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REPUBLICAN NEWS

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Britain "fast running out of options"

New Year message from Oglaigh na hÉireann

In a New Year statement the IRA has said that it has "driven home the message that Britain is fast running out of options" in its Irish war. Oglaigh na hÉireann points out that in 1992 republicans "stand ready and willing to show the courage and leadership required of us" if the British government acts positively to bring a peaceful resolution to the conflict.

The statement signed 'P. O'Neill' was issued by the Irish Republican Publicity Bureau, Dublin.

"The leadership of the IRA extends seasonal and fraternal greetings to all its friends and supporters both at home and abroad. To our imprisoned comrades and their families and to the families of all our dead, especially those Volunteers who have lost their lives over the past 12 months, we extend solidarity. Your courage and commitment in the face of terrible suffering continue to inspire us and add to our determination to pursue this struggle to ultimate victory.

As we face into the 23rd year of unbroken struggle we salute the Volunteer soldiers of the IRA and we salute all those who, through their unwavering support, have steadfastly assisted and sustained them in their work.

Over the past 12 months we have witnessed an ever more desperate oppressor resort to ever more desperate measures in a futile attempt to crush our struggle, yet the resolute resistance of the nationalist people, headed by the cutting edge of IRA actions has defied their worst efforts. The resilience, ingenuity and resourcefulness of ordinary men and women continues to confound them and will continue to do so.

Across the Six Counties and within the national territory of our oppressor successful and ever more frequent IRA operations have delivered one simple message, a message which our enemy cannot censor and cannot ignore. That message says to those who sustain this conflict: your outdated war in Ireland is futile, you cannot hope to quench our people's desire for freedom and so long as you continue to occupy and oppress us you will live with the inescapable consequences of your actions.

Our ability to diversify and to strike effectively and hard has driven home the message that Britain is fast running out of options and must soon face the inevitable by taking the steps necessary to resolve this conflict and grant peace and stability to the people of Ireland.

We in the Republican Movement stand ready and willing to show the courage and leadership required of us. The British government for their part must end their current bankrupt policies in regard to Ireland. Hysterical and theatrical performances by senior British political figures serve only to underscore the bankruptcy of their position and were the situation not so serious their dramatic posturing would be laughable.

This war has already brought immense suffering to all concerned and it will continue to do so until those who claim the mantle of leadership live up to their responsibilities and act in a decisive manner to bring about a just and lasting resolution of the conflict.

Britain is all too aware, in spite of its recent return to the rhetoric of the 1970s, that we in the IRA possess the means and the will not only to continue with this struggle but to intensify it, and they fully appreciate that they cannot ever hope to contain, never mind defeat us. We for our part genuinely desire peace, the British have it in their power to grant peace. Failure to do so will only delay the inevitable day of Irish freedom. It will not and cannot prevent it from dawning. Beirigi bua.



An Phoblacht

REPUBLICAN NEWS

January 2nd 1992



● 30 years on, RTE continues to act as an "arm of the state"

■ 30 years of RTE television

RTE TELEVISION began broadcasting 30 years ago this week. In the coverage of this anniversary there has been little serious assessment of the role of the station in the life of the country and virtually no criticism of its fundamental failings. The fact that for more than 20 of those 30 years RTE's news coverage has been subject to direct political censorship did not rate a mention — but then the secret of the censor's success is to deny the public the knowledge that they are being denied knowledge.

When RTE began it was a small operation with a skeleton staff and a low budget but its foundation was of great significance. It was intended to be a national TV station, the means by which Irish people would look at the world and themselves through the most modern and powerful of communications media. That would have been the ambition of many who worked in the station, if not of the Dublin government which set it up. However RTE never lived up to the promise.

From the start it was constricted by the conservatism of the government which set it up. Indeed the then Taoiseach Sean Lemass described it as an arm of the state. The Broadcasting Act gave the government strong powers of censorship, allowing the relevant minister to stop virtually any programme he or she pleased. After an initial honeymoon period of several years the real power of censorship began to be asserted.

In 1968, '69 and '70 RTE reported the cataclysmic events in the Six Counties, including the views of republicans. But to the government factual reporting was dangerous, and obsessed with what it saw as the spread of instability from the Orange state to the 26 Counties, it imposed political censorship. Section 31 entered the political vocabulary.

For the past few years there has been almost no debate on the continued existence of Section 31, one of the most anti-democratic pieces of legislation anywhere. Many broadcasters are among the most silent on the issue. Yet the fact is that 30 years of RTE news coverage has been handicapped and democracy distorted and Irish broadcasting itself damaged as a result. It is something the politicians and broadcasters should be reminded of this month when Section 31 is renewed.

News

■ BY MICHAEL MORRISSEY

FLYING SICKNESS

IN THE SAME WEEK that Bertie Ahern announced a £20 million cut in Social Welfare spending, a four member team from the Department of Defence flew to the US. Their mission is to oversee the handing over of the new Dublin government jet. The Fianna Fáil/PP Cabinet have broken out of their supposedly stringent spending targets to splash out £15 million on a Gulfstream 4 executive jet.

The cuts proposed affect yet again the weakest members of society. Minister Ahern proposes to tax short-term disability benefits and occupational injury benefits. The measures will 'save' the Exchequer £20 million a year. Ahern is using the cuts as a bargaining chip for a fair wage for public service workers. The previous week Ahern told reporters that "all the fat had been stripped from public spending". He obviously forgot about the new £15 million pound jet.

The new plane will be delivered in early January. It

can carry up to 12 people. It will replace the Gulfstream 3 that the government currently leases at a cost of £1.5 million a year. The logic of Bertie Ahern's accounting is that a plane that can carry 12 people is more important than maintaining the sick and disability pay that Irish workers were formerly entitled to. The Dublin government still has its original jet purchased in 1980. It has been up for sale for the last year. The cost of maintaining this 'extra' jet is yet another cost borne by the tax payers in the 26 Counties.

The purchase of the new jet is the latest installment in the

Dublin government's lust for prestige and status. Under the Haughey stewardship Dublin has been brought to a standstill so as to enable foreign dignitaries to be driven in cavalcades throughout Dublin. Then there was the £17 million pound "restoration" of Merrion Street buildings. Now with both Dublin Castle, the Royal Hospital Kilmainham and the refurbished Merrion Street offices the Dublin government can properly entertain the foreign leaders who come to Dublin.

The new jet is the reverse side of the developments in Dublin. Not only can the government receive visiting delegations in luxury, it must also be able to travel in prestige and luxury. The national airline has been spurned by Haughey's cabinet, even travelling executive class with Aer Lingus is not good enough for the Dublin government. Maybe the executive jet is supposed to symbolise to the Irish people the importance of the job in hand when our ministers go to EC negotiations. However, when you consider the yes men that the Haughey cabinet have become in EC negotiations it makes you wonder why they don't just make a phone call.



● Despite cuts in Social Welfare spending the Dublin government is to splash out £15 million on a new jet

Trigger-happy Brits condemned

BELFAST Sinn Féin Councillor Lily Fitzsimmons has demanded the immediate arrest of the soldiers involved in two shooting incidents in the Turf Lodge area of West Belfast on New Year's Eve.

Around 10pm two shots were fired into the bedroom of a house in Downline Gardens. The 23-year-old son and teenage daughter of

the Ferris family escaped injury when the bullets ricocheted around a room, gauging out two large holes.

In a second incident, a short time later, a shot was fired through the back door of a house in Norglen Road, narrowly missing the occupant.

Dismissing British army claims that the soldiers fired at a 'gunman' Councillor Fitzsimmons said: "In both instances British soldiers rushed into the house to recover pieces of the rounds which had been fired. Contrary to today's belated claim, that the soldiers were firing at a gunman, their behaviour was not that of soldiers hunting a gunman but of soldiers covering their tracks."



● Fergal Caraher - murdered by British soldiers in Cullyhanna on December 30th 1990

REMEMBERING FERGAL, DEMANDING JUSTICE

AT 6pm on December 30th, with most people still recovering from the Christmas festivities and looking forward to the year ahead, the South Armagh village of Cullyhanna came to a standstill just as it did a year ago when news broke of the killing of Fergal Caraher.

This year to mark the first anniversary of Fergal's killing the people of Cullyhanna held a torchlight procession through the tiny village. Close on 1,000 people took part in the ceremonies which culminated in the unveiling of a granite monument raised at the spot where British soldiers shot dead the 20-year-old local man.

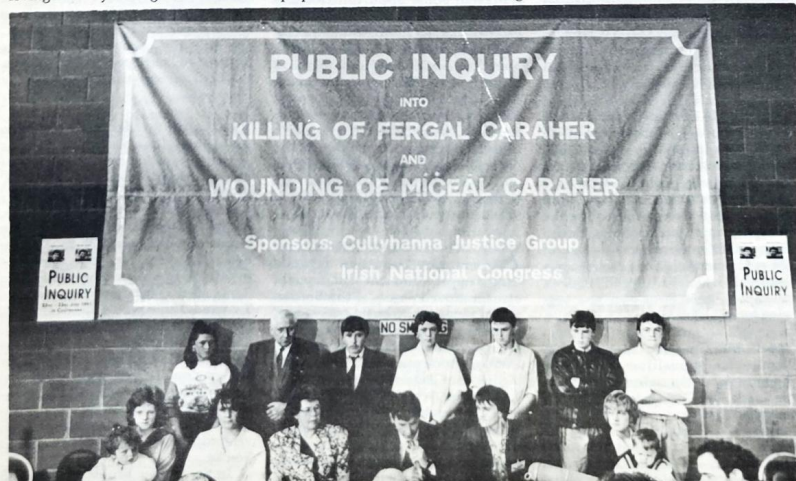
The simple marble plaque adorning the monument bears the slogan "In loving memory of Fergal Caraher murdered by British soldiers at this spot December 30th 1990". It was unveiled by Fr Raymond Murray of Armagh city who spoke of the long history of such shootings by British forces before handing over to Eilish McCabe, spokesperson for the Relatives for Justice Group.

The final speaker of the evening was Fergal's widow, Margaret Caraher, who told of a long year of meetings, preparations and work aimed at bringing Fergal's killers to justice, during which time the family had been subjected to harassment and raids on their home by the British army and to neglect from the 26-County government who have offered every excuse as to why they can't become involved in the case.

After a personal note of thanks to all those involved in the commemoration and in the work of the Relatives for Justice group, Margaret rounded off by saying: "A lot has been accomplished in the past year, there is a lot to be done in 1992 and hopefully we will see the men who killed my husband and the government who sent them here held fully accountable for their actions."

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● The Caraher family at the public inquiry held in June to investigate the circumstances surrounding his killing

1991 REVIEWED

JANUARY

NEW YEAR CELEBRATIONS were muted as the nationalist community in the Six Counties began 1991 with the burial of yet another victim of the British government's shoot-to-kill policy in the North. The funeral of 20-year-old Fergal Caraher, who was brutally gunned down by a British army foot patrol on December 30th, proved a prophetic beginning to a year which was to witness an escalation in attacks by British and pro-British forces on the beleaguered northern nationalist community. January also witnessed two sectarian killings by loyalist death squads. On January 5th 26-year-old Jervais Lynch was shot dead by loyalist gunmen at his family's Magheralin home. North Belfast father of five, Sean Rafferty, was shot dead when loyalist gunmen burst into his Rosapenna home.

January was also to witness the initiation of a number of environmental campaigns by communities throughout Ireland. The ongoing opposition to factories using toxic chemicals and other hazardous processes in Counties Cork and Wicklow, was soon to be joined by a campaign against the proposed siting of a toxic waste incineration plant on the outskirts of Derry city.

January also saw the death of 31-year-old IRA Volunteer Patrick Sheehy, from the small West Limerick village of Ballysteen.

FEBRUARY

SPEAKING at the party's Ard Fheis, Sinn Féin President Gerry Adams outlined a vision of the future.

Addressing a packed hall in Dublin's Mansion House, he said: "Our vision rejects forced emigration and unemployment, cultural oppression, sexism and inequality. Our vision embraces dignity, education, well-being and equality. Our vision is for a free Ireland and a free people. It is for bread and roses."

British media propaganda which sanitised saturation bombing by American and British troops in the Middle East into a video wargame, was interrupted by an audacious attack at the heart of the British war machine by the IRA. In a daring operation IRA Volunteers launched a mortar attack on 10 Downing Street, forcing the British war cabinet to scurry into bunkers which had not been used since the Second World War.

As sectarian attacks continued in the Six Counties, with the death of North Belfast man Peter McTasney and the wounding of his three-year-old niece, loyalist gangs claimed responsibility for a series of arson attacks in Dublin.

In Belfast there was an emotional gathering of families, many of whom met for the first time, of Irish prisoners held in English jails. On the eve of the release of the Birmingham Six, the campaign for the transfer of Irish prisoners to jails closer to their families gained momentum.



● GERRY ADAMS

MARCH

CROWN FORCES COLLUSION was once again in evidence when a loyalist death squad gunned down four nationalists at a bar in the nationalist village of Cappagh, County Tyrone. Dwayne O'Donnell, John Quinn, Tommy Armstrong and Malcolm Nugent were shot dead in a loyalist attack on Boyle's Bar on Sunday, March 3rd. Local people reported that a heavy crown forces presence in the run up to the shooting conveniently appeared to melt away as the pro-British death squad moved into the area.

Loyalist killings continued in March with the murder of Belfast taxi driver, Michael Lenaghan, who was lured to his death by a bogus call to a city centre firm. On March 17th, the battered body of 17-year-old Catholic teenager Francis Taggart was discovered in Lisburn. He died of multiple stab wounds after being attacked by a loyalist gang on his way home.

Jubilation accompanied the long awaited release of the Birmingham Six after being wrongly convicted and held in jails in England for over 16 years.

International Women's Day was marred in Belfast by the RUC banning a march by women from West Belfast into the city centre because one of the banners was written in Irish. The banner "Lá dínáisiúnta na mBan" was described as 'illegal' and 'offensive' by the RUC.

APRIL

THE MONTH when thousands of people gathered at parades, pageants and commemorations, to mark the 75th anniversary of the Easter Rising, was to open with a vicious sectarian onslaught by pro-British death squads and was to end with the launch of the doomed Brooke Talks.

The first week of the month saw four nationalists, two of them young women cut down in random sectarian killings in North Armagh and Belfast. Catriona Rennie, Eileen Duffy, Brian Frizzell and Samuel Bell were not to be the month's only victims of British terror. On April 10th IRA Volunteer Colum Marks was also to die at the hands of a British death squad, while only seven days later yet another random victim, John O'Hara from Belfast, was to die at the hands of loyalists.

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1991 REVIEWED

■ MAY

MAY was to be another month of anniversaries as the nationalist people called to mind the heroic H-Block and Armagh Hunger Strike which had claimed ten young lives in 1981.

In defiant shows of resistance huge crowds turned out in Belfast to attend a tenth anniversary rally and in Fermanagh and Leitrim to reopen a series of border roads bombed out of existence by British forces. The month was to see the dragging out of the Brooke Talks which were fast turning from a soap opera into a farce. Their inevitable by-product increased loyalist attacks, however, was to see Sinn Féin Donegal Councillor Eddie Fullerton die at the hands of a death squad in his Buncrana home on May 25th.



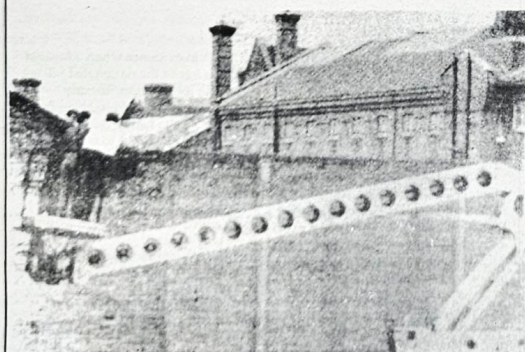
● The burnt out car of IRA Volunteers Pete Ryan, Larry McNally and Tony Doris shows the ferocity of the crown forces' ambush in which over 200 bullets were fired at them

■ JUNE

JUNE was to open with the killings of IRA Volunteers Pete Ryan, Larry McNally and Tony Doris who died in a massive hail of British bullets in the village of Coagh, County Tyrone, on June 3rd and was to end with the people of South Armagh holding a public inquiry into the death of unarmed civilian Fergal Caraher who was gunned down by the same forces the previous December.

Increased reports of torture in RUC interrogation centres began to break through the wall of media silence during the month of June as Human Rights group Amnesty International issued its most damning report to date and as young nationalists appeared at press conferences to reveal shocking details of their treatment at the hands of RUC interrogators.

Republican determination to see through the struggle was also reiterated during the month with thousands turning out at Bodestown churchyard to hear Sinn Féin President Gerry Adams confound those who have attempted to pervert the message of Tone and harness him in defence of the Northern unionist veto over Irish unity.



● The escape from Brixton Prison in July by Nesson Quinlivan and Pearse McAuley was a major embarrassment to the British government

■ JULY

IN one of the most daring escapes ever Nesson Quinlivan and Pearse McAuley dashed to freedom from the notorious Brixton Jail in London. The escape was a major embarrassment to the British government and provoked calls for the resignation of Home Secretary Kenneth Baker.

The following week the British government announced their intention to merge the infamous Ulster Defence Regiment with the Royal Irish Rangers. Such a move was viewed by the nationalist people of the Six Counties as being nothing more than a cosmetic exercise. The UDR have since its inception been closely associated, either directly or indirectly, with numerous sectarian

Review of '91

A year of failure for Direct Ruler Number Nine

■ BY HILDA MacTHOMAS

NINETEEN NINETY-ONE was the year of the failure of the Brooke Talks — as this latest British attempt to stabilise the Six Counties has come to be known. The talks officially started on April 30th, parties actually sat down face to face on June 17th, and by July 5th it was all over bar the recriminations.

British minister Peter Brooke had launched his initiative in January 1990, and spent the whole of 1990 in 'talks about talks', that is, bilateral meetings with the SDLP and the three unionist parties, the OUP, DUP and Alliance — Sinn Féin, and by extension the republican viewpoint, being excluded from the whole process. The plan was to hold three sets of talks, Strand One between the northern political parties, Strand Two between them and Dublin, and Strand Three between Dublin and London.

By the end of 1990 the mood was definitely downbeat. Just as the unionists had agreed on the Talks' procedure with Brooke, the Dublin government put forward its views on its own involvement, and the unionists balked. In January 1991 the whole process was quickly disintegrating. 'A sick joke', in the words of Alliance leader John Alderdice, a "false dawn", wrote the *unionist Newsletter*.

The difficulties may have seemed trivial and merely procedural to some British officials who were quick to point out in press briefings that the differences between the parties were relatively small. "Not a huge chasm", Peter Brooke had said in December 1990. In January the disagreement concerned mainly the timing of Dublin's entry into the talks. Near the start, said Dublin, not before northern parties had made "substantial progress", said the unionists. This was interpreted by the SDLP and Dublin as a delaying tactic. At the end of January Brooke suggested that the parties leave it to him to decide when Dublin should be brought in.

This role of referee was one which Brooke had been building carefully. In a lengthy speech in the autumn of 1990 he had declared that Britain "had no selfish economic or strategic interest in Ireland", and that its sole concern was to facilitate 'democratic debate' (except for republicans) and 'political progress' (within the partitionist framework).

Through February and half of March there was no movement. Time to "put up the shutters" and "take stock", a despondent Brooke said. The parties were beginning to prepare alternative proposals, or simply draft their election manifestos, since the time was approaching for the British Prime Minister to announce the date of the next general elections. Newspapers editors which had hyped Brooke's attempt to the heavens were now begging for a quick burial.

In Dublin Charles Haughey's neo-unionist opposition seized the opportunity of the stalemate to mount an attack. Fine Gael leader John Bruton accused Haughey of "showing no urgency" and of "arm-twisting the unionists into a united Ireland". Insisting on a united Ireland, Bruton said, was "the single remaining obsta-

cle to the Brooke initiative", a turn of phrase which strangely echoed John Hume's labelling of the IRA as "the main obstacle to peace". Or as some would have put it in less diplomatic times, "croppies lie down".

On March 14th, Peter Brooke issued an ultimatum to the parties. This was his final proposal for the talks, take it or leave it: Brooke would decide when Dublin got involved, the three strands were declared to be "equally essential", and the unionists would be formally linked to the British Minister in the talks with Dublin — another of the points which unionists had fought for, another reassertion of British sovereignty over the North. Yet Dublin eagerly accepted the deal, and beat all the other participants to it. Within a week the talks were back on the rails, and on March 26th Brooke announced in Westminster that the talks would start on April 30th, at the start of a ten-week gap in inter-governmental conference meetings.

The unionists, it seemed, had made some gains: first they had obtained a suspension of the intergovernmental conference. The Hillsborough Agreement's status and importance had been perceptibly weakened by the ongoing process which was said to lead to a new Agreement. Most importantly the talks' agenda was clearly a partitionist one: Dublin would face a British/unionist side in Strand Two.

The SDLP for its part remained very defensive on the Hillsborough Agreement throughout the entire 'talks about talks' period and beyond: after all, they were not prepared to ditch one of the few political advantages the northern Catholic middle class had managed to secure for itself in 22 years. Yet for the SDLP the talks did represent some opportunity of rebuilding a political profile which they had perhaps too firmly tied to the fortunes of the Hillsborough Agreement. Sinn Féin's exclusion from the talks enhanced the SDLP image as a relevant party. As for Haughey, he saw the talks as a possible road to joint authority, but also as an opportunity to crown his fading career with an image for the history books: Haughey shaking hands with unionist leaders as they prepare to discuss North-South relationships (one in the eye for Garret FitzGerald!).

As parties prepared for the talks the ideological frontline between British imperialism and Irish republicanism moved south of the Border, with a series of successful celebrations of the Easter Rising, culminating with a huge pageant through the streets of Dublin, which put Haughey's sneaking into the GPO with a few journalists into shame. And on April 23rd the *Irish Times* published the results of a survey which startled many, North, South and in Britain: 82% of those surveyed said they wished for a united Ireland, with over half thinking that it

would become a reality within 25 years. And 56% were in favour of retaining Articles Two and Three of the 26-County Constitution. This result received much attention since unionists had added the removal of Articles Two and Three from the 26-County Constitution as a condition for accepting to take part in talks with Dublin.

April 30th, day of the official start of the talks, was little more than a photo-call. It marked the start of a new period of arguing: this time on the venue and the chairing of Strand Two of the talks, those involving Dublin. While the parties met Peter Brooke one at a time and in turn, some inter-party working committees met, though the record of their work was not made public. Stormont was finally agreed as a venue by the end of May. On the fourth week the SDLP team began to attend Stormont only occasionally, and the OUP followed suit on week five. It took another two weeks to agree on a chairperson for Strand Two. Many were rejected, including Lord Carrington (the unionists chose to forget that he had been on the British Cabinet at the time of Bloody Sunday and to remember his role in the Lancaster House negotiations which led to the demise of white Rhodesia and the birth of Zimbabwe). Finally a former Governor-General of Australia, Sir Ninian Stephen, received every-one's approval.

An interesting side-show was Brooke's skillful use of the media and other bodies to produce the illusion of 'public pressure' on the parties to compromise: the Northern Committee of the ICTU, various business people, the Churches, New Consensus, all did their duty and called on the parties to get on with it. And on June 17th, they were talking — 17 months after Brooke's speech in which he had said: "There may be now in my judgement enough common ground to make worthwhile the start of talks soon."

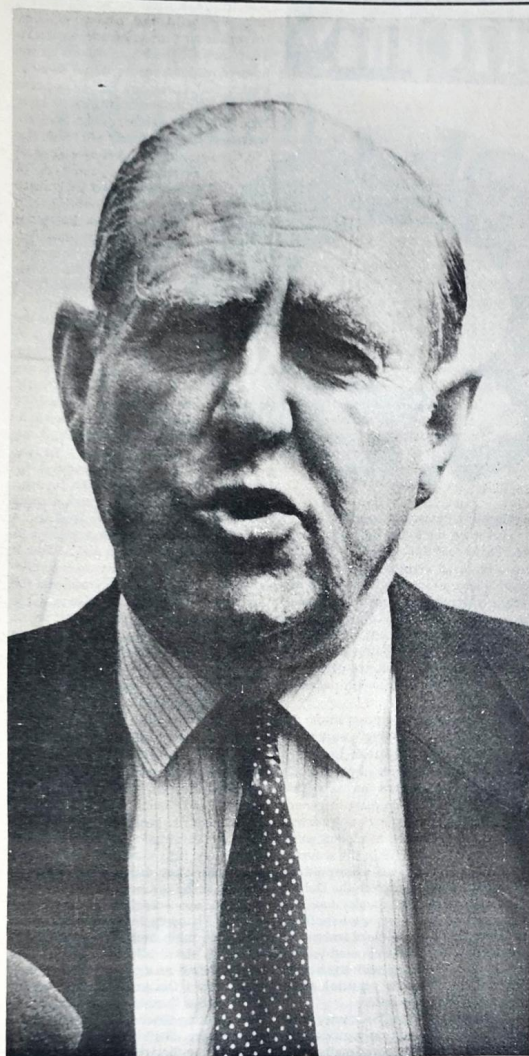
Less than three weeks later the talks had collapsed. Brooke and the other parties had spent seven of the ten weeks hammering out the last procedural points, and the refusal of the London and Dublin governments to put back an intergovernmental conference meeting scheduled for July 16th caused the unionists to pull out of no talking in the shadow of the Hillsborough Agreement, they said. While Brooke officially saved face by claiming some positive achievements out of a few days in which political parties had merely read their respective analyses of the situation at one another, the media, particularly in Britain, launched an attack on the unionists. *The Times* blamed them in an editorial entitled 'The End of Patience', as did the *Guardian* and the *Independent*, and later in the Autumn, the BBC current affairs programme *Panorama*.

By August the idea of a resumption of the talks was fading fast, as unionists started to harden their lists of preconditions once again: the DUP decided that Sir Ninian Stephen was no longer an appropriate chairman, having declared in an interview that in certain circumstances such as a "cessation of violence", Sinn Féin should be involved in talks. The DUP also demanded assurances that Articles Two and Three would be dealt with promptly at the start of Strand Two, and that allowances be made for 'injury time', possibly another play for stringing out the talks and keeping the Hillsborough Agreement in suspension. For the OUP John Taylor suggested that the talks should take place in Westminster, possibly even without Brooke.

In September Brooke announced

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● Peter Brooke — continued to hear rustlings in the political undergrowth during 1991

that he was hearing rustlings in the political undergrowth which he would investigate. But again speculations about the proximity of British general elections made his attempts unrealistic, at a time when northern parties, and indeed he himself, would start preparing for the canvass trail. On September 13th Brooke officially shelved the talks until the elections. Meanwhile the season of political party conferences opened, and while the British Labour Party had nothing very new to say about its 'unity by consent' policy for Ireland, distinctly unionist noises were coming from Blackpool where the British Conservatives were assembled early in October.

In Blackpool Brooke declared that any new talks would be about "improving the scrutiny of Northern Ireland's primary legislation and the wider relationships between any new institution in Northern Ireland and the Westminster Parliament." No mention of the other two strands there. British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd went further. Dublin was "not a rival for sovereignty," he said, "but a partner in ending political violence," and added that "the discussion now focussed not on the Border or the reunification of

Ireland but on how Northern Ireland can run its affairs within the United Kingdom."

Such words were music to the ears of northern unionists, especially integrationists like James Molyneux, the leader of the OUP. Molyneux argued that at last the British were shifting from traditional support for a devolved administration of the Six Counties towards closer integration with Britain. Yet it was pointed out, including by some in the OUP's rival unionist party, that this was pre-election time, and that with the prospect of a much reduced Conservative majority next Spring, the British government was not about to alienate 13 unionist MPs. But it was definitely the season for courting the unionists: shortly before the Blackpool conference, Peter Brooke had given an interview to the *Irish Times* in which he had referred to Articles Two and Three of the 26-County Constitution as "unhelpful" and "overly at variance with Article One of the Hillsborough Agreement."

After such advances made in his party's direction, James Molyneux, at his own party conference later in October, was gloating. However, at the end of November the DUP's tone

was distinctly more pessimistic. In particular the DUP's deputy leader Peter Robinson argued that while the Hillsborough Agreement was in place there was an "inexorable drift" towards Dublin rule, and that unless this could be reversed unionists should consider going for an 'independent Ulster'. Ulster Independence has never been taken seriously as a political option in the unionist camp, but Robinson's militant tones, partly aimed at countering the new found optimism in the OUP, received backing from loyalist hard-liners, including members of his own party who are identified with paramilitaries.

Yet by mid-December political goodwill had apparently broken out again. Apparently Mr Brooke had once again detected positive rustlings, etc. What had happened? Little more than the prospects of British general elections receding from February to June 1992, and the issue of the old political vacuum to be filled, and of the British to be seen to be filling it. And so as we reach the second anniversary of Brooke's speech calling for talks, here we are again, back at square one.

The British had a number of objectives in this latest initiative. The first one, to produce some devolved administration for the North, was obviously not met. The second one was for the British to be seen to be doing something about Ireland in the eyes of people in Ireland, Britain and the international community, and to present themselves as credible referees and peacemakers in this conflict of their own making. The British can claim partial success in that most of the media assisted the publicity drive with their usual docility.

The third was to further isolate and marginalise republicans. In this they were helped by the arsenal of repressive laws already at their disposal, and the media ban of Sinn Féin spokespersons. Yet excluding Sinn Féin from the Talks was not always understood internationally as the British would have liked. Remember in particular Bishop Tutu's remarks last Spring. And British efforts were lost on the nationalist electorate in 1991, as Sinn Féin won two by-elections and improved its share of the vote in a third.

By the end of 1991 Brooke's strategy for stabilising the northern entity has become clear. Essential to that strategy is the defeat of the republican struggle. Repression intensified against the nationalist people, with new legislation increasing the crown forces' powers of arrest and detention, and a new offence, that of possession of objects in suspicious circumstances. The Special Powers Act of pre-1969 days made it an offence to hold a bunch of keys. From 1991 people can be arrested for having kitchen gloves. The number of cases of people being beaten by RUC interrogators in Castlereagh detention centre rose sharply, and led to an 'urgent action' by Amnesty International, and representations at the United Nations. And of course, 1991 was the year of loyalist death squads. Given the collusion between the crown forces and loyalist organisations, it is safe to say that if the British did not order every killing, they must have had knowledge of many, and provided the intelligence for quite a few. That was the other side of that Brooke Talks coin. The British know well that a partitionist solution can only be imposed by buying off some of the northern nationalists and terrorising or killing the rest — and if unionist parties have always frowned at the former, loyalist gangs have always been willing to oblige in the latter.

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murders and quite a number of their soldiers have been charged in connection with such murders.

As one element of the British local gang was being given a face lift another element in the form of a loyalist death squad was out seeking another innocent nationalist to kill. Their victim was Thomas Hughes, a Catholic taxi-driver, murdered on July 19th.

Yet another embarrassment to the British government was the disclosure that they funded the 'Peace Train' organisation. It was alleged these people had come together in a spontaneous gesture to oppose the IRA bombing of the rail link. As these people were receiving their funding from the British government ordinary nationalist people achieved a resounding victory when they broke the decades old ban on nationalists marching through the centre of Belfast.

■ AUGUST

AUGUST saw three British paratroopers being charged with the murder of two young nationalists, Karen Reilly and Martin Peake. The two had been shot dead the previous September.

It was also the month which saw a massive display by thousands of nationalist people as they took to the streets to commemorate the 1981 Hunger Strike and the introduction of internment.

Loyalist death squads responded in the usual sectarian manner by shooting dead four people. Pádraig O Seanacháin from County Tyrone, Tommy Donaghy from South Derry and Jim Carson and Martin O'Prey, both from Belfast.

■ SEPTEMBER

THIS MONTH was dominated by the activities of loyalist death squads with the killing of Sinn Féin Councillor Bernard O'Hagan, and three innocent people from nationalist areas of Belfast, Seamus Sullivan (26), Kevin Flood (31) and Francis Crawford (57).

■ OCTOBER

AS THE month of October witnessed an escalation in the sectarian assassination campaign by loyalist death squads, damning evidence of the deep involvement of crown forces in that campaign was carried in a television documentary broadcast on Channel Four.

Dispatches revealed evidence that prominent loyalists including senior RUC officers, bankers, solicitors and politicians were colluding with loyalist paramilitaries in a pan-Unionist alliance which targets nationalists for assassination. Following a firebomb attack on a GAA hall in County Down by the UDA, the loyalist group issued a statement which threatened members of Ireland's largest sporting organisation.

A MORI poll conducted in Britain showed a majority of 61% of people in favour of a British military and political withdrawal from the Six Counties within four years. A sizeable number wanted withdrawal immediately.

The 26-County Programme for Economic and Social Progress (PESP) was finally agreed on October 18th ensuring that Charles Haughey remained in office.

■ NOVEMBER

DESSIE ELLIS arrived home to a tumultuous welcome in Dublin on November 7th after an English jury cleared him of the charge for which the Haughey government handed him over nearly a year beforehand.

The month of November saw the McCarthyite nature of 26-County politics go over the top as Sinn Féin was barred from using the traditional venue of Dublin's Mansion House for its annual Ard and theis and Charles Haughey's nominee for 26-County Defence Minister, James McDaid was forced to step down after he was described as unfit for office because he knew a former republican prisoner Jim Clarke.

IRA Volunteers Patricia Black and Frankie Ryan were killed in an accidental explosion while on active service in St Albans, England, on November 15th.

Three workmen were gunned down by loyalists on the Lurgan to Portadown Road on November 14th.

The first contingent of an extra 600 British troops deployed to the Six Counties arrived on November 27th.

An explosion at Crumlin Road Jail on November 24th killed two loyalist prisoners. The IRA said that it had carried out the attack in "direct response to the violent attacks upon republican prisoners and their relatives by loyalists which have occurred over a considerable period of time often with collusion from warders".

■ DECEMBER

JOHN MAJOR arrived in Dublin on Wednesday, December 5th, for a summit meeting with Charles Haughey. During his visit the British premier rejected the suggestion that he should change his government's attitude to involvement in Ireland following the publication of opinion polls in Britain showing majorities in support of withdrawal from the Six Counties.

On December 16th, five days before he was due to be released from Portlaoise Prison, Belfastman Angelo Fusco was served with five warrants seeking his extradition to Britain.

Review of '91

The year of the Golden Circle

■ BY MICHAEL MORRISEY

"In this supreme hour the Irish nation must by its valour and discipline, and by the readiness of its children to sacrifice themselves for the common good, prove itself worthy of the august destiny to which it is called."

Never was more of a mockery made of this clause of the 1916 Proclamation than in 1991 when the majority of Irish people were asked to "sacrifice themselves" not for the common good but for the preservation of a system that has seen an elite of business people and politicians enrich themselves at public expense.

pay increases. Special awards that the Labour Court had agreed for public sector workers would also be paid. In return for this the Dublin government would have to meet targets on tackling unemployment, education, housing, tax and social welfare reform. In reality the trade union movement was attempting to force the government to

Most surprised at the decline in the 26-County economy was the Dublin government itself. The Dublin government had done it all according to the EC Commission/International Monetary Fund text book.

The Irish economy finishes 1991 in turmoil and despair. The minor boom experienced over the last four years evaporated as unemployment reached a record high of 265,000. Growth in the state's production of goods and services is projected to be only half a per cent in 1991 compared to 7.8% in 1990. Most surprised at the decline in the 26-County economy was the Dublin government itself.

The Dublin government had done it all according to the EC Commission/International Monetary Fund text book. They lowered inflation by appealing to the trade unions to act in the "national interest" and negotiate a wage freeze. They promised to increase employment by well-trying methods including: paying multinationals to come to the 26 Counties; setting up training schemes; and boosting the construction industry. Borrowing was to be cut down by imposing savage cuts in essential public services.

On their return to government in 1987 Fianna Fáil negotiated the Programme for 'National Recovery with what the image-conscious Dublin government called the "social partners". The tail end of 1990 saw the "social partners" back in negotiation for a new agreement to cover the years 1990 to 1993. In return for three years of relative industrial harmony between 1987 and 1990 the trade union movement was looking for substantial concessions in the new agreement.

The unions agreed to new limited

actually create some semblance of a coherent economic policy.

It was May before the PD/FF cabinet realised the scale of the economic downturn. The small decreases in unemployment recorded in 1990 evaporated and the numbers signing on rose rapidly. By September the numbers signing on had increased by 34,000 since the beginning of the year. Redundancies in the first three months had increased by 42% more than in the same period last year. Exchequer figures showed a huge downturn in tax revenue, a clear sign to bankers, stock brokers and their ilk that things were not what they should be.

In the years since 1987 the government budgets had been saved by a "strong end of year economic performance", strong on balancing books, that is, not on providing jobs or alleviating poverty. In fact Albert Reynolds and the Department of Finance took a distinct pleasure in proving the private sector analysts wrong over the previous three years. In the last quarter of 1991 there has been some recovery in tax returns but not enough to save either the PESP or the government's grand economic plans.

As the numbers signing on rose and tax returns fell it became clear by June that the Dublin government could not keep to its budget guidelines and that either borrowing would have to increase or else public spending would have to be cut yet again. By mid-July Albert Reynolds had announced cuts

of £100 million saying that "it was only the first step". Health, Social Welfare, Defence, Environment and Education were the main areas hit.

The Dublin government began 1991 attempting to perpetuate a big lie about the state of the 26-County economy. The reliance of the FF/PD cabinet on manipulation and misrepresentation of economic data such as the importance of inflation figures, the level of unemployment and projected economic growth backfired. As unemployment began to rise the blame was laid at the door of returning emigrants who were taking the jobs on offer. The slow down in the economy was blamed on the Gulf War and the world recession.

The discussion of economic issues in the media is nothing new. The last 20 years has seen an increase in the time and column space given to covering economic issues. Leinster House elections in the 1980s were fought almost exclusively on economic issues.

What we have seen over the 1980s and 1990s is a manipulation of the media and ultimately the Irish people.

Successful governments have spread the lie that effective economic policy merely means policies that enable the economic indicators to reflect positive changes; lower inflation, positive growth, increasing employment, a positive balance of payments etc. The Dublin government seems convinced that this is where the emphasis of their work should be. However, even by the measures of their own creation 1991 was a miserable year for the 26-County economy. Their own criteria for economic success failed. Here in the 26 Counties we had booming exports, low inflation, a stable currency and copious EC structural funds.

The attack on the plans of PD/FF coalition came from two sources. The most obvious being the worsening employment situation and the sluggish growth in the economy. The second came from within their own ranks.

Des O'Malley, presiding over a depleted party in the aftermath of the 1987 Leinster House elections, sought a target to give the edge back to his party as mould breakers. His target? The Irish beef processing industry, and in particular the activities of Larry Goodman. O'Malley made noises in Leinster House. Noise planned to generate column space in newspapers

highlighting the crusading PDs. However, the following year found the PDs in coalition. O'Malley had the Industry and Commerce brief. He could take on Goodman to prove his party's claim to be the great reformers, the honest brokers. O'Malley's powder got damp and it was left to *World in Action* to take up the baton prompted by the spectacular collapse of Goodman industries in 1990 with debts of £515 million.

The *World in Action* programme on work practices in the beef processing industry prompted more Leinster House questions and an eleventh hour £2 million High Court enquiry. The capacity of the Beef Enquiry to generate political scandals changed the political environment. Ministers were being labelled daily within the security of Leinster House. This prompted an overnight transformation in the Dublin newspaper circle. The *Sunday Independent* dropped the first bombshell on the first Sunday in September — Greencore. They were followed within days by the *Irish Times* with the beginnings of the Telecom scandal, then Carysfort, Celtic helicopters...

It transpired that 26-County economic policy was not only guided by the EC or the IMF but by a small group of Irish business people who were patronised by government ministers with contracts and kickbacks. James Connolly said "Whatever class rules industrially will rule politically." 1991 showed this to be true. It showed that two economies exist in the 26 Counties. One that exists in the minds of Leinster House politicians and the band of millionaire exploiters they surround themselves with. The other is the day-to-day economic disaster that the people of the 26 Counties actually live in. One economy is wealthy and creating more wealth. One economic group is still the slave of another.

One economy was that of redundancy, low pay, emigration, increasing mortgage repayments and poverty. Another economy is that of country clubs, helicopters, foreign bank accounts, public sector appointments and lucrative investments. However, even the 26-County industrial rulers had a bad year. Goodman, Smurfit, AIB and Bank of Ireland all lost money on their foreign investments in 1991. Tony O'Reilly's attempt to take over the Australian Fairfax media group seems destined to fail.

The responses that the Dublin government offered to deal with the economic problems that arose this year

was to break their PESP agreement and withhold the promised pay increases to public sector workers. They then washed their hands of the unemployed by creating a task force to deal with the problem. Eighty per cent of the total number unemployed have been without work for more than six months, yet suddenly in 1991 the Coalition decided that a special "task force" was needed. Those uninitiated in Dublin government dealings, one would believe that more soldiers were about to be sent to the Lebanon. Indeed that was probably considered as a solution.

The findings of the task force released in August were that the method of calculating the live register should be changed, and 15-20,000 new places should be created in third level colleges. Finally they suggested that planning applications should be speeded up, as it is an impediment to foreign investment. The last suggestion came from the IDA. The IDA told us in August that the blame for record levels of unemployment could not be laid at their door. Seán Donnelly, an executive director with the IDA, claimed that the live register was not a precise measure of the number of people out of work. Mr Donnelly believes that a core group of 250 "efficient companies" could do the job.

The key word here is "efficient". It is something that has two different meanings. For the Irish workers it means sacrifices either to keep the jobs they have or lose their job so a plant or a company can stay open in the hope of growing again in the future. For the owners and directors of Irish companies "efficient" means that more of the profits and company finances can find their way into their off-shore bank accounts. They didn't even keep the money in the 26-County economy.

1991 saw economic planners disgraced. Haughey, Reynolds and Ahern were the main architects of disaster. The PDs stood idly by. They will be remembered as a party which, when crisis after crisis emerged, was continually either "seriously concerned" or in a meeting discussing their increasing concern. Their sole contribution to economic policy during the year was to dogmatically pursue their calls for tax reform and no increases in government spending. If this was not delivered they would leave the coalition. No amount of scandal could make them loosen their grip on power.

As the year progressed the politicians who allegedly plan and run the 26-County economy began to talk more about serving and sacrificing in the national interest. Yet we live in age that when the Bundesbank in Germany talks about raising their interest rates, the Irish media goes into overdrive to explain the consequences. On December 12th 1991, in Maastricht, Haughey and Ahern negotiated away control of the Irish economy — in the national interest of course.

Nineteen ninety-one saw the failure of textbook solutions to economic problems. Since 1921 successive Dublin governments have failed to accomplish the basic needs of any economic policy, that is to provide for the needs and welfare of its people. Paise gave us an economic objective for economic policy when he wrote "A free Ireland would not and could not have hunger in her fertile valleys and squalor in her cities." By that standard Ireland enters the third year of the 1990s very much unfree.

Twenty-Six Counties Economy



● Haughey with Michael Smurfit — the scandals of 1991 showed the 26-County economy was not only guided by the EC and IMF but by a small group of business people who were patronised by government ministers with contracts and backhanders

Review of '91

BUSH'S HOLLOW TRIUMPH

THE FINAL REMOVAL of the Red Flag from the Kremlin at the end of 1991 and its replacement by the Russian banner is a powerful symbol. A year of devastating setbacks to world peace and justice culminates in an act which seems to mark the death of the Russian Revolution and the triumph of capitalism. But that triumph may well prove to be a rather hollow one. Any obituary of socialism would be decidedly premature. Nineteen ninety-one will probably be seen as the year when the capitalist West bit off much more than it could chew. Over the next few years it is likely to suffer from the consequences of that greed.

Right now, over 20 million people in Central and East Africa are already suffering from it. They face starvation in a famine which will probably be more serious than Ethiopia's great hunger of 1984/85 when 1.2 million people died. During the year, aid agencies reported that 20 children were dying every hour in the Sudan and in parts of Ethiopia. The champagne corks may well be popping in the world's stock exchanges, but capitalism does not feed peasant farmers whose crops and livestock have died in the fields — it dispossesses them.

The eyes of the West are not on these starving people. They are not on fixed on the new profits to be made in Eastern Europe and the Asian republics of what was once the USSR. Earlier this year they were fixed on the Middle East where George Bush bombed Iraq back into the 18th Century, so as to protect some feudal Arab monarchies from the ravages of the 20th Century.

The Gulf War, which opened on January 15th, was Bush's first major effort to enforce his new world order. Saddam Hussein's attempt to take over Kuwait offended against that order, so the Iraqi population was crucified. In an appalling display of laser-guided destruction, bombs equivalent to one-and-a-half Hiroshimas were dropped on Iraq every day until its entire infrastructure was obliterated. One excited US airman compared it to "the Fourth of July". The US military promised that only military installations were targeted by their 'smart bombs'. But a large Baghdad air-raid shelter full of civilians was among these targets.

The Iraqi army was the fourth-largest in the world and many expected it to put up a huge fight. But it entirely collapsed. When US, British and French troops were sent in to mop up, they slaughtered many fleeing Iraqi soldiers. Bush sent messages to the Kurds in northern Iraq and the Shias of the south to rise up and overthrow Saddam. But, when they tried to do so, the victorious allies totally abandoned them and the remains of Saddam's army turned on the rebels. By April, hundreds of thousands of Kurds were stuck in the mountains between Iraq and Turkey, freezing to death. They were denied access to Turkey and, for fear of reprisal, the Iraqi army left them alone. This winter, most of them are still there.

As this huge scandal emerged, so did the real truth about the US bombardment of Iraq. Its main target was the common people. Maarti Ahtisaari, the UN representative who oversaw Namibia's liberation, visited Iraq in March and reported that the country had been "relegated to a pre-industrial age". Untreated sewage was flowing into the water supply and disease was endemic. He called for the lifting of the food sanctions which were implemented after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.

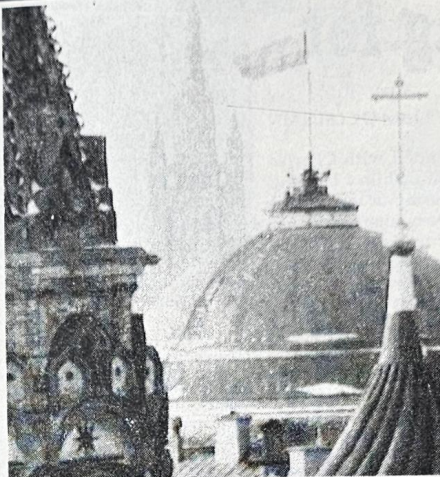
The Gulf War trebled the hardships of the Iraqi people and left Saddam Hussein in place. It restored the Al-Sabah family to power in Kuwait and gave the US enormous leverage in the whole region. But it solved nothing. Absolute monarchies, such as those in Kuwait or Saudi Arabia, are bound to fall. Propping them up in this way only increases the bitterness when they are toppled.

Bush's walkover victory in the Gulf would not have been possible before 1985, when Mikhail Gorbachev became leader of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and therefore leader of the USSR. Now, neither the Communist Party nor the Soviet Union exist any longer. The death-agony of both institutions dominated the second half of 1991. But the first symptoms were seen the previous year when Gorbachev attempted a complicated balancing act between the reform movements in the Soviet republics and those within the Communist Party who wanted to maintain the status quo.

He brought into his government the leaders of the KGB and the supporters of the military. Their object was to maintain the Soviet Union at all costs and to crush the secessionist movements in the republics. His defence minister, Boris Pugo, ordered a military clamp-down in Lithuania and provoked opposition from the republics. The democratically elected president of the Russian Federation, Boris Yeltsin, defended the Lithuanians and the repressive moves merely accelerated the break-up of the Union.

Throughout the year, Gorbachev sought a compromise with the republics and, by the summer, he managed to negotiate a loose federation of nine of them, with himself at the helm. This "nine-plus-one" treaty was due to be signed in mid-August, but that was never to be. On the eve of the signing, while Gorbachev was about to return from holidays, his deputy Gennady Yanayev, backed by Pugo and KGB chief Dimitri Yazov, seized power in

International



● The Red Flag no longer flies over the Kremlin — any obituary of socialism however would be decidedly premature



● Bush — popularity declining order to forestall the treaty.

It was a carbon copy of the coup which overthrew Khrushchev in 1964. All the key traditional sectors of power within the state were represented within the new government. But it failed abysmally. The plotters did not realise that the people of the Soviet Union had changed utterly. Boris Yeltsin refused to yield to the new government and the soldiers refused to fire on the elected deputies in the Russian Parliament. After three days the coup collapsed on August 21st.

Gorbachev was brought back to Moscow, but the triumph was

Yeltsin's. It was obvious to all that the Russian President, not the Soviet leader, defeated the coup. It was also obvious that Gorbachev's attempt to pacify the communist hierarchy by bringing Yanayev and his colleagues into government, was partly responsible for the crisis. Yeltsin was easily able to extend his powers.

The Ukraine and Belarus (formerly Byelorussia) declared total independence in late November and early December but Yeltsin was able to persuade them to form a commonwealth with the Russian Federation under an agreement which was even looser than the "nine-plus-one" treaty. All that remained of the Soviet Union was its president, who had not even been elected by the people. Gorbachev's own salary, and those of the army, were being paid by the Russian Federation. Yeltsin decreed that the Soviet Union would finally be wound up on New Year's Day.

It was not the only multinational state to break up during the year. Yugoslavia has also become an obsolete geographical term. In both cases, attempts to crush national aspirations resulted merely in violence and probably hastened the eventual break-up of the state. Much of the responsibility lies with Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic and the rest lies with the imperial powers which abused this region for centuries. During the Second World War, this reached a peak when a holocaust of Serbs was carried

out by Croatian fascists and their German masters.

In recent years, when the Albanian majority in the Serbian province of Kosovo demanded greater democracy, Milosevic chose repression instead. Independence movements in Croatia and Slovenia were warned that their turn might come next. When the peoples of these republics chose independence, Milosevic chose to use the Yugoslav army against them. He seems determined to carve a considerable slice out of Croatia as punishment for that choice.

While multinational states are coming apart in the East, the West seems determined to march in the opposite direction. In early December, at the Dutch town of Maastricht, the EC governments signed a treaty which will take them even further towards a European super-state.

If voters in Ireland allow it, there will be a single currency for the whole of the EC and the degree of democratic control we have over our own affairs will be eroded. A minimal amount of money will be transferred from the richer states to 'peripheral' nations such as Ireland. But the right of Irish people to provide their own solutions to this country's economic problems will be surrendered in payment for these grants.

After a year like 1991, the picture of the world could only be a bleak one. But there are some positive aspects to it. In South Africa, the relentless rise of the ANC has continued in spite of near genocidal attacks on its supporters. These attacks have been masterminded by sections of the government and the paramilitary police and assisted by Zulu Chief Buthelezi. Inkatha, Buthelezi's tribal organisation, has been guilty of many mass killings, although the chief has constantly denied this. But, in mid-July, evidence appeared proving that Buthelezi's organisation was funded by the government. The Zulu leader has always posed as a peaceful opponent of apartheid and was deeply embarrassed at proof that he was actually paid by the racist state.

In the United States itself, George Bush's popularity has declined heavily in recent months as the economic recession continues — something which was not expected earlier in the year. Voters seem to be ignoring his foreign policy 'victories' and Bush's re-election in 1992 may not be as certain as he once thought. He already has one major rival for the nomination as Republican candidate, something a sitting president could normally expect as of right. At the beginning of this year, Bush seemed to be the unchallenged captain of the world's only superpower. But his boat now seems a bit leaky and his crew rebellious.

Something similar can be said for the EC. Moves to total integration have slowed down. The Maastricht Treaty was considerably looser than many of the Eurocrats wanted. Governments seem to have avoided radical changes. The German Bundesbank is still one of the most powerful central banks in the world, but it is now worried by increasing chaos in Eastern Europe where much German money has been tied up.

It's ironic, but, exactly 500 years after Christopher Columbus' voyage, world geography is being redrawn and the world's economy is going through a radical alteration. In 1492, Spanish colonisation of the Americas ushered in an horrific era of super-exploitation for the native peoples. But, eventually, the new colonies proved too much for Spain to control. It's a lesson George Bush should ponder half a millennium later.



● Anti-Gulf War protesters in Dublin — a UN representative visited Iraq in March and reported that the country had been relegated to a pre-industrial age

75 years on — still fighting for freedom

■ BY LIAM O COILEAIN

THE FINAL YEAR BEFORE '1992' ended with Charles Haughey going off to Maastricht with Dublin's begging bowl, looking for more handouts, ensuring in the process that Ireland will probably end up as a de-industrialised subsidised tourist resort on Europe's outskirts. Haughey had no regrets at putting sovereignty and neutrality on the table. But that Dublin politicians now regard neutrality as an outmoded luxury was demonstrated as early as January when Gerry Collins allowed US warplanes bound for the Gulf to refuel at Shannon.

In 1991 the campaign to reopen border roads continued to gather momentum as other barriers across Europe looked increasingly like falling. The Dublin government welcomed such developments abroad but actively assisted British border closures at home. There were some notable victories in individual extradition cases in 1991 but the year ended with Ray Burke's promise to Peter Brooke of legislation to do away with the political offence exception. Sinn Féin's choice of venue for its Ard Fheis fell victim to the current climate of censorship in the South. The Goodman affair ran and ran but it had to contend with a multiplicity of scandals, none of which quite managed to unseat Haughey. Neither could Albert Reynolds.

In January multinational chemical manufacturer Du Pont announced its plans for a national toxic waste incinerator in Derry, an environmental nightmare which the people of Derry and the scenic Inishowen peninsula spent the year fighting to make sure would never happen. Sinn Féin (in particular Derry Sinn Féin Councillor Hugh Brady and Donegal Councillor Eddie Fullerton before his tragic assassination) played a major part in the campaign against the incinerator, a campaign which would have a happy ending in December.

The British Court of Appeal rejected, miscarriage-of-justice victim Danny McNamee's application for leave to appeal against his 25-year sentence. His lawyers announced that the case would be taken to Europe. In Dublin, the High Court quashed an extradition order against Belfast man Michael McKee, although Tony Sloan and Paul Magee lost their appeals. They appealed to the Supreme Court, while the state appealed against McKee's release.

In February Gerry McGeough, an Irish prisoner held on remand in Germany, was served with US extradition warrants. Extradition victim Robert Russell, who was forcibly handed over by the Dublin government in August 1988, won his appeal in Belfast against his 1981 jailing and was released from Long Kesh. In Dublin the government again postponed work on the already long overdue Tallaght Hospital. Meanwhile, in Britain, another extradition victim, Dessie Ellis, had the charges against him changed by a London magistrate who did not feel that he could be convicted on

the original conspiracy charges which the Dublin government had been so willing to accept.

What was billed by New Consensus as a mass picket on Sinn Féin's Ard Fheis turned out to be a gathering of just 150. The selective nature of their condemnations was highlighted at the Ard Fheis by Sinn Féin Ard Chomhairle member Joe Reilly. The legacy of 1916, on the 75th anniversary of the Easter Rising, was a recurrent theme running through the Ard Fheis, as was the tenth anniversary of the 1981 Hunger Strike and the need to build for the 26-County local elections in June. Gerry Adams applauded the efforts of the Reclaim the Spirit of 1916 Committee and made a strenuous call for the retention of Articles Two and Three of the 26-County constitution.

Also in February, the Virgin Megastore in Dublin was fined £500 for stocking condoms and a proposal by Fianna Fáil to allow 16-year-olds to purchase the 'sinful rubber sheaths' had the bishops up in arms. The issue dominated a dull Fianna Fáil Ard Fheis in March and as usual, the politicians backed down.

In March a French court recognised the political motivation of three Irish men convicted of smuggling a huge consignment of arms in 1987 aboard the *Eksind*. Relatives of those killed by pro-British murder gangs demonstrated outside Leinster House calling on the Dublin government to do more than ritually condemn such killings. In the US the Supreme Court granted the government leave to appeal against Joe Doherty's right to a hearing for political asylum while at home up to 1,000 people braved atrocious weather in a major Day of Action to highlight the campaign to reopen border crossings closed by the crown forces.

But by far the biggest story of the month was the long-overdue release of the Birmingham Six. All six walking out the front entrance of the Old Bailey to a tumultuous reception. Paddy Hill condemned the Dublin government's inactivity in their case. Of the judicial system which had taken 16 years to finally admit that the six men had been framed, Hill said: "Justice? I don't think them people in there have the intelligence or the honesty even to spell the word let alone dispense it. They are rotten." Johnny Walker called for the resignation of Lord Lane and for an end to extradition saying: "How can anybody support extradition into a system which has this man at its head?"

POLITICAL



● The events organised by the Reclaim the Spirit of Easter Committee were a resounding success

A Royal Commission was appointed just hours after the release to investigate the criminal justice system in an attempt to claw back lost credibility in the police and judiciary.

Thousands demonstrated in Derry's Guildhall Square against the Du Pont toxic waste incinerator.

April marked the 75th anniversary of the Easter Rising, an historic occasion which was marked by official embarrassment and public pride. The official 'state' ceremony on Easter Sunday consisted of a mere 12 minute military parade. In contrast the series of events, the climax of which was a spectacular parade and pageant organised by the Reclaim the Spirit of Easter Committee were a resounding success. The climate of revisionism of Irish history has reached such a high though, that much of the media felt

they could ignore the Reclaim the Spirit Committee's pageant. The Committee's chairperson, artist Robert Ballagh, said: "It is a revealing experience to witness the serried ranks of the southern establishment squirm in the face of their own history — It is a measure of their failure to build an Ireland remotely equal to the Ireland of the visionaries of 1916 that our political leaders have had to descend to a deliberate clouding of the real nature of the Rising."

Three Irish people acquitted of killing two Australian tourists in the Netherlands in 1990 were rearrested pending extradition to Germany, while a fourth, Gerard Harte, was found guilty and sentenced to 18 years. He was to be acquitted later in the year.

April also saw South African radical Archbishop Desmond Tutu in Ireland. Like Nelson Mandela



● The campaign to reopen border roads continued to gather momentum

before him he embarrassed the 26-County establishment and British ambassador Nicholas Fenn in Christchurch Cathedral when he called for all parties to be involved in peace talks, saying: "Let your negotiations be as inclusive as possible. Don't let any feel they have been excluded."

In a disappointing ruling, the European Court of Human Rights ruled in favour of Section 31, citing the 'protection of the state' as reason enough for such a blatant broadcasting bias.

Dessie Ellis's case took yet another twist when the British DPP was given permission for a judicial review in an attempt to have the original charges reinstated. Dublin saw a major demonstration by An Post workers who were protesting against management proposals for massive redundancies and cutbacks, particularly in rural areas, which would as one banner read "kill off our postal service". The workers received such widespread and overwhelming public support that the cutbacks were quietly shelved.

May was overshadowed by the killing in his home of popular and hard-working Donegal Sinn Féin Councillor Eddie Fullerton by a pro-British murder gang. His loss is still deeply felt by all who had the honour of knowing him. He was accurately described in AP/RN as "a persevering, tenacious, unceasing worker for his community and an unforgettable character".

The judicial review in London of Dessie Ellis's case was inconclusive as the three judges refused to make a decision on what charges the Finglas man would face. A new challenge to broadcasting censorship, this time aimed at RTE's interpreta-



"I hope they're released — then we can nick them for the Downing Street job"



● One of the happier moments of 1991 — the release of the Birmingham Six

● Dessie Ellis's case took yet another twist when the British DPP was given permission for a judicial review in an attempt to have the original charges reinstated.

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dropped against three

Two other Irish prisoners also acquitted were extradited to Germany while a third, Donna Maguire, was extradited in October after losing an appeal.

It emerged in July that the Peace Train and Families Against Intimidation and Terror groups had all received substantial funding from the British government. In a display of pettiness the British army, backed up by 26-County forces, closed off a reopened border road just hours after it had been opened to allow GAA fans easy access to Clones for the Ulster football final. Appeasement of unionists by Dublin did not prevent a spate of firebombings by the UDA in Dublin shops at the end of the month.

In August the Home Office finally agreed to look into the case of Judith Ward.

The European Court of Justice decided that Irish women were owed some £200 million in social welfare back payments because the Dublin government had failed to implement an equality directive on time.

In the United States Joe Doherty was refused bail but was moved to Lewisburg Penitentiary in Pennsylvania after almost a decade of being held without charge in the Metropolitan Correctional Centre in New York.

In September the Dublin government delivered another snub to Irish neutrality when it attended a meeting of the Western European Union military alliance and in Britain Judith Ward's case was referred to the Court of Appeal.

The Greencore scandal broke with the revelation that company directors had been involved in the purchase of a distribution company which they then sold to Greencore at a tidy profit of £7 million. Greencore's chief executive Chris Camford and chairperson Bernie Cahill were implicated.

Haughey had been coming under pressure anyway with cabinet squabbles over condoms, the future of the transatlantic Shannon stopover and warnings by Albert Reynolds that the public sector pay awards couldn't be afforded but then it emerged that the government had plans to privatise Telecom Eireann.

This was only the beginning though. The media then uncovered that Telecom chair Michael Smurfit was connected to two companies, one of which bought the old Johnson Mooney and O'Brien building in Ballsbridge, sold it to the other which in turn sold the building to Telecom for its corporate headquarters. The site was bought by Telecom for £9 million, twice what had been paid for it just 14 months previous. Smurfit subsequently resigned but the breathless pace of revelations continued apace.

Haughey, already on a sticky wicket with the opening of the Goodman Inquiry imminent, was implicated in the scandals when the role of brokers NCB became apparent. NCB's chair, Dermot Desmond, was a close business associate of Haughey's, and his company was involved in the Siúicre Eireann privatisation, the Irish Life privatisation and with the proposed Telecom privatisation.

In Dublin ministers from Dublin and London committed themselves to trying to resuscitate the failed northern talks before the end of the year — a fruitless hope! On the Glorious Twelfth a Dutch court cleared Irish defendant Gerry Harte of IRA membership. He had already been cleared of the killing of two Australian tourists. The British press reacted with anti-Dutch hysteria.



● Fianna Fáil TD James McDaid's support for Jim Clarke triggered off a McCarthy type witch-hunt

by Aer Lingus had been passed on to Ciarán Haughey's Celtic Helicopters Desmond was forced to resign as chair of NCB and Aer Rianta. Speculation as to the role played by Charles Haughey in all of these scandals continued to grow, as did internal pressure for him to step down as Fianna Fáil leader.

The May inquiry into the convictions of the Guildford Four and the Maguire family resumed but it was announced that the three key figures in the Maguire case, Lord Havers, Lord Donaldson and Peter Imbert would not be called to give evidence.

There was an anti-extradition march through Dublin at the end of the month to highlight pending cases.

In October the High Court carried out a judicial review in the challenge to Section 31 brought by former Gateaux workers' spokesperson and Sinn Féin member Larry O'Toole, who, incidentally, polled very well in the local elections in June. Judgement was reserved but an *In Dublin* opinion poll found that 82% of people were opposed to the Section 31 ban. Seventy-four prominent individuals signed a declaration warning against any alteration of Articles Two and Three of the 26-County Constitution.

Dublin's extradition policy received another blow when Dessie Ellis was finally cleared by a British jury of conspiracy charges. There was no evidence to link him with the charges but the trial judge had refused to call off the trial. Tony Sloan, Michael McKee and Paul Magee had judgement reserved in their Supreme Court hearing in Dublin.

The EC Court of Justice found in favour of SPUC in its case against students who were taken to court for continuing to distribute abortion information. The court upheld Dublin's ban on information.

The purchase of Carysfort College from property developer Pino Harris (a close ally of Fianna Fáil) by UCD, using state money for twice what it could have been bought for just two years previously, was another scandal which was starting to gain momentum, with allegations of political interference in UCD's decision to buy a site which they had initially rejected.

Several hundred demonstrators arrived outside Leinster House to protest against the proposed Du Pont incinerator. It appeared that Charles Haughey would be allowed time to bow out with dignity as Fianna Fáil tried to cut its losses.

In November there was a major Day of Action on Britain's border to highlight the border roads issue. In a move smacking of McCarthyism, Dublin City Council passed a motion (proposed by the Labour Party and amended by the Greens) banning Sinn Féin from using the Mansion House for the party's Ard Fheiseanna.

Haughey's detractors within Fianna Fáil finally made their move and put down a motion of no confidence. Albert Reynolds announced that he would be willing to take on the top job and the party "split down the middle". Displaying his customary survival skills, Haughey won the subsequent vote by 55 votes to 22 but he was left under no illusions by many who chose to sup-

port him that his days are definitely numbered. Following the decision of the Supreme Court to refuse to extradite Tony Sloan and Michael McKee (who had been arrested in Belfast before the decision), Ray Burke emerged from a Dublin/London intergovernmental conference meeting to announce changes in the extradition laws "as soon as possible". The last vestiges of a political offence exception are expected to be done away with.

Also in November the appointment of James McDaid as Dublin Defence Minister started a witch-hunt on McDaid, because he made a statement on behalf of Jim Clarke (who beat British extradition warrants in 1990), was labelled as a Provo fellow traveller. Dublin and London politicians joined in the chorus of abuse, the PDs using the issue to put pressure on Haughey. McDaid resigned his nomination.

The Goodman inquiry, potentially the most damaging to Haughey and Fianna Fáil of all the scandals, investigating extensive malpractice in the beef empire, resumed in November. Justice Hamilton is still awaiting details of Goodman's contributions to political parties from Fianna Fáil, Fine Gael and the PDs. The much vaunted alternative to RTE, *Century Radio*, went bust in November.

In December John Major came to Dublin to meet Haughey, their main points of discussion centering not on the Six Counties but on Maas-tricht and EC Union.

December also saw the serving of extradition warrants on yet another Crumlin Road escapee, Angelo Fusco. The extradition process ground under way as he was whisked from Portlaoise to the Special Court in Green Street. Sinn Féin members again confronted bogus 'peace' picketers outside its offices in Dublin. The High Court in London ordered the British Home Secretary to reconsider republican prisoner Roy Walsh's release date and disclose to him the length of time he has left to serve. Dermot Desmond halted the inquiry into the Telecom scandal when he won a High Court order preventing the inspector appointed by the Department of Industry and Commerce from asking him any more questions about the Ballsbridge site.



● Albert Reynolds shown the door — but for how long?

Review of '91

AN PHOBLACHT
REPUBLICAN NEWS

IRA
bombs War
Cabinet

When the nationalist people in the Six Counties are forced to live under British rule, then the British cabinet will be forced to live in bunkers. The British government has the option to withdraw from the conflict... it should initiate the process which will lead to British withdrawal from our country and create the conditions for a true democracy throughout Ireland.
— Irish Republican Army, Thursday, February 26th 1991.

IRA interview

Guerilla war bites deep in 1991

THE PAST YEAR has seen the British government deploy ever increasing numbers of troops to the Six Counties, transfer an extra 1,400 part-time members of the Ulster Defence Regiment to full-time duties and increase recruitment to the RUC in a military effort to crush resistance to its rule in Ireland.

That government's insistence on subverting Irish national democracy and its pursuance of a military solution to the conflict has condemned people in Ireland and Britain to continued war.

But throughout 1991 the armed forces of imperialism in Ireland were met with renewed resistance by the freedom fighters of the Irish Republican Army who confronted the British on a number of fronts.

Active service units continued to exact the highest price from the British crown forces. Week after week British army and RUC barracks, armoured patrols and on several occasions British military helicopters came under attack from IRA Volunteers using heavy machine-guns, rifles, rockets, grenades, mortars and landmines. In the course of 1991 the IRA killed 15 British soldiers and seven RUC members. The year also saw the introduction of a number of newly improvised weapons by the IRA, demonstrating the resourcefulness and ingenuity of the people's army. The IRA further isolated the British garrison in the Six Counties by wiping three military barracks off the map and targeting collaborators who carry out contracts or engage in work for the crown forces.

Nineteen ninety-one saw the list of firms in the Six Counties publicly announcing that they would cease such activities steadily getting longer.

Britain's policy of creating an appearance of normality in the Six Counties was devastated by numerous IRA bomb attacks in the centre of Belfast and incendiary attacks on com-

mercial premises across the North.

Throughout 1991 O'Leigh na hEireann brought the war to those who are ultimately responsible for it. British Prime Minister John Major and the Tory War Cabinet escaped death by only 40 feet when the IRA launched a spectacular mortar-bomb attack on 10 Downing Street on February 7th. British commercial life was disrupted with a wave of incendiary attacks towards the end of the year and in one operation alone the IRA threw the British capital into chaos at a cost to the British economy of £100 million.

Despite intense provocation throughout the year the IRA refused to be drawn into a protracted war with loyalist/pro-British gun gangs, realising that such a development would divert the republican army from its primary role of prosecuting the national liberation struggle. The IRA did however, take selective military action against a number of identified loyalist paramilitaries following a vicious spate of sectarian murders against members of the nationalist community.

A number of IRA Volunteers paid the ultimate sacrifice in 1991 for their courage and dedication to the cause of Irish freedom. Volunteers Colum Marks, Lawrence McNally, Tony Doris, Pete Ryan, Patricia Black and Frankie Ryan were killed on active service in the Six Counties and England while Volunteer Patrick Sheehy, hounded by the British media, died in tragic circumstances on the run in County Tipperary.

Following a three-day suspension of offensive military action the IRA resumed operations on December 26th 1990 with a gun attack on a crown forces checkpoint in Fermanagh. Less than 20 minutes after the deadline Volunteers fired over 400 rounds from a heavy machine-gun at the permanent border checkpoint at Roslea. The attack was followed by another on New Year's Day when Volunteers using heavy calibre weapons attacked the permanent vehicle checkpoint at Aughnacloy.

The trial of Irishmen James Coll, James Doherty and Gabriel Cleary in connection with their attempt to import a consignment of arms into Ireland aboard the *Eskind* to fight the British occupation forces began on Monday, January 7th.

At their trial the men set out their stand as republicans resisting British rule in Ireland in the clearest of terms with Coll announcing defiantly: "I have no regrets. My only apologies are to the Volunteers of the IRA who needed those guns to continue the war against England."

Crown forces in the Six Counties were at full stretch in the second week of January with the IRA launching several attacks in Belfast on British army



● The UDR jeep in which two soldiers were killed outside Armagh by a new IRA horizontal mortar — the mortar was one of a number of new IRA weapons used during 1991

WAR NEWS



● Banbridge Courthouse which was devastated by a car bomb in April

fortresses and the law courts and with dozens of incendiary devices exploding throughout Belfast, Lisburn, Glenormley, Dunmurry, Newtownabbey and Newtownards.

The British army attempted to conceal the loss of three of its members in South Armagh in January. The South Armagh Brigade of the IRA said that three British soldiers had lost their lives and several others were injured, in a carefully planned IRA operation at Tullyvallen, near Cullyhanna. The first two soldiers were killed in a landmine attack on January 8th. The third fatality came eleven days later when soldiers engaged in a widespread sweep of the area surrounding the site of the initial attack, were caught in a second landmine blast. The British army did not admit any of the casualties.

The IRA in South Fermanagh killed an RUC reservist in a gun attack in the Brookeborough area on Monday, January 21st.

Eight days later one of the North's biggest dairy firms, Fane Valley Co-Op Ltd, based at Markethill, announced that it would no longer fulfil contracts with any branch of the crown forces. The announcement came in the wake of an IRA statement claiming responsibility for the planting of a booby-trap device under the car of one of the company's directors.

A British army helicopter had to make a forced landing in South Armagh on January 31st during an attack by IRA Volunteers using anti-aircraft guns. A Ballymena car firm announced on February 2nd that it would withdraw all contracts with the crown forces. Magherafelt UDR barracks was substantially damaged in an IRA bomb attack on February 3rd.

The most spectacular IRA attack for many years came at 10am on Thursday, February 7th, when Volunteers rocked 10 Downing Street, the nerve centre of the British government, in a daring mortar-bomb attack. The attack occurred as Prime Minister John Major and his War Cabinet, including two former Direct-Rulers in the Six Counties, Defence Secretary Tom King and Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd, sat down at Number 10 to discuss the conduct of the Gulf War.

The IRA drove a van into position close to Number 10 with three primed mortars on board. At 10.12am, two minutes after the ASU withdrew from the area, the mortars were fired. The first mortar struck a tree in the garden of Number 10, 15 yards short of its target and exploded with a deafening roar. Blast windows and their frames protecting the Cabinet room shattered but were not blown in; only these defences along with heavy protective curtains, ensured that injuries were

restricted to two civil service officials and two policemen, members of the Diplomatic Protection Squad.

The attack was devastating in its effect on the morale of the British establishment, occurring amidst greatly increased security precautions in Britain at the height of the Gulf War.

In a statement claiming responsibility for the attack on Downing Street the IRA said:

"While the nationalist people in the Six Counties are forced to live under British rule, then the British cabinet will be forced to live in bunkers. The British government has the solution to the conflict... it should initiate the process which will lead to British withdrawal from our country and create the conditions for a true democracy throughout Ireland."

Two separate IRA attacks downed British military helicopters at Crossmaglen in South Armagh on Wednesday, February 13th, and on the outskirts of Augher in County Tyrone less than 72 hours later.

Due to cynical decisions by senior security staff to ignore 40-minute IRA bomb warnings one man was tragically killed and 30 others injured by IRA devices at London's Victoria Station on February 18th. In a subsequent statement the IRA said that "all future warnings should be acted upon."

Two British soldiers died and another six were injured, two of them seriously, when their mobile patrol came under attack from Volunteers of the North Armagh Brigade, IRA, on the Killyleagh Road on Friday, March 1st. The soldiers, members of the Ulster Defence Regiment were killed by a newly improvised directional missile, designed to blast through armour plating.

The IRA caused a 'security nightmare' on March 4th when they displayed their continued ability in spite of five security reviews to target the Headquarters of the British Defence contractors Shorts Brothers in East Belfast. Two 3lb semtex devices exploded inside the complex.

RUC Detective Constable Spence McGarry was killed in Ballycastle, North Antrim, on Saturday, April 6th when a booby-trap bomb exploded underneath his car. The North Antrim Brigade of the IRA claimed responsibility. On the same day in an attempt to weaken the killing capacity of pro-British death squads in Tyrone the IRA shot dead Derek Ferguson, whom the Tyrone Brigade described as an active member of the UVF responsible for sectarian killings in the Tyrone area.

Volunteer Colum Marks of the South Down Brigade, IRA, was fatally wounded by the RUC on April 10th in an ambush at Downpatrick. Although on active service at the time

Review of '91



● (Above) Three British soldiers were killed during the attack on Glenanne Barracks, County Armagh in June of his death Colum Marks was unarmed and was not warned or challenged before the RUC opened fire.

A long-serving RUC man was shot dead by the IRA in Lisburn on April 13th. On the same day another contractor involved in supplying services to the crown forces in the Six Counties publicly indicated that it would cease to do so.

Five members of the RUC's notorious Divisional Mobile Support Units (DMSU) responsible for terrorising nationalists, sustained blast injuries in an IRA rocket and gun attack in the Beechmount area of West Belfast on Wednesday, May 1st. One of the RUC men injured in the attack died in hospital the following day.

Yet another firm stated it would no longer engage in work for or supply any materials to the crown forces on May 3rd. The announcement by Windsor Photoprints came after the Belfast firm's managing director escaped injury in an IRA booby-trap bomb two days beforehand.

A British army officer was killed by a booby-trap bomb in Armagh city on May 13th. The IRA said that Volunteers attached to the 2nd battalion, North Armagh Brigade, had placed the 2lb semtex bomb which exploded underneath the car of UDR officer Robert Orr.

Four days later an RUC man died when a booby-trap device attached to the underside of his car exploded as he attempted to reverse it from the driveway of his home in Lisbellaw, County Fermanagh. The IRA's Fermanagh Brigade claimed responsibility.

The IRA used a new improvised rocket launcher for the first time in the Six Counties on May 20th. The new launcher was used in an attack on an RUC Land Rover in the Unity Flats area of Belfast.

A director of a fruit and vegetable firm which had been supplying produce to RUC bases across the Six Counties for many years was executed as a collaborator by the IRA on Tuesday, May 21st. In a seven-day period following the execution, a further seven firms joined the long list of suppliers and contractors that publicly indicated they would no longer provide services for the RUC or British army.

A British soldier and an RUC man were killed in separate IRA gun and grenade attacks in Belfast on May 25th.

Three soldiers were killed when the IRA demolished the Headquarters of the UDR's 2nd Battalion at Glenanne, County Armagh, in a bomb attack on May 31st.

Three IRA Volunteers Tony Doris, Lawrence McNally and Pete Ryan were ambushed and shot dead by undercover British forces in Coagh, County Tyrone on June 3rd. Over 200 bullets were fired into their car which



● Markethill Barracks was demolished in an IRA bomb attack — like Glenanne there are no plans to rebuild it

burst into flames. No attempt was made to arrest the Volunteers. So vengeful and ferocious was the attack that the ambushers kept firing into the car for ten minutes.

Another supplier in Belfast gave a public undertaking on June 3rd that it would cease work for the RUC and British army. The statement was made by Spicers Ltd, a stationers in Prince Regent Road. A further two businesses in Derry and Tyrone gave public undertakings on June 11th and 12th, to cease supplying services to the crown forces.

It was revealed in the third week of June that the British government had secretly drafted in an extra 500 troops to the Six Counties at the beginning of the month. The unpublished reinforcement of the British garrison demonstrated the renewed and increasing pressure which crown forces were coming under from the IRA and showed that behind the hype of the Brooke talks there lay a hidden agenda, involving further repression of northern nationalists.

A UDR soldier was killed in an IRA ambush in North Belfast on June 17th. A serving British soldier attached to the Parachute Regiment who had just completed a tour of duty in West Belfast was executed as he sat in a house in the east of the city on June

19th. The execution of the soldier on leave in an area of Belfast supposedly safe for British forces had a shattering effect on British military morale.

Derry Brigade, IRA, shot and killed UDA/UFF Commander Cecil McKnight in the Waterside area of the city on June 29th.

A County Down firm joined the list of those publicly stating their intention not to supply the crown forces on June 29th.

Extensive damage was caused by an IRA bomb to an RAF Naval Careers Office at Fishergate, Preston, in England on June 30th.

During a court case on July 5th an RUC man admitted that a new grenade used by the IRA which made its debut on May 25th had greatly enhanced the IRA's capacity for mounting successful attacks in urban areas. The new grenade was subsequently used in a wave of attacks on the crown forces and installations in Belfast between July 5th and July 11th. The attacks involving the most recently innovated grenade resulted in a total of ten RUC men and a British soldier suffering blast injuries.

The IRA's tactic of starving the crown forces of non-military assistance continued to bite during the month of

July when a further four businesses signalled that they would no longer engage in contracts for the RUC or British army.

A 28-year-old UFF member was shot and killed by the IRA in Derry on August 9th. A British soldier attached to the Coldstream Guards regiment was killed on August 17th when IRA Volunteers detonated a massive landmine between Newtownhamilton and Cullyhanna in South Armagh.

The crown forces base at Markethill, County Armagh, was levelled by a 1,000lb IRA van bomb in a successful attack on August 28th.

UFF member John Hanna was executed by the IRA on September 10th in Belfast in a co-ordinated series of attacks against a number of sectarian gang leaders in the city.

An RUC man was killed and three British soldiers seriously injured when an IRA directional mortar scored a direct hit on a mobile crown forces convoy in Swatragh, County Derry, on September 17th.

The British garrison in the Six Counties was further isolated following the IRA's execution of one of the top business people in the Six Counties on September 19th. The IRA said that Jack Haldane's firm "had supplied materials for the rebuilding of border posts and had supplied materials for Henry Bros, in South Derry" who are the North's main contractors engaged in work for the British forces. A spokesperson for Haldane's firm said that they would no longer supply British forces and this was followed a few days later by a similar pledge from another firm in County Down.

An official opening by Peter Brooke of the new offices of the British inland revenue in Belfast had to be cancelled on October 7th after an IRA operation caused disruption among the crown forces.

A further two firms in the Six Counties publicly stated on October 8th that they would not engage in any contracts with or undertake work for the crown forces.

Peter Brooke was once again embarrassed as he carried out an official opening in Belfast when the IRA launched a series of bomb and hoax-bomb attacks across the city on October 22nd.

Two members of the British army were killed and six others were injured, two of them seriously, when an IRA bomb ripped through a British army bar inside the British army base at Musgrave in South Belfast.

British concern over the ability of the IRA's firepower to penetrate armoured vehicles grew after the IRA's South Derry Brigade devastated a British army jeep killing one of its occupants outright and injuring four of his colleagues. The attack which resulted in the death of the soldier, a member of the UDR occurred on the outskirts of Bellaghy on November 6th.

The IRA launched a co-ordinated series of attacks against loyalist paramilitary figures in Belfast on Wednesday, November 13th. Four men were killed in the attacks.

Two IRA Volunteers, Patricia Black and Frankie Ryan, were tragically killed in England on November 15th in an accidental bomb blast. The Volunteers were on active service and according to the IRA were at the time of their deaths engaged in "an operation aimed at a specific military

target".

The IRA's South Armagh Brigade detained and then killed a British soldier who was apprehended close to the village of Crossmaglen on November 26th. The soldier was attached to the UDR.

The British government deployed another 600 troops to the Six Counties on November 27th. The extra troops coupled with the decision to transfer 1,400 part-time members of the UDR to full-time duty and an increase in RUC recruitment indicated the British government's intention to pursue a military solution to the conflict in Ireland.

December witnessed a wave of IRA incendiary attacks in various British cities and in the North.

On December 4th the Unionist Party HQ, the Europa Hotel and the Grand Opera House in Belfast were all severely damaged by a massive IRA bomb.

The IRA dealt the British political and military establishment further devastating blows in the second last week of December with military operations in the Six Counties and England which paralysed the economic life of the British capital and wiped out another military barracks.

The RUC barracks at Brownlow in North Armagh was the third to be blown out of existence during 1991. On December 12th the IRA drove a massive 2,000lb bomb into position at the rear of the barracks which was detonated once the area was clear.

In Britain the IRA carried out a series of well co-ordinated bomb attacks and hoax bomb alerts with an estimated initial cost to the British exchequer of well over £55 million in lost revenue.

On December 14th three incendiary bombs exploded in department stores at the Brent Cross shopping centre in London. The next day an incendiary exploded at the British National Gallery.

A small IRA bomb at London's Aclapham Junction, one of Europe's busiest rail junctions on December 16th caused massive disruption to the British capital's business community and an estimated cost of £50 million in lost revenue. With 13 London terminals closed for over five hours during peak travel time, it is estimated that around 250,000 of the usual one million commuters were forced to abandon their journeys to work. On December 23rd over a million shoppers didn't travel in London's city centre when IRA incendiary bombs closed down the entire network.

Against the military technology of one of the world's major powers the guerrilla fighters of the IRA proved once again throughout 1991 that the desire for self-determination cannot be extinguished nor can the nationalist people of the Six Counties be cowed by force or intimidation. By its armed struggle the IRA has pursued an effective counter-strategy of resistance. Because of it Britain's designs on Ireland have been frustrated and the aim of an independent 32-County Irish republic is brought a step closer.



● Clapham Junction

Review of '91

PICTORIAL



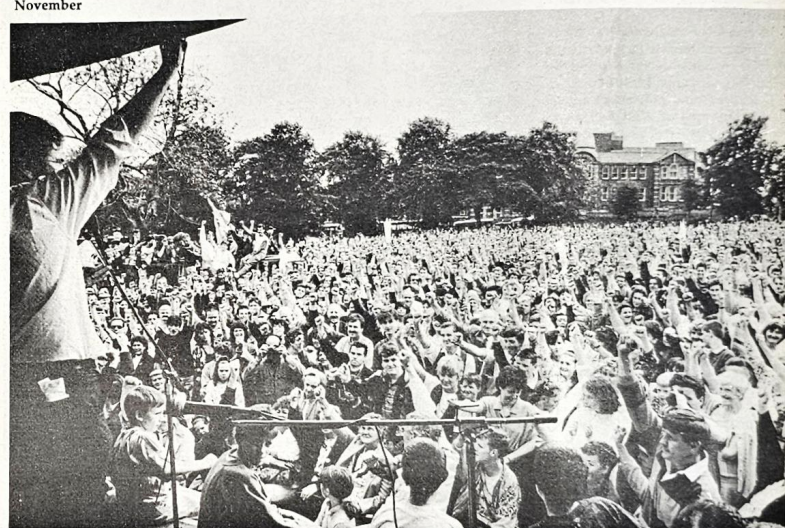
● Lá 1dirnáisiúnta na mBan (International Women's Day) — the RUC's failure to allow this banner to be carried into Belfast city centre sparked off a successful campaign which broke the ban on nationalist marches from entering the city centre



● Johnny Walker — back home in Derry in March after 16 years wrongful imprisonment in English jails



● Sinn Féin councillors protesting at Dublin Corporation's decision to ban Sinn Féin from the Mansion House during November



● (Above) Tens of thousands of nationalists came out in August to pay tribute to the courage and commitment to freedom of the 1981 hunger strikers (below) the funeral of Sinn Féin Councillor Eddie Fullerton who was murdered by a pro-British death squad in his Buncrana home in May



Review/News

Radio Times Underneath the lamplight

■ BY DANNY MORRISON

I WAS IN LOVE.

She wore high heels, and infinitely long legs and a waist as slim as the neck of an hour glass. Her laughter was carefree, almost careless. She smoked repeatedly — which was curable — but the nicotine lent a sensuousness to her sharp tongue. She cast back her blonder hair and her eyes (always half-closed) gave her a smouldering, pert look. And that confident, defiant stroll of hers. Only that I could walk like that! She carried a cane which was somewhat intimidating until I realised that she needed it to tap-dance.

Oh Lambkin! Oh Snookums!
I thought. Come to me.
Come to baby!

Struggle as hard as I could my safety harness kept me strapped to my perambulator. However, I managed to hit my big sister on the back of her head with my rattle, spat out my dummy-fit and told her to immediately stop knitting, if I was ever to become fluent in German, and to read out the subtitles on the screen, because although I was almost four months old my comprehension was poor and, besides, I didn't want to strain my eyes which were still growing. (If you don't

believe me ask my big sister).

The film on the television was *The Blue Angel*, set in a louche Berlin cabaret, and was made in 1930. It catapulted to international fame the eternally young Marlene Dietrich. Last Friday it was her 90th birthday and *Radio 3* featured a special tribute to my childhood sweetheart, playing some of her most famous songs: *Lola Lola*, *Johnny and Falling in love again*.

But for me she is at her best singing the First World War German love song, *Lily Marlene*, which begins:

"Underneath the lamplight,
By the barrack gate.

Darling I remember
Where you used to wait..."

Real schmaltz; but then, that's me! (You should have seen me swim through *It's a Wonderful Life*!) Lily Marlene is the story of a young soldier being called away to the front and now reminiscing about the short but precious and magic moments he shared with his girlfriend. Such was its universal appeal that French soldiers in the opposite trenches picked up the song and adopted it, as did the British army.

Nor did the echo end there.

Two years before his and John Stone's death on active service in 1975, IRA Volunteer John (Bap) Kelly borrowed the air of Lily Marlene for a song called *The Internee's Lament*. Bap's group recorded it on an LP, though I don't suppose it is easily available today.

That song was about a Long Kesh internee writing a letter to his loved one whom he longed to be with but from whom war (once again) had separated him.

Drogheda, 1979. 'Murder is Murder.' Or is it?

On Christmas Day it was reported on the radio that Pope John Paul II had sent a message to the warring factions/nations in the defunct state of Yugoslavia, appealing to all sides to sit down and negotiate. He is also to send a representative, a cardinal, to the Balkans as a mark of his concern for the victims of the war.

Unlike his pronouncements on the IRA no reported part of his statement made any



● Thanks for the card,

Mairead

reference to the morality or immorality of the taking of human life in Croatia between right-wing Croats who want independence and the Serbs who want to maintain the Federation (or create a Greater Serbia). Nor was parleying conditional on one or both sides abandoning 'violence'. I think it safe to assume that the Pope made no such reference and the absence is remarkable because in this civil war both sides have engaged in massacres and the killing and mutilating of prisoners.

In the largely Croatian city of Vukovar the defenders, whilst heroically resisting the siege, refused to allow their own civilian population to flee the bombardment. There were thousands of deaths with civilians comprising 70% of the casualties. In many other towns and villages the Serbs have shelled the Croatian population into submission. 'Shelled' is a euphemism for indiscriminately blowing people away in unknown

numbers.

The people of Serbia (the state which has dominated the Yugoslav Federation) did not vote for war with Croatia. The Croats, who voted for independence (like the Irish in 1918) have had the realisation of their historic dream undermined by the 600,000 Serbs in East Croatia who, like the loyalists here in the North, fear being swallowed up, don't want independence and want to maintain the union. In 'just war' terms neither side can realise its goal.

So if morality is indivisible why didn't the Pope fearlessly exercise his moral authority against the 'murdering' Croats and Serbs in the same way he has exercised it against Irish republicans?

The answer is expediency. That is the only explanation open to us. In world stage terms we are too insignificant. But significant enough to be sermonised.

In the Balkans the Pope cannot afford to offend Catholic Croatia or be accused of a sectarian stance by the powerful Eastern Orthodox Church (to which most Serbs belong).

And the irony, or lesson, is that were the conflict in the North at a much higher pitch all round (and therefore more bloody) and were the British close to quitting point, you could be sure that there would be no 'murder is murder' statements from the Pope or, rather, from his sermon writers.

How are we supposed to take seriously the teaching of morality when it seems that for the Vatican (as for most Churches) the difference between 'war' and 'terrorism' is not the method of killing, or the civilian status of the victims but the magnitude of the killing?

The *Shaughraun* (The *Vagabond*), a witty melodrama by the Dublin-born playwright Dion Boucicault, and first performed over a hundred years ago, was broadcast on *Radio 3* last Sunday. It is set in County Sligo and is about a lovable rascal called Conn The Shaughraun who helps a Fenian escape from Australia and return home to claim his lands from which he is being defrauded by a corrupt squire.

If you could accept the humour of *The Quiet Man* (which panders to the image of stage Irishry and Begorraism but is still a great movie) then you'll like this play. The local Irish aren't one bit stupid and when Captain Molineux, an English officer recently quartered in the area, comes upon a cottage and seeks provisions for his men, he is fooled into churning the butter before being told by the woman of the house that their land has been taken from them and they can't help him. He finds their names unpronounceable but they deliberately mispronounce his surname.

Molineux patrols along the coast because he expects the escaped Fenian to be landed from a boat. He meets a stranger — it is the escapee — who offers him whiskey from a

flask. Molineux says: "We have ordered to capture a dangerous person who will be, or has been, landed on this coast lately, and those rocks are just the kind of place where he might find refuge."

"Not at all unlikely," says the escapee. "I'll keep a lookout for him."

The play cocks many a snook at the naive English officer though Boucicault is careful not to offend his Victorian audience. The principal villains are the squire, a police informer and some policemen — who are all Irish.

The Fenian is eventually recaptured but escapes again with the help of Conn. During their getaway, shots — fired by the squire's men — ring out and Conn falls down. Molineux is very upset and gives Conn's mother £5 for the wake. And this leads to the funniest scene of all. As Conn's body lies in his cottage and his mother goes off to organise food and drink and keepers, a priest says to the Captain:

"No one else was present to prove how Conn was killed."

Conn sits up and says, "Yes, I was there!" It turns out that he wasn't even wounded but now decides to play dead so that he can fool his assailants. When the wake house fills with people they are all praising Conn as a great fella and he loves it. Occasionally, Conn sits up unnoticed and empties the odd jug of punch, takes a pinch of snuff and sneezes, and winks at the Captain who just can't understand these people and their ways.

Eventually, the gang are located and everyone leaves the wake to go after them. Conn follows suit and they are captured. Meantime it has also been revealed that Queen Victoria (a most sensible woman) has annulled all the Fenians. So our escapee is free to come home and marry his fiancée and Conn his. It all ends happily ever after. Even the Captain gets an Irish wife!

Conn's resurrection, but more so the Amnesty, really made it!

Finally, on behalf of the prisoners here I would like to thank all those people who sent us Christmas cards. The bulk were from friends and relatives in Ireland, but there must have been thousands more from republican supporters in the USA, Britain and Europe. They added a lot of colour and sparkle to this drab place and have made the NIO revise upwards our level of international support!

Amongst my own personal favourites was an expensive one that I received from a comrade in the women's department of Sinn Féin which still had its price sticker on the back!

It was nice to see how much I'm worth, Mairead!

*Confirming our correspondent's fetish for exotic words the Shorter Oxford English Dictionary informs us that this is 'rare' and means 'oblique, not straightforward'. What exactly this has to do with a Berlin nightclub we cannot figure out. — Ed.

CHRISTMAS COMMEMORATION



● A small crowd trekked to Art O'Neill's grave in Gleann an Rí in the Wicklow Mountains on December 26th to commemorate the 400th anniversary of an Irishman who died while escaping from Dublin Castle. Art escaped at Christmas time along with another Irish taoiseach, Aodh O'Dónaill, who went on to lead the Irish in rebellion against the English Queen Elizabeth. Aengus O Snodaigh of Dublin Sinn Féin gave a short oration in which he condemned revisionist historians for trying to excise events in Irish history which any other nation would be proud of. Afterwards the crowd climbed the mountain before returning to their cars wet, tired but proud that a little bit of Irish history was not forgotten.

Notices

REMEMBERING THE PAST

The Northern Star

■ BY PETER O'ROURKE

Within three months of the founding of the United Irishmen in October 1791, realising the advantages of a paper to help spread their republican policies, they began publishing their own newspaper, *The Northern Star*.

In January 1792 the first issue of *The Northern Star*, the official newspaper of the United Irishmen, edited by Samuel Neilson, appeared in Belfast. The policy of the new paper was "equal representation of all the people in parliament", but as Theobald Wolfe Tone pointed out, the necessary end of this policy must be the establishment of an Irish republic.

As the editor and chief shareholder of *The Northern Star*, Neilson, who had

conceived the idea of a society of Irishmen of every persuasion to overthrow English rule in Ireland and who was a founder member of the United Irishmen in Belfast, adopted Tone's republican outlook and his paper came to advocate complete separation from England.

The circulation of *The Northern Star*, which carried radical political articles and literary writings, extended as far as Dublin, Edinburgh and London,

although its news was almost exclusively from the north of Ireland.

Within a year the proprietors of the paper were prosecuted on eight charges. They were defended by the Dublin barrister, John Philpot Curran and the Dublin Castle authorities lost the case.

By the mid-1790s, especially following the Jackson Affair (the arrest and death a year later, in April 1795 of the Rev William Jackson, an envoy of the new French Republican government who was sent to Ireland to assist the United Irishmen) the pro-French sympathies of a section of the population were openly aroused, and *The Northern Star* kept them before the public.

As a result of the disclosures made to the Dublin Castle authorities in connection with Jackson's trial, the United Irishmen Society was suppressed and declared illegal while many of its leaders were forced to leave the country to avoid arrest. It at once became a secret society with the aim of establishing an Irish republic by force of arms.

Government harassment of the staff of *The Northern Star*, which by now had the largest circulation of any newspaper in Ireland, intensified during the following months. In 1796, Neilson, its editor, was arrested for a 'seditious' article in the paper and, with Thomas Russell and others, he was transported to Dublin and imprisoned in Newgate Jail.

In 1797, following the failure of the French expedition under the command of General Hoche the previous December, and with government fears of an imminent French invasion, martial law was proclaimed in Ulster and in every part of the country where there were signs of republican activity. In May, by which time Neilson and most of the proprietors of *The Northern Star* were in jail, on the order of General Lake, a detachment of the Irish militia raided the offices of the paper, smashed the machinery, confiscated documents and suppressed the paper.

Within months of the suppression of *The Northern Star* it was succeeded by a more revolutionary paper, *The Press of Dublin*, which was eventually suppressed in March 1798, two months before the planned rising.

The Northern Star, the first Irish republican newspaper, began publication on January 4th 1792, 200 years ago this week.

DECLARATION, RESOLUTIONS, AND CONSTITUTION, OF THE SOCIETIES OF UNITED IRISHMEN.

DECLARATION AND RESOLUTIONS.

In the present great Era of Reform, when unjust Governments are falling in every quarter of Europe; when Religious Persecution is compelled to abjure her Tyranny over confidence; when the Rights of Men are ascertained in Theory, and that Theory substantiated by Practices when Antiquity can no longer defend absurd and oppressive Forms, against the common Sense and common Interests of Mankind; when all governments are acknowledged to originate from the People, and to be so far only obligatory, as they protect their Rights and promote their Welfare:— We think it our Duty, as Irishmen, to come forward, and state what we feel to be our heavy Grievance, and what we know to be its effectual Remedy.

WE HAVE NO NATIONAL GOVERNMENT.— We are ruled by Englishmen, and the Servants of Englishmen, whose Object is the Interest of another Country: while the Instrument of Corruption, and whose strength is the Weakness of IRELAND; and their Men have the whole of the Power and Patronage of the Country, as Means to seduce and subvert the Honesty of her Representatives in the Legislature. Such an extrinsic Power, acting with uniform Force, in a Direction too frequently opposite to the true Line of our obvious Interests, can be refuted with Effect solely by the *Unanimity, Decision, and Spirit in the People*—Qualities which may be exerted most legally, constitutionally, and successfully, by that great Measure, essential to the Prosperity and Freedom of Ireland—AN EQUAL REPRESENTATION OF ALL THE PEOPLE IN PARLIAMENT.

Imeachtaí

ANTI-EXTRADITION MEETING: meets 6.30pm every Tuesday, Dublin Resource Centre, Crow Street, DUBLIN

PICKET ON US EMBASSY: opposing US policy in Central America, 11.30am-1pm, every Saturday,

Ballsbridge, DUBLIN

SEAN SABHAT COMMEMORATION: Speaker Joe Austin, 12 noon, Sunday January 5th, Bedford Row, LIMERICK CITY

PATRICK SHEEHY COMMEMORATION: Wreath-laying ceremony, 12.30pm Sunday January 5th, Ballysealeen Graveyard, ASKEATON,

County Limerick.

BLOODY SUNDAY 20th ANNIVERSARY: Rally 6.30pm Friday, January 17th, British Embassy, Merion Road, Ballsbridge, DUBLIN

BLOODY SUNDAY 20th ANNIVERSARY: March & Rally: Sunday, January 26th; Assemble Creggan Shops, DERRY

In Díl Chuimhne

CARAHÉR, Fergal (20th Ann). In proud and loving memory of Vol Eugene Devlin. Always remembered by the Dungannon Martyrs Sinn Féin Cumann. Always remembered by the Coal-land Martyrs Sinn Féin Cumann. Remembered with pride by the Clonoe Martyrs Sinn Féin Cumann. Always remembered by the Jim Lynagh Sinn Féin Cumann, Clogher. Always remembered by South Tyrone Comhairle Ceantair Sinn Féin.

BLOUNT, Emmet (3rd Ann). In proud and loving memory of Emmet Blount who died on Christmas Day 1988. Always remembered by Anto and Paschal, Portlaoise

Prison.

DEVLIN, Eugene (19th Ann). In proud and loving memory of Vol Eugene Devlin. Always remembered by the Dungannon Martyrs Sinn Féin Cumann. Always remembered by the Coal-land Martyrs Sinn Féin Cumann. Remembered with pride by the Clonoe Martyrs Sinn Féin Cumann. Always remembered by the Jim Lynagh Sinn Féin Cumann, Clogher. Always remembered by South Tyrone Comhairle Ceantair Sinn Féin.

SHEEHY, Pádraic (1st Ann). In proud and loving memory of Vol Pádraic Sheehy who died tragically on January 22nd 1991. Lay him away on the hillside along with the young and the old, inscribe his name in the

roll of honour in letters of purest gold. Always remembered by the Limerick POWs, Portlaoise Prison. Remembered with pride by the Republican Movement, County Limerick.

Always remembered by the Seán Heuston Sinn Féin Cumann, Patrickswell, Limerick. Remembered always by County Limerick Comhairle Ceantair Sinn Féin.

Never forgotten by Fianna Éireann, County Limerick.

Always remembered by David Buxton and family, Patrickswell, Limerick.

Remembered with pride by Joe, Denise and Rachel. Always remembered by Tiny, Nora and the Lynch family, Limerick city.

Beannachtaí na hAthbhlíana

BEGGS, Anthony (Portlaoise). Happy New Year. Thinking of you at this time. From Christine. XXX.
DOHERTY, Joe (America). New Year greetings Joe. Hasta la victoria siempre. From Watty.
KELEHON, John. (Portlaoise). Wishing you a very happy New Year. Love from ma, da, Horse and Danagh. Love from Michelle and Frank. From Jason and Fiona. From John, Bernie and kids. From all the lads in the Dog Ruff Inn.
KENNA, Brian (Portlaoise). Happy New Year Brian. Love always Veronica and Seán.
LAVIN, Patrick (Portlaoise). Think-

ing of you at this time. Happy New Year. All our love always. Sandra, Arlene and Patrick.
MCGILLIOWAY, Paddy (H3). Happy New Year. From family and friends, Derry city.

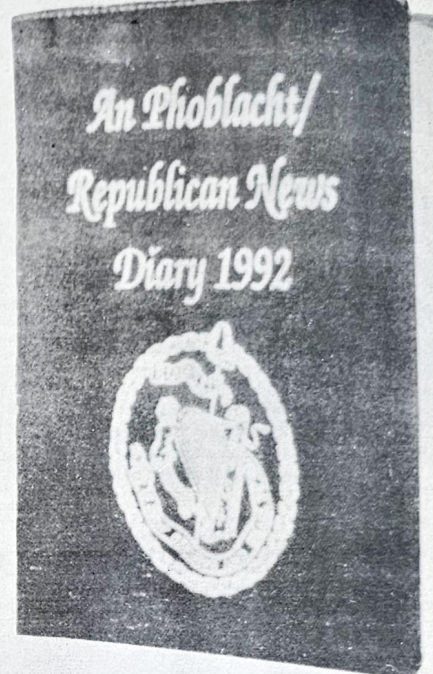
MCKEE, Michael (Long Kesh). Wishing you all the best for the New Year. Beaky. Missing you very much. From your loving wife Patricia; From your children Kevin, Michael, Stephen Karen and Patricia; From your in-laws Alice, Deirdre-Ann, Alice, Mary, Martine, Karen, Michael, Liam, Vincent and Gerard; Do chairde Nicola and Paul.

NEW YEAR GREETINGS from Holland to our friends in Portlaoise. Declan, Eamonn, Shay, Les and Eugene and to Pamela in Limerick. From Watty, Michelle and Seán.

ROCHE, Gerry (Belgium). New Year greetings Gerry. From the Lynch family, Limerick city.

Beannachtaí

BEGGS, Anthony (Portlaoise). Happy 29th birthday. All our love Sandra, Arlene and Patrick.
MAC DOMHNAILL, Gearóid (Leicester). Happy birthday Gearóid. From Joyce.
GIBSON/DOHERTY/McDONNELL/VELLA. Birthday greetings to Noel Gibson, Hugh Doherty, Gerry the best on your birthdays this month. From Mary and Patrick, Buncrana.



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Last Orders

Reargunner

COULD THIS BE THE FUTURE?

As 1991, a year which saw major changes in the political and ideological map of Europe, came to a close, Derry seemed like a fine place to spend some time reflecting on the earth-shattering events of the year.

The Reargunner pondered the spread of capitalism and the decline of socialism; the end of borders (!) in Western Europe and the restoration of borders in Eastern Europe; the fall of Gorbys and the survival of Charlie...

but Derry, Derry would be reassuring. A few days in the company of the POWs on Xmas parole would restore the flagging morale of someone whose every 'cert' had crumbled.

Being a sporting type the Reargun-

ner was delighted at the invitation to attend a football challenge match between a Derry selection and a team of paroled. The latter was captained by that chap McGuinness whose penalty kick seemed more likely to bring down a chopper than a red eye missile.

Biting a GAA tongue the Reargunner clapped as the two sides lined out for the soccer match, sighing at the thought of another great bastion of Gaelic Ireland falling when suddenly, I noticed the POWs jerseys. McDonalds opening a hamburger joint in Moscow was small fry (no pun intended) to the sight of a Coca Cola logo emblazoned across the strip. What's next? the gunner ponders... an Ard Fheis sponsored by Adidas? A Slógadh from Slazengers? Could this be the future?



● That chap McGuinness



BRITISH POLICE unveil their latest initiative to combat IRA volunteers active in England. The new £375 vinyl cut-out Panda car is light, portable, cheap to replace and is 100% as effective in tracking down ASUs and escaped Irish prisoners as standard police vehicles.

HUGH ANNESLEY received his payoff for accepting the job as commander of the RUC in this year's New Year's Honours List. Hughie was made a Knight Bachelor, which might provide some compensation for being the main apologist for the Six Counties' sectarian stormtroopers. An indication of the qualities necessary for the post may be gleaned by the fact that Dirk Bogarde, another excellent performer and actor, like Hughie, well known for the stiff-upper-lip parts he played (mainly in Second World War films) received the same award.

TWO PEOPLE had heart attacks and three thugs wielding pick axe handles were arrested when the UDA and the UVF got stuck into each other in a Belfast club in December.

The two groups had just returned from a joint march to Crumlin Road Jail to call for segregation. The brawl, in which baseball bats were also used, happened in a club on the Taughmonagh estate in the south of the city and centred around the failure of one club in the area to shut following the IRA bomb attack in the jail which resulted in the deaths of two loyalist prisoners. Unfortunately the RUC arrived on the scene, preventing any serious injuries.

NEW FIGURES released by the Rape Crisis Association in the Six Counties reveal that RUC officers have the worst record of sexual abuse.

Of a sample of 100 people who contacted the organisation for help five named their attackers as RUC officers and three as soldiers.

MAN OVERBOARD. Brit sailor Brent Hollister literally died to get out of the navy when he collapsed from alcohol poisoning at a party to celebrate his leaving HMS Atherstone.

An inquest in December heard that Brent lowered

seven pints of Guinness and five rums before his unsuccessful and fatal attempt to sink 12 measures of spirits in one glass.

SIMPLE SIMON slips up. A soldier on sentry duty outside Windsor Castle made a belated attempt to upstage Kenneth Baker and George Churchill Coleman as Britain's Eejit of the Year.

Visitors to Windsor Castle collapsed in stitches when Grenadier Guardsman Simon Mitchison (whose job is to march up and down outside the castle all day with a big hairy teacosy on his head) slipped on ice and accidentally bayoneted himself in the neck.

As fortune favours the brave and the stupid alike, Simon escaped with stitches.

But the incident gave his loving wife Marion the opportunity to talk to the press. She was suitably sympathetic, saying: "I'd have paid a fortune to have seen him do it. A photo would have been priceless." On his role in protecting the English monarch Marion said: "She is probably safer with Simon in hospital."

ON THE SIDE...ON THE SIDE...ON THE SIDE...ON THE SIDE...ON THE SIDE...ON THE SIDE...ON THE SIDE...

FOUR DIE IN SECTARIAN SHOOTINGS

FOUR MEN DIED and three people were injured, including an eight-year-old child, in a series of random sectarian attacks in the run-up to Christmas. The wave of killing, described by the IRA as "serving no one's interests only the British", saw IPLO and UFF gunmen unleash three random sectarian attacks.

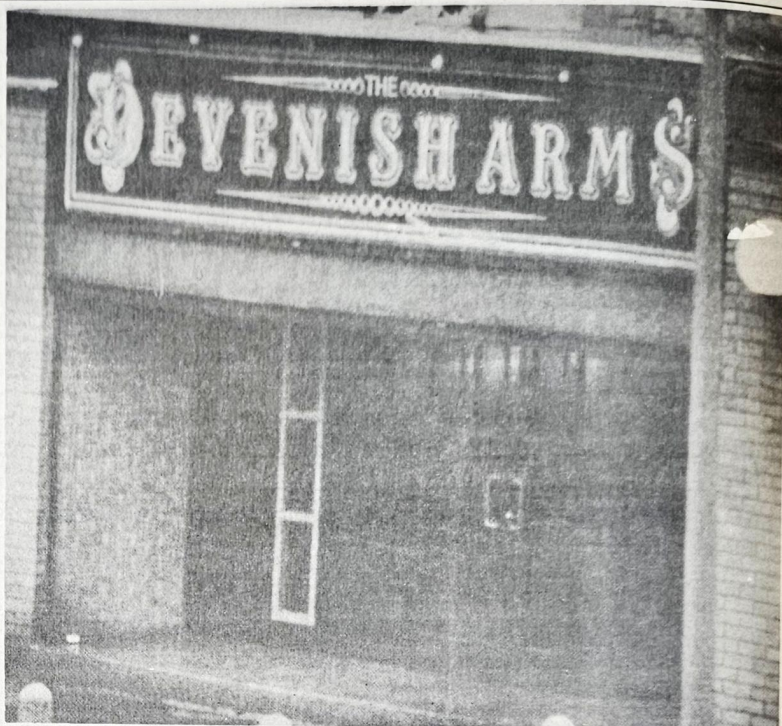
The first two to die were Neil Gorman, a 55-year-old single man and 25-year-old Barry Watson. Both men were shot dead when IPLO gunmen indiscriminately opened fire in the Donegal Arms Bar in the Village area of South Belfast on Saturday, December 21st. Within hours of the shooting the UFF shot dead William Johnston at his Fortuna Street home. He was a Catholic living with his Protestant girlfriend in the loyalist area close to the scene of the earlier attack.

On Sunday, December 22nd, loyalist gunmen struck again. Shortly after 2pm a number of armed and masked men burst into the snooker hall of the Devenish Arms public house in a nationalist area on the edge of West Belfast. Twenty-two-year-old Aidan Wallace was shot dead and two other men were injured when the gang opened fire. An eight-year-old child who had been playing snooker with his father was critically injured when

one of the gunmen, in an act of pure terror, singled the child out. Christopher Lawless was shot in the head when a gunman stood over him and fired at close range as the boy lay on the floor. He remains critically ill in hospital.

In South Armagh the brother of a member of Sinn Féin escaped injury in a gun attack on a house near Whitecross. A car, belonging to the Sinn Féin member and borrowed for the evening by his brother, was parked outside the house when a number of shots were fired at around 1am on Friday, December 27th.

A North Belfast man had a lucky escape when he was confronted by a car-load of armed loyalists at Rosevale Street on December 28th. The man made his escape on foot along an entry. The car drove up and down the street for a few minutes before driving off towards the Crumlin Road.



● The Devenish Arms in Belfast where pro-British gunmen killed Aidan Wallace and singled out and critically injured eight-year-old Christopher Lawless in one of a series of sectarian attacks

IRA SUSPENSION ENDS WITH WAVE OF ATTACKS

TWO BRITISH SOLDIERS suffered blast injuries and a number of crown forces military installations came under automatic gunfire as IRA operations in Belfast signalled the eve of 1992.

In a wave of operations which began shortly after teatime, Volunteers placed up to 20 commandeered vehicles at strategic locations across the city forcing the deployment of hundreds of RUC and British army personnel and necessitating a massive clearance operation which lasted into the first day of 1992.

During the clearance operation crown forces flooded nationalist areas across Belfast only to come under attack at up to six separate locations. Five British soldiers sustained blast injuries during the attacks when their patrols were targeted by Volunteers using improvised grenade devices. Those injured were operating at Ardilea Street in North Belfast, at Colligan Street in West Belfast and at Stewart Street in South Belfast where three of the injuries occurred.

Shooting attacks were also mounted at Templar Flats in the New Lodge area of North Belfast and at Woodbourne and Fort Whiterock barracks in West Belfast. All the incidents came in a three-hour period up until 11pm.

As 1992 dawned further operations were to again force the deployment of massive numbers of crown forces. The first attacks of the new year came at 2am on January 1st when incendiary devices ignited in a Belfast city centre

WAR NEWS

Top Man store. The devices which caused a massive fire in Donegall Place, were to be followed throughout the day by other incendiary attacks at Boucher Road and at Wellington Place. The previous day incendiaries had been discovered at three separate locations in Belfast and at one set of commercial premises in Bangor.

As APRN goes to print yet another wave of bomb alerts are being dealt with by the crown forces. The suspect devices all on board commandeered vehicles have been placed at major bridges and flyovers leading into the city centre. Incendiary devices have been reported on the outskirts of Lisburn and believed to have destroyed car showrooms and a carpet warehouse in Newtownards, East Belfast.

● THREE-DAY SUSPENSION

In a statement issued through the Irish Republican Publicity Bureau in Dublin on Wednesday evening, December 23rd, and signed P.O'Neill, the IRA indicated that it would "temporarily suspend hostile military operations for a 72-hour period up until

midnight on December 26th".

● BELFAST SECURITY BREACHED

The statement came after a five-day period in which IRA operations had struck home in both Belfast and London. The Belfast attack which came minutes after midnight on Wednesday, December 18th, saw the IRA confound British security chiefs by yet again breaching security to ferry a massive van bomb into the heart of the city centre.

The target on this occasion was the law courts at the junction of Townhall Street and Victoria Street. The bomb which was positioned adjacent to a British army observation post caused widespread physical damage but the damage to British credibility from this, the fifth massive explosion in the city centre within three weeks, will have been much greater, given their very public increase in security in the run-up to Christmas.

The city centre blast came at the end of a day in which incendiary attacks had taken place at Coleraine in County Derry and at Larne in County Antrim. These attacks brought to 300 the number of blast incendiary bombings which had occurred throughout 1991.



● London ground to a halt when IRA bomb attacks derailed commercial life in the city in the run-up to Christmas

● LONDON PARALYSED

December 23rd was to see the IRA again strike in London causing massive disruption and paralysing the British capital on the very eve of Christmas.

The disruption which cost millions of pounds in lost revenue came as the IRA in a co-ordinated series of attacks targeted the London underground tube system.

In the early hours of the morning IRA warnings were delivered stating that devices had been placed in a number of named stations. Small incendiary devices subsequently exploded on board trains at Ilford depot in East London, and at Harrow-on-the-Hill and Neasdon stations both in North West London. During the massive clearance operation brought about as a result of the attacks the London Transport authorities were forced into closing 273 stations and eleven main lines into the capital, thus causing over one million people to stay at home.

● SECTARIAN ATTACKS

On the same day as the London attacks the IRA issued a statement in Dublin regarding a series of attacks which had left four people dead in a

72-hour period. The statement which referred to attacks in the Village area of Belfast where two Protestants died, in Moy, County Tyrone, where one Protestant student died and at Marino in Dublin where a member of the IPLO gang died said: "None of our Volunteers were involved in any of these attacks which serve only to divert attention away from Britain's central role in this conflict. We repeat that we in the IRA will not allow ourselves to be drawn into any such diversions."

● RENEWAL OF OPERATIONS

The IRA's three day suspension of military operations had only expired by three minutes when the first of a series of three operations got under way in Counties Down and Tyrone and at Belfast in County Antrim.

The first attack came at 12.03am on December 27th and saw a device detonating on the main Belfast to Dublin railway line at Newry, causing a 48 hour shut down of services between the two cities. The device which was placed on a stretch of line adjacent to a temporary station house on the outskirts of Newry town, caused substantial damage and forced a massive deployment of British troops to help clear and secure the area, before British bomb technicians could move in to check for further devices.

Within 22 minutes another attack was underway, this time in Belfast where Volunteers poured automatic fire into crown forces positions guarding the central law courts at Oxford Street in the city centre.

Two days later a crown force border post was to come under attack in County Tyrone when a 500lb car bomb detonated at a forward observation post at the main cross border military checkpoint in Aghnacloy. The device which exploded at 8pm was heard up to 15 miles away and caused considerable damage.