

Irish National Congress

P.O. Box No. 2814, Dublin 7



Comhdháil Náisiúnta na hÉireann

P.O. Box No. 2814, Dublin 7

APRIL 1995

STAND BY ARTICLES 2 AND 3

"With a new government settling in and the publication of the framework document attention has once again focused on Articles 2 and 3. The British government has increased their efforts to get a positive commitment for amendment. An attempt has been made to forge a consensus that Articles 2 and 3 should be amended for a change in the wording of the British Government of Ireland Act 1920."

The INC believes this is not "a balanced constitutional settlement" but amounts to an abandonment of northern nationalists and of the right of the Irish people to self-determination.

Changing the British Government of Ireland Act, while welcome symbolically, has no practical impact. The British government has already said they will not do anything which impacts on British

sovereignty or control. The British claim to absolute sovereignty will stay in place in the 1949 Ireland Act and the 1973 Northern Ireland Constitution Act. More importantly they will retain actual control and jurisdiction.

INC CAMPAIGN

The INC has launched a national campaign to defend Articles 2 and 3.

We have produced leaflets, posters, postcards

PEACE CANNOT BE BUILT ON PARTITION



STAND BY ARTICLES 2 & 3

Articles 2 & 3 of the Irish Constitution express the democratic rights of all the Irish people to live together in peace and with mutual respect. The dilution of Articles 2 or 3 will only serve to perpetuate division among the Irish people and will not bring a lasting peace.

Irish
National
Congress



Comhdháil
Náisiúnta
na hÉireann

Annual General Meeting

The AGM of the INC will take place in the Teachers Club, 36 Parnell Square Dublin on Saturday, 6 May from 11am to 5pm, followed by a social that evening at 8.30.

The AGM will focus on what the INC's contribution to the developing peace process can be at a national and branch level.

GUEST SPEAKERS

Ann Cadwallader (Irish Press) 'The Media and the Peace Process'

Mitchell McLaughlin (Sinn Féin) and Mark Durkan (SDLP) on the peace process.

THEMES

- The Peace Process — where is it going and what is the INC's role
- Articles 2 and 3 — how can the INC best defend them.

Registration from 10.30 £3 waged/£2 unwaged including lunch
Membership if due can be paid on the day.

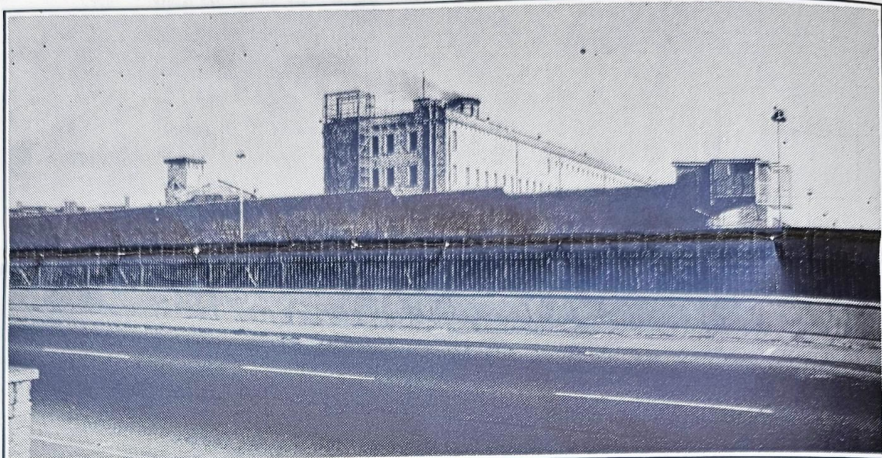
All welcome.

(to be sent to the Taoiseach and your local politicians), pamphlets and other material. We want to hold meetings in every corner of the country. Your help is needed. If Articles 2 and 3 are to be protected you need to act now and not wait for a referendum to be called.

RELEASE ALL POLITICAL PRISONERS

The INC has written to Nora Owen, Minister for Justice congratulating her on the release of some of the republican prisoners held in Portlaoise and Limerick Jails, and calling on her to bring forward further releases to consolidate and develop the peace process.

The response of the British government on the issue of prisoners has been very disappointing. Instead of releasing prisoners, the treatment of Irish political prisoners in jail in England has worsened. The Irish government needs to do more to highlight the question of prisoner releases and can best do this by releasing prisoners



● PORTLAOISE JAIL

in their own jails and by ratifying the Transfer of Prisoners Bill as soon as possible so that prisoners in jail in England can be transferred back to Ireland.

Forum must open its doors

The INC has expressed its disappointment at the very limited opportunity for community groups, human rights groups, women's groups etc to participate in the work of the Forum for Peace and Reconciliation.

The peace process does not belong only to political parties. From the very beginning community groups were involved in supporting the Hume-Adams Initiative, in the 'Time for Peace — Time to Go' events, the march from Derry to

Dublin and hundreds of other meetings and events.

The forum is an opportunity to look at the causes of violence over the past 25 years and to discuss what is needed to advance the peace process and build a new,

agreed Ireland. It can only do this if it allows for the widest possible participation.

The INC proposes that:

(1) More oral hearings need to be held to allow groups put their views before the forum.

(2) The forum should hold open sessions where groups have the opportunity to take part in discussion which other groups and members of the forum.

(3) The Forum should move outside Dublin Castle and hold sessions in other towns and cities around the country.

PEACE PLEDGE

The INC has now received over 50,000 signed peace pledges in response to our appeal in the immediate aftermath of the IRA cease-fire. The Peace Pledge called for:

- (1) Demilitarisation — removing of troops from the streets
 - opening of border roads
 - release of prisoners
 - removal of military installations.
- (2) The creation of a new unarmed and acceptable police service.
- (3) Immediate all-party talks with no preconditions and no vetos for any party.
- (4) Measures to guarantee equality and parity of esteem.

If you have signed pledges please send them back immediately to PO Box 2814 Dublin 7.

Cuidigh linn Ailt 2&3 a chosaint

Ciallóidh aon athrú ar Ailt 2&3-

● Tréigean na náisiúnach agus géilleadh ar chuid de thír na hÉireann go deo don 'Ríocht Aonaithe';

● Saorántacht na hÉireann agus ceart cur ar son na hÉireann ó thaobh spóirt agus cultúir a bhaint de mhuintir na Sé Chontae

● Glacadh leis gur ag an 'Ríocht Aontaithe' a bheadh uascheart rialaithe in Éirinn san am a d'imigh, san am i láthair agus amach anseo;

● Cearta a ghéilleadh, ní

d'aontachtóirí, ach do rialtas na Breataine;

● Cealú ar cheart an rialtais seo againne ar bhaint a bheith acu le gnótha na Sé Chontae agus ar bhunchearta daonna ár muintíre a chosaint;

● Réiteach agus athmhuintearas a chur siar - ní chabhróidh athrú ar Ailt 2&3 puinn leis an tsiocháin.

**Ná lig dóibh
Ailt 2&3 a athrú
Glac páirt san fheachtas
chun iad a chosaint**

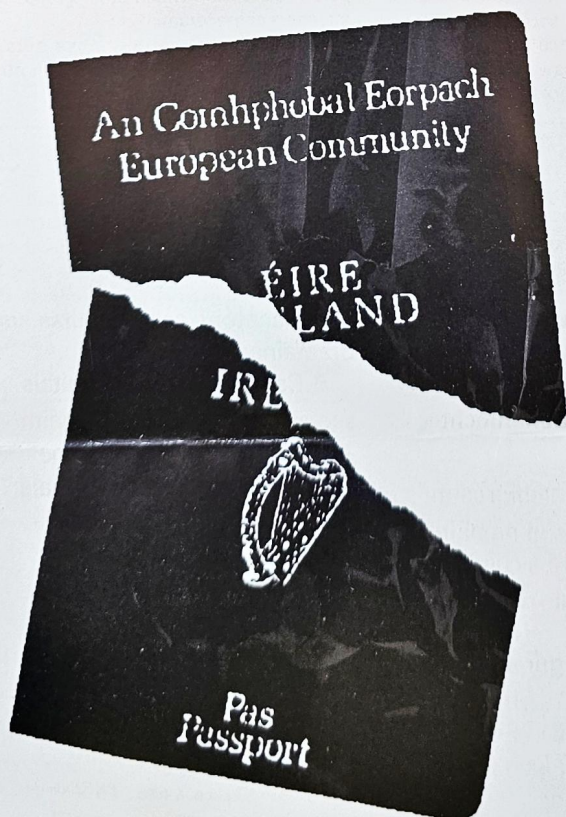
ARTICLES 2 AND 3

— what the issues are

If the peace process is to develop the British government must show that it is willing to undertake the radical reforms necessary to consolidate the peace. The Irish government must play its role in showing northern nationalists that political progress can be achieved by peaceful means. An amendment to Articles 2 and 3 would be disastrous in this context.

While obviously Articles 2 and 3 are not cast in stone and could be amended in a manner acceptable to nationalists or even strengthened that is not under discussion. The only amendments which will emerge will be to dilute Articles 2 and 3; to write the unionist veto into the

Irish constitution and to define the Irish national territory as an exclusively 26-County state. These amendments are unacceptable and would be damaging to the peace process — sending a signal to northern nationalists that they had been abandoned.



THE 1967 REVIEW

A number of anti-Articles 2 and 3 commentators have said that the review of the constitution carried out in 1967 proposed amending Articles 2 and 3 and therefore people should do so now. The 1967 Committee proposed no change to Article 2. The amendment to Article 3 as proposed read "the Irish nation hereby proclaims it's firm will that it's territory be reunited in harmony and brotherly affection between all Irishmen".

This proposal is a long way from the current suggestion that we incorporate the "unionist veto" into the Irish constitution — saying that Ireland will not be united unless a majority within the North vote for it — in effect denying the right of the entire Irish people to decide on the issue. (And simultaneously denying the right of the British public to vote to end their jurisdiction as they surely would if given an opportunity).

"A NON-TERRITORIAL NATION?"

Dick Spring has suggested that Articles 2 and 3 could be rewritten so that the nation is defined in terms of its people and not its territory. He is attempting to play on people's genuine desire to give emigrants a place in the nation (even while refusing them a vote! — see article on page 2). However the amendment proposed, while certainly guaranteeing the Irish identity of Irish people in the North of Ireland as well as the Bronx and London is telling them all that they are living on foreign soil. In other words, people from Belfast, Derry and Tyrone are Irish but according to Dick Spring's proposal they would be living on British soil.

HOW TO HELP

- (1) Write to John Bruton and your local politicians.
- (2) Distribute leaflets, posters and postcards.
- (3) Organise a public meeting — the INC can help arrange speakers.
- (4) If there is no INC branch in your area help us form one.
- (5) Write to the newspapers and phone radio programmes when the issues arises.



**ONE YEAR AFTER
THE CEASE-FIRE**

March for peace and
for Britain to join the
peace process
SATURDAY
AUGUST 26TH

● Robert Ballagh at last year's Time to Go march in Dublin, at which thousands gathered

ONE YEAR AFTER THE CEASE-FIRE

MARCH DUBLIN SATURDAY AUGUST 26TH

August 31st this year will mark the first anniversary of the historic IRA cease-fire which lifted the current peace process onto a new phase. If the process is to successfully develop it is essential that the obvious public

support for the process is mobilised to pressurise those who are preventing or slowing progress.

In particular the role of the British government has been largely negative. Instead of the 'generous

response' that was promised, the British government has dragged their feet and sought to pressurise the Irish government to dilute Articles 2 and 3.

News from the branches

There are now INC branches in Donegal, Sligo, Ballina, Limerick, Galway, Cork city, Macroom, Wexford, Gorey, Bray, Laois, Tipperary town, Mullingar, Drogheda, Dundalk, Dublin, Derry city, Clare and Meath. If you would like to get involved in any of them contact us and we will put you in touch. New branches are being formed in Dungarvan, County Waterford, Clonmel, County Tipperary and Fingal/North Dublin at present.

To develop our campaign work we need branches in every part of the country. Please help to form new INC branches in areas not covered at present.

Branches perform vital work in speaking our message. No campaign can be won without people in every corner of the country working together distributing leaflets, poster, lobbying politicians,

holding public meetings, contacting the media and organising public events, information stalls etc. INC branches do all of this and more. We could do it better with your help and involvement. Join or start a branch today. Write to Robert Ballagh, Chairperson Irish National Congress, PO Box 2814, Dublin 7 or telephone the INC at 01-8202019 or 8210493.

A Chair,
I am writing to ask you to oppose any
dilution of Articles 2 or 3 of the Irish
Constitution. Such a change would
reduce the pressure on the British
Government to respond positively to
the peace process and would leave the
British claim to the North of Ireland
unentitled in law. It could also
endanger the right of people from the
North of Ireland to hold Irish passports.

An Taoiseach

John Bruton, T.D.,

Government Buildings,

Dublin 2.

Send a postcard

The INC is asking all our supporters to send a postcard to John Bruton and your local politicians asking them to oppose any dilution of Articles 2 and 3. A printed postcard is available if you want to use them. Copies are available from INC PO Box 2814, Dublin 7.

Vote for emigrants

The INC has rejected the proposal to give emigrants a vote in Seanad elections only, as an inadequate response to the demands for emigrants voting rights.

Emigrants have a right to vote in their own 'home' constituency in Dáil and Presidential elections. This is the norm in other European countries. With modern communications there is no basis for the argument that emigrants are out of touch. Emigrants have a right to vote. This must be recognised in law.

**If you would like to join the INC,
fill in the form below and return to:**

**Irish National Congress, P.O.Box 2814, Dublin 7
MEMBERSHIP FEE £5 WAGED/£3 UNWAGED**

Name:

Address:

Phone no:

