'. This has usually been confined to the third and fourth year groups with the possible inclusion of brothers in the fifth form or friends supposedly helping out these younger ones.

I would say that violence exists equally on the side of staff in schools. In our particular school I've seen teachers acting in a very violent manner towards pupils - and I must confess to slapping a boy's face myself. Physical punishment is certainly not confined to caning.

How much caning is there?

We've had a change of headmaster since I first went there. The old head used to cane fairly frequently with very little questioning; the new head considerably less - with much more discrimination. In the old days caning was the accepted punishment for misdemeanours ranging from slashing the seats on one of the coaches going to games to 'insolence'. A teacher could go down to that headmaster and say 'This boy's been insolent to me and so I want him caned' - and he would be caned.

Of course caning at our place is accepted as a deterrent so that again and again the same boys are seen to be caned. And the other boys are assumed to be reasonable because of the deterrent of the caning. I doubt this very much. I think they'd be reasonable without it.

What's the attitude of the kids to caning?

One boy in particular who was frequently caned - a mischievous kid but bright and very likeable - saw it as a kind of obligatory purging. And his father once said to me that as far as he was concerned you

could do whatever you liked with the boy as long as you got learning into him: you could wipe the floor with him. And the boy was aware of his father's attitude.

You had other boys who didn't accept it at all - one in particular refused to be caned and in the end he left the school and went somewhere else. It may be that children are more prepared to question authority now. Certainly it seems to me that fourth and fifth formers are more likely to question authority than I was at that time. I don't ever remember being ready to strike a teacher back again - but nowadays some boys would certainly be prepared to do this.

Have you ever used the cane?

Yes, once. Much as I detest caning it was the only way out in this particular instance. Some lavatories were found smashed up: three, possibly four, lavatory pans were found smashed, totally wrecked. And inquiries were being made rather discretely, putting pressure on smaller children - younger ones who were always on the fringe of things going on - trying to find out who'd done it. And it was pretty obvious that someone in my fifth form had done it, so I started asking questions.

Now because I felt at this point that I'd shielded them very frequently from the obstinate authority of members of staff who would condemn these kids out of hand I said that in this particular case I would like to know what had happened. Eventually the two kids came up and admitted it. I said: 'What are we going to do about it? There's about £150 worth of damage - you can't pay for it, can you?' No, they couldn't. 'We don't want our parents to know, that's the first thing.' And they also asked that it should not be written down on their report from school.

Right, so what do we do? In fact I did ask them what they thought their punishment should be or what they could do about it - and they said 'Let's get it over and done with and have a caning. Then we're free, completely, we can do our exams.' So I told the head and he agreed that no parents would be told, that there would be no mention of it on their leaving report and that they would be caned.

Afterwards one of them said to me that he was bloody glad it was all over and done with. Whereas if it had been on their report and if their parents had known the

boys felt it would have been worse. In fact it would have been worse: apart from the effect of a written report on their job prospects, one of the boys would certainly have been severely beaten by his father - he'd have had it both ways.

In other words, you can't separate physical punishment from other forms of force?

Exactly. Violence exists not only in a physical way. Violence exists when authority overrides rational questioning. One can be mentally violent to somebody else. We accept in our legal system that there is such a thing as mental cruelty, so if there is cruelty there is presumably some violence.

Finally, what about the raising of the school leaving age - the reason why the NAS have been making all this fuss about 'violence'?

I would say that the majority of secondary school teachers think the raising of the school leaving age - at this moment in time, with resources as they are - will be a mistake. To make it worthwhile for the kids you'd need to restructure drastically secondary education from the age of 15. I mean there's a lot of talk - a lot of lip-service is paid to 'links with the outside world', trips round factories and so on - and some schools are doing it very well indeed.

But there's still such a lack of imagination, lack of funds, lack of incentive for teachers to make contacts with industry - and unimaginative employers' attitudes. In many cases boys who had a worthwhile job to go to would be better off going to it at 13 years old and serving an apprenticeship with an enlightened craftsman. That sounds as reactionary as the NAS but in school at the moment children are missing contact with the outside world.

There's no gradual move into deep adolescence and there's no help for them in the transition from a schoolboy world to an adult world. That's what the extra year should be for: it should be for social education, it should be for adjustment. I'm afraid that this year is going to be used for more, inappropriate academic education - and if so there are going to

be a lot of problems.

When you sit down and talk to a group of 30 boys or girls, the questions coming at you are more than you can possibly cope with. You'll need far more staff with the raising of the leaving age because your groups need to be smaller. But what looks like happening is that as a teacher you'll be held down by practical limitations: you'll fall into the routine of continuing an academic as opposed to a social education. Because it's easier: there's nothing easier under normal circumstances than to dish out facts.

There are some schools where a very enlightened attitude to careers holds. But these are very few and far between: Kes is absolutely right. It's not overplayed at all, it's not a caricature: it's reality. The boys at school mostly say that it's virtually a waste of time the school careers people coming in to talk to them because they're so unrealistic. They tend to go on what you're likely to get as an examination subject - not on you as a person. And that's at a grammar school - never mind a secondary modern or a neighbourhood comprehensive.

When the school leaving age is raised to 16, Silverthorne Secondary School for Girls in Camberwell, South London - like other secondary schools - will face a number of extra problems. By no means the least of these will be the attitude of those 15 year olds who have already made up their minds that school has nothing to offer them. Some of the girls at Silverthorne will need a lot of convincing after the extraordinary incident last December when six members of the school's only CSE exam class were summarily expelled by the headmistress.

Silverthorne School is an anachronism in several ways. It is a single sex secondary modern in an area committed to coeducational comprehensive schools. Plans to rebuild it and combine it with a boys' school to form a comprehensive have been postponed indefinitely.

So the teachers and children stay where they are - in two inadequate buildings some distance apart. There is a limited number of inside lavatories. There are no playing fields. The hall is not big enough for the whole school - so the annual prize-giving takes place at another school. For the raising of the school leaving age some new classrooms are necessary: they will be built on what is now the playground.

The girls are drawn from as many as 42 different primary schools. While the average percentage of immigrant children in local secondary schools is 10.2, over 60% of Silverthorne girls are from immigrant families.

Formal punishment in the school consists mainly of detention - 10 minutes for being late, 30 minutes for bad conduct. But the cane is also used about three times a year.

Class VS, the only CSE exam class at Silverthorne, consists therefore of those girls who have decided to stay on after 15 to get an academic qualification. In September 1971 the class had 30 girls. Most of them had been together since the first year - and on their way up the school they'd acquired a reputation for being talkative and troublesome.

A few weeks after the beginning of term a duplicated letter was sent by the headmistress to the parents of 12 girls in the class complaining about their standard of work and attitude. Then on 26 November a further duplicated letter was sent to the parents of every girl in VS. This referred to the earlier letter and said: 'I am sorry to say there has been little or no improvement.'

The parents were warned: 'You will be informed of the results of the CSE Mock examinations before the end of this term and, if, because of lack of effort, non-co-operation and general disinterest, your daughter has not reached the standard of which the Staff and I think she is capable, in five subjects, then I shall ask your daughter to leave.'

The parents were not in the event 'informed of the results of the CSE Mock examinations'. What six of them did receive was a handwritten letter from the headmistress which told them their daughters were out. She was 'not prepared' for them to remain at school.

Later the headmistress was to say that she intended to arrange transfers for

INNER LONDON EDUCATION AUTHORITY

SILVERTHORNE SCHOOL

HEADMISTRESS: MRS. M. O. DAVIES



Upper School:
Southampton Way, S.E.5
Telephone 01-703 3530

Lower School:

Albany Road, S.E.5
Telephone 01-703 2936

Correspondence to be addressed to the Upper School

15. 12. 71.

Dear Mr. Atkins,

I regret to inform you that I am not prepared for your daughter to remain at school after the end of this term. In spite of repeated warnings Norma has been rude and unco-operative, has disturbed classes and has seldom made use of her undoubted ability. She wastes time at the beginning and end of lessons and her results reflect this 'don't-care' attitude.

If you would like me to arrange an appointment with the Youth Employment Officer perhaps you would be kind enough to let me know.

Yours sincerely,
M. O. Davies.
Headmistress.

One of the six expulsion letters sent to Silverthorne School girls' parents

the girls to other schools. However this point was not included in any of the letters - and at least two specifically mentioned a possible appointment with the Youth Employment Officer. One of these is reproduced opposite.

Of the six girls one accepted the situation and went to the Youth Employment Office. The father of another, Maria Papaphotis, went at once to see the headmistress - and was told that she could be transferred to another school. Two girls made enquiries about further education.

One parent went to see the vice-chairman of the school's governors, who pointed out that the girls could not technically be expelled or suspended without certain formalities. He gave four girls letters stating their right to return to school. They went back, produced the letters - and were sent away again, this time with a more formal suspension letter.

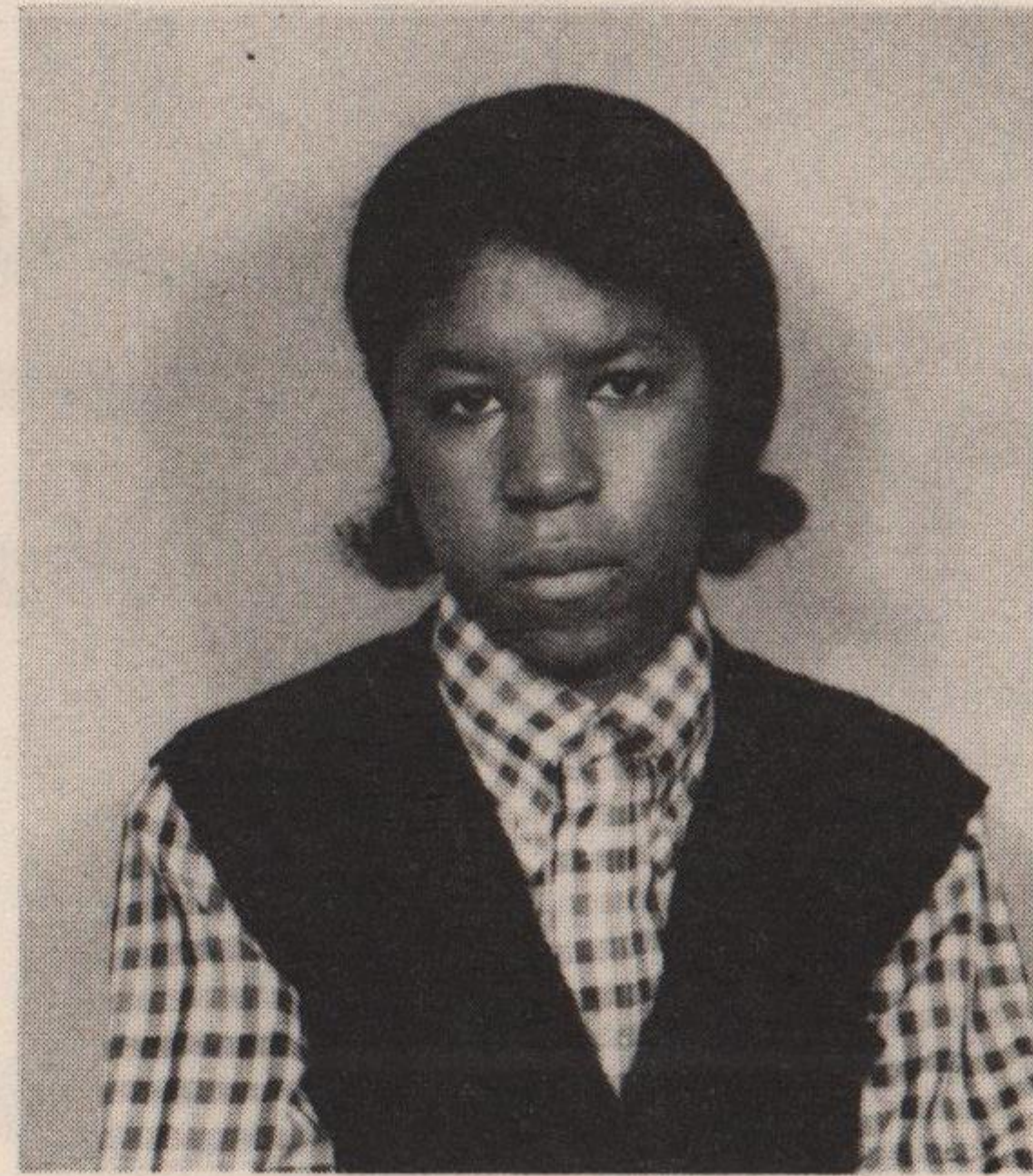
Transfers to other schools were arranged for three girls, but Maria Papaphotis and Norma Atkins refused. These two - and only these two - were then informed by the ILEA Divisional Office that they had the right of appeal to the Board of Governors.

The governors heard their appeal on 21 January and rejected it. Now an appeal is being made to the Department of Education and Science. Meanwhile Maria and Norma, after several weeks away, have been transferred to other schools.

Whatever the result of this appeal, the girls and their parents will go on feeling angry and bitter about what was done to them. Most people will feel that they have good reason.

The following extra facts may be of interest:

1. At no point did the headmistress suggest that parents come to see her to discuss their children's progress.
2. Of the six girls who were expelled none was accused of any offence except the general ones - noise, lack of co-operation etc - which the group of 12 and the whole class were also accused of.
3. Of the 24 girls who remained in the class, two left 'in protest', two left for other reasons and two were put back into the fourth year.
4. Of the six girls, five are black and one, Maria, is a Greek Cypriot. Or, if



Norma Atkins, left, and Maria Papaphotis: the two who appealed

you prefer, none of the English girls in the class was expelled.

5. Silverthorne is not the only London school where a head teacher has acted in this arbitrary way: there have been similar incidents recently in at least three others.

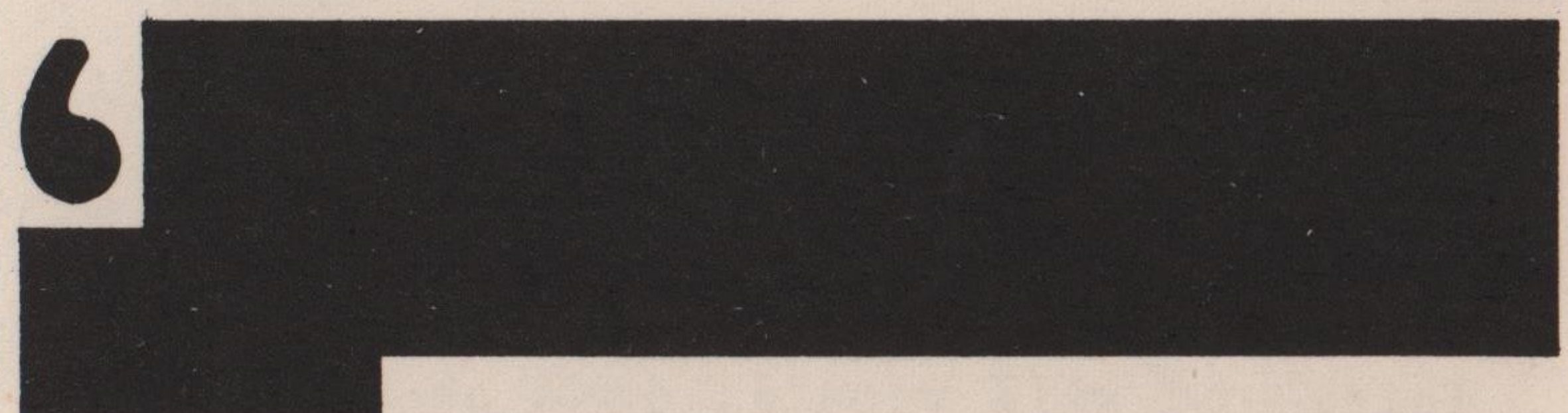
Mr Atkins on the appeal to the governors:

At the governors' meeting the head said Norma was going to be transferred from the beginning, but there's the letter about the Youth Employment Office. And she was sent to the Youth Employment Office before I got the letter.

I said to the head "Can't you give these young girls a chance?" And she said "Oh no, not by letting them back here - by transferring them to another school." But you have to start all over again.

If a child says "I want to stay at school and achieve something" - and you keep them from it - that's not fair.

Mr Papaphotis on the appeal to the governors:



The school took the easiest way: chuck them out and perhaps we'll have some peace and quiet.

Last summer my daughter brought home a report most parents would be proud of. She was second in class and first in several subjects with good marks. They say she could do better: we all could.

satire section

Readers of Seven Days who are beginning to tire of this revolutionary breakthrough in photo-journalism may be interested in the following words of wisdom:

'Certainly there are some wonderful press photographers about, and every so often you get a photograph which, in its impact and revelation, surpasses anything that could be conveyed in any other medium. On the other hand, eighty per cent of the photographs people publish are inferior to what a black and white artist can do with the same subject.'

This quotation is taken from the third volume of Claud Cockburn's autobiography View from the West. It seems that many years ago - when Alexander Cockburn was still at his preparatory school - his famous father and Maurice Richardson tried to get Hulton Press to start a revolutionary new periodical. It was to be called - surprise, surprise - Seven Days.

The first Seven Days was to escape from the straitjacket of photography by using cartoons 'in the worst possible taste' and was also to be printed on 'a cheaper, scruffier newsprint than anyone else used'. Sadly, the second Seven Days, which Alexander Cockburn helps to produce, has not learned very much from the first.

Claud Cockburn meanwhile - apart from acting as one of the Seven Days trustees and contributing a couple of articles - has seemed to prefer to write for its satirical rival Private Eye.

This, you will recall, is a cheap and scruffy paper in very bad taste.

Private Eye is also well known for the political reporting of Paul Foot, who is perhaps the most able journalist in Britain. Indeed the magazine's appeal is based on its unique blend of international socialism and Toryism with a funny human face. From time to time, however, the 'cre-

ative tension' between Foot and editor Richard Ingrams becomes open conflict - as last summer when Foot successfully stopped Ingrams using a cover featuring Bernadette Devlin.

But Ingrams is the editor of the paper and usually has his way: on Ireland Private Eye certainly does not endorse the 'critical support for the IRA' which is the policy of Foot's International Socialism organisation. In fact attacks on the IRA in the front half of Private Eye have led to bitter accusations elsewhere on the left that Foot 'acquiesces in the publishing of pro-imperialist lies' (Red Mole 12 December 1971).

Private Eye did not reply to this particular charge. Instead Ingrams told Gerry Lawless, a member of the International Marxist Group which publishes the Mole, that he was no longer wanted in the Private Eye office.

Pause, however, before wasting sympathy on Gerry Lawless. As Seamus O'Kane reported in Ink (7 January 1972) Lawless had early in 1971 supplied a French journalist with the names of several people, including Ian Purdie, allegedly connected with the Angry Brigade. An article based on this information appeared in Politique Hebdo on 29 January 1971 and a further cryptic paragraph in the Red Mole on 16 February. Ian Purdie was arrested and charged on 6 March.

A less serious example of carelessness by a 'radical' journalist occurred after the appearance of the BBC's underground paper Burial. How did Atticus of the Sunday Times find a source for his quotes from 'the editors'? He asked the garrulous John Howkins of Time Out.

Andrew Cockburn's excellent exposé of the first few months of Ink, which was published in Frenz (15 November 1971) nearly wasn't. That's to say it was originally written for the Evening Standard - the paper Cockburn used to work on - at the suggestion of features editor Mary

