

IRELAND

INTERNATIONAL NEWS BRIEFING

Published by Sinn Féin Foreign Affairs Bureau,
51/55 Falls Road, Belfast BT12

Issue No. 20

March 1991

EDITORIAL

Good, evil and oil

● Let us state it clearly: the Gulf War, presently at the end of what will probably come to be seen as its first chapter, was not about defeating 'evil', or even about 'liberating' Kuwait. It was about oil, and who controls its price. It was also about the US government attempting to redesign the post-'Cold War' Middle East to its advantage.

Irish Republicans do not for one minute condone the invasion or occupation of Kuwait. But they, along with anti-imperialists everywhere, believe that this was a matter to be resolved by, and between, Arab states. By intervening, and now by visiting humiliation on Iraq, the Allies are sowing the seeds of deep and lasting trouble in that region, just as the Treaty of Versailles did with Germany in 1918.

Then there is the torrent of jingoism, hypocrisy and lies which poured out of the mouths of Allied government spokespersons, of Allied army officers and indeed of many press correspondents — to their shame — as they depicted the War as just, good,

moral, beneficial to humanity.

The contrast between establishment attitudes to that war and to the war of liberation in Ireland could not have been starker. Dropping bombs on someone else's country was just, good, moral, beneficial... but throwing bombs at an army of occupation in your own country was the opposite of all these things, Irish Republicans were told.

Further afield, hypocrisy also reigned. No fewer than ten UN resolutions were passed last year and the biggest military deployment since World War Two was despatched to enforce them. Meanwhile, Palestinians are still rotting in camps and in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, and the two UN resolutions concerning them remain a dead letter.

In the South of Ireland, the Dublin government's decision to allow US war planes to refuel in Shannon Airport further eroded Irish neutrality, and presented the international community with the spectacle of a government allowing its airport to be used to 'liberate Kuwait', but incapable to press for the liberation of its own country.



Sinn Féin

CONTENTS

POLITICAL

'Brooke talks' to end	2
Thatcher resigns	2
South elects woman President	2
SF President reasserts ideals of 1916.....	2

ECONOMIC & SOCIAL

British threaten economic apartheid	2
Derry people oppose pollution	2
Springvale: British plan without substance	3
Worst poverty in Europe — Report.....	3

LOYALISTS

Loyalists strike in Tyrone and Belfast	3
Sinister new tactics	3
Tenth Tyrone victim of death squads	3
Unionist MP sets up SF councillor for assassination	3
Nationalists assassinated in Belfast and Armagh	3
Loyalists firebomb Dublin	3

JUSTICE

'Casement Accused' update	3
McNamee case for Europe	4
Extraditee released	4
McKee goes free — extradition refused	4
Dessie Ellis — British change the charges	4
US seeks Irish prisoner	4
Eksund Three tried in Paris	4
New arsenal of repressive laws	5
Eighteen years in British jails	5

REPRESSION

Bloody Sunday commemorated	5
Shoot-to-kill case for Europe	5
Shoot-to-kill — the killing of Fergal Caragher	5
New Consensus — bogus 'Peace' group	6
'Border hostages' open more roads.....	6

CENSORSHIP

South renews censorship laws	6
Law lords uphold media ban	6

BOOKS

.....	6
-------	---

CULTURE

Glór na nGael case delayed	6
Prisoners' appeal rejected	7
Growth in Irish-medium education	7

MILITARY OPERATIONS.....

.....	7
-------	---

'Brooke talks' to end

● British minister for the North of Ireland Peter Brooke admitted on February 14th that his attempts to get the Unionists and the SDLP to engage in talks about a future administration for the North were in their "closing stages" — in other words, had failed.

The position of each side hinges on the irreconcilable nature of two views of the North. Unionists want any talks, whether or not Dublin is involved at any stage, to reaffirm clearly that the North of Ireland is British and part of the 'United Kingdom'. On the other hand, the middle-class Catholic party SDLP, assured of some access to power and influence through its contacts with the Dublin government and the London-Dublin Agreement, does not want to publicly abandon the more Nationalist stance, which is that of many of their voters and which sees the North as part of Ireland, with a link to Britain through the proclaimed 'Britishness' of Unionists.

The result of this divergence was that Unionists wanted any talks with Dublin to take place only after Unionists and the SDLP had agreed on some form of administration for the North, and that in talking to Dublin both Unionist and SDLP would be seen as one 'United Kingdom delegation' led by Brooke.

For many Northern Nationalists the Brooke initiative, dubbed 'talks about talks', was a time-wasting diversion, and now that it is out of the way Republicans have suggested that Nationalists North and South should push for an 'Irish agenda', based on the demand for Irish self-determination and with the creation of an Irish national democracy as its central objective.

Thatcher resigns

● The resignation of Margaret Thatcher last December after eleven years as British Prime Minister was greeted with relief by Nationalists in the North of Ireland. Many among them would agree with the sentiments expressed by the member of Parliament for West Belfast and President of Sinn Féin, Gerry Adams:

"Thatcherism impeded any chance of achieving peace; she has prolonged, unnecessarily, the whole process of getting peace. We will always associate her with the hunger-strikes of 1980-'81. The demands were very basic and have since then been met, but her intransigence elevated it from a domestic dispute over prison conditions to an international dispute which focused on the British-Irish relationship."

Gerry Adams listed the many instances of erosion of human rights under Thatcher's premiership, including the end of the right of silence for detainees, the media ban on Republicans and sympathisers, the shoot-to-kill policy and emergency laws no longer being renewable but a permanent feature. To that must be added Thatcher's economic policies of cutbacks in public services, which had disastrous effects on the lives of the most dispossessed.

"Resigning was the most constructive thing she has done. Eleven years after she came to power, the demand for Irish freedom has outlived her arrogant and dogmatic reign. Her demise provides an opportunity for her successors to adopt the type of imaginative approach which brought such dramatic and democratic changes in Eastern Europe."

South elects woman President

● The South of Ireland elected its first woman President, Mary Robinson, last November. The historic appointment was due in no small part to her progressive record on

social and women's issues, which made her more popular than the other two candidates, Brian Lenihan of Fianna Fáil (who was sacked from the Coalition government in the midst of a national scandal before the election) and Austin Currie of Fine Gael (a former SDLP member). The election was historical in another sense in that it was the first time a Fianna Fáil candidate was defeated in a Presidential election.

Mary Robinson resigned from the Labour Party in 1985 because of its support for the Hillsborough Agreement. She felt it was unfair to Unionists in the North. Unionists claim that her election success was influenced by her advocacy of the removal of Articles 2 and 3 from the 1937 Constitution in the 26 Counties, which they see as a threat to the existence of the Six Counties because they contain a territorial claim to the whole of Ireland. However, this did not feature in her campaign, as she was fully aware that the vast majority of voters still retain the aspiration for national reunification.

The main thrust of her campaign was that she wanted to be President for all the people of Ireland and a conduit towards reconciliation and peace. The Presidency is a titular position and, in as much as she can be president of a partitioned country, Sinn Féin welcomed her appointment, while pointing out that it was indicative of some sections of the Irish left that someone so progressive on social and women's issues could be so reactionary on the national question.

Sinn Féin President reasserts ideals of 1916

● At the 86th Sinn Féin Ard Fheis in Dublin in February, in the year of the 75th anniversary of the 1916 Easter Rising against British imperialism in Ireland, Gerry Adams, President of Sinn Féin, reasserted the demands of the 1916 Proclamation of the Republic — "the right of the people of Ireland to the ownership of Ireland" — and praised those Republicans and Nationalists carrying on that struggle in Ireland today.

He condemned the Dublin government, revisionist historians and the clergy who feared the social and democratic intent of the Proclamation and were loath to celebrate the ideals of 1916.

He re-affirmed Sinn Féin's commitment to the search for peace, declaring that "Sinn Féin has consistently said that negotiations, without preconditions, are an essential first step to the search for peace... We remain committed to this search for a real and lasting peace."

He criticised neo-Unionists, North and South, who for their own interests support 'Pax Britannica' and relinquish all claims to reunification. These people, he stated, ignore the sectarian role of Unionism and offer "solutions incapable of bringing real peace. Subverting the right of all our people to a national democracy in order to support the undemocratic partition of our country can only reinforce the division of our people and strengthen the sectarian base upon which Unionism exists."

He condemned British repression in Ireland and rejected the claim to neutrality declared in the Brooke talks, stating that Britain was aware that talks with Sinn Féin were inevitable and, therefore, should "move to a policy of constructive and peaceful dissolution of the union and seek to persuade Unionists of this."

Turning to the Hunger Strike of 1981, he declared that Margaret Thatcher's legacy in Ireland was the deaths of ten hunger strikers and Britain's "ignoble distinction of having the worst record on human rights of any signatory of the European Convention". British prime minister John Major "following her mistakes, had not yet adopted a strategy for lasting peace in Ireland based on the restoration of national democratic rights."

British threaten economic apartheid

● Britain's Economy Minister in the North, Richard Needham, made a major blunder at the end of January and was forced to backtrack when he tried to impose a form of economic apartheid against the entire Nationalist community of West Belfast.

Amidst saturation media coverage, Needham accused the IRA and the Sinn Féin MP for West Belfast, Gerry Adams, of destroying current jobs and future prospects of investment. He threatened to redirect £25-million earmarked for economic development into paying for damage caused in IRA attacks on a number of commercial premises. Damage compensation is usually paid through a separate budget.

Needham immediately came under attack from *The Irish News* which argued that the financial cost of the damage should be "borne by all taxpayers in the United Kingdom not just Northern Ireland" which is "a small enough pond, and the ripples he causes affect many people". The editorial went on to say that Needham "then turned the knife" in words clearly directed at the Nationalist community when he said:

"The people in these areas have to make up their minds when it comes to an election whether they wish to continue to live in a world without work or whether they reject the supporters of violence."

"The message is clear" said the editorial. "Until you unseat Gerry Adams from West Belfast nothing will be done to alleviate the deprivation which so clearly exists. That is not only blackmail of the most pernicious kind but a gross insult to nationalists across Northern Ireland."

"Sinn Féin is a party which has the right to operate in Northern Ireland under the law. Its representatives have the right to sit in council chambers, the House of Commons and even (though it would be remarkable to see it) the House of Lords. The economic sanctions Mr Needham is talking about are clearly undemocratic."

Derry people oppose pollution

● Community groups, local residents, the Irish Farmers Association and Sinn Féin have joined the Derry Development Education Centre in opposing unequivocally the siting of a new toxic waste incinerator in Campsie on the outskirts of Derry.

Du Pont, an American multinational company, is planning to construct a toxic waste incinerator to dispose of 23,000 tons of highly toxic naphtha tar emulsion fuel which the North's Department of the Environment permitted the British Oxygen Company to leave behind after its factory closed down.

To be economically viable, however, Du Pont's incinerator (like the infamous Sellafeld in England) would have to become a dumping ground for imported toxic waste too dangerous to be disposed of in countries with stricter environmental protection laws.

In July 1990, following an inquiry by Derry Sinn Féin Councillor Hugh Brady, Du Pont claimed that the waste was not dangerous. However, in March 1991, an internal memorandum informed workers that inhalation or skin contact could cause cancer and stated "this emulsion has not been tested for environmental effects".

The decision to site the incinerator in Derry was taken jointly within the framework of the Hillsborough Agreement by 26-County environment minister Pádraig Flynn and his British counterpart Richard Needham in the North. This followed parallel consultancies commissioned in Britain and Ireland and was announced under the guise of creating employment and in the context of the now frequently-

used threat of disinvestment if the community's opposition to this dirty industry was successful.

Councillor Brady, referring to this "conspiracy to impose toxic waste on the people of North West Ireland", declared Sinn Féin's total opposition to the incinerator and affirmed the party's commitment to "clean production".

"Richard Needham," he declared, "may believe that his role as a British colonial ruler gives him the authority to act as a dictator but he will learn that the Irish people's opposition to the siting of the poison process here will be determined and resolute."

Springvale — British plan without substance

● British government plans for the development of a vacant industrial site in West Belfast have drawn heavy criticism from the local MP, Sinn Féin President Gerry Adams, and over 40 community groups in Belfast. The former Mackie's Engineering Works site in West Belfast is earmarked for development by the British government in its bid to 'normalise' the area.

Gerry Adams, whose party has already made two submissions to the Springvale development team, has called for a full public inquiry into the plans being developed for the site in advance of the March deadline for local submissions on the three-options plan of the Department of the Environment. He affirmed his party's commitment to the establishment of a solid manufacturing base in West Belfast and declared Sinn Féin's opposition to the British Conservative Party's reliance on the private sector, stating that "public spending must, therefore, be used to create a necessary 2,000 real jobs and maintain existing ones".

British environment minister Richard Needham, ignoring Britain's role in the underdevelopment of the North of Ireland, particularly the Nationalist areas, and the use of discrimination in employment as a means of buying Unionist loyalty, indicated that development was conditional upon the cessation of "violence".

Eileen Howell, manager of the local community group the Falls Community Council, said:

"In our eyes the people of West Belfast have been the victims of government economic policies... Therefore, any attempt now to introduce political conditions into the Springvale development cannot possibly be accepted."

Worst Poverty in Europe — Report

● A recent Child Poverty Action Group survey has found that the Six Counties has the worst poverty rate in the European Community:

"Two-fifths of Northern Ireland's population have been living in poverty for many years now. It is caused by a mixture of high unemployment and low wages... Wages must also be improved. Companies sometimes come here because they know of the low wage levels that prevail."

After the North of Ireland, Greece and Portugal have the next highest poverty rate followed by the 26 Counties and Spain. Enjoying the lowest poverty rates are Germany, Holland, Luxembourg and Belgium with poverty affecting 7% to 8% of the population.

LOYALISTS

Loyalists strike in Tyrone and Belfast

● Since November, Loyalist killers have been terrorising the Nationalist communities in Tyrone and Belfast in a spate of

assassinations and attempted killings.

In November, long-standing Sinn Féin member Tommy Casey (57) was shot dead in Cookstown. His wife Kathleen was also injured in the attack which occurred at the back of a friend's home.

Tommy Casey had survived a previous Loyalist assassination bid.

Sinn Féin Councillor Francie Molloy stated that following the previous attacks the Casey family had suffered severe harassment at the hands of the British crown forces. Sinn Féin also called on the RUC to allay suspicion that there was collusion between the RUC and the UVF in the murder by publishing a ballistics report on the weapons used in the attack. Councillor Sean Begley said that the lack of interest shown by the British army and the RUC, in either conducting raids for arms or making arrests following Loyalist murders, stands in contrast to the widespread raids and arrests which take place in Nationalist areas on an ongoing basis.

Sinister new tactic

● In a sinister new development in the wave of attacks by Loyalists in the mid-Ulster area, the house, at which Tommy Casey was murdered, was destroyed in an arson attack by an armed gang who locked two women in a shed and waited for two hours before setting fire to the house when the male members of the family failed to return home.

Tenth victim of Loyalist death squads

● Malachy McIvor (42) became the tenth victim in a year of pro-British death-squad activity in Tyrone when he was murdered while working in a garage near Stewartstown. McIvor was hit at least 17 times in a burst of automatic gunfire and died instantly. The killing was later claimed by the Ulster Volunteer Force.

As a result of the number of killings and assassination attempts in the area the Nationalist community in Tyrone now lives in constant fear; a fear compounded by the fact that recently the files of 38 people from the Tyrone area 'disappeared' from a British military vehicle in the Castledearg/Strabane area. Often these files end up in the hands of Loyalist killers.

Unionist MP sets up SF councillor for assassination

● Sinn Féin Councillor Francie Molloy is seeking legal advice over remarks made by Unionist MP Ken Maginnis during a council meeting in Tyrone. During the meeting, Molloy objected to the omission of the name of former Councillor and IRA Volunteer Martin McCaughey, who was shot dead by an SAS undercover squad, from a council vote of sympathy for those recently killed in the area. Maginnis accused Molloy of involvement in deaths in the area saying: "You arrange them, you supervise them, you carry them out."

Given Maginnis's record of using the cover of parliamentary privilege to target individuals, his public accusations about Councillor Molloy are worrying in the extreme.

Nationalists assassinated in Belfast

● In November, North Belfast man, Gary Campbell (21), was shot dead by Loyalists as

he watched television in his home. Two men burst into the house and shot Campbell several times at close range, in front of his girlfriend and 2-year-old child. He died a short time later in hospital. The attack was a carbon copy of the shooting of another Nationalist in the same area two years ago.

At the end of January, another North Belfast man, father of five Sean Rafferty (44), was shot dead when Loyalist gunmen burst into his home in the Oldpark area.

Another assassination bid in the same area by Loyalist death-squads was foiled when Ardoynne woman Brenda Taggart struggled with two gunmen who broke into her home and fired shots at her husband.

The Ardoynne and Oldpark areas have become infamous for such sectarian killings. The area is surrounded on all sides by Loyalist strongholds and the ease with which the pro-British death-squads can move in the area has long led Nationalists to conclude that they operate with the active collusion of elements within the British military forces.

Early in January, 26-year-old Armagh man, Jervis Lynch, became the first Nationalist assassination victim of the new year. Loyalists entered the house outside Lurgan and shot Mr Lynch several times at point-blank range in the hallway. Mr Lynch had had no involvement with the Republican Movement.

Meanwhile on February 18th, Loyalist assassins shot and seriously wounded father-of-one, Raymond Croskery (24), after bursting into his West Belfast home. His condition is still serious in hospital where he underwent emergency surgery for an artery replacement. A 13-year-old Nationalist schoolboy fortunately escaped death or injury when the two unmasked Loyalists ran past him to their getaway vehicle, later found in the predominantly Protestant Shankill Road.

And tragically, just six days later on February 24th, Catholic youth leader, Peter McTasney (25), was killed when Loyalist gunmen fired indiscriminately into the living-room of his home in the vulnerable Bawnmore estate in North Belfast. The victim's three-year-old niece was grazed on the head during the shooting. It is the second tragedy to affect the McTasney family; in 1985 the victim's brother-in-law was assassinated by Loyalists. Mr McTasney became the 648th victim of Loyalist death-squads in the North Belfast area.

Loyalists firebomb Dublin

● Up to 20 firebomb devices were planted recently in stores in Dublin City Centre by the Loyalist Ulster Freedom Fighters. Two devices were discovered in Clery's store in O'Connell Street, the main thoroughfare in the city centre, shortly after opening on Monday February 4th. Later, two more devices were found in Dunnes' Stores and the Stephen's Green Shopping Centre.

In a statement issued to the BBC in Belfast, on the Monday evening, the UFF claimed that there were 15-20 such devices planted all over Dublin City Centre.

JUSTICE

'Casement Accused' update

● A total of 31 people have now been charged in connection with the killing of two British undercover soldiers after an incident at a Republican funeral in 1988.

To date, in five separate show trials before one-judge Diplock Courts, 13 people have been convicted and sentenced to a combined total of 248 years imprisonment. Five of the 13 people convicted have received life sentences, two of whom have been sentenced to recommended terms of 25 years

imprisonment. The remainder await their trial, and to date, there appears to be no indication that the revengeful arrests and charges preferred by the DPP will end.

The convictions arise from an incident in March 1988, when a car containing two armed British undercover soldiers drove at speed towards mourners attending the funeral of Caoimhin Mac Brádaigh. Mourners were very alarmed because Mac Brádaigh was one of three unarmed people killed several days earlier by a Loyalist paramilitary who had launched a gun and grenade attack on mourners attending the burial of Mairéad Farrell, Seán Savage and Danny McCann, three IRA Volunteers killed by the SAS in Gibraltar.

Understandably, the atmosphere at Mac Brádaigh's funeral was highly charged, with the majority of those in attendance still shaken by the earlier Loyalist attack. The reaction of mourners and media alike to the car driving at the funeral was that it was yet another Loyalist attack. In an act of what they perceived as self-defence, mourners immediately surrounded the car and overpowered the two occupants, one of whom fired a shot from his British army pistol. The soldiers were taken from the scene and later executed by the IRA.

In a surprising development, the Court of Appeal freed one of the 'Casement Accused', West Belfast man Sean Lennon. The appeal court judge ruled that the central issue, as the 'Casement Accused' have asserted all along, was whether Lennon had correctly assessed the situation in the atmosphere of fear present. He contended that the evidence was not sufficient to prove Lennon did not honestly believe the soldiers were a danger to those participating in the funeral.

The ruling has set a precedent which can be argued by those waiting for their appeals against conviction.

Three of those accused are currently awaiting the decision of their appeal against Life sentences.

In another 'Casement Accused' case, the judge dismissed himself due to 'unique circumstances', but did not elaborate on what these were, and ordered a new trial.

McNamee case for Europe

● The family and supporters of Danny McNamee, a Queen's University graduate, pledged to take his case to the European Court of Human Rights, after they were "shocked and disgusted" by the Appeal Court's decision to reject his application for leave to appeal against a savage 25-year sentence on conspiracy charges. They are determined to take his case to Europe to prove to the world the true worth of British justice.

The defence's main arguments were that the judge's decisions to allow the charge to be changed twice, with no time for McNamee to prepare a defence, resulted in an unfair trial. The European Convention, Article 6, sub-section 3, says that defendants in any trial are entitled, as a basic human right, to know the case against them in detail and have sufficient time to prepare an adequate defence.

Lord Lane, the most blatantly anti-Irish of British judges, delivered the three-judge Appeal Court's decision on January 18th. He rejected all the grounds of appeal which related to the conduct of the original trial judge. He said of the defence arguments that they were phrased in "temperate language" and amounted to serious allegations which on examination had no substance. He added that the trial had been "impeccably conducted" and that justice had been done. He also refused a defence application for leave to appeal to the House of Lords on the grounds that there were no grounds for appeal.

McNamee was refused permission to appear in

court throughout the hearing and throughout the judgement.

Lawyers and family have made it quite clear that this is not the end of the road in their fight for Danny McNamee.

Extraditee released

● Extradited by the Dublin government and imprisoned for over ten years, Robert Russell was freed on February 25th following a successful appeal against the original 1981 conviction which sentenced him to 21 years for the attempted murder of an RUC officer.

Diplock judges admitted that the evidence used to convict him twice was "unacceptable" because of "inconsistencies and discrepancies".

Russell was convicted in a Diplock non-jury court in August 1981. Shortly after the original trial, the conviction was set aside on appeal and the court ordered a retrial. At the retrial, the judge reimposed a new 20-year sentence. Russell lodged a further appeal.

With little faith in the working of so-called British justice, Russell escaped in the mass escape of Republican POWs from Long Kesh in September 1983. His freedom was to be short-lived however. In just over six months, he was arrested and held in Dublin on warrants from the RUC. Having spent four years in Dublin fighting extradition, the controversy surrounding the Dublin government's extradition of a man who should have never been convicted in the first place came to a head when Russell was forcibly handed over the border to British crown forces in August 1988.

Now, ten years after the original trial, an appeal, a retrial and a second appeal, Robert Russell has finally had his conviction quashed.

McKee goes free — extradition refused

● While the quashing of the extradition order against Belfast man Michael McKee represents a small but important victory, it is expected to result in stronger pressure from the British to have further changes in Dublin's extradition law.

The decision by the High Court, on January 25th, that possession of an automatic firearm did not constitute grounds for exclusion from the political exemption under the 1987 Extradition Act will have deeply angered the British, who have been watching all cases under the new act with a very keen eye.

Support for change has come from Fine Gael, who have introduced a private members bill in Leinster House which calls for the closing-up of what that party says are "glaring loopholes", and the Progressive Democrats have said the decision appears to "confirm our worries" about the current legislation.

Dessie Ellis — British change the charges

● Dessie Ellis, the first Irish citizen to be extradited under the 1987 Extradition Act to another jurisdiction, thereby allowing the 26-County state to ratify the European Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism, is now at the centre of another political row over extradition. Ellis was extradited to Britain on November 14th, 1990, to face charges of conspiracy. On February 14th a magistrate dropped the original charges and returned him for trial on two new conspiracy charges.

Speaking of the original conspiracy charges, his solicitor said: "It is a very worrying situation where the

Attorney-General lends his weight to such proceedings [the extradition proceedings] and then there's no case to begin with, there's no prima facie case."

Under 'normal' procedures in extradition cases, the person involved is brought to trial on the charge in respect of which they were extradited.

The Irish Anti-Extradition Committee called for the immediate release of Dessie Ellis. Welcoming statements by a number of leading Irish politicians calling for the same, they said: "What is needed now is legislation to stop the extradition of nationals."

Ellis was on his 36th day of hunger-strike when he was taken on a stretcher to a British Air Force jet and flown from his native country to England. While in Ireland, Ellis had consistently stated that he was prepared to stand trial in his own country under the existing Criminal Jurisdiction Act, an option rejected by the Fianna Fáil/Progressive Democrats coalition government. He believed that any Irish person charged with political offences would not receive a fair trial in the British courts. Directly after his extradition, the Dublin government announced that it would be sending an official observer to the trial, which prompted Green Party TD Roger Garland to say: "This is sickening hypocrisy... It's a bit like attending the execution to ensure the knot is nicely tied."

The day after his extradition, Dessie Ellis, responding to pleas from his parents and family, called off his hunger-strike.

US seeks Irish prisoner

● Gerry McGeough, currently on remand in a German prison following his arrest in 1988, was served with extradition warrants from the US on January 5th, 1991.

On March 16th, 1990, the investigating magistrate ordered that charges of causing an explosion and attempted murder at Duisberg should be dropped for lack of evidence. The prosecution subsequently appealed this and the charges were reintroduced.

At the start of the trial on August 16th, 1990, British media commentators complained bitterly about the opportunity afforded to the accused to address the court at length on the injustice of Britain's occupation of Ireland.

If McGeough is extradited he could become the US's second Joe Doherty. Doherty has been held in custody for eight years without ever being convicted of an offence.

The Irish Political Prisoners in Europe Solidarity Group have said that they "view the recent serving of extradition warrants on Gerry McGeough as a sinister development in the cases of Irish people imprisoned in European jails".

Eksund Three tried in Paris

● The three Republicans arrested on board the Eksund were tried in Paris last January, in connection with the cargo of 150 tons of arms found on the ship. The prosecutor complained that the men spoke as a "united block" and would not deny they were soldiers.

"They even gave their names and regiment numbers", he added.

The witnesses called by the defence included Tim Pat Coogan, former editor of the Irish Press, and anti-imperialist and former civil rights activist Bernadette Devlin-McAliskey.

McAliskey explained to the judges how every time Nationalists in the North of Ireland tried some non-violent action, the British state replied with coercive laws. Coogan explained that he understood why "a young Catholic in Northern Ireland would join the IRA".

The prosecutor asked for seven-year sentences for the three men. Verdict in March.

New arsenal of repressive laws

● The British government plans to refine existing repressive legislation to further restrict civil liberties and to increase the use of the courts as a weapon to remove political opponents to British rule in the Six Counties.

The Emergency Provisions Bill, which will come into force in 1992 to replace the existing Emergency Provisions Act, has been described by human rights groups, politicians and legal rights groups as one of the most draconian pieces of legislation to be introduced here. The British government appears determined to ignore even the meagre recommendations of its own Colville Report and the Standing Advisory Committee on Human Rights and push ahead with an even larger battery of repressive legislation.

The Bill represents yet another admission on the part of the British of their inability to administer the Six Counties without the most drastic of legal measures.

The new Bill increases the power of the courts to imprison people with the introduction of three new 'offences':

● Possession of items intended for 'terrorist' purposes.

This can mean being in possession of household items such as rubber gloves, an alarm clock or batteries. Guilt can be established on the word of an RUC member that possession of the items meant that the person was 'equipped for terrorism'.

● The re-opening of border roads or the by-passing of closed roads.

Under this 'offence', British crown forces have the power to seize and retain vehicles and equipment used in the opening of the roads as well as imprisoning those involved in the ongoing campaign of opening border roads, the closure of which has cut off people from their farms, churches, villages and relatives.

● A new offence carrying a life sentence for "anyone who directs at any level the activities of an organisation which is concerned in the commission of acts of terrorism".

Although there are no indications of how such a charge would be sustained, it would appear from the wording and the tone of the schedule that it would be possible for the British government to use this particular piece of legislation to intern political opponents to their regime in Ireland.

Furthermore, the new Bill proposes to give extended powers to the RUC to examine and seize documentation and data taken during house raids or at road blocks. The power of investigation would include requiring people to attend for interview, to produce documents and to provide an explanation for them. Failure to do any of these things would be an offence. It would also be an offence to give false or misleading explanations or falsify, conceal or destroy documents if a person knows or suspects an investigation is being carried out or is likely to be carried out at some future date. These proposals would shift the onus of proof onto those under investigation.

Despite recommendations by British Lord Colville, internment is to remain on the statute books as a means of enforcing the blanket imprisonment of those opposed to British government policy.

The Bill represents a determined effort to discard the last vestiges of human, civil or legal rights in the Six Counties. The Committee for the Administration of Justice with the backing of the British National Council for Civil Liberties argued for the immediate scrapping of the Bill. The SDLP's Seamus Mallon called it "dangerous, abhorrent and open to abuse".

Sinn Féin's party chairperson in the Six Counties, Mitchel McLaughlin, said:

"British political policy in Ireland is a failure held together by repressive laws which successive governments have sought to refine and make more

effective... The depths to which the British government have been forced to sink in eroding civil rights in the North is evidence of their inability to create the conditions of lasting peace."

Eighteen years in British jails

● The prison regime in Britain for Irish political prisoners is an especially punitive one. The British government are treating these prisoners and their families as political hostages.

One of the most savage examples of the persecution of Irish political prisoners has been the treatment of three West Belfast men sentenced to life imprisonment in 1973 on explosive charges. Roy Walsh, Billy Armstrong and Paul Holmes have spent almost 18 years in prison in England. All of those arrested and charged with them, some also sentenced to life imprisonment, have since been released, a number of them after being transferred to prisons in the North of Ireland.

These three men, in contrast, have recently been told, not only that they are not to be released, but that they will not be considered for release for another five years. Effectively they will serve 23 years before they are even considered for release.

In every way, Irish political prisoners are victimised by the British prison system. So also are their families, who are faced with long journeys whenever they wish to make a prison visit, and the prisoners' requests for transfer are motivated primarily by a desire to reduce the hardship for their families.

In recent years, many voices have been raised at the inhumane treatment of these prisoners, including the late Cardinal Tomás Ó Fiaich and the National Association of Probation Officers. The latter have publicly noted that prison rules state clearly that prisoners should be situated as close to families as possible. In 1987, the Irish Commission for Prisoners Overseas, a subsection of the Bishops Commission on Immigrants, called upon the Dublin government to ratify the European transfer treaty to facilitate the transfer of Irish prisoners from Britain.

REPRESSION

Bloody Sunday commemorated

● Upwards of 5,000 people participated in this year's Bloody Sunday march in Derry to commemorate the death of 14 civil right demonstrators murdered in an unprovoked attack by British Paratroopers in Derry, in 1972. The march took place on Sunday, January 27th, and was organised by the Bloody Sunday Initiative. Members of the RUC photographed people participating in the march at several points along the route.

The march was headed by relatives who carried black flags and wreaths. The main speaker at the rally, Anne Speed of Sinn Féin's Ard Chomhairle, pointed out that the same army, which in 1972 shot down unarmed Irish people on their own streets, is now engaged in a war in the Middle East, the fundamental aim of which, she said, was to deny Arab people, particularly the Palestinians, the right to self-determination.

She pointed out that the Palestinians had been waiting 27 years for the implementation of UN Resolution 242, while the Irish people have been waiting 800 years "for the English invaders to quit Ireland.

"We want our freedom and nothing less. We are prepared to talk at any time, and any place, about it, to anybody, even to people who declare themselves totally uninterested as they tighten their grip around our throats." She finished with a quote from James

Connolly: "Our demands most moderate are, we only want the earth." We want our freedom and nothing else. That will be real justice."

As Anne Speed spoke, several British helicopters hovered overhead in an attempt to drown out her speech.

Following the main address, a member of 20/20 Vision cultural group recited a poem concerning the events of Bloody Sunday 1972. He was followed by Paddy Logue of Derry Trades Council who recalled the murderous onslaught by British soldiers on peaceful demonstrators.

Shoot-to-kill case for Europe

● The families of three IRA Volunteers, murdered by the SAS in February 1985, are preparing to take their case to the European Court following a refusal by the Court of Appeal in Belfast to compel those who fired the fatal shots to attend the inquest into the murders of their sons.

In Britain, a coroner is required to ensure that all interested parties have access to witnesses for examination.

However, the Appeal Court hearing on December 8th, presided over by Lord Chief Justice Brian Hutton, held that the coroner at the inquest hearing on the deaths of Charles Breslin and Michael and David Devine was right to admit written statements only from those responsible for the killings and not to compel them to attend in person and subject themselves to cross-examination.

This decision has added the official stamp of approval of the Northern judiciary on political decisions by the British government to reduce the power of the Coroners' Court — the last court in the Six Counties capable of deciding by jury the issues involved in a violent death.

The jury in the Coroners' Court currently may state only when, where and how a death occurred. It may not apportion any blame or express any opinion regarding criminal or civil liability.

Speaking after the Appeal hearing, Sinn Féin spokesperson Ivan Barr said:

"The inquest system has been so radically altered over the years by the British state that it is now a totally ineffectual means of securing details about the circumstances surrounding disputed killings involving crown forces in the North."

Shoot to Kill — the killing of Fergal Caraher

● The Irish National Congress, a Southern-based group established last year to pursue unity and peace, announced in January that it has initiated criminal proceedings against the British Ministry of Defence for the killing of Sinn Féin member, 20-year-old Fergal Caraher, and the wounding of his brother, Michael, in South Armagh on December 30th, 1990.

The infamous Royal Marines, the British army regiment responsible, claimed that Caraher's car failed to stop at a checkpoint and tried to run them down.

This was strongly denied by eye-witnesses and by the injured Michael Caraher, who stated that the brothers were victims of an unprovoked attack as they drove away from a checkpoint, having just been searched by crown forces in Cullyhanna.

Those who killed Fergal Caraher were back on patrol in the area within 24 hours. His father, Peter John Caraher, has stated that his second youngest son has been jeered at by British forces who have threatened him with death.

Peter Caraher, his family and those concerned with achieving justice for the bereaved family picketed the home of New Consensus leader, David Norris, in

January prior to his planned and much-publicised picket of the Sinn Féin Ard Fheis, demanding to know if his opposition to violence stretched as far as condemning the British crown forces.

A decision to conduct an independent public inquiry has been taken by the INC and the Caraher family. A number of human rights groups and eminent lawyers have been contacted.

Jim McAllister, Sinn Féin councillor for the area, who had spoken to the men minutes before the killing, declared that: "The revelations of some witnesses in the area will leave no doubt in anyone's mind over how these lads were shot."

New Consensus — bogus 'Peace' group

● For the third year in succession, the New Consensus group picketed Sinn Féin's Ard Fheis (national conference) in Dublin on February 2nd. The group is a conglomerate of pro-partitionist political groups and individuals North and South of the border. In the main, New Consensus is organised and controlled by the Workers' Party, an organisation which has accepted the Unionist veto over Irish reunification and is openly linked with the criminal activities of the Official IRA in the North.

The main slogan of New Consensus is 'Peace in Ireland' but its activities in 'promoting peace' have been confined to attacking Republicans. Prior to the picket, which was expected to have attracted thousands but instead was supported only by about 200, Sinn Féin stated that, while it accepted the group's right to express its views, it totally rejected its claim to be a peace movement. This was borne out by the fact that Unionist politicians, including Ken Maginnis, who refuse to condemn the violence of the British army, the RUC and the UDR (of which Maginnis is a former major) would be attending the picket. The statement continued:

"The Workers' Party, who are the main forces behind the New Consensus group, are still openly linked with the Official IRA in the North, whose activities now are solely racketeering, beatings and shootings. The Workers' Party also support Loyalist control and the continuation of the Unionist veto on any change in the North.

"New Consensus are completely one-sided. What they are urging on the Irish people, and particularly on Northern Nationalists, is not peace but capitulation. What Sinn Féin seeks is real and lasting peace based on equality, justice and dignity."

RELATIVES PROTEST AT BRITISH INJUSTICE

'Relatives of British Injustice' held a press conference in Dublin during the New Consensus picket to protest at the group's indifference to British and Loyalist paramilitary violence against the Nationalist community in the North.

The group represented relatives of Nationalists killed by plastic bullets, assassinated by Loyalists, ambushed in shoot-to-kill incidents and other disputed killings. The relatives also picketed Leinster House during an Intergovernmental Conference meeting and again outside the Dublin home of New Consensus leader David Norris.

In an effort to try and balance this adverse publicity, New Consensus conceded that it would picket the Belfast offices of the Ulster Defence Association. However, even if it does this, the group would still be guilty of deliberate misrepresentation by not addressing the political conditions which lead to political violence in Ireland.

'Border hostages' open more roads

● The battle by border residents in the Fermanagh and South Armagh areas to

open roads closed by the British army continues unabated despite recently introduced laws allowing for the arrest and indictment of people involved in the re-opening of sealed border roads. Feelings about the closure of these roads run very high in the communities who are subjected to constant British army harassment at check-points.

"It's the humiliation and frustration you feel knowing that every single day you are going to go through the same thing at these check-points. Even when you're not held for hours, you know that you are still going to have to go through the indignity of queuing and being checked out each and every day. Now, we can't even travel after dark."

These were the feelings of one Fermanagh resident about the road closures and the check-points they are forced to endure every day of their lives.

Shortly before Christmas, the British government announced the night-time closure of seven check-points in the Fermanagh area. Such a move enraged local residents who in effect were put under curfew since these were the only roads open in the area, all the other major roads have been made impassable by the British army. Hundreds of families unfortunate enough to have British military border installations in their area, and who have been cynically used as military shields for years, are now night-time hostages trapped in their homes by the latest 'security' policy.

Local residents totally reject the excuse that the closures were intended to protect the local community and many have called for the permanent removal of the check-points.

For the last two years, border residents have been re-opening dozens of other roads to ensure that local residents can go about their business without having to make long detours or to endure harassment at check-points.

During those road openings, residents have been arrested, beaten and shot at with plastic bullets and have seen their hard work destroyed by the British army but they still continue to fight.

At the moment there are 27 roads in one 15-mile stretch of the Fermanagh border. Of those, five have permanent check-points which are now under curfew and all the rest are blown up and barricaded. Such a situation has grave social and economic consequences for the local communities.

In one incident in Kiltober, British troops erected a massive steel structure and filled it with concrete. Within an hour, local people dug out the still wet concrete and used it to fill in the cratered area of the road. During the incident, British soldiers made an incursion across the border and damaged some vehicles. The incident took place in full view of members of the Garda who refused requests from local people to intervene.

Local priest Fr Joe McVeigh has called on the Dublin government to end its co-operation with the British government in closing border roads.

CENSORSHIP

South renews censorship laws

● For the 15th year since 1976, Section 31 of the Broadcasting Act in the 26 Counties was rubber-stamped in January without any vote in the Dublin parliament — an undemocratic measure applied in an equally undemocratic fashion. Under Section 31 neither Republican spokespersons nor their elected representatives can be interviewed.

Censorship in the 26 Counties has effectively distorted public perception of the conflict in the North. It has led to revisionism of contemporary and historical events and, by robbing a substantial part of the nation of its freedom of information, retards any prospect of moving the political debate forward

towards a lasting and peaceful resolution of the national question.

Law Lords uphold media ban

● Five British Law Lords unanimously upheld the British government's strict censorship ban on broadcasting television and radio interviews with Sinn Féin elected representatives or spokespersons. The ban was introduced in October 1988, by former Home Secretary Douglas Hurd, in a bid to squeeze and marginalise support for the Republican Movement.

However, as critics have pointed out, censorship has been counter-productive. Denial of freedom of expression and information has damaged Britain's image abroad as a democracy. In addition, given the nature of the conflict in Ireland, neither the IRA's military nor Sinn Féin's political strategy can be ignored because they are key elements in the conflict.

The predictable outcome of the hearing on February 7th means that those National Union of Journalists' members who challenged the ban are now free to take the case to the European Commission of Human Rights in Strasbourg.

BOOKS

● *The SAS in Ireland*, by human rights priest Father Raymond Murray, is probably the most thoroughly researched work about Britain's use of the notorious SAS regiment of the British army and other undercover units to appear over the past 20 years. An essential reference source for observers of the conflict in Ireland. Price £16.95. Published by the Mercier Press, available from The Art Shop, 53 Falls Road, Belfast 12.

● *Discrimination in Employment in the North of Ireland* is the second in a series of pamphlets produced by the Irish Social & Economic Research Unit, an independent grouping. It examines the legacy of structured discrimination and is a compelling and informative read. Available from the above, cost £1.25.

● *Presidential Address*. Copes of the Presidential Address by Gerry Adams to the 86th Sinn Féin Ard Fheis can be obtained from the Sinn Féin Bookshop, 44 Parnell Square, Dublin 1. Price £1.

CULTURE

Glór na nGael case again delayed

● Judgement was reserved in a case in the High Court on February 15th in which Glór na nGael was applying for discovery of British government papers relating to their decision to withdraw all ACE (Action for Community Employment) funding from the Irish-language umbrella group in August 1990.

The West Belfast Committee of Glór na nGael, which employs 19 workers and oversees the work of seven Irish-medium nursery schools, had funding to the tune of £80,000 withdrawn a week before the start of the new term, as part of a process which has become known as the 'political vetting' of community groups. In spite of widespread criticism of the British government's decision, British Secretary of State Peter Brooke reiterated in a letter to Glór na nGael on October 22nd that funding would continue to be withheld and once again made reference to ensuring that funding would not "have the effect of improving the standing and furthering the aims of paramilitary organisations either directly or indirectly".

An application was then made for a judicial review into the Northern Ireland Office decision to withdraw grant aid but this was temporarily halted at the start of November, when crown lawyers indicated that a

Public Interest Immunity Certificate was to be issued in respect of certain documents relating to the decision.

Some documents were made available to Glór na nGael later in November as a result of further court action but these proved useless in explaining the reasons for the withdrawal of funding. Arguing in the High Court on February 15th against the use of the Public Interest Immunity Certificate to conceal the remaining documents, Reginald Weir QC said: "We must be very wary not to allow the government to shelter behind this catch-all word 'security'."

The issuing of immunity certificates in cases involving the British government has long been a cause of considerable controversy, whether in relation to shoot-to-kill allegations, as was the case in the Gibraltar inquest and the case taken by the widow of Gervaise McKerr, one of those shot in County Armagh in 1982 (whose killings became the subject of the Stalker inquiry) or in the case alleging discrimination by Northern Ireland Electricity (then state-owned) in the awarding of work contracts.

Prisoners' appeal rejected

● Judicial approval was once again given to the practice of cultural discrimination in jails throughout the Six Counties when the appeal by two Long Kesh prisoners, John Pickering from Belfast and Eoghan Mac Cormaic from Derry, into the dismissal of a Civil Bill issued by them in 1989 against the NIO and the prison administration was turned down on January 11th.

Judgement was reserved in the High Court Appeal last August in which the prisoners claimed they were being less favourably treated under the terms of the Northern Ireland Constitution Act, which forbids discrimination on the grounds of religious belief or political opinion.

They based their case on the fact that they were not allowed to speak Irish during visits, write or receive letters in Irish, wear the fáinne (badge) indicating they were Irish speakers, use the Irish form of their proper names or play Gaelic games, and that Irish-language magazines and books were subjected to very lengthy delays before being admitted, compared to English language material, with delays of up to two years in some cases.

In a 13-page judgement, given after a five-month delay, the High Court judge stated that, for the appeal to succeed, the prisoners had to establish not only that they were treated less favourably in some circumstances than other prisoners but also that the discrimination was deliberately done on the ground of their political opinion. On each of the six points he concluded that there was "a sustainable reason for the restriction, based on grounds such as security, maintenance of good order and discipline, lack of resources or smooth running of the prison." Although he concluded: "That is not to say I am expressing judicial approval of each and every restriction or the way in which each has been handled."

In a statement issued following the appeal, the prisoners pointed out that in the course of the legal action the NIO had been forced to give way on the restriction on the wearing of An Fáinne, on the playing of some Gaelic games, on the use of traditional Irish musical instruments and on the right to address outgoing mail in Irish. The NIO claims that these changes took place as part of "an evolving prison regime".

In a further legal move, the prisoners are challenging the outcome of the appeal on the grounds that the verdict in another discrimination case which was heard in the British House of Lords just prior to their appeal last year should have led to a totally different conclusion as to what constitutes discrimination. The outcome of this latest submission is expected in March.

Growth in Irish-medium education

● The North's only Irish-medium secondary school is set to open its doors on September 1st, 1991. Plans for the new school were submitted to the Department of Education in November 1990, and an appeal has been launched to raise the initial £100,000 needed.

Throughout the coming months, fundraising activities will be staged and an ambitious lottery has also been set up to ensure the survival of the project. Committee chairperson Liam Andrews has expressed confidence that the school will receive grant-aid from the NIO, without having to wait 14 years as did the first Irish-medium primary school, Bunscoil Phobal Feirste.

Irish-medium education continues to expand in the Six Counties in spite of the difficulty in obtaining British government funding. To date there are 14 nursery schools and two primary schools, with an Irish-medium stream in a Catholic primary school in Derry and negotiations underway for another stream to open in a Belfast school, possibly next year.

However, considerable obstacles still face those who choose to have their children educated through the medium of Irish in the Six Counties, in contrast to those who choose to send their children to integrated schools.

Minister for Education Brian Mawhinney announced in October last that eight integrated grant-maintained schools are to receive 100% grants towards building and equipment costs. These include one school which is housed in a listed building, and whose facilities include five tennis courts, all-weather pitches and an athletics track. Yet Gaelscoil na bhFál, which was established three years ago in one of the most deprived areas of West Belfast, receives no grant-aid from the Department of Education.

A Working Group set up by Mawhinney in May 1989 to make proposals for a programme of study and attainment targets for Irish-medium primary schools backed plans made by parents and Irish-language groups that Irish-medium schools be treated as favourably as integrated schools in the Six Counties and as Welsh-medium schools in Wales.

The report stated:
"Goodwill is already being shown and assistance given to parents seeking integrated education for their children, and this is commendable. Can the same level of support not be accorded to parents seeking an education for their children which redresses the balance between both traditions?"

IRA military operations

● Since the last production of the *International News Briefing* (November 1990) the impact of IRA military operations in Britain, particularly, and in the occupied Six Counties have succeeded on several occasions in shifting media attention away from the saturation coverage of the Gulf War and onto Britain's role in Ireland.

The most significant attack, in terms of its political impact on the heart of the British government and in the minds of the British public, was an IRA mortar attack on Downing Street, London, on February 7th while British Prime Minister John Major was chairing a 'War Cabinet' meeting on the Gulf. The cool precision of the operation, carried out in the midst of unprecedented tight security measures by the British police around government buildings in the Whitehall area, demonstrated the IRA's ability to continue to press home the demand for Irish national self-determination.

One of the three mortars landed in the back garden of No 10, some 50 feet from where Major and his team were discussing the Gulf War. They quickly vacated the bomb-shattered room and convened the meeting in the security of a concealed bunker in the heart of the building.

In a statement claiming responsibility for the operation the IRA denied that it was an attack on democracy saying "it was an attack aimed at forcing the British establishment to restore democracy to Ireland".

CIVILIAN KILLED

Meanwhile, in a tragedy which could have been avoided but for the deliberate inaction of the British police, one civilian was killed and scores injured in an IRA bomb attack on Victoria Railway Station on February 18th. The British police's excuse for not evacuating the station was that it could "cause too much inconvenience to commuters". Precisely in order to avoid confusion and risk to civilians, the IRA had placed a warning bomb in Paddington Station which exploded harmlessly in the early hours of the 18th. The IRA referred to this bomb in telephone warnings to the British police some 40 minutes before a second bomb exploded in Victoria station at 7.40am. Instead of taking the warning seriously in the context of the Paddington warning bomb, the police instead treated the telephone warnings as one in a series of hoax calls received on a daily basis and refused to evacuate the station. The police also stated that the time-scale given in the warning was inadequate given the numbers of commuters involved. In the aftermath of the bomb explosion however, all 14 London mainline stations were evacuated in the space of 15 minutes.

IRA operations throughout the occupied Six Counties have resulted in the deaths of eight members of the British military forces since last November while many more have been injured. Operations up to and following a three-day IRA suspension of offensive military operations over the Christmas period have demonstrated the IRA's capability of striking in the urban and rural areas.

Prior to Christmas, three RUC personnel were ambushed and killed in the Castor Bay area of Lurgan, North Armagh, and a UDR sergeant major was killed in a bomb attack in Cookstown, County Tyrone. On December 30th an RUC member was ambushed and killed in another attack in Lurgan and some 12 hours later two British soldiers were injured in a bomb attack in Stewartstown, County Tyrone.

Two massive landmine attacks in the Cullyhanna area of South Armagh on January 7th and 19th inflicted three fatalities on the British army: two British army helicopters, the supply lifeline of the British forces along the border, were hit in concentrated IRA anti-aircraft gunfire in Forkhill on January 31st and Crossmaglen on February 13th. Both were forced to land.

Elsewhere, British military bases and permanent check-points have been constant targets: Magherafelt UDR headquarters was devastated in a 500lb van-bomb attack on February 31st; five RUC personnel were injured in grenade attacks, on January 11th, on barracks in Belfast and Newry. Twenty minutes after the IRA suspension ended, Roslea British army check-point was attacked by heavy machine-gun fire and on December 27th two RUC were injured in a bomb attack on Mountpottinger barracks in East Belfast. The border check-point at Aughnacloy, County Fermanagh, also came under heavy fire on New Year's Day.

The placing of elaborate hoax bombs in strategic positions across the Six Counties has been a prominent feature of IRA strategy in the past months. The result has effectively stretched the British forces and thrown them into a state of confusion and high alert. The strategy has also seriously undermined the British government's normalisation policy and redirected its concentration away from widescale harassment of the Nationalist community.

Sinn Féin's demands

● Sinn Féin's ultimate objective is to create the political conditions necessary to secure a true and lasting peace in Ireland. This can only be achieved by:

- The ending of partition arising from British rule in six of Ireland's 32 counties;
- British disengagement from Ireland and the restoration to the Irish people of the right to exercise self-sovereignty, independence and national self-determination;
- The setting of a definite date within the lifetime of a British government for the completion of this withdrawal;
- The disarming and disbandment of the Royal Ulster Constabulary and the Ulster Defence Regiment as part of the military withdrawal;
- The calling of a Constitutional Conference to which all political parties would be invited. This conference to be responsible for determining the nature and composition of an emergent national police service and the judiciary. If Britain was sincere about disengaging and was committed to an orderly transference of power, this could be achieved with a minimum of disorder; and
- The unconditional release of all political prisoners.

SINN FEIN INTERNATIONAL INFORMATION SERVICE

Sinn Féin Foreign Affairs Bureau provides an International Information Service to subscribers in Europe, the USA and Canada. It consists of a weekly collection of articles from a wide range of Irish and British daily and weekly newspapers, as well as monthly magazines. In addition, there is a weekly issue of analytical and statistical data and reports on a wide range of issues relating to the political situation in Ireland.

NUAIGHT IDIRNAISJUNTA NA hEIREANN

IRELAND

INTERNATIONAL NEWS BRIEFING

Published by Sinn Féin Foreign Affairs Bureau,
51/55 Falls Road, Belfast BT12

■ Subscription rates for the monthly briefing are as follows:

BRITAIN:£5 per year

EUROPE:.....£6 per year

USA:.....\$12 per year

Cheques should be made payable to:
Sinn Féin Foreign Affairs Bureau,
51/55 Falls Road
BELFAST, BT 12

Subscription rates are:

BRITAIN:£15 per quarter
EUROPE:.....£20 per quarter
USA:.....\$40 per quarter
CANADA:.....\$40 per quarter
AUSTRALIA:.....£30 per quarter

Cheques should be made payable to:
Sinn Féin Foreign Affairs Bureau,
51/55 Falls Road,
BELFAST, BT 12,