

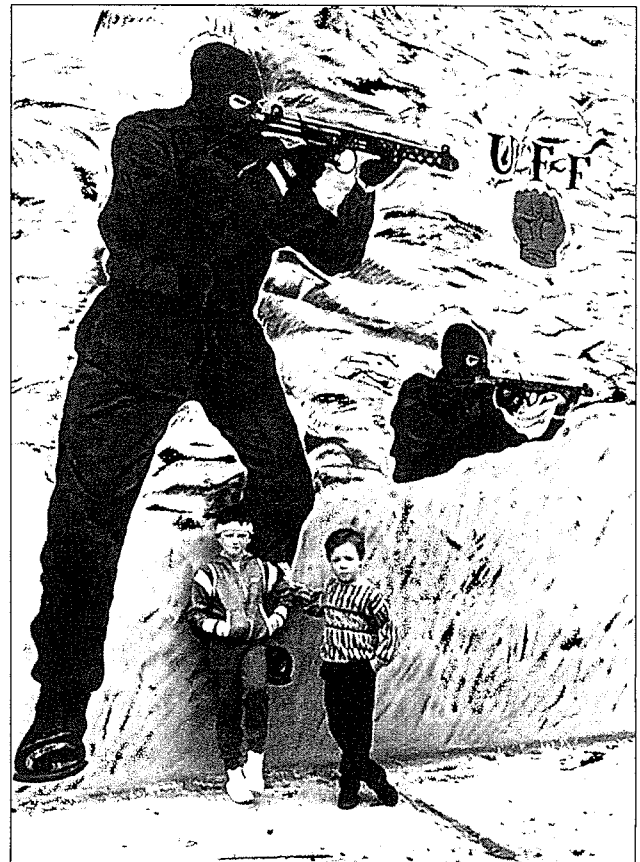
News



Do you know the people in these photos?

If so, email: photo4u@michaelkientiz.com

IMAGES OF OUR PAST: photographer Michael Kienitz is keen to trace the people in these photos, which he took in the early 1980s



Photographer returns to Province after 20 years to find...

'Wounds are still deep'

THE legacy of the Troubles is far from over, an award-winning American photographer warned yesterday.

Michael Kienitz, 56, from Wisconsin has worked in many conflict zones throughout the world, including Lebanon, Afghanistan and El Salvador.

But never has he been quite so disturbed by the effect that 30 years of conflict has had on working class people than in Northern Ireland.

"Unlike other wars and conflicts I have covered, the Troubles seem to have had a longer lasting impact on people here.

"So embedded has it become in the psyche of many people here, it has become an unalterable tragic lifestyle," he said.

Over 20 years ago, Michael travelled to the Province to take photographs of children living in areas of deprivation, including the Shankill and Falls roads.

Forward the clock to the present

BY KATE CHAMBRE

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day and he is back again to trace them and find out what has become of their lives – the details of which will eventually be published in a book.

"I decided to return to Northern Ireland to find out what happened to these children and what their lives are like now," he said.

Michael is particularly keen to hear from anyone who can help him trace the four people in each of the black and white photographs pictured above.

He took both images in the early 1980s. One depicts two young boys from the Shankill. The other is of a father and son during an Orange parade but he is not sure of the location.

"The reason for embarking on this project was to bring to people's attention how children around the world



PROJECT: Michael Kienitz

are affected by adult political conflict," he said.

"It's clear that the political change taking place in Northern Ireland at the moment benefits a certain social and economic strata. But since I last visited Northern Ireland, I don't see a lot of change in the working class

areas of the Shankill and Falls roads.

"In fact, I see things much the same as they were. Drugs and suicide are raging, due to the cessation of the paramilitary organisations who previously policed these neighbourhoods and have now been largely disbanded."

Over the past week, Michael has met with people from both Protestant and Catholic communities in Belfast, and said he had been moved and shocked by their stories.

"The wounds are still very deep and there is still a great deal of pain. The majority of people I met are cautiously optimistic about the new power-sharing deal – it's too soon to tell if there'll be real change or cosmetic change."

Michael said that over his 35-year career few conflicts have impacted on him as much as that of the Troubles.

"The conflict in Northern Ireland was a continual drip, drip, drip and went on far longer than most wars.

"There has been a vast amount of suffering. The conflict has had a profound impact on the way primarily working class adults will live out the rest of their lives in Northern Ireland because they have been so deeply affected psychologically."

Six of Michael's photographs from Northern Ireland will also feature in a 36-picture exhibition entitled Small Arms Children of Conflict.

The exhibition will be at the University of Wisconsin, Madison in the Chazen Museum of Art from September 8 to October 28.

Michael will not be profiting from the sales of the photographs or his book. Instead, he has vowed to donate all artistic royalties to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

If you know the people in the above photographs Michael would like hear from you. His website address is <http://www.michaelkientiz.com> and his email address is photo4u@michaelkientiz.com