

IRA

THE PRESS CALLS THEM TERRORISTS AND THUGS —BUT WHAT DO THEY REALLY STAND FOR?

A MASSIVE propaganda campaign of lies, hysteria and distortion has been waged by the British press against the Irish Republican Army, the main force fighting the British Army of occupation in the streets and on the housing estates of the Six Counties' police state.

The popular press pumps out a daily stream of abuse and mangled truth about the way the IRA operates and the motives behind its actions. Cartoonists have revived the racist images of earlier days in the Irish independence struggle, showing men in trench-coats looking like apes.

Socialist Worker has made it clear repeatedly that in the confrontations between the British Army and the IRA, socialists are on the side of the republicans. And we do not put conditions on that support—the Army is an occupying force and we support the efforts to drive it out.

But this does not mean we have to support every single tactic of the IRA. We are not uncritical of their political attitudes or their tactics in the military struggle.

Neither wing of the IRA—Provisionals of Officials—is a revolutionary socialist organisation and they cannot bring about a real victory in Ireland—a united 32-county socialist republic.

When the IRA split into Provisionals and Officials, both groups maintained their military sections and their separate but overlapping political organisations—Sinn Fein.

Both the Provisional and Official Sinn Fein have just held conferences in Dublin. Contrary to the British press image, there was nothing sinister or conspiratorial about the way the Provisionals and Officials conducted their political struggles: they were engaged in.

THE PROVISIONALS were created because of the lack of any capable force in the Catholic areas of Belfast and Derry in August 1969, when the people faced a bloody massacre from the mobs of armed Orange men who bombed and burned families out of their houses.

Since then the Provisionals' role has changed from being a simple defensive one. But their campaign, far from being indiscriminate as the press claims, has been directed mainly at military targets, at business premises, state symbols and, occasionally, at civilian targets such as pubs and clubs. In purely military terms, none of their actions has been particularly skilled or successful.

REFUSING

Many of those who joined the Provisionals in 1969-70 were people who had not been active in the movement for some time. They clung to the traditional republican ideals of driving out the occupying force and uniting Ireland—often refusing to ask questions about what type of united Ireland that would be.

Others who joined the ranks at that time were young and insisted on the need for militancy in the opposition to British troops. They often had more radical but not fully worked out political ideas.

At the Provisional Sinn Fein conference, leader Ruairi O'Beirneah recognised these competing attitudes in the movement by concentrating almost all his attention on the campaign against the troops and



Resistance to the British Army has been built and sustained largely by the IRA itself, but they do not draw the necessary conclusion—the need to build a movement throughout Ireland actively engaged in the struggle of workers, tenants and small farmers against the grip of imperialism and its local supporters.

ON THE SURFACE, the Officials seem closer to a socialist approach. Tomas MacGiolla, president of the Official Sinn Fein, told his recent conference that the best help they can give to the people in the North in their struggle is to intensify the fight against British imperialism, and the Southern government.

But opposition to the Lynch government is based on its 'selling-out' to Britain, not on the need to build a working-class movement that can convince Protestant workers in the North that they will not be forced into a United Catholic capitalist Ireland.

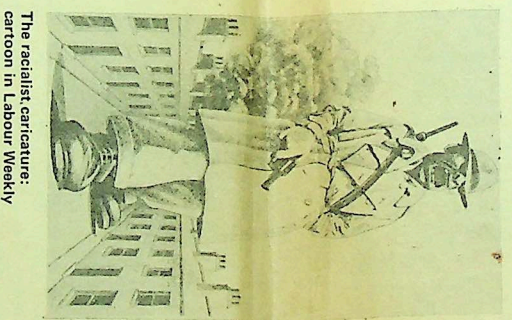
UNDERLINING

The Officials insist much more on the need for a social programme and speak of the power of the capitalist press—but at the same time they call repeatedly for unity of all democratic forces, of all nationally-minded people, of all opposed to the Common Market instead of undermining the independent action of the working class.

The Officials oppose the Common Market, recognising its threat to jobs and the livelihood of small farmers—but they phrase that opposition in terms of loss of 'independence' and 'sovereignty'. They put forward the alternative of an independent capitalist Ireland trading with other small nations which.

But more than a third of the delegates supported an amendment to the statement on the Common Market that stressed the only possible alternative to Irish entry is a socialist workers' republic.

TURNING TO THE NORTH, the Officials said that military action can be only one tactic among many to be used by the mass movement against British domination. But their call for a 'democratic administration



The racistist caricature: cartoon in Labour Weekly

at Stormont is unreal. To keep Stormont in some form means inevitably keeping other institutions of the Orange regime. They warn against Britain and Dublin agreeing to some Federal deal as a solution to the present problem—but

a 'reformed Stormont' would almost certainly be part of such a deal. The Officials are certainly closer than Provisionals to recognising the need for a working-class movement but they seem to want to avoid immediate socialist and working-class demands. The achievement of both sections of the IRA in providing defence for the areas under continuous attack in the North must be acknowledged and acclaimed.

REMOVING

But as long as the struggle is confined to the Six Counties, it cannot win. To disrupt the state and annoy the authorities is not enough. Only a movement based on clear revolutionary socialist politics aimed at removing the regimes of North and South can have any hope of building a mass organisation that will break down the sectarian barriers between Protestant and Catholics.

Neither section of the IRA and Sinn Fein, brave and determined people that they are, can build such a force on the basis of their present politics. That job can be done only by a revolutionary socialist party that, in sweeping away the hideous regime in Stormont and the messenger boys of British capitalism in Dublin, will at long last end the repression and poverty that have ravaged the whole of Ireland for centuries.

Spying on women at home

MOTHERS who are forced to rely on Social Security benefits in order to keep their families together fear that their order books will be snatched from them if they are discovered entertaining a man on their premises.

Co-habiting means living together as man and wife, having a common home, a pooled income or children or being acknowledged publicly as man and wife. Having a boy/friend or sleeping together is not co-habiting.

Special investigators watch over their morality and can walk in at any time to check there is no man about the house. Living on Social Security benefits means being scared to have

men around, terrified to let them stay overnight.

The frequent visits to the Department of Health and Social Security, the hours spent waiting there, the interrogations by hostile counter clerks is enough to weaken the strongest mother. But the scripping and scraping on the meagre weekly allowance of £5.80 for the mother and £4.70 for children under five is most damaging.

Many unsupported mothers are not aware that they can also be covered by grants for clothing, footwear, prams, carpets and bedding. They are entitled also to free prescriptions, dental treatment and spectacles.

If the mother is lucky enough to secure a place at a nursery for her

child, the low wage she will earn as a woman worker—the average wage for a woman is £12 a week—would hardly be enough to support her let alone her children.

The only way out of this sort of situation that the mother can see is to find a man willing to marry her and care for her and her child. So she is forced out of necessity to depend upon a man for the survival of her family.

Her income from the state or her wage packet is not enough and in this way the system maintains the sacred family unit and undermines any other variety of human relationship that could exist alongside the family institution.

Sue Banks

ELDRIDGE CLEAVER



Author of *Soul on Ice*
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HOW THE TORIES PULL

A YEAR AGO, in December 1970, the Tories won the first major success of their war against workers' pay claims. Aided and abetted by the mass media, they took on and defeated the unions who organise the electricity supply workers. The story of that defeat is full of lessons for workers today.

In 1969 and 1970, the 'revolt of the lower paid' developed. Because of wage freeze, rising prices and high rises in taxation, all workers were finding it harder to make ends meet. Many sections moved into battle for the first time for generations, demanding substantial pay rises. Many of their strikes were successful.

In 1969, the power workers took part in this movement, unofficially, and won 10 per cent. In late 1970, they came back for more. The Tories decided to take the power workers on. They were anxious to beat a section of workers decisively, to slow down wage claims generally.

The electricity workers were an ideal target. They work out of the public eye and so would win less sympathy. Their action would mean cold homes, lay-offs in factories, blank TV screens. The public, ignorant of the industry's workings, could easily be deceived about what was happening.

The work to rule was amazingly effective. There were 31 per cent power cuts at peak periods. In Northern Ireland the Stormont government—terrified of darkness in its strife-torn streets—closed nearly all factories down. Everyone in Britain was affected by the power shortages.

SURPLUS

Yet this is odd. In 1964, a work to rule and overtime ban on similar lines had very little impact. But in 1964 average overtime was eight hours while in 1970 it was practically nil.

In 1964 there was a plant shortage, while in 1970 there was a surplus. The impact of the work to rule ought to have been greater in 1964 than 1970.

The reason it was not is simple: the employers themselves took a hand.

In the autumn of 1970, the electricity bosses faced several problems. There was a serious coal shortage. The power bosses sent men to scour Europe and beyond for coal. Much of the supplies they found were unsuitable and difficult to burn.

And the power cables that link France and Britain broke in October. Most of the traffic on these cables goes one way—to Britain. The cables were still broken in December, so one source of extra power was lost.

Again, over the previous two years, there had been hosts of

PLUG

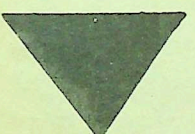
OUT

ON THE POWER

WORKERS

SPECIAL
FEATURE
by COLIN
BARKER

Jak's notorious hate cartoon in the London Evening Standard. Print workers refused to run the paper until their statement of solidarity with the power workers appeared



breakdowns in the big new power stations. Result: more loss of supplies.

But still more important was the power bosses attitude to the crisis. They were very lackadaisical.

First, they did not use all their available generating resources. Across Britain there are various gas turbines that are saved for emergency situations like peak periods in cold weather. A number of these were not used during the work to rule. For the power bosses, it seems, the work to rule was not an emergency.

Second, in 1964, the supply networks were split. If this is done, supplies to hospitals can be maintained even if the streets around are in darkness. In December 1970 the networks were not split until towards the end of the work-to-rule.

Also, the majority of hospitals

have stand-by generating equipment which can be brought into action in a matter of a few minutes. Power cuts in operating theatres are unnecessary if some warning is given to hospitals in advance.

Yet there were power cuts to hospitals. Who was to blame?

OFFERED

One thing needs to be understood: the manual workers in the industry do not control the distribution of electricity. Management does. And management could have prevented many of the blackouts, in hospitals and elsewhere. The unions in fact offered to help the boards make sure that essential services were maintained, but their offer was effectively ignored.

Thus the employers magnified the effects of the work-to-rule themselves. Few people outside

the industry knew what was really going on. The power workers' were blamed for the employers' lack of action, and public hysteria could be whipped up by press, radio and TV.

How successful the policy was! The power workers had an enormous advantage: they were losing little pay through the work to rule, their action had immediate impact, troops would be ineffective at running the power stations, and the law was effectively powerless.

The only card left for the Tories to play was public opinion. Even before it started, Anthony Barber, Chancellor of the Exchequer, declared public war on the power unions. The second day of the work to rule, Sir John Eden, number two in the Department of Trade and Industry gave what the Financial Times called 'one of

the strongest attacks, yet by a Minister'.

Absolutely nothing can justify the widespread disruption which this has caused. I cannot believe the men themselves ever meant to carry this so far as to jeopardise human life.

The press was quick to pick up the cue, and searched out stories about breakdowns of hospital supplies. The London Evening Standard published one of the most vicious anti-union cartoons ever. The printers stopped the presses until the employers gave them the right of reply.

The General Secretary of NALGO, which organises clerical workers in the supply industry, reported that his members on switchboards and in showrooms were being subjected to personal abuse of all kinds. They had paint tipped on them, some had their car tyres slashed.

The papers went out of their way to find horror stories, some of them utterly ludicrous. A woman died in Manchester when her electric blanket started smouldering after a power cut.

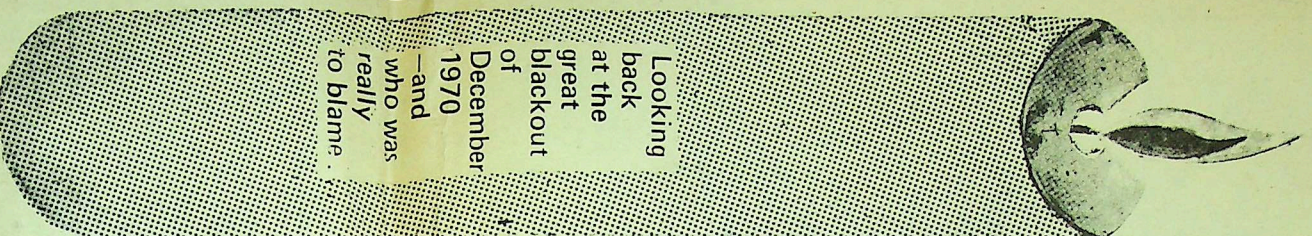
VIOLENCE

To any thoughtful reader, it sounds like a case of criminal negligence on the part of the blanket maker—but in the atmosphere of public hysteria the press were whipping up, the power workers were blamed.

Garage and pub owners who refused to serve power workers were given publicity. Most front pages carried the story of a well-to-do farmer who sprayed a switching station with manure.

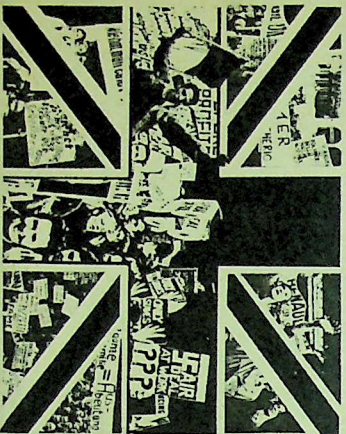
Acts of violence against electricity workers multiplied. There was a kidnap threat to a technician's child, a bomb scare at a power workers' social function, a Norweb fitter was beaten up in the street in broad daylight, a showroom window was smashed, and abusive and obscene phone calls were made by the hundred.

A Department of Health adviser on nutrition stated that 10,000 old



Looking back at the great blackout of December 1970—and who was really to blame.

International Socialism 49



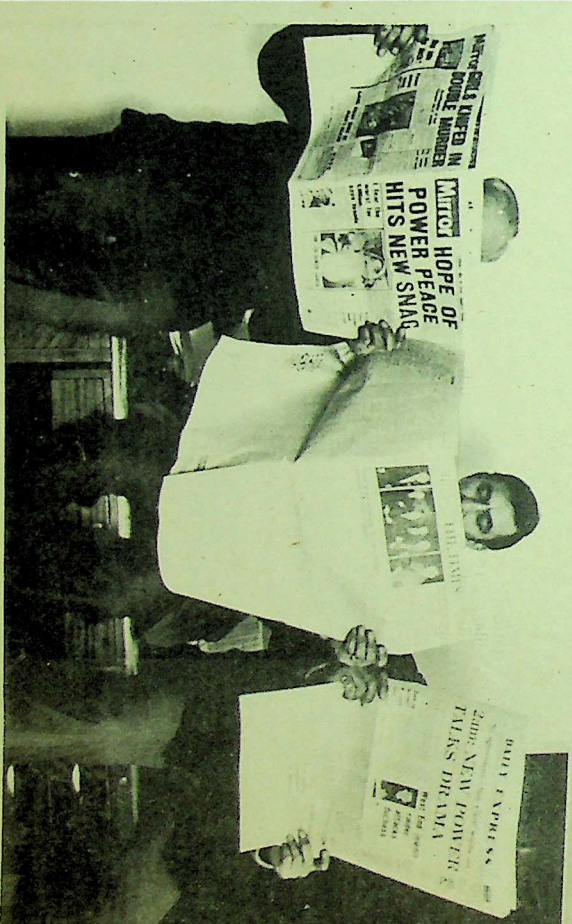
World Economy
Revolution and Education
Ireland

Autumn 1971 15p

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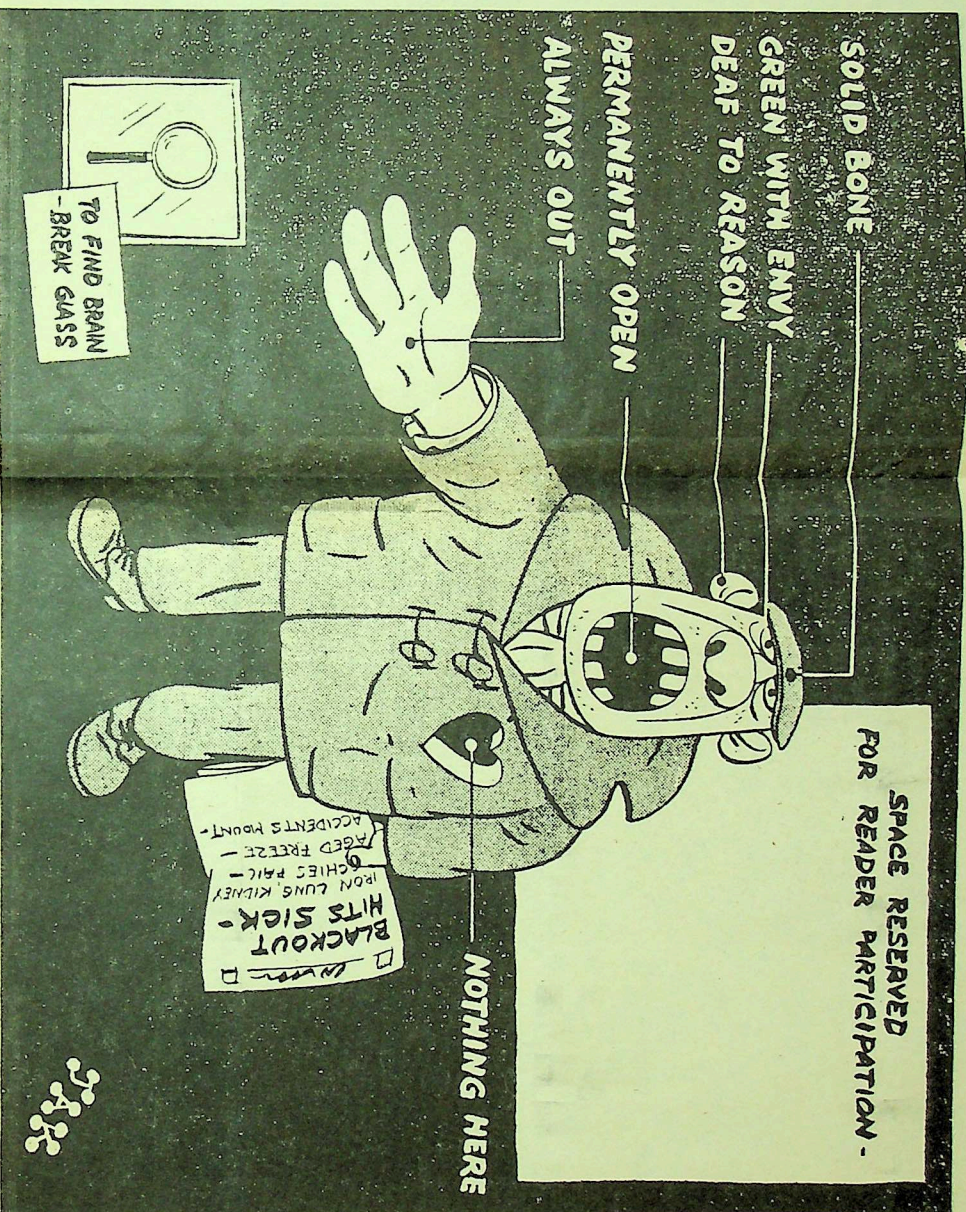
INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISM

6 Cottons Gardens, London E2 8DN



The press launched a ferocious onslaught on the power men in a bid to isolate and demoralise them.

ORIES PULLED THE



NOTHING HERE

SPACE RESERVED FOR READER PARTICIPATION -

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DAVID FROST: Lynch-mob attack

people could die of cold if the cuts continued. (He remained silent the year before, when more pensioners than that died of cold, without power cuts.)

The Daily Mail, perhaps the most vicious of all the press, did its best to whip up the fury further: '... why the hell should Britain always have to take it? Isn't it about time we started dishing it out.'

The Mail's editorial was entitled 'The Power Maniacs'. It ended with these words: 'The question for the power workers is: Do they want to be respected as public servants? Or would they rather be regarded as Public Enemy No 1?'

TV and radio also did their bit to add to the general panic. No programme ever revealed why the networks had not been split, or who was failing to keep hospitals supplied.

On the Sunday night, the David Frost show reached an all-time low when five power workers were faced by a lynch-mob audience,

given no chance to explain their case, and finally one of them was knocked down.

Faced with the barrage of organised 'public opinion', the supply unions backed down, accepting the Tory terms for surrender more or less totally.

The Court of Inquiry which followed dished out one of the worst deals for many a year. But more than the power workers suffered: the postmen were beaten within a month of the Wilberforce Court of Inquiry, and after them other sections too were knocked back.

1971 was the first year since the war that the British working class suffered a real drop in its standard of living. The offensive against the power workers achieved that.

STRENGTH

Could it have been otherwise? The answer is yes—on condition: themselves had the democratic strength to determine their union leaders' decisions. The work to rule did not crumble in the power stations: only the union leaders collapsed to the Tories.

Second, a huge propaganda counter-offensive was needed, to explain to other trade unionists the truth about the power workers' case, who were really responsible for the hospital blackouts. Millions of leaflets were needed, but only thousands were produced. The defeat of the power workers illustrates one weakness very sharply: no revolutionary workers' party existed in Britain, with sufficient resources to do the job of telling the working class the truth, quickly enough.

For lack of connection with the rest of the working class, the power workers were beaten—and the working class as a whole has had to pay the price.

This writer the power workers have another claim. It will be our responsibility to see that they are not again isolated from their fellow-workers.

The battle the pension fund

THIS TIME LAST year the newspapers got very upset over the plight of old age pensioners. It was unanimously agreed that this had nothing whatsoever to do with the appallingly low level of pensions.

The real villains of the piece were the dreadful power workers and their work-to-rule. They were killing the old, who otherwise were perfectly placed to afford electricity to heat their homes.

The power workers were bludgeoned into line and the old age pensioners quietly forgotten. Not the least significant group to be neglected by this inexplorable year of silence were electrical power workers themselves. Thanks to the genius of the grab motive system, they were quite simply separated from rather large amounts of money by financial experts employed for their abilities to conjure cash out of thin air.

It was to transpire however that these gentlemen could conjure only other people's money into thin air while lining their own pockets. The electricity power workers' pension fund and others will cover the losses.

The history of this little fable starts with the deep friendship of Charles Gordon—a humble financial journalist who rose to a position of prominence in one of the big merchant banks—and Sydney Cowton, a financial adviser to the Electricity Council, who was in a position to influence where the pension money was invested.

These two genies moved into action, building an organisation called Spey designed to combine their talents with a star-studded board of directors or rich and powerful men with the funds of the big company pension schemes.

Essential

Charles and Sydney took the pension money and invested it in such essential processes of production as a half share in National Car Parks, hotels, hair curlers, Belgian dress shops, drugs and brasserie.

They solicited the confidence and the money of the ICI, Unilever and Barclays Bank pension funds in addition to the rather easier meat of the Electricity Council. All told they got some £50 million to play around with.

The pension funds had a stake in both Spey Investments, and Spey Westminster, a company which was owned jointly with a Mr Boris Marmor. In the 1950s Marmor had spent some time in prison for confusing some of his employers' money with his own.

Influential

But the jewel in the Spey crown was Spey Finance. Its board of directors included some of our most influential people in our society. Sir Joseph Lockwood of EMI and former head of the Labour government's Industrial Reorganisation Corporation was brought in. So were Sir Paul Chambers of ICI fame and Lord Chalfont, Minister for 'Disarmament' in the previous Labour government.

The key to this star-studded operation was undoubtedly the lovely asset Charles Gordon had in his wife, the ballerina Nadia Nerina. She was paraded around the offices of various organisations with pension funds. Everybody was suitably impressed by Mile Nerina and happily handed over their pension funds to Spey.

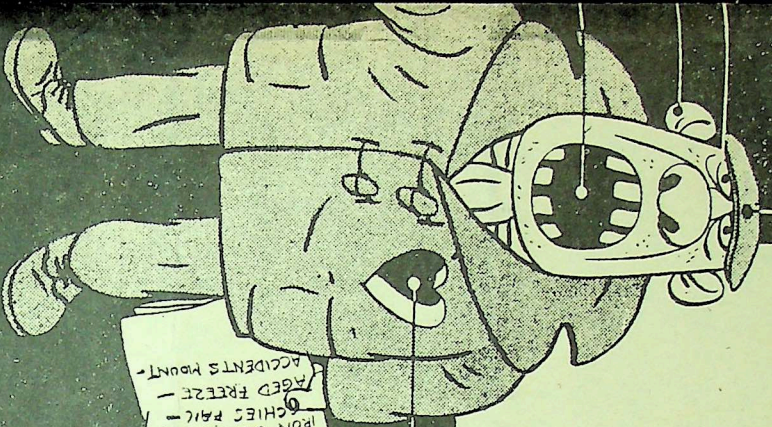
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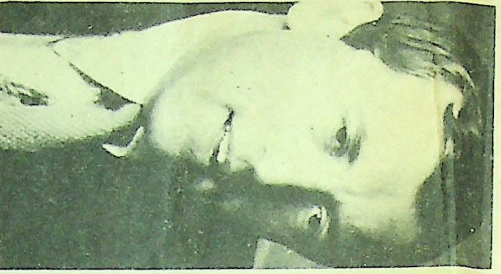
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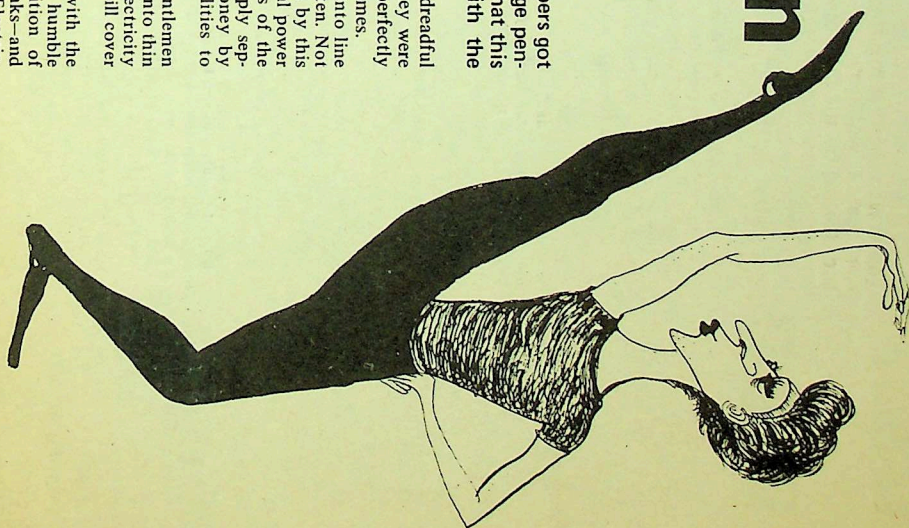
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The ballerina and the pension fund



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by Arthur
Malone

Between the old masters, Nadia and the marble-tiled lavatory, who could fail to see that these were the men to look after your pension funds?

Spey was flattered in all the papers, there were constant rumours and gossip about what great coup they would pull and the Spey whizz kids seriously discussed how they were to become the second greatest financial institution in the country after the Bank of England.

And then in March this year, Unilever and its funds pulled out. The schemes and grand dreams were going astray.

Charles Gordon suddenly departed. A 'disagreement' over policy was the gentlemanly euphemism chosen to describe his sacking. Sidney Cowton suddenly left his post at the Electricity Council.

The remaining mugs got the wind up and started to sell off the company, approaching Boris Marmor to see if he would help them out of their little hole. No dice. They were left holding the baby and the estimated £1 million losses.

Saviour

And then a new saviour stepped into the ring. Patrick Mathews of First National Finance, an old associate of the trusty Peter Walker who was now looking after business interests in his disguise as Minister of the Environment. Patrick offered them £1 million in cash to take Spey's finance interests off their hands. Some shares in First National were thrown in too.

The saviour was accepted and some weeks later Pat sold off part of the Spey Holdings for £6.4 million. This gave him a cool £5 million plus profit on the operation.

Never mind chaps, the power workers' pension funds will be a bit lighter, and anyway, pensioners die every day.

THE BRITISH PRESS & NORTHERN IRELAND EAMONN MCGANN

IRA cross border to stir Belfast riots

IRA behind riots in N. Ireland

BY ULSTER

ROOBY TRAP

ULSTER

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