

IRISH REPUBLICAN INFORMATION SERVICE (no. 235)

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1. AN AGREEMENT BUT NOT A SETTLEMENT

IN a statement on April 10, following the signing of the Stormont Agreement, Ruairí Ó Brádaigh, President, Republican Sinn Féin, said: "This weekend British rule in Ireland stands updated and strengthened."

He went on to say: "The New Stormont will have nationalists in executive positions and cross-Border bodies will have their growth and development controlled by the Unionists and cannot lead to a free and independent Ireland.

"The Agreement signed at Stormont is less than Sunningdale in that it provides for a "Council of the British Isles" and amendments to Articles 2 and 3 of the 1937 Constitution. It has been stated to be transitional but it is in fact a stepping-stone away from Irish national independence.

"The Provos have finally and publicly accepted the Unionist Veto, underwritten and endorsed the British governments presence in Ireland and made partition permanent in so far as they possibly can.

"The whole process began in 1986 when Republican Sinn Féin had the far-sightedness to see where the departure from the Republican position at that time would lead and had the courage to oppose it. That stand has since been vindicated as Stormont is now accepted as well as Leinster House.

"The half-page advertisement in the *Irish Times* (April 9) from eight mainstream Irish American organisations unconnected with the Republican Movement in Ireland says inter alia: "A just peace will only come when Ireland is free from British control".

"This Easter weekend Republican Sinn Féin calls on all nationally-minded people to rally to the Republican standpoint and reject this sell-out of the nationalist position.

"We repeat our call to vote "No" in any referendums on the subject.

"There may be an Agreement but there is no Settlement of the question of Irish freedom and independence. A new four-province federal Ireland together with a British commitment to disengage would provide the basis for such a settlement and bring the permanent peace we all desire so earnestly, Ruairí Ó Brádaigh concluded.

2. NEWSPAPER, GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS OPPOSE STORMONT DEAL

SINCE April 9 Republican Sinn Féin has been joined in opposition to the Stormont deal by other groups and individuals. On April 12 the *Sunday Business Post* editorial was headed "This is no 'deal' for nationalist Ireland" and described it as "an enormous disappointment" which was likely to "copperfasten partition on this island for many years to come, perhaps for decades". Bertie Ahern was going "to tour the country urging the people to vote for a palpable lie: namely that the soil of Tyrone, Fermanagh, Derry, Antrim, Down and Armagh is British and not Irish".

On April 9 a half-page newspaper ad taken by eight US Irish American organisations called for the rejection of any changes to Articles 2 and 3 of the 1937 Constitution and stated: "A just peace will only come when Ireland is free from British control."

Bernadette McAliskey and The Irish in Britain Representative Group have also publicly opposed the deal.

3. 'A PERMANENT PEACE THROUGH BRITISH DISENGAGEMENT' – Ó BRÁDAIGH AT BALLINAMUCK

"THE United Irishmen of 1798 fought bled and died 'to break the connection with England' and to establish Liberty, Equality and Fraternity in Ireland. It is a sobering thought that this Easter, 200 years

afterwards, their ideals have not been achieved but are in reverse from the Irish people," said Ruairí Ó Brádaigh, President, Republican Sinn Féin.

He was speaking at the Co Longford Easter Commemoration held at the grave of General George Blake of Mayo, in Tubberpatrick Cemetery, Ballinamuck. General Blake was leader of the Irish forces at the Battle of Ballinamuck and was hanged afterwards following a drumhead court-martial by the English forces.

"The United Irishmen were not sectarian but highly political, he said. In the Age of Enlightenment they drew their inspiration from the most modernising forces of the time – the American and French Revolutions.

"Their leaders in Longford included Pat O'Farrell of Ballinree, Patrick and Henry O'Connell of Cranery and O'Keeffe of Ballinlough (who were Catholics). Hans and Alexander Denniston of Clonbroney and Alexander Cromie of Granard were Presbyterians and all of them led the Irish forces in battle against the English troops in that fateful year.

"Both of the Dennistons were British officers in the Mostrim Yeomanry and initiated many of their men into the United Irishmen. Hans Henniston was the link man with Irish headquarters in Belfast and went there for instructions when the French landed in Killala.

"General Blake came from Garracloon near Cong – not far from the ancestral home of General Tom Maguire who fought the British forces in the 20th century. Blake rallied his countrymen again and again on Shanmullagh Hill fighting obstinately even then all hope was gone.

"After capture and execution local people took his body, waked him in a barn and buried him in Tubberpatrick. A former officer in the British army who had seen service abroad, his grave has been marked by a fitting memorial cross.

"In the bicentenary year of the United Irish Rising, a well-crafted attempt is being made to update and strengthen British rule in Ireland. Nationalists will assist in maintaining the new Stormont and cross-Border bodies will be controlled by Unionists to prevent their growth and development.

"The Irish people are being urged on all sides to accept the new version of British rule and turn their backs on the United Irish objectives of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. The 'connection with England' instead of being broken is to be renewed.

"Nevertheless, Irish history teaches us that the British government and its occupation forces in Ireland will always be resisted. For a real, permanent peace people at home and abroad should support the demand for a British disengagement over a period of years. The creation of a new, democratic and federal Ireland, with four self-governing provinces would bring power to the people and help to realise those United Irish ideals of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity.

"For Irish freedom and those imperishable ideals the men and women of 1798 and of succeeding generations ever since had fought and sacrificed all.

"Let us not fail them now but strive to give to posterity the great gift of an abiding peace based on justice for all Irish people," Ruairí Ó Brádaigh concluded.

4. STORMONT 'AGREEMENT' DOES NOT ADDRESS THE REAL CAUSE OF THE CONFLICT

SPEAKING at the Easter Commemoration in Tipperary town on Sunday, April 12 Republican Sinn Féin Vice-President Des Long (Limerick) accused the Provisional leadership of treachery by splitting the Republican Movement purely in the interests of personal and political advantage. He called for a re-united Republican Movement to focus on the cause of the conflict in Ireland – the British presence in the Six Counties.

"The Stormont Agreement will not bring real and lasting peace to our country because they are not tackling the cause of the conflict," he said. We must have the courage to say that the leadership of the Provisionals – for personal and political advancement – have sold out the Republican position. The Provisional leadership have surrendered to the British, that is the reality and no amount of public relations will disguise the fact. What they have done can only be described as treachery.

"We must ensure that the question of the British presence is placed back on the political agenda. Until the British declare their intention to withdraw from Ireland the cause of the conflict will remain.

"Today I want to appeal to all Republicans who disagree with the sell-out strategy of the Provisionals to re-unite with the Republican Movement and work to ensure a British withdrawal," Des Long said.

5. THE VOICE OF REPUBLICAN YOUTH

IN bed with the British enemy and her unionist underlings, Provisionals' leader, Gerry Adams spoke at the Stormont Castle gathering on April 10, of leaving the past behind us. Graffiti from Republican youth appeared following the Stormont Agreement on the walls of William Street, Little Diamond and Rossville Street in the heart of Derry's Bogside: "SIX COUNTIES GOING CHEAP -- SELLING AGENTS -- ADAMS AND McGUINNESS".

6. BLOODY SUNDAY INQUIRY OPENS IN DERRY

APRIL 5 saw the formal opening of the inquiry into the infamous Bloody Sunday Massacre of January 30, 1972. The tribunal headed by Britain's imperial law Lord Saville chose Derry's Guild Hall to launch it's proceedings. Flanked by two commonwealth judges, William Hoyt of Canada and New Zealander, Edward Somers, Lord Saville promised journalists that the inquiry would be fair, thorough and impartial.

The statement of Lord Saville, himself a former British soldier that: "We have considered whether to recommend to the Attorney General at the outset that there should be immunity from prosecutions, when it may be possible to see more clearly whether the giant of immunity in any given case, or group of cases is necessary".

In other words those Crown agents who have committed crimes against humanity may be granted immunity case by case. Although the tribunal has the power to subpoena witnesses and insist on documents being produced, when asked by journalists if Britain's former Prime Minister, Edward Heath, senior British army commanders or former Stormont ministers would be asked to give evidence in person, Lord Saville replied, he could not say with certainty.

On the question of the tribunal examining British government or Stormont documents, Lord Saville said that the British government had not given any undertaking that it would not use public interest immunity certificates to prevent some files from being disclosed. The tribunal will begin in October proper in the Guild Hall, Derry with occasional sojourns to London. No findings will be disclosed by the tribunal for some time, enabling the cement to set on the new and reinforced Stormont regime of which former nationalists and former Republicans are expected to be part.

Commenting on the remit of the inquiry, Liam Wray, whose brother Jim was one of four men shot dead as they tried to flee the carnage in Glenfada Park, said "They're talking about possible immunity for British soldiers. That's something that I would have concerns about".

7. GUNSHOT ATTACKS ON ANTRIM FAMILIES

PRO-BRITISH elements launched gun attacks on two adjacent homes in Antrim town on April 16. At 11.30pm a woman leapt from her bed in terror to the sound of a gun blast at the front door of her house in Ballycraigey Estate. She escaped uninjured.

Within seconds, the gang struck at another house a few doors away. A couple and their three-and-a-half year old son were in bed when a single shot was fired through their living-room window. The family were badly shaken but were unhurt.

Around the same time an explosive device was thrown through a living-room window of a house in Carnany Drive, Ballymoney, Co Antrim. The device failed to explode. A man and a woman who were present at the time escaped injury.

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