

Sabhat and Ó hAnluain Killed in Action

**50
Years
Ago**

*'Twas on a dreary New Year's Day
As the shades of night came down
A lorry load of Volunteers
Approached a Border town...
THE ballad of 'Seán Sabhat of*

Garryowen' remains in the mind of Irish people fifty years after that famous New Year's Day of 1957 and ranks with the ballad of Kevin Barry "In Mountjoy Jail one Monday morning".

The fourteen Volunteers who comprised the Pearse Column of the Irish Republican Army were indeed loaded on a lorry which drove into the town of Brookeborough, Co Fermanagh at 7pm that evening.

Their mission was to attack and capture the RUC Barracks in the town which was fortified with sand-bags, steel shutters and barbed wire. The members of the British forces who made up the garrison were armed with Lee-Enfield rifles, Sten guns and a Bren light machine gun.

The red telephone box at the edge of the footpath on the Main Street marked the location of the Barracks. The column was divided into three sections, Cover, Assault and Cut-off.

The Cut-off Section consisted of four men armed with Lee-Enfield rifles: Vincent Conlon, Armagh (driver of the lorry); Pat Connolly, Roslea, Co Fermanagh; Mick O'Brien, Dublin; and Mícheál Ó Ceallaigh, Kilimor, Co Galway. Their job was to clear the street of civilians and keep the way open for withdrawal after the attack. This they did successfully.

The Cover Section was made up of Seán Sabhat, Limerick who was No One on the Bren gun; Pat O'Regan, Dublin, Bren gun No Two; Packie Tierney, Enniskillen, Co Fermanagh and Seán Scott, Ballyloran, Co Galway, both of whom were armed with Lee-Enfield rifles.

Their task was to open fire on the barracks and force the garrison to keep under cover while the Assault Section moved in and placed mines. The covering fire was opened from the rear of the lorry and the Assault party went in and placed a mine at the barrack door. But it did not explode.

The assault Section comprised the remaining six members of the Pearse Column: Seán Garland, Dublin, officer in Command; Dáithí Ó Conaill, Cork, Second in Command, both of whom were armed with Thompson submachine guns for close quarter combat; Section-Leader Liam Nolan, Dublin; Fearghal Ó hAnluain, Monaghan; Phil O'Donoghue, Dublin; and Harry Goff, Enniscorthy, Co Wexford. The latter four were equipped with Lee-Enfield rifles.

All of the column (1) wore military uniforms with Green, White and Orange shoulder flashes to distinguish themselves from civilians, (2) they carried arms openly and (3) they were under the control of responsible officers. They were the international requirements for guerrilla forces under the Geneva Convention Protocols of 1949 and they were fully complied with.

Under their Rules of Engagement the Column was instructed to open fire and blow in the barracks door with a mine. They were then to call on the garrison to surrender their position. If they refused to do so another larger mine was to be thrown into the open hallway and the barracks demolished.

In no circumstances was a barrack attack to last longer than ten minutes, as reinforcements would have been summoned and the Column needed to have withdrawn before they arrived.

But what actually happened at Brookeborough Barracks when the first mine failed to explode? An RUC Sergeant, alerted by the covering fire, grabbed a loaded shotgun, which had been placed behind the door, and opened fire through a window.

Dáithí Ó Conaill fired a burst of automatic fire at the unexploded mine, which action would normally cause it to explode. It did not do so. The Assault group brought up the second



• Seán Sabhat

larger mine and placed it alongside the first. It did not explode either.

The garrison now had the initiative and opened fire from the upper windows with Bren gun, rifles and Sten machine carbines. Seán Sabhat and Pat O'Regan on the tail of the lorry were of course exposed and hit, Sabhat in both thighs and O'Regan in the buttocks. The column Bren was put out of action.

In the assault group, Fearghal Ó hAnluain suffered a wound to the thigh as did the column commander Seán Garland. Dáithí Ó Conaill (18 and-a-half) took over as 2 O/C and organised the withdrawal. He proved equal to the occasion.

With cover fire minimised, the lorry was now being riddled by enemy fire. All Volunteers were ordered aboard the only immediate means of escape. The driver Vincent Conlon was wounded in the foot but remained at his post and drove the lorry, with at least one wheel on a flat tyre, out of town on the prearranged route. Phil O'Donoghue was grazed on the forehead by a bullet but remained conscious.

With the hoist on its rear rising occasionally and the back awash with blood, the lorry made its way to Altawark Cross, six miles away. There the dying Seán Sabhat and the critically-wounded Fearghal Ó hAnluain were left in an out-office and the lorry was abandoned.

The column with all its arms took to the mountainside, Liam Nolan, with compass and map, plotted a course for them which led them across Slieve Beagh and towards Co Monaghan. To have attempted to carry Seán and Fearghal across such terrain would certainly have fatal results for both men.

The arms were dumped securely and were later recovered. Then eight survivors and four wounded men crossed the Border into Co Monaghan. There armed 26-County army and police took them prisoner.

They were moved to Monaghan and on to Dublin where they were charged with 'refusing to answer questions about their movements' on a day they had spent fighting their country's enemies. The four wounded men were placed in hospital.

Ten minutes after the column had departed from Altawark crossroads, the British forces arrived and opened fire on the abandoned lorry and also on the shed where Seán and Fearghal were. The house was unoccupied as the owners were 'ceil-ing' with neighbours.

British troops ripped the Tricolour flash from the shoulder of Seán's uniform and placed it in their regimental museum as a trophy. So much for the Geneva Convention and the rights as combatants claimed under it!

At the inquest in Enniskillen, the RUC referred to him as 'John South'. Of course on the Six-County electoral register, every Seán is described as 'John'; Séamus as James; Máire as 'Mary'.

Recently at a British forces roadblock in West Tyrone an elderly woman who gave her name as Nuala..... was told that 'Nuala' was not a name at all and asked for her proper name!

Fearghal, who always wrote his name in Irish was described as 'Fergal O'Hanlon'. The Gardaí, following on the practice of the RIC do the same with names in Irish of Republicans.

The bodies of Seán and Fearghal were handed over to their relatives and moved by horse to Clones, Co Monaghan. At Clontarf Customs post a huge crowd had gathered to



• Fearghal Ó hAnluain

receive them and the coffins were draped appropriately with the Irish national Tricolour.

Seán Tully, Clann na Poblachta TD for Cavan was present. An ex-internee at the Curragh in the 1940s, Tully was pointedly asked a question by another ex-internee of that period, Andy Nathan of Dublin.

Andy was then in 1957 Assistant Quarter-Master General of the IRA and he asked what about the comrades of the two martyrs who were now in the Bridewell prison, Dublin, held by a government Seán Tully supported in office. There was no reply but the question was a portent of things to come....

The funerals of the two martyrs were the largest ever seen in Ireland for years. At the grave of Fearghal in Latluran Cemetery in Monaghan, Noel Kavanagh, who had been released from custody in Dublin, spoke.

He said that in the future a memorial would be erected to the two martyrs, "big enough for the whole world to see — the All-Ireland Republic for which they had fought and died."

The Sunday Press of January 6 reported on its front page with banner headlines the funeral of Seán Sabhat in Limerick.

It said that 50,000 people had attended to pay tributes. Local rugby supporters showed their respects by flying the Irish flag at half-mast in their grounds.

That night (Sunday, January 6) Taoiseach John A Costello requisitioned time on *Radio Éireann* to deliver an address in condemnation of the campaign. The *Kerryman* newspaper the following weekend commented editorially:

"It was a remarkable performance of Mr Costello to speak for 18 minutes on Sunday on the subject of armed attacks in the Six Counties without once referring to the presence there of British armed forces or to the fact that the Six-County government could not exist unless it were heavily subsidised by Britain. Occupying forces are not welcome in any country."

Headed "Nobody Can Deny" the editorial began: "The Government and Opposition cannot ignore the spontaneity with which the people turned out in huge numbers to pay funeral tributes to Seán Sabhat and Fergal O'Hanlon (sic).....nobody can deny the fact that on occasions they [funerals] have proved turning points in Irish history — O'Donovan Rossa's and Thomas Ashe's to name two."

"Sabhat and O'Hanlon, young men of exemplary lives, imbued with the very highest of patriotic motives, have gone down to early graves because they believed that physical force, as the last resort, was the only means by which the unity of the country could be effected."

"Their deeds and their memories will be honoured by a virile, uncompromising section of our people. Rightly or wrongly, they are determined that this question of partition will not be relegated or ignored. They intend to keep it in the forefront by drawing violent attention to it and accepting the consequences of doing so."

Two nights before the Brookeborough raid, on Sunday December 30 at 10.15pm another unit, the Teeling Column, had been in action against British forces. Derrylin RUC barracks, south of Upper Lough Erne was attacked.

The Cut-off section, consisting of Pat MacManus, Kinawley, Co Fermanagh; John Joe Ruane and Paddy Hanniffy, both of Athenry, Co Galway, blocked the main road

from Kinawley and Enniskillen by sawing down telegraph poles across the route.

A local Fermanagh unit cut the other road across Lough Erne by placing a bogus biscuit tin 'mine' with wires attached in the centre of one of the two bridges on the route from Lisnaskea.

The Cover Section was made up of five Volunteers, 2 O/C of the column, Ruairí Ó Brádaigh, of Longford and Roscommon who operated as No 1 on the Bren gun; Willie Folan, Galway city as No 2 on the Bren; Peadar Murray, Newport, Co Mayo, Joe Daly and Dermot Blake, both of Navan, Co Meath, as riflemen.

From the cover of trunks of trees growing along the roadside they sent a volley through the barracks door and ground floor windows, followed by subsequent fire on the first floor windows.

After the first volley from the Cover Section the Assault Section moved in from the cover of a nearby primary school and placed a mine at the front door. They raked the upper storey with gunfire and grenades, destroying the radio room which was used to summon assistance.

This section comprised Noel Kavanagh, Dublin, Column Commander; Charlie Murphy, Dublin, GHQ Staff; Pat McGirl, Aughavas, Co Leitrim; Paddy Duffy, Derrinacreeve Cross, Swanlinbar, Co Cavan; Leo Collins and Des Clarke, Navan, Co Meath.

These Volunteers were armed mainly with Thompson guns and grenades, with a minority having rifles. The mine exploded, blew in the door, demolished the stairs and wrecked the ground floor.

All fire from the barracks ceased. The Column Commander called on the garrison to surrender. The answer was "No surrender". Preparations were made to put in the large mine. Thirteen minutes had elapsed since the first volley — the attack was three minutes overtime. The GHQ officer and the Commander consulted and decided that the column could be trapped by reinforcements breaking through from Kinawley and Enniskillen on one side and from Lisnaskea on the other.

The order to withdraw was given. Flares of the parachute type were discharged from the stricken barracks as the column moved away, a section on either side of the road.

They had just linked up with the Cut-Off Section when a jeep from Kinawley, with a Bren gun mounted on the cab, drove past them. The column, in two sections, lay in the ditches of two boreens off the Mountain Road.

They could hear the messages being conveyed by radio as the jeep climbed up the slope, with parking lights only illuminated. The Commander decided not to attack as the other reinforcements could be near at hand and with most of the Volunteers experiencing their first operation, an element of shock would be at work with them.

The column took to the fields at this stage and made their way up Slieve Russell in the direction of their base. British troops and RUC spread out on all sides from Derrylin combing out the entire area.

Parachute flares were continually sent up and the column had to 'freeze' each time. There were several close calls as the column avoided the searching British forces. Eventually they dumped their arms safely and these were all recovered in due course.

Next morning found the Volunteers emerging from a thick mist on the Co Cavan — and on the 26-County side — of the mountain. They scattered to several houses as they saw the 26-County forces searching the mountain-side behind them. Half of the column was captured that evening — Noel Kavanagh in one house and six others in another. The other half — seven men — reported for duty to GHQ.

The seven, dressed in military uniforms with their Tricolour shoulder flashes, were taken first to Ballyconnell and later to the Bridewell prison, Dublin. There they heard the bells of Christchurch Cathedral ringing in the New Year — 1957.

(Next month: the general situation in 1957. Refs: Resistance booklet 1957; daily and Sunday newspapers, December 1956 and January 1957; interviews with survivors.)

'OPERATION HARVEST' PLANS PUBLISHED

**50
Years
Ago**

**DURING
January and
February 1957
support for Sinn
Fein and the
Republican
Movement in
general grew
and intensified.**

The Resistance Campaign, and the deaths in action of Sabhat and O h-Anluain in particular, had moved the Irish people at home and abroad.

The Plan of Campaign for Sinn Féin published in 1953 as part of the Overall Plan had outlined a programme appealing to "the reason, national instincts and popular imagination" of the Irish people.

An indication of this was a wreath laid at Seán Sabhat's burial in the Republican Plot, Limerick city from the local FCA Sabhat had been a 2nd Lieutenant in the FCA and the newspapers reported that the wreath was laid on behalf of "the officers and the men of the 49th Battalion, Fórsa Cosanta Aitiúil". There were no repercussions.

In the kitchen in Dublin of Brendan Behan, poet, playwright and writer, as well as former IRA Volunteer and Republican prisoner, hung an old 1957 calendar with Irish national content. It was inscribed in handwriting: Do Bhreandán Ó Beacháin agus muid le chéile ag socraídh saighdiúra — Seán Sabhat".

It was signed "Liam Ó Flatharta", the famous writer and Republican Socialist. He and Behan had marched together in Seán Sabhat's funeral cortege. People were deeply affected by the sacrifice of two exceptional young Irishmen.

The Longford Leader of December 22 reported resolutions passed by Longford and Leitrim Co Councils calling for the release of all political prisoners held in the Six Counties. Longford Co Council also adopted a letter which called for "support in the fight against British Imperialism and tyranny in part of this country".

The Irish Press of December 20 reported another council asking for "political treatment for internees" in the Six Counties. Such resolutions from local bodies were to become frequent and familiar.

The trials of six men arrested in Co. Cavan and eight held in Co. Monaghan were given extensive coverage in the Irish Press of January 15. All appeared in uniform. Ruairi Ó Brádaigh gave commands in Irish to the six and asked for proceedings to be held in Irish. When an interpreter was sought he dropped the request.

Dáithí Ó Conaill was in charge of the eight and queried Justice Fitzpatrick if he was in fact an ex-officer of the British Army. Fitzpatrick did not reply. An obituary on his death some years later stated that he had indeed served in the British Army's RASC (Royal Army Service Corps) in WWI.

All 14 were sentenced to six months imprisonment for "refusing to account for their movements" and failing to answer questions". These men were of the Pearse and Teeling Clann.

On January 8 four men were arrested when a car was stopped in Bellurbet, Co. Cavan. They were Seán Cronin and Robert Russell of Dublin, Noel Kavanagh also of Dublin and Paddy Duffy of Cavan who had escaped from hospital.

Duffy and Kavanagh later received six months sentences along with the other Teeling Clann men. Cronin and Russell got three months each.

An interesting development in Cronin's case was the reading out in court of a lengthy document found in his house and for which he took responsibility. The prosecutor said he had instructions to read it from the 26 County Attorney General who was acting on orders of the 26 County Government.

Resistance says (p35): "it was a Cabinet decision to release the document. In this way the terms of (British Prime Minister) Sir Anthony Eden's declaration on the 'effective and successful' destruction of the Resistance were being carried out. This was co-operation indeed".

Resistance went on: "It named targets to be attacked and suggested the general lines of

organisation of the guerilla forces". The document said that operations would be in three phases. These were: Phase One — one month's period: destruction of listed targets; Phase Two — three months period when we build our forces and continue guerilla attacks, maintaining ourselves; Phase three — continuation of the struggle to higher level "when we can co-ordinate our tactics on a more perfect communications basis."

The document gave an "Analysis of the situation".

"The Resistance of the people (Nationalist) can be built up by clever propaganda on top of guerilla success. From the point of view of guerilla warfare, the co-operation of the people is essential. If this is lost — or never received — the guerilla's cannot win".

Much of this 15-page typewritten document, code-named "Operation Harvest" and defined as "A General Directive for a Guerilla Campaign" can be read in the Resistance booklet on sale in 223 Parnell Street, Dublin 1. In fact it was an earlier outline on which the general plan of campaign was to be based.

A second document introduced at the trial was entitled "Outline of Operations to Date", all over (the Occupied area) we would be in a tremendously strong position in the Six Counties.

It went on: "The enemy is attempting to say that this Resistance is only trans-border raiding and his cry is taken up by the politicians here. For that reason, under no circumstances, will arms be carried in the 26 Counties and the area will only be used in cases of extreme necessity when a column has no other choice but to pull back. In such cases arms will first be dumped in the Six".

It finally said: "It was said that no column could survive in the Six Counties. We have proved otherwise. The people are behind us, and we must back up their trust".

One day after the publication of the General Directive, a target listed, Dungannon Territorial Army barracks, was seized by freedom fighters and blasted in two explosions. Publication of the document did not break the morale of the freedom fighters.

On the contrary, the people were singing a ballad composed locally celebrating the demolition, "Dungannon TA Camp". Morale was high in spite of the mass arrests by the 26 County Government which followed in January 1957.

The Sunday Press of January 13 reported "a large crowd" gathered at College Green, Dublin for "a meeting of Dublin Republicans in aid of the freedom fighters" the previous night. Cathal Ó Murchú (Charlie Murphy) presided and the speakers included Tomás Mac Curtáin of Cork, Tomás Ó Dubhghaill of Dublin, an anonymous Derryman and an Armagh man who was nameless.

Nurse Elizabeth O'Farrell of Dublin who had carried Pádraic Pearse's military surrender order to the British Commander, General Lowe, in Easter Week 1916, was also on the platform — a direct link with the past.

Speakers said that an attempt had been made to cut the Republican Movement off from the people. "Our statements have been suppressed, our meetings ignored by the press and even our printing press for The United Irishman was smashed", the chairperson declared. Tomás Mac Curtáin, using all his moral authority as a veteran Republican, announced: "The freedom fighters, if they find themselves in the 26 Counties will not fire on 26-County forces. Even if they are fired upon, they will not return fire". Nothing could be clearer. The crowd was ecstatic.

But next morning, Sunday January 13, the blow fell. Special Branch men raided the home of Charlie Murphy at 116 Emmet Road, Inchicore, Dublin and arrested five men. Next day they were charged with "membership of an illegal organisation", "failing to account for their movements" and "possession of incriminating documents" and remanded in custody to Mountjoy Jail.

Tomás Mac Curtáin (41), Charlie Murphy (26), Lawrence Grogan (56) of Drogheda and Anthony Magan (40) were found in the front room downstairs. Seán Cronin (30) — a Dublin man not to be confused with "American" Seán Cronin — was arrested in the kitchen of the house.

When they appeared in court it was not before an ex-British Army officer. The Justice was Michael J. Lennon who had been an active

IRB man in the 1920s. He had just completed a series of 35 articles in the Irish Independent on the Fenian Brotherhood in the United States.

Lennon had earlier dismissed the charge of "failing to account for movements" against seven Volunteers of the Teeling Column but they were re-arrested leaving the court and charged again with the same offence.

The spirit of the Fenians was strong in Lennon. He claimed that Offences Against the State Act proclamation did not end with "God Save the King" and he ordered that a small box of .22 sporting ammunition found in Mangan's house be returned to him. "Property to owner", he declared.

Michael Lennon was removed from the case, and later deposed from the bench altogether! He never apologized for his conduct in the case of the political trials that came before him.

The state spread the rumour that he had been "intimidated" but that was nonsense. The Phoenix flame of the IRB from his youth burned brightly in him and he did not fail. A salute to your indomitable spirit, Mick Lennon!

The five Republican leaders were sentenced to three months by the next judge. And on January 18, a swoop took place on Republicans throughout the 26 Counties. D-Wing, Mountjoy, soon filed up.

Meanwhile, north of the Border D-Wing of Crumlin Road Jail, Belfast, was housing internees from all over the Six Counties. Eventually, up to 50 internees from Belfast alone were lodged there. The historic Mid-Ulster election organisation of Sinn Féin was an early target in the interment swoops. Those who organised and voted for Tom Mitchell in three consecutive elections were to be punished.

Paddy Doyle (34) of Belfast who was arrested in the local railway station on December 2 was sentenced to three months for possession of documents which were on public sale. He was interned without trial on expiration of sentence and was held until the last internees were released in April 1961.

Even though the OC of the Belfast Battalion had been arrested a time bomb was placed in the Belfast shipyards on December 12. The Irish Times December 14 reported that the bomb which failed to explode consisted of 200 sticks of gelignite, an alarm clock, a flash lamp, battery and two detonators. It was placed at Milewater Basin, near HMS Caroline, HQ ship of the Ulster Division of the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve.

Swatragh and Dungiven RUC barracks in Co. Derry were sniped at on December 22. The sniper at Swatragh had the RUC station sergeant in his sights, but because he was engaged in lighting up a family Christmas tree, the Volunteer chose not to fire the fatal shot. He fired elsewhere.

A striking case resulting from the 26 County swoop on January 18 was that of Domhnall Ó Lúbhlaí, the Irish teacher under South Tipperary VEC. He refused to recognise the court on two grounds, because it was a partitionist institution and because it did its business through English. He got two weeks in prison and lost his permanent and pensionable job.

Meanwhile, Co Councils, town councils and city councils were busy formally expressing sympathy with the relatives of Seán Sabhat and Fearghal Ó h-Anluain. Varying degrees of support were given to the Resistance of Occupied Ireland, but it was clear that the two Volunteers were highly regarded.

The indiscipline of the B-Specials on Six County roads was clearly in evidence. At Slushill, Lisnaskea, Co. Fermanagh, they ambushed an RUC patrol, wounding a Catholic, shortly before Christmas. It was announced by the RUC that the IRA was responsible.

On December 26, Charles Hillard (38) of Brackley, Ederney in the same county, was wounded in the leg by a B-Special patrol while driving home early in the morning.

On January 1, 1957 five young Tyrone people were fired on by B-Specials as they drove home from a New Year's Party, near Caledon. Una Buchanan (12) lost the sight of an eye, Maurice Buchanan (19) was seriously wounded in the back, Florence Buchanan (14) and Ruby Buchanan (17) had hand injuries. Mervyn Mulligan was wounded in the arm.

Later in the month a B-Special shot his own son as the latter approached a road-block between Dungannon and Coalisland, Co. Tyrone.

The "Letter from Belfast" in the Irish Times on New Year's Day questioned the banning of

Sinn Féin and Fianna Uladh (Liam Kelly's organisation). "The wisdom of the decision, however is debatable and so perhaps is the morality of it", it said.

It went on: Both organisations have, in a sense, provided Nationalists with a safety valve. Every oppressive measure the government takes — and some are clearly necessary in present conditions — carries the danger of alienating further the nationalist minority. And, of course, Nationalists already have a sense of oppression".

Every measure of the Special Powers Act 1922-43 was activated, of course. The Six County statelet was born out of coercion, fed on coercion and remained alive on coercion, ie government by force.

Then there were political repercussions to all this. Seán Mac Bride, SC, TD, leader of Clann na Poblachta whose three TDs supported the Coalition Administration in Leinster House, wrote an open letter to John A. Costello, head of government on December 21.

Jack McQuillan and Paddy Finucane, Independent TD and Clann na Tálún TD respectively, sent a Telegram to Costello on January 4 demanding the recall of the 26-County Dáil to discuss the situation in the Six Counties. Costello refused.

The two TDs had stated that they protested against "the use of the Army and Gardaí as instruments of British policy to maintain Partition". Well said, well phrased. Costello took exception to this.

Instead of recalling the Leinster House TDs, he requisitioned time on Radio Éireann and proceeded to attack the Resistance and as the Kerryman commented editorially, spoke for 18 minutes without once referring to the presence of British forces in the Six Counties or the fact that Stormont could not exist without British financial support.

Then matters must have come to a head. The Irish Press of January 5 reported that "the Thomas Street, Dublin Craobh of Clann na Poblachta has passed a resolution calling on the party's three Deputies in the Dáil (sic) to withdraw support from the Government because it has embarked on a policy of repression against Republicans", Mr Con Lehane presided at the meeting".

The three TD's were Seán Mac Bhride, (Dublin South West), Seán Tully (Cavan) and Kathleen Ó'Connor (Kerry North). Kathleen had replaced her father, the famous Johnny "Machine-gun" Ó'Connor.

During the following week and just before the leaders were arrested, the Ard Chomhairle of Clann na Poblachta sent a message to the Army Council asking what the Council wished them to do in the situation.

"Would they withdraw support from the Coalition Government in the sure knowledge that if Fianna Fáil came to power the repression of Republicans would be certain to be more severe?"

The Army Council's reply was that they expected the leadership of Clann na Poblachta "to do their duty as Irishmen and women".

However, on January 29, the Irish Press carried a statement from Clann na Poblachta in which they announced a "no confidence" motion (for Leinster House) in Mr. Costello's government.

The statement was lengthy and criticised the Coalition administration on economic grounds as well as on its failure to adopt a "positive policy on the reunification of our country".

The absence of such a policy "created a dangerous internal situation in which the Government would assume responsibility for maintaining the status quo and would undertake the role of acting as Britain's policemen against a section of the Irish people", the statement said.

It also criticised the action taken against Justice Lennon as "a thinly disguised attempt to interfere with the independence of a member of the Judiciary in the exercise of his functions".

Next day Fianna Fáil put down its motion of no confidence and as a result Mr Costello was forced to call a general election. Leinster House never met in February 1957 and Sinn Féin had already announced its intention of contesting the general election in the 26 Counties.

(More next month. Refs: Resistance, The Story of the Struggle in British-Occupied Ireland, published 1957; Longford Leader, December 22; Irish Press, December 20, January 5, 15 and 29; Sunday Press, January 13 and Irish Times, December 14 and January 1.)

FOUR TDS ELECTED IN 26 COUNTIES

**50
Years
Ago**

THE general election in the 26 Counties announced in early February 1957 took place on March 5. Four Sinn Féin candidates were elected to an all-Ireland

Parliament. They were returned as Deputies, one in each of the four provinces, for the constituencies of Monaghan, South Kerry, Longford-Westmeath and Sligo-Leitrim.

Their names were Éineachán Ó hAnluain (23), John Joe Rice, Ruairí Ó Brádaigh (24) and John Joe McGill (36).

Rice was a former O/C Kerry No 2 Brigade IRA and a veteran of the Black-and-Tan and Free State Wars. McGill was an IRA Volunteer since 1938 who had been interned at the Curragh 1940-45.

Ó hAnluain, the youngest Deputy returned in the election, was from Park Street, Monaghan, a brother of Fearghal Ó hAnluain killed in action at Brookborough on New Year's day. Ó Brádaigh, the next youngest to be elected was a native of Longford town and had been on active service with the Teeling Column in South Fermanagh.

Both McGill and Ó Brádaigh were serving sentences in Mountjoy Jail at the time of their election. McGill's sentence expired about 10 days following his return in Sligo-Leitrim and he was given a most enthusiastic welcome in his constituency.

He was first greeted at a public meeting in Longford, followed by receptions at Dromod, Mohill and his home town of Ballinamore. A ballad "McGill from Ballinamore", composed during the election campaign was sung from the platforms.

The following weekend a tumultuous reception was held in Sligo. The centre of the town was packed and blocked by people from all over the constituency and from the surrounding counties. The *Sligo Champion* at the end of March gives a vivid account of the scenes on that occasion, featuring it on its front page.

At a meeting of An Ard-Chomhairle on February 6, arrangements had been made for constituency conventions to select candidates and set up election machinery for an intense campaign.

Many of those selected for the contest were prisoners in Belfast jail and in Mountjoy. Nineteen of the 40 constituencies in the 26 Counties were fought. The full list of candidates, apart from the four successful ones, already mentioned was:

Seán L MacCormaic (Mountjoy) for Meath; **Paddy Duffy** (Mountjoy) for Cavan; **Máire Ní Dhálaigh** (sister of Charlie Dail, executed at Drumboe, Donegal in 1923) for North Kerry; **Pádraic Ó Ceallaigh** of Ballygar for North Galway; **Murtogh Qualter** of Athener for South Galway; **Seán Ó'Hegarty** (Belfast Jail) for Cork City; **Tomás Ó Dúill**, Vice-President of Sinn Féin, Dublin South Central; **Seán Scott** (Mountjoy) for Roscommon; **Liam Earley** (Mountjoy), a member of Cork City Council, for East Cork; **Lawrence Grogan** (Mountjoy), veteran of the 1920s for Louth; **Walter Mitchell** (Mountjoy), veteran of 1920s, for Laois/Offaly; **Paddy Mulcahy**, veteran of the 1940s and member of Limerick City Council, for Limerick East; **George Dearnle** for Dublin South West; **Tom Mitchell** (Belfast Jail) for his native Dublin North East and **Andrius Mac Domhnaill** (Mountjoy) for Tipperary North.

Nine candidates were prisoners in Mountjoy and four of these had been captured on active service. Two were in Belfast jail and both were take prisoner while on active service.

The remaining eight were free to campaign in their constituencies. Two of these were veterans of the 1920s; two were 1940s veterans and four were young 1950s activists. The total included one woman and one Protestant.

The full list is given in Irish in *An t-Éireannach Aontaithe/The United Irishman* for March 1957.

Also quoted in full in the March edition is the text of their election manifesto which was



• **John Joe McGill**, Sligo-Leitrim.



• **Ruairí Ó Brádaigh**, Longford-Westmeath.



• **Éineachán Ó hAnluain**, Monaghan.



• **John Joe Rice**, Kerry South.



• **Phil Clarke**, Fermanagh-South Tyrone.



• **Tom Mitchell**, Mid-Ulster.

written in Mountjoy by a prisoner candidate for his constituency. Tony Magan gave some help with this. An Ard-Oifig, Sinn Féin, made slight alterations and adopted it as a general manifesto.

It reads as follows: "We feel greatly honoured in being selected as the standard-bearers of Sinn Féin in this election. At the outset we would like to point out that we place the Unity and Independence of our country above all petty issues which may be raised.

"If you should think fit to elect us as your representatives we will sit only in an All-Ireland Parliament, the convening of such a Parliament being one of the primary objects of Sinn Féin.

"We will not make empty promises. We do, however, pledge ourselves to work unflinchingly for the ideals of all our patriots down through the ages — the freedom of our country and the welfare of its people.

"Already our people in the North have made their stand on this issue. In the last Westminster election in the British Occupied Counties, the Nationalist people discarded the old Parliamentary politicians whose policies since 1922 proved fruitless, elected Phil Clarke and Tom Mitchell and voted 152,000 strong for Sinn Féin and an All-Ireland Parliament.

"Now they look to their brethren in the 26 Counties for support, and Sinn Féin ALONE has a policy to win freedom for them. Suffice to say the politicians of all parties are content to stand by and watch them suffer on indefinitely under British Occupation and British repression.

"Forty years ago exactly — in 1917 — Longford pointed the road to freedom by electing Joe McGuinness, an Easter Week man, as the first Sinn Féin prisoner TD ever. Westmeath had as its champion Larry Ginnell and the entire Irish Nation followed their lead and set up a 32-County Parliament in defiance of England.

"Sinn Féin leadership bought the united people of Ireland within reach of complete freedom. Unfortunately, the high hopes were dashed in 1922 when English trickery divided us and brought bitterness into our midst again.

"In the intervening years, no really worthwhile progress has been made. The politicians of all parties have brought our country to the verge of disaster. They have had ample time to implement their policies over the last 35 years, yet the legacy they pass on to us of a new generation is pitiful indeed: England's stranglehold on the industrial North-East is unbroken; the Gaeltacht is dwindling year after year; a quarter of a million of our youth and bloom lost in emigration over the last five years alone; 95,000 unemployed in the 26 Counties and 40,000 in the Six Counties.

"Ireland literally 'lies broken and bleeding', while we are burdened with taxation to maintain two states and three governments. To continue along the path indicated by politicians since 1922 can only lead to complete disaster. Extinction as a nation would be the inglorious end of our epic 800 years' struggle for freedom.

"Sinn Féin HAS the remedy for the plight of our country. We ask you, the people of Ireland, to consider the Sinn Féin programme carefully. We feel sure you will be forced to the conclusion that ONLY THROUGH SINN FÉIN can we resume the march to victory.

"Therefore, it is with confidence that we appeal to the people of Ireland for support. We are convinced that the children of the Gael will not fail their country in its hour of need" (Ends).

Note: In the original text the last sentence read: "We are convinced that the sons and daughters of those who fought England's Black-and-Tans will not fail...etc".

A hectic and enthusiastic campaign took place in all 19 constituencies. Old Republicans and ex-internees of the 1940s who had not been active now joined in the contest which saw the first Sinn Féin TDs elected in the 26 Counties in 30 years.

In 1927 five Sinn Féin TDs and two Independent Republicans who were abstentionists were elected. A month later the Free State administration put a political test oath into parliamentary nomination papers, thus blocking Republican candidates and barring Sinn Féin from public life at that level. Only local councils were now open to be contested by Republicans.

In 1957 the total first preference vote secured by Sinn Féin was 65,640. With 19 candidates in the field, this was an average of 3,455 per candidate. Quotas varied but were generally in the region of 5-6,000. Many candidates secured good transfers and remained in the contest to the fifth and sixth counts, and even later.

Notable was the first preference vote for John Joe McGill who headed the poll in Sligo-Leitrim with 7,007. When this figure was announced on radio, a mighty cheer went up in Mountjoy Jail which seemed to lift the roof off D-Wing where the Republican prisoners, including McGill, were held.

Then in Longford-Westmeath, Ruairí Ó Brádaigh with 5,506 came second. He was 500 votes behind General Seán MacEoin (Fine Gael) who headed the poll. McGill secured the first seat out of five and Ó Brádaigh the third seat also out of five.

In Monaghan Éineachán Ó hAnluain came second in the first count with 4,791. He secured third seat in a three-seater constituency.

In Kerry South, another three-seater, veteran John Joe Rice came third with 5,582 first preferences and took the third seat.

In Longford-Westmeath, Monaghan and Kerry South, Sinn Féin took seats from Fianna Fáil in all cases. In Sligo-Leitrim the seat was won from Ben Maguire, a former Fianna Fáil TD now standing as an Independent Fianna Fáil candidate.

With one exception no Sinn Féin election deposit (100 pounds) was lost. Dublin South Central was that exception where Tomás Ó

Dúill was 24 votes short of saving the £100. Tomás, as a Vice-President, probably spent too much of his time helping in other constituencies.

Besides, an Independent Unemployed candidate, John Murphy who was very popular, stood in Dublin South Central, gathered the anti-establishment vote and was elected to the last seat.

Of interest to readers in various counties will be the first preference votes secured by the Sinn Féin candidate in each constituency, together with the quota in each case. The transfers can be seen in the local and national newspapers of the time.

Laois-Offaly: W Mitchell 2,939 (Q. 7,448)
Kerry South: JJ Rice 5,582 (Q. 5,554) E
Cork City: S Ó hÉigeartaigh 4,789 (Q. 7,177)
Dublin SW: S Dearnle 2,442 (Q. 6,603) (Seán Mac Bride with 2,677 lost his seat.)

Dublin NE: T Mistéil 3,346 (Q. 6,732) (remained until the 8th count at 4,063).

Sligh-Leitrim: SS MacFhearghail 7,007 (Q. 7,435) E

Galway South: M MacUaltair 2,086 (Q. 5,625)

Dublin SC: T Ó Dúill 1,734 (Q. 5,322)

Limerick East: P Ó Maoilchathaigh 3,085 (Q. 7,244)

Tipperary North: A McDonnell 2,548 (Q. 6,746)

Louth: L Grogan 2,991 (Q. 7,915)

Meath: SL MacCormaic 2,658 (Q. 7,408)

Monaghan: E Ó hAnluain 4,791 (Q. 6,336) E

Kerry North: M Ó Dálaigh 3,171 (Q. 6,894)

Roscommon: Seán Scott 2,741 (Q. 6,127)

Cavan: P Ó Dubhthaigh 3,308 (Q. 6,116)

Cork East: L Ó Mochóir 2,635 (Q. 6,873)

Galway North: P Ó Ceallaigh 2,551 (Q. 5,593)

Longford-Westmeath: R Ó Brádaigh 5,506 (Q. 6,508) E

Meanwhile in the British-Occupied Six Counties, the ban on the main opposition party which secured 152,310 votes in the last election was being vigorously enforced.

Two 17-year-old Omagh boys appeared before a Crimes Court in Belfast on March 20. Daniel I Donnelly, student, Glenview Terrace and Seán M Woods, unemployed, Brook Street were charged with "distributing leaflets and posters inviting persons to join Sinn Féin, an unlawful organisation and with having posters".

There were in custody since February 9 when it was stated by the RUC, one poster was found on Donnelly bearing the words "Fight Your Corner. Join Sinn Féin. Don't Emigrate". A bottle of water and a cloth for spreading posters was found on Woods.

Donnelly was a schoolboy who hoped to take his Senior Certificate that year. Both youths were bound to the peace for 12 months on bail of 20pounds and one surety of 20pounds.

South of the Border an inquiry was set up "into the conduct of District Justice Michael Ó Leannáin on the hearing by him of charges under the Offences Against the State Act 1939 in the Dublin Metropolitan District Court on January 22, 1957".

Mr Justice Teevan, a judge of the High Court was appointed to conduct the inquiry, the *Irish Press* of January 22, reported. The former IRB man, Mick Lennon, would not sit on the bench again.

In Seán Mac Bride's announcement in the *Irish Press* of January 29 withdrawing Clann na Poblachta's support for Mr Costello's government, he protested against the ordering of an investigation into Michael Lennon's "discharge of his judicial functions in the hearing of a political charge".

This action was, McBride stated, "a thinly disguised attempt to interfere with the independence of a member of the Judiciary in the exercise of his functions. The action...is highly reprehensible and a dangerous precedent which will shake confidence in the administration of justice and the independence of the Judiciary".

Lennon's refusal to sentence Republicans to imprisonment had become a factor in bringing down the 26-County government of the day.

The Republican organ reported: 105 in Belfast Jail; 53 in Mountjoy; 4 in Wakefield; 3 in Wormwood Scrubs.

(More next month. Ref: *An t-Éireannach Aontaithe/The United Irishman* March 1957; *Irish Press* January 22 and 29, March 7, 8 and 9 and *Sligo Champion* late March 1957.)

DEATHS OF SCEILG, ERNIE O'MALLEY

50 Years Ago

EASTER Sunday 1957 was on April 21. With continuing operations in the Resistance Campaign to British rule and the election of four deputies in the 26 Counties, the commem-

oration ceremonies everywhere were usually enthusiastic.

Easter Lilies were in evidence on all sides. Even the warders admitting visitors to the Republican prisoners in Mountjoy, Dublin, were wearing Easter Lilies while on duty at the prison gates.

A "packed" Sinn Féin rally was held in College Green, Dublin on Saturday night, the eve of Easter. Speakers were Tomás Ó Dúill, Vice President; Pádraig Ó Cuanacháin, Corcaigh; Seoirse Dearth, Ard Chomhairle; and Seán Cronin, recently released from Mountjoy. Seán Ó Súilleabháin, presided.

The people were thanked for their support in the election. Tomás Ó Dúill, warned that the Irish people could not stand for coercion. Seán Cronin said the struggle in the north was directed against British Occupation and not against any section of the Irish people.

Next day John Joe Rice TD spoke at the 1916 Plot in Glasnevin Cemetery. The radio and press were continually drumming Imperialism into the ears of the younger generation he said.

"It was amazing that any nationality was left in the country at all so strong was the assault. The minds of the people were being moulded by the daily press masquerading as national newspapers."

The Belfast parade formed up inside the gates of Milntown Cemetery headed by the tricolour marched to the Republican Plot.

An RUC stenographer took notes as Jimmy Steele gave the oration: "We are meeting under the shadow of the internment camp, the penal cell made possible under the infamous Special Powers Act."

"While there has been no attempt to stop us meeting, the eyes of our enemy are focused here today picking out future men and boys for future interrogation and probably internment."

An t-Eireannach Aontaithe *The United Irishman* reported: "Other plain clothes detectives were on duty in the cemetery while outside the gates a police car, crammed with armed men, waited. Extra police were on duty in the police stations."

In Newry more than 5,000 people took part. The Tricolour was carried, in defiance of the Stormont Home Affairs Minister, through Newry streets and on to St Mary's Cemetery. Dan Sheridan, Newry delivered the oration.

Four buglers sounded the Last Post and four bands participated. Later the flag-bearer, Robert Savage (63), John Martin Gardens, Newry was arrested and taken to Belfast prison.

At Foxhall, Co Longford, over 1,000 people attended and heard JJ McGill TD speak: "Today a wall of silence is erected around the Republican Movement. The people read or hear only what the politicians wish them to read or hear."

"You have elected a deputy who will sit in an All-Ireland Parliament only, and when that Parliament is set up, patrols, the Border and British Occupation will disappear for ever. God speed the day!"

Three bands and more than 1,000 marchers moved from Selton Hill to Fenagh cemetery, Ballinamore, Co Leitrim. Seán Cronin, Dublin spoke: "In this generation we must end British Imperial rule, achieve national independence and build a free nation with the ownership of Ireland in the hands of the Irish people."

In the exercise yard of D-Wing in Mountjoy Jail, the Republican prisoners lined up in military formation facing the execution chamber where eleven Republican soldiers from Kevin Barry (1920) to Charlie Kerins (1944) were hanged.

They heard Black-and-Tan veteran, Dan Gleeson of Nenagh, Tipperary, speak of building a New Ireland which would be a "shining example to the whole wide world."

At the conclusion of the ceremony, a six-man colour-party marched to the graves of the 'Forgotten Ten' inside the boundary wall of the prison. There suitable honours were rendered.

From Manchester to Sidney, Australia, from New York to San Francisco and in 40 centres in Ireland itself, the Easter Message from the Irish Resistance Movement in Occupied Ireland was read.

It was distributed on their behalf by the Irish Republican Publicity Bureau and was essentially a



• Ernie O'Malley.

cry for help from the people north of the Border to Irish people in the 26 Counties and throughout the world.

It reads: "On this momentous Easter Sunday 1957, when Irish men and women meet to commemorate those who in every generation fought and died for Irish freedom, we the people of British-occupied Ireland call for assistance in our present day struggle for independence."

"Our fight is your fight and is a continuation of the same resistance to British rule for which our martyrs died."

"We base our claim for the support of the Irish people throughout the world on the Proclamation of 1916. This is our Declaration of Independence and Charter of Liberty."

"It sums up the hopes and aspirations of those who throughout our tortured history disputed and resisted Britain's claim to jurisdiction over Ireland. Nothing less can claim our allegiance and we will accept nothing less."

"We take the words of that Proclamation 'We declare the right of the people of Ireland to the ownership of Ireland and to the unfettered control of Irish destinies to be sovereign and indefeasible' for what they are: the assertion of Ireland's right to freedom."

"And Ireland is not free today as we in the Six Counties well know. The British flag flies over us. We are subject to British law and Britain's will is enforced by an Army of Occupation."

"More than 40 years have passed since in 1916 this British rule in Ireland was challenged. In the heart of historic Ulster we of this generation have renewed that self same challenge and have joined issue with the common enemy."

"We believe that those of Irish blood everywhere will support our struggle because it is their struggle too. The independence of our country is the responsibility of all our people. It should take precedence over all other interests. It must if we are to succeed."

"It is bitter indeed to discover that while we face our oppressor here against such terrible odds there are Irishmen who, for the sake of power and influence, are prepared to abandon us — even try to prevent help reaching us, Irishmen who have descended so low as to side with our enemy in misrepresenting before the world the objectives of our revolt."

"But despite their efforts the support of the 26-County population has indeed been heartening. We are uplifted and encouraged in our fight when we see the return to the old allegiance and how brightly the torch of freedom glows."

"The magnificent success of Sinn Féin candidates in the recent election gives us new strength after being abandoned for so long. We know that the hearts of Ireland's people are still with those who are ready to do and die for Irish freedom."

"In making this appeal for your support, it is but fair to warn of individuals or groups who, for their own ulterior motives, will pretend to connections and associations with our struggle."

"Assistance can most effectively be given us through the traditional Republican Movement which alone has supported and encouraged us through the years and whose constituent branches have preserved their continuity since 1916."

"Convinced of the justice of our cause and renewing here now our pledge to keep faith with our patriot-dead, we call with confidence on our kin throughout the world to stand shoulder to shoulder with us in defence of our right to liberty."

This *tour-de-force* and heartfelt statement was penned in Mountjoy by Tony Magan a matter of days before his release on completion of sentence in April 1957. It was adopted by the leadership outside as the Easter Statement to be read at all commemorations under the auspices of the Republican Movement.

A photograph in the Republican organ for May '57 shows a huge crowd at an election meeting for Sinn



• 'Sceilg' — JJ O'Kelly

Féin in Dublin in March. The caption notes that "support for Sinn Féin policy is growing by leaps and bounds in the Ireland of 1957."

"Since the 26-County General Election in March this support has increased out of all proportion to the votes cast for Sinn Féin candidates at that time. Our people are facing up to the challenges of today by rallying to the banner of Republican Ireland."

The editorial in the same paper headed "Who Fears to Speak....", noted that "Police, Specials and British Army units 'stood to' throughout occupied Ireland as the people commemorated the 41st anniversary of 1916. Armed police lined the routes (of commemoration parades) and moved through Nationalist areas but everywhere the people showed new spirit and Tricolours were flying from one end of the occupied area to the other."

"The mass of the people paid their respects to Ireland's heroic dead not at these officially organised functions but at lonely Republican Plots throughout the land."

The *Belfast Telegraph* of April 20 in a special report: "Young (British) soldiers, sailors and airmen stationed in Northern Ireland, who would normally have been spending their Easter leave at home in Great Britain, will be on duty over the holidays."

"Security precautions have been stepped up and the Services, in common with the RUC, will be on special alert.... members of the Ulster Special Constabulary have been mobilised". The spirit of 1916 was truly abroad in the Six Counties that Easter of 1957.

The Republican organ in April reported on prisoners: 112 men in Crumlin Road Jail, Belfast; 7 men jailed in England and 55 in Mountjoy Prison, Dublin.

The following month it noted that Hugh Brady of Lurgan, Joe Campbell of Newry and Leo McCormack of Dublin, having completed their penal servitude terms, were not released from Belfast Jail but were interned.

"In the case of Leo McCormack (who as a Dubliner is considered a "foreigner" by Brookeborough) he was actually taken to the reception centre preparatory to release and then handed a document of allegiance (to the British Crown) to sign — when within sight of freedom."

Meanwhile, the anti-colonial struggle continued elsewhere. In Algeria the ALN (Army of the FLN — Front de Liberation Nationale) in its fight against French Occupation Forces killed 25 French soldiers.

The *Irish Press* of March 29 reported that church bells rang in Cyprus and there was public singing as Cypriots celebrated the release of Archbishop Makarios and three other churchmen from internment without trial on the Seychelles Islands in the Indian Ocean.

The *Irish Independent* of March 30 quoted Makarios as saying "he was not prepared to negotiate about the future of Cyprus unless he was allowed to return there". Mr. Lennox Boyd, the British Colonial Secretary had told the House of Commons the Archbishop would not be allowed to go to his native land.

The celebrations in Cyprus continued for 24 hours; "boisterous rejoicing" the *Irish Independent* called it. Then dusk-to-dawn curfew was again imposed. An official (British) proclamation said "the emergency regulations would be strictly enforced".

It was rumoured in Ireland that the Council of Europe's Human Rights Commission had intervened in the matter of Makarios and the three other churchmen being interned. Seán Mac Bride SC was said to be involved.

The *Sunday Press* of March 31 reported "The British Government stood shaken yesterday over the resignation of Lord Salisbury from the Cabinet in disagreement over the release of Archbishop Makarios — a severe blow to the fading prestige of the Conservative Party".

The last week in March also saw the deaths of two famous Irish Republicans, JJ O'Kelly (Seán Ó Ceallaigh) whose pen name was "Sceilg" (1872-

1957) and Ernie O'Malley (Eamán Ó Máille) 1898-1957.

Born in Valentia Island, Co. Kerry, Sceilg was a founder member of Conradh na Gaeilge in 1893 and was one of the foremost pioneers of the language revival. At various times he was secretary, treasurer and vice-president of Conradh. In 1919 he became President.

He was a writer and contributed to many publications in both Irish and English. As editor of *The Catholic Bulletin* in the year following the 1916 Rising he managed to evade English censorship because it was a religious magazine.

He was elected Sinn Féin TD for Louth in 1918 and became Leas-Cheann Comhairle and Minister for Irish in the First (All-Ireland) Dáil. He became Minister for Education in the Second Dáil (1921-22).

Sceilg resolutely opposed the Treaty of Surrender, toured the United States twice in 1922, first with Austin Stack and later with Fr. Michael O'Flanagan. He was known there as "the silver tongued orator of Madison Square Gardens. Sceilg and Father O'Flanagan went on to tour Australia, both were arrested, served sentences in jail and were deported to Europe on completion of their term."

Sceilg succeeded Valera as President of Sinn Féin, serving from 1926 to 1931. He became Ceann Comhairle of the remaining Deputies of the Second Dáil and presided at its last meeting in 1938 when it delegated its executive powers of government to the Army Council of Óglaigh na hÉireann.

The *Irish Independent* of March 27 traced his career in detail under the heading "Prominent Pioneer of Language Revival". The *Irish Press* covered the obsequies under "Great Funeral Tribute to Mr. JJ O'Kelly" in its March 29 edition.

The list of prominent people attending the funeral ran to 14 paragraphs. Of course those he sternly opposed, Eamonn de Valera and Seán T. Ó Ceallaigh were there, as well as representatives of many aspects of Irish life: Irish language organisations, GAA, NACA, Cumann Camógaíochta na nGael, INTO, educational life at all levels etc. etc.

The coffin was draped in the Tricolour, the pall bearers wore black berets and Seán Óg Ó Tuama, former President of Conradh and ex internecae gave the oration in Irish.

"Throid sé go fíochmhar go minic agus labhair sé agus scríobh sé le fuinneamh. Bronnadh onóracha air i gcein is i gcomhgar agus gach onóir tuille go maith aige."

Sceilg's writings were voluminous and included a substantial life of Cathal Brugha. His last attendance at an Ard Fheis of Sinn Féin was in 1950 when he was confined to a wheelchair. His legacy is one of remarkable courage, persistence and the written word — plus an inspiring life of service.

Sinn Féin representatives at his funeral included: Pádraig Mac Lógáin, Uachtarán, Máiréad Uí Bhuchalla agus Tomás Ó Dúill, Leas-Uachtarán; Míchéal Tréinfhír, Rúnaí and Seoirse Dearth, Cisteoir.

Ernie O'Malley died on March 25, 1957. Outstanding as an IRA commander and as a writer, he was wounded in 1918 at Ballymoe on the Roscommon-Galway border and in a barrack attack at Rear Cross, Co. Tipperary in 1920. Captured in Kilkenny he endured severe torture by the British in Dublin Castle but would not reveal his identity.

He escaped and became GOC 2nd Southern Division. He was the first divisional commander to reject the Treaty of Surrender and repudiate the authority of the Provisional government of the Free State.

Later in 1922 he became Assistant Chief of Staff of the IRA with responsibility for Ulster and Leinster. In November of that year he was severely wounded, captured and imprisoned.

He was under sentence of death until his release in July 1924. In August 1923 he was elected Sinn Féin TD for North Dublin and was among those who undertook a 41-day hunger strike later that year.

He spoke in Limerick at Easter 1928 after which he went to the USA. There he drafted the early versions of his autobiographical "On Another Man's Wound" and "The Singing Flame". Having travelled throughout Ireland in the 1950s he published a series of articles in the *Sunday Press* on IRA operations in the Tan War. These were later collected into a book "Raids and Rallies" published in 1982.

He became an art collector and literary person, but his wounds bothered him greatly in later life and caused his demise at the early age of 59. A Republican soldier whose writings continue to inspire succeeding generations.

(More next month. Refs *An t-Eireannach Aontaithe — The United Irishman*, April and May 1957; *Irish Press*, March 29, *Irish Independent* March 27, 30 and *Sunday Press*, March 31.)

ARRESTS, COLLABORATION AND VICTIMISATION

**50
Years
Ago**

ON MAY 5, 1957 an event occurred which gave an indication of future collaborationist actions by the new administration in the

26 Counties.

On that date, the President of Sinn Féin Pádraig Mac Lógáin, one of the National Secretaries and two Ard Chomhairle members were arrested by Special Branch on the outskirts of Monaghan town.

When they had concluded a post-election organising meeting of representatives in the Westerra Hotel they were followed by two police cars, blocked, arrested and brought back to the barracks in the town.

They were searched and all personal and organisational papers seized. They were held for an hour and then released. All papers were returned without a word of explanation or apology.

Two months earlier a seat in the Monaghan constituency had been won for Sinn Féin by Eoinéachán Ó hAnluain, a brother of Fearghal who was killed in action with Seán Sabhat at Brookeborough barracks.

Following the general election in the 26 counties in March, a Fianna Fáil administration was returned in Leinster House with a secure overall majority.

The new Justice Minister was Oscar Traynor who had been O/C of the Dublin Brigade, IRA during the Black and Tan War. In June 1927, even after the formation of Fianna Fáil, he was elected a Sinn Féin TD for North Dublin. He later defected to de Valera's party.

The new Minister for Defence was Kevin Boland, son of Gerry Boland who became notorious in the 1940s for his repression of Republicans while Justice Minister.

Fianna Fáil had not uttered a word as to its intention to employ coercion when it went before the electorate in February and early March but the appointments of Boland and Traynor (who had been Defence Minister in the 1940s) and the Monaghan arrests foreshadowed coming events.

Meanwhile at Stormont indications were given during a debate on an increase of 250,000 pounds voted to the B-Specials, that hard-line attitudes were being taken.

Unionist MP Nat Minford stated (*Irish Press* May 3): "No measures could be severe or repressive or bad enough for them (the freedom fighters). We should have the same laws here as in Cyprus, and anyone found helping these fellows should be taken out and shot."

"Better death for them than for some innocent person. The hanging machinery should be kept in good working order."

South of the Border, all those sentenced to imprisonment for terms of three months or less following the January round-ups had now been released on expiration of sentence.

Richard Burke of Dublin had been Chief of Staff temporarily but now Tony Magan was restored to that post. Seán Cronin resumed as editor of *An tÉireannach Aontaithe/The United Irishman*.

But now additional penalties not resulting from the courts were being imposed on Republicans. They were being victimised in their employment.

Cases in point were Domhnall Ó Lúbhlaí and Ruairí Ó Brádaigh TD, vocational teachers in South Tipperary and Roscommon respectively, and Tomás Mac Curtáin, a rent collector with Cork Corporation.

The *United Irishman* of June reported in

detail on this. Domhnall Ó Lúbhlaí was arrested on January 18 and sentenced to 14 days imprisonment.

He applied for leave of absence without pay to the South Tipperary Vocational Education Committee which was granted to him.

Despite this the Minister for Education suspended him because "he had failed to perform satisfactorily his duties by being absent from school."

Ruairí Ó Brádaigh TD, still in Mountjoy was similarly suspended. Tomás Mac Curtáin's case came before a meeting of Cork Corporation. As in the other cases mentioned he had been given a form to sign stating that he would have nothing to do with the Republican Movement.

Sinn Féin Councillor Seán Ó Murchú raised the matter in Cork and proposed that the letter from the Department of Local Government be referred back to source. Councillor J Hickey seconded and Lord Mayor Seán Casey supported the Ó Murchú proposal. Hickey and the Lord Mayor represented the Labour Party.

The motion was passed by seven votes to six, three Labour, three Fianna Fáil and one Sinn Féin supporting and three Fianna Fáil, two Fine Gael and an Independent opposing. (*Irish Independent* May 29)

The *Sunday Press* of May 26 reported a meeting of Leitrim Co Council. "A resolution calling on the Minister for Education (Jack Lynch) to reinstate the vocational teachers who were suspended after being imprisoned under the Offences Against the State Act was rejected by the Chairman, Mr Stephen Flynn TD (Fianna Fáil) at Leitrim Co Council meeting yesterday."

"Mr B McGowan (Clann na Poblachta) who proposed the resolution said that three or four teachers had been 'victimised'. They had got leave of absence while in prison but when they returned to their schools they were asked 'to sign certain documents or else...'

Martin Bernard McGowan had been a Sinn Féin TD for Sligo-Leitrim in 1923-27 and was an uncle of Declan Curneen, Glendale, Co Leitrim, formerly of Ard-Chomhairle, Republican Sinn Féin who is now seriously ill in hospital. Best wishes are extended to Declan.

The UI of June 1957 said: "The object (of the victimisation) in all cases appears to be to drive Irish Republicans out of the country by forcing them to emigrate."

"Men received leave of absence to return to their British Army units at the time of the Suez aggression".

Those firings were similar to those engaged in by Stormont for the same reasons. It went on:

"There must be a public outcry by our people. This is not 1917 and those who want to back British imperialism in this country by doing the things that were done to men released after 1916 had better be made understand that."

Indeed in some cases that stand was made as will be seen in future instalments of *Fifty Years Ago*.

The Republican organ for June reported that it took a British Judge — Lord Justice Black — 35 minutes to sentence 13 men to 94 years imprisonment in Belfast.

Three Newry men, Bernard Loy (19), Christopher Loy (25) and Thomas Kearns (20) with three Dundalk men Pat Shaw (21) Seamus Hand (35) and Peter Duffy (36) and a Dublin man Paddy Constantine (28) were all sentenced to eight years each.

Peter Duffy had endured the blanket protest in Portlaoise in the 1940s when Seán MacCaughy died on hunger and thirst strike. Paddy Constantine had taken part in the Arborfield Raid in England in 1955. All seven men were arrested near Warrenpoint, Co Down in January.

John Kelly, (20) of Belfast, David Lewsley (20) of Lurgan and John Madden (20) of Cork were also sentenced to eight years each. Peter Monaghan (22) Dunamore, Co Tyrone



• Pádraig Mac Lógáin

received three years. All were captured at Dunamore.

Two Dublin men Piaras Ó Dúill (23) and Pat Hodgins (21) arrested near the Glenshane Pass, Co Derry were sentenced to six and five years each. All 13 were accused of possession of arms.

In addition Tony Cooney (21), Willie Gough (20) and Jimmy Linehan (20) all natives of Cork received 32 years, 12 years for Cooney and 10 each for the other two.

They were taken after a gun-battle near the RAF radar installation at Torr Head, Co Antrim on December 12. In a statement of his position, Tony Cooney said that the freedom fighters were attacking British occupation in Ireland alone.

James J Corbett and Thomas Ferran both of Belfast received five years and four years for possession of arms and ammunition and Phelim McStravick, Co Antrim, two years for possession of documents including the *United Irishman*.

The other Belfast men, Patrick Pearse McGrogan (23) and Desmond Patrick O'Hagan (23) got four years each on charges arising out of the attempted rescue of Thomas Lennon, an internee, from Belfast City Hospital. The same issue of the Republican paper gave the total interned without trial in Belfast Jail as 133.

On May 26, a total of 38 young Dublin men were arrested in Glenree Valley, Co Wicklow by members of the Special Branch. They were not armed and appeared to have been engaged in a cross-country hike at the time. They included three of the four wounded at Brookeborough, Paddy O'Regan, Phil O'Donoghue and Seán Garland.

All were taken to the Dublin Bridewell, charged with not answering questions and eventually sentenced to two months imprisonment each. Apparently, mass arrests of Republicans had become the order of the day.

One week later exactly, at the very same place, 28 students were arrested by Special Branch. They carried a big wooden box which when opened was found to contain a large rock. They were taken to the Bridewell and held for two days. Their action was in protest at the earlier mass arrests.

Right through these months, military operations by local units of the IRA continued across the Six Counties. In no way was it a 'Border Campaign' as enemy propaganda asserted. Transport, communications, bridges, electricity power supplies and B-Specials training bases were all hit by explosives and RUC barracks were sniped by gunfire.

Occasionally an operation caught the public imagination. On Easter Sunday morning, an Irish National tricolour was seen flying from a 50-foot high water tower at a disused aerodrome at Clontarf, Co Tyrone.

An RUC constable named Power from the nearby Coagh barracks climbed the tower but found his way blocked by a thorn bush. When he pulled the bush out of his way a hand grenade exploded and blew him down to the platform underneath.

He saved himself by using his lanyard and revolver as a tourniquet to stop a severed artery in his leg from bleeding. With great difficulty, RUC and ambulance workers brought him down the narrow ladder to the ground.

At meetings that Easter speakers referred to the incident calling for Tricolours to be flown at prominent positions throughout the occupied area, "with a good thorny bush under each Tricolour to keep it safe from interference!"

Then in Stormont on May 28 a new Bill was introduced to strengthen still further the restrictions on nominations to elections for the puppet parliament.

Two abstentionists had been elected in the latest election in 1953: Charlie McGleenan for South Armagh and Liam Kelly for Mid-Tyrone.

On June 12 the text of the new Bill was circulated: "I.....of.....hereby solemnly and sincerely profess, testify and declare that I recognise the lawful authority of the parliament of Northern Ireland etc. etc." The oath-bound candidates were required to take seats "in the said House". It duly became law in the Six Counties.

However, an even more sinister aspect of this question was revealed in the Stormont Cabinet Papers published 30 years later. The *Irish Times* of January 1 and 2, 1987 gives chapter and verse:

"Nationalist MPs sought the assurances of the Stormont government in a bid to preclude Sinn Féin from contesting elections to the Northern Ireland Parliament, according to the 1956 Cabinet papers."

"At a Cabinet meeting of February 8th, 1956, the Attorney-General, Mr Edmund Warnock, revealed that he had been approached by 'several Nationalist MPs' to suggest to the Government that legislation should be introduced requiring all candidates for Stormont elections to take the Oath of Allegiance at the time of nomination."

"Their object", he explained, "was to prevent Sinn Féin candidates going forward for election who had no intention of sitting in Parliament if elected, and they contended that if a number of Sinn Féiners were elected, it would destroy the Nationalist Party and mean eventually that there would be no effective opposition."

The report ends: "In fact the measure was passed in 1957". It all demonstrates just how far into the system alleged nationalists could be drawn. Their stand in this regard was ultimately a Unionist one.

The *Irish Independent* of May 27, in an editorial struck a blow at the Dublin government decision to ask District Justice Michael Lennon to resign "in the teeth of the Judge's (Teevan) findings".

It concluded: "The Minister (GIB May 24) has caused DJ Lennon to resign and has therefore inflicted a penalty which the High Court Judge who heard the case expressly declared was not merited. What is of far graver import, the Minister and the Government have struck a blow at the independence of the Justices."

Thus ended the career of Michael Lennon who joined the Volunteers in 1914, fought in 1916, suffered imprisonment in Frongoch Camp in that year and in Mountjoy and Lincoln prison, England in 1918-19 and was a Justice of the South Dublin District Court under the First (All-Ireland) Dáil.

(More next month. Ref. *An t-Éireannach Aontaithe/The United Irishman*, May and June 1957; *Irish Press*, May 3; *Sunday Press*, May 26; *Irish Times* January 1 & 2, 1987 and *Irish Independent*, May 27 & 29.)

BODENSTOWN AND SPEECHES FROM THE DOCK

**50
Years
Ago**

DURING June 1957 there were further indications that the new Fianna Fáil administration in the 26 Counties was preparing for a l-l-o-u-t

coercion against Republicans.

Ever since the election of four Sinn Féin Deputies at the general election in March, Fianna Fáil Minister for Lands Erskine Childers (son of the Republican leader of the same name executed by the Free State in 1922) went on an anti-Sinn Féin campaign.

He spoke every weekend at various places in his constituency — Longford-Westmeath — and wrote lengthy letters to the local newspapers, always on the same theme.

This was the same constituency which had elected Ruairí Ó Brádaigh, who decided to reply to these attacks from his prison cell. On May 24 he compiled a letter to the Editor of the *Longford Leader* and brought it to the prison governor Seán Kavanagh for transmission to that paper.

Ó Brádaigh rebutted Childers's accusations point by point and charged that the ground was being prepared steadily for the total repression of Republicans in collaboration with British rule in the Six Counties.

The letter — instead of being censored and forwarded — was sent to the 26-County Department of Justice. They held it for three months and returned it to its author on June 12. It would not be allowed out of the prison.

A brief letter from Ó Brádaigh's Election Agent Mary Delaney explaining the suppression of the letter from prison was carried in the *Longford Leader* of July 6.

She stated that it was a letter to his constituents concerning national and local affairs and she commented: "Not content with jailing a public representative, the authorities muzzle him and obstruct him in any business undertaken by him in his capacity as representative of five-and-a-half thousand people in Longford-Westmeath."

North of the Border, the British were more open in their approach: The *Sunday Independent* of April 21 had reported:

"Block houses are to be erected at the front and rear of Belfast Jail, where more than 120 men are now interned and imprisoned following the recent attacks.

"The block-houses will be manned by armed police and will be used as look-out posts to guard against the possibility of an attack on the prison.

"Pressure on accommodation in the prison is becoming acute as more and more men are interned. Twenty-five ordinary prisoners have been transferred to the hospital wing.

"The [Stormont] government, it is reported, may soon decide to transfer some of the prisoners or internees to 'another place'. During the war [WWII] the government interned a number of men on the prison ship *Al Rawdah* in Strangford Lough."

There was a curious turn in the case of five men sentenced to three months each at Letterkenny District Court (*Irish Press*, April 20) when one of them gave an American address. He was Vincent Conlon (27), 728 Copley Road, Upper Darby, Pennsylvania, USA.

Vincent, a Co Armagh man, had returned from the US to take part in the Resistance fight against British rule. He had driven the lorry during the Brookeborough attack and had been wounded in the foot. Three months later he was



• *The Loys of Newry: Christopher G Loy (centre), father of Christopher A (left), Bernard (right), Matt and Dominick Loy, all of whom served eight-year sentences in Belfast jail for the cause of Irish Freedom.*

back in action.

The other four were: Larry Bateson (21), Magherafelt, Co Derry; Gearóid Mac Cárthaigh (33), 43 Drimnagh Road, Dublin; Seán Lynch (23), 27 Rutland Avenue, Dolphin's Barn, Dublin and Patrick Joseph Dawson (27), 33 Lower Main Street, Letterkenny, Co Donegal.

It was stated in court that all five were arrested on the Lifford-Castlefinn road in a car which had five Thompson sub-machine guns and 727 rounds of ammunition locked in the boot. Lynch wore clerical garb and described himself as Rev Lynch.

Gearóid Mac Cárthaigh, in an address said that "when stripped of their technicalities, the charges against them were purely that the guns and ammunition were to be used against the British forces of occupation in the Six Counties. The evidence proved that there was no intention of using them anywhere except against those occupation forces.

"As Irishmen," he said, "we are proud to assist our comrades in the Six Counties and if some people think they will stop this fight by sending men to jail, we say the fight will not finish in this generation and will go on, and children yet unborn will continue it." Prophetic words, Gearóid.

Other statements made in court in cases where arms were found included Patrick Joseph Hodgins (21), St Vincent's Park, Blackrock who said: "As Irishmen and soldiers of the Irish Republican Army, it is not only our inalienable right but also our duty to resist the power of another power in Ireland." He received five years.

Piarras Ó Duill (23), of 11 South Circular Road, Kilmainham, Dublin received six years. He stated that they had no apology whatever to make. "You can send us to prison but you cannot stop this fight," he said. The two Dublin men were found in a cottage near the Glenshane Pass, Co Derry.

Patrick Shaw (21) of Dundalk, who spoke in Irish and in English, said that he and the men with him were members of a national movement. Brothers Christopher (25) and Bernard Loy, Newry said that they were soldiers of the Irish Resistance Movement.

Bernard said: "I take my sentence [eight years] as a great honour and I thank you very much." Christopher said: "I have no regrets for my actions. My actions speak for themselves."

Patrick Constantine (28) of Dublin told the court: "Despite the fact that many of our men are behind lock and key in the Crumlin Road, we will be free and the Tricolour will fly over that building."

Seamus Hand (32), Dundalk said he was proud to face the charge of trying to free his country of British control. Peter Duffy (36), Dundalk said the trial was a vindication of Ireland's God-given right to freedom.

Thomas P Kearns (20), Newry, Co Down said that once again in Ireland's historic fight for freedom Irishmen had risen against British

rule.

Peter Duffy was a remarkable man. He had spent years "on the blanket" in Portlaoise in the 1940s. Following his release from Belfast Jail in 1962 on completion of sentence, he organised a boot and shoe cooperative factory in Dundalk and became a Sinn Féin councillor.

As a member of the IRA Executive in 1969, he opposed vehemently the Officials' proposal to recognise Westminster, Stormont and Leinster House. He and his brother Paddy were faithful to the end, dying in the early 1970s.

James J Corbett (19), Jamaica Street, Belfast received five years for arms and documents. He refused to give or call evidence, but said: "Although I am not a member of the IRA, as a citizen of the Irish Republic I give every allegiance." As he was led from the dock he declared: "Up the Republic."

In Armagh city, girls ran cheering from the courthouse when Seamus Heuston of Keady and James Oliver Smith of Bessbrook were stood down following a jury disagreement. Later a packed Belfast jury found them guilty on arms charges and they received 10 years and eight respectively.

Bodenstown Sunday, 1957 was on June 23. An *Éireannach Aontaithe/The United Irishman* in its July edition reported an attendance of 8,000. Tomás Mac Curtain presided and Tom Monaghan of Philadelphia spoke on behalf of the Irish in America.

Two days later Tom, a native of Strabane, Co Tyrone, dropped dead suddenly. He was a member of Clan na Gael and a veteran of the Black-and-Tan War.

Seán Duggan, Dunloy, Co Antrim, fresh from the war zone, gave the oration. He said: "To say that Republican Ulster will not fight for its rights today is to say that we have at last accepted British rule and the British connection.

"And as an Antrim man I want to tell you that this has not happened. And it never will."

The Republican organ in an editorial next month commented on the newspaper reports and pictures of the Fianna Fáil ceremony (30 people present) and the 26-County Defence Forces wreath-laying (50 present under orders to be there).

"But the 8,000 odd who came in the evening to join Republican Ireland in honouring Tone were under nobody's orders... they merited a scant paragraph or two from 'Ireland's national press'.

"The man who believed in the sovereignty of the common people would have understood the full significance of that mighty tribute [8,000] to his memory on Sunday, June 23."

At the official opening of Feis Chill Choinnigh an tAthair Tomás Ó Fiaich, Joiner of Modern Irish History at Maynooth College (and later to become Cardinal) said he spoke as one who came from the occupied part of Ireland.

"As long as any part of Ireland was occupied by a foreign army, then the freedom of Ireland was not complete. Irish freedom was not for sale and there was a whispering campaign going on against the whole struggle."

"The gospel of Irish-Ireland meant Irish in three things: Irish in its government and that meant a free Ireland; Irish in its mind and that meant an Ireland intellectually and culturally free; Irish in its happiness and that meant an Ireland socially and economically free."

Meanwhile the anti-colonial struggle continued elsewhere. On his way back from exile in the Indian Ocean at the hands of the British, Archbishop Makarios, leader of the Greek-Cypriots, stopped off at Nairobi, Kenya and addressed the Greek population.

"The Greek Orthodox Church had always been concerned with freedom for all peoples and it had a duty to secure that freedom." He continued on his way to Greece where he received enraptured receptions. He was still banned from entering his native Cyprus.

At Chalon-sur-Marne, M Mollet, the Prime Minister of France, said that if France left Algeria a Civil War could follow.

Referring to allegations of brutalities on the part of French troops in Algeria, he said: "such reprehensible acts, however, could be counted on the fingers of one hand." The imperialist song is the same the world over.

At home in Ireland the annual Ard-Fheis of Clann na Poblachta took place in Limerick on the weekend of June 8-9. A resolution was passed "deploring the action taken by the government against Republicans".

A telegram pledging support to the people of Cyprus "on their unflinching stand against unwarranted aggression by Britain" and congratulating Archbishop Makarios on his leadership of their struggle for freedom was sent to the Archbishop, the *Irish Independent* of June 10 reported.

Seán Mac Bride, leader of the party, said that "in the light of political integrity", the decision to withdraw support from Mr Costello's government was the only one that could have been taken.

"To have actively given our support to policies which we knew to be ineffective and even damaging would have been politically dishonest," he said.

He warned the Fianna Fáil government "to be extremely careful not to place themselves in the position of being policemen for Britain in Ireland. No amount of coercion would replace lack of policy and leadership."

Glacadh leis an rún seo leanas ag cruinniú Cinnbhlana Coiste Chathair Átha Cliath de Chonradh na Gaeilge: "Gur cúis imní don Dáil seo an masla atá á thuirg ag an Roinn Poist agus Telegrafo do laochra na Cásca an stampa d'éisúint ag comóradh John Redmond," the *Irish Press*, June 16, reported. More on this later.

Links with Easter 1916 were broken by the deaths on May 2 of Father Aloysius, OFM Cap and Nurse Elizabeth O'Farrell on June 25. The Franciscan from Church Street, Dublin had attended the 1916 leaders, Pearse, McDonagh and Connolly before their executions.

Nurse O'Farrell of Cumann na mBan had carried Pearse's surrender order to British General Lowe and later toured the IRA garrisons in Dublin with the order. She spoke on a public platform in Dublin with Republican leaders in January 1957 in support of the freedom-fighters in Occupied Ireland.

Brian O'Higgins gave the oration at her funeral to the Republican Plot, Glasnevin. Her life-long friend and comrade of 1916 Síle Grennan, who died in 1972, rests alongside her.

(More next month. Refs. An *Éireannach Aontaithe/The United Irishman*, June and July 1957; the *Longford Leader*, July 6; *Sunday Independent*, April 21; *Irish Press*, April 20 and June 16 and *Irish Independent*, June 10.)

CURRAGH CONCENTRATION CAMP RE-OPENED

**50
Years
Ago**

ON Saturday evening, July 6, 1957 at 9pm, a party of Special Branch headed by Inspector Philip McMahon raided Sinn

Féin Head Office, 31 Wicklow Street, Dublin and interrupted the fortnightly meeting of An Ard Chomhairle.

An tUachtarán, Pádraig Mac Lógáin stated the nature of the meeting. There were cláracha oibre (agendas) on the table, correspondence and the minute book of meetings.

The Branch were not interested in the documentation and simply arrested all twelve men present and conveyed them to the Bridewell prison behind the Four Courts.

The only woman present, Mrs Margaret Buckley, Vice-President, was not taken into custody. She made her way to the Sunday Independent offices where she gave a statement to the reporter who interviewed her. The Sunday Independent of July 7 quoted her:

"The police gave absolutely no explanation for the incident, and we are completely at a loss to know why our members were taken into custody," she was reported as saying in the next day's edition.

"I am completely mystified by the raid and can think of no reason for the arrests." Sinn Féin, she said, is a civil organisation and has no military commitments. "That is laid down in our constitution. There is nothing secretive about our activities and all our meetings are held openly..."

The report went on: "A spokesman for the Special Branch – the Garda department which handles all political matters – refused to comment."

Those arrested included the President of Sinn Féin, Pádraig Mac Lógáin; Vice-President, Tomás Ó Dúill; Rúnaí, Michael Traynor; Cisteoirí, Robert Russell and Paddy O'Hagan; Ard-Chomhairle members, Liam Early (a member of Cork County Council); Pádraig Ó Cuanacháin, Cork; Pádraig Ó Ceallaigh, Galway; Antoine Mac Cana, Áth Cliath; Gearóid Ó Broin, Áth Cliath; Seoirse Dearle, Áth Cliath; Eamonn Mac Thomáis, Áth Cliath.

At the same time the office of An tEirannach Aontaithe/The United Irishman at 1 Gardiner Row, Dublin were raided. Staff, including Seán Dougan, North Antrim and people collecting papers for sale, eg Rory McDevitt, Dublin, were arrested.

Tomás Mac Curtáin was arrested in Kent Station, Cork at 9pm as he alighted from the non-stop train from Dublin. Branch men had followed him to Heuston Station, Dublin where he boarded the train at 6pm.

All across the 26-County State homes were raided throughout the night and into the early morning. Key members of Sinn Féin were arrested in almost every county.

Some had just served short sentences in Mountjoy jail. Others were veterans of the struggle since 1916, including Larry Grogan of Drogheda, Martin Whyte of Co Clare and Dan Gleeson of North Tipperary.

Paddy McCallig, Claremorris, Co Mayo, a Republican veteran in his '70s, was taken from his bed at 6am according to the Irish Press of July 8, the paper described him as "a member of the well-known firm of McCallig Brothers, general wholesale merchants".

Others arrested in Mayo included Dan Hoban and Peadar Murray, Newport, John Joe Monaghan, Bart Gormley and Jimmy Deere, Castlebar. Some of the names will be familiar.

In Clare five arrests were made. In addition to the veteran Martin Whyte of Lisdoonvarna, Michael J O'Keefe, Ennistymon; Flanna Lyons, Martin Finucane and Lot O'Halloran, all three from the Ennis area, were held.

While the majority of the 64 arrests over all were young men of the 1950s generation, a number of 1940s veterans were taken in the round-up.

A notable person to escape was Mick McCarthy, a Co Cork man living in the city. This veteran of the '30s and '40s was holidaying on a beach close to the city with his wife and family.

He was paddling in shallow water with a child held in either hand when a friend told him of the Dublin arrests of Ard Chomhairle members and Margaret Buckley's statement in the Sunday Independent that morning.

Mick moved quickly, went "on the run" and evaded the indiscriminate net of the Leinster House Special Branch for 15 months.

Councillor Liam Earley of Cork was driving to the



• 26-County police lorries taking Sinn Féin prisoners to the Curragh Concentration Camp on July 8, 1957.

Ard Chomhairle meeting when, passing through Naas, Co Kildare, he noticed local Republican veteran Frank Driver cycling by.

Late, in the Bridewell, he heard Frank Driver's voice and considered that if people from country areas were also being arrested, then it was not just the Ard Chomhairle that was being "detained". It was a round-up.

There was much speculation in the press on Monday as to the purpose of the arrests – the figure was given as a total of 63. However, this was soon dispelled as the 48-hour detention period allowed under the Offences Against the State Act 1939 neared expiration.

About 6pm on the Monday, lorries moved into position near the Bridewell, the prisoners were loaded into them and taken under escort to the Curragh "Glasshouse".

People outside (60 or 70 reported the Irish Times July 9) sang A Nation Once Again and the prisoners responded with "Up the Republic" and "Remember Skibbereen". The military prison at the Curragh got its name from its glass roof – the same as in the Aldershot military encampment in England.

In a special issue of Iris Oifigiúil the Dublin government's gazette, on the Monday, an official proclamation was carried announcing the establishment of internment camps at the Curragh and Athlone military barracks.

Part II of the Offences Against the State (Amendment) Act 1940 – a wartime measure – was to be brought into operation. Twelve years subsequent to its closure in June 1945, the Curragh Concentration Camp was to be opened again. The Leinster House Dáil had adjourned for three months two days before.

Early on the morning of July 4 an IRA active service unit in South Armagh attacked an armoured patrol of the British Forces of Occupation. The column had been seeking a British army target but when they made contact it was with an RUC Commando unit from Belfast.

The scene of the attack was on "a lonely stretch of road between Forkhill and Crossmaglen", the Irish Times of July 5 reported. It went on: "The police concerned were part of a Commando force from Belfast. It provides patrols, which always return to Belfast after scrutinising roads and fields in the Border area."

One RUC Commando was shot dead and another was wounded. "British military and police, with tracker dogs, converged on the area." The column withdrew successfully and empty shells of Bren and Thompson machinegun ammunition as well as a butterbox packed with gelignite were found.

A familiar sequence of events followed. Mr Topping, Stormont Minister for Home Affairs stated that under the Special Powers Act prisoners could be flogged or even sentenced to death for possession of arms or indeed lesser breaches of these coercive Acts.

In the British House of Commons, Prime Minister Macmillan stated that "the British Ambassador in Dublin has already taken up the matter with the Government of the Republic (sic)" (Irish Times, July 10).

Resistance activity in the Six Occupied Counties was usually followed by diplomatic pressure by England on the Dublin administration which in turn engaged in collaborative coercive action against Republicans.

Sinn Féin protests got scant coverage in the national press and none on radio. There was no television service. North Tipperary Co Council protested against the internments. Longford Co Council rejected a resolution condemning the requirement for written undertakings by Republicans

in public employ by eight votes to six.

Clann na Poblachta councillor Patrick M Farrell had proposed and Seán F Lynch (Independent Republican) supported. Brian Kiernan (Fianna Fáil) seconded. Others in support were Cllrs Browne (FG), Dowd (Indpt) and Heaney. Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael generally joined forces to defeat the motion (Longford Leader, July 13).

Sixty people were held for 48 hours in the Six Counties from July 11 to 13. Twenty men were from Belfast, another 20 from Fermanagh and the remainder from Tyrone and Down. One woman was "detained", Bridie O'Neill (28), from Belfast. Her brother Liam was an internee since December 1956.

At the July 12 celebrations, de Valera was praised for his action in opening up the Curragh Concentration Camp and for his condemnation of the Fethard-on-Sea, Co Wexford boycott of Protestant-owned shops.

Next day, July 13, fifteen men – members of the Pearce and Teeling Columns – were due for release from Mountjoy. They included Ruairi Ó Brádaigh TD and Dáithí Ó Conaill. However, they were taken from their cells at 5am, placed in lorries surrounded by Special Branch and taken to the Curragh Glasshouse.

Parades with bands and protest meetings took place that evening and next day in Mullingar and Longford. Enthusiasm was high in the Longford-Westmeath constituency where a CIE train driver, Patrick Harney of Athlone was also interned without trial.

The Coiste Seasta of Clann na Poblachta issues a statement that day which was carried in the Sunday Independent of July 14. "While we hold no brief for Sinn Féin and disagree profoundly with their policy, we must also register our emphatic protest against the action of the Government in raiding their party offices and in imprisoning without charge or trial most of the members of the Sinn Féin Ard Chomhairle," it said.

The statement added: "Whether or not one approves of their policy, the fact remains that their candidates polled 65,640 votes at the last elections and that four of their candidates are now elected members of Dáil Éireann (sic)."

It could have added that in the last election north of the Border, Sinn Féin had polled 152,310 votes and had two candidates – in Mid-Ulster and Fermanagh-South Tyrone.

In the Curragh Glasshouse, Tomás Mac Curtáin was elected O/C and a Camp Council chosen by the internees was formed. The small internment camp where German prisoners were held during WWII was prepared hurriedly and the internees from the Glasshouse were moved down to it.

Larry Grogan of Drogheda had been there before, as had quite a number of others, in the 1940s. Larry had been in Ballykinkar Camp, under the British, in 1920-21. Now he was joined in the Curragh, at the age of 56, by his son Tommy.

Pádraig Mac Lógáin had been in the Curragh in the '40s and before that in the '20s. Earlier he had been in Belfast jail and in 1917 had been in Mountjoy and on the famous hunger strike there when Tomás Ashe of Kerry died.

Outside the war of words was fought between Sinn Féin and 26-County government agencies. May Smith of South Armagh (married in December 1956 to Robert Russell) was the other general secretary of Sinn Féin and she rose valiantly to the occasion.

New members were co-opted by the few Ard Chomhairle members free to do so. They would fill in until the Ard-Fheis in the autumn.

De Valera said that "whatever the nature of the

present Sinn Féin organisation, no one was interned because of membership of it". Sinn Féin responded that Sinn Féin was the same as when de Valera was president of it 1917-26; that he had deserted it in 1926 to form Fianna Fáil and seek power in the Free State Parliament.

In an interview with the New York Herald-Tribune (Irish Independent, July 29) de Valera alleged that of the 12 men arrested at the Ard Chomhairle meeting in Dublin, 11 were interned. Those held included "the co-called Chief-of-Staff and the so-called Adjutant-General, as well as other members of what they call the Army Council". No names were given.

Now the names can be revealed. Paddy O'Hagan, Mullaghbawn, Co Armagh was one of the Treasurers and he was released. Tony Mogan was the Chief of Staff and Robert Russell was Adjutant-General. None of the other nine Ard Chomhairle members interned were members of the Army Council.

Magan and Russell were living openly and could have been arrested at any time. They were not. The Ard Chomhairle was the target and the intention was to behold the Sinn Féin organisation and to cripple it by arresting and intern key members throughout the State.

The Sinn Féin reply carried in the Irish Times of July 29 concluded: "Have the people been asked to decide on the present attack on Sinn Féin? Have the people been asked to decide on the setting up of concentration camps and summary arrests without benefit of trial or charge?"

"When did Mr de Valera get a coercion mandate from the Irish people? We challenge Mr de Valera to bring this whole issue before the Irish people NOW – and then we'll be in a position to speak about the people's will."

"Will Mr de Valera do that?"

There was no reply, of course. The question of dealing with Republicans or coercive legislation or internment without trial was never raised by either Fianna Fáil or Fine Gael during the election campaign in February or March.

But Sinn Féin was not beheaded. Vice-President Margaret Buckley, Ard-Rúnaí May Smith and Cisteoir Paddy O'Hagan were at liberty. They and the few members of An Ard Chomhairle who were absent from the July 6 meeting met and filled up the vacant places.

The interned members were quickly replaced at local level. Then it was business as usual for Sinn Féin.

GHQ staff members Seán Cronin and Charlie Murphy had escaped the net and were "on the run". They reorganised the Headquarters Staff and soon the IRA was back in business. The knockout blow aimed at the Republican Movement had failed.

What was more, public opinion was now largely opposed to internment. There was a great forward momentum in support for the Movement.

In particular the people who had endured the jails and concentration camps with their dreadful conditions in the 1940s remembered their ordeal and rallied in supporting the new generation in its hour of need.

(More next month. Refs. Sunday Independent, July 7 and 14; Irish Times, July 5, 8, 9, 10 and 29; Longford Leader, July 13; Irish Independent, July 29.)

CURFEW IN NEWRY

50 Years Ago

ON August 12, 1957, curfew was imposed on Newry. It required "persons within specified areas to remain indoors between 11pm and 5.30am".

The *Irish Press* of August 13 reported: "The curfew area which is within a radius of about three miles from the town will extend to almost the Border on the Dublin Road and to the Border on the Carlingford Road."

"As well as Newry, the curfew applies to the following townlands in Co Armagh: Lisdrumgully; Derrybeg; Carnagat; Bellinlere; Lisdrumliska; Dromolane and in Co Down to Ballinraig; Carneylaugh; Commons."

"More copies of a manifesto which appeared in the Six Counties on Saturday were again posted up in many areas yesterday. It said the 'resistance fight' would go on and urged members of the RUC and B-Specials to change sides."

The report continued: "About the same time (10.30p.m.) a crowd of about one thousand young people gathered into Hill Street – the main street of the town – and paraded up and down singing songs, one of which was 'We won't go home until morning'."

"At 11p.m. when curfew was due to commence, there was still a crowd of about two hundred demonstrating. They continued singing until 11.20p.m. and then headed homewards."

The *Irish Times* of August 17 said: "The maximum penalty of conviction in indictment (for curfew breaking) at assizes remains a term of imprisonment of not less than three years or more than fourteen, and a fine of 500 Euro or both."

In the Newry area the previous day, the RUC found copies of a leaflet posted prominently in various places and issued by the Newry Unit of the IRA. "The leaflet said", the *Irish Times* continued: "People of Newry – by clamping a curfew on Newry, the Stormont authorities hope to break your spirit. By policy baton charges they hope to enforce the curfew; by a display of force they hope to intimidate you; by threatening to draft in more British troops they hope to frighten you. They will not succeed."

"British guns will not top the march to freedom of the Irish people. A Stormont curfew will not stop us walking the streets of our own town in our own land. 'Defy the curfew! Stand together! March together! Fight together! For a united Ireland, for a free Ireland, for a democratic Ireland.'"

Then *Raidió Phoblacht* na h-Éireann swung into action. This broadcasting station was first heard from O'Connell Street, Dublin on Easter Tuesday 1916. It was heard again throughout the autumn and early winter of 1939.

Now in August 1957 it went on the air again reporting on the Newry Curfew:

"British Imperialism, like a cornered rat, is striking out blindly in every direction," it declared. "Morale was high and enthusiasm is rising – even in Belfast Jail and the Curragh Concentration Camp."

Night after night local people defied the Newry curfew. They lined the streets and in spite of an overwhelming presence of British forces stood to "Attention" at 11pm – the hour of curfew – and sang *Amhrán na bhFiann*, the Irish National Anthem.

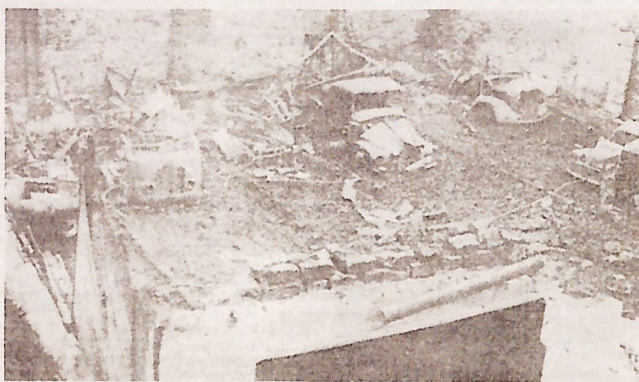
On the previous Friday night, August 9, RUC barracks at Swatragh, Co Derry and Crannagh, Co Tyrone were attacked by the Resistance. At Mullin, Co Fermanagh, a British Customs was demolished and a British military vehicle had to be brought from Enniskillen to act as a temporary office.

The *Sunday Independent* of August 11 described the Swatragh attack: "In the attack on Swatragh barracks on the Maghera-Garvagh road, the raiders (sic) who are believed to have used two motor vehicles, mounted three machine guns on high ground and sprayed the station with gunfire for ten minutes."

"Police fired Sten guns through sandbag defences. A rocket was fired and police patrols throughout Co Derry were alerted. The raiders made off and police mounted road blocks all over the county. No arrests were made."

The *Sunday Press* of August 11 reported: "Police were out in many parts of the Six Counties yesterday tearing down posters said to have been issued by an illegal organisation (recte: the IRA)."

"Headed 'The fight will continue' the posters asked for support for the organisation. Police were warned that so long as they wore England's uniform



• *British Imperial and Stormont installations were targets of Resistance attacks in Newry, Co Down on August 12, 1957. Picture shows burned-out Post Office transport.*

they would not be immune from attack. The 26-County government was criticised for using internment powers."

The full text of the August 9 proclamation is carried on pages 95, 96 and 97 of *Resistance: The Story of the Struggle in British Occupied Ireland* by J McGarrity. (This booklet has been reprinted and is available from 223 Parnell Street, Dublin 1.)

It is quite clear regarding the attitude of the IRA. It says: "The struggle of the Resistance Movement is most certainly not directed against the Unionist population of the Six Counties."

It also quotes the December 12, 1956 proclamation which publicly warned the UC and B-Specials not to take part with the British armed forces. Since then they had been put on a war-footing and were "doing England's bidding with a vengeance."

It went on: "The Resistance can hardly be expected to differentiate between men trained, organised and equipped along military lines (although clad in police uniforms) and British troops."

There it is stated clearly. The record stands publicly. There was no exemption for the RUC and B-Specials in 1956-62. Yet the lies persist in spite of facts.

Why did Stormont blunder into the curfew in Newry in August 1957? There had been no curfew in the Six Counties since it was imposed for nine weeks from October to December of 1942 in the Lower Falls area of Belfast and before that it had been used in 1920-22.

The answer is that for once the full programme of military operations planned for a given area had been carried out and Stormont "lost the cool head".

On July 25, a British army lorry had been held up in O'Neill Avenue, Newry by four armed and masked men. The sole occupant, the driver was ordered out and the vehicle was burned out.

Then the British Post Office – of Royal Mail – and the Electricity Board installations in the town were attacked. The ground floor and offices of the Electricity Board in Francis Street, Newry were badly damaged by a bomb on the night of August 11.

At the same time a fire broke out at the Royal Mail GPO garage in the town and many vehicles were destroyed. The immediate response to these successful sabotage actions was to impose a curfew on 15,000 people.

The Anti-Partition MP for South Down at Stormont, Mr J Connellan, while deplored the imposition of a curfew remarked:

"Those who remembered the curfew of 1921 will recall that it was availed of by well-known elements for the carrying out of frightful and indiscriminate atrocities on Nationalists, and consequently we can only view the action now taken with feelings of alarm."

He was referring to the death squads composed of RIC/RUC, B-Specials and loyalists which murdered innocent and uninvolved nationalists in 1920-22. What is new one might ask?

On Sunday August 11 at an early hour a dredging barge owned by the Stormont Ministry of Finance and carrying hundreds of pounds worth of equipment was sunk in Lough Neagh by an explosion. Engineers described it as a total loss.

The *Irish Press* of August 13 said: "A heavy charge of gelignite was fixed to the barge, which was pushed into the Lough from the shore near Coagh, Co Tyrone."

The East Tyrone IRA had been extremely active and on the following Saturday night, August 17, a trigger-mine exploded at Brackville, Coalisland which killed an RUC sergeant and wounded two

British soldiers and three RUC constables.

Sergeant Owens stationed at Coalisland had led a party of British troops and RUC to a disused house at Kettle Lane. The door was partly open and a light showed behind it. When he pushed open the door the mine exploded with fatal consequences.

The *Irish Times* of August 19 stated that: "This was the eight incident in the Coalisland district since April. There is a possibility of curfew being imposed on the area."

An anonymous phone call had been received at Coalisland RUC Barracks. The empty house is about 200 yards from a sand pit where four submachine guns and ammunition were found a few days previously."

However no curfew was imposed on the Coalisland area. Stormont had learned that that would only increase nationalist support for the Resistance. But there would be other longer-term consequences, as we shall see.

The *Irish Times* of August 21 in an editorial agreed with the coroner's jury description of the death as a "wilful, foul, deliberate and corrupt murder". However, the same paper on August 23, two days later, carried in full an answer from the Irish Republican Publicity Bureau signed J McGarrity secretary.

It read: "When an armed member of the British garrison dies it is 'murder most foul'. When Irish youths are tortured and killed to maintain British rule in our country, this of course is 'law and order' operating."

"Since December 12th, 1956, the only non-belligerents killed or wounded have met their fate at the hands of the maintainers of 'law and order'. The *Irish Times* carried no leading articles condemning the kind of 'law and order' which can shoot innocent people to death and get away with it."

The statement continued: "Since December 12th, 1956, the RUC and B-Specials have been told at least three times by proclamation to stand clear of the struggle against British occupation, or else be regarded as combatants on the side of English rule."

"No later than August 10th-12th they were told via a manifesto (which the *Irish Times* failed to carry) that the Resistance could not be expected to differentiate between men armed, trained and organised along military lines (although clad in police uniforms) and British military."

No one reading the RUC account of the Brackville incident could doubt for one moment the death-dealing nature of that expedition: machine guns at the ready, grenades primed and held in hands, movements co-ordinated and so forth.

"When they set out to kill should they be surprised if death meets them on the way? Should they cry 'foul' because they themselves become the victims?"

"Some months ago, Lord Brookeborough boasted that traps were being prepared for the young freedom-fighters and that one day they would walk into one. It comes ill from the perpetrators of injustice in our country to have to face up to the realities of the violence on which their very rule depends."

"Finally, the leader-writer of the *Irish Times* omitted to tell us (in common with our other national news papers) that the jury foreman who made that nice British propaganda speech quoted above is an ex-District Inspector of the RUC. It makes an enormous difference."

Note: The *Irish Times* report of August 21 gives the foreman's name as William Duffy.

Meanwhile, the number of internees in the Curragh Concentration Camp had grown to 115. These were crammed into two huts.

By August 5, the sentences being served by the last Republican prisoners in Mountjoy jail had expired and all – with the exception of a very few (just five) – were removed to the Curragh where conditions were dire.

The 'small camp' as it was called had housed German servicemen during WW1. Since 1945 it had been unoccupied. The timber walls of the huts were cracked and let through the breeze.

The roofs were leaking and the beds, consisting of three planks each on trestles nine inches high, were arranged in zig-zag fashion to avoid the constant 'drop-down' of rain. Plastic raincoats were spread on the beds as cover.

When the prisoners were moved to other huts during 'security' searches there were no flush toilets available behind the locked doors. One huge galvanised bucket in the corner of each hut without screening was the only facility.

With the bedclothes brushing the floors it was only a matter of time until the unsanitary conditions caused illness. On the night of August 1 there was an outbreak of dysentery which affected most of the men.

This condition was nicknamed *scribo* by the former internees of the 1920s and 1940s and was very debilitating. Many cursed de Valera, Aiken and Oscar Traynor that night. They had endured such conditions and food-poisoning themselves in their day, yet they themselves inflicting them on a new generation. It was the only occasion that the internees gave vent to such feelings.

When the internees were moved first from the Glasshouse to the small camp in July, the elected OC, Tomás MacCurtáin, addressed the men lined up in formation.

He said that the collaborators with British rule who were based in Leinster House had acted to make the Curragh Concentration Camp "the grave of the Irish Republican Army". He called on the prisoners to behave at all times in such a manner as to frustrate the design of their jailers.

On August 16 a form of undertaking was distributed to each internee. They could secure their release, it said, by "signing the form". Those in "public employment" were told they would not be required to "sign" a second time to have their employment restored.

The answer was immediate. The internees formed up in good order and marched around the perimeter of the camp led by the President of Sinn Féin, Pádraig Mac Lógáin.

They then proceeded to a small incinerator within the camp where the forms were ceremonially burned, each man dumping his "form" in turn in the flames and waiting to see it burn. No one signed the form.

But there were happy moments too. In the bright summer evenings the children of the Free State Army personnel at the seven military barracks on the Curragh plain used to gather outside the six barbed wire fences that hemmed in the internees.

There they would sing rebel ballads. The internees would gather inside and respond. Every second verse was sung by each side. Both sides would join in the chorus.

The *Boys of Wexford*, *Boylavogue*, *Kelly the Boy from Kilmalee* and *God Save Ireland* would echo across the plain of the Curragh.

Fourteen years later, one daughter of a 26-County Army officer who was very active in the Republican Movement would tell of how at 11 years of age, this "choir practise" at the Curragh was her first introduction to Republicanism.

With the numbers of internees mounting up, the lack of space for outdoor games became more and more noticeable. One small space available was reserved for basketball. Would be participants had to queue up for long periods to secure a place.

In answer to a Free State inspired article in the *Irish Times* on August 6 "by Our Political Correspondent" praising the treatment of internees, a comprehensive description of conditions in the camp was compiled by the Camp Council.

This was smuggled out and carried as an expensive paid advertisement in the *Sunday Independent* of August 18. It was issued by the Publicity Committee of Sinn Féin on August 13, 1957.

The full text also appeared in *An t-Éireannach Aontaithe/The United Irishman*, September 1957. Headed "Inside the Curragh Concentration Camp", the advertisement measured 15 inches by six inches.

For the concerned with such matters it is essential reading. No reply to it ever came from "the powers that be". It was a full statement of the facts.

(More next month. Ref: *An t-Éireannach Aontaithe/The United Irishman*, August and September 1957; *Resistance: The Story of the Struggle in British-Occupied Ireland*, publ Irish Freedom Press, 1957 and 2007; *Raidió Phoblacht na h-Éireann*, 1957; *Irish Press*, August 13; *Sunday Press*, August 11; *Sunday Independent*, August 11 and 18; *Irish Times*, August 6, 17, 19, 21 and 23.)

MILITARY OPERATION, HUMAN RIGHTS AND A WEDDING

**50
Years
Ago**

AT the end of August 1957, guerrilla attacks against British installations in the Six Occupied Counties continued.

In Derry city, the Brookhill

District Telephone Exchange was "wrecked by an explosion" the *Irish Times* of August 31 reported. The automatic dialling equipment was put out of action.

A British Post Office garage at Fogle Road, Derry, was set on fire according to an *Irish Times* report of August 26. Eleven vehicles were contained in it where formerly it housed over 30. Following the burning of the GPO garage in Newry a number of lorries had been dispersed.

A British Customs house at Lifford Road, Strabane, Co Tyrone was blown up, according to the RUC Inspector General's HQ in Belfast. "The force of the explosion was such that some windows in the gas office, Strabane, about a quarter of a mile away were broken", their statement said.

Then in the *Sunday Press* of September 1 reported: "The biggest explosion so far in the Six Counties wrecked the main transformer of the electricity network at Newcastle, Co. Down, at 11.20 last night."

"Several towns were plunged into darkness and the power supply to Belfast – 30 miles away – was affected. Flames leaping from the blasted transformer were visible for miles around."

"Immediately after the explosion, police sealed off the park (Donard Park at the foot of the Mourne Mountains) and mounted machine guns at the entrances. A number of young men were questioned but no arrests were made."

The *Sunday Independent* of the same date carried a speech by Mr. Brian Faulkner, Unionist Chief Whip at Stormont, at one of the six demos held by the "Orange Black Preceptor".

"The drastic measures already taken to stop incidents in the Six Counties were 'only a sample', he said."

"No consideration of convenience will prevent us from taking whatever further steps may be necessary to stamp out this evil thing."

A resolution was passed welcoming "the belated steps now taken by the Irish Government following representations by Britain". They would never "sever the British connection or surrender any part of this legally constituted area of Northern Ireland to Irish Republicans".

On September 9, the Stormont imposed curfew in Newry was ended and the lights went on again. It had lasted just four weeks in comparison with the three months of curfew in the Lower Falls area of Belfast in 1942.

In 1957 there was wide public resistance to the measure. Similarly the closing of cross-border unapproved roads by the British Army had antagonised local people on both sides of the frontier.

British courts were busy handing down sentences to Irish Republicans. Eamon Timoney (30) of Derry city received four years and at a later court 10 years. From the dock he defied the whole apparatus of English rule in Ireland.

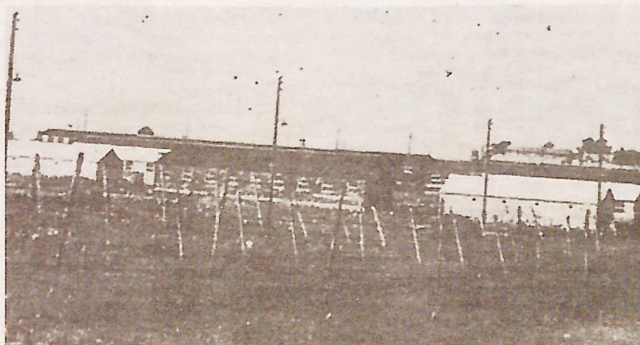
Patrick J Fox (23) had 10 years imposed on him; Mathew Monaghan (19) and Lawrence McGowan (18) got 6 years each. All three were from Derry city.

P.J. O'Kane (33), Dungiven received 10 years for possession of documents and explosives. He refused to plead in court but conducted his own cross-examination of witnesses.

Three Cork youths, Tony Cooney, William Patrick Gough and James Joseph Linehan were held by RUC at Torr Head, Co Antrim following a brief gun-battle and were sentenced to 12, 10 and 10 years each.

Near Armagh city, Séamus Heuston of Keady and James Oliver Smith of Bessbrook got 10 years and eight years. Leonard Magill of Lurgan, arrested near Dungannon was given 18 months.

Seven men were captured at Clonallon, Warrenpoint, Co. Down by British military in a comb-out of the Mourne Mountains on January 4,



• One hundred and fifteen prisoners were held in the Curragh Concentration Camp without charge or trial.

1957. They received eight years each.

They were Christopher Loy, Bernard Loy and Thomas Kearns of Newry; Séamus Hand, Peter Duffy and Pat Shaw of Dundalk and Paddy Constantine of Dublin.

On December 30, 1956, three men were held in the Dunamore area of Co. Tyrone. They were John Kelly of Belfast, John Oliver Madden of Cork and David T Lewsky of Lurgan, Co. Armagh. They were sentenced to eight years each.

Peter Monaghan of Dunamore, Co. Tyrone, was charged with aiding and abetting them and received three years. Two men were captured in a cottage near the Glenshane Pass, Co. Derry on January 15, 1957; Piaras Ó Dúill (later an t-Athair Piaras) and Pat Hodgins, both of Dublin, were given six years and five years.

Phelim McStravick of Lurgan got four years. He told the court an RUC Head Constable had asked him who his confessor was and what the priest's politics were after offering him money to become an informer.

Thomas O'Malley (55) and Patrick Collins (48) two Belfast men, fathers of large families, who were arrested in Bangor, Co. Down and charged with putting up a Resistance Proclamation were sentenced to six years and four years each.

The only evidence against them was the statement of an RUC Sergeant that "their hands were sticky". The listing of those sentenced which is given here is not intended to be complete.

Also at the end of August came the long-awaited Cuthbert and Isles Report commissioned by Stormont in 1946 but its publication was repeatedly held up over the intervening years.

It ran to 648 pages under the title "An Economic Survey of Northern Ireland" by Professor K.S. Isles of Queen's University and Mr. Norman Cuthbert, also of Queen's.

The *Irish Press* of August 29 says: "The North needs more independence in its monetary policy and more positive help from Britain if it is to overcome its chronic unemployment problem and build up a standard equal even to the least developed areas of Britain, states the Report, published yesterday."

"The Report points out that because of the Government of Ireland Act (which set up the Six-County and 26-County States in 1921), the Six Counties has no control over its own economic financial policy."

"A number of recommendations to improve the existing position are, however, made". The *Irish Press* lists nine of these.

The *Irish Times* of August 29 commented in an editorial: "The Isles Report keeps within its terms of reference and shuns mention of the rest of Ireland like the plague. It brings home the lesson that there is less difference between the problems of the Six and 26 Counties than between those of the Six Counties and Britain".

It also states: "It becomes increasingly apparent that the economic problems of the two separate parts of this country differ only in degree".

The editorial went on: "There has been abundant evidence expanding over the years that 'the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland' is a convenient term of politics, but does not extend to the sphere of full economic unity".

Meanwhile, south of the Border the *Longford Leader* of July 27 reported remarks made by the 26-County Minister for Lands, Mr. Childers when he addressed the Roadduff Cumann of Fianna Fáil: "Referring to Sinn Féin he said the Government would put it down if they were to fill every jail and barracks in the State".

Sinn Féin in reply quoted Mr de Valera's statement of July 22: "Whatever the true character of Sinn Féin, no one has been arrested because of membership of it".

Sinn Féin asked which of these Ministers of State "is to be believed"? Is it that the latter (Mr Childers) is the more honest?"

The *Longford Leader* the following week, August 3, headlined a speech by General Seán Mac Eoin, Fine Gael TD for Longford-Westmeath. Speaking at Granard he said: "How long are we going to intern people? Will they repent while in confinement?" He then quoted Mr Childers' remarks and said "I want to warn the Minister, and the Government, that threats and internments are no solution to the problem".

Mac Eoin continued: "Offenders should be tried in court and given a chance to defend themselves. Let them know the charge and, if found guilty, let the punishment fit the crime. But unrest and internment never ended anything – and everyone knows that".

A chance meeting between Seán Mac Eoin and Seán Ó Brádaigh soon after the *Sunday Independent* of August 18 carried the large advertisement on conditions in the Curragh Concentration Camp (see last month's *Saoirse*) clarified Mac Eoin's thinking. They met outside Clarendon St Church, off Grafton Street.

Having asked about Ruairi Ó Brádaigh TD (then in the Curragh whom he knew well), he went on to give his views on the campaign in the Six Counties.

General Mac Eoin did not contest the right of young Irishmen to attack British military and police barracks north of the Border, but having attacked them they must stay in the Six Counties, he said.

The Border was an "international frontier" and had to be respected. In other words no help could go to those fighting British rule in the Six Counties.

This, of course, was at variance with his own position as G O C Midland Division, Irish Republican Army in February 1922 when he stood over an operation into Co Fermanagh from Swalinbar, Co Cavan to seize hostages in view of the imminent execution of three Republican prisoners in Derry jail.

But there was a happier side to events, too, in that month of September 1957, Wexford Corporation, North Tipperary Co Council and Westport, Co Mayo town council among other local bodies called for the release of Sinn Féin prisoners in the Curragh".

The *Irish Times* of September 17 reported that a young Curragh internee from Newport, Co Mayo was given fourteen days parole to enable him to get married and have a honeymoon. He was named Donal Hoban (22).

"His marriage will take place at the Catholic Church at the Curragh Camp to Teresa Murray, of Rosslave, Newport, Co Mayo. Another internee Peadar Murray, a brother of the bride may be best

man".

The report went on: "Miss Murray is a keen camogie player, while Mr Hoban is a well-known Mayo footballer".

Next day the *Irish Times* reported again: "There were about 65 people in the (Garrison) Church, most of them members of garrison families, when the bride arrived – 15 minutes late – on the arm of her father, Mr Edward Murray."

"The church was familiar to Mr Murray he was interned during 1922-23 and again during WWII when he was interned for four years."

"Following the ceremony, with Nuptial Mass and Papal Blessing, the 11 members of the wedding party drove four miles to a reception in a Newbridge hotel".

Of course when Dan Hoban was being released at 8.15am his comrades in the camp put on a show as he approached the gates. They formed a Guard of Honour for him and required him to walk under a canopy of bed boards on his way out. This was not reported in the newspapers!

Earlier on August 1, the *Irish Times* had reported: "Mr Denis Gallagher, chairman of West Mayo divisional board of the GAA protested at a meeting of the board, at the arrest and internment of three members of Newport, Co Mayo GAA club. (They were Dan Hoban, Peadar Murray and John Joe Monaghan)."

"He said that he did not want to introduce politics into the GAA, he thought a person should have a chance of proving his innocence before a civil court before being interned."

"Mr O. Dawson agreed and said it was very unfair of the law to intern young men without a trial".

Also during September a case was being taken by an internee, who was not a member of the Republican Movement, to the European Court of Human Rights at Strasbourg.

He was Gearóid Ó Laighléis (Gerry Lawless) of Dublin and he began by "exhausting all domestic remedies" first and applying to the Curragh Commission. Then he applied to the Dublin High Court.

He was represented by Seán Mac Bride, SC, Séamus Soraghan BL and Ciarán Mac Anailí, solicitor (of the office of PC Moore and Co solrs)

It was not the first approach to Strasbourg. Following Ruairi Ó Brádaigh's election to an AI-Ireland Parliament in March, his election agent Mary Delaney, notified the Human Rights Commission of his imprisonment.

With his internment, the Commission was again notified, but as a member of the Republican Movement he could not "exhaust all domestic remedies". However, much correspondence with the Human Rights Commission ensued.

The *Irish Independent* of August 26 noted the transfer from Limerick of "five well-known members of the Franciscan Order in the city". Four were sent to other places in Ireland but one was exiled to the Holy Land.

He was Father Athanasius MA, known as an tAthair Athánais, close friend of Seán Sabhat. He made no secret of his admiration for the young Republican.

An t-Athair Athánais was uachtarán of Dáil na Mumhan of Conradh na Gaeilge from its reformation in 1952 and one of the founders of ROSS, the bilingual paper of Conradh.

He spoke feelingly of Seán Sabhat as he obeyed the Order's instructions to go to Palestine. "Faighinís luach a chuid fola" (let us get the price of his blood), he is quoted as saying as he left Ireland.

Rosc, Meán Fómhair 1957, gives a comprehensive account as Gaeilge of his work throughout Munster for the Irish language in the early and mid 1950s.

Then at the end of August 1957, Sinn Féin announced that it would contest the Dublin North-Central by-election. The vacancy was caused by the death of a Fianna Fáil TD. Sinn Féin had not contested that constituency before.

(More next month. Refs: An t-Éireannach Aontaithe/The United Irishman, September 1957; *Irish Times*, August 1, 26, 29, 31; September 17 and 18; *Sunday Press* September 1; *Sunday Independent* August 18 and September 1; *Irish Press* August 29; *Irish Independent* August 26 and *Longford Leader*, July 27 and August 3; *Irish Times*, August 30).

ANTI-INTERMENT PROTESTS AND CENSORSHIP OF NEWS

**50
Years
Ago**

TOWARDS the end of September and early October 1957, the 26 County Board of Works moved a large party of workers

into the Curragh Concentration Camp and began repairs on the huts housing the 118 internees there.

This was in preparation for the re-opening of Leinster House in October and the inevitable raising of the question of the Concentration Camp. That camp had been opened in July two days subsequent to the closure of Leinster House for its summer recess.

Internees were moved to vacant huts at the Board of Works men took over. The huts were re-roofed to keep out the rain (note: the summer had been unusually wet).

The walls were lined internally with "hard-board" to keep out the wind. Flush toilets were installed in the huts to replace the extra large buckets used heretofore.

A section of the old 1940s internment camp known as the "football field" was fenced off, an opening made in the barbed wire at the southeast corner of the existing camp to link up with this "field" and a bridge placed over the 15 foot deep moat to provide access to the "field".

This bridge operated as a tunnel surrounded by barbed wire to allow the internees through to the field for games in the morning and afternoon and also in the evening when bright.

It reminded the prisoners of the circus tunnels through which the lions were herded from the vehicle cages into the closed ring where they would perform for the attendance.

Other smaller improvements were made in conditions, but the complete lack of any privacy—even in the toilets—still remained.

An *t-Éireannach/The United Irishman*, in its October 1957 edition, noted that conditions had "improved considerably" since the publication of the statement from the Publicity Committee of Sinn Féin in a paid advertisement in the *Sunday Independent* of August 8.

This advance "followed a wave of public protests by people, many of whom can hardly be said to be sympathetic with the Cause of Irish Republicanism".

There was still plenty of room for improvement, it was stated, but that, by itself, was not enough. The men had committed no crime and MUST BE RELEASED NOW.

In the September issue of the *Republican Organ*, a full list of the Curragh internees was given county by county. In all 24 counties were represented as follows:

Antrim: three; **Cavan** two; **Cork:** Four, including city councillor Liam Early; **Clare:** five; **Derry:** one; **Donegal:** one; **Dublin:** 49; **Fermanagh:** three; **Galway:** four; **Longford:** one (Ruairí Ó Brádaigh TD); **Limerick:** one; **Leitrim:** one; **Meath:** seven; **Mayo:** five; **Tipperary:** four; **Tyrone:** one; **Westmeath:** one; **Wicklow:** four; **Wexford:** one.

In all cases full addresses were supplied. The total in September came to 116. A further two were interned without trial later that month. They were from Dublin, making a total of 50 from that county.

In D-Wing of Crumlin Road Jail, Belfast, the number held without trial from that city was also in the region of 50. More on this later.

On October 19, Roscommon County Council suspended standing orders to pass a resolution by 11 votes to 9, calling on the 26-County government to "consider the feasibility" of releasing the men held in the Curragh Concentration Camp.

The original motion by Councillor PA McGuinness of Farmonbarry (Clann na Poblachta) "deplored the action of the Government in having citizens arrested and interned without trial". The amendment (as above)



• **Seán Ó Brádaigh.**

which was carried, was proposed by Councillor Brian Lenihan (Fianna Fáil), later Minister for Justice at Leinster House.

Notes and Comments in the *Republican Organ* (October) reported on the National Convention of the Federation of Old IRA (1916-21). They discussed at length a South Louth protesting against "the tyrannical system of arrests and imprisonment of citizens of the 32 Counties of Ireland without trial or charge".

Eventually the Convention, on the suggestion of the Chairman, Seán Dowling of Dublin (dentist and IRA veteran (1916-24) agreed to adopt a composite resolution as follows:

Asking the 26-County Government "to bring continued pressure to bear on the UNO to denounce the continued occupation by British Crown Forces of part of the territory of Ireland; that this Convention implores the Government to utilise to its utmost the resources of the Civil Courts in the maintenance of the law".

The columnist "Éireannach" comments "Mr Aiken (26-County Foreign Minister) while discussing the Hungarian at UNO might note particularly that Resolution".

A panel in the *Republican Organ* of October is headed: "Spirit of Republicanism" and reads: "The spirit of Irish Republicanism is not to be found in the speeches and saying of Mr de Valera and his lieutenants."

"The spirit of Irish Republicanism is to be found in the Autobiography of Wolfe Tone, the Proclamation of Robert Emmett, the Essays of Thomas Davis, the letters of Fintan Lalor, John Mitchell's "Jail Journal" and "Last Conquest of Ireland Perhaps", John O'Leary's editorials, "The Sovereign People" of Pádraig Pearse, and James Connolly's "The Re-Conquest of Ireland".

"These are the true founts of Republican doctrine. Their message is timeless. We can ask ourselves: 'How would they view the struggle for Irish freedom? Would they condemn it? And instinctively we know what the answer would be."

"Educate that you may be free — SAOR". A further addition to SAOR's list would without doubt be Terence Mac Swiney's "Principles of Freedom".

In October also was listed the names of nine members of Sinn Féin co-opted to replace those Ard Chomhairle members then in the Curragh Concentration Camp.

They were: Councillor **Seán Ó Murchú**, Cork; **Ned Smith**, North Cork; **Micheál Ó h-Aonghusa**, Dublin; **Seán Ó Mahony**, Tipperary; **Jack Guinness**, Meath; **Myles Shevlin**, solr, Carlow; **JJ McGill**, TD, Leitrim; **Mrs Ella May Woods**, Kerry and **John Behan**, Laois.

During September, the *Republican Organ* reported that a big demonstration was held at Ballinamuck, Co Longford.

Its purpose was to commemorate the Battle of Ballinamuck in 1798 when Irish and French forces were defeated by overwhelmingly superior British numbers and also to protest against the internment of Pádraic Ó Ceallaigh and other Irishmen at the Curragh Concentration Camp.

Several hundred people paraded from Guigue

Cross to the meeting led by students of the local Technical School where Pádraic Ó Ceallaigh taught.

The students carried plaques reading: "Ballinamuck students demand release of their Headmaster, Pádraic Ó Ceallaigh". "Give us back Mr Kelly". "Release our Headmaster", etc.

John Joe McGill, TD, Tomás Ó hUiginn, Longford and Seán Ó Brádaigh addressed the gathering. JJ McGill said the Free State administration sought to cripple Sinn Féin by jailing the Ard Chomhairle.

"But," he continued, "a new Ard Chomhairle has taken its place. The youth of Ireland are flocking to the ranks of Sinn Féin and no threats or intimidation from the politicians will hinder us in our work for the unity and independence of Ireland."

"The attention of the Irish Red Cross Society should be drawn to conditions in the Curragh Concentration Camp where 116 men are housed in two huts, the normal capacity of which is 38 each."

Seán Ó Brádaigh said that the people of Newry had taken its place. The resistance movement is rooted firmly in the nationalist people of the north, when they defied the British-imposed curfew and proclaimed the right of the Irish people to walk the streets of their own towns if they like.

The "national" newspapers did not tell the people that broken bottles and glass were scattered on the streets to hinder the movement of RUC and British army vehicles. It is our duty, he said, to help the unfortunate people who are suffering the brunt of British occupation.

Tomás Ó hUiginn said that Pádraic Ó Ceallaigh was arrested at a meeting of the Ard Chomhairle of Sinn Féin on July 6 and is being held without charge or trial.

Not alone that, but now he has been suspended from his teaching post by the 26-County Minister for Education because "he failed to perform the duties of his office satisfactorily". How could he do so when held in a concentration camp, he added.

A meeting of Roscommon Co Council passed unanimously a resolution asking the Minister for Defence to allow Ruairí Ó Brádaigh TD to consult his legal adviser on his suspension and threatened dismissal from his position as a vocational teacher at Roscommon.

Peter A McGuinness, Co Councillor (C na P) said that Mr Ó Brádaigh had applied to the Camp Commandant to see his solicitor on this matter on August 29 but was told on September 5 that the Minister had refused the legal visit.

Jack McQuillan, TD (Indpt) seconded the motion and said that it was a serious position that a man seeking legal advice with regard to his employment should be refused.

Mallow Town Council unanimously adopted a resolution from Owen Harold (Sinn Féin), "asking the Minister for Local Government to reconsider his attitude regarding the reinstatement of Tomás Mac Curtáin as a rent collector under Cork Corporation, and condemning any action that precludes any person from living and working in his own country".

At the monthly meeting of Kerry Agricultural Committee, Mr E Fuller said that the country was never quieter, and that it was ridiculous to be arresting these young men without cause. He was preparing the adoption of a resolution received from Carlow Agricultural Committee, protesting against the action of the Government in arresting and internment young men without trial.

The resolution was unanimously adopted.

An interesting set of figures was put down in an article in *An t-Éireannach Aontaithe/The United Irishman* of October 1957 by a writer entitled "Observer".

He called the 26-County Constitution of 1937 a "mighty fraud". The number of voters on the register that year of 1937 was 1,777,823. The "Sacred Constitution" was accepted by 685,105 or 38.54% of the register.

It was rejected by 526,094 or 29.59% of the register. Spoiled votes amounted to 116,194 or 6.54% of the register. No vote at all was recorded by 450,430 or 24.45% of the register.

These figures mean that an actual majority of the register in the 26 Counties alone failed to support the 1937 Constitution.

Fianna Fáil advocated "Yes" and secured 38.54% of the register. Fine Gael urged "No" and got 29.59%. The Republican Movement said "Spoil", receiving 6.54%. No vote at all was recorded by 25.34%.

The Republican reasoning was as follows; "If we vote Yes we claim all 32 Counties under Articles 2 but confine the laws to 26 Counties under Article 3."

"If we vote No we are seen as supporting the 1922 Free State Constitution which was the alternative. That we cannot do."

Many prominent women and women's groups opposed the new constitution because of its articles on women and women's rights. Republicans would also agree with this.

Other articles allowed for military and other non-jury courts.

Fifty years later these are no Articles 2 and 3 in what is now clearly a 26-County constitution. What was accepted by a minority on the register in 1937 was, according to its advocates: "A new constitution for All-Ireland". What it gave with one hand, it took away with the other.

In the autumn of 1957 detachments of RUC Commandos took over private property in four counties of the occupied area for use as barracks. These included the Archdale Memorial hall in Lisnaskea and an old rectory near Derrygonnelly, both in Co Fermanagh. Other property seized was in West Tyrone and South Armagh, whole the old jail in Derry city was fortified as a stronghold.

Yet the British Army Camp at Magilligan, on the northern tip of Co Derry was attacked on October 24. A blockhouse part of Lough Foyle fortifications was destroyed.

On October 16 and RUC patrol in Co Derry was ambushed but the attack could not be pressed home because a civilian moved into the life of fire.

In South Derry and North Antrim occupation installations were attacked during the same period. A B-Special training hall and a British Army Cadet training hall were destroyed by explosions on October 24 at Killeel in South Down.

Also during October Seán Harland, a native of the area, was picked as a candidate to contest the Dublin North Central by-election on behalf of Sinn Féin.

The *Republican Organ* said that "what Ireland needs today is youth, courage and vision. Seán Harland has all three in abundance."

He was aged 23 and had been severely wounded at Brookeborough, when Seán Sabhat and Fearghal Ó hAnluain were killed in action. In October 1957 he was interned at the Curragh.

Ag tús Mhí Lúnasa bhí Comhdháil bhliantúil na Chomhairídhmáir dá reachtáil sa gCeathrúin Rua i nGaeltacht Chonamara. Eagraíocht a cheangail le chéile na Cumainn Gaelaacha as na hÍoslóicléanna ar fad in Éirinn a bhí ins an gComhairídhmáir.

An cheist a bhí á plé acu i 1957 ná "Ath-Aontú na Tíre". Roghnádh Tomás Mac Curtáin leis an "Seasamh Poblachtaíoch" a chur i láthair na Comhdhála ach ar ndóigh bhí seisean ngeibhinn ar Churach Chill Dara.

Cuireadh Seán Ó Brádaigh, mac léinn óg 20 bliain d'aois, ina áit. Ós a choir bhí Eamán de Bhlaghad, sean-fhondúir 68 bliain a bhí gafa leis an nGaeltacht i rith a shaoil agus ina Aire i Rialtas an tSaorstáit 1922-32. Chuir seisean an leagan amach mar atá i gComhaontú Stormont i 1998 i láthair.

Fuair an Bhlaghadh go léir spáis sna paipéirí ar fad cé go raibh sé imithe ón bpolaíocht le fada an lá. Cé go raibh ceathair Teachtáí Dála sna 26 Chontae agus beir na Sé Chontae ag Aire i Sinn Féin, ní bhfuair an Brádaigh fú is focal amháin ins na meáin chumarsáide.

D'fhóillsigh COMHAIR, iris mhíosiúil an Chomhairídhmáir, téacs iomlán Sheáin Uí Brádaigh. Ag tosaigh i Mí Dheire Fómhair, chuir *An t-Éireannach Aontaithe/The United Irishman* é i gcló comh maith i dtí mhíreanna. Á léamh inniu, tá sé fírinneach réadúil agus spréagúil.

(More next month. Refs. *An t-Éireannach Aontaithe/The United Irishman*, October and November 1957.)

THE FIVE MARTYRS OF EDENTUBBER

**50
Years
Ago**

AT 2.10am on November 11, 1957 an explosion demolished completely a four-roomed cottage in the townland of Edentubber overlooking the Border from a mountainside in north Co. Louth.

From the cottage could be seen the British Customs post at Killrnn, in Co. Armagh and the 26-County Customs post at Carrickarnon, Co. Louth. The British Customs post had been the target for the bomb, but it exploded prematurely with disastrous results.

Five men were accidentally killed. Four were IRA Volunteers in active service against the British Occupation Forces. They were Paul Smith (19), Bessbrook, Co Armagh, Oliver Craven (19), Newry, Co Down — local men. The other two were George Keegan (29), Enniscorthy, Co Wexford and Patrick Parle (27), Wexford town who had come to the assistance of the northern men.

The fifth casualty was the owner of the cottage, Michael Watters (55). All five were single men. The narrow road beside which the cottage was situated led east from the Dublin-Belfast main road across the shoulder of a mountain towards Omceath.

Having prepared the mine for the nearby British Customs post, Oliver Craven and George Keegan had carried it outside and were loading it onto a bicycle when it exploded ahead of time. Killed instantaneously were the two men handling it and the three men inside the cottage.

Apart from the bodies, parts of the Thompson sub-machine guns (needed for protection) and bicycles (for transport) were found among the rubble.

Radio bulletins told the Irish people of the tragedy. At 3pm that afternoon the Radio Eireann news-desk was given the names of the dead. They did not use the listing on the 6.30, 10pm Irish news, 10.15pm English news, or the 8am news next day, November 12.

An *i-Eireannach Aontaithe/The United Irishman* of December 1957 asked: "Who issued the order to ignore the list of the dead given to Radio Eireann? Why was this order given?"

"It could only prolong the agony for the many parents throughout the country who were learning of the awful tragedy through the medium of Radio Eireann. Or was this the reason why the censorship order was given in the first place?"

It emerged afterwards that a special Leinster House official had been placed full-time in the Henry Street, Dublin offices of Radio Eireann to censor and control the news with regard to the fight in the Six Counties.

Yes, in every county in Ireland, and in the prisons too, families and friends were anxiously awaiting the names, to find out if their loved ones were included in the roll of the dead at Edentubber.

In those days wherever Republicans gathered an intense gloom hung over proceedings. In the Curragh Concentration Camp the Free State PA's broke their enforced silence and sympathised with the prisoners on their loss.

They recollected their own situation after the Glen of Imaal explosion in 1941 which claimed 16 lives. An officer had been instructing a class on the make-up of a landmine when it exploded.

The 1940s men among the prisoners told of the accidental explosion near the Border at Castletin, Co. Donegal when a bomb, intended again for a British Customs post at Strabane, went off ahead of time in 1938 killing Jimmy Reynolds of Leitrim, John James Kelly of Tyrone and Donegal and Charles Mac Cafferty of Strabane.

The 1920s veterans spoke of the loss of five Volunteers in Co. Wexford when a bomb factory blew up at Saltin hills, Clonmilles, Feather-on-Sea in October 1920, the cost in casualties had been heavy and a new generation was learning fast.

Myles P Shevlin, solt, Carlow spoke at George Keegan's grave, Seán Ó Brádaigh, Longford at Paddy Parle's funeral and JJ McGill, TD, gave the oration in Dundalk when Paul Smith, Oliver Craven and Michael Watters were interred in a single large grave in the Republican Plot, St. Patrick's cemetery.

A booklet has been published by *Cló Saoirse - Irish Freedom Press* at this time in commemoration of Edentubber. It will give readers an account of the Martyrs and the great



outpouring of grief which was demonstrated on the occasion of their tragic deaths.

On a lighter note, towards the end of November, "an epidemic, believed to be Asian 'flu, had broken out in the Curragh Concentration Camp", stated a press release from the Publicity Committee of Sinn Féin.

The statement, carried in the *Sunday Independent* of November 24 continued: "The first cases occurred on November 12 and so far about 50 of the prisoners have been affected. The camp infirmary has only accommodation for 12 patients. Nursing attention has to be done by the prisoners themselves.

"The camp presidium of the Legion of Mary has organised the nursing, but ... the fact remains that they are untrained and unskilled. The prisoners believe that the patients should be removed to the Base Hospital in the Curragh Camp where skilled nursing and attention would be available."

When the epidemic passed, a unanimous vote of thanks and appreciation was passed with the Legion members on their good work during the 'flu, which had been severe. This was at a general meeting of internees and on this occasion it was totally sincere — with no giggling!

On the last weekend in November, the annual Ard-Fheis of Sinn Féin took place. The O'Connell Hall in central Dublin was again the venue and the attendance was the biggest ever since the early to mid-1920s.

John Joe Rice, TD for Kerry South, was the chairperson and Margaret Buckley, as Vice-President, was called upon to prepare and give the presidential address in the absence of President Pádraig Mac Lógáin and Vice-President Tomás Ó Dúill in the Curragh Concentration Camp. She was then 78 years.

The *Irish Times* of November 25 reported what she said which could have relevance again today: "Over a number of years we have seen the defection of leaders who were trusted by members of our organisation and even beyond it.

"This defection has resulted, in varying degrees, in a disintegration of loyalties which were focused only on one object — the continuance of the Republic proclaimed in blood in 1916 ...

"The Sinn Féin organisation has stood firmly by its commitments and alone of all political parties had adhered to its original objective — the establishment of a 32-County Republic."

A message of greeting from the Curragh



• The Edentubber Martyrs, from left, Paul Smith, Oliver Craven, George Keegan, Paddy Parle and Michael Watters.

prisoners was read to the Ard-Fheis: "It is the considered and set policy of the Republican Movement to avoid clashes with the military and police forces of the 26-County Government.

"It is a further part of that policy to refrain from organising activities which might provide that government with a pretext for using the forces at its disposal to provoke incidents with members of the Republican Movement. One of the tasks that Sinn Féin had undertaken ... was to defeat the 26-County Government's design and obvious intention to create a situation favourable to civil strife.

"Our quarrel is with Britain and her Occupation Forces and we make a special appeal to the Ard-Fheis delegates, and through them we extend the appeal to all members of the Republican Movement, not to be incited into any conflict with the forces of the 26-County government no matter what the provocation ..."

This important and significant message from the Curragh prisoners was written by Tony Magan. Before writing it he certainly consulted with Ó Brádaigh. In all probability he also consulted with Mac Lógáin and Mac Curtáin.

Officers elected for 1957-58 were: Uachtarán: P Mac Lógáin; Leas-Uachtarán: Tomás Ó Dúill agus Margaret Buckley; Ard-Rúnaith: Máire Ní Ghabhann agus Micheál Treimhí; Ard-Chisteoir: Róibárd Ruiseál agus ...; Ard Chomhairle: SS Mac Fhearghail TD; Ruairi Ó Brádaigh TD; SS de Rís TD, E Ó hAnluain TD; S Ó Murchú TC; Tomás Mac Curtáin; S Ó Guinidhe agus Liam Ó Mochóir TC.

At the end of November, Stormont Home Affairs Minister, Col Topping announced that 166 men were interned in Belfast Jail, 27 were detained (yet to be sorted out) and 49 had been sentenced since December 1956.

Taken with those in prison before 1956 the total came to approximately 260 with 20 coming from the 26 Counties, that is 7.7%. Yet a delegate at the Northern Ireland Labour Party conference said that "the majority" of the political prisoners came from south of the Border.

On October 31, the *Irish Independent* reported that a motion by Jack MacQuillan (Roscommon) and Patrick Finucane (Kerry) both Independent Deputies in Leinster House regarding bringing UN Observers to the Six Counties, was defeated by 62 votes to 17.

Mr MacQuillan proposed that "the Irish permanent delegate to the UNO be instructed to seek the immediate despatch of UNO observers to the occupied part of the national territory and the setting up of the necessary machinery for a national plebiscite of the whole people of Ireland on the question of Partition."

Speaking to the motion, Deputy MacQuillan said that "Mr Aiken's (Foreign Affairs Minister) suggestion in Boston four days after the UN meeting that a plebiscite for all Ireland would be advisable should have been made at the UN Assembly in the form of a specific motion.

"It was vitally necessary that they should prove to the world assembly that Partition was imposed by Britain by military means".

MacQuillan was on his feet speaking for 2 1/2 hours. The Republican newspaper in its December issue carried the text of much of the speech over two pages.

The voting split the Fine Gael party. The 62 against were made up of 53 Fianna Fáil, eight Fine Gael and Independent 1 (Sheldon). For the motion 17: Fine Gael 2 (Giles and Manley); Labour 9; Clann na Talún 1 (Beirne); Clann na Poblachta 1 (Tully); Independents 4 (Mac Quillan, Finucane, Murphy, Byrne).

But MacQuillan and Finucane were back in Leinster House in November with another motion, this time to release the Curragh Internees. It called for "the immediate release from custody of the member of Dáil Eireann (sic) and other persons interned under the Offences Against the State Act".

Following the three hours of debate allocated, the motion was defeated by 103 votes to five, Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael coming together and Labour — with one exception — abstaining.

Seventy Fianna Fáil, 31 Fine Gael and two Independents (Sheldon and Russell) were against. The five for the motion were: Jack Mac Quillan, Paddy Finucane, John Tully (C na P), Patrick Tierney (Labour — North Tipperary) and John Murphy (Unemployed representative).

Dr Noel Browne, (Indpt) was challenged by Fine Gael as to "why he ran out of the House to avoid the division" (ie he did not vote). — *Irish Independent* report, November 21.

The result of the Dublin North-Central by-election on November 14 was a disappointment for Fianna Fáil who lost the seat and for Fine Gael whose vote also fell. An Independent, Councillor Frank Sherwin won the seat.

The *Irish Times* on the eve of poll, November 13, predicted "a record low poll". In the outcome it was 45%. The Fianna Fáil vote fell from 7,751 in March to 3,353, a loss of over 50%. Fine Gael's vote from 3,579 to 2,394, Labour's from 1,088 to 741; C na P with 569 in March did not contest.

Seán Garland for Sinn Féin had 1,633, ahead of Labour. The Republican organ (December) commented: "From the Sinn Féin point of view the result was encouraging. Seán Garland received many of the number twos of the Independent victor of the election".

Note: Sinn Féin did not contest the constituency in March. Its first preference vote in the by-election was 13.37% of the total poll.

In November 1957 also, an Extraordinary General Army Convention of Oglaiha na hÉireann was held. Its purpose was to pull together the fabric and structure of the Army in a good military situation.

Security was tight and the convention was brought off successfully. Myles Shevlin of Carlow was Cathaoirleach and Seán Cronin emerged as Chief of Staff. Shevlin became his Adjutant-General and Pat Mac Manus of Fermanagh was a member of the new Army Council.

Even 50 years afterwards the venue of the convention cannot be revealed because the struggle for Irish national independence has not yet concluded in victory.

Meanwhile the Dublin Supreme Court dismissed a claim for release by the Curragh internee Gearóid Ó Laighléis/Gerry Lawless of Dublin.

The *Sunday Independent* of November 10 reported that with the dismissal of Ó Laighléis's appeal for an Order of Habeas Corpus, the way was now clear for proceedings before the Commission of Human Rights in Strasbourg to test the legality under International Law of his imprisonment without trial.

The report went on: "It is believed that the release of Archbishop Makarios and the suspension of collective punishment and of flogging were the direct result of the intervention of the Commission whose primary task is to ensure the observance of the Convention (of Human Rights) by Governments through conciliation".

The Greek Government had brought a case against the British Government which had "derogated" from the Convention in the cases of Cyprus and Northern Ireland (sic).

(More next month, including the military operations against British forces. Refs: An *i-Eireannach Aontaithe/The United Irishman*, November and December 1957; *Irish Independent*, October 31 and November 21; *Irish Times*, November 13 and November 24; *Cló Saoirse/Irish Freedom Press*, *The Story of the Edentubber Martyrs*.)

MALLON AND TALBOT TO BE HANGED?

**50
Years
Ago**

HANGED yes!
The British were busy fifty years ago hanging Cypriots. The death penalty was still on the English statute book. Of course they would

execute Irish patriots if they got the chance.

A folded leaflet issued by the Irish Republican Publicity Bureau (IRPB) dated December 1957 tells the story. One hundred and twenty local youths from the greater Coalisland area of Co Tyrone were held in a massive round-up.

Following interrogation, all were released. Then about twenty were taken in again, interrogated and released. Finally four were lifted. The IRPB described what happened to them in a publication headed "British Torture in Ireland".

Torture stories are not new. But the inhuman treatment meted out to young Irishmen in the name of British law in our Occupied Six Counties may be news to the majority of the Irish people. The unwritten orders of the RUC are that a "confession" must be got at any price. And this "confession" must not only involve the youth who is being interrogated but many others also.

Near Coalisland, Co Tyrone, an R.U.C. Sergeant named Owens was killed in an explosion in a disused house at Brackville, in August, 1957. The Stormont authorities had publicised a scheme of rewards for information leading to the capture of Irish freedom fighters. Accordingly, British military and R.U.C. guides were rushed to Brackville after being told by telephone that young men had been seen entering the disused house. Owens, acting as a guide, was killed when a mine exploded.

The British authorities have since then turned east Tyrone into a terror-area. Scores of young men have been arrested, interrogated, beaten, released, re-arrested – and the torture process repeated to force "confessions". This is the story of four of them who are now held in pre-trial detention – no charges have yet been preferred against them – in Crumlin Road Jail, Belfast.

This did not happen in Hungary, Algeria or Cyprus. It happened in Ireland. Now read it and see what the 26-County government is co-operating with by using their forces to protect British rule in Ireland.

Ordered by Torture

Four Coalisland, Co Tyrone youths, Kevin Mallon, James O'Donnell, Francis Talbot and John O'Neill, were arrested at various times on Monday, November 18 and Tuesday, November 19, by the R.U.C.

They were taken to Dungannon Barracks where the first interrogation began at 7.30 pm on November 19 and lasted until midnight. They received no meals and a request for tea was ignored.

They were questioned continuously by relays of three men and in the course of the first questioning were beaten with fists, punched in the stomach and face, caught by the hair and their heads banged against the wall.

At 12.10 am they were taken from Dungannon Barracks and informed they were being moved to Belfast. They were handcuffed. Somewhere between Lurgan, Co Armagh and Lisburn the cars swung up a by-road and stopped. The youths were removed from the cars and again beaten on the roadside.

In Belfast they were taken to Crumlin Road R.U.C. Barracks. The time was about 2 a.m. Wednesday November 20. Relays of interrogators now pounced on them. The questions were couched in the foulest language.

They were threatened that their homes would be destroyed and their families thrown on the streets; that their brothers would be put away for 20 years; that it made no difference who was got but that "someone was going to be got for the Brackville job and it might as well be them".

The interrogation took the following form:

One of the four would be returned to a cell after



• Kevin Mallon, pictured in 1972 with a Thompson submachine gun getting into position for an attack on a British army patrol near Aughnacloy, Co Tyrone (from *People at War* by Colman Doyle).

about three-quarters of an hour of beatings combined with threats and questions. He would hear clearly the screams of his comrades and the shouted oaths and threats of the police. The police would roar the following:

"You are a dirty rotten Communist".

"Your mother is nothing but a ..."

"You killed Sergeant Owens".

"No man ever went through our hands that we didn't break. And we're going to break you".

When one of the youths returned to his cell in the dark and lay on the bunk he discovered the pillow was covered in blood. A detective followed him and said: "That is the sheet that covered Owens". And he added: "It will cover another body soon".

The interrogation continued all through the night. Between five and six the four were returned to their cells. They were in bad shape physically and mentally.

At 6 a.m. they were pulled out of their cells. Squads of three men now started the questioning in relays. Cocked revolvers were placed against the stomachs, throats and temples of the youths. Sticks were pressed into their bodies. Handcuffs were twisted around their necks. A cloth soaked in foul-smelling liquid was pushed against their faces while their noses were held. They were thrown on the floor, their arms pinioned, the cloth around the neck was woven tighter and tighter. Then it would be snapped and they'd be told "to confess".

Now they were beaten around the head and body with rubber truncheons. These beatings continued in different forms throughout all day Wednesday and from midnight to 6 a.m. Thursday morning. They were returned to their cells and put in solitary confinement.

A detective whom they had not seen before rushed into the cells almost immediately and acted like a maniac. He clawed all over them. He said: "I'm Owens. I'll haunt you for the rest of your lives".

After this they were taken out of the cells and the torture and questioning began again. This went on through Thursday.

They were told the torture and questioning would continue until they signed the statement the RUC had prepared.

Mentally and physically exhausted from the torture, constant questioning, lack of food and sleep, fearful of its continuation and what might befall their families they eventually "admitted" anything the police wanted them to admit. They signed the statements.

Any of these days now they may stand in the dock charged with the murder of Owens.

The torture mill confessions will be used to send them – and others – to the scaffold.

There followed the complete text of two statements – one each beaten out of two 21-year-olds youths, Kevin Mallon and Francis Talbot. In both statements, each of them admitted to making a phone call to Coalisland RUC Barracks saying that "strange men were at a disused house in the local Cattle Lane".

In addition the statement forced physically from Talbot said that "a trap" was going to be set for "the military or whoever would come". The statements also said that they made the phone call on instructions from two unknown men.

The leaflet concluded:

To The Scaffold?

With these "confessions" Stormont – which holds down the Six Counties of North-East Ulster for the British Empire – will now presumably go into their rigged courts to get convictions on capital charges. They will attempt to send to the gallows four young Irishmen – and as many others as they can implicate by use of their torture mill.

At the moment they are holding 242 in the Crumlin Road Jail, Belfast – the majority uncharged and untried. Twenty-nine are being held in similar conditions as the four youths noted above; that is under "interrogation", without being formally charged. The Stormont Home Affairs Minister, Colonel W.W.B. Topping, says that at least 13 of these will be charged "and the question of charges against the remainder are under consideration".

Topping also said: "Since the 12th of December 1956, 49 men have been convicted and sentenced to terms of imprisonment totalling 272 years". He did not say that many of the convictions were got by use of the forced confession torture mill as described above. The individuals who were forced to sign the statements were themselves sentenced later.

In the same speech Topping gave the reason behind all this in Occupied Ireland when he quoted extracts from a release by the Irish Republican Publicity Bureau. The quotation went:

"For example in the Fermanagh area, the headquarters of British mechanised forces there, are at Castle Archdale, near Enniskillen. Tanks, heavy armoured cars (weighing 15 tons at least), armoured scout cars and heavy armoured troop carriers, are used nightly along all Fermanagh roads. Churchill tanks have been used to guard crossroads, while other vehicles in the patrol passed by. All units of the British Army engaged in these operations are accompanied by B-Specials who act as guides".

The police commandos, the Republican Publicity Bureau release went on were more of a Black-and-Tan terror force than an elite group picked from the R.U.C. They had been especially trained at Ballykinkar British Military Camp by the British army for anti-guerrilla operations. The majority were full-time B-Specials.

Mr Topping's comment on this release was: "I do not think I will be giving very much away when I say that for once they are not very far out in the picture they paint".

Mr Topping admits the truth of full-scale British Occupation in the Six Counties – an occupation which keeps Ireland divided and unfree and which is against the expressed will of the overwhelming majority of the Irish people.

It is because of this British Occupation that a campaign of Resistance is now taking place in British-Occupied Ireland. The Resistance says the campaign will continue until British forces withdraw from Ireland; the Irish people will then be in a position to settle their own affairs in peace.

LET THE IRISH PEOPLE GET BEHIND THE DEMAND NOW THAT BRITAIN WITHDRAW HER FORCES OF OCCUPATION FROM OUR COUNTRY.

WHY MUST YOUNG IRISHMEN BE TORTURED IN THIS YEAR FOR THE CAUSE OF IRISH FREEDOM?

—Issued by the Irish Republican Publicity Bureau.

On December 22, 1957, the *Sunday Review* (Dublin) reported that the prestigious English political journal the *New Statesman* had featured extracts from the IRPB publication at some length and had called for an inquiry, saying: "We are all aware that some very unpleasant things go on in 'Northern Ireland'". It stated that there was a prima facie case for an inquiry.

The *Sunday Press* of the same date outlined the "allegations" referred to by the *New Statesman* and said that the Stormont Home Affairs Minister,

Col Topping had "undertaken to investigate charges of ill-treatment of prisoners by the R.U.C."

The English *Observer* newspaper (London) on December 15 carried an article on brain-washing in which this statement appeared: "The real tortures are isolation and solitary confinement, prolonged interrogation, humiliation..."

The *UI* of January 1958 quoted this and commented: "Now read the story of the Coalisland youths and see if the description fits." The *Longford Leader* of December 14 devoted an editorial to the subject:

"This is something we would expect behind the Iron Curtain, but to think that such treatment is meted out in the name of British law in the North is simply astounding. However, it may not come as a surprise to veterans of the fight for independence here who have painful memories of what happened to them when they fell to the tender mercies of the Black and Tans.

"These allegations are so serious that they warrant immediate investigation and if Stormont and the British occupation forces (sic) are to clear themselves in the eyes of the world they will expose the torturers or convincingly disprove the charges that have been levelled against them".

The editorial was headed "Are These Charges true?" The cat was really out of the bag in this case!

In the Curragh Concentration Camp the Free State Camp Commandant addressed a general meeting of all the internees on Sunday, December 22 and offered them all Christmas parole until December 27. He was met with absolute silence. Not a man spoke or moved.

Seán Ó Mathúna, Ard-Rúnaí, Sinn Féin, in a letter carried in the *Irish Independent* of December 28 said the Fianna Fáil administration was making a gesture in an attempt to allay criticism, which was steadily increasing, of its concentration camp policies.

They knew well the attitude of Republicans to parole: "It was sought in the case of death or grievous illness of a near-relative, or in the case of serious personal or family trouble. It was known beforehand that the offer of Christmas ticket-of-leave would be rejected."

In Mountjoy jail, a hunger strike was engaged in by 16 Republican prisoners in protest against a rejection of a demand for treatment as political prisoners.

The *Irish Times* of January 1, 1958 carried a statement from the "Government Information Bureau" saying that prisoners would be granted conditions in line with treatment afforded to prisoners serving sentences before August 5th, 1957. The eight-day hunger strike had ended.

During December also the last of the non-Republican Movement internees, Gearóid Ó Laighléis, was released on signing an undertaking as to his behaviour in future. His application for release had been refused by the Dublin Supreme Court.

A further application on his behalf for damages for wrongful imprisonment was made to the European Human Rights Commission (EHRC).

It was understood at the time that the EHRC was already responsible for the release of Archbishop Makarios from internment by the British, for an end to flogging and collective punishments by the British régime in Cyprus.

Meanwhile General Harding, former Chief of the Imperial General Staff, retired as British Governor of Cyprus. According to the *Times of Cyprus* he made two big mistakes during his term of office: (1) to intern and exile Makarios and (2) to release him without arranging for political talks with him.

In the British occupied area, the *Sunday Review* reported on December 29, internees numbered "about 200". It noted that a British journal had "called for an inquiry into their treatment, stating that 'something rotten is happening in that area'". There were 51 prisoners serving sentences and one on remand.

(More next month. Ref. *An t-Éireannach Aontaithe/The United Irishman*, December 1957 and January 1958; *Irish Republican Publicity Bureau* leaflet, December 5, 1957; *Sunday Review*, December 22 and 29; *Sunday Press*, December 22; *New Statesman and Nation* December 1957; *The Observer*, December 15; *Longford Leader*, December 14; *Irish Independent*, December 28; *Irish Times*, January 1, 1958; *Times of Cyprus*, December 1957.)