

**FIANNA
FAIL**

**THE
I. R. A.
CONNECTION**

NO MAN IN NO NATION

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THE SUCCESSION RACE

On November, 10th, 1966, Sean Lemass resigned suddenly as Taoiseach and leader of Fianna Fail. The much publicised succession race sparked by the Lemass resignation first brought to public attention the alignments within the party which were to figure more and more in "split" talk right up to May, 1970, when the arms crisis burst on a startled public.

George Colley and Charles Haughey soon emerged as the main contenders, Colley returning precipitately from a tour abroad to line up his support. Colley had cultivated an Irish language and Republican image and was generally regarded as chief shareholder of the De Valera moral tradition within the party. Haughey had one obvious advantage: he was son-in-law to Sean Lemass. His big disadvantage, however, was his unpopularity with the farming community as the Taoiseach-ship stakes came at the end of a year in which, as Minister for Agriculture, he had rebuffed and humiliated the National Farmers Association.

Colley, aged 41, and Haughey, aged 41, were both ambitious men and despite or, perhaps, because they shared the same constituency in Dublin North-East, had become deadly political rivals. As each canvassed support the clash became a head-on confrontation with the party rumoured to be equally divided and the bitterness between the contestants out in the open. Haughey was the favourite until the "Old Guard", led by External Minister Frank Aiken, moved in and made Colley their favourite son.

As the confrontation hardened the feeling grew within the party that unity and the reins of power meant more than personalities. The search for a compromise candidate began at once. Boland, Minister for Social Welfare, who had not given his support to either of the two young men, nominated Neil Blaney. Lemass, unable to openly sponsor the candidature of his son-in-law, Haughey, now moved. His nomination of Jack Lynch caused both Blaney and Haughey to withdraw and Colley was crushed by

53 to 19 vote. Party unity had been salvaged and a man widely held to be an interim Taoiseach elected: the Colley-Haughey power struggle could fester on beneath the surface.

In his acceptance speech the new Taoiseach made clear that he would rule very much in the Lemass manner. Paying the usual lip-service to the Irish language, he talked about the desirability of entering the Common Market and announced he would continue the dialogue begun the previous year with the Six Counties Premier. Lynch's first Cabinet put Charles Haughey in the powerful and prestigious post of Finance, thus rescuing him from Agriculture and Fisheries and giving him a marginal advantage over his rival Colley. This move by Lynch could be interpreted both as a gesture to the father-in-law and a repayment for Haughey's withdrawal in his favour. Blaney took over in Agriculture and Boland went to Local Government - positions all three were still holding four years later.

The intervening four years were to witness the rise of the Civil Rights Movement in the North and the slow transference of the leadership struggle inside Fianna Fail to the events and issues thrown up by that major upheaval. The first major development of the period, however, proved to be what became known as the "Donegal Mafia". These were a dedicated group of Fianna Fail party workers and businessmen supporters who stormed into critical bye-elections and usually managed to bring off the victory.

One of the best examples of a Mafia Operation came in the Summer of 1967 during the closely contested South Kerry bye-election. In a piece of blatant corruption Cork contractor P.J. Hegarty, a Fianna Fail business supporter, was awarded the contract for the building of the Valentia Bridge. The fact that Hegarty's tender for the construction of the bridge was £115,000 dearer than that submitted by another contractor of world wide repute and that the design was years out of date did not matter. What did matter was that the Valentia Bridge Committee held the votes of the islanders for the candidate who could do most to expedite the building of the long awaited

bridge and that Hegarty was a businessman in good standing with the Party.

O'Leary, the Fianna Fail candidate, polled 13,590 votes on the final count to Begley of Fine Gael's 12,807 - a majority of 785 votes. The block vote of the islanders for the Fianna Fail candidate was estimated at 595 votes..which proved the decisive factor in the election result. And if the bridge was a monument to corruption the islanders did not think so and three years later Neil Blaney, now a fired Cabinet Minister, was invited down to perform an unofficial opening. Bye-election victories like South Kerry helped spread the fame of the "Donegal Mafia" and Blaney became the acknowledged machine man of the Party.

In May, 1967, the smouldering enmity between Colley and Haughey burst into the open when Colley made a speech alleging "low standards in high places". Fianna Fail backbenchers admitted that the attack was aimed at Haughey. What the particular standards being referred to were, were never made public. Both Colley and his ambitious wife, Mary, share a strong moral orthodox outlook and both are strong and committed Catholics. Haughey, married to the daughter of the previous Taoiseach, had a reputation as a rake and a womaniser. Stories of Haughey's conquests in the female world mingled easily with rumours and descriptions of his business and property speculations. His punch-up with Eamonn Andrews over an insult given to the latter's wife made good beer talk in the bars and lounges of Dublin.

Colley's intention may have been simply to disassociate himself from this aspect of his Cabinet colleague's affairs or it could have had a more serious political aim. Whatever the intention Labour and Fine Gael spokesmen in the Dail took it upon themselves to interpret Colley's words for the public at large. Following a week of speculation on the latest instalment of the Colley-Haughey clash Mr. Colley stated in the Dail that in fact he had been speaking about the Coalition Cabinet of the previous decade! Once again Fianna Fail had closed the ranks and there the matter rested.

TACA proved to be the next big talking point. An attempt by Blaney to systematize the Party's fund raising relations with its big business backers, it quickly ran into trouble. £100-a-plate dinners in the leading Dublin Hotels proved an effective fund-raiser and acceptable to the businessmen supporters who availed of the opportunity to spend the evening discussing their business problems with the Minister. But they also tended to attract pickets and gave a golden propaganda bonus to the Opposition. "Persevere" said Blaney and the pickets would go away and public criticism fade. A brother of Kevin Boland, one of the leading lights in TACA, was of the same opinion. Fianna Fail persevered for eighteen months and at the 1968 Ard Fheis the party faithful gave Blaney a standing ovation for his impassioned justification of TACA. For a while it looked as if the American fund-raising style was in for keeps.

Other American principles were already in operation. Party discipline and the "jobs for the boys" ethic operated at every level. In Donegal in May, 1968, four Fianna Fail Co. Councillors were called to a specially convened meeting and asked to apologise for defying the Party whip during the election of a rate collector. Each of the recalcitrant Councillors were to repeat the words of their pledge of loyalty to the Party. The four men concerned, Councillors Friel, Kelly, Meehan and Murrin, had failed to vote to appoint Mr. Teddy Blaney, a brother of the Minister for Agriculture, as Rate Collector for the Milford area. Teddy was the official Party choice for the position. One of the four men, Councillor Friel, refused to attend the disciplinary meeting. Party unity survived the crisis and Teddy Blaney was subsequently appointed Rate Collector to the Ramelton area.

In August of 1968 a 56 acre site at Woodville, Athlone, was sold to the Office of Public Works for the new Department of Education Offices. One of the directors of Athlone Industrial Estates Ltd., which sold the site to the Board, turned out to be Paddy Lenihan, a T.D. in the Fianna Fail interest and father of the Minister for Education, Brian Lenihan.

1968 was the year when Blaney and Boland teamed up to launch the campaign which was to get rid of Proportional Representation and substitute for it the British single seat constituency. The "first past the post" system would virtually give Fianna Fail the title deeds of Irish democracy. Holding the biggest single bloc of votes in the State Fianna Fail would end up with an overwhelming Dail majority and end the suspense of narrow votes in the Dail and critical bye-elections in the country. A previous attempt in 1959 had been defeated in a ticket splitting Referendum which sent Dev to the Park but rejected his proposal to abolish P.R. The Referendum was fixed for October 16 - a date which gave just enough time for the tailwind from the first major Civil Rights confrontation in the North to register with the voters in the South. October 5th in Derry lent emotional impact to the warnings of Northern speakers like Gerry Fitt about adopting the North's electoral system.

The Referendum result went massively against the Government with a 60/40 defeat in rural and a 70/30 defeat in urban areas. The Mafia had carried the day for the Government by a narrow margin in Donegal but South Kerry provided the only other joy in what had proved to be a debacle for Fianna Fail.

TACA was quickly discovered when the search for a scapegoat got under way. The Colleyites within the Party were in favour of abandoning the project and their attitude quickly seeped into the public press. Blaney stood firm, however, and such was his prestige and position - despite the Referendum setback - that he was able to persuade Lynch to join the fight to save TACA. In October Lynch had attended a TACA seminar to speak on "Social Justice". The exercise aimed at whitewashing TACA by associating the Taoiseach's fine phrases on social problems and their relief with a defence of the organisation sponsoring the seminar. TACA Chairman, Mr. D. McGreevy, said the few words - "TACA, in simple terms, is a planned giving organisation and our members, numbering over two hundred, contribute equally something not more than 30/- a week to our funds." "He was proud", he said, "to be Chairman of the organisation, and to be able to say that no

member has sought or obtained favour or patronage because of their membership of TACA".

Following their exertions in the Referendum and their subsequent rearguard action to save TACA Boland and Blaney, Secretary and Treasurer of the Party respectively, came closer together. The 1969 General Election and its surprise result was to prove the final element cementing the Haughey, Blaney and Boland triumvirate within the Party. Haughey as Director of Elections, Boland as the expert carver-up of the constituencies, and Blaney at the head of his "Mafia", carried the day winning a total of 75 out of the 144 seats for Fianna Fail. Much of the credit also went to Lynch who had spent the campaign on a tour of Convents interspersed with raids into areas where Fianna Fail faced tough opposition. One such area was the West Galway Gaeltacht where a Civil Rights candidate was making great inroads in a traditionally solid Fianna Fail stronghold. While Lynch sipped tea in Convent parlours Haughey, Boland and Blaney conjured up the red scare to meet the threat of the burgeoning Labour Party in the towns and cities. The strategy worked.

The major share of the credit for the victory was attributed to Lynch by his media and overnight, the "stop-gap" of three years previous had become a leader in his own right. His first assertion of his new strength came to grief when he attempted to demote Blaney and Boland to lesser Ministeries within the Cabinet. Speeches on the issues at stake in the North by both men in the period preceding the election had rankled. Boland's threat to resign led to a quick change of mind and both were re-appointed to their briefs in Agriculture and Local Government. The confirmation of Blaney in Agriculture carried a rider that the Taoiseach intended appointing him to be Planning Minister when the new position was created. It never was.

Lynch's plans for Blaney reflected very closely the latter's plan for Lynch. Now at the pinnacle of his power within the Party, Blaney was already planning how to replace the "stop-gap" Taoiseach with somebody more to his liking. Already the

kingmaker in the constituencies, his ambition was to become kingmaker in the Cabinet. The growing conflict in the North offered the means of defeating Lynch within the Party.

THE FIANNA FAIL SPEECH WAR

October 5th, 1968, in Derry is fast being recognised as a turning point in modern Irish history. On that day the Special Riot Squad of the R.U.C. baton charged a small Civil Rights march in Duke St. Derry. Water cannon drenched the demonstrators, scores of injured were rushed to Altnagelvin Hospital and television film splashed the horror and brutality of the day on screens throughout the world. The Radio Telefis Eireann film crew made a particularly graphic and detailed film running many risks in the process. Shock registered throughout Ireland. Derry was the second Civil Rights march since the campaign of marches was begun by the estimated three thousand who marched from Coalisland to Dungannon on August 24th.

In contrast to the Dungannon march, Derry mustered only about three hundred marchers. The dramatic difference proved to be the R.U.C. attitude; the first march had been blocked on the outskirts of Dungannon and had dispersed peacefully at the urging of the organisers; the Derry march was ambushed by the R.U.C. from the two parts of the street, and baton-charged in a determined and pre-meditated manner. Civil Rights demands had been met with State violence of a most naked and intolerable quality. The violence of that day in Derry not only indicated the deep split in the Unionist Party as to how best to deal with civil rights demands but opened a chapter of blood and terror unparalleled in the short and bloody history of Northern Ireland.

October 5th drew no official comment from the Dublin Government. It was an embarrassing happening at a time when Government Ministers were heavily engaged persuading the population of the South to get rid of Proportional Representation. P.R. was one of the demands of the civil rights marchers in Derry. Opponents of the abolition of P.R. were not slow to

point the moral and the emotional rake-off from Derry went entirely against the Government proposition.

Derry undoubtedly figures in the massive Government defeat in the October 16 Referendum which followed. It was the first time since the General Election of 1957 that events in the North influenced the electorate in the South and on that occasion De Valera and Fianna Fail had been on the topside of the waves. The lesson was not lost on Mr. Blaney, who, as soon as the dust of the Referendum had settled, made his first major pronouncement on the North.

The speech aimed at targets North and South. To level up the Referendum score and to give encouragement to Nationalist opposition to Civil Rights he pointed out that the Civil Rights Association had not got the unity of Ireland on its list of demands. With his eye on reaction within Fianna Fail in the South he attacked the O'Neill-Lemass meetings as futile and called for a re-assertion of the national sovereignty claim. The speech proclaimed Blaney's realisation that events in the North could begin to affect politics in the South and that in that event Fianna Fail had to be on the right side in terms of the political spin-off. His advice to the Party would be to play the Green Card and to stop the Lynch-O'Neill parleys across the Border. Political columnists from the beginning, aware of the tensions inside Fianna Fail, interpreted the speeches as aimed at unseating Lynch as Taoiseach.

His next speech came from Derry in January 1969, Reminding his audience of the terms of the Government of Ireland Act, 1920, he called for the establishment of a Council of Ireland between Dublin and Belfast or a Federal Council comprising the Governments of Belfast, Dublin and Westminster. In Dublin Lynch remained silent.

At a Fianna Fail Convention in Spring, 1969, Blaney again commended himself to Republican Ireland by a well timed attack on Captain O'Neill's election strategy. For some years Captain O'Neill had run an ecumenical campaign aimed at proselytising

middle-class Catholic voters to switch their allegiance to his new-look Unionist Party. His Programme to Enlist the People and Civic Weeks had had good results already in this direction and the General Election called in late February would, hopefully, bring in the harvest.

O'Neill's hopes were threatened by the spreading civil rights conflict and the right-wing opposition of hardliners like Ian Paisley. The biggest threat he had to face was the split in Unionism to which the effects of civil rights came second. Blaney's words, addressed to Catholics and appealing to them to avoid all Unionist candidates, would have little, if any, impact on O'Neill's chances but they would make official relations between Stormont and Dublin more difficult. The split between Blaney and Lynch was again widely noted in the press.

If the results of the General Election in the North disappointed O'Neill, they shocked Fianna Fail. The Nationalist Party, Fianna Fail's traditional camp-follower in the North, had been virtually eclipsed in the election. Blaney's old friend Eddie McAteer, leader of the Nationalists, had lost his seat in Derry to John Hume. More and more the Civil Rights Movement was setting the pace and more and more events in the North caught the attention of people in the South. Not content to speak about the North Blaney could see the need for Fianna Fail to get some say or control in the decision making process inside the North. Kevin Boland recalls of this period that *"we considered the establishment of Fianna Fail on the other side of the Border and had almost decided that this might have to be done."*

The reason given by Boland for this attitude - that there had been no talk of unification during the election in the North - would be the justification. The real reason would be the danger inherent to Fianna Fail's political grip in the South if events in the North continued to be dictated by people with little political sympathy with Fianna Fail. It was as much in the objective interest of Fianna Fail that the leader-

ship of events in the North change hands as it was in the interest of Unionism. The question was how?

At this period also the first tentative contact between Fianna Fail and the I.R.A. took place. A businessman in South Derry approached the O/C of the area and intimated that there were people across the Border willing to help out with arms and cash. Both the businessman and the I.R.A. leaders were known to each other and the source of the offer was traceable back to Blaney in Donegal. The O/C reported back to I.R.A. H.Q. in Dublin and it was decided there to play along with the contact in order to discover more about the background and motivation of the sudden offer. Very little came from this contact at the time. The wariness of the I.R.A. response coupled with the coming General Election in the South, which would keep Blaney busy for some months, allowed the matter die.

It was only after the dramatic events of August '69 that the contact was to be suddenly renewed through the same businessman and to lead to a meeting between the I.R.A. O/C and Blaney at Malin in September and to a further and final meeting in October at the Shelbourne Hotel in Dublin. An alleged meeting in June, 1969, between these contacts from both sides as outlined in an anonymous document entitled *"Fianna Fail and the I.R.A."* and dealt with in even greater detail in the "Sunday Times", Insight book "Ulster" never in fact took place.

In the run up to the June General Election events in the North did not impinge much on public opinion in the South, Blaney desisted from his resounding speeches, possibly for fear of conjuring up the Lynch-Blaney split in the minds of the electorate, and possibly because his speech writer in chief, Seamus Brady, was busy on other aspects of policy concerned with the elections.

Brady had been professionally engaged by Fianna Fail to help turn out scripts during the Referendum of 1968 and at previous Ard Fheiseanna of Fianna Fail. An experienced journalist whose sounding rhetoric was a feature of Blaney scripts on the North he was now busily engaged turning out the phrases

the 'red-scare' scripts that were to halt the Labour Party advance in the towns and cities. The Donegal "Mafia" were deploying throughout the country under their redoubtable leader. For Blaney, allocating the finances and charting the areas where help was needed most around the 26 Counties, the North must wait.

In all of this period, up to and following the June General Election, Lynch spoke not at all about the North. Following the election, with political life in the South at a low ebb, he was joined in his silence by Blaney. August in Derry was to mark the next stage in the leadership crisis inside Fianna Fail.

DAYS OF DECISION

Street fighting was general in Derry when the first of the emergency Cabinet meetings was held in Dublin at 11.00a.m. on the morning of August 13th 1969. The massive outbreak of violence in Derry and the public response in the South presented the Government with serious problems. Not only was the future of the Government felt to be at stake but also that of the Fianna Fail Party.

For Jack Lynch, who summoned the meeting, the problem was even more serious and immediate: *his own survival as Taoiseach was imperilled by an outbreak he had done absolutely nothing to prepare against in political terms.* He was faced with the accusing eyes of Blaney and Boland, and, as the meeting commenced, felt the full weight of Haughey, his arch-rival, in support of their demands. The knives were well and truly out and Lynch knew it. The question of a leadership tussle never arose: *the crisis demanded immediate action and Lynch conceded point after point as he played for time.*

There were areas of agreement. A strong all-Republican Government statement was needed - even stronger than the draft submitted by the Civil Service. Some action was needed. Here was the crux. *Should the Army go into Derry?* The Army report read to the Cabinet saved Lynch's point of view as the

Army was in a state of unpreparedness. 8,000 men was the total serving; equipment was old and unreliable; 500 of the crack troops were on U.N. duty in Cyprus and would take at least four days to repatriate.

An invasion limited to Derry would unleash pogroms in many other parts of the North, particularly in Belfast. It was either full invasion or nothing. A compromise would be to ask the British Government to allow the Irish Army enter the North to protect Catholic areas in the event of a general conflagration. This was agreed to. But it was not enough in itself. A strong dramatic gesture was needed to capture the public imagination. Somebody remembered De Valera had sent fire brigades over the Border to Belfast during the blitz. *Why not announce that Military Field Hospitals were being set up along the Border?* Yes, of course. This would also facilitate the movement of more Army units towards the North. Also, a call-up of first line reservists would reassure the public that the Government was on the job.

The Government could agree as well on the dangers now facing it. One of these was the I.R.A. Already in early August Mr. Lynch had met the Editors of the various newspapers and asked them not to publicise statements from the I.R.A. on their doings in the South. This request related to I.R.A. actions and threat of further action against foreign ownership of land in Ireland.

In March of that year the burning out of a property owned by a German in Co. Meath led to a furore in the West German Parliament. On June 11, estates owned by foreigners at Dunleer, Co. Louth, and at Carlanstown and at Ballymacgarvey near Kells in Meath were hit by I.R.A. action. Lynch had traded statements with the I.R.A. on the issue of foreign ownership but had probably come off second best with the small farmers demanding land in Louth and Meath.

Fearing that the I.R.A. might steal Government thunder on the sensitive issue of land buying by foreigners, Lynch

had summoned the newspaper and television editors to his office, and, in requesting them to play down I.R.A. statements, mentioned in passing that such mention was illegal. The media took the caution grudgingly.

With the North a complete terra incognita as far as Fianna Fail influence was concerned, the I.R.A. could play a role there which might quickly make it a political rival in the South. Just how much control or influence the Republican Movement had in the decision making areas in the North was not known.

Long years of neglect left the Cabinet in the realms of guesswork when it came to understanding the motivating factors personalities or relative organisational strengths among the minority in the North. One thing only was certain: *Fianna Fail's traditional ally, the Nationalist Party, was at a discount.* The threat posed by the Republican Movement and the search for a means to counteract it was to be further discussed at Cabinet meetings and lead to a fateful decision on 15th August. Meanwhile the Army Intelligence Service and that of the Garda Siochana would be instructed to concentrate on the I.R.A. on both sides of the Border.

The Government statement, read out by the Taoiseach on radio and television electrified an already tense country.

"The Stormont Government is evidently no longer in control of the situation, which is the inevitable outcome of policies pursued for decades by them. The Government of Ireland can no longer stand by.

"It is obvious that the R.U.C. is no longer accepted as an impartial police force.

"The employment of British troops is unacceptable and not likely to restore peaceful conditions.

"The Government of Ireland have requested the British Government to apply to the United Nations for urgent despatch of

a peace-keeping force to the Six Counties, and the Irish Permanent Representative to the United Nations has been instructed to inform the Secretary-General of this request.....

"Many injured do not wish to be treated in Six County Hospitals, so Irish Army authorities have been instructed to establish field hospitals in Donegal and other points on the Border where necessary....."

The content, terminology and tone of the statement all indicated a major confrontation with Britain in the making. Fighting in Derry intensified following the broadcast and rumours swept the Bogside that the Irish Army was on its way across the Border. Fighting went on through the night and into the next day. Refugees and wounded crossed the Border and a pall of smoke from burning buildings mingled with the clouds of C.S. gas over the Bogside.

On the evening of August 14th with the battle still in the balance the dreaded B-Specials were mobilised and began to shamle in droves towards the barricades surrounding the Bogside. Before they could be fully committed, however, to the amazement of R.U.C. and 'B' men, lorry loads of British troops were deployed in the flash point area. The troops orders were to contain the outbreak and as the R.U.C. reluctantly withdrew, Colonel Todd, commanding the British troops, guaranteed that there would be no attempt to breach the barricades. Two days of almost continuous fighting gave way to a night of wild celebration. The R.U.C. and B-Specials, traditional and hated enemies, had at last been defeated. Something big had been accomplished by the Bogsideers - exactly what no one could say with any certainty.

Even as the Bogsideers celebrated, all hell was breaking loose in Belfast. What had remained a brick and bottle operation in Derry with the exception of two shots fired by a cornered R.U.C. Sergeant quickly came to guns and bullets in Belfast. In a night of wild confusion and terror at least ten people died, hundreds of houses were burned and thousands

of refugees fled to safety inside the barricades of the Falls or south over the Border. The abiding feeling of defencelessness was reborn in the minds of the minority following a night when they faced sectarian mobs led very often by groups of R.U.C. and B-Specials.

Prominent Northern leaders began to appear at the almost nightly public meetings in O'Connell Street, Dublin, appealing openly for arms for defence. It was against this background of uproar in the North and vociferous demands for armed intervention from the South that the Cabinet met on Friday, 15th August.

In the interval between the meetings Dr. Hillery had flown to London and been sharply rebuked and repulsed on the question of a United Nations peace keeping force anywhere in the North. Northern Ireland was an internal affair of the United Kingdom and would remain so, he was told. Sharp criticism was also forthcoming on the tone of the Government statement and the movement of troops to the Border. One of the first decisions was that Dr. Hillery would go to the United Nations to raise the matter at the Security Council there.

Meanwhile the Army would complete preparations to be available to intervene with Britain's permission in the event of a complete breakdown. The Gardai would be instructed by the Minister for Justice to turn a blind eye to the unofficial movement of arms across the Border to help the defence of minority areas. The Minister for Defence would immediately put in hand a recruiting and re-equipment drive to bring the regular Army up to full establishment strength. *(An advertising agency soon converted this Cabinet decision into the "Mighty Mighty Ranger" who became so familiar a sight on television commercials.)*

The problem of some days ago had become even bigger now. *How was the Cabinet to assert its influence in the decision making areas in the North?* The Civil Rights Association was one influential body where the Government had no influence. The mushrooming Defence Associations were another significant

area of power in the North. And, in the military situation now opened up, the I.R.A. loomed as a distinct threat. At all costs the golden opportunity for the I.R.A. to make political capital must be aborted, but how? Government money had to be made available to deal with distress and this money would have to be carefully spent to win friends for the Government.

Finally, it was decided to provide £100,000 from Exchequer funds for relief and to appoint a special Cabinet Sub-Committee to deal with the whole problem of the North. The members of this Sub-Committee were to be Neil Blaney, Padraig Faulkner, Joe Brennan, *(whose constituencies lay along the Border)* and the Minister for Finance, Charles Haughey *(who had strong Northern connections)*. The functions of this Sub-Committee would be many-sided and not specifically limited to Cabinet or Government operations. Already, Blaney could report, plans were afoot among businessmen supporters of the Government to collect an all-purpose fund to buy influence in the councils of the minority in the North.

Mr. Haughey, recalling the Sub-Committee's brief during the Arms Trial said: *"We were given instructions that we should develop the maximum possible contacts with persons inside the Six Counties and try and inform ourselves as much as possible on events, political and other developments, within the Six County area"*.

Another major Cabinet decision was the Propaganda Corps to launch an international attack on Britain on the question of Partition in Ireland. A round score of Public Relations men - *all but two of them drawn from State or Semi-State Companies were already being contacted for the operation.*

As the Cabinet adjourned Haughey and Blaney had every reason to be satisfied - despite the walk-out earlier of Kevin Boland on the question of sending the Irish Army over the Border. They were in virtual control of Government policy towards the North and had a wide and elastic brief which would allow them maximum room for manoeuvre.

THE CABINET SUB-COMMITTEE

The Cabinet Sub-Committee on the North comprising of Padraig Faulkner, Joe Brennan, Charles Haughey and Neil Blaney, was the Government reaction to the crisis in the North. This Sub-Committee it was which met with and fused the reaction of the Fianna Fail party and backers with that of the Government.

The exact brief of the Sub-Committee was never made known by the Government even to the Dail Committee of Inquiry, but its scope was general and all-embracing. It had at its command not just the fund provided by the Government but the substantial sums of money which began to flow into a general purposes fund from the Party's business backers. The limiting of the Dail Committee of Inquiry into investigating the Government's £100,000 led to a complete distortion of the nature and scope of the operation launched from Dublin in the closing weeks of August 1969.

From the very beginning official Government action mingled with private Party action and official funds with private funds. All of the initiatives taken, however, whether with the I.R.A. or Saor Eire contacts, were taken under the aegis of the Sub-Committee and directed by its members.

Padraig Faulkner made contact with Belfast I.R.A. men through the directors of the G.E.C. in his home town of Dunleer: Neil Blaney made contact with Saor Eire through the Citizens Committee located in a house in Kildare Street (since demolished), the use of which was donated to the Committee by the New Ireland Assurance Co. Haughey made initial contact with the Chief of Staff of the I.R.A. through his brother Padraig at a venue in London. The one Committee member who seemed to remain inactive was Joe Brennan.

All of these contacts were made with a single objective: to somehow obtain a substantial supply of arms through illegal channels and distribute them throughout the North. The guns themselves were but a detail in a master plan that slowly unfolded through September, October 1969.

The master plan of the Sub-Committee was simply to "get in". Every area of influence and decision-making inside the North both established and potential must be infiltrated and taken over where possible. No longer must the Fianna Fail Government or Party be at the mercy of decisions taken by Civil Rights or Republican organisations in the North. The Government and the private Party fund would provide the means.

The plan was as follows: *The Irish Army Intelligence section, aided by the special Garda intelligence squad sent over the Border would concentrate on I.R.A. personnel and sympathisers on both sides of the Border. They would discover everything discoverable about their contacts, cross-border routes, activeness, etc. This dossier would be of critical importance in foiling any major push by I.R.A. units from the South across the border in the event of a future escalation of trouble inside the North.*

Concurrent with this drive against the I.R.A. Fianna Fail personnel, armed with cash, would build up contacts inside the North and help influence an organisation which would take its political lead from Fianna Fail. Personalities amenable to Fianna Fail would be brought to prominence through the activities of this organisation. A newspaper would be specially founded to promote the general objectives of this plan and give a lead to public opinion. An "illegal" radio station would be beamed on the North to offset the propaganda of the illegal radios operating in the Bogside and Belfast. The Civil Rights Association would be infiltrated and taken over if possible. Slowly but surely the neglect of years would be eroded and minority public opinion attuned again as of old to the political advice of Fianna Fail.

In the final stages of the campaign when Republican, Civil Rights and Socialist groupings had been sufficiently weakened the red scare bogey would finish the job and Fianna Fail's grip on events in the North assured.

The main agents of the "get in" campaign would be Captain James Kelly and Seamus Brady, Blaney's confidante and speech-

writer. Captain Kelly was already at work along the Border collecting intelligence on the I.R.A. He would now get a briefing to equip him for the job of building up an organisation inside the North to replace the one he was busily collecting information on along the Border: *the only apparent difference would be one of political allegiance.*

Haughey had put Seamus Brady on the team as early as 15th August. In his evidence to the Dail Inquiry the Head of the Government Information Bureau recalled: *"The first information I had about Mr. Brady's selection and appointment...was as a result of a casual meeting on Friday, August 15, with the then Minister for Finance, Mr. C.J. Haughey, who informed me that he had arranged for Mr. Brady to join the Bureau for the duration' at a fee of £200 per month."* Seamus Brady reported for duty on the Government's Propaganda Squad on Tuesday, August 19th, and was the only member of the squad selected to go into the North ostensibly to collect material for the P.R.Os. being sent all over the world.

Brady's first report, in late August, went to the Taois-each through the Information Bureau Director. It had nothing to do with explaining the situation in the North to the world: it amounted to an intelligence report on the I.R.A. and the composition of the various defence groups springing up throughout the North.

Such was the need for accurate information at Government level that all types of people had been commissioned to do intelligence work of this nature. Brady, being near to the Fianna Fail machine, was one of the first to be asked. In Belfast a short time later the political correspondent to the Irish Press was engaged in a somewhat similar task.

Brady's report confirmed that people who had no previous connection with the I.R.A. were training or looking for training in arms. Defence committees were springing up in all areas of tension. Speaking of the Defence Committees Brady noted that *"these certainly included I.R.A. men and former*

members of the I.R.A. both from the Forties and the Fifties; but they also included men of some local standing, members of the Nationalist party, and business and professional men, all of whom felt the need for taking steps to have men with arms trained and available if the need for defence should arise."

Brady recalls the result of this report to the Taois-each: *"I was asked to meet the Director of Intelligence and his personal assistant, Captain James Kelly"*. Thus was born the team which was to carry out the evolving master plan of the Sub-Committees. For the next few weeks Brady helped Captain Kelly with intelligence work inside the North introducing him to various persons. It was during this period that the Defence Committees were selected as the best possible power base to restore significant Fianna Fail influence in the North.

Meanwhile moves were being made in public to cut off the flood of financial assistance going to various branches of the Republican Movement. On August 21st the Government Information Bureau announced that funds for the relief of distress in the North would be handled mainly by the Irish Red Cross. Already the British Red Cross had refused permission to the Irish Red Cross to distribute relief directly in the North but arrangements had been made to do so indirectly.

A statement by the President of the Red Cross, Leslie Bean De Barra, in the public press, implied that any aid not channelled through her organisation was falling into dishonest hands. A Government Information Bureau statement also said that the "Northern Defence Fund" being collected by Republicans was going into illegal hands.

One of the first aid transactions in the Government-Red Cross pipeline into the North were quite genuine. On October 9th, Charles Haughey directed that £20,000 be paid to the Red Cross in Dublin. This amount was transferred to the Munster and Leinster Bank in High Street, Belfast, on the same day and lodged to the account of the Belfast Refugee Re-Establishment Committee which had approached the Government in Dublin for assistance.

THE I.R.A. MOVES

The I.R.A.'s first reaction to the events of August was one of military action. The decision was taken to arm and equip four active service units (*all that could be mustered with the total arms remaining in the 26 Counties*) and send them to the border. The immediate idea was to take the pressure off the besieged minority areas in Belfast and Derry, and to this end some of the old 1957 Campaign blue-print was exhumed and examined as to its military feasibility and with a view to lining up military targets in the border regions.

By the time these units had assembled at the border and gathered the military intelligence necessary for their operations, the Belfast pogrom had ceased and the need for a border campaign - however limited - had obviously gone. However, the active service men were finally ready to move on the evening of Sunday, August 17th, among them Sean MacStiofain, then I.R.A. Director of Intelligence, who had bade his wife farewell at their An Uaimh home earlier that week.

Meanwhile, in Dublin, Cathal Goulding saw the change in the Northern situation and he realised that now that a lull had come in Belfast, military activity by the I.R.A. on the border could only be counter-productive. He feared that it would lead to a resumption of the Belfast pogrom and he knew that people there behind the barricades were inadequately armed to resist further attack. The consequent slaughter would be blamed on the I.R.A. and the Republican Movement would be discredited in the eyes of the Northern people, thereby leaving the way open for Fianna Fail to fill the Republican gap.

The events of the previous week had left the I.R.A. in poor standing among the Northern minority, because the popular story at the time was that the Belfast I.R.A. "*had let the people down*", and the dead Catholics in Belfast were used to prove the point. The Fianna Fail Cabinet was playing the Northern card at the time and they had stationed the Irish

Army on the border, so Goulding realised that a mistake now in the form of a border campaign could mean the end of the I.R.A. He reckoned that the order to take the pressure off Belfast was now an out-dated one and set about changing it.

The men on the border, however, were so involved in their military preparations that the change in the Northern political atmosphere barely registered with them. The organisation of which they were members had suffered a moral set-back in the week up to that Sunday, and they were determined to make up for that by the actions they had carefully planned. They felt bitter that the people who were now criticising them about their lack of arms were the same people who had not contributed to a collection for years, who would not wear an Easter Lily or buy the "United Irishman", but who were now self-appointed military strategists. Their intended actions that evening were designed to put the I.R.A. back in the political arena, boost the morale, and strike a blow at the traditional enemy. The I.R.A. had been accused of running away - now they were about to refute this in the only manner they knew how.

Goulding sent advance word of his decision to the border and set out for North Louth to confirm the order and explain its logic to the men on the ground. The idea of calling off the planned strike against the British and Northern Governments was not well received by the active service men, and they felt betrayed at not being allowed the chance they had waited and prepared for.

Goulding's first call was at a farmhouse near the Louth-Armagh border and his arrival there was heralded over the walkie-talkie radio linking the perimeter guard to the house itself. The immediate reaction of the O/C in the house was, "*Shoot the ----*", an indication of the unpopularity of the order rather than the man who issued it. However, Goulding strode into the farmhouse without being shot and calmly explained the change in the situation in Belfast and in the North generally, pointing out the political and military necessity

for refraining from border activity at that time. The political education process of the I.R.A. over the previous number of years stood to him, and two active service units kitted out in the kitchen remembering that war was but an extension of politics, laid down their equipment albeit grudgingly.

However, no sooner had Goulding's point of view been explained and his order both obeyed and understood, than the siren of the Crossmaglen R.U.C. station was heard at the farmhouse in the still evening air. One of the active service units had left another farmhouse earlier and unaware of the change of order they had struck at their target, and the Crossmaglen siren's wailing for help seemed to be echoing from every R.U.C. station siren in South Armagh.

No help was needed, however, because the raiding party had failed in their objective. They had stolen a small lorry, packed it with explosives and driven the lot across the front lawn of the barracks, parking it near the front of the building. The idea had been to detonate the lorry's contents by exploding a grenade under it, but when the grenade was thrown nothing happened, much to the relief of the R.U.C. and a local drunk they were questioning in the station at the time.

Without any nearby firing cover, with the explosive power of the lorry obviously dormant, and with the element of surprise now distinctly disappearing, the unit had no option but to call off the attack and withdraw. As they did so, a 'B' man on look-out duty at the station emptied his Sterling at them, but his aim was much more erratic than that of his comrades in the Tynan platoon to the North, and the I.R.A. made an orderly retreat.

In the event of a pursuit, the I.R.A. had arranged an ambush party near the border, but they were not needed, as the lorry load of explosives on their front lawn was enough to keep the R.U.C. occupied for the rest of the evening. The whole incident warranted only minor press coverage the following day and even the Cameron Commission Report did not attach major

significance to the event. The I.R.A.'s 1969 border campaign was over without their having fired a shot.

On that same Sunday, however, the I.R.A. were beginning a campaign of a different sort - a campaign for survival. That morning Goulding had personally received his first indication of the growing Fianna Fail interest in the I.R.A. Fr. Dore, then head of the Irish centre in London, had contacted him and said that he could put him in touch with an unlimited supply of money which was available for the purchase of arms if it was guaranteed that these arms would be sent directly to the Six Counties. To arrange this, Fr. Dore said, it would be necessary for a leading member of the I.R.A. to travel to London to meet the man who was offering such vast sums of money.

The next morning (Monday August 18th) Goulding flew to London and met Fr. Dore who then introduced him to the I.R.A.'s new benevolent benefactor - Padraic Haughey, brother of the then Minister for Finance in the Free State Cabinet.

Goulding and Padraic Haughey discussed the situation in the North at that time and Haughey indicated that he was willing to help. If Goulding was supplied with money, could he in turn supply the Northern people with arms? Goulding said that this would be no problem if the money was forthcoming, although he pointed out that the amount needed was at least £50,000. In reply to this Haughey handed him £1,500, promised more within a few days, and said that the whole £50,000 would be obtained. Goulding returned to Ireland with the £1,500 and put it in the standing arms fund.

But money was no good at that time to the hardest pressed section of the I.R.A. - the men in Belfast. They needed arms and they needed them immediately. The O/C in the city had been interned in the Crumlin Road prison earlier that week, and as soon as the pogrom had subsided the acting O/C sent a member of his staff to Dundalk to obtain by whatever means possible all available arms from any source willing to give them. This

established that he was the person representing the Belfast I.R.A. - *an essential step to take because of the large number of individuals who were also posing as would-be gun collectors.*

The Belfast man sent the word out that the I.R.A. in Belfast needed arms. The message reached many different people, and by evening a motley assortment of arms ancient and modern had been handed over to the I.R.A. Some of the stuff was obsolete or in poor condition, much of which had been hoarded since the forties, the thirties or even the Tan War. Other items were brand new and in excellent condition, some of which came from the most unlikely places - a friendly Garda Sergeant passed on a box of .38 ammunition. The situation resembled an arms amnesty - everything was accepted and no questions were asked.

The I.R.A.'s call for support reached beyond Dundalk - from Dunleer came a man offering to help, not by supplying arms but by supplying money for arms. The Belfast staff man was not particularly interested in money that day, but when he heard the amount of money being offered, his interest increased. The man from Dunleer was a Mr. Naughton, who is an executive of the G.E.C. factory there. When he was informed that the I.R.A. needed at least £50,000 before they could enter the international arms market, Naughton replied that the people he represented could supply £150,000 and "not miss it". He made it clear that he was not in a position to supply this money personally, although he appeared genuinely concerned about the defence of the Northern minority.

He also made it clear that the people who were willing to supply this money had no intention of handing it out after the fashion of Padraig Haughey, as he insisted on asking the Belfast men his opinions on various matters, including the I.R.A.'s socialist policies, their political involvement in the 26 Counties, and the use to which the guns bought from this promised money would be put.

Recognising the situation the I.R.A. officer played along and said that all the Belfast I.R.A. were interested in was to fight for Irish freedom, and that when freedom was achieved, Naughton and anyone else who felt like it could "push socialism, capitalism or any other -ism." He realised that this was what Naughton wanted to hear, and he also realised that if guns ever materialised from the promised money, the people holding those guns would be able to decide as to their use. A well armed I.R.A. might surprise the men who sent Naughton as to its political awareness.

But Naughton was delighted with the answers he received, and he assured the Belfast man that the money was as good as on its way. Delighted also was the man who sent Naughton. This was Mr. Padraig Faulkner T.D., Minister for Education, who had been appointed to the Cabinet Committee on the North the previous day. On the previous day also the Committee to which Faulkner was appointed had been given £100,000 "to provide aid for the victims of the current unrest in the Six Counties." Taca had much more than this at its disposal at that time, and the proceeds of the £100 a plate dinners in the Shelbourne Hotel were now to be used to devour the I.R.A. The call for support had attracted the political vultures, who in any case had been hovering around the I.R.A. from early summer. Faulkner had sent Naughton to tempt the I.R.A. into the political desert..

While the I.R.A. were looking for arms, the Unionists were looking for a way out. Following the British Army's arrival in Belfast on August 15th, Prime Minister Wilson summoned Chichester Clark to Downing Street to find out what the Unionists were playing at, and to tell him what he intended to do by way of a "solution". The meeting was scheduled for Tuesday, 19th August. A clash of opinion between the two men was inevitable, and one of the main points of controversy hinged on the future of the 'B' Specials. The Labour Cabinet's Northern Ireland Committee were united on their first decision - *the reform of the police and the disbanding of the 'B' Specials.* For the Unionists to give in to the former would be unwise; to agree to the latter would be political suicide.

Whatever his personal views on the future of the Specials, Chichester Clark realised that he was so much a prisoner of his own right wing that if he was to survive, so must the Specials. He had no option but to oppose their disbanding. Wilson and his cabinet were adamant.

Despite the pressure that was on them at that time, the I.R.A. Army Council realised that the irreconcilable clash between the Stormont and Westminster premiers could be exploited to good effect. By Sunday August 17th they had a statement prepared explaining the role of the I.R.A.'s Northern units in the previous week's fighting, illustrating the political lessons of the period and pointing the way forward for Republicans.

At that time there was little evidence that the I.R.A. had been active in the North, and a public statement from them would not only set the factual record straight, but if suitably timed it could make it even harder for Chichester Clark to accept the disbanding of the Specials. Goulding decided to hold the statement and release it on the evening before the Downing Street meeting for optimum effect: *"Already Northern units of the Irish Republican Army have been in action in defence of the lives and homes of the people which have been attacked by sectarian forces, backed up by the 'B' Specials.....the Army Council has placed all volunteers on full alert and has already sent a number of fully equipped units to the aid of their comrades in the Six Counties...."*

The statement had its desired effect on the Downing Street meeting the following evening, although it was eventually through a misunderstanding that Chichester Clark agreed to the disbandment of the Specials. At home the statement had an adverse effect both within and outside the ranks of the I.R.A. - to many people it appeared a belated attempt at justifying the actions - or lack of them - carried out during the Belfast pogroms. By this time (August 19th) the pogrom was over, but the real action was only beginning.

THE SUB-COMMITTEE OFFENSIVE

The quest for accurate information about events and trends in the North proved the major preoccupation of the Irish Army after August 15th. On orders from the Government all refugees in the camps in the South were being questioned.

In early September the Director of Army Intelligence met Charles Haughey in McKee Barracks, Dublin, and discussed further intelligence initiatives in relation to the North. From this meeting came the decision to use a relief centre set up in Monaghan to cope with distress needs as a clearing centre for intelligence on the North. Already Army I.O.s John Duggan and Finbarr Drohan had reported on the suitability of the Monaghan relief office as a front for intelligence activities.

Haughey and Colonel Hefferon agreed to subsidise the activities of the office to the extent of £100 per week. The first £100 was paid over on September 9th. The idea was that the weekly expenditure would pay the costs of maintaining the office and staff and help publish a weekly newssheet which would have the effect of creating many sided contacts inside the North and thus establish a regular flow of intelligence through Monaghan. Captain Drohan had made arrangements with the staff in the Monaghan office to publish a newssheet on the proviso that he would have the right to veto any article and in return for which he would provide "unlimited" cash backing.

Meanwhile Seamus Brady had been busy on another part of the same front. A booklet entitled *"Terror in Northern Ireland"* containing a well written account of the August pogrom in Belfast was produced by him for the Central Citizens Defence Committee in Belfast. The production of the booklet enhanced the position of the man selected to penetrate the C.C.D.C. by allowing him to perform efficient and helpful service to the Committee. The man selected was Hugh Kennedy, a Bord Bainne representative in the North, known to Brady who

worked for Bord Baine in a professional capacity and to Neil Blaney, the Minister for Agriculture, in whose Department Bord Baine operated.

The full costs of printing the publication was borne by the Government Information Bureau and over a thousand copies were given free of charge to Paddy Devlin M.P. who distributed them at the Brighton Labour Party Conference in October. Most of the print order went to the C.C.D.C. to retail at 2/6 while the G.I.B. kept about two thousand for distribution abroad. The booklet carried no imprint as the source of the help given to the C.C.D.C. was to be kept as anonymous.

Kennedy now became Public Relations Officer to the C.C.D.C. and began the job of image building for Tom Conaty, a wholesale Fruit Importer, who was now working closely both with the Rev. Padraig Murphy and Kennedy's political mentors in Dublin. The aim was to replace Jim O'Sullivan with Tom Conaty as Chairman of the C.C.D.C. In the confused and disorganised atmosphere in Belfast still struggling to recover from the confusion of August and deal with the growing pressure from the British Army and Bishop Philbin to take down the barricades, the Sub-Committee penetration plan, backed by the resources of the Dublin Government, cut like a knife through butter.

Success was also reported from Dungannon - again by Brady - where Aidan Corrigan was proving more than cooperative in the developing enterprise. A booklet written partly by Corrigan and partly by Brady *"Eye Witness in Northern Ireland"* was the next publication to be financed by the Government Information Bureau. £333.5.3 was the cost of printing 5,000 copies at the Cityview Press, Dublin, with half going to the G.I.B. and the other half to the author in lieu of fee. This latter booklet, with a false imprint *"Printed and published in the Province of Ulster"*, was launched at a press conference in Dublin on Sunday, October 5th 1969, arranged by Seamus Brady in Jury's Hotel.

A glimpse of the grand design for the takeover of the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association was given by Corrigan at this conference. Speaking as Chairman of the Dungannon Civil Rights Committee Mr. Corrigan said - *"that a number of regional Civil Rights groups such as those in Fermanagh and Dungannon, had only tenuous affiliation with the N.I.C.R.A., and an altered constitution would tighten the organisation and permit discipline and control to be maintained."* Earlier that month fifty £1. affiliation fees had been paid into the Civil Rights Association H.Q. in Belfast and fifty new members from Dungannon registered.

Giving an example of an unaffiliated civil rights group, Mr. Corrigan named the Monaghan Civil Rights group which *"was formed during the riots in mid-August and had since been organising meetings on the Civil Rights campaign in the South."* *"The constitution of N.I.C.R.A. was a stumbling block as it did not permit satisfactory representation from Civil Rights groups outside Belfast,"* Mr. Corrigan said. All in all, Mr. Corrigan represented a valuable shareholding by the Sub-Committee in the Civil Rights arena. Government and Party money would see that this promising foothold was maintained and strengthened. Corrigan would figure prominently in the next big push just one week away.

Brady had already appeared in the Monaghan office and spoken of a need for a newspaper which would be "Civil Rights and Republican but not I.R.A." Plans were going ahead there for a publication of the newsheet suggested by Captain Drohan but this would only be a foolscap sized publication and obviously did not meet the requirements of Brady.

In the event two editions of the newsheet entitled *"The North"* did appear at the end of September and beginning of October by which time the relief operation had finished and the whole future of the office was in doubt. £150 spent by Colonel Hefferon to purchase printing and office equipment for the Monaghan office was written off and the Army presence

withdrawn as it was considered that proper cover had not been maintained. The Monaghan office closed down finally in the last week of October.

Brady resigned from the Government Propaganda Squad on September 21st to devote himself fulltime to the organisation of a weekly newspaper and mobile radio station. He did this in consultation with Haughey and the Director of the G.I.B., Eoin Neeson who discussed the projected newspaper with him over dinner and offered what technical aid the G.I.B. could supply to the newspaper. Final plans for the paper were discussed at a meeting attended by Haughey, Captain Kelly, Aidan Corrigan and Brady himself. Brady recalls that it was Haughey who actually suggested the title "*Voice of the North*" for the new paper. The first edition from the presses of the Anglo-Celt in Cavan would come on October 12th.

Captain Kelly had already made considerable progress towards supplying the organisation which would sell the paper. The weekend of October 4/5 had been devoted to a conference in Bailieborough, Co. Cavan, attended by representatives of Defence Committees from many parts of the North. The stated objective of the meeting was to set up a controlling body for all defence committees in the North, and to discuss the purchase of arms. The meeting took place in the Commercial Hotel, Main Street, Bailieborough, owned by Vincent Kelly, a brother of the Captain. The first task Captain Kelly had on hand was to reassure the attendance that the sudden ending of arms training of people from Derry at Fort Dunree was only temporary and occasioned by a newspaper inquiry to Army G.H.Q. in Dublin. In order to maintain the secrecy of the operation the training was postponed for a short period.

The main question discussed was the funding of full-time personnel in control of barricaded areas and the provision of arms. The meeting was riddled with intrigue. Among the attendance were such people as Sean Keenan of Derry, Tom McGill, Belfast; Art McAlinden, Billy Kelly, Belfast; Kevin Mallon, Tyrone and Jim O'Sullivan, Belfast. With the I.R.A.

split well-developed at this stage Captain Kelly was under the impression that no one owing allegiance to the Dublin IRA leadership was present at the meeting: *all of them seemed favourable to the idea of an independent Northern Defence Committee.*

Captain Kelly himself was acting as a sympathetic soldier and the funds offered were not identified as coming from the Government. Nor would those present at the meeting be aware that on the day previous Colonel Hefferon, Director of Army Intelligence, had given £500 to Captain Kelly to cover the expenses of this and subsequent projected meetings: or that, on the following day, Colonel Hefferon would receive a full report of the meeting from Captain Kelly. To cap all, hovering around outside the Hotel were members of the Garda Special Detective Unit or Special Branch who would report to Peter Berry in the Department of Justice that Captain Kelly was consorting with "subversives" and fill him with horror at alleged alcoholic excesses and dramatic gestures of money being openly flourished at the meeting.

Within days of the Bailieborough meeting Charles Haughey lifted the telephone in the Department of Finance in Dublin and asked the Red Cross to transfer £5,000 of its own funds to the Bank of Ireland in Clones. The account holders, identified as Messrs. F, G. and H at the Dail Inquiry were Paddy Kennedy M.P., Paddy Devlin M.P. and the Belfast Solicitor Mr. P.J. McGroary. Two signatures, usually those of Kennedy and McGroary, were needed on a cheque. The cover names used at the Bank were John White, John Loughran and Roger White. On October 15th and 30th sums of £5,000, drawn on the Government Grant-in-Aid of £100,000, were paid into the Clones account.

The money was to be distributed according to the arrangement made at the Bailieborough meeting and cement the position and power of the Northern Defence Committee structure. The original intention was to distribute it to full time I.R.A. officers and vigilantes in the Defence Committees which would and did for a while mean impartial distribution as between the two sides in the ripening I.R.A. split.

The Clones fund quickly became a victim of the rising tensions. Malachy McBurney, then O.C. of what later became recognised as the Official I.R.A. in Belfast became aware of the opening of the account shortly after the first £5,000 had been paid in and also had reported to him a remark by Paddy Kennedy that the I.R.A. would be cut out. Paddy Kennedy was "more or less" persuaded to write out a cheque for £2,000 and detained while an I.R.A. Volunteer went to Clones and collected the cash on October 10th. Paddy Kennedy wrote out a similar cheque on October 17th without any persuasion and again the I.R.A. collected. The money was used for the express purpose for which it had been lodged - *to pay full time men on vigilante and defence organisation.*

On the third occasion, October 24th, Paddy Kennedy did not appear with the cheque. He informed McBurney that he had sent a man to Clones already. The man turned out to be John Kelly who was to become the new paymaster and the money arrived in due course and was distributed on the basis established in the previous weeks.

The fragile accord continued for the next few months surviving the split in the I.R.A. and the subsequent public split in Sinn Féin by about two weeks. On November 6th, a further £2,000 had been withdrawn in Clones but after that date the supply of cash began to fluctuate and, even more significantly, those people like Paddy Kennedy and the Kelly brothers, clearly identified as the paymasters, tended to openly support the emerging Provisional I.R.A.

Things came to a head in late January 1970. McBurney spoke to Captain Kelly about the 7th or 8th January following a meeting of the 6 County Central Defence Committee and asked him about continuing the 'relief' money which had not appeared for some weeks. Captain Kelly confirmed that when the open split had come he had sent down word that both sections still get relief. He would look into the matter. Some weeks passed and nothing came except the news that of £1,000 which

had come into the city in one week, what was now known as the "Official" I.R.A. had got £200. The Belfast O.C. requested a meeting with Captain Kelly. This took place in Dundalk and was attended by Paddy Devlin, Paddy Kennedy, Billy and John Kelly, Captain Kelly and McBurney.

McBurney complained that the bulk of the money was going to one side. Paddy Kennedy retorted that what money had been handed over was not getting to the right people. The debate heated up. McBurney got down to recriminations. What about the car Billy Kelly was supposed to have bought for the Active Service Unit? He had bought it off the Unit again, crashed it and bought a new one. And what about the house John Kelly was supposed to have bought? At this the meeting broke up in a storm.

At a private meeting afterwards Captain Kelly assured McBurney that the relief would be continued and that arms which he expected news about "*between the 7th and 10th of February*" would be distributed on a fair basis and that each area could make its own representations of its needs. This was acceptable to the Belfast O.C.

A week later, at the end of January, one of the Kelly brothers, Oliver, came to McBurney and handed him £200. He complained about a statement from a Republican Club which claimed that the "*Voice of the North*" being distributed by the Kelly brothers, was a Fianna Fail paper and that statements like that would militate against the money. McBurney retorted that no one would hold money over the heads of Republicans in Belfast in that manner. That ended the money as far as the Official I.R.A. was concerned. For an unknown period after that time a weekly payment of £350 was made to Billy McKee for distribution to the Provisional section. The breakdown seemed more the work of Belfast differences than any hard and fast decision by Captain Kelly.

The Bailieborough meeting which had established the overall Defence Committee had an interesting sequel at Cabinet

level in Dublin when the report of the Special Detective Unit reached the desk of the Secretary to the Minister for Justice. Berry's response to the report caused the Minister for Defence, James Gibbons, to ask the Army's Director of Intelligence, Colonel Hefferon, for an explanation. Gibbons accepted Hefferon's rejection of Berry's complaint. The fact that Kelly's report to Hefferon at that time could neutralise that of the Garda Specials shows that Kelly acted with the full authority of the Government.

In fact throughout his dealings in the North Kelly acted with the utmost sincerity. This was the impression of almost all the I.R.A. men with whom he came in contact. Kelly's own understanding of his brief seems to have been to create the conditions inside the North which would allow for a complete breakdown in law and order in the area and so justify the incursion of the Irish Army which would intervene at the height of the fray to restore order.

The "Doomsday" situation would be created by the I.R.A. who would then withdraw or cooperate in the areas occupied by the Irish Army and concentrate on harassing British Army movements in other areas by disrupting communications, power supplies, and blowing up bridges etc., as well as providing defence for areas threatened by the resulting pogroms. Seamus Brady was of a similar opinion and quoted Haughey as speaking of a "military solution".

Certainly an interim aim of the plan was to establish Defence Committees with as little I.R.A. influence as possible which would give their allegiance to the Dublin Government or to the Cabinet Sub-Committee at any crisis point in the North. Whatever role the I.R.A. might play could thus be controlled by the political thinking from Dublin. What exactly the political thinking behind the briefs given to Kelly and Brady was could not be identified with any accuracy. One factor which loomed most prominent was the continuing tensions between Blaney and Boland on the one hand and Lynch on the other. Blaney's close connection with the Sub-Committee's penetration in the North would make him the kingmaker in the Dublin Cabinet in the event of a successful move in the North.

THE STRUGGLE FOR CONTROL

When the extreme unionist onslaught on the minority in the Six Counties ended, the Fianna Fail onslaught began. The former was intended to eliminate the Catholic population, the latter merely to control it. The latter was also to prove the more intense and the more determined. Its main weapons were money and the promise of arms. The front line troops were Irish Army Intelligence Officers backed up by writers from various backgrounds, and led by the Generals in the Fianna Fail Cabinet. The barricades of the Bogside were to prove ineffective against them - indeed they were to use these barricades and the defensive mentality they represented to their advantage.

The first shot from the Government's official £100,000 arsenal was fired by Blaney on August 20th when he paid out £1,000 to Mr. James O'Doherty, a Derry solicitor subsequently described in the *Dail Inquiry* as "Mr. A." This money was used for the relief of distress in the Bogside, mainly for food supplies, although £150 found its way to decorate Mr. O'Doherty's house which, he claimed, had suffered badly while in use as a relief centre. On the same day Haughey dispatched £5,000 from the same arsenal to London, which his contacts there later claimed was spent on relief of those refugees who travelled to London to avoid the violence.

At the same time the other main weapon - the promise of arms - was used to good effect and a "boat-load" of arms was promised to the Belfast I.R.A. through Paddy Kennedy and Paddy Devlin who had travelled to Dublin shortly after the ending of the pogrom. Paddy Kennedy told a Belfast I.R.A. staff officer that the amount of stuff expected on this boat was 15 machine guns, 30 rifles, 5 or 6 short arms and a number of shot-guns. He also said that there were 60 men coming into the North from the Twenty Six Counties along with a "nitro expert" (*i.e., an expert at handling nitro-glycerine, the main ingredient in gelignite*). The I.R.A. were to arrange billets for these men. The boat never materialised,

although preparations were made in Belfast for its arrival there. Because of this the billets for the 60 men were not prepared and they too soon proved to be a Fianna Fail mirage.

The main target of the Fianna Fail attack was the I.R.A. which they wanted to control, and within a fortnight of August 15th, this task became much easier when a definite cleavage began to appear on the fringes of the Belfast I.R.A.

The division stemmed directly from what a small group of former and current members regarded as the I.R.A.'s failure to offer adequate protection to the nationalist areas during the pogrom, but this was merely an excuse to voice their disagreement with the I.R.A.'s socialist policies and their involvement with the mass of the people on social and other issues. They justified their apolitical stance with military elitism and the offer of Fianna Fail money and arms satisfied both these characteristics. On August 24th a number of this dissident element came together in the social club in Casement Park in Andersonstown without the knowledge of the I.R.A. leadership in the city who did not know of the meeting until several weeks later.

Those present included Jimmy Steele, whose main claim to fame was the fact that he had spent longer than anyone else in Belfast in prison, and Joe Cahill, who had not been active since the 1940's and who had spent much of the time since then in the National Graves Association. Also present was Billy Kelly and his brother John who had been dismissed from the I.R.A. in 1963 for embezzling funds, by the then O/C in the city, Billy McKee. The remainder present were Seamus Twomey, Leo Martin, Gerry Adams, Jimmy Drumm, Dave O'Connell and Frank Morris. They decided to overthrow the leadership of the Belfast I.R.A. to take control themselves and to accept Fianna Fail's offer of money and arms for use in the city, of which they had now heard from Captain James Kelly.

The money continued to reach the I.R.A. leadership in Belfast while this cleavage was developing, and in the first

week of September, Mr. Naughton of Dunleer, an Executive of G.E.C. of which McCourt was Managing Director, appeared on the scene again and offered them £3,000 through Paddy Devlin and Paddy Kennedy. *"My committee do not know what this money will be used for,"* he said, *"but we are quite happy if it goes for arms for the defence of the people."* He handed over £1,000 to the I.R.A. with the promise of a further £2,000 but this never came - apparently if money was to be spent, the dissident element in the Belfast I.R.A. was thought to be the area of investment which would give the best returns.

It was at this point - in the first week in September, 1969, - that the Provisional I.R.A. emerged as a distinct group, and although weak at birth they were slowly nurtured on Fianna Fail milk until they grew strong and healthy. At a meeting in Moville, Co. Donegal, at this time they were promised large sums of money from prominent Dublin businessmen if they set up a separate Northern command and met certain conditions, mainly the dropping of any political involvement particularly in the Twenty Six Counties. On September 14th the dissidents held a meeting in Belfast at which they were addressed by a mysterious man who was introduced to them as a political commentator from Dublin.

That evening a meeting was arranged by Hugh Kennedy, a former Bord Bainne employee, between a member of the 'official' I.R.A. staff in Belfast and an equally mysterious man, who, Kennedy claimed, would put the I.R.A. in contact with the 'right people' in the South. The meeting was scheduled for the Wellington Park Hotel on Belfast's Malone Road, and the contact man turned out to be Michael Mills, the political correspondent of the "Irish Press". Mills said that money and assistance would be coming from the South and he arranged a further meeting between the staff officer and some of the people in the Twenty Six Counties who would be supplying this aid.

The promised meeting took place a few days later in the offices of the Minister for Agriculture, Neil Blaney.

Present at the meeting were the Minister, Hugh Kennedy, Paddy Devlin and the Belfast I.R.A. Officer. The meeting lasted about forty five minutes and towards the end of it Seamus Brady was brought into the room to add to the discussion. Mr. Blaney was interested in the I.R.A. man's opinions of John Kelly, and he was informed that Kelly was basically a "mé féin" man. He also inquired about the sort of character Paddy Kennedy was. The I.R.A. officer was more interested in arms and on inquiring what sort of arms might be forthcoming, the Minister for Agriculture said that he was thinking mainly in terms of .303 rifles and shotguns.

On September 18th, the same people - except Blaney - met with the then Minister for Finance, Mr. Haughey, in his home in Malahide, and this time Seamus Brady was present throughout the meeting. Mr. Haughey's main problem was whether arms could in fact be obtained if the money for them was forthcoming. The I.R.A. man said that obtaining the arms was easy enough provided a sum of not less than £50,000 was available, and Haughey stated that such a sum would be no problem to provide. He said that if the Belfast I.R.A. would open a bank account the money could be paid to them via this account, and the following morning (September 19th) the I.R.A. Officer opened a bank account with a £5 deposit in a Dundalk Bank. No further money was paid into this account - *it was becoming clear to the members of the Cabinet in Dublin that the I.R.A. was not going to be so easy to take over, and that perhaps the creation of a new I.R.A. would be a quicker, cheaper and more rewarding process.*

On September 22nd, Captain James Kelly gave an indication of this strategy in the Fianna Fail campaign when he called at the home of the O/C of the I.R.A. in South Derry. *(This was the same man who had been originally contacted by a friend of Blaney's in February).* Kelly was accompanied by Seamus Brady and two others, one of whom was the man who had made the original contact in February.

Kelly did most of the talking and his main point was the feasibility of establishing a separate Northern Command

independent from the Dublin I.R.A.'s leadership. He inferred that if this were done, arms and money would be supplied more easily, and he insisted that he had previously sent the O/C arms which had not arrived. He repeated this point several times and linked it to the idea of a separate Northern Command along with his desire to see the I.R.A.'s socialist policies dropped. He was curious to know what the Northern reaction was to Fianna Fail and how acceptable the party would be in a Northern context. *"You see, the I.R.A.'s socialist policies are unacceptable,"* he said, *"and if some of the top people in the organisation were to be removed, we could supply you with arms and money."* When asked who "some of the top people" were, he named four: Cathal Goulding, Seamus Costello, Mick Ryan and Roy Johnston.

The O/C realised that the Fianna Fail aid was intended for distribution only on the meeting of certain conditions, and the main condition was that the I.R.A. give up its claim to being the army of the Irish people and to become an armed wing of Fianna Fail operating exclusively in the Six County area as a prelude to Fianna Fail political control there. Announcing that John Kelly of Belfast would be arriving soon after him with an important message, Captain Kelly left. John Kelly's subsequent message was that the O/C was requested to attend a meeting in Bailieborough, which is described elsewhere.

The Fianna Fail offensive was now going at full strength and shortly afterwards Padraic Haughey also arrived in South Derry bearing gifts from Mount Street. He gave the O/C £200 and praised the idea of a federal solution to the partition problem. His "soft-sell" approach differed from that of Captain Kelly, but the message was the same: become the private army of Fianna Fail or you will get no support from us.

The same message had reached Belfast, and the people who had participated in the Casement Park 'caucous' meeting earlier were now firmly committed to the Fianna Fail policy of controlling the I.R.A. Urged on by the prospect of immediate arms and money they were easy to convince of the need for a separate Northern Command, and since most of them had missed

out on the political educational process of the middle and late sixties the socialist policies were meaningless to them. They were largely politically uninterested and therefore politically unaware, and their main interest was in "the fight" - *if Fianna Fail could supply the goods, they could supply the action.*

They decided to "take over" the Belfast I.R.A. by ousting the leadership and thereby leaving the way open to the aid from the Twenty Six Counties. On the evening of September 22nd, they burst into a meeting of the Belfast Battalion Staff which was being held in a room in Cyprus Street in the Lower Falls area. They were armed and informed the O/C and his staff that they were "taking over". The men who decided to take this action included Hugh Kennedy, formerly of Bord Baine, Sean McNally, who had left the I.R.A. five years previously after he married, the aged Jimmy Steele, Billy McKee, Leo Martin, Seamus McCollum, Tom O'Donnell and Jim Webb. This was to be the nucleus of the "new" I.R.A. machine in Belfast oiled and maintained by Fianna Fail.

A serious confrontation could have developed had it not been for the calmness with which the Belfast O/C reacted. His main aim was to preserve the maximum unity in the short term in the face of possible further pogroms, and he agreed to listen to the demands of the dissident element. Agreement was finally reached and the main points that emerged were representation for the dissident element on the Belfast Staff, a temporary shelving of the I.R.A.'s socialist policies, a tentative break with the Dublin Headquarters, and abstention from the forthcoming General Army Convention. The dissidents appeared to have won a victory but the O/C was playing for time and he did not intend to finally agree to any of the demands.

I.R.A. Headquarters in Dublin were unaware that there had been a change of policy in Belfast, and on Thursday, 25th September, 1969, Cathal Goulding sent his Director of Intelligence, Sean MacStiofain, to Belfast to inform the Army Council members there of the next Army Council meeting, and to discuss

some other matters with them. Next morning MacStiofain phoned to tell Goulding that there had been a coup in Belfast and that they were no longer taking orders from Dublin. Goulding met MacStiofain later that morning and then sent him back to Belfast to arrange a meeting in Dundalk the following day - (Saturday 27th) at which he wanted to meet the Belfast O/C and some of his officers.

The meeting took place in Dundalk and agreement was reached on the pooling of financial resources for the completion of an arms deal that Headquarters was involved in. No other points were agreed on, although the Belfast men agreed to send their two Army Council members to the next Army Council meeting in Dublin due to be held on Saturday, October 4th.

On the political front Fianna Fail were also moving in strength. They realised that it would not be sufficient to control the I.R.A. alone and for this reason they moved in on the Citizens' Defence Committees. After his meeting in Dundalk with the Belfast men, Goulding moved on to the Oriel Hotel in Monaghan to attend what was intended as the setting up of a Central Committee of all the C.D.C.'s in the Six Counties. Not all the invited areas turned up in Monaghan, particularly Lurgan and Derry City, and among those who did arrive there was a certain confusion, as that very afternoon a similar meeting had been held in Lurgan and a provisional Central Committee for the C.D.C.'s had been formed.

Goulding's meeting had been pre-empted and he realised that a second central committee would be useless, so he let the idea pass. The fact that the Lurgan meeting had taken place did not come as a great surprise to Goulding, but he did observe the fact that present at the Lurgan meeting was Rory Brady, then a member of the I.R.A. Army Council, who had not given Goulding any prior indication of either the meeting itself or his intention to attend it. The offer of Fianna Fail aid was proving too great a temptation to many Republicans.

One member of the Movement who remained immune to the offers from Fianna Fail, however, was the O/C of South Derry,

who has been mentioned previously. He was to be a first hand witness of even more planning by Fianna Fail at a meeting in the Shelbourne Hotel in early October 1969. Present was the man who had contacted him on behalf of Blaney. Also there was Gerry Jones, who, during the Second World War, served under Peter Berry, at the time Private Secretary to Gerry Boland. Jones had helped Berry list the names of Republicans destined for the Curragh and his task was the smashing of the I.R.A. from within the Fianna Fail Government. It was largely due to the efforts of Berry and Jones that Gerry Boland could stand in the Dail in 1945 and say that the I.R.A. was dead and he had killed it. He had killed George Plant, Charlie Kerins, Barney Casey and many others, but the I.R.A. had survived, and now his faithful servant, Gerry Jones, complete with eye patch and business man's cheque-book, was back to finish off the I.R.A. from closer range.

Jones was accompanied by Gerald Carroll, a prominent member of the Fianna Fail organisation in Cork City. He had been a member of Saor Uladh in 1956 and had taken a part in the 1956-62 border campaign. After this, to use his own words, he *"became disillusioned with the Republican movement when it began to move towards the left"*, and by 1965 he had joined Fianna Fail. Also at the Shelbourne Hotel meeting were another Cork man called McCarthy, the ever present Seamus Brady and Paddy O'Hanlon, at that time a "Unity" M.P. for South Armagh.

McCarthy and Jones discussed the possibilities of obtaining a trawler in Cobh, and taking £20,000 worth of arms to the Six Counties. They appeared very anxious to obtain immediate control of all that was going on in the North, and Jones kept insisting that the weapons sent to the North should be used only in the North and not in the Twenty Six Counties. He feared their use in the South so much that he even suggested sending a man to the North with the arms to ensure that they remained there. He also appeared pre-occupied with the establishment of a separate Northern Command.

Carroll was of the opinion that he could collect sufficient weapons from ex-I.R.A. men for use in the North, but he was not prepared to hand over these weapons until Brady could guarantee their replacement, obviously referring to expected arms from the continent. The reason he requested replacement of his ex-I.R.A. men's weapons was, he said, because they were needed to defend the state against a Communist plot, and he made reference to the Connolly Youth and other left wing groups. His leaving the Republican Movement because of their "leftward trend" was obviously something of an understatement.

Seamus Brady was taking a more realistic approach to the Northern problem and dwelt largely on the availability of medical supplies - *he realised they would be needed if the planned arms reached the Six Counties*. No final decisions were reached at the meeting, and it was decided that McCarthy would contact the South Derry O/C through Derry City shortly afterwards. As the meeting broke up, Gerry Jones phoned Blaney to tell him how the meeting had gone.

The O/C returned to Derry, but he never received any subsequent news from any of those at the meeting. He had gone to the Shelbourne with the image of an I.R.A. man that might be subject to Fianna Fail's offer of help on conditions, but obviously Jones and his friends found some other people who were much more willing to accept their plans for control of the I.R.A.

By the second week in October it was obvious that the Fianna Fail Sub-Committee was in top gear in its move against the I.R.A. They had succeeded in laying the basis of a split, and, unable to oust the I.R.A. leadership, they had set about creating a new organisation with a new leadership, financed with their apparently unlimited funds. They had begun their takeover of the Citizens' Defence Committees and their attempt on the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association. What they needed now was something to get their message across to the Northern minority, something which would effect whatever support the I.R.A. had and channel it towards Fianna Fail. They decided to publish a weekly newspaper.

THINGS BEGIN TO GO WRONG

The first edition of *"The Voice of the North"* appeared on October 12th 1969, and its distribution throughout the North was organised by the Kelly brothers. It was understood that the printers bills would be met by the Sub-Committee funds while distribution costs would be covered by the funds being channelled through the Defence Committees inside the North. Any payment made for the papers would be retained by the Kelly brothers after certain expenses related to distribution in the North were met.

The "Voice" claimed to speak *"for a group of people who have decided that there is need to speak out fearlessly for the Irish people of the Six Counties"*. It carried innocuous enough stories in a civil rights vein but straightaway set about equating the Civil Rights struggle in the North with Fianna Fail in the South. By the third edition, however on October 26th, the "Voice" was carrying a two page spread titled *"De Valera on the North"* with a reprint of a speech on partition given by De Valera in the Dublin Senate in 1939. The propaganda was becoming a little too unsubtle.

On October 30th, the Editor of the *United Irishman*, Seamus O Tuathail, gave a press conference in the Grēsham Hotel, Dublin, to launch a major expose of the Fianna Fail infiltration plot in the North. "The Voice" and the pamphlets organised by Brady and printed for the Government Information Bureau figured largely in the accusation that Haughey, Boland and BBlaney were using "Fianna Fail gold" to buy their way into the Civil Rights Association and other areas of influence in the North. The *United Irishman* front page allegations also commented: *"It is hard to believe that Mr. Jack Lynch is unaware of this cynical double-dealing by his Ministers. These Fianna Fail politicians are doing their best to disrupt Civil Rights and anti-Unionist forces which have been politically embarrassing to them."*

The *United Irishman* story opened a controversy which raged for a full week in the national press and which led to

certain developments. But at no stage did the Ministers named reply. Giving a speech in Bray about one week after the allegations were made Jack Lynch made what could be a passing reference to the controversy when he denied that any of his Government Ministers had acted in any underhand way in relation to the North.

Seamus Brady decided to put a bold face on it and when asked to comment on the allegations retorted - *"This is all a pack of lies. These people couldn't tell the truth if their lives depended on it"*. A few days later, on November 3rd, Brady submitted a bill for £1,580.6.6. to Eoin Neeson in the G.I.B. for the organisation and production of the first three editions of the "Voice". On the day prior to "The United Irishman" expose, October 29th, Brady had written to Neeson pointing out that the Minister for Finance, Mr. Haughey, had authorised payment of £1,000 to him to cover the "Voice" expenses. As previously agreed between himself and Neeson Brady used the cover description *"to preparation of manuscripts for Government Information Bureau."*

Brady received no payment either for the invoice of October 30th or the more explicit and detailed one of November 3rd. The Taoiseach refused to have the bills paid out of the grant for his Department and the matter was referred back to Haughey in Finance. Brady panicked and told Captain Kelly that the deal was off and that the paper would have to fold. On November 6th or 7th Kelly produced £600 and on November 17th, a further £1,000. On November 26th, Brady lodged a further £600 he had received from Kelly. On December 9th he received a cheque in the name of Anne O'Brien for £800 from the same source.

Obviously the controversy surrounding the "Voice" led to a new arrangement for paying for its production. £2,500 was withdrawn from the bank account in Clones on November 10th and the same amount was used to open the Anne O'Brien account in the Munster and Leinster Bank in Lower Baggot Street, Dublin. And so the "Voice" sailed on with the bills being paid from the Anne O'Brien account via Captain Kelly.

Another bill submitted by Brady for the production of the pamphlet given to the C.C.D.C. and for Corrigan's pamphlet was ultimately paid by the Department of the Taoiseach in February, 1970. Following the United Irishman story, Corrigan stated in the Irish Times (Nov. 6, 1969) that "he was solely responsible for financing the booklet 'Eye-Witness in Northern Ireland' and that he had in hand a bill for £660 for its first consignment which anyone could scrutinise at any time". Brady was paid a total of £656.2.3. by the Taoiseach's Department for the production of the two pamphlets.

With the new financial arrangements and with Hugh Kennedy drafted in hurriedly as "Managing Director" to front for Brady, Kennedy gave a press conference in Dublin to refute the United Irishman allegations. "Funds (for the 'Voice') were donated by wealthy people in Belfast and by sympathetic organisations and individuals in the United States. Not a penny had been received from Fianna Fail or any Minister of the Government in the Republic", he said. It subsequently emerged that £5,507.9.6 was paid to the printers alone from the Government fund over the cover name Anne O'Brien.

W.P. O'Hanlon, Managing Director of the Anglo-Celt where the 'Voice' was printed, was listed by Kennedy as one of the "Directors" of the paper. Others named as Directors by Kennedy included Sean Keenan of Derry, Tom Conaty of the C.C.D.C. in Belfast, Mr. John Kelly, "Republican assistant secretary of the committee", and Mr. Kennedy himself.

The controversy faded after a week in the public press and the 'Voice' continued to appear on a weekly basis. By April of 1970 it was carrying an advertisement for a Provisional meeting in Armagh, by May articles praising EEC entry by Aidan Corrigan and Dr. Philbin, Bishop of Down and Connor and on May 17th a *croi de couer* for Haughey, Boland and Blaney in the first flash of the arms crisis. "Their actions were not an attack on Protestant Irishmen, but pity and protection for the poor of Belfast and Derry and other places, left to defend themselves with stones and petrol bombs

against machine-guns and rifles from mobs roused up by the amateur cowardly 'revolutionaries' so idolised by the press", wrote Seamus Brady in the lead story. "Talk of the future being with Doctrinaire Socialism and Cuban-style commune politics has been blown sky-high by the events in Dublin..these men put all the talking revolutionaries, extreme Socialists, Trotskyites, Maoists, Petticoat revolutionaries like Bernadette Devlin, and Maureen de Burca, Farrell, McCann, etc., in the shade." The story ended with the phrase "Thank God Ireland still has real Republicans." In the heat of the moment Brady had anticipated some lines which properly came towards the end of the well-orchestrated Sub-Committee plan. With Haughey, Boland and Blaney now gone it looked like the end of the grand design.

But the 'Voice' carried on, appearing more and more intermittently until it finally closed down in December 1970. The month of December in Dublin brought the final defeat of the "dissidents" within the Fianna Fail party and so the 'Voice' vanished.

Other bones were sticking out of the Sub-Committee plan. On St. Stephens' Day, 1969, 7,000 rounds of ammunition were discovered by Special Branch Detectives at one of the Canal locks in Dublin. Sensational headlines were followed by an investigation and the ammunition was traced back to Captain Finbarr Drohan, the I.O. who had seen action in Monaghan in August and September.

An Army Courtmartial accepted his story that surplus ammunition from target practise had accumulated in his flat in Dublin and that as he was going home to Cork for Christmas he could think of no other way to dispose of it. That an Army Courtmartial could swallow 7,000 rounds on such a story bore eloquent witness to the saving arm of Jim Gibbons Minister for Defence.

Shortly after the crisis in the following May, Drohan quietly "resigned" from the Army.

THE SPEECH WAR CONTINUES

While the Sub-Committee was making policy on the North, Lynch began stating a policy very much at variance with the activities set in train since August. At Tralee on September 20th Lynch delivered a major speech on North-South relations. He spoke of the Council of Ireland idea for a Federal Ireland as contained in the 1920 Government of Ireland Act. He then went on to state that the Dublin Government had no intention of using force to end Partition: *"It would remain the Government's most earnest aim and hope to win the consent of the majority of the people in the Six Counties to means by which North and South could come together in a re-united and sovereign Ireland."*

The speech in many ways paralleled that given in Derry in January by Blaney who also declared in favour of a Federal Ireland involving the Governments of Dublin, Belfast and Westminster. In terms of policy towards the North, therefore, there was no difference between Blaney and Lynch. But events in the North and the attempts by Lynch to demote Blaney in Cabinet responsibility had intervened between the two speeches.

In October Blaney sought the opportunity of upping the ante on Lynch during a Dail debate on events in the North but was prevented from speaking by a Labour Party device in talking the debate out. Seamus Brady's carefully prepared speech was thus wasted and the "Voice of the North" took Labour to task for its impertinence in the next edition.

The occasion chosen for the speech was Blaney's celebration of his twenty-first anniversary as a Dail Deputy in Letterkenny. Kevin Boland was one of the Ministers who attended on invitation. Reading from the script of his well circulated speech Blaney switched the emphasis in the debate with Lynch from policy to methods. *"I believe, as do the vast majority, that the ideal way of ending Partition is by peaceful means. But no one has the right to assert that force is irrevocably out."* Blaney went on to invoke Party support for the thinly

disguised attack on Lynch: *"The Fianna Fail Party has never taken a decision to rule out the use of force if the circumstances in the Six Counties so demand....If a situation were to arise in the Six Counties in which the people who do not subscribe to the Unionist regime were under sustained and murderous assault, then, as the Taoiseach said on August 13, we 'cannot stand idly by'".*

The newspapers headlined the speech and Lynch spoke out to dissociate himself from the sentiments expressed. In the Dail there were repeated allegations of a Fianna Fail split.

The Letterkenny speech was still ringing in the ears of Fianna Fail delegates when the Ard Fheis convened on the following January 17. A showdown between Lynch and Boland and Blaney was expected. But the expectations of the political commentators were disappointed. Lynch sat on the platform flanked by his powerful Barons and listened to a stream of speakers approving of Blaney's sentiments in Letterkenny and impliedly criticising his own.

Kevin Boland, Honorary Secretary of Fianna Fail, noted the aim of the party was to *"secure the unity and independence of Ireland as a Republic"* and said that this aim must be achieved *"unhampered by preconceived ideas or predetermined conditions as to the methods to be used."* Lynch gave a vague speech which seemed to endorse the sentiments of Mr. Boland. The "split" was successfully healed.

In a radio interview on the following day Boland, Blaney and Lynch lined up together behind the microphone and Lynch made it clear that he found nothing objectionable in the Letterkenny speech. He had been concerned only about the misleading headlines! Lynch was still the prisoner of his Cabinet colleagues.

THE REPUBLICAN MOVEMENT DIVIDES

An extraordinary General Army Convention was held in early December, 1969. The purpose of the Convention was to take a decision on the results of the Commission inquiring into the structure of the Movement in advance of the Sinn Fein Ard Fheis due in January. The Commission timetable was being held to despite the increased activity on the Northern issue and its main recommendation - on the issue of abstention - was to provide the final showdown point between the differing viewpoints inside the I.R.A.

In retrospect many of those favouring change felt it was a blunder to have persisted in pushing the issue to decision against the background of the upheaval in the North and the tensions existing within the I.R.A. as a result of August and the various developments since then. Many motives and ideas eddied around below the surface but the single surface issue was to be that of political flexibility on the parliamentary front. It was an unfortunate issue at an unfortunate time.

Even before matters came to a vote those opposed to ending abstention complained that delegates, most of whom did not favour the new policies, had not been picked up to attend the Convention. Explanations which showed it was the delegates own fault were not acceptable. Nor was Belfast represented as the Belfast Staff, though owing allegiance to the Army Council, had stayed away in order not to breach the conditions which had resulted from the coup attempt in September.

The next dispute arose on the issue as to whether the vote would have to be a two thirds vote or not. The Chairman eventually ruled that a simple majority would suffice because the I.R.A., as distinct from Sinn Fein, had no clause in its Constitution advocating any particular method for the achievement of a thirty two county Republic. And the Chairman commented later that he felt like the man *"who had signed the Treaty and re-canted"*. The vote was carried by more than a

three to one majority and as the result became clear Sean Mac Stófaín burst into tears saying *"this is the end of the I.R.A."* Most of those who had voted against then withdrew from the proceedings of the Convention.

On December 29, the first statement from the Provisional Army Council appeared in the papers. It was due notice to the discerning to make up their minds for the coming Sinn Fein Ard Fheis when the battle for abstention would be fought once again, this time with a two thirds majority necessary to win the vote.

But the statement also meant that an unbridgeable breach had been made: the actual question at the coming Ard Fheis would be the size of the walk-out. The justification was very simple. The Bunreacht of Sinn Fein stipulated that candidates standing on an attendance basis for any of the Partitionist assemblies constituted "an act of treason", to even discuss the matter, therefore, amounted to treason.

In the interval between the I.R.A. Convention and the Sinn Fein Ard Fheis the scramble for delegates was only equalled by the scramble for dumps. Somewhere in the middle all hope for a reconciliation hung suspended.

On Saturday, January 10th 1970, the biggest Ard Fheis in living memory convened at the Intercontinental Hotel in Dublin. The first big debate centred around the National Liberation Front proposal contained in the "Ireland Today" document compiled by the Commission established by the previous Ard Fheis. The principles enshrined in the document added up to formal recognition and acceptance of trends already visible in Movement policies such as joining with other radical groups for the attainment of common objectives. But the vote which came at the end of a four hour debate was taken as a dry run for the critical debate on the question of the removal of political embargoes due to take place on the following day. The National Liberation Front concept passed with a big majority.

The first clause in the resolution to remove political embargoes read: *"That all embargoes on political participation in Parliament be removed from the Constitution and Rules."* The decision to be made on the Sunday evening was clear and unequivocal. When the vote was finally taken the motion was defeated because it failed by 19 votes to obtain the necessary two thirds majority in the 257 delegate assembly. For almost an hour afterwards it seemed as if the clash had been averted and another year gained during which the two sides could fight for supremacy. Then the storm burst.

Dennis Cassin of Armagh stood up and proposed that a resolution pledging confidence in the I.R.A. be taken. This would only need a simple majority to pass. Before the Chairman, Tom Mitchell, had time to rule on the admissability or otherwise of the motion Sean Mac Stiofain was at the floor microphone pledging allegiance to the Provisional Army Council. His brief emotion-filled statement was the signal for the pre-arranged walk-out. Visitors and delegates sympathetic to the Mac Stiofain-O'Bradaigh axis left the Ard Fheis and adjourned to the Kevin Barry Hall in Parnell Square. On the following day a front page article by Michael Mills in the Irish Press was headed *"Major Split in Sinn Fein"*. The formalities had been completed.

GARDA FALLON DIES

On January 21, 1970, an event of little significance at the time took place in a Dublin Court. Before the Court were two men, Sean Doyle and Tom O'Neill, charged with the illegal possession of arms and with shooting with intent to commit murder. They had first been arrested at Ballyfemot Avenue on October 3, 1968, following a car chase by Gardai and their case had been adjourned on many occasions in the intervening period. Counsel for the prosecution applied for yet another remand on the grounds that certain key witnesses were unable to be present because of illness. Justice Murnaghan refused to grant the adjournment and the State, faced with going ahead without its key witnesses, entered a nolle prosequi - a device which would allow for re-arrest and re-charging. But for some unexplained reason there were no re-arrests and the two men walked out of Court and vanished.

It was a time of frequent bank raids in the country. No fewer than twelve robberies had taken place since February 27, 1967 when the Royal Bank, Drumcondra, was the target of a daring raid by armed men which netted about £3,000. In the popular imagination the raids were the work of Saor Eire, a pseudo-political grouping which seemed to use politics as a flag of convenience for bank raids. The period since August 1969 had seen a veritable spate of such robberies, the professed aim of which were to help the North. The National Bank, Baltinglass, Co. Wicklow, yielded £800; The Northern Bank, Sth. Circular Road, £5,000; The National Bank, Kells, £3,000; The National Bank in Coolock, £4,000; Whitehall Road Post Office, £1,200; and the Royal Bank, Prussia Street, Dublin £3,000.

Since August the raids had not only increased in frequency but also in the numbers engaged on them (there were twelve men involved at Kells) and in their audacity. The Department of Justice, under Micheal O'Morain, did nothing.

On February 20th, the Hibernian Bank, Rathdrum, fell victim to seven armed and masked men who cut all communications with the village, fired a shot over the head of the sole custodian of the law who appeared on the scene, and vanished with £1,500. Again no action was taken.

There was a definite evidence of Government non-action if not toleration. Exactly why was a difficult question to answer. One theory was that Micheal O'Morain had intervened on one occasion in the interests of a person connected with Saor Eire because of local ties in Mayo. Another was that Blaney's contacts with political elements in Saor Eire in the quest for arms by the Sub-Committee had given encouragement to the idea that Saor Eire, a semi-Government intermediary with arms supplies in the U.S.A., enjoyed a certain immunity in other directions as well. Certainly, in the afterglow of the August events Blaney had frequent recourse to the Saor Eire-infected Citizens Committee and certain of their personnel had undertaken flights to the States to provide arms for the North. But the connections of either men with Saor Eire were ill-defined and of little public significance until April 3, 1970.

On Friday morning, April 3, at about 10.40a.m. the Royal Bank, Arran Quay, was struck by armed men. In cutting the alarm wire outside the Bank they actually triggered the alarm. Gardai were alerted and rushed to the Bank. Making their escape the raiders shot down Garda Richard Fallon. Fallon's death became a public sensation. Immediately, road blocks were set up on all main roads but to no avail. O'Morain visited the widow of the dead Garda and offered a £5,000 reward for information leading to the apprehension of the killers.

A most unusual step was then taken by the Garda who issued a hue and cry listing seven men whom they wished to interview in connection with the raid. This procedure was tantamount to accusing the men named of murder. All of them were immediately identified in the popular imagination as members of Saor Eire. Three of the seven could still be in Garda custody were it not for the apparent bungling in court in

January and a mistake in a Ministerial order transferring another of the men named, Joe Dillon, from Mountjoy Jail to Portlaoise.

The days following were filled with crowd scenes and funeral pomp as the dead Garda was buried beneath a weight of official hypocrisy seldom before witnessed. But the official tears and public subscription lists did nothing to dampen the rising criticism of the Department of Justice among the rank and file members of the Garda. Rumours multiplied. In senior Garda ranks resentment at what appeared to them indiscreet and indiscriminate contacts with subversives turned to suspicions and accusations. Everybody from the State Attorney's office to the Secretary of the Department began to feel the heat. The Minister's own reaction was to publicly state his intention of introducing the amended and controversial Criminal Justice Bill: privately he turned to drink.

One of the first effects of the rising tide of dissatisfaction within the Garda Siochana were the confidential reports which Chief Superintendent Fleming of the Special Branch began to send directly to the Secretary to the Department of Justice, Peter Berry.

Fleming's reports dealt with Saor Eire activities and also with the connections between Blaney and Saor Eire and Captain Kelly's apparent role as liaison between various Ministers - Gibbons, Haughey and Lenihan were mentioned as well as Blaney - and elements which Fleming would consider "subversive".

In the Garda reports and in the mind of Chief Superintendent Fleming there was no distinction made between the activities of Captain Kelly, the Ministers mentioned, and the activities of Saor Eire.

O'Morain's immediate reaction to the reports was to order that the information in them be doublechecked and to privately warn the Ministers named of the inquiry. When

assured that the information was accurate he sat tight and took no action. Dissatisfaction within the Garda grew as the inaction, in their opinion, related to the apprehension of the killers of Garda Fallon and their apparent familiarity with Government Ministers.

Meanwhile Captain Kelly had been very busy indeed. Using the George Dixon account which had been opened in Baggot Street on the same date, November 14, 1969, as the Anne O'Brien account, he was heavily engaged in attempting to bring in a cargo of arms to Dublin. While the operation was intended to be discreet it was made clear to the Dublin Customs that it had official sanction when, on March 25, Captain and John Kelly drove to the docks in a hired truck to pick up an expected cargo of arms from the City of Dublin. On the ships manifest the arms were described as "mild blue steel". Only forty bullet proof vests arrived, however, as the shippers had refused to ship the arms from Antwerp.

The arms were already on the ship when it was discovered that Captain Kelly had failed to provide the mandatory end users certificate and they were off-loaded. It was a fatal bungle on Kelly's part and was to lead to the presence of Albert Luykx on the next attempt because of his familiarity with import procedures. Captain Kelly's attempts to get Aer Lingus bring in the arms on a regular scheduled flight failed but effectively spread the news of the "secret" until it became one of the best known secrets in Ireland. On the Continent a member of the Schleuter armaments firm earned his retainer fee from British Intelligence by tipping them off about the order of arms for Ireland and the payments made.

It was reported that the George Dixon account had paid an initial deposit of £3,000 into Schleuter's Hamburg account in early January. A fortnight later a further payment was made. In mid-February Captain Kelly himself undertook a trip having obtained the consent of his superior Colonel Hefferon.

On February 19, Captain Kelly was again airborne carrying with him on this occasion £10,000 in cash which he lodged in

a Dortmund Bank. A few days later he met with Schleuter in Dortmund to discuss the exact nature of the arms and ammunition. On March 4, Captain Kelly met with Defence Minister Gibbons to explain the need for the next trip to Europe. On this trip Schleuter had promised that the arms would be sent from Antwerp on March 17. All this was duly reported to British Intelligence.

On March 17, an already nervous Gibbons was standing beside Haughey on the reviewing stand for the St. Patrick Day's Industrial Parade in Dublin, suggesting that Captain Kelly be transferred from his Army duties. Haughey suggested that he become a pig smuggling Inspector along the Border. This would help him by giving him a new "cover" as his activities were by now widely known and would still allow him to continue in close cooperation with the Northern Defence people. It was Blaney who resisted the need for this move.

In the event, part of the cargo promised on March 17th, arrived in Dublin on March 25th - the bullet proof vests described as "protective clothing". The "mild blue steel" failed to arrive and this necessitated a further trip to the Continent. Kelly, accompanied this time by Albert Luykx, flew out to Antwerp on April 1st. On the evening of Thursday, April 2nd, serious rioting broke out in Ballymurphy when six hundred British troops with armoured Saracens in support moved into the area. Troops used tear-gas when stoned and the huge estate erupted with violence.

John Kelly and Hugh McAteer contacted Blaney in Dublin. Blaney's response was to contact other members of the Government. Lynch had left for a weekend in Barley Cove, West Cork and could not be contacted by telephone.

Gibbons had left for his home in Kilkenny but the Garda at Naas were asked to intercept him. Gibbons rang back and eventually contacted the Chief of Staff at the Curragh Army Camp and a pre-arranged plan transferring 500 Lee Enfield rifles and 3,000 gas masks to Dundalk Barracks was put into operation. The initial stage of the master plan thus triggered

could not go into its second stage because the "mild blue steel" was still on the Continent. A few days later the violence died out in Ballymurphy. For Jack Lynch it was a rude awakening. He now knew who ruled the country, and it wasn't Jack Lynch.

The urgency communicated itself to the Continent and on April 3 Kelly and Luykx met with Schleuter who informed them that the arms were on their way to Trieste. Kelly asked that they be stopped at Vienna and he would arrange to fly them from there to Dublin. Luykx wrote out a personal cheque to cover the costs of a chartered plane and the purchase of some additional arms. The flight date was tentatively set for April 7th.

In Dublin on the same day, April 3rd, Garda Fallon was shot dead.

FROM MUTUAL ASSISTANCE TO BLACKMAIL

In the days following April 4th Captain Kelly's attempts to get first Aer Lingus, and then Aer Turas to fly in the arms to Dublin Airport led to more inquiries being made with Government Departments. A meeting involving Luykx and Brian Lenihan of Transport and Power which took place in the Old Shieling Hotel, Raheny, made its way into Fleming's report to Berry in Justice. Kelly pushed ahead with settling the details for importation and flew out to Vienna with Luykx on Friday, April 17th, to meet with Schleuter and fix up the final details of the charter flight to Dublin.

On the same morning the fuse so carelessly laid by Kelly began to burn. Dublin Airport authorities began to check out the authorisation from the Department of Finance quoted by Captain Kelly for allowing the arms cargo through without customs search. The Department of Transport and Power received the call but referred the Airport query on to the Department of Justice. Pressure began to build up at Justice.

The Garda Commissioner, in receipt of information from the Special Branch courtesy of British Intelligence, was already aware of Kelly's trip to Vienna and the fact that passage through customs for a suspect consignment had been arranged. Not knowing whether he should act or not, the Commissioner applied to the Department of Justice for a direction. O'Morain was not available. Berry was left holding the can. He was also aware that his responsibility was all the greater because of O'Morain's alcoholic state. And he was reading a publication that Taoiseach Jack Lynch was also reading at the same time.

Hibernia magazine on April 17th, published a damning indictment of the Department of Justice in relation to Saor Eire and the death of Garda Fallon. Calling for an independent inquiry into the whole issue of nolle proseques and other evidence of inaction, Hibernia hinted broadly at the Saor Eire connections of O'Morain and asked about the "possibility of political interference". *"Either the authorities have been guilty of negligence....or those same authorities were influenced by political pressure in the proper discharge of their duty"*. Hibernia was reflecting popular feeling and adding a pointer. The full evidence of the "political pressure" connecting various Government Ministers with arms importation and Saor Eire lay in the files on the missing Minister's desk.

Berry was appalled. Not only was the information contained in the files of an explosive nature which would bring down the Government but too many people were now aware of Captain Kelly's activities. Then there was the widespread Garda resentment towards the Department and the application for a directive from the Minister. The request for a directive was a distinct vote of no confidence by the Garda Siochana in the Department.

When no answer to the first request was forthcoming a further request for a directive was lodged. With his own Minister absent and the question of an arms cargo expected hourly at Dublin Airport, Berry made his now famous phone-call to Haughey. Haughey realised from the call that O'Morain had either got cold feet or let matters out of control. The Garda had

anticipated matters and placed a cordon around the Airport and were ready to seize any cargo brought in. 'Better call the whole thing off', reasoned Haughey. The important thing now was that the whole affair not become public knowledge: the authorisation from the Department of Finance was withdrawn.

On Saturday evening, April 18, when Captain Kelly rang his home in Dublin, his wife told him that the Airport was surrounded and that the goods would be seized and he himself arrested. He was to stay where he was and John Kelly would fly out the following day with the new arrangements. John Kelly duly arrived on the following day and on Monday, April 20th, Captain Kelly cancelled the whole operation. On the following day the two Kellys and Luykx arrived home on the same plane.

With O'Morain incommunicado in the West of Ireland and the Department of Justice under siege both from public opinion and the rank and file of the Garda, Lynch was consulting with Peter Berry on the Monday and Tuesday, April 20 and 21. A first reading of the files supplied by Fleming connecting Haughey, Blaney, Gibbons and Lenihan with attempts at arms importation on the one hand and the hotbed of Saor Eire activity in 43, Kildare Street on the other filled him with horror. O'Morain's non-action coupled with the widespread rumours of his subterranean connections with the organisation that was now the most talked of in Ireland in connection with Fallon's death added up to a scandal that would cause the Government to fall in ignominy. As early as April 20th, Lynch's main concern was to salvage the Government of which he was titular head.

Both the Minister for Justice and the Minister for Defence were involved. There seemed to be no way of saving the Government. The first move, however, would be to discover exactly how far the Government was compromised. The Minister for Defence was ordered to instruct the Director of Army Intelligence to prepare a full report on the arms importation attempts.

Wednesday, April 23, was Budget Day but the Minister for Finance had been taken to hospital early that morning following a fall from his horse in the stable yard. With the Budget to bring in and Mr. O'Morain to interview it proved a busy day for Lynch. The decision that O'Morain would have to go was already made. The question was how to ease him out? An unexplained resignation would lead to public speculation and the Garda would soon arm Opposition T.D.s with the real reasons. There must be an explanation and it could not be the real one.

O'Morain agreed to the inevitable and quickly thought of the way out - a manner so distracting that it proved a complete success. He was already due to go to a Nursing Home for a 'cure'. He decided to go with a bang. On the evening of Budget day he was due to attend a legal dinner in the Greham Hotel. A Canadian lawyer spoke at the dinner praising Sergeant Sullivan. With calculated aim the Minister heckled the speaker about the man who demanded his money in advance for defending Roger Casement. Shortly afterwards the Minister "collapsed" and was taken to Mount Carmel. Lynch was thankful: a lawyer himself, he could use the prima facie case of ill health thus established to "retire" the Minister. The following days papers carried the story of O'Morain's "collapse".

The next few days were filled with manoeuvrings. A meeting in Blaney's office between the Minister for Agriculture, Gibbons from Defence and Captain Kelly and Colonel Heffernon on Thursday, April 23, broke up inconclusively. Gibbons had, however, told Captain Kelly that he was in 'the hot seat' Gibbons was looking for an out. Blaney was in favour of persisting with the arms importation. It would be possible to put a face on it in the Dail if any questions arose. The main consensus fear at the time was not as among themselves as Ministers but as between their Government and the Opposition. If the story broke the Government would fall.

By May 1st, Lynch had already spoken with Blaney and Gibbons. By May, 1st there was Cabinet unanimity that the

matter would be dropped and forgotten. In future any big undertaking like the Sub Committee's arms importation would be brought for approval before the full Government. It was generally felt that the sacrifice of O'Morain would suffice to placate the Garda in relation to the circumstances surrounding the death of Fallon. Kevin Boland visited Haughey in the Mater to bring him the good news. The crisis seemed to be resolving itself without any public knowledge or outcry.

But even as Boland spoke with Haughey in the Mater Captain Kelly was being questioned in the Bridewell. His interrogation reveals what was uppermost in the minds of the Garda. On page 31 of his "Orders of the Captain" he describes the dramatic interview with Chief Superintendent Fleming and Inspector Doocey. "You're in a spot. A statement...We know all about it...You're up to your neck in it.. What do you know about the Garda Fallon murder?" Kelly was shocked and indignant. He knew nothing about Fallon's killing. It was more than likely that both Fleming and Doocey realised this but were trying to scare him into implicating Blaney who had contacted Saor Eire sources in the quest for arms immediately after August '69. Lynch interviewed Kelly in the afternoon in the hope that he might discover more information but Captain Kelly, quite naturally, said nothing: as a retired Army Officer, with his career in ruins, he had nothing left but his liberty. The Government would have to find their own scapegoats.

On the evening of May 4, a brief Government statement announced: "The Minister for Justice, Mr. Micheal O'Morain, has today tendered to the Taoiseach his resignation as a member of the Government on the grounds of ill health. The Taoiseach has accepted the Minister's decision with regret and in accordance with Article 28-9-3 of the Constitution has advised the President to accept that decision." It was the first in a series of judicious lies aimed at salvaging the Government.

The Taoiseach was later to admit in the Dail: "I did frankly suggest to him that he should resign because of his condition mainly and because of the length of time he was likely to remain under medical treatment." Another lie.

By Tuesday, May 5, it looked as if the crisis might pass unnoticed. At mid-day Lynch, Blaney and Hillery lunched with the Committee of the R.D.S. at Ballsbridge.

But that evening in the Dail the clouds quickly gathered again.

The first real knowledge of the secret activity had reached the Opposition leader, Liam Cosgrave. The note in his possession read: "A plot to bring in arms from Germany worth 180,000 for the North under the guise of the Department of Defence has been discovered. Those involved are - Captain James Kelly I.O., Col. Hefferon, Director of Intelligence (both held over the weekend in the Bridewell), Gibbons, Haughey and the Jones Brothers of Rathmines Road and Rosapena Hotel, Donegal. See that this scandal is not hushed up. GARDA".

But then note was anonymous and Cosgrave did not feel like putting his full weight on it. When O'Morain's 'resignation' was announced, however, he nerved himself to ask if this was only "the tip of the iceberg" and could other Ministerial resignations be expected. Lynch responded: *I don't know what the Deputy is referring to*".

Lynch left the Chamber a scared man. The story was out: the dogs in the street would soon be barking at it.

Cosgrave spent the afternoon trying to establish more concrete evidence about the background to the intriguing message. He sought and obtained an appointment with the Taoiseach at 8.00pm. that evening. Lynch spent some time convincing Cosgrave that Gibbons was not involved. This was vital. If Gibbons were found to have been involved then no Cabinet reshuffle or sacking of Ministers would suffice - the Government in toto would have to resign.

Cosgrave swallowed the story and afterwards failed to mention Gibbons in his mention of the anonymous note. Lynch had already nerved himself for the task of requesting the resignations of Blaney and Haughey. About 9.45p.m. following the interview with Cosgrave, Blaney was sent for. Both he and Haughey refused to resign and argued that the Taoiseach should brazen it out in the Dail.

The only issue between the two Ministers and Lynch was how best to deal with the matter in the Dail: all shared the concern to save the Fianna Fail administration. Lynch insisted. Haughey and Blaney were dismissed and Boland, outraged at this capitulation to Fine Gael, resigned in protest. About 3.00a.m. on the morning of May 6 the startling news was released. The big question was whether the Government would survive the inevitable Dail debate that would follow. Lynch and the sacked Minister agreed to make sure it would.

When the Dail met on Friday, May 8th, the Government side of the house was bound together by a common fear - that the Opposition would invoke the ghost of Garda Fallon - while the Opposition was hindered by a lack of any distinct information. The previous day had been well used by Fianna Fail and a united front was presented in the House. The debate was to continue for two days. Boland earthed his anger in the anonymous Civil Servant whom he claimed collaborated with British intelligence to contrive the crisis. No names were mentioned but Peter Berry or Superintendent Fleming or Fleming's secretary Patrick Crinion might have been the person alluded to.

Ritchie Ryan alluded to the fact that *"The Garda are certainly all complaining that they have not been given the facilities and the scope necessary to bring the murderers of Garda Fallon to justice."* Generally, however, the Opposition speeches were scattered and mis-informed. Most of the references mentioned Cosgrave's "tip of the iceberg" remark of a few days previously. But Liam Cosgrave had nothing to add.

He sat in an excited Dail like a man who had struck an oil gusher but who lacked the means to cap it.

Blaney's speech proved the main excitement of the day. Like Boland, he linked the arms running and Saor Eire allegations in his prepared speech. *"I want at this time straightaway to deal with the allegations of gun-running that have been made so freely in so many places during these last few days and to say here before the House that I have run no guns, I have procured no guns, I have paid for no guns, I have provided no money to buy guns and anybody who says otherwise, is not telling the truth."*

"I also want to deal with the much more sinister, far more subtle and blackguardly rumours that are being spread, and, indeed, peddled around in various ways.... that I have or had anything to do with subversive organisations in so far as this country is concerned. To those who are saying and to those who say that I have any link with this lousy outfit, Saor Eire, .. I want to say that I have nothing but the utmost contempt and any association with them would be as repugnant to me as it would be to any other Member in this House". Blaney went on to describe the scandal being hawked about his Saor Eire connections. *"The blackening operation was that this then could be seen to be a tie between certain manipulations that are said to have occurred because of Government Members intervention and influence to try and cover up and to allow to escape from this country, as it is said they have escaped, the murderers of Dick Fallon."*

Blaney believed in taking the bull by the horns. The Opposition slept on. Blaney continued on giving the substance of the agreement made the previous day. *"I am speaking for Deputy Charlie Haughey and myself when I say that there is no question about our allegiance to the leadership of Fianna Fail, to the members of the Government, and past colleagues, and to the new members who are coming into Government."*

On the evening of May 9th, a lighthearted Taoiseach rose to answer the debate. He was most careful to speak highly of the dismissed Ministers, mentioned a "bright future" for Haughey, and reduced the whole action to the question of a "breath of suspicion" attaching to Ministers' names. *"I am satisfied that Deputy Gibbons was not involved in the importation of arms"*. Gibbons was saved: so was the Government. Corish, the Labour Leader, ended the debate by calling the credibility of Gibbons into question. *"It was somebody else, not I, who cast suspicion on Deputy Gibbons"*, Lynch responded.

The Dail divided on the question of the newly appointed Ministers, Cronin, Collins and Molloy and the continuation of the other Government Ministers including Gibbons. Neil Blaney and Kevin Boland voted with the Government, Haughey was recuperating at his home and could not be present.

The Government and the Party had been saved but a vital change had taken place. Blaney and Haughey now found themselves outside the Cabinet. Lynch held the high ground and determined to hold it. He had acted in desperation but had won through.

POSTSCRIPT

It was only in the weeks following the Cabinet crisis that the expelled Ministers realised their real position. The handing of papers to the State Attorney and the Four Courts trial which ensued showed Lynch's intent hardening. They were being frozen out and their names blackened. From running scared from the ghost of Garda Fallon, Lynch began to use it to blackmail the "dissidents" as they came to be known.

In the interval before the Four Courts trial on October 7th, and the final acquittal Boland approached both Haughey and Blaney in an attempt to organise with them "to rescue Fianna Fail". He records the result in his book. *"I could get no agreement - nor was there any disagreement. I got the impression of shadow boxing about an issue, which was never*

mentioned". Haughey's challenge after the Four Courts trial was expected but shortlived. He went on to vote confidence in Mr. Gibbons.

In December 1970 a last tentative rally of the dissidents within Fianna Fail tried to push Lynch into a General Election in a manner which would still leave themselves official Fianna Fail candidates. A fortnight before Christmas Lynch scattered the challenge by boldly reminding the dissidents of their shady background. By now he himself and his Government had put sufficient distance between themselves and the same shady dealings.

A convicted member of Saor Eire, Padraic Dwyer, was unexpectedly released from jail and a Special Branch guard put on his flat. The trial Judge made a statement which helped give the impression that Dwyer had talked. The new Minister for Justice, Des O'Malley boldly announced the threat of internment and based the threat on Government knowledge of "projected bank raids and kidnapping attempts".

The threat, ostensibly aimed at Saor Eire or Republicans, was actually aimed at Blaney and successfully helped spread the smear inside the Fianna Fail organisation. The challenge of the "dissidents" faded. From being super-patriots, they became semi-criminal. The only salvation was inside Fianna Fail. Haughey opted for salvation. Blaney continued to try and make a deal but Lynch wanted no deal. The dead hand of Garda Fallon would keep Blaney and anyone else who would care to join him in their place. O'Morain dropped from sight in Mayo. The power struggle was over - for the time being at least.