

Police Persecution of Patriot Family.

FOR MANY YEARS the family of the late Tomás MacCurtain, martyred Lord Mayor of Cork, has been subjected to ceaseless police persecution, a few examples of which appear below: in particular, Tomás MacCurtain, the dead patriot's only son, has been watched, spied upon, and hounded like a dangerous criminal; his only "crime" was to strive for the independence of his country, when renegade Republicans sold their ideal of Irish Freedom for place and pension.

It is made no crime to belong to anti-National or anti-Catholic organizations, such as Freemasonry or the Orange Order; but it is one to belong to a movement sworn to achieve national unity and independence. This, then, was young Tomás MacCurtain's crime; for this he had to live in danger of life and liberty, his house raided at dead of night, his mother and sisters bullied and insulted. If he had joined the British Army, the forces of Ireland's enemy, he would have been feted and honoured; because he dared to fight for his own country, he became an outlaw.

To this, then, has Ireland sunk, her Government subservient to British orders, her Nationalists proscribed. In any other country Tomás MacCurtain's patriotism and zeal would have been valued as a national asset; in a degraded Ireland it earned for him merely the prison cell. Do *you* approve of this? If you do, you are unworthy of the name of Irishman. If you do not, raise your voice in protest.

Remember, the responsibility is yours, if you wrong your country and people by slavishness. Here are some of the facts as told by Tomás MacCurtain, junior:

DURING the year 1934 as I was returning home late one night I was attacked and beaten in the avenue approaching my home. I was left practically unconscious but managed to get home. I was no sooner inside the door when a detective arrived and asked how I was. My mother remarked that it was rather strange his arriving immediately after I had been beaten, before anyone could possibly know what had taken place. He got very flustered and said he had been told in the Barracks that I had been beaten up.

The week following the beating, when I was returning home from College, I was waylaid by unidentified assailants and beaten unconscious, as a result of which I had to have four stitches in my head.

Early in September, 1935, our house was raided subsequent to an armed attack having been made on me while I was going home a few nights previously. On two occasions during this month shots were fired in my direction. On the second occasion I threw myself on the ground and bullets whizzed within three feet of where I was lying. On this occasion the house was searched by Sergts. Noonan, Barrett, Guard Roche (deceased) and others, and I was arrested for refusing to answer questions. They also searched the place where I threw myself looking for spent bullets, but failed to find any, until my mother in their presence, *raked* the grass where I had been lying and found a number of spent bullets. She gave these to the guards, but they were not produced or even mentioned at my

subsequent trial until I brought out in cross-examination that they had been found and demanded that they should be produced as evidence, as they were a definite proof that an armed attempt had been made on my life. On this occasion I was acquitted by the Military Tribunal.

On the night of September 20th, 1935, I was again arrested and our house was searched while I was detained in the Bridewell. During this raid Sergeant Conroy used insulting and abusive language to my mother and sisters, and when my mother said: "I will complain of you to Colonel Broy, he was a friend of my husband's and would not tolerate your use of such language in my house," he replied: "If he was a friend of your husband's he is no friend of your son's, and we have him behind bars now where we want him."

In 1935, when attending College and under police observation, detectives questioned professors and students as to my movements. Detectives always waited outside College when I attended lectures, etc.

On the night that Admiral Somerville was shot in Skibbereen, detectives raided my house between 2 and 4 a.m. and questioned me about my movements. About a fortnight later detectives again raided my house at 4 a.m. when a man called Egan was shot in Dungarvan.

On the 29th April, 1936, I was arrested in the course of a "round-up" and sentenced to fifteen months' imprisonment. I was placed in solitary confinement in Arbour Hill Prison. Subsequent to a protest against the solitary confinement which occurred after Mass one Sunday, I was put on bread and water. As a soldier of the Irish Republican Army I refused to accept this treatment and went on hunger-strike. I was released on the 8th August, 1936, after 31 days' fast.

During the solitary confinement my leg was seriously injured and sinews broken as a result of kicks received from jailors who entered my cell and beat me up.

After my release I was constantly under police observation and was permanently followed by detectives.

On one night in the month of May, 1937, while a policeman was trailing me, the "Irish Times" office was smashed. I was, of course, arrested the following morning and held for three days. The night I was released I went to a Boxing Contest in the City Hall. I bought my ticket at the door from Detective-Sergeant James Moore. Throughout the contests I sat near D.O. Kennedy, who knew me well, and who was one of the men who arrested me three days before. While the contest was in progress and while I was in the hall in plain view of the C.I.D., shots were fired in Union Quay Barracks. They followed me home after the contest, raided the house and I was requested to give an account of my movements. D.O. Kennedy was on the raid and admitted that he knew I was at the boxing but he wanted me to give an account of my movements all the same.

The same month I was still being trailed by detectives and went to a Cumann na mBan picnic. While there, and under police observation, shots were fired in the Bandon direction. I was again arrested and in spite of the fact that the detectives knew I was miles away from the place I was asked to account for my movements.

I was due to give an Oration in Dundalk on Easter Sunday, 1937, but while I was waiting for a 'bus a tender full of police and a squad car of detectives attempted to arrest me. Some of the detectives, including Det.-Sergt. Moore, drew revolvers and called on me to halt; by this time I was some distance away from them, and going well!! I heard revolver shots fired in my direction, but I managed to get away.

On three occasions during the Winter, 1936-37, I was arrested on arrival in Cork from Dublin and taken to the Barracks, stripped of my clothes and searched. Three others were arrested also, even though the police evidence in all four cases was the same, they were acquitted at the District Court, but I was returned for trial to the Circuit Court in January and spent three months awaiting trial in Cork jail. I was tried in the Circuit Court in January, 1939. In evidence, at the trial, Det.-Sergt. Moore admitted that no matter what happened in Cork or Cork County of a political nature, I was arrested and questioned. In his summing up to the jury, Judge O'Connor said that the State had absolutely failed to provide sufficient evidence in the case, but by their evidence they had definitely proved that it was an impossibility for me to have been anywhere near the place where the detective was beaten, short of having an aeroplane it would be impossible for me to get back to my house where I was arrested. He also reminded the jury that two hours after the detective was beaten, the X-Ray eyes of the police were turned on me but they failed to find any evidence that I had taken part in it. He said it was quite obvious that when anything of a political nature occurred I was immediately pounced upon. The jury found a verdict of NOT GUILTY *without retiring*.

In 1939 I had a job in the County Council in Cork Courthouse. Detectives interviewed my employer and asked him was he aware of the type of man he had working for him. They kept C.I.D. stationed outside the office door every day, watching and waiting for me from the time I went in in the morning, and every day I was followed home. This watching was carried so far that every time I went to a cinema a detective followed me and asked for a seat behind me.

On at least three occasions already mentioned by me I had the unique alibi of being seen by police at the vital times. My family have been upset and alarmed by constant police raids, searches and questionings at dead of night. This has been going on from the time I was fourteen years of age.

In the course of a Bakers' Strike in Skibbereen, a blackleg was wounded in Skibbereen. Our house as a matter of course was raided, and I was asked to account for my movements.

On the morning of the 16th September police raided our house at 5 a.m. and remained until after 7 a.m. They had come to arrest me but I was not at home.

I was on the run from then until the prisoners were released in December, 1939. While I was on the run, Mrs. Hurley, a friend of mine, came to tell me, for God's sake to keep out of the way, as she had heard from a reliable source that the detectives in the Barracks *were determined to get me dead or alive*.

As a result of an appointment which got mixed up, I was obliged to go into Patrick Street on January 3rd, 1940. While I was there the C.I.D. arrived on the scene and attacked me with guns drawn. The consequences of which you are already aware.