

# PRESS RELEASE

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# SINN FÉIN

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## THREATENED INTERNMENT

Mr. Lynch's statement of yesterday on internment, coming two days after the Donegal and Dublin by-elections, was obviously based on a decision taken some time ago by the 26-County government. The question must now be asked - why is it announced now? If it is to deal with bank robberies why was it not announced long ago when a spate of these robberies took place and a garda was shot dead?

It is obvious to Sinn Féin that the threatened internment is in fact directed at the Republican Movement. Since there has been no major incident which Mr. Lynch could use to try to justify imprisonment without charge or trial, he has now tried to create a scare situation.

This state has since it was set up already seen three periods of internment. One lesson we would like to point out from the 1950's period is this: when the microscopic splinter group whose activities were used to justify internment were rounded up hundreds of Republicans were jailed with them. In 1957, within a couple of months of being interned in the Curragh, all the members of the splinter group had appeared before the "Commission" and signed out, leaving behind over 200 Republicans, most of whom were not released until March, 1959. This is quite likely to happen again.

It is well-known that the outline of a new arrangement between the Six-County State, the 26-County State and Britain has already been agreed between Mr. Lynch and Mr. Heath; that this new federal arrangement ties in with E.E.C. membership; and that the details are now being worked out. This would result in a new compromise settlement like the 1921 Treaty. Republicans oppose this, and Heath, Clarke and Lynch are working and moving in co-operation to stifle and crush Republican opposition.

The announcement of impending internment has been welcomed by all the extreme Orange and bigoted elements in the North. It is a very definite encouragement to Major Chichester Clarke to do likewise. All those good and generous people who rushed to help the oppressed people of the North in August 1969 with money, food, clothes and all kinds of assistance, should now consider the terrible consequences of this happening. The menfolk of exposed nationalist areas like Ballymacarrett and Ardoyne in Belfast will be arrested and interned. Their homes, families, womenfolk and children, will be left completely defenceless. The consequences of this are too terrible even to imagine, especially in view of the partisan attitude of the British army (witness July last in the Lower Falls) and disclosures in Stormont by Mr. John Taylor that firearms licences are being issued to B-Special rifle clubs.

Mr. Lynch is asking the people to buy a pig in a poke. He must produce his evidence which up to now appears to the public as just pub talk. Farmers and Trade Unionists who have suffered under the Offences Against the State Act must act quickly to prevent a further denial of basic Human Rights and Civil Liberties. All organisations must protest, and we call on them to do so now. By resolutions, telegrams, phone calls and letters to the press all citizens and citizens' organisations must act now to stop the stampede into dictatorship. In 1957-59 we had the reputation of being the only country in Western Europe with concentration camps. It looks as if the 1970s are going to be the same. Only a public outcry can stop it.

Finally, though internment may have been accepted passively by Republicans in the past, it will never again be so accepted. Never again will we suffer the indignity and degradation of being thrown behind barbed wire and held at gunpoint without charge or trial for an indefinite period of time.

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