

IRELAND

INTERNATIONAL NEWS BRIEFING

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

Issue No. 24

September 1991

EDITORIAL

British behind increase in loyalist killings

● "Religious war", "sectarian strife", are the images which pro-British propagandists like to project when explaining the conflict in Northern Ireland. Indeed the recent increase in attacks by loyalist gangs plays right into their hand: in September alone four nationalists were shot dead and each attack followed by a statement from one loyalist group or another claiming 'retaliation' for an IRA attack on British military forces.

Just as killings carried out by the South African group Inkatha on ANC supporters, and which the media described as 'tribal warfare', are now known to have been aided and in some cases instigated by the South African police, in Northern Ireland many killings of nationalists by groups like the Ulster Defence Association or the Ulster Volunteer Force have been helped and sometimes carried out by British military forces.

All escalations of loyalist violence cannot be ascribed to British counter-insurgency strategists. One familiar pattern of loyalist attacks occurs whenever the loyalist community feels most politically vulnerable: for example after the suspension of the Stormont Parliament in 1972; during the truce with the IRA in 1975 and after the signing of the Hillsborough Treaty in 1985. But there are other times loyalist circumstances do not suffice to explain an intensification of attacks.

Collusion between members of loyalist gangs and the British forces has been well documented. Last year a British-initiated inquiry into instances of collusion, the Stevens' Inquiry concluded that such collusion was widespread and inevitable given the political circumstances and the make-up of locally-recruited forces such as the Ulster Defence Regiment and the RUC. The Stevens' Inquiry focused on the leak of intelligence documents by British forces to loyalist groups. Sinn Féin councillor Bernard O'Hagan, gunned down by the 'Ulster Freedom Fighters' two weeks ago, may well have been the victim of such a leak: three months ago his personal details were found in a British intelligence file abandoned on a rubbish dump near Dungiven. At the time, people speculated that it had been left there for loyalists to collect it. And there are other sinister pointers, such as the apparent ease with which loyalist killers seem to slip in and out of nationalist areas, given the high level of patrolling and roadblocks, not to mention constant ground and aerial surveillance by the British army, in Belfast in particular.

Given the obvious contact and overlap between members of loyalist gangs and members of the British military forces, loyalist groups have always been much easier to control and infiltrate than republican organisations. These circumstances allow the British to turn the tap of loyalist attacks on and off. To turn it off, arrest some key members of the UDA or the UVF. To turn it on, pass on personal information about 'republican suspects' and publicly declare 'open season' on nationalists. Typically, three years ago, the UVF murdered human rights lawyer Patrick Finucane. A few weeks before his death a British minister, Douglas Hogg, had publicly criticised "certain lawyers" in the North for being "too close to the IRA." RUC members had named Pat Finucane as a member of the IRA to loyalists in Castlereagh detention centre: Pat Finucane's death warrant had been signed.

By censoring Sinn Féin views, by refusing to engage Sinn Féin in political talks, by ambushing and shooting republicans, by withdrawing funds from community projects whom they accuse (without evidence) of being sympathetic to republican views, the British are creating a climate in which republicans, activists, sympathisers and voters become loyalist targets. It is what Sinn Féin President Gerry Adams MP was recently describing as a "restructured counter-insurgency strategy."

British minister Peter Brooke has of course denied that British secret service agents are feeding information to loyalist gangs waging attacks on nationalists. But an escalation of loyalist attacks on nationalists is in the short-term interest of the British government. One of the objectives at the top of the British list is the isolation and defeat of the Republican Movement. They see loyalist attacks as capable of putting pressure on republicans in two ways, first through nationalists themselves putting pressure on the IRA to retaliate, thus diverting its efforts away from the British occupation forces, and second, through loyalists terrorising isolated sections of the Catholic population which might then say to the IRA, look, stop your actions because we are getting hit by loyalists in the process.

It is to the latter group which Peter Brooke must have been thinking when, at a recent press conference, he warned 'paramilitaries' to consider whether their actions, "with the absolutely certain consequence of retaliation", were the right way to proceed. Given the British record in manipulating loyalist violence, Brooke's words sounded sinister, to say the least.



Sinn Féin

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POLITICAL

Brooke shelves talks initiative

"We owe it to the public to verify how the individual parties feel," British Minister Peter Brooke declared on September 13th. What he was saying was that he was launching yet another time-filling round of bilateral talks with the unionists and the SDLP. This is the stage reached by the 'Brooke initiative' nearly two years after its official launch in a speech in Bangor in January 1990.

Having taken a year and a half to agree on a format for inter-party talks, the unionists and SDLP sat down and talked for all of two weeks last June. Early in July the talks collapsed because of unionist objections to an impending London-Dublin conference. Since then, the unionists have increased their list of preconditions for the talks to start again, and the SDLP has shown itself less than eager to re-enter the talks anyway.

The pretext given by Brooke for not planning to bring the parties together again is the proximity of the Westminster elections, which might interrupt the talks. The real reason is the impasse reached by the British government and the parties. The SDLP want to retain some Dublin involvement through the Hillsborough Agreement. The unionists want the agreement scrapped, yet are not prepared to concede full institutionalised power-sharing to the Catholic middle-class party. With elections around the corner, those parties are even less likely to give any ground and risk losing electoral support to a rival.

After an inter-governmental meeting with Dublin Foreign Affairs Minister Gerry Collins on September 13th, Brooke issued a brief communique containing the usual platitudes about *"working in close co-operation to advance political dialogue on the basis of the relationships within Northern Ireland, within the island of Ireland and between the peoples of these islands"*. But it remains that two years after his appointment Peter Brooke, who was hailed by the media as a clever 'bridge-builder', and the one who would succeed in getting Northern politicians around a table at met by every single British attempt to cobble together some political structure for the Six County statelet in the last 20 years.

The state of the parties is now as follows: Ian Paisley's DUP is holding firm with an ever-growing list of preconditions including a new chairperson to chair any future talks; immediate discussion of Articles 2 and 3 of the 26-County Constitution and a few others; the Official Unionist leader James Molyneux has resumed his attacks on the Hillsborough 'dictat' by likening it to Eastern European undemocratic bureaucracies. Some unionists have suggested that the format of the talks should be changed to exclude Dublin, some have even suggested excluding Peter Brooke. Meanwhile, SDLP leader John Hume has

declared that renegotiating the format of the talks would be a waste of time. Alone of the four parties around the table, the Alliance party is keen to restart in any way at any time. Alliance's status as the 'fourth party' invited to, the talks rests on the fact that the party which is actually the fourth largest in electoral terms, Sinn Féin, and its agenda for an all-Ireland solution, were excluded from the talks.

The refusal of the British to allow the expression of republican views, and their insistence in maintaining control over the North, are some of the ingredients which contributed to the present failure. In the framework of the Six Counties and with the British agenda in operation, no political consensus is possible. Any attempt to manufacture one has failed. But one of the motives behind the recent Brooke initiatives — regardless of its outcome — was to *"distract international opinion from British responsibility for the ongoing conflict in the Six Counties,"* as Sinn Féin President Gerry Adams put it last May.

And this is precisely what British Minister Peter Brooke was doing in the US and Canada in September: there he spoke to politicians and business people of the valiant efforts his government was making in order to bring peace to this troubled land... remaining suitably vague on the political flop his initiative had been, and the reasons why.

Dublin minister addresses UN

DUBLIN Minister for Foreign Affairs Gerry Collins addressed the United Nations General Assembly on September 27th. In his speech he dealt with the North in terms so vague as to make it 'difficult for any interested outsider to discover the nature of the Northern Ireland problem' — as *Irish Times* journalist Sean Cronin wrote in his report of the Minister's words. Collins' speech was, in fact, a masterpiece of disinformation.

He spoke of the Anglo-Irish (Hillsborough) Agreement as a *"valuable mechanism"* which was: *"ending discrimination"*, improving the administration of justice and promoting: *"even-handedness"* in the behaviour of the 'security forces.' There was no one there to contradict Mr Collins, and so he continued with what must have sounded totally meaningless to UN delegates by outlining his and the British government's efforts to bring about a new agreement and thus give: *"full expression to all of the relationships in the North (between North and South and between Ireland and Britain)."* Why would a valuable agreement be ditched for a new one and why were these relationships in need of 'full expression'? Unless UN translators provided abundant footnotes along with the translation of the Dublin Minister's arcane speech, UN delegates now know as little about the Irish-British conflict as before (possibly less).

More importantly, Gerry Collins, who claims, like his Prime Minister Charles Haughey, to be an Irish nationalist, missed an opportunity to place in front of the UN Assembly the

Irish nationalist viewpoint, namely that political initiatives which aim at tinkering with the Six-County state are bound to failure and that Britain's proclaimed neutrality in Irish affairs would be best expressed by a declaration of intent to disengage from Ireland.

Gerry Collins could even have quoted his British counterpart Douglas Hurd who, a week earlier, brought his government's experience of Northern Ireland to bear on the situation in Yugoslavia when he argued at a meeting of EC foreign ministers that sending troops in was a lot easier than withdrawing them and that troops are useless in the absence of a political settlement.

Belfast City Council sued for discrimination

SINN FÉIN councillor Fra McCann has taken Belfast City Council to court over continued discrimination by unionists against nationalists.

Sinn Féin is the second largest party on the City Council and the largest nationalist party, yet it is excluded from all council committees. The legal action seeks the abolition of the present committees and the appointment of new ones on which Sinn Féin will be represented.

The legal case, which is expected to be heard in court in November, is part of an ongoing battle against historical unionist bigotry in the City Hall. Commenting on the legal action Councillor McCann stated: *"We were elected to represent the voice of Belfast nationalism. This we have continued to do against all the odds. We have challenged unionism even against the wishes of those SDLP councillors who have, in the past, slated the unionist junta as 'bigots' but remain reluctant to work with Sinn Féin to effectively challenge the sectarianism of City Hall."*

JUSTICE/PRISONS

Sinn Féin President withdraws legal claim

SINN FÉIN President Gerry Adams has withdrawn from legal proceedings in a criminal injuries case arising from his attempted assassination by loyalists in March 1984.

Adams, who was seriously injured on that occasion, stated that his original motivation in pursuing the compensation claim was to expose the way in which the British state controls and manipulates the law in the North of Ireland.

Over a seven-year period this was amply demonstrated by the number of deliberate obstacles placed in the way of his legal team by former RUC chief constable Jack Hermon, the crown prosecution and the judiciary itself. Indeed, for five years Hermon refused to issue the proper certification to confirm that Adams had been shot and that he had been hospitalised! The crown prosecution still refuses to accept that he is the person named on the certificate!

Because of his high political profile, Adams

had placed no confidence in obtaining financial compensation but in recent months it had emerged that a co-ordinated effort was underway to link compensation claims by other republicans to his which would have jeopardised their chances of a successful outcome.

New rule gags compensation claimants

IN a climate of increasing RUC brutality in the Six Counties new measures have now been introduced which effectively prevents people who have suffered RUC brutality and have made out of court settlements for compensation from making their cases public.

The clause states: "The parties hereto hereby agree and undertake not to reveal the terms of the said settlement and not to take any step or authorise any person on their behalf to take any step which would cause the terms to be published or disclosed."

This measure is seen as a means whereby the RUC is able to admit culpability for brutality in private, but the details will never be disclosed. It is another way of ensuring immunity from prosecution for RUC members.

Ward case goes to Appeal

SEVENTEEN years after her wrongful conviction for placing a bomb on a coach containing British soldiers, the case against Englishwoman Judith Ward has been finally referred to the Court of Appeal by British Home Secretary Kenneth Baker.

The move, on September 17th, prompted former Birmingham Six member Billy Power to remark that while the media was presenting the Home Office decision as a magnanimous gesture, the fact remained that "it's diabolical that it's taken so long."

He contended that the spacing out of decisions to refer miscarriage of justice cases to the Court of Appeal was an attempt by Britain to limit damage to the face of British justice, seriously discredited after the spate of releases since the freeing of the Guildford Four in October 1989.

The Home Office decision was unprecedented in the sense that referrals to the Appeal Court are only made on the presentation of new evidence. Baker has not acknowledged that new evidence has or has not emerged but in reality he was faced with a deluge of evidence presented by Ms Ward's solicitors who focused on the dubious nature of the forensic evidence which convicted her to 12 life terms plus 30 years imprisonment. Her solicitors pointed out that the forensic tests carried out by Dr Frank Skuse to detect the presence of nitroglycerine had proven to be totally discredited during the appeal of the Birmingham Six. Skuse had used the same TLC test on Ms Ward.

Ms Ward's solicitor, Gareth Pierce, said her client hoped the referral to the Appeal Court, which may take some months yet, was "the beginning of the end of her ordeal."

"There can be no happy ending when someone has been incarcerated — buried alive — for 17 years."

No date has as yet been fixed for the Appeal hearing.

Irish prisoner extradited to Germany

IN September, Irishwoman Donna Maguire was ordered by the Dutch authorities to be extradited to face charges in Germany. She was extradited on Monday, October 7th.

Her appeal against extradition was heard in her absence by the Dutch Supreme Court which gave no reason for the ruling.

Donna Maguire was arrested in Belgium in June 1990 and extradited to Holland. The German authorities applied for her extradition to face charges relating to an IRA bomb attack at a British army barracks in Osnabruck in 1989 and the killing of a British army corporal in Hanover in the same year.

She is expected to face charges along with Sean Hick and Paul Hughes both of whom were also extradited to Germany after being cleared of any offences by a Dutch court.

Segregation battle continues in Belfast prison

THE British policy of forced integration of republican and loyalist prisoners in Belfast's Crumlin Road Jail is taking its toll. Tension rose steadily through September as loyalists rioted and attacked republicans. Republicans were also attacked by prison warders. Sinn Féin spokesperson Francie Molloy described the situation as: "volatile".

The latest series of incidents started on September 17th when loyalist prisoners threw boiling water on warders, then two days later started a riot in 'C' Wing. During the disturbance, members of the prison's riot squad burst into a cell occupied by two republicans and assaulted them viciously, then dragged them to the punishment block. The two prisoners were injured as a result. The most seriously injured, Gregory Carroll from Armagh, remains in the punishment block where warders have refused him access to a doctor to record his injuries. On September 21st, loyalists set fire to 'C' Wing's main dining hall. Prisoners had to be evacuated from the wing while the fire was being brought under control.

The British government's attitude so far has been one of Thatcherian intransigence, an echo of the old H-Block days. They see integration as an integral part of criminalisation — in that it negates the political nature of the actions which led those people to prison — and use it also as a form of control over republican prisoners. However, de facto segregation already exists at Crumlin Road as republican and loyalist prisoners forfeit their

rights to association and exercise on alternate days. Forced integration wouldn't even be contemplated in any of the North's other prisons.

In a statement released from the jail on September 20th, loyalist prisoners have issued a threat to prison warders. "Every prison warder who engages in harassment of us will be dealt with," they warn, and add that every loyalist in the prison has been instructed to "attack any republican who appears on our landing." Republican prisoners, who demand segregation also, nevertheless suffer attacks from both sides: loyalist prisoners and hostile (and also often loyalist-minded) prison warders.

British harass prisoner's relatives

RELATIVES of a republican prisoner have been barred from future visits following a perfectly innocent occurrence which the British police and prison authorities completely overreacted to.

On September 17th, British police arrested the brother and two sisters of Martina Anderson who is serving a life sentence in Durham prison, England. They were detained for questioning in relation to the discovery that day of a child's toy gun contained in a clothes parcel they had handed into the jail. The toy had been placed there by Martina's three-year-old nephew as a prank. In fact, when it was discovered in the parcel by a prison warder, the Andersons were as surprised as she! At that point, clearly nothing sinister was suspected because the Andersons were allowed to proceed with their visits.

Their subsequent arrest, detention for 35 hours, eventual release without charge and being barred from visits was therefore clearly an attempt to further intimidate and victimise the relatives of Irish political prisoners.

Campaign to support Pamela Kane

A campaign has been launched in the 26 Counties in support of republican POW Pamela Kane and other women prisoners who are being held under appalling conditions in Limerick Prison.

Pamela, from Dublin, has been denied family visits, while other male and female prisoners are brought to Dublin every four to six weeks for visits. The women are confined to tiny cells with no proper toilet facilities. They are punished severely for minor breaches of petty prison rules and Pamela herself is now on 20-hour lock-up because she talked to a male prisoner.

The women are calling for: (a) closure of the wing on which they are held; (b) transfer to a prison which has adequate education exercise, craft and leisure facilities; (c) larger cells with sanitary units; (d) an end to severe and unnecessary disciplinary punishment and (e) family visits for all prisoners without discrimination.

REPRESSION

'Impotent' police complaints body

RECOGNISING that it has become more of a liability than an asset in the investigation of complaints against the RUC, the 'Independent Police Complaints Commission' has called for more power in order to win public credibility.

The commission, a British government-appointed body, complained on September 21st that under existing legislation it can only investigate incidents involving RUC members if invited to do so by the British Secretary of State for the North or the Police Authority.

However, since its establishment in 1988 the commission's record has been appalling. With an average of over 2,000 complaints against the RUC each year, the commission supervised only 111 cases in 1988 and 176 cases in 1989, 40 per cent of which it had still not dealt with by the end of that year!

An additional problem with the commission has been the issue of serious cases. Almost all of these are referred to the DPP. Of the 803 cases completed by the commission during 1989, 682 had already been to the DPP. Only one formal disciplinary charge was proved, while another 12 disciplinary hearings initiated resulted in not-guilty findings.

In its three years in existence, the commission has been asked on only one occasion to directly investigate a serious incident where death has occurred as a result of RUC actions. This was during the investigation into the killing of 15-year-old plastic bullet victim Seamus Duffy in August 1989.

On that occasion, the commission recommended that no disciplinary measures be taken against the RUC members responsible. The SDLP at the time accused the commission of being: "impotent".

The Campaign for the Administration of Justice (CAJ) a human rights watchdog in the Six Counties, tentatively welcomed the commission's call for more power but pointed out that of the hundreds of complaints made in relation to detainees held under emergency legislation in recent years, not one case had been upheld by it: "despite the fact that in several cases compensation for ill-treatment has been ordered by the courts."

Against such a backdrop, calls by the commission to have more power will be viewed with cynicism by the nationalist population.

US Congressmen consider British shoot-to-kill policy

IN Washington on September 17th, US Congressmen heard a detailed submission by relatives of one of Britain's shoot-to-kill victims.

Margaret Caraher and her father-in-law Peter were invited by US Congressmen Thomas Manton, Tom Lantos and John Porter,

to address a Forum examining Britain's shoot-to-kill policy. The Forum was sponsored by the United States House of Representatives' Congressional Human Rights Caucus and the Congressional Ad-Hoc Committee for Irish Affairs.

The Carahers outlined how Fergal Caraher (20) was shot dead and his brother Micheál seriously injured when, without provocation or warning, British soldiers opened fire on their car last December 30th near their home in the village of Cullyhanna.

The Carahers described the circumstances surrounding the incident and explained to Congressional members that in spite of the case being highly controversial, the British authorities had refused to hold an inquiry into the killing. They also briefed members about the daily reality of living with a hostile army of occupation in their midst in South Armagh and throughout the Six Counties. The Carahers also outlined details of an independent public inquiry held under the auspices of the Cullyhanna Justice Group and the Irish National Congress, where eminent international jurists heard wide ranging evidence from eyewitnesses who disputed the British army/RUC version of the shooting.

The findings of this inquiry are due to be made public in October and will be distributed to human rights organisations worldwide.

Amnesty's Urgent action snubbed by RUC

DAMIEN AUSTIN (18) who was the subject of an Amnesty International Urgent Action Order last month, has been targeted for harassment by the RUC and British army. Amnesty issued the order after Damien was tortured by the RUC during his second interrogation in Castlereagh where he was detained with several other teenagers from West Belfast.

But even with Amnesty's intervention, Damien Austin continues to be harassed on the streets: "Every time the RUC see me now they pull up and continue the harassment. It's mostly the usual stuff apart from the threats they make. They have threatened me with further arrest and torture and try to belittle me by saying 'next time the big baby will not have his daddy to get him out'. At times when I'm stopped with my mates they pull me to the side and tell me I'd better be careful because 'with the dark nights now in, a lot of bad things can happen'. As they threaten me, usually one of them imitates a gun being put to my head and the trigger being pulled."

Damien's solicitor is being kept informed of the harassment and threats and a document is being prepared for Amnesty. Damien is now considering leaving home rather than continuing to live under the threat of being beaten, tortured, framed or murdered by the RUC.

Terminally-ill woman body searched

ON September 18th, the British army and RUC raided the home of an elderly

woman who suffers from Alzheimers disease and subjected her to a body search while in her wheel chair before she was allowed to leave her house to attend hospital.

The incident occurred in Twinbrook on the outskirts of West Belfast when a British military party entered the home of Eileen Strong, herself suffering from cancer. Eileen was due to attend the cancer clinic at the hospital that day and the raiding party refused to let her leave the house to keep her appointment. In addition, her 66-year old invalid mother Sarah Crooks was only permitted to leave the house after she was body-searched by a female British soldier. They refused to allow any member of the family to accompany her even though she was upset and confused.

Mrs Strong's two daughters, aged 11 and 16, were also body-searched before they were allowed to leave the house for school. Commenting on the raid Sinn Féin councillor Pat Rice described it as: "an act of indecency, barbarism and inhumanity."

Teenager latest shoot-to-kill victim

AN RUC shoot-to-kill operation in County Fermanagh, intended to ambush and kill an IRA active service unit, resulted in the tragic death of a 19-year-old nationalist man on September 29th.

Kevin McGovern, an agricultural student from Kinawley, was shot in a graveyard in Cookstown when the RUC opened fire without warning on him and his two friends. The RUC had staked out the area for several hours following a tip-off from a member of the public that an IRA operation was about to take place. In fact, the IRA had aborted a mortar attack when its Volunteers realised they had been under observation from civilians.

Kevin McGovern's two friends escaped death simply because there were too many eyewitnesses.

The killing bears all the hallmarks of previous shoot-to-kill operations where clearly the British forces had no intention of taking prisoners and where cover stories were concocted and issued to the media to justify the use of lethal force.

Following the killing of Kevin McGovern RUC headquarters claimed that the three friends when challenged to stop began running and that after a second challenge, two of them halted and a third man ran on. The statement further claimed that warning shots were fired into the air and that: "The third man was followed by police who again called on him to halt. He did not do so and appeared to throw something towards the police. One officer fired and the man was fatally wounded." Kevin McGovern was hit several times in the upper body and died at the scene.

As it became clear to the RUC that the youth was not involved in an IRA operation and that practically every element of its allegations was being disputed by eyewitnesses, it immediately clawed back and an apology was issued to the McGovern family.

The killing has again sparked off a political

storm regarding the use of lethal force by the British military forces. However, in order to defuse criticism the RUC chief constable Hugh Annesley has ordered an investigation by the Independent Police Complaints Commission — a pro-RUC body which commands little credibility in the nationalist community. The results of this investigation is already a foregone conclusion — another shoot-to-kill cover up.

LOYALISTS

British intelligence "directing death squads"

LOYALIST death squads, operating in conjunction with British intelligence, have killed four nationalists this month and have been responsible for a wave of indiscriminate sectarian bomb and gun attacks.

Seamus Sullivan — September 3rd

ON September 3rd, 24-year-old Seamus Sullivan, from the Falls Road area of West Belfast, was gunned down at his workplace. Mr Sullivan, a City Council Cleansing Department employee, was shot in the back at point-blank range by loyalist gunmen while he was working in a depot in Springfield Avenue. He died at the scene. Two of Mr Sullivan's colleagues escaped death or injury by diving for cover. The gunmen had calmly walked into the depot, despite the fact that the area immediately surrounding the scene was saturated with British army and RUC patrols.

In their escape by car via the controversial Lanark Way motorway — which links the nationalist Springfield Road to predominantly Protestant areas — the death squad passed by a British army foot patrol. The linkroad has provided a convenient access and escape route to loyalist killers on many occasions in the past, yet it remains open in spite of continuous calls for its closure by local people and politicians.

Kevin Flood — September 13th

THE Ulster Volunteer Force, UVF, claimed responsibility for the random sectarian killing of 31-year-old Kevin Flood on September 13th. Mr Flood, a part-time taxi driver with a young family, was working at his vehicle outside his Ligoniel Road home, North Belfast, when loyalist gunmen opened fire from a passing car. Their victim was struck several times in the head and body and died a short time later in hospital.

Minutes before the fatal shooting, another nationalist man escaped attack by the same death squad when he jumped over a wall and ran to safety.

The UVF claimed that Kevin Flood was a member of the IPLO when clearly he was randomly picked because he or any other nationalist for that matter, happened to be in the street at the time.

Bernard O'Hagan — September 16th

IN the third loyalist assassination, the UFF claimed responsibility for the killing of Magherafelt Sinn Féin Councillor Bernard O'Hagan on September 16th. The UFF have killed four Sinn Féin members this year, two of them elected representatives.

Councillor O'Hagan (37) a married man with three young children from Swatragh, South Derry, was elected to the Sperrin Ward of Magherafelt District Council in 1989. He was a lecturer in computers and statistics at Magherafelt College of Further Education and it was here, when at his most vulnerable, that the UFF gunman struck, knowing that he would be arriving for work. As he stepped out of his car he was shot several times and died at the scene. Shocked lecturers and students arriving at the college witnessed the shooting.

Sinn Féin President Gerry Adams MP said that the killing had been "directed" by British intelligence working in conjunction with the death squads as part of a: "restructured counter-insurgency strategy" aimed at terrorising the nationalist community and targeting republicans.

Three months ago, security files discovered on a rubbish dump in Dungiven contained details on Councillor O'Hagan and a number of other republicans. At the time, Derry Sinn Féin Councillor Hugh Brady said the files had been left there by the British military forces for loyalists to collect at a pre-arranged time. A subsequent high-level RUC cover-up into the discovery of the files was initiated. It concluded that the files had mistakenly been thrown out among kitchen waste! The official explanation made a mockery of the recommendations of the Steven's Inquiry into collusion which was supposed to prevent such eventualities from occurring.

Larry Murchan — 2,000th civilian fatality

THE Loyalist Retaliation and Defence Group, a cover name for the Red Hand Commandos loyalist paramilitary organisation, claimed responsibility for the random sectarian killing of 63-year-old newsagent Larry Murchan on Saturday, September 28th. He was the fourth person to be killed by loyalist death squads this month and the 2,000th civilian to die as a result of the conflict. The same group claimed responsibility for the copy-cat murder

in August of nationalist newsagent John Carson. On that occasion the LRDG used the fact that he sold the weekly republican newspaper *An Phoblacht/Republican News* as a pretext for Mr Carson's murder. The LRDG also made the same allegation in the killing of Mr Murchan whose family said the claim was unfounded.

Mr Murchan, a married man with three grown up children, was about to open his newsagent's shop situated in the St James' area of West Belfast when the gunmen struck. He was shot at least five times at point blank range and died at the scene. The two gunmen escaped in a waiting car and abandoned the vehicle in the nearby loyalist Village area.

Climate of vilification assists death squads

RECENT comments by unionist spokespersons have contributed to creating a climate whereby such killings as the last four can take place with the least public or political criticism.

Only hours after the murder of Seamus Sullivan, Unionist MP John Taylor told a forum of young unionists in Belfast that: "one out of every three Roman Catholics one meets is either a supporter of murder, or worse still a murderer". Taylor's comments were described by the SDLP as: "disgusting" and "highly inflammatory". Sinn Féin said that they created the atmosphere: "whereby each and every nationalist was a potential target for loyalist assassins."

Following the assassination of Bernard O'Hagan, the Democratic Unionist Party's press officer, Sammy Wilson, gloatingly said that his killing was the inevitable consequence of what he untruthfully called: "the sectarian IRA murder campaign which is openly promoted by Sinn Féin". Just several weeks earlier, Wilson called nationalists voters in North Belfast "sub-human animals" because they had exercised their democratic right in electing a ninth Sinn Féin councillor to Belfast City Council.

Bombs in residential areas

LOYALIST paramilitaries have also recently embarked on a potentially more lethal terror tactic — abandoning crudely constructed incendiary bombs in built-up nationalist residential areas.

The bombs were left in hi-jacked vehicles in the Ardoyne area of North Belfast close to the Sinn Féin centre; in the Laurel Bank estate in Poleglass on the outskirts of West Belfast and in Portaferry, County Down.

In all three instances, the alertness of nationalist families led to the UFF bombs being defused.

However, in a separate incident, a loyalist fire-bomb attack on the flat of a Sinn Féin member from Newry completely gutted the

premises and endangered the lives of several families who were evacuated.

Lucky escapes

IN two separate incidents in September a nationalist family and a lecturer at Queen's University Belfast, escaped loyalist murder bids.

A grenade attached to the steering mechanism of a car belonging to a nationalist family from the Short Strand area of East Belfast was fortunately discovered by a motor mechanic conducting repairs on the vehicle. The family had been driving the vehicle for some time before the discovery.

In the second incident, on September 6th, Queen's University lecturer Adrian Guelke was slightly wounded during a UFF attack and only escaped death when two automatic pistols jammed.

The UFF claimed that it had obtained "high-level intelligence information" about Mr Guelke, who is a South African and an authority on international relations with a special interest in the conflicts in the Six Counties, Israel and South Africa.

The UFF claim was substantiated by a British "security source" admission in a Sunday newspaper that such a file exists but relates to "another foreigner", whom, the source alleged, is involved with republicans. Mystery still surrounds this part of the equation but the incident proves that the UFF is receiving highly classified documents from senior British military sources which could go as far as MI5/MI6.

EMPLOYMENT

New Job row rocks Ford plant

CATHOLIC workers at the Ford Autolite plant in Andersonstown, West Belfast, have hit out again at the management's continued snubbing of both Ford's own fair employment principles and those of the Fair Employment Commission.

The latest criticism follows the discovery that a vacancy for an accounting assistance in the controller's office had been advertised internally only — "an action bound to perpetuate the anti-Catholic discrimination which has long been a hallmark of Fords" since the workplace is predominantly Protestant and the company does not practice affirmative action.

In 1987, the Fair Employment Commission (then the Fair Employment Agency) found the company guilty of discrimination. Concern about practices within the plant became so acute that it was forced to introduce its own alternative to the MacBride Principles.

However, in some departments there is still 100% Protestant representation.

US firms ignore fair employment law

THE impact of fair employment legisla-

tion on US-based companies operating in the Six Counties is 'questionable' according to a report published by an independent research organisation — The Investor Responsibility Research Centre (IRRC) in Washington DC.

Whilst conceding that "there is little doubt that the MacBride Principles were a major factor in prodding the British government to pass a tougher Fair Employment Act in 1989", many managers are not very familiar with the required codes of practices.

Oliver Kearney, chairperson of the Fair Employment Trust, described the report as a damning indictment of employment practices by US corporations in the Six Counties as well as locally-based employers. He stated that the report illustrated that employers are unwilling to engage in effective affirmative action measures and that shoddy legislation by the British government failed to compel employers to do so.

RUC vetting employees

THE Sunday Tribune newspaper has stated that it has proof that the RUC has been secretly vetting employees at Shorts Bros company for over a year.

According to the report, four men, three of whom are Catholics, were dismissed by the airplane and missile manufacturers in June 1990. A fifth man, also a Catholic, had his job application withdrawn as a result of screening carried out by the RUC Special Branch.

None of them were given the true explanation for the company's actions: that their alleged paramilitary connections would endanger the security of the plant. The men turned up for work to find that their security clearance had been withdrawn.

Their cases are now in the hands of the Fair Employment Commission but Shorts are shielded by Section 42 of the Act, which permits a company to vet employees.

Jobless total rises again

The number of people out of work in the Six Counties has risen for the tenth month in a row.

- 14% of the workforce is unemployed
- 104,000 people are registered as unemployed
- 1,200 joined the dole queue during July and August
- 6,200 more people are unemployed than this time last year

Worst hit are the nationalist areas of Derry, Newry and Strabane with the worst record of 25%.

Sinn Féin Vice President Martin McGuinness accused the Northern Ireland Office employment minister, Richard Needham, of trying to deflect criticism from the British government's disastrous handling of the economy which has resulted in the successive increases in unemployment.

Refuting the British governments claim that the IRA were responsible for the loss of jobs, McGuinness referred to the authoritative find-

ings of Reading University, England, which in a report published last year, showed that job losses resulting from IRA operations played an insignificant part in creating unemployment. The study placed the overall responsibility on economic factors such as the recession and high interest rates as the major factors for job losses. In other words, said Martin McGuinness "the British governments failed economic and political policy is ultimately responsible for the mishandling of the Six County economy."

CULTURE

New Irish secondary school

IRISH-MEDIUM education took another historic step forward on September 2nd, with the opening of the first all-Irish secondary school in the Six Counties, Meánscoil Feirste. The opening of the new school sees the culmination of several years organisation by Irish language enthusiasts and prospective parents who remained undaunted by the task of starting from scratch to cater for all aspects of the pupils' education.

Meánscoil Feirste is situated in the heart of the new cultural centre, situated on Belfast's Falls Road, which opened to the public earlier this summer. The cultural centre also houses the Irish language daily newspaper, LA.

Plans for the new school were submitted to the Department of Education in November 1990, and an appeal was then launched to raise the initial £100,000 needed. Throughout the year, fundraising was carried out on a private and voluntary basis to ensure the survival of the project. Although financial support has been forthcoming from the state body, Bord na Gaeilge, in Dublin, to date the British government has yet to provide financial assistance.

Glór na nGael — one year on

The last weekend in August saw protests outside British Consulates and Embassies in several European cities and across the US to mark the first anniversary of the British government's withdrawal of funding from the Irish language umbrella group, Glór na nGael.

At the end of August, 1990, Glór na nGael were notified that their funding was to be withdrawn under guidelines set down by the then British Secretary of State for the North, Douglas Hurd, in June 1985. They received 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."

The withdrawal of funding raised a storm of protest from a wide range of political, social and cultural groups. One year on, the workers are still carrying on a high profile campaign in

defence of the cultural group, with the active backing of their trades union, the National Union of Public Employees. The union marked the anniversary with a picket on the British Government Training and Employment Agency, the Glór na nGael workers' former employers.

Glór na nGael has made an application for a judicial review into the NIO decision to withdraw grant aid, but last year this was temporarily halted when crown lawyers indicated that a Public Interest Immunity Certificate, a barring order, was to be issued in respect to certain documents relating to the decision. As a result, neither Glór na nGael nor their legal team can have access to all the papers regarding the decisions made against them. However, legal action to seek 'discovery' of the documents is ongoing.

BOOK REVIEW

Standing proud by Joe Doherty

● *Standing Proud* contains articles and poems written by Belfast man Joe Doherty during his eight years in prison in the US and his fight for the right to political asylum. The book includes a history of his legal battle with the US government. Available in the US from the 'National Committee for Joe Doherty', \$12 plus \$2.50 p&p, all proceeds to go to his legal defence.

ENVIRONMENT

Derry protests at incinerator plan

AT the beginning of September, over 2,000 people, representing 60 anti-incinerator action groups, marched in protest in the latest phase of a year-long battle against the proposed siting of a £40 million toxic waste incinerator in the Du Pont plant outside Derry. The action had the support of local political parties, church leaders and farmers unions.

Dr Raymond McClean, a former Du Pont medical officer who addressed the rally, expressed grave concern about the possible dioxin contamination of the food-chain if the incinerator is built. In such a case, the destructive effects of the incinerator would stretch far beyond the immediate area. Dioxins, which are 70 times more poisonous than cyanide, would be produced if Du Pont were to incinerate the chlorinated solvents used in its plant.

Yet Du Pont, with the support of the British and Dublin governments and despite the overwhelming opposition of the local community, is planning to process 20,000 tons of toxic waste per annum if the incinerator is built.

Du Pont has recently conducted a feasibility study carried out by Queen's University — a recipient of funding from the industry. Not surprisingly, the study sup-

ports the building of the incinerator. However, to date, Du Pont has refused to release the study to Derry City Council nor a comprehensive toxic release inventory — a requirement under US Environment Protection Laws.

As the Merville/Greencastle Environmental Alliance presses ahead with its constitutional challenge to the Dublin government, which has paid grants to Du Pont, Derry Sinn Féin Councillor Hugh Brady has demanded access to the information held by Du Pont and called on all local councils in both the Six and 26 Counties to hold a referendum on the issue.

Nerve gas scare in Donegal

THOUSANDS of tons of nerve gas, dumped off the Donegal coast in the 1950s by Britain, is nothing short of a time bomb. Fishermen's spokesperson Joey Murrin has demanded a full report and declared that his organisation would be carrying out an assessment of information supplied by a member of the Dublin parliament, Dinny McGinley. The Irish Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament endorsed the call for a full investigation into Britain's actions and into the current state of the bombs.

The British government has reluctantly confirmed that it dumped Nerve Agent GA — Tabun, mustard gas, phosgene and Bromo benzyl Cyanide in the form of gas bombs encased in concrete and scuttled at 2,700 feet.

Since the issue was first raised over three years ago, the British government has continued to do nothing despite the fact that it is impossible to ascertain if the concrete casings have been damaged.

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 tar-

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

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51/55 Falls Road, Belfast BT12

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Dr Raymond McClean, a former Du Pont regional officer who addressed the rally, expressed grave concern about the possible blood contamination of the food chain. The incinerator is built in such a way that the best available emissions control would stretch far beyond its immediate site area. Dioxins, which are 70 times more poisonous than cyanide, would be produced. Dr. McLean was to denounce the incinerator as a "cancer factory".

Yet Du Pont, with the support of the British and Dublin governments and despite the overwhelming opposition of the local community, is planning to place 50,000 tons of toxic waste per annum in the incinerator's still.

Du Pont has recently submitted a preliminary study carried out by Queen's University, a report of funding from the industry. Not surprisingly, the study sup-