

Irish Republican Information Service.

Vol. 3.

No. 61

January 27th 1979

CONTENTS

1. Commemoration of Irish Parliament
2. Address by the President of Sinn Fein
3. "If Only"
4. In Memoriam
5. War Claims
6. Anti E.E.C. Campaign Launched

1. COMMEMORATION OF IRISH PARLIAMENT

A ceremony commemorating the 60th anniversary of the First Dail, the Irish National parliament established by the General Election of December 1918 and which declared by an overwhelming majority its firm allegiance to the Republic of all Ireland, was held on Sunday 21st January.

The colourful event which was organised by Sinn Fein took place in the Mansion House, Dublin and in the very room in which the original assembly gathered. It was a full days programme of history, pageantry and music and the constant theme running throughout the whole ceremony was that the integrity of the first Dail is today preserved by only the Republican Movement; certainly the Free State usurpers stand firmly against the proud tradition of the first Dail.

Sinn Fein Secretary Daithi O'Conail set the tone for the day by stressing that the day of tremendous importance to the Irish people, is not just a solemn occasion but is a joyous event marking the re-declaration of the Republic.

Stirring Lecture

There followed a pageant of the flags, with a march-in and accolade to the national flag, the flags of the four provinces and the flags of the revolution. This display was carried out in

a disciplined fashion by members of Na Fianna Eireann and Cumann na mBan.

Writer Eamonn Mac Thomais delivered a stirring lecture entitled 'The Irish Nation'. The main theme of the lecture was the heroic struggle of generations of Irish men and women to free this country from foreign rule. He recounted the terrible suffering and dedication of many people in the face of British-inflicted imprisonment, torture and death.

Starting with the Easter Rising of 1916 he explained the rise and fall of the first Dail and the later treacherous signing of the Treaty and how the British imposed partition in order to disunite the people of 'Ulster' using divide and rule tactics that has been their policy time and time again.

Eamonn Mac Thomais then reviewed the history of our country to explain how Ireland is an ancient nation with a great tradition which today is still shown by remnants of Celtic art, schools and monasteries.

He explained how it took the anglo-Irish invaders four hundred years to capture this country. After 100 years they had conquered only four counties, after 200 years eight counties and after 300 years only twelve.

Since 1169 there has been a strong separatist tradition down through the years generation after generation.

Eamonn MacThomais spoke of some of the heroes and heroines: of Wolfe Tone, the founder of republicanism; of Anne Devlin, the finest woman patriot; and of Joe Clarke, whom he described as "the greatest Fenian that this nation has ever produced."

Sixty years ago Joe Clarke was the official courier of Dail Eireann; ten years ago he was thrown out of this same room by the Free Staters at the time of their hypocritical fifty year commemoration ceremony.

Eamonn MacThomais concluded as he had started, with a quote from Padraic Pearse. His lecture over, he received a standing ovation; for everyone present it had been a fascinating lecture.

Re-enactment

In the afternoon a re-enactment of the first historic Dail (parliament) sitting took place. This consisted of a salute to the First Dail, a reading of the re-declaration of the Republic, a message to the free nations, an outline of the Democratic programme and

extracts from speeches of the well known professional actors Brendan Caldwell, Eamonn Keane, and Breandan O Duill took part in the pageantry and read from some of the original speeches.

One of the highlets of the day was a tribute to the Irish prisoners of war suffering in Long Kesh, H Blocks. This was carried out in the form of a pageant, readings by the three actors with music on harp and violin, a depiction of two 'blanket' men alongside a bronze sculpture (by Breton artist Jan Goulet now living in Ireland). The theme of the display was 'The Chain of Endurance'. The magnificent sculpture of five figures in chain-like form was inspired by the heroic struggle of the H-Block 'blanket men'. The audience then heard a fine speech by the President of Sinn Fein Ruairi O Bradaigh.

2. ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF SINN FEIN

We reprint in full the address by the Sinn Fein President, Ruairi O Bradaigh, to the 60th anniversary commemoration of the First Dail;

One who was present here in the Round Room of Dublins Mansion House on this day, sixty years ago—and who is also present to-day—wrote of that great event:

"Never was the past so near, or the present so brave, or the future so full of hope".

In her book "The First Dail" Maire Comerford re-creates the atmosphere and tells how so many people present repeated the words of Cathal Brugha, the Ceann Comhairle after him undertaking to put into effect the Declaration of Independence "by every means in our power".

The three documents read on that occasion, that is the Declaration of Independence, the Message to the Free Nations of the World and the Democratic Programme,—taken together with the 1916 Proclamation of the Republic—constitute the title-deeds of the Republican position in Ireland and signify (1) national independence, (2) internationalism—reaching out to the world against "the vested privileges of ancient tyrannies", and (3) social concern rooted in fundamental principles of common ownership of Ireland by the Irish People.

"Rest in peace O great MacSwiney! Thou hast shown all the world that thy people are innocent, and that they are harassed and governed by

foreigners;

We of Egypt have known the English as you have known them; They never change.

In their law wrong is justified; in their law justice is denied . . .

The message of the First Dail was carried to the world by 69 pressmen from home and overseas who were present here sixty years ago. The French historian M. Goblet, realising that the First Dail was inspired by the spirit of Easter Week, wrote: "Those who knew it, partisans or adversaries, divined that a new epoch was beginning, and one that would be terrible".

Revolutionary Ireland

The advanced and progressive declarations of January 21st 1919 were followed by a number of events: (a) by guerilla warfare which commenced that same day at Soloheadbeg, Co. Tipperary; (b) by the organisation of machinery of the underground government in opposition to British rule; (c) by advanced actions such as the taking over of land-lords estates, by the people; the governing of Limerick city by the local Trades council when England declared it under military rule, the running of the creamery at Knocklong, Co. Tipperary by workers who raised a banner saying "we make butter—not profits", the bringing of Arigna collieries in Co. Roscommon under the control of the coal miners themselves—Ireland was putting the first crack in the world-wide British Empire and giving the lead to oppressed peoples everywhere.

The new, revolutionary Ireland was being built on the solid foundations laid here on January 21st 1919, by our founding fathers. The first Dail, too, including a woman, Countess Markievicz who was the first woman deputy elected in Britain or Ireland and became the first woman Cabinet Minister—outside of Soviet Russia—to head a Department of State when she became Minister for Labour in the First Dail in April 1919.

Counter Revolution

But where the British reign of terror and the Balck and Tans failed the counter-revolution succeeded in 1921, '22, and '23 neo-colonialism was established and still reigns oppressively in Ireland; the First Dail, through its successor the Second Dail, was overthrown—subverted—as Leinster House, Stormont and Westminster replaced them through weakness, treachery, civil war, murder and progrom. The high hopes were dashed. Those of whom it was written sixty years ago "It was sheer joy to us to be alive and taking part in a fight for Ireland and justice", those gallant Irish People were halted in their advance, most cunningly divided by imperialism and driven back in confusion.

In January 1919 a great war had

"freedom of small nations" and the "right of peoples to self determination". Ireland took the victors at their word and claimed just that in the most democratic manner sixty years ago. Three delegates were appointed here to attend the post-war peace conference. They were denied admission.

The Committee of Four—England, France, America and Italy—had decided that no small nation should appear before it without the unanimous consent of the whole committee. Thus England denied the admission of the democratically chosen Irish delegates: similarly, France refused to allow the representatives of our Celtic cousins, Brittany, to be heard. Only the small nations oppressed by those who lost the war, Germany and the Austro-Hungarian Empire, were given rights at the peace conference.

Massive Support

But the first Dail was progressive in its outlook and appealed to peoples across the heads of their governments. Support was rallied wherever Irish exiles lived: in England itself in Australia, Canada, and especially in the United States where millions of Irish birth and descent rallied to the call for international recognition of the Irish Republic. A delegation went to the new revolutionary government of Russia: representatives were sent to many countries, notably France, Germany, Italy where the socialists were most favourable and where English intrigue at the Vatican had to be countered—then as now; to Latin America where the peoples of Argentina and Chile expressed warm interest and support. Of Spain it was reported to the Second Dail in 1921 that "no country in Europe holds Ireland in such honour and affection, except Catalonia where our name stands higher still."

The Message of the Free Nations of the World declared that England was retaining Ireland as a "barren bulwark" for her "policy of world domination". And so great interest in Irish developments was shown in other parts of the Empire on which the sun was alleged never to have set.

In India, Mahatma Gandhi, ever sympathetic to Ireland, had begun his struggle: in Egypt the hunger strike of Terence MacSweeney, Lord Mayor of Cork and deputy of the First Dail for Mid-Cork was followed closely: on his death great pictures of him were displayed along the Valley of the Nile and an Egyptian poet wrote in Arabic:

All Ireland Republic

The High ground of revolution marked out clearly by documents and the actions of 1916 and 1919 represent for us to-day the rallying point for our peoples renewed struggle for national independence, for international co-operation of the oppressed peoples,

and for social justice in all of Ireland. The Republican Movement alone, standing in direct lineal succession to Easter 1916 and January 1919, has not reneged on that position, but has built upwards from it terms of to-day's struggle.

We regret the 26-County Free State, the so called United Kingdom and the E.E.C., and along with them the politico-military and economic power-blocs of East and West—all of which contradict and deny the First Dail and all that it stood for.

We stand for the All Ireland Republic of Pearse and Connolly, for the freedom of the oppressed peoples of Europe and of the Third World; for the break up of the power blocs by substituting for them "freedom and justice as the fundamental principles of international laws", and a "frank co-operation between the peoples for equal rights against the vested privileges of ancient tyrannies". (Message to the Free Nations of the World).

The conflict of Eire Nua, of a decentralised Socialist Republic with maximum political power at local level and workers control of industry together with State development of natural resources is the way forward in an increasingly centralised, imperialist and state-capitalist world. Eire Nua is but the logical development of the documents of 1919 read to you to-day.

"We declare that we desire our country to be ruled in accordance with the principles of Liberty, Equality and Justice for all, which alone can secure performance of government in the willing adhesion of the people". (Democratic Programme)

Nowhere does the Republican Movement to-day deny or contradict the clearly spelt out message of 1916 and 1919. Our British withdrawal demand is aptly worded in the Message to the Free Nations of the World in the Passage: "And this existing state of war between Ireland and England can never be ended until Ireland is definitely evacuated by the armed forces of England."

Way Forward

All the other political forces in Ireland, even those who seek to be known as Republican, have not commemorated this great Diamond Jubilee. As in the case of the Diamond Jubilee of 1916, celebrated by us outside Dublins G.P.O. and banned by the Free State, they wish that the First Dair had never happened. Dorothy Macardle in her book "The Irish Republic" states in regard to January 21st 1919:

"For Irish Republicans what had been done on that day was a national act as grave as was the Declaration of Independence in the United States for the American people—an act from which the nation could not withdraw"

Sinn Fein does not seek to withdraw from that act; we rejoice in it and we stand by it, as does the entire Republican Movement! The endurance of the Irish people beset by colonialism and neo-colonialism, North and South can find an answer and a way forward in the teaching of 1916 and of the first Dail. To-days struggle and the sufferings of our prisoners in the H-Blocks of Long Kesh and in all our other prisons are directed towards the implementation and making effective of that teaching—in our day.

3. IF ONLY . . .

In an R.E. interview (14.1.79) D.U.P. member, the Rev. Rob. Bradford described Roy Mason as the type that "if a bullet entered his head and went through, it would miss his brain . . . as a politician Mason begins at minus one." It was a harsh judgement but however crudely state, Roy Mason in a lengthy interview on R.E. one week later said little that might redeem that image.

The cockiness and the conceit of his delivery didn't quite match the plaintive wheedling in his statements. He was generously renewing his offer of the previously rejected 5 point plan for an interim solution to the N.I. problem—if only the leaders of the political parties in the North would come together again, if only they would agree now to resume dialogue: He wanted the assembly back and he was going to get the assembly back—"to supply us with ideas and information," (shortage of both noted).

He had much to offer the politicians at the level of local administration—if only they would stop thinking in terms of power-sharing and think partnership, think participation, think of the largesse of power and money he held for distribution to the local boys if only they play the part. If they failed to come together, then, he guaranteed, integration was on its way—an open invitation indeed to the integrationists and one that should not go unrecognised.

Did someone recently say something about the futile politics and sterile rhetoric of 50 or 100 years ago? Mason's pre-dates that by several decades. But it's all he has to bring to bear on an immediate and pressing political problem. "If only the Northern politicians would stop thinking of long-term solutions—they should be thinking of short-term measures . . ." He needs some short-term "solution",

Black

Dail

stated

both noted).

just "sitting around the table together debating" would do, to carry him and his vorenment party colleagues into the approaching British general election with a semblance of "success" and more importantly a semblance of fairness to balance the dirty little deal which the British Labour party carried out to give extra seats to the Unionists at Westminster. That was a deal that could have only two results, that of maintaining the British Government in power and that of strengthening the British-inspired sectarian divide in the Six Counties. If only people would believe Mason those extra seats "are quite likely to fall to anti-Unionist groups like the S.D.L.P. Alliance, and Republicans". Why the Alliance party was included in the anti-Unionist group is a mystery since its constitution demands retention of the Union link with Britain.

While Mason climbed down to admit failure on the political front he climbed back up to claim success "in his own province of activity, the security front"—a frank acknowledgement of the well known fact that his office is not a political one but that of a military governor.

He had "eaten into the strength yes, they had re-grouped, they had re-organised, they had carried the campaign back into Britain and no, he would never, in reference to them, use words like 'success', 'defeat', 'beaten'—it may be a slow process but the man must have something, somewhere, that registers, the Rev., Bradford to the contrary. "But," Mason declared, "the tide is turning against these men of violence". A mysterious tide that, the turning of which was declared with certainty back in 1972 and then vanished—sightings have been reported from time to time but these were subsequently found to be based on false rumours.

Mason was more positive, Mason—positive that is, on the matter of the H-Block prisoners—there would be no return to political status; no yielding to their demands; they were inflicting these terrible conditions on themselves—"if only they would conform there would be end to the problem . . . if only their old Kith and Kin in America would accept that most people now see no support for them." The Provisionals could only muster 250 people for their Burntolbet commemoration march he claimed in evidence—500 according to the B.B.B., 1000 according to R.T.E; 1500 according to the press, 2,000 according to another journal. Mason omitted to say what was noted and explained to the press, that the provisionals had withdrawn from participation in that particular march.

However there was a bright side, the economic and industrial front—"of course we made progress there"—and he might have been believed if only no one remembered that on the

previous 2nd January, Mason was warning the local politicians of "the enormously grave economic difficulties" in the Six Counties; if only no one was aware of the industrial chaos bursting about his ears, if only no one took notice of the highest unemployment figures since 1921 and less notice of the fact that Mason had just called in his troops to break an industrial strike.

Why shouldn't he claim progress.—"our financial inducements are the best in Western Europe". Now if only he could get some people to take him up on that—another Hoppe maybe—another deLorean?

4. IN MEMORIAM

Following his death this week, the name of Sir Arthur Young was re-introduced to the Irish scene as "the Reformer of the R.U.C., the English pioneer who had achieved so much in changing the sectarian image and modernising the activities of that police force, so transforming its members as to make them respectable, acceptable and impartial even within the Catholic Community in the North."

Credit where credit is due — Sir Arthur Young did do a good job for Brit. Government in initiating a transformation of the R.U.C. following his transfer to the 6 Co.s in October 1969 to take up the post of Inspector General.

The R.U.C. and their familiars, the B Specials, had been caught in the full glare of T.V. publicity. Blunt and brutal, nakedly sectarian in their role as the private police force of Unionist ascendancy. It was an exposure embarrassing to the public image of Brit. democracy and upsetting to the private plans of the Brit. Government. It required the experience of an old colonial hand and the skill of modern methods to change all that.

Sir Arthur Young in his brief tenure of office in the 6 Co's applied himself well to the job. The changes were quickly effected, the howls of protest and violent reaction of Loyalists and Unionists helpfully providing the flak behind which Young carried out his covert operation while maintaining the prepared public face of "a fair-minded cop."

Within six months the discredited B Specials were disbanded, transferred to build up the U.D.R. Redrafted as the R.U.C. reserve or set up in Government licensed gun clubs — an operation as thrifty as it was infamously deceitful. Within the R.U.C. and particularly their Special Branch, reportedly "totally demoralised by bad publicity" he began that process which transformed them from a bunch of publicly disgraced muggers to a gang so secretly skilled as to earn them-

selves the later description of "the most sophisticated torturers in western Europe since World War II" — an accolade they shared with their British army mentors.

Sir Arthur Young set in motion the coldly planned evil which set up the interrogation centres and supplied the expertise which "transformed" the R.U.C. but with careful attention to the public image. Militaristic titles of police personnel and establishments would be changed to peaceful-sounding ones. No further public displays of the Boot, the Baton and the Gun — there would be a time and a place provided for that, unseen, unheard and unquestioned. Laws would be bent, broken or stretched or new ones enacted to give complete cover and immunity, the final approval from the highest authority of their respectability and acceptability of the R.U.C. No longer a private police force, their newly acquired skills and activities would be divided as between the needs of the loyal unionists and the British authorities — what could be more impartial?

Towards the end of 1970 Sir Arthur Young left the 6 Co's in a faint aura of failure and regret that "he had not achieved all that he had set out to do." Modest man! The results of his plans and experiments were evident in the few short months that led from his departure to the introduction of Internment.

Clever man! he did not wait to share the well earned rewards of ignominy which have been heaped on the R.U.C. these past nine years.

He may have had some consolation last year. In May 1978, an Independent Public Inquiry held in Dublin revealed in depth and in detail the continuing grossness of R.U.C. brutalities in co-ordinated activity with the Brit. Army.

In June 1978, Amnesty International published their very damning indictment of the R.U.C. ill-treatment of prisoners and detainees during the previous year.

In October 1978, the Garda Review Journal (organ of the 26 Counties police) published an article describing the R.U.C. as "cool, professional, thorough and all in all admirable." The author wondered if the Gardai could emulate such "an improvement." Well, some of them did have a stab at it, didn't they?

5. WAR CLAIMS

The Belfast Brigade of the Irish Republican Army carried out a devastating bombing raid on a West Belfast City Bus Depot on Thursday January 17th.

Six bombs were planted, all exploding destroying 25 buses. The damage to the depot and buses was

estimated to be over one million pounds.

Claiming responsibility for the operation in a supplied statement, the Belfast Brigade said: "The attack had taken place despite the presence of British troops in the area and the heavily fortified Brit/RUC post less than 100 yards away. All volunteers involved in the operation returned to base safely."

To dispel the story put about by one of City Bus' inspectors in the depot that the IRA volunteers on the bombing operation, put a gun to his head and demanded to know his religion, the Belfast Brigade issued the following statement to "An Phoblacht-Republican News." "The IRA deny the sectarian divisive claims made by 'Inspector' Billy Vance that he was questioned at gun point about his religion during the bombing raid on Andersontown's City Bus Depot."

NEWRY

In a shooting attack, last Saturday, in Kilmorey Street, Newry, an RUC man was shot and seriously wounded.

In claiming responsibility for the attack the IRA denied the claim by the RUC that they had fired wildly during the operation, narrowly missing two children in a parked car nearby.

COMPUTER BANKS

The IRA also claimed responsibility for the bombing of Queen's University Computer Banks in College Street East, Belfast, last Sunday night. In a supplied statement the Belfast Brigade said:

"An active service unit of the Irish Republican Army successfully carried out the attack on the computer banks of Queens University, Belfast. We would point out that contrary to media reports less than fifty percent of the computer work had any relationship to the university; the bulk of the users of the computer were Brit government bodies. A warning was given and there were no civilian casualties."

6. ANTI EEC CAMPAIGN LAUNCHED

A campaign of united European opposition to the EEC was launched in Brussels this weekend by Sinn Fein and delegates from the other eight EEC states as well as Spain and Portugal.

An agreed platform for a joint campaign against EEC structures was made public at a Press Conference in the International Press Centre, Brussels, on Monday morning, January 22nd 1979.

Twenty-two socialist political parties and liberation movements

attended a four day conference which agreed the final terms of the platform.

These groups include the Venstre-socialisterne of Denmark and Democrazia Proletaria of Italy, both of whom already have representatives in their national parliaments; several French organisations subscribe to the platform including the United Socialist Party (PSU); as well as Sinn Fein the national liberation movements in the Basque country and Brittany and representatives of the Flemish and Frisian movements attended the conference.

The international platform is directed against "the Europe of big business, austerity, unemployment and repression" imposed by the undemocratic EEC structures.

On the positive side, it seeks to strengthen the international solidarity of workers for democratic freedoms and national and minority rights."

Sinn Fein, as already announced, will be carrying out an active and intensive boycott campaign, on an all-Ireland basis, against the EEC elections and institutions.

Irish Republican
Information Service

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