

THREE PRISONER-CANDIDATES SELECTED

**50
Years
Ago**

ON December 19, 1999 the last colonial presence on Chinese soil, Macau — a Portuguese possession for 442 years — was evacuated by the imperial power

and all of China was at last cleared of foreign rule.

On June 30, 1997 (the Year of the Ox) nearby Hong Kong was evacuated by the British under the joint-declaration made between China and Britain in 1984 in Margaret Thatcher's time as Prime Minister.

Fifty years ago in December 1949 the long Civil War in China ended. The Communist forces under Mao Tse-tung finally forced the Nationalists under Chiang Kai-shek and the remnants of their army off the mainland and onto the off-shore island of Formosa, later known as Taiwan.

Chairman Mao, as head of the Communist Party then established the People's Republic of China with its capital in Peking, later renamed Beijing. It was said at Mao's death in 1976 that he changed China from a place where peasants were forced to eat the bark off trees in order to survive to a situation of assured subsistence with dignity.

However the rapid political, economic and social changes in the new China did not occur without massive violations of human rights. The most recent of these to be widely known in the outside world was the notorious Tiananmen Square massacre of students on June 4, 1989.

The new regime in China fifty years ago was not accepted widely as the Nationalists claimed for many years to be the "Government of China" from their stronghold on Taiwan.

China under Mao sent economic aid, but not troops, to help the revolutionary movements in Laos and Vietnam during the 1950s and 1960s. Indeed in the early 1970s Chinese engineers built the famous "Tan-Zam" railway in Eastern Africa.

When Northern Rhodesia became free of British rule in 1964, it found itself as Zambia economically dependant on South Africa and other countries than ruled by white minority governments.

To strengthen its ties to its black African neighbours, especially Tanzania, it built an oil pipeline to Dar es Salaam on the coast in 1968.

A further outlet to the sea and import-export trade was achieved by the land-locked Zambia in the following decade by the construction of the railway to Dar es Salaam under the direction of Chinese engineers.

Such assistance to anti-colonial and anti-imperialist governments was much appreciated at the time. The 26th County State during the middle and late 1960s trained black Zambian administrators in local government procedures and technical education.

It was not until 1971 that the People's Republic of China was seated at the United Nations as "China" and the Taiwan government ousted and recognised only as "Taiwan". From 1957 on the Dublin government actively supported this move at the UN.

Of interest to readers will be the British government's attitude to the conflicting claims for recognition from the Communists in Peking and the Nationalists in Taiwan in December 1949 and January 1950. In the January 1950 issue of *An tÉireannach Aontaithe/The United Irishman* an article on the leader page is headed "England Recognises Communist China".

It states: "For years England denounced the Communists in China as brigands, robbers, murderers, cut-throats, etc, who were financed by Russia and whose aim was to overthrow Christianity.

"She extolled to the stars the valiant efforts of the ill-armed Nationalist forces — the bulwark of civilisation in the East. When an English warship was bombed by Communists in Chinese waters (the ship won a glorious victory by running away just as Dunkirk in 1940 was hailed as a great victory) the whole English press



At the end of 1949 the civil war in China ended with the victory of Mao Tse-tung and the Communists. Within a few weeks England moved to recognise the Communist government because of her capital investments in China worth over £300 million.

denounced the 'cowardly act'."

(The *Amethyst* incident took place on the Yangtze River in China in the summer of 1949. What was it doing there? — Ed.) "And now despite all that England gives *de jure* as well as *de facto* recognition to this Communist government," the article goes on.

"The reason is not far to seek: English capital investments in China are said to be worth over three hundred million pounds (multiply many times for their value in 2000 AD), and for the sake of a few pounds or dollars England would make a pact with the devil himself."

The article concludes by wondering what Sir Basil Brooke, then Stormont Premier, thinks of such English government action and if Sir Basil himself would 'stoop so low as to make the choice of principles to be adopted conform to the needs of the pocket'."

Also carried in the same issue are extracts from a speech made by de Valera in 1931 when the "Cognave Party" (now Fine Gael) brought in a Coercion Act "less devilish" than those later enacted by Fianna Fáil. They certainly make interesting reading at a time when the "poachers" of the 1970s and 1980s have become the "gamekeepers" of the 1990s and the 2000s: "They [the IRA]," said de Valera in pursuit of power, "are to be taken into these secret tribunals and maltreated and nobody is to hear a word about it and nobody is to be allowed to raise his voice in protest. That is the situation.

'GOSPEL'

"But tradition is a hard thing to kill. They have been reared in that tradition. That is the Gospel that kept Irish nationality alive through all the centuries of persecution . . .

"These are the men whom we want to crush now. These are the men who are represented as terrorists, these who never thought of themselves. They are simply the rats that are to be squelched.

"These are the people who are ready to give everything that they had for Ireland, and well we know it, and now they are being deserted by the majority of their people.

"They have been deserted by old comrades who can no longer see any hope of success on the line they are adopting, by people who were with them originally but who are so far away from them now that the road which they are following is leading diametrically in the opposite direction.

"They are brave men anyway, let us at least have for them the decent respect that we have for the brave," the extract concludes.

These words of de Valera in Leinster House in 1931 have often been quoted by Republicans down the years — in 1941, 1951, 1961 . . . They can be quoted again with relevance to the present situation at the start of the new Millennium.

Even as Jack McCaffrey of Hannahstown outside Belfast was welcomed home on release from Crumlin Road jail, Belfast three of the remaining prisoners were chosen as Sinn Féin candidates to fight the British general election in the Six Counties as abstentionists.

The candidates selected were Séamus (Jimmy) Steele (Belfast) for West Belfast; Hugh

McAteer (Derry city) for Derry city and county and Liam Burke (Belfast) for Mid-Ulster.

Their election address began by stating that "the cardinal objective of the Irish people" is the restoration of the All-Ireland Republican Government and State overthrown by England when she "partitioned the Nation into two statelets".

The candidates nominated would be pledged, if elected, not to sit in the British parliament. "They shall seek the votes of the electorate and the support of the Irish people not merely as anti-partitionists . . . but as the spokesmen of the Republican Movement.

That Movement "was then preparing itself to resume the onward march towards achievement of the national ideal". The winning of seats would not be an end in itself nor would the results, whatever they might be, affect in any way the determination of Republicans to forge ahead towards their objectives.

Votes won would not be looked on "in the remotest way" as something in the nature of a plebiscite on Ireland's right to freedom.

"THAT RIGHT IS INALIENABLE AND NON-JUDICABLE AND MUST NEVER BE PUT IN ISSUE THROUGH A REFERENDUM OF A SECTION OF THE POPULATION NOR OF THE PEOPLE OF THE COUNTRY AT LARGE."

Ireland's right to "full and complete freedom", the Manifesto claimed **could not be taken away and was not a matter for decision.** (Ireland as a historic nation was entitled to it and the constitution of Republican Sinn Féin says so to this day, fifty years later.)

The election was an opportunity for Irish people to renew their Republican allegiance and "demonstrate to England and the world" that the Irish Question was not a matter for the British Empire but "the right of an ancient and historic nation to its complete and absolute freedom and independence".

Republicans might be charged with disruptionist tactics because of entering the election contest. The Movement had never been a source of disruption. "Rather was it those who adhere to political party manoeuvring or who foment sectarian bitterness and strife that prevent our people from making a common and united effort to end British rule in Ireland."

Republicans had ever sought civil and religious freedom, individual and national freedom and had been the foes of bigotry, persecution and sectarianism. They had a better right to represent genuine Nationalist opinion than those who adhered to sectional or party interests.

"Ireland is a Nation with a national right to separate existence and freedom . . . and Ireland is the country to which all Irishmen should give allegiance."

"The Republican Movement personifies the continuance of the national tradition of opposition to foreign rule and was deserving of the support of all who seek freedom."

The work of setting up election directories and organisation in the three constituencies went ahead despite cries that Sinn Féin was "splitting the nationalist vote" by entering the elections at all.

In *An tÉireannach Aontaithe/The United*

Irishman of January 1950 an article entitled "Nationality and Sport — A Young Reader's Views" appeared to open up another front for Republicans.

"Seosamh Phádraig" wrote that Irish athletes could only reach international competition before 1922 by competing under the Union Jack. The GAA in 1922 decided to entrust care of athletics and cycling to a newly-formed body, the National Athletic and Cycling Association of Ireland, popularly known as the "NACA(I)".

In 1924 this association which had jurisdiction over the 32 Counties was admitted to membership of the International Federation. Irish athletes competed in the 1924, 1928 and 1932 Olympics where Irish victories were acclaimed by the hoisting of the Tricolour and the playing of *Amhrán na bhFiann*.

"This it might rightly be claimed was the first international recognition extended to 'Poblacht an Phiairsigh', the writer went on and was "a great victory and suitable reward for the GAA who had persevered in their ideals of Ireland as a nation".

Then a few Orange clubs in Belfast objected to competing under the National Flag and with the aid of England had a motion passed by the International Federation to the effect that the jurisdiction of members of the Federation be limited to the political boundaries of the country or nation they represented.

The NACA(I) was then ordered to confine its activities to the 26 Counties and leave Six-County athletes to compete for England. The NACA(I) naturally refused to obey this order and subsequent Congresses held in 1934, 1935 and 1937 confirmed the stand taken at the International Federation meeting.

In 1935 the NACA(I) was suspended from the International body because it refused to recognise the Border. Then the real blow fell.

"The Seoinins gave in and a few imperialist clubs severed their connections with the NACA(I). Such clubs had before 1922 belonged to the 'Irish Amateur Athletic Association' which was in fact the Irish branch of the British AAA.

Clubs mentioned by the writer included Trinity College, Clonliffe Harriers and Donore Harriers. Yet another was O'Callaghan's Mills Club in Co. Clare.

Before these resignations approaches had been made to the International Federation on behalf of an association "not yet officially founded" for affiliation as a 26 Counties organisation.

Thus it was that the "Amateur Athletic Union of Éire" came into being. It was known as the AAU and the cycling body with an Irish name "Cumann Rothaíochta na hÉireann" as the CRE.

The great majority of athletes of Ireland remained with the NACA(I) but were denied international competition because they remained "true to the glorious ideals of an Irish Republic". Those who bartered their nationalism for international competition were actually "drinking out of the cup with England".

The writer concludes by appealing to all to stand by the NACA(I), the GAA and other national organisations. "Seosamh Phádraig" is believed to have been a young NACA(I) cyclist named Seosamh Mac Cniall of whom more would be heard.

The same issue carried a letter from a 21-year-old American student with an address in Lowell, Massachusetts. Named JT Dillon, he had Irish grandparents and expressed enthusiastic support for "your wonderfully enlightening newspaper".

Was this the same Joe Dillon of Boston who is still with us in the Irish Freedom Committee/Cumann na Saoirse?

A full page article in Irish is headed "Eachtra Chnoe Loinne" — the Encounter at Knocklong railway station when Seán Hogan was rescued from his British captors. Two RIC were killed and two IRA Volunteers wounded.

"Hands up or die", was the warning cry At the Station of Knocklong.

The piece was an extract from a book which was later published by Colm Ó Labhra entitled "Trodaire na Treas Briogáide" (the fighters of the Third Tipperary Brigade).

D'éirigh an Treasach (Seán Treacy) de léim. D'éirigh dá éis an laochra mear D'ling ar an traen go beo Is do chaitheagh go cróga san treas.

(More next month. Refs. *An tÉireannach Aontaithe/The United Irishman* January 1950.)

SINN FÉIN FIGHTS NORTHERN ELECTION

50 Years Ago

ON February 24, 1950 the British general election took place, the first since July 1945 when the British Labour Party won an overall majority for the first time.

In 1950 Prime Minister Clement Attlee's Labour Party was returned again to power but with a decreased majority. Winston Churchill's Tories were again defeated.

In the Six Occupied Counties of Ireland there were 12 constituencies. Three of these had nationalist majorities. Originally Sinn Féin had proposed contesting four with prisoner candidates.

Co Armagh Republicans opted out of a contest but guaranteed to organise the county immediately for Sinn Féin. This was done and by summer 1950 there were two comhairlí ceantair — in north and south Armagh and many cumainn functioning. It was the most highly organised of the Six Counties.

Liam Burke was put forward in Mid-Ulster and Jimmy Steele in West Belfast, two of the nationalist majority constituencies. After a nationalist convention decided to run Anthony Mulvey as an Abstentionist Nationalist candidate, Sinn Féin withdrew their man.

In West Belfast, however, Irish Labour's Jack Beattie insisted on standing on a programme of participating in the British parliament. In the face of this Sinn Féin would not back down and a three-way contest ensued.

A letter to the daily papers from Sinn Féin's two Ard-Rúnaithes was denied publication. The Easter edition of *An tÉireannach Aontaithe/The United Irishman* carried it in full.

Answering the charges of "splitting the nationalist vote" and dated February 8, 1950, the letter from 9 Parnell Square, then the headquarters of Sinn Féin, read:

"In today's issue of your paper under the sub-heading 'Mr Beattie's Seat' you state

"The entry of Sinn Féin at this election into Anti-Partition Constituencies in opposition to Anti-Partition and Irish Labour candidates is causing uneasiness in Nationalist circles because, our Belfast reporter writes, there is a serious danger that the Unionists may with a more efficient election machine and organisation gain seats as a result of this division."

"Would it ever occur to your Belfast reporter, or to anyone else for that matter outside the ranks of the Republican Movement that Sinn Féin is not entering the contest of these elections for the mere purpose of opposing Anti-Partition and Irish Labour candidates?"

STANDARD OF REPUBLICANISM

"Sinn Féin is entering the contest primarily because it feels that the time has come to raise again the standard of Republicanism and to provide our people with the alternatives of a united and virile national movement as opposed to the political parties and cliques that serve but to create confusion and dissension, thus preventing that unity of effort so essential if the Republican Government, disrupted in 1922, is to be restored.

"Again, Sinn Féin is opposed not to individuals but to the practice of sending representatives, no matter what their shade of politics, to Westminster thereby giving to the British parliament a semblance of authority to legislate for the Irish people.

"In conclusion, attention may be drawn to the fact that if Sinn Féin is to be indicted on the score that it is entering into the contest is a cause of splitting the 'Nationalist' vote then the selfsame charge can be made against the Anti-Partition and Irish Labour candidates who enter the contest in opposition to the candidates sponsored by the Republican Movement.

"If withdrawal of the Republican candidates eliminates the danger of 'splitting the vote', surely an identical result would be relieved by the withdrawal of Mr Beattie's candidature in West Belfast or Mr Mulvey's in Mid-Ulster?"

"It is high time that people should realise that the Republican Movement has at least equal rights with all others in seeking the support of the electorate for its programme as a medium for



• A car bearing the Irish Tricolours is stopped by the RUC in Derry during the February 1950 Westminster elections.

expounding its aims and objectives to the people of Ireland."

The letter had appended to it the names of Tomás Ó Dubhghaill and Séamus Ó Ruiseál (brother of Seán Russell, Chief-of-Staff 1938-40).

The Sinn Féin organisation was galvanised in support of its candidates. A church gate collection was held in Dublin city on successive Sundays — northside one week and southside the following — and in other centres. A large advertisement was placed in the daily papers announcing this and appealing for subscriptions.

Speakers and election workers went north each weekend to Belfast and Derry — where Hugh MacAteer was standing. Noteworthy was the turnout on every occasion of driver Sandy McNabb in his Baby Ford (Model Y) car to ferry speakers from Dublin.

A native of Castlewellan, Co Down McNabb was garrulous, of unflinching good humour and totally reliable. In his Bray, Co Wicklow home where Tomás Mac Curtáin stayed many weekends, Sandy would proudly indicate the printed notices framed and hanging on the wall on either side of his living-room fireplace.

One was signed by Sir Samuel Hoare, British Home Secretary in 1939, deporting him from England under the Prevention of Violence Act of that year. The other was endorsed by Sir Dawson Bates, Stormont Home Affairs Minister, ordering McNabb to be interned without trial in 1940.

When arrested in London the Special Branch asked him about his (to them) unusual surname. Was he any relation of the famous Father Vincent McNabb, a Catholic Order priest and noted preacher? The irrepressible Sandy answered, "Yes, he's my father!"

Curiously enough, McNabb is the English corruption of the Irish "Mac an Aba", son of the abbot.

With a fund of stories McNabb kept the election workers amused on the 100-mile journey to Belfast, or the even further excursion to Derry, and back, with a rope tying the two doors of the crowded baby Ford together to keep them closed.

In the outcome Sinn Féin was vindicated. The Anti-Partitionist Mulvey was elected; he then summoned a new constituency convention and secured a directive to reverse his election policy and to sit in Westminster — which he promptly did.

But the point was made. Never again would Sinn Féin be misled by "nationalist constituency conventions". The lesson had been learned the hard way.

In West Belfast Sinn Féin paid the price for standing by its principles. It secured only 1,482 votes as opposed to Beattie's 30,539. The unionist Rev McManaway polled 33,917 and won the seat.

Republicans' grief was not that the unionist won. Any Irish representative going to the British parliament was in fact a unionist, if not a Unionist Party representative, in their eyes. Their regret was the low vote for Jimmy Steele, who had been in Belfast jail since 1938 — with the

exception of nine months on the run between his escape and recapture in 1943.

They took solace in the turnout of 21,880 in his native Derry for former IRA Chief-of-Staff Hugh MacAteer, almost the entire nationalist vote. The unionist, Sir Ronald Ross won the seat as expected with 36,602.

The vote for MacAteer was unexpected because of the lack of organisation. Ross had said publicly that "The main-spring — and the only spring — of Sinn Féin in this constituency is solicitor Kevin Agnew of Maghera." (A part only of Co Derry was then included with the city in the constituency.)

Ross also said that the real nature of Sinn Féin's "intervention" in the election was an attempt by the extreme physical force Republicans to take over the nationalist electorate."

An unusual feature of the election in the Six Counties was the participation of two Dublin government ministers. Seán MacBride, Minister for External Affairs and Noel Browne, Minister for Health spoke at a public meeting in Enniskillen in support of the Anti-Partition candidate, Cahir Healy.

They called for support for all Anti-Partition, Sinn Féin and Irish Labour candidates. The Anti-Partition candidate in Fermanagh-South Tyrone won the seat and took part in the British parliament the following year, 1951.

Incidentally, the move by Mulvey in Mid-Ulster to declare as an abstentionist and later renege on this was inspired by a strategy of the Nationalist Party in 1935. In order to head off two Republican candidates in Tyrone and Fermanagh in the election of that year the Nationalists withdrew and put up two non-party men as abstentionists.

The Republicans felt under pressure and withdrew. But the non-party men, Mulvey and Cunningham, kept their word and did not attend Westminster from 1935 to 1945. (There was no election during WWII.)

Meanwhile in 1950 repression and harassment of all expressions of national feeling grew. A victory parade through Enniskillen for the election of the Anti-Partitionist Cahir Healy was baton-charged by the RUC and the Irish Tricolour seized after fierce fighting.

An *tÉireannach Aontaithe/The United Irishman* of February 1950 in a report gives the flavour of the time:

"At a Special Crimes Court in Armagh (doesn't the name ring very familiar?) two men were charged with 'displaying a tricolour consisting of three vertical stripes, green, white and yellow' (the RUC would not admit to orange). In the course of the proceedings the following questions and answers ensued:

Council to Sergt Nethercott: I suggest if you had not interfered with the flag, it would have remained an orderly procession?

Witness: It is quite possible. If the flag had not been raised, it would have remained orderly.

Council: Supposing that it had been the Soviet flag, would you have interfered with it?

District Inspector Ferris (prosecuting): That is an unfair question.

Council pressed the question.

Witness: I would not have interfered with the Soviet flag unless I had received instructions to do so.

The men were given the benefit of the Probation of Offenders Act." Tomás Ó Glaisigh in the *News Commentary* spoke about a "psychological partition which must be smashed. Without in any way conceding our principles of freedom, we must achieve a liaison of minds."

There is no better way to conclude this account of the 1950 election than to quote from the Sinn Féin election manifesto:

ELECTION MANIFESTO

"Today, Saturday 21st January, Sinn Féin opens its election campaign in support of the Republican candidates in the North. We have deliberately chosen this date . . .

"Why is Sinn Féin contesting this particular election?"

"In the Six Counties any candidate going forward for Stormont must give a prior guarantee that, if elected, he (*sic*) will take his seat. No such guarantee is required for the Westminster elections . . .

"Why go forward as abstentionists?" "The main objection to taking seats is that all sitting representatives must take an oath of loyalty to the King of England; also by taking his (*sic*) seat a representative gives his tacit consent to the claim of England to rule Ireland.

"Therefore no Irishman willing to sit in Westminster can truthfully claim to be a Republican or even an Anti-Partitionist."

"What is the attitude to the Anti-Partition League, etc?"

"We hold that the term 'anti-partition' is a very definite under-statement of the National demand. At best an anti-partition campaign is only a negative policy.

"We demand that the Republican parliament for the Thirty-Two Counties must be re-assembled and that it alone has the right to rule Ireland. This is a positive aim as apart from mere talk about doing away with the Border.

"It is to emphasise this aim that we are choosing Republican prisoner candidates. These men, by their service to the Republican cause and more particularly by their long-suffering for it, personify the will to resist British aggression.

"They symbolise the national demand for freedom and for that reason are the best possible standard-bearers for our cause," the manifesto concluded.

In January-February fifty years ago a new generation, standing on the shoulders of the previous generation (the prisoners) took political action which showed clearly they were flexible (Mid-Ulster), serious (Derry) and determined (West Belfast).

Under the leadership of veterans of the 1940s including a few from the 1920s the Republican Movement was flexing its muscles again and giving a clear lead to the youth of the upcoming generation . . .

(More next month, *Rev. Northern Ireland: the Orange State* by Michael Farrell, published 1976 by Pluto Press and *An tÉireannach Aontaithe/The United Irishman*, January, February and Easter 1950.)

SIX-COUNTY STREET POLITICS

**50
Years
Ago**

IN March 1950 a St Patrick's Day parade was banned from Moneymore, Co Derry while in Aughnacloy, Co Tyrone the RUC baton-charged a parade and seized the Irish Tricolour.

Politics in the Six Counties had moved to the streets. As early as 1948 nationalists had begun to organise parades and demonstrations and had been met with Stormont restrictions and bans.

In March of that year Edmond Warnock, Stormont Home Affairs Minister had banned an Anti-Partition League St Patrick's Day parade in Derry.

The parade was to carry the Tricolour and this was forbidden under the Special Powers Act. Speaking in Stormont, Warnock said: "So long as this government lasts and so long as I am Minister for Home Affairs, I shall not permit the Republican flag to be carried through Derry city . . . No Surrender."

The Rev Godfrey McManaway, Unionist MP at Stormont for Derry city — which was severely gerrymandered — said: "The Minister was perfectly right in suppressing that demonstration for if he had not done so we [the Derry unionists] would."

The ban and the Stormont capitulation to threats from local loyalists caused deep resentment in the nationalist-majority city where the unionist Apprentice Boys were allowed to march every year.

In September 1948 Stormont banned rallies planned for High Street in the centre of Belfast. The 1798 Rising was to be commemorated and Henry Joy McCracken, a Protestant leader of the United Irishmen, had been hanged in High Street

RESTRICTED

The commemoration parade was restricted to the Falls Road area. Belfast Corporation followed suit by cancelling the Commemoration Committee's booking of the Ulster Hall for a céili. The committee, which had a substantial Protestant membership, took them to court for a breach of contract and won.

The Crown Forces attack on the victory parade through Enniskillen on the election of Cahir Healy as an abstentionist MP in February was dealt with in our last instalment of 50 Years Ago. This was a pattern which would repeat itself again and again as shall be seen.

After the poll in the Westminster elections, the Sinn Féin Director of Elections in Derry, Neil Gillespie, made a statement to the press. Hugh McAteer had polled 21,880 votes there.

The statement read: "We entered this fight fully aware that as an election contest merely the result was a foregone conclusion. We decided, however, to fight under such conditions because we believe there is a much deeper issue involved than the mere winning of a seat.

NORTHERN IRELAND: THE ORANGE STATE MICHAEL FARRELL



Pluto Press

"A hastily recruited and to a very large extent inexperienced election organisation did very well. We are satisfied with the result. I consider it to be a good sign for the future of Sinn Féin in the area."

Ten days before the voting, on February 14, Neil had addressed an election meeting in Derry at which about 200 people attended, according to the *Irish News*.

He was reported as saying: "Unless the people of Ireland make a united demand of England to withdraw her troops and cease interfering in Irish affairs, there are young men in Ireland who will do it."

Apparently the Republican Movement was revealing the second string to its bow.

Meanwhile across the Atlantic the Anti-Partition campaign had manifested itself in the US Congress. After the passage of the Ireland Act through the British parliament resolutions on Irish unity and self-determination were discussed in both the House of Representatives and the Senate.

The movers were Representatives John Fogarty (Democrat — Rhode Island), Thomas Lane (Massachusetts), Enda Kelly (New York), Mike Mansfield (Democrat — Montana) and Everett Durksen, a Republican senator from Illinois. There were also proposals for an American Joint Commission to aid Irish unity. Cronin notes that all these moves failed.

He continues: "Then on March 29, 1950

the House of Representatives approved by a teller vote of 96 to 66 an amendment to the Foreign Aid Bill moved by Fogarty, providing that European Recovery Programme funds for Britain should be withheld as long as Ireland remained partitioned.

"There was consternation. The decision was reversed by standing vote two days later." But the pressure by Irish-American elected representatives would continue.

UNUSUAL STATEMENT

In the Easter 1950 issue of *An tÉireannach Aontaithe/The United Irishman* an unusual IRA statement was carried. It was noted that the letter in question was sent to the daily papers but was not published.

Addressed to the "Editor, 'United Irishman', Dublin", it stated:

"A chara

"Since the raiding of the homes of Republicans by the 26-County police, in connection with the recent agrarian trouble in Dundalk, may give rise to the belief that the Irish Republican Army was involved, GHQ considers it advisable to emphatically state that this is not so.

Seán Mac Nicóil, Adjutant-General."

The background to this was that a small quantity of ammunition was seized in the raids and that two local Republicans were arrested.

These were Jimmy Dullaghan, later held in connection with the famous arms raid on Armagh British military barracks in 1954 and Paddy Lennon who as a veteran of several decades was prominent with Republican Sinn Féin in Dundalk until his death in the early 1990s.

One was just held locally while the other spent a month in Mountjoy jail. Pressure was brought to bear on Clann na Poblachta and Seán MacBride. The prisoner was immediately released and the matter was dropped.

An tÉireannach Aontaithe/The United Irishman was not published in March 1950 and a combined March-April edition came out for Easter Sunday which was April 9.

We have received a letter from Joe Dillon of the Irish Freedom Committee/Cumann na Saoirse in Boston in response to our query about the identity of a young student, JT Dillon who wrote to the Republican newspaper in Ireland in January 1950.

He writes: "Just a quick note to confirm the identity of the JT Dillon mentioned in your '50 Years Ago' page. The 21-year-old student was none other than I.

"From selling the Republican paper on the street to being thrown out of AOH halls, that was my initiation; learning of Wolfe Tone and the United Irishmen is what set me on the right path. Lots of memories . . .

"Best wishes to all at 223 Parnell. Tiocfaidh ár lá!"

Sláinte agus fad saoil agat, a Sheosaimh. (Health and long life to you, Joe.)

(More next month. Refs. *Northern Ireland: The Orange State* by Michael Farrell, published 1976 and 1980, Pluto Press; *Washington's Irish Policy 1916-1986* by Seán Cronin (1986) and *An tÉireannach Aontaithe/The United Irishman*, Easter 1950.

EASTER 1950: REPUBLICAN OBJECTIVES CLARIFIED

**50
Years
Ago**

EASTER Sunday 1950 was on April 9. As usual many Easter commemoration ceremonies were held throughout Ireland and abroad.

The Easter Statement from the Army Council of Óglaigh na hÉireann was read at every event under Republican auspices.

It began by stating that now it was clear to all thinking people that no "passing of bills in the 26-County parliament" or mere declaration of a Republic was going to achieve the goal of a free and united Ireland.

It went on: "the primary objective of the Irish Republican Army is a successful military campaign against the British Army of Occupation in Ireland.

"In furtherance of this policy and in order that no excuse may be provided for using coercion, and to define quite clearly the fact that the Irish Republican Army has only one enemy, England, no sanction will be given for any type of aggressive military action in the 26-County area."

It was for the ordinary people of Ireland to ensure that those who were pledged to attain freedom by force of arms were not molested by the politicians "who are bankrupt of everything except promises".

All the political parties in the 26 Counties had declared that under no circumstances would they resort to arms to free their country. Everything had been tried, they said. If that were so then everything had failed.

One way had not been tried and "the Irish Republican Army now calls on the people to rally behind them so that they can train, arm and equip the young men of Ireland to strike the final decisive blow".

Then came the policy; there was a place for everyone in the struggle. "For the young men there is the Irish Republican Army; for the boys there is the Fianna Éireann; for the women and girls Cumann na mBan and for all people, old and young, who are willing to work to achieve the ideal of a free Ireland, there is the historic Sinn Féin movement."

In the struggle there could be only one question: "For whom do you stand, Ireland or England?" If you stood for Ireland your place was with those pledged to fight for Ireland.

The statement concluded: "When the whole people of Ireland want and are determined to get freedom — then, and only then, will freedom be achieved."

Tomás Mac Curtáin spoke at the 1916 Plot in Glasnevin Cemetery, Dublin. He quoted from the Army Statement and said that no one should be under the impression that a successful military campaign against the British army in our country is meant to include certain criminally irresponsible acts by private individuals.

IRELAND FREE, GAELIC AND UNITED

"The ideal of the Irish Republican Army is now as always an Ireland free, Gaelic and united, with social justice and religious freedom and we state unequivocally that we mean to achieve that object by force of arms."

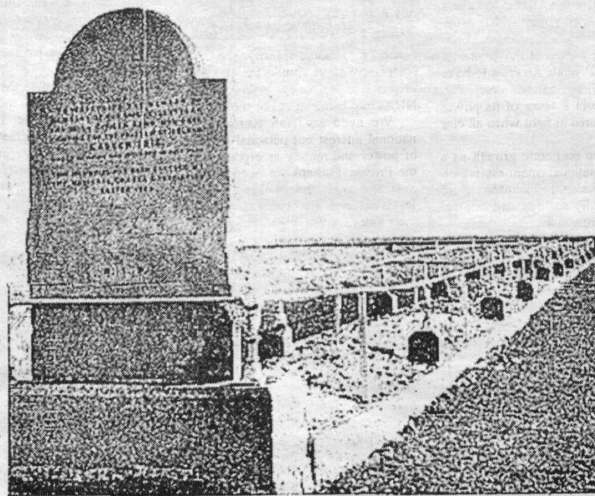
Significantly, he emphasised the need for public support: "When the whole people of Ireland are again behind the Army as the stiffening force, when all the young men are banded together, drilled and armed — then the Irish Republican Army will strike and strike home."

In Tralee, Tomás Ó Dubhghaill, newly-appointed Ard-Rúnaí of Sinn Féin, was the speaker. Uniformed Fianna Éireann, IRA units and members of the general public marched from Denny Street to the Republican Plot at Rath.

Tomás Ó Dubhghaill said that the Republican Movement must be rebuilt into the strong, virile organisation it was in 1919-21. The civil or political arm and the military arm must both be rebuilt.

"For the political wing we put forward the following points as our programmes for National Unity and Independence:

"(1) To convene the elected representatives of all Ireland as the National Assembly of the independent Irish Republic;



The old monument at the 1916 Plot in Glasnevin Cemetery, Dublin, unveiled by Frank Ryan, OC Dublin Brigade, IRA at Easter 1929. Tomás Mac Curtáin spoke here at Easter 1950.

"(2) to proceed to legislate for all Ireland;

"(3) to use every means in our power to overcome opposition to the re-established Republic;

"(4) to repudiate all treaties, pacts and laws that in any way curtail the nation's freedom."

"To this end we need the support of every man and woman, every boy and girl, for there is work for all in the ranks of our movement," he concluded.

In Dundalk and Drogheda, Seán Ó Néill of Cahersiveen gave the oration. He spoke of the Bombing Campaign in England by the IRA in 1939-40 and how the resources of the Dublin administration were used unscrupulously to turn the people against the Irish Republican Army and to justify the coercion which came afterwards.

"I have no wish to labour the tragedies and mistakes of the past. If I mention them at all, it is that we may profit by them and realise that Ireland has only one enemy — England — and that until she takes herself, bag and baggage from our soil, there can be no peace, between us."

In Nenagh the parade marched to St Mary's Church where High Mass was celebrated "for the repose of the souls of all those who died for Ireland". The Roscrea Piper's Band and the Portree Pipe and Drum Band took part.

After Mass the parade reformed and marched back to the Memorial in Banba Square. Seán Morrissey, Rossmult, Uppercurch recited a decade of the Rosary as Ghaeilge, the 1916 Proclamation was read by Sean Kennedy, Nenagh and the Army Statement by Daniel Gleeson, Ballymackey, Frank Gray, Roscrea, presided.

Micheál Ó Conbhuidhe (Mickie Conway) in his address spoke first in Irish and later in English. The grand solidarity of 1916 to 1921 was broken by the wiles of English politicians who knew only too well the value of the old Roman slogan: "Divide and conquer", he said.

Yet the lessons of history are not always lost. One small band which included survivors of 1916, of the "Tan War and the later defence of the Republic was by January 1939 operating in England in the very heart of their Empire under the able leadership of General Seán Russell.

In Cork city the Volunteer Pipe Band led the parade to the Republican Plot in St Finbarr's Cemetery where Séamus Ó'Regan delivered the oration.

Leitrim and Longford combined commemorations at Cloonmorris Cemetery in Barnacoola where the two counties meet. Hubert Wilson, Longford presided and read the Proclamation of the All-Ireland Republic. John Joe McGrail, Ballinamore read the Army Statement.

Cristóir Ó Néill, Dublin in his oration expressed pleasure in linking the memory of a modern soldier of the Republic (Staff-Captain JJ Reynolds killed on active service in 1938) with

the men of 1916.

All should join Sinn Féin, the civil arm of the Republican Movement. The Irish Republican Army was girding itself for the final — and successful — onslaught on the bastions of British Imperialism in Ireland.

Three bands took part in a parade of 600-700 people from Johnston's Bridge.

At Drumboc, Stranorlar, Co Donegal more than 600 people attended. The Garvagh Pipe Band led the parade. Séamus de Faoite presided at the ceremony and read the Co Donegal Roll of Honour.

The Rosary in Irish was said by S O'Lennox. Joe Nolan of Dublin, a former Curragh internecine, gave the oration.

CELTIC CROSS UNVEILED

In Clare, a Celtic cross was unveiled over the graves of Staff Captain Jack Hourigan in Drumliff Cemetery, Ennis. Joseph McMahon, NT recited a decade of the Rosary in Irish.

Members of the IRA formed a Guard of Honour and a bugler sounded the Last Post. Martin Whyte, Lisdoonvarna read the 1916 Proclamation and the Army Statement.

Caoimhghin Mac Cathmhaoil, solicitor, Swinford, Co Mayo addressed the gathering. "In every county in Ireland at an appointed Republic Plot a ceremony similar to this is taking place," he said.

"Pádraig Pearse taught us that as long as Ireland holds the graves of the Fenian dead, Ireland unfree shall never be at peace."

A commemoration céili at Ballymacnab, Co Armagh was hugely successful. Tony Magan of Dublin spoke to the very large attendance and said that ever since the English invader first set foot in Ireland many had dared all and sacrificed all in resistance.

Armagh city, Keady, Madden, Darkley and Tassagh were represented. Frank McGeough was fear-a-tighe and the Kevin Barry Céili Band, Cullyhanna provided the music.

The Belfast commemoration at the Republican Plot in Milltown Cemetery was largely attended. Joe McGurk gave the oration. Ruairí Ó Drisceoil, Cork, spoke in Offaly and Gearóid Ó Broin, Dublin at Carlow. Aoghagan Mac Cormack addressed the Cavan commemoration.

The Laois commemoration at Mountmellick heard Seán Kearney of Dublin give the oration. Pádraig Mac Lógáin read the Army Statement, the Proclamation and the County Roll of Honour. But the most impressive parade of all was in Newry. Here four thousand people took part in the annual parade while thousands more lined the streets. Heading the marchers was a Colour Party bearing the Irish Tricolour flanked by the Irish Citizen Army flag and that of the Fianna.

Bands taking part were the Thomas Davis Memorial Pipe Band, Newry; St Catherine's Silver and Reed Band, Newry and Camloch Brass

and Reed Band.

Outside areas such as Killeel, Warrenpoint, Rostrevor, Hilltown, Camloch, Rathfriland, Bessbrook, Meigh and Glenn were strongly represented by contingents.

Even uniformed members of the Catholic Boy Scouts of Ireland of the 6th (Newry) and 7th (Warrenpoint) South Down Troops marched behind their own flag.

Forming up outside the Cathedral after Mass "for all those who died for Ireland in every generation", the parade went via Hill Street, John Mitchell Place, Kilmorey Street, Quay Street and Chapel Street to St Mary's Cemetery.

There at the Mission Cross, Seán McArdle, Newry recited deichniúr den Chóroin Mhuire and read the 1916 Proclamation.

A wreath of Easter Lilies was laid by Jack Shields, Bessbrook, whose father died in combat locally. All flags were dipped over the graves as the Last Post was sounded by Jack McGivern, Newry.

Gearóid Mac Carthaigh, Coraigh spoke in Irish and continued in English. It would be a mockery, he said, to leave that spot saying "we have done our duty, we have honoured the dead".

"Let each of us say instead, I shall go from this spot and I will never rest until I complete the task which these men served."

These reports have a flavour of the time. They are taken from the May 1950 edition of *An t-Éireannach Aontaithe* / *The United Irishman*.

FRUSTRATION

The level of the turn-out indicates the measure of national feeling that Easter, 50 years ago. Frustration was beginning to set in with the lack of momentum on the part of the constitutional politicians on the national question.

People were giving an ear to the Republicans whom they knew to be sincere. The Republican message was heard loud and clear but, apart from local papers, media coverage was scant.

Often the daily papers would report just that "appeals were made to young men to join an illegal organisation". Local papers were straightforward where they did give space.

Later, Fianna Fáil deputies would ask questions in Leinster House about what the Minister for Justice (General Sean Mac Eoin and later Dan Morrissey, also of Fine Gael) would do about such appeals. The reply would disapprove of the speeches but no action was taken. But the Special Branch, north and south, was present at all events and noted the main participants.

And what of the large attendances at these ceremonies? All were nationally-minded people, of course: relations of the dead; in all areas of the 26 Counties some Clann na Poblachta members and supporters; in some areas the same could be said of the Labour Party, the faithful Republicans and a new generation of young people.

Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael members generally kept well away. In the Six Counties nationalists across the spectrum attended, apart usually from Anti-Partition members of Stormont and local councillors.

Regardless of who was present the Republican message was conveyed in unmistakable terms as can be seen from the reports quoted here.

It must be added that while the texts of orations were carried in local papers the Army Statement was seldom, if any, quoted.

In general Easter 1950 saw the Republican Movement extending its influence into new areas of the country which had not yet been reorganised.

It did so with a growing confidence that what it had been saying all along was being seen to be factual; that its analysis was right and that its means were deserving of support.

As to the content, the Army Statement and Tomás Mac Curtáin's address at Glasnevin made the vital points: a successful military campaign against British occupation was the primary aim of the IRA; as a corollary to that there would be no aggressive military action in the 26 Counties.

On the political side, Tomás Ó Dughghaill's exposition of the four cardinal points of the Sinn Féin National Unity and Independence Programme at Tralee was crucial: reconvene the All-Ireland Dáil and proceed to govern the 32 Counties, using every means to overcome opposition.

The stage was being set and the youth were being called on to participate.

(More next month. Refs. *An t-Éireannach Aontaithe* / *The United Irishman* May 1950.

THE WOLFE TONE ANNUAL OF 1950

Brian O'Higgins tells the full story of the 1940s

**50
Years
Ago**

BROUGHT out in the springtime of each year 'The Wolfe Tone Annual' in 1950 carried for the first time the comprehensive story of the martyrs of the 1940s.

Brian O'Higgins (1882-1963) was the author who described himself as one who was "their friend and comrade when living and who sang their praises when dead".

It was entirely appropriate that Brian na Bannan should tell their story for the first time. His great-grandfather had been brought to Gleann na Móna, Cill Seire, near Ceannannas Mór, Co Meath, a severely wounded United Irishman rescued from the Battle of Tara in 1798.

He was Seán Ó hUiginn, a poor scholar from Co Tyrone who on his way to Munster met up with the Meath men who were gathering at Tara and took part in that famous battle.

Brian's own father was a Fenian who turned out on March 5, 1867 for the Rising which was obliterated by the great snowfall of that night.

He himself fought in Easter Week 1916 as a member of the GPO Garrison, was a TD of the First and Second (All-Ireland) Dáilanna for Co Clare.

As President of Sinn Féin from 1931 to 1933 he inaugurated the Wolfe Tone Annual in 1932 and continued publication of it until the year before his death in 1982.

Brian was one of the seven members of the Executive Council of the All-Ireland Dáil which delegated the executive powers of government to the Army Council of Óglaigh na hÉireann in December 1938.

The chain of Irish resistance to British aggression in the family of Brian went back to 1798 and the Gaelic poets before that.

True, 'An tÉireannach Aontaithe/The United Irishman' since its foundation in May 1948 has been telling the story of the Republican soldiers of the 1940s, but only as individual cases and not giving the overview of Brian O'Higgins in the 1950 Wolfe Tone Annual.

Brian had edited the 'Wolfe Tone Weekly' newspaper from 1937 until it was banned in September 1939 by the Fianna Fáil administration in the 26 Counties. It had acted as successor to 'An Phoblacht' which was finally banned in 1937 after 12 years of publication.

Various chapters of Irish history were treated in the Annual which had a very wide circulation at home and abroad. In 1944 it was banned and Frank Aiken described Brian in Leinster House as a "futile old gentleman". In fact he was 62 that year — the same age as de Valera!

In the more relaxed atmosphere of 1949 Brian began his own story — 'My Songs and Myself' which came up to 1908 in that edition.

The following year he concluded his account: '1916 Before and After — Historical Epistles of 42 Years together with 107 Songs and Ballads and the Soldier's Story of Easter Week'.

He gives the text of his oration at Bodentown in 1924 — where he spoke for the second time — and mentions that he had the privilege of speaking at Liam Mellows' grave in Castletown, Co Wexford later that year when his body was given up by the first "Free State" government.

Then he excoriates the Fianna Fáil régime in the 26 Counties for allowing a certain "history" text to circulate in schools and colleges from 1932 to 1939.

Iris Teoin 1950
WOLFE TONE ANNUAL

1916
BEFORE, AND AFTER

HISTORICAL
EPISODES
OF 42 YEARS
TOGETHER WITH
107 SONGS AND
BALLADS AND
THE SOLDIER'S STORY
OF EASTER WEEK

Published by
BRIAN O'HIGGINS
38 UPPER O'CONNELL ST. DUBLIN
ONE SHILLING AND SIXPENCE

"Some who for seven years, when they had the power to stop it, allowed Liam Mellows to be held up to the scorn of young Irish students as a murderer, an incendiary, a criminal 'whose life was justly forfeit' have through the murky ways of party politics, stolen stealthily to that grave in Castletown and have spoken there as if they had never departed from the straight road or allowed the Four Martyrs and Childers and their comrades to be vilified in mean propaganda masquerading under the guise of history.

"To imply that Liam Mellows would ever have countenanced compromise with wrong under any circumstances, or accept the policy of expediency for one hour, is to insult his name and memory."

COERCION UNDER FIANNA FÁIL

On page 122 of the 1950 Annual Brian introduces the subject of the 1930s and '40s coercion under Fianna Fáil: "There may be bitterness of truth in the things I have to tell of those years when make-believe was rampant in Ireland, (so what is new? Ed.) but there is no venom and the incidents I recount belong to history.

"They were connected with the deals of panic-stricken tyrants on the one side and on the other brave, unselfish, God-fearing, high-minded soldiers, unpaid and untrumpeted, who, having dedicated their lives to the service, the freedom and the honour of the Republic of All-Ireland went forward serenely on the path of duty, hoping for victory, prepared for defeat and torture and death as part of the day's work they had vowed to do.

"They were called criminals by the petty tyrants who hounded them to their death, they are called criminals to this day by those who are troubled with a guilty conscience,

but in all her long history of heroic sacrifice and unselfish love Ireland has never had nobler sons, more devoted lovers, more gallant soldiers. That will be the verdict of history when all of us are inanimate dust."

"I am proud to have known them, to have been their friend and comrade, to have encouraged them in life and sung their praises in death; and I am ashamed that many of them were struck down by the treacherous blows of fellow Irishmen.

He goes on: "Some of them, like Seán Glynn of Limerick in 1936 and Seán McCaughey of Belfast in 1946, died of persecution in prison; others like Peter McCarthy and Seán Griffith of Dublin, Patrick Dermody of Westmeath and John Joseph Kavanagh of Cork were shot dead at sight without a word of warning, and the results of the inquests on them suppressed, lest the truth of how their lives were taken should be made known to the people.

"Some died on hunger strike against injustice, some before the firing squad, some in action, while as late as 1944 the official British hangman was hired by Irishmen to come over here and strangle to death a fine young Irish soldier for the crime of remaining loyal to the Republic when the hangman's hirers had betrayed it.

"It is a sad story, a shameful story, but it is true; the nobility, the heroism, the Christian fortitude and resignation of the victims had already outweighed the shame of those who took their lives."

These searing words of Brian Ó hUiginn had a lasting affect on young people who read them and took them to heart. But Brian was not finished.

"Before I begin to shock some of my gentle readers by telling them that I wrote songs in praise of Irish soldiers — real Irish

soldiers — who in 1938 carried the age-old war for freedom into enemy territory for the express and avowed purpose of forcing the English to evacuate Ireland, let me show how justified they were."

PRETENCE OF FREEDOM

He went on to write of the pretence of freedom in the 26 Counties after the Treaty of Surrender in 1922. That pretence grew more brazen and more vocal from 1932 onward. Even under the new "Free State" constitution in 1937 the English king was "in our passports and signing the credentials of our representatives going abroad".

Brian then describes the events of January 1939 when the IRA led by Seán Russell, "a man as selfless and sincere as has ever struck a blow for freedom", sent an ultimatum to the British Foreign Secretary to withdraw all British armed forces from Ireland. The military campaign in England began when the ultimatum was ignored.

"When the bombings were a short time in progress Seán Russell told me that far greater damage to property and to military objectives could have been done but for his repugnance to the taking of innocent human life.

"I had no hesitation in believing that because, although he was a born soldier whose whole life from boyhood was given to Ireland, there was nothing bloodthirsty or revengeful or callous about Seán Russell.

"He and those who acted with him have been called 'enemies of peace', and 'madmen' and 'weeds' and 'criminals', and the vulgar-minded who have applied such names to them had often praised Tom Clarke and Luke Dillon and Michael O'Brien and William Allen and Michael Larkin and all the other Fenians who fought the English on their own ground with far less effect or success.

"They had also praised Cathal Brugha when he planned to carry fire and destruction throughout England as a reprisal for the atrocities of the Black-and-Tans here in Ireland. But for Seán Russell and the brave small company of men (and women, Ed.) he had gathered around him there was only denunciation and worse.

"As if any Irishman could be a criminal who tries to break England's robber grip on this country by whatever means he finds nearest to his hand and whatever time the chance offers! Had all Ireland stood behind Seán Russell in 1939 there would be no Partition problem to be solved now.

"It was England's difficulty and Ireland's opportunity, but those of the Irish who had power in their hands and arms at their disposal came to England instead of to Ireland's. That is the truth of the matter."

Brian Ó hUiginn says that the IRA had stated plainly that their fight was against England only and would be carried out on English soil. That assurance had no effect on the "Dominionists" in Dublin.

They framed a Treason Bill and an Offences Against the State Bill. The provisions of these permanent Coercion Acts were far more drastic than any such legislation ever launched against Ireland by the English.

Public bodies all over the country protested and

"over twenty members of the Fianna Fáil parliamentary party refused to vote for either of the bills at any stage of their progress through Leinster House!"

But Fine Gael came to the rescue of course.

(More next month. Refs: 'The Wolfe Tone Annual 1950'.)

Note: Wolfe Tone Annual 1950, pp 1-32: "Strange how history repeats itself. King Billy's statue in College Green, Dublin, was blown up in 1836 (when Ireland was supposed to be 'prostrate') and had to be slowly and carefully put together again, after which Daniel O'Connell, to prove his loyalty to England, had the whole statue bronzed and made like new. A hundred years later it was beheaded, and the head taken away."

THE MARTYRS OF THE 1940s

Brian O'Higgins tells the full story of the 1940s (pt 2)

50 Years Ago

IN THE Wolfe Tone Annual of 1950 edited by Brian O'Higgins the story of the Republican struggle of the 1940s is continued.

Brian tells how the Coercion Acts were used only against Irish Separatists: "No enemy of Irish freedom, no upholder of the Union Jack and the connection with the British Empire, was caused a moment's inconvenience because of them," he writes.

"But Irish Republicans were torn from their homes and flung into jail, young families and old, helpless people being bereft, in many cases, of their sole bread winners, and a determined effort was made by the coercionists to prevent the collection of aid for the dependants of men and women in jail, here and in England.

"Meetings called for the sole purpose of providing aid for the helpless victims of coercion were broken up, persons known to be actively engaged in organising succour for old men and women and helpless children were thrown into jail, for no reason beyond the disorganisation of the work of mercy in which they were engaged."

He went on: "All organs of Irish Republican opinion were suppressed, and the ordinary newspapers, metropolitan and provincial, were ordered to refuse publication to every single item of news or views from Republican sources, the penalty for ignoring the order in the slightest being suppression of the paper concerned."

From day to day the panic grew in England and scores of Irishmen and women were arrested. The finding of a copy of the 'Wolfe Tone Weekly' or of a Republican pamphlet in raids on their homes or lodgings was sufficient to have them associated with the bombings and fires that went on all over England.

Brian states: "Soon it was decided by the British government, as in 1867, to make an example on the gibbet of some obscure Irishman and so strike terror into the hearts of others." At the end of August 1939 a bomb exploded in Coventry. Five persons were killed in the accidental blast. All Irish residents of Coventry were raided by police and two of those arrested "were selected as the victims of British justice".

In spite of appeals, protests and petitions from all over England and Ireland Peter Barnes of Banagher and James MacCormack of Mullingar were hanged in Winson Green prison, Birmingham on Ash Wednesday, February 7, 1940.

"In memory of them and in praise of them I wrote two ballads — one in Irish ('Cúimhne na Laochra'), the other in English ('England's Gallows Tree' to the air of 'The Harp That Once'), which were issued as a broadsheet and widely distributed."

"Mar shaignidúir na Poblachta do throidéadar go dian

San tseana-troid tá 'leantúint le breis is seacht géad mbliain."

Brave Peter Barnes fixed his foes with calmness on his face.

And James MacCormack voiced once more the brav'ry of his race."

The 'Wolfe Tone Weekly' had been suppressed in September 1939 and its publisher, Joe Clarke, arrested so booklets and leaflets had to take its place when any big event occurred.

"Such an event took place two months after the murder of Barnes and MacCormack." Tony Darcy (32) of Headford, Co Galway and Seán McNeela (26) of Ballycroy, Co Mayo died on hunger strike in prison in Dublin after a fast of almost eight weeks for political status.

COERCION CENSORSHIP

The coercion censorship was in full swing and newspapers were allowed to print just a few lines of formal announcement of their deaths without comment.

People who were not present at their funerals in Galway and Mayo had no idea how that sacrifice stirred hundreds of thousands who had never heard their names.

Brian published a booklet concerning happenings in Ireland from 1921 to 1940, the hunger strike and the disgraceful scenes at the funerals of the two latest to die for love of Ireland. That booklet was seized by the police, the printer of it prosecuted and fined and the publisher, Joe Clarke, sentenced to six months imprisonment. Brian O'Higgins spoke at the funeral of Seán



• Brian O'Higgins

McNeela at Cleggan in Mayo under the muzzles of machine guns trained on the grave. To those who asked what had been gained by the sacrifice of two splendid lives, he replied that the youth of Ireland had gained the inspiration to be true.

"That inspiration is the greatest earthly thing we have gained by the martyrdom of our two unconquered soldiers and all our gains are included in it. There has been no loss, there has been no defeat, there has been no lowering of the flag either by the two who have left us or their four courageous comrades who still remain..."

"The lesson for all the people of Ireland is simple and clear and easily learned and the sooner it is committed to memory the better for us all."

"It is that there will be no peace, no progress, material or spiritual, no friendships between us and our neighbours in England until the humiliating connection between Ireland and the British Empire is broken, until every sod of Irish soil is one, united, independent land, free of British Occupation..."

"Until that perfectly reasonable, sensible, understandable state of affairs comes about there will always be unrest, there will always be war, there will always be coercion and suppression and tyranny, there will always be suffering and sacrifice and heroism and martyrdom, because 'you cannot turn back the current of tradition', and all the censorship and slander and brute force in the world cannot fight to final victory against the inspiration of the patriot dead."

"Martyrs for Freedom" to the aid of 'Boo-lavogue' was the name of Brian's ballad:

"Brave Tony Darcy! Brave Seán McNeela! From storied Galway and proud Mayo... May Ashe be near them and brave MacSwiney

Through the gloom and pain of the Vale of Shadows,

Where no bright hope-star above them glowed."

"During that time of coercion, suppression, seer' military tribunals and all the other symbols of tyranny," Brian continues, "the men whose only enemy was the English invader of their country and whose only object was the freedom and unity of all Ireland were hunted night and day by the armed minions of renegade Irishmen who had come to power under false pretences."

SHOT ON SIGHT

He goes on to describe how Republican soldiers were to be shot on sight — several already were — and so they went armed night and day in their own defence.

The gun-battle on Rathgar Road, Dublin on August 16, 1940 is described when Paddy McGrath, a 1916 Veteran with a Black-and-Tan bullet lodged near his heart, and Tom Harte of Lurgan — just returned from the English war zone — were captured. Harte was wounded and two policemen died of wounds. "A special military court was set up to pass sentence of death on them and on September 6, 1940 they were shot to death in Mountjoy jail."

Branded as criminals and murderers though they were, a priest who ministered to them told Brian afterwards: "The light of truth and manliness shone in their faces for all to see. I

have never met two more perfect men. They were incapable of an ignoble motive or an evil deed. I am proud to have known them and to have received their blessing."

Brian wrote a street battle in memory of them entitled 'A Ballad of Brave Men':

'Come all ye men of Éireann, from Antrim to Berchaven —

On a day that we'll remember — on the sixth day of September

In the dark year Nineteen Forty — in the prison of Mountjoy —

And they sleep with Kevin Barry in the lonely prison clay —

We'll tell with pride their story — then our glad hearts will remember

That the comrades of Lord Edward are the glory of the Gael."

Asked to write an appreciation of the two men for publication, Brian did so under the title 'Comrades of Lord Edward'. Those who published it did so with Brian's name in big letters as the author.

"Fortunately for me," he writes, "they made alterations in it of which I would not have approved (they put Ulster garb, for instance, on the introduction in Irish). When detectives came to his office and put a copy of the pamphlet in front of him, he was able to wriggle out of an awkward situation. Asked "Do you accept responsibility for that document?" he replied emphatically, "No, I do not accept responsibility for 'that' document."

He resented the stupidity which put his name on it at that time and "was riled at the liberties taken with the text". "That is all I was told to ask" said the detective and wrote down: "He accepts no responsibility for the document." Brian had no further visit from them.

"It will hardly be believed," he writes, "by those who were not in touch with the events of the coercion period... that the partitionists of the 26-County government, the partitionists of the Six-County government and the authors and architects of Partition in London all worked hand in hand against the IRA."

(In 1949-50 the great Anti-Partition campaign was going full blast, with the coercionists of the 1940s in prominent place.)

On August 31, 1942 Gerard O'Callaghan (19) was tracked to a friendly farmhouse at Hannahstown, outside Belfast and killed. Two days later his comrade Tom Williams (19) was hanged in Belfast jail.

HANGED IN BELFAST JAIL

Brian wrote a ballad entitled 'A Soldier of Ireland' to the air of 'The Blue Hills of Antrim': 'The blue hills of Antrim are soft 'gainst the sky.

But young Thomas Williams this morning must die..."

In the green fields of Antrim, face to face with the foe,

His comrade, O'Callaghan, fell two days ago...

With Harte and McGrath, and with Plant and with Goss,

We will sing him tonight in our pride and our loss..."

"Plant and Goss were two more soldiers of the Republic of Ireland who were done to death by the coercionists of the 26 Counties. Richard Goss was executed in Portlaoise prison, August 9, 1941."

"In the same sinister jail George Plant of Tipperary (a Protestant) was done to death the following year. They were 'criminals', of course. I may as well repeat that the IRA thus prosecuted was neither an oath-bound nor a secret society."

Brian recalls speaking at the graveside of Mary Mac Swiney "on a mild spring day in 1942 in a quiet churchyard on the outskirts of Cork city."

"In the minds of most Irish people who are not petty or degenerate or vindictive or debased, the name of Máire Nic Shuibhne, during the past 20 years, has stood for unselfish patriotism, unflinching loyalty to right and truth, uncompromising hostility to falsehood and wrong."

"Every new act of injustice and tyranny directed against faithful soldiers of the Republic, every brave young life demanded by the monster of coercion and imperialism, every fresh demonstration of the depths to which renegade Irishmen can fall, was as a sword plunged into her justice-loving heart, and so she is dead before her work is done."

Brian writes: "Because it was feared that those who had persecuted her in life would have the effrontery to attend her funeral as mourners, her surviving relatives decided to keep it strictly private, a decision that was regretted by Republicans all over Ireland."

Also in 1942 "a fine young Kerryman,

Maurice O'Neill (25) of Cahersiveen was shot to death in Mountjoy jail". Brian's tribute to the aid of 'Finéan the Rover' was entitled simply 'Maurice O'Neill':

'Let no voice plead for me with the traitors He cried when the death-hour was nigh, May the young men be faithful forever To the Cause that has called me to die.'

NB. Neither Richard Goss nor Maurice O'Neill were charged with causing death. Both were simply charged with "firing at State forces with intent to resist arrest", yet they were executed.

ENGLISH HANGMAN BROUGHT OVER

"Two years later... the official English hangman was hired by Irish coercionists to end the life of another young Irishman, Charles Kenins of Tralee. The simple verses I am going to quote ran into my mind the very moment I heard about his death and were on paper in fifteen minutes: 'The Boy from Tralee'

'He spoke like a soldier, he stood like a true man,

When the cravens condemned him to death and to shame.

He followed the path of a long line of heroes And Ireland forever shall honour his name.

On a first Friday morning in the month of December

The hangman from England came over the sea..."

Brian O'Higgins tells of how following a change of government in the 26 Counties in 1948, the bodies of six executed Republicans were disinterred in prison yards and given over to their comrades and relatives for re-burial among their own.

Speaking over Paddy McGrath's grave in the Republican Plot at Glasnevin, Dublin, Brian said that the most significant aspect of the six ceremonies was that the men has been put to death "as criminals, as outlaws, as enemies of Ireland"

"Today, that judgement and verdict is reversed, even by those who were and are their opponents, and they are acknowledged to be what we always claimed them to have been — true comrades of Tone, of Emmet, of Mitchell, of the Fenians, and of all the heroic dead of our own day and generation."

Brian na Banban concludes his account of the historical episodes and songs of the 1940s as follows:

"These men — some just emerging into manhood, some veterans of the whole war for independence — were pursued relentlessly, persecuted, put to death, slandered living and dead, THAT A FRAUD MIGHT BE DEFENDED AND A LIE ALLOWED TO LIVE.

"They were called enemies of Ireland's freedom but they were in truth enemies of Ireland's shame and bondage, enemies of her enemies, friends and comrades of all who sincerely desired to make her strong, united and free."

"They were men who loved life and enjoyed all the lovely things God has provided for us even in this world. They were healthy-minded, high-hearted, joyous and sane. To call them criminals because they flung their precious lives into the struggle for Ireland's full and true independence is falsehood and slander of the meanest kind."

"When those who callously killed them are periodically driven by uneasiness of conscience to recall their own unhappy past they seek to justify their tyrannical action by vilifying the patriotic dead. Their chief line of defence is that policemen were killed."

"Policemen (and agents provocateur) were killed in Lord Edward's day, in Emmet's day, in the days of the Land War, in the stirring days from 1916 to 1923, but those who killed them have never been classed as criminals or murderers by the people of Ireland."

"That odious attitude towards Irish soldiers of freedom was adopted only by England's tools in Dublin Castle and their words of condemnation have been repeated almost verbatim in the 'law and order' diatribes uttered by the petty tyrants of our own day when they sought to justify their special courts and secret executions by denouncing as criminals the unpaid, unselfish soldiers of the Irish Republican Army."

It is little wonder that the 'Wolfe Tone Annual' of 1950 became a collector's item and is treasured by those who possess a copy. Brian O'Higgins was trying his utmost to make up for the damage caused by the suppression of the truth during the wartime censorship. We are all indebted to him. God rest his valiant soul.

(More next month. Refs. 'The Wolfe Tone Annual 1950').

PRISONER RELEASES AND CROSS-BORDER BODIES

**50
Years
Ago**

IN THE first week of August 1950 two of the remaining Republican prisoners held in Crumlin Road jail, Belfast were released.

Hugh McAteer, Derry city, former IRA Chief-of-Staff, and Liam Burke, Belfast, former GHQ Staff Officer, were set free unconditionally. They had been serving sentences of 14 and 12 years respectively since 1943.

Burke was interviewed by the press. He said: "We have been released from prison but Ireland has not been released from the prison-house of the Empire."

He went on to refer to Jimmy Steele, held still and serving 12 years. "The last man has not been released yet from Belfast jail — nor has the last man gone into it" (a reference to the continuing struggle in the future.)

Friends and relatives greeted them on their release and they had their photograph taken with Eoin "Pope" O'Mahony, a tireless worker for the release of the Republican prisoners in England and Ireland, and for the Breton nationalists held in French jails.

On Sunday, August 6, they received a warm welcome and applause when they attended the unveiling of a memorial to Roger Casement and twelve other Antrim patriots at Shane's Cairn, Cushendun, Co Antrim.

The ceremony was held by the Co Antrim Branch of the National Graves Association, of which the Republican veteran Pat McCormick was Chairperson.

Pádraig Mac Logáin, former O/C of the North Antrim Brigade, IRA and a member of the Sinn Féin Ard Chomhairle in 1950, performed the unveiling.

"While we honour the names which deck the pages of Irish history, we must never forget the more humble — yet none the less faithful and true — who gave their lives for Ireland.

"Dan and Patrick Duffin, Charles McAlister, Patrick McVeigh, James McAllister, Harry Carey, John Gore, John Hill, Patrick McCarty, Joseph Murray and Archie McAnn are names that outside their native county are not so well-known as that of Roger Casement, but like him and with him they died in a phase of the long struggle for freedom.

MARTYRED DEAD

"Republicans merely enunciate the national faith of the martyred dead, from Wolfe Tone to Roger Casement and his comrades, from them to Seán McCaughey and from him to the man who yet endures a living death behind the bars of Belfast jail."

He concluded: "A country capable of rearing such sons as they, a country that for centuries has resisted foreign domination and aggression, a country where the Republican faith and spirit still lives despite all efforts to kill it and whose loyal citizens, young and old, are prepared to labour and make sacrifices for its freedom can never finally pass from the circle of liberty-loving and free nations."

There is no doubt that the publicising of the situation of Republican prisoners in Belfast jail through their nomination as candidates in the Westminster election of February 1950 did hasten their release.

The story of the 1940s would end with the liberation of the last remaining prisoner of the period — a story which began with the first deaths (in an accidental explosion) in 1938.

To move to another aspect of the scene fifty years ago, June 1950 brought the inauguration of the first "cross-border bodies". These institutions, it was insisted falsely, would through time and "working together" bring about a "united Ireland".

In Leinster House on June 13 and in Stormont



• *Hugh McAteer, Eoin 'Pope' O'Mahony and Liam Burke, after the two had been released from Crumlin Road jail in 1950.*

on June 27, the [River] Erne Drainage and Development Acts were passed to give effect to an agreement between the two states for a joint scheme of drainage and electricity generation.

GREAT NORTHERN RAILWAY

On January 9, 1951 another agreement was reached between the Six-County and 26-County states on the Great Northern Railway (as it was then) which operated on both sides of the Border.

It was not until September 1, 1953 that the GNR began to operate under a board appointed jointly by the Leinster House and Stormont administrations.

Another "cross-border body" set up fifty years ago was the [River] Foyle Fisheries Commission. In addition, a similar institution was later created to deal Carlingford Lough which forms the Border between Counties Down and Louth.

Besides the Erne Scheme, the joint railway board and the Foyle Fisheries and Carlingford Lough Commissions, other such bodies were initiated in the early 1950s. These had to do with the control of animal diseases such as bovine TB, anthrax, foot-and-mouth disease etc.

There were four of these "cross-border bodies" to begin with, and it was argued plausibly by the Leinster House politicians that "working together" like this would produce results that the Anti-Partition campaign of the time had failed to do.

Such arrangements between states with adjoining land frontiers in Europe, for instance, are commonplace. They make life easier for people living in both jurisdictions, and especially for those in Border areas on both sides.

But experience has shown that they do not result in a change of sovereignty on either side which has been amply demonstrated by the working of the "cross-border bodies" in Ireland over the past 50 years.

Take the case of Gibraltar, for example. The English captured it in war taking it from Spain as long ago as 1704. The Peace of Utrecht in 1713 confirmed British possession of the Rock although Spain has long made claim to it.

Gibraltar is a heavily fortified key British naval and air base, controlling the entrance to the Mediterranean Sea. Spain has cut off communications with it in the past as a means of exercising pressure on it.

Down the years England has developed in an area of two-and-a-quarter square miles a mixed Italian and Spanish population of 30,000 which

is favourable to British rule.

But no "cross-border co-operation" with Gibraltar by Spain has resulted or is likely to result in its being returned to the Spanish state.

The year 1950 also saw the outbreak of the Korean War when North Korea invaded the South on June 25. The entire Korean peninsula had been an independent kingdom until 1910 when Japan took it over and made it a Japanese colony until the end of WWII in 1945.

Russia then occupied the northern part and the United States the southern. From this situation were formed two separate states on opposite sides in the Cold War.

When hostilities broke out with the Soviet-backed North invading the US-supported South, many people thought it was the beginning of WWII.

The UN Security Council, which the Soviets were boycotting at the time, met immediately. They demanded unanimously a ceasefire and the withdrawal of North Korean forces from South Korea. No Soviet representative was present to veto this action.

Two days later, on June 27, the Security Council, noting continued North Korean aggression, called on member states of the UN to assist South Korea in repelling the armed invasion.

US President Truman ordered air and naval forces into action in support of South Korea. General Douglas MacArthur, C-in-C of US forces in the Far East, urged that ground forces be employed as well and Truman agreed.

Britain, Canada, Australia and Turkey provided the bulk of the other UN troops brought under a unified United Nations command with the US and South Korea.

IRISH BRIGADE

Then Brigadier-General Dorman O'Gowan, a leading Anti-Partitionist, called for an Irish Brigade to be formed to serve in Korea as an integral part of the American army. He said this at the annual Co Fermanagh Feis in Newtownbutler, organised by the parish priest, Canon Thomas Maguire.

O'Gowan, who had changed his name from Smith, had served in the British army in WWII as Chief-of-Staff to General Auchinleck in the North African desert.

He prepared the plans for the first Battle of El Alamein in 1942 when Rommel and his Afrika Corps were turned back from taking British HQ at Alexandria in Egypt.

For their pains both Dorman O'Gowan and

Auchinleck were relieved of the commands by Churchill and replaced by Montgomery. Later they were both forced to resign from the British army.

An t-Éireannach Aontaithe/The United Irishman' of September 1950 took O'Gowan to task for his Newtownbutler remarks. He also proceeded to denounce the policy of abstention from Westminster and Stormont, showing himself "a traitor to the cause he professes to espouse".

This move to sacrifice national independence for unity was in line with the Leinster House proposal to join the Atlantic Pact (NATO) if England would "remove the Border". They would commit Irish people to help England in all her wars.

In an earlier edition of the same Republican paper — July 1950 — the surviving sister of the martyred Lord Mayor of Cork, Eithne Mac Swiney, attacked Dorman O'Gowan and the Dublin politicians, John A Costello and Seán MacBride:

"O'Gowan says the Border must be removed. But why? Because Ireland must be a unit of defence in the next war. All the ports of Ireland must be brought up to date for the defence of England.

"The deep fjords of south-west Munster must be fitted with the latest type of Mulberry Harbours. All the manhood of Ireland must be organised behind these latest Mulberry Harbours and other forts.

"The Border must be removed to make way for this planning. It has been guaranteed by Mr MacBride, Mr Costello and the rest.

"The proposal was 'no removal of anything but a firmer fastening of England's chains on this land'.

"And then all is safe for the defence of England by Irishmen, while Ireland provides the outposts, and the refugees' shelter — rather questionable shelter — as Ireland will undoubtedly be the first casualty if she allows herself to be embroiled in England's wars — or America's."

The fighting spirit of the Mac Swineys of Cork was strong to the very end — as evidenced by these emphatic words from the last survivor, Eithne, of that heroic family. A new generation was learning its Republicanism from a source steeped in sacrifice for Irish freedom.

(More next month. Refs. 'An t-Éireannach Aontaithe/The United Irishman', July and September 1950 and 'A Chronology of Irish History Since 1500' by Doherty and Hickey, publ Gill and Macmillan 1989.)

SINN FÉIN RE-ENTERS LOCAL ELECTION CONTESTS

**50
Years
Ago**

IN THE local elections in the 26 Counties in September 1950 Sinn Féin contested seats in Cork and Mayo.

It was the first time for many years that Sinn Féin had entered the contest in local council elections, but such activity was in keeping with its principled stand down the years.

An article in *An Éireannach Aontaithe/The United Irishman* of September 1950 gives an idea of the level of feeling and activity in Co. Cork.

"People in Cork county are asking themselves 'How did this happen?' A few years ago Mr [Gerry] Boland and his fellow-jailers told us, 'The Republican Movement is no more. We have killed it'."

"But, apparently, something has gone wrong, something for which Mr Boland had not bargained and which he could not explain were he not to remember the 'miracles of God who opens in the hearts of young people the seed sown by the young men of a former generation' (quoted from Pádraic Pearse at O'Donovan Rossa's grave).

"For now, along with the veterans who withstood the Free State prosecution of the 'Forties, the Sinn Féin organisation is attracting young men who were schoolboys four or five years ago.

"Every Sunday morning sees a Sinn Féin party setting out for some town or village in Cork county to bring to the people the fearless uncompromising doctrine of Republicanism.

REORGANISING

"Sinn Féin is reorganising. Already it has contacts in Cobh, Burnfoot, Passage West, Donoughmore, Arnglin and Mallow. Slowly the wheel turns.

"The youth, sick of the hypocritical platitudes of the Leinster House politicians, are turning towards the old idea — that Ireland is ours — that no Sasannach shall stop the march of the Irish nation — that the work of liberation is ours to do — that we must no longer be the invalid Nation of the world, beseeching America to right our wrongs, begging from the world for poor helpless Ireland.

"We were always a nation of men. We shall never be a nation of beggars." Spirited stuff that, but then Cork was reorganised as early as 1944-5, while in 1950 many counties had no Republican organisation since the early 1940s.

The report goes on: "When Sinn Féin began its reorganising campaign in Cork it was decided to use the municipal elections as the spearhead of the drive in the city.

"With the elections will come the opportunity to enunciate once more the Republican gospel, to propagate the creed of Tone.

"They can do this by voting for the two Sinn Féin candidates: Jerry Cronin and Eddie McNamara.

"These then are the candidates whom Sinn Féin offers to the people of Cork and with them it offers as a guarantee the proud record of the Republican Movement.

"Relying on its tradition of integrity it comes before the people once again in full confidence of support.

"This time there must be no halt. We must go forward together to the end of the road. We must complete the work of Tone. We must not fail. If we work together we shall not fail."

Yes, the enthusiasm of youth shines through in that report written in August 1950. But then Cork city had a headquarters building known as the Thomas Ashe Hall since about 1917.

It was still in the hands of the Movement and was a great asset. It was located at Father Mathew Quay in the city centre.

Another premises, Mac Curtain Hall in MacCurtain Street, was held by trustees for the Movement until the late 1940s. It was then sold to raise funds to renovate and repair the Thomas Ashe Hall.

September 1950

SINN FÉIN and Local Elections in Cork

People in Cork County are asking themselves, "How did this happen?" A few years ago Mr Boland and his fellow-jailers told us, "The Republican Movement is no more. We have killed it." But, apparently, something has gone wrong, something for which Mr Boland had not bargained and which he could not explain were he not to remember the "miracles of God who opens in the hearts of young people the seed sown by the young men of a former generation." For now, along with the veterans who withstood the Free State prosecution of the 'Forties, the Sinn Féin organisation is attracting younger men who were schoolboys four or five years ago. Every Sunday morning sees a Sinn Féin party setting out for some town or village in Cork County to bring to the people the fearless uncompromising doctrine of Republicanism.

Sinn Féin is reorganising. Already it has contacts in Cobh, Burnfoot, Passage West, Donoughmore, Arnglin and Mallow. Slowly the wheel turns. The youth, sick of the hypocritical platitudes of the Leinster House politicians, are turning towards the old idea — that Ireland is ours — that no Sasannach shall stop the march of the Irish nation — that the work of liberation is ours to do — that we must no longer be the invalid Nation of the world, beseeching America to right our wrongs, begging from the world for poor helpless Ireland. We were always a nation of men. We shall never be a nation of beggars.

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These then are the candidates whom Sinn Féin offers to the people of Cork and with them it offers as a guarantee the proud record of the Republican Movement. Relying on its tradition of integrity it comes before the people once again in full confidence of support.

• **The report on the local election campaign in Cork in the then newspaper of the Republican Movement, The United Irishman, September 1950.**

In his monumental work *The IRA in the Twilight Years 1923-48* Uinseann Mac Eoin notes that the "Ashe" as it was popularly known "passed down through a number of hands becoming run-down". That is what happened to it when the Workers' Party got control of it in 1970.

Cork city was on a firm footing by 1950 with the thorough reorganisation of the First Cork Brigade, IRA, the Cork Volunteer Pipe Band (known as "the Vols"), Sinn Féin, Cumann na mBan, Fianna Éireann and Cumann na nGael.

It was, along with Dublin, in a position of leadership in the Movement and it was not unexpected that it should field two candidates for Cork Corporation in 1950.

Jerry Cronin and Eddie McNamara performed well and laid the ground for the election of two Sinn Féin councillors to the Corporation the next time round — in 1955.

One of those who worked in the elections in Cork in 1950, Pádraig Ó h-Airteinde, came to work in Dublin soon afterwards. He told of a large strategically placed poster put up on the night before Polling Day.

It was placed on the bucket of a large digger working on the banks of the River Lee. All day long while voting was taking place, the bucket moved up and down while the message on it was clearly visible to hundreds if not thousands of passers-by.

"Vote Republican: Sinn Féin candidates — Cronin Jerry and McNamara Eddie — Vote 1 + 2." The workers on the machine did not interfere with the poster.

STANDARD-BEARER

In Mayo, Caoimhin Mac Cathmhaoil was the Sinn Féin standard-bearer in the contest for the County Council. In the following local election Paddy Ruane was returned as councillor in the neighbouring Co. Galway. Caoimhin had shown the way in the West.

In Longford a young Republican who had just entered his teens saw an election car festooned with Sinn Féin posters stop for petrol. A party of men got out but the youngster was too shy to approach them.

Nonetheless it did give him a fillip to see an active public demonstration of Republicanism in a county which had no Republican organisation.

THE UNITED IRISHMAN

SINN FÉIN
We extend a hearty welcome to Hugh McAteer and Liam Burke lately released from Crumlin Road Jail, Belfast



GEAHOID O BROD speaking at Bodanstown

THREE ROADS TO REVOLUTION

(continued from page 8)
Actually most, if not all, the remnants of aristocratic capitalist schools of economics deserted the Republic in 1923 and 1924.

It was during the lock-out that the Citizens Army was formed to protect the workers against the police and the armed gangsters of the employers. It was not until some time after 1914, when it adopted a constitution and was placed on a permanent basis. The principal article in the constitution was:

"... that the first and last principle of the ICA is the survival of the fittest."
(continued from col. 1)
This time there must be no halt. We must go forward together to the end of the road. We must complete the work of Tone. We must not fail. If we work together we shall not fail.

in 1950.

The sight of Sinn Féin posters calling for votes for Caoimhin in the contest for Mayo Co Council was inspirational to the young boy.

He went on to play his part in the reorganised Movement — and is still an active Republican. The election car was obviously on its way from Dublin to Swinford in Mayo — the area being contested by Sinn Féin at the time.

SINN FÉIN COUNCILLORS

It should be mentioned here that Sinn Féin councillors acted in local government even under British rule. Prior to 1916, Alderman Tom Kelly, Seán T O'Ceallaigh and WT Cosgrave participated for Sinn Féin on Dublin Corporation and gained experience of working for the people at that level.

Throughout the 32 Counties after the local elections of 1920 Sinn Féin — sometimes with the support of nationalists — controlled local councils.

They promptly voted to sever all connection with the British Local Government Board in the Dublin Custom House and to affiliate with the All-Ireland First Dáil, coming under its Department of Local Government.

Thus was another part of the machinery of government taken out of British hands and placed under Irish control. The same action was taken with the courts and police at that time. Dáil Éireann courts and Republican police replaced the British Petty Sessions etc and the RIC.

Following the imposition by force of the Free State and Northern Ireland state under the Treaty of Surrender, Sinn Féin representatives continued to sit on local councils in the 26 Counties.

Alderman Charles Murphy and Councillor Joe Clarke on Dublin City Council were two examples of such representation in the 1920s.

Charles Murphy was the same Cathal Ó Murchú TD who as a member of the Executive Council of the Second (All-Ireland) Dáil delegated the executive powers of the Dáil to the Army Council of the IRA in 1938 to be held in trust for the people until the Third (All-Ireland) Dáil was assembled and took control.

In the Cork context Seán Mac Swiney, brother of Terence (Lord Mayor), Mary and Eithne was a member of the Corporation during the 1920s and into the 1930s representing Sinn Féin.

A book yet to be published *The IRA in the*

Twomey Years 1926-36 deals with Republican representation on local councils in the 1930s when Sinn Féin and the IRA were not co-operating.

"There were IRA members who held elected office in local politics, Seán O'Farrell (Sinn Féin TD for Sligo-Leitrim 1923-27) was elected to Leitrim Co Council in 1934 and the O/C of the North Westmeath Battalion, Thomas Maguire, was Chairman of Westmeath Co Council during 1933 and was re-elected a year later.

"Michael O'Donnell, a stationmaster at Fenit, Co Kerry and an IRA member, sat on Kerry Co Council during the same period. They were all elected as 'Independent Republicans'."

It can be added that in other areas throughout the 26 Counties, IRA Veterans who were no longer on the active list for one reason or another were elected as "Independent Republicans" also.

In Longford, for instance, Matt Brady and Seán T Lynch were returned to seats on the Co Council for the Ballinalee and Drumlish areas respectively. In Roscommon Brian Nangle was elected for the Strokestown area.

These veterans of the national struggle invariably took a pro-Republican Movement stance. It must be remembered that Sinn Féin was not organised in every county in the 1930s and 1940s.

POLITICAL TEST OATH

In the Six Counties from the establishment of Stormont by British Act of Parliament in 1921, candidates for local councils were required to take a solemn declaration of allegiance to the Crown of England, which of course precluded either Republican or Sinn Féin candidates participating.

In the face of the People's Struggle in 1973 this political test oath was removed and Sinn Féin contested successfully on a wide scale. In 1988, fifteen years later, a similar requirement was re-imposed by the Thatcher regime, thus excluding Republican Sinn Féin once more.

The Westmeath Tom Maguire mentioned above remained faithful until his death at the age of 87 in 1974. In that year he came out of hospital in Mullingar to take part in the funeral of hunger striker Michael Gaughan passing through the town.

He never voted in a parliamentary election from 1927 to 1957 because no Republican abstentionist was standing. In the latter year and again in 1961 he campaigned and voted for Ruairi Ó Brádaigh.

A most respected man, he had served on his local Board of Guardians in the 1920s, had worked with Paddy Dermody and Hugh MacAteer in the 1940s and was again returned as an Independent republican member of Westmeath Co Council in 1960.

His final year (1966-67) on that body was as Chairman once more. An honour and respect to his unwavering allegiance to the All-Ireland Republic. Ar dheis Dé go raib a anam uasal.

Sinn Féin membership of local councils numbered six in 1955 and increased to 30 in 1960. A majority of Republican Movement councillors rejected the Workers' Party breakaway in 1970.

Sadly, that cannot be said of the Provo defectors in 1986 but Michael McGonigle (Limavady), Eamon Larkin (Newry and Mourne) and Frank McCarthy (Moyle) stood firm, as did Frank Glynn (Galway), Joe O'Neill (Bundoran) and Finbar Kissane (Tipperary town).

In general the Republican Sinn Féin contribution to local government for over 80 years has been an honourable one and is something to be proud of.

In February fifty years ago Sinn Féin took a high profile stance when it contested the Westminster elections in Belfast and Derry with abstentionist candidates.

The Movement followed up on this in September by entering the local elections in Cork and Mayo. The build-up and restructuring of the political organisation continued.

(More next month. Refs. *An Éireannach Aontaithe/The United Irishman* September 1950; *The IRA in the Twilight Years 1923-48* by Uinseann Mac Eoin and *The IRA in the Twomey Years* (yet to be published).

Buiochos: to a diligent Republican archivist and reader for the full text of Máirtín Ó Cadhain's sworn statement of July 1950 on the Curragh shootings of 1940.

LAST PRISONER RELEASED: END OF AN ERA

**50
Years
Ago**

AT THE end of September or the beginning of October 1950, the last Republican prisoner was released from Crumlin Road jail, Belfast.

Jimmy Steele had been in prison continuously since 1936 (when he was sentenced to five years) — apart from three-and-a-half months at liberty following his escape in 1943 and another short period early in the 1940s.

Harry White has written that by the time he died in 1970 he had served a total of 20 years in jail. According to Republican folklore he had "spent 17 Christmases in prison".

The little Belfastman who was an inspiration to succeeding generations of Republicans immediately reported back for service to his local unit of Óglaigh na hÉireann.

The October 1950 issue of *An Éireannach Aontaithe* (The United Irishman) published a large "Fáilte-Welcome Home" notice for him and the November issue reported on a "Reception Céili" held in Dublin on October 16.

The Céili was organised by the John Mitchell Cumann of Sinn Féin in the Foresters' Hall, Parnell Square in honour of Steele and his recently-released comrades Liam Burke and Hugh McAteer.

WELCOME

Margaret Buckley, President of Sinn Féin, welcomed the released prisoners to a thronged attendance which included some young Welsh Republicans.

The presence of the prisoners, Mrs Buckley said, demonstrated clearly that the Republican Movement recognised no Border in the country. It claimed the whole 32 Counties.

"As long as it had young men prepared to make the sacrifices which these prisoners and their comrades had made, the national cause could never be lost."

Liam Burke thanked all those old friends in Dublin who had been so helpful to him and his comrades in their work before their capture and who had continued to assist them all during their long imprisonment.

Hugh McAteer spoke of the need for rallying all Republican elements into one great movement to complete the task of freeing Ireland.

The prisoners' aid committees and release committees had received great help from unexpected sources and this help could be availed of now to rebuild the Movement.

Jimmy Steele emphasised that Republicans could accept neither Stormont nor Leinster House. Both these assemblies had been instituted to suppress the Republican Government elected by the free vote of the whole Irish nation in 1918.

He continued: "The British army which occupies the six northern counties and dominates the Twenty-Six, is the first obstacle in our path and we should rally all forces to make one great united effort to clear every British soldier out of Ireland, North and South."

Then Tomás Ó Dubhghaill on behalf of the Republican Prisoners' Release Association presented each of the prisoners with a rolled gold watch.

Jimmy Steele was to serve another four years in Crumlin Road prison — this time with the internees in "D" Wing — from 1956 to 1960. His release fifty years ago in 1950 marked the end of an era — the heroic period which began in 1938 with the decision of the General Army Convention of the IRA to initiate the 1939-40 Bombing Campaign in

The Dead March Past

*Behind the files of Easter Week
And ranked, battalioned tread of twenty-one
Close behind the lime-stained dead of twenty-two
Seán Russell at their head they come.*

*The two that swung in Birmingham, with ordered step from off the gallows floor,
Now march behind McGrath and Harte, and the boys blown up at Castlefin,
Its fiery roar lights the wasted flesh of Darcy and McNeela,
Kelly, Reynolds, McCaffrey made whole again to join in strict array this dead march
past of Easter Day.*

*Come now the lonely ones, all solitary they pass,
Maurice O'Neill, Dick Goss, George Plant, young Williams, Casey, Glynn,
O'Callaghan,
On Jackey Griffith's right, comes Paddy Dermody,
So quick avenged by one as dear to us — tho' not as yet departed to the Columns of
the Night,
"Rockey" Burns rises up from Chapel Lane, Charlie Kerins lives, and laughs again.
Perry and Malone from Parkhurst come to march beside McCaughey and greet the
Easter dawn.*

*Behind the files of Easter Week,
And all the gallant dead of yesteryear they come,
Their step a hope, a dread salute
To you who march their way,
And pledge your word this Easter Day.*

— Brendan Behan.

The Last Republicans

*Because their fathers had been drilled,
Formed fours among the Dublin hills,
They marched together, countermarched
Along the Liffey valley, by larch-wood,
Spruce, pine road. Now, what living
shout
Can halt them? Nothing of their faces
Is left, the breath has been blown out
Of them into far lonely places.
Seán Glynn pined sadly in prison. Seán
McNeela, Tony Darcy, John
McCaughy died on hunger-strike,
Wasting in the ribbed light of dawn.
They'd been on the run, but every dyke
Was spy. We shame them all. George
Plant,*

*Quick fighter and a Protestant,
Patrick McGrath and Richard Goss,
Maurice O'Neill and Thomas Harte
Were executed when Dev's party
Had won the county pitch-and-toss.
Pat Dermody, John Kavanagh
John Griffith, Brian Casey, black-and-
tanned.
At Mountjoy Gaol, young Charlie
Kerins
Was roped; we paid five pounds to
Pierpoint,
The Special Branch castled their plans,
Quicklimed the last Republicans.
— Austin Clarke (The IRA in the
Twilight Years — 1923-48,
Appendix 26, p 949.)*

England.

In spite of all the forces ranged against it the Irish Republican Army followed up on the English Campaign with a mini-campaign in the Six Occupied Counties from 1942 to 1944.

Nine of its leadership and rank-and-file were executed, five by firing-squad in the 26 Counties, while four died at the hands of the English hangman — two in England and one in each of the two statelets in Ireland.

Three died on hunger strike against atrocious prison conditions in the 26 Counties while another five were killed — shot down in the Curragh Internment Camp and on the streets of the 26-County State. All of these were unarmed as were a number of others who were wounded both in prison and outside of it.

More than half a dozen others died in prison due to the rigorous conditions while others still were killed in action. In all the IRA lost 33 of its Volunteers while on service between 1936 and 1946.

Several thousand were imprisoned in England, Scotland, the Occupied Six Counties and in the 26-County State. Many were sentenced but the majority were interned without trial.

In the 26 Counties all death sentences and terms of imprisonment were imposed by Military Tribunals which had no legal training. In all situations great hardship was endured by Republicans and by their families.

But in addition to taking their lives, the Westminster, Stormont and Leinster House administrations attempted in true British style to inflict then what has been known in Irish history as "the second death".

That is to destroy their reputations and

blast their characters. The British called the Republicans "terrorists", while Stormont described them as "gangsters" and "amateur gunmen".

However, it was the erstwhile Republicans in Leinster House who described their former comrades as "criminals" because they continued in the same Cause that their persecutors had abandoned in 1925 and 1926.

SOLITARY CONFINEMENT

Sixteen Republicans were held in solitary confinement in Portlaoise jail clad only in blankets, and never allowed out in the fresh air from 1940 to 1947.

Mar a dúirt Donncha Ó Murchú (Corcaigh), ag Feis na Poblachta i 1990 nuair a bhí "Dathadha Dearthadha" fé chaibidil aige, "Thar gach aon ní eile SAIGHDIÚIRÍ dob ea Republicanaithe na ndathadha".

(The Corkman affectionately known as "Bulldog" said in the course of a lecture to Feis na Poblachta in 1990 that the Republicans of the 1940s were — above everything else — SOLDIERS.)

On the other side of the world, in Japan there is a saying that "life is a generation but one's honour is forever". Highly appreciated is the "place that honour holds in a true soldier's heart". (*The Emperor's General* by James Webb, published Penguin 1999.)

With the release of the last Republican prisoner in the late 1940s — in the 26-County State in 1948, England in 1949, the Six Counties in 1950 — and the return to their families of the bodies of the executed men, the climate of opinion following wartime censorship became more balanced.

Huge crowds attended the funerals in

1948 of the Republicans executed south of the Border. Every honour was rendered and great dignity shown.

Barnes' and McCormack's families had to wait until 1969 for a massive tribute at the funeral from England of their loved ones in Mullingar, Co Westmeath.

For the family of Tom Williams (executed in Belfast in 1942) it was 58 years later, in 2000AD, before they were allowed to render fitting tribute to his sacrifice for Ireland. The entire Falls Road closed down and the streets were lined with people standing in respect.

Brian O'Higgins in his *Wolfe Tone Annual* of 1950 defends the honour and reputation of the Republicans of the 1940s as valiantly as he did in various booklets, broadsheets and ballads published underground at the time of their deaths.

Austin Clarke (1896-1974), described as "the best Irish poet of the generation after Yeats", paid them homage and acknowledged that sacrifice in his poem *The Last Republicans*.

But surely the most evocative tribute came from one of themselves who suffered imprisonment both in England and in Ireland, the dramatist, novelist and story teller Brendan Behan (1923-1964).

In *The Dead March Past* he imagines a ghostly Easter commemoration parade in which the dead soldiers of the IRA of the 1940s period march behind the men of 1916, of 1921 and of 1922:

*Behind the files of Easter Week
And ranked, battalioned tread of twenty-one
Close behind the lime-stained dead of twenty-two
Seán Russell at their head they come . . .
And the famous artist and writer Jack B Yeats (1871-1957) did not turn down the men of the 1940s. Roger McHugh, himself an internee in 1941-42, writes.*

"I remember going to him once to ask him to sign a petition for the reprieve of some young Republicans sentenced to be hanged in the Six Counties and he signed it without hesitation."

That was for Tom Williams and his five comrades in 1942. He differed with his elder brother, the poet WB Yeats who became a Free State Senator because he (Jack) was "sympathetic to Republican and socialist thought" (R McHugh).

McHugh explains: "He was never a political activist but his sympathies are implicit in the choice of some of his subjects for paintings: *Bachelor's Walk* [British troops kill Irish civilians in 1914], *Communications with Prisoners* [outside Sligo jail], *The Funeral of Harry Boland* (1922), *Going to Wolfe Tone's Grave*; and his friendship with Ernie O'Malley was based on the sharing of more than artistic values."

Incidentally, Jack B Yeats won a silver medal for Ireland with his painting *The Liffey Swim* at the Paris Olympics in 1924.

From 1947, through the 1950s and 1960s, memorials were erected at their graves and sometimes in public places as in the case of Sean Russell (Dublin) and Charlie Kerins (Tralee).

The unveiling of these memorials were always significant occasions. But their interment in local Republican plots above all else meant that they were associated with all who had died for Ireland since the United Irishmen and through the centuries before that.

For the past 50 years their memory is enshrined in the hearts of their countrymen and women, at home and in exile — and that is the greatest tribute of all.

(More next month. Refs. *Songs and Recitations of Ireland*, CFN Cork 1961; *Austin Clarke — Selected Poems*, Dolmen Press and Wake Forest, USA 1976; *Harry* by Harry White, Argenta Publications 1985; and Jack B Yeats, A Centenary Gathering, Dolmen Press 1971.)

ARD-FHEIS OF SINN FÉIN AND OTHERS

**50
Years
Ago**

ON Sunday, November 19, 1950 the Ard Fheis of Sinn Féin was held at An Ard Oifig, 9 Parnell Square, Dublin in the large front room on the first floor.

More than seventy delegates attended, *An t-Éireannach Aontaithe/The United Irishman* reported in its issue of December fifty years ago.

The dominant note in the assembly was one of satisfaction with the progress made during the previous twelve months and of hope and confidence in the continued development of the organisation.

Margaret Buckley stepped down as President, having served in that capacity for 13 years – since 1937. The incoming President was Pádraig Mac Lógáin of Portlaoise, a northern Republican who was among those “excluded” from the Six Counties by the new puppet administration there in 1923 following the original Partition of Ireland.

Born near Markethill in South Armagh in 1899, Pádraig joined the Irish Volunteers in 1914. He was on hunger strike in Mountjoy Jail with Thomas Ashe and Seán Treacy in 1917.

Later he was officer in charge of North Antrim and operated an active service unit in North Down. He was captured and imprisoned in Belfast Jail under the name “Patrick McLoughlin” while British forces searched for him outside as he was wanted on a capital charge.

During the Free State War he was imprisoned in Newbridge. From 1933 to 1938 he was a Republican abstentionist TD for South Armagh and was Chairman of the short-lived political wing of the IRA, Cumann Poblachta na h-Éireann 1936-37. He was interned at the Curragh 1940-41.

A more extended account of his life-long service to his death in 1964 can be read in *The IRA in the Twilight Years 1923-48* pages 875-6-7.

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

To return to the Ard Fheis of 1950, Margaret Buckley in her address “gave a brilliant résumé of the history of the organisation from its formation in 1907 (sic), tracing its progress through the Rising of 1916 – sometimes called the Sinn Féin Rebellion – to its re-formation on more definite Republican lines in 1917 and arriving at its apex in the 1918 election and the formation of the Republican Parliament and Government in 1919”.

Her address received wholehearted applause from the delegates and was later issued in pamphlet form under the title “Mrs Buckley’s Short History of Sinn Féin”. For many years it was essential reading in the political education of Republican Sinn Féin members.

The Secretary’s report stated that many new Cumann had been affiliated since 1949, twenty of these being in the Six Counties.

An Ulster organising committee had been set up to co-ordinate and direct the activities of Cumann in the province. With the aid of this committee it was expected that the rate of progress made would be maintained and even accelerated.

The success of the Ulster Committee encouraged the Standing Committee (later known as An Ard Chomhairle) to set up a similar one for Munster and that was gradually getting to work and had already established two new Cumann.

It was expected that Connacht and Leinster would be co-ordinated in the same way. This method of organising was aimed at producing a strong sense of mutual support and co-operation between neighbouring Cumann and thus promote a more active and virile organisation.

This idea also underlay one of the principal resolutions adopted by the Ard-Fheis, that dealing with the changing of the constitution of the Standing Committee.

Up to then the Standing Committee consisted of the Officer Board, Resident Standing Committee (i.e. Dublin based) and provincial representatives (who were expected to attend only quarterly meetings).

It was felt that this arrangement did not give



• Paddy McLogan

adequate scope to the provinces to voice their opinions and cast votes on general policy.

To remedy this situation the resolution proposed to abolish both the Resident Standing Committee and provincial representatives and to substitute a Standing Committee (Ard-Chomhairle) to be chosen from all over the country.

This proposal was adopted and the incoming Officer Board elected was as follows:

President: Pádraig Mac Lógáin (Portlaoise); Vice Presidents: Tomás Ó Dubhghaill agus Éamonn Ó Gargáin (Ath Cliath); Hon. Treasurers: Rita Mac Sweeney and Ella May Woods (Ath Cliath); Hon. Secretaries: Anthony Magan and Seán Kearney (Ath Cliath).

The Standing Committee elected were: Margaret Buckley (Dublin), Pat McCormack (Antrim), Joe McGurk (Belfast), Larry Grogan (Drogheda), Paddy McGlynn (Dublin), Gearóid Ó Bóin (Ath Cliath), Caoimhín Mac Cathmhaoil (Muighéu) agus Criostóir Ó Néill (Ath Cliath).

In addition there was a complete overhaul of the main provisions of the Constitution which had been unchanged since 1917 when Sinn Féin became a definite Republican organisation.

In particular the following passage was inserted up front: “The Organisation is based on the following fundamental principles:

(a) That the allegiance of Irishmen and Irishwomen is due to the sovereign Irish Republic proclaimed in 1916 ...

(b) That the sovereignty and unity of the Republic are inalienable and non-judiciable”.

These basic principles on which the Organisation would stand from 1950 onwards were (a) that all Irish people owed loyalty to the All-Ireland Republic of 1916 and (b) that the unity and sovereignty of that Republic could not be given away and were not matters for decision.

Of course the Treaty of Surrender of 1921 denied these two principles. In recent times the Stormont Agreement also did so.

Both instruments sought to have Irish people

give allegiance to the 26-County State and to the Six County Statelet under British rule. They claimed to give away the unity and sovereignty of Ireland and in the case of the Stormont Agreement to put such for decision in concurrent referendums on both sides of the British-imposed Border under threat of continuing war.

In other countries such action is stigmatised as “treason” or “treachery”. Under the new provisions, loyalty to the 32-County Republic and the sovereignty and unity of Ireland were absolutes. One could not deny these principles and remain a member of Sinn Féin.

Another of the resolutions on the Clár referred to the censorship of Sinn Féin or Republican information by the Dublin daily papers. Many speakers rose to support this motion and referred to the deliberate campaign carried out by the ‘Irish Press’ and ‘Irish Independent’ to suppress or misrepresent the views of Republicans.

This allegation was given additional point by the fact that a statement issued by the Organisation on the South Armagh by-election then current was referred to in part by the ‘Independent’ but completely ignored by the ‘Press’ although each carried an advertisement saying that the statement was being submitted for publication.

REPUBLICAN ATTITUDE

The Sinn Féin statement sought to clarify the Republican attitude to the by-election. They were debarred from the contest because candidates were required to sign a declaration that they would sit in Stormont if elected.

One of the candidates sought to sit in Stormont. The other was publicly pledged not to enter Stormont but was prepared to seek admission to Leinster House if elected.

Sinn Féin itself could not contest and it would not support either of the candidates. It was the intention of Sinn Féin to hold a series of public meetings throughout the constituency to elaborate on the stand adopted by Republicans.

Another Ard-Fheis was held Dublin about

the same time – that of the Anti-Partition Association. Stormont Senator McNally, a former Republican prisoner, condemned 26-County political parties for trying to organise north of the Border.

The organisation of nationalists should be left to the anti-partitionists in the North, he said. At the same time he said that any possible outbreak of military force must come from whatever government was in power in the 26 Counties.

An t-Éireannach Aontaithe called this an extraordinary statement since all parties in Leinster House had declared that force would not be used. Or perhaps he would like the Northern Nationalists to do the organising and the Southerners to do the fighting? If so, he is also very mistaken, it went on, for when the time comes for fighting the true Republicans in the North will be fighting hand in hand with their Southern brethren and neither Mr McNally and his anti-partitionist politicians nor the Free State Government would take part.

WASTE OF TIME

Joe Connellan, Stormont MP for South Down thought the solution lay in admitting Nationalist MPs to Leinster House. Apparently he was convinced, the Republican journal thought, that attendance at Westminster and Stormont was a waste of time.

“As long as Nationalist MPs have been at Westminster and Stormont, their Southern counterparts have been at Leinster House and have not advanced one step nearer to a solution”.

If he would only have remembered this he might have been convinced that the solution might be found in a policy that ignored Leinster House, Stormont and Westminster.

After his election as Chairman, Mr PT O’Reilly, said he hoped the government of the 26 Counties would “take steps to have 250,000 men ready to act in the final demand for unity and freedom”.

What a hope! remarked An t-Éireannach Aontaithe. He must have been listening to the wilder statements of Irish politicians in America. The meeting ended without a solution, without a policy, without a hope, concluded the Republican organ.

But the reality was that since Easter 1949 many young men had joined the FCA in the hope that the 26-County government would move. They wanted to be ready for that day.

In time, some of the more sincere of them would join the Irish Republican Army and actually take part in the 1956-62 campaign.

Another Ard-Fheis held about the same time was that of Fianna Fáil, still led by Mr de Valera. There was the usual pious demand for complete sovereignty over the 32 Counties.

The resolution was passed unanimously. The delegates then went home quietly satisfied that they had done their part. The Coalition Administration was roundly condemned for allowing British and American troops to take photographs and make a general survey of the Irish Coastline.

It was also condemned for its lack of policy in the then world crisis, for its attitude to the Irish language and for all the evils it inherited from Fianna Fáil.

De Valera made it clear “that the total responsibility for national action on Partition must necessarily remain the responsibility” of the 26-County Administration.

His sole interest in joining the Mansion House Committee on Partition and in continuing on it “was to supervise the expenditure of the funds collected”.

The Republican paper summed up by saying that in opposition Mr de Valera would do exactly what he did while in office – nothing.

But still that bus left Enniskillen loaded with young men once a week. It picked up others in Lisnakea and other places en route across the Border to Clones, Co. Monaghan.

There in the FCA building they put on uniforms, were issued with rifles and did their military training.

What would happen when these young men discovered at last that they were being fooled? What would they do then?

(More next month. Refs. *The IRA in the Twilight Years 1923-48* by Uinseann Mac Eoin and *An t-Éireannach Aontaithe/The United Irishman*, December 1950.)

STORMONT PREPARES FOR RENEWAL OF STRUGGLE

**50
Years
Ago**

THE December 1950 issue of *An tÉireannach Aontaithe/The United Irishman* leads on its front page with a headline "Stormont prepared!" and

sub-headings "Northern police get military training" plus "Commando tactics for RUC and B-Specials".

The report itself says: "From a debate in Stormont it has been obligatory on all members of the RUC and B-Specials to undergo a special course of training in general Commando warfare."

"Sir Basil Brooke [Stormont Prime Minister] admitted that this was so and emphasised the point that it was done to protect the Six Counties against any attempt to incorporate them in a United Ireland."

Accordingly even as the last Republican prisoners were being released from Belfast jail in the autumn of 1950, Stormont was getting ready for the next round of the battle for Irish national independence.

There was no hesitation there in facing reality and what the unionist leadership knew to be inevitable. The "UI", as it became known colloquially, noted there were 3,000 RUC and about 12,000 B-men, the latter recruited exclusively from members of the Orange Order.

Then there was the British army, "many thousands strong to protect the Border and ensure that England will have a secure foothold in Ireland in times of war".

It went on: "In spite of all these facts the anti-partitionists, North and South, still seek the peaceful solution to the problem."

The Free State at an army costing many millions of pounds annually, allegedly "to protect the borders of the country". They were never given a chance of driving out the enemy from our shores, "which the great majority of the younger men would do with a will".

The sad fact was that "the authorities accept the 26 Counties as 'Ireland' and have abandoned any idea of ever restoring the 32-County Republic".

The report concluded: "But there are thousands of young men who will not take their lead from Leinster House and who are prepared to use all and every means to restore the republic of Pearse. Sir Basil Brooke knows this and hence his haste to augment the British forces in north-east Ulster."

LINK-UP

The same front page reports on the British and US military attaches to Dublin attending Free State artillery practice in the Glen of Imaal and expresses concern about a link-up with the Western Powers in the event of WWII.

It accuses Seán MacBride — not for the first time in the Republican monthly — of trying to "strike a bargain about Partition before he formally joins the Atlantic pact (NATO)".

MacBride as Foreign Minister in Dublin had been pushing the idea of leaving Stormont as it was and seeking the transfer of Westminster powers over it to Leinster House — an idea first put forward by de Valera in an interview with a London evening paper in 1938.

Both MacBride's and de Valera's ideas were mislabeled a "federal solution" which it most certainly was not. It merely provided for a continuance of entrenched unionist hegemony within a regional experiment in Ireland.

Also criticised was MacBride's apparent willingness for the 26-County State to join NATO as a *quid pro quo*. He said in later life that while the State could in the future pull out of NATO the British government could hardly return to Ireland once it left.

At successive Ard-Fheisanna of Clann na Poblachta he had firmly ruled out the use of physical force to deal with the British government's presence in Ireland.

Obviously he was trying to use the constitutional position of the 26-County State to advance towards the national objective of a free and united Ireland. This, of course, would involve bargaining and deals were well aware of John Redmond's deal in 1914.

He chose a path which sacrificed 50,000 Irish



• **Died for Ireland: Tony Darcy, Galway, died on hunger strike April 16, 1940. See Roll of Honour 1936-1946.**

lives to England's war against Germany. In return he got the obliteration of his Irish party, no Home Rule and the regime of the Black-and-Tans.

Meanwhile in Leinster House on October 26, John A Costello, head of the Coalition Administration answered a question regarding the admission of elected representatives from north of the Border to the 26-County assembly.

His government had decided not to sponsor any proposals for their admission either to the 26-County Dáil or Seanad. A nationalist MP had already been elected in a by-election who was pledged to sit in Leinster House rather than in Stormont.

But the 26-County politicians were not prepared to break the confines of the Westminster "Government of Ireland Act" of 1920 or the Treaty of Surrender of 1921 which set up their assembly at Leinster House.

Costello's statement clarified the position of all parties there. He spoke for those supporting his administration, while previous utterances by de Valera made it clear that the Fianna Fáil party were in complete agreement with this policy.

No reason was given for this refusal which the "UI" headed "Nobody from the North need apply — Leinster House bans Northern representatives". People were left to think the worst in the absence of justification.

It was a slap in the face to constitutional nationalists in the Six Counties. Republicans, of course, simply said "I told you so".

Then it was put about that the four cross-Border bodies being set up at the time would eventually grow into a free and united Ireland. Fifty years later we are told that six such bodies will do the job. Fool me once, etc.

But one man who spoke out in letters to the press was Father (later Canon) Tom Maguire, PP of Newtownbutler, Co Fermanagh. He summed up as follows: "The unrepentant politicians are a national danger." The "UI" felt the word "party" would be more accurate than "unrepentant".

Father Tom concluded: "The feeling here is that we are losing our opportunities to force the issue and that another party must take the political floor at the next election and test the constitutional effort to its utmost limits, and if that fails we must start where 1921 left off."

The "UI" agreed that opportunities to force the issue had been and were being lost, but creating another political party would simply cause division and confusion with the same result in the end.

"The remedy is more certain to come from our effort to organise the people of Ireland in a nation-wide movement analogous to that in existence prior to the Truce of 1921."

Clearly frustration was building up in those who sought to "force the issue" and they would in time turn to organisations other than those of the constitutional nationalists north or south of the Border.

And Canon Tom Maguire of Newtownbutler would not be found wanting when the time came to "force the issue". He was to the fore right up to his death in 1968. Beannacht Dé len an am dílis.

Two things have altered now

Since the world began:

*The beauty of the wild green earth
And the bravery of man.*

Never were Ireland's sons and daughters lacking in bravery when it came to facing the foreign foe for the national independence of their country.

As our coverage of the period 1938-1950 draws to a close we list the casualties of the "1940's" as it is called — those who in their generation made the supreme sacrifice for Irish freedom.

On this page may be read the 33 names on the Roll of Honour 1936-46, from Seán Glynn of Limerick to Seán McCaughey of Belfast.

Also reproduced here is an addendum to that Roll of Honour — the listing of eleven more Irish Republicans who were released from prison and concentration camp when it was obvious they were about to die.

Their captors sought to shirk responsibility for their deaths while in their care, and they did not release them until death was close at hand. Earlier discharge from the rigours of imprisonment and proper medical treatment could have saved their lives.

These eleven also died for Ireland as surely as did those who faced the firing squad, the English hangman or death on hunger strike. Frightful prison conditions struck them down in the prime of their young manhood.

FALTERING HEALTH

In many cases the option of early release by renouncing their Republicanism through "signing the form" of undertaking was open to them. But they did not take the dishonourable way out even when it was obvious to them that their health was faltering.

From Aonghus McNulty who lies at rest in Achill island; to Jack McLoughlin in the surrounds of Fenagh Abbey, Co Leitrim and a Willie Gaughan interred in the same plot as Richard Goss in St Patrick's Cemetery, Dundalk, their graves have become places of pilgrimage.

Local people have taken them to their hearts and they are honoured in the course of Easter commemoration or other ceremonies throughout the year.

Seamus Keenan of Derry city, it will be recalled, was the father of Seán Keenan in whose memory a fitting memorial was raised recently in the Bogside under Derry's Walls. When he was released to die Seán and his brothers Terry and Dan remained in captivity.

The sacrifice of these eleven arose directly from the grim ordeal of imprisonment in the 1940s and has the same validity as the other 33. Henry O'Kane possessed a spirit of fire within a frail and weakened body, yet he did not flinch when called on.

God rest them, all 44 of them, and may their noble spirits continue to inspire their successors to even greater efforts "for the Cause of long-downtrodden man". Beannacht dílis De ortha ar fad.

By the end of 1950 the Republican Movement, shattered by the combined action of Westminster, Stormont and Leinster House in the 1940s, was under reconstruction.

In the 1950 Easter Statement from the Army Council of Óglaigh na hÉireann, read at all 1916 commemorations held in Ireland and abroad, the leadership had the courage to acknowledge "the mistakes of the past" — principally in regard to the 26 Counties.

They took action to avoid a repetition of such mistakes. In their decisions at the 1948 General Army Convention they had laid down a policy of (1) pursuing a successful military campaign against the British Occupation Forces in the Six Counties and (2) refraining from any offensive action against the 26-County State.

This was the Movement's policy and it would be adhered to, even in the most trying circumstances. But by 1950 Republicans were on the march again.

(More next month. Refs. *An tÉireannach Aontaithe/The United Irishman*, December 1950 and January 1949; *The IRA in the Twilight Years 1923-48*, edited by Uinseann Mac Eoin.)

ROLL OF HONOUR

Died for Ireland 1936-46

Seán Glynn, Limerick. Died in Arbour Hill, September 13, 1936.

Peter McCarthy, Dublin. Shot by police, June

15, 1937.

Jimmy Joe Reynolds, Leitrim. Killed in accidental explosion, November 28, 1938.

John James Kelly, Clady, Tyrone. Killed in accidental explosion, November 28, 1938.

Charles McCafferty, Tyrone. Killed in accidental explosion, November 28, 1938.

Christy Bird, Dublin. Accidentally shot while training, May 13, 1939.

Peter Barnes, Banagher, Offaly. Hanged in Winslow Green Prison, Birmingham, England, February 7, 1940.

James McCormack, Mullingar, Westmeath. Hanged in Winslow Green Prison, Birmingham, England, February 7, 1940.

Tony Darcy, Headford, Co Galway. Died on hunger strike, April 16, 1940.

Seán McNeela, Ballyeroy, Co Mayo. Died on hunger strike, April 19, 1940.

Seán Martin, Ballymacarrett, Belfast. Killed in accidental explosion, April 25, 1940.

John Joe Kavanagh, Cork. Shot by police near Cork jail, August 3, 1940.

Seán Russell, Dublin. Died overseas, August 14, 1940.

Patrick McGrath, Dublin. Executed, Mountjoy prison, September 6, 1940.

Thomas Harle, Lurgan, Co Armagh. Executed, Mountjoy prison, September 6, 1940.

Jack Gaffney, Belfast. Died on prison ship *Al Rawdah*, November 18, 1940.

Barney Casey, Co Longford. Shot by military police, Curragh Camp, December 16, 1940.

Bob Clancy, Waterford. Died in Curragh Military Hospital, June 12, 1941.

Richard Goss, Dundalk. Executed in Portlaoise Prison, August 9, 1941.

Joseph Malone, Belfast. Died in Parkhurst Prison, Isle of Wight, January 21, 1942.

George Plant, Tipperary. Executed in Portlaoise Prison, March 5, 1942.

Terence Perry, Belfast. Died in Parkhurst Prison, Isle of Wight, July 7, 1942.

Gerry O'Callaghan, Belfast. Killed in action, August 31, 1942.

Thomas Williams, Belfast. Hanged in Crumlin Road Jail, Belfast, September 2, 1942.

Patrick Dermody, Co Cavan. Killed in action, September 30, 1942.

Maurice O'Neill, Cahersiveen, Co Kerry. Executed in Mountjoy Prison, November 12, 1942.

John Hinchey, Co Louth. Died in Mountjoy Prison, December 28, 1942.

Jackie Griffith, Dublin. Shot by police, July 4, 1943.

Seamus (Rocky) Burns, Belfast. Killed in action, February 12, 1944.

John Doyle, Belfast. Accidentally shot dead while training on his 16th birthday, April 10, 1944.

Charles O'Hare, Armagh. Died Isle of Man Internment camp, June 2, 1944.

Charles Kerins, Tralee. Hanged in Mountjoy Prison, December 1, 1944.

Seán McCaughey, Aughnacloy, Tyrone. Died on hunger strike, Portlaoise Prison, May 11, 1946.

REPUBLICAN PRISONERS RELEASED TO DIE

Aonghus McNulty, Mayo. Died after release from Curragh Internment Camp, 1941.

Seán Dolan, Derry city. Died after release from Belfast Jail, October 25, 1941.

Cathal Kerr, Down. Died after release from Belfast jail, 1941.

John McLoughlin, Leitrim. Died after release from Curragh Internment Camp, 1942.

Seán Kilroy, Mayo. Died after release from Curragh Internment Camp, 1942.

J. Rooney, Armagh. Died within week of release from Belfast Jail, 1942.

Joe McGinley, Derry city. Died a fortnight after release from Belfast jail. Contracted TB in jail, August 13, 1943.

James Keenan, Derry city. Died after release, October 6, 1943.

John Curran, Co Down. Died after release from Belfast Jail, 1943.

William Gaughan, Dundalk. Died after release from Camp Hill Prison, England, 1947.

Henry O'Kane, Derry city. Died after release from Belfast Prison, May 1947.