In this issue, we print brief summaries of the aims and practice of three Irish solidarity groups in Britain: each is written by a member of the group. The Troops Out Movement is a relatively large, national organisation. The other two are small, locally-based groups which aim to change people's views on Ireland.

The Irish Hunger Strike Commemoration Committee and the Campaign for a Free Ireland are both based on overt support for the Republican Movement. Troops Out and the Irish Hunger Strike Commemoration Committee have both been small, locally-based groups which aim to change people's views on Ireland.

In England, we are part of an oppression nation and it is our role only to support the Irish struggle against British imperialism.

The Troops Out Movement believes that the only responsible contribution Britain can possibly make towards ending the conflict in the North of Ireland is to withdraw its troops immediately. It further believes that Britain has no right to govern any part of Ireland, and that the Irish people alone must decide the future of their country, free from British interference. The movement's two demands are, therefore: "Troops Out Now" and "Self-Determination for the Irish People as a Whole!"

The current role of TOM is to campaign for these two demands and to help people better understand what Britain is doing in Ireland. For this purpose the movement produces a wide range of information and material, such as leaflets on policing strategies and strip-searching as well as exhibitions. There is also a new weekly paper "Troops Out," which covers the latest news in Ireland.

It organises the annual August delegation to the North of Ireland. This enables people to see British rule in Ireland for themselves. It also shows the troops that not everyone in Britain sees them as peace-keepers.

The backbone of TOM is its branches which organise local pickets, meetings, film shows and lobby groups. TOM is also publishing an important book on Ireland to mark the 20th anniversary of the re-deployment of British troops in the North of Ireland. It will be called "An Obstacle to Peace: Britain's Role in Ireland 69-89." Troops Out Movement, PO Box 353, London N6 4NH.

THE IRISH HUNGER-STRIKE COMMEMORATION COMMITTEE

The Irish Hunger-Strike Commemoration Committee (IHSCC), Birmingham, was set up five years ago following an initiative by the Birmingham branch of the Irish in Britain Representation Group. It was formed to fill the need to hold an annual commemoration of the twelve Republican freedom fighters who died on hunger-strike.

Membership is open to those who accept unconditional support for the Republican Movement. The IHSCC is an overt solidarity organisation in which Irish people give the leadership.

Although the main focus of its work is the annual commemoration (of which there have been four so far), it also supports the Republican Movement's prison pickets and the pickets of Durham Gaol on International Women's Day.

The committee has always actively supported campaigns and demonstrations organised by broader organisations, calling for British withdrawal from Ireland.

The IHSCC is an essentially Irish organisation. But this does not exclude people and organisations of other nationalities. The black national minorities have given the committee its most consistent support. It has also received support from a small number of English organisations but in the main such organisations choose to do their own solidarity work on a broader-sounding and often pro-Labour Party campaigns.

The IHSCC is a legitimate part of the broad spectrum of organisations fighting for the rights of the Irish people to self-determination. It complements the attempts to build a broader-based campaign.

English organisations in particular must respect the right of the Irish people in Britain to set up solidarity organisations such as the IHSCC.

P&P: Irish Hunger Strike Commemoration Committee (Birmingham), PO Box 540, Sparkhill, Birmingham, B1 4AU.

CAMPAIGN FOR A FREE IRELAND

Mention the Campaign for a Free Ireland (CFI) in Strabane, and people will point to a mini-bus used by relatives of Republican prisoners to visit their loved ones. CFI has made two donations of £2,000 towards the cost of the mini-bus, and the Sinn Fein-led local council of Strabane (a town with the highest unemployment rates in Europe) presented CFI with a plaque bearing the town's coat-of-arms.

CFI is not a propagandist group, like many others in the Irish Solidarity movement. Its own pro-Republican stand is well-known. But for CFI members, actions speak louder than words, and they consciously restrict CFI's activity to practical work. CFI has now worked in North London for five years in support of the relatives of Republican prisoners.

Fund-raising activities include socials and car boot sales, as well as providing catering services at Republican and other Irish meetings.

CFI does not compete with other solidarity organisations. Individual members support other initiatives on Ireland. The movement recognises that a positive solidarity movement would be beneficial to the Irish struggle but that is still far off. In the meantime, CFI must continue its work and practical contribution to the Irish people's struggle.

Campaign For a Free Ireland, c/o 203 Seven Sisters Road, London N4 3NW.