

'NEITHER KING NOR KREMLIN BUT IRELAND'

**50
Years
Ago**

IN January 1951 with the ideological "Cold War" being fought between East and West the Republican Movement found it necessary to clarify its stance.

For the first time ever the Standing Committee of Sinn Féin and the Army Council of Oglagh na hÉireann issued a joint-statement on the matter. In the fifty years since no other "joint-statement" has ever been issued.

This declaration was apparently definitive as there was no follow up on it. It was not repeated. The Movement had made its stand and that was the end of it.

James Connolly's famous banner on Dublin's Liberty Hall in 1916 was inscribed: "We Serve Neither King nor Kaiser — but Ireland", and the Irish Citizen Army, armed and in uniform, was drawn up under that banner.

In the 1950s Connolly's slogan was brought up to date as Republicans summed up their position with the words: "We Serve Neither King nor Kremlin — Ireland". The Kremlin was the seat of Soviet power in Moscow.

The joint-statement rejected both imperialisms, of the East and of the West. But it did not advocate a witch hunt against Communists which would have been popular at the time in certain quarters.

In fact it forbade attacks on "meetings or functions sponsored by organisations referred to as Communist" and said the Movement would take disciplinary action against members doing so. Members were directed to "steer clear" of all such functions in case their presence would give the wrong impression.

The lengthy statement was headed "No link with Communism — statement by Sinn Féin and the IRA" in the January/February issue of *An tÉireannach Aontaithe/The United Irishman*. It opened by saying that in England and Ireland advocates of Communism were attempting to identify themselves with the Republican Movement.

Genuine Republicans might therefore believe that service to the cause of Irish Freedom could be rendered through membership of groups under the control or influence of such persons. For this reason the leadership of the Republican Movement felt it necessary to make the following statement:

"There is no connection whatsoever between the Republican Movement and organisations known to be under the control or influence of the Communist party or its agents."

It went on to say that the leadership of the Republican Movement had no desire and certainly no intention to form any links of association with such organisations and would resist all efforts on the part of agents and sympathisers of Communism to identify themselves with the Movement.

The only purpose of such persons would be to use the Movement for their own ulterior motives. If it was feasible to win the freedom of Ireland with the support of small groups attached to Communism, then it was equally feasible without "their dubious assistance".

Nothing could be clearer. The immediate and primary aim was to free Ireland "from the grasp and influence of British Imperialism".

However, it was not part of the Republican programme to free Ireland from the British or other Western forms of imperialism in order



• James Connolly's famous banner on Dublin's Liberty Hall with armed Irish Citizen Army in front. In the 1950s, the slogan was updated to read: "We serve Neither King nor Kremlin — but Ireland".

to become subject to or under the sphere of influence of the brand of imperialism operating in Russia and other countries.

The Irish people realised that exploitation could take place through a ruling party or clique, irrespective of the class or creed from which the rulers had sprung.

"Because of this realisation, Republicans have nothing in common with those who strive to keep Ireland in subjection to British Imperialism, nor with those who profess a desire to have Ireland independent of Britain, yet would have her used as a pawn to promote the interests "of an ideology repugnant to the overwhelming majority of her people".

Members of all constitutional political parties in Ireland, when it suits them, boast of their past records in and service to the Republican Movement, Communist and quasi-Communist groups in England and in Ireland seek to give themselves a Republican hue by identifying with them ex-members and expelled members of Republican organisations. Such techniques are familiar to Republicans, but they are not impressed by them.

The charge that Republicans are Fascists and reactionaries was anticipated. Republicans were just as indifferent to such a charge from Communist sources as they are to "others of their traducers who seek to brand them as Communists".

CONNOLLY'S BANNER

The statement then quoted Connolly's banner on Liberty Hall already referred to. "Brought up to date to meet the prevailing global situation, it remained the motto of the Republican Movement".

In conclusion, the declaration ruled against interference with the groups mentioned. By staying away from the activities promoted by such groupings credibility would be denied to "cleverly veiled calls for 'unity' emanating from their leadership".

To summarise, there was and would be no linkup, the Movement would not be used by others and both Eastern and Western imperialisms were rejected. Irish national independence was the goal and the Movement would not be a pawn or

"cat's paw" for either.

From the writing and the obvious desire to close every loophole the statement seems to have been the work of Pádraig Mac Logáin.

Elsewhere in the world the anti-colonial anti-imperialist forces were stirring. On November 16, 1950 King Farouk of Egypt made a speech outlining the government's policy for the ensuing parliamentary session.

The King would soon be overthrown because of his extravagance and the inequalities in Egyptian society and his address to parliament was simply an outline of government intentions, not a statement of his own policies.

His government was demanding "total and immediate evacuation" of British troops who were still in the Suez Canal zone. The Treaty of 1936 was no longer a "suitable basis for relations" between Britain and Egypt.

They would strive by every means in their power to end a position whereby the national aspirations of the people were incapable of realisation.

"My government," Farouk said, "proclaims that it will never depart from these fundamental principles. It is profoundly convinced that British recognition of these principles would be the surest guarantee of the maintenance of peace and security throughout the Middle East."

"Come what may, my Government will persistently and unhesitatingly continue its efforts to realise national aspirations."

"It will not fail to take all measures to fulfil its aims, especially that of proclaiming the end of the 1936 Treaty, because it is in flagrant contradiction of the United Nations Charter, and all the more so because the circumstances which attended its conclusions have totally changed."

The Prime Minister, on learning that the British would not evacuate, later told a mass meeting of students in Cairo that if political measures failed, the Egyptians had other means open to them.

"We have never let the nation down," he declared, "and if the time for a struggle comes I shall be at your head."

An tÉireannach Aontaithe/The United

Irishman commented that the British refused to evacuate on the grounds that they could not leave the Middle East defenceless, and also because withdrawal would prejudice the safety of other countries. Naturally, it said, Mr Bevin (British Foreign Secretary) was anxious to find out how far Egypt was prepared to go.

"If the Egyptian Prime Minister is content to abide by the result of negotiations and further compromises, England can be certain of maintaining herself in a superior role."

"If on the other hand Egypt appeals to arms England may find herself in such a position that she may be forced to evacuate. Time will tell if the Egyptians have learned that lesson."

'QUIT GIBRALTAR'

On another page is an article headed "Quit Gibraltar says Spain". It states that it seems to be true that there is in Spain (then under Franco rule) no freedom as we Irish Republicans understand the term; it is equally certain that those gentlemen whom England would install in place of Franco would not get the approval of Irishmen.

England was opposed to Spain because of Spanish neutrality in WWII and led the post-war economic boycott of that country. Because of the Cold War England must come to terms with Franco.

Spain knows that this diplomatic volte face is in order to be able to utilise the well-trained Spanish Army against Russia and she demands that England as a token of her good faith should evacuate Gibraltar and agree to its incorporation with Spain.

In other words, Franco demands cash with order knowing from past experience that a promise to examine the question on the termination of the war would not be worth the paper on which it was written.

We shall in due course outline the developments, if any, in both cases and examine the results. Suffice it to say that the case of Egypt proved the more interesting.

(More next month. Refs. An tÉireannach Aontaithe/The United Irishman, December 1950 and January/February 1951.

1951 — 'THE KEY YEAR'

**50
Years
Ago**

THE year 1951 was going to be decisive for the Republican Movement. The Anti-Partition League (in the Six Counties and Britain) and the A-P Association

in the 26 Counties had more or less run their course.

Their impact, Bell assesses, was much the same as Clann na Poblachta; great initial enthusiasm, influential speeches and publications, high hopes and then no tangible results.

In 1949 the contacts between the Anti-Partition Association and the Dublin government had convinced many that "a real campaign to end Partition had begun".

But the only result of the Clann's entry into constitutional politics and the long campaign of the Anti-Partition forces was the declaring of the 26-County republic in 1949.

The reaction of the British government was the Ireland Act which "turned over the future of the Six Counties" to the Stormont regime. Bell estimated that "a united Ireland seemed even further away as a result of all the agitation and excitement".

By 1950, although both the Clann and the A-P Association remained active and apparently virile, the IRA and Sinn Féin had begun to pick up the disenchanted. There were not many but the IRA could not absorb many.

More important was the slight rise in the temperature of Irish politics. Mac Bride's "reformed republicans" in Dublin, the politicians in the Anti-Partition League, and Eddie McAteer in Derry with the concept of Passive resistance had each excited hopes that could not be fulfilled.

They had revealed the evils of a divided Ireland to many who had grown comfortable in the presence of the Border. They had, however, devised no means to remove the Border. Their methods pacifism, propaganda, and constitutional politics had achieved nothing, no victory only words.

Michael Farrell in his *Northern Ireland: The Orange State* (1976) says "The Anti-Partition League seemed to be falling apart. It had no consistent policy and no way of enforcing one if it had.

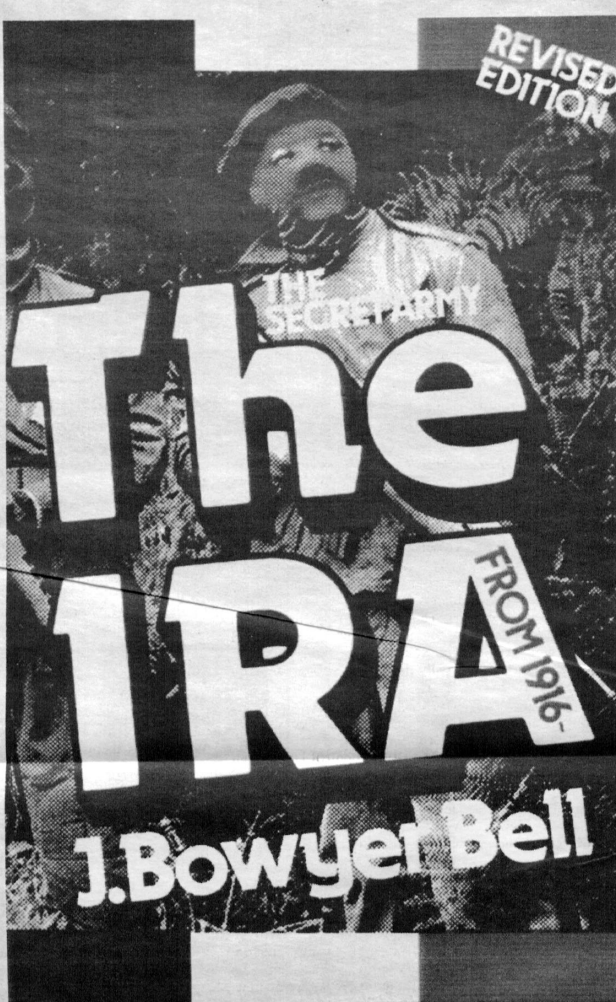
"It had one MP abstaining and one attending at Westminster and two MPs abstaining and seven attending intermittently at Stormont. After the 1951 Westminster election (Sinn Féin did not contest) the two MPs decided to take their seats again though they got an even less sympathetic hearing from Churchill's Tory government [than they had from the 1945-51 Labour Party administration].

REFUSED ADMISSION

"In March 1951 four [Stormont] A-PL MPs. Charles McGlennan, Cahir Healy, Joe Connellan (South Down) and EV McCullagh (Mid-Tyrone) and two Senators sought admission to the Dáil (sic) as elected representatives of part of the national territory, but they found the Dublin government's Republicanism and anti-partitionism didn't extend as far as giving a vote in their parliament to an unpredictable group of Northerners — who could conceivably make or break Southern governments — or to issuing such a direct challenge to Stormont and to Britain. They were refused."

Bell goes on: "The victory envisaged by the IRA, a united Ireland achieved by physical force, seemed nearly as far away in 1950 as it had the day the Curragh closed.

"If the politicians had led the Irish people down the garden path of anti-partition to the locked door of British intransigence,



• The Secret Army by J Bowyer Bell. He described 1951 as a key year for the Republican Movement.

the IRA assuredly did not have the key.

"The Dublin unit, strongest in the country, had a paper strength of no more than 40 men, divided into two companies [northside and southside of the Liffey] which could seldom parade more than a dozen men each.

"The traffic in and out of the Army continued year after year . . . In the North organisation had accelerated but units were often small, dotted around one or two strong men and subject to the same regular attrition through boredom.

"Throughout Ireland, large areas still remained unorganised. Some counties might have one or two men and little more. Others might have a unit of four or five, which never grew and never quite dissolved.

"Without action or the prospect of action, without a programme, the climate created by the politicians and the organisation built up by five years of work would go to waste.

"The IRA was either going to decay into a bitter little group of ageing and unsuccessful fanatics, conspiring pointlessly in odd corners, or act even when unready. Thus 1951 would be the key year."

The Sinn Féin Notes in *An t-Éireannach Aontaithe/The United Irishman*, January-February 1951 comments on "the very dull by-election in South Armagh" which took place the previous December. It said that

"both Anti-Partition parties emerged from it with little glory.

"The very small poll by the Irish Labour candidate is a complete rejection by the people of that area of the policy of his party." Charles McGlennan, a respected IRA Veteran of the 1920s was the other candidate.

To be nominated in a Stormont election he was required to sign a solemn undertaking that if elected he would take his seat in that puppet parliament. This he apparently did sign.

The Organ of Irish Republicanism went on: "The official anti-partitionist, who appealed to the people for a mandate to take his seat in Leinster House, and who promised to abstain from Stormont received only one-third of the total electorate votes which shows that the Republican stronghold of South Armagh does not wish to be represented in either of the Partition Parliaments."

In spite of being elected — even with a minority vote — to Leinster House, Charles McGlennan and the other Anti-Partition elected representatives from the Six Counties were refused admission in March 1951, as has already been noted in this article.

The Sinn Féin Notes of 50 years ago recalled that South Armagh had elected the then President of Sinn Féin, Pádraig Mac

Lógáin in 1933 "by a large majority without holding one meeting", Pádraig, who was a native of the area [near Markethill], had been expelled from the Six Counties under the Special Powers Act of Stormont.

Following his election the restriction on nomination of candidates was brought in. Removed by British Supremo Whitelaw in 1973, it was replaced in 1988 when Thatcher imposed an even more stringent political test oath for nomination.

The Notes also continued the text of a circular letter from A MagCana and S O Cearnaigh, Ard Rúnaíthe, Sinn Féin to various organisations offering co-operation with them in campaigning against the import of anti-national literature with its anglicising influence.

SINN FÉIN RALLY PLANNED

South Armagh Comhairle Ceantair were active with plans for a Sinn Féin rally in Camloch on St Patrick's Day, while the Seán Doran Cumann undertook the erection of a memorial to the Republican dead in Carrickcruppin Cemetery.

The editorial in that issue (Jan-Feb 1951) dealt with the coming to Derry of a unit of the Dutch Air Force on the invitation of the English government "without any regard for the wishes of the Irish people."

"Why go chasing after this hare started in Holland, the object of the present propelled and massed hunt, while the British lion is allowed to remain unmolested in his Six Counties?" the editorial asked.

"Why call for a boycott of Dutch gins and lager beers and at the same time remain silent about the distribution and sales of London gins and British ale?"

It regretted the presence of Dutch troops on Irish soil as a "passing phase" and while not expressing opposition or disagreement with the anti-Dutch campaign it sought to inject "some sense of realism and logic" into it.

Protests of this nature were useful provided that those who promote them are prepared to follow them up by advocating without hesitation or qualification, that the Irish race unite in one solid phalanx as a preliminary to taking whatever active measures may be necessary to drive British forces and influence from Ireland if their protests fail, as fail they must."

The fact was that the Anti-Partition campaign was flagging and the Dutch intrusion into Derry gave a temporary post to rally opinion. The A-P campaign had reached the "locked door of British intransigence" already referred to and positive action was needed.

The Dutch interlude provided novelty and a diversion from reality but in John Mitchell's words "the axe needed to be applied to the root", ie English imperialism in Ireland.

An article gave notice of the Seán Russell Memorial unveiling: "Mindful of the huge crowds that thronged to the Knockmealdown Mountains to see the Liam Lynch memorial unveiled (in 1935), we have every reason to expect still larger crowds pouring into Dublin on 9th September next for the unveiling of the memorial to our late Chief-of-Staff Seán Russell."

"The Return of the Gaels" will be a big feature in the event when hundreds of the IRA who were forced to emigrate will return in September to see the unveiling of a monument towards the cost of which they have contributed so much."

"An energetic committee is in charge of the arrangements and the event promises to be an outstanding one in the history of the Irish Republic," the article concluded.

And so it came to pass as we shall see . . .

(More next month. Refs. *The Secret Army* by J Bowyer Bell; *Northern Ireland: The Orange State* by Michael Farrell and *An t-Éireannach Aontaithe/The United Irishman*, January-February 1951.)

ENGLAND'S DIFFICULTY IRELAND'S OPPORTUNITY

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Years
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THE March 1951 issue of *An tÉireannach Aontaithe/The United Irishman* carried a trenchant editorial in which it answered official Dutch

excuses for their Air Force's presence in Derry at the invitation of the British government.

A spokesperson for the Dutch, a Dr Klompé wrote to a Mr Finan (possibly an Anti-Partition official) saying that a refusal of the British invitation would have meant taking the Irish side "in the conflict between your country and England" which would have done "great harm to your case and to European co-operation as a whole".

The editorial replied that the Netherlands government took "a definitely invidious position in the conflict... by invading our land with your armed forces in defiance of the strong protest of every section of the Irish people". Had the Dutch refused it would have "done NOT harm but great good to our 'case' and to your Honour as a Government."

"It would have shown England and the world that you stood by the PROFESSED principles of the United Nations and refused to commit an Act of Aggression on Ireland that has always been a friend to the Dutch."

The letter went on to say that in sending the Air Force unit "we do not express any opinion in this conflict: we are only the guests of the British government."

"In our view," the editorial answered, "you express the most forcible opinion you could possibly express, by your aggression on our soil, by occupying with England our northern counties, which you know are held by England by sheer force of her superior military arms."

"You cannot possibly plead ignorance of the fact that this is our land, and that in entering it you have taken England's side in the fight for our robbed territory."

The letter again: "I do appeal to you not to draw my country into this delicate situation, as you must be convinced that the Dutch people have no intention at all to hurt their good Irish friends."

"I express the hope that you will appreciate the fact that my Government is not guilty in this respect and that we could not act otherwise." It went on: "My party and I have done what we could, but we must back our Government..."

The editorial hits back: "We understand, very thoroughly, the hypocrisy of your attitude... we have not drawn you into the conflict... but you have entered it, deliberately, despite the most vigorous protest from the people of Ireland."

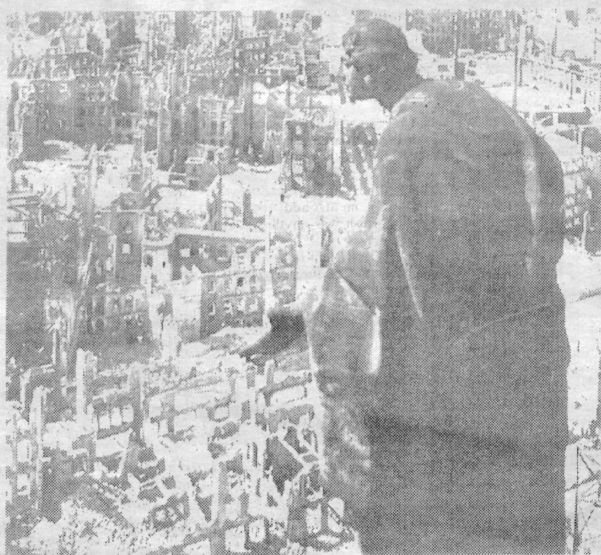
"We quite agree that the Dutch people, as the Irish people or English people, or American people, by which we mean the ordinary men and women of these countries, living their daily lives amidst the great difficulties of the conditions brought on them by their governments, that never consult them as to whether they wish to go out and slaughter and be slaughtered by their fellow-men, — we agree that these helpless people are not responsible for the things done in their name, BUT the Dutch government is DEFINITELY MOST GUILTY of an outrageous Act of Aggression in Ireland..."

"It should have felt itself bound in honour and principle to act otherwise. Your party and you have not done what you could. It should have refused to back your government in their aggression."

The editorial concluded: "By backing your government you have TAKEN SIDES IN THE IRISH-BRITISH CONFLICT. You have taken the side of Aggression. You have aroused resentment and enmity between our country and yours."

Nothing could have been clearer. Hypocrisy was answered boldly in plain words. A letter to the Editor carried in the same issue of the *Organ of Irish Republicanism* referred to an Anti-Partition meeting held in Dublin's Mansion House "to protest against Dutch forces landing in Ireland."

A speaker on that occasion condemned "any party who used force to end Partition. The same speaker called Robert Emmet, Wolfe Tone and Kevin Barry "fools or madmen". Ninety per cent of the audience protested at this "insult to the memory of those who gave their lives for Irish



• The German city of Dresden after the firestorm bombardment by British and US bombers on February 13, 1945 which killed 100,000 people. Experts agree it served no useful military purpose. Fifty years ago Sinn Féin opposed the suggestion that Ireland would join NATO if the Border was removed and "fight the wars of England or her allies".

freedom", the letter-writer stated. Another letter, dated January 21, 1951 was sent by the Standing Committee of Sinn Féin to all Public Bodies (local authorities) in Ireland, "in view of England's inviting foreign armies to Irish soil."

It asked each local council to demand the breaking off of all relations — political and economic — with England and any of her allies who assist her.

It also asked for a declaration that the "Partition Question" was not the issue. Rather was it the removal of British troops and British influence from Ireland and the breaking of the connection with England.

Further the letter requested that councils repudiate the suggestion that if the Border were removed, Ireland would join NATO and fight the wars of England or any other country.

The people of Ireland had never given mandate or authority to anyone to make such a bargain. Such a situation would lead to Ireland "becoming a shambles in a war between the Aggressors of the East and West."

HONOURABLE STAND

Sinn Féin reminded the Public Bodies of the honourable stand they took when they repudiated the British in 1920, publicly withdrew their allegiance from Dublin Castle and pledged themselves to the Government established by the All-Ireland Dáil on January 21, 1919.

This spirited circular letter was signed by Antoine Mac Cana and Seán Ó Cearnaigh, Ard-Rianna.

Indeed the headline on the front page of that March 1951 issue was "War Clouds", indicating the possible outbreak of WWII.

The news article underneath listed "feverish diplomatic activity; huge rearmament budgets, former enemies being wooed for support, defeated nations being appeased and strengthened."

All of these being combined with significant movements of troops, showed that the "uneasy peace of the past few years" could not last much longer.

The two world wars were fought between governments who had promised liberty, freedom and plenty to the world while the war was on. When it was over the victors proceeded to tyrannise over the smaller nations whose very existence might, economically or otherwise, interfere with their designs of wealth and world conquest.

The article went on to describe how propaganda can force millions to discard their powers of reason. In WWI it was Catholic Belgium was being fought for, in WWII it was Poland and in WWII it would be the defence of Christianity.

It was the propaganda slogan of "Christianity versus Communism" that was intended to bring

Ireland into the war which appeared to be coming — on the side of "Christian" England and America.

In WWII the Soviet Union had attained her position of power and eminence with the help of England and America. They had with the Cold War closed their eyes to the fact that the only change WWII made to Poland was the substitution of a Russian overlordship for that of a German.

In 1951 with Russian intrigue having proved itself superior to that of England we were told that Communism must be destroyed, as if Communism were not equally reprehensible when the Big Three (Churchill, Stalin and Roosevelt) met at Yalta in February 1945.

However, at Yalta they were busy marking out their post-war spheres of influence once Germany had been defeated.

A proper government in Ireland would easily overcome this stupid but persistent propaganda — not by suppressing the truth but by giving the whole truth. Sadly, political leaders on both sides of the Border seemed to agree that the Irish must go to war on England's side.

"In this way they are probably more honest than those who boasted a neutrality in the last war and in the most sneaky manner imaginable co-operated in every way with England," the writer observed.

Spokespersons for all political parties had urged that "we cannot be neutral" and well-meaning Anti-Partition supporters were taken aback when Brigadier O'Gowan — a leader and spokesperson — had advocated an Irish Brigade to fight on England's side.

When war came, not alone would thousands of Irishmen, for one reason or another, be forced to join the English army, but both administrations in Belfast and Dublin would be officially on England's side.

Given such a situation, Republicans should strive by every means to stem this thoughtless, headlong rush to support an infernal but now crumbling Empire. It should be pointed out that as long as England seeks by force and intimidation to impose her will on Ireland we must ever see in ENGLAND'S DIFFICULTY IRELAND'S OPPORTUNITY.

Furthermore it should be stressed that the one occasion when most people will agree that war is justified is when a hostile army invades another country.

"If those who advocate going to war on England's side to prevent aggression are to be in any way logical, they should first of all advocate a war to stop English aggression in Ireland," the article concludes.

References at the beginning of that piece to "former enemies being wooed for support" and "defeated nations being appeased and strengthened" cover the reconstruction of

Germany after 1945 in order to make it a bulwark against the new enemy and former ally, Soviet Russia. Not alone was the Polish capital Warsaw which was destroyed by German forces rebuilt carefully, stone upon stone, but the German city of Nuremberg was "meticulously reconstructed from the actual architect's plans of the original town, [which had been] reduced with its cobbled streets and timbered houses to ashes and rubble by the Allied bombs of 1943" (*The Odessa File*).

As late as 1995, the commemorations in places like Dresden of the 50th anniversary of its destruction by British and US bombers on February 13, 1945 caused tension in Germany's relationship with Britain.

Dresden was "a severe case of over-bombing". The firestorm bombardment used there and in Hamburg draws a person in — people's remains were shrunk to tiny little figures. The 100,000 who died in Dresden were disposed of by mass funeral pyres in the streets.

MONUMENT

The city was "another monument to total war" as practised by the Allies. The *Irish Times* of January 7, 1995 stated that "the bombing came during the final weeks of the war and most experts now agree that it served no useful military purpose."

The anger and bitterness surrounding the destruction of the city once known as the Florence of the Elbe rose to the surface two years ago (1993) when Queen Elizabeth [of England] was booed as she passed the ruins of the Frauenkirche. One 70-year-old man carried a sign which read "Royal Air Force — war criminals".

(Note: The ruined stump of the famous Frauenkirche or Women's Church has been preserved among all the reconstruction as a reminder of that awful night in February 1945 when the city was levelled and 100,000 people shrivelled up into figurines before being reduced to ashes.)

Elsewhere in the March 1951 issue is a letter from Eithne Nic Shuibhne, surviving sister of Terence Mac Swiney, Lord Mayor of Cork who died on hunger strike in 1920. Her letter had been sent to the *Sunday Independent* but was refused publication.

Dated February 1, 1951 it came from her home at 4 Belgrave Place, Cork, and challenged the "Indo" to publish, saying that it boasted that its wide circulation was due to the fact that "your paper is ready to voice the opinions of all its readers, irrespective of your own views".

Eithne traced the origins and history of the puppet parliament at Stormont from 1920 and then attacked the proposal to join NATO if "the Border were removed".

When English forces, power and influence leave Ireland, she said, we shall decide for ourselves with whom we shall ally ourselves and to what extent. If we decide to have an alliance at all.

"But in the present struggle for power between East and West Aggressors, our plain duty to our country is to be strictly neutral. Atheism is anathema to us; so also is Hypocrisy, the fruitful breeding ground of Atheism." Eithne Nic Shuibhne concluded. (Atheistic Communism was the propaganda slogan used at that time.)

Miss Mac Swiney was adamant in all her letters at this time that there should be "no selling out of our youth to the European battlefields in return for our freedom, nor are we going to have our land turned into a shambles for either side."

Also Margaret Buckley, former President of Sinn Féin (1937-1950) began a series of articles under the nom-de-plume "Margaret Lee". The first dealt with the folklore of "Quaint Easter Customs".

An interesting quotation from the English *Morning Post* in December 1919 is carried: "The Sinn Féin frame of mind is as open as a book to anyone who can read."

"The leaders are absolutely uncompromising. In a sense this is the most honest movement of the kind the country has experienced. It says what it means, and sticks to it."

Republican Sinn Féin aspires to live up to the standard set over 80 years ago. But what of those who have stolen the historic name of Sinn Féin to which they are not entitled? That name never belonged in Stormont or Leinster House and soon too we may see it in Westminster itself.

(More next week. Refs. *An tÉireannach Aontaithe/The United Irishman*, March 1951; *The Odessa File*, by Frederick Forsyth, published Hutchinson 1972 and the *Irish Times*, January 7, 1995.)

'SACSA NUA DARBH' AINM ÉIRE'

**50
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EASTER Sunday 1951 was on March 25 and therefore the April edition of *An tÉireannach Aontaithe/The United Irishman* carried only the Army Council statement and the report of the Dublin Easter Commemoration.

The IRA Army Council's Easter Message 1951 was notable for its emphasis on policy. It read as follows:

"The Army Council takes this opportunity once more to state its policy. This policy is based on two main points: (1) the primary object is the expulsion of the British Forces which occupy portion of our country, and (2) that in order to avoid the mistakes of the past and in order to deprive the time-serving politicians of an excuse for coercion, all types of aggressive military action in the 26-County area are ruled out."

Nothing could be clearer than that. The statement went on to amplify those two points:

"That this policy is clear-cut and reasonable cannot be denied. Since we have only one enemy, England and those who serve her, we refuse to be lured from our objective into the maze of violent internal political action which has in the past stultified the efforts of those pledged to complete the work left to us as a solemn trust by those of former generations who struck for freedom against oppression."

Then it proceeded to deal with the implementation of policy:

"The Army has set itself a task — a hard task and one which cannot be accomplished by hasty ill-timed or unplanned action."

"Every move must be carefully excogitated every political, geographical and tactical factor must be weighed carefully, every step forward must be well considered and then taken resolutely until the stage is set for the final blow."

"Then the Army will strike and strike home, and with God's help will succeed in ending forever the centuries-long struggle which has cost this small nation so much in blood and suffering."

"It is not in humans to command success but by careful planning in advance and resolute action at the psychological moment we can do out best to deserve it."

A word of warning followed:

"Let no one be deceived by the apparent inactivity of the Army; not for us the monster meetings, processions and flag-waving; not for us the platitudes and worn-out clichés of those politicians who make their living out of a nation's subjection."

"For us there can only be one course and on this Easter day we pledge ourselves to follow that course to the end."

Then an appeal:

"We call on the youth of the country to rally to our standard. The Republican Movement can and will attain complete freedom for our country if given the support it deserves."

Finally, a pledge.

"In that spirit of self-reliance which has brought the Irish people so far along the road to freedom, and in commemoration of those whom we honour today we pledge ourselves to carry on the fight until with God's help we will see the epitaph of Emmet written in letters of fire across the world, and Ireland free, Gaelic and united taking her place amongst the free nations of the world."

— Issued by the Army Council."



• Pádraig Pearse

Brave words, certainly, with once more the courageous admission that mistakes had been made in the past which played into the IRA's political enemies in the 26 Counties.

Also a phased and steady advance was proposed with determined implementation at each stage. It appears to this writer that the statement was written by Tomás Mac Curtáin, Corcaigh; while this may be so — based on internal evidence in the text — there is no doubt but that it reflected faithfully the thinking of the Army Council in 1951.

In Dublin the parade marched from Stephen's Green to Glasnevin, led by the Fintan Lalor Pipe Band. The Emerald Girls Pipe Band also took part and organisations participating included Oglagh na hÉireann, Cumann na mBan, Cumann na gCailíní and Clann na nGael.

The report states that "thousands lined the route to watch the procession which was much larger than [in] former years". Seán Ó Néill, Ciarraí, spoke at the Republican Plot.

Dúirt sé nárbh í "an phoblacht bréige sin a bhuaíodh sna chuid seo den tír an Phoblacht céanna a bhí in aigne an Phiairsigh agus a leithéid agus ar thugadar a mbeatha ar a son. Ní raibh siad-sán sásta le leath-shaoirse agus ní bheidh muid-ne sásta le leath-shaoirse acht oiread."

He spoke of the many betrayals since 1916 and pointed out that the history of this period, with its mistakes and betrayals should be a lesson to us and to future generations not to allow ourselves to be deflected from the straight hard path by the prospect of short cuts to freedom.

SHORT CUTS BROUGHT 'RUIN AND DISASTER'

Short cuts had only brought ruin and disaster and the loss of valuable lives. There was only one sure path to victory — the path of physical force. The Republican Army would choose no other path and he appealed to the people of Ireland to give them the necessary support so that they could complete the hard task before them.

The words of Seán Ó Néill, whose own brother Maurice went before a 26-County State firing squad in 1942, were not heeded by some of those then in the Movement, and others who later joined it.

"Short cuts" to Irish freedom were taken twice in the past 50 years with "ruin and disaster and the loss of valuable lives".

One needs to consult the May 1951 edition of "the Organ of Irish Republicanism" for further reports of Easter commemorations that year. Indeed there is a notice "To our Contributors" in that same May issue apologising for the inability to include many of the reports received from various centres of Easter 1916 ceremonies.

Reports were carried, however, from six centres: Belfast, Clare, South Kerry,

Longford, Carlow and Manchester.

From Belfast it was stated that the commemoration there "showed a marked improvement" with "a notable resurgence of spirit among the people".

The parade represented the IRA, Fianna Unites, National Graves Association, Sinn Féin, Central Branch of the Irish Labour Party and the general public.

"The McKearney-Diamond group in the Irish Labour Party held a separate commemoration immediately after the official ceremony. In this connection the Central Branch of the Irish Labour Party practically repudiated this attempt to make political capital out of our Martyred Dead — by publishing an advertisement asking all its members in the interests of Republican Unity to attend the National Graves Ceremony."

Tom Heenan presided at the Republican ceremony and recited a decade of the Rosary as Gaeilge. The Army Statement was read by Pádraig Ó Dubhghaill and the oration was given by Séamus Steele, recently released from Belfast jail.

In Carlow at St Mullin's Tomás Ó Broin presided. Units of Fianna Éireann, Cumann na mBan and IRA with members of the general public paraded from Glynn, headed by Powerstown Piper's Band.

Aoghagán Mac Cormaic, Baile Átha Cliath, gave the oration and Seán Ó Dúinn, Inistiog, Co Kilkenny, read the Army Statement. Other speakers included veteran Séamus Lennon and Mrs Doyle.

In Manchester at Mostyn Cemetery, Seán Fitzpatrick, Secretary of the National Graves Association, spoke.

In Cahersiveen, South Kerry, Críostóir Ó Néill, Baile Átha Cliath, delivered the oration.

"Independence signified complete political, social and economic freedom for Ireland. In other words the complete undoing of the conquest in all its aspects was the task to which Republicans had committed themselves."

"He emphasised that this could only be achieved by: (1) our living as true Gaels should, culturally and (2) by our driving from our territory the foreign troops now in occupation of it."

Críostóir Ó Néill commented on the recruiting posters for the FAC displayed in Cahersiveen. "The proper place for any young man who wished to fight for this country was in the ranks of the Irish Republican Army. No other organisation was likely to give him the opportunity he sought."

In Clare, Clouna Cemetery was the venue at the graveside of Comdt Martin Devitt, IRA who was killed at Crow's Bridge in an encounter with an RIC patrol on February 23, 1920.

Contingents were present from Ennis, O'Callaghan's Mills, Milltown Malbay, Newmarket-on-Fergus, Sixmilebridge, Ennistown and many other parts of Clare.

Brian Lowe recited a decade of the Rosary in Irish, and a bugler sounded the Last Post. Martin Whyte, Lisdounvarna read the Army Statement.

Gus O'Loughlin, brother of Col-Comdt Peadar O'Loughlin who died on active service in 1921, read the 1916 Proclamation. Joe McMahon, NT, Milltown Malbay gave the oration and a wreath from North Clare IRA was laid on the grave.

In his oration Joe McMahon said that "compromise had followed compromise and a minority in the North is allowed to dictate a policy for the whole Irish nation".

Elsewhere, Tomás Mac Curtáin spoke in Cork; Gearóid Ó Broin (Dublin) at Camross in Laois; Seán H Ryan in Tralee; Tom Maguire in Donaghpatrick, Headford,

Co Galway; Ruairí Ó Drisceóil (Corcaigh) in Nenagh; Gearóid Mac Cárthaigh in Newry and Seán Kearney (Dublin) in Drogheda and Dundalk.

Ceremonies were also held in Sligo, Leitrim, Drumboe, Co Donegal, Derry and Tyrone. Others still are not listed.

'LIFE OR DEATH'

The front page banner headline in *An tÉireannach Aontaithe/The United Irishman* of April 1951 reads "Life or Death". The article is by-lined with the name Seán Mac Eoin, a middle-aged Republican who gave many inspiring public lectures at Sinn Féin functions in the early 1950s.

He quotes Fearflatha Ó Gríve (now anglicised Agnew), who was Hereditary Bard to Ó Néill of Clanaboy, in what he calls a "startling prediction": "Beidh saor-Éire ina Sacsain".

The writer was quoting from a long poem by Ó Gríve [Gnimh] entitled Céimsíon na nGaedheal — the Downfall of the Gael. It was written about the year 1612 after the Flight of the Earls (O'Neill and O'Donnell with their families) and the subsequent Plantation of Ulster by the English government.

Professor Tomás Ó Rathaille in his *Measra Dánta II* (published 1927 and 1977) calls this work "a mournful but majestic poem".

Pádraig Pearse in his essay *Ghosts* says Fearflatha Ó Gríve "spoke for the generations that preferred exile to slavery":

*Má thug an deòirdí
Sacsá nua darbh' ainm Éire
Bheith len a linn-se tainm bhla,
Do'n inise seo is cóir céiliúradh,
If thou had consented, (Ó God)
That there be a new England named
Ireland*

*To be ever in the grip of a foe
Then to this isle we must bid farewell.*

Mac Eoin went on: "This British Conquest is two-fold: it is physical — there are British troops on Irish soil; it is spiritual — Irish nationality is being stifled slowly but surely to death."

"Patrick Pearse died a soldier's death for freedom, to save Ireland's ravaged body; but he also spent an active life working to save the soul of Ireland."

"Pearse was a true disciple of Tone; and it was Pearse (with the help of Davis) who gave its final fullness to Tone's doctrine. 'Freedom,' wrote Pearse, 'is a condition which can be lost and won and lost again; nationality is a life if once lost, can never be recovered.'

"A nation is a stubborn thing, very hard to kill; but a dead nation does not come back to life, any more than a dead man."

CRIMINAL FOLLY

The article goes on to urge Irish people to a realisation of their criminal folly in succumbing to England's new and subtle onslaught on the mind and soul of Ireland.

While readily appreciating the anguish of soul which prompted Ó Gríve's dread utterance we know also that the poet had not lost all hope for later in the same poem he asked "Or shall we have a second glory?"

"When we have done all these things," the writer concludes, "when we have made the Irish language safe for posterity, when we have shaken off England's spiritual shackles, when we have made an Irish Nation proud and supreme on this island, then, indeed We Shall have a Second Glory!"

More next month. Refs. *An tÉireannach Aontaithe/The United Irishman*, April and May 1951; *Measra Dánta II*, leis an Ollamh Tomás Ó Rathaille, Cló Ollscoile Chorcaí 1977 and *The Complete Works of PH Pearse — Political Writings and Speeches*, Phoenix 1924.)

MILITARY COUNCIL TO DRAFT OVERALL PLAN

**50
Years
Ago**

FOR seven days from Tuesday, May 28, 1951 a black flag flew from the flagpole on Sinn Féin Head Office, 9 Parnell Square, Dublin.

An English royal visit was taking place in the Six Counties. Arrangements were made by the Seán McCaughey Cumann in Belfast to hold a protest demonstration and public meeting on Thursday, May 30.

Posters advertising these events were put up on the previous Saturday, but these were torn down or defaced by the English colonial police, the RUC.

Then in the early hours of Tuesday, May 28 large-scale raids were made on Republican houses in Belfast and 13 men were arrested and thrown into Crumlin Road jail without charge or trial.

Among them were Jimmy Steele and Liam Burke, recently released after long years in jail. Under the Special Powers Act they all remained in prison for seven days. It was internment without trial again.

In spite of the raids and arrests and British forces interference with Sinn Féin publicity, the protest demonstration went ahead as arranged.

A parade formed up in Hamill Street and, headed by the Tricolour, marched up the Falls Road to Clonard Street where an enthusiastic meeting was held.

Speakers were Pat McCotter, Chairperson; Tom Heenan (Belfast); Seán Ó Cearnaigh, Ard Rúnaí, Sinn Féin; Cathal Ó Murchú; Tomás Ó Dubhghaill, Leas-Uachtarán; agus Seosamh Mac Criosail. The latter four were from Dublin.

One last kick by the RUC was the attempted intimidation of the owner of the lorry and of the loudspeaker hirers. Of course, the so-called nationalist press was too careful or too loyal to carry advertisements for the meeting.

The Sinn Féin Notes in *An tÉireannach Aontaithe/The United Irishman* of June 1951 reported that there had been increased activity by the Sinn Féin Cumann in many areas.

The Dublin Comhairle Ceantair held regular weekly public meetings at Elvery's Corner, O'Connell Street each Saturday night and they had been attracting ever-increasing crowds.

Then there was the Hotel Conference at the Metropole and the flying of the Union Jack over the front entrance. A picket was placed by the Austin Stack Cumann carrying slogans such as: "The Union Jack flies in O'Connell Street, while British troops occupy Irish territory".

UNION JACKS BURNED

During the second day of the picket some young men entered the Metropole Restaurant,

came out on the canopy over the front entrance, seized the two Union Jacks and hurled them into the street.

Following a scuffle between the police and members of the picket who managed to obtain the flags, the Union Jacks were publicly burned at the weekly Saturday night meeting in O'Connell Street, to the great delight of an enthusiastic crowd.

The April edition of the *Organ of Irish Republicanism* commented on "three cheers, derisive and victorious" which greeted Anthony Mulvey when he (belatedly) took his seat in the British House of Commons.

He had been elected in the Mid-Ulster constituency on an abstentionist ticket. Now he had "adopted a policy which is diametrically opposed to the mandate given to him by his constituents".

Mulvey, a journalist associated with the *Ulster Herald* grouping of local newspapers and an independent abstentionist MP for Fermanagh-South Tyrone (along with Patrick Cunningham) 1935-45, was selected by a nationalist constituency convention on an abstentionist basis.

Later, subsequent to his election, he put together another convention, believed to be hand-picked, to reverse that policy. The "News of the Month" column in the Republican organ continued: "Treachery is a word that is often freely bandied about but in this case a man who publicly swears allegiance to a foreign king cannot complain if this terrible epithet 'Traitor' is henceforth applied to him.

"It is safe to assume that if this man had been honest enough to announce, before election, his intention to take his seat that a candidate pledged to the old Sinn Féin abstentionist policy would have been nominated and elected.

"But honesty is seldom an attribute of Irish politicians. He has succeeded in retaining his seat but he has lost forever the confidence of the people of Ireland and his good name as a man of honour and honesty.

"Perhaps the fact that the British government's majority in the House of Commons is dwindling has something to do with Mulvey's decision.

"It is significant that he took his seat on the government side of the House and it is well within the bounds of possibility that this man's vote might, in time of crisis, be responsible for saving the government.

"What an achievement for Mulvey and the Anti-Partitionists!"

If 1951 was the "key-year" for the Republican Movement, as has already been mentioned in this series, May was the pivotal month in that decisive year.

In that month a Military Council was established to draft an Overall Plan for the Republican Movement as a whole.

Its members consisted of Tony Magan, IRA Chief-of-Staff; Tomás Mac Curtáin, chair of the Army Council; Pádraig Mac Lógáin, President

of Sinn Féin and Chair of the Army Executive; a former British army officer with WWII experience service who was an expert on guerrilla warfare; and one other person who is not identified.

No longer would it suffice to have a political organisation and a military force working in harmony. A policy contesting Westminster elections north of the Border and local elections south of it, together with a military aim of a successful campaign against British forces in the Six Counties and no offensive action in the 26 Counties, would not be adequate any more. The Movement was developing.

The Overall Plan would have to provide for specific military training for Volunteers and lay out objectives to be achieved and step by step.

Similarly, if the mass of the people were to be organised, specific steps needed to be taken by Sinn Féin and within that same organisation. Political education of members' organisational and publicity skills, preparation for passive resistance – civil disobedience and non-cooperation – all of these skills needed to be developed.

Further, roles needed to be sketched out for Cumann na mBan and Fianna Éireann as well as for a Prisoner Dependents Fund organisation and welfare body. All would need to grow and develop in co-ordination.

The Military Council set to work and did produce an Overall Plan. This was the road map according to which the Movement was to advance in the years ahead.

Essentially, it was followed throughout the 1950s and early 1960s. With a specific policy the Movement would be steered in accordance with the guidelines set down and discipline maintained.

The completion of the Military Council's work was indeed a significant achievement and a most important milestone in the Movement's progression.

FIRST PRESIDENT OF THE IRISH REPUBLIC

With all the publicity and a special postal stamp for "75 Years of Irish Radio", it is necessary to advert to the fact that it is 85 years since the first Irish radio – in 1916.

Similarly, the first President of Ireland – and not just 26 Counties – was Pádraic Pearse. The IRB Military Council, which planned the Rising, met at 9am on Easter Monday 1916 and appointed the seven who signed the Proclamation of the All-Ireland Republic as the Provisional Government of that Republic.

The Provisional Government then elected Pearse as President and James Connelly as Vice-President. Contrary to a recent RTE TV programme Pearse did not just assume that title.

The first Irish Radio Station went on the air early on Easter Tuesday 1916. In Reece's Building, O'Connell Street, Dublin there was a

School of Wireless Telegraphy.

At the instance of Joseph Mary Plunkett, this was taken over by Óglagh na hÉireann on Easter Monday 1916, and after long and arduous labour it was fitted out as a Transmitting Station.

It began functioning next day as Raidió Phoblacht na hÉireann. The messages it sent out were received by a ship at sea and re-transmitted to America.

And so, in spite of rigid censorship the news of the Rising was flashed to the world and newspapers had it on their front page, much to the anger of the British.

The first Irish radio was a great coup for the all-Ireland Republic proclaimed in arms at Easter 1916.

The Irish language weekly, *INNUI*, in an article on this event in the late 1940s, stated that the Government of the Argentine Republic – Tir an Airgid – where there were many Irish exiles, immediately recognised the Provisional Government of the Irish Republic as the lawful government of Ireland.

While the equipment of this Station was being transferred from Reece's to the GPO, Captain Thomas Weafer of the Army of the Irish Republic, a native of Enniscorthy, Co Wexford, was mortally wounded.

The building where he was caught fire and his body was consumed in the flames. Two brass plaques on the Hibernian Bank at the corner of O'Connell Street and Lower Abbey Street commemorate his sacrifice.

On Easter Sunday 1937 several thousand people accompanied by six bands marched from St Stephen's Green to O'Connell Street. A plaque to the O'Rahilly was unveiled in Moore Lane which was re-named O'Rahilly Parade in his honour.

The parade then reformed and marched to the Hibernian Bank where the plaques in honour of Captain Weafer – one in Irish and one in English – were unveiled.

Eoghan Ó Tuairise, the poet and writer from Ballinasloe has written a beautiful poem in Irish on his thoughts on reading the inscription on the plaques. It was on the course for the Intermediate (now Junior) Certificate examination as recently as the 1980s.

But Raidió Phoblacht na hÉireann did not die in Easter Week 1916. It was heard again throughout 1939 with accounts of the IRA Sabotage Campaign in England and the Comhar na gComharsan (Neighbour's Co-operation) economic policy of the Movement. It was on the air once more in 1957-59 during the Resistance Campaign.

(More next month. Refs. *An tÉireannach Aontaithe/The United Irishman*, May 1949, April 1951 and June 1951; *The Last Post* published by the National Graves Association, 1938, 1976 and 1985; *Northern Ireland: The Orange State* by Michael Farrell, published by Pluto Press 1976 and 1980 and *INNUI* of a date in the late 1940s.)

DERRY BARRACKS RAIDED: IRA CAPTURE ARMS

**50
Years
Ago**

ON June 3, 1951 the IRA was back in action. Members of the Derry city unit led by two GHQ Staff officers (including Tony Magan) raided a local British barracks and captured

arms. An *tÉireannach Aontaithe/The United Irishman* of June 1951 in a front page article described the raid as "a fitting protest against the visit of English royalty to Ireland made by the Irish Republican Army".

Bren and other machine guns plus Sten sub-machine guns and Le-Enfield rifles and a quantity of miscellaneous ammunition were seized.

The BESA 7.92mm machine gun taken was a new type of weapon still on the secret's list, according to a News Flash in the July issue of the Republican organ. The 20 Lee-Enfield Mark IV No 1 rifles were like the Bren light machine gun and the 20 Sten guns all of WWII vintage — six years earlier.

In fact the army of the 26-County State was still equipped with WWI Lee-Enfield Mark III rifles while the IRA trained with much newer weapons as a result of the raid.

Bell described how the Derry unit "reorganised in 1947 and up to a total twenty men by 1951, requested permission to raid the Ebrington territorial Barracks inside the Joint Royal Navy-Royal Air Force Anti-Submarine School". The operation was actually a silent seizure without armed confrontation; the intelligence was excellent and the chance of success good. It went off without a hitch.

The *UI* detailed the foresight and efficiency displayed throughout, every contingency being guarded against and nothing left to chance.

In planning out the mode of entry beforehand the various obstacles had been noted and provisions made to overcome them. When an additional obstacle was encountered all the necessary implements were on hand to deal with this.

WELL REHEARSED

The whole action was well rehearsed beforehand; each man knew his job and the part he had to play. Two large padlocks had to be smashed and a heavy door sawn through.

The precious cargo was loaded on the waiting truck and "delivered into the eager hands of the men waiting to receive it". Within a couple of hours the truck was back empty in its garage.

GHQ had to issue a statement to the press before the British army and the RUC were even aware of what had happened!

It was the first successful arms raid on a British military establishment since the Belfast IRA raided Ballykinlar Camp on February 10, 1940 and seized 100 rifles. A report of that action had been broadcast on Raidió Phoblacht na hÉireann, the IRA radio, in Belfast that evening!

The Derry raid of June 1951 was in fact the first armed action by the IRA since 1944. Things were looking up...

In the Republican Organ the purpose of the raid in relation to the new policy was implied.

"... the only effective protest that can



• Tony Darcy on his death-bed.

be made to England's claim to rule in Ireland, viz: the placing of guns in the hands of men who are willing and anxious to use them to drive the British army out of Ireland."

In Donegal, a middle-aged man remarked that it was "only a protest" and that "the arms must have been thrown into the sea". Not so, as Bell assesses.

"Most of Ireland may have been little interested in a single snatch-and-grab raid but within the Army it made a difference. Some sort of corner seemed to be turned. Volunteers were now using the Lee-Enfields, better rifles than those of the Irish army (*sic*). The Military Council was at work.

"The first printed directives on Organisation had been issued in May 1951, the first training notes had been printed in June and in July the first re-issue of *An tOglach*, the IRA monthly came out.

"When Magan spoke at Bodentown on June 24, he might well tell the Army was truly under way," Bell concluded.

Meanwhile the people were being organised behind the Movement as "the stiffening force". In addition to the public meetings in Belfast, protest meetings against the English Royal visit and the detention without trial for a week of 13 men in Belfast were held in Letterkenny, Swinford, Lurgan, Cork and Dublin.

The meeting in Dublin took place on Saturday night, June 2. It was preceded by a parade through the centre of the city, headed by a Tricolour, while at the end of the parade a Union Jack was dragged along the ground.

The Republican organ described it as having been "streeded" along the streets. It was afterwards burned at the meeting amidst the cheers of the large crowd present.

Speakers on the platform were Michael Traynor, chair; Séamus Sorahan, Gearóid Ó Broin (Dublin); Margaret Buckley, Tomás Mac Curtain, Seán Kearney and Tomás Ó Dubhghaill.

The speakers emphasised that if these [English royal] visitors were coming at the invitation of the Irish people to the free Irish nation "they could receive the highest honours and the greatest hospitality".

But coming as they were, to demonstrate the continued subjection of the Irish nation, to try to strengthen and perpetuate the "divide and conquer" policy on Ireland — their coming could only be calculated to rouse the indignation and even hate of the Irish people.

This calculated insult could only be looked on as a challenge. We should answer it not merely by protest meetings, but also by organising again to make good our claim to all Ireland, North and South, "from the centre to the sea".

If the English Royal visit had the effect of waking us from our torpor, of rousing us again to action, then it would have been a blessing in disguise. But it was up to ourselves.

1940s.

"Mr Boland and his master Mr de Valera," it reads, "have been very perturbed in Leinster House recently because an 'Illegal Organisation', to kill which they had employed all the forces of the [British] Empire, is still alive and not alone that but is still actively recruiting and collecting money.

"They know of course that the logical outcome of all this activity on the part of the 'Illegal Organisation' will be a war against England to whose monarch they and their friends have sworn allegiance [1927, 1932 and 1933 in order to be admitted to Leinster House].

"They know that in pursuance of their adopted policy of co-operation with England they will, in the event of such a war, have to declare openly whether their allegiance is to the Empire or to the Irish people.

"In the meantime they try to have it both ways." (Unveiling monuments to Republican Dead while they seek further coercion of Republicans, for example.)

However on June 12, 1951 as a result of a 26-County general election precipitated by the "Mother and Child" crisis, Fianna Fáil was returned to power as a minority administration. Gerry Boland became Minister for Justice for the last time.

The Organ of Irish Republicanism's July issue quotes a *Sunday Express* reporter of June 17:

"Mr Gerald Boland, back again under Mr de Valera as Minister for Justice, is said to have called for a dossier on the activities of the outlawed IRA in the three years he had been out of office.

"Forecast is that the remaining elements of the irregular army is likely to get a shock.

"A claim frequently made by Mr Costello and his ministers was that they 'took the gun out of Irish politics' (where did we hear that before and since?). But Mr Boland and members of the new government have never accepted this claim."

NO NONSENSE

"A colleague of the new Minister for Justice said yesterday: 'He is a strong man, and will stand for no nonsense from the IRA or any other private or underground army.

A publication which described itself as 'the Organ of Irish Republicanism' printed yesterday that a raid on Ebrington Barracks, Londonderry (*sic*) was 'carried out by the IRA', and described the raid as 'a fitting protest against the visit of English royalty to Ireland'.

"The general political scene since the changeover will be cleared tomorrow when Prime Minister (*Sic*) de Valera will hold a press conference to tell his plans. And his Defence Minister, Mr Oscar Traynor, is scheduled to explain when he hopes to do about civil defence."

For the record let it be noted that Seán Mac Bric, ex-Minister for Foreign Affairs, protested long and loudly on June 13 in Leinster House against the reappointment of a man with such a record of coercion against Republicans as Minister for Justice. But Fianna Fáil had minority support only in Leinster House...

Note: Sinn Féin issues a statement in May 1951 which was carried in the daily newspapers saying that they had not the finance or other resources to contest the 26-County general election.

(More next month. Refs. *The Secret Army* by J Bowyer Bell and *An tÉireannach Aontaithe/The United Irishman*, April/May, June and July 1951.)

Addendum: Refs in May instalment of 50 Years Ago to Pádraic Pearse were from Louis le Roux: *Patrick H Pearse*, published Phoenix 1932.



• Comdt Louis Darcy.



• Gerald Boland.

In the June 1961 issue of *An tÉireannach Aontaithe/The United Irishman* a letter from Patrick Darcy, Headford, Co Galway is carried. It is in connection with the unveiling of a memorial cross at Castlegar on Easter Sunday of that year, at which Mr Gerry Boland, 26-County Minister for Justice 1939-48, officiated.

Mr Darcy stated: "It has been reported in the press that a Mr Darcy, a relative of the late Comdt Louis Darcy, was amongst those present at the ceremony. I wish to state that I was the nearest relative of the late Comdt Darcy who was present in Castlegar that day, but I was not present at the unveiling.

"I was there a considerable time before the ceremony commenced and I went there for the express purpose of protesting against the unveiling being performed by an ex-Minister for Justice, during whose term of office the late Tony Darcy, my brother and a first cousin of Comdt Louis, was forced to die on hunger strike.

"I did make such protest to several members of the Memorial Committee and informed them that should the unveiling be performed by the ex-Minister I would not be associated with it.

"As I was not present when the ceremony took place I do not wish my name to be in any way associated with it," concluded Patrick Darcy in his well and clearly spelled-out letter.

In the April issue *News of the Month* section, Gerry Boland figures showing that like the Bourbons, Fianna Fáil had learnt nothing and forgotten nothing from their first coercion of Republicans in the 1930 and

THE BREAKING OF CLANN NA POBLACHTA

**50
Years
Ago**

WHEN the votes had been counted following the 26-County general election on May 30, 1951 Clann na Poblachta found itself reduced to two seats in Leinster House.

It was a big loss from the ten seats it won in 1948. Indeed Seán MacEntee of Fianna Fáil with his barbed wit was his usual abusive self when he likened the Clann na Poblachta experience to "a fish which had a brush with a cat - nothing left of it but a head and a tail".

The two Clann na Poblachta deputies who held their seats were Seán Mac Bhríde (the "head") and John Tully of Cavan (the "tail"). Mac Bhríde maintained his position in Dublin South-West, while Tully who seldom spoke in Leinster House was re-elected in Cavan.

On June 13 de Valera returned to office with 74 votes to the opposition's total of 69. Fianna Fáil had, at 69, gained one seat over its 1948 figure but five Independents supported them and restored them to power as a minority administration.

Three years in office 1948-51 marked a turning point for Fine Gael, which had 30 seats in 1944 and 31 in 1948, but recovered by 1951 to win a total of 40.

Labour had 16 in 1951, a loss of three; Clann na Talún six (down one), while Independents grew from 12 to 14. The whole debacle for the Coalition elected in 1948 grew out of the celebrated Mother and Child health scheme which split Clann na Poblachta and caused the downfall of the Coalition Administration.

The two main elements that comprised the Clann, those with a Republican background (led by Mac Bhríde) and those with a stern Socialist conscience (led by Dr Noel Browne), were sundered.

The Mother and Child Scheme was originally part of the 1947 Health Act drafted by Fianna Fáil who were still in power. It was shelved then when the Catholic hierarchy made known its opposition to the measure.

The Scheme was revived by Dr Browne as Minister for health in 1950. He had already made a great success of combating the scourge of tuberculosis then rampant in the country. His leadership in this regard was dynamic.

Browne now proposed a scheme of health care and education "in respect of motherhood", which was not to be compulsory. It would be available to all mothers, and children up to sixteen years of age. **There was to be no means test.**

The Irish Medical Association with which Dr Browne had a poor relationship objected to the concept of "socialised medicine". In July 1950 Browne told Leinster House he would not agree to a means test and received the backing of the Cabinet.

During October of that year, the Catholic Bishops considered the Scheme and expressed disquiet at clauses which had already been rejected in 1947. These were the lack of a means test and freedom of choice of doctor.

Nobody apparently adverted to the fact that "socialised medicine" had already come in north of the Border under the British labour government which had been in power since 1945. It did not appear to have done any harm to the people of the Six Counties - quite the contrary in the opinion of many.

Dr Browne met the bishops and felt he had dealt satisfactorily with their objections. When the IMA indicated the lack of resources at the disposal of the State, the Minister insisted that a means test be rejected.

Then the bishops made it clear to the Cabinet that they considered there was an important "issue of faith and morals". The family, they stated, was the final arbiter in matters of sex education.

They also objected to non-Catholics treating Catholic mothers-to-be or offering them sex education which might be at variance with accepted Catholic social teaching. The debate went



• Seán MacBride, leader of Clann na Poblachta which was reduced to two seats in Leinster House in the 1951 26-County general election.

on until March 1951.

Then Dr Browne published the Scheme and two days later the bishops rejected it. The Cabinet refused to support the Minister and abandoned the Scheme in the face of the bishops' and the Medical Association's objections.

DUBLIN ADMINISTRATION FELL

Browne had now also been rejected by his own party, Clann na Poblachta: Seán Mac Bhríde had demanded his resignation. Dr Browne did so and published his correspondence with the Catholic Hierarchy. The Dublin government fell in May 1951 as a result.

There was much agitation centred on the Mother and Child Scheme. A huge mass public meeting was held in College Green, Dublin, protesting at the upholding of a means test. Speakers included Eoin ("the Pope") O'Mahony who had been so active in securing the release of Republican prisoners.

"Eoin was always with the forces of disorder," commented one Dublin secondary teacher originally from Leitrim. Also prominent at debates and protests against the "means test" was Sinn Féin public speaker Séamus Oraghán, BL. At a debate in UCD's Literary and Historical Society on the Mother and Child Scheme, he made an impassioned contribution criticising the vested interests of the medical consultants and others who lived in the "crescents and squares" of the fashionable areas of Irish cities.

Certainly the Special Branch were in attendance in force at the College Green protest. As little groups gathered after the meeting, the Branch men were prominent in each group - avidly listening to the continuing discussions and noting the speakers. What had this social question got to do with "Offences Against the State", one might ask? Was it not normal politics? The Establishment felt under threat - their power was endangered, they figured.

Of the six seats held by Clann na Poblachta in Dublin in 1948, only one - that of the leader - was retained in 1951.

Peadar Cowan had departed in late 1948. Now Noel Browne, Dr French-O'Carroll, with leading supporters such as Noel Hartnett, BL resigned. Con Lehane stood by Mac Bhríde and



• Noel Browne lost his seat.

In the countryside, Jack McQuillan of Roscommon, the former All-Ireland footballer joined with Browne and held his seat. Paddy Kinane in North Tipperary and Timony in South Tipperary remained with Clann na Poblachta and lost their seats.

Outside of Dublin, only John Tully, loyal to Mac Bhríde, was returned to Leinster House, Drs Browne and French-O'Carroll, standing as Independents, were victorious in Dublin.

The forward momentum of Clann na Poblachta, Fianna Fáil's main political enemy, was halted and the party broken. At the next election in 1954, there was a slight recovery when a third seat was gained in North Kerry.

Johnny ("Machine-gun") Connor joined Mac Bhríde and Tully in Leinster House. They supported the second Coalition government there under John A Costello but refused a place at Cabinet.

Eventually in 1957 they brought down that administration when it collaborated with the British forces at the Border and jailed

Republicans.

Mac Bhríde lost his seat in the 1957 general election as did O'Connor's daughter (who had succeeded him in North Kerry following his death in a motoring accident). Tully alone remained and Clann na Poblachta dissolved in 1965.

Dr Browne went on to join Fianna Fáil in 1953 and lost his seat in 1954. Again as an Independent in 1957 he re-gained it and was co-founder with Jack McQuillan of the National Progressive Democrats Party in 1958. He joined the Labour Party in 1963 and held a seat with them until 1973. In 1977 he became the only sitting member of the Socialist Labour Party.

A lecturer in English in UCD and later in UCG, Dr Lorna Reynolds proclaimed publicly that "It did not matter if Noel Browne changed his parties as often as he changed his shirts," she would still vote for him. She felt he adhered to socialist principles.

But Dr Browne seemingly had no national principles. He often walked out of Leinster House rather than take a stand when his colleague Jack McQuillan raised the question of the Republican internees in the Curragh 1957-59.

In 1972 he lined up with unionist spokespersons such as William Craig in a televised debate in Boston which was carried coast-to-coast in the USA and later on RTE television in Ireland.

Browne could not ask unionists to join the 26-County confessional state, he said. Other speakers on the night including Ruairi Ó Brádaigh who called for a totally New Ireland with complete separation of church and state.

After the Clann na Poblachta debacle in 1951 the way was clearer for the Republican Movement. Many former Clann members and supporters at local level would support Sinn Féin "provided it was clear there would be no question of going into Leinster House". The constitutional road led nowhere, only to disillusionment.

But, irony of ironies, the Fianna Fáil Administration introduced and carried through in 1953 a Health Act which included in effect the Mother and Child Scheme. However, there was to be no means test!

STREET POLITICS

Meanwhile, north of the Border, street politics by nationalists continued in answer to the Stormont regime's intransigence. Unionist spokespersons seized upon the Mother and Child episode in the 26 Counties to highlight the confessional nature of the State there and maintain that "Home Rule would be Rome rule".

In April 1951, James McSparran, Stormont MP and a lawyer, successfully challenged the ban on the Irish national Tricolour in the Belfast High Court on a technicality. The Stormont response was to draft a Public Order Bill to reinforce the permanent Special Powers Act.

It sought further control over purely political opposition to itself. The Public Order Bill required 48 hours notice of all parades other than traditional - ie Orange - ones, and giving the Stormont Home Affairs Minister or the RUC power to ban or re-route parades at will if they thought they might lead to a breach of the peace.

The opposition nationalists denounced the Bill but it was rushed through Stormont by July 3, 1951. Eddie McAteer, Stormont MP, declared that "the immediate duty of the people of Derry was to meet the Bill with determined, disciplined disobedience".

But the first clashes were in Enniskillen. Even before the Bill became law the RUC attacked an AOH parade on August 15, batoning men and women and seizing the Tricolour. Later they cut down Tricolours from several private houses in the town, including Cahir Healy's.

Again the unionist regime was responding to pressure from local loyalists. TC Nelson, the unionist MP for Enniskillen, said: "Had the Minister for Home Affairs refused to forbid the Tricolour being carried through Enniskillen then we would have taken steps to see it wasn't carried."

It was no idle boast, a few days later three hundred loyalists armed with clubs and cudgels prevented a local nationalist band from parading through the village of Tempo near Enniskillen.

(More next month. Refs. *Northern Ireland: The Orange State* by Michael Farrell and *A Dictionary of Irish History 1800-1980* by Hickey and Doherty.)

"THE IRA STILL A FRAGILE STRUCTURE"

**50
Years
Ago**

IN CHAPTER 8 of his book *Northern Ireland: The Orange State*, Michael Farrell deals with the period 1945-51 and its concluding paragraphs summarise the situation.

It makes interesting reading: "The (Stormont) government were intent on taking a tough line. In May 1951 they used the Special Powers Act to intern a number of Republicans during a (British) royal visit to the North.

"And at the end of 1950 they had established a Reserve or Commando force of 100-150 men inside the RUC. The Commandos were to be a highly trained, self-contained mobile force which could be used either against the IRA or as a riot squad. In fact it was this squad who were used in most of the Tricolour riots.

"Despite all the criticism of the Stormont government by Labour backbenchers, the Labour government agreed to the RUC Commandos being trained by the British Army at Ballykinkar barracks in Co Down and supplied with automatic weapons and equipment by the War Office.

"The Anti-Partition League had tried working in the Stormont and Westminster parliaments without success; they had launched an international publicity campaign with the same result; they had turned to street demonstrations in the North only to be batoned off the streets.

"It was inevitable that the thoughts of some sections of the nationalist population should turn again to physical force.

"As early as June 1949 Malachy Conlon (Stormont MP for South Armagh) had hinted at force at a rally in Armagh when he talked of a 'final move to end partition... in which every man or woman, boy or girl, would be called upon, not just to attend meetings and wave flags but to make sacrifices (and) stand the strain which so many generations have stood before, and touring America with Conlon, Tom Barry had advocated that the South (sic) should declare war on the North (sic).

"Early in 1950 Capt. Peadar Cowan, an ex-Clann na Poblachta TD in the South (sic), had talked of raising an army to invade the North. Most of this was just talk, certainly the parliamentarians of the APL had no intention of fighting anybody, but it was symptomatic of the frustration of Northern and Southern Nationalists.

"Meanwhile the IRA had been slowly re-organising itself and had decided on another campaign in the North. In May 1951 they established a military council to draw up plans for it and in June they launched a successful attack on Ebrington (British) military barracks in Derry...

"Once again Unionist intransigence was driving a section of the Nationalist population towards war."

But for the Irish Republican Army, it was indeed an "Agonising Reconstruction", as Bowyer Bell entitled his Chapter XII. The full heading read "The IRA Endures: The Agonising Reconstruction, 1945-51."

On page 251-252, he graphically recaptures the atmosphere of the time. A re-reading of those pages is recommended today.

DIFFICULT

Some veterans of the 1920s recalled that the effort to reorganise in the mid-twenties was even more difficult than in 1945-51. It would appear that the higher the



* Robert Barton, signed, then repudiated, the 1921 Treaty of Surrender.

revolutionary wave rose – as in 1918-1921 – the lower came the trough which inevitable followed the lack of success.

Certainly the post-Parnell split period of the 1890s and 1900s was more difficult still for the IRB nucleus which was striving to re-invigorate the historic Fenian movement that had survived several generations.

Bell sums up: "To create a revolutionary base, a secret army, a band of brothers, no matter how deep have run the currents of nationalism and no matter how long has been the tradition of service, patience is more a virtue than daring, persistence than sparkle.

"The patient years, the long plodding routine, the scars of past failures add the steel and ruthless dedication to a movement centred on a faith that the future will not deny what the past already has.

"In 1951 the IRA was still a fragile structure, often maintained by inertia rather than action, totally incapable of the grand plan or the big coup, but each month a bit stronger, a bit harder, a bit more like the weapon Magan wanted."

Note: Tony Magan was Chief of Staff of the IRA from 1948 to 1957. Bell describes him as a "hard man, tightly disciplined, and utterly painstaking." Later he says that "the Dublin people in particular felt that the Army needed a steel core and that Magan could supply it."

Meanwhile the July issue of *An tÉireannach Aontaithe/The United Irishman* noted the passing of an historical figure George Gavan Duffy, who was the last of the Irish representatives to sign the Treaty of Surrender in 1921.

Born in 1882, he was son of Charles Gavan Duffy, the Young Ireland leader who was a native of Monaghan town. As a lawyer he arranged for the legal defence of Roger Casement in 1916.

He represented South Dublin in the First (All-Ireland) Dáil and helped considerably to set up the Sinn Féin Courts under its jurisdiction. Earlier he assisted in drafting the Declaration of Independence.

The Republican Organ states that "he, more than any of the five" signatories to the "Articles of Agreement for a Treaty" made it clear that his signature had only been given "under the dire threat of immediate and terrible war." He asserted that but for this threat he would never have signed, it says.

It went on: "It is to be regretted that with all his legal talent, he did not point out that a signature obtained by means of a threat, a consent forced under duress, could not be considered binding.

"Whatever we may think of his subsequent action, we owe him a great debt



* George Gavan Duffy (right) 'Treaty' signatory, died 50 years ago.

for his frank admission, for his statement shows clearly that there was no agreement, there was no treaty, there was only a Surrender".

Subsequently, Gavan Duffy became Minister for Foreign Affairs under Arthur Griffith's Presidency in January 1922, but resigned after the Supreme Court of the Republic was suppressed by Griffith's administration.

His suggestion on September 27, 1922 that Republican prisoners should be treated as prisoners of war was defeated. He opposed the Free State policy of arrest and detention without trial.

He also criticised the draft Free State constitution in October of that year and attacked their execution of Erskine Childers in November while an appeal was pending in the 26-County High Court.

Also in November 1922 he protested at the first four executions of Republican prisoners which took place on the 17th.

"It was neither law nor justice to try a man for one thing and execute him for another", he said.

Gavan Duffy later followed a distinguished legal career in the 26-County courts and became President of the Dublin High Court in 1946.

The Organ of Irish Republicanism noted that he had "established for himself the position of being probably the keenest legal mind in the Ireland of his day".

The death of George Gavan Duffy left only one of the "Treaty" signatories alive. That was Robert Barton who later repudiated it and returned to his allegiance to the All-Ireland Republic.

He was one of the 12-member Republican Council of State in October 1922 and later suffered imprisonment at the hands of the Free State he had helped to create and later sought to overthrow.

Also noted in the July issue of the Republican newspaper was the Ard-Fheis of Clann na Poblachta in Dublin on June 30, at which Séan MacBride was reported to have said that "force was not necessary" for the ending of "Partition".

FIERCELY CONTESTED

This contention was hotly contested in the Republican Organ, Sinn Féin Notes in the same issue deal with Wolfe Tone Week organised by Dublin Comhairle Ceantair and a meeting of Comhairle Chúige Laighnean held in an Ard-Oifig.

An organising meeting took place in Droichead Nua, Co. Chill Dara. In Ard Mhaca, an Aeriocht was held in Cullyhanna by the local Cumann and a Céili Mór in Newry Town Hall that night.

In Tyrone a new Cumann was formed in

Aghyaran and a public meeting was held at which "needless to remark the RUC were very interested spectators".

In London the Roger Casement Cumann sponsored a demonstration and public meeting. The United Irishmen Cumann had arranged a public meeting for Trafalgar Square at the end of the month with Diarmuid Ó Cróinín from Cork as principal speaker.

The August issue features a report of the second annual Aeriocht at Camlough held by South Armagh Comhairle Ceantair. Buses from Dublin, Dundalk, Armagh, Portadown and Newry brought supporters while Cork, Belfast, Longford, Tipperary and Galway were also represented.

Six to seven thousand people attended and Dan Sheridan, Cathaoirleach of the Comhairle Ceantair presided at the opening. Pádraig Mac Lógáin, Uachtarán, Sinn Féin spoke, as did Gearóid Ó Broin, Baile Átha Cliath.

The Céili in Newry Town Hall that Sunday evening was most successful, dancing prizes being presented by Tomás Ó Duíll, Dublin, Séan Fox, Portadown and Séan Ó Cearnaigh, Rúnai, Sinn Féin.

Comhairle Chúige Uladh held after-Mass public meetings each Sunday in Armagh and Down, with local Cumainn supplying the speakers.

The Joe McKelvey Cumann was formed in Belfast during July. Its first public meeting was held three weeks later. It was then necessary to form a Comhairle Ceantair in Belfast which took place before the end of the month.

An interesting development took place in St Mary's Hall, Belfast during July at a lecture by Tomás Óg Mac Curtáin, Corcaigh on *Sinn Féin and the Ireland of Today*.

It was sponsored by the Seán McCaughey Cumann and Séamus Steele (Cathaoirleach), presided with Liam Burke (Rúnai) proposing the vote of thanks. About 200 people attended. T

he report states: "Seven CID men were present during the lecture and although challenged for their authority to be present they were unable to produce any authority and refused to leave the hall.

"During the lecture they were segregated from the people and forced to remain sitting by themselves in one part of the hall".

It was noted on the front page of the August issue of the Republican newspaper that a new "Republican" party, to embrace the 32 counties was about to be launched, according to rumours then circulating.

It was to be headed by ex-members of Clann na Poblachta Peadar Cowan, Noel Harnnett, Dr Browne, Dr McCartan and Dr Ffrench O'Carroll.

It would be "no more Republican than any of its predecessors", said the paper, adding that they had "repeatedly warned Republicans in the past against 'Free State Republican Parties'." Of course, the renowned party never emerged.

Much was made on the front page of the impending unveiling of the Seán Russell Memorial in Fairview Park, Dublin on Sunday, September 9. Contingents would assemble at Parnell Square and move off at 12 noon. It announced: "The Memorial, which is being erected by the Clann na Gael organisation in the United States and the Irish Republican Army, will be unveiled by Mr T McMonagle of Philadelphia. Mr P O'Mahoney, New York, will deliver the oration."

(More on the Seán Russell ceremony next month. Refs An tÉireannach Aontaithe/The United Irishman, July and August 1951; Northern Ireland: The Orange State by Michael Farrell; The Secret Army by J Bowyer Bell and The Irish Republic by Dorothy Macardie.)

REPUBLICAN ACCOUNT OF RUSSELL UNVEILING

**50
Years
Ago**

THE October 1951 issue of *An t-Éireannach Aontaithe/The United Irishman* appeared in tabloid form for the first time (16.5 x 11.5 inches) and with a new masthead.

For more than three years, since its inception in May 1948, it had been published in magazine form. The old masthead was retained over the editorial on page two to show continuity.

The slogan "Is é AN PHOBLACHT ár gcuspóir" was incorporated into the new masthead to underline its descent from the old *An Phoblacht* which had been published from 1825 until it was finally banned in 1937.

The new lay-out and format indicated confidence that with a growing circulation it was now a newspaper proper, even if it was confined to four pages only. The price remained at three [old] pence.

The front page banner headline was "Young Ireland Will Fight On!" with sub-headlines "Volleys Salute Dead leader" and "How Seán Russell Died".

Two-and-a-quarter of its four pages were devoted to the Seán Russell memorial unveiling, to reaction to its erection on Dublin Corporation and to Seán's life and death.

Of course the account of the parade and unveiling ceremony differed substantially from that quoted in last month's SAOIRSE.

The Special Branch concentrated on numbers from various areas and on who led the various contingents. It speculated on the make-up of the firing party and listed more than 100 of the Republicans taking part.

An t-Éireannach Aontaithe, naturally gave much space to ideology, carrying Paddy O'Mahoney's oration in full. Its report stated that in unveiling the memorial in Fairview Park, Dublin on September 9 Thomas A McMonagle did so on behalf of the Clann na nGael organisation in America and presented the memorial to the people of Ireland.

It listed the relatives of Seán Russell present, including four brothers and three sisters, a brother-in-law and two sisters-in-law, three nephews and two nieces.

One of the nephews, Robert Russell of Cadogan Road, Fairview was later in the 1950s and early 1960s to make a significant contribution to the Republican Movement, serving both on the Ard Chomhairle of Sinn Féin and GHQ Staff of the IRA.

Incidentally, the headline used in the *Irish Independent's* report of the ceremony carried on September 10 had the same headline, "Volleys Salute Dead Leader", as *An t-Éireannach Aontaithe*. The *Independent* also carried a photo showing the memorial, a section of the huge attendance and the six .455 Webley revolvers raised in the air.

Paddy O'Mahoney in the course of his oration said that "you shall never be alone in your fight. There are still in America those whose pledged devotion to the Cause of separatist Ireland will last as long as there is one man or woman left to continue the struggle."

This message was brought to the people of Ireland and especially to the Irish Republican Army and Sinn Féin. Seán Russell was "one of Ireland's greatest soldiers and one of the gentlest and most unselfish characters" he had ever known.

He went on to sketch Seán's career through 1916, the Black-and-Tan War, the Free State War, how he had rejected all compromise on the national issue, had organised and fought through until as Chief-of-Staff, IRA he led the Sabotage Campaign in England in 1939-40.

"The moral of Russell's life to the youth of Ireland — in the name of her heroic dead" was to join the Republican Movement. Join soon, even



• Frank Ryan (left) and Seán Russell.



today, for soon your help may be needed and remembering the words of Pearse, "It is not sufficient to say, I believe. One must also say, I serve."

He concluded: "One more word to you, Seán, indomitable Seán, you whose bones rest at the bottom of the sea, I hope close to the shores of Ireland.

"Perhaps your mortal remains rest close to those two heroes who died with Aero Lyons at the Caves of Clashmealcon (Co Kerry), Paddy O'Shea and Tommy McGrath. Their bodies like yours, Seán, have never been recovered.

"Let this magnificent gathering, while pledging themselves one and all to the completion of the heroic task, remember you and your comrades who sleep beneath the Atlantic, where sleep those of our race who were buried at sea, done to death in the coffin ships of our mortal enemy, England, on another day.

"Let you and I in addition to our prayer for their immortal souls say with the poet Aubrey De Vere —

Our dead were buried, the leal, the true,

Our dead were buried where the wild waves hurried, and flashed and flew.

God bless their slumber, who thus have died

In the battle's tide, Innisfail for you.

For those who were present on that inspiring occasion the two high points were the firing of the volleys in salute and Paddy O'Mahoney's rousing oration.

We knew then that Irish-America stood with us and would stand by us in the testing time to come. The then current Chief-of-Staff, Tony Magan, presided at the ceremony and confined himself strictly to making the introductions.

O'Mahoney had served in his native North Kerry in the 1920s with the No 1 Brigade of the IRA, hence his references to the Volunteers killed there by the Free State in 1923. (See Dorothy Macardle's *Tragedies of Kerry*.)

EVENTS

The second front page article dealt with the events leading to Seán Russell's death, which had been "surrounded by a veil of mystery" for more than a decade.

It was rumoured, for instance, that the ship carrying him from the US to Europe had been stopped near Gibraltar by a British warship, that he had been taken prisoner by the British, executed and his body thrown overboard.

The article read: "We publish below an authoritative account of the events which took place from the time he arrived back in Europe from America until he died aboard a German U-Boat off the Irish coast."

Russell had been IRA Director of Munitions on GHQ Staff from 1920. He was later Quartermaster — General and finally Chief-of-Staff. He was sent to America at Easter 1939 "to seek aid in money and equipment from Irish exiles there".

"His efforts were continually dogged by British agents who eventually succeeded in persuading the FBI to arrest him on a trumped-up charge."

He was arrested in Detroit near the Canadian

border during a visit by the English King and Queen to Canada. It was suggested that Russell intended to disrupt the visit. In fact he was simply on his rounds to boost morale and secure support.

Released on bail he continued until the outbreak of WWII. Then he directed his efforts to securing German aid for the fight and making his way home to Ireland.

Around the end of April 1940 he arrived aboard ship in Genoa, Italy. That country was still neutral in the war. From there he was brought to Germany, arriving in Berlin on May 12.

POOR HEALTH

He was then in very poor health. "The strenuous campaign he had carried out in America, his arrest in Detroit, the subsequent period of waiting to get away and the strains of evading British agents all took toll of his strength.

"This added to the fact that being smuggled out of the States, he had to work his way on the boat across to Genoa, most of the time below decks and getting little fresh air, left him anything but well when he arrived in Berlin. He was then 47 years of age.

"During his presence in Germany until August he was a guest of the German High Command and their Foreign Office was aware of his visit. He urged immediate aid to the IRA to enable them to strike at the British occupation forces in the North.

"Seán was given an opportunity of visiting Brandenburg Camp to see the latest developments in German armament and new guerrilla methods and to study the techniques of sabotage."

Apart from his classes in producing explosives from chemicals available through ordinary trade channels, "he astounded his hosts by living modestly as a monk and by his regular attendance at Mass every Sunday." (Enno Stephan's *Spies in Ireland*)

Helmut Clissmann was then [1951] in Ireland and could substantiate this account, the UI report said. Clissmann had known Russell while a student in Ireland in the 1930s and was later associated with him in Berlin.

In early August Frank Ryan joined Seán Russell in Berlin. Ryan had fought with the International Brigades against Franco's forces in the Spanish Civil War and was released from prison into German hands in the summer of 1940.

The two leaders left Berlin next day and were put aboard a German submarine at Wilhelmstraven to be landed in Ireland on August 8. The U-Boat commander was Korvetten-Kapitan Von Stockhausen.

They broke the British blockade in the North Sea and rounded Scotland. Very rough seas and the necessity of the submarine to remain submerged most of the time meant the two passengers were confined to their very narrow bunks without fresh air or exercise.

Seán became violently sick with vomiting and a severe pain in his stomach. "He suffered very patiently and died in Frank's arms on August 14, approximately 100 miles west of Galway."

It had been their intention to land at Baile an

Phirteáirigh in the Kerry Gaeltacht on Lady Day, August 15 and mix with the holiday crowds, before making their way to Dublin. Frank was of course very fluent in nGaeilge Chúige Mumhan.

Seán was buried with full Naval Honours in the Atlantic west of Ireland. Frank was brought back to the German submarine base at Lorient in Brittany.

AFFIDAVITS

On arrival affidavits were sworn by the Captain, his First Officer, the Steward and Frank Ryan as to the manner and circumstances of Seán's death. "These affidavits were submitted to two leading German physicians of the Charité (Hospital), who diagnosed independently that Seán must have died from perforation of a duodenal ulcer.

"So ended the life of Seán Russell, worthy successor of Tone and Casement," the article concluded.

Enno Stephan's *Spies in Ireland* says: "He was buried alive . . . almost in sight of Ireland for whose freedom and re-unification he had fought a life-long battle."

In the End of Page Notes of the *United Irishman* a report: "We have been informed that two Fianna Fáil members of the Dublin Corporation who attended the unveiling of the Seán Russell Memorial have been summoned to a meeting of the Party Executive to explain their attendance in spite of the Party ban."

But another article on page two is entitled *Ghosts*. It reports that at a meeting of Dublin Corporation on September 3, when the invitation to take part in the Seán Russell ceremony was accepted, Mr G Hughes, a Fianna Fáil spokesman objected.

He said, "When permission was given to erect the statue no mention had been made of the memorial plaques to several other people which had now been included."

When it was pointed out that these plaques were in honour of Russell's fallen comrades, he said he was satisfied that this was "a political stunt".

Of course it was the list of names on the Roll of Honour 1936-46 which were inscribed on the memorial plinth that Mr Hughes objected to. Seventeen of these died at the hands of the 26-County administration of Fianna Fáil.

The *United Irishman* recounts what happened in each case and calls the roll of *Ghosts*. It also enumerates those who died as a result of Stormont and British government action.

All in all the ceremony in honour of Seán Russell was on a scale comparable with the dedication of the Round Tower in honour of another IRA Chief-of-Staff on the Knockmealdown Mountains in 1935.

Maurice Twomey, Chief-of-Staff, IRA performed the dedication of the Liam Lynch Memorial and Brian O'Higgins gave the oration. The huge attendance at the spot where General Liam Lynch was killed in action against Free State troops was drenched that day in a great downpour.

The weather was kinder in Dublin's Fairview Park in September 1951 but there was a knock-on result. The photo on the front page of the new-look *An t-Éireannach Aontaithe/The United Irishman* shows the statue of Seán Russell with his right arm raised while his left clutches his notes.

It was based on a photo of Seán speaking at Tara in 1938, at a 140th anniversary of the Battle of Tara in 1798. Ignoramuses in Dublin vandalised the Russell statue several times in later years, breaking off the raised right arm.

Paint splashed on the memorial indicated the vandals thought Seán was giving the Communist salute. The National Graves Association replaced the arm on each occasion and eventually had to have it placed across the body. Sheer ignorance had won out.

Lynch is commemorated annually at the Round Tower on the slopes of the Knockmealdowns. It is a pity Seán Russell is not remembered and honoured regularly as well. He richly deserves such a tribute.

(More next month. Refs. *An t-Éireannach Aontaithe/The United Irishman*, October 1951 and *Spies in Ireland* by Enno Stephan, Four Square Books, London 1965.)

50 Years Ago

colonial and anti-imperialist struggles in both countries moved up a gear. Persia had been known officially as IRAN since 1935 but 50 years ago was still popularly called Persia.

The article concludes with a note as follows: "An Egyptian student made a vigorous protest in the Adelphi Cinema, Dublin against British



SEAN McNEELA
BALLYCROY, MAYO.
Died on Hunger Strike
Arbour Hill, Dublin,
April, 1940.

By the late 1960s Iran was the fifth largest producer of petroleum in the world, having about 10% of the earth's known reserves. But in 1951 Mossadegh was not going to yield to the British, even though oil accounted for almost 90% of the export earnings.

The political parties involved in his rise to power to power were the National Front and the Tudeh ("the masses") Party, a Communist organisation. Mossadegh had support at various levels but he faced powerful vested interests and his progress will be monitored through 1952 and 1953. His experience has implications for the

Thomas Maguire was of course Comdt. General Tom Maguire, Deputy in the Second (All Ireland) Dail while Seamus Burke was the prisoner who took a Habeas Corpus action in 1939 which resulted in the release of all - more than 50 internees from Arbour Hill Prison in

"The enlightenment he has recently received should disillusion him".

(More next week. Ref. *An t-Éireannach Aontaithe*/The United Irishman, November 1951.)

'PRISONERS' RELEASE UNCONDITIONAL' — LEO DUIGNAN

The United Irishman

50
Years
Ago

ON November 23, 1951 the local members of the AOH arranged a parade through Armagh city, for which they sought prior sanction from the Stormont police, in "honour" of

the Manchester Martyrs.

It was followed by what the AOH termed a "céilí, old-time and modern dancing". Local Republicans considered the AOH actions an insult to our martyred dead, *An tEireannach Aontaithe* reported.

They organised a protest meeting through the local Sinn Féin Cumann. The RUC prevented the meeting from taking place and arrested four members of Sinn Féin.

Charged the following day they were remanded on bail. Refusing to give bail they were lodged in jail, where they remained at the time the Republican newspaper went to press.

It commented: "They have one consolation; their protest has effectively dissociated Republican Armagh from what can only be described as an insult to the memory of the Manchester Martyrs."

What was called "the depth of corruption" in Irish politics was manifested by an "amusing incident" in Dublin during October.

The "nationalist" politicians elected to the British House of Commons addressed a public meeting in the city and pledged their allegiance publicly to Seán T Ó Ceallaigh as President of "the republic of Ireland", and secured him of their utmost support.

Next day Seán T received the new British Ambassador to the "Republic" and told him he could count on the co-operation of the Irish to the mutual advantage of both countries.

The "nationalist" politicians had no comment on this action of their President, and it was understood that they intended swearing an oath of allegiance to the King of England in order to "fight" Ireland's battle in the House of Commons.

In Leinster House, Frank Aiken, Minister for External Affairs answered a question as to whether he was going to take any action in regard to the insult offered to the National Flag when a group carrying it in Enniskillen were attacked by the RUC.

Mr Aiken said that "he did not intend taking up the matter with England". The *United Irishman* reported that the tricolour was stoutly defended in the fight which took place between the bearers and the RUC and quoted the words of Thomas Davis:

We'll trust ourselves, for God is good and blesses those who lean

On their brave hearts, and not upon an earthly king or queen;

And, freely as we lift our hands, we vow our blood to shed

Once and forever more to raise the Green above the Red.

Some of those who fought the British forces that night in Enniskillen were later, on January 1, 1957, to do battle with those same forces in the raid on Brookeborough barracks when Seán Sabhat and Feargal Ó hAnluain were killed in action.

A letter to the Editor of the Republican paper from Leo Duignan of Leitrim and Dublin makes interesting reading. Sentenced to 10 years penal servitude at London's Old Bailey in May 1939 for possessing explosive substances, Leo stood by the Republican Movement all his life and with his fellow-prisoner of 1939-48 Charlie Dineen, attended the Ard-Fheis of Republican Sinn Féin in 1987 to show support.

In his letter he referred to the words of Brian O'Higgins regarding the effect of prison environment on the mentality of inmates:

"The mind becomes dulled, the body enervated, the heart hopeless or hardened, and selfishness displays itself unashamedly in every direction, and at all hours of the day. Men become suspicious, petty, cynical or stupid."

Leo agreed with Brian na Banban and said that because of the knowledge of the effect of long imprisonment on the personnel of the



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THREEPENCE

• The masthead of the new-look tabloid-size *United Irishman* in December 1951.

physical force movement in the past, he felt reluctant to mention the last stages of the English campaign until forced to do so until the statement of Mr Chuter Ede in relation to the release of Republican prisoners.

PRIVILEGE OF PARLIAMENT

Ede spoke under the privilege of parliament and engaged in a face-saving act so common to politicians dealing with defeats forced on them by soldiers of the Irish Republican Army:

"I was assured that if I released those men it would be an end of the last permanent difficulty between the Irish people and the British government. After considerable thought I had come to the conclusion that it would be justifiable to recommend remission if they gave an undertaking . . .

"All of them agreed except two and later these two also gave their undertakings and were freed."

Leo Duignan continued: "It matters little who assured Mr Ede, if he ever was assured, how the release of a few dozen men could end the permanent difficulty that existed, exists, and will exist between the Irish people and the British government while Ireland remains unfree."

"Let me assure you, Republican readers at home and abroad, that no man or group of men could sell the right of Ireland to its freedom for the personal freedom of the remnants of any movement that at that stage in its history had failed to complete its task."

"Let dogs bark, the caravan still goes on and it is you, old and especially young, who must carry on the Movement now to the completion of its task."

"We were not the first group or the first individuals who were shamefully belied by the enemies of freedom. One cannot help thinking of the lies and slander shouted from the British politicians' houseposts about Tone, Mac Swiney, and Casement."

"It is not my duty to put before you what British politicians thought proper to say about them — historical facts are there for all who are interested, but I do think that Mac Swiney's teachings gave us the clarity in the darkest of moments to stand when but a few, and to answer back at Cathal Brugha told us all we should."

"If with our last bullet fired and our last man on the ground and asked to come into the Empire, he should say, 'I will not'. We were asked to accept conditional release and I know definitely that the last six men to be released from English prisons answered in the words of Cathal Brugha."

"For two years previous to my release I was asked 24 times to accept a conditional release and on each time I was asked I refused . . . Is it likely that having but the last five months of a ten-year sentence to serve I swallowed the anchor and bowed the knee to the Empire."

"By our friends you shall know us. Many friends and enemies of the Movement have asked me to deny publicly Ede's falsehood, but I ask you, Republicans, what reply Ede requires?"

"Is not a continuance in the belief that words won't achieve the object, sufficient reason to

remain silent awaiting the time, when force will be met by force?"

Leo went on to be a most active member of the Jimmy Joe Reynolds (accidentally killed on active service on the Donegal Border in 1938) Memorial sub-committee in Dublin. He was one of the first to reject the Officials' betrayal in 1969-70 and the Provos' defection in 1986.

Ar dheis Dé go raibh a nam calma.

Reports of Sinn Féin activity in the latter part of November were carried. In Cork a protest meeting was held by the Mac Curtáin-Cumann against the continuing visits by British naval units to the city. A Manchester Martyrs commemoration was held with Christóir de Baróid as principal speaker.

Laois Comhairle Ceantair also honoured the Manchester Martyrs by a céilí in the Coliseum Ballroom. The large attendance warmly greeted Tomás Óg Mac Curtáin of Cork who said that the freedom Allen, Larkin and O'Brien died for could only be achieved if each and every Irish person, shunning the futility of political party squabbles, was prepared to work and make some sacrifice for the national goal.

Inistige Cumann, Co Kilkenny held an impressive ceremony in the village to honour the three Fenian martyrs. A torchlight procession of 500 people with banners, headed by St Colmille's Band, marched to a public meeting. Seán Dunne presided, Pádraig Ó Murchú recited a decade of the Rosary in Irish and Séamus Lennon gave the oration.

In Manchester itself the annual commemoration was "indicative of the growth of the Republican Movement in England". Contingents travelled from London, Liverpool, Bolton and Birmingham. On Saturday, November 24, a lecture on Allen, Larkin and O'Brien was given at the Craobh Oisín rooms by Terry Dunne, Sinn Féin, Dublin. A céilí followed the lecture.

After the Memorial Mass on Sunday, a procession led by the Mac Swiney Pipe Band took place to the cemetery. Wreaths were laid and an oration delivered by Terry Dunne, Chairperson J Kennedy and Francis Dowling also spoke.

Newry Cumann also held a céilí on Sunday, November 18. Dan Sheridan gave a short address. The céilí was described as a "wonderful success" and a packed hall gave a "particularly hearty reception to the display of the newly-formed Slua of Fianna Éireann" who sang *Step Together and God Save Ireland*.

The front page headline of *An tEireannach Aontaithe The United Irishman*, December 1951 issue, was "When Ireland Lay Bleeding — 10,368 emigrate in five months". These were the official figures from the Leinster House regime, from June to October inclusive, that year, almost 500 Irish people per week were forced to leave the 26 Counties.

These figures were called "startling" and a slump had arrived with the numbers signing on at Labour Exchanges increasing enormously. The programme being put forward by Leinster House was to "restrict credit, restrict purchases, restrict building".

It was obvious that such a policy would

result in a general slump and widespread unemployment, yet it was said that such was "in the public interest and must be proceeded with."

The key to the whole problem lay in the new Minister for Labour in England stating that their financial position was critical and that production would have to be increased.

However 400,000 jobs in England needed to be filled for which no workers could be obtained. The "Central" Bank and the commercial banks here had most of their reserves tied up in British securities and their prosperity depended on the continued prosperity of England.

Therefore, to alleviate a serious shortage of labour there, the banks here and the Leinster House administration needed to rally round and provide that labour. Hence the real purpose of the financial scare and the real object of the deliberately organised business slump in the 26 Counties.

"Mother England must be saved," the front-page article concludes.

'TAKING STOCK'

The editorial on page two is entitled "Taking Stock", and calls for a glance back over 1951, a review of the work attempted and the results achieved. It frankly admits that during the period 1944-47 the spirit of Republicanism had reached a very low level.

Many had grown tired, had grown cynical and bitter, many had fallen by the wayside because of the ferocity of coercion from Stormont, Leinster House and Westminster.

But always new people, new minds have come forward to take their places, "eager to give lavishly of their strength and hope and courage in our nation's cause". As James Connolly said, "the unconquered soul asserts itself and we shall rise again".

The previous five years had seen a rebuilding of the Movement throughout the country. "From the gloomy depths of the persecution of the 1936-1948 era we have risen again, prepared once more to take up the work."

Firstly, truths obvious to an active Republican are unknown to ordinary people and more especially the rising generation.

"Each and every republican would need to constitute himself/herself as a propagandist for the cause, ready to explain, discuss and argue out nation's claim on every occasion."

Our right to freedom was proclaimed in 1916, legally established by the First Dáil Éireann in 1919, but betrayed and surrendered by the Treaty in 1922, which accepted the two statelets.

A national movement needs to be rebuilt in every county and parish in Ireland. Good work had been done but it was only a start. It was a terrific task, requiring hard, relentless work. Our generous young people would rally enthusiastically if given the lead.

And so the work of rebuilding went on remorselessly.

(More next month. Refs. *An tEireannach Aontaithe The United Irishman*, December 1951.)