

# IRELAND

## INTERNATIONAL NEWS BRIEFING

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### EDITORIAL

## UN to hear British torture report

Next month the United Nations Committee Against Torture will hear reports from Amnesty International and the Belfast-based Committee on the Administration of Justice, on beatings and intimidation of detainees by the RUC at Castlereagh Interrogation Centre.

The RUC described this latest move and the recent reports of beatings in Castlereagh as: "*little more than a Republican propaganda offensive*". This fell short, but only just, of its reaction in the late '70s to similar reports: the RUC had then described the injuries detainees showed at the end of seven-day detention periods as: "*self-inflicted*"...

This will be the first time the UN Committee considers such accusations made against Britain. Britain has, until now, been relatively successful in warding off any challenge to its policy in Ireland at international forums, although it comes top of the list of indicted countries at the European Court of Human Rights.

The British government will consider this as deeply embarrassing. It has spent hundreds of millions of pounds in trying to counter the bad image it has in the world because of the continuing conflict in Northern Ireland: glossy brochures have been distributed by all its embassies to politicians and journalists around the world, government-sponsored 'fact-

finding tours', 'respectable' politicians and business people paid to go and testify in front of US legislatures that fair employment existed in Northern Ireland...

But Britain's master stroke was the Hillsborough Agreement, signed with Dublin in 1985. The British government used the agreement in two ways: to show to international opinion that it was co-operating with Ireland in trying to 'bring peace', and to defuse political controversies by announcing that they would be dealt with privately in conference meetings with the Dublin government. Since the signing of the Hillsborough Agreement, the Dublin government has been muted on human rights abuses by Britain in the North, and has certainly not initiated or encouraged legal action against Britain at international level.

One of Amnesty International's recent 'emergency urgent actions' concerned the severe beatings inflicted to 18-year old Damien Austin while detained by the RUC, and his continued harassment by British forces after his release. Damien's father, Sinn Féin Councillor Joe Austin, welcomed the move by Amnesty and the CAJ to bring British torture to international attention, and added: "*It is a matter of grave concern to Northern Nationalists that the Dublin government has so far failed to raise these issues or confront Britain internationally on its deteriorating human rights record.*"



## Sinn Féin

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## POLITICAL

### Intergovernmental conference defuses issues

London and Dublin government ministers came together in London on October 24th for another meeting of the intergovernmental conference. The meeting set about its intended business, that for which the conference had been set up in the first place: defusing live political issues.

Any controversial questions which might otherwise have forced the Dublin government to issue a protest, such as the RUC's singling out of the IRA as the "principal threat to the fabric of society" in the midst of a Loyalist upsurge, or fresh reports of collusion between Loyalists and the British crown forces, or even the recent declaration by British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd that "the debate was no longer about the Border and Irish reunification", all such questions were instead described in official statements as: "matters which the conference will consider". Meanwhile, Loyalist gangs continued to move in and out of Nationalist areas with ease, as the death toll mounted throughout October.

Dublin Foreign Affairs minister Gerry Collins sought, and apparently obtained, 'reassurances' that British policy hadn't shifted from support of the Hillsborough Agreement to an integrationist agenda à la James Molyneux (the leader of the Official Unionist Party and main proponent of integrating Northern Ireland with Britain). Yet in a separate press conference after the meeting, British Secretary for Northern Ireland Peter Brooke was more evasive when asked where Mr Hurd's words had been debated: "It is not a subject which we on this particular occasion in any sense discussed." Translated: it never came up.

As for the 'Brooke initiative', the attempt by Peter Brooke to get the unionists and the SDLP to agree on some form of devolution, it was agreed that a resumption was untimely, with the possibility of Westminster elections being held.

### British people want troops out

A MORI poll commissioned by British television for a recent Channel Four programme *Pack Up Your Troubles* (in the *Critical Eye* series) indicated that 61% of British people would like to see their troops withdrawn from Northern Ireland: 23% want an immediate withdrawal, while 38% prefer a phased withdrawal with a timescale. A total of 73% thought that the presence of British troops in Ireland made no difference (37%) or made things worse (36%).

On the North itself, only 33% wished it to remain part of the 'United Kingdom'. And as for the talks organised recently by the British Secretary of State Peter Brooke with the unionists and the SDLP, 51% thought that Sinn Féin should have been included. The

British argued at the time that Sinn Féin could not take part in the political process until it renounced support for the use of force. No such demand was made on the British and the unionists of course.

This latest survey is yet another indication of the latent 'troops out' feeling in Britain, which British governments have been studiously ignoring down the years.

### British Labour Party conference

The British Labour Party held its annual conference at the start of October. Typically the debate on Ireland was given little prominence by the conference managers.

Labour party policy on Ireland for the last decade has been one of "unity by consent" — realising that Irish unity is a popular slogan with many Labour voters but wanting to do nothing about it. Some Labour politicians interpret this as 'do nothing to upset unionists', while a few, like the present spokesperson on Northern Ireland, Kevin McNamara, make speeches on "bringing about greater social and economic harmonisation within Ireland."

The motion supporting the Labour leadership view was passed, along with the usual condemnations of emergency legislation and human rights abuses which Irish people have come to expect from the British Labour Party while in opposition.

The Party's short-term concern is to avoid falling out with the unionists, whose 13 votes at Westminster cannot be ignored if Labour is returned next year with a slim majority, while not alienating the large Labour-voting Irish constituency in Britain.

## JUSTICE

### Appeal procedure 'inadequate'

British Foreign Minister Douglas Hurd stated at the May Inquiry into the wrongful conviction of the Maguire family and Giuseppe Conlon in 1976 that "in this case and in other cases the system and the way it was handled turned out to be inadequate for the purposes of justice".

He also called for the establishment of an independent tribunal which would take the power of referral out of the hands of future British Home Secretaries.

However, despite this belated declaration, Douglas Hurd, as the then British Home Secretary, refused in January 1987 to refer either the case of the Maguires or the Guildford Four to the Court of Appeal despite abundant evidence of their innocence.

The Maguires were jailed in 1976 for between four and 14 years for allegedly running a bomb making establishment.

Six served their full sentences: Giuseppe Conlon died in jail and his family continue in their campaign to clear his name.

The May Inquiry continues.

### Irish prisoner extradited to Germany

Irish political prisoner Donna Maguire

was extradited to Germany by the Dutch authorities on October 7th — the second time she has been extradited since her arrest in Belgium in June 1990. The Dutch Supreme Court rejected her appeal against extradition in September.

Following her initial arrest in Belgium, she was extradited to the Netherlands where she stood trial along with three other Irish people for the killing by the IRA in Roermond of two Australian lawyers in mistake for British soldiers.

However, in July, Maguire and the others were acquitted of all charges against them and one of the group, Gerard Harte, was released. And while an unsuccessful appeal by the Dutch Public Prosecutor upheld their acquittals this did not result in their release.

Donna Maguire, from the border town of Newry in the Six Counties, was held in custody until October 7th when she was taken by helicopter from Maastricht Prison to the German town of Karlsruhe where a court remanded her in custody for interrogation. The German authorities wish to question her in relation to her alleged connection with IRA attacks on a British army barracks near Osnabruck in June 1989, and a car-bombing in Hanover some weeks later.

### Dessie Ellis acquitted by British jury

After two-and-a-half years in Irish and British prisons — the equivalent of a five-year prison sentence — Irishman Dessie Ellis walked free from London's Old Bailey court on October 30th, following a jury's unanimous verdict to acquit him of conspiring to cause explosions in Britain between January 1981 and October 1983. The unexpected surprise verdict was immediately welcomed by a wide range of anti-extradition supporters in Ireland and Britain who said it indicated that the jury was more concerned with administering justice than the Dublin government. The verdict also renewed calls for the immediate repeal of the 1987 Extradition Act.

During the course of the trial, a second and equally insupportable charge of possessing explosives was also dropped.

Ellis (39) from Dublin, denied the charges against him but confirmed during the trial that he had assisted the IRA in 1980 and had served an eight-year prison sentence for possessing explosives. His defence outlined that prior to his release from an Irish prison in April 1989, the British began extradition proceedings. Ellis was subsequently arrested and detained in custody while a lengthy legal challenge commenced and where it became patently obvious that the Dublin government was more concerned with facilitating the British at the expense of the rights of Irish citizens. Ellis lost his appeal to the Irish Supreme Court and, following a 35-day hunger strike, was the first Irish citizen to be extradited from Ireland to Britain on November 14th last under the 1987 Extradition treaty between the two governments.

Once in Britain, a magistrate attempted to

substitute the original charges with fresh charges. This breached the rules of 'specialty' governing the extradition treaty, which specifies that individuals can only stand trial for those offences specified on the original extradition warrants. A diplomatic row erupted between Dublin and London with Dublin insisting that the original charges should prevail when, in fact, it should have demanded Ellis's immediate release and return to Ireland.

Ellis's defence lawyer argued that he should never have been extradited as he had completed a prison sentence in Ireland for the same offences he was standing trial for in Britain. He said it was clearly a "form of double jeopardy".

When the verdict was delivered, Ellis shouted his thanks to the jurors but he was immediately arrested by the British Special Branch and taken to Paddington Green police station and detained overnight. The following day, October 31st, he was served with an Exclusion Order under the Prevention of Terrorism Act, PTA, which effectively bars him from ever entering any part of Britain. He was taken, under heavy police escort, to Heathrow airport and put on a plane to Ireland, where he was welcomed home, at last, by jubilant supporters.

Dessie Ellis never had a case to answer but that reality has never prevented serious miscarriages of justice being perpetrated against Irish people in the past by British judges or jurors. Nor does this welcome verdict rule out further injustices. What the whole sordid affair did however demonstrate, is that the Dublin government, in bowing to pressure from the British, showed it was willing to extradite Irish citizens on charges that couldn't stand up in a legal system rocked by many miscarriages of justice involving Irish people.

## Prisoners seek Judicial Review

In an effort to secure a release date, Republican prisoners Roy Walsh, Paul Holmes and Billy Armstrong, serving life sentences in England, are seeking a judicial review of their cases.

The trio were recently refused an appeal, meaning that they will have spent 22 years in prison by the time of their next prison review.

The protracted length of their sentences, on charges where no one was killed, contrasts sharply with the treatment of Private Ian Thain, a British soldier who served just two years and three months for the murder in August 1983 of Thomas Reilly, an unarmed Nationalist man.

Thain was the only member of the British military forces ever convicted in the Six Counties. Over 300 civilians and Republicans have been killed by these forces in often highly controversial and disputed circumstances.

## Prison transfer system slammed

Britain's refusal to transfer Irish prisoners to jails in the Six Counties contradicts recommendations in the Woolf Report commissioned by the British Home Office following the Strange-

ways riots, stated international legal expert Vivienne Stern. She made the criticism during a meeting of prisoners' support groups in Belfast.

At present, 15 of the 32 Republican prisoners held in English jails are taking cases against the British government to the European Court of Human Rights over the Home Office's refusal to grant them transfers.

## RUC allegations endanger former prisoners

A recent statement from the RUC Police Federation claimed that those prisoners serving life sentences did not serve long enough and recommended that there should be a minimum life sentence of 25 years for those convicted of killing. The Federation also claimed that prisoners were serving longer for killing civilians than for killing members of the British forces.

The Police Federation claimed that most lifers served a maximum of eleven years when in fact many prisoners still serving out their sentences have actually completed 13, 15 and 17 years.

And, in a more sinister development, the RUC body alleged, without any supporting evidence, that released life sentence prisoners have become reinvolved in what it termed "acts of terrorism". Sinn Féin said the statement was: "disgraceful" and that: "such comments could be easily used by Loyalist death squads as an excuse for murdering Nationalists".

## REPRESSION

### Relatives march against collusion

Relatives of victims of the British military forces shoot-to-kill policy and Loyalist death squads, organised their first march and rally in Belfast recently. Relatives for Justice originally planned the march to go to Belfast city centre but it was banned by the RUC. The 500 marchers instead held a rally outside Springfield Road RUC barracks in West Belfast. They heard how only that week, 25 Nationalists in the area had been visited by the RUC and informed that their security files had: 'gone missing from the barracks' and were in the hands of Loyalists.

Martin Finucane, brother of human rights solicitor Pat Finucane who was murdered by Loyalists, listed some of the circumstances in which unarmed civilians had been murdered by British forces and called for independent public inquiries to be held in every case where death had occurred in disputed circumstances. "In the past 20 years sectarian assassinations of Catholics have been carried out by Loyalist paramilitaries and pseudo gangs tolerated and often directed by the British secret service. This march and rally is to ensure that the facade of British law and

order in the North of Ireland remains exposed."

## Second Amnesty 'Urgent Action' being considered

Amnesty International are considering issuing a second Urgent Action order in the case of 18-year-old Belfast man Damien Austin who has been the subject of regular harassment by the British military forces. Austin believes that they are going to carry out a threat to kill him.

He recently had a meeting in London with representatives of Amnesty to discuss the campaign of harassment and intimidation being waged against him.

Since the first Urgent Action order was issued, the first ever in the Six Counties, Austin has been constantly harassed and threatened in the street by the RUC and British army. In one incident which was witnessed by his father, Sinn Féin Councillor Joe Austin, he was punched in the throat by an RUC officer.

The latest incident, which has prompted further concern within Amnesty International, occurred when the RUC fired plastic bullets at him and two of his friends while they were walking in the street. The bullets were fired at head level, contrary to 'yellow card' rules governing their use. One of the bullets narrowly missed his head.

Representatives of the Beechmount Five campaign shared a platform with Damien Austin at fringe meetings during the annual Labour Party conference. Other speakers included Billy Power of the Birmingham Six and Labour MPs Ken Livingstone, Peter Hain and Bernie Grant.

## RUC interrogate prisoners

The Association of Legal Justice, a civil rights group in Belfast, has highlighted the latest instance of ill-treatment in Castlereagh Interrogation Centre — an incident which also shows a further decrease in prisoners' rights under recent legislation by giving increased powers to the RUC.

Christopher Walsh, a remand prisoner, was taken from Crumlin Road Prison to Castlereagh where he was interrogated and physically abused by the RUC over a four day period. Prior to this, a prisoner had the right to refuse being further questioned by the RUC.

## New plastic bullet guns

Clare Reilly, Belfast spokesperson for the United Campaign Against Plastic Bullets, has slammed the British government's plans to issue a new plastic bullet gun — to prevent injuries to those firing them — as "adding insult to injury". The British military forces have been experiencing problems from misfires and breach explosions.

This development was announced, coincidentally, at the same time as the New York based Helsinki Watch human rights organisa-

tion issued its report calling on the British government to ban plastic bullets altogether and "find an alternative intermediate weapon the use of which does not violate human rights standards."

The UCAPB spokesperson pointed out that in spite of 17 deaths and hundreds of injuries by plastic bullets:

*"Not one word of sympathy or apology has ever been expressed by the RUC or British army, and no action has been taken against those members of the British forces who have blatantly failed to adhere to their own firing regulations."*

West Belfast MP Gerry Adams has said:

*"However hard the British government attempts to sell the introduction of this new improved version, the fact remains that in the hands of the RUC and British army and now the UDR, this lethal weapon will continue to kill and maim."*

Foot note:

Plastic bullets were introduced in 1973 to replace rubber bullets which killed three people in 1972/1973. It was claimed that plastic bullets were "more accurate" but very quickly it was proven that plastic bullets were more lethal than their predecessor.

Some 55,367 plastic bullets were fired between 1973 and 1990. The peak year was 1981, the year of the H-Block hunger strike by Republican prisoners led by Bobby Sands, when 29,601 plastic bullets were fired resulting in the death of several people and serious injury to hundreds of demonstrators.

Despite the deaths and injuries only one member of the British military forces, an RUC member, was charged but later acquitted of the manslaughter of John Downes during an anti-internment rally in 1984.

Seven of the 17 people killed by both rubber and plastic bullets were children all under the age of 16.

## Haldane Society lawyers visit Belfast

**Fourteen legal experts from the British-based Haldane Society of Socialist Lawyers met with the relatives of over 100 prisoners in West Belfast this month.**

Their fact finding visit was prompted by:

The recent Amnesty International Report;

Reports of ill-treatment in Castlereagh Interrogation centre and the murder of fellow human rights lawyer Pat Finucane by a British government supported Loyalist murder gang.

The relatives said later that the lawyers had been "shocked and disturbed" at harrowing accounts of ill-treatment, injustice, forced confessions and show trials.

Chairperson of the Haldane Society, Bill Bowring, expressed particular concern about the removal of the right to silence of detainees during interrogation by the RUC and the strong correlation between those who had spoken whilst in custody and convictions without corroborating evidence. He pointed out that: "It has always been a basic tenet of civilised jurisdiction that nobody has to convict themselves".

The delegation also met the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) and, remarking on the fact that people preferred to

take civil actions against the police, the prisoners' relatives welcomed Haldane Society's support for the establishment of a truly independent body to investigate further complaints against the RUC.

## Censorship challenged in 26 Counties

**A High Court case taken by a prominent trade unionist and Sinn Féin member challenging the wrongful interpretation by broadcasters of Section 31 of the Broadcasting Act was heard in Dublin on October 11th.**

Larry O'Toole, a member of the Bakers Union National Executive, was spokesperson for striking workers at the Gateaux Factory during a dispute last year but was prevented from airing the workers views on television and radio because of his Sinn Féin membership.

During the hearing, O'Toole's counsel submitted that the provisions of Section 31 do not prohibit the broadcast of material from people solely because of their membership of Sinn Féin and that such an interpretation was an interpretation of the law.

Peter Shanley, representing Radio Telefís Éireann defended political censorship saying that O'Toole had no legal right to access to the airwaves and could not complain when interviews with him were not carried.

In reply, O'Toole's counsel concurred with this legal point but contended that what was at issue was that as a spokesperson for the striking workers, he had a right not to be "excluded arbitrarily" from RTE.

Judgement has been reserved.

## Third anniversary of media ban in North

The Belfast headquarters of the BBC and *Ulster Television* was picketed by Sinn Féin Councillors on October 21st to mark the third anniversary of British government imposed media censorship. Censorship was introduced in 1988 by the then British Home Secretary Douglas Hurd. It prevents Sinn Féin members being interviewed by the live media which, in effect, disenfranchises 45% of the Nationalist people in the Six Counties who vote Sinn Féin.

The anniversary was also marked in Australia where Johnny Walker of the Birmingham Six handed in an open letter of protest to the British consulate in Sydney, signed by 21 trade union leaders and nine parliamentarians.

## Helsinki Watch criticises repression

**A report on Human Rights abuses by Britain against the Irish people was published in October by Helsinki Watch, part of the world wide Human Rights Watch, founded in 1978 to monitor the provisions of the Helsinki Accord (1975).**

The report was the result of ten days spent in Ireland last January when members met with human rights activists, lawyers, community workers, religious and political leaders, and British government officials.

Britain, a party to the Helsinki Accord and a signatory to the Declaration of Human Rights, has the worst record of Human Rights abuses of any other European country.

The 192-page report, a clear indictment of the British government's actions in Ireland, was launched at the Commonwealth Summit in Zimbabwe by Helsinki Watch spokesperson, Aryeh Neier. It makes the following recommendations:

Ban on the use of plastic bullets;  
Abolition of the Emergency Powers Act standard for the admissibility of confessions as evidence;

Abolition of exclusion orders under the Prevention of Terrorism Act;

Abolition of the Broadcasting Ban which denies access to the media by Sinn Féin;

Strict control by government of the use of force by the British forces, imposing the standard of absolute necessity in proportion of the actual danger;

That Britain adopt the United Nations guidelines for investigations into complaints against the British forces;

The reintroduction of trial by jury for certain: "scheduled offences";

The report showed that Britain's presence in the North is unsustainable without this widespread abuse of Human Rights.

## University guilty of political vetting

**A controversial plan to extend political vetting to include the scrutiny of applications of former prisoners who wish to become students at Queen's University, Belfast, has been condemned by prisoners' organisations in the Six Counties.**

Queen's plans to compel ex-prisoners to obtain recommendations from the Probation Service or another "relevant authority". Former prisoners would also have to give the university permission to request a police check before their applications could be considered.

The Probation Service has refused to participate in any mandatory vetting. The Northern Ireland Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders (NIACRO) accused the authorities of increasing the degree of institutional discrimination faced by ex-prisoners.

## LOYALISTS

### Loyalist death squads kill six Catholics

**Throughout October, Loyalist death squads in Belfast and County Tyrone were responsible for the random sectarian murders of six Catholics and a wave of attempted killings which left several others seriously injured.**

Four of the six victims were murdered by the UFF — a cover name for the still legal Ulster Defence Association which openly recruits from its premises on the Newtownards

Road in East Belfast. The other two victims were killed by the UVF.

But even with such conclusive evidence against the UDA, senior British ministers, including Lord Belstead and Peter Brooke, Secretary of State for the North, again publicly refused to proscribe the organisation. The refusal prompted the main Nationalist newspaper, *The Irish News*, to comment "...while the largest Loyalist paramilitary group is a perfectly legal organisation, what are people to think".

The government's position exposed its complete contempt for the genuine fears of the Nationalist population who are living with the daily spectre of Loyalist sectarian murder gangs freely roaming Belfast and elsewhere, secure in the knowledge that they have British government immunity to continue with their terror campaign.

## RUC unit incapable of stemming attacks

Purely to defuse political criticism from the Dublin government, certain church and political leaders, the British authorities superficial response to the increase in Loyalist killings was to authorise the establishment of a new RUC unit — the 'Loyalists Murder Co-ordinating Team'. The title itself is not only highly ironic but has sinister undertones given the RUC's deep-rooted history of collusion with Loyalist death squads in the targeting of Nationalists for assassination via the continuing widespread leaking of security force files.

The unit has been assigned to the North Belfast area where over 600 Catholics have been killed since the early 1970s. (Approximately 40 Catholics have been killed in North Belfast since 1986).

But there is little confidence among the Nationalist community that the RUC has either the will or ability to apprehend some 40-50 Loyalist killers, supported by some 300 operatives, it claims have been responsible for this years spate of sectarian killings.

Coincidentally, the appointment of the RUC unit came just three days before an intergovernmental conference meeting between British ministers and their Dublin government counterparts where it was expected that the upsurge in Loyalist paramilitary activity would feature high on the agenda. It was therefore more of a cosmetic gesture to placate Dublin than a serious attempt to crack down on Loyalist killers.

So far this year, Loyalist paramilitaries have been responsible for the majority of deaths as a result of the conflict. Attacks have surpassed the highest number of sectarian killings since the peak period of the early 1970s.

The logic behind the killings is clear: It is intended to terrorise the Nationalist community and therefore keep it in its place, keeps it from demanding its civil and national rights and so helps stabilise the British government's maintenance of the sectarian statelet.

- UFF — Ulster Freedom Fighters
- UVF — Ulster Volunteer Force

## Chronology of events

**Thursday 3rd October:** Catholic trade unionist Pearse McKenna was shot in the back by UFF/UDA gunmen as he walked to work on the Ormeau Road, South Belfast.

**Friday 4th:** A Catholic taxi driver who was leaving four children to school in a predominantly Loyalist area of East Belfast, had a lucky escape when Loyalists fired two shots through the windscreen of the car, forcing it to a halt. There was an attempt to kill the driver but the weapon jammed and the taximan sped off.

**Tuesday 8th:** A Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) club premises in County Down was destroyed in a UFF/UDA firebomb attack. The organisation issued a statement declaring that the GAA, consisting of some 300,000 people throughout Ireland, would in future be considered as 'legitimate targets'.

**Wednesday 9th:** The UFF qualify their threat by saying that it was not directed at all GAA members but at those who were: "using the GAA or its property" to "promote Republicanism". The qualification did nothing to moderate what was essentially a further excuse for the random sectarian killing of Catholics.

**Thursday 10th:** Catholic father-of-one Hugh Magee was shot dead at the wheel of his black taxi by a lone UFF gunman as he was driving out of the Oldpark area of North Belfast. Passengers in the taxi, a man, two women (one of them pregnant) and a two-year-old boy, escaped injury when the vehicle careered across the road and crashed into a wall. Mr Magee died later in hospital. He was the second black taxi driver to be killed by Loyalist paramilitaries this year. His colleague, Thomas Hughes from West Belfast, was assassinated on July 19th.

Within a 24-hour period, a further three Catholics were killed, another shot and seriously injured while several others had either narrow escapes or remain in a serious condition in hospital following assassination bids.

**Saturday 12th:** Two Catholics standing outside the Mater Hospital, North Belfast, escaped possible death or injury when the gun of a Loyalist assassin jammed.

Hours later, an 18-year-old Catholic man who was walking home along Clifton Street in the same area, was shot in the back by Loyalists and seriously injured.

**Sunday 13th:** In the early hours, Karl Hegney, a father of four young children, was returning to his home in the Catholic Markets area of South Belfast when he too was shot in the back. He was discovered by an RUC patrol but died later in hospital. His assassins had identified him as a Catholic simply because of the particular side of the Ormeau Road he was walking along. The UVF claimed responsibility for his murder.

In the second incident that day, a Catholic from Ardoyne, North Belfast, was abducted by a Loyalist gang and taken to an isolated spot in the Loyalist Shankill Road area. The man was badly beaten by the gang who also dropped concrete building blocks on his torso and limbs. He remains seriously ill in hospital with brain damage.

**Monday 14th:** Two Catholics were targeted for assassination. The first, taxi driver Harry Conlon, was lured to his death in the Loyalist Taughmonagh estate in South Belfast. He was found dying from gunshot wounds to his head and is believed to have been killed by either a

Loyalist posing as a passenger or by gunmen lying in wait. He was the sixth taxi driver to be killed this year — five of them by Loyalists.

The UFF/UDA claimed responsibility for the killing and issued a warning to drivers of three Nationalist taxi firms, alleging that drivers were involved in providing information to the IRA. The claim was dismissed by the firms who said that it was: "just another excuse to kill Catholics".

The Taxi Drivers' Association on several occasions called on the RUC to publicly refute the claim given that in recent months the three firms had been the subject of an RUC investigation into their financial standing. The RUC's subsequent silence was not only construed as condonation for the action of the UFF but has led to the growing belief that it actively colluded with the Loyalist gang in singling out the firms and their drivers.

**Monday 14th:** The body of a man with bullet wounds to the head was found in a stolen car in Tamar Street, East Belfast, only yards away from the UDA's central headquarters. The man was rushed to hospital and put on a life support system. He was later identified as Brian McCabe (33) from the Nationalist White-rock area of West Belfast. His relatives switched off the life support system on Wednesday, October 16th.

In a statement claiming responsibility, the UFF/UDA said he had been "interrogated" for several days before being killed because he was a member of the IRA. The claim was denied by Republicans and Mr McCabe's family.

The same night a Catholic attendant at an all-night petrol station in West Belfast escaped injury when three Loyalists drove into the garage and opened fire before speeding off.

**Tuesday 15th:** 24-year-old Catholic John McGuigan, from Lenadoon, West Belfast, was shot dead at his workplace, Morrow's timber yard, in the lower Ravenhill Road — a predominantly Protestant area. The two Loyalist gunmen clearly knew their victim and singled him out from the mixed workforce. The UFF/UDA gunmen shot Mr McGuigan several times in the chest. He died later in hospital.

**Friday 25th:** The sixth victim of Loyalist death squads, Sean Anderson from Pomeroy, County Tyrone, was killed when a hail of bullets were fired at him as he was driving in the laneway of his home. Mr Anderson had escaped a previous assassination bid exactly one year ago when, on that occasion, Sinn Féin member Tommy Casey was killed and his wife injured by Loyalists.

The UVF later claimed responsibility for his murder.

**Saturday, 26th:** A Dublin man, Peter Fagan (28) was discovered in the passageway of Malvern flats, situated in the predominantly Loyalist Shankill Road area. Fagan had been badly beaten then shot in the arm, mouth and head and left for dead. However, he survived and remains in a serious condition in hospital. The UFF claimed responsibility for his attempted killing.

## TV programme exposes collusion

Channel 4's *Dispatches* programme, screened on October 2nd, sparked off a major political controversy in senior

## RUC and British government circles when yet more damning evidence of RUC collusion with loyalist death squads was revealed.

According to several Loyalist informants interviewed in the programme, a new pan-unionist group headed by the main Loyalist paramilitaries and calling itself the Ulster Loyalist Central Co-ordinating Committee, has been formed throughout the Six Counties and has been responsible for sanctioning, co-ordinating and conducting a sizeable proportion of sectarian killings. The ULCCC, according to the informants, has some 60 members comprising of senior British military and RUC personnel, Loyalist politicians and leading unionist business people.

An anonymous member of the ULCCC interviewed on the programme claimed to have met supporters of the RUC 'Inner Circle' or 'Inner Force' whose representatives would approach the committee and 'advise' on the timing of individual attacks. He said that not only is intelligence passed from members of the RUC who have access to security files but that RUC members provide safe passage for the death squads carrying out the actual attacks. Illustrating this, *Dispatches* reconstructed the circumstances surrounding a number of sectarian killings including those of human rights solicitor Pat Finucane, murdered in February 1989 by the UFF; Lurgan man Sam Marshall who was shot dead by the UVF as he left Lurgan RUC Barracks in March 1990 and UVF killings in Cappagh, County Tyrone, last March in which three Nationalists died.

Furthermore, commenting on the Stevens inquiry into collusion, a Loyalist informant confirmed what Nationalists had long known: that Loyalist paramilitaries were given prior warning by the RUC of the inquiry team's proposed moves so that their tracks could be covered.

Both the RUC Chief Constable Hugh Annesley, who incidentally refused to co-operate with *Dispatches* and the British Secretary of State for the North Peter Brooke, refuted the highly convincing evidence contained in the programme. They angrily demanded that the production team hand over all details relating to it. However, prior to the programme's screening, the TV team had already decided to do so in the hope that its revelations would prompt a full investigation!

### Footnote:

Two days prior to the *Dispatches* programme, the RUC visited the homes of 25 Nationalists from West Belfast and informed them that their personal details contained in security force files were now in the hands of Loyalist death squads.

## INTERNATIONAL

### Joe Doherty awaits US court's asylum judgement

Joseph Doherty, who is currently in his eighth year of imprisonment in the United States, went before the US Supreme Court on October 16th 1991.

Mary Boresz Pike, Doherty's attorney, argued that the Attorney General abused his power when he denied Doherty's asylum hearing. Now the Attorney General is asking the Supreme Court to decide whether or not it

is within his power to deny Doherty's right to an asylum hearing and whether or not he can invoke foreign policy and political considerations in exercising his discretion to grant asylum to refugees under the 1980 Refugee Act. The Supreme Court have reserved judgement; the ruling is expected some time next year.

The ruling will bring to an end the legal saga which began in June 1983, when the FBI arrested Doherty, who had gone to the US after escaping from Crumlin Road Jail in 1981.

Upon his arrest, the US began deportation proceedings and Doherty applied for asylum, but the British interceded by issuing an extradition warrant. However, in April 1984, Judge Sprizzo denied the request, stating that Doherty's offence (in the Six Counties) was political.

Doherty requested to be deported to the 26 Counties until Dublin enacted a new extradition treaty with Britain which would have made him extraditable to Britain. Doherty then re-applied for asylum in the US. In 1988, Attorney General Meese ordered Doherty to be deported to Britain, but later that year the Board of Immigration Appeals granted Doherty's motion to reopen his deportation/asylum hearing for the third time. Attorney General Thornburgh's reversal of the BIA ruling was then successfully appealed in 1990. The Attorney General then sent the case to the Supreme Court, where Doherty's last chance for asylum now lies.

### Republican representatives visit Euskadi and Australia

The recent visit to Euskadi by Sinn Féin's spokesperson on Culture, Bairbre de Brún, coincided with two major cultural events: Egin Eguna (an international festival organised by the nationalist daily *Equin*) and Gudari Eguna (a celebration honouring Basque freedom fighters).

De Brún met with a number of language, womens' and prisoners' organisations and gave several press interviews during her visit. She spoke about media censorship, Britain's shoot-to-kill policy, the Irish language, and the increase in Loyalist assassinations of Nationalists.

De Brún also addressed a commemoration for freedom fighters on September 20th and spoke at the launch of a Spanish translation of Sinn Féin President and MP Gerry Adams's book: *The Politics of Irish Freedom*, which was translated by a Basque political prisoner.

In October, Sinn Féin Councillor Gerard McGuigan made a significant blow against British censorship during a recent tour of Australia. In an interview with Melbourne's *The Age*, McGuigan described British censorship as "a subtle form of dictatorship which every fascist state in the world would practice." McGuigan was interviewed on television and on several radio stations throughout Australia, including Australia's national broadcasting station, ABC.

In Melbourne, McGuigan met with leaders of the Aboriginal Advancement League. He also launched the Phoenix Club at the Emer-

ald Hall, which is expected to become a centre of Irish political and social activity.

In Sydney, McGuigan met with Mayor Frank Sator and addressed the Trades Council Body there.

Throughout his tour, McGuigan met with Australian Aid to Ireland. He focused on Irish solidarity activity.

## ECONOMIC

### Unemployment and poverty on the increase

At a time when the Northern Ireland Office Economy Minister Richard Needham claimed that the Six Counties has missed the worst of the recession in the British economy, a group of 254 firms declared that there will be redundancies before Christmas with one in five contractors in the building trade reporting a serious downturn in their business.

The survey, carried out by the Northern Ireland Chamber of Commerce, stated that despite bigger profits, few firms are willing to reinvest in building programmes.

The news comes at a time when 40% of children in the Six Counties are living on or below the official poverty line. The Anti-Poverty Network of community workers says that over 27% of households are caught in the poverty trap in the "poorest region of the United Kingdom".

At the launch of a seven-point charter *Towards the Elimination of Poverty*, Network chairperson Róisín MacDonagh said it was not a radical proposal but merely asking for the restoration of welfare benefit cuts made by the British government since 1980.

### Anti-discrimination boycott gains momentum

As a further attack on the discriminatory employment practices of the Northern Bank, students at Queens University Belfast voted to: "actively support" a campaign of sanctions against the bank and participate in the Equality Working group earlier this year.

The Northern Bank employs only 16% Catholic workers and only 8% of management is Catholic.

An extension of the campaign was made by the students union in a call to students in the 26 Counties not to do business with the National Irish Bank, the Northern Bank's equivalent there.

To deflect criticism the bank's Human Resources consultant claims that it has 'clear objective for recruitment'. However Oliver Kearney, Equality's secretary, was unimpressed and asked, "The question the Northern Bank has not addressed is: 'What is there timetable for achieving a balanced workforce? 10, 20, 30 or 40 years?'"

## U-turn on Irish TV station feared

The president of the GAA, Peter Quinn, has called on the Dublin government to establish an All-Irish television station, as promised some years back, amid fears that impending financial cutbacks could see the plan shelved once again.

Quinn, the head of Ireland's largest sporting and cultural organisation, was speaking at the presentation of awards to the pupils who achieved the highest awards in the Irish language in the 'A' level examinations in the Six Counties. The presentation took place in Omagh, County Tyrone, on Monday, October 21st.

Even before the announcement of the cutbacks due in the 1992 budget, observers were expressing doubts as to whether any realistic steps were being taken to establish the new station. It is now obvious that the infamous U-turns seen in Fianna Fáil policy on extradition, the economy and the Hillsborough Agreement can be expected with regard to recent promises on the language. Feachtas Náisiúnta Teilifíse (National Television Campaign) spokesperson Donncha O hEallaithe has said that the undertaking given by Dublin Taoiseach Charles Haughey that the station would be set up in 1992 took the wind out of the campaign. Now that the immediate pressure is off, he said, there are no concrete signs that planning is underway to fulfill the promises made.

Amidst strong rumours that the plans for the All-Irish TV station are to be shelved, Mr Quinn's presentation speech came as a reminder of the depth of feeling such a move would arouse. The GAA president recalled the attempts by NIO education Minister, Brian Mawhinney in 1989 to reduce the status of Irish in the school curriculum and expressed his pride in the leading role played by the GAA in the broad-based campaign which forced the minister to modify his proposals.

Meanwhile, *Ulster Television* have announced that 44% of their viewers watched the first ever programme in Irish to be broadcast on their channel. The estimated 200,000 audience is above average for the TV station, which throughout its history has faced accusations of anti-Nationalist bias and discrimination.

## Marketing value of Irish language

Recent surveys in the 26 Counties have shown a very positive attitude towards the Irish language, although English remains the everyday language of communication for most people living outside of the Gaeltacht — all Irish speaking — areas.

Some of the major Irish companies, such as Telecom Eireann, the telephone company, have launched Irish language advertising following surveys which correctly predicted a very favourable response.

Meanwhile Batchelors, the latest multi-

national company to include Irish in its advertising, following Cadbury's, Birds Eye and McDonalds, estimate a 10% improvement in sales as a result. Major supermarket chains in Dublin and Cork are also adopting bilingual signs throughout the interior of their stores, previously a feature only in Gaeltacht areas.

One of the strongest criticisms of the Dublin government's language policy has been its almost total reliance on the education system for the preservation of Irish since the 1920s, and the lack of initiatives to promote the language in everyday life. These latest surveys, including the findings of the Henley Centre Ireland report, *Planning for Social Change*, point strongly to commercial and other benefits in the everyday use of the language and will undoubtedly lead to further calls for legislation on bi-lingual packaging such as already exists in Quebec.

## Voting rights for emigrants call

The joint Fianna Fáil/Progressive Democrats' programme for government up to 1993, which was published in mid-October, includes a pledge to examine the feasibility of providing voting facilities to emigrants and promises that a decision will be made before Christmas. Yet Fianna Fáil was the only party not to support a Labour sponsored bill in favour of emigrants rights earlier this year. The Bill was lost by 66 votes to 62.

Now, Irish emigrants in England are organising a lobbying campaign to ensure that the Dublin government does not backtrack on its assurances, as it has done in the past on many other issues. Glór an Deoráil (Emigrant's Voice) a London-based group which has long campaigned for the needs of Irish emigrants to be seriously addressed, have published a report which shows that the 26 Counties is the only EC state not to offer some form of voting rights to citizens living or working overseas.

Last month, a British Conservative MP sparked off a bitter row when he called for the disenfranchisement of the Irish in Britain. At present, voting rights for Irish people in Britain or British people in Ireland are preferential to those afforded other EC citizens. Throughout the last 20 years, however, there have been strong calls from within the British Conservative Party for voting rights for the Irish in Britain to be withdrawn. In 1982, for example, this was reflected in 35 separate motions to its annual conference. To date, the Conservative government has shied away from such a move to avoid further deterioration in Anglo-Irish relations, in spite of the widely-held view that the British Labour Party benefits to a far greater extent from the Irish vote.

## IRA military operations

The deployment of almost 1,000 extra British troops to the border area of South Armagh in mid-September to carry out a major refortification programme on bases and outposts damaged in previous

IRA attacks, has demonstrated that the British garrison in the occupied Six Counties is under extreme pressure. Coupled with a marked increase in IRA attacks against bases throughout the month, the IRA continued its policy of targeting those firms which continue to provide vital supplies to the British military infrastructure despite repeated warnings to them to desist.

As those troops amassed at the border were preparing to pull out of the South Armagh area, having stolen more farmland and placing the local populace virtually under siege for two weeks, the IRA in Belfast killed one of the top business contractors supplying the British garrison.

Jack Haldane, the managing director of the Haldane/Sheils Group, was shot on Thursday, September 19th. In a statement to the media the IRA said his firm: "had supplied materials for the rebuilding of border posts and had supplied materials for the Henry Brothers Ltd of South Derry" — the North's main contractors engaged in work for the British forces. A spokesperson for Haldane's subsequently confirmed that it would desist from the supply of materials and labour for military contracts. Several other firms followed suit.

British military bases and military personnel came under gun, mortar and grenade attacks throughout the Six Counties which resulted in the death of one RUC member and serious injuring of three British soldiers during a mortar attack on a mobile patrol in the village of Swatragh, County Derry on September 17th. Three days earlier, in Newtownstewart, County Tyrone, a UDR soldier was seriously injured in a booby-trap bomb explosion. At least three other personnel were injured in two out of many such operations against military bases in Belfast (Donegall Pass and North Howard Street bases) on September 5th/6th.

On September 15th the IRA, in response to a wave of British-inspired terror attacks by Loyalist paramilitaries against the Nationalist community, issued a statement stating that it would take direct action against those Loyalist involved in organising and carrying out such activities. The statement however pointed out that: "The IRA under no circumstances will allow itself to become involved in a sectarian conflict which would only divert us from our war with the British forces and those who control, supply and sustain them." Several days earlier, leading UVF Loyalist paramilitary, John Hanna, was killed by the IRA in Belfast and following its September 15th statement a number of other leading Loyalists, members of the Ulster Loyalist Central Coordinating Committee, had narrow escapes in subsequent IRA operations.

## 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

# IRELAND

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