

Irish Republican Information Service.

Vol. 3. No. 79 June 2nd 1979 KEVIN BARRY HOUSE, 44 Parnell Square, Dublin 1, Ireland.

CONTENTS

- 1 - QUID PRO QUO?
- 2 - BOYCOTT E.E.C. MONSTER
- 3 - H-BLOCK HERO SLAMS CANDIDATES
- 4 - RED HAT WILL NOT MUZZLE
- 5 - CHAIN OF ENDURANCE
- 6 - THE WAR NEWS
- 7 - NO REPORT FROM BRITS INQUIRY

1 - QUID PRO QUO?

All has been made clear to the Irish people as the E.E.C. election day approaches. Not a shadow of distrust remains as to the purpose, policies and opportunities of a central "European" Parliament; not a scintilla of doubt (to borrow a phrase) as to the position on sovereignty and neutrality of the Irish State. Its as crystal clear as a black hole in the universe, thanks to the wise men among the politicians and the editors of the national dailies.

Take the editorials - Two years ago, warning that "Ireland" (meaning the southern 26-counties) would have to face up to the demands of the E.E.C. partners and decide on its military role in Europe . . . indicating the signs that its European partners wanted "Ireland" to join NATO - even as a mere pawn it would be a useful one . . . "Ireland" would have to shed its Alice in Wonderland attitude on neutrality and make a definite military commitment to Europe. Now the editorials are breathless in their descriptions of a new Europe that was setting aside old enmities, hatreds and exploitations and all thoughts of war; based on peace and progress, its purpose was not economic gain but the preservation of Western civilisation.

On the 14th June last year, the European Parliament voted for the establishment of an E.E.C. policy on the stepping up of arms production as part of its industrial development. For export only, no doubt, since it is so committed to peace and avoidance of war at home. Of the Irish members

present, Fine Gael voted in favour - on the stated grounds of economic gain; Fianna Fail merely abstained - on the grounds of its irrelevance! One Labour Party member voted against, voicing his suspicion that Ireland was being drawn into a policy that led to NATO.

Like the rest of the Irish people he would have good grounds for suspicion since the previous year when the guru and leading lights of Fianna Fail were repeatedly stating that Ireland "could not evade its responsibilities and had little or no option but to commit itself to a European alliance." But he would have been reassured by the words of O'Kennedy (Fianna Fail), Minister for Foreign Affairs in October, 1978 restating the Irish position of neutrality and defining that neutrality as a matter of principle and of advantage. Those words were flatly contradicted the following month in a statement from his own Department of Foreign Affairs and the contradiction upheld by his own Dail statement a month later still, when he guaranteed "Ireland" would go to the defence of any one of its E.E.C. partners in the event of war.

Fine Gael are getting great mileage in their Euro-electoral campaign by taunting Fianna Fail with the latter's "unwise military commitment to the E.E.C. and their outright and manifest dishonesty on the issue." Leader Garrett Fitzgerald makes Fine Gael's position on Irish neutrality quite, quite clear - it has dissociated itself from any proposal of collaboration between the E.E.C. and NATO, it had explicitly refused to enter any military commitment within the E.E.C. and it would not support any move to extend the Treaty of Rome to cover this area of military alliance - in the present circumstances."

Change the circumstances and give Fine Gael a back door for the riddance of Irish neutrality. What matter if that flatly contradicts Richie Ryan's statement of official Fine Gael policy last year that "the best interests of Ireland and Europe call for the maintenance of Irish neutrality," met by Fitzgerald's own claim of seven months ago that the advance of the European community would logically entail a common defence policy which Ireland would be willing to discuss.

Could there be anything clearer unless it be the question of Irish sovereignty and Irish National interests? Fianna Fail claim to be the heroic defenders of both against the "politic-

al conglomerates in the European Parliament whose only purpose in life was to secure financial benefit for their international secretariats." The reference is to "our partners" in the E.E.C. whose only purpose is "the preservation of Western civilisation and not economic gain" or so we are told.

Fianna Fail warned that the Common Agricultural policy was under siege but did not bother to warn that a Common Agricultural policy would have to be paid for in the coinage of a Common Defence policy. But then, it's not the first time that the lives and future of Irish youth have been placed in pawn by their political leaders to an outside power in the hope of political and social advancement.

One thing remained unclarified in all this not-so-clear confusion. Recognising the reverence which professional politicians display for the sacred concept of "a mandate from the people," do these politicians hold such a mandate for their "commitments, alliances, obligations and duties" in the military defence of their partners in the European Common Market?

Glossary: Fianna Fail = Government party in Dublin. Fine Gael = Opposition party in Dublin Government.

2 - BOYCOTT E.E.C. MONSTER

Direct elections to the EEC parliament are taking place next Thursday 7th June both North and South of the border. Sinn Fein is mounting an active boycott throughout Ireland against the EEC election for participation would be giving credibility to the Strasbourg/Luxembourg parliament.

Real Democracy

Sinn Fein is opposed to the basic philosophy of the E.E.C. It is a highly centralised political and economic power bloc where decisions about our lives are taken in institutions which are completely undemocratic. The so-called "European Parliament" is an attempt to put a democratic face on the whole operation, but it is in effect only a talk-shop, because it has no real power.

Our struggle has been for freedom to manage our own affairs and the Sinn Fein programme is for maximum power at the base in the local communities. This is real democracy and the very opposite of centralised E.E.C.

imperialism.

Under the E.E.C. our resources are being taken from us, prices were never higher, unemployment is massive and our youth are emigrating again. The E.E.C. bureaucrats are doing well on their large salaries and so are the big farmers. But the plan is to wipe out the small farmers and restructure our industry so that the E.E.C. centre can prosper at our expense. Thus our footwear and textile factories are being closed down.

We feel that the best interests of our people would be served by boycotting the E.E.C. Elections. Furthermore, our local government representatives will oppose and expose any directives from Brussels which will damage Irish interests.

In this and other matters, Sinn Fein representatives will take issue outside the council chambers into the streets to ensure the interests of the Irish people. It is of interest to note that the twenty-six county establishment is well aware of the apathy of the people and in an attempt to maximise the turn-out they are holding the local government elections on the same day as the E.E.C. elections. Sinn Fein will therefore be urging the voters, while voting for Sinn Fein local government candidates, not to vote for any E.E.C. parliamentary candidates.

At the time of the E.E.C. Referenda in Ireland, 17% of the population (212,000 - voting age 21) in the South and 49% of the population (239,000 - voting age 18) in the North voted against Irish entry, i.e. 450,000 people or 25% of the votes cast in all of Ireland.

Sinn Fein is the only nationally organised group that has consistently opposed the E.E.C., adopted the tactic of active boycott at the National Congress in October 1978 and is determined to lead the opposition to the E.E.C. on June 7th next as in 1972 and 1975. In the years since the membership referenda, more and more Irish people are becoming disenchanted with the E.E.C. idea. This is borne out by the results of several opinion polls.

Effects of E.E.C.

The outstanding effects of membership of the E.E.C. in Ireland have so far been:

*Huge rises in the cost of living.

*Inability of native Irish industries to compete (clothing, furniture, footwear).

*Increased multinational foreign investments resulting in branch factories which only make component parts.

*Initial benefits to the farming community, as promised (approx 45% of population make their living directly or indirectly from the land). The Farm Modernisation Scheme (Directive 159) for the re-structuring of holdings has not been implemented as yet and the CAP itself is coming under threat.

*200 mile fishing limit around Ire-

land thrown open to superior E.E.C. fleets.

*Steady undermining of Irish neutrality. (Ireland is the only E.E.C. country not a member of NATO).

*Increase in cultural domination of minorities, including Irish-speaking communities along the western seaboard.

*Increasing E.E.C. control over the exploitation of mineral resources and offshore wealth.

The effects of the E.E.C. on the war of Liberation against British imperialism in Ireland are seen by the following:

(1) NATO support for British Occupation forces in Ireland.

(2) Pressure from Bonn and the E.E.C. generally on Britain not to yield to the Liberation forces' demand that the British withdraw from Ireland.

(3) Extra-territorial courts, North and South, which provide a model for the "European Convention of Repression."

(4) Unification of monetary system will be followed by unification of police and military forces.

(5) It has become much more difficult to expose British torture of Irish political prisoners and the appalling and degrading prison conditions (400 prisoners in 3rd year naked and in solitary confinement in H-Block, Long Kesh Concentration Camp).

Legitimising Monster

In the occupied six-counties, only an anti-repression candidate of the stature of Bernadette McAliskey could hope to ensure a sizeable vote from the nationalist working-class people.

The slavish and slabbering John Hume and Paddy Devlin are discredited political hulks lying shipwrecked on the treacherous sands of collaboration in the 1974 'power-sharing' assembly.

But the Republican Movement and the H-Block blanketmen are totally opposed to the opportunism of Bernadette McAliskey who is running on an anti-repression ticket. It matters little to the Eurocrats on which issues a candidate contests the election - as long as a maximum turn-out is guaranteed. (And in this case the more militant the candidate the better the turn-out).

The Republican Movement appreciates the temptation of the argument that there are propaganda gains to be made for the H-Block prisoners. These gains, however, are very short-term and Bernadette McAliskey has in the past admitted that she achieved absolutely nothing whilst sitting at Westminster.

The EEC parliament (and not the H-Block prisoners nor the Irish people) will certainly gain if people vote for the birth of a monster which in the long run is out to strangle us.

The fact that the parliament (which will gradually be given further powers)

forms an important and decisive step in the direction of legitimising, and giving moral backing to, the massive project currently being mounted to integrate Western Europe as one political state highlights why it is a foolish mistake for candidates who supposedly oppose the EEC to stand for the parliament and thereby help legitimise European integration.

3 - H-BLOCK HERO SLAMS CANDIDATES

In a book published last year on Human Rights in Ireland, Fr Raymond Murray writing on the conditions in H-Blocks wrote: "In 1976 the British government said nobody would receive political status for political crimes committed after March 1976. The first prisoner - Kieran Nugent was sentenced in September 1976. He has now been two years "on the blanket." If he can endure another year, he will emerge as a great hero. When he is released he will have served every day of his sentence on the blanket (naked, but for a blanket)."

In the last few weeks Kieran Nugent was released as that hero. Last week he issued a statement to the media on the forthcoming E.E.C. elections.

He pointed out that as a former PoW and inmate of H-Block he is well acquainted with the feelings of the 'blanket men.' He stated: "They regard active participation in the EEC as a sell out of their Republican beliefs" and "they are opposed to any involvement in this imperialist system."

Nugent pointed out that anyone who takes part in the EEC elections, even on an anti-repression ticket, is giving credibility to political structures which are opposed to the interests of the Irish people. In the long term that is a lot more important than the few minor publicity points on the H-Blocks which might be scored over the British.

Nugent concluded: "I would therefore earnestly ask all those who have in the past supported the struggle waged by myself and my imprisoned comrades to now give that same support and backing to the Republican Movement in its active opposition to the dangerous threat of EEC imperialism."

Facit of the struggle

Several hundred people took part in a H-Blocks protest march in Dunloy, in North Antrim this week. It was organised by Sinn Fein. South Derry Republican Kevin Agnew praised the organisers and said that such protests by showing that Republican PoWs had support would hasten the day of withdrawal, and of the Irish people exercising their right to self-determination and control over their own destiny. He

then introduced Martin McKenna from Belfast who had spent several months on the blanket in the H-Blocks.

Martin McKenna stated: "We are at war and let us not forget it! Those words were said in 1971 in the House of Commons, the British Parliament, by Reginald Maudling who was then British Home Secretary. He declared that the British Government was at war with the IRA."

Martin then traced the upsurge in the struggle from that declaration and how ever British tactic since then was designed to defeat the IRA.

"Criminalisation of captured activists was introduced to defeat the IRA and attempt to discredit the cause of Irish People for freedom," he said. But it had failed and the H-Block men had sent Martin "scurrying home with his tail between his legs."

The second speaker, Belfast Republican Liam Hannaway, explained the background to the H-Block struggle and the historical connection between Republicans jailed under British rule in 1798 and Republicans jailed in the Fenian times, all of whom asserted their political status.

Liam said: "The jail fight is another facet of the overall struggle of the independent Irish People . . . We Irish have now called a halt to our oppression. We have done so through acts of resistance."

Liam then made it clear to the marchers that the Republican Movement was not secretly supporting any candidates in the EEC election: "We support no-one. We will not give anyone the right to infer they have a hidden treaty. We ask you to boycott the EEC. There are no candidates representing the men in H-Block."

4 — RED HAT WILL NOT MUZZLE

The Archbishop of Armagh, Dr Tomas O Fiaich, who will become Cardinal on June 30th, said this week that when he becomes a cardinal he will not feel muzzled on occasions when he considers that he should speak out on matters of conscience. He did not intend to stop making statements about controversial issues like the protest by the prisoners in H-Block.

He had no evidence that the British Government had tried to prevent his appointment as a cardinal. But from his knowledge of history he knew that "things like that" had happened in the past.

When pressed on the subject by a journalist he remarked "Students of history, with a knowledge of Irish history know that this thing happened in the past — it happened before and it could happen again, but I have no hard and fast evidence." His home town, Crossmaglen, is delighted to have a

Cardinal who "caused some discomfort to the British government" by his outspoken comments on inhuman conditions in the H-Blocks. It is a town which has made the headlines regularly in the last ten years, the "capital" of South Armagh, where the British writ does not run.

More pleased still will be the suffering inmates of the H-Blocks of Long Kesh Concentration camp, that the Cardinal will speak out for them in the future.

The Archbishop visited Long Kesh on the 31st July, 1978. Clearly overcome by what he had seen, Dr O Fiaich stated:

"Having spent the whole of Sunday in the prison, I was shocked at the inhuman conditions prevailing in H-Blocks 3, 4 and 5, where over 300 prisoners were incarcerated. One would hardly allow an animal to remain in such conditions, let alone a human being. The nearest approach to it that I have seen was the spectacle of hundreds of homeless people living in sewer pipes in the slums of Calcutta. The stench and filth in some cells, with the remains of rotten food and human excreta scattered around the walls, was almost unbearable. In two of them I was unable to speak for fear of vomiting."

The Archbishop then outlined the deprivations which were suffered in the struggle for political status: "The prisoners' cells are without bed, chairs or tables. They sleep on mattresses on the floor, and in some cases I noticed that these were quite wet. They have no covering except a towel or blanket, no books, newspapers or reading material except the Bible (even religious magazines have been banned since my last visit), no pens or writing material, no TV or radio, no hobbies or handicrafts, no exercise or recreation. They are locked in their cells for almost the whole of every day and some of them have been in this condition for more than a year and a half."

After Dr O'Fiaich's visit, the government slapped a ban on all special visits.

5 — CHAIN OF ENDURANCE

In a letter to the newspapers this week a Dublin priest, Fr Piaras O Duill compares the "chain of endurance" of the H-Blocks with the reckless high life of southern Irish society. He predicts "social anarchy" as a result of the E.E.C. Fr O Duill writes:

"Four young men were freed from H-Blocks in recent weeks — the first releases but one in the three years of protest and refusal by the prisoners to submit to being classed as criminals. Since Archbishop O Fiaich made public his concern about the situation in the H-Blocks, after his visit to Long Kesh on July 30th last year, no further

opportunity for first hand information arose until the freeing of these prisoners. Since their releases Kieran Nugent (Belfast), the first to go 'on the blanket,' John Deery (Derry), Mark Hannigan (Strabane) and Brendan Flynn (Belfast) have spoken to me about conditions in the H-Blocks and the incredible daily resistance by the prisoners there.

"All four would have been released many months ago if they had not lost fifty percent remission as punishment for their protest. All of them seem reasonably well in spite of their long and terrible ordeal — a reminder of the Archbishop's reference, in the course of his factual description of the H-Blocks, to "the triumph of the human spirit over adverse material surroundings."

From talking to these men, one soon realises the depth of patriotism which inspires such self-denial; the degree of self-respect that stimulates so strong a capacity for endurance.

"Indeed, often we priests who visit the cages of Long Kesh, find many spiritual values there that are lost or dormant in the devastating greed of more "respectable" society. Contrast the three years chain of endurance in the H-Blocks of Long Kesh with the merry-go-round of high living and greed in our present day gin-and-tonic society.

"The British Government in its eagerness to suppress the heroic stand of the Republican prisoners inflict terrible deprivation: no clothes, no books, no papers, no mental stimulation of any kind, no parcels, no physical activities and 24 hours daily confinement.

"There are people however, in the twenty six counties, who cry 'criminals' and 'self-inflicted' as an excuse for their own lack of compassion. But the identity of a political prisoner cannot be changed by putting a criminal label on him. The thirst for identity, personal or national, is not quenched by a label — as our history should have taught us well. It springs from a deep human need and is the basic ingredient in struggles and conflicts all over the world.

"This is relevant not only in the North (of Ireland) but in the South. Here we are surely heading for the brink of social anarchy in which no man will know what he is or what he can call his own as we follow blindly the phantom of Euro-wealth through a cul-de-sac of materialism and greed. This is really a worse state of bondage than any foreign government."

6 — THE WAR NEWS

All the operations referred to below were claimed in supplied statements by the Irish Republican Army.

Following the previous week's IRA car-bomb blitz of several towns' commercial centres and the crippling effect on road traffic of widespread hoax bombs, last weekend the IRA carried out two bombing operations directed against the transport network. One against the railway system and one against the bus service.

The most devastating bombing operation was carried out against the main North Belfast bus depot in Ardoyne shortly before midday last Sunday when four IRA Volunteers breached the security wall surrounding the depot and planted the bombs.

A massive blaze swept through the depot following the explosions totally destroying nine single decker buses and one double decker and severely damaging another ten buses. A total of half-a-million pounds worth of damage was caused to the depot and buses.

Trains

On Friday evening, two days before the Ardoyne attack, two trains were bombed.

The first attack took place in Belfast's York Street station. The target was the Belfast to Larne train. Two bombs exploded causing a fire and completely destroying a rail carriage.

Ten minutes later another double bl blast started a blaze on a train outside Antrim on the Derry route.

In both attacks adequate warnings were given and no civilians were injured.

Sniper

On Wednesday, May 23rd, at 11 a.m. an IRA sniper opened fire on a Brit patrol in the Andersonstown area of West Belfast. One high velocity shot was fired as the Brit vehicle passed by Gransha Park near Turf Lodge estate but the Brit patrol escaped injury.

Larne Barriers

Larne in Co. Antrim is the latest to join the growing number of towns re-erecting barriers around their centre. Larne town centre is now being sealed off to traffic every night from 6.30 p.m. following recent successful IRA bombings of commercial centres.

Other attacks

Derry city centre escaped major damage on Tuesday morning when a 200 lb car bomb only partially exploded causing slight damage. The car bomb was left on the road outside the city's head post office. An adequate warning had been given and there were no civilian injuries.

Later that day in Belfast an IRA sniper fired a single shot at a mobile Brit patrol. The attack happened in the late evening as the Brits passed through the Newington area of North Belfast.

On Wednesday morning in the County Tyrone village of Cookstown, two members of a Brit foot-patrol were injured when a booby-trap bomb was detonated as they passed through the grounds of the Holy Trinity churchyard.

7 - NO REPORT FROM BRIT'S INQUIRY

There is still no sign of a report from the British Ministry of Defence who ordered an immediate and major enquiry into the IRA's acquisition of the highly confidential British Army intelligence assessment of the IRA's strength and capabilities. The fact that the secret document is in the hands of the IRA, and was subsequently leaked to the media, has clearly embarrassed the British Conservative government so early in their term of office. As the 'Irish Times' put it:

"Coming as it does following several months of steady and concerted activity by the IRA, these events will add to existing pressure on Northern Ireland security forces already hard-pressed to contain the present offensive by the reorganised and increasingly confident IRA"

The new British Secretary of State for Defence, Mr Francis Pym, admitted that the leak was an awkward development. 'It's a most unfortunate development,' he said.

The document was prepared by Brigadier Glover who was then in Defence Intelligence Staff. He has since been promoted and is now Commander of Land Forces in the north of Ireland and the fact that he believes the IRA to be unbeatable will certainly affect the depressed morale of soldiers serving under him.

Reaction to the publishing of the document came immediately. Loyalist Ian Paisley said, "It is absolutely scandalous." Another loyalist, Jim Kilfedder, called for removal of the British army officers who compiled it.

The London Daily Telegraph said: "The Post Office began its own investigation into the theft of the document, while M15 and Ministry of Defence security officials were making their own inquiries.

"Mr Pym demanded a full report on the incident which was politically embarrassing . . ."

Calibre of I.R.A.

A high-powered British Defence-Ministry security investigation into how the document "fell into the hands of the I.R.A." was ordered after it was proved that the I.R.A. claim was authentic. The part of the document that seemingly was most annoying to the loyalist/S.D.L.P. politicians was

that which acknowledged the tenacity of the I.R.A. and comments on the calibre of the I.R.A. volunteers:

Leadership - the IRA is essentially a working class organisation based in the ghetto areas of the cities and in the poorer rural areas. Thus if members of the middle class and graduates become more deeply involved, they have to forfeit their life-style . . . Nevertheless, there is a strata of intelligent, astute and experienced terrorists who provide the backbone of the organisation . . .

Technical expertise - IRA has an adequate supply of members who are skilled in the production of explosive devices.

Rank and File - Our evidence of the calibre of rank and file terrorists does not support the view that they are mindless hooligans drawn from the unemployed and unemployable.

Trend in Calibre - The mature terrorists, including, for instance, the leading bomb makers, are sufficiently cunning to avoid arrest. They are continually learning from mistakes and developing their expertise."

The British Army Intelligence document admits that the availability of long delay timers made it feasible for bombs to be placed at a target before suspicion arose, even during the construction phase of a building or at a site to be visited by a V.I.P.

"Such bombs were used at the time of H.M. the Queen's visit to the Province in August 1977."

The report concludes:

"The Provisionals' campaign of violence is likely to continue while the British remain in Northern Ireland. We see little prospect of political development of a kind which would seriously undermine the Provisionals' position."

'THE BRITISH MEDIA AND IRELAND' is an excellent booklet which leaves one with the impression of a growing consolidation of 'dissident' British opinion on the British presence in Ireland. Given this and the proposed major 'Troops Out' demo in August it seems that the truth about British imperialism's dirty war in Ireland is at long last breaking through in some quarters.

'The British Media and Ireland - Truth the First Casualty,' edited and produced by the Campaign for Free Speech on Ireland, published by Information on Ireland, 56 pages.

Available by post from:
Information on Ireland, 1 North End Road, London W14.

Prices: Britain and Ireland: Single copies 50p plus 15p p&p, 10 copies for £3.40 plus 60p p&p.

Other countries: Single copies 50p plus 50p p&p.

10 copies for £3.40 plus £1.20 p&p.