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THE BELFAST ESCAPE.

The following Communique was issued from Northern Command Headquarters in the afternoon of 15th January, 1943 :-

"At 8.30 this morning a daring and successful escape was made from Belfast Prison by four Irish Republican prisoners. The names of the four men are Lt.-General Hugh McAteer, Comdt.-General Seamus Steele, Capt. Patrick Donnelly and Lt. Edward Maguire, and all four reported to Command Headquarters within four hours of leaving the prison."

Interviewed at Command Headquarters one of the men said, "The plan almost failed when we reached the outer wall. We had miscalculated the height of the gaol wall and the overtopping barbed wire, and the pole for placing the hook on top of the wall proved to be too short.

We tried to reach the top of the wall by placing one man on another man's shoulders, but the height was too great, and thrice the men slipped and fell.

For the next attempt a third man climbed on to the second man's shoulders and reaching up he raised the hook to his utmost, and saw it barely clear the top of the wire and drop securely into position. The success of the escape was then assured."

FREE STATE AGENTS IN NORTHERN IRELAND.

The result of the Belfast Bye-election in which Mr. Hugh Corvin received only a handful of votes is a striking indication of the political wisdom of Belfast Republicans.

Mr. Corvin offered himself as a candidate without the consent or support of the Government of the Irish Republic, or of any Republican Organization. The Convention which selected him consisted of 17 individuals representing, no one knows who, for even yet they modestly refuse to publicly disclose their identity, and not a single Republican Organization was present or represented.

Mr. Corvin, and his chief, Agent E. Donnelly, sought to deceive the people into believing that they were Republicans when in fact they are merely Free State Agents. Their "Republican" Election Address declared Mr. Corvin as an Irish Republican, but during the election campaign it was made clear that Eamon Donnelly and Hugh Corvin intended to seek admission to the Dominion Parliament of the Twenty-six counties.

Every vote for Corvin would have counted as a vote for De Valera's Constitution and the present resurgence of Republicanism in the North would be hailed as a movement in favour of De Valera.

The spokesman of the Government of the Irish Republic repudiated Mr. H. Corvin. Out of a total of over 30,000 electors less than 2,000 voted for Mr. Corvin.

The lesson is plain for all to read.

It is disloyalty to the Republic needlessly to destroy its instruments of publicity.

When you have read this copy it is your duty to pass it on to a friend or leave it in a tram, train or bus.

NEUTRALITY AND MR. DE VALERA.

Much has been said in praise of Mr. de Valera's consummate statesmanship in keeping "three quarters of a nation", neutral in the present war. But if we approve of neutrality when England is at war it implies that we no longer consider England as the enemy. That "England's difficulty is Ireland's opportunity" has always been accepted by Irish Republicans and, as a consequence, it logically follows that England's enemies are our natural allies. Any assistance we could get from them in driving the British Army out of the North of Ireland and re-establishing the Republic for the whole of Ireland should be most welcome. However Mr. De Valera has decided that the "Irish Free State" is to remain neutral.

But there is another fight in which Mr. De Valera is not neutral - the fight for Irish freedom. In this fight he has taken a very definite stand. By every means in his power he is determined to wipe out the soldiers of the Republican Army whose only "crime" is that they are ready to give their lives for a free and united Ireland. In the passing of Coercion Bills; in the deliberate flouting of the ordinary laws of justice; in the employing of spies; in condoning the ill-treatment of prisoners and in the murdering of Republican soldiers - who are not even accused of having taken life - Mr. De Valera has out-Heroded Herod. In other words, he has surpassed in brutality his late political opponent Mr. Cosgrave.

No! Mr. De Valera is not neutral. In the struggle for the Republic he has changed sides and is now completely gone over to our only enemy - England. And he has no defence. On the evidence of his own political career alone he is damned in the eyes of all Republicans. Let us use our commonsense. The Irish Republican Army is the same to-day as it was in 1916 and 1922. It has the same Constitution - its soldiers are inspired by the same ideals. How can it be right for the members of this Army, led by Mr. De Valera, to be revered as heroes in 1922 and to be hunted, tortured and shot in cold blood by Mr. De Valera in 1942? There are some things that do not change and one of them is the inalienable right of a nation to be free, and this nation will realize before long how it has been duped and misled. Already the scales are falling from the peoples' eyes. Every man hunted and with a price on his head; every man tortured and kicked to unconsciousness by the brutal military police in the Curragh Camp; every man brought before the Military Tribunal (composed of the same traitors who served Mr. Cosgrave) and condemned after a mock trial to be shot; every man suffering and dying for Ireland will be avenged. Slowly but surely the account is piling up and the day of reckoning is at hand. Then the Irish people will know how to make their choice.

"For dearer the grave or the prison
Illumed by one patriot's name
Than the trophies of all who have risen
On Liberty's ruins to fame."

SEVEN EARTHLY HELLS.

In the heart of picturesque Co. Laoighis is the outwardly peaceful town of Portlaoighis, forming the British garrison town of Maryborough. How many people realize that, in this town, stands one of the most hideous torture-chambers this persecuted country has ever known?; those grey stone walls of Portlaoighis prison with the support of Free State censorship, hold their ugly secrets well.

Behind that grim sentinel of stone, languish seven of Ireland's noblest and best soldiers, who have been sentenced by Free State treachery and hate, four to life imprisonment, and the other three to a minimum of twelve years penal servitude each. The only "crime" of these men is their unflinching adherence to the sacred cause of Irish Freedom, sanctified by the blood of Tone and all his valiant successors in that unending line of patriot martyrs.

These seven men are silently suffering the worst tortures that traitors can inflict. Solitary confinement is the stringent rule, which is enforced by beatings, etc., on occasions. These men are forbidden to speak, except, of course, to those old relics of the British

regime, the warders, whose services are still retained even after the Treaty.

Twenty-four hours daily gazing at the same four walls of the cell, hearing no friendly voice, seeing no friendly face, hearing no news of the outside world, their very spiritual needs denied, whom they are forbidden to attend Mass. Wearing only their blankets and refusing to don the garb of the criminal convict. Forbidden all communication, either inwards or outwards with home. Such is part of the daily routine of our seven soldiers. The only hope of escape is death. One prisoner, after thirteen months there, during which he was twice on hungerstrike, is now a patient in Dundrum Criminal Lunatic Asylum.

We salute you seven worthy successors of Thomas Clarke! The memory of your sacrifices will be remembered with honour in the proud heart of Republican Ireland.

THE WAY TO FREEDOM.

In Ireland to-day there is a body of Nationalists who, sincerely believing in the Irish Republic as our ultimate goal, yet persist in thinking that freedom may be achieved through the Twenty-six County Parliament.

That they are terribly misguided, the history of the past 21 years proves. Messrs Cosgrave and Mulcahy claimed that the "Free State" was a first instalment of freedom. The hundreds of Republican soldiers slain by their orders proves that it was, in fact, the last word in National apostasy. De Valera asserted that his "Eire" was a Republic in all but name, but the graves of D'Arcy and MacNeela; of Harbo and McGrath; of Plant and Goss and O'Neill are an eternal denial of that lying assertion.

The way to freedom does not lie through Westminster or Leinster House or Stormont. But the way is plainly visible to all whose eyes are not blinded by expediency or wishful thinking.

"Ireland must tread the path Our Redeemer trod. She may shrink... but her faltering feet will find the road again. For that road is plain, and broad and straight. Its sign-posts are unmistakable."

THE VERDICT OF POSTERITY.

Pearse's bitterest words were written in condemnation of the Irish men of the Boer War generation, the men who then failed to exploit England's difficulty by striking for Ireland's freedom.

To-day our greatest tribute and our warmest praise is for the men of 1916, the men who lit a flame that in five years almost reduced British Imperialism in Ireland to ashes, a flame that illumined the scaffold on which Williams died; the barrack square in which O'Neill fell before a Free State firing squad; the hundred upon hundreds of prison cells in Ireland and England filled with the noblest and best of our land.

What shall our children say of this generation? Will they be satisfied with the score of casualties inflicted on the enemy and the three score attacks on enemy barracks and institutions during the months of September, October and November 1942? They will say that we failed, that we were unworthy of our noble heritage, that we were unfit for the glorious task to which history called us, unless we make a mighty effort to smash British Imperialism in Ireland.

That is the task before the Government of the Irish Republic, and to that end it will organise, train and equip the manhood of Ireland in the ranks of the Irish Republican Army. When the opportune moment arrives the Army will be ready to give the word that will send our troops into battle for the freedom of our Motherland.

The history of Ireland abounds in glorious failures. We of this generation must make certain that ours shall be a glorious success.

The frustration of the De Valera plot to murder Col.-Comdt. Michael Quillo was hailed with joy all over Ireland, especially in the North, where he had gone to assist the Army in the critical days prior to and following the murder of Lieut. Thomas Williams and Lieut. G.O. Callaghan.

"We fight for freedom - not for the vanity of the world, not to have a fine conceit of ourselves....The inspiration is drawn from a deeper element of our being....It is a matter of life and death; it is our souls salvation. If the whole nation stand for it, we are happy; we shall be grandly victorious. If only a few are faithful found they must be more steadfast for being but a few. They stand for an individual right that is inalienable. A majority has no right to annul it, and no power to destroy it. Tyrannies may persecute, slay or banish those who defend it; the thing is indestructible....One man alone may vindicate it, and because one man has never failed it had never died... He is called to grave charge who is called to resist the majority. But he will resist, knowing his victory will lead them to a dearer dream than they had ever known...He will fight....never crushed, never silent, never despairing, cheering a few comrades with hope for the morrow. And should these few sink in the struggle the greatness of the ideal is proven in the last hour; as they fall their country awakens to their dream and he who inspired and sustained them is justified; justified against the whole race, he who once stood alone against them."

REPUBLICAN PRISONERS IN ENGLAND.

When in January 1939, the British Government ignored the ultimatum of the Government of the Irish Republic, demanding the withdrawal of British troops from Ireland, the Irish Republican Government declared War on England. Into the heart of England's territory the guerilla units of the I.R.A. struck with lightning rapidity and force and struck fear into the hearts of the English population.

Our soldiers were compelled to fight under handicaps - they had strict orders NOT to take life if possible and they were living and fighting in hostile territory where practically every citizen was a foe and every house closed against them, yet they hesitated not in undertaking this dangerous work.

Our casualties, under such conditions were certain to be heavy and as a result some of our noblest and bravest soldiers became once more the "Felons of our Land" standing in that same English dock as their Fenian Comrades of '67 had stood defying the power opposed to them.

Who can forget the scene in the Dock as defiant Rory Campbell of Belfast and gentle Mary Glonn after the British Judge had pronounced sentences of 20 and 7 years repeated the cry of the Manchester Martyrs "God Save Ireland" and how in the weeks that followed almost every one of these hundred prisoners professed likewise their contempt of England and their faith and love of Ireland by some such noble sentiment.

Lord, how we felt in those days as these brave noble soldiers - both men and women - passed from sock to prison cell bearing sentences of from 10 to 20 years. We felt an inward glow of pride that Ireland had given us such noble successors to the Fenians, Tom Clarke and all who came after them, and we felt a terrible hate for the cowardly power that sent them to their dungeons to rot.

Since then two of that noble band - James McCormick and Peter Barnes gave their lives on the scaffold whilst two others, Joe Malone and Terry Perry died in prison as a result of prison treatment.

There are still one hundred of these brave men and women imprisoned in England's dungeons, far from home and friends. Rory Campbell, Belfast, and Mary Glonn, Paddy Floming and Mick Ferguson from the South are typical representatives of that noble band of our Felons who represent Free Republican Ireland of Thirty-two Counties in the gaols in England.

We must not for a moment forget our imprisoned comrades. Let us by all the means in our power work for their release and the release of all our prisoners in Ireland and England who believe in and seek to enthrono the Republic proclaimed by Pearso and ratified by the free votes of the Irish People in 1919.

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"No Republicans cannot be beaten for the Cause we serve onshrines the soul of Ireland." Austin Stack.