

# Irish Republican Information Service.

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## THE ROAD TO PEACE

The Republican Movement is not only about war but about peace and justice and hope for the future. The war is about destroying all vestiges of colonial and neo colonial oppression; the peace about building a new society based on the Republican Eire Nua programme..... 1

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THE ROAD TO PEACE

In the minds of many Irish people, preoccupation with the dramatic life and death issues, the day-to-day urgency and the continuing tragedy of the armed struggle in the 6 Counties often overshadows consideration of the primary motivation and aim of the Republican Movement, our unyielding determination to bring peace and justice to this island and to build a better Ireland for all our people.

After long years of conflict, the Republican Movement does not need to convince the people of Ireland that we can make war, but it is vital that we assure them that we can make peace, that the Movement is not only about war but also about peace and justice and hope for the future. This is of the utmost importance because it is to Republicans that the Irish people must turn if they desire peace. No one else is capable of giving it to them.

We cannot turn to the British for peace. They have tried and failed, tried again and failed again. They would love to see the 'peaceful' Ireland of the mid-60's again, a cringing covering Ireland so hesitant to disturb the uneasy aura of normality and, as yet, unawakened to Ireland's right to justice and nationhood. But the British cannot bring us peace because they cannot defeat the combined forces of the Republican Movement and the people who support us.

Peace will not come from Jack Lynch and Fianna Fail who reign as the government in Dublin and who would appear to have a great deal of difficulty realising that there is a war on. In a recent statement, Jack Lynch said that there was absolutely no friction between the British and Irish governments. One may be sure the people of the 6 Counties were very glad and relieved to hear that bit of news. Garret Fitzgerald, leader of Fine Gael the "opposition" party to the Dublin Government (now calling themselves the 'Republican' Party) will not win the peace despite his unbelievable audacity in calling for British withdrawal. Nor do Cluskey or O'Brien (Southern Labour Party) have the answer.

Will the SDLP the so-called Nationalist Party in the North, bring us peace? It's not very probable. They seem much too busy playing cat and compromise politics with the Brits (and anyone else who is willing to play the game) to worry about such an illusive and uncompromising concept as lasting peace. As for the Peace People, we can not really afford their services.

There is no use appealing to any of these factions for peace. It is not in their power to give it. The truth is that only the Republican Movement can bring peace to Ireland. It is in the hands of Republicans to bring this war to a victorious end and lay the foundations for the peace for which we all are striving.

It is also true that the most publicised message of the Republican Movement is a message of war. We are determined to carry on the fight until our demands are met even if it takes another ten years. We will not lie down again under the heel of the Brits and their collaborators. So, let our enemies be satisfied with this message

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of war. It is good enough for them. And we, as Republicans, understand that the message of war is vital to the eventual achievement of peace, that justice will not come to us unless we first defeat those who would preserve and uphold injustice.

But what of the ordinary people of this country, those who are not British and who are not Republicans? What does the Movement offer them? What have we to say to all those people who do not understand the essential link between the anti-British armed struggle and the social and economic progress of all the Irish people, of those who are so busy trying to survive in the chaos of unemployment, inflation and foreign exploitation that they have no time to think of the war and its justification, or those who would prefer not to think of the hostilities because they feel it is all so complicated, so unsophisticated or so hopeless? What words of reassurance have we for the people of the 6 Counties whose lives have been torn apart by the struggle and who must, at times, become weary and disheartened? How can we respond to the ex-Unionists, confused and embittered because they know in their hearts that the British are going to leave them to their own resources as they have in all their other colonies, the ex-Loyalists who are searching around for the kind of Ireland that will take account of their fears and offer them hope?

Will our message of war comfort the mothers in Derry's Creggan or Belfast's Andersonstown or Ballymurphy whose sons suffer daily the horrors of H-Block or the man whose first son was murdered by the British because he dared to stand up to them and who is afraid for his second and third sons when their time comes to fight or submit? What hope do we offer the people who have suffered and who continue to suffer and make sacrifices for the cause of their nation? Will it all have been worth it? These are the people that we Republicans must reach. We must make them understand that the message of war is only half the message. We must show them that our aim is peace and that peace can only come from the Republican Movement and from supporting the Movement and working with it to achieve that peace.

We must help them to realise that our war is about destruction and we are determined to destroy all vestiges of colonial and neo-colonial oppression but that our peace is about construction and we are equally determined to, and capable of, building a new society based on Sinn Fein's Eire Nua (New Ireland Programme). For the people of Ireland, the road to peace lies in helping the Republican Movement implement the plans and proposals of the Eire Nua programme. Our political and economic policies are as much a threat to the British and Free-State establishments and as deadly and decisive in the hands of the Irish people as all the arms in all the armouries. The Republican Movement has the weapons of war to win the war, but we also have the weapons of peace to win the peace.

THE SCANDAL OF H-BLOCKA HORROR TALE

The true meaning of repression in Ireland is gleaned from H-Block conditions in the Long Kesh Concentration Camp, torture by RUC and renewed police brutality all over Ireland. As the President of Sinn Fein, Ruairi OBradaigh recently pointed out, Internment without trial, which was finally beaten and ended by the courage of the Republican prisoners, was ended to be replaced by a more sophisticated approach in 1975, facilitated by the Terrorism Act of 1974, by which persons could be held incomunicado for seven days.

During this time the torture mills of Castlereagh and elsewhere went to work on the unfortunate victims picked up haphazardly, extracting forced "confessions". This was followed by appearances in the Diplock no-jury courts which has amended rules governing admissibility of evidence. The processed results resulted in automatic convictions based solely on statements extracted during the seven-day detention.

"The final chapter of this horror tale," said Ruairi, "Consists in the sufferings of the H-Blocks". Those now suffering unprecedented torture in "H"-Block areas of the now notorious Long Kesh Concentration Camp are detained under special laws, interrogated by special methods, having been brought before special Diplock no-jury courts where there were special laws of evidence, before finally being sentenced to specially long sentences. "The Irish Times" has calculated that 80 per cent of those convicted were being jailed solely as a result of statements extracted during the seven-day detention.

And what is the latest news from H-Block?

A Young Belfast member of the Republican Movement, Paddy Loughran, has suffered a heart attack as a result of the terrible conditions prevailing now in the H-Blocks of the Long Kesh Concentration Camp and has been transferred to hospital. One of the factors which aggravated the heart attack was the savage beatings of the younger prisoners, in the 18-25 age group. Paddy has been nine months on the blanket. Last week a gang of 50 Warders entered prisoners' cells, dismantled bunks and removed steel frames, leaving the prisoners with only their mattresses on the filthy concrete floor.

These prisoners are naked in their cells because they refuse to wear convict uniform being political prisoners of war. Their latest protest, having suffered the cold and humility of living with no clothes but for a blanket, for the last two years in some cases, is one of terrible consequences for themselves. They have refused to co-operate in any way whatever with the prison authorities in a state of perpetual passiveness. Almost 300 of them have been driven to the most terrible means of protest imaginable, refusing to wash, clean out their cells or empty slop buckets - for almost two months.

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STATEMENT FROM PRISONERS

A statement from the prison camp, signed by the prisoners, said: "Prisoners and their bedding have been drenched by the warders who pushed hoses through the observation slit in the cell doors. Then warders using protective clothing and face masks poured extra strong disinfectant into the cells." The statement continued: "The results of this have been that prisoners are being violently sick and are temporarily losing their eyesight. The fumes from the disinfectant is causing considerable pain to the eyes, head and stomach."

Dr. Edward Daly, Bishop of Derry, revealed that he has spent more than seven hours visiting 70 men from his diocese in their cells in H-Block 3 and 5 at Long Kesh and he added: "I found it to be a depressing and most unpleasant experience." Dr. Daly said there did seem to him to be a potential health hazard, albeit largely self-inflicted by the prisoners themselves, and he continued: "The cells are filthy. The form of protest being indulged in is degrading and dehumanising in the extreme. I must state that during my visit I did not see any signs of skin rashes or skin infections, nor did I see any evidence of prisoners having been beaten up. The cells in the H-Block, however, were certainly never designed nor intended to house two men 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

"As well as the obvious serious hygiene hazard, there would seem to be serious over-crowding in the H-Blocks I visited, especially under present conditions. There is no doubt in my mind that if this present situation continues, serious damage to health and mind will result." The Bishop then went on to blame the Republican prisoners for the treatment they are receiving. He said the Provisional IRA seems to be quite determined to continue its military campaign, "as well as a propaganda campaign centred on these prisoners." He then called on the IRA to end the campaign of freedom directed against the British in Ireland. It seemed unbelievable that an Irish Bishop at this stage of the war against Britain should see fit to say that unless Irishmen surrender to Britain they deserve to see their prisoners brutalised and tortured. Listen again:

"I would ask the Provisional IRA how can they expect the British government to respond generously to our appeals-----" (while the war continues) "Perhaps such appeals would gain a more sympathetic hearing if the Provisional IRA first responded positively to our appeals, (to give up the fight) instead of repeatedly rejecting them outright.

Bishop Daly is fighting Britains' battle. The prisoners' and the prisoners' relatives reject his views. Speaking on their behalf the editor of "An Phoblacht" has this to say on the "Political Bishop":

"There does seem to me to be a potential health hazard, albeit largely self-inflicted by the prisoners themselves." the Roman Catholic Bishop of Derry, Dr. Daly, said after a vistt to H-Block Long Kesh Cencentration Camp:

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"Self-inflicted". The fact is not denied. But why? Bishop Daly, if queried, was not quoted. But quoted he was on the demand of the H-Block prisoners, and of the Republican Movement in general, for prisoner-of-war status for those "on the blanket". Bishop Daly once again demanded that Oglaiigh na hEireann surrender. Why? Are Oglaiigh na hEireann the invaders? Why does not Bishop Daly demand that Britain withdraw forever from Ireland? What authority for their bullying presence does he regognise?

Obviously, the fighters of 1916 stand condemned by him. With them, the more than 70 per cent of the people of all Ireland who voted in 1918 for a 32 counties Irish Republic? Vox populi, vox Dei; wrong, Bishop? Bishop Daly is impervious to the fact that the British trampled arrogantly on the 1916 decision of the Irish people, forcing on them the disastrous 1920 Westminster Act. Even the Bishop must admit, by now, that it has been disastrous for the Irish people.

The Bishop adds insult to injury: "How can the Provisoonal IRA expect the British government to respond generously to appeals from the Catholic community or bishops when they themselves constantly ignore similar humanitarian appeals?"

This is enemy propaganda at its most blatant. Whitehall must be overjoyed. Many a practising Catholic, however, will be greatly scandalised.

#### U.S. CONGRESS TO RECONSIDER VISAS BAN

The United States Congress is expected to order formal hearings shortly into the refusal by the State Department of visas to leading Republicans. A sub-committee of Congress may also undertake a review of the overall situation in Northern Ireland but a spokesman for the Dublin government's Irish Embassy in Washington said that if members of the Provisional Irish Republican Movement were allowed to appear at the Congressional hearings this would be regarded as "an unfriendly act by a friendly country."

The Chairman of the Congress sub-committee on Europe and the Middle East, Mr. Lee Hamilton, said that the question of proceedings with the hearings was at present under discussion between the leadership of the committee and Congress. A decision would be announced in a few weeks. Leaders of the ad hoc Congressional Committee for Irish Affairs are confident that the sub-committee will accede to a request for hearings when they complete discussions on foreign and military systems by May 15th. The ad hoc committee is supported by 104 of the 500 members of Congress and has the backing of the Irish National caucus.

The Dublin Government has opposed hearings on either Northern Ireland or the visa issues. They argue that they would serve useful purpose and provide the Irish Republican Movement with an important platform to "mount a propaganda platform," meaning of course, to put forward their political policies for lasting peace with justice in Ireland.

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THREE DAY REPRESSION CONFERENCE FOR DUBLINNo Inquiry, says Government

According to Mr. Collins, the Minister for Justice in the Dublin Government, Amnesty International, who carried out an investigation last year into allegations of garda ill-treatment of people in custody, failed to set out specific complaints and consequently, no investigation was conducted by a senior garda officer, as promised some time ago by Mr. Collins. Mr. Collins answering questions about his undertaking of last October to assign a senior garda officer to investigate specific complaints, told the House that Amnesty had been asked to submit details and had not done so. None of the allegations mentioned by Amnesty was subsequently the subject of a specific complaint. Accordingly, he said, the assignment of an officer to investigate such a complaint had not arisen.

However, he was reminded that he had, as Opposition spokesman on Justice, made general allegations last year about ill-treatment by a "heavy gang" within the Garda Siochana. This was when the gardai had been accused, by Amnesty International of brutality in the treatment of people in their custody and before the hearing of several cases taken, without success, against members of the force by prisoners or ex-prisoners.

There are very substantial files of southern police brutality in the possession of organisations and persons connected with civil liberties as well as in the possession of Government ministers themselves. These are being overlooked by the government in Dublin. However, now a three day public inquiry and conference is being convened in Dublin's Liberty Hall, to deal with the allegations of brutal interrogations and the abuse and torture of prisoners throughout Ireland. The committee is composed of representatives of organisations which have concerned themselves with the question of civil liberties and repression in Ireland. The convener is Fr. Piaras O Duill of Dublin who was first to highlight police brutality in the south.

He said, "In view of the continuing existence of torture and repression in Ireland, I have decided that a public inquiry is necessary to highlight the extent of repression throughout the country and the reasons for it. The schedule will be the weekend of May 19th, 20th and 21st., in Liberty Hall, Dublin. On the first two days witnesses will personally testify and put forward their evidence to an international panel of judges which will specifically include a number of Irish Trade Unionists. A public conference will take place on the third day to elaborate the findings and made an analysis of torture and repression in Ireland. All the proceedings will be held in public and before the press."

Fr. O'Duill said that his Committee has been sitting weekly since January, disseminating information and selecting representative cases from North and South that substantiate the allegations. "We have copies of well documented accounts of maltreatment by the Southern Authorities which were submitted for examination to the commission set up by the Dublin government as far back as last October. So far there has been no report from this commission which has informed us through its secretary that it has no authority under its terms of reference to initiate proceedings of any sort on foot of the allegations made. They point out that the statements and affidavits submitted by us will only be considered by them as 'likely to be of assistance in the formulation of recommendations for future practice'."

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Fr. O'Duill said that there has already been adequate experience of this type of procedure in the North, where, despite the existence of ample laws on paper nothing is being done to alleviate brutality and torture in interrogation centres and in prisons and the repression of whole communities. "In our view the real source of police brutality lies in repressive laws and in particular the non-jury courts in both parts of the country. For this reason we intend to have lawyer-witnesses available to address the panel on the constitution and function of such courts and legislation"; he said.

#### Awareness in South

The real theme of the Conference will be repression in all its forms. Emphasis will be put on British repression in the six-counties and especially the deplorable conditions in "H" Block, Long Kesh prison. Again, the committee has at its disposal large dossiers of affidavits that substantiate complaints of torture in six-county detention centres.

Fr. O Duill said that the persistence of torture of prisoners and detainees, despite the findings of the European Commission of Human Rights, and the extent of community harassment has assured a degree of public awareness in the north that is absent in the south. "Our inquiry is therefore seen as a means of establishing a similar awareness in the south and abroad of the extent of repression in Ireland", he said.

One would expect that the result of the analysis of repression to take place on the third day would find Britain guilty of all repression in Ireland. The cause of all repression in Ireland, North and South, is the centuries of British domination and the continuing British presence there, both military and economic. The history of Ireland shows that the British have remained in occupation there only by holding down its people by coercion and brutality both directly and indirectly by her colonial means. Ireland was England's first colony. Her continued presence ensures that Ireland cannot unite to find its own solutions. Her troops and her rule are the most serious obstacle to any solution of the problems. Harassment of whole communities and brutality to individuals are her weapons, whether in her own hands, in the hands of carefully nurtured loyalists in the North East or tailor-made "gombeen" Irishmen in the Dublin parliament. It is necessary to read Irish history, but more especially the history of the British inspired civil-war, to understand the reasons of the bitter enmity shown by recent gombeen Dublin governments towards the Republican Movement.

In July 1921, after years of the Irish independence struggle, the British decided to bring in the politicians and to gain at the conference table what they couldn't win in the field. When it's considered who voted for the subsequent treaty and what vested interests backed them, meaning consent for a partitioned Free State and 6 Counties, it becomes clearer who were later to support that Free State and its law-and-order issues in the consequent civil war, and thereafter give support.

The 26 Counties state was tailor-made for the bourgeoisie and the petty bourgeoisie, and it was they who filled the ranks of those Sinn Fein deputies who voted for constitutional arrangements dictated by Great Britain.

The Free Staters therefore enjoyed all the advantages of an establishment government supported by Britain and by the British allies within Ireland. The civil war emphasized the national divide between those Irish who instinctively turn towards Britain and those who instinctively do not.

Only a few months before, the Free State's leaders had once called themselves Republican - but were now a part of the neo-colonial project that the treaty was designed to bring about. And so the familiar pattern of repression and violence, and counter-violence and resistance went on just as in the former British war. Dublin ministers and politicians cannot be understood without reference to the civil war years out of which the two main parties have emerged. For in a sense the war has never really ended. One needs always to remember the repressive history of Fine Gael, the acquiescence of Labour, and the ambivalence of Fianna Fail.

Speeches by Irish cabinet ministers, the Irish media reports, and the course of the propaganda war can now be seen in their historical perspectives. The key to policies of successive Dublin governments is the treaty and the civil war. Otherwise much from Dublin should be incomprehensible - as its co-operation with Westminster on the 6 North Eastern Counties and its reactionary activities towards the current 'troubles'.

The Inquiry is also intended as a forerunner to the International Tribunal on Britain's presence in Ireland to be held in Britain later this year. This committee will be giving the British Tribunal its backing and the full support of its facilities.

The following are some of the areas of contention proposed to be covered during the three-day session:  
Prison Conditions (particularly "H" Block, Long Kesh), Interrogation Centres, Community Harrassment, Special Powers Act, Offences Against the State Act, Criminal Law Jurisdiction Bill and the Non-Jury Courts.

In order for the Inquiry to make the necessary impact it must have the widest and most impressive backing from prestigious organisations and individuals.

#### LONDON DECLARED BLOODBATH

##### To Keep the Troops Here

The following is by Fr. Desmond Wilson and first appeared in the "Down" Magazine. One of the arguments for keeping the British army in north eastern Ireland is that there would be a bloodbath if it were to leave. No one has yet made an analysis of the situation which would justify such an argument.

On the other hand, if we trace the argument, we find that it came not from an analysis but from a simple declaration by the London government that a bloodbath would in fact take place if the troops were withdrawn. This declaration was accepted and repeated, without analysis, by politicians, academics, churchmen and others.

Eventually, it became a principle upon which a case was built up for keeping the troops there, against all the evidence that the presence of the soldiers was not contributing to peace but impeding it.

The British Government often said that it has a moral duty to maintain the troops in Ireland as a protection for one of both parts of a divided community, to uphold law and order and to uphold established government.

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But the moral duty of the government is to do whatever will contribute to peace, not to uphold a particular form of law and order, or to continue holding a ring between two sides.

There may come a time when the military presence may impede the establishment of order, keep two sides apart and make stable government less and less likely. If this should be so, the duty of government is to do what contributes to peace, even if this means abandoning the tactics which it has used so far.

It may be the moral duty of the British government, for the sake of peace, and to prevent a bloodbath, to withdraw troops.

#### Ancient Pretence

The pacification of the natives through the presence of a civilising army is one of the oldest pretences of government. We tend to assume that with the disappearance of empires and colonies, governments do not say such things any more, but they do.

When it is said about the natives of north-eastern Ireland, that they need strong military control in order to prevent them killing each other, the argument must be seen for what it is. It is a tactic of government control, not a moral response to a real need. Anyone who says this must answer a number of questions.

He must, for example, prove that the bloodbath idea had come from the mouths of Whitehall rather than from the minds of Irish people. When that is done, the bloodbath argument loses much of its force.

He must also answer the question, if a bloodbath is not necessarily going to follow a British army withdrawal, what is? Here there is need for a rational analysis such as we have not had; up to the present, the bloodbath declaration always stopped people in their tracks and further discussion was impossible.

If the troops are withdrawn, people will see to their own law and order. There is a deep longing in people's minds for security. It is wrong to say that armed citizens are against law - they are against what they see as bad law.

The police, deprived of the brute force of the military, will have to treat with the citizens for the first time, to try to co-operate with and protect them. This will bring the police to their true position in society. The police must please the people. This does not mean that they allow people to get away with crime - it does mean that they must be seen as a protection, not a threat, for all the citizens. No amount of fresh, new policing will bring about this change of attitude. But if policemen learn they can get promotion by being honest, just, law-abiding and non-violent, they will be honest, just law-abiding and non-violent. That is not how promotion goes at present, as Roy Mason publicly counts the numbers arrested, put in prison, killed.

The argument that if we remove the troops we leave the country open to the "men of violence" is a false argument based upon the premise that the natives are inescapably violent and unable to make compromises with each other.

People ask, if the British army were withdrawn what would we do for an army? The only answer a pacifist can give is: Don't have an army, demilitarise the north of Ireland. If ever a place needed it, and deserved it after all these years of war, Northern Ireland does.

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it would be an example to Europe that demilitarisation is possible and useful.

As I write this article a spotter plane is roaring overhead. I am convinced that it is there, as the daily and often nightly flight of helicopters is there, not only to gather information, but to frighten people, to show them who is boss.

I am interested when I read that exactly the same thing happens in black areas of America, and in other countries. As I see it now, after all these years, we have had enough of it.

NEWS FROM THE NORTH

Sunday April 16th

Tyrone - Two booby trap bombs in creamery cans, discovered on Flushtown Bridge Strabane were defused by enemy forces.

Twelve shots were fired at a Crown Forces (RUC) mobile patrol on Tullyhagas Road, Dunloy.

Tuesday April 18th

Co. Antrim - A member of the Crown Forces (RUC Reserve) was seriously injured when shots were fired at the police station in Portglenone.

Friday April 21st

Newcastle - Nine shots were fired at a Crown forces' (RUC) mobile patrol at Murlough, on the Dundrum/Newcastle Road.

Belfast - The Spar supermarket and the J & J foodstore, Ardoyne Road, were badly damaged in fire-bomb attacks.

Saturday April 22nd

Co. Antrim - A member of the Crown Forces (RUC) was shot dead at his home in Lisburn.

Wednesday, April 26th

Co. Down - Shots were fired at a Crown forces (military) foot patrol outside the courthouse, Newry.

Derry - A Crown forces (military) sand-bag post under Craigavon Bridge was demolished in a blast-bomb attack. Derry Brigade, IRA claimed responsibility.

Thursday April 27th

Belfast - Sixteen buses were destroyed by incendiaries at the city bus depot in Ardoyne.

Co. Down - A former major in the Crown forces (T.A.V.R.) was shot and injured seriously in Bridge Street. South Down IRA, in a statement claiming responsibility, said that the man, manager of the local labour exchange, had been continuously co-operating with Crown forces in the area.

Friday April 28th

Belfast - Four more buses were destroyed by incendiary attacks at the city bus depot, Ardoyne.