

IRELAND

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EDITORIAL

British appoint 'War Cabinet'

The British government has appointed 'hard liners' to the two top jobs in the Direct Rule administration in 'Northern Ireland'.

Sir Patrick Mayhew, the new Secretary of State, is remembered as the former British Attorney General who vociferously opposed what limited safeguards the Dublin government had introduced in its 1987 Extradition Act. In particular he openly criticised the Dublin government several years ago for refusing to extradite Father Patrick Ryan who was subsequently freed on all grounds.

In 1988, Mayhew announced the decision not to make public the findings of the Stalker/Sampson report on killings by the British military forces, as well as his refusal to prosecute the RUC officers responsible on grounds of "national security".

Mayhew's second-in-command, Michael Mates, a former British Army Lieutenant-Colonel, was a British Conservative spokesperson on military and defence questions. Both Mayhew, with his background in legal repression, and Mates, who is close to military thinking, present a very different image from the previous Northern Ireland Office team headed by Peter Brooke. The signal which the British government is giving by these appointments could not be clearer.

While the British are keen to push political parties in the Six Counties back to the discussion table, (all parties minus Sinn Féin that is), they are also intending to squeeze the Republican viewpoint out of the political agenda altogether; and this they plan to do by a combination of legal repression and military might.



Sinn Féin

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POLITICAL

Westminster Election results

In the British general election on April 9th, a total of seventeen MPs from the Six Counties were returned to the Westminster parliament: 9 Ulster Unionists; 4 SDLP; 3 DUP, 1 Independent Unionist.

The only deviation in the distribution of the seats was a gain to the SDLP who took the West Belfast seat from Sinn Féin as a result of strategic voting by unionists.

Of the five main parties the Ulster Unionists, who commanded 37.8 per cent in 1987, are now down to 34.5 per cent. The DUP share of the vote went up by 1.4% from 11.7% to 13.1 per cent.

Sinn Féin's vote mainly held firm, slipping by one per cent (approximately 5,000 votes) from 11% to 10%.

The SDLP vote stands at 23.5%.

The Alliance party, deliberately and wrongly promoted as the fourth largest party in the Six Counties when in fact it is the fifth, saw its share of the vote slip even further, from 10.0% in 1987 to 8.7%.

A breakdown of the overall share of the vote is as follows:

- Ulster Unionist Party (UUP) 34.5%
- Social Democratic Labour Party (SDLP) 23.5%
- Democratic Unionist party (DUP) 13.1%
- Sinn Féin (SF) 10%
- Alliance, 8.7%
- Conservative, 5.7%
- Independents, 3.6%
- Workers' Party (WP) 0.6%
- Natural Law, 0.3%

Westminster election campaign issues

The election campaign waged by the unionists predictably rested on demands for more repression of republicans, and for cast-iron guarantees by the British government that the Union with Britain was safe. The two main unionist parties the Ulster Unionists and the DUP, in those constituencies where they ran rival candidates, vied with each other for the badge of 'best defender of the Union' and 'worst enemy of republicanism'.

The SDLP (Social Democratic and Labour Party) directed a largely negative campaign at its rival for the nationalist vote, Sinn Féin. It tried to argue that a vote for Sinn Féin was not a vote for peace, that only the SDLP would truly represent the nationalist people, and in those constituencies where they thought they had a chance, this time or in the future, of beating the unionist candidate, they unscrupulously played the 'sectarian card'. In constituencies like South Down and Mid-Ulster, the SDLP argued that Catholics should vote for them to keep unionists out, whereas in West Belfast the SDLP candidate, Joe Hendron, canvassed the strongly unionist Shankill area. However, he prevented the media from covering this part of his campaign, well aware of the damage which they could do him in nationalist parts of West Belfast, given that countless loyalist assassinations of nationalists have been planned and carried out from that quarter.

Assisting the SDLP in its efforts was the hierarchy of the Catholic Church. Cardinal Cathal Daly intervened in the press no less than twice, appealing to 'consciences' and calling for a 'vote

for peace' — the coded way of saying, "Vote SDLP". Clerical interference was concentrated mainly in West Belfast where several parish priests delivered thinly-veiled voting guidelines to their flock.

In contrast, the Sinn Féin message was consistent and positive. Based on its new peace proposal, 'Towards a Lasting Peace', Sinn Féin candidates argued again and again for the need for all parties to the conflict to sit down and talk without preconditions.

This positive argument put the SDLP leader John Hume under extreme pressure in radio and television debates with Sinn Féin leader Gerry Adams. Hume tried to argue that: "everything was on the table" in the inter-party talks which were about to resume after the elections, everything including the Government of Ireland Act 1920 and other subsequent claims by the British to sovereignty over part of Ireland. However, Hume's statement was vehemently denied by unionist politicians who declared that if the Union or the constitutional position of the North was to be discussed at the talks, they would leave the discussions.

Now that inter-party talks have resumed, all these issues will undoubtedly be clarified, and the SDLP's claim that Britain and the unionists are for renegotiating the Union will be exposed.

Hollow 'victory' for SDLP in West Belfast

Strategic voting by unionists in the West Belfast constituency during the Westminster general elections secured a hollow victory for the SDLP over Sinn Féin and provided the SDLP with its fourth parliamentary seat.

The SDLP strategy had been to mobilise non-voters to vote for it and to win votes from Sinn Féin. In this, it scored no successes. The increase in the turnout in nationalist areas despite a reduced register principally benefited Sinn Féin — which received some 42% — while, despite the collapse of the anti-republican Workers' Party vote which could only have benefited the SDLP, the SDLP vote from nationalists significantly dropped.

This shortfall, however, was more than compensated for by a wholly unpredicted vote for the SDLP from the unionist Shankill Road area. With a turnout of 65% there, an estimated 8,500 loyalist votes. The Ulster Unionist candidate, Fred Cobain, polled only 4,766 votes. Consequently around 3,500 loyalist votes went to the SDLP thus allowing it to scrape home in front of Sinn Féin's candidate Gerry Adams by a mere 589 votes.

The SDLP's Joe Hendron claimed that its vote from the Shankill was an expression of "cross-community support" but the reality is that his support lay in the most violent and extreme elements of loyalism.

During the campaign it was an open secret that the UDA, the main loyalist paramilitary organisation, was actively lobbying voters to vote SDLP. This factor alone has politically alienated large sections of nationalists from the SDLP, who would not necessarily have voted for Sinn Féin, and it will undoubtedly prove counter-productive for the party in future elections.

Following the election results, and particularly in the aftermath of the West Belfast result with the loss of the 'prestigious' Westminster seat, the media and British government spokespersons set about writing Sinn Féin's political epitaph, ignoring of course these central facts:

- In West Belfast the Sinn Féin vote held firm while the SDLP's vote from nationalists decreased.

- That Sinn Féin, not the SDLP, continues to represent the majority nationalist opinion in the constituency.

- That within Greater Belfast, Sinn Féin's total vote has increased once more.

Meanwhile, the party has dismissed media speculation that republicans were prepared to ditch party politics, Six County Director of Publicity Richard McAuley, confirmed that Sinn Féin, the fourth largest political party in the Six Counties, remained committed to the electoral process and will continue to contest seats in any future assembly, council or Westminster elections.

Peace proposals highlighted in London and US

On March 23rd during the Westminster election campaign, Sinn Féin President Gerry Adams handed in a copy of the party's peace proposals to the Downing Street residence of British Premier John Major.

In a covering letter Mr Adams, the only political leader in the Six Counties to go there to put forward the democratic option, identified and outlined the proposals for initiating a political process which could lead to a lasting peace in Ireland.

It was pointed out that all party attempts by the British government at resolving the conflict in Ireland had failed and that should inter-party talks resume after the General elections, they could not evolve into a meaningful and sustainable peace.

Mr Adams put the onus on persuading the unionists to take up the democratic option on those whom the power and the responsibility for doing that lies — the British and Irish governments. He said:

"The unionist veto over Irish reunification must be removed so that the unionists understand that their future lies with the rest of the people who live on this island of Ireland." A removal of the veto, he added, "would open up constructive dialogue with the rest of the people".

POSITIVE PUBLICITY GENERATED IN US

Meanwhile, in the United States, Sinn Féin Ad Chomhairle member and Monaghan County Councillor, Caoimhghin O Caolain, has received a positive response to Sinn Féin's peace document in a number of east coast cities and towns among political and media circles.

In New York, Congressman Thomas Manton, one of the co-chairs of the Ad Hoc Committee on Irish Affairs, undertook to distribute the document to more than a hundred members of Congress enrolled in the Ad Hoc Committee. O Caolain also met congresswoman Nita Lowi and several other Yonkers officials.

In Tuscon, Arizona, the Sinn Féin representative was warmly welcomed by City Councilman Michael Haggerty who presented him with a Copper Letter signed by the Mayor of Tuscon — the equivalent of bestowing the keys of the city — making O Caolain an honorary citizen of this growing southwestern city. In accepting the honour, O Caolain praised the people of Tuscon and Tuscon city council for being the first western city to adopt the MacBride principles on fair employment and urged supporters to mount a statewide campaign in the fight against discrimination in employment in the Six Counties.

In Seattle, San Diego, Los Angeles and several other cities O Caolain had lengthy meetings with the editorial boards of newspapers, television and radio stations where he outlined how media censorship in

Ireland was not only a direct removal of a fundamental civil right to freedom of information but that it had directly contributed to the ongoing conflict by sowing confusion and disinformation at home and abroad.

In San Francisco, during attendance at the Father York Commemoration sponsored by the United Irish Societies, O Caolain, unlike Irish Vice Consul Broifne O'Reilly, concentrated on the political reality in Ireland as a result of British occupation and partition as opposed to the 'Irish Tourist Board' image promoted by the Irish government representative. Afterwards, both men were cordial and O'Reilly was given a copy of the new peace document in which Sinn Féin has called on the Irish government to assume its national responsibility and develop a strategy with a view to making the ending of partition its policy goal; that it should persuade the British government that partition has been a disastrous failure; and that the Dublin government should initiate this process itself or gain assistance from other international forums.

Tories win fourth general election

Though opinion polls repeatedly announced outcomes between a slight Labour majority and a hung parliament, the British Conservative Party won this latest electoral contest by a relatively comfortable majority making this its fourth successive victory since 1979, the first without Margaret Thatcher at its helm.

The reason for Labour's defeat, and the final decision of the famous 'floating voters' to cast again for the Tories, will occupy many a political analyst for years to come. Many in Britain, particularly among the poor, the unemployed, people dependent on, or working for, public services, experienced the return of the Conservatives as a personal tragedy.

For Irish people the Conservative victory leaves little to rejoice about. The policy of the British Conservative government since Thatcher has been one of deliberate propping up of the Six County state with the help of an ever-growing arsenal of emergency legislation as well as military repression. And while the British Labour Party, when last in power, acted in a similar vein, it has at least adopted since 1982 a policy of 'Irish unity by consent' which it claimed it would actively pursue.

Irish in Britain lobby support for disengagement

Prominent members of the Irish community in Britain have signed a Declaration for Peace expressing concern over the continuing conflict in The Six Counties and calling for the new British government to pursue the path of dialogue in Ireland in an "inclusive" manner. Calling also for a British disengagement from Irish affairs, signatories to the Declaration for Peace want the British government to reconsider the validity of its claim to sovereignty in the Six Counties under Section 75 of the Government of Ireland Act 1920.

They have added their support to those in Ireland who believe that there should be no change to Articles Two and Three of the 26 Counties 1937 Constitution. Such a move would in their words: "remove the rights and privileges of Irish citizenship for people born in Northern Ireland and would diminish the ability of the Irish government to articulate

the social and economic interests of all the people of Ireland in international institutions."

Furthermore, it would have the effect, in domestic and international law, of "recognising the validity of the United Kingdom's claim to supreme and lawful sovereignty in that part of Ireland".

The group further contends: "Any lasting settlement must involve flexibility from all sides but we believe that the British government should consider its own legal claim to absolute sovereignty over the North of Ireland alongside any discussions of the Irish constitutional claim."

The Declaration of Peace will be circulated within the Irish community in Britain and to British politicians. The signatories also plan to employ a professional lobbyist to draw attention to this constitutional claim, working in Britain and in the international arena.

Maastricht treaty study calls for open and real debate

Authors of the first public study in Europe of the military and foreign policy implications of a 'YES' vote in the forthcoming referendum on the Maastricht Treaty on European Union have called for an "open and real debate". The report, *Maastricht and Neutrality, Ireland's neutrality and the future of Europe*, was published by the People First/Meitheal and launched at a press conference in Dublin in April.

The authors, Professor John Maguire, Senator Brendan Ryan and Joe Noonan state that to say 'YES' to Europe in its widest sense is to say 'NO' to Maastricht. A 'YES' vote would mean that Irish citizens would become "European citizens" and could be conscripted to serve in an EC army. Currently the 26 Counties and Britain are the only EC states without conscription. Under the treaty a qualified majority of the Council of Ministers could and can take a decision in favour of joint action even if the Dublin government disagreed. Under the treaty provisions, the minority have to accede and cannot block such an action. It would mean the complete disappearance of Ireland's long established position of neutrality. It is also feasible that the 26 County exchequer would have to pay a proportion of the costs of military action taken on "behalf of the Community".

People First/Meitheal argue that the position of neutrality is not shameful, old fashioned outdated or odd as claimed by many prominent Irish politicians and Senator Ryan attacked the fact that the supposed economic benefit of EC and the Single Market are used as bargaining chips in the neutrality debate.

Senator Ryan pointed out that in fact EC membership had not increased overall farm income since entry. Unemployment had grown in the 26 Counties from over 50,000 in 1971 to 281,000 in 1992. The Single Market could not be guaranteed to benefit the peripheral economies like Ireland, he said.

Abortion controversy enters Maastricht referendum debate

The debate on the Maastricht Treaty in the 26 Counties, has become enmeshed in controversy, as the abortion debate continues to play a central role.

The abortion issue effects the Maastricht Treaty,

because following pressure from pro-life and church groups, the government inserted an amendment to the Treaty last December, in an attempt to copperfasten the eighth amendment to the 1937 Constitution.

The eighth amendment (article 40.3.3) states:

"The state acknowledges the right to life of the unborn and, with due regard to the equal right to life of the mother, guarantees in its laws to respect, and as far as is possible, by its laws to defend and vindicate that right."

The amendment to the Treaty known as the protocol agreement states:

"Nothing in the Treaty, or in the Treaties establishing the European Communities or in the Treaties or Acts modifying or supplementing these treaties shall affect the application of Article 40.3.3. to the Constitution of Ireland."

The controversy arose, after a 14-year-old rape survivor was enjoined by the Irish courts, to prevent her from travelling to England to obtain an abortion. The injunction was eventually lifted, following an appeal to the Supreme Court (after public outrage at home and abroad). However the Supreme Court judgement dealt specifically with the "equal right to life of the mother" and stated that because the young girl's life was at risk (psychological evidence was given in court that she was suicidal) she had the right to have an abortion. While this judgement allowed one young girl to have an abortion, because the wording of the judgement only referred to the specific threat to her life the possibility of further injunctions still remains.

The debate on Maastricht has left both sides of the Right to Choose debate effectively on the same side. The "Repeal the Eighth Amendment Campaign" while welcoming the decision to allow the young girl to travel and the fact that the Supreme Court established abortion in limited circumstances, is calling for a NO vote to Maastricht unless the protocol agreement is removed. They believe that the protocol agreement copperfastens an amendment which is anti-women and which would allow further women to be criminalised. The pro-life campaign are calling for a NO vote to Maastricht, because they believe that the Supreme Court judgement undermines the right to life of the child, and that if the protocol agreement is passed that it will bring abortion into Ireland.

The "Repeal the Eighth Amendment Campaign" want the eighth amendment to the Constitution dropped and the government to legislate for the availability of abortion in certain circumstances. The Pro-life campaign want a new referendum in advance of the treaty referendum to strengthen the right to life of the child.

The Taoiseach, Albert Reynolds, has refused to drop the protocol agreement and his only compromise on the issue is that he will hold a referendum on abortion information and the right to travel after the Maastricht Treaty. This does not satisfy either side, neither of whom are willing to trust the Free State government. After increasing pressure and the fear of a NO vote, the Irish government attempted to get an amendment inserted into the treaty guaranteeing the right to travel and the right to abortion information, this was rejected by their European partners on April 6th.

Facing a concerted campaign for a NO vote (A NO vote would mean that the treaty could not be ratified as every member state must vote in favour. This would mean that the while treaty would have to be re-negotiated or the entire European Union scheme would have to be halted). Albert Reynolds resorted with a threat to Irish women on April 29th, that if they did not vote in favour of Maastricht that state injunctions would again be sought against

Irish women to prevent them leaving the country for abortions. Albert Reynolds has said on more than one occasion that he does not want to preside over a police state, that he wants the right to travel to be upheld, yet he is now prepared to dangle the threat of the police state over the heads of its women citizens to force the ratification of Maastricht. The Council for the Status of Women, opposition parties and concerned groups in Ireland have all condemned the remarks of the Taoiseach, they replied that his comments were a deplorable attempt to frighten women into voting for the Maastricht agreement, and that the women of Ireland would not be intimidated into voting for the Maastricht Treaty.

Sinn Féin believes that the Maastricht protocol must be dropped and that if the government refused to do so, that we must vote no if we are to defend women's rights. Sinn Féin calls on the 26 County government to process the repeal of the eighth amendment to the 1937 constitution. Sinn Féin would encourage all women to continue to pressurise the Dublin government for pro-women changes and a pro-women constitution. Never again can we allow women to be made second class citizens, criminalised or threatened.

Easter commemorations honour Ireland's dead

Throughout the Easter weekend, April 18th/19th, republicans throughout Ireland and supporters abroad paid tribute to Ireland's dead. At the ceremonies wreaths were laid on behalf of various branches of the Republican Movement, a minute's silence was observed and a message from the leadership of the Republican Movement was read.

The Easter message from the leadership of the Republican Movement extended warm and comradely greetings to its friends and supporters and said that:

"Sooner, rather than later, those who sustain this conflict will realise the futility of their position and will opt for resolving, rather than prolonging, this war. In the meantime, Oglai na hEireann (Irish Republican Army, IRA) have shown that they will, with every means at their disposal, bring home to them that there is a high price to be paid for occupying part of our nation.

"Let us go forward facing into the year ahead with determination and courage, inspired by the example of our fallen comrades and sure in the knowledge that we will prevail and shall see Ireland take its rightful place among the free nations of the world."

Easter Rising ignored by Irish establishment

Gerry Adams, President of Sinn Féin, was the main speaker at the West Belfast Easter Commemoration. He acknowledged the courage of the people who earlier had prevented the RUC's attempted attack on the platform. Adams said that their bravery was a message to the British that republicans would not be defeated.

In his address Adams was scathing about the lack of any official marking of the 1916 Rising by the 26 County establishment: "the Proclamation itself is an embarrassment in these censored, revisionist times of EC and multinational capitalism when we are told that Irish nationhood is an outdated concept."

Turning to the recent elections, Adams said that the Sinn Féin vote remained generally sound against all the odds, increasing in five of the 14 con-

stituencies contested. Adams said he was proud of West Belfast and its people who voted for Sinn Féin in their thousands: "The contest here was seen correctly as a battle for the hearts and minds of nationalist West Belfast. The SDLP lost that battle."

Stressing the need for a real peace process, he continued: "to reiterate the democratic view that a lasting peace in our country will be secured only in the context of Irish national self-determination. Partition continues to be a social, economic and political disaster for all the people of this island. Talks which do not seek to end partition and the British connection, the Union, are a waste of time for nationalist Ireland."

JUSTICE

Appeal hearing upholds convictions in informer case

Former Sinn Féin Publicity Director, Danny Morrison, was one of three people to lose an appeal against an eight-year conviction for aiding and abetting the false imprisonment of an RUC informer. The two others, Gerard Hodgins and John Murray lost their appeals against a 12-year and eight year conviction.

The outcome of the appeal hearing on April 9th held no real surprises given that Morrison's 19-day political show trial last May had been undoubtedly authorised at the highest political levels with the aim of removing him from political circulation.

Despite serious contradictions and flaws in the prosecution case and in the trial judge's legal interpretation of the law, Morrison and the others were nevertheless convicted. This political decision has now been rubberstamped by an Appeal Court panel of three of the most notorious Diplock Court judges who claimed that the convictions were 'safe and satisfactory' and that detailed reasons would be given 'later'.

Throughout his 19-day trial, Morrison asserted in January 1990 that he had gone to a house in West Belfast to talk to informer, Sandy Lynch about organising a Sinn Féin press conference about Lynch's role as a double agent. The house was surrounded by the British military forces and Morrison, discovered in an adjacent house, was charged and sentenced with several others.

Shoot to kill inquests reopen

Inquests into the deaths of the six men which led to the Stalker inquiry are scheduled to take place in May. Belfast coroner John Leckey has set aside the entire month for the inquests into the highly controversial shootings of three unarmed IRA Volunteers, Gervaise McKerr, Eugene Toman and Sean Burns. There will also be separate inquests in the cases of 17-year-old Michael Tighe, shot dead by the RUC in Armagh in 1982, and INLA members Seamus Grew and Roddy Carroll, again killed in suspicious circumstances in December of the same year.

The McKerr, Toman and Burns inquest was adjourned at Craigavon Crown Court three-and-a-half years ago pending the outcome of legal proceedings which went to the House of Lords.

The human rights lawyer Pat Finucane, who was acting for the families, was murdered some months later by a loyalist death squad after he had been publicly accused by British junior minister Douglas Hogg of having 'IRA sympathies'.

The announcement on the inquests came just

days after the appointment of Sir Patrick Mayhew as British Secretary of State for the Six Counties. Mayhew refused to prosecute in some of the cases on the grounds of 'national security' although later he was forced to admit that there was prima facie evidence of a conspiracy by the RUC to pervert the course of justice.

RUC border rampage

Two men were arrested when heavily armed RUC members launched an unprovoked attack on a peaceful group of people working to reopen a border crossing closed by the British army on the Cavan/Fermanagh border (26 and Six Counties) outside Swanlinbar.

One of the arrested men had travelled from Dublin to attend the Border Roads Day of Action on Sunday, March 22nd, which had been jointly organised by the Border Community Association and the Irish National Congress (INC).

At Farrelly's Crossing, where two large earth-moving machines had set to work rebuilding the border road the RUC and British soldiers looked on and photographed those attending. As the reconstruction work continued, the RUC charged without warning towards a group of workers. Carrying riot shields they swung batons and snatched two men from the crowd. They were beaten about the head and dragged off to a waiting RUC car.

The RUC then trained plastic bullet guns and rifles on a by then incensed crowd which remonstrated with the officer in charge. The people were told that the two men would be taken to Enniskillen Barracks, one on the pretext of 'refusing to give his name', and because they were "orchestrating an illegal act by reopening a VCP (vehicle crossing point) lawfully closed by the Secretary of State".

Following the assault by the British forces and, in spite of the threat, the road work recommenced until the river was successfully bridged and Counties Cavan and Fermanagh were reconnected once again.

Robert Ballagh, Ireland's leading artist and INC member, said that there was much talk in recent times about freedom of movement in Europe. "What we are doing here today is defending the right of Irish people to freedom of movement."

In a gesture of defiance a group of people walked across the reconnected road past the lines of riot-clad RUC and back across a footbridge to loud cheers and applause.

Later at a press conference in Swanlinbar Ballagh said that if the road was again closed by crown forces it would be opened again and again.

Further unease at Belfast prison

On Friday, April 20th, a republican prisoner was attacked by loyalist prisoners on the way to the court house in Belfast's Crumlin Road Jail. The prisoner, from Belfast, sustained severe bruising to his private parts. When the prisoner reported the incident to the Governor he was told that the prison officers had not witnessed the attack. A medical examination confirmed that the prisoner had severe bruising.

Sinn Féin spokesperson on prison issues, Councillor Francie Molloy, said: "This is a very worrying incident as it shows that collusion between prison officers and loyalist prisoners is ongoing. Republican prisoners' lives are being put at great risk due to the failed policy of forced integration. A policy that allows such incidents to take place

unhindered." He called upon the Northern Ireland Office (NIO) and the prison authorities to introduce a common sense policy that allows all prisoners their basic right to a safe environment.

Birmingham Six welcome departure of British law lord

Just over a year since the release of the Birmingham Six after 16 years wrongful imprisonment, an appeal court judge who upheld their convictions, has resigned.

Lord Chief Justice Lane was not only notorious for his handling of the Birmingham Six case but also that of the Guildford Four.

Lane dismissed the Birmingham Six's appeal in 1987 despite convincing new evidence of their innocence. At the time he said: "The longer this hearing has gone on the more convinced this court has become that the verdict of the jury was correct." The Six were imprisoned for a further four years until their release on March 14th 1991 after a second successful appeal hearing.

Former Birmingham Six lawyer Gareth Pierce has, since Lane's resignation, expressed particular concern at a whispering campaign amongst the judiciary which support Lane's comments in 1987 and which claim that the Six were released on a 'technicality'.

LOYALISTS

Brutal sectarian attacks intensify

One of the most brutal and shocking loyalist sectarian killings in many years took place on April 28th when a nationalist mother of two young children was gunned down at her West Belfast workplace. Philomena Hanna was mother to a of nine-month-old baby and a seven-year-old girl who is due to make her first communion in the coming weeks.

The shooting, as in the case of Kilrea nationalist Danny Cassidy, took place in daylight and at a time when the victims were at their most vulnerable. Mrs Philomena Hanna (26) was working in a Chemist's shop on the Springfield Road when an assassin entered at 9.30am and fired at least five shots at her head. A teenage girl who was in the shop at the time miraculously escaped injury and was treated for severe shock.

The controversial Lanark Way motorway — which links the nationalist Springfield area with the loyalist Shankill Road district — was again used by the killer to escape on a motorcycle driven by an accomplice. Angry and frightened local people immediately mounted a protest at the nationalist end of the motorway, calling for its closure — a call which British ministers have consistently refused to listen to.

The scene of the killing is directly overlooked by high-powered British army surveillance cameras mounted on Mackies engineering factory and Springfield Road RUC base is situated several hundred metres further down the same road. Furthermore, the assassin still succeeded in escaping from an area constantly saturated by both British military foot and mobile patrols. These factors have reinforced nationalist opinion that the loyalist paramilitary death squad received British military assistance.

COMMUNITY WORKER KILLED

Less than 24 hours after the slaying of Philomena Hanna, loyalist killers struck again, killing 22-

year-old Conor Maguire in the Ligoniel area of North Belfast.

Mr Maguire was singled out from a group of people working in the premises of the Ligoniel Improvement Association. The two assassins shot him several times in the head and chest before they escaped in a waiting car which was later discovered in the loyalist Glencairn area.

The UVF (Ulster Volunteer Force) claimed responsibility for the sectarian killing, saying that its victim had been a member of the IPLO (Irish People's Liberation Organisation). However, both local SDLP and Sinn Féin councillors claimed that Conor Maguire had been subjected to undue harassment by the RUC. While being detained in Castlereagh interrogation centre, the RUC threatened to give his personal details to loyalists after he had refused to work as an informer. The implications of this threat in the wake of Mr Maguire's assassination are obvious.

LUCKY ESCAPES

There have been three other aborted sectarian attacks by loyalists in Belfast on March 22nd, 23rd and April 26th. On each occasion the circumstances lean heavily in the direction that there was direct collusion between loyalists and the British forces.

In the first incident, loyalists wearing boiler suits smashed their way into a house in the Dermott Hill estate and fired several shots inside before they searched the house and left. Fortunately, the occupants were not at home at the time. A British army base is situated close to the house yet the killers escaped without any attempt being made to challenge them.

The following night, in the New Lodge Road area of North Belfast, two women escaped injury when loyalist assassins carried out a similar attack. They displayed a thorough knowledge of the layout of the interior. It is believed that a male member of the family, who had left just minutes earlier, had been the loyalists' intended victim.

Notably, in the days prior to the attack, the RUC had taken the name and addresses of everyone going in or out of the street where the attack took place. Furthermore, several months ago, the RUC had made detailed plans of the layout of the same house.

During the third attack on April 26th, loyalists sledgehammered their way into a house in the Kashmir Road area of West Belfast and fired several shots. A male occupant of the house escaped through a rear exit.

COLLUSION

British forces/loyalist collusion in killing

The nationalist community witnessed further evidence of collusion between loyalist paramilitaries and the British forces on April 2nd when Sinn Féin election worker Danny Cassidy, a father-of-four, was gunned down by a UDA death squad in Kilrea, County Derry. Using the spurious cover name of the UFF (Ulster Freedom Fighters) the killers drove into the village in broad daylight and pulled up alongside their victim's car which was parked less than 100 yards from his home.

Witnesses report as many as three were in the car and Mr Cassidy was shot through the driver's window. One of the assassins then got out and fired at him several more times.

The fatal shooting took place only 48 hours after the RUC threatened to kill Cassidy. His grieving widow, Emanuele, said that she had "no doubt" in

her mind that the RUC members who had issued this threat were "in direct collusion" with the UDA/UFF killers.

As further evidence of this collusion she outlined that in the previous seven days before the shooting, the RUC had twice, in the presence of witnesses, threatened his life. In the first incident, she said her husband had his arm twisted up his back and was thrown against a vehicle, cutting his hand. On the second occasion a rifle was placed against his head.

During Danny Cassidy's funeral mass, the bishop of Derry and Raphoe, Dr Edward Daly, described the victim as an innocent man and said: "In the murder of Danny Cassidy, as well as in many other murders here in the North in recent years, there is clear evidence that the victim suffered constant, cruel and public harassment and humiliation from some units of the police. This was witnessed by many people on the streets of Kilrea and there is good reason to believe that a factor in Danny Cassidy's murder was the undue attention paid to him by units of the police."

DISCRIMINATION

Jobs bias report slams Belfast Council

The long delayed report on employment practices at Belfast City Hall was finally published in March. It confirms that severe religious inequality still exists in that 68.2% of the Council's 3,206 permanent staff are Protestant and 28.4 per cent are Catholic.

Fair Employment Trust spokesperson Oliver Kearney said:

"Although Belfast City Council signed the Fair Employment Agency's Declaration of Principle and Intent in 1978 — which voluntarily commits an organisation to fair employment practices — there is no evidence that any serious commitment has ever existed promoting economic equality for all sections of the community in the councils' workforce."

He also criticised the delay in obtaining and producing the figures — an activity initiated four years ago which has been met with obstruction by the council right up to the time of publication when a further attempt was made to weaken its impact. The unionist dominated council wanted the report to be withheld until after the publication of a Fair Employment Commission (FEC) report covering 1,700 employees where it would have been lost in a deluge of information.

Kearney demanded that the FEC (the Fair Employment Agencies forerunner) to be given, and to exercise, full legal powers with which to penalise those employers responsible for maintaining inequality throughout the public and private sectors.

The figures, published below, clearly illustrate the continued refusal of one of the largest public sector employers in the Six Counties to redress the discrimination consistently experienced by one section of the community.

Post	Protestant	Catholic
Senior managers	76.5%	17.3%
Middle management	67%	25.5%
Staff	64.5%	31.5%
Manual	69.3%	28%
Department		
Gas	81.9%	16.7%
Parks	75.4%	19.3%
Town Clerk/solicitor	75.4%	19.3%
Technical Services	71.4%	26.1%
Community Services	49.3%	45.8%
Leisure Services	55.7%	41.5%

Power Station faces MacBride test

Ballylumford power station in County Antrim, which has recently been privatised and is now owned by British Gas, has come under the fair employment spotlight in the US.

New York City authorities are one of the largest institutions which has bought shares in British Gas worth £24 million. The New York Comptrollers Office, which administers the cities massive pension funds, use the MacBride Fair Employment Principles as a guideline when investing in companies in the Six Counties. Consequently it is obliged to press the power station's new owners to change the composition of their staff so that it reflects the actual make-up of the workforce of the area instead of being, as now, a purely loyalist one.

Pat Doherty, director of investment responsibility at the Comptrollers Office, has confirmed that British Gas had been contacted and asked to supply details of the religious composition of its Ballylumford workforce, including a breakdown of various seniority levels.

Ballylumford's workforce has at various times been to the fore in supporting extreme loyalism. During the May 1974 Ulster Loyalist Workers' Council strike it effectively shut down power supplies at the height of the strike which brought down the Stormont 'Power Sharing' Executive.

In more recent times the management was found guilty of discrimination against a Newry demolition firm which was denied a one million pound contract. Management claimed the firm's employees were a 'security risk' but it was exposed in court that the real reason was that its employees were mainly Catholic.

FEC report confirms employment inequality

Catholics are still being systematically discriminated against in employment and are more likely to be employed in the lower paid, less skilled jobs while many firms in the Six Counties still show a marked imbalance in the religious composition of their workforce.

These are the findings of the Fair Employment Commission's (FEC) Monitoring Report which was finally published in March despite attempts to suppress it by unionists and employers opposed to the exposure of the employment practices of those firms with over 25 people on the payroll. (Some 97 public sector bodies including the 26 local councils and 1,832 companies and firms containing some 352,971 employees — of which 199,377 (56.6%) are in the private sector, were scrutinised).

The report clearly shows that Catholics are still 2-2.5 times more likely to be unemployed than Protestants despite a 0.4% increase in the number of Catholics employed in 1991.

From the graph below, it can be seen that Catholics are also under-represented in the higher levels. Among the worst offenders are some of the biggest employers such as Shorts where Catholics make up only 12.4% of the workforce; the Northern Bank with only 18.9% and Harland and Wolff where only 5.7% of its workforce is drawn from the Catholic community.

Clearly, systematic discrimination in employment, which has been the hallmark of the Six County statelet since partition, has not and is not being seriously addressed by the British govern-

ment. The bottom line, borne out by the FEC's statistics, is that discrimination against the Catholic community looks set to continue for some time.

Employer	Protestant	Catholic
Short Bros. PLC.	87%	12.4%
British Telecom	60.8%	39.2%
Harland and Wolff	94.3%	5.7%
Stewarts Supermarkets	74.6%	25.4%
Queens University	74.6%	25.4%
University of Ulster	74.9%	25.1%
Northern Bank Ltd	81.1%	18.9%
Moy Park Ltd	59%	41%
Wellworth FA and Co.	55%	45%

In the Public Sector:

Eastern Health and Social Services Board	58.3%	41.7%
Dept. of Finance and Personnel	58.2%	41.8%
Royal Ulster Constabulary	92.6%	07.4%
The Civil Service	76.4%	23.6%

ECONOMIC

Unemployment on upward spiral

Unemployment figures in the Six Counties have risen for the eighteenth consecutive month, totalling 104,500 — an increase of 600 in March and 5,800 up on the total figure for the same period last year. One in seven people, some 14.3%, are unemployed — 80,200 male and 24,300 female. The grim statistics, which economists predict will worsen due to the economic slump, put the Six Counties high on the list of being a Western European unemployment black spot.

These official statistics, however, have been disputed by the Irish National Organisation of the Unemployed which has set a more realistic figure of 160,000 unemployed. Some 37,000 individuals on short-term government sponsored employment programmes are not, for example, included in the government statistics. Also, one-fifth of those claiming Social Welfare benefits have been doing so for longer than five years and are classified as 'long-term unemployed' while the percentage of those unemployed under the age of 34 is very high, between 55% and 60%.

However the British government tries to present the unemployment statistics, it cannot disguise the reality that Catholics continue to be two and a half times more likely to be unemployed than Protestants.

The predominantly nationalist area of Strabane has 30% unemployment while in unionist Ballymena, unemployment stands at 11%.

Recession major cause of job losses

British government propaganda repeatedly cites IRA actions as the reason for job losses and for causing foreign investors to shy away from setting up companies in the Six Counties. However, economists and those firms which have either reduced their workforces or pulled out altogether have firmly blamed the recession or have chosen to relocate overseas to where the market is in order to boost their profit margin. A few examples follow:

● Coates Viyella, the largest private sector employer in the Six Counties and the parent company of Peter England — a recipient of over £3m in Industrial Development Board (IDB) grants — closed in Magherafelt recently with the loss of 516 jobs. A further 650 workers at its Maydown plant in Derry were also made redundant. Earlier this year, Coates Viyella closed another subsidiary, Welch Margelton, in East Belfast, with job losses of 350.

The company cited cheap imports and the recession for the closures. Despite this, the IDB has agreed to continue with a multi-million pound investment in another Coates Viyella plant in County Fermanagh in order to maintain the illusion of a successful British government economic policy.

● Federal Express, the US based courier company has announced the closure of its operation with the loss of 37 jobs. Reduced prices, profits and the recession were again cited as the reasons for closure.

● Lummus Mackies, the West Belfast engineering company is expected to close in the near future according to an IDB source, yet the IDB continues to financially assist the American owned plant. The workforce was moved to a new site in unionist West Belfast, from the nationalist Springfield Road area, on the much-hyped pretext that the old site was needed to generate new jobs for West Belfast. This has not happened and it now appears that the millions spent on transferring Mackies have been wasted.

Task force needed to tackle economic neglect

The West Belfast employment campaign, Obair, is calling for a high-powered task force to be set up to deal with spiralling unemployment in the area. Obair has stated that the task force should adopt a long-term plan which would rectify the damage caused by what it called: "a litany of government broken promises."

Spokesperson Eileen Howell stated: "for too long the unemployed of West Belfast have been treated as a political football to be used or abused as it suited the government. Any new policy must be accountable to the community and more concerned with job creation than media hype."

Ms Howell was speaking at the launch of a new dossier on the British government approach to unemployment in West Belfast over the last 22 years: "Only a special task force charged with tackling the economic neglect of West Belfast and putting in place structures which will encourage job creation can solve our unemployment crisis. There have been too many broken promises to West Belfast which haven't been delivered by those who have the power to locate jobs here. Groups such as the DED* and IDB** have failed West Belfast. We are saying that it is time for a new start."

The dossier was also presented as evidence to an influential Human Rights Assembly which was held in London at the end of April.

Obair's sixth report, entitled *Broken Promises — Job Creation and West Belfast*, can be obtained from:

The Conway Mill
Conway Street
Belfast BT12 2PD.

* Department of Economic Development, DED

** Industrial Development Board, IDB

INTERNATIONAL

Clinton favours peace envoy

US Democratic party front runner for the presidential nomination, Bill Clinton has come out in favour of a US peace envoy for the Six Counties.

Speaking at a specially convened forum on Irish issues, Clinton also endorsed the possibility of a United Nations role in the Six Counties and stated that if elected president, he would lift the visa ban on Sinn Féin President Gerry Adams.

On the issue of human rights violations in Ireland, he said that he would wish to focus on the work of Amnesty International and Helsinki Watch. Clinton also stated that in office there would be more direct intervention with the British government on affairs concerning the North of Ireland.

Clinton also expressed his support for the MacBride Principles, saying: "I like the Principles, I believe in them and as president would encourage all the governors to embrace them."

CULTURE

Glór na nGael funding restored

Glór na nGael, the Irish language umbrella group which had been blacklisted by the British government since August 1990, won an historic victory on March 27th, when the 'Northern Ireland Office' announced that funding would be restored.

In August 1990, Glór na nGael were notified that their funding was to be withdrawn under guidelines set down by the then British Secretary for State, Douglas Hurd, in June 1985. Like the other twenty-three community groups who have lost their funding in this way, Glór na nGael was given no explanation or justification for the decision other than a photocopied press release from the Northern Ireland Information Service dated 27 June 1985, which refers to plans "to ensure that Government financial support for community activities is not used to foster the aims and objectives of paramilitary interests".

A storm of protest followed the move, and the West Belfast group immediately initiated legal action in an effort to have funding restored. Now, almost two years later, in what has been seen as a complete climbdown by the NIO, the decision to blacklist the group has been reversed. All those who were employed by the group in August 1990 are to be offered their jobs back and the committee remains the same.

Expressing delight at the U-turn by the NIO, Bairbre de Brún, head of the Sinn Féin's Cultural Department, said: "While the decision to restore funding cannot make up for the hardship inflicted on this group since it was blacklisted, it is a step in the right direction. The British government has repeatedly used its influence to prevent funds coming to Glór na nGael, and other vetted groups, from international bodies and this should now cease immediately."

Witch hunt in the language movement

The latest victim of the McCarthyite witch hunt against those who express nationalist or pro-republican sentiments, is Prionsias MacAonghusa, chairperson of the Dublin gov-

ernment's semi-state language body, Bord na Gaeilge.

MacAonghusa, who is also a journalist and author, made the following points in his weekly column in the Sunday newspaper, *Anois*:

1. If he were living in England he would vote for the Labour Party.

2. If he were living in Scotland or Wales he would vote for the Nationalist parties.

3. He didn't know much about Eddie McGrady (SDLP) in South Down but felt it would be a blow if he were defeated.

4. It would also be a blow if Gerry Adams were to be defeated. It would be a victory for British imperialism.

5. Republicans in south Down should vote for Eddie McGrady and nationalists in West Belfast should vote for Gerry Adams.

There was an immediate outcry from right-wing TDs Mary Harney and John Bruton, who called for the Dublin government to remove Mr MacAonghusa from his post because of his expression of support for Gerry Adams. Others, noted for their anti-nationalist stance in the past, were quick to take up the call — all of them ignoring the other points made in the opinion column. The following week, the *Sunday Tribune* carried a full page story on Mr MacAonghusa, and included other quotes of a "republican" nature, such as his support for the retention of Articles Two and Three of the 1937 Constitution, which refer to the Dublin government's legal claim to jurisdiction over the Six Counties.

The latest person to join the attack has been Ulster Unionist Chris McGimpsey, a prominent member of the NIO-sponsored language group, the *Ulltath Trust*. McGimpsey has even suggested that MacAonghusa's view might lead to further attacks on language enthusiasts by the UDA/UFF, who in fact need no excuses to kill nationalists.

Other language activists have been quick to defend MacAonghusa's right to free speech and to condemn this unwarranted attack upon him. Many are worried at this extension of censorship even to the opinion columns of national newspapers. They stress that the attacks are being made purely on the basis that Mr MacAonghusa has expressed opinions which some do not like.

As we go to print, Mr MacAonghusa has not been removed from his position.

IRA military operations

The loss of three civilian lives in a massive explosion which rocked the city of London on April 10th were, according to the IRA: "*not part of our intention and are to be regretted.*" The organisation, which gave a 25-minute warning to British police before a car bomb exploded in the financial heart of the British capital, was not acted upon immediately. The IRA further stated that: "*all future warnings should be heeded*".

Initial estimates put damage at £1.5 billion. The bomb wrecked the Baltic Exchange, which is a centre of world trade, and the offices of many top financial companies. Insurance firms are withdrawing cover from firms, meaning that the British government now has to pay compensation directly, as it does in the occupied Six Counties.

A second explosion some four hours later

occurred at Stapel's Corner, North London, crippling one of the city's principal road junctions. It will take up to a year to repair damage, again at a high financial cost.

Meanwhile, in the Six Counties, the IRA carried out sustained grenade, sniper and bomb attacks on a number of British Army/RUC military bases and patrols. On March 24th a 1,000lb van bomb damaged Donegall Pass Barracks in Belfast, injuring several RUC personnel inside. The bomb also caused widespread damage to commercial premises in the 'Golden Mile' district.

On March 27th, one RUC member was killed and another was seriously injured during an IRA rocket attack on a mobile patrol in Newry, County Down. The previous day, up to 60 shots had been fired at a mobile patrol emerging from Musgrave Park Military base in Belfast. That same night in the north of the city, shots were fired at a British army post. Elsewhere, New Barnsley RUC barracks came under sustained fire while in the Poleglass area of West Belfast two grenades were thrown at an RUC patrol.

Keeping up the pressure, on March 28th Derry barracks came under grenade attack and on the 30th, four RUC members were injured during a similar attack on a mobile patrol in the Beechmount area, West Belfast.

On April 6th, at least two British soldiers, one of them believed to be an SAS undercover soldier, were shot during an IRA sniper attack in the Mullafad area outside Fivemiletown, South Fermanagh.

In Armagh, an informer working for the British military forces was executed by the IRA. Brendan McWilliams had been passing on information about republicans and continued to do so despite numerous warnings to desist.

On April 22nd and 27th the Ulster and Northern Banks were bombed in Belfast's city centre causing serious damage. In the latter, four RUC personnel were injured. Also on the 27th, incendiary bombs exploded in Belfast Castle causing severe damage. The nearby Bellevue Arms public house was also seriously damaged by incendiaries. Both venues had been used by senior RUC personnel and Northern Ireland Office officials. In between these events there were a series of sniper and grenade attacks in Lisburn, North Belfast, Derry and Carrickmore, South Armagh. An attempt to bomb the notorious Castlereagh interrogation centre on the outskirts of Belfast failed however when a massive bomb was defused after several hours.

A British soldier was killed and several others were injured on May 1st when a 1,000lb bomb exploded at Newry on the Belfast to Dublin railway line. Volunteers had used a mechanical digger to push the massive bomb to the railway line where it was detonated by remote control while soldiers were checking the area.

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.

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NUACHT IDIRNAISIUNTA NA hEIREANN

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