

THE PATRIOT GAME

93 minutes, B&W

The north of Ireland, a decade of riots, war and civil strife. The longest years in the history of the Irish 'troubles.'

It was 1968 that the world press seized upon the spectacular street fighting then occurring in Derry and Belfast. For most people it was the first time they had ever heard of the peculiar state the British called Northern Ireland. Northern Ireland is a British colony made up of six counties that had been carved out of northeastern Ireland in 1920. This tiny statelet contains most of Ireland's Industry. It also contains an artificial majority of one million loyalists (loyal to England) against a minority of a half million Irish nationalists. The loyalists are descendants of 17th century British colonizers and are Protestant while the Irish mainly are catholic.

Since the creation of Northern Ireland, nationalists were often denied basic civil liberties, such as the right to vote. As a minority they have often been discriminated against in jobs and housing, In the late 60's they demonstrated against this discrimination and were met with systematic repression by the loyalist police force. From the beginning the news media reported these events in terms of Protestant versus Catholic, so it is not surprising that most people have the image of a bizarre religious war.

"THE PATRIOT GAME" is the first definitive film treatment of the war in the north of Ireland. It analyses the origins and history of this conflict, revealing a reality that has little to do with religion. It shows the war as one fought for independence from British rule. It is a war in which hundreds of British soldiers and nearly 2,000 Irish civilians have lost their lives.

In the midst of the Common Market a guerilla war rages, hidden, unknown or misunderstood to most people. In effect the north of Ireland remains a mystery to the outside world; a mystery which the filmmakers hope "THE PATRIOT GAME" will clarify.