

Irish Republican Information Service.

VOL. 3

No. 52

OCTOBER 25th, 1978.

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1. PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS AT THE 74th ARD-FHEIS OF SINN FEIN

Another eventful year has passed since Republicans assembled in National Convention. In his address to the 74th Ard Fheis of Sinn Fein, the political arm of the Republican Movement, Ruairi O Bradaigh, the President of the Party, spoke of the courage, suffering, endurance and the will to victory that have not been wanting in the supreme effort to establish freedom, justice and peace in our country. The Convention took place in Dublin's Mansion House last week-end, 21-22 October. The highlight of the weekend was the presence at the Convention of a large number of foreign observers from anti-imperialist organisations throughout the world.

We give here the full text of the Presidential address to the Convention which outlined events in Ireland since last year.

i Year of Events

Within a month of our last Ard-Fheis a team from the world-renowned human rights body, Amnesty International, was at work in Belfast investigating the notorious Castlereagh torture mill and other such places throughout the Six Counties. Their report in June last came as a vindication of the work of many dedicated human rights and legal justice bodies, as well as of concerned individuals motivated by humanitarian considerations, and last but very far from least - of the hard, slogging efforts of ordinary members of the Republican Movement themselves.

Amnesty's findings were in effect rejected by the British Government through their galeiter Mason when an independent public inquiry with wide-ranging powers was refused. Sinn Fein demanded that such an inquiry be constituted on an international basis. The British response of an investigation behind closed doors with the practitioners of torture given an amnesty in advance was merely following the example of the Fianna Fail administration in the 26 Counties, when they too turned down an Amnesty demand for an independent public examination of Garda brutality against prisoners, Portlaoise prison

conditions and the operation of the Special non-jury Court.

May we now expect any positive aspects which may emerge from Mason's secret inquiry to be turned down in due course since Fianna Fail have already pointed them the way by rejecting out of hand the O Brian Commission's report in its material findings?

In January last, the European Court of Human Rights, in the case of the 14 hooded men, did the cause it espouses internationally a grave disservice in lowering the threshold in its definition of torture. It did agree with other European Commission findings indicting the British Government before the world for "inhuman and degrading treatment" of Irish political prisoners. But, as we in Ireland know to our distress down the centuries, the English ruling classes are shameless in the pursuit of power, privilege and wealth.

Despite guarantees given by two British Attorney-Generals to the Strasbourg Court that torture, however defined, would cease, despite the indictment at international level of January last, torture has never stopped and remains to this day an instrument of British policy in Ireland. Government with out the consent of the governed is impossible without denial of human rights, without the use of "inhuman and degrading treatment" of prisoners, without recourse to a well-worn British practice in Ireland, torture.

ii Sinn Fein Unspared

Sinn Fein, for its part, was gratified to participate in the public tribunal of investigation into denial of human rights North and South held in Liberty Hall, Dublin, before a respected international panel of jurists last May. Because it is relentlessly exposing British rule in all its savagery to the world, and because, through its advice centres, it is providing the people with an alternative service, Sinn Fein is not being spared. Our offices at Falls Road, Belfast, were ransacked and all papers and files seized in a massive British Occupation Forces operation in December. Officers and leading members of Belfast Comhairle Ceantair were taken from their beds to Castlereagh and subjected to intensive grilling and psychological pressure for days on end.

Releases were followed by re-arrest months later and the preferment of bogus charges. Marie Moore of An Ard Chomhairle was included; Gerry Adams, also of An Ard Chomhairle, spent seven months on remand in prison on a charge which failed, but which was based mainly on a political speech made by him at our Ard-Fheis last year. Derry Comhairle Ceantair offices and members were the next target while within the past months, leading members and Comhairle Ceantair officers throughout the rest of the Six Counties received the same treatment. The *Republican News*, published weekly in Belfast, was similarly disrupted in an attempt to close it down. We are happy that it continues to preach the gospel of Irish Republicanism fully and fearlessly week after week.

Just as internment without trial in the Six Counties has been replaced by a "conveyor-belt" system of seven days detention incommunicado, torture and forced confessions, Diplock special courts and H-Block suffering, so outright proscription of Sinn Fein and banning of *Republican News* are substituted for by more sophisticated techniques of harassment and persecution. The changed attitudes in both matters indicate British sensitivity to an

informed public opinion, and especially, international opinion.

iii Active in Foreign Affairs

In this connection, our Foreign Affairs Bureau has been particularly active in the past year; this accounts for the number of visitors, whom we heartily welcome to Ireland and the messages of support from abroad at this Ard-Fheis. Apart from renewing and maintaining contact with solidarity committees throughout Europe and with our active supporters in North America and Australia, new friends have been made in Africa, Asia and Latin America where latent support for the Irish struggle has existed for the past decade.

Delegations from Sinn Fein have attended the congress of the Front Nacional de Catalunya in Barcelona in support of another oppressed nation struggling for freedom and justice; and also the congress of O.U.T., the United Organisation of Workers in Portugal where a genuine popular revolution has been temporarily checked by the E.E.C. and other forces of international imperialism.

Sinn fein also engaged in a speaking tour of the Basque country—Euskadi—under the sponsorship of our good comrades of E.I.A.; in a series of meetings in Brittany and in Northern and Southern France, thile representatives also visited Wales, Scotland and Cornwall to explain our policies—especially our foreign policy—to our fellow Celts. The facts of Ireland's struggle against English colonialism, and E.E.C. cum international neo-colonialism, are being carried to the sympathetic ears of oppressed peoples and nations and to those freedom-loving people who thirst for justice for themselves and for their fellow-men.

The message is being driven home at every opportunity that the small and oppressed nations cannot survive in future in real independence and with social justice without a major political re-organisation of Western Europe—for we all depend on each other—and without the ultimate break-up of the major political and economic power-blocks in the world. Neutrality and non-alignment remain our positive stance. The process of the oppressed nations striving for identity and self-determination is under way within the French state; but it is at its most advanced against the Spanish state and against the so-called United Kingdom.

Meanwhile the Dublin Government, through its Foreign Minister, denies and repudiates the struggle and sufferings of the people of the North at the United Nations, at the Council of Europe and across the globe. While suspect on the question of a military alliance within the E.E.C., Mr. O'Kennedy, Government Foreign Affairs Minister, has the gall to tell a leading member-state of the Non-Aligned Movement, Yugoslavia, that the Irish struggle is not one for national liberation. He then goes on to meet Joshua Nkomo of the Zimbabwean African People's Union during September last when the liberation struggle against Smith's racist Rhodesia was at its fiercest for many years; he then tries in his return to explain away meeting a "gunman" or rather, a guerrilla leader.

Mr. O'Kennedy told RTE listeners that this was justified because Smith had seized power illegally and the Patriotic Front was recognised by the Presidents of the Front-line states. But, to come 5,000 miles nearer home, was not Stormont set up illegally? Is not the British presence here in defiance of the wishes of the Irish people? And did not the Free State initially seize power illegally in 1922 with the aid of British guns? It is not surprising that those who so roundly condemned the

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British Government for meeting Irish guerrilla leaders remained silent on this occasion. The reality is that, like the Labour Party's support for Allende's Chile, worthy causes are all right provided they are far away from home and do not threaten Fianna Fail's, Fine Gael's or Labour's political futures.

iv Nuclear Power and Other

Issues

During the past year also the logic of the type of development being followed in the 26 Counties has brought with it the decision to build a nuclear power station at Carnsore Point. As we stated in our *Quality of Life* policy document more than five years ago: (a) Sinn Fein believes the development of technology must be controlled in the interests of humanity; (b) we are opposed to pollution, destruction of the environment and of nature with the resultant danger to life itself.

Even if it could be shown that nuclear power is more economic than other forms—and we do not accept that—we still reject it because we believe the overwhelming evidence points to the damage it can do, and does, to the environment, to health, to life and even to future generations. We know that nuclear power will not contribute in any meaningful way to the solution of the huge problem of unemployment. Therefore, at this time, we demand (1) that the E.S.B. invest sufficient resources into research on alternative forms of energy, such as wind, solar and wave power and (2) that an independent public inquiry be held into the Carnsore Point proposal.

Sinn Fein members and speakers, aided by the local Co. Wexford Cumainn, took part in the anti-nuclear demonstration in August last. Similarly, our members participated in the Wood Quay march, in the May Day march organised by Dublin Trades Council and, for the record, we oppose the practice of Prison Officers being in charge of boys aged 12 to 16 as is intended for the Loughan House detention centre.

On the Wood Quay issue, we feel that adequate office accommodation is long overdue for Dublin City Council staff. But Sinn Fein does not believe in the present top heavy, centralised, bureaucratic system. We visualise 26 districts in a Dublin region stretching from Bray to Fingal and from the Pigeon House to Lucan and Tallaght; each would have its own district Council and offices; the regional Council offices and staffs for close on a million people would federate the districts and be much smaller due to the decentralisation of both decision-making and administration.

Meanwhile, adequate time must be given for the complete excavation of Wood Quay and the local communities and the experts must combine in working out its future. There must be involvement of both.

January next marks the Diamond Jubilee of the First Dail Eireann, our revolutionary All-Ireland Parliament, which we alone do not deny and to which we in the Republican Movement are the direct lineal successors. In this very room on January 21st, 1919, the assembled deputies from all 32 Counties heard read out the Declaration of Independence, the Message to the Free Nations of the World and, very importantly, the Democratic Programme. Here they pledged allegiance to the Republic of 1916 of Pearse and Connolly; and here on the 21st of January next, the Ard Chomhairle will hold a suitable commemoration ceremony. May it be as memorable as the 60th anniversary of Easter 1916 outside Dublin's General Post Office.

v Local Democracy

Next year is also an election year for Sinn Fein, and this is the last time we will meet in annual Ard-Fheis before we come before the voting public, once again, at the local government elections, due in the 26 Counties next June. Despite the extra bur-

den this places on a political organisation which is engaged in revolutionary activity at so many levels and in so many ways, year in year out, we welcome the challenge and are glad that our elected public representatives will be enabled to renew their mandate, and hopefully, to be joined by very many other Republican spokespersons.

There should be a membership on all local authorities and it should be constantly publicising and stressing our own broad philosophy. It should use its local authority membership to promote—by regular meetings—the provincial assemblies of the New Ireland. Even twenty such representatives meeting twice yearly in each province in embryo parliamentary assemblies could give shape and form to the Eire Nua idea in a way that a million pamphlets would not. Such locally directed propaganda with steady emphasis upon provincial problems could result in important political advances later on. Imagine what 100 active and articulate councillors could do for H-Block at the present time.

It was part of Sinn Fein policy at the 1974 elections to press for a regular four-year term for local government representatives, and while this has not been achieved, we still feel a more regular renewal of mandate is important, and are glad that at least the normal five-year period of office has not been extended. Local elections tend to focus attention on vital local issues. It even forces the major parties to try and come up with some type of local government policy—something which is absent all too frequently from the thoughts of parties and politicians who see the local council chamber as a step to bigger things in Leinster House and/or as a useful tool of local patronage.

The value of local democracy in the eyes of the big parties can clearly be seen from the postponement of elections which took place twice, in 1972 and again in 1973. These were trying years for the Republican Movement too. Nevertheless, we doubled our vote in 1974, compared with 1967, and despite the reorganisation necessitated in 1969-70, ended up with representation on some 26 local bodies. This was twice as many as any other grouping apart from Fianna Fail, Fine Gael or Labour, so that our claim to be the fourth largest force in the public life of the 26-County state is clearly visible—for those who want to see.

However, it does not prevent the political masters of RTE—be they of the Fianna Fail or Coalition variety—from totally banning Sinn Fein spokespersons from radio and television. Dr. Conor Cruise-O'Brien introduced the blanket prohibition following a five-minute interview by RTE with our Director of Publicity at the 1976 Ard-Fheis—the one and only allowance of air-time we were given in the entire previous twelve month period. He renewed the total ban at the beginning of 1977, and when this came up for review in January, 1978, the new Fianna Fail Minister, Mr. Faulkner, renewed it again—thundering that in essentials there is no difference between the two factions in Leinster House.

vi Control of Broadcasting

Let us be clear what this means. It means that we are the only political party which is totally banned from putting our policies to the public, on the media which are the main source of information and discussion in today's world. We are the only body with elected public representatives in the whole of Western Europe which are specifically excluded from public articulation of the ideals and ideas which people have elected them to represent. And then they tell us to participate in the alleged "democratic process"! The cheek of O'Brien and Faulkner to lecture us, and more significantly, the Irish people, in this way! Their alleged belief in democracy is only as deep as what is necessary to protect their own positions—though in this case it was not sufficient to prevent the people from dismissing O'Brien at the polls in North-East Dublin, and with

him, the rest of his ilk, from Keating to Cooney, throughout the land.

True, Mr. Faulkner, at the time he renewed the Cruise-O'Brien exercise in "democracy" also banned the UDA (O'Brien, it seems, had no objection to them) in a kind of trade-off aimed at giving the impression of being "neutral", "fair to all sides". But such action fools nobody. The UDA is a paramilitary organisation. It does not contest elections and does not have elected representatives. We do. We always have had, and we intend to let the whole of Europe and the world know in the months ahead just how "democratic" Mr. Faulkner and his Fianna Fail colleagues are.

It is interesting to note on this score that the Fianna Fail Government has frustrated the development of Irish broadcasting since coming back to office by failing to give the go-ahead for RTE development plans, while at the same time allowing big business friends to run pirate radio stations with total disregard for the law of the 26-County state. Fine Gael's attitude to illegal broadcasting has been equally ambivalent. It seems that the regulation of broadcasting is not a matter of concern to anybody—as long as what Fine Gael have described as "subservives" are kept out. And who are these "subservives"? Anybody, it appears, who even dares to consider any idea that might in the slightest way upset the Leinster House apple-cart, and reflect the broad Republican sentiments of the Irish people. Irish ballads which for generations sustained the fighting spirit of our people, are now absent from the Irish airwaves. There is no specific ban. But programme makers know when to be cautious. Similarly, journalists, commentators, academics who might raise nasty, but vital questions, are discreetly excluded—or invited to talk about the problems of Rhodesia and South Africa only! The saddest thing about all this is that the Irish public, who pay for the broadcasting services, are denied a right to knowledge and information to which they are entitled.

It is not without significance that the Fianna Fail go-ahead for a second radio service was given only after it became known that a group of Northern Nationalist people, with no political axe to grind, but who wished to see the truth and realities of Irish life given some place on the air-waves, are planning to set up an independent radio service. Let us be quite clear about it. Sinn Fein has suffered more than any other group from the political control of public service broadcasting. But this does not mean that we want to see the Irish air-waves taken from public hands and given over to big business interests whose ability to sell soap-powder and chewing gum far exceeds their interest in good programming.

Sooner or later political interference in RTE will fail, through the people's anger with being treated as though they were children, or the organised frustration and resentment of professional broadcasters to interference with their freedom to go about their job. But if the airwaves are handed over to the private business friends of Fianna Fail, Fine Gael or whatever, who, then, is going to control broadcasting and see to it that it is run and regulated in the public interest? The freedom with which pirates have been allowed to break the law of the 26-County state, including the law concerning the compensation of recording artists each time their work is played on air, is at once an indication of the circles in which most of them move, and a clear demonstration that the so-called "subservives" apart, the Leinster House parties have little regard even for their own laws—as long as they do not endanger their own personal careers. Sinn Fein, of course, believes that a proper national broadcasting service should be supplemented by adequate local services but under local community control.

The commercial broadcasting controversy is indicative of a trend within the political establishment which has made naked profit-making and unbridled "private enterprise" the new God. The new Fianna Fail Government has not only forgotten its limited progressive role in economic matters in the 1930's. It has made the law of the jungle in business and commercial life a rigid doctrine—as rigid as anything that Stalinist Socialists advocate at the other end of the spectrum. Hence, the abolition of the wealth tax. Hence the pre-occupation with a puny bill for food subsidies in a country where up to one in four is living in real need if not absolute poverty. Hence, the consistent attack on the public sector which they themselves built up in the 1930's, and the attempt to blame organised labour for all the failures of their own greedy economic policies.

vii Economic Policy and E.E.C.

The Irish Catholic Hierarchy recently expressed, through its Social Welfare Committee, concern for the weaker members of our society, as a result of the assault on food subsidies and hints that social welfare measures would have to be cut back. The concern, I am sure, is genuine. But it is not enough. At last year's Ard-Fheis, we challenged the Hierarchy to state if they honestly believed it possible to achieve a just, caring and Christian society as long as Irish economic policies remained subject to the say-so of Brussels, the basic philosophy of the Rome Treaty, and the rat-race mentality of free-wheeling "competition"? We got no reply—because we know in our heart of hearts that it is not possible. All we can hope to gain, while we remain tied to the E.E.C., and while there are no changes in the current policies of that arrangement, is a little more dole, a few more crumbs from the rich man's table, but no fundamental changes. It is a sad and demoralising prospect. But let us honestly admit that this is all we have to look forward to as long as the status quo remains.

Sinn Fein opposed full E.E.C. membership. Sinn Fein is still opposed to such an arrangement. We do not believe, as it appears some of those who also said "No" in 1972, now seem to suggest, that sending 18 members to a 410-member E.E.C. Assembly will bring about any great changes. It will provide good jobs for the members who go. But very little else.

Sinn Fein continues to say "No" to the E.E.C., not just on a day to day basis. We question its fundamental philosophy and its basic assumptions. We want an alternative arrangement, not only for Ireland but for the relationship between the peoples—and not just the states—of Western Europe, and indeed of the wider world. That is why we will be mounting a massive campaign against the E.E.C. next year. Not just a campaign to get this or that detail changed. Not just to get a fat European salary for this or that representative in an Assembly (it is not a Parliament in any real sense) which will represent only part of Western Europe, and will have no real power in any sense.

The whole E.E.C. structure has to be dismantled, in the interest of Ireland and in the interest of many other subject peoples in Europe. We will carry this demand into all nine E.E.C. countries and co-operate with all progressive political groupings in the other European countries in this campaign. The method of doing this has been decided democratically by this Ard-Fheis, and the responsibility for organising the campaign will rest with the new Ard-Chomhairle. I mention this because our enemies frequently suggest that we are not serious about politics, that Sinn Fein Ard-Fheis delegates are essentially a rubber stamp. Apart from the audacity of this assertion from political opportunists whose life centres in many cases around the smoke-filled rooms of Leinster House and Westminster and (before it was abolished mainly through the efforts of the Republican

Movement) Stormont, this assertion shows how short some memories are.

When certain infiltrators succeed in getting some members of the Republican Movement as it then was to propose an abandonment of our opposition to participation in Stormont as well as Leinster House and Westminster, a few years ago, we all know what happened. The proposal was rail-roaded before the Sinn Fein Ard-Fheis of January, 1970, and the Sinn Fein Ard-Fheis delegates, taking their orders from nobody, and making up their own minds, flatly rejected it. It was not the first time that Sinn Fein, the open democratic expression of Irish Republicanism, made up its own mind and came to its own decision which, in the event, proved to be so important in the progressive march of Irish history.

viii Language and Community

Authority

Speaking in Irish, Mr. O Bradaigh said that perhaps people in the Movement sometimes overlook the extent of political revolution that this movement has initiated, especially since the beginning of this phase of the war just ten years ago. Recently a Bill was published by the Government to launch a Gaeltacht authority. It took a long time to come. Perhaps many of us forget that it was Deasun Fennell, at the time of the Republican commemoration of the first Dail, in January, 1969, who suggested a completely new attempt to save the Gaelic speaking areas. Among the suggestions he made in an article in the *Irish Times* was the introduction of a special system for the Gaeltacht that would give these people control over their own affairs. It was said at the time that this was not practical and could not succeed. Having received much debate since then nearly everyone is agreed now that there is no alternative. It is better late than never even though the Bill has its weaknesses—it is a surrender to some of the initial demands in principle at least.

Mr. O Bradaigh went on to say that the majority on an authority like this should of course be elected. It must be accepted that the work for development of people in the Gaeltacht should be co-ordinated under one roof, under democratic control. It is encouraging to see that this is recognised for the Gaeltacht areas. It is encouraging especially to Republicans. And if these principles are good for the Gaeltacht are not the same local freedoms essential for all local communities, rural and urban, throughout the country?

In a word, said Mr. O Bradaigh, does not the support for the Gaeltacht demands prove that Sinn Fein was right when we demanded self-government for all local communities? Our stand for the Gaeltacht was perhaps the most revolutionary stand of the last ten years. We were not, and we are not prepared to limit our demands to the Gaeltacht only. Self government, authority and control of their own affairs is the right of every local community, North and South, East and West, rural and urban, Irish speaking or English speaking, Nationalist or Loyalist.

And specifically in the Ulster context, we are convinced that any future political arrangement, even a federal one, which is based on the unnatural Six County statelet, is a recipe for further strife and conflict. We have ruled out, years ago, the idea of an independent Six County state; and we reject the idea of a Six County/26 County federation put forward by Mr. John Hume and what he claims to be a majority of the SDLP in one of their latest political somersaults. We must make every effort to educate the people as to what a New Federal Ireland of the four provinces really is. It is most certainly not two unworkable 26-County and 6-County units. The artificial entity which is misnamed "Northern Ireland" resulted from an English head-count of population on sectarian lines. To perpetuate it is to perpetuate sectarianism and we are completely opposed to that.

ix H-Block, Long Kesh

In September the Republican prisoners in H-Block of Long Kesh entered their third year of protest for the restoration to them of prisoner of war status. Refusing to do the convict garb of England and to do penal labour, they have been confined to their cells naked as the day they were born and in solitary confinement during all that time without exercise, fresh air, reading matter or writing materials. In March last, they escalated their protest. Because the prison staff withdrew and restored at will the right to go to the toilet, slop out and wash, using these elementary rights as bargaining counters to force conformity with criminal status, the prisoners decided to disarm them by refusing to cooperate in these matters at all.

And so their distress has grown to proportions which defy the imagination. Beatings by prison warders and scaldings by having boiling water thrown over them multiply. Yet, their sense of dignity and of the righteousness of their cause and, above all, their morale continue to grow. May we, in all humility at such sacrifice which is above and beyond the call of duty, pledge to them and to the protesting women prisoners in Armagh Jail our sincerest admiration and a guarantee to work even harder on their behalf in the coming year. We include in that pledge our prisoners in Crumlin Road Jail, Belfast, in Portlaoise and in the various prisons throughout England.

The recent successful Coalisland-Dunagannon march and just a fortnight ago the memorable and even more successful parade from Derry's Waterside railway station to Guildhall Square are most heartening and act as incentives to even more effective mobilisation of support to break H-Block, secure British withdrawal and a general amnesty and build a decentralised and Democratic Socialist Republic in all of Ireland.

x The Coming Year

These then are our tasks for the coming year: press home the campaign at home and abroad for restoration of prisoner of war status pending a general amnesty, oppose full membership of the EEC—and the leafleting and picketing of their Roadshow at many centres signalled the start of that campaign; articulate and amplify the demand for British disengagement from Ireland; and lead and involve the people in creating a new society—Eire Nua. In addition, the local elections must be contested effectively in the 26 Counties. In summary form, this is conveyed by: H-Block; EEC No; Brits Out; Power to the People; Eire Nua.

With the commemoration of the outstanding and far-reaching events of 1968, political commentators have been speaking of the "Troubles of the Past Ten Years" and some of them would have us and the world believe that our struggle began a decade ago. The fight of the Irish people for their place on the face of the earth, to live their own lives in their own civilisation, develop their resources, garner the fruits of their labours and carve out their own future, began on the day the invader first set foot on Irish soil; not ten years ago, but 810 years ago.

Today's struggle is the final and victorious phase of that centuries-old epic fight. And contrary to the interested lies of establishment politicians and their lackeys in all walks of life, the sequence of events was not straight from Civil Rights marches into guerrilla warfare. They suppress the truth; the facts that the Civil Rights campaign was met in turn by official police violence, by unofficial mob violence, by British Army intervention and finally by British military atrocities against unarmed people—all designed to shore up anbutress a tottering colonialism.

When the people were left leaderless in this advanced revolutionary situation, betrayed and deserted by many who had led them onto the streets, it was then that

they turned instinctively to those who would stand by them, come what may, who would give them leadership and travel with them the painful road to a totally new society.

This today is the historic mission of our generation, said Ruairi O Bradaigh, at once a duty and a privilege. Let us see it through, right to the end.

Ruairi O Bradaigh was returned unopposed as President of Sinn Fein. Others elected were Sean O Bradaigh, Director of Publicity; Jerry Adams and Joe Cahill, Vice-Presidents; Daithi O Conaill and Walter Lynch as Joint Secretaries; Tony Ruane and Charlie McGlade, Treasurers.

Ard-Fheis: National Congress or Convention; Sinn Fein: Political wing of the Irish Republican Movement; Fianna Fail: Government party in the 26 Counties of South; Fine Gael: Opposition party; Ard Chomhairle: Supreme Council; Comhairle Ceantair: Local Council; Gaeltacht: Gaelic-speaking area; Stormont: Old House of Parliament in Belfast; Castlereagh: R.U.C. Interrogation Centre; R.U.C.: Royal Ulster Constabulary; R.T.E.: Radio Telefis Eireann; Irish Radio/Television Service.

2. SOLIDARITY GROUPS ATTEND CONVENTION

At the Sinn Fein Ard-Fheis Risteard Behal opened the session on Foreign Affairs by introducing the invited delegates from other countries. Included were Sion Ahd and Eryl Sychan from Wales, Bruno Da Ponte of the Organisation of United Workers from Portugal, Mario Onandia and Mikel Etxeberria from the Basque Revolutionary Party, Yann Goulet, Brittany, and Mr. and Mrs. Michael Rafitis from Greece. A number of these delegates addressed the conference.

Mr. Behal summarised the activities of the Foreign Affairs Department over the year which covered visits to France, Spain, Germany, Belgium and the United States organised by the various solidarity groups in these countries. He recalled the visits of a number of Judges and lawyers to the torture of prisoners Inquiry last May in Dublin and the trial of leading Republican Jerry Adams in Belfast. Telegrams and greetings were read out from countries as far away as Australia.

Mr. Behal concluded his address with a quote from James Connolly when he said: "To me, therefore, the socialist of another country is a fellow patriot, as the capitalist of my own country is a natural enemy. I regard each nation as the possessor of a definite contribution to the common stock of civilisation, and I regard the capitalist class of each nation as being the logical and natural enemy of the national culture which constitutes that definite contribution".

3. BRUSSELS - ANOTHER LEGITIMATE TARGET

The traditional opponents of the Republican forces over the decades have been British imperialism and those that serve it. Irish freedom fighters have struggled long and hard to subvert the plans and programmes of British colonialist strategy and to bring about the inevitable withdrawal of British domination and influence from this island.

But, the Republican Movement is well aware that, in this advanced age, it is no longer enough to rid ourselves of the effects of British imperialistic manipulation which have existed in both parts of Ireland for so long. The true self-determination of the Irish nation can only be achieved through the free and unfettered exercise

of Irish sovereignty by the Irish people. Anything that would prevent or disturb that process in the future must be overcome. Our enemy is not just British imperialism, but imperialism in any form, imperialism generally and more and more significantly and especially the new and dangerous imperialism of Europe and the EEC which boldly challenges our right to Irish nationhood and aims to thwart the aspirations of the people of Ireland in a much more insidious way than the Brits ever did.

Republican opposition to the whole concept of the EEC as it was presented and as it has developed is well known. We have continuously and consistently pointed out the essential fallacy of possible European economic co-operation between the large industrially-advanced giants of Europe and the poorer under-developed peripheral nations. That sophisticated 'European identity' we are all encouraged to welcome can only be achieved by denouncing our own inherent Irish identity. The price we will be forced to pay for our 'Europeanism' is our Irishness.

Our initial analysis and continuing anxiety with regard to the EEC idea have been proved correct. It is more and more obvious that the EEC is based on a philosophy of exploitation and the total subjection of all things to the demands of increased profits and financial benefits. This primary motivation of Brussels even goes so far as to create unnecessary artificial competition (resulting in butter mountains, wine lakes etc.) in order to ensure a continuing rise in profits for the EEC machine.

Our fishing grounds are no longer Irish fishing grounds but "EEC waters" to be used as barter by the larger European nations to gain access to the fishing areas of other non-EEC countries. Our uranium is not Irish uranium but EEC uranium and control over it rests with the powers in Brussels. The much-needed programmes for strengthening our economy and alleviating the unemployment situation cannot be implemented because they would interfere with EEC co-operation. Our clothing and footwear industries are being allowed to die because it would be a breach of the rules, and blatantly unEuropean, if we imposed tariffs on the foreign goods flooding our markets. Inflation and unemployment continue unabated. We are being robbed of our resources on a massive scale and the EEC grants, though well-publicised, are but paltry handouts that can never repay us for the loss of our natural riches and for the loss of our national sovereignty.

What then would be the point of chasing the Brits out of Ireland if our future is to be surrendered to the whims of Brussels? Is it worth getting the British out at all if we can only look forward to domination by this newer and highly organised imperialism from Europe?

The Republican Movement and the people of Ireland have fought for many years to achieve their aim and, despite the sufferings and sacrifices, will continue to fight until victory is won. But all will be in vain if a new kind of Ireland does not arise from the ashes of our struggle.

The Republican Movement believes that new kind of Ireland can be built to the blueprint outlined in the Eire Nua proposals. Our Eire Nua programme rests on the strong foundations of social and economic advancement through Democratic Socialism and political harmony and fulfillment through the structures of a Four-Province Federal Ireland.

But, a necessary prerequisite for the implementation of the Eire Nua programme is the securing of our freedom as an Irish nation, no longer dominated by foreign interests and in absolute control of our own destiny. Eire Nua cannot be achieved while Britain still wields power over our country or our people and, likewise, the New Ireland we are fighting for will remain only an empty dream if the new imperial-

ism of the EEC is allowed to continue its offensive against the separate identity and future potential of our people.

European interference in the affairs of Ireland must be halted and the threat of EEC imperialism must be removed. The neo-colonialist forces of Brussels are as much a threat to our aspirations and our victory as are the British businessmen that reap the rewards of our labour and British soldiers that patrol our streets.

4. THE NORTH LAST WEEK BELFAST - OCTOBER 11th

Andersonstown R.U.C. Barracks was evacuated while the British Army spent a number of hours defusing two bombs which had been placed outside the barracks. The bombs had been placed in a hijacked bus and parked outside the police station by the I.R.A. A warning had been given to avoid casualties.

BELFAST - OCTOBER 12th

Three bombs exploded on the Dublin/Belfast Express train as it approached Belfast. A woman was killed and four others were detained in hospital with injuries. The First Battalion, Northern Armagh Brigade of the I.R.A., admitted responsibility but said that a full half-hour warning was issued by them about the bombs on the train. The I.R.A. statement to the press blamed the British Army and the R.U.C. for not acting quickly enough and stated that four separate warnings were issued to the Samaritans which were promptly passed on to the R.U.C. and army. Had these been acted upon then the operation "would have successfully destroyed the train without loss of life".

BELFAST - OCTOBER 13th

Two bombs exploded in the Donegal Road area of Belfast. The first bomb exploded in Ryelmere Street at a clothing company's premises. The other bomb exploded in Nubia Street, a short distance away. Later another bomb was control-detonated by the British army. Warnings had been given in all cases to avoid civilian casualties.

H-BLOCK INFORMATION CENTRE OPENS

AS CONDITIONS inside Mason's Hell-blocks continue to worsen Belfast Sinn Fein have opened an H-Block Information Centre on the Falls Road. This centre will assist anxious relatives seeking news about their imprisoned relatives.

The address is:-
170A Falls Road,
Belfast 46841 ext. 9.

Irish Republican
Information Service

Kevin Barry House,
44 Parnell Square,
Dublin 1, Ireland