

UINSEANN MacEOIN

THE IRA IN THE TWILIGHT YEARS 1923 - 1948

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THE **IRA**  
IN THE  
**TWILIGHT**  
**YEARS**

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1923 - 1948

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**A totally new assessment with many photographs**



### **Uinseann Ó Rathaille Mac Eoin**

Architect, planner, mountaineer; and for long deeply into the conservation of Ireland's built heritage.

The period of Irish Republican history, 1923 - 1948, about which he has now written, carried the sombre undertones of an unrealised - un realisable ideal; it is a story largely untold in any of the works on the I.R.A; on Óglaigh na h-Éireann. He felt it was time to research and tell it.

Amhlamh Ó Cathaill Mac Éoin: Feathra M



Óglaigh  
na hÉireann  
IRISH DEFENCE FORCES

Military Archives | Cathal Brugha Barracks | Rathmines | Dublin 6 | Ireland

**MacE**

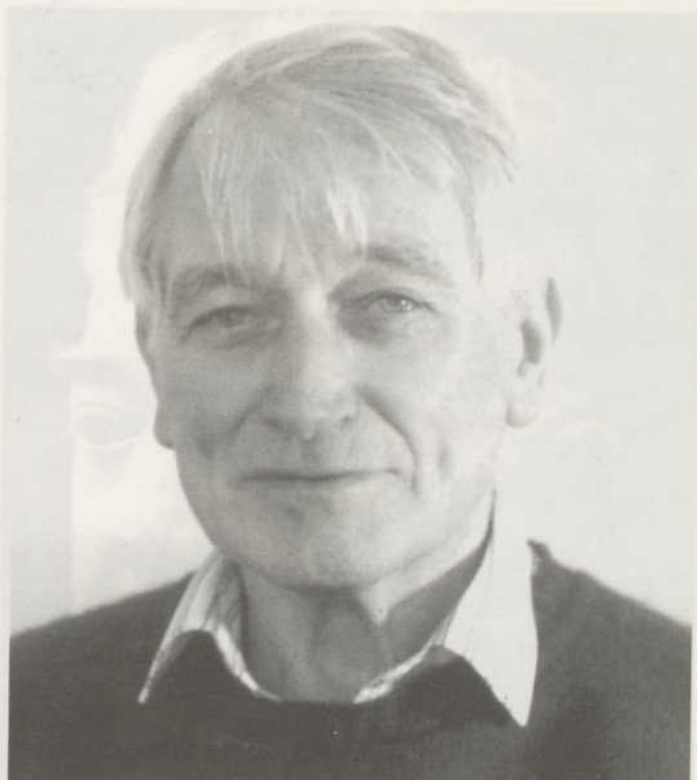


When a police superintendent questioned Tom Barry on his arrest at Union Quay station, Cork, in April 1935, to explain the policy of the I.R.A, Barry promptly answered:-

1. To compel the British forces to leave Ireland
2. To overturn the two dominion parliaments
3. To stop the exploitation of people by foreign interests
4. To finally break the connection with England
5. To restore to the people the unfettered control of their own destinies and resources, while promoting their cultural independence.

Tom Barry, an outstanding guerrilla leader, and until 1938, high in the ranks of the I.R.A, died in July 1980.

The photograph, by Colman Doyle, was taken in 1979, while Uinseann Mac Eoin was researching in Cork city for his work *Survivors*.



Conor Payne

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The period of Irish Republican history, 1923 - 1948, about which he has now written, carried the sombre undertones of an unrealised - un realisable ideal; it is a story largely untold in any of the works on the I.R.A; on Óglaigh na h-Éireann. He felt it was time to research and tell it.



ATLANTIC OCEAN



*On the Run - War of Independence*  
Painted by Sean Keating, PRHA 1924

Reproduced by permission

Keating's picture, now in the Allied Irish Bank Collection of Twentieth Century Irish Art expresses, not only the anxiety, but the tedium of being on the run. Yet, with the stories that circulated in the aftermath, it conjured for many a romantic image of guerrilla warfare.

It was an image that grew with time until after the veterans had passed on. And with Fenianism ever latent, it ensured a continuation of a military tradition and the belief that 'we had nearly won'.

It overlooked the fact that had England chosen to prolong the two year struggle by another two years, she might have turned a majority of people against the I.R.A through her influence with the Catholic Church, and the power that a government holds upon the print media. And so far as current warfare is concerned it is an imagery as obsolete as a cavalry charge. Far from lying in wait, and departing on bicycles, in the recent Six County war, British helicopters could hover over the scene of a rural action within seven minutes.



## PREFACE:

It is now over 50 years since the Curragh Internment Camp of the forties closed, and no account whatever has been written of it. 56 years since it opened in the Glasshouse of the Military Camp, while a camp of hutments was being built below; to be followed soon after by an enlarged camp that could have accommodated eleven hundred, although fortunately never called upon to imprison that number. Upwards of 1500 may have passed through, although the peak number held behind five rows of barbed wire, a deep trench and armed sentries, reached only 547 in March 1943. From then on, until December 1945, the numbers held declined steadily through release and a system of parole. Not more than five per cent actually 'signed out', and they were mostly people who had no connection with the Republican Movement.

Have I said, five lines above, 'only 547', yet these were men - there were women and girls also in Mountjoy - who were imprisoned for a considerable number of years *solely upon suspicion*. So it is therefore time that it was written about, and in the autumn of 1991 I undertook, somewhat reluctantly, this self-imposed task. It was not a glory period, men followed what they believed to be a Fenian tradition, but in so doing they were accused - and it was easy under the pall of censorship to so accuse - that they endangered 26 County neutrality.

More than 300 persons were spoken to, and 33 have their story entered here; their story, and that of their family and friends; largely unaltered, as they told it, and unabridged. There is some repetition, and there are conflicts of view on comrades within the Camp and upon Free State personnel. That is as it should be. Quite early on I felt however that I could not present this somewhat grim story by itself, in isolation. There had to be a lead-in, so I commenced from the Cease Fire Order of April 27, 1923, trawling newspapers and reports, until the next 'outbreak' of 1939. Thereafter I allowed the veterans to speak for themselves. But I included also in that lead-in period national and world events, while giving fair and respectful due to the leaders of Saorstát Éireann in those seven formative years of the twenties and the nine years of the thirties. And many will wonder, knowing the millions and billions borrowed and funded and drawn upon to support the state of today, how so much then was accomplished with so little.

Ní raibh moran rachmasóirí na daoine cam-saibhir ag an ám; sin cuis amháin. Bhí an cuid is mo des na politicheóirí ionnraice; ní raibh 'ceisteanna sóisialta' ag cur an náisún ar mire, agus ní raibh ach fíor beagan féinmharú. Ar lámh amháin, ní scéal politíochta atá sa leabhar seo ach scéal sóisialta.

*Uinseann Ó Rathaille Mac Eoin 1997*

The Jack Lynch of Cork frequently referred to was not Jack Lynch, former Taoiseach, but one of the 3 brothers, Tadhg, Jack and Paddy from Dunmanway.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

Táim fé chomaoín mór do's na daoine go léir a thug cabhair dom, especially Séamus Ó Mongáin as Co. Muigheo, to Seán Ó Mathúna and Michael Mac Evilly, the latter reading some proofs.

To Caoimhín Ó Beoláin, Peadar Mac Ardgail, as Dún Dealgan, Bernadette Ní Rodaigh, Peter Carolan, who helped with newspaper research, to the staff of the Gilbert Library, to Commdt Peter Young, of Cathal Brugha Barracks and his Military Archive, to Billy Quirke of Enniscorthy, Jackie Clarke of Ballina (more on that!), Sean Sherwin of Fianna Fáil, Joe Farrell of Dundalk, Declan Horgan and Doddie, née Comer, Traighlí, Derek Mc Kenna agus a bhean, as Cathair Saidhbhín, Donncaid Mac Gearailt as Traighlí, Seán Mac Mathúna as Conradh, Ned Bailey from Emo on Fr. John Fahy, Rúairí Ó Brádaigh, An t-Ollamh T. P. O Neil, Tim Pat Coogan, Jim Mc Guinness, Michael Mc Donagh from Carrick on Shannon, Una O'Neill of Ballyknocken, Seoirse Plunkett, Col Desmond Swan and Sergt-Major Mick Fahey of Newbridge, Commdt Pat Phelan of the Curragh Camp, Donal O'Donovan, Nora Harkin, Cathal Holland, Dermot Fleming, Francis Mc Kay, T.F Mc Namara, Seamus Leahy of Clonmel, Eamonn Corcoran, Elsie O'Connor née Kerins, Dan Gleeson, now in Dublin, and Dan of Ballymackey, Brendan Walsh, Seamus Forde, Anna Barron, Conor Foley of London, Carmel Mc Neela, Margaret Casey, M. Ní Cearnaig, of National Graves Association, Sheila Bradshaw, Noel O'Donoghue, Deasún Breathnach, Bob Humpheries, Office of Public Works, David Simms, Jack Mc Carthy of Lixnaw, Aer Lingus, on early Atlantic flying, Pat Roche of Carrigaholt with Eddie Lenehan and Vincent Keane of Baldoyle.

Editors of *Tuam Herald*, *Anglo Celt*, *Clare Champion*, the library of the *Irish Times*, the Imperial War Museum, *The Daily Telegraph*.

In this long list the most important people come last. MARGARET, my wife, who inspired me to undertake *Survivors*; all of the Veterans whose stories commence from the middle pages (with a special word for Jim Savage, my tireless 'secretary' in Cork city), Colman Doyle, photographer - the Dublin houses - and Conor Payne - most of the personalities, and the Cork houses; Patricia, for the thousands and thousands of words inputting she patiently punched in; so, tá súil agam as Dia nár ndhearn mé dearmad ar aoinne.

*Hope for success; under all circumstances have your heart. You may live to see Ireland what she ought to be, but whether or not let us die in the faith.*

James Hope, 1764-1847

*The greatest danger in negotiations is Reasonableness, Eamon De Valera to his confidant Frank Gallagher on eve of Economic War 1932, De Valera 1882 - 1975.*

*Where shall they pitch their camp?*

*Says the Shan Van Vocht*

*On the Curragh of Kildare*

*And the boys will all be there*

*With their pikes in good repair*

*Says the Shan Van Vocht.*

*Iad siud atá imithe: I have a profound dislike of treating any of our Veterans as 'late' or deceased. They are still with us and will continue to inspire us. Ach, ag an ám seo tá siad siud sa cré; Bob, Liam, Pat, Máirtín, Mattie, an tarna Bob, Paddy, Jimmy.*

*Go ndheanfaidh Dia Trócaire orra.*

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The I.R.A - Óglaigh na hÉireann - slipped into the trough of defeat following the week of the Dublin Rising of Easter 1916 (a draw), two and a half years of an Anglo-Irish war (a seeming victory), and a year of civil war with the new Free State (a resounding defeat), to emerge chastened and demoralised. It continued to wage an underground struggle with the governments of W.T Cosgrave and Eamon De Valera, until in 1938, its new Chief of Staff, Sean Russell, a warrior of the Tan days, gave it a fresh focus with his S. Plan, for the strategic bombing of the cities of England. World War 2 was not expected for another three years, but events overtook Russell and the campaign ended in imprisonment and executions.

This book is a record - a unique record - of the political and world events leading up to 1939, and the personal story of 33 of the veterans subsequently. Apart from anything else it is pre-eminently a social document.

**Other Works:**

**SURVIVORS:** The personal story of 26 veterans from the early decades of this century.

**HARRY:** The story of Harry White of Belfast

**SYBIL:** A novel of the fifties



Richard J King

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*The historian who avoids suspicion and surmise has the best title to credit. It is hard for a man who did not live at the time to believe or comprehend the extent to which misrepresentations were carried at the close of our struggle.*

- James Hope on 1798 in Co. Antrim writing 1843.

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*To assist in the considerable expense of producing this work,  
a gentleman from a western town subscribed a munificent sum to Argenta.  
The men and girls of the late thirties and forties have been written  
out of history, he said; I do not want that to happen.*

The Republican Movement from May 1923 to April 1938 as seen by J. Bowyer Bell, T.P. Coogan and Conor Foley. A Digest of Events, with Editorial Interpolations and Commentery.

## PART ONE: MAY 1923 TO FEBRUARY 1932.

J. BOWYER BELL: AUTHOR, THE I.R.A.

After the dump arms order of May 24, the Civil War dribbled away; arrests continued. By July there were officially 11316 prisoners. On neither side was there a sign of remorse. On July 26, a Public Safety Act, the first of more than thirty such in the lifetime so far of the nation, was passed. Nora Connolly O'Brien, in the Court of Appeal, precipitated another on August 3; otherwise most prisoners would have had to be released at that time.

The Republicans, as Sinn Féin, contested the second Free State elections, under northerner Eamon Donnelly, and on August 27, doing better than anyone expected, returned 44 abstentionist candidates. Reorganisation of Óglaigh na h-Eireann recommenced 'from the parish pump upwards' under Frank Aiken C.S and Sean Lemass, Minister of Defence, following a two day meeting in the Elliot Hotel, 64 Harcourt Street. Maud Gonne, with Charlotte Despard and others, commenced a release campaign. There were escapes and attempted escapes. 73 men passed through a tunnel from the Curragh Tintown. Others passed out singly, in disguise, buried under rubbish, daringly under barbed wire; over walls. At this stage the satisfaction of a successful escape would make no difference to the balance of forces; it was simply something that should be done. A mass hunger strike spurted up in Mountjoy on October 13; two died; more cried off, but by early December most were released.

G.H.Q in Dublin was beefed up by the arrival of MacBride, Price and Daithi O'Donoghue; a parallel army and government, albeit shadowy now existed. On January 16, 1924 the Public Safety Act was re-enacted with additional powers. In March there occurred the quite separate threat of Free State Army mutiny from Maj. Gen Liam Tobin and Col. Charlie Dalton. On March 21, four I.R.A in Free State uniforms, influenced by the mutineers, fired upon a boat unloading passengers from the British base at Spike Island in Cork, killing one and wounding a number. It failed to provoke the hoped for response from the British. By July 1924, all but six, had been released from prison and the government itself was secure. Unarmed civic guards under Chief of Police Eoin O'Duffy were in control of all of the 26 Counties; the huge military force wound down was confined to barracks.

On November 19, in five by-elections, two Sinn Féin candidates were elected, while in the other three support rose significantly. Two more seats were won in March 1925 bringing the tally to 48 seats. Kevin O'Higgins, in April, brought in a Treasonable Offences Bill permitting a death penalty for 'levying war' against the State. Two months later, June 1925, found Gerald Boland, Sean Russell and P.A. Murray in Soviet Russia on a not too clearly defined mission; a worthwhile effort even if they returned empty handed. Not all Republicans were euphoric as a result

of their seemingly easy electoral success however. Some recognised that voters would turn away in time from those who preached abstention while leaving the real power to others. Jobs grew harder to find; in the rural areas republican support was being eroded through enforced emigration.

The 'paper wall' was complete. Republicans had only the monthly *Sinn Féin* as an outlet until, on June 18 1925, *An Phoblacht*, edited by Patrick Little appeared. A General Army Convention was held on November 14, in Dalkey which up-ended Aiken on the political issue of entering parliament. Meanwhile, the Mountjoy Prison break of October 25, had occurred and 19 men were freed. November brought also the news to Ireland that the Boundary Commission was not going to alter the Border by one iota.

In November 1924, in a general election in the North, De Valera, standing as an abstentionist in South Down was elected, as was Eamon Donnelly for South Armagh. With an overwhelming Unionist majority, that would cause no ripples; long before the Civil War ended the I.R.A had been beaten out of the North. At its height Crumlin Road Prison, the Larne camps and Derry held 870 Republicans. By 1924, into early 1925, all had been released. The North, from now onwards was an area that would remain dormant.

On March 9 1926, Sinn Féin, in an extraordinary Ard Fheis, split upon the issue of Dáil entry, 223 to 218; a decision that left De Valera in a minority but one that was uncomfortably close. He resigned as President and went, on April 12, to found his Fianna Fáil Party in the La Scala Theatre, in Prince's Street. At the start the I.R.A and Fianna Fáil remained closely in tandem; only later, after 1932, did the division widen.

Prior to the formation of Fianna Fáil, De Valera sent Aiken, his most trusted lieutenant to the U.S to stake a first claim on funds from that quarter. Andy Cooney, who had been appointed C.S in succession to Aiken, departed on a similar mission in June 1926. Maurice Twomey, 'a man of faultless intuition,' was appointed as a replacement - later confirmed - and so remained until May 1936.

On November 14, 12 rural garda barracks were raided for arms and intelligence; little being got, but two garda were killed. Extensive raiding of homes followed. It was an instalment of a stepped up militancy which had already commenced with a raid upon the sheriff's office in Dublin when a jury list was seized; at Seatown Place, Dundalk, John Doyle, was shot dead on August 20; on November 20, Crumlin barracks, in a village outside Dublin, was attacked; Knockanore barracks, Co. Waterford, was raided and station records removed.

The level of militancy continued into 1927 when, along with other incidents recorded, C.I.D man O'Donnell, of Mallow, was fired on by Con Healy, who subsequently received five years penal servitude.

By 1927 Peadar O'Donnell had a campaign to withhold annuities under way; there was much to be done on it but in time it would help to topple the government.

After a dogged effort by the I.R.A to bring Fianna Fáil and Sinn Féin together for electoral purposes, an effort which failed, the 26 Counties went to the polls on June 9, 1927. Fianna Fáil actually dropped four seats to 44; and when they presented themselves at Leinster House they were turned away when they refused to take the Oath.



On July 10, Kevin O'Higgins was assassinated; arising from that the Cumann na nGael government introduced and put through the Dáil a new Public Safety Act, an Act whose effect would end abstention by forcing a prior agreement from candidates to take the Oath; while a third bill ruled out a referendum on the issue. (F.F. had been considering a referendum).

On September 15, a further election gave 62 seats to Cosgrave with 57 to De Valera. After all heads were counted he was still six seats short of government. Fianna Fáil would have to cool its heels for another five years.

A General Army Convention held in the little Theatre in Clarendon Street in November 1927 confirmed Twomey as C.S. Reorganisation was proceeding satisfactorily; the structure was being maintained; and the links with Clan na Gael in America held tight. Four and a half years on from the close of the Civil War the shadowy army of the I.R.A was ready for business; but what business?

The majority of volunteers continued to be the survivors from the Tan and Civil War periods although younger men were available in plenty. The peripheral organisations, Fianna and Cumann na mBan, were thriving. More Thompsons were arriving from America, and cash from that source paid a modest wage to H.Q staff and organisers. Jim Killeen, who had escaped from Mountjoy in 1925 was arrested in London in 1926, and extradited back to complete a short sentence.

*Fianna Fáil*, said Sean Lemass in the Dáil in 1928, *is a slightly constitutional party.... We have adopted the method of political agitation to achieve our end because we believe, in the present circumstances, that method is best in the interests of the nation and of the Republican movement.*

Cumann na mBan, under Shelia Humphreys, developed a form of mild pamphleteering under the title of Ghosts. They assisted also, in August, when it came to 'persuading' a few Dublin business houses to remove Union Jacks flying to celebrate the resumed Tailteann Games. Letters were written to jurors appealing to their conscience, but stronger action - ultimately to prove damaging - came on January 23, 1929, when John White, foreman of the jury in the Con Healy case, was gravely wounded in Terenure. On February 20, Albert Armstrong, who had given evidence against four young men who had removed a Union Jack, was shot dead at his home in Terenure. *Slave minded jurors are responsible*, said *An Phoblacht*, *and are paying for their treachery.* It did not however serve well the cause of persons accused because the authorities were seeking ways to abolish juries and would soon do so.

A General Army Convention of January 1929 resulted in no change of direction. Adjutant General Tom Daly from Kerry, brother of executed Charlie and May\* retired because of ill health and was replaced by Donal O'Donoghue, followed later by Jim Killeen. By and large however the same dozen men remained in charge.

\* See their life story in *Survivors*

A new umbrella body, *Comhairle na Poblachta*, came together in April 1929, and, although pilloried in reports by the police, it failed to pull together the principal constituent bodies, Sinn Féin and the I.R.A; they in a short time, reverted to their appointed ways. Sinn Féin was a dying organisation anyway: no longer nation wide. Staffed by people past their prime, untouched by a youthful membership, and devoid of cash resources, it could do little more than issue occasional statements.

In June 1929 another organisation surfaced; the Irish Labour Defence League, staffed by Price, Fitzpatrick, Ryan, Coulter and Tom Merrigan: it was clearly under the aegis of the I.R.A, and its life would be a short one. About this time Dave Fitzgerald and Gilmore, in Russia, were endeavouring to arrange for training there; an effort that, because of its impracticality came to nothing.

Less impractical, because it meant merely boat and train fare, and a stentorian crowd voice, was an appearance at an international congress; O'Donnell and MacBride in 1930 went to Frankfurt-on-Main, O'Donoghue and Frank Ryan to Paris, with Annuity committee members going to Berlin.

It was all a commendable way of keeping open a window upon a somewhat unreal world. Fructified by their travels, and influenced by world depression, a host of would be revolutionary groups tumbled out upon the stage; the Workers' Revolutionary Party, with O'Donnell, Fitzpatrick, O'Donoghue and Donal O'Connor in the ascendant; The Friends of Soviet Russia, the Irish Unemployed Movement, The Womens' International League for Peace and Freedom, The International Anti-Imperialist League, the Irish Workers' and Farmers' Republican Party, together with a revived Communist Party. Within a short time all of them, having no real separate existence, would coalesce with other groups or disappear without trace.

Nonetheless the hope of a leftward boost, if unreal, stayed constant. Mick Price visited New York in November 1930 and was escorted by Gerald O'Reilly and Charlie Harkin, recently arrived wild geese, on a tour of initiation; not that Price required it. Maurice Twomey arrived shortly after, but the brief of the staid Twomey was to meet only the Clan and ensure that modest funds continued to flow.

On February 15, 1931 a General Army Convention in the home of Róisín Walsh, Dublin's Chief Librarian, committed the I.R.A to a new and radical movement, Saor Éire. O'Donnell and Dave Fitzgerald commenced at once to put together the basic tenets of a programme for submission to a national convention.

A fortnight earlier the organisation carried out its first official execution for many years; sadly but deservedly. Patrick J. Carroll, O.C No. 3 Company, was identified and shot on January 30, as an admitted government agent. A week later Supt. Curtin, in Tipperary, initiated a treason case, when he set alight a chain reaction. Curtin wrote to his commissioner arguing strongly against a jury trial-unavoidable in the circumstances-on what was a mere charge of drilling in the area of Soloheadbeg.

Two hours after he had written his report the I.R.A arrived and shot him. As the I.R.A nudged forward in what was an avowedly anti-state campaign to intimidate policemen, prison warders - never a respected profession - and jury men, their confidence and their numbers grew. H.Q, in a novel move, freed them to take cases for

assault and false arrest into the courts; numbers of them did just that to the great frustration of Commissioner Eoin O'Duffy.

George Gilmore was arrested on April 24, 1931; at these times he seemed more often in than out; with the increasing popular impetus behind the Movement and the corresponding strengthening of Fianna Fáil it appeared to many that the ten year old Free State must soon crumble.

Sunday June 21, 1931 was Bodenstown; and a Bodenstown banned for the first time. But the thousands who made their way there only added to the siege feeling of government, heightened in this case by the high flung oratory of O'Donnell substituting for an arrested Sean Russell.

The drive against the state's servants continued. In Dublin, on July 18, warders from Mountjoy were seized and one was handcuffed to a railing. In Tipperary, in a final echo of the Soloheadbeg case, John Ryan, one of the witness's was taken from his home and shot. 'He was nothing less than a traitor', Frank Ryan told reporters\*.

At a meeting in the happy hunting ground of the Hotel Elliot, owned by Mrs. E. Elliot at 64 Harcourt Street in September, Sean MacBride and Mike Fitzpatrick were assigned the task of calling the first foundation conference of Saor Éire. 120 delegates and twenty observers met in the Iona Hall, North Great Georges Street, under Clare man Sean Hayes of the Irish Working Farmers' Group. A revolutionary programme, handed down by the Army Council, was adopted unanimously, and after a flow of rhetoric, handshakes and back slapped reminders, the delegates left for their trains. But the country was unready for the vigorous language of socialism, and much more inclined to give ear to the traditional republicanism of De Valera who continued to profit from the seemingly unstoppable growth of the I.R.A.

Backed by the press and applauded by the comfortable, the doctrine of a Red Menace was propagated. On Sunday, October 18, a joint pastoral letter from Maynooth condemned Saor Éire by name, and the I.R.A. by implication: the government rushed through the Constitution (Amendment No. 17) Bill, inserting Article 2 A into the Constitution, and banning 12 organisations, many of them minuscule. Eoin O'Duffy, and to a lesser extent the bishops, had had their way. As a net result, there was talk of a second round; more funds were sought in the U.S, although little came, but some Thompsons did. The only real response was an Anti-Imperialist Rally, accompanied by more window smashing, on November 11.

George and Charlie Gilmore, held since April following the raid upon the Massey estate, went before the new Military Tribunal, after an abortive attempt at escaping from Mountjoy, in December. Frank Ryan, for seditious libel, Sean O'Farrell, T.J. Ryan, Shelia Humphreys and a few dozen lesser lights were also clapped behind bars; some on mere drilling charges. The government felt satisfied that they were once again on top of the situation. Facing a Eucharistic Congress in June (St. Patrick being said to have arrived in Ireland 1500 years before), and an International Dominion Conference in Ottawa likely to last one month, confronted

\* Yes: at that time spokesmen could say things like that and have them printed too.

Cumann na nGael with a dilemma; they could seek an electoral mandate in February 1932, or they could wait until October: they choose February. O'Donnell set the tone for the entire Movement with the slogan, Put Cosgrave Out.

An Army Council meeting in January, held in Dundrum, Co. Dublin, rescinded the General Order of 1927 prohibiting Volunteers working or voting in a Free State election. While support varied from constituency to constituency, in the main, I.R.A. support and the support from their families, was welcome and counted; especially when the dead in their legions were resurrected and the emigrants ghosted home. Impersonation, through the I.R.A. influence, became part and parcel of the culture of F.F. from then onwards. The country was in foul economic shape and the old war cries of 1923 sounded sour to the hungry. Although in the six years since its foundation, Fianna Fáil had become a less radical and a somewhat less republican party, yet they walked into power with 72 members to Cosgrave's 57. They were short of an overall majority, but the minuscule Labour Party, ever eager for patronage, would provide the lobby fodder De Valera now required.

## Part Two: February 1932 to June 1936

On March 9, 1932 Eamon De Valera was elected President of the Executive Council by 81 votes to 68. The election was approved by Governor-General James Mac Neill whose office De Valera intended soon to abolish.

Promptly James Geoghegan, the new Minister for Justice, and Frank Aiken, the new Minister for Defence, and lately - until November 1925 Chief of Staff of the I.R.A, went to Arbour Hill Military Prison to commence the formality for release of the 20 men there; all (except Gilmore) upon very short terms. Some three others, not I.R.A, were released later.

Operation of Article 2 A (the Military Tribunal) was suspended on March 18. Ernest Blythe had already called into Portobello Barracks, preceding Aiken, and warned the assembled Free State Army officers there that, as they had captured the Four Courts in June 1922 their task now was to capture the Minister for Defence.

Meanwhile the I.R.A sat back; some of them awaiting a quick dismissal of the guilty ones, a recognition of the role of the I.R.A itself and a rush down the road to secure the Republic. Gilmore and Russell were invited, as representing two view points, to meet De Valera. His intention, he told them, was to secure the objectives of Document No.2, and there would be no real need henceforth for the Army.

Conversely, it was growing by leaps and bounds. It was a repetition of the summer of 1921 when all sorts joined, swelling the numbers beyond its organisational ability. Easter commemorations overflowed; the Bodestown processions, with Fianna Fáil prominent, stretched from Sallins to the graveside.

The first Republican, Gerald Dempsey, arrested on a minor misdemeanour proved an embarrassment and was promptly released. On August 14, George Gilmore and T.J. Ryan were shot at and wounded near Kilrush. An inquiry, charged the C.I.D, and the two later received compensation.

Saor Éire, in cold storage now for six months, was quietly forgotten. While Cumann na mBan's anti-British sweets campaign continued in a restrained way, a more violent anti-Bass boycott commenced. Through his No Free Speech for Traitors slogan Frank Ryan energised the fringe into bursting up Cumann na nGael street meetings. This in turn combined with real hardships caused by Britain's Economic War, resulted in the transformation of the club-like Army Comrades Association into a mass movement, known as the Blueshirts: it would have a short life but a troublesome one.

While the I.R.A slipped into stunts and street fighting, De Valera, with caution and skill, was broadening his base; all the time edging the I.R.A further off stage. By June he had abolished the Oath, and on July 1, commenced defaulting on the Annuities (while still making half payable by farmers into the national exchequer). As forecast, the British clapped duties on Irish cattle while the Free State in turn put taxes on newspapers and British goods. Mac Neill was replaced as Governor by Donal Ó Buachalla of Maynooth, De Valera's *Seán na Scuab*, to quote himself. Col. Neligan, the 'butcher' of Kerry was shifted to a pleasant post in the Dept. of Lands; 'twas all done in a masterly manner and without blood letting'.

Seizing his opportunity (being dependent heretofore upon the goodwill of the small Labour Party) De Valera called for January 24, 1933, a general election, intent upon achieving an overall majority. Once again the I.R.A had to decide whether to support him and, without saying so directly, they accorded him considerably greater support than they had done even in 1932.

On the evening of January 7, a General Army Convention, summoned for the purpose, recommended that Óglaigh na hÉireann work and vote against Cosgrave. (Tom Gill, exiled in America, had returned to join the leadership). Two days later however, De Valera warned in Navan, that no section of the community would be allowed to arm. Conveniently the I.R.A ignored this small blip upon the horizon.

The result of the January 1933 election was a solid success; a gain of five seats for Fianna Fáil, with a loss of nine for Cumann na nGael; giving them the mystical 77 seats in a house of 153. Fianna Fáil made much of the concurrence of the tragic Civil War figure 77\*. The recently formed Centre Party, under Frank Mac Dermot and James Dillon, gained eleven seats, but that party in a few weeks would be subsumed into Cumann na nGael (by that time renamed United Ireland Party or Fine Gael).

On February 22, De Valera dismissed Eoin O'Duffy as Commissioner of the Garda Síochána; although offered, and pressed to accept, a comparable civil service position he opted rather to take to himself the leadership of the A.C.A which on April 8, at Kilkenny, would adopt the Blueshirt uniform.

On July 20, O'Duffy ordered a name change to that of National Guard, fixing the date of Sunday, August 13, for a March on Rome type of excursion, being a massed trek through Dublin to Glasnevin via Merrion Square, commemorating the Treaty triad, Griffith, Collins, O'Higgins.

Meanwhile, with the slogan, *only Communism can liberate the masses*; that minuscule party, the C.P.I reformed with the retitled *Irish Worker's Voice*, as its organ. Realising that this serpent must be crushed, sodality members and hundreds who were not, attacked over three nights, Connolly House in Great Strand Street, in March 1933, eventually wrecking it and burning a bedding factory next door for good measure. Madame Despard's Irish Workers' College at 63 Eccles Street was next for attention, but apart from broken glass, it escaped.

At the same time Frank Ryan, Mick Price, George Gilmore and Peadar O'Donnell were slipping through the countryside raking up support for a new Saor Éire, to be titled Republican Congress; essentially it would be a left wing umbrella organisation. Using the O'Duffy march threat as a lever, De Valera confiscated all of the private revolvers licenced to former ministers, while Colonel Eamon Broy, replacing O'Duffy, recruited a S. Branch, largely of former I.R.A men, ostensibly to fight the Blueshirts. Dawn of Sunday August 13, found O'Duffy's march banned a few hours before and the parade route heavily guarded. The General ate humble pie in as much as it was a repeat of O'Connell's 1844 Clontarf all over again; the parade was cancelled.

\* Although we know from Ernest Blythe the number of official executions was 84 or 85.

Renaming his battalions the Young Ireland Association, O'Duffy was elevated leader of United Ireland (Fine Gael), incorporating the Centre Party, with Cosgrave, Dillon and Mac Dermott as vice-presidents; the party meanwhile being instructed in the weekly *United Ireland* on the corporate philosophy of professors James Hogan and Michael Tierney.

Nothing could be more conducive to welding the I.R.A into a solidly anti-Blueshirt force; ignoring Fianna Fáil, its own leadership and England's continuing occupation of the North, it struck at Blueshirt parades wherever they could be found. The struggle between them became more bitter in the winter of 1933, through 1934, before they disappeared altogether by 1935; the Blueshirt movement having by then shot its bolt.

On September 21, an I.R.A squad shot and wounded a member of the O'Duffy party in Dingle; two days later they broke up a meeting in Limerick; on September 30, the riot was repeated in Cork. In some areas the Blueshirts had to be conveyed to meetings for their own safety. Trees were uprooted, shots were fired and on October 6, at Tralee, O'Duffy suffered physical injury, while his meeting hall was continuously pummeled\*. On October 16, five persons were wounded when shots were fired into a Blueshirt dance at Woodford, Co. Galway. On October 19, Hugh O'Reilly and Frank O'Leary were shot at in Bandon, O'Reilly dying later. Twelve were arrested after the Tralee episode and sentenced to Arbour Hill for periods ranging from four months to six months imprisonment.

On December 8, the Association was again banned and O'Duffy himself arrested in Westport, although speedily released. *An Phoblacht* pointed out the soft fines and shorter sentences incurred by Blueshirts; as a result a December issue was suppressed; its first suppression under Fianna Fáil. Many in the Movement now inwardly wondered; were we wrong to support De Valera.?

1934 brought a lessening of Blueshirt - I.R.A clashes. On January 4, a publican from Dunmanway died after a Christmas Eve mêlée. On January 9, Two Blueshirts were robbed in Dundalk. On February 8, one, McGroary, pointed to the Republican concerned.

The following Sunday 11, a bomb demolished his house, shattering the street, and causing the death of his mother a fortnight later from shock. On the same day there was a wild melee in Drogheda. On February 23, a bill, introduced in An Dáil prohibited uniforms, but the Senate, on March 21, rejected the bill. This gave De Valera his long sought opportunity to abolish it. [The new Constitution of 1937 created a Senate of a different sort in 1938].

Along with his Special Branch, Frank Aiken announced a volunteer force; one that would siphon off some old I.R.A men seeking a convivial job, while the other would wean the young who might otherwise be tempted into Óglaigh na hÉireann. Compensation was also promised for property lost in the Tan and Civil Wars; around the corner was the carrot of a 1934 Pension Act which would bring a bounty to anyone who played any part in the struggle up to the end of September 1923. The I.R.A and their followers were politically becalmed by these developments.

\*See Tomo Costelloe's account

Meanwhile the Congress founders beavered away, garnering votes for the all-important Convention of March 17, 1934, ultimately to be held in a ballet school above the Home Market shop in St. Stephen's Green. To some it would be a re run of the Saor Éire debacle; to others it would be meaningless, as Fianna Fáil had already captured the high ground. Twomey and MacBride were unenthusiastic, while O'Donnell, apostle of change, was discounted by many. Mick Price's leftward resolution proved too far leftward even for them; he withdrew then in high dudgeon.

In the calm that followed, O'Donnell proffered the Congress proposal, ably supported by Gilmore and Ryan. By a small majority the delegates accepted it but the Executive and Army Council gave it a thumbs down by a single vote. To the Congress men (and women), it must have appeared that, although losers, they might still have half the Army in the country behind them. In that they were to be seriously mistaken.

The inaugural meeting of Republican Congress gathered in Athlone on April 8, issuing a radical manifesto that called for a united front of Republican forces through which capitalism would be uprooted. They then spread the canard that the Economic War was being fought to serve Irish capitalism, choosing to overlook that what was at stake was the issue of Irish sovereignty.

On April 11, a courtmartial chaired by Séan Russell, had dismissed O'Donnell and Price with ignominy. *Shorn of all the fine phrases the call for a Congress.....means nothing more than an attempt to form a political party, An Phoblacht* declared.

Going their separate ways, Price attempted to organise a new Citizen Army; with Ryan, Gilmore, Roddy Connolly and Seamus McGowan. It was never to be a serious contender to the I.R.A., and eventually it disappeared; when, with head held high, Mick Price entered the Labour Party.

Meanwhile the Blueshirts, driven by the occasional hardships of being unable to sell cattle, had resorted to a campaign of withholding rates, annuity payments, clipping phone wires and blocking roads. These activities, never sufficiently widespread to upset the nation, converted no one; and brought solace to no one. The big farmers could not be transformed into revolutionaries; both the Blueshirts and the I.R.A. were now upon parallel paths leading politically downward.

On Monday, August 13, at Marsh's Yard, Cork, there was an auction of seized cattle. A lorry crashed the gate, and when men piled out, Branch gunmen stationed inside, opened fire, and a youth, Michael Lynch, was killed and seven others wounded. A League of Youth Congress of August 18, called at once upon farmers to cease paying rates and land annuities. The turbulence so far had been watched nervously by the solid men at the top of the movement but this call to lawlessness was edging them too far.



On August 31, the United Ireland Executive met and reined in O'Duffy, but this action was insufficient for Professor James Hogan who resigned. Commandant Ned Cronin then took control of the League, while the General retired to lead a short lived Corporate Party. Cronin was then quietly eased out so that the solid men at the top, the Dillons, Cosgraves, Fitzgeralds, Costellos, O'Higgins, Mulcahys, could sink once more into their arm chairs. There would be no more windy hustings for them.

Republican Congress - supposedly a force for unity - quickly proved the opposite when its 186 delegates arrived at Rathmines Town Hall on Saturday and Sunday, September 29 and 30, 1934. Price, Nora and Roddy Connolly, called for a drive for a Workers' Republic, while O'Donnell, Ryan, Gilmore, Bobbie and Frank Edwards but forward the more moderate sounding united front resolution. After a day long debate the latter won by 99 to 84; too close for comfort. Congress was shattered; staggering along, its sole external semblance being its tiny tabloid newspaper, into February 1936.

Meanwhile the I.R.A had survived but with no clear direction, it was lapsing into stunts; burning the occasional 'imperialist' film, removing cross channel newspapers, and since now the Armistice parades were no longer what they were, they were scarcely worth upsetting. Long time O.C Leitrim, Sean O'Farrell, joined Fianna Fáil; Michael Hilliard of Meath, resigned from G.H.Q, and eventually became a Minister for Defence; Sean Buckley, one of the fathers of County Cork Republicanism, switched over to become a T.D. Downward through the ranks the same erosion continued.

Economically the country was in a poor way. Exports down from £36m in 1931 to £18m in 1935. Cattle and calves being slaughtered since they could not be sold; industrial employment rising but not sufficiently to absorb the pool leaving the land. In an effort to find a role for itself the I.R.A commenced to intervene in strikes and popular disputes.

In one such, having been invited by the Town Tenants Association of Edgeworthstown on November 5, 1934, the I.R.A held a public meeting during which the agent of the Saunderson Estate, Gerald More-O'Ferrell, was loudly threatened. On February 9, intent on roughing up the father, four men entered their home, *Lisard*, during a small dinner party. The son Richard wrestled a gun from a man's hand (or reached for one in a cabinet); shots were fired, one hitting the father was deflected; while another struck Richard who died twelve days later. Michael A. Kelly the speech maker, was arrested together with Mick Ferguson, Jimmy Joe Reynolds, 'Nipper' Shanley and Hughie Devine: the latter four on a capital charge. In a prolonged trial, the three however were found not guilty.

In Waterford, about the same time, January 1935, Bishop Kinnane sacked Frank Edwards from the Mount Sion Christian Brothers' School, following his highly publicised involvement in Congress and his participation in a builders' strike and a campaign to lower inner city house rents.

Demonstrating the close links that still continued between the I.R.A and the Congress fragment, the Army took up the cudgels on behalf of Edwards by letter through *An Phoblacht* and by a public meeting, culminating in a gathering of eight hundred supporters addressed by Maurice Twomey, Barry and Pádraig Mac Logan. The first serious breach with government came however, not over More-O'Ferrell, the Lenten Pastorals of March 3, or Bishop Kinnane, but because of their involvement in labour disputes.

Away from such diversions, Sean Mac Bride had sought at a General Army Convention early in March 1935, to resurrect the notion of a political party; a proposal that was speedily sat upon. Instead, action within six months against the Six Counties was called for by Tom Barry and others, but that had to be left to one side when Twomey listed the pitiful war resources available. So intervention to counter 'strike breaking' provided a golden opportunity when it came.

On March 2, a tram and bus strike paralysed Dublin; 18 days later army lorries were running upon the streets as make shift transport, but this was objected to by the I.R.A. Sniping at tyres began; then on March 23, at midnight, two gardaí were shot at and wounded in Grafton Street, while another was shot at near the offices of the *Irish Press*. On March 25, an Army Council statement proclaimed willingness to assist the workers in their struggle. The government saw red; intervention on sensitive industrial disputes would not be permitted.

On March 26, a police swoop detained 43; among them O'Donnell, Donal O'Donoghue, Michael A. Kelly, Tom Barry, Con Lehane, Tom Merrigan and Claude O'Loughlin. 20 were quickly released, but Lehane and O'Donoghue, O'Loughlin, Barry and nine other I.R.A men were sentenced by the Military Tribunal, Lehane receiving eighteen months. By August 20 there were 104 Republicans in prison. Those accused of the Dundalk bomb explosion were however found not guilty. A garda was shot at in Dublin when he interrupted four young men painting a foot-path; the I.R.A Sweeps office in Dame Street was summarily closed and *An Phoblacht*, long suffering an uneasy existence, was suppressed.

Suddenly at this juncture attention was switched northward. There had always been low level sectarian attacks against people perceived to be Catholic in Belfast and the towns of the Lagan valley, Lurgan, Lisburn and Portadown, but in June 1935 serious incursions upon the small streets of working Catholics erupted in Belfast. July became one long orgy of murder, arson, looting, assaults and sniping in which 13 died. That Belfast was unlike Dublin, ninety per cent Catholic, had meant that the I.R.A in the North had always to play a defensive role.

In the South it had been polarised against Billy Cosgrave, but in the North the enemy was Craigavon and the British. Some nationalists had continued to hope for a united Ireland, but the majority, after the Boundary Commission debacle of 1924, settled down and made their peace.

Breaking out politically in the November 1935 Westminster election, the I.R.A, with abstentionist candidates, contested six seats, although they could hope only to win two. Breaking out militarily, Belfast I.R.A on December 27, sought to raid the armoury of Campbell College. The police were forewarned; a gun battle broke out and four activists were later arrested. Edward Mc Cartney, their O.C, was not defended and received ten years.

The other three were permitted to engage a defence lawyer, but the recognition of the system enraged G.H.Q which directed a court martial of O.C Anthony Lavery. [By defending the charges it was hoped to smoke out the police mole who had betrayed the raid].

The penultimate act of the drama was staged at his trial upstairs in the Craobh Ruadh Club at 10 Crown Entry on April 15, 1936. Jim Killeen, Adjutant-General, and Michael A. Kelly of G.H.Q, sat, attended by the Ulster leadership, Sean McCool, John McAdams, Jimmy Steele, Charlie McGlade, Tony Lavery, with Liam Rice on armed guard outside the locked door. Half an hour later R.U.C rushed up the stairs, seized Rice, and smashed in the door. In a treason felony trial on May 29, sentences totalling 48 years were meted out. It was obvious by now that something was seriously amiss at the top in Belfast. Following this disaster Joe Hanna of Brigade Staff, in January 1937, was courtmartialled in a club near Bow Street, found guilty, taken out to waste ground and shot.

At a General Army Convention in 1935, to counter the spalling away of its membership, G.H.Q again considered a parliamentary move. The finished political vessel, Cumann Poblachta na h-Éireann, an abstentionist party, was launched in 1936, with Sean Mac Bride as National Secretary and Pádraig Mac Logan as Chairman.

But it was Sinn Féin writ small, and to the cynical it seemed that anyone who moved from the physical force camp into politics was bound to 'go wrong'; Fianna Fáil and the Congress group were the despised examples of that.

On March 24, 1936 at 9.30pm an I.R.A action squad with G.H.Q sanction (to warn only) arrived at Castletownshend, beyond Skibbereen, and shot dead, upon his own door step, Vice- Admiral Boyle Somerville. He had given numerous references to local lads wishing to join the British navy, for long a tradition in Co. Cork, but the action was unwarranted. Less than one month later, on April 26, with G.H.Q sanction to execute, John Egan, a young man dubbed a police spy, was shot dead in a street in Dungarvan. The last ties binding Óglaigh na h-Éireann to Fianna Fáil snapped; on May 21, 1936, Maurice Twomey was arrested at his house, Home Farm Road, Glasnevin, under Article 2 A of the Constitution, and on June 19, he was sentenced to three years and three months, portion of which was spent in Arbour Hill and the later portion in the Glasshouse.

On June 18, the I.R.A was again declared an unlawful organisation and the annual gathering at Bodenstown banned for June 21. Support and membership had been spalling away once the electoral honeymoon with Fianna Fáil was seen to have ended; the latest measures brought a further withering. The Army faced a future of disarray, with its public support diminished.

The first part of the book is a history of the development of the concept of the self. It starts with the ancient Greeks and moves through the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, and the Enlightenment to the modern era. The author discusses how the concept of the self has been shaped by various cultural and intellectual movements. He argues that the modern concept of the self is a product of the Enlightenment and the rise of individualism. The second part of the book is a philosophical analysis of the self. The author explores the relationship between the self and the world, and how the self is shaped by its environment. He discusses the concept of the self as a process rather than a static entity. The third part of the book is a practical guide to living a more authentic life. The author offers various exercises and techniques for self-reflection and personal growth. He emphasizes the importance of being present and fully engaged in the moment. The book concludes with a reflection on the meaning of life and the role of the self in the universe.

*Whoever closes his mind to the past becomes blind to the present .*

- Richard von Weizacker 1994.

## De Valera Pre-empts The Stage: The I.R.A. Without Direction: June 1936 - March 1938

Sean Mac Bride was hastily co-opted C.S by the Army Council until a general Army Convention could meet. (Despite what Bowyer Bell says at this point MacBride was universally popular. Later rumours of politics were spread against him from the Russell camp). Donal O'Donoghue, his close mentor, was appointed Adjutant-General.

Meanwhile Sean Russell, ignoring Mac Bride, was urging action against England; directly into England; where it would hurt. This clashed with the new political policy of Cumann Poblachta na h-Éireann. Russell's weakness however was upon matters of detail and, as Mac Bride excelled on detail, it was not long until a strong case was laid against him for failure to account for missing funds and a motor car. In the subsequent courtmartial, the case against Russell was proven and he was suspended.

With the quickening move into politics, activists under Tom McGill and Peadar O'Flaherty rallied towards Russell. The concept of a bombing campaign in England on the then meagre resources of the Army may have had a touch of madness in it, but if something was not done the diminished ranks would shrivel further or they would die from boredom.

In the midst of this sluggish G.H.Q activity, an event, opening on July 18, 1936, riveted the activists; the Spanish Army under General Franco had risen against the recently elected government; a coalition stretching from communists to social democrats; but in a Cortes of 473 only 17 professed to be Communist. That was not how some Irish newspapers saw it; the *Irish Independent*, friend of Fine Gael, (Cumann na nGael by a new name) declared in so many words that the 'Nationalists' were fighting for God - *Dios, Patria y' Rey* - while the Republic had declared for Communism.

Notwithstanding that the Irish left wing, represented principally by Frank Ryan and George Gilmore, endeavoured to explain that the peninsula was now a battle ground for fascism, the Free State government and the mass of the Irish people opted for neutrality.

Despite this the call of faith was strong, and when Patrick Belton, a Fine Gael T.D, inaugurated his Irish Christian Front, he found widespread support. They sought, as did some local authorities, that Dublin break off diplomatic relations with Madrid, but that, until the end, was resisted. Peadar O'Donnell returned from Catalonia, urging support for the government, while George Gilmore sailed into Bilbao in the Basque country of Euskadi cut off from the rest of government held Spain, to see what could be done. Meanwhile one Irishman, Republican Bill Scott, then in Europe, travelled into Barcelona and offered his services to the Catalan government.

The Movement however would not allow itself to be distracted. As Cumann Poblachta na h-Éireann, it presented Stephen Hayes for election on the abstentionist ticket in Wexford, and Count Plunkett, in Galway. Both were resoundingly defeated; Hayes with a meagre 1301 votes and Plunkett with 2,696. Meanwhile Frank Ryan had commenced organising volunteers and, when Eoin O'Duffy made a like public announcement for the Nationalists, it proved grist to Ryan's mill. While most I.R.A. people would be opposed to a wild geese action, hundreds still volunteered under Frank although not all were permitted to go.

The promised General Army Convention met in Dublin in September, distracted now between the call to Spain and the frustrations of the by-election defeats. In this atmosphere Tom Barry mounted the rostrum, making a fiery speech favouring an immediate assault upon English forces in the Six Counties. To cool an over heated situation and to rest Mac Bride, the post of C.S. was offered to Barry.

His first action was to forbid any I.R.A. soldier volunteering for Spain; they still went anyway, where they formed the James Connolly Battalion\* of the U.S. Lincoln Brigade. Some 133 Irish most of them I.R.A. went there; 63 died; 12 were captured and over 114 were seriously wounded.

In stark contrast, O'Duffy's brigade, briefly engaged, lost two to their own side; shortly after, voting to return to Ireland. Belton's Christian Front, collecting a considerable sum of money, faded away and was soon forgotten. On the left, *Republican Congress* ended as a four page tabloid in February 1936 and was replaced a year later with O'Donnell's *Irish Democrat*; for want of support and cash that, together with *The Worker*, faded also. In the general election of July 1937, with its now standard 45 per cent support; Fianna Fáil was returned, although dependent until the following year upon Labour. Belton lost his seat, while a briefly home to Ireland Frank Ryan polled a disheartening 875 votes in a relatively working class area of South Dublin.

Meanwhile Barry planned, not a sustained guerilla campaign, but a single strike action against Gough Barracks, Armagh, by a native Cork 26 man column, out of which a spreading war might emerge. But the word had got out and Cumann na mBan sought to have a role; Barry, upon hearing this, cancelled the strike without a single shot being fired.

Despite the size and enthusiasm of the I.R.A. in the Six Counties, the North since 1922 had played only a minor part. There were few Northerners in G.H.Q. and G.H.Q. largely overlooked the North (Peadar O'Donnell and the Gilmores, although hailing from the Rosses and near to Portadown, represented left wing viewpoints; Maurice Twomey was mildly antipathetic to Northerners).

\* Also as James Connolly Unit of the XV International Brigade, or more commonly since, Connolly Column.

Following Crown Entry the R.U.C took a greater interest observing and spying upon the I.R.A. The result was that the I.R.A in Belfast commenced a review of its own rigorous security, and to sort out any whom they could prove was a police spy; in the years 1936 to '38 four such moles were disposed of while upwards of twelve were punished.

Sean Russell had meanwhile left for America to whip up support for his English campaign. Men like McGarrity, dyed in the wool Fenians, understood Russell's scheme and were prepared to go all out in his support. Meanwhile Barry, now convinced, following his Armagh failure, that his tenure would be short, had appointed Peadar O'Flaherty, Adjutant-General; MacBride, Intelligence Officer, and Mick Fitzpatrick, Quartermaster-General. O'Flaherty however was a supporter of the displaced Russell, going through the country whipping up support for him and shifting Jack Lynch O.C Britain in favour of Jimmy Joe Reynolds, a dedicated Russell man. With Tom Mc Gill, Pearse McLaughlin, Mick Ferguson, Mick Welsh and the McNeelas, Óglaigh na h-Éireann was soon top heavy with Russell men.

Tom Barry, not wishing to remain indefinitely in Dublin, informed an Army Council in Banba Hall, Parnell Square, in mid-1937, that he would be happy to resign. Quickly a neutral candidate was sought and the spotlight fell upon easy-going northside Dubliner, long upon G.H.Q. Mick Fitzpatrick. He would hold the Army together until a convention was called. He appointed Jimmy Hannigan of Dublin to his staff along with Séan Keating of Co Kilkenny, retaining Tadhg Lynch of Dunmanway and Tomás MacCurtain of Cork city. Soon after word trickled in of O'Flaherty's coup in London; Fitzpatrick sped over, displaced Jimmy Joe, replacing Jack Lynch, who was known in England as Buckley, together with Lynch's former staff. A sparsely attended Bodenstown in June 1937 heard Barry advise those who might vote in a forthcoming election to *not vote Fine Gael*.

Aware of the erosion in numbers, Fitzpatrick, with the aid of Harry Simon, investigated the possibility of a raid upon the Magazine Fort in Phoenix Park but decided, for the reason what-would-we-do-with-it, not to attempt it. MacBride's political alternative had petered out; Russell's bombing campaign was too far fetched, and Barry's Northern gamble had been a non-starter. The thoughtful began to ponder if there was any future for the I.R.A.

The decline of the I.R.A from the glory days of a unit in every parish and twenty thousand volunteers waiting for the call; from the high drama of the Blueshirt confrontation, and the ferment of radical ideas, had been precipitous. Fianna Fáil and the country was clearly upon the high road to the Republic; the Senate had been eliminated on May 19, 1936; with the abdication of King Edward VII on December 11, 1936, all future sovereigns were expunged from the Constitution, and the Governor-General was a dead letter. On March 10, 1937, a new Constitution was introduced to An Dáil, and by 1938 it would be the law of the land. Carefully within that Constitution would be the clause defining Ireland *as the whole island of Ireland, its islands and its territorial seas*. It was a geographical definition without, as yet, laying claim to the Six Counties. It was adopted, somewhat unenthusiastically, by 39% of the electorate. However the terms, Saorstát Éireann/Irish Free State were gone, being replaced by Éire/Ireland.

Absorbing into Fianna Fáil all those who now earnestly believed Ireland had achieved independence, apart from partition and the language, De Valera could watch complacently the I.R.A slide into sterile actions. The politicians might feel the I.R.A no longer counted; not so however the Broy Harriers, many of them I.R.A men of recent vintage.

A sign of this was the seemingly unprovoked shooting dead in Clanbrassil Street of Volunteer Peter Mc Carthy\* on June 15, and the grim silences insisted upon in Arbour Hill, as a consequence of which Sean Glynn of Limerick died.

As the year 1937 closed there was little sense of accomplishment or even of direction for the shrunken movement. Then, between November 1937 and May 1938, to celebrate the new Constitution, all Republicans still held, including Mixie Conway, were released unceremoniously from the Curragh Glasshouse. Emerging in December 1937 was the former C.S Moss Twomey, but he had made perfectly clear that he did not wish for the seat, being still held warm for him by Fitzpatrick.

(A small stirring for the future came from Brian O'Higgins assisted by Joe Clarke; in the autumn of 1937, in the absence of any other publication, they commenced distributing an eight page tabloid, humorous and well written, *The Wolfe Tone Weekly*).

However, De Valera's greatest triumphs were still to come. In January 1938 he commenced negotiations with Neville Chamberlain, the British Prime Minister, which resulted in an agreement on April 25, ending the Economic War and granting Ireland possession of the treaty ports; neutrality in a future war could now be assured. A snap election on June 17, gave him a substantial majority in An Dáil; the I.R.A seemed obsolete, and even the Harriers were being wound down.

Yet this confidence was misplaced. The I.R.A, as Óglaigh na h-Éireann, still held tight a skeletal organisation in all of Ireland's thirty two counties, in the principal cities of England and Scotland and dotted over the United States. As its Convention of April approached it would have been obvious to anyone within the organisation that it still retained the vigour and the muscle power to make itself felt; only that the solid men at its centre still hoped that it would not be in obedience to the schemes of Séan Russell.

\* Unarmed, he was attempting to rescue Sam Wheelock and Harry Dale in Lr. Clanbrassil Street.



## I.R.A. COMMAND; 1923-1938:

T. P. COOGAN, AUTHOR, *THE I. R. A.*, 1972 Edition.

In July 1923, two months after defeat in the Civil War, the I.R.A held a two day meeting at the Hotel Elliot, 64 Harcourt Street, at which organisational plans and a draft constitution were drawn up. It provided for an Executive of 16, elected by 25 provincial delegates, from whom an Army Council of 7 would be chosen; four being from the Executive and three from outside members. The Executive should then appoint a Chief of Staff and he would appoint his own staff. A General Army Convention should be held each twelve months, consisting of the Executive, Army Council, H.Q Staff, Divisional Commandants and members of their staffs and Brigade delegates. At a minimum these might number 60. (While women and girls had performed sterling service in the wars there was no provision for them on these staffs; in latter years there would be provision). A simple form of oath was required from Volunteers; since the late thirties that was replaced by a declaration.

The leadership in 1923 and for years after (without listing provincial leaders) consisted of Frank Aiken, Andy Cooney, Maurice Twomey, Mick Carolan, P.A. Murray, Sean Russell, Jim O'Donovan, Sean Moylan, Sean Lemass, Tom Daly, Sean MacBride, Michael Price, Jim Killeen, Peadar O'Donnell, George Gilmore, David Fitzgerald, Ben Maguire, Mick Fitzpatrick, Tomás ÓMaolóin, Mick Kilroy, Tom Barry, John Joe Sheehy and Dan Gleeson; most of whom had escaped arrest in the Civil War, otherwise numbers of them most certainly would have been executed.

The principal organisers chosen at the July meeting were Pádraig McLogan, from Armagh, David Fitzgerald, from Tipperary, and James Killeen from Longford. By April 1924 the I.R.A felt itself sufficiently cohesive to express its support for the 44 member strong Sinn Féin Party, then abstaining from An Dáil.

[The Spike Island landing incident of March 21, 1924 is touched upon by Coogan as is a shooting of May 6, at Creagh, Co Tipperary, but one listed at Claremorris had nothing to do with the I.R.A]. On November 6, an attempt led by George Plunkett to rescue Jim Killeen at the Hill of Down railway station, failed, as the train had departed.

A policy directive against 'British propaganda films' was issued in 1925 and enforced at times until the late thirties. In the same year the H.Q of Mike Carolan, Director of Intelligence, at 69 Adelaide Road \*, was raided; he and his secretary, Margaret Clancy, were arrested and a pile of documents seized.

On June 18, 1925, *An Phoblacht*, official organ of the I.R.A appeared, edited by P.J. Little. 1926 resulted in a stepping up of activity when a jury office was raided in Dublin in June. In November, garda barracks in Cork, Co. Tipperary, Crumlin and Co. Waterford were raided as part of an intelligence gathering sweep.

\* See Sean Dowling's account of this house in *Survivors*, 1987 edition

The high point of 1927 was the unofficial assassination on July 10, of Minister O'Higgins; while in August Detective O'Donnell was fired upon near Mallow by an escaping Con Healy. Arrests were made, though frequently not of the right people, after each of these activities, or for the perennial 'illegal drilling' charges. Serious claims of maltreatment of prisoners were proven in some cases.

In 1928 principal warden Robert Grace, of Mountjoy, was fired upon following complaints. There was the incident at Woodpark Lodge, Dartry Road, where agent Sean Harling shot dead Tim Coughlan. Intelligence gathering upon jurymen caused Florence McCarthy to be sentenced to six months in April. Grafton Street shops were entered, coinciding with Tailteann Games celebrations, for flying Union Jacks that summer; pressure being maintained upon jurymen meanwhile.

John White, a jurymen in Terenure, who had served in court in the case of Con Healy, was shot in the stomach on January 23, 1929. Albert Armstrong was less lucky; he died after giving evidence over a flag removal. D.O. T. O'Sullivan was killed by a trap mine in Co. Clare, while a companion D.O. O'Driscoll was wounded. On November 8, the roof of an ex-serviceman's hall in Inchicore was blown off. Sean Russell's home on the North Strand was raided on December 11; arms and ammunition being found. He received the remarkably mild sentence of three months. The stand-off against police continued through 1930 although with a mild attitude of cannot-care-less. On July 17, another Mountjoy warden was penalised by being chained to the railings of the 'Black Church' at Mountjoy Street. On September 20, a garda was chained in Drumcondra with the inscription; 'informer Farrell arrests Republicans'. On November 23, Sergeant O'Regan, on protection duty at the home of the Ceann Comhairle (Speaker in Dáil) in Rathgar, was shot in the leg.

There was a tremendous upsurge in 1931 when, according to Coogan, the normal process of law could no longer deal with the I.R.A and a regime close to military law was resorted to in the autumn. After the discovery of numbers of dumps, a police spy, Carroll, from Inchicore was shot dead in Crumlin, then largely open fields, on January 30. Police Superintendent Curtin was shot dead entering his home late at night in Co. Tipperary on March 21.

On April 5, a hundred men were found drilling at Daingean, Co. Offaly, under Sean McGuinness. In the same month, a campaign of boycott upon British goods commenced in Dublin. On April 23, an I.R.A party was disturbed in Lord Massey's estate at Kilakee; two Trinity men, said to be students, were fired upon, one being wounded. The head of William of Orange, sawn off, tis said, by George Gilmore the year before in College Green, was found there together with much else\*. On July 20, John Ryan of Oyle, Co. Tipperary, who had been a witness in the Soloheadbeg drilling prosecution, was found shot. A new unoccupied garda barracks at Kilreekle, Co. Galway, was blown up on September 12; on September 18, William McInerney of Kilrush, escaped a shooting brought on by his public denunciations of the Army.

From this point in his account Coogan traces the political developments from 1923 to the foundation of Fianna Fáil in April 1926. O'Donnell and George Plunkett, fearing a take-over by an aspiring Fianna Fáil, removed the Army from Sinn Féin control at the Dalkey Convention of November 1925. Thereafter, the Oath became the great hurdle over which De Valera was expected to leap, or to creep under, in 1927. Meanwhile out-vying this formula of words was the infinitely more important one of territory. On November 25, 1924, the London *Morning Post* leaked the findings of the Boundary Commission, which proved very adverse to Ireland, but which might have been overturned if at that time Sinn Féin with its 44 members was in the Dáil.

Following the foundation in the La Scala Theatre of Fianna Fáil on May 16, 1926, the I.R.A attempted to reunite the movement again, but it was a forlorn effort. A gulf of principle separated Sinn Féin and Fianna Fáil on Dáil entry; the former would soon commence to fade into irrelevancy while the future would hold a prospect of steady growth for the latter.

On June 23, 1927 Fianna Fáil, for the first time as a party contested an election, gaining 44 seats; mostly those which they already held under the label of Sinn Féin. Disappointingly it was the same number as had been gained by Sinn Féin in August 1923. On August 11, De Valera and his party, having signed their names to a book containing the declaration, entered Leinster House. In the election called for September they were rewarded with 57 seats, a mere five below Cumann na nGael. De Valera's political strategy was paying off.

Following the decision of the Convention of February 1931, the Army, in May 1931, decided to dip their toe in the political stream by organising a party of 'peasants and workers'; eventually to be called Saor Éire. Their first congress was held on 26 and 27 of September 1931 in the Iona Hall, North Great Georges Street. Maurice Twomey and many others within the Army were cautious on the appeal of such a grouping to an Irish electorate. The let-out was provided in a spectacular way when it and eleven other organisations were banned on October 20 1931, under the operation of the new coercion laws enshrined in Article 2 A of the Constitution.

With the triumph of Fianna Fáil in February 1932, all were automatically

\* In recent years the head taken from a Corporation yard was sold for a high figure in London.

unbanned, but, while reams of Saor Éire notepaper remained in its Gardiner Place offices, no attempt was made to revive it. The accession of Fianna Fáil to power seemed for many to presage a new era.

In this final Cosgrave year, Coogan debates the lack of any real political strategy by the I.R.A.; the fact that the government was in a dilemma on how to deal with a ghost-like army; the fact that the I.R.A. allowed Fianna Fáil to capitalise upon the relatively few prisoners incarcerated by Cumann na nGael while garnering no political profit for itself, but he does congratulate them on bringing cases against false arrest into the courts.

There were over a dozen such in all for which small compensatory payments were awarded. Curiously, he says, they did not push their advantage here as far as they might have.

Whatever power, in the run-up to 1932, that lay with the I.R.A. was permitted subsequently to slip into the grasp of Fianna Fáil. The I.R.A. allowed the political initiative to drift away because, in O'Donnell's phrase, the I.R.A. felt that its cause would be best advanced by nipping at the heels of that party. But, concludes Coogan, the heels of De Valera were not for nipping; he gratefully accepted the valuable Annuities weapon presented to him by the I.R.A.; a weapon that helped to tumble him into power.

## The Triumph Of Fianna Fáil

The defeat of Cumann na nGael was not to herald a new dawn for Óglaigh na h-Éireann. De Valera immediately took steps to abolish the Oath, and after he formed his cabinet he released on March 10, 20 prisoners from Arbour Hill. Two days later *An Phoblacht* again appeared on the streets with a message from Maurice Twomey; *the Irish Republican Army must continue its work and cannot escape its role as the vanguard of the freedom movement.*

Six days later on March 18, the Military Tribunal was suspended and orders declaring the I.R.A and Saor Éire illegal revoked. Responding to a welcome for the released prisoners in College Green, Sean McGuinness declared the recent Executive Council, a menace....that should be wiped out. On June 19, 15000 I.R.A volunteers gathered at Bodenstown to cheer an oration delivered by Sean Russell.

Frank Ryan, now editing *An Phoblacht* in succession to O'Donnell, declared at a meeting in Dublin; *while we have fists, hands and boots to use, and guns if necessary, we will not allow free speech to traitors.* In this he was supported, although the phraseology was softer, by O'Donnell. Three days after the prisoners' release a convention of the Army Comrades Association, formed in February 1932 by retired officers' class Free State Army men, was held to appoint a national executive\*. Ostensibly the group existed to promote employment for ex-soldiers, and its committee included Richard Mulcahy and Dr. Tom O'Higgins, brother of the assassinated Kevin. They were now called upon to protect their public meetings and to support Dublin vintners selling Bass ale, a boycott of which had commenced. I.R.A involvement, countering the A.C.A, deepened with the commencement of the Economic War.

On July 1, 1932, following its election pledges, the government defaulted on the Annuity payment due that day. The British retaliated with a bill on July 11, to recoup by extra duties the annuity monies withheld by the Free State. Dublin struck with a similar bill on July 23 and the war had begun. As Fianna Fáil reduced to near half the amount of annuity to be paid by farmers, and as they funded arrears for three years and longer, theirs' was a highly popular policy with small farmers. The larger farmers however were incensed by the loss of the English market and commenced refusing to pay any annuity. Taking legal proceedings against thousands of individuals clogged the courts, so that, in a Land Act of 1933, the government was forced to counter non-payments through a blanket procedure by which warrants issued from the Commission replaced a court process. Up to May/June 1939 more than 400,000 of these warrants had been issued and £2.5 million, a goodly sum for those times, had been levied or collected. [This in itself shows the widespread and understandable resentment of farmers, mainly in the Munster area, caused by their lack of market, and demonstrates, that in some respects, Blueshirtism had little to do with politics and next to nothing with continental fascism]. Violent incidents accompanied the boycott; in the three years to

\* It may have derived from the National Defence Association formed from the officer class on August 28, 1929: Minister for Defence Desmond Fitzgerald withdrew recognition of that association one year later.

1935 there were hundreds of encounters in east Cork alone. On February 22, 1933 suspicions across the political divide were further fuelled by the peremptory dismissal from his post as Commissioner of Police of General Eoin O'Duffy. But a parting of the ways between the I.R.A and Fianna Fáil was already in prospect.

A General Army Convention, summoned in February 1933, was preceded by a wordy communique to *each parade and battalion staff meeting* conveying their disappointment that the government was not prepared to go down the left wing road now charted for the I.R.A itself in the Manus O'Rourke document. The communique was undecided whether to continue the boycotts (*'should the campaign be intensified or discontinued'*), but it laid great stress upon recruitment (although one wonders for what) and upon training. It directed that an officers' training camp be established over the summer months of 1933, and instructed that each unit send at least two officers for one week\* upon the training course.

The proposed creation of a Volunteer Reserve Force was a particularly sore point as, presumably, the I.R.A saw itself, in ideal political circumstances as just that. Recruiting opened the following year, on February 20, 1934 for the force, in a distinctive Casement Brigade style uniform. (Completely an appendage of the Department of Defence, by 1940, it had been subsumed within the Free State Army; by that time the Irish Army).

On July 20, 1933, an organisation known as the National Guard was formed from the Army Comrades Association with General O'Duffy as its Major-General. On the suggestion of Commdt. Ned Cronin it adopted in April the blueshirt as its uniform. *United Ireland*, the organ of Cumann na nGael, edited by Ernest Blythe, set out from the start a militant course for the association. The inevitable clash with I.R.A and young Fianna Fáil people, although strongly discouraged by Republican H.Q, was hastened by advocacy of *'the corporate state'* from University College Dublin professors, Michael Tierney (later its President) and James Hogan, brother of Paddy, until shortly before this Minister for Agriculture under Cosgrave; the latter, author of a widely distributed pamphlet, *Could Ireland Go Communist?*

These conflicting ideologies, combined with Civil War memories, were sufficient to set the I.R.A against the Blueshirts in a disastrous and pointless interlude for the organisation. Meanwhile O'Duffy was planning a mass assembly for Leinster Lawn, Merrion Street, upon Sunday, August 13, 1933, reviving a wreath laying ceremony at the Cenotaph commemorating Arthur Griffith, Michael Collins and Kevin O'Higgins. Special trains and buses were to be laid on; it was confidently expected that, including the massed ranks of the Blueshirts, more than 60,000 would take part. The government had, a very short time before, commenced recruiting I.R.A men into a Special Branch, with the intention of suppressing the Blueshirts, and the Army Council now planned an ambush upon the march from the high buildings of Westmoreland Street; presumably with fists and missiles, not bullets. It would be controlled from the former home of Kevin Barry at no. 8, in nearby Fleet Street. But

\*There are many references in the following veterans' accounts to these camps, at Portmarmock, in north Sligo and elsewhere.

the confrontation never occurred for O'Duffy's demonstration was banned.

The government promptly revived Article 2 A of the Constitution and the Military Tribunal; on the afternoon of Saturday, it banned the rally, and the National Guard organisation itself which thereupon swiftly changed its title to Young Ireland.

On September 8, 1933, Cumann na nGael joined with Frank Mac Dermot's small Centre Party, to call itself Fine Gael, under the leadership of W.T. Cosgrave, James Dillon and MacDermot. The National Organiser and leader was, however, O'Duffy. The Young Ireland Association was banned, after continuing clashes with the I.R.A., on December 8; these clashes being deplored by Twomey and MacBride. Six days after the ban O'Duffy altered the name of his movement to League of Youth, at the same time seeking a court declaration that it was a lawful body that should not be subject to a ban. After a hearing over years no decision was ever reached upon the application.

Coogan at this time deals at length with a case in Dundalk of February 11, 1934, when the attempted demolition of the home of Joseph McGrory of Chapel Street went awry, his mother dying from shock a fortnight later. McGrory had given evidence against two I.R.A. accused of an armed hold-up of a Blueshirt collector; the two concerned being later found not guilty.

O'Duffy's personality however was totally unsuited to politics. He arranged payments to young fellows to turn up at rallies in blue shirts; he predicted sweeping victory in the local elections of July 1934 (Fianna Fáil instead swept the boards) and he backed at the Blueshirt congress in August, a non-payment of rates motion unless the Economic War was ended. Finally he spoke of 'war' into the Six Counties which would be supported by 'ninety five per cent of Blueshirts'. Dynamite; Professor Hogan resigned from Fine Gael on August 31, and on September 21, O'Duffy himself resigned, or was pushed out. In two years he would be in Spain, while Fine Gael itself would by that time have reverted to a quiet constitutional road under W.T. Cosgrave.

In the three principal years of I.R.A./Blueshirt clashes, an almost equal number of persons - four hundred each - were brought before the Tribunal by police. The I.R.A. itself continued to be distracted by the three never failing currents within it; left wing pressures, middle of the road orthodox nationalism and its militaristic wing. An example of how the heart could take over the head was the Galton affair of 1933, when James Galton refused to be deported to the U.S, receiving assistance from some in H.Q. but significantly not from the local Leitrim unit. Commonplace Dublin set the scene for the next confrontation with the 'communists' when on March 27, and succeeding days, Connolly House in Great Strand Street and Mrs. Despard's Workers' College at 63 Eccles Street were attacked; the former being burned to a shell and the latter damaged.

Charlie Gilmore had attempted to defend Connolly House with a revolver, and for this he was courtmartialled by the I.R.A., although his stance was strenuously supported by his brother, Harry.

In March 1933 a *Constitution and Government Programme for the Republic of Ireland*, together with the Army Council's manifesto of Easter 1933 called for the reorganisation of Irish life under public ownership. On March 17/18 1934, a Convention in Dublin voted-but by only one vote-against the formation of Republican Congress; Ryan, Price, Gilmore, O'Donnell, Fitzgerald and many of their supporters, walking out. Taking offices at 202 Pearse Street and shortly after at 112 Marlborough Street, they launched in Athlone, on April 8, Republican Congress, *so revolutionary in its outlook that its achievement would mean the overthrow of all existing political and economic machinery which at present holds this country and our people in subjection.*

The Army Council felt obliged to respond to this statement (they largely agreed with it), but at the same time they predicted that Congress would in time enter the Free State Parliament. (They did not, because, other than Frank Ryan, none aspired to it). Price, O'Donnell, Gilmore and Ryan were courtmartialled and expelled.

Sheila Humphries, Eithne Coyle, Charlie Reynolds, Séamus de Burca and George Leonard recanted, but Liam Kelly, Cora Hughes, Nora and Roddy Connolly with Frank Edwards stayed on, and although Congress largely dissolved itself following its Rathmines Town Hall Convention, of September 29 and 30, its long term effect was to confuse and and severally damage the fabric of Óglaigh na h-Éireann. Michael Price had attempted to form a Citizens' Army but gave that up and joined the Labour Party, while Roddy Connolly eventually held office in a non-too-splendid coalition government.

By the end of 1934 Congress was in debt; very soon it could neither pay for its Abbey Street office on the top floor of no. 57 nor maintain its flickering weekly. In January 1935 individual members joined with the I.R.A under Mick Fitzpatrick, an official of a shop worker's union, in enforcing a boycott upon the Bacon Shops, a chain of grocers. The strike of Dublin bus and tram workers in March 1935 provided another opportunity for joint labour agitation (a form of activity that many considered was outside the remit of the I.R.A and one that in the heel of the hunt would pay it no dividends.)

But the blinds were coming down upon Republican Congress. On January 3, 1936, Peadar O'Donnell proclaimed an unusual four pronged task for a one hundred strong '*active service unit*'; to penetrate organisations such as Fianna Fáil; to take part in tenement house struggles; to co-operate with unemployed workers and to disrupt strike bound employers; to organise outings, collections and classes. Highly visionary, the '*active service unit*' never got off the ground. In the fading political light, the Congress, now no more than a collection of fervent individuals, joined with Séan Murray of the Communists, to welcome Willie Gallacher, Scottish Communist M.P, to Dublin, in April 1936. As a group they paraded with Republicans on Easter Sunday to Glasnevin, but the presence of red buttons in their lapels provoked hostility while passing through O'Connell Street. The next afternoon a meeting advertised for College Green, was broken up by an angry crowd; O'Donnell having to be rescued by police. By November 1936, with all eyes upon Spain, Republican Congress effectively had ceased to exist, and the same could be said of the Communist Party of Ireland whose organ, *Worker's Voice*, stopped publication.



The I.R.A, using the employment of Army lorries as a pretext for declaring it strike breaking, involved itself, not only against the populace, but in a direct conflict with government. Widespread arrests followed in Dublin, but, although some Congress leaders were roped in, it was solely I.R.A who found themselves before the Military Tribunal. Con Lehane received 18 months; Claude O'Loughlin, Dick Batterberry, Leo Burdock, Tom Farrington, Pat McElroy, Tom Merrigan, Jimmy Hannigan, Andy Walsh, John Farrington, Joe Hendley, Sean Brunswick, Michael Neary and Larry Carwood received 6 months; John Nalty, Bill Scott and Mike Kelly received one month. MacBride, Twomey Mick Fitzpatrick and Russell went on the run, although Twomey was taken in later. Tom Barry, wanted for seditious utterances in Tralee on January 6, received six months.

These unwarranted set-backs promoted the constitutional lobby, and at a Convention in Dublin on August 17, an agenda for contesting elections and recognising the courts was put forward; the election aspect gained acceptance on September 21. By March 7, 1936, Cumann Poblachta na h-Éireann was formed in Barry's Hotel. Present were Twomey, who was lukewarm; Mac Bride, keen upon it, Dr. Andy Cooney, Dr. J.P. Brennan, Fiona Plunkett, Madge Daly of Limerick, Pádraig Mac Logan, abstentionist M.P for South Armagh. The party continued to be opposed by Twomey and by Dublin Brigade officers, Claude O'Loughlin, Jim Coulton and Kevin Lawless. At subsequent local elections in Dublin on June 30, five Cumann candidates performed miserably, while two Congress men, Ryan and George Gilmore were even less distinguished..

Police swoops against the I.R.A continued; Twomey, Tadhg Lynch, Denis Griffin; the latter two Cork Brigade, and Donal O'Donoghue, editor of *An Phoblacht*, being hauled in; after a 19 days hunger strike throughout the later twenties and the thirties, none of these men - except Twomey on 39 months - faced long sentences; one month; three months and six months being the norm.

Coogan records an 'idiotic episode' in Cork city on January 25, when a convivial dinner in the Masonic Hall in Tuckey Street, was disrupted. More serious, and showing how far astray the I.R.A had moved - as Coogan expressed it - was the fateful wounding of Roderick More- O'Ferrall on February 9, 1935; the shooting dead on March 24, 1936 of retired Vice- Admiral Henry Boyle Somerville, and the daylight killing of said to be a police agent John Egan in Dungarvan on April 16, 1936. [Coogan gave sufficient detail on this particular case to demonstrate that the charge should not have been upheld, and that Egan was probably innocent].

The heavy handed interference in trade disputes, in which a sense of competitiveness with Congress may be discerned, and the peace time shootings in a period of tranquillity, brought the house down. John Tobin, Ned Carrigan of Knocklofty and Michael Conway, from the south Tipp area, were arrested; Conway was sentenced to death; it was commuted, and he was released on May 4 1938, having served twenty five months; but with no Republicans then in jail and government eager to clean sheet the nation following the adoption of the new Constitution, it seemed the proper thing to do.

On June 18, 1936, Gerald Boland, as Minister, banned the I.R.A. [It was 'unbanned' with the inception of the new Constitution on December 29, 1937, but was again banned on June 16, 1939, and so remains], and upon the same day banned Bodenstown, fixed for Sunday June 21. This time, as distinct from 1931, there was no getting through. A band of young Limerick men, attempting to do so, were held and subsequently sentenced to the silent rigours of Arbour Hill, where one, Sean Glynn, committed suicide.

Sean Russell met Joe McGarrity for the first time in 1929, in Dublin. McGarrity had been wrongly expelled from the New York Stock Exchange, but following an inquiry, was restored to his seat. He had plans then which turned out to be abortive, for a development in Bolivia; when these did not proceed, he came holidaying to Ireland and, by chance, came in contact with Russell. McGarrity from the rolling hills between Pomeroy and Carrickmore, Co. Tyrone, was long acquainted with Ireland and was a close friend and admirer of De Valera.

Mc Garrity and Russell became aware through a young German chemist in Cleveland, of the theory behind what was later known as the balloon incendiary bomb. A cross Border attack, such as Barry's Armagh plan, did not appeal to Russell; he foresaw instead that hundreds of incendiaries, placed in shops and stores, could cause devastating damage to English property without endangering life.

The weakened I.R.A presented Russell with the opportunity of a take-over. The left was discredited; it was in Spain, in the Labour Party or retired. The right wing, represented by MacBride, was about to go constitutional. McGarrity's diary for August 1936 tells of the frequent exchanges with Russell, then Quartermaster-General, (A post he held since the Tan period when he had been Director of Munitions; no chicken in revolutionary experience, Russell from Dublin's North Strand, had been a Volunteer in Easter Week).

At this time McGarrity was totally disenchanted with De Valera; the 'Dear Chief' tenor of his letters had, in the last year, ceased. The fact that De Valera had made widespread constitutional change counted for nothing with McGarrity whose recollections were firmly set upon the hills of Tyrone. The severity of the prison regime and the widespread arrests of 1936 hardened his attitude to De Valera whose last meeting with him had been around the fire in his Cross Avenue home in December 1935. Russell however, had had a meeting with De Valera in April 1935 and had proposed I.R.A co-operation if De Valera could promise an all-Ireland republic within five years. De Valera, as head of a government, could not promise that.

Eighteen months later, McGarrity financed a mission to Ireland in November 1937 by an Irish-American Quaker, J. O'Hara Harte, with the object of re-opening the proposal of I.R.A co-operation. The meeting took place, being later leaked into the newspapers; De Valera refused to consider proposals upon these lines, while politely rebuffing the services of the mediator. Meanwhile in August, Russell was outlining his plans to a select group of Clan members. At home however he was frowned upon and would soon be courtmartialled over financial matters and the reported loss of two Thompson machine guns.

MacBride, although no longer C.S. was still in G.H.Q. and took exception to Russell's support for the O'Hara Harte mission. But Russell was now directing his appeal to the younger men and with their help carried the day.

Early in March 1938 a meeting took place, probably at the home of Miss. O'Brien, 4 Victoria Street, South Circular Road, where Máirtín ÓCadhain and Bob Clements shared a downstairs front room, although Clements was not present. Taking part were Eoin McNamee, Seán Ó Broin, Mick Fitzpatrick, ÓCadhain and possibly one or two more.

Mc Namee carried the names of an Executive which would take over at the Convention scheduled for Jim Larkin's H.Q. in Marlborough Street in April, a Convention that would be packed for that purpose and one at which the Hamlet of the cast, Sean Russell, could not, because of his suspension and dismissal, appear. McNamee's twelve names, all of whom were later present at the Convention, were Jack McNeela (Mayo), Tony D'Arcy (Galway), Victor Fagg (Westmeath), Charlie Dolan (Sligo), John Tully (Cavan), Jimmy Trainor (Belfast), John James Kelly (Tyrone), George Plunkett (Dublin), Ted Moore (Kilkenny), Ned Carrigan (Tipperary), Johnny O'Connor (Kerry) and Larry Grogan (Louth).

*Long, long ago, beyond the misty space*  
*Of twice a thousand years,*  
*In Erin old there dwelled a mighty race,*  
*Taller than Roman spears;*  
*Like oaks and towers they had a giant grace,*  
*Were fleet as deers,*  
*With wind and wave they made their hiding place,*  
*These Western shepherd seers.*

- Thomas D'Arcy McGee, 1825-1868.

## CONOR FOLEY, Author, LEGION OF THE REARGUARD:

*The I.R.A. 1923-1932*

In the late summer of 1923 both Frank Aiken and Sean Lemass were in broad agreement with the political course that De Valera, from inside prison, was now urging should be pursued. This involved abandoning military activity for the foreseeable future, and instead concentrating on winning political support. Seamus O'Donovan, who had been the I.R.A Director of Chemicals, urged instead shifting the struggle to Britain. He drew up a bombing campaign, later the framework for the S. Plan, to force a re-negotiation of the Treaty. O'Malley and O'Donnell in the meantime were looking to the teaching of Connolly. O'Malley was to write later\*; *if there had been a definite, clearly defined objective to fight for the people would never have deceived themselves by thinking they could accept another system.*

Before the Civil War ended Jim Larkin arrived back from a three year sentence of imprisonment in the U.S; he thereupon established a fragile link into the Communist Party through his brain child The Irish Worker League, whose executive included Muriel, the French born widow of Terence Mac Swiney.

1924 saw a renewal of the Public Safety Act, and with it the suspension of *habeas corpus*. In their home areas, released I.R.A were once again picking up the threads of organisation. The government on its part created an unarmed police force, the *Garda Síochána*, basing them in former R.I.C barracks, with Eoin O'Duffy as their Commissioner. They successfully replaced the military, numbering 53,000, far more than the new state could afford.

In March 1924 General Richard Mulcahy announced that the army would be cut by 2,000 officers and 35,000 men. With alternative employment impossible to find this sparked off the so called Mutiny under Major-Gen. Liam Tobin and Colonel C.F. Dalton; styling themselves the I.R.A Organisation, and centred upon former members of Collins' Squad and the I.R.B, but hopes had died when Collins and his successors showed that they were content to work the Treaty.

Sean McKeon was chairman of this post-Treaty I.R.B with Seán Ó Muirthile as secretary and Eoin O'Duffy as treasurer. Joseph McGrath, Minister for Industry and Commerce was also a participant as shown by his speedy resignation from cabinet when the heave against it commenced. His home was searched; elsewhere Dalton and Tobin were arrested. With Cosgrave confined by illness, O'Higgins became acting head of the Executive Council. He denounced Mulcahy, in some way implicated, who resigned; although he was quickly received back into government. This four week turmoil was thought, in July 1927, to have triggered the assassination of Kevin O'Higgins, although, as we know, such was not the case.

On March 21, a limousine containing five I.R.A volunteers (the colourful 'Sandow' Donovan, James and Jeremiah Grey, from Barry's No. 1 Brigade, and two others) pulled into the wharf of the British base for Spike Island. Shouting, Up Tobin! Up Dalton! they fired upon a party killing one British soldier and wounding 25. The intention was to provoke an onslaught by Britain, but as an I.R.A feint, it failed.

Cosgrave, a cautious conservative, based his economic policies closely upon pre-

\* *The Singing Flame.*

vailing orthodoxy. A large proportion of his administration had held office under the British; the currency was tied to sterling; credit was backed from London; and parliamentary procedures closely resembled Westminster.

The British Legion re-emerged, holding large armistice parades; the rate of unemployment climbed steadily, while the returning Republicans found themselves boycotted for jobs.

By July 16, De Valera, after an eleven month sojourn, was released, and immediately threw himself into the political fray. There were at this time only three long term Republican prisoners inside whom we shall shortly refer to.

Sir James Craig, and his Six County government refused any co-operation in forming a 32 County Council under Articles 13 and 14 of the Treaty, and they refused to appoint a representative upon the Boundary Commission, about to be set up under Article 12, and upon which so many nationalist hopes were set. Britain therefore appointed a representative for them, thus forming a 2:1 representation.

Rather than the expected transfer of whole counties the message now being conveyed was that its purpose would extend to no more than the adjustment of a few parishes.

On October 29, 1924 the North went to the polls in an election for the Westminster parliament. De Valera was elected to South Down which he had held along with Clare in 1921. Eamon Donnelly was elected for South Armagh. Defeat in the Civil War had disheartened nationalists who now saw Sinn Féin, not as a party of hope, but as one associated with defeat. Crossing the Border resulted in De Valera being twice arrested; in Newry, and a day later in Derry. He refused to recognise the court and was sentenced to one months imprisonment. In the North as a whole Unionism won a decisive electoral victory. At the height of internment there were 870 prisoners spread between Crumlin Road, Larne workhouse, the prison ship *Argenta*, Derry Jail and Newtownards. Sean MacBride, using a converted gun craft, planned a rescue from Larne, but the prisoners were released before it could proceed\*. All but three were free by the end of 1924.

On November 4 1924, Sinn Féin held its first *Árd Fhéis* since 1921, attended by 1300 delegates. Two weeks later five by-elections were held, the party winning two and increasing its vote in all. On March 11, 1925 nine by-elections were held but this time Sinn Féin managed only to win two. In April, elections held in the North showed a nationalist advance, while Sinn Féin shrank further. The Six County Nationalist Party was now a church dominated group with no accommodation in it for purely Republican representation. They would oscillate over the next decades between attendance and non-attendance at Stormont, caused in part by the granite jawed hostility of the Black Preceptory men on the opposite benches, while Republicans pursued an entirely correct but inadequate policy of abstention. It thus preceded the day of the Armalite in one hand...

\* See *Survivors*, 1987 edition

In April 1925, Kevin O'Higgins, Minister for Justice, introduced his Treasonable Offences Bill, otherwise the 'Floggers' Bill'. We need not at this remove look askance at O'Higgins and his advisors; in the 30 subsequent acts of parliament, deemed 'coercive' and which were necessary to maintain order in the twin statelets, De Valera and subsequent 26 County regimes, would enact legislation infinitely more stringent.

The Bill could have been defeated had Sinn Féin entered Leinster House; De Valera could see that. He understood more than anyone that Sinn Féin could not sustain itself indefinitely in self-imposed isolation. Police meanwhile harassed the I.R.A. leadership by arrests, although some of these were of short duration. David Fitzgerald, organising the northern units, and Jim Killeen in the Midlands, were held in the spring. C.I.D. swooped in Dublin; Mac Bride, Aiken, Chief of Staff, Lemass and Mick Carolan, Director of Intelligence, were pulled in. That summer the Army however, not to be distracted, launched its weekly newspaper, *An Phoblacht*, edited by Patrick Little.

Entering Leinster House was now a subject of animated, if whispered, debate. In September George Plunkett and Andy Cooney confronted Aiken with their suspicions that he was steering Óglaigh na h-Éireann towards the Free State Dáil. He refused to give a straight answer but agreed to make a statement at the Convention in November.

Sean Russell, Director of Munitions, was arrested prior to the Convention. On November 6, George Plunkett tried to pull a stroke rescuing Killeen, but the train in the tiny Hill of Down station pulled out before the armed party had arrived.

Frank Ryan, as a fiery orator and street fighter, was coming into prominence; at a Wolfe Tone commemoration in Belfast, pointing to the many Union Jacks around the city, he declared; *where I come from if we don't pull them down, we shoot them down.*

On November 14, in the Queen's Hotel Dalkey, Frank Aiken presented a new constitution to the Army, which the hundred and twenty odd delegates accepted. It streamlined the executive, but it also forbade volunteers recognising the courts, north or south. Towards evening, Peadar O'Donnell introduced a resolution whereby the Army would sever its connection with the Second Dáil of Sinn Féin; in future acting under its own Executive. At this point Plunkett demanded that Aiken make his long promised statement on the future political advance. He obliged by admitting that an element in the leadership were considering that, if the Oath could be overcome, then the 48 T.D's should enter the Free State Dáil. In the subsequent turmoil Aiken's supporters were removed from office and Andy Cooney was elected Chief of Staff in his place.

Three days later the annual Árd Fhéis of Sinn Féin was confronted with the same issue. A compromise amendment from Countess Markievicz and Sean Lemass postponed discussion to an emergency Árd Fhéis, later fixed for January 1926. The I.R.A. meanwhile pulled off its most spectacular coup since the Civil War in the rescue of 19 prisoners from Mountjoy; a coup organised by George Gilmore, with some assistance from Warder Tully on the inside, and a committal warrant for three 'poachers' from Baltinglass obtained from old I.R.B. solicitor, Henry Dixon.

On November 7 1925, the London *Morning Post* leaked the news that the Boundary Commission would be recommending, not entire counties, but the transfer only of strips of land from Fermanagh and Armagh, while taking a rich swathe of east Donegal into the North. Meanwhile Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin and the English Tory Party rowed in strongly against any sweeping exchange, while at the same time, propping up military strength in border areas. The British had had two representatives: their Justice Feetham keeping that side well informed while, perversely, Eoin Mac Neill, consulted no one. On November 21, he resigned ahead of the publication in London of the findings. On December 3, after six days of hasty negotiations in London, it was agreed to suppress the Commission's report, and, quite extraordinarily, to throw upon Dublin the task of compensating for claims arising from the Tan War, while increasing payments to those who had had their mansions burned at that time. The settlement involved a down payment of £150,000 and compensatory payments of £250,000 per annum over 60 years.

The following year it emerged that the government had secretly agreed to continue the payment of land annuities which had already been waived for the North. The agreement was the origin of the expression attributed to W.T Cosgrave; 'a damned good bargain'.

The emergency Árd Fhéis of Sinn Féin in January was a prelude only to the real thing on March 9, where a split seemed inevitable. De Valera moved the motion whereby entry became a question not of principle but of policy. Fr Michael O'Flanagan opposed with the resolution that it is incompatible to send representatives into an usurping legislature. This was carried by 223 to 218, but fell as a substantive motion by 179 to 177. On simple voting strength De Valera won by two votes among the delegates, but as no one wanted that he and his supporters should go away, a follow up motion, that he was the greatest Irishman for a century (proposed by Fr. O'Flanagan and seconded by Mary MacSwiney) was passed unanimously. There was no holding back however; on May 16, in the La Scala Theatre, the new party, Fianna Fáil, was formed.

Days earlier, George Gilmore pulled off a hat trick when he rescued Capt. Jack Keogh from Dundrum Asylum; a coup for which he was to be congratulated by De Valera from the stage of the La Scala.

Andy Cooney, intending to continue a medical career, took off for the U.S, seven months after his appointment as Chief of Staff and Maurice Twomey was appointed acting in his place; quickly then being made permanent. In February 1926, Frank Ryan, accompanied by Cumann na mBan, stormed the Abbey Theatre stage in protest at an episode in Sean O'Casey's *Plough and the Stars*. This is the scene where volunteers prior to Easter Week enter a north side pub carrying the tricolour and accompanied by a prostitute. It would not raise an eyebrow now but 1926 was different.

There were street fights with police, and a series of raids against moneylenders in which Fiona Plunkett, and other Cumann na mBan volunteers, along with Donal O'Donoghue and Mick Price were arrested. Twomey was held in Westmeath on November 5, while Gilmore, in an Armistice Day riot, was clapped in, whereupon he received 18 months for the rescue in 1925.



On the night of December 14, 12 police barracks were attacked and raided upon an 'intelligence gathering' exercise in which two guards were shot dead. As a result, almost the entire G.H.Q staff were taken in. *An Phoblacht* had one issue suppressed, and another Public Safety Act was introduced.

In the summer of 1924, James Larkin, for attending a conference in Moscow, was expelled from the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, then under the influence of William O'Brien; his son, James junior, promptly formed the Workers' Union of Ireland, but Larkin senior, like many another Messiah, was notoriously hard to work with.

On November 24 1926, Fianna Fáil held its first Árd Fhéis; as a party it seemed to hold great promise for the future. A few weeks later De Valera joined MacBride upon a platform to protest at prison conditions.

For the election called for June 9 1927, Fianna Fáil ran a full raft of candidates; Sinn Féin, due to lack of funds, could run only 15. The results gave Cumann na nGael 47, Fianna Fáil 44, Labour 22, Sinn Féin 5, Independent Republicans 2, Farmers 11, National League 8, and Independents 14. Fianna Fáil presented themselves at the gates but were refused admission. Cosgrave had a comfortable majority, nominating his cabinet as before, with O'Higgins, Vice-President of the Executive Council, Minister of Justice and External Affairs.

On Sunday July 10, in an unofficial action, Kevin O'Higgins was assassinated going to Mass at Cross Avenue, Blackrock. Forthwith another Public Safety Act slammed the door against Dáil entry, by way of plebiscite, which De Valera had been considering. It also required a promise to sit if elected. There was now no means of avoiding the detested Oath, even if in practice it merely meant signing one's name underneath.

On August 11, the 43 trusty men, signed and entered the precincts behind their leader; Hannah Sheehy-Skeffington resigning from the party in protest. 27 days earlier Countess Markievicz T.D was buried in Glasnevin after close upon 100,000 had filed past her coffin in the Rotunda; City Hall being refused. Cosgrave's majority was now wafer thin; dissolving An Dáil he fixed September 15, for an election; the second election of 1927.

He was returned with 62 members to Fianna Fáil's 57. Labour fell to 13; James Larkin won a seat on behalf of the Workers' League but was disqualified as an undischarged bankrupt. In November Óglaigh na h-Éireann held its annual Convention attended by some 80 delegates. In the same month, Mick Fitzpatrick, representing the Army Council, travelled to Moscow where he was elected to the presidium of the Friends of Soviet Russia.

1928 saw increasing tension between individual I.R.A men and the garda force representing the state apparatus. The C.I.D was under the control of David Neligan, said to have been Collins' key informer although he may have been a double agent. On January 28, in Dartry Road, Sean Harling, a police agent, formerly in the I.R.A, accused of betraying a dump in Glasnevin, found himself being approached in the darkness by two trench coated men. Dodging behind a gate pillar he fired at one, mortally wounding Tim Coughlan, one of the trio who had assassinated Kevin O'Higgins seven months before. Five days earlier volunteers fired upon the principal

warder of Mountjoy in response to a complaint from the imprisoned George Gilmore.

Peadar O'Donnell had returned to Co. Donegal following his escape from the Curragh in March 1924. He found widespread complaints among the small farmers on the issue of annuity payments which many had withheld in the Tan period. Following its agreement with Britain in 1925, the Free State government was now diligently pursuing these arrears.

O'Donnell commenced a church gate agitation. His radical opinions were distrusted however within the I.R.A and he was at first unable to obtain the organisation's backing. Spasmodically it developed however and one of those leading was Protestant Geoffrey Coulter, from Leitrim, now deputy editor of *An Phoblacht*. Officially Fianna Fáil held aloof although its rural followers showed interest. The Labour Party, under Tom Johnson, stayed clear. O'Donnell's principal parliamentary ally was Colonel Maurice Moore of Mayo, a dogged nationalist, who had opposed the 1926 Anglo-Irish agreement.

O'Donnell was pulled in numbers of times over the summer of 1928; one of his few clerical allies being the Clonfert, Co. Galway priest, Fr. John Fahy\*. In Clare there were eventually 2,000 tenants defaulting under Fianna Fáil councillor Sean Hayes.

In parliament Fianna Fáil now exuded confidence; we are a constitutional party, but before anything else, we are a Republican party, declared Sean Lemass. In fact Cosgrave's ministers had much to be proud of out of what they had rebuilt and restored in the after war period. They had improved education, rationalised the state bureaucracy, advanced agriculture and industry, initiated the Shannon hydro electric scheme and commenced the home manufacture of sugar from beet. They participated in the Imperial conferences and had entered the League of Nations. Soon they would see the passing (in 1931) of the Statute of Westminster, a statute that enabled much of the constitutional advances that De Valera was to make later on. Fianna Fáil of course ridiculed these advances; the state, admittedly was impoverished, so it was easy for a radical opposition to throw mud.

Meanwhile Óglaigh na h-Éireann gnawed away at the state apparatus outside. In 1928, in a raid on the home of Cumann na mBan leader, Shelia Humphreys, a list of jurors names, besides ready to mail circulars signed *Ghosts*, were found. It was part of the pressures maintained upon jury men in political cases; it could be mild, as in a case where only a *ghost* was employed, or it could be stringent.

Maire Comerford had been sentenced in 1926 to nine months for attempting to influence a jury. In January 1927, two Cumann na mBan girls, Fiona Plunkett and Maeve Phelan, were arrested *loitering close to the residency of a judge*; they received sentences of two months. Maud Gonne was arrested in May on a sedition charge but was acquitted.

In July 1928 Sean Russell and Mick Price, having being arrested the previous November, were in court. *Harassment* screamed *An Phoblacht* on their acquittal. The gardaí however maintained that it demonstrated the futility of the ordinary law in dealing with the I.R.A. In July the Public Safety Act was allowed to lapse by James

\* See Appendix for Fr. John Fahy

Fitzgerald-Kenney, the Minister for Justice appointed after O'Higgins. The government felt that it had adequate powers already under the Treasonable Offences Act. Meanwhile, to all who cared to listen, O'Duffy warned of an eventual communist take-over by the I.R.A. Far from such a take-over August saw dozens of Union Jacks on display in the fashionable streets for the revived Tailteann Games. Girls and men of the Movement made speedy work of those displays, although some were sentenced to short terms upon arrest. A protest meeting in O'Connell Street was addressed by Fianna Fáil people, including Robert Briscoe T.D.

In December Con Healy, of Co. Cork, received a five year sentence which was unusual for that time: He had however fired while escaping from an armed detective. On January 23, 1929, John White, foreman of that jury was visited on his doorstep in Terenure, receiving a bullet wound in the stomach. More serious was the shooting dead on February 20, of Albert Henry Armstrong in Ballsbridge for giving evidence against a person accused of removing a flag. The government responded with a bill to protect the anonymity of jurors and to make refusal to recognise the court a punishable offence. There were more police raids, and one hundred Republicans were pulled in but were then quickly released.

In February 1929 De Valera was again arrested for breaking a Six County exclusion order; a great rally was held in Dublin addressed, among others, by Robert Briscoe, T.D and Sean Mac Entee, T.D; the latter making as was his wont, an extraordinarily vitriolic speech.

In March, a Dublin judge held that arrest without reason was an assault, and a person so detained would be justified in destroying prison property. Promptly Donal O'Donoghue and others, commenced actions which they later won, accompanied by monetary awards. Under Frank Ryan's editorship, *An Phoblacht*, with Hannah Sheehy-Skeffington as his assistant, continually urged on the militants.

On June 11, in Co. Clare, D.O Tadhg O'Sullivan was fatally injured by a booby trap mine, after he had been called out anonymously to examine an alleged cache of arms. O'Sullivan was the third person shot dead by the local Clare men in those years.

On June 15, MacBride and five others were acquitted of belonging to Óglaigh na h-Éireann despite their having incriminating documents. However, assault and a beating up on sight by C.I.D was commonplace. In November George Gilmore, out of prison, accompanied by I.R.A officer, Patrick Carroll, was summarily set upon in a public street. In January 1929 an I.R.A Convention approved the formation of a new political grouping, Comhairle na Poblachta. Its purpose was to link the I.R.A with Sinn Féin and Cumann na mBan; it was not to prosper however as the self-interest of each organisation remained dominant.

In April 1929 Austin Stack, one of the universally respected figures of Sinn Féin, died, accelerating its decline and the decline of the diminished Second Dáil group. It however continued to style itself *Government of the Irish Republic*, and towards the end of the year, protested to Pope Pius XI when the Vatican received an envoy from the Free State. Mary MacSwiney launched her new Constitution, while the group even discussed the re-establishment of Republican courts and employment exchanges, but lack of personnel and of finance prevented them taking these ambi-

tions further.

Art O'Connor, who had replaced De Valera as President of the Republic and had resigned shortly after, finding it necessary to earn his bread in a Free State court, had not been, as such, replaced by another president. Father Michael O'Flanagan remained the most radical voice, but his case for a change of direction failed to sway the traditionalists, MacSwiney, J.J.O'Kelly 'Sceilg' and Brian O'Higgins *Brian na Banban*. Many in the I.R.A considered Sinn Féin a pretentious joke; a political organisation, Saor Éire in embryo, was about to be promoted by them in its stead.

In March 1928, a London officer Michael Burke, was found in possession of 20 revolvers and a large sum of money. Police there managed to show that it was laundered Soviet money, although the widespread feeling was that the quality of the proof had to be taken with a grain of salt. A fragile linkage with the East there had always been, and this was demonstrated by the foundation in October 1928 of a branch of the Comintern dominated, League Against Imperialism, with Frank Ryan as secretary.

Arrested shortly after at his workplace, the Irish Tourism Association (located at the same address as Dublin Tourism at 24 Upper O'Connell Street until recently), his inauguration speech with A.J. Cook, British miners' leader, was given instead by Sean MacBride.

In June 1929, a Labour Defence League, yet another shadowy organisation, was established, following a mob attack on a meeting addressed by Willie Gallacher, Scottish communist M.P. According to a police report the League was funded by Charlotte Despard of Eccles Street, and had office space on loan from the Russian Oil Products company. At that time R.O.P pumps were in competition country wide with the Seven Sisters, Esso, Shell and the rest, but prior to 1932 R.O.P was forced to close. Commercial jealousy cannot therefore be ruled out.

In July 1929 O'Donnell and Mac Bride went to Germany for the second congress of the League Against Imperialism. Ryan and O'Donoghue attended another in Paris. An agreement was said to have been reached to train I.R.A officers in Russia and George Gilmore went there to commence the course. He was cold shouldered however when the secret police, the O.G.P.U, found that he had been tailed by an English female. He was then helped on his way by a Comintern official, who, he learned years later, was Josef Tito, but in this he was mistaken as Croatian, Josip Broz, was not in Russia at that time.

Rural revolutionary groups were being set up in tandem; the Irish Anti-Tribute League, being one; later subsumed into the Irish Working Farmers' Committee, a brainchild of O'Donnell. In November, Frank Ryan, still holding ties with U.C.D at Earlsfort Terrace, organised a meeting objecting to the establishment of an Officers' Training Corps within the College. He was supported by student lawyers Tadhg Forbes who later, under Fianna Fáil, was a prosecutor in the Military Tribunal. De Valera's son Vivion attended, but excused himself later to the College authorities.

In the same month Óglaigh officer George Mooney was arrested followed by a raid on a 'safe house' of Sean Russell in which, according to the C.I.D account, a vast haul of maps, documents and detonators were found.

In the North, by 1926 Catholics, following the fiasco of the Boundary Commission, settled down, peacefully accepting the Unionist regime, while Joe Devlin, and his followers swallowed hard and ended their boycott of parliament. Proportional representation, required by the Government of Ireland Act 1920, remained the norm until 1929, and this gave a timorous Labour Party there a chance of growth, until the die-hards reverted to a first-past-the-post system combined with carefully carved constituency boundaries; this type of geographical overkill - disregarding the unfranchised overkill at local authority level - enabled the sash sporting, rulership to maintain a two to one majority over the subdued Catholics.

Sinn Féin was almost non-existent in the North and did not nominate candidates in the 1929 election. A meeting of the entire republican movement in Belfast in the late twenties was attended by fewer than 40 people. Most northern Catholics remained tied to their church, some to the Ancient Order of Hibernians, and to the Nationalist Party. On voting issues, bigotry did not enter; it remained however a case of holding your own and never selling land or property to the other side.\*

In June 1929 five I.R.A. leaders appeared in court in Belfast charged with membership of an illegal organisation; Anthony Lavery, Jimmy Steele, Francis Grimley and Hugh Russell were acquitted; that the authorities considered the I.R.A. unimportant was evident in their awarding a mere three months to the fifth man John McGinty.\*\*

The October 1929 Wall Street crash ushered in a five year era of depression across the U.S and the western world. This was reflected in an already depressed Ireland where falling food prices further devastated the economy. Cumann na nGael could only watch helplessly as the devastation mounted; a George O'Brien type of orthodoxy - he being the ruling financial expert of that day - could not provide an answer.

The world depression however continued to push the leadership further leftwards. On March 13, a short lived Revolutionary Party saw the light; of its 70 members half were near the top of the I.R.A. Its secretary was Patrick Rooney, intelligence officer of a north side Dublin battalion. Cumann na mBan was said by the police to be permeated with Red ideas, while Briscoe the Jew was close to the Reds. An Irish section of the Comintern's Peasant Committee was formed with all the usual familiar faces; O'Donnell, Sean O'Farrell of Leitrim and Sean Hayes of Clare; in some respects the Movement was splattering the target rather than going for the bullseye. It was being left to De Valera to do that.

\* Catholics readily supported Protestants in elections where they stood firm on the national issue; Wm. McMullan and Jack Beattie being examples. A 1993 poll gave an interesting result on the perception of the two sides at that time. Catholics perceived Protestants (Church of Ireland, Presbyterian, Methodist and Baptist) as different; Protestants perceived Catholics as different and inferior.

\*\* For corroboration see *Touched by the Flame* in *Harry*

In March 1930 the I.R.A again sent delegates to a congress of Friends of Soviet Russia. Capt. Jack White, who had helped Connolly form the Citizen Army, moved north to help out. Loftus Johnson, a Belfast Protestant, said to be communist, did a short term there for remarking that it was *only by the gun that anything was gained*. In 1930 Frank Ryan and Gerald O'Reilly were addressing Clan meetings on the theme. Irish communists, following a Comintern directive moved further leftward, divorcing themselves from what some of them called *the petty bourgeois* within the Movement.

In September 1930 a number of strike breaking buses were burned in Dublin, but it was a passing phase, although in the same month, Larkin and Jim junior won Corporation seats, while their Irish Worker League decisively outpolled Labour.

In February 1931 an Army Convention approved the launch of Saor Éire; its programme would be when launched, to seek through agitation and political means, to seize the commanding heights of the economy. Mary MacSwiney for Sinn Féin, opposed the hint of class warfare in its strategy. C.I.D agent Patrick Carroll, was executed near Crumlin on January 30, 1931. As he had been an O.C and an activist in the Revolutionary Workers' Group it at first mystified many within the Movement. On March 30, Supt. Curtin was shot dead in Tipperary for pressing too hard the case of illegal drilling near Soloheadbeg. On April 23, two Trinity students stumbled upon an I.R.A camp within Lord Massey's estate at Kilakee; it was to have consequences for one George Gilmore. Cumann na mBan launched a campaign against imported sweets although Fianna Fáil's accession the following year would ensure (until the sixties) that all sweets, and many manufactures would be made at home.

The Easter 1931 commemorations were the largest and most colourful since the Civil War. They would have been capped by an impressive throng at Bodenstown had not the government, prodded by Neligan and O'Duffy, taken fright and banned it. Nonetheless, in the surprisingly relaxed security situation that prevailed, by private bus, bike and by footing it, over ten thousand arrived at the cemetery. Fianna Fáil took part in the banned parade; the previous November De Valera was even upon an anti-poppy platform in Dublin. Votes had to be garnered somehow and, as his 1932 results would show, there are no certainties in a P.R election. He steered clear of radicalism however; he bore no taint of 'communism', although it had to be sedulously spread to counter it that he was a 'daily communicant', as indeed he was. Tom Mullins T.D was disciplined in November 1930 for tabling what was thought to be a too radical resolution on unemployment.

Sub-editor Chris O'Sullivan was let slide from the *Irish Press* in 1935, ostensibly for a too left-ward approach in his editorial\*. In June 1930 the party welcomed Cumann na nGael defector, James Geoghegan into the fold; elevating him later as Minister for Justice; and soon after as a High Court judge. On one occasion, about 1930, Lemass remarked rather pertinently to O'Donnell; *don't you see we stand to gain so long as we can't be accused of starting the turmoil*.

\* *The Newspaper Book*, by Hugh Oram.

In June 1931 Frank Ryan and others led a march upon Mountjoy in support of the imprisoned Gilmore; resulting from the scuffles that followed, Ryan received a three month sentence. Warders continued to be chained to railings, and in Tipperary, John Ryan, said to have been a witness in the Soloheadbeg drilling case, was abducted and shot dead.

Sean MacBride, on an organisational meeting in Co. Kerry, was held for a while; he was putting together preparations for the launch of Saor Éire which occurred on September 26, 1931. It was not and could not be a coming together of political forces; it was simply another front. The government, prodded by the C.I.D was already considering new coercive measures; the I.R.A was planning another round, they were told, and 200 rifles had been landed in Kerry.

On October 10, George Gilmore and Charlie attempted an escape from Mountjoy with two dummy pistols, while Sean Russell fluttered a red scarf from a high level window to indicate readiness. But it failed, as the objects thrown over were too small to identify their position for the party holding the rope ladder ready to be flung over from the canal bank.

On October 14, a new Public Safety Bill, inserting Article 2 A into the Constitution, was introduced. It became law on October 17, and twelve organisations, many of them mere shadows, were banned; but it included Óglaigh na h-Éireann and the principal Republican organisations except Sinn Féin. Backing it up, the bishops issued their joint pastoral on the following day; *evil associations.... sinful and irreligious*. *An Phoblacht* went also, being replaced by a scissors and paste job, *Republican File.*, T. J. Ryan of Cranny, Co. Clare, Sean O'Farrell of Leitrim, Shelia Humphreys of Dublin and Frank Ryan were swept in; cat and mouse had a field day. Nonetheless, when Frank Aiken and James Geoghegan called on March 10, 1932 to release the prisoners only 23 were held, and most of them were on very short terms.

The first of these was the 1992 election, when the Labour Party, led by Tony Blair, won a landslide victory over the Conservative Party, led by John Major. This was a significant moment in British history, as it marked the end of Conservative rule and the beginning of a new era of social liberalism. Blair's government introduced a range of reforms, including the creation of the National Health Service (NHS) as a free-at-the-point-of-use system, and the introduction of the minimum wage. These reforms were widely popular, and helped to establish Blair as a popular leader. However, Blair's government also faced criticism for its handling of the Iraq War, and for its policies on education and the environment. In 2005, Blair's government was defeated in the general election, and Tony Blair resigned as Prime Minister. This was a significant moment in British history, as it marked the end of Blair's leadership and the beginning of a new era of conservatism. Blair's government had introduced a range of reforms, including the creation of the NHS as a free-at-the-point-of-use system, and the introduction of the minimum wage. These reforms were widely popular, and helped to establish Blair as a popular leader. However, Blair's government also faced criticism for its handling of the Iraq War, and for its policies on education and the environment. In 2005, Blair's government was defeated in the general election, and Tony Blair resigned as Prime Minister. This was a significant moment in British history, as it marked the end of Blair's leadership and the beginning of a new era of conservatism.

*Lay their spears and bucklers bright  
By the warriors sides aright,  
Many a day the Three before me  
On their linked bucklers bore me.*

- Samuel Ferguson, Deirdre's Lament, from the Irish



## On To The Republic: 1932:

On January 29, 1932 An Dáil was dissolved and a general election announced. A Eucharistic Congress was due in Dublin in June to commemorate the fifteen hundredth anniversary of St. Patrick's arrival, and an Imperial Conference was to be held in Ottawa in July. (Cosgrave may have wished to have received a vote of electoral confidence prior to these occasions although it could have benefited him to have had them over, thus gaining from the favourable publicity).

*Put Cosgrave Out*, was the slogan painted on walls everywhere; the Army Council rescinded the order forbidding volunteers working in elections. O'Donnell considered running a batch of candidates side by side with Fianna Fáil; he had already brought out an issue of *An Phoblacht* (still banned) without authorisation. While G.H.Q made it clear that a joint I.R.A - Fianna Fáil slate did not exist relations were warmer at local level.

Posters depicting Fianna Fáil as a dupe of the *communist I.R.A* were distributed widely by Cumann na nGael; Fianna Fáil hit back describing their opponents as Masons, Unionists and West Britons. The Oath stood in the way of national unity, they said; once abolished all would come in. There were pledges to foster native Irish industry, and to treat all citizens equal before the law.

It was a dirty election, with meetings broken up, and in some areas mass personation. Fianna Fáil, with the assistance of I.R.A volunteers, proved adept in this; names of deceased persons and emigrants, with changes of attire, being handed out from the party rooms. Raids and arrests, continuing during the campaign, ensured however that 'the murder gang' stayed unpopular. De Valera's new newspaper, *The Irish Press*, saw its editor hauled before the Military Tribunal days before polling; that aided the Party.

It was a heavy poll; 75 per cent, with Fianna Fáil reaching 72 seats; a gain of 16, while Cumann na nGael were reduced to 57. Labour characteristically slumped, from thirteen to seven. De Valera knew that he could not rely upon the support of Labour; he turned instead to the I.R.A leadership, suggesting a fusion; a volunteer force could be created into which activists from the I.R.A would be merged. The I.R.A rejected his call for disbandment. He countered by writing that his 1922 Document No. 2 had satisfied Cathal Brugha, Mary MacSwiney and Liam Mellows; would not the Army Council stand over their own peace proposals of 1923, and he wrote; *a fusion of national forces, that is of the labourers and working farmers, will ensure that the national march to freedom and social justice and cultural and economic development will commence with rapid movement and overwhelming strength.*

The Army Council replied that Document No. 2 had been a compromise, while the peace proposals had been a response to military defeat. When An Dáil reassembled on March 9 there were widespread fears of a coup by Cumann na nGael, and Aiken took the precaution of issuing revolvers to those T.D 's who wished to carry one. The British cabinet had already met to consider their responses; a trade boycott and treatment of Irish born persons as aliens in Britain was considered.

De Valera, 'twas whispered, would not be allowed to implement his programme; *we must stand absolutely by the sanctity of the Treaty, was the official British view.*

A more immediate threat came from some officers within the Free State Army where a proclamation for a military government under Police Commissioner O'Duffy had been drawn up. David Neligan of the Special Branch, Michael Brennan, Chief of Staff of the Free State Army, W.T. Cosgrave and most ministers were opposed to any panic action, so the transfer of power went through peacefully; William Norton, leader of the Labour Party, succeeding Tom Johnson, promising his support. It was however conditional upon a moderate programme, with Neligan and O'Duffy guaranteed their jobs; a move that ensured him praise from the *Irish Times*.

De Valera was elected President of the Executive Council by 81 votes to 68. His cabinet was approved by Governor-General James Mac Neill; Frank Aiken was appointed Minister for Defence, Sean Mac Entee to Finance, Sean Lemass to Industry and Commerce, James Ryan to Agriculture, Patrick Rutledge to Lands and Fisheries, James Geoghegan to Justice, Senator Connolly to Posts and Telegraphs, De Valera to External Affairs. As soon as these formalities were completed, Aiken and Geoghegan went to Arbour Hill Prison where Aiken spent a long time talking to George Gilmore\*; the following day 20 were released (At the same time Con Healy, imprisoned, December 1928, and Sean Hogan, imprisoned October 1923, were released from Maryborough; Sean Mc Guinness, re-imprisoned in Mountjoy in April 1931 after escaping, was also released.) The next Sunday a tumultuous welcome home rally took place in College Green; Cumann na mBan girls parading in Sam Browne belts, flanked by the I.R.A, and with every inch of space occupied.

Sean Mac Bride, secretary of the Reception Committee, pledged that there would be no disbandment of the Movement; other speakers, were Peadar O'Donnell, George Gilmore, Frank Ryan, Hannah Sheehy-Skeffington, Mick Fitzpatrick, Maud Gonne MacBride and Sean McGuinness.

*An Phoblacht* published sweeping appraisals; the I.R.A would lead the van to final victory; it made no concessions to the new government, but in their respective analysis, that came from Maurice Twomey, C.S, and O'Donnell, lurked the divergences that were to come. Saor Éire may have proved a liability, but for some, divorced from the caution of the countryside, that was still the way to go. De Valera himself was adept at playing to the gallery; visiting Skibbereen on his victory tour, he choose to take a salute from the I.R.A guard of honour there, ignoring the gardai drawn up on the roadside opposite.

The Public Safety Act was suspended and the I.R.A became once more legal. Instructions went out to police to cease harassment of Republicans. A clash occurred however on August 14 in Co. Clare when T.J. Ryan and Gilmore were shot and beaten by C.I.D from Kiltrush, who fired shots into their own barracks afterwards in faked justification.

On April 23, a bill to delete the Oath was introduced; De Valera using the argument that the Treaty laid down a form of words *but did not actually specify that the words should be repeated and spoken*. Tension rose, mainly upon the British side, as they did not now know what to expect; it rose further, when on July 1, Dublin defaulted upon payment of an Annuity. Two weeks later Britain passed an Irish Emergency Duties Bill placing tariffs on agricultural produce; De Valera responded with duties

\* A poem by George Gilmore heretofore unknown as a poet, appears in the Appendix

on British goods, and the Economic War began.

Land Annuities amounted to about £4 m in 1932; it suited the Free State to retain half while leaving half with its supporters; the tariff policy also suited the drive for self sufficiency, although still causing severe economic problems.

Britain accounted for 97 per cent of the export market; 85 per cent of which consisted of agricultural products. Fianna Fáil maintained that this dependence distorted the economy; the bullock had displaced the human being, De Valera declared. Nonetheless a search had now to be made for alternative markets but the prospect was not good. Only a tiny export trade prevailed with the U.S.A, while the volume into Europe could not, in the foreseeable future, replace Britain. Unemployment, which stood at 30,000, rose to 80,000 by October, while trade figures fell by half within a year. Lemass warned of impending collapse. The two sides met in London in October, with De Valera, in a bold memorandum, digging up the Irish claim of over-taxation in the nineteenth century. Britain should also accept a united Ireland, he declared. The talks broke up in public disagreement. Britain was unready for settlement; they were certain that, as a result of the hardships, De Valera would be toppled, and they liaised with a select nucleus of Cumann na nGael former ministers to bring this about. But England was again misunderstanding; their obdurate policies allowed Fianna Fáil to rally popular outrage against them and Fianna Fáil survived.

In October, the Governor-General, James Mac Neill resigned, claiming that he had been ignored, slighted and insulted. This suited De Valera to a tee; he replaced him with a tweedy Maynooth shopkeeper, Donal Ó Buachalla, who did not take up residence in the Vice-regal Lodge. Britain blustered at this latest 'breach' but the protests were ignored. On each occasion De Valera declared that he was not challenging the Treaty; simply Britain's interpretation of it.

In July, the Army Council, nudged by George Gilmore, issued an address to the Orange Order; it did not fall upon receptive ears. Trains travelling to and from the Eucharistic Congress had been stoned. Protestant sectarianism was rising, sharply manipulated by their M.P's; the Nationalists withdrew from the Stormont parliament in May 1932, leaving as the sole opposition an even more extremist right winger, the former R.U.C Inspector, J.W. Nixon.

The reigning unionists were not upset; proportional representation had been abolished, the franchise severely restricted and electoral boundaries redrawn to exclude opponents. Discrimination in the allocation of employment and of housing was systematic; if a Catholic got through it was by mistake. This siege mentality, accompanied by rabid sectarian speech-making carried, however, the seeds of its own destruction. By September 1932, with unemployment standing at over 100,000, a crisis developed in the Poor Law System because of the pitifully low level of payments; in some cases, of no payment.

Demonstrations, initiated by Tommy Geehan of the minuscule Revolutionary Workers' Group, culminated in an attendance of 20,000, when unemployed and lowly paid workers marched in the streets. Other marches, growing in vigour, demanded admission into the City Workhouse; a general strike was called, blue collar workers and their unions remaining aloof (the Trades Council contributed a token five pounds). The demonstration planned for October 11 was banned under

Special Powers, and thousands of R.U.C and B. Specials were stationed along the streets; two workers, one Catholic and one Protestant were shot dead and upwards of a hundred injured by gunfire.

George Gilmore was later to claim, completely without foundation, that the riot had somehow brought the I.R.A and the B. Specials together, but it had not. O'Donnell had an equally unreal view of the riots potential to generate a revolution. Individual young Republicans and nationalists participated, but the I.R.A - extremely weak in Belfast - had played no organised part.

Quickly the authorities mended fences; the Poor Law Guardians announced an increase in the rates of relief\* while the Minister for Home Affairs, Sir Dawson Bates, set up a Distress Committee (mandated exclusively to assist Protestants), and a fortnight later the Prince of Wales was invited to visit Belfast. Radical republicans in Dublin concluded that the riots signified a developing anti-imperialist consciousness on the part of the working class. The superficial nature of that unity, the fact that it was around a single issue and based on very limited demands, was overlooked - as were the consequences of I.R.A involvement.

\* See *Harry* for his eye witness account

## The Blueshirts 1933:

At midnight, January 2, 1933, De Valera dissolved An Dáil, setting an election for three weeks later. Fianna Fáil sought endorsement for what it had done to date, for the challenges thrown down to Britain and to escape being trammelled by the tiny Labour group. On January 7, Óglaigh na Éireann held a Convention at which the continuing policy of working against Cosgrave was upheld. O'Donnell, backed by Ryan, Gilmore and Price, again urged the creation of an organisation to focus discontent on the slow nature of De Valera's reforms; this was opposed by Twomey, MacBride and Russell, and was voted down.

A resolution seeking to exclude communists from within the I.R.A. was also rejected. The I.R.A. instead, decided to step up its boycott, principally against Bassale and newspapers; while Cumann na mBan sought to lure away young people from buying non-Irish sweets. The Army Comrades Association reacted by declaring that they would protect deliveries of Bass.

The stated aim of the A.C.A. was to uphold the right of free speech; in this way they were responding to what they perceived was the free hand given the I.R.A. Feeling that they had many old scores to settle, *An Phoblacht*, in September, urged a policy of *No Free Speech for Traitors*. On November 6, 1932, a riot broke out in Patrick Street, Cork, when W.T. Cosgrave, who sat in parliament for the city, attempted to address a public meeting of his party. The mêlée was led by Tom Barry and Kit Conway, National Training Officer, recently returned from the U.S.A. De Valera appealed to his supporters to allow opponents to be heard; he was answered by Frank Ryan on Armistice Day in Dublin; *while we have fists, hands and boots to use, and guns if necessary, we will not allow free speech to traitors*.

The results of the election were a solid success for De Valera. Fianna Fáil were returned with 77 seats and almost 50 per cent of the vote. He now had an overall majority. British government reports at this time referred approvingly to the A.C.A. Could it be for them a *White Army*?

On February 19, 1933 Inspector E.M. O'Connell, deputy head of the Special Branch and Col. Michael Hogan, of the Free State Army, were arrested and charged under the Official Secrets Act. Hogan was a brother of Patrick, former Minister for Agriculture. Three days later Eoin O'Duffy was sacked as Commissioner of the Garda; Dublin seethed with rumours. Col. Eamon Broy was appointed to replace O'Duffy, amalgamating his job over the Special Branch with that of Chief of Police. Hogan and O'Connell were brought to trial towards the end of March. Hogan undoubtedly had passed information from files to his brother, Professor James in Cork, for his pamphlet, *Could Ireland go Communist?* It was however a damp squib; the jury acquitted both.

O'Duffy, now with time on his hands, was approached to lead the A.C.A.; accepting the post of Director-General with alacrity and with the self-declared brief that he intended to rid the country of divisive party politics. In April 1933, it adopted the Blueshirt uniform, with shoulder straps, black buttons and a black beret. Quite apart from this incarnation, streaks of anti-communist hysteria were already building up in urban areas, nurtured wherever a vigorous sodality preacher was in place. *Like a*

plague, Cardinal Mac Rory preached, *Bolshevism seems to be spreading*. On March 27, 1933 the congregation of Dublin's Pro-Cathedral were so affected by an evening sermon, that they marched a half mile to Connolly House, the recently acquired headquarters of the Revolutionary Workers' Group. For three days and nights they stormed the building, eventually setting fire to it, at the same time burning a bedding factory next door.

Charlotte Despard's georgian house at 63 Eccles Street, nearly shared the same fate when a crowd gathered there a few weeks later.

They were dispersed at gunpoint by Mick Kelly, Dublin Brigade officer, accompanied by some volunteers. Kevin Barry Hall at 44 Parnell Square and the Unity House at 31 Marlborough Street suffered broken windows.

(The reluctance of the I.R.A to be identified too closely at this time with communists arose from the fact that communists had an entirely different agenda; that they were distrusted, and that most I.R.A men were - in all respects other than politics - dutiful Catholics, while the few communists that were in the movement were seen as unacceptable in the countryside).

This reluctance was evident in the case of James Galton, covered elsewhere, of Effernagh, Co. Leitrim. While opposing his deportation, the local O.C, Sean O'Farrell, held aloof, and the Army Council itself refused to allow Mick Price and Frank Ryan address a meeting on his behalf. Clearly the Army Council considered Galton an erratic star to follow.

In May, Dr. O'Doherty, Bishop of Galway, made an embittered attack on Robert Emmet and Wolfe Tone, inspired by the bishop's dislike of what he chose to believe were secret societies. Despite these difficulties the Communist Party of Ireland was re-established in June 1933; its meeting place booked as a total abstinence society, and its first chairman being Jim Larkin, junior, with Sean Murray as general secretary. Volunteers had been forbidden to attend but the C.P.I claimed that half of those attending were Óglaigh. They instructed that factions be set up within the I.R.A to expose the leadership; this resulted in the Army adopting an unfriendly face to such penetration of its ranks. The communists had devalued and isolated themselves; they suffered a further loss when in the June local election Jim Larkin, junior, failed to hold his Corporation seat.

On January 31, 1933, rail workers on the Great Northern Railway, faced with a wage cut, went on strike. The company used their emergency staff as strike-breakers to run their trains and buses, and two were killed on the first day when a passenger train was derailed at Dromiskin, Co. Louth. Ambush and sabotage then became widespread and an R.U.C man was killed in Belfast.\* In April a settlement was reached whereupon the workforce was cut by 700. The militancy shown by Óglaigh na h-Éireann had failed to pay off; northern workers soon drifted back to the loyalist fold. The Northern Ireland Labour Party vote continued to slip, although Harry Midgley picked up a seat in Belfast on a split vote. (Uninspiring and tame the N.I.L.P conspicuously failed to bridge the sectarian divide; Midgley, commencing well, ended up inside the Unionist Party). Tommy Geehan contested an election for the Poor Law Guardians but polled badly.

The Nationalists abandoned their year old boycott and returned again to

\* See Bob Bradshaw's account.

Stormont. They were challenged in six areas by abstentionist Republicans; all doing reasonably well, and two, including Pádraig MacLogan, being elected. De Valera was again returned as an abstentionist for South Down. The government responded to this heightened political activity by detaining upwards of 40 nationalists but releasing them later. De Valera, although President of the Executive Council of the Irish Free State, had agreed again to run for South Down; in an interesting constitutional situation, he was elected M. P.

In March 1933 the Executive published over Easter a *Constitution and Government Programme*, calling for widespread public ownership. Cumann na mBan formally broke with the Second Dáil group, apparently regarding them as out of touch. This provoked Mary MacSwiney to break with them, setting up Mná na Poblachta (Women of the Republic) instead. An *Phoblacht* (under the influence of O'Donnell and Ryan) refused notes from Mná na Poblachta. (They had also refused to publish her Constitution; a worthy document). In the spring of the same year Frank Ryan and Hannah Sheehy-Skeffington resigned from the paper. In Ryan's case this presaged his flirtation with the Congress idea. Donal O'Donoghue, a safer man, succeeded Ryan; a contributor at this time, of whom more would be heard, was Helmut Clissman.

On July 20, O'Duffy, renamed the A.C.A., National Guard. *Providence and De Valera made General O'Duffy available* declared Dr. T.F. O'Higgins at his selection on July 20, 1933, in the Hibernian Hotel, Dublin. The Blueshirt organisation would go through five name changes in its brief life. O'Duffy thereupon announced a programme based upon order, discipline and national honour. At the same time he made public an intention to march upon Leinster Lawn, Upr. Merrion Street, and from there to Glasnevin Cemetery, where Michael Collins, Arthur Griffith and Kevin O'Higgins lay. It was fixed for Sunday, August 13, and it posed a problem for De Valera, whose Minister for Justice, P.J. Ruttledge, as a precaution, withdrew all private gun permits; ordering the weapons to be turned in. Starting on the night of August 9, some dozens of I.R.A. men were recruited into a Special Branch; a move inspired by Oscar Traynor.

The parade was banned under Article 2 A (the Cosgrave Act of October 1931); after considering the position, and the known fact that Dublin bristled with armed police and armed I.R.A., the parade was ignominiously called off on the Saturday. That night saw scuffles in many parts of the city. The following week the National Guard was proscribed; promptly changing its name to the Young Ireland Association. *The Irish Times* accused De Valera of being paranoid, and called for a wholehearted effort to oust Fianna Fáil. On September 8, O'Duffy announced a merger of Cumann na nGael with the eleven member Centre Party of Frank Mac Dermot, under the new title of Fine Gael or United Ireland Party. O'Duffy was its President and an uncomfortable W.T. Cosgrave, one of its three vice-presidents.

Support for the rejigged party grew straight out of the politics of the Civil War and from those larger farmers hit by the Economic War. Scuffles continued widespread between Blueshirts and young Fianna Fáil supporters, indistinguishable from I.R.A. On September 21, a Blueshirt suffered a shooting injury in Kerry; two days later there was a serious riot in Limerick city when Cosgrave and O'Duffy

attempted to hold a rally; at the same time a group of Blueshirts had to flee Kiltrush; the week was rounded off by a riotous assault on a meeting in Cork. They now frequently for their own protection travelled in convoys. Police treatment however appeared partisan; by the end of the year 34 Republicans had been convicted by the Tribunal against only 11 Blueshirts.

On October 6, at a Fine Gael Convention in Tralee, O'Duffy had his car ambushed and burned. With Ned Cronin he proceeded on foot but suffered a severe blow on the head from a hammer. Baton charges failed to disperse the crowd, until eventually, soldiers were rushed in. The next day 14 Tralee Republicans were charged; local Fianna Fáil fearing electoral loss was aghast.

De Valera rushed into Tralee to soothe his worried local organisation. At the party *Árd Fhéis* in November he gave a stridently nationalistic speech which cheered his supporters. This was better understood in the light of his approach that same month to the British government wherein he sought an assurance that if the Free State seceded from the Commonwealth, Westminster would respect its right to do so.

Britain however refused to categorically answer, thus causing a protest from other Dominion states as, under the 1931 Statute of Westminster, Saorstát Éireann had that right: W.T. Cosgrave added his voice in protest. De Valera probably did not then contemplate secession; a move which would await the Republic of Ireland Act of 1948 under John A. Costello.

Meanwhile battles continued for control of the countryside. In December an obstructing crowd was batoned from a town in Mayo to allow a Blueshirt meeting; two Blueshirts were dragged from bed in Cork and badly beaten, with one dying later; in December, C.I.D. men shot at a Republican group, some of whom were said to have attacked Cosgrave's car; on December 23, *An Phoblacht* complained of a Blueshirt walking from court after being charged with possession of a revolver during a brawl. Tom Barry, by contrast, was serving a twelve month sentence for a gun found in his home. Was there a difference between De Valera and Cosgrave, it speculated? Evidently not, because that particular issue was promptly seized by police.



## Republican Congress 1934:

On December 8, 1933, the Young Ireland Association was banned. O'Duffy was arrested a week and a half later and charged with membership of an illegal organisation. He was then released on bail. On January 4, a Cork city publican died of injuries following a brawl between Blueshirts and Republicans. On February 8, a group of Republicans in Dundalk were arrested on the word of a Blueshirt, McGrory; he claimed he had been robbed at gunpoint the previous month. Later a bomb demolished his home, injuring his mother who died a week later. On the same day there was a major riot in Drogheda.

The leadership now felt that this sort of campaign had got out of hand; twice issuing warnings against clashing with Blueshirts. They also stated, with evident truth, that only six of the large number detained for anti- Blueshirt activity, were I.R.A. volunteers.

On February 23, the government introduced a bill to outlaw political uniforms. This was seen as a gesture to Republicans and to many young Fianna Fáil people who joined in the fray. Fine Gael T.D's, some attired ostentatiously in blue shirts, clamoured. Approved however in An Dáil, it was rejected by the Senate; the following day; doubtless welcoming the rejection, a bill to abolish the Senate was introduced. De Valera had moved far to outflank the wings upon his right and upon his left; he had implemented pension and compensation bills covering the Civil War period, a period which had not before been covered. The Broy Harriers and the Volunteer force, still to come, provided other counter magnets away from the I.R.A. Imperialist monuments, in the legal sense, - more enduring than stone - were being stripped away; Frank Pakenham's *Peace by Ordeal*, justifying De Valera's efforts to renegotiate the Treaty, was published in 1935, followed in 1937 by Dorothy Macardle's classic history, *The Irish Republic*.

Meanwhile De Valera's popularity held up despite the continuing fall in living standards (and that popularity would be further enhanced through the hardships of the 'Emergency' period). I.R.A. efforts at trade boycotts received no widespread endorsement.

On the world scene refugees told of the clamp-down under the political regimes of Germany, Portugal and Italy, forcing the Soviet Union to forsake its class war and to advocate the formation of 'Popular Fronts'. The minuscule C.P.I. during 1933 was sparked into an alliance-seeking activity, north and south. (Eventually it would be solely Republican Congress who would join with them.) The radicals within the I.R.A. thought that a broader political platform was required and commenced a covert lobbying campaign in the run up to the March 1934 General Army Convention. It would not be another Saor Éire; they would instead spearhead what they conceived to be popular struggles. The I.R.A. was too conspiratorial, O'Donnell argued; theory and tactics should be forged through open discussion.

At the Convention opening on March 17, Mick Price moved his own resolution, turgid and wordy, ending with a message condemning the exploitation of human beings 'with all its attendant miseries'. Council members criticised the tenor of the resolution, O'Donnell withholding his support; Price then withdrew his motion and

stormed out, thus depriving the reformers of a vital vote. Price anyway was an unusual convert to the ultra left and would soon abandon it.

O'Donnell and Gilmore then moved the Congress resolution; the purpose of which they said would confer upon the I.R.A. *the social revolutionary task of rallying the national forces to participate in the struggles of the people*. Adopting an ultra pure stance they asserted that De Valera's Economic War was being fought to foster Irish capitalism, while he himself was preparing for a settlement with Imperialism along the lines of Document No. 2.

Supporters of this motion won a narrow majority of the delegates, but the Army Council and Executive voted solidly against it. Ironically it was Price's walk out which decided the issue. (Ironically too, Price maverick-like would reappear in Congress in September to disrupt it then completely.)

On April 8, the dissidents met in Athlone, issuing a manifesto; *a united Ireland will never be realised except through a struggle which uproots capitalism*. It was signed by O'Donnell, Gilmore, Ryan and Price, with Eithne Coyle, Sighle Humphreys and May Laverty of Cumann na mBan executive, followed by Nora Connolly O'Brien and Cora Hughes. A whirlwind campaign followed; a weekly newspaper was established, and Price commenced to form a Citizen Army. The Army Council hit back, attacking *factionalism*, in its Easter statement. Shorn of its fine phrases, *An Phoblacht* declared, the Congress means nothing more than an attempt to form a political party. Gilmore, O'Donnell and Price were court martialled *in absentia*, in a hearing chaired by Sean Russell and dismissed with ignominy. Coyle and Humphreys rejoined Cumann na mBan; the aim of Congress, they said, seemed to be to smash the I.R.A. O'Donnell replied with a scathing attack upon Cumann na mBan, citing numerous stunts they had instigated to 'ginger up' their male comrades.

Congress activists immediately sought openings on picket lines, and in exposing slum housing. Jim Larkin's Workers' Union of Ireland affiliated, while support came through Roddy Connolly from Bray Trades Council, and counterparts in Mullingar and Dundalk. But for the umbrella concept to succeed this was cream all too thinly spread; there was little to distinguish Congress from the C.P.I: in their *Irish Worker's Voice* they predicted that it would soon be an 'all embracing body'. Winning toe-hold support in the Shankill and Newtownards caused Frank Ryan to trumpet that the road was now open for the long sought alliance of Protestants and Dissenters.

At Bodenstown, on June 17, Congress refused to furl controversial banners being carried by them. The Tipperary Battalion was directed to form a cordon around them and to seize the banners. (The recollection of this incident was to form a fruitful cry martyrdom tale for George Gilmore in subsequent years).

What was soon clear was that the presence of whatever the small number of Protestant Republicans who had appeared at Bodenstown it would not diminish sectarianism in the Lagan valley; it was in fact growing apace.

The Orange Order and its vitriolic adherent, the Ulster Protestant League, was fomenting action against Catholics securing work in the wide range of agencies, government, local authority and private employer, influenced by them. All I boast is that we have a Protestant parliament for a Protestant people, declared Lord Craigavon, Prime Minister, and Lord Brookborough assured an Orange gathering

that he *did not employ a single Catholic*. Encouraged by these statements gunmen took the politicians at their word.

From November 1933, when a Catholic publican was shot dead, through 1934 and on to the major outbreak of July and August 1935, in Belfast, when loyalist aggressiveness was at its height, crossing the political divide was completely ruled out. But by that time Congress was a spent force; never having had the slightest influence in the North, while its impression on main stream Irish politics was minimal. (Historically, like Saor Éire, it remains on in academia as an over-inflated footnote).

The heavily picketed founding meeting - Athlone in April being an inauguration - took place at Rathmines Town Hall on September 29 and 30, a Sunday. Attended by 186 delegates and presided over by William McMullan of Belfast, it split upon the classical lines of Workers' Republic, proposed by Price, Roddy and Nora Connolly, versus a United Front resolution from O'Donnell, Gilmore, Ryan and Frank Edwards.

The latter was carried by 99 votes to 84, but the movement was irretrievably splintered. (McMullan later had to leave Belfast). The minuscule C.P.I group had given the Front its votive support; it was the sole group, apart from dissident republicans gathered under the umbrella. Its paper, *Republican Congress*, survived fitfully until February 1936, while its supporters retired, returned to the I.R.A., or a few - a very few - joined the C.P.I.

The Curlew Mountains in 1596, a significant battle in the Nine Years' War, was a decisive victory for the English forces led by Hugh O'Donnell and Hugh O'Neill against the Irish forces led by Hugh O'Donnell and Hugh O'Neill. The battle was fought on the Curlew Mountains, a range of hills in County Wick, Ireland. The English forces, led by Hugh O'Donnell and Hugh O'Neill, were defeated by the Irish forces, led by Hugh O'Donnell and Hugh O'Neill.

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*Have no dread nor fear of the great number of the soldiers of London, nor of the strangeness of their weapons, but put your hope and confidence in the God of glory. I am certain if ye take to heart what I say, the foreigner may be defeated and ye victorious.*

- Red Hugh O'Donnell on the Eve of the Battle of the Curlew Mountains 1596

## The Patriot Game: 1934 - 1936

An Extraordinary Convention, held on August 18, 1934 heard the Army Council report that the units, despite the defection of Congress, had held solidly. The defections had not robbed the Movement of its left wing; if anything, to judge from its continuing policies and from *An Phoblacht*, it was as hard hitting as ever.

The Blueshirts, now as League of Youth, were also in annual conference. The local elections of June, the first fought strictly on party lines, had been disappointing; of 23 councils Fine Gael had gained control only of seven, and Blueshirtism was being perceived by some within party ranks as a liability. A leading Blueshirt in Clare had been convicted of killing an opponent in a scuffle, and they were becoming involved now in clashes between farmers and police. The Economic War had reached a new intensity; there was a calf slaughter scheme to dispose of unwanted animals, and farmers were widely defaulting on rates and annuity payments.

In March 1933 the government extended the three years moratorium on annuities, at the same time reducing them by fifty per cent. The state was able to announce a budget surplus in 1933 and 1934, while the calf slaughter scheme upheld welfare payments. O'Duffy in August 1934 gave full backing to the campaign to withhold payments, having returned encouraged from an international conference of fascist parties. This appears to have converted him into adopting a stridently anti-British stance, announcing that the Blueshirts would be extending their organisation into the Six Counties; at the same time proclaiming that they were the true inheritors of 1916, swapping their berets for the broad black brimmer of the Volunteers.

Urging support for the anti-annuities campaign, there were now 349 persons convicted and four county councils, Waterford, Kilkenny, South Tipperary and Laois refusing co-operation in the collection of rates and annuities. They were promptly dissolved, as central government had the power to do. Cattle auctions were heavily guarded, and the clashes led to tragedy when Broy Harriers fired upon a lorry of young Blueshirts attempting to crash a sales yard gateway in Cork on August 13. A 15 year old boy was killed and seven others wounded, but the League of Youth continued to endorse the campaign despite growing Fine Gael concern.

On August 31, 1934, Professor James Hogan resigned in protest at the *general destructive and hysterical leadership of its President General O'Duffy*. On September 21, the General resigned the presidency of Fine Gael, endeavouring however to retain control of the League. When that came to nothing he set up a short lived Corporate State Party. The anti-tax campaign continued without him; the Broy Harriers strength was doubled to 400, and in October nearly 200 farmers were arrested; but the end was near, and the campaign had petered out by mid 1935. (Had they realised it, De Valera could now turn his full attention upon the I.R.A; they would be faced with the choice of quitting or imprisonment despite the fact that numbers among them had vigorously opposed the anti-annuity campaign).

Industrial employment was not growing sufficiently fast to absorb the rural masses notwithstanding a strong self-sufficiency aspect in Fianna Fáil planning.

National income increased in 1934, for the first time in five years, but unemployment reached 100,000 in 1935 while emigration peaked at 26,000 in 1937.\* Relations with Britain eased; in January 1935 a Coal/ Cattle Pact was announced enabling an exchange of the two countries major exports.

Radicalism in government policy was slowing; the financial institutions were still tied to London as was the currency to sterling. Land distribution had eased; live animals still formed 50 per cent of exports, and by the end of the decade the acreage under tillage had increased by only two per cent.

Although *An Phoblacht* carried stories of individual resignations from Fianna Fáil, the drift, in truth, was in the other direction. Michael Hilliard of Meath, long time G.H.Q member, left the I.R.A after its 1934 Convention and rose high in the Dept. of Defence later: Sean Buckley, a pillar of Cork I.R.A, became a Fianna Fáil T.D: in Leitrim, Sean O'Farrell left to form his own insurance company.

Radicals sought now to 'involve' the unemployed; on November 15, 1934, thousands marched to a rally addressed by Labour, C.P.I and I.R.A spokesmen. They sought and were granted increased 'dole', but the unemployed would remain a constituency of limited potential.

In November the agent of the Saunderson estate in Longford, Gerald More - O'Ferrall, issued eviction notices to 121 tenants; the I.R.A intervened and Michael A. Kelly, one of their best spokesmen, addressed a meeting in Longford. It did not have the effect sought, namely the withdrawal of the notices, so on February 9, 1935, a masked squad from Leitrim arrived at *Lisard* with an instruction to punish More-O'Ferrall. A *mêlée* developed around the dinner table and the son was shot, dying later.

Jimmy Joe Reynolds, the new Leitrim O.C, and two others, Hughie Devine; 'Nipper' Shanley and Mick Ferguson, were arrested. The three were acquitted after a second trial. Kelly was also arrested and charged with conspiracy, but was acquitted.

Lapsing into stunts, the I.R.A added 'imperialist films' to its targets. Once again there was some trouble in Dublin on Armistice Day, but this time Frank Ryan, temporarily converted from his fists and boots era, joined a small group of veterans protesting against war.

In January 1935, and in numbers of Lenten pastorals, the I.R.A was castigated en masse. This time a clear difference was perceived in the public mind between a Fianna Fáil that was bent upon securing place and preference, and an I.R.A that offered no such prospect. There could be no mistaking as to which one would have the larger following.

At its Convention in March 1935, Sean Mac Bride, feeling acutely the need for a new direction, proposed that the I.R.A sponsor its own political party but his proposal was overwhelmingly rejected. That it instead should declare war on Britain was only headed off by a sober speech from Maurice Twomey. On March 22, the Army Council issued a support message to striking Dublin bus and tram workers.

\* These figures are considerably below current unemployment and some recent emigration levels.

When the government deployed army lorries to provide emergency transport, the I.R.A. intervened, and two policemen suffered gunshot wounds. Two days later police and Special Branch roped in 43, including O'Donnell, O'Donoghue, Barry, Kelly and Con Lehane. Three who died later in Spain were also taken in; Jack Nalty, Dinny Coady and Charlie Donnelly. Some were released, but by April, more than 100 were in jail, including Lehane, Barry and O'Donoghue.

On May 12, another garda, interrupting youths painting *Join the I.R.A.* on the footpath, suffered a shot wound; most G.H.Q. members were now on the run, and the Army's sweepstake office in Dame Street was ordered to close. On June 24, the *Irish Press*, carried a statement by a number of Irish-Americans calling for the re-unification of the national movement; they naturally would be opposed to Óglaigh na h-Éireann's leftward slide. McGarrity considered that economic and social policy should take second place to the military struggle, although by this time Clan financial support had almost dried up. *The Irish Press* answered with an editorial asserting that I.R.A. acceptance of the 1923 ceasefire provided a logical basis for unity. Meanwhile the prospect of a war in Europe caused some nationalists, under Dan Breen, to seek a separation from Britain's war plans; but as nothing serious appeared to be happening there was little response to Breen's call.

In November 1935, Republican Congress supporters in London produced a newspaper, *the Irish Front*, edited by Charlie Donnelly. (It speaks volumes for their frustration that the rebels from the I.R.A. who erupted in Athlone in April 1934 had now moved their battleground to London, and some would soon be dispersed on to the battlefields of Spain). The *Front* was to be the precursor of the Connolly Clubs.

From America McGarrity preached that the I.R.A. should heal its breach with De Valera, abandon other political initiatives, and renew the war with Britain. Mac Bride was opposed to both suggestions as the I.R.A. simply had not the resources.

Bodenstown 1935 held up with 20,000 in attendance, but Mac Bride's oration was muffled by the forced closure of *An Phoblacht*. There was a re-run at Sallins of the previous year clash with a Congress - C.P.I. contingent. The next issue of *Republican Congress* carried a scathing denunciation of the Twomey-MacBride leadership; the same issue carrying the news that Mick Price and Roddy Connolly had led the remnants of the Irish Citizen Army into William Norton's Labour Party.\*

In June 1935, twelve Belfast I.R.A. trainees, arrested at Giles Quay, north of Dundalk, received two year sentences that would consign them to the harsh rigours of Arbour Hill. *An Phoblacht* was at the same time being censored out of existence; on July 6, it was replaced by a typed sheet, *The Republic*. In August, a Convention finally agreed to launch an abstentionist party, Cumann Poblachta na h-Éireann, although few held much hope for its prospects.

\* A Party radicalised to the extent that in 1936 it adopted a Workers' Republic as its objective; that however made uneasy the Irish National Teachers' Organisation, and after taking advice the twin objectives of public ownership and of a Workers' Republic were drafted out of the Constitution in April 1944. See *Survivors*: Appendix.

The summer of 1935 brought the largest outbreak of loyalist violence since 1922. Led by the Ulster Protestant League it indulged in an orgy of house burnings, made easy by the gas installed in each small terrace dwelling. Catholics were driven from mixed workplaces and street sniping was frequent. Premises considered faintly left wing, being sited usually in in-between areas were wrecked; the wholly innocent C.P.I being a particular target. 13 died, of whom, amazingly only two were Catholic; 500 in all were seriously injured; hundreds of Catholic homes were either burned or abandoned to the 'other side', and some thousands of jobs were lost.

Calls for a public inquiry were ignored; Stanley Baldwin, the Prime Minister, refused to allow the matter to be discussed in Parliament. There was retaliation in the south; a retaliation that few encouraged; short-lived boycotts occurred in Clones, Limerick and Galway. A Protestant church in Kilmallock was burned, while Protestant property elsewhere was damaged.

Even before the riots the C.P.I had dropped Irish from its *Worker's Voice* title; its programme was watered down to satisfy a popular front that, so far as the Lagan valley was concerned, never existed. The Northern Ireland Labour Party was badly damaged by the polarised atmosphere.

The riots confirmed what Republicans always believed, that the northern state was irreformable and that the R.U.C and the B. Specials were its armed custodians. The riots provided an opportunity for the I.R.A to use Thompson guns in urban fighting in Belfast for the first time. While working class Protestants stayed with the Orange monolith, the I.R.A succeeded in recruiting some educated Protestants into its ranks; they drifted in from the Irish Union Movement founded by Denis Ireland\*, a liberal Presbyterian.

The riots had boosted I.R.A prestige; as independent republicans they contested six seats in the November 1935 Westminster elections, forcing the Nationalist Party to stand down. Two were elected on abstentionist tickets while the other three polled well.

Partition posed problems for the C.P.I; never a mass movement but influential in the trade unions. In Belfast they gave overt support to partition while in Dublin they attempted to be more nationalistic than Fianna Fáil in an effort to win ground from them.

At its annual conference in February 1936, the Irish Labour Party declared for separation from the British Empire and for a Workers' Republic, only to be denounced promptly by the Catholic hierarchy. In April, Congress and C.P.I were assaulted by by-standers while taking part in the I.R.A Easter parade; Captain Jack White suffering a blow\*\*.

\* From 1948 to 1951 Denis Ireland stood as a senator - one of the Taoiseach's eleven - in Seanad Éireann.

\*\*The father of Capt. Jack, from Antrim was decorated for his defence of Ladysmith in 1899 in the Boer War. Capt. Jack himself is said to have put the proposal to Jim Larkin during the 1913 strike for the formation of the Citizen Army, training them afterwards in Fairview Park. See Desmond Greave's *James Connolly*. He remained on the fringe of radical politics until his death in the sixties.



The following day Willie Gallacher, Scottish Communist M.P. with Peadar O'Donnell, had to be rescued by police while attempting to hold a public meeting in College Green. Their lorry had failed to appear, and O'Donnell was trying to support himself upon a lamp post.

In December 1935, Belfast I.R.A. attempted a raid on the arsenal of the Officers' Training Corps in Campbell College; it fell apart in a gunfight and four volunteers were later arrested. It was obvious there had been a tip-off. Anthony Lavery, Belfast O.C., therefore gave permission to three of the arrested men to recognise the court, hoping in that manner to smoke out the informer. Edward McCartney refused however to recognise the court and got ten years while the three others were acquitted. Dublin H. Q. saw red; recognition was forbidden under Frank Aiken's General Order Eight.

On April 25, 1936, a courtmartial was in session upstairs on the issue in an Irish language club at 10 Crown Entry when armed police with sledge hammers swept aside Liam Rice, guarding the door, and burst in. Adjutant-General Jim Killeen, Michael A. Kelly, and four of the Northern O.C.'s together with Lavery, were arrested. All were charged with treason felony; receiving sentences from seven years downward.

The I.R.A. was in deeper trouble in the South. On March 24, 1936 Vice-Admiral Henry Boyle Somerville was shot dead, as an English recruiting agent, upon his own door step. The operation had been sanctioned, but the squad exceeded their instructions. One month later, there was a repeat, in Dungarvan, on April 26, when a young man, John Egan, recently left the I.R.A., was gunned down. At this critical turning point of governmental policy making it was the worst sort of action that the organisation could be doing.

On May 21, Maurice Twomey was arrested under Article 2 A. On June 18, the day before his trial, the I.R.A. was declared unlawful. Not a single T.D. choose to oppose Gerald Boland, Acting Minister for Justice on the issue. Twomey was sentenced to three years and three months on June 19, and the forthcoming Bodenstown commemoration was banned upon the same day. This time the entire district in Co. Kildare was effectively sealed off. A few Cumann na mBan and Sinn Féin people tried to enter the cemetery only to be rudely pushed away. Eventually Hannah Sheehy-Skeffington read Mary MacSwiney's address to a handful of the faithful gathered upon the roadside.

The account of 1585 through the legend of the 'Red Hugh O'Donnell' is a story of a man who was a great warrior and a great leader. He was a man of many talents and a man of many virtues. He was a man who was loved by his people and feared by his enemies. He was a man who was a great warrior and a great leader. He was a man of many talents and a man of many virtues. He was a man who was loved by his people and feared by his enemies. He was a man who was a great warrior and a great leader. He was a man of many talents and a man of many virtues. He was a man who was loved by his people and feared by his enemies.

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- Philip O'Sullivan on Red Hugh O'Donnell

## The Connolly Column: 1936 - 1939:

The Civil War, long boiling, broke out in Spain on July 18, 1936. Within a few days the country was evenly divided, with Franco and his generals (these were known as the Nationalists) holding the western half, backing upon Portugal, and the government forces - the Reds in Irish Catholic papers - holding the eastern half flanking the Mediterranean. Madrid, from the start almost, was in the front line, and held by government forces; the extreme north, along the Biscay coast was also in government hands, being part of the Basque province of Vizcaya, and also the adjoining provinces of Santander and Asturias. Asturias had been involved in a bloody revolt two years earlier.

The Popular Front was the legal government of Spain. It had been elected in the previous February but with an extremely slim majority.

For the Popular Front, the votes cast were:- 4,176,156

The others consisted of:-

Basque Nationalists 130,000

Centre Group 681,047

National Front (Right Wing) 3,783,601

There had been turbulence before the election, but this turbulence increased afterwards. It was easy for the conservative forces, the Church and the Army, to persuade many Spaniards and of course people abroad, that the disparate grouping of Socialists, Republican Left, Republican Union, Catalan Left, Communist (there were 17 of those only in a Cortes of 473), who made up the Popular Front were in no position to maintain order or to guide the destinies of Spain.

They were obsessed too with the fear that what had occurred was the prelude merely of a Bolshevik takeover, a *Putsch* after Trotsky and Lenin, as in Russia in November, 1917. While the left wing, now in government, squabbled and lost control of their followers, the conservative forces in opposition, and the centre groupings consolidated among themselves, and prepared for insurrection.

The immediate cause of the outbreak, when it came, was the murder by left wing police and civilians of the Monarchist leader Calvo Sotelo on July 13, but it was clear that considerable preparations had been made by the Army generals beforehand. Not all of the Army supported the Franco forces; within a few days many soldiers found themselves before his firing squads, among them seven generals.

The course of the 33 month fratricidal war that now followed was bitter and cruel in the extreme. Not only were many of Spain's finest art treasures, in the way of buildings, destroyed (50 churches burnt in Madrid within the first week), but civilians on both sides suffered. It is estimated that 50,000 were executed by the Nationalists in the course of the war (many more afterwards), most of them in the first weeks. All but one of the Popular Front deputies found in that half of Spain were executed. Many of these

killings were carried out in the most brutal fashion. On the government side retribution was equally swift and summary; it would be difficult to estimate the total numbers who died in the war as a whole - but it must have been near half a million.

The world powers declared against intervening at an early stage, but the non-intervention pact was made a mockery of by the open participation of Italy and Germany. Both these nations contributed handsomely to Franco's victory; the Italians some 50,000 trained soldiers at one time, and the Germans upwards of 16,000 Luftwaffe and anti-tank personnel.

Each of the dictators saw their future to some extent bound up with a victorious Fascist Spain, and Franco, to some extent, lived up to their hopes. At the end of the war, in March 1939, he dutifully joined them in an anti-Comintern (anti-Russia) pact. He was clever enough to stay out of World War II.

Was it the sort of war that any foreign nation should have had an involvement in even as volunteers? And could they hope - short of massive intervention like Hitler and Mussolini - to sway the issue? Passions in Spain are generations deep, and issues which might seem clear-cut abroad, were by no means as clear-cut in Andalusia, Catalonia or Castile.

The government side had more of the volunteers, some of them adventurers maybe, but most of them liberal and left wing idealists. Those who sought service as combatants were grouped in a section of the army known as the International Brigade. The Brigade was the brainchild of Europe's communist parties (principally Maurice Thorez, the French leader) although they welcomed non communists. The first arrivals reached Albacete in October, and from then on continued in a steady trickle from most European countries and the U.S.A, until their number built up to 18,000 (though 40,000 in all could claim to have been in the Brigade). The Soviet Union could take credit for being the inspiration for the Brigade, but in most other respects, Russia's aid to the Government of Spain was disappointing. Some 85 million dollars of war materials are said to have been delivered, though the Spaniards maintained that all of this was paid for in gold bullion transferred to Moscow. Stalin's cautious foreign policy was reflected at home in purges which had a disruptive effect upon left wing people the world over. The disappearances, the confessions, the executions of his most trusted policy makers and generals, including many of his principals within Spain, Ovseenko, Berzin, Gaikino, Orlov, disheartened international communism.

The in-fighting going on between Communists and the powerful Trotskyists (P O U M) even at the most critical period of the war, had a debilitating effect. Was this the witches cauldron in which Frank Ryan and his comrades, Peter Daly of Wexford, R.M. Hilliard of Killarney, Michael O'Riordan of Cork, Paddy O'Daire of Donegal, Charlie Donnelly of Tyrone, Kit Conway of Tipperary, Dick O'Neill and Bill Henry of Belfast, Joe Monks, Alec Digges, Mick Brennan, Jack Nalty, Jim Straney, Dan Boyle, Bill Beattie, and Tommy Patten of Achill - to mention only a few of them - should have thrust themselves, even General O' Duffy and his 650 volunteers? It is doubtful, although it must be said that none of those who survived this bitter war ever expressed the slightest tinge of regret for having taken part in it. Politics in Ireland were at a loose end; for some of them there was nowhere to go but Spain.

That they were heroic there was no doubt. It was an end to boasting, and for most of them an end for the seemingly endless drilling of their I.R.A. days. In this struggle for democracy, they were putting their life where their heart was.

Many of them believed that victory for the government forces in Spain would put a stop to the gallop of fascism in Europe. Maybe so, but would it really have stopped Hitler from going to war, if not in 1939, then perhaps in 1941 or 1942?

What was the feeling in Ireland about the war? Historically the ties between Ireland and Spain have always been strong, for religious reasons as much as the romanticism of history. The majority of the Irish were horrified and bewildered at the atrocities of the war. They were presented in a totally one sided way as Red atrocities or Nationalists' victories by all of the newspapers north and south, with the exception of *The Belfast Telegraph*, *The Irish Press* and *The Irish Times*, and some local northern papers.

The Irish Free State was a party to the non Intervention Pact and retained its ambassador to Madrid (later Valencia): the radio and official view points were presented with exemplary impartiality. Not so the Fine Gael Party and the remnants of its Blueshirt following. On August 31, 1936, the Irish Christian Front was founded at a mass meeting called for the Mansion House, Dublin, by Patrick Belton (father and uncle of two later Fine Gael politicians), Dr. J.P. Brennan, the Dublin City Coroner, and Miss Aileen O'Brien. Interrupters at the meeting who shouted remarks about James Connolly were removed. It concluded with *Hail Glorious St. Patrick and Faith of Our Fathers*. The following month there was an announcement that General O'Duffy would organise a brigade. 2,000 volunteers were sought. About the same time the Christian Front held a mass meeting in Cork. They continued to progress around the country by holding meetings in Sligo and Longford, culminating in a throng of 30,000 in College Green on October 25: 2,000 Catholic Boy Scouts took part. President Belton declared; *the religion of Ireland is our sacred heritage and its protection demands immediate action.*

The I.R.A. and the Republican Movement generally had their backs to the wall at this time with much of their leadership locked up, north and south. Barry had declared against volunteers going to Spain; there was nothing they could have done which would have affected such a distant and complex situation.

*The above is from Survivors by this writer, footnoting Frank Edwards, a Republican volunteer with the Brigade. We continue with Foley.*

O'Donnell and Gilmore had visited Spain only weeks before the outbreak. They were convinced supporters of Madrid and advocated volunteering though neither did so themselves. Recruitment was entrusted to Bill Gannon (one of the three who had assassinated Kevin O'Higgins in July 1927). Frank Ryan was given the leadership although at first he seemed not to wish to go. On November 5, a meeting chaired by Ernie O'Malley was held in the Engineers' Hall, Dawson Street, in support of the Republic at which Fr. Michael O'Flanagan, Peadar O'Donnell and George Gilmore spoke.

500 of O'Duffy's Irish Brigade departed from Galway in November, while, in the same month, the first trickle of recruits to the International Brigade left Ireland, travelling singly overland to France. They were quickly in action on the Cordoba front

in southern Spain, fighting as the James Connolly Unit within the British Battalion; losses were suffered and after a month they were moved northward to assist in a desperate defence of Madrid.

There was discomfort in any Irish being attached to a British battalion, especially as it contained two or three ex-Black and Tan officers. By a narrow majority the remnant voted to join the American Abraham Lincoln Battalion. For the first time Ryan was learning that ignorance about Ireland among the English left exceeded even that of the Tories.

In the valley of Jarama south east of Madrid in February 1937, the government forces lost many thousands in defence; 19 were from the small Connolly Column, a group which never attained separate status.

Ryan, wounded, came home to Ireland in March, knowing that the cause was already hopeless, but returned - leaving Irish soil for the last time - to Spain in June. Withdrawn from Brunete, west of Madrid, the fragment of the British battalion, still with some Irish attached, were transferred northwards to Aragon where, the following March, Frank Ryan was to be captured when in darkness he stumbled following a breakthrough, upon a group of Italian tanks. There was little sympathy for the leftists, mostly anarchists and Trotskyists, who clashed - a war within a war - with government forces in Barcelona during May 1937. They were considered poor soldiers, the Irish preferring communists for their organisational ability.

That March, the Franco forces, broke through to the Mediterranean at Tortosa, splitting the Republic from Catalonia and from mainland Europe. It was in truth the end of the war although, out of desperation at the appalling fate in store for thousands of them, republican forces fought on for another year until March 31, 1939. Ryan, jailed with hundreds of others, lay incarcerated in Burgos, and was lucky not to have died as each morning nine were removed from the group for execution. (Voices were raised in Ireland on his behalf and after De Valera telegraphed General Franco, and with some aid from an Irish churchman, he was spared. The death sentence was commuted to thirty years imprisonment. De Valera could not deal directly with the government of Franco in Burgos as Irish minister Leopold Kerney was still accredited to the republican government which had moved to Valencia. As soon as the war ended, Kerney did all in his power to improve Ryan's situation, but, as we know, he was enabled to escape into France and thence to Germany on July 15, 1940, having spent twenty seven months in a Spanish prison. He was to die of tuberculosis in Dresden on June 10, 1944.)

### Drift: 1936 - 1938:

The loss of Twomey, Jim Killeen and much of the Northern Command I.R.A. in the early summer of 1936 necessitated a complete reorganisation of G.H.Q. Sean MacBride became Chief of Staff with Donal O'Donoghue as Adjutant-General. In Belfast, Sean MacCaughey and Albert Price tracked down the police informer - Joe Hanna - their Information Officer, who had betrayed the Campbell College raid and the Crown Entry courtmartial.

MacBride was not popular, this account says, and found difficulty due to his strange accent and fastidious nature [True, so far as it goes, in this writer's experience, but incorrect that he was not popular. He had been on active service in the I.R.A. for almost 20 years, the last five being frustrating ones; he was now about to seek a political way].

MacBride finally succeeded in persuading Óglaigh na h-Éireann to launch a political party, Cumann Poblachta na h-Éireann, but its first outings in Galway and Wexford in August 1936 resulted in derisory polls. He persevered however to hold an *Árd Fhéis* in November. Tension with the militaristic minded Sean Russell resulted in crisis. Russell was courtmartialled for misappropriation of funds and reduced to the ranks. (Some reports say suspended). But the slur was widely resented. Russell had been in the Volunteers since November 1913; a Dubliner and veteran of 1916 and the Tan War, commanding the Second Battalion; killing British agents prior to Bloody Sunday, November 1920. Brought on to G.H.Q. by Collins as Director of Munitions towards the end, he remained on G.H.Q. until his courtmartial.

In the autumn of 1936 he was invited, or just went to the U.S.A., to meet McGarrity, with a plan to mount a bombing campaign in Britain to force her to yield up the Six Counties and the Treaty ports. For leaving Ireland he was dismissed from the I.R.A., being accused also of permitting Thompsons to be captured in Co. Kildare. (Barry felt particularly sore about that.)

Meanwhile throughout the autumn of 1936 the I.R.A. reeled. Michael Conway was sentenced to death - later reprieved - for killing John Egan in Dungarvan, while Cork O.C.'s Tomás MacCurtain and Sean MacSwiney were imprisoned in the citadel of enforced silence, Arbour Hill, in which within weeks, young Sean Glynn would take his own life. Christy Ahearne had made such an attempt earlier.

Frustration had reached its height by the time of the November Convention in Dublin. Politics in the form of Cumann Poblachta was in disrepute; and when Tom Barry, hero of Kilmichael and Crossbarry, rose and proposed an early thrust into Armagh, it was greeted with acclamation. MacBride, Chief of Staff for scarcely six months, willingly stood down, being appointed Information Officer, with Mick Fitzpatrick as Quartermaster-General and Peadar O'Flaherty as Adjutant-General. Tadhg Lynch was brought from Cork to Dublin to give personal support to Barry, who, at the same time, issued an order forbidding volunteers going to Spain.

In March 1936 De Valera had introduced his new Constitution into An Dáil; its purpose was to replace the 'British dictated' May 1922 Free State constitution; in most respects it marked a national advance although it failed to receive Vatican approval\*. The Senate had been abolished in May 1936, while reference to the King of England had been erased in December 1936, being neutralised as 'an instrument' in external association. The rushed Executive Authority Bill was made possible by the abdication of King Edward VIII; England then being for 48 hours without a king.

In the run-up to a referendum coercion was eased, and *An Phoblacht* reappeared briefly to denounce the draft. At a demonstration centred upon Beresford Place where old Liberty Hall, then then stood, an assembled I.R.A and general public was attacked by masses of police on May 14, 1937. Led by Barry, it was joined by a wounded Frank Ryan, briefly home from Spain.

Bodenstown June 1937 saw 1500 gather to Wolfe Tone's grave where formerly 20,000 might have gathered. The parade was led by the unbanned Cumann na mBan; Mick Fitzpatrick reading jail messages from the one hundred held north and south (the sixty or so prisoners in the south would shortly be released). De Valera's moderate programme was endorsed by the electorate, and there was now no possibility of challenging Fianna Fáil for the high ground. *De facto*, the 26 County state was now independent, a status Sean Mac Bride and his generation would soon recognise.

Barry, planning his northern offensive, decided upon a one-off strike at Gough Barracks in the city of Armagh. A 26-strong unit was assembled in Cork and would travel by train to Dundalk, being ferried northwards from there. For security reasons northerners were not involved, but all the world seemed to know anyway. At the last moment it was called off, leaving the northerners furious and swinging them firmly behind Russell. O'Flaherty refused to accept G.H.Q instructions because of MacBride's presence, causing Barry to dismiss him. O'Flaherty now began to act as Russell's campaign manager; whose shadow soon loomed larger with the precipitate resignation of Barry. Mick Fitzpatrick, for the next twelve months stepped into the C.S shoes, though clearly as a stop-gap, pending the arrival of someone else.

An Anglo-Irish agreement signed on April 5, 1938, was a further triumph for De Valera. For a once-off payment of ten million pounds all annuity arrears were wiped out, the treaty ports were handed over and the Economic War was ended. Britain had however recouped meanwhile around two thirds of the withheld annuities through tariffs, and the 26 Counties still traded 90 per cent with the U.K while Irish unity remained as far away as ever.

\* De Valera in April 1937 secretly sent Joseph Walshe, Secretary of the Department of External Affairs to Rome to obtain the approval of Pope Pius XI to a number of the religious articles of the draft constitution, not yet presented. In a series of meetings with Cardinal Pacelli, Secretary of State, and the future Pius XII, Walshe learned to his dismay that the *special position* accorded to the Catholic Church (since removed from the Irish Constitution) *had no value*, and so far as approval for the Constitution was concerned, the Pope's reply through Pacelli was; *I do not approve, neither do I disapprove. I shall maintain silence.* They failed also to reach agreement on the description of the other Christian churches.



Significantly De Valera failed to stand for South Down in 1937, following which, Eamon Donnelly, long excluded from his native Newry, resigned from the Party. Donnelly then returned to Newry and was jailed for one month, having broken an exclusion order for the second time. Craigavon responded to the Agreement with a snap election in the Six Counties, greatly increasing the die-hard vote; once again moderate groups were pushed to the wall.

The General Army Convention of April 1938 was held in Marlborough Street, Dublin, in the same month as the Anglo-Irish Agreement. Maurice Twomey, released in December, had agreed to chair what was to be a tense emotional loaded gathering. Hand picked delegates from Britain supported the proposal for a bombing campaign which Barry denounced as a crazy gesture. Swept aside, Russell was reinstated with a new staff including George Plunkett, Patrick Fleming and Peadar O'Flaherty. Five members of the new executive, Barry, MacCurtain and Johnny Connor resigned, being quickly followed by Fitzpatrick and his staff. Three battalions in Cork and a number in Kerry withdrew allegiance. MacBride, Con Lehane, Tomás Ó Maolóin, Tadhg Lynch, Donal O'Donoghue and Pádraig Mac Logan, ceased to play an active part (although Lehane remained on in Intelligence). Twomey agreed to continue as Adjutant-General for six months. Meanwhile Russell did the rounds of the veterans; failing to persuade George Gilmore, but winning back to active service Seamus O'Donovan, Paddy McGrath and George Plant. At his request O'Donovan drew up the S-Plan strategy, a proposal dating from Civil War days and one which looked feasible on paper.

Critically it was based upon the sanction that there be no major war or world crisis running. In that respect Russell was overlooking the realities of post-Munich Europe, but at last the I.R.A., after the misdirections of the late twenties and thirties, had a focus and a *raison d'être* for the future. After the bombs went off some German help of limited value was offered but it had not been sought. The dominant attitude of the I.R.A was apolitical; they relied upon money from Joe McGarrity (and, that in the event, proved to be short lived).

This circumscribed vision of the world blinded Russell's supporters to other realities. The assumption that the British government could be blackmailed by mere squibs was incredibly optimistic, or that De Valera would not intervene; nor was the reaction of Unionists even considered.

In June 1938, fresh from his Anglo-Irish Agreement success, De Valera called an election to bring Fianna Fáil back with 77 seats, giving him an overall majority; Labour slipped, dropping its advocacy of a workers' republic. Partition was still an issue but neutrality now assumed overriding importance and had the support of the overwhelming majority.

By November 1938 the I.R.A was on a war footing with a network of dumps, couriers and safe houses in England and Ireland. Several classes had graduated from Paddy McGrath's school in Killiney Castle; Twomey had completed a tour of inspection in England; Reynolds had been recalled to G.H.Q, and Willie McGuinness, who had replaced Ó Cadhain as Dublin O.C, was switched to London to form a new battalion staff. Gerry Doherty, from Derry, travelled on an inspection of Scotland and northern England.

Police on both sides of the water seemed blissfully unaware. In the summer of 1938 Jack McNeela and Mick Ferguson were arrested in London in a van carrying potassium chlorate; Ferguson skipped bail while McNeela got only four months. There were plans even to wind up the Special Branch\* when suddenly, largely for its propaganda effect, on November 28, there was a series of custom hut explosions on the Border. In sum, however, this four pronged operation amounted to a set back, with Jimmy Joe Reynolds, John Kelly and Charlie McCafferty dead near Castlefin, Co. Donegal, and the R.U.C now sufficiently alerted, swept into internment upwards of 34, mostly Belfast Republicans, days before Christmas. McGarrity, in Philadelphia, called a news conference, announcing that the campaign had started, but the indiscretion, although reported, was overlooked by the authorities in the U.K.

Six weeks before D-day of the Campaign, the Army Council met in Dublin and endorsed it after a lengthy and divided meeting. Máirtín Ó Cadhain tried to have it postponed on the grounds that the Army in England was unready and because of his disagreement upon the content of the declaration itself: *political freedom without economic freedom was useless*. Ó Cadhain resigned from the Council while Russell and the other five members voted a go-ahead for the Campaign.

On December 8, Brian O'Higgins' *Wolfe Tone Weekly* announced that the seven surviving Second Dáil members had voted to transfer their authority to Óglaigh na h-Éireann; Tom Maguire, momentarily, holding out. Later that month 50 delegates at an extraordinary Convention heard Russell promise that never again need Irishmen die upon Irish soil. On January 12, the I.R.A presented the Foreign Secretary with their demand, drafted, it is said, by McGarrity and signed by Russell, O'Flaherty, Hayes, Grogan, Fleming and Plunkett.

\* Coinciding almost to the night of the explosion on November 28 was the announcement from Commissioner M.J. Kinnane that the 80 men in *Crime Special* would be merged with the *Crime Ordinary* detective force.

## CHRONOLOGY: April 1923 to December 1938:

### THE PATH OF IRISH REPUBLICANISM MIRRORED IN THE TRACK OF IRISH NATIONAL AND WORLD EVENTS:

#### YEAR 1923: April to December Inclusive:

A Proclamation over the name of Frank Aiken, Chief of Staff, Óglaigh na h-Éireann (succeeding Liam Lynch, killed in action, April 10) dated, Dublin, April 27, 1923, announced *Suspension of Offensive*, for Monday, April 30, after which the Republican forces would take defensive action only. The date happened to be the seventh anniversary of the surrender of Easter Week, 1916.

On May 13 and 14, the Republican Cabinet meeting, decided against renewing the war, but chose not to surrender arms. De Valera, having in the intervening days, through intermediaries, Senators Andrew Jameson of the whiskey firm and James Douglas Quaker, failed to get agreement with the Free State authorities on two statements of principle, viz;

(a) the sovereignty of the Irish nation, and the integrity of its territory are inalienable.

(b) any instrument purporting to the contrary is, to the extent of its violation of the above principle, null and void.\*

These two principles emerged from the Army Council itself; in subsequent days they were fleshed out and built upon by De Valera; his proposals however *did not include for a surrender of arms* which the Free State was insistent upon.\*\* They were equally insistent upon retention of the Oath of Allegiance to the King, but as W.T. Cosgrave, President of the Executive Council, refused to meet De Valera, who was on the run and much sought after, a negotiated ending of the Civil War never became possible.

De Valera sent confidential letters through the Protestant Senators, Andrew Jameson and James Douglas, and they met him; not to negotiate but as intermediaries only; Cosgrave refused to personally negotiate; a document was given Jameson, Macardle says, embodying the essentials. One essential was the surrender of arms.

It was a repeat of the failure by the Free State authorities to properly bring to a close the term of the Second Dáil, in June 1922. It had been prorogued, illegally, on June 30, one of the days during which the Four Courts was being bombarded. Who is to say what the outcome might have been had its life been brought properly to a close since, after all, pro-Treaty deputies were in a majority following the election of June 16, 1922, but would they have voted for war? The same mistake motivated by venom for their opponents, was now being made in April and May, 1923; in not bringing about a proper signed peace as a termination of the ragged Civil War; one of the reasons being that the hard edged hierarchy now running the state refused to acknowledge that there had been a war. It was, through their blue spectacles, looting and terrorism by 'Irregulars'.

\* Drafted by Liam Pilkington and P.J. Rutledge

\*\* In Coogan's *De Valera* this was expressed in his phrase in an earlier letter to Liam Lynch 'should we be beaten, let us quit'. He rebuffed those on the Republican side who thought the I.R.A should surrender its arms for an amnesty.

With aggressive hunting and executions continuing, the order to cease fire and to dump arms was issued, May 24, 1923, a significant date in Irish history, by Frank Aiken; accompanied by a ringing message from Eamon De Valera; *Soldiers of the Republic, Legion of the Rearguard*.\*

The Chronology commences now at that point, with some, but not all, of the information, compiled from the *Irish Times* for 1923. So far as newspaper sources are concerned, the compilation in the twenties is mainly from the *Irish Times*, and to a lesser extent from the *Irish Independent*; from 1932 to 1938 it is compiled from the *Irish Press*, and occasionally from the *Irish Times*, but it must be emphasised that more than half of what will follow in this Chronology, is from private sources and research.

**The Horror of Civil War** had not entirely ceased, nor did it with the proclamation by Óglaigh na h-Éireann on April 27, of a *suspension of offensive operations*, signed by Frank Aiken, Chief of Staff; D. day for that was Monday at noon, April 30.

**Official Counting of Casualties: Belfast Figures Worst:** The official figure for numbers killed was 665, with 4000 wounded. In today's terms the damage would approach four and a half billion pounds. Between July 1920 and July 1922, 453 people had been killed in Belfast; 37 were members of the Crown forces, and 416 were civilians; of whom 257 were Catholics, 157 Protestants and two of unknown religion.

Of the city's 93,000 Catholics, a quarter of its population, 11,000 had been put out of their jobs, and 23,000 driven from their homes. Over 500 Catholic owned shops and businesses had been burned, looted and wrecked. Outside Belfast at least 106 people had died; 45 Crown forces and 61 civilians.

Of the civilians, 46 were Catholics and fifteen were Protestants. Brian O'Higgins, in the *Wolfe Tone Annual* of 1937, pitches the figure of Catholics 'slaughtered in their homes' at almost 500; i.e. not only in Belfast, but throughout the Six Counties. As Michael Farrell, in *Northern Ireland, the Orange State*, expressed it; the Catholic population - ever a soft target - had been beaten into submission.

**Fr. Michael O'Flanagan** and 'Sceilg', J. J. O'Kelly, were arrested in late April in Sydney, Australia, and charged with engaging in sedition against the British Commonwealth. They were released on bail. Sent first to the U.S as delegates of the Republican government, they were met at official level in Australia with hostility, noticeably so in their efforts to make contact with Catholic bishops. They had arrived in March and had concentrated on Brisbane and Sydney.\*\*

**James Larkin Returns:** After an absence of almost nine years in the U.S, 30 months of which were spent in Sing Sing, James Larkin, former General Secretary of the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, returned to Ireland.

**Boyle Ambush:** A military patrol was ambushed outside Boyle on April 29; two soldiers being wounded. From now on reports of these exploits should be treated with reserve. The job security the war had afforded was welcome; not all of the Free State forces sought an end.

\*Quoted in full in Macardle, *The Irish Republic*.

\*\* *They Have Fooled You Again*, by Denis Carroll.

**Shots Fired:** Shots were fired at Castlebar military barracks, and in Carrick on Suir. A mine exploded outside the guards' barracks at Castledermot. While cabinet decisions on such matters as response to random attacks varied, the motivating force for a hard line on law and order, continued to be exercised by Mac Neill, Blythe and O'Higgins. Even more than Richard Mulcahy, they were the men in the saddle.

**Tom Greehy, Republican of Lismore** was reported killed by a booby trap mine explosion on May 5. He was buried in Lismore.

**Executions in Ennis:** Continuing to conform to a scheme devised since November 1922; executions of Republicans were localised to jails and military barracks throughout the state from Drumboe to Waterford, and not, as heretofore, under the British, in Dublin and Cork, with one in Limerick. This spread over most of the Twenty Six Counties, appeared to have as its purpose to extend the fear of execution into every province; there being nothing so salutary as the sound of an early morning volley from within the barrack walls; a volley that would be heard by all the townspeople. Similarly, the involvement of Free State generals; Sean Mc Keon, Joe Sweeney, Mick Brennan and others, showed a determination at the top that none of those former I.R.A men would escape 'guilt': would escape having blood on their hands. The cease fire of April 30, failed to save at least two more young men from being executed; Christy Quinn of Ennis, and Willie O Shaughnessy. were executed for possession of arms, in Ennis Jail on May 5. They were charged also with the death of Private Canty on April 21.

**John Howard Parnell** died in Dublin, May 3; he was a brother of Charles Stewart Parnell M.P.

**West Belfast:** A by-election returned Col P.J. Woods, as an independent unionist against Sir Joseph Davidson, official unionist, by a large majority.

**King George V and Mussolini:** On an official visit to Rome, King George conferred a Knighthood of the Grand Cross of the Order of the Bath on Signor Benito Mussolini. In October 1922, the King and army had installed him as prime minister. At this time he was about to assume complete power.

**Francis Breen and John Foley,** 28 years of age, and 25, from Co. Galway; they were convicted of armed bank robbery in England, and sentenced; Breen to 20 years and Foley to 10 years. They had pleaded for deportation to Ireland on the basis that they had acted as soldiers of the Irish Republic, but the request was not granted; Foley remained imprisoned until May 1930, when, with Bernard Iago, on a similar charge, he was released. Francis Breen was released in December 1930.\*

**Neil Plunkett's Column:** Troops from Blessington and Tallaght co-operated in a mountain sweep to track down this column known to be hiding in the Lacken area of County Wicklow. Following an exchange of fire lasting 40 minutes, the papers reported, on the evening of May 8, that the column had escaped.\*\*

**Death of Tom Mackey:** Volunteer Tom Mackey of Tallow, was killed by 'enemy forces', on May 10. He is buried at Knockanore, Co. Waterford.

\* There is a note in *Survivors* of a reception in 1930 in *Roebuck House*, to Bernard Iago and John Foley.

\*\* See Tom Heavey in *Survivors*, 1987 edition for the Neil Plunkett O'Boyle column.

**Ballybeg, Co. Meath:** Six armed men burned this railway store on the Great Northern Railway, Ballybeg, as reported on May 9.

**Co. Tipperary:** Reported on the same day was the burning of the residence of Mr. Boyle at Rocksborough, by armed and masked men.

**West Cork:** Troops mopping up in the last few days in the Gougane Barra area captured stragglers Martin Beckett, Martin Healy, and Dan O'Shea. Near Ballingearry, James Molloy, Patrick Pollard and John Darmody were held.

**Negotiations:** A prominent government announcement on page 7 of the *Irish Times* states, that there will be no further peace talks with the 'Irregulars' at any level. The Oath of Allegiance and the surrender of weapons was given as the principal cause of the break down.

**Women Prisoners Escape:** 22 female prisoners escaped on May 9 from the North Dublin Union; 18 being quickly recaptured. They had just been transferred from Kilmainham Jail. Still at large were, Maire Comerford,\* Kathleen Barry, Effie Taaffe and a Miss Duggan.

**More Captures:** With the Republican Army disintegrating, and men willingly giving themselves up rather than starve in dug-outs, lists of captures now frequently appeared. On May 11, the following captures were noted; Cornelius Mc Gonigle, near Dungloe; Martin Gilford, near Dunboyne; Tim Mc Carthy, Dan Wright, and Tim Hayes, near Glin; and a man named Maguire, in Kingscourt. Tim Carroll was arrested in Cork city; Cornelius Kelly, in Fermoy; John Fitzgerald and John Cox were arrested also, near Fermoy.

**Art O'Brien Extradited:** Art O'Brien was removed under armed guard from Mountjoy to Kingstown on May 13, and placed on the mail boat. At Holyhead he was taken under guard to London. Art O'Brien had been a highly placed personality in the Republican government since 1919; acting unofficially at the Imperial Conferences, with the Treaty delegation and on the Truce Committee. That England should seek his extradition at this time was an ill-omen.

**More Extraditions:** The House of Lords, May 15, observed in a judgement, that in the case of Art O'Brien, his case should be dealt with by Mr. Bridgeman, Home Secretary, producing him for trial under *habeas corpus*. Kevin O'Higgins, Minister for Justice, in An Dáil, declared that if the British Government required all 114 prisoners [they had been detained and deported from Britain in the earlier years] they could have them.

**More Captures:** J. O'Leary and J. Mullone, from Macroom, were held; near Tulla, Co. Limerick, John and Thomas Mc Cormack, and in Headford, Co. Galway, John and Francis Hardiman, and John Joyce were turned in.

**Neil Plunkett O'Boyle:** The remnants of his column were captured and he himself was shot dead, while surrendering to Roger Mc Corley (claiming descent from the legendary Roddy of Toome), on May 15, 1923, at Knocknadruce, south east of Vallemount, Co. Wicklow. Captured on that occasion were; Tim Conaty, Dublin; Chris Barry, Mullingar; Mick Collins, Dublin; Pat Reilly, of Hollywood (with whom this writer has spoken; as also with Roger Mc Corley); Barney Corcoran, of

\* See her account in *Survivors*.

Blackrock, Co. Dublin; Dan Mc Gee, O'Boyle's close friend from Donegal; Frank Fleming, Wicklow; Pat Shannon, Co. Wicklow; Jim Mc Murrough, Leitrim; Pat Farrell, Baldoyle, Wicklow; Jim Miley, Glenmalure; George Miley, Valleymount; John Redmond, Dublin; Jim Tracey, Co. Galway. Tom Heavey, who was present, got away for a short while, but was rounded up near Blessington.\* Neil Plunkett is buried at Kincasslagh, Co. Donegal. His sister, Bríd, married in the U.S, kept in touch with relatives until recently. Neil's homeland was Leac Eanach. He had been seeking an opportunity to surrender.

**More Captures:** Arrested in Kilkenny were Patrick Gregan; with Con Sullivan, Patrick Doyle, and Michael Murphy, the latter from Co. Sligo. Also, a Mr. Rogers in Ballina; Cornelius Sheehan from Mallow; Edward Manning, of Donaghmore, Co. Cork; Sullivan, of Cappagh Street, Cork, and Marley of Dublin Street, Cork.

**Art O'Brien:** Released under *habeas corpus* on May 17, was re-arrested and charged with sedition and conspiracy, and remanded for one week.

**Latest Arrests:** Listed in the paper of May 17, were Fitzgerald and Spillane, of Tralee; Patrick Myles of Rathmore; Tom Concannon, escapee from Athlone barrack; John Connolly and John King, of Roundstone; Tom Kyne and Michael Corcoran, of Ballinasloe; Michael Logan and Fran Callan, arrested in Westport and Galway; Patrick Toal, B. O' Folan and John Mc Donagh.

**Deported:** Kevin O'Higgins was as good as his word. 110 Republican prisoners - four were not now sought - were deported to England on May 17. They had been arrested and deported from England in the previous March. On arriving back to Holyhead, two were held while the rest were allowed to return to their homes or places of work in England.

**Spring Show:** The Royal Dublin Society Spring Show opened on May 17, with 5,500 attending.

**Trim:** John J. Costigan, a Republican officer, on May 17, at a hearing of the Central Criminal Court, was found not guilty of the attempted murder in Dunshaughlin of Free State Army officer, by name, Ben Dunne, on April 24, 1922.

**Fiona Plunkett** was held in Co. Mayo; she was said to have had in her possession 'important documents' and a map.

**U.S Inferno:** 74 men, women and children, were reported dead after a school blaze in Camden, South Carolina, on May 18.

**Prime Minister Bonar Law** resigned, May 20, for health reasons. He was succeeded by Stanley Baldwin, First Lord of the Treasury. President Cosgrave expressed his regret at 'the loss of a great leader'.

**More Captures:** Listed in the papers of May 19, were; J. Byrne, of Shanvalleymore, Fermoy, and M. O'Brien, of Skehanagh; in Claremorris, P. O'Sullivan and J. Molloy; in Galway, Tom Doherty, W. Lafan, John Joyce and S. King; in Waterford, W. Simpson, Crohane; John Mc Grath of Limerick city; Joe Leahy and Tom O'Sullivan.

**Free State Deports 9:** Seven of these 9 were escorted, on May 18, by F.S officers

\* See the extended reference by Tom Heavey in *Survivors* 1987 edition. Also, Neil's entire life story, *Óglach na Rosann*, 1994, by Pádraig Ó Baoighill.

to Holyhead where they were formally placed under arrest; two being released at that point. Four were sent to London; Sean Mc Grath, Sean O'Mahoney, Michael Galvin, and Kevin Lee; all on a charge of seditious conspiracy. Three were sent to Liverpool; Joseph and Patrick Fleming, with Thomas O'Malley. They were charged with disturbing the peace within the Free State, and with assisting the I.R.A. They were said also to have trafficked in arms. The remaining two were set at liberty.

**Fiona Plunkett**, was arrested by troops as earlier stated, in Aughamore, Co. Mayo. She was said to be carrying dispatches. She was accompanied by Peg Kenny of Kylemore.

**Round-Ups and Captures** were reported continuing extensively in the south west and west; in Munster and Connacht.

**Volunteer Mc Nicholas (or Mc Nichols) of Kilkelly**, was reported on May 21, while being conveyed to Kiltimagh, to have snatched a rifle and to have fired and wounded a soldier, whereupon the escort shot him dead. His name is omitted from *Last Post*.

**Queen's University:** The Officer Training Corps, on parade in Belfast, was congratulated on their performances by Major-General Cameron.

**Mohill:** Patrick Kenvil, an ex-Free State officer, was shot dead in mysterious circumstances in Dissly, Mohill, Co. Leitrim.

**More Captures:** Included in the list of May 21 were; Nurse Grace, of New Inn; William Dwyer of Littleton Dan Foley, and Mrs. Peg Kenny of Claremorris; Murray of Cork city; Arthur Heapes, of Summerhill, Cork; Michael and Con Sullivan of Co. Cork; Pat O'Brien, Mick Mackey, Jim Ryan, Harry Mooney; all of Co. Tipperary, and John Kenny of Killyglass.

**Sean F. Quinn**, The Milestone, Newry, was shot in an affray with R.U.C; dying later on May 22, and is buried in St. Mary's Cemetery.

**More Captures:** The list of May 21, includes John Hayes and Murty Sullivan, arrested in Castletownbere; J. Colbert and T. O'Brien, from Kilkelly, Co. Mayo; Sally Coyle and David Prendergast, from near Claremorris. In Cork, Dineen of Millstreet was held.

**Girls Moved:** Nine female prisoners were moved from Galway to Dublin, in a report of May 22. They included Fiona Plunkett, Doctor E. Murphy and Mrs. Delap.

**Thundering Denunciations:** Dr. Daniel Cohalan, Bishop of Cork, in the course of the Civil War - as he had during the Tan struggle - continued to make stinging attacks upon the Republican forces. Now that the struggle was concluded, his attacks continued more strongly than ever. At Confirmation in St. Finbarr's on May 20, he paid 'a hearty tribute' to the government. A day later at St. Peter and Paul's, the Army was lauded; they had landed at Passage in August, and 'with 200 troops had cleared up Munster'.

**Collinstown, Co. Westmeath:** Panic was caused in this small village on May 20, during a public meeting, when troops arrived and took up positions on the outskirts with machine guns pointed into the crowd.

**A Deadly Encounter:** A report of May 21, told of two soldiers outside Kiltimagh being approached by a man in uniform whom they appeared to know. After walking a short distance, he whipped out a gun, shooting one dead. The companion, seeing



this, acted equally quickly by shooting the stranger dead. Both bodies were removed to Claremorris.

**Peace Commissioners Replace Justices of the Peace:** One of the less meritorious aspects of the new Free State was that its legal system would be a mirror image of the former British system, and would not therefore be a development of the Sinn Féin courts.\* Hence, upon May 23, the Minister of Home Affairs, later renamed Justice - issued a list of Peace Commissioners corresponding to the former Justices of the Peace. They included some from the English regime.

**Dublin:** The reputed Quartermaster of the Third Battalion, Patrick Dunn, was arrested in the Coombe area of Dublin, in a report of May 24.

**General O'Duffy,** Commissioner of Police, after a short stay in the U.S, was reported on May 24, addressing 2500 gardaí in massed ranks in the Phoenix Park. A photograph showed him standing on the running board of a heavy automobile.

**Charged at Bow Street:** Four of the deportees to England referred to earlier, were charged on May 23, at Bow Street, London.

**Dump Arms:** In the absence of terms, any terms, from the government, Chief of Staff, Frank Aiken, issued an order to cease fire (already in operation), and to safely dump arms on May 24. Accompanying it was a message from De Valera: *Soldiers of the Republic, Legion of the Rearguard. The Republic can no longer be successfully defended by your arms. May God guard every one of you and give to our country in all times of need sons who will love her as dearly and devotedly as you.*

**Fourth Western Staff Arrested:** A sweep in north Connemara brought in the entire staff of this now largely inactive division; P. J. Mc Donnell, O.C; John Kilroy, Vice O.C; Stephen Coyle, Intelligence Officer; and Jack Feehan, Quartermaster.

**Death of Michael Neary:** Volunteer Michael Neary of Tubbercurry, who had been wounded in action in Glenageary, Co. Dublin, following an encounter with F.S troops, during which a Corporal Baker was seriously wounded. He was taken to St. Michael's Hospital, Dun Laoire on May 24. Troops entered the hospital and would have removed him but for strong objections from the medical staff. Had he recovered, in the climate that prevailed, he might have been executed.

**Turkey and Greece on Brink of War,** was a major item in the news of May 26, with the Lausanne Conference called to seek a settlement amid 'disquieting news' from Constantinople. The two nations came to terms afterwards, but the hostility has never eased.

**Riots in Ruhr,** with the communists said to be in control of Gelsenkirchen, a report of May 22 spoke of scattered fighting in the Ruhr towns.

**Loan Sought:** The same day brought the news that the Free State was seeking a loan of £5 m from the U.S.

**Captures:** The May 28 list included, Fallon of Claremorris; O'Malley of Leitrim; Michael Cunningham, Henry Long, John Moore and Mick Loftus, of Rutland Street, Dublin.

**Sniping at Barracks:** A sentry at Keogh Barracks, formerly Richmond, Inchicore,

\* See 1994 work, *Retreat from Revolution: The Dáil Courts, 1920-1922*, by Mary Kotsonouris.

was reported wounded in a night sniper attack. A post at the North Wall was also fired upon.

**Widespread Arrests:** Reports of widespread arrests of 'Irregulars' continued; at Dromore West, Kanturk, Upton, Douglas, Skibbereen and Timoleague. Men were literally turning themselves in at this time.

**Escape:** On the other hand, six were reported to have escaped from the Detention Barracks, Fermoy, on May 25; one being recaptured.

**Bruff:** Geoffrey Mortell, who had escaped from Limerick Jail, was reported recaptured.

**Grantstown:** Three 'Irregulars' were reported captured.

**At New Inn, Kilcash,** a dug out, fitted with three beds, and holding three sporting guns, was found on the land of Philip Cummins.

**Arrests:** There were arrests - end of May- around Killarney, Castlecomer, and in Foulksmills, Co. Wexford, two young women, Bridget Colfer and Dotie Laherty, were taken.

A man arrested near Dingle carried a rifle: two were held at Kilgarvin, south Kerry.

**Bandon:** Troops near Tooreen. uncovered a dug-out holding a six cylinder motor car 'in perfect order'.

**O'Malley:** Shot dead, 'while trying to escape' was the fate of Volunteer O'Malley, said to be from Tullow. His name does not appear in *Last Post*.

**Dump Arms:** The Free State government allowed the publication, on May 29, of the order from Frank Aiken, to dump arms; and De Valera's *Legion of the Rearguard* message.

**Clerys Rebuilt:** Clerys great store in Lower O'Connell Street, was reopened on May 23. Their new restaurant announced a 5 course lunch for three shillings and six pence, or evening dinner for five shillings.

**Captures:** Listed on May 29, were, T. Maxwell and P. Gilroy, of Co. Leitrim; Mac Namara and Dominic Kilroy in Co. Mayo; in Charleville, John Mc Carthy and P. Sheehan. They had escaped from Limerick and from the Curragh Camp.

**Northern Budget:** The Rt. Hon H.M Pollock, M.P, Minister for Finance, announced on May 28, the Budget for the North, £13,193,000, including a contribution to the Imperial Exchequer.

**Inquest Report:** The papers of May 30 carried a report of an inquest on a Free State soldier shot dead in Ballina, following a four times challenge by a sentry.

**Executions in Tuam:** *The Irish Times* of May 31, reported that Michael Murphy, of Crannagh, Co. Galway, and Joseph O' Rourke, of Coxtaun, Co. Galway, had been tried by a Military Tribunal in Tuam;\* charged with robbery under arms from the

\* This writer is indebted to solicitor Noel O'Donoghue, local historian, for a detailed account which showed that the two men - three were involved but the third was not apprehended - for a mere £687 faced execution, and faced it bravely in Tuam barrack on May 30. They are not claimed in the 1985 booklet, *Eleven Galway Martyrs*. When the bodies were handed back in late 1924, theirs were received by their relatives and buried locally. The account suggests that they were unfortunate to have been apprehended by military; had they been arrested and brought to Galway and tried under civil law, it is unlikely that they could have been executed.

Munster and Leinster Bank in Athenry, on May 22, and sentenced to death, the two were executed in Tuam at 8 a.m. on May 30. They are not claimed in *Last Post*, but the fact that the action, with two Webleys, took place three days prior to the dump arms order might lead one to think that it was an 'official job' even if delayed. Such was not the case, and the only explanation for it is that it was part of the second or hidden war, the struggle for the land.

**Ship Collision:** The cross channel steamer, *Grafic*, and the cargo steamer *Balsam*, collided in Belfast Lough. There were reports of some injuries; the *Balsam* was later beached.

**Denis Ryan of Tipperary Town**, died of wounds received in action on January 10. Lingered until June 4, he is buried in St. Michael's Cemetery.

**Bulgaria:** A report of June 11, told of a revolt there, with the cabinet arrested, and the premier besieged in the parliament building in Sofia.

**Joe Healy of Ardnaree, Ballina**, was slain by Free State forces on June 5, and is buried in Ballina.

**Dan Downey of Dundalk** died on June 10, as a result of ill-treatment in Tintown, and the effects of a hunger strike.

**Belgium:** King Albert, in a report of June 15, accepted the decision of his cabinet to resign.

**Court Changes:** In line with amendments already noted, the Judiciary Committee proposed on June 12, an extension of the jurisdiction of District Courts, and that County Courts be replaced by Circuit Courts. A majority of nine jurors would be sufficient in future for a verdict in the High Court. Grand Juries were abolished.

**Public Safety Bill Introduced:** A Public Safety (Emergency) Bill was introduced on June 15, providing for the continued detention of 12,000 Republicans. It was intended to forestall an impending action by Nora Connolly O'Brien and Eamonn Donnelly. It would be the first of around 35 such Acts in the lifetime of the State.

**Releases:** A report of June 16, notes that eight Republican prisoners had been released from Galway Prison two days before; one being Maurice Sweeney, Co. Surveyor.

**Shot Dead:** Patrick Grant was reported, June 22, shot dead on the Armagh border, by Forkhill B. Specials. He is not claimed in *Last Post*.

**FS Ministers List:** After the death of Arthur Griffith in August, 1922, the government consisted of his successor, W.T. Cosgrave, as President of the Executive Council. His Vice-President and Minister of Home Affairs was Kevin O'Higgins, and his Minister of Finance was Ernest Blythe. The four other members of the Executive Council were Joseph Mc Grath, in Industry and Commerce; Eoin Mac Neill, in Education; Desmond Fitzgerald, in External Affairs; and General Richard Mulcahy, in Defence. There were in addition, four who were not members of the Executive Council; Patrick Hogan, in Agriculture; J.A. Burke, in Local Government; J.J. Walsh, as Postmaster-General; and Fionan Lynch, in Fisheries.

**Post Office Losses:** A statement of loss over the Civil War period noted, 780 post offices damaged; 3500 miles of telegraph wire lost; 5500 poles cut down. Raids had been frequent, resulting in cash losses.

**Mick Radford of Tomhaggard** was killed in action on June 22, and is buried at Murrinstown, Co. Wexford. Seven Republicans resting in a farmhouse at Sleedagh, were surrounded by a big force of Staters; five fought their way out, one being held.

**Maire Comerford:** A report of June 23 noted that she was now 22 days on hunger strike. She was released from Kilmainham six days later.

**Releases:** 20 political prisoners were released in Cork.

**Fr. Michael O'Flanagan and 'Sceilg'**, in a report of June 27, were discharged from prison after being charged with sedition, but were released only on a bond raised by Archbishop Mannix, for six weeks, pending deportation. Archbishop Mannix had generously assisted in their defence on a series of wild charges.

**Releases:** A statement of June 28, listed numbers released:

April	352
May	277
June	230

There were still more than 11,000 held.

**The Movement Generally:** Both Sinn Féin, as a participant in the Government of the Republic, and the I.R.A., although defeated, with its leadership executed, or imprisoned, maintained, each, their organisational framework intact.

A Roll Call of 11/12, July 1923, two months after the conclusion of the Civil War, lists the following posts.

Gen. Frank Aiken, Chief of Staff

Commdt-Gen. Liam Pilkington, O.C 3rd. Western Division

Commdt-Gen. Sean Hyde, Assistant Chief of Staff

Commdt-Gen. Michael Carolan, Director of Intelligence

Commdt-Mick Cremin, Director of Purchases

Commdt-Gen. Patrick Ruttledge, Adjutant-General

Commdt-Gen. Tom Barry

Commdt-Gen. Bill Quirke, O.C 2nd. Southern Division

Brigadier Tony Ruane, O.C 2nd. Brigade, 4th. Western Division

Commdt. Sean Mac Swiney, Quarter Master, Cork 1, Brigade.

Commdt-Gen. Tom Crofts, O.C 1st. Southern Division.

Brigadier J.J. Rice, O.C Kerry 2 Brigade; substituting for Humphery Murphy.

Commdt-Gen. Tom Maguire, O.C 2nd. Western Division

Commdt. Seamus Robinson, was listed as absent.

All of these men were still being sought after and on the run from state forces. Their carefully drafted minutes show repeated concerns for members being forced to emigrate to America. Within a few years some of these officers would retire into civilian life, or move into Fianna Fáil, while some would remain in Óglaigh na h-Éireann. General Tom Maguire, in *Survivors*, gives an insight into a headquarters house at that time at 70 Harcourt Road. The Elliot Hotel at 64 Harcourt Street, and O'Mahony's, at 31 and 32 Gardiner Place, were other favoured meeting places for the command staff.

On the side of the shadow government, Eamon De Valera was recognised and greeted deferentially as President, enjoying the allegiance of 44 non-sitting Dáil members, most of whom were elected in December 1918; others in May 1921 and

June 1922. The account given by Brian P. Murphy in *Patrick Pearse and the Lost Republican Ideal*\*, is a good starting point for the political history of the period up to the departure of De Valera in March 1926 to form Fianna Fáil.

**The Arrest of John Mac Peake in Glasgow**, appeared in a report of June 28; on a charge of the theft of an armoured car\*\*. He was extradited by the British, for trial in Cork.

**Clonmel Escapees**: A report of July 18 tells of a mass escape by 41 Republicans from Emmet Barracks, Clonmel. But J. Mahony of Burncourt, John Aylward and John Sharkey, an Intelligence Officer, who had come to Clonmel to organise the escape, were themselves arrested.

**Dockers' Strike**: A reduction of two shillings a day in dockers' wages caused a shut down of all Free State ports on July 17.

**Secret Session**: Following the formal adjournment of the Dáil on July 19, members reassembled in a secret session to hear a statement from President W. T. Cosgrave.

**Boundary Commission**: Dr. Eoin Mac Neill, Minister for Education, was appointed on July 21, as Free State representative on the forthcoming Commission. In London, Sir James Craig, stated that his government would not appoint a representative. That would prove in time a winning stroke, almost certainly done in concert with personalities in the English Tory Party.

**Wicklow Jail**: Five prisoners, with assistance from a soldier, escaped from the jail on July 23. A hole had been cut, low down, in that portion of the wall that faces south where it may still be traced.

**German Inflation**: The pound sterling was valued, July 26, at three million marks. In other words, to obtain food, which in these islands might cost one pound, one had to pay 3 million marks. Within a few weeks, the inflation of the near valueless mark would require an outlay of ten million.

**Nora Connolly Action**: In the Court of Appeal, Dublin, a *habeas corpus* action, on behalf of Mrs. Nora Connolly O'Brien and Eamonn Donnelly, was granted. In a remarkable judgement, the court observed that the state had not proved to its satisfaction that a state of war continued to exist. It directed that the Commander-in-Chief of the Army have the two prisoners before it at 11.00 a.m on Thursday. As a consequence, a Public Safety Bill was rushed through Dáil and Senate. Kevin O'Higgins told the members that if this was not done, the government would be compelled to release 10,000 to 12,000 prisoners. Nora Connolly O'Brien and Eamonn Donnelly were set free, but a fresh move, entitled Public Safety (Emergency Powers No.2) Bill, enabled the government to continue to keep internees locked in.

**U.S President Harding Dies**: President Warren Harding died on August 3, after scarcely two years as President, taking office after Wilson. He was succeeded by John Calvin Coolidge.

**Henry Mc Entee**: The bullet riddled body of Henry Mc Entee, aged 28, of Lennox Street, South Circular Road, was found in a field between Ballymun and Finglas on August 3. He had been missing four days before. An unofficial vengeance killing by

\* James Duffy, Dublin 1991.

\*\* See Connie Neenan in *Survivors*.

the Free State, he is buried in the Republican Plot, Glasnevin.

**Indemnity Bill:** To protect the forces of government from the consequences of actions taken against Republicans, over the previous 20 months, an Indemnity Bill was rushed through and passed on August 3.

**Dáil Dissolved:** The Dáil was dissolved on August 9, with the date of August 27 set for elections. With only 17 days, no funds, and most of their workers in prison, the government expected a poor showing by Sinn Féin. (sometimes known at this time as the Anti-Treaty, or Republican Party).

**Henry Mc Entee Inquest:** His wife stated at the inquest, reported August 9, that he was a Captain in the I.R.A. The day before his disappearance, a number of houses were raided for him by the forces of Oriel House. His father then stated that his son had been murdered by the C.I.D. After an adjournment, the jury found that he had been murdered by persons unknown.

**Germany:** In the face of widespread food riots, the cabinet resigned; the mark now standing at seven million to the pound. Huge war debts owing to the victorious Allies was at the kernel of the situation.

**Riots:** Riots near Cologne left 22 dead and 200 injured.

**De Valera Arrested:** Appearing on a platform before an overflow crowd, in his own constituency, De Valera was arrested on August 15, in the Market Place, in Ennis. Soldiers, with fixed bayonets, approached, while an armoured car firing blanks from a machine gun resulting in a wild stampede. Every effort was being made to cause the electorate to believe that a vote for Sinn Féin was tantamount to a renewal of the war. De Valera's opponent in Clare was Eoin Mac Neill.

**Mac Neill and the Boundary Commission:** Although Mac Neill was not to win in Clare, the government had attempted to boost his position there by nominating him as Free State representative under Article 12 of the Treaty; to the Boundary Commission.

**Mac Rory Unwilling to Co-Operate:** Dr. Joseph Mac Rory (later Cardinal), informed Stephen G. Talents, a representative of the British government, sent in July 1922 to make inquiry on the issue of Catholic non-co-operation, that he would not recognise the northern government 'unless it agreed to co-operate for large purposes with the southern government.' That remained Dr. Mac Rory's position for the remainder of his life.\*

**Eamonn Donnelly Arrested:** Although only shortly released, with Nora Connolly, Eamonn Donnelly, Sinn Féin Director of Elections, was arrested on August 18, at their offices, 23 Suffolk Street.

**Cork City Shooting:** A Free State officer was involved in a shooting, as reported on August 20, when Albina Murphy of St. James, succumbed to wounds. Two others, Miss Deasy of Spangle Hill, and a man, were wounded.

**Election Candidates:** When nominations closed, there were 65 candidates for 26

\* *Northern Nationalism*, by Eamon Phoenix.

seats in Dublin, and 367 for 153 seats in the remainder of the 26 Counties.

**Numbers Released:** A statement of August 22 gave the totals of Republican prisoners recently released:

June	230
July	387
August	563 (to August 20)

**De Valera in Arbour Hill:** In reply to an inquiry, Mrs. De Valera stated that her husband was being held in Arbour Hill.

**Polling Day** on August 27, proved uneventful, despite a strong turnout. The sole incident reported occurred in Co. Donegal, where troops arrested a polling officer described as an outspoken Republican.

**Director Arrested:** Sean Nolan, town councillor, and Director of Elections, Sinn Féin, in Cork city, was arrested on August 28.

**James Waters**, aged 22, of Kingscourt, died on August 28 in St. Brigan's Hospital. Held prisoner in Dundalk Jail, the old Jail- he had been rushed to Dublin a month earlier after contracting pains in his ear.

**To Be Of Good Behaviour:** A statement of September 1, announced that Councillor Nolan, Councillor John Fitzpatrick, John Sheehan and Professor Alfred O'Rahilly, had been released from military custody 'on signing the usual undertaking'.

**Italy and Greece in Dispute:** The Italian government acted swiftly in its dispute with Greece by occupying the island of Corfu, off the coast of Greece and Albania. This followed the killing, on the Greco Albanian border, of General Tellini and members of his staff.

**President Cosgrave:** Dr. Eoin Mac Neill and the Marquis Sweeney left Paris on September 1, for a League meeting in Geneva. They would be met there by other members of the delegation, including President Cosgrave, awaiting them.

**New Dáil Result:** Results of the second general election of the Free State were declared on August 30.

Government	63
Sinn Féin	44 Known also as Anti-Treaty, and Republicans
Farmers	15
Labour	15
Independents	16

Sinn Féin, despite a lost war and other obstacles, had moved up from 36 seats to 44, but they were still not prepared to enter the Dáil; the Second Dáil, not having been formally dissolved, and the government operating under a 'dictated' Constitution, which recognised the King of England as the supreme authority. The political and physical attrition between Pro and Anti-Treaty groupings would continue.

**Ballycastle, Co. Mayo:** Corporal Hogan, 61st. Battalion, Claremorris Command, was shot dead 'by Irregulars' on September 2.

**Joseph Whitty of Wexford Town:** This young volunteer died after a long hunger strike at the Curragh, on September 2; he is buried at Ballymore Cemetery, Killinick.

**Ambush:** A small party of Free State soldiers was ambushed at 10.,20 on the

night of September 2, near Castleconnell, Co. Limerick. There were no casualties.

**Note:** Fearing disbandment, as already observed, the practice was widespread of Free State Army personnel reporting attacks on posts, and ambushes, which had not occurred.

**Earthquake in Japan:** The death toll, following an extensive earthquake on September 4, exceeded 58,000 dead, with 200,000 dwellings destroyed.

**Malachy Muldoon,** barrister, was arrested in Dublin, in a report of September 5. Muldoon had spoken on a Sinn Féin platform in north Mayo, and was party organiser in south Mayo.

**C.B. Collins,** on Cork Harbour Board, described as a well known Republican, was arrested on September 5, while attending a meeting of the Board.

**Mick Ganly of Kilkerrin:** Killings continued even though the Civil War had ended four months before. Early in September Mick Ganly of north Co. Galway was shot dead by a patrol because, allegedly, he had failed to halt when called upon close to midnight on a Saturday.

**Arrested** in recent days were Frank Mulherin and Tom Beirne, in Co. Roscommon, and James Baird, I.T.G.W.U organiser in Waterford.

**I.F.S New League Member:** On Monday, September 10, the Irish Free State was unanimously voted into membership. Mr. Cosgrave addressed the delegates in Irish.

**Dock Strike in Dublin:** The strike, causing widespread hardship, as at this time over three thousand from the inner city worked there, was now in its twelfth week, with no sign of a settlement.

**Spain:** Army garrisons in a number of cities, spontaneously seized power, although Madrid remained loyal to the government.

**Italy to Evacuate Corfu:** Italy had agreed to evacuate Corfu within days on a promise from Athens that Greece would bring to justice the killers of General Tellini and his officers.

**Philip Cosgrave Elected:** 33 Dáil members were sworn, in a report of September 18. Among them was Philip Cosgrave, brother of President Cosgrave, who had held the post of Governor of Mountjoy, and whom Peadar O'Donnell described in *Survivors*, as 'the wayward brother of the new states prime minister'. He was referring to the Phil Cosgrave who resided in St. James Street, and who would not long survive his election. At the age of 38, he died on October 22. Captain Dermot Mc Manus, whom Tom Heavey described, also in *Survivors*, as 'a mean faced ex-British officer from Kiltimagh', succeeded Paudeen O'Keefe as Governor. Both Governor and Deputy, were given heavily to drinking whiskey while in charge of the prison.

**Paudeen O'Keefe, Clerk of the Dáil:** Mountjoy Deputy-Governor, Paudeen was appointed at the same time, Clerk of the Dáil, a cushy number; with a civilian, Fitzpatrick, as Deputy-Governor replacing him. Paudeen, as a former Secretary of Sinn Féin, had 11 entries, mostly from his Sinn Féin past, in *Survivors*, but is best remembered for his reply, in the Truce period, to an inquiry from a journalist of the



London *Times*, as to what precisely the I.R.A. wanted. Giving the man a hard look, he hissed; *revenge, be Jasus, revenge*. Peadar O'Donnell, speaking in *Survivors*, of his period in Mountjoy under him, almost 60 years on, described him as a tubby little man, scarcely fitted for a uniform, but given to flashes of crude humour, alternated with curses and epithets.

**Spain:** It was announced at this time, that following the dissolution of the Spanish parliament, a military dictatorship had taken over under Primo Miguel de Rivera; he would remain in paternalistic control of the nation, until January 1930.

**Fourth Dáil Meets:** The Fourth Dáil met on September 19. Michael Hayes was elected Ceann Comhairle (Speaker), and W.T. Cosgrave was appointed President of the Executive Council.

**Dan Breen Released:** Dan Breen, noted guerrilla fighter from Tipperary, was released from Mountjoy after a short hunger strike, on September 23, and brought to Lile O'Donel's private nursing home. There would be two ells in Lile's name when, some years later, she married Peadar.

**Escape:** Four prisoners escaped from Athlone Military Barracks, according to a report of September 25. The four were named as Mc Manus, Costello, Macken and O'Brien. *Note:* Civil War prison records in respect of full names were frequently defective; some men fearing to give their real names.

**Ballygar Raid:** A raid took place at this time on Ballygar, Co Galway, garda barracks. The raiders made off with uniforms and batons.

**Dusseldorf:** A street battle between separatists and communists left ten dead and many wounded.

**Arrested in Athlone,** in a report of October 1, were Tom Keogh, Prendergast, Mannion and Jennings. Keogh was said to have been wounded.

**Shots in Sackville Street:** At a Sinn Féin public meeting in Sackville Street, later O'Connell Street, random shots were fired. No casualties were reported, nor was the source known.

**An Imperial Conference** opened at 10 Downing Street on October 1; being held normally, at this period, every four years. Mr. Cosgrave, Kevin O'Higgins and the other members of the delegation, received a hearty welcome from Stanley Baldwin, Prime Minister.

**Attempted Escape:** A night-time attempt to escape from Limerick Jail was made by four Republicans, but was foiled by the military.

**Seamus O'Rourke, Tinahely:** Sinn Féin organiser, he was reported abducted by four men in a note of October 3. He was returned safely later.

**Germany:** The government resigned on October 3, amid a continuing wave of strikes and protests. Gustav Stresemann appeared likely to form the new government.

**Patrick Mulrennan of Liscaul,** four miles south of Ballinacorney, was shot and fatally wounded while at hobbies in the compound of Custume Barracks, Athlone, by a shot fired, in deliberate fashion, from Col. A.T. Lawlor, accompanied on the tour of inspection by General Sean Mc Keon, on October 6.

**Dock Strikes:** The six month-strike in Dundalk was settled on October 8. Hopes were high that the prolonged strikes in Dublin and Cork would soon also be settled.

**Billy Myles of Tralee:** Civil War actions continued in some areas. On October 11, Billy Myles of Tralee was killed in an ambush at Curraheen on the road to Dingle. He lies buried in Rath Cemetery, Tralee.

**Noel Lemass Body:** Abducted by Free State agents on July 3, his body was found on Cruach Mountain, popularly known as the Featherbed, on October 12. Forensic examination later showed, apart from having a broken jaw, and a broken arm, he had been shot in the head three times.

**Mallow:** President Cosgrave, on October 15, opened the repaired rail viaduct, breached in mid-August, in the Civil War. The repair meant that a direct train service was once more restored between Cork and Dublin.

**Mass Hunger Strike:** 300 prisoners in Mountjoy commenced, on October 10, a hunger strike in protest at their continued detention.

**Inquest Adjourned:** The inquest on the death of Noel Lemass opened on October 15, and was adjourned.

**Berlin Scenes:** A report of October 17, described ugly scenes between police and throngs of unemployed. The police used bayonets to break up the groups, at the same time firing over their heads.

**The Sinn Féin Árd Fhéis** opened in Dublin, in the Mansion House, on October 16. Discussion centred for a time on the mass hunger strike. Mary Mac Swiney suggested that if all Republicans abstained from liquor it would hurt the Free State exchequer. On financial matters, it was announced that £2,040 had been lodged in affiliation fees; it was recommended therefore that £300 should be made over to the Prisoners' Release Committee. Eamon De Valera was re-elected President of Sinn Féin; thus remaining in the mind of his followers, President of the Republic. A policy of continuing passive resistance towards the Free State was outlined and adopted. The meeting then adjourned to enable attendance at the funeral of Noel Lemass.

**Robert De Courcey:** Councillor Robert De Courcey, a jailed Republican, was elected Mayor of Limerick, in a report of October 18.

**Árd Fhéis Resumes:** The Árd Fhéis ended on the following evening with a march towards Arbour Hill; that was blocked, however, by military at Sarsfield Quay. At a concert in the Mansion House, it was announced that 440 prisoners were now on hunger strike, while in the last two weeks there had been 28 releases from Mountjoy. 13 more were pending, but prisoners were refusing to answer their names.

**Removed to Curragh:** Over 100 prisoners were removed on October 18, from Mountjoy, to the Curragh, in an apparent effort to break the strike. It had the opposite effect, as prisoners there joined in. It must be said however, that a mass hunger strike was, even then, considered to be a bad strategy, as many could not stay upon it. In a matter of days, 1300 men had joined the strike in the Curragh.

**Shoot Out:** Three men, involved in a robbery in Castleknock, were arrested after a shoot out, near Dunsink, with C.I.D; one of whom was shot dead; He was Tom Fitzgerald, formerly a 1916 volunteer. The arrested men were identified as dispatch riders of the Free State Army.

**Charlestown, Co. Mayo:** Michael Frain, a private in the Free State Army, was sent for trial on October 21, on a charge of robbing the Hibernian Bank of £5,000.

**Germany:** Bavaria was said to be seceding, as was the Rhineland, where a republic had been already proclaimed.

**Dublin Dockers:** With almost 3,000 on strike, representing upwards of 15,000 women and children, all living in inner city tenements, there was renewed talk of settlement, provided a ballot could be taken.

**Lemass Inquest:** The inquest was resumed on October 22, in Rathmines Town Hall. After evidence was heard from a number of witnesses, it was adjourned for a further day. Two gave evidence that an Army captain, by name of Murray, was involved in the abduction; he was stated at this time to be in military custody.

**Demobilisation:** From 53,000, prior to July, the Free State Army had been scaled down to 39,000 at this time.

**Mass Hunger Strike:** The latest report from Sinn Féin was that there were now 7282 on strike, with the numbers disposed as follows:-

Mountjoy	462
Cork Jail	70
Kilkenny Jail	350
Gormanstown Camp	1200
Newbridge Barrack	2000
Curragh (Tintown) Camp	3200

**Four Escape:** As related by Sean Mac Bride in *Survivors*, four escaped from a lorry transferring men from Mountjoy to Kilmainham on Saturday, October 18. They were O.C Mick Price, Sean Mac Bride (who had spent much of his time tunnelling in Mountjoy), Daithi O'Donoghue and Sean Buckley T.D.

**Lemass Inquest Conclusion:** At the resumed inquest on October 23, the jury returned their verdict:- we the members of the jury agree with the medical evidence that he was brutally and wilfully murdered. We have not sufficient evidence to satisfy us who the actual perpetrator was. We are convinced however that armed forces of the state have been implicated in the removal and disappearance of Noel Lemass, and we demand from the government a judicial inquiry.

**Dockers' Strike Over:** After supporters of Jim Larkin in the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union invaded the hall, preventing a ballot on October 23, the secretary of the dockers' union called off the strike in Dublin and Cork. (Larkin was at loggerheads with William O'Brien who had been running the I.T.G.W.U during his long spell in America; although still secretary, Larkin would shortly lead a break-away Workers' Union of Ireland).

**Change of Name:** *The Irish Times* of October 24 carried the news that the C.I.D would be replaced by a reorganised Detective Branch of the Dublin Metropolitan Police under Col. David Neligan, given the rank of Chief Superintendent, and based at Oriel House, Westland Row. Superintendent Kinsella and O'Driscoll, of Oriel House, would be given the rank of Inspector, while five others would be raised to the rank of sergeant.

**Toirnaffilla, W. Limerick:** The garda barrack in this small village was raided on October 23, by five armed men, who finding nothing worthwhile, rode away on bicycles belonging to the guards. Three men were later arrested.

**Monivea, Co. Galway:** The barrack here was raided by six armed men on

October 24. Uniforms and bicycles were taken.

**Leaders Removed:** Four of the Republican leadership were removed from Mountjoy to Kilmainham at this time; Austin Stack, Ernie O'Malley, Eamonn Donnelly and Frank Gallagher.

**Toirnaffilla Aftermath:** Three men held for this action were named as Sheehan, Wren and Cripps.

**Mass Hunger Strike:** The latest from Sinn Féin, was that there were now 7033 on strike, with the numbers disposed as follows:-

Mountjoy	462
Cork Jail	70
North Dublin Union (Women)	50
Dundalk Jail	200
Kilkenny Jail	350
Tintown 1,2,3 Curragh	3390
Newbridge Barrack	1700
Gormanstown Camp	711
Harepark Camp	100

**Blythe Visits Hunger Strikers:** On a date later in this month, as related to this writer by Professor K. B Nowlan, Ernest Blythe, then Minister for Finance, visited Newbridge Barrack, meeting representatives of the hunger striking prisoners. As told to Kevin Nowlan on an evening in March 1959; 'I went to Newbridge and I met a party of them there'. 'We are not going to force feed you, but if you die we won't waste coffins on you; you will be put in orange boxes and you will be buried in unconsecrated ground. So have sense, and come off it'.

**Eamonn Donnelly:** In a report of October 27, Eamonn Donnelly lost his appeal in the Court of Appeal against the refusal of a writ of *habeas corpus* addressed to the Lord Chief Justice on September 23.

**Test of Strength:** In a South County Dublin bye-election, Mr. Kennedy, for the government, defeated the Republican candidate; 23676 to 11502.

**South Africa:** It was announced that the Earl of Athlone had been appointed Governor-General, and Commander-in-Chief of the Union.

**Off Hunger Strike:** The inevitable had commenced to happen by October 29; with men one by one giving up the strike. According to government sources, 1360 men had resumed taking food.

**Robbed:** James Hora, one of the disbanded C.I.D men, was struck on the head in Hume Street, and had his revolver taken.

**Cork Offered a Deal:** 1493 prisoners who had ended their hunger strike in Cork, were offered a deal, according to Sinn Féin. 33 would be released in 48 hours; and the remainder within three weeks. It was already evident that a process of phased release was about to commence.

**To Hang:** William Downes, a despatch rider with the Free State Army, arrested following the shooting dead of Thomas Fitzpatrick, a C.I.D driver on September 19, was sentenced on October 29, to hang. Before sentence was passed, the prisoner pleaded that cruel treatment in Oriel House had induced him to sign a statement admitting guilt.

**Bonar Law Dies:** The death took place in London on October 30, of former Tory prime minister and ex-banker, Andrew Bonar Law. He had opposed Irish Home Rule in 1912, giving instead open support to the Belfast loyalists. He was 65. Bonar Law had an Ulster background, being close to the Loyalist leadership, especially to Edward Henry Carson.

**Turkey:** Mustafa Kemal (Ataturk), through his national assembly, declared Turkey a republic on October 30.

**John Hogan of Clare** was sentenced at this time to hang for the murder of James Cullinan on October 31, 1922, during the Civil War, with Hogan then an active I.R.A. captain. The jury passed a strong recommendation for mercy. The execution date was fixed for November 30. The death sentence was, one week later, commuted to penal servitude for life. Held under very strict conditions in Maryborough, John Hogan was not released until March 1932, after Fianna Fáil had come to power.

**Hunger Strike:** While numbers were slipping off the strike; after 15 days, more than five thousand were still on it.

**Germany:** The currency crisis was worsening, with inflation rising, and an increasing scarcity of food because of unaffordability.

**South Tipp Arrests:** A report of November 3 told of continuing searches and arrests. Near Clonmel, at Newtownmanor, on Sunday night, Sean Morrissey, Mick Tobin, Tom Brophy and one of the Mansfields were taken in.

**Film Censorship** was introduced into the Free State in this month.

**Foot and Mouth:** Irish cattle, lately shipped to Leeds, where foot and mouth disease was then discovered, caused a ban by Britain upon all cattle imports.

**John Keogh Recaptured:** Keogh, who had escaped from Athlone Barracks, disguised as a soldier, five months before, was recaptured at Meelick, Co. Clare, on December 7.

**Revolt in Bavaria:** Five revolutionaries, one named Adolf Hitler, backed by supporters, were reported to have arrested von Knilling, Prime Minister of Bavaria.

**Nicholas Corcoran:** Corcoran, a Republican prisoner, was one of a group who had refused earlier in the year, to assist in the removal of a barricade on the Cork border of Co. Limerick on the grounds that it might be booby trapped, and for this was shot dead on the spot. Military policeman Daniel Doyle, in court for wilful murder, on November 9, stated that as a punishment he had intended only to fire over their heads, but had accidentally hit Corcoran. After an absence of 20 minutes the jury returned a verdict of not guilty. Nicholas Corcoran is not noted in *Last Post*.

**Munich Putsch:** Hitler's attempted beer cellar putsch was reported crushed on November 10.

**Michael Mc Intyre** was brought, November 12, before Charlestown, Co. Mayo, sessions, charged with the wilful murder of Mrs. Norah Kelly, of Tannagh. The case was adjourned. On his way back to Sligo Prison Mc Intyre was rescued by several armed men.

**Dick Hume of Camolin, Co. Wexford** although not on hunger strike, died on November 9, after being taken from Tintown No. 3 to the Curragh Hospital.

**Owen Boyle, Burtonport** died in Newbridge Camp on November 13. He is buried on Cruit Island, Kincasslagh.

**Nobel Prize:** The 1923 Nobel prize for literature was awarded in mid-November to W. B. Yeats. The prize was valued £7,500. Yeats was at this time restoring the castle of Tor Ballylee, Co. Galway, so his first reaction was, *how much is it worth?*

**British Parliament Dissolved:** After one year, the parliament of Westminster was dissolved on November 17. The election was fixed for December 6, and the new parliament would meet on January 8.

**Shots in Ballsbridge:** One of three men shot by C.I.D during an attempted robbery in Ballsbridge, on Monday 21, died two days later. He was named as Patrick Kelly, of Phibsborough. The other two remained in hospital.

**Prisoner Numbers Down:** It was officially stated on November 21, that the number of prisoners still detained at various centres was down to 6800; of whom, after 41 days, 230 were still on hunger strike.

**Andy Sullivan of Mallow,** died on hunger strike in Mountjoy on November 22. He is interred in Mallow.

**The Body of Commdt. Denis Barry:** The government, in a report of November 22, refused to hand over for burial, the body of Denis Barry, of Blackrock, Co. Cork, who had died after 34 days on hunger strike in Newbridge Camp. Richard Mulcahy, Minister for Defence, in a statement, said that Denis Barry's remains would be interred within official premises of the state. Within five days however, the decision was reversed, (it was unsustainable, as Barry had not been convicted of a crime). Handed to relatives, his remains lay in state overnight in the Town Hall, Newbridge (Droichead Nua), being removed on the day following to Cork, where they were interred in St. Finbarr's Republican Plot.

**Hunger Strike Ends:** With prisoners now being rapidly released, and with upwards of three or more having died as a result of the strike, it was brought to an end on November 23, 41 days after commencement. Mayo man Tom Derrig, and ex-British Army man and friend of Childers, David Robinson, both from Kilmainham, and Liam Hearty from Mountjoy, visited the units in Harepark, the Curragh and Gormanstown, directing them to come off. Gerald Boland, who had persevered, quoting from the Bible where Our Lord had fasted for 40 days and 40 nights, expressed his satisfaction with the outcome.\*

**Cardinal Logue,** on November 18, in a rare acknowledgement of the existence of the Republicans, expressed a hope for the early release of all those 'not guilty of crime', and that all prisoners would abandon the hunger strike; which they had done some hours before.

**Private P. J. Carroll** was courtmartialled at Collins Barracks, Dublin, on November 22, charged with receiving a letter in Mountjoy with the intention of delivering it to the addressee.

**£10 m Free State Loan:** A prospectus was published on November 24, from Ernest Blythe, Minister for Finance, seeking subscriptions from the public, and from

\* As told to this writer by son Caoimhín.

institutions. Support for the loan would be, he said, an insurance against a renewal of disorder.

**End of Foot and Mouth:** British ports reopened on November 26, to Irish cattle.

**Kilmore, Ballinasloe:** This small garda barrack was attacked on November 28, by armed civilians, who were eventually beaten off. As already observed, this, and many other attacks, may have been carried out by dissident soldiers concerned about the wind-down of the Army.

**William Downes Hanged:** The former Army dispatch rider, convicted for the murder in a hold-up of Inspector Thomas Fitzgerald, on October 19, was hanged in Mountjoy on November 29.

**Sergeant James Woods** of Scartaglen barrack, near Castleisland, was shot during a raid on December 4. Six masked men were involved. Sergeant Woods, aged 22, was a brother of Assistant Commissioner Woods. The occurrence was an internal Free State affair.

**Killimor, Co. Galway:** The barrack was attacked on the night of December 5; two guards being wounded before the attackers, after firing 200 shots, withdrew.

**British Election:** The results of polling on December 6, were as follows:-

Present Position:	Before Dissolution:
Conservative 253	341
Liberal 152	114
Labour 192	138
Others 5	22

Among the 615 were eight women. Winston Churchill failed to secure a seat.

**Thomas Brosnan of Scartaglen:** Armed and masked men entered his home on the night of December 6. He was shot dead a short distance away. This was linked to the incident reported above.

**Case Dropped in London:** The Director of Prosecutions dropped the case of seditious conspiracy, on December 9, for which Thomas Joyce and Art O'Brien had been extradited.

**Con Horan from Castleisland Area:** He was shot and wounded on the night of December 10, when armed men entered, and attempted to remove him from his home in Dromuttin. The incident appeared connected with the Scartaglen affair.

**Baldwin to Remain:** Despite failing to secure a parliamentary majority, Stanley Baldwin announced that he would remain as Prime Minister. King George V was informed.

**Exhumation:** The exhumation of the bodies of three English officers, and their car driver, took place on December 11, at Kilgobnet, near Macroom. The party had gone missing on April 26, 1922, prior to the Civil War. The bodies were found buried in a grave on bad land, piled on top of each other. The remains were removed from Rosslare to Aldershot.

**Scartaglen Echo:** An officer and six men of the Free State Army were arrested in Tralee on December 13, following the attack and incidents in Scartaglen. The officer managed to escape from custody.

**Help for Unemployed:** It was announced in An Dáil on December 14, that a sum of two million pounds would be spent upon road improvement, to assist the unem-

ployed; and a further quarter of a million on building.

**War Memorial:** Viscount Powerscourt, on December 16, unveiled in Bray, a memorial to the 200 men from the district who had lost their lives in the Great War.

**Joseph Bergin:** The body of Joseph Bergin, a military policeman, was found in the Grand Canal, at Milltown Bridge, Co. Kildare, on Friday, December 15. The medical evidence showed that he had suffered considerable violence, and had been shot six times. He had been identified carrying messages in and out of Tintown 3 on behalf of prisoners. On December 15, he was intercepted returning to camp, interrogated and tortured in a brutal manner, following which, while still alive, he was tied to the rear of a car and dragged at high speed for a distance, whereupon his body was dumped in the Grand Canal. The official report stated that he was found with six bullet wounds, and his face smeared with blood. Capt. James Murray - who may also have been involved in the killing of Noel Lemass - was sentenced to death on June 12, 1925. Commuted, he died in Maryborough Jail in July 1929.

**Patrick Mc Gurk,** in a Dublin court, was sentenced on December 17, to four months, for inducing a Free State private to part with a revolver.

**King George of Greece,** son of King Constantine, who died in exile, received a direction from Greek republicans, successful in the recent elections, to leave the country. He retired to Romania.

**Kerry: Further Echo of Scartaglen:** The trial of three soldiers for the murder of Thomas Brosnan (see above) commenced on December 19. Sergeant Michael Shea, Private Michael Shea and Private Daniel Brosnan, were charged. Lieut. Gaffney, Private Robert Mc Neill and James Mc Cusker, were also arrested. Gaffney escaped custody, and with another soldier, Denis Leen, went on the run. Mc Cusker and Mc Neill agreed to give state evidence.

**J. Sullivan of Kilgarvan:** It was reported on December 19, that a man by that name, on the run for some weeks, had been arrested in Tralee.

**Failed To Answer:** A Free State Army captain was wounded by a sentry in the Curragh Camp on Friday, December 18, when he failed to answer a challenge.

**Corporal Shot Dead:** At Ponsonby Barracks, Curragh, Corporal Johnston was shot dead in bed on December 20. Private Patrick Killoran, a native of Sligo, was taken into custody.

**Monaghan Death:** In Monaghan town at this time, Private Fitzgerald was shot dead. At the inquest, the jury found that death was caused by gunshot wounds, but there was no evidence to show how that had occurred. The coroner observed however that there was evidence that drink and indiscipline were rife on the occasion.

**Sequel to Corporal's Death:** James Killoran, was charged, on December 22, with the murder of Corporal Johnston. The accused, when asked if he had anything to say, replied; 'my name is O'Brien from Wexford, and I have nothing to say'. He was remanded to Newbridge District Sessions on December 22.

**George Burke of Cork City,** died on December 22, and was buried in St. Finbarr's Republican Plot.

**Joseph Lacey:** of Blackwater, Co. Wexford, died as a result of the Curragh hunger strike on December 24, and was buried at Blackwater.

**Monaghan Sequel:** Private James Graham, a military policeman, was charged



with the murder of Private Fitzgerald. He was removed to Dundalk Jail.

**Releases:** The authorities announced on December 28, that they had released 166 prisoners on Christmas Eve, holding 1866 in custody. Among those released were Madame Markievicz and Alderman Charles Murphy of Dublin.

**Lieut. Gaffney Sought:** Capt. Mc Clean, was arrested in Tralee in December, charged with having harboured Lieut. Gaffney. The police expressed confidence that they would soon have Gaffney.

**Co. Mayo:** Tom Carney, a small farmer, of Cloonsfallagh, Co. Mayo, was shot dead at his home on December 27. Local people were at a loss to suggest a motive.

**Other Republican Deaths:** The following five death occurred in the closing months of 1923. They are noted, without dates, or other details, in *Last Post*.

O'Donoghue, Frank, Scramogue, Co. Roscommon: died of wounds on Quaker Island, Lough Ree. Laid to rest in Kilglass Cemetery.

O'Keefe, Frank, Clonmel: died in Curragh and is buried in Powerstown Churchyard, Clonmel.

Mc Grath, Mick, Powerstown: shot by a Stater while a prisoner, and is buried in Powerstown Churchyard, Clonmel.

Ahearne, Jack, of East Cork Column: died on active service.

Landers, Edward, Tralee: died while a prisoner in Ballykinlar Camp, Co. Down. So closed 1923; year seven after the Easter uprising.

**77 Executions: An Incorrect Figure:** Although the number of official executions of Republicans in the Irish Free State in 1922 and 1923 has been widely accepted as 77, and is so stated in Brian O'Higgins, *Wolfe Tone Annual*, of 1937, where they are set out as *Authorised Murders*, and carefully numbered up to 77, it is an incorrect figure.

Professor T.P. O'Neill, the biographer of De Valera, has stated to Michael Mac Evilly, that it could be 'over 80, but that the Department of Defence should have the correct figure'. Further corroboration came to this writer recently through Professor K.B. Nowlan. In March 1959, at the time of a rejection in a referendum by the electorate of a Fianna Fáil attempt to abolish P.R., Kevin Nowlan, with others, joined with Ernest Blythe in a radio discussion on the top floor of the G.P.O., where Radio Éireann was then located. Afterwards, in more convivial circumstances, the party resumed on a general historical discussion which, with Blythe in a talkative mood, ranged back upon the period of the Civil War. On the numbers officially executed, he was quite categorical. Look, said he in his rasping northern accent, it was not 77, it was 83, or it could have been 84.

**Unauthorised Murders:** Brian O'Higgins, in the same issue, lists by name 113 'unauthorised murders'. It could well be somewhat more than that. Indeed, in these circumstances - since the authorised executions were carefully recorded - it could be seven or twelve more than that, arising from, F.S. parties determined to pay off old scores.

*Sacred the cause of Clan Connaill's defending,  
 The altars we kneel at, the homes of our sires;  
 Ruthless the ruin the foe is extending,  
 Midnight is red with the plunderer's fires.  
 On with O'Donnell then,  
 Fight the old fight again,  
 Sons of Tir Connaill, all valiant and true.  
 Make the false Saxon feel  
 Erin's avenging steel,  
 Strike for your country 'O'Donnell Abu'*

- M.J. McCann, 1824-1883

**CHRONOLOGY: THE YEAR 1924:**

**Councillor R. de Courcy of Limerick:** In a letter to the Lord Mayor of Dublin, published January 1; President Cosgrave said that the Mayor of Limerick, R. De Courcy, an internee, would not be released at present.

**Kilworth, Co. Cork:** Two Free State soldiers, Patrick Flanagan and Patrick Martin, were charged with attempting to rob a man named Daly, in Kilworth.

**Ardfinnan:** At around five, on the morning of January 2, the garda barrack at Ardfinnan was raked by rifle fire. About 17 shots were fired.

**U. S. Disputed Funds:** John Finnerty, the New York lawyer, had an interview with De Valera in Arbour Hill Prison in January. His visit was in connection with litigation over a half million pound sum held in the U.S, to which the government here, and the Republicans, laid opposing claims. Justice Wagner, of the New York Supreme Court, laid down that, should De Valera and Austin Stack not be allowed testify, the Free State government would be debarred from continuing its claim. Mr. Finnerty later visited Stack in Mountjoy.

**Scartaglen Echo:** Denis Leen, a Free State soldier, sought in connection with the killing of Thomas Brosnan, at Scartaglen, near Tralee, was arrested in Liverpool, as reported on January 5. Lieut. Gaffney was still being sought.

**The Pope, Pius XI,** appointed, as reported on January 5, Canon David Keane, Bishop of Limerick. He had been, up to this, parish priest of Glin.

**Officers Discharged:** In a report of January 7, Captain Mc Clean and Captain Walshe, accused of harbouring Lieut Gaffney, were discharged by District Justice Johnston; informations being refused.

**Arraigned:** Private Denis Leen was charged with the wilful murder of Thomas Brosnan, at Scartaglen, Tralee, at a court hearing in Tralee, on January 8.

**Gaffney Arrested:** Lieut. Gaffney was arrested at the rear of a house in North Richmond Street, Dublin, on the night of January 9. Major General O'Daly, with a section of troops and D.M.P men, was involved.

**Submarine Disaster:** The British submarine L. 24, was rammed while on manoeuvres in the English Channel, by the battleship *Resolution*. Lying in thirty fathoms of water, the crew of 43 succumbed.

**Disputed Funds:** A report of January 12, refers to John Finnerty, U.S lawyer, conferring again in Arbour Hill, with De Valera and Stack. Present also was Ernest W Proud, solicitor,\* acting for De Valera. According to Coogan in his *De Valera* these discussions - most probably held in a parlour of the prison on each occasion - were bugged by the authorities.

**West Galway:** Miss Mary Malone, of west Galway, was found guilty, as reported January 15, of the possession of a revolver; and was fined twenty pounds, or, in default, one month in prison. She declined to enter into recognisances, and was imprisoned in Limerick.

\*The practice continues as B. Walsh and Partners.

**Public Safety Act:** On January 16, the Free State government renewed its powers to imprison without trial. At the same time the practice commenced of charging Volunteers who had participated in military operations of being guilty of offences under common law. John Mc Peake was sentenced to four years for larceny. He had handed over an armoured car to the Republicans in west Cork, in September 1922.

**Deaths of 9 Volunteers Noted:** In the aftermath of the Civil War, some nine Volunteers, six of whom are listed below, died at different times from its effects, or from related causes. In April, the death of James Hickey, of Cork city, was noted; he was buried in St. Finbarr's.

**William Murphy,** of Cork city, was commemorated on May 4; he was buried also in St. Finbarr's, as was Dan Barry of Cork city, on May 10, and Liam Cronin, a fortnight later, on May 27. Tim Hobbs of Cork city, died on November 18, and Charles Murphy, on December 7. Both also rest in St. Finbarr's Republican Plot.

**Croom:** An attempt to burn the courthouse in Croom, Co. Limerick, resulted in the death of Simon Howard; while Volunteer Hughes of Dundalk died as a result of wounds he received at a comrade's funeral. Sean Nolan, of Ballon, Co. Carlow, died on June 18 from the effects of prison ill-treatment, and was buried in St. Finbarr's Republican Plot.

**Possessing Arms:** James Gore, of 37 Gracepark, Rathmines, was arrested on January 18. He had in his possession a revolver and a Mills bomb. Gore was an ex-officer of the Free State Army.

**Rail Strike in Britain:** A rail strike began on January 20, in Britain. Ireland expected to be affected only indirectly.

**No Confidence:** A no-confidence vote in the Commons, on January 21, resulted in a defeat for Stanley Baldwin's government by 328 to 256.

**Resigns:** Baldwin went to King George V on January 22, and tendered his resignation. Ramsay Mac Donald, Labour leader, was sent for. He promptly announced the names of his cabinet. He would last until October only when Baldwin would return with a strong majority.

**Lenin,** (Vladimir Ilyich), died January 21, in a sanatorium at Gorki, a few miles from Moscow, Born V.I. Ulyanov, he was at the time of his death a mere 54 years of age.

**Scartaglen Trial:** The trial of the five men involved in the shooting dead of Thomas Brosnan was moved from Tralee to Dublin. Their names were: J. Gaffney; D Leen; Sergt. M. O'Shea; Private M. O'Shea and D. Brosnan.

**Rail Strike Ends:** A nine day rail strike ended in Britain on January 29.

**Belfast Municipal Aerodrome:** A municipal aerodrome for flights into and out of Belfast, with grass runways, was established this month at Malone.

**Baltinglass:** A garda, O'Halloran, was shot during a bank robbery in Baltinglass, at 2 p m on January 28. Taken to the military hospital at the Curragh, Garda O'Halloran later died.

**Argenta Internees Moved:** All of the internees aboard, numbering one hundred and one, were moved at this time from Larne Lough to Crumlin Road, Belfast. The government announced that the *Argenta*, a timber vessel, was no longer required.

**Mullingar Fracas:** A proposal to reduce the wages of road workers, at the

Westmeath County Council meeting in Mullingar, as reported on February 1, led to a fracas in which faces were cut, clothes torn and furniture overturned, inside the chamber. Civic guards and soldiers were involved in restoring order.

**George Fitzgerald**, Curraghbay, Athlone, was charged in Athlone District Court with the armed robbery of two bicycles from two members of the garda, at Ballyforan, Co. Roscommon, on March 28, 1923. Describing himself as an officer of the I.R.A., Fitzgerald refused to recognise the court. He was returned for trial.

**Garda O'Halloran**: His remains were interred at Gort on February 29. In attendance was the Commissioner, General Eoin O'Duffy; 'the civic guards are ready to carry arms if that is the people's wish', he declared.

**A Refuge for Irregulars?** The Free State Minister for Defence, Richard Mulcahy, had said recently that the Six Counties had given sanctuary to wanted Irregulars. This was denied, in a report of February 2, by Patrick Ruttledge, Acting President of the Republic, Six County treatment of Republicans was no different to 26 County treatment, he said.

**Woodrow Wilson**, late President of the U.S., died on February 3, in Washington. He had been succeeded by Warren Harding in 1921, followed by John Calvin Coolidge.

**Fianna Kidnap?** John Francis Ivors, of 32 New Bride Street, in inner Dublin, was remanded in custody, in a report of February 7, charged with the attempted kidnap of Patrick Mullen, of 4 Marshalsea Lane, in order to force him to attend a parade of Fianna in Crumlin. Fianna was described in court as the junior wing of the I.R.A.

**Duke of York to Visit**: His Royal Highness, the Duke of York, (later King George VI, and father of Queen Elizabeth II), visited Belfast in February, to lay the foundation stone of a new museum and art gallery at Botanic Gardens. In the five decades of its existence, the Unionist government sought on every occasion to invite royalty to the city, and on every occasion royalty complied.

**Westminister and Ireland**: Joe Devlin M.P., whose wish was that the new Six County state be accepted by Catholics, reported to his close friend, Bishop Patrick O'Donnell of Raphoe, (later Cardinal), that he was shocked by 'the very, very bitter spirit' towards nationalist Ireland that prevailed in the mother of Parliaments.\*

**Dublin And Cork Still Ruinous**: While the lower part of O'Connell Street had commenced rebuilding in 1920, the Gresham Hotel and its surroundings were still in a ruinous condition. Plans for recommencement, and of Patrick Street, Cork, and also of bridges throughout the country, were still on paper.

**Gresham Award**: The Recorder of Dublin awarded the hotel company, in a report of February 7, the sum of £93,550, to cover loss of buildings, furniture and stock destroyed in July 1922.

**Baltinglass Case**: In a report of February 12, evidence was presented against Jack O'Beirne, 11 Ushers Island, and Daniel Hegarty of Kilcock, charged with the murder of Garda O'Halloran, at Baltinglass. They were remanded for a further two

\*From *Northern Nationalism*, by Eamon Phoenix.

days. On reappearing, further evidence not being presented, they were discharged.

**Cahir Healy, M.P.**, released from internment, on February 11, was prohibited from entering the western part of Co. Fermanagh. Cahir Healy M.P. (1877- 1970) would be again interned during World War Two. As a Nationalist of long standing, he was actively disliked by Sir Basil Brooke, with whom he shared the county.

**Scartaglen Trial:** Lieut. Gaffney and Private Michael O'Shea, went on trial on February 14, at Green Street, charged with the murder of Thomas Brosnan. Robert Mc Neill, James Mc Cusker and Daniel Brosnan had been indicted for complicity but were discharged. Sergeant M. O'Shea and Private Denis Leen, also charged, had their cases put back.

**Lieut. Gaffney To Hang?** Late upon the night of the second day of his trial in Green Street, Lieut Gaffney was found guilty of the murder of Thomas Brosnan. He was sentenced to hang on March 13; the jury recommended mercy.

**Private O'Shea** was found not guilty, but was remanded upon another charge. Five days later, Private Denis Leen was convicted of the charge, and sentenced also to death. The date of execution was fixed for March 20. Sergeant M. O'Shea was found not guilty, but was put back to appear upon another charge. The death sentences on Lieut. Gaffney and on Private Denis Leen were later commuted to life.

**Lieut. John Joe Cosgrave** was found guilty, in a report of February 24, of shooting John Sweeney, in Athlone, on September 29, 1923; with intent to kill him. Put back for sentence he was, days later, bound to the peace and released.

**James Larkin v I.T.G.W.U:** Larkin lost the case wherein he had sought to recover his position in the Union he had founded. The major portion of the costs were awarded against him. Larkin had departed on what was expected to be a short term visit to the U.S in 1914. Involved in left wing socialism, and in sympathy with the Bolshevik revolution, he was arrested in the infamous Palmer raids of 1920, and sentenced to ten years on a criminal anarchy charge. Released early in 1923, he returned to Ireland, but power meanwhile in the Transport Union had passed to William O'Brien,\* a competent official, but one who was very different from the volatile Larkin.

**South Dublin Bye-Election:** There were three candidates at the close of nominations on March 1; Sean Lemass, for Sinn Féin; John O'Neill, Independent Protectionist; and James O'Mara for Cumann na nGael.

**John 'Flyer' Nyhan**, together with Tom Lane, was charged at Clonakilty on March 5, with complicity in three murders; Michael Keany, District Inspector at Clonakilty in February 1922; Robert Nagle, of Barrack Street, Clonakilty, in February 1922; Jerome Riley, Lackenduff, in January 1923. He was charged also with the removal of documents. He was remanded until March 20. Tom Lane was remanded

\* I did not like him but I respected him. We regarded him then as the Lenin of the Labour Movement... I believed that Bill O'Brien and company would mobilise and move forward. I was horrified when I found that they too supported the Treaty along with all the other reactionary forces. Peadar O'Donnell in *Survivors*.

with him on a lesser charge. All had been Civil War actions.

**C.I.D Man Shoots Policeman:** On a Sunday morning in Cork city, C.I.D man Richard O'Leary approached a group of men standing at a corner of Princes Street. With a gun cocked in his hand, he ordered them to raise their arms. All complied except military policeman, Richard Aylward, in civies, who retorted, 'put them up yourself'. O'Leary at once fired, killing Aylward instantly. His age was given as 24 years. O'Leary was charged three days later with the murder of Aylward.

**Army Mutiny:** A report of March 10, refers to Major-General Liam Tobin and Col. Charles Dalton; absent, and wanted for mutiny. These two officers, said Richard Mulcahy, have attempted to involve the Army in a challenge to the government. For days, rumours had been current alleging serious breaches of discipline among certain officers; quantities of arms were said to be missing.

**O'Duffy to Command:** It was announced, on the next day, that General O'Duffy had been appointed General Officer Commanding the defence forces of Saorstát Éireann. Army H.Q announced at the same time that all commands were normal.

**Joe Mc Grath Resigns:** It was announced on March 12, that Joe Mc Grath, Minister for Industry and Commerce, had resigned from government. A number of officers, particularly in Dublin, had tendered their resignations. The second in command in Cork, had also resigned, as had the O.C at Baldonnell aerodrome.

**Murder Charge:** At an inquest in Dublin on March 12, a verdict of murder was returned on the death of C.I.D man Arthur Nolan who died from wounds inflicted in the Central Police Station, Brunswick Street, (Pearse Street) on February 29.

**South Dublin City Result:** James O'Mara, for Cumann na nGael, won this seat with 17,196 votes, to Sean Lemass at 13,942.

**The Mutiny (continued):** At 9 p.m, on Tuesday, March 19, Devlin's public house, close to Moore Street, at 68 Parnell Street, was surrounded by troops. 40 men were said to be in an upstairs room. By midnight there were ten lorries, two armoured cars and a Lancia, with over 100 soldiers ready for action in the street. The officer in command was said to be in phone communication with President Cosgrave. Joe Mc Grath T.D, accompanied by Dan Mc Carthy T.D, then arrived. Some shots were fired at this point; whether defensively or as a warning, was unclear; but by 4 a.m men commenced surrendering, and ten were arrested, including Commdt. Joe Dolan. Most of the party however had already made their escape. Kevin O'Higgins, Minister for Justice, stated on the day following, that the raid on Devlin's was unauthorised, and without the knowledge of General O'Duffy. The Executive Council, after discussing the position, asked for the resignation of Lieut- Gen. Sean Mc Mahon, Chief of Staff; Lieut-Gen. Gearóid Sullivan, Adjutant- General; Lieut-Gen. Seán Ó Muirthile, Quartermaster- General. The Executive Council also recommended that General Richard Mulcahy be asked to resign his position as Minister for Defence. He announced that he had already resigned before receiving the notification.

**Officers Named:** Those arrested at Devlin's public house were named as; Col. James Slattery; Col. Chris O'Malley; Col. Frank Thornton; Commdt. Pat Mc Crae; Commdt. Joseph Shanahan; Ex-Commndt. Leahy; Commdt. Joe Dolan; Commdt. Bob Halpin; Commdt. Patrick Griffin; Commdt. Charlie Byrne, A.D.C to the President;

Lieut. Michael Collins.

Many of those named were 'old Collins men', and had been prominent in his 'Squad'.

**General Mc Mahon Refused** to resign his post as Chief of Staff; accordingly, his commission was cancelled.

**New Appointments:** The following appointments appeared in an announcement of March 21:-

Major-General Joe Sweeney, Chief of Staff  
 Major-General G. Horgan, G.O.C Eastern Command, Dublin  
 Major-General S. Mc Keon, G.O.C Western Command, Athlone  
 Major-General M. Brennan, G.O.C Southern Command, Cork  
 Major-General P. Mc Mahon, G.O.C Curragh Command  
 Col. Hugo Mc Neill, Adjutant-General  
 Col. F. Cronin, Quartermaster-General

**Armed Raid at Ballintubber:** Armed men raided, late upon the night of March 16, the home of John Connolly, in a search for arms; his sister only being present. Unexpectedly returning, he found himself confronted in the darkness of the exterior, and, in the confusion, was shot dead.

**Batt O'Connor Elected:** The government candidate, Donnybrook house builder, Batt O'Connor, was declared, on March 21, elected to the vacancy for Co Dublin. B. O'Connor, 24,491; Sean Mc Entee, 12,679. These two by-election defeats were causing De Valera to review the Sinn Féin policy of abstaining from entering the Dáil in Kildare Street.

**Free State Army Mutiny:** The most sensational event of 1924 was, of course, the Army Mutiny, or so-called mutiny, since no mutiny as such took place. The official Department of Justice report records that Joseph Mc Grath, Minister for Industry and Commerce, resigned on March 7, and then for March 9, (although matters had been developing before that), it notes that the result of the reorganisation scheme of the Army involved the demobilisation of 900 officers, and the reduction to the ranks of some of those retained.

Major-General Liam Tobin and Colonel Charles Dalton\* had demanded the removal of the Army Council and the suspension of demobilisation; at the same time charging the government with pursuing a policy 'not reconcilable with the Irish people's acceptance of the Treaty'. Orders were issued at once for their arrest, and several houses were searched for them. In the provinces, members of the Army absconded with some arms, ammunition and equipment.

On March 10, General Eoin O'Duffy, as noted, was appointed G.O.C. On March 17, a statement was issued that arms carried from military barracks must be returned by March 22, and the persons concerned should surrender at the same time. On March 19, a serious incident (as already noted) took place at Devlin's public house, 68 Parnell Street. (The house is demolished since 1970, but until then, a void, or secret room, could be discerned above the ceiling of the bar. Devlin's, with Kirwan's pub, Vaughan's Hotel, Barry's, O'Mahony's and others in that area, was a resort of Michael Collins, and many others of the leadership.) Laying siege for 12

\* The letter to Cosgrave (We claim Michael Collins as our leader...) is quoted in *Kevin O'Higgins*, by Terence De Vere White. A faction against a faction, was his description of the two officer groups involved.



hours, ten officers finally, including four colonels, were captured. Major-General Tobin, who had been in the premises, escaped. General Richard Mulcahy, Minister for Defence, then resigned on that day. (On personal grounds, tis said, as Kevin O'Higgins and he were polarised against each other.)\*

He had resigned, a report in *An Phoblacht*, November 19, 1932, states, because of the abrupt dismissal of General Sean Mac Mahon, Lieut-Gen. Gearóid O'Sullivan, and Lieut-General Seán Ó Muirthile. But O'Higgins, speaking around March 19, hinted mysteriously; no one knows as well as Deputy Mulcahy that if I were so minded I could blow his interesting fiction\*\* sky high, and *no one knows quite as well as Deputy Mulcahy what considerations prevent me doing that*. On March 20, General Sean Mc Mahon, Lt-Gen. Gearóid O'Sullivan and Lt-Gen. Séan Ó Muirthile also resigned; there were further officer resignations on March 26, while most of the arms taken away were handed back on March 25. The mutiny, such as it was, was over. On April 2, Patrick Mc Gilligan succeeded Joe Mc Grath as Minister for Industry and Commerce.

A long account, by John Regan, in the *Irish Times* of March 7, 1994, states, that shortly after 10 o'clock on the night of Thursday, March 6, an ultimatum was presented to W.T Cosgrave, President of the Executive Council, signed by Liam Tobin and Charlie Dalton, acting on behalf of a secret body within the Free State Army styling itself the Irish Republican Army Organisation. The two, with Tom Cullen, Frank Thornton, Joe O'Reilly, Joe Leonard, Joe Dolan, Pat Mc Crae, Bill Stapleton, Kelleher and Slattery, were the core of the Collins Squad; smart operators and, signs on it, almost all, because of the Collins influence, pro- Treaty.

The ultimatum demanded the removal of the senior general staff known as the Army Council, comprising Richard Mulcahy, Minister for Defence, Gen. Sean Mc Mahon, Chief of Staff. Gen. Gearóid O'Sullivan, Adjutant-General, and Gen. Séan Ó Muirthile, Quartermaster-General. (As noted above, Mc Mahon, O'Sullivan and Ó Muirthile in fact resigned, as did Mulcahy, thus seemingly fulfilling the mutineers' demands.)

Furthermore, they wanted the drastic demobilisation then taking place to cease; and finally, they sought that a conference be called to discuss their aspirations towards 'achieving a Republic'. This latter is incomprehensible in view of their actions throughout the Civil War suppressing the Republic. While probably feeling occasional heart stirrings for the old days against the Tans, the core of their complaint lay in the restricted promotion prospects in an army shrinking to one fifth of its then size; and also the tedium of coming under the thumb of nine-to-five civil servants at Parkgate Street, Dublin.

A split had opened between the Tobinites and the Army Council in late 1922; the

\*See *Almost a Rebellion :the Irish Army Mutiny of 1924* by M.G Valiulis 1985.

\*\* No hint of the 'fiction' ever emerged.

Army Council extending its influence through the secret Irish Republican Brotherhood, but making the mistake of not including Tobin and Dalton, who promptly countered with the formation of the I.R.A.O. They took umbrage also at the promotion of ex-British Army men who had joined solely for the good pay and the opportunity to fight the Republicans.

Cosgrave had been in discussion with the I.R.A.O on their grievances since June 1923, with Joe Mc Grath, Minister for Industry and Commerce (and later in 1930, Sweepstake pioneer and home industrialist), as their intermediary. Confronting critics head on, Cosgrave told the Dáil on March 11, 'it is a challenge to the democratic foundations of the state', whereupon the mutineers, in a statement, climbed down a day later; conceding that army and police had to be subject to civil authority. A compromise was then soon reached, with both sides agreeing, in the safety of their respective conclaves, that there were causes of complaint affecting them both. The situation was transformed at this juncture, on the night of March 18-19, when Army Council officers laid siege to Devlin's of Parnell Street where they thought, from the top heavy nature of the gathering, that the I.R.A.O was planning a military coup.

As the Army Council (being the other faction) had taken this precipitate action without awaiting Cabinet approval, they were invited to resign, which accounts for the resignations referred to above of Mc Mahon, O'Sullivan and Ó Muirthile. Joe Mc Grath, the go-between, had resigned a fortnight earlier as a result of a raid inspired by the Army Council upon his home. Hours after the raid on Devlin's, Mulcahy also resigned, although it should not be thought that he had any involvement with the mutineers. At this juncture, Kevin O'Higgins, in the absence of Cosgrave through illness, took control. Making it clear that the mutineers and resigned I.R.A.O officers would not be taken back, he succeeded also in edging out, through resignation, Richard Mulcahy, his chief rival. (It was inevitable in the light of these events that, when O'Higgins was assassinated in July 1927, it would be at first thought that disgruntled mutineers were responsible). Richard Mulcahy climbed back later into cabinet, while Joe Mc Grath, remaining outside the Cumann na nGael Party, went on to found, with eight deputies, the splinter National Group; soon after leaving politics altogether. Joseph Mc Grath was in fact too big a man to have remained in Free State politics.

Tom Heavey, of the I.R.A Command Staff, is noted in his own account in *Survivors*, 1987 edition, as sitting in, at the request of Sean Mac Bride, on a meeting of the mutineers held at 99 Connaught Street, Phibsboro, in the home of the mother of Liam Tobin.

**Queenstown Affair:** Linked to the Mutiny, but too late to affect the issue, was a Republican attack, authorised by Frank Aiken, on British personnel landing at Queenstown. At 6.45 on Saturday evening, March 21, troops from Spike Island, coming ashore from a military launch, were fired upon, by what was thought to be a Lewis gun, from inside a motor car. One soldier was killed, and 29 were wounded, including two women.

The official report relates that on March 21, four men, dressed as officers of the

\* In fact, two Thompson sub-machine guns

National Army, opened fire with machine guns\* on a party of British soldiers, women and children, landing from Spike Island. Private Aspinall was shot dead, and 28 others, including two women, wounded. Three days later a reward of £10,000 was offered to anyone giving information; and upon May 8, this was confirmed, if assisting in the arrest of Dan Donovan of St. John's Terrace, Military Road, Frank Busteed of Blarney, Jim Gray of Hayfield and Jeremiah Gray, and Peter O'Shea of King Street.

There are numbers of references to Dan 'Sandow' Donovan in *Survivors*, where he operated with Connie Neenan; remaining at the helm in Cork city until his flight from Ireland in 1924. In July 1920 for instance, he entered the County Club in Cork city, shooting dead, Div. Commissioner Smyth of the R.I.C (Smyth had told the R.I.C in Listowel on June 17, that they had a free hand to shoot suspects). Taking part in almost every Cork city engagement thereafter, he masterminded the capture of the arms in Forts Camden and Carlisle, upon the British departure, in February 1922.

In March 1924, as a result of the Mutiny appearing serious on March 11, Frank Aiken, Chief of Staff, acting quickly; consulting with Sean Mac Bride, Tony Woods, Tom Heavey and others, probably at the home of Sean Maloney, *Inis Fáil*, Albany Road, Ranelagh. As Heavey told it; 'Frank had the idea that if we got the mutineers to come on our side the old anti-British spirit would be revived. It was worth taking the chance and I fully agreed with it'. Hence, less than one week later, a yellow Rolls Royce, provided by Woods, containing what appeared to be four officers of the Free State Army, drove on to the pier at Cobh and, shouting 'Up Tobin', 'Up Dalton', they let fly at the party arriving from Spike Island.

The intention was to create a major international incident, although, in that it failed, as the government instantly apologised to Britain, and later paid compensation. As Heavey continues; 'we had now to stand by our own. G.H.Q decided to get the lads to America. Off with them out of the town in the Rolls Royce, to be met by Tony Woods who had driven from Dublin; he collected three of them, and brought them safely to Sean Moloney's house. They were later shipped out'. The three were, 'Sandow' Donovan, James and Jeremiah Gray. As Bowyer Bell drily comments, 'the possibility of an Army-I.R.A alliance, faint at best, was snuffed out'.

**Released:** With the authorities in undisputed command, they could afford, as they did, to release all the so called mutineers arrested in Devlin's public house.

**Leitrim:** John Clarke Keegan, formerly a sergeant in the Free State Army and a native of Dromod, had aided the escape of Republican prisoners incarcerated in Athlone in November 1922. Several rifles were taken at the same time. Keegan was captured in March 1923, and summarily sentenced to death; but escaped from Custume Barracks, Athlone, on the night before his execution. Pursued at this time, March 25, by soldiers and police, he resisted in the countryside around Rossin; in the shoot out that followed, Lieut. P.J Kane, of the Ninth Battalion, was killed, but Keegan was arrested.

**Timoleague:** Daniel O'Leary, a guard on the Cork-Bandon railway, was shot dead at his home, at ten o'clock, on March 29.

**Shots in Sackville Street:** During a meeting in (later) O'Connell Street, seeking a total prisoner release, and addressed by James Larkin, shots were heard from the

periphery of the gathering. It was not known who was responsible.

**Italy:** Benito Mussolini's Fascist party, on April 9, were declared victors in Italy's general election, with 400 members returned.

**Numbers of Prisoners in North:** The number of Republican prisoners in the Six Counties was given in a statement of April 10, as; Armagh 85; Belfast 400; Derry 100; Larne Internment Camp 250.

**Trial in Belfast Of Col. James Woods:** Col. James Woods, charged with the murder of W.J Twaddell, M.P on May 22, 1922, was found not guilty as reported, April 14. He was held in detention however, in connection with another charge. Major-General O'Connell, and other officers of the Free State Army, attended the trial in mufti. Days later, Col. Woods was released; being escorted to the Border at Newtownbutler. The trial of Officer Woods of the Free State Army in April 1923 recalls the bloody trail of murder pursued by the Unionist government and its supporters in creating their state in those early years.

On May 22, 1922, W.J Twaddell, Unionist M.P for West Belfast, was shot dead in Garfield Street, while on his way to his drapery establishment in North Street. Several men were involved. Twaddell was a leading Orangeman. The following day, the government proclaimed the I.R.A, Fianna Éireann and Cumann na mBan as illegal associations. 300 arrests were made. In the ten days preceding the assassination of Twaddell, 27 Catholics had been murdered in Belfast; and of these five were women and two were children. More than 40 were shot at and wounded in the same period. Statistically they formed part of the numbers of Catholics, totalling almost five hundred, that were shot dead in their homes, with fifteen hundred wounded, and some hundreds of homes burned out in the 1921/22 period.

**Boundary Commission Disagreement:** An initial meeting on this matter, under Article 12 of the Treaty, broke up in Downing Street, as reported on April 25.

\*Robert Stewart, 8th. Marquis of Londonderry, and wealthy colliery owner, although Tory, allowed a close relationship to exist between his wife and Premier Mac Donald. See the relevant paper in *The Londonderrys*, by H. Montgomery Hyde on the affairs of the Irish Boundary Commission. Londonderry and Craig were close friends. In June 1921, prior to the first meeting of the Northern parliament in the Council Chamber of the Belfast City Hall, Craig had offered him leadership of the 34 member senate, and the portfolio of Education, both of which he accepted. In a letter that Mac Donald sent to Londonderry at this time (quoted in Montgomery Hyde), he made out that Article 12 intended a *rectification* only of the Border 'but the South people had a different pledge (at the time of the Treaty) from Lloyd George'. Baldwin had stated that 'if the Commission gave away counties, Ulster would not accept it *and we would back them.*'

Robert Stewart's ancestor, by the same name, was Viscount Lord Castlereagh, and is recalled in the poem by Percy Bysshe Shelley:

*I met murder on the way,  
He wore a mask like Castlereagh,  
Very sleek he looked, yet grim  
Seven bloodhounds followed him.....*

The poet Byron was more robust:

*So he's cut his throat at last! He! Who?  
The man who cut his country's long ago....*

He was referring to the Act of Union, and Castlereagh's suicide in August 1822

Attended by Sir James Craig, Lord Londonderry,\* President Cosgrave, and Kevin O'Higgins, it ended in disagreement on the scope of its powers to materially alter the boundary now for three and a half years established, and being staked right up to the Border with B. Specials. Craig was obdurate on this aspect; ending by refusing to appoint a representative. As a result, Britain appointed two, while the Free State had one.

**Officer Charged:** John Wilson, former Free State Officer, of Thomas Street, Dublin, was charged, in a report of May 9, with the attempted murder of Sergt. Richard O'Connell, Dublin Metropolitan Police, on May 4.

**Gas Worker's Strike:** Dublin gas workers had been on strike for a week on May 19. They requested James Larkin to negotiate for them; as a result, William O'Brien, of the Irish Transport and General Workers Union, withdrew from the negotiations.

**Carrick on Suir:** A report of May 7, told of two civic guards, Sergeant Thomas Griffin and Guard Morrin, being seriously wounded at Cregg, on the border with Co. Kilkenny; near the home of a man named Sonny Dwyer. Griffin died in Clonmel Hospital the following day. In a statement read at the inquest, it declared that Sonny Dwyer fired the shots. An official report states that on May 6, Sergt Thomas Griffin and Guard John Morrin proceeded to a house at Cregg belonging to Sonny Dwyer, 'a well known member of the I.R.A.'. When they knocked, shots were fired without warning and the sergeant fell wounded; later dying. Guard Morrin was also severely wounded; dying five months later. Meanwhile Sonny Dwyer escaped to America.

**Two F.S. Officers Killed:** The bodies of two officers were found at Upper Dargle Road, Bray, on May 19. Both had been shot in the head. They were James Whelan, aged 23, of Bray, and James Finn, aged 26, of North Strand, Dublin.

**Wanted Man Shot Dead:** Denis Hayes, said to be a wanted man, was shot dead by soldiers, at Casey's Cross, near Nenagh, as reported on May 20. He was found to have been carrying two revolvers. He is not listed, by oversight, in *Last Post*.

**Dockers Strike:** When 45 men were arrested in Liberty Hall on May 27, 4000 of the dock labour force called a lightening strike. The 45 men were released later, but bound to the peace for twelve months.

**Gas Strike Ends:** The Dublin strike ended on May 29, but an announcement said it would require a week before supplies were back to normal.

**Boundary Commission Appointment:** Mr. Justice Feetham, an Englishman, of the South African Supreme Court, was appointed, in an announcement on June 5, to chair the Commission. He was expected to sail from South Africa within a week. This last fragile hope still remaining from the Treaty, commenced to be implemented in October. Meanwhile, the Six County Government had firmly established its jurisdiction over the disputed area. Three Commissioners were to be appointed but Sir James Craig, as noted already, declined to have anyone represent him. The British Government then appointed R. Fisher, a well known Belfast Unionist, partnering Justice Feetham, nominated by Prime Minister Ramsay Mac Donald. Eoin Mac Neill was appointed to represent the Free State, but the Free State, when the crucial decisions later arose, would find itself outnumbered.

**Thomas Rohan** of Addison Road, Fairview, was remanded, June 2, for being in possession of revolvers, ammunition and Mills bombs. When cautioned, he stated

that he was a sergeant in the I.R.A.

**Courts Inaugurated:** The new Supreme Court and High Court, of the Irish Free State, were inaugurated in Dublin Castle, on June 11.

**More Prisoners Released:** 120 Republican prisoners were released early in June; leaving 300 still in jail. Many of these were expected to be released soon.

**Tralee:** James Larkin, a former officer of the Free State Army, was charged in Tralee, on June 17, with the murder on January 18, 1922, of Thomas Prenderville, a Republican prisoner, at Hartnett's Post, Castleisland. Prenderville is not listed, through oversight, in *Last Post*.

**Mutiny Report:** This lengthy report was presented in the Dáil on June 17. Among other matters, it stated that there had been, in the Free State Army, two secret societies; the Old I.R.A and the I.R.B. That, of course, was already known.

**Cavan Killings:** Eight men were being held at this time, charged with the murder of James Soraghan, and his wife, on December 11, 1923, at Corlislea. It was stated that Soraghan had been responsible for committing a man to prison.

**Body in Bog:** The body of William John Frazer was removed from a bog, on Ballard Mountain, near Camlough, on June 23. A well known Orangeman, he had been taken away by three armed men in July, 1922.

**Numbers of Prisoners Now:** 14 months after the end of the Civil War, in answer to a Dáil question, President Cosgrave stated on June 28, that there were at this time, 123 prisoners still interned and 104 sentenced prisoners held. He understood that there were 250 held in the North; most of whom would be internees.

**Footballers' Protest:** In protest against the continuation of these detentions, Cumann na Luith Cleas Gael, (G.A.A) announced on June 30, that footballers and hurlers would refuse to play in the finals of the All-Ireland Championships.

**Queenstown Incident:** Four men, as reported on June 30, boarded the White Star liner *Majestic*, arresting, and leaving the ship with a man, Patrick Buckley, who had boarded at Liverpool. 'In the name of the Irish Republic', they had informed the captain. They were persuaded however, to release Buckley, whereupon they dispersed, and Buckley returned to the ship.

**Larkin Forms Workers' Union:** Upon Larkin being removed as Secretary and expelled from membership of the I.T.G.W.U, he went to Moscow on the invitation of the Communist International. During his stay there, the breakaway Workers' Union was formed: the name of Jim Larkin still having enormous attraction for Dublin workers, particularly the dockers, carters and coal workers from whom he would soon recruit. It would be their way of protesting against the I.T.G.W.U leadership which had openly identified itself with the Free State establishment. The Workers' Union of Ireland was established in June, with James Larkin as its General Secretary and its headquarters opposite the ProCathedral at 31 Marlborough Street. It at once became an affiliate of the Red International of Labour Unions. He had been courted in Ireland by the miniscule Communist Party, but he refused to be associated with it because, as he said, it had no real worker following.

**Chairman of Commission:** Mr. Justice Feetham, the South African judge, appointed by Westminster as Chairman, visited Dublin, on July 1, for talks; before proceeding to Belfast.

**Irish Air Corps:** An Irish Air Corps was formed at Baldonnel aerodrome under

Col. Charles Russell and Capt. James Fitzmaurice, on July 1.

**Patrick Mc Keon of Boyle** was charged in the court there, as reported on July 4, with possession of arms and ammunition. As a soldier of the Republic, he proclaimed, he would not accept bail. Later he escaped from custody, but was recaptured shortly after, and lodged in Sligo Jail.

**Derry Internees:** At this time there were still 21 internees in Derry. Four released on July 3, were named as P. Gunn, Liam Mc Corry, Joseph Mc Clure of Belfast; and Liam Mc Knight of Kilkeel.

**Scartaglen Recalled:** Michael Healy, of Knocknagree, Co. Cork, was remanded in custody on July 8, charged with the murder of Sergeant Woods, at Scartaglen, on December 3, 1923.

**Tomgraney Raid:** 12 armed men raided the garda station, near Feakle, Co. Clare, on July 9. Not finding any arms, they removed two bicycles.

**Tuam Bank Raid:** At the Central Criminal Court, Dublin, as reported on July 10, Martin Kyne was indicted for armed robbery from the Bank of Ireland, Tuam. The sum stated to be missing was £10,000. During the raid a receipt was offered for the money, signed, T. Maguire, Commandant, 2nd. Western Division. Kyne refused to recognise the court. He was put back for sentence.

**Baltinglass Raid:** Peter Jordan, who had been acquitted of the murder of Garda O'Halloran, on January 28, during a raid at Baltinglass, was charged with complicity; and was sentenced to ten years, and 20 strokes of the cat.

**Ship Sinking Tragedy:** A newly built Cork steamer, the *Lismore*, sank 15 miles off Tramore on Friday, July 11, when on its way to Birkenhead. 17 of the crew of 18 were lost, along with three cattle men, a boy, and some 60 cattle.

**Longford Men on Trial:** At the Central Criminal Court in Dublin, three Longford men; J. Geraty, Patrick Cooke and Thomas Dale, were found guilty of burning uniforms in Granard garda station, on July 13, 1923. Refusing to recognise the court, they declared that they had acted as soldiers of the I.R.A. They were put back for sentence.

**Belturbet:** Laurence Mullaghton, of the Free State Army, as reported July 16, was found guilty of the manslaughter of Garda M. Lyons at Belturbet, on August 16, 1923. The killing took place while the accused was on guard duty; the dead man had refused to halt when challenged. The prisoner was bound over.

**De Valera and Stack Released:** They were released from Arbour Hill Prison on July 16. Other prisoners recently released were: Seamus O'Donovan of Dublin, Tom Daly of Co. Kerry, Peter Glynn of Sligo, Gerald Boland of Dublin, Liam Deasy of Co. Cork, and Con Lehane of Bantry. Upon De Valera's release, 50 of the T.D membership and others convened at Sinn Féin headquarters, 23 Suffolk Street. To quote Brian P. Murphy; \* De Valera did not waver from the course adopted in October 1922 (when, during the Civil War, the Republican Dáil convened, and the Army adopted its authority). He was happy to accept the title of President of the Republic, referring to the Free State as the 'present junta'. He appointed at once a cabinet, consisting of

\* Patrick Pearse and *The Lost Republican Ideal*.

Austin Stack for Home Affairs and Finance; Art O'Connor for Economic Affairs and Local Government; Frank Aiken for Defence; Patrick Ruttledge and Robert Barton, without portfolio; and Sean T. O'Kelly as *cathairleach*. The non-dissolution of the Second Dáil in June 1922 (when instead the Free State went to war), was regarded as the basis of its continuing constitutional validity.

**John Keogh of Co. Galway**, in a report of July 17, was charged with the burning of a barrack at Laurencetaun, and stealing a gun. He refused to recognise the court.

**Royal Visit to North:** Coinciding, as it frequently did, with the Orange celebration, the Duke and Duchess of York, later King George VI, and Queen, commenced a week long visit to the north of Ireland on July 19.

**Art O'Brien Released:** Art O'Brien, who had been engaged entirely on political work, together with Sean Mc Grath, was released from prison in England, on July 23.

**John Devoy Visit:** Ancient Fenian turned Free Stater, John Devoy arrived on a holiday to Ireland at this time. As reported, July 30, he called on President Cosgrave at Government Buildings; meeting there also several ministers, together with Sean Collins, brother of Michael Collins.

**Felix Mc Mullen Executed:** Felix Mc Mullen was executed in Mountjoy at 8 a.m. on Friday, August 1, for the murder of Guard O'Halloran in Baltinglass on January 8. The executioner was Albert Pierrepont.

**Tailteann Games: Prisoners:** The spectacle of the Tailteann Games, once held in ancient Ireland in County Meath, was revived in August. They would be held again in 1928. Republicans had threatened to disrupt the Games unless all the remaining prisoners were released; and the Kerry team refused to play until 1925. Over 100 were still held, together with 21, noted elsewhere, in England.

**Two Mullinahone Men:** A report of August 4, told of two men, James Daly of Coolgagh, Callen, and Philip Leahy of Poulacappal, three miles south east of Mullinahone, charged with the murder of Guard Henry Phelan, on November 14, 1922. The incident was obviously part of the then ongoing Civil War, but the Free State made a practice of dragging up such charges for long after. 15 days later they were returned for trial, at Kilkenny District Court.

**Skehineeran, Co. Kerry:** Michael Jones was shot dead, on August 3, at his home. The inquest on that evening, in Listowel, was adjourned for a fortnight. 18 days later, a jury returned a verdict of murder by a person or persons unknown.

**Killenaule:** Two men were shot and seriously wounded near the village by a Free State Army patrol on Saturday night, August 9. They were Martin Keane and John Murphy. They were said to have been drilling; others however said that it was the local hurling team engaged in a practice match.

**Boundary Commission:** The Bill passed its first reading by 64 votes to 10 in the Dáil. It empowered the British to appoint a representative for the North; the government there having refused to appoint one.

**Michael Hartnett** was shot dead on August 15, by Free State soldiers when returning in a car, a short distance from Clarecastle. He had been attending a Sinn Féin meeting in Ennis. He is interred in the Republican Plot, in St. Michael's Cemetery, Tipperary. He is not listed through oversight, in *Last Post*.



**Drumboe Burials:** The bodies of the four Republicans; Charlie Daly, Sean Larkin, Tim Sullivan and Dan Enright (all, save Larkin, from north Kerry), executed under General Joe Sweeney, on March 14, 1923, were disinterred and reburied in late August, close to their north Kerry homes. Larkin rests in Magherafelt.

**Robert Lambert T.D** (Republican), was charged before District Justice Fahy at Waterford, on August 29, with using force and violence, in taking a pony and trap in 1923. He refused to recognise the court.

**British M.P's Tour Border:** What appears to have been a tactic to ensure there would be no serious change by the Boundary Commission, was the arrival in Belfast on September 9 of 30 Tory M.P's, under Lord Curzon, ostensibly, to 'tour the Border'. Curzon, a short time earlier, had fixed the 'Curzon Line' as a boundary between Poland and Russia.

**Athlone:** John Hayes, appeared in the Dublin District Court before Mr. Beale, charged, as reported on Wednesday, Sept. 10, with unlawfully possessing a revolver. He declined to recognise the court. Peter Molloy, a witness for the prosecution, refused to give evidence and was promptly arrested.

**The Six County Cabinet** met, on September 19, at *Cleeve Court*, the home of Lord Carson, to discuss and agree tactics on the Boundary Commission crux, resulting from their failure to appoint a representative. The discussions would negate any prospect of a readjustment of the boundary as we shall see.

**Belfast:** In a raid on September 19, by R.U.C, upon a house off Cullintree Road, a machine gun, rifles and some ammunition was found.

**Kilsheelan** garda barrack, Co. Tipperary, under repair, was set on fire on September 19.

**Major-Gen Michael Brennan**, formally resigned, in a report of September 30, as chairman of Clare County Council. He had had, with his brother, a distinguished record against the Tans before going Free State.

**Scartaglen Echo:** Michael Healy, in a report of October 1, was returned for trial at Tralee, charged with the murder of Sergeant Woods, at Scartaglen, on December 3, 1923.

**British Labour Upset:** The Labour government under Ramsay Mac Donald, was defeated, October 8, by 364 votes to 198. The Prime Minister refrained from asking the King for a dissolution until the Irish Boundary Bill passed into law. It received Royal Assent on the following day, whereupon Mac Donald dissolved Parliament; announcing the election for October 29.

**Cregg, Carrick on Suir Echo:** Garda John Morrin, the second man in the affray of May 7, died in Clonmel Hospital, on October 29, 1924.

**Westmeath:** Two men from the county were arrested and charged in connection with a raid upon the home of William Murphy, of Muckenagh, Glassan.

**Belturbet:** Seven Free State soldiers were charged, in a report of October 23, with causing malicious damage to Belturbet Orange Hall. The case was put back.

**Third Man Appointed:** The third man, replacing the Six County boycott appointed to the Commission, was J.R. Fisher, a Tory businessman and former editor of the *Northern Whig*. His purpose was to represent the viewpoint of the Unionist government.

**De Valera Arrested:** Partly, if he would admit to it an election stunt, De Valera got himself arrested, on October 24, at Newry Town Hall, despite a sharp police watch to prevent him entering. Detained overnight at Canal Street barrack; he was served with an exclusion order.

**Bodies Handed Back:** The authorities handed back, on October 29, from Mountjoy, the remains of 18 men of the 77 official executions of the Civil War. They were removed overnight to the Hardwicke Hall. On the authority of Ernest Blythe we now know that there were '83 or 84' official executions.

**Queenstown Shooting:** Seven Dublin men were arrested, on October 28, in connection with the ambush at the Spike Island landing stage, of March 21. Matthew Connolly of Crawford Terrace; William Keane of Moyne Road, Rathmines; Patrick Mullaly of South Summer Street; John Byrne of Nicholas Avenue, Church Street; Edward O'Rourke of Irvine Terrace, East Road; Arthur Kelly of Hanover Street West; and John Harrington of Camden Row.

**Torys Win In Britain:** The Conservative Party, on October 29, made large gains; the Liberals were overwhelmed, with Asquith losing his seat at Paisley. The Conservatives won 405 seats to Labour's 152; with Liberals holding only 38, and others 5. Stanley Baldwin was appointed Prime Minister.

**In The North:** There was a division between Nationalists and Republicans where, as a consequence, Tyrone and Fermanagh passed to a Unionist. South Down elected De Valera as an abstentionist, and South Armagh, the same, for Eamon Donnelly. Sinn Féin campaigned, but lost heavily in the fall-out.

**Rail Accident:** A rail accident near Blackpool, on October 3, resulted in 14 dead and 12 injured.

**U.S Electors:** Polling was taking place on October 4, in the U.S Presidential election.

**Nine Resign:** Nine Cumann na nGael members of An Dáil resigned, according to a report of November 1. The nine, who were associated with Joseph Mc Grath's National group were: Dan Mc Carthy, Sean Milroy, Sean Mc Garry, T. Carter, Frank Cahill, H. Finlay, Sean Gibbons, Alex Mc Cabe and Osmond Grattan Esmonde.

**Eleven Departments of State Consolidated:** The foundation of the all important task of bureaucratic consolidation commenced in November. 11 departments of state, most of which were already in existence, were authorised, namely; Presidency of the Executive Council, Finance, Justice, Local Government and Health, Education, Lands and Agriculture, Industry and Commerce, Fisheries, Posts and Telegraphs, Defence, External Affairs. These 11 departments remained the guiding sectors of government until the sixties. A Ministers' and Secretarys' Act largely removed responsibility for their actions from civil servants.

**De Valera Sentenced:** In Belfast, on November 2, De Valera was sentenced to one month in prison for breaking an order forbidding him entering the Six Counties. He had passed from Newry to Derry; appearing in a crowded hall there in support of the Republican candidate in the Westminster elections.

**Queenstown Echo:** The seven men referred to above, were released on November 4, with no charge being brought against them.

**The Movement Generally:** On the political side, Sinn Féin, continuing as an

abstentionist party, still made progress. On November 4, it held its second *Árd Fhéis* since 1921, attended by 1300 delegates, but not by its President who, symbolically, was in jail in Belfast.

**U.S President:** John Calvin Coolidge, was elected President, for the second time, on November 5. Devoid of personality, when he died in 1933, the wit, Dorothy Parker, asked, 'but how do they know?'

**Candidates for South Dublin:** Sean Lemass, Republican, and James Hughes, Cumann na nGael, were nominated in a report of November 7, candidates in the forthcoming by-election. On November 20, the results were declared; Sean Lemass 17,297; James Hughes, 16,340.

**Other Results were:-**

North Dublin:

J.A. Madden (Republican) 14,628

M. Tierney (Cumann na nGael) 13,758

Cork City:

Michael Egan (Cumann na nGael) 27,021

Sean French (Republican) 14,703

East Cork:

M. Noonan (Cumann na nGael) 17,719

H. Walsh (Republican) 13,399

Five scattered by-elections held in November found Sinn Féin winning two and increasing its vote, from 48831 to 77398. If the Party continued to progress in this manner, the plan discussed was, that on refusing to take an Oath, they would, as a majority party, enter and proclaim again the Republic. Sinn Féin, as the Second *Dáil*, continued to meet occasionally: the membership, enlarged by elections since May 1921, could be convened as *Comhairle na d'Teachtaí* (Council of the Members).

**De Valera Released:** Having completed a sentence of one month, De Valera was released on November 28; he returned at once to Dublin.

**Leitrim Barrack Attack:** On Tuesday night, December 2, the civic guard barrack at Drumkeeran, was attacked by around 20 armed men, who proceeded to fire some hundreds of shots into it. Failing to enter the barrack, they eventually retired.

**Radio Transmission:** Broadcasting transmission commenced from Belfast on December 15, from an attic over Albertbridge Road power station; with the call signal 2 BE.

**Colliery Tragedy:** Nine men died on December 6, in an explosion at Laly Colliery, near Wrexham. It was described as Britain's most modern colliery.

**Northerners Being Released:** Springtime had found almost 300 Nationalist internees still held in Crumlin Road, in Newtownards and Larne; releases now commenced but not all were home until December. Convicted Republicans continued to be held.

**The Voyage of the St. George:** Sunday, December 14, 1924, saw the converted submarine chaser leave the Workman Clarke shipyard, Belfast, with Sean Mac Bride, Tom Heavey, Tony Woods and Frank Barry on board. Their mission was to rescue prisoners who had been reported tunnelling out of Larne Workhouse. The full account of this adventure is told in *Survivors*.

**North Curfew Ends:** Dusk to dawn curfew had obtained in the North since April 6, 1922. The Northern government announced, on December 31, that it would not be re imposed.

**Dr J.A. Madden T.D.**, a member of the West Mayo Brigade, saw active service over the entire period and was one of the few doctors to serve full time with a flying column.

## CHRONOLOGY: THE YEAR 1925:

**Dorothy Macardle** opens her account of this year in sombre style; when the year 1925 opened, Irish Republicans could see only a faint gleam of hope on the far horizon.

**Capt James Murray Charged:** Murray of Convent Road, Kingstown\*; described as an ex-officer of the Free State Army, was, in the Dublin District Court, remanded until the following Thursday. He was charged with the murder of Joseph Bergin, at Milltown Bridge, Co. Kildare, on or about December 14, 1923. (See that report)

**Paper Prohibited:** Sir Dawson Bates, Minister for Home Affairs in the Six Counties, issued an order on January 3, prohibiting the circulation of the monthly paper *Sinn Féin*, for the twelve months of 1925. A later writer, Patrick Buckland, refers to Bates as having a contemptuous attitude to the Catholic population.

**Frank Carty T.D. Arrested:** Frank Carty of Clooncunmy, Ballinacarrow, Co. Sligo, had been O.C. of the Fourth Battalion, Sligo I.R.A. He was arrested on January 4 in Newry, and conveyed to Crumlin Road Prison.

**Derry Constable Wounded:** Special Constable William Edwards, formerly of Dublin, was seriously wounded when a bomb, thought to be part of his own equipment, went off accidentally in his home at 16 Aubrey Street, as reported on January 6.

**Noel Moore of Marlborough Street** was charged on January 5, along with Michael Kavanagh, Georgina Cottages, Ballybough; with having in his possession arms to effect the rescue of prisoner Michael Mc Namara from Mountjoy. The two, who had nothing to say, were remanded for a week.

**Capt. James Murray** again appeared in court on January 8, being then remanded until the following Wednesday. James Cleary, a soldier, in evidence for the prosecution, stated that, on December 13, he had been ordered by Col. M. J. Costello, Director of Intelligence, to give a car to Murray. When the car was returned to him on the following day, 'it was covered in blood on the inside'. Three days later, Cleary was detained and held in Arbour Hill for four months. He was not told on what charge he was being held.

**Ballyharry, Co. Donegal:** A number of rifles and revolvers were uncovered in an armed police raid upon a house, according to a report of January 9. A man had been arrested.

**Turmoil in the Gardaí:** In a statement of January 10, the Executive Council announced that Supt. Charles P. Reynolds and Sergt Daniel Hallinan, had been dismissed from the force. Inspector Patrick E.J. Kelleher was reduced to the rank of sergeant. Although not connected, concern had been expressed earlier at an executive attempt to alter the garda badge from 'G.S' to 'G.S.E' (Gardaí Saorstát Éireann), meaning 'Free State Gardaí'. It was not pursued.

**R.U.C Shoot Newry Man:** Local Republican, Tom Carr, was shot dead by the R.U.C in Hill Street, Newry, on January 10. He is buried in St. Mary's Cemetery.

**9 By-Elections:** On March 11, nine by-elections took place but, disappointingly, only two Sinn Féin candidates were elected; Oscar Traynor for North Dublin, and

\* Kingstown/Dun Laoire: For a number of years after 1922 it remained Kingstown; as did Queenstown/Cobh, and Maryborough/Portlaoise.

Sam Holt for Sligo/Leitrim. Now numbering 44, they would soon have to consider, although no one admitted this, whether they could continue as a Party in self-imposed isolation, while their opponents pushed through on the nod, repressive legislation, or entered upon agreements, as was shortly to happen, contrary to Ireland's interests.

**Ku Klux Klan Outlawed:** A report of January 12, refers to a judgement of the U.S. Supreme Court, ending a conflict of two and a half years in Kansas, during which lawyers of the Klan had contended that its purpose was benevolent.

**Free State Army Strength:** Trimmed from an excess of 53,000 in 1923, its strength was officially stated on January 14, as:-

Men	14623
Officers	1080

15708

**Capt. James Murray:** Col. M. J. Costello, in evidence, on January 14, stated that Bergin was 'in illicit communications with the Irregulars and with republican prisoners in Tintown'. He had sent Murray to investigate.

**Clonakilty:** During a heavy storm of January 13, the British steamer *Cardiff Hall*, was driven ashore, near Clonakilty, and was pounded to pieces. All of its crew perished.

**Official Secrets Act:** At Bow Street, London, two young Irishmen, Cyril Gough, a civil servant, of London S.W. and Joseph O'Leary, shipwright, of Southsea, were charged under the Official Secrets Act. Said to be linked to a Republican organisation, O'Leary was found to be in possession of plans of His Majesty's Dockyard, Portsmouth.

**Scartaglen Echo:** In the Central Criminal Court. Michael Healy, was found not guilty of participating in a robbery at Scartaglen garda station on December 3, 1923, during which Sergeant Woods was shot dead.

**William J. Mc Kinney of Inishowen** was charged, in a report of January 23, with having in his possession arms, ammunition and tunics belonging to the I.R.A. But for the I.R.A., said Mc Kinney, who was said to be one of the first Volunteers in Inishowen, there would be no Irish courts or gardai. District Justice Louis J. Walsh agreed with the prisoner. *If it had not been for the I.R.A they would not have broken the British stranglehold; but firearms must be kept under control.* He remanded the prisoner. The Justice had himself been held once in Derry Jail.

**'Very Large' Dump in Clontarf:** What was reported on February 2, as a very large dump, was found in a house in Strandville Avenue, Clontarf, on the previous Saturday. It consisted of a large cache of fire arms, and a half ton of explosives. Alfred Norgrove, charged the next day, accepted full responsibility, saying that it was the property of the I.R.A; and that it had been under his house since the Cease Fire. He was fined 20 pounds, or two months in prison.

**Leitrim Kidnap Charge:** In a report of February 5, Michael Geoghegan, John Dolan and Michael Mulligan, were charged in the Central Criminal Court, with kidnapping, with others, James Ryan, John Maguire and Michael Flynn; between October 14 and 20, 1924. Mulligan refused to recognise the court; and the prisoners

were put back. Sentences delivered later were as follows:- Geoghegan, one month; Dolan, bound to peace; Mulligan, four months.

**Dr. Dúbhglas de h-Íde** was unanimously elected, February 4, a member of the Free State Senate; a vacancy caused by the resignation of Sir H. Poe.

**57 Prisoners Detained in England:** In a reply to Commander Locker Lampson, M.P. Mr. Bromley, in the Commons, stated that there were no political prisoners detained in England or Wales on behalf of the Free State government. There were however 57 prisoners detained on behalf of the Northern Ireland government; their sentences varying from three years to life.

**Resignations Accepted:** The Executive Council announced that it had accepted the resignation of Major Thadens Courtney and Capt Eamon O'Donnell.

**Treason Bill:** The second reading was passed in the Dáil, in a report of February 20, by 38 votes to 21. The five hour debate occupied a page of newsprint.

**By-Elections:** Seven by-elections were listed for March 11; North and South Dublin; Carlow-Kilkenny; Sligo-Leitrim; Cavan; North Mayo, and Roscommon.

**German President Dies:** President Friedrich Ebert, Reich President, died suddenly, on March 1; following an operation for appendicitis.

**Mountjoy Rescue Attempt:** Noel Moore and Michael Kavanagh, in a report of March 5, pleaded guilty to the charge of having conspired to aid in the escape of Michael Mc Namara from Mountjoy Jail between January 1 and 7. The jury disagreed, and the prisoners were put back.

**North Parliament Dissolved:** The Six County parliament was dissolved on Saturday, March 14; with an election fixed for April 3. With the Unionist laager threatened (?) by the Boundary Commission, Sir James Craig welcomed it as an issue for election.

**Free State By-Election Results:** were published on Friday, March 13:-

<b>South Dublin:</b>	Dr. Hennessy, C na nG	24,075
	Michéal Ó Mullane, Rep	13,900
	T. Lawlor Lab	4,237
<b>North Dublin:</b>	P. Leonard C na nG	16,611
	Oscar Traynor Rep	16,360
<b>North Mayo:</b>	M. Tierney, C na nG	18,385
	Tomás Ó Derrig, Rep	13,458
<b>Carlow Kilkenny:</b>	T. Bolger, C na nG	24,142
	M. Barry, Rep	16,830
<b>Roscommon:</b>	M. Conlon, C na nG	21,118
	J.J. Kelly, Rep	13,410
<b>Sligo-Leitrim:</b>	S. Holt, Rep	18,289
	M. Roddy, C na nG	16,386
<b>Cavan:</b>	Dr. O'Reilly, C na nG	12,980
	J. F O'Hanlon, Farmers	12,119
	P. Baxter, Rep	9,774

To have won only one seat in seven by-elections must have disappointed greatly the leadership of Sinn Féin/Republican, although their disappointment remained unexpressed. The results demonstrated that the growth recorded in 1923 was not

continuing. From 58 pro-Treaty, to 36 Republican seats, in June 1922; rising to 63 pro-Treaty, to 44 Republican (the numbers of seats had been increased by 25), a lack of impetus was evident. In the light of this, De Valera must have wondered could he afford to remain abstentionist.

**Commission Resumes:** The Boundary Commission resumed its sittings in London in March; a forecast of its very adverse findings would appear in November.

**Shannon Scheme Envisaged:** The hydro electric scheme for Ardnacrusha was now under active consideration; its cost was projected at £7,188,000.

**Patrick Ryan, of Newtown, Enniscorthy,** was rescued by armed men, on March 20, while being escorted to Waterford Jail. Ryan had been remanded in Enniscorthy on a charge of threatening with a firearm, Patrick Waters, that he must leave Ireland.

**Treason Bill:** This coercive instalment passed its report stage in the Dáil on March 26, after which it moved to the Senate.

**Athlone Tragedy:** Three men, clearing a shed in Custume Barracks, caused a mine left there to explode; killing all three. According to a report of March 31, their names were James Kearney, Private Donal Tighe and Joseph Hoey.

**Treasonable Offences Act:** This minor piece of coercive legislation was waved through in April; only 30 deputies, in a House potentially of 153, actually voting for it.

**Rochestown, Co. Cork:** A report of April 2 relates of the discovery of a dump close to the Capuchin Monastery. It contained eight rifles and 150 rounds of ammunition.

**Six County Election Called:** Forestalling a Boundary Commission report, Sir James Craig called an election in the North on April 3. It resulted in a predictable majority. Unionist 32; Independent Unionist 4; Labour 3; Nationalist 10; Republicans 2; Tenants 1. As a number of Catholic members had decided to take their seats, the Speaker requested Cardinal O'Donnell to appoint a chaplain. That was not done until 1970, lapsing in March 1972.

**Westmeath Kidnap Charge:** The trial of five farmers' sons, at the Central Criminal Court, was reported on April 3. They were found guilty of kidnapping Thomas Manly, and of holding him in a number of places for over four months. Patrick Mc Cabe, Stephen Murphy, David Fitzgerald and Thomas Fitzgerald, refused to recognise the court. Three were found guilty of the unlawful possession of arms. They were put back for sentencing. On the following day each was sentenced to two years. As they left the dock, they shouted, 'Up the Republic' and 'Up Dev'.

**Shannon Scheme:** This, the largest single engineering contract in these islands, received unanimous approval in the Dáil on April 3. Siemens-Schukert of Germany, were the appointed contractors.



**Six County Election Results:** The result of polling on Friday, April 3, as stated above was as follows:-

	Old Parliament	New Parliament
Official Unionists	40	32
Independent Unionists	-	4
Nationalists	6	10
Republicans	6	2
Labour		3
Tenants		1
	52	52

**Amalgamation of D.M.P with Garda:** On April 6, the Dublin Metropolitan Police, consisting of 1200 of all ranks, and created in 1838, was amalgamated with the Garda Síochána.

**Arigna Arms Dump:** What was described as a large dump, was uncovered in the mountains, by guards under Inspector O'Driscoll. The arms were brought to the barrack at Drumshanbo.

**Dismissed Without Prejudice:** A report of April 18, notes Jeremiah and Michael O'Neill of Leixlip, charged with possession of arms, ammunition and explosives. Because the 1924 Firearms Act had expired days earlier, the Justice dismissed the case.

**Two Half Hundredweight Mines** were found, in the Liscragh district of South Tipperary, on April 20. They were conveyed to Clonmel.

**Stephen Joyce:** A young man, Stephen Joyce, of Claremorris, was reported shot dead by armed men while returning from a dance on May 4.

**Treasonable Offences Bill in Senate:** The Bill passed the Committee stage; but an amendment to abolish, on May 7, the death penalty, was defeated by 25 votes to 13.

**Army Vote:** The Dáil of Friday, May 15, voted £2,053,117 to maintain the Army. Manpower was given as 17,618; consisting of 1,081 officers, 3,237 non-commissioned, and 13,300 privates.

**Boundary Report Expected:** Minister Kevin O'Higgins stated in An Dáil, on May 18, 'that the Boundary Commission will not solve the political problem that exists in the north east'.

**John Denton Pinkstone French** (1852-1925), was Lord Lieutenant from 1918-1921; narrowly escaping assassination on December 19, 1919, at Ashtown by Dan Breen, Seamus Robinson, Sean Treacy, Martin Savage, and several more\*. French was raised to the title Earl of Ypres, on his retirement from Ireland. He had shone in the Boer War but was a failure in Flanders. His death was reported on May 23. His sister was Charlotte Despard (1884-1939), a notable Irish patriot.

**Joseph John Maguire of Enniskillen** was sentenced in Belfast in 1923 to four

\*All are listed in *My Fight for Irish-Freedom*

years for possession of explosives. Conveyed to Maidstone Prison, he appealed in London against being sent to an English prison to serve his sentence. His hearing was fixed for June 15.

**Free State to Broadcast:** The Minister for Posts and Telegraphs, J.J. Walsh, announced in An Dáil on May 27, that a broadcasting station would be established in Dublin, with a subsidiary in Cork. That, in Dublin, it transpired later, would be upon the top floor of the G.P.O; in Cork it would be in a part of the Female Asylum. Initial cost was estimated at £9,000, with an annual budget of £20,000.

**P.A. Murray, Sean Russell and Gerald Boland in U.S.S.R.:** In June, into July, this party travelled to the Soviet Union. It seems certain, since visas were issued, that they had an official invitation. P.A. Murray had been Adjutant-General, I.R.A. in the Civil War period: he was still upon H.Q. staff; he had contact with Russians in London, and his uncle Freddie, had been O.C. Cork No. 1. He led the three man delegation. He was to later marry Róisín, sister of Joe Doherty, T.D. Inishowen, and she remained a trusted person well into the thirties. P.A. removed himself from active participation after 1926: in his later years, after his retirement, he spent hours in the Park - Áras an Uachtaráin, talking over old times with De Valera. He died in 1967.

Gerald Boland was a Sinn Féin (later F.F.) T.D. at this time, having inherited Harry's seat in Co. Roscommon. As he was in De Valera's confidence, one may be certain that 'the Chief' dispatched him after the two I.R.A. men - catching up with them in London - as a trusted minder.

Sean Russell, still Quartermaster-General, would have had a specialist interest in any hardware that the Russians might have available.

Travelling by train through Germany to the port of Hamburg, on June 27, they boarded a steamer for Leningrad; now St. Petersburg, P. A. Murray had the uncomfortable, and possibly correct, feeling that they were under observation. Afterwards, Stalin, confirmed that to Murray; that someone in the party had talked; whether to a Cheka agent, or to a British agent, was not made clear.

As a result, while on the boat, and in Russia itself, he arranged small items, which if moved, would indicate their quarters had been entered. To while away time, they read up on the new Russia, or played chess. Murray travelled as Patrick Hughes, a British subject; and Boland as Charles George Woods, also British. We have seen their passports, but the whereabouts of Russell's is unknown. In Moscow, Murray found himself picked out from the party\*, to meet Stalin; spending half an hour with him, in a one to one conversation, through an interpreter.

Stalin's purpose, as his son recalls, appeared to have been to inquire to what extent could the Irish, through their widespread contacts, enlarge Moscow's network abroad. Murray saw no prospects for that. Stalin would have known that he was not dealing with a government; that real power did not rest with his visitors; he expressed a worry on any arms offer - which he was careful not to make - that their origin, if captured, would be recognised.

\* It can be confirmed that Mick Fitzpatrick, later Clann T.D., was also in the party.

At this time, and for long after, his greatest fear was of another western invasion. His last dry comment as Murray took his leave was that 'your revolution has not gone far enough'.

Russia was painfully emerging from its post-revolutionary turmoil; Lenin had died in January 1924, and Stalin had commenced to manipulate himself into power. Russia had only primitive five shot rifles right into World War Two. There was no arms and no money available for the Irish Movement.\*

**Capt. James Murray:** His trial, for the murder of Curragh military policeman Joseph Bergin, commenced in Dublin on June 9. Letters read on the following day, suggested that Col. M.J Costello, Director of Intelligence, had assisted Murray in fleeing the country. During the course of his four day trial, the case of Noel Lemass was mentioned but was not pursued. Murray was sentenced to death on June 12.

**An Phoblacht Commences:** Up to this the Republicans had only occasional small news sheets. On June 18, *An Phoblacht*, edited by Patrick Little, appeared for the first time. It remained middle-of-the-road Republican until Fianna Fáil was founded the following year; soon after which they had their own weekly, *The Nation*.

**Castlemaine:** John Flynn and Patrick Mannix: pleading guilty to possession of firearms, Judge Mc Elligott bound each to the peace. Both had been Republicans, he observed, but they now recognised the law of the State.

**Joseph Maguire of Enniskillen** had his appeal dismissed in London, on June 15. It was against being imprisoned in England following sentence in Belfast in 1923.

**Geneva Convention Signed:** 27 states pledged that they would not use chemical or bacteria warfare; in a report of June 18.

**Murray to Appeal:** The Supreme Court listed for July, Captain Murray's appeal against a sentence of death.

**John Mc Guinness, Republican T.D.**, of Kilbeggan, was arrested at Rathdangan, and charged with assaulting police in 1924. Refusing to accept bail, he was remanded for four days in custody.

**Laurence Sweeney Commemorated:** Killed in action, near Castledermot, on July 5, 1922, De Valera unveiled a celtic cross to his memory; in Churchtown Cemetery, Dundrum, on July 5.

**Judgement was Reserved** in the appeal of Capt. James Murray, according to a report of July 8. Four days later, it was announced that the appeal was refused.

**John Mc Guinness T.D** was returned for trial at Tullamore; still refusing to recognise the court. He received a sentence of eighteen months, on October 29.

**North Roscommon Arms Find:** Rev. Edward Ryan, C.C Keadue, with John Lane of Fostra and Thomas Ruane of Knockranny, were charged at Boyle, following the discovery of arms in the area. The charges were dismissed.

**Patrick Fagan of Ballina**, formerly a Free State soldier, was returned for trial on July 17, charged with the murder of Lieut. Patrick Moran, at Hill Street, Ballina, on August 11, 1922, after which he had joined the Irregulars.

**Death Commuted:** The death sentence on Capt. James Murray was commuted

\*Tim Pat Coogan, in *The I.R.A.*, covers this episode in some detail.

to one of life; in a report of July 20.

**Clare Men Charged:** Con Mc Mahon, Spanahill; Michael Flynn, Tiermaclane; and Michael Kelly, Ballyallen, were, at the District Court Ennis, charged, in a report of August 3, with possessing documents relating to the I.R.A. The documents were said to relate to a Brigade convention at Kilkee and Kilmihill.

**John FJ Walsh, of Newtownards Road,** was charged in Belfast, with possession of explosives, arms and ammunition.

**Michael Carolan on Trial:** A report of August 8, records Michael Carolan, I.R.A Intelligence chief of that time, charged with Margaret Clancy, under Section 6 of the Treasonable Offences Act, following a raid by Det. Sergt. Mooney and Detective O'Keefe, on 68 Adelaide Road\*. A cache of rifles was uncovered. The case against Margaret Clancy was dropped, but Carolan was returned for trial.

**Pallaskenry, Co. Limerick:** A report of August 11, relates that Civic Guard Howard was shot in the back and in the legs outside the chapel. His condition was reported satisfactory.

**Treason Raids in Cork:** Many houses were raided over the preceding week in the city. Documents and guns were reported found.

**France:** Nine people were known to be dead and 160 injured, in a train smash at Amiens. The train driver was arrested.

**Patrick Lynch of Hospital, Co. Limerick,** had a Celtic cross unveiled in his memory by Batt O'Connor T.D. He was killed in action by British military on August 4, 1920.

**Clonmel:** P. Dalton and James Nugent, town councillor, were arrested in their homes, after guns and ammunition were found. They were remanded in custody. Found guilty of membership of the I.R.A, on November 5, Nugent was later sentenced to twelve months.

**Fethard:** Guns and ammunition were reported found at a farmhouse at Cloheen, following a raid under Sergeant Reardon. John and Michael Burke were remanded.

**Ballyfin House:** Guns and ammunition were reported, August 20, uncovered by Sergeant Duff. Since a college, the residence, five miles west of Portlaoise, was at that time the home of the Cootes.

**Denis Long of Crookstown, Co. Cork,** was charged at Macroom, on August 24, with drilling upwards of 150 men; on evidence from Supt. Stack. He refused to recognise the court or to accept bail.

**William Bolton, Killeshin, Laois,** was sentenced at the District Court, in Carlow, to six months, for the possession of arms and ammunition found in his home and upon his lands. He refused to recognise the court. At the same court, Francis Egan of Ballickmoyler, was given one month for the possession of arms.

**Clonmel:** Following his remand (see above), James Nugent refused to recognise the court, and was further remanded. The charge against Patrick Dalton was dismissed.

\* On July 30, the house *Kilronan*, at 68-70 Adelaide Road, then occupied by Miss Maud O'Day, was raided by Oriel House detectives, and Director of Intelligence Michael Carolan, with secretary, Margaret Clancy, arrested; and a considerable file of intelligence paper work captured. See *Survivors* 1987 edition, where Sean Dowling describes this house.

**Fethard Case:** (See above) John Burke was fined five pounds for the possession of ammunition. It had been given to him, he said, by the late Commdt. Tom Donovan, killed in action by Tans at Killenaule on October 31, 1920. The case against Michael was dismissed.

**Kerry Finds:** At Castleisland, Michael Mahoney, of Ballinard, was fined four pounds for possession of arms. Daniel Doody, Shanaphona, was fined ten shillings for holding a rifle, said to have been found in the River Feale. James O'Connor of Scartaglen, was fined 20 shillings for possession of a revolver.

**Ballinasloe:** At a special court, as reported September 2, Martin Gunn and Patrick Pender, of Kilconnell, were charged with being in possession of arms, ammunition, and a rubber stamp relating to the I.R.A. They were remanded for a fortnight.

**U.S. Airship, Shenandoah,** was wrecked, September 3, in a thunder storm in Ohio. Thirteen of the crew of 42 were lost.

**John Sheridan, of Ballinagh, Co. Cavan** was returned for trial to Cavan, on a charge of assisting in the maintenance of an illegal force. A letter from the Adjutant-General I.R.A. to the Adjutant Cavan Battalion, was found in his possession.

**Tullamore:** What was described as a large amount of arms and ammunition, was found by detectives in a tomb in Annaharvey graveyard.

**Ballinamult:** Shots were fired at the barracks on September 17, following house raids by guards. An attempt was also made to fire the building.

**Michael Mc Gonigle of Ballymagroarty, Co. Donegal,** was remanded on bail at a special court in Ballintra, charged with possession of arms and ammunition; under the Treasonable Offences Act.

**Belfast:** A report of September 23, relates that Joseph Mc Gurk, of Chemical Street, was charged under the Special Powers Act, with membership of an unlawful association, and having illegal documents. Sentenced to three months, he had refused to recognise the court\*.

**Fr. Michael O'Flanagan** and Eamonn Donnelly T.D., and Republican M.P. for Armagh, were arrested by the R.U.C., at a concert at Derrymacash, near Lurgan, on September 26. Held overnight, they were put, next day, upon a train for Dublin.

**Manorhamilton:** Garda James Ryan was shot and wounded at his home. An arrest was made.

**Rural District Councils** were abolished in the Free State, by legislation, in October.

**A South Belfast By-Election** was fixed for November 6. It arose from Unionist, Col. F.J. Woods, being switched to West Belfast.

**Also Charged With Bergin Killing:** A report of October 24, records that Joseph Mack, aged 25, of Charlotte Street, Dublin, former lieutenant of the Free State Army, was charged with the murder of Joseph Bergin, with others, on December 14, 1923. Mack is noted in *Survivors* as a likely participant in Civil War excess in the Killarney region\*\*.

\*See *Harry* for Joe Mc Gurk.

\*\* On page 551 of the 1987 edition.

**Michael J. O'Hara and Frank O'Beirne**, were charged on October 26, with taking part in Co. Sligo, between January and mid-August, in the I.R.A. Refusing to recognise the court they were returned for trial. Found guilty on October 28, the two were put back. The jury had said that the men were not criminals, and that they should be treated as political prisoners.

**Michael Carolan, Commdt-General I.R.A.**: At his trial, as reported October 28, he refused to reply to the charge. A plea of not guilty was entered. After the case for the prosecution had closed, Carolan addressed the jury in Irish. After some time, Judge O'Shaughnessy intervened to say that he did not understand, and he felt that many in the jury would not understand either. Carolan, ignoring the interruption continued. At this point the judge asked a man taking notes in the press box what paper he represented. *An Phoblacht*, he replied. 'Can you explain what the accused has been saying'? 'I understand that this is an Irish court but I am under no obligation to help in the business of the court', he replied. Carolan, speaking then in English, referred to his rank in the I.R.A. He took responsibility for any documents found, but he was not a criminal. The jury then found the accused guilty, but added that they did not consider him a criminal. *That is not the question, said the judge; the accused is a criminal in the eyes of the law.* Michael Carolan was put back for sentence.

**Darrell Figgis**: Anglo-Irish man of letters, and one not unfree from rumour, to quote *Survivors*. Darrell Figgis was found dead in a boarding house in Bloomsbury, London, on October 27; having taken his life by gas poisoning. In November 1924, his wife had shot herself. Darrell Figgis had been summoned to give evidence on November 5 into the mystery death of Rita North. An inquest confirmed suicide\*.

**Police Raids in Clare**: Claiming 40 guns captured in the Carron and Kilfenora areas; detectives and gardaí continued widespread raiding in the county.

**Further Charge in Bergin Killing**: Sergt. John Dooley, of Dun Laoire, was charged, in a report of October 29, with involvement in the murder of Private Joe Bergin in December 1923. The charge was withdrawn eight days later.

**Monaghan: Suspended S.F Councillors**: Peter Brennan and James Johnson were suspended from the Party in a report of November 5, for participating in a motion that would result in two officials taking a vote of loyalty to the Free State.

**Bank Raid Recalled**: Patrick Mc Callig, as an I.R.A volunteer, had participated in a raid upon the Provincial Bank, Cavan, on May 17, 1922, when a sum of £395 was taken. Charged at this time, he declared that he had joined the I.R.A in 1916, and the raid of 1922 was carried out under orders. Found guilty, he was sentenced to six months; to date from his arrest on September 3.

**Dublin Sentences**: Michael Carolan, M. J. O'Hara and Frank O'Beirne, remanded, were each sentenced to twelve months.

\* Darrell Figgis was involved, at an earlier time, in arms purchases abroad. Nora Connolly spoke well of him. For a while, Sinn Féin T.D, for Co. Dublin, he went pro-Treaty and helped to draw up the Constitution. He gave his own account in *Recollections of the Irish War*.

He has been described by Ernie O'Malley as vain and egotistical, with having mannerisms that set him apart.

**Hill of Down Incident:** 25 armed men, under George Plunkett, attended at Hill of Down station on November 6, with the intention of rescuing three prisoners destined to be tried in Mullingar; one being Jim Killeen. The train however had departed minutes before. They then raided the station office and the local post office, but appear not to have removed anything.

**Films Seized:** Two films, deemed propaganda, were seized by armed men in Dublin on November 9. The Great War film, *Ypres*, was taken from the Masterpiece Cinema in Earl Street; and *Prince of Wales* was taken in Kingstown.

**The British Legion office** at 38 Kildare Street was raided by armed men, according to a report of November 10. Books and documents were removed.

**Patrick Sheehan, Prison Board Member:** He was kidnapped for a short time from his home at 69 Sandymount Avenue, on November 9. With a Mr Poole driving a commandeered car, he was brought to Merrion Road. After a stern warning against the 'harsh treatment of jailed Republicans, the party alighted. Patrick Sheehan's house in Chapelizod was burned in 1922. He was transferred by Fianna Fáil in March, 1932.

**Shots Fired:** Ex-service men, at supper, in La Scala Restaurant, Prince's Street, had shots fired into the building, on Poppy Day, November 11.

**Submarine Lost:** The British submarine, M.1, was lost in the Channel, on November 12, with 68 officers and men.

**Remanded:** James Donnelly of Inchicore, and John Russell of North Strand Road, were remanded on November 13, charged under the Treasonable Offences Act 1925, with membership of the I.R.A. Donnelly was later charged with being also in possession of military maps and other military documents.

**Raiding:** 60 houses in the Dublin area, together with the Sinn Féin offices at 23 Suffolk Street, were raided by detectives under Supt. Peter Ennis, from College Street, on November 13.

**I.R.A Dalkey Convention:** On the 13th and 14th of November, 1925, some 110 Army delegates assembled at the Queen's Hotel, Dalkey, for a Convention that would change the role and allegiance of the I.R.A. The Army had since September 1922 accepted the political direction of the shadow government, but in recent months there had been widespread rumours that the Chief of Staff himself, no less, was about to take a step towards accepting the Free State parliament.

Towards evening, Peadar O'Donnell's Donegal Battalion moved a resolution drawing attention to this, and in it he was supported by George Plunkett, pressing Aiken for a statement. When it came there was uproar, with the result, when the clamour had subsided, that General Frank Aiken, T.D; Chief of Staff I.R.A, was stood down and Dr. Andy Cooney (not yet a qualified medico) was appointed in his place.\*

The paradox was that Aiken had just presented the I.R.A with a new streamlined Constitution, which had been accepted, but with a poisoned pill in the form of an order that Volunteers must not plead before the Free State or English courts. It was

\* Succeeded very shortly afterwards - as Cooney had temporarily to go to the U.S - by the durable Maurice Twomey.

to handicap them for 30 years.

**War Memorial, Cork:** An attempt was made to blow up this memorial, commemorating the Boer War, on November 15. An attempt was made also in 1919.

**Sean Russell** was returned for trial under the Treasonable Offences Act, in a report of November 20; charged with possession of documents addressed to the Quartermaster-General of the I.R.A. Russell was Q.M.G. Some of the documents were read in court.

**Queen Alexandra**, mother of Queen Mary, wife of King George V, suffered a heart attack at this time; her condition in Sandringham Castle was described as critical. Her death occurred a day later.

**Eoin Mac Neill Resigns:** Eoin Mac Neill tendered his resignation, to the Executive Council, as a member of the Boundary Commission, on November 21. His resignation was accepted. The government had known for some time that the Commission would propose no change in the Border. Following this, Mac Neill resigned as Minister for Education, and was succeeded by John Marcus O'Sullivan.

The events leading to the Commission's report are charted in *Northern Nationalism; 1890-1940*, by Eamonn Phoenix. The methodical research and extreme care by local nationalists and curates, working from parish records, was set at naught by a British Government decision, already arrived at, that there would be no change. High expectations in the Border areas were followed by years of despondency. The failure of the Dublin government to courageously face London on their shameless knavery in thus setting at naught Article 12 of the Treaty, was inexcusable.

**Clan na h-Éireann:** As a direct result of the disappointing performance of the government on the issue, Deputy Professor Magennis, with some other deputies and a senator resigned, forming their own party. It disappeared in the 1927 elections.

**Cinema Attacked:** In a display of bravado, the Masterpiece Cinema recovered a copy of the 'propaganda' film *Ypres* and commenced running it. Three armed men arrived early on the morning of November 20, and exploded a mine inside the entrance. Two constables, John Murphy and William Timmons, followed the men as far as Sheriff Street, but were fired upon, and being slightly wounded, they withdrew. Two days later, Tom Merrigan of Church Street, and Charlie Ashmore of Holles Street, were arrested and charged with the offence.

**Kilmore Cathedral:** Three well maintained rifles, marked U.V.F, were found in the Cathedral. Rev. W.J. Askins was returned for trial in Cavan, charged with their possession. The rifles had been there before 1916, he said.

**Clare Incidents:** Two men, Michael and Patrick Cahir, were ambushed and wounded near Corofin. The brothers were sons of Frank Cahir of Buncragga, Ennis, whose home was fired into a short time before.

**Mountjoy Escape:** On Friday night, November 27, 19 men were rescued from Mountjoy Prison, by George Gilmore, Gerald O'Reilly\* and three other volunteers. Gilmore, attired as a sergeant, with a police constable, was escorting two 'poachers' into the heavily guarded prison. He carried a committal warrant with an authentic stamp and signature upon it. The poachers, allegedly from Baltinglass, were from a

\* See Appendix for Meath man Gerald O'Reilly.



range beyond the twenty mile limit of the Dublin Bridewell area. Otherwise they would have had to be accommodated in the Bridewell. The plan had been hatched with Frank Kerlin, Director of Intelligence, using the good offices of Henry Dixon, old-time I.R.B solicitor. After borrowing a light from a soldier inside the second gate, and disarming him in the process, Gilmore called out *Two On*. The warder inside then came forward, opening the gate to admit them.

They were nonplussed however to find that there were more warders present than they had bargained for. However the plan went off well, and 19 men, including such notables as Jim Killeen, Mick Carolan, Sean Russell and Dave Fitzgerald, got away. They were met outside by Tom Finlay, a taxi driver, who had helped many times in the past. To their consternation however, his was the only car. Others, that had been arranged, failed them. Some of the escapees had to make off on foot. Gilmore's account is given in *Survivors*, where the date mistakenly appears as 25th. November.

**Philipstown (Daingean):** Telegraph wires were cut entering the garda barracks there, on the night of November 27. A number of shots were then fired at the windows; there were no injuries.

**Questioned:** Eight men, including George and Jack Plunkett, were questioned on the morning following the Mountjoy heist.

**Athenry:** P.F Foundes, manager of the Empire Palace, Galway, returning by car from Athenry late on Sunday night, November 28, was held up by armed men, and the film *Zeebrugge* taken from him. He had just screened the film in Athenry. It was later found burned.

**Chancery Street, Dublin:** In a search for arms there, the occupant, Joseph Smith, was accidentally shot by a detective in the thigh. No arms were found.

**Divorce:** Under the still prevailing British law, divorce was permitted in the Free State up to this time; but although Attorney-General, Hugh Kennedy, appeared to favour legislation permitting divorce, a Bill forbidding it was introduced in December. Numbers in the cabinet favoured divorce but worried that, once in play, where might it stop.

**Border: No Change:** It was announced on Friday, December 4, that a Tripartite Agreement had been signed on the previous day in London. The boundary between the Free State and the Six Counties would therefore remain unchanged. The Agreement would be placed before all three parliaments without delay. Thus founded the high hopes held by Michael Collins and others, that Article Twelve of the Treaty would cause the northern state to collapse.

**Boundary Debate:** The papers of December 9, show that the Agreement passed swiftly through Commons and Lords; and the two houses of the northern parliament. After a debate over some days, the Agreement was passed in the Dáil by 54 votes to 14: it later went through the Senate 35 to 7. It had adhered to the limitations set down behind the scenes at its inception, by both Mac Donald and Baldwin; that its task would be a rectification only, and not an exchange of counties; despite anything that Lloyd George promised during the Treaty negotiations. Even so; under the report of November 5, the Free State stood to gain on balance both in territory and in population. An Amending Agreement however rushed through on

December 3, revoked Article 12 and thus preserved the entire Six Counties as defined by the Government of Ireland Act 1920. It waived the Free State's share of Britain's National Debt of £155m of which, under the Treaty, they had agreed to share (although new burdens were soon imposed.) It was signed by P.M Stanley Baldwin, Winston Churchill, Sir Wm Joynson-Hicks, F.E Smith, Lord Birkenhead, and Leopold Amery. It was signed on the Free State side by W.T Cosgrave, Kevin O'Higgins and Earnest Blythe. For the North, Charles Blackmore, Secretary N.I Cabinet, signed. The three Commissioners were present at the ceremony.

**Republican Dissent:** 43 Republican deputies, led by De Valera, on December 10, in the Rotunda, signed a declaration of protest. The meeting was addressed by Rev. Fr. Cashill, Devenish, a leading researcher, of Fermanagh who had this to say of the Bill. *It is the first time that a responsible government elected by the Irish people has betrayed a section of the people. They were told that they had sown the seeds of peace. In my opinion they have sown the seeds of trouble, misery and revolution.* It was later announced in London that the report of the Commission would not be made public. Within days of its announcement, Justice Feetham, its English born and Oxford educated chairman. although at this time holding a judgeship in South Africa, departed from London. J.R Fisher, the prominent northern Unionist and publisher, had been the second appointee. Eoin Mac Neill was thus outnumbered two to one from the start.

**Leitrim:** Michael O'Farrell, with his son Sean, a Sinn Féin T.D, and his three brothers, had been charged on December 7, in Dromod, with membership of the I.R.A, and possession of ammunition. Ownership of the land where the find was made could not be related to O'Farrell, so the charges failed.

**Summerhill:** The barracks in this Meath village was raided on the night of December 18, by a large body of men. Handcuffing three gardaí, they locked them in a cell, whereupon they removed three new bicycles and official correspondence.

**Limerick City:** Denis Maher of Clare Street, was remanded on December 20, charged with the possession of arms and ammunition.

**Co. Waterford:** Extensive searches were carried out at this time in the Cappagh district of Dungarvan. A number of finds were claimed; among them, three shot guns, two rifles and ammunition.

**Co. Clare:** A patrol of two civic guards on duty near Fanore was ambushed on the night of December 28. For being too 'nosey' twas said, with local Republicans. Garda Thomas Dowling was shot dead in the darkness near Craggagh graveyard. Clare would continue to be a turbulent county until Fianna Fáil arrived in 1932; and for a time thereafter.

## CHRONOLOGY: THE YEAR 1926:

**Honours:** At the commencement of the year President W.T. Cosgrave and Sir James Craig, in separate messages, expressed hopes for 'fostering a new spirit in Ireland'. The President had received a number of honours, including doctorates in two universities. In November, he was received by King George V at Buckingham Palace.

**Summerhill Raid:** The year 1926 opened with a further raid by a large body of I.R.A men on the tiny barracks of Summerhill, Co. Meath. The raid was part of a policy of harassment of the four year old uniformed garda body. Upon the same day, De Valera was speaking to an outdoor public meeting in Ranelagh.

**Released from Peterhead:** 17 Republican prisoners were released from Peterhead, Scotland, on January 27.

**St. Enda's Dump:** What the authorities described as a huge ammunition dump was uncovered in the basement of St. Enda's College, Rathfarnham, on February 1.

**President De Valera:** As President of Sinn Féin, he still possessed for nationalist Ireland the enormous charisma of being the 'last surviving Commandant of 1916', and the reputation of 'leader' of the Republican forces in the Civil War ended only two and a half years before. With hindsight however, his moves and his statements from now on could be seen as a delicate adjustment for the unthinkable; the acceptance of the Oath and entry into 'the Free State assembly'. It must be said however, that he would endeavour, through every means, from a court action, to pressing for a plebiscite, to avoid even the semblance of oath taking.

**Moves Towards Fianna Fáil:** On a standing committee elected at this time was found Larry de Lacy and others, soon to be prominent in Fianna Fáil. One such was Denis Allen, later a T.D for Wexford, but sentenced at this time to a few months imprisonment; Denis being O.C of the North Wexford Battalion of the I.R.A. His son, Lorcan, later filled the T.D.'s slot for Wexford.

**Seán Lemass:** Sean Lemass, Minister for Defence at this time in the Republican government, whom George Gilmore, his one time political secretary, considered a 'socialist', was hinting at 'future action', action which culminated three months later in the foundation of Fianna Fáil.

**Commdt Keogh:** There was an echo of the Civil War in the news, at the end of April, that I.R.A Commdt. Jack Keogh had been transferred from Maryborough to Dundrum Criminal Lunatic Asylum. He was on a ten years sentence from 1924, for a 'crime' of the Civil War and was said by *An Phoblacht* to be the sixth prisoner to be mentally effected by imprisonment.

**To Unseat the Staters:** Moving closer to the issue of real sensitivity, De Valera in his St. Patrick's Day message opened a chink in the blind with the statement that *we must have the will to face facts courageously, to cut our losses and begin our efforts anew.* His reasoning was simply, that the Sinn Féin Party with 44\* elected members was only nineteen behind the government in a house of 153; if the Oath could be ignored, and if all of the Sinn Féin people would fall in behind the decision, it might be possible in a later election to unseat the 'Staters'. But, to ignore the Oath, a hard core of a dozen was not willing to do. So a split within the organisation was inevitable.

\* As elected in August 1923. The 48 referred to overleaf includes Six County deputies.

**Boundary Accepted 71 : 20, Clan na h-Éireann:** The party Clan na h-Éireann, as already noted, was founded in March 1925, by the nationalist minded Professor William Magennis to oppose the 1925 Agreements, fixing permanently the Six County boundary, and agreeing to an exchequer payment of £5m\* annually to Britain, known as the *Ultimate Financial Settlement*. The Agreements however were finally approved by 71:20 in August 1926: (the financial aspects being carried in the previous December). Clan na h-Éireann's presence made no difference, in the absence of Sinn Féin. Frantic efforts had been made to have the Party attend as a body. As that proved impossible, the 48 Republican Deputies assembled in the Dublin Rotunda on December 10 1925, when De Valera read a solemn protest that had been signed by the leadership, not all of whom however were deputies, but many of whom would shortly contribute to Fianna Fáil.

However, the implications of the free acceptance by the Dáil of the 1925 Agreements, as a line drawn on the Treaty, and the Boundary Commission, cannot be overlooked: it still haunts us to this day. The Cumann na nGael government failed badly to uphold Ireland's basic rights; English and Loyalist leaders have never ceased to refer to it as an 'acceptance' of the Boundary by the parliament of the Irish people. As F.S.L Lyons remarks; *as a symptom of the loss of confidence in the government engendered by the boundary fiasco, the agreements were distinctly ominous.* It would be difficult now to state a total of what each side claimed from the other, but the figures have been put at £175m by the British and £300m by the Irish. Counting payments made up to mid-1931, and one single payment in 1938. the British recovered around £40m of their claims.

**General Strike in Britain:** Although it generated much bitterness and hardship in urban Britain, the short lived general strike there of May caused little upset in Ireland.

**Coinage Act:** The passage of this Act allowed the Free State to issue its own coinage. The international competition for the design of the 7 pieces was won by Percy Metcalfe, who based his design upon an animal theme.

**Raid on Sheriff's Office:** The Sheriff's office, Dublin, was raided by armed men on June 2, and the jury panel names removed.

**World Sinking into Depression:** One of the perplexing situations that a new government would have to face was that the world and Ireland was sinking into recession. Prosperity of a sort had continued for some years after World War One had ended in 1918; the Free State had succeeded in a masterful way in winning the Civil War, and the physical reconstruction that followed; but it was no match for a world economic decline; and economic decline had commenced and would continue on to its final manifestation. The Wall Street crash of October 1929, was followed by England forsaking the Gold Standard in 1931\*\*, and Ernest Blythe, taking one shilling (five pence) from the old age weekly pension of ten shillings. The returns

\* The £5m (approx) sum was reached in the so-called secret agreement of March 1926, between Blythe and Churchill. It was an agreement which undertook to pay to the British Government the full amounts of the Land Purchase Annuities arising from the Wyndham Act of 1903; the Act of 1909; earlier Acts, and later compensatory claims. F.F were to make hay of it when they 'discovered' it in 1932.

\*\*Having returned to it only six years before under Winston Churchill.

published shortly before had shown a dangerous drop in agricultural output, a fall in rail traffic, and in exports. Cumann na nGael was wedded to a tight-fisted policy; the Labour Party at this stage hardly counted, and only Fianna Fáil, as would be seen, was prepared to adopt the policy of economic autarky; or the development of home industry behind a tariff wall.

**Foundation of Fianna Fáil:** Reports of the proceedings in March of the annual Sinn Féin Árd Fhéis, indicated that the organisation was on the verge of a deep and divisive split. Four weeks later, President De Valera spoke at the annual commemoration in Glasnevin, and a few days afterwards was quite specific in an interview; *we are forming a new organisation.... we believe that Republicans ought not to stand aside.... the ideal of the Irish people is still broadly a Republican ideal: they will support us if a reasonable programme based upon the existing conditions is placed before them.* Shortly after that the name, emblazoned FIANNA FÁIL, (Soldiers of Destiny, or more correctly, Warriors of Fáil) appeared for the first time with its sub-title, *Republican Party*. Mayo man P.J. Ruttledge was announced as the chairman; Sean Lemass and Gerald Boland as secretaries; and Belfast man, Sean MacEntee, and Wexford medical doctor, James Ryan, were down as treasurers.

These five were later to be long standing and capable ministers in government. The foundation manifesto concluded; *there is a place in the new organisation for all who, with Pádraic Pearse, believe in an Irish nation and that free.* On the same occasion, they added the aim of securing the political independence of Ireland as a republic. Fianna Fáil however risked being hoisted upon its own petard, when it declared in April of Professor Magennis' Clan na h-Éireann, which had recently taken the Oath in order to enter the Dáil: the person who takes it will be commonly known to have taken an oath in the strict sense, no matter what he himself may believe.

Fianna Fáil was founded on May 16, at a public meeting in the rebuilt La Scala Theatre, Princes Street (the long demolished Capitol Theatre) Dublin. At a stroke, De Valera would enlist the effective workers- many former guerrilla fighters - from Sinn Féin. As a measure of this, in the forthcoming June 1927 election, Fianna Fáil would secure 44 seats, while abstentionist Sinn Féin would be left with 5.

**An Phoblacht**, which had commenced on June 18 1925, was the sole organ that Republicans had; filling the gap after the post-Civil War publications of *Poblacht na h-Éireann, The Plain People, Éire, Sinn Féin, Irish Freedom, all of which - except the latter - were short lived.* *An Phoblacht* was published weekly from 12 St. Andrew Street in Dublin, and was edited by the moderate P.J. Little, later a Fianna Fáil minister, whereupon Peadar O'Donnell took over.

**Rescue of Commdt Jack Keogh:** Shortly after his transfer from Maryborough to Dundrum, George Gilmore sprang him from the heavily guarded Asylum; an action for which he received a public plaudit from De Valera, keeping an eye upon the political support such action would garner for his new party. Unconnected with Keogh, were the continuing widespread police raids in all parts of Ireland; raids that were frequently accompanied by 'incidents'. In what may have been local counter strokes there were reports of attacks on barracks in Co. Sligo and Co. Clare.

**Mary Mac Swiney and Macardle:** Second Dáil deputy Mary Mac Swiney now joined in public criticism of the new party; in 1921 she had been rejected by De

Valera for membership of the Treaty delegation although that did not affect her views on this issue. She was answered however, in striking words by authoress Dorothy Macardle, speaking of the 'impossibility' of ever taking the Oath; *one towering barrier.... at this side all Republicans stand unfailing in their resolve not to cross it.*

**Patrick Garland:** In May the Army hit a piece of ill-luck with the arrest of Patrick Garland, from a New York liner; he was found to have money and a 'lot of communications' for the I.R.A.

**An Phoblacht Cordial:** At this time, and onwards into the thirties, *An Phoblacht*, was exceptionally cordial in its reportage of the growth of Fianna Fáil, while its opinion of Sinn Féin was at zero.

**Sean Lynchehaun:** There was a further Civil War echo in July, with the capture in Achill of Sean Lynchehaun, said to have been on the run since 1922.

**Money Lenders:** The Mick Price policy of pinpointing money lenders, or rob-the-rich-to-feed-the-poor, was derailed in August when C.I.D. from Oriel House pounced, but failed to secure convictions in the ordinary courts, as the lenders, forced to attend, failed to identify them. It was a line ball situation; later, action against money lenders spread to Limerick city; but whether the I.R.A. should have been involved in social action of that sort was questionable.

**Dundalk:** John Doyle of Seatown Place, Dundalk, was shot dead by armed men, on August 20. It had no political significance. Raiders had entered a public house seeking the takings; in the confusion a customer was fired on.

**Prison Picture:** The prison picture at this time was interesting; interesting inasmuch as there were so few in prison.

**Those in Prison:** *Maryborough:* (only later was it officially Portlaoise).

John McPeake\*, Glasgow; sentenced to 6 years on November 6, 1923 for the seizure of an armoured car at Bandon in December 1922.

John Hogan of Clare; penal servitude for life, October 31, 1923. He shot a soldier in self defence in the Civil War.

John Downey of Galway; ten years in September 1923; had set fire to a guards barracks.

Matt Hughes of Galway; three years; he had assisted Downey.

Patrick Dunleavy of Galway; three years; he also assisted Downey.

J. Maguire, Co. Donegal; serving 3 years for commandeering a car on behalf of the I.R.A.

The six above were left-overs from the Civil War, and their sentences were not representative of the short sentences normally handed out at this time.

**Mountjoy:** Denis Allen of Enniscorthy; James Maguire of Dublin; Tom Maguire of Westmeath; William Bolton of Carlow; all on short terms.

The remanded money lender raiders included: Chris Murphy, Mick Price, Donal O'Donoghue, Fiona Plunkett, Róisín Ó'Doherty and Mick Seary.

**Galway:** Mark Killalea; later prominent in Fianna Fáil; on remand.

\* Jack Mc Peake, who commanded the Free State armoured car at Béal na Bláth on August 22 1922, brought his car to the I.R.A. in October, and remained with them, being extradited from Scotland later. See Connie Neenan in *Survivors*.

**Belfast:** Three arrested in September 1920, on money raiding, and on a death charge were held on sentences of 20 years; Frank O'Boyle and Hugh Rogers of Tyrone, and Bill Conlon. They were released soon after and extradited to the Free State. John Fox was held on a five year sentence, and Tom Walsh on 18 months. Leaving aside those three, it demonstrates the remarkably low level of Republican activity, until well into the thirties, in the Six Counties.

**Clonmel:** Jimmy Hannigan of Dublin was on a two year sentence. Hannigan was later on H.Q staff in the thirties; after which he joined the public lighting dept. of Dublin Corporation.

**Glasshouse.** Curragh: Five Free State soldiers, who had helped Republicans, were held on long sentences; Larkin, Greene, Rooney, Gordon, Lean. They were released shortly after this date.

**England:** Joseph Horan, Pat Walsh, Michael Foley and Pat Galvin were held in Maidstone on varying terms for arms and documents. Francis Breen, John Foley and Bernard Iago were held in Dartmoor and other jails on ten year terms. Hugh Daly was on 12 months in Wormwood Scrubs, while Jim Killeen was serving 3 months in Pentonville.

**Imperial Conference:** Kevin O'Higgins, Minister for Justice, and Desmond Fitzgerald, Minister for External Affairs, attended in September the Imperial Conference in London: O'Higgins being the leader. The Balfour Report presented was confirmed; it laid down that Commonwealth countries were deemed to be equal in status and in no way subordinate to one another.\*

**Twomey Arrested: Raids on Barracks:** In November, Maurice Twomey, the Chief of Staff, appointed in June, was arrested at Crookedwood, between Mullingar and Castlepollard; on his way to a staff meeting. He received only a light sentence, but with his hand removed from the tiller, one wonders was it responsible for the sudden spurt of raids upon small garda barracks which followed? On the night of November 12, 12 were attacked in Cork, Kerry and Meath: no less than 24 were entered in Co. Waterford. Two Dun Laoire yacht clubs, the Royal and the George, were entered; seemingly in a search for poppies. A Public Safety Bill 1926, was introduced, as a result, on November 16, becoming law on November 19.

**Barrack Raids:** In St. Luke's, in Cork city, a Sergt. Fitzsimons was killed; and a few weeks later at Hollyford in Tipperary, a constable was also killed. The raids, pointless seemingly, were said to be an intelligence gathering exercise; instead a state of national emergency was proclaimed; ten being arrested in Dublin and ten in Cork. *An Phoblacht* had its press smashed, and missed an issue.

**Crumlin Barracks Attacked:** The village barracks in the countryside of Co. Dublin, was fired into, and Garda Boyle was wounded.

**State of Emergency Proclaimed:** The Public Safety Act, referred to above, having been passed, a State of Emergency was proclaimed.

**Knockanore Barracks Was Attacked,** in Co. Waterford. Armed men locked the gardaí in a cell and removed records.

**Ballinakill, Laois:** When Guard Hanly attempted to hold up two cyclists with-

\* *Kevin O'Higgins*, by Terence de Vere White.

out lights, he was shot, and wounded.

**George Gilmore:** Despite government unease, George Gilmore, arrested earlier, received only an 18 month sentence, with hard labour, early in December; for having rescued 19 prisoners from Mountjoy on November 27, 1925. Gilmore was one of the outstanding believers in physical force at this time.

He promptly sought political treatment by commencing a hunger strike, whereupon a mass public meeting held in College Green, heard De Valera denounce the government and call for support for Gilmore; *the Irish people told so often they are murderers, should now exert their authority.* On the platform with him were Art O'Connor, President of the Republic in succession to De Valera; Countess Markievicz, Mrs. Hanna Sheehy-Skeffington, Eamonn Donnolly and Madame Gonne Mac Bride. Underlining his association with Republicanism, despite having founded Fianna Fáil, De Valera joined with Art O'Connor in issuing new year greetings to Fianna Éireann.

**All Detainees Released:** All persons detained under the Public Safety Act, were released by December 14.



## CHRONOLOGY: THE YEAR 1927:

**Honours:** In the London new year honours' lists, Sir James Craig was created Viscount Craigavon. He would be Prime Minister 19 years; 'long after he had out-lived his usefulness', according to former M.P. H. Montgomery Hyde.

**Economic Woe:** South Tipperary County Council was reported issuing a cry of economic anguish; the military barracks in a number of towns had closed. Cleeve's factory had burned, with 300 out; the lactose factory had closed, with 100 laid off; the mineral water and glove factories were closed; the Munster House Emporium, employing 40 had burned down. The Council chairman added that the speaker had not overdrawn the sad condition of the southern part of the county.

**Caherconlish:** Unknown men had entered the small barracks and burned it down.

**Gaeltacht Areas:** A meeting of speakers, on January 28, from Clare (which still had a gaeltacht), Galway, Mayo and Donegal described the conditions prevailing in each region, as 'a blot upon the country'.

**Waterford City:** The Macdonald margarine factory announced imminent closure.

**The Currency Commission,** permitting the issue of Free State notes, was established.

**Joe McGrath,** former minister, was reported on February 3, to have taken an action, in which he won damages, against Bretherton, a *Morning Post* journalist who, in a book, accused him of being responsible for the death of Noel Lemass; McGrath (who later founded the Sweepstakes) being head of the military secret service at the same time. He was not responsible.

**Meetings:** Open air public meetings in halls and after Mass, were, and would continue to be, for all political parties, an established practice. Established also was the practice of firing rhetorical questions, shouting interruptions, and even mini riots; especially if the meeting was organised by Cumann na nGael. That party was seen as a middle class party closely identified with the executions of the Civil War, while its opponents represented vigorous new youth.

**Ernest Blythe:** Hence it is not surprising that one of those hate figures, Earnán de Blaghd, Minister for Finance, should be heckled in late January, addressing an indoor meeting in Ardee; *yes, he granted, peering short sightedly but belligerently, yes, it was unpleasant for us as a cabinet in that late autumn and into the springtime of 1923 to sit at a table in Merrion Street and decide who was to be shot. That was a thing no one wanted to do\*.*

\* Execution in the Civil War could be for as light a matter as clipping rural phone wires. Capt. O'Connor, in Dundalk Military Barracks, in February 1923, was recorded seeking payment for whiskey from Col. O'Higgins, the quartermaster, in Dublin; the whiskey was provided to tank up the firing squad that had executed three young men on January 13; Tom Mc Keon, John Mc Nulty and Tom Murray.

Blythe\* had been born into strong farming stock in Maghera, and brought up by a stern Co. Antrim Presbyterian family. He turned enthusiastically gaelic, joined the Volunteers, and participated in the Movement, but on the political side, thereafter. He went 'Free State', and had nodded, in cabinet, for each of those seventy seven executions, and the cover-up of considerably more, through unofficial killings. He remained a forceful advocate for the language revival, and afterwards for 12 years directed the Abbey Theatre

**Desmond Fitzgerald and War:** A fair partner for him in cabinet was the Minister for External (now Foreign) Affairs, Desmond Fitzgerald; sworn enemy of all things I.R.A. To the question whether we might participate again in a world war - the rising Soviet Union then being identified as the likely enemy - Fitzgerald, in mid-February, gave his answer; *yes, in the event of war the Free State Army must co-operate with the British Army.*

**Money Lender Peace:** Meanwhile, at another level, the I.R.A published its conditions of peace with the money lenders, so interest rates, at a legal 39 per cent would prevail henceforth.

**A Daily Newspaper?** It was reported on Friday 25, that a project being investigated on these lines for Republicans, had failed.

**Jim Killeen:** His trial, following his Mountjoy escape, was reported on February 26.

**Clan na Gael Standpoint in the New Departure:** As made clear in Sean Cronin's *The Mc Garrity Papers*, the 1926 departure was not welcomed by Clan or by Joe Mc Garrity, although he remained friendly with De Valera until 1935. Aiken pressed Clan to influence its members but met with a refusal. Clan exists to help an armed force in Ireland, was the response.

**Republican Bonds:** De Valera was in New York early in March to give evidence in the Bonds case, contested, for the Free State government, by P.S. O'Hegarty, Secretary of the Executive Council; and Brennan, the Secretary of the Dept. of Finance, representing Kevin O'Higgins, Minister for Justice, and Desmond Fitzgerald, later Minister for Economic Affairs. The action was brought by the government to obtain possession of \$2.5m (formerly \$6m). It failed, and some of that money helped to create the *Irish Press*.

**Commencement of Annuity Agitation:** March 1927 was marked by the commencement of an agitation that was to touch the marrow of Free State politics for three quarters of a decade. Like the Civil Rights 'trump card' in the North in 1968/69, or the Conscription 'trump card' of 1918, it would unsettle the balance of politics in a marked way; and yet this card was later handed gratis to Fianna Fáil, because the I.R.A at the time was not structured to make use of it. Peadar O'Donnell, novelist and polemicist, was primarily a political, rather than a military man; each day with Peadar brought with it a bright new idea. But in the case of the oppressed small holders of West Donegal he had taken hold of a weapon that would cause ripples to run through all parts of rural Ireland; that would eventually contribute to unseating the Cosgrave government.

\* He tells his own story in *Trasna na Bóinne*.

It began in a small enough way, with an 'anti-landlord' gathering on a street in the village of Doochary on the Gweebarra River, in the most poverty stricken part of West Donegal. Indeed it could be said, that it really commenced the day Peadar 'dandered' into the home of Jack Boyle of Croveigh, a townland near Dungloe; the story continues in his own inimitable words in *There Will Be Another Day*, published in 1963.

**Ultimate Financial Settlement:** Land annuities were apportioned on the acreage of each farm and were paid annually to the British government following the Wyndham Act of 1903, which bought out the landlords. The purchase was financed by a government loan spread over 70 years.

Provision was made for this payment to continue following the Treaty, and was confirmed by the *Ultimate Financial Settlement* signed by Blythe and Winston Churchill in March 1926, referred to earlier.\*

The annuity apportionment of this agreement amounted to little more than three million pounds; £3.13 annually, to which was added a quarter of a million in payment of R.I.C pensions. This, and compensation for damage to crown property, brought the charge to over five million, but at that time, with the 26 County budget hovering around 19 million, it was felt to be a considerable imposition.

The average annuity upon western farms was about five pounds, but they had built up into substantial arrears over the war period; and at this time, when a sound new bicycle could be purchased for 25 shillings, a good horse for 15 pounds, while the old age pension paid only ten shillings a week, money of any sort counted. O'Donnell's agitation centred in the stoney countryside south east of Dungloe, where it was manfully assisted by Sean Mc Cool's I.R.A unit. It was supported by that rural reluctance to part with hard earned money, and by an innate and long nurtured sentiment that the land had been robbed by the landlord Cunninghams from its rightful owners; and now in this century, their descendants should not have to pay to recover it. O'Donnell, although he hardly realised it, was on the highway to victory.

Three weeks later he was arrested in Dublin by Supt. Peter Ennis, a brother of Gen. Tom who had been a Civil War commander on the F.S side\*\*. A minor charge was laid against him but he was not held; there being no Tribunal, or Offences Act at that time. Indeed, as we shall see, after the blood letting of the Civil War, prosecutions and sentences in the Cosgrave period were remarkably mild.

**Restless I.R.A:** Meanwhile the restless companies of the I.R.A had to be given tasks, and one such, from time to time in different areas, could be a local trade boy-

\* The settlement was disputed at that time by Professor Magennis of the Clan na h-Éireann Party, and Colonel Senator Maurice Moore. They contended that all financial claims under Article 5 had in effect been discounted by the 'abandonment' of Fermanagh and Tyrone. Liability for the public debt should be set aside as a consequence of the effective abandonment of the Boundary Commission under Article 12. *We have sold our Nationalists*, Magennis contended, *and we have not received the price. We have been burgled*, Colonel Moore declared, *and we have bribed the burglar.*

\*\* See Tom Kelleher in *Survivors: and Green Against Green*, by Michael Hopkinson.

cott; burning a pro British film, or the destruction of newspapers. So it was that at this time a group of men in trench coats met, in the dawn, the mail boat at Dun Laoire; took away and set fire to the bales of English newspapers landed on the quayside, then promptly making off.

As an indicator of the straightened economic conditions of the countryside, a father, mother and two children were found dead of starvation in West Cork. They had been rejected for home assistance through being land holders.

**June 1927 Election:** With a general election signalled for the state in June, nationalists of all sorts sought to combine to expel the hated Cosgrave regime with an 'On to the Republic' slogan. Anyone with an eye to see could grasp that De Valera would win a number in the high forties (most of them already elected but non-sitting Sinn Féin members), but if the dedicated Sinn Féiners could be persuaded to forget their principles and throw in their lot, it might spell the end of the Cumann na nGael government, and a gloating quietus for its abhorred figure heads, O'Higgins, Fitzgerald-Kenney, Blythe and the rest. It was felt that at this time a single leap could put them straight into government, whereupon they would find means to constitutionally ignore the Oath. So the call went out for unity; unity among Republicans. *Form a united front for the election.*

**Attempt at Agreed Policy:** In mid-May, Mary Mac Swiney discussed this call in *An Phoblacht* and, although hoping for the best, clearly feared the worst if De Valera went on to recognise the Treaty position. In an effort to promote electoral unity the I.R.A had brought the parties together, but in the end they were forced to admit failure.

**Dissolution of the Fourth Dáil:** The Fourth Dáil was dissolved on May 23. A main plank of the I.R.A proposal was that there should not be a rush, as a minority, into Leinster House which would mean having to take the Oath, but that the two groups agree upon a panel of candidates and go forward with I.R.A support to *win outside parliament*, and then to enter, disregarding an Oath.

**Fianna Fáil Rejects:** They had presented Fianna Fáil and Sinn Féin in meetings, with a seven part proposal whereby, there would be this agreed panel and policy that would avoid recognition of the status of the Free State. It had been put together by Twomey, Mac Bride and O'Donnell, but it was rejected by Fianna Fáil - doubtless by De Valera himself who would have found it too inhibiting, and in his view might have meant a loss of that control that he was later seen to exercise for three decades over his party. In a careful statement following the rejection, the I.R.A reiterated its view to its volunteers that their aim should be the *creation of a revolutionary situation favourable for action*; contesting elections might be a means but not, as with some, an end in itself.

To the man and women in the wild flat lands of the West, that could mean only 'voting for Dev', and the leadership knew this well. The final result after the second election in September, showed that the gap, was not closed but near to closing. The defeated legions of 1923 had their foot inside the door, and Eamon De Valera was still leading them.

## PARTY STRENGTHS: STRENGTH OF PARTIES IN 5 ELECTIONS.

	July 1923	June 1927	Sept 1927	Feb 1932	Jan 1933
Cumann na nGael	63	47	62	57	48
Sinn Féin	44	5	nil	-	-
Independents	17	16	13	13	9
Labour	14	22	13	7	8
Farmers	15	11	6	4	-
Fianna Fáil	-	44	57	72	77
Nat League	-	8	2	-	-
Centre Party	-	-	-	-	11

The National League, founded in 1926, was the creation of Capt Willie Redmond, son of John, it inclined towards Cumann na nGael. Frank Mac Dermot's Centre Party was founded in 1932

**Sinn Féin Out:** Sinn Féin, impoverished financially and confronted by an electoral oath, did not go forward in September; in effect the elected Fianna Fáil membership almost exactly replicated the former Sinn Féin membership.

**S.F. President O'Connor Steps Down:** Days after, President Art O'Connor, soon to retire and enter the bar, gave a quiet address, with nothing new in its content, at Bodinstown. He had been a singularly uninspiring successor\* to the charismatic Dev, and would soon be succeeded by J.J. O'Kelly (Sceilg) as chairman only: e.g. not as President; although the title, President of Sinn Féin continued in use. Sinn Féin after September ceased to count politically, being ridiculed even in the columns of *An Phoblacht*. It was not to surface again until March 1957 when four I.R.A. volunteers were elected as abstentionist *teachtaí dála* (T.D.).

**Kevin O'Higgins Assassinated:** Scarcely a month after the June election, on July 10, Kevin O'Higgins, Minister for Justice, was assassinated on a Sunday morning close to his home at Cross Avenue, Blackrock, Co. Dublin.\*\* As the electoral table above shows it was the most fortunate turn of events, although doubtless not so intended, for Fianna Fáil. Indeed, one of the trio in this unofficial I.R.A. action, was a card carrying member of the party since at that time and until Fianna Fáil reached power, dual membership I.R.A./Fianna Fáil was encouraged.

\* Visiting the U.S in July 1926 in the footsteps of De Valera 'he failed to make a stand on behalf of the Second Dáil'; admittedly difficult, having been preceded in New York, Chicago, Philadelphia and Boston, by De Valera and Archbishop Mannix. 'Plagued by self doubt as to his future career, O'Connor relinquished the presidency in November 1927, and eventually broke completely with his colleagues by practising law in the Free State.' (From *Patrick Pearse and the Lost Republican Ideal*, by Brian P. Murphy.)

\*\* His father also died by assassination, early in 1923, in his home near Stradbally, Co. Laois. As part of a reprisal policy against F.S. executions - there being over 50 Republicans executed at that time - seven Óglaigh, on Sunday, February 11, 1923, approached *Woodlands*, the attractive home of his father. His wife and two teenage children were in the house. Holding the door against them at first, he admitted them., Inviting one to follow into the dining room, where he turned upon him, grappling with him. One of the men following promptly shot dead Dr Tom Higgins. Influenced by the gaelic revival some years earlier his son Kevin restored the prefix 'O' to the family name.

O'Higgins was on his way walking to the Church of the Assumption, 200 metres down Booterstown Avenue, at 11.55; his personal bodyguard detective having hastened back on an errand to the residence, where Mrs. O'Higgins, the former Bridget Cole, a noted socialite and beauty, who later married solicitor Arthur Cox,\* was breakfasting with cabinet minister Patrick Hogan of Co. Galway. They were joined shortly after by Eoin Mac Neill, Minister for Education, who had witnessed the shooting.

The hijacked car of army captain McDonnell had drawn to the kerb and, as O'Higgins approached, three men, Archie Doyle, Bill Gannon and Tim Coughlan\*\* emerged, firing at close range at O'Higgins. Seeing him fall, they re-entered the car, but emerged again when he appeared to raise an arm. Crossing the deserted roadway they each fired, one into the head, one above the heart and one into the abdomen, a total of seven. Amazingly he survived for five hours, being sufficiently coherent to dictate his will and beg forgiveness for the assassins: he died at 5 p.m. Patrick Hogan, Minister for Agriculture, resided when in Dublin, at the same house.

Normally they went to the same Mass, but on this day, Hogan had arranged for golf with Patrick Mc Gilligan, going instead to 10 o'clock Mass with Mrs. O'Higgins. In addition to Detective O'Grady, there remained a uniformed guard in the residence. The trio, Doyle, Gannon and Coughlan, said to be on their way to football in Gorey, abandoned the car in Milltown (they may have left bicycles there), continuing to *Newpark Lodge* (since demolished), Stillorgan, the home of Tom Bohan. It was into this same house in September 1922, that Free State soldiers fired, killing Rodney Murphy of Deansgrange and Leo Murray of Dun Laoire, before arresting Tom and James Nolan. That party may have been led by Capt. James Murray said to have led the party that dumped the body of Noel Lemass on July 3, 1923 on Cruagh (Featherbed) Mountain, and later led the party that killed Joseph Bergin, military policeman. Bohan and Gannon spent time in the 'Joy together during the worst period of the executions, so they had reason. Bill Gannon died in September 1965, a red flag and a tricolour upon his coffin. Archie Doyle, true to the last, in the forties was still active, and died in St. James' Hospital, Dublin, in 1980.

The frequently top hatted O'Higgins, ex-Maynooth boy, nephew of Tim Healy's wife; was a person of great forensic talent, unremitting in argument, upright but with an alien streak in his character: from the post-Treaty period he was held in admiration by Winston Churchill. His scholastic career towards the priesthood had not been without its ups and downs; he had been expelled, or asked to leave, both Knockbeg College and Maynooth. It has recently come to light, in a work by Sinéad Mc Coole, that from 1921 he carried on a sultry affair with Hazel Lavery, American born wife of the painter; Hazel being then 41 and Kevin 29. A recently unearthed packet of his letters confirmed the relationship.

\* On retirement, Arthur Cox entered the Catholic priesthood.

\*\* It was not until this writer's *Harry* appeared in 1985, that the names of the three men became known. Archie, a skilled carpenter, was a foreman in the Office of Public Works later, known to this writer.

Wrongly accused of calling for the execution of 'Rory, Liam, Dick and Joe',\* his death, as it led to a second general election in 1927, was an unexpected bonus for Fianna Fáil. All hell broke loose however with the killing; the I.R.A was aghast; denying complicity, while blaming it upon dissidents within the Free State Army; even upon annoyed public house owners, whom O'Higgins had been legislating to restrict. Some newspapers suggested that it could be a private vengeance. All city traffic ceased, with 300 priests heading the concourse to Glasnevin.

**Owen Donnelly:** Oriel House, running down their list of H.Q men, pulled in 20, among them Owen Donnelly, George Plunkett, Frank Kerlin, Mick Fitzpatrick, Brendan O'Carroll, and brother Kevin, Henry and Aubrey Hunt, Joseph Reynolds, Sean Mac Bride (later), James and Jeremiah Grey, and Tod Andrews. All were eventually discharged.\*\*

**Archbishop Byrne** issued a special pastoral following the death; denouncing it as 'murder, stark and hideous'.

**Take the Oath and Break It:** In the tension following the death of O'Higgins, Sean Lemass told that Fianna Fáil was being urged to take the Oath and break it; I cannot imagine, he declared, that political morality should sink so low.

Meanwhile, the Party was campaigning in the country for its abolition; they considered taking a test case, but that, said Lemass, 'would be like arraigning the Devil in the court of hell'. Two weeks later, on being taxed upon the subject, De Valera declared; 'under no circumstances whatever would I subscribe to such an Oath. That is final.'

**The Geneva Naval Conference** broke down at this time. Britain sought to enlarge its naval gunnery and retain its dreadnoughts 'for reasons of security'.

**Public Safety Act:** The government responded to the assassination by introducing a new Public Safety Act, and an Electoral Amendment Bill; the latter requiring that an oath be taken before standing for election. Under the first named there would be an extension of the death penalty. A Military Tribunal was also envisaged, but it was not until 1931 that that was put in place. The 1927 Act, a severe encroachment on liberty, to quote F.S L.Lyons, was repealed in December 1928.

The new Act would consist of three bills, providing *inter alia* that candidates must

\* Not true. When it was proposed at a cabinet meeting in a barricaded Merrion Street that Rory O'Connor, Liam Mellows, Richard Barrett and Joe Mc Kelvey, then prisoners in Mountjoy, be executed as a reprisal for the shooting dead in Dublin of pro-Treaty T.D Sean Hales of West Cork, and the wounding of another, Pádraig Ó Máille of Galway; Eoin Mac Neill was the first to agree, while O'Higgins held back; 'is there no other way' he whispered. O'Connor had been best man at his wedding in Dublin in October 1921 when, from the letters they had exchanged, one could see that they had been on very close terms. The assassination of Hales, and the attempt on Ó Máille at Ormond Quay, was the work of north side Dubliner, Owen Donnelly, and was acting in line with a Republican response, announced by General Liam Lynch in the draconian *Army Powers Resolution* of September/October 1922, which permitted the Free State government to execute prisoners for anything deemed - even in the most tenuous way - to aid or abet action against the National Forces.

\*\* See Ulick O'Connor: *Executions*, for Donnelly, who, in fact, was the lone gunman in the 1922 assassination of Sean Hales and the attempt on Ó Máille

declare their allegiance to the Constitution, while the referendum provision (which might have enabled the citizenry under Article 47 to put an end to the Oath), was abolished. There would be provision for the suppression of organisations and publications, for deportations, military courts, and a death sentence for the possession of arms. It never went as far as that.

The Act passed into law after August 10, having been opposed by the Labour Party and some Independents. Fianna Fáil thereupon issued a statement that their members would sign the form (of Oath) to comply with Article 4, but they would regard it as an empty formality. They arrived on the following day in a body; the ceremony of signing being witnessed by the Clerk of An Dáil, Colm Ó Murchadha. (See below. They had presented themselves earlier after the election but were refused entry)

**Passing of Countess Markievicz:** Within days of O'Higgins' death, the much loved Countess Markievicz passed away at the early age of 43. She had trailed a colourful swathe through recent decades; from Castle balls, to 1913 soup kitchens, to fighting in the uprising in St. Stephen's Green. Not to be forgotten was poetess Eva Gore-Booth, her sister from that remarkable house, *Lissadell* in Co. Sligo, who had died a year earlier. (as sadly had her mother, between both bereavements.) 100,000 filed past her coffin in the Rotunda, Parnell Square, both City Hall and Mansion House, having being refused by City Commissioners Séamus Ó Murchadha, Dr. W. Dwyer and P. J. Herson, while soldiers and C.I.D prevented a final I.R.A volley over her grave.\* Her passing however, freed De Valera from the embarrassment of 'taking the Oath' and entering Leinster House while she lived. The established state was proving intractable to change by any other means so he recognised that he must bow to it. Indeed, as far back as the Nier Valley of March 1923, when he slept in the same room as his co-heir Frank Aiken (if one is to credit Sean Dowling in *Survivors* 1987 ed), the political road that he would follow was already germinating. Constance Gore-Booth, faithful Republican and elected Fianna Fáil T.D, might have sought to make him evade the act of signing; with her death there was now no hindrance. Her grave was opened in the Republican Plot, in Glasnevin; the coffin being carried there by De Valera, Patrick Rutledge, Frank Aiken and Count Casimir Dunin Markievicz. The Count was a noted portrait painter and playwright. In 1913 he had left Ireland, and for the remainder of his life lived in eastern Europe and Warsaw until his death in 1932. He returned briefly in 1927 to be at his wife's bedside.

**Vienna Revolt:** A revolt in the city by communists and socialists was suppressed on July 18.

**De Valera Takes Oath:** On August 11, 1927, with his 44 followers, De Valera presented himself again, *I am taking no oath*, he said, thereupon signing the declaration; a procedure that his retinue then followed.\*\* One week later they entered Dáil Éireann to support a Labour motion of censure. Had it then succeeded, a coalition of Labour with National League (Vincent Rice defecting) and Fianna Fáil could have been in government from August 1927; but it failed, as a second League member\*\*\* and sup-

\* Dublin was governed by those three from 1924 until 1930.

\*\* Moving a bible to one side, each signed a book in which the following declaration was printed:- *I, (name) do solemnly swear true faith and allegiance to the Constitution of the Irish Free State as by law established, and that I will be faithful to H.M King George V, his heirs, successors by law, in virtue of the common citizenship of Ireland with Great Britain, and her adherence to and membership of the group of nations forming the British Commonwealth of Nations.*

\*\*\* From whom came the saying, 'there must be a jinks on it'. But see an earlier reference to jinks. A very successful race horse of the name ran afterwards. The vote resulted in a deadlock, but the Ceann Comhairle voted for the government.



porter of the motion, Alderman John Jinks of Sligo, after a hearty lunch, was left in a drunken state in a Harcourt Street hotel, by his fellow countyman (and Independant member), Major Bryan Cooper of Markree Castle, who then stole swiftly to Kildare Street. Cooper's other companion was R.M. Smylie, late of Sligo, and at this time still only a journalist with the *Irish Times*.\*

**Victory for Cumann na nGael** left the way open for the threatened penal legislation; the I.R.A had now to prepare for that. But, solely as a military organisation, they could agitate only from the street.

**I.R.A In and Out of Government:** They could not pretend to act as a government; in the springtime of 1919 the Volunteers had allowed themselves to come nominally under the control of the revolutionary Dáil, but in March 1922, disillusioned in the aftermath of the Treaty, they reverted to volunteer status. They were then, as a G.H.Q, free of parliamentary control, but that imposed its own constraints.

That situation altered again on October 25, 1922 when, with civil war raging, and persuaded that they owed a political framework to their thousands of non-military supporters, the I.R.A permitted itself to come under the control of an emergency government\*\*. In the closing months of war; March, April, May, De Valera, acting as President, endeavoured, by carrying on peace negotiations, to secure terms - in the event fruitless - which an armed faction would not have been able to do.

**E.S.B Established:** The Electricity Supply Board was established in this month. Its purpose would be to create the network that would distribute power from the Shannon Scheme then being built at Ardnacrusha.

**I.R.A Its Own Master:** Following the releases from internment in late 1923/24, the I.R.A continued as the 'Army of the Republic' under Chief of Staff Frank Aiken, President De Valera, and a cabinet of ministers; but with the real seat of power in Free State hands in Merrion Street; everyone, or almost everyone, recognised it as a charade. Once Fianna Fáil, in August 1927, entered Leinster House, the attraction of remaining under a shadow Sinn Féin government, now more vestigial than ever, had ceased. The I.R.A had pre-empted this, when at their Dalkey Convention of November 14, 1925; upon despatching Aiken, it severed again its connection with the Dáil.

**Public Safety Act 1927:** Fianna Fáil had entered Leinster House two years too late to prevent acceptance of the Six County Boundary Commission, or the 'damned good bargain' financial settlement of 1926, but they still sought to frustrate the Public Safety Act of 1927 which threatened a Tribunal, and an extension of the death penalty; and which required candidates for election to give an undertaking on attendance; a clause which ruled out abstention in the future. *Government should not govern with a dagger in its pocket*, Col. Maurice Moore declared in the Senate, while P.J. Rutledge was to add a few weeks later in October, that the government had 'out Heroded-Herod'. Statements were issued from the I.R.A and Sinn Féin calling for resistance. At the same time the *Irish Rosary* was calling for co-operation by Church and State, 'as in Italy and Spain'. Miscreants should be tried by matter-of-fact tribunals behind closed doors, declared 'Delta'.

\* It was believed widely that for much of his life R.M. Smylie had another role, that of agent for British Intelligence. Working for the *Irish Times* in the late twenties he was editor from 1934 until his death in office in September 1954

\*\* A republican government, on De Valera's advice was reconstituted in October 1922.

**Agricultural Credit Corporation:** This farmers' bank was established at this time.

**Attempts to Co-ordinate:** A short lived Advisory Council was formed in the wake of entry to co-ordinate Fianna Fáil, Sinn Féin and I.R.A. activity. After some time it was found that 'it could serve no useful purpose', so it ended. Critically, Mary Mac Swiney was writing for *An Phoblacht* a piece headed 'The Parting of the Ways'.

**Mrs. Sheehy-Skeffington** felt sorely on the issue also, and resigned from Fianna Fáil; she busied herself henceforth with the Movement, joining the editorial staff of *An Phoblacht* later. Another Republican writer suggested as an attitude to Fianna Fáil 'your charity but non co-operation'. That may be so, but the party now strenuously poached likely electoral candidates from the Movement; Sean Moylan, Oscar Traynor, Mark Killalea, Mary Mac Swiney herself, Tom Maguire of Mayo, Professor Stockley, were all approached, but to no avail; although the fire eating Moylan and Killalea joined later. Oscar Traynor, a prime target for this proselytism, declared; it is not my intention now or at any future date to betray my electors. Shortly after however, he did just that when he joined Fianna Fáil, and retained the former S.F. seat for Fianna Fáil in north Dublin.

On August 25 the government easily won two by-elections in Dublin; Sinn Féin being at the bottom of the poll with candidates Charles Murphy and Dr. Kathleen Lynn. Mayo born Kathleen Lynn was with the Citizen Army in the Rising; was on the S. F. Executive, and was a Dáil member for Dublin North. She later founded St. Ultan's Infant Hospital.

**Mac Bride Charged:** Sean Mac Bride was charged on August 25, with the murder of O'Higgins. He was discharged four days later and re-arrested on a new charge, but was released a few weeks after. On the same day, An Dáil was dissolved. Sinn Féin had 5 T.D.'s elected in June; Mrs. Brugha, Daithi Kent, Dr. J.A. Madden, Austin Stack and Oscar Traynor. Due to lack of funds, and the constitutional obstacles, none of these could now go forward.

**One Eyed Gunner:** An official report states that on August 27, Detective O'Donnell, of Mallow, while cycling, suddenly encountered upon the road, Con Healy, known as the One Eyed Gunner. He directed four shots at O'Donnell; weeks later, he was arrested and sentenced to five years.

**J.J. Walsh View:** J. J. Walsh, a moderate nationalist and minister within government, resigned, having kept quiet with difficulty until this time; 'I accepted the Treaty with great reluctance and only because satisfied that it was to be this mangled concession or none at all. I certainly can never reconcile myself to the high indemnity of five and a half million pounds per annum. England is making partition permanent. I believe in friendship with England but hold it will be soon enough to show friendship when her colonial advisors decide to hand back those chunks of territory deliberately torn from us in the Treaty of 1921'.

In the same issue of *An Phoblacht* in which that appeared, there also was displayed a half page advertisement calling for support from 'every Irish Irlander' for Fianna Fáil.

**Election Result:** The state of the parties was published on September 24: Cumann na nGael 62. Fianna Fáil 57. Labour 13. Independents 13 Farmers 6.

National League 2..

**New Parliament:** The new parliament, as a result of the September election, met on October 10; W.T. Cosgrave, being elected President of the Executive Council by six votes; with Blythe in Finance, Fitzgerald in Defence, Mc Gilligan in Industry and Commerce, Marcus O'Sullivan in Education, Fitzgerald-Kenney in Justice, Hogan in Agriculture and Fionán Lynch in Fisheries.

**Mexico:** Mexico was in revolt again in October, and there were many casualties.

**In The North:** The government announced on October 11 that, for the sake of strong government, proportional representation would be abolished. At the same time they were renewing the Special Powers Act 1922.

P.R. in local elections, was abolished after passage of a Local Government Bill on July 5, 1922. It resulted at once in the loss for nationalists of a swathe of important towns; Derry, Omagh, Dungannon, Enniskillen and Newry. The job-giving authority moved into unionist hands, resulting in wholesale loss of opportunity for Catholics.

**North: Dual Standard Justice:** An official dual standard was adopted from the earliest years, and has continued. As Patrick Buckland, in *Irish Unionism*, has written, 'the law was vigorously enforced against Catholics and Nationalists, but its application to Protestant and Unionist offenders was often tempered by discretion and political considerations.'

**Sean Mac Cool:** Sean Mac Cool (Seán Mac Cumhail) of Stranorlar, whom O'Donnell describes as deeply read but very much the I.R.A man, was reported now two months in Mountjoy; Mac Bride was still being held there on the O'Higgins charge, later changed to a *nolle prosequi*, only to be then prosecuted on a minor matter; and then let go, cat and mouse like, as that prosecution was not proceeded with either.

**Leftward Image:** Peadar O'Donnell, the Prices and Gilmores, sought now to project a leftward image by setting up a short lived League of Republican Workers. The left-seeking efforts would continue into the middle of the next decade. In the Dáil, P. J. Rutledge read a list of Free State army men held for serious crimes, but quickly released, while 12 I.R.A men held long term in Maryborough were staging a protest. George Gilmore at this time was in solitary confinement in Mountjoy.

**The League of Republican Workers:** The League of Republican Workers briefly surfaced again in the columns when Mary Mac Swiney wrote rejecting it; countering with aspects of Sinn Féin policy. Peadar O'Donnell commented upon these editorially, declaring his support for Sinn Féin; he would back it but would then seek to push it further when its lesser objective was obtained.

**Fishermen Lost:** On the last day of October, in stormy weather, 39 fishermen from the Galway islands were lost. The King sent £100 to the Governor-General, while the Queen sent £50.

**Russell Held:** Early in November Sean Russell was held; he was one of the 19 taken from the 'Joy' by Gilmore on November 27 1925, so he had been two years at liberty. Russell was permanently on H.Q staff from 1919, as Director of Munitions, until, with one short break, he departed for the U.S in April 1939. In Mountjoy he was joined by Mick Price; the evidence against him being that he had a list of num-

bers of police cars.

**Repeal of Act:** Fianna Fáil in An Dáil attempted to repeal the Public Safety Act but the move was defeated.

**Inchicore Hall Fired:** The British Legion hall in Inchicore, was set on fire on November 10.

**Convention:** *An Phoblacht* reported that a volunteer, Pat Ryan, was being offered a job in the Land Commission, if he would disclose the whereabouts of dumps. A six line report announced that the I.R.A had just held a General Army Convention at a secret location near Dublin, attended by 80 delegates. It was the practice to hold it at least every two years. Peadar O'Donnell and Mary Mac Swiney continued their friendly joust. Republicans, he argued, should indulge in 'direct action'; and the place to begin was in resisting the land annuities. Peadar had the bit in his teeth now and was not going to let go.

**Dungloe Welcome:** Sympathetic and concurrent was the announced release, with lighted tar barrels in Dungloe, of Sean Mc Cool, O'Malley and Bernard O'Donnell, brother of Peadar. They 'had obstructed planter landlordism in Tír Conaill'; the bandwagon was commencing to move.

**Ned O'Reilly and Jim Ryan:** In December, Ned O'Reilly and Jimmy Ryan were being charged before a jury in Green Street with the offence of shooting dead Garda Ward at Holyford in December 1926, during the raiding of that time. Ryan had been extradited from England while O'Reilly had been arrested twelve months before. The prosecution against them failed and they were released.

A week later, at a Release the Prisoners meeting - a bare dozen in jail at this time in the South - Sinn Féin and Fianna Fáil were represented; evidently the De Valera party wanted to maintain bridges; if only for future electoral support.

**O'Donnell and Stack:** Approaching Christmas, Peadar in *An Phoblacht* was again sniping at Sinn Féin. Its honorary secretary, Austin Stack, opposed a motion refusing payment of annuities to England. Maybe so, at this remove we cannot say what were the circumstances, although 'Sceilg', J. J. O'Kelly, its President, was for withholding them.

**Sinn Féin Árd Fhéis:** Its Árd Fhéis was held at this time; being attended, one notes, by J.H. Fowler representing the Casement Cumann of London. Fowler, although not an activist, left England early in the 1939 Campaign, settling in Dublin, and producing a little pamphlet, *Bombs and their Reverberations*. The Árd Fhéis, a fortnight before Christmas, was attended by 120 delegates; with 'Sceilg' as President, and chaired by Fr. Michael O' Flanagan and Mary Mac Swiney. A resolution supporting the I.R.A and Cumann na mBan was carried. As for the Annuities, Peadar O'Donnell writing a fortnight later interpreted; 'Sceilg and Stack do not see eye to eye, but Stack is more hesitant than opposing'.

**Working Farmers:** A call came from O'Donnell seeking groups who would travel among 'working farmers', as distinct, one supposes, from the hated 'ranchers'; and these groups should seek to persuade them to withhold their annuities. Support within Fianna Fáil and rural people for such action was far from clear cut; many believed that debts incurred under the Wyndham Act of 1903, loan financed as it had been, should be repaid.

When pressed by O'Donnell's organisation, Fianna Fáil kicked for touch by appointing a committee to look into it. That brought wry smiles as the Republican leadership knew full well that, in the fullness of time, De Valera would make his own decision.

**James Nugent:** An official report states that he escaped from Mountjoy, was wounded, but was recaptured in Clonmel on December 21.

When under treatment in St. Brigan's Hospital, he escaped from there, on January 20, 1928.

When passed by O'Donnell's organization, it was a landmark in the history of the Irish people. It was a landmark in the history of the Irish people. It was a landmark in the history of the Irish people.

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Daughter, Wilhelmina, sympathetic and concerned with the education of women, with regard to her work in Dunblair, or even Mr. C. O'Malley and Bernard O'Donnell, leading to the fact that they had abstracted photos from the Dublin and London papers was something to think.

Neil O'Reilly and Jim Ryan in December, Neil O'Reilly and Jimmy Ryan were being charged before a jury in Crown Street with the attempt of shooting down General Wood at the end of December 1926 during the killing of that date. Ryan had been recruited from England while O'Reilly had been recruited by the same means before. The prosecution against them failed and they were released.

A week later at a meeting the Provisional Committee - a hard dozen in all at that time in the North - the Provisional Committee had been appointed, including the Dr. Yelverton party, which was a mixture of only the most liberal and radical support.

O'Donnell and Wick: Approaching Christmas, Pender in An Phoblac was again writing of the Irish people's members. A year later, a report was published in the Irish people's members. A year later, a report was published in the Irish people's members. A year later, a report was published in the Irish people's members.

The Irish Art Theatre in Art Theatre was held at the time of the 1927, and was held by J.J. Pender, representing the Provisional Committee of London, Pender, although not an actor, left England to work in the 1927 Campaign, working in Dublin, and producing a little party, the Irish Art Theatre, and the Irish Art Theatre. The Irish Art Theatre, a party which before Christmas, was attended by the Irish people, with the Irish Art Theatre, and chaired by Fr. Michael G. Haughey and Mary Mac Swiney, a production representing the IRA and Communist, a union was formed. As for the Provisional, Pender O'Donnell writing a letter to the Provisional Committee, and Wick also was not very far from the Irish Art Theatre, and Wick also was not very far from the Irish Art Theatre.

*'Did they dare, did they dare to slay Owen Roe O'Neill?  
'Yes, they slew with poison him they feared to meet with steel'.  
May God wither up their hearts! May their blood cease to flow!  
May they walk in living death, who poisoned Owen Roe!*

- Thomas Osborne Davis, 1814 - 1845.

## CHRONOLOGY: THE YEAR 1928:

**Cosgrave's New Year:** *We look back with pleasure upon the progress made.* He then announced his intention to go to the U.S. He was to spend only a few days in New York; being greeted by posters, Welcome Cosgrave: God Save the King. In Canada, four carriages of the train in which he was travelling, were accidentally derailed.

**Stanley Baldwin,** for Britain, spoke of a better spirit in Industry and a desire between Capital and Industry to co-operate.

**Money For The Irish Press:** De Valera sailed shortly after Christmas 1927 to the United States, where he sought to raise around a million dollars with which to set up a daily newspaper; all of the Irish dailies, except the *Irish News* of Belfast, being then bitterly opposed to him. It was a clever and necessary move, if he was to project his party and secure election. The U.S courts had ordered in 1922 that \$2,500,000, the balance of a Dáil \$6,000,000 external loan placed in three deposit boxes there by trustee Stephen O'Mara, should be withheld pending action in the U.S court. By agreement, early in 1927 with Sinn Féin, a case on behalf of the bondholders came before an American court, which declared on May 11, 1927 that the money should be returned to the original subscribers. De Valera, backed by Sean T. O'Kelly and officers of the American Association for Recognition of the Irish Republic, a Fianna Fáil sponsored body, was standing by, hand outstretched, to collect a major part of the liberated funds on behalf of 'the Republican position'. For that, read the newly founded F.F Party, and its projected newspaper the *Irish Press*. Astutely, that future company was structured in such a manner that control would remain with the De Valera family.

*Unemployment and emigration are problems most urgently pressing for solution,* he announced before leaving, but Fianna Fáil has a programme that will end both.

**President O'Connor Retires:** President (of the Republic) O'Connor, at a Sinn Féin Dáil Eireann session of January, announced that he was stepping down. A sincere man but his shortness of term and the manner of his going, lowered further public interest in the skeletal body. He had assumed the mantle in April 1926, and now, only 20 months later, he was bowing out, to practice at the Free State bar.

**Police searches** countrywide continued regularly. At this time, they were being reported from Wexford town where they sought two escapees; Ryan and Rock, from Mountjoy; one being a native of Wexford, and one from Macroom.

**In this same month,** James Nugent was rescued from an armed guard in hospital, having been one of those sprung by Gilmore in November 1925. With escapes, matched by captures, taking place all of the time, the I.R.A was making sure to keep the state upon its toes.

**James Nugent Freed:** The I.R.A commandeered a car from Major Myerscough of Dundrum, and proceeded to raid St. Brigan's military hospital, seeking Nugent. Nugent had been wounded by police hunting him in Clonmel. On this occasion two detectives guarding him were overpowered, and he was freed.

**Chief Warden Grace** was reported shot and wounded on January 23 under cover of darkness about 7.30 p-m, close to Hanlon's Corner. Carried out by 'die hard ele-

\* See Brian P. Murphy: *Patrick Pearse and the Lost Republican Ideal*, for a full account.

ments', the *Irish Times* suggested; seeking, after the James Nugent rescue, to counteract President Cosgrave's reception in the U.S.

**Cosgrave in U.S:** He was at this time in Washington (where students of Columbia University demonstrated against him); and the hope was that tourist traffic would benefit. After eight weeks away, he arrived home early in February, to a gun salute at Kingstown.

**De Valera in U.S:** De Valera had spent some months in America from early March 1927 appearing in the Bonds case when the court directed that \$2,500,000 of the remaining funds should be returned to the bondholders; Irish people resident in the U.S. He returned again at this time, his visit overlapping with Cosgrave. His purpose, he announced, was to collect some of the monies being given back to set up a newspaper *that will publish the truth even if the truth is against us*. He hoped to raise a substantial sum to finance the start-up costs of the *Irish Press*; which cost was eventually to top £250,000. He arrived home one week after Cosgrave.

**Economic Progress:** Free State exports rose by 3 million in 1927 and now stood at around £110 million.

**Tim Coughlan and Sean Harling:** Early in February there was a strange occurrence in the darkness of an evening in respectable suburban Dartry Road, when Volunteer Tim Coughlan sought to shoot, in the small front garden, Sean Harling of *Woodpark Lodge*. Harling today would be described as a double agent; a tiny mean faced man, having had a background in the Irish Volunteers, and claiming to have worked for 'Mick Collins'; and for a while as a driver for Countess Markievicz. At this time he was working for the Free State Oriel House chief, David Neligan. Accused of betraying a major I.R.A dump in Glasnevin, he was sought for execution, but the plan misfired, and Coughlan, who was accompanied by another volunteer, was shot in the head by Harling,\* and was dead on admission to the Meath Hospital. Tim Coughlan, of Inchicore, from a sterling Republican family, both male and female members of whom were in the Movement, along with Archie Doyle and Bill Gannon, had slain Kevin O'Higgins less than eight months before. As for Harling; under the pseudonym Hurley, Neligan had him and his family whisked, at state expense, to the United States, where however he chose not to remain, returning to Dublin and receiving a clerical officer post in the Revenue Commissioners. He died in 1979.

**Michael O'Brien:** Michael O'Brien, a Leitrim or north Roscommon man, was captured at this time. After the Tan struggle he had joined the Free State Army, but deserted soon after linking up with the Arigna column of Jimmy and Michael Cull. Run to earth, he was condemned to death but escaped on the morning fixed for his execution, in February 1923.

**Tim Coughlan Funeral:** Meanwhile Tim Coughlan was given an impressive funeral through Dublin attended by Republicans and followers of Fianna Fáil, of which party he had been a member. *We will avenge Tim Coughlan*, announced the normally serene Sean Mac Entee; in decades later, De Valera's Minister for Finance; and a forthright man when it came to denouncing Republicans. Coughlan had fought in

\*The full story, told in impressive detail in *Curious Journey* by Ken Griffith and Tim O'Grady, was published by Hutchinson 1982.



1922, and had been interned. Among the wreaths was one from Fianna Fáil, South City Comhairle Ceanntair. Fr. Dunne, the parish priest of Donnybrook, thought differently; *a would be assassin*, he declared from his pulpit, *has been given a public funeral through Dublin*. That provoked Peadar O'Donnell to inquire in *An Phoblacht*; were the Dunnes from a poor stock?

**James Mac Neill**, of the Co. Antrim family, High Commissioner in London, and brother of Eoin, former Minister for Education, was installed on February 1, as Governor-General, in succession to Tim Healy.

**William O'Brien**: A link with Parnell was severed on February 26, when William O'Brien, M.P. for Cork, died in London.

**U.S Quota on Immigration** from the Free State was set at 17,427 persons.

**Estimates for 1928-29**: Estimates fixed at £22,433,000, showing a decrease of £1.5million, were published.

**John Brosnan**: John Brosnan of Co. Kerry was reported in court in Dublin upon a charge of treason.

**Egypt Rejects**: On March 7, Egypt, then a type of protectorate within the British Empire, rejected a treaty proposed by Britain. Egypt instead, called for a total evacuation by Britain who, in response, issued a 'a stern warning. Egypt was ignoring the realities'. It was followed by a severe 'will stand no nonsense' *demarche* listing four demands.

**P. J. Rutledge: John McPeake**: P. J. Rutledge was reported, on March 15, making a plea for the five long term prisoners in Maryborough. He cited cases of soldiers imprisoned there for murder, and who had been released. Specifically on the John Mc Peake case, Patrick Hogan, Minister for Agriculture, said that Mc Peake was in charge of the armoured car when Collins was ambushed on August 22. The gun *went wrong then and it went wrong on other occasions. Mc Peake is a traitor who should be kept in Maryborough.*

**Scotland Yard**: Scotland Yard was reported concerned, on March 22, that the I.R.A was purchasing, and dumping arms in England; a Chinese ship's steward had been detained.

**Stormont Commenced**: The foundation stone of the new parliament building at Stormont, in the southern suburbs of Belfast, was laid, in March 1928, upon rising ground, in the centre of an estate purchased from Lord Bangor, whose residence, the gothic Stormont castle, stands within the estate. The entire cost would be funded by the British Government, who also appointed the Architect, Sir Arnold Thornley, of Liverpool.

**Frank Ryan**: Moving up in the ranks at this time was Frank Ryan, adjutant of Dublin Brigade; sometimes teaching Irish or *céilí* dancing for *Craobh na Cuig gCuigi*; full time worker with the Irish Tourist Association in Upper O'Connell Street, and of the illegal *An t-Oglach*, and soon to be editing, with Geoffrey Coulter, *An Phoblacht*.

**Raids and Courts**: Meanwhile, widespread C.I.D raids were reported from Cork, Clare, Mayo, Donegal and Derry; later, under Special Powers, four youths from Derry were interned, while Stephen Murphy, one of the Mountjoy 19, was recaptured in London and promptly sent back. Sean Russell and Mick Price were

arraigned before Justice O'Byrne in Dublin where, despite his intemperate remarks, the jury disagreed on the charges; both men were put back.

**Shelia Humphreys:** Her home at 36 Ailesbury Road was searched on April 11. Copies of *Ghosts* and a jury panel were found.

**Peadar O'Donnell** continued to fan the flame of the Annuity agitation; this time with a public meeting in Dublin with Col. Maurice Moore in the chair. A resolution passed repudiated the Annuities and the terms of Blythe's Ultimate Financial Settlement.

**Killester:** The British Legion hall in the village, was burned overnight, on April 22.

**Sean T. O'Kelly:** Having returned, following a prolonged tour safeguarding De Valera's financial position in America, he was at this time editing *The Nation*; a stop-gap weekly pending the arrival of *The Irish Press*. On being charged with questioning a judge's partiality in a political case, he had been fined one hundred pounds. Sean T, a Dubliner, had an attractive and effervescent personality; retaining for years after an affinity for the 'old crowd' despite political division.

**Middelton Mills:** More bad economic news; the mills, employing 150, were to close. Pierce of Wexford also. Heavy snow was reported all over, including the city of Dublin.

**Too Many Guards?** Sean Lemass in An Dáil was complaining that at 7000 there were too many civic guards in the country. (There are at present 12,000).

**Arigna I.R.A:** The column were reported, on April 5, refusing to allow Dr. O'Dowd, T.D speak at the commemoration of the Cull brothers and Pat Tymon. This arose from the fact that Dr. O'Dowd had recently 'entered the Free State assembly'.

**Florence Mc Carthy, (Blaithnid Nic Carthaig) Arrested:** In a search, on April 10, of Sinn Féin offices, and then of her home, pamphlets entitled *Ghosts* were unearthed. The pamphlets attempted to convince jurors that they should not convict Republicans. She was later sentenced to six months imprisonment.

**Easter Commemoration:** *Demonstrations of I.R.A.*, the *Irish Times* reported, had taken place in various parts of Ireland, *characterised by the usual anti-English speeches*. Eight men were arrested in Milltown Cemetery, Belfast, where all such commemorations were under permanent ban. Ernie O'Malley spoke to a parade in Limerick.

**Russian Money?** Sir William Joynson-Hicks, Home Secretary, was reported on April 9, in Parliament, stating that money found on Irish gunmen, arrested in London before Easter, had been issued by a Russian bank. Two Russian banks then called for an investigation, but the matter was not pursued.

**Annuity Campaign:** Meanwhile, the annuity campaign seemed close to foundering, until again fanned alight by Peadar. In Clare, volunteers raided a solicitors office in Ennis, removing files of impending seizures. In Co. Galway, close to Loughrea, Fr. John Fahy was briefly jailed for assaulting a bailiff.\*

**O'Donnell was in and out of jail over the summer.** Brought to trial in Dublin, he told the jury that his campaign was part of a vast I.R.A conspiracy; which was untrue, as the Army had not yet adopted it; and that they should acquit him, which they did.

\* See Appendix for Fr. John Fahy

**De Valera on Platform:** The campaign rolled along; resolutions being adopted widespread by county councils. In Clare, 2000 farmers defaulted, led by Sean Hayes, a radical Fianna Fáil councillor. De Valera now joined O'Donnell on a platform, *Call off the Bailiffs*, in Ennis; all grist to his mill, and years afterwards Peadar O'Donnell recognised that that was the day the I.R.A handed a trump card to Fianna Fáil, but who else was there to hand it to.

**John Hogan:** April 1928 brought familiar news from the jails; John Hogan of Clare, whom we have listed already on a ten year sentence in Maryborough, having shot a man in self-defence in the Civil War, was reported in solitary confinement for refusing to work or wear prison clothes; it was a manifestation of the eternal tug-of-war within jails for political treatment. Working from the outside, and because a similar row was afoot in the 'Joy, a protest meeting held nearby was dispersed by gardaí. This was followed a week later by violent scenes at Cathal Brugha Street, where a meeting was addressed by Frank Ryan, Liam Raul of Sinn Féin, and Donal O'Donoghue. A fortnight later, George Gilmore, having served an 18 month sentence, was released; he brought out the news that five of the women prisoners had gone on hunger strike; one being Shelia Humphreys. Since 1923 there had been no women prisoners, but from now on the girls would figure occasionally.

**Numbers in Jail:** At this time however, there was the remarkably low figure of 22 acknowledged Republican prisoners in jail; north, south, and in England. After the 1923 releases, imprisonments fluctuated around that figure; e. g. 10 to 20 all told; with one quarter of these being Civil War left-overs on longer stints. Three quarters were on very short terms. After 1935 the total in the three administrations soared towards 100; after 1939 they soared to over one thousand.

**Egypt and England:** Britain continued its pressure on Egypt, sending Cairo an ultimatum to withdraw a Bill regulating public meetings, 'as it would endanger foreigners'. Egypt then 'postponed' the Bill. As a result Britain recalled certain warships which were afloat in readiness, under orders to sail.

**New York Protest:** A protest with a difference was reported on May 15. English residents objected there that Union Jacks had not been flown in New York at the reception for the *Bremen* flyers who had arrived from Baldonnel, April 13, via Greenly Island, Labrador. The Junkers W.33 duralumin aircraft was piloted by Commdt. James C. Fitzmaurice and Capt. Hermann Koehl, with the promoter, the tall slim Baron Gunter Von Huenfeld, suffering incurable cancer, on board. At times the aircraft was only 50 feet above the water, and never more than one thousand. English residents considered that, as the Free State was part of the British Empire, their flags should have been flown. In the event, only German and Irish flags were flown.

**Second Dáil Disputation:** Disputation between Mary Mac Swiney and Peadar O'Donnell in *An Phoblacht* continued on and off. Mary, a thoroughly upright and clear sighted person, was no longer an elected T.D, having lost her position for Cork city in the June 1927 election, although she remained as a T.D of the shadowy Second Dáil. At this time Peadar was discussing the social outlook of the men of 1916; and in print Mary severely chastised him. O'Donnell replied with an attack on the Second Dáil position, assailing it contemptuously; *it was not a workers' group, and it was not representative of Irish Republicanism.*

Contradicting that some weeks later in July, John O'Mahony T.D, Second Dáil, was declaring, at Cathal Brugha Street, that *Sinn Féin is an organisation out to overthrow the present social system and is prepared to work with other revolutionary organisations to that end.* Sean was 'Big John' of Fleming's Hotel, a Republican stopping place at 31 and 32 Gardiner Place.

Sinn Féin was still in offices on the first floor of 23 Suffolk Street; not transferring to Parnell Square until mid-1931. Sean Moylan and Sean Buckley, later T.D's for Fianna Fáil, and Dr. Kathleen Lynn (who was loaning her Glenmalure Cottage at this time to Dorothy Macardle to allow her write her authoritative *The Irish Republic*), were still at this time with Sinn Féin.

**O'Donnell's Secret Room:** Sinn Féin now decided to support the agitation to repudiate the Annuities, but with outgoing President Art O'Connor dissenting. Another raid was reported on 39 Marlborough Road; the home of Peadar and Lile O'Donel; Peadar had a secret room on the first floor; incorporated beyond the dead end of an upstairs corridor.

**George Nash, Belfast:** In a raid on 52 Gibson Street, on June 12 at 6.0.am, 23 rifles were found. The organisation appears to have directed him to recognise the court and to contest the R.U.C evidence.

**Retain the Annuities:** Influenced by the swelling agitation led by Peadar O'Donnell; De Valera, on June 21, tabled a motion that the Annuity money be retained here. Although it was defeated, as an inspired outing it was calculated to win support for Fianna Fáil.

**Fianna Éireann:** James Galton\* may have been behind a distant echo from New York, where the Leitrim Republican Club resolved that the formation of *sectarian Catholic boy scouts was reprehensible.* At this time, Fianna Éireann held the high ground in many parts of the country, while the Catholic scouts existed only in small numbers. Political and religious pressures in the next decade would change that.

**Six County Special Powers:** A report of May 16 noted, that the Six County Special Powers Act, was being extended for a further five years; it was later made permanent. In its defence Sir Dawson Bates, Minister for Home Affairs, declared; *in the Free State they have the same powers.*

**Abolish the Oath:** Now that Fianna Fáil was inside parliament, De Valera wished that the barrier created by the Oath would be abolished. It rested upon Article 4 of the Treaty (Articles of Agreement). Introducing his motion, supported by 96,000 signatures, he reminded the House that *the statement that all the people are represented here is an attractive falsehood.* His motion was rejected by 71 votes to 59.

**FS Alluring Future:** In an address of May 25, President W.T. Cosgrave predict-

\* See page 490 for James Galton

ed an attractive future for the state. 'Production is improving and trade is increasing'. *The Irish Times* described it as an admirable address.

**Six County Nationalists:** In Belfast a group of 200 came together to form a National League; essentially a consolidation of middle class elements to create a Nationalist Party. We have consulted every bishop in Ulster, declared Joe Devlin, M.P., and we have received their approval.

**Cat and Mouse:** Raiding, whether of an on-the-spot type, or cat and mouse variety, continued. Maurice Twomey was arrested and held briefly in July, while C.I.D men went after T.J. Ryan, a notable Republican, of Cranny, near the estuary, in Clare. In the last six months he had been arrested on 21 occasions. On this occasion, he was handcuffed at 2 p m and brought into the Market Square, Kilrush, where he was detained until 7 p m. On the way home he was arrested again and his motor bike searched. A neighbour, John Daly, was arrested twice in one week.

**Cave Hill Banned:** A Wolfe Tone commemoration planned for the summit was banned by Special Powers.

**Explosives Raid:** A report of June 26 announced that unknown persons had entered a contractor's shed at Irishtown, Dublin, removing a large quantity of gelignite required for a service tunnel being constructed under the Liffey.

**Jury Courts:** Meanwhile we find in Dublin that Mrs. Mc Dermott - could she be the lady of Sutton in 1939 - and a Miss Jackson, were sentenced to twelve months for the mere crime of bill sticking; they had been held already six months in Mountjoy so that, mercifully, the sentence dated from, January 1928. *An Phoblacht* at this time frequently published the names of jurors, and that may have influenced verdicts; although it could not be considered an excuse for the introduction in 1931 of the Star Chamber non-jury system that has since prevailed. (The North was different; hand picked loyalist juries could be relied upon to convict a 'Taig' on almost any charge; the Diplock courts approved by Westminster, in December 1972, and in operation there shortly after, were an even more controlled and anonymous form of non-jury court.)\*

**P.R. to be Abolished:** Lord Craigavon announced on July 12-Orangeman's Day-that early in 1929, his government would abolish Proportional Representation. Women, would, however receive the vote at 21.

**De Valera on Population:** De Valera, in a report of July 14, said; *I believe we can maintain within the shores of this country two or three times its present population.*

**Cork: Explosives Find:** Two stone of explosives were reported found in Cork city on July 20; a youth was under arrest.

**Economic Pressure:** Harbingers of the pressures, soon to prevail upon the Irish rail systems, was the report of July 28, that British rail men had agreed to a 2.5 per cent cut in wages to save three million pounds.

**Press Control:** Control of the press, particularly *An Phoblacht*, appeared less tight at this time. For example, in September, *An Phoblacht* referred to two gardaí as *Thug Inspector Kinsella*, and *Thug Scully*. Actions for libel were almost unknown. Commercial reasons, and the ever tightening libel case law, has restricted political debate, together with (since 1972) the much abused Section 31 on radio and t.v

\* *The Longest War:* Kevin Kelley

which prevented the presentation of straight news within Ireland.

**Typhus in Connemara:** The Board of Health was reported, on August 3, protesting at living conditions for the coastal dwellers; these made typhus practically endemic in the region, it said.

**Cat and Mouse:** Cat and mouse raiding continued to be reported from Clare and other counties; while Mary Mac Swiney found her own home invaded and searched in Cork. The August issue of *An Phoblacht*, apart from carrying an advert for patent bathing goggles invented by Fr. O'Flanagan, reported favourably on a new gaelic theatre, *An Taibhdhearc*, opened in Galway, where Micheál Mac Liammóir had written a new play *Diarmaid agus Gráinne* especially for it. A previous issue had spoken well of Sean O'Casey's *Silver Tassie* which the Abbey Theatre had rejected; or sought to have amended.

**Rushbrooke Dockyard:** In another signal of economic decline, the yard announced imminent closure.

**Timothy O'Donnell,** said to be a wanted man, was surrounded at Castleconyers, Co. Limerick, but shot his way out and escaped.

**Supt. John Mallon:** A note elsewhere referred to Supt. John Mallon eavesdropping on The Invincibles while concealed in a cupboard. The case arose from a judgement in Dublin where a Republican was acquitted; subsequently a writer in *Garda Review*, told a story of where in similar circumstances Mallon had hidden under a table, and as evidence added, that he had been so told by Mallon himself.

**Fianna Fáil and Senate:** A report of August 11 stated that the Party would contest the forthcoming elections.

**The editor/owner of *The Irish World*,** a long standing friend of Ireland, Austin J. Ford, had died at this time, and Gerald Boland and Sean Lemass wrote, conveying their sympathy.

**Cat and Mouse:** J.J. Ryan of Cranny, was still being arrested: in the last few weeks he had been held on 23 occasions, while Peadar O'Donnell was held 14 times.

**John Mc Peake Released:** John Mc Peake, who drove the Free State armoured car at Béal na Bláth, and who had been imprisoned in Maryborough since 1923, was released on August 4. His parents died while he was in prison, where he had been on solitary much of the time. At a function later in *Roebuck House*, sixty pounds was presented to him before his departure for London.

**India Demands:** A report of August 15, stated that a conference of all parties at Lucknow called for Dominion status for the sub-continent.

**Tailteann Games and Union Jacks:** The ancient Irish Tailteann Games had been revived by the Free State in 1924, whereupon De Valera had published a statement on the reasons why Republicans could not participate. As a four year event they were again scheduled at this time, and many premises in Dublin were beflagged.

**Objection was taken to displays of the Union Jack** however, and some premises around Grafton Street were entered and flags were forcibly removed; Detective Michael Gill arrested three of the girls involved in Dawson Street, Maeve Phelan, Kathleen O'Toole and Una Daly, whereupon they were remanded to Mountjoy. At a Woman Prisoners' Defence League meeting subsequently, they were congratulated by speakers Maud Gonne, Robert Briscoe, Sean Brady and Madame Charlotte

Despard. Briscoe and Brady were later T.D.'s in the Fianna Fáil interest; *An Phoblacht* published the firms names (Switzers, Barnardos' Furs, Commercial Union Assurance, Drummonds, and Seales Tailoring) calling for their boycott; a move vigorously supported by Mrs. Sheehy-Skeffington. Subsequently six men were charged before Judge Cussen.

**Andrew Finlay of Charlemont Street**, and John P. Purcell, were sentenced, on August 24, to fourteen days for removing a Union Jack in Grafton Street.

**Dame Street:** Four men, Patrick Stapleton, Patrick Fox, John Kinsella and James Lyons, were sentenced on August 24, for removing a Union Jack from the Royal Insurance Co. Dame Street.

**Drummond Employee Sought:** Armed men raided the home of Drummond employee, Robert Wilkie. He had given evidence against the three girls named above. They searched the house but he was not at home.

**Sligo Dump Found:** A dump containing 24 rifles, was reported August 27, found near Coolaney, a hamlet, in Co. Sligo.

**Ford Winding Down:** Henry Ford announced that they would transfer all car manufacturing from Cork to Manchester; (in subsequent years they assembled for the Irish market in Cork). Ford had proposed to Mr. Blythe, Minister, in London in April, that, provided the government abolish all car tariffs, they would manufacture for Europe in Cork. Blythe said that the government still had Mr. Ford's proposal under consideration, but nothing further was heard of it.

**George Gilmore on Revolt:** Meanwhile, in late August, George Gilmore was in Macroom and talking of revolt. In a speech at an unveiling, he was reported; *we must never for a moment admit that we can with honour give up the struggle for independence and leave it to the next generation. It is our present business to take the necessary steps so that our revolt may be successful.*

**Kidnap at Bray:** While purchasing a ticket at the station, on August 29, T.F. Harrup, an inspector of the Refuge Insurance Co, was bundled into a car, and held in a hay barn for 14 hours. He had given evidence in connection with a strike at the company.

**Sea Scout Hut Burned:** A number of sea scout huts were burned at this time: Baden Powell huts had shots fired into them.

**Kellogg Pact Against War:** It was reported, on September 1, that the Soviet Union had accepted the principles of the pact, while critical of England's reservations; England had declared that they would continue to use force 'along the fringes of Empire'. Frank Kellogg was in Dublin at this time, attending a dinner party given by the Governor-General, and visiting the Abbey Theatre.

**Gate Theatre Formed:** The formation of the Dublin Gate Theatre under Hilton Edwards and Micheál Mac Liammóir, was welcomed by *An Phoblacht*. It commenced in the tiny Peacock.

**Cat and Mouse Continues:** Meanwhile extensive C.I.D. raiding prevailed in Limerick, Offaly, Leitrim, Clare, Dublin and Waterford; finally into all parts of the Free State. Nothing of consequence was found. However, one plum, in the person of Frank Ryan, was taken, but as he worked publicly at the offices of the Irish Travel Association, at Upper O'Connell Street, it was not a great catch. However, the

inevitable 'documents' were uncovered; they appeared to link him to the Adjutant-General's office, then held by long distance cyclist, Jim Killeen.

**James Fitzgerald-Kenney**, of the Mayo family, had succeeded Kevin O'Higgins as Minister for Justice at this time.

**Don Piatt** was writing in *An Phoblacht* in October, praising progress in Italy under Benito Mussolini; while the Catholic Truth Society in a church pamphlet called upon Catholics to obey the Free State 'as an example of a good Catholic country'.

**Cú Uladh**, Peadar Mac Fhionnlaoidh, President of *Connradh na Gaeilge*, administered the perfect rebuff, while another writer drew comparisons with those former I.R.A. supporters - gone F.F. evidently - who now found fault with physical action.

**Con Healy**, on the run since 1923 in Cork, was finally arrested in the countryside near Macroom.

**Cosgrave in Cork:** President Cosgrave represented Cork city. The National Agricultural and Industrial Development Association had presented a gloomy report upon employment prospects there. In a long speech upon the 'continued progress of the Free State', he advised his audience not to read the report. *The Irish Times* expressed its agreement with his advice.

**F.F./I.R.A. Collaboration:** As further evidence of the close F.F./I.R.A. collaboration; in the same week as Gilmore's call to revolt, Donal Corkery, of Fianna Fáil, spoke at a march past of the seventh and eighth Battalions, Cork No.1 Brigade, I.R.A. This also happened to be the month when Frank Billings Kellogg, U.S. Secretary of State, led the great powers (Soviet Union excluded) in the signature of a pact in Paris for the outlawing of war. Sinn Féin, in a draft by Mary Mac Swiney, submitted a memorandum to the assembly on Ireland's right to independence. It received a standard acknowledgement.

**The Irish Press:** This month brought the long expected floatation of *Irish Press* shares, with an issued capital of £200,000. A substantial part was already received from the Republican funds released by the U.S. courts and nominated to De Valera. In the Prospectus; the name of Eamon De Valera, teacher and Chancellor of National University, of 84 Serpentine Avenue, Ballsbridge, was given as the controlling director. J. C. Dowdall, a Cork city business man, was another director; along with Hugh T. Gallagher of Urney Chocolates of Tallaght, a firm long since subsumed by a U.S. multi-national. The Gallaghers, long term advertisers in *Wolfe Tone Annuals*, were a nationalist family that had moved south. The advertisement seeking subscriptions was, as required by law, published in a raft of daily, and weekly newspapers, but the *Irish Independent*, refused the add. *An Phoblacht* welcomed the announcement, as did Sinn Féin Clare Co. Executive, referring to it as a 'new national press'.

Work in preparation for the launch in the autumn of 1931 was pushed energetically ahead; the Tivoli Theatre, on Burgh Quay, was purchased, and the difficult structural conversion from theatre to printshop was put in hand.

**Attempts to Blow Statues:** At about 5 a.m., an attempt was made to blow up the equestrian monument to George II, on St. Stephen's Green. At the same time an attempt was made to blow up the statue of King William III, of Orange, on its high pedestal on College Green. A fountain to King Edward VII, in Herbert Park, was



damaged. The damaged head of King William was later removed by armed men from a Corporation yard at Hanover Street.

**'Sceilg' On The Split:** In the run up to the Sinn Féin Árd Fhéis of December 'Sceilg' (J.J.O'Kelly) reported upon a committee that produced, prior to the F.F./S.F split of March 1926, 'a detailed Republican policy' called the Sinn Féin Platform, which he said was at that time adopted. Two statements were to be part of this policy; *The Robbery of Ireland, and the Remedy*; and *The Claim of the Irish Republic*. He proceeded to dispute the Fianna Fáil claim of being the Republican political organisation. Sinn Féin, he went on, had agreed the I.R.A political proposals for a united front in the June 1927 election. (Peadar O'Donnell, in a footnote to this *An Phoblacht* item, said that the united front had not been agreed.)

Nowadays the name of the Republic is invoked to sustain a policy of abandonment, he continued; proceeding to refer to Senate seats being awarded by Fianna Fáil to old time followers, as 'political souperism'. Too true; however 'Sceilg', Mary Mac Swiney and others, in the diminishing rump that Sinn Féin had become, although expert on verbal polemic, could not hinder its slide towards irrelevancy. Presided over by J.J O'Kelly and Vice-President Dr. J.A Madden T.D, with Mary Mac Swiney, it barely held together.

'Our position has been well maintained', the report stated. In reality, since 1927 it had ceased to count politically, and had insufficient income to pay a secretary.

The meeting of around 100 was held in Wynn's Hotel, with Liam Mac Giolla Mhuire as secretary. There were 69 branches; Leinster 30; Munster 11; Connaught 13; Ulster 1; England 7; Scotland 7. Complaints were made of the constant harassment of their offices, accompanied by searching. On this occasion, their caretaker, Joe Clarke, leaving Wynn's, was arrested and conveyed to College Street station, where all of his papers, including 'Sceilg's' hour long speech, were confiscated.

**Sinn Féin Funds:** In a final jab from the Árd Fhéis, 'Sceilg' boasted that while in the U.S in 1923 as Republican envoy, he collected \$200,000 to assist the 'Peace Election' of that August. This, he said, was not spent upon the candidates, but upon 'an ornamental establishment in Suffolk Street'; inferring that Fianna Fáil diverted and made off with other Republican monies, excluding the £8610 held in the Free State court since Jennie Wyse-Power and Eamonn Duggan lodged them in February 1924.\* De Valera replied with a challenge on December 8, for a 'public tribunal'; to which 'Sceilg', a month later, gave a very vituperative reply. The matter of the disputed funds in court, was not threshed out until April 1947, when in fact De Valera, by political sleight of hand\*\*, sequestered the fund, then grown to £27,000 (current value £555,000).\*\*\*

\* The lodgement in court by Eamonn Duggan and Jennie Wyse-Power had a doubtful standing legally; as had her action, a short time before, in closing the state owned house occupied by Sinn Féin, at 6, Harcourt Street.

\*\* We could use it to advance the Irish language, he said, or make sums available to those in needy circumstances, as a result of the national struggle. Consult, *From Parnell to De Valera: A Biography of Jennie Wyse-Power*, by Maire O'Neill.

\*\*\* See also Séamus Ó Goidhe on the funds, in this work.

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*When the aristocracy come forward the people fall backward; when the people come forward the aristocracy fearful of being left behind insinuate themselves into our ranks and rise into timid leaders or treacherous auxiliaries.*

- Secret Manifesto of United Irish Society 1791

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## CHRONOLOGY: THE YEAR 1929:

**Comhairle na Poblachta** set up at this time, was an attempt to reconcile the disjointed Republican groupings and to find, as Mary Mac Swiney wrote, 'Agreement and co-operation on the basis of co-equality between the civil and military arms of the Republic\*'. Members of all shades; Army, Sinn Féin, Second Dáil, Cumann na mBan and Republican left; including Mary Mac Swiney, Maud Gonne, Count Plunkett, Frank Ryan, O'Donnell, Mrs. Margaret Buckley, Brian O'Higgins, Mick Fitzpatrick and others came together. 'Sceilg', (J. J O'Kelly) absent, had sent a message, as his son had recently died; the group met in Dublin, being kept under observation by the Free State police.

The way was signposted in *An Phoblacht* in November 1928 in an editorial, referring to the 'need to secure popular backing for the physical force movement'. The organisational meeting was followed before Christmas by a statement in *An Phoblacht*, that Comhairle was 'formed to counter the cleavage in the Movement'. It called for renewed activity within the organisations, continued repudiation of both parliaments, and a special effort to recruit young men for the I.R.A. J. J O'Kelly was appointed chairman, with Mick Price as secretary; it had an office at 6 Gardiner's Row, close to Parnell Square, Dublin.

A flurry of activity followed and meetings were reported from Louth, Meath and other counties, but, although Sinn Féin remarked that Comhairle was 'the most hopeful happening since the severance of the Army from the government 3 years ago' in a reference to November 1925, it was not going anywhere. The organisations were not influencing the general public; they were each whispering within themselves; mindful of their own objectives. There was discord within Sinn Féin, between 'the government' and the Second Dáil; between the principled purity of 'Sceilg' and Mary Mac Swiney, and the faintly pliant stance of Fr. O'Flanagan and the girls of Cumann na mBan.

(Six months later, at the trial of Sean Mac Bride in June, it emerged that it had been set up following agreement between the Executive Council of Sinn Féin, Dáil Éireann, and the Army Executive. There was need, a confidential document said, for a military effort to overthrow British rule, and the Second Dáil and the Army should co-operate. Each volunteer was asked to give active support to every decision and activity of this body).

**Cat and Mouse:** The name, Sergeant Séan Gantly, appears for the first time raiding in Leitrim with James Vaugh as one of the targets\*\*. Sean Mc Cool was arrested also at this time in Sligo; on the inevitable 'documents' charge, and given six months; although it is likely that he was engaged also on annuity agitation. In Offaly, Sean MacBride was held on a charge of 'maintaining a military organisation not authorised by law'. Probably true, although he may have been doing some Comhairle organising at the same time. About this time, Frank Ryan, after a four month remand in the 'Joy, was acquitted.

\* *Soul of Fire*: a biography of Mary Mac Swiney.

\*\* See Packy Joe Dolan for Vaugh.

**Cosgrave's Escort:** Lieut. Doyle, escort to President Cosgrave, received minor injuries in a motor accident at Rathfarnham, on January 2.

**Yugoslavia:** King Alexander, on January 7, suspended the constitution, and appointed a military government. (The country, consisting of six federal republics, was forcibly broken up in this decade by the European Community).

**King William Goes:** A statue of King William of Orange was removed from its pedestal in Boyle, on January 7.

**F.S. Army Reduced:** Desmond Fitzgerald, Minister, announced on January 8, a reduction of 5,000, over all ranks, with inducements to pre-1924 officers to retire. It would leave it at 8,454 men. A reserve would be formed.

**Professor Smiddy:** Professor Smiddy was appointed, in the papers of January 10, as High Commissioner in London.

**Seven Arrested in Offaly:** Seven men appeared in court in Tullamore on January 15, arising from a raid upon a barn at Pallas, Blue Ball. Led by Sean Mac Bride, it was evidently a policy consultation with local men.

**Charlie Dolan of Sligo:** Having refused at any time to speak to the court, Charlie Dolan, old Republican of Sligo town, was sentenced, in a report of January 18, to two months, upon a document charge. His companion, Tom Scanlon, was released.

**Trouble in Afganistan:** The King was permitted to vacate his throne which had been taken over by a 'bandit' describing himself as the new King. King Inayatullah and his household were then airlifted to safety by the R.A.F.

**Newport, Co. Mayo:** A small dump, in perfect condition, containing two revolvers and assorted ammunition, was uncovered prior to January 22, at Skirdagh, Newport.

**John White, Juryman:** John White, a juryman in the Con Healy (One Eyed Gunner) case, of Terenure, was shot, and seriously wounded, at his door on Ashdale Road, on January 23.

**Influenza in Belfast:** A widespread outbreak of influenza had caused more than 100 deaths within a week in Belfast. In one case, four from the same family died.

**Second Dáil Members:** The Sinn Féin Second Dáil met formally on Saturday, January 20, in the Rotunda Theatre, with the following deputies present:- S. Ua Ceallaigh ('Sceilg'), Máire Mac Suibhne, Count Plunkett, Briain Ó h- Uiginn, Daithi Ceannt, Aibhistin de Staic, Professor Stockley, Sean O'Mahony, Seamus Lennon\*, Sean Mac Swiney, a brother of Mary, Tom Maguire of Mayo, Cathal Ó Murchadha, Dr. J.A. Madden, Sean O'Farrell, Mrs. Brugha, Brian Mellows, Dr. Kathleen Lynn and Eileen Tubbert,\*\* acting as secretary, was also present. The first draft of a new constitution was read to them; the *Constitution of the Republic of Ireland*, by Mary Mac Swiney, with 150 members of the public looking on.

**Land Dispute at Co. Wexford:** 15 armed and masked men entered, on February 4, setting fire to a disputed house and holding at Tullagher, Co. Wexford.

\* From Carlow; he had an interest in creating a strong currency.

\*\* See Appendix for Eileen Tubbert. Dr. K. Lynn and Dr. J. A. Madden were not members of the Second Dáil, but had been elected later.

**De Valera At The Border:** In February, De Valera attempted to travel to Belfast to open a bazaar. As he was restricted from entry, the R.U.C removed him from the train and arrested him; he had already been arrested in Newry, and the following day in Derry, in October 1924, receiving one month. This time he received again a sentence of one month. Justified, as indeed he was in breaching an English inspired exclusion order, the outcry that followed did no harm to the electoral prospects of Fianna Fáil. Upon release, he was offered a form for signature, promising not to return again to the Six Counties; he refused to sign it. *An Phoblacht* resented the imprisonment; but remarked that his four weeks in jail paled in comparison with republican soldier Con Healy's five years; then being served in Mountjoy.

**Vatican City State Created:** A dispute, outstanding with the Italian state since 1870, was solved by the Latern Treaty at this time, between Benito Mussolini and Pope Pius XI, whereby a Vatican State was created by solemn treaty on February 11.

**Mexico:** General Obregan, Mexican president, had been assassinated in July 1928; his assassin was executed at this time.

**Frank Ryan:** A report of February 14, records the acquittal of Frank Ryan, on a documents charge, brought by Supt. Peter Ennis.

**Census Figures:** Released census figures for 1926 showed that the fall in the population was continuing. In 1911 there were 3,140,000 persons in the 26 Counties; at this time 2,972,000. There were 10,036 northern born persons living in Dublin; in Belfast there were 22,606 southern born: that relatively high figure probably represented Protestant flight from Southern Ireland after 1921.

**General Sean Mc Keon:** 'The Blacksmith of Ballinallee,' was appointed, on February 20, Chief of Staff of the Free State Army, following the resignation of Lieut-General Dan Hogan. He was not to last long however before entering politics.

**Albert Henry Armstrong:** An insurance inspector of that name was shot dead at his residence on the evening of February 21, at Madison Road, near Kilmainham; he had given evidence against four young men who had removed a Union Jack from the Royal Insurance Company of Dame Street, the previous August.

**Sir John Maxwell,** the English general, who commanded the troops in Dublin in 1916, died on February 21, in Capetown.

**Kabul: Latest:** 580 people were reported rescued from Kabul by R.A.F aeroplane flights; in what was described as the latest revolution.

**Dump Uncovered in Mayo:** An I.R.A dump under the floor of Cloonlyon school, near Charlestown, was uncovered in late February. It contained two machine guns, 28 rifles, two revolvers, and assorted ammunition.

**Saor Éire Mooted:** An I.R.A General Army Convention was held in Dublin in the third week of February; with a reported 91 delegates. Peadar O'Donnell, urging the I.R.A to create a political organisation, introduced the blueprint of *Saor Éire* for the first time; it was supported by Dave Fitzgerald of Cahir. Fitzgerald was an astute political thinker who died in September 1933 at the age of 36. He had participated in the Howth gun running, in Easter Week, and thereafter in Newcastle, England, for Michael Collins. He held out during the Civil War; returning to build up the Army thereafter. See *An Phoblacht*, September 9, 1933. Mick Fitzpatrick, Gilmore and Ryan, inevitably, gave it their support. However it received a lukewarm reception

from the rural delegates. Approved however, was the less radical political grouping, Comhairle na Poblachta; made up of Sinn Féin, I.R.A and Cumann na mBan.

**William Kinsella**, charged in Wicklow with shooting at a garda in 1926, was acquitted there by a jury. *It speaks poorly for the people of Wicklow*, remarked Judge Cahir Davitt, directing his release. Loud applause followed.

**Red Flag Author:** Jim Connell died in the same month. He was born in Kilskyre, 5 miles west of Kells, in 1852, where the cottage home still stands. He emigrated at an early age to England where he wrote the *Red Flag* in 1889, setting it to the air of the *Green Cockade*. It was adopted by the British Labour Party as its anthem in 1924 on the motion of conscientious objector George Lansbury, being then sung to the German air, *Tannenbaum*, at the close of each conference. Still writing songs and poetry, Jim Connell died in London, on February 8, 1929.

*Oh, grant me an ownerless corner of earth,  
Or pick me a hillock of stones;  
Or gather the wind wafted leaves of the trees,  
To cover my socialist bones.*

**Tension: Cosgrave's Fear:** Tension was rising between the I.R.A and the Cosgrave government. Two issues of *An Phoblacht* had been suppressed, and the Longford Printing Works, where it was printed, entered, with copies seized and equipment damaged. Tod Andrews, although inactive, was detained, as was Geoffrey Coulter of T.C.D, assistant editor. Pat Rooney, the manager, at 31 Exchequer Street; Mick Kelly, O.C Third Battalion and secretary Fianna, and Donal O'Donoghue (Ó Donnachadha) were among numbers pulled in. Peadar O'Donnell had retired to work on the Annuity campaign at this time, and had been replaced on *An Phoblacht* by Frank Ryan. Ryan, the east Limerick man, and Coulter, the Leitrim Protestant, made a good team.

Andrews was released, but was quickly pulled in again. Raiding went on ceaselessly over three weeks, with numbers arrested and held over short periods. There had been two non-fatal shootings of jury men; an action regretted by the leadership for, to quote Maurice Twomey to this writer, 'we were doing alright with juries at that time'.

There was excitement too with a by-election; while the politically spun-out Cosgrave government was jittery. The Free State was approaching the period when it was thought by nervous cabinet members that the I.R.A was about to seize power; or to take it, through a combination of I.R.A and F.F. In a public statement, William T. Cosgrave referred to the imminence of a coup, 'against the foundations of ordered society in Ireland'.

**Dump Uncovered:** A minor dump was uncovered early in March; this time under the small Protestant church of Kilmurray, Co. Cork. It consisted of six rifles, a revolver and assorted ammunition.

**Eamonn Donnelly, M.P.:** Excluded from the Six Counties, he had returned to Armagh early in March, and had been arrested. Held some days, he was then placed on a train bound for Dublin.

**Herbert Hoover:** Herbert Hoover was sworn in on March 4, as Republican President of the United States; with Charles Curtis as his Vice-President.

Hoover defeated the Democratic candidate 'Al' Smith, an R.C.; and the first Catholic candidate ever. John Fitzgerald Kennedy was the first R.C. President of the U.S. in 170 years, although at 64 million, Catholics then outnumbered all others.

**Dublin Round-Up:** What the newspapers described on March 6, as large numbers of young men, were arrested and held 36 hours in the Bridewell. Over 120 were taken in, and released, in what appeared to have been a 'trawling operation'.

Subsequently in a report of March 18, 16 were charged with breaking windows in the Bridewell; which they admitted doing as a protest. All were inner city folk.

**Sinn Féin Raided:** Similar trawling raids were carried out, on six successive days, upon the offices of Sinn Féin at 23 Suffolk Street.

**Ballina:** In Ballina, on March 18, civic guards were out early in the morning tearing I.R.A. recruitment posters from dead walls in the town.

**Marshall Foch:** Generalissimo of the Allied Forces in Europe in the World War; Ferdinand Foch died in Paris at the age of 78, on March 20.

**Clare Allegations:** What were described as startling allegations, sworn on an affidavit, against 12 C.I.D. men who raided the home of Michael Cahill, of Kilmihill, were read to a meeting of Clare County Council on March 25, when a resolution was passed, calling for a public investigation.

**Patrick Rooney:** A charge of assault, brought by Patrick Rooney, manager of *An Phoblacht*, against a detective, on March 29, was dismissed in the Dublin District Court by Judge Cussen.

**A Constitution of the Irish Republic:** One fruit of the short lived Comhairle na Poblachta association was the drafting, unaided, by Mary Mac Swiney, of a *Constitution of the Irish Republic*, in January 1927. Equality, liberty, justice; it included everything that seemed at that time desirable, but it did not go far enough to the left for some in the leadership of the I.R.A.; and O'Donnell churlishly refused, in *An Phoblacht*, to allow it to be printed. It was eventually published and, although Mary and De Valera were opposed since 1926, it influenced, in some respects, his Constitution of 1937.

**Republicans Hard Pressed for Finance:** The difficulty in having such a simple task as her Constitution set up in type and printed, reflected the total impoverishment of Republican organisations at this time. Not since the Civil War had the I.R.A. resorted to 'financial operations', such as holding up banks and post offices; and they did not resume such operations until forced by circumstances after 1935.

In the intervening 15 years, the organisation was kept going from the meagre fruits of local collections, raffles, sales of Easter Lilies, and functions; with modest donations from circles of business people, and a diminishing flow from the U.S. In *Survivors*, Pax Ó Faoláin speaks of some thousands of pounds recovered by him through the courts in 1932 from the Free State government; that went straight to the I.R.A., but windfalls like that simply did not re-occur. When it came to the 'big push'; Sean Russell's English Campaign, it is very doubtful indeed if Joe Mc Garrity's contribution would have exceeded \$60,000, valued at that time at around £15,000.

As for the withered rump, which at this time was Sinn Féin; of the 17 Dáil members,

a number were close to pensionable age, but pension meant simply the nine shilling old age pension; they had no worthwhile business connections. There was no other income except from limited and sparsely attended functions. The Cumann na mBan organisation, affiliated with Sinn Féin, although strong enough in numbers, relied for support from what could be raised locally.

After Fianna Fáil came to power, and the safe people among its supporters distanced themselves from Republicans, even those local sources dried up. Mary Mac Swiney herself had an uphill battle maintaining her school, St. Ita's, in Cork city; a grind that is reminiscent of Pádraig Pearse's efforts to keep St. Enda's afloat. The number of her students had remained constant around 50 over several years. The tuition was £8 per year, with a teaching staff of one principal and three assistants. The school received no government endowment so that outside donations were necessary; inevitably these were frugal and unreliable.

**Mrs. Ellen Doyle:** Supt. P. Ennis had a Mrs. Ellen Doyle, of 50 Smithfield, in court on a charge of possessing a Lee Enfield rifle and a revolver. Sentencing her to two months imprisonment, Judge Collins remarked; 'because you are so elderly I will not enforce hard labour upon you'.

**Aiden Sweeney Remanded:** Aiden Sweeney, aged 18, of Cadogan Road, Fairview, was remanded for having an assortment of fire arms and two grenades.

**Six County Parliament:** The second parliament of the Six Counties was prologued on April 16. Polling was fixed for May 22.

**Policeman Posing as I.R.A.:** Fitzgerald-Kenney, Minister for Justice, admitted in An Dáil on April 17, that a garda, posing as a member of the I.R.A., had approached the head of Fianna Fáil in Drimoleague, and by this means obtained 'valuable information' from him upon the local Óglaigh na h-Éireann. Following the disclosure there were loud interruptions in the Dáil.

**Breandán Ó Cearrbháil:** Detective Pluck was convicted of assault and fined two pounds in the District Court, in the case of Breandán Ó Cearrbháil of *Washington Lodge*, Rathfarnham, as reported on April 18. The assault occurred in March, when police raided Foghla Printing Works where *An Phoblacht* was printed. Georgina Doyle and Frank Ryan gave evidence in support. Notice of appeal was given.

**Fitzgerald-Kenney Rejects:** In An Dáil, as reported on April 19, De Valera was informed by James Fitzgerald-Kenney, Minister for Justice, that he had indeed received from Clare County Council a resolution calling for an inquiry into assaults, said to have been carried out by Dets. Michael O'Cahill and John Hassett, at Crossmore. He would disregard the resolution, he said, as he had come to the conclusion that the allegations were made to cover their own criminal activities.

**Death of Austin Stack:** Only weeks after he had been among the 17 deputies attending the Second Dáil in the Rotunda, Austin Stack died on April 27 1929, at his residence on Strand Road, Dublin. Commandant of North Kerry I.R.A., he was responsible for the reception of the *Aud*, but due to circumstances beyond his control, the *Aud* had arrived 36 hours too early; while the arrival on Banna Strand of Roger Casement accompanied by Robert Monteith and the traitor Bailey, was totally unexpected.



The years to 1920 were for him an unbroken series of imprisonments, jail fights and a hunger strike, culminating in an escape from Manchester Jail in 1919. Deputy Chief of Staff I.R.A., and Minister for Home Affairs 1921, he accompanied De Valera on his first meeting with Lloyd George, in July 1921. He was present also at the second last staff meeting of the Civil War in the Nire, March 1923, but was captured on his way to the adjourned and final meeting at Poulacappal, near Mullinahone, on April 20, 1923.

**An Phoblacht** published a page length eulogy, while the accompanying three columns of names covered everyone of nationalist endeavour, across the spectrum of Fianna Fáil, Sinn Féin, I.R.A., and a legion of followers.

**Father Fahy:** Father John Fahy of Clonfert, Co. Galway, was arrested at this time. A bailiff, accompanied by police, had arrived to collect annuities from a widow on a small holding. Fr. Fahy organised a resistance, resulting in his later arrest. Fr. Fahy is noted in the Appendix.

**North P.R. Abolished:** True to form, the Stormont Unionists, in April abolished proportional representation voting for all constituencies except Queen's University; they then re-adjusted constituency boundaries to enable them to enjoy a considerable majority in places where they were a minority.

**Pensions Refused:** On the same day, Ernest Blythe, Minister for Finance, in a debate on pensions for resigned and superannuated members of the R.I.C., replied to the plea that it be extended to cover the men of the Connaught Rangers who had mutinied in protest in India in June 1920; 'if we give pensions to everybody who became impoverished through action taken during the national struggle, it will be hard to set limits to expenditure'.

**Tipperary Bank Raid:** A raid on the Bank of Ireland on Wednesday, April 17, netted around one thousand pounds for three raiders, who arrived in a green car driven by a fourth. Two days later, three men were arrested in a house north of Fethard; they were named as James and George Plant and Pat Keogh. They were charged subsequently, and then brought by train to Limerick Jail; the fourth man, Edward Plant, being released.

**Breaking Glass in Bridewell:** Andrew Finlay and John Kelly of Dublin were held in the Bridewell without warrants or without being charged; they broke window glass in protest. Judge Davitt dismissed a malicious damage charge brought against them, on the grounds that 'they had been in unlawful custody and had a right to do what they could to obtain release'.

**Patrick Mc Guinness:** In a report of April 25, Patrick Mc Guinness was charged with possession of a Colt revolver. Refusing to recognise the court, the jury disagreed and he was put back.

**Dumps Uncovered:** In a ruined castle near Macroom, civic guards Gantly and Woods came upon a haul of rifles, hand guns and ammunition. A day later 27 rifles were seized from a farm yard near Callan, Co. Kilkenny.

**Aiden Sweeney,** of Cadogan Road, Fairview, was charged on April 30, with possession of arms, bombs and ammunition. The case was brought by Detective Michael Gill and Supt. Ennis, but upon Sweeney refusing to recognise the court, and the jury disagreeing, the case was put back.

**Juries Protection Bill:** The government considered that Irish juries, outside of the Six Counties, had no desire to convict Republicans; their attitude rested upon a wish 'not to be involved'; many, as it so happened, being in sympathy. Juries were entirely male at this time, and government therefore found it frustrating being unable to secure convictions; but even when they imposed safeguards, as we shall see, they still failed, until they finally resorted to the non-jury court of the Military Tribunal set up under Article 2 A of the Constitution in November 1931.

Therefore in May of 1929, a Juries Protection Bill was introduced; Madame Gonne Mac Bride found herself one of the first arrested for criticising it; Sean was at this time imprisoned, untried, five months. Its provisions were severe; it allowed for total anonymity of jurors; nine out of twelve could convict. To make its passage easier, two issues of *An Phoblacht* were seized. To Fitzgerald-Kenney, the Minister, Col. Maurice Moore in the Senate remarked; *as far as I can see the Minister is out for a scrap; he is going in the right direction to produce murder and outrage.*

110 amendments were proposed for the Bill in the Dáil; Ernest Blythe however applied a guillotine, allowing only six hours for discussion, following which it was stamped through; the Labour Party, under Tom Johnson, supporting the government.

**Annuities Motion Rejected:** Mr. De Valera in An Dáil on May 2, endeavoured to have passed a motion that Land Annuities collected be placed in a central fund, rather than paid to Britain. His proposal was rejected by 79 votes to 60.

**Trillick, Co. Tyrone: Corpse Sought:** Early in May a large force of police and civilians went digging extensively in Dodsney bog, in search of the remains of Thomas John Gallagher, taken from his home in June 1922, and never again seen. Head Constable Jackson of Omagh, and Sergt. Agnew of Trillick, were in charge of the digging.

**Maud Gonne Arrested:** On the weekend of May 11, Maud Gonne Mac Bride was arrested in Dublin and brought to the Bridewell, where a charge of seditious libel against the state, for a speech in Cathedral Street, was proffered against her by Inspector Mc Gloin.

**John Devoy Funeral Arrangements:** A meeting took place in the Mansion House on May 14, to arrange the funeral of John Devoy for June 16. Devoy, who had died in May, would be buried with full Free State honours as a supporter of the Treaty, in Glasnevin.

**U.S. Bonds Refunds:** The bonds withheld by a U.S court (on an application of the F.S government) would, it was announced on May 23, be refunded to the donors at the end of this year. The sum to be distributed would be eight million dollars, or one million six hundred sterling; the dollar then being the equivalent of two old shillings or twenty pence.

**Six County Election:** The result of the third election - the previous two being 1921 and 1925 - was announced on May 24. P R had been abolished, except for Queen's University,\* but the feared massive gerrymander (other than the normal gerrymander) had not occurred.

\*Under the Government of Ireland Act of December 1920 Queen's representation could not be interfered with. In any event it remained solidly Unionist. (At the present time the majority of students are R. C.)

	New Parliament	Old Parliament
Unionist	34	33
Ind. Unionist	2	3
Nationalist	11	10
Labour	1	3
Republican	0	2
Farmers	0	1
Liberals	0	0
	48	52

(Queen's result delayed)

The description Independent Unionist was a misnomer; as a rule they were more extreme in their Protestantism than the average Unionist.

**John Devoy:** John Devoy\* had died in early May in New York and the government decided that he should have a state funeral. Devoy, born 1842 near Kill, Co. Kildare, was a renowned force in Fenianism, and from the seventies in America, plotted unceasingly for the freedom of Ireland. But he clashed with De Valera during his prolonged stay in the U.S from June 1919, and this coloured his attitude to the Treaty to the extent he was said to have 'rejoiced' at the execution of Liam Mellows in December 1922. *An Phoblacht* was scathing on the plan for a state funeral to Glasnevin (an event that took place on June 16, 1929; the oration being given there by Fr. P. O'Connor.)

**Crash Coming:** The first sign of the impending U.S crash of late October was a jolt in mid-May; when hundreds of millions of dollars were wiped off the stock.

**Polling Day in Britain:** Britain went to the polls on May 30, and returned the Labour Party under Ramsay Mac Donald, but not with an overall majority: it was to be his second term as P.M. Result: Labour 288; Conservative 250; Liberal Party 53; Independents 7. Stanley Baldwin then resigned as Prime Minister. Events were to soon show however that the new government could not prosper in the face of a prolonged world depression.

**Vatican Appointment:** On June 4, it was announced that Charles Bewley would be the first Minister plenipotentiary to the newly created Vatican State.

**Mac Bride Six Charged:** Five months after their arrest at Pallas, Offaly, Sean Mac Bride, Patrick Lynch, Nicholas Egan, Patrick Cloghan, Joseph Ryan and Sean Crinion were brought before Justice O'Byrne in the Central Criminal Court on a charge of 'maintaining an illegal organisation known as Óglaigh na h-Éireann'. Mac Bride, who cross examined the police, pointed out to the jury that there was no evidence connecting the accused men with the documents produced in court. Taking from his pocket an act of parliament wherein the phrase appeared; 'this force shall be known as Óglaigh na h-Éireann, he passed it to the jury; they then dismissed all charges (although the presumption clearly was that the force referred to was not the I.R.A but the National Army, or the Free State Army.)

**Five Arrested in Belfast:** Five men bill posting on the Falls road, were arrested in Belfast on June 4, under the Special Powers Act, and removed to Crumlin Road Jail.

\* See *Reflections of an Irish Rebel*, by Devoy, published by Irish University Press 1969.

**Lieut. General Sean Mc Keon Wins Leitrim:** In the Leitrim by-election caused by the death of Sam Holt of Fianna Fáil, Mc Keon, who had earlier resigned as C.S of the Free State Army, came first, with 28,598 votes. Eamonn Donnelly, a good Republican, but an outsider, gained 24,621 for Fianna Fáil.

**George and James Plant:** Pleading guilty to robbery from the Clonmel branch of the Bank of Ireland, of £950 on April 18 - evidently a local I.R.A financial operation - they each, with Patrick Keogh, received sentences of seven years, at Clonmel Circuit Court.

**Co. Kildare Dump:** In the outhouse of a farm at Ballysax, three miles from the Curragh, a dump of five rifles, ammunnition, Mills bombs and detonators, was uncovered in a search on June 12.

**Devoy Casket Arrives:** Impressive scenes were witnessed at Queenstown, on June 12, when the casket containing the remains of John Devoy arrived.

**Demise of Comhairle:** Fading accounts of Comhairle na Poblachta indicated that, after only six months, this hybrid organisation had run its course. *An Phoblacht*, itself for some time now under the generalship of Frank Ryan, seemed also to have lost the humour and lightness of touch that Peadar had given it.

**Clare Booby Mine:** On June 11, Det. Officer T. O'Sullivan was killed by a trap mine near Tullycrine on the estuary, Co. Clare\*. Detective O'Driscoll of Knock station, had received a letter, inviting him to inspect a box of ammunnition 'inside the ditch at Lahiff Cross'. With Guard Cusack and Detective O'Sullivan they went there. When pressure was exerted to open the box, the explosion occurred, injuring also Detective O'Driscoll. No one was ever charged; the unofficial action doubtless was inspired by the prolonged cat and mouse harassment of local activists. Normal police raiding continued however, as reported from that county, and from Wexford and Mayo, and from Dublin where, shortly after, 37 I.R.A were arrested on what were described as cycling manoeuvres; they were then summarily released.

**Clashmealcon Cave:** From Co. Kerry came a report of a considerable attendance at the Clashmealcon Cave commemoration; the location of a tragic event, concerning the death of 'Aero' Lyons, on a cliff face on Kerry Head, in April 1923\*\*.

**Bogus Letters:** Evidently to ensure an easy passage for the Juries Bill, Oriel House, or whatever department of police would deal in such sensitive matters, arranged that a 'spate of threatening letters' would reach a number of Dublin businessmen; thus creating an atmosphere of 'understanding' for the new protection legislation.

**Mayo Arms Find:** In Tullygraney bog, Swinford, Supt. Kinsella was reported on, June 15, finding a dump containing a rifle, Mills bombs, some ammunnition and equipment.

**Bodenstown 1929:** The annual pilgrimage took place on June 16, with a cast of thousands. The oration was given by Sean Buckley of Cork.

**Catholic Emancipation:** A week of celebrations closed on Sunday, June 23, when

\* See footnote to Dan 'Bally' Keating.

\*\* See the full account in *Tragedies of Kerry* by Dorothy Macardle

300,000 people attended High Mass in the Phoenix Park.

**Unemployment and Emigration Figures:** Statistics quoted by William Cosgrave, President of the Executive Council:-

Unemployment:	Emigration:
1925-1926 30,000	30,000
1926-1927 23,000	27,000
1927-1928 21,000	24,000
1928-1929 22,500	

**Submarines Collide:** Two English submarines, submerged, collided, one sinking; with the loss of 24 lives in the Irish Sea, on July 9.

**Restored G.P.O Opened:** The restored G.P.O was formally opened on Thursday July 11, by President Cosgrave before a great concourse. In a symbolic act, Gearóid O'Sullivan, who had lowered the flag on the Friday of Easter Week, attended again to hoist the tricolour.

**Patrick Mc Guinness:** Charged for the second time on July 19, with the possession of a revolver, Patrick Mc Guinness, who had refused to recognise the court, was found guilty, and sentenced to two years.

**Capt. James Murray:** Mid-July 1929 marked the death in Maryborough Prison of Capt. James Murray, ex-Free State Army, and a remote killer figure of the Civil War. A number of unauthorised killings of the 1923 period in the County Dublin area were attributed to Murray, and a group of Free State military led by him.

One such was Noel Lemass,\* and there may have been others; he was however convicted by a court in July 1925 for killing Joe Bergin at Milltown Bridge, near Newbridge, Co. Kildare, in December 1923, eight months after that war had ceased. Bergin was a military policeman who carried out messages for Republicans from Tintown Camp 3. Capt. Murray, accompanied by others, intercepted him returning near Kildare. As already related, he was tortured, mutilated and dragged at high speed behind a car before being pitched into a canal. Murray at that time was on the staff of Col. M. J. Costello, chief of Army Intelligence; but any suggestion that he was aware of Murray's behaviour is not sustained. Fionán Lynch, Attorney-General, had earlier said that Murray would be released provided he left Ireland; he had fled to the Argentine after the killings, but was persuaded to return for a normal jury trial. Evidence presented there had convicted him.

**Aiden Sweeney Sentenced:** Aiden Sweeney, of Fairview, was sentenced to two years hard labour for possession of firearms on July 22. He had refused to recognise the court which was attended by Madame Mac Bride and Madame Despard.

**Shannon Canal Opened:** An important stage in the Ardnacrusha project was reached on July 22, when President Cosgrave formally opened the canal to serve the power house. It was expected that electricity would therefore be available throughout the entire Free State towns by winter.

**The Woman Prisoners Defence League** was stepping up their activities with street meetings in Dublin. P.J. Little, later F.F Minister, was reported speaking at one

\* See footnote in *Survivors*

such, with Madame Mac Bride presiding. Minister for Justice, James Fitzgerald-Kenney, led the Dáil through the Jury Bill; having earlier refused an investigation into the hundreds of cat and mouse raids by C.I.D in Clare. To a complaint of July 31, of heavy gang injuries caused to T. J Ryan of Cranny, he declared; 'we have investigated that and find that the man was kicked by one of his own cows'. Col. Maurice Moore, right hand across his breast pocket, in the same Senate debate that followed, continued to warn the Minister against proceeding with the measure. Col. Maurice Moore was a brother of George Moore, noted novelist, art collector and dramatist, whose home on Lough Carra was, most unfortunately, burned by Republican forces early in 1923. Maurice Moore himself was a man with a strong nationalist record; colonel of the British Army; he joined up with the Volunteers as their Inspector-General in 1914\*.

**Police Peccadillos:** As if to show that the 7,000 garda force of those days was less than lily white, newspaper accounts of 1929 refer to the 'murder' of a detective by another detective in Cork city; to a uniformed guard in Bray who stole a car; then gave two other police a trip in it and killed both by striking a lamp standard; another killed a poacher in Mallow by shooting at him; while another did likewise near Castlegregory. No wonder *Irish Freedom*,\*\* the monthly organ of Sinn Féin inquired; *Are the Guards Supposed to be Unarmed?*

**Efficacy Of Parliament Questioned:** A controversy broke out briefly between *Irish Freedom* and *An Phoblacht*, on the level of parliamentary publicity in the T.J. Ryan case; Ryan at this time was still incapacitated through being 'kicked by his cows'. The controversy however moved to a discussion on the 'efficacy' of parliament; with a long and reasoning letter from Maurice Twomey in his capacity as Chief of Staff. In its reply, *Irish Freedom* deprecated any threat of force 'in the immediate future', but added this important addendum; 'we do not deny that the Republic is in *de jure* existence and that it ought to be the aim of every citizen to work for its *de facto* existence'.

**League Against Imperialism.** Ever seeking to enlarge their image upon the left wing world stage, Peadar O'Donnell and Sean Mac Bride were reported in August

\* *Tús agus Fas Óglaigh na h-Éireann*, published 1936.

\*\* Albinia Broderick (Gobnait Ní Bruadar), died 1948, financed and owned this newspaper from 1926 to 1937. A sister of the Earl of Middleton, she never agreed with the unionist views of her family, but could not show independence until her father died. Then, aged 47, she trained as a nurse, and built a hospital in Kerry; the ruins of which may be seen, on the seaward side, west of Sneem. She atoned in this manner, she explained, for the land that had been wrested by her family from the people. She then gaelicised her name and joined Cumann na mBan. She was elected a Sinn Féin member of Kerry County Council in 1921. In 1933 she was co-founder, with Mary Mac Swiney and Eileen Tubbert (see Appendix) of Mná na Poblachta, because they felt Cumann na mBan had become 'too socialist'.

attending the Second World Congress of the League Against Imperialism in Frankfurt, Germany. Germany at that time, two years before Adolf Hitler first came to power, was on a see-saw between communism and nazism; squeezing out the two principal centrist parties. But, as we know, nazism eventually overtook communism by a short head in Germany. The Congress passed a resolution, on a motion from Peadar O'Donnell, condemning British Imperialism and the two governments, north and south, in Ireland.

**Dunne and O'Sullivan:** In mid-August Republicans in London unveiled a plaque commemorating Reginald Dunne and Joseph O'Sullivan, both former British Army veterans of Ypres, who on June 22, 1922, assassinated Field Marshal Sir Henry Wilson on an order, delayed, from Michael Collins. The event precipitated the Civil War as Winston Churchill choose to blame it upon the Republicans in the Four Courts\* and pressed, through the Vice-regal Lodge, that the building be attacked.

**Donal O'Donoghue:** Donal O'Donoghue\*\* was charged on August 28, with breaking glass in the windows of the Bridewell where he was being held. Upon his statement that it was in protest at the frequent detention, for no reason, of Republicans. the State Solicitor withdrew the charge, and he was released.

**Unrest in Palestine:** Serious unrest broke out in late August in Palestine between Arabs and Jews, resulting in some hundreds of deaths. Palestine at this time was under a British League of Nations mandate. Jewish immigration, arising from the Balfour Declaration of 1917, was the source of the trouble.

**Desmond Fitzgerald,** Minister for External Affairs, was visiting the U.S at this time, where his mission was to inform America of the progress the Free State had made over eight years. Britain and America exchanged ambassadors, and Ramsay Mac Donald, the Prime Minister, arrived in the U.S.

**World Depression:** As a result of the Wall Street crash of late October 1929, world commerce was plunged into recession. This made itself felt in Ireland through widespread wage cuts wherever these could be implemented. The Dublin United Tramways Company (together with rail companies), sought a cut of ten per cent from its workforce and staged a lock-out to enforce it.

**Trams Back:** Trams reappeared in Dublin streets on September 20, after a five week strike. At this time, some 31 tram routes served the entire city.

**Withhold Annuities:** De Valera, in a speech in Lucan, came out again in support of the state withholding the Annuities. Fianna Fáil would withhold £3 m to pay for derating agricultural land and to promote employment, he said. Some rural people confused these statements, thinking that they would not need to pay Annuities if Fianna Fáil were to be elected.

**Brits Out:** Meantime, in September, J.J. O'Kelly 'Sceilg' as 'Ceann Comhairle Dáil Éireann', was reported as having sent an ultimatum to Ramsay Mac Donald, elected Prime Minister in May 1929 of a Labour administration, demanding that Britain

\* It was one of the reprehensible aspects of Collins' character that he did not acknowledge this, but the circumstantial evidence is convincing.

\*\* Donal O'Donoghue later married Sheila Humphreys. Sighle Bean Uí Dhonnchadha. See *Survivors*.

withdraw her troops from Ireland; not simply, be it noted, the north of Ireland. At that time ports in Cork and on Lough Swilly were occupied, and they were included in his ultimatum.

**Armed Men Stop Train:** It was reported on September 15, that armed men had stopped the Sligo train near Mullingar, and had removed and burned packages of English papers.

**Sinn Féin,** awakening from its torpor, announced a series of winter meetings, talks and functions. Peadar O'Donnell, following a brief detention after being arrested by Sergt. M. Gill from his home at 39 Marlborough Road, was released under the First Offenders Act.

**Detectives Move:** The Dublin Detective Division, consisting of 80 men, moved on September 29, from College Street to the Lower Castle Yard of Dublin Castle.

**Tipperary G.A.A** ruled that gardaí, forcing their way into matches, must in future pay, unless on duty.

**Judgement:** Infanticide, remarked a Cork judge on October 2; has now become a national industry.

**Britain and U.S.S.R:** As reported on October 2, Britain, with Labour's Arthur Henderson as Foreign Secretary, agreed to exchange ambassadors for the first time since the revolution; the *Daily Telegraph*, taken aback, referred to his statement as 'eaten words'.

**Desmond Fitzgerald,** Minister for Defence, was reported on holiday in the U.S for several weeks 'at his own expense'. 'He will tell Irish-Americans what Ireland has accomplished in eight years.'

**Rhineland Evacuation:** The German Rhineland was being evacuated at this time by British and French troops. There were emotional scenes at the rail station of Weisbaden where the crowd sang 'Auld Lang Syne'.

**R.101:** This great dirigible, the world's largest, built at a cost of two million, was declared ready for trials. It was shortly to meet with disaster over France on its way to India.

**Short Term Roundups** continued, with H.Q men Frank Ryan, Mick Price, Jimmy Hannigan and Breandán ÓCearrbháil - all of them keeping out of sight but not really upon the run - among the victims. David Fitzgerald of Cahir, on the run since the escape of November 1925, was netted at this time and sent back to the 'Joy to complete the unexpired part of a two years sentence; no additional sentence was tacked on for escaping.

**Bill Sticking:** To keep the troops engaged, and to prevent incredulity creeping in about their ultimate objective, there was a spate of bill sticking in October; the purpose being to reaffirm the Army's intention of *breaking the connection*. They called also for volunteers. In Dartry Road, Rathmines, four of their bill stickers were arrested and held briefly.

**In Co. Clare** a new name pops up; Michael Huxley, arrested 12 times in one fortnight. *An Phoblacht*, following its socialist agenda, was engaged upon an onslaught on 'primitive' housing at Ardnacrusha.

**Slieveardagh Coal:** Tipperary County Council was pressing for this extensive coal field to be opened.



**Liam Raul:** The home of Liam Raul of Sinn Féin, at 31 Exchequer Street, was fired into through the upstairs windows where the family were at tea. A room in the house had previously been occupied by *An Phoblacht*, but they had meanwhile vacated it.

**Kabul Fell** to Shan Wali Khan; King Habibullah having fled. Nadir Khan, as reported on October 10, was later declared king, but the situation continued unstable. Being on the northern fringes of British India, London remained watchful.

**Joseph Healy, Donoghmore, Co. Cork,** was charged with resisting arrest and shooting at Detective Barrett. He had been on the run 18 months for firing into a dance hall.

**Law Courts, Belfast:** The foundation stone of the Chichester Street edifice was laid on October 10, by the Duke of Abercorn, attended by George Landsbury, First Commissioner of Works.

**Bus Competition:** To counter cut-throat competition from the bus, Great Southern Railways, set up their own group, I.O.C, or Irish Omnibus Company. It would cover much of the Free State, and their tickets would be interchangeable with rail.

**Professor J.M. O'Sullivan** was at this time Minister for Education, while Professor T.A. Smiddy continued as High Commissioner in London.

**Hibernian Hall Blown Up:** This occurred close to loyalist Loughgall, Co. Armagh, where an earlier structure had been destroyed a short time before.

**University Education:** University education is destroying civilisation, declared George Bernard Shaw on October 15, at Plymouth. 'If I had my way I would raze them all to the ground'.

**Pat Conlon,** 38 Oscar Square in Dublin, was reported, on October 25, held at home by four armed men, while the house was searched. He broke loose, and was shot in the shoulder.

The same issue carried a confused account of a raid, under Detective Lockhart, in Fairview.

**E.S Volunteer Force:** The Free State Army at this time stood at 13,000, including its A and B reserve. It had been reduced from 53,000 in 1923 to 8,454 men. Desmond Fitzgerald, Minister for Defence, proposed to raise a Volunteer Force of 50,000 through payment of a 'substantial bounty'. It was not proceeded with: it was left to Fianna Fáil to do that.

**Shannon Harnessed:** All centres of population, south of the Dublin-Galway line, it was announced on October 21, would have electricity from that night. The giant scheme was described by *The Times* of London as a scientific success beyond dispute.

**Derry Girls Harassed:** A special bus bringing a party of girls from Derry to a British Army dance in the Lenan Fort on Lough Swilley, was intercepted at Doagh. The girls were deprived of their shoes, stockings and dance frocks, and returned on the bus to Derry.

**Fianna Fáil Árd Fhéis:** It was left to Republicans in the North to contest their own elections as they saw fit. *Fianna Fáil*, in a statement, said that they would not organise there. De Valera was quoted saying that they did not seek power simply to issue military pensions; there were already too many pensions. Nor did the party

agree on withholding annuities; they were due to the State and should be paid.

**Mrs. Despard:** On October 24, she fell downstairs and was injured. While the ambulance was present, the *Irish Times* reported, 20 C.I.D. men arrived, and raided her home at 63 Eccles Street.

**Castlecomer Coal:** Capt. Wandesford, the owner, and a deputation, met President Cosgrave on October 24; the object being to promote the use of their coal where, at this time, 150 men were employed. They asked that it be used in government offices.

**Crisis on Wall Street:** The crisis, bubbling for some months, burst with fury in the last days of October, when billions were wiped off share values, heralding a prolonged world depression.

**Sir Oswald Mosley,** one of the principals in the Labour Party, and Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, was being spoken of as the next ambassador to the U.S. (It did not happen: after 1931 he founded the British Union of Fascists).

**Ernest Blythe on Annuities:** They are rightfully due to Britain, he told the Cumann na nGael faithful of Clonmel on October 27. It was a loan to Irish farmers and, as such, should not be reneged upon. If we do not pay, England need not use force. She need only put one pound per head upon cattle, and upon each hundred weight of butter; English prices being governed by the lower prices of Argentinian meat. *The Irish Times* congratulated the Minister; 'it is one of the most important speeches made in the country since the establishment of the regime'.

**Civic Guards:** A debate in An Dáil on November 1, disclosed that there were at this time 7202 guards: there were 289 fewer barracks than in 1914.

**Court Acquittal:** The 7th. November 1929 was a landmark day, for on it, before Justice Cahir Davitt in Dublin, were charged the four young men, arrested two weeks earlier in Dartry Road for bill sticking. They were charged under the new Jury Protection Act with 'assisting' and 'maintaining' the I.R.A. Censorship was creeping in, for the proclamation was not published. Notwithstanding the strictures of Cahir Davitt, who, despite his father, in no way leaned towards Republicanism, the four were acquitted by the jury.

**Jail Score:** The prison score at this time, October 1929, was as follows:-

Mountjoy: Aiden Sweeney of Dublin, 2 years from July. Patrick Mc Guinness ditto. David Fitzgerald of Cahir, serving the unexpired part of a two year sentence.

Maryborough: John Hogan of Clare, who had killed a man in 1923 trying to disarm him; serving life.

Limerick: George and James Plant, and Patrick Keogh, 7 years.

Con Healy of Cork: in since October 1928 on 5 years.

Belfast: George Nash: in since July 1928 on 3 years for 'documents'.

Dartmoor: Francis Breen: in since February 1923 on 20 years.

Maidstone: John Galvin: in since 1924 on 20 years.

Bernard Iago: in since 1922 on 10 years

John Foley: in since 1925 on 10 years

**India: Dominion Status Promised:** Lord Irwin, the Labour Viceroy, promised India, on October 31, dominion status as the ultimate aim, and was severely criti-

cised by Stanley Baldwin for so promising. India, however, found the offer unacceptable. Reporting on December 28, they called for total independence, coupling that with a threat of a boycott of government and a policy of civil disobedience.

**De Valera at Cathal Brugha Street** on November 1, was condemning the arrest of a handful of Republicans who had been held days without charge, and had smashed windows in the Bridewell to draw attention to their illegal detention. Sean Mac Entee protested at what he called 'the campaign of terrorism carried on by the C.I.D.' Sean T. O'Kelly presided.

**Unemployed March:** 400 unemployed, the papers of November 7 reported, marched via Dawson Street to Leinster House, on the occasion of a Dáil debate on the subject. They were accompanied by Madame Charlotte Despard, accommodated, as the journalist expressed it, in a motor car. At Kildare Street they were harangued by a 'young man with an English accent', perched on the roof of a laundry van. (In a subsequent court case he turned out to be Robert Lovell of London, accompanied by Christy Ferguson, secretary of the Irish National Unemployed Men, of Capel Street). Engaged at this stage by gardaí, they retreated to nearby South Frederick Street, where a ruined house enabled them to fling bricks and stones at the police.

In the Dáil debate, President Cosgrave quoted official figures for the unemployed as 22,000 for 1928, and 19,500 for 1929. [Qualification as unemployed was more stringent then]

At the court appearance next day, Lovell and Ferguson were each fined two pounds, whereupon a crowd of about 100 seated in the court cheered, and standing up, joined in singing the *Red Flag*.

**Sean O'Farrell of Leitrim:** An Dáil spent some time discussing a C.I.D. assault upon the Republican leader.

**Jury Disagree:** The papers of November 8, reported four men charged with removing flags from a Dublin premises in August; the jury considered it wise to disagree, and the men were discharged.

**Inchicore Hall Destroyed:** The papers of November 9, reported severe damage to an ex-servicemens' hall in Inchicore by an explosion. An earlier timber hall was destroyed by fire. It would not now be rebuilt.

**Remembrance Sunday:** 10,000 marched in Dublin, while services and marches were reported from many other places.

**Inchicore Dump:** A dump found at Inchicore contained three machine guns, six rifles and 30 revolvers.

**Celebrating Poppy Day** or Remembrance Day (11th. November), as it was properly called, attracted considerable publicity in the *Irish Times*, with parades in many centres; it was evidently a big occasion. The I.R.A. always tried to disrupt them. A statement on the celebrations agreed with the principal of remembrance, but warned that the 'garrison' was using it to flaunt imperialism. 'Poppy Day' at this time was widely celebrated in the Free State, especially in Dublin where there was a considerable procession in the main streets, with Union Jacks in evidence, flags, banners and bunting.

The populace viewed these with mixed feelings, but led by the I.R.A., and enthu-

siastically by Frank Ryan, they sought, and succeeded over the next few years, in disrupting them completely. By the mid-thirties, Armistice celebrations as such, had disappeared from the 26 County scene.

**Sean Mac Bride** told of one monster meeting of that November, sponsored by the League Against Imperialism. The speakers sounded, he remarked sarcastically, like a Republican *Who's Who*. Peadar O'Donnell, Alderman Tom Kelly, Helena Moloney, Sean T.O'Kelly, De Valera, Hannah Sheehy-Skeffington, Alec Lynn and Frank Ryan. It was a time, and for long after, of monster street meetings, and the steadily rising Fianna Fáil, clearly felt they should, for political reasons, be present.

**Derry Arrests:** In Derry, R.U.C chased two, arresting one, Seamus Mc Cann, a second hand clothes dealer of Edith Street; he was sentenced subsequently to five months imprisonment by Major Dickie and R.W Glass, magistrates.

**Ford Motor Plans:** Car manufacturing, on being removed from Cork, would not now go to Manchester but to Dagenham. Cork would be converted to manufacture tractors.

**In Cork At This Time:** De Valera was speaking with Sean Lemass, receiving a 'cordial reception'. Fianna Fáil, he complained, was impeded by not having its own newspaper.

**Public Safety Act to End:** The Act of 1927, renewed each year, would terminate this year.

**George Mooney**, a prominent activist, of Fleet Street, was stopped by D.O Coughlan and Lane in Harcourt Street. He was found to be carrying a small mine, a service revolver and ammunition.

**Derry Shipyard Closes:** A report of November 12, noted the closure of the Derry Shipyard. (There were still two in Belfast: Harland and Wolff and Workman Clarke's). Said the *Irish Times*; the prospect for the Maiden City is not a rosy one. At this time there were 36,640 registered unemployed in the North.

**U.C.D Protest:** The papers of November 13, reported that around 20 students of University College, Earlsfort Terrace, were protesting at the presence of recruiting officers, and stink bombs were released. Nonetheless recruitment proceeded.

**Free State and Privy Council**, ran a headline of November 14, reflecting the ongoing controversy carried on stubbornly by Ernest Blythe with the British House of Lords. Article 2 of the Treaty, Blythe said, 'was now an anomaly and our Attorney-General will no longer appear before the Council. If private persons (in this case it was the London Performing Rights Society) bring an appeal which reverses the decision of our Supreme Court, the government will take whatever steps are necessary to render the Council's decision ineffective'. The declaration was greeted with anguish by Lord Danesfort in the Lords.

**Denis Coughlan of Cork:** From Upper Glasheen Road, was found to have in his possession on November 13, an armoury of 25 revolvers, one automatic pistol and 1600 rounds of .45 ammunition. When bail was offered, Coughlan, refusing to recognise the court, rejected it.

**T.P. O'Connor Dead:** The noted parliamentarian, born in Athlone but representing Liverpool, in Parnellite and Redmondite days, journalist and 'father' of the House of Commons, died in London on November 17, being waked by Cardinal Bourne in Westminster Cathedral.

**Coinage:** It was announced on November 22 that the Free State would issue its own coinage by Christmas. The coinage, designed by Percy Metcalfe, was far superior to anything afterwards issued (as were the Lady Lavery notes), while the silver coinage contained, until 1943, a high percentage of silver.

**General Frank:** Rejecting a slur, De Valera referred to Frank Aiken; 'Deputy Aiken has as much right to be called General as some of the generals in this house'.

**Six Counties Abolish P.R.:** There were scenes during this debate in the northern parliament, and numbers of members were removed. Meanwhile the *Irish Times* was concerned about the 'King's illness'. It continued to dominate the paper for weeks.

**Joseph Mac Rory;** Archbishop of Armagh, was appointed Cardinal, by Pope Pius XI, at a Consistory in Rome on November 24. He succeeded Cardinals O'Donnell, Logue, Cullen. Born in Ballygawley, Co. Tyrone, in 1861, he was like Ó Fiach, a strong nationalist in the old mould.

**Savoy Cinema:** Part of a magnificent complex of buildings in Upper O'Connell Street, replacing those burned in the Civil War, it was reopened on Friday, November 29, seating 3000. A special staff, 100 per cent Irish, has been engaged, their advertisement proudly declared. 1929 marked the completion of a major task of restoration of streets and buildings destroyed in 1916 and afterwards; O'Connell Street, Abbey Street, Henry Street, G.P.O, Four Courts and Custom House.

**Mongolia Taken:** Treating it as a 'sphere of influence' the Soviets, in a bloodless coup, occupied the entirety of this Chinese province - 12 times the size of Ireland.

**Privy Council Appeals:** Blythe in *An Dáil* sought to curb them, but a blunder had been made in the Civil Service Compensation Bill. He expressed the hope instead that the system would no longer be used. The government had recently passed an Act nullifying an award of the Privy Council in favour of the Performing Rights Society against Bray U.D.C. Blythe pursued the matter on November 20 by warning that, if persons appealed against the Supreme Court, then 'the government would take whatever steps were necessary to make it ineffective. Appeals are an anomaly in the present state of development of the British Commonwealth'. Describing this statement as a 'breach of honour', the Secretary of State for the Dominions in the House of Lords disagreed profoundly with Blythe: in answer to a question however, he admitted that the Treaty had not been broken.

**Boycott:** Seán Ó Muineachan, secretary to De Valera, replied in *An Phoblacht* to that organ's criticism of Fianna Fáil associating socially with Cumann na nGael ministers; the intention being at that time among Republicans to press for a boycott on all things 'Free State'; to ostracise them. Liam Mac Giolla Mhuire, the honorary secretary of Sinn Féin, wrote questioning statements appearing to praise Fianna Fáil, coming from Louise Bennett, woman's trade union leader, made at a meeting of another communist front organisation in Prague; the Congress of the Workers' International League of Peace and Freedom.

**Edward Russell, Fenian:** A testimonial was presented at this time to Edward Russell 'for eighty years a Fenian', and born presumably about 1850. It was signed by Emmet Sweeney, Oscar Traynor, Frank Henderson (a brother of Leo; he who raided Ferguson's Motors in Baggot Street, June 1922, setting the tinder alight), Joe Reynolds, (H.Q. man picked up after O'Higgins assassination), and Frank Ryan.

**Snatch Raids:** The usual widespread snatch raids were being reported in November, with Joe Clarke\*, Mount Street Bridge survivor, at this time caretaker of the Sinn Féin office in 23 Suffolk Street, among those taken.

**Frank Gallagher:** There was some griping on an appointment of an 'ex Free State Army man' as works manager in the new *Irish Press*, not yet up and running. He was said to carry with his salary the then considerable pension of £125 per annum. Frank Gallagher, later an *Irish Press* editor, and close confidant of De Valera, replied in the F.F. weekly *The Nation*: 'we are not interested in parochialism or in parliamentarians'.\*\* Frank Ryan replied in *An Phoblacht*, which at this time was creeping back to the literary heights of O'Donnell's editorship, purveying good reading and an enlightened view on literary and art policy.

**Gilmore and Price:** In two successive days in November, George Gilmore was pulled in in Westmoreland Street, and again in Harcourt Street; each time being dragged and beaten: like Price, Gilmore always resisted arrest.

**Stand-Off:** Maintaining the stand-off against 'Free Statism', when Army recruiting officers - announced beforehand - appeared one afternoon at University College, Dublin, then in Earlsfort Terrace, they were greeted with paper missiles and cat calls. They had come seeking officer material, but the interrupters were led by Frank Ryan and students who were, later on, luminaires within Fianna Fáil. Dr. Coffey, President, forbade a meeting which had been announced; the participants then withdrew to Gloucester Street; the historic north side tenement street.

**M.J. Lennon:** An announcement in mid-November referred to a history lecture on Fenianism by M.J. Lennon, B.L., addressing Clanna Saoirse; a Fianna Fáil offshoot. Lennon sat as a district justice in the Dublin courts in the late thirties, contributing papers on historical matters, until dismissed by the government in 1940 for failing to proceed in a case against a Republican.

**Cat and mouse** continued endlessly in Dublin, with Mick Price, Liam Gilmore - not related to George - secretary of Sinn Féin, Mollie Hyland of Cumann na mBan, Agnes Farrelly and Michael Kelly, secretary of Fianna; tall, dark and later known as 'black Michael'. These late November detentions, the result of an over-zealous Chief of Police, (Eoin O'Duffy) and his cohorts in Oriel House, 'Spy in the Castle' (or double agent) David Neligan and Peter Ennis now seemed concentrated on the fringe organisations. The suggestion was sometimes made, and has already been referred to, that in the run up to the 1931 period the I.R.A. may have had a *coup d'état* in mind, but this does not hold water. No such plans have ever come to light.

**Nervous Administration:** Nervous reactions however continued from government, culminating in 1931 in the banning of Bodenstown; accompanied by a widespread clampdown, not only upon the I.R.A., but upon all its peripheral organisations; the closure of *An Phoblacht*, followed by O'Duffy hawking around 'documentary evidence' to the Catholic bishops as grounds for their pastoral later that year.

\* See Mattie O'Neill's account of Joe Clarke.

\*\* In the wartime years Gallagher was Director of the Government Information Bureau.

**Madame Mac Bride Arrested:** November saw the arrest, from *Roebuck House*, of Madame Mac Bride on a charge of publishing sedition; but a jury in a Dublin court acquitted her.

**Mail Van Robbed:** In County Roscommon, three armed men robbed a post office van of mails; a few miles to the north, two post offices in Manorhamilton were raided for mail.

**Indian Viceroy:** In connection with India's demand for independence, a policy of civil disobedience was announced in late December by Jawaharlal Nehru. There were reports of bomb attacks, including one upon Lord Irwin, the viceroy, but these were condemned by the Congress Party.

**King William Goes:** The remains of this important equestrian statue of finest lead, by Grinling Gibbons (1701), was removed from College Green, plinth and all, by Dublin Corporation on November 30. The head, falling into private hands, was sold, in the late eighties, in London, for £7,000.

**Annuities:** A Fianna Fáil motion from Cork County Council, to retain the Annuities in Ireland, was rejected by government.

**Dr. Fogarty on Annuities:** Dr. Fogarty, Bishop of Killaloe, was reported on December 12, at Toomevara denouncing the campaign as 'an evil omen for the future. It is the first attempt to identify the flag of Ireland with brazen dishonesty. The government are doing wonders'.

**Sean Russell Dump:** The dump, in a secret room at 34 Spring Garden Street, North Strand, contained three bombs, maps and accessories. Bail was fixed at £200, but Russell refused bail.

**British Labour Government in Narrow Escape,** said the headline on December 20, in reference to a Coal Mines Bill going through Parliament. It was carried by eight votes.

**A Quiet Year in Free State Politics,** summarised the *Irish Times*, in its review of December 24.

The year 1929 was a year of significant events in the history of the Irish Republic. The year began with the death of Michael Collins on August 22nd, a major blow to the Irish Republican Army. The year also saw the signing of the Anglo-Irish Trade Agreement on December 6th, which ended the long-standing trade embargo between the two countries. The year also saw the election of the first Dáil Éireann in 1927, which was a landmark event in the history of the Irish Republic. The year also saw the death of Éamon de Valera on August 22nd, a major blow to the Irish Republic. The year also saw the signing of the Anglo-Irish Trade Agreement on December 6th, which ended the long-standing trade embargo between the two countries. The year also saw the election of the first Dáil Éireann in 1927, which was a landmark event in the history of the Irish Republic. The year also saw the death of Éamon de Valera on August 22nd, a major blow to the Irish Republic.

*Amárach máirseálaimid ar Aontrim. Tiomáinigi garastún Bhaile Raghnaill rombaibh agus déanaigi deifir le teagháil a dheanamh leis an Árd cheannasai.*

- Anraí Seoigheach Mac Reachtain, 1798.



## CHRONOLOGY : THE YEAR 1930:

**The year opens** with a story of police assaults in Coachford, Co. Cork, and another involving James Vaugh of Drumshanbo. In the Coachford case, a young man called O'Mahoney was beaten for information, and a revolver held to his head. That was followed with a bogus letter to him purporting to come from the I.R.A, wherein they demanded that he send on the names of his witness's!

**Warren Darley:** Dr. Warren Darley, of the outstanding Dublin family, in music and art as well as nationalism, had died and was remembered in a panegyric delivered by singer and respected Republican, Gerald Crofts, in Glasnevin.

**Dan Turley:** Some brisk raiding by R.U.C occurred in Belfast, when Dan Turley of Dunmore Street was roped in, followed by Tyrone man Pat Kane, who was sentenced to one months imprisonment for possessing a copy of *An Phoblacht*.

**London Naval Conference:** Ramsay Mac Donald spoke at the conference on 'Britain's Will for Peace'.

**Luke Dillon and Jack Keogh:** Luke Dillon, who spent 14 years in a Canadian prison for trying to blow the lock of the Welland Canal during the Boer War, was noted as having died in the U.S early in January. Jack Keogh earlier mentioned as having been in Maryborough from 1923 and then rescued by George Gilmore from Dundrum Asylum in 1926, was reported still at liberty. Aiden Sweeney, Patrick Mc Guinness and Mick Kelly were at this time on 18 weeks solitary, seeking political treatment in Mountjoy. Meanwhile the Kevin Barry Hall in Great Denmark Street was raided, and 11 persons prominent in the Movement detained, but for one night only.

**Engineers' Hall:** Seven were detained here on January 28. The hall, in Gardiner Street, was a noted meeting place.

**A New Direction:** Searching for a new direction, Peadar O'Donnell issued a call to 'broaden out the volunteers to create a mass movement', presaging his support four years later for what he hoped would be such a movement, namely Republican Congress. A worthy object, except with every day that passed, Fianna Fáil was increasing its hold upon the political high ground; soon they would control the largesse of government itself. Peadar was responded to in *An Phoblacht* by an editorial closely upon the same lines, 'Wanted a Citizen Army'. Meanwhile the Adjutant-General was writing the British Home Secretary, J.R Clynes, seeking the release of four Irishmen; Galvin, Iago, Foley and Breen, serving a total of 57 years; two had been convicted for £300 taken from a bank in Manchester in July 1922. Although no reply was received they were released shortly afterwards; being helped by a series of public meetings held in London and Manchester.

**Suing for Assault:** Sean Ryan, long standing Tralee Republican, was raided by C.I.D, and with George Gilmore (like a few others, encouraged by their lawyers and H.Q) had taken a civil case for damage against three named C.I.D men, but Judge Gleeson dismissed the claim. In the course of the case evidence was given by Mrs. Margaret Mc Entee that she had seen Gilmore being dragged along the street, but the fact that her own husband had been killed in 1923 by C.I.D had not, in his honour's eyes, helped her status as a dependable witness. Meanwhile the usual raids continued in Dublin and Leitrim, while Dr. Gregg, Protestant Archbishop of Dublin,

received a deputation of Protestant Republicans intent on bringing to his notice conditions in Mountjoy.

**Stanley Baldwin in Belfast:** Drumming up Orange support, Baldwin of the Conservative opposition visited Belfast in mid-February.

**League of Nations:** In this year, the Irish Free State, already a member, was elected to the Council of the League.

**Hospitals Sweep:** Joseph Mc Grath, with Capt. Saul, Spencer Freeman, Joseph Duggan and others, founded the Irish Hospitals' Sweepstakes. It would contribute many millions to improving and building hospitals; in its lifetime it would employ hundreds of staff.

**Soviet Trade Pact:** It was announced on February 15, that the Soviet Union and Britain were to sign a trade pact [The U.S had not then relations with Russia]. There was criticism of the move in the House of Lords, especially as the U.S.S.R had recently been denounced by Pius XI for allegedly persecuting religion. Metropolitan Sergius retaliated; denouncing the Pope and the Archbishop of Canterbury.

**Sweepstake Bill:** The Hospitals' Trust Sweepstake Bill was debated in An Dáil on February 23; as gambling, it had already been condemned in a sermon by Dr. Gregg, Archbishop of Dublin.

**'Missing Postman':** Ten County Waterford people were on trial accused of knowledge of a rural postman who had disappeared on Christmas Eve and was never subsequently found.

**Dáil Scene:** Two Cumann na mBan girls created a scene in the Dáil public gallery on the issue of the Mountjoy prisoners.

**James McArdle:** James McArdle, who was out in 1916 and against the Tans, received a four month sentence in late February, whereupon the occupants of the court arose and sang *God Save Ireland*. What was said to be a Sinn Féin cumann found itself under arrest in the Weavers' Hall in Dublin's Coombe one night in late February; all however were released. Lenten pastorals at this time usually belaboured the I.R.A, but on this occasion only the Bishop of Galway referred to them.

**India:** Mahatma Gandhi and Sardar Patal, political leaders, continued prominently to feature in the news.

**London Naval Conference:** It was reported to be breaking down.

**Assault Awards:** Cearbhall Ó Dálaigh had a piece in *An Phoblacht* in Irish on Aonach Leipsic, while elsewhere there was a detailed account by Madame Charlotte Despard on the latest assault upon T.J. Ryan as witnessed by herself. A Dublin Republican, Patrick McKee, was more successful than Gilmore when he sought damages against the C.I.D; he received an award of £75. Another Republican, Charlie O'Neill, received £80, Sugrue £40 and Donal O'Donoghue £50, against Michael Gill, George Mordaunt\* and Stubbins. The taking of these cases quelled the enthusiasm among sections of C.I.D men for wresting answers from un-cooperative prisoners by means of assault; in that respect, appealing to the law was a worthwhile change in Republican tactics in as much as it enabled their people to get their own back.

\* Mordaunt, a 1922 Free State man, was killed by fellow Branch men, in a shoot out at Donnycarney on October 24, 1942. Resulting from the affray Maurice O'Neill of Cahirciveen was executed. See *Harry*

**Working Farmers:** The last week of March saw the opening in Galway of the pompously titled Congress of Irish Working Farmers. Their first action was to send greetings to the European Congress of Peasants and Working Farmers in Berlin. A speaker called for the formation of a revolutionary workers' party which would draw members from 'committees of action' in Dublin and Belfast, Cork and Coleraine.

These efforts were part of Peadar O'Donnell's continuing annuities campaign, and to that extent may have made a contribution, although Chief of Staff Moss Twomey did not place much reliance upon them.

**Cosgrave Resigns:** President W.T Cosgrave, with his cabinet, resigned on March 28, on the issue of a reduction of one shilling off the old age pensions; from ten shillings to nine. It was defeated by 66 votes to 64 in the Dáil; but after a 13 day crisis, during which De Valera and T.J O'Connell were put forward, Cosgrave was re-elected. The cabinet, and policy, remained unchanged.

**De Valera in U.S:** The approach of Easter found De Valera touring the eastern states. In Boston he declared; England still occupies Ireland. Every Irishman longs for a new battle of Clontarf that will throw the English out of Ireland.

**Militant Gestures:** The approach of Easter generated a more pugnacious spirit, with talk of organising among 'militant workers'; censoring T.J O'Connell's Labour Party, and offering Sean Russell as the principal speaker at the Dublin Brigade commemoration at Glasnevin. The lead article in *An Phoblacht* sounded the note; 'for every man prepared to take the field in Easter Week there are ten today. We have a plan before us to save Ireland while there is yet time'. The plan remained unformulated and under wraps, and the people of Ireland would still have to wait for Fianna Fáil.

**Labour Meeting Broken Up:** A report of April 9, spoke of a Labour Party meeting in the Mansion House broken up by militant Fianna Fáil supporters waving a red flag and creating pandemonium. They were denounced by Senator T.J. O'Farrell as a 'combination of Fianna Fáil and communists'.

**Brian O'Higgins** featured in a Sinn Féin discourse in their Parnell Square rooms, during which he disassociated Irish republicanism from 'eastern materialism'.

**Disbandment:** Despite talk of a proposed 50,000 reserve force, the Free State Army was about to be slimmed by the loss of 200 of its commissioned officers. This resulted in the formation of the National Defence Association of August 1929,\* which in turn gave rise later to the Army Comrades of February 1932.

**Flour Mills Bought:** Anxiety was expressed in a report of April 30, naming Ranks as purchaser of a number of flour mills. Ranks grew to monopolise the Irish flour trade, and many rural mills were soon closed.

**Tension In India:** Tension was reported following the arrest of Gandhi, accompanied by rioting.

**Fianna Fáil Criticism:** The party in a Dáil report of May 10 directed severe criticism at those civic guards against whom Republicans had recently won awards on grounds of assault.

\**The Blueshirts*, by Maurice Manning.

**Ryan in New York:** Frank Ryan was at this time in New York from where his Easter speech reported him calling for 'the complete overthrow of the two British governments in Ireland as a preliminary to abolishing the present social system which had impoverished Ireland and its people'. Among speakers at a celebratory dinner in June were Mick Quill, Joe McGarrity and Dan Breen.

**Bus Strike:** A strike was proceeding at the Irish Omnibus Company; a subsidiary of the Great Southern Railways.

**Six County Education:** Catholic schools heretofore being treated by the government as 'voluntary' received no grants towards their expense of building. In future they would receive fifty per cent, the Northern government announced. Public schools, attended entirely by Protestant pupils, received full grant support.

**Dawson Bates was Criticised** by Cahir Healy, for opening private letters, and for phone tapping.

**India:** Disorders continue.

**The home of Mrs. Heron** in Dublin was raided by C.I.D, pulling up flooring and even puncturing bicycles parked outside upon leaving. A new journal, *Humanities*, was crediting Séamus MacGrianna, the Donegal writer, as one 'giving promise of becoming an Irish historical novelist of the first order'.

**Iago and Foley Free:** Three weeks ahead of completing their sentences, Bernard Iago and John Foley, described as 'volunteers', were released from jail in England, and *An Phoblacht* announced a campaign to have John Galvin and Francis Breen liberated also. On snatch raids and cat and mouse there was no let up; Clare, Dublin and Cork figuring; T.J Ryan of Cranny, receiving 35 visits in 20 days.

**The Irish Omnibus Company**, the red painted bus subsidiary of the Great Southern Railways, was upon a partial strike, and *An Phoblacht*, without seemingly taking into account the parlous state of the railway companies, announced grandly, that Republicans would not be scabs by travelling in them. Helena Moloney, the women workers' trade union leader, returned from a short visit to the Soviet Union, was billed to talk to Sinn Féin in Rathmines on that very subject 'Russia Today'.

**Ford of Cork:** Having announced that the Cork factory would produce exclusively tractors for Europe, with an eventual target of 300 per day; Ford announced that they had achieved 150 per day, with 7000 employed.

**Blythe on De Valera:** At a by-election in Longford, the Minister for Finance denounced the Articles of Association of the *Irish Press*; the company then being formed. Complete control of the papers would rest with De Valera; a dictator, he said; 'he had no money in it worth speaking of. If Fianna Fáil retained the Annuities Britain would recover them by a tax on Irish produce which would ultimately be paid by the farmers of this country'.

**Sir Oswald Mosley:** Sir Oswald, as Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, was a member of the Labour cabinet; he resigned at this time to form the British Union of Fascists.

**Trouble On The Foyle:** Trouble between poaching fishermen and the game keepers employed by the London company controlling the fishery was endemic. It had broken out again, and a difficulty lay in the company's refusal to treat with the Free State government.

**Public Meetings:** In Belfast, three young men were sentenced to three months each, for participating in an Easter commemoration. A public meeting—one of many—was being held in Phibsboro, close to Mountjoy itself, protesting at 'conditions' in that jail; the speakers listed were the indefatigable Sean MacBride, Hannah Sheehy-Skeffington and Alec Lynn B.L.

As part of the same political rights campaign a meeting was being held a week later outside the residence of the Minister for Justice, James Fitzgerald-Kenney at Waterloo Road; the line-up of speakers being, George Plunkett; close to the family home patch at Ballsbridge; Geoffrey Coulter, *Poblacht* journalist, and Sidney Gifford; a frequent writer under her pen name of John Brennan, later Mrs. Czira.

**'Disorder in Mullingar':** The papers of June 3 carried reports of 'scenes' in Longford town and Mullingar, where a by-election to fill the F.F. seat was being contested by Dr. V. Delaney for Cumann na nGael, James Geoghegan for Fianna Fáil, and M. Duffy of Labour. Interrupters hearkened back to who shot whom in the Civil War. Geoghegan had earlier offered to stand for C na G.

**Ban on 'Filth':** The first bans under the Censorship Act were announced on June 4; *The People*, *Empire News*, *Thompson's Weekly*, *News of the World*.

**J.H. Thomas:** A Welsh Labour man who was to feature soon in the prosecution of the Economic War against the Free State, was appointed Dominions Secretary at this time.

**Professor Michael Tierney of U.C.D:** He was soon to figure in the Blueshirt leadership, but at this time, as a Cumann na nGael senator, was writing in the *Irish Independent* of June 4, advocating that farmers should pay their annuities. 'Fianna Fáil are endeavouring to gull voters into swallowing De Valera's medicine with their eyes shut'.

In Ballymahon, De Valera was frank enough to tell farmers that they would still have to pay the annuities into the Irish treasury.

**Jack Jones, British Labour M.P.** was vigorously heckled in the Y.M.C.A. Hall in Belfast; by Communists allegedly. 'Why shoot the Indian workers'. The heckling group was said to form 'the Preparatory Committee for the Establishment of a Workers' Republic'.

**No Pact With F.F.:** George Gilmore was contributing a long I.R.A. recruiting piece in the weekly, while defending himself in court against a charge of 'assault' brought by a C.I.D. man. Frank Ryan, still in New York, was scotching a rumour that a political agreement existed between the I.R.A. and Fianna Fáil. If there was not, as we shall see, there was indeed to be tacit agreement. Meanwhile *An Phoblacht* was complaining that that Party was whittling down its programme; at the same time, in a debate on naval affairs, it fully expected England and the U.S. to be soon embroiled on opposite sides!

**300 Tractors a Day:** Ford of Cork had now reached half way upon their production target of 300 tractors a day; but this good news was not to last.

**Tivoli Theatre:** June saw the commencement on Burgh Quay of the considerable alterations required to transform the Tivoli Theatre into a case room and offices for the *Irish Press*. A young-girl trapeze artiste fell to her death some years before the Tivoli closed. Her ghost, attired in tights, continues to haunt a room on an upper floor of the building.

Eoin Mac Neill had returned from a lecture tour in America, while in Limerick city the imposing bronze statue of Viscount Fitzgibbon on Sarsfield Bridge, was displaced by explosive. He was the grandson of John, Earl of Clare, of ill-repute in the 1798 and Union period. George Gilmore had been arrested, and this time held, on a faked charge of possessing a rifle; that being dispensed with, he was promptly re-arrested and charged with resisting arrest. Father Michael O'Flanagan was reported as being on a visit to the States.

**F.F. Retain Longford and Westmeath:** It is the turning of the tide, De Valera declared. 'The people know the resources of this country.... are ample to provide a comfortable living for all.'

**Bodenstown, June 22:** The government commemoration was attended by Desmond Fitzgerald, Minister for Defence\*, Ernest Blythe, Minister for Finance and Major-General Hugo Mac Neill, whom on December 8, 1922, had conducted the firing squad at the executions of O'Connor, McKelvey, Mellows and Barrett. Fianna Fáil later held a meeting there, while the R.U.C enforced a ban at Cave Hill.

**Iago and Foley Home:** *An Phoblacht* had a spate of Soviet propaganda running at this time; *Women in Soviet Russia*, and *Prisons of Modern Russia*. There was continuing advocacy seeking the release of Breen and Galvin. Meanwhile Bernard Iago and John Foley had returned to Ireland, and were being given a warm reception in *Roebuck House*.

**Lough Foyle:** Two bailiffs on this disputed fishery were found chained to a gate in Co. Donegal.

**Bodenstown:** The Bodenstown commemoration of late June was larger than ever; being seen as an anti-Cosgrave demonstration, and augmented by people who would soon be voting Fianna Fáil into power. General Tom Maguire was the speaker. Mick Price had endeavoured to wish upon him a socialist sounding address, but Maguire would have none of it. The *Worker's Voice*, a waspish weekly, sought to criticise the 'political moderation' of the Movement and was sternly rebuked by *An Phoblacht*.

**India:** Jawaharlai Nehru and Mahmud, secretary of the Congress Party, were arrested. Unrest continued with bombs bursting in Calcutta.

**English Tories:** They were actively speech-making throughout England at this time, in the last weeks of a Labour government, preparatory to returning to power as a coalition. Labour had just been saved by only three votes in parliament. By September, the party leader was declaring that there was no desire for socialism in the Labour movement. In 1931 the Tories would join Mac Donald to form, with the Liberals, a National Government.

**Vocational Education Commences:** July saw a Local Government Act passed for Dublin, and a very important Vocational Education Act; in respect of Irish education, a landmark. With it came the vocational schools, and the committees to run them.

**Raiding:** From Leitrim, Clare, Kerry and Louth came reports of raiding, with Sean Ryan held momentarily in Cahirciveen. A 'Republican Bureau' was opened in Killarney. Meanwhile an editorial spoke of 'bloodshed on the Foyle', in reference to

\* From 1923 until 1927, Desmond Fitzgerald had been Minister for External Affairs, now Foreign Affairs.

the conflict between local fishermen and the London company which (until the fifties) controlled it.

**Egypt:** In line with her mailed fist in a kid glove policy, two British warships arrived in Alexandria.

**Clashmealcon:** Bus trouble continued through July, with I.O.C men calling upon the rail men for a general strike, and buses being ambushed in Galway, Leitrim and Wexford; but shortly afterwards it was settled. Out on Kerry Head, Sean Ryan delivered, to a very large gathering, the annual Clashmealcon Cave oration.

**Silvermines:** It was announced on August 2 that the mines in North Tipperary would reopen, with employment at the commencement for one hundred.

**Kelp:** This western seaboard industry was said in a report to have 'bright prospects'.

**Novel Action** was taken against a Mountjoy warder accused of ill-treating George Mooney of the Dublin Brigade; he was taken and chained overnight to the railings of the 'Black Church', in Mountjoy Street.

**Gaeltacht:** A pessimistic searchlight was turned upon the Gaeltacht where official figures listed speakers down from 436,000 to 220,000 by 1930 as a result of a dearth of work, and with it the opportunity for marriage. *An Phoblacht* had no ready remedy.

**James Downes:** The death of James Downes, 'Protestant Republican of Trinity College' was noted. Frank Ryan, home from America, reported encouragingly that 'the support of the best of our exiles is wholeheartedly with Ireland's fighting men'.

**Cattle Seizures:** Kilmainham Jail, out of use since 1924, was handed over in August by Sean Kavanagh to the care of Dublin County Council. Meanwhile the police and army were seizing cattle in west Donegal. There were raids in Dublin, Leitrim and Wexford, while some blows were exchanged in Leitrim; and in Co. Kerry there were reports of shots being fired, and of increased activity.

**Peadar O'Donnell**, still stomping the country on his annuity campaign, was quoted criticising Fianna Fáil 'who would collect them but retain them in Ireland'. The working farmers organisation was active in some places, but largely ineffective as cattle were still being seized.

**Empire Games:** The National Athletic and Cycling Association (N.A.C.A) was persuaded to withdraw from the forthcoming Empire Games about to be held in London. At this time, late August, there was a sudden outbreak of slogan painting upon business premises in Dublin; its purpose being to publicise conditions in Mountjoy.

**Maryborough Prisoner Sean Hogan:** *An Phoblacht* printed a letter from Mrs. P. Hogan, mother of Sean Hogan of Co. Clare, accused in 1923 of shooting a Free State soldier who had tried to disarm him; an obvious relic of the Civil War but still held in extreme conditions; the last time he had had a visit being in May 1925.

*A chara, she began. Some few days back your letter reached me asking news of my son Sean. You will be surprised to read that I have no news of him for the past three years beyond a brief, very brief note each year at Christmas, and with that I have to be content.*

*Time and again I have written to the governor asking for a visit and I have not even had an answer. You may tell Mrs. Sheehy-Skeffington that I don't know anything of Sean's*

health or the treatment in Maryborough; his life there is a blank to us all.

**Indian Peace Talks Fail:** The Congress Party sought after a prolonged conference; the right to secede; combined with a demand for a national government that would be responsible to the people; combined with defence and economic control by that government.

**Capt. Jack White:** An issue in September carried a C.I.D bribery offer made to Mr. Boyle of Cloughmore, Achill. Evidently such offers were widespread and frequent. Capt. J.R White, the Co. Antrim man who helped train the Citizen Army, long resident in Dublin, contributed an article on Irish economic conditions.

**Meanwhile 'Galloper' Smith, Lord Birkenhead,** who figured prominently in the Treaty negotiations, had died. Pressure continued to have Galvin and Breen released; names of prominent English Labour personalities being sought in order to influence Home Secretary, J.R. Clynes.

**Flooding in Ireland:** Mid-September brought bad floods all over Ireland, ruining much of the harvest.

**Clondalkin Paper Mills:** Their closure was announced. F.F would later reopen them.

**Commonwealth Conference:** Britain agreed at this London conference to cease accepting appeals from Commonwealth citizens to the Privy Council. There would be instead a new court of Commonwealth judges. Patrick Mc Gilligan, for the Free State, was not satisfied with that; he sought that the Hague court should be the final arbiter.

**R. 101:** Britain's airship, after a series of successful trial runs, crashed in flames at Beauvais, with a loss of 48. It had been destined to travel to India.

**A Catholic State:** In a stern discourse on October 20, Dr. Collier, Bishop of Ossory, reminded 'the government and state departments that this is a Catholic state and must remain so'. The sermon was at the opening of the academic year at University Church, St. Stephen's Green.

**Tied to Railings:** A member of the Detective Branch was handcuffed and chained to railings in Drumcondra by three men, on the evening of September 20. A notice was affixed; Informer Farrell arrests Republicans.

**Roger Baldwin:** C.I.D raiding was reported from Dublin in November, while resolutions were placed on the *clár* of the Fianna Fáil Árd Fhéis seeking relief for the Mountjoy prisoners. In that connection, U.S citizen Roger Baldwin was noted as having protested to government here on behalf of Sean Hogan and Aiden Sweeney. Baldwin was acting in the name of the International Committee for Political Prisoners; an early form of *Amnesty*.

**Spurn That Flag:** De Valera on Victimisation: At the Fianna Fáil Árd Fhéis early in November, De Valera read out an internal police memo that I.R.A men recently given employment in the Electricity Supply Board should be kept under scrutiny; this, he correctly described as victimisation. A note in the same issue announced a meeting for Monday, November 10, by the League Against Imperialism; an amorphous grouping spun together by the I.R.A. Their public meeting in College Green was said to have been the largest there since 1922, carrying the slogan, *Spurn That Flag, the Badge of Slavery*. It was addressed by Peadar O'Donnell, Alderman Tom



Kelly, Helena Moloney, Sean T. O'Kelly, Eamonn De Valera, Hannah Sheehy-Skeffington, Alec Lynn, Frank Ryan, Sean Mc Connell, Sean Murray and Sean MacBride. It was a galaxy that was guaranteed to frighten off the poppy wearers; yet it showed that the Movement had no real focus for advancement, other than ineffectual boycotts, and the occasional blowing apart of a monument.

**Professor O'Sullivan**, a government minister on his home pitch in Kerry, was warning farmers against withholding annuities, as Britain would inevitably tax our produce.

**Gen. Hertzog**: General Hertzog, Prime Minister of the Dominion of South Africa, visited Ireland at this time and, at a banquet attended by William T. Cosgrave, eulogised the exploits of Major John MacBride in the Boer War of 1899-1902; this may or may not have been appropriate in the circumstances since his son Sean, at that time, was on the H.Q. staff of the I.R.A.

**Sean Hogan**: At last the father and mother of Sean Hogan were permitted to visit him in Maryborough; the encounter being permitted under the usual conditions behind wire screens six feet apart. At 30 years of age, they described him afterwards as 'looking old but unyielding'.

**Fired Upon**: A car used by President Cosgrave was reported in the *Irish Independent*, fired upon on November 12; it was being driven at the time by an unarmed soldier.

**The London Imperial Conference** was now closing. Economic discussions were adjourned to a conference proposed for Ottawa in 1932.

**Daithi Ceannt Dies**: Peadar MacAndrew of Hardwicke Street, on the Brigade staff at this time, was reported as being 'followed night and day'. Daithi Ceannt, or Kent, of Cork was reported dead in mid-November. A doughty fighter, he had been imprisoned in the land war; armed and ready, their home, *Bawnard House* at Castlelyons, was assailed by R.U.C in Easter Week, when Richard was killed fighting them off. Tom was condemned then and executed in Cork Jail on May 9, while Daithi was also sentenced to death, but later had the sentence commuted. Elected T.D for Sinn Féin in December 1918, he fought in both the Tan and Civil Wars.

**Elite Corps**: Ever since the 1924 Free State Army 'Mutiny' politicians in government kept a watchful eye upon the emergence of any groupings within it. In August 1929, an Officers Defence Association, described in one quarter as an elite corps, was set up. In November however this corps was disbanded on a hint from Desmond Fitzgerald, following the publicising of alleged grievances. As a consequence, General Sean Mac Eoin, 'the Blacksmith of Ballinalee', resigned his commission.

**Foreign Butter**: A flood of cheap imports caused the government to impose a duty of 11 (old) pence per pound on foreign butter.

**Fired Upon (ii)**: Two men were reported by the *Irish Independent* of November 24, to have fired upon a soldier in mufti guarding the home of Michael Hayes, Ceann Comhairle (speaker) of An Dáil, in Brighton Square, Rathgar. The soldier, Sergeant O'Regan, a member of the Special Army Unit, was wounded in the knee. Richard Mulcahy had left the house only a short time before.

**Six County Nationalist M.P's** had not taken their seats until 1925. In May 1929 they left again for a prolonged period following a speakers ruling on the budget debate.

**Alfred O'Rahilly:** In the same month a group of manufacturers met in the Mansion House, Dublin, seeking government protection from the blows now being sustained throughout the world economy, they were being addressed by, among others, Professor Alfred O'Rahilly, whom *An Phoblacht* described unkindly as 'a vicious Treatyite'. Peadar O'Donnell interrupted the proceedings and had to be allowed speak, whereupon he gave them a vigorous rebuke on their adherence to 'capitalist economics'.

**'Sniping':** Patrick Mc Guinness and Aidan Sweeney were released in early December from Mountjoy after 19 months of a two year sentence; fifteen of which were spent in solitary confinement. They had sought association with each other but had been refused. Sinn Féin held their Árd Fhéis in the same week, the proceedings being fully reported; including complaints from speakers on 'sniping' by *An Phoblacht*. That was refuted in a subsequent issue when the editor complained that no press invitation had been received by him.

A piece of petty police persecution was reported from Thurles area after Republican Ned O'Reilly had returned from the U.S due to the slump there. Three offers of a job posted to him from Dublin had been returned 'not known'; when he called to the police in the town to investigate he was abused by them.

**The Sinn Féin Árd Fhéis** of December 9 forbade its members 'to associate for any purpose whatsoever with those who signed an Oath of Allegiance'. It was moved by Brian O'Higgins, who criticised *An Phoblacht* which had sponsored the meeting; and it was passed by 32 votes to 8. It was opposed by Helena Moloney, Miss Ffrench-Mullen and Dr. Kathleen Lynn, 'Sceilg', (J.J. O'Kelly), was elected President of Sinn Féin.

**Oscar Traynor:** Among contributors to this, *An Phoblacht's* Christmas number, was none other than the future Minister of Defence, Oscar Traynor. A mystery report at the same time referred to an attempt to shoot Gen. Richard Mulcahy as he entered the house of Michael Hayes, Ceann Comhairle, in Brighton Square. This followed a story, a fortnight earlier, of a mysterious shooting incident in which a soldier was wounded; there being a suggestion of a link.

**'Big' Jim:** The year closed with a resounding declaration from 'Big' Jim Larkin, made at a crowded street meeting in Middle Abbey Street, at what was known as Elvery's Corner; speaking of the performance of the Cosgrave government, he concluded his criticism in ringing tones;

They are unnational,  
 They are unmoral,  
 They are unpractical,  
 They are unhung: the pity of it.

## CHRONOLOGY: THE YEAR 1931:

**Breen and Galvin Released:** Having served the full term, less remission, Frank Breen and Pat Galvin were released from England. Breen had been arrested and sentenced in June 1921 to five years but was let go as a result of the Treaty, in January, whereupon he resumed working in Manchester. Apprehensive of a new charge however, he fled to Dublin a short time later, but was arrested and handed over to English police, whereupon he was charged with a bank robbery, undertaken for the I.R.A., and sentenced to jail for life.

At this time there were altogether, only five Republicans in jail, north and south.

**Ramsay Mac Donald** in a New Year message: 'we say goodbye to 1930 without much regret'.

There were continuing coal strikes in Wales; and Lord Carson was recovering from an illness.

**An Phoblacht:** The I.R.A weekly journal, as an official document of the time described it, 'published a continuous stream of seditious language, justification of past crimes, and incitements to future crimes'.

**State of the Nation:** On the social state of the island in 1931, a newspaper report centred upon an employed man in Athy supporting a wife and three children on ten shillings a week outdoor relief. Taken on for a few weeks work approaching Christmas he ate a solid meal, keeled over, and died.

**Population Down:** The population of the Free State in 1929 was 2,949,000; down 3,000 on 1928. 18,000 had emigrated despite the bad times abroad. Marriages were fewer; 4.61 per thousand against 5.95 in the North. Imports/exports had declined from £109 m in 1929 to £103 m in 1930.

These gloomy figures did not deter W.T. Cosgrave from eulogising a fortnight later on the state's sound position; 'a high purpose and hard work have gone to the making of this success'.

**Maurice Fenlon:** Maurice Fenlon, an elderly man, trading in Mary's Lane, was one of those who had escaped from the 'Joy in November 1925. On the run until the last year, he had chanced returning to his business but was arrested and brought back to Mountjoy; where, however, the state entered a *nolle prosequi* in the action.

**Castlebar Librarian:** Castlebar had failed to appoint Letitia Dunbar-Harrison, a Protestant graduate of Trinity, as a County Librarian, and this resulted in a *cause célèbre* which we will not follow here. *An Phoblacht* however could afford to take the correct stance on this; denouncing loudly those council members who had rejected Miss Dunbar-Harrison. De Valera, on the other hand, in an address in the neighbouring town of Claremorris, managed to cleverly obfuscate the issue. In a Dáil debate of June 17, Labour and Fianna Fáil were largely upon the 'right' side, but the government managed to win by 73 votes to 62.

**India Conference Ends:** On January 19, with a promise of eventual federal self-government. Gandhi, Patal and Gupta were released, and the Congress Party was no longer considered unlawful; Gandhi however said that civil disobedience would continue.

**Defeated:** The British Labour government, for long hanging upon a thread, was defeated on its Education Bill. It decided to amend it and carry on.

**'Spy' Shot:** Following the policy of taking court action against C.I.D. brutality; a man living near Kiltrush, Peter Fennell, was awarded a sum of damages. Early in February the I.R.A. shot dead a young man, P.J. Carroll, in Captain's Lane, Crumlin; the first 'spy' for a considerable number of years. At first it was thought that police had killed Carroll, and detectives attending the Glasnevin funeral were stoned. He had been in the I.R.A. since 1922; belonged to the Labour Defence League, and was frequently raided by C.I.D. But Supt. Peter Ennis at the inquest admitted that Carroll had been a police agent for three years, but claimed privilege when asked his remuneration. Found in his pocket after his decease, was one shilling and three pence; or six and a half new pence.

**Soloheadbeg:** Shortly after, under the bye-line 'Executed by I.R.A.', a veiled warning was conveyed to another ex-volunteer who gave evidence against four young men arrested at Soloheadbeg, Co. Tipperary.

**Oscar Traynor** although since 1927 a member of Fianna Fáil, was announcing a talk, *Reminiscences of Easter Week*, for Wynn's Hotel, which, the public was told, would be of great interest.

**England's Best Customer:** England had a monopoly of the Irish market but Fianna Fáil intends to change that, De Valera stated in a speech on February 9. 'You have all heard that England is our best customer' he went on, 'but you have not heard that we are England's best customer'.

**Worst Year:** The Great Northern Railway announced on February 26 that 1930 had been the worst year in its history. The Great Southern Railways made known that the limit of their economies was nearly reached. Without an improvement in revenue and profitability, they would be unable to maintain the system.

In the North an electricity board was set up.

A builders strike prevailed in Dublin.

**Sir Oswald Mosley** had left the Labour Party at this time to found the British Union of Fascists. He was accompanied on his mission by a Belfast Unionist M.P.

**Dash to London:** Patrick Mc Gilligan, Minister for Industry and Commerce, was reported on March 20, to have dashed to London where he saw the King.

**Boycott:** Meanwhile in *An Phoblacht* there was a short debate on the subject of 'sovereignty of the people', between Mary Mac Swiney and George Gilmore; two personalities case hardened in debate. Pressed home by the editor was the twin message, *Wear an Easter lily and Do not sail in British ships*; advice which left only the alternative of the Hamburg-America Line calling fortnightly to Galway.

**Supt. Curtain:** Supt. Curtain was shot dead by the I.R.A. in the last week of March at *Friarstown House*, Co. Tipperary. A trial for drilling had been running since February 9 to March 18, at which he had given prosecution evidence, although it was clear that the organisation held other matters against him. Curtain had joined the garda force on its formation at the age of 19 in April 1922. He had returned on this night after an inspection in Tipperary town, and finding his gate closed, alighted, whereupon he was shot six times in the car headlights.

His wife was awarded £6000; a very substantial sum for those days. The four young men on trial had already been acquitted by a jury two days before, although a number of jury men called when challenged by the State had not acted. Statements

allegedly made by witness's had been repudiated. Patriotism, commented *An Phoblacht*, is not yet a crime in the county that fired the first shots in the Tan War. General Eoin O'Duffy, Chief of Police, complained that the people were not helping the police; while Desmond Fitzgerald, Minister for Defence, said that people's minds were blurred as between right and wrong. Weeks later, seven of the witness's in the trial were charged with perjury, accused of having altered their pre-trial statements, to which the paper then replied, 'Charge the Police Too'. O'Duffy shortly after visited London, and upon returning whispered veiled threats of coercion. Sensing this, the paper, three weeks later, headed its leading article 'When Coercion Comes'.

**Tim Healy Dies:** Tim Healy died early on March 26; the *Daily Telegraph* lamenting that the King had seldom if ever been more ably represented; nor indeed had he if one is to credit the enormous amount of unwritten testimony that still exists about this foremost personality in the Bantry Brass Band.\*

**Donal O'Cahill:** Donal O'Cahill of Killarney, later to produce the 'first Irish film' *The Dawn*, had his poem *Marching Down the Glen* in the April issue of *An Phoblacht*; a patriotic ballad of an ambush party of the Tan period.

**Beet Growers** were refusing to grow beet for the new Carlow factory unless a better price was offered.

**Builders Resume:** After a three month strike Dublin building workers had resumed.

**Lord Ashbourne:** Liam Mac Giolla Brighde, Lord Ashbourne, presided at the annual meeting of Connradh na Gaeilge, the Gaelic League. Resolutions passed condemned the government for 'its shameful neglect in dealing with the Gaeltacht and the way in which it was cajoling the people concerning such insignificant forms of income as kelp and carrageen'.

Séamus Ó Grianna said that even if one thousand pounds a ton were paid for kelp and carrageen it would be only like a drop of holy water among the people of the Gaeltacht as only those who lived on the coast could benefit. Séan Ó h-Uadaigh said; 'the government had it in their power to enable those who knew Irish to be able to live and work in their own country'. Lord Ashbourne was re-elected President.

**Easter Parades:** Easter Sunday brought out in Dublin one of its largest volunteer parades when 2,000 I.R.A. marched from St. Stephen's Green to Glasnevin. They were led by their veteran officers of the Brigade, including Oscar Traynor, and headed by the flags and banners of the five battalions 1, 11, 111, IV and County. Peadar O'Donnell, eager to carve a policy niche away from Fianna Fáil, called for workers 'to set themselves the task of building new groups to lead the workers and thus save them from the treachery of the present labour leadership'.

**King Alfonso XIII** of Spain abdicated his throne on April 14, hurriedly leaving the country. Catalonia at once declared itself an independent republic.

**Karl Spindler:** Sean Mc Guinness of Kinnity, in Offaly, who had escaped in November 1925, spoke in Daingean. Mc Guinness was one of the organisation's leading land reformers. Emmet Sweeney and others from the south spoke in the Six Counties, while Sean Moylan spoke at Castleisland and Capt. Karl Spindler of *Aud*

\*See reference in *Survivors*.

fame was a guest of honour in New York. A medal was presented to the Captain, cast from five gold sovereigns replicating the five given by Brit ambassador in Oslo, Findlay, as a down payment on the five thousand promised the crew man, Beverley, (Bailey) for betraying Casement. A copy of the promissory letter was produced during the presentation.

**I.R.A Convention:** Under cover of Easter the I.R.A held its annual Convention in Glendalough.\* The programme for widespread nationalisation envisaged under Saor Éire was adopted, as was the not dissimilar *Statement of Policy*, otherwise, the Manus O'Rourke document. A full report was given in the underground *An t-Oglach*. Relevant was a carefully argued piece by Maurice Twomey in the paper replying to a 'pseudo Republican pamphlet' published in the U.S.

The convention itself was an orderly affair; the I.R.A expected Fianna Fáil to come soon to power and hence Republicans would be soon upon 'the winning side': disappointment with their subsequent performance was to cause the later cleavages of 1934.

**Emmet Sweeney:** In Belfast, Emmet Sweeney, arrested, received a six month sentence for addressing the Easter commemoration, while another Republican, T.G Mc Grath of Newry, received twelve months. The R.U.C had warned him that he could say prayers at the graveside but that he would be arrested if he attempted to make a speech. Emmet's son, Aiden, a fine young fellow, died tragically in a motor cycle accident while his father was in jail.

**Killakee House:** An event occurred in late April which was to have lengthy reverberations. Óglaigh na h-Éireann had taken over *Killakee House*, the former residence of Lord Massey at Mount Pelier, under the so called Hell Fire Club on Mount Venus, where George and Harry Gilmore were in charge. *Killakee House* or Castle was in the hands of the Munster and Leinster Bank, and had been unoccupied for ten years.

George and Harry Gilmore commenced to use it for battalion training. On a weekend afternoon, as ill luck would have it, two Trinity students, Young and Jameson, traversing the grounds, were challenged, shot at, and one was slightly wounded by a sentry. Subsequently George Gilmore was returned for trial for resisting arrest; a quantity of arms being also found. Gilmore was to have the benefit of a jury trial, so the organisation accordingly sent what they considered to be non-threatening letters to the likely jurymen pointing out what a fine soldier he was. That failed to save him as he was subsequently returned by Justice Reddin for trial; the justice, who lived in Fitzwilliam Square, had his hall door painted red, white and blue overnight for his pains\*\*. Meanwhile, the Oriel House C.I.D remained in occupation of Killakee; its owner being *non compos mentis*; they continued to diligently

\* It was not a requirement that it be held each year.

\*\* 45 Fitzwilliam Square was the residence or rooms of Dr. Kerry, Dr. Desmond and Gerald Norman. Solicitor J.J. Reddin of the Dublin Port and Docks Board and Kenneth Shiels Reddin, Justice of the District Court, resided there.

search all parts of the extensive grounds, during which they came upon a considerable dump consisting of 26 rifles, 2 revolvers, 2 pistols, 1 Lewis, bombs, explosives and parts. Clearly the stray shot fired at the students ought to have been withheld.

**Soloheadbeg Reverberations:** On trial in Clonmel, April 16, were four young men, John Ryan, John Harding, Cornelius O'Brien and Tom Ryan; charged with drilling at Soloheadbeg. This minor exercise had already cost Supt. Curtain his life and would soon claim another. In court seven state witness's retracted their statements and, as a result, found themselves charged. They contended however, before D.J. Troy, that their statements had been forced from them by C.I.D. men who repeatedly prodded them with revolvers.

**Free State Budget:** Ernest Blythe announced his budget on May 6, taxing petrol for the first time, fourpence a gallon. He put a halfpenny on sugar, and two pence per foot on films.

**Pioneer Industry:** There were the beginnings of a pogrom noted from Belfast, although the city, never far off the edge, did not then erupt until some years later. Sinn Féin was holding a conference in the Hardwicke Hall where they were addressed by 'Sceilg', and Peadar O'Donnell was giving advice to 'working farmers' in Carlow, where a strike of sorts had commenced at the year old sugar beet factory, one of the pioneer industrial experiments of the new Free State; growers were threatened if they did not join in. Attanagh rail station was raided and 18 sacks removed by armed men. About the same time one notes the resignation of Dr. T.F. Mc Laughlin, the far-sighted engineer who persuaded the government to embark, five years earlier, upon the Shannon Scheme; in its day considered one of the outstanding hydro developments of Europe.

**Riots in Madrid:** Following the flight of King Alfonso XIII anti-monarchist riots broke out in Madrid where convents were attacked and burned. Jesuit and monarchist newspapers were subjected to attacks in many towns.

A **New Encyclical** declared that 'no one can be at the same time a good Catholic and a true Socialist'. This will come as a bombshell to many Roman Catholics, declared the *Irish Times*.

**Ford Depart:** Ford of Cork announced that their foundry would be transferred to Dagenham, to which numbers of their employees had already been sent. The Cork factory was reported at a standstill.

**Germany and Austria** were proposing a customs union, but this was objected to by France. It did not proceed.

**Economic Bad News:** A report of May 18 carried the news that Free State trade had declined by £12 m or almost one quarter, in 1930; while exports also had declined.

**Six County Politics:** The National League, representing the Nationalist Party, continued alive and well; Cahir Healy M.P. was reported on May 26 speaking at Enniskillen.

**The Hospital Sweeps** were announced a success. The first had been launched, with a total revenue, mainly from the U.S., of some millions.

**The Shannon Scheme** was already short of water for its hydro purpose. Lough Ree would therefore be considered for supplemental storage.

The **B. Specials** had been demobbed in the North, but the government there agreed to pay them five shillings yearly for one drill appearance; a report of June 4 stated.

The **Juries Protection Act** of 1929 would be extended for a further two years: regrettably, a statement said, this was due to attacks continuing upon some jury men at this time.

**Germany 'Bankrupt':** Germany was to be subject to drastic financial decrees 'to save the country from bankruptcy,' according to a report of June 8; meanwhile Chancellor Brüning and his Foreign Minister had arrived at Chequers. The two countries are moving towards each other, Brüning declared.

**Widespread Drilling:** *The Irish Times* was concerned about this activity. 'It is notorious', it declared, 'that drilling is being carried out in the Dublin mountains, while police reports from Tipperary, Kerry, Cork, Limerick, Leitrim and Donegal, indicates that there is considerable drilling in those counties also. Leitrim is particularly bad'.

**Killakee** reared its head again with an *Irish Times* report of June 11. A carefully constructed dump, guarded by a trap mine, on the bank of a stream contained 50 rifles, five revolvers, ammunition and 'important documents'; plus King William's head from College Green referred to earlier.

Eoin O'Duffy, Col. David Neligan, chief of C.I.D., Supt. Brennan and Peter Ennis attended to witness the ceremonial blowing up of the dump which was 'heard all over Dublin'. Fianna Fáil criticised the publicity being given to Killakee which they declared was intended to affect a by-election in Co. Kildare, and to make easy the passage of the Jurys Bill. Panic legislation, Sean Mac Entee described it 'designed not to secure the protection of jury men but the conviction of political prisoners'.

**James Fitzgerald-Kenney:** The case of two such prisoners, George Mooney and Sean McGuinness, had been raised by Dr. Patrick Little but, according to an *Irish Times* report, Minister for Justice Fitzgerald-Kenney, had refused to listen.

The latter, with his cultured accent, was barn storming days later in Co. Kildare. 'Next Sunday', he offered his chapel gate hearers, 'Fianna Fáil will march at Bodenstown behind the men responsible for the murders of Kevin O'Higgins and of Superintendent Curtain; behind a body of men standing to destroy your state; a body that is avowedly Communist'.

As for the Land Annuities: 'if ever there was a debt owed by the people of Ireland it is those same Land Annuities'.

**Liberals Break:** In Britain the Liberal Party broke with Labour on a land tax matter; it brought nearer the creation of Mac Donald's National Government.

**Baton Charge in Berkeley Road:** With Mooney and Mc Guinness on hunger strike in Mountjoy, the Movement mounted its strongest protest on the evening of June 18, preceeded by a Cumann na mBan meeting at Cathal Brugha Street addressed by Frank Ryan, Alec Lynn, Mick Fitzpatrick and Seamus Mitchell. Marching then towards the prison, they were confronted by a heavy police cordon at Berkeley Road. The crowd now numbering 1500 took on the police, with missiles thrown and blows freely exchanged.

**Col. Michael Mc Laughlin:** Mrs. Ryan, mother of T.J. Ryan of Co. Clare, was



reported deceased; while from New York came news which saddened Leitrim. Col. Michael Mc Laughlin, I.R.A., had been shot dead by a bandit. His remains were brought home to his native Dangan where the C.I.D. attended in force with a machine gun trained on the grave. The body had lain in state inside the church for many days, with thousands trooping by.

**F.F. At Bodestown:** In June Sean McGuinness, one of the 'Joy escapees, and Dubliner, George Mooney were still on hunger strike for political treatment; other persons were reported imprisoned for having sold Easter lilies. In the run-up to Bodestown Sunday, *An Phoblacht* published a diagram of the participating groups in the field at Sallins; noteworthy among the bands, banners and contingents was the prominent slot awarded to Fianna Fáil.

**World Slump:** The Free State economy, in concert with the world economy, continued to slide. Old age pensioners were still down Blythe's shilling from their 'half note', and railway men on the Great Southern system were being cut five per cent; while the double track from Dublin to Galway was being reduced to single.

**A Directive From 'the Thunderer':** Emulating the London *Times* in government policy formation, the *Irish Times* was setting the keynote (as it was to do in 1939 and in later events) against the breaking out afresh of Republican activity with a trenchant leader on illegal country-wide drilling.

Despite its tiny circulation, confined to right wing Protestants, and its flaunting a black border upon the death of British royalty, an opinion from the *Times* frequently amounted to a directive in Merrion Street, and this was the case in 1931, 1939 and, although we are not concerned with it here, in 1957 and throughout the seventies and eighties; when indeed that newspaper and its columnists came into their own as the opinion formers of what became known colloquially as *Dublin Four*; (Dublin 4 being less a place and more an attitude of mind.) That the *Irish Times* should on this occasion select Leitrim as a place of political concern, while overlooking any social concern for a county that in this period of native government had already lost almost half of its young people and would lose many more, tells us something of its value as an opinion former. Pointing to 'subversion' in Leitrim was seemingly of more importance than dealing with an economic problem that resulted in half of the native born people leaving their countryside.

**Kilcormac:** A report from Kilcormac, Co. Offaly, refers to the local branch of Connradh na Gaeilge permitting police 'patronage' of their *aeridhiocht*. In accord with the policy of the Movement of that time, which sought to ostracise gardaí, any such participation was frowned upon.

**Bodestown Banned:** One cannot say if the government of W.T. Cosgrave was actually heeding the strictures of the *Irish Times* when the great commemorative procession from the village of Sallins to the rural grave of Bodestown was, at very short notice, banned; police and military being placed in strength to enforce it. The government, declared Ernest Blythe, was not going to allow any party to work itself into the position of a second army. The Movement however had already published its Order of Procession, and a review of this now is enlightening.

It would be led by the First Battalion, Dublin Brigade, followed by the Workers' Union of Ireland; then I.R.A. contingents, Dublin 2, 3, 4 and 5 battalions; Cork

Volunteer Pipers Band; South Dublin and Kildare Battalion; Leitrim Battalion; Republican Brass and Reed band; Wexford and Louth Battalions; Other Units: O'Toole Pipers; Cumann na mBan; Clan na Gael girl scouts; Fianna band; Fianna contingents from nine counties; Brian Boru fife band; Fianna Fáil Party; 1916-21 Club; Woman Prisoners Defence League; T.C.D Republican Club; Other Organisations; General Public. The Rearguard Company would be drawn from the First Dublin Battalion.

Ten special trains were booked, and the speakers were announced as Mick Price and Sean Russell. Late on Saturday night the government cancelled the trains by written order; Kingsbridge station and many other stations were occupied, and Mick Price and Sean Russell were arrested. Some shuttle buses however were organised; bicycles, cars, ponies and traps contributed; in the end some 10,000 leaked through and the procession proceeded as planned. According to an official document, detachments of I.R.A were present from 19 counties. (When next Bodenstown was banned in 1936 by Fianna Fáil, few leaked through and the graveyard itself was solidly occupied).

In his address, standing in for Sean Russell, Peadar O'Donnell - and few could imagine a more unlikely replacement - paid him tribute; *Russell is pre-eminently the man to deliver this oration.... The state is a machine that we must destroy. All the power that is in their hands we must take into ours; in the final phase we must be prepared to meet force with force. But this day is not the day fixed for a rising no matter how much the Free State executive may have feared it was.*

**Not A Test Mobilisation:** Was it a test mobilisation? With all of those marshalled ranks; all of those training camps and all of the frequent gunnery practice, what objective had the I.R.A in mind? It had passed from being a dispirited remnant in 1924 to being a self-confident volunteer army ready seemingly to 'take on' the Free State by 1931; or could it have taken on the Free State, because no such plans had ever been uncovered, and both Maurice Twomey and George Gilmore have declared, to this writer, that Bodenstown 1931 was not a test mobilisation, nor was there in that year a plan for a *coup d'etat*. Why should there be; the Cumann na nGael government was clearly on its last legs, and Fianna Fáil would surely fulfil the hopes and dreams of everyone in the days to come.

**Riots in Spain:** Trouble continued in Spain under the republican government of Alcalá Zamora and the prime minister Manuel Azana, with riots and burnings reported from many centres.

**Kildare Result:** Fianna Fáil won this hotly contested by-election in the person of Tom Harris. Here is a community of farmers, said the *Irish Times* of June 29, who have returned to parliament a man pledged to the ruination of their industry.

**Secret Service:** On July 3, An Dáil passed 63-47, a vote of £6,500 for a service that was, its opponents declared, devoted mainly to small scale bribery.

**I.R.A: No Focus:** No matter how one looks upon its forays, its parades and its battalions, the I.R.A in these years, and in the subsequent years up to 1938 had no focus; no real notion of its role; should it stage a *coup d'etat*; should it be purely agitationery; a machine for boycott; engage only in social issues; be subsumed into a political party? Whether one agrees with his methods or not, it was Sean Russell in

1938 who gave it a focus; who turned its nose northward and across the water; gave it a heavy spank and said, get out there and fight. Russell gave it its first clear focus since 1922, when indeed its role had been merely reactive to Free State aggression.

**The Contingent That Was Absent:** In the late sixties and early seventies an active role was thrust upon the I.R.A. at a time when there were no colourful battalions about, and when it had virtually ceased to exist. When therefore one considers the 'Longest War' one should note that among the colourful contingents listed in 1931 there was not a single one from the Six Counties.

**Social Pariahs:** *An Phoblacht* was calling in mid-June for members of the C.I.D. to be treated as 'social pariahs', adding that this treatment be extended to judges and uniformed police.

**Price and Russell:** Mick Price and Sean Russell were each charged with membership of the I.R.A. under the new Treason Act; and Frank Ryan was arrested and sentenced to two months after a protest meeting in O'Connell Street, and that march to Mountjoy. In Russell's house a secret compartment was found; however it contained only training manuals.

**Working Farmers:** The Working Farmers groups were called upon to assemble in Limerick on a Saturday, and in Galway on a Sunday when, according to a declaration by Peadar O'Donnell, they would 'transfer leadership of the fight against landlordism, banks and combines to the most active fighters in the campaign'; meaning, presumably, the I.R.A. However there continued to be only muted protest sounds from the 'working farmers'.

**Clissman:** Helmut Clissman, married to Elizabeth 'Budge' Mulcahy of a Sligo nationalist family, had written in a German paper on the relationship of the I.R.A. to the Free State government. It was, he declared, a tangled skein.

**Fermentation:** Looking ahead, *An Phoblacht* was advising in July; 'in the days when the initiative is passing from the enemy to us, our responsibilities are great... The whole land is full of restlessness and fermentation must be invested with the ideas and plan of struggle by which alone freedom can be achieved... A national revolutionary organisation must break into the open'. But what was it? Words, words, words; or preparing the stage for the launch of Saor Éire?

**Killakee Dump:** July brought further details of the dump found at Killakee House (as well as a front page splash showing the Red Army in Moscow). It had a booby trap door, and contained a single bed supported upon cans of the I.R.A. explosive, Paxo. Gilmore, whose age was given as 35, was charged with 'maintaining a military organisation'. The cache contained 29 rifles, 13 revolvers, 4 pistols, one Lewis, 3 shotguns, Verrey light pistols, bombs, explosives and 3000 rounds of ammunition.

**Jurymen Not Convicting:** After withdrawing for only 15 minutes, the Dublin jury hearing Russell's prosecution returned with a 'not guilty' verdict. 'Very well, gentlemen', admonished Judge Davitt sourly; 'it is a welcome thing that unlike a judge, a jury never has to give a reason for its verdict'.

It was disclosed in evidence however that the raid on Russell's home was undertaken, unceremoniously, at one a.m. and Russell, fearing for his life, dived under a bed. A secret room was found; entered through a hinged full length mirror in a bath-

room; but it contained only British Army training manuals.

Entering the press box, Hannah Sheehy-Skeffington, reporting for *An Phoblacht*, was informed by the judge that she was being excluded. *But these are Star Chamber proceedings*, she cried, calling over her shoulder as she departed; *you should remember your father*, meaning Michael Davitt, who had spent upwards of twelve years in an English prison, on heavy manual work, despite loosing an arm prior to that in a factory accident.

In both the Russell and Price trials juries refused to act in the way government expected, instead declaring themselves 'in full sympathy with the ideals of the men in the dock'. It was in this situation where popular opinion was sliding towards militant republicanism, combined with unrestricted and uncensored publicity, that would cause the government to introduce Article 2 A of the Constitution, and with it a three officer Military Tribunal that could be relied upon to process prisoners in the desired direction.

The paper however was jubilant; That's for You, Fitzgerald-Kenney, declared *An Phoblacht*. Matt Kent from near Bunclody, long prominent in the radical farm scene, was jailed this month, and again two weeks later. *Roebuck House*, home of Maud Gonne and Sean, was raided for the umpteenth time by C.I.D; a photo graphically showed the disorder caused by upturned drawers, and books strewn upon the floor.

**Juries Protection Bill:** The Juries Protection Bill was passed on June 12: it extended the 1929 Act to September 1933.

**Michael Mc Laughlin:** An official report of June 15 refers to the funeral of Michael Mc Laughlin, shot dead in New York; that it took place to the graveyard of Kilmore, north Roscommon, with 3000 I.R.A and sympathisers in attendance. The presence of 50 military and a large force of gardaí prevented a farewell volley.

**Germany On Its Knees:** In Germany, the Weimar republic; awaiting the arrival of whoever reached the gates first, Communists or Nazi's, was upon its knees. Dr. Luther, President of the Reichbank, returned empty handed from Paris and London, having failed to obtain a loan from either. Ten days later the powers relented, offering a three month credit. But it would be insufficient.

**Death of a 'Spy':** The 'veiled warning' to a suspected spy in Tipperary referred to earlier, in connection with the Soloheadbeg incident, was not heeded, and a man, John Ryan of Oyle, was found shot dead. The organisation declared him 'a police spy' who had, on the evidence of the police of Cappawhite, been given three weeks to leave Ireland, but seemingly, made no move to do so. *Fianna Fáil's* weekly paper, *The Nation*, condemned the shooting.

**Garda Sports Spoiled:** As a reprisal obviously for police interference with Bodenstown, Kerry I.R.A lifted sections of the two rail links entering the kingdom, thus preventing special trains reaching the garda sports at Tralee.

**Frank Ryan:** News from Kerry told of numbers of Óglaigh na h-Éireann commemorative parades being held throughout the county. A cartoon of Frank Ryan appeared in the paper, calling upon readers to 'help free Ireland and the Irish working masses by taking your place in the revolutionary movement'. Meanwhile a jury disagreed in the Killakee case of George and Charlie Gilmore; they were put back.

**Failure to Convict:** Sean Mac Bride and others were arraigned on a membership

charge in Listowel where for the first time was mentioned in the public press the title of the new front organisation which some in the I.R.A fully expected would have earth shaking political potential, namely Saor Éire. Meanwhile Peadar O'Donnell was organising his working farmers in Maam Cross, Galway and Craughwell. Days after, Sean Mac Bride and three local men were released in Listowel. The jury had seen no reason to convict them.

**Dublin's Slums:** Overcrowding in the slum tenements of Dublin's inner city had been a by-word for a half century. A crowded meeting in the Mansion House was given the figures; 80,000 lived in single rooms: a single tall georgian house might shelter as many as twenty four families or upwards of 84 children, while the death rate was twenty per thousand, seventeen out of one hundred dying within a year of birth.

**Sir Dawson Bates:** The July marching month was celebrated in Belfast by Minister of Home Affairs, Dawson Bates ordering the destruction in Carrickmore, Co. Tyrone, of 'an offensive monument'. It had been erected at the Loughmacrory road to the I.R.A of 1920, and Sir Dawson empowered himself under Section 8, of the Special Powers Act; a section that he had added only a week previously for that purpose.

**Cootehill:** Early in August an Orange demonstration by the Black Preceptory, was announced for Cootehill, Co. Cavan; this provoked a warning reaction from the local organisation of working farmers. Cavan Brigade I.R.A 'proclaimed' the demonstration which went ahead under police protection and intermittent fisticuffs, during which eight persons were arrested. Cootehill, like many other towns, had once been a strong redoubt of Orangeism, but this demo was to be its last. Orange mobs responding however, attacked in August, Hibernian processions in Armagh, Portadown and Lisburn. At Richill they breached the rail link from Goraghwood, and the following week broke out again, wrecking houses and halls in Armagh and Portadown.

**Dan Breen's** mother had died in Tipperary, and Breen himself was noted as 'still in exile in New York'.

**Scout Hut Burned:** A Baden Powell scout hut was burned by armed and masked men on August 24.

**Troubled Times:** James Fitzgerald-Kenney, addressing a passing out of guards in Phoenix Park warned, on July 18, of 'dangerous and troubled times before the country'.

**Roebuck House:** Madame Mac Bride and Madame Charlotte Despard, who shared *Roebuck House*, wrote complaining of the last C.I.D raid. They had suffered 11 raids during which papers and books were scattered and furniture overturned. Arms were never found there, and this latest raid was carried out by no less than 17 able-bodied men, they said.

**John Foley:** John Foley, released a few months earlier, after a ten year term in England, was reported as having been dragged from a train in Killorglin, whereupon he was beaten by police. *An Phoblacht* continued to issue warnings of 'an impending pogrom' in Belfast. For some strange and unconnected reason there were six C.I.D men placed on guard inside the offices of the *Irish Independent* in Middle

Abbey Street. This could have been connected with the impending launch of the *Irish Press*. Countrywide police raiding continued to be reported, while a number of letters appeared in *An Phoblacht*, criticising Fianna Fáil for its new found attitude to physical force; but Fianna Fáil was a political party, and would soon be in government

**Saving £96 m:** A Parliamentary Economy Committee in London recommended an immediate cut in unemployment benefit and teachers' salaries with the object of saving £96 m.

**Rail Interference:** Rail links near Portlaoise and north Donegal were cut, with the intention of disrupting garda sports in Clonmel and Letterkenny. At the same time the announced closure of branch lines from Kinsale, Killaloe and into Co. Leitrim, met with protests.

**Launch of Saor Éire:** September saw the formal launch of Saor Éire,\* with Cahir man David Fitzgerald as secretary, and offices at 44 Parnell Square. Its manifesto ran upon the usual lines, stressing the necessity for a united front of workers in towns and cities and among small farmers and agricultural workers, and pointing out that 'the community of interest of these classes and the common pressure of British Imperialism and its native allies should make them inseparable friends'. A national congress would shortly be held in Dublin.

Girding his loins against such radicalism, Dr. Kilmartin, Archbishop of Tuam, thundered in a letter that, 'lawful government must be obeyed while secret societies were abhorrent in the eyes of God'. *An Phoblacht* took him on but his rescript was to be an opener for a collective pastoral letter soon to splash across the news media.

**Not Destined To Go Anywhere:** Saor Éire, with many other organisations was soon to be officially banned, and, within months, unbanned by Fianna Fáil. But it was not destined to go anywhere despite the high hopes held in some quarters for it. Fianna Fáil bestrode the political high ground while the organisation was a recognisable and transparent reflection of the I.R.A. In the opinion of Maurice Twomey, it did not gain popular support within its very short life prior to the ban, and when, in the springtime of 1932, it came to be unbanned, Twomey considered that the I.R.A., in the new circumstances, would have been foolish to try to revive it.

**Interference With Garda Sports:** Widespread police raiding was reported in September, thought to have been motivated by interference with the garda sports held in Tralee and Letterkenny. It was policy at this time to try to keep a gap open between the people and the police. In Waterford city a golf course was cut up prior to a police golfing outing, and in Newcastle West police were obliged to protect the approaches to a sports outing.

**Chained to Railings:** Six young men had been chained to railings in Armagh for issuing threatening letters to local Protestants. Was it part of the aftermath to Cootehill?

**Launch of the Irish Press:** In this month also the first issue of the *Irish Press* appeared from Burgh Quay. *We welcome the arrival of Dublin's third daily, the Irish Press, spoke An Phoblacht; by giving the truth about Ireland, by breaking the paper wall*

\* Meaning *Free Ireland*, or *Ireland Free*; more likely, the former as an imperative.

that hides from the people their slavery, their impoverishment and the brutality of their rulers, the *Irish Press* will render national service. Its motto was: Truth in the News, and, *Do Cum Gloire Dé agus Ónóra na h-Éireann*.

**Police Raiding Printers:** The paper complained in the same issue of police harassment of its printer, Farrell, of Longford. Another printer under pressure was *Fodhla* in Dublin, owned by Oscar Traynor, whom the police still saw as a Republican. He was raided four times in two months. Another piece sensibly sympathised with the rail system now suffering uneconomic competition from road transport: they had to pay for and maintain their rail roads while the taxpayer maintained the public roads.

**An official job,** doubtless, was a completed but unoccupied police barrack near Loughrea which was reported blown up. In Raheela, Co. Kerry, Sean Mac Bride was unveiling a memorial, inspecting units and introducing rural Ireland to the mysteries of Saor Éire policy.

**Sinn Féin's New Offices:** In Dublin, the new offices of Sinn Féin, a first floor georgian drawing room, at 16 Parnell Square, were raided and searched. Financial imperatives had made them evacuate some time before space no longer required in Suffolk Street, off Grafton Street. The Parnell Square house was shared downstairs with Robinson's Tea Rooms, a number of trade organisations, and old time Republican solicitor Joseph Henry Dixon; the same Dixon - see Gilmore's account in *Survivors* - who provided the official committee warrant stamps enabling 'Sergeant' George Gilmore enter Mountjoy on November 27, 1925 to rescue 19 prisoners.

**In Connemara Saor Éire** was reported organising among road workers and among the Oughterard fisheries on Lough Corrib. In Castlebar, James Fitzgerald-Kenney warned, 'there is in this country an organisation - there may be two, Saor Éire and the I.R.A - but so closely linked they may be described as one. Their avowed aim and object is to force by means of threats and violence a republic of a Soviet nature on this country'. In Clare, Dr. Fogarty, Bishop of Killaloe, was doing his bit in denouncing Republicans as communists.

In the run-up to the inaugural meeting, *An Phoblacht* ran a double page spread, outlining Saor Éire policy; it was evidently to be a full dress political party well to the left of anything that then existed. An article on trade and finance in the same issue bore the Mac Bride stamp.

**Inauguration of Saor Éire:** On September 26 and 27, a week-end, the inaugural meeting took place in the Iona Hall, North Great Georges Street; the Abbey Theatre and the Peacock having been denied to them. Its stated objectives were the abolition of the private ownership of lands, fisheries and minerals; a state bank; state control of imports and exports, with wide state support for the creation of industrial workers' co-operatives.

The members of the National Executive were as follows: Sean Mc Guinness\* (Sub. Fionán Breathnach), Sean Hayes (Clare), May Laverty \* (Belfast), Helena Moloney, Sheila Dowling, Sheila Humphreys,\* D. Mc Ginley, M. Fitzpatrick, Sean Mac

\* Asterisks denote those who later signed the manifesto of Republican Congress.

Mac Bride, M. Price,\* Peadar O'Donnell,\* David Fitzgerald (Tipperary), M. Hallisey, (Kerry), M. O'Donnell (Offaly), Pat Mc Cormack (Antrim), Tom Kenny (Galway), L. Brady (Laois), Nicholas Boran (Kilkenny), John Mulgrew \* (Mayo), Tom Maguire \* (Westmeath).

**Frank Edwards:** Frank Edwards told afterwards how startled he and others were when Sean Hayes, who chaired the meeting, commenced with a religious invocation, and then to cap it all, Fionán Breathnach insisted on closure on the Sunday to attend nearby Croke Park. *Religion cannot be much use*, Sheila Mc Inerney cracked afterwards; *it did not work for Saor Éire*.

**Sean Mc Cool:** The paper carried a Clarion Call to Saor Éire, while an editorial called for wholehearted support. Fraternal greetings were sent to the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics; the motion being seconded by Sean McCool who had just returned from hospital treatment there.

**Plot to Postpone Congress:** October brought whispers of a government plot to have the Eucharistic Congress, scheduled for the following June, postponed; placing the blame for 'the disturbed state of the country' upon the I.R.A. Had this happened it could have jeopardised Fianna Fáil's chance of being elected. Instead General Eoin O'Duffy, Chief of Police, and a closet homosexual, toured the bishops, proffering documentary evidence for a Pastoral Letter that inveighed heavily against Republicans.

**Wm. Mc Inerney, Kilrush:** An official report of his 'attempted murder' states that he had been seriously wounded while reading a 'Spies Beware' note on his front door. He had been outspoken denouncing the I.R.A and Saor Éire.

**Clare State Solicitor Fired On:** An official report noted that the house of James Lynch, State solicitor for Clare, had been fired upon with a Thompson and revolvers. Evidently as a warning against enforcing Land Commission warrants.

**Meanwhile Óglaigh na h-Éireann** issued a statement denying that they would attempt to disturb the Congress.

**Sinn Féin and Saor Éire.** Weeks ahead of their normal time Sinn Féin held their 22nd. Árd Fhéis, by now a harmless side-show, in their drawing room at Parnell Square. 'Sceilg' was in the chair when Mary Mac Swiney proclaimed the Party attitude to Saor Éire and the impending coercive legislation. 'We call the attention of the Irish Hierarchy to this threatened terror.... We suggest to them that this is part of a plan to create a state of affairs in which the holding of the Congress will be impossible. Dáil Éireann (meaning S.F. Second Dáil) has been asked its attitude on a new organisation which proposes to unite 'the working farmers' on the basis of the Proclamation of 1916, in what is described as a class revolutionary organisation.

We are of the opinion that a *national* not a class basis is the only hope of uniting the people of Ireland.... Loyal Republicans should be on their guard against any attempt to entice or force them to surrender their allegiance. We desire further to emphasise that all the social justice aims are already contained in the Democratic Programme of Dáil Éireann as adopted in 1919, upon which our constitution is based.

Mary Mac Swiney, sister of Terence and Sean, has been a much underestimated lady in the history of the Irish revolution, where people see her as an uncompro-



missing black clad spinster with a helmet-like hat clasped tightly upon her set face. As she told Eibhlin Ní Cruadhlaich of Ballintemple in 1936, she had requested De Valera, with whom she had been on close terms, to be appointed a member of the 1921 Treaty delegation. He refused. *You would not do Maire, you are too extreme.*\* The delegation of seven consisted of men only; how much more would it have been strengthened by the addition of Mary, or of Helena Moloney, or Hannah Sheehy-Skeffington, or Áine B.E Ceannt.

Mary was among the last three girls (Linda Kearns, Cathleen Barry and Mary) to be evacuated from the besieged Hamman Hotel\* in July 1922. *Soul of Fire*, a critical evaluation by Charlotte Fallon, from Mercier Press, throws a wealth of insight upon the unyielding spirit of Mary.\*\*

**Fr. O'Flanagan:** Resolutions passed at the Sinn Féin Árd Fhéis however, supported the I.R.A; Father O'Flanagan going so far as to say that he favoured in certain cases setting up an Army dictatorship. Presiding over the debate was Brian O'Higgins.

**Unemployed Riot in Glasgow and Salford:** The 'Economy Bill' in Britain, promoted by the National Government under Ramsay Mac Donald, cutting relief, bore its first fruits when unemployed rioted in late September, in Glasgow and Salford, with many injured. John Mc Govern M.P. was arrested.

**Wild Birds Protection Act:** T.J.S Harbison, a strong constitutionalist, and a member with Joe Devlin, and Cahir Healy of their short-lived National League, had died at this time. Healy took his place as M.P with Devlin at Westminster where they concentrated their attack upon Mac Donald's support for partition and his decision to cut unemployment benefit. In the latter part of his parliamentary career, in both Stormont and Westminster, almost their sole legislative achievement was the passing of the Wild Birds Protection Act of 1931. Devlin was known to smile recalling this in his more cynical moments in the few years left to him.

**Catholic Education:** To quote Eamon Phoenix,\*\*\* frustration of the Nationalists at their failure to win any meaningful concessions from the Craigavon government was seriously undermining the party's credibility. It was difficult to refute the charge that the provision of grant aid to their schools had been due more to the threat of legal action by the bishops than to parliamentary tactics.

**Jimmy and Joe:** On other occasions, when members of the Black Preceptory were not within earshot, Devlin could exploit a personal friendship which he was fortunate to have with Prime Minister Lord Craigavon. One such occasion - heretofore quite unheard of - was when he was induced in 1930 to visit the Mater Hospital and agree to the transfer of a slice of land under the walls of Crumlin Road Prison, to the nuns, then urgently required for extension purposes. With the two men left alone in the parlour over a whiskey afterwards, it was a case of a whispered imprecation; *now Joe; not a word of this.*

\*See *Survivors* for both references

\*\* She is said to have intervened on January 7 during the Treaty debates to prevent De Valera shaking the hand of Michael Collins.

\*\*\* *Northern Nationalism*

**Conciliatory Effects Lost:** As Phoenix adds; the conciliatory effect of such gestures was lost by the unremitting hostility of Home Affairs Minister, Sir Dawson Bates and the more extreme sections of Unionism. In 1934, when the Hospital approached the Minister to permit the use of clear glass, instead of obscured glass, in their laboratory windows which happened to overlook a portion of the prison, Bates refused, despite the most courteous representations from T.J. Campbell, K.C.

**Cork Switch:** 160 tram men found themselves disemployed in Cork when the company there abandoned trams and switched to buses.

**England in the Mire:** 'England is in the mire today', proclaimed 'Sceilg', J.J. O'Kelly. 'England is under the lash of her destiny; she has pickled herself for her own trouncing'. A later statement said of Saor Éire; Dáil Éireann sees no reason to condemn the organisation but it deprecates any attempt to promote class distinction or class warfare. No such distinctions formed any part of the Proclamation which is our common charter.

**Warning On Congress:** A message read by Mary Mac Swiney condemned the Public Safety Bill; announcing also that a message had been sent to the Hierarchy respecting the forthcoming Eucharistic Congress. The proposed murder campaign, it stated, was unlikely to afford a proper atmosphere for the Congress. It was a deliberate plan on behalf of the Free State junta to make the Congress impossible. In view of the outrage on Republican feelings in 1929 the celebrations should be entirely religious and should not be used for the glorification of the English ministers in Ireland. Cardinal Bourne, the suggested Papal Legate was *persona non grata* with the Irish people.\* Following this the I.R.A. issued its own statement that there would be no interference with the Congress.

Fr. Michael O' Flanagan then rose to condemn all negotiations with the Hierarchy. He was surprised that Dáil Éireann was carrying on negotiations with the Pope and the Irish bishops. They should not forget that the Pope himself is as great an enemy of Ireland as Cardinal Bourne, while as far as the Irish bishops were concerned they were still as unrepentant as they were in 1922. Joseph Fowler of London, proposed a resolution, which was carried, 'condemning insidious anti-Christian propaganda'; Irish Republicanism, he added, was founded on truth and justice.

Brian O'Higgins, elected President of Sinn Féin for 1932, took exception to Fr. O'Flanagan's description of the Pope as an enemy of Ireland, (cries of hear, hear). He refused to be associated with Fr. O' Flanagan when such statements were made. Fr. O' Flanagan replied that he had said that the Pope was an enemy of Irish republicanism and Irish independence. 'I know what I am talking about', he declared; 'the Pope's predecessors back through the history of Ireland have been opponents of the independence of Ireland!'.\*\*

\*Cardinal Bourne, of Westminster, was not appointed Legate; for whatever reason Rome appointed Cardinal Lorenzo Lauri. Cardinal Bourne, in late October 1920, had refused to allow the remains of Terence Mac Swiney into Westminster Cathedral.

\*\*If anyone would know Irish history, Fr. Michael O'Flanagan would. He later edited the entire 50 volumes of the O'Donovan Papers.

On a motion proposed, it was agreed that members of Óglaigh na h-Éireann could be also members of Sinn Féin.

**Elected:** Elected for 1932 were: Brian O'Higgins, President; Vice Presidents; Tom Maguire, Dr. J.A Madden and Mrs. Brugha; Secretaries; Peadar Mac Andrew and William Gilmore.

**On T.D's Doorsteps:** In the light of the impending coercive legislation, targeted organisations were sufficiently concerned to encourage their lady supporters to call upon Cumann na nGael T.D's inquiring whether they would support such laws. Where they were received, the T.D was non-committal, although in most cases, according to reports, they sent their wife to the door.

**Aims of Saor Éire:** From Saor Éire a statement emerged announcing that their number one objective was the overthrow in Ireland of British Imperialism and of Irish capitalism. Number two, was that 'workers' should control the entire instruments of production, distribution and exchange. Number three, was the restoration of the Irish language, its culture and games.

**Bike Patrols:** Bicycle patrols formed from units of the Free State army commenced to appear on the streets of Dublin.

**Máirtín Calligan:** One of the first targets of the new coercive legislation was Máirtín Calligan from Kilmurray Mc Mahon, Co. Clare, who, with two others, was charged with depriving a soldier of his uniform.

**Four Courts Re-opened:** The Dublin Four Courts, seriously damaged in the bombardment of June 1922, were reopened in the early days of October. The bombardment was unnecessary: they could have cut off the water.

**Co. Clare Shooting:** On October 7, just before the Bill was presented, a number of men raided the home of John Irwin at Cappanakilla, Co. Clare, shooting him in the leg. The incident was headlined in the *Irish Times* as seemingly to offer a justification of the Bill.

**George and Harry Attempt Escape:** In mid-October, George and Harry Gilmore George held since May, and Harry some months - attempted a daylight break out from the 'Joy'. They had provided themselves with dummy guns and a rope ladder, while George Mooney and a squad from the Second Battalion waited under the wall. But at the last moment it failed; holding off warders with dummy guns, a large bottle was expected to fly over and crash outside, establishing their location. It did not so happen as the only article available was a small Bovril bottle which bounded noiselessly upon a grass bank.

**'Drastic' Police Bill:** Days after the *Irish Times* of October 9 was reporting that if the Dáil did not pass the 'Police Bill' President Cosgrave would 'go to the country' as there was evidence of widespread communist activity. Eoin O'Duffy, chief of police, listed five members of the force killed in Clare, Cork and Tipperary, 'while standing against anarchy'. *The Irish Times*, the next day, reported that there were 'very drastic clauses in the 'Police Bill'. There would be military courts but not internment camps; in the latter assumption the paper was incorrect.

**Writers and Artists:** Writers and artists were canvassed to speak out against the impending enactment. I think the proposed coercion bill is both hateful and stupid', Jack Yeats declared. He was supported by Austin Clarke, Liam O'Flaherty, Maurice

Mc Gonigle, Harry Kernoff and Francis Stuart. Senator Farrell and T.J. O'Connell of the Labour Party were criticised for what was considered their mealy mouthed attitude to the impending coercion.

**Not Acting:** Dissension appears to have arisen in the ranks of Saor Éire as, scarcely after one month, Helena Moloney and Sighle Dowling wrote, October 12, to state that they were no longer acting upon the executive of Saor Éire.

**Flabby Protests:** Leaks on the content of the dreaded Bill continued in the papers of October 13. There would be a death penalty, while treason trials could be heard in camera. Meanwhile a government T.D. condemned 'terror stricken councils' for their 'flabby protests' against the Bill.

**Constitution Amendment Bill:** Mid-October brought the long feared Constitution (Amendment No. 17) Bill, that would be a nail three months later in Cosgrave's coffin, but which De Valera and successive governments were to wield with greater effect against Republicans. So it is government by guns now, screamed *An Phoblacht*; listing the abrogation of liberties that was about to occur under an 'amendment' that abrogated the rest of the Constitution.

**Army Council Listed:** In the Dáil, Cosgrave listed Sean Mac Bride as Adjutant General, Mick Price as Director of Intelligence, Sean Russell as Quartermaster-General and O'Donnell as a member of the seven man Army Council. Oddly, Maurice Twomey was not mentioned. We assure every deputy, came a statement, that the only intimidation he may expect is that now being exercised by the Executive Council of the Irish Free State.

**Warnings:** In the run up to the Bill some senators and T.D.'s were visited and warned against voting for the public security bill. The young men calling were unarmed, but representatives voting for the Bill would do so at their own risk. The Mayor of Sligo, and the chairman of Galway and of Westmeath Co. Councils, called upon the government to shelve the Bill.

**Pastoral Letter:** Contemporaneous with the turn of the coercive screw the Catholic bishops meeting in Maynooth issued their Pastoral Letter. 'The existing government of Saorstát Éireann is composed of our own countrymen.... there is in operation among us a society of avowed militaristic character whose object is to overthrow the State by force of arms'. Saor Éire - a Bolshevik scheme - was singled out, and a triduum of prayer was called; it fell short of the impact of their Letter of October 1922. *An Phoblacht*, quoted Lalor Shiel addressing the British Government when he advocated support for Maynooth College in 1845; 'is not a great standing army and a great constabulary force more expensive than the moral police with which by the priesthood of Ireland you can be thriftily and efficiently supplied?'

The paper denounced the Hierarchy while studiously refraining from attacking the Catholic religion itself. Jim Larkin commented; 'anyone opposing this government will go to Hell; let us all go!' Local bodies continued to protest, joined by Cumann na mBan and the Revolutionary Workers' Group.

**Military Tribunal:** The members of the Tribunal as listed in the Bill, Article 2 A, were, Col. F. Bennett, Acting Assistant C.S.; Col. D. Mc Kenna, Q.M.G.; Major John V. Joyce, Deputy A.G; Commdt. Conor Whelan, O.C. 3rd. Battalion; Commdt. Patrick Tuite; training staff Curragh. Only three of these would sit together and there would

be no appeal from their findings. The Tribunal could impose any punishment including death, and there need be no inquest; nor was there provision for an appeal, although later on, appeals were made in the higher courts. Every other article in law must be construed in favour of the intent of the Act, the Bill declared, while any punishment that was 'expedient' could be administered.

It gave power to intern, to transfer trials, to search suspects, photograph and finger print. Buildings could be closed and property seized. If persons charged guards with assault, their case would not be heard before juries. A person in state employ convicted would, not only forfeit their job, but their pension. All of these clauses were adopted in 1939 by Fianna Fáil in framing their Offences and Treason Bills.

**A New Menace:** In Castlecomer, Mr. J.N. Nolan, a government T.D, declared; 'the country is faced with a new menace... A Bolshevik communist movement which has spread from Soviet Russia', while another declared that a Christian country like Ireland would not stand for the objects of Saor Éire which were totally opposed to the traditions of the State.

**Limerick City Hall Entered:** Two men, arrested in Limerick city, were remanded on October 10; they were William Barry and Michael Hurley who had entered the City Hall to excise a resolution from the Minute Book. The resolution condemned the recent shooting of 'police spy', John Ryan of Oyle.

**Irish Times Approves:** The five members of the Tribunal, said the *Irish Times*, wield such power as no judicial authority has exercised in any period of Irish history. Nonetheless it gave Article 2 A, its 'reserved approval'. The policy of Fianna Fáil, it added, was unintelligible. 'It must know that many of the forces arrayed against Mr. Cosgrave's government are equally hostile to itself'.

**De Valera's Criticism:** The Bill passed its second reading in the debate of October 13, by 82 votes to 64. President Cosgrave, in supporting the Bill, referred to *An Phoblacht* as 'the principal organ of the conspiracy'; he pointed to its open support of force, listing a long series of 'crimes', and coupling the I.R.A, Saor Éire and other named organisations with the Soviet Union. Eamon De Valera contended on the other hand that 'the ordinary law is quite sufficient to deal with these matters'.

**18 Coercive Acts:** He proceeded then to list no less than 18 coercive measures passed in that house since 1922; six Public Safety Acts, three Firearms Acts, three Enforcement of the Law Acts, four Jury Acts, one Treasonable Offences Act and one Protection of the Community Act. Arrests could be carried out without warrant, under the Bill in front of them, and persons could be held 36 hours, extended by a further 36 hours, followed by a remand of one month before being brought to the Tribunal. There was, he said, neither a necessity nor a demand for the drastic measures now foreshadowed. 'The real need is a government which will establish national unity... create employment and promote decent conditions of living for the nation'. Resuming his seat he challenged the Government to resign upon the issue. The O'Mahoney T.D from West Cork spoke; 'President Cosgrave is a God fearing man who would not lend a hand to anything unless it was for the good of the people'.

**Challenged:** Cumann na mBan challenged, 'we are working for a revolution that will overthrow the present pagan social system'. The Revolutionary Workers' Group

declared; the present coercion act is a desperate attempt by the capitalist class to drive Irish workers and small farmers into tame submission to the robber capitalist regime. In this the capitalists have the support of the whole forces of reaction in this country from Trinity College to Maynooth.

Carlow, Kilkenny, Limerick and many other authorities protested; in truth there seemed no body in favour anywhere but Cumann na nGael. Fitzgerald-Kenney, Minister, disclosed in a long debate that in 1925 the I.R.A. proposed sending eight of its members to Russia (in the event three went; P.A. Murray, Sean Russell and Gerald Boland). The Bill passed on October 16 by 83 to 65, becoming law on October 17, 1931. *The Times*, London, congratulated Cosgrave; he has done his countrymen a signal service and added to his reputation. James Larkin, junior, was reported speaking on the Sunday following to the Revolutionary Workers' Group, while Mrs. Despard at Cathal Brugha Street, was addressing the Society of Friends of Soviet Russia. It would be their last outing for a while.

**Banned Organisations:** The following organisations were declared unlawful: Óglaigh na hÉireann\* (Irish Republican Army): Cumann na mBan: Fianna Éireann: Saor Éire: Irish Labour Defence League: Workers' Revolutionary Party: Irish Working Farmers' Committee: Workers Defence Corps: Workers Research Bureau: Irish Tribute League: The Friends of Soviet Russia: Women Prisoners Defence League.

Many local authorities protested at the embargo, while at the same time Saor Éire was banned in the North. John Joe Sheehy was arrested and detained in Tralee where his wife had died some time previously. An issue of *An Phoblacht* was seized from the Longford Printers. The next issue however announced a mass meeting against Poppy Day, November 11. It would be addressed by every star in the Republican firmament; Father J.F. Sweetman, Mick Fitzpatrick, Seosamh Ó Grianna, Con Connolly, Hannah Sheehy-Skeffinton, 'John Brennan' (Sidney Gifford), Cormac Breathnach, William O'Dwyer, Sean Mc Glynn, Donn Piatt, Helena Moloney, Madame Mac Bride. The meeting was proclaimed and 'wild scenes' followed. A similar meeting was proclaimed in Cork.

**A General Meeting** of County Councils in Dublin protested against the 'despotic legislation'.

**Papel Nuncio:** The Papel Nuncio, Pascal Robinson, refused to meet a protest delegation as it concerned 'internal politics'.

**Paper Suppressed:** The last issue under the Cosgrave regime of *An Phoblacht* boasted; the military dictatorship can suppress *An Phoblacht* but it cannot suppress the cause which it advocates. It then gave a four column listing of seizures, proclamations and arrests over the previous three weeks. The paper was henceforth banned and it did not resume publication until fifteen weeks later on March 12, 1932, after Fianna Fáil came to power. In the intervening period the organisation issued a make-do publication, *Republican File*, made up from published clippings; a number of these were seized.

\* As given in *Iris Oifigiúil*, although the title was, and is, claimed by the army of the state.

**Other Papers Banned:** Banned also were *Irish World*, *Workers' Voice*, *Irish Worker*, *Republican File*. For good measure a meeting scheduled for November 7, in Dublin, commemorating the 14th. Anniversary of the Russian Revolution was also proclaimed.

**Kilrush Riot:** A riot occurred in Kilrush on October 13, when 300 men arrived to protest against a coal boat being unloaded by non-union labour. A rail siding was blown up while a turn table was put out of action preventing movement by rail to Limerick. Detectives arrived and proceeded to fire over their heads.

**Mac Donald's National Government:** Ramsay Mac Donald, having stepped down as a Labour Prime Minister, now sought a mandate by election to head a national government consisting of Liberals and Conservatives in Britain. This 'betrayal' caused deep wounds within the Labour Party.

**Pope on Spain:** Continuing republican turmoil in Spain caused Pope Pius XI, as reported October 17, to protest to the government 'with all of the energy required by my Apostolic Ministry' arising from the disestablishment of the church, dissolution of the Jesuits, and seizure of church property.

**Economic Report:** *The Irish Times*, in an economic report remarked, 'no one can pretend that the immediate outlook is cheerful. The Free State has confronted the menace of sedition and lawbreakers; on the other hand it faces an accumulation of economic troubles as trade has declined in recent months'.

**Five Guinea Policemen:** Five guineas damages was awarded in Killarney court against Det. Officer David Tormey. He had entered a farmer's house searching for arms during which he had assaulted the owner and his brother who had offered no resistance. No arms were found.

**Revolt in Cyprus:** A report of October 23, speaks of a revolt on the island of Cyprus, controlled by Britain. Government House was burned by rebels seeking union with Greece. Warships were said to be speeding to the island.

**Alfie Byrne:** A Dublin Corporation meeting attempting to register a protest against the new Bill was ruled out of order by its chairman, Alfie Byrne. Dan Morrissey of Tipperary and R.S. Anthony, councillors, were expelled from the Labour Party on policy issues. Morrissey then joined Cumann na nGael.

**Fianna Fáil Árd Fhéis:** De Valera, at the Fianna Fáil Árd Fhéis on October 27, listed a six point programme of government consisting of:-

- (i) removal of the Oath
- (ii) a second election would follow to permit wider representation
- (iii) the Constitution would be revised
- (iv) the post of Governor-General would be abolished, and a President of the Republic would replace it.
- (v) large holdings would be divided
- (vi) industry would be developed

Referring to the shooting dead of Supt. Curtin near Tipperary town in March, De Valera had this to say; 'no one in this country had the right to take human life. If they did not realise that there would be an end to everything. If Fianna Fáil got into power.... they would maintain order'.

**British Election Result:** The British general election of October 27 returned a

'national government', which was heavily Conservative, to power. Ramsay Mac Donald, as Prime Minister, presided over 549 members of whom 469 were Conservative, against an opposition of 61 of whom 51 were Labour. The result, declared the *Irish Times*, was a victory for the people's commonsense.

**An Phoblacht Seized:** 2,000 copies of *An Phoblacht* were seized by police at the end of October from its offices in St. Andrew Street. The paper was seized also from newsboys in Waterford, Limerick, Galway and Dundalk. In Tralee, the New Ireland Assurance Co. offices were entered and John Joe Sheehy held, but released three days later. A week later 6,000 copies of *An Phoblacht* were seized from Fodhla Printing Works, Dublin.

**Three Galway Men:** Three Galway men, charged on November 5 with armed robbery, were sent before the Military Tribunal.

**'Drastic Retrenchment':** Ernest Blythe, Minister for Finance, in a pre-budget address, promised drastic retrenchment, in the face of world depression.

**Round-Up:** A countryside round-up of activists netted Robert Walsh in Waterford, Brian Corrigan of Achill, Sean Mulgrew of Mulrany and John O'Shea of Cahirciveen; all to go before the Military Tribunal. There were other arrests in Co. Longford, and in Dublin, a Cathal Brugha Street meeting was proclaimed; the clamp down was ramping into gear.

**Armistice Day, or Poppy Day,** saw the usual demonstrations in Dublin. The Anti-Imperialist League, in truth the I.R.A., confronted a ban on their College Green meeting by proceeding anyway, with Madame Despard, Maud Gonne and Sidney Gifford ('John Brennan') addressing a very large gathering, which subsequently marched to Henry Street, to a meeting being addressed by Fr. J.F. Sweetman of Mount St. Benedict, tobacco grower and long time nationalist. Civic guards arrived at this stage in lorries, wading in and attacking the meeting.

In Cork city an Anti-Imperialist meeting, at which Hugo Flynn, Martin Corry, and Sean Mac Swiney were listed as speakers, was proclaimed and did not proceed.

**Economic News:** Imports into the state recorded a drop to £50m, while exports were down to £37m.

**Briscoe Home Raided:** The home of Robert Briscoe, Fianna Fáil T.D., of Ballybrack, Co. Dublin, was raided on November 11, and a poem by Constance Markievicz together with other papers removed. Briscoe, a gun purchaser in the Tan struggle, explained afterwards that he had been in commercial correspondence with the U.S.S.R., and he now expected to be branded with a 'communist plot' charge.

**India Conference Fails:** It was announced on November 14, that the long heralded India round table conference in Whitehall had collapsed due to inability to reach agreement between Muslims and Hindus. Days later, Mahatma Gandhi announced that, regretfully, he could not visit Dublin as arranged, due to the pressure of affairs.

**Statute of Westminster:** The text of the Statute of Westminster Bill was issued on November 14. It gave effect to resolutions passed at Imperial Conferences in 1926 and 1930 in which the Free State had participated. Introduced by J.H. Thomas, Dominions Secretary, Stanley Baldwin and Sir Herbert Samuel, it was a remarkable step forward in offering freedom to the Dominions. Among its relaxations there



were clauses which enabled freedom from the Colonial Law Act of 1865; that no law of a Dominion would be void through being repugnant to English law. Dominions could legislate for extra-territorial operation over seas and islands; while British Acts now being passed would no longer operate in the Dominions. There were eight protective clauses.

**Winston Churchill** later sought to exclude the Free State from the benefit of the Act, and in this he was supported by Col. John Gretton M.P; a move which explains the animosity of Republicans for the Bass beverage; Gretton being a director of the firm of Bass, Ratcliffe and Gretton, and long standing opponent of any concession to Ireland.

Cosgrave countered this by writing a letter to Prime Minister Mac Donald; 'we have reiterated time and again that the Treaty is an agreement which can only be altered by mutual consent'. Taking his cue, possibly from Churchill, Baldwin, in a message to Cosgrave, quoted November 25, warned him that the Free State Constitution could be modified only in conformity with the Treaty. The Statute became law on December 10, 1931. De Valera, waiting in the wings, would be guided when the time arrived, by Michael Comyn S.C, on how to take advantage of it.

**Its Effect:** The effect of the Statute was to enable De Valera in the subsequent six years to initiate the constitutional changes which he did without transgressing English law or the terms of the 1921 Treaty.\*

**Advising Calm:** James Fitzgerald-Kenney, Minister for Justice, was reported at this time at a meeting in Mayo reading an I.R.A circular to the units 'advising calm in the face of coercion'.

**No Relief Money:** President Cosgrave was quoted, November 17, at a public meeting in Waterford city stating that 'there would be no money this year for winter relief schemes'.

**Peoples Rights:** A new organisation, Peoples Rights, had their announced public meeting proclaimed. John Burke and Sean Coughlan of Ballinrobe, together with Michael Kelly of Galway, were arrested on a Saor Éire charge.

**Baden Powell Scouts:** Young men were reported on November 26 invading a Cork city ballroom, where they ripped out electric cable to prevent a rally by Baden Powell boy scouts. Six were later arrested and fined.

**Police Raids:** Extensive police raids were reported in Dublin, Galway and Laois.

**Desmond Fitzgerald:** In a strongly delivered speech in Bray, Desmond Fitzgerald, now Minister for External Affairs and father of Garret, upheld the Commonwealth connection, the Oath, and payment of the Annuities.

**Tribunal Commences:** The Military Tribunal commenced its operations on November 19 in an upstairs room of Collins Barracks. There were 20 young men and boys before it; 19 on illegal assembly charges from the Hardwicke Hall. Numbers gave undertakings and were released. Sean Mulgrew of Mulrany was sentenced to six months, and deportation to the U.S. Five days later Máirtín Calligan, of Co.

\**Let the boys know, said Michael Comyn, meeting Maurice Twomey on the street in Dublin at this time, that we can have the Republic without firing a shot. I have prepared a memo for the Chief on the Statute. Survivors.*

Clare, received six months; a number of others received short terms.

**Rail Link Breached:** The narrow gauge rail link between Derry and Letterkenny was reported breached in December.

**Gilmores Sentenced:** George and Harry Gilmore, having tried escaping from Mountjoy while on remand for the Killakee dump in mid-October, were brought before the Tribunal on December 7, where they displayed a spirited attitude. There had been no trap mine there; that was a police story. The twin enemies of Ireland were British Imperialism and International Capitalism. Both were at heart pacifists, they asserted. George was sentenced to five years; severe for those days, while Harry received three years, both inclusive of contempt charges.

**Germany in Trouble:** Weimar Germany continued to sink into deeper economic difficulty while struggling to stay solvent.

**Frank Ryan:** Frank Ryan was arrested on December 8, in the *An Phoblacht* publishing office at 12 St. Andrew Street. He was conveyed to the Bridewell and days later to Mountjoy. On December 10, 12 men were bound to the peace by the Tribunal.

**India:** Passive resistance was resumed in India under Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru in mid-December; the former with Patal, being arrested early in January 1932. *The Irish Times* expressed itself editorially in terms strongly opposed to Congress; the arrests marked the commencement of the Congress struggle for independence.

**James Vaughn:** The official report of his death on Christmas morning, after being held for some days in Ballinamore Barracks, described him as a prominent I.R.A. leader in south Leitrim. Medical testimony was that he suffered from influenza, measles and congestion of the lungs. There were no marks of violence.

**'Ruffians':** 'A crowd of worthless ruffians' was Ernest Blythe's description of the I.R.A. in an address prepared for the forthcoming election.

**Spain:** In Spain, the government of President Don Manuel Azana invoked martial law, while Catalonia, having declared itself a republic, altered its title to one of *communist* republic. The Jesuit order in Spain was dissolved.

**China Invaded:** The Japanese Army invaded Shanghai in the opening act of what would be a long drawn out war.

## CHRONOLOGY: THE YEAR 1932:

**Election Reportage:** There is not a single ship upon the slipways of Queen's Island, reported the *Irish Times* January 29; but upon southern political affairs its reportage upon the upcoming general election was very favourable to Cumann na nGael; Fianna Fáil being restricted to a single column on page 2. In the edition of February 9, the paper, along with the *Irish Independent*, carried a full page advertisement with the banner headline, in reference to Fianna Fáil, *Sanity or Suicide?* Election meetings were heckled in lively fashion; epithets, such as *Freemasons*, or who shot the seventy seven, being bestowed on Cumann na nGael: while Fianna Fáil were *gunmen*, or *communist*. Amid the verbal mauling the Cosgrave party announced that abolition of the Oath, 'without a shadow of doubt', would be a breach of a solemn treaty. The gunmen, they declared, are voting Fianna Fáil; the communists are voting Fianna Fáil. On February 8, there were three hours of disorder at the final Cumann na nGael rally in College Green.

**Place in Empire Imperilled:** In a final appeal to voters, the *Irish Times*, then read mostly by loyalist people and with circulation hovering below 35,000,\* declared that 'the Free State's place in the Empire, and the brilliant prospects of economic benefits, will be imperilled by the election of Fianna Fáil'.

The Minister for furze bushes, was Hugo Flynn's description of rival Patrick Hogan, Minister for Agriculture.

**Seditious Libel Charge Against Irish Press:** The official report of four charges of seditious libel against the new *Irish Press*, and its editor Frank Gallagher, was heard over ten days immediately prior to the election, from January 26, to February 9. The case arose out of the publication of charges of maltreatment in garda barracks. The charges were proven, and on February 17, each defendant was fined £100 but costs were not allowed. The words of the judgement showed that the Tribunal was not satisfied that the insinuations were baseless.

**Two Die in Leitrim Affray:** On the day prior to the election a startling event occurred in Co. Leitrim. Ex T.D Patrick Reynolds, with Detective Mc Geehan and others, called to the home of Joseph Leddy at Fenaghbeg, Ballinamore. Reynolds, in an aggressive mood, accused Leddy of canvassing for his opponents, assaulted him and threatened to have his R.I.C pension withdrawn; Leddy, being ex-R.I.C, who had resigned in sympathy with the national cause, following which he had been granted a Saorstát pension. At that Leddy seized a shotgun, while Mc Geehan drew his revolver. Leddy instantly fired, shooting dead both men. He was later charged with manslaughter, receiving a twelve month sentence.\*\* Mc Geehan was implicated in the death of Capt. James Vaugh, of the I.R.A, whose inquest, with an unsatisfactory verdict, had closed the previous Saturday; but other than that, the affray had no republican connotations.

**Army Comrades Association:** This right wing leaning organisation was formed

\* Current circulation exceeds 98,000

\*\* Mrs. Reynolds, elected T.D for many years afterwards, was awarded £1050.00 compensation. Mc Geehan's father was refused compensation. See Packey Joe Dolan.

- evidently in the belief that Fianna Fáil might win the election - at a meeting in Wynn's Hotel, on February 10. Dr. T.F. O'Higgins presided, and General Richard Mulcahy was present. Ostensibly, it would be an organisation of ex-Free State officers, who had had pre-Truce service in the I.R.A.

**The '32 Election:** The election of February 14, 1932, brought Fianna Fáil to power with 72 deputies, to Cumann na nGael's 57, but with Farmers and Independents leaning towards it. De Valera was thus forced into an alliance with the seven deputies of a much depleted Labour Party.\* The Cosgrave government had reduced old age pensions, teachers' and policemen's salaries in 1931, when Blythe could see no alternative to an austere budget. Their fall was thus expected; nonetheless, had Cosgrave waited six months, basking in the limelight of the Eucharistic Congress, he might have scraped home. For Lemass, O'Kelly, Derrig, Ryan, Aiken and Rutledge of the new cabinet, it was a close enough one; without the strong nationalism of the four months old *Irish Press*, not to overlook their skilled impersonations, they would not have won.

**De Valera's Promise:** In his first victory address, De Valera promised that he would abolish the Oath, repeal the Public Safety Act, and retain the Annuities. Every section of our people, he added, will now, without sacrifice of principle, be able to attend the national assembly.

**In Negotiation Avoid Being Reasonable:** Coogan, in his *De Valera* quotes from conversations De Valera had with his close publicity aide Frank Gallagher. *The greatest danger of all in negotiations is reasonableness*, he remarked; and over the next six years he would act upon that text in his dealings with the British Government.

Surprisingly, he thought, the Southern Irish were nearer the English in character than the Northerners.

**Hair Shirts:** He taunted the opposition that their policy was a silk shirt for some and a hair shirt for others. If there are to be hair shirts at all it shall be hair shirts all round. Easy to speak like that, Coogan remarks, having just moved from a simple house on Serpentine Avenue to a residence *Bellvue* on five acres at Cross Avenue, Blackrock. He does concede that, over the next 16 years, he was to work himself unsparingly and those around him.

**Appointments:** Ministers and Ministers for Justice: On March 9 the Dáil reassembled, with De Valera nominated as President of the Executive Council, James Geoghegan, Minister for Justice, and Conor Maguire, Attorney-General. Both of these were middle of the road law men; neither of them having a Republican background, although Maguire had briefly been a Sinn Féin judge. P.J. Rutledge, who would replace Geoghegan in February 1933 remained, with one short break, as Minister for Justice, until September 1939 when he was replaced by Gerald Boland. Senator Connolly from Belfast was appointed to Posts and Telegraphs; Frank Aiken to Defence; James Ryan to Agriculture; Sean Mc Entee to Finance; Sean T. O'Kelly, to Local Government.

**A Menace:** I regard the I.R.A menace as the only serious factor in the present sit-

\* Fianna Fail 72. Cumann na nGael 57. Independents 13. Labour 7. Farmers 4. Total 153.

uation, said Ernest Blythe; many in Cumann na nGael were unable to decide to what extent the new government would be beholden to the I.R.A.

**O'Duffy, Neligan, Sheehan Go:** On March 6, Eoin O'Duffy, Commissioner of the Garda Síochána, announced his resignation from the National Athletic and Cycling Association (N.A.C.A.); his position there having become untenable. He ceased to be Commissioner on February 22 1933 and, although offered a civil service post on equal pay, choose not to accept it. In December 1932, Col. Neligan, Chief Superintendent at Garda H.Q., was relieved, being transferred to the Land Commission shortly after. Also transferred was the Principal Officer of Prisons, Sheehan.\*

**Blood Brothers:** In the first issue of *An Phoblacht* on March 12, with their blood brothers now in power, Maurice Twomey took the opportunity to declare; *the Army of the Republic. Where it Stands*. Volunteers co-operated personally in the drive to eject Cumann na nGael, without hiding the fact that they believed the alternative administration offered the people could not lead them to re-establish the Republic and achieve their freedom, said Moss Twomey. The Irish Republican Army must continue its work, and cannot escape its role as the vanguard of the Freedom Movement. An I.R.A statement declared; 'the terrorist police campaign which was to uproot our organisation has already failed'. It then called upon volunteers in south Galway, who had carried out illegal 'funding operations', to support the local Working Farmers organisation. That case however, had been treated as one of common robbery; when releases came they were not then included, although the three concerned were released shortly after. A note in the issue at this time referred to James Vaugh, 'beaten up and killed' by policemen in Ballinamore before Christmas\*\*. He had been manhandled by heavy gang members O'Donovan and Mc Geehan on Christmas Eve in Ballinamore, the report said.

By mid-March Republicans were reviewing 'how each county had fared under coercion'; although be it said, the level of Cumann na nGael coercion fell short of what was to come under Fianna Fáil. Kerry had suffered worst, although not so bad evidently; and in Co. Mayo some clergy were said to have 'co-operated' with police, although on the actual details of this 'co- operation' the report was singularly lacking.

**Army Comrades' Association:** A general convention was held at Wynn's Hotel, on March 17, at which 200 ex-F.S Army officers were present. Col. Austin Brennan was elected President, but he resigned shortly after. He was succeeded by Dr. T.F O'Higgins; Commdt E.J. Cronin had been appointed secretary.

**On to the Republic!** The late government, intoned Peadar O'Donnell, did not just fall; it broke its neck after loosing its head. So Fianna Fáil, the late 'gunmen' - some of whose T.D's were still members of the I.R.A - now held the reins of power, and De Valera, with whom Peadar had a more than sympathetic relationship, was seated in the chancellery of Merrion Street. There now appeared to be no obstacle to

\*.See earlier reference on Sheehan.

\*\* See Packy Joe Dolan

an all-out 'On to the republic' policy, and the I.R.A would be in the vanguard.

**Article 2 A Suspended:** An official order of the Executive Council of March 18, suspended Parts ii, iii, iv, v of Article 2A of the Constitution.

**Oath to Go:** On April 20, the new government introduced the Constitution (Removal of Oath) Bill. Obstructed by the Senate, which considered that it should be negotiated with the British government, the Bill did not pass into law until May 3, 1933.

**Victory Celebrations:** Mass open air meetings were the norm at that time, and 30,000 Dubliners, the denizens of the crowded Liberties and Gardiner Street, welcomed the released 20 prisoners in College Green. With the space from Trinity College to Dame Street, and into the colonnaded cul-de-sac of Foster Place, packed wall to wall; trams wedged in, and lamp posts used as perches, George Gilmore told of his hardships over the few months he had been in Arbour Hill since the arms dump discovery on Lord Massey's estate.

Refusing prison clothing, he was wrapped daily in towels; he had been allowed no book except the prison bible, and had been three days on , and three days off, bread and water, as a punishment. Others locked in with him, although evidently not subject to the same rigours, were his brother Harry, Frank Ryan, (whose brother died while Frank was held), T.J. Ryan, Claud O'Loughlin\*, Dick Stephens, George Mooney, John Sheehan, Sean O'Shea, John Martin O'Connell, Tom O'Driscoll, Tom Breen, Brian Corrigan, Sean Mulgrew, Sean O'Farrell, Michael Skerry, Jimmy Hannigan and John O'Connor.

**Sean Hogan of Co. Clare** was at last released from Maryborough, as was Con Healy; while Sean Mc Guinness came out of Mountjoy. In the midst of the celebrations, Sinn Féin issued a sharp reminder that Leinster House was not Dáil Éireann, quoting the rhetoric of De Valera in Tralee 1925; 'our business is to stand fast and firm, and fast and firm we shall stand even if we are reduced to the last man. We will not contribute to the stampede of the nation'.

**Britain Warns On Oath:** On March 24 Britain - The Free State had High Commissioner Smiddy in London, but the U.K who had no representative in Dublin - sent a warning note on the Oath, and on the Annuities, remarking that there was 'considerable perturbation' throughout the Commonwealth. De Valera was said to be pondering his reply when W.B. Yeats intervened; 'Ireland will not be a penny-worth more loyal if she takes an oath. The London County Council takes no oath, and it governs far more millions than the Free State'.

**Contentions Follow:** De Valera replied on April 6, that the Oath was a domestic matter and it would be abolished. As to the Annuities, Britain had no legal right to them. He refused to send delegates to London to discuss either. At a packed meeting in heavy rain in Ennis on April 10, he declared that the national honour was at stake, and that there would be no turning back on the Oath. On the Annuities, he called for Britain to produce proof of her claim, while warning farmers in the audience to continue paying. Britain responded in a note of April 9; 'what is actually

\* See Christy Quearney

raised now is the repudiation of the 1921 settlement as a whole. The British government adheres to the view that the Oath is an integral part of the Treaty.'

**Easter Message:** For the Army's Easter message, Frank Ryan declared: - One Ireland, an Irish Republic; One government, a government of the Irish Republic; One army, an army of the Irish Republic. These were the aims of our great Dáil: these too are our aims. We have clung to them in the face of relentless tyranny; tyranny is overthrown; we survive. Shall we abandon in a time of peace the aims for which we strove in war? Shall we turn traitor to our great dead? We shall not. *Ní siothcháin go saoirse*. Ten thousand attended the Easter commemoration in Glasnevin, with dozens of similar triumphal gatherings throughout Ireland. The Army Council however, warned amid the jollification; 'we feel it our duty to state that an endeavour will be made to drive the new ministry of Southern Ireland step by step into conflict with the Republican Movement'. And Peadar O'Donnell inquired; 'will the removal of the Oath be what the Treaty was; a better basis for attacks upon Republicans?'

**Old Gang:** The C.I.D are still spying upon Republicans, *An Phoblacht* complained a week later, calling for their withdrawal; while the Dublin Brigade issued a repudiation of a Dublin republican group who had waited upon ministers to complain of unemployment; elsewhere there was a disparaging remark upon poet Pádraig Colum for writing an article in the U.S lauding Cosgrave. Meanwhile the Movement was chiding the new government against any hasty negotiations with England; and dissatisfaction was expressed that 'old gang servant' Eoin O'Duffy, Col. David Neligan and Major Joe Sweeney were still around.

**Irish Rosary:** In April, Peadar O'Donnell commenced a court action for libel, against the monthly Jesuit religious magazine *Irish Rosary*. It had stated that in 1929 O'Donnell had been sent to study in Lenin College in Moscow, although he had never visited Russia. There was a host of Catholic magazines which at that time carried considerable influence, some of them bitterly anti-Republican. O'Donnell was encouraged to take his action, but facing a partisan judge - Hanna and jury - he lost it; the position was difficult, and the result did not help O'Donnell's standing.

**Two Deaths:** Two deaths occurred in April; Capt. W.A Redmond, son of John; to the end, chimed *An Phoblacht*, virulently Imperialist and opposed to any breakaway. He dropped dead at a funeral on April 17. And Mrs. Pearse, mother of Pádraic, Willie and Margaret. The latter lived on; was appointed later senator, and virtuously voted with Fianna Fáil in all of its coercive outings of the forties.

**Jacobs Predict Disaster:** The Dublin biscuit firm, W & R Jacob, warned that half of its work force would be unemployed if the Free State left the Empire.

**Hindenburg Stays President:** With an impoverished Germany wobbling towards Nazism, the presidential election of April 10 returned the aged Hindenburg, with 19.3m votes to Adolph Hitler's 13.4m.

**C.I.D Defended:** *An Phoblacht* then posed the question; if the Oath goes will there be an offensive against the Republican Movement? Indeed there would be, it thought, but it was early days yet. Two pointers were the invitations to Arbour Hill ceremonies issued to 'former Staters', and a defence by James Geoghegan, the Minister for Justice, of former C.I.D actions when questioned by three Fianna Fáil deputies. In response the paper listed 19 C.I.D men convicted of assault in earlier

years. Four weeks later, Minister Geoghegan, in the Dáil, defended his position, declaring that punishment by the court must be considered sufficient; overlooking the fact that the fines imposed were nominal.

**Armagh Kidnap:** James Nixon was seized on April 18 in Armagh city and conveyed outside the town where he was manacled to a railing with a note pinned, *Spies Beware I.R.A.*

**Disorders at Meetings:** 'You have got to stop disorder at meetings', warned a telegram from Cork Cumann na nGael following disorders at a Cosgrave meeting there.

**Mac Entee's First Budget:** There were many new taxes and duties on imports; income tax moved up from three shillings and six pence to five shillings (17p to 25p). The Tariff Commission of the previous government was allowed to lapse.

**Oath Abolition Frustrated:** May 19 saw the bill to abolish the Oath passed by An Dáil, but 18 days later that move was rendered inoperative at Senate level by their amending sections 2 and 3.

**Pensions:** Fianna Fáil would introduce in the next two years all-embracing service pensions acts; minuscule sums, but attractive at a time of very low incomes. In practice they were designed to tempt away support for the physical force movement, and in that they succeeded. At this early stage the Army Council sought to counter this by stating their opposition to pensions, except in the case of volunteers who had been incapacitated, or where there were involved dependants of men who had given their lives in the struggle. Aiken announced that one qualification for a pension would be that the applicant had tried to evade capture by the Free State forces.

**'Threat' from Industrialists:** There were whispers by some industrialists against the new government policy; Gallagher's cigarettes threatened to close down their new East Wall factory (and they did), while Jacobs and Guinness also made noises. 'Take Them Over' chorused *An Phoblacht*, while the next number shouted in a headline 'War to the Knife', calling for control of big business which they feared was then trying to railroad Fianna Fáil. J. H. Thomas, Secretary of State for the Dominions, was the principal named protagonist in the escalating row over tariffs and annuities; the tariff aspect of which, it was sought to settle at an Imperial Conference to be held in Ottawa. *An Phoblacht*, fixing its eye sharply upon this, advised 'not an inch'.

**Belfast Arrests:** Arthur Thornberry and James Connolly were imprisoned in June in Belfast for lifting five rifles from the home of an Orangeman called Newell; this resulted in a protest meeting in Dublin; it was a time when there were only four short term prisoners in Belfast\*. In Westmeath, Mick Price was addressing an aeridheacht on the 'Task of the I.R.A. - undoing the conquest and changing the social order'.

**Turf Promoted:** A scheme to promote nationwide, the use of turf as a fuel, was commencing. All military barracks henceforth were ordered to burn turf. Sir John Purser Griffith was also at this time an almost lone promoter from his works at Turann.

\* See Bob Bradshaw.



**Start of the Economic War:** J.H. Thomas and Lord Hailsham - Douglas Hogg - arrived in Dublin to commence a parley with De Valera. Hogg then - and his son today - being not over-fond of Ireland. Earlier, Thomas had warned that, while there would not be a gun boat in the Liffey, Irish people at work in Britain might be treated as aliens. One of the entourage described De Valera as a 'complete dreamer with no grasp pf realities'. That was far from being the case. A conference was arranged for June 10 in London attended by him; accompanied by Sean T. O'Kelly and the new London Commissioner, J.W Dulanty. On the other side were P.M Ramsay Mac Donald, Stanley Baldwin, Sir Herbert Samuel and J.H. Thomas. 'It was not found possible to reach agreement'. On June 19 therefore, Westminster introduced in Parliament, a bill to tax the mainly agricultural imports from the Free State. The 'Economic War' was about to commence.

**Papel Legate Arrives:** The Papel Legate, Cardinal Lorenzo Lauri, with a flight of aircraft hovering over, arrived upon the mail boat at Dun Laoire, on June 21, to a tumultuous welcome, prior to the inauguration of the International Eucharistic Congress. From every rail station between Belfast and Portadown came reports of train windows broken by stone throwing loyalist mobs.

**Home Industry:** Fianna Fáil had commenced to protect the home market and create a foundation for home industry, which they were to do quite successfully, with a tariff barrier; *An Phoblacht* encouraged this in a piece giving sound advice on the prudent use of tariffs while combining banking, credit and currency as a state monopoly. De Valera would never, of course, go that far, although in developing numbers of state organisations - Bord na Mona, Aer Lingus, the Industrial Credit Corporation, the Central Bank, and many more - he took tentative steps in that direction (until the backward retreat of Sean Lemass in the mid-sixties, and the unravelling into privatisation of the nineties).

**Downhearted:** Cumann na nGael, down in the dumps that the 'gunmen' had not brought pistols into Leinster House, had started a new weekly newspaper, *United Ireland*, replacing their previous organ, called *The Star*, of all things.

**Lady Gregory** had passed away, and her residence at Coole, Co. Galway, bequeathed to the nation, was shortly to be demolished by an unthinking officialdom. *An Phoblacht* bestowed praise, but qualified that by remarking that her place would have been higher had she written less. She was the 14th child of 18 of Galway whiskey distillers Persse, whose estate lay close to Athenry

**Aiken Scheme:** *The Irish Press* meanwhile announced an Aiken scheme for the Army; he was proposing a form of national guard upon a territorial basis, offering 'athletic development more than mere military training'. *An Phoblacht* frowned upon such moves, but it was to come anyway with his Volunteers in 1934, and the F.C.A\* of the wartime years.

**Document No. 2:** De Valera had made a recent utterance upon, to him, the pet

\*.Forsa Cosanta Áitiúla

subject of 'external association', an essential element of his January 4, 1922 Document No. 2; and one that had indeed appeared in the Treaty negotiations of November 1921 in Downing Street (and was rejected from the British side). It would be rushed through overnight in the abdication crisis of December 1936, when 'the King' became an instrument of 'external association'. *An Phoblacht* looking back, in 1932, and foreseeing what might yet happen, would have none of this; Republicans, it said, would insist on 'absolute sovereignty, without equivocation'.

**Catherine Wheelright:** De Valera's mother, Catherine Wheelright passed away at this time in New York, and Hannah Sheehy-Skeffington penned an appreciation.

**C.I.D In Uniform:** Meanwhile the new government was implementing an unwritten commitment by transferring many of the mufti attired C.I.D to uniform: this did not satisfy the Movement however who countered with a headline that 'the gunmen must go'; dismissal for political reasons was however an unlikely eventuality. In a riposte, *United Irishman* hoped now that Fianna Fáil would tell the I.R.A 'where to get off', and that they would cease parading with them to Bodenstown. That, said *An Phoblacht*, is part 'of the Imperialist plan' to bring the administration into conflict with revolutionary organisations.\*

**Bodenstown 1932:** In preparation seemingly for a massive I.R.A turn out at Bodenstown, traditionally the last Sunday of June, the government lifted the ban upon all of the organisations listed in late October 1931 under the Constitution (Amendment no. 17) Act. 27 trains, buses, cars, bicycles, and on foot, brought 20,000 to hear Sean Russell speak; marshalled by Mick Price although, oddly enough, the official organ did not splash the report. Frank Aiken went there a few days later with a Free State Army contingent, a move which was seen as significant.

**Seán Ó Faoláin, Francis Stuart, Rosamund Jacob, Donn Piatt and Séamus Mac Grianna** appeared in the correspondence columns showing the level of *An Phoblacht* readership; while in October, among books reviewed, were ones by Frank O'Connor and Denis Johnston; both favourably.

**Britain Recovering Annuities:** Britain was out to recover the near equivalent of the Annuities by fair means or foul. On June 30, J.H Thomas and Lord President, Stanley Baldwin, announced 'an effort at recovery by instant steps', through duties of 20 per cent on Free State exports.

**Lough Foyle Dispute:** In the continuing fishery dispute with the London Society, it was reported at this time that they had 'swooped' on Inishowen fishermen in a large motor boat; ripping their nets and swamping the smaller boats.

**Foreign Firms Apply:** The government allowed it to be known, boastfully, that foreign firms were 'queuing up' to trade with the Free State.

**An Albert Power Bust** of Countess Markievicz was unveiled on July 2, by De Valera in St. Stephen's Green.

**Wm. Norton in London:** Seeking to settle the Economic War, William Norton, of the Post Office Workers' Union, and leader of the Labour Party, travelled to London; meeting George Lansbury, Stafford Cripps and Clement Attlee of the British party. It was unavailing.

\* At that time the C.I.D numbered under 250; at the present time the detective Branch exceeds 1300. Effectively the uniformed gardaí number 10,800.

**British Government Offer:** On July 4, the British Government offered to submit the dispute to a Commonwealth tribunal; but De Valera, fearing a packed house, and recalling the Boundary Commission, rejected that.

**Arms Imports?** There were frequent reports in these years of secret arms imports into west Cork. The subject surfaced again at this time in a Dáil question from Patrick Mc Gilligan.

**Thornberry and Connolly:** In Belfast, Lord Justice Best, sentenced Arthur Thornberry and James Connolly to eighteen months for raiding the home of T.C. Newell at Glengormley and seizing five rifles and a shotgun. *I am a Republican and I do not recognise this court*, Thornberry shouted.

**Spend Holidays in Ireland:** The rail companys joined into the spirit of patriotism; spend your holidays in Ireland, they called out in advertising.

**Apology Demanded:** Governor-General James Mac Neill, demanded an apology on July 11, for a, no doubt, intended slight, or series of slights; at receptions and functions. At first the government banned publication of his complaint and then shrugged it off. De Valera had nothing but contempt for Mac Neill and took care to show it. Earlier he had informed Maurice Twomey that he would replace him with *Seán na Scuab*.

**The First Republican arrested** under Fianna Fáil, and tried by ordinary court, was George Dempsey, upon an arms charge. He received three months for contempt, but was released three weeks later.

**An Address to the Orangemen:** Near mid-July, an Anti-Imperialist Rally was held in College Green addressed by Frank Ryan, Maurice Twomey, Hannah Sheehy-Skeffington, Maud Gonne, Mick Price, George Gilmore and Peadar O'Donnell. Price's well worn theme being, the Capitalist system cannot be reformed; it must be destroyed. Shortly after, the Army Council delivered their historic 'Address to the Men and Women of the Orange Order'. In an effort to get through in the high noon of their celebrations - the twelfth of July - the address called for the mass of the working farmers and wage earners to organise behind revolutionary leadership. We see no permanent solution of these evils, it went on, except by transfer of power over production, distribution and exchange to the mass of the people. It was fated to fall upon stoney ground. Continuing the campaign against any move towards 'external association', *An Phoblacht* was proclaiming, in a series of editorials, 'Nothing Less than a Republic'.

**A Tax on British Imports:** The Free State responded within a fortnight to Britain taxing Free State exports. Dublin announced, on July 13, that certain classes of British exports to the 26 Counties would have duties levied upon them.

**De Valera in London:** De Valera was invited at this time, by Ramsay Mac Donald, to London, but neither side would agree concessions. The Economic War would now enter a stern phase.

**Camp Near Glenarm:** R.U.C raided, July 19, a camp, over which the tricolour flew, at Harphill, near Glenarm; run by the Mc Kelvey club, Belfast. There were no arrests, but the flag was removed.

**Hugh Flynn and 'Priest' Mc Weeney** were remanded on July 24, to Sligo Jail, for raiding a house at Fenagh, close to Mohill.

**Import Duties Announced:** The promised retaliatory taxes were announced on July 26, and covered a wide range, including newspapers and magazines. Coal, then around two pounds a ton, had five shillings clapped on. Cheese imports were ended.

**Germany:** Under Vice-Chancellor Franz von Papen, announced on July 27, that it would commence a limited rearmament.

**Gerald Delaney,** of Darley Terrace, Pimlico, was released from a two months sentence by order of the Executive Council. He had been charged with possession of two revolvers and a rifle, but the jury found him not guilty. Judge Davitt then sentenced him to three months for contempt.

**Souless Capitalism:** In a rousing address at the Irish Trade Union Congress in Cork, William Norton, T.D, Leader of the Labour Party, declared; *the pioneer work of Labour would be to rid the Free State of souless capitalism.*

**Put C.I.D into Uniform:** However we were quickly wrenched back to old times with a report from Kilrush, where T.J. Ryan and George Gilmore were beaten up and wounded by C.I.D; George being badly hurt. An official inquiry was quickly ordered in Ennis where some bogus shooting at C.I.D men had occurred. Three of the C.I.D concerned in Kilrush were 'reprimanded'. Will they now be put in uniform, *An Phoblacht* inquired; proceeding then to list other 'demons' in the force; Byrne, Gill, Corry, Sherlock, Stubbins, Rogers, Pleich, Coughlan, Moore, Gantly.

**De Valera Speech:** Calling the clans together for a mass meeting in College Green on July 27, De Valera exhorted the thousands to buy Irish; and farmers to pay their Annuities. *It is our duty to stand by one another and to keep down imports.*

**Carrick on Shannon:** A mass Republican meeting in Carrick on Shannon at the end of July, heard Sean O'Farrell sound the same tune. There would be no forced sales and no tribute to England. Mick Price; in order to enforce tribute an economic war has been declared. George Gilmore said simply that, our aim should be to undo the English conquest of Ireland.

**German Stalemate:** The elections gave the Nazis 40 per cent. The Communists with five and a quarter million votes, increased their seats from 78 to 87.

**Dundalk Lay-Off:** Railway income, resulting from road competition, was at an all-time low. The biggest employer in Dundalk, the Great Northern rail works, announced on August 2, that it would lay off 700 men one week out of three.

**Co. Mayo Affair:** In an I.R.A raid on the home of Patrick Gavin of Belcarra, a young man was wounded by the legally held weapon of its owner, a retired army officer.

**Grant-in-Aid:** A two million grant-in-aid, to promote business and industry, was passed in An Dáil on August 5. Patrick Mc Gilligan T.D, complained that there were 14,000 unemployed in Dublin, to which De Valera responded; *I see little prospects of finding alternative markets.*

**Cinemas Visited:** As part of the ongoing campaign, cinemas in Waterford city were visited on August 5, and urged not to exhibit 'propaganda' films.

**Drumm Train:** There was a picture in the press on August 9, showing De Valera, with Dr. Drumm, at Portarlinton station examining their No. 2 train, after its trial run from Dublin. No. 1 set was regularly running on the Dublin-Bray route.

**Spanish Revolt:** A short lived monarchist revolt occurred in Spain on August 10; Madrid and Seville being the two areas affected. The leader, General Sanjurgo, was captured fleeing to Portugal.

**A.C.A Executive Meets:** The meeting of the Army Comrades Association heard that Col. Austin Brennan had resigned 'due to ill health'. Dr. T.F O'Higgins T.D was elected honorary general secretary. A statement afterwards called for the formation of a volunteer corps.

**The Affray at Kiltrush,** in which George Gilmore was concerned, arose from a local labour dispute, as a result of which two members of the C.I.D, Mc Connell and Muldowney, were placed to guard the employer's home at Cappa, one and a half miles from the town. An official statement was issued that the two C.I.D men were not armed. The I.R.A was quick to state however, that it was not involved in the particular dispute.

**Another Portmarnock Flight:** On August 18, Jim Mollison, a noted flyer, flew the Atlantic, from Portmarnock Strand to New Brunswick, in 30 hours. He was seen off by a well known Irish airman, Capt. Saul.

**Béal na Bláth:** The annual commemoration was celebrated on August 22, with 1,000 A.C.A in the march past, taken by General Richard Mulcahy.

**Donamon Castle Occupied:** The castle, in Co. Roscommon, owned by Thomas St. George Caulfield, who had it up for sale, was occupied for four days as an I.R.A camp. Police reports described the occupants as 'all of the farm labourer class and hatless'.

**Kiltrush Sequel:** In what the *Irish Times* described as a 'remarkable turn'; T.J Ryan and Gilmore were released while the conduct of the police would be looked into. There would be a court inquiry.

**German Turmoil:** There were daily reports of disorder and deaths from Germany, arising from left wing clashes with Nazis. Franz von Papen was invested Vice-Chancellor by President Hindenburg.

**Imperial Conference in Ottawa:** This important trade conference was the last Imperial occasion attended by the Free State. In the current situation of the Economic War, it had little relevance for Ireland. It was attended over four weeks by Sean T. O'Kelly and Sean Lemass; Dr. Jim Ryan was also present but returned earlier. With a severe decline in exports and imports, Free State trade was at its lowest level since 1927.

**Ennis Fusillade:** As a possible repercussion to the labour dispute in Kiltrush, an unexplained fusillade of fifty rounds were discharged at four detectives close to the Queen's Hotel, Ennis, on Monday night, September 5; there were no injuries.

**White Army:** The Blueshirt organisation had commenced referring to themselves as the 'White Army'. For a while they carried on marches a large white flag, and a tricolour.

**Dan Turley:** A note from Belfast in September welcomed home from Crumlin Road, Dan Turley, after four months, with a *céilí*

**Gun Raid:** An official report gave details of the attempt earlier to raid the home of an ex-army officer at Cloonagh, Castlebar; a raid which went wrong, with one of the party being wounded by the occupant's shotgun.

**De Valera's Statement on Arms:** In An Dáil on August 5, De Valera concluded a long statement upon the fact that while the I.R.A possessed a considerable quantity of arms; 'as long as there is no attempt to get arms, or as long as there is no attempt to publicly parade with arms, we are not going to go out after arms that are in the hands of individuals at the present time'.

**Rail Crisis:** As a result of road competition, the Irish rail systems were in a constant state of crisis, seeking cut-backs and wage reductions.

**Boycott British Campaign:** Turning the screw in the heightening anti-British atmosphere, since, in refusing to pay the Annuity monies, Westminster had clapped a levy in July upon live cattle, the Movement launched a boycott of British goods, extending it mainly to ales, sweets, and occasionally newspapers. It was not destined to be seriously hurtful, and it resulted in unnecessary confrontationalism, but it gave the urban troops something to do. Con Lehane, from Belfast, and not yet qualified as a solicitor, was appointed secretary of the League, with Donal O'Donoghue as chairman. It commenced immediately to warm up; being very active on picketing with, generally speaking, the larger shops making haste to co-operate or to withdraw merchandise from display. It was noted as a black mark against it, that *The Irish Press* refused a boycott advertisement.

**Stormont Ready:** The great Six County parliament buildings south of Belfast, had been completed for some time. Arrangements were being made that they would be opened by the Prince of Wales in November.

**Candid Speaking in Geneva:** As President of the Council, De Valera opened the current session of the League of Nations on September 26. His speech was highly critical, predicting its moral and political bankruptcy, which indeed was to happen. Completely ignoring the prepared script, his discourse was received in stoney silence. It was stated afterwards that it was customary to receive speeches in silence.\*

**Blueshirt Confrontation:** Confrontation was building up too against what would shortly be styled the 'Blueshirts', or Army Comrades Association. Founded in February by the middle officer retired class of the Free State Army, it was to undergo a number of organisational guises and name changes before being subsumed, in October 1936, into the ranks of Cumann na nGael, renamed Fine Gael.\*\*

Referred to at this time as the 'Pensioner' organisation, it was led by Dr. T.F. O'Higgins of the 'White Army', a name culled from the reactionary anti-Soviet groups. First reports of clashes came from Kilmallock and Mallow in October, where the slogan among Republicans was, *No Free Speech for Traitors*; a slogan coined and frequently used by Frank Ryan. *What Will the Bishops Say*, inquired Donn Piatt, in an article questioning their immunity from episcopal criticism while the I.R.A was lambasted. In Ballymahon, George Gilmore was telling the assembled I.R.A that, 'we must never allow the Army to generate into a tool of the Irish capitalistic class'.

\* The Irish Free State, we have noted, was elected to the Council of the League in 1930. De Valera's position as President at this time was a matter to a degree of rotation, but he fulfilled it capably.

\*\* Note 9 after the Frank Edwards entry in *Survivors* is a potted summary of Blueshirt history.

**James Mac Neill Relinquishes Office:** Four months before he need have done so, James Mac Neill, the 'slighted' Governor-General, called upon the King at Buckingham Palace, to relinquish his office. An official statement recorded that, 'in accordance with advice tendered to His Majesty by the President of the Executive Council, the King had approved of Mr. James Mac Neill relinquishing his office as Governor-General of the Irish Free State. It went on to say that he had behind him a distinguished service of 25 years in India.

**O.D.R Riots in Belfast:** Early October brought unusual news from Belfast where at first it appeared that Orange and Green factions were coming together in a struggle leading to a direct confrontation with the bosses in Stormont. It was not to be, of course, because the few radical Protestants there were quickly deserted by their following, leaving the 'Taigs' and the 'Fenians' vulnerable to the baton swinging R.U.C.\* When it was announced that the Prince of Wales would visit Belfast, and on such occasions royalty would invariably be photographed in Orange regalia tapping a drum, it was tantamount to ending the short lived alliance. Called, Outdoor Relief Riots, they sprang from a system of meagre payments to married men taken on for short spells of road works, for which as a general rule they were totally unsuited. The system was directed by a Poor Law Committee located in the Workhouse, where the City Hospital on Lisburn Road now stands. Newspapers had spoken of a riotous scene, with 15 arrested in Great Victoria Street, and of 250 admitted into the Workhouse.

**Trouble Continues:** What were described as 'hunger riots' in the papers of October 12, resulted in burning, looting and sniping continuing during the night, with a curfew then ordered. Police opened fire, resulting in casualties. Three days later, a settlement was reached, with a promise of 24 shillings per week being paid to outdoor relief workers. The Board of Guardians hertetofore had paid to married men only eight shillings per week and this had caused protesters from both religious sectors of the city to act in unison, parading from the Falls and the Shankill in the direction of the Workhouse. Sit-downs took place, stopping the trams; streets were trenched, and stones thrown. The police used batons and fire arms, and two men, Samuel Baxter, Protestant, and John Geegan, Catholic, in different streets, were killed. *Orange and Green are united in blood, declared An Phoblacht\*\*.*

Lord Craigavon, the Prime Minister, condemned the strike, blaming Republicans

\* See page 36 *Harry*, The Relief Riots.

\*\* For 10 days curfew had prevailed, with 3000 R.U.C men and B. Specials engaged with armoured cars mainly in the Falls area where, according to the R.U.C 'a reign of terror' had ensued. A strike meeting addressed by Tommy Geehan in St. Mary's hall called off the strike on October 16. 'Protestant and Catholic had marched together, and, upon last Tuesday, 11, October, had fought together'. He was supported by Rev. J. N Spence, Methodist, of the Central Mission.

Sam Baxter's funeral took place on October 14, with 2000 unemployed marching the two miles to the cemetery. 'Police search for communists' screamed one headline, after Tom Mann, veteran English communist was arrested and deported.

for it, although it had been spontaneous; the I.R.A, fragile creature that it was in Belfast, was not the inspiration. They took note of it however in Dublin; Maurice Twomey and George Gilmore travelling together to the city, but by that time, it was all over.

**Zinoviev and Kamenev in Trouble:** For long on top in Moscow, these two were expelled from the Communist Party; 'attempting to create a bourgeois Kulak organisation', was the charge. They were not to be executed until 1937.

**London Negotiations Off:** Accompanied by Sean Mac Entee, James Geoghegan and Conor Maguire, De Valera went for the third time to London on the Annuities issue; this time accompanied by a secretariat of nine. After two days of negotiations, the effort broke down in failure. *England is attempting to play the Shylock with Ireland*, said De Valera, reporting next day in An Dáil. A prolonged strike of all the Dublin daily newspapers commenced in October; *An Phoblacht* took advantage of this, with a daily one sheet news summary sold as 'stop press'.

Meanwhile the negotiations referred to above had been broken off in London; the paper headlining the event; *On Now Against the Old Foe*. Disenchantment was showing however when an article from Peadar O'Donnell was penned; 'the alternative to Fianna Fáil is not Cumann na nGael terrorism, and yet an alternative must be found'. Minister for Justice James Geoghegan was promoted a judge in November; being replaced by Mayo man P.J. Ruttledge; a delicate man, with mildly republican leanings.

**A.C.A Promotion:** A large advertisement in the daily newspapers - excluding the *Irish Press* - called for support for the Army Comrades Association. From its headquarters at 5 Parnell Square, it was signed by Seamus Burke, T.D, T.F. O'Higgins, T.D, William Cosgrave, T.D, and T.J. O'Donovan, T.D.

**John O'Shea:** When charged on October 16, with possessing two rifles, John O'Shea, of Rylane, Crusheen, refused to recognise the court or to accept bail.

**New Pensions Bill:** A new Pensions Bill, designed to draw wavering Republicans behind the government, was introduced on October 17. Entitled Army Pensions Bill, it would cover pre-Truce and Civil War service; as a catch-all net its purpose was widely defined to ensure that few would be excluded.

**More Import Duties:** A long list of more import duties was published on October 20.

**London Hunger March:** 2000 men were reported on 'a hunger march' from London, with radical Tom Mann, on the platform. Later it was broken up by baton charges in Hyde Park. Mann, novelist and Nobel winner, had left Germany.

**Mulcahy v Aiken:** An interesting exchange took place in the press of October 28, between Frank Aiken, Minister for Defence and General Richard Mulcahy on the position of the I.R.A in 1921: letters from state files were read.

**Restive Waterford:** Unemployed workers were reported restive in Waterford city.

**A.C.A v Republicans in Mallow:** In Mallow, on October 30, 1000 A.C.A marched, and were addressed by General Mulcahy and Commdt. Cronin. Running battles took place with Republicans, resulting in widespread fights and stone throwing. A number of shots were fired.



**No Bargaining With Free State:** In the Commons on October 31, rejecting a Labour amendment; J.H Thomas, Commonwealth Secretary, stated that there would be no bargaining with the Free State,

**James Mac Neill, Governor-General Retires:** Appointed on the first of February 1928, James Mac Neill, Governor-General, was effectively sacked upon October 31, 1932. An official report stated; 'correspondence which passed between Mr. Mac Neill and the President relating to certain incidents, had been published by Mr. Mac Neill, contrary to the government's expressed wish: the government had taken steps, without success, to prevent its publication'. The appointment of Domhnall Ua Buachalla as *An Seanascal* (high steward) was announced five days later.

**A Control of Manufacturer's Act** was passed in October. An essential arm of home spun industrial policy, it prescribed that an industrial company must be 51 per cent native controlled.

**FS Exports:** To prevent the closure of some factories, the government announced on November 2, that it would pay the duties levied on certain manufactured exports.

**Kilrush Vindication:** As a result of the inquiry, three of the C.I.D gardai involved were adjudged by Minister Ruttledge, guilty of violation of duty; disciplinary action had been taken. The report was criticised by Fitzgerald-Kenney; 'the Executive Council are now under the thumb of the I.R.A.'

**Germany:** 'Communists control riots in Berlin', was a headline of November 5, in the run up to the Reichstag elections when the Nazis paradoxically suffered a setback, sinking from 230 seats to 195 in a house of 582. Meanwhile the Communists advanced from 89 seats to 100.

**Stormy Scenes in Cork:** When W.T Cosgrave attempted to address a meeting in the Colosseum cinema in Cork on November 6, he was greeted with heckling and cat calls.

**S.F Meeting on Prince of Wales in College Green:** Protesting against an impending visit by the Prince of Wales to Belfast, in College Green, Sinn Féin mustered Brian O'Higgins, Charlie Murphy, (Cathal Ó Murchadha) Liam Gilmore, and Davie Matthews (of Belfast). The main matter troubling local authorities in the Six Counties was, should they, or should they not, have bunting in their towns, and should they, or should they not, give their schools a holiday.

**Britain Raises Duties:** Britain upped the ante in the press of November 8, with cattle and other duties going from 20 per cent to 40. As a result, 'ruinous' prices were offered at fairs for cattle. Co. Meath was described as 'faced with ruin'.

**Prince Arrives in Belfast:** After a build-up of weeks in the media, H.R.H the Prince of Wales, arrived at Donegall Quay, Belfast, to a salute of guns, and attended by Major John Aird.\* They proceeded then in a cavalcade of cars to formally open Stormont; pavements en route being protected by timber barricades to restrain the devoted citizenry. A loyal address from the Mayor and Council was then delivered at the City Hall, attended by lines of bemedalled flunkies. Portion of the branch line from Oldcastle to Kells in Co. Meath, was ripped up to prevent a train, said to be intended for Belfast, from travelling. In the succeeding days the Prince was towed

\* Earlier plans would have had him arrive more spectacularly by air.

around the usual Loyalist fountainheads; the shipyard, Gallagher's Tobacco factory and Queen's University, where, the papers related, he was greeted with a 'wild ovation' by the students. Lord Carson, who had returned from England to Belfast for the occasion, was unable to leave his car because of feeble health.

**Anti-Imperialist Rally:** In Belfast, in November, Mick O'Kane, Dom Adams and Bob Sloan were arrested. Cork reported scuffles at an A.C.A meeting there. In mid-November, close to Poppy Day, a crowded 'Anti-Imperialist Rally' took place in College Green, where 15000 were claimed in attendance. Sean Mac Bride presided, and the speakers included Con Lehane, Peadar O'Donnell, Sean Murray, Frank Ryan and Hannah Sheehy-Skeffington. There is no wedge, declared O'Donnell, between the Republican rank and file and the rank and file of Fianna Fáil. Ryan was critical of De Valera's promise of free speech (to 'traitors'). Sean Murray, late of the I.R.A and now of the Communist Party of Ireland, lectured in the Irish Workers' College at 63 Eccles Street, a property owned by Madame Charlotte Despard.

**Annuities to be Halved:** On November 16, De Valera announced in An Dáil, that legislation would be introduced 'to remit a substantial portion' of the annuity.

**Dev at the League:** Four days later, De Valera, presiding at the League of Nations in Geneva, heard of Japanese control of its puppet state of Manchuria (Manchukuo) debated. China's Dr. Yen; 'we have resisted Japanese aggression singlehanded for over a year'. The thirties was a decade during which Japan was to lean heavily upon, and finally to invade China. Meanwhile the League declared, that it would be wrong to recognise the occupation.

**Hitler Refuses:** Adolf Hitler was invited by President Hindenburg to form a government, but on November 23, declined, as he could not obtain the necessary parliamentary majority. It was his second attempt in five months.

**Continuing Rail Crisis:** The Rail Wages Board authorised, on November 26, an actual wage reduction of six per cent.

**Centre Party Formed:** Disenchanted with Cumann na nGael, James Dillon T.D, and Frank Mac Dermot announced the formation of a Centre Party.

**New Governor-General:** The papers of November 28 carried a picture of a trim gentleman, Donal Buckley, the new Governor-General succeeding James Mac Neill. His Majesty, the King, on the advice of the Executive Council of the Irish Free State, declared a report from London, has appointed Domhnall Ua Buachalla Esq, to the office of Governor-General of the Irish Free State. He would reside modestly at *Gortleiragh*, Monkstown, Co. Dublin. He will be content to accept a fraction of the salary, moaned the *Irish Times*, while the social importance of the Vice-regal Lodge will be extinguished. As he did not intend to present himself in London, he was sworn in, with only a few present, at his brother's house. An *opera bouffe*, the *London Times*, declared the event.

**Kilmichael:** In November, at Kilmichael, where Barry had so distinguished himself in ambush strategy on the 28th of that month in 1920, when 17 Auxiliaries were killed for three Volunteers, Maurice Twomey addressed the host; 'the Imperialist party is striving to drive the present ministry into a conflict with the I.R.A. There is grave reason to fear that they might succeed'.

**Film Burned:** A film of armistice day parades on view in the Town Hall picture

house, Rathmines, was forcibly removed and burned in the yard. A letter warning against showing 'imperialistic pictures' was left.

**Ernest Blythe Warns:** The member for Monaghan, and former Cumann na nGael Minister for Finance, in a speech on December 4, warned that while the I.R.A. was currently quiet, it had grown considerably. It was quiet, he said, 'because the government is going down the I.R.A. road'.

**Larkin Refused Mansion House:** Dublin Corporation, on December 5, refused James Larkin, junior, a councillor, the use of the Round Room, for a meeting celebrating the anniversary of the Russian Revolution.

**Boycott Campaign:** Two men, clearly I.R.A., were charged with threatening behaviour in connection with the boycott campaign in Dublin District Court; Mick Price, an activist in the campaign, was himself in the body of the court, and creating his own disturbance there; very much Price, he was then himself charged. The campaign made widespread use on walls and pavements of a door mat size stencil BOYCOTT BRITISH GOODS. One of the principal targets was Bass ale, controlled by Bass, Ratcliffe and Gretton. At an early stage of the Treaty negotiations, Col. John Gretton had made remarks, deemed to be insulting, in Parliament, which made the ale a high profile target.

**Waterford:** In Waterford city, for a Manchester Martyr commemoration, in late November, I.R.A. and Cumann na mBan paraded to hear George Gilmore speak. With the threat of military tribunals lifted, parading, frequently with augmented numbers in trench coats, was in vogue, reminiscent to some old volunteers of the 'Trucers' of 1921.

**Army Comrades:** There was a full turn out of A.C.A. to greet Dr. T.F. O'Higgins, in the Mansion House, Dublin, on December 5.

**Britain Cannot Repay:** On the matter of war debts owned to the U.S., the British government had made a plea to the U.S. for their total remission 'as payment means bankruptcy'. Washington was unmoved. A few weeks later, on December 11, Britain and France agreed to pay their 1932 instalment; in Britain's case it amounted to £95.5 million dollars. Six nations were paying, but five were defaulting; all would eventually default except Finland.

**Tomás Mac Curtain:** In mid-December, a raid upon the Bass depot in Cork was reported; while from the same city, Tomás Mac Curtain was fined for involvement in A.C.A. (Blueshirt) trouble\*.

**Bass Raid in Dublin:** Resulting from the boycott, raids were increasing against suppliers. In Dublin, on December 14, a lorry was held up near the North Wall, in Common's Street, by four young men who arrived by taxi. The entire consignment was tipped into a drain, and the barrels were then burned.

**Nora Connolly in Search of a Party:** Nora Connolly O'Brien was reported, in mid-December, calling for the formation of a new revolutionary party; an instance which shows the development of thinking towards the formation of Republican Congress 16 months later. Charlie Price, the 34 year old brother of Mick, died that

\*The shirt was not worn as an official garment until the Kilkenny County convention of the A.C.A. on April 8, 1933.

month; he had been O.C of No. 2 Company, 2nd. Battalion, in north side Dublin.

**Sean Lester:** In the absence of De Valera, Sean Lester is noted at this time, as Acting President of the League of Nations in Geneva. Lester had had a non-fighting role in the Tan struggle, going Free State, and being appointed Director of Publicity.

**Neligan Goes:** In the same month too, Col. David Neligan was compulsorily retired as C.I.D chief; accepting instead a post at equal pay in the Land Commission; in hindsight it was quickly seen that the Machiavellian De Valera had directed this sacking with a view to obtaining maximum support in the forthcoming election.

**An Phoblacht** continued to hear rumours of a new Free State Army unit; 'we believe that the establishment of a new unit is an attempt to divert men of military age from the revolutionary movement'.

**Civil Service Pay Cut:** The so-called bonus, the government announced on December 24, would be cut 7.5 per cent. It was not a pay cut of that amount, but a percentage cut in what was known as a cost of living bonus.

**Co. Leitrim:** For reasons arising from a dispute with the local P.P, an attempt was made on December 23, to blow up a galvanised dance hall at Gowel; damaging a timber floor. Some time previously, shots had been fired into the hall.

**Kilrush Battle:** Headed in the dailies of December 27, 'Battle in Kilrush Streets', it reported a mêlée between I.T.G.W.U strikers unwilling to unload coal boats for a private importer named Butler, who as a consequence had engaged his own gang.

**Senator Bourne Vincent:** He had just donated Muckcross House and 10,000 acres at Killarney to the nation. Concerned at the policies pursued by F.F, he issued a clarion call on the last day of the year for the formation of a national party that would oppose these policies. Although supported, 'to bring the country back to peace and progress', by the *Irish Times*, it was to fall upon deaf ears.

## CHRONOLOGY: THE YEAR 1933:

1933 would be the year when the sane men of Cumann na nGael allowed the quixotic Eoin O'Duffy to lead them towards lawlessness in a bewildering series of name changes, while the I.R.A., after De Valera had stolen their thunder, waited helplessly for him to deal with them; and that he would do in his own good time.

**Bloodshed in Berlin:** The reports of January 2, spoke of bloodshed in Berlin, with three dead and many injured in street fighting.

**Political Bombshell in Ireland:** Unexpected, but true to form, De Valera dissolved the Dáil on January 3. The election would be held on January 24.

**De Valera Seeks Overall Majority:** Early in January, De Valera dissolved parliament, readying the country for a general election. He sought the opportunity of escaping the spandrels of the seven member Labour Party, and calculated that, with the direct assistance of the I.R.A and their legions of fringe supporters, he could achieve it. No pact as such was announced, not did he himself come close to the principals, but the I.R.A in a Convention of January 7, endorsed their policy of working against Cosgrave. Ryan, Gilmore, Price and O'Donnell called for a new party, but Twomey, Mac Bride and Russell countered that, instructing also that *An Phoblacht* should be less a mouthpiece of the left in future; Frank Ryan's editorial would be 'looked at' henceforth.

**Violent Scenes at Cumann na nGael Meetings:** In view of De Valera's performance in 1932, the feeling was widespread that Cumann na nGael was West British, a haven for unpatriotic elements. 'Violent scenes' were reported at meetings held on January 8; under the Parnell statue in Upper O'Connell Street, and in Sligo.

**Sinn Féin Statement:** In a long discourse, published on January 9, the joint secretaries, Peadar Mac Andriú and Liam Mac Giolla Mhuire, announced, not unexpectedly, that the organisation would take no part in the election.

**Liverpool Cathedral:** Dr. Downey, Bishop of Liverpool, announced plans on January 9, for a vast cathedral designed by Sir. Edwin Lutyens, to which, in subsequent years, many Irish would subscribe. It would have 46 side chapels, and the weight alone, of the paper plans was over a half ton. Ultimately, only a mortuary chapel was built; the Lutyens cathedral was not proceeded with. The present glass pyramid ('Paddy's Wigwam') is a two million pound 'solution' by architect Gibberd. Lutyens, although Anglican, and a very great architect, had obtained the commission from Dr. Downey, on foot of a sketch on the back of a menu card presented to him by the architect at a dinner function in Liverpool.

**I.R.A Support Fianna Fáil:** 'While adopting this course', a message, all too transparent, from the Convention declared, 'we wish it to be clearly understood that we do not commit ourselves in any way to an acceptance of Fianna Fáil policy. The attitude of Fianna Fáil towards the Republican Movement is proven by the claim it makes for a legitimacy derived from the Cosgrave government; its failure to repeal coercive legislation, and its enforcement of it. Twelve months ago Fianna Fáil entered an election campaign pledged to release I.R.A prisoners. Today Fianna Fáil holds I.R.A prisoners in its gaols. We appeal to the Irish people once this election is over to rally for a free united Irish Republic where the great common people will be enthroned and the I.R.A will be their servants'.

A response of sorts came a fortnight later when De Valera declared in Navan; 'no section of the community will be allowed to arm. All arms will be completely at the disposal of the majority of the elected representatives of the people'. A full page advertisement in the current issue of *An Phoblacht* called for support for the Party.

**In Newry,** Hannah Sheehy-Skeffington, Assistant Editor of *An Phoblacht*, was arrested by R.U.C when she travelled to address a meeting. There was a Six County exclusion order against her as there was against hundreds of others. She was sentenced to one month in Armagh prison.

**Anarchist Revolt:** Unstable Spain, saw a short lived Anarchist revolt in Catalonia quickly put down.

**Luxury Trams:** New luxury eight wheel trams were introduced on January 19, on the Howth route. Later, they would travel on most Dublin routes.

**Disorders:** Disorder was now frequently reported at Cumann na nGael meetings; speakers being heckled and shouted down. There was a feeling of real patriotic fervour in this, and a conviction that, while Cosgrave, Mulcahy, O'Higgins, Blythe *et alia*, may have won the Civil War, others were top dogs now. Army Comrades Association men were charged with disorderly behaviour in Tipperary, while Tim O'Shea of the I.R.A., was arrested in Ennis. In Derry, in mid-January, Sean Mc Cool and Neil Gillispie\* were reported addressing a release the prisoners meeting; there was a mere handful inside at this time.

**George Moore Dies:** George Moore, poet and novelist, died on January 23, in London, one month short of his eighty first birthday. Scion of a patriot family, he was brother of Col. Maurice Moore of Ballyglass. On April 24, the cremated remains were buried under a tumulus on Castle Island, Lough Carra, inscribed in Gaelic and Ogham. In the closing decades of the 19th. century, Moore, studying art, had spent half a life time in Paris where he acquired, at a few francs a time, a considerable collection from the leading Impressionist painters. These he later gave in London to Lady Cunard; she quickly disposed of them hanging copies to replace them. Had they been given to Ireland they would have been even more valuable than the much appreciated Hugh Lane endowment.

**Hannah Sheehy-Skeffington:** She had been arrested in Newry nine days prior to January 24, after which she was sentenced in Armagh to one month's imprisonment by Mr. Austin, R.M, for entering the Six Counties in defiance of an exclusion order. 5,000 attended a protest meeting in Newry on Sunday, January 29, presided over by Malachi Quinn.

**Fianna Fáil Poll Near 50 per cent:** Fianna Fáil polled almost fifty per cent of the vote, increasing their seats by five, to 77, which was considered a significant figure; Cumann na nGael dropped to 48\*\*. De Valera now had his overall majority; he could drive forward. Adjutant-General Mac Bride I.R.A., in an order, following the result, declared; *all reports received from our commands indicate that the weight of the Volunteer organisation thrown behind the Fianna Fáil Party made a big contribution to the defeat of*

\* See *Survivors* for Neil Gillespie.

\*\* The full result; Fianna Fail 77, Cumann na nGael 48, Labour 8, Ind. Labour 1, Independents 8, Centre Party 11.

*the Imperialist elements. The election shows the resurgence of Republican feeling. The enthusiasm during the election clearly shows that their true leadership and their ideals are served within it.*

**Hitler, Chancellor of Germany:** What was headlined, Historic Day, was January 31, when Adolf Hitler was appointed Chancellor by President Hindenburg, in what was at first a coalition, but events would soon alter that. It opened with a massed parade of storm troops before Wilhelm Frick, the new Minister for the Interior. Ominously; he promised a Bill that would give more authority 'to secure longed for national rehabilitation'.

**Rail Strike in North:** A strike by all rail companies in Ulster, but affecting especially the Great Northern, broke out on the last day of January. It was to prove prolonged and bitter. Two days later, on February 1, the first fatalities occurred when a train was derailed at Dromiskin, south of Dundalk, with a loss of two lives. It had been manned by a temporary crew, and carried only seven passengers. To keep going, the rail company was now employing as drivers, administrative and volunteer staff.

**The Dilemma Facing I.R.A.:** 'Served within it'; but how served within it? By 1933 - 35 the I.R.A. had reached a peak of membership. They had allowed themselves to be used by Fianna Fáil to gain control of government, but De Valera was not going to allow Óglaigh na h-Éireann to steer from behind. There would be no back seat driver; he would be in control. There were many Republicans who thought De Valera would do the job for them; the 'on to the Republic' sloganeers; but he had his own agenda and that essentially was a Document No. 2 agenda. George Gilmore considered that at this time the respective policies of the two organisations hardly differed,\* while Sean Mac Bride remarked in 1933\*\* to Gilmore that 'if Fianna Fáil remove the Oath and the Governor-General then I feel we must work politically'.

Gilmore had been secretary to Sean Lemass in 1924 when Lemass was Minister for Defence in the Republican Government, and he continued to hold a high opinion of him into the late fifties.\*\*\* Maurice Twomey and Sean T. O'Kelly were close; at the time we speak of there is every reason to believe that they all rolled along club-like together on first name terms, attending the same functions and funerals together, although De Valera was different; he stayed aloof. Gradually, with the functions of government - it must never be forgotten that it was a government of Twenty Six counties while the objective of the I.R.A. was a republican government of thirty two - the courts and the police, divergence crept in. Pensions and appointments played a part in the falling away of their followers; was this then when disappointment festered and when the need to create a political organisation that would emulate the success of Fianna Fáil appeared; was this the inspiration for Republican Congress in 1934?

\* To this writer

\*\* Gilmore to this writer

\*\*\* Survivors

If it was, they were sadly mistaken in their programme; Daniel O'Connell understood just how far he could bring the Irish people; as did Parnell; as did De Valera. With conditioning, they might be pushed further, but hardly into the socialist republic prescribed by Congress; questions of land ownership alone would scuttle that.

**Sergt. Bevan, Tralee:** On February 2, Sergt. Bevan of Tralee, was fired on and wounded in the back. An official report stated that 'he had been active in a baton charge at a meeting addressed by Mr. Cosgrave on January 22.

**Bus Held Up:** A Belfast Catherwood bus on the Dublin to Dundalk route, was held up in Dublin by armed men. The driver and conductor were removed, and the bus was driven off.

**Germany: 'War' on Communists:** The Nazis, now with the bit between their teeth, would not be long in going from a parliamentary democracy to dictatorship. On February 2, they opened war on the Communist Party; the third largest, closing offices and suspending its newspapers.

**Col. Eamonn Broy** was appointed, February 3, to replace Col. D. Neligan. Broy, prior to 1921, had been in the Dublin Metropolitan police and had been arrested, for assisting Republicans that April, and then lodged in Arbour Hill. Both Broy and Neligan, at that time, had been in G. Division. (See a further reference.)

**Kerry Men Charged:** Johnny 'Machine Gun' Connor of Farmers Bridge, and Michael Kennedy of Lisnanoul, Castlemaine, were charged with taking a shotgun, during a search for arms, from the home of Timothy Cahill. Found also behind the kitchen door in the Connor home was a rifle. The two refused to plead.

**Germany: 'Bitter strife in Germany'** was the headline at the opening of the March election campaign, which the Nazis were going to win hands down as they already controlled vital ministries.

**Athlone Radio:** With its signal 2 RN, the radio mast at Moydrum, east of Athlone, was officially declared open on February 6. Heretofore there was a low powered mast only in Dublin, and one in Cork.

**Rail Interference:** With the Ulster rail strikes continuing and volunteers - black legs in union parlance - manning some trains, two incidents were reported on February 13; an attempt to blow a bridge and track at Ballybofey, Co. Donegal, and at Dunmurray, near Belfast.

**Governor-General Refuses:** The new Governor-General gave notice of his refusal to attend the Ireland-Scotland rugby international at Lansdowne Road.

**The Broy Harriers:** Eight weeks after Neligan had been moved aside, Col. Eamonn Broy was appointed head of the gardaí síochána on February 22. Ned Broy, as one of Collins' key intelligence men, had accompanied the delegates to London in October 1921; participating afterwards on the Free State side. His name became synonymous as 'Broy Harriers' with the newly recruited gunmen of the C.I.D; later 'the Branch' (Special Branch, officially); the detective force. In time, 'the Branch' would become an all pervasive highly paid secret police force.

**A New Army?:** Meanwhile, from the sidelines, the cry was 'Resume the Task'; we want a Republic free from foreign domination, but only Fianna Fáil, if they were so disposed, could deliver that. An editorial referred caustically to De Valera's recent proposal in Ennis that 'we create a trained body always available for national



defence'. What national defence; is it to create dissension by forming another pro-Treaty force, *An Phoblacht* inquired; suggesting that the government sought to entice Republicans into an army in order to isolate militant republicanism; which was exactly what was about to happen.

**Six County Police:** In February, Six County police went raiding in north Tyrone, pulling in John James Kelly and Ned Logue. Kelly was killed later in an operation in November 1938. A Dublin jury acquitted Donal O'Connor of Clonliffe Road, and Tom Molloy of Sitric Road, on a charge that they had been raiding for Bass. Such jury acquittals would soon provide reasons for De Valera to reactivate Cosgrave's Military Tribunal.

**Buses Waylaid:** In Dundalk, on February 19, two drivers, operating Great Northern buses between Dublin and Dundalk, were set upon and roughly handled after driving in their buses. Three days later there was an attempt to burn a bus at Eden Quay. Two Dubliners were charged; Philip Clarke of Marino, and James Mc Cormack.

**Shows of Strength:** In view of the impending trial of Johnny 'Machine Gun' Connor in Tralee, the local I.R.A. paraded 500 men, in a show of strength on February 19. Presided over by Tom O'Connor; Mick Price delivered a fiery address.

**'Sensational Decision':** So headlined was the announcement on February 23, of the decision by the Executive Council to remove General Eoin O'Duffy, and to appoint Col. C.E. Broy, Commissioner, in his place. General O'Duffy had been appointed Commissioner in September 1922. Offered the post of Controller of Prices, which he declined, he retired on a pension of £520 per annum.

**Welcome Home:** Towards the end of February, Hannah Sheehy-Skeffington was welcomed home from Armagh Jail; with torchlights and celebrations in Dundalk, Drogheda and Dublin. Once again College Green was filled to hear her, and to greet also the speeches of Peadar O'Donnell, Sean Mac Bride, Maud Gonne, Mick Price, Mick Fitzpatrick, Charlotte Despard and Mrs. Tom Kettle.

**Mystery Report:** A mystery report at the end of February tells of the arrest of Col. M. Hogan and Inspector E.M. O'Connell; second in command of the C.I.D. They were charged under the Official Secrets Act, and while the matter was being investigated spent six weeks in jail. In the course of this investigation a clerk from the registry of the C.I.D. told that, before the accession of Fianna Fáil in 1932, he had been instructed by Col. Neligan to burn the register of documents (and, presumably, many of the documents themselves). Col. Hogan was a brother of Patrick Hogan who had been Cosgrave's Minister for Agriculture. A report of March 29, after they had both been acquitted, states that Col. Hogan's brother in Cork, James was simply seeking information for a booklet on 'the threat of Communism in Ireland'.

**Last of the Fenians:** James Stritch, one of the last of the active Fenians, died at this time; he had taken part in the Manchester rescue of September 18, 1867, of Colonel Kelly and Captain Deasy; for which, in November, William Allen, Philip Larkin and Michael O'Brien were hanged.

**Great Northern Troubles:** On protection duty during a prolonged strike, a bomb was thrown at an empty bus in Dundalk, injuring a driver and a garda stationed within. On February 26, a Mills grenade, was thrown at locos stationary outside

Great Victoria Street, Belfast, and, upon the same night, another grenade was thrown at locos in the York Road terminus. Splinter damage only was caused.

**Reichstag Fire, Feb. 27:** As part of their orchestration of anti-communist panic, the Nazis could not have hoped for better than the fire in the parliament building, Berlin known as the Reichstag, although only superficial damage was done. Dutch simpleton, Marinus Van der Lubbe, was arrested nearby. Goering's men had set it alight entering through a little known tunnel.

**Heavy Snowfalls:** Ireland suffered a heavy snowfall at this time; the snow continuing and remaining for some weeks.

**Rail Capital Write Down:** £13 m was written off the capital of Great Southern Railways, to ease its balance sheet position. In a new Railways Bill, the system was valued at £11,875,000.

**R.U.C Man Shot Dead:** In the continuing rail strife, R.U.C man, John Ryan, a native of Tipperary, was shot dead at eleven o'clock on the night of February 28, in Durham Street., Belfast. Ryan, and another policeman, were coming on duty, when they ran into a number of men who had fired at a Great Northern employee near Great Victoria Street. Three men were involved, said Constable Lally, at an inquest later. He already had his gun in his hand, he said, so they fired at him also\*.

**Dictatorship for Germany:** Although the nationwide election was not to take place for four days yet, President Hindenburg, on February 28, signed a decree placing the country under dictatorship. Seized documents showed how food and water supplies would be poisoned 'by Reds'. 89 Communist deputies were already arrested or in flight.

The results of the election, declared on March 6, gave victory, although not an overall victory, to the Nazis: 43.9% of the votes. Hitler was already in power since January, and he had said privately that he would retain power even if they failed to be elected.

**De Valera, Sean Mac Entee and W.B Yeats:** Following the tour by the Abbey Theatre to the U.S in 1932 De Valera, as Minister for External Affairs, received a complaint in February 1933 on grounds that plays by Synge and O'Casey were 'anything but elevating'. Passing the letter to Sean Mac Entee, Minister for Finance, the Abbey was informed that their £1,000 subsidy was being cut to £750, and that they would have to suffer Professor W. Magennis - replacing Walter Starkie who had resigned - upon their board.

Yeats rose to the matter in a lordly manner. Their plays would not be curbed, and the government could keep its subsidy; nor would they accept Magennis. Fighting shy of confrontation, the matter was allowed to drag on for a year, whereupon De Valera withdrew the conditions and restored the subsidy. Mac Entee, as a small time poet and writer should have known better.

**Erasmus Smith Schools:** In a long judgement reported on March 3, Judge Meredith held that the paramount purpose of the charity was educational; not religious.

\* See Bob Bradshaw's account

**Communist Menace:** Numbers of Lenten pastorals published at this time warned of a 'Communist menace' in the Saorstát.

**Governor Sean Kavanagh:** Sean Kavanagh was transferred about this time from Mountjoy to Portlaoise Prison. Within months he was back in Mountjoy.

**James Gralton** was born in 1886 at Effernagh, lying between Carrick on Shannon and Drumsna, where his father farmed 25 acres of land. After joining and deserting the British Army, he took a job as a stoker on a tramp steamer, eventually settling in New York where he worked as a taxi driver, bartender and ice man; and after 1916, founded the James Connolly Club. Returning to Leitrim in the last weeks of the Tan War, he rallied the people to build a new hall to replace one burned down as a reprisal by the British; that was the Pearse Connolly Hall. Realising, in the first weeks of the Civil War, that he would be a ready target, he retired to New York. Remaining there for ten years, he returned with new hope after the advent to power of Fianna Fáil, after February 1932; and lights came on again in the Pearse Connolly Hall. But Ireland was in the grip of an anti-communist panic and Gralton found himself accused of spreading the Marxist doctrine. Carrying U.S citizenship, Fianna Fáil choose the easy option of deportation; and after going on the run for a while he was deported in August 1933.

There were protests (the story is told as an Addendum to Packy Joe Dolan), and on a Sunday morning early in March, Peadar O'Donnell arrived; mounting, for want of a platform, the stump of an old tree, he attempted to hold a meeting down from the chapel in Drumsna. But he was vigorously attacked by loyal parishioners led by their parish priest Fr. Cosgrave. Stones were freely flung; Peadar and his few supporters, sheltered by gardaí, had to make off. Fianna Fáil is under the control of the Knights of Columbanus, *An Phoblacht* declared. Or could it have been that Peadar O'Donnell, always a man for lost causes, had failed to gauge the temperature in Leitrim?

**'Masonic' Mexico:** Stories from Mexico referred to the impending foundation there of a 'Masonic - Communist state'. The story was part of a series being contributed by a certain Dr. F. O'Reilly F.C.S.G. But a contradiction in terms, surely.

**Roosevelt Embargoed** the export of gold from the U.S due to the prolonged currency crisis.

**Daniel J. Browne, Sec. Dept. of Justice:** The new secretary of the Department of Justice, following Henry O' Friel, who had held the post since 1922, was Daniel J. Browne, solicitor, of Tralee, appointed on March 7.

**Pope's Picture in Stormont:** A matter of great concern in the new Stormont parliament building was an oil painting, prominently displayed, by the Dutch painter, Van der Meulin. Presented to the house, and depicting King William surrounded by his generals against a continental landscape, it had a mitred figure in the background, correctly supposed to be 'the Pope'. The picture was historically correct as the reigning Pope, Innocent or his predecessor, had given support to the Prince of Orange in his rivalry with the Sun King, Louis XIV.

J.W. Nixon, Independent Unionist M.P.\* raised the matter on March 8, of a pic-

\* Former District Inspector R.U.C. See a reference elsewhere to Nixon.

ture showing 'in an exalted and superior position His Holiness the Pope'. He demanded an explanation. Evading responsibility, Lord Craigavon, the Prime Minister, replied that the hanging of the picture was the responsibility of the Speaker. Seven weeks later, a party from the Scottish Protestant League, accompanied by Mr. Nixon, slashed the picture, throwing crimson paint upon it. Two Glasgow women were later fined. The picture was restored afterwards, but it was not rehung in Stormont: it had been purchased for £199 from the sale of the effects of Lord Curzon in London. Its value currently would exceed half a million.

**Con Brosnan Charged:** Con Brosnan was charged on March 11, with entering the A.C.A office at 5 Parnell Square, and removing bundles of their paper, *United Ireland*; setting them on fire. He was remanded in custody.

**Buses Attacked:** In the continuing rail dispute two Great Northern buses were attacked in Dundalk on March 10. There were many such reports at this time.

**Dollfuss Takes Power in Austria:** With the intention of blocking a Nazi incursion, Dr. Engelbert Dollfuss, a minister in government, prorogued parliament; commencing to rule by decree, on March 12.

**Repression in Germany:** In mid-March, the new Nazi government of Germany seized the town halls and suppressed the free states. Newspapers were served with closure orders. The Nazis were permitted to do this by a unique *Enabling Law* which the other parties, still within government, allowed them do. Once passed, those other parties were then dealt with.

**Dáil Debates O'Duffy:** A motion, that the Dáil disapproved the O'Duffy sacking, was rejected, after a lively debate, by 70 votes to 58.

**'Senators Obdurate to the End':** was the headline on a Senate debate of March 15, rejecting by 24 to 18, the Bill to remove the Oath.

**'Bomb Outrage':** refers to 'a deadly missile' flung into a bus parked in Dundalk. A guard and mechanic were injured.

**Frank Fitzgerald,** a brother of the late minister, Desmond, found himself charged in London with the possession of two automatic pistols, three revolvers, and ammunition. Described as a works manager, of Cornwall Gardens, Kensington, he was fined five pounds. In his defence, it was pleaded that he had acted as an agent of the Irish Free State in the purchase of machine guns and 10,000 rifles, and that the offence was political. Inspector Edmonds stated that when his gun dealer license was revoked in January 1925, Fitzgerald gave an undertaking to return the revolvers to the office of the High Commissioner I.F.S, and the automatics to the suppliers. The magistrate ordered the confiscation of the weapons.

Note: A Free State Committee of Accounts in 1925 sought an explanation for the whereabouts of sums totalling £20,000, entrusted to Frank Fitzgerald for gun purchases in the pre-Treaty and post-Treaty periods. The Auditor-General stated that a considerable sum had not been accounted for.

**United Front Against Communists:** Cardinal Mac Rory, on March 18, called for a united front against Communists.

**'Hangman's Friend':** 'Hangman's Friend Dead' ran a piece in *An Phoblacht* of March. The Right Hon. Thomas Lopdell O'Shaughnessy K.C, P.C, late Recorder of Dublin, who resided at 64 Fitzwilliam Square, had died. According to the report he

had signed the death warrants of Kevin Barry, Patrick Moran and other Republicans executed under the British in Dublin.

**'False Economics':** A long unsigned piece, *False Economics*, in the paper of the same month ran: 'the fact, daily becoming more evident to all, is that the economic policy of Fianna Fáil does not provide any real remedy for our economic ills. The real solution, indeed the only solution, for rural poverty is the taking over of the land, without imposing any burdens of landlordism on the new settlers.' Taking over land, taking over banks, taking over communications; it all sounded such a simple solution to the desk-bound theorists of *An Phoblacht*. Yet nowhere was it explored how managed co-operative farms could exist and prosper; the first two thousand acres, for example, being won from fallow and unclaimed land, and from slices purchased off the large estates.

**'Shocking Outrage'**, was the description given for the action of an A.C.A man who, on March 23, was charged in Athenry with stripping and beating the young son of a local farmer.

**Bomb Flung:** A bomb was flung at a railway bus in York Street, Belfast, on March 26: it missed and there were no injuries.

**Dublin Jews Protest:** Dublin Jews, under Dr. Isaac Hertzog, protested in the papers of March 27 at the outbreaks of 'medieval barbarism' towards Jews in Germany.

**Connolly House Attacked:** After 9 pm, on the evening of March 28, a large band of young men and women arrived from the direction of the Pro-Cathedral, to Great Strand Street (off Capel Street), headquarters of the Revolutionary Workers' Group, where an address was being given by a Mr. Troy on the *Dangers of War*. Singing hymns as they approached, the troop demanded admission, and, on being refused, smashed all of the windows. Approached after some time, by gardaí, they retreated and dispersed.

The following night the attack was resumed with such vigour that the crowd broke through a garda cordon to inflict more damage. Retreating, they returned the next night; the occasion being headlined 'big forces of police battle ineffectively'. On this occasion, Charlie Gilmore was inside with a pistol, and fired outwards a number of times (for which he was afterwards charged), but the crowd broke in; setting fire to the building, and also setting fire to a mattress factory next door.

**Eccles Street Attacked:** Encouraged by this success, the crowd, on March 30, proceeded to 63 Eccles Street; Madame Despard's Workers' College, but on this occasion they were thwarted by the presence outside of young men and gardaí. Earlier, around 500 had assembled outside the Irish Unemployed Workers' Movement in North Great Georges Street where there was much booing and shouting. Gardai were placed outside the Workers' Union premises in Marlborough Street, and two Republican clubs in Parnell Square.

\* It might surprise people that the gardaí took no action; nor did the I.R.A. Harry Gilmore of the South Dublin Battalion publicly defended the effort of his brother Charlie in attempting, with a revolver, to fend off the attackers at Connolly House, for which he was condemned by the Adjutant-General I.R.A. The ensuing internal controversy resulted in some bitterness. At a prisoner meeting, then held once monthly at Cathal Brugha Street, Madame Mac Bride and Alec Lynn, condemned the actions and also, amid some interruptions, personal attacks upon Hannah Sheehy-Skeffington and Charlotte Despard.

Professor James Hogan, closely linked to the Army Comrades Association (later Blueshirts) and Cumann na nGael, praised the mob as 'Catholic citizens taking the law into their own hands in default of government action\*.

**Northern Penal Legislation:** In March, a second reading of the Northern Ireland Special Powers Bill was passed. The loyalist controlled Six Counties consistently from its foundation, sought, by coercive measures, as indeed had the Free State, to smother Republican dissent. The inception period of the northern state,, with its legions of Specials, the armed part-civilian forces, A, B and C constabulary, is charted in Michael Farrell's, *Northern Ireland: The Orange State*, and again in a chapter on page 50 of Kevin O'Kelly's, *The Longest War: Northern Ireland and the I.R.A.*; and in a host of other books and publications. Girding itself therefore for a croppies-lie-down regime that was to last throughout its existence\* an all-pervasive Civil Authorities (Special Powers Act) was passed in 1922; one year after the state came into being. Anything which displeased the authorities, i.e not specifically provided for in the regulations, to quote the Act, was punishable. Flogging was provided for; and was continued at a diminishing rate into the mid-forties\*\*. In 1922 there were 21 floggings, 18 of the recipients being Catholic.

The Act was adopted in 1922 as a temporary year-by-year expedient in the face of declining I.R.A activity. The outbreak of the Civil War in June 1922, so effectively throttled the northern I.R.A\*\*\* that, for 16 years thereafter, it existed almost solely as a commemorative body. In 1933 however, for no particular reason that one can see, the Act, which had been dutifully renewed each year, was made permanent.

Hannah Sheehy-Skeffington had commenced a series of reminiscences in *An Phoblacht* 'Behind the Bars', on the short periods she had spent in womens' jails; Mountjoy, Holloway and Armagh. The County Antrim Presbyterian poet, John Lyle Donaghy, working part time on the paper, was favourably reviewed.

*The grave was sunk in '98  
The while primroses were planted late  
By one wild looking with grey hair  
She had sought long and found him there.  
Contented then she left the place  
A grand women with no passion on her face.*

In the same issue, a new play, *Men Crowd Me Round* by Francis Stuart appeared. The author being introduced as a Republican and an ex-internee.

**Northern Prisoners:** Following the release from Larne in 1924 of the last of the internees, political imprisonment came to an end in the Six Counties, apart from Frank O'Boyle and Hugh Rogers, held since 1920.

\*Paradoxically, it can be attested, if one overlooks its deeply sectarian nature, the Stormont government (Stormont as a building exists only since 1932) was ahead, in almost all aspects of normal civil administration over its southern counterpart.

\*\* See Liam Burke

\*\*\* See James Mc Elduff, in *Survivors*

In 1933 however there was a spate of short term and remand prisoners of which the following is a list:-

Arthur Thornberry: raiding for arms: 18 months

James Connolly: raiding for arms: 18 months

Michael O'Kane: possession of revolver: 9 months

Hugh Matthews: drilling: 3 months

John Turley: drilling: returned for trial

Christopher Mc Laughlin: drilling: returned for trial

William Mc Allister: possession of firearms: awaiting trial

Thomas O'Malley: possession of firearms: awaiting trial

**Gilmore in Castlefin:** George Gilmore in late March at Castlefin, Co. Donegal was conveying the true socialist message:- 'the attack should not be upon the symbols but upon the structure of Imperialism. The landlord, the rancher and the banker interests should be the first point of attack in a revolutionary Ireland'. And then, more moderately; 'the I.R.A stood, not only for national independence, but for social justice'.

**Naas Fianna Fáil:** In Naas, the local Fianna Fáil Brian Moore Cumann, was calling for the head of Colonel Costello (later General Michael J; considered in our time a worthy Irishman); 'we condemn the government for retaining the services of Colonel Costello and other members of the Murder Gang'. There was condemnation also that Colonel David Neligan had been given a post, and that General O'Duffy had been offered one (an offer he did not take up). Civil War General Peter Ennis was also accommodated. 'Curious', continued Naas F.F, 'how such jobs are discovered to be vacant for C.I.D thugs'. Shows the tenor of the times, and also how far then that one could go in the print media without incurring libel.

**Sinn Féin:** Sinn Féin held a rally outside the General Post Office on St. Patrick's Day at which the President of Sinn Féin, Brian O'Higgins, spoke. He was accompanied by 'Sceilg', Liam Raul, Mary Mac Swiney and Mrs. Buckley. 'Sceilg' opposed payment upon the 3 per cent Republican Bonds by a 5 per cent State Bond issue; quoting De Valera in 1928 in the U.S in his support.

**Tranquila Convent:** In the paper, Donn Piatt was critical of the official gaelic publishing house, *An Gum*; manuscripts offered to it took ten years before they were published, he said. Later that month, Sean Russell was unveiling a small memorial at Tranquila Convent, Upper Rathmines, to Captain Tom O'Leary, a victim of an unofficial Free State killing on March 23, 1923. On the impending new Volunteer force, he warned that 'it is up to the I.R.A to see that the creation of this force is not attempted'.

**United Farmers:** In County Cork, Tom Hales, chairman of the United Farmers' Association of West Cork, at Bandon, was calling upon the I.R.A to protect farmers against the banks and their agents.

**U.S. Airship Down:** The U.S airship *Akron*, crashed on April 4, off New Jersey, with a loss of 71 personnel.

**Rail Strike Ends:** After 67 days, the strike upon the Great Northern and L.M.S systems in the North ended. A hitch then developed, causing it to be prolonged for a further four days.

**Speakers at Easter:** The mid-April listing of Easter Commemoration speakers gives a flavour of who was important in the hierarchy of the Movement. Jim Killeen came first, followed by Tom Maguire of Westmeath; then followed Sean MacBride, Maurice Twomey, Dr. Andy Cooney, Seán Óg Ó Ceallaigh, Fionán Breathnach, Sean Buckley, Mick Fitzpatrick, Tomás Ó Maoileóin, Peadar Ó Máille, Liam Mac Gabhann, Con Lehane, Hannah Sheehy-Skeffington, Donal Ó Donnchadha of *An Phoblacht*, and later married to Sheila Humphreys (Sighle Bean Uí Dhonnchadha), national vice president of Cumann na mBan, and Mick Price. Alec Lynn and Maud Gonne went to Liverpool, and Frank Ryan, to London.

**Draft Constitution:** The Army Council at Easter adopted a 'Draft Constitution and Government Programme for the Republic of Ireland'. This had been in limited circulation as the Manus O'Rourke document.

**Fr. O'Flanagan:** Father Michael O'Flanagan was lecturing Sinn Féin at their rooms in Parnell Square; that organisation had sent the I.R.A. an aggrieved note at not receiving 'the usual invitation' to the Easter ceremonies. Óglaigh replied with a tepid excuse that it had been an oversight.

**I.R.A. Criticised:** *The Irish Press*, in an editorial, criticised the now legal I.R.A. for their Easter statement equating the regimes north and south, as dishonest. The statement\* had said that 'those who genuinely believed that a change in the Free State government was a step towards the Republic are being disillusioned'. The statement continued with an appeal for recruits, and for a continuation of the boycott.

Underwriting the call was a large notice in the paper:

Óglaigh na h-Éireann  
A Call to Young Men,

It appeared, in an appeal for recruits, over the names of Maurice Twomey, Chief of Staff, and Sean MacBride, Adjutant-General.

**Co. Tyrone:** In Co. Tyrone, where bans prevailed during the entire lifetime of the State upon all commemorations unless held under another guise, Joe McGurk, the speaker sent from Belfast, was arrested and sentenced to three months. In other Six County venues where there were graveyard gatherings; 'they said the Rosary'.

**Moscow Trials:** World wide interest was concentrated at this time on a prolonged spy trial in Moscow. Two British engineers, of the engineering firm Metropolitan Vickers, were sentenced to three years and two years, while three were expelled. Ten Russians, working with them, were also sentenced on charges of military espionage on April 18. In reprisal, Britain promptly banned a wide range of Russian imports.

**FF. Hall Burned:** The Fianna Fáil hall at Deerpark, Boyle, was reported on April 20, burned maliciously.

**U.S. Abandons Gold Standard:** Two years after Britain and most other nations had abandoned the gold standard, Washington did likewise, on April 20.

**Johnny Connor:** Connor, remanded in custody, came before Judge Mc Elligott again on April 15, when he was again remanded until July. Scuffles broke out outside, and Dan 'Bally' Keating received three months for contempt. Shortly after, both were released.\*

\* See Dan 'Bally' Keating's account



**When E.S. Becomes Republic:** On the second last Sunday of April, De Valera in Arbour Hill declared: the Free State must become a Republic in fact. *so that when the time comes its proclamation will involve nothing more than a ceremony.*

**In Letterkenny,** Sean Mc Cool (Seán Mac Cumhail) presided at the inauguration of a new Fianna sluagh, while in Dublin, the *Irish Press* refused to publish a letter from Brian O'Higgins condemning the authorities for holding Easter ceremonies in Arbour Hill while having Republicans imprisoned there. It was to be the first of many refusals by the paper to publish republican complaints.

**Liam Mac Gabhann,** celebrated the passing of the Oath with a poem, while in Dungannon, the owners of the local *Observer* newspaper were fined ten pounds for publishing an *In Memoriam* notice which happened to mention the I.R.A. in it.

**Oath Goes:** The Oath of Allegiance, which had been such a bone of contention, was abolished by due process, early in May: the vote being 76 to 56. De Valera admitted that he had been prepared to violate the Treaty to get rid of the Oath, but it had not been necessary to violate the Treaty. Next to go, he promised, would be the appeal to the Privy Council, and the King's right of reservation. In his speech upon the issue, De Valera declared; 'there are people who will never be satisfied until there is a Republic for the whole of Ireland, but what they are not entitled to do is to make an attack by force on the majority of the people'. Blissfully unaware that events were passing them by, the I.R.A. would continue coat trailing while De Valera made ready to pounce, as pounce indeed he eventually did.

**Vigorous Language:** News leaked out that a local cumann Fianna Fáil resolution was not to see the light of day; in vigorous language, it condemned the government for holding Easter ceremonies in Arbour Hill 'in association with the army that employed English guns and English tactics to subvert the Republic'. Resolutions in these terms came also from the U.S, but *The Irish Press* suppressed them.

**In Recess,** in the centre of Connemara, police were reported to have lain in heather watching an I.R.A. party carry out drill formations for three hours; from the right came a letter complaining that the I.R.A. had gone 'socialist'; at that time the expression being almost as unclean as 'communist'.

**Nazis Seize All:** By a decree of May 10, all Socialist Party property, including newspapers, were seized by the state.

**New Irish Communist Party:** The executive committee of the Communist International; speaking from Riga, Latvia, announced the formation of a new independent Irish Communist Party.

**Profit and Loss in the Economic War:** Figures issued on May 16, almost a year after it had commenced, by Mr. Hore-Belisha, Secretary to the U.K. Treasury, showed that the Free State, by withholding £3.2m of Annuity money, paid back in U.K. imposed duties £2.89m. In one year, Free State imports were down from £51m to £37m, while exports were down from £34m to £22m.

**Larry and Tom Grogan** were in court in Drogheda on May 19, charged with defacing ESB poles with posters appealing for recruits to attend at a certain hall. The justice decreed fines of ten shillings and seven and six pence.

**Volley Fired:** In Thurles, on May 23, a platoon of A.C.A. men in uniform, fired three volleys over the grave of Sean Ryan, late captain in the Free State Army.

**Danzig:** In a state election the Nazis emerged as the largest party with 38 seats out of 72; a Nazi controlled government was then formed. Danzig, however, remained under the League of Nations, with shortly, Irishman Sean Lester as Commissioner.

**Aiken Opposed I.R.A:** The upper levels of Fianna Fáil were showing restlessness about participating with the I.R.A at Bodenstown in the following month. The paper referred to a statement of Frank Aiken - then General Frank Aiken, Chief of Staff I.R.A - in 1925 that 'Bodenstown must remain the sole responsibility of the I.R.A'. But of all the ministers, Aiken was at this stage the one most averse to the I.R.A; he was Minister for Defence, and especially fond of 'his' army and of the new volunteers he was soon to recruit; and the I.R.A had rejected his army. It was a case of hell hath no fury ... As events unfolded, Frank Aiken would turn out to be the minister, closest to De Valera, and the one most opposed to the I.R.A.

**'Hanger Joyce':** A snide reference was made in the issue of *An Phoblacht* of mid-May to Colonel John Joyce, as 'a man who, as a member of the Coercion Tribunal, had sent a graduate of University College to Arbour Hill for his fidelity'. He had been referred to by Major-Gen. Brennan as a pupil of Pádraig Pearse in St. Enda's, which indeed he had been. Throughout his 15 year career on the Tribunal, Joyce was to receive numbers of face to face insults which rarely bothered him; but when a cub reporter on the *Evening Herald* referred to him as 'Hanger Joyce', believing it to be a normal nickname, he sought and obtained substantial damages.

**Training Camp in West Cork:** An official report speaks of an I.R.A training camp - not raided - at Ballinacarriga, in late May. Tom Lynch, a school teacher, was O.C. on Sunday, armed with the latest continental rifles, 60 men marched to Mass.

**Explosives Taken:** In a raid on May 27, an I.R.A group made off from a magazine at Ballymullen, Tralee, with 200 lbs of gelignite, 400 coils of fuse wire and 5,500 detonators.

**'Cut Throat Tone':** On a Sunday in late May, the Bishop of Galway, Dr. O'Doherty, with one eye upon Bodenstown, referred to Wolfe Tone as 'Cut Throat Tone', causing quite a hullabaloo; as anyone closely reading the history of that time would decide, at worst, that that charge was unproven, He went on then to refer to Robert Emmet's 1803 venture as composed of 'a rabble'; which was partly true of that fateful 16th. July, but was later redeemed by the nobility of his speech before John Toler, Lord Norbury. O'Doherty concluded that, so far as his diocese was concerned, the I.R.A should 'be given the boot'. Resolutions poured in condemning the bishop, while *An Phoblacht* complained that recent attacks by De Valera were responsible for the upsurge of assaults by churchmen opposed to all things national.

**Stormont Attendance:** Six County nationalist M.P.'s had retired from Stormont in 1932, deeming that the preponderant loyalist majority had made normal politics unworkable. By October 1933, with the pull of parliament proving too strong, they returned. The Movement had opposed this; in June, Republicans were complaining that control of the political machine by the Catholic bishops prevented the selection of representative candidates; meaning of course, individuals who, if elected, would abstain. For reasons as commonplace as school grants, the bishops did not want abstention. The party was led by 'wee' Joe Devlin, a practical minded ward heeler

and one likely to do whatever the bishops would direct. In the November election the results were fragmented; of the 52 seats Nationalists were unlikely to control more than nine.

An abstentionist Republican, P.J. Mc Logan, won in South Armagh, and De Valera was elected for South Down. He had been put forward locally in the belief that it would strengthen his hand in raising the subject at the League of Nations if he was an elected representative of a Six County area.

Joe Devlin died in 1934, after which the remaining nationalist members, all but two, ceased again to attend for a prolonged period.\*

**'I.R.A Flouting the Law':** In An Dáil on June 1, James Fitzgerald-Kenney, inquired why did the Minister for Justice allow the I.R.A to flout the law by widespread illegal drilling. Frank Mac Dermot offered the answer that Fianna Fáil regarded the I.R.A as a kind of *mastiff on a chain*; to be kept reasonably quiet during their own regime but still to be kept reasonably fierce, so that under another regime it could be unleashed again. P.J. Ruttledge, Minister, gave a temporising reply.

**Liverpool Cathedral:** The foundation stone was laid, with a colourful ceremony, in fine weather, on June 5; with 50,000 children marching from St. George's Hall to the site. Cardinal Mac Rory, Papal Legate, was greeted by thousands on landing.

**Fianna Fáil Organise Their Own Bodestown:** Fianna Fáil in this year, 1933, decided that they would organise a separate Bodestown commemoration; that they would no longer walk to the grave of Wolfe Tone in the company of the I.R.A. It was an ominous move, as it seemed to bring nearer the banning of Óglaigh na h-Éireann, a move the dogs of the right were already calling for. 'Fianna Fáil', a statement from Upper Mount Street said, 'cannot allow itself to be put in a false position. It is the organisation to which the vast majority of Irish Republicans belong'. Their members had been left free to participate before, but now, if one participated, it could mean the loss of a pension, or that you would cease to advance within the Party.

**Disarmament Conference Failure:** The Disarmament Conference, sitting many weeks in Geneva, adjourned *sine die* early in June. *The Economist* gave as one reason, Britain's insistence on her right in certain circumstances to use aerial bombardment. The reader should recollect at this point that, while Adolph Hitler had come fully to power as Chancellor in January, Germany had not yet commenced to rearm. The failure of the conference, because of England's insistence, may have spurred German rearmament.

**The Senate:** De Valera was not yet ready to abolish the Senate, so he introduced on June 6, a Bill to reduce its power. Henceforth it could only delay legislation to which it objected.

**Back from Holiday:** Returning from a short holiday in Italy, De Valera called on June 6, upon President Lebrun, during a three day stay in the French capital. Days later, upon arrival at Dun Laoire, he was greeted with a salute of 19 guns.

**C.P.I Programme:** Following a weekend conference prior to June 7, Sean Murray, for the Party, announced that its aim was an independent Irish Republic, ruled by

\* From 1934 until the end of the Second World War in 1945, only the two Belfast M.P's, Campbell and his colleague Richard Byrne, attended Stormont on a regular basis. *Northern Nationalism*.

the working class and farmers. Loftus Johnston, from Belfast, held that there was no way forward for the workers in the North except in concert with the workers of the rest of Ireland. It was decided to apply for affiliation with the Communist International.

**Germany Not Paying:** The German government announced on June 9, that it would withhold all further payments on credits that it had lately received to enable it to liquidate its war reparations.

**Arms Landings?** Rumours were flying at this time of secret arms landings at Rosscarbery, in west Cork, but the fact that the Free State Army was on manoeuvres nearby may have given rise to this.

**World Economic Conference:** A top drawer gathering of that title opened in London on June 13; with Cordell Hull of the U.S, M. Daladier, French P.M, and Ramsay Mac Donald, British P.M.

**Peat Development:** A scheme for peat development was announced on June 14 in An Dáil by Tomás Ó Derrig, acting for Sean Lemass. Deputy P. Belton declared that they might as well throw their money into a bog hole.

**Austria:** Strains were reported between this small country and the new Nazi government of Germany.

**Bodenstown 1933:** 'Big turn-out by the I.R.A', said the press, although the number declared attending was obviously diminished by a scrupulous editor. An interesting spectacle, wrote the journalist, was the variety of uniforms, especially those of children under 12 who were examples in their ready response to drill commands. Presided over by Mick Price, who laid the wreath: 45 units participated. General M. Twomey delivered the oration to the 20,000 present; 16,000 of whom, it was claimed, were I.R.A volunteers. In his address, Twomey led off against the 'attacks and slanders' upon the I.R.A. Meanwhile police, up to their old habits, were checking the names and car numbers of arrivals into Sallins.

**Aiken There:** One week later, former General of the I.R.A, Frank Aiken arrived at the head of a Free State Army contingent. Aiken had an unusual pride in this new plaything; 'fine progress has been made in training and equipping the army; progress that would have delighted the heart of him we honour here today whose heroic efforts were frustrated by lack of just such a military force as we possess; a force to act as the disciplined back bone of the people in the struggle for their rights'; closing with a phrase that appeared deliberately ambiguous.

'How they would have sniggered', said *An Phoblacht*, referring to Generals Brennan, Mac Neill, Sweeney and Mc Goran; all of whom had a hand in (or were to have yet a hand in) executing Republicans. One hour after the F.S Army, and one week after the I.R.A, a Fianna Fáil contingent of respectable proportions arrived also to do honour.

**Dr. Dollfuss, of Austria,** returned from a visit to London on June 20 where he had been guaging support for his stance against Germany. His government banned the local Nazi Party following bombings.

**Germany:** Germany by mid-June, was effectively a one party state where no other political grouping dared exist. Catholic, secular and political organisations were now illegal.

**Secret Societies:** In Sligo, Maurice Twomey, in an oblique reference to Bishop O'Doherty (Cut Throat Tone) at the opening of an *Aeridheacht*; 'if there are any people in this country, lay or clerical, disturbed by the growth of secret societies, I would refer them to two; one, an avowedly imperialist organisation known as the Masonic Order, and the other, the Knights of St. Columbanus, a secret Catholic society.

**Leitrim:** Pat Darcy and J.J. Reynolds, shop assistant, were each sentenced, on June 26, to three months for threatening a blacksmith in Drumshanbo.

**Dundalk:** Boxes containing 800 lbs of gelignite and hundreds of detonators were returned to the Louth County Surveyor on June 28, 'with the compliments of the I.R.A.'

**Lyle Donaghy on Ulster:** Lyle Donaghy contributed an article on Partition: 'today more than ever the problem of Ireland is the problem of Ulster. Ulster is a captive of war held by the Imperialist enemy. Her chief fetters are fetters of the mind. Our immediate objective therefore is the rescue of the captive by spiritual reconquest'.

*Oh soon full soon, though armed and strong  
Today, tomorrow, the barriers fall,  
And the dead that lie beyond the wall,  
Will re-embodied again come forth,  
Answer ye now; how long? How long?  
Men of the North; Men of the North.*

**Workers' College Closes:** P. J. Ruttledge, Minister for Justice, responding to pressures from Cumann na nGael spokesmen in An Dáil warning of the threat of communism in Ireland, stated, in rebuttal, that Madame Charlotte Despard's Workers' College at 63 Eccles Street had had to close for want of students.

**Mrs. Sheehy-Skeffington Retires:** At this time, due to declining health, Mrs. Sheehy-Skeffington resigned from the editorial staff of the paper and ceased to play an active part in the organisation. Wife of pacifist Francis Skeffington, done to death in Portobello by a British Army gang led by Captain Bowen-Colthurst in the days following Easter Week,\* she was a Sinn Féin judge in the period of independence, remaining on the Republican side in the Civil War. She died in May 1946. In an unusually strong letter, of that time, her son, Owen, who did not agree with his mother's I.R.A. sympathies, rejected F.F. condolences, out of sympathy, he said, with her memory and the recent death of Sean Mc Caughey.

**Wildfire Charges:** Protests against Bishop O'Doherty's reference to Wolfe Tone continued; some from Connradh na Gaeilge and some from the States. A long article outlined the differences between the I.R.A. and the Communist Party. In this 'denial of Jesus', the Movement appeared anxious to fire proof itself against the damaging charges running rampant at that time. There is no connection between Irish republicanism and communism, the piece affirmed, proceeding to announce a discussion on Public Ownership from the pen of Treaty signatory, Robert Barton.

**Robert Barton:** Barton, a Wicklow Protestant and cousin of Fianna Fáil, and at this time a director of *The Irish Press*. His appearance in the columns of *An Phoblacht* indicated a still cordial relationship. Another announcement, already noted, related

\* Along with two journalists, Patrick Mac Intyre and Thomas Dickson.

that the Army Council had adopted at Easter a draft constitution for the Republic. Was this the so called Manus O'Rourke document? In Clare, life-long Republican Martin White and Seamus Mc Cann were arrested, while in Belfast, James Leo Martin was sentenced to 30 days for possessing 12 copies of *An Phoblacht*.

**Jimmy Joe:** Jimmy Joe Reynolds, already a figure on the skyline of Leitrim, was sentenced with Pat D'Arcy, to three months by Judge Sheehy. They refused to recognise the court.

**Pax Ó Faoláin:** The Minister for Finance, on July 3, appealed an award of £2313 to Pax Ó Faoláin, which sum had been deposited in the National Land Bank by P.J. Paul, F.S Brigadier, in December 1922. The appeal was dismissed and Ó Faoláin was awarded the money, which he in turn gave to the Army Council I.R.A.\*

**Gralton:** Now sought for deportation, James Gralton went on the run. Appeals were still being made on his behalf, but the members of Leitrim County Council were divided on the issue.

**U.S. Republican Bonds:** An extended Dáil debate on this piece of history lasting from 1920 was taken on July 6 and 7, when De Valera gave a detailed account of the earlier period and of his own stay there over May 1927 when he sought funds for the *Irish Press*, following the favourable verdict of Judge Peters who authorised the return of £2.5 m to the bondholders\*\*.

**Carson Statue Unveiled:** Referred to earlier, this enormous statue, powerfully placed on the approach to Stormont, was unveiled in the presence of 40,000 admirers on July 9, by Lord Craigavon. On this occasion, Lord Carson, who had been ill, was able to alight from his car. He was accompanied by Lady Carson and his son Edward. In attendance also were the Stewarts, Lord and Lady Londonderry, the sculptor, L.S Merrifield and many dignitaries.\*\*\*

**'Boycott the Match'** Continuing the campaign to isolate the gardaí from the common people (a campaign that manifestly was not succeeding), the tarred roads approaching Ballina had painted slogans, *Boycott the Match*. The occasion was an impending gaelic game between Mayo county and a selection of Dublin guards.

**A.C.A Activity:** Reports were now arriving frequently of attacks upon gatherings of Army Comrades Association (Blueshirts); at this time they were coming from County Cork, Tipperary and Cootehill.

**In Belfast,** Sean Turley was sentenced to twelve months, while Christopher Mc Laughlin received eight months. They had been observed the previous December drilling with 70 others near Finaghy Road.

**Capitalism Dead and Damned:** Capitalism is Dead and Damned, announced Peadar O'Donnell in an article, proceeding to affirm that Fianna Fáil was shirking 'a real land settlement'. He was referring to the Land Act 1933 which an editorial also

\*See Pax Ó Faoláin in *Survivors*.

\*\* See Pádraic Pearse and the *Lost Republican Ideal*.

\*\*\* Carson remained loyal to the puppet state he had helped to create; but disillusioned. 'What a fool I was. I was only a puppet and so was Ulster, and so was Ireland in the political game that was to get the Conservative Party into power.' House of Lords, December 14. 1921. Carson's original home in Dublin at 4, Harcourt Street, after many vicissitudes, was recently fully restored.

criticised; the first step to deal with the landlords and the land is the abolition of the Land Commission.

**U.S. Bonds Explained:** A long article in the issue of *An Phoblacht* of July 15, explained the matter of the American bonds. De Valera had been appointed a trustee in 1927 just in time to contest the Free State claims. The U.S courts found in favour of individuals, many of whom instantly reinvested the money received in *The Irish Press*. De Valera was now accused of reversing his previous commitment by proposing that the Free State repay the original holders in full; that is, declared the paper, 'the tax payer is expected to fund the *Irish Press*'.

**Land Commission:** A report of July 15, announced that the powers of the Land Commission to acquire and divide estates would be extended.

**Drogheda Incident:** On the night of July 16, the home and the motor car of Supt. T. Casserly was sprayed with machine gun bullets. Two months later he was awarded £120 compensation for the damage caused.

**Cootehill Disorder:** Rival factions in Cootehill had created disorder there during an A.C.A demonstration on June 29. The full story emerged in a court report of July 18, when six men were fined.

**Londonderry:** The new bridge spanning the Foyle, carrying road and rail traffic, was formally opened, as Craigavon Bridge, on July 18. It was however, very much a loyalist occasion, with the Mayor of London performing the ceremony.

**Sugar and Tillage:** An announcement of July 21, showed the continuing trend by F.F towards economic autarchy. Three new sugar factories would be set up; Thurles, Tuam and Mallow, under a state company formed for the occasion, Comhlucht Siuicre Éireann. There would be a drive also for considerably more tillage: the Irish loaf, entirely made from imported wheat, would soon be forty per cent Irish.

**Drumm Train:** Contributing to the same trend, a second, and improved, Drumm train ran from Dublin to Wicklow, and back again. On board was De Valera, with distinguished guests. The trains were built in Inchicore, as were all G.S steam locos; Great Northern locos were built in Dundalk.

**National Guard:** The A.C.A, renamed National Guard, was banned by Sir Dawson Bates, Minister for Home Affairs, in Belfast, on July 23. We have come to stay, was O'Duffy's riposte; although the organisation never, in fact, existed in the Six Counties. At this time, O'Duffy was claiming a membership throughout Ireland of 30,000; an exaggeration certainly. Pressed privately, he had resigned a year before, as National President, from the National Athletic and Cycling Association.

**Leon Trotsky:** Leon Trotsky (Lev. D. Bronstein), former Soviet Commissar for War, and arch enemy of Stalin, arrived in France on July 24, from the Turkish island of Prinkipo. He had hoped to make his home in Corsica, but was obliged instead to go to Mexico (where he was assassinated by an agent of Stalin in 1940).

**Authorised Firearms Withdrawn:** In a move that verged, either upon a deep seated strategy by F.F, or panic, detectives and police, over the last days of July, called to homes, and collected from ex-Ministers and others permitted to hold them, authorised short arms. It was clearly sparked by the big National Guard demonstration intended for Leinster Lawn, for Sunday, August 13, to be presided over by

General O'Duffy, Richard Mulcahy, Dr. T.F. O'Higgins and others of the Cumann na nGael leadership. Ernest Blythe, Gearóid O'Sullivan and O'Duffy refused to yield up their weapons.

**A.C.A Ball:** The Army Comrades announced a dress ball, 'where blue shirts should be worn', for the Horse Show week in Dublin. It was held a week later; the throng of Blueshirts being greeted by cheering and cat calls.

**Land Bill:** In An Dáil in August, the government evaded defeat on this measure by only three votes, when Labour, the Centre Party and Cumann na nGael combined against them.

**De Valera's Warning:** In the Dáil, early in August, De Valera warned; 'once the Oath is removed there can be no excuse for anyone trying to use force, or to arm themselves'. It was a clear reference to the I.R.A. Their reply was not long in coming; 'Mr. De Valera knows that until the nation is absolutely free and undivided the forces of freedom must and will exist'.

**I.R.A Response:** The I.R.A was not going to be short changed by enactments passed through the parliament in Kildare Street, declared *An Phoblacht*. A later editorial referred to Fianna Fáil efforts to persuade the I.R.A abandon physical force, and an Army Council statement asked; 'do the leaders of Fianna Fáil suggest that the war of 1922 and 1923 was fought solely for removing the Oath of Allegiance?' It then proceeded; 'the Army Council in this situation makes a strong and sincere appeal to all Republicans to unite on the one and only basis upon which unity is possible, namely repudiation of the Treaty of Surrender of December 1921 and the establishment of an Irish Republic. While we recognise the fundamental differences existing between Fianna Fáil and the I.R.A on plans for the social and economic reconstruction of the country, the Army Council states the foregoing as the only basis upon which unity is possible'.

**O'Duffy's Gun Seized:** Detectives called again unexpectedly to the home of General O'Duffy in an apartment near Baggot Street, on August 2, seizing two weapons; one, O'Duffy said, being that which Michael Collins had at Béal na Bláth, and which, naturally, he held in high regard.

**Fire in Government Buildings:** Shades of the Reichstag; a fire broke out in the basement of Government Buildings on the Wednesday night prior to the big march. As it occurred in the boiler house and was quickly extinguished, it was most probably accidental.

**Buildings Under Guard:** One week ahead of the Blueshirt demonstration, Government Buildings were placed, by Col. Broy, under armed police protection. Some 50 beds were moved in and a catering service provided for the guards and military inside.

**Ghandi Sentenced:** After three months of limited freedom, Ghandi was again imprisoned in India as an ordinary political prisoner.

**Cosgrave's Car Stoned:** As part of their celebrations, a National Guard dance was held in the Metropole Ballroom on the evening of August 8. Feelings were high in Dublin, and thousands gathered in O'Connell Street. When Cosgrave did arrive, his car was stoned and he himself had to remain within the building until the small hours. Commdt. Cronin was recognised and attacked in the street, while many other



cars were damaged. There was a police baton charge; the crowd dispersing only after midnight. At the time in question tens of thousands of tenement dwellers lived in the adjoining streets, making it easy to summon a crowd at any hour.

**'Party System un-Irish':** Not dismayed, on the day following, O'Duffy issued from Wilton Mansions, a statement declaring the Free State party system un-Irish. *I have the sacred duty to perform of leading the National Guard on Sunday, and from that I will not flinch.*

**Constitution to be Amended:** The government had already decided, and they now announced, that the powers of the Governor-General would be reduced, while the right of appeal from the Supreme Court to the English Privy Council would be ended.

**Unease in Cumann na nGael:** There were rumours of growing unease in Cumann na nGael at the tensions being stoked up by O'Duffy; he had just announced, as Director-General of the National Guard, that, given power, the Free State parliament would be remodelled on vocational lines. While he was putting this forth, the saner men in the Party were closeted at a secret meeting in no. 3 Merrion Square. This was upon the Thursday, preceding the fateful Sunday. Would Sunday be a repeat of Mussolini's march on Rome, or the damp squib of O'Connell's monster Clontarf meeting? Was De Valera biding his time, and were the mugs at the head of Cumann na nGael walking their supporters into the trap created by the loud mouthed O'Duffy?

The broad outline of his arrangements was that some 80,000 might come, in moving masses from the train stations, principally Heuston; they would assemble at St. Stephen's Green, although, in a last minute change, the numbers there were limited to 3,500; they would then march to the Cenotaph, honouring Griffith, Collins and O'Higgins, at Leinster Lawn, after which the entire body would 'proceed' to Glasnevin where O'Duffy would orate over the grave of Michael Collins. But Leinster Lawn was a nerve of sensitivity; they would be within the sacred railed precincts at that moment, and a small, disciplined, armed body might easily, with an 'eyes left' seize the seat of government. I do not anticipate a ban, declared O'Duffy confidently on the Friday, although it was clear to many that a ban was expected, and O'Duffy was leading his troops and party leadership to a dismaying humiliation.\*

**Climbdown:** In time for the press's still running in Dublin and Cork; in time for the newspaper trains that would convey the papers to the most distant towns, P.J. Rutledge, Minister for Justice, under Article 2 A, banned the St. Stephen's Green assembly three quarters of an hour past Friday midnight; just 45 minutes into Saturday. (At least it was more considerate than the British government's ban upon O'Connell which was not published until 3.30 on Saturday afternoon in circum-

\* A temporary cenotaph was unveiled on August 13, 1923, by President Cosgrave, consisting of plaster on a frame of timber, with bronze medallions by Albert Power, representing Griffith and Collins, to which, a rectangular plaque of K. O'Higgins was added after 1927. This edifice was replaced in 1950 by a 60ft. high granite obelisk by Raymond Mc Grath, on to which medallions of Griffith, Collins and O'Higgins, by Laurence Campbell, were incorporated.

stances where telephone communications did not exist). The headline from Westmoreland Street was, *No Sunday Parade of Blueshirts*. Deliberately and provocatively thousands of uniformed guards encircled the streets leading to Government Buildings, while green uniformed soldiers craned from the windows, and sludge painted armoured cars growled along the thoroughfares. Mingling among crowds of gawking Dubliners were the mufti clad men of the newly formed Special Branch. It was the perfect rebuff; De Valera and his circle knew quite well that the raw lads from the country were not trained or disciplined for an attack, and certainly not in circumstances like this. Nor would there be need for support from the I.R.A men posted armed upon the roof tops along Westmoreland Street; they could now go home.

Promptly, before noon on Saturday, O'Duffy announced; I have decided to call off the ceremony, but, as a sop, he gave notice that on the following Sunday, August 20, there would be a church parade of the National Guard in every parish. But even that too was quickly cancelled; priests did not wish to be involved in mixing the arrival of a quasi-military platoon with a normal Sunday morning Mass.

**James Gralton:** An official report on James Gralton, deported from Cobh on August 13, stated that he emigrated to the U.S in 1909, returning for six months in April 1922. This would contradict the claim that he had participated in the Tan War or, to any extent, in the Civil War. He returned to Effernagh, Carrick on Shannon, from the U.S on March 25, 1932. He was described in this report as 'an avowed atheist and communist'.

**'Pacification' of the Berbers:** Reports of the pacification of the Berber people of the High Atlas, Morocco, by the French, were appearing at this time.

**'A Catspaw':** De Valera, On Sunday, August 20, was reported from Thurles, warning that the National Guard 'may be proclaimed'; as for O'Duffy; he was but a catspaw, a tool for others. Fangs drawn, O'Duffy elsewhere was making the best of it; listing off and praising minor parades held in out-of-the way places. 'We have two companies in Dublin of one hundred men each', he boasted.

**Military Tribunal Re-established:** The court which the Cosgrave government created in its dying weeks in 1931 - and which continues today in another form as the Special Criminal Court - was re-established on August 22; while at the same time the National Guard was proclaimed. Identical in membership with the Cosgrave tribunal of one and three quarter years before, they were: Col. Francis Bennett, Col. Dan Mc Kenna, Major John V. Joyce, Commdt. Conor Whelan and Commdt. Patrick Tuite. Success was guaranteed; it would have no jury, and would depend very largely on police reports conveyed to it.

**Ghandi Released:** From India came news that Mahatma Ghandi had been given a conditional release after a fast of seven days. As a political leader Ghandi was much too important for the British to allow him to die on their hands.

**O'Duffy Restrained:** What was publicised as a monster meeting for Thursday, August 24, from Waterford, was banned only minutes before it should commence; with O'Duffy, Blythe and Dillon standing by, ready to mount the platform. The General then announced to the press that the meeting would be abandoned, and that people should go home peacefully. Rubbing it in; Béal na Bláth, for the follow-

ing Sunday, where O'Duffy intended to speak, was also banned.

**Bass Boycott:** On the night of the last Friday of August in Dublin, there were widespread incursions by I.R.A. groups upon publicans selling Bass; City Quay, Wexford Street and Bolton Street being visited\*

**Rathvilly:** A Cumann na nGael meeting being addressed by Desmond Fitzgerald and other notables, at Rathvilly, Co. Carlow, was forceably broken up by a hostile crowd on that Sunday.

**Paddy Fleming** of Killarney, was charged with stealing signs advertising Bass from outside public houses in the town on August 26. In court, three days later, he declined to accept bail.

**Robert Barton**, who, with Gavan Duffy, was a reluctant signatory as noted already of the 1921 Treaty, wrote occasionally in *An Phoblacht*. We note him again in an end of August issue, advocating a tax upon site values; he was at this time a director of *The Irish Press*.

**Sean Russell:** Sean Russell, in Middleton, at the end of August, was stating the I.R.A. position in bold terms; 'we will hand up our arms to one government only, the government of the Republic'. 600 men of the East Cork Brigade paraded, while 400 paraded in Mallow at a boycott meeting.

**United Ireland Party:** An announcement made on September 2, conveyed the news that Cumann na nGael would combine shortly with the small Centre Party and other groupings to form the United Ireland Party (U.I.P.) (In these accounts we allow both titles, eventually phasing in Fine Gael, their later title.)

**Peter Mc Geogh, Castlebellingham:** An official report refers to Peter Mc Geogh of Mooretown, taken from bed and tied to the village pump at Dromiskin where a card was affixed to his breast stated that he had been tried for making slanderous statements about the I.R.A.

**Bass in Full Swing:** An official report describes the boycott as being in full swing in September, with large stocks destroyed.

**George Gilmore:** In the Dublin mountains of Glendu, C.I.D. men had raided a Second Battalion encampment staffed, as it happened, by six men only, and no arms. A doleful note was struck on another page by George Gilmore; 'this generation may well pass away without seeing that real freedom of Ireland for which it fought so valiantly and for which it sacrificed so much'.

**The New York Irish World** could not wait, failing to comprehend De Valera's slow moving semantics; it called for an immediate declaration of a Republic for all 32 counties. Sean Mac Bride, sensing also Fianna Fáil's retreat, appealed in front of 200 volunteers at Soloheadbeg, for that party to declare a Republic 'instead of wasting time trying to induce Republicans to accept the Treaty position'.

**Death of David Fitzgerald:** The loss of Staff Commdt. David Fitzgerald was announced following a long illness. It had occurred on the first of September, and

\* The presiding, and very active director of Bass, Ratcliffe and Gretton for a considerable number of years, was Col. John Gretton, right wing Tory M.P.; very much opposed to concessions to Ireland in 1921 - no parlying with Sinn Fein - then, or at any time. For readers of parliamentary debate his name would ring a bell, but for most Bass drinkers the boycott and the actions of the I.R.A., was a cause of bewilderment.

his funeral in Cahir, Co. Tipperary, was attended by the top men of the Movement; Maurice Twomey, Donal O'Donoghue, Sean Russell, Sean Mac Bride, Jim Killeen, Peadar O'Donnell, Mick Fitzpatrick, George Gilmore, Tom Daly, and Frank Ryan.

Fitzgerald, as a seventeen year old youth, had been involved in the Howth gun running of 1914; had retreated to the U.S after 1916; had returned and had been closely associated with Collins. Following the Civil War, he reported to H.Q. and was assigned to reorganisation work. Sentenced to 18 months imprisonment, he was among the nineteen rescued from Mountjoy in November 1925. Three years ago this writer enjoyed speaking with his sister in Cahir.

**United Ireland Party Launched:** This confusing title - it was never significantly anti-partitionist - was adopted for the joined-together grouping which met in two separate conventions in the Mansion House, Dublin, on September 8; whereupon, after agreeing the motions, they met as one party; that is Cumann na nGael, and the Centre Party of Frank Mac Dermot and James Dillon. The latter carried a distinguished parliamentary heritage going back to his father, John, an M.P. in Isaac Butt's time and later in the Land League days; and his father, John Blake Dillon, of the Young Ireland Party of Davis and Charles Gavin Duffy. Nor was Mac Dermot a lightweight; highly intelligent and articulate; a banker for a time in New York; educated in England, he had fought in World War One. Both favoured the Commonwealth connection; and, although Dillon was to long survive in 26 County politics, Mac Dermot did not, as philosophically, he was unsuited among the common herd of Irish politicians.

De Valera's comment on the amalgamation was that it was a 'new game by the men who started the Civil War and who were prevented from starting a new one'.

**More Bass Raids** were reported on September 9, widespread in Dublin, and in Tralee, Derry, Navan, Dundalk, Drogheda and Waterford. The Nash bottling plant in Newcastle West was entered.

There was a baton charge outside the Dublin District Court where five unnamed were charged. De Valera condemned these raids; 'they cannot be paralled outside of bedlam'.

**Austria:** Dr. Englebert Dollfuss spoke, wearing officers uniform, on September 11, to a gathering of 70,000. The era of Marxism is over, he told his listeners; the era of Capitalism is over also; we are determined to build the new era on a Christian and guild basis under an authoritative leadership.

**Bass Raids:** Eight were reported in Dublin on September 10.

**Dundalk:** A goods train, bound for Enniskillen, was held up, and a barrel of Bass on board was spilled.

**The Boycott League and De Valera:** The Boycott League had concentrated mainly upon public house warnings, following which, the offending bottles disappeared out of sight. That, and occasional feints against English newspapers, was the strategy, but whether this was a worthy strategy or merely a means of keeping the lads busy, was hard to say. With jousts against the Blueshirts, boycott activity, slogan painting, parading at commemorations and drilling, the Movement maintained its high profile. Yet De Valera in government was settling into a constitutional routine which he would not permit old sentiments disturb. In an address in Patrick Street,

Cork, on a Saturday in mid-September, he called upon people to disown the I.R.A.; this only eight months after they had assisted him to victory. Disown the I.R.A. and the Boycott League, he instructed his audience; accusing the I.R.A. of impeding him in the state's economic struggle with England. He was rebuked by Tom Barry at Fermoy, although Tom, as we now learn, enjoyed his glass of Bass\*. 'The Republican people of this country will not be cajoled into disowning the men in jail'. That was a reference to the treatment of young men held briefly in Blackrock, Co. Dublin, Bray, Clondalkin and Dun Laoire. Not so short term were those in Mountjoy, where there were 15, mostly resulting from Bass raids; serving six months or less. 11 more were held on suspicion in Lucan; seven in Cork; three in Waterford, and six in Belfast, although the latter were not on boycott activity.

**National Guard Office Closed:** As this was now a proclaimed organisation, its head office at 5 Parnell Square, was closed by the Tribunal on September 15.

**Eleven Sentenced:** Judge Hanna, on September 15, sentenced 11 young men to six months arising out of a raid upon 'The Deadman's'; the well known hostelry on the Lucan Road.

**Fitzgerald-Kenney:** The United Ireland Party stands for farmers paying rates until the law is changed, he declared on September 17. This was in response to a growing campaign to withhold rates.

**Emigration Ending?** With the U.S. in depression the quota there was not being filled, and exiles were even returning. The total going in 1929 was 20,802, of whom 18,035 went to the U.S. So far, in 1933, 975 had returned.

**Bass Boycott Ends:** Republicans were at last receiving messages that the incursions and seizures were doing harm. Currently there were 41 prisoners in Mountjoy, most of them on short terms. Days later there was a mass demonstration outside the prison.

**Reichstag Fire Trial Opens:** The stage-managed trial arising from the superficial fire of February 27, opened in Berlin on September 21. The defendants were; Ernest Toggler, a Communist deputy; Marinus Van Der Lubbe, a 24 year old Dutch man; Georgi Dimitroff; Blacoi Popoff, and Wassil Taneff; the latter three, Bulgarian communists.\*\* The five were charged with high treason. Days later Toggler, 'impressed the court,' as he poured scorn upon the new Nazi government.

**Silence is Golden,** others beware, was the inscription upon a card affixed to a man chained to a tree in the grounds of the R.C. church, on Newtownards Road, Belfast, in September.

**U.I.P. in Limerick:** The newly launched party held its first big meeting at the Crescent in Limerick city, addressed by Cosgrave, Dillon and O'Duffy. There were scenes, with heckling, that later merged into stone throwing.

**U.I.P. Youth Movement:** When Cumann na nGael, the Centre Party and the National Guard were amalgamated, an official statement from the organisation declared on September 27, that it was agreed a youth movement would be established under General O'Duffy. Its objects were listed as; the inculcation of patriotic enthusiasm; the undertaking of voluntary work, and support for sport and athletics.

The Youth Movement was formally inaugurated on September 25, at 3 Merrion

\* See Derry Kelleher.

\*\* Name spelling in their native spellings.

Square, with its leadership present; General Eoin O'Duffy, Col. O'Higgins, Col. Gerry Ryan, Major C.F. Dalton, Commdt. Ned Cronin and Ernest Blythe. On the same day, and with Broy Harriers chasing him, Commdt. Ned was being sought to appear before the Tribunal along with Patrick Belton. Nine Co. Waterford farmers were also arraigned on a conspiracy charge. They were acquitted eleven days later.

**Official Report on Bass:** An official report at this time refers to the action being initiated by the Boycott British League and sanctioned by G.H.Q in August 1933; Volunteers were being issued with revolvers, it said, but told to avoid gun-play. Stocks of the ale were destroyed in Tralee, Dun Laoire, Drogheda, Lucan, Naas, Rathcoole, Waterford city, Tramore and many other places. On October 2, a named shop assistant from Kells, Co. Meath, was taken in a car and beaten; tied to a gate post, a notice was affixed; 'Informer - Others Beware. Boycott Bass'.

**Mac Bride at Gweedore:** 'I definitely charge the Fianna Fáil government with trying to placate the imperialists by attacking and coercing Republicans', declared Sean Mac Bride in Gweedore. 'The present Fianna Fáil leaders', he went on, 'renounced the title to speak on behalf of the Republican movement when they seceded from it in 1927'. A cartoon in an issue of the paper of September 30, showed the Fianna Fáil car crashed into a signpost; one arm of which was labelled REPUBLIC and the other EMPIRE.

**I.R.A Overture:** When De Valera chided the I.R.A for 'impeding the economic struggle with England', he was overlooking the fact that in July 1932 the I.R.A approached Fianna Fáil 'to call a conference of all national organisations to secure united and enthusiastic action to fight the economic war'. Whether such a parallel grouping could have co-operated within the panoply of the burgeoning Free State bureaucracy is doubtful; but at any rate they were informed verbally through Robert Brennan, later an ambassador to the U.S, and Liam O'Doherty, that these proposals could not be entertained.

**Tomás Ó Maoleóin:** In Limerick city, Tomás Ó Maoleóin, 1916 fighter in Westmeath, and thereafter, as 'Sean Forde', tireless East Limerick commander,\* who would remain near the top until 1937, addressed an *aeridheacht* attended by 600 volunteers. In Dublin, a mass meeting was called for political treatment for the short term boycott prisoners in the 'Joy'; addressed by Madame MacBride, Fionán Breathnach, Liam Kelly, Sean MacBride, Mick Price and Mick Fitzpatrick; the old hands, but noticeably, with no one from Fianna Fáil, although some cumann did register protests.

**Windows Broken:** Following a release the prisoners meeting in Cathal Brugha Street, a section of the crowd sallied along Upper O'Connell Street to break windows at the offices of Bass, Ratcliffe and Gretton, on September 26.

**Cooraclare:** From this Co. Clare village came word on September 27, that an elderly ex-policeman had been fired at; he had been heard to pass 'derogatory remarks' upon the Bass raiders

**Tony Lavery:** Tony Lavery of Balkan Street, Belfast, who was to figure prominently later on, received three months from Mr. Topping, R.M, on September 29,

\* See *Survivors* for Tomás Ó Maoleóin

upon the usual documents charge. Described as Battalion Adjutant; the documents consisted of notes prepared for G.H.Q on staff strengths, and on available stocks of ammunition.

**Monster Meeting in Cork City:** Now, and for some time onwards the opposition, spurred on by the fantasies of O'Duffy, would concentrate upon a series of nationwide public meetings right through the winter. 25,000 were claimed present in South Mall on October 1, to hear O'Duffy, Mac Dermot and Dillon; with Blythe in a blue shirt. There were interruptions, and prior to it, 1200 counter-marched in what was described as an anti-Imperialist procession.

**Dolfuss:** An attempt was made on October 3, to assassinate him in parliament when he was wounded by two shots fired by an ex-soldier.

**Belton Fined:** After a prolonged Tribunal hearing, Belton, Cronin, and two adherents, were each fined £25 on charges of membership of an illegal organisation to wit, the National Guard; and incitement.

**Riotous Tralee:** A United Ireland Party convention was fixed for Friday, October 6 in Tralee\*, and, although kept secret, it was an unwise venue. Held in the Foresters' Hall, it was attended by close on 100 delegates. O'Duffy arrived with Cronin, both wearing blue shirts, accompanied by local adherents, entering the Grand Hotel at 3 p m for a brief lunch. Meanwhile the street filled with excited men who tried to break into the hall. O'Duffy's car was set alight; he suffered a heavy blow, as did Cronin. Military were hastily summoned from Cork, but by the time they had arrived the U.I.P delegates had dispersed. Two days later, O'Duffy was in Castlebar where, head swathed in bandages, he addressed a meeting; the crowd meanwhile crouched in doorways sheltering from heavy rain. Other meetings followed; being greeted everywhere with varying levels of hostility, in Sligo and Limerick. At Ballinamore, Co. Leitrim, there were no disturbances but, putting down a marker, 250 I.R.A marched through the street afterwards.

**Galway Men at Tribunal:** Six Galway city men appeared before the revamped Military Tribunal on October 30, on a charge relating to removing the film *Gallipoli* from a cinema and burning it. The film recalled the disastrous attempt to land troops in the Dardanelles in 1915, but was nonetheless considered 'propaganda'. Charged in Collins Barracks were Billy and Patrick Walsh of the Old Malt House,\*\* John Heron, Patrick Golding, James Carden and Tim Murray. Sentences, varying from six months to three months, were handed down. Shortly after, a protest meeting was held, with 500 volunteers parading; at which Maurice Twomey, Donal O'Donoghue, Sean Mac Bride and Mick Price spoke. On that occasion, Twomey, in a prophetic address, appealed to ex-members of the I.R.A not to join in a compromise; 'to consider the dangers'; the new Land Act is in line with Fianna Fáil policy, he told them; the huge numbers cooped up through lack of emigration are being looked upon as a nuisance; unemployment cannot be settled by doles and grants.

**Brown Book on Hitler:** *The Brown Book of the Hitler Terror* appeared in a full page

\* See Tomo Costelloe's account

\*\* See Pierce Fennell on the Old Malt House

review in *An Phoblacht* in October, while another piece was headed 'Political Freedom is not the End'. For all that, now that O'Donnell had moved away from it, the paper seemed to have lost its fire.

**Belfast:** There were raids in the Six Counties, where 60 were raked in for a short while. Arthur Thornberry and James Connolly were released after a stint of eighteen months in Crumlin Road; Thornberry being promptly clamped in again for ignoring a deportation order from Sir Dawson Bates; Orangeman, and Minister for Home Affairs. Billy Mc Corry and Dominic Adams, two teenage boys, were among those pulled in. Pogroms, emanating from the lower class Orange ghettos, were never more than minutes distant in Belfast; so upon a Saturday night in mid-October it seemed that another was about to erupt when Daniel O'Boyle, described as 'a well known Republican sympathiser' was shot in York Street. Following the occurrence, a mob invaded the Catholic quarter of the Lower Falls attacking houses.

**Dingle Affray:** An official report speaks of a parade of National Guard being fired upon near Dingle in daylight, and one, Martin Fitzgerald being wounded. Four I.R.A., on other charges, Pat Devane, James O'Connor, Bob Myles and Tom Collins, refusing to defend themselves, were sentenced by the Tribunal to 18 months.

**Juries Protection Expires:** With the operation now of the Military Tribunal, juries were no longer required, so the Act, said to protect them, was allowed to expire.

**Dromiskin Award:** The Great Northern Railway was awarded, October 12, £7451 for the train seriously wrecked, near Dromiskin, earlier in the year.

**Dungannon Arrests:** 14 young men were arrested on October 11, at Mullaghmore, outside Dungannon, on a drilling charge.

**Killarney Meeting:** In Killarney, Joe Daly, Tom Barry, Sean Ryan and Mick Fitzpatrick spoke against boycott prisoners from Killarney being held in Cork Jail.

**Privy Council:** After prolonged Dáil and Senate proceedings and rejections by that house, the Bill ending appeal to the English Privy Council reached its penultimate stage on October 12.

**Gilmore on Economic War:** In Clondalkin, then a rural village in Co. Dublin, George Gilmore sounded a different note; 'the economic war that would be of importance to the people of Ireland is not the sham fight going on between Irish capitalism and English capitalism, but the struggle of the working classes against capitalism'.

**Belfast R.U.C Man Dies:** A Constable Anderson had been shot dead in Belfast on October 8, while on duty in uniform with two others in Romania Street. Evidently, in a tit for tat, a sixty year old Catholic man, O'Boyle, was shot dead in York Street days after; as already referred to. On October 13, police made a swoop, taking 34 Catholic men away in cage lorries: quite plainly in what became known, much later, as a 'trawling' operation.

**Revolver:** In Westport, on October 13, a former army officer was sentenced to three months for withholding a revolver.

**Germany Quits:** Germany, on October 15, announced that it was quitting the prolonged disarmament conference in Geneva; not going anywhere, said a spokesman (nor did it). At the same time they announced their intention to leave the League of Nations. The Reichstag was dissolved on the same day; elections being fixed for November 12.



**Aiken's Vendetta:** *An Phoblacht* was refused a permit to be at a Military Tribunal trial of the Galway men in mid-October. Pursuing a private vendetta, Aiken had written that they had neglected to publish his rebuttal that a certain cadet had received the 'King's Commission'. The paper in reply quoted Article 51 of the Constitution wherein 'the Executive Authority of Saorstát Éireann is hereby declared to be vested in the King'. Running at this time in the *Irish Press* was a series by Dorothy Macardle on majority rule; De Valera's aim, she averred, was to secure a Document No. 2 position for the state (which indeed he did obtain five years later). Fianna Fáil, she declared, had never accepted the Treaty. 'On the contrary, to my mind, it is the one party in Ireland which is making a genuine effort to extricate us from its toils'. Six years later, Protestant Dorothy, a most talented lady, disenchant-ed, had left for ambulance service in wartime England.

**Barn Dance:** A barn dance, said to be patronised by Blueshirt supporters, was fired into, near Ballingar, Co. Galway, on October 16, and five persons were slightly wounded. A week later shots were fired into a hall in Beaufort, west of Killarney.

**Recognising Russia:** After a decade and a half of non-recognition, President Franklin Roosevelt was at this time, October 15, on the point of according U.S recognition to the Soviet Union.

**France** was said to be 'plunged into confusion' by the unexpected collapse of the Daladier coalition.

**Arms Conference Resumes:** Despite the absence now of Germany, the conference decided it should resume in Geneva.

**More Blueshirt Trouble in Kilkenny:** An official report of October 22, refers to a Fine Gael parade and meeting in Kilkenny addressed by O'Duffy, W.T. Cosgrave and James Dillon, with many followers wearing blue shirts. There were violent scenes of disorder, with several persons injured by stone throwing. 200 gardai were unable to maintain order; after two baton charges a party of military, steel helmeted and carrying rifles, were brought to the scene.

**Arthur Thornberry and James Connolly** of 22 Clondara Street and 471 Falls Road, were sentenced to one month in Crumlin Road Prison for disobeying an order excluding them from the north of Ireland; the judge refusing to accept their defence that they were natives of Belfast.

**Kilkenny:** A heavy police guard was present for a U.I.P. dance held, October 25, at New Street, Kilkenny. Benevolent over-policing was, however, now having the effect of intimidating middle class supporters from opposition party functions; a dividend, that was doubtless intended by the government.

**Sean Lester**, mild nationalist, northern Protestant, journalist and sometime League official in Geneva, was, on October 16, appointed High Commissioner of the Free City of Danzig. With the Nazi upsurge, it was likely to be a turbulent posting.

**Belfast:** Major J.H. Mc Cormick, D.S.O, M. P Belfast, was shot at, and wounded in the arm on the evening of October 26, on Barnett's Road, in south Belfast. He had been M.P for St. Annes since 1929, and he had frequently asked questions critical of the I.R.A. On this occasion he was approached by three men whom he had tried to fight off.

**Sean Murray and Sean Nolan**, the two leading lights of the Revolutionary Worker's Group, and from 1933, of the Communist Party of Ireland, were awarded compensation by the court on October 27, of £269, for the loss of their property, Connolly House, Great Strand Street, in the attacks of late March.

**Rioting in Jerusalem:** Steady Jewish immigration into Palestine from the late twenties was resulting in land pressures upon the Arab peoples. Following the 1917 Declaration by A.J. Balfour, British Foreign Secretary, to Lord Rothchild, Chairman of the British Zionist Federation, favouring the creation there of 'a national home for the Jewish people', concern among native Palestinians resulted in insurrectionary outbreaks against the British troops and police, many of them Irish, holding the mandate of government. In the last days of October, following similar riots in the ancient city of Jaffa, prolonged outbreaks occurred in Jerusalem, resulting in 27 deaths.

**Reprisal Shootings in Cork and Roscommon:** Reprisal shootings, resulting in woundings, between Blueshirt and Republican factions, were not uncommon in these two years. On October 29, Denis O'Leary and Hugh O'Reilly, members of U.I.P, were each shot in the leg in raids on their homes in west Cork. Another shooting took place near Roscommon town as a result of which John Hanly was critical.

**Bandon:** An official report of October 29, tells of Blueshirts Hugh O'Reilly and John O'Leary, taken from their rural homes and badly beaten by armed men; O'Leary being shot in both legs. The report advances reprisal action as the reason; stating that I.R.A volunteer John O'Connor, four days before, had been threatened; brought into a field, and forced to lift and carry a heavy boulder for a distance.

**U.S to Buy Gold:** 'World on the Verge of Gold War' was the headline, foreseeing the wealthy nations racing to corner the metal. It did not happen, although at this time President Roosevelt authorised purchases to support the state's bullion held at Fort Knox.

**Privy Council Goes:** On the last day of October, the Free State Senate was finally obliged to pass the Bill ending appeal from the Supreme Court to the English Privy Council, as had been provided for in Article 66 of the Constitution. Approved also were two amendments limiting the powers of the Crown. It must be said that De Valera had pursued the Privy Council abolition, as he did the Oath, with unrelenting vigour. Kevin O'Higgins, that devoted defender of the Treaty, had stigmatised the Council as 'a bad court - a useless court and an unnecessary court'.

**Special Branch Recruitment:** In this month also there was news that a Special Branch, ostensibly to fight the Blueshirts, had been recruited; while *An Phoblacht* carried reports of police raiding for arms in the slums of Marrowbone Lane. The I.R.A is again banned (not quite true; it was not again banned in the 26 Counties until three years later), said the paper, quoting a charge against the Galway men; 'being members of an unlawful association contrary to Section 20 of Article 2 A of the Constitution'. A piece followed on 'The Retrogression of Fianna Fáil', reviewing their slide down the slippery slope, as the paper saw it.

**Control of Nation's Wealth:** Liam Mac Gabhann in Clifden, was underlining this; 'it is useless to try to build up any industrial system here unless it is controlled by the state. The people, through the state, must be in control of the wealth of

Ireland'. That last may cause a hoarse chuckle these days when state companies, in order to pay ever higher stipends to state employees, are floated upon the stock exchange and then sold upon the international market.

**Belfast Protest Meeting:** A meeting, protesting against the arrest of the 34, scheduled for Smithfield and attended by 600, was baton charged by R.U.C on November 5. Brendan Kiely of Tyrone, and Harry Diamond, later an M.P.\* were charged subsequently with 'flouting the authority of the court' by addressing the meeting. They were sentenced to one month's imprisonment, or a fine; which they refused to pay. Eileen Morrissey, a girl, in company with other girls, had shouted in Divis Street, *Up the Republic*; for that she received a similar sentence.

**Batons Out in Balla, Co. Mayo:** When some local people met in the school to form a branch of the U.I.P, they found themselves surrounded by a crowd, said to be very anti-Blueshirt. Scuffles, leading to baton charges, resulted.

**Gallipoli Men:** The six appeared at the Tribunal on November 6, before officers Joyce, Tuite and Bennett. It marked a watershed for F.F as it was the first time they had brought I.R.A men before a tribunal. However, there is always a first. Cosgrave's coercion again in force, screamed *An Phoblacht*; perjured evidence from the police. The prosecutor was James Geoghegan, for a short while F.F Minister for Justice, 'a man who was discarded by the Cosgrave government'; referring to the fact that he had come over from Cumann na nGael. Pat Walsh was sentenced to six months; Herron to four and the others to three months each.

**Rifle and Revolver Shots** were fired into the Mullin home at Blennerville, Tralee at this time. Patrick Mullin was said to be a Blueshirt, and had received blows during the riot against O'Duffy on October 6.

**A Dance Bus**, proceeding to a 'Blueshirt dance' near Naul, Co. Dublin, was attacked by stones on November 6.

**New Volunteer Force:** An Army Council statement on the projected new volunteer force of 15,000 promised 'unrelenting hostility to the creation of this new appendage to the Free State Army'.

**21 Sentenced in Belfast:** For refusing to answer questions, 21 of the 34 originally held, the remaining 13 having been released, were sentenced in November to periods of three months and under.

**Sean Murray:** C.P.I leader, originally from Co. Antrim, was also sentenced on the same day for refusing to obey an exclusion order to stay out of the Six Counties.

**Armistice Day:** Armistice Day was rolling forward. This 'demonstration of imperialism' was always a high point of Republican counter-activity, especially in Dublin. This year a statement had gone out that the Executive Council might permit an Armistice Day celebration; Republicans will not, announced *An Phoblacht*.

**Bray Head Obelisk:** An obelisk, erected on Bray Head to commemorate Queen Victoria's Jubilee, was destroyed by explosives on November 10.

**Protests Silenced:** In mid-November at the Fianna Fáil Árd Fhéis céilit in the Dublin Mansion House, the M.C, Giolla Christ Ó Broin announced at an interval;

\* See Harry for the esteem in which he held M.P Diamond

'I feel it is my duty to protest on behalf of my friends against the sentences passed yesterday on the six young Galway men for taking and destroying an imperialist film. I and my friends here approve of the action of these young men and would have done the same'. His statement was drowned in cheers, but Giolla Christ, who always wore a traditional green kilt, was not again invited to be M.C.

A resolution at the same *Árd Fhéis* deplored the 'crisis among Republicans', the use of the Military Tribunal and the enforcement of criminal status; on the instruction of Sean T. O'Kelly a number of like resolutions were omitted from the *clár*. In an effort to have them debated it was sought to suspend standing orders, but the effort failed. Delegates were overawed by a statement from Sean Moylan T.D; 'if Fianna Fáil is not the most extreme Republican Party then I would not be in it'. Minister Frank Aiken; 'during the Civil War I would have often been glad to jail my own officers'; meanwhile De Valera affected a display of temper sufficient to quell the murmurings. On the North, he advised that the only way to bring them in would be by having an economy, so prosperous, that they would wish to join with us.

**Afganistan:** King Mohammed Ghaki was assassinated in Kabul on November 8, reportedly by a servant in the royal palace. He was succeeded by his son.

**Permission Refused:** The Tribunal, on November 8, refused an application from the proclaimed National Guard to be allowed open its headquarters at 5 Parnell Square; this time for use by the U.I.P.

**Havana:** Fighting continued in the capital with army officers holding out in buildings close to the presidential palace.

**Poppy Day:** At a protest meeting held on November 10 in College Green by the Anti-Imperialist League, a front for the I.R.A, Donal O'Donoghue declared; 'the friends of England have been given permission to parade on the streets of Dublin', while Peadar Kearney urged that we tear up every emblem of the Empire. Maud Gonne made a plea for Irish neutrality; it will not be respected so long as British soldiers are at Cobh and in the North of Ireland. Sean Mac Bride and Frank Ryan also spoke. Days earlier a British Legion standard had been flung over the parapet of O'Connell Bridge but an intrepid ex-soldier, witnessing it, stripped, dived in and recovered the banner. In these years it was customary to have colourful assemblies, combined with church parades, on Remembrance Day, in all of the cities and many small towns as a considerable remnant of the '14 war were still living.

**Gerald Thornberry,** a brother of Arthur, of Clondara Street, was charged on November 12, with shooting at Charles and James Newell of Carnmoney, a village to the north of Belfast. According to the evidence, James Newell was employed in the labour exchange. A jury later found Gerald not guilty.

**Nazis Win:** Not surprisingly, the Nazis won the election called after Germany departed the Disarmament Conference and the League of Nations. On November 13, the results gave them 92% of the poll, with 40 million favourable votes compared with seventeen and a quarter million in March, only eight months before. *The Irish Times* described the result as a remarkable change.

\* As F.S.L. Lyons express's it, Thomas sniffed the approach of treason in every tainted breeze, and saw in the return to power in 1932 of the transient republican of 1922 a direct threat to the whole basis of the settlement so painfully reached in the Treaty.

**Tricolours Fly:** The banned tricolour continued to defy the R.U.C, flying over G.A.A matches in Derry city.

**J.H. Thomas, Secretary of State for the Dominions,** continued to express concern about the constitutional course of the Free State. In the House of Commons on November 14, he remarked that three recent Free State amendments were in conflict with the Treaty. 'It is our desire to see the Irish Free State taking her full part as a member of the Commonwealth, accepting its responsibilities and enjoying its privileges. If it does not accept its responsibility it cannot continue to enjoy its privileges.' (As Thomas\* had always spoken in this hectoring manner, it might be thought that he was Tory, but no; he was Welsh Labour, in, at that time, a Conservative coalition with some former Labour people under Ramsay Mac Donald. He was to disappear within twelve months as a result of a financial scandal). De Valera vigorously rejected the viewpoint expressed: Mr. Thomas, he remarked, has never ceased to threaten us. At the same time there was a view held among the ultra conservatives in Britain, and here we may include Thomas, Hailsham, Churchill and others, that the Free State should not benefit from the Statute of Westminster where it ameliorated the Articles of Agreement contained in the December 1921 Treaty.

**Uniforms for New Force:** Frank Aiken's volunteers, *An Phoblacht* announced, referring to the Army Council statement on the new Free State reserve, would have a uniform based upon Casement's abortive German brigade. Instantly, Capt. Robert Monteith, a survivor of that brigade, cabled from New York; 'I consider it outrageous that Casement's sacrifice for an Irish Republic is set at naught by Free State troops raised to support an English treaty and the brigade uniform dishonoured'. A number of weeks later the paper was warning those who might join, to remember the career of crime against the nation of those who joined in 1922. They did not enlist to fight against, and to murder Republicans, but the fact of their enlisting made each further course inevitable.

**Blueshirts: Banned and Banned: A Confusing Medley:** There were baton charges in mid-November in Longford town during a Blueshirt meeting; as he left his hotel under close guard afterwards, Eoin O'Duffy was greeted with cat calls and the Nazi salute. The organisation known as the Army Comrades Association (A.C.A), first banned under its (second) title of National Guard in August 1933, soon found itself banned again in December under its cover name of Young Ireland Association. As Army Comrades Association, first convened at Wynn's Hotel on February 10, and founded with 200 Army officers present on March 17, 1932, it was intended to include dissident Free State Army officers. Under Dr. T.F. O'Higgins, Ernest Blythe, General Mulcahy, Prof. James Hogan, and almost all of the principal leaders of Cumann na nGael, it was open to all, but preferably anti-Fianna Fáil people. It contained also a considerable blue bloused female section. On July 20, 1933, Dr. T. F. O'Higgins resigned the leadership; the dismissed Eoin O'Duffy was elected unanimously in his place, and the name changed to National Guard. His arrival invigorated the organisation for a short time, but not for its good.

'Blueshirt' was both a tag and a uniform; the name of a short lived paper, but never the organisation's official name. As a uniform, it first appeared in Kilkenny on April 8, 1933, later being worn by all of the leadership, except W.T. Cosgrave. On

August 21, 1933, the National Guard was banned, and on September 13, Commdt. Ned. Cronin stated that the organisation 'may in future be referred to as the Young Ireland Association'. There had been a political merger meanwhile on September 8, (already referred to) of Cumann na nGael and Frank Mac Dermot's Centre Party as the United Ireland Party, led by O'Duffy, with W.T. Cosgrave as its leader in the Dáil. On December 8, the government banned the Young Ireland Association which, on December 14, was renamed League of Youth.

**North Elections Were Signalled** for November 30. There would be six abstentionist Republicans going forward: George Nash of Belfast, for Mourne; Arthur Thornberry, for Central Belfast; Seán Mac Cumhail, for Foyle; Pádraig Mac Logan of Portlaoise, for South Armagh; Frank Devlin, for East Tyrone and De Valera, for South Down. Tom Mc Grath was originally selected but was persuaded to step aside. Unfortunately, for those Republicans going forward, Six County nationalists at this time, were disenchanted with abstention. Meanwhile, although he himself was seeking election, De Valera announced on November 18, that the Fianna Fáil party would not put forward candidates, despite many within the party urging that they should.

**O'Duffy in Ballybricken:** At that time Ballybricken was a working class district in Waterford city; old time Redmonite. Eoin O'Duffy claimed an audience there on November 17 of ten thousand. His theme; *when Fianna Fáil is defeated*.\*

**W.T. Cosgrave was in Cork**, and thankfully within the civilised precincts of the Imperial Hotel: he addressed a meeting there on November 22.

**Reichstag Fire Trial:** On November 23, Van Der Lubbe, usually incoherent, was on this occasion plain speaking. He called for a sentence upon himself, declaring that the four co-defendants should be acquitted.

**Dean Ryan of Clonmel** informed the National Education Committee on November 24, that they should not appoint Patrick Carew as caretaker in the technical school of Cashel. He is a publicly proclaimed recruiting agent for the I.R.A, he declared. This was too much for some of the committee, but as agreement could not be reached, the school would remain closed.

**Bluebell Rally:** A Blueshirt rally, with a difference, brought 600 together at the cemetery in Inchicore where Volunteer I.P. Traynor lay buried. He was stated to have been shot dead by British forces in Croke Park, on Sunday, November 21, when a dozen spectators were killed and 60 wounded.

**'Remarkable Rally' in Belfast:** 'Remarkable', was the description of a rally in nationalist Belfast on November 26, attended by some 12,000 who marched along, singing.

**R.G. Bradshaw of Sligo:** R.G. Bradshaw of Sligo was a Protestant nationalist who served on the brigade staff I.R.A in 1921, and had been interned in 1922. He was the proprietor of a forthright journal, *The Connaughtman*. Selected at this time for a staff post in Sligo Corporation; for an undisclosed reason his name was turned down from Dublin.

\* Sean Lemass in the Dáil at this time, said that O'Duffy was confused, and that his ideas on fascism were picked up on a holiday cruise in the Mediterranean.

The Corporation members were upset; at their meeting in late November they passed a resolution by 12 votes to 4; 'we are satisfied that the influence of the organisation known as the Knights of Columbanus was brought to bear upon the appointment making machinery in this case, and was thrown into the scale against the candidature of Mr. Bradshaw'. The contest with the Dublin bureaucracy, and whoever was behind it, was now set to run and run, but victory in the end would lie with the Dublin bureaucracy.

**U.I.P. at Navan:** General O'Duffy was the principal speaker at a rally held in Navan on November 26.

**Eamonn Donnelly Arrested:** F.F. T.D. for Laois-Offaly, northern Republican, Eamonn Donnelly was arrested by the R.U.C. in Newry on November 26, on foot of an exclusion order, and conveyed to Crumlin Road Prison.

**Forestry Development:** The government announced on December 1 that, in order to increase forestry development from 3,500 acres planted per annum to 6,000, there would be presented a supplementary estimate of £30,000.

**Search for Blueshirt Arms:** Reports carried at this time referred to a nationwide search of U.I.P. households for concealed arms. P.J. Ruttledge, Minister for Justice, defending the action, referred to the National Guard, saying that the activities of this banned organisation were continuing; the government must take every precaution.

**Six County Election Result:** Announced on December 2, it was as follows:-

Unionist 33 (37); Nationalist 9 (11); Independent Unionist 2 (3); Labour 2 (1); Fianna Fáil 1; Republican 1. (Those in parenthesis are for the previous parliament of 52). The election was not on the P.R. system but upon first past the post. The other parties were united in their opposition to Republicans who, while performing reasonably, elected, as an abstentionist, only Mc Logan.

**Tralee Charges:** Arising from a mêlée in the town on October 6, 14 were charged with creating a disturbance.

**France:** The Daladier government was being succeeded by a cabinet formed under Camille Chautemps.

**Shots Fired At Bus:** It happened in Middleton, to a bus conveying parties to a Blueshirt rally in Cobh. On the day following, newspapers carried reports of 4,000 marching in a Blueshirt organised parade, in Macroom.

**Tralee Charges:** Twelve of the 14 Tralee men received sentences, on December 5, ranging from three months to six months. All football matches in Co. Kerry were, as a result, cancelled.

**Young Ireland Party Banned:** Although established in recent months as a branch of the United Ireland Party organisation, that did not wash with government. On December 8, an announcement was made banning the Young Ireland Party. 'otherwise the Blueshirts'; at the same time their offices in Dublin and Cork were closed and sealed by police. The action was denounced as monstrous by the Party.

**Rally in Ballybofey:** On the same day the U.I.P. presence was strong in the north west where W.T. Cosgrave and James Dillon were speaking, at an outdoor rally in Ballybofey, Co. Donegal.

**Ambush at Annagry:** Heading into west Donegal from Killybegs, December 10,

stones were flung at a Cosgrave entourage following a stormy meeting in Annagry. After the stones came shots, whereupon detectives, travelling with the party, halted, alighted and fired back, but no injuries were reported. Annagry was not the only venue to have stormy meetings in early December; Lisdoonvarna and Tipperary town, where the meeting was banned, had their brawls and their excitement.

**Quintin Hogg, Lord Hailsham**, for a period had indulged in heavy criticism of the De Valera government arising from the termination of the right to appeal to the Privy Council. Hogg, as a dyed-in-the-wool Tory\*, had taken this decision to heart. He was answered from a number of quarters; the controversy not at all going his way.

**O'Duffy Disappears:** There was some concern when, after the Co. Donegal series of meetings, O'Duffy disappeared for a full 24 hours. It was thought that he may have visited friends, incognito, in the Six Counties, but he then turned up in Dublin.

**Spanish Outbreak:** What was described as an Anarchist and Syndalist insurrection, which had broken out in Madrid and some other cities, leaving scores dead, passed its peak on December 11.

**George Plunkett:** In these years, George was Chief Scout of Fianna Éireann, while Sean Mooney was *Árd Rúnaí*. Between them they had made a great success of the organisation which had troops in nearly every corner of Ireland.

**Con Collins and the Clonakilty C.Y.M.S. Hall:** In mid-December it was reported that Con Collins, caretaker of the Catholic Young Mens' Society hall, had been given the choice by his parish priest, to resign from the I.R.A. or lose the post; he would not resign, so he was sacked.

**Overthrow the Government?:** The Young Ireland Association, declared P.J. Ruttledge in the Senate on December 13, was seeking nothing less than to overthrow the government. He was replying to criticism of the government's latest action in banning the Young Ireland Association on December 8.

**League of Youth to be Formed:** On December 15, another name change was announced. A League of Youth would be formed, and the Blueshirts would be dissolved. O'Duffy was again appointed to the top, with the title of Director-General. At the same time a writ was served upon the Attorney-General, Conor Maguire, seeking a directive from the High Court that the League was a lawful body. Court procedures being what they are it would be some years before a decision was announced on that matter, and by that time the League would have ceased to exist.

**Westport:** Sunday, December 17, was fixed for a major meeting in Westport, with many wearing the now banned shirt; and James Fitzgerald-Kenney impressively entering the town at the head of 60 horsemen; that being considered superior to F.F.'s use of old I.R.A. men holding aloft on pitch forks lighted peat sods. Escorted by a League of Youth contingent, O'Duffy, wearing a blue shirt, was blocked at a police cordon. *I will wait here for a week*, he announced defiantly; but it did not so happen as he managed to break away and reach the platform where he was promptly arrested. Taken then, he was lodged in Arbour Hill where, after some days of *habeus corpus* proceedings, he was released in some triumph on December 21.

\*. As is his son, a member of Thatcher and Major cabinets, and remembered as critical of northern Catholic solicitors.



**Reichstag Trial Ends:** After 57 days, the trial, which had circulated around a number of venues, ended in Leipzig on December 16.

**Islandbridge War Memorial:** A scheme of development for a War Memorial at Islandbridge had been agreed prior to December 19. On that day it was announced that British Legion trustees would provide £50,000 towards the work, while the government and the Office of Public Works would provide £50,000. Sir Edwin Lutyens was selected as architect.

**An Phoblacht and United Ireland Seized:** On December 20, all copies of the Fine Gael weekly, *United Ireland*, were seized from 3 Merrion Square, and from the printers, Cahill. On the same day, all copies of *An Phoblacht*, were seized from Terry Ward, the Assistant Editor, at the printers in Longford. It contained a piece of editorial entitled, *The Mask is Off*; Fianna Fáil's anti-Republican policy is beginning in deeper earnest.

Afraid to admit failure, our ex-Republican ministers will not brook any opposition....Every promise they made of vital interest to the people of Ireland has been broken.....England, through J.H. Thomas, has stated that the Fianna Fáil apostate leader, Eamon De Valera, wishes for a form of association with the British Empire. It has not been denied by him; it has been proved by his capitalist policy. A clue to the suppression may have lain in another piece on 'Aiken's Army', as he was touchy on the subject.

**Trial of Commdt. Cronin:** Commdt. Ned Cronin had been in custody since his arrest in Bundoran on December 9. On December 21, he appeared before the Military Tribunal in Collins Barracks charged with sedition and membership of an illegal organisation. Evidence was adduced on the boxes of ammunition found months before at 23 St. Stephen's Green. Paroled at first, he was found guilty of being a member of an illegal organisation on December 29, and was sentenced to three months, which he elected to do.

**O'Duffy Faces A New Trial:** On December 25, O'Duffy was summoned on five charges, including one of incitement to murder the President of the Executive Council. These were to lead to a series of contests in the High Court which were to stretch well into the spring.

**Sentence in Reichstag Trial:** Marinus Van der Lubbe, who, uninspired, had started what was most probably a relatively harmless fire, and which the Nazis with their *enabling law* of March 23, speedily took advantage of to install a dictatorship, was sentenced, on December 23, to death by beheading. Clearly sub-normal, he had been convicted on charges of high treason and insurrectionary incendiarism. Earnest Togler, the leader of the Communist Party in parliament, Georgi Dimitroff, Blacoi Popoff and Wassil Taneff, three Bulgarians, were acquitted. Dimitroff emerged as the most remarkable figure of a remarkable trial. He propagated his communist views and attacked and confronted the official Nazi witnesses. Undecided what to do with them, the Nazis held them until the second last day of February, 1934, when they were flown to Moscow by special plane. Dimitroff was later communist Prime Minister of Bulgaria, from 1946 until his death in 1949.

**Commndt. Cronin's Trial:** Commndt Cronin - who, after this episode, was always referred to pointedly as ex-Commndt - was tried by the Tribunal on December 28, and

found guilty of membership of the Young Ireland Association; the National Guard, otherwise the 'Blueshirts'. The Tribunal ruled that these organisations were analogous; that there was no difference between them. He was sentenced to three months imprisonment; not to be enforced if he entered into his own recognisance of £50: that, he quickly said, he would not do. He would serve his time, but, meanwhile, he was allowed 14 days parole. His defence to the charge was that he was not in control of the ammunition; that it had been planted in the Association H.Q. at 23 St. Stephen's Green. He also alleged ill-treatment on entering Arbour Hill; that the blue shirt he had been wearing was ripped from him.

**Hugh T. O'Neill of Bandon** was an important U.I.P member and a Blueshirt. Shortly after Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve, he was taken from his home and beaten, as a result of which he died shortly after. (It was known that his beating was a reprisal for another beating in that neighbourhood. Eight weeks earlier he had been attacked, along with Denis O'Leary). His funeral took place on the last day of the year, attended by the Rosscarbery Blueshirt Band, with 800 young men in shirts, and 250 girls in blue blouses. It was presided over by Bishop Daniel Cohalan, Bishop of Cork; a graveside oration was given by Eoin O'Duffy, and there was a distinguished attendance.

## CHRONOLOGY: THE YEAR 1934: JANUARY TO JUNE 30.

**Harassment:** The first issue of the new year was also seized, and neither the editor nor the printer was informed of the reason. Harassment from now on would cause the demise of the paper in eighteen months time. For, presumably, an unconnected reason, an *Irish Press* journalist, Joseph Dennigan was jailed for refusing to tell the Tribunal where he obtained certain information. Fianna Fáil, declared *An Phoblacht*, has begun where Cumann na nGael was forced to halt. The printing works in Longford was now under a guard of police placed there, not to guard but to intimidate. The publishing company, Republican Press, of 12 St. Andrew Street, contested the interference on January 13, in the High Court but failed in their application. Liam Mac Gabhann, assistant editor, gave a detailed presentation of the case, but Justice O'Byrne refused the motion against the police without calling the defence. Following this the premises was entered on February 10, and 5000 leaflets deriding the new Volunteer force taken away.

**The O'Duffy Trial** was due to open on January 2, and was expected to last a week, but on Tuesday, January 1, Justice O'Byrne, in the High Court, forbade the Tribunal proceeding on the application of J.A Costello S.C. The question of the supremacy of the Tribunal resulted in an unpleasant impasse for government.

**Helena Moloney** was writing in the *Irish Press* on January 1, from the storied residence of the Coughlan's, *Frankfort House*, Dartry, on the subject of upholding the sovereignty of Ireland.

**Clonmel:** A U.I.P meeting there on the eve of the new year had a reported attendance of 3,000, half of whom wore blue shirts under their coats. They were addressed by O'Duffy, W.T. Cosgrave and James Dillon; being welcomed outside the town by hundreds, all of whom raised their arms in salute.

**Commdt. Cronin**, now ex-Commdt. Cronin, addressed a new year's eve League of Youth dance at Rathkeale at which he affirmed again that he would not enter into bail. He was on a 14 day parole.

**Other U.I.P/Blueshirt Meetings**, which cannot all be chronicled here, were held widespread in the summer, winter and spring of 1933 and 1934. In this month alone, major meetings addressed by the leadership were held in Wexford, Fethard, Athlone, Skibbereen and Dundalk. Blueshirts departing by rail from Drogheda for the Dundalk meeting, and upon their return, were attacked forcefully, and military with tear gas had to be used.

**Francis Stuart** was reviewing in the *Irish Press* of January 1, a collection of poems from the upper-crust English writer, A. Sackville West. There is nothing lyrical, impassioned or inspired in her poems, was his verdict.

**Eamonn Donnelly T.D Released:** After one month in Crumlin Road, Belfast, Eamon Donnelly, F.F. T.D for Laois/Offaly, and a native of Newry, was released on January 2. He had been imprisoned for visiting his native town under a nine year old exclusion order.

**Down with Jazz:** It was reported that a historical programme prepared for radio by Seán Óg Ó Ceallaig was scrubbed on orders from the Minister for Posts and Telegraphs, Gerald Boland. The same minister promised Connradh na Gaeilge that Radio Athlone would curtail the broadcast of jazz music. An anti-jazz campaign was

in full swing at this time. Leitrim Connradh sponsored an anti-jazz march in Mohill in which 3000 took part. 'Down with Jazz' messages were received from Dúbhglas de h-Íde, De Valera, Cardinal Mac Rory and Conor Maguire S.C, Attorney-General.

**Roosevelt's New Deal** was launched in Washington on January 3. It was to be a post-depression 3 year plan, moderately successful, as events proved, 'of national recovery that would make America prosperous again out of the ruins of the old selfish social order'.

**Huge French Fraud** was a headline of January 8 on what was quickly called the Stavisky scandal. A discreditable episode that brought France to the verge of civil war. It rocked the cabinet; one minister resigning, followed eventually by a prime minister and cabinet. An official in the Prosecutor's office was murdered. Stavisky shot himself at Chamonix on the border of Switzerland.

**U.I.P in Wexford:** 4000 were reported gathered at the Redmond monument to hear address's from O'Duffy, Cosgrave and local politicians. It was preceded by a procession of 30 horsemen. There was some booing around the outskirts.

**An Phoblacht Reprinted:** The seized issue for January 8 was reprinted overnight as a *stop press*.

**Castlewellan:** Two young men, Patrick Bannon and George Mussen were fined and imprisoned two months on a document charge at Castlewellan, in a report of January 9.

**Van der Lubbe:** The young Dutchman was executed by guillotine in Leipzig on January 10. *The Irish Press* carried his photograph.

**Lismore:** 2500 U.I.P followers were addressed by ex-Commdt. Cronin and O'Duffy on January 14.

**Twomey in Co. Kerry:** An official report refers to a visit by C.S Maurice Twomey on January 14 to Tralee where he lectured 250 I.R.A volunteers on 'lack of discipline', probably in reference to attacks upon Blueshirts, frowned upon by H.Q. H.Q being reported 'apprehensive' at the success of Volunteer force (Aiken's volunteers) recruiting.

**Cork Blueshirts Charged:** Three Cork city Blueshirts appeared before the Tribunal in a report of January 15 charged with membership of an unlawful association, to wit, the National Guard.

**Belfast:** Ex-Argenta internee, Edward Mc Mahon of Coalisland, was on trial on January 15 on a charge of possession of documents; receiving one month.

**Wicklow Granite for Liverpool:** There was an expectation that granite from Doyle's quarries at Ballyknocken might be used to clad the new cathedral. The project as planned however never proceeded.

**Galway Men Before Tribunal:** Six Co Galway men went before the Tribunal in a report of January 18 charged with an attack upon three U.I.P men; one of whom was the local chairman.

**Devlin M.P. Dies:** 'Wee' Joe Devlin, M.P. after a prolonged illness, died on January 18. Born in 1872, he started life as a bar tender; later entering journalism.

**John Mc Mahon of Tralee,** while on parole at the end of January from Arbour Hill, according to *An Phoblacht* in its issue of January 20, was offered his liberty if he signed a form to be of good behaviour. The form was in Aiken's handwriting, but Mc Mahon refused to sign it.

**Boland on Law:** Gerald Boland, Minister for Posts and Telegraphs quoted in *An Phoblacht* of January 20, stated: we are not a revolutionary government at all. We are bound by the written law. It is for the courts to say whether the government acts outside the written law or not.

**Austria,** increasingly nervous with Nazi Germany, called upon the League to intervene. However there was nothing the powerless League could do.

**Sean Lemass** at a dinner in the Metropole Restaurant, then in O'Connell Street, on January 23, announced a wide range of self-sufficiency plans for 1934.

**Tralee:** James O'Grady of Moyderwell, appeared in a report of January 24, on a charge of boarding a train in Rathmore, and throwing bales of *Irish Press* newspapers along the track to Headford junction.

**Derry Mayor:** There was a strong nationalist protest in the Guild Hall on January 23 when Sir Dudley E. Mc Corkell was elected Mayor, in this notoriously gerrymandered city, for the sixth time. Meanwhile in Belfast, Sir E. Mc Cullagh was elected Mayor for the seventh time.

**Powers of Tribunal:** Arising from the O'Duffy case at the beginning of the month and the ruling then in the High Court that it had powers superior to the Tribunal; a challenge was entered on January 24 by Attorney-General Conor Maguire that the legislature in 1931 had knowingly and specifically given extraordinary powers to the Tribunal. At a hearing on January 30, Judge Hanna, in a short-shrift judgement, had this to say of the Tribunal: the life and liberty of every citizen was in the hands of three officers untrained in law, inexperienced in evidence and without appeal to a legal tribunal.

**New Republican Party?** A report of January 25, referred to a new Republican party being considered with an advanced social and economic programme. It would be discussed at an I.R.A Convention in mid-March. This was obviously a reference to the Congress proposal that would be put forward at the Convention. Frank Ryan, a week earlier in Enniscorthy, had called for a 'new party which will embrace the whole Republican party'.

**David Matthews of Belfast** was reported in *An Phoblacht* of February 3, dismissed with ignomy while in Crumlin Jail. This was thought by many a peculiar verdict as Matthews was considered a worthy officer.\*

**Drive Against Six County Republicans:** As reported in *An Phoblacht* of February 3, five had been jailed, short term, from Tyrone and Down. Two Cumann na mBan, Mary Donnelly and Winnie Magennis, were jailed for selling flags.

**Tuam Men Sentenced:** Six Tuam men, held upon charges, were sentenced by the Tribunal in a report of January 25, to terms of twelve months and six months.

**French Government Falls:** In the aftermath of the Stavisky scandal, the government of Camille Chautemps fell. Two days later he was succeeded by Edouard Daladier, who had been P.M. before and who continued to be a very durable politician into the future.

**Skibbereen:** Although trees were felled and phone wires cut, a major U.I.P meeting proceeded in Skibbereen on January 28, with 150 guards in attendance. 5000 were said to be present, arriving by train, bus and other means. Addressed by O'Duffy, Mulcahy and Dillon, it was preceded by a procession of 1200 Blueshirts and 300 ladies in blue blouses.

\* See Bob Bradshaw on Matthews.

**F.F. Dance at Wolfhill, Laois:** The car conveying the orchestra was held up, in a report of January 30, and ordered back by armed men.

**Aiken's Volunteers:** It was announced that recruiting for upwards of 10,000 Volunteers would commence in three weeks.

**Fr. M. O'Flanagan and Diarmuid O'Crowley** as reported were still upon the *Árd Comhairle* of Sinn Féin at this time.

**Anti-Volunteer Posters** began appearing on lamp posts at the end of January but were promptly scraped off by police.

**Hitler's Speech:** What the press described as an important speech was delivered by Adolf Hitler to a cheering Reichstag lasting two hours. He promised that Germany would not invade Austria, but Austria must not try to suppress its Nazi movement. As for the Saar, a rich valley on the Moselle due for a referendum in 1935, it must be returned to Germany. (A League of Nations plebiscite in January 1935 resulted in the Saar voting overwhelmingly for union with Germany.)

**Angriest Scene Ever,** was a newspaper description of a Dáil scene in an issue of February 1, when the U.I.P. accused Fianna Fáil of laughter after hearing that Cornelius Daly of Dunmanway had died following an assault when returning from the Christmas midnight Mass.

**Maxton in Dublin:** James Maxton, conscientious war objector, and Glasgow Independent M.P., interviewed G.H.Q. men, Mac Bride, Price and Dr. Andy Cooney at *Roebuck House* on January 31, attended by aide-de-camp Jimmy Hannigan and orderlies from the 3rd. Dublin Battalion.

**Congress on the Way:** *An Phoblacht* at this time was carrying many articles and snippets denouncing fascism; of the Reichstag trial, which had concluded, it condemned as a glaring travesty of justice, the execution of Van der Lubbe, declaring that he had been tried before a partisan Nazi court. Georgi Dimitroff, the principal defendant in the case, is remembered for his court confrontation with Herman Goering. He survived. But the O'Donnell fire was absent, and the *Irish Press* of February was speculating upon a new republican party 'with a very advanced social and economic programme'. G.H.Q. dismissed this as journalistic speculation, saying that it would be decided at the next Convention. Frank Ryan pre-empted that by announcing at a public meeting in Enniscorthy that the new group would embrace the entire Republican family; the people were looking for a lead from the I.R.A.

**Justice Secretary:** Kerry solicitor, Browne, after one year in this sensitive slot, was replaced on February 1, by S.A. Roche.

**'Resolving Political Differences':** A national conference with this purpose in mind, was proposed in the press of February 2. It came from the U.I.P. side, and proposed that it would have Cardinal Mac Rory or Nuncio Pascal Robinson as chairman. It was not welcomed by F.F. or the Labour Party. Nothing more was heard of it.

**University Seats To Go:** It was announced on February 1, that 16 university seats in An Dáil would be abolished, leaving then 136 in the house.

**Armagh:** Two Republicans, Patrick Toner and Henrietta Carson, were fined and threatened with imprisonment for passing around in a crowd, a prisoners' collection box on Sunday, November 19.

**Women Athletes:** The National Athletic and Cycling Association (N.A.C.A) debated on Saturday, February 4, the all important question of permitting girls to compete. Already they played camogie and they did take part in some race events. There was strong opposition but the majority decided that they should be allowed to compete in a wider range of sports.

**Blueshirt Clashes Condemned:** In reply to an editorial in the *Irish Press*, the Army Council on February 5, issued an unequivocal statement condemning these now frequent clashes. Those taking part, it said, were not exclusively I.R.A.; the majority were general public, F.F supporters and I.R.A. The Army Council called for the I.R.A to stay aloof.

**First Irish Aeroplane:** The press of February 5, carried a report of the first Irish built aeroplane, *Spirit of Erin*, constructed by a young man of Sligo, Charles V. Foley. It had been blessed and would shortly go to Baldonnel for flight tests.

**Swinford:** O'Duffy, Dillon, Fitzgerald-Kenney and W.T. Cosgrave addressed a meeting there on February 4. It was preceded by a parade of blue sashed horsemen.

**Wild Disorder in Paris:** The papers of February 7, so described left wing disorders after rioters burst into and attempted to set ablaze numbers of government offices. 66,000 were said to have taken part, but Prime Minister Daladier dubbed it an attempted coup.

**Clamp Down Coming:** Na Fianna, now diffused throughout the four provinces, launched a monthly paper selling at one penny. But a clamp down was coming, and De Valera was about to prove his 'even handedness' in dealing with the Blueshirts and the I.R.A. The fact that one belonged to a transient, quasi- fascist movement while republicanism was a deeply held tradition, would not hinder the thinking of one now slipping away from the faith. The government were out to prove that there were no holds barred; they doubled the secret service vote. In Drogheda also this February there were weekend clashes with Blueshirts when C.I.D drew guns after a dance. Shortly after more police raids were reported from Armagh, Tipperary, Limerick and Dublin. Preparing the way for coercion, forecast *An Phoblacht*, predicting that the I.R. A would soon be banned; adding that measures in preparation against the Blueshirts were intended for use against the I.R.A. The skirmishes with the Blueshirts, it declared, were provoked in the main by Fianna Fáil supporters.

**Sighle Humpheries**, a niece of the O'Rahilly, had her home at 36 Aylesbury Road raided and not for the first time; she had been jailed for pamphleteering under the previous government. Sighle was National Vice- President of Cumann na mBan (Eithne Coyle was President\*). The offices of *An Phoblacht* and of Cumann na mBan, as an added turn of the screw, were also raided. In Clonakilty, a former comrade of Capt. John 'Flyer' Nyhan, was charged with possession of arms, having fired a volley over his grave. Following that incident, Commdt-Gen Tom Barry, and Commdts Mick Crowley, Pete Kearney, Capt. Stephen O'Neill - we give their full rank as they were all Tan veterans - were held upon the same charge and removed to Arbour Hill.

\* See *Survivors* for Eithne Coyle

**I.R.A Social and Economic Programme:** Dr. F.C Ward, T.D of Monaghan, whose reputation was later clouded in a tribunal inquiry, went public this month upon the I.R.A as a 'private army', a charge repeated in the *Irish Press*. The Army Council responded in a long statement tracing the revolutionary history of the last 20 years. The first week of this month had brought the announcement from G.H.Q on the issue of Government Policy and Constitution of Óglaigh na h-Éireann, as adopted at the General Army Convention of 1933. Whether it was hoped by its publication to pre-empt the exodus of the people who would shortly form Republican Congress is unclear, but this very advanced social and economic programme - impractical now in the light of world conditions and the inherent selfishness of those on top of the pile in Irish society or secure in state employment- managed to link tradition and the promise of a widespread economic future for Ireland which 60 years on must seem like a dream.\*

**De Valera Inaugurates Volunteer Force:** De Valera in An Dáil of February 7 opened the debate, which proved to be a long one, on the structure of the new volunteer force. The aim, Frank Aiken declared, would be to have a defence force based upon the Swiss model; that is, a small standing army, plus a considerable and largely unpaid volunteer force.

**A Folk Museum:** Now that the Vice-regal Lodge was no longer actively used the government was reported on February 8, considering its suitability as a folk museum.

**Scuffles in Dawson Street:** A Blueshirt dance being held in the Mansion House Round Room on February 8, resulted in street scuffles around Dawson Street and neighbourhood.

**More Scenes in Paris:** Running battles continued in the streets where a communist organised march for February 9, was proclaimed. A new government was formed on that day with M. Doumergue as prime minister. As expressed in the Penguin *Twentieth Century History*, the Republic was only saved by the formation of a National Union coalition headed by the much respected former President, Gaston Doumergue (1863-1937).

**Drogheda Blueshirts:** An official report of February 11, refers to a shirted party en route to Drogheda rail station being attacked by a mob throwing stones. Military called were compelled to fire shots and to use tear gas to ward them off. They were travelling to a public meeting in Dundalk addressed by W.T. Cosgrave at which disturbances occurred around the fringe.

**Mrs. Jos Mc Grory,** aged 65, of Chapel Street, Dundalk, suffered severe shock when a bomb was placed inside her house and the entire front was blown out upon the street. Days later a man, Edward Lawless, was detained. His brother had been sentenced some weeks earlier for kidnapping a Blueshirt money collector, O'Flynn; a son of Mrs. Mc Grory had then given evidence for the prosecution. Arrested at this

\* It is summarised with an updated gloss in the Appendix under Statement of Republican Policy.



time were Republicans Richard Goss, J. Finnegan and Matt Mc Crystal, but they were released without charge. Lawless was held until February 21 when informations were refused and he was released.

**Kanturk:** O'Duffy addressed a meeting here on February 11; the rally being attended by parties arriving by bus and train. Prior to the meeting there was a march past by 1200 Blueshirts accompanied by some hundreds of young ladies attired in blue blouses.

**One Day Strike in France:** February 12, saw a one day general strike, described as a protest against fascism. There was rowdyism in many towns, with violence in Marseilles.

**Vienna in Revolt:** A left wing uprising, which went on for a number of days, resulted in over 2,000 killed and wounded. Commencing in Linz on the Danube, it spread to Vienna where howitzers fired on the brown Karl Marx flats complex. The Socialist party had been banned by the Dollfus government; there were summary executions.

**Scenes in Ballinrobe:** Scenes were reported from the cinema in Ballinrobe in a riposte of February 13, when a section of the audience, following the national anthem, stood up and gave the fascist salute, as, t'was said, they had been doing for some time.

**Trade War?** Britain and France were reported on February 13, engaging in trade war tactics. France had denounced mutual navigation and commercial treaties.

**Pete Kearney,** a director of the South of Ireland Asphalt Company, working in Dublin, was arrested on February 12, and conveyed to Cork Jail. He had been one of a six man firing party over the grave of 'Flyer' Nyhan at Ballineen; Nyhan had been an outstanding figure in west Cork in the period of the Tan and Civil Wars; a comrade of Kearney, Kelleher and Barry.

Days later he appeared in court in Dunmanway, charged with possession of arms. Tom Barry, a member of the firing party, protested in court and was promptly arrested, along with Michael and Con Crowley of Kilbrittain; all prominent in the Tan fight.

**Attorney General Opposed,** on February 12, in the High Court, the newly named League of Youth which had commenced proceedings on its legality claim. The case was adjourned.

**Newbliss:** There was a torchlight procession to welcome O'Duffy to this Monaghan town on February 14.

**Peter Daly,** an I.R.A. volunteer in Co. Wexford and a former British soldier, was released in mid-February from Mountjoy where he had been charged with a £1200 raid upon a bank in Taghmon. The charge was not proceeded with. He later commanded with Frank Ryan in Spain, and was fatally wounded near Quinto in 1937. Later three men from the locality were charged with an action which does not appear to have been an official I.R.A. funding raid.

**Armagh City:** News reports of February 16, told of widespread R.U.C. raids in that town; Patrick Hackett being held, and the home of James Trodden being entered.

**Albert, King of the Belgians** was killed in a climbing fall from a crag near Namur in a report of February 19.

**Castlereagh:** This Roscommon town had a well attended U.I.P meeting on February 18, supported by Frank Mac Dermot and other notables.

**Batons Out in Abbeyfeale:** Batons were out for a U.I.P/Blueshirt meeting on February 19 held in the local hall. It had been preceded by a street parade of young men in blue shirts, with girls in blue blouses.

**Taghmon:** The home of Nicholas Bolger was set ablaze by five armed and masked men on February 19.

**Clifden:** On February 19, disorderly scenes were reported from Clifden; this time more selectively between Fianna Fáil and U.I.P/Blueshirts.

**First Volunteer Sluagh:** Significantly this emerged in Dundalk, Frank Aiken's home town (he was actually from near Camlough, South Armagh\*) on February 20. It consisted of an attractively uniformed turn-out of 40 young men. The Volunteers were what Wolfe Tone would have prayed for, declared Aiken.

**'Flyer' Nyhan Party:** The five, still detailed in Arbour Hill had gone on hunger strike for political treatment; Commandants Barry, Michael and Con Crowley, Pete Kearney and Capt. Stephen O'Neill. Near neighbour and one time member of the Nyhan column, Sean Moylan, now F.F. T.D declared, 'I will resign my seat if they do not receive political treatment'. It was quickly granted. It was anyway somewhat a hot potato to have this particular five arrested from this particular area. When the case came before the Tribunal again on March 7, sentences were deferred for twelve months, whereupon they were released.

**Jobs Dangled:** Many local F.F. Cumann were troubled at the turn of events and registered protests, but head office was only too ready to brush aside or to dangle a job or a pension where they persisted. Protests from overseas, from Clan na Gael, were simply ignored.

**'Rags, Robes and Rebels'**, a collection of poems by Assistant Editor, *An Phoblacht*, Liam Mac Gabhann, was published at this time.

**More Raids** were carried out in the later days of February in Armagh, Tipperary, Galway, Limerick and Dublin. Prepare the way for coercion, declared *An Phoblacht*, forecasting at the same time that the I.R.A would soon again be banned. (It would be but not until twenty eight months had elapsed). Attacks upon Blueshirts, it affirmed, were mostly the work of F.F. followers.

**Bill to Ban Uniforms:** Primarily aimed at the Blueshirts and their trappings, a Bill for this purpose was introduced on February 23 by P.J. Ruttledge, Minister for Justice.

**Child Blueshirts:** An official report of February 28, states that during February and March some school children arrived attired in blue shirts to schools in Clonakilty, Thurles, Rathluirc and elsewhere, causing bad feeling with their school mates.

**I.R.A Training:** The same official report refers to extensive I.R.A drill parades in Tipperary, Roscommon and Dublin: instruction being given in mines, the Lewis gun and rifle.

\* Frank Aiken, from a Co Tyrone background, built up in three years 1918-1921, when he became O.C First Northern, a tough reputation, not hesitating to carry out reprisals across the religious divide. One of his outstanding operations was his ambush of a British cavalry train travelling south near Bessbrook viaduct in June 1921. See Appendix.

**Armed Detective Force Resurrected:** A week earlier the *Evening Herald* had forecast the creation of a new special armed corps of some hundreds 'to fight the Blueshirts\*'; it would consist of C.I.D men, like Gill, Gantly and the rest, given back their guns, combined with active I.R.A men, tired of not having a job, yet willing to hire their skills. At the start many of them really did believe they were joining to fight only the Blueshirts: but Republicans arrested were likely to find themselves before the self same 'Cosgrave Tribunal' which Judge Hanna criticised when he said as quoted earlier; *the life and liberty of every citizen is in the hands of three officers, untrained in law, inexperienced in evidence and without appeal to a legal tribunal.*

**Dr. John Crowley,** Sinn Féin T.D for North Mayo, had his death reported at this time.

**Extensive R.U.C Raids:** House raids were concentrated in South Armagh, Mullaghbawn and Warrenpoint.

**Walk-Out:** When one boy entered a school in Cong wearing a blue shirt, a report of March 1 states, 50 of the other school pupils staged a walk-out.

**Workers' College Closes:** Replying to a U.I.P charge in An Dáil that 'communism was rampant' in Ireland, Minister Rutledge countered by stating that the Workers' College in Eccles Street had been closed since June 1933 for want of pupils.

**Mounting Crisis in Spain:** Parties of the right and centre, according to the news of March 3, had created a civil crisis by polarising against those on the left, but 'iron rule' was promised, accompanied by martial law, by Prime Minister Lerrox.

**Faction Fighting:** In an effort to calm faction fighting, *An Phoblacht* had appealed to Volunteers in March 'not to be drawn into clashes with Blueshirts which would divert their activities from smashing the capitalist system'. They were reminded of an Army Council statement on the same lines in February. 'Acts of individual and local terrorism, even against the recognised fascist and imperialist organisations are not the policy of the Army'. A long poem from Lyle Donaghy appeared in this issue.

**Philippines:** Washington announced on March 3, that this archipelago of very large and smaller islands would receive its freedom within 14 years. The U.S, which occupied the territory after the Spanish American War of 1898, would continue to retain military bases after that period.

**George Gilmore on Capitalism:** A full report of a talk given to the Irish National Union of Woodworkers appeared in *An Phoblacht* on March 3, sternly anti-capitalistic in tone.

**Ballybunion:** Excitement and objections were reported from the Kerry resort following a U.I.P/Blueshirt meeting there on March 4, as reported on March 5.

**Galway:** Minor disturbances were reported at a U.I.P gathering on March 4, in that town, addressed by Frank Mac Dermot, Patrick Hogan and Eoin O'Duffy.

**Flyer Nyhan Case** had come before the Tribunal as noted already. When the case came before the Tribunal again on March 7, the five veterans had their sentences deferred. Nonetheless the F.F. government had made its point that not even veterans could fire a volley at a commemoration.

\* Elements had been recruited from mid 1933

**Liam Lynch Memorial Appeal:** An appeal for funds letter was published in the press of March 8, from Ned (Edmund) Carrigan of Knocklofty, Clonmel, with the names appended of James Mc Grath, Newcastle (at the foot of the mountain), Maurice O'Gorman, Ardfinnan, and David Hackett, secretary, Newcastle.

**Concentration Camps in Germany:** The head of the Prussian Secret Police admitted that 9000 were currently held in concentration camps there.

**Rosamund Jacob** had a piece in the *Irish Press* of March 9, entitled, *When Belfast Was a Rebel City*, referring to the harpers' festival, the Mc Crackens, and the years preceding 1798.

**An Phoblacht Seized:** Killing the paper by a process of a thousand cuts continued on March 8, when 4000 copies were seized from shopkeepers. Seizing from shopkeepers was more intrusive and intimidating than removing them from the Longford works, and that was its purpose. Even if permitted to continue to publish the paper would soon find its retail outlets reduced.

**Universities:** 'As regards leadership and solutions to Irish problems the role and purpose of Universities today would and should be challenged'. Tomás Ó Derrig, Minister for Education, reported on March 10.

**Liam Lynch Memorial Commenced:** A group photographed appeared in the *Irish Press* of the same day showing workers and friends at the foundation dig.

**General Strike in Spain:** A general strike was called in Spain on March 11, but the government proclaimed it.

**N.A.C.A. Overrules Ladies:** The National Athletic and Cycling Association Council, as announced on March 12, reversed the Congress decision of February 4, allowing women to compete in four running events; 'in the matter of mixed athletics we cannot flout public opinion!'.\*

**Tom Daly:** The second Sunday of March saw Tom Daly at the initiation of the round tower above Goatenbridge commemorating the death there of Liam Lynch, Commdt. General and Chief of Staff, on April 10, 1923, in the closing weeks of the Civil War. Tom, brother of executed Charlie, and May, burned out by the Tans in April 1921, from Currans, near Tralee, was on the H.Q. staff at this time. He had wandered the world after the war, returning in 1931, hoping for better things.

**Secret Service Vote Increased:** The 'bribery money' by which the Secret Service vote was known was bumped up at this time by £10,000 to £25,000.

**Clan na Gael Wires Condemnation:** Clan na Gael was reported in *An Phoblacht*, of March 10, wiring a condemnation of coercion to De Valera. We will continue our support for the I.R.A, it declared. A long critical letter, quoted in Coogan, arrived earlier to De Valera, dated October 1932: more would follow.

**Six Co. Law Change:** March saw also a law change in the North: candidates going forward for election would require to make a declaration that they would attend. There would be no more P.J. Mac Logans\*\*.

\* N.A.C.A. continues to exist, with an address at Claremont Stadium, Navan.

\*\* After being set aside in 1973, the rule was reimposed for Westminster after Bobbie Sands M.P. was elected for Fermanagh/South Tyrone in 1981.

**Beet Factories Held Up:** Dr. J.H. Hinchcliffe of the Irish Sugar Coy, announced on March 13 that 800 construction workers had commenced a strike at the three factories being built.

**Patrick J. Hackett** of Mill Row, Armagh, was sentenced under the Special Powers Act, as reported on March 13, to twelve months hard labour on a membership and documents charge. He had resisted the R.U.C entering his home.

**Loughnane Brothers:** Patrick and Henry, killed by Tans on December 6, 1920 near Kinvara, had a cross unveiled to them on March 12.

**Uniforms Bill 77: 61.** Contested all the way, the Bill to ban the wearing of bluishirts, or any such uniform, was passed on March 14; eight Labour members supporting.

**Burning: Three Charged:** Following the burning of a U.I.P platform on January 28, at Skibbereen, three men were charged at the Tribunal, as reported in the press of March 15.

**Blueshirt Bullies:** A report in the *Irish Press* of March 15, told of a party of young men near Mitchelstown having been waylaid and beaten by a group of local Blueshirts.

**An Phoblacht Seized:** On an order of the Military Tribunal of March 16, all copies of the weekly issue were seized from the Longford works; shops being also raided. The manner in which these seizures were taking place rested upon grounds of dubious legality but the paper, having entered and lost in the High Court once, was not prepared to do so again.

**Senator the Mac Gillicuddy Carpeted:** He had delivered a speech in the Senate attacking Roger Casement. *The Irish Press*: responded vigorously with a 'what could you expect' piece: he received a British education; he had been a cadet in the British Army; he was commissioned in 1905 and remained in that army 20 years; worst of all he was a member of the Kildare Street Club. 'His whole outlook is that of the Anglo Irish'.

**Aiken's Volunteers:** Now that the Volunteers were launched, public relation pieces were constantly appearing. On March 17 it was announced that Vivion De Valera, Peadar Kearney's son and four 1916 men, including M. J. Lennon, whom F.F. sacked later as a judge, had joined and were training.

**Wearing the Shirt:** General Mulcahy was reported from Tramore leading a St. Patrick's Day parade there wearing the shirt. Ernest Blythe and The O'Mahoney T.D., were reported from Baltinglass addressing a meeting of 250 men in blue shirts and girls in blue blouses.

**Momentous I.R.A Convention;** March 17 saw in Dublin the General Army Convention which was to result in the foreseen parting of the ways for O'Donnell, Ryan, Gilmore, Price, Frank and Bobbie Edwards and others; out of the Movement and into the short lived Republican Congress. There were 120 delegates present on that weekend in the ballet school behind the Home Market shop of Liam Lucas in St. Stephen's Green where it was held. Mick Price put forward independently his own radical Workers' Republic resolution. On its defeat he withdrew. The Congress resolution, namely the formation of an umbrella grouping wide enough to embrace all progressive movements including the membership of Fianna Fáil, was then

debated and only narrowly defeated by the weight of the Executive and Army Council. Its proponents speedily departed upon a country wide tour to win support while the Army Council prepared to courtmartial them *in absentia*.

In mid-April a statement was issued that Commdt-Gen. Price and Staff Capt. O'Donnell had been found guilty of 'a series of insubordinations' and had been dismissed with ignominy. A statement a week later affirmed that 'a group had taken it on themselves to try to convene a Congress of Republicans and anti-Imperialists.... The Congress means nothing more than an attempt to form another political party'.

**Basil Brooke on Catholics:** Speaking in Derry, as reported on March 19, the Six County Minister for Agriculture; 'my policy on non-employment of Catholics has produced an enormous amount of talk but I can assure you that I have not lost one night's sleep over it. What I said was perfectly justified. It has nothing to do with a man's religion, but when that religion is so politically minded as to attempt to destroy us in the North, it concerns me very much'.

**Ballinamore Blueshirt Rampage:** An official report of March 20, tells of two egg dealers travelling by lorry from the market in Ballinamore to their home town of Cootehill. The two were held up and brutally assaulted; shots being fired into the lorry. Later, Blueshirts were charged and sentenced to twenty one months imprisonment.

**Thomas Lynch of Duleek** received six months imprisonment from the Tribunal for the possession of three rounds of .303 ammunition and refusing to answer questions. Sergt. J.G. Kelly of Navan gave evidence that he was a man of good character who had suffered injury while sinking a well: he was now under doctor's care. Lynch refused to recognise the court.

**Cork to Dublin in 2 hours 27 Minutes** was the record time of a steam train conveying new U.S Minister W.W. Mc Dowell 'an old friend of the Irish cause' to Dublin. He was met at Kingsbridge by the No. 1 Army band.

**Uniforms Bill Rejected by Senate:** By 30 votes to 18, on March 21, senators, including Lord Granard 'who had never attended' mustered to vote down the anti-Blueshirt measure. De Valera, in a strong speech denounced their actions as 'sinister'.

**Bill to Abolish:** On the day following, a Bill, already prepared, was introduced to abolish the Free State Senate. 'The present chamber has to go' declared De Valera. [Under the 1937 Constitution a new senate would be created, with an appointed Taoiseach's eleven; in time considerably more pliant].

**Sinn Féin:** On March 23, at 16 Parnell Square, convened what they called a Provisional Advisory Council. The Second Dáil, at this time with no more than a dozen of the 1918 and 1921 elected members, then urged the creation of a National Advisory Council 'to represent every area'. Whatever its purpose may have been nothing more was heard of it.

**Bill Graham, Co. Down** was charged at this time with the possession of a rifle, but refused to plead at the session in Downpatrick.

**James Finnegan** of Castletown Road, Dundalk, was found not guilty at the Tribunal on a charge of robbery.

**De Valera in Mullingar:** With local elections approaching political activity of

that nature was increasing. On Saturday, March 25, De Valera addressed in Mullingar a claimed 12,000, with ten bands, 2000 cyclists, 200 veterans, 60 horsemen and streets sporting bunting and flags.

**Alec Lynn B.L.**, addressing the usual street corner meeting at Cathal Brugha Street, raised a vigorous protest at the strangulation of *An Phoblacht*. Supported by Maud Gonne, who declared that there were now 40 in jail; half in the North and half in the South. Sidney Gifford, who wrote under the pen name of John Brennan also spoke. She was a sister of Grace, who married Joseph Plunkett in Kilmainham on the evening of May 3, twelve hours before his execution; and of Muriel, married to executed Tomás Mc Donagh\*.

**O'Duffy in Ennis** was greeted on Sunday, March 25, by a crowd of 6000, including a thousand Blueshirts and girls in blue blouses. An attempt had been made to derail a train on the West Clare line at Quilty. Six men were later charged with interfering with the rail line.

**George Fullerton:** His death was noted on March 26. Of Bow Lane, Kilmainham, he was a 1916 veteran under Michael Mallin, taking part throughout, and in the Hamman Hotel in July 1922. His brother, Tom, continued actively in the Movement and was later imprisoned in Arbour Hill and the Curragh.

'**Wild Scenes at U.I.P Meeting**' were reported by a newspaper of March 27, commenting on two U.I.P meetings in Co. Leitrim, at Drimcong and Rantogue. Among the speakers was F. Mulvey, their organiser, and P. Mc Menamin, T.D, from Donegal. Stones, mud and eggs were said thrown before gardaí moved in with drawn batons.

**Volunteer Martin Nolan of Wexford:** A memorial cross was unveiled at Rathnure to Martin killed in action by Free State forces on March 23, 1923 near Ballyboggan, in the presence of 1500.

**Speed Limit in Britain:** With deaths running at 7,200 in 1933, and injuries at least ten times that, Britain decided to impose a speed limit of 30 m.p.h in built up areas. Their count of road casualties has never since reached the 1933 figure.

**Commdt. Cronin Released:** Pointedly still described as Ex-Commdt. He was released after serving a three month sentence on March 29.

**Carrigtwohill:** A mine exploded on the doorstep of local U.I.P supporter Tom Mulholland. He housed also the post office. It blew in the door. Later two I.R.A men, John Harnett and Dan Bray, received substantial sentences.

'**Blood Sucking Capitalist:** *An Phoblacht*, under that heading on March 31, was addressing Sir Edmund Williams, industrialist, major shopkeeper, whiskey distiller, and employer of Tullamore.

The paper continued its internationalist outlook; anti-Nazi, anti-Mosley.

The Golden Jubilee of the G.A.A was celebrated on April 1, in Thurles, the town of its foundation.

\*Sidney Gifford, Czira- the writer John Brennan; sister of Grace (Plunkett) and Muriel (Mc Donagh). Youngest of twelve children, born to a family in a good residential south side Dublin district, and a product of a 'mixed marriage'; the girls, although Protestant going nationalist, the boys remaining middle of the road. She gives a light hearted account in *The Years Flew By*, published in 1974; the year of her death. It has a forward by Jack White, late R.T.E.

Oscar Traynor orated, as part of the Easter Commemorations, to 1400 in Arbour Hill. Sean Russell did likewise to the four Dublin Battalions of 1600 men in Glasnevin, with Cumann na mBan and Fianna participating. There were of the public 5000 present. Mick Price spoke, but unofficially, as he was no longer a member, in Deansgrange. Tom Barry addressed 1200 at Crossbarry; Maurice Twomey was at Drumboe, while Mary Mac Swiney, at Ballylanders, Co. Limerick, had an audience of 4000.

**Easter Commemorations:** In view of their recent breach neither George Gilmore nor Peadar O'Donnell were listed as speakers. Sean Russell at Glasnevin condemned coercion and appealed for recruits. Maurice Twomey in Stranolar challenged F.F. on whether in 1922 the I.R.A. stood then for something less than a Republic. He rebutted the 'private army' tag as calumny. Commemorations throughout the nation seemed as well attended as ever.

**Shots Fired:** Shots were fired into a U.I.P. dance at Fanad, north Donegal, as reported on April 4, and also into an F.F. dance in Clara, Co. Offaly.

**Lord Granard,** in a reaction to criticism after his Senate vote, resigned from the Hospital's Trust on April 5.

**17 Rifles** belonging to B. Specials, were taken in a raid upon the Ballybraid Spinning Mill near Ballymena. Six men overpowered the night watchman.

**Clifden:** An attempt was made on April 7 to burn the town hall prior to a U.I.P. dance there.

**Cavan:** A dance in Cavan town attended by Eoin O'Duffy had its lighting interfered with.

**Not a Private Army** declared Maud Gonne of the I.R.A. at a meeting in Dublin reiterating its objectives. The magnificent Easter celebrations had heartened all Republicans, declared Helena Moloney.

**U.S. Minister's Death:** The recently arrived Minister, W.W. Mc Dowell, expired at a banquet in his honour on April 9, in St. Patrick's Hall, Dublin Castle. He was about to commence a speech in response to De Valera: he had been accompanied by the Nuncio Apostolic, Dr. Pascal Robinson.

**Anti-Blueshirt Hoax:** On April 10, by personal invitation, 50 newsboys attended at U.I.P. headquarters in Parnell Square, to be enrolled in the League of Youth. During General Mulcahy's address of welcome the lighting was suddenly extinguished whereupon all marched out in a body.

**J.H. Thomas on Dispute:** Land Annuities form only a part of the dispute, he told intermediaries. The dispute, he declared, was caused by the non-observance by the President of the Free State of certain provisions in the Treaty of Settlement of 1921; it also involved important political issues.

**Tullamore:** Shots were fired near the County Ballroom where a U.I.P. dance was taking place. Near Macroom shots were fired at a party cycling to a U.I.P. dance.

**Republican Congress in Athlone:** Over the weekend of April 7 and 8, the adherents met in Athlone, largely to decide in their own minds in what direction they wished to go, and also to prepare for what they hoped would be their first major congress of September 29 and 30, in Dublin. A statement issued, known as the



Athlone Manifesto, informed the nation that 'a conference of men and women prominently associated with the Republican Movement in Connacht, Ulster and Leinster met in Athlone on Sunday'. As the meeting was hurriedly called, they were unable to arrange for a Munster representative it said. Their purpose, they declared, was to make Republicanism a live active force and not a mere theme for speech-making. The Army Council promptly issued a rebuttal, adding that O'Donnell, Price and Gilmore faced courtmartial.

**I.R.A on Congress:** The follow-up statement came in *An Phoblacht* of April 14. Gilmore, O'Donnell and Price it said, had walked out of the Convention of March 17. They had put forward certain proposals which were rejected by the delegates. Since then, and while indicted for courtmartial, they held a convention in Athlone to launch a Congress. The statement was mild, agreeing with their condemnation of 'the present social and economic system.'

**Court martial:** *An Phoblacht* reported in its issue of April 21 that Major-Gen. Sean Russell, presiding, with the O.C.'s of four units, (North Tipperary Battalion, Clonmel Battalion and Fourth Dublin) tried Commdt. Gen. Mick Price and Staff Capt. Peadar O'Donnell charged with a series of insubordinations. Both were dismissed with ignominy. Price and O'Donnell condemned it as a publicity stunt, challenging the I.R.A leadership to disband the Army. That to come from Price was peculiar as he was at this time endeavouring to scrape together a 'citizen army', an effort that proved a failure.

**Hall Burned:** The U.I.P hall at Clogher, Co. Mayo, was burned on April 10, to prevent a Blueshirt dance being held.

**Eamon O'Neill T.D** of Knockduff, Kinsale, U.I.P member, was reported on April 11, fined ten shillings for being in possession of 20 rounds of revolver ammunition, at Kinsale District Court.

**Raiding in Tyrone:** The R.U.C were reported at this time actively raiding in Co. Tyrone seeking the rifles taken from Ballybraid.

**Aiken's Volunteers:** There was considerable hype and media publicity in these months encouraging recruitment. *The Irish Press* of April 13, claimed that 10,000 had joined 'in the last two weeks only'. It was designed as a counter-magnet to the attraction of the I.R.A in rural areas; an attractive uniform; especially its cuffs and head-gear, and some cash to go with it. The I.R.A had no answer to it; attempts to coerce young men from joining proved futile.

The main reason for the establishment of the Volunteer Force in 1934 was to attract young men away from the I.R.A, a retired member of the force told the Military History Society of Ireland in a Dublin lecture in 1994.

Capt. John Meehan, who joined the Volunteers in 1936 and was commissioned in 1942, having gone through all stages from private to company sergeant, in a 1995 article in the *Irish Times* recounted: the formation by the Government of a new military Volunteer Force similar in its constitution to the British Territorial Army, members of which were obliged to forswear any connection with the I.R.A or Blueshirts, was a further blow to the I.R.A, many of whose men joined in spite of threats and, in several cases assaults.

Another reason cited by Capt. Meehan confirmed that the force had been intend-

ed to capture the energies of young men who might otherwise have joined the I.R.A., and it had also served the purpose of allowing De Valera to inject Fianna Fáil blood into the Army. Nobody realised better than the I.R.A. the reason for establishing the Volunteer Force. The Volunteer Force first appeared in public on St. Patrick's Day 1935, and was subjected to a hostile demonstration passing the saluting base in College Green. A black flag was displayed bearing the figure 77.

Recruiting registers for the force, now held in the Army archives, contains a column on I.R.A. service showing in many cases that men of 18 and 20 years of age admitted up to four years membership of the I.R.A. This was accepted by the authorities as I.R.A. training and discipline proved a useful apprenticeship. The I.R.A. soon found that it could no more isolate Volunteers than it could, in the mid-twenties, have isolated the newly founded gardaí.

**Charlie Reynolds, Séamus de Burca and George Leonard**, withdrew their names on April 13 from the 'Athlone Manifesto'. We believe, they said, that social and economic policy will best be directed by the Army Council. About the same time Sheila Humphreys and Eithne Coyle (Eithne Ní Cumhail) also withdrew their support.

**Scenes in Thurles** was the heading when a garda superintendent attempted to auction three horses for unpaid rates. With 300 farmers, many of them in Blueshirts, attending, the sale was abortive.

**Walk Out:** *The Irish Press* of April 13, reported a walk out by 12 girls from a school in Parnell Street, Waterford, when one arrived wearing a blueshirt emblem.

**Seven Drogheda Volunteers** were jailed on short terms in mid-April following an involvement with local Blueshirts. Meanwhile, four Kerry men, having served short sentences, were released.

**De Valera in Clonmel** on April 15, warned against the no-rate campaign then gaining momentum.

**Sean Russell's Mother** died on April 15 at her home, 66a North Strand Road, mourned by Sean, Pat, Tom, Jim and four daughters. The large attendance at her funeral four days later included De Valera, Sean T. O'Kelly, Gerald Boland, Lord Mayor Alfred Byrne, Oscar Traynor and the entire Republican firmament.

**Duncannon:** A ceremony was held there on April 15 to commemorate Vol. Tom Byrne killed in an accidental explosion in 1919. In his address Donal Ó Donnchadha warned that attendance at the commemoration would be a waste of time unless one was prepared to follow in the footsteps of the volunteer being so honoured.

**Castlegregory:** 900 came together on the same day in Co. Kerry to commemorate the deceased of the Fourth Battalion, Kerry No. 1.

**Leon Trotsky** was now being accommodated, although unwelcomed by the French government, at Barbizon, a village 320 kilometres south of Paris-not the Barbizon of the Impressionists- James Maxton, Scots independent M.P, supported by J. Mc Govern, another Scots M.P, with Jean Longuet of the French parliament had sought to have him reside in Ireland, but De Valera refused, and an official statement proclaimed that 'it would be quite impossible'. In 1930 William O'Brian of the I.T.G.W.U. had petitioned President Cosgrave, failing then.

**Jack Lynch and Bill Grainger** of Dunmanway, were arrested on April 16 and

conveyed to Arbour Hill.

**Tom Barry Arrested:** Taken from his employment with Cork Harbour Commissioners, he was brought to Union Quay Barracks where he was charged with the possession of a Thompson and 384 rounds of ammunition. Next day he was conveyed by train to Kingsbridge (Heuston), where he was greeted by Dr. C.J. Mc Carthy, Donal O'Donoghue, Joe Clarke and his wife, Mrs. M. Martin, Maeve Phelan, Joe O'Leary and Pete Kearney.

**Sligo Town Clerk:** Accusations of religious influence continued to figure from Sligo town with the Dublin High Court hearing evidence that the chaplain of the Knights of Columbanus had waited upon the Minister for Local Government, Sean T. O'Kelly, with a letter objecting to Robert G. Bradshaw, whose case we have noted. The court action was a side issue arising from a libel action brought against Martin Roddy, owner of the *Sligo Champion* following a comment printed in that paper.

In this instance Bradshaw was engaged solely as a witness arising from his appointment not having being sanctioned by the Dept. of Local Government in 1933. As he had been voted in by a majority of the Corporation he claimed to be Town Clerk, but that did not last. Sean Higgins from Co. Cavan was speedily appointed by Dublin. The positioning of safe people through a candidate selection process based on the imperial system was proving one of the less attractive features of the emerging Free State.

**Dr. Tom Powell, Former Galway T.D.:** It was announced that the 35 year old medical student was now qualified as a doctor. Tom Powell had figured in the Tan and Civil Wars and is noted in *Survivors* under five references.

**Naas Affray:** At an attempted forced sale of five cattle attended by 700 farmers, the crowd overcame gardaí and rescued the cattle. There were no bids.

**Bill to Abolish Senate:** The Bill was passed 70:52. This proved to be a first stage only and not the end of the matter as will be seen.

**Fermanagh Refuses:** Enniskillen G.A.A sought the use of the County Hall for a Sunday night céilí. The Unionist controlled council refused.

**Irish White Cross:** This agency was created in 1920 to 'assist the children of the victims of the Anglo Irish War and later conflict'. At a meeting in its offices, Mansion House Chambers, 26-27 Dawson Street, on April 14, it was reported that 490 children had been assisted in maintenance, clothing and education. John O'Neill presided. Madame O'Rahilly proposed the adoption of the accounts with Senator D.L. Robinson seconding. Of the original £150,000 funding it still held £58,947. James Henry Webb proposed that the outgoing council be re elected and that was seconded by Mrs. Tom Clarke. Thanks were then extended to Áine B.E. Ceannt and Miss Malone\*, staff.

**Newry Men Jailed:** For possessing what were termed seditious posters 'Break the Connection', and Easter Lily announcements, three Newry men were sentenced, as reported on April 16, to four months each in Crumlin Road; Tom Mc Grath, an election candidate the previous year, along with Edward Mc Aniff and John Kierans.

\* Áine B Ceannt, a very wise lady, was the widow of Eamon, one of the 1916 signatories, and mother of Ronan. Miss Malone was a relative of Dan Breen, at this time a Fianna Fáil T.D.

James Henry Webb, long time friend of this writer, architect in Sth Frederick Street, represented the Quakers.

The Ulster Blackshirt Party held a public meeting in Belfast on April 16. Speakers Capt. Armstrong and Staff-Officer Stolt wore black shirts and berets. Nothing further was heard of this group.

**Drogheda:** On April 20, 21 persons were charged following disturbances outside Mayoralty House at a U.I.P. dance. Two men and two women were separately charged in court arising from a recent U.I.P. procession.

**Edward Kinnane, Upperchurch, North Tipperary:** Edward, a step brother of Paddy, I.R.A., and later in 1947, Clann na Poblachta T.D., was wounded in an affray with Blueshirts. He had been taken, beaten and shot in the hip; but as Edward was the local rate collector, the reason may not have been overtly political.

**Col. Jerry Ryan** of Tipperary was arrested with four other League of Youth members on April 22.

**Election Employment:** For the forthcoming local elections the secretary of the Department of Local Government directed that polling booths should be manned by workless or by Irish speakers in preference to employed persons.

**Man of Aran:** Four of the persons who had acted in the film were brought to London for its first showing.

**Strabane:** Bernard Devine, a former British soldier, and John Sharkey, were charged in Strabane on April 23, under the Civil Authorities, Special Powers Act, with 'possession of documents', namely a leaflet on the short-lived Saor Éire, and a single copy of *An Phoblacht*.

**Captain Hughes,** owner of the Midland Hotel, close to the Broadstone Station, and a high ranking League of Youth Officer, was detained at this time in Arbour Hill. It would create a *cause célèbre* in the courts resulting in his eventual release.

**Judge Diarmuid O'Crowley** had commenced a case in the High Court for salary arrears. He had been a Supreme Court judge of the Republic, and the reportage is of intense interest in relation to history over the Republican period, and in respect of the collection and disbursement of monies collected for the Dáil loan.

**'Esquire' Banned in Donegal:** Donegal County Council directed its clerical staff to cease using the suffix, esquire or esq, upon letters to male persons. A simple 'Mr' would do in future.

**Derry Refuses:** The Unionist controlled Corporation, by a majority vote, refused to allow a British Army band play in Brooke Park on the Sabbath.

**Naas Farmers Arrested:** Following a preceding report when 700 farmers disrupted a sheriff's sale, nine were arrested from the neighbourhood on April 25.

**Spain:** A State of Alarm was proclaimed on April 25; a bomb having being thrown at the Minister for the Interior. Spain would continue turbulent.

**Baltinglass:** Commdt. Cronin was welcomed to the town on April 25, but, as frequently happened, there was interference and he found the town in darkness and the drums of the band slashed. Upon order being restored, he spoke, urging employers to give jobs first to Blueshirts.

**An Phoblacht Seized:** The slow strangulation of the newspaper continued. Six sample copies were brought to the censor, following which 12,000 copies were removed from Longford. In 15 weeks seven issues had been seized, totally without explanation, even when sought.

**Mohill:** W.T. Cosgrave and Eoin O'Duffy were scheduled to address supporters on April 29 but, upon arriving, found the platform burnt. 50 men had attacked gardai protecting it in the early hours.

**Enniscorthy:** Determined not to take matters lying down, 600 Blueshirts arrived in Enniscorthy on the same evening, many of them swinging batons and blackthorn sticks. Speakers at the gathering were Osmond Esmonde T.D., Commdt. Cronin and Ernest Blythe.

**Mrs. Mary Twomey,** mother of Maurice, died April 28, at Fermoy Hospital, leaving Moss and three married daughters. Jim Killeen and Donal O'Donoghue represented the H.Q. of Óglaigh na h-Éireann.

**Cattle Sold:** At some cost to all concerned, five seized cattle were eventually sold in Naas to an unnamed buyer for a total of £12. Wild scenes, accompanied by baton charges, were again repeated, with an estimated 800 men opposing 300 gardai.

**Joe Mc Garrity Home:** Joe Mc Garrity was home from Philadelphia, his address being quoted in *An Phoblacht*: 'victory is not always with the big battalions'. Joe, long time admirer of De Valera, was soon to withdraw his support.

**James Glynn of Ennis I.R.A.** was shot and gravely wounded, according to an official report, in an affray on April 29. He died two days later; the oration being given by Sean Russell. Sean Mc Namara, a local leading Blueshirt, was later found guilty of manslaughter, his defence being that he was approached by a hostile crowd.

**Leitrim:** Two Leitrim men, also in late April, were fired on by Blueshirts.

**Clonakilty:** A local Republican received a gun shot wound in the town.

**May Day: Address by Adolf Hitler:** In Berlin, Hitler speaking close to the Brandenburgh Gate addressed a crowd of two million. In Vienna, Chancellor Engelbert Dollfuss oversaw an audience of 50,000 children. He was soon to die (July 25) in a Nazi attempt to seize power while cornered in the Chancellery.

**Moscow,** for the occasion, staged a mammoth military display.

**Sean Sharkey of Strabane,** recently sentenced to two months on a documents charge, had died suddenly. A veteran; he had been in the I.R.B., then joining the Volunteers. During the Civil War he spent eighteen months imprisoned in Newbridge. The impressive funeral to Melmount, as reported on May 2, was followed by a Rosary led by Sean Mc Adam of Derry, completed by an address from Sean Mc Cool.

**Col. Jerry Ryan** of the National Executive of the U.I.P and prominent Blueshirt, with three accomplices, was charged as reported on May 3, with shooting Edward Kinnane of Upperchurch. Held in Limerick, his trial was transferred to the Military Tribunal.

**Newry:** House raids by R.U.C. continued in the town and countryside.

**Easter at Arbour Hill:** The Executive Council held the official 1916 Commemoration in the walled-off yard behind the jail on the first Sunday of May with some hundreds of public present. The irony was that across the wall some dozens of Republican prisoners were held.

**Congress Paper Appears:** Early in this month, *Republican Congress*, the weekly

four page tabloid of the group commenced. It was to struggle on until February 1936, 20 months, with some stoppages in the meantime. From July 1935, when *An Phoblacht* was at last extinguished, it substituted partly for that paper. The nominal editor was Peadar O'Donnell, but much of the writing and the real hard work was put in by Frank Ryan.

It was published from Unity House, headquarters of the Workers' Union of Ireland at 31 Marlborough Street, and printed by the Co-op Press.\*

**Loughrea:** In Loughrea on May 2, three men were charged with shooting at Patrick Cahill and two other local Blueshirts.

**Limerick:** On the evening of Saturday May 5, at a gala dance organised in Cruise's Hotel, stones were flung at guests entering.

**Tom Barry Sentenced:** Tom Barry, hero of Kilmichael, Crossbarry\*\* and a dozen other fights, appeared before the Tribunal in Collins Barracks, prosecuted by Kevin Haugh, instructed by J.S. O'Connor. For possession of a Thompson gun and ammunition, and contempt of court, he received a twelve month sentence. Some Fianna Fáil clubs protested but to no avail.

It was noted that in some cases Blueshirts were being brought before the civil courts where treatment was favourable. *An Phoblacht* quoted a case in Ballinrobe where a Blueshirt had attacked a Republican named Cusack with an iron bar. He was fined two shillings and sixpence.

**Mitchelstown:** 3000 Republicans paraded, as reported on May 8 at Shraharla, Mitchelstown, to honour Capt. James Hogan, Lieut. Tim Hennessy, Capt. Pat Casey and Capt. Pat Starr of Nenagh, who fell at Shraharla, May 1, 1921.\*\*\*Also Capt. J. O'Riordan, who fell at Lackelly, and Vol. J. O'Riordan, mortally wounded at Ballyspillane. The address was given by Mary Mac Swiney, with Liam Leddy presiding.

**Excluded from Senate:** An official report of May 9, indicates that there was at this time contention by senators and visitors wearing blue shirts on being excluded from the precincts of Leinster House.

**Jack Lynch of Dunmanway,** with Bill Grainger and Patrick Foley, charged with assault, possession of firearms and refusing to answer questions, were sentenced to twelve months at the Tribunal. They had remained silent. Two Dundalk men were sentenced at the same time.

**Maurice Twomey in Roscommon,** as reported in *An Phoblacht* of May 26, in a long and carefully framed speech, countered the 'private army' charge.

**Comm. Cronin,** in Clane, May 8. The next government will be a Blueshirt gov-

\* See *Frank Ryan*, by Sean Cronin.

\*\* More English died at Crossbarry on March 19, 1921, than in any other engagement. See Tom Kelleher's lively account in *Survivors*.

\*\*\* 'On the previous day we had been heavily engaged in an attempted ambush at Shraharla, which went wrong because superior forces of the enemy arrived'. Tomás Ó Maoileóin in *Survivors*.

ernment. 'I promise you that when we are in government by God we shall govern'.

**Budget 1934:** Revenue £30 m: widespread tax reductions and grants. The public debt of £17 m would be reduced by £5 m.

**6000 Republicans** were present at a commemoration in Mohill on May 10, with Tom Shanley presiding. As a portent of the ever tightening F.F. censorship of Republican commemorations the occasion received in the *Irish Press* a notice of only 20 lines.

**Book Censor:** Professor William Magennis, formerly representing the National University in An Dáil, Professor of Metaphysics at U.C.D., was appointed censor in a report of May 11. He succeeded Professor R. Donovan, D. Litt, U.C.D.

'**Cork's Greatest Meeting**', or so F.F. publicists would have the world believe. But so indeed it may have been when 60,000 packed Patrick Street on Saturday, May 12, to hear 'the Chief': who put Tom Barry in prison, he answered a heckler. He put himself in prison. Are all the efforts of the Irish people to be in vain because there are a few fools among us. He then turned to the Free State's fiscal position, touched upon in the budgetary reference above. 'We are one of the most prosperous countries in the world; we are sixth in the list of creditor countries'.

**Listowel:** Two rival gatherings were fixed for the town on May 12; a Republican meeting addressed by Sean Ryan, Denis Quill and J.M. O'Connor. That was followed by a U.I.P. meeting addressed by O'Duffy and local leaders. Towards the end of it there were violent clashes, followed by baton charges; three lorry loads of soldiers were on stand-by.

**Leitrim Arrests:** For that U.I.P. platform burned on April 19, 33 men from Mohill neighbourhood were arrested prior to May 14. After questioning, most were released.

**Ballybunion Aftermath:** Following the disturbance in that town at a U.I.P. meeting on March 4, eight men were brought to court in Rathkeale on May 11.

**To Derail Train:** Bernard Ryan, a local north Tipperary Blueshirt, was charged on May 13 with attempting to derail a cattle train entering Tullamore.

**Clifden:** Scuffles were reported from Clifden in the press of May 14, where a U.I.P. meeting was held addressed by O'Duffy, Patrick Hogan, W.T. Cosgrave and General Mulcahy.

**Protest March:** 3000 turned out in Drumshanbo on Sunday, May 13, in a protest march against the activities of local Blueshirts. It was presided over by P. Harvey of Ballinamore.

**Arigna Coal:** With new sugar factories being built at Tuam, Carlow and Thurles, the government had decided that steam trains would be powered by coal from Arigna. The narrow gauge line of the Sligo, Leitrim and Northern Counties Railway was therefore extended three miles north from Drumshanbo to a new rail head, and an order was placed for 40 wagons to convey coal to the main line station.

**The Disarmament Conference** ended after almost two years in Geneva. Germany had retired and Russia had not been invited. The arms race would go on.

**James J. O'Dwyer:** of Ballinure, Co. Tipperary, local director of the League of Youth was charged in court on May 17 with possession of arms, receiving six months.

**Bulgaria:** A military coup occurred in Bulgaria on May 20 with the alleged intention of setting up a fascist regime. King Boris signed a decree dissolving parliament.

**Big Drogheda Meeting:** A twenty five line report of May 21, gave details of a meeting protesting against the imprisonment of Republicans. Marching groups of Cumann na mBan, Fianna and I.R.A were accompanied by three bands and addressed by Terry Ward, Michael A. Kelly and Liam Mac Gabhann.

**Twomey in Roscommon:** In response to De Valera's Cork statement, Maurice Twomey, before 16000 in Roscommon town, declared that he was one of those called fools, but 'we are heirs to a long line of fools and a proud tradition of folly. Down the centuries those who held to the separatist creed were dubbed fools'.

**Castlebar Unveiling:** In nearby Castlebar, upon the day following, May 21, 5000 attended upon a Sunday to witness the unveiling by Dr. J.A. Madden of a memorial in the Republican Plot to Staff Capt. James Mac Evilly,\* Volunteers Thomas O'Driscoll, Newport, and John Collins, Westport.

**Capt. P. Hughes Case:** Earlier referred to, this leading Blueshirt and owner of the Midland Hotel, now appeared charged before the Tribunal under the Official Secrets Act, as reported on May 24. He had endeavoured through a member of the Special Branch to be forewarned about raids. It was to be a case that would run and run, with batteries of lawyers called in support.

**Anti-Partition League Launched:** In Belfast, in St. Mary's Hall, close to the city centre, the League, an offshoot of the Nationalist Party, was launched on Sunday, May 20, to fight the Belfast Central by-election. Harry Diamond, a member of the Board of Guardians and the chairman of Antrim G.A.A, was selected to contest Belfast Central. In the coming years the League would surface and then disappear until the late forties when it achieved special prominence under the Costello/ Mac Bride inter-party government; its message then being carried abroad by De Valera.

**'We Say To England Get Out':** Welcome although this emotive call by De Valera may have been on May 25, it cannot be forgotten that he had a political aim of another sort in mind. He made it in the concluding stages of the Senate Abolition Bill.

**De Valera in Clifden:** With local elections approaching which would give a critical verdict on the F.F. stewardship of two and a half years, politicians had commenced to rally the hustings; although U.I.P (Blueshirt/ Fine Gael) had maintained a year long pressure on the government in power and were expected to perform well. On May 27, with an escort of 500 horsemen and a corps of cyclists, preceded by special trains and buses, De Valera arrived upon a sunny afternoon in Clifden.

**Widespread Election Meetings:** With the F.F Party now holding election meetings it behoved U.I.P to step up on theirs. This resulted in more frequent clashes than usual, pointing at an involvement by Fianna Fáil supporters and less to conflict from the I.R.A who, after all, were beginning to suffer imprisonment.

\* See *Survivors* 1987 edition for an account of the Kilmeena Westport, ambush of May 19, 1921, from Tom Heavey in which staff Capt Seamus Mac Evilly and Vol Thomas O'Donnell of Castlebar Battalion, Vol Patrick Staunton of Newport and Vol Sean Collins died. Vice Commndt Paddy Jordon died later in King George V Hospital, now St Brigan's.



Euphemistically reported as disorders the news came from a dozen venues, including Drogheda, Cork, Midleton and Shrule, Co. Mayo. There was a tense scene in Midleton Cemetery when Blueshirts marched to lay a wreath on the grave of one of the 12 volunteers shot dead by Tans at Clonmult.\*

**Le Bourget to New York, 38 Hours:** Flying the Atlantic was now less a problem of doing it but of doing it at speed. On May 27 and 28, two flyers, Codos and Rossi, covered from mainland Europe to Ffloyd Bennett field in thirty eight and a half hours.

**The Duke of Gloucester,** brother of King George V, was on a ritual visit to Belfast, May 28, during which he managed in 15 minutes to shake 300 hands of persons in public bodies. Nationalist representatives were not present, as the visit, they said, was being made purely to serve party political purposes.

**Prisoner Protest Meeting:** The indefatigable Maud Gonne, with Helena Moloney and 'John Brennan', (Sidney Gifford), were reported in *An Phoblacht* of June 2, holding a meeting in Dublin. These regular weekly meetings were held by Maud Gonne, speaking from a dray, and clad in long widow's weeds, at the corner of Cathal Brugha Street in Upper O'Connell Street.

**Cardinal Mac Rory at Eglisli, Co. Tyrone,** in a confirmation ceremony, reminded the children that their chapel was 'no more than three Irish miles from the site of Owen Roe O'Neill's victory at the Battle of Benburb in June 1646', adding that 'the Battle of Benburb was one of the finest victories that Ireland has ever seen'.

**U.S. Pressing for £47 m:** Britain had defaulted on paying the annual instalments of her war debt to the United States. £47 m was outstanding on instalments at this time and Washington was pressing for payment. Instead, the British Ambassador told the Americans that they must defer until 'it becomes possible to discuss an overall settlement'. The full debt was never paid.

**Capt. Hughes** was found guilty, as reported on June 2, of an offence under the Official Secrets Act and was sentenced to two years imprisonment in Arbour Hill. He at once went upon a hunger strike which lasted only two days.

**Sean O'Farrell** of Leitrim, described as ex-T.D., of Dromod, was charged in a report of June 2, with assisting in slogan painting prior to the O'Duffy meeting of April 30.

**Senate Rejects:** In a report of June 2, the Bill for its own abolition by 33:15 after a three day debate.

**Prison Protest Meeting:** With the I.R.A on a shuttle into prison, scarcely a year after they had helped F.F. to power, Headquarters felt that something should be done. A meeting called for College Green on June 3, found a gathering of 15,000 there, addressed by Mick Fitzpatrick, Sean Mac Bride, Helena Moloney, Dr. Andy Cooney, Mrs. Sheehy-Skeffington, Maurice Twomey and Maud Gonne. Protest from

\* Clonmult, seven miles north by east of Midleton, was the scene of a disaster to an Active Service Unit of the First Cork Brigade on Sunday evening February 20, 1921. After four weeks training in the neighbourhood they were about to leave for an attack upon a military train at Cobh junction. At that moment the 15 found themselves surrounded outside by Auxiliaries and troops. Resisting for two hours from small windows and with the thatched roof ablaze, they agreed to emerge unarmed. They were immediately set upon, 12 being shot dead on the spot. From *Rebel Cork's Fighting Story*.

the street was all that the I.R.A could now do; with F.F in the saddle their fangs were drawn.

**Belfast Central By-Election:** T.J. Campbell, an urban lawyer, was elected to Joe Devlin's seat in Stormont, in a report of June 5, with William Mc Mullen runner up, and Harry Diamond well down. In 1946 Campbell would be created a county court judge.\*

**Glencar Memorial:** On Sunday, June 3, in the Kerry valley of Glencar, a memorial cross was unveiled to Capt. Joseph and Lieut. James Taylor; the former killed in February 1921 by Tans, and the latter in March 1923 by Free State forces. The ceremony was preceded by a 500 man parade accompanied by two bands, and the panegyrics were delivered by Sean Russell and Sean Ryan of Tralee.

**Mick Ferguson,** a shop assistant of Longford town, was charged in a report of May 6 with being concerned in a raid on December 7, 1932, upon the home of the engineer of the Inny Drainage Board. He was acquitted for an action caused by fears that a rate was about to be struck. 13 years on Mick would be appointed organiser for Clann na Poblachta.

**Councils Replaced:** To counter the number of County Councils refusing to strike a rate because of the difficulties arising from the Economic War, central government replaced each one in turn by a civil servant Commissioner. A report of June 7, listed Laois, Tipperary South Riding, Kilkenny and Waterford as councils abolished on order of Sean T. O'Kelly, Minister for Local Government.

**Mosley in Dublin:** Winchester and Sandhurst educated, Sir Oswald Earnald, former Tory M.P, turned Labour Party cabinet member, addressed a public meeting in the Olympia Theatre, according to a report of June 8. It was accompanied by wild scenes, with interrupters beaten, and with dense crowds in Dame Street, surrounded by mounted police. There were 23 arrests.

**Aiken's Volunteers:** Glowing publicity continued on the subject. New *sluagh*s were being established, and there was a promise of a hall in every centre.

**Capt. Hughes Released:** Accompanied by a band of legal advisors, including future Taoiseach John A. Costello, Capt. Hughes was released, according to a report of June 9, on a plea of *habeus corpus*. 'Big issues have been raised', said the bench.

**Republican Congress Public Meeting:** Nothing had been heard of this mould breaker for ten weeks until a report of June 9, noted a gathering at that favourite gathering place, Cathal Brugha Street. (It was a favourite place because of the teeming tenements close by; hence speakers were sure of an audience.) Contributions were made by Mick Price, Nora Connolly O'Brien, Peadar O'Donnell, George Gilmore and Frank Ryan; the entire galaxy of the organisation. But where had they been up to this? The focus of a not very fruitful afternoon was a collective 'barney' directed against the I.R.A and *An Phoblacht*.

**Congress Progress:** Their paper reported a James Connolly club founded in Belfast. Early in this month Frank Edwards presided at a public meeting in his home town of Waterford where Frank Ryan also spoke. An editorial in the paper accused the I.R.A 'of shirking revolution by taking refuge in militarism'. One might think that it was somewhat soon to criticise the organisation with which they had co-habited for so long.

\* Michael Farrell: *Northern Ireland: The Orange State*.

The Local Election Campaign was proceeding and with O'Duffy promising to win all 23 councils out of 23, expectations were high and the going hot and heavy.

'Austria's Night of Terror', as newspapers of June 11 described a Nazi outbreak aimed at overturning the Chancellor, Dr. Dolfuss. Bombs and explosions were widespread.

**O'Duffy in Dun Laoghaire:** In a boastful mood at a mass meeting in the township, reported June 12, he declared in reference to the forthcoming local elections of June 25; 'all the way from Cork I bring you goodly news that Fianna Fáil is beaten to a frazzle'. He proceeded then to list the paper strength of his 'army'; 66,000 men; 40,000 women, and 20,000 boys and girls. Taking part upon the platform was H.M. Dockrell, T.D., J.A. Costello T.D., Clr. J.P. Dooge and Councillor Edward Gibbons.

**Mrs. Sheehy-Skeffington Won £750** in a libel action against the Liverpool *Catholic Herald*. They had published on January 20 that, although an extreme communist and editor of *An Phoblacht*, she enjoyed a British pension arising from the murder of her husband in Easter Week. The statement was shown in court to be untrue.

**U.S. Continues to Seek Payment:** Washington bluntly stated that it was 'unable to concur' in Britains' debt plea, and continued to press for payment of £47 m. Meanwhile Dr. Schacht, President of the Reichbank, announced that Germany was suspending transfer payments on all foreign debts.

**Ballinrobe:** *An Phoblacht* in its issue of June 16, referred to Volunteer P. Cusack having been attacked with a bar by a Blueshirt in Ballinrobe. The defendant was fined two shillings and sixpence.

**Hitler and Mussolini Meet:** A report of June 16, described the meeting of the dictators in the Lido Golf Club in Rome where an undertaking was given 'to preserve the independence of Austria'. There were also promises of cordial collaboration between the two countries. The discussions were entirely in German and with no witness's present.

**Bodenstown Sunday:** The gathering of June 17, was described in the *Irish Press* as 'the biggest tribute yet paid'. The paper said 17,000 were present; *An Phoblacht* said 30,000. There were 15 trains, 35 buses, with bikes, motor cars and walkers. The procession from Sallins stretched for a mile and a half, with 16 bands in attendance. Not all could enter the cemetery to hear Pádraig Mc Logan in an address presided over by Donal Ó Donnchadha, with Mick Fitzpatrick as Chief Marshall. 'Republicans must think and see clearly through the fog which clouds their vision today... We want not a better, or less humiliating Treaty, but its total repudiation.... We are training and arming the manhood of our people knowing that by no other means can freedom be made effective'.

Weeks before *An Phoblacht* had made clear that only authorised banners could be carried but that instruction was disregarded by the tiny Congress group wedged inside the procession.

They carried a banner, or banners, - it is unclear - *Wolfe Tone Commemoration 1934 - Shankill Road Belfast Branch - Break the Connection with Capitalism*. On being approached by stewards near the gate of the graveyard, a scuffle took place during

which it was torn, although the group kept a hold if it. They at once wheeled about and returned to the assembly field at Sallins where they were addressed by Peadar O'Donnell, George Gilmore and Seamus Mc Gowan.

A call from Belfast to trade unionists generally to come out in support of Congress was signed by William Mc Mullan, Bill Craig, Murtagh Morgan, J. Swindenbank; those four holding union positions there. And Clr. John Campbell, John Mc Connell, Don Loughran and P. Hadden; three being members of the tiny Socialist Party. Mc Mullan and Craig were respected Protestant republicans, but unfortunately those eight names were almost all that could be mustered, falling well short of 'the three busloads of Shankill people' mentioned in other places. It was the old case of one swallow does not make a summer.

**Scenes in Claremorris:** Scenes occurred when Blueshirts on June 17, following a public meeting addressed by Commdt. Cronin and local leaders, were set upon by a jeering crowd in the Square.

**'Blackguards':** In Claremorris, on the morning of their departure, Father Mc Hugh, shouting from the church steps, called at volunteers leaving for Bodenstown; look at the blackguards, the robbers, the ruffians.

**Kilrush:** 'Young men', a report of June 19 stated, had tried to break up a U.I.P. meeting in Kilrush. Batons were drawn.

**Governor-General:** In preparation for the imminent abolition of this office, a report of June 21 noted that its maintenance vote was being reduced from £26,000 to £4,500.

**A Company's Bill:** The object of this bill in consonance with the then outlook of F.F. was to safeguard the control of industry. Under the Control of Manufacturers' Bill two thirds of all voting shares had to be held by citizens of Ireland.

**'Wild Scenes in Cork':** The papers of June 22 reported, describing a U.I.P. meeting in Patrick Street where the factions were kept apart by scores of gardai. It should be kept in mind that a U.I.P. meeting was never a normal political meeting. Marching contingents of Blueshirts, attired with berets, frequently with batons and arm bands, were invariably present, arms raised in salute. On this occasion 400 marched, led by the Fair Lane Band.

**Germany:** In a trade move, announced at this time, Germany stated that it would restrict imports from Britain. It brought a strong protest accompanied by a threat of war.

**Secret Service:** An interim vote of £16,500 was approved at this time. Information is required, said Sean Mac Entee, Minister for Finance, for the security of the state.

**Father O'Flanagan** was listed on June 22, to give a talk on Theobald Wolfe Tone, at Sinn Féin headquarters.

**Catholic Truth Society:** After weeks of preparation for a major congress in Belfast, during which the Ulster Hall was refused to them, the event culminated in an open air Mass in a park at Beechmount attended by 100,000.

**'Seized Cattle Sold':** There was tension in Feolamore, Co. Limerick the previous Sunday when eight cattle, seized from a local farmer, were sold. There were baton charges as the nameless buyers protected by gardai prepared to leave by lorry.

**Maurice Twomey in Ballinamore:** The Chief of Staff, accompanied by Donal O'Donoghue and Sean Mac Bride, congratulated local units, as reported on June 25, present to support candidate Sean O'Farrell, Terry Mc Laughlin and J.J. Mc Garry in the forthcoming council election. *The Irish Press* reported that there was 12,000 in the march past. The following day, in court, Sean O'Farrell was found by a jury not guilty of painting slogans at Dromod, in a case already noted.

**F.F. At Bodinstown:** on Sunday, June 25, in heavy rain, as the paper noted, to explain their small turn out. Minister P.J. Rutledge gave the address.

**Tyrone Fermanagh** by-election had its results announced on June 29. Joe Stewart, a 40 year old moderate, polled 28,790, while his farmer opponent Dominick Mc Crossan got 18089 votes. There was no Unionist candidate, although some of their votes may have gone to Mc Crossan.

**Local Election Result:** The 26 County result, covering County Councils, Urban Corporations and Town Commissioners, totalled:- F.F 728: U.I.P (F.G) 596: Labour 185: Independents and Others 371. There were no outright winners, although the U.I.P remained a vigorous party. The results carried in newspapers of June 30, also had a note on Commdt. Cronin. Speaking in Cootehill, amid scuffles, he endeavoured to explain why U.I.P had not won, to quote O'Duffy, 23 councils out of 23.

**Aiken Heckled in Drogheda:** In Drogheda Frank Aiken was heckled vigorously at an open air meeting by Cumann na mBan. Being Aiken, and close to his own bailiwick, he was annoyed. Instructions were issued to police that at future meetings Republican hecklers should be removed.

The year 1934 was marked by significant events in the world of literature and art. In the United States, the publication of 'The Waste Land' by T.S. Eliot in January 1934 was a landmark event in modernist poetry. The poem, which had been written in 1922, was a collection of fragments and allusions that reflected the fragmentation of modern life. Eliot's work was a response to the cultural and intellectual crisis of the early 20th century, and it paved the way for a new generation of poets.

In the United Kingdom, the year 1934 was also a time of artistic and literary achievement. The publication of 'The Waste Land' in the United Kingdom in 1934 was a landmark event in modernist poetry. The poem, which had been written in 1922, was a collection of fragments and allusions that reflected the fragmentation of modern life. Eliot's work was a response to the cultural and intellectual crisis of the early 20th century, and it paved the way for a new generation of poets.

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*Here we watch our brother's sleep;  
 Watch with us but do not weep;  
 Watch with us through dead of night -  
 But expect the morning light.*

- William Drennan, 1754-1820 on the execution 1796 of William Orr.

**CHRONOLOGY: THE YEAR - July - December 1934:**

'Hitlers Swift and Ruthless Swoop' was the headline in the Monday *Irish Independent* of July 2, after a weekend of blood letting, suicides and executions in Germany. A Brownshirt plot, under Capt. Ernst Rohm and General Kurt von Schleicher, was savagely smashed in the 48 hours from Friday to Sunday. I have not used mittens, said Goering; everyone who has resisted us has been shot. People who raise their hands against the Third Reich will loose their heads. In a Reichstag speech of July 13, Hitler admitted to 77 dead, all of them being in the middle or upper ranks of leadership.

In a comment, *An Phoblacht*, now alerted to Nazism, described it as a German fascist blood bath by a dictator who had become panicky.

**F.F. In Ascendant:** In early July there were disturbances reported from a meeting in Newcastle West addressed by General O'Duffy. The local election of June 25, showed F.F. in a strong position:-

Fianna Fáil	728 Councilorships
Fine Gael	596 Councilorships
Labour	185 Councilorships
Others	371 Councilorships

**James Glynn's Death:** In Green Street, before Judge Hanna, Sean Mc Namara, Ennis League of Youth leader, charged with murder, had it reduced, by verdict, to manslaughter 'under great provocation'. He received a sentence of eighteen months.

**Drogheda:** The 21 young men charged with unlawful assembly and riotous behaviour in February, were declared not guilty at a local court, as reported on July 3. Seven had refused to recognise the court; Charles Smith, Michael Stewart, Edward Mc Quail, Laurence Flynn, Michael Smith and Andrew Finglas.

**Patrick Kenny** of Genanstown, near Nenagh; injured in a fracas when returning from Toomevara, was buried here on July 2. 400 Blueshirts paraded for an address by Eoin O'Duffy.

**Enniscorthy:** Michael Grainger, Fintan Harris, and John Hendrick, were charged in Enniscorthy, in a report of July 4, with assaulting two Blueshirts who, earlier, had attacked a local Republican.

**Home Built Aircraft:** With the emphasis now upon *deanta in Éireann*, it was not surprising to find a second aircraft had been home built. Joseph Gilmore, of Ardglass, built a small aircraft which on July 4, had its first flight from Baldonnel.

**Kerry Men Before Hanna:** Maurice Higgins, Clahane; William and Patrick Thornton, Clashmealcon; Jeremiah Nolan, Listowel. They were charged in Dublin before Judge Hanna with unlawful assembly on March 4. Refusing to recognise the court, they received one month for contempt; the trial itself on the assembly issue being put back.

**Sean Mac Bride in Castlecomer:** Propagating the new gospel, Sean Mac Bride, as reported by the paper on July 14, described how workers in industry could be responsible for its operation under state direction and management, while being remunerated on a wage basis.

**Killeenen, Co. Galway:** Father Moroney, curate, questioned schoolboys on their membership of Fianna, telling them they must leave, that it was communist.

**Trouble Brewing:** In Arbour Hill, the same issue reported, where Tom Barry was O.C. they were commanded to move around in silence at exercise. The trouble however did not then come to a head, for as a result of High Court action by imprisoned Capt. P. Hughes of the Free State Army, all were released, comprising 32 I.R.A and 6 Blueshirts.

**Sligo Town Clerk Case:** In a report of July 11, the Supreme Court dismissed the Corporation appeal against an order that they appoint Seán Ó hUigin, of Co. Cavan, Town Clerk, rather than their own choice, Acting, Robert G. Bradshaw.

**I.R.A Political Programme:** 18 months after their overall Dáil victory, and despite the hardships of the Economic War, Fianna Fáil had consolidated a lead which, from now onward, they would never look like losing. And all the time their political half-brothers, the I.R.A, veered more and more off course. To counter this, the Army struggled to publicise their social and economic programme; the main points of which were:-

1. Land required by the State for building or amenity to be purchasable at agriculture value.
2. After a certain date the building of houses for sale or rent to be illegal.
3. Laws to be codified in non-technical language
4. Workers in industry to be responsible for its operation and management; and to be remunerated upon a wage basis.
5. The State to establish a monopoly in banking, so that the wealth and credit of the nation shall be available for the benefit of the community.

As the Manus O'Rourke document it was debated and adopted by the Army Council and published in pamphlet in January 1934 as the I.R.A's *Constitutional and Governmental Programme for the Republic of Ireland*. Hindsight (in the cold light of international pressures upon the 26 county state of the nineties) might show such utopian ideas deranged, but in the mid-thirties, and dare we say into the mid-seventies, it seemed a proper path for a socialist minded thinker to follow. On the ground in Ireland, sadly, the programme aroused no interest and had no impact; not even in the short term.\*

**Scottish Home Rule:** Representatives of the Nationalist Party of Scotland travelled in mid-July to Belfast, and on to Dublin, led by the Duke of Montrose, with Sir Alexander Mac Ewan, their chairman, and five others. Investigating the possibilities for Scots home rule, they called upon De Valera where they discussed agriculture, industry, self-government and banking. Later in An Dáil, they conferred with W.T. Cosgrave and Sir John Keane. They then decided to remain one further day for other meetings.

**Dr. Robert Henry, J.P of Comber,** boasted on July 18 that, after 50 years in practice, he had never taken a single hours leave because of ill-health.

**Sean T.O'Kelly Bereaved:** His wife, of the Wexford Ryan family, was reported to have died in Germany while on holiday. Sean T later took as a second wife the commanding lady, Phyllis, a sister in the same family,

**Native Nicotine:** In line with the policy of promoting Irish produce, the govern-

\* See *Irish Historical Studies* xxvii no. 105, May 1990, for a wide coverage of the socialist republican schism within the Movement, by Richard English of Queen's University, Belfast.



ment decreed at this time that a percentage of native grown tobacco (mainly from south east Leinster) should in future be blended into all cigarette manufacture. It resulted in widespread tobacco growing on some specialised farms; one co-op in Co. Meath, planting a hundred acres.

**Captain Patrick Hughes**, held in Arbour Hill on a charge of corruption, was released on July 20 by the High Court having served three months of a two year sentence. This resulted in a general prisoner release as noted already.

**Mêlée in Cashel:** On the day prior, evidence was offered in the local court of a mêlée in the town on June 26, following which six Blueshirts were charged. 2000 had attended an O'Duffy meeting, supported by 200 Blueshirts cheering and issuing party cries including *down with the bailiffs*; shots at this stage being fired into the Davern home. As Michael Davern, later prominent in Fianna Fáil, acted as a rate collector he was a natural target. In an attempt, using a gun, to ward them off, he shot himself in the neck.

**Another Pension Act:** Maurice Twomey, Chief of Staff, was noted late in July, addressing a meeting in Ballybunion. About this time a second Military Service Pensions Act, awarding a small pension to anyone who could show involvement or loss in the Civil War, was introduced. Jobs, and the chances of a pension, were now serious factors in eroding support away from the militant movement.

**Austria:** Two men, both Nazi, were executed this week in Vienna, for the assassination, on July 25, of Dr. Englebert Dollfuss, Chancellor of a short lived corporate state.

**De Valera Says No:** De Valera was reported addressing a polite no, on August 1, to a London invitation, addressed to heads of state, to attend the London celebrations of George V, 25 years reign as King.

**President Hindenburg Dies:** The last obstacle to Adolf Hitler's advance to dictatorship in Germany was cleared with the death of the aged Field Marshall on August 1. Hitler then adopted the title President and Chancellor.

**Free State Army Oath:** As a riposte, presumably to frequent episcopal criticism of the Óglaigh declaration, *An Phoblacht*, in its issue of August 11, published the oath of the Free State Army: *I, name, do solemnly swear against all enemies whatsoever to defend Saorstát Éireann and its Constitution as by law established, and I will render good and true service to the Oireachtas and Government of Saorstát Éireann under the Constitution.*

**Paper Now 3 Days Weekly:** *An Phoblacht* was now appearing three times weekly as a 'Stop Press', carrying normal news during a prolonged strike by the workforce of the Dublin dailies. 'Because of its policy the Strike Committee has facilitated its publication and its news supply', a statement said. For as long as it lasted it enabled its message to reach a wider audience\*.

**Congress Girls Resign:** In a letter to the Congress paper, Sighle Nic Amhloibh and Eithne Ní Cumhail,\*\* resigned from the organisation, 'because of its attacks upon the I.R.A: some Congress leaders seem more concerned with breaking up the

\* The *Cork Examiner* and the *Evening Echo* were not on strike, nor were Belfast papers. The strike lasted nine weeks.

\*\*Both noted in *Survivors*.

Republican Army rather than putting Connolly's teaching into practice'. Sighle Ní Duinneachadha had resigned earlier. The two were advanced thinkers, and their departure was a blow. Peadar O'Donnell replied, facetiously as usual, but admitted that 'the attack on the Congress is heavy; this period will be marked by collapses'. At the Trade Union Congress in Galway on the August weekend, on a resolution to support Congress, only 16 out of 170 registered support.

**Cork Sales Yard Affair:** One of the most serious incidents of the Blueshirt campaign against the government occurred at the entrance to a sales yard in the city of Cork on August 13, when a farm lorry broke through a cordon and rammed the gates, where inside cattle owned by a farmer named Coveney, were being exposed for sale. C.I.D. inside the yard opened fire with rifles and revolvers against the unarmed party of 15 crouched upon the vehicle, and seven of the young Blueshirts were hit; one, Patrick Lynch, falling dead. Chief Supt. Fitzgerald was reported hurt. *An Phoblacht* in its report, which had been describing the withholding of the halved annuity as 'the Ranchers no Rates Campaign', was in two minds on how to report this case.

**Blueshirt Reprisals:** As a reprisal Blueshirts throughout Munster stepped up their campaign of road blocking, tree cutting and clipping of telegraph wires. Roads in counties Cork, Limerick and the town of Killarney were blocked in different places, and the rail link to Dublin was cut.

**Blueshirt Convention:** A Convention, already scheduled, was held at the Mansion House, Dublin, on the weekend of August 18 and 19, attended by one thousand delegates. At this first Blueshirt Congress; its independent existence from the mother party, Fine Gael, presided over by General O'Duffy was emphasised. It attracted the usual raft of scuffles around St. Stephen's Green.

**I.R.A Convention:** Over the same weekend, a General Army Convention was held, making a second for 1934, which was unusual. Reference was made in a statement afterwards to 'the growing strength of the Army, reflecting the rise in the countryside of Republican opinion'.

**Fine Gael/Blueshirt Split:** In its thrice weekly offerings in August, *An Phoblacht* had been gleefully predicting a split between the constitutionalists, and the wilder men of the O'Duffy circle in the Fine Gael/United Ireland Party. Following a meeting of the National Executive of Fine Gael at 3 Merrion Square on August 30, the cracks opened to a rupture. Vice-President James Hogan resigned; 'as the strongest protest I can make against the generally destructive and hysterical leadership of its President, General O'Duffy'. Hogan's resignation brought to a head the growing but carefully concealed dissatisfaction by Cosgrave, Dillon, Blythe, Mulcahy, with the erratic and contradictory leadership of the General, whose days were now clearly numbered.

**I.R.A./Blueshirt Clash:** *An Phoblacht* on September 1, carried a report of a clash between the two groups in north Cork.

**A New Police Force?** The paper, in the same issue, carried the news of a new 500 man strong police force 'about to be formed'. Its foundation, as 'Broy Harriers' or, officially, Special Branch, was already well advanced, with many of them inducted straight from Óglaigh na h-Éireann.

**Béal na Bláth:** Thousands of Blueshirts and supporters gathered at where Collins fell, on the last Sunday of August to hear an address by Eoin O'Duffy.

**De Valera in London:** De Valera, on his way passing through London to Geneva, was reported early September, as having had a brief parley there.

**Waterford Strike:** What would be a landmark in the affairs of Frank Edwards and Republican Congress, was the five week builders' strike in Waterford. The paper, *Republican Congress*, reported that 'two scabs' working for John Hearne on the De La Salle College were hooted at in the street. Strikers had earlier refused an agreement recommended by the Mayor and Archdeacon Byrne.

**Twomey at Aeridheacht:** The popular Republican outing of an *aeridheacht*, or outdoor sports with concert, was an occasion on the first Sunday of September for Maurice Twomey to address a gathering of some thousands on 'the resurgence of Republicanism', from a platform that also hosted George Plunkett. But with F.F in government now busily implementing much of the republican programme, did not some wonder *whither the I.R.A?*

**League of Youth: Official Title:** From Army Comrades Association (1932), the organisation which later became the Blueshirts, progressed rapidly through a range of titles; National Guard (1933), to Young Ireland Association (1933), to League of Youth (late 1933 to 1934).

**Capt Arthur Russell,** brother of Colonel of the Air Corps Charles died on September 9 when his light aircraft crashed in Terenure, upon the roadway opposite the home of his brother, and witnessed by him.

**Riots in Belfast:** Tanked up after Orange marches, rioters attacked on Saturday and Sunday, Catholic homes and public houses in the North Queen Street area, burning some, and wounding by shooting, three men, on September 15 and 16.

**I.R.A Not to Accept Pensions:** Clearly identifying the intention of F.F to winnow its support, following the passing of the Pension Act referred to earlier, the I.R.A in mid-September issued a statement: 'it has been decided that Volunteers of Óglaigh na h-Éireann who are eligible shall not apply nor accept pensions... They shall not sign certificates of military service or applications for service pensions by others. The free Ireland of equal rights has still to be striven for.... Those who believe in and cherish these ideals abhor the political and special injustices which exist and they will refuse to be bribed or bought off by a pension'. John Joe Sheehy, Tom Maguire, Tomás Ó Maoileóin, prominent O.C's in their areas at the time of struggle, refused to sign certificates for others as a result of the decree, but the Pensions Board in Griffith Barracks, presided over by former I.R.A Executive man, Mick Hilliard (later F.F Minister), found means to overcome that.

**Dublin Evictions:** Evictions for failing to pay ten shillings weekly rent, from tenement rooms, were fairly frequent at this time. Two girls, now having joined Congress, May Laverty and Cora Hughes, seeing a constituency there, took a hand, obstructing and were arrested and held briefly.

**Animal Gang:** For whatever reason sparks occasionally flew in inner northside Dublin with youngsters identified as the 'Animal Gang'. On an evening in mid-September they massed in St. Andrew Street, throwing stones upwards at the windows of *An Phoblacht*. The paper reported in its issue of September 29 that I.R.A offi-

cers had visited the hide-outs of the gang and had issued warnings.

**Garda Review on Broy Harriers:** The so-called Broy Harriers, declared the *Review* loftily in mid-September, are members of the Detective Branch.... are members of the Garda Síochána.

**F.F. Fight Blueshirts:** Near Ballinasloe in mid-September groups of Blueshirts and F.F. supporters joined in a *mêlée*.

**Meath Cumann na mBan:** About this time they held an *Aeridheacht* at Kildalkey. Fiona Plunkett was then upon the Executive.

**Kilkenny:** A bomb placed in the pound by Blueshirts failed to explode.

**Tipperary Aeridheacht:** Maurice Twomey, addressing supporters there, defined the difference between the I.R.A and the constitutionalist parties, as being the difference between those who sought full freedom and those who would accept a span-cled freedom.

**Welsh Mine Disaster:** A chain of fire damp explosions throughout the Greshford Colliery, Wrexham, on September 21, resulted in the deaths of 264 men, and the subsequent entombment of nearly all of them.

**O'Duffy Resigns:** General O'Duffy resigned on Saturday, September 22, the Presidency of Fine Gael and membership of that party, having tendered a letter, four days earlier, to party secretary Liam Burke. I am glad to be out of politics, he said, when interviewed, and he wished Edmund Cronin well as the new Director-General of the League of Youth. It was quickly evident that the unpredictable O'Duffy wished to retain a leadership role with his Blueshirts, and that a tug-of-war would soon commence between the two factions of Blueshirts before both sank into oblivion together. The sober men of Fine Gael had recovered themselves, and wished to have no more of late night hustings or of extra constitutional methods. But, as we shall see, these would continue for some time yet.

**Toomevara:** A report of late September referred to Edward Kennedy being found chained to railings in the village. An inscription attached stated that he had deserted the I.R.A to join 'the Free State Imperialist militia'; meaning Aiken's Volunteers.

**Millstreet:** A piece in *An Phoblacht* of September 29, spoke of a clash occurring there between F.F. and Blueshirts.

**Maurice Twomey in Nenagh:** We must rid our of minds of illusions about Fianna Fáil, was his theme at an *Aeridheacht*.

**Numbers Unemployed:** The official register for the 26 Counties at this time gave the figure as 107,011.

**Numbers in Jail:** The figure for Republicans in jail, north and south, at this time was 20.

**Nenagh Men Jailed:** Six Nenagh men, linked to Republican activities, were reported jailed, in the issue of October 6.

**Liam Mac Gabhann:** The future daily paper journalist had a piece in the same number; 'Get Out of the Way for the New Generation'.

**Maurice Twomey in Crumlin:** Summer must not yet have ended as we find the Chief of Staff attending an *aeridheacht* in the fields of Crumlin, the Dublin township. The message was plain, simple and direct; the Army is opposed to all compromise and surrender.

**Aer Lingus:** The State took the first modest step towards the creation of an international air line, with an announcement on October 3, that a state controlled service with a funding of £60,000 would be set up.

**Fr. Patrick Dineen S J:** The modest (and impoverished) priest who gave us *Foclóir Gaedhilge agus Béarla*, first published for the Irish Texts Society in 1927, was laid to rest in Glasnevin on October 2.

**Rathmines Meeting of Congress:** Of little consequence to the nation at large, but momentous to its 183 participants, was the first inaugural session of Republican Congress at Rathmines Town Hall on the weekend of September 29 and 30.

*The Irish Independent* of October 3 reported George Gilmore at the meeting, accusing F.F. of using republican phraseology to promote Irish capitalism, although singularly unspecific as to how a state with an annual budget of £30 million could advance its industry without the assistance of native capitalists. Peadar O'Donnell, on his feet, moved a United Front resolution; *we support a United Front campaign by which workers and small farmer leadership in the whole Republican struggle can be achieved*. His quarrel with De Valera, he declared, was not that he was not a socialist but that he had ceased to be a Republican.

After support from other speakers, for what was considered the 'moderate' resolution, Mick Price sprang forward with his proposal; in essence it rejected O'Donnell, Gilmore and Frank Edwards. It called for an undeviating commitment to a Workers' Republic. It was seconded by Roddy Connolly, who, in the excitement of the moment, stripped off his pullover; bringing into play the colour and fervour of the Connolly name; and with Nora present, throwing in her own considerable weight as well.

The substantive resolution prevailed however, but only by a margin of 99 votes to 84. Invited to serve on a National Executive, Price, Nora, Roddy Connolly, Barney Conway and Tom Maguire (Westmeath), declined. What had been conceived as an umbrella group for all progressive movements, including sections of Fianna Fáil, only seven months before, was split hopelessly into two minuscule and impoverished parts, one of which would go on to sputter lifelessly for another two years, while the Price radicals sought a home in the Irish Labour Party.

**Frank Aiken:** Minister for Defence, on October 3, was married to Maud Davin, Director of the Municipal School of Music, at the Carmelite Church, Whitefriar Street. Vivion De Valera acted as best man.

**Spain:** The unsettled nature of the country in the interval between the abdication of King Alfonso XIII in 1931, and the outbreak of prolonged civil war in July 1936, was once more highlighted by a socialist revolt in Catalonia, in the first weeks of October; one ostensible reason was said to be the appointment of three Catholics to the Madrid ministry. After nine days, during which the newly proclaimed Catalan Republic was bombarded, the leaders surrendered.

**The International Federation of Athletics** ruled in Stockholm, on a British application, that Six County athletes must in future compete as part of the British team. The ruling was rejected by the National Athletic and Cycling Association (N.A.C.A) by 31 votes to 23; but its effect was that much of Ireland was excluded from international participation, and would be for many years to come.

**O'Duffy Was Touring Leitrim** in his attempt to retain control of the League of Youth. For what it was worth, support was pledged to him there, and also in Longford, Mohill and Manorhamilton.

**Wires Severed and Roads Blocked:** An activity that for sometime to come, despite the split in the organisation, would become increasingly frequent in the campaign against payment of annuities and rates, was the widespread felling of trees and clipping of telegraph wires, especially in the Munster area.

**Dance Halls Attacked:** The primitive tin (corrugated iron) roadside dance hall had always been a prey to attack for obscure political reasons. The press of October 9, carried a brief report of a hall at Shannon Harbour and another at Drumcroagh, being fired into during dances, but without causing casualties.

**Mullingar Cathedral:** The great Cathedral of Christ the King, at Mullingar, had been commenced some months prior to this; it was taking shape at this time.

**Strabane:** A young man, J. C. Mc Crossan, was reported in *An Phoblacht* of October 13, fined £10, or two months in jail, for possessing a copy of the paper.

**Spain:** Defensively, but with some truth, *An Phoblacht*, writing of recent events declared, that the international media reporting on Spain, lied about the killing of religious there.

**Why Blueshirts Crashed:** Under that head, and writing with some inside knowledge, the paper charted the rise and fall of that movement, although, as we shall see, it would continue to have life for some time to come.

**Spanish-American Parentage:** The same issue carried a brief letter from Maurice Twomey, regretting a reference by a writer in the paper to the 'Spanish-American parentage' of Eamon De Valera. 'It is a sneer that will not be approved of by Republicans'.

**Sean Mac Bride in Castlebar:** At a *céili* there, Mac Bride told his listeners that the I.R.A. 'wanted a complete change of the social system under which we live'.

**King Assassinated:** Shortly after arriving by ship in Marseilles, King Alexander of Yugoslavia, on a formal royal visit, and accompanied by French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Barthou, were shot at and assassinated, while travelling in his motor car in the public street, on October 9. The assassin, Petrus Keleman, from Zagreb, Croatia, was trampled on the roadway; an accomplice being arrested. The assassination was quickly attributed to Serbian 'tyranny'; Serbia, a poor nation of three million at that time, had been placed in charge of seven republics, some of which were considerably developed, following the Versailles settlement.

**Co. Meath:** Road blocking and wire severing was reported from Co. Meath, where the sheriff was busy making cattle seizures.

**Pensions Restored:** The press of October 13 listed nine individuals, former I.R.A. and Blueshirt, who, upon giving undertakings, had had their pensions restored.

**Act Explained:** The new pension act of July, noted earlier, applicable principally to Civil War veterans, could benefit ten thousand, or so an explanatory leaflet of the time held out.

**James Finnegan,** a young Dundalk man, was kidnapped on Sunday, October 14, while delivering milk in Clanbrassil Street. He had been released from Arbour Hill, following the High Court ruling of July.

**Free State Recruiting:** *An Phoblacht*, in its issue of October 20, complained that the Free State Army was infiltrating Connradh na Gaeilge, in an attempt to recruit for its Volunteers.

**Sinn Féin Árd Fhéis:** Sinn Féin convened its 25th. Árd Fhéis at 16 Parnell Square over the weekend preceding October 15. There were 70 delegates present, and the press was excluded. For some time past, declared Sean Buckley of Cork, the Sinn Féin organisation has lost the confidence of the great mass of the Irish people. Sinn Féin is out; it has nothing new to offer; it has no new growth.

Fr. Michael O'Flanagan was again elected President, with Mrs. Margaret Buckley, Vice-President, with Liam Raul T.C. Honorary Secretaries were Liam Mac Giolla Mhuire and Diarmuid Ó Laoghaire. Honorary Treasurers were Séamus Ó Neil and Seoirse Ó h-Aodha. The Standing Committee consisted of Mrs. C. Brugha, Miss L. Coventry, Cathal Ó Murchadha T.D., Sean O' Mahoney T.D., P. Mac Andriú, Count Plunkett T.D., Dan Sheridan and Seamus Mitchell.

**Provincial Representatives were:** *Ulster:* Robert Kelly; *Munster:* Professor Stockly T.D., and Seán Ó Tuama; *Connacht:* Claud de Ceabasa, Eoghan Mac Gabhann; Tom Maguire T.D.; *Leinster:* Maire Comerford and Michael Sheehan; *England:* Joseph H. Fowler; *Scotland:* Frank Kelly. Brian O'Higgins and Mary Mac Swiney resigned from the organisation in protest against the continued membership of persons in receipt of Free State pensions.

**Lord Craigavon:** Making awards to B. Men, following a rifle shooting competition at R.U.C headquarters in Newtownards, Premier Lord Craigavon congratulated all on the 'wonderful; peace' prevailing in the North.

**Farmers Rounded Up:** *The Irish Independent* of October 17, announced that 37 east Cork farmers were lodged in Mountjoy, and there had been arrests also in Co. Kilkenny. At Kilmallock court, 26 others were charged, arising from seizures around Effin in east Limerick.

**'Irish Swoop':** The aeroplane, christened *Irish Swoop* by Mrs. Joe Mc Grath, sponsored by Irish Hospitals Sweepstakes, and favourite in the forthcoming England to Australia air race, would be piloted by Col. James Fitzmaurice.

**Cork Yard Inquest:** Judge O'Connor at an inquest in Cork on October 17, held that armed action by police was justified, when Michael Patrick Lynch was shot dead and others severely wounded on August 13.

**More Farmers In:** The press of October 19 carried the news that more farmers were on remand in Mountjoy.

**J.W. Nixon M.P. Belfast, and 'Nomad':** *The Irish Independent* of October 20, carried a brief report of a libel action commenced by the Independent Unionist and Stormont M.P. J.W. Nixon against Methuen, London publisher of Capt. Charlie Mc Guinness' great story of the times, *Nomad*\*. It should be noted here that the title, independent unionist, in the North is code for a person more zealous than the normal run-of-the-mill unionist\*\*.

\* See *Survivors*.

\*\* Tim Pat Coogan in his , *Michael Collins* covers some of the career of District Inspector J.W. (Bill) Nixon, of R.U.C barracks, Brown Street; five of the Mc Mahon family slaughtered in their home in March 1922; the husband and two babies Walsh of Arnon Street in April, and some dozen others by the Nixon directed killer squad.

**'Irish Swoop' Withdrawn:** Due to the technicality of a fuel overload for the 11,000 mile air trip, or it may have been that the English sponsors of the race simply did not like the competition from a former Irish Atlantic flyer, the Sweeps plane was announced withdrawn, in the papers of October 20.

**Meath Round-Up:** The papers of this day carried stories of a round-up of Blueshirts in Co. Meath.

**Attempt at Unity:** A mini convention was held in the Clarence Hotel on October 23 by representatives of the two Blueshirt factions seeking unity. O'Duffy was present but Cronin stayed away. In retrospect, it was obvious that Cronin was acting on instructions from his Fine Gael masters, now gone respectable. In a very short while they would ditch Ned also.

**More Farmers In:** Tackling the soft underbelly of subversion, De Valera's police were calling in more and more farmers. The papers of October 24 noted dozens held from Co. Cork and Co. Kilkenny: most would be released after giving recognizances. Had the I.R.A. been able to recognise the signs, the arrests were a practice run for future action against them.

**Tipp I.R.A. Arrests:** The papers of October 25 carried details of six to nine month Tribunal sentences imposed upon Toomevara men, Bill and Pat Duggan, John Gleeson, Mick Spain, Stephen Gleeson and Tony Power. Four other men from the Nenagh area were also sentenced. They were charged with holding a courtmartial on September 5 on a comrade who had joined Aiken's Volunteers. Found guilty, he had been chained to the chapel gate in Toomevara.

**The Irish Labour Party** held their annual conference in Dublin on October 26, when a number of strong resolutions were approved condemning 'sweat shops' and fascism.

**Banking Commission:** The appointment of a Banking Commission was announced on October 27; its remit being to advise on Saorstát Éireann currency, credit, borrowing etc. It would not report until 1938.

**100 Farmers In:** It was announced that one hundred farmers were currently held in Mountjoy.

**Blueshirt Disturbances:** At Kanturk on the Sunday, interrupters were forcibly removed from a Blueshirt meeting, in the course of which detectives fired shots and one Blueshirt was hit. In Kilmallock and County Kilkenny, there were more disturbances and arrests. At Athboy, the Clonmellon road was blocked by felled trees.

**Flag Sellers:** Blueshirt flag sellers in O'Connell Street on last Sunday were pushed around by gardaí. At that time a permit was not required.

**Longford Commemoration:** In Longford town Mick Ferguson, Commdt. Longford Brigade I.R.A., held a commemoration at which an address was given by Jim Killeen, and one by Donal O'Keefe.

**Appeal for Money:** The Congress paper had issued an appeal; 'we need £300 to



keep us out of debt.'

**Mac Swiney Anniversary:** A London commemoration was held on October 28, Sunday; drawn from Óglaigh, the Anne Devlin and Reggie Dunne Cumann na mBan troop, the Roger Casement and brothers Pearse Sinn Féin clubs, the O'Donovan Rossa club of Connradh and the G.A.A. After an address by Sean F. Murray, they marched from Brixton to St. George's Cathedral, Southwark, where a Rosary was recited.

The writer, D.L. Kelleher, had spoken of the significance of *Samhain* at a Connradh occasion at Kings Cross on the previous night.

**Fired On:** Two detectives, on farm duty near Castlelyons, Fermoy, were fired upon overnight. They returned the fire.

**Co. Wexford Seizure:** It was reported on October 29, that excitement was generated at Castle Talbot, Co. Wexford, the residence of a former County Councillor, when nine pigs and a horse were seized. Attended by a large crowd, there was tension following the felling of roadside trees and cutting of phone wires.

**O'Duffy in Ballybay:** In his own heartland, the leader, accompanied by Capt. Hughes, was greeted at the Town Hall by 400 Blueshirts. 'I want to lead only the League of Youth', he declared. 'They are the real successors of the Volunteers; if Michael Collins were alive today he would be Director-General of the Blueshirts'.

**Cosgrave in Kilkenny:** On the same day, at the theatre in Kilkenny, W.T. Cosgrave was condemning the blocking of roads as 'deplorable breaches of the law'. He was supported in this by Commdt. Cronin.

**Two Sentenced:** As reported on October 30, Capt. P. Quinn and Tom Fitzgerald, Blueshirts, of Gowran, Co. Kilkenny, were sentenced at the Tribunal to three months each for refusing to answer questions.

**Tallaght:** Riotous behaviour there by Blueshirt supporters on Tuesday 8, resulted in 15 being charged.

**Denis Ireland** in an address at the Young Mens' Christian Association hall, Belfast, was charting three possible courses of development for the North, but holding that unity was likely within two years.

**'Swoop' Saga:** The aircraft had set out independently for Australia piloted by Col. J.C. Fitzmaurice and Eric Bonar but was forced to return over Belgium.

**Asturias:** *The London Morning Post* reported, on October 30, an outbreak of 'communist terror' in Asturias, northern Spain.

**Traffic Regulations:** Road traffic regulations were announced on October 31 applicable in the Free State. In future cyclists would be required to travel no more than two abreast.

**Fr. O'Flanagan:** A ten line account of a talk by the President of Sinn Féin outlining the policy of the organisation was reported.

**Patrick Belton T.D.**, who had been in Fianna Fáil, and later Fine Gael, was formally expelled at this time. He had questioned the expulsion of O'Duffy. Proposed by Dr. T.F. O'Higgins, it was seconded by Richard Mulcahy and W.T. Cosgrave, presiding.

**Limerick Blueshirts Sentenced:** A report of November 1, relates of four Blueshirts from Rathkeale area, sentenced to twelve months and six months by the

Tribunal, for wire cutting along the rail line.

**Meath Arrests:** The papers of November 1 carried news of swoops by gardaí on Blueshirts; ten from Nobber and six from Kells. Several more were lifted in Cork.

**An Phoblacht, Nov. 3:** This was a delayed issue as the usual one was seized. It gave the result of an I.R.A Sweep in the Banba Hall. It also referred to an I.R.A rally in Ballina, and condemned the conservative make-up of the recently appointed Banking Commission. It noted that three Ennis Republicans had been sentenced for illegal assembly; they had defended their hall, it said, against Blueshirts.

**Japan Refused** to sign a naval limitations treaty in London, unless placed upon the same terms as Britain and the U.S.

**Gerald Boland**, Minister, was noted addressing the Dublin Chamber of Commerce on the work of the post office.

**Kevin Barry Window Unveiled:** On November 1, the fourteenth anniversary of his hanging in Mountjoy, teenager Barry was commemorated by a stained glass window unveiled at University College, Earlsfort Terrace, by The O'Rahilly. Barry's people, long in residence in Fleet Street, Dublin, hailed from Co. Carlow. He himself had commenced to study medicine when the ambush upon a British Army unit outside Monks' Bakery, Church Street, occurred. The impressive window consisted of eight historical panels from the dawn of Irish history to his own period, and was painted by Richard King of the Harry Clarke Studios. Following Mass at University Church, attended by his mother, by Elgin, Mr. and Mrs. Moran, Mr. and Mrs. O'Donovan, Mr. and Mrs. Cronin (of the immediate family), by De Valera, and all of the front bench of Fianna Fáil and the Cabinet, a talk was given at the unveiling in the College by Dr. John Harrington. 'a member of B Company.'\*

**Dr. Jean Piccard**, over Detroit, soared 10 miles up in a balloon, accompanied by Madame Piccard, 'the first woman into the stratosphere'.

**Blueshirt 'War' Continues:** More cattle seizures were reported on November 2, from Wexford, Clonmel and Mullingar. 23 men from the Cloyne district pleaded guilty at the Tribunal to having cut trees and blocked roads. Widespread detentions were reported from counties Carlow, Kilkenny and Cork.

**German Army:** *Le Matin* reported that the German Army had now reached a strength of two million; the same as August 1914.

**Michael Davitt's Widow**, died at 21 Pembroke Park on November 3; some 25 years after the death of the founder of the Land League.

**National Graves Association**, announced on November 5, through their spokesman Sean Moore, at an unveiling in Deans Grange Cemetery, that it was their intention to mark the graves of all those fallen in 1916.

**Remembrance Day:** Sporadic opposition still occurred to these dwindling parades. Scuffles were reported with ex-servicemen returning from St. Stephen's

\* See *Survivors* for Dr. John Harrington. The window, in colour, with sumptuous detail by Richard J. King, is illustrated in *Irish Arts Review* 1995. It remains in Earlsfort Terrace, in the faculty of Engineering. U.C.D. published a brochure by Sean O'Reilly and Alister Rown which has a colour illustration.

Green, and from the Pro-Cathedral, to their headquarters on Bachelors Walk.

**Former Friends:** Eoin O'Duffy, Dr. T.F. O'Higgins and Commdt. Cronin, came briefly together at a crowded League of Youth convention at Hospital, in east Limerick.

**National Park:** Britain established the first National Park, covering the Snowdonia wilderness of north Wales.

**Cork Men Sentenced:** Nine Co Cork men were sentenced by the Tribunal to periods of twelve, six and three months; for felling trees and cutting wires, as reported on November 7.

**Rousing Reception:** On the same day, General O'Duffy was reported to have had a rousing reception, being carried shoulder high to his hotel in Cashel. 'I endorse all aspects of the industrial policy of Fianna Fáil' he told his bemused audience.

**U.S. Democrats,** were reported gaining a sweeping victory in the Senate and House of Representatives.

**Lloyd George,** was having his portrait painted by Sir John Lavery; the face of whose Irish American wife for long adorned the Free State pound notes.

**Lloyd George's Wealth (and Thatcher's):** The London *Financial Times* of October 30, 1994 disclosed that in his financial career, arising from such opportunities as came his way, he accumulated a wealth of £1.5 m, forty million in present day terms. For comparison they computed the wealth of Margaret and Denis Thatcher - son Mark excluded - upon leaving office, at £70 m; a figure which omits some millions subsequently from publishing royalties, and 'appearances'

**Sir Oswald Mosley:** Together with William Joyce - the later Lord Haw-haw- and others, were reported on November 9, summoned at Worthing, for riotous assembly, a month earlier.

**Bound to Peace:** 10 County Meath men were reported at this time bound to the peace at the Tribunal, for tree cutting.

**Car Imports,** would in future be limited by quota in order to assist a developing assembly industry. The quota was fixed at a mere 420 fully assembled cars; all others to be CKD (completely knocked down). It was to prove a means of employing ten thousand mechanics over the next three decades.

**Dundalk Man:** James Finnegan, a milk roundsman, and I.R.A volunteer, found himself arrested and charged before the Tribunal.

**Blueshirt Conventions** were being convened on November 8, in South Tipperary, Waterford and West Cork. The League found itself divided as to which leadership it should now follow. O'Duffy managed to attend two of the conventions.

**Arrested:** Blueshirts were reported arrested in Middleton and Co. Wexford, while some others were released. Bound over by the Tribunal, in a report of Saturday, November 10, were five young fellows from County Meath, for tree felling.

**France:** The Premier. M. Doumerge, resigned with his cabinet after only months in office. France's constitutional difficulties would continue in the run-up to the war of 1939.

**More Home Industry Protected:** By government order; glass, copper and cosmetics came under tariff protection; it would increase employment in these trades.

**Clonmult Farmers:** Numbers of farmers from this east Cork area were reported in Mountjoy.

**Remembrance Arrangements:** The chairman of the British Legion announced at this time that their march would commence from Beresford Place to the cenotaph, the Wellington Testimonial, in Phoenix Park [The Garden of Remembrance at Islandbridge was not completed until the late forties]. After the ceremony there, they would furl their flags and disperse. The gathering upon the Sunday was quite impressive; with 4000 present, including foreign representatives and diplomatic corps. Not to be outdone, Congress - although this seemed to be contrary to their recently announced policy on Remembrance marches - held an anti-imperialist meeting at that other favourite venue, Abbey Street corner. Speakers there addressed a crowd of 1500; their theme being, 'down with Fascism'.

**Austria:** Dr Kurt von Schuschnigg had succeeded the assassinated Dolfuss as Chancellor. Austria in these years was continuously poised between armed outbreaks from the nazi right and the communist left. The reports of November 12 spoke of a threatened 'proletarian revolt'.

**Confidence:** A news item at this time records that General O'Duffy had received a vote of confidence in Kanturk; but votes of confidence in Ireland are a lowly priced commodity.

**24 County Meath Men** appeared before the Tribunal on November 12, charged with blocking roads.

**Mike O'Leary and Fritz Langsdorf:** Veteran Dublin Brigade officers, they had been arrested at Balbriggan on October 4, while holding for inquiry, Dundalk I.R.A officer, James Finnegan, who however was in no personal danger in what was an internal affair. Both however were arrested by detectives, during which a shot was fired, and they were each found in possession of weapons. At the Tribunal on November 12. Mike O'Leary, of Drumcondra, was sentenced to five years, and Fritz Langsdorf, of South Circular Road, received three years. It is noteworthy that these two sentences were the longest imposed in the Free State (with the exception of Mixie Conway) during the entire decade of the thirties. O'Leary, who received a serious eye injury while in Arbour Hill, was released in the amnesty at the end of 1937. He was interned from 1940 onwards. Finnegan himself, as noted earlier in October, had been released from Arbour Hill by High Court action, but later received a fifteen month sentence.

**An Phoblacht** condemned the lengthy sentences. It pointed out that Jeremiah Ryan, a Blueshirt, who had shot at Edward Kinnane of Upperchurch, got nine months. It listed 115 road blockers, all of whom were released. A Clare Blueshirt charged with murder got 18 months.

**Fianna Fáil Árd Fhéis:** Ever with a finger upon the pulse of the nation, and adept at striking the right note, De Valera is recorded on November 14, from the Mansion House, declaring: 'we will never regard Ireland as a nation until it is united'. A group of 2,000, representing Republicans and unemployed, congregated close by at the top of Dawson Street, where they were addressed by Sean Mac Bride. Police moved in to interfere, and to drag Mac Bride from his perch upon a horse trough, but men in the crowd pressed forward preventing it.

**East Donegal Loyalists:** 5000 Donegal loyalists, in a report of November 14, presented a memorial to Westminster and Dublin, seeking that east Donegal, known as the Lagan area, be brought into the Six Counties, and the Border redrawn as a consequence. (This was one of the recommendations in the 1925 Boundary Commission). They argued that the inclusion of this fringe of Co. Donegal would assist the commercial life of Derry, at that time a deeply depressed town. District Justice Louis Walsh, in a vigorous response, warned the memorialists that their submission 'contained scandalous and groundless statements that reflected upon the administration of Saorstát Éireann.

**Jazz Again Under Attack:** A notice of the same date refers to the county convention of Connradh na Gaeilge, in Drumshanbo, where the playing of jazz music was denounced as 'a central African cult'.

**Herr von Ribbontrop** had arrived at the Court of St. James as German Ambassador, being greeted by Sir John Simon, Foreign Secretary. Germany will return to the League of Nations, he assured press men. However, Germany did not.

**The Problems of the Gaeltacht:** Then as now the Gaeltacht had problems, although then it was three times more extensive than it is now. Its difficulties were teased out at length at the Árd Fhéis, but with no coherent policy emerging.

**13 Co. Cork Men** were reported, November 15, jailed by the Tribunal on charges of tree felling, wire cutting and membership of an unlawful association.

**Gerald Crofts**, singer, was reported this time as having passed away at his home in Clontarf. Aged 45, he had joined the Volunteers in 1914, taking part in Easter Week, when he received a 10 year sentence. Upon release in 1917, he returned to the Volunteers, taking part in the Tan struggle, and was in Mountjoy. 'His beautiful voice was familiar as a singer of Irish melodies assisted by his musician brother, Joseph'. The impressive funeral on Friday from the Carmelite Church, Whitefriar Street, had representatives from F.F. Fine Gael and the Republican Movement.

**Col. Gerry Ryan** was released from Arbour Hill; being welcomed outside by Commdt. Cronin.

**Frank Kerlin**, long standing Republican of Camden Street, died on November 13. In a tribute at the F.F. Árd Fhéis, Sean Lemass declared that 'he had a record of service in the Irish Republican Movement second to none'. More tributes were paid at the funeral, attended by Aiken, Sean T. O'Kelly, Bill Quirke, Dan Breen, Andy Cooney, Maurice Twomey, Liam Deasy, Sean Russell, Eithne Coyle, Mrs. Hyland, H. Mc Glennon, J. Keating and Simon Donnelly.

**Unemployed** marched on November 14 from Cathal Brugha Street to Grafton Street intent on reaching Leinster House, but at that point were dispersed by a baton charge; prominent among them were Dan Layde, Eamon Ó Faoláin and Charlie Donnelly.

**Bishops Criticised:** The Bishops, declared *An Phoblacht*, in its issue of November 17, had issued a Joint Pastoral Letter on October 10, 1922, condemning Republicans. In the current unruly circumstances, why do they not issue such a letter condemning O'Duffy and Fine Gael?

**Dan Ryan** of Tipperary town, on an arms charge, refused to plead at the Tribunal; as reported on November 16. He was sentenced to six months.

**Mexico:** In a letter home to Borrisoleigh, Rev. M. Kenny, a Jesuit, referred to the religious persecution said to be prevailing in Mexico; he had only returned from there.

**Citizenship Bill:** A new measure was introduced in An Dáil at this time. It enabled persons born in the Six Counties to claim citizenship of Ireland which many subsequently did. Foreigners could claim Irish citizenship provided they had one grand parent who was Irish.

**50 Farmers** were brought before the Tribunal at this time: most were allowed out on bail.

**Townplanning:** The 1934 Act, giving outline powers, was now in operation.

**Clonmel,** by an announcement of November 17, was to have a shoe factory.

**Dundalk:** The Employment Exchange was burned overnight, on November 16.

**Poulaphouca:** The Electricity Supply Board and Dublin Corporation announced, on November 17, plans for the development of a great reservoir, combined with an electricity generating scheme, as proposed nine years earlier by Sir John Purser Griffith.

**Col. Gerry Ryan Welcomed:** Col. Gerry, accompanied by John Hart, was welcomed to his home town, Thurles, on November 18, by Commdt. Cronin and a large gathering of supporters. The Colonel criticised Eoin O'Duffy whom, he said, now spent his time campaigning against his former comrades. (The split had occurred while Ryan was in Arbour Hill). There was now, he said, a total of 140 Blueshirts in jail on short terms.

**J. J. Traynor of Kilmainham:** As in the attempted Clonmult commemoration, the official Blueshirt wing sought to honour the memory of Vol. John Joe Traynor, killed in action on April 24, 1916. His brother repudiated the ceremony beforehand. 200 in mixed attire then marched to the gates of Glasnevin Cemetery where they were addressed by Senator Ernest Blythe.

**Putsch Intent Denied:** Adolf Hitler denied at this time that Germany was planning a putsch in the Saar. 'It is sheer folly to suppose that Germany wishes to disturb the forthcoming plebiscite'.

**Patrick Belton T.D.,** announced in Ballybofey, in a report of November 19, that he was forming a new political party with Eoin O'Duffy as leader, and one of the Kent brothers of Co. Cork, a member. Nothing further was heard of this proposal.

**Co. Kilkenny:** Widespread arrests of Blueshirts were reported on November 21.

**Rents Campaign:** In their stronghold of Waterford City, Republican Congress was running a not very successful campaign for house rent reductions. Organised around school teacher Frank Edwards, and his future wife Bobbie, -Bobbie Walsh-Waterford city was one of the few places where Congress had a public face.

**Mick Price and His Irish Citizen Army:** This small grouping had been formed a short time before by former I.R.A. men under the control of Price. In November - having joined the Labour Party - he called for it to be disbanded, although it may have continued in a fragmented form for a little longer.

**Ten Men From Rathcormac** were imprisoned at this time for Blueshirt activity

**Protestant Government for a Protestant People:** The state opening of the Stormont parliament took place on November 20, when the Duke of Abercorn per-

formed the ceremony at the second session of the fourth parliament. An upbeat speech from the King was read by the Duke. When asked by Mr. O'Neill M.P. on how loyalty was tested, Lord Craigavon, Prime Minister replied; 'it is our duty and privilege to see we have servants of the most unimpeachable loyalty to the King and the Constitution in carrying on a Protestant government for a Protestant people'.

**Imprisoned:** There were at this time 120 farmers on Blueshirt charges in Mountjoy awaiting trial. A further nine Co. Cork men went before the Tribunal, on a charge of road blocking and damaging a bridge.

**Banking Commission Meets:** The first formal meeting of this Commission met at the board room, Upper Merrion Street, on November 23. Heavily weighted with conservatives, it had 23 men and no women.

**'Wild Scene':** A report of November 24, tells of 30 men before the Tribunal following 'wild scenes' during seizures on a Co. Limerick farm.

**Mountjoy Unveilings:** Sunday, November 25, saw a series of unveilings of stones to volunteers of the 1916-23 period by the National Graves Association.

**Rival Meetings:** There was tension on Sunday at the Harrison Hall, Roscommon, arising from rival Fine Gael/Blueshirt gatherings scheduled for there. Subsequently O'Duffy, assisted by Belton, held his meeting inside the hall.

**Manchester Martyrs:** A series of processions were held upon this Sunday in New Ross, Youghal, Middleton, Toome, Bandon, Derry, Limerick, recalling the execution of the three, William Allen, Philip Larkin and Michael O'Brien, in Manchester, on November 24, 1867.

**James Finnegan, Dundalk;** already referred to, and who evidently acted as a quartermaster, was tried on November 26 by the Tribunal, receiving a sentence of fifteen months. He was found with an 'arsenal'; one Thompson, two Parabellums, one Colt, two grenades and assorted ammunition. He was an old time Fianna boy and volunteer, running a dairy shop, in poor circumstances at this time. In 1924 he had escaped from Dundalk Jail. Prior to these events he had had a dispute with the I.R.A. Seeking an independent inquiry, it was refused; causing him then to be arrested by the I.R.A., which, in turn, resulted in Mike O'Leary and Fritz Langsdorf being imprisoned.

**More Farmer Arrests:** There were more widespread swoops at this time, with farmers arrested in counties Waterford, Kilkenny and Cork.

**Mac Dermot Criticises O'Duffy:** 'Since he resigned General O'Duffy's speeches have become completely incoherent. I would implore him for the sake of his reputation to desist'. So, said Frank Mac Dermot in Boyle on November 26. 'At present the chief asset of Fianna Fáil is a disunited opposition. General O'Duffy in the past frequently said things that I privately disagreed with'. What Mac Dermot said was entirely true. General O'Duffy, at best, was never very reliable; he had now become completely intemperate, and this would be highlighted in two years by his madcap effort to raise a brigade for Spain.

**J.H. Thomas in Citizenship Wrangle:** The backwoodsmen of the Tory party had complained that the new Bill 'would force Irish citizenship upon everyone living in Ireland'. The Dominions Secretary complained 'that the Bill did not provide for the status of subjects of His Majesty who wished to preserve their allegiance to the

Crown: it should not deprive a subject of his status'. De Valera's response was immediate; 'those already British subjects could not have their status altered, but after the Bill is passed it will be an impertinence to call anyone who is Irish a British subject'.

**League of Youth Legality Case:** Initiated early in the year the case had now reached the High Court. Put simply, it sought to confirm that the League was legal, and could not therefore be banned like its three predecessors. It was a case that would go on and on until it became irrelevant through the fading away of the League itself. On this occasion, November 28, after O'Duffy's name had been struck from the action, the plaintiffs continued solely as the National Executive of Fine Gael.

**Ballindangan 2nd. Cork Brigade:** In the last days of November a resolution was proposed by T. O'Keefe; 'that no Old I.R.A Association be formed as it was being formed for an unworthy object, namely, securing pensions under the new Bill for which we have nothing but contempt'.

**Republicans in Jail:** At this time there were 36 Republicans in jail in the Free State, and two only in Belfast.

**Tralee:** Volunteer John Regan of Currough, formerly in the I.R.A., was assaulted by armed and masked men. Some time later an attack with fists was reported upon a group of Aiken Volunteers at recreation there.

**Micheál Mac Liammóir,** received a commendation at this time from Connradh for his play *Diarmuid agus Gráinne*, produced in *Taibhdhearch na Gaillimhe*.

**The Grand Canal,** on which there was considerable bulk traffic at this time, found itself blocked by large coping stones pushed into the 13th. lock.

**Co. Limerick:** 20 Blueshirts were arrested overnight on November 28.

**Stanley Baldwin,** Lord President of the Council, warned in the King's speech in Parliament, on November 28; that Germany was again rearming. The expansion of the R.A.F therefore would be accelerated.

'Big' **John O'Mahony** died on November 28, at the age of 70. John, or Sean, of Fleming's Hotel, 31-32 Gardiner Place, was a native of Thomastown. Active in 1916, he was interned in Lincoln and Frongoch, following which he was elected in December 1918, M.P for Tyrone/Fermanagh. He opposed the Treaty, and remained an active member of the Second Dáil. He was survived by his son Malachy, and a daughter. All strands attended his funeral to Glasnevin a few days later; De Valera, Sinn Féin, and the top men of the I.R.A and Cumann na mBan.\*

**Four Meath Men** were reported pleading guilty to tree felling, at the Tribunal.

**Clash in Bandon:** The press of Friday, November 30, told of a clash of rivals at a dance on Thursday in Bandon. A Mr. O'Sullivan, a former O'Duffy supporter, was shouted down. The split, the General replied, was a god- send; it will help to winnow the chaff from the wheat.

**Mexico:** Four were reported shot dead, and a child died, as a result of clashes in the state of Chiapas.

\* See *Patrick Pearse and the Lost Republican Ideal*, for more on John O'Mahony. U.S. visitors to the house still inquire for the room 'where Michael Collins slept.'



**Before the Tribunal:** 28 men from Carlow and Kilkenny appeared before the Tribunal on the last day of November, on Blueshirt charges: five who refused to give undertakings received sentences running from twelve to eighteen months.

**Egypt:** King Faud signed a decree abrogating the Constitution and dissolving Parliament.

**Co. Limerick:** Moves against the Blueshirts continued, with more arrests.

**Senator Francis Mc Guinness**, of Longford, a Fine Gael supporter, was reported dead in December at the age of 66. A brother of Joe; *put him in to get him out*, elected from Lewes Prison for Sinn Féin on May 9, 1917.

**Thurles Beet Factory:** December 2, saw this, the state's second beet factory opened. Mallow and Tuam would soon follow.

**O'Duffy** was reported addressing a private conference in Kilkenny on the first Sunday.

**Cronin:** Meanwhile in Newmarket, Co. Cork, Commdt. Cronin was referring to the 'national decay' that had occurred under Fianna Fáil.

**Newcastle West:** Tom Mullaly and William Barrett were reported on December 1, charged at the Tribunal with the attempted murder of Thomas Enright. Although this was said to be a personal dispute, they refused to recognise the court, but were found not guilty.

**Savoy Cinema:** The screen was damaged amid uproar in Dublin during a news reel showing of the wedding of Princess Marina. 500 men had invaded the cinema.

**Privy Council, London,** heard an appeal on December 3, regarding fishing rights in the estuary of the River Erne, off Ballyshannon.

**Sean Russell** unveiled, on December 3, a cross near Gort to Patrick and Harry Loughnane, murdered and mutilated on December 6, 1920, after they had been taken from their homes by Tans; following which their bodies were dumped in a pond.

**Kilbarrack Cemetery:** An impressive ceremony took place in Kilbarrack Cemetery near Sutton on Sunday, December 3, when wreaths were laid upon the graves of Capt. Sean Flood, executed Mountjoy, March 3, 1921, and Quartermaster J.E. Lyons and Volunteer C.E. Lyons. Four others were executed in Mountjoy on that day.

**Seanad Éireann 'Surprises':** The results were announced on December 5 for a body shortly to terminate in its then form: Fine Gael and Independents, 31: F.F. Labour and Independents, 29. Sir John Keane, of Cappoquin, lost his seat.

**Patrick Quinlan** of Glanworth, Co. Cork, a farmer, and a member of the National Executive of Fine Gael, was sent to prison for nine months at this time for the possession of a Mauser pistol.

**Swoops:** More anti-Blueshirt swoops were reported from Co. Kilkenny and east Limerick: a number of Blueshirts were reported sentenced on December 7, from Co. Cork.

**The Edgeworthstown Town Tenants**, in the first days of December, held a public meeting there at which they called for I.R.A support to obtain a fifty per cent reduction of ground rents. Peadar O'Rourke, of Dublin Brigade, declared that their

struggle was not an isolated one. It was part of the struggle against capitalism and imperialism in all its forms.

**Yugoslavia and Hungary:** Tension was reported between these two, never friendly, countries. Yugoslavia had a considerable Hungarian minority close to that border. Reports said that they were pouring across into Hungary, then a single party state under Admiral Horthy. For a time a serious conflict seemed to be impending.

**Bram Stoker of Dracula Fame:** His grandchild was reported, December 8, engaged to Lieut. Dobbs, Royal Navy, in London. Stoker was born in Ely Place.

**Italian Subjects Die:** It was reported that 60 Italian subjects had been killed in a cross border raid from Abyssinia into the colony known as Italian Somaliland. This gave Italy an excuse for her later invasion of Abyssinia.

**Loyalists Wishing to Leave:** Combined with the report above that a slice of east Donegal wished to join the Six Counties, the news of December 11, spoke of numbers of Border loyalists wishing to move across, and that some had already left and bought land close to Belfast.

**Liverpool Cathedral:** The project as conceived by Sir Edwin Lutyens was now thought by some to be too vast. Fund raisers were discouraged by the targets set them. However Dr. Downey, Archbishop, was full of encouragement; he expected 'the shell to be complete in ten years'. It was never completed.

**Senate Contest:** A contest that would provide De Valera with a further excuse for abolition occurred when Westropp-Bennett was elected chairman on a tied vote of 28 to 28, against the F.F nominee Michael Comyn, barrister. Rubbing salt into the wound the casting vote against him was given by Sir William Hickie of the British Legion.

**Tralee:** Prior to a Volunteer dance being held in the gym of Ballymullen Barracks, Tralee, two small bombs were thrown over the wall on the evening of Friday 14. Damage was slight, and there were no injuries.

**Clonmel:** In what appears to have been a rates dispute, John Slattery of Clonmel, a court messenger, was said to have been kidnapped on August 25; along with Andrew Quirke of Carrick on Suir. Denis O'Brien of Mullinahone, charged at this time before the Tribunal, was found not guilty.

**The International Fascist Congress** in Montreux, Switzerland, was attended on December 17 by General O'Duffy. With support ebbing rapidly, he nonetheless declared; 'our movement has made great progress among the youth of Ireland'.

**Leitrim:** Terence Mc Laughlin, Corlara, Kilmore, was before the Tribunal on December 17 on charges of refusal to account for his movements, and possession of ammunition. Sentenced to six months, he received three in addition for describing the Tribunal as 'this junta', together with a refusal to recognise it.

**7 Kerry Republicans** were sentenced around December 22, to terms in the Curragh Glasshouse; Richard Eager, Maurice Quirke, Michael Evans, Timothy Dunwood, Patrick Dunwood, Patrick Curran and John Delaney. A fight broke out in the court room, with chairs and furniture hurled, before police and P.A.'s overcame the seven.

**O'Mara Shops:** Following a prolonged strike, during which the five grocery shops known as Bacon Shops remained open, staffed by part-timers, dubbed black-

legs; selected Dublin Brigade members entered each one simultaneously on Friday evening, with hammers and clubs, chasing customers, and throwing much of the contents about.

**Mid- December:** George Gilmore had been sent by Republican Congress to the U.S in a forlorn attempt to raise funds. He arrived there on November 18. A single report in their paper of December 15, was the sole reference to him.

**1931 Constitution Amendment (17) Act Declared Legal:** The Supreme Court, with Fitzgibbon and Murnaghan assenting, but with Chief Justice Kennedy dissenting, ruled against the action taking earlier in the year by Col. J. Ryan, O'Duffy and others of the Blueshirts, that the Act was *ultra vires*; the High Court had already ruled that the Military Tribunal was empowered to try them. At this time, following his disagreement with U.I.P/Fine Gael, Eoin O'Duffy had withdrawn his appeal.

**Citizenship Bill:** The British House of Lords, with Lord Lucan leading for the government, debated the Free State bill which had already perturbed London. The bill raised grave constitutional issues, said Lord Lucan. Nonetheless F.F. persisted with the bill, granting citizenship to everyone on the island, or to those whose parents or grandparents (plural or singular) had been born in 32 county Ireland. It would not however deprive anyone of British citizenship.

**Soldier Tied:** Limerick city soldier, James Lyons, was found chained to the railings of the Sarsfield monument three days after Christmas with a notice affixed, *deserter from I.R.A.*

**Cork and Muskerry Railway,** 27 Miles long, linking also Blarney, was closed on December 28. It was one of a series of mid-thirties closures arising from restrictive victorian legislation, and lack of positive central fund investment in the rail system.

**Robert Flaherty, Man of Aran:** Native of Aran, long resident in U.S and the producer of the film, was awarded a cinematograph prize in New York.

**Bacon Shop Charges:** Three inner city Dublin men, John Devlin of North King Street, Leo Mc Cabe of Summerhill and Tom Hughes of Jones Road, were charged by Inspector Mc Gloin in the District Court with participation in the raids on the Bacon Shops chain. It emerged in evidence that since the strike commenced, and the employment of other staff, a constant garda watch had been maintained on the five shops.

**Executions in Russia:** Following the assassination of Sergei Kirov, in Leningrad (St. Petersburg) on December 1, 1934, a series of staged trials and executions commenced which proceeded for four years. Announced at this time was the execution by firing squad of 14 said to be part of the 'Zinoviev anti-Soviet group'. Stalin had taken fright at the assassination of Kirov.

The place chosen for execution was selected in a spirit outrageous to the feelings of his family. They erected a scaffold on the green midway between his dwelling and his place of worship.

The International Labor Commission, in its report on the execution of James Porter, stated that the scaffold was erected on the green midway between his dwelling and his place of worship.

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- Dr. Madden on the hanging of Rev. James Porter of Greyabbey, Co. Down, 1798.

## CHRONOLOGY THE YEAR 1935 : JANUARY - JUNE 30:

**Sligo Gun Running in 1913:** A report in the *Irish Press* of January 1, disclosed that some of the rifles for Carson's volunteers, apart from the main supply taken in through Larne, may have come through the port of Sligo, where they were said to have arrived in crates labelled china, assigned to the auction rooms of Alderman John Jinks, a former Mayor. He was said not to have known the contents of the crates, which were then promptly despatched by train to Enniskillen. Jinks later became nationally known in connection with the first general election of 1927 when he critically failed to present himself for a vote.

**O'Duffy in Waterville:** Shrinking attendances at his rallies had shown how forlorn was the hope of General O'Duffy to maintain a separate Blueshirt organisation, following his resignation from U.I.P./Fine Gael, the previous September 22. In Waterville, Co. Kerry, on New Year's Day, the attendance reported was 50 in blue shirts, accompanied by 150 others. Our policy, announced the General, is to introduce the co-operative system to this country, and to put it in a prosperous condition as has been done in Italy.

**Birth of Poulaphouca Scheme:** An article in the *Irish Press* of January 2, by R.N. Tweedy, engineer; outlined the reservoir and hydro electric proposals for the Liffey source, commenced later that year. The Blessington Lake, as it came to be known, would be Ireland's largest man-made lake.

**Drumm Battery Success:** The experimental train appeared to be achieving a fair measure of success as a third train was being built at Inchicore.

**Luisitania Memorial:** The stone base for this impressive bronze grouping was commenced at Scott's Square, Cobh. It would however be a considerable time before the bronze work by the brilliant but unpredictable Jerome Connor could be completed.

**Coal-Cattle Pact Announced:** A pact with Britain, which mitigated the effects of the Economic War, was announced on January 4. There would be an increase of 33 1/3 per cent in the quota of non-duty cattle in exchange for the Free State importing one and a quarter million additional tons of coal.

**Lady Lavery:** Lady Lavery's death was announced from London on January 5. Born in U.S, she was the daughter of Edward Martyn of Co. Galway: wed to Sir John, a famous painter, she was a friend of Michael Collins at the time of the Treaty negotiations; later having an intimate relationship with Kevin O'Higgins.

**Dr. Kinnane of Waterford:** The bitter, short-lived struggle between the Bishop, with Archdeacon Byrne of Mount Sion, and Frank Edwards, school teacher, supported by Republican Congress and the I.R.A., had commenced. On Sunday, January 6, Bishop Kinnane issued for reading in all Waterford City churches a pastoral letter; *the event of which this is the occasion of my address to you today is the termination of a teacher's appointment in the Christian Brothers school, Mount Sion.* Gardaí were present in all churches, but no interruptions, apart from a few walk-outs, were recorded. The Bishop would win, but not just yet.

**Youghal:** A round-up of men in connection with Blueshirt wire cutting was reported from this area.

**Ceannanus:** A forced sale of cattle owned by Miss Mc Cormack for non-payment

of annuities was reported, with protestors and gardaí in attendance.

**Clones:** A night goods train was held up, and the fireman forced off and told to return to the Six Counties. He, evidently, had been reported as a 'black leg' in the rail strike of 1933.

**O'Duffy at Creggs, Co. Galway:** Supported by a small attendance and 40 youths in blue shirts, the General was now upholding De Valera's policy of self-sufficiency arising from the Economic War.

**Bacon Shops:** 23 men were charged on January 7 in Dublin District Court with 'besetting' the shops by picketing outside.

**Dr. Kinnane:** The Army Council of the I.R.A. in a statement on January 9, challenged the Bishop to state in what way its aims and constitution were 'sinful'. Throwing in some *plámás*, they referred to 'some of his kinsmen having played a notable part in the fight for Irish independence.'

**Mexico:** 5000 students were reported to have attacked the headquarters of the Red Shirts there; shots being exchanged.

**Census:** The report of the 26 Counties population for 1926 gave a new low at 2,971,992.

**Dawson Bates:** Six County Minister for Home Affairs; he announced a ban on January 10, for Armagh City Hall, where two Republican prisoners would be welcomed home.

**Drogheda:** The elected Corporation members, heretofore attired in ceremonial red robes, voted that they be now changed to green.

**Airport at Fairview:** Frank Gibney, Dublin architect and planner, displayed his proposal in the *Irish Press* of January 11, showing the feasibility of placing a new Airport on reclaimed land east of the railway, adjacent to Fairview and East Wall.

**Kinnane Reply:** Dr. Kinnane, in the same issue, made a long reply to the I.R.A. and Congress, that indeed these organisations were sinful and irreligious.

**Barrister Mc Enery:** When John Kelly of Cork Street was arraigned on the charge of kidnap before the Tribunal on January 11, he stated that as a Republican he would not recognise the court. Without taking evidence, he was acquitted and discharged.

**The Truth About Hitler's Germany,** the title of a lecture intended for Rathmines Town Hall on January 13 was not delivered by Ernst Toller, exiled German writer, then resident in London. Pleading illness, he had been dissuaded by J.W. Dulanty, Free State High Commissioner, not to attend. Organised by a short-lived group, the Labour League Against Fascism, the top names of the organisers were Owen Sheehy-Skeffington, Peadar O'Donnell, Dr. A.J. Laventhal, Dorothy Woodman of London, and Sean Murray of C.P.I.

**Armagh:** That banned prison reception was held on January 13, at Milford, Co. Armagh, with 200 present, when an address was given by Pádraig Mac Logan, M.P.

**Saar Vote:** Overwhelmingly, the mineral rich valley adjacent to Alsace, administered by the League of Nations, voted 90% to adhere to Germany, with only 0.4% favouring France, and 8.87%, the League.

**Rathcarne Gaeltacht:** De Valera's brainchild, a gaeltacht on the rich land of Co. Meath, appeared closer to fruition on January 14, with the announcement that 900 acres had been purchased.

**The Edwards Dispute:** The I.R.A and Congress issued further statements, while 350 school children staged a one day strike in Waterford city.

**Claddagh Fades:** New two storey local authority houses were rising in the Galway seafaring suburb to replace the typical thatched roof *botháns* of people, many of whom still spoke Irish. Contrasting photos appeared in the *Irish Press* of January 17.

**Zinovieff and Kameneff:** Top leaders of the Bolshevik revolution, were charged, with 14 others, with setting up a secret terrorist centre under the exiled Trotsky. Found guilty on January 16, all were eventually shot, although the first report was that the two were sentenced to ten years and five years.

**Newry:** An attempt, reported January 21, was made in the public street to kidnap James Toman, a young Newry man, but, upon being observed, the attackers ran off.

**Dom Sweetman of Mount Saint Benedict,** addressing a meeting of 400 farmers at Rathoe, Co. Carlow, in January, called for a state bank and for control of credit.

'**Guests of the Nation**', based upon the Frank O'Connor novel, and said to be the first film made solely in Ireland, had its first showing on January 20, at the Dublin Gate Theatre, with the author, Sheila Richards, actress, and Hilton Edwards, present. The story deals with O'Connor's imprisonment in the Free State during the Civil War.

**Bagenalstown:** Seven Co. Carlow men were reported on January 22 charged with an attack upon the Aiken Volunteers.

**Limerick:** Four men from the city were reported, on January 25, receiving sentences ranging from three months to 15 for a recent affair when a former I.R.A soldier was chained to a gate. Their names were given as Edward Hannigan, Christopher Harris, Dan Quaid and John Roche.

**Cork City:** 12 men, in a 20 minute incursion upon the Freemason H.Q in Tuckey Street, disrupted an annual dinner, at which 70 male guests were present. Shots were fired in the air, furniture was disarranged, while crockery and food was thrown about.

**Lieut. Russell Plane Crash:** The descent of an Air Corps plane attempting to land on the roadway near Terenure Road in September, was witnessed from his home by his horrified brother Col. Charles Russell. Private D. Toomey died with him in the fire ball after striking a tree, while Sergeant L. Canavan was thrown clear.

**Waterford City:** 800 men paraded in the city on Sunday, January 27, in connection with the Frank Edwards protest. At Mass on the same day, Dr. Kinnane and Rt. Rev. Mons Byrne continued their vigorous denunciations.

**Louis N Le Roux,** author of *Patrick H. Pearse*, was reported in the *Irish Press* of January 28 speaking in Limerick on 'Impressions of 1916'. 1916, said the author, really began with Tone, Neilson, Russell, and the rest in 1795 upon Cave Hill.

**Trade Pact with Germany:** The Free State was reported on January 29 having signed a trade pact with Germany, whereby Germany would take one pound of Irish goods for every three pounds purchased by the Free State. From now on these short-term trade pacts with a number of countries would be a means of moving the Free State, to a small degree, out of its dependence on Britain.

**Mary Mac Swiney** was in Anglesboro, Mitchelstown, on January 28, at a rally called to aid the Liam Lynch memorial project. Alluding to Republican Congress - already as a group of little consequence - she declared that their chief crime had been to split the I.R.A. and to put a social and economic programme before the need first to obtain political freedom.

**Boxer Jack Doyle:** A farewell dinner was given in Dublin on January 29 to aspirant boxer Jack Doyle, late of the Irish Guards, before departing on a world heavy-weight career.

**Burning of Volunteer Hall:** The official report, undated, notes, about this time, the burning of a Volunteer Hall at Clonmel, and also attacks on Aiken Volunteers at Lixnaw and Mountcool, Co. Kerry.

**Tiger King of Aran** was reported on February 1 setting out for London to discuss his future in films.

**Inner Mongolia:** As the Japanese opened an onslaught on this enormous land locked province of northern China, on January 31, Russia, in possession of Outer Mongolia, fortified its eastern frontiers. 'Let enemies try our borders' warned War Minister Tuchachevsky from Moscow.

**Ruling Rejected:** The Council of the National Athletic and Cycling Association, meeting February 3, in Wynn's Hotel, rejected 27 to 24, the ruling of the international body favouring Britain by limiting its jurisdiction to 26 counties. P.C. Moore, its President, and a nationalist solicitor, presided. Support for the outside body was led by Dublin County Board under F.G. Duffy who called for compliance with the international body. Within two years there would be a cleavage.

**Thomas Carnduff, Playwright,** of Belfast, a Protestant shipyard worker, was about to have his play, *Castlereagh*, on Belfast around 1798, produced at the Abbey Theatre.

**Kanturk:** Eoin O'Duffy referred here to the 'New Land League', recently founded in Cork city. It had his approval, he declared, and would be supported by his 'non-political Blueshirt organisation'. In Cashel, Patrick Belton, T.D., speaking to 250 Blueshirts, endorsed the League, although its future would be short-lived.

**Templemore:** A report of February 5, recounted the trial of Kieran Holland of that district, sentenced to five years by the Military Tribunal for an armed attack on the home of James Kinnane, rate collector, on December 29. He had fired from 100 yards through a window.

**Grace Plunkett, née Gifford,** of 11 Nassau Street, who had married, in his cell on eve of execution, Joseph Mary, entered an action that she should be a beneficiary under the will of Dr. J.J. Cranny, his uncle, of 17 Merrion Square, who had died in 1904, but who had at that time willed that the proceeds of his estate go to the children of his sister, Josephine, Countess Plunkett. The action was taken against George Noble, Count Plunkett, and the Countess. The estate largely derived from the Crannys, whose residence once was Muckross convent, and who had built or owned much of Marlborough, Elgin, Clyde and other roads.

**Youghal:** Three young men from this neighbourhood were sentenced by the Military Tribunal on February 4, to two years each for cutting telegraph wires, and placing a sleeper across the line, on behalf of the Blueshirt organisation.



**Batt O'Connor**, former Cumann na nGael T.D and earlier a close confidant of Michael Collins, died at his home on Eglington Road, Donnybrook, on February 6. Born in Brosna, Co. Kerry, he had gone to the U.S as a bricklayer; returned, and joined Connradh and the I.R.B. Easter Week found him in Kerry. A prosperous house builder later in Donnybrook; Brendan Road is named after his son, and it was under the concrete floors of one of those houses that he buried the gold of the Dáil loan; gold which he restored to the Free State in December 1922. Widespread cross party sympathy followed his decease.

**Donaghmore, Tyrone:** In a series of house searches by R.U.C under D.I Coulson, one young man was arrested.

**Citizenship Bill:** Under a Bill circulated on February 7, every person not a citizen of the Free State would be considered an alien.

**Northlight Razor Blades:** The opening in converted buildings of this factory, was celebrated on February 8, in Enniscorthy.

**Helena Moloney** gave a talk to Sinn Féin at 16 Parnell Square on the history of the run-up to 1916.

**Co. Longford:** Four raiders, wearing part garda uniform, forced their way into the home of Gerald More-O'Ferrall, *Lissard*, near Edgeworthstown, on the evening of February 10, while a small dinner party, consisting of father, son Richard, daughter Majorie, and two guests was in progress. Arising from a dispute by ground tenants of the Saunderson estate, the I.R.A sought to tar and feather Gerald, the agent, but father and son rose to resist the intrusion, and in so doing, both were shot at; Richard dying in St. Vincent's Hospital, ten days later. A cigarette case deflected a bullet directed at Gerald.

**Dundalk:** Aiken's Volunteers had been awarded the run-down military barracks as a H.Q. and 300 of them paraded in the town on February 10.

**Casement:** The chaplain, Very Rev. John T. Nicholson, appointed chaplain of the small brigade in Germany in the months prior to 1916, died in Wyoming, U.S on February 11. A native of Tubbercurry, he had been asked by Joe Mc Garrity to join Casement in Germany - the U.S being still neutral - which he did; remaining five months until the departure of Casement for Ireland; he continued afterwards to hold Casement in reverence.

**Abysinnia:** Following frontier incidents the Italian government, as reported on February 13, issued an ultimatum to Addis Ababa.

**U.S Airship Macon** came down in the sea off California on February 11, with its crew of 83, of whom all but two were rescued. The *Macon* was commissioned in April 1933; disasters such as this would turn the U.S away from the lighter than air dirigible.

**National Gallery Attendant**, Patrick T. Mc Guinness, formerly of the Army Comrades Association, was sentenced to six months by the Tribunal on February 13 for possession of a .45 Webley revolver.

**J.H. Thomas, Dominions Secretary:** Speaking in the Constitutional Club, London on February 14, while pleading Britain's desire for reconciliation and peace, reminded his Tory listeners that in the Irish situation 'there were two questions that were fundamental, namely the sanctity of agreements and continued membership of

the British Commonwealth of Nations, and these must not be obscured'. De Valera instantly replied that 'the Irish people reserve the right to freely decide their own destiny'.

**Omagh:** John Clerkin of Castleshane was arrested by R.U.C at his home and brought to Crumlin Road.

**Broadstone Rail Station:** It was announced that this important terminus of the Midland Great Western Railway would close shortly. There were protests from traders in the Parnell Square and Dominick Street area.

**Alderman J.W. Nixon M.P of Belfast:** The news of February 15 reported that the libel action of former Detective Inspector Nixon of the R.U.C against the publishers, Methuen, of *Nomad*, the autobiography of Captain Charlie Mc Guinness, gun runner, formerly of Derry, would proceed in the High Court in Belfast. Nixon,\* although very seriously ill, and unable to attend on February 20, pressed the action; Mc Guinness having obliquely alleged that he had led a murder gang in 1922, operating from Brown Street; a murder gang that was responsible for many killings of uninvolved Catholics. Mc Guinness, who was not in court, reflected in his account also on Sir Henry Wilson, assassinated June 22 in London, whom he described as 'author of the pogrom'. Although the book had not named Nixon, saying solely that 'he had been elevated to parliamentary honours', he was awarded his costs and £1250, a considerable sum in those days when £600 would buy a new house, or £200, a new car. He had received £1000 in an earlier libel case.

**Bacon Shops:** A large group of Republican Congress followers found themselves imprisoned in Mountjoy, but on giving recognisance not to beset the shops, 22 were released. At a welcome *céilí* in the Plaza Hotel, presided over by Cora Hughes, Peadar O'Donnell in his address referred to 'an unarmed strategy in a bloodless revolution'. But is there such a process?

**Disputations in Kerry:** Kerry I.R.A and Kerry F.F had been for some time engaged in a long polemic in the newspapers on their relative positions. The press of February 16 brought another *demarche* from the I.R.A.

**Anti-Volunteer Activity:** Attacks on Aiken Volunteers were reported from Lixnaw and Mountcool, in Kerry.

**Berlin:** Two women, on February 18, were beheaded, allegedly for betraying army plans to invade Poland. They were named as Baroness von Berg and Frau von Natzmer; the latter having stolen the documents from the Ministry.

**Richard Hayward** played the lead part in *Castlereagh*, the Thomas Carnduff play; the Belfast Repertory Company staging it, being given a warm welcome in Dublin.

**Torchlight:** In Nenagh on February 18, Tom Power and Sean Gleeson were welcomed home by torchlight, at a meeting addressed by Con Lehane and Tom Barry.

**Non-Party Blueshirts:** A new headquarters of the O'Duffy Blueshirts, now

\* The man responsible for organising the Mc Mahon murder, (when five of a family in their home were wiped out), and for many other lesser known killings, was Detective Inspector Nixon and District Inspector Harrison, head of the Belfast Detective Division. They were given a free hand in organising a counter-insurgency unit in east Belfast, killing Catholics with impunity. As a result Nixon and Harrison were folk heroes in east Belfast. Tim Pat Coogan in *Michael Collins*.

described as independent non-party, was opened by the General on February 19, in Pearse Street, when summer schools were proposed.

**Killala:** A group of unemployed men prevented track on the Ballina to Killala branch line being lifted as it was thought that it would hinder the chance of a factory being located there.

**'New Land League':** 24 men, said to be members of this newly created and short-lived body, an offshoot of the Blueshirts, were arrested in a swoop in Co. Cork under the Public Safety Act, and conveyed to Mountjoy.

**Argentine:** The Argentine continued to lay claim to the Falkland Islands (Malvinas), and had shown them as part of its territory upon stamp issues. At this time the Ministry of the Interior altered the passports of persons where the documentation showed them as a British possession.

**Gradamh do'n Craoibhín:** Following his retirement from University College, Dublin, and his return to *Ratra*, Co. Roscommon in 1932, a subscription fund was organised, for Dúbhglas de h-Íde; a long list of names being published in the press of February 23. Heading the list with ten pounds was E. De Valera, *agus a bhean*, followed by Una Ní Fhairceallaigh, Dr. George Bastible, Tadhg Ó Donnchadha, and the Árd Comhairle of the G.A.A. The list closed a fortnight later at £1200.

**Refuse to Play:** On a motion from the O'Rahilly club, Tralee, Kerry County Convention G.A.A. decided by majority vote that the county teams would refuse to play until all Republicans would be released.

**Clonmult:** There was a large turn out on February 24, for the annual commemoration in east Cork. Because of the soaking rain Tom Barry cut short his address.

**Clonmel:** The Playfair hall, new H.Q. of Aiken Volunteers, was fired on February 25, prior to a dance.

**Belfast:** A grenade was thrown on the night of February 25 in the Nationalist quarter of Hardinge Street. Two youths were seen to run into Queen Street. It caused no injury.

**Writers** Frank O'Connor and Seán Ó Faoláin sounded a protest on the Abbey Theatre proposal to produce a series of plays by continental authors. It will be a pitiable confession of defeat, they declared.

**Bacon Shops Dispute:** Three men still held were released by Judge Shannon on February 25.

**Glencree Reformatory** was known as *St. Brendan's*, where at this time 74 boys were held. On February 27 a fire occurred in the boiler house, causing only slight damage. The reformatory was formerly a barrack built, together with a military road, in 1800 to curb Michael Dwyer.

**O'Duffy on U.I.P./E.G.:** 'They gave me a dirtier deal than ever I experienced in my whole career', declared the General at a meeting, February 28, in Loughrea.

**Press Readership:** Starting, August 1931, with a readership of 56,821, the *Irish Press* at this time had a circulation of 103,237.

**'Only Escape':** The corporative system, declared O'Duffy from his group's new H.Q. in Pearse Street, was Ireland's only means of escape from capitalism or communism.

**Revolt in Greece:** Led by the veteran politician, M. Venizelos, a revolt had bro-

ken out on March 3 against the Athens government. Mixed naval and army units controlled portions of the island of Crete and Macedonia.

**Gorey:** A cross was unveiled at this time in St. Michael's Cemetery to the memory of Commdt. S.R. Etchingham, Capt. Clince, Vol. T. Dugdale, Vol. F. Stephens and Adjutant V. Coughlan. Dr. P. Synott performed the ceremony.

**British Army Costs:** The upkeep cost throughout the world was estimated at £43m.

**Tunnel to Scotland?** A South Belfast M.P. W.J. Stewart, was advocating at this time a tunnel or bridge linkage, eleven miles long, from Torr Head to the Mull of Kintyre.

**Maud Gonne** was reported on March 8 speaking to the Universities Republican Club in Ely Place on the economic effects of the Reformation.

**Fr. O'Flanagan:** Emmet was recalled by Fr. Michael O'Flanagan in the Sinn Féin rooms. Pádraig Pearse, he declared, had referred to Tone, Davis, Mitchell and Lalor, as the four evangelists of Irish nationality. Pearse, said the speaker, was tempted to add two more; Parnell and Emmet. With Catholics forming 74 per cent of the population of Ireland, Fr. O'Flanagan was puzzled why they had only one out of the six evangelists.

**Greek Revolt Ends:** M. Venizelos and his close adherents, their revolt collapsing, sought sanctuary in Italy.

**Joe Smart** of Hendrick Street, a friend of Countess Markievicz and also involved in the Custom House attack of May 1921 and other actions, was reported deceased on March 14.

**Mecca:** Three men, armed with daggers, attempted on March 15, to assassinate King Ibn Saud, at this time making a ritual circuit of the sacred Kaaba; the meteorite which descended aeons earlier upon where the city stands. Guards shot all three men dead upon the spot.

**Irish Light Bulbs:** J.J. Walsh, industrial entrepreneur and former Minister, announced on March 16, that his light bulb factory Solus Teo, was shortly to commence production at Bray.

**Torch Emblem:** F.F. was promoting, in a colour advertisement, the Torch emblem, in opposition to the Easter Lily.

**O'Duffy Rally in Cashel:** 2000 in blue shirts, with girls in blouses, under Capt. T. Quinlan, attended an O'Duffy rally in Cashel on March 17; the occasion being followed by a dance.

**Conscription in Germany:** The German government had announced conscription for its armed forces, causing Britain to address a note that this was 'calculated seriously to increase unease in Europe'.

**Tralee:** Det. Sergt. Reynolds was fired upon on the evening of March 18, by a rifle, close to Abbey Street barrack. A bullet struck him, but was deflected by the weapon in his pocket.

**Tram and Bus Strike in Dublin:** Army lorries would provide a skeletal service following a transport strike in Dublin which had commenced on the St. Patrick's weekend. Both rail companies had refused to offer their buses for this purpose.

**ES Annual Budget:** Estimates for the total outlay on the public services 1935-1936 came to £28,737,710.

**'Immoral Films':** Concern was being shown in a report of March 23 at the 'flood of immoral films' entering the Free State.

**Co. Kerry:** Ten young Kerry men appeared before the Tribunal, in a report of March 23, on a charge of riotous assembly at Licken, Glencar. The trouble was said to have been provoked by local Blueshirts after a house dance was interrupted by shots, and stones fired through windows.

**Travel Arrangements:** The Great Southern Railways was advertising train excursions to Clonmel, with linking buses to Newcastle, for the Liam Lynch unveiling on April 7.

**Shooting in Dublin:** A report of March 25 told of two punishment shootings near midnight in Dublin. Sergt. Lockhart and Garda O'Leary were shot in the legs in Grafton Street when three men on bicycles rode up to them. A guard outside the *Irish Press* office on Burgh Quay was also fired upon. Both incidents were deemed to be related to the tram and bus strike.

**Liverpool Cathedral:** A difficulty had arisen in the very large order for Wicklow granite envisaged for use in the cladding of the edifice. Due to an import tariff the quarry management considered that it would be uneconomical to supply the stone at the price expected.

**Lieut. Fullerton** had a stone unveiled to him in the cemetery, James Street; the area in which he had lived. The stone was unveiled by Donal Ó Donnchadha of G.H.Q. Lieut. Fullerton had been in the Citizen Army under Commdt. Michael Mallin, and afterwards in the Fourth Battalion.

**Limerick City Old I.R.A.**, on March 25, called for the release of all Republican prisoners.

**Muinntear na Tíre** debated in Mount Mellary at this time that 'capitalism, as it now exists, is honey combined with injustice, and is digging its own grave'. The lead talk was given by Very Rev. Canon Kelleher, of St. John's College, Waterford.

**All Ireland Will Be There:** The press was at this time giving somewhat muted publicity to the impending unveiling of the Liam Lynch round tower on the Knockmealdown slope above Newcastle on April 7.

**Who Wrote The 1916 Proclamation?** In a talk by J.J. Bouch, assistant librarian at the National Library, he expressed the opinion that P.H. Pearse was responsible for the literary composition of the Proclamation, with traces of amendments by James Connolly, and possibly also by Tomás Mc Donagh. 2500 copies were printed under guard in Liberty Hall, from type supplied by W.H. West of Capel Street. The plates were in two parts, resulting in an irregularity upon the printed sheet. It had also emerged in recent times (and there is now a bronze tablet upon the building) that the Proclamation was signed by the seven on the evening of the Wednesday prior to Easter, in an upstairs room of the Wyse Power house at 21 Henry Street, where Jennie's parents traded as the Irish Farm Produce Company.

**John Clerkin of Castleshane**, Co. Monaghan, was sentenced on March 25, on a document charge at Belfast, to one month, before Mr. H. Topping R.M.

**Dublin: Mass Arrests:** As a result of I.R.A. interference in the tram and bus strike, the government struck overnight on March 26, arresting 43, some of whom,

including Peadar O'Donnell, Mick Price, and Roddy Connolly, were speedily released. Expecting a round-up, Maurice Twomey, Sean Mac Bride and Sean Russell were not at home. Those held were removed to the Curragh Glasshouse.

**Broadcasting:** Dr. T.J. Kiernan, secretary to the High Commissioner in London, was announced, March 27, as the new Director of Broadcasting. His wife was the traditional singer Delia Murphy.

**Statement:** Published in the Press of March 28 was a long statement from the Army Council of the I.R.A that the 'Dublin transport strike has assumed an aspect that removed it from the sphere of ordinary trade disputes'.

**Security Pact:** Anthony Eden, British Foreign Secretary, was at this time exploring the possibility of a European Security Pact with Maxim Litvinov, Soviet Foreign Minister, during which he had a heart to heart talk with Stalin, accompanied by Lord Chilston; at which also were present M. Molotov and M. Maisky, U.S.S.R ambassador to Britain. Germany and Italy would not be invited to join.

**De Valera Defends:** At a National Executive meeting of F.F. De Valera went on the offensive over the recent swoop; 'there was only one thing for a government to do where an avowedly military organisation with arms at its disposal interferes in a trade dispute'.

**Communist Meeting Broken Up:** A street pavement meeting at Cathal Brugha Street, addressed by Sean Murray, was broken up on March 29, when a crowd of about 300 marched chanting 'we don't want communism in Ireland'.

**Power's Wolfhound:** On page 3 of *Irish Press* of March 30, appeared a very fine picture of an Irish wolfhound (in plaster), by Albert Power R.H.A. For the purpose of the Lynch unveiling, two wolfhounds were in fact positioned on the base. These were later removed as it was intended to have them cast in bronze, but due to a shortage of funds this was not then done.\* A local committee has since raised funds and placed four Wolfhounds there.

**Cork:** A brand new rubber factory, promoted by Dunlop, was soon to open in Cork, and 300 men were about to start work there.

**Danzig:** The so-called free city under the tutelage of the League of Nations Council in Geneva, had as its High Commissioner, the Irishman Sean Lester. The city on the Baltic was at the mouth of the Polish Corridor, which strip of land, no more than the width of an Irish county, was of deep strategic interest to Germany, as it separated its land mass from the province of East Prussia. As a consequence of his independent stand Lester was under pressure from the Nazi inclined Senate governing the city. The Nazi daily of late August accused him of being partisan in support of Poland, the other considerable interest in the city. Meanwhile Julius Streicher and Herr Rust, the Minister for Education, arrived to address election meetings.

\* One of the wolfhounds was exhibited in 1935 at the Royal Hibernian Academy of Arts. Power's wife was the model for the Sphinxes on the rebuilt Gresham Hotel; for the carved panel at the base and the impressive coat of arms. Earlier in 1911, he carved the figure of Science, upon what is now Government Buildings, in Merrion Street. Power also recorded MacSwiney on his deathbed, and modelled the death mask of Collins, following his return from Cork, to St. Vincent's Hospital, then in Leeson Street and St. Stephen's Green. In both of the latter works he was assisted medically by Dr. St. John Gogarty, who paradoxically, the I.R.A later tried to assassinate, and whose mansion at Renvyle they fired. The reason being however that he had voted for the Army Powers Resolution or 'Murder Bill' of September 1922.

**Eden Departs:** Anthony Eden, Minister for League of Nations Affairs, departed from Moscow after three days where he had endeavoured to interest Russia in a European security pact. Berlin described the plan as dead.

**Twin Brothers:** Maud Gonne, in her weekly street corner meeting, Sundays, at Cathal Brugha Street, was describing De Valera and Cosgrave as 'like twin brothers in their treatment of Republicans'.

**Pearse Mc Loughlin,** of St. Peter's Terrace, Howth, afterwards an activist in London, was, in late March, sentenced to 14 days before Judge Cussen for an involvement with Special Branch men outside Marino post office. *Suas le Poblacht na h-Éireann*, he called as he left the dock.

**Rathmines:** The National Graves Association under secretary, Sean Fitzpatrick with Bernard Nolan (present at the ambush), unveiled a cross at Rathmines Road Upper commemorating Section Commander Christopher Reynolds, of Rathfarnham, shot there by Black and Tans, afterwards dying in hospital on April 1, 1921.

**Bean Cathal Brugha** was informing readers on April 1, that her son, Rúairí, then aged 17, was being held in the Bridewell for posting bills relating to the forthcoming Liam Lynch unveiling, and also publicising the sale of Easter lilies. He was released after some days.

**Tram and Bus Strike:** The men voted at this time against a return to work. Despite numbers of conciliation meetings the strike continued for 76 days.

**Russell Meets De Valera:** T.P. Coogan in his *De Valera* notes a 'secret meeting' this month between Sean Russell and De Valera at which the Q. M. put forward a proposal for co-operation with Fianna Fáil over a five year period provided he undertook to declare a Republic for all Ireland at the end of it. While it appears in the circumstances to have been unworkable, Twomey learned of it, most probably afterwards. Russell is said to have had one other meeting with De Valera in 1938 when De Valera again rejected his overtures.

**More-O'Ferrall Case:** Four young men, strongly protesting innocence, appeared at a special court in Longford charged with the death of Richard More-O'Ferrall on February 9. They were John 'Nipper' Shanley of Dromod, a well known county footballer; Jimmy Joe Reynolds, insurance agent, of Dromod; his twin brother, John, and William (Billy) Mulligan, of Ward's Terrace, Longford.

**The Poblacht Office** in St. Andrew Street, was visited by detectives on April 1, when Terry Ward, acting editor, was warned that he must not publish statements from an illegal organisation. At this stage the I.R.A. was not yet a declared illegal organisation, save in the Six Counties, and would not be until June 18, 1936, under Article 2 A.

**Inishmore, Aran:** The first aeroplane to land here; a twin seater monoplane, landed and took off from the island, with its gentleman pilot and female passenger, on April 1.

**Wire Cutting In North Cork,** doubtless by Blueshirts, was widespread. Poles were sawn, resulting in phones being disrupted, and trains being delayed due to signal difficulties.

**Spain:** A cabinet crisis was reported on April 3, due to the leader of the Catholic

Party, Gil Robles, pressing to be included in the cabinet. He later supported Franco from exile.

**Sinn Féin:** Holding their regular open air meeting at Cathal Brugha Street Fr. Michael O'Flanagan, and 'Seilg' made the prisoners, and the pressure upon *An Phoblacht*, the centrepiece of their address.

**The Folklore Commission,** announced the resumption of 'work abandoned a hundred years ago' after Eugene O'Curry and John O'Donovan, the antiquarian, had been forced, by the withdrawal of funds, to discontinue the Derry survey, known also as the *Memoirs*.

**De Valera Challenges U.K** to an all-Ireland plebiscite whether the Six Counties would wish to enter an all-Ireland Republic. He was replying in the Senate to Senator Milroy of Fine Gael. He did however admit that, since the Statute of Westminster of December 1931, 'there was more power under the Treaty than I had anticipated'.

**Bond Repayment:** The government had decided to repay in full the American-Irish bondholders although few were seeking this. On April 3 the first repayment cheque was handed over in New York by ambassador Michael Mc White.

**German Air Strength:** Hitler informed Foreign Secretary Sir John Simon at this time that the German air arm was now numerically equal to the British.

**Easter Lily:** A front page add in colour carried the announcement that 'in 1935 Republican Ireland will again wear the Easter Lily'.

**No Sunday Dancing:** Under a recent Local Government enactment in the North, Belfast police announced a Sunday ban henceforth on indoor entertainments, listing dancing, singing, music and boxing.

**Aiken's Volunteers:** Introducing a Defence vote of £1.5 m, Minister Aiken announced that the number in his new force had reached 22,000. 25 new *sluagh* halls would be built.

**Casement Brigade:** Survivors from the pre-1916 brigade formed by Sir Roger in Germany, and which it had been thought might be employed in Ireland, were invited to march in the government organised march past the G.P.O on Easter Sunday wearing those uniforms which had survived.

**Longford:** A newspaper described it as a 'dense cheering crowd' assembled outside the courthouse to greet the four accused in the More-O' Ferrall affair.

**The Lynch Tower:** *The Irish Press* of April 5, carried upon its front page a fine photograph of the sixty foot high rubble stone tower erected close to where Liam Lynch fell.

**Goering Pledged** not to occupy the free city of Danzig by force; at the same time declaring that 'Germany is inseparable from the Swastika'.

**League of Youth:** The protracted hearing in the High Court action seeking to have the League declared lawful continued on April 4. By the time that the court would be satisfied, the League, successor to the Blueshirts, would have ceased to exist.

**Litriú, no Litriugheadh:** Seán Toibín M.A, made a case in the *Irish Press* of April 5, for a simplified form of spelling in the Irish language. Fifteen years later this was accomplished by the translation staff of An Dáil under Liam Ó Rinn.



**Turf As a Source of Power:** A talk by Robert N. Tweedy with the title, *Power From Peat: How Russia Uses It*, was delivered in the Engineers' Hall, Dawson Street, attended by Sean Mac Entee, P.J. Little and Frank Aiken.

**Liam Lynch:** The retreat up the Knockmealdown Mountain and the mortal wound he suffered on April 10, was described in the *Irish Press* of April 6 by Óglach, whose identity was not disclosed, but most likely was Moss Twomey, Sean Hyde, Bill Quirke or Frank Aiken, who accompanied him on the fateful withdrawal.

**John L. Sullivan:** The Blueshirt leader in west Cork, with his brother, local director of the League of Youth, of Carrigroe, Clonakilty, was detained at this time.

**Numbers Unemployed:** Official returns stood at 137,628 for male and female unemployment.

**Water Shortage:** Prior to the completion of the Blessington lakes, Dublin consuming forty gallons per capita, suffered a water shortage, (It now consumes 85 gallons per capita, but forty percent is lost by outworn pipe work).

**Unveiled:** The Lynch tower was unveiled on Sunday, April 7. Photographs show the rain swept attendance of 10,000, with Maurice Twomey, Chief of Staff, flanked by John Joe Sheehy and Brian O'Higgins (Brian na Banban). Two Irish wolfhounds by Albert Power graced the base. In plaster, they were removed shortly after, and funds never allowed for their replacement in bronze. Sheehy recited a decade in Irish; O'Higgins, not fazed by the weather, which had converted the track across the mountain into a raging torrent, gave a lengthy address\*.

**The Danzig Poll** gave the Nazis 60 per cent in the Senate

**Céilí Only:** Cashel Urban Council, on a proposition by M.F. Davern F.F., seconded by P. Phillips of Labour, voted that in future only céilí dancing could be performed in the Town Hall.

**League of Youth Hearings:** After close questioning by state counsel, Commdt. Cronin declared that 'any officer of doubtful character went with O'Duffy'.

**Lords on Citizenship Act:** The claims made in the Act continued to trouble the House of Lords. Its effect would be, announced Lord Danesfort, that British citizens residing in Ireland, would lose that status, while U.K. citizens would now be regarded as aliens.

**Rathcarne Gaeltacht:** Eleven Irish speaking families from the west of Ireland, were conveyed there on April 12.

**Easter Ceremonies:** Sean Russell, Acting Secretary of the National Commemoration Committee, announced on April 12, that there would be 50 ceremonies throughout Ireland.

**North Kerry:** John Mc Elligott, Michael O'Brien, Tom O'Brien, Edward Whitson, John Healy and Edward Fuller, were charged before the Tribunal on April 12, with entering a house and removing two volunteer uniforms. Refusing to recognise the court they were given each three months, with three months being added for contempt.

**Torch Emblem:** Another colour advertisement appeared for the F. F. emblem.

**Dr. Mark Ryan,** old Fenian of London, had his portrait by Leo Whelan R.H.A., presented to the Hugh Lane (Municipal) Gallery.

\* The road that now exists was not then in existence.

**Museum Exhibits:** 500 articles from the 1916 to 1922 period were placed on display in a special section of the National Museum.

**Torch Rejected:** A meeting of South Leitrim F.F. on April 15, decided unanimously not to adopt the Torch as an Easter emblem. They would remain with the Lily, but the Lily would shortly be driven off the streets by police action. Disinterest would quickly kill the Torch.

**Banned:** Minister for Home Affairs Sir Dawson Bates announced on April 16 that all Easter Commemorations were banned in the Six Counties. Despite this, five were surreptitiously held.

**Easter Sunday Report:** Pulling out all the stops, the Free State Army gave a lively display in the capital, while at the same time the statue of Cuchulainn by Oliver Sheppard R.H.A. was unveiled by De Valera within the Post Office. 13,000 marched in an I.R.A. parade from St. Stephen's Green to Glasnevin, where they were addressed by Maurice Twomey 'denouncing 13 years of expediency and political knavery'. Parades, large and small, took place at 50 other locations.

**Con Lehane and Others:** At the Tribunal, four days after Easter, Con Lehane was singled out, for what was at that time, the heavy sentence of eighteen months; the authorities being determined to make an example of the highly articulate Lehane. Sentenced with him was Claude O'Loughlin, Tom and John Farrington of Wexford Street, Donal O'Donoghue of 12 St. Andrew Street, and Andy Walsh of Queen Street; all five receiving six months each. They had been charged with membership of an unlawful association, although as stated earlier, the I.R.A. was not yet a declared illegal association.

**Five Other Dubliners Were Sentenced** a day following; each to six months. Sean Brunswick of Clonliffe Road, Jim Cole of Lower Buckingham Street, John Kelly of Cork Street, Michael Neary of Ring Street, Jimmy Hannigan of Gardiner's Row, and Laurence Carwood of Kilmainham.

**Germany:** In the name of safeguarding the independence of the press, the Nazi government announced a total ban on Catholic dailies and publications on April 25.

**Tom Barry** was arraigned for trial by the Tribunal, as reported on April 26. With him were two acknowledged Communists; Jack Stapleton and Christy Clarke of Dublin. Objecting that a collective trial was intended to confuse the public, the Tribunal agreed then to separate the trials. Supt. J. Meehan in evidence stated that when he questioned Barry at Union Quay station, Cork, to explain the policy of the I.R.A., Barry promptly answered:-

1. To compel the British forces to leave Ireland
2. To overturn the two dominion parliaments
3. To stop the exploitation of people by foreign interests
4. To finally break the connection with England.
5. To restore to the people the unfettered control of our own destinies and resources, while promoting their cultural independence.

Prosecuted by William Blake S.C., instructed by J.S. O'Connor, solicitor; he was sentenced to six months on charges of refusing to account for his movements and for membership of an unlawful association. The Fianna Fáil government removed the ban on the I.R.A., he declared; so far as he knew, it had not been reimposed.

**Limerick:** A new firm, Irish Wire Products, announced on April 29 a plan for a new factory in Limerick which would employ 200.

**Submarines:** To an outcry in the House of Commons, Germany announced that it would build 12 pocket submarines of 250 tons each.

**Ten More Sentenced:** The papers of April 30, reported the trial by the Tribunal of Joe Hendley and Leo Burdock of Marrowbone Lane, Dick Batterberry of St. Kevin's Parade, Pat Mc Elroy of Inchicore, Tom Merrigan of Charlotte Place, John Nestor of Phibsborough Road, John Nalty of East Road, Bill Scott of Inchicore, Michael Kelly of Eccles Street, Mick Price of St. Michael's Road. On counts of membership and contempt all received six months which they would serve in the Glasshouse.

**Seats in Dáil:** With the population drop, the numbers of seats in the Dáil under the Electoral Reform Act 1935, Revision of Constituencies, would be down from 153 to 138.

**Sarajevo Riot:** A report spoke of an election riot, with troops firing, and one man killed and 50 wounded.

**S.F To Fight Election?** J. Mitchell, for Sinn Féin, speaking at Cathal Brugha Street on Tuesday, promised that his party would contest the next general election, and a forthcoming by-election in County Galway.

**One Million Attend Hitler for May Day:** At Templehof Field, to hear him declare that Germany wants neither war nor unrest in the world; Germany stood for peace only.

**In Moscow:** 600 planes thundered over Red Square while 500 tanks pounded past.

**'67 Rising Widow:** Mrs. M. Kenny of Cabra, a widow of an 1867 Rising participant, had a wide attendance at her funeral.

**Home Fired:** Arising from cattle seizures in that neighbourhood, the home of Patrick S. Murphy, Fianna Fáil, T.D, was fired on by armed men at midnight on May 2.

**Longford Trial:** The four Republicans were sent for trial from the District Court to the Central Criminal Court on May 2.

**Fermoy:** A sheriff sale there attracted 500 in a protest march, with an armed force in attendance within the pound. As was usual in such cases, the cattle were knocked down to an unnamed purchaser.

**Belfast Pogrom:** The first sparks of a destructive Orange pogrom, in which close upon a dozen would die, flared on the Antrim Road, when a drunken loyalist group returning from a parade broke their way into a public house. Crowds then tried to enter the small Catholic street of Upper Library Street to burn houses, but were repulsed.

In the Protestant village of Coagh, Co. Tyrone, the local priest, after removing Orange bunting from his church, was attacked.

In Belfast, a shop in Denmark Street was broken into; the owner later being taken to hospital with head wounds. The next day, 9th. of May, grenades were flung in Vere Street, the upper end of which was Catholic. Youths guarding against incursions into Queen Street were driven off by R.U.C with batons. Curfew was declared

a day later in troubled areas; the trouble being induced by drunken Orange celebrations of the 25th. anniversary of King George V. Inevitably there was to be a royal visit, with the Duke of Gloucester arriving in the city. Meanwhile Catholic mill girls came under attack. The Duke himself would be protected by 1500 police and military spaced along the kerbsides from City Hall to Balmoral.

**Dundalk:** Arrested on May 9 were Richard Goss and Tom Walsh of Long Avenue, Bernard Murphy of Hill Street, and James Finnegan of Castletown Road. All were charged in the case of Mrs. Mc Grory of Chapel Street, but all would be found not guilty later on.

**Dublin:** Another garda shot in Dublin, stated a headline. It occurred at the end of Leeson Street entering St. Stephen's Green, where four youths were painting prisoner slogans on the foot path. The garda received an arm and a leg wound.

**Poland:** Marshal Pilsudski, politician and soldier; and dictator from 1926, died on May 12, aged 68. Hitler and many world statesmen attended in Warsaw at his Catholic Mass.

**Connolly Commemoration:** 5000 attended a commemoration at the G.P.O upon the anniversary, May 12, of his execution in Kilmainham.

**Dúbhglas de h-Íde:** Presented with a scroll and wallet on May 13 at University College, Earlsfort Terrace, was Douglas Hyde; a future President. *Distinguished Services to the Language*, the citation read (as gaeilge), with a laudatory address by Pádraig Ó Siochfradha (An Seabhac), Eoin Mac Neill and De Valera.

**Kilmallock:** Commdt. Cronin was charged on May 13, following a meeting attended by 150 Blueshirts in Lord Edward Street; insults being freely exchanged.

**Derry:** Coinciding with the arrival of the Duke of Gloucester, under heavy security, to Derry; fire broke out in the Chapter House of the Cathedral, but it was found to have been caused by an electrical fault. The Duke then inspected ex-service men in the Diamond.

**Mussolini** delivered a war-like speech, heavily tinged with sarcasm towards Britain, in Rome on May 14.

**'Sceilg' and Sons Arrested:** J.J. O'Kelly and sons, Seán Óg and Mortimer, were arrested at their home, Botanic Road on May 4, after a six hour struggle by the sheriff and guards to enforce a disputed £15 income tax decree. They had held them off with hurleys from behind barricaded doors and barricaded windows. The heavy handed raid was condemned by Fr. O'Flanagan at a Cathal Brugha Street S.F meeting on the following day.

**Father of Ethna Carbery,** Antrim poetess. *The Irish Press*, of May 15, had an interesting half page article by Séamus Ó Neil, M.A. Hale and hearty at 94, he had been 'out' in '67, while his son James had spent a while in Frongoch.

**The Fourth F.F Budget** announced revenue of £29,386,000; with an expenditure planned of £32,485,500.

**Malachi Quinn** of O'Hagan Street, Newry, and Tom Greene of St. Brigid's Terrace, Dundalk, were charged in Newry, on May 15, under the Civil Authorities, Special Powers Act. Quinn was singled out for having made a statement 'likely to cause disaffection' that British forces in the Tan period had murdered three local women, by name Moore, Mc Aruff and Morgan. A fine of five pounds was imposed

on Quinn, but he choose to go to jail for three months.

**Andy Skelton of Lurgan**, Henry Heaney and John Byrne, as reported May 17, were charged with displaying a tricolour flag at a commemoration. Refusing to recognise the court, they received three months hard labour in Crumlin Road Prison.

**James Kelly** of Lower Camden Street, as reported on the same day, was sentenced to two years for the possession of three revolvers. He was the quartermaster of his company; 'I have the authority of the I.R.A to hold them', he told the court.

**Peter McDonnell**, a quarry man of Newtownforbes, refused to plead at the Tribunal on a charge of possession of gelignite. He was sentenced to six months imprisonment.

**An Craoibhín Aoibhinn:** A report of May 17 had him honoured at a dinner in the Gresham Hotel at which 200 guests were present, with Una Ní Fhaircheallaigh presiding. Dúbhglas de h-Íde was on the point of returning to *Ratra*, Co. Roscommon, unaware that another role would open for him.

**The Tram and Bus Strike Ended** in Dublin after 76 days, by a three to one vote.

**The Largest Russian Plane** crashed, as reported May 20, while taking part in an air display, with the loss of 48 lives. It was caused by striking a small plane crossing its path.

**Rúairí Ó Drisceoil**, at a Coiste Gnotha meeting of Connradh, proposed a good will resolution in favour of Con Ó Liathain, a member, in jail. It was lost on a casting vote. Peadar Mac Aindriú put forward also a resolution condemning the imprisonment of Republicans. Supported by Liam Ó Luanaigh and Fionán Breathnach it failed by seven votes to six. 'Cú Uladh', Peadar Mac Fionnlaoich, later F.F senator, declared that the I.R.A should not expect Connradh to fight their battle.

**S.F. To Decide:** Sinn Féin announced on May 21 that they would summon a Convention to decide whether the party should put forward an abstentionist candidate for the Galway by-election.

**Abysinnia:** Rumour was rife that Italy was about to invade after many border incidents with Eritrea; then an Italian colony.

**Lawrence of Arabia:** Anglo Irishman 'T. E Shaw', originally from Killua Castle, Co. Westmeath, died following a motor cycle accident on May 21, in Dorset. He had swerved to avoid two young cyclists who survived.

**Britain to Treble Its Air Force:** Stanley Baldwin, Lord President of the Council, announced in the Commons on May 22, that Britain would treble its air strength in order to counter Germany.

**Tickets Seized:** Tickets, in an Óglaigh Derby draw were seized by police from 12 St. Andrew Street, and from a depot in Dame Street.

**Sent For Trial:** Arising from the siege of their home on Botanic Road, on the order of Under-Sheriff Sherlock, 'Sceilg' and his two sons, on remand in Mountjoy, were sent for trial.

**Diesel Rail Cars:** Struggling against rising costs, the Great Northern Railway, announced that it would introduce diesel rail cars on some branch lines, and these would be built at its works in Dundalk.

**Awards Against Gardaí:** A Blueshirt plaintiff was at this time in the court in Westport awarded £75 against a Superintendent for wrongful arrest in December

1933. In Dublin. Justice O'Byrne awarded £200 to another plaintiff on a similar complaint.

**Archbishop Clune:** Clare born Irishman, of Perth, Western Australia, who had been involved from December 1, 1920, through David Lloyd George, in seeking peace for Ireland, and uncle of Conor Clune, killed a fortnight earlier in Dublin Castle, died in Perth, aged 71, on May 24.

**Sean Lester,** Northern Protestant, nationalist and two years League of Nations Commissioner, in the free city of Danzig, and now under pressure from its Nazi dominated Senate, was promised, in a report of May 25 'full support' by the Council of the League.

**France:** Panic buying of across-the-counter gold foretold that France would soon be forced off the gold standard; the gold support being 25 per cent of the currency. Next day, May 28, the government, to save the franc and remain with gold, introduced a restrictive bill, but that also was to fail within days.

**Brian O'Higgins,** addressing an *aeridheacht* in his native county, at Mullaghea, near Ceannanus, paid special tribute to the Fianna troop present. You have been 25 years in existence, he told them, and in that time you have never strayed from the path of independence. Fianna Éireann was founded by Constance Markievicz in 1909.

**Michael Sullivan,** of Headford, Co. Kerry, was reported on May 29, sentenced to six months by the Tribunal for participating in a raid on a Volunteer's home in the locality.

**Two League of Youth men,** James Cronin and John J. Creed, were arrested on May 28, and brought to the barracks in Fermoy.

**New Constitution:** President De Valera, speaking in An Dáil on the estimates for the President's office, announced that a draft of a new Constitution would shortly be laid before them.

**West Clare:** The County Council, on May 29, sought that the Great Southern Railway company and the government would provide £100,000 to widen the narrow guage system from Ennis to Kilkee.

**Italy** moving towards invading Abyssinia, and with one million already under arms, announced the call-up of another 200,000.

**League of Youth:** 18 associates of the Blueshirt group were charged in Kilmallock with riot on March 17, when General Sean Mac Eoin T.D visited the town.

**I.R.A Sweep:** The Tribunal, on May 30, ordered the closure and sealing of four premises associated with the Sweep; *An Phoblacht*, at 12 St. Andrew Street, Cumann na mBan H.Q. a shop premises in Dame Street and 44 Parnell Square. P. J. Rutledge, Minister for Justice, intimated that if he could be assured they were no longer in use for sweep purposes, he would permit them to reopen.

**The Galway Sword and Mace** were sold on May 30 in London, by Louis Wine, antique dealer, for £5,000. The Corporation, in 1932, had tried to raise £6,000 to purchase the symbols, but could not.

**France:** The government collapsed on May 30, following the defeat of its bill aimed at saving the franc.

**Sweep Raid:** Special Branch men raided Weaver's Hall, Coombe, forcing a barricaded door, where a sweep draw was in progress, and seized the drum. All of the prizes, with the exception of three, had been distributed. Present were, Mrs. Brugha, who had opened the draw at 9 p.m. with Count Plunkett, Jerome Riordan, Mrs. Twomey and a dozen others. Sean Russell, on the run, had slipped away.

**College Green Meeting:** On the same evening, May 30, at College Green, two processions converged, with two bands, to a meeting of prisoner protest, attended by two thousand. Chaired by Peadar Kearney, Helena Moloney, speaking for Cumann na mBan, denied that the organisation had sent a deputation to Minister Ruttledge. The meeting was addressed also by Mary Mac Swiney, Maud Gonne and Peadar Mac Andriú.

**Winston Churchill speaking in the house of Commons:** 'we are entering a period of darkening danger', in a speech directed against Germany.

**Bodenstown:** A large newspaper advertisement on June 1, listed trains from all parts for travellers on June 23.

**Prof. Alfred O'Rahilly,** visiting from Cork University on June 1, in support of Professor James Hogan of U.I.P./F.G, and early supporter of the Blueshirts, raised the spectre of communism in Ireland. The two were long joined in a witch hunt after a non-existent enemy. Peadar O'Donnell, three days later, in a vigorous letter reply, drew attention to the Free State Army service of Hogan in the Civil War of 1922 and 1923.

**Abyssinia:** A report carried on June 4, told of a mixed body of 30 Eritrean subjects and Italian police, dead in a border clash with Abyssinia, on May 31.

'**Sceilg**', with sons **John L**, and **Mortimer**, was found guilty, on June 3, in the Circuit Court before Judge Cahir Davitt, with obstructing a court messenger sent by Sheriff Sherlock to recover tax said to amount to £15. They were each sentenced to six months, and amid scenes, were forcibly removed from the dock.

**John Mulhern**, a County Armagh man, was fined 40 shillings for possessing an I.R.A Sweep book.

**France:** The government under M. Bouisson fell on June 4. It was the eighteenth government in six years.

**Trawler Arrested:** The Free State defence vessel, *Muirchú*, arrested June 4, an English trawler near Bantry. As *Helga*, it had shelled Liberty Hall in Easter Week.

**Charged at Court in Longford** on June 4, were four Republicans, Pat Forde, Frank Mc Glynn, Pat Morrow and Tom Quinn, of Drumlish and Ballinalee. Membership, and unlawful assembly at Edgeworthstown on April 24, were alleged against them.

**Ex-C.I.D Chief Col. David Neligan**, accused of Civil War misdeeds in Kerry, married Miss S. Rogan of Finglas.

**The Privy Court in London**, on June 6, upheld De Valera's contention that the Irish Free State was empowered under the Treaty, and the Statute of Westminster, to abolish appeals from judgements of the Dublin Supreme Court to His Majesty in Council. The case had arisen from an appeal in 1932/33 by the Erne Fishery Board. The judgement was a blow to persons in the U.I.P./F.G leadership who contended that removing Privy Council appeal would breach the Treaty. The Free State government was not represented.

**Sinn Féin** decided that they would not contest the approaching Galway by-election.

**London:** Ramsay Mac Donald, formerly Labour, resigned on June 7, and was succeeded by Stanley Baldwin, Conservative.

**Tom Murphy** of Irishtown, Dublin, was sentenced on June 7 to two years for shooting at Garda Egan at St. Stephen's Green on May 11.

**Jack Fitzsimons**, Mc Guinness Square, and Tom Mc Grattan of James Street, were put back. The charges arose from tram strike activity.

**Thomas Mackey** of Dundalk had a tablet unveiled to his memory in St. Patrick's Cemetery, Dundalk. Mackey was killed in action in Dublin; dying of wounds in Jervis Street Hospital on July 2, 1922.

**Slabs Were Unveiled in Limerick** to Tom Slattery, accidentally shot in 1922; to Volunteers Michael Downey, shot by Tans in the city, May 1921; and to Volunteer John Collopy, who was fatally burned in an attack upon an R.I.C. barrack early in 1921.

**Will Not Vote:** Maud Gonne, at Cathal Brugha Street, on June 9, declared that she would not vote in the forthcoming Co. Dublin election; advising her listeners to follow her example by not voting. Alec Lynn, B.L., also spoke.

**Pádraic Ó Conaire:** His statue, by Albert Power, was unveiled in Eyre Square, Galway, on June 9, by De Valera, in the run up to a by-election there.

**O'Duffy Congress:** 500 attended, June 9, a Congress of his National Corporative Party, a shade only removed from his Blueshirts, and now into a fifth change of name. Elected Director-General, he announced that he would adopt the 1916 Proclamation as the basic policy of their Party. He believed that many in the I.R.A. were sincere republicans, but the U.I.P. did not even pretend to have any national ideals; it was a Party that had been imposed and financed from Britain. The N.C.P. would retain the Blueshirt, but with a green tie instead of the regulation black tie.

**Cows Shot:** Eight cows, belonging to an F.F. supporter, were found shot dead in a field near Kanturk. Telegraph wires were cut over a wide area on June 10.

**Industrialisation:** It was announced that the F.F. tariff programme had resulted so far in the creation of 300 industries since 1932.

**Fr. O'Flanagan** at Cathal Brugha Street, on June 11, advised his audience that it would be important to have the living republic already in place before declaring a republic. In this he appears to have been at one with De Valera.

**Jack Fitzsimons**, noted already on a charge of wounding a garda (Special Branch), was sentenced by the Tribunal to ten years. His companion, Tom Mc Grattan, on a minor charge, received six months.

**Belfast:** After an afternoon meeting on June 12, called by the Protestant League for the Custom House steps, hundreds of men swarmed through the streets waving Union Jacks. Stones were thrown at shop windows and houses; the police declaring themselves powerless. Every window in the Labour Party offices at Frederick Street was broken.

**Parnell Square:** Men at work downstairs in No. 11, which was formerly the Fowler Memorial Orange Hall, but at this time in use by a post office department, uncovered a hoard of rifles and ammunition concealed since the 1914 period.



**Peace by Ordeal:** This important work on the behind-the-scenes Treaty negotiations, by Frank Pakenham, later Lord Longford, was reviewed in the *Irish Press* of June 14.

**Resumption of Belfast Pogrom:** Armoured cars appeared on some Belfast streets on June 14, when an Orange band returned, drunken, from Glasgow; the armoured cars being employed to regulate and direct a stone throwing rabble led by the band. The crowd threw stones freely into the small Catholic streets off Great Georges Street. In the York Street area shots were fired, defensively it was thought, by Catholics.

**A Shipyard Closes:** Belfast's second shipyard, Workman Clarke's, announced its forthcoming closure. On the north bank of the Lagan, some of the force were offered absorption into the Harland and Wolffe yard on Queen's Island.

**Belfast:** Catholic mill girls were fired upon on Sunday, May 16, emerging from Mass at St. Mary's church, and around St. Joseph's.

**F.F. at Bodenstown:** A select group, led by De Valera, brought Fianna Fáil to Tone's grave where they were addressed by Sean Lemass.

**Belfast:** The newspapers of June 18 spoke of Catholics living in the small streets around York Street and North Queen Street, being in a state of siege, caused by intermittent rifle and revolver fire.

**Cecil Lavery S.C** won County Dublin for U.I.P./E.G in a by-election, thus holding the seat.

**Lough Foyle:** In the long running dispute over fishery rights in this large sea inlet, the British patrol boat *Doon*, rammed the nets of fishermen out from Moville. An agreement on these rights would be reached in the fifties.

**Dromod:** In an action, aimed evidently by local Republicans against the *Irish Press*, a tree was felled across the railway line near Dromod causing an early morning newspaper train to stop. Bales of the paper were then removed. A similar action was taken against a lorry carrying the paper days earlier.

**Edgeworthstown Settlement:** As a follow-up to the public protest and the affray in *Lisard*, a meeting held in the Four Courts resulted in a settlement whereby tenants rents were reduced by 25 per cent.

**Belfast:** R.U.C were raiding homes in the York Street area around June 20. Meanwhile Sir Dawson Bates, Minister for Home Affairs, was receiving a deputation from the Protestant League.

**Galway By-Election:** Fianna Fáil held this seat with Eamon Corbett.

**Belfast:** James Matthews of Devonshire Street was charged, on June 21, with holding up a lorry and assisting in burning 4000 copies of the *Irish Press*.

**Constable Fannin**, in evidence, stated that he had brought Matthews on the previous Wednesday to Cullentree Road barracks.

**Belfast:** Due to the prevailing tensions, doubts had arisen whether there should be major Orange parades in the Belfast area on the twelfth of July.\* These however were dispelled by an announcement on June 24, by Sir Joseph Davidson, County Grand Master, that, yes, Orangemen would march in Belfast on the Twelfth.

\* In the June, July, August period there have always been some thousands of lesser parades.

**Bodenstown Sunday, June 23:** The numbers at this assembly, a fine weather Sunday, 'the last great Bodenstown', are given in Republican mythology as 30,000. The newspapers at this time, with government turned against the I.R.A., were committed to dampen down the numbers; hence references were made to ten thousand marching. Since 4,500 arrived by train to Sallins station, and there were over fifty buses, together with car transport, bicycle and foot; the likely numbers, between onlookers and those marching, was probably around 17,000,

Chaired by Chief of Staff, Maurice Twomey, the assembly was addressed by Sean Mac Bride, who then introduced Pádraig Mac Logan, followed by Tomás Ó Maoileóin. Before reaching the graveyard fisticuffs broke out with a small section of Republican Congress supporters accompanied by a group under William Mc Mullen from Belfast. They were displaying 'unauthorised banners'; members of the Tipperary contingent intervened, as they had been instructed to do, whereupon the group fell out and returned to Sallins. There was a thousand in attendance at a *céilí* in the Mansion House that night; some of those participating having marched in formation from Hueston Station.

**Dr. Tom Bodkin**, addressing a meeting in Trinity College, advocated the creation of a department of Fine Arts.\* Such a body could assist in marketing Ireland abroad. He criticised severely the administration of the National Museum and the National Gallery.

**Clonakilty:** John L. Sullivan, from that area, was charged on June 25 at the Tribunal with having set fire to the home of P. Murphy T.D, Fianna Fáil, and with having attempted to set fire also to the home of Martin Corry, another Fianna Fáil T.D, in the same district.

**Belfast:** Minister for Home Affairs, Sir Dawson Bates, announced that he was removing all restrictions on Orangemen parading 'in view of the good order prevailing'.

**Unionists to Control Omagh:** Arising from a 'pure gerrymander' following a Stormont inquiry, Nationalist representation on Omagh Urban Council would be reduced while Unionists would be put in control. The number of Catholics there being 3159 to 1964 Protestants.

**France:** Paris announced on June 28 the government's intention to procure more aircraft and more artillery.

**W.B. Yeats:** For his seventieth birthday a literary reception was held in his honour on June 27 at the Royal Hibernian Hotel, in Dawson Street. Among the 1200 there to pay tribute were, Desmond Mc Carthy, critic; novelist Seán Ó Faoláin; historian Louis Le Roux with Oliver St. John Gogarty. W.B. Yeats is Ireland's greatest living poet, declared Lord Longford.

**Spain** at this time was in a state of seige, with trouble acute in Barcelona. Conditions would become progressively worse until the outbreak of its Civil War in July 1936.

**An Phoblacht Suspends:** The weekly paper announced indefinite suspension in the press of June 29. For the organisation it was another notch downwards. A statement from Maurice Twomey and Sean Mac Bride blamed 'the Southern Irish executive for their constant seizures and intimidation'.

\* Under the first Dáil, Count Plunkett had held that post. As a Renaissance scholar he was qualified for it.

**CHRONOLOGY: THE YEAR 1935: JULY - DECEMBER:**

**John L. Sullivan**, Blueshirt activist of Clonakilty, was sentenced to five years by the Tribunal, in a report of July 1; for burning or attempting to burn the homes of two F.F.T.D's. Sullivan was obviously aggrieved, since the government was seizing cattle to enforce payment of the half annuity. On hearing the sentence he raised his right arm in salute.

**Sir John Lavery**, widowed, and at this time living in the countryside of Kilmoganny, Co. Kilkenny, at the end of July presented the Dublin Municipal Gallery (now Hugh Lane) with 33 of his paintings. On current values they could exceed £3.5 m.

**More-O'Ferrall Trial:** The four, Mulligan, Shanley and the two Reynolds', transferred from the District Court, appeared on June 28 at the Central Criminal Court in Dublin.

**Belfast:** Three men were shot, when a mob following an Orange band attempted to invade Millfield, a small Catholic enclave near York Street. Had they been successful the terrace houses would quickly have been set alight by igniting the gas main at its point of entry. The defenders in this case were probably I.R.A, although the I.R.A rarely claimed such actions.

**Mike Leonard of Windy Arbour**, with Edward Grant of nearby Milltown, were each sentenced to eighteen months by the Tribunal on June 20.

**Co. Roscommon:** Patrick Duke of Elphin and John Moran of Croghan, appeared before the Tribunal on June 2 on a charge of possessing a Thompson sub machine gun, concealed in his hayshed; and a revolver hidden in the thatch of his house. As soldiers of the I.R.A, we refuse to recognise the court, each said. Moran was sentenced to six months, and Duke to three.

**More-O'Ferrall Trial:** This simple tar and feather action, as it was intended to be, had already run and run in the local court and would continue to do so in Dublin, and would soon be prolonged further by a jury disagreement. The published evidence of July 2, gives considerable detail, with daughter Marjorie identifying the four in the dock, and describing the five person dinner party precisely. Her identification was however challenged in later evidence. Three were attired as gardaí; father Gerald grappled with one, and was joined by Richard, whereupon up to six shots were fired by the leader; one proving fatal later for Richard.

**Belfast:** Tension was reported from interface streets as mobs, accompanied by drummers, roamed the city.

**Dublin's National Gallery:** Dr. George Furlong was appointed Director on July 4.

**Eoin O'Duffy** was reported at this time speaking at Higginstown, Co. Kilkenny, for his National Corporate Party, where he was greeted by a guard of honour of Blueshirts adorned with green ties.

**Potassium Chlorate** when mixed with other substances produces an effective explosive. On the night of July 4, at Sir John Rogerson's Quay, close to Tara Street, a car, which later proved to be stolen, pulled up, and, what an onlooker described as a pretty girl, emerged, and with a man, removed three hundredweight drums of the substance, placing them into the car which then drove off. The car was later found abandoned at Kimmage Road, three miles off. It belonged to Mrs. Cathal Brugha,

and had been taken from Gardiner Place.

**Ex-Empress Zita** of Austria-Hungary, returned at this time to reside there; the Diet having withdrawn the law of 1920 banishing the Hapsburgs.

**Belfast:** Annadale Street, off the Antrim Road, was reported invaded by a threatening mob.

**Dundalk:** For the unfortunate house explosion of February 11, 1934, five went on trial before the Tribunal on July 11. The target evidently was the son of the house; then in the Free State Army and said to be an active Blueshirt; although on that particular day in question, he was collecting for his party, the U.I.P./F.G, and was in the local Hibernian Hall, when a small mine, pushed through a downstairs window, demolished the entire front wall, causing the man's mother, Mrs. Jos Mc Grory, to die five weeks later from heart failure. On trial, but not recognising the Tribunal, were Richard Murphy, Richard Goss and Thomas Walsh, with two who were represented, Eamon Coffey and James Finnegan. All five were later acquitted.

**More-O'Ferrall:** The defence, at this time, had opened in the trial.

**Belfast:** As was customary, enormous Orange bonfires were alight on the Twelfth eve in every loyalist street of the city.

**Belfast:** Police were engaging snipers with machine guns. The count was two dead with 50 wounded. The York Street area was described as no mans land. This latest major outbreak occurred when a band returned from Scotland and stones were exchanged.\*

**More-O'Ferrall:** The Dublin jury disagreed on July 12, and, although sent back, could not reach agreement. A retrial was directed for November.

**Dundalk Trial:** Mr. Kingsmill Moore, S.C, for the defence, contended that the five accused should be tried by the Central Criminal Court and not by the Tribunal.

**Belfast:** The death toll was mounting, while the troubled streets were extending, with mobs roaming nightly. At this time there were five dead and 70 wounded. Nelson Street, North Ann Street and Earl Street, all in the York Street area, had been invaded, and Catholic homes burned.

**Giles Quay:** An I.R.A training camp on the Carlingford peninsula, ten miles east of Dundalk, was raided by police and Special Branch, on July 14, and 12 of those present arrested. The arrests by the Free State authorities were particularly inappropriate with the brothers, sisters, and parents of the youths being burned out in Belfast at this time\*\*

**Fermoy:** A report from there, of July 15, told of 300 farmers, wives and daughters attempting to rush the pound, which was inside the military barracks, while a forced sale was proceeding.

**Belfast:** 'B' Specials were reported firing at snipers defending their neighbourhoods; while mob rioting had spread to streets outside the curfew area.

**Macroom:** Different, and indeed praiseworthy, tactics were being employed by the farmer groups demonstrating against cattle seizures by the authorities. Contrary

\* See *Holy War in Belfast*, by Andrew Boyd.

\*\* A demonstration by Dundalk Republicans outside Ann Street on that evening ended up in a running battle with police.

to popular belief these were rarely from 'big ranchers' but from middle size farms; the seizures frequently leaving them impoverished. In Macroom, on July 16, the female fraternity banded to demonstrate against the seizures. Wives, daughters and a few sons crowded into a meeting in the Square.

**Italy:** In anticipation of war, 50,000 young men were called up.

**The Giles Quay men** were at this time lodged in Mountjoy, prior to appearing at the Tribunal.

**Portadown:** Anti-Catholic blackguardism persisted in Portadown. School children returning from an excursion to Warrenpoint, identifiable by their uniforms, were attacked leaving the station. Later houses around Obin Street were stoned on July 16.

**Belfast:** Trouble continued, extending into the centre; shop windows being smashed in Royal Avenue and in York Street. Homes deserted by Catholics from Library Street were fired.

**Letterkenny:** A revenge outbreak occurred here, when five Protestant shops had windows smashed overnight and five cars were set alight inside a garage owned by a Protestant, after which two men were arrested. The action was promptly condemned by the Vocational Committee, Rev. J. O'Doherty P.P, Canon Meredith and Neil Blaney T.D.

**Belfast:** The Ulster Protestant League was calling for the withdrawal of British soldiers and their replacement by 'B' Specials. On July 17, the government mobilised the Specials, although the small number of British troops engaged were not withdrawn. Fighting was now prevalent in widely separated areas.

**George Russell, AE,** died at Bournemouth on July 17 aged 68. Poet, artist, and farming economist; his passing was universally regretted.

**Belfast:** Catholic families fleeing the small streets between Shankill and Falls saw their furniture dragged into the street and burned. The families took refuge in a hundred unfinished houses in the Ardoyne. But the nightly disorders continued, here and in Portadown, where shots were fired and one person was killed. In Dublin, Senators Milroy and Cunnihan of U.I.P./F.G called upon the government to press London for action.

**Dundalk:** In the Mrs. Jos Mc Grory case before the Tribunal, the five men were acquitted of the main charge and had a *nolle prosequi* entered against them by the prosecution at the end of a five day hearing. In a careful summing up the President concluded; 'we are not satisfied that guilt has been brought home to the accused.... accordingly, we acquit the five'. Finnegan was already serving a sentence in Arbour Hill.

**Belfast:** *The Irish Press* of July 19 carried a photograph of a small corner shop and houses running from it, on the corner of Connolly and Forth Street; wrecked by loyalists, although not yet set on fire.

**Lord Craigavon** on July 20 was in London meeting the Premier, Stanley Baldwin. 'The mission has no connection with the current disorders', a statement said. Catholic working girls in Gallaher's huge tobacco factory in York Street, and in the Belfast Collar Co. were warned by their work mates that they must leave.

**Albina Broderick:** Protestant and sister of the Earl of Midleton, writing from

Castlecove, Co. Kerry, condemned 'the lapse into savagery of my fellow Protestants of Belfast'.

**Belfast**, where nine were now dead and nearly a hundred injured, saw the disorders extend further each day. South of the Lagan, the Newtownards Road was involved, with outbreaks also in Saul Street and Bryson Street.

**Outbreaks in Free State:** Windows in Limerick city and Clones were smashed overnight on July 21. In Limerick, windows in Trinity Church, the Diocesan hall and the home of the Young Mens Christian Association were broken. In Clones, the Masonic Hall was burned, and two other halls were damaged.

**Buriel of A.E.** George Russell was brought home to Plunkett House on Merrion Square, and on July 21, buried in Mount Jerome Cemetery; where the oration was delivered by Frank O'Connor, with W.B. Yeats, F.R. Higgins, Osborne Bergin, Senator St. John Gogarty and much of the litteratai of Ireland in attendance.

**Italy:** Mussolini plans an empire in Africa, ran the headline, where Italy had long control over Libya, Eritrea and Somaliland; territories that, although sparsely populated, aggregated to more than twelve times the area of the home country. 'I think for Italy', he declared, 'as the great English man who made the British Empire, thought for Britain'.

**Belfast:** After the normal two week holiday which prevails in the Six Counties over the twelfth period, Catholic workers found that, in many cases, they now had no work to go to. Sporadic shootings continued nightly from both sides.

**More Outbreaks in Free State:** The Protestant church in Kilmallock was burned overnight on July 22, while windows in the local rectory, and in some houses, were broken. Damage was suffered by the church in Trim, while the Masonic Hall in Ceannanus was burned.

**Italy:** It was announced on July 23, that Italy had abandoned the gold standard; up to this the lire had a forty per cent coverage.

**Belfast:** Presiding over an inquest, Coroner T.E. Alexander blamed inflammatory speeches by so-called leaders of public opinion in high and responsible positions.

**Nationalist M.P's:** J.F. Stewart and Cahir Healy, met Sir John Simon, British Home Secretary, at Westminster; the government there however adopting a policy of total non-interference. Emerging, Stewart declared to journalists that the root of the trouble lay with some Stormont Ministers urging Protestants not to employ Catholics.

**The National Corporate Party** of O'Duffy was now listed at 19 Middle Abbey Street; having moved from Pearse Street.

**200 Million Germans:** Aodh de Blacam had an article in the *Irish Press* of July 24 on the threat he perceived from the existence of 200 million Germans spreading over the boundaries of other nations; and hence the threat that could arise if Hitler sought to bring them within the German Reich.

**Belfast:** The Great York Street Mill closed temporarily, when a hundred returning Catholic workers were refused admittance on July 25.

**Boyle:** An attempt was made to burn the local Methodist church.

**Goolds Cross:** Shots were fired into two local Protestant homes; no serious damage being done.

**Croagh Patrick:** 25,000 climbed the Reek on Sunday, July 28.

**Quiet Weekend:** Belfast was reported as having had a quiet weekend.

**Italy:** 35 women workers died in an accident in a munitions factory at Taino, northern Italy.

**Liverpool Cathedral:** Sir Edwin Lutyens, the architect, who had already expressed a wish to use Wicklow granite in the great edifice, was reported as still hoping to do so, and would be in Dublin on a coming weekend. Tariffs entering England threatened this.

**Home Grown Wheat:** Success was attending the drive to produce an Irish loaf; 70,000 acres were now under wheat. The policy would prove a life saver later.

**Belfast:** Catholic workers returning to the docks and the shipyards were finding their jobs already filled.

**Cork City:** The Dunlop tyre factory had commenced production, with over 200 employed.

**Arklow Pottery:** Cups and saucers were being produced here, where 200 were employed.

**League's Last Chance** ran the headline. Italy being now intent upon the total annexation of Abyssinia.

**The Giles Quay Case:** 12 I.R.A men were sentenced by the Tribunal on July 30 for unlawful assembly and unauthorised possession of arms when 34 Branch and gardai raided the Carlingford Peninsula encampment, with its six bell tents and smaller tents. The 12 were; Charlie Leddy, O.C, Seán Mac Con Uladh, Billy Mulholland, Brian Burns, Sean O'Hara, John Brown, George Broderick, Billy Rice, Peter Doherty, Pat O'Hara, Jim Harvey and Liam O'Connor. Each received a sentence of two years. Much of it would be served in solitary confinement.

**Berlin Olympics 1936:** A Catholic U.S weekly at this time was calling for their country to boycott the forthcoming Olympic Games. It was not to happen.

**Refugee Camp Closes:** The Belfast refugee camp that for four weeks had functioned in Mac Rory Park, closed on the last day of July. There was not a house to be had in the Falls area where many families had to share.

**Capt. D. Quish,** of Galbally, Co. Limerick, was sentenced, July 31, at the Tribunal to twelve months for Blueshirt membership, obstruction of the law, and advising non-payment of annuities.

**Mrs. Kathleen Clarke,** on August 5, donated a valuable collection of Fenian memorabilia to the National Museum. Included was Tom Clarke's Freedom of the City of Limerick scroll, of February 23, 1899, received after his release in October 1898 from Portland, inscribed; 'in recognition of his outstanding services in the cause of Ireland and of the suffering endured by him in English prisons over a period of fifteen and a half years'. Like other Irish felons he had spent time in a number of English prisons, but principally in Millbank, and for a long period in Chatham.

**Belfast:** A largely attended public meeting in St. Mary's Hall called for a public inquiry into the origins of the recent riots. It would not be heeded.

**Cork Express:** The Great Southern's new all steel coach express, built at Inchicore, covered the journey in two hours and forty three minutes. As already noted, an express, Cork Dublin, did it in two hours and twenty seven minutes. The

only limitation in covering the journey in even less time, an engineer said, was the condition of the railroad itself.

**Germany:** In the first of many future expulsions, all Jews in the small Bavarian Spa of Bad Toelz, were expelled from there on August 3.

**Poulaphouca Scheme:** The 1925 concept of Sir John Purser Griffith, and engineer L.T. Kettle, was at last being looked at seriously. As a major reservoir it would generate also electric power, and was estimated to cost one million.

**Belfast:** Republicans Frank Coogan of Baker Street, and Dan Toner of Christian Place, after a jury acquittal, were re-arrested under Special Powers, and interned.

**John B. Hoey,** carrying 150 rounds of .303 rifle ammunition in the Old Lodge Road, told Head Constable Kenny when stopped, that the parcel contained a pair of boots.

**Donegal:** The renowned Church of the Four Masters, with its round tower, of Mountcharles stone, was completed at this time.

**Abyssinia:** Desperate to stave off invasion, Abyssinia was reported on August 12, offering Italy the Ogaden province in exchange for a seaport for the land locked-country, and a loan. Ogaden adjoined Somaliland, on the south east flank of the country.

**Derry:** The annual march of thousands of Apprentice Boys; namely old and young besashed Orangemen, raised tensions on Saturday, August 11, when stones were thrown from the walls, and there were answering volleys from the Bogside below.

**'Silver Tassie':** After a refusal years before, the Abbey Theatre ran the O'Casey play at this time. It was to meet with severe criticism, and would not be revived for many years.

**Kilmallock:** Three men were returned for trial for the church burning. Persons were prosecuted in almost all of the other cases noted earlier.

**Tom Barry Released:** Returning by train on August 12, he was welcomed at Mallow, and at Kent Station, Cork; where he was borne shoulder high.

**Parnell Square Tragedy:** 9 Parnell Square, the first floor of which was occupied by the Sinn Féin rooms, was seriously damaged by fire on August 18. Apart from multi-use occupancy in the lower floors, 16 persons lived above; two of these, Mrs. Higgins and her daughter, Anne, being associated with Sinn Féin. Failing to escape, their bodies were recovered the next day.

**Belfast:** Curfew ended on August 18, while riot trials proceeded.

**Béal na Bláth:** Chaired by Col.J.P. Coughlan, General O'Duffy spoke, with 3000, accompanied by bands, in attendance.

**Gold Near Woodenbridge:** A prolonged Dáil inquiry into mining leases was proceeding. A photograph of August 19 showed gold prospectors already at work there.

**Frank Gallagher:** It was announced on August 20 that Frank Gallagher was being posted in charge of Free State radio. In 1919 he had been head of publicity in Sinn Féin, and had edited its *Irish Bulletin*. Since 1931 he had been Editor in Chief of the *Irish Press*. A close confidant of De Valera, he would be in charge of censorship in the Emergency years.



**Will Rogers:** U.S. humorist, and Wiley Post, airman, were reported lost in the Arctic wastes.

**Blueshirt Conference:** As League of Youth, the U.I.P./F.G. wing of the organisation met in the Mansion House at the weekend of August 24. The purpose was a drastic winding down of the powers of Commdt. Cronin who would no longer be permitted to appoint central office staff. It was a case of the politicians taking back control, prior to consigning the organisation to the dust bin of history. Supported by Senator Blythe, Tom Lenehan of Cork in seconding, hoped that 'the pomps of power will not ruin Mr Cronin, as it has ruined the last Director General'.

**Belfast:** Patrick Boyle of Rodney Parade, and Patrick Mc Grath of Rodney Drive, for their misdemeanours, had been kidnapped by the I.R.A. On Sunday morning, August 25, they were found chained to the railings of St. Paul's Church.

**'Silver 'Tassie':** Rev. M.H. Gaffney, of Galway Catholic Young Mens' Society, spoke, condemning the Abbey production. It lowered the prestige of the nation. Brinsley Mac Namara, one of the Directors, declared himself as not having been in favour of producing *Tassie*; adding, however, that he had succeeded in preventing the production of 'an even worse' O'Casey play, *Within the Gates*.

**Geneva Crisis:** De Valera departed for London on September 3, accompanied by Frank Aiken and son Vivion. An Irish crowd cheered them at Euston. Two days later the Italian delegates walked out of the meeting.

**Poulaphouca Scheme:** It was rejected on economic grounds by the E.S.B. at this time, although in a short while the Board would agree to co-operate and to share costs.

**Drumquin, Co. Tyrone:** Peter Morris and his wife, of Cornacarra, were found on September 8, chained to the railings of the church.

**The Noel Lemass Cross** was unveiled on Cruagh Mountain (the 'Featherbed'), on September 8, in the presence of some hundreds, including his parents. Seamus Gibbons and Seamus Rigney, of Fianna Fáil gave the address.

**Governor Huey Long,** the controversial 'dictator' of Louisiana, was assassinated by a gunman in the State Legislature at Baton Rouge, on September 9.

**Forecast of Change:** Speaking to Fianna Fáil in Wynn's Hotel, Sean Lemass forecast many changes arising from the new Constitution being drafted. The national objective, he told them, was now at last in sight.

**O'Duffy:** The General at this time was reported attending an international fascist congress in Geneva.

**Dublin Theatres:** It was announced that the magnificent Theatre Royal would shortly open. Meanwhile, the Abbey Theatre sought to amalgamate with the Gate, but the Gate refused.

**Germany:** It was announced that the Swastika was now adopted as the national flag. Jews, or persons of Jewish blood, would no longer be permitted to marry Germans.

**Belfast:** Henry Healy of Cavehill Road, was found on September 15, tarred and chained to the railings of St. Peter's Church, Donegall Street; a daylight action witnessed by hundreds.

**Ballsbridge:** The Free State Army staged this week in the grounds of the Royal

Dublin Society, a military tattoo which included a pageant of the bombardment and burning of the G.P.O. 1916. Braving the rain, 18,000 saw it on its opening night, while 104,000 attended over the six days.

**Sir John Lavery**, who had already donated 33 of his valuable paintings to Dublin, was on September 17, made a Freeman of the City of Dublin.

**Twomey Challenge:** J.J. O'Reilly, National President of the American Association for the Recognition of an Irish Republic, had been reported stating that there were no political prisoners in Ireland. His Association, however, was for long linked to Fianna Fáil. Maurice Twomey answered him on September 20; denouncing his statement as 'a malignant falsehood'. There are 40 in Arbour Hill as well as a number jailed by Craigavon, he said.

**Trade:** The government had imposed a seventy five per cent duty on sports goods; this resulted in the manufacture here of rackets, cricket bats and hockey sticks.

**Belfast:** There were renewed anxieties by Catholics living in exposed areas, following the shooting dead of John Mc Kiernan, owner of the Glen Bar, in Great Georges Street, behind his counter on the Saturday night of September 21. There were pointers to R.U.C involvement.

**The National Graves Association** on Sunday, September 22, unveiled a stone in Dr. Steeven's Hospital to Volunteer Sean Owens and Peter Wilson, killed near there, during Easter Week.

**League of Nations:** What was dubbed as the League's final crisis, was now emerging, with clear indications that Italy was about to invade.

**Belfast:** Mrs. Mc Gahey, a Catholic married to a Protestant, living near York Street, was shot at her door; critically injured, she was taken to the Mater Hospital.

**Theatre Royal:** The 4,000 seat theatre was opened on September 23, by Minister for Industry and Commerce, Sean Lemass.

**Inchicore:** Coinciding with the beet sugar drive which had required the building of rail rolling stock, the Great Southern Railways completed the building at this time in Inchicore of 50 lorries.

**Portlaw:** A new leather tannery employing 70, was opened at this time in Co. Waterford.

**Wicklow Gold:** At the continuing Dáil committee inquiry into the unexplained demise of the State's mineral rights, to which Robert Briscoe T.D was a party, Senator Comyn in evidence, on September 26, gave the mines a value of £17 m\*.

**To Contest Election:** At a College Green meeting on September 27, Sean Mac Bride, addressing a gathering of 1500, told them that steps were being taken to devise the best means of putting forward Republican candidates at the next election. With him upon the platform was Chief of Staff, Twomey, and Headquarter's men, Donal O'Donoghue, and Tomás Ó Maoleóin.

**Tallaght Cemetery:** Frank Daly unveiled a memorial here to James J. Carroll who, at the age of 17, had joined B. Company, Fourth Battalion, against the Tans. In the Civil War, he was shot and seriously wounded while in Free State custody, in Keogh Barracks, in 1923. His name has been omitted from *Last Post*

\*.In 1796 numbers of nuggets were found south of the Woodebridge area. This writer has seen gold panned there.

**Memel:** The disputed Lithuanian city on the border of East Prussia, was now under threat from Germany. Tension ran high preceding October, with Hitler visiting nearby Tannenberg, accompanied by Generals von Blomberg and Fritsch.

**Six County Transport:** The Stormont government, in a report of October 1, announced a transport bill which, in time, would not advance public transport but would cause its decline. The buses and lorries of the Great Northern, of the Belfast and Co. Down and of Northern Counties Committee (Antrim and Co. Derry) railways would be, in effect, confiscated, and would come under a Government Board. The Belfast Omnibus Company and Catherwood Bus - all properly run undertakings - would be delivered into the charge of a board.

**Republican Unity:** An unidentifiable organ, seemingly relating to the middle left, was at this time seeking, like married couples in a fall-out, to bring the parties together. Republican Congress, or the fragments thereof, loomed somewhere in the background, in a call that went out for Republican and Labour unity 'to break free from the shackles of the Treaty of 1921'. A demonstration was announced for College Green on October 7.

**Geneva: De Valera Home:** After almost one month in Switzerland, President De Valera, with Eamon and Vivion, shadowed at Dun Laoire by two Branch men, returned home on October 1.

**Gardaí Must Have Irish:** Col. Ned Broy, in an interview with the *Irish Press*, announced that, in future, garda recruits must be proficient in the Irish language.

**Abyssinia Invaded:** Italian troops, advancing cautiously, entered the country from Eritrea on October 2. There had been a menacing speech in Rome from Mussolini, where he failed however to announce invasion.

**Bulgaria:** A report spoke of a plot to dethrone King Boris. Martial law was imposed.

**Soldier's Song:** Author, Peadar Kearney, responding to a letter, and writing from 25 Donohue Street, Inchicore, complained that royalties had not been paid to him by U.S. regiment, the 69th, in their *Sons of Erin* recording, which included *Amhran na bFhian*.

**Abyssinia:** The invasion, now confirmed, was directed from Eritrea by High Commissioner General de Bono. The Council of the League was convened.

**Neutral:** All newspapers were now abounding with reports from the front. De Valera stated that the Irish Free State could not be committed in any way without the sanction of the Oireachtas.

**Republican Unity:** A conference, somewhat unreal, was reported on October 5, from London where Charlie Donnelly, later to die in Spain, chaired a roomful. The usual well trodden lines were touched upon; the small farmers must organise to confront the bankers; agricultural land should be derated; annuities and poor prices; agricultural workers should be organised in unions. Speaking for the Roger Casement Sinn Féin Club, Risteard Ó Boidléir stated that they would support any action which had, as its objective, a restoration of a 32 County Irish Republic. They would appoint a delegate to the Dublin demonstration.

**Jumping Team:** Eight horses of the Free State Army team were pictured, October 5, before their departure for New York.

**Arbour Hill:** Tom Mc Grattan, recently released, told of prisoners in solitary confinement for 18 weeks under O.C. Lehane. He and Charlie Leddy had been beaten for resisting a body search.

**Fresh From Geneva,** De Valera addressed, October 4, in Ennis, a meeting attended by 10,000, preceded by a parade which included five bands. On the platform with him were Hugo Flinn, Senators Comyn and Mc Parland, and Sean Brady.

**Sligo:** A pre-Celtic burial mound at Creevykeel was being excavated; its age was estimated at 4000 years.

**De Valera Returns to Geneva:** accompanied by Vivion and Frank Aiken, Minister for Defence. The party, on October 8, included also his personal secretary. Kathleen O'Connell, J.P. Walshe, Secretary of the Department, F.H. Boland and J.J. Hearne, Legal Adviser.

**Frank Mac Dermot:** U.I.P./F.G joint secretaries, W.T. Cosgrave and Frank Mac Dermot, clashed with each other on De Valera's stand at Geneva 'pledging support to Britain', as Mac Dermot interpreted it; although that would be strictly speaking incorrect. De Valera had recently stated that Dublin would not permit the Free State to be used as a base for an attack on Britain. Mac Dermot considered this undertaking worth to England many times the value of withheld annuities.

**Republican Unity:** The planned demonstration, which did not have any official stamp of support, took place in College Green on October 7, attended by around one thousand. On the platform were P. J. Gaffney, described as the general secretary of the United Farmers Protection Association; Barney Conway of the Workers' Union of Ireland; Frank Carpenter and a Mrs. O'Kelly; Peadar O'Donnell and Dr. J. Hannigan; Charlie Donnelly; J. Burke, of the Transport Union; P. Maguire of Port Workers' Union; Cú Uladh Mac Fhionnlaoch; with Frank Ryan presiding. Little more would be heard of this well intended effort; not being mainstream, it sank like a stone.

**Kilmainham Jail,** now derelict, was visited by 70 members of the Old Dublin Society.

**O'Duffy on U.I.P/Fine Gael:** Interviewed by the *Irish Press*, Eoin O'Duffy gave his opinion on the public disagreement that had arisen between Cosgrave and Mac Dermot. 'Mac Dermot', he said, 'having arrived into U.I.P from his Centre Party, was not of the old guard; he was one of the step children. Anyone in Fine Gael who expressed an opinion in conflict with the old Cumann na nGael party bosses, was not wanted'. He then went on to cite himself, Patrick Belton T.D, Mac Dermot himself, and James Dillon T.D. He inferred that there were other party members who might go in time.

**No Inquiry Into Belfast Riots:** Lord Craigavon in Stormont, to T.J. Campbell M.P, refused any inquiry into the recent troubles. The circumstances, he averred, are well known. Under the Government of Ireland Act 1920, responsibility for maintaining law and order in this part of the United Kingdom is a matter which falls within the sole competence of the Ulster government. The circumstances of the recent unfortunate disturbances are deep rooted among a certain section in our national life who are disloyal to the Throne and Constitution. My colleagues and I are fully satisfied with the efficiency and forbearance of our police force, including the 'B' Specials constabulary.

**British Labour Party:** George Lansbury, noted pacifist, resigned, October 8, the leadership of the Labour Party, which he had held since 1931; Major C.R. Attlee, deputy leader, was appointed.

**Sanctions:** Austria and Hungary announced that should sanctions be imposed by the League upon Italy, they would not enforce them. Their geographical and trading relationship was given as the principal reason.

**Belfast:** A news man, in a report of October 10, identified as a Catholic, attending a public meeting of the Ulster Protestant League being held in the Ulster Hall, was physically attacked, and had to be escorted to safety.

**Derry:** Councillor Gallagher, of the Unionist Party, complained that, to please Cardinal Mac Rory; 'if a disloyal Catholic meets with an accident', seven Protestants are jailed.

**Lithuania:** By election, the German party, won a majority in membership in the local Diet of the border city of Memel.

**Drogheda:** A youth was found chained to a pole on Marsh Road, on October 10, with a note affixed that he had been found guilty of destroying property belonging to the I.R.A. He had been arrested by them, and brought across the Boyne in a boat.

**Frank Mac Dermot, T.D.** announced his resignation from the United Ireland Party on October 11.

**Greece:** Royalist army officers staged a coup, forcing the government to resign. A Regent was appointed, with the longer term intention of restoring the monarchy.

**Erne Fishery Claim:** The salmon rights in the river and in the estuary into Donegal Bay, were claimed from the seventeenth century by the Erne Fishery Co, of which, Major R.J. Moore of Ballyshannon, was the local representative. Proceedings were now in train to test the company's case, initiated by the Attorney-General and a number of fishermen.

**Poulaphouca:** Before joining in the creation of Blessington Lake, with Dublin Corporation, the E.S.B. decided they would seek a further report from their Swiss expert.

**Wexford:** A factory for the production of springs, axles, wind screens and other car accessories, would commence there shortly.

**Count Mc Cormack,** staged a celebrity concert in the new Theatre Royal on October 13 to a capacity house.

**Sanctions:** What were described as creeping sanctions had commenced to operate against Italy. They would have no effect upon her conduct of the war.

**Dr. Daniel Mageean,** Bishop of Down and Connor, in an address in Maynooth College; there is no truth in statements that the troubles in Belfast are political. Catholics are persecuted because they are Catholics. They have been evicted from their homes; they have been prevented from their right to earn their livelihood simply on account of their religion. At this point he paid tribute to the local Protestant bishop.

**Tomás Mac Curtain:** The Tribunal, on October 18, refused to pass sentence on a membership charge 'in view of what his family had suffered'. Sentence of one month was, however, passed upon John Curtain of Barrack Street, but both were then released. The evidence was that Mac Curtain, in the previous August, had

cocked a gun at Garda P. Malone, but the gun was taken from him by a companion. Prosecuting were Tadhg Forbes and J.S O'Connor.

**Father Dominic O.F.M Cap.** died at this time at Hermiston, Oregon. Born in 1883, he had suffered in a car crash some years before. He had been chaplain to Terence Mac Swiney on his 74 day fast in Brixton Prison. Prior to that he had been chaplain with the Royal Irish Rifles in Macedonia and with the Munster and Dublin Fusiliers in 1916 and 1917. Returning to Ireland he took part in Cork in the anti-conscription campaign. Arrested with Father Albert at the Church Street friary, he was sentenced by court martial to five years and deported to England. Following the Treaty, he was released on January 22, but soon after he was exiled by his Order to Bend, Oregon. The remains of both Father Albert and Dominic were returned to Ireland in 1958 through the good offices of Connie Neenan and Florence O'Donoghue, and were reinterred in the Order's foundation at Rochestown, Co. Cork.

**Six County Westminster Seats:** Northern Republicans announced, October 21, that they would contest the forthcoming election on an abstentionist basis.

**Kilmainham Jail:** Annie M.P Smithson, the novelist, in the *Irish Press* of October 21, wondered what would now happen to the derelict structure.

**General O'Duffy,** in a statement, denied that the Blueshirt organisation had offered aid to Italy.

**Divorce:** The ever increasing rate of divorce, declared the Vice Dean of Canterbury, is revolting against conscience.

**Edward Carson Dies:** Lord Carson died, on October 21, at his home in Kent, at the age of 81. By his own wish he would be buried in the relatively new Belfast Cathedral, and a Bill to permit this, was rushed through Stormont. A native of Harcourt Street, Dublin, his father was descended from an Italian architect, by name Carsoni, who arrived in Ireland in the second half of the 18th. century, adopting the Protestant religion. His mother was a Lambert; one of the landed gentry of Co. Galway, whose demense (with an imposing tomb still evident) was located some miles north of Tuam. His first wife, Sara Kirwan, was from the same locality; all of which accounts for his concealed opposition to the partition of Ireland which would diminish greatly his own kinsfolk in the West. Educated at Portarlinton and Trinity College; he was outstanding at the English Bar where he prosecuted among others his fellow T.C.D student Oscar Wilde. Later he served in the British War Cabinet, following which he was created Baron Carson of Duncairn.

**I.T.G.W.U v A.T.G.W.U:** The Irish Transport Union under William O'Brien, sought, on October 22, an injunction against the (English) Amalgamated Transport Union, whose area representative in Dublin was Sam Kyle. The I.T.G.W.U case rested on the title of the other causing confusion. Kyle, a Presbyterian republican in evidence, stated that the A.T.G.W.U was first formed in Ireland in 1921 from a number of small unions.

**Omagh:** Peter Morris and his wife, of Cornavarra, Omagh, sought compensation in the district court on October 22, for having been chained to the railings of the local chapel, but the judge dismissed the action. They had not suffered injury, he said, merely mental anguish. Morris, evidently a Catholic, had supported a local group who had lighted a bonfire celebrating the jubilee of King George V. A local

Republican had objected to this, and had been jailed for it. As a result, Morris and his wife had been chained to the railings, and subsequently ostracised, and their cattle set wandering.

**Charlie Leddy was chosen**, while in jail in the Free State, to stand in the forthcoming Westminster election for West Belfast.

**The U.K. Parliament** was dissolved at this time. It had first met in November 1931.

**Francis Stuart** is noted as involved in a radio discussion with Niall Sheridan, on *Ireland and the Modern World*. Niall, husband of cookbook expert Monica Sheridan, was later, in the fifties, one of those at the top of Bord Fáilte Éireann.

**Republican Candidates:** Putting forward the trusted stalwarts, a Republican convention selected as its Westminster candidates (abstentionist); for Tyrone/Fermanagh, Michael Gallagher of Dromore; for mid-Ulster, Tom Daly of Firies, Co. Kerry; for Armagh, Charlie Mc Gleenan of Blackwatertown; for Derry, Seán Mac Cumhaill; for Belfast West, Charlie Leddy of north Antrim; for Down, Patrick O'Hagan of Kilkeel.

**Make Believe Freedom:** In a talk in Cork city, reported on October 28, Brian O'Higgins laid down as 'the minimum upon which Separatists could unite' would be the restoration of Dáil Éireann over 32 counties. Seán Ó Tuama presided, and among those present were; Micheál Óg Mac Suibhne, Máire and Ethna and Seán; sisters and brother of the late Terence; Tom Barry and wife Leslie\*, Sean Coughlan, Professor William and Mrs. Stockley, Tomás Óg Mac Churtain and Eibhlís Ní Churtain.

**Funeral of Lord Carson:** Crowds lined the principal streets of Belfast through which the cortege of Lord Carson was borne on Saturday to his resting place in Saint Ann's Cathedral; although, paradoxically, Carson might have preferred, had the political geography remained unchanged, to have been buried in Co. Galway, or even in Dublin. The destroyer, *Brooke*, bore the catafalque past the Queen's Island where some 15,000 workers stood with bared heads; grimey caps held in their fingers.

**Belfast:** In the case of the murder of publican John K. Mc Kiernan, of Great Georges Street (see above); James Hull, and Robert Charles Mc Clure, of the loyalist community, were charged, in a report of October 29.

**Edenderry:** Fianna Fáil's continued industrialisation policy notched up a further success with a shoe factory, that eventually employed some hundreds, when it opened in the small Midland town of Edenderry.

**Gilbert's National Manuscripts of Ireland:** This important collection from John T. Gilbert of 1879, was handed over at this time, by the London Authorities, to the Stationery Office of the Irish Free State.

**The Death Penalty** is not only futile but a horrible deed, said James Henry Webb, architect, and council member of the Irish White Cross, and also of the Society of Friends (Quakers), at a meeting convened to press for its total abolition. The trea-

\* Leslie Price, a sister of Bob, Mick and Charlie; she signed herself Leslie, Bean de Barra; she later headed the Irish Red Cross.

surer of the small group was Miss Lily Mc Carthy, with Miss M. Jordan, its honorary secretary, and a committee which included Mrs. Hannah Sheehy-Skeffington, Rosamund Jacob and James Larkin, Jr.

**Declare a Republic:** Although a Commonwealth man himself, Frank Mac Dermot, now an independent T.D, decided to call the FF bluff by proposing a Dáil motion that the government should abandon their intention to sometime declare the Free State a republic but to seek now authority to declare a republic. The motion was defeated by 78 votes to 18, with Fine Gael largely abstaining.

**Lion and Unicorn:** It was announced (shortly before the fifteenth anniversary of their killing within Dublin Castle of Dick Mc Kee, Peadar Clancy and Conor Clune), that the Lion and Unicorn coat of arms, then standing upon a wall at the end of Exchange Court, beside City Hall, would be removed and replaced with a plaque commemorating the three.

**A Fenian Passes:** Denis Shaw, of Melrose Avenue, Fairview, died in late October at the age of 85. A friend of James Stephens, O'Donovan Rossa and John Devoy; he had been 'out' in North King Street in 1916, and in the Four Courts in 1922.

**Kevin Barry:** Terry Ward, formerly of *An Phoblacht*, was writing, on November 1, on the subject of Kevin Barry, in the *Irish Press*:

**Six County Election:** At a Tyrone and Fermanagh Convention in Omagh on November 1, compromise on the subject of abstention from Westminster proved impossible. Cahir Healy and Joe Stewart offered at once to contest as abstentionist, but Anthony Mulvey, a journalist, and Patrick Cunningham, a farmer, were chosen. Sean Mc Cool was late, by six minutes, to lodge his papers at the Guild Hall, Derry, and so Sir Ronald Ross was returned unopposed.

**Sligo:** Alderman M. Nevin resigned on November 4, as Mayor, pleading inability to meet the cost of a libel case taken against him by Frank Carty T.D, of Fianna Fáil. It had been an unworthy action as Nevin had sought to defend Robert G. Bradshaw, a Protestant, who had been discriminated against for an appointment by the Dept. of Local Government, but it resulted in long and costly hearings; while Carty was quite wealthy, Nevin, an old Republican, had been on the Corporation since 1918. Days later, the members declared his resignation void, although he did not resume as Mayor.

**Lurgan:** Maurice Twomey was speaking at this time in Lurgan on behalf of the candidature of Charlie Leddy; the meeting being attended by 3000. On the platform with Twomey, a Chief of Staff evidently not barred from the Six Counties, were Sean O'Leary of Dublin, James Trodden of Armagh, and Sean Buckley of Cork.



**Lusitania:** The wreck of the Cunard liner *Lusitania*, sunk by German submarine action off the Old Head of Kinsale with the loss of 1200 lives on May 7, 1915, was said to have to have been located at this time.\*

**Drogheda:** Kidnap of John Gorman: (See above) In a report of November 8, five Drogheda men were jailed for this episode. Tom Grogan, Hugh Downey, Matthew Callan, Charles Hoey and Michael Stewart. Grogan was sentenced by the Tribunal on a charge of membership; imprisoning Gorman, and documents, to five years; Downey, Callan and Hoey, to three years; and Stewart to twelve months. Gorman had torn an envelope which sought a subscription for the I.R.A.

**The World's Greatest Aviator:** Sir Charles Kingsford Smith, Australian, was deemed lost at this time, between Allahabad and Singapore, on a London to Australia flight.

**Westminister and S.F.:** The Party announced that it would not be supporting any particular group of candidates.

**British Legion:** With the approach of the annual Poppy Day, Remembrance Day, parades, Joe Reynolds, secretary of the Federation of Old I.R.A. Associations, published a letter, in strong terms, 'demanding that the mockery and insults cease'. His letter was in reply to a plea made by A.P. Connolly, chairman, of the Metropolitan Area of the British Legion.

**Arranmore Disaster:** 19 tatie hoker islanders returning from Scottish harvesting, were drowned on the night of November 10, with only one survivor. Burtonport, the rail station to the island, was a distance of four miles through open sea. The rowing boat struck a rock close to the island landing stage.

**'Deserted' I.R.A.:** A young man, Joseph O'Rourke, from the Douglas area, was found chained to the Courthouse railings in the centre of Cork city.

**Poppy Day:** A meeting, termed 'anti-imperialist', was held in College Green, as reported, November 11, at which a Union Jack was burned. Presiding was Donal O'Donoghue, with Maud Gonne, P. Mc Kenna and Peadar Kearney.

**Maurice Twomey** was injured and conveyed to hospital, in a report of November 12, while approaching Newry from Warrenpoint in dense fog, after he had taken part in an election meeting. He was accompanied by Dr. Andy Cooney, and T.F. Bradley of Downpatrick.

**Bog Development:** The engineer, R.N. Tweedy, in an address at the Engineers' Hall, Dawson Street, called for a policy of bog development: 30,000 could find work and be settled in new towns upon the midlands.

\* There is substantial evidence that Winston Spencer Churchill, the First Lord of the Admiralty (dropped from cabinet shortly after), conspired in the sinking, in order to lure the U.S. into the war. Approaching the Irish coast, the *Lusitania* found itself sailing alone, without the normal convoy protection. The most recent evidence is (hitherto carefully hidden by the Admiralty) that the liner carried a considerable tonnage of shells and highly explosive aluminium powder; a cargo that, by the rules of maritime shipping, it should not have carried. It was this second explosion which caused it to go under in 17 minutes. Refer to Longman published work 1972 by Colin Simpson.

**Italy Protests:** A protest note was received from the Italian government, following the Free State participation in Sanctions imposed after the invasion of Abyssinia.

**Belfast:** During an election meeting on behalf of Charlie Leddy, on the corner of North Howard Street and the Falls, six shots were fired into the crowd there, wounding two, according to a report of November 14. A car then took off into the Shankill.

**Cusack Stand:** The G.A.A announced that it would shortly commence to build a two deck, reinforced concrete stand, costing £40,000.

**Deported:** After an election address, Maud Gonne found herself deported from Lurgan. I had bought only a single train ticket, she said, in anticipation of this.

**Humphery Murphy** \* of Farranfore, dropped dead suddenly, on October 14, while serving on the Military Pensions Board at Griffith Barracks.

**U.K. Election Results** reported at this time show the Tories returned with 421 seats; Labour 153; Liberals, 16; Independents 1; Communist 1. In the North, Mulvey and Cunningham, abstentionist, were elected for Tyrone/Fermanagh, with over 50,000 votes each. The Unionists retained their seats in Armagh, Down and West Belfast. Figures for the abstentionist Republican candidates were; C. Mc Glennon, 16,284; O'Hagan, 20,236; Leddy, 20,313.

**Belfast:** Following the results, a bomb was flung in North Thomas Street, and three shots were fired in Little Ship Street.

**Irvinestown:** A Republican celebration around lighted barrels in the main street, of this small Fermanagh town, was attacked with stones and bottles.

**Kanturk:** After returning from a commemoration for Michael Lynch, killed in 1934 in Marsh's Yard, numbers of Blueshirts had stampeded in Mallow on August 18. 69 were charged at this time in Kanturk, with unlawful assembly and riot. Time having elapsed, all but three were released. You were trailing your coats, admonished the judge.

**Kilkenny Castle:** The Duke of Ormonde was at this time selling the contents, with R.V. Judd, as auctioneer. Over 5,000 had viewed the contents. (The Castle was presented to the nation, and formally handed over in 1967).

**Drumshanbo:** Continuing industrialisation brought a jam factory, trading as *Breffni Blossom* to the town. It was planned to use fruit grown locally.

**Dan O'Mahony,** world champion wrestler, recently married to Esther Burke, and much in the news at this time, was reported involved in a minor car crash near Boston.

**Jamestown, Co. Leitrim:** Archdeacon Donohue, supported by townspeople, petitioned Leitrim County Council to retain the town arch. Formerly walled, having received a charter from King James, the village has since lost some of its arch although it is likely to be restored.

**Nier Valley:** John Wall's little house (still preserved), was pictured in the *Irish Press* of November 25, in an article by Diarmuid M. O'Brennan on the last journey of Erskine Childers; executed in Beggars Bush Barracks on November 24 1922. The cottage however had no connection with Childers, but it was the location of an important Cease Fire meeting there in March 1923.\*\*

**National Graves Unveilings:** *The Irish Press* of October 25, reported a number

\* See *Kerry's Fighting Story*, and numbers of references in *Survivors*.

\*\* See *Survivors*: 1987 edition.

of unveilings in notices received from Sean Fitzpatrick; in Dublin, Sean Moore, their President, over Volunteers W. Mc Dowell, P. Howard, J. Cromien, P. Whelan, J.S. Dwan and T.J. O'Reilly.

**Manchester Martyrs Anniversary:** The 68th anniversary was celebrated with ceremonies in Cork, Manchester, Limerick, Bandon, Wexford and Waterford. Bandon was the birthplace of William Allen.

**Greece:** King George, accompanied by Crown Prince Paul, returned from Brindisi aboard the cruiser *Helle* to Athens, where he was restored amid popular acclamation.

**Air Service:** It was announced on October 27, that a commercial air service would be established from the grass runway of Baldonnel to Bristol.

**France:** The government under Premier Pierre Laval, was reported in crisis.

**Portrait of a Rebel Father:** Nora Connolly's telling biography was published at this time. I read the 300 pages at a gulp, wrote Mrs. Sheehy-Skeffington in the *Irish Press* of October 27, and when the end was reached my eyes were dim.

**Stormont:** The Duke of Abercorn, representing the Crown, opened Parliament, with six Nationalists and 39 Unionists in attendance.

**Tom Markham** of Fairview, elaborated, in the *Irish Press* of October 28, on a matter relevant to the illegal shooting of Mc Kee, Clancy and Clune, in Dublin Castle on November 22, 1920. The three had been arrested, brought to the Castle and interrogated there; probably by Sergeant Igoe, Major Hardy and others. Mc Kee was O.C. Dublin Brigade, and would be held to have responsibility for the assassination of fourteen British spies of the so called Cairo gang early on that morning. Clancy was Vice Commandant, but Clune, a volunteer from Co. Clare, had little responsibility. Markham says that they were held overnight after Bloody Sunday, and shot at 8 a.m. on the Monday.\*

**Derry:** Neil Gillespie\*\* of Southern Park, and Sean Mc Adam, a teacher of Irish, from Bogside, were each fined five pounds, in a report of October 29, for statements made at recent election meetings, and the display of a tricolour. Fined also, on a variety of similar charges, were; William and Charlie Harkin, Hugh Carlin, Bill Dunlop, Sean Keenan and Billy Harley. Rather than pay, they refused, thus making jailing likely.

**Article 2 A:** In An Dáil, De Valera, in reply to William Norton of the Labour Party, informed him, that the time for a suspension of Article 2 A of the Constitution had not yet arrived. The article allowed the operation of the Military Tribunal.

**Co. Louth:** In a police raid upon the home of Dan Breen of Mullacrew, a rifle was found. Breen refused to plead at the Tribunal, and was sentenced to twelve months. The rifle, he said, belonged to the I.R.A. who had suspended him, but upon completion of his sentence he would apply to be readmitted.

**Sinn Féin Árd Fhéis:** There was a long report on page eight of the *Irish Press* of December 2, on the Árd Fhéis held at Wynn's Hotel over the weekend, with 60 pre-

\* See Tony Woods in *Survivors* on the character of Igoe and Hardy.

\*\*See *Survivors*, for Gillespie.

sent. Albina Broderick, Gobnait Ní Brudair, sister of the Earl of Middleton, long time faithful Republican and Gael; was permitted to attend as a visitor, following the suspension of her local Ballinacooona Cumann; she protested at the suspension, which occurred over an obscure matter. In his address, Fr. Michael O'Flanagan, occupying the chair following a recent illness, stated that Sinn Fein would have contested the recent Galway by-election had they had a candidate of personality. 'Sceilg', Count Plunkett and Tom Maguire had each been asked but had refused. Cathal Ó Murchadha was then elected President; Tom Maguire, Liam Raul and Mrs. Brugha were elected Vice Presidents.

**Fr. O'Flanagan on Abyssinia:** In a statement on the Sunday resumption, Father O'Flanagan expressed the opinion that behind the war in Abyssinia lay the threat of Italy breaking Britain's hold upon the Mediterranean.

**The O'Duffy Party:** Over the same weekend, the National Corporate Party were reported holding a conference in Sneem.

**The Second Longford Trial** opened on Monday, December 2, to crowded galleries, at the Central Criminal Court, with the same four accused present. After a ten day trial in July, the Dublin jury had disagreed on the identity issue. The state was represented by Martin Maguire, S.C and Kevin Haugh, with Albert Wood and Alec Lynn, for the accused.

**F.F. Árd Fhéis:** The heavily attended conference ran for three days in the Mansion House. The government had tried, as far as humanly possible to carry through its promises, De Valera said. The business consisted in the main of a general approval of the government stance at Geneva and on the subject of Abyssinia. Interest centered upon I.R.A pensions for Six County people, land division and local appointments. Their erstwhile comrades in the I.R.A were scarcely mentioned.

**Cork City:** Mick Mc Carthy and Richard Mc Carthy, arrested on the charge of chaining Joseph O'Rourke to the Courthouse railings (see above), pouring tar upon him, and affixing a 'spy' notice, received three years at the Tribunal, in a report of December 4.

**Withdraw From League:** Patrick Belton T.D, proposed a Dáil motion (rejected) that the Irish Free State withdraw from the League of Nations and abandon sanctions.

**Is Learning Irish Hard,** was the heading of an article by Don Piatt in the *Irish Press* of December 6. Two graphic maps accompanied the piece; one showed the position in 1926, while the other showed the density of speakers in each county.

**Séamus G. Ó Ceallaigh** had a piece in the *Irish Press* of December 9, on Liam Mellows; headed *Mellows, Soldier and Thinker*.

**Second Longford Trial:** The four, J.J. Reynolds, William (Billy) Mulligan, John Shanley and James Reynolds were discharged from the Central Criminal Court in Dublin before the defence opened, and before the case went to the jury.

**Newry:** Two were charged on December 11, with a flag offence during the November election. John Kerins of King Street, who did not appear, was sentenced to six months hard labour. The Free State tricolour was placed inside the window of the Brothers Pearse club in King Street, an R.U.C constable stated. The second man charged, Louis Grant of Boat Street, was in the Wolfe Tone club where the flag flew externally.

**Drogheda:** Bill Collins, of Mell, Drogheda, was sentenced to three years in a report of December 12. He was involved in the kidnap of John Gorman. They each worked in the same boot factory. Collins had handed Gorman an envelope, with inside a leaflet seeking a subscription for the I.R.A. Gorman tore this in front of Collins; he was therefore accused of destroying I.R.A. property.

**Senate Abolition Bill:** The Constitution Amendment No. 24 Bill, earlier passed by An Dáil 76-57, was, in a report of December 13, returned to the Senate, which body, basically loaded with Cumann na nGael appointees, was opposed to its own abolition. No matter what action the Senate would take, under the law as it now stood, that body would disappear after 60 days upon a resolution from An Dáil.

**Why Union Jack Refused:** The Belfast Cathedral Board issued an explanation why it rejected an offer to suspend a large Union Jack within the Cathedral entrance, over the floor slab of Lord Carson. The feeling of the Board was adverse, it said; it would be out of place.

**Peat Development:** A Turf (Use and Development) Bill was placed before the Dáil, in a report of December 18. Following the experience of the C.S Andrews delegation to Germany and Russia in 1934, the government now envisaged developing machine pressed turf in Kildare, Laois and Mayo, while also retaining sweeping powers of land acquisition\*.

**Abyssinia:** A 'peace plan' put together by Pierre Laval of France and Anthony Eden, British Foreign Secretary, was deemed at this time to be 'dead'. Eden replaced Sir Samuel Hoare who had resigned.

**Limerick:** The Savoy Cinema opened six days before Christmas. Seating 1500, it was designed by Leslie C. Norton, architect of the Dublin Theatre Royal.

**Kildorrey** garda barracks had been besieged by a group, loosely connected to the Blueshirts, on June 5, following which eight young men appeared at the Tribunal, in a report of December 20. All pleaded not guilty and were discharged.

**Omagh:** Encouraged by the Mulvey and Cunningham election result, an unaffiliated group of Republicans held a convention on December 22, at which a call went out summoning all Republicans of the Six Counties to an organising conference at an early date.

**Sean Dowling,** speaking at a smoking concert of the Fourth Battalion in Jury's Hotel, criticised the slow operation of the 1934 Military Service Pensions Act.

**Releases:** As a Christmas gesture, the government, two days before, announced the release of 34 from Arbour Hill and one from Mountjoy. 19 of these were Republicans while 16 were Blueshirt.

**Belfast:** Liam Mac Gabhann was writing in the *Irish Press* of December 27, how 400 families burned out by loyalists in Belfast in July, had been resettled in unfinished houses in Glenard estate in Ardoyne.

**Since An Phoblacht** had been forced in June to cease publication there was now no further work for its principal journalists: Terry Ward, from Derry, and Liam Mac Gabhann, from Kerry. They moved into conventional journalism.

\* See his *Man of No Property*.

**Campbell College Raid:** This I.R.A. raid attempting to seize the rifles of the student Officers Training Corps, at Belmont, in south Belfast, was launched on Friday, December 27. The authorities had been apprised beforehand, so when the raiders entered the gate lodge to arrest the occupants, Constable Ian Hay, of Mount Pottinger R.U.C, rushed in, whereupon shots were exchanged and he received bullet wounds in the shoulder and leg. With the waiting police force alerted, the raiders then beat a hasty retreat on to Hawthornden Road.

**Dublin:** It was announced at this time that an office block would shortly be built upon the long derelict site of the Maple Hotel, in Kildare Street. J.R. Boyd Barrett of Cork, won the commission in open competition for the Dept. of Industry and Commerce building.

**CHRONOLOGY: THE YEAR 1936: JANUARY TO JUNE 30:**

**Virtual Disappearance Of Blueshirt Organisation:** Following his rift with U.I.P./Fine Gael in September 1934, when General Eoin O'Duffy resigned, the organisation went into a steep decline, with the result that, by this time, Blueshirt incidents only rarely appeared in the press. O'Duffy's short lived Corporate Party also disappeared. Commdt. Ned Cronin still remained however under the umbrella of the parliamentary party, controlling a skeletal League of Youth organisation, until October 1936, when, seeking to divorce themselves totally from physical force, the politicians of Fine Gael - the short lived title of the United Ireland Party having reverted to the small print - locked him out of headquarters at 3 Merrion Square. To quote *Survivors*; the League of Youth, a pale shadow of its former self, was laid to rest behind the stuffed keyhole of the Georgian head office.

**Egypt:** Seeking a new treaty that would remove British troops from the Suez Canal Zone, bands of students demonstrated against England in Cairo and Alexandria over two days of the International Surgical Congress.

**Abyssinia:** General Graziani, although still bogged down near the Eritrean border, announced his intention to shortly commence a drive for Addis Ababa, still 250 miles away.

**Royal Coat of Arms:** An official report of February, refers to an attempt to blow up a masonry coat of arms over the premises of Prescott's, in Talbot Street.

**Fenit:** The same source refers to the station house at Fenit having been maliciously burned, and telegraph wires cut. This may have been a Blueshirt operation.

**Lincoln Jail Escape:** Feb 3, 1919: The story of the escape of De Valera, Sean Milroy and Sean Mc Garry, was told by artist Frank Kelly to Noel Hartnett on radio, and related in a report in the *Irish Press* of January 9. Milroy sketched the key and sent it out through a priest; but the first two keys, not surprisingly, based upon the sketch failed. A blank, with key cutting files was then sent in through 'an influential person'. The articles may have been within a cake baked by Kathleen Boland. Meanwhile, Collins and Harry Boland, who had already visited the prison, arrived again, accompanied by Frank Kelly\*, when they approached a double postern gate. Entering one, their key broke at the inner gate, but De Valera, Milroy and Mc Garry, waiting in darkness on the other side, skilfully and with great care, pushed out the broken key. They then inserted the one they had made - presumably with the files sent in - and it worked. A car in charge of P. O'Donoghue, brought them to Worksop. Neil Kerr took them in charge in Liverpool, arranging a safe crossing for Milroy and Mc Garry. For three weeks Harry Boland stayed back with De Valera 'practically all the time', after which they both crossed to Dublin.

**Great Southern Railways** shareholders at their annual general meeting, chaired by Sir W.R Nugent, heard his announcement that now they had no fears for the future. Passenger and goods traffic had improved.

\* Frank Kelly afterwards married Anna Kelly, née Fitzsimons, also of the Movement and for a time secretary to Collins. She, later on, over 25 years, was Woman's Editor of the *Irish Press*.

**Harry Pollit**, general secretary of the Communist Party of Great Britain, spoke, to a loudly heckled meeting, in Rathmines Town Hall, on January 12. The Catholic Young Men's Society picketed the hall, and inside, where 500 had paid for admission, there were free-for-all. Tommy Geehan, of Belfast, and James Larkin, junior, spoke, with Sean Murray presiding.

**O'Duffy Corporate Party** meeting at Innishannon, in a report of January 13, heard the leader denounce the Ultimate Financial Settlement of, 1926.\* As a result of that settlement, he said, millions had been handed to John Bull.

**Hannah Sheehy-Skeffington** had a letter in the *Irish Press* of January 15 on Fanny Parnell, sister of Charles Stewart. It carried a picture of the old barracks of Aughavannagh, for a while used as a hunting lodge by him. Fanny and Anna were the two outstanding sisters of Charles. They founded the Ladies Land League which Charles, 3 years later, disbanded. Upset by this Fanny travelled to the States, accompanied by her mother Delia, and died there at the early age of 32. Anna carried on to join, in its formative years, Sinn Féin in the North Leitrim election effort of 1908. Three years later she drowned swimming at Ilfracombe, September 1911, at the age of 59.

**O'Duffy was at Roscarbery**, where he was greeted by 50 delegates, in a report of January 16. An all-Ireland corporate state, he announced as his hope.

**Campbell College Arrests:** Edward Mc Cartney, of Oranmore Street, and Bernard Rooney of Thompson Street, had been arrested, and were being held on remand on fire arms charges.

**King George V Dies:** Black borders on cross channel newspapers, on Northern loyalist papers and in the *Irish Times*, were the order of the day announcing, on January 21, the death, at 70, of King George V, in the 26th. year of his reign. He was automatically succeeded by the short lived Edward VIII, Prince of Wales.

**Houses Built:** Under the Fianna Fáil Housing Acts of 1932 to 1934, it was announced that 33,000 houses had been built,

**Danzig:** Sean Lester was drawing the attention of the League of Nations to the grave state of affairs in the city. It was policy, he said, to establish there a National Socialist State, *de facto*, despite the constitution and rulings of the League forbidding this. Herr Foster, the emissary from Hitler, was 'a fanatical Nazi'.

**Sinn Féin** held a well attended function in Wynn's Hotel, on January 21, to commemorate the First Dáil, with 'Scailg' as chairman. It was followed by a musical programme.

**Egypt:** Increasing turbulence forced the cabinet to relinquish office on the treaty issue.

**Laval Resigned** on January 22, when his coalition broke up. Within days he was succeeded by a government of the centre left, under M. Sarraut.\*\*

\* Signed by Winston Churchill and Ernest Blythe, March 19, 1926; it is quoted in extenso in Macardles', *The Irish Republic*.

\*\* Pierre Laval was executed in Paris in 1945, having been convicted of collaboration with the Germans during the occupation.



**Derry:** Sean Mc Adam of the Bogside, and eight other Republicans, were arrested at this time, and conveyed to prison, arising out of their failure to pay the five pound fines imposed following speeches and incidents during the November election (see above).

**Father O'Flanagan Expelled:** Because of his participation in a Radio Athlone broadcast enactment of the meeting of January 21, 1919, of the First Dáil in the Round Room of the Mansion House, Father O'Flanagan was expelled from Sinn Féin. He had joined Sean T O'Kelly, Senator E.J Duggan, Robert C. Barton and Piarais Beaslaí in a reconstruction. The S. F journal *An Dé*, declared that his participation automatically ended his connection. In a spirited reply the priest declared 'something more than an order from the Standing Committee of Sinn Féin would be required to prevent me repeating publicly before the people of Ireland the part I took on January 21, 1919. A last minute meeting of Sinn Féin had forbidden attendance, but the letter had not reached Father O'Flanagan.

**Belfast:** Patrick Carson of Foundry Street, Ballymacarret, was found tarred and feathered, and chained to the railings of St. Matthew's Parochial Club, in time to be seen by those arriving for Sunday morning Mass on January 26.

**Dublin Civil War Echo:** There was a reference in the *Irish Press* of January 27, to a John O'Mahony, formerly in the British Army, but killed presumably on the Republican side in O'Connell Street. He was said to have been buried unclaimed in Mount Jerome.

**The Dublin Dockyard:** Yes; at this time Dublin had a small shipbuilding yard at the North Wall; it was announced by the Irish Steam Packet Company that they had ordered from that yard a 270 ft. vessel.

**George V Funeral:** Six reigning monarchs had arrived, January 28, in London for the occasion.

**'Dump' Discovered:** An official report refers to 'a dump' having been discovered in a stable at Georges Hill, close to Townsend Street. It gave no other details.

**Inchicore Loco Works:** The Great Southern Railway announced plans for five super locomotives. Three were later built; *Macha, Maeve and Tailte*. (These magnificent locos were withdrawn 25 years later; *Maeve* is preserved in the Belfast Museum at Cultra.)

**Gardaí Seek Vote:** Under the Electoral Act of 1923, gardaí did not have the right to vote. The press of January 31 announced that those on full pay were seeking the right to vote.

**D.P Moran, editor and proprietor of The Leader:** The press of February 1, announced the death of a journalist who had carried on a commentary that had considerable influence on Irish affairs over 30 years.

**Campbell College Trial:** The press of the same date carried a report of the commencement of the trial; a report which gave details of the I.R.A assault plan.

**War Office Seeks Irish Recruits:** Commdt. E.J. (Ned) Cronin, in the press of Saturday, February 1, disclosed that he had seen a circular from the British War Office, enclosed with pension warrants (payments) to pensioners in Ireland, offering a bounty of four shillings, or five shillings, to any pensioner who could induce a young Irishman to join the British forces.

**R.M Smyllie**, of Cavehill Road, Belfast, collapsed and died on February 2, while out walking with his wife. He had been editor of the *Sligo Times*, and a member of the Corporation. Later he was editor of the *Belfast Newsletter*. His son, also R. M Smyllie, was the well known editor and columnist *Nichevo* in the thirties and forties, of the *Irish Times*.

**Subhas Chandra Bose**, respected fighter for Indian independence, and Mayor of Calcutta, was in Ireland at this time, and was received by President De Valera and welcomed by Madame Mac Bride, at whose residence he stayed. He had been forbidden entry into England. Days later he met a representative group of Republicans at a reception in his honour.

**University Seats Go:** A relic of the so-called pocket boroughs, the University Dáil seats, in Trinity College and University College, were abolished at this time.

**Tyrone:** Republicans sentenced at this time were; Michael Mc Caffrey of Beragh; two months on a documents charge, and Patrick Mc Keirnan, and Patrick Mc Carney, both of Ramackin, on an arms charge, to three months each.

**An Síol:** A small typewritten fortnightly, of Belfast gaels, found itself banned, February 8, under the Civil Authorities (Special Powers) Act.

**Brian De Valera Killed:** While horse riding with a friend, on February 9, in the Phoenix Park, Brian, fourth son of Eamon, collided with a heavy branch, under which the horse had raced, suffering severe concussion. He died later in the Mater Hospital.

**R.U.C Man Attacked:** It occurred in the Turf Loney, off Springfield Road; a report of February 10, tells of two assailants shooting and wounding a policeman, whereupon they made off.

**Labour Party Conference:** At a conference in Dublin, according to a report of February 12, the party voted on a motion to exclude the press by 35 votes to 36. In the chair was William O'Brien, with M. J Keyes, T.D, Limerick, vice-chairman. Reaffirming James Connolly as their founder, they declared as their objective, the establishment of a Workers' Republic for the 32 counties of Ireland.

**Campbell College:** Hugh Keenan, of the Short Strand, and John Monaghan, found themselves added to those already arrested. Contrary to the then orders of the I.R.A, they were defended; this being a subterfuge to flush out a stool-pigeon; but it misfired internally against the organisation, as will be seen.

**Spain:** Yet another crisis when an attempted army coup failed. An election was proceeding at the time, and on February 16, this resulted in a slim majority for the parties that would form a popular front and elect Manuel Azana, President. The unrest and disorder would worsen in the run up to the July 18 outbreak; the commencement of a 33 month fratricidal civil war, in which well over half a million would die; more than 50,000 would be executed, and invaluable art treasures and buildings would be lost.

**Belfast:** Alexander Mc Donald, of Annadale Street, was found chained, tarred and feathered in North Queen Street. He had been seized by six men.

**Belfast Get Together:** The papers of February 19, reported an inaugural meeting of Republican students at Moira, where they were addressed by a broad platform, including George Gilmore, Seamus Mallin, (a son of Michael, of 1916), Mrs.

Margaret Buckley of Sinn Féin, Tom O' Hanrahan of Fianna Fáil, Con Lehane of the I.R.A., Sighle Humphreys (Ní Duinneachadha), of Cumann na mBan, and Frank Ryan of Republican Congress.

**Cause Célèbre Death:** The blood stained car of Mrs. Vera Ball, wife of a renowned nerve specialist, of St. Helen's Road, Booterstown, was found abandoned in a laneway, near the sea water at Shankill, Co. Dublin. Edward Preston Ball, her nineteen year old son, a part time actor in the Gate Theatre, was questioned and later charged.

**Campbell College:** Edward Mc Cartney, of Oranmore Street, O.C of the raiding party, and the only one to recognise the court, was found guilty on February 24, and sentenced on a number of charges, including attempted murder. 'I have no power to order you to be whipped', said Lord Justice Best, 'but I have power to impose a very heavy sentence'. Ten years was imposed.

**Commdt. Paddy O'Brien** and Volunteer Maurice Spillane, killed in action against the State forces in Enniscorthy, on July 11 1922, had a plaque unveiled at the Post Office to their memory. The O'Briens; an outstanding Inchicore family, lost another member in 1942, when Denis of the Special Branch, was cut down on the avenue to his home, *Thomond*, at Ballyboden, Rathfarnham, by the I.R.A. Fighting that July 1922, in Enniscorthy, was Ernie O'Malley; both O'Brein and himself had escaped after the fall of the Four Courts.

**Father Denis Fahey**, a misguided theologian of the Holy Ghost Order (not representative of that Order), had recently published a book on the Communist/Masonic threat to Ireland, in which he indicted the Fenians of 1867 as 'agents of anti-Christ'. A review by Aodh de Blacam in the *Irish Press* of February 25, challenged that view. Dr. Fahey, Doctor of Philosophy and Church History, at Kimmage Manor, had his work authorised by the Bishop of Waterford and Lismore, Edward Kinnane, a hard liner in these matters.

**Japan:** An army officer revolt occurred in Tokyo at this time. The Prime Minister, and members of his cabinet, were said to have been assassinated, but later it emerged that he had escaped from the parliament building in a coffin. The attempted coup was quickly suppressed.

**Belfast:** Hugh Carson, of Foundry Street, on the Newtownards Road, was found on a mid-week morning, tarred and feathered and chained to a lamp post in Comber Street.

**Trade Pact:** The recent Coal/Cattle trade pact with Britain was approved by An Dáil, on February 27, by 72 to 49.

**Hospitals:** Following the success of Joe Mc Grath's Hospital Sweepstakes, set up in connection with that lottery, a Hospitals' Commission was created in September 1933. They now recommended that eight million be expended on new works and improvements.

**Belfast:** Peter Fanning of Springfield Road, was charged by D.I Hamilton, with being in possession of a copy of the 1916 Proclamation; such a document, said the Inspector, 'being likely to cause disaffection'. It had been seized in a raid on the Wolfe Tone Republican Club.

**Killiney Castle Sale:** A sale of the contents took place on March 3. It had been

the home of the Ormsby Hamilton family, built in 1741, and would now soon pass to 'Count' Heaney, who made it available as a training school for the I.R.A.

**Far East:** The Soviet Union was reported at this time flexing its muscles in preparation for a war with Japan, on the issue of Outer Mongolia, otherwise the Mongolian People's Republic. Russia saw Japan, upon occupying Manchuria, as threatening her ally, the sparsely populated Mongolia.

**Airship Hindenburg** went on trial from Freidrichshafen. With the smaller Graf Zeppelin, they were programmed to fly all over Germany.

**Rhineland:** On Saturday, March 7, German troops marched into the Rhineland, bordering Alsace, breaching the Treaty of Versailles and Locarno. Simultaneously, Hitler offered a new agreement and a 'era of co-operation'. France and Russia hastily joined each other in a defence pact.

**A New Republican Party:** Somewhat inauspiciously, a new Republican Party, Cumann Poblachta na h-Éireann, was signalled, on March 9, from Barry's Hotel. It would not take seats in either parliament, north or south, although a minority of delegates had other views on that. The inaugural meeting was attended by many of the old names; Pádraig Mac Logan, Dr. J.P. Brennan, Dr. A. Cooney, Madge Daly of Limerick, Nodlag Brugha, Art O'Connor, B.L., Eamonn Gallon of Co. Donegal, Jerome Riordan, Maurice Twomey, Sean Mac Bride, Fiona Plunkett and Blathnid Nic Carthaig. There was a long list of supporters. Many of these names, would, in 1948, help in founding Clann na Poblachta, which, after some initial success, wrought its own downfall in 1948, through associating with Fine Gael.

**Spain:** Churches and convents were reported under attack, with photographs of burnt out buildings appearing in the world press.

**Rhineland:** France demanded that Germany withdraw, but Britain, under Baldwin and Anthony Eden, made no move, although hinting that they might, should Belgium or France be attacked.

**British Army Recruiting:** Arklow Urban District Council were reported on March 12, objecting strongly to well founded reports of British Army recruiting and of co-operation by gardaí in furnishing character references.

**Six Counties:** In a parliamentary reply to Harry Midgely M.P, the Secretary for Education stated that, in schools in the Six Counties, 'two foreign languages were taught'; Irish and French.

**Torch and Lily:** F. F. announced they they were adopting the torch as their Easter emblem, while a colour advertisement for the Lily appeared at the same time, with the slogan, *Gradam do Laochra na h-Éireann*.

**The Irish Bulletin:** The story of this underground information sheet appeared in the *Irish Press* of March 16. Produced daily, by four men and a woman, with a typewriter and a multigraph; it was first issued to press agencies in November 1919. The editorial staff consisted of Frank Gallagher, Robert Brennan and Erskine Childers.

**De Valera Interrupted:** The St. Patrick's Day broadcast of Mr. De Valera was briefly interrupted by a voice; *hello, everybody. This is the I.R.A.* Some words followed.

**James Francis Egan:** Deceased Fenian, who had been sentenced to 20 years with John Daly of Limerick in Birmingham in 1884, would have a tablet to his name placed in Glasnevin, by Madge Daly, sister of Mrs. Tom Clarke\*.

\* See *Revolutionary Woman*, By Mrs. T. Clarke.

**Television on the Way:** On March 19, at Clerys, of O'Connell Street, a demonstration of primitive television was held within a darkened room.

**R.I.C Pensioners:** Those who resigned or were dismissed in the Tan period, had a pension restored by a Pensions Order on March 20. There were 300 applications for the pension which was estimated would cost the exchequer over one year £5,000.

**Derry:** A sentence for attempted kidnap was recorded but not imposed, on V. Doherty and Gerry and John Mc Cool.

**Wolfe Tone Monument:** Funds for a lofty monument were collected in 1898, but the monument, for which a stone was laid, on the site shortly after occupied by the Boer War Triumphal arch (facing down Grafton Street), was never proceeded with. Following the split of 1922, the monies were placed on deposit in a bank. There was at this time, March 23, £3,500 on hands, in the Munster and Leinster Bank. The trustees at this time were Mrs. Tom Clarke, J.R Reynolds and J.R O'Beirne. The fund was absorbed finally in creating the dour figure and upright granite pillars erected (sculptor: Edward Delaney) at the north east corner, opposite the Shelbourne Hotel.

**Sir Oswald Mosley:** His fascist movement at this time was at its height and could rarely rally without trouble resulting. On March 23, fighting was reported from within and around the London Albert Hall.

**Jerome Connor,** U. S sculptor arrived in Cobh at this time to supervise work on his partly commenced *Luisitania* memorial. The Urban Council had expressed annoyance that it had not - commenced some years before - been completed, and were threatening to withdraw permission. The grouping, a poignant reminder of mass drowning, was never completed by Connor, but remained to be finished 30 years later by another hand.

**Zeppelins** made their joint five and a half hour flight on March 22; Graf and L.Z 129 (Hindenburg) from Freidrichshafen.

**S. F Condemns I.R.A:** Their Standing Committee, in a statement of March 23, condemned the I.R.A which, they said, had made of itself a political organisation. It will render more difficult the work of those organisations that stand for the Republic.

**Vice-Admiral Henry Boyle Somerville** was shot dead on the night of Monday, March 23, at *Point House*, Castletownsend, in West Cork. The two maids of the house were absent, having gone to witness a drama presented by a travelling show company. About 9.30 p m, in answer to a knock, the admiral proceeded to the door; the house was lit only by oil lamps, common in rural places at this time. His wife, from a sitting room, heard some words and then rapid fire; five bullets penetrated his body. Are you Mr. Somerville, he had been asked. I am Vice-Admiral Somerville, he replied. Quite a number of young fellows used to come for advice on how to join the navy, his wife related next day, explaining the late night call. A card left at the house had upon it; *this British agent has sent 52 Irish boys to British forces within the last four months. he will send no more.* (From a Republican point of view this would be seen in the context of the recent concern about British Army recruiting, expressed in Arklow, coupled with the admission by Vice-Admiral Somerville's wife.) He claimed to have fought in four wars; his brother, Vice-Admiral Hugh Somerville, lived nearby. Edith Oenone, his close relative, in partnership with her cousin, was

the Somerville and Ross literary authorship; their stories of nineteenth century Irish life achieving great distinction. Within days his wife left for England, leaving instructions that *Point House* be sold.

**Hannah Sheehy-Skeffington**, had an article in the *Irish Press* of March 25, on Michael Davitt, entitled, *A Great Irish Tribune*. Davitt, born March 25, 1846 at Strade, close to Castlebar, died in 1906.

**De Valera's Eye Trouble:** De Valera - like James Joyce -, frequently but unknown to each other, in the same city, was never free from eye trouble. At this time, and for many weeks, he was attending, in Zurich, the clinic of Alfred Vogt.

**Cumann Poblachta** held its first organising meeting in Barry's Hotel, on March 26, with Sean Mac Bride presiding. Attending were Austin Stack, junior, Sheila Humphreys, Elsin O'Rahilly, Mrs. Tony Woods, Mrs. Sidney Czira, Nodlaig Brugha, Blathnid Nic Carthaig, Louise Coughlan, Kathleen Gleeson, The O'Rahilly, B.L., Doctor Mc Kee, Dr. C.J Mc Carthy, Maeve Phelan, of Wexford Street, Nellie Murphy, Pauline Mangan, Emmet and Dick Humphreys, Ben Doyle, Doctor Tom Powell, M. Keating, J. Mc Grath, J. Fitzgerald, D. O'Reilly, Seamus Mallin, B.E, W. Reilly, Donal O'Donoghue, Mick Fitzpatrick and Sean Keating.

**Pro-Cathedral:** The Lenten mission closed on the night of Sunday, March 29. Five thousand men escorted Archbishop Most Rev. Dr. Byrne inside the building. In Gardiner Street church, Fr. P. J Gannon, a noted Jesuit, delivered a strong sermon. Class warfare was a suicidal doctrine, he declared. Capitalism, in the proper form, could employ easily the two billion inhabitants of our planet.

**Derry:** The latest gerrymander of the city would ensure Unionist hegemony for generations to come; that, in a city, where on a head count, nationalists exceeded others three to one.

**Enniscorthy:** Mrs. Brugha, with two thousand attending, unveiled, Sunday afternoon, at the Post Office, a plaque referred to above, to Commdt. Paddy O'Brien, O.C. Four Courts, and Volunteer M. Spillane, killed in action against the Free State, nearby on July 11, 1922. Present were Tom Lawrence and Dermot O'Brien, with Mrs. P. Booth, sister, together with the Spillane parents, and a brother.

**Belfast:** Constable J.J Harrison, of Glenravel Street barracks, York Street, travelling on his bicycle at 10.0 p m, was hailed by three youths; one of whom levelled at him a revolver, shooting him in the shoulder before making off. Harrison was identified as having been in some way active in the July troubles.

**Zeppelin Hindenburg** flew on the last day of March, from Germany to Brazil; an unprecedented length of flight at the time. It carried 50 passengers and a crew of 40, travelling at 94 m.p.h.

**Clondalkin Paper Mills**, closed since 1921, were about to reopen under entrepreneur J.J Walsh.

**Roger Casement:** *The Final Vindication of Roger Casement*; a work by Geoffrey de C. Parmiter, was reviewed in the *Irish Press* of April 7, by M. J. Mc Manus, literary editor.

**Mansion House Debate:** Enterprising Cumann na mBan organised a debate on the motion, *that only a Sovereign Republic, having no connection with the British Empire, will satisfy the aspirations of the Irish people*. With lawyer Art O'Connor in the chair, the protagonists consisted of Hon. Frank Pakenham and Mr. Frank Mac Dermot facing

Mary Mac Swiney and Sean Mac Bride. The Round Room was filled, with many outside.

**Poulaphouca:** It was announced on April 7, that the million pound scheme to harness the Liffey at the falls of Poulaphouca had been approved by the Dept. of Industry and Commerce, the E.S.B and Dublin Corporation.

**Spain:** Dr. Alcala Zamora, President since 1931, was deposed by a Socialist and Communist alliance in the Cortes.

**Population Up:** Good news for population watchers, and a boost for the F.F government. 61,000, the first increase for decades was recorded, making the 26 Counties 3,033,000 in number.

**French Fears:** It was learned that France would seek sanctions against Germany should that country attempt to fortify the former forts along the Rhine. Meanwhile French engineers were busily building the underground complex known as the Maginot Line, but that line would not extend along the frontier with Belgium, and it was through that frontier that Germany invaded in 1940.

**Belfast:** Constable King, in Balmoral Avenue, signalled a suspect car to stop, on the evening of April 9, and was later found with a gunshot wound in the chest.

**Hindenburg: Crippled:** The great airship, returning from Brazil, was slowed by the failure of one engine. It received a special permission to sail over France.

**Nation's Dead Honoured:** Apart from many country wide parades, by both Free State Army and I.R.A, thousands again marched in Dublin. A group of 60 with red tabs but with no banners, fell in at the rear of the Republican column on its way to Glasnevin. Led by Sean Murray with Capt. Jack White, and Willie Gallacher, Scottish M.P, they were attacked from the side walks in Westmoreland Street, and along the route, accompanied by cries, 'we want no communists in Ireland'. In Fermanagh, the R.U.C baton charged a group marching to the graveyard at Tempo.

**Poland:** In an affray between police and unemployed, 20 demonstrators were killed. Poland had at this time an authoritarian government.

**Social Credit:** A social credit meeting called for the Gloucester Diamond in Dublin, on Sunday morning, had its platform upset. Local people mistook the group for communists.

**Britain Rearming:** It was announced on April 22, that Britain would increase taxation to allow an extra fifty million to be spent upon defence.

**Austria:** Austria was again nervous of a coup within the country. 50,000 conscripts were called up.

**Derry:** The local Protestant League sought to ban a civic welcome proposed for Cardinal Mac Rory on his visit to the city. The occasion was the consecration of St. Eunan's Cathedral.

**University Seats Abolished:** Held up the requisite period, by a blocking Senate, the Bill abolishing them was finally passed 58:40.

**Connaught Rangers:** Surviving Rangers, who had lost pension rights from Britain as a result of their revolt on June 28, 1920, in Jullundur, in the Punjab; 62 being courtmartialled, and one, James Daly, being executed, had their rights restored by the government; back dated to 1934.

**Belfast: Craobh Ruadh, Crown Entry Arrests.** On Sunday afternoon, April 26, a

heavily armed squad of R.U.C raced up the three floors, smashing in a door where a courtmartial was taking place, arresting 13 present there. It was an important haul, that followed permission to recognise the court in the Campbell College case. They were brought to Chichester Street and conveyed to Crumlin Road.

**Dungarvan:** John Egan, of 24 Mitchell Street, was shot down on the evening of Monday 27. Four men had arrived to his home in a car seized from District Justice Troy of Fermoy. Not finding him there they moved to a nearby shop where Egan had purchased a glass of milk.

**Shots Fired at Destroyer:** An official report of April, reveals that rifle shots were fired in the direction of the British destroyer *Tinedos*, moored in Cobh harbour.

**Castleblaney:** A boot factory was under construction in the town. The government claimed that, between large and small, 700 factories had opened since 1932.

**Balrath, Co. Meath:** An attempt was made on April 27 to fire the local Fianna Fáil hall, resulting in some scorching.

**Derry:** The Unionist phalanx on the Corporation defeated a motion to set aside the planned gerrymander. Rival factions were inside and outside the chamber.

**Cork City:** A police and Branch swoop pulled in nine, including Sean Mac Swiney and Eugene Powell. All told, 31 were brought by train to Dublin and lodged in Arbour Hill.

**Diesel Rail Cars:** The Great Northern Railway had built a number in Dundalk. More economical than steam, they were introduced on branch lines, including Carrickmacross, Cootehill, Bundoran and Howth.

**Shanganagh Castle,** formerly in the ownership of the Rowan Hamilton family, and later Wentworth Allen, was sold in May. (It is now a juvenile prison).

**Abyssinia:** With the Italian Army advancing, the Emperor fled on May 2, upon a British warship. Anarchy was said to reign in Addis Ababa; the streets strewn with dead.

**Attempt to Restart An Phoblacht:** Cumann Poblachta required a newspaper, although it was uncertain whether *An Phoblacht* would be the best vehicle. Its first issue of April 29, was seized however. Sean Mac Bride wrote to Seán T. Ó Ceallaigh, Vice President of the Executive Council to inquire the reason. He was informed simply that it had been seized under Article 2 A of the Constitution.

**Egypt:** The nationalist Wafd party won 3:1 in a parliamentary election.

**Spain:** There were now almost daily reports of burnings. On May 4, five convents and two churches were burned in a suburb of Madrid.

**Curragh Mutiny:** Col. Maurice Moore and Frank Mac Dermot were engaged in an exchange of letters on the subject.

**Italy:** The war is over declared Mussolini. Ethiopia is Italian.

**Aer Lingus Teo:** Its first aircraft, *An t-Iolar*, was christened on May 7, by Seán Ó h-Uadhaigh, chairman of Aer Lingus.

**G.A.A Teams Leave for U.S.A:** The victorious all-Ireland Cavan team (football) and the Limerick team (hurling), departed at this time for the U.S.

**Mob Surrounds Congress:** A crowd of 2000 overwhelmed an attempt by George Gilmore and Frank Ryan, with three other speakers, to hold a Saturday meeting at Cathal Brugha Street. Afterwards they required a garda escort to a tram at Nelson



Pillar, followed by a chanting mob of 200.

**Turf Development:** Speaking in An Dáil, Sean Lemass stated that in excess of 40,000 could be employed on peat development. He was speaking on the Turf Development Bill.

**De Valera Home:** After more than six weeks spent in Zurich with his recurrent eye trouble, De Valera returned to Dublin on May 10.

**90 In Jail:** Maud Gonne's figure (criticising Labour Party inaction) was 90 Republicans in jail, north and south.

**Finglas Arrests:** About 50 young men were seen drilling in a field in Finglas. They had come on bicycles. 12 were arrested.

**Cumann Poblachta:** Maurice Twomey launched the Party in Enniscorthy where there would be a by-election. England, he declared, is making ready for war. Later, 50 attended a convention to choose the candidate.

**The Round House, Kilmashogue:** This extraordinary 'ink well' structure, with a shallow dome roof, existed in hilly south Dublin, until burned by British soldiers in September 1920. It was owned by an arty nationalist, by name Duncan C. Parker; a photograph in the *Irish Press* of May 14, shows Gerald Crofts, the singer, standing upon the roof. Visitors to it, prior to its burning, included St. John Gogarty, Arthur Griffith, Erskine Childers and others.

**Armagh:** For having in his possession an engraving of Theobald Wolfe Tone inscribed, *to break the connection with England is the aim of Óglaigh na h-Éireann*; William Dorgan of Castle Street, Armagh, was sentenced on May 14, to three months imprisonment.

**J.H. Thomas, Financial Scandal:** The Secretary of State for the Dominions, was arraigned, on May 14, at an Inquiry in London, on a charge of leaking budget secrets for reward to a friend and golfing partner, Alfred Bates. Knowledge of a projected rise in income tax had benefited Bates considerably.

**Sean Mac Swiney,** a brother of Terence, was released suddenly from Arbour Hill, after a ten day hunger strike. He had been held without charge.

**Belfast:** The bitterly sectarian Protestant League, scored a victory, as reported May 11, when they defeated the official Unionist candidate in Duncairn for a municipal seat.

**Baileborough:** A boot factory was to be established in the Co. Cavan town. Ireland would soon be well shod.

**Tomás Mac Donagh:** In a radio talk series on 'Great Irishmen', Mrs. E. Mc Carvill spoke of her University teacher, Tomás Mac Donagh, of Cloughjordan on May 18. As Eileen Mc Grane, she herself had played a pivotal behind the scenes role during the Tan period.\*

**Senate Dies:** 'We leave the stage conscious of our rectitude,' declared Cathaoirleach, T.W. Westropp-Bennett, as the Free State Senate adjourned *sine die* on May 19.

**Two Cement Factories:** Danish, English and Irish interests would combine to build two; one at Drogheda port, and one at Mungret, west of the city of Limerick. Cement Ltd, would be capitalised at £750,000.

**Twomey and Lehane Arrested:** The government bit the bullet with the

\*. She refused graciously to speak in *Survivors*.

arrest, leaving 11.30. Mass, on Thursday morning, May 21, of Maurice Twomey, Chief of Staff, I.R.A; and elsewhere in Dublin, Con Lehane, at the top of the organisation was also held. Maud Gonne's home, *Roebuck House*, was searched for Sean.

**Belfast: A Damning Report:** From London, as reported May 23, came the Report of the National Council of Civil Liberties on the Belfast, July riots. It was not nice reading but it would make no difference to the lives of Catholics and nationalists resident there; and neither Stormont nor Westminster would pay heed. Catholics, said the report, had been denied all lawful means of conducting their political activities, or of advancing the cause of a united Ireland. Days later, Lord Craigavon, Prime Minister, answered back; 'no importance should be attached to a document containing such misrepresentations.... Their sole ambition is the establishment of an all-Ireland republic, to which, I need hardly say, the Loyalists of Ulster will never agree'.

**Stewartstown, Tyrone:** As a curtain raiser to another hot summer, an excursion train bringing loyalists from the York Street area of Belfast, arrived on a Sunday in this small town. Marching to a Catholic school, they smashed windows. Villagers returning from their fields went on a counter attack, driving them off. Regrouping followed, but again they were driven off, whereupon a troop of R.U.C escorted them from the scene.

**Wales:** Thousands of protestors gathered, May 24, at Pwllheli on the coast of Gwynedd, the site of a proposed bombing school. Some fisticuffs were exchanged with locals who wanted the employment.

**Paddy Kenna:** An official report, for Sunday, May 24, refers to a public meeting at Cathal Brugha Street, where Paddy Kenna appealed for recruits. 'All young men should join the I.R.A; we have plenty of guns; all we want is the men'.

**Ball Trial:** After a prolonged trial, Edward Preston Ball, was found guilty but insane. The body of Mrs. Lavinia Ball, was never located.

**Palestine:** Guerrilla fighting continued against the British mandate; the Arabs feared what was eventually to happen, simply, that the authors of the Balfour Declaration would enable Jewish settlers to possess much of their land.

**Roscommon:** Five young men were detained for questioning; John Mitchell, John Mellin, Denis Daly, James Connor and James Morris.

**Palestine:** There were reports of 'pitched battles' in the press of May 27; with Arabs fighting British forces. Reinforcements were sent from Cairo.

**Kelleher and Others Sentenced:** The press on the same day, reported sentences by the Tribunal; Patrick J. Collins, Tom Kelleher of Upton, Kieran Finbar Mc Carthy, to nine months each. Sean Coughlan, twelve months, and John M. Connolly and Joseph Stockdale, of Cobh, to three months each.

**Queen Mary Sails:** The new ocean liner, the largest in the world, slipped out on its maiden voyage, from Southampton, hoping to capture the Blue Riband with the fastest crossing

**The Dawn Film** received a rapturous welcome from a 1600 audience in the Capitol Cinema, when screened for the first time on May 27, with many distinguished people present. The story centred around an ambush against the Tans in Kerry.

**Cork Men Sentenced:** 11 Cork men, mostly from Cork city, were sentenced by the Tribunal, in a report of May 28: Michael Hogan, Tomás Mac Curtain, Jerry Mc Carthy, John and Patrick Curtain, Eugene Powell, Patrick Mac Swiney, Tim O'Callaghan, James Counihan. Prosecuted by G.P. Murnaghan, instructed by J.S. O'Connor, each received twelve months except Jerry Mc Carthy who, upon a contempt charge, was put back six months.

**First Flight:** The Aer Lingus craft, the De Haviland Dragon, the eight seater *Iolar*, left Baldonnell on Wednesday, May 27, for Bristol; the first flight by the state airline.

**Goodbye Senate:** A final Dáil vote, on May 19, of 74 to 52, ended the life of the Senate.

**R.U.C Raiding Fermanagh:** In raids around Beleek and Castlecauldwell, the R.U.C caused penal damage in some cases; with beds and mattress's ripped, and thatch, in one case, removed.

**More Cork Men Sentenced:** A report of May 29, listed Liam Leddy of Araglin, Michael Byrne of Conna, James Beary of Coolmohan, Thomas Wall of Fermoy, John Duggan of Ballinlough, Patrick Roche of Macroom, Denis Mulchinock of Kanturk, Patrick O'Leary of Millstreet, Denis O'Connor of Ballyclough, and Joseph Kinneally of Newmarket (the latter found not guilty); all sentenced to twelve months on the usual membership and refusing to answer charges.

**Herr Von Ribbentrop:** The new German Ambassador at the Court of St. James, arrived, May 29, to *Mount Stewart*, on the Ards peninsula, upon a short stay with Lord Londonderry, the former Minister for Air.

**Steel Carriages:** Great Southern Railways announced, June 30, that passenger carriages, for the suburban services from Westland Row and Harcourt Street, and out of Cork, would shortly be of an all steel construction.

**Palestine:** Fighting was more intense, with machine guns in action.

**Joseph Devlin's Memorial:** On Sunday, May 31, in Milltown Cemetery, T.J. Campbell, K.C, M.P, unveiled a memorial to the late Joe Devlin. Among the distinguished parliamentary host attending, from north and south, was Hannah-Sheehy Skeffington.

**Tram and Bus Strike:** A lightning Whitsun stoppage occurred on Monday in Dublin. It concerned payment for hours worked upon a bank holiday.

**'The Dawn':** Homage was paid in Dublin, on that Monday, to the 'men who gave you The Dawn': Tom Cooper, garage owner, and Donal Ó Cahill, poet; both of Killarney.

**Belfast Treason Trial:** Stormont and the Crown had decided that the men captured at the courtmartial in Crown Entry should be charged under the Treason Felony Act of 1848; the Act which permitted transportation to Australia and Van Diemen's Land, now Tasmania, after the attempted 1848 Rising. Refusing to recognise the court, 13 men appeared before Mr. Topping, R.M: Jim Killeen of Dublin\*, Sean Mc Cool of Stranorlar; Michael O'Boyle of Dublin; John Mc Nally, Ardilea Street, Belfast; William James Rice, Merrion Street, Belfast; John Mc Adam, Derry; James Steele, North Queen Street, Belfast; William Mulholland, Gracehill Street, Belfast; Michael Traynor, Rockhill Road, Belfast; John Collins Fox, Portadown; Michael Gallagher, Dromore, Co. Tyrone; Charles Mc Glade, Ardilea Street, Belfast.

The detailed plan of the attempted post-Christmas raid on Campbell College armoury - a central feature of the courtmartial - was read. The three gate lodges were to have been seized, and 200 rifles conveyed to a 'new destination'.

**Ulster Gaelic League:** The annual *Dáil-Mhór* was held in the *Árd Scoil*, Divis Street, with nine Ulster Counties and Louth (ancient Ulster) represented. The opening address, in Irish, was given by Dr. Mageean, Bishop of Down and Connor.

**J.H. Thomas, Guilty:** The Tribunal, sitting upon the budget leak allegations, found Thomas guilty, June 2, of informing two friends, Sir Alfred Butt, M.P. and Alfred Bates, a wealthy businessman. Thomas was expected to resign his seat.

**France:** The socialist Popular Front government of Leon Blum, was said to be in crisis. He had taken office at the age of 64, at a time when the country was swept by strikes.

**Cooley Factory:** Three factories were in course of building by the state to absorb surplus potato crops, Inishowen, Killala and Cooley, Co. Louth. They would distil the crops into pure alcohol. That at Cooley was almost complete at this time.

**China:** Having first invaded central China in 1931, Japan was continuing to press into the country.

**Finglas Sentences:** Following the raid upon a field drilling party near Finglas, Co. Dublin, when 12 young men were pulled in, Tribunal sentences, of six to twelve months were applied by number, as their names and home address's were unknown; it being a common practice to withhold names to enable homes to be cleared of articles. Phil Christie, of Mc Kee Avenue; Liam Ó Luanaigh of Cabra, and Joe Brady of Upper Rutland Street, were known already.

**Fintona:** Orangemen, in a train party from Belfast, attending a demonstration of some thousands in the west Tyrone town, indulged in a frenzy of shooting, after which they attacked local youths, shouting sectarian slogans. There were three arrests.

**Ballymacarret:** A train returning from a Saturday féis in Newcastle, Co. Down, was attacked with stones as it entered the Belfast terminus.

**Eamonn Duggan,** one of the five Treaty signatories, collapsed on June 7, at a U.I.P. meeting being held in Dun Laoire Town Hall, where he chaired the Borough Council. Duggan was a lightweight in the politics of the time; his selection for the delegation occasioned surprise when announced in the autumn of 1921.

**Night Time Battle in Jerusalem:** Guerrilla warfare was continuing in Palestine. A report of June 9, spoke of Arabs occupying trenches around Jerusalem dating from the period of Allenby in World War One; their struggle being against Jewish immigration, and the operation of the British mandate which permitted it.

**Tipperary:** Sean Lemass was continuing energetically to promote the development of Irish controlled industries. Two new factories opened in Co. Tipperary; one for the manufacture of gloves, and one for a lino substitute called balatum. De Valera arrived by train, being welcomed by rail workers at Limerick Junction. In the town he was escorted by the Tipperary Pipe Band, and a contingent of Old I.R.A. The formal proceedings were chaired by Rev. J.M. Hayes C.C., President of

\* A Dublin address would not indicate their counties of origin; Killeen was from Co. Longford.

Muinntear na Tíre. 200 would be employed in the two factories.

**Sir John Purser Griffith**, the engineer who had promoted over the years the Poulaphouca scheme, was made a Freeman of the City of Dublin at this time. A pure Welshman, he described himself. Now over 70, he had been born in Holyhead and educated at Trinity College.

**Cavan and Limerick** football and hurling teams received an enthusiastic reception when they returned to Cobh at the end of a successful tour of the U.S., on June 9.

**A New Second Chamber?:** The Executive Council set up, at this time, a Commission with the task of making recommendations for a chamber to replace the former Senate. Chaired by Hugh Kennedy, Chief Justice, it included Attorney General, Conor Maguire, as vice-chairman, with 20 other legal and political nominees, but only one woman; Helena Concannon, T.D., historian.

**Eamonn J. Duggan:** Treaty signatory\*, was buried on June 9, in Glasnevin, next to the grave of Arthur Griffith; the coffin being draped in the tricolour and the Blueshirt flag. For such a colourless man, the attendance was remarkable; almost all of the Fianna Fáil cabinet, together with a host of notables attended.

**Trams to Trollys:** Belfast Corporation announced their intention to phase out trams, commencing in east Belfast. They would be replaced by trolley buses.

**Seige Mentality:** Mr. J. Gordon, Parliamentary Secretary to the Six County Minister of Labour, was quoted on June 11, declaring at a meeting of the Royal Black Preceptory (an upper echelon of the Orange Order) in Newtonstewart; it is evident that the new Nationalist organisation about to be established in the Six Counties would work in conjunction with their enemies in the South. (It is noteworthy that, at this time, and until the seventies, the official term Northern Ireland, was rarely used.)

**Bodenstown Train Advertisement:** Unaware that the parade would be banned, the Great Southern Railways were advertising a train service for the 'Republican Pilgrimage'.

**Dublin Municipal Election Candidates:** George Gilmore and Frank Ryan had put themselves forward in Areas 2 and 3. At a meeting in Cathal Brugha Street, Gilmore promised that 'a Republican could do much to foster republicanism inside Dublin Corporation'. Frank Ryan promised free school books, a relief of tenement overcrowding, the restoration of trial by jury, and freedom for the Republican Press. Neither of them however would be elected.

**Fall of J.H Thomas:** Greeted with glee in Ireland, was the verdict by a tribunal of inquiry into budget leaks benefiting two wealthy men, Sir Alfred Butt, M.P. and Alfred Bates. Ex-Labour man Thomas, Commonwealth Secretary, and an opinionated critic of De Valera's constitutional changes, had been found guilty on June 11. The House was officially closed to him; on that day he departed for the last time.

**No Bigotry:** There is no bigotry in the south of Ireland, declared the Rev. W.T Lumley at the Methodist Conference in Belfast on June 11. For all that, he said, the

\* Absent, at a function on the night of December 5, 1921; his signature was pasted on from a menu card (which had been signed previously) in Downing Street, but signed upon the document next day. See *Survivors*.

Protestant population is steadily dwindling.

**F.F. Pilgrimage to Bodenstown:** Described as a great pilgrimage, the spokesman was commenting on the number attending which may have been 4000. De Valera laid the wreath, and Tomás Ó Deirg delivered the oration.

**G.K. Chesterton:** Catholic essayist and novelist, died on June 14, aged 62.

**Cumann Poblacht na h-Éireann:** Publicity for this new Republican party had been negligible since its foundation. At this time a public meeting was reported from Nenagh, where Alec Lynn was declaring that the Free State was neither Irish, free or a state. Sean O'Leary of Dublin also spoke.

**Acting Minister of Justice,** Gerald Boland, declared in An Dáil, that 'any organisation promoting the use of arms will not be tolerated'. This was in reference to the shooting of Vice-Admiral Somerville, and John Egan.

**Six County Deputation:** A deputation was received by De Valera on June 17, consisting of Very Rev. Mons. Tierney, accompanied by three other priests, and Mr. E. Killen, Senator T. Mc Laughlin, Cahir Healy, M.P., A.E. Donnelly, M.P., A.J. Mulvey, M.P., J.J. Mc Carroll, M.P., and W.J. Doherty of Derry, Bernard Hay of Dungannon and P.J. Flanagan of Enniskillen. A statement issued said that 'today the President received a deputation of Nationalists from the six north eastern counties which put before him, as a Member of Parliament for South Down, and as head of the Saorstát government, the disabilities under which the Nationalists of the Six Counties are suffering. Their main complaint was the repeated gerrymander from Derry to Newry; and the fact that Catholics had to largely fund their own schools, while Protestants incurred little funding, as they enjoyed the full benefit of the state built schools'. Stormont ignored the report of the deputation.

**Special Powers Act:** Lord Craigavon informed his parliament that the Special Powers Act was now permanent. He was replying to J.W. Nixon, Independent Unionist, who complained of recent roughing up of young Protestants by the R.U.C.

**Bodenstown Arrangements:** A small note, two days ahead of Sunday, referred to the travel arrangements. There would be many buses and 22 special trains. The oration would be by Mary Mac Swiney.

**De Valera on the League:** In a statement to the Dáil, De Valera announced that both the League and Sanctions had failed. The fate of Ethiopia was a warning to the small states of Europe. It was followed by a long debate during which recent constitutional history was covered.

**'Govt. Bans I.R.A. Parade':** That was one headline for Saturday, June 20. The order, and a corresponding one, which declared the I.R.A. an unlawful organisation, was issued at 10 p m on Friday evening, over the name of Gerald Boland, Minister for Posts and Telegraphs, and Acting Minister for Justice.

**At Lisbellaw (Co. Fermanagh) Petty Sessions:** Hugh Mc Gauran, of Letter, and Stephen Reilly, of Milltown, Newtownbutler, were charged under the Special Powers Act. An R.U.C. sergeant of Tempo stated that on Easter Sunday, about 200 people arrived walking, in cars, and on bicycles, at the graveyard of Tobal, to the grave of Philip Breen, killed in 1920. Batons were drawn by the force present, whereupon the parade dispersed. The two men were sentenced to three months hard labour, with a further three months, unless they entered into recognisances.

**Maurice Twomey Sentenced:** Arrested leaving Mass on Home Farm Road, on May 21, Maurice Twomey was sentenced on June 19, to three years and three months, on charges of membership of an unlawful association, and a refusal to account for his movements. He was prosecuted by Kevin Haugh with J.S O'Connor, solicitor.

**Condemnation:** Rarely voicing an opinion on matters political, Cardinal Mac Rory, perforce, at Maynooth, condemned recent shootings. They were murders, he said, that had shocked the country.

**Bodenstown Ban Enforced:** Contingents of the Free State Army, accompanied by police, held the rail terminals of the principal cities, with some hundreds stationed around Sallins, and at the graveyard. All police leave had been cancelled, as was the movement of the special buses and trains arranged for the occasion. 'Wild scenes' were reported in Dublin, and there were tales of arrests in the city and provinces. Some lorries carrying supporters were intercepted, but there was no concerted effort to breach, or to get around, the ban. One group however held a meeting close to Sallins. Hannah Sheehy-Skeffington attempted, despite police pushing and shoving, to read there the speech prepared by Mary Mac Swiney, With her was Count and Countess Plunkett, Mrs. Tom Barry, Jim and Mrs. O'Donovan, Lil O'Donel, Kathleen Lynn, Jack Plunkett, Eithne Coyle (Eithne Ní Cumhaill), Annie O'Farrelly, Blaithnid Nic Carthaigh, Frank Ryan, Cora Hughes, Fiona Plunkett, Maire Comerford, Paddy Mc Grath, Mrs. Brughá, Dr Tom Powell, Seamus O'Kelly, Maeve Phelan and Mary Gaynor.

An official report refers to what was described as a disorderly public meeting, held in the evening in College Green.

**Justification:** Discussing the forthcoming 'New Constitution', in the Dáil, De Valera warned that 'an organisation that relies upon force is, by the very terms of Article 2 A of the (current) Constitution, an illegal association'.

**President to Replace Governor-General:** In a continuing report on his New Constitution, De Valera informed the House that the Governor-General post would be replaced by an elected representative of the people who would act as the ceremonial head of state.

**Pogrom Inquiry Sought:** By a report of June 25, a deputation representing 180 members of parliament (all party) approached Prime Minister Baldwin at Westminster, seeking an inquiry into the July 1935 Belfast Pogrom. There would be no inquiry, they were informed.

**Mike Fitzpatrick,** as a municipal candidate in Dublin, was reported on June 25, speaking at Hart's Corner, in the north inner city.

**Tom Hales Resigns:** Tom Hales, one of three west Cork brothers, renowned in the Tan struggle, announced his resignation from Fianna Fáil on June 26. 'I feel I can no longer continue as a member of the Fianna Fáil Party'. He was first elected in 1933; but he would now sit as an Independent Republican. 'Three cheers for Tom Hales', called Frank Ryan, to his audience in College Green. 'Tom Hales is the only honest Fianna Fáil T.D.' However, there were no more defections from what had become an obedient and monolithic party.

**Gun Running in 1920:** Sean T O'Kelly, who at that time was Republican repre-

sentative in Paris, along with George Gavan Duffy, related, in the *Irish Press* of June 27, his efforts, on instructions from Collins, to obtain continental arms. Contacting Mussolini, then a rising star but not yet head of the Italian state, he was advised to visit Gabriel d'Annunzio, in Fiume. Arms were promised at once, and were loaded upon a vessel, but 'owing to disputes having arisen among the Italian adventurers as to who would lead the expedition, the boat never sailed'.\*

**Seamus Mallin**, a relative of Michael of 1916, speaking at Chapelizod on behalf of Cumann Poblachta na h-Éireann, compared the objectives of Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael. So far as Republicans are concerned, he said, they are identical.

**Poblachta Branches in Kerry:** A spate of branches were formed at this time in Ballylongford, Kilcummin and Dingle.

**Tension in Belfast:** With the Twelfth approaching, Catholics wedged in the small streets again feared the rising tension. Dr. Daniel Mageean, Bishop of Down and Connor, expressed anxiety. Cardinal Mac Rory spoke of Six County towns that had been 'shamefully gerrymandered'.

**Tuam:** A report of June 30 refers to the memorable end to the three day Catholic Truth Society Congress centred upon St. Jarlath's College in that town. 20,000 children paraded, as a finale, within the grounds.

**Palestine Police:** A named Waterford city man was reported, June 30, wounded in Palestine. There were numbers of Irishmen at that time serving in the Palestine police.

**J.W Burns:** His death was reported in Dublin. Burns, a Methodist and a Republican, prior to 1916 was acquainted with Skeffington and Connolly. He returned from Canada to Dublin in 1923, and was at once interned. After a 26 day hunger strike, he was released.

\* There are allusions to these contacts under d'Annunzio in *Survivors*. There is more 'meat' in a recent work by Brian P. Murphy on *John Chartres*.



## CHRONOLOGY: THE YEAR 1936: July to December:

**Paddy Kenna, of Dublin:** A sitting of the Tribunal at Collins Barracks, on Tuesday, June 30, sentenced Paddy Kenna, of Darley Street, Harolds Cross, to eighteen months for membership of the I.R.A. Kenna, on May 24, had publicly appealed at Cathal Brugha Street, for recruits.

**Michael Conway at Tribunal:** As reported on July 3, Michael Conway, of Mary Street, Clonmel, was charged before the Tribunal, with the murder of John Egan of Dungarvan, who died on April 26. Conway refused to recognise the court. The trial was set for July 15.

**Spain:** Fear of an imminent *coup d'etat* resulted in a thousand 'fascists' being taken in widespread arrests.

**Inflammatory Speeches:** An official report refers to an 'inflammatory I.R.A. speech' made by Sean Mac Swiney, presumably in Cork city or district. A similar speech, it adds, was made by him in August in which the phrase 'spies will get it in the neck' was quoted. Perhaps he did say that, although it sounds an improbable phrase from Mac Swiney.

**Tom Kealey, Celbridge,** was before the Tribunal on a membership charge on July 7. Refusing to recognise the court, he was sentenced to six months imprisonment.

**Jim Larkin's Union:** The Dublin Trades Council, on July 7, rescinded by 84 votes to 41, a resolution banning the affiliation of the Workers' Union of Ireland.

**Donal O'Donoghue,** editor of the suppressed *An Phoblacht*, was arrested on July 9, at Ballydavid, in the Kerry gaeltacht, where he was holidaying with his wife, the former Shelia Humphries.

**Thirty Men Before Tribunal:** Arrested travelling towards the banned Bodenstown of June 21, 30 young men, almost all from Limerick city, were brought before the Tribunal on Monday, July 10. Their names were:- Patrick Greaney, Athlunkard Street; Michael Ryan, Mungret Street; William Quinn, Nicholas Street; John Flood, Prospect; John Moloney, Mardyke; Edward Hannigan, Mardyke; Joseph Crowe, Carr Street; Thomas Allen, Cashe's Row; James Collins, Mungret Street; Patrick Power, Smith's Row; Patrick Gavin, Joyce's Lane; Michael O'Mara, Newgate Place; Sean Glynn, Pennywell; Daniel Quaid, Georges Quay; Patrick Keogh, Grey Lane; James Liston, Coogan Street; Sean O'Dwyer, Dixon's Lane; Patrick Mulcahy, Broad Street; John Kennedy, Castle Street; John Gleeson, Lisnagry; James Barry, Brendan's Road; Christopher Thompson, Barry's Lane; Michael Hanrahan, High Street; Leonard Barry, Brendans Road; John Mulcahy, Broad Street; Patrick Pearl, Gort, Co. Galway; William Hartney, Upper William Street; Joseph Barry, Brendans Road; John Hartigan, Lisnagry; and Liam Barry, The Crescent. The lorry had been taken from a driver for Limerick Co. Council, but was blocked at Dunkerron, where all of the accused were taken into custody. Mr. R. Mc Laughlin instructed by J.S. O'Connor, solicitor, prosecuted. The men, refusing to recognise the court, were not defended. Tried in batches of ten, sentences of six months to eighteen months were awarded. The third batch of ten received their sentences on Monday, July 13.

**Proclamation:** A proclamation issued by government on July 10, forbade the holding of a 'Commission of Inquiry' into the treatment of prisoners held in Arbour

Hill. As events unfolded, the holding of such an inquiry at that particular time might have been no bad thing.

**Belfast:** Richard McIlkenny of the Marrowbone district, was charged on July 13, with having in his possession 12 revolvers. He was returned for trial.

**Spain:** Following the assassination of Calvo Sotelo, the right wing leader, on July 13, ten police officers were arrested and charged with the killing. Pent-up feelings on both sides were about to be released in a bloody civil war.

**Patrick Hogan T.D.**, former Minister for Agriculture, died, in a car accident, at Monaghan Bridge, Aughrim, Co. Galway, on the night of July 15.

**Michael Conway:** The trial proper commenced on July 15, following which the Tribunal adjourned for four days to enable a defence to be put forward. Conway objected strongly, stating that he would not be putting forward any defence.

**Derry: Hugh Mc Ateer:** At a court in Derry on July 17, six men - five from one family - were charged in connection with a find of arms and explosives. Hugh Mc Ateer with his four sons; Hugh junior; Daniel; Edward and John; from William Street; and Thomas Carlin of St. Columb's Well Street, were arraigned. Stating that he did not recognise the court, Hugh junior asked Sergeant Clements if it had been necessary to arrest his entire family when he had at once accepted responsibility for whatever had been found. The sergeant did not reply.

**Dungannon:** As reported July 20, Patrick Mc Kearney, Remackin, Six Mile Cross, was put back for sentence on a charge of possession of a revolver. The accused said he was no longer a member of the I.R.A.; having automatically ceased when he signed a bail bond in jail. James Mallon, Curran, Dungannon, was also put back upon a charge of being in possession of a revolver. Mallon said that he was not in the I.R.A. However the R.U.C maintained that he was.

**Spain:** The army revolt, which initially broke out in Spanish Morocco on Saturday 18, plunged all of Spain into civil war. The rebel army was led by generals Francisco Franco, Emilio Mola, Quiapo de Llano (radio spokesman) Garcia Valino, Fidel Dávila, José Sanjurjo, Juan Yaguë and José Varela; they were faced by José Miaja (defender of Madrid), José Hernández Sarabia and Vincente Rojo. José Aguirre was President of the Basque Republic, which adhered to the government cause, with Manuel Azana as President of Spain; Luis Companys was President of Catalonia. Dolores Ibarruri (*La Pasionaria*) stamped her name indelibly as the expressive spokesperson of Communism.\*

**Derry:** The seven arrested were again remanded on July 20.

**Dungannon:** At Tyrone Assizes on July 20, James Mallon was sentenced to twelve months, and Patrick Mc Kearney to eighteen months, arising from the charges above.

**Mallow Reception:** Seven Cork Republicans, released from Arbour Hill, arrived to an enthusiastic reception, on July 20, at Mallow. They were; Jim O'Donovan, Pádraig Mac Swiney, Tadhg O'Callaghan, Pat Cummins, Jim Counihan, Jim Stockley and Tom Wall.

\* See further Index references for Spain and the Connolly Column there; for Frank Ryan; for Michael O'Riordan's story, and Frank Edwards (in *Survivors*) See the keynote work, *The Spanish Civil War*, by Hugh Thomas.

**Fine Gael Organiser Sentenced:** Col. Jeremiah Ryan, of Highfield Road, Rathgar, Organiser of the Fine Gael Party; convicted of being drunk in charge of a motor car at Townsend Street, was sentenced on July 21, to thirty days in prison with hard labour.

**Michael Conway**, was sentenced to death on July 21, by the Tribunal, for the murder of John Egan; the sentence by hanging to be carried out on August 12. In a long speech, Conway declared that he had already been sentenced by a Fianna Fáil minister a month before. Although, in the event, not carried out, the sentence was the first death sentence imposed by the Tribunal since it had been set up in 1931.

**Spain:** Apart from the Basque province along the Bay of Biscay, and Catalonia, the Franco forces had by this time established control over the northern half of Spain, while still holding only small pockets in the South. Had there been disciplined resistance they could not have advanced as they had.

**Crown Entry Arrests:** 13 men remained silent, refusing to recognise the Belfast court, when charged on July 21, following their arrest at an I.R.A courtmartial. Their names were:- James Grace (or Killeen) of Dublin; Sean Mc Cool of Stranolar; Michael A. Kelly of Dublin, John O'Malley of Dublin; William James Rice, Merriem Street, Belfast; John Mc Adam, Bogside, Derry; Anthony Lavery, Balkan Street, Belfast; James Steele, North Queen Street, Belfast; William Mulholland, Gracehill Street, Belfast; Michael Traynor, Rockmore Street, Belfast; John Collins Fox, Obins Street, Portadown; Michael Gallagher, Dromore, Tyrone; Charlie Mc Glade, Ardilea Street, Belfast.

**Barcelona**, key Mediterranean city, and capital of Catalonia, having almost come under the control of rebel forces, was retaken by government. Thereafter it remained in a volatile state as headquarters of the P.O.U.M (Marxists Anarchists) until their overthrow by the Communists.

**Sir Thomas Grattan Esmonde**, T.D for Wexford, died suddenly on July 22, at his flat in Upper Pembroke Street.

**Crown Entry Trial:** The 13 men were sentenced on July 22, as follows:- Jim Killeen, Adjutant General I.R.A, six years; Michael A. Kelly, Sean Mc Cool, Sean Mc Adams and James Steele, five years; Tony Lavery, Joe Mc Nally, Billy Mulholland, Liam Rice, Micky Traynor, John Fox and Charlie Mc Glade, two years hard labour.

**Hugh Mc Ateer senior**, with sons, Edward, Daniel and John, had charges in Derry police court against them dropped, on July 22. Hugh, junior, and Thomas Carlin, were arraigned for trial on the day following, Found guilty of possession of arms and gelignite, he was sentenced to seven years while Carlin received five.

**Boosterstown Kidnap:** John Carroll, who refused to recognise the court, was sentenced, in a report of July 24, to nine months, by the Tribunal, on a charge of kidnapping Fianna Fáil agent, Mannix O'Rourke of Blackrock. Two others concerned pleaded guilty.

**Belfast:** Gerald O'Connor of Nelson Street, with Arthur Carr of Vere Street, were sentenced to twelve months for their involvement in the tarring of Alexander Mc Donald in February.

**Michael Conway:** It was announced on July 24, that the death sentence had been commuted to life imprisonment.

**Donal O'Donoghue** (ÓDonnachadha), on hunger strike 16 days in Arbour Hill, had his trial, fixed for July 24, deferred.

**Patrick Cullen of Waterford**, was sentenced by the Tribunal, to three months, for painting slogans; and for membership of the I.R.A.

**Belfast:** In the trial of Richard Mc Ilkenny, the jury could not agree; he was put back, bail being refused.

**Galway By-Election:** Fixed for August 13, had three nominations; Professor James Hogan of Fine Gael; M. Neilan of Fianna Fáil, and Count Plunkett of Cumann Poblachta na h-Éireann.

**Tribunal Sentences:** A report of July 29 lists four I.R.A. members sentenced: Thomas Lynch of Duleek, Co. Meath; to twelve months for membership, possession of a gun, and 74 envelopes relating to an I.R.A. national collection. Denis O'Neill of Portlaoise; to eighteen months for membership and possession of a firearm; Richard Mulready of Mullingar; to six months, for membership and possession of documents; Sean Clerkin, Castleshane, Co. Monaghan; to six months for membership and possession of documents. In the previous year Clerkin had served one month in Crumlin Road Prison. On this occasion he remarked that the present Minister for Defence had once been his Chief of Staff; now he would be his jailer.

**Connaught Rangers' Bill:** Oscar Traynor, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Defence, promised that every genuine applicant would shortly receive the offer of a modest pension, or a gratuity.

**General Sean Mc Keon T.D., Charged:** At Dunshaughlin District Court, in a report of July 28, he was sent for trial on a charge of having caused the death of Michael Stewart, aged 28, of Clonard, Co. Meath, and serious injury to Bridget Fields, both of whom were cycling, in daylight, when run down by Mc Keon's car.

The state solicitor, Mr. Brown, said that there was ample evidence of negligence as the defendant had to be stopped before the accident because of his erratic driving.

**John L. Esmonde**, was selected on August 3, to stand in the forthcoming Wexford by-election.

**Stephen Hayes Selected:** Stephen Hayes of Enniscorthy, was selected for Cumann Poblachta; Michael Murphy, a teacher, was chosen for Labour, and Denis Allen, for Fianna Fáil.

**Mine Disaster:** A report of August 7, related that 57 men were believed dead, following an explosion at Woodmoor Colliery, near Barnsley. 32 bodies had already been brought to the surface.

**Derry Men Sentenced:** In a report of the same date, James Coyle of Spencer Road, described as Adjutant, Derry City Battalion I.R.A., was sentenced to twelve months on membership and documents charges. At the same time, John Dolan, of Union Street, received six months.

**William Brett, Kilkenny:** An official report refers to William Brett, of Kilkenny, being fatally wounded in this month, by Thomas Brett; both Kilkenny I.R.A., in what appears to have been an accident at a training session, or when weapons were being cleaned. William Brett is not noted in *Last Post*; the omission would appear to have been an oversight.

**Baton Charge At Arbour Hill:** Republicans endeavouring to publicise the

regime of isolation and silence prevailing in the prison, organised a meeting in O'Connell Street, followed by a march to the prison. Baton charges and running battles followed in the roadway fronting the prison.

**Bodenstown:** A report of August 10, states that a Sinn Féin procession, of some hundreds, took place to Bodenstown. Mary Mac Swiney delivered the oration.

**Spain:** Mass executions of prisoners taken in battle were being reported from both sides in Spain.

**Wexford Result:** The by-election result was reported on August 19, as follows:-

Denis Allen: Fianna Fáil	23,263
Capt. John Esmonde: Fine Gael	16,734
M. Murphy (Labour)	4,276
Stephen Hayes (Rep)	1,301

**General O'Duffy** was reported on August 20, after returning from Holland, as expressing willingness to lead an Irish Brigade to Spain. 'If only two Irishmen go to Spain, I shall be one of them'.

**20 I.R.A Were in Crumlin Road,** where eight had commenced a hunger strike for political treatment. The Six County authorities had always refused to concede any form of political treatment. After a dozen days only Jimmy Steele remained on hunger strike.

**Newtownards Tragedy:** When a racing car went out of control, on Saturday, September 5, during a Tourist Trophy race that passed through the town, it plunged into spectators. Eight died instantly, while ten were very seriously injured.

**Cork City Hall:** De Valera opened the new £185,000 City Hall, upon Merchant's Quay, on September 8. The former City Hall, along with much of Patrick Street and adjoining streets, had been burned by the British on December 11, 1920.

**Slogan Painting in Cork:** Four men were arrested in Cork city on the evening of September 11, engaged in slogan painting on the issue of conditions in Arbour Hill Prison. William and Denis Conroy, Carrigtoohill; Michael Walsh, Streamhill; Denis Mc Donnell, Gardiner's Hill. All were conveyed to Dublin, to appear before the Tribunal.

**Death of Sean Glynn:** Sean Glynn, one of the lorry men attempting to travel from Limerick to Bodenstown on the morning of June 21, was found strangled in his cell, on the morning of September 13. His death was touching evidence that after a mere eight weeks, he had been unable to withstand the regime of isolation and silence imposed by the authorities in Arbour Hill.

**Spain:** Franco's forces had captured San Sebastian in the north, and were commencing an offensive that would roll up the entire Basque province; the principal towns of which were Bilbao, Santander and Gijon.

**Sean Glynn at Rest:** A volley was fired over the grave of Sean Glynn, laid to rest in Limerick on Tuesday, September 15. The remains were borne from St. John's Cathedral on the shoulders of his comrades. Mary Mac Swiney led with a decade of the Rosary, and former H.Q man, Sean Keating, of Kilkenny gave the oration. Sean Glynn's death, for the first time focussed attention on the regime in Arbour Hill in a manner that marches and slogan painting could not have done. A cheerful boy, scarcely over twenty, he had not seemed a subject for suicide, and yet, one never can

tell. Within twenty four hours, the Dept. of Justice, instructed the military authorities to revert to normal association procedures of six hours daily and placement of prisoners in the jail.\* e.g. not to be separated by a cell held empty.

**Mc Garrity: Final Breach:** The prison death of Sean Glynn is said to have caused the final breach for Joe Mc Garrity. Writing to Mick Mc Donnell a few weeks before his death in May 1940, he acknowledged that throughout the period of their friendship he and De Valera had been pursuing different goals. 'Dev! his very name makes me sick. What has he not done but to reverse everything he has ever taught? We made him a little god here, and I now believe, and have for some time, that after Easter Week he was through with any physical contest against England'. Quoted in Coogan from Sr M.V. Tarpey, Ph.D St John's University, N.Y.

**Spain's Minister in Dublin Dismissed:** Senor Don Alvaro de A Guilar was dismissed by the Madrid government, with loss of salary and pension, on September 16. Senor de A Guilar denied however that he had been dismissed; he had, he said, resigned ten days before.

**Crumlin Road:** Sean Mc Cool and Jim Killeen were reported at this time on hunger strike, seeking political treatment.

**The Alcazar at Toledo,** 40 miles south west of Madrid, held by a pro-Franco garrison, was mined by Madrid forces on September 18. The mines failed to destroy the complex stone fortifications, and the besieged managed to hold out until Franco forces broke through ten days later; when, as was normal in Spain, there was a blood bath of every Madrid fighter that could be found.

**Patrick Gillespie,** aged 18 with an address in Gardiner Place, was released from Arbour Hill, on September 20, after a ten day hunger strike. He had been arrested drilling near Rathfarnham on May 13.

**Sean Glynn Inquest:** The jury, at the inquest on September 22, found that death was caused by asphyxia, and was self inflicted. They added that the deceased was not a fit subject for solitary confinement, but that he had not otherwise been ill-treated by civic guards or military authorities.

**Three Firemen Die:** In a conflagration that broke out in a house at 164 Pearse Street, occupied by Exide Batteries, on October 5, three firemen, William Malone, Peter Mc Ardle and Thomas Nugent, were lost.

**Spain:** Franco General Varela, now closing in on two sides upon Madrid, issued a surrender call on October 13. Surrender unconditionally, he ordered, or your punishment will be equal to your resistance. Madrid would not be taken however until another 30 months had elapsed.

**Jeremiah Mc Carthy** of Mardyke Street, Skibbereen, was on October 13, sentenced to seven months by the Tribunal on a charge of being a member of an unlawful association. Letters found in his pocket were addressed to the adjutant of F. Company, Óglaigh na h-Éireann. Mc Carthy, addressing the three officers, said that he had already spent six months in solitary confinement in Arbour Hill where Sean Glynn had been done to death; if however De Valera wished to smash the I.R.A, he

\*See Christy Quearney's Account

would require to kill thirty thousand more.

**Madrid:** Prolonged attacks and counter attacks took place in October and November, as the Franco forces tried to surround the city. The Republican government had already moved to Valencia. The Franco forces had commenced heavy air raids upon Madrid. These were carried out by the future Stuka pilots of Germany.

**Flanders Poppies,** on sale in France in November were yellow; not red; as it was feared that wearing a red poppy might suggest that the wearer was a communist.

**Cumann Poblachta Árd Fhéis:** The Árd Fhéis, which opened in Wynn's Hotel, on a Saturday in November was the first in a weak attempt to emulate Fianna Fáil while remaining abstentionist. It would also be its last. Addressing the hundred delegates, Pádraig Mc Logan, M.P. South Armagh, apologised for the absence of National Secretary Sean Mac Bride due to political activity which made it impossible for him to attend.

**Carrickmore, Tyrone:** Brian Mc Mahon was sentenced to three months in Belfast, in a report of November 10, under the Special Powers Act for refusing to answer questions. When arrested on October 28, a booklet of poetry was found in his possession.

**General O'Duffy** left Dublin on November 20, with around 40 members of his Brigade, travelling overland to Spain. Numbers had already left.

**Germany and Japan Pact:** The two nations signed, on November 25, what they described as an anti-communist pact. It was believed that it covered also a secret military agreement.

**Recognise Franco?** A motion, countering one put forward by Fianna Fáil that the Dáil adjourn until February 1937, called for adjournment until December 1 only. It was a procedural motion, in support of a proposal from W.T. Cosgrave and the Fine Gael Party, that the Irish Free State withdraw recognition from Valencia, and accord full diplomatic recognition to General Franco's government in Burgos. At this time, apart from Germany and Italy, few other states had accorded recognition. The motion was defeated by 64 votes to 44; De Valera strongly defending his non-intervention policy.

**Son Held:** The 22 year old son of Premier Largo Caballero, tricked early on at Madrid, and becoming a Franco prisoner, was held for some time as a possible hostage exchange, but about this time was executed by a firing party at Segovia.

**O'Duffy:** A further batch of 80 volunteers left Dublin on Saturday, November 25, to travel overland, or by sea, to Franco Spain.

**Film Banned:** Sir Dawson Bates, Minister for Home Affairs in the Six Counties, on November 27, banned the showing of a film *Ourselves Alone*, in the province. A.U.S. production, it dealt with events in 1920 and 1921.

**Drogheda Baton Charge:** A protest meeting against the detention of local Republicans, being held at the Tholsel, Drogheda, was broken up with a baton charge on Sunday evening, November 29. A speaker at the meeting was later detained.

**E.P. Mc Carron, Secretary, Dept. of Local Government Removed:** Rumour of a conspiracy floated about following his sudden removal after 40 years service. The Executive Council gave no reason.

**Crystal Palace Destroyed:** A creation in glass and iron, of the engineer Joseph Paxton, for the Great Exhibition of 1851, the Crystal Palace was destroyed by fire

overnight on November 31. Originally erected in Hyde Park, it was taken down and rebuilt, in modified form, at Sydenham Hill.

**Abdication Crisis:** Having chosen that he would marry American, Mrs. Wallis Simpson, King Edward VIII, agreed on December 10, to sign an Act of Abdication. This required that he must leave the United Kingdom, and refrain from entering any of the Dominions. King George VI, his successor, agreed to confer a Dukedom upon him.

**700 Sail for Spain:** They left early on Sunday, December 13, from Galway, aboard the German vessel *Urundi*. They were said to have come from all parts of Ireland. At the last moment around 50 refused to go on board, as they complained that officers were referring to them in demeaning terms.

**External Relations Act:** In the 48 hours during which the U.K did not have a reigning monarch - that not having happened since Cromwell had Charles I beheaded in 1649 - De Valera summoned by telegram and other means, all members of the Dáil (there was no Senate), and had passed - most adroitly be it said - over Friday 11, and Saturday 12, two bills; the Constitution (Amendment No. 27) Bill, and the Executive Authority (External Relations) Bill, both by 81 votes to five. It provided that Free State diplomatic and consular representatives would in future be appointed by the Executive Council only, while all vestiges left from the Governor-General's time, would be deftly swept away. What was being done in effect was a clearance of way for the Constitution of 1937, a Republican Constitution in everything but name; with the King, as a constitutional *organ, instrument or method of procedure*; retained only for limited purposes.\*

**Rev. Thomas O'Doherty**, Bishop of Galway and Kilmacduagh - the man who coined the reference two years before 'Cut Throat Tone' - died at his palace on Taylor's Hill, Galway, on December 13.

**Legal Appointments Made:** The following appointments were announced on December 23: Justice James Creed Meredith and James Geoghegan K.C, Attorney-General, appointed judges of the Supreme Court.; George Gavin Duffy, K.C, appointed judge of the High Court; Patrick Lynch, K.C, appointed Attorney-General of Saorstát Éireann.

**Commdt. E.J (Ned) Cronin** left Cork, with Doctor James Burke, in November to assist the Franco forces in Spain, but was blocked upon arrival at the frontier; it was believed through the influence of General O'Duffy with the Burgos authorities. He accordingly returned to Cork a few days prior to Christmas. In a statement, he announced that he hoped soon to form a new Irish Brigade as a rival to the O'Duffy brigade. (Nothing further was heard of that.)

**Estimates of Volunteers in Spain:** None too reliable; estimates of the number of volunteers - many of whom were not volunteers - circulated at this time.

On Franco Side:	On Government Side
Germans 20,000	Russians 10,000
Italians 15,000	French 10,000
French 500	Belgians 2,000
Irish 1200	Others 7,000

\* Discarded altogether in 1949.



## CHRONOLOGY: THE YEAR 1937:

**Past The High Point:** The years 1934/35 marked the highest point for Óglaigh na h-Éireann, both in respect of numbers and expectations. Ninety per cent of the leadership and membership expected that, with Fianna Fáil in government, the road to the Republic would be opened and the dream of Pádraic Pearse would be fulfilled. With the increasing popularity of Fianna Fáil prior to 1932, the torch light processions, the charisma of De Valera's name, and the overwhelming rural support due to the declared intention to abolish the Annuities - a scheme that came from the I.R.A through Peadar O'Donnell - the perception was, that half the nation was on their side, and that indeed the names Fianna Fáil and I.R.A were almost interchangeable. But the offer of pensions, of jobs for some hundreds in the Broy Harriers, and the crack down from the resurrected Military Tribunal, ended all that. Having used them, De Valera was adroitly distancing himself from the I.R.A; from na h-Oglaigh: and ex-Chief of Staff Frank Aiken, now Minister for Defence, disappointed that they had not as a body joined his Volunteers, was bitterly opposed to them.

So the word quickly went out; it was as good as a wink to an Irishman. You would miss your chance of a pension; of a job perhaps, if you were seen to be active in the I.R.A. Never strong in the North, the numbers shrank in the South, with brigades becoming battalions; and then only skeletal at that. The head figure, Maurice Twomey, was in jail, along with Con Lehane and others in the leadership. Its political party Cumann Poblachta had been a recent and dismal failure, and there was a further big split, on a policy issue, impending.

1937 therefore, could be no more than an effort of holding the line; the Army was without a policy; it had been so for years. It now awaited a messiah that would bring to it a policy. The awaited messiah would be Sean Russell.

**Carrigtwohill, Co. Cork:** A report of January 1, told of John Harnett appearing before the Tribunal charged with possession of arms and ammunition, and with sending threatening letters to Thomas Murphy, a postman. It emerged that Harnett had been postman but had been replaced by Murphy. Refusing, in a defiant speech, to recognise the court, he was sentenced, on the possession charge, to three years. The letters charge was dismissed.

**Omagh, Co. Tyrone:** The County Committee of the G.A.A had at this time booked the Courthouse, a striking building in the centre of the town, for a *céilí*. They were informed however by the Under Sheriff, Mr. R. Mc Coy, that they would not be allowed display the tricolour inside, or to have paper decorations of a tricolour content. The Committee undertook to consider this, although it was expected that they would seek other premises.

**Spain:** Reports from the battle fronts told of a lull. 5000 Italians were reported to have landed in Cadiz, on the Franco side, while 80 British volunteers had left by train from Paris to join the International Brigade.

**Irishmen for Spain:** A report of January 7, records 80 young men leaving Dublin by bus for a port in the south; with 20 left behind because of overcrowding. 50 were said to have left Cork, while more followed from Limerick.

**Arms Ban:** The U.S. Government, on January 6, banned the sale of arms into

Spain. This would not hurt the Franco side, but it caused problems for the Madrid government. Meanwhile Franco planes manned by German crews had indulged in bombing along the eight mile front south of the capital.

**Frank Ryan:** In a radio address from Madrid on Saturday, January 9, Frank Ryan, commencing in Irish 'to my Irish Republican comrades' spoke of heavy fighting 'against the pick of Hitler's forces'.

**Belfast:** 15 rifles, together with ammunition, were found in a night time house raid, on January 12, in Whiterock Crescent. Joseph Gerald Keenan was later charged and remanded.

**Glenties:** More arms were discovered by Broy and garda raids in the Clogher and Meenabrock area of Glenties, in the heart of the Donegal Gaeltacht.

**De Valera and Malcolm Mac Donald:** Son of Ramsay and said to mildly favour Ireland, Malcolm Mac Donald and De Valera had two meetings over January 14 in London.

**Minister Dies:** Dr Wilhelm Von Kuhlmann, German Minister, appointed to Dublin in October 1934, died after a long illness, at Wiesbaden.

**Mine Detonated in Belfast:** What may have been engineering practice was the detonation harmlessly of a mine, on the night of January 14, in the Bog Meadows, below Milltown Cemetery.

**Belfast:** Widespread house raiding took place in west and north Belfast over the weekend of January 16. There were reports only of 'documents' being found.

**Fr Ramon La Borda, Basque priest,** spoke to a packed Gaiety Theatre (with this writer present) on January 17, chaired by Fr M O' Flanagan. Some weeks earlier George Gilmore had crash landed in Euzkadi seeking him.

**An Airport for Dublin:** A hundred acres of land was acquired at this time, at Cloghran, near Collinstown, Co. Dublin, close to where a former R.A.F aerodrome existed. It was the nucleus of the future Dublin Airport.

**Joe Hanna of Belfast:** Described as a Belfast Corporation employee, Joe Hanna, father of nine children, was shot dead, after dark, on January 27, in a street off Falls Road. Hanna had been in Óglaigh na h-Éireann since 1920, being highly respected, as its information officer. The I.R.A however regarded its case against him on the Campbell College raid, Crown Entry, and other disclosures, as proven. At the inquest, the Coroner referred to the death as the eighteenth since 1923.

**Bishops' Pastorals,** omitted references to the I.R.A, but continued to warn against communism, and emigration; emigration, this time to Britain, having recommenced after six years.

**Died in Spain:** Reports were received on February 6, of the deaths of four men of the International Brigade, serving on the Jarama and Cordova front, south of Madrid. Their names were; Dan Boyle of Belfast; Frank Conroy of Kildare; Bill Beattie of Belfast and John Meehan of Galway. Numbers of other Irish were reported wounded, among them being Jerry Doran, Donal O'Reilly, Jack Nalty, Seamus Kelly, Paddy Smith, T.T O'Brien and Pat Murphy. Many of these casualties were said to have been caused when the Irish column attacked the village of Guadarrama\*.

\* Nalty, Kelly and O'Brien were to die later.

**Malaga Falls:** The important town and port of Malaga, on the Mediterranean coast, fell to the Franco forces on February 8.

**Non Intervention:** The second reading of this Dáil bill (strongly opposed by Fine Gael), was passed 56:39 on February 19. The final stages were passed on February 24 by 77:50. Section 7 of the Act empowered the government to stop volunteers departing for Spain.

**Salary Increase:** It was decided to give a salary increase to Ministers at this time. President De Valera would receive £2,500 per annum henceforth, while Ministers would receive £1,700. They had voluntarily reduced their salaries in 1932.

**Trade Agreement:** A trade agreement of minor consequence, was announced on February 26. Horses imported from the Free State would enjoy a lower rate while this state would remove the levy on sugar and subsidiary products from Britain.

**Kit Conway Dies:** Captain Christy Conway, of Burncourt, Co. Tipperary, second in command, was reported killed in action, on Wednesday 24, on the Madrid front. Wounded were Paddy Duff, and Jim Prendergast, both of Dublin.

**Joseph Gerald Keenan** of Whiterock Crescent, Belfast, pleading guilty on March 2, to possession of fire arms (see earlier), was sent to prison for one month. An innocent victim, declared Lord Justice Andrews, on hearing the evidence.

**De Valera's Work Plan:** In a St. Patrick's Day broadcast to the U.S., he set out his five point plan:

1. To provide productive work as far as possible.
2. To secure proper conditions for labour.
3. To safeguard the economic rights of the less well-off.
4. To provide protection for the family and the home.
5. To prevent the expansion of cities through seeking to ruralise industry.

**Peadar O'Donnell Banned:** Crusader-at-large O'Donnell found the doors barred against him when he arrived at Queen's University, Belfast, on March 8, to speak upon Spain. The doors of the theatre of the Students' Union were locked against him. A well attended discourse took place elsewhere.

**School Catastrophe in U.S:** An explosion reported on March 19, at a school in New London, Texas, killed over 600 children and teachers. It had taken place in a boiler room beneath the building. The school's total roll was 1500.

**Spain: More Irish Deaths:** Jim Foley, formerly of Dublin, and Maurice Quinlan, of Waterford, were reported on March 20, to have been killed near Cordova.

**Tom Mellett of Ballinrobe:** A report of March 20 notes that he had been sentenced to two years for possession of a Thompson gun. Mellett had been surrounded by five police and Branch men. In the struggle Supt. O'Leary shot him in the shoulder.

**O'Duffy Brigade Deaths:** Commdt. Gabriel Lee, with an address in Drumcondra, and Tom Foley of Tralee, were reported dead from wounds received near Madrid, on March 23. Earlier, on February 18, Capt. Tom Hyde and Dan Tuite, both from Kerry, were killed in a fatal blunder, by a *bandera* of General Franco, from the Canary Islands.

**Castlebar Meeting Banned:** What was described, in the *Irish Times* of March 27,

as an I.R.A meeting, to be addressed by Donal O'Donoghue at Castlebar on Easter Sunday, was prohibited by Minister P.J. Ruttledge. The meeting was one of 30 planned, with two announced for the North, and three for Britain.

**Newport, Co. Mayo:** 'Wild scenes' followed the ban, as an I.R.A party paraded through this town. They had intended proceeding to Castlebar but choose Newport instead.

**At Kilmeena,** south of Newport, around 60 were attacked with batons, while commemorating in the churchyard an ambush by Mick Kilroy with a column of the West Mayo Brigade upon the Tans on May 19, 1921\*. 'I was asked by the men', protested Fr. J. Philbin, 'to say a Rosary over their comrades killed at this spot; the ceremony was purely religious when the guards drew their batons and charged the men'.

**Birr:** An intended parade in this town did not take place due to it being prohibited. The town remained quiet.

**Belfast:** Despite an Easter Sunday ban, an attempt to form a procession in the Falls area was frustrated by a large force of police making repeated baton charges. They were backed up by the presence of dozens of armoured cars with machine gun mounted turrets.

**Belfast Girls Arrested:** Five girls appeared in court on March 29, charged with provocative behaviour, likely to lead to a breach of the peace, on Easter Sunday. Rose and Kathleen Kelly, Alice Deeds, Isabel Wilkins and another. After being arrested they continued to wear Easter lilies, while being escorted to the Shankill Road bar-rack. We meant no harm, they told the judge. The Probation Act was applied.

**Arrested for Lilies:** On March 21, five young people were arrested in Drogheda for selling Easter Lilies.

**Refinery Plan Abandoned:** An ambitious plan by Sean Lemass for an oil refinery located at Alexandria Basin came to a halt, although construction work had commenced, as reported on March 23. Shell and Esso were blamed for the forced abandonment.

**Sallins Raid:** 12 Thompson guns, newly arrived in cases bearing steamship labels, together with 12,000 rounds of ammunition, were seized at the farm of Dominic Collins, at Waterstain, Sallins. Although found in the house, all were intended to be concealed in a concrete chamber entered via a tunnel from a hayshed.

**Spain: More Violent Battles:** The news of April 2, carried reports of intensified artillery bombardments upon both sides, resulting in a high death toll.

**Newport Charges:** 13 men appeared in court in Westport on April 2, charged with riotous assembly in Newport on the previous Sunday. The prisoners kept up a continuous fire of interruptions; singing Republican songs during the hearing. They were removed in custody, with names not being given.

**Judges' Salesyard Criticism:** In a case arising in the High Court on April 5, when damages were sought against the Branch men who had fired and killed

\* A disaster for the column; five dead, seven wounded and some of those captured. See Tom Heavey in *Survivors*, 1987 edition.

Michael Lynch, wounding seven others, in the Cork sales yard episode of August 13, Judge Hanna was severely critical of the armed detectives. They were an excrescence, he declared; the use of guns in the circumstances was quite unsustainable. In a subsequent appeal against the award, a reserved judgement was announced.

**Irish Christian Front:** The recently founded organisation of Patrick Belton T.D, Dr. J.P. Brennan, Dublin City Coroner and Miss Aileen O'Brien, held their second meeting on Sunday night April 4, in College Green, with an overflow attendance in excess of 10,000 people. Interruptions were unwelcome, with the gardai removing individuals for their own safety. Frank Ryan, declared Belton, had run away from Madrid and was now in Dublin solely to cause disturbance. \*

**Aer Rianta Created:** A new state company was announced on April 7; Aer Rianta would supervise Aer Lingus and would develop and control airports. Work would commence shortly upon a new airport at Shannon.

**Film Seized in Dundalk:** Two men, armed, in a report of April 8, entered the Park Cinema in Dundalk, removing the film *Clive of India*. Later in the day two men were detained.

**Sending Girls to England:** The Department of Industry and Commerce in a statement admitting sending girls to employment in England, but added that none were under 21, nor had they been sent against their will.

**Spain:** The world's largest battleship, *H.M.S Hood*, moved at this time to Spanish waters, with instructions to protect merchant shipping.

**Sentenced for Sallins Raid:** Following the arms seizure at Waterstain, Joseph Daniel Collins received a four year sentence from the Tribunal. He refused to recognise the court.

**Six County Minister for Finance,** H.M. Pollock, died on April 15 at the age of 74. Pollock, a major Belfast flour importer, was wedded to financial orthodoxy.

**Spain:** On the Madrid front around El Paede, and at Vaciamadrid, a two day truce was called to enable each side to go forward, find and bury their dead.

**Newport Case:** The 13 accused appeared on April 26 at Castlebar; all charged with riotous behaviour. Ten of the men were discharged, while Jack Mc Neela of Ballycroy, Ned Corrigan of Drumcallagah, Ballycroy, and James Moran of Knockmoylan, were returned for trial to the Tribunal. The names of the ten were; John Sweeney, John Gardiner, P. Keane, M. Cassidy, O Sweeney, M. Mc Neela, J. Ginty, T. Mc Neela and P. Conway. Press men in the courtroom were ordered to leave. After the prisoners had been removed to Sligo, a baton charge was directed upon the crowd assembled outside.

**Guernica:** German aviators raided the holy city of the Basques on April 26, causing much death and destruction; roundly condemned by President Aguirre of the Basque Republic.

**Arnold Lunn Speaks for Franco:** 'This is a just war in Spain,' declared Arnold Lunn, English writer and traveller, to a crowded Gaiety Theatre, as reported on April 26. 'This is a just war in which case Our Lady wants the Spaniards under

\*Frank Ryan had returned suffering a minor wound, to Dublin in the third week of March. He remained until June 3. It was his last homecoming.

Franco to have as many rifles as possible and to shoot as straight as possible. In that case the rifle is a holy weapon, very properly consecrated to Our Lady..... Italy under *Il Duce* was a great country which Great Britain could not patronise'. (The Pope, Pius XI, had referred to the triumphal peace of this great and happy nation, after Abyssinia). Rev. J. Canavan, S.J, proposing a vote of thanks, stated that communism never took hold of a country until that country was rotten. Prof. Michael Tierney seconding the vote of thanks said that the best way to meet communism was with force. It should be suppressed everywhere it showed its head.

**Zeppelin Hindenburg** exploded, and burst into flames, as it prepared to moor at Lakehurst, New Jersey, on May 6. 32 passengers, including some crew, perished but, miraculously, 66 by leaping and sliding, escaped..

**Máirtín Ó Cadhain Sacking:** The school teacher, Marrinan, who had replaced Ó Cadhain at Cearn Mór, three miles north of Oranmore, was assaulted by armed men and warned to leave. Máirtín himself, who had no fore-knowledge of the attack, had earlier been called upon by Canon Patrick Moran, directed by Bishop Doherty, to leave the I.R.A or resign his teaching post. Although he came from an impoverished family he choose to resign.

**Killiney Castle Purchased:** Killiney Castle and eight acres of land, was sold on May 3 by Dun Laoire Corporation to the 'Count' Heaney for £2,000. It would be a training university for the I.R.A.

**Beresford Place Anti-Coronation Meeting:** Called originally for College Green, this protest attempted to assemble outside Liberty Hall. But, as it had the title of I.R.A, among its announcements, 300 police occupied the venue and a running battle took place. 250 Dublin Brigade men, with Tom Barry, Tagh Lynch, Frank Ryan, Donal O'Donoghue, Peadar Rigney and many other names were involved\*. A peaceful procession was permitted through O'Connell Street on the following night, May 12.

**The Irish Times** windows in Patrick Street, Cork, were smashed for placing on view early pictures of the Coronation.

**George VI** was crowned King of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and of the Dominions, Emperor of India etc. in Westminster Abbey, on May 12. In accordance with English tradition he was seated on the Stone of Scone (a village in Tayside, Scotland), or, as Ireland claims, the *Lia Fáil*, the ancient Stone of Destiny from Tara.

**Constitution Proceedings:** The Dáil, on the night of May 13, passed the second reading of the draft constitution 69: 43. Article 2 A- the coercion powers - would no longer prevail, but powers for a Tribunal would be retained. For this and for other reasons the Labour Party resolved to oppose the measure.

**Equestrian Statue Goes:** The bronze statue of King George 11, in the centre of St. Stephen's Green, was blown up at eight, on the morning of May 13. It had been erected in 1758.

**Col. Tom Carew** of Main Street, Cashel, an officer with the O'Duffy Brigade, was reported on May 14, recently wounded near Madrid.

**Ballycroy Men Sentenced:** A report of Tribunal proceedings of May 15, announced sentences as follows: Jack Mc Neela, *Claggan House*, Ballycroy, twelve months: Ned Corrigan of Drumcallagh, Ballycroy, twelve months: James Moran, Knockmoylan, Ballycroy, three months.

\* A lengthy account appears in Sean Cronin's *Frank Ryan*.

**Hollywood, Co. Down:** 17 live grenades were unearthed while digging on the lands of Richard Jefferson. They had been there for some years.

**Spain:** Germany's pocket battleship, *Deutschland*, was bombed on May 30, while cruising in the Mediterranean. 24 crew were reported dead. Reprisals came quickly. The battleship *Admiral Scheer*, accompanied by four destroyers, entered the government held port of Almeria, and proceeded to pour 200 shells into the town. At the same time, Germany and Italy announced their withdrawal from the London based Non-Intervention Committee.

**Spain:** General Mola, the commander of the Franco forces around the city of Bilbao, was killed in an air crash on June 3.

**Ex-King Edward VIII Married:** As Duke of Windsor, Edward on June 3, married Mrs. Wallis Warfield, divorcee, and U.S citizen, at the Chateau de Cardé, near Monts, France. A biographer, after his passing in 1972, disclosed that Edward was particularly tight, to the point of meanness, where payments, or picking up a tab, was concerned. A more recent biographer unearthed evidence that Edward offered himself to the Nazis should they overrun England.

**O'Duffy Brigade Returning:** A Reuter message of June 5, from Lisbon, told of 650 members of the Brigade boarding the Portugese steamer *Mosambique* to return to Ireland. The Brigade had engaged in no worthwhile fighting, but the unaccustomed diet and rough conditions weakened morale, while four had died as a result of sickness. When a vote was taken, it was virtually unanimous for return. As Maurice Manning expresses it in *The Blueshirts*, the virtual unanimity of the decision to return was hardly an indication of high morale or that the adventure had been an unqualified success.

**Dáil Dissolved:** The government dissolved the Dáil on June 14, with an election fixed for July 1. With the New Constitution passed 62:48, the referendum was fixed for the same day.

**Peter Mc Carthy**, of Clonard Road, Crumlin, was shot dead in Lower Clanbrassil Street, in daylight, on June 15. He had approached a Branch car in which arrested men were seated. The next day in the Dublin District Court, further details emerged. Held in the car were two young men, Sam Wheelock and Harry Dale. They were charged with having fire arms and with stealing a car. Eamon Fagan was charged with an attempted rescue assisted by Peter Mc Carthy and others, not in custody. All four, from the Clanbrassil Street/Rialto area, refused to recognise the court.

**Emigrants:** Trains bringing emigrants from the west of Ireland, a correspondent observed, used to have the young men in them shouting, 'Up Dev' or 'Up the Republic' as they departed. Now the cries were 'Up Sligo' or 'Up Mayo', or nothing at all.

**Bilbao** was occupied by Franco forces on Saturday afternoon, June 19, after a fighting street by street entry.

**Bodenstown Sunday** was a quiet affair, with around 1500 participating, led by Cumann na mBan. Tom Barry spoke, urging Republicans not to vote in the forthcoming referendum on the Constitution. Mick Fitzpatrick read a message from 12 prisoners held in Free State jails; and there was a single special issue of *An Phoblacht*.

**O'Duffy Brigade Home:** In a scornful report of June 22, the *Irish Times* contrast-

ed the smartly attired General and his considerable baggage with the condition of his troops, dressed in rags and odd bits of uniform taken from the bodies of dead government soldiers.

**Belfast:** Warming up for the Twelfth, a man was shot in the hand in Malt Street, off Grosvenor Road, while a Mills grenade was thrown at men standing outside a public house in the same street. Although presumed to be Loyalist attacks, the R.U.C raided some dozens of Nationalist homes. The stone cross on the Republican Plot in Milltown Cemetery was also damaged.

**Sean Lester** was appointed, this month, Deputy Secretary-General of the League of Nations 1937-1940. He was already Commissioner of the free city of Danzig, an appointment that had become increasingly rocky because of Germany's desire to recover that territory, ultimately the spark for World War Two.

**James Larkin Senior** in a report of July 3, wrested the Dublin North East Constituency seat from General Richard Mulcahy of Fine Gael.

**General Election Results:** Apart from Richard Mulcahy loosing his seat (although one was found for him later on), there were other surprises. Desmond Fitzgerald was eliminated in Co. Kilkenny, while Patrick Belton, of the Irish Christian Front, was knocked out by Labour candidate. G. Mc Gowan, in north County Dublin. The final count declared on July 7 showed the position as follows:-

Fianna Fáil	69
Fine Gael	48
Labour	13
Independents	8

It was not a satisfactory result for Mr. De Valera as Fianna Fáil had not secured an overall majority. However, they would soon try again and be successful. The Constitution referendum was somewhat better, although if one counted those who failed to vote (560,662), it cannot be said that an overwhelming majority had accepted it either\*.

Those in Favour :	686,042
Those Against :	528,296
Majority For :	157,746

**J.A Costello on Kevin O'Higgins:** A lengthy article appeared in the *Irish Times* of July 10 on the work of the late Kevin O'Higgins; on the Free State and its constitutional links with Britain. O'Higgins, declared the writer, was a master of direct speech, and at times of cutting and fierce invective.

**President of the Executive Council:** On Wednesday, July 21, De Valera was re-elected 82:52.

**Amelia Earhart:** Another great air woman, in the tradition of Amy Johnson, Amelia Earhart, wife of G.P Putnam, American publisher, and first woman to fly the Atlantic alone, disappeared without trace, accompanied by her navigator, Capt. Noonan, over the Pacific.

**Japanese Advance:** A large force, accompanied by planes and artillery, was reported on July 14 advancing into north China.

**Tom Barry Arrested:** As Chief of Staff, succeeding Sean Mac Bride at the end of

\* The Catholic or Thomist influence is covered in F.S.L Lyons, page 545, Fontana ed.



1936, (Mac Bride had stood in for eight months when Twomey was arrested in May). Barry tried to stay under cover, but arrest for the Cork man was well nigh inevitable. He had acted recently as best man at the wedding of Tom Kelleher of Knockavilla, adjacent to Upton, in the very heart of storied rebel country; but it was days later, in Cork city, on July 24, that he was held.

**China:** The battle for China's ancient capital was now in full swing, July 28, at Tungchow, close to Peking.

**Royal Visit Actions:** As a response to the reception July 28, to the new King and Queen, at City Hall, Belfast, a large bomb was detonated 800 yards away, in Academy Street. Overnight close on 30 custom huts were blown up, or burned, along the Border from Louth to Derry. Mount Pleasant rail bridge, north of Dundalk, was damaged by an explosion, and rail traffic was halted. Five Tyrone men were arrested at 2.30 a m, cycling north of Omagh. Their names were given as James Devlin, Garvagh, Gortin. James O'Doherty, Gortin. Aloysius Conway, Fallagh, Gortin. Charles Coyle, Fallagh, Gortin, James Mc Bridge, Newtown Stewart. They were remanded in custody until August 4.

**Belfast:** A bomb left outside a marine store on Cullentree Road exploded at 1.30 a m causing damage to surrounding property. Evidently intended for the barracks, it was still some 30 yards away.

**Co. Waterford:** Michael Fitzgerald, of Stradbally, a member of the British Army, was shot dead on August 1. Guard Daly, of the local station, was arrested and charged.

**Dawson Bates Home Entered:** The holiday home of Sir Dawson Bates, Six County Minister for Home Affairs, at Portrush, was entered by four men and searched on August 4.

**Sergeant Michael Weymes** of Mullingar, a former garda, died in Spain on July 15, at Villa Franca, on the Madrid front. He had been a member of the O'Duffy Brigade and had chosen to remain in Spain. His two brothers, Patrick and Andrew, had only come home.

**Francis Joseph Mc Kenna**, of Falls Road, Belfast, was charged on August 4 with possession of arms and ammunition found in his home. A number of other houses nearby were also gone over; one in Alma Street occupied by Mrs. Hicks, had its floor boards lifted.

**China:** Chinese troops were reported in action on August 11, at Nankow, near the Great Wall. Japanese warships shelled the city of Shanghai, and engaged in land battles around it.

**Effigies Burned:** On August 15, an effigy of Lord Craigavon, Prime Minister, was burned in Derry's Bogside, together with one of James Dillon, T.D.

**Belfast:** 13 men were detained in Belfast in early morning raids on August 18. After identification parades at Chichester Street, all were released.

**James Murphy, Dundalk**, was sentenced to two months imprisonment, at this time, for possession of two rounds of Thompson ammunition on July 29. The accused remained silent.—

**Francis Mc Kenna, Belfast**, was returned for trial on a charge of unlawful possession of arms and ammunition on August 16. Evidence was given by R.U.C of

finding the cache at the rear of his provision store on the Falls Road. Days later he was sentenced to three years.

**Santander:** Franco forces entered this northern port of the Basque province on August 25, following an uprising within, and the surrender of the remaining Government troops.

**Ambassador Hit:** Sir Hugh Knatchbull-Hugesson, British Ambassador to China, was hit and seriously injured by machine gun bullets from Japanese war planes on August 26.

**Madrid:** Battle of Brunete: Colossal losses were suffered by the Republic in the July/August battle to drive a wedge into the Franco forces west of the capital. The Lincoln and Washington Battalions lost so many that they were merged into one. 25,000 altogether were lost in the limited offensive from the Government side. It is not surprising therefore that Irish losses, proportionately speaking, were high, and that Brunete, with Jarama, gets frequent mention in O'Riordan's *Connolly Column*. Five Irish died and eight were wounded. The dead were:- Richard O'Neill of Belfast, William Davis of Dublin, William Beattie of Belfast, Liam Tumilson of Belfast and William Loughrin of Belfast. Wounded were:- Patrick Duff of Dublin, Johnny Power of Waterford, Pat Murphy of Waterford, Robert O'Flaherty, with Patrick and James, all of Boston and Pat Mc Elroy of Dublin, and Seamus Straney of Belfast.

**Sean Treacy Plaque:** Thousands were said to have attended the unveiling on September 12, of a commemorative plaque in Talbot Street, to the Tipperary man, killed in a lone fight against British forces on October 14, 1920. The oration was given by Dr. Andy Cooney.\*

**Wolfe Tone, an Informer?** Armed men entered the *Irish Independent* building on the night of September 15, and with a hammer, smashed the plate of a concluding series by Leo Mc Cabe, old I.R.B man and Free Stater, which alleged that Tone had betrayed his associates in 1794. It was his reply to one that favoured Tone, by P.S O'Hegarty, author of a number of historical works.

**Kirkintilloch Tragedy:** Ten Achill youths perished in a barn fire in this village in Dumbarton, close to Glasgow, on September 15. They had arrived in Edinburgh the previous night to begin work as tatie hokers. Sleeping upon a mixture of hay and straw, the building was a fire trap as its roof consisted of timber covered with felt and tar. 14 girls asleep in another part of the building escaped, but a need for tatie hokers to migrate each summer in the fifth year of Fianna Fáil was questioned by those who had hoped for a new golden age from the Party. John Dulanty, Commissioner in London, with Minister. P. J Ruttledge, hastened to Glasgow, although the remains were brought home to Achill\*, on one of the last trains to serve the island; the branch line having been listed for closure.\*\* A committee was appointed September 24, 'to investigate migration problems and to recommend improvements in their conditions'. A subsequent meeting was reported discussing afforestation, road improvement, a shirt making industry, fishery and harbour modernisation, and a declaration that the

\* Treacy and Dan Breen had shot dead two days before two undercover men sent after them in Drumcondra. On this occasion Treacy took one of his assailants with him. See Coogan's *Michael Collins*.

\*\* One of the first trains, in 1894, also conveyed dead; the 32 bodies lost when the hooker *Victory* capsized.

rail link, Achill, Newport, Westport, would be kept open. It was not.

**Belfast:** An attempt to cause serious damage to St. Teresa's Church, on the Glen Road, Belfast, failed on September 21, as the bomb was placed in an air shaft which directed the force upwards.

**China:** Thousands were reported killed, on September 23, following a massive air raid by Japanese bombers.

**Dr. Edward Hempel:** A photograph appeared in the *Irish Press*, of October 5, of *Gortleitragh*, the house formerly occupied by Donal Buckley, purchased by the German government for their new ambassador here. The Embassy itself was at 58 Northumberland Road.

**Dublin Unemployed Protest:** A stand up and shout protest was made in the public gallery of An Dáil on October 6, by a group of Dublin unemployed - the number of unemployed in the state being around 90,000 - at the refusal of ministers during the debate on the Presidential Bill to receive a deputation. Presidential salary was a few weeks later, fixed at £15,000, plus allowances. Dúbhglas de h-Íde would be chosen the following May as President, by common agreement among the parties.

**Pearse Hall Raided:** R.U.C raided Pearse Hall, King Street, Belfast, on the evening of October 9. There were 17 persons present, and the police lifted two for questioning.

**Dundalk:** Sean Farrell, of Hill Street, and Gerard Halfpenny, of Byrne's Row, were acquitted by a jury on October 12, upon a charge of destroying a Customs hut at Carrickarnon, Co. Armagh, and possession of arms, including a Thompson gun. Judge Comyn agreed with the verdict on the grounds that the hut was within the Six Counties.

**Mrs. Tom Clarke's Criticism:** At the Fianna Fáil Árd Fhéis, of October 11 and 12, Mrs. Clarke vented criticism of the organisation 'as a result of which real Republican support is dwindling. Why should Mr. De Valera represent Ireland as free and independent at the League of Nations when he should be exposing England's stranglehold'. In reply, De Valera announced that having enacted a new Constitution, their next step would be unification.\*

**Last Post Falls:** Franco forces entered Gijon, on October 21, the last Government stronghold on the Bay of Biscay.

**Irishmen Die in China:** Three Irishmen, members of the Royal Ulster Rifles, were killed by shell fire from Japanese positions on October 29, inside the western defence sector at Shanghai.

**Shanghai fell to the Japanese on October 31, after three months of close fighting around the city.**

**Belfast:** A bomb exploded in a ground floor British Navy recruiting office in Donegall Street on the evening preceding Remembrance Day, November 11. A number of passers by were swept off their feet by the force of the explosion.

\* In her Autobiography, *Revolutionary Woman*, Kathleen Clarke speaks of her family, the Dalys of Limerick city. Her brother Edward, and her husband Tom, were executed after 1916. In interesting sidelights, she traces, through the thirties and forties, the slow slide of F.F away from nationalism.

**And in Dublin**, a British royal insignia, part of Dublin Castle, was blown from the wall of a building in Exchange Court, under the City Hall at 6 a.m. on the morning of Remembrance Day. So, although, seemingly dormant, the I.R.A., north and south, continued to issue reminders of its existence.

**Ramsay Mac Donald**, former Prime Minister of Britain, died at this time on board the liner, *Renia del Pacifico*, on his way to a South American holiday. The illegitimate son of a labourer of Lossiemouth; his father may have had a Lady Chatterly-like liaison inasmuch as the boy, born 1866, grew to be a remarkably refined and artistic individual who quickly entered Labour politics in 1894, becoming Secretary of the party in 1900. He lost the leadership in 1914 due to his opposition to the First World War, but recovered it in 1924 and was briefly Prime Minister at that time. He returned to office in 1929 - a bad period economically - but his willingness to form with Stanley Baldwin of the Conservatives, a National Government, caused a lasting revulsion among left wing people.

**Brian Burns and Hugh Mc Cluskey** of Islandbawn Street, were found guilty, in a report of November 24, of disarming an R.U.C constable on the day, July 28, that King George VI visited Belfast. Mr. Burn's father, Peter, a man with a life long reputation of republicanism, had died the previous day. Put back, they were sentenced, three days later, to twelve months penal servitude.

**Spain:** The death toll of 133 Irishmen on the battle fronts continued. A report of November 29 lists, Jim Woulfe, of Limerick, Patrick R. Mc Laughlin of New York, Mick Browne of New York, Joe Kelly of New York, Paddy O'Neill of Vancouver; all of them on the Aragon front. Upwards of 63 Irishmen, almost all of them I.R.A., were dead at this time, fighting on the side of the Spanish Government.

**Sinn Féin Árd Fhéis:** The annual conference of a party slowly sinking into oblivion, was held in its rooms at 16 Parnell Square, on Sunday, December 5. Addressing the 40 delegates attending, Mrs. Margaret Buckley, President, criticised the government, and the about to be approved Constitution. Officers elected were: Margaret Buckley, President, with Seamus Mitchell and Pádraig de Paor, as Vice-Presidents; Secretaries were Tomás de Paor and Patrick Delaney; Treasurers, Miss M. Carroll and Seamus O'Neill.

**Dock Strike:** Belfast dockers, on December 6, refused to discharge Dublin consigned cargo in two vessels because of the Dublin deep sea dockers strike.

**Hugh Corvin and Peadar Murney:** These two leading northern nationalists called a meeting on December 8 in St. Mary's Hall, Belfast, from which two declarations emerged:-

(a) we the undersigned desiring the unity of Ireland under the New Constitution demand government action to that end.

(b) we now call for an All-Ireland Council to promote that unity.

**Rail Disaster:** 34 people died in a train collision during a blizzard, near Glasgow, on December 10.

**China:** British warships suffered aerial attack from Japanese planes in Yangtze waters, in a report of December 13. The U.S gunboat, *Panay*, was also attacked, and sank with the loss of 11 crew.

**Milltown Cemetery:** Eight men were arrested on Sunday, December 12, when a

party of 200, many of them wearing Easter Lilies, and with a tricolour, attempted to commemorate Ulster man, Joe Mc Kelvey, executed in Dublin. December 8, 1922. The men were arrested during a struggle with 50 R.U.C attempting to remove the flag. On December 30 sentences were imposed by Resident Magistrate J.H. Campbell and W.F. Mc Coy as follows:- Denis Whelan, of Bridge End, twelve months, in his absence. Felix Kelly of Chemical Street; Daniel O'Doherty, of Sheriff Street; Alex Mc Atamney, of Fleet Street; John O'Connor, of Nelson Street, John Campbell of Jamica Street; Henry White, of Anderson's Park; six months. Patrick Ferran of Parkview Street, and Daniel Mc Allister, of Lincoln Street, were sentenced to one month each for wearing illegal emblems. D.I Cullen was granted an order of forfeiture on a large tricolour produced, that had been carried by White.

Sergt. R. J Wilson, told of searching a club off Beachfield Street, and discovering there examination papers in Irish, with a series of questions relating to Republicanism. D.I. Geelan corroborated. Constable Peters gave evidence of finding in the club upon Whelan, the script of a play 'derogatory of the Special Constabulary.' The scene in the Cemetery was then described by Sergt. Fannin. A parade there of upwards of 200 young men responded to commands in Irish. He called upon them that they must disperse; no notice was taken, O'Doherty continuing to give commands. Summoning assistance from Andersonstown barrack, after a tumult, arrests were made. With the exception of White, Fannin said, all wore miniature paper flags bearing the words, *Join the Fianna*, and on the reverse, *Rory, Liam, Dick and Joe*.

**Free State Prisoners Released:** As a gesture on the advent of the New Constitution, the De Valera government released 12 Republican prisoners on December 14. Those released were: Drogheda; Matt Callan, Bill Collins, Charlie Hoey and Hugh Downey. Cork: Mick and Dick Mc Carthy. Co. Mayo: Jack Mc Neela and Ned Corrigan, of Ballycroy, and Tom Mellett, of Ballinrobe. Sallins: Dominic Collins. Dublin: Maurice Twomey. 11 were met at Kingsbridge (now Heuston) arriving from the Curragh, by Mick Fitzpatrick, Con Lehane, Sean Mac Bride and Jimmy Hannigan of H.Q staff. Still detained were Mick O'Leary, Jack Fitzsimons, Máirtín Calligan, Tom Grogan, Sean Hartnett and Michael Conway. They had been guilty of violent crimes, said the government, and would be detained. They were in fact released the following May upon the inauguration as President, of Dúbhglas de h-Íde.

**Aiken and Twomey:** In a response to a statement by Maurice Twomey that he had not been allowed visitors for much of the 19 month period of his imprisonment, Minister for Defence, Frank Aiken, replied that visitors had been allowed until prisoners commenced passing messages, whereupon mesh screens were fitted. He then disclosed that a message had been intercepted from Twomey to a visitor instructing how information could be passed by swapping cigarette packets.

**Constitution Approved in Dáil:** A report of December 17, carried an account of Dáil approval after three divisions won by margins of 27, 29 and 27. Twelve days later the former official description, Irish Free State, was replaced by ÉIRE, or in the English language IRELAND. (That became Republic of Ireland, in November 1948).

**Dedicated to End Partition:** Bearing his new title, An Taoiseach, De Valera,

broadcast to the nation, on the night of Wednesday, December 29; 'the day this Constitution becomes effective over the whole of the national territory, on that day Emmet's epitaph may be written'. Concluding, he prayed that the Irish Race dedicate itself anew to end partition.

**Phone Wires Cut:** Officially the I.R.A said nothing at all about this, but unofficially, someone outside Mullingar cut the phone links to the transmitter at Moydrum, in the vain hope that it would interfere with De Valera's nation-wide broadcast on the inauguration.

**Inauguration of New Constitution, December 29, 1937:** 'Éire from today', was one headline, with the new Constitution now in force amid church services, but without a public holiday. A black flag flew from Sinn Féin's first floor balcony at 9 Parnell Square; and Mrs. Buckley, President, described the document, at a sparsely attended meeting at Cathal Brugha Street, as 'a bogus constitution'. There were military parades but, otherwise, it was business as usual. 'A charter of liberty', old soldier Sean Moylan called it. The British government reaction was different; they rejected the claim, seemingly inherent in Articles 2 and 3, to the entire land of Ireland. The British Government, it said, would recognise the name Éire as relating only to the area 'hitherto known as the Irish Free State'. The Constitution it averred, 'makes no fundamental alteration in Éire's Commonwealth status'. At this Lord Craigavon from Stormont voiced 'profound satisfaction'; De Valera signalled a no comment.

**Drilling in Milltown Cemetery:** The news on December 31 reported that five young men were sentenced to six months for drilling in Milltown Cemetery, on December 12.

## CHRONOLOGY: THE YEAR 1938:

**William R Smith**, aged 39, an ex-warder of Crumlin Road Prison, was shot in four places, while at work in the freight yard of Wordie and Co. at Divis Street, Belfast, as reported on January 6.

**Eire - U.K Negotiations Soon:** An announcement by Taoiseach De Valera, in An Dáil, on January 6, conveyed news that the government would soon negotiate with Britain on outstanding questions, including Partition. This caused a flurry in Belfast, resulting in a cabinet meeting being called. Lord Craigavon announced that a general election would be held 'to deal with the threat' on February 9. The run-up to these important negotiations - initially is covered in Coogan's *De Valera*, Oliver Mc Donagh, Lord Longford and T. P O'Neill. The path finder was the 34 year old Malcolm Mac Donald, Dominions Parliamentary Secretary, who had developed a considerable admiration for De Valera. By this time the British had swallowed their objections to Articles 2 and 3 of the Constitution. In the weeks preceding the Agreement, that would be signed in April, De Valera harped many times on the subject of Partition as the *mutilation* of our country, but the British were determined to keep the question off the agenda.

**Lillie Connolly:** The widow of Commdt-General James Connolly, died at her residence, 36 Belgrave Square, Rathmines, on January 22.

**Barcelona Air Raid:** It was reported reliably that 350 people were killed in the city in an air raid on January 30, by Franco aircraft.

**Manning Spanish Ships:** About 100 former men of the O'Duffy Brigade, left Dublin on February 7, for ports in the North. Their purpose was to crew former Basque ships in Larne and Belfast, and bring them to ports in Franco Spain.

**Ballykinlar Flag:** When the detail at Ballykinlar British Army Camp, near Downpatrick, went outside, on Thursday morning, February 10, to hoist the Union Jack, they found the Irish tricolour flying from the pole.

**William O'Brien:** A young man of that name, from Kelly's Cottages, James Street, was shot dead near Dr. Steeven's Hospital, about midnight, on February 10.

**Northern Election Result:** The final state of the parties, as announced in the papers of February 10, following polling on the previous day, was as follows:-

	New Parliament	Previous Parliament
Unionist	35	37
Nationalist	8	9
Labour	2	2
Indep Unionist	2	2
Independents	1	1
	48	51

With four seats to be filled from Queens University, this would total 52 in the new parliament. The four later elected were; Prof. R. Corkey; Prof. Sir R. Johnstone; Lieut-Col A.B Mitchell, and Mr. J.C Mc Dermott, K.C, later a judge. All were Unionist. The absence of De Valera, for South Down, in the previous parliament accounts for 51 seats where otherwise there would have been 52.

**Anthony Eden Resigns:** Anthony Eden, British Foreign Secretary, resigned on

February 18, in disagreement with P.M Neville Chamberlain's appeasement of Germany policy. With him, Lord Cranborne, Under-Secretary of Foreign Affairs also resigned.

**Flag Confusion in Enniskillen:** At a police dance in Enniskillen, on March 8, the Mexican flag, hanging upside down, was mistaken for the Free State tricolour, causing some concerns. It resulted in Lord Craigavon banning all flags at such functions, other than the Union Jack.

**Austria Invaded:** On the night of March 12, German troops marched across the frontier at several points, following a three hour ultimatum from Adolph Hitler to the government in Vienna, demanding the appointment of a new chancellor and cabinet. Chancellor Kurt von Schuschnigg had resigned.

**Milltown Monument Detonated:** The Republican Movement in Milltown Cemetery was damaged by a mine blast on the night of March 11.

**Recruiting H.Q Damaged:** A mine exploded in the British Army recruiting office on Alfred Street, on the night of March 11. There were no injuries.

**Dublin Cinema Raid:** At 10.30 on the morning of March 11, three armed men entered the Astor Cinema in O'Connell Street. They removed the film *Victoria the Great*.

**Austria and Germany One:** A proclamation from Vienna announced that the seven million Austrians had now joined the German Reich, to create a nation of 73 million.

**Land War:** What the papers of March 31 described as a large party of women armed with sticks, attacked guards and workmen, at Ballyveale Farm, Ballyhaunis, on the morning of March 30. Gardaí arrived, and removed 25 women in cars to the barrack. The dispute arose from what local farmers considered was inequitable division by the Land Commission of the *Ballyveale* estate.

**Frank Ryan Captured:** Franco Spain H Q announced, on April 3, from Saragossa, the capture of Lerida, thus bringing them further north east, to within the border of Catalonia. It was learned also from a United Press report that, among the 99 International Brigade men held in the San Gregorio Military Academy of Saragossa, was Patrick Byrne of Dame Street, Dublin.\* The same report gave the news, bare of all details, that Frank Ryan had also been captured.

As Sean Cronin, in his *Frank Ryan*, graphically relates it:

Frank Ryan was assigned to the British Battalion. The new commander, Sam Wild, promoted to Captain at Caspe, was on sick leave; his successor was George Fletcher. The political commissar was Wally Tapsell, a lively Cockney with a fund of humour. The battalion received orders on March 30 to occupy a second line of defence south and west of Gandesa. Gandesa had to be held at all costs.

It was the gateway to Tortosa, the last door before the Mediterranean. The orders were not precise. The British battalion was to go beyond the town of Calaceite, and link up with the Canadian Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion, which however did not get orders to move until the next morning. The front was supposed to be 15 miles away at least. There was no front, but no one knew that. Arthur Landis in *Abraham*

\* Paddy Byrne is listed in O'Riordan's *Connolly Column*.



*Lincoln Brigade* says categorically: 'they were not told the front had broken, or that it was fluid'. But, unknown to Ryan it was broken.

Calaceite is eight miles directly west of Gandesa. The British Battalion moved out in darkness and took the main road to Calaceite. Jimmy Moon looking back seemed to think 'we were walking all night along the road'. It was relatively near the billets, but in the darkness it took hours to cover the distance.

In the half light of dawn, Thursday, March 31, the lead company with Wally Tapsell, and probably Frank Ryan at its head, walked past small tanks lined up around a bend of the road at Calaceite. Those who saw the Italian lettering on the side assumed it was Spanish. The veterans were tired, the recruits inexperienced. They had no scouts in front, no flankers on the sides.

Tapsell apparently shouted a question to the officer leaning out of the turret of a tank and was shot dead. By then the lead company was trapped without hope of resistance or escape. The shot alerted the rear companies and they opened fire. The Italians signalled their prisoners to lie flat on the ground. Jimmy Moon remembers seeing tanks coming around the corner. He and Danny Doyle tried to mount a machine gun by the side of the road; then managed to get off the road. Doyle was wounded. Moon was captured later after being strafed by planes.

Naturally enough, accounts of the encounter are confused. William Rust, correspondent for the *Daily Worker*, later editor, while admitting that 150 men were killed or wounded and 140 captured - the actual number of prisoners seems to have been 167 - puts the best face on the disaster.

Tom Wintringham does not overlook Ryan in his account 'the man, who to me, represents Ireland'. Neither does he overlook the military disaster. 'The battalion had no advance guard'. It had been told that the Fascists were 20 miles away; but this and the weariness that follows weeks of heavy fighting, and the fact that many men were new recruits who had only just joined the unit, cannot excuse the disastrous slackness of its march. No preparation had been made by the battalion for action; no hand grenades were fused. Most of the first company were cut off and captured.

The tank troops belonged to the crack 23rd of March (Blackshirt) Division. They were in position, apparently, not to trap the British who just stumbled into them, but to attack at dawn. Frank Ryan must be absolved of any responsibility for the disaster. He was merely attached to the unit. Discipline and security were outside his jurisdiction.

Ryan was condemned to death at Alcaniz, not far from where he was captured, and driven, with other prisoners, to the city of Saragossa. It was there that William P. Carney, of the *New York Times*, got speaking to numbers of prisoners. His report was a factor in - for the moment - delaying a speedy execution of Frank. Through the trojan efforts of Leopold H. Kerney, the Irish Ambassador (although at this time not yet accredited to Franco at Burgos), and with the complete support of Eamon De Valera, Frank Ryan survived by a hair's breath, until July 14, 1940, when his 'departure' from Spain was arranged through a combination of remarkable people; remarkable, inasmuch as the Irish diaspora had come together to aid a patriot close to death. 'Budge' Mulcahy of Sligo, married to Helmut Clissman, and Jupp Hoven,

at this time near the top of the Brandenburg Regiment., with the discreet support of Kerney, brought off the transfer.\*

**Patrick Mc Kenna of Glenard Park, Belfast**, was sentenced, on April 7, to ten years imprisonment, for the attempted murder of William Smyth, ex-prison warder, at the yard of Wordie and Co. in January.

**Spanish Territory Split:** The Franco forces, in a drive, reached the Mediterranean Sea, at the town of Vinaroz, on April 5, thus cutting the major government sector of Madrid, Valencia, from Catalonia. The war would continue for a further ten months, but there could be no hope of victory for the Government, or even, for a negotiated settlement.

**I.R.A Convention Held in Dublin:** It did not hit the news but it was held in April, in Marlborough Street, and is touched upon in Dan 'Bally' Keating's account. Its main purpose was to install Sean Russell in power, with a mandate for the English campaign.

**Dúbhglas de h-Íde: an Agreed Candidate:** In an inspired selection, the two main parties agreed on the candidature of former Senator Hyde for President; Uachtarán na h-Éireann. Dr Hyde expressed delight at the honour. He would serve one term until June 1945, being succeeded then in an election by Seán T O'Ceallaigh.

**Pact With Britain:** An important pact was signed in Downing Street, between the governments of Ireland and Great Britain, on April 25. It had three major provisions:-

1. The naval Treaty ports at Berehaven, Cobh, and three at Lough Swilly, would be handed back, within weeks. As Europe moved towards war, this proved of immense importance.

2. Britain would remove duties on the majority of Irish agricultural goods, and live animals.

3. Ireland would pay £10 million to cover all outstanding claims, including land annuities. The result, astonishing to many people, was regarded as a signal victory for the government; De Valera's standing was never higher. The Agreement was approved by the Dáil within five days.

**Henry Marshall, Toomebridge:** For disobeying the Six County government ban on Easter commemorations, he was sentenced on May 2, by Mr. Mc Coy, R.M., to twelve months imprisonment in Crumlin Road, and a further twelve months for being in possession of what the judge described as documents relating to the I.R.A. The accused had been arrested at Moneyglass Cemetery on Easter Sunday.

**Francis Mc Kearney of Odessa Street, Belfast**, was sentenced, on May 2, at the police court, by Mr. Mc Coy, R.M. to six months imprisonment, for being in possession of documents, relating to an I.R.A courtmartial.

**English Colliery Disaster:** 78 miners lost their lives, according to a report of May 11, in a pit head explosion at Markham Colliery, Derbyshire.

**Belfast: Hall Wrecked:** The Pearse Hall, King Street, Belfast, was wrecked by an

\*In a further 90 pages, Cronin relates the rest of the Frank Ryan story, until his death, through a combination of pneumonia and heart failure, in Dresden, on June 10, 1944

In a work on Spain, Frank Ryan was recalled 'standing in the twilight,' by U.S. novelist Upton Sinclair. See the Appendix for news of Ryan in Germany.

explosion, on the morning of Thursday, May 26. The hall, a centre of Republican activity, had been raided by R.U.C. hours before.

**Election Called:** De Valera lost no time in seeking electoral advantage following the successful pact with Britain. The election of July 1937 had left Fianna Fáil on an evenly divided see-saw so far as numbers in the Dáil were concerned. He now sought a commanding advantage.

At 10.30. on the night of May 27, the Dáil was dissolved, and an election was called for June 17.

**Bodenstown Sunday:** The turn-out of 5,000 for Sunday, June 19, was, in the circumstances, heartening. The address was given by Maurice Twomey. Sean Russell laid a wreath on behalf of the I.R.A.

**Election Result:** De Valera was proved the consummate political strategist that he always had been. Fianna Fáil secured its desired overall majority when the election results, of June 17, were published on June 22. It was a 73.5% turn-out.

	This Election	1937 Election
Fianna Fáil	77	69
Fine Gael	45	48
Labour	9	13
Independents	7	8

Their overall majority now stood at 16. With a World War - although not then perceived - only 14 months away, 'a strong hand at the helm' was soon to be of vital importance.

**Dundalk Sentences:** Two young men, Johnnie Mc Kevitt, New Inn, and William Stewart, in a report of June 23, were sentenced in the local court, Dundalk, to two months imprisonment, for stealing, on April 7, the film *Beloved Enemy*, based upon the Tan War. The men refused to plead, but Mc Kevitt declared that 'the film was an insult to all those who fought for Irish freedom'.

**Uachtarán na h-Eireann**, (well, not quite). On Saturday, June 25, in Dublin Castle, Dúbhglas de h-Íde, 'An Craobhín Aoibhinn', was installed as President of Ireland, inside the storied walls of Dublin Castle. An immense throng of invited notables attended. Although at all times a great educationalist, scholar and Irishman, Hyde, then President of the Gaelic League for 22 years, had opposed its politicisation under Pearse and Mc Donagh, in the years prior to 1916. It resulted eventually in his refusal to allow his name to go forward for the presidency, at the Árd Fhéis in Dundalk, held in the hall of the Irish National Foresters, on July 27, 1915, and the day following.

Martin Connellan and Piaras Beasláí, both I.R.B., had proposed a change in its constitution, which Hyde saw as *political*. To quote Ernest Blythe, in a radio broadcast decades afterwards; in spite of Hyde's opposition to change, it was finally decided that the Gaelic League should declare that it stood for a free Ireland.\*

**Where Frank Ryan Held:** A report of July 2 stated that a representative of the International Red Cross had seen Frank Ryan, on June 4, at the Campo de Concentraun, Burgos.

\* Covered in considerable detail in the work by Proinsias Mac Aonghusa, *Ar Son na Gaeilge*.

**Spike Island**, and the forts guarding Cobh, were handed over to Irish Army personnel on Monday, July 11.

**Belfast: Office Wrecked:** The *Daily Mail* offices, in Rosemary Street, were wrecked in a bomb explosion, early on the morning of July 17. Housing also, the *Daily Mirror*, the bomb may have been loyalist; the *Mirror* having published, what were deemed to be derogatory reports of the Twelfth celebrations.

**Hubert Mc Nerney** of Herbert Street, Belfast, was sentenced to twelve months hard labour by Mr. Mc Coy, R.M, in a report of July 20. His offence was that he possessed a pamphlet, *The Republic of Ireland*,\* by Mary Mac Swiney, which D.I Williams, of the R.U.C regarded as seditious.

**'Riot' in Maghera:** Charged with unlawful assembly and assault of R.U.C at Maghera, on July 12, nine local men appeared in court on July 21. Their names were: Peter and Patsy Mc Kenna; Hugh Mc Nulty; James Kearney, Slaghtneill; James Doherty, Ballyrock; Patrick Mc Kenna, Upper Fallagloam; Harry Madden, Swatragh; Bernard O'Kane, Tarhigh. All were remanded in custody, except Charles O'Neill, aged 71, who was granted bail.

P. J Agnew, solicitor, defending, protested that 'the case was a piece of wholesale persecution of local Catholics. The originators of the disturbances had been B. Specials masquerading as civilians'.

**Belfast: Lesson Street Arsenal:** At a special court, Denis J. Mc Namee, of John Street, was sentenced to two years, for membership of the I.R.A. He had surrendered to police, stating that he was the person who had placed explosives and guns in the home of his brother-in-law, Michael Brady, of 131 Leeson Street, where an explosion took place on May 28, seriously injuring Bridie Dolan. The accused later denied making that statement. His brother, Henry Mc Namee, was remanded for one week, on a charge of possession of the arsenal.

**Palestine:** The worst rioting in the history of the Palestine disturbances occurred on July 25, following a bomb explosion in a Haifa vegetable market, killing 43 Arabs and four Jews, and injuring scores of others.

**Mc Areavey, Belfast Charges:** What the R.U.C described as remarkable intelligence documents, were brought to light, in a report of July 25, when John and Mary Mc Areavey, of Stratford Gardens, were charged with possession. The case against John was dismissed while Mary was sentenced to twelve months imprisonment. The documents were stated to be an I.R.A infantry training manual, and a book containing intelligence reports of 'Company B.3.'

**Eamonn Donnelly Again Imprisoned:** Former T.D, Fianna Fáil Director of Elections, and current Seanad election candidate; he was imprisoned for one month in Belfast, for violating an exclusion order. He conducted his own defence surrounded by 40 R.U.C men. The order was first served in October 1924. Mr. Donnelly had been imprisoned in 1933 upon a similar charge.

**William Mc Keaveney of 126 Leeson Street**, Belfast, had contested, as a Republican, a bye-election in 1934, following the death of Joe Devlin, M.P. According to a report of July 29, a bomb, placed in the porch of his shop, exploded in the morning, causing damage.

\* Its correct title, *Poblacht na h-Éireann*.

**Belfast Celtic Burned Out:** The grandstand of the football club, on Donegall Road, together with a pavilion and offices, was burned out overnight on August 3.

**The Banking Commission Report** was received in August. Heavily weighted with men of a conservative viewpoint, it had been set up four years previously on October 27, 1934. The minority report made some innovative proposals.

**Milltown Monument Destroyed:** Early on the morning of August 15, a monument being prepared in O'Neill's sculpture yard, was blown apart in an explosion. It was being made ready to replace one destroyed in the cemetery in July.

**Eamonn Donnelly** was released from Crumlin Road Prison, on the morning of August 26, following the completion of a one month sentence.

**St. Anthony's, Willowfield:** This new Belfast church, due to open in October, narrowly escaped destruction, after two mines with charred fuses were found inside, on September 6. They had been ignited but the spark had not reached the main charge.

**League of Nations:** Mr. De Valera was elected President, on September 12, in Geneva, by 39 votes to three. He had already served in 1933.

**Munich Conference:** After teetering for weeks on the brink of a war threatened by Germany, on the Sudetan issue in Czecho Slovakia, Neville Chamberlain and Edouard Daladier of France, finally qualied. A conference, held in Munich, agreed, by a report of September 30, to surrender extensive border areas, effectively leaving the state defenceless. Signatories were; Italy, Germany, Britain and France.

**Last Forts Handed Over:** Britain's last ports in the 26 Counties, were handed over to the Irish Coastal Defence Corps, on October 3. The forts, Dunree and Lenan head, on Lough Swilley now had the tricolour flying over each.

**Two More Irish Die in Spain:** A report of October 12, carried the news that Capt. Jack Nalty, of Convent Avenue, Richmond Road, and Lieut. Liam Mc Gregor, of Inchicore, had been killed on the Ebro front, while defending Catalonia.

**Trolley Bus System Extended:** As trams were replaced in west and north Belfast, the trolley bus system, already operating in east Belfast, was extended.

**Kevin Barry Plaque:** Oscar Traynor, Minister for Posts and Telegraphs, was reported, on November 7, having unveiled, the previous day, a memorial plaque to Kevin Barry, on the wall of Monk's Bakery; the ambush location, where four British soldiers, had been killed, in Church Street, in October, 1920.

**Armistice Day Bombs in Belfast:** Four simultaneous explosions occurred, all upon waste ground, coinciding, with the two minute silence of Friday, November 11. Two had been set in the brickfields, Beechmount; one at Ardilea Street, and one at Noble's Field, Newtownards Road.

**The Sinn Féin Árd Fhéis,** was held on Sunday, November 13, at their office, at 16 Parnell Square, with 60 delegates attending. Mrs. Margaret Buckley was re elected President.

**Newtownbutler Meeting Banned:** Sir Dawson Bates, Six County Minister for Home Affairs, on Friday, November 18, announced a ban, prohibiting the holding of meetings, for Saturday or Monday. Anti-Partition meetings were to take place in the strongly nationalist Fermanagh town, addressed by Erskine Childers T.D, Eddie Mc Ateer, M.P, Rev. P. Maguire, local P.P, and others. Large forces of R.U.C and B. Specials were drafted into the town.

**Belfast: Club Burned:** The National Club, in Derry Street, Belfast, founded by Joe Devlin, M.P in 1892, was burned out in the early hours of Sunday, November 20.

**Hollyford, Co. Tipperary,** hosted Sean Russell, Chief of Staff, I.R.A, together with a large local contingent, on Sunday, November 20, when he unveiled a memorial to Phil Shanahan, prominent in the Tan struggle, who had died in 1931.

**Invincible James Fitzharris:** In Glasnevin cemetery, on the same day, Stephen Hayes, now upon G.H.Q staff as Adjutant-General, unveiled a memorial to James Fitzharris, the driver of the cab on that fateful day in May, 1882, when the Invincible Society struck at the newly appointed Chief Secretary, Lord Frederick Cavendish, and Under-Secretary, Thomas Henry Burke, on the main road of the Phoenix Park, close now to a signpost for Ashtown Castle.\*

\* Founded in November 1881, the group had made a number of forays; one being intended for W.E. 'Buckshot' Foster.\*\* Following a meeting upstairs in Mullett's public house, at 12, Lower Bridge Street, on the morning of May 6, the party was issued with surgical knives. They departed, led by James Carey, in two vehicles, a cab and a side car; one driven by Fitzharris, and the other, driven by Michael Kavanagh.

After a lapse of eight months, betrayed by Carey, (and later by his brother Peter, and driver Kavanagh), 26 were arrested by Supt. John Mallon. 20 of these were convicted in Green Street, and between May and December, five were hanged in the prison yard of Kilmainham: Joseph Brady, Daniel Curley, Michael Fagan, Thomas Caffrey and Timothy Kelly. Joseph Poole - who was not an Invincible, but a Fenian, and not a participant in the Phoenix Park incident - was hanged in Richmond Barrack, later Keogh Square, Inchicore. (Volunteers of that name fought in 1916 and after: they were most probably sons or nephews.)

The eight others, including Fitzharris, served long terms in Kilmainham. Carey, with his wife and six children, escaping to South Africa, was recognised on board the *Kinfaun Castle*, by Donegal Fenian, Patrick O'Donnell - they had been engaged in a card game - and was shot dead. Taken back, under heavy guard to England, O'Donnell was tried at the Old Bailey and sentenced to death. He was hanged at Newgate in December 1883.

Tim Kelly, scarcely past his eighteenth year, had a simple, close friendship with Joe Brady. They were inseparable at the musical concerts in the city, and signs on it, they were a partnership when it came to giving an impromptu rendering at house warmings. Last to die, by some months - the Castle had to empanel three juries before his conviction could be secured - when the fateful night came, Tim Kelly spent it in song from within his cell; the door being left ajar. And tradition has it that on that occasion, his final piece, through the half open door was, *The Heart Bowed Down with Weight of Woe*. It continued for long to be a favourite among older Dubliners.

\*\* Following Gladstone's Kilmainham 'treaty' with Parnell, Foster resigned, being replaced by Lord Frederick Cavendish, nephew by marriage to Gladstone. The assassins sought only the permanent under secretary Thomas Burke but Cavendish intervened.

**Henry Mc Namee**, of John Street, Belfast, was, in a report of November 26, sentenced by Judge Brown, to three years, for possession of explosives at Leeson Street, where an explosion occurred on May 28, seriously injuring Bridie Dolan. His sister, Mrs. Josephine Brady, was sentenced to fifteen months.

**Baton Charges in Belfast:** There were baton charges by R.U.C. against persons attempting to hold a public meeting in the Lower Falls, protesting against new crack downs under the Special Powers Act.

**Belfast:** A bomb exploded close to the Rock recreation club in Rockmount Street, at 10.20 p.m. injuring three young men.

**Castlefin Tragedy:** Evidently as part of an opening salvo for the 1939 bombing campaign in England, the last weekend of November saw an elaborate series of Border hut actions, resulting in the destruction of seven in Fermanagh alone.

One, that was in preparation, in a dwelling at Stranamuck, Castlefin, Co. Donegal, prematurely exploded on the night of November 28. Jimmy Joe Reynolds, a G.H.Q. man, with an incomparable knowledge of the resources of the English campaign, along with Charles Mc Cafferty, the owner of the cottage (his family were in an adjoining room), were killed instantly. Old soldier, John James Kelly, thrown clear, had part of a chimney fall upon him, and died later. There were three mines sent on by Jimmy Dolan, from Sligo; each intended for three huts in Clady and Strabane. One was marked faulty, but that message failed to reach Castlefin.

**John Joseph Mc Kee**, of Sevastopol Street, a youth, was sentenced to two months hard labour, on December 6, by Mr. Campbell, R.M., for drilling a troop of Na Fianna, at Rockmount Street hall, Belfast.

**Second Dáil Hands Over:** Such shadowey powers as still reposed in the Second Dáil, were handed over to the I.R.A. on December 8, in the home of Mary Mac Swiney in Glanmire. The occasion, although not covered in daily newspapers, is described in that issue of Brian O'Higgins' *Wolfe Tone Weekly*. The Army Council minutes of December 4, printed in Sean Cronin's *Irish Nationalism*, notes that Brian O'Higgins and Mary Mac Swiney, were 'favourable', while Count Plunkett, J.J. O'Kelly ('Sceilg') and Cathal Ó Murchadha, appeared merely to go along with the proposal. Professor Stockley was ill, while Tom Maguire was absent. As Charlotte H Fallon in *Soul of Fire* describes it; with Mary's encouragement a decision was reached and a formal statement issued in which the surviving members of the Second Dáil transferred their authority to the Irish Republican Army.

**Tomás Mac Curtain**, was returned for trial in Cork, on December 12, charged with assaulting a detective garda, on October 28. Mac Curtain refused to recognise the court.

**John White of Tullysarran, Co. Armagh**, was sentenced by Mr. Campbell, R.M., to two years hard labour in Crumlin Road Prison, for possession of I.R.A. papers. One paper had notes of finance raised to send men to Manchester. Two men had already been sent; one of whom had been detailed to join the British Army. There were also notes of a machine gun class held in 1938.

**Jimmy Herron of Kilkeel** was at this time undergoing instruction for an air pilot's licence at a private airfield in Co. Kildare. This was being undertaken fol-

lowing a directive from G.H.Q, but whether he ever flew we cannot say.

He was later interned for the duration in the North. Proinsias Mac Diarmada of Belfast recalls him as 'brilliant on translation'. He still treasures his translation in Irish of his *Men of Harlech*. After years spent working in England he was laid to rest in Kilkeel. A sister married Terry Wilson - Tarlach Ó h-Uid, another internee.

**The Second 1938 General Army Convention**, was held this month in a small hall, 'a ballet school', upstairs, over the Home Market shop, of William Lucas at 107 St. Stephen's Green West; an area that has since been redeveloped. Around 50 delegates were present. Russell's main purpose in calling it was, that, now rehabilitated since April, back into the Army, and Chief of Staff, the delegates could reconfirm the intention to attack England on her own soil. It was an opportunity also to say farewell to Maurice Twomey, seeking retirement, and who over the past year, had given service as Adjutant-General, and would continue for 'missions' into the years ahead.

The minutes then continued with details of an Army Council discussion of social policy, and the alleged lack of social content, in the manifesto being prepared to launch the Campaign. The members present were identified only by code names, but one, Joyce, we know to be Ó Cadhain. He was critical on the lack of social content, and also on the meagre resources available for the Campaign itself. As a result, he did not sign the ultimatum to Lord Halifax, British Foreign Secretary,\* although remaining on the H.Q staff in Dublin.

**December 22, Belfast Swoop:** Dawn raids by R.U.C, on that Thursday morning, may have indicated some knowledge of the intended English campaign, but misplacing it into the North. The statement, issued by Sir Dawson Bates would lead one to conclude this; *the fact having come to knowledge of the police that plans have been prepared by the Irish Republican Army for attacks upon persons occupying prominent positions, and upon Government and other property....*

34 men were seized and interned in Crumlin Road. In the course of the next two years they would be joined by hundreds more, and some would remain in this untried state until December 1945. Their names were: Joseph Cullen, Rockmore Street; Richard Dunne, Valentine Street; Samuel Irvine, Majorca Street; Angelo Forte, Clonard Street; W. Watson, Malcolm Street; J. Campbell, Jamaica Street; R. Hicks, Glenard; J. Mc Guinness, Hamill Street; G. O'Connor, Nelson Street; Joseph Keenan, Falls Road; M. Trainor, Glenard; Joseph Mc Gurk, Durham Street; Sean Mc Nally, Ardalia Street; S. Mc Ardle, Beechmount; F. Mc Glade, Ardilea Street; O. Trainer, Nelson Street; W. Murray, Chemical Street; G. Harte, Locan Street; P. Loughrey, Sidney Street; J. Nolan, Mc Cleery Street; C. Mc Loughlin, Vere Street; A. Mullan, Seaforde Street; J. Boal, Seaforde Street. The ages of the men ranged from 20 to 40 years.

\* See Cronin's *Irish Nationalism*, Appendix XIII



## THE I.R.A. A STATE WITHIN A STATE

### 12 St. Andrew Street, Dublin 2.

From an upper floor in the building from the late twenties until 1935 *An Phoblacht* (founded June 18 1925 under the academic P. J Little, later a Fianna Fáil minister) was edited and published. It was commercially printed by the Longford Printing Co, both many times raided and disrupted.

Apart from Little, *An Phoblacht* had a galaxy of colourful editors and assistant editors, all of whom later cut a swathe in Irish journalism and politics; from Peadar O'Donnell, Lyle Donaghy, Geoffery Coulter, Terry Ward, Frank Ryan, Hannah Sheehy-Skeffington and Donal O'Donoghue.



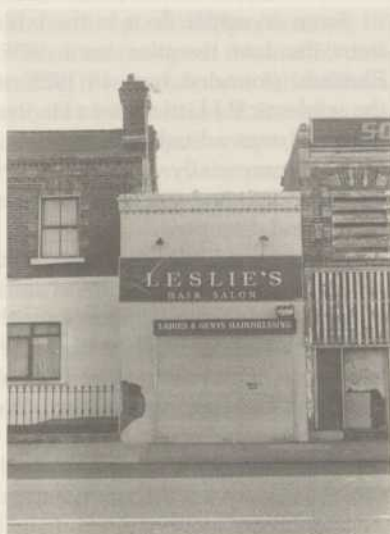
### 204 Pearse Street, Dublin 2.

The house, now rebuilt as part of the Samuel Beckett Centre, was a replica of that shown but adjoining, and was owned by Fianna Fáil councillor and business entrepreneur Andy Clerkin. Its first floor was commercially let during 1939 into 1940 to the I.R.A. in the guise of a fruit import company. National organisers reported there monthly; it was used also as an editorial office by the Publicity Bureau. See the account by Séamus Ó Mongáin. It was never raided.



**28 Lower Grand Canal Street, Dublin 2.**

The shop and rear premises of this building was, during most of the thirties and into 1940, a training depot for the boy scout organisation Fianna under Seamus Grace, one of the nine survivors of the battle of Mount Street Bridge in Easter Week 1916. See Mattie O'Neill's account. It was never raided



**17 Percy Place, Northumberland Road, Dublin 4.**

From the Autumn of 1939 until May 1940 much of this house was used as editorial, print and despatch dept for the weekly *War News*. Up to seven personnel resided there, including Jack (Sean) Mc Neela, Máirtín Standúin, Seamus Murphy, Tom Hunt, Kathleen Kelly, Eddie Ryan and this writer. It escaped being raided until after its evacuation.



**Mc Cracken Hall, behind Crowe's,  
Ballsbridge.**

This was a training H.Q. under Frankie Rogers for 3rd Battalion members (at one time De Valera's unit), later No. 3 Company, until the spring of 1940. Through an entry, no longer there, from Merrion Road one passed into a court, Darcy's Cottages. The hall was up steps on the left inside the court.



**29 Landsdowne Park East,  
Ballsbridge**

In 1940 this was an office of the training dept, in which Christy (Kit) Quearney, Seamus Murphy, Mrs. Ellen Keane and Margaret Murray resided.

Raided August 22 1940; all were arrested and heavily sentenced from which a chain reaction, the Devereux/George Plant affair sprang. See Christy Quearney's account



**3 Prince of Wales Terrace,  
Ballsbridge, Dublin 4.**

According to Mattie O'Neill this house belonged to the I.R.A and had a caretaker (the name O'Flaherty is in Thom's Directory for that period). It was used by the training dept for classes in 1939 into 1940. Mixie Conway may have been in charge, assisted by Pearse Mc Laughlin of Howth, and Christy Quearney.

Callers included Joe O'Connor from Brosna, Kerry, a lad named Joe O'Donnell was ex-R.A.F, and taught radio telegraphy in the house. In the event of a raid it was hoped to disappear into No. 4, the home of Norbett O'Connor, brother of executed Rory.



**98a, Rathgar Road, Dublin 6.**

In front a make-believe shop. From 1938 onwards this was a Training Dept H.Q, with a deeply constructed dump excavated by the father of Liam Brady.

Occupied by Mixie Conway until his arrest in Harold's Cross in July 1940, and by Paddy Mc Grath, Tom Harte, Tom (Liverpool) Hunt, and a girl named O'Kelly, until an early morning raid on August 16, 1940 when two Special Branch men were shot dead in the affray, and Harte wounded. Mc Grath and Harte were executed and Hunt was sentenced to life. See Christy (Kit) Quearney's account.



**Ashgrove House, Highfield Road,  
Rathgar, Dublin 6**

In the later quarter of 1939 this was the H.Q of the I.R.A wireless broadcasting system; leased by Seamus Byrne, solicitor and later playwright.

Raided during a broadcast on the evening of December 29, 1939 when Byrne, Jack Plunkett, Jack (Sean) Mc Neela and Séamus Ó Mongáin were arrested. All received comparatively light sentences, but Mc Neela died after a 55 day hunger strike which Plunkett survived.



**16 Rathmines Park, Rathmines,  
Dublin 6.**

Leased by H.Q staff I.R.A. Occupied by Larry Grogan, Paddy Mc Grath, Peadar O'Flaherty and Willie Mc Guinness. It was raided on September 9, 1939 and the four arrested. Also present were Stephen Hayes, Acting C.S and Mattie Tuite. Both escaped.



### Killiney Castle.

Leased by the mysterious 'Count' Heaney, who loaned it to the I.R.A for training purposes from mid 1938 prior to the English campaign. Most of the top operators passed through it. It was raided after evacuation in October 1939.

1741 is upon a door stone above the door with the inscription *Nisi Dominus Frustr*, the full import of which is *Except the Lord Keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.*



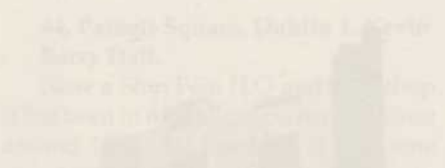
### Glencullen House in the Dublin Mountains.

Loaned in May 1939 to the I.R.A as a staging post for deportees from England. Evacuated later. See Pat Hannon's account.



**Silver Springs, Delgany.**

The grounds were used as a training camp from 1938 until it was evacuated in late 1939. Owned by a sympathiser, Mr. Fitzgerald. All of the principal I.R.A officers from Mixie Conway, to Paddy Mc Grath, to 'Lanty' Hannigan, to Pat Shannon, to Harry White passed through Killiney Castle and Silver Springs.



**An Stad Hotel, 30 Nth. Frederick Street, Dublin 1.**

This hotel which still exists as An Stad, was privately owned by Mollie Gleeson and her family. For long a resting place or stop-over, it entered the mythology of the I.R.A in the twenties and thirties.



**No. 38, Hardwicke Street, Dublin 1.**

The Hardwicke Hall, theatre, early school, court and complex dating from 17th century; now totally demolished and replaced in the early fifties by Corporation flats. Was a long frontage two storey building with an inner court and parallel wing used by Evelyn Gleeson of Dun Emer (carpet weaving) Guild. The frontal building was shared with Fianna Éireann on the ground floor and I.R.A. on first floor. Owned by Countess Plunkett.



**94, Upper Dorset Street, Dublin 1.**

Strictly speaking this was a private house (with a separately rented shop trading in fish below), but Madame Rogers - in the Republican pantheon their leading ladies from Despard to Mac Bride to Markievicz were always given this distinction - who had the misfortune to have one son a Harrier and another a training officer in the I.R.A, presided over the menage.

Madame had earlier occupied portion of *Crofton House*, Dun Laoire. It was in the above that Brendan Behan's farce *An Giall* (The Hostage) was set.





BOB BRADSTRAW  
OF BELFAST

**53, Upper Dorset Street, Dublin 1.**

E.J. Brennan's provision shop formerly, at the rear of which the I.R.A. under Paddy Mc Grath set up a grenade factory overseen by Q.M.G Paddy Mc Neela, Mattie Tuite, Bob Clancy, Dan O'Toole and Paddy Cummins. The grenades were cast in Co. Cavan, and the refined work on the pin and content done here. Never raided. See a reference by Séamus Ó Mongáin.



**44, Parnell Square, Dublin 1. Kevin Barry Hall.**

Now a Sinn Féin H.Q and Bookshop it has been in republican ownership since around 1925. Its purchase at that time was assisted by Dr. Moran of Rathgar, Dr. John Harrington of North Frederick Street, Joe Stanley and a Mr. Hoban of Parnell Street, Simon Donnelly of the Old I.R.A., Donal O'Connor of the Castle Hotel and Mick O'Neill, an old Fenian.

Margaret Casey, née O'Brien, recalls that her family were installed there as caretakers at that time. Her father, who was in the Customs House action of May 1921, had his wife shot dead in an affray with Tans while she was attempting to cross Bolton Street, in June 1921.



**CORK CITY:****Mac Curtain Hall, MacCurtain Street, Cork.**

Held by trustees for the Movement until the late forties when it was sold. See account by Jim Savage.

**Thomas Ashe Club, Fr. Matthew Quay, Cork**

As local commander I.R.A, Tom Barry had his office here in the mid-thirties directly above the entry. The top floor was in use for training with a private conference room alongside. In recent decades it passed through a number of hands becoming run-down.



## BOB BRADSHAW OF BELFAST:

*Bob's father was a veteran of two of England's wars.*



*Bob Bradshaw in 1993*

Bob Bradshaw comes from a parentage of English soldiery; the 'scum of the earth', as Wellington called his own men in the Peninsular War of 1809 (many of them being Irish); the lowest of the low. Bob's father was not only in Flanders in 1914 but had fought in the Boer War, too. A no-good, Bob says; a drinker and a ne'er-do-well. In Flanders, he had an easier life than on the Veldt. He was comfortably behind the lines training horses, where he could drink and booze to his heart's content. His mother's brother soldiered also, as did his father's half-brother. Army life, an end of the line vocation, attracted them; had they had proper alternative jobs to go to in the Belfast of the early part of this century, it might have been a different story.(1)

Bob readily admits, therefore, that while he came from a nest of British soldiers, he had no national background whatsoever.

My dad's name was Bob, also: Robert Bradshaw. With that name you could be taken for a Prod in Belfast but the address would give you away. If you were young then, in the wrong district and surrounded by a group from the other side, you could get a hammering, you might be left for dead. That is why every youngster from around the Falls took up boxing, was handy with the gloves or without them. I could hold my own. I was handy with the gloves myself, having sparred with professionals.

I must not leave out my mother; her name was Lizzie Mc Veigh. Without disparaging her, because she was good to me, she was just about the same quality as my dad's people, a cut above them perhaps, but affected adversely by the relationship. She had been just a wee girl from Hawthorn Street beside him, working in a linen mill, as did her mother, her aunts and sisters; all of them. She met my father and married him.

At 12 years of age Bob joined the Fianna. They had smart green uniforms and music. And at that time no one would join the Baden Powells, they were Orange and Protestant, and he would not touch the Catholic scouts. They were 'sissies'. Bob admits to having his heart set on joining the I.R.A. He was born in 1912, so we are speaking now of 1925, only two years after our Civil War and with nothing much happening in Belfast. The political scene in the North was firmly set. Stormont was established (although that great edifice had not yet been built). It was a Protestant

Parliament for a Protestant People, to quote the alliterative slogan of its Prime Minister, for 20 years, Sir James Craig, Lord Craigavon. Loyalism was firmly in place; and with the Royal Ulster Constabulary and the B. Specials, it was in total command. The I.R.A. was a fragmented group of idealists, rudderless and without a programme; it was the era of 'Croppies lie down'.

As an example of the low level of Republican activity in the middle to the late twenties, there was rarely more than a half dozen held in Crumlin Road Prison, and they were mostly short term and on minor charges, although there were three still held long term in the aftermath of the birth of the northern state.

Frank O'Boyle, Hughie Rogers and William Conlon were arrested in Co. Down in the course of an I.R.A. fund raising operation in 1920 during which a pay clerk was shot dead. They were sentenced to 20 years, being released in 1928. Throughout this period there is almost no reference whatever in the pages of *An Phoblacht* to any activity in the North until we come to the short lived Outdoor Relief Riots of October 1932 when, among some idealists, orange and green seemed for a while to join hands. (2)

The following is a chronicle of the very low level of what might be called I.R.A. activity within the Six Counties between 1929 and 1935.

In June 1929, five men are noted in *An Phoblacht*, charged with bill sticking, including Jimmy Steele. On that occasion Bob, put up 22 bills in the centre of Belfast. *Ye couldn't have, said Tony Lavery; (3) ye never would get 22 in that area.*

In July 1929, *An Phoblacht* notes O.C. Abercorn Street, George Nash, sentenced to three years for documents. Nash, Bob observes, was from Abercorn Street, a strong G.A.A. man and a Republican to the end of his days. In January, 1930, three Belfast men were sentenced to 3 months for taking part in an Easter parade. By early 1931, however, there were only five in jail in the entire North and South.

In June, 1932, Arthur Thornberry and James Connolly were jailed for removing five rifles from the home of an Orangeman. An Orangeman by the name of Early, Bob says, and a civil servant, was the gun owner. Joe McGurk sought for reprisal action but none was taken. (4)

In 1932, three men were fined for bill sticking, but rather than pay, opted for a short imprisonment, the three were Dan Turley, Billy McCurry and Tom O'Malley. There was a welcome and a eulogy on Turley's return. Turley, an old soldier - he was at Coalisland on Easter Saturday, 1916 but was later shot dead by the I.R.A. in 1937 in disputed circumstances (his family remained nationalist).

July, 1932, saw an address from the Army Council of the I.R.A. to the men and women of the Orange Order; this is a well known document inspired by George Gilmore, (whom Bob describes somewhat uncharitably as a mouthpiece for Moscow), who with his brothers, Harry and Charlie, were prominent Protestants in the I.R.A. at that time. *I can see them all reading and discussing it in the Orange lodges,* Bob adds maliciously. Be that as it may, it evoked no response whatever.

The level of activity that prevailed at that time can be gauged from newspaper accounts.

August, 1932; Dr. Farrell Leddy was sentenced to one month for drilling at Carnlough. Dr. Leddy's father was in the R.U.C. and he himself was in the Officer's

Training Corps in Queen's University.

October, 1932: Outbreak over 10 days of the Outdoor Relief Riots in Belfast, caused by a severe cut in wage relief to unemployed workers, thus penalising both sides. Two were shot dead by the police; Sam Baxter, a Protestant, and John Creegan, a Catholic. Bob was up to his neck in them, throwing pickers (paving stones) at the police. Two B. Specials grabbed him, one drawing back the well greased firing pin of his rifle. Its the end, thought Bob; but, at that moment, a horde of mill girls flocked in front of him and the danger was averted.

Lord Craigavon, in a fiery speech blamed republicans; the Prince of Wales visited the city, thumped an Orange drum and all was smoothed over again.

November, 1932: Three young men were arrested in Belfast; Michael O'Kane, Dom Adams and Robert Sloan, the latter, Bob says, was known as 'Tod' and hailed from Antrim.

By March, 1933, the following Republican prisoners were held in Crumlin Road, Belfast:

names	charges	terms
Arthur Thornberry	arms	18 months
James Connolly	arms	18 months
Michael O'Kane	revolver	nine months
Hugh Matthews	drilling	three months
Sean Turley	drilling	Ret for trial
Chris Mc Loughlin	drilling	Ret for trial
Wm. Mc Alister	firearms	Awaiting trial
Thomas O'Malley	firearms	Awaiting trial

April, 1933: James Trodden of Armagh is noted as receiving six months' sentence in his absence over the Border. He had skipped.

April, 1933: Joe Mc Gurk is arrested addressing a banned Easter parade in Tyrone. He was, I think, our intelligence officer, Bob says, but he could not be much use since for a post like that you need a sleeper, and Joe was too well known.

June, 1933: Leo Martin, well known after, received one month for having 12 copies of *An Phoblacht*.

July, 1933: Sean Turley and Chris Mc Laughlin are noted as having received 12 months and eight months, respectively, for having been found drilling the previous December with 80 men.

September, 1933: Six, unnamed, are held in Belfast.

October, 1933: Thornberry and Connolly are released but sentenced to a further month for ignoring a deportation order to the Free State. Both, of course, were Belfast men. Thornberry from Clondara Street; very much a Belfast man, Bob says, with all of the prejudices that that connotes, but a brainy fellow for all that. He was a teacher and a hurler later, a man of very strong principles.

In the same month yet another pogrom erupted in Belfast, and Daniel O'Boyle, said to be a well know Republican sympathiser, was shot dead in York Street. A mob invaded a Catholic quarter and attacked houses. O'Boyle was an ordinary middle aged Catholic.

November, 1933: A mixed band of 20 persons, including Jimmy Steele, are sentenced to short terms in Belfast.

### I JOIN THE I.R.A.

At 14 years of age, says Bob, resuming the story, I went down to the Mc Kelvey hut, a small timber structure near the Whiterock Road; the Belfast headquarters of the I.R.A. It is funny now to think, and it shows how unimportant they were in the eyes of the R.U.C, that the I.R.A could maintain a known headquarters. I told them I wanted to join. Tony Lavery, the O.C, took one look at me and said: *come back when you are out of short pants*. I went away deflated.

A year later my dad bought me a pair of long pants; not to join the I.R.A of course. He knew nothing about that; but I presented myself again at the McKelvey hut and this time Davy Matthews (5) took me on. From the stories he had heard about me in the meantime I think he looked upon me as a reincarnation of Buffalo Bill and the Cisco Kid. About a year after that, in Clondara Street, having got to know me better in the meantime, he produced this big service revolver. At this time I had commenced a metal working apprenticeship in the engineering firm of Combe, Barbour and Combe, but what Matthews had in mind was a suicidal mission in reality. *There is a platoon of British to be ambushed coming down the Falls Road; they will turn down Clondara Street and you are to let fly at them there*. Clondara Street was a street of ordinary small terrace houses. I went there sticking it out waiting and standing openly upon the pavement. As I waited, I wondered how many of them I might get before they got me. I thought I might hit three, by which time they they would have killed me.

I hoped that Billy Hall would not be one of them; he was a territorial officer and a journeyman with Combe, Barbour and Combe, a Protestant, of course, but nice to me. Looking back afterwards I would say he was homosexual. At that time I was blue eyed and boyish, and that may have aroused his interest.

Fortunately for me, however, there was to be no slaughter because no platoon of the British Army went to Clondara Street that night. Meanwhile a strike commenced at the Great Northern Railway in January, 1933, and it was affecting the work force in Belfast which was mainly Protestant. Davy Matthews, our O.C was approached one night, sitting by his kitchen fire when two Protestant men knocked. *Our men that are out are hard pressed*, they complained. *The Great Northern are still running trains and they are also managing to deliver goods by lorry. Now if the I.R.A would stop them, they might be prepared to settle. The only way we could stop them*, said Matthews, *would be by blowing up the railway. We thought of that*, said the Protestant men, *but we had no one that could do it*. Now, the reason that Matthews could entertain such a hairbrained scheme was that he thought it might bring Protestant and Catholic together. The pity was that he selected me for the action. I was summoned to be his operative.

I already knew how to use explosives; in fact, I had developed quite a proficiency letting then off in an old quarry under the Black Mountain. I was given a hundred sticks of gelignite, detonators and a battery by May Lavery.(6) I was told to try the terminus at Great Victoria Street and, in present day parlance, create an incident there; but when I got to it I found it patrolled by armed R.U.C and B. Specials. Nothing could be done in Victoria Street. Then I remembered that out under the line, Lisburn way, there was a stone culvert where a mine might be placed. I had often looked at it with something like this in mind, so, with rain falling, I walked all the

way.

It was dark, of course, when I got there, and I found that the rain had partly filled the channel. It was not going to be easy.

Pushing the gelignite and battery ahead of me, and with the loop of wire and the detonators in my pocket, I squirmed into the culvert. It was like a tunnel with only the suggestion of grey light at the far end. It was a tough job making progress and at the same time keeping the material up and out of the water.

Inch by inch I squirmed forward. My only fear now was that I might not be able to squirm backwards again; that I might get stuck in there, or that the water under me which was already reaching my mouth and nose, would rise with the rain and drown me. Everything was possible: it was no place to be feeling claustrophobic.

Somehow or other I managed to make in the dark, on a ledge up out of the water, the right connections to the battery. Well, if I had not, I would not be telling you about it now. I started then to squirm backwards; and working away I managed eventually to engage my toe on the outside edge of the tunnel. That gave me purchase; I could move back a bit quicker. I had set the timer for an hour, so I would have time to get back to the street before it went off.

I met May Laverty again near the station; a brave girl, although I never saw anyone so relieved after she had passed the gelignite to me. She had waited all this time for me. I had to keep in the shadows, however, as my entire front was caked in mud. *Reilly's car is waiting there for you*, she whispered, as she pulled her coat around her girlie figure and made off.

Reilly had drawn up alongside the kerb and he just muttered, *get in*. At Beechmount I said; *let me out here and I'll run home*. At that moment I heard this big bang away out along the railway line. *That's it*, I remarked to him. I knew the culvert had been breached. A couple of days after that Matthews called me again. Now, I want to tell you one thing about Davy Matthews: In some ways he was a menace but he was no coward. Isaac Pimley, another volunteer, used to say that he had a heart of gold but a head of ivory.

There are 25 R.U.C guarding the G.N lorry exit from Victoria Street, he told me: *You are to ambush the lorries as they come out. Fire into the cab but try not to kill the driver. Get yourself a Mauser pistol and enough ammo*. Dismissing me, he turned then to Joe Pimley: *Vol. Pimley, you are required for the same job. You will give covering fire during the operation*.

We went down the Grosvenor Road, and in the darkness, I took up a position on the pavement. It had all the marks of being another suicidal mission. As the procession of lorries emerged I let fly. I managed to fire into the cab of the first three lorries. (7) Bang, bang, bang went my Mauser; but, after firing at three my position was identified. The lone gunner was shown up. Nor had Pimley fired, as his gun, I learned after, was defective. An R.U.C sergeant saw where I was and ran towards me, firing as he came; six aimed shots. I counted them to see when his gun would be empty, then I turned tail and ran hard for Durham Street, one of those small streets of wee houses where I knew I could burst in and find safety. Apart from being a handy boxer I was a good runner also; I used to run three miles every day.

Now, anyone, who knew Belfast before this area was redeveloped knows that

Durham Street was only a few hundred yards up the Grosvenor in the direction of the Falls. Two R.U.C men had emerged ahead of us but Pimley and myself did not see them until we were almost on them. Immediately we dodged into an entry. At this point Pimley tried again but could give no covering fire as his ammunition clearly was 'dozed'. It had been in the dump for too long, a common fault with I.R.A material at that time. However I fired straight at one and he fell. I am sure he was dead. He was from Cullentree Road barracks. He had his gun drawn and cocked and it was him or me. I am sure of that. (8)

His companion froze when he saw him fall, in fact, he went into wild hysterics, firing at me twice but never taking proper aim, and the shots of course, missed. As a result of that action I had to leave Belfast; and the North. My parents never knew and I wasn't going to tell them. No need to add to their worries. That was March 3, 1933. (Bob may not have known but he was being observed by no less a personage than Queen Victoria, whose statue, overlooking the scene, stood high upon the wall of the Queen Victoria School nearby).

I remember walking the length of the Falls with Gene Thornberry to Nth. King Street, to the Árd Scoil. Already I was finger printed and photographed, having been pulled in on an earlier occasion. I was aware that I stood out because I had a clean white shirt and a fresh tanned face. Frank O'Neill had been delegated to get me out of Belfast; he scooped me up and conveyed me in his car to Dublin. As soon as he reached O'Connell Street, however, he turned around and like blue hell headed back to Belfast. I found myself in Dublin, on my own, with no contacts and no money. The only address I knew was 12 St. Andrew Street, the publication office of *An Phoblacht*. I knew that, because it was printed on every issue of the paper.

Upstairs, the office was staffed by three women members of Cumann na mBan. I did not know them so no words were exchanged. I just sat there and waited. After about an hour Mick Price walked in. I recognised him because he had been at a battalion meeting in Belfast. Indeed, he was a frequent visitor, (9) and besides the Price brothers had a sterling record in the Movement. Mick himself had been in the British Army in Egypt so I felt an affinity there. He was quickly followed by Moss Twomey, Chief of Staff, whom I had not met before.

They agreed that I be conveyed to where Moss then lived in Clyde Road, Ballsbridge, and from there I was taken to Mrs. Furlong's at 32 North Great Georges Street. She was a native of Belfast. Her son, Jack, had married Kathleen Kearney (10) who, upon his early death had married Stephen Behan. There was no direct relationship between Granny Furlong, as he called her, and Brendan Behan. Joe Pimley arrived there then, almost on my heels, accompanied by Jack Crosskerry, a handsome intelligent lad from Co. Down, who had witnessed the shooting. Art Thornberry arrived after that, preceded by Gerry O'Toole from Spinner Street. It looked like the entire Belfast battalion was coming to Dublin. The I.R.A undertook to pay Mrs. Furlong 25 shillings a week for bed and board until we would find our feet in Dublin.

Mrs. Furlong had two daughters, Evelyn and Emily.(11) Emily was a music teacher, although the whole family were musical. I was myself fond of music and, despite the upsets in Belfast, had been collecting records there. Evelyn brought me



upstairs to their drawing room where there was a grand piano, and she commenced to play the grand march from Faust; later she coached me in the refinements of playing. Both Joe and I could play passably well, so in next to no time the whole house had joined in. All came upstairs and the house filled with song. I never lost my interest in music and later even before I got properly settled, I had built up a collection of records, LP's of *Rigoletto* and *Il Trovatore*. Later, Mrs. Furlong went to live in Kincora Road, moving from there to Vernon Avenue, Clontarf.

Bob could not subsist upon the Army for ever; a job had to be got and one was found later with Solus Lamps, Bray, a factory founded to produce electric light bulbs under Fianna Fáil but, in this case, controlled by the mildly nationalist J.J. Walsh, a former Cumann na nGael minister (12) who had broken with them in 1926. Bob worked in Bray for five years, three of them as a navvy at two pounds five shillings a week; and moving up for the remainder to the laboratory as an industrial chemist (where he frequently had to stand by the highly volatile hydrogen all night) at four pounds a week. Meanwhile, every day, he cycled from Clontarf the two way journey to Bray, a practice that made him a skilled cyclist in later years. Wherever at that time I saw a Republican on a bicycle away from home, I knew he was on a mission, he says.

But we have leaped ahead here, because, in the period 1933 to 1936, Bob was a full-time training officer in different parts of Ireland, subsisting on irregular payments or upon the kindness of the people to whom he had been sent.

#### PROMOTED TRAINING OFFICER:

Kit Conway (13) was his first training officer, a man born in Burncourt, who had come up the hard way, and who expected his own very spartan and strict methods to be reflected among the trainees under him. Like everyone else, I admired Conway, Bob continues, and when the session was ended he would sit down on a grass bank out upon the farm where we were stationed at Portmarnock, and draw on a cigarette through a haze of sunlight, resting and smoking with the rest of us. Women and boys would be making up the hay from laps into stooks in the field behind us, and Kit would make sure to walk over and have crack with them. He was born a countryman and, despite being out in the Great War and wandering over America afterwards, he ever remained a countryman. I used often wonder how he fitted into Spain, a grim arid place to be in, especially in the middle of a civil war that, as events were to prove, even bravery could not win. I used to pray that time that Kit would come safely home to us but, of course, he did not; he was one of the 59 Irishmen who died there. I spent much of that summer on that farm at Portmarnock, the other officer being Sean Keating from Kilkenny. We slept at night in a tent on the farm of a man called Fitzgerald who had sold up in Kerry.

I was a first class shot with a Lee Enfield .303 rifle; I could hit the target at a quarter of a mile; as a result I fancied myself, too, for the International Brigade when the time came. I remember Tomás Mac Curtain was recruiting for it and, along with numbers of others (I am talking now of early 1937, three years after Portmarnock), I put my name down. It will surprise you to hear that Mac Curtain recruited me, and not only me, but Sean Keating. In the end, neither of us went. I waited a year for the call but the call never came. I contacted Peadar O'Donnell and all he could advise

was, wait on; wait on. The result was that I never got to Madrid. Anyway, I was saved the experience of Pierce Fennell, who was told he had, yes, been accepted, only to be informed that it was for O'Duffy's Brigade.

Sean Mac Bride, who, at that time may have been in Intelligence, put me on the Staff, the command staff of the I.R.A., where Moss Twomey was Chief and Sean Keating of Kilkenny, a former British Army man, was Adjutant-General. As such, it was Bob's task to get around all parts of the country, training, organising and bringing languid columns up to scratch. Did he ever ask himself what all of this was about? A *coup d'état* against the Free State? *Not that*, he answered shortly; *I swore it would not be for a coup d'état.*

I already had reorganised four battalions in Mayo, and I can remember near the end of my stint standing one wet Sunday afternoon in the square in Charlestown, not a soul about, the rain battering down and the town looking forlorn. I have the *cafard*, which means the blues. There was no social life at the time; there wasn't a girl about; not a girl. *Where are they*, I asked. *Oh, come back around Christmas. They come home, then; home from domestic work in England. You can have all the girls then you want.* I had been four months there and I voiced my anxiety to Sean MacBride, leaning from the window of his car. *You will be all right, Bob*, he said smiling, as he rolled up the window and drew off. I was left standing as his tail light faded.

After 10 weeks in Mayo I was recalled to Dublin to meet Sean Mac Bride at *An Stad* in North Frederick Street. MacBride was a very punctilious person in respect of timing and efficiency but I respected him. As a sample of his thoroughness, if he handed you a Thompson, he would not say 'there, take that on the job'. No; you would be told to get 'ammo' and go up to a certain quarry and blaze away. Every weapon had to be tested first. Sean Russell would never have thought of doing that; not in a 100 years. Or Mike Fitzpatrick, either.

I was told that, at a certain time, I was to meet John Joe Sheehy, the noted Kerry footballer, at the Metropole Cinema, where Penneys is now, in O'Connell Street. At that time, around 1935, the I.R.A. was not under pressure, and a car, because there were few cars, could draw up and wait anywhere, even in O'Connell Street. So I met John Joe for the first time and he introduced me to Freddie Schweppes, another New Ireland man, but not in the I.R.A. John Joe was the New Ireland Insurance agent for County Kerry and he was known to almost everyone in Munster. Sure they have since called a road in Tralee after him.

The company provided him with a car; so it was always in a car that he travelled. As well as having Schweppes, the car was filled with children's toys, for John Joe's own family: Kathleen, Sean, Niall, Pádraig and the rest of them. There was also there a book, *According to Culbertson*, by the renowned bridge expert and, as I fancied myself, I got engrossed in it most of the way.

At Limerick, we called into the new Savoy Cinema; to be greeted there by the manager. We had a meal in the restaurant; spending quite a while chatting with people who had gathered around John Joe, before moving on for Kerry. It was day-break when we reached *Chuan Beg*, his residence in Tralee.

I spent six months in Kerry; reorganising six battalions, and getting to know every inch of the county, cycling between Cahirciveen, Dingle and Kenmare.

MacBride arrived on a tour of inspection and evidently was pleased. I was told then to report back to Dublin where I was being appointed a second lieutenant at H.Q. on a salary of two guineas a week. I refused it: *I am a volunteer, not a mercenary*, I said, but we did not fall out over it. I returned then to 82 Kincora Road to board with Mrs. Furlong.

I was friendly also with Peadar O'Flaherty at this time. He was equally as punctilious as MacBride. Get the 8.00 a.m. train, I was told, from Dublin, and meet me in Tuam. When he said 8.00 a.m., he meant that, not a later train. The camp at Tuam was a mansion somewhere north of that town, with ranges of barns and outhouses in which our men could sleep. There were some dozens there, and we went through the whole gamut of arms training, with the Mauser repeating rifle, the Luger or Parabellum, with its 29 parts, and the Thompson. There would be competitions in regard to that, take apart, reassemble and load, all in seconds. We were up at six and into the fields by seven.

A while before that I had been in Ballinrobe where I had business with the adjutant, called Johnny McHugh. In 1922, he had witnessed the burning of George Moore's mansion, *Moore Hall* on Lough Carra, the people earlier having looted it. His ancestor was, of course, John Moore, the young Catholic gentleman whom Humbert summarily appointed President of the short-lived Republic of Connacht, and who shared the same fate afterwards of some thousands of peasants who had flocked to the French standard. (14)

#### BOB'S VIEW OF THE L.R.A. CHIEFS OF STAFF:

No one has a word of criticism to say of Maurice Twomey (15) the big man from Fermoy in County Cork who survived longest as Chief of Staff, from June 1926 to June 1936, being succeeded in rapid succession by Sean MacBride, Tom Barry and Mike Fitzpatrick, until Sean Russell came on stage, following the Marlborough Street convention of April, 1938; a Convention, Bob says, that could have done credit to Peter the Packer.

Twomey had distinguished himself in the Tan struggle and almost to the bitter end in the Civil War, when he was lucky to escape the ultimate penalty. In every way a big man, he was very much cast in the Liam Lynch tradition, a man he revered, and whose monument on the Knockmealdownes he unveiled in April, 1935. He had married the ladylike Cathleen Mc Loughlin of Inishowen, who had been prominent in Dublin's Cumann na mBan. Twomey's outstanding quality was his diplomacy and his ease in dealing with the factions within the Movement, and the respect in which he was held outside it. This was evident in 1934 with the Republican Congress split, when, to a great extent, bitterness was avoided. Of Peadar O'Donnell, he declared, he had a new idea every day. And if reminded of yesterday's idea, he would dismiss it (16).

He smiled at Sean Russell's occasional efforts at disguise, although he mystified some by his tolerance for the 1939 Campaign when it was plain beforehand that he had entertained doubts about its prospects. Moss, Bob says, had been released only days prior to the Marlborough Street convention (at which he was chairman). He feared he might be offered the post of C.S. so he backed Russell for it. To ease the transition he agreed to act as Adjutant-General, but for six months only.

It was evident that Bob admired Sean Mac Bride for his discipline and his attention to detail. It is difficult to know how the smear of politics was in later days, by Russell's associates, applied to him. He had indeed, given a hand organising two earlier political movements, but both were sponsored by the I.R.A, Comhairle na Poblachta (1929), and Saor Éire (1931). He was not involved in the Republican Congress (1934) but did encourage Cumann na Poblachta (1936) although, in that case, Stephen Hayes, the choice of Sean Russell afterwards, was persuaded to stand in Wexford as an abstentionist, failing miserably.

Mac Bride retired within a year of his appointment in 1936. He had joined the I.R.A at the age of 15 and he may have come to see the Movement as a spent force, although afterwards he attributed his change of feelings to De Valera's New Constitution of 1937. I felt that we could not oppose that, he was to say later; but another reason could have been the slander poured upon him from the Russell - O'Flaherty camp. There was a deep personal antipathy there, especially as Mac Bride had officiated at Russell's courtmartial in the summer of 1936.(17)

Mac Bride was succeeded early in 1937 by Tom Barry, whom, Bob says, always carried a gun and was keen to let everyone know that he did. I had become very friendly with Tadhg and Jack Lynch. I remember in Co. Galway entering a small hotel with Tadhg, and us spending the night together in a double bed which, at that time, was quite customary. Around this time, Bob recalled, that while in Dublin, Tadhg had had an affair with an American girl called Violet, whom he intended to marry; the word 'affair' at that time did not carry the connotations it carries now, no more than did 'intimate', 'gay', 'I loved him', or, 'he was a bit queer'. We both laughed at this point.

In a house in Dublin, possibly on Morehampton Road, Jack Brady, who was also present and on H.Q staff, emerged with Tadhg Lynch, *the Chief wants you*, said Lynch, addressing me. I went into a room where Tom Barry was seated at a table. Barry did not know Dublin well, but contended that too many H.Q men did not know their way anywhere in rural Ireland 'south of Blackrock'. As a test, he directed me to meet Paddy Duggan, then O.C in North Tipperary. Knowing I was from Belfast, he pressed me as to how I would get there. I told him I would be cycling, and I was able to tell him every crossroads, chapel and farm house along the way. That impressed him greatly.

Then he produced a letter from the O.C of the County Galway battalion. Máirtín Ó Cadhain was at this time under threat (and was later sacked from a school at Carnmore near Oranmore, in 1938) because he was a member of the I.R.A staff. The letter sought to have the school manager, the local priest, shot. *Go there*, says he to me, *and tell them they can shoot the P.P.* I accordingly, travelled to the Old Malt House in Galway city, and informed the assembled staff that the C.S. had signified agreement: they could go and shoot the P.P. There was a pained silence. They expected someone else to do it, and Barry knew that and he was not, under any circumstances, going to do it. For whatever reason, he had a low opinion of Galway, and he was using this to call their bluff.

Within less than a year Mick Fitzpatrick succeeded Barry who, after his Gough Barrack, Armagh, debacle, choose to retire.(18) Fitzpatrick, a Dubliner, was a man

with the common touch, was a good organiser, but the I.R.A. was broke; it was now a diminished organisation, and Fitzpatrick was little more than a caretaker. The stage was set for the arrival of Sean Russell.

I blame Sean Russell and Peadar O'Flaherty for splitting the I.R.A. at that time (19) and losing good men such as Malone, Lehane, Jimmy Hannigan and others who had, up to this, remained near the top.

Russell had been 20 years Quartermaster General, and I considered him downright incompetent. He invited me in 1938 to go on the English Campaign but I refused. How then did I survive under him? Well, I did not. In 1938, when I heard of the appointment of Stephen Hayes to the staff, I told Russell that he drank too much and that, as a consequence, he might well turn out to be an informer. I did that from first hand knowledge, having spent five weeks in Co. Wexford. You also, have had that confirmed by George Molloy (20) of Wexford town.

Shortly after that, when Hayes came to occupy the office of Adjutant-General, he uncovered my report; as a result of which I was expelled from the Army. Nonetheless, on the outbreak of war in September 1939, I was interned in Arbour Hill along with around 70 other Republicans. In November, when the question of testing the Offences Act, under which we were interned, came up, Sean Mac Bride wished me to go forward on the *habeas corpus* plea. Mac Bride pointed out to me that I was in a particularly strong position as I could show that I had been expelled from the I.R.A. Machine Gun Johnny Connor persuaded me to agree but I was released before the case could be taken. On the morning before, I was physically thrown out of the jail in a cloudburst of rain. The Staters may have learned of my particular strength and let me go: that would not surprise me.

As a result, Seamus Burke of Ballinrobe, ever after known as *Habeas Corpus Burke*, took the action and was released in the High Court by Justice Gavan Duffy. Following upon that, all were released from Arbour Hill on December 2, 1939 (21)

I should say at this point, that Tadhg Lynch and Jack and Paddy- I must not forget Paddy, all three originally from Dunmanway and very well known as Republicans (22) continued to serve the new staff under Russell and following his departure for America, Stephen Hayes and the rest. I would say they did so reluctantly; yes, I would say they did so reluctantly. Jack himself said to you that he was 'amazed' that Sean Russell had appointed him. (23) Jack had been a 'sleeper' in England from 1935 where he passed under the name of Buckley.

Tadhg was arrested and interned in May, 1940, and was O.C. of Hut C. 1 at the time of the Fire. Disenchantment with the leadership probably led to the disastrous Camp split which commenced at that time. Jack Lynch, who was interned in September 1939, went on hunger strike with Paddy McGrath, Dick McCarthy and Jeremiah Daly, and was released and thereafter he survived outside until the late autumn of 1941, following which he was O.C. in Mountjoy, with Denis Griffin. I knew Jack well, explains Bob at this point; a good volunteer, although I considered him lacking, what I must call, *the stuff of leadership*. But then, he added meditatively, how many of our politicians possess it?

So, in December, 1939, with a phoney war still on in Europe, I was out in three senses; I was out of jail; out of the Army and out of a job. As a result, I was invited

by Roger Mc Hugh, with whom I was long acquainted, to stay in his cottage in Glencree, a place very isolated at that time. Now I had all the time in the world to catch up on my reading. He had a good library there and I caught up on everything Joyce had written except *Finnegans Wake*; on Irish writers of the 19th. century, and on the French and Russian authors in translation. Roger, I considered to be a reliable and very decent man, a Dubliner; he had written *Times Pocket*, a play based upon a Fenian; *Trial at Green Street* and *Rossa*, all on national themes.(24)

Bob, who knew Jim (Seamus) O'Donovan reasonably well from visiting his house at Shanganagh on Army business, recognised him, when, one night, he arrived on a bicycle at Glencree for a confab with McHugh (but he crossed swords with him afterwards in argument when the two met again in the Curragh). O'Donovan did not say much to him that night. Instead, squeezing his cap down against the wind, he mounted the bicycle and pedalled off into the gloom. A man upon a mission, Bob thought to himself, as his eye followed the disappearing figure.

Bob was not to know that O'Donovan was biking to the cottage near Brittas Bay where Hermann Goertz was temporarily residing with the two Farrell ladies and their nieces. In August and September, 1941, he made two attempts to sail to France from there. O'Donovan was interned shortly after.(25)

#### THROWN IN ONCE MORE:

An incident occurred in 1943 in Glencree with a C.I.D man, a Branch man, and in which Bob had no involvement, but because of his proximity, he was arrested again. Peace was disturbed all right, says Bob; my peace. I could no longer enjoy the mountain scenery, that long view down the valley to Knockree and Slieve Cualan, and out over the Irish sea, or the sun setting and the black shadows creeping longer and longer down from Kippure. I would never have a library like Roger's, and it would be a long time before I would again bicycle the mountain roads. (26) I had become a literary recluse in Glencree, a confirmed bachelor, married to the books, to mountain walks that brought me as far as Mullaghcleevaun, and to occasional bicycle runs to Dublin.

On coming into the Camp, the first person I met was Jack Brady. I had known Jack, whom I have referred to already, for a long time. After I found accommodation in Bray, while working there for Solus, I continued frequently to cycle into Dublin, staying in either of two places, with Roger McHugh, close to Leinster Road, or with Jack Brady at 5 Gray Street. Jack had three sisters, Ellen, Eileen, and Margaret. I was particularly fond of Margaret, a music teacher, because of our shared interest in music, although I was able to play the piano only indifferently because of my inability to read the music.

Anyway, Jack quickly explained the Camp situation to me. There was a split, of course, but already formalised under Liam Leddy and Pearse Kelly. I went with Jack, joining the group presided over by Kelly, meanwhile making it plain to the Camp Council that, though not in the I.R.A, I would not sign out. I would act in concert with the rest of the men and maintain the same discipline. The Staters must have thought therefore that I was important because I was held until the war's end: April, 1945. I had been imprisoned without charge for 18 months.

My chief associates in the Curragh were John Cummins who, thereafter,

remained a life long friend; and Johnny, Machine Gun Connor, a wise and intelligent man. He earned the soubriquet from his defence of Tralee against the Staters in August, 1922, remaining ever afterwards a faithful Republican. Despite his size and weight, he worked as a steel erector, high up upon girders, in New York. Perfectly balanced, he could tread noiselessly, even upon gravel. He married a lovely girl, Peggy O'Connor, whom I lost track of afterwards. John Joe Sheehy continued among my circle of intimates, as did Jack, Jack Brady.

#### MEMORIES:

The people Bob had met along the way encapsulate the most colourful figures in the Movement: George Gilmore, betrothed to De Valera's godchild, the consummative young radical, Cora Hughes; but he also had another lover, the wife of a doctor in Kanturk.

Peadar Mac Andrew, the big, red-haired, native speaker, who had a shop in Hardwicke Street, and who drove a bread van drawn by a horse which was always spoken to in Irish. When Peadar was imprisoned, the horse for a long time was confused by having only an English speaking driver. Of Frank Weafer of Mayo, who had a long and chequered career in the I.R.A on both sides of the water, all I can say is that he was the sort of man that you could not keep out of the I.R.A.

There was Jack Mc Neela, who had a fine muscular body, and who fancied himself at throwing the weight. He challenged me in Mayo one afternoon, in Ballycroo about 1936 to throw the 56lb weight. I took him on, and after a couple of puts, we settled for a draw though, between ourselves, I knew I was a full quarter of an inch ahead of him at the finish.

Of Gearóid Mangan; I found him very well read and intelligent, a convinced Catholic, but convinced, not out of simple faith, but through a protracted study.

Of Bob Clements; well, Bob says, he made a hell of a good try to throw off his heritage when he learned Irish (almost as good as Ó Cadhain), became a Catholic and joined the I.R.A. It would be hard to beat that. He moved about in these Conamara tweeds the colour of turf they were and its texture; and to crown it all, he had an old cap of the same material. *I could forgive him everything, his mother used say, if he would give up wearing those clothes.*

His first job upon release, inevitably was through Gearóid Mangan, upon the turf in the Phoenix Park. But he remained only a very short time there. Bord Fáilte was looking for hotel inspectors whose qualifications were that they knew the countryside, and were prepared to travel through it on a bicycle. He was willing to do that, was interviewed, and got the job; but he held it for five weeks only, despite covering all north Connaught and delivering detailed reports (Bob had first-class knowledge of building techniques). Was it the result of backstairs visitations from the Special Branch, ever seeking to disemploy Republicans?

At this point he heard that Liam Redmond, the Abbey Theatre actor, had been promised support to start a new theatre company, the Players' Theatre. His benefactor was Helen Hooker O'Malley, the later estranged wife of Ernie, and mother of Cathal, Etain and Cormac. Bob dismisses Redmond as a little man who believed himself a genius.

It was while trail-blazing and writing their publicity in Cork city, in the home of

sculptor Seamus Murphy, that he met on Christmas Eve, Sheila McCallion, an art student of Donegal parentage, born in Derry and reared in Cork. Commencing as a sculptor in the Crawford, she veered towards designing in woolcraft. In a short time they were engaged and married. Life was knock-about in the Dublin to which they had returned, in the late forties and fifties.

For a while living in Pembroke Road, Waterloo Road and later, in Sandymount, they had a colourful existence among writers and personalities, the likes of Desmond MacNamara, the sculptor; Alan Simpson and Carolyn, of the Pike Theatre; Seamus Kelly, *Quidnunc*, of the *Irish Times* (whom he describes as vain and on the make); George Hodnett, Anthony Cronin (whom he describes as erudite and having a fine intellect), and who lived with them a while. There was Patrick Swift, the artist, and, of course, Paddy Kavanagh (I was not cordial with him; he abused everybody), and many, many more.

Bob had a story and a verdict upon each which could fill another volume. Eventually, however, realising that he had four children to support, he gravitated into building, jobbing work, roof repairs, glazing, gutters. It was hard work, poorly paid, but he was willing to undertake anything that came his way.



## REFERENCES:

1. The underlying sectarianism that excluded Catholics from meaningful jobs prevailed at that time around Belfast and throughout most parts of Ulster as it still prevails in Belfast and the Six Counties today, yet it may be on the verge of changing. The following two footnotes from *Belfast: Approach to Crisis*, by Ian Budge and Cornelious O'Leary, show the employment climate prevailing in the first four decades of this century.

Professor J.W. Boyle in Beckett and Glasscock, Belfast, pp 132-43. argues that the general election of 1906, in which the founder of the Belfast Labour Party, William Walker (with Ramsay MacDonald as election agent), reduced his Unionist opponent's majority to 300, and with Sloan winning South by a majority of 800, was 'the strongest challenge to official Unionism in Belfast's political history' (p. 135). But Boyle overstates his case. The Labour support quickly evaporated in East; and Sloan was a political freak, an extreme Orangeman who left the Order because it was not sufficiently anti-Catholic and then teamed up in the Independent Orange Order with Lindsay Crawford, a landowner with Home Rule leanings.

However, by 1908, Crawford was expelled from the Independent Orange Order, and Sloan, succeeding him as Imperial Grand Master, in Boyle's admission, 'soon reverted to his original sectarian policy' (p. 137). It is worth noting, however, that Walker, in his first attempt at Parliamentary honours (a by-election in North Belfast in 1905) felt constrained to answer in the affirmative a number of anti-Catholic questions put to him by the Belfast Protestant Association (Sloan's organisation), including the crucial question whether he would place the interests of Protestantism before those of the political party to which he belonged. (O.Dudley Edwards, *The Sins of Our Fathers*, pp 156-9.)

The Walker referred to here was, of course, the man whom James Connolly engaged in polemic as a 'gas and water socialist' in 1911.

On employment, the second footnote has this to say: Up to 1914 there was a much greater differential between the wage rates for skilled men and labourers in Belfast (and Ireland generally) than in Britain. The influx of cheap labour from the rural areas forced down labourers' wages in the towns, but skilled labour was always scarce. Wages for semi-skilled workers approximated to those of labourers rather than skilled workers. The differential between labourers and skilled workers' wages was something as high as 300 per cent. C.F.Coe, *The Engineering Industry of the North of Ireland* (p. 178).

In reading this, one must bear in mind that a skilled person in the North at that time was unlikely to be Catholic, while unskilled personnel most certainly were.

2. See *Harry*, pages 36, 37, 38.

3. Tony Lavery was among the last internees to be released before Christmas 1945.

4. Painted slogans around the Falls shrieked that *Arthur Thornberry and Connolly are in jail on a trumped up charge*.

5. Davy Matthews's brother, Hughie, was a shoemaker in Albert Street and was also in the I.R.A.

6. May Laverty, long-time Belfast Republican, doughty fighter and later school teacher, figured in 1931 on the National Executive of Saor Éire; later she joined Republican Congress, in 1934, ending up in Dublin in the late forties as a Clann na Poblachta candidate.

7. In his account of this strike, Michael Farrell in *Northern Ireland, the Orange State*, says: In November 1932 the Irish railway companies applied to the Railway Wages Board for a fifteen per cent cut in railwaymen's wages, and the Board recommended a cut of ten per cent. The Unions rejected this immediately. It was to become the most violent strike in the North's history. From the beginning the company used blacklegs on a massive scale.

Railway office staff who weren't on strike scabbed on the manual workers, and students from Queen's University in Belfast queued up to do their bit for their country and their class. The wage cuts would have brought the railwaymen's wages down to below £2 a week, yet the companies paid their blacklegs £4.10s.0d. a week.

There are further references in Conor Foley's *Legion of the Rearguard*

8. The newspapers of March 1 report, *R.U.C Man Shot Dead in Belfast*. Constable John Ryan, a native of Tipperary, was fired upon at 11 p m on February 28. Accompanied by another policeman coming on duty they were fired upon by a number of men.

On the first day of the strike a Dublin-Belfast train manned by blacklegging office staff was derailed at Drumiskin, Co. Louth, and two killed. Elsewhere, trains that did run were stoned, and railway lorries were stopped and the drivers threatened. The Unions decided to stop G.N.R buses as well, and this extended the strike to the South. From the beginning, the R.U.C in armoured cars escorted lorries in the North.

Both sides saw the conflict as a major test and huge solidarity demonstrations were held at the Custom House steps in Belfast. By now the R.U.C were blacklegging themselves, operating signal boxes and working as porters. They also stepped up their security, and a 100-strong flying squad, armed with rifles, patrolled the Belfast railway lines. The level of violence was steadily increasing. The first G.N.R bus to reach Dublin for a fortnight was burnt by a crowd at Eden Quay, and a full scale riot followed, with gardai baton charging in Gardiner Street. Meanwhile, bombs were going off under bridges, and grenades were thrown at railway property in Belfast and outside.

By now, the leftist sections of the I.R.A., were involved as well. On February 28, an I.R.A unit fired warning shots at scab lorry drivers leaving the G.N.R goods depot at the Grosvenor Road, Belfast. They were chased and fired on by an R.U.C patrol and two I.R.A men were cornered in a cul-de-sac off Durham Street. They shot one R.U.C man dead and escaped.

*Legion of the Rearguard* confirms I.R.A involvement in the rail strike action; Foley confirms, as does Farrell, that this 'comradly partnership' made no difference to loyalist political perceptions: they stayed with the tribe. 'Protestant workers.... drifted back to the Unionist fold'. The N.I. Labour Party dropped votes although Harry Midgely - later to welch on them - picked up a seat on a split vote. Tommy Geehan, hero of the Outdoor Relief struggle of 1932, polled badly. The Nationalists, under wee Joe Devlin, imbibed soup and returned to parliament where gerrymandering ensured that their representation would never exceed one quarter of the house's membership.

9. See under Peter Carleton in *Survivors*. Mick Price had fought in World War One, with the British Army in Egypt, as had the father of Liam Mellows; Tom Barry in 1916 was fighting for the B.A in Mesopotamia. With his brothers Eamonn, (Bob) and Charlie, they played an active part in the Tan War, the Civil War and on into the mid-thirties. The Dalton brothers also fought in England's war, as did Ernie O'Malley's brother, Frank (who died in Africa), Reggie Dunne and Joe O'Sullivan (who were hanged) and many more.

10. Kathleen was a sister of Peadar Kearney, who wrote the words of *A Soldier's Song*; he is referenced elsewhere in this work.

11. On July 15, 1939, following an explosion in a house in which they lived at Cliff Park Road, Birmingham, Mrs. Furlong, then aged 77, was sentenced to three years; Evelyn to two; and Emily, to three. Martin Patrick Clarke, arrested with them, was sentenced to 20 years.

12. Minister for Posts and Telegraphs.

13. See Michael O'Riordan and Appendix for a resume of a man who merits a book to himself.

14. Some 40,000 Irish peasantry were killed between Wexford, Meath, the West and the North. As for the great mansion itself, whose stark shell still stands (and which may yet be restored) the Ballyglass Old I.R.A. in an act of atonement, erected a limestone tablet to the right of the portico, which reads:- *Home of John Moore, President of the Republic of Connacht, who gave his life, and also John Henry, leader of the First Home Rule Party, and of George Moore, novelist.*

There is a similar tablet close to the entrance.

15. Succeeding Andy Cooney, who had lasted eight months, succeeding Frank Aiken, who had lasted two and a half years, succeeding Liam Lynch, .....

16. To this writer: but Ó Mongáin adds that during the Achill fever Peadar was one of the few bold enough to enter the afflicted houses.

17 See Dan Gleeson in *Survivors*

18. He had gone back to Cork without H.Q. permission, and was there offered back his harbour post.

19. Five members of the executive resigned from it, following the 1938 Convention; Barry, Mac Curtain, J.J. Sheehy, Sean Keating and Johnny Connor. Mick Fitzpatrick, Mac Bride, Con Lehane and Tomás Malone drifted. See Bowyer Bell, Chapter VIII, *The I.R.A.*, for an account of the Campaign's prospects. Hannigan never moved far from the I.R.A., while Lehane continued behind the scene as an intelligence officer. Mac Curtain and Sheehy came back in.

20. See Dan Gleeson's account in *Survivors* of Russell's courtmartial in 1936, and which paradoxically, brought him later to power; and George Molloy on Hayes in this account.

21. This situation did not last long. The Offences Against The State Act, to permit internment, was amended in January, 1940, and internment was resumed in February.

22. See *Harry* for many references.

23. Jack Lynch's denunciation in his home in Cork city to this writer (when compiling *Harry*) was as follows:-

The greatest mistake a man ever made, was for Russell to appoint Stephen Hayes as his second-in-command. I believe he was the one man who should never have been in the organisation, in no way at all. I would say he was more intelligent than we thought. He wasn't the fool he let on to be, and he proved it when a prisoner. He kept telling them everything; biding his time in the hope that something would happen; and, of course, it did happen.

He came from nothing in Wexford; all right, he played for Wexford one time. He was a

greyhound man and all that. I had a few greyhounds too, so we were friends, he and I, but I was amazed when I heard he was Russell's second-in-command. I had played also, for Cork, so we had plenty in common; Still I was amazed. He was a drunkard.

I met him when he was Chief of Staff, a short time before he was arrested, and I got a shock when I saw him. He had always been round and fat, but here he was with the flesh hanging off him. He had got old. This was May, 1941. I was O.C. of Munster at the time, on the run myself; I did not want to see him, but I had to go along.

He would not talk about anything but greyhounds, this and that, as I tried to bring him back to what I was there for. I asked him had he an Army Council; he said no; who could I suggest? There is nobody here, he said. What about Moss Twomey? Oh, he is spun out. So I said; what about John Joe Sheehy? An overrated man. There was only one man he thought to be any good, and that was his brother in law, Larry de Lacy, of the *Irish Times*.

Then he questioned me very hard about the shooting of Admiral Somerville in March, 1936. Did I know anything about it? I had been in Cork that time with Barry, he reminded me. Yes, I said, I went down to see my mother. He got angry then. Do you realise, he scolded, that you are talking to the Chief of Staff? Yes, I said, it is because I am talking to the Chief of Staff that I will not tell him. Afterwards when he was arrested, he admitted to me that he had been told by the government to find out who was on the jobs. I had a good idea but I could not swear to it, and I was not going to tell a lie.

I was not at his courtmartial in Castlewood Park, though I knew about it as I was often there. I fought very hard to have him shot. After all, he was sentenced to death; why they were playing around with him I don't know. There he was writing, writing, writing. A lot of what he wrote was true but at the same time he was saying anything and everything to kill time. I am proud to say I would have killed him myself. The bastard sold out everything, yet I believe it was because of de Lacy. He idolised him. Whatever he said was right. He had ensnared him gradually. Of course he was weak. I said to him in Castlewood Park: you wanted me to tell you who shot Admiral Somerville. I did, said he; I was asked to find out.

24. See Appendix for a short biography.

25. For, at times exaggerated and misleading references to O'Donovan, see Enno Stephen's *Spies in Ireland* (18 refs) and *The Shamrock and the Swastika* by Carole J. Carter, a Californian publication (17 refs). The influence of O'Donovan, a good and loyal Republican, has been greatly exaggerated. The I.R.A as anyone concerned with it knows, past, present and into the future, will always, regardless of sentiment, do things in its own way, i.e. what suits their own policy at the particular time. That is what the so called arch spy, Hermann Goertz, a man who sponged upon its ring of supporters, discovered, when he declared, 'I consider them as a body worthless'. From the *Diaries of Hermann Goertz*, published in *The Irish Times*, September 1947.

26. This cottage was used for a very short time in July, 1941, to imprison Stephen Hayes and to question his *eminence grise*, Larry de Lacy who had been brought there. But the latter escaped by lowering himself from a window, and that spoiled the usage of the cottage. The little band and their captive had, summarily, to foot it along the mountain road into Castlewood Park, Rathmines, from which eight week later Hayes escaped.

## LIAM BURKE, BELFAST:

*LIAM DE BURCA AS  
BÉAL FÉIRISTE.*



*Liam Burke in Belfast 1994*

*The house name is Cill Mhicil because I thought that too many people were putting up names of defeats or retreats on their houses. I wanted to put up a victory and I considered the battle of Tom Barry in Kilmichael was one of our few successes, so I called the house Kilmichael when I bought it in 1960.*

My mother's maiden name was Elizabeth McCoy; her mother came from Rathlin Island off the north coast of Antrim. She had some of the old Irish language but otherwise was not particularly national. My father's name was William Joseph Burke and he came from the heart of the Falls. My mother and father met in the house in which James Connolly once lived; they were members of Fianna and Cumann na mBan. I was born in Leeson Street. My mother, like many other Belfast mothers, worked in one of the fabric factories in the town. My father was a hair dresser and he had a business in Albert Street in his own home, just off the Falls Road. I was the eldest son; the second in the family to my sister Kathleen; Alec was next, then Danny, Jeannie, Mary and Gerard. Three brothers and three sisters. Danny worked in Foxe's, a sweet factory, and he then secured employment in the shipyard. Mary worked in Douglas and Green, the same firm as her mother, in Donegall Street. My father was well read in Irish history and was, of course, republican. My mother was republican also; they were both fine singers, and members of the Gaelic League. They idolised Pádraic Pearse and the 1916 leaders. That was inevitable as they had known James Connolly, and my mother was a personal friend of Nora Connolly, his daughter, having attended numbers of meetings in their house.

I have read the last book written by Nora Connolly O'Brien, and I was astonished as it could have been my own mother talking. It brought my mother completely back to me, I did not realise how like each other they were.

My father was in Coalisland on the Friday before Easter 1916, but he did not say much about it except that he was there. He remembered Connolly's daughter coming up before the dispersal but he did not know what was going on as he was only a volunteer. As a result of MacNeill's countermand however, the hundreds who had assembled left Coalisland before Easter Monday so they had no part in the Rising.

I was born in 1919 in Leeson Street, with Joe McKelvey living in Cyprus Street close by. The 'troubles' were on but my recollection of them is dim. The only thing I

do remember are R.U.C going up the street and my father telling me that one time a caged car had broken down not far from Lesson Street, in the Loney, and when they got it started again, *Up The I.R.A.* was painted on it, and he heard a woman remark, *the peelers have turned Sinn Feiners!*

When I was five or six years old I was sent to a girls' school. The reason for that was my older sister attended one, and, as she was one year older than I, she could bring me there. It was in Getty Street and I think it was called St. Paul's. We only went there for one or two years as it was a kind of kindergarten. I then moved to Raglan Street School where the master was very national; he played a very formative part in my life. Besides being a magnificent teacher, he was a fine man; a Republican, and his name was R.J. Langley. He taught from first class to sixth, so for six years we had the same teacher. He was in charge also of the gaelic football and the hurling and swimming.

I was particularly good at swimming as we were only a stones throw from the Falls Road Baths, and I was in and out of it every day. I knew the staff there, so I could go swimming every day except Sunday, winter and summer. I went then to Harding Street junior tech on the advice of Mr. Langley who pointed out that the senior certificate course at that time took five years in St. Mary's secondary or, if I wished, St. Malachy's college. I got a scholarship to them both; but Mr. Langley advised the course at Harding Street as it took only three years and was run by the Christian Brothers.

I had passed the examination for the Post Office and I had an additional advantage in that I was a good swimmer; I was the under fourteen Ulster Champion at the breast stroke, and for that reason they were anxious for me at the Post Office. Now why they wanted a good swimmer in the Post Office mystifies me but clearly it meant something.

However I learned that, as I was in Fianna since the time I was seven and as there was an oath of loyalty attached to service in the Post Office, I would have to refuse the job; that meant a sacrifice as there was good pay and assured promotion (1).

There was strong influence on all the boys of the public elementary schools, especially if they excelled in sport of any description, to join the Catholic Boy Scouts of Ireland. We did not know very much in those early days except that it was 'the cubs', and one day numbers of the class were told by the local priest that they should join the scouts. When I mentioned this at home however my father got quite mad; *there are no scouts in Ireland*, he declared, *except Na Fianna Éireann*. They are Irish through and through and it is they you should join. Little did he realise where that would lead me.

Fianna were based at the McKelvey hut; only a wooden hut, and we paid weekly for our uniforms. Membership of Fianna had to be kept secret from our parents so we used keep our uniforms in my grandmother's house in Dunville Street.

I remember one morning about 1930 I was going to Bodenstown and I had this half crown (12.5 pence) and a penny. The idea was to go first to Mass in St. Paul's, and then to nip into my grandmother's and change into my uniform, and so to catch the train in Great Victoria Street for Dublin and on to Bodenstown. In the rush into the chapel, so as not to be late, I put the wrong coin into the collection box. As this

was my train fare I was horror stricken. Nipping out during Mass I told the man; son, says he, *if there is a half crown in the box it is yours, but if there is I will be astonished. No one has ever put a half crown in my box.* He found the half crown alright and he gave it to me; I said, *there is the penny. Keep it son, says he, and have a good day on it.*

#### CONFRATERNITY, SCOUTS, POLITICS.

Accompanied by bands, banners and singing rebel songs, the boys marched from Sallins station to the graveyard. Liam cannot remember who the speaker was, (It was General Tom Maguire, and the procession was described as larger and more colourful than ever, with more Óglaigh na h-Éireann in evidence). It was to be the first of many that he would attend, but he arrived home happy.

I was not attempting to reach Bodinstown in 1939 when the police baton charged the Belfast Battalion on arrival at Amiens Street station, I was in hospital. But about 1937 I had graduated from Fianna into the I.R.A. and, at that time if you were already a Fianna member or a Fianna officer, you had to do only one month in recruits' training.

The ordinary person had to do six months training before being admitted. It was all very open; like club membership. Your name was read out to the assembled company and if anyone had an objection to you they would call on the O.C. afterwards and you might not be admitted. There was a man who was in charge of recruits' training at that time called Jim Nolan; he had been in the old I.R.A. and he was inevitably called Gyppo in later years, from O'Flaherty's *Informer*.

The most remarkable political event of this time was the election in November 1933 when De Valera was chosen for South Down. It was quite remarkable as he was already President of the Executive Council of the Free State. I can remember there were confused ideas about De Valera at that time and what he stood for. My father had a high regard for him because he led the Republican side in the Civil War, and the *Irish Press* was his newly formed newspaper. At the top of that paper during the election they had a diagram of a race course with horses running, each with a party label; with special editions coming out morning and evening. I was sent to the shop to buy the papers, and when the Fianna Fáil horse was seen to be in front my father was delighted, and when they won he was even more delighted.

The confraternity and the scouts were frequently inter mixed together. At the time of the Eucharistic Congress in 1932 Liam remembers there was a special day set aside for children which was probably the Saturday, and all of the children were told where to congregate for it (2). He remembers marching to the station, and from there marching to the Phoenix Park, and then back again to the station in Amiens Street, and then from Great Victoria Street to his home. All Liam remembers of that day, as he was in new short trousers, was the backs of his trousers rubbing against his thighs. And if any reader can recall when he was a small boy, he will have known tender thighs and the effect of a trouser hem rubbing upon them.

They were accompanied by teachers who were supposed to lead them in singing hymns but that did not last very long. The most popular hymn of that day, and one that was sung with great gusto was, *We're Off To Dublin in the Green*.

When I started in Harding Street school about 1933, Liam continues, we were then living in Ross Street, with my father still hairdressing. We had a two bedroom

house, and as the family consisted of seven children we lived literally on top of each other. The type of house, widespread in Belfast at that time, had four tiny rooms originally built for the mill workers, with a thrust out scullery and a back yard w.c.

I can remember well Gerry Murray, long dead now, who had been in the 1920 war; he was O.C of the company I joined, D. Company, in the Lower Falls. Sean McArdle was O.C Belfast at the time that I joined what was called the 'Old Bat'. We had to contribute coins during our parade, and then collect around doors for the prisoners, and you would be lucky to collect maybe, a couple of pence. We got help from Cumann na mBan on these collections but there was never any attempt to get friendly; only the most furtive glances and smiles being exchanged between us. There were lectures also on 'intelligence', and guns and explosives, in different houses. We trained out of doors in McKenzie's Glen, using short arms and rifles, and sometimes grenades. Some chaps would arrive with these in sacks tied upon their bikes, and no remarks passed.

Some of the girls involved at that time were May Lavery, Una Burke and Violet McGowan. These were people fairly high up in the organisation. Dorrie Hill, and Maggie Nolan who married Dominic Adams, and the Dolan girls, Bridie and Crissie, were prominent. They had the courage of steel; there was nothing they would not do. I was only an N.C.O in 1939, so the job that we got that January was the posting of the Lord Halifax declaration all over Belfast.

There were a few other important things happened during these early years; there was at least one Royal visit when the I.R.A were on stand-by. They were billeted in various houses, and I can remember tearing around on a bike delivering verbal and written messages. Maybe, even at that time one single assassination might have stopped them for good. I remember men from my company volunteering for active service in 1939; after which they were sent to Birmingham, Manchester and other places. One of those was Albert Price, and another Gerry Kerr.

I used go in and out of Johnny Tomelty's house which was a sort of a meeting spot where volunteers knew the company was thrustworthy, and where they talked about actions, and the fellows who were engaged in England: when they had a weekend off they would call to Johnny's and we would get filled in on what was happening. I remember leaving them down to the boat; and at that time you could travel on the boat to Heysham or Liverpool, and you could buy a return ticket for five shillings and sell the other half for half a crown. On one occasion there was a big group of Volunteers and Orangemen who happened to be on the same boat. The nationalist *Irish News* reported the incident, saying that a big crowd of Irishmen on the ship sang national songs as the ship slowly left the quayside; while the loyalist *News Letter* reported that youths had hurled bricks and invective as the ship left the quayside.

#### THE MUTINY IN DERRY JAIL:

In 1939 on the outbreak of war I was arrested; it was probably because I was a known Republican. I had been seen and had been questioned in the McKelvey hut a few times. I was brought straight from my home to the Springfield Road barracks; I knew everyone held there in the round-up that morning. I can recall especially Paddy Morrison, 'Rocky' Burns and Jack McCluskey. We eventually numbered 34,



all arrested under the Special Powers granted to Sir Dawson Bates. 'Rocky' confronted them, being ready ever to get involved in fisticuffs but there was no need; there was some bad language from the B. men and peelers but no rough stuff. We were moved quickly from there to Chichester Street and then the next day to the Crumlin Road. Shortly before Christmas 1939 we were moved to Derry Jail, and even that was not to be the last step for on Christmas Day there was news of the Magazine raid, and we were also in mutiny in the jail on the same day. It is a Christmas that I am not likely to forget.

My partner in that, as we were all in two's, was Jimmy Drumm. We had come from the same street and we were life long friends; so acting with friends, we seized a wing. I have still a copy of the statement that was given by the O.C, Sean Mc Ardle, to the governor of the prison on the morning of Christmas Day, and that statement was also put upon the outside of the barricades that we threw up in the corridors.

We were protesting against our continuing imprisonment without being charged or tried; that it was undemocratic and that it made nonsense of our rights. Our very first action when we came in from Mass was to take the warders prisoners, and to lock them in cells that were outside the barricade area. Derry Jail was a horse shoe shaped building (3), with empty cells into which we put the warders, taking their keys. In order to attract attention we broke the windows putting out flags and banners, addressing the people of this overwhelmingly nationalist city gathered outside. The B. Specials, the R.U.C and the fire brigade had already been called. They commenced using torches at one stage, trying the barricaded steel door with a battering ram. We could hear this activity from inside; myself and 'Rocky' Burns were guarding the door, and 'Rocky,' who was a fair singer, started to sing *Who's That Knocking at My Door*.

They were now holding their own in a double cell with two doors; one was blocked completely but upon the other one the fire brigade concentrated. They put huge brass nozzles that looked like canon upon their hoses, and with these they now advanced.

Closing the nozzles gave them such pressure that it took the plaster off the walls and drenched the prisoners. Paddy Adams, or 'Maghera' as we knew him, was at the door and, when they tried to get in, he was able to strike them and with a twisted knuckle he could really do damage. His resistance on this occasion was outstanding, getting himself a rough time afterwards. Sean McArdle decided after some hours of this that the position was hopeless; we should go out and offer surrender. Trying to do so however, he was struck as he emerged, so that he hurriedly retreated inside again. Our only recourse then was to put out a white flag through a window whereupon the door was opened and we had to run the gauntlet between baton wielding police.

They had some of the lead pipes they had pulled from the ceiling, and they used those as weapons along with boots and butts of rifles. The British Army soldiers, B. Specials and R.U.C then rushed in to the open cells into which the prisoners had been pushed, where they were beaten indiscriminately. The O.C was given special treatment however: he was taken out and kicked around the exercise yard where, of course, we were powerless to assist. A high state of tension prevailed, and all recog-

dition accorded to the Camp Council was taken away.

In May 1940 after the invasion of France there was a large influx of internees rounded up from around the rural parts of the Six Counties, but by summertime we were all moved, around 200 of us, in buses avoiding Belfast, to the prison ship *Al Rawdah* on Strangford Lough, which is a seawater inlet where a ship flying the British flag would have been a target for a German submarine (4). That may have been the reason (no doubt through polite intervention) we were moved again, early in 1941, to Crumlin Road Prison, Belfast, from which a short time later, with four others, I was to escape.

As internees we were housed in D. Wing - the layout being four fingers rather like Mountjoy - while our friends, the sentenced Republicans, were in A. Wing (5). While there, my young brother, at the age of nine years, died; I was not allowed parole to attend his funeral.

In June 1941 Liam escaped out of Crumlin Road. Those who escaped with him were Eddie Keenan, Billy Watson, Phil McTaggart and Gerry (the Bird) Doherty from Derry (6). The extraordinary thing about this, continues Liam, was that the two McTaggarts and Liam were altar boys in the jail, although that in no way helped Phil's escape. The first attempt by another group, to escape, although undetected, had failed, so we decided to try. We made a rope out of sheets, and a hook out of the iron supports of the mess tables. We kept a close eye on the guards armed with Sten guns inside the walls; there were armed guards outside also but not as closely spaced as those inside.

We had selected a spot where we could cut through the corrugated iron separating us from the sixteen foot high wall by sawing through the bolts that secured it. To saw the bolts we had only an ordinary table knife but we made the edges jagged so that we managed with hard work to cut through four bolts and set them back in again loosely, but ready to pull out again. It was to be a daytime breakout so as we would not have to escape from inside our cells. The corrugated hoarding was in the exercise yard; we had confided in five fellows whom we could trust to play cards against the fence, and we then joined in with them which was common enough. Using the group as cover we moved over and through the fence, at once throwing the hook up upon the wall. The first time it did not catch on the wall top but the second time it did. We had ten seconds only to get over before the two police with Sten guns would pass by again. When we got on top of a second wall there was a garden twenty feet below us. It was the garden of the Mater Hospital. We knew it was there but we did not make allowance for the considerable height. I dropped onto a glasshouse without serious damage to myself or to it.

There was a nun saying her rosary, and when she saw me she was about to scream until Billy Watson put his hand over her mouth and told her we were I.R.A. and that we would do no harm. There was however quite a flurry among the young novices at the arrival of this wild group of bearded men, but at that moment the main door of the convent was opened and we were guided to the front hall where, quite fortuitously, an old friend, Dr. John Harrington, complete with car was waiting.

Sizing up the situation at once he grabbed hold of me; you look the least excited

so you can sit in front along with me (7). As it was the wartime he had an official sign *Doctor* prominently displayed. The others - Watson and Keenan - we had lost Doherty and Mc Taggart - lay down in the back. We were conveyed to Sultan Street, to the house of Sammy Benson who had been in the British Army. Dr. Harrington said he would call for me at midnight, and by that time I already had an identification card. The I.R.A took the others to different houses so I was left in Sultan Street. Precisely at midnight Dr. Harrington returned, taking me to his own house where I was treated like a lord.

He conveyed me a few days after to south Armagh, near the Border, where I was greeted by a man called Toner; he accompanied me on a bicycle to a bed and breakfast in Clones after which I got a train to Dublin. A few days later I was in Joe Clarke's little bookshop high up in O'Connell Street where I met a girl, and through her made contact with a house in Castlewood Park, Rathmines, to which I was brought by Tommy O'Brien of 44 Parnell Square to lodge as a boarder.

#### INVOLVEMENT IN THE HAYES AFFAIR:

As a result of his arrival in Dublin Liam found himself unexpectedly involved in the arrest and holding of Stephen Hayes. The Belfast leadership, Sean McCaughey, Charlie McGlade and Liam Rice, mystified by the succession of arrests in the Army in the South, came to the conclusion that this could only be ascribed to a serious leakage at the top. They quickly made contact with him, appointing him, staff captain. They were delighted that I had escaped, continues Liam, Sean talking in Irish to me all the time. I always had a high regard for him, considering him one of the best officers we had in the North. There was one particular person interned then who had a lisp and who Liam was able to imitate very realistically; Sean loved this and would laugh loudly at my interpretation. During the Derry mutiny this man ran the gauntlet of police batons; he was about six foot three but thin and nervous, and as he was running along he could be heard lisping *Jesus, Mary and Joseph; Jesus, Mary and Joseph*. This would send McCaughey into fits.

My duties in Dublin were concerned mainly with house watching; I used to sit all day watching houses. Sean would later say to me, what time did they raid at? He already knew they were raided before I had reported. He told me afterwards that he was testing out a theory that by giving address's to Stephen Hayes, he would trap him. Hayes was eventually arrested by McCaughey, Rice and Mc Glade in the company of Joe Atkinson (Dougherty) on June 30, which would have been three weeks after they had met Liam in 20 Castlewood Park, at which time they had not disclosed what their real objectives were. Liam was not present at the arrest in Coolock, nor did he accompany them to Dundalk, to the Cooley mountains or back to Roger McHugh's cottage in Glencree.

He learned about this only when they walked in to Castlewood Park with Hayes as a prisoner after a midnight trudge across the Featherbed mountain from Glencree. Even then, after Liam had met him in Castlewood Park, he was not to know for a number of days that the prisoner was Stephen Hayes, ex- Chief of Staff. 'I only knew his identity when Jobie Sullivan was brought to Castlewood Park to act as a guard.' Jobie had just escaped from the Dental Hospital at Lincoln Place, where he had locked himself in a toilet, escaping through a window. In the street he ran into Sean McCaughey and Sean immediately linked him into this escapade.

Together Jobie and Liam entered the front room at Castlewood Park where Hayes was seated. Jobie had already been told that there was a prisoner who had to be guarded, but he had not been told who the prisoner was. Entering, Liam could see there was a second of startled recognition and that Jobie was amazed. Breaking the silence, he remarked, *you are in a bit of trouble Stephen*, to which he responded, *indeed, aye*. Jobie then motioned Liam out; *do you know who that is; that is Stephen Hayes Chief of Staff*. Sean Mc Caughey then confirmed this and Liam was taken fully into their confidence. For a limited period Hayes was on short commons but afterwards he received the same food at the same time around the same table as his captors; all being treated alike by the landlady.

The court martial could not be held until officers of sufficient standing could be found, and that turned out to be the evening of Wednesday July 23, when the three man court sat in what was described as a downstairs room. The courtmartial was in fact held in the front sitting room with a large bay window looking out upon Castlewood Park. At the courtmartial was Charlie Mc Carthy from Cork, Tom Farrell of Carna, Connemara, and Pearse Kelly of Dungannon; Kelly being a journalist, was also his own notetaker.

Mc Caughey was prosecutor (8). Hayes had refused to nominate any defending counsel, so, as nobody was nominated for the defence, the onus lay upon the prosecutor.

His demeanour was meek and subdued, while anything he said in his defence consisted of simple unsupported denials. Nonetheless, in his dual role, Mc Caughey dealt with these. Failing to be specific on any point Hayes continued only with monosyllabic rebuttals, frequently going off at tangents.

He recognised the court alright, Liam says, but, in my opinion, he made a very weak defence. I cannot recall what time it began but it went on through the night; Mc Caughey going methodically from point to point, one after the other, and never repeating himself. We then left the room to await a recall. When eventually we were sent for the verdict was announced: I must say we were all in agreement with it. There was no reaction from Hayes that I could see; he asked instead if he could have permission to write, I think to a girl friend. In return for that, and to undo some of the harm he had caused the Republican Movement, he offered to pen a full confession. There and then it was decided that yes, a confession should be written, and it would be in Indian ink on vellum.

Staying constantly in Castlewood Park were Burke, Jobie, Rice and 'Black Dan' O'Toole. Mc Caughey, Mc Glade and Pearse Kelly rarely overnighted there, stopping instead in another H.Q house in Whitehall, on the north side. Travelling across city early in September, Sean McCaughey was arrested alighting from a tram at the corner of Castlewood Avenue, close enough to the hideaway: he had just returned from meeting Liam Lucas, sugar wholesaler and old time supporter of the Movement. Instantly, with the head centre gone, there was confusion. Pádraig Mac Logan and John Joe Sheehy were called in and agreement was reached that Pearse Kelly be appointed Chief of Staff. He was not to last long however, being arrested in Clontarf only twelve weeks later. Arrests of top men were now so widespread, and would continue so, that it seemed as though the spirit of Stephen Hayes was still in command.

In these first few confused days of September 1941, the options of when to execute Hayes and where to place his discredited corpse were being trawled over. It was precisely at that moment, on a bright morning around noon, on September 8, with a captor's short arm in his hand and his ankles loosely manacled, that the pallid ex-Chief of Staff stepped through an open bay window on to the front lawn of number 20 and waddled the four hundred yards to the station of the gardaí síochána at Rathmines.

It was to be a full two hours before armed Branch men under Denis O'Brien arrived, shooting in the back the lookout, Liam Rice, placed at the corner of the avenue; he had been placed there to deter Kelly, who was expected but who entered from the further end. He came, saw the debacle and made off. Meanwhile, Hayes in court, seven weeks later, in prison, and for years afterwards in Enniscorthy until his death at the age of 78 in December 1974, would be offering to anyone who listened, the story of his innocence; to Peadar O'Donnell in *The Bell*, to a couple of Sunday papers and in two ghost written volumes, (not so far published.)

Burke, for his sins, was made O.C of the south east, mainly Wexford, Carlow, Kilkenny, where on one occasion he had the unenviable task of calling upon Mrs. Michael Deveraux, widow of the hapless lorry driver and quartermaster, to inform her that the Army now considered her executed husband - executed on the direction of Stephen Hayes - to be innocent(9). But with heads toppling all around he was not, upon his bicycle, to last long either. Passing from Georges Street, Dublin into Dame Street in December, the bike was forced by a police car to the kerb and armed men leaped out. He was on route to the Great Northern, to what is now Connolly Station, with communiques for Belfast.

#### CURRAGH INTERLUDE:

Trudging along the narrow Dame Lane, closely escorted, he was still able to rip an inside lining and allow his papers to slip unseen down a grating. Under close grilling in the Lower Castle Yard, he concluded they were at a loss for identification; they had no evidence and no photographs as he had never been photographed. The sharp faced men on the other side of the table did not even have a name. After hours of this he decided that 'breaking down' and declaring his identity would be in order. *I am Gerry Doherty from Buncrana*, he announced, knowing that there was unlikely to be a charge against the Bird. Quick as a flash came back from Michael Gill, a native of those parts; *there is a big chapel in Buncrana. Is it in the middle or the end of the town?* And that sighs Liam was where Auhgrim was lost, for I said it's in the middle, and that very imposing edifice - as anyone who has been to Buncrana knows, is in St. Mary's Road at the low end of the town. He spent two nights in the Bridewell, then ten days over Christmas in Mountjoy. These, however, were administrative details as he was going to be interned anyway.

I was interned in the Curragh under the name of Sean Maguire but I had a number of other alias', one being Brennan. Like many others he was depressed by his first sighting of the place; all those wild tattered men with bald heads and straggling beards. Harry White was the first to greet him and he joined a hut occupied by him and Charlie McGlade.

My time there lasted no more than six months, and almost my only memory was

hunger and the severity of the wind. I was always hungry; I can recall fellows hanging around outside the cookhouse kitchen ready to grab bones being thrown out. Peadar Mc Andrew, otherwise known as *Clampar*, was on a special diet of frequent bread, eggs and milk. Some of us would hang close by him ready to grab anything he might leave. Of all the jails that I had so far been in, numbering five, I preferred Crumlin Road provided there was no row in progress.

An escape planned for February proved abortive; the night was wild and windswept but the Staters appeared to know and it was called off (10). Later the group sought to slip out on a foggy morning in March; the fact that 'a big push' was planned in the North lent urgency, but once again they were thwarted. On the appointed morning, the fog being heavy, they readied themselves to have a go. They were spread out facing the three lines of barbed wire and the trench, when the 'silent man' Paddy Dalton, a veteran of 1920 from Tipperary, came up to them. *Hold on*, he said; *this is not the only fog: there will be others. But take a walk now and look across when that fog lifts*. Sure enough, in minutes, it swirled away to reveal military police standing fifty yards apart outside the fence. *There*, said the silent man, moving away, *when fog drops on the Curragh, they don't rely on the lamps and the sentries; guards are posted outside as well* (11).

When Harry White signed out of the Curragh in April 1942 it was a trial run to see what would happen, and if that succeeded Frankie Duffy and I would come out. The reason that I was required was because I knew the location of the dumps in the south east. I returned to Dublin in the summer of 1942, and with Charlie Kerins of Tralee as Chief of Staff, and with Mick Quill of Listowel as his A.G. Liam, Frankie, Harry, Archie Doyle, Charlie and Mick with local men, were involved on September 2, near Cullaville in the first action of what was intended to be an onslaught upon the Border, on the same day that Tom Williams was hanged in Crumlin Road. After an exchange the column retreated and it did not reform. Sporadic actions commenced instead in Belfast, continuing into November, with curfew imposed and heavy patrolling by R.U.C and B. Specials.

Mick Quill, sent to Belfast on August 23, ran foul of one of these patrols and was arrested in North Queen Street. The Dublin authorities arranged that he be extradited south and indicted before the Military Tribunal at Collins Barracks. Charged with the shooting at Rathfarnham of Det. Sergt. Denis O'Brien, his case was sensitive and had to be carefully defended. Much of the responsibility for this lay upon a handful of men, including Liam, already themselves hotly pursued and upon the run. The proceedings are recounted as follows from this author's *Harry*.

#### MICK QUILL'S TRIAL:

Mick Quill was arrested by R.U.C Special Branch off his bike in North Queen Street, Belfast, on October 2, 1942. He seemed likely to be charged with being concerned in the shooting of Dinny O'Brien on September 9, at Rathfarnham. On October 4, he was brought to Carrickarnon and pushed over the Border. As police expressed it in the Special Court afterwards, a man was put out of a car on the Northern side, and when he crossed it, we arrested him.

There was strong police evidence against him. One, a Branch man, who happened to be cycling towards the mountains on his way to cut turf, saw two men on

bikes come towards him, one of whom, he identified five weeks later in the Bridewell as Quill.

The identification broke down somewhat in court: before going to the identification parade, he was told Quill would be on it and was given a photograph and description of him, such nudging being standard police procedure when they wanted to nail a suspect. He did not think he had any doubts but that Quill was the man he saw. Pressed further he said he was almost sure of it.

There was supplementary evidence including recognition from a fellow guest from 12 A Grosvenor Square, where Quill, for a short time resided in the boarding house with other suspects, Sean Maguire (Liam Burke), Chris O'Callaghan and Charlie Hanly (Kerins), prior to a massive police raid on it on September 16.

In the boarding house he was known as Michael Barrett, and passed himself off as a student of chemistry. He returned there shortly before the police raid upon it on September 16, when of course all the birds had flown. In his evidence, the twenty-five year old Quill, said he had been in Belfast from August 23 until October 2, returning to Dublin on one occasion on September 4. At this stage Mrs. Sarah Malone, her daughter Maureen and Mary Mc Guigan from Belfast, were put in the box by Sean Mac Bride. The I.R.A had cobbled together a strong alibi for Quill, and were determined to meet Free State subterfuge with their own. Sarah, Maureen and Mary were three attractive Republican girls from the Falls; both Quill and Mc Ateer had stayed in their houses. Mrs Malone was a step sister of Dan Turley. Con Lehane was deputed to go over the case carefully with them beforehand, as to what they would say and not say. Using his office over the Bank of Ireland on Ormond Quay as a mock up, he rehearsed them through the proceedings of the military court at Collins Barracks. They had never been in court before, but they emerged from it with flying colours.

On the sixth day of his trial, the girls gave evidence that he had been in Belfast on September 9, and for a period before and after. The evidence, in camera, was accompanied by a State undertaking that their names would not be passed back to the R.U.C, an undertaking that was, needless to say, dishonoured. Quill was acquitted on the death charge although he now faced two and a half years in the Curragh.

However there was much joy at the back when the three military officers returned and gave their verdict: *The court has decided to give him the benefit of the doubt and we find him not guilty of murder. When my boy is released from internment, said his dad tearfully, he will have to marry one of those girls.* But they had already received a more tangible reward: the boys presented them in Belfast with three of the new reversible coats, then all the rage, purchased for around six pounds each from Andersons & Mc Auleys. The coats rewarded the girls while at the same time the switch of attire upon the train disguised their arrival from Branch men on the platform at Amiens Street. Army funds, however, did not extend to meeting the expenses of counsel; MacBride never received or took money from the Movement.

#### CLOSING IN:

We were reduced now, Liam proceeds, to a small nucleus that could contribute very little to the sporadic struggle in the North. We were under pressure and without resources moving from pillar to post. That autumn in Dublin there were not

more than half a dozen houses open to us; Murphy's in Rathmines, Brown's in Cabra, Rosanne Collins close to the North Strand and Hutchinson's of Rathgar Road. But all of these were under surveillance and likely to be raided. Harry had two hair breadth fighting escapes; in September, at the Dermody wedding in Tuite's of Mount Nugent, and in October from Mrs. Kelly's house in Donnycarney. As a result of the first, Paddy Dermody, was shot dead in action, while Maurice O'Neill of Cahirciveen, paid the full price by execution, for the second. For all of us it could now only be a matter of time (12).

The state regarded us as mad dogs - how often have I heard that journalist's expression used in regard to Republicans - and would give us no quarter. When it came to move finally, we decided to head northwards. Jimmy Steele had been captured in Belfast as had Hugh McAteer, our Chief of Staff, on September 6. Their places urgently required filling; there was nothing that we could do in Dublin.

Taking advantage of the pre-Christmas rush, with Jim Toner and Harry, I departed by bus for Sligo in the dark of the morning, December 20, 1942. Frankie Duffy was already in Belfast. By various means from Sligo, between biking and bussing, we also reached the city. We walked through the darkened streets to Beechmount in the middle of the Falls, the Nationalist quarter. It was hard to recognise some streets; their railings had been removed for scrap. Lights peeped out from chinks behind windows, while a few street lamps burned with a dim blue colour. An occasional car crept past, dim lights emerging only from thin slots. In some streets we had to pick our way over water mains laid upon the surface. Muted signs directed the way to air raid shelters (13).

It is a measure of how poorly off the Army was at the start of 1943, that its two principal officers upon their return from Dublin, could find shelter only in a brickworks. The grand offensive against the rearguard of the enemy had fizzled out after only three months. The Free State was forbidden territory now, more tightly patrolled than ever. Over the Six Counties there was a rigid clampdown, which limited individual movement and made all thoughts of coherent planning impossible. And yet it was to be a year which at its commencement anyway, sparkled with hope. Mick Quill, who had faced an almost certain rope, escaped with his life in January. Four intrepid men, Hugh Mc Ateer, Jimmy Steele, Pat Donnelly and Ned Maguire broke their way out of Crumlin Road Jail in the same month; in March, 21 tunnelled their way out of the bastille in Derry, while a propaganda coup was scored at Easter by the appearance on a cinema stage in Belfast of Mc Ateer and Steele.

Even so, for all their gallantry, for all their idealism, for all the smartness and the occasional brilliance of the I.R.A. before the year was out, the struggle would have fizzled to extinction. By the end of 1943, with another activist, Jackie Griffith, dead in Dublin, one could say that north and south there was not a kick left in the organisation, and the one great survivor, Harry White, the lone Chief of Staff, after the hanging of Charlie Kerins in December 1944, was on his keeping, in deep concealment, at Altaghoney, in rural south Derry.

In all the actions, save the Crumlin Road escape, Liam participated actively. Hugh McAteer, Jimmy Steele, Pat Donnelly and Ned Maguire escaped over the wall from Crumlin Road. McAteer and Steele had been there for only three months;





*Jackie Griffith, shot dead  
from his bicycle, at Merrion Square,  
July 4th, 1943.*

McAteer on a fifteen year sentence, Steele on ten, Donnelly on twelve and Maguire on six. Arrested in the blackout outside the home of a young Derry Catholic policeman resident in Belfast, in September, McAteer had been arraigned along with David Fleming and John Graham, both of whom operated the publicity H.Q at 463 Crumlin Road. McAteer was sentenced by Justice Brown to fifteen years. *Ireland is still worth fighting for*, said the Protestant Graham, who got twelve years. But McAteer was determined that this time he would not stay.

A plan was put together by Steele, McAteer and Donnelly. Maguire was brought in because he was a slater by trade. Noticing that one could pass from a trapdoor in a top floor toilet, into the roof space, they worked for weeks on a scheme which entailed a bed sheet rope ladder, a wall hook swathed in bandages, and a tall demountable pole, the leather jointing ferrules of which were made in the boot shop. Even when they found the trap door padlocked, and an ordinary prisoner had got to know about it, they persevered. On the morning appointed - 'summertime' prevailed so it was still dark - they separately received permission to go to the wash house, where they broke a hole in the roof and escaped into the yard.

From there they passed through to the wall fronting Crumlin Road, threw a sheet rope on which the bandaged steel crook was attached to the top, and on climbing that, they dropped on to the ground at the gable of the screws' cottages.

In fact it was not quite that easy. The demountable pole for placing the hook upon the barbed wire on top of the wall, was found to be six foot short, and Maguire had to stand booted upon McAteer's thin shoulders. The other three had ascended and disappeared over the top, but when it came to Hugh's turn he lost his grip and fell to the ground, severely injuring an ankle. However he persevered, and with bleeding hands climbed over.

There were crowds of men at that time of the morning coming down the Crumlin Road with coats buttoned up, so the four men in their strange attire were not noticed. They had become separated anyway. Hugh in fact was lost, and had to backtrack into a party of warders. He was in trouble too with his ankle following the drop from the high wall. Steele, however, had plenty of friends around North Queen

Street, where he knew of an empty house, and the three made their way there. Hugh being found too was guided there shortly after. Once inside, Jimmy got word to friends who provided them with food which lasted a few days until H.Q got them separately fixed. After a few weeks, Pat Donnelly and Ned Maguire moved to Dublin but McAteer and Steele remained in Belfast to face the biggest security rum-pus the North had seen.

Following the escape, in mid-February, Charlie Kerins and Archie Doyle arrived in Belfast. Archie had been in Belfast before, Charlie had not. They came by train. We controlled the Auxiliary Fire Service in the Falls, Liam says, so we quickly had them into uniform with proper stamped identity cards complete with authentic photographs taken for us by the girl in Jeromes, the firm officially appointed for that purpose.

They could then relax in reasonable safety, remaining for about a fortnight. Charlie was Chief of Staff but he now deferred to Hugh, becoming Assistant Chief of Staff himself while Archie had the post of Quartermaster-General on the staff. Hugh was appointed because his training lay in administration; he was less a hard man than Charlie or Archie. Harry continued as O.C Northern Command while I remained Adjutant-General. The appointments were arranged at a full day convention in Ballymacarret; neighbours there subscribing food from their own meagre rations for the group.

#### **MASS BREAK OUT OF DERRY JAIL:**

We now knew that there was to be a mass escape by internees from Derry Jail, where 300 Republicans were held. To raise funds for it - as we had no money - a hold-up was sanctioned in Strabane which brought in £1,500. It was an early morning raid by the O.C Tyrone and his Adjutant, on February 2, 1943, Jim Toner and Joe Carlin, on a horse drawn mail van as it left the station.

Two men, one shining a strong light upon the driver, ordered him and his helper to dismount, while the other searched for and removed registered packages. They made off on bicycles. Toner and Carlin had planned the operation without any knowledge of the impending escape, knowledge withheld even from Steele and McAteer. The money was lost temporarily though some came to Belfast, while Paddy Clarke (originally from Ardee) had £700 in his possession just before the Staters closed in on the quarry at Kinacalley, as he waited there with the escapees. He slipped it to a local farmer and recovered it from him later. A few months earlier in November, Billy Graham and Eddie Steele had commenced a tunnel from under the floorboards of their cell, with Harry O'Rawe and Jimmy O'Hagan in support. The grim gothic edifice of Derry Jail was built upon a hill, and the work facing the lads was arduous and dangerous. They had to sink a 15 foot vertical shaft before burrowing a tunnel 80 feet long.

The excavation was done at night, and while two of the men worked, the third kept watch for the night patrols who flashed their lights on the beds, and satisfied themselves that no prisoner was missing. As soon as the man on the watch saw the patrol, he signalled the two men below who shinned up the rope, jumping fully clothed into bed. The tunnel, propped up in places by boards and sandbags made from pillow cases filled with soil, was for bellying through, being too narrow to turn

in. The clay removed from it, some fifteen tons of it, was placed under other cells, flushed down manholes, or discreetly scattered on soil beds in the yard. They worked with the aid of "candles" made from salvaged cooking fat, carried on tin lids. When the candle, through the lack of oxygen went out, the men knew it was time to come up.

There was little we on the outside could do other than direct them towards the Logue's house in Harding Street, giving them a fix upon a tall chimney behind. Paddy Adams, uncle of Gerry, who was O.C prisoners, could signal and receive directions at a high window from myself positioned outside. I had been in the jail and knew the layout well, and had chosen the back yard of Logue's as the place for the tunnel to surface.

For some time previously Adams had been more assiduous than usual when writing to Annie Hamill, his fiancé, a sister of Sean, also imprisoned. His letter contained a secret message in the blank space between the lines. In their touch and go passage they suffered everything; a roof collapse which temporarily trapped Billy Graham; a flood of underground water which had to be bailed out and then plugged, and, most unsettling of all, a well preserved coffin which had to be passed by digging under. Some of them on the final morning fainted as they bellied through the suffocating earth, and had to be dragged along by the hair by their preceding comrade.

At last, early on Sunday morning March 20, 21 young men poked their way upwards through the small coal shed of the Logue's at 15 Harding Street, off Abercorn Road, just south east of the prison, passing through their small kitchen, to the stunned astonishment of the family. Pat Scullion, all black and with a long beard, floored them; *Holy St. Patrick*, cried the father, *Daddy it's the devil*, cried the daughter.

Along with Jimmy Steele and myself, Harry was concerned with communications out and into the jail; what direction they should come and how far they would have to travel. Louis Duffin, moving by train from Belfast, checked the ordnance map against the conditions on the site so that we knew exactly what house they would come up in. Tunnelling like that cannot be done now because of the listening devices and intense security precautions, yet still they break out. Louis had, a few weeks earlier, been one of a party which attempted to raid an R.A.F barracks off Newtownards Road. The raid was not a success, and as he charged out, the car he was to board, sped off. He fell clutching his gun, in the roadway. At the same moment an R.U.C car drove up. *They nearly killed you, son*, said the policeman, helping him to rise. Thrusting his gun into his pocket, Louis was conveyed in the police car to a tram stop. Jimmy Steele travelled in the furniture van with its driver to Derry. I had booked the van from Curran's a few days before, then travelled there accompanied by the driver and Steele. At the last moment when he realised what they were about, the driver opted to stay with us. All were accommodated in a friendly house in the city. The van was parked in Abercorn Place, awaiting zero hour which was 8.30 the next morning.

Shortly after that time, the first of the muddied men came sprinting down the short residential street, down a flight of steps and over to where the van was parked, crowding inside. One of them however did not make the van that morning. As the

others climbed aboard, Seamus O'Rawe of Belfast, was slowed up in the tunnel. For 36 hours he lay low around Derry; then on Sunday night in the blackout, he was accosted by the R.U.C and hauled back. He later received twelve months hard labour on top of internment. Five others, Harry O'Rawe, Hubert McInerney, Brendan O'Boyle, 'Chips' McCusker and Billy Graham did not make it either. They headed into the city cemetery, and from there reached Letterkenny on foot where a priest brought them into a restaurant giving them a four course meal. He then brought them by car to Ballybofey where Dan McCool put them into the hands of Jimmy Clarke, (14) his training officer. Clarke ferried them to Sligo where, armed with sticks, they boarded a train as cattle drovers.

Unfortunately on arrival penniless in Dublin, they made straight for that rendezvous of Republicans, *An Stad*, in North Frederick Street, where early next morning, all, excepting O'Boyle who stayed north, were arrested. In the hunt for them even Maud Gonne's house at Roebuck had been raided. As more recent events have shown in respect of northern prisoners, the Free State is assiduous in its co-operation with the occupiers. The main body of escapees, 15 men, plus Ned Maguire with the driver, sped towards Carrigans, jumped the border and dashed through the village. There was to be a lorry to meet them and they were also to have received money to enable them to disperse. But although £700 was on hand with Paddy Clarke, the other arrangements fell through.

Having jumped the customs post, they were followed closely by Free State police while Branch men and Free State Army from Letterkenny were already alerted by the Brits. Five of the men detached themselves and escaped, but ten were found unarmed and leaderless near the top of windswept Kinacally mountain. *Come forward, ye bastards*, shouted the armed Staters, as they approached them; but the only arms the lads had was an old rifle and a forty five.

They were brought and lodged at Rockhill military barracks, Letterkenny, where, after being held for a week (viewed meanwhile by screws and police brought from Derry) they were conveyed the 180 miles to the Curragh Internment Camp. Harry White immediately recommended that Albert Price, Billy Perry, 'Rocky' Burns and five others should come out, which they did. Albert, Billy and 'Rocky' then returned to Belfast. The furniture van ordered from Curran Bros. of Belfast on the Friday, was left near Sion Mills, and the sum of nine pounds hire was forwarded to the firm. Steele and myself arrived back safe and sound by train, alighting at Midland station in Belfast. This time I was travelling as a priest while Steele was in his Fire Service uniform.

#### **PUBLIC APPEARANCE OF MC ATEER: STEELE AND I ARRESTED:**

Easter Sunday evening I was tracked down together with Alfie 'Shuffles' White, to the house we were staying in, Carmichael's of Windsor Drive near the Lisburn Road. It was a Loyalist area and we thought we would be safe, but evidently suspicion was aroused because the R.U.C approached front and rear so that when we ran out the back we found that way blocked. Alfie had escaped from Derry only five weeks before. Three months later we each got twelve years. An arms dump, which we were unaware of, was found under boards on the first floor. It consisted of a Thompson, two Lee Enfields, nine revolvers and an assortment of magazines and

bomb cases.

To save Carmichael, who had already gone off-side to Dublin, I took responsibility for them. As the police evidence on this was sloppy, I pressed them why they had not discovered the arms, until some days after. *I gave it a cursory examination*, said the policeman. I slipped a note to 'Shuffles'. *Surely that is a unique procedure*, was scribbled on it. Taking his cue, 'Shuffles' piped at the bewigged judge: *Surely that is a unikay procedure!*

One way or another at that time we would never know where each of us was staying; we had call houses where meeting places were arranged, but one kept very dark indeed, the location of the house where you stayed. To be arrested at this time was unfortunate as we had gained a small propaganda coup through the public appearance on Easter Saturday afternoon of McAteer and Steele during the showing of the film, *Don Bosco*, at the Broadway Cinema, Falls Road.

Of course the location and most of the audience were favourable, but the district bristled with R.U.C determined to block an Easter commemoration. That it might take place in public in a cinema never occurred to them. It was two Army lads, John Doyle and Dan Diffin, who came up with the idea. At first it was simply that a slide be flashed on the screen JOIN THE I.R.A, but we turned it into a full dress commemoration. Harry White was stopping in the house of the projectionist, Willie Mohan, whose brother Gerry was interned. The box was kept locked, but there would be a three minute break between films during which they stepped out for a smoke. We would act then. The cinema had been well gone over; armed volunteers were inside the doors, on the roof and across the street. McAteer and Steele were already below. When the projection box door opened at 5.25p.m. our men slipped in, handed over their slide which was flashed upon the screen.

THIS CINEMA HAS BEEN COMMANDEERED BY THE IRISH REPUBLICAN ARMY FOR THE PURPOSE OF HOLDING AN EASTER COMMEMORATION IN MEMORY OF THE DEAD WHO DIED FOR IRELAND. THE PROCLAMATION OF THE REPUBLIC WILL BE READ BY COMMDT. GEN. STEELE AND THE STATEMENT FROM THE ARMY COUNCIL WILL BE READ BY LIEUT. GEN. MCATEER.

The two men then mounted the stage reading from two documents, which was greeted by thunderous applause. Meanwhile, Frank, the manager, who was an uncle of the projectionist, was held in his office and his phone seized. It was all over within 20 minutes, but he was so frightened he did not call the police until an hour later. They then arrested him but released him quickly. A statement had already reached the papers, and it was from them the police first learned of it. By the end of April only three of the 21 from Derry were still at liberty. About 40 Republicans were pulled in on these sweeps. There was no let-up north or south.

In Dublin, Sean Hamill, one of the escapees, and Frank Kerrigan, who had escaped from Mountjoy with Jackie Griffiths and Jim Smith the previous October, were re-arrested in April. Early in May, Jimmy Steele, then O.C. Belfast, was arrested at eleven o'clock at night at 96 Amcomri Street, Beechmount, off the Falls. Jimmy, now 34, had already served five years following the 1936 Crown Entry raid. Before his death in the early seventies, he would have served a total of twenty years in His

Majesty's jails in the cause of freedom. A man of unshakeable principles and courage, Liam Burke adds; and these were enunciated in a stirring address at the grave of Barnes and McCormack in Mullingar in 1969; a speech which more than anything gave new backbone to the northern I.R.A.

In March, the Stormont Civil Powers Act was further tightened; they already had blanket powers but these new measures gave them an abundance. Introducing it, William Lowry K.C, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Home Affairs stated; *the aim of these people is very much like the mischief that was made at the time of the introduction of the Treason Felony Act of 1848.* It was that Act which permitted the deportation of the Young Irelanders, Mitchell, Duffy and the rest to Australia. Unionist thinking had not advanced one inch in a hundred years. Meanwhile four more of the Derry internees were held in Dublin. Of the 21 who made it scarcely four remained. Pat Tinney and Frank Campbell of Beleek, Co. Fermanagh, were taken. He was a brother of Tom interned with us in Crumlin before our escape. Ned Maguire, who had escaped from Crumlin Road was held after twelve weeks in Donegal.

You were good, laughs Liam, if, having escaped, you could remain free for half a year. In Belfast 50 men were rounded up. Jimmy Steele in May was taken, cleverly disguised the report said, in the Falls. There were still ceremonies, there was still defiance but organised resistance was no longer possible.

At my own trial, before a secure upholder of the Empire and the Protestant religion, a Major McCollum, Alfie and I refused to stand or face towards him. Police tried to force us but we resisted that. The evidence that followed concerned how they had staked out the house front and rere in Windsor Drive, and of the considerable quantity of weaponry found under a timber floor about which, as I said, I knew nothing.

In August before another secure upholder of the Empire, Lord Justice Murphy, eleven of us were sentenced in rotation. *The Irish News* report of August 4, told the story:-  
FIREARMS CASES 4.8.43.

#### HEAVY SENTENCES AT CITY COMMISSION

Steele Gets 12 years

Heavy sentences including in one case the Cat and in two others the Birch, as well as imprisonment, were imposed by Lord Justice Murphy at the Belfast City Commission yesterday on a number of young men who had been found guilty of possession of firearms and ammunition. The sentences were:-

James Steele, North Queen Street	-12 years
Jos. Doyle, Whiterock Crescent	-12 years and 12 strokes of the Birch
William Doyle, Britton's Drive	-10 years
James Mooney, Raglan Street	-10 years and 12 strokes of the Cat
Arthur Steele, Artillery Street	-12 years and 12 strokes of the Birch
Liam Burke, Locan Street	-12 years
Alphonsus White, Rockmore Road	-12 years
Louis Duffin, New Lodge Road	-12 years
John Jos Doyle, Whiterock Crescent	-10 years
Joseph Lunney, Bow Street	- 7 years
Francesco Notarantonio, Jamaica St.	- 4 years

James Steele the I.R.A officer who escaped with other I.R.A officers from Belfast Prison on January 15th. last, received a sentence of 12 years penal servitude for having had in his possession a revolver and ammunition while in hiding in the house in Amcomri Street. From the dock Steele said: 'The police report describes me as morally good, but politically bad.

After this admission that my crimes are entirely political I have been refused the treatment of a political prisoner, and instead' - Lord Justice Murphy - 'I am not concerned in any of these matters to which you refer. They simply don't concern me. Have you nothing else to say?' Steele - 'I have nothing further to say to this British assembly'. Lord Justice Murphy - 'you are a dangerous man. The sentence will run concurrently with the sentence he is now serving'.

Liam Burke of Locan Street and Alphonsus White of Rockmore Road, were each sentenced to 12 years penal servitude on a charge of having had in their possession or under their control in a house in Windsor Drive explosive substances, including a sub machine gun, bombs, rifles, revolvers and ammunition. When the Clerk of the Court said to Burke, 'Have you anything to say to My Lord before sentence is passed.' Burke replied: 'I have nothing to say because I do not recognise the right of Lord Justice Murphy to judge me.' White said, 'I do not plead with my enemy.' (End of *Irish News* Report).

Early in July, the sentenced prisoners, of which there were about 200 in A. Wing, threatened a strip strike as a protest against being forced to wear prison garb; normal political treatment never having been accorded in Crumlin Road Jail. 20 chosen prisoners held out for ten weeks until ordered off by their Camp Council. Liam notes that the strip protest had already commenced when he arrived in A. Wing in August 1943. Steele, Mc Ateer and Pat Mc Cotter, then O.C, discussed the situation and it was decided that Steele should join the strikers while the rest would remain in support. With wartime censorship however there was no hope of success so after ten weeks the staff ordered them off.

Five months later, in March 1944, the Staff, influenced by worsening conditions, invited volunteers for a hunger strike. Mc Ateer, Pat Mc Cotter and Liam commenced it, being on a first rota, to be followed by a further three led by Steele. Their abstinence lasted 43 days when, once again, it became clear that wartime censorship suffocated all news of it.

Liam was now acting as O.C of A. Wing, comprising the convicted prisoners, almost all of whom were Republican. The 200 internees in D. Wing had their own O.C. The sentenced men were now resigned to the prison garb and to going through the motions of working in the shoe shop, the tailoring shop and the mat shop. In effect the Northern authorities never conceded political treatment until the great hunger strike of 1981 in which ten men died.

Joseph Steele and Arthur Doyle, as noted above, had been sentenced to 12 strokes of the Birch as well as 12 years, and James Mooney to 12 strokes of the Cat. Both punishments were freely handed out in the North, and occasionally in the South, to humiliate in a degrading manner, those prisoners and their close relatives outside.

#### THE CAT AND THE BIRCH ADMINISTERED:

There are few accounts anywhere on how this barbaric punishment was applied; Liam was therefore pressed to give an account.

I have no direct personal experience of the Cat, he commenced, but I was O.C Republican Prisoners when James Mooney received 12 strokes and Joe Doyle and Arthur Steele, a nephew of Jimmy Steele, received 12 strokes of the Birch. These three were members of Fianna Éireann at the time of their capture on an outdoor Fianna parade. I believe a hand gun was captured on that occasion, but to have administered the Cat and Birch was very much over the top and says much of the bigotry of loyalist judges when they were sentenced on August 4, 1943. On arrival in A. Wing there were already men there who had received the Cat, including Pat McCotter, Ned Tennyson, Pat Donnelly and John McMahon.

The Cat in their case was administered by a warder who was ex-British Navy. Pat McCotter, and his comrades, told me that the physical pain was negligible, and that in his opinion the whole scenario demeaned those who inflicted it more than the victims. It was laid down that the punishment be carried out within a limited period after sentence; it was supposed to unnerve the man, leaving permanent physical scars on the body. The three Fianna boys could not expect any merciful intervention from the Unionist regime and they therefore hoped to have the ordeal finished sooner rather than later.

The weeks dragged on from August to December and most of us began to feel that the floggings were either cancelled or forgotten. Such, however, was not the case, for on a cold night near Christmas, we heard doors opening and unusual activity in A. Wing. We knew then that the floggings were beginning. Each of the three Fianna members were taken from his cell and brought to an empty cell in C. Wing, warders being locked in with them. They were then ordered to strip off their shirts. They were left alone then to listen to the sounds of warder activity in the Wing. Each had no idea of the consequences or how long they would have to wait for their turn. It was extremely cold without shirts or jackets and each one told me afterwards that their worst ordeal was to try not to shiver with the cold in case the warders would boast that they had been afraid.

Eventually they were escorted singly by their jailers between ranks of assembled off-duty warders - onlookers, I suppose - down steps to a boilerhouse where they were suspended by rings, hands and feet, inches over the ground. A man with a hood over his head then administered the whipping. Each stroke was counted by the prison Governor while the doctor present checked the heart beat after each stroke. The boilerhouse was filled with warders; it was not clear if their attendance was on the Governor's orders or if they had volunteered. After each flogging each victim was taken down, and escorted back to his cell. The only medical treatment received was a thin gauze bandage over the bleeding parts.

The following morning, continued Liam, I examined the men and found each bleeding. James Mooney who had received the Cat was quite badly cut upon the chest, while Joe Doyle and Arthur Steele were lacerated on the buttocks. I complained to the Governor on the next day about the barbarity of this punishment; about the unnecessary attendance of so many warders, the lack of proper medical



attention, but his answer was that *he acted in accordance with Home Office instructions and the sentence of the court*. My complaints to the Board of Visiting Justices received the same answer.

The Cat was described to me by the recipients, as the cat of nine tails as applied in the English navy. The Birch was described as a bunch of tree strips tied together like an elongated 'besom'. I am glad to say that I never noticed any sign of mental or physical deficiency in any of these men afterwards, in jail or in their later life, Liam added.

After some years of imprisonment a common dining room was provided in A. Wing and, while there were a number of ordinary criminals there, the I.R.A. maintained themselves as a disciplined grouping. They received their own books, worked upon crafts, held classes and, after a while, made even their cells homelike. Concessions, were wrought from the authorities from time to time through a discreet showing of a gloved fist but without throwing up barricades.

Early in August 1950 with Hugh McAteer, Liam Burke was released from Crumlin Road Jail, thus completing some seven years and three months there. Jimmy Steele was released a few weeks later. *They were the last of the many hundreds of forties men - in excess of fifteen hundred - that had been imprisoned in the two kingdoms and were now finally at liberty.*

Forty five years later, looking back, Liam spoke of many friends, selecting particularly John Graham, a Protestant, son of a colonel in the British Army, born in India, and studying for the ministry when he joined the I.R.A. in Belfast. He was one of a small group of intellectuals who came over from Denis Ireland's Irish Union Movement. Graham, then O.C. of the Belfast Battalion, was arrested in September 1942 in the headquarters of the publicity department where owner, Sean Dynan, was also taken in along with David Fleming of Killarney. Graham was sentenced to 12 years. In mid-June 1943 he, with 21 others went upon a strip strike for political treatment. Each morning at 7.30 every article of covering, down to a towel, was removed from their cell, and they were left to sit cold upon the floor until night time when bedding was returned.

Those on the strike were:- James Brogan, Tyrone; Frank Morris, Tyrone; David Fleming, Kerry; John Mc Mahon, Portadown; Ned Tennyson, Portadown; Sean Gallagher, Derry; P. Hegarty, Derry; John Graham, Belfast; Joe Cahill, Belfast; Dan Mc Alister, Belfast; Gerry Adams, Belfast; James Hannon, Belfast; Joe Myles, Belfast; R. Dempsey, Belfast; H. O'Hara, Belfast; S. Mc Parland, Belfast; P. Corrigan, Belfast; Charles Mc Cotter, Belfast; T. Morley, Belfast; W. Doyle, Belfast; J. Mc Cusker, and Seamus 'Jimmy' Steele, Belfast.

The strip strike began in mid-June and was called off early in September. It had received almost no publicity and was unavailing. (*There is a good account by Jimmy Steele in Tim Pat Coogan's The I.R.A.*)

After his release in 1950, John Graham married a Catholic, Sheila Gibbons. 'You never thought of changing', Liam joked with him one day. 'Sure God would have no respect for a man who changed his religion for a woman', laughed Graham. Still living with his five daughters in Belfast, Graham was then, and still remains, a pacifist.

### PARTING SHOT:

A striking memorial was unveiled to Jack Mc Neela at the graveside in Ballycroy on May 26, 1952, attended by a wide circle which included Liam. At a celebratory dinner later in the Mulrany Hotel, Liam recalls being joined by a group which included Peadar O'Flaherty. Almost at once a discussion was begun as to whether the charges against Stephen Hayes had been properly levelled; Peadar O'Flaherty denounced the proceedings, saying he had carefully studied the papers and everything in relation to the charges, and in his opinion Stephen Hayes was innocent. Myles Heffernan, who was among the group, took exception to this and argued strongly that Hayes was in fact guilty.

Peadar O'Flaherty died in Enniscorthy unexpectedly six months later, early in December 1952. Brought to hospital for a routine examination he reacted either to the medication or to the anesthetic, and died suddenly. A friend, signing himself L.V.S, published a sympathetic note in the *Sunday Independent* of December 7, making only a veiled reference to his Republican activities.

### AUGUST 14, 1969

On that evening a loyalist mob, assisted by B. Specials and R.U.C and encouraged by drink looted from the Arkle Bar, having burned homes in Dover Street, Percy Street and Beverly Street, were on the point of breaking on to Divis Street, when blocked by seven Forties men who had entered St. Comgall's school, a broad street side building commanding a wide view of the area. The I.R.A, denuded of weaponry by the leadership of that time, had between them one Thompson, one Lee Enfield and four postols. With those however they forced the tanked-up mob to retreat. One of that seven was thirties/forties man, turned accountant and father of six, Liam de Burca.

## REFERENCES:

1. From the incorporation of the Northern state in 1921 it was a requirement that everyone from messenger boy, teachers and others upwards, must swear an oath of fealty to His Britannic Majesty, King of Great Britain etc. Yet this was a requirement only at the highest levels in Britain. Northern Unionism employed the oath because they knew it would exclude some Catholics (for Catholic read nationalist) from employment for which they were otherwise qualified. Many other economic pitfalls were created with the same intention such as a requirement to state the school attended (upon a C.V form). An early requirement for licenced premises to be physically separate from a grocery business, those being largely controlled by Catholics, resulted in many closing down altogether.

2. Trains bound for Dublin on those days were heavily attacked by loyalist stone throwers.

3. Derry Jail, standing at the highest point within the old walled city, was demolished in the seventies.

The statement to the Minister of Home Affairs, Sir Dawson Bates, was as follows:-

December 25th. 1939  
Derry Prison.

To The Minister of Home Affairs,  
Northern Ireland.

We, the Republican internees, desire to inform you of our deep resentment at being detained in prison, most of us for the past twelve months, without charge or trial, and we hereby demand that you take steps to bring about our immediate unconditional release.

Our action today in seizing and holding that part of the prison in which we are interned is designed to reinforce the foregoing protest and demand, and to draw public attention to the injustice of our imprisonment.

The responsibility for this action being taken, and for any regrettable consequences which may ensue from it, rests not with us but with you, the Six County Junta of which you are a member, and the British Government, which in declaring its War aims against Germany, has stated that its fight is being waged on behalf of Democracy, the right of national self-determination and the freedom of the individual, and the sweeping away of the era of the concentration camp. The Six County Junta has affirmed its unity and solidarity with the British Government in the pursuit of these aims, but while both continue to deny the right of the Irish Nation to Unity and Independence, and while the injustice of our internment continues, so long will these professions stink in the nostrils of all lovers of Truth and Justice throughout the world, as hypocrisy of the most disgusting kind.

Sinne,  
The Internees

(4) *Al Rawdah*, a Mecca pilgrimage ship was crewed by Pakistanis.

(5) For those not conversant with Belfast; going N. W up Crumlin Road, one passes at once, the very large Mater Hospital complex, to be immediately followed by the heavily fortified prison. A Wing, parallel to the road, is on the right, B and C are out of sight behind, while D is further along the road frontage. The Courthouse is directly across the road on the left; court and prison being connected under the road by a tunnel.

(6) John Gerard O'Doherty was born in 1911 in Eglington, five miles east of Derry city. He joined the I.R.A in 1928; his craft was tailoring. Arrested in 1936, he was again inside in 1939, being interned in March 1941. Escaping on June 6, 1941, he was arrested by Free State police near Bunrana, the following March, escaping again but held a few weeks later and brought to the Curragh.

In June 1943 with Sean McCool of Stranolar, Terry McLaughlin and John Joe Maxwell of Leitrim, he was on hunger strike for 48 days until persuaded off by Con Lehane and Sean MacBride. He remained an activist in Derry city until his death in May 1993.

(7) See *Survivors* for more on Co. Cork man John Harrington.

A previous escape to this one was in May 1927, when four long sentenced Republicans got away from Crumlin Road. See *Newsletter* report of June 7, 1941; also *Northern Whig*.

(8) The courtmartial is accurately described in Bowyer Bell.

(9) Liam, and later Jackie Griffith, sheltered at the home of Paddy D'Arcy, Ardristan, Tullow, whose nephew was Séamus Ó Mongáin. Paddy's wife, née O'Neill, had their home burned by the Tans.

(10) Related in *Harry*.

(11) Sergt.-Major Mick Fahey confirmed to this writer that that was the practice but he said that they would not be armed; they would have whistles.

(12) These episodes are related in detail in *Harry*.

(13) The previous year, in April and May, the city sustained three horrific raids, mainly concentrated around the docks and leaving nationalist streets untouched. That of April 8, 1941, resulted in dozens of casualties; April 15 resulted in 750 dead and 2000 injured. A two night incendiary raid of 5/6 May resulted in widespread fires and hundreds of casualties.

(14) See *Harry* for the adventures of Jimmy Clarke of Tyrone.

**BOB CLEMENTS:**

**RIOBARD MAC  
LAGHMAINN:**



*Bob Clements near Celbridge 1993*

*Fear a d'fhill ar a shean oidhreacht Ghaelach.*

In Killadoon (the church of the fort), in the home of his mother formerly, beyond Celbridge, we meet again after more than 50 years; a vast and high corniced drawing room, its tall windows gazing forth over parkland being slowly nibbled into by suburbia; the lazy blue line of the Wicklows in the distance. The little medieval church ruin of the place name is still there but the fort is no longer evident. The last time I had seen him - never spoken to - a long lanky man, seemingly much senior to me, as I tripped across the stumps of concrete foundations in the Curragh internment camp in 1944. I had not met Bob Clements before and we had never met since. Occasionally, his name had cropped up in conversation, but now we are seated together.

Riobárd Mac Laghmainn is a member of the family of the notable Earl of the same name William Sydney, born 1806 and assassinated at Cratlagh Wood on the shores of Lough Swilly on April 2, 1878, while being driven in his coach to his estate at Milford (1). That residence is still there, as is his other great residence at Lough Rynn, in Leitrim, although ownership has passed to others.

The father of the late Cardinal Logue, Archbishop of Armagh, horse riding, a short distance behind, may have witnessed it but later professed to have seen nothing and heard nothing. Although there are raucous tales told of the Earl, the killing may have been the result of a land dispute as, in all matters affecting his property, to quote a contemporary account, the Earl was notoriously litigious and had prosecuted more than 180 of his tenants. He strongly opposed sheep rearing which, he believed, ate into the thin soil of Donegal. The three assassins having taken the precaution to kill not only Leitrim, but his male secretary and coachman, were never apprehended, (Mike Hegarty, Mike McElwee and Neil Shields), and the mortal remains of the Earl lie today in the vaults of St. Michan's in Dublin. As he had remained unmarried, the many members of the Clements family alive and well around Dublin do not derive from him; and Bob himself was not in the direct line.

My father's name was Henry Clements and my mother was Eleanor Wickham, from Hampshire. I was born on July 7, 1910, in this very house. When I was about 10 years of age I was in a nursing home in England and it was then that I developed my interest in nationalism. Until that time in my boyish way I had accepted the order of things; that there was no difference between England and Ireland, whether

in culture, nationalism or outlook. But another patient there, a Mr. Wolfe, taught me otherwise. He was from Co. Kildare, in Ireland, and was probably from the same family from whom Wolfe Tone derived his name.

Tone's mother, Margaret, who came from Drogheda, spent years before marrying Peter, in the Wolfe mansion in Blackhall, near Clane, not far from where we are now; the mansion is still extant. The Wolfe family, although part of the Dublin Castle establishment, maintained a discreet support for Tone. Arthur Wolfe helped to save him in 1794, and in November, 1798, as Chief Justice, sought to remove him from military custody in Arbour Hill. A study of those tense days therefore would tear a hole in the suicide theory. A son of Theobald Wolfe who wrote *The Burial of Sir John Moore*, was killed in the Peninsular War in Spain later. Sir John himself was credited as England's only humane commander in the 1798 rebellion,(2) while Tone as can be seen, inherited his middle name from the family.

In a hazy way I can recall Mr. Wolfe now as a fairly tall, distinguished looking man; and, of course, he had a lot to answer for because it was he who first developed my interest in nationalism. He told me that there was a difference, not a religious difference, but a racial difference, between the Saxon and the Celtic people; that we had a different language, and he even taught me a few words of that! My imagination soared as he went on upon the chequered history of our past, of early Christianity and of our culture, and of how, after the 17th. century, much of it was broken.

Despite the fact that my upbringing continued to be English; that I was sent to public schools, to Sherbourne School, my interest in Irishness developed and grew. I was like the young Hugh O'Neill, a page boy in the court of Elizabeth, seemingly completely anglicised but, deep down, an Irish kerne.

With the onset of the Tan war in Ireland in 1920, I had to take sides. My companions saw the Breens and the Barrys as killers, shooting policemen and English soldiers from behind hedges. What was it all for? The map of the world was coloured red, why are we not content to be part of it? I hated being in school anyway, so I had no qualms in taking the Irish side. As a result we had many discussions and even some hot arguments.

When I think of it now it seems funny; one little Irish boy with his upper class accent pitched against the rest. There was no ill-feeling; I suppose they thought I was just silly. I was still in Sherbourne; but, as my parents thought I had a bent towards mechanical engineering, at a fairly young age I was sent to Loughborough Technical College; then, and still, renowned as a centre of instruction in general engineering.

As a result of that course I was transferred to Doncaster, then a very important centre of British rail engineering. Altogether I spent three years there as an apprentice engineer, and from that derives my interest in railways. I know that many people recall me from the Curragh as a train buff; as a person who could tell the departure time of a train from Claremorris to Ballina, but, in fact, I have always seen trains as the most ecological way of conveying people and merchandise, and it is a great pity that we are so short sighted in Ireland in failing to develop them more than we have done.(3)

While I was at work in Doncaster, and with my parents living in London, as I had cheap travel, I could come up every weekend. I discovered and joined the

Gaelic League there. For six nights of the week I was in digs in Doncaster but I had no social life there. Now I was among friends; many of them with a similar outlook. The League itself was non-political; there were people in it who were political, but, as an organisation, it was really non-political. I do not recall any important figures there; we are speaking now of the very early thirties, when I was just over twenty. I continued week ending in London and remained a member of the Gaelic League for about two years.

#### COIS FHARRAIGE:

Feeling, perhaps, that my future bread and butter might be in another direction, my parents encouraged me to study law. As a result of that I returned to Dublin, qualifying eventually as a barrister at the Kings Inns in Henrietta Street, a street then decayed, that I came to know very well. I walked up it several times a day and I must say that I was totally unaware that an ancestor had built one of the first grand mansions there.

I joined the I.R.A about 1934. I knew all of the personalities at that time. I was adjutant of the College company in Trinity College. Lyle Donaghy, the Co. Antrim Presbyterian poet, was with us then, as was Charlie Donnelly or, at any rate, I often met him, another poet; killed in Spain. I was keenly interested in what was happening on the international front, hence my visits later on, to study revolutionary history in the National Library.

I had already spent many months in Cois Fharráige, so I was impregnated with Gaelic culture and a political view which ran contrary to Imperialism. I could not accept the Fianna Fáil view of Ireland in the middle thirties, the social consequence of which has ripened into the Ireland of today.

My discovery of Cois Fharráige arose after I had returned to Dublin where, by chance, a friend of mine won a scholarship, bringing him to Cois Fharráige. I followed him there, Micheál Mac Shéamuis, an insurance agent in London, was my friend's name. It was a new world to me. You have got to bear in mind that, in the mid-thirties, the west of Ireland still existed in glorious isolation: white washed cottages with golden thatched roofs. People walked or biked everywhere; talk was the common currency and they had plenty of time for that. The government in Dublin has long since steam rolled the pressures of the east on to the west where they had never previously existed, and with no corresponding benefit. *Bhí mé ag fanacht an t-ám sin i dtigh Pheadair Eilbhe agus rinneamar cuairt ar 'chuile teach ar an mbaile sin. Do gheobhfá bia agus deoch i ngach teach cuairte agus ghlachadar liom sa achan áit mar dhuine diobh fein.* I was accepted everywhere.

*Do chas mé ar Albanach annsin darbh ainm Colm MacGilathin. Bhí gaeilge aige (Scots gaelic) agus bhí fonn air cur len a stór gaeilge de chuid Chonamara. Bhiómar go minic ag ól len a cheile.* When we came to Dublin we continued to meet and to go drinking together. We must have got rowdy on one occasion because we were locked up in the Bridewell. *Ach, bhí aithne ag mo dhuine ar De Valera agus niorbh fhada gur scaoileadh saor sinn an lá in a dhiaidh.*

Of the story going the rounds that there was an old woman of Connemara responsible for my 'conversion' by asking me to accompany her on the Rosary, all I can say is that it is a kindly tale but a fable. In the same context is what my mother



*Máirtín Ó Cadhain ins na triochadaí*

is reputed to have said, but less of a fable: *I can forgive him learning Irish; I can forgive him being Catholic and joining the I.R.A; what I cannot stand are those awful Connemara tweeds and the cáipín he keeps perched on his head.*

It was in April, 1935, that I first met Máirtín Ó Cadhain. I was bound, with a number of others, on bicycles, for Galway city, where we boarded a bus booked for the unveiling of the Liam Lynch memorial above Goatenbridge, Newcastle, on the slopes of the Knockmealdowns. I was seated with Máirtín, so that, on the long journey there and back to Galway, we learned a lot about each other.

As Séamus Ó Mongáin has told you, I was becoming engrossed in all things Irish. He said there that I had learned Irish so well that I was as good as a native speaker, well, I do not know about that, but it is true that I immersed myself in Gaelic culture, eventually becoming a room mate of Máirtín, the greatest authority on the language over the past century.

It was an impressive gathering there that day on the mountainside, a tall, newly constructed tower with two wolfhounds at the base, by Albert Power. Maurice Twomey unveiled the plaque, followed by a speech from Brian O'Higgins. What remains strongest in my mind about that Sunday, however, was that the weather turned foul, developing into an unremitting downpour. In the circumstances it was a tremendous tribute to Twomey and to Liam Lynch that such a throng of people climbed the long, rough mountainside to the memorial - there was no road to it - and that they remained there throughout.

I had been staying about three miles from where Máirtín resided so, from here on our acquaintanceship developed, especially after he retired to Dublin and I also came to reside there. In this intervening period, following, if you like, the high point of 1934 and 1935, we must have been aware, we should have been aware, that the political tide was turning. Fianna Fáil dispensed power and favours, and it was consolidating itself at the expense of its original grass roots. It is naive not to expect that to happen; it is cynical to welcome it when it does happen.

Máirtín lost his position in Cearn Mór because of his I.R.A connection which conflicted with the strong law-and-order outlook of its reverend managers, Canon



Moran and Bishop Doherty (4) Knowing how outspoken Máirtín could be, that was bound to happen; yet it was one more straw in the wind. I was still in Galway at that time but I did not figure in the case at all. I was leaping mad when he was dismissed but there was nothing I could do. I was unable to assist in any way. For a while he acted as a *timire* for Connradh na Gaeilge and then he obtained a part-time post with *An Fainne* as *Árd Rúnaí* and teacher in the *Árd Craobh* at 14 Parnell Square. Later, his brother, Seosamh, filled that post. But Máirtín to subsist had to sell Eire trading stamps and things like that.

I had barely begun to practise as a barrister when, early in 1937, I was hauled before the Military Tribunal for making an allegedly seditious speech, at a meeting in Drogheda. I cannot recall now what the text of it was, probably I invited them to join Óglaigh na hÉireann and, if so, Drogheda was the right town in which to make it. I did not recognise the court and I got six months in Arbour Hill, where, at that time, there were around 30 other Republican prisoners. Lennon was governor there; but, for Duffy, his assistant, a left-over from an earlier period, no one had a good word to say.

Máirtín came to live then at 4 Victoria Street, in the ground floor front room, off the South Circular Road, close to Synge Street. He occupied a room where Peadar O'Flaherty had stayed; indeed, they may have overlapped. Our landlady was a Miss O'Brien, formerly of the Featherstone-Haugh family. She prepared and served us meals. I joined him because, although now at liberty, I had no wish to practise as a barrister. Instead I spent much of my time in the National Library researching revolutionary history. I must have written reams on that subject.

Neither of us had any resources, so conditions were quite spartan. Gas light was our means of illumination; it being then in common usage in Dublin, and our commissariat was certainly not an overstocked one. Máirtín spent much of his time writing; he may have commenced sketching *Idir Shugradh agus Dairire* at that time. He had numbers of visitors, Séamus Ó Mongáin from Dú Thuama being one. The plan to reinstate Sean Russell as Chief of Staff in 1938 was certainly under discussion although Máirtín had reservations about his captaincy later. Seán Ó Broin, Eoin McNamee and Jack McNeela, with others, played a part in this; and from Tim Pat Coogan's book (5) I learned that 4 Victoria Street was the venue for the caucus meeting that brought Russell to power. No wonder I was a marked man afterwards!

From a reference in Sean Cronin's *Irish Nationalism* to that time, it is clear that Máirtín regarded economic independence to be just as important as political independence; that he considered the programme of the Army to be lacking in social content; and that he regarded the 1939 campaign, as then planned, as premature, or indeed inadvisable. At all events he voted on December 4, 1938, to postpone the Campaign, and, upon being ruled out of order, he resigned from the Council (6).

I feel sure the arguments in Victoria Street must have been hot and heavy upon these issues, while many of his visitors must have been colourful and diverse; I kept my own counsel. Swinging more and more against the Russell policy as it evolved in the opening weeks of 1939 onwards, and replaced after June 1939 as O.C. Dublin, Máirtín, nonetheless, remained a loyal member of the Army, and that is adequately testified by the prolonged period of internment which he underwent afterwards.

Máirtín discussed some of the forthcoming events with me, but I considered myself out of things, on the reserve. I had no tactical expertise nor did I move around, what you call headquarters's houses. I was really and truly out of things, I do not mean that I had ceased to be Republican. They interned me among 70 others, in September 1939, but there is nothing strange about that, as frequently they do not know what they are doing.

Following the Burke *habeus corpus* action I was released on December 2, 1939. Of the personalities interned then with me, I knew best the Dublin and Galway men. The Magazine Fort raid occurred three weeks after my release. I was in no way involved but I considered it a great coup. Of the persons arrested at the wireless in Ashgrove House, I had known Ó Mongáin slightly, as well as Jack Mc Neela and Paddy - the latter not arrested then - from Ballycroy, tough but very attractive men. I had no part in the actions that followed in the early months of 1940 beyond a feeling of regret that they were not more successful. Of Peadar O'Flaherty, I can say only that I knew him very well. In my opinion he was a good man although, possibly a bit over enthusiastic. I may have met Stephen Hayes but, if so, he failed to make any impression upon me.

#### NOT ON THE RUN:

Prior to the mass internments of June, 1940, I continued to live in Victoria Street, and although Máirtín had been interned since April. I was not on the run. I had no reason to be unless one suspects 'guilt by association'.

I was reminded of this on that day in mid-April, in Headford, when we buried Tony D'Arcy. The whole place was surrounded by an army with rifles, Bren guns and all. I saw one soldier there whom I knew very well; a Connemara lad. He got out of the army later, going, unfortunately, to England, and disappearing. We were talking together a couple of months later, and he said he had seen me there; I knew that because he had waved. 'If I had been ordered to fire', he said, 'I would have, because there were plenty of bloody guards to aim at'. Máirtín gave the oration that day; it was the last time he spoke in public for five years because he was seized on the spot and interned.

I continued living in Victoria Street until a few days before Christmas, 1940, when I too, was seized and interned. God only knows why because, as I have said, they had no reason. On arrival at the Curragh and seeing then, after the Fire, the exposure of the maze of tunnels, I thought, what madness, to burn down seven huts and expose them. Nearly everyone else thought it mad also, including some who had helped to burn them!

I was put on the Camp Council as soon as I landed inside the gate. There was a meeting then and a certain amount of discussion upon, I suppose, the situation in Hut C 1; the Tadhg Lynch hut, where turf had been drawn contrary to orders. I was not entirely happy with whatever programme was proposed to deal with this. I proposed that they consult the hut O.C's and report back on what view prevailed.

What I meant was that they should consult each hut O.C and no more. Unfortunately, and I do not know how this happened, there was an election in each hut. That was not what I had intended. That confirmed the position and standpoint of Tadhg Lynch so far as his hut was concerned and led directly to the split.

I still consider it was foolish to take action without discovering what the feeling was in the Camp as a whole. At that time the Tadhg Lynch group might not have done anything but, as a result of the hut election, there was a form of rebellion, and they declared their independence. The Council then decided that those in Hut C 1, be ostracised, and I can tell you the decision was fairly well unanimous. Some time around December, 1941, a document was circulated (7) from Pearse Kelly, Tom Cullimore and others, seeking to have a new Council elected that would, in that way, terminate the split.

Some months earlier they had published the entire content of the Hayes confession. The accuracy of this confession, now known to have been grossly exaggerated by Hayes himself, proved a serious bone of controversy within the Camp. As a result, the Liam Leddy council ostracised the Kelly group, but they were immediately joined by about half the prisoners, most of whom were less concerned about the confession (as many of them could see holes in it also), but concerned rather to have the ugly practice of ostracism ended. In time, the Pearse Kelly group grew to be the larger segment. Bob could not recall those circumstances, though he could recall having had many conversations with Neil Goold, on social and philosophical issues, prior to the split.

I was on the Camp Council at that time, but I cannot recall those events. I don't remember the exact details of it now; indeed, I cannot remember what the big split was about at all. I do recollect that efforts were made by John Joe Sheehy, who had come in late, to heal the split,

But I cannot recall now why such a respected personage as Sheehy failed.

About the arrest of Stephen Hayes, I did not know what to think; and I still do not. That is one of the things I have wondered about ever since. I had known Maire Comerford (8) as a journalist with the *Irish Press*, and I considered her very good and level headed. I did not remain on the Council. There may have been an election subsequently; I cannot remember whether I resigned or got thrown off. Of the 1943 tunnel effort described by Packy Joe Dolan and John L. McCormack, I was never in it. I am too lanky and conspicuous in other ways. I would have been missed. I was listed as one of the people to escape by it although I was told about it only at the last minute; and I cannot tell you therefore, what the transport arrangements might have been. John L. McCormack conjectures that the heavy run for chocolate and the like upon the shop in the days preceding might have given the game away; and, indeed, it might have.

When Máirtín, late in 1944, circulated what was deemed to be a political document (9) on the Leddy side of the Camp, he got into hot water; the document was seized and has never appeared since. As far as I recall, I was released in September 1944; I would not therefore have known anything of that document.

I never was offered three month's parole, or any parole; and in the four years that I was there, I took only one visit. Then suddenly, one morning, I was told to pack up, and I packed up bloody quick. I got a rail voucher for Dublin, although I may not have gone to Dublin. I may have come here to Celbridge, as my mother was living here at that time. Yes, probably I did come here.

## REFERENCES:

1. Remarkably, Cardinal, Michael Logue, born in Carrigart, north Donegal, October 1, 1840, has here a connection. His father, Michael, an innkeeper; his mother, Catherine Durnan resided in the area. The future Cardinal attended the national school and a private school before entering Maynooth in 1857. In 1887 he was appointed co-adjutor Archbishop of Armagh; in 1893, appointed Cardinal in Rome, along with the renowned Cardinal Vaughan, friend of King Edward VII, who was said to have administered the last rites to the King. Cardinal Logue was a stern upholder of Catholicism; bitterly opposed to C.S Parnell following the divorce, and was known to the saintly priest of Eglishe as 'Humpy Mick', and is recalled in Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist*, during the Christmas dinner argument by the jibe, 'is it for Billy with the lip or for the tub of guts up in Armagh? Respect!'

2. *Theobald Wolfe Tone*, by Frank Mac Dermot.

3. Robert Clements over the years has contributed technical notes on steam traction to a number of journals notably that of the Irish Railway Record Society.

4. Máirtín with others (see Pierce Fennell) was arrested and held briefly in Galway when they attempted to attend the banned Bodenstown commemoration of June, 1936.

5. The *I.R.A*

6. *Irish Nationalism*, by Sean Cronin. *Legion of the Rearguard*, by Conor Foley. When first mooted (Maurice Twomey to this writer) Ó Cadhain, Grogan and G. Plunkett were 'wildly in favour'.

7. See Appendix for this document.

8. Maire Comerford appeared to consider Hayes's guilt as not proven (in Scots parlance); Maurice Twomey, likewise. He was especially turned off by the implausibility of the story that Russell had been executed in Gibraltar. Within two years, however, Twomey had become totally disenchanted with Hayes. Speaking to Séamus Ó Mongáin, early in 1941, he had advised a take-over by a younger group. This occurred in a discussion on 'doubtful allegiance' when the two were meeting daily.

9. See Christy Quearney's account

## CURRAGH TESTIMONY:

### TOMO COSTELLOE OF TRALEE:



*Tomo Costelloe with his wife.*

My father was also Tom Costelloe and my mother was Ellen O'Gorman. She came from Clohane, Ballyard, a few miles outside Tralee, but she was reared in the town as her father held the post of caretaker of the sports field, since know as the Austin Stack Park. Two of my mother's brothers, Thady and James, played with the Kerry team that brought the first All Ireland - the first of many - to the County in 1903.

Thady was captain of that team, while Austin Stack, afterwards so distinguished in Republican history, was a member of it. In the politics of that time, grand dad O'Gorman was a member of the Liberal Party, while Uncle Patsy was a Parnellite; as such, he came to be arrested a couple of times in the nineties.

My father, Tom, was born in this town; a brother - my uncle - emigrated to England, where he became head stableman for Stanley Wooten of Epsom; his son, another Tom, used come to Ireland, being at that time an apprentice jockey. In the 1914-1918 war he joined the army, being sent, fortunately I suppose, to India, but when the war ended he came home to Tralee. He was a close friend of Mattie Moroney later sentenced to death under the Tans, but escaping that penalty by the advent of the Truce in July 1921. It was the same Mattie who persuaded Tom to join the I.R.A in the Tan period when he was automatically promoted Training Officer. His photograph can be seen in Eamonn O'Doherty's book of some years back, *The I.R.A At War*, when they were taking over the staff barracks at Boherbue after the Treaty. Tom is to one side on the left, with Tommy Barrett in front. Tom is holding one of the new Thompsons, and there is a line of volunteers from Dingle and Castlegregory direction to the right.

#### FATHER ARRESTED:

My father Tom was arrested on suspicion by the new Free State in the Civil War, and held in Ballymullen barracks, where a Capt. Danaher was in charge. Around September 1922 when the first batch of prisoners were to be transferred to the big camps of Kildare, which - because of broken rail routes could only be done by sea from Fenit - upon his name being called, cousin Tom briskly stepped out. *That was a cute move*, Capt. Danaher said, friendly like, to my father when the party bound for Kildare had departed. *I can see you preferred to remain here.* So Dad remained here in

Ballymullen; never going to the Curragh or Newbridge. He was held until the Civil War was well over; being released early in 1924.

Meanwhile I had started school in the Presentation Convent, moving on to the Christian Brothers. Being native of Tralee, with all its republican associations, it was natural that I should join Fianna; the boy scouts, which I did in 1928. The Cosgrave government of Cumann na nGael was very unpopular here at that time, and indeed was on its last legs in the country. It was a question of time only until the republican De Valera would come to power. Right enough he played a new tune that appealed to us, and their torchlight processions, banners and marches could not be matched. Us lads, in the Boherbue *sluagh*, were active and into everything. When William Cosgrave came to the town in January 1933 he got a hot reception; that was perfectly natural; he was coming to a county that had suffered more in the Civil War than any other; he and his government were blamed for that, and the embers only needed a puff to come alight again. The streets here were being concreted at the time; there were plenty of missiles about, and we used them in an unholy riot that produced a number of baton charges, with, finally, to quell the situation, military being brought in from Limerick.

#### ACTIVE SERVICE UNIT:

My brother Jimmy, who had been a messenger boy in Hilliard's drapery shop, set out for America in 1929; his job, at nine shillings a week, fell to me although I had only left school. Denis Cotter, much older than I, and a Republican, was also employed; and it was from him, that I got, what I will call, my first baptism of fire, when he commenced giving me lessons in the Thompson machine gun, during slack periods, at the back of the shop. Denis was very dedicated, and it was through him that I had my first coaching in the traditions of republicanism. Fianna, meanwhile, was under the guardianship of Michael O'Leary, an I.R.A. man who had been wounded in the Tan War; he had a great way with us; in giving us a sense of duty and leadership.

On the political front, after the Cosgrave riot, the next major excitement that I recall was a ceremonial visit on October 6, 1933 by General Eoin O'Duffy and his Blueshirts to the town. There were numbers of Blueshirts active in the county so he expected to hold an impressive rally. But that is not how it worked out. I had been sent out of the shop on the afternoon upon a message, but, in reality, it was just to see what was going on. I remember I was standing at the corner of the Shamrock Mills as he arrived marching down the street. It was at that very moment that he received a blow from a hammer; I do not know how hard or how damaging it may have been but it caused consternation then, and instantly the whole street was involved in a *mêlée*.

I hurried back to put up the gates on the shop, but the next morning when Denis walked in, I noticed that he had neither an eyebrow or an eyelash. I realised then that he must have been among the group who had burned Eoin O'Duffy's car the night before.<sup>(1)</sup>

In 1936 an Active Service Unit was formed in Tralee, following a directive from Tom Barry. The unit was to train in the use of all kinds of arms. Early in 1938 Garrett Cotter and I were sent into County Waterford for a week's training, being met by a

local man called Ryan and Paddy Fleming of Killarney.(2) We were conveyed then by another man to a large estate surrounded by trees somewhere in the neighbourhood of Passage East. For a week we were in training in the stables, learning how to make mines and time bombs. I met there Paddy McGrath and Pearse McLaughlin, the acknowledged experts; with Mick Walsh of Kilmacow and Paddy O'Connell. I think, but am not sure, that Seamus O'Donovan looked in upon us as well. Coming to the end of the week we were told to get on the move, that we had been spotted; so we departed in twos. On the road we were picked up by another man who took us in charge, and we ended up in Ted Moore's of Mooncoin; going to Mass on that Sunday morning. After Mass we made off the few miles to Waterford city; Paddy Fleming knew there was a train from Killarney to Waterford that morning with a Third Order pilgrimage, and we could join it for the return journey. That we did, arriving safely in Tralee that night. We knew that over the next few weeks we would be training the local units on what we had learned on the big estate in County Waterford.

Tadhgeen Drummond was in charge of the local unit; Tadhgeen's two brothers were later interned in the Curragh. Paddy was a teacher, living in Tralee, while Ned was a greyhound trainer in Co. Wexford; he was never seen without riding breeches and a string of hounds on the leash.

#### A TRIP TO LONDON:

The Campaign started in England in January 1939, and although many of us in Tralee did not agree with it, yet, we thought we should do something to scare the wits out of the authorities. We decided to join a late February rugby excursion trip on the *St. David* from Rosslare, during which we would plant some small incendiary devices on the boat. We would be well on our way from Fishguard to London by the time they went off.

Three of us left Tralee; Garrett Cotter, Tadhgeen Drummond and myself. We had some girls from the town as cover, and Garrett carried a radio - which at the time was as large as a small suitcase - belonging to one of the girls. All went well anyway; we cleared Fishguard and arrived by train to Paddington a few hours late. The reason for the delay was soon obvious; a screen of police forming a vee shape corridor, closed off the platform. But we were still accompanied by the rugby crowd and ordinary passengers, and some of those were filtering past on the outside flanks. Those going into the vee had to pass lines of policemen and emerge through a narrow neck. Talking to the sister of one of our girls, who was already in a London flat, the policeman stationed there stepped back and we found ourselves - all except Tadhgeen - outside the vee. We hastened up the steps, separating ourselves then from the girls, as I had a married cousin in Shepherds Bush; Garrett and myself skipped into a tube and made for there.

That night we left again from Paddington; mission accomplished, for Fishguard. On reaching the pier we found a group of rugby supporters whom we joined. The plain clothes police however were thick on the ground, and one of them placed a hand on Garrett's shoulder; *can I have a word with you?* I continued on board unnoticed where I ran into Tom Ferris from this county. Just before the gangway was elevated I was relieved to see Garrett come on board, although accompanied by two

detectives.

Tom and I moved into the bar where I was even more relieved to see Tadhgeen, although seated on each side of him were two detectives. As the pilot boat slipped cable with our mail steamer, they rose and left the boat. We were free to return safely to Ireland, but I suppose it had been a near thing.

#### IN CONNAUGHT AS AN ORGANISER:

I was appointed then to travel through north Kerry; accompanied by Jacob Lovett, on organisational work. Jacob's ancestors, having a name like that, must have been Palatines; refugees from the Rhine country, planted in the 18th. century in Co. Limerick. Jacob himself was a carpenter from Abbeydorney, six miles north of Tralee, knowing every inch of that territory. He was interned in the Curragh after, and was in charge of D. Line cookhouse the morning that Barney Casey was shot.

Around December 1939, Purty Landers, long renowned on the Kerry team, was in the Killarney neighbourhood also on organisational work. Sometime in February, 1940, I was ordered to Dublin; told to check in at O'Briens, a small hotel in Parnell Street, and there to await instructions. While lodged there, a small time manufacturer of polish, Dan Moynihan arrived. *If you are travelling Ireland, says he; why not carry a few samples of my polish around and I will reward you with a commission on sales.* Well, it never really came to that, but it does show the homely level upon which native industry of that time was struggling.

That evening, while having my tea in the restaurant, who should walk in through the door but Denis Cotter. I rose promptly; Denis being my contact. I paid for my digs, and followed Denis out through the door. I ended up with Mrs. Keane, at 29 Lansdowne Park Ballsbridge.(3) There we remained, under cover for about a week, until we received instructions to proceed to Ballinrobe, Co. Mayo, and call upon Seamus Burke. Now Seamus was, what you would call, high profile, in the I.R.A; it was no shock for us to be told that we were already spotted by the Branch; by the police. The period between the Magazine raid of December 1939 and the wide scale internments of June 1940, was a period of high police activity; of watching where I.R.A men could be located once internment commenced. I thought afterwards that we had not given enough attention to that; that we were at sea as to what our policy should be.

At this time all our travel was by train and bus, so that day we left Ballinrobe for Claremorris and continued to Mullingar by train. We stayed there that Saturday night; going to Mass on Sunday morning and, straightaway, catching a bus for Dublin. As we were entering the city, Denis whispered, *get off; the long distance buses are watched.* We caught a local bus that brought us near O'Connell Bridge, noting with some interest the Mullingar bus being gone through. Moving along Pearse Street, we made for Lansdowne Park, our former billet. Mixie Conway and Tony Magan called there shortly after our arrival; it was my first time meeting H.Q personnel. While there also, I met Tom Harte from Lurgan, who had been on the English campaign, and Mick Conroy. From now on, as organisers, much of our travel would be by bicycle;(4) accordingly we were funded and told visit Capel Street and purchase each a second hand bike. It was war time now and nearly everyone was on a bike, except police of course; they still had cars. Accompanied to Capel



Street by Tom Harte, he observed in Tara Street a car he took to be police, so he made off.

We continued however and bought two sturdy roadsters; the trouble now we thought might be getting the tyres and spares. The bikes were well fitted, but with wartime tyres had become scarce.

Early next morning, with a few pounds each for expenses, and the address of our contact, we set off for Sligo where the man we were to meet was Mick Silke, general man at the Ursuline convent. Mick was approaching fifty; a gentle well spoken creature with a scholarly appearance. He had his own house in the grounds so we stayed there. Charlie Dolan, one of the pivots of the Movement, called upon us and directed us the next day to Ballina. From there we travelled to Swinford, finally finishing up in Castlebar where we lodged with Andy Redmond. After some days there we went on into Leitrim, meeting Terry McLaughlin; he, later in the summer of 1943, did a 49 day hunger strike in the Curragh, seeking release.

We travelled then, it being fine spring weather, and sure we were young and fit, to Roscommon; then back west into Westport and up to Newport. These were all good republican areas. We were told then to report into Galway city, and to there we went; installing ourselves at Walsh's, the Old Malt House. Of course Billy and Fursey were as well known as a pair of begging asses, but what did we care at this stage, with the warm welcome we got.

It was now mid-April; five men were on hunger strike in Dublin. After 52 days Tony D'Arcy died and three days later, Jack McNeela after 55 days followed him on April 19.(5) The car was rolled out, and we were driven, not very far, to the first crowded funeral at Headfort; and then a few days after, to west Mayo, to Ballycroy. These, for me, were two very sad occasions; two very sad spectacles.

#### RUN UP TO MY INTERNMENT:

Back that night in Walsh's, Denis and I discussed matters among ourselves. We did not like the general complexion of things or the aimless way they were proceeding. Country wide travel is alright but we were supposed to be organising. He advised me to return home to Tralee as he would be going to Dublin. I hesitated about that; I did not want to return in a condition of mystery. *You have got to give me a reason why I should go home. There is an informer at the head of affairs, he said, and I am afraid it is Stephen Hayes.* I was taken aback by this. *You must never repeat this, he told me, or my life would not be worth living. I had to give him my word on something that I could scarcely believe.*

I have known Hayes since 1936, Denis then told me; when he was going forward in August in a Dáil election under Cumann Poblachta na h-Éireann. Denis was directed into Wexford to work for him at that time. Hayes had a clerical job with the County Council, and was a popular figure in the G.A.A., but he cut a poor specimen as a candidate, and, besides, Fianna Fáil was going to sweep the board anyway. *I was there, Denis said, with Paddy Drummond and other Republicans, assisting Hayes. I did not like him then and I don't trust him now.*

I got nothing tangible from Denis as to why he distrusted the Acting- Chief of Staff; nor did I whisper a word of this to anyone, but what he confided to me was told a full fifteen months before Stephen was arrested in Coolock by Sean

McCaughey and the Belfast boys. And I would say the only reason they were still free to arrest him then was because they had remained out of his reach.

Denis then instructed me to cycle on to Limerick city, to the Imperial Hotel; to inquire for Mrs. Saltier, and if there was no message for him there, I was to cycle on to Tralee. On arriving home I heard to my dismay that the house had been raided. I realised then that they were that close upon my heels that I was a wanted man. A friend of mine in Aiken's Volunteers (and therefore impeccable as far as police raiding was concerned), said I could stay in his house. His mother had died a short time before; there was now no one but his sister Sheila, who departed each morning to work at eight o'clock. I was offered his mother's room, and I remained there until I was arrested five weeks later.

Denis, who had by this time returned to Tralee, was himself pulled in. They sprang upon him as he was walking in broad daylight with his girl friend, May, at the back of the wood. A squad car drew up along side of them and three men leaped out; he just managed to say to her that she should get word to me. May knew my girl friend - whom I was years later to marry - but, rather than proceed directly to her, she called instead upon Mrs. Fitzgibbon. So the dire tidings were relayed to me; Denis was gone and I might soon follow him.

I nipped out of my home; hopped over the back wall and was soon ensconced in the safe house. But this was a game that could not last forever. When the big round up of June 2, came, I knew of it some hours before. I was uneasy however as, should I be found where I was hiding, would my friend and his sister be in some trouble? I could not risk that, so I moved out and concealed myself from where I could observe what was going on. Towards evening the coast, seemingly clear, I slipped into my own home for a bite to eat. That was my undoing, for minutes after there was a squad car at the front and rere. I barely got finished before I was lifted; first to the garda barracks; then to the military; and from there to Killarney, picking up more prisoners there. We were then conveyed by armed soldiers with gun carriers between each lorry, to Cork Jail.

#### CLINK:

We remained in Cork Jail, around 170 of us, until early August. While we were there, as is related elsewhere, the Cork unit tried to tunnel in to release some prisoners and John Joe Kavanagh (5) was shot dead, and Roger Ryan badly wounded. Later on Roger was a close friend of mine in the Curragh. I found the jail life dreary, although for most of the others, apart from the annoyance of being confined, they seemed to go along with it. One of the men there whom I got to know really well was Pierce Fennell; a great man for the crack, as they say nowadays. Then, one morning at 5 a m we were told we would be moving. Pack your belongings and get going. We were five hours on the road for Kildare; a long, unusual and heavily guarded convoy. I was handcuffed to Terry Myles, but I soon discovered a trick for slipping them off. In next to no time they were all thrown out of our lorry, and, I was told, from most of the other lorries also. Pierce Fennell in his lorry was waving half a bed sheet with a hammer and sickle painted upon it. Eugene Powell, from Tralee, was on our vehicle; he tried to slip away on arrival, but he did escape afterwards from the Curragh base hospital.

The Camp was a big change from the jail; around 30 men to a hut and a space to play football; in one game there I had my nose broken. I used to run too, and Tony McInerney was one of the very few men who could outstrip me. We found it a new world altogether; I was in Hut C .12 after arriving, with a mix of Limerick and Kerry men. I was one of the few people there who managed to hold on to a watch. I had carried it concealed under my belt from Cork.

Entering the Curragh we were searched, but I managed to slip the watch to Terry Myles as he came away after being searched. Things were going well until November when the three H.Q men, as they were called, arrived from Arbour Hill, and took over from Billy Mulligan and his Camp Council. Almost simultaneously the standard of the food deteriorated; the Friday fish being stale and inedible. The butter ration fell to a quarter ounce. The decision was taken then to burn a selected number of huts, including C.12, where I resided. I cannot say if the wind caused more to burn or if seven was the magical number anyway. There were outbursts of shooting all over the place, and we found ourselves herded in the gloom of a December evening, on to the football field. Meanwhile any property the P.A's found lying about they threw into the flames.

Hours later we were herded, amid threats and curses, into five of the huts, where we were packed like sardines. All but one - the Ice Box - had timber floors, but no bedding. There we remained for 48 hours, until the Monday, when I, John Callaghan and George Duffy, were released at 6 a m for cookhouse duty. We were escorted to C.Line cookhouse under armed escort by Corporal O'Connor. We found however that there were no rations there. Thinking a mistake had been made, I told John to follow the Corporal and inform him. At the door however an armed P.A told him in no uncertain manner to remain where he was. An escort would have to be found to bring him to D. Line cookhouse where the rations had been delivered.

Captain McNamara came in an hour later; what are you waiting for, he shouted? Forget about an escort, get out that bloody door and collect from D. Line. Breakfast was not ready until close on 10 a m, and it was then only, that the hut doors, in these tense circumstances, would be opened. Normally the men fell into two lines and marched to the cookhouse under their officers, and that was the practice being followed on this occasion. But that was not what came to pass. A line of armed P.A's under a captain stretched across the gate beyond the cookhouses. They opened fire as soon as our lads lined up.

Purty Landers, was in charge of the first hut inside the gate, and when he heard a call outside to present arms, he shouted to his crew to lie down flat. The result was that the first and second huts escaped injury but the third hut bore the brunt of the volley.

Just prior to that I had sent John Callaghan and George Duffy to collect the coal ration for our range. The coal lay outside one gate while being still inside the outer gate. Just as they approached the coal shots rang out, and a sergeant emerged swinging a Thompson. Overhead a soldier in the box, finger on the trigger, covered us, while we below carried only an empty basin between us. To the sergeant, he shouted; *I have those two men covered*, as indeed he had. I prayed that he was not too nervous.

From the window of the dining hut we peered out towards the drive between C and D Line from where we had heard the shots. We heard shouts of, *get back there*, and then Billy Mulligan appeared. That was the occasion when he shouted to Capt. McMahon; *there is a seriously wounded man in my hut and I am going now to get a stretcher*. With the still smoking guns he was taking a grave risk in so exposing himself, but he turned on his heel and strode towards a hut directly parallel with our dining hut. It served as a camp hospital. From there, he emerged, carrying a stretcher, accompanied by Billy and Jimmy Doherty. Barney Casey was laid on that; some more were wounded, but Barney was brought to the base hospital where, within hours, he died.

The three of us in the Cookhouse were supposed to appear at the inquest but it was, in effect, suppressed, although Mac Bride did get in the query that caused uproar, *why was Barney Casey shot in the back?* (7) We learned later that an order had been given to McNamara the evening before, that our practice of parading in formation to the cookhouses must cease. We were not however informed of it.

Subsequently the regime in the Camp was rough indeed. On St. Stephen's night, 52, of what the Staters deemed were 'ring leaders' were pounded with batons up the hill to the Glasshouse, and afterwards tried. I myself was released on October 20, 1943, 40 months after my arrest in Tralee. In that period I neither received a visit nor did I obtain parole, although my father had applied for it.

## REFERENCES:

1. The meeting was completely wrecked and O'Duffy received a nasty wound when struck with a hammer on the way to the meeting. Later, over a hundred Fine Gael delegates were besieged in the hall by a stone throwing crowd outside. The 200 police present were unable to deal with the crowd, and it was not until soldiers, attired in battle kit, arrived from Cork after nine o'clock, that peace was restored. A Mills bomb was thrown through the skylight over the stage, but it did not explode as it was caught in the wire netting. O'Duffy's car was burned by the crowd and he and Commdt. Cronin had to be escorted to the county border by a large police escort. The following day an unexploded bomb was found at the rear of the hall. - Maurice Manning; *The Blueshirts*.

The official report states that when General O'Duffy and Commdt. Cronin- both wearing blue shirts- attended a U.I.P convention in Tralee, there were wild scenes, and military with fixed bayonets had to be called out to reinforce the cordons of gardaí protecting the convention hall. Tear gas bombs were used to disperse the demonstrators. General O'Duffy was assaulted and cut on the head, and his car was burned on the public street; Commdt. Cronin was injured, and many of the delegates were badly manhandled. The hall was in a state of siege for about seven hours. At 11 p m volleys of shots from rifles and revolvers were fired at the garda barracks, and at 1.30 a m a second attack was made with a machine gun and rifles.

2. See Appendix for a note on the three brothers Fleming.

3. See Christy Quearney's account.

4. See Bob Bradshaw: 'whenever I saw an I.R.A man on a bike I knew he was on a mission'.

5. Dr. Andy Cooney, old time I.R.A chief, was persuaded to telephone De Valera seven days before their deaths but, unless they gave up the hunger strike, De Valera made it clear that he would not intervene.

6. See the accounts by Jim Savage and Pierce Fennell.

7. Casey Inquest: the censored news report from the *Irish Independent*, December 18, 1940:- The coroner stated that he had received an order from the Minister for Justice and therefore the procedure would be rather different from other inquests. Sean MacBride advised the coroner to discard the order, but this the coroner refused. He could take only evidence of identification; date of death and medical evidence. Medical evidence was shock and haemorrhage due to gunshot wound in the chest; the entrance being in the back. (MacBride caused uproar at this point when he asked, why was Bernard Casey shot in the back? That question was not in the published report.)

*O Breathe not his name may it sleep in the shade,  
Where cold and unhonoured his relics are laid;  
Sad, silent and dark be the tears that we shed,  
As the night dew that falls on the grass oer his head*

- Thomas Moore, 1779-1852, on Robert Emmet.

## PACKY JOE DOLAN

OF ARIGNA:



*Packy Joe in 1993*

*On his release from the Curragh in 1944 Packy Joe returned to the Arigna mines, where he continued to work, retiring only as he approached 70.*

My grandfather was a Land League man, commenced Packy Joe, as we sat in the home of Michael McDonagh in Drumshanbo on an autumn afternoon. Packy Joe, a spare man with a pair of keen eyes, has worked, although one would not think it, for more than 38 years in the coal mines of Arigna.

There was an organisation then, he continued; called the Molly Maguires, and grand dad was a member. But the Molly Maguires' of that time were not what is nowadays popularly imagined; ultra-Catholic they may have been. They had green banners, tassels and sashes, with drums, bands and plenty of music. They were in all probability an answer to Ulster to the Orangemen, and in that respect would be seen in polite circles today as sectarian. But that is not how grand dad saw it; the Orangemen were cock o' the walk from Manorhamilton to Cootehill, places they are long gone out of, and, I suppose, we on our side felt we needed music and colour as well. Their parade was on the twelfth of July and ours was St. Patrick's Day; with green ribbons, lashings of shamrock and glory o' to the Bold Fenian Men.

This county has always been a rebel county, a nationalist county; the territory of the O'Rourkes of the ancient Kingdom of Breffny. The parts of it that were worth planting were planted after 1607, but our native government since 1922 has dredged the life out of it. Leitrim, like many other parts of Ireland, is a county that the government in Dublin has long since abandoned. Our population is one third of what it was when the Dáil first met in Dublin.

My mother's name was Matilda, Matilda Cafferty. She was from Aughnasheelin, between Drumshanbo and Ballinamore. She had a nationalist outlook, although she was by nature a mild person; but in Leitrim at that time you were one thing or the other, Irish or pro-British. I was born in 1916.

My father came from the townland of Largan, two miles north of this town, and he was in Sinn Féin. He participated as a helper in the great election of 1918, but he went Fianna Fáil eventually, and there would be often weeks before an election that we did not talk because I would not vote at all. In the Civil War he had been on the Republican side; but, after Fianna Fáil was founded in 1926, he saw them as the future saviours of Ireland. I heard of the Cull brothers, Michael and Johnny, who

were separately killed around here in the Civil War. Michael I did not know, but Johnny I saw on one occasion. He and Paddy Tymon came into our house, on the run, of a Sunday morning in December, 1922. It was the day before they died. They came over from Owney Keane's, where they had stayed the day before and the previous night and, I remember, when they came to us we were having breakfast, and they had a bite to eat and stayed a while. While they were having their bite, they had two Lee Enfields which they left standing at the end of the table. I went over and was lifting a rifle and I can remember one of the boys said to me: *never get too fond of them things!*

They left that day, crossing west over Lough Allen by boat to Arigna, and the next day they were killed. The Free State army located them in one of the mine tunnels and called on them to surrender but they refused. They pumped gas into the cavern, killing them. Michael Cull, a brother, was shot dead not long after on January 6, 1923, in the village of Ballyconnell.(1)

There was another Republican leader here of that time, Michael McBrien from Carrigallen, there being numbers of McBriens around here. I did not know him myself but he led a charmed life. He was in the Free State Army by mistake, like a few more, and he deserted in 1922 to join the Arigna column of the Culls'. In the spring of 1923, while the war was still on, he was captured and, of course, as a deserter, his fate could not be worse.

He was sentenced to death by drumhead court-martial. It might have been in Carrick or Boyle, but he escaped, anyway, on the morning of his execution. And you tell me, now, he was on the run then and not captured for five years, until February, 1928, when he was probably let go. I would love to know more of Michael McBrien.(2)

We had William Harold Bridges here, too, in the Drumshanbo company of the I.R.A; he was O.C in 1937, having joined when he was 17. He was from a Protestant family and was a skilled mechanic, having served time in a garage in Drumshanbo. Later he was big in the earth moving abroad. He died in Dublin so far as I know, in 1991. He had a namesake, the famous dockside leader, Harold Bridges of San Francisco, who worked all over there, and they doing their damndest to deport him back to Australia where he was born. Because of his activities with the longshore men's union he was dubbed a communist; he was not so in fact, and was defended in his many court appearances by the Irish-American lawyer Vincent Hallinan, who died little more than five years ago.

#### **JAMES VAUGH (Capt):**

It was after his time that I joined the I.R.A, so I do not know that much about him. There is a reference to him in the recitation that Paddy Kenna, God rest him, used to recite;

*How the Staters fought for England,  
How they fought for British law,  
And in Cosgrave's last coercion,  
How they murdered Captain Vaugh.*

It was not murder. That is poetic licence; but it was police neglect and harassment. Jim Vaugh had been continuously raided since Black and Tan days. He had joined the I.R.A in 1919 and had been on the run with Sean O'Farrell; tis plain that he was a patriot and there was not much time for patriotism in Cosgrave's Free State.



Det. Sergt. Sean Gantly, as he was at that time, was raiding all over Leitrim in 1928, and Vaugh, now adjutant of the battalion, again was visited in December, 1929. He was pulled in once more in December, 1931. Strange how it was always the coldest month because, on this occasion he died of pneumonia on Christmas Day, having been released the day before.<sup>(3)</sup> It was sought at the inquest, according to *An Phoblacht* of March 19, 1932, to have Ballinamore police John O'Donovan and Patrick McGeehan, charged; but that, of course, was not done.

As I have remarked, I did not go out canvassing or voting. I took no interest in the political parties. Being fairly close to the Border here I knew there was still a job to be done. In 1934, at the age of 18, I joined the Drumshanbo company of the I.R.A. We had Sean McManus, a miner; Francly Curran, Tom O'Brien, Jack Larkin, Tom Foley, Peter Walsh, John Francis Horan, Jim Lynch: God rest them all.

There was always a strong left wing influence here, Leitrim being considered a poor county, which it is not. I remember seeing Jim Gralton of Effernagh when I was a boy. It was long before the dance hall episodes. He had returned from the States and was beginning to throw himself into the fight with the British. He, and another called Paddy Horan, came to our place. They were here about land that had been grabbed from the people and whether, under the new order of things, they might get it back. Horan had no land so he was campaigning; it was widespread at that time <sup>(4)</sup>. They came to our house and had a meal, and they were talking to my father who had land taken from him some years before that; they were talking to him about a socialist party; aye, a socialist party.

Col. Michael Mc Laughlin, who was shot by a bandit in New York, was taken home here in June 1931, to be buried from Dangan chapel where his body lay in state for days, viewed by thousands passing through. He was 32 when he died, having joined up for the fight against the Tans at 18. They captured him in February 1921, but he escaped, taking part in every fight up to the Truce. In the Civil War he attacked and burned the barrack in Boyle. Afterwards he was adjutant to De Valera but was forced by economic circumstances to emigrate in 1925. When they came to bury him here in 1931, the soldiers had a machine gun trained on his grave.

I would not agree that Gralton stuck his neck out too far against the Catholic Church in these parts. There were certain people who thought that he did and there were others who thought that he did not, that he was only doing what he had to do. His old friend Kilroy of Carrick would tell you that.

In 1933, the Earl of Kilronan, who resided in a baronial pile near Ballyfarnan, Co. Roscommon, evicted the Milimo family from a gate lodge. Rural evictions were offensive to the I.R.A. and on this occasion 200 of them marched in military formation to the lodge, opening it again to the family. A good number were from Leitrim, it being on the county border, and they included Leo Duignan, Jimmy Gallagher, John O'Rourke, John Redihan and 'Priest' Mc Weeney. One of the men commanded the Earl to kneel upon his front steps, a revolver to his head, and swear that never again would he evict a Milimo, an undertaking which afterwards was faithfully kept.

In February, 1932, at the height of De Valera's election campaign, the Cumann na nGael candidate, J.J. Reynolds, was shot dead, but the I.R.A. had nothing to do with

that.(5) North Leitrim from Ballinamore to Derada, was not Republican and even Fianna Fáil supporters had to be careful. Sergeant McGeehan went into the home of a man called Leddy, living between Kesh and Ballinamore, to canvas votes. Leddy had been in the old R.I.C but had resigned, later becoming associated with the I.R.A. Reynolds was a bulldog type and, with him was Patrick McGeehan who, as I have referred to earlier, was linked to the death of Capt. Jim Vaugh. Whether they went in actually to intimidate Leddy we do not know, but there were all the makings of a serious row. Anyway, Reynolds was shot dead, and McGeehan, who had entered with his gun drawn, was shot dead also.

Physical abuse of young Fianna boys was very common from detectives and Broy Harriers in all parts of the 26 Counties, there being a licence seemingly to be abusive, knowing that there would be no legal redress. As a Fianna boy I often had a sore ass from Detective O'Donovan.

After De Valera came to power and General O'Duffy formed the Blueshirts, it was the I.R.A largely that kept him secure. In my opinion, most of the army and police force at that time were inclined towards O'Duffy and it was the I.R.A who backed Fianna Fáil. At an *aeríocht* in Keadue, where Frank Aiken was to deliver an oration in 1933, the I.R.A were called out to protect the platform overnight, as a Blueshirt platform had been burned shortly before that in Mohill. There were prominent men here at that time associated with the government party while, at the same time, they had some influence in the I.R.A. They asked them to stand by and protect the platform. A year later some of the protectors were locked in jail.

The Blueshirts at that time were strong in parts of this county and O'Duffy had great pull. As a result of that Fianna Fáil thought they should recruit special gardaí from within the I.R.A, the 'Broy Harriers', and not be dependent upon us. The I.R.A were at a cross-roads and they did not know what direction to take in that period.

I met a man about whom I had been hearing a great deal, Tom Barry, when he delivered the oration in Bodinstown in 1937. Barry was never a big man, nor was he a small man, but he had sharp eyes and a brisk manner. He had the sort of personality that, no matter where you met him, or whatever number of people were there, he was the one that would impress you. And he did not do that with talk because he talked hardly at all. We had gone to Bodinstown, a lorry load of us Leitrim men, driven by Pat McCabe in a truck loaned for the occasion by John Joe Doherty of Kilclare.

About that time 16 of our fellows had been arrested, drilling on Ballyfermoy mountain in Co. Roscommon. Included among them was Leo Duignan and Jim Gallagher. Two years later Leo got a long sentence in England. (6)

By 1938 our training became more intense. We knew then that there might be a fight. We had a delegate, John McManus, at the General Army Convention that was held in Dublin in April, 1938, and when he came back he had this exciting news for us. God be good to him, but he did not know then, nor could we look that far ahead, as to what the outcome might be. But our drill classes were intensified, learning the secrets of explosives. We had a training officer, Jack Daly of Mayo, and a good one. He trained us, spending weeks with us on bomb making. It was tricky work and I am not sure if we mastered it all.

At the same time we had practice on the Thompson, taking it apart in seconds, putting it in one piece again, and firing it. We had a range outside Drumshanbo where we could have target practice with Lee Enfields, mostly of a Sunday after Mass. We had in the company two Lee Enfields and lots of ammunition, and so we could have target practice. Some of the men were naturally good shots, but some would never be marksmen. I had a gun that I kept at home; and one day I shot a fox with the Lee Enfield.

There was a priest then that you have mentioned, and who I recollect, was favourable to us, a Father Ward. I know he was favourable to us because he used to go to Bodenstown, but he had no power with the Hierarchy and was allowed to celebrate Mass only privately. 'Tis said he had cures so a lot of people used to go to him. Packy Early knew him very well; they were close friends. They used to have a quiet drink together in Mahony's of Drumsna.

#### THE CAMPAIGN AND WHAT CAME AFTER:

When we came to hear of the Campaign intended for England we thought it would be a success and we did everything to make it so. We collected money, and we sent gelignite over. It was not easy to send over money at the time, but we did the best we could. One man who shall be nameless and who was well connected here collected gelignite in these parts for transportation in suitcases. There were only two men in this county who knew he carried it: that was John McManus and myself, and the contact at the Dublin end.

This man was not in the I.R.A., but he was a sympathiser. He wanted to see England out of the north of Ireland, out of the next county to this one, out of County Fermanagh. Afterwards the man was interned, so his activities must have become known through Dublin. We had great hopes that we would come out winners in England. We were not pro-Nazi; we just had the hope that England would be brought to her knees and that we would get freedom for our country when the war was over.

Seven weeks before the Campaign started we lost a sterling man from this county, Jimmy Joe Reynolds, and two other sterling men; in an action on the Donegal border that I am sure has been well covered already. We heard afterwards that it was a doubtful bomb in a suitcase that had X marked upon it. It was said to have come from Jimmy Dolan of Sligo town. Charlie and Jimmy Dolan were old-time I.R.A. men from Tan days, they were training officers and worked as typesetters with the weekly *Sligo Champion*. Jimmy Joe was a Staff Captain and a great organiser, with plenty of London experience. He had a brother, John, a farmer, afterwards interned. His other brother Charlie, attached to the sugar company in Tuam, was not interned. Jimmy Joe himself had worked in Tom McManus's hardware shop in Drumshanbo.

The day of the funeral of Jimmy Joe to Cloonmorris cemetery, Barnacoola, we had a great turn-out, and that was the first time I met Tony D'Arcy, who was to die five months later on hunger strike. The superintendent here was Glynn, and the Branch, armed with Thompsons, surrounded the cemetery. Our firing party however walked in by them, but they were amply covered by other volunteers with short arms. Jimmy Mc Cormack of Mullingar was in charge of the party. Afterwards, he was executed, with Peter Barnes, in Birmingham. From now on a special watch was kept upon us, and when it came to the Easter Commemoration they used that as a means of identification. They were lining up the active men for internment.

As for the Magazine Raid on December 23, 1939, we thought it a great piece of work. The Campaign in England had clearly wound down, so now we felt here was the Army getting ready for a push across the Border.

Getting 13 lorries into the Fort, loading up and out again was a smart piece of work; but when they started to recover the stuff we were disheartened. We knew they would get some of it but it turned out they got nearly all of it and some that was ours. Some of it drifted down here and was hidden in the bogs of Leitrim, and never recovered.

It was Monday morning on June 2, and I was at home when I was arrested. A sergeant and two gardaí arrived, and I was taken by car to Drumshanbo where I met a few other lads raked in from the countryside. We were then conveyed to Carrick, meeting more there, and were then brought in lorries at high speed to the Curragh, with five armed soldiers in each. In my lorry there was Jim Kane, Frank Breffny, John L. McCormack, Hugh McCormack, John Francis Horan and Jim Lynch.

I supported the 26 Counties' neutrality in the European war; I knew I was not a renegade by my continuing republicanism. During the First World War 50,000 Irish were slaughtered, and there are people in high places today who think it was a right thing to encourage them into the trenches. In 1940, many fellows went from the south and joined the Enniskillen Fusiliers, while men in the North did not join, they were too smart. (7) I knew a fellow who had been in Boyle barracks when it was attacked in 1922 by the Arigna Flying Column, before that he had been in the British Army but that was not unusual. I also knew Ambrose Conway, who came out of the British Army, in 1919 and who trained Republicans. He was a Kiltubrit man.

#### LIFE INSIDE:

I found myself in Hut 4 of the small camp with John Reynolds as O.C. Mostly there were Leitrim lads in that hut. There were about 32 men from Leitrim interned, a figure greatly out of proportion to the population of the county, which was under 50,000. It is less than half that now, so you can see what the government of Dublin has done for us. If the number of men interned from elsewhere had been in proportion to our 32 from Leitrim there might have been 2,000 interned instead of 550, the highest number reached.(8)

Bob Flanagan had been interned some months previously. He wandered in to us *ag lorg scéil*, a big, wild, ruddy faced fellow with a mop of blonde hair. They had come to us with tea and a quarter loaf. I asked Bob if there was any soda bread as loaf bread gave me heartburn. *Well*, said he, *what you get here won't give you heartburn*. A few days after the Fire, with huts burned and frost on the ground, we were out walking and Bob shouted across: *have you any heartburn this morning?* There were times like that when we enjoyed a laugh.

In August, 1940, when around 170 arrived from Cork Jail, we were all transferred to the big camp directly next door, with over 450 in it. Billy Mulligan was O.C, and we were getting along all right until the take-over by the H.Q people, in from Arbour Hill in October. I did not feel good about that as rank is supposed to be put aside in prison. It was Peadar O'Flaherty who delivered the ultimatum on the eve of the Fire. I forget the wording of his speech but it impressed us at the time. We thought them gods, I suppose; but after a while you begin to see the feet of clay. What, apart from anything else,

that I had against their action was the fact that it would expose our network of tunnels, and I had spent hours working in them.

We lost more than we gained by the Fire; in fact, we gained nothing. Before the Fire there was no roll call; now there was one inside the locked hut every night; it was humiliating. Before the fire we paraded to the Cookhouse in military formation. Afterwards we could not; the lights were left lighting all night in the huts; the palliasse mattress was on the floor; and there were no sheets or pillow covers. That lasted for years

Liam Leddy was appointed our O.C after more than 50 of what the Free State termed the ring leaders had been removed to the Glasshouse, at the end of December. He had to make decisions and one of them was that there would be no more military formations. For weeks after the fire there were no beds at all; keeping warm at night was a real problem. Some lads took turns to sleep upon the wide shelf over the toilet area, thinking it less cold there. The Staters objected to this and, one night, well tanked up I suppose, they started firing into our hut, riddling it with bullet holes. Fortunately, the bullets struck no one. I suppose it was all part of our youth because we never thought that our lives might be in danger.

I lost all of my clothes in the Fire. For weeks, I had no jacket until I was given one by Mick Mc Bride, from Ceanannus Mór. Charlie Hoey, from Drogheda lost a piano accordion, and George Plunkett, a harp. There was much else lost besides, including valuable books, and books that were not so valuable. There were gifts and art work and much more. When the contents of seven huts that contained 400 men go up much will be lost; much that is of sentimental value and irreplaceable.

I learned Irish while I was in the Curragh although I did not follow it up when I came out: too many other distractions. Peadar McAndrew was our teacher and very good he was too. It was easy to learn Irish from Peadar. I was acquainted with Gearóid Ó Mhistéil and Seán Óg Ó Tuama, two other teachers and, of course, Máirtín Ó Cadhain, although I have got to say that he was too advanced for me. That reminds me that the last time I was talking to Máirtín, it must be 25 years ago; it was in this house of his brother-in-law here in Drumshanbo and we had a good session, with John McManus present. I was fully behind the ostracism of Hut C.1, the so-called Cork hut, because I felt they had co-operated with the enemy. I said that on the evening that I saw Tadhg Lynch standing outside, days after the shootings, with the P.A's standing by. He had got concessions then for his men and himself many weeks before the rest of the camp received beds and fuel. Therefore, I remained on Liam Leddy's side, although that created difficulties, as you had to have Camp Council permission to transact business with anyone under Pearse Kelly. I went on a few occasions to talk to John Joe Maxwell, Sean McCool and Terry McLaughlin. We talked together for hours the day before they went upon a 49 day hunger strike seeking a fair trial or release. After all, we had been held without trial for three years. Terry was the man about whom they were to say afterwards; *he could not do without drinking but he could do without eating.*

On another occasion, around Christmas time, after the boys at home had collected money that was then sent to me to be divided among the Leitrim lads, I called upon John Joe Maxwell, as half of them were from that side. The divide was made and everyone was satisfied. But it was hard passing men you had known all your

life and yet never exchanging a word with them. If they had been playing football and, as sometimes happened, the ball travelled in my direction, I would kick it back, yet I saw fellows who would not look at the ball. I could not do that.

The tunnel that our side developed in 1943 was a great one and we brought it almost to completion. They had to get through the timber and concrete floor at the toilets in such a way that it remained concealed, even in the period when the hut was vacated, when as a security precaution, the Staters examined and scrubbed it out.

A great job of matching the trapdoor into the floor was done, especially bearing in mind that we had no tools for sawing, nailing or any of the normal operations of carpentry. One then passed through a concrete sub floor and then down a sufficient depth. The trench around the camp was 11 feet deep; one had to pass under that. I worked upon it myself for a while, but, as with every tunnel, the problem is the disposal of clay. Some was packed under the joists of the Irish-speaking hut; some was rammed into the old tunnels that were still there; and some was taken out in pockets. Some men on the Pearse Kelly side observed the activity and guessed that a tunnel was proceeding. There was a rumour, too, that the Staters knew and allowed it to go ahead anyway. I cannot say, except that early on the day fixed for the break out the Staters came in and ended the plan.(9)

Well now, looking back and who do I remember? I remember nearly everyone, but Joe Bray springs to mind foremost because he spent a lot of time here in 1939 as a training officer. There was George Fluke, a good looking character and full of fun. He was a neat footballer, being soccer trained; many's a game I had with him. Tom Brady was a good footballer, playing full back for his hut. He had played for a club in Dublin.

Paddy, 'the priest' McWeeney, had been our quarter master in Leitrim, yet there was never a bullet found upon him. He was on the run for more than a year before they tracked him down and interned him. He remained a staunch Republican until the day of his death.

Bob Flanagan came from Kilmore, Co. Roscommon, and was imprisoned in Arbour Hill before spending five years interned in the Curragh. He was seriously wounded by shooting at the time of the fire: the bullet was lodged near the spine and could not be removed. A good soldier all his life. Jack O'Shea, from Kerry, organised gaelic football and rounders in the Camp. Known as Dr. Croke, he refereed our matches.

Jim Lynch and I, lying in two beds one night, were keeping Frank Weafer of Charlestown awake talking among ourselves. *Are you awake*, says Jim; how could I be otherwise? he complained, but he lost patience altogether when I attempted to call over to Jim Kane to sing for us *The Three Flowers*. Jim was a nice singer, but at 2.am Frank was not having any of that.

The first I heard of Victor Fagg, a Protestant from near Athlone, was when he addressed an Easter Commemoration here. The next time I met him we were both in the Curragh. Jim Kirwan, a close friend of Seamus Goulding, would start an argument purely for fun and with no case at all. There was one particular man with whom he took a special delight in argument and that was Bill Hayes of Cork city. He would put Bill through the ceiling arguing nonsense, and yet, in the end, against Bill's better judgment, he would almost be convinced.

## GOODBYE:

Of Free State personnel in the Curragh, Packy Joe mentions a Captain Cullen from his own parish. He was so frightened of the atmosphere pervading the place that he was afraid even to nod in Packy's direction.<sup>(10)</sup> On the other hand, there was a Commdt. Casey who was well thought of; he just did his job and that was that. McNamara was heartily disliked, and with good reason.

For 'Tommy the Cook', a Poilín Áirm, (P.A.), Packy surprisingly says, he had reputation but was not that bad. Heavy with the baton, but mostly upon the vee-sheeting of the hut. He remembers one spring morning at seven o'clock, Tommy bouncing the baton upon the door and the vee-sheeting inside the hut. Walking up the centre of the floor, brown boots and leggings gleaming, and shouting, *come on now lads, show a leg*, he suddenly received a clout of a boot upon his head. Instantly he stopped, swung around and marched outwards: *come on lads, out of those louse traps, all good soldiers obey orders*. Reaching the door he was gone.

I was released early in 1944. Mick Flynn and I got a voucher to Athlone but we stopped at Mullingar with good friends, the Mulreadys. There we met Eamonn Moynihan, a school teacher, who had been released earlier and who gave us each a ten shilling note; we had a few drinks on that.

The next morning, on our way out, we met children going to school. I had not seen a child for four years and thought I had not seen anything so small in all my life. Women's voices too; I could not bear to listen as they seemed so sharp; eventually, I got used to them.

I got the narrow gauge railway then from Dromod to Ballinamore, emerging into a different world. I felt isolated then for a while, feeling lonesome for the lads, I suppose. My father had a bit of land but there was no work on it for me, as my brother was at home. The first job I got was with the County Council: at the time they were not supposed to give us any employment for seven years, which has since been proved contrary to law, but Charlie Woodworth, the ganger, took me on. *I have got orders not to start any man that has done time, but I will start you, and let somebody else sack you.*

The pay was not good but, as I had no money anyhow, what little there was seemed plenty. After a few months there I went to the coal mines, working for 38 years in the tunnels. At first, it was entirely with hand picks, in near darkness and with the floor and walls flooding water. In later years machinery was brought in.

I settled down in 1951, marrying Mary Ferguson from Ballinglana, not far from here. One day in the late fifties I met Jack Murphy, the T.D. elected by the unemployed of Dublin, outside the Labour Exchange in Werburgh Street. Jack also had been interned. I have my pay cheque here, said he, showing me a two figure sum for the month.<sup>(11)</sup> No one will cash it for me; come with me over to the Dáil. Two years later, after Jack, frustrated, had resigned, I met him crossing O'Connell Bridge. *There were too many after me for favours and touching me also for money. As for getting anything done, I may as well have spoken to that river as talk in Dáil Eireann; they paid no heed to me.* (Which reminds us of Dr. John O'Connell, a former Minister for Health, on the fate of his recommendations to the Dept. of Finance; *I could have dropped them into the shredder.*)

## JAMES GRALTON

*OF EFFERNAGH,  
LEITRIM.*



*A sketch of Jim Gralton from an Outline  
History of the CPI*

James Gralton was born in 1886 at Effernagh, lying between Carrick on Shannon and Drumsna, where his father farmed 25 acres of land. After joining and deserting the British Army, he took a job as a stoker on a tramp steamer, eventually settling in New York where he worked as a taxi driver, bartender and ice man, and becoming a socialist.

Reading James Connolly, he realised how close were their ideas, so he went on to found the New York James Connolly Club. Becoming a fund raiser for the Irish cause, he decided to return home, taking part as a training officer in the last few weeks of the Tan struggle before the July 11, 1921, Truce. Packy Early recalls how, upon a Sunday in March, 1921, he was in Gowel chapel when a British officer entered ordering all the men out for scrutiny, the suspicion was that men active with the column sometimes came in for Mass and Communion.

Lieut. Wilson, it was, says Packy, and he was killed one hour later in an ambush. After the burning down of the local parochial hall, as a reprisal for the ambush, Gralton rallied workers to build a better one, the Pearse-Connolly Hall, and it was so substantially built that a year later it was taken over and used as a billet for the newly formed Free State Army.

By this time, Gralton had aligned himself on the Republican side. Of the two barracks in Boyle, one had been held by the Free State and one by the Republicans. Evacuating the one, James found himself on the run again and, knowing that he could be a target for harassment, decided to retire, to return to New York. Remaining there 10 years; always politically active, with the advent of Fianna Fáil in February, 1932, James Gralton returned. Forthwith he recommenced where he had laid off 10 years before. Lights came on in the Pearse-Connolly Hall at Gowel and dances for young people were resumed, but once more the same old foes arose from the undergrowth. In the Ireland of 1932 one could quickly earn condemnation, and Gralton earned the vilest tag of all, that he was a communist, which indeed, he was.

On Christmas Eve 1932, the hall was soaked with petrol and burned down. The question must still be asked, however, for those with any understanding of the rural psyche of the thirties: was our James an entirely blameless figure? Fr. Noel and Fr. Laurence, two sermonising Redemptorists, had been invited to Gowel chapel. Packy Early told this writer that indeed, some local volunteers probably had been con-



cerned in the burning, but unofficially, as the battalion O.C. Sean O'Farrell, would not have permitted it; and when it came to firing into the hall, only shotguns, not rifles, were used! Packy at that time was in A. Company area with some 100 men, along with Fianna and Cumann na mBan. The Movement he says, was woven into the sedge grass of the county: we looked upon Sean O'Farrell as our god.

As Conor Foley, in *Legion of the Rearguard* has it: the reluctance of the I.R.A to be identified publicly with communists was also shown by their attitude to a controversy over the Leitrim communist, Jim Gralton. Gralton was Irish born but had acquired U.S. citizenship in the 1920s. He returned to his native Leitrim in 1932, a convinced communist and atheist, which soon earned him the wrath of local priests. A hall in which he held dances and meetings aroused particular alarm, and the parish priest launched a campaign to have the 'den of iniquity' closed. Shots were fired into it; an attempt was made to blow it up, and eventually it was burned.

In February 1933, the government responded to clerical pressure by ordering Gralton's deportation. The (Dublin based) Revolutionary Workers' Group came to his defence with a 'Keep Gralton Here' campaign. A public meeting was held in Dublin chaired by Hanna Sheehy-Skeffington, who had just been deported from the North after a month in Armagh Jail for breaking a previous exclusion order. The meeting was addressed by O'Donnell and other R.W.G members, but the Army Council refused to let Mick Price or Frank Ryan attend. Instead they sent a terse message: *This organisation is taking steps independently, to organise opinion against Gralton's expulsion and so, therefore, consider it unnecessary to send a representative to your meeting.*

There was considerable local hostility to the Save Gralton campaign. Peadar O'Donnell was attacked in March in Drumsna when he attempted to speak at a meeting. From the altar, Fr. Cosgrave P.P declared; 'there will be an anti-God meeting in Drumsna today'. ( There is a tree that he had climbed pointed out there still by some of the older people, as Peadar O'Donnell's tree). In the face of an ecclesiastical melt-down of that order it was difficult to attract support except from the far left, and the far left was never respected in rural Ireland. The local Fianna Fáil T.D condemned Gralton for 'propagating English ideas', although other Fianna Fáil branches passed resolutions opposing his expulsion.

A few Labour and trade union branches also backed Gralton, but most steered clear of the campaign. Some even joined the witch hunt, condemning communists as anti-christs and perverts, pledging their support to the priests who were seeking to drive them out. One Labour T.D. called on the government to deport 'the two or three foreign Communists who are in the country'. *An Phoblacht* urged support for Gralton, but Sean O'Farrell, the Leitrim commanding officer, ordered his men not to get involved. Some were very hostile to Gralton, and it was rumoured that they might have been concerned in the attacks upon the hall. In such circumstances neutrality was the best that could be hoped for. Eventually, Gralton was arrested and deported in August, 1933. It was the first political expulsion in the Free State's history.

He had been giving free dances in the Pearse-Connolly hall, with the result that he drew in the numbers, but that only heightened the opprobrium in which right

wing circles viewed him. Served with a deportation order in February, 1933, he gave a personal undertaking to leave by March 4, but, instead, went on the run.

Pointers such as this caused the Left to form Republican Congress the following year, but it, as we know, was not destined to go anywhere. Galton was behind the Leitrim Republican Club of New York, in June, 1927, registering its objection to the formation of 'sectarian boy scouts' in Leitrim - meaning the Catholic boy scouts, - so collision was inevitable; while O'Donnell was prominent in the action for libel against the Jesuit monthly, *Irish Rosary*.

They stated that, in 1929, he had gone to Lenin College, Moscow, to study, and much more, although he had never been in Russia. The H.Q. staff of the I.R.A supported him in taking an action, running the inevitable risk that, in court, he would face a partisan judge, which is what happened (Judge Hanna); for whatever reason it was dismissed. Inevitably, however, that contributed to his anti-Christ image; O'Donnell was probably the worst ally that Galton could have had, and, adds Packy Early, the rest of us stayed silent. Earlier Galton had joined a Fianna Fáil Cumann, hoping in that way to obtain a platform for political activity.

Sean O'Farrell, the local O.C., on the other hand, was canny enough to keep his troops aloof. O'Farrell had a good record and was respected. He had taken part in the Tan war and had been in Ballykinlar; and afterwards in the Civil War, because of which he was under pressure thereafter from the Cosgrave regime.

James Galton was arrested in the home of Frank Byrne, of Breandrum, in the early hours of Sunday, and taken aboard ship at Galway in August 1933, and returned to New York, later standing there as a Communist candidate in the borough elections, although failing to be elected. A member of the Irish Workers' Club he continued to run courses, spreading the teachings of James Connolly. James Galton died in Bellview Hospital, New York on December 19, 1945; the Club erecting a stone in his memory. His friend, John Mulally, gave the graveside oration.

There have been published recently two slim booklets on Galton: *The Galton Affair*, by Pat Feely, Dublin 1986; *My Cousin Jimmy*, by Margaret Galton, Drumlin Publications; £2.00.

## REFERENCES:

1. While older Republicans adhere to the account of gassing, authoritative sources dispute it. A report of the inquest and verdict appeared in the *Leitrim Advertiser* of March 8, 1923. Identification of the bodies of James Cull and Patrick Tymon was given by his sister Annie while James Tymon, father, identified Patrick.

A dug-out was discovered by the Free State Army close to the Arigna River days after that Sunday in December, referred to in the account A small room was found 'with a hole leading further in'. (This would be part of the mine workings). After calling out, an officer placed a mine 'in the mouth of the cave'. Later local people drew attention that men may have been concealed further inside. Upon digging into the cave the bodies of James and Patrick were found. It is clear therefore that the effect of an explosion in a confined space caused their death.

2. Packy Early, another veteran of this county, as a Fianna boy recalls McBrien addressing their column. Tall and thin, he was, with a military bearing. He thinks he emigrated to the States.

3. As J. Bowyer Bell tells it: James Vaugh was arrested (in Ballinamore) on December 5, and interrogated by the police until Christmas Eve, when he was released. He died the following morning of obvious causes which the inquest overlooked, to the outrage of Leitrim republicans.

4. See Tom Maguire's account in *Survivors*.

5. An official report states: February 14, shooting of Patrick Reynolds (ex-T.D), and detective Officer Mc Geehan, at Fenaghbeg, Ballinamore, Co. Leitrim, by Joseph Leddy. Reynolds was a candidate for the Cumann na nGael Party in the General Election. In the course of his electioneering, accompanied by the detective officer and others, he called at Leddy's house. An altercation arose. Reynolds was in an aggressive mood.

He accused Leddy of canvassing for his political opponents and assaulted him and threatened to have his pension rescinded. Leddy was an ex-R.I.C man who had resigned through sympathy with the National Cause and had been granted a pension by the Saorstát Government. Leddy presented his shotgun at Reynolds, the detective officer drew his revolver. Leddy shot both men. At the Central Criminal Court on 10/3/32 he was sentenced to 12 months imprisonment for manslaughter.

Mrs. Reynolds and her family were awarded the sum of £1050 compensation in the High Court, Dublin, March 21, 1933. A claim made by the father of D.O Mc Geehan was dismissed at Cavan Circuit Court on July 27, 1932.

6. See *Harry* for Leo Duignan, later a building contractor in Dublin.

7. Nine Victoria Cross awards were made to Irishmen in World War 2; eight of these were 26 County men, while the Six County man was Roman Catholic.

8. A count-down of the Leitrim men who passed through the Curragh is as follows:-

*Kiltubrit*: Michael Guckian, Paddy Mc Weeney, Frank Murray, Frank Byrne, Farrell Gallagher, Michael Gilhooley, his brother, P Gilhooley, Bertie, Hughie and John L. Mc Cormack.

*Carrick*: Bob Flanagan, John Joe Maxwell, Terry Mc Laughlin, Paddy Carthy, John Joe Reynolds, Francis Durrigan, Lynn Faulkner.

*Drumshanbo*: John Mc Manus, PJ Dolan, Jim Lynch, John Francis Horan, Michael Darcy, Jim

Keane, Stephen Wren, Michael Mc Intyre.

*Ballinamore*: John Joe Martin, John Joe Mc Girl, Jack Mc Laughlin, Packy Mc Laughlin, Tom Reilly, Michael Heslin, P. Farrelly.

(List compiled by J.L. McCormack).

9. Sergt-Major Fahey to this writer was of the opinion that the authorities had known of this tunnel but not of the 1940 network. *Let them tunnel away* was an expression he had heard at the time. They had sound detectors, which Mick Fahey had the use of, but these recorded nothing. A rabbit will always burrow through clay, he says, pointing out that much of the Curragh is sandy and hence not suitable for an unsupported tunnel. Bed boards sawn in half were used as supports; replacements were obtained by pleading to Q.M Blanchfield that the board had broken. As a result, Blanchfield was later transferred.

10. He may have had grounds. A few internees were visited by members of the forces related to them. That person then had a blue pencil encircling his name in the records.

11. Currently with allowances, a T.D receives close to £50,000 per annum

## TOM DORAN

OF DUBLIN:



*Tom with wife Rosemary.*

*Tom was a lad with northern connections; but at 18 he was sentenced to 5 years; and was one of the last free in October 1946.*

Tom Doran's father was an electrician on the Great Northern Railway, a tight, efficiently run outfit in its day. Sean O'Casey was for a time working with him. How the two hit it off, Tom does not say, but the family background on two sides was distinctly Fenian and Republican.

Tom's father was working at the other end of the line in Belfast when he met his future wife, a girl with the distinctly Ulster name of Kane; Kitty Kane. Her Aunt Catherine was married to William Harbinson, a Belfast Fenian, whose name (but not his remains) may be found in Milltown Cemetery, and who died in Crumlin Road Jail in September 1867.(1) Peter Doran his cousin, was a member of the Irish Republican Brotherhood; one of Michael Collins' hit squad, and was twice wounded in operations against the Tans. Tom's father however was a peaceable Dubliner, and after marrying moved down the line to Dundalk, eventually returning to Dublin, being all the time engaged within the G. N. system.

Tom was born in 1924, and from an early age attended school in that little cut-off township of East Wall where they lived. Graduating upwards, he progressed to the Brothers at St. Canice's on North Circular Road, where one of the teacher's was 'Skinner' McCabe; Alister MacCába, an historic figure surely, even though he had gone pro-Treaty, because he had been a member of the first Dáil and was himself deeply entrenched in the I.R.B.(2) The photograph of this tall, thin teacher graced the boys' history book, adding no doubt to his stature. Canice's, Tom says, was a fervent republican school at this time. Dev, the great Republican (or so he then seemed), had come to power, and there was a ferment and an expectancy in the air. From the age of ten, wherever there was a meeting or a rally, Tom, and many of his school chums, gathered there. Tom Barry, Frank Ryan, O'Donnell and other luminaries were magnets for the boys; Teach an Árd Mhaor, the corner of Cathal Brugha Street; maybe even packing College Green. It was still the era of outdoor meetings, T.V, the universal mind leveller, was away in the future.

One Sunday in June, still a boy, Tom found himself at the impressive annual commemoration ceremony in Bodenstown. It was one of the great Bodenstowns; special trains and buses arriving, and the road from Sallins to the little cemetery

packed with thousands. An attender at some of these functions was an old lady who impressed Tom with her ditty, even though it sounded gibberish to some;

*They have raised the price of our daily bread  
And given us guns and bombers instead  
Sure we will not need those when we're dead,  
Amen, amen, amen.*

Brendan Behan made his confirmation with me in St. Agatha's in North William Street. My godmother, Sister Clare, one of the Faloon's of County Antrim, taught me in North William Street. I later moved into fifth class under Brother O'Donnell in St. Canice's. I still have a photograph of the class. Brendan said afterwards that he could see the likeness between me and my cousin, Sister Clare. In the confirmation class he had this habit of interrupting the teacher with questions; mostly theological questions, until one day Brother O'Donnell rapped out; *and now Bishop Behan, if your Grace has finished his sermon; may I proceed with my teaching?* It caused a laugh, but it did not stop Brendan for long.

Being from two streams; peaceable Dubliner and turbulent Northerner; the Kane - or Ó Catháin connection, former chieftains of Derry - Tom and his family were always aware of that fearsome economic divide; the haves and the have nots, which unionist hegemony maintained within the Six Counties; even before that statelet was created. His mother had been a nurse in the Mater Hospital of Belfast, and knew intimately the circumstances of deprivation which still obtains where the allocation of jobs is concerned. (3) Nationalist people had the credentials, the training and skills, but religion, or the location within a loyalist area of the job, deprived them; they were lucky to end up labouring or in service, while a half educated hill billy loyalist got the post. We have been sold by southern politicians to a foreign power who deprives us of employment and keeps us under, his mother would say. They have even robbed us of the O'Neill marching song and of the Derry air; the latter being particularly galling, since inevitably, as an Ó Catháin, she claimed descent from the ruling septs of Ulster.

#### POVERTY:

Poverty in the East Wall and in the Dublin he grew up in marked and seared Tom. Are people gutless to allow this to happen, he asked himself? Was it for this the wild geese spread the grey wing upon every tide: for this that all that blood was shed, he continued to ask himself, quoting the best of Yeats. He read from John Mitchel: 'that no good thing for Ireland could ever come from the English parliament.' And from Fintan Lalor: 'let laws and institutions say what they will - the fact is that those who own your land will make your laws and command your liberties.' He turned to Thomas Davis; 'and now Englishmen listen to us. Though you were to give us the best tenure on earth... we tell you ...that Ireland shall be a nation.' He concluded by reading Connolly's works, and followed up with Pearse's *Sovereign People*. Strong medicine, one might say, for a young fellow still in his mid-teens. All this, he avers, inspired him; he would have to do something about it; but what could he do? At 16 years, covering up a bit on his real age, he joined the I.R.A. The logic of history was coming home to roost; the logic of what he saw around him in the north inner city. The logic of a divided Ireland had called him to book; had called

him to follow in the steps of Tone, Lalor, Mitchel and Connolly.

Come the school holidays, he went to County Antrim; to his Uncle Joe's farm, where he combined harvesting with an open air holiday. There were barn dances, and the Antrim boys and girls were top dancers and singers; knowing all the rebel songs. The B. Specials were prominent in the neighbourhood; they were the armed Protestant auxiliary force, taking their guns home at night, and ready to spring into action if pape or croppy became too stroppy. Some of the youngsters called them the black men, although that is actually the official title of the top echelon within the Orange Order.

For 11 months of the year one could be friendly with many of them, but as the twelfth approached the atmosphere would become frigid. Come the twelfth, and they beat hell out of the lambeg drum; swearing fealty to the King and damnation to his enemies. After a week calm would return.

In that cooling off period Tom often had debates with them and they would agree, yea, Protestants and Catholics should unite, but like a desert mirage, that longed for unity of Dissenter and Catholic never came to anything.

#### WITH THE LOUGH NEAGH FISHERMEN:

At that time there were plenty of Catholics within the R.U.C, and one of them was a policeman, McCourt. One day he caught Tom and another boy in an orchard; their cousin's orchard. He did not believe them, so he frog marched them to the owner who, of course, laughed it off. Years later, McCourt, dissatisfied, left the R.U.C and came to Dublin where he somehow ran across Tom. They wanted me to do things that my principles would not allow me to do, he told Tom; so I left: I resigned from the Royal Ulster Constabulary, but I thought it safer to come to Dublin.

He had pals among the fisherman on Lough Neagh; Uncle Joe's farm ran down to the shore of that great lake. Often Tom sailed with them; they would be after eels and pollen, a trout like fish. It was their livelihood, yet it was also illegal to be out there at all. So a game of hide and seek was played between the bailiff and his big powered cruiser, and the men in their shallow boats. The bailiff; a man appropriately called King, had a powerful vessel; and when the fisher folk saw it they headed into shallow water, sometimes into reeds, where they could hide, and the propeller craft could not follow.

Tom remembers when Pat Brankin of the lough shore got a powered boat. He was the first to have one. By way of celebration they sailed for Rams Island, a small island in the bay of Glenconway. An old man, by name O'Neill, lived in an ancient castle, upon the island. They naturally called upon him, whereupon the *seanachai* raced over stories of nearby places connected with '98 and the era of the United Men; Henry Joy, Jimmy Hope, the weaver of Templepatrick, and Betsy Grey, the heroine of County Down. 60 years ago, some of these traditions and the personalities connected with them were still very much alive.

One of the old fishermen accompanying them that day told them a story of a young fellow who, after pulling his boat on to the island one sunny afternoon, fell asleep in the unmown hay, and dreaming, saw Wolfe Tone and the council of the United Men seated around a table; it inspired him on waking to compose the balled,

*For Tone is Coming Back Again.*

*Young Dwyer among the heath clad hills of Wicklow ranks his men  
 And Russell's voice calls kindred hearts  
 From many an Antrim glen,  
 And Father Murphy's men can wake  
 From Barrow to the sea,  
 We swear to make this dear old land  
 From tyrant's thralldom free.*

On his visits northward he heard of fishermen fined heavily; of small farmers, unable to pay mortgages, evicted. Of the organisation on the ground; of the I.R.A. itself, Tom recalls Andy Skelton O.C. of the district and Arty McAlinden, O.C. of the Lurgan area, a fellow called Cush and another lad, Kelly.

Back in Dublin again, Tom continues, I was at the 1935 Bodenstown along with a school friend Mick Whelan and Behan. After the march, upon returning to the town of Sallins, Moss Twomey came over to us; *what will you have boys*; meaning, of course, lemonade. Behan, who was no more than 13, piped up, *I'll have a pint*. I cannot recall now, if Moss let him have it. Being a pal of Mick Spillane, a nephew, I could be friendly with Moss; seeing him as a father figure; although we never discussed current I.R.A. affairs. In fact I often had lunch with Mick in Twomey's home, then in Home Farm Road on the north side. Other times I could be in his popular shop at the corner of Upper O'Connell Street where he had a lending library and small bakery; I being quite a reader.

Other times, with Mick, we would spend hours with an old I.R.A. man, a veteran with Moss on Spike Island, called Roche, who had a business in Lower Abbey Street. Later in the Movement, I knew Pete Martin, Paddy and Seamus, and the Woods brothers; Paddy was an officer with Fritz Langsdorf, together with his brother. They had an uncle killed in May 1921 in the Dublin Customs House action, and another, earlier, hanged in 1920. So the thread of Fenianism lived on.

**INSIDE THE I.R.A.**

The Campaign in England had commenced by the time Tom found himself back in Dublin and a fully fledged volunteer of the I.R.A. After passing out of recruits he was allocated to No. 2 Company, formerly the Second Battalion, whose stomping ground was the Dorset Street, East Wall, Fairview, Artane segment of the city.

My first parade was in a tenement house in Upper Dorset Street where we had our first arms drill. Then it was into Fairview Park, although that was very open. We used a number of private houses; we often drilled in a shed at the home of 'Ructions' McDonagh in Sutton; it was a bit far out, but quite safe as his father had been in the G.P.O. in 1916. Some of the recruits I recall from those days were Jimmy Herbert, Paddy Sherwin, 'Long' Paddy Kelly, Peter O'Callaghan, Christy Tancred and Mick Spillane. Sherwin worked in a pepper factory, and he seemed to get more of it on his clothing than went into the packets because each time he moved the pepper dispersed into the air and we all broke out sneezing.

**DUBLINER'S ALL:**

Ignatius Lyons, one of the three Lyons brothers, Mick, John and Ignatius, was our training officer; Albert Farrell, O.C.; Tom McAnaspie, intelligence officer; Paddy



Martin was a section commander, as was Frank Sherwin. Ignatius Lyons' brothers were all interned. Altogether they were a remarkable and widely read family. Paddy Martin had a brother doing five years, and had a few cousins among the hundreds that were now interned. De Valera, we felt, was really stamping upon us.

Trouble broke out on one occasion with a few rowdy locals near Hardwicke Street Hall (4) where Fianna boys were molested. We made a demonstration with guns which quietened them but unfortunately it resulted in Farrell, Martin and Sherwin being charged and imprisoned for the duration.

Not playing a part in the Fort raid because of my youth, I was allowed small arms drill as a compensation. We also got to the mountains a few times, firing, .303. But it was hard to find, out of earshot, a safe range even in the mountains. Harder still to find and transport the long Lee Enfields. We took apart for practice a Thompson in a cottage by the railway, and at Judd's, in Killester. After the Charlie Kerins arrest in 1944, documents were found which led them to Judd's, although nothing was got there.

I was still around in August 1941, although more than 500 of our lads were in prison by this time, when the blow fell. We learned of the defection of our Acting Chief of Staff, that spiritless creature Stephen Hayes. We were on parade in a big mill in Islandbridge, around 20 of us, when our O.C, Albert Farrell, read the special communique denouncing Hayes as a traitor, and going into much more horrendous detail besides. That we were dumbfounded would be an understatement: there was a man named 'traitor' for whose safety I had prayed, *Oh God; let me be arrested, but not our Chief of Staff*. That we felt utterly demoralised would certainly be no exaggeration. The I.R.A in Dublin was already on its knees and soon, as likely as not, would be rubbed out of existence.

My heart felt chopped in two as I left the darkened mill by the Liffey-side that night. Yet we had no opportunity to mooch about. At this time, a gathering of Republicans anywhere was liable to be a passport to internment. Even here, on this silent river bank, we were at risk, for just five minutes after leaving, the entire locality was enclosed by police and military with guns out and at the ready. We were barely out of the old building when they had closed in. Another few minutes and the jaws would have snapped on all of us. And yet I had gone there earlier that evening hoping to be selected as one of a party that might rescue Richard Goss, then lying under sentence of death in Arbour Hill Prison. The Staters executed Richard (whom I had never met) on August 9, 1941, and here I am now in this good year of 1996 married for over 40 years to his sister, whom I met much later; but that is a story I must hold for the closing page of this account.

After that episode the fellows who held on were being arrested day after day. We were on our knees, and at that time we realised, like Christ, most people will come only a certain piece of the road with you. Once you pass the cross roads you will find yourself on your own. However we decided to reorganise; to batten down the hatches, and to salvage what was left. Although our entire battalion staff was in jail new appointments were made. We would go on (on to where?) defiantly.

Rory Ryan, our acting O.C, decided that we would publicly march in the annual Easter Commemoration on April 5, 1942 to the Republican graves. That used to

be a big occasion, with thousands in serried ranks, but now it had shrunk to a few hundred. And that few hundred were watched over and spied upon by dozens of special police. I knew it was madness, and that any of us, not known, would be on their lists for rounding up later on. Against my better judgement, but not for all the world would I let the lads down, I went.

Brendan Behan, released only the previous October from an English Borstal, was along too, and shouting loudly as usual. Close to him was Andrew Nathan, Laz Mangan, Buckley and a chap called Hammond. Georgie Parnell had a hand upon the inside pocket of his coat, so anyone looking would guess that a gun was there. It ended up as a shooting match when armed police approached, and the one gun that was definitely there, a short, in the possession of Laz Mangan, was wrested from him by Behan, who then shot wildly in the air, decamping as fast as he could. The police fired back at us, and we were lucky that we were not shot, although we stood our ground, replying with volleys of stones. A strategic retreat was then quickly decided upon.

That night we all attended the annual Republican concert in the Gaiety Theatre and, believe it or not, Behan was there too. He was supposed to be on the run; under military court rules you now could be executed for firing at police, but that did not appear to bother him. Father O'Flanagan, the great rebel priest, was in the theatre, and I had a chat with him at an interval. I knew he thought we were a crowd of head cases but he was a very humane man; he loved the youth of Ireland and would not condemn them. He died less than four months later, on August 8, 1942, and rests in the Republican Plot in Glasnevin where his grave is close to Madame Despard (died November 1939), Joe Clarke, frequently mentioned in these accounts, the hero of Mount Street Bridge (died April 1976), Helena Moloney, (died October 1971), and 'Seailg', J.J. O Ceallaig, who gave the oration, and who himself was laid to rest there.

#### DECIMATION:

Behan was arrested within days, leaving a house in Blessington Street, and was extremely lucky, in view of the times that were in it, to receive a sentence, and not the rope, with a release date for 1952, although in fact he got out in 1946. He had been play-acting with a gun in a friendly house owned by Donlons, the grocers, of Moore Street, in Hollybank Road, in Drumcondra and, for his own sake, was as well under lock and key.

After this Georgie Parnell, Mick Whelan, 'Stretch' Clarke and Jim Keating were pulled in from our company. We were losing arms too, in both great and small numbers, but everything counted.

In North Mayo in August 1942, Eddie Joe Gallagher was caught with 78 Thompsons, and nearby another 18 were found\*. These were brand new; still in their greaseproof wrappings. Those holding them had been approached by a Branch man; *I'm from H.Q.* and unfortunately they fell for his line. There were still dumps of arms but we did not know where they were dumped.

In the run up to the hanging in Belfast of Tom Williams on September 2, 1942 (up to that time he was the one and only Republican to be executed within the North), I had a premonition from my own contacts that there would be action there.

\* Peter Hart states a total of 109 in *Irish Sword*, Summer 1995.

After all, what was all our preparations on the southern side of occupied Ireland about if we would not take action in defence of the North. I travelled to Lurgan and placed myself at their disposal. Williams was executed, but the R.U.C rounded up everyone they could find, and Gerald O'Callaghan was surprised and shot dead at one of the major dumps at Hannahstown, while Archie Doyle and Harry White carried out a feint-you would hardly call it an attack- directed at Crossmaglen, (5)but there was no opportunity for me to take part in the attacks, which in any event were too spasmodic and unrehearsed.

Then one evening in November 1942, when we really had our backs to the wall after the Dinny O'Brien assassination at Ballyboden on Wednesday September 9, we had, what I must call uncharitably, an unwished for success when Frank Kerrigan, Mick and Murt Lucey from Cork city, and Jackie Griffith from Dublin, and Jim Smith from Oldcastle and Pete Martin of Dublin, escaped over the wall from Mountjoy. With everyone tightly watched, that posed the problem of keeping the hotly hunted five in safe houses; and one uses the adjective safe advisedly. A house is safe only if visitors can be kept away from it, and if the sought after person is careful in his comings and goings. And where and upon whom does the cap fit? The cap that will protect a republican prisoner on the run? Not in the mansions of the grandees on Ailesbury Road or Palmerston Road, but in little box- like terrace houses where one hopes they will remain unseen.

You have since told me that Séamus Ó Mongáin, released from Arbour Hill in mid-1941, with the honorary title of Citizen of the Republic conferred upon himself, did trojan work with Ned Maguire in listing a score or more of safe houses, which list was given Charlie Kerins, then Chief of Staff.

That for a time solved the problem, although all six - Griffith being killed the following year - came a cropper later. And one, Pete Martin, recaptured, was released ahead of his time to die. His brother, Paddy, on five years, was refused parole to attend the funeral.

Six months later, in March 1943, we were approached again on behalf of the 21 who tunnelled out from Derry Jail; can you put one up, or find a house? De Valera answered the problem in a hands across the Border approach with the British by interning nearly all of them. I was in prison myself by that time, but friends of mine found places for some of them.

Nemesis, that Greek goddess of retribution, was now clutching at me. I could feel her warm breath on my shoulder, but what could I do but carry on? With my mate, John McGlew, this fine sunny morning, I was engaged painting the woodwork of the little wayside station of Portmarnock, the occasional steam puffer thundering by. We were, in fact, returning from the village when armed police descended upon us.

I thought Det. Sergeant O'Connell leading the posse would have a fit; he was that excited, and growing redder in the face with each passing second. With Det. Sergt. Kelly and a squad they had raided my home that morning, although to be fair, they did not wreck it, but I learned afterwards that they had a spy post set up in the home of a policeman across the road. An old trick, and in this case pointless, as I had warned everyone in the Movement never to come near our house.

Question time started as soon as I reached the Bridewell; quite intimidating it was too from across a table, but I would not answer; so I was thrown into a cell. Now, anyone that has been there, knows that the Bridewell is the filthiest place on earth; blankets with the date 1911 stamped upon them. One was streaked with vomit. Sheets or a pillow; are you joking? The smells and the grime of the place. A flush w.c. in the corner, but the chain to pull was outside the door. And as for ever getting out for exercise... Well, save the question, for that does not happen. The woman who swept the concrete landing outside was real Dublin; *will I pull the chain son*, she would shout. I had to laugh. Herself and the policeman who brought a meagre ration, were the only people I saw in five days. Overnight you might hear shouts and calls from drunks on the lower tier, but that was all. The police man, a kindly person, offered me a packet of cigarettes; I did not smoke but I thanked him all the same.

The first day, a friend of mine, Paddy Griffin was hauled in and placed on a parade with me. To his evident relief, since he had nothing to do with the Movement, he was released.

Afterwards I wondered was he lucky, as he hared off and married a widow with seven children, and then, to crown it, they had seven more. Still, I understand, they were extremely happy.

The day I was arrested my sister Queenie arrived with a flask of tea and food, but she was not permitted to see me. Every day she came, and I was there eventually for eight days; that was the way it was always in our family. So loyal, they would die for each other.

On the eighth night, the cell door opened and three Special Branch men escorted me to an interview room where I was confronted by Kelly and O'Connell. They were going to have another go at me. An ordinary garda superintendent, Glynn, I learned after, stood to one side. The two boys did their worst to brow beat me, although I must say, no force was used. *I thought that after eight days solitary stuck in this place you would be ready to talk*, sneered O'Connell. Glynn then stepped in. He was courteous, I have to ask these questions; if you refuse, your refusal will simply be entered. You will be transferred to Mountjoy in the morning, he added, as we shook hands. 40 years later, visiting Rosemary's cousin in Howth, I chanced across Supt. Glynn again. There he was, an old gentleman, sitting by her fireside, to whom she introduced me. I did not disclose that we had indeed met before; we conversed on other things. I later learned that he had moved back to Co. Galway and that he has since died.

I was happy to be in Mountjoy; to have a bath and to be re-united with friends like the 'Crib' Duffy and Paddy Grey from Dundalk. My mother called; *son, you never told me you were in the I.R.A.* How many mothers have said that, I thought. *All the trouble it has caused, but we will never let you down.*

I returned to the C. Wing exercise yard where there were now about 12 of our men; a fellow from Kildare; another, Ellis, a lion tamer, and there was a Leahy from Kerry. 'Crib' had elected himself remand prisoners O.C, as he was the one with routine experience.

Put in for a visit to the Governor in the morning, he advised, and you will meet

our sentenced men in the queue and there can be a two way exchange of information. Sure enough, Mattie Tuite, George Parnell and Paddy Martin were in the line and we readily conversed with each other; the chief warder, Donovan, did not interfere.

I have got to say I did not get along with Sean Kavanagh; others may have found him alright, but to my request to have a drawing copy and paints, he was deeply hurtful. With your intelligence could you draw a handcart? He broke his heart then laughing at the pun. Grey haired, pale and with a wrinkled face, I was not in the mood to take lip like that from him, and in a few words I told him so and stomped out.

#### THE TRIAL:

The day came, on January 21, 1943, when we had to appear in Collins Barracks, before a Military Tribunal of three army officers and their prosecuting counsel. 'Crib' Duffy and Paddy Grey were tried first. They had pages of charges against them. *The People of Ireland*, and all that rubbish, versus....I thought they would get years and years. Instead the 'Crib' got only three, and Paddy 18 months. That is great, I thought; my charge sheet has only a few lines and I am the youngest of the group; barely 18. Defiantly, I sat down in the room only to be dragged up by the two military police on each side of me. Murnaghan read out the concocted evidence that I was the leader of three men on an arms raid; the other two being unapprehended.

My mother and Queenie were seated in court, and at the proper moment she rose to speak on my behalf. I was proud of her as she stood there, and then I realised why people always said, your mother is so distinguished, we cannot help turning around when she appears in church. I was only a child, she said, and I should not be abused by the court. The presiding officer interrupted her to say; if he recognises this court, and makes an appeal, he will walk out free. In view of your appeal, he added, my colleagues and I will be lenient.

He addressed me then; do you wish to plead guilty or not guilty? As a soldier of the Republican Army I refuse to recognise this court, I answered boldly. Be that as it may, within five minutes, after a brief retirement, I was brought down to earth. Concurrent years were rattled off, seeming to total upwards of 20; of course they really ran to five, but I had never been in court and and knew nothing of the law, and my head was reeling. My mother said she was proud of me, 'although they gave you a stiff sentence son'; Queenie was just sobbing quietly into a handkerchief as I was led away. Then she rushed after me, and smack; I got a great big kiss.

We were soon back on North Circular Road again; into the 'Joy and the reception procedures. Just as though you had never been there. It would not be C. Wing remand this time; it would be B 2. Wing, where our own lads were encamped under O.C. Tom Doyle. After medical examination and a bath, during which warders searched our clothes, we were directed to our cells where a lag, passing from locked door to locked door, served tea.

'Lag', of course, is the standard terminology for the O.D.C. (We, Republicans, do not use that in any demeaning way; there are worse criminals we all know in the snob districts of Dublin). The warder told us that, come the morning, the cell door would be unlocked; we could empty slops, wash ourselves, fold blankets and tidy

our cells. Then breakfast would be served in the same manner by a lag accompanied by a warder, bringing a battered tin can to each door. That would be followed by Governor's inspection.

Our O.C Tom Doyle entered my cell then and told me to prepare for a morning inspection. We were still a unit of the I.R.A even though we were incarcerated, he reminded us. I could not avoid looking at the men about me as we paraded; fine fellows, but with many of them their clothing was in a sorry state. Some were inside a few years, and, of course, they had no money to buy clothes, others had parents and sisters who contributed. Still they looked fine.

Denis Griffin, from Cork, was a mystery to me. He was already here three years. His clothing was a maze of patches but all so neatly done that you could not see the stitching. How is it done, I asked him. *Easy*, he said, *we have glue in the craft shop, so I just glue them on.*

In the yard I was introduced to this strange passion of craft making. Some of the lads were sitting around a fire while others were working on benches, preparing glue with which to stick on the matches to make a celtic cross, a chapel or a round tower. They heated the glue in a small can upon the fire; added a sup of water and waited until it melted. Then they got to work, patiently building up from matches the structure, as though it was a real building. One fellow, 'Cushie' Ryan, was a clever genius; he could make anything. From a sod of turf he could create a thatched cottage. Others were making rings from the silver shillings we had at that time. A hole would be drilled in its heart; a big nail inserted, and then tap, tap, tap around the edge with a steel bar resulted gradually in a flattening outwards and inwards, creating a crude ring. The artistry entered when one came to shaping, then engraving with an awl, and finally, infilling the snake's heads with colour obtained from a tooth brush handle. The Claddagh ring was a great favourite; a few wedding rings were produced from gold sovereigns. They were beautiful and everlasting.

The bowl of a prison spoon made an attractive belt buckle engraved with a celtic design; embroidery too was patiently attempted; embroidery that I thought really skilful.

As matches were not allowed you may wonder how those who smoked could light up. A method using a small tinder box was devised (described elsewhere in this work). The lags pestered us for cigarettes, since they were not allowed them, so a barter system developed between us and those lags who had access to the kitchen. A cigarette would get you an extra butter from the lag serving the meals, while two cigarettes would buy an egg. Nobody got eggs except those in hospital, or those condemned on a murder charge.

Those unfortunates were fed like turkeys, although sometimes the poor whore did not have a stomach for his breakfast so the lag would sell it to us; and we gladly ate it instead. One week I got a really fine breakfast that way, bacon, egg, sausage, black and white pudding. I tell you it is an ill wind that does not bring good to somebody. Five cigarettes was the price of that meal and cheap it was too at the price. Not wishing anyone ill, but I had to wait a year for another like that one. Our wardman that time was a rustler and a butcher by trade; he was our contact for the extra food, and he saw to it, provided the cigarettes were available, that we got it. In times of

need scarce goods can become a currency, and in Mountjoy cigarettes were the currency.

#### PRISON EXPERIENCE:

One Sunday at Mass the priest rather foolishly laid into the Movement. He should have known better as we were the last people that would take an insult. Pop Cummins was the first to rise; then we all got up and followed him out. After his Mass the priest entered our wing and promised that, never again, would he use his pulpit for politics. We accepted that and returned the next Sunday.

None of you have ever been in the 'Joy so you cannot imagine what the Benediction experience is like, but privately I used to think the hymn singing was funny. *Sweet Heart of Jesus Make Us Pure and Gentle*, while in between the verses the lags would be making signs and advances to us for smokes. Those same fellows were in for every crime under the sun; compared to them the men of the Foreign Legion were harmless. We had four murderers in the congregation. The night before he was executed Barney Kirwan had a few words with Behan and I. He was just after having a visit from his girl friend, a beautiful young woman; his last visit. Broken hearted she must have been. It was all so sad, and he, a fine specimen of manhood. Behan, he said, *they won't hang you, but what really makes me mad is that Flynn from Kerry who threw his wife down a well will get away while I am for the high jump.*

Flynn had shoved his wife into a deep well and pitched a turkey after her; moryah, she was looking for the turkey and fell in. Of course he should have pitched the turkey in first. Flynn put on an act, and 'tis said dodged the hangman with the aid of some local political pull, while Kirwan, who murdered his brother, went for the swing swong. The affair, I could see, disturbed Behan greatly. That night he commenced to sketch out *The Quare Fellow*, into which he put a lot of work later on.

Harmless pranks were played. Lying in bed this night I heard in the dark something shuffling across the floor. No, I thought, it cannot be a rat, or could it be? Not breathing, I listened for a while and then I found out. It was the fellow in the next cell who had passed a string and a piece of timber through where the pipes ran, and every moment gave it a another little jerk. 'Crib' Duffy was lying in bed when the clothes were dragged off him. He had been told already that a murderer spent his last night in the cell. When it happened again, greatly frightened, he sprung up, hammering and screaming at the door. What was it but a piece of string attached to his bed clothes and operated from the next cell.

Behan, too, was a target. His cell was in a terrible state. We called him *Filth*. In Mountjoy the butter was served upon the pages of old ledgers covered with names and figures. That would not be considered sanitary these days. Behan used take the pages and stick them upon his wall. He would have endless fun doing this.

He wore three shirts usually; when he wanted to display a clean one, he put the outside one on the inside. Sometimes he would take a mad fit and leap into a bath with shirts and all upon him. It's my way of getting everything washed together, he would say. He had obtained a mouth organ from a lag which he would play through his long nose; a nose that had always a drip. You try it, he would say to me; but I could not play even with my mouth.

He was sharing the three man cell (mostly the cells in Mountjoy are single cells

but there are a few three man cells) with Jackie Griffith and Frank Kerrigan, but they escaped to freedom, midnight October 31, along with Jim Smith, Mick and Murt Lucy and Pete Martin. They did not include Behan in their plot; I suppose because, apart from being a bit inactive for getting over a high wall, with his big mouth he could not be trusted to keep a secret in the run-up to the night. Their plot was nearly scuttled by Griffin himself. He addressed a parade on the morning before demanding to know who was purloining bed sheets, not realising that it was the future escapees assembling their 'ropes'.

Denis Griffin was Acting O.C.; a devil also for tricks. To sharpen Behan he called a parade for the B. Wing yard during a downpour of heavy rain. Behan was there in his shirt- his usual practice - and cursing roundly as Denis continued on and on with a pep talk. The strange thing about Behan was that his books were always carefully stacked, and when going on a visit he wore a blue sports coat and grey trousers; looking neat and spotless; for all the world like a college boy.

There were 30 other I.R.A men in D. Wing who were lodged there early in 1941, having being sentenced for burning huts in the Curragh. They were on sentences ranging from three years up to ten, and as they included many of the original 1939 G.H.Q staff, some of our lads looked up to them although Jack Lynch dubbed them the *Fire Bugs*. Jack, being an old Barry man, would not have had much affinity with them, especially as he held them responsible for introducing a cuckoo like Stephen Hayes into the nest.

About this time a group of small farmers were brought in over a land protest in the midlands. We found they were being treated like criminals and we would not stand for that. Some of them went upon a short hunger strike whereupon they were accorded political treatment. Unfortunately, their leader, an elderly man, died later in the prison hospital. We showed our respect with a formal parade and prayers with which they joined. Meanwhile the 'Fire Bugs' had been transferred from D. Wing to join us in B. 2, and shortly after that we were taken out of the 'Joy' altogether and brought to Arbour Hill.

#### IN ARBOUR HILL:

Say what you like but I thought Arbour Hill a palace compared to the 'Joy. It was airy, clean and comfortable, although very cold in winter because there were stoves only down on the floor of the wing compound. I found the military police very good; one was kind to me anyway. He cut my hair and he used bring me bars of chocolate; I suppose it was that I looked so young to be commencing a term of five years. Another one, a Dubliner over 40, and said to be a terrible bugger, was nice to me, bringing in Zane Grey novels; all the rage at that time. Michael Lennon was the F.S. commandant, and one day a P.A. (P.A.= *Póilíní Airme* = military police) came shouting to me. I grappled with him and for that lost two days, which, of course, in a five year sentence, was nothing.

It was Lennon who imposed it, but without abuse or rough stuff. I had a football jersey on and he asked who I played for; so the conversation soon veered to football. One of our fellows, Jerry O'Brien from Cork, was seriously ill with tuberculosis; the doctor insisted on his release although he died a few months later. Our doctor, at that time, was a conscientious person who attended to every complaint. We had no



dentist, so when he heard of this, he had one brought in, but unfortunately he turned out to be a bit of a butcher. Tom Kealy ran out from him; I only had my teeth examined, but Frank Weafer had four pulled and found it excruciating as he used no anaesthetic.

Sean Hamill from Belfast, one of the Derry escapees, was now in with us. We found him a terrible liar, although harmless and at times amusing. *I had an awful nightmare last night*, he announced one morning. *The R.U.C were after me and I had to leap out of bed and run like bleeding hell over rough ground in my bare feet. And look*, says he, turning up the soles of his feet; *when I woke up this morning my feet were a mass of blisters.*

Another friend of mine from Dublin, by name of Keating, was inside over a raid for arms, although he had not taken any part in the raid. That was how it was in those days; under our I.R.A code imposed upon us when Frank Aiken was C.S, you could not plead or recognise the Free State courts, with the result that there were numbers held who had not done what they were accused of.

There was another, 'Pop' Cummins, who had insomnia, and he used never go to bed. He just sat in a chair all night. He was a good artist; painting some fine pictures; a linguist and playwright. Finally, the doctor arranged that he get hospital treatment, following which he was released.

As I say we found Arbour Hill a big improvement on Mountjoy. We even got Martin Henry suits; grey or brown tweed in a herring bone design. New, they looked fine; crumpled, they were nor so good. We now had army boots, socks and shirts; and for the first time in years, uncaged visits. Heretofore visits were not accepted because we would not submit to a caged visit.

Denis Griffin who had been our O.C., was a devil for playing tricks, as I have just remarked. Tony MacAnaspie, small and cranky, was an artist at making stick chapels, so one afternoon Denis stuck his pot to the floor under his bed. Rising, to spend a penny in the dark, he was unable to move it, and the next day, those of us in the know, had a discreet laugh as we watched him working to unloosen it. Another time Denis left for Mick Murphy, who loved sugar, a saucer full, but he had sand mixed through it. Mick cursed him from high heaven.

There were a number of house trained cats in the jail, and these he lured into Tom Kealy's cell, leaving them inside. When Kealy returned he was mad to find cats hairs everywhere as he himself was spotlessly clean and disliked cats. Tom got his revenge later when he hid the best clothes Denis possessed prior to meeting his girl friend on a visit. However I came to his aid as I had a respectable civie suit, and so Denis was saved.

On Christmas Day 1943, as a special treat, any three friends were allowed spend the day and have their dinner together. I shared mine with Tom Kealy and Mick Murphy, and I have to say I enjoyed it. Tom said grace very solemnly before we sat down, thanking God for the meal. He had been on the run for years and often had no dinner.

By this time Behan had written his first play, commenced in Mountjoy, called *The Landlady*. He wanted to produce it in Arbour Hill but nobody was interested. Denis Griffin however produced a few plays and I acted in them. In one that I recall, there

was a corpse lying in state and for stage effects we had to have revolvers which Tony Deery of Dundalk carved from wood. They were so realistic that they had to be turned in to the authorities afterwards.

An election now took place for a new O.C, and Tom Doyle who was standing down, was replaced by Peadar O'Flaherty. As readers of other accounts here would know, he was a controversial figure although I held him in some esteem. In this case he selected on his staff Paddy McGlynn as adjutant, with Tony Deery, Mick Geraghty and Laz Mangan; all of them middle of the road men.

All letters in and out were censored of course, and anything which the authorities considered informative was obliterated by a heavy overlay of black ink. One of our chaps had a means of removing this and reading what was underneath, although it was rarely of much importance; but the Staters got on to the trick and commenced to cut out offending lines with a razor blade. As people then wrote on both sides of the page this meant that the message over was lost.

Although it was a confined place we had games in Arbour Hill; basket ball, rounders and handball; the latter within a roofed shed. It was a little limited but one got used to it. I took part in all games. I was young and fit and I had some good bouts with a couple of Cork lads, all of whom seemed to be great at handball. I used take Behan out, but he was brutal at any sport. He had an ambition to beat me at handball but never did. I let him win a few times because he would be on the verge of collapse, and I knew he would go on until he collapsed.

#### THIS TIME, KILDARE:

Then one morning in June 1944, we were told to pack our belongings; that we were about to be removed. This time it would be to the Curragh Internment Camp. There were around 50 of us. Some were handcuffed; those whom they fitted that is, because my wrists were too large. I was astonished; stunned at my first sight of the place.

It was not a tin town; that was 1922. The internees were held inside long weather sheeted timber huts, like primitive log cabins, with smoke flues projecting through their felt roofs. Inside there were dry toilets for night time use. We were greeted by fellows who in the world outside were real dapper and trendy. I failed to recognise any of them. Some had beards; others had their heads shaved, They would be called skinheads now.

Their Martin Henry suits looked crumpled and shabby. We had our best gear on and we looked smart by comparison. We were like a visiting delegation; the shock we got on entering the huts was indescribable; beds of planks on two trestles six inches over the floor. Grey army blankets and no sheets, while at the head, part of a blanket or an old coat nailed to the wall to restrain the wind that filtered through the thin boarding. Mugs, half washed, and other utensils lay on the floor. Clothes, drying, hung from string overhead. It was all very depressing.

When grub-up was called we went into another hut dubbed the dining hall, where it was noticeable that hygiene was almost non-existent. A terrible looking dive; in some way it reminded me of the Bridewell. We were accustomed to dining alone in Mountjoy and Arbour Hill, with, maybe, a book propped in front of one; the idea of eating in this bleak hut with dozens of others was a new one to me.

We went to see Joe Crowe. He was O.C. of one side, accompanied by Joe Dunne and Mattie O'Neill. Pearse Kelly was O.C. for the other side, and there was a 'centre party' captained by Tom Wall. When we came in we did not have to make up our minds instantly what side we were on as we had friends on every side.

The way I looked at it was we were all in for the same cause. I was not going to walk by a comrade of mine because some fellow instructed me. I did not know the rights or wrongs and I was not going to condemn any man. Ral Sealy and Mattie O'Neill were trying to get me on to Leddy's side. Leddy had been O.C, but was released a few weeks after our arrival. Joe Dunne, a saturnine Dublin man was his adjutant. I did not say anything to the overtures. Ashe Hughes and I were friendly with the men from Dundalk. A few of us from Arbour Hill therefore decided we would stick together; that we would not split, so we moved in beside Ashe Hughes, Sean McCool, Dan O'Toole, Frank Weafer and Eddie Joe Gallagher. Paddy Donnelly was in the hut with Hubie McNerney of Belfast, John Joe McManus, the 'Assassin' Mulvaney, Jim Toner, Sean McDermot, John Sheils; altogether there were about 28 in the hut at the time; Eddie Whelan, one of the renowned trio from Benburb Street, Dublin, and Jimmy McCann were there. This was Pearse Kelly's side; henceforth we did not have anything to do with the Joe Crowe side because they would not now speak to us. Ours was a very jolly hut to be in.

There was no great point of principle involved; we just had more friends on this side. We were determined to stick together as a group, and we found the relaxed rule of the Pearse Kelly council to our liking. But we did not wish to ignore the other side, or sides, which by this time represented less than a third of the Camp. Next day therefore I said hello to Tony Magan but he told me to F off. Ashe said banteringly, *Tony, Tony, will you serve Mass next Sunday using such obscene Black and Tan language*, but Tony ignored him and passed quickly on.

Pat Shannon, who was on the Crowe side, pulled me behind a hut saying, I will be ostracised if I talk to you at all, but nonetheless he brought me up to date with news of my friends over there. Then he pressed my hand firmly and flitted off. There were around 40 with Crowe, but we quickly found we had joined the right side. There were about 150 with Pearse Kelly, and the 'centre party' had about 20. Laz Mangan had gone home at this time, while Mick Geraghty moved into an Irish speaking hut on Pearse Kelly's side. The majority were with us, although sound men like Dominic Adams, Larry Grogan, Paddy McNeela stayed with the Leddy/Crowe group because Pearse Kelly may have appeared too undisciplined and permissive in allowing everybody talk to whom they liked.

After a few days of a nomadic existence, I moved into a hut called Hell's Kitchen, along with Jack Lynch, Denis Griffin, Tom Kealy, Frank Weafer, 'Ace' Ferris, and Eddie Joe Gallagher and the others I have mentioned. Five of our crew worked in the Cookhouse. Jack Lynch was a master baker by trade and a good one; when he got the material he could make doughnuts and cakes. Joe Birrell was a butcher and would occasionally make sausages. Eddie Joe Gallagher was one of the best poteen makers that Co. Mayo produced. If flour or yeast came in, it was passed on to him, and with a worm made from galvanised iron, poteen was produced that was adjudged first class clear run poteen. All the reports said the snake-like worm must

be made of copper but we did it successfully with a galvanised pipe. I did not drink myself, but I kept a sauce bottle full in case I took cold. On Christmas night 1944, the 'Assassin' Mulvaney sang, and said that, never having been drunk in his life, he had to be interned before he could experience it.

He hoped after he returned to civilian life to continue to enjoy it; and indeed by all reports he did as, apart from hovering around the theatrical life of Dublin in the late forties and fifties, he was, a convivial figure in Mc Daid's of Grafton Street, among the Catacombs and advanced places like that.

In the camp next door the Germans made a large kite which they would occasionally fly. Then Ashe Hughes decided he would also make one, and he managed to do so from sheets, wherever he got them; whereupon we had a competition with the Germans across the wire. Ours had I.R.A in big black letters emblazoned on it, and it was launched with great ceremony; the 'Assassin' blessing it and 'all who would fly in it'. Up and up it went; higher than the German kite which had been launched at the same time. There rose then, a great cheer from all of us in which the airmen joined.

Denis Griffin next decided that the Camp should have its own band, and that it should be kitted out in blankets specially sewn for the purpose. A busby was made from fur for Dan O'Toole who was appointed band leader, and he was given a staff such as you see the Orangemen with, to twirl around and throw high up in the air. It was gas to see, hell being hammered from tin cans, as the band led the teams out for a football match.

Some of these were an even greater send up, with the 'Assassin' dressed as a huntsman, and Rúairí O Drisceóil, a school teacher in normal life, as a farmer, taking the field.

The 'Assassin' got plays going, with occasionally some of the actors inserting their own funny lines. Then he moved to a black minstrel show, with himself as a very sad Sambo. One of the lines went; 'Sambo was working on the turf, but he bogged up; boggled up.' Boggled up meant that he had signed out to obtain release; untrue of course, but then Ashe Hughes inquired waggishly; why so sad Sambo, and back came the refrain; 'we have no poteen; no poteen.'

At this point Denis Griffin sang, we will have to have Christ work again a miracle, or more realistically, have Johnny Lyons make dandelion wine instead; which Johnny could do, and very tasty it was too.

Jim Toner from Donegal was a serious sort of fellow. He was the cook in one of the 'Assassin's' cowboy plays. His line was to say; 'boss, I will mosey up the flap jacks and toss them in the air.' (Now, we all know that mosey is American slang for something else, but never mind). I had however glued them to the pan, so they stuck there and you should have seen Jim's face when they stayed stuck to it.

Danny Conroy, a little man from Donnybrook who had been a Fianna boy in the Tan time, was a close companion of the 'Assassin' although he could play tricks on him at times. Mulvaney was in constant correspondence with Lennox Robinson of the Abbey Theatre, and this inspired Danny to hoax the 'Assassin' into believing that he might soon have a play put on; an event, in the circumstances, that was highly unlikely. He even went as far as to quote a conversation allegedly overheard

between Gerald Boland and Robinson; 'isn't it too bad', Boland was reported as saying, 'having a man of talent like Mulvaney among that crew in the Curragh. I shall have to look into having him released'. For a while the 'Assassin' really believed the report.

There was the orchestra too, with Frankie Rogers as lead violinist and Joe Carlin from Donegal as first fiddle. Frankie took his music seriously, so during one recital he was taken aback when Carlin struck a wrong note. Are you trying to make a laugh of me, he shouted; but the reason was that John Joe Quinlan from Tralee had reached through the curtain, tapping Joe on the head. Another day, John Joe, a reporter on *The Kerryman*, secured the door and stuffed the chimney so that they were smoked inside and unable to get out.

Seamus Rickard, a fisherman from Howth, and a native speaker, made the looms that fashioned the Aran belts.

We had a stove at each end of the 30 man hut, so on most nights we had plenty of crack and gossip seated around it. Our numbers were diminishing now but there was no crack up in the morale.

'Ace' Ferris would take out his fiddle and Denis Griffin his tin whistle, and by thumping upon the timber floor with our army boots, we could raise the roof.

Outside of course, the wind was whistling, but what did we care. Sometimes we knelt for the Rosary, and at such times Dan O'Toole, who was only one of a number of our agnostics, just lay upon his bed reading. One conscientious young fellow, Callan, from Derry, took exception to what he thought was disrespect. *That claptrap is for Catholics*, said Danno; a real hard chaw. *It is not for Orangemen like me.*

Sean Gallagher, when the weather was good, would appear in shorts, but he had a terrible pair of spindly legs which caused us all to laugh. 'Trotsky', for whatever reason, we called him. Even with the sun shining, I would know it was certain to rain when 'Trotsky' appeared in his shorts.

There was a female cat there and it had kittens. Some of us fancied a kitten, but how to catch them was another matter. They lived in an empty hut where they could play all day. So we tied a string to a toilet door and when they entered pulled it shut. We had them.

Sean Parnell got one; a military policeman got another, and I had a prize, with a black face and white whiskers. Later in the Glasshouse, Capt. Tennant was keen to get my cat, but no, sir. I would not surrender it. I sent the cat home and he never got it. Tennant later retired and was living close to where I live now; becoming a pillar of the church, and collecting at the door. However the same Tennant was head of an army unit which early in 1940 helped break a farmer strike by collecting milk and bringing it to the creameries. As a result he was known in the camp as 'Bainne'. Therefore Sean Parnell, my fellow parishioner, would greet him at the chapel door; *how are ye this Sunday, Bainne; still full of the milk of human kindness, I'll be bound.* This embarrassed the old sod no end to such an extent that he kept out of sight when he saw Parnell coming.

#### TO THE GLASSHOUSE AND HOME:

In August 1945, four months after the war in Europe had ended, we were transferred out of the vast, near empty, camp to the Glasshouse; the small stone and brick

prison up the hill. There were now 20 only of us left. Peadar O'Flaherty and Johnny Lyons were gone; 'Ace' Ferris and Paddy Martin had their five year sentence completed and were released. A few months later Eddie Joe Gallagher (6) and Mick Geraghty went home westward to Mayo; to make more poteen I suppose. Suddenly then to our astonishment in April 1946, we were reinforced by the ten picked up at an attempted reorganisation meeting in Ardee Street, Dublin. Some of the old hard core were there; Mixie Conway, Cathal Goulding, Terry Sweeney, Danny McCafferty, Larry Grogan, John Joe McGirl, Peadar O'Flaherty, Donnie Keane and Tony Magan. Added later, but away from that meeting was, John Joe Sheehy and Sean Ryan of Tralee, both very unlikely participants in the reorganisation, but both equally unlikely to recognise a court and plead their way out.

What Goulding had in mind in the 'Bishop' Ryan's pub on the corner of Ardee Street on the evening of March 9, 1946 is hard to say now, except that Bowyer Bell in his account gives someone the credit, if such be the word, for having brought the Special Branch on their tail to the rendezvous. (They were caught drinking after hours, cracked Jack Lynch when he heard about it). I must say our first thoughts rather selfishly were, how does a reorganisation meeting at this stage affect our chances of getting out? For despite all the fun that I have outlined, and despite all the tricks we got up to, there is no disguising the *grádh agus an gruaim* of a prison existence. And five years taken from a young and impressionable life leaves a mark.

And whatever about the mark it may have left upon a young fellow like me, how much worse was it for the somewhat older men with impoverished families and dependants in an Ireland that was then devoid of welfare payments. Some were inside seven years with three more to do; at this time I had only six months to do.

To cap it all Pat Shannon of Co. Galway, (7) a veteran of earlier days, who had been released a few months before, fired upon a Branch man, getting five years, and being stuck into the Glasshouse with us.

Sean Hamill was O.C, but he was under pressure from the three surviving members of the 1939 G.H.Q, Paddy Fleming, Larry Grogan and Peadar O'Flaherty. They issued a document calling for meetings to be held with a view to ostracise Pat Shannon for the crime of shooting at the Special Branch. Tom Doyle, Jack Lynch and myself had a meeting with all the sentenced men, and we resolved to greet Pat with a republican *céad míle fáilte*. This was not going to be to the liking of the G.H.Q trio. At the meeting Larry Grogan asked to speak in favour of his motion. Larry started off with a long slanderous attack on Pat. I jumped up at this and said; as the youngest Volunteer in this unit can I speak? Hamill nodded.

I am not going to ostracize anybody, I started. In this prison one third of the men are doing time; there are three in Portlaoise; six have been executed and there is one on the run. If Harry White is caught he will be executed too. By ostracising Pat Shannon now we will be condemning these men. Do you people want us to condemn ourselves and become constitutional hacks, betraying everything so much suffering in jail has been endured for? I got a great cheer; there were no more meetings on the subject and the matter was dropped.

Next morning when Pat arrived, the first people to greet him were Larry Grogan and those who had condemned him! A week later Pat Shannon came into my cell

with tears in his eyes. Thanking me profusely, he said, you never told what you had done for me. I changed the subject quickly. Pat, we heard your yo ho before the All-Ireland final last year on the radio.

In the Curragh the way he and Ashe Hughes had communicated before was by this yo ho. Both of them had powerful lungs. It was their way of telling each other that friendship was more important than ostracisation. That night Denis Griffin started a sing song. I started the ball rolling by singing the French foreign legion song, *The Legion of the Lost They Call Us*. The lads lifted the roof with vigour singing the chorus about ten times. I suppose they felt the same as I did that we really were the legion of the lost; we were forgotten. Parcels came to us from fellows recently released. Most of the letters bore sad accounts of the poverty they had found on their return home. 'Ace' Ferris sent me a parcel he could ill-afford. His poor sister lived in semi-starvation while he was in prison. The Special Branch did their best to deprive them of a livelihood. Potential employers were threatened, and their business leaned upon if they employed Republicans. That meant they had to emigrate; to become citizens of the world, and their children in time would be strangers to Ireland; some were later to become the forerunners of Noraid.

Still, we had been through the only real proletarian university that Ireland ever had; a university where professors, teachers, engineers, accountants, solicitors, journalists, barristers, plumbers, tradesmen, writers, artists, actors and farmers of greater and lesser acreage had mixed together.

The wise man with only the simple education of the soil was listened to with as much attention as those who had spent years acquiring academic distinction. All of them later on followed an independent role in life without being dependent upon a state that had disowned them.

Brendan Behan, sentenced in November 1942, failed in an application for parole to attend the funeral of his uncle Peadar Kearney, author of *The Soldier's Song*, Ireland's national anthem.<sup>(8)</sup> I would not let him out for a day, Sean Kavanagh, the Governor, reported Gerald Boland as saying, even with a ball and chain strapped to his ankles. While he was upstairs in the Glasshouse, he lifted one day boards under his bed assisted by Mick Murphy. Knowing that Capt. Tennent was about, he commenced hammering and boring. Tennent, hearing this, ran off shouting, Prisoner Behan is attempting to tunnel out. He had forgotten that Behan was upstairs.

Shortly before I left in October 1946 his mother fell ill, and this time he really was offered parole. *Would you not clean up your cell before you go*, said Commdt. Guiney; *it is filthy*. Sure it would take me a month, Commdt, and I have only a fortnight's parole.

At this time whenever a man went out on parole, Tom Grogan, who otherwise kept very much to himself, used remark to us, that is another you will not see back. When Behan was leaving he made a point of coming to Tom, shaking his hand and saying, you can safely say after I'm gone that *I won't be back if I can help it*.

One day in the summer of 1945 as I peered at visitors from a window of the Glasshouse accompanied by Tommy McElroy and Brendan Behan, I suddenly exclaimed; *who is that lovely girl with Judy Gaughran come to visit Peter Duffy?* That is Rosemary Goss, sister of the late Ritchie, he replied. Well, said I, she is the loveliest

girl I have ever seen. You must be moon struck, jibed Behan, releasing one of those raucous laughs of his. The extraordinary thing is she had noticed me also for she inquired from Peter. We call him 'Smiler', he said; the 'Smiler' Doran. Would I ask him to write to you? Oh yes, oh yes; please do. And so a correspondence began lasting 15 months, each day bringing release nearer.

I spent my twenty second birthday, October 2, 1946 in prison, but three weeks later, my time up, I left alone. I had come in alone; I left alone. Standing at the bus stop I felt sad thinking of those comrades still languishing in prison for a principle that very few wanted to know about. Then I thought of the funny things that happened, and that brought the smile back to my face. The morning John Joe Martin was released, as he was on his way out he stopped to bid me goodbye. Will you be back, I said to him? What makes you say that, he replied astonished. I looked down at his legs and his eyes followed mine. In the excitement he had forgotten to put on his trousers, but who could blame him after five years locked up.

On the night of my return my parents had a big spread laid on for me. All the family were there. My father holding my mother's hand affectionately; yet was there a tear in his eye.? Then he smiled; this is the first time the whole family are together in the past five years. When you are saying your grace, thank God your brother, our prodigal son, has come home, safe and well; hale and hearty.

Needless to say I had not forgotten Rosemary, and liberated, we soon met in Dublin; we met in the company of friends, and within a short time we were engaged. Getting a job however after release was the problem.

I took up panel beating as a stop-gap, and stuck it for four years. Laz Mangan offered me a job upon the turf in Phoenix Park, but the indications were that the boom days had passed. So, when an opportunity turned up for a conductor on the provincial and Dublin buses, I accepted it; got married and, a year later, put money down on a house on the strength of it.

#### FOOTNOTE ON THE FINAL RELEASE:

In a newspaper of December 19, 1946 there appeared the following news item.

Release of 24 prisoners undergoing penal servitude for offences connected with the activities of an unlawful organisation has been ordered, the Government Information Bureau stated yesterday.

The decision was made by the Government on Tuesday, and, according to the bureau, 21 of the prisoners were released from the Military Detention Barracks Curragh Camp yesterday. Three of the seven prisoners similarly sentenced in Portlaoise Prison are also being released.

Among the released from the Curragh are T. Doyle, G. Parnell, S. Parnell. K. Sullivan, A. Nathan. M. Murphy and P. McGlynn, all of Dublin.

J. Lynch and D. Griffin of Cork; M. Tuite and T. Grogan of Drogheda; P. Duffy and J. O'Callaghan of Dundalk; S. Hamill and J. Atkinson of Belfast; and T. Kealy of Kildare.

Also affected by the order, it is understood, are Brendan Behan and Liam Carey, both of Dublin who are at present on parole, and three others also on parole.

Another man, P. Shannon, a native of Galway, is reported to have been moved from the Curragh to Mountjoy Prison, Dublin.



None of the three whose release has been ordered from Portlaoise had left the jail last night; it is likely that they will be free today.

Their names are Bill (Willie) Stewart and Paddy Murphy, two Dundalk men, sentenced to long terms when convicted of hold-ups in Dundalk; and Frank Kerrigan of Cork who escaped from Mountjoy and was subsequently sentenced to ten years for firing on gardaí who were attempting to arrest him. (Young Joe O' Callaghan, captured with Goss, had been released in 1945)

All the men concerned were serving sentences ranging from five to fourteen years. Some had already served up to five years.

*End of news item.*

Tom Doran's name did not appear in this report as he had done his full time and was unconditionally released on October 23, 1946.

In November 1946, David Fleming, after an indeterminate number of days on hunger strike, was released from Crumlin Road Jail, Belfast.

Released earlier were the last of the Republican internees; on June 24, 1945, 40 from the Curragh Glasshouse, and on December 21, eleven from Crumlin Road, Belfast.

Released from Portlaoise in March 1948, through the efforts of the new incoming coalition government in which Sean MacBride was Minister for Foreign Affairs (then External Affairs) were, Harry White of Belfast, Jim Smith of Oldcastle, Eamonn Smullen of Dublin and Liam Rice of Belfast.

By September 1947 the numbers of long term Irish Republican prisoners held (almost all from 1939) in England, and nearly all at this time on the Isle of Wight, were down to 33. Strong parliamentary efforts were made under the Labour government of Clement Attlee and Chuter Ede for their release, though neither were in any way favourable. However, through the efforts of Eoin 'Pope' O'Mahoney, K.M., and Lord Longford, whose help was sought by Flann Campbell and Frank Lee of the ever faithful London Connolly Association, all were released and deported in February 1948.

In October 1949, released from Crumlin Road, Belfast, were Joe Cahill, Jim Perry, John Oliver, Dixie Cordenor and Patrick Simpson. The first four had been sentenced to death and reprieved for shooting at Constable Murphy on Easter Sunday 1942, for which Tom Williams was hanged on September 5, although he had not fired the fatal shot. Patrick Simpson had been serving 15 years.

All Republicans were not out however until August 1950, when Hugh McAteer (a former Chief of Staff) and Liam Burke were liberated from Crumlin Road: Jimmy Steele following a few weeks later. They had been held, at times under harrowing conditions, since 1943.

## REFERENCES:

1. The following footnote is taken from *The Shan Van Vocht* of 1897. This little paper was controlled by Anna Johnston who wrote under the name of Eithne Carbery, poetess, *Brian Boy Magee* and *Roddy Mc Corley* and many more, and who later in her short life was the wife of historian Seamus Mac Manus; *The Story of the Irish Race*, being his major work, among many stories and plays.

**Death of an Old Fenian**

On July 19, there passed away at his home in Michael Street, Belfast, after a lingering illness, Philip Harbinson, fortified by the rites of the Catholic Church. Some 30 years ago his name, and that of his brother William, were more familiar to the ears of the Belfast public, when these two, together with Francis Rea, stood their trial for alleged Fenianism in the local courthouse.

At the County Antrim Assizes, in the summer of 1867, he with his brother and Francis Rea, were put upon their trial, the principal evidence against them being that of the notorious informer, Massey Murray, the Belfast informer was also present and swore that they were members of the Fenian organisation. The late John Rea, who was the professional advisor of the prisoners, so foiled the court in the attempt to push on the prosecution that they were compelled to consent to an adjournment of the case to the next assizes. Meantime nothing was heard of how Harbinson and his companions were faring in jail until the news spread on the morning of Tuesday September 10, 1867, that William Harbinson was found dead in his cell the previous night.

At the inquest it was specified that death had resulted from heart disease, but the investigation proved very unsatisfactory to the friends of the deceased owing to the manner in which it was carried out. These circumstances combined to bring together a vast assemblage of persons to assist at the Harbinson obsequies on Sunday morning. Philip Harbinson, whose death we announce today, was at that time in Crumlin Road Jail, but was not allowed to attend his brother's remains to their last resting place in the family graveyard at Ballinderry. He accompanied them to the gate of the prison, and there was forced to turn back. The rigor he had endured affected a naturally powerful constitution, so that for long afterwards he was in extremely delicate health. For the past six years the old man had been confined to his bed with paralysis. The funeral took place from his residence in Michael Street, Belfast, for interment in Ballinderry.

Two handsome wreaths were laid upon the coffin, a harp of white sweet pea, crimson roses and hothouse fern, from the Belfast Amnesty Association (Robert Johnston, President; Henry Dobbin, Vice-President); a cross of rare and beautiful flowers from the C.J. Kickham Society and staff of the *Shan Van Vocht*.

William had been a colour sergeant in the Antrim militia stationed at the North Queen Street, Victoria Barracks. He is buried in the ancient monastic grounds of Portmore, Ballinderry, Co. Antrim. His name is inscribed on a stone in Milltown Cemetery.

2. He was one of those interned for two months in 1940 for alleged pro-German activity, and was later a Director of the Educational Building Society, being appointed Secretary in the thirties. By the sixties he might frequently have been seen having his aperitif in Davy Byrne's pub near Grafton Street.

3. 5 Catholics unemployed for every 2 of the other

4. Referred to in Mattie O'Neill's account

5. See *Harry*, page 107: this is followed by accounts of the actions in Belfast.

6. It was Eddie Joe who excused a friend of his who had signed out; when a good soldier knows his army is defeated, he surrenders before he is annihilated, he then prepares for the next battle. Defeated he may be, but conquered, never.

7. See this writer's *Harry*, for Pat Shannon.

8. Peadar Kearney, who had been living in Inchicore at the time of his death, was born at 68 Lower Dorset Street, Dublin, in 1884, and was a house painter by trade. The words were set to music; an original composition by Patrick Heeney in 1907. It was adopted in 1916 as a republican marching song. In the mid-thirties the government paid him £600 for the song copyright.

### THE DUNDALK MEN:

BARNEY O'CALLAGHAN, TOM Ó FEARGHAIL, PEADAR MAC ARDGAIL, JIMMY WYNNE AND PADDY MURPHY: *With in Portlaoise Prison*, SEAN MC CAUGHEY LIAM RICE and JIM CROFTON and a note on MINISTER RUTTLEDGE.

The re-creation of the story of the 'Secret Army' of 50, 60, nearly 70 years ago from their own testimony, and with only fragmentary records, has involved well over three hundred interviews in many parts of Ireland, and of that number, around 40 are given *in extenso* here.

While not placed last in this volume, the Dundalk men of County Louth, Barney O'Callaghan, Tomás Ó Fearghail, Peadar Mac Ardgail, Jimmy Wynne and Paddy Murphy were, in fact, the final batch of Republican veterans spoken to. And it was appropriate also that Dundalk, the capital of Co. Louth, should be chosen for this final visitation, Louth, in part an Ulster county; in part Leinster. A landing place for the Celtic invaders, many centuries before Christ, at Inver Colpa, on the mouth of the Boyne; birthplace of the legendary Cuchullain, and across whose lands and countryside, invaders and armies have for centuries shuttled over. Our veterans here are exclusively of Dundalk, but we do list at the end the names of all of the Curragh period who hailed from Dundalk and the Drogheda areas, and numbers from other parts of the county.

*O Paddy me hearties, do away with your parties.  
Let men of all creeds and opinions agree.  
If the orange and green boys no longer were seen boys  
How easy it would be boys old Ireland to free.*

### BARNEY O'CALLAGHAN



Barney O'Callaghan quoted the ditty from Jimmy Hope, the weaver of Templepatrick, whose colourful story fills the pages of *Antrim and Down in 1798*.

Barney's father was an engine driver on the Great Northern Railway whose main rail works was in Dundalk. He came from further down the line, from Drumiskin. His mother was Alice Connolly from Spencer Hill, Castlebellingham, and we had no

particular Republican background, he says. In the hey-day years of the Movement, in 1935, he was invited, with a few friends, by Leo Mc Eaney, to join the I.R.A.

We were taken over to a place called the Clump in Cox's Demense, which is now Marian Park, and there he met both Ritchie Goss and Gerry Halfpenny. Both of them born leaders, he says, and both were to serve organisational spells in England; Halfpenny eventually imprisoned 12 years on the Isle of Wight, and Goss executed by this state in Portlaoise.

In the demesne they were trained in short arms, drill and extended formations, and Barney found himself attached to Signals, under Halfpenny. Bicycles brought them in summer ten miles into the Cooley Mountains where they fired off rounds with rifles, short arms and Thompsons. Goss, Halfpenny and Paddy Downey were in charge there. Downey was from Co. Mayo, working in Mc Cann's bakery, and in late November played a role in burning northern custom huts from Omeath to Carrickarnon, later leaving to others to incinerate many of the remaining huts along the Border as far as the Derry/Donegal boundary. It was a symbolic offering, and a prelude to the bombing campaign in England, although none of the veterans spoken to on this occasion took part in that.

They were often pulled in coming from the exercises around Faughart, and Barney at this period had commenced to serve his time as a turner in the railway works where they had around seven hundred employed. Jim 'Fisty' Murtagh was O.C of the Dundalk Battalion at this time but he did not persevere beyond 1938, parting ways with the younger Goss on the activist policy advocated by the new Executive under Sean Russell. Joe Fitzsimons, Quartermaster, was another who failed to see eye to eye with the new policy; he retired.

Barney recalls a meeting out on the hills, in the summer of 1938 attended by Stephen Hayes, later on to act as Chief of Staff, in the absence of Russell overseas, and in 1941 uncovered as an agent for the Free State Government. Hayes appeared there as an observer, deeply in conversation with Halfpenny, attired in a heavy crombie coat 'for all the world like a teddy bear', and accompanied by a lady. On another occasion in the same area, at a place called the white piers, Joe Mc Garrity was present with Ritchie Goss and John Carroll, the Training Officer.

## TOM Ó FEARGHAIL



Tomás Ó Fearghail, a brother of Joe Farrell, who was a close friend of Frank Aiken and long term Fianna Fáil T.D, is a true native of Dundalk. His mother was Catherine Garvey, and her brother Paddy, at 38 years of age, was the oldest man to leave Dundalk that Easter Sunday to participate in the Easter Rising in Dublin. They were blocked at Castlebellingham.

According to a report of that time, parties of men in cars from Dundalk stopped on the Monday afternoon at Castlebellingham. When approached by two police, Sean Mc Entee and Frank Martin threatened to shoot if they advanced. The armed group numbered about 20, and their intention was to reach Dublin to participate in the Rising. At this point, a Lieut. Dunville arrived, and shortly afterwards shooting broke out in which Dunville was wounded and a policeman, Mc Gee, was shot dead. Shortly afterwards all of the cars, except one which had broken down, departed. Two others charged later were Denis Leahy, described as a labourer, of Dundalk, and James Scally, a coach painter of Dundalk. The party had been shadowed leaving Dundalk on Sunday morning, travelling via Ardee in five cars, and shadowed all of the time by a Sergeant M. Weymes of Dundalk.

Tom's brother Sean or 'Shando' was interned in the Curragh in the forties and claimed the honour of being first in and the last out. But Tom himself was not there; remaining on the other side of the wire, in the National Army, or the Free State Army in these accounts, as that was where he felt his duty at that particular time lay.

With his good knowledge of Irish he had his place in the Irish speaking battalion, *An Caidreamh*. He was a close friend of Liam Fagan, of Riversdale, who was interned. In the years that Liam was absent he helped with neighbours to mind his farm. Tom did not join the Movement proper until 1962 when he became a member of the Willie Stewart Cumann of Sinn Féin; he has a deep interest in Irish history; his bookcase express's it all.

Paddy Garvey, Tom's uncle was involved throughout the Tan War and the Civil War, while brother John, another uncle, was on hunger strike in the internment camp of Ballykinlar. Frankie Martin, an uncle of Peter Mc Ardle was there too. At this point Barney chipped in on our conversation recalling Samuel George Fluke, a Protestant Republican from the North. Charged in April 1939 with possession of explosives in Tottenham Court Road, he was acquitted on May 22, when his landlady, Catherine O'Connell declared his father to be an Orangeman, and that the coat he was wearing, which showed traces of potassium chlorate, belonged to her son Edward, sentenced to 20 years for being concerned with Willie Gaughran in an attempt to destroy the Hammersmith suspension bridge. George was arrested in Dublin in August 1940, serving six months in Arbour Hill for refusing to account for his movements, and was interned thereafter in the Curragh. He was strong on recitations; one of his favourites being:

*Who is Ireland's enemy?  
Not Germany nor Spain,  
Not Russia, France or Austria,  
They forged for her no chain  
Nor quenched her hearths, nor razed her homes,  
Nor laid her altars low,  
Nor sent her sons to tramp the hills,  
Amid the winter snow.*

This he would deliver with vigour at a concert in the Icebox. Máirtín Ó Cadhain was studying Welsh at the time, and George was instrumental in obtaining a bible in that language for him from the minister who used visit him.

## PEADAR MAC ARDGAIL:



Peadar, who was not interned in the forties, but recalls much of what went on, had, through his mother, Rose, a connection with the earlier period through her brother Frankie Martin. His father, also Peter, hailed from the townland of Sheelagh, on the Monaghan border. His uncle Frankie, already referred to, was sentenced by drumhead courtmartial in May 1916 along with Sean Mc Entee and others, following the Castlebellingham skirmish. He spent three years in Ballykinlar Camp, Co. Down in a darkened cell, and upon release had to wear bandages over his ailing eyes.

I was born in 1921, Peadar says; attending the Christian Brothers school some six years later. In 1931 Brother Leonard, known for his physique as 'Carnera', after the great boxer, invited the class to rise and sing the *Soldiers Song*. George Plunkett, Chief Scout of Fianna Éireann, had arrived and Brother Leonard gave him time to address the boys, inviting them to join the scouts. Peadar was not to join however until five years later, and after another lapse of years, while employed in Rawson's shoe factory, entered the Movement, Óglaigh na h-Éireann itself. Often pulled in, ostensibly for an identity check to Ann Street barracks (1) whenever there was an incident in the town; Peadar was never held for a prolonged period.

Early in January 1939, in preparation for the English campaign, Barney and others were out after midnight posting the Halifax ultimatum. They were fully behind the Campaign; we knew it might not go very far, Barney said, but hopefully it would end in Ireland's favour. That was not to be. World War Two commenced in September and the Campaign gradually petered out. Sometime in November he was arrested, expecting to be interned, but it was not to happen just yet. The Gavan Duffy *habeus corpus* judgement came through and the 70 odd internees in Arbour Hill were freed, so Barney never left Ann Street.

Instead, when not in the Great Northern works, he was at drill parades or at public prayers being said in the Square during the crisis of the hunger strike of early April, 1940.

It was inevitable however that Barney's name would be on a list for internment as soon as the great round up would commence, and so it was. Daybreak of June 2; my father, he says, came upstairs; *there are men in the kitchen: they have come to arrest you.*

In the Curragh there was an officer, a typical '22 man, called Fitzpatrick. His brother was a chaplain there and a thoroughgoing Stater. Barney admits that, as a result, he was not a great Mass goer when Fr. Fitzpatrick was officiating.

## JIMMY WYNNE:



A remarkable thing about the four men is their wide range of readership; largely Irish history and the topography of the area. Jimmy Wynne says he has read almost every work on Sean O'Casey, and he seems to be an expert on Robbie Burns whose sister is buried in the churchyard of St. Nicholas; not forgetting Florence Wilson, the poetess who wrote *The Man From God Knows Where*: Ethne Carbery, the poetess who wrote *Brian Boy Magee*, is another of his favourites.

It must be over 60 years since I attended the Bodenstown that was banned; the one in 1931, he began. He had been told to bring some class of a weapon but the only article he could lay hands on was a poker, so the poker and he travelled in a crowded wind blown lorry to Sallins and they got through with no bother.

On another occasion about 1934 they travelled by through train to Sallins; Great Northern carriages all the way. Entering a compartment with Goss, Willie Stewart and Willie Gaughran, the boys, but for an occasional whisper, stayed silent, as there was a fairly old man dressed like a British conservative in one corner. After a while he spoke over to them; *well lads, I suppose you are wondering why I am on this train. I led a battalion of men to Bodenstown in the summer of 1913, I was then a captain in the British Army; I am a Co. Antrim man, so who am I?* He was Captain Jack White, who in October 1913 urged Larkin to form a Citizen Army, and those ragged volunteers he afterwards helped to train in Croydon Park.(2)

Continuing Jimmy recalled manoeuvres at Stephenstown about 1934 when Moss Twomey was present. Pat Farrell had his farm there, in a house perched on the top of a hill. They used hold engineering classes in it, sometimes twice a week, with Gerry Halfpenny, Willie Stewart and Peter Duffy and Ashe Hughes among others. Gelnignite was frequently boiled to be creamed off then as nitro glycerine.

Later he met Tom Barry in O'Hagan's; that would be in 1937 when Barry was working on a scheme to bring off an incursion, with a Cork 24 man active service unit, to capture Gough Military Barracks in Armagh city, and thus set alight a flame throughout the Six Counties. It was based upon the Easter Rising, Dublin G.P.O strategy, but saner heads were of the opinion that, while the barracks could conceivably be captured, (after all it was successfully raided in daylight in June 12 1954, after persuading Sean Garland of Dublin to join and to spend some time in there as

a soldier; as a result a considerable quantity of arms were removed) it would not have set a flame alight in the Six Counties at that time. One must always bear in mind, chipped in Barney, that the Dublin administration no matter what its hue will always co-operate with the British in suppressing the Nationalist population of the area. Tom Barry dropped the plan; he appears to have had second thoughts about it as it already had leaked through Republican circles in Cork.

Jimmy was arrested in January 1940, and sentenced to three months for failing to account for his movements; a commonly employed holding charge as it was all the time intended to intern him for the duration.

Jimmy then touched upon a man notable in the Curragh because of his silence; Fitzsimons of Inniskeen. Co. Monaghan. In his younger days he had been a considerable footballer having played for Monaghan county. A deep thinker but willing to talk if engaged; otherwise he was known as the 'silent man'. John, at this time of writing, was still living near Inniskeen, and probably still rearing pigs. He was marked down for killing in the Tan period, said Jimmy, but he escaped under fire out of a hut, when some of his companions were killed.

Jimmy Browne was another he recalled. His mother was shot in the head by a Tan when she helped her young brother escape. She recovered and had a family of 21. A remarkable women. Jimmy was born in 1918. He was arrested a few months after his marriage in 1940 and sentenced to four years for possession of arms. He spent a period in solitary confinement for striking a warder who had pinched his daughter's arm when she tried to pass him a square of chocolate through the wire during a closed visit. He was to be the father of Fra Browne, former Sinn Féin councillor of Dundalk.

Farrell Gallagher of Aughnasheelin, Co. Leitrim, was recalled then by Jimmy as coming from a strongly Republican family. A coal miner by trade, he was interned over a four year period, and had helped in the efforts made to tunnel out.

After Jimmy was released late in 1944, he returned to the quarry at Mount Pleasant, north of Dundalk, where he had been employed. He was then engaged by a man called O'Connor on tree cutting in the Ravensdale forest; there being a shortage of every sort of fuel at the time. He remained on that for a number of years until his employer passed away, after which he returned to the stone quarry. Working in industry in England in the early fifties he suffered a serious injury that caused him finally to retire.

#### **PEADAR MAC ARDGAIL Resumed:**

Tony Deery was our Battalion Intelligence Officer when I joined in 1938, Peadar recommenced. His parents had a dairy shop in Chapel Street, and he himself kept a very low profile, never appearing at parades. Afterwards he transferred to the Dublin area where he again worked very much under cover for Headquarters.

Deery was well known to Peadar as he had attended engineering classes under him in Pat Farrell's house in Stephenstown, already referred to. Following the finance raid on Dundalk Post Office in Clanbrassil Street, where Tony Deery and Tom Murphy, a building contractor, maintained watch from the roof, Tony left for Dublin, on the run.

Early in 1942, Tony was arrested in Dublin; recognising his importance and effec-



tiveness he received a sentence of seven years on March 31. From Arbour Hill he was transferred in June 1944 to the Curragh where, in a confidential report, he was described as a model prisoner. Early in 1946 he was on extended parole until the official release date of June 1947.(3)

In late 1942, as O.C Dundalk Battalion, Peadar was approached at the Friary Church by Paddy Dermody; in a week there would be an Army Convention held at a certain place in Co. Meath, he was told. The state forces were now pressing hard upon the I.R.A, and a new Chief of Staff was required to replace Sean Mc Caughey arrested early in September in Rathmines. Would he vote for Charlie Kerins of Tralee, then unknown to him? A few evenings later, speaking to Judith Gaughran of the Demense - later married to Paddy Duffy whose brother Willie was serving ten years in England - she inquired if he would be voting for Tony Deery at the Convention.

That puzzled and alarmed him that two personalities might be in the contest. He was sufficiently concerned in view of the recent Hayes disclosures, not to attend an I.R.A Convention, although, in fact, Charlie Kerins, later hanged on December 1, by Pierrepont in Mountjoy, much later was appointed Chief of Staff and so remained for a further two years until his arrest in Rathmines on June 16, 1944.

Days after the execution of Dick Goss in Portlaoise on August 9, 1941, Peadar left home going on the run, staying first in the holiday home of Nora Mc Dowell in Omeath.(4) Gerry O'Callaghan, later waylaid and shot dead by the R.U.C on August 31, 1942 at Hannahstown, north of Belfast, had stayed there also; his Fianna uniform was still hanging there. Walking from Omeath to Dundalk and then slipping by bus to Dublin, he met Nora at *An Stad* and was brought by her to another safe house, the terraced home of Rosanne Collins at 22 Northbrook Avenue, North Strand. There he met Bridie Dolan of Belfast, the victim of explosive injuries received three years before in May 1938 when she had been sent to remove grenades from the home of the Bradys of Leeson Street. (So sensitive were these grenades that two bomb disposal experts, detailed from Kilroot Fort to remove them, were also injured). She had lost both hands and her eyesight, and with her face disfigured, had her head still swathed in bandages as she underwent skin grafting, with a slit only for her mouth. A remarkably brave and uncomplaining woman, Peadar says; we used to spoon feed her and then light a cigarette for her to smoke. (Albert Price later married Bridie's sister, mother of Dolors and Marian, on hunger strike in 1974, when they were force fed over 167 days).

Paddy Dermody, O.C of the Eastern Command, called after some time and brought Peter to a house, 12 A Grosvenor Square, Rathmines, where he met Charlie Kerins, Maurice O'Neill, (5) Harry White, Liam Burke, Archie Doyle and others in the vanguard of the Movement. Mick Quill, in a trench coat with epaulets of which he was unusually proud, was introduced by Charlie as 'the only true I.R.A man here'. I can still recall, Peter says, Charlie standing at that upstairs window overlooking Portobello Barracks (now Cathal Brugha), his hands in his pockets, as he watched the Free State Army pounding the square, while at the same time quietly singing, *Is grádh geall mo croidhe thú Tír Connail a stór.*

It was late August when they left there for Donaghmoyn House, three miles

from Carrickmacross and seven from Crossmaglen, over the Border in Co. Armagh. Owned by Mrs. Caragher and Tom Caragher, who had played a part in the Tan and Civil Wars, it was now host to around 20, mostly local lads, who would be using it as a springboard for an attack upon the R.U.C. barrack at Crossmaglen.

That attack was planned for early morning on September 2, the day that Tom Williams was due to hang in Belfast. That story is related in *Harry*, where Donaghmoyno and its people are photographed and described (proving the permanence of the Fenian tradition; it is described also in *Dublin Made Me*, by C.S. 'Tod' Andrews.) The attack did not so much fail, as to be intercepted. There were many other operations throughout the Six Counties at the same time; continuing for months, but eventually petering out. Peter had returned to 12 A Grosvenor Square meanwhile with Christy O'Callaghan of Tralee, Liam Dowling and the leadership; the house being a three bay, three storey with a garden level basement, granite steps up to a hall door, and a side door under. It was an end of terrace house, with a laneway leading back to Leinster Road.

Spontaneously, one drizzly afternoon, they all decided to go to the cinema, and the Princess, as it then was, on the corner of William's Park, was visited by seven I.R.A. men, including four of the most wanted men in the two states of Ireland.

Seated in the semi-darkness of an empty auditorium they were startled at the sudden arrival of an entire troop of military. The afternoon showing had been reserved for a soldiers' matinee; but one can imagine, Peadar laughs, the shock and surprise if it had resulted in the capture of the most wanted men in the state.

The next day they left Dublin by train to Dundalk and thence by bus to Carrick and were soon back in Donaghmoyno, but their cover had been blown by the attack of ten days before. There were police and soldiers everywhere, evidently in close co-operation with the occupying forces in Co. Armagh; they could rest nowhere, so instructions were given to disperse. As Peter was about to depart, Paddy Dermody called to him to leave with him the .38 revolver he carried. That was to be the weapon he had on him when he was shot dead in the mini battle that ensued on the eve of his sister Jane's wedding to Mick Tuite in the countryside of Lisnacanigan, near Kilnacrott Abbey, on September 30.

With Christy O'Callaghan, Peadar left for Castleblayney by train that evening for Dublin, arriving at Connolly Station at 10.30. Public transport finished at nine each evening, so the two set out walking to Rathmines, stopping to have a meal of chips and eggs in a chip shop along the way. It was dark and raining heavily when they arrived at a strangely silent 12 A Grosvenor Square. Proceeding to the tiny side door under the steps, Peadar gave three knocks. Instantly the door was flung open and they were grabbed and manhandled along a dark hallway, before being catapulted into a kitchen. Lights were switched on to show a phalanx of Branch men, guns drawn, standing there. Two rushed at them, and bawling, commenced to strip all of their clothing off them; punches and blows being freely administered.

*So you have finally caught the O.C.*, said a grim faced Sean Gantly, flanked by Det. Sergt. Gill, when Peadar found himself piloted upstairs and into a room awaiting him; the Chief Superintendent being seated there, the sole illumination being the street lamp outside lighting the side of his face. After perfunctory questioning, but

with clothing restored, the two were removed in a car to a sealed room in the Lower Castle Yard where Peadar was interrogated on his own by three of them for the remainder of the night.

In the morning he was removed to the Bridewell but, with nightfall, was back in Dublin Castle, in a different room and with a light directed upon his face and a light overhead. Questioning in rapid fire fashion was resumed, but after an hour he was left seated in a snooker room where two Branch men were playing at a table. Idly lifting a newspaper there he found it snatched from his hands, whereupon he was pushed into a corner. Move away from there, one shouted, and it will be your last. These strange antics proceeded for two more nights; the days being spent solitary in the Bridewell, Christy O'Callaghan in the next cell; the nights reserved for close questioning in the Castle.

There was a change of routine on the third night. Crushed into a car he was driven into the countryside and led into a field where he was pushed against a tree. Gill, holding a revolver, advanced towards him; *if I was to shoot you now*, he remarked coldly, *as you shot Dinny O'Brien, no one would mourn you and no one could point a finger at us*. The other policemen had commenced to drift away to the car at this time whereupon Gill whispered; *look, your only chance of escaping a rope is to make a run for it now*. But Peadar, although frightened, was not biting; he allowed himself to be conveyed to the Bridewell, where he attempted, under a covering of filthy blankets, to sleep the whole matter off. It was not to be, for the next morning he was back in a different room in the Castle yard. Left alone, he noticed the window was slightly open, but at the same time was aware of a shadow moving outside. I pulled back from the window, he says; I could see what their game was.

He was approached then by a detective, Tom Kenny, brought from Dundalk for identification purposes. If you can account for your movements over the 24 hours of September 9, when O'Brien was murdered, I will see what can be done for you. Peter refused although he had played no part in the political assassination. The following morning he was put through the mug shot routine in the yard of the Bridewell; his finger prints impressed upon a pad, and then to his bewilderment, brought before a desk and charged with the murder of Det. Sergt. Denis O'Brien. Left again for 48 hours in the filthy cell, on cocoa and margarine, he found himself brought back to the Castle. This time the interrogators seemed less certain of their quarry; they had ceased to threaten.

The following evening he was removed handcuffed, from the Bridewell, and brought to Connolly Station where he was locked into a box wagon. On arrival at Dundalk the sliding door was unlocked, and he found himself confronted by two Branch men. Without speaking a word one unlocked the handcuffs. Relieved, he passed outside where he was greeted by Benny Murphy; *did I not warn you to stay away from Dublin, but you would not listen. No, you would not listen*.

Peter, however, could not understand his good fortune until spoken to by Detective Kenny some weeks later. Your uncle Frank Martin who was involved with Sean Mc Entee in 1916, intervened on your behalf, he was told. Releasing him in this fashion after prolonged interrogation, meant that there was a chance the I.R.A would believe him to be a traitor. However there was no likelihood of that happen-

ing, as Peadar made it his business to give an account of the entire affair to Paddy Dermody. Nonetheless, three weeks following his detention, he was conveyed to Dundalk barracks and offered protection! We are aware, he was told, of a plot to shoot you. Peter, knowing there was no foundation for this, turned down the offer. A form of good behaviour was then pushed across the desk, but, smiling and shaking his head, he turned on his heel and walked out of the station.

### PADDY MURPHY:



Paddy Murphy, born in 1917, is a well built, dark, striking man from Dowdallshill, with whose club at one time he played gaelic football, but at the time we speak of he was working in Rawson's shoe factory(5A). In 1937, he commenced, we had a bonfire on the Border, referring to the Royalty visit to Belfast in mid-1937 of the new monarch, George VI and Queen Elizabeth. Belfast loyalists, it seem to me, Paddy commenced, need at least one Royal visit a year to keep their morale up. With me was Jimmy Wynne, Sean O'Farrell and John Mc Kevitt. Nearly the entire Dundalk unit of 40 were engaged as we were training for the English campaign and many of us expected to volunteer. Eventually Ritchie Goss, Willie Gaughran and Gerry Halfpenny went. Faughart rail bridge was blown by Barney O'Callaghan and Joe Fitzsimons as they intended running special trains from Dublin, and we were not going to let them. Nearly every customs hut from Carrickarnon to Derry was set on fire or blown up that night. Returning from the operation some of them were arrested, although they were not held for long.

The first finance raid, Paddy Murphy relates, was planned for Dundalk Post Office, Clanbrassil Street, on April 3, 1941, when the weekly intake of money would be delivered. Finance raids, he explained, would not be claimed by the I.R.A, but they were necessary since all means of obtaining money, even for prisoners' dependants, was blocked; where it was not blocked by law, it was blocked by the heavy handedness, arrest and bullying of the police. Tom Mc Elroy,(6) Joe O' Callaghan, Peter Duffy and myself were detailed for it, an operation that was planned by Tony Deery; he and Tom Murphy (7) would be on the high roof of the building, ostensibly adjusting a wireless aerial, but in a commanding position overlooking the main street of Dundalk.

Traffic however was very light because of what was called the Emergency, namely the European war, at that time, while the use of balaclavas and stocking masks

was unknown. Post Office money, including childrens' allowance, was brought weekly in a tricycle cart by a boy messenger, and the plan was that Joe O'Callaghan would remove this money, which was mainly notes with some coin, into a large bag and make off.

Tom Mc Elroy and myself, Paddy relates, walked into the yard; we produced guns and under the archway held up Maguire, an ex-British soldier who worked there, and a young fellow called Mc Cann. Maguire made a move to escape into the post office but was shot in the leg just as Joe O'Callaghan grabbed the money which was about to be transferred from the tricycle into the building. Joe O'Callaghan had the £960 in a patchwork bag but the bag burst in Market Street, silver coins and notes scattering in all directions. With shots fired and the street alerted, we had no choice but to make off. Joe O'Callaghan went north to Ravensdale on a bicycle, while Tom Mc Elroy, Peter Duffy and myself cut down Market Street; I going to a house in Riverstown where I remained for two days. The man of the house then went into Dundalk to see how things were, and he told me that Peter Duffy, Tom Mc Elroy and Tommy Greene had been arrested. Tommy Greene, being on the Battalion staff was Finance Officer, and was to have taken charge of the money. It was known that I was involved so I moved from Riverstown to a house on the Long Avenue, remaining there two nights before taking a bus to Dublin where I called upon Maurice Twomey. He arranged that I stay in *An Stad*, and while there I was joined by Willie Stewart from Drogheda and the lads who had been in Longford.

I travelled to Co. Longford by push bike then with Ritchie, and we stayed for a while until we got word on the Friday from Stephen Rynne, a headquarters man, that there was to be a raid upon the Northern Bank, Oldcastle, on the Monday morning, the fifth of May. Ritchie and myself made our way to Dundalk, where we stayed in Kathleen Morton's, a sister of Benny Murphy; from there we sent word to Paddy Duffy, Quartermaster of the unit, that we required to see him to obtain short arms.

Walking to the bridge over the Castletown River, we met Paddy, but he disappointed us by saying that he had no arms available. We had to leave Mortons then, so we sought a bed in Gaughrans but, they were high risk and could not take us. We went to Seatown Place and stayed in O'Hagan's; if anything it was a higher risk as Mrs. O'Hagan and daughter Carmel, always generous with accommodation, were interned in Mountjoy. We left there on Sunday, travelling to Drogheda, to Jimmy Rooney's place, *Baymore*. We passed on from there on bicycles to the Casey home at Oghill, Co. Longford.

We told Josie and old Joe, the father, and Lizzie Ann, that we could not remain but continued on to Tom Maguire's home, between Granard and Oldcastle, arriving there about three in the morning, and were greeted by Willie Stewart, Paddy Dermody and Joe O'Callaghan. We sat down and made arrangements for the raid on the Northern Bank, but we had no car; we shall have to take one, said Dermody with finality. We left the house, going up and staying in a big hay shed belonging to Paddy Maguire: it was the fifth of May. At half past six in the morning Paddy came in and was astounded to find us there. I am only going to milk the cow, he said, but, calling then to Paddy Dermody, he went out, and Paddy quickly came back with rounds of soda bread and cans of tea. Tea, as you know, was a scarce commodity at

that time but they had it.

We went then to the far side of Oldcastle. The doctor was the only one, apart from the parish priest, who would have a car still running and with petrol in it. *What do you want my car for*, said he, standing there in his pyjamas. *Never mind*, said Paddy; *only give us the keys*. Going back in, he returned with a key which he gave to Paddy and then, not even waiting for us to close the door, he mounted the stairs again to bed. But none of us could drive a car, so, thinking quickly, Paddy went off and returned with a young fellow willing to drive us for a few pounds. We returned then to the hay barn, collecting Ritchie, Willie and O'Callaghan, and the six of us drove up to the bank; parking outside, waiting for it to open. Staff commenced to enter, so I walked in, with Ritchie and Dermody behind me.

As arranged I walked over to the cashier with a twenty pound note and asked politely for change. With that, Ritchie came behind me with a gun, and leaping upon the counter demanded all of the money; Dermody meanwhile covering the door. At that, one of the girls let out a screech, but I said to stay quiet and that we would not be seeking any personal money. We then searched drawers and the officials for a key to the safe, as there should have been more money, but we drew a blank. Taking all of the cash, amounting to £704, we prepared to leave, but first we locked the girls and male staff in a cloakroom, entered from the porch.

There was a pig market in Oldcastle that day; some one had noticed the car full of men and notified the barracks. Two guards had come along, but they merely waited across the road observing; they did not interfere. We got into the car and the lad drove us to a blacksmith's forge on the outskirts where we all got out, leaving the car there. We then mounted bicycles and rode back through Oldcastle and on to Oghill where we stayed in Casey's for around three weeks, attending parades and meetings here and there. Stephen Rynne then came and told us to prepare for a raid on a bank in Castlepollard.

Monday morning was fixed for the raid on the bank in Castlepollard, so on Saturday night we left Oghill for Maguire's. (Meanwhile Willie Stewart had been seized in Clarke's of Ballyboy, Athboy: Willie, a small, very sincere and dedicated Dundalk lad, was to be sentenced on June 11 to 14 years and 12 strokes of the cat by the Military Tribunal; a sentence excessive by any measure of fairness: he was then sent to Maryborough where I was soon to join him. James Gerard Clarke got two years). Paddy Dermody and Joe O'Callaghan were there to meet us, and Mrs. Maguire had a pot of porridge bubbling on the hob. *There is a can of milk there*, she said, in her off-hand fashion, *so help yourselves*. We ate the porridge and then lay down on beds for a while. This time, June 9, we had a car, and we had a local driver. Drawing up outside the Hibernian Bank, I stepped briskly in with Ritchie after me and Paddy minding the door. During this time a clerk from the Ulster Bank came across and was allowed in, but he then had to remain.

A guard crossed the square in the direction of the bank, but Dermody fired two shots in the air and the street cleared like lightning. We emerged with £636, hopped into the car, and some way outside the town passed the cash to the man from H.Q. Away with us then on bikes to Oghill where we lay on the alert, because after all of this activity Casey's could be targeted for a raid. Barney Casey had been shot dead

in the Curragh internment camp the previous December and all of the family were known to be Republican, but it was situated upon a hill with views in all directions. If anything should happen we hoped we would get away.

When the Free State raid came on July 18, I was not there as Ritchie had sent me to Dundalk to collect ammunition. Joe O'Callaghan, our youngest volunteer at 18, had arrived the previous evening after inquiring the way. At six in the morning the rumble of lorries and cars was heard.

They were all in bed in a room at the back of the house that had a handy escape window in the event of a raid. Ritchie leaped through it followed by O'Callaghan and Joe Casey, the son. Scattering across a field a soldier came right up against Ritchie who grabbed him and held him taking hold of his rifle which he passed to Joe O'Callaghan. It was at this point that Goss may have fired two shots from his Smith and Wesson in the direction of the raiding party, although it was found to have five spent cartridges after surrender.

There was fire coming from the detectives at the lower end and the two were now trapped in the cross fire. One of the soldiers got hit in the neck and another was wounded. Goss, who had six rounds in his revolver, may have fired three, but the cross fire from Branch men and military was considerable. And it was cross fire; the soldiers firing in a westerly direction while the Branch men were firing in an easterly direction. Afterwards there was widespread disagreement at the Military Court by the four police and military witnesses on this. As we now know from observing shoot-outs by police, they are more likely to wound or to kill uninvolved persons rather than those they are pursuing. Ritchie released the soldier and commenced again to run across the field some hundreds of yards. As he did so, there were further bursts as he reached a bank.

Ducking behind the ditch he pulled out a handkerchief. *We may give up boys*, he said, addressing the two others, Joe O'Callaghan and Joe Casey; O'Callaghan still holding the Lee Enfield which he had not fired. Nonetheless he was charged with firing some shots although that was later withdrawn.

I was arrested early that same morning where I was staying at Mc Alevey's on the Castletown Road, Dundalk. I was conveyed to Kells and identified by the clerk that had crossed from the Ulster Bank in Castlepollard. I was taken then to the Bridewell where, in the morning, I met Ritchie and Joe Casey who had been brought in during the night. Greeting me that morning, Ritchie inquired when had I been brought in. *I think I am booked*, he said; meaning he would be executed. *Anyway*, he added, *I would rather be shot than get the cat*. Then he remarked quietly, *I don't suppose I will see you again*. We shook hands, and he was taken off to Arbour Hill while Joe Casey and myself were removed to Mountjoy. He had taken it so lightly I scarcely had time to think that it would be the last time I would see him.

Ritchie's case was brought before the Military Court; first in Longford Barracks, and then in Collins Barracks the following Tuesday, July 30 and subsequently. I was removed from Mountjoy on the same day and conveyed to the Curragh where I was lodged in the Kerry hut. Ritchie and Joe O'Callaghan were charged with shooting at members of the Garda Síochána, and members of the Defence Forces, with intent to evade arrest. They were not charged with wounding. However, resisting in that

manner was a capital offence, and the Military Court, before which they were charged (quite distinct from the Military Tribunal), was obliged to find one guilty or to discharge. If found guilty sentence of death would be carried out within 48 hours of it being confirmed by the government. Richard Goss was executed simply for firing at most five shots, none of which hit the soldier or the lieutenant. The evidence by the state was that 'the bullet which wounded the officer had not been found', while the one which hit the soldier 'did not come from the gun found in the dyke'.

That gun belonged to Goss.<sup>(8)</sup> On the application of Sean Mac Bride, accompanied by Con Lehane, Joe O'Callaghan on July 18, was found not guilty and was discharged. Nonetheless, the eighteen year old boy was charged with the post office raid in Dundalk, sentenced to fourteen years and consigned to Portlaoise.

Richard's last letters from Arbour Hill to the Clarkes of Castletown Road, Dundalk, reflected the light hearted lad that he was. *Dear Mr. and Mrs. Clarke: I am writing these few lines hoping you and the family are getting on well, and not worrying over events that have happened. I am content and prepared and there is no need to worry over me..... I still think of the good days we used to have with the dogs hunting and how Mick and I used to slide off to have a drink.* Asking to be remembered to eight other friends, he concludes, *Yours sincerely, Richard Goss.* The authorities withheld that letter; it was not delivered until seven years afterwards.

A fortnight later I was removed from the Curragh to Arbour Hill where I was questioned about the post office raid, and the shots directed at the legs of Maguire. I was there for two days, whereupon I was sent on remand to Mountjoy. On September 26, I appeared before the Tribunal where I was sentenced on a range of charges to 43 years, or, concurrently, to 14, and 12 strokes of the cat. I had, of course, refused to recognise the court, as did all of my comrades at that time. I was then taken back to D. Wing in Mountjoy.

After nearly four weeks I commenced to think that, maybe, they had forgotten about the cat; that I would not have to suffer it. Then early on this Monday morning, while I was still in bed, a warder unlocked saying, that the Governor required to see me downstairs. *I am after receiving word from the Department of Justice, said Sean Kavanagh, that the remainder of your sentence should be carried out.* He was accompanied in his office by the prison doctor and by Doctor O'Sullivan from the Mater Hospital. He reached over then to offer me a drink, but I refused; it would of course have been brandy, or a stiff whiskey, but I was not interested. We turned then, and with Kavanagh leading, and accompanied by the two doctors and warders, we descended to the basement. In a cell there I saw for the first time the apparatus of the triangle; a high steel contrivance bolted to the floor, with a pulley wheel and bar on top, and a rope traversing, so that a fellow's handcuffed hands and body would be drawn up to the full height of the apparatus.

No one, up to that moment, had spoken; then Kavanagh addressing me, said; *you had better strip.* I stripped to the waist and Kavanagh said, *step over here.* I was handcuffed to the wheel and my feet were strapped to each end of the triangle, so that my entire body was held quite taut. I was then blindfolded, at which moment someone entered with the lash. It consisted of nine stripes, with a small piece of lead at the end of each one. They curled right around the exposed body and were much more painful than I had imagined. At number nine; with Kavanagh counting each one, he asked if I could take any more, but I just said, *go ahead; finish it.*



They took a sheet then from a bath of ice, and wrapping it around me, I was placed on a stretcher and conveyed to the hospital. I could have walked, but they insisted I lie upon the stretcher. The two doctors and Kavanagh followed me.

Ointment was applied over the exposed skin which of course was punctured and bleeding. Kavanagh then asked if I wanted a drink, and the doctor said, yes, he wants a drink. A warder brought in a half glass of brandy, which I got down. I then fell into a deep dreamless slumber.

When after hours I awoke, I thought I was the most miserable man alive. I was in pain all over. I lay there very unhappy for two days. On the third Kavanagh came inquiring how I felt. I had to say that the soreness was still shooting through me. On the fourth day I was told to dress and report to Kavanagh's office. I dressed with some difficulty and managed to limp down the stairs along to his office. There were four detectives waiting for me there and I was handed over to them. I was taken then, in silence, in a car from inside Mountjoy to Portlaoise.(9)

It was a very frosty morning when I arrived, and the first man I met there was the chief warder, by name Mac Bride from Dundalk. But if from my home town he was by no means friendly; far from it. *Straighten up; (I still had my sores) you are now in Maryborough Convict Prison, with emphasis on 'convict prison'*. Forms were exchanged between the police and the warders, and I was then brought to Major Barrows' office.(10) Standing in front of me he read quickly the rules and regulations, and the remission for what they would term as good behaviour. I said I was not interested in convict regulations; I was a political prisoner and that was that.

I was then taken into the main prison block and downstairs to a basement, by a warder, Fennell, and another, where there was a bed and a suit of prison attire. Retiring, Fennell directed me to put on the clothes; up to that time I had worn my own; a sports jacket and trousers. They were intensely annoyed on their return to find me still attired and seated upon the bed. Grasping the sports coat, it was torn off me, while the shirt and anything else they could grasp went the same way. Major Barrows then entered, surveying the scene.

I told him I would not wear prison clothes. *Choose what you like*, said he, *but those clothes must come off*. They were already off, exposing my plastered back and sides. This is an awful business, said a doctor who then entered. Calling for privacy, he said that he had come to examine me. Do you smoke, said he, as he closed the door. I do, I said. Well you will not get any here; at the same time lighting one and putting it between my lips. He commenced then to examine my back. While he was doing so a warder entered: put out that cigarette, he ordered. I gave it to him, said the doctor, closing the door again. I will see you later on when you are in E.5, he then added.

Fennell returned again, and with Mac Bride, I was taken up five flights of steel steps to gallery E.5. At every step I took upwards Mac Bride hit me with a strap. I stumbled into a cell then and threw myself upon the bed. The doctor came at once and examined me as I lay there. I must have fallen asleep after that for I remained oblivious of everything over two days. Prisoners received four army blankets and two sheets for their bed; the sheets being changed weekly. Wearing one, tied over the shoulders, as I now did, meant that there was one less upon the bed.

That night I heard a knocking upon the pipe passing across the floor of each cell,

accompanied by a faint calling sound. In the morning a warder said that Mc Caughey had been trying to talk to me, and I learned that with two enamel mugs which I could use like a telephone in contact upon the pipe, I could speak and hear tolerably well. Mc Caughey gave three taps when he wanted to talk to me. Willie Stewart was then shifted to the same floor and I could chat with him also.

Confinement at that time was such that you never got outside the cell door, not even to empty slops; that was done for you by an ordinary convict escorted by a warder. You wore a blanket only with a hole cut in it through which your head passed; and a strip of blanket formed a belt for the waist. You had shorts and a pair of rough carpet slippers and no other clothes. You saw a warder only, and no one else. You got no letters or papers. You got out of the cell once a week to take a bath, when two warders escorted you there and back. The only light of day you saw was high up through the bars of the cell and there was no prisoner in the cell next to you because they purposely held those two empty. That went on for two years - longer for some such as Tomás Mac Curtain who had arrived a year earlier - but it ended in the summer months of 1943 when we were permitted one and a half hours in the morning and the same in the afternoon in the timber floored machine shop, which we christened the *Caidreamh*, a place that enabled us to converse and play board games.(11)

George Plant was executed on March 5, 1942 in Portlaoise. Paddy Murphy, now in solitary confinement for almost four months witnessed a brief scene that may astonish and shock those who knew Governor Michael Lennon of Arbour Hill Prison (under whom Plant had been confined for 18 months previously) and who - there are many references in this work - thought Lennon quite a decent fellow.

When Plant was brought from Dublin to Portlaoise, as Paddy Murphy tells it, he was put into the Governor's office which faces the main prison block. Which would overlook the Dublin road.(12) We were in E 5, on the top floor of the block. I placed my stool and table at the window, I lifted the stool on to the table and I stood upon the stool. A warder told me the night before that one of our fellows would be executed in the morning. Otherwise, not having any papers and letters, we would not have known. On the fifth of March the warder came around as usual, passing in our breakfast.

Immediately he departed I mounted the table and stool staring out. I saw a firing squad of soldiers come in under Commdt. Lennon: I had spent long enough in Arbour Hill not to mistake him. The minister arrived also and entered the Governor's office (we had christened him Mc Tockle, the son of a wheel barrow: he came to us every morning on inspection but not this morning).

I could see Plant inside the Governor's office. At ten minutes past eight two P.A.'s tapped on the window of the office, inside which there were already two P.A.'s. The door opened and George walked out, flanked by them. He was wearing a new blue suit with a white shirt and tie. Standing to attention, he looked up to where our cells were. I had the pillow slip which I fluttered from the window. I am certain that he saw it as I could see a flash of recognition. The soldiers then in full battle dress under Commdt. Lennon, marched out of sight around the corner. Within minutes the volley rang out, and minutes afterwards, or so it seemed to me, still watching from the window, the corpse of George Plant was carried back around the corner in a plain deal box.(13)



George Plant taken near Fethard in 1938

After a long series of court and Tribunal trials, George Plant, initially joined with Joseph O' Connor of Brosna and Michael Walsh of Kilmacow and Patrick Davern of Glenbower, south Killkenny, was condemned to death by the Military Court on February 27, 1942; the sentence included Walsh and Davern, while O'Connor, acquitted, was returned to years of internment. Within days the sentence on Walsh and Davern was commuted to life imprisonment while that on Plant was confirmed. But to enable the three to be sentenced it had been necessary to invoke two Emergency orders, No 41F, and one specially drafted, No. 139. The Labour Party brought a motion opposing into the Senate; among those who upheld order 139 were Doctors Alton, Barniville and Farren, Miss Pearse, Seamus Robinson, Bill Quirke. Cú Uladh MacGinley, Frank Mac Dermot and J.J. McEllin; a neat combination of Anglos and former Republicans.

George Plant was shot by military police in Portlaoise, on March 5, 1942.

See Tipperary Historical Society paper 1989 by Michael Moroney. Nollaig Ó Gadhra, *Feasta*, Marta 1992, with a photograph of Elizabeth and a five page account. See local pamphlet of the 50th. anniversary and a note in *Harry*. Close relatives are still living; his sister died in Fethard in 1992.

#### Portlaoise Prisoners:

Sean Mc Caughey, who died on May 11, 1946 after 23 days on hunger and thirst strike, was from Aughnacloy, Co. Tyrone, but spent most of his life in Belfast. He had been arrested in Rathmines on September 2, 1941. Frank Kerrigan of Cork city had escaped, with Jim Smith of Oldcastle and Jackie Griffith, from Mountjoy on November 1, 1942, and had been recaptured in 1943. Griffith was then dead; the two recaptured were sent to Portlaoise. Patrick Murphy and William (Bill) Stewart of Dundalk (both had received the cat) were in Portlaoise from the late autumn of 1941, as was young Joe O'Callaghan, also from Dundalk. Liam Rice was there from early in 1942. Joby O'Sullivan was there also, for a period from 1942 before being transferred to Dundrum Asylum. Michael Walsh of Kilmacow, Co. Kilkenney, was imprisoned since February 1942, arising from the Devereux charge. There was also Jim Crofton, the Wexford man, the spy in the Castle; a Branchman for whom a special

punishment was reserved. Harry White arrived in February 1947, by which time the hardships had largely ended and most other sentences had expired or had been remitted. Stewart, Murphy and Kerrigan were released in December 1946: the honour for initiating the struggle for political treatment in Maryborough must go however to Tomás Mac Curtain, who arrived there in late July 1940, and pursued a lonely fight for 18 months before anyone else arrived. With the change of government he was released in March 1948, along with Eamonn Smullen, Jim Smith, Liam Rice and Harry White.

You could take a book twice a week from the prison library, supplied from the County Library, Paddy relates; you chose from a list and the book was then brought to you. The food was not bad; in the morning a tin of porridge, tea without milk and a wee square loaf. The dinner was good; soup, followed by stew; and on Friday fish; all followed by tea, bread and margarine. A simple tea with a loaf was served at 4 o'clock. Of course no parcels, books or supplementary food was allowed. By five in the afternoon your last crumb was eaten and lights went out at eight o'clock. Every quarter of an hour after that a warder switched on the light and peeped through the spy hole. An official from the Dept. of Justice called Connolly arrived each month to see us. He would ask a routine question, whether we required anything? All we ever said was that we sought political treatment; the stock answer always was the same, you will have to apply to the Minister for that.

The Governor was required by the rules to inspect us each morning accompanied by a warder, and Major Barrows did just that. He used to boast that he had been a prisoner in his own jail. That was while he was in charge of the prison in Dundalk, when Frank Aiken captured the town, and for a few days he was clapped in a cell until the Republicans evacuated Dundalk. He was transferred to Maryborough in 1929. He was ex-British Army, but he wore no uniform; only breeches, leggings and a wee stick. He was strict, although he would speak conversationally to you in the cell. He would give you what you deserved, no more and no less.

Early in June 1943 Connolly called on his monthly Departmental visit. He gave no hint that the system was about to change, but the next day the Governor told us that we would have association twice a day henceforth. It would not be in the open air; it was in a long room that we christened *An Caidreamh*, where we could talk and play board games. We were permitted also to write and to receive one letter monthly. For most of us that was the first time we had received a letter in two years.

Then one day Luke Duffy and Jim Larkin of the Labour Party arrived. Addressing me, Larkin, who had spent three years in a U.S. jail from 1920, asked if I had been attired in a blanket all this time, and what I did for association. *Oh*, said the Governor, *they can talk through this phone system. Surely*, said Larkin, *they did not have to lie on the floor without clothes to do that?*

As the operation of the Military Court, under which we had been condemned, had ended, Sean Mc Caughey, in April 1946, gave notice of his determination to go on hunger strike for release. Mc Caughey, who had been sentenced to death in September 1941, commuted to a life term, for imprisoning the traitorous Acting Chief of Staff, Stephen Hayes, was universally held in high regard by all those comrades who ever became acquainted with him. It was the same also in Portlaoise

where, after almost three years of association, Paddy had come to know him well. Very straight and upright, he says, but full of devilment; he had the most cheerful laugh in the world, and he could pretend anxiety because he was slowly loosing his hair. He was on hunger strike for five days; he then went upon a thirst strike which brought about his death after 23 days.

Paddy was released in December 1946, by which time all political prisoners in the 26 Counties were free, save four still held until March, 1948, and Pat Shannon.

#### **JIM CROFTON IN PORTLAOISE PRISON:**

Jim Crofton, like Maire Comerford and some others, continued to express belief in Stephen Hayes, although Maire Comerford qualified this by saying that he had not received a fair trial, which, in this writer's view, was incorrect.

Jim Crofton, Wexford born like Maire Comerford herself, (and then living at Dunbar Road, Wicklow) the Special Branch man, returned from U.S in 1934 'to help fight the Blueshirts'; he believed that he was not suspected by his superiors in Dublin Castle until arrested while endeavouring to assist the escape out of Ireland of Hermann Goertz, from Fenit with Johnny Machine Gun Connor, in February 1941. He was charged with refusing to account for £50 found then in his possession; money which was intended for payment to local fisherman Michael Moriarty as deposit upon a sailing boat. In the Bridewell, apart from threatening a death sentence before the Military Court, Chief Supt. Carroll cajoled him with a promise 'if he told all' of a very short sentence, and that his wife and children would be provided for. Christy Quearney in his account shows that Crofton in the Castle did not work entirely alone; there was a civilian clerk there who, for sums of money, provided information.

Crofton refused to account for the money, and when Chief Supt. Sean Gantly arrived he remained mute. He was then sent to Mountjoy, and before the Military Tribunal was sentenced in March to five years. It was Minister Boland's personal decision that he be sent to Portlaoise. In a statement afterwards he said: after five days in Mountjoy, I was transferred to Portlaoise. On my arrival I was placed in a cell and told to take off my clothes. I was ordered to don the garb of a convict which I refused to do. I was then left in solitary confinement clad only in blankets for two and a half years. During that period I left the cell to be escorted to a bathroom once a week. For part of the time I was barefooted. I was deprived of any means of communication by letter or otherwise with my wife and children.

One of the children died while I was in prison. To all intents and purposes I was dead. It was two years and nine months before I was allowed to Mass. I repeatedly asked the Governor and visiting justices for political treatment but it was not, they replied, within their powers to grant. Nothing happened to me, they said, which was not in accordance with the rules. James Crofton was released on the termination of his sentence in 1946. With his family he went to live and seek employment in London.

Of Jim Crofton, who survived with his family in London into the late eighties, Liam Rice, a fellow captive over the entire period in Portlaoise, had this to say; 'Jim Crofton may have been a distant relative of Stephen Hayes. At all events he believed Hayes was innocent and that Sean Mc Caughey was a trouble maker. Naturally this

left it that I could not be on friendly terms with him, especially that, whenever the occasion arose, he would commence to rant about the Hayes affair. If my memory serves me right, he was transferred early in 1945 to the Curragh; he was released or paroled from there sometime in 1946.

Liam Rice added that while working in London in 1952, he had occasion to call to the house of a lady sympathiser and was surprised to meet again with Crofton. 'He was still ranting about the Hayes affair and about Sean Mc Caughey. That was the last time I saw Jim Crofton'. Crofton however made annual visits to Wexford, and may indeed have retired there.

#### LIAM RICE'S Recollection of the Death of Sean Mc Caughey:

Sean Mc Caughey, Adjutant-General and briefly Chief of Staff I.R.A. (June to September 1941) was born near Aughnacloy, Co. Tyrone in 1909 but lived almost his entire life off the Falls Road, Belfast.

Following his arrest on a street in Rathmines on September 2, and upon the court evidence of Stephen Hayes, deposed Chief of Staff, he was charged with the common law offence of *assault and unlawful detention* and sentenced to death by the Military Court on September 18, 1941. Normally the maximum sentence for the offence charged would have been two years, but the Dublin government seemed motivated by a desire for vengeance following the uncovering of their highly placed mole, Hayes, who indirectly had been responsible for the killing some time earlier of Michael Devereux, a man now presumed innocent, but whose death was soon to lead to the execution by a highly questionable process of George Plant, in Portlaoise, in March 1942.

It is safe to say that following the sentence Mc Caughey was within an ace of a Free State firing squad, now becoming quite used to execution; but wiser and more influential voices prevailed. Could the Belfast man be executed following conviction on a mere charge of assault and unlawful detention? The sentence was commuted on September 25 to one of penal servitude for life and within two days Mc Caughey was dispatched to Portlaoise, colloquially sometimes in these accounts, Maryborough (after Queen Mary, 16th. century queen; Bloody Mary, as she was known by the English themselves.)

At that time there were in the prison, quite separate from the two hundred normal convict population, the following Republicans: Tomás Mac Curtain, Cork; Mick Walsh, Kilkenny; Jim Crofton of Wexford. Soon to arrive there were Liam Rice of Belfast, Eamonn Smullen of Dublin, Willie Stewart of Dundalk, Paddy Murphy of Dundalk, Frank Kerrigan of Cork city, Joe O'Callagan of Dundalk.

(Harry White did not arrive until February 1947; being released along with the remaining four, Mac Curtain, Smullen, Rice and Smith, in March 1948, after the inception of a new government in which Sean Mac Bride was a Minister). At peak, the total number of persons together was ten; there was no reason and no justification why these ten could not have been distributed into any of the three prisons already housing Republicans; Mountjoy, Arbour Hill or Curragh Camp, where men on comparable charges were held; no reason except the extraordinary perversity of the system, or the personal 'lusting after vengeance' of Peter Berry, the departmental Secretary, Gerald Boland, the Minister, or Eamon De Valera himself. Dev. over the

last nine days of Mc Caughey's strike, received daily reports; he must have known his tongue was shrunken to finger nail size. Why did he not quietly let him go; the European war had ended twelve months before; the demoralised remnants of the I.R.A were themselves almost all released. Mc Caughey, when one reads on, may well have been 'off his head'.

Portlaoise was just that sort of place; the hell hole it was called. No letters in; no letters out; no news; no radio; no newspapers; above all, no visits; no clothing; no daylight; no stepping out beyond the confines of a 10 foot by seven foot prison cell, except once a week to a bath, no going into the open air; in Mac Curtain's case, he being the first in July 1940 to hold out for non-convict clothing, that was the system, followed year after year until limited association was permitted in June 1943. Will the release of official papers ever disclose who devised this perverse system of punishment? Unlikely. One can rest assured that it was not the Governor or his staff.

The Republican prisoners wore the blanket poncho style, Liam Rice commences, that is a hole was made in the very centre large enough for the head to pass through. the two parts of the blanket then covering the body back and front. A band of the blanket material was tied around the waist to hold it in place. The blankets were coarse, dark grey or brown, and were not warm. When, later on, Sean Mc Caughey's sisters saw them they were appalled, and the authorities quickly replaced them with domestic blankets.

It was the afternoon of Spy Wednesday, five days before Easter, 1946, Liam continued, we were at recreation in the *Caidreamh*, a former large workroom set aside for us as we still could not go out to the open air. Those present were Tomás Mac Curtain, Sean Mc Caughey, Jim Smith, Eamonn Smullen, and myself. At this time Sean was O.C Prisoners. At 3.30 p m the prison Governor, Major Barrows, and the Chief Warder, Mr. Blennerhassett, made their customary visit of inspection. As they were about to pass out Sean overtook them, speaking briefly to the Governor. *I have just given him a note saying that if I am not released by Friday I shall be compelled to go on hunger strike until I am released.*(14) We were all stunned and shocked by this; we had no intimation of such an intention; one person shouted at him; *what have you done, they will let you die.*

Sean and I then walked together during this final half hour; it would be the last time that I would walk with him. He was positive however that he would win through as he outlined plans for the period after his release. The recreation ended at 4 p m and we all returned to our respective cells; Sean and Eamonn Smullen and I were in F. 2. Shortly after Sean was moved to a hospital cell in our section; a cell that had large windows, eight feet by four feet with views across the main Dublin road to the lands and trees of the hospitals on the far side. We however had now no contact with Sean. Being upon the same floor however and separated only by two cells, I was close enough to him.

He was on hunger strike five days when I heard him call from the big window. *What is it Sean*, I shouted. *Liam*, he yelled back, *I am going off the water wagon*. It was shattering news. It meant that he could not last much more than a fortnight; his health and stamina would rapidly deteriorate. His sisters now came from Belfast, remaining in the town to visit him daily. Each night I could hear them bravely call-

ing a cheery good night to him as they left his cell around ten o'clock. I marvelled at their constancy.

One day when Tomás Mac Curtain was returning to his cell he heard Sean shouting in his; the door of which was ajar with a warder inside. In his delirium he had become agitated, but Tomás was shocked when he saw the wasted form hidden by the coverings. *Is anyone ill-treating you*, he called, but Sean answered; *no, Tomás; just go back to your cell*. Meanwhile we all waited; our nerves on edge, yet feeling there was nothing we could do. Our wing had now gone silent; we just whispered to each other, and of course, the few indoor games we had played were forgotten.

Then one afternoon about 4.30, three days before he died, Major Barrows and Mr. Blennerhasset opened the door of my cell. The Governor said to me that he thought Sean wanted to come off his hunger and thirst strike but would I go and assure him, that if he did we would welcome and support him.

I readily agreed and went to his cell where I stood, unaccompanied, by his bedside. In the strong light of the afternoon I could observe every detail of his shrunken face. It shocked me, for the 19 days had taken a terrible toll of his body. He was no more than a skeleton covered by a parchment of skin, that, were I to touch, I felt would break. His eyes were dried holes, his sight gone. His tongue was no more than a shrivelled piece of skin between his jaws, while his body and hands, from what I could discern, were those of a skeleton.

I told him what the Governor had said to me; that if he wanted to come off the strike we would stand by him. Bending close to catch his reply, he told me he never thought I would talk to him like that. He was determined to carry on; it must be death or honourable release. I retired, moving slowly backward; I could only shake my head sadly on meeting the Governor.

Father Harris, the prison chaplain, who always visited us in prison - for of course we could not go to Mass - was a noble Christian priest whom we all remember with respect and gratitude. He was a faithful and constant friend to Sean in the last days.

Two nights later I was asleep, when suddenly I wakened up sometime after midnight. The prison was very quiet and I lay there wondering. After a long time I heard sounds coming from the direction of Sean's cell. It was his sisters leaving and I listened to them sobbing and crying to themselves as they passed. It was the first time I heard them crying. 'Cries of sisters' grief passing my cell door'.

The next morning breakfast was brought to my cell by the prison orderly accompanied by Warder Fennell. He was an Irish speaker, and we usually exchanged a few words together, but not this morning; he stood back, keeping quiet. At nine o'clock I left the cell to go on the usual morning exercise in the *Caidreamh*. Jim Smith was the first one inside, and meeting him, he said simply; Sean died early this morning. Officially Sean died at 1.10. on Saturday morning, May 11, on the 23rd. day of his strike; it being the 18th. day of his thirst strike; the fast having begun on April 19, 1946.

An inquest on the death of Sean Mc Caughey was held in the Governor's office on that same Saturday, May 11. It was quickly evident that a Deputy Coroner, Dr. T.J. McCormack had been chosen with the sole task of preventing any light being thrown on the system in the prison. He sought to exclude Pádraig Mc Logan, who



was living in Portlaoise, attending, but Major Barrows, the Governor, intervened. He then placed stringent limits upon questions to the Governor and on the circumstances within the jail. Sean Mac Bride, accompanied by Noel Hartnett B.L., a well known radio commentator, and Con Lehane, appeared on behalf of Sean's three sisters and brother. Opening the proceedings the Deputy Coroner announced that he would take no evidence of events prior to April 19, the day Sean embarked upon his fast; he thus sought to limit the proceedings to a verdict - self evident in the circumstances - on the immediate cause of death.

Mac Bride however boldly overrode this in a brief and startling interlude that exposed the scandal behind Portlaoise. His chance came when the Medical Officer, Dr. Duane, appeared before him. The few brief questions he put to him shocked Ireland as they rang around the nation. Leaving aside his papers and looking directly at the doctor, he inquired; are you aware that during the four and a half years that he was here he was never, never out in the fresh air or sunlight? Dr. Duane: as far as I am aware he was not. Mac Bride: would I be right in saying that up to twelve or eighteen months ago he was kept in solitary confinement and was not allowed speak or associate with other persons? Dr. Duane: that is right. Mac Bride: would you treat a dog in that fashion? At this point R.J. Mc Loughlin S.C, a regular prosecutor at Tribunal trials, sought to deflect the doctor answering, but Mac Bride repeated the question; if you had a dog would you treat it in that fashion? Dr. Duane, after a pause; no. Turning to the jury, Mac Bride spoke over to them; *the answer is no gentlemen in case you did not hear it.*

Mac Bride then sought that the jury be brought to inspect the cell where Mc Caughey had been held but the Deputy Coroner overrode that with a terse refusal. The Medical Officer, in the course of his evidence had said that Mc Caughey may have become unstable because of the conditions imposed by the prison. Mac Bride sought to call evidence on that; the Governor had already refused to permit Tomás Mac Curtain to appear, and when Mac Bride sought a postponement to seek a High Court directive, the Coroner 'carrying out his duties properly', brusquely informed him that he could question nothing prior to April 19, 'when the prisoner went upon hunger strike and prior to which he had been in perfect health'.

Withdrawing then in protest, Lehane, Hartnett and Mac Bride returned at the conclusion, to join in sympathy with the relatives; Mac Bride being careful to point out at this stage, having scored a very important victory, that his questioning Dr. Duane in no way reflected upon the doctor since he was aware that he had given his patient undivided attention.

The jury returned a verdict that death was due to cardiac failure, resulting from inanition and dehydration, following lack of food and fluid intake. They did however add a unanimous rider: *that the conditions in the prison were not at all that could be desired according to the evidence furnished; but there was no reflection upon the Governor, Medical Officer or staff intended.*

The nine Republican prisoners were not informed of the inquest and knew nothing of it until two days afterwards when they read of it in the newspapers they were now permitted to receive. They had heard from within the cells on the Saturday afternoon the sounds of undertakers and warders at work, and then the shuffling

upon the passageway as the coffin was borne downward. As the sounds passed the locked cell doors of the three upon that level, they sprang to attention, in salute, each facing his door, however grotesquely that may have appeared, (could there have been an observer), of a bare legged man, clad poncho style, in a rough brown blanket, his feet shod only in sandals.

#### MC CAUGHEY: THE AFTERMATH:

Sean Mc Caughey's remains were taken by road from Portlaoise on the Saturday evening to 'Adam and Eve's', the Franciscan church on Merchants' Quay, Dublin. Attended by a considerable number, the cortege continued on Sunday to Binn's Bridge, Drumcondra, where a volley was fired. It then proceeded to Dundalk, where it was piped through the town; the sidewalks of which were lined with waiting people. At the Killeen customs post, 20 R.U.C stopped the hearse and removed the tricolour. A guard of honour awaited it at Newry where a Rosary was recited. By nightfall the motorised cortege arrived at Holy Cross Church, Ardoyne, large crowds lining the roadway outside and packing the church. Pall bearers here included Harry Diamond M.P and Hugh Corvin. Wreaths laid upon the floor surrounded the coffin which remained covered by its tricolour.

Official Free State showed no regrets following the exposure of the conditions under which Mc Caughey had been held in Portlaoise, although conditions there for the remaining nine continued gradually to improve. The strictures of the Department in respect of convict clothing remained unchanged until 1948; so the diminishing number of prisoners remained blanket clad despite a rising swell of protest that included Wicklow County Council, Fermoy Urban District Council, Limerick Corporation, Meath Agricultural Committee, the Historical Society of Trinity College, writers Liam Ó Briain, Seán Ó Faoláin, Mons. E.J. Flanagan of Boys' Town, U.S.A, who happened to be in Ireland, (15) and many more. A petition for release, heavily signed by Labour and Clann na Talmhan deputies and senators, had been presented to the government ten days before the death. Two and a half weeks after, May 29, the same two parties, in the person of Michael Donnellan T.D, East Galway, sought to have a Select Committee 'which would investigate all the circumstances' established.

It was rebuffed by De Valera who, going over the well worn ground, now seemingly agreed with the early measures of the Cosgrave government. Swallowing his criticisms of those days, he confessed that 'before a very short time had elapsed we saw that we were wrong'.

Noel Hartnett of Kenmare, the barrister at the inquest, (and a long time member of Fianna Fáil) who, over a number of years, had contributed to a number of popular programmes on radio, was banned by P.J. Little, Minister for Posts and Telegraphs, from further participation, particularly in the long running weekly *Question Time*, sponsored by the Irish Tourist Association. As Minister Little was a particularly mild and scholarly man one must discern the hand of Boland or De Valera here. His expulsion caused Seán Ó Faoláin to inquire, 'what sort of broadcasting can now be expected except the safe, the sycophantic, the innocuous, the unadventurous'? He added that he himself had long ceased to broadcast on that station.

Unexpectedly, Owen Sheehy-Skeffington, later of Trinity College, joined in. Refusing to accept the condolence of a Fianna Fáil cumann on the death of his mother, he wrote to the Rory O'Connor branch on May 18; *I received your letter of sympathy on the morning that the papers carried the account of McCaughey's inquest. I can accept no official sympathy from Fianna Fáil,, nor would my mother want me to. She had nothing but contempt for the party who so assiduously carried on the British tradition in its treatment of prisoners, and so consistently betrayed the ideals for which it was founded.*

On June 4, in Collins Barracks before the Tribunal, now renamed Special Criminal Court, John Joe Sheehy, Sean Ryan and Richard Eager, all well known Tralee Republicans, were charged that 'in the hearing of liege citizens of Ireland', they did make seditious speeches on May 11, (day of the death) and May 19. Sheehy was sentenced to four months and the other two to six months each, following which they were consigned to the reluctant charge of Commdt. James Guiney, at that time desperately keen to see the last of his remaining prisoners removed from the Curragh (since June 1945 they were being held in the Glasshouse, the Camp having been vacated).

So, there was really no let-up and no apology from the 'head man' for the extraordinary conditions of solitude and confinement imposed upon a handful of prisoners, from the first to enter, in July 1940, until the last five were released in March 1948, although by that time the severities had been ameliorated.

#### THE POSITION OF MINISTER P.J. RUTTLEDGE

Significant, or perhaps not significant, at this point would be a consideration of the position of cabinet minister Patrick J. Ruttledge from near Ballina; survivor of the Poulacappal cease fire talks of April 20 and 21, 1923; Adjutant Western Command, and Commdt-General in the post 1923 shadow army. Of him Maurice Twomey, quoted here, had this to say; 'he had been a good man. When Fianna Fáil was formed in 1926 he might not have joined but quailed as he would have been invited then to lead Sinn Féin. He joined Fianna Fáil as the lesser of two evils'. (16)

He was not attracted to Fianna Fáil, nor was he under the spell of De Valera's leadership in the sense that Gerald Boland was. In the late twenties De Valera entrusted every off beat sensitive negotiation to Boland; with Tom Johnson's Labour Party for instance, and when Sean Russell and P. A. Murray travelled to Russia in June 1925, he sent Boland post haste after them.

Likewise Frank Aiken. De Valera slept with him in the home of James Cullinane, Bliantas, in the Monavullagh Mountains of Co. Waterford, on the nights of 23rd. and 24th. of March, 1923, discussing Cease Fire proposals, and the political aftermath. Tomás Ó Maoleóin speaks of their relationship in 1925; 'Aiken was very friendly with De Valera; he fawned upon him'.

Ruttledge however, trained in Trinity College, and qualified as a solicitor in 1918; appears to have kept his distance. As a Sinn Féin T.D for West Mayo from May 1921, and then North Mayo, he had no difficulty being elected for Fianna Fáil when that call came. Appointed in March 1932, Minister for Lands and Fisheries, he was promoted to succeed James Geoghegan as Minister for Justice in 1933. Already wealthy in his own right, he had also a large practice as a solicitor in Ballina.

The Blueshirt disturbances of those years he coped with, but it is significant that

he retired for some months in 1936 during which there was the harsh period in Arbour Hill and the I.R.A was declared illegal on June 18. Gerald Boland stood in as Minister at this time. Shortly afterwards Ruttledge returned to the post but again stepped down in early September 1939 when, as Bowyer Bell expresses it, 'he was assumed to be too gentle to grasp the nettle of coercion.' Gerald Boland grasped the nettle alright while Ruttledge took on the politically innocuous post of Minister for Local Government and Public Health.

Then upon August 15, 1941, an announcement came from the Government Information Bureau that he had resigned membership of the government and had been appointed to the sinecure of Solicitor-General for Wards of Court. Despite the heavy censorship newspapers described the announcement as a surprise. But was it? Young Richard Goss had been executed five days before; others had died in 1940, and more would die or be executed in the exhausting struggle against militant republicanism. Patrick J. Ruttledge may not have wished to continue to be a party in that struggle. Patrick Ruttledge died on May 8, 1952.

#### COUNTY LOUTH MEN (+ 2 Girls) SENTENCED OR EXECUTED IN THE FORTIES:

Note: The Official Figure for the Number of Internees from County Louth is 27.

County Louth is fourth in the Order of Counties, as to numbers of those imprisoned after Counties Dublin, Kerry and Cork. Between Imprisonment and Internment our Count as follows is 49.

Birrel	Joe	Dundalk	Interned
Black	John (Hungie)	Drogheda	Interned
Brown	James	Dundalk	3 years
Byrne	Patrick	Dundalk	Interned
Clarke	Michael	Dundalk	3 years
Collins	William (Buddy)	Drogheda	Interned
Deery	Anthony	Dundalk	7 years
Duffy	George	Dundalk	Interned
Duffy	Patrick	Dundalk	Interned
Duffy	Peter	Dundalk	14 years
Farrell	Sean	Dundalk	Interned
Faulkner	George	Drogheda	Interned
Finglas	Andrew	Drogheda	Interned
Gaughran	William	Dundalk	12 years Isle of Wight
Geeney	Clement	Dundalk	Interned
Gill	James	Dundalk	3 years
Goss	Richard	Dundalk	Executed Aug 9, 1941
Green	Tom	Dundalk	Interned
Grey	Patrick	Dundalk	3 years

Grogan Grogan	Larry Tom	Drogheda Drogheda	Sentenced and Interned 52 Day Hunger Strike
Halpenny Hartigan Hoey Hoey Hughes Hinchy	Gerard James (Jimbo) Charles Paul Tom Ashe John	Dundalk Dundalk Drogheda Drogheda Dundalk Dunleer	12 years Isle of Wight Interned 6 Months, then Interned Interned Interned Died in Mountjoy 28, December 1942
Larkin	Barney	Dundalk	3 years
Moore Murphy Murphy	Frank Bernard Patrick	Dundalk Dundalk Dundalk	Interned Interned 14 Years and 12 strokes of Cat. Portlaoise.
Murphy Murphy Mc Elroy Mc Kevitt Mc Quaile Mc Quaile	Paddy Joe Tommy Tom Mick Edward Joseph	Dundalk Dundalk Dundalk Dundalk Drogheda Drogheda	3 years Interned 3 years Interned Interned Interned
Nixon	Oliver	Dundalk	Interned
O' Callaghan O' Callaghan O'Farrell O'Hagan O'Hagan	Barney Joseph Sean Carmel Patsy	Dundalk Dundalk Dundalk Dundalk Dundalk	Interned Imprisoned in Portlaoise. Interned Interned Interned
Plunkett	George	Dundalk	Interned
Rogan Rooney	Joseph Jimmy	Dundalk Drogheda	Interned Interned
Shaw Stewart	Joe 'Angel' William	Dundalk Dundalk	Interned 14 years and 12 strokes of the cat
Tuite	Mattie	Julianstown Drogheda.	Interned
Walsh Wynne	Tom James	Dundalk Dundalk	Interned Interned

## REFERENCES:

1. Not to be confused with Crescent Barracks which fronts the old jail; the jail long ago being the scene of criminal hangings and Civil War executions. The impressive barrack edifice fronting it, was then the Governor's residence. Ann Street barracks is long replaced by apartments.

2. Capt. Jack White, short tempered, but a commanding speaker, first came to notice, on an evening of November 12, 1913, in an upstairs room at 40 Trinity College, when he proposed to a group, self-designated as a peace committee, formed to intervene in the great labour dispute, that it reconstitute itself as the *Civic League*. He then recommended, to general approval, that a scheme of arms drilling be started. For the Civic League it then became a very short step indeed to announce the formation - which was done next day - of a Citizen Army. Six evenings later, now giving lavishly of his time and money, Jack White had sufficiently advanced the mood of resistance to read to a meeting of about a hundred, a telegram of encouragement from Sir Roger Casement. 'I hope it will begin a widespread movement to organise and drill'; as indeed it did. That meeting was held in the Antient Concert Rooms, Pearse Street, as both the Mansion House and Trinity were barred to White.

3. Tony Deery was one of the few mourners present when Hermann Goertz was laid to rest in Deansgrange on May 26, 1947; Deery had, on I.R.A instructions, endeavoured to supply a transmitter link for him with Abwher 11. Prior to the Post Office raid in Dundalk he had worked there as a wireless technician. When asked by Óglaigh na h-Éireann to work at Upper Clanbrassil Street, Dublin, for 'Mr. Robinson', he replied that he had no transmitter; the I.R.A promised to look for one, and shortly after one arrived through the help of Michael Kinsella, from the same factory that turned out sets for the Free State Army. He met Goertz on one occasion only, he says, in Miss Coffey's house in Dun Laoire; although remaining in almost daily contact through a third party.

4. See *Harry* for a note on the McDowells of Belfast.

5. See *Harry*, and also Sean O'Neill's account in this work.

5a. At the age of seven, he was present at the re-interment of six Republicans executed in the military barracks by the Free State. On this occasion in 1924 they opened fire, killing a local man, Hughes, home visiting from America.

6. Tom Mc Elroy and Peter Duffy in August were each sentenced, Duffy to 14 years, and Mc Elroy to three years by the Tribunal.

7. Tom Murphy was Battalion O.C in 1941; he later retired to farm in Co. Kilkenny.

8. The lieutenant was shot through the neck, most likely from a Branch man's gun. In evidence he stated that he had not heard the report although Goss was close to him; while the private soldier was shot in the abdomen from behind. That could not have been Goss, who for the while he held him had only threatened him. On August 9, at the age of 26, Ritchie was executed at 5.45. a m in Portlaoise Prison. As was the practice at that time, the announcement in the newspapers was confined to 13 lines.

9. The former 'high security prison', on the fringe of the town entering from Dublin, was

built from 1830 to the design of William Deane Butler, a noted church architect.

The old county jail, designed 1789 by Richard Harman, Gandon's clerk on the Custom House, Dublin, was directly behind the courthouse by Richard Morrison, standing in the centre of the town, on the right hand side going south.

10. Barrows was ex-British Army; not, one might say, that it makes any difference. No one has anything particularly bad to say of Major R.W Barrows who merely implemented the instructions he received from Dublin. At this time, he had been ten years governor. Prior to that he had been governor in Dundalk and, under the British regime, Deputy Governor in Derry and later in Crumlin Road, Belfast. See the Frank Aiken account in the Appendix.

11. See *Harry: Ireland's Bastille*, for more on Portlaoise prison routine.

12. Lennon's position still awaits confirmation. P.M believes he acted also at the execution of R. Goss. P.M says the Governor confirmed to him that, in the case of Plant, Lennon was in charge, and that Plant had refused to be blindfolded. We are still uncertain about Michael Lennon, but he had two brothers also in the Army - 'Blackie' was a P.A in the Camp - so the strain seemed to run with them. The family were from Co. Kilkenny.

13. Plant was buried within the Prison, but reinterred at Johnstown Cemetery near Fethard, in September 1948; his sister then residing there, deceased only recently.

14. Portlaoise, April 16, 1946.

'To whom it concerns. This is to notify you that unless I am released before Friday 19, inst. I will be compelled to go on hunger strike until I am.' It was signed in Irish.

In evidence, Major R.W Barrows stated that there were standing instructions from the Dept. of Justice that under no circumstances could prisoners be released by virtue of hunger strikes.

15. 'Intemperate and offensive', Gerald Boland, Minister for Justice, said of his remarks, which were directed at the prison system generally.

16. References are from *Survivors*, second edition.

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*How hard is my fortune  
And vain my repining,  
The strong rope of fate  
For this young neck is twining!  
My strength is departed  
My cheeks sunk and fallow,  
While I languish in chains  
In the jail of Clonmala*

- The Convict of Clonmel, from the Irish 18c



**PIERCE FENNEL:****OF CARRIGAHOLT.**

*Pierce Fennell did not wish to be photographed.*

*A County Clare man who grew up in the Movement; who was involved in more scraps and scrapes than one could count, and who ended up travelling the world.*

My father was John Fennell and his father was a farmer in Carrigaholt. My father trained as a carpenter and went to Limerick. Eventually after a few years in Limerick he joined Irish Lights and became a lighthouse keeper. His wife would be from Carrigaholt. Roche was her name; her people and his people were always mixed up in politics. I was brought up in the lighthouses, but my father was not involved in politics of any sort as Trinity House was a British institution. His brothers however were involved before even 1916 in the troubles. Eddie Fennell, his brother, was a commander of small units around Kilkee and Carrigaholt. He was present when British soldiers or marines came ashore in Carrigaholt, in March 1918. They had a little reading room where Irish was taught down there, and when they delayed to come out of the room the soldiers charged in with fixed bayonets and injured a number, killing one. A chap called Russell died, when a bayonet was thrust through him; he was from Kerry. There is a plaque there on the wall to commemorate him.(1)

I was born in 1918. There were three children in the family, two girls and myself. All the family are dispersed now. My younger sister Una is in America for the past 50 years, and my older sister Maura is dead. The old lady's family are from Doonaha, about three miles from Carrigaholt. They were the Roches and were involved in the Republican movement. Both Fennell and Roche families received pensions from the Fianna Fáil government for the rest of their lives. They were no longer involved in the I.R.A. They changed over to Fianna Fáil; you might say that they had been bought off.

As far as I can remember my mother always spoke about her contacts and the things she did. She ran the Post Office in Carrigaholt, so she could intercept telegrams from the British Admiralty, passing them as information to the I.R.A at the time; that would have been to the Roches and Fennell's. In fact the time that the bayonet charge took place in Carrigaholt, they had tipped them off the morning before that the British forces were coming in and would be in the mood for fight. My mother used to tell stories of this, so that listening to her and learning various things led me to a particular line of thought.

The first recollection I have about how politics impinged upon me was in 1932

when we were living in St. John's Point in Co. Donegal. I went against the old fellows instructions and took off across Donegal Bay that night to see Mr. De Valera; he was in Killybegs two nights before he was elected in 1932. I remember the fuckers were carrying him around in a chair above their heads. In fact I got lost the same night in Donegal Bay, a hell of a big bay and they were looking for the boat for a few days. We survived that. That was my first recollection of politics.

We were living in light houses around the country throughout my entire upbringing. My first recollection of going ashore was in Skibbereen; I think we were being shuffled from one dwelling to another and therefore it was easier then to travel by boat, so we were landed somewhere in Cork at the time. I saw a British officer shooting a shark in a dock off a torpedo boat or something like that. We had left a little place, Goleen; there were dwellings for the light house there, and we were travelling to another lighthouse in Valencia Island. I remember we travelled in a Model T Ford. It must have been after the Civil War and the roads were all cut up. At times we had to travel through fields. There was a truck following with furniture in it.

The fields were flooded at the time and I can remember rabbits sitting up on little green patches around the place. We reached Valencia Island eventually but it took my father all day to do so. Valencia was the first place where I went to school and we must have remained some years there, but eventually we left Valencia and came to Skerries, Co. Dublin. Some years after that we went from there to the South Island Light off Inisheer, (Inis Thiar), Aran Islands. I can remember the first liner coming into Galway; her name was *General Von Stuben*, of the Hamburg Amerika Line. She was blown up some time after that in the Mediterranean with a cargo of explosives aboard. We were on the South Island light at that time and I was going to school.

I had started school in Valencia in infants class, and then to high infants on Inisheer. The school teacher was an old nit; I can't think of his name now. We did a couple of years on the island. They were always trying to get me to learn Irish. I could understand what they were saying but could not answer them. The islanders told me that Irish was a bloody waste of time and I believed them. When they got as far as Galway they had to start talking English. The Irish language was useless to them there. To preach it or write about it may be alright, but to put too much emphasis on it means terrific money going into it and it is money going down the drain. It is a load of god damn rubbish, and in my opinion they will never recover it. If the same money went into creating jobs we would need less U.S.A visas.

We went from there back to Skerries for three years, and at this time lived on shore while my father was in Rockabill; the old lighthouse there. We were there the year of the Eucharistic Congress, 1932. I was also there and a fellow, who lived next door, a very nice fellow who flew the Atlantic in June 1930, Paddy Saul, was the co-pilot and radio operator, along with Charles Kingsford-Smith.(2) He lived in one of Fulton's houses.

The light house families always lived ashore. My father did ten days on and ten days off. Sometime in those years we were on holidays in Carrigaholt when a plane piloted by Captain McIntosh and James Fitzmaurice, that set off to cross the Atlantic, came down on Beale strand in Kerry opposite Carrigaholt. It was there for

a few days and they fixed whatever the hell was wrong with it; got her air borne and back to Baldonnell. Capt. Koehl, von Huenfeld and Colonel Fitzmaurice in April 1928 from Baldonnell were the first to fly the Atlantic westwards. In fact I have a cutting from D.W.D, the Dublin Whiskey Distillers Co. of that time. Their aircraft was a Junkers W. 33 called the *Bremen*.

We left Skerries around 1931 and we went to St. Johns Point in Donegal Bay. That is how I saw De Valera in Killybegs. That is also the time that the British fleet was in Killybegs fishing herrings. In fact I remember those days around Killybegs they would manure the fields, believe it or not, with mackerel. They would sell mackerel off the drifters for a shilling a horse load. They were interested in catching herrings only and they had about two hundred girls across from Scotland gutting and salting them, so they did not want mackerel. When they caught mackerel they would have to shovel them over the side; the money was in kippers.

They would salt the herrings and send them back to Scotland to be smoked for resale. The mackerel would get caught in the same nets, and sometimes the farmers could take them for nothing just to clear the decks. They had a regatta every year in Killybegs. Now don't misunderstand me; I had no views on De Valera in 1932, I was too young. I was just following the bandwagon and listening to the locals, the news and ups and downs, I was too young to know. It was all up Dev; who shot the 77 and down with Billy Cosgrave. Bloody nonsense.

We left St. John's then and went to Oyster Island in Sligo Bay, close to Rosses Point. I went to school there in a bus. I think it was the first bus I was ever in. The lady who owned the buses was a lady called Mrs. Gillen; she owned her own 32 seater buses and they took us to school in Sligo. She would have been the first lady bus driver in Ireland. I went there for a while, and after another year or two we left there and the old man was transferred back to Inisheer, Aran Islands. This time we did not go out to Inisheer to live in the dwellings; it was controlled by Irish Lights then and they arranged for us to stay in Galway.

#### LIFE IN GALWAY; DRINKING IN THE OLD MALT:

We lived in various parts of Galway; in Barna, Salthill, Spiddel, in our first years: we are coming up now to 1935/36 and I am getting interested in politics. I finished my education in 1936 by going to navigation school, doing navigation with a man called Capt. Wooley, master mariner. He taught at the Tech. in Galway, and I must say he could put it across. The Blueshirts then were coming into the Tech, and we were starting to fight them. I don't know why, but most of us fellows took an instinctive dislike to them. They were marching in the streets, and I started to take sides then and joined the I.R.A in Galway under Máirtín Ó Cadhain and Fursey and Ned Walsh, there were six brothers of them. I spent a lot of my time drinking in the Old Malt House in the High Street in Galway owned by Walsh's. Drilling down around the docks and clowning with them, and doing one bit of damage after another. I was in Galway when De Valera came to unveil the statue of Pádraig Ó Connaire. Somebody put a blue shirt on Pádraig, but the cops spotted it and got the blue shirt off before Dev came.

I was in Galway when they burnt the film, *Gallipoli*, I was not involved in it.(3) Half of the jobs were declared official afterwards in the Old Malt depending on what

they thought; they then decided one way or the other to recognise them or not to recognise them. A fellow came in one night and said there was a big bale of blue shirts had come in at the railway station, and then of course everyone was talking what they would do about it. They decided to get a couple of revolvers and go up to the station where they broke the lock on the store setting fire to this bale. Then they discovered the bloody thing was full of medical supplies, but it looked like packages of blue shirts. The Free State soldiers used to have practice shoots at Renmore in trenches, and we used to go out and they would leave the bullets in the trenches in rabbit holes for us. At night some of the soldiers would fling the 303's over the wall. We would bring everything we found into the Malt House.

One other fellow who frequented the Old Malt House, that I won't readily forget, he died on hunger strike after, was Tony D'Arcy. I was down in Clare at this time and was on my way back to Galway. I had some 200 pounds of T.N.T(4) with me and I nearly blew myself up that time, for I ran into a wall. However Tony gave me about 40 rounds of forty five stuff in the Old Malt House that I was looking for at the same time, saying, *if you do kill anyone with that stuff, try and remember me, I am an undertaker and I need the business.* The Old Malt House was a place you could get killed in; the Free State Army fellows came in to drink there as well, and there was always scraps there.

I saw a fight one night with a tinker who stood on the counter with a broken glass in his hand. He was swinging it at anyone who came near him. It took five of the blokes to overcome him and the left him unconscious outside the door. We put on a dance in the *Taibhdhearc* one night for Republican funds. Ned and Paddy were at the door and Fursey and I were on the inside door taking the tickets. The crowd came in followed by two fellows; Fursey Walsh asked for their tickets. They said they had no tickets; *we are detectives. I don't care what you are,* says Fursey, *you are not getting in here without fucking tickets.* I was at the second door where we would take the tickets and tear them up, and I was watching for what might happen. It finished up anyway that Fursey hit one fellow and I hit the other one and then the row started. We pushed them out on to the street and they ran for the barracks and brought down about 20 cops. We were not put off by the show of force. We got the crowd out from the hall and we slaughtered them outside in the street.

The day Duffy came to Galway, I got split open that day. God, will I ever forget it. There was about 2,000 cops in the square there in Galway. I remember one of the Walsh's designating myself and two other fellows to do a job. And the job they gave us was; Duffy was in this hotel and they said when he is coming through the door, there will be a fellow in front of him with a flag. *It is your job to take the flag: get the bloody flag.* To me that meant nothing, no problem at all. I reckoned being handy with my fists I could take a flag from anyone. All O'Duffy's supporters were around the hotel door and we moved in among them. Then this party came through the door with the Blueshirt flag, and my mates were there were too, and we jumped forward and swiped it. But they must have expected us, for when I came to after being knocked out, I was about 25 feet from the hotel door. I did not know what happened but I was split and pumping blood all over.

The platform for O'Duffy was further over in Eyre Square; I don't know who did

it but one of our crowd ran in through the hotel door, up the stairs and out through a window, He jumped out of the window and straight through the roof of a car, O'Duffy's car. The cops then baton charged us right to the bottom of the hill, to where a cinema used to be, it was burnt down before that and a lot of people were burnt at the time. Then it was a garage, Higgins', but around the corner there were lines of broken stones for road repairs. We lured them around the corner and then we pelted them with stones; it was like bullets with the rocks flying as we belted them up the street, it was crazy. There was an old docker there, Michael John Burke and another fellow; they were not in the I.R.A but were anti-establishment. I remember one of them getting up on an old weighbridge there in Galway and I got up with him, and the cops came up on ladders to the top of the weighbridge and knocked both of us off. It was about 14 foot of a jump. No quarter.

#### BODENSTOWN BANNED:

I was out in the Aran Islands on holidays for a couple of weeks with the old man in 1936. It was the year De Valera banned the I.R.A and stopped them from going to Bodenstown. He had turned his back on the Republic and was cracking down on us instead. Ned Walsh came down and knocked at the door; I was living in Barna at the time. He said; *look, you have to be in Galway tonight, we are taking the trucks to Bodenstown. We are not going to lie down under this.* I said I am only after coming back and I cannot get in until nine or ten o'clock, what time is the last one going? There was a chance of a lift in a car; with himself and another fellow, he said. Leo Fagan was with us; he was a fellow I had recruited into the I.R.A.

When I came back into the house, the old fellow said; *what is all that about.* I said, *Bodenstown is banned but I am going in the morning,* and he said, *you are not going;* and I said, *I bloody well am going.* And one word borrowed another and I said I was going; so he was resigned, but he left a few bob for me. So myself and Fagan cycled in to Galway, and we got in about 2 o'clock to the Old Malt House. We were banging the door and the daughter opened the window and whispered down, would you clear away altogether, they have all been arrested. So we took off around the town and there was murder; they had the army out and lorries across the road and they were trapping fellows everywhere. There was a football match in Dublin that day, so we decided to go up in the train and pull the communication cord near Sallins. We got on the train alright; but they spotted us and they rushed the train, but we got out the other side and took off.

There were about 20 of our lads arrested that night, and I was very annoyed about it afterwards when Ned Walsh told me that Maurice Roe who was the sergeant in charge of the barracks in Eglinton Street who had given them rashers and eggs for their breakfast; and here we were lying in ditches up to our eyes in puddles and shit all night. Why did we not get arrested; we could have had rashers and eggs.

Peadar O'Flaherty was an instructor at this time, travelling the country; and he came to Galway giving lectures and talks. I was appointed a section commander or something like that. We used to drill down at the docks; near an old hospital where they used to put the sailors in quarantine, and the fellow in the unit who used to drill us was a fellow by the name of Jim Fay; he was one time in the Free State Army. If we had a meeting of the battalion in Galway about 300 of us would then go

drilling out at Ballybrit race course; we would have some one up on the stand with binoculars watching for the police cars.

There was one incident when we were drilling in some old field and a car drew up with a detective and a guard in it. The detective came through the crowd and he said to Ned Walsh and Billy, they were the most prominent blokes in charge, that he would arrest Ned. He whipped out an old revolver and the crowd moved in on him. Ned said to him fire away but it will be your last shot. At that he put the gun away and left us alone. The fellow who did the drilling was Jim Fay, ex-Free State Army man and also a builder; he was later interned in the Curragh.

I met O'Flaherty in a hotel in Galway with Ó Cadhain and Ned Walsh. Myself and this fellow from Barna were at the meeting which was about guns and bombs and all that. It was near the docks in a Galway hotel, and we had cycled in from Barna. I think Tony D'Arcy was there as well. I remember having a quick talk with O'Flaherty; I could not understand what was going on with republican literature and I was cheesed off. It was all right talking about guns and bullets but where were we going. *What is going on in Dublin*, I said to him. *We are puzzled down here; we don't know what is happening*. I was very annoyed at the arrogance of his reply; *look, he said, it has nothing to do with you fellows what is happening in Dublin, that is for headquarters staff. All you fellows have to do is drill, learn how to fire; you are the army. You have no business being political*. I took note of the answer, but from that day on I tried to find out more about the political thing other than the military side. As it went on and on, I found that my allegiance no longer lay with the I.R.A but with the Connolly side of things. I started to read Connolly's books, and that put me into the communist bracket; in other words it was not communist philosophy but Connolly philosophy, which to me is the same thing.

#### BAGS OF GUNS:

I left Galway in 1937 and came down to Carrigaholt; my father was then on the lighthouse at Loop Head. I had left home at that stage and was living in Carrigaholt with my mother's people. I was running an old hackney car as a means of livelihood but I had wrecked it. I wrecked two cars between 1937 and 39 and I left Carrigaholt broke. I tried to reorganise things because there was nobody in Carrigaholt except one fellow from Dunbeg, a tailor, Keane; his people were in the I.R.A and I got him back in with me, but he was lukewarm. The first time I tried to make contact was an Easter Sunday, I wanted to get Easter Lilies; to sell them. I came in here to Kilkee to see a powerful bloke who had been in but was now sick of it, T.J. Ryan. So I met T.J. and asked him where I could get Lilies; he sent me down to Kilrush, to a fellow there who is still alive, named Blunnie Sino. He was involved with the Gilmores, Frank Ryan and T.J. Ryan in the big Kilrush strike when a 'tec named Leahy shot one of the lads on the platform. He gave the lilies to me, and I sold them in Carrigaholt and got arrested for selling them. Then I contacted Callaghan's crowd and the Lowe's of Kilrush. All the time that I was with the Clare crowd they could not understand why I was with them; they were suspicious of me. I started picking up guns, but I never handed the guns in. I kept them for myself; they were annoyed about this. After internment they had a meeting to try and take them off me, and I said, try it, but they never did. These were private guns of my own; they did not belong to the Army, so

I was going to hold them.

There was a chap killed at Cross a few years before with a high powered sniper's rifle, and that rifle was taken from him by the R.I.C., but a fellow dug it up afterwards and gave it to me. There was no stock on it and I put a stock on it and it turned out to be a lovely Hornet with Martini action; a single shot Hornet; and I had that gun for a number of years, and a shot gun.

I then got a 45 with two notches on the butt of it and it belonged to a fellow, Paddy Naughton, from outside Limerick. I got it from a fellow in Foynes; and I gave a cop a belt over the head with it one night. He carried a Webley, so I took it off him and I had that. I got another snub nosed 45 from a fellow by the name of Willie Hartnett who was in the I.R.A in Limerick as well. The cops in '38 raided Carrigaholt; a few of the mates I knocked around with sold me out to the cops. They raided all the houses of my relations; the Post Office, my old fellow's house and all. They got none of the revolvers, but Eddie Fennell decided to hand up the shotgun and the rifle that was hidden at his house. I told him if he did it was his responsibility not mine. I would never willingly give a gun to a Stater.

Eddie was my father's brother. He handed in the rifle and the shotgun and he said he had them since the troubles; and of course there was no prosecution, and that is how I lost those two guns. That was in 1939.

In 1937 as I mentioned before I was in Carrigaholt and I had the old hackney car down there. I went to the Galway races and met Leo Fagan again, and we got drunk together, and I went straight through the wall at Knocknacarra at the top of the golf course hill; I was leaving Leo home. It was smashed to pieces and Leo's head and my own split open, I never saw Leo since and he is dead now. The car was a Morris, but I brought her back and repaired her. I did a bit of work in a garage in Spiddel, belonging to Jim Dillon who knew a bit about cars; she was a wreck and I traded her in and ought a V8. I collected in the country a couple hundred pounds of T.N.T (4) and detonators, and I supplied the Galway battalion with them. I went to Galway with about 70 pounds in the car, and I went in to the *Twelve Pins* pub in Barna, Paddy Long ran it at that time and the chap that owned it was from Spiddel.

I crossed the road at the *Twelve Pins* and a solicitor who was staying at Lord Kilanin's place in Spiddel was coming along the road doing about sixty and we crashed in the middle, right into Donlon's pub; a fellow got jammed between the two cars and he died afterwards. The road was littered with T.N.T and detonators. We could all have gone up. When I got out of the car the chassis was broken in two and the four doors were hanging off. I had sense enough to get rid of the T.N.T; I hid it behind the ditch temporarily, and the cops came out and they fucked me from a height, and they threatened me not to take the car out as it was not insured. But I got the car running again, and I delivered the T.N.T and got back to Clare about two in the morning. I had comprehensive insurance for £52 a year with the New Ireland. The insurance company offered to give me back my money if I got insurance elsewhere. But I would not desert the New Ireland.

We had to import a chassis in from America, as the insurance company would not give me a new car. They gave me one new door and they rolled out the others, and they gave me a couple of mudguards and I got her back on the road again, but

she was a bloody wreck. I used to shift a lot of explosives from one place to another and things like that, and then I started with the crowd in Kilrush, doing a bit of drilling and acting the clown.

**PERSONALITIES:**

I remember I was in a field with O'Flaherty and I brought a few comedians with me, and O'Flaherty was being very regimental, I thought a bit too regimental, and he was giving us a lecture about some army business and it started to rain. The fellow next to me said, *tell him to shut up until the rain stops*; and I said, *you try it*. He intentionally kept on talking to see who would break first, and he would then open up and tell whoever it was that it was no way to be a soldier for old Ireland and all that bull shit. I drove Máirtín Calligan and O'Flaherty down to another place that night. O'Flaherty more or less travelled Ireland on an old bicycle in those days. I did not see him afterwards until I met him in the Curragh.

Ó Cadhain it seemed to me would not elaborate or talk to the squaddy. He was always conversing in undertones with the brass. He seemed to me to be more on the literary side of things and in the Gaelic League than what I was interested in. None of them seemed to touch on it; the working economic issue on what they were going to do for the plain people of Ireland. Not one of them wanted to talk about it. Ó Cadhain anyway always wanted to talk to you in Irish, knowing that you did not understand him, I would say; *would you fuck off Mairtin*. They say he died as a socialist; Ó Cadhain to my mind was nothing but a bloody fascist and a right winger also in the Curragh. His notion was based on the same thing as De Valera; a Gaelic Ireland, talking bloody Irish and dancing at the cross roads.

I was trying to make a living at this time and earn a few bob, but I was drinking heavily; I was taking chances and rambling around the country as well.

I still kept contact with the I.R.A. In my few years in Clare I could not stay away from meeting the characters here. Calligan was the real hard man with the bullets, but we had the two other fellows in Kilrush. One of the was an Irish school teacher, Brian Lowe; he was much on the same base line as Ó Cadhain, but a lot more religious than Ó Cadhain.(5)

Ó Cadhain did not talk a lot about religion with me and I never knew what his background was. But Lowe was a religious fanatic and he had a brother who said, yes, to every thing he did. They were all in the Curragh later. He is dead now. Later he went around with Calligan blowing his coal, and speaking off walls about the Republic.

The Tommy guns were taken from a factory on the east coast of America. John Joe Sheehy himself told me that in 1936 they were in America with the team, and that they all brought trunks, and that each of the trunks on the liner was filled with Tommy guns. They had a bit of trouble when they got to Cork. One fellow on the team was a Fine Gael bloke, and they were afraid that he would do something or say something and the whole lot would be captured. But before arrival in Cork they got him half drunk and then they helped him ashore. He was so grateful he made no reference to anything.

I did hear that the guns were distributed and some of them were found in Mayo much later. God be good to the Staters but they must be right rusty by now. Russell



had a dump of his own, I heard, and it was controlled by a Fianna Fáil bloke. When Russell died in 1940 no one knew who this fellow was or the reason Russell had it with him for safe keeping.

I did not have much time for Sean Russell down the years, I do not think his method would have been a good method from what I know of who was who in the organisation and who to trust and who not to trust. T.J. Ryan he was arrested in 1938; he had been arrested many times in the thirties. He was living here in Kilkee, but I knew he had contacts. He was very much a man of the Gilmore stamp. I asked him in 1937 what were the chances of getting out to Spain and he told me he would look it up; he came back and said he could not make head or tail of it, or how I could get there. But then I was in Carrigaholt and there was a chap there named Keane; he was after being fired off the buses, and I said to him one night; *the best thing we can do is volunteer for Spain*. He said, *all right, I will write the letters*. He wrote anyway and about three days afterwards he said he had got an answer. I said I would meet him in a pub that night and I got the letter and it said, OK no problem.

I looked closely at the letter and said, *you have made a mistake here somewhere*; he said, *what do you mean?* I said, *you have written to the wrong fucking crowd*. He said, *what do you mean?* I said *you have written to the wrong bloody bastards, Duffy's crowd*, and he said, you were going to write your bloody self and you didn't. So we had our own civil war down there that night.

When I was in Galway, a brother of Jimmy Joe Reynolds was a mechanic in Elwoods; I was living in Spiddel at the time and did a bit of work in a little garage there that Jim Dillon had. It is now a house. The only thing I know about Jimmy Joe afterwards was talking to his brother Johnny, who had remained at home on the farm. Charlie was a foreman in the Tuam Sugar Company, but that did not save him from being interned also.

We always had a discussion about what happened; we had trouble finding out. Jimmy Joe was an expert. From what I heard anyway it was that one of the cases had X on it, and they were in Sligo before they were transferred up to Castlefin. It was suggested at one time that it was a ring on Jimmy Joe's finger. We will never know.

I knew there was a bombing campaign intended for the North and I was more or less in agreement with that; but the bombing campaign in England, I could see no sense in it. I thought it was crazy because of the lack of equipment and finance we had here, we were not capable of integrating and a lot of other things besides. Strike at the heart alright if you are able and equipped for it.

#### ON THE HIGH SEAS:

Moss Twomey, I considered was a bit to the right and fairly religious, but at the same time a good military man and a great diplomat. A very nice fellow. I met him several times, and he used to talk about being on the run; he had spent a bit of time in a pub called Molly Behan's in Carrigaholt. I think De Valera spent a bit of time there in days gone by. Moss was a fellow who did not open up very much, I did not talk politics with him. If you did talk to those fellows in those days and you asked them straightforward questions, they were of the opinion you were looking for information. So you were better off to shut your mouth and have your own ideas, and by doing that distance yourself from the bloody Movement. There was a lot of mavericks in those days including myself. I was trying to make a living, and no mat-

ter what Cathleen Ní Houlihan was doing you had to live.

It was a hard time too. My old man was transferred then from Loop Head to Skerries. I had to ditch the car because we could not get petrol and I was broke, so I ended up in Skerries for a couple of months. I went away to sea after that in 1940; I was on strike in Liverpool on New Year's day. I was at sea for a number of months running coal in a Limerick Steamship boat, the *Luimneach* under Captain Good, I think his name was, from Cork city.

People talk about neutrality and all that bullshit, and about these Irish fellows running across the Atlantic in old boats for the sake of old Ireland. We were lucky to get a job and we could not care one damn thing about old Ireland, only about what we could smuggle, and what money we could make out of it for a living.

I remember running coal from Newport Mon in Wales to Rouen in France on the *Luimneach*, and the last run I did with her we went from Newport Mon with about 2,000 tons of culm, which is coal slack, to the cement works in Limerick. I went and got drunk in Limerick in a dive known as the Crows Nest, and when she was going back out at three o'clock in the morning I missed her and she was sunk by gunfire in September 1940 later. Her sister ship the *Foynes*, was blown up in 1938 in Barcelona docks by the Germans and sunk.

I was living in Skerries for about four or five months at the time, and I had applied for a passport, and they were writing back to me saying they were looking into it. They sure were. They sent me back a letter saying I was refused a passport into Britain, so I just abandoned it. It was hard to know what to do, trying to find your way through; you were reading any books you could get; listening to other fellows; listening to various rhetoric; trying to make a living. There were crazy blokes talking about blowing up Britain; others that were talking politics. It was very hard to know who to join and what to do or who to talk to. Without a passport I had ceased to be a seaman by April 1940.

#### GUEST OF THE NATION:

The detective cars were watching me so I was going around Skerries with no contact with anybody. Punching in their overtime I suppose. I decided to come back down to Clare to find out what was happening in the Movement there, to find another job or something. I left Dublin one morning and arrived in Ennis; it was about the first of June, and I met a fellow in Ennis. At that time there was a milk strike on and the army were transporting the milk to Dublin in trucks.<sup>(7)</sup> My mate was in the army and he was driving one of the trucks; but he had a row with an officer, so he drove the truck over a ditch and he got six months in the Glasshouse for it.

He was a local fellow here in Kilkee, and he had come out that night very disenchanted and I met him in Ennis. His brother was living in Daragh about five miles from Ennis. I had no money so we decided to go down to Daragh and we stayed the night in Joe Keane's house. I stayed there and it was a Saturday night. On the Sunday morning I came out with an old suitcase on to the road looking for a lift to Kilrush or Kilkee on my way to Carrigaholt, about twelve o'clock in the day.

A car passed me with two blokes in it. They pulled up and came back and asked if I wanted a lift, and I said yes. I told them I was going to Kilrush, so when we came

to Kilrush they said they had a bit of business to do and if I went and had a drink they would be going on later to Kilkee. I did not have any money so I said I would stay in the car if they didn't mind. What did they do only pull up outside the bloody barrack. The superintendent in the barrack, a fellow by the name of Dawson, knew me only too well. Dawson peered out the window; I could see the old face of him squinting. He saw me and he came out. *Pierce*, he said, *there are two detectives here looking for you. They have come all the way from Dublin, they have been scouring this county for the past three days and they don't even know they have you in the car. As you are in now, (and this was June 2, 1940), you might as well stay in.* Dawson was alright; he was a straight enough fellow. Doing his job I suppose. There were four of us brought in from Kilrush that night; we were taken in a car to Ennis barracks, and when we got to Ennis barracks there was another crowd in from around that area. There was a fellow Scanlan from Ennis, and Hourigan who worked in the Mental Hospital. We were a big number and we did not know one another. We were all handcuffed and put in a truck for Limerick. Now, please remember *we were not charged with anything*; at worst we were about to be interned purely on suspicion. Yet here we were being treated like the Jews and the vagabonds in Hitler's extermination camps.

I had read a book a few months before on Houdini and on how to escape out of handcuffs, so I took the handcuffs off; no problem, and threw them away. Over the side, onto the road. So much for Gerald Boland's cufflinks. When we got to Limerick and we were lined up in William Street barracks and this prick came to take the handcuffs off us, a Sergeant Mulroy; he was annoyed with me and asked what happened the handcuffs. I said, *they were too big, they just fell off.*

We met the Limerick crowd and some of the Tipperary crowd. We were put in a big room and left waiting; there would have been about a hundred of us at the time. That night we were handcuffed and put in trucks as we were heading for Limerick Jail. When we arrived in the jail we were lined up once more and they found I had lost my handcuffs again so there was a row about that. Some poor sod in Limerick got a free pair of handcuffs out of it. The one thing that got me down was the following day in Limerick, out in the yard. Brian Lowe was a well known character around Kilrush and he stood up and gave a lecture that we were the I.R.A and we were not going to be told by the Governor to do this or to do that; we would do things our way but under his command. We were idiots of course and took this verbatim, he seemed so genuine about it. We spent a few days in Limerick Jail, and then we were taken out handcuffed as usual in the early morning, and I was handcuffed to Paddy Mc Namara from Kilrush - he later joined the R.A.F - and the guards clambered into the truck with us going to Cork. Each two were handcuffed together with a guard in between. I told Paddy I would take the handcuffs off and if there was a slow down we would make a jump for it. But it did not work out; they kept up speed all the way. I fired the handcuffs through a window in Cork. Mulroy, the sergeant from Ennis, met me in there. I still had no handcuffs on but this time I told him to fuck off.

We got into Cork about twelve in the day and were at once put into cells around the jail. We were starving as we had nothing to eat; I was young at the time and I would eat the side of a mountain. We were talking out of the windows to one another.

er, but we were still hungry and getting nowhere. I shouted at Lowe and he said, *what is wrong with you Pierce. Can you do something about this; we want our dinner*, I said. *You are the one who was doing all the rhetoric in Limerick, do something now*. He said, *if you were O.C. what would you do about it?* I said, *I would be out of this cell in fucking ten minutes. Right, do it*. So I said, *right lads*, we took up the bed and turned it up side down and started knocking the door down, but there was a steel plate in the middle. In next to no time there was rackets all along the cells and some fellows were really going to break out. Then a P.A. came and opened my door and said, *what is the matter with you; the dinner will be along in half an hour*.

We stopped at that, and the dinner then arrived and the doors were thrown open. I was interested to know what damage they had done to the other doors in my vicinity. There were four panels in the door and I had smashed the lot of them; I went down to see had anyone else done any better. But they hadn't; there was little or no damage. I said to Lowe, *you're a shower of shits; ye did nothing*. We were segregated then, and another crowd came in from Cork and Kerry. We were all around the yard, congregating and exchanging notes. I was at the top in a corner cell so life commenced to go on more or less, day in day out the same. It was one of the finest summers I remember. I used to knock around with Sean Mulcahy from Limerick and John Hunt from Athea in that county. Hunt has since had a big write-up about his time in the Curragh; he afterwards went big in business in Chicago.

We were in the top row of cells, as I said, and Paddy Power was there; the International Brigade fellow, and there was another chap from Wexford alongside me. One day we were lying in the grass and were stuck for cigarettes; I said to Mulcahy, *have you got a fag*; he said, *no, but I have plenty above in the cell*. The door into the prison and all of our cell doors were always left open; in that respect it was very relaxed. I said to him, *why don't you go up and get them?* So he gave me his number and said; there is an old leather case under the bed with a carton in it; bring down twenty for me and keep twenty for yourself. I, like a bloody idiot, went upstairs, took the forty out of it and came down, and they were passing cigarettes all around. Hunt was in the party as well, and the smoking was great. When Hunt went away; Mulcahy said to me, *you are an awful case; they were Hunt's cigarettes*. I said, *good enough for the bastard; he should have brought them down to us anyway*.

#### ESCAPE PLANS:

There was Fuller from Tralee. He was a nephew of the only survivor from Ballyseedy, 1923. There was another from the Mental Hospital in Killarney, Jack Smith and another fellow called Eugene Powell, and, I think, Purty Landers. Purty was one of the best. They were all working in the Cookhouse, and there was plenty of grub, and sweet cakes. They then started to dig a tunnel out of the hang house with the intention of meeting Jobie's tunnel coming in. I was a bit of a maverick; I was looking for files or anything for cutting the bars out of my window to make an escape. I had one bar of the window cut, and I decided to raid the governor's office where I got two files and knives and a pair of handcuffs. Before leaving, I set fire to the bloody office. I was courtmartialled for that, and I got three days in the cells down below, from both crowds; the Free State and our own.

I made a shindig over this: I would not go down below until they brought down

my bed. I wasn't going to lie on the floor; not bloody likely. They brought down the bed, but the problem was I had slit the legs of the bed and had the files up in the leg and they were rattling. That passed over; they themselves made so much noise they did not hear them. Later on when I got back to my own cell I got beaten up by our own lads for taking unauthorised action. I had to tell Powell that I had the window cut out of my cell and that I was going one of these nights before they let me go back to that particular cell; escape being an imperative for Republicans when held in jail. They talked me out of going, and Powell asked me if I would cut a window out of another cell for him, and I said I would. The cell he pointed out was occupied by a fellow who was pro-German, Gorman; they were body builders from Clonmel. I used to go down during the day to Gorman's cell and get up on the window and work away. The windows in Cork Jail at that time were two nice wooden casements; they used to fold in and the bars were outside, and the whole crowd used to sit at night with their legs dangling out of the window.

Our people from outside used to come in under the windows at night and shout up the news to us. I remember the night, I was reading a book at the window, and they came up and said that MacCurtain had been reprieved; that was July 8.

Some fellow over on the Kerry wing then put his sheet outside the window and set fire to it, and it was blazing away. I could not be quiet either so I set fire to the book I was reading, and when it got too hot, I flung it on to the roof where for a while it was ready to take off, so they had to get hoses out. So that was another black mark against me. I got three days in the cells and my letters were stopped for two months. I continued to go down every day to Gorman's cell and cut the bars; I had to cut them at a slant so that if you shook them they would not fall out. I cut them with an army knife. I had two knives, and both were tapered the way knives are, and they would stick so you had to get at the bar from another angle. I had one bar out; and I went down this day, and after a while when I had been up on the window I said to Gorman, *something is wrong*. I had seen a curtain in the *La Retraite* convent opposite moving. What I was supposed to be doing was; I was to cut the bars out and to put steps down with a rope with pegs into the wall; this would bring us down to the hang house, and we were to start the tunnel there. I did not know at that time that the lads outside were tunnelling in to meet the hang house. I got up on the window this day and put my legs out through it; I put the book outside at the same time to disguise my purpose, and commenced cutting with the knife.

The convent windows were right in front of me and they were always open; by that I mean the curtains were not drawn across. In fact I did not know they had curtains at all until this particular day. Then I noticed one curtain moving and I said to Gorman, *there is someone behind that fucking curtain. I saw it moving*.

Gorman said; *what are you talking about?* He could not care less. *Well fuck it*, I said, *I am not cutting anymore*. I was only down off the window when I heard the machine guns opening up. The detectives were behind the curtains in the convent windows, and when I got up to the window again I could see them firing below in the field and the lads running. Jobie and Connie Byrd and young Kavanagh and the other chap Roger Ryan. I saw the chaps running, and I could hear the clatter of guns. They seemed to have been trying to extricate themselves from a hole. It was a massacre,

and it need not have happened. I could never forgive the nuns after that; they were bastards.

Prior to the tunnel episode and to show you the sort some of these nuns were, I will tell of a method we had to send out letters. We would kick them *sub rosa* in a rag ball over the jail wall on to the road. This day I was sending out two letters; the language in them was cruel. One was to a mate of mine in Carrigaholt. I put both into an old rag ball that we used for kicking over the jail wall, and a kid would come up, and he would run with the ball and take the letters and post them. In fact another time I put some handcuffs in and sent them to a fellow called Kelleher in Cork, but I never got them afterwards. This day anyway I kicked the ball too hard and it went into the convent grounds. The kid climbed over the wall but the nun came out and run him; she gave the ball back in to the governor and my letters were stopped again. So the Reverend Mother was the fly in the ointment there, you need be under no misapprehension about that.

As far as religion was concerned, it was taboo with me. It was taboo for a few others too but no matter. One evening Brian Lowe was down on the ground floor shouting his head off. The blokes came up then and ordered us out of our cells to go and say the Rosary. We did not want to say the Rosary; I remember kneeling down on one knee on the platform with Johnny Power and a few more characters. We never answered a thing, they would go on with a litany; I'll never forget this. The bloke giving it out would say something like 'Mother most holy', and the crowd would say, 'pray for us'. Instead of answering like that however all our lads from B. Wing would murmur, 'release us'. We said that after every invocation. The whole bloody thing made me sick; being a military body, and we could get killed anytime and here we were, so concerned about our immortal souls and the bloody hereafter. It was all a bloody piece of rubbish.

#### CONVOYED TO CURRAGH:

We were ten weeks in Cork before we were sent to the Curragh. We did not have any classes in our wing; the period was too brief. It was a modern jail and quite a good one; not the old part where lads were held and executed in the Tan and Free State time. The P.A's used to play cards in the cells with the prisoners until an incident occurred outside. They were going up the city one night and they got attacked by the I.R.A so when they came in next day they were withdrawn, and there was a bit of friction but otherwise there was no hassle. Then one morning about 5 a m we were got up and told we were moving. The windows that hinged inwards had two bolts which I had already taken off, and I had files and knives. I filled my pockets with everything I could find; put then in a suitcase, and we went down in groups. We were taken out of the gate with a line of troops each side of us.

Somewhere in front was Eugene Powell, with the Free State soldiers standing with fixed bayonets and we were in the middle of them, and I remember Powell grabbing one of the guns and taking it out of the soldiers hands and giving it to an officer, saying, *keep that bloody thing before he kills someone*, for the kid was shaking. Powell's escape from the hospital in the Curragh, and his involvement in the attempted Plant escape from Arbour Hill, and the tunnel in Cork, all speak for themselves. Eugene Powell, from Dean's Lane, Tralee, was a nimble minded fellow; ever

up to something. A loss to his country, like I suppose, some of us were.

They brought us to a truck with a ladder going up the back; there was about 15 men in each truck. The one I was in; there was Sean Mulcahy, all the Clare crowd, including Brian Lowe, and a teacher from Milltown Malbay, Mick McMahon, Sean Talty and a chap called O'Connor. They were all in the truck I was in, and then there was a row in the truck between me and the brass, and they threatened to courtmartial me again. We set off for the Curragh with a truck in front full of military, and we came behind that. Right behind us was a cut down version of a half ton truck, with a Bren gun on the dashboard, and a driver and motor cycle out-riders each side. With a total of 170 men travelling, it was a long convoy; It was a good job therefore the Gerries did not invade that day; the Free State Army would have been otherwise engaged.

We drove on for a while with no one saying a thing in the truck. I got a bit annoyed and restless, and I said, the best thing we can do is take off these handcuffs. *We are not charged with anything; it is disgrace having us handcuffed like this.* I pulled out the bar I had taken from the window in Cork and I hit the handcuffs, and the pin jumped and released the cuff. I did this with them all until I came to Sean O'Connor, and each time I would go to hit his handcuffs he would pull his hand away. I let fly again anyhow and I missed and hit his thumb. He was the only one that arrived at the Curragh in our truck handcuffed. I said to Sean Mulcahy; I am getting fed up with this, and of course I was a bit of a maverick. I took out a knife then and pulled it along the canvas roof of the truck, and the wind whipped the whole roof off our truck. Brian Lowe and Mick McMahon attacked me and said, *look what you have done; you will definitely get courtmartialled when we get to the Curragh. For what, said I, for fucking damaging a Free State truck? We could get our death of cold, they said. If you are going to fight a war for Ireland and you are worried about getting a cold, I laughed, well fuck you.*

The next thing that happened then was, as we went through the villages, the cops were on the side of the pavements on security duty, and we fired every fucking thing we had at them, including the handcuffs. As we were going past one police station we broke every window. A fellow from Cork then said to me, I will hit the next cop with a stone before you, and as I always was considered a good shot with a stone, I said, you won't. We had loaded a couple of rocks into the lorry before we left the prison, so we started letting fly with them. There was a chap by the name of Derry Kelleher, he was a university student from Cork, and he had a big load of books, and on top was a dictionary. We had run out of rocks by this time so I got hold of the dictionary; we were on the look out for a cop, and all of a sudden this peaked cap came around a corner and we both fired; anyway the fellow went down and he was a fucking postman.

I remember passing Portlaoise, and there was an army fellow standing outside the barrack at a gate in the wall and I had this big butchers knife, and I said to Sean Mulcahy, *I bet I'll stick this in his forehead,* and he said, *I bet you won't.* I put the knife in the gate within inches of his head. I said to Mulcahy then; *listen, let's make a break and fuck this crowd.* The next bend we go around, and there was a ladder between us about four feet long; *you get your side of the ladder and I'll get at mine, and we'll fire it at the front wheel of the Bren gun carrier, and if we put him over the wall he will wreck the con-*

*voy.* So around the next bend we fired the fucking ladder and it hit the Bren gun carrier square; he hit the wall, and at the same time he bumped the motor bike rider and knocked him off. A fellow in the next truck stood up with his rifle and shouted, up the I.R.A; I said to myself, he is in for it. When they get him in the Curragh, he will get a hammering. When we reached the Curragh the trucks pulled up in a circle at the entrance. In the confusion Eugene Powell saw a chance: he changed coats with somebody and tried to walk away from the crowd; he got about 50 yards before they copped him on and brought him into line again. (8)

George Plunkett in Cork, got in a heap of modelling clay which he placed in a ball on a stick, and he had a fellow sitting down modelling his face. I used to stand behind him and I said to myself, how crazy the bastard is. I could do better. When he finished the model, he got this box made, and it full of plaster of paris. He put the head into it making a plaster mould. The day he finished it, he said to me, *what do you think of it?* I said, *it is not a bit fucking like him. Do you think you could do better?* I said; *no problem*, and he laughed, so I said; *I would not take half the time you took.* Well, he said, *what would you do.* Well, I answered; *do you see that box of plaster of paris. I would get that and I would stick his face into the middle of it and then you would have a genuine mould.*

He got into a fit of laughing at that, and for years afterwards I did not know what he was laughing at until someone told me about the different facial characteristics and the shadows on a person's face. Then I laughed myself.

I could not have cared less where we were; it made no impression whatever way you were pushed in an internment camp you had to go with it, and with whatever the conditions were. I kept mostly with the Limerick crowd. All the time in Cork Jail I was mostly with the Limerick crowd; Mulcahy and that crowd. We kept together and finished up in Hut C. 12. As far as we were concerned I couldn't care less about the Camp Council. I knew there was a council there but all I knew was that the O.C of the hut, Joe Crowe, was a damned good bloke. A good clean military man. He had that role in the Tan times. After the burning of the huts the Staters would come in about one in the morning and make us stand up. They would call your name, and we would refuse to answer, and you would get a blow of a baton and maybe get knocked out. Crowe would break the line that they tried to form, and he would get a couple of pushes, and then he would give an order that would settle a situation that was on the verge of total eruption. We would take orders from Crowe; he had the guts to break the line and insist on his command. Plunkett Danaher from Limerick, Sean Mulcahy, Hunt, and all the fellows from Limerick knew how to stand up to them.

When a fellow decided to sign out; the military procedure, I thought, was too much of the fascist German type. All the huts would come out, march down and form a square; then they would walk this poor sod down; put him in the middle, and we would all turn our backs on him. He would be ostracised then, and no one could speak to him until he left the Camp. After the fire in December 1940 however there was no more of that. Discipline had broken down.

The crowd from Arbour Hill; the H Q crowd, who arrived in October; they were all the same to me. Peadar O'Flaherty, Grogan, McGuinness, meant nothing to a raw recruit like me. I spoke casually to O'Flaherty. I found, like I observed before, that



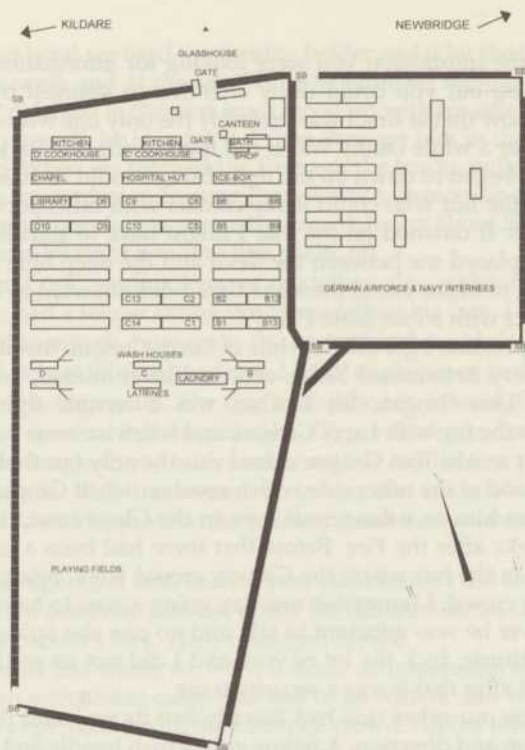
he always had the impression you were looking for information. You only asked about your mates, but you could draw attention to yourself by looking for any information. I know that at first I was probably the only one who did not go to Mass in the camp. After a while Dinny Walsh did not go, nor did Tony McNerney and a few more. But it began to dawn on me that absence could be dangerous, that I was the only one in the hut who could make contact with officialdom when everyone else was at Mass. It dawned on me that I might have to start becoming religious again. But that placed me between the devil and the deep blue sea. There was no way I was going to Mass, but at the same time I did not want to be looked upon as a possible contact with a Free State P.A.

The only impression I got after a while of Larry Grogan, the other H Q man was that he was a very determined bloke; cool and level headed, and the police were afraid of him. Tom Grogan, his brother, was a terrible fighter. I was in the Glasshouse after the fire with Larry Grogan, and when we were being hammered up and down to our meals, Tom Grogan's door was the only one that they did not beat. A P.A always stood at the other side with a revolver when Grogan was coming out. They did look on him as a dangerous type in the Glasshouse. It was very spartan there in the weeks after the Fire. Before that there had been a tunnel started right across from me in the hut where the Galway crowd were. Being friendly with Fay and the Galway crowd, I remember one day going across to have a crack with Fay. I noticed however he was reluctant to talk and no one else spoke to me in the hut, so I took the attitude, fuck the lot of you, and I did not go in there any more. Of course I realised after that it was a security issue.

The tunnel on our other side had literally lost its way and they were trying to find their location and direction. A fellow got a brush handle and pushed it up from below, and it came up on the road; there was another fellow waiting for it to come up, but when it came up there was a P.A coming down the road and yer man put his foot on it to hide it, but the fellow below thought he had struck a rock so he kept pushing, pushing, it was an awful mess up, a near disaster. They covered the situation by shouting, and telling the fellow below to stop with the brush. The Staters sent rollers over the road occasionally to see if there were tunnels; the roller went over this one but it did not crush it in.

#### HIGH NOON, STAURDAY 14TH. DECEMBER 1940

Myself and Sean Mulcahy were ordered to burn C. 12, and we did burn it. That was the Galway hut across the way which had a tunnel in it. I heard it said afterwards that they did not want to burn the lot but that the flames travelled with the wind from one hut to another, there being only thirty six feet between them. They selected huts where there were no tunnels, but whether it was for the rations or whether they knew the tunnels were already discovered I do not know. They only wanted a limited number of huts burned, but other huts got burned because the wind blew that way and set fire to others. We were told to burn our hut, and when I was told to do a job I was going to do it right and not be half hearted about it. At the time we were using a lot of plastic wood for making crosses with matches. We collected all the plastic wood tubes we could get and put them along the internal side of the wooden walls. We sprung some of the vee sheet lining and packed in newspapers behind them, and when we got the word ok, we cracked the match.

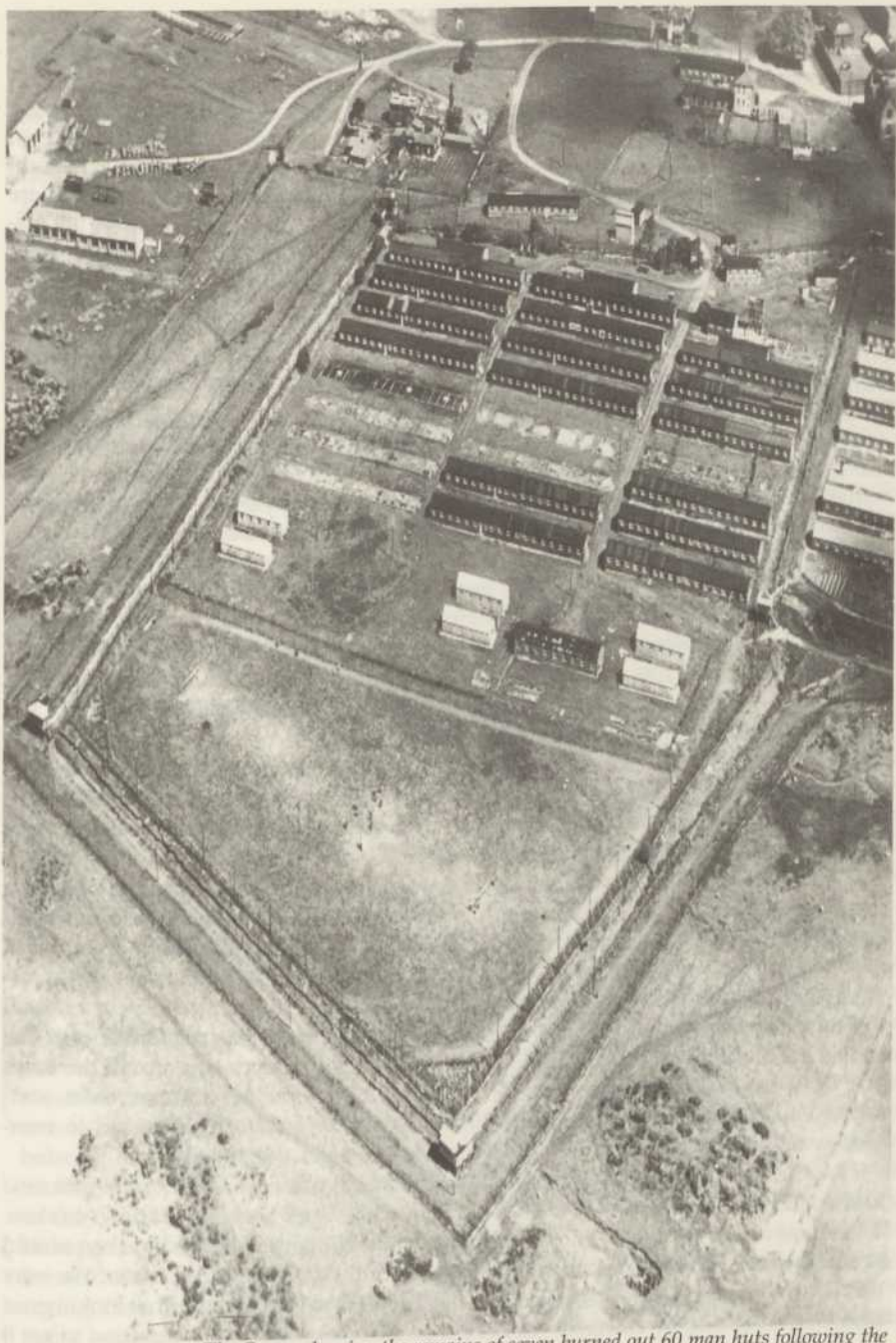


*A Plan of the No. 1 Internment Camp at the Curragh.  
It was located at the extreme western end of the Military Camp.*

There was an old fellow, Mike Carlos, from Strokestown; he was in the bed next to me, and he was asleep when we set fire to the hut. Everyone started to run, and someone gave him a kick and told him get up: the place was on fire. Carlos jumped out of the bed and grabbed a mug and tried to put it on his foot. After the second attempt he realised it was a mug and he flung it at the window and missed, and he flung it again; and there was a fellow running along and he must have thought Carlos was firing the mug at him. So he got a lump of wood and fired it back. The hut was on fire at both its ends, and I always heard it said that in a fire, it is the panic that causes the trouble. So I said to myself, to hell with them, I am not going to panic. I took my time, got my case and put everything into it, and started to walk down a tunnel of smoke and flames each side of me inside the hut. But I did not make it; I was overcome, and the next thing I remember, was coming to outside the hut on the road. I said to whoever pulled me out, *what the fuck happened? We were looking at you walking down and all of a sudden you slumped, so we went in and pulled you out.*

Not everyone got their stuff out before the fire, but ours was one of the lucky ones. There were big losses in other huts, and there was worse to come when the Staters came in rampaging.

It is correct to say that some of the leaders - including myself although I was not a leader - were beaten and kept in solitary confinement for ten weeks in the Glasshouse. That happened within a few days after the fire when more than 40 of us were dragged away. One of the recollections I have of it was, there were a couple of



*The Camp, showing the remains of seven burned out 60 man huts following the conflagration of noon, Saturday, December 14, 1940.*  
PICTURE SUPPLIED BY THE PHOTOGRAPHIC SECTION AIR CORPS BALDONNELL 30.5.58.

lads detailed to break the fire extinguishers. One of the P.A's, Sergt. Matthews, grabbed a fire extinguisher and he tried to get it working, so one of our lads, Jim Doherty of Belfast, hit him with a bar and he fell; he was going to hit him again on the head, and would have killed him; but Tommy Sheerin jumped in and hit our lad a belt in the jaw. I believe afterwards that Matthews was badly injured, and Sheerin did his best to stop it at that stage. We ran in all directions, and I ended up at the end of the road coming in from the gate, right down at the bottom. I would think there was about 20 of us there. We were trying to push our way up back up, but the soldiers were across the entrance with their revolvers drawn; there was a terrific lot of rhetoric going on and some one said, *rush them*. With that they opened fire and Bob Clancy spun around with a bullet through the stomach. I remember taking Bob Clancy with another fellow to the wash house and we pulled up his shirt; and the other fellow took out a bullet that was protruding from his back. He had a hole right through and was bleeding, but I left him and went out to join the battle. It could not be said by the Staters in their defence that we were trying to charge the gates to escape. Bob Clancy, and the rest shot at this time were hundreds of yards down from the gates, in the playing field, when they were shot. They had cleared out the remaining huts, driving us down the slope into the playing field when the real shooting began. Now do not confuse this with the killing of Barney Casey; that was two days later.(9)

At that time they had a machine gun on the road; in fact there was some confrontation on the road with a soldier lying behind a gun. I don't know what happened, but I remember a clergyman going over to the soldier and a corporal; and there was some big row among them about firing. I think that the clergyman was saying that there was no need to fire; that batons could be used. But they were letting fly in all directions, and it was at that stage that Arthur Moynihan, Bob Flanagan and Máirtín Standúin got hit. Then we were driven towards the wash houses, and they were firing also from the sentry posts, and the bullets were whistling back and across us. I remember O'Reilly, a footballer from Cavan, was walking across from the wash house.

One of the P.A's had a revolver and he was pushing O'Reilly from the back, trying to get him to move. O'Reilly would not move, while we at that time were herded into the field at the bottom that would have been the football pitch. We were told by our own crowd to line up and keep in military formation; that if we were scattered they would open fire upon us. We were there for maybe three hours, and all the time it was raining; the military then brought in the Construction Corps. The Construction Corps went through all the remaining huts, opening up all the cases and throwing out our possessions. They cut the suits in halves and tore coats, scattering everything between the huts. Obviously they had been instructed to completely destroy whatever personal belongings survived after the fire.

After that we were herded up, and I was then put into a hut close to the gate next to the Icebox; with the concrete floor seeping with water and the windows broken. There was about three times the normal complement of men in the hut than would normally be in it; there was no bed boards, no clothes; nothing only water. We were locked into the hut with all the possessions littered between. One fellow looking out said, *that is my shoe out there*. So we got hooks and pieces of string, and tried to get it

in. But even if, by a miracle, you got a coat and found it was yours, you would find it was torn in two halves and was useless.

We spent the first night lying in rings around the stove with our feet towards the stove, and with bits and scraps out of cases under our heads. In the morning when you got up, you would have a pain across the back of your neck. I remember the night the Germans bombed somewhere, we were lying around the stove having torn the partition down, and it was burning in the stove. Suddenly the door broke open, and the P.A's ran in and threw a bucket of water into the fucking stove and it exploded; we woke up and with that there was ashes and steam all over the place, and we could hear in the distance the drone of aeroplanes. It was like a scene from Kafka. That is one distinct recollection I have, of lying on the floor; we were two days and nights there.

There was another group in another hut further down our line. They must have got stools or something. There was some sort of confrontation because the Kerry crowd were down near the stove and I don't know what happened, but a P.A had a revolver and he fired three bullets through the window and they went straight in and out and out the other wall without hitting anybody. On Monday, December 16, we were released, and we were parading to the Cookhouse for our breakfast, our first meal in two and a half days. As we were turning the corner the P.A's were across the front gate and they at once opened fire. Casey was behind me and he was hit, and the one in front of me was Walt Mitchell, and he was hit too. I saw him go down and spin around; it transpired afterwards that the bullet hit him in the leg. Casey of course, died.

#### OUT OF THE PAN AND INTO THE GLASSHOUSE:

They then started to wash the huts and to shift us from hut to hut. The bed boards were burned and would not be replaced for two years, so the palliasse rested on the floor. That did not matter to me as I was bound for somewhere else, namely the Glasshouse. The period of time in between the burning of the huts and my forcible removal, was just 16 days. On New Year's Eve I was asleep in a corner; I had a beard, and I was startled to hear the door flying open and somebody saying, *the fellow with the beard*.

There was a lot of burnt wood each side of the door, and as I was dragged out, I got hit on the side of the head and I fell into the wood, and a big six inch nail went up my arse. I was pulled out then and run up with batons, between the huts, and on to the gate. At the gate there would be already about 20 blokes, all handcuffed. I was shoved into the group where there was a Kerry fellow, a big bloke; I think his name was Mahoney. They did not handcuff either of us. I had my suitcase with me; what was left of it anyway, and I had a few other things that I still have, like *The Iron Heel* belonging to Mick O'Riordan, written by Jack London. Guiney said, *we are now proceeding to the Glasshouse and anyone that breaks the line will be shot*. We started to walk to the Glasshouse with Staters each side of us. The one behind me made several kicks at the suitcase and kicked me on the fingers and tried to make me drop it, a favourite trick, when escorting prisoners. I was watching where we were going and saying, *fuck it, should I make a run for it?* But I decided against it as there were too many weapons around, I would have been a sitting duck. When we arrived in the

Glasshouse we were put into cells and locked up. The Staters came around later and slated every one of us and I got beaten up. I think the same treatment was applied all around.

Looking back on it I now think the reason the other fellow and I were not handcuffed, they knew me as a bit of a maverick, and they thought I would run and they would then shoot the rest. That is my own opinion. Then they came around to each cell and they beat up every one of us. I was beaten up that night with fists. That became a regular practice.

My recollection of the Glasshouse was, they would come in the morning and ask, any complaints? Carroll it was. If you refused to say, sir, Big Ned Gill would hit you a belt in the mouth. As a result one morning I was sore all over; and when they opened the door to send you for your breakfast there would be a couple of P.A.'s there and they would try to make you run, and again you were belted. One morning I decided I would stand with the bed behind me, and take the punch and fall upon the bed. But he beat me to it; he gave me a kick on the back of the legs.

Then as I was going down the stairway one morning while Ned was leaning over the railing, he gave me an awful kick in the arse, and only for the book belonging to O'Riordan which I had padded into my trousers, I would have had a hell of a sore arse from all the kicks I got. He did this twice, and I could not think how the Christ I would get out of it. But sometimes you would get out of situations without planning them.

Each morning the door opened and the P.A. would be outside with a baton, and he would say double, and we would not double, and he would keep poking you with the baton. Just before I got to the top of the stairway to go down I changed the mug from my right hand to my left, and when I saw Ned's boot coming up, I caught him on the ankle with the corner of the mug. He let a yell out of him, and I went down those stairs bloody fast that morning. I lost my breakfast; he knocked it out of my hand on the way back up and I got no breakfast.

Calligan was across the way from me, and Hunt. They started to write little notes on the toilet paper, hiding them behind the toilet seat. The Staters copped on to that and as a result they would only give you one sheet of toilet paper. Of course if you wrote on the wall you would get into big trouble. Every four or five days you had to wash out your cell, and that being wet, you were transferred to a cell that was washed out two days before. Then they entered and would examine the cell. Calligan got into this cell, and it was John Hunt who was in it before. He was looking around the cell for names on the walls, and under the window ledge he found Hunt's name. He said to himself that, if Hunt had enough of guts he should have written on the wall, so he wrote Hunt's name on the wall. The P.A. came in and saw the name, and putting Calligan outside into another cell, he sent for Hunt, and after hammering him, he said; *where did you put your name*; and of course John went for the one he had done under the ledge, not knowing the other one was there. So he got hammered again. There were big gratings along the floor covering pipes and they would pull up a grating and put it across the door. Two P.A.'s inside the cell would make the man jump out, and two outside would make him jump back in. Calligan would be laughing at all this; he was an awful character.

One day it was raining and we were put out in the yard. Rúairí Brugha was put out with me, and we had this big bath, and we were told to fill it with coal and bring it into the cook house. The two P.A's were belting us meanwhile with batons, and Rúairí with his little weasel face, was out in front pulling me, so that I was getting all the belting.

Later on I was down in the Cookhouse one day peeling spuds and who was with me but John Hunt.(10) I had been in the Cookhouse before and I said to John; *if you are caught talking they will beat your brains in. On the way in there will be bits and scraps of fat bacon on the table. Just pick a small amount and take what you want.* John could not be restrained, so he took a big fist and filled his pocket with it. Eventually we were put back in our cells, but John had eaten so much, and we were so starved at the time, that he got sick. He rang the bell and, as he was vomiting, they saw it was fat and wanted to know where he got it. They said he stole it, and they beat the hell out of the poor bastard.

Another night they took Sheeran out; he was a brave bastard. He would do nothing for them, but you could hear the screaming and the belting and the roaring. They belted Sheeran and he knocked out about two of them, but they beat him all around the floor. I was coming across from my cell and I met Tommy coming out of his, and his face was all black and blue from being beaten with batons; he was a great character. Another time, I swear to God, they took him and put him in a cell with three P.A's. Guiney, the Camp Commandant, was there too but he stepped outside. I am in for it now, says Tommy, putting himself up against a corner, his fists at the ready. None of them had the guts to take him on. After a few minutes Guiney reappeared whereupon one of them made a dash at Sheeran but Guiney shouted; *get back you bastard. Ye had your chance and not one of ye had the guts.* But they belted him with batons on the way back after Guiney had departed.

One morning they opened the doors and chased the lot of us out, and we careered down and were lined up. It was a Saturday morning and a bloody clergyman came in to say Mass. I did not want to go into the chapel so I sat under the stairway and fell asleep. When it was over we were kicked out again and put back into our cells. I was not back in the cell very long when the clergyman came in and he said; *you were not very respectful at Mass.* I said; *I did not ask to go there. I am here under military control; I would have been better off left in my cell.* He said inquiringly; *you don't believe in anything,* and I said; *you're right. You are like the rest of them,* he went on, *not prepared to read anything?* He brought me two books, and he came back to me a week afterwards and asked if I read them. I said, I had. *What did you think of them? A heap of old rubbish.* Myself and the clergyman then had an argument, and I got another hammering for that.

They were two religious books and one of them was *There Must Be a Prime Mover.* The theory was that if you had a deck of cards standing up, and you knocked one of them, the whole row fell down. I said, *where did the prime mover come from.* Oh, he said, *you must know that,* and I said; *fuck that old yarn, that's bullshit.* I got into trouble again. They came around one particular day, hammering me again; and I did not know what I'd done. You got hammered so often you would not know what it was for. If you had a few bob in your account and I did not have much, but I used to get

a few bob in now and again, they would let us buy something. They came around this day; Fennell; *what do you want?* I said, *two loaves of bread and a pound of butter. I'll give you butter if I go into you.* I remember getting that loaf of bread and eating the whole lot of it dry; that's a fact.

One morning, I don't know how long we were in there, and they lined us up at the bottom again. Lowe was alongside me. If you were caught with a watch or anything like that they would knock your head off. I said to Brian Lowe, *where is your watch*, and he said; *shut up. I threw it down the ventilator. What number*, I asked him then. I said to Hunt on the way up; *there is a lovely gold watch down the ventilator* in such and such a cell.

#### CHARGED WITH BURNING:

Another morning they came and gave us all charge sheets. They charged the whole lot of us with the burning of the Curragh; that was at the end of January 1941. They took us out one morning, and Jim Breen of Roscommon was with me and a fellow from Waterford city, Denis Ryan, and Brian Lowe and John Joe McGirl. We were put into a truck: it was early morning and it was cold. Guiney came out with blankets saying, *the prisoners may get cold.* I said, *fuck off with them; you would not give them to us when we were freezing in the Icebox.* Fennell, he said, *if you don't shut your mouth you will go back in here again.* I would not take the blanket from him. We were taken from there to Collins Barracks; up before the Tribunal, and charged.

Lowe threatened to recognise the court and Breheny let fly at him. When we went below to the cells in Collins Barracks, I said to the P.A that swore he saw me at the gate with about two hundred enticing them to rush the gates. I said, *you are a bastard of a liar: you did not see me near the gates. I was down in C 12. What did it matter*, he replied, *you were one of the bastards anyway.* Jim Breheny saved me from a good hammering. *I have an idea then*, I said, *when those P.A's are handing us over to the governor of Mountjoy, there is five of us here, or at least four. Let us turn on them and give them one almighty hammering. It is one way of getting our own back for all we had to endure in the Glasshouse.* But Breheny was more cautious. *Be careful*, says he, *we might be back in the Curragh*; and sure enough years later we were. So it was a good job we did not make the attack. They would certainly have got us two years later when we were kicked back there.

We were sentenced in batches of five by the Tribunal. While we were having a recess before we were sentenced, down in the cells of the barracks, Lowe said to me; *how long do you think we will get?* Peadar O'Flaherty, Ó Broin, Weafer and McNeela had been up the day before and they had got ten and five years. *If you take it that they are the brass, we should work out with about three years.* I got two years, and it ended up about eighteen months to run concurrently. We were shifted that night to the 'Joy, and we were there for about four or five days.

Rúairí Brughá got the flu and Peadar O'Flaherty was bull shitting about him; we had all to go to Rúairí's cell to boost his morale, and he had blankets all over the place while the windows were broken in our bastarding cells. Meanwhile the ladies across in the other wing would call out; *are you the I.R.A fellows, send us over a cigarette.*



## AN ESCAPE GOES WRONG:

After that those of us sentenced under three years went to Arbour Hill. Joe Crowe was already there and we joined the other Republican prisoners who were serving relatively short sentences; I can remember Paddy Lynch there from Ardfert. Conditions generally were good as we had recreation outside, basketball and handball; playing cards in the shed, and of course trying to figure out how to break out.

I used to knock around with Hunt and Calligan; we used, as part of our fatigues, take the dustbins from one walled compound to another, and then to the wash house at the back of the compound. Calligan, Mixie Conway and Joe Crowe and myself were planning to break out from the wash house. Wash day was Friday, and we decided that we would all go to the wash house together, and when Mixie Conway asked me for more soap, I would knock the P.A out that was standing near me. There was only one P.A in the washroom.

We would then tie him up and we would go through the window. I would smash the lock on the wire gates, and then go to the main gates and smash the lock there. We would then have to risk running through the fire from the two sentry boxes after getting through that gate, but we calculated that at best they could only shoot two and we would take our chances.

During the morning before we went to the wash house Calligan and I were making preparations and talking, and Hunt said to me, *there is something on Pierce*. I said, *what do you mean, John*; and he said, *you and Calligan are up to something, and I don't care whether you are or not I am going to find out what it is. Big deal, John, how are you going to do that?* He said; *every step you take I am going to be two steps behind you.*

I went anyway and got the bucket and my clothes and headed for the wash house, and sure enough John was right behind me. When we got to the wash house we were washing in these old baths, and Mixie asked for the soap and I hit the P.A a clatter and turned him upside down. When he fell I put my hand over his mouth for he was muttering something. I said to Calligan, *give me something to shut this fellows mouth*. Hunt dived into the bath full of hot clothes, and threw a hot towel down on top of my hand on the fellows face, and he nearly burned the hands off me. The rest of the fellows in the wash house did not know what was happening, but they stayed clear of the windows. The sergeant on the outside heard the commotion and ran for the door. I said, *let the bastards in*, but they obviously pulled back. Calligan said; *it's all up what will we do?* I said, *lets go through with it; to hell with it*. Calligan pulled the window up and dived through; I followed him and Hunt was behind me. We then came under heavy fire from the two sentry boxes. There was a little wall, and I said to Calligan, *dive; get behind it. We have had it*. The bullets were coming down over the wall, and the sergeant was blowing the whistle in the middle and calling on us to get up. I said, *fuck off: tell those fellows to stop firing*. Never tell me a Free State soldier wouldn't shoot a Republican. They damn well will. We were taken into the cells; Crowe, Calligan, Hunt and myself. I don't think they took in Conway. We were put on three days bread and water. Hunt of course, who was not of the outfit was also charged; he said to the Governor, *I've had nothing to do with it. It's like this Mr. Hunt, you did not go to the assistance of the P.A. Do you think I'm a lunatic*, cried Hunt. Lennon let us off lightly, I must say. The bread and water system worked like this; you had to go with a tray for a tin of bread and water and you would leave the tin outside each door, and you would then take the tin in and they would lock your door. This particular morning I went down to the Cookhouse and I had this tray with our tins of bread and water on it, and I left one at Crowe's door, and one at Calligan's door. As I left the tin down, the P.A would open each door, but Calligan said; *I don't want the damn thing*, and the P.A said, *neither do I; look Calligan*,

take it in. *Fuck off with it*, said Calligan, and he gave it a kick and sent it up the middle of the floor. We spent only about two and a half days there but we were hungry. Lennon let us out somewhat before our time. We were released then into the yard with our own lads, and one fellow had a bottle of milk while another had three or four slices of bread, and another three kippers. I will never forget this; we were in the toilets, and I had the bread and the kippers, and I remember putting a kipper on a slice of bread and handing it to Calligan and another one to Hunt. *I don't like kippers*, said Hunt, so I gave him the second slice and I ate the two kippers and the other slice myself. Years afterwards in Mooney's pub one night with Calligan and Hunt; I said to them, *will you have another drink*. Hunt said, *we will, and it won't be like that fucking kipper*; and I said, *what kipper?* *That kipper in the Hill; do you remember the day we were starving*. I said, *you told me you did not want the kipper*, and he said, *I was only being polite*. *By Jesus*, I laughed, *you were being polite to the wrong man*.

Joe O'Connor on the Devereux case came into the Hill, but the best of the lot was George Plant; he was a grand lad. There was about 60 or so in there but I don't remember them all. There was another attempted break out from the Hill after that. Some of the lads decided to try a break to get Plant out but I was not involved. It was Mixie Conway, Mártín Calligan, Eugene Powell, Plant, and I think, Joe Crowe. In the other yard there was a small door, but about two hours before the attempt a sentry was put on the door for the first time ever. That put paid to the idea.

On his final night, Plant asked for a couple of lads to have a talk with him; I think they were Conway, Calligan and Crowe. The Governor allowed them into the cell, and when they were about to talk Plant put his finger to his mouth and hushed them up. He then went to the ventilator and took a microphone from it and broke it. There was something symbolic about that. Next day he gave me about two pounds of ham that someone had sent into him. He would not get around to eating it, he said, before they shot him. It is said that they put the coffin into the truck with him when they took him to Portlaoise for execution. I cannot however confirm that, but it was a widespread story, and I wouldn't put it past them.

Calligan tried once again to escape. You couldn't stop him, he was like Powell, always at it. He got me to make him a wood chisel and screw driver, and he unscrewed the steel plate over the door frame. He then cut the wood away from the door lock and the door then swung in. But as usual he was heard working on it, and it was just another failure. Over the wire, up on the hill were a lot of soldiers' accommodation houses; redbrick with balconies. And up on the balconies this day we saw an elderly man and woman and they were waving. We were looking across: we did not know these people in the distance and we did not recognise them.

As the group of us increased, Paddy Brown, the Dublin bricklayer, recognised the old man and woman. *For Jesus sake*, he shouted, *will you go away home and get drunk like you were on the morning in 1916 when you did not turn up in Liberty Hall for Connolly*. It was Paddy's old man and woman.

#### BACK TO KILDARE:

We were released one morning from the Hill. When we came out on the road we were, as expected, rearrested and brought to the Curragh again. We were put into a hut, but this time, I am not sure about this, we are coming up to the split. There was a lot of trouble at H.Q in the Curragh and rumours and counter rumours. I was not

very concerned in it, because at that time I would be more interested in the communist side, and they were getting more consolidated and organised. I can remember being brought before the Clare Council; there was Calligan, Lowe and Martin White, an old I.R.A man from the Tan times. I remember someone saying at the table that all of the counties in Ireland had had a breakaway, but the Clare company was still intact and under the official council. Just to show them that this was not so, I then went over to the other side of the Camp. You could remain under Liam Leddy or you could join Pearse Kelly, under whom was the communist group.

I went into a discussion with them and I talked about Connolly and his association with the First International. I said I was making up my mind what I was going to do. I went over to the side where Kelly was because he seemed to be a step above the ordinary, though he would not come down to basic facts; he lived, to my way of thinking, in a rhetoric of his own, whereas the Leddy crowd were prepared to talk only about republicanism. Communism was out with either group.

The question of signing out came up in the communist section of the party, because they reckoned that our interest now lay behind victory for the Soviet Union, and we could do better outside than inside. The problem as far as I could see was that we went in on a principle of freeing our own country and while I could go along with their theories, I could not as regards signing out. So that was one of the points where I disagreed with them and stuck to my own guns; I would refuse to sign. Goold and O'Riordan were the principal advocates for signing out. O'Riordan to my mind was just as dictatorial in his leftist attitude as Seamus O'Donovan was in his right wing attitude.

You can be a dedicated communist which Goold was; and indeed he was far more dedicated than anybody. But you could talk to Goold and he would talk with you; there was give and take with him, but not with Mick. Mick was dogmatic, and if you did not agree with him you were on the wrong side of the coin. If you did not agree with the total communist philosophy you were a fascist, whether you were or not. Calling the opponents fascist was just a slogan amongst them.

I had great crack with George Fluke, whose father was said to be an Orangeman from Cavan. This is George's own account of his arrival in the Curragh. He said he thought he was coming in to a solid republican group but when he got into the guardhouse at the gate, Guiney asked him, *what part of this open university would you like to go into?* Fluke said, *I don't know what you are on about.* Well, said Guiney, *I will put it into perspective for you. You can go in and join Mr. Leddy who is totally republican; republican flag and republican to the backbone. If you don't like his side of the Camp, you can go and join Pearse Kelly who is a little more liberal with his northern republicanism; there is more give and take and he is not as dogmatic. Then if you don't like that, you can go and join Mr. O'Donovan's group; the ones who believe in Hitler all the way through. If you are still not satisfied, you can join Mr. Goold, who marches under the banner, workers of the world unite. Now move yourself Fluke, you are holding us up,* and a P.A gave him a belt of a baton that split his ear.

It was customary for three or four of the lads who had nothing better to do, to stand at the gate to see who was coming down the Hill; to see who the next internee might be. Anyone coming in would get a mattress and would have the mattress

rolled up on his back and held with two hands in case it fell down, for if it fell down you would get a kick on the backside or maybe a clip of a baton. This particular day we could see this wee fellow coming down and all you could see was a mattress. Some said it is only a mattress coming by itself for where was the bloke? Well, when he staggered out from under the mattress we found it was a bloke alright. A wee Belfast man, known as *Ludai Óg*; ever since release he has been holding down a photography business as Cathal Holland at Parnell Square in Dublin.

Gerry, the Bird, Doherty, from Derry, used to knock around with Black Dan O'Toole, a hard man from Belfast; and he would say occasionally to Dan, *have you any bees*; he meant money. And Dan would say yes; *I have a few*, and he would say, *lets hear them buzz*. Purty Landers told me about ten years ago he was down in some old square in Tralee and he was looking at a fellow selling suit lengths. He was walking around the van and who was there but Doherty. Doherty recognised Purty and they had a bit of crack, and he said to Purty, *are you interested in a suit length*. Yes, said Purty, *but I would not have enough money to buy anything like that*. Who said anything about bloody money, *just pick out a length*, replied Gerry. *I will look after it*.

Lanty Hannigan, who was eternally writing letters, would borrow your writing pad and all he would give you back was the cover. He would have written about forty pages of a letter on your pad. I remember he was writing to this dame; he had got in touch with her, saying he was an engineer when showing her around Killiney Castle. He was bluffing her, but then Lanty was known for his tall stories. He emigrated to Australia after.

Ned Corrigan of Ballycroy was a big strong mountainy man. I knew him and had good crack with him. The time Liam Rice was shot through the lung and we got the report in the Camp; I said to Ned that he is knackered. Ned said, *what do you mean; it's gone through mine twice and my knee, and I am not knackered*.

With regard to rumours still circulating about the death of Paddy McLogan, former M.P. who is said to have shot himself dead at the bottom of his own garden in Blanchardstown in July 1964. There are two views about that; one is that he committed suicide, the other is that he was shot by the official I.R.A. I am glad to hear that in this book you will uncover this mystery as you did in *Harry* when you named the three who assassinated Kevin O'Higgins. Of course if you find he died by his own hand, that will be another matter.

About making an electric fire to heat up the hut or to boil tea, I will tell you how it was done. I would pull the wire from a clothes line outside, and by stretching and unwinding I would end up with about 25 feet. That wound around a pencil would make a coil. Wind it then around pieces of asbestos and put it on three panels of board, and then link two wires to a plug that fitted the light bulb, and it would glow. When I took it out the first night and plugged it in, all the lights in the Camp went dull.

It was red hot; it could boil a cup of water in minutes, and then you could hear a surge of electricity going through it and P.A.'s running in all directions. We would have our three mugs boiled in a minute and the apparatus hidden. It would last about 10 days, and then the wire would burn out and I would have to do it again.

At the medical hatch waiting for Thackaberry, John Hunt was always in the

queue looking for bismuth. He would say to me my back is killing me.

Mick Dowling from Cork city, was the most skilled engraver in the camp. He was the engraver of rings and all the other designs that were done; the celtic ones that were on bags and wallets; those that were any good. Eighty per cent of them originated from him.

Before he signed out early in 1942, I said to Harry; *what in the name of Jesus is gone wrong with you; why are you signing out?* He said, *well Pierce I am in here for doing nothing, but when they put me in here again they will have plenty of reason for putting me in.* I did not understand then what he meant, but I understood before long.

I remember one incident where I nearly got shot myself although it was some time before this. I had agreed with Sheeran that the next night the lights went out in the Camp, as they sometimes did, we would make a break for it. The lights went out soon after and I had removed netting wire from outside the windows; I am not sure of the date, but I got to the window and jumped out and reached the far side of the Camp where I had agreed to meet Sheeran. We met close to the wire, and we were just about to start cutting when the bloody lights went on. Then we realised there was a P.A standing behind us. I don't know if Sheeran hit him or not but I started running, and Sheeran ran too in another direction, and they started blowing whistles.

We both got back to the huts and got into bed, and they never found out who it was. But that established for us that whenever the lights went out or the fog came in, armed P.A's and soldiers surrounded the Camp.

Among the communists Paddy Smith was a very nice self-effacing fellow: ex-International Brigade, as was Johnny Power of Waterford. Johnny was wounded, Smith had a dirty bayonet mark across his face. The thing that intrigued me about them was that upon cold frosty mornings when we would go down to wash our faces in the wash house, they would have the taps turned up in the air and they would have the water flying upwards and they would be running crossways through it having a shower bath.

This, on a cold winter's morning was the practice of all of the International lads. They were a very nice group and I got on very well with them. Neil Gould Verscoyle was their outstanding theorist. (11) Left as part owner of a victorian house in the village of Dunkineely, Co. Donegal, and some lands nearby, he had grown up partly in the home of an old family retainer, at the same time away from boarding school spending much of his holidays fishing trout in one of the many rivers flowing down from the Bluestack Mountains. About 1933 he emigrated to the Soviet Union where he married and had one son. Some five years later he slipped home again. I used return to the hut and take down and re read all the notes he had lectured us upon. And everyone of those lectures I still have; handwritten books of them, and even typewritten ones. All of his lectures were based on the communist ideology and how it could improve our well being. Then the discussions would start at the fire at night time when we would be sitting around it. I remember Joe O'Connor of Brosna was with us at that time. Joe had gone a little bit left as well. I used to argue like hell at the fire for and against. In each hut there were one or two of the communists, so the propoganda, if you like to call it that, or the ideology, was spreading and the

groups were getting bigger and bigger. One night the discussion was on about something, and I was trying to elaborate on the communist side of things, and down at the other end were the Kerry group controlled by John Joe Sheehy. John Joe, who was a very upright man, got up and headed off down to our fire place and he had about 15 of the Kerry lads with him, and he said; *Pierce you have gone far enough.* I said, *what do you mean, far enough.* He said, *I do not want to hear any more communism in this hut.* I said, *I am not talking communism; I am talking Connollyism and if you object to James Connolly, its time we all left the bloody hut.* One word borrowed another and I switched subjects so that instead of quoting Lenin or Stalin, I started to quote Connolly and to challenge John Joe upon it. So instead of a fist fight he withdrew with his group to his own end, and that finished the discussion for that night.

On Leddy's side there was a tunnel being dug in 1943, and although they did not talk to us, we sent messages across to them that the lads were seen coming up and dropping the clay from their trousers. The one that was completed, was near the porch and they were ready to go. Just about an hour before they were ready to go the army came in and said, no lads you are not going tonight. The Staters may have known about it all along that they were digging. It is not to be confused with the earlier tunnels of 1940 which were discovered in the burning. The second tunnels were going around the blockades of the old tunnels, and partly using the old tunnels.(12)

John Henry Cummins slept somewhere near the door. I saw him frequently walking up and down the hut with a mug and toothbrush, and he would be washing his teeth and he would be spitting out through a hole in the window; I don't know if it was a bullet hole or not. I thought it was odd that he would not go down to the wash house. A well read man and a linguist, if a trifle shy, he hailed from Kiltimagh; ending his days in Dublin. However, the time he was signing out, Sean Mulcahy and myself went down and had a bit of a talk with him. Sean said to him, *John when you get out now you will obviously contact the lads outside.* John said, *look Sean, I would not contact you shower of bastards again if I had a short wave broadcast set from Mars.* He was sent to the Mater Hospital in Dublin. I looked for parole myself one time; my old lady was supposed to be dying, but they would not give it to me.

There were about three or four Protestants in the camp at that time; Fluke and Clements was a Protestant, and Walt Mitchell and Victor Fagg.

#### INTO THE LIVING WORLD:

I was told in 1944 that I was being released. That is the way it was. You would be told without warning in the morning; pack up, and given a train voucher. I think I had about five bob coming home, and I drank it on the train. After Limerick I did not have the money to reach Kilkee: instead I borrowed the fare from a bus conductor I knew and I gave it back the following week. Here in the town I met several people; no one was interested in me except an old bloke who was anti-republican. He offered to see me home but I walked it home. I found I was taboo even in Carrigaholt. The so called republicans, with the fighting ability from 1922 had now joined forces with the Free State Army, and they were all in the L.D.F, with the clergy of course behind them.

Anyone who had any sympathy with what was dubbed communism was out of luck there. I spent a few months in Clare before taking off again for Dublin, where I

walked the streets broke and hungry for many weeks and months. In O'Connell Street in those days in 1945 the total bloody internment camp were walking up and down the street every day. You could meet everyone in it, all as broke as yourself. I did not get a job on the turf in the Park so eventually I went out to Glencree; myself and Dinny Walsh. Dinny went to the quarry and I was working on the roads. We were trying to cause a strike in the Glencree camp, where we were still known as the communist element.

Some little incident happened when a stone cross fell down. It was knocked down and they blamed us for it and we had to leave the camp quickly, otherwise we would have been killed. When we came back to Dublin we went to the Park and I met Gearóid Mangan and a few more, and Seamus Mangan who seemed to be in charge there.

I asked him about a job, and he said sorry, there are no jobs. The fellow in the truck who gave us a lift back to the city said; *you will have to join the I.R.A to get a job up there*. We did hear the following day from one of the lads who was in the hut, an ex-internee, that Seamus Mangan said; you could not give a job to those two, they would have everyone out on strike the following week.

I was back in Carrigaholt again when I answered a job in a Dublin paper for a foreman fitter; a job in a garage in Bray. I worked in Bray for about a month, and a certain person used to come and meet me in Bray, very friendly like and we had the odd few pints together. Then one day a fellow arrived in and he wanted to buy a second hand bicycle. I noticed he was not very interested in the bicycle. He seemed more interested in me. The following morning the owner came to me, Ledwidge was his name, and he said to me; *Pierce you will have to go. Is it the fellow with the bicycle*, I asked, *I am not supposed to say anything, but yes, he was a Branch man*. Instantly I recalled a funny thing that happened in the Camp when a group of us were around sitting on a bed; that person, myself, Sean Mulcahy and somebody else, and we were discussing what had happened with Micky Gill who had somebody beaten up at the time. And they said; well what should be done with Gill, and I said, why are we arguing? Haven't we got the facts; make your minds up. Someone said to me; *what is your mind*, and I said; *I would shoot the bastard and be done with it*. The meeting broke up and there was no more discussion about it. A year and a half afterwards, going back to Bray, I was in the city and I met Dinny Walsh. I said to Dinny, *I don't like going into the Castle on my own, but I want to go in and see Gantly to see if I can get my seaman's identity card renewed*. There is no use going through the regular procedure as he would vet it at the end of the day.

So Dinny and I went into the Lower Castle Yard and we met a fellow there, and I asked him where I would find this fellow Gantly. He said; *are you referring to Superintendent Gantly? I do not know who the hell he is*, I answered, *but I want to see him. Who the hell are you*, inquired the individual. *I am Fennell; Pierce Fennell from Clare*. Well, said he, *I am Det. Insp. Gill and the next time you are opening your big mouth about shooting people, be careful of what you are talking about. You are now in the Castle and you are not getting any bloody seaman's identity; you can fuck off out of it*.

Instantly it brought back to me that there had been only four of us on the bed talking that night. Gill repeated exactly what I had said. It was not Sean Mulcahy,

there was that person and another one. It was that same fellow who put the Branch on to me in Bray when I got sacked. When they were looking for Don Tidey, and that was thirty years after, the same fellow arrived down here one night; he had heard that I had a pub here. So I said; *look friend, get the bus now and get out of here fast.*

In the case of a sandy officer from Carlow who was allegedly in the I.R.A in the early days and was disliked in the Curragh. They went to warn him so they put the bullets through the fanlight of the door. After that he was quiet. It was easy for him to be quiet for by then it was all over. As usual they talked a lot of bull shit. Myself and Calligan caught up with - a year afterwards in O'Connell Street in Dublin. Calligan said; *look who is in front of you.* I said; *don't give any notice now; we will go each side of him and clock him.* But he saw us and went straightaway for the gun he always carried.

When I came out of the Curragh, I worked at everything. I was prepared to do any thing. I worked ploughing fields; I ploughed half of this county with an old Fordson tractor as no one knew how to drive in those days; and I worked fixing old cars and that. I could not get my Irish seaman's identity card back because of Gill, so I went to Dublin and stayed a couple of nights in the British Seaman's Mission on the docks where I got an offer of a job on one of Palgrave Murphy's ships which was in Liverpool at the time. They signed a card for me to say that I was going to join the *Gold Finder*; it belonged to Palgraves anyhow. I worked on that for a couple of months and I finished up with a very bad ulcer. We were going up and down Britain at the time in a coastal vessel. I had to leave her as I had a ruptured ulcer. I threw up a lot of blood near Lands End and I left her in Newport. The immigration office caught on to me in Newport and threatened to do this that and the other.

That night I took my suitcase, got on a train and ended up in Liverpool Sailors' Home. I was there for about a week, and they caught up with me again and told me to get out of Liverpool. I left there and went into the *Flying Angel*, and was another fortnight there, and then I went into Gordon Smith's. Eventually they caught up with me again, and asked why did I not get on a boat and get out of Britain. I said, I had no money. They went back to Palgrave's office in Liverpool and got the money but they would not give it to me because I might drink it. So they brought me down to the boat in a squad car and told me to fuck off to Ireland and not to come back. I came back home then for another couple of weeks, but there was still nothing doing here.

I heard then that they were looking for fellows for the British Coal Board. I got some kind of an old document that had a different name, and I went to Britain to work in the coal mines. I worked in a coal mine in Worksop, Shireorex Colliery. After a few months I left there and I am rambling since. I worked in a foundry for about eight months. I left the foundry and worked for a heating outfit, and then I worked on a tunnel for Cementation, and they made me foreman fitter. I was in charge of that for about five years. It was the only bloody job I had in my life for that long.

When that job come to an end they had three jobs to offer me; one in Canada, one in Scotland and one in the north of Ireland. I wanted to buy a car and cars were cheaper in Ireland at that time, and so I went to the Erne.

All the blokes who were coming with me had got their work permits through,



and mine was not coming through, and the manager asked me was there a reason for that; I said, no. Eventually after about three months it came through, and I worked there for two and a half years. I lived in Ballyshannon and worked at the Beleek bridge and Rosscor. The record we made in Wales is not broken yet, even with the tunnel machines. I still have photographs of those. I spent about 13 years with Cementation. Then I went with John Howard to the Severn Bridge. I left that and went to India with Cementation for about two years on a smelter, but left there over a domestic problem after which I was divorced. I then went down to Africa and worked for a company in Lagos; Costain and Romond. I was getting on well with them, the manager was an old friend of mine; his name was Blood Smith, and his father was something in the navy and they lived in Skerries, so we had something in common. He was manager of this firm in Lagos at the time and a very nice fellow to work with. I left Nigeria and was back in England again and working on the M.6 with Costain's outside Manchester, after which I returned to Howards.

A fellow from the Channel Islands asked if I was interested in joining an Arab outfit. I could not care less; no problem, so I joined an Arab company called Karafi in Kuwait. He is now managing director of the Bank of Kuwait, I wish I'd stayed with them. They had 22 million when I was with him. Its billions now. I was plant engineer and was looking after different parts of engines. I was there for three or four years until I had domestic trouble again; women. I came home then as an old aunt of mine had left me a house with a licence on it. I modernised it; making a proper pub of it, and sold it and went away to Britain again. I finished up shortly after, and the last job I did in Britain was to build another bridge.

I concluded with the mechanical and went over on the civil side, and I was foreman for D.C.C Construction on a bridge going in to Ipswich, Claden Bridge; I spent ten months building that bridge. I left that and came back and bought a pub in Kilkee which I have recently sold. It was in 1973 when I finally returned to Kilkee. So I had roamed a good part of the world for nearly 30 years after coming out.

I did not meet Brendan Behan until after we were released. I met him several times in the city with Dinny Walsh; we used to drink in an old pub the other side of Capel Street bridge. I thought Behan was a showman, nothing more. Myself and Dinny were coming up one night with him and Beatrice; they were not married at the time. There was a Fianna Fáil meeting near the Parnell monument. Behan said, *lets go over and listen*. I said, *I am listening to them all my bloody life, I am sick listening*. He insisted, and we went over, but Behan could not keep his mouth shut. He started shouting at the fellow on the platform about one damn thing or another. Then the crowd turns around and we were under the firing lights again for nothing. In his book, *Recollections of an Irish Rebel*, he depicted the Curragh as a doss house with great crack with the P.A's and Governor; where you could make poteen. If he depicted the Governor as we found him it would have been a different book. When he came in in 1944 there was no hardship; it was all over. To my mind Behan gives a totally false and unbalanced picture. As a rebel, he was nothing more than a bag of wind.

The standard of the lads in the Camp taken in general was very high no matter where they came from. There are two aspects of that. I myself lived all along the

rocks of Ireland, and I was brought up in all of the little villages down along the coast; drinking black tea and eating fish. Then you find that in the British navy, where men are all thrown together, it becomes a game of savagery and sexuality. There was no sexuality that I knew of in the Curragh, and there was no savagery. The calibre there to my mind was of a very high standard, even though I did not agree with a lot of people there, and I still would not today. I would say nevertheless, that the calibre was very high. I would select a government and Dáil from the people in the Curragh, but I would have to look at them in a different light.

A good government to me would have to be a socialist government on the lines of James Connolly, and there was not enough of them in the Curragh. There was really only one outstanding person of that sort and that was Neil Goad.

## REFERENCES.

1. Thomas Russell from Dingle, noted in *Last Post*, was their victim. He was the Irish teacher, 'a fine able man', in the college that was sited in the former coastguard station. It occurred on March 27, 1918. He is buried in Kilmalkedar, Dingle.

2. The flight team of the *Southern Cross* were: Major Charles Edward Kingsford Smith, Capt. J.P. Saul, Evert van Dyck and J.W. Stannage. The aircraft was a metal Fokker with timber wings. A crowd of 10,000 witnessed the take-off from Portmarnock.

3. The I.R.A frequently interfered with the showing of news reels and what they considered to be propaganda films. *Gallipoli*, commemorating an inglorious attempt to land there on Turkish soil in February 1915, was removed from a city cinema and burned in September 1933. As a result six men were sentenced: P. Walsh, 6 months; John Heron, 4 months; Billy Walsh, Patrick Golden, James Carden and Pat Murray, 3 months. Michael, the Walsh father, had been shot dead by Tans in October 1920. The family name was also frequently given as Breathnach.

4. Trinitrotoluene.

5. Brian Lowe was a vocational teacher. When he later retired his pension was cut for the duration of the Curragh period. This action, under the Offences Act, showed a pernicious streak in those who framed it (there was loss of employment also for seven years after a conviction); it was overturned as unconstitutional by the Supreme Court in 1991. By then of course it had affected hundreds of men for whom compensation no longer mattered.

6. Captained by Eric Jones on passage from Spain to Drogheda with a cargo of pyrites, the *Luimineach* was sunk on September 4, by U boat 46 in the Bay of Biscay. The crew took to the boats and were rescued by a Spanish trawler.

7. See the tail end of Tom Doran and his account of Capt. Tennant ('Bainne') on this subject.

8. Seamus Ronayne describes Powell as a Tralee man, always looking business-like and lively, and with a pronounced air of efficiency about him.

9. Bob Clancy of Waterford died in the Military Hospital, Curragh Camp, on June 12, 1941. See Appendix.

10. Shortly after release John Hunt emigrated to lay pipes in Alaska before reaching heights of business eminence in Chicago.

11. See Appendix for a note on Neil Goold (Verscoyle.)

12. See John L Mc Cormack's account. John L was in that dig.

**Tony McInerney has contributed this addendum to Pierce Fennell's Account 10.3.92.**

*Ref to Brian Lowe.*

Brian Lowe is now dead. He was a vocational teacher and when he retired he was refused a pension as the time he spent in the Curragh was considered to have broken the continuity of service, and he was deemed to have started work afresh when he got his job back after he came out of the Camp. His son Brendan is the editor of the *Irish Post* in England.

*Escape Plans ref.*

The guy from the mental hospital in Killarney was Tommy Lynch, a very gentle and quietly spoken fellow but a great footballer.

*Ref to not going to Mass*

Pierce's memory is not complete here as I also did not go to Mass. In fact I don't believe I was ever inside the chapel for any purpose all the time I was in the camp. I suffered some aggression because of this. I used to get a lot of abuse from a Kerry man whose name I forget (O'Sullivan, Killorglin?) almost every Sunday until such time as the Camp settled down after the fire and we, more or less, gathered by county. I was in the Limerick hut for some reason. So was Pierce as I remember well his home made electric fire. I also remember lying in bed being regaled by Pierce about his youthful adventures. He told me once that coming home from a dance in Kilkee he and a friend or two would find a horse or horses grazing in a field. They would catch the horses and ride all the way home, then turn them around and slam them on the hindquarters and off they would go back to the farm. One Sunday morning I was lying in bed as all the others in the hut were gone to Mass. *Tá an sagart istigh* Gerry Callaghan of Tralee (older brother of Fred) pulled the blankets off me and said, get up you fucking pagan and go to Mass. My boots were beside the bed and I grabbed one and flung it as hard as I could and it caught Gerry in the mouth. He screamed in pain and jumped on top of me raining punches. I had by this time pulled up the blankets and found it very hard to defend myself. Indeed I could hardly move. Suddenly reprieve arrived in the person of Paddy Pearl from Coonagh, near Limerick. He ran down the hut and caught Gerry with a *luadar* in the face toppling him on the ground, jumped on top of him and astride him and beat the shit out of him shouting, "I'll teach you to hit a man on the ground". Bang another wallop, "I'll teach you to hit a man on the ground". They were separated by others and all trooped off to Mass like good

Christians leaving me in peace. I have a vague recollection that Liam Brady did not go to Mass either. He used to go into an empty hut and practice the violin. It eventually grew to a large section who did not go to Mass.

*Ref to Firing Huts*

Pierce's account of firing the hut is very accurate. That is exactly how it happened as I was there and encouraged by Pierce to help. The burning came as a complete surprise to me as I was not in on the plans. Pierce was breaking open the sheeting of the hut walls and stuffing papers in and all the time singing some wild song and laughing all the time. I ran out and did not take anything with me. This hut was at the bottom of B line and opposite this was where the incident with Sergt. Matthews took place.

*Ref to M O'Riordan.*

Mick O'Riordan's name was 'Screwback' and had nothing to do with a twisted back. Mick was very straight and upright and walked like a soldier which is what he was. I have just looked up the word in the dictionary - an architectural term! The two stones of an arch. The Smith mentioned here was Paddy Smith from Dublin. He had fought with the International Brigade in Spain. Seamus Dowling's younger brother signed out and joined the British army or air force. 'Ludáí Óg', the name applied upon diminutive Cathal Holland, derived from the Irish playlet, *Ludáí Óg na Lairige Móire*.



## MICK FITZGIBBON,

FAIR HILL, CORK CITY:



Mick at home in 1992.

*As a boy, a skilled step dancer: then Na Fianna. In the Curragh he worked in the dark of a tunnel:*

Here we are seated in the elegant, comfortable home, 52 years on, of Mick Fitzgibbon, of Fair Hill, Cork city, looking down steeply on that part of the urban north side that has Shandon and the older city on the right before one rolls down to Pope's Quay on the Lee. Two comrades, contributing to the story; Mick, in the unrepentant Fenian tradition; Jim Savage, life long friend, who in his later I.R.A experience, had ventured along the path of communism. It is a bright and sunny afternoon; so bright in fact that, with our stories unwound and ended, we retire to the front garden where Mick poses for pictures against the hedge. Snap after snap as the camera clicks; there is a reluctance to walk away from the green sward; to come into the home again. Where is your designer wife who turns out that lovely knitwear? I could do with a *geansai* myself! But she is nowhere about. We have so often wished to photograph couples together and have succeeded only on a few occasions. Readers will not believe, that Republicans do not chain their womenfolk in purdah; that it is frequently the wife who declines, and so the success picture of the ex-felon (a word not used correctly in this context since felon implies a convicted prisoner, while most of our veterans remain unconvicted except of their being upholders of the Fintan Lalor tradition) with an attractive woman remains untaken

Well, we are not dwelling upon that in Fair Hill. All three of us are glad to be here together bringing to life again events and people from two generations away. We interchange views; we interchange personalities as we race from county to county. Jim Savage is speaking now of Denis Griffin, a man always high in our esteem, but whom he commences by describing as tall and thin, 'and that is why they called him Skinner Griffin'. He was in England during the Campaign and after his return, and prior to his arrest, he always acted, in Jim's opinion, in a secretive - not to mean underhand - manner.

This carefully schooled discipline seemed part of the man's nature inasmuch as, after release, he frequently called for Jim, going on long roadside walks together, yet scarcely exchanging a word of conversation. Like a character in a no play; where the silence is more pregnant than speech.

Griffin, with Jack Lynch, Cork O.C, went on the run immediately following the

mass internments of June 1940. Fatally perhaps, they both retired to Lynch's old hunting ground of Dunmanway, where they were spied upon resting in an outhouse behind a pub in that town. A police and military net was thrown about and in the early hours the raid was sprung. Both made a break to scale over walls at the rear. Halts were shouted and fire was exchanged. A rifle burst from a Private Berry was followed by a short exchange in which Griffin received a hand wound and he later ran a close risk of death before a military court (1) not then constituted but set up, receiving instead a 14 year sentence for 'intent to murder', a charge which Griffin readily answered by saying that a shot had been fired at him and he realised he would have to defend himself.

Jack Lynch escaped on that occasion only to be arrested eighteen months later whereupon he joined Denis, now O.C prisoners, in Mountjoy, a position demonstrating the high confidence in which he continued to be held.

Mick continues to listen in upon the conversation while Jim opens up on Jobie Sullivan and other events around that time in the city. He played rugby in the backs and was also a good swimmer, being employed for a while in the baths. We had a swimming club at that time here, the Republican Swimming Club although Jobie was not a member of it. Derry Kelleher, Jim and Maurice Savage, Tadgh Philpott, Buster Dineen, John Sullivan, Brian Kennedy and Brian Scanlan and some others were the leading lights.

Jim here touched upon Peter Daly of Enniscorthy (described as an outstanding commander later in Spain) wounded on the Aragon front at Jarama, and who fell at Quinto in 1937.(2) Daly, not only played a part in the Civil War, emigrated and joined for four years the British Army, but returned again to Ireland and to the I.R.A before parting for Spain in late 1936, to die there less than one year later.

#### MADAME ROGERS:

The conversation switched then to that unusual and outstanding lady, Madame Rogers of Dublin's inner city (and formerly of *Crofton House*, Dun Laoire), who maintained rooms in a tall georgian edifice (the remains of which are pictured on page 418) in Upper Dorset Street, in inner Dublin, and whose hospitality for foot-loose and on the run Republicans was legion. Frequently in the mornings she could be seen going hoop la over the street cobbles upon her high bicycle to her morning swim at Dollymount. The story of this house is permanently and uproariously enshrined within Brendan Behan's *An Giall*. Madame Rogers had three children; Sean, who defected early into the Special Branch ('to save Ireland from the Blueshirts'), Frankie, a sensitive violinist and outstanding training officer for the I.R.A and Doreen, his sister, a nice looking girl; and a national camogie player.

A week after this in June 1940 the text of Emergency Powers (Amendment No.2) Bill was issued giving powers for trial 'in a summary manner' before a military court where, if convicted, death was the only verdict. There was no appeal and it was laid down that sentences be carried out within 72 hours. Of course means were found to seek intervention through the normal courts.

A penniless Jim met Johnnie Reynolds of the Tuam sugar factory, on O'Connell Bridge sometime after the surge of these events had ended, and found himself brought to a tall georgian house a bit beyond *An Stad* where Republicans used to stay. He found that numbers of internees - this may have been early in 1945 - were lodging in the house while Madame Rogers, then well into her seventies, went around collecting food to keep them alive. It was hard for her as Jim found her a very human person who was doing her best for everyone. But who was not, one



wonders, with other similar providing women and mothers in other towns and cities; though few could have been as outstanding as Madame Rogers. Jim cannot recall if Mártín Calligan was there, but he observed that she was cooking stews and looking after everybody. When she died at the age of 78 in the late fifties, hundreds of the boys attended her funeral and Brendan Behan, then into the money, provided a slap up lunch for them in the Gresham Hotel.

Then, in another quick flashback, Mick recalled Eugene Powell of Tralee. Powell whose colourful story is touched upon in places here, was at this time in late 1941 back in Mountjoy on remand. Looking over the landing railings one day and seeing Stephen Hayes passing below, he raced down the stairs and struck him a blow. A startled Hayes had hardly time to recognise him before Powell was dragged away.

#### JOINS FIANNA:

Mick's father was Michael Fitzgibbon, a Mitchelstown man from John Mandeville country, and not too far from where John O'Mahoney, co-founder with James Stephens of the Fenians, was born. His mother was Ellen Collins from Kildorrery, eight miles to the west in the direction of Mallow. They were both in the nationalist tradition. Mick's introduction into the republican movement came simply through step dancing. As a boy growing up he was taking lessons from Joe O'Donovan of Fianna Éireann; a skilled step dancer, and that provided the gang plank by which Mick climbed aboard the boy scout movement then widespread in the city. He used to attend féiseanna in Millstreet, in Kanturk, and all over Munster and indeed in Dublin. Fianna was based in the MacCurtain Hall along with other elements of the movement, each slotted onto their respective floors in that tall building.

Questioning Mick upon that mysterious Cork entity, the Brotherhood; was it really a survival of the I.R.B after the Free State Army mutiny of 1924? Evidently not; rather that they, old school republicans, were keeping the torch alight by an occasional concert and attendance at veterans' funerals. Derived from I.R.B people and the leftovers of fenianism, they included Messrs Murray, Ford, Sullivan, 'Wisdom' Murphy, Paddy Twomey; the father of the late Professor Charles McCarthy, a plumber named George McCarthy, was a member, along with Peter Donovan and others.

With a representative from the various levels of the Movement, Fianna, Cumann na mBan, I.R.A etc. the Brotherhood organised the annual November Manchester Martyrs Concert. With advancing years they eventually handed all control to the Movement. We had representatives on their committees, says Mick; Con Deasy, Cork I.R.A leader and once a Deputy Chief of Staff, was Brotherhood.

For parades and drill practice after I graduated from Fianna, Mick continued, we attended both indoors and outdoors. We used to have rifle practice on our own at Twomey's glen in Ballvolane and ride back on bicycles. We were probably already under observation as Republican activists, sealing our own fate for internment later on.

We had indoor classes then in the MacCurtain Hall assembling Thompson guns, short arms drill and military formations. At one time, taking a rifle apart with Sean Kelly above in the class, someone asked John Murphy what is that cavity (concealed by a brass plate) in the butt; *that is for your sandwiches*. We burst out laughing.

Another time a number of us were upstairs at an arms class when there was a raid from the front. Jobie was there and he climbed up through a skylight and down

onto the terrace behind Merrigans from where he made his getaway. We stayed back with a Thompson and short arms; had they entered we would have been obliged to defend them. Leaving when things had quietened, we went out and met some girls.

Two nights before Christmas news came over the radio about the successful raid on the Magazine Fort in Dublin. We were tremendously chuffed by that. Now, by the Lord, the Army has the ammunition and we might soon have the guns too. Of course none of us knew the exact purpose or strategy of our next move. We were out with some of our Fianna boys, in a girls house that night; O'Donovans of Blackpool. What a coup; it was a great boost to all of us. It was not to last for long.

A parade as a show of strength was arranged in early January 1940, for the extensive grounds of the mental hospital at the top of Blarney Street overlooking the western end of the city. Emerging from the grounds we marched, a few hundred of us, in military formation down Blarney Street, a long street, to near the centre of the north side city at Shandon Street, headed by Tommy Mahoney our piper. After a short address by Tomás MacCurtain, our O.C, and officers Frank Kerrigan and Jimmy Farrell we were dismissed, each group going their own way homeward.

We were of a drinking age then, but few of us had the money or inclination. In fact for an I.R.A volunteer to be seen entering a pub at that time, he was liable to court martial. With a chap called McAuliffe, I wandered into the centre of the town, around Patrick Street; there was great excitement, and it was then that I learned a policeman had been shot and Tomás arrested. We continued our involvement in spite of everything. What with increasing numbers going into the Free State Army and as part timers into the local defence forces, the tide and the politics of the Emergency was telling against us. We were Republicans, but we were now perceived as an anachronism; (3) as a threat to neutrality. The law and the police would soon be given an opportunity to ride roughshod over us.

The hanging of Barnes and McCormack in February, 1940, proved a rallying point for nationalist Ireland, removing for a time some of the antipathy and odium attached to carrying on a struggle aimed at proving that Ireland was still an occupied nation. For a while people saw that there was indeed 'something rotten in the state of Denmark' when two agents who had nothing to do with placing the mine in Coventry were to be executed for it.

They were to be the first political hangings (with the exception of Roger Casement in August 1916 and Reginald Dunne and Joseph O'Sullivan in August 1922) to take place on the soil of England since Allen, Larkin and O'Brien were hanged in 1867. But it demonstrated the unbreakability of the Fenian tradition. I suppose it was that that buoyed us up. There had been numbers of public meetings in the lead up to it, but on the day there was a protest march and a magnificent gathering in Patrick Street attended by thousands at which Tom Barry spoke.(4)

### GUNNING TO HANG MAC CURTAIN:

I continued attached to both Fianna and the Army and we continued to function despite the increasing clamp down. There were round ups and we found ourselves knocked about and pushed around a lot. There was an increasing confidence among the Special Branch that they would be let do what they liked so long as it would curb or intimidate us. They were gunning to hang MacCurtain; shortly they would be interning hundreds of us; in July they shot up the lads trying to tunnel into the jail and afterwards they showed no mercy if someone they were after, such as Tadhg Lynch, tried to make a run for it. Just as in Dublin where there was one particularly odious policeman, so there was one in Cork. They enforced the new emergency laws as a form of private war against Republicans, and they enforced them in a manner they knew would not be questioned, and with only formal inquests that would be covered up.

Then on June 3, 1940, 170 of the Cork and Munster men were swept up and interned in Cork Jail. We used to parade in a protest march to the big gates (5). The Fianna band came along with us playing stirring tunes, but that was a situation - young lads in uniform - that the powers were not going to permit much longer. On the third occasion we fell in outside the MacCurtain Hall only to find ourselves surrounded by dozens of police and armed detectives. We were lifted, band, pipes and all, and were held for four hours in the Abbey Street station. That finished the Cork Fianna band because they held on to the pipes and instruments in a damp store until they rotted, whereupon they were offered back; they were not entitled to do this but who is to question them when you are classified as an 'illegal organisation' in the middle of an emergency?

### RUN TO EARTH:

Shortly before Christmas 1941 the I.R.A having done their homework, carried out a daring raid on the army magazine at Inniscarra, then occupied by the Local Defence Force. Three men were involved in a take over of a taxi in the town, after which they drove to the magazine and met the other lads already positioned for the hold up. It was a complete success. Gelignite, plungers and detonators, over a ton, were taken and held hopefully for delivery, to a unit in the Six Counties. But it brought the house down upon those of us who so far had escaped imprisonment; I was arrested along with a ring of others and held in the Bridewell, and after a going over, found ourselves destined for Kildare. Handcuffed, with an armoured car fore and aft, plus a Special Branch car filled with armed police, we also had soldiers on board with us. At Horse and Jockey there was a brief stop when the handcuffs were removed. Then it was forward again, the 90 or so miles to the Curragh.

Mick McCarthy brought us into the hut destined for us, but as we entered we found a brawl proceeding between Paddy Brown, well known in Dublin lore, John Joe McGirl of Leitrim and John Joe Martin of Bawnboy. We never found out what the racket was about because Mick said, pay no attention to those fellows; pass on, which we did.

We found ourselves in an English speaking hut with 30 men in it all told; 30 being a standard number. Strictly speaking each hut held 60, but they were divided across the middle, with an internal porch and two bucket latrines at the east and

west ends. Constructed entirely in timber, they had two pot belly turf stoves in each section.

Nearly half of the huts in the camp had chosen to go Irish speaking, so after a while, I volunteered for an all Irish hut in which there were such leading lights of the Movement as Tony Magan and Mixie Conway. There was also 'Skipper' Mahoney, a very decent and nice man, but a tough fighter: six feet four inches in height. There was also John Joe Sheehy, and Purty Landers and Sean O'Neill from Kerry, and George Duffy from Dundalk. And there was a terribly wild fellow, Jim Doherty, of Belfast who kept us all on the go. I enjoyed my stay in that hut; we were involved in a lot of activities including an Irish class, although I must confess I did not learn a great deal as I spent a great part of my time making and engraving rings, stitching patriotic tapestries and playing football which I played a lot. And then of course there was the tunnel; but more of that shortly. Still I qualified for *An Fáinne*, receiving it from Seán Óg Ó Tuama, with Seán Óg's help, and the help of Philip O'Kelly of Dublin, you would need to be a real shirker if you failed to educate yourself in the Curragh.

I became quite skilled with the rings; making them, small ones from shillings and larger ones from two shilling pieces. At that time all of those coins were close to pure silver. We made them from spoon heads also; they were a basis for the Tara brooch of which some hundreds were made. There were snake rings and Claddagh rings; all skilfully engraved. I had a lovely ring after, made from a two shilling piece which everyone admired, but I lost it a while back at Jim O'Regan's funeral.

The only memento I now have is the framed Volunteer which is hand stitched; there were table cloths in linen with the four provinces stitched in each corner, but I did not do those.

#### THE TUNNEL:

I mentioned a tunnel a while back; one which was commenced late in 1943. There was a whole network of old tunnels left following the Fire of December 1940. But this was a new effort undertaken by the group on the Leddy side. Liam Leddy as O.C, along with Tony Magan, Joe Geary, Andy Redmond from Castlebar and Christy O'Connor from Tipperary drew up a roster and a plan of work. It was to proceed from our hut and would link under the three other Irish huts. The plan at first was to try to carry out the clay on our person, but this was slow and liable to discovery. Instead we buried much of it in the old dead tunnels which we entered from our new tunnel. The 'long john's' cut up and turned into bags and filled with sand were used for propping the sides of the tunnel. The beams under the floors of the huts were cut out and used for supporting the roofs of the tunnels, resting upon the sand bags.

The staff working in the tunnel, comprised lads packing away the sand, lads digging and propping up the sides of the tunnel, and others taking away the sand and gravel. Myself and Arty Connell were the youngest; we started off as the pit ponies, followed by the lads from Leitrim some of whom had worked in the Arigna mines.(6) You got going immediately after breakfast if it was your turn for that day, as only one could work at the face. You pulled on long johns, long socks and knee caps; you were working belly flat and getting a lot of wear on the knees. You had

very little air entering, but when you got half way down the short ladder to the level, you were acclimatised. There were some strong men who just could not do it; they would be gone only a short distance when they were overcome with claustrophobia and had to back back, as it was impossible to turn around. Men who were not afraid to face guns were afraid to go into the tunnel; they could not be faulted for it.

Confined, close, dark spaces can cause terror and fear in the strongest of people. But, as I said, we were the donkeys and we got used to it. We had butter boxes on string for hauling backwards. That is the way you would be going all day, from tunnel to tunnel, on your knees and belly, helping to haul out the clay and earth as it was pushed back from the face. For lighting we had grease inside a tin can with a bandage as a wick. It was stifling down there, and of course the grease burning lamp consumed as much air as we did, but we had to stick it out and remain down until almost seven o'clock, or whatever time was our curfew. When eventually you came back up, long johns and everything else removed, there would be an aluminium plate of left overs heating on the stove as your reward.

The tunnel was designed to drop down and under the deep trench surrounding the Camp and then to rise up again. This was a formidable barrier as it could be passed under only by having a shaft down and up on each side after passing the trench; two vertical shafts. In addition there was the problem of the service road within the Camp; a rough gravel road, parallel with the wire fencing, along which a heavy lorry might sometimes pass. The structure of our tunnel had to be specially reinforced to support that, and it was further tested by pushing a pointed rod upwards with an observer waiting, as a means to gauge position and depth of cover. At this time there was a shallow service trench outside the fence, from the sentry box along the outer line of barbed wire; there being four lines of high barbed wire staked well apart, plus of course the trench and six elevated sentry posts. We planned to emerge into the shallow service trench since it would make a night time exit less obvious from the flood lit perimeter. As far as I remember now that would have been a Friday night, but it was not to be. Some say the Staters were on to us from early on; some say they had discovered the tell tale signs in the Camp itself. These days there are listening devices, radar images, thermal pictures and the like, which effectively prevent successful tunnelling, but in the early forties there were only the physical obstacles and, believe me, they were enough. At all events they arrived early one morning in force, and that was the end of our tunnel and the last effort to burrow out from the Curragh.

There was a stubby little fellow, a captain, whom we called 'piss in the bucket', by name, Capt Larry Clancy, he had a brother lost against the Tans in the twenties. He used to go down to the bucket that was supposed to act as a toilet in our hut. It was more convenient for him than travelling to 'Boland's Lodge'. Anyway, after the discovery, he was able to announce triumphantly; *twenty one did not escape from here last night*. That was a reference to the escape of 21 through a tunnel from Derry Jail on Sunday morning March 20, 1943, following which, on crossing the Border, most of them were rounded up by De Valera's forces and interned.

The Camp Council at that time on our side, what the Staters termed No. 1 Group (Pearse Kelly's group being No. 2) consisted of Liam Leddy from Araglin, a tiny

hamlet perched upon the borders of three counties under the Knockmealdown Mountains. It had a reputation of being one of the last places occupied in the Civil War. Bob Clements, or Riobárd Mac Loghmainn, from Loch Rinn and Celbridge, was Quartermaster, and Joe Crowe, later O.C., was Adjutant. I knew, and had been friendly, with many of the Cork men under Tadhg Lynch who had been ostracised after Christmas 1940. That affair is covered in the accounts of others. It was already fixed and unchangable when I entered the Curragh. We had instructions not to speak to them; I found it all very disquieting. It was hard enough to do your time without that. I suppose in a highly principled organisation it can happen, but it should have been avoided in 1941.

Early in 1945, a number of the now rapidly diminishing body, down to about 50, were removed from the Camp up the hill into the Glasshouse. I was not among them as I had been released a short time previously. Some of us had it in our minds to go working in England after we came out, although it was hardly a practicable notion as an entry permit was required and, as ex-internees, we would not have got a permit. Anyway I did not try.

I took my travel voucher and returned to Cork where my father had worked all the time upon the railway. Thus I found it easy enough to obtain a day's work, eventually becoming permanent and rising within the company. In 1949 I married Rosaleen Cahalane from the north side of the city; and so you can say my saga had ended.

## REFERENCES:

1. During a short period of remand there prior to going somewhere else this writer came to know Griffin and to feel the same quiet confidence in him as a prisoner O.C.
2. The story of this colourful soldier of fortune is touched upon in Michael O'Riordan's, *Connolly Column*, 1979 and Sean Cronin's, *Frank Ryan*, 1980.
3. The dictionary defines anachronism as an error in the order of time.
4. For weeks prior to these executions there was a massive build up of sympathy throughout the nation, a build up which the Republican Movement was unequipped to avail of. It drained away instantly once the executions were over and some actions following February 7, ensured that many of these sympathisers would not turn out ever again. Mass public meetings attended by many thousands were held in towns from Ballina to Tralee and from Galway to Dublin in the days immediately prior to the date, flags flying at half mast everywhere.
5. The County Jail (or Gaol) as it was officially called was entirely demolished in the sixties and it is occupied now by an extension of University College, Cork. (U.C.C). The great gateway, in red sandstone, by James and George Pain, dating from 1818 remains.
6. See Packy Joe Dolan.

*A mightier question moves Ireland today than that of merely repealing the Act of Union. Not the Constitution that Tone died to abolish but the Constitution that Tone died to obtain; independence, full and absolute independence for this island.*

- James Fintan Lalor, 1848.



## PAT HANNON

### OF LIVERPOOL:



Pat with wife Kitty, 1992

Pat Hannon's father was on hunger strike with Thomas Ashe. As Fox, the family migrated to Liverpool where he acted as an agent of Michael Collins.

Pat's mothers people are O'Neills from Moy, Co. Tyrone, which itself is O'Neill country. 'Benburb, Armagh, the Yellow Ford, he fights and wins them o'er again', goes the refrain on the great Hugh's last sojourn in Rome. It is a countryside redolent of history; then as now. Pat's father and Kevin McKearney, grandfather of that clan, assembled at Coalisland prior to Easter Week. Pat's father was arrested in August 1917 at the same time as Thomas Ashe,(1) and, although Pat does not recall, he was probably charged with the same misdemeanour as Ashe, namely making 'making a speech calculated to cause disaffection'. On hunger strike then, like Ashe, he was forcibly fed and transferred to the Mater Hospital. On hunger strike too with them was non other than Pádraig Mac Logan, said to have died by his own hand in July 1964.(2) In 1920 Michael Collins sent him to reside in Liverpool to arrange the supply of guns from there to Ireland. Liverpool anyway, because of its Irish associations, was coming more and more into the fight picture; Rory O'Connor was about to set the docks ablaze as an instalment of the economic war of that time. Pat learned little of these covert operations from his father in later years. Enough said; *you don't need to know*.

The entire family were now going by the name of Fox in Liverpool. The Hannon's of Moy had disappeared, dead. Seamus Fox, Sean Fox and a little later Pat Fox commenced their formative years on the Mersey. The surname Fox itself, is a local Moy name. But a year and a half on from this arrival upon their bridgehead, the family like so many others, were left high and dry by the Truce and then the Treaty and then, worst of all, Civil War.

One supposes a lump must have risen in the throats of his parents at such a melancholy outcome, for them and for Ireland. By 1924 with England gripped by depression, the Foxes, the Hannons came home. Back to Dromay in the rural Moy countryside. A great place to be if you could afford to live there, but quite patently if you cannot afford it, neither can one eat the scenery or the history. The bleak pall of the Northern government was making its economic presence felt upon the Blackwater and the Oona countryside; the squeezing of nationalists out of the Six Counties was underway. The family moved again, this time as Hannons; yes, Hannon, and back to the city whose ice they had already broken; to Liverpool. And where better in Liverpool than upon the docks; big scrawny hands grasping for teetering loads poised from the steel cables of proud cranes. If you had the dock man's union button in your belt you were taken on, and even if you got only three days

work in the week it was worth two pounds ten shillings; enough to live upon. At that time in every city's dockland there was employment for thousands, many thousands. At subsistence wages, of course.

Pat's father returned there and readily got a job, dawn to dusk if a ship was in; go hungry if it was not. Pat started, little more than a toddler, at St Augustine's Public Elementary School, within walking distance of his home at Great Howard Street, far from the green countryside of Dromay. He had two sisters now, Eileen and Rosaleen, and five brothers. Until 1934 the Hannon boys were totally unaware of their Dad's murky past as an agent upon an English bridgehead of the arch terrorist Michéal Ó Coileán.

One does not know how the story burst, probably as they would say in Irish, *diaidh ar dhiaidh*; little by little. They were already in 'illegal organisations'; flamboyantly so in 1932. Robbie O'Carroll, the brother of Pat's future wife Nora, O.C. Liverpool Fianna, died at the early age of 21, and Pat paraded to the funeral in his Fianna tunic. He was a member of the Sean Heuston *sluagh*, the only Fianna unit in England at that time.

(Remember the founderess of Fianna, Constance Markievicz, was herself dead a mere five years at this time. She had indeed only a short while before, blessed Fianna with her presence at a camp at Formby accompanied by the Quaker 1916 figure Bulmer Hobson). A marked man you would say; a marked boy? Should Sean Russell six years later be recruiting people from haunts so well known for his Campaign?

Paddy Hennessy O.C Liverpool I.R.A fired a salute and gave an oration over Robbie; and Robbie was succeeded as Fianna standard bearer by Joe Mc Sweeney from Waterford. Rita McSweeney's brother who herself was later heavily sentenced for her part in the Campaign.

Rita and Kathleen Mc Sweeney from Waterford: their father, Pat says, being revered as much as O'Donovan Rossa was to his succeeding generation. Rita served five years in England and later married Paddy McGlynn. Rita and Maggie Nolan (married Dom Adams) were two of the principle couriers in the Campaign. Rose Sweeney and Maura Sweeney came to Liverpool from Ballycroy, home of the McNeela's. Maura taught Irish at the Gaelic League in Wood Street. They left for London at the commencement of Russell's campaign. Joe McSweeney was succeeded by non other than the bold Séamus Ó Mongáin of Dú Thuama in Co. Mayo. And here the tempo quickens, because the Ó Mongáins - all four brothers - were part time residents, indeed near natives, of Merseyland.

Their mother had remained in the family home *Ceann Cora* in Blackhorse Avenue, alongside the Phoenix Park, in Dublin; their father carried on a grocery business in Liverpool, and his four boys were destined for university there.

*Where O Kincora is Brian the Great*

*And where are the glories that once were thine?*

*And where O Kincora the nobles that sate*

*In thy halls at thy feasts and drank the red wine*

*Where, O Kincora?*

In 1934 the celebrated long time fighter, Helena Moloney and Kate O'Connor

came to them as Clan na Gael delegates; Clan na Gael being the younger girl's organisation, not the more ancient U.S outfit. Kate had been interned by the Staters in the South Dublin Union (now St. James Hospital) while Helena was in and out so many times that one could not list them. She was the first political woman to be imprisoned in this century. (3) Activists in Liverpool Clan at the time also were Sarah and May Doody, Cissy Cunningham and May McLaughlin.

Pat Hannon has a picture of Maire Drumm who, as wee Maire McIntyre attended a dance in the city with his future wife, Nora. Maire Drumm as Vice President of Sinn Fein was gunned down by British agents in a Belfast Hospital in October 1976 after a prolonged period of demonisation by the gutter media and the Dublin press.

The previous year Maud Gonne MacBride gave a vigorous nationalist address to a gathering in their hall in Gay Street; the Gaelic League Hall in Wood Street, another rendezvous, being used solely for Irish classes although a number of surreptitious arms classes were also held there, as well as upstairs over Spillane's pub. In 1935 Fr. Morgan Healy asked Pat to assist with some young boys going on holiday to Rush, Co. Dublin.

Seámus Ó Mongáin was in charge while Tomás Mc Donagh Byrne was also with the group. While near Dublin Pat visited the Hardwicke Hall and recalls seeing Brendan Behan and Cathal Goulding preparing a large gaudily painted banner for Bodenstown that month. (4)

#### THE MERRY PLOUGHBOY:

Pat is categoric that *The Merry Ploughboy* is an English folk ballad and that it was adapted to the Irish scene. It certainly has folk associations. Odd, would it not be if the marching song of the I.R.A had been composed by by a sentimental Englishman? Sean Hannon, a singer of many ballads, had it among his favourites.

*Oh I am a merry ploughboy and I plough the fields by day.  
Till the liking came into my mind that I should run away,  
Oh I'm tired of civilian life since the day that I was born  
So I'm off to join the I.R.A and I'm off tomorrow morn.*

In 1934 Paddy Hennessy retired from the Republican Army; He came then to Dublin where he had a tall house in Dorset Street, sheltering many Republicans there. Paddy and his wife Annie did a great deal for the Movement before he retired in 1946 to Newry where he is interred; his wife having been from there. Paddy had known fighting in Ireland; he had been in the column with Dinny Lacy, killed in action with the counter revolutionaries in the Glen of Aherlow in February 1923, and following that had emigrated. He was succeeded in Liverpool by George Stannard who later in 1938, was made aware by Maurice Twomey, of the intended English campaign and of the vital role the Liverpool unit would play in it.

It is not known whether Stannard saw Russell's intentions as impractical or that they were wrong upon some grounds of principle, but he expressed strong disagreement with the strategy and resigned.

It should be noted that the same trend of disagreement was evidenced in other units, many of which had seen themselves only as ceremonial/commemorative groups that never expected to be called upon for the real thing in England.

Changes at the top came rapidly everywhere. Some resigned; others were dis-

missed as spun out; gone political, or part of the Barry, MacBride clique. Twomey himself was well aware of the exposure and the difficulties, but it is not possible to say to what extent the big Cork man urged that upon Russell and his staff in Dublin. (5)

Joe Deighan from Co. Armagh, who had been jailed in the Six Counties and who had arrived in Liverpool in 1936, was appointed O.C. to replace George Stannard. One could describe Deighan as a budding intellectual, well educated, a competent Irish speaker with a ready grasp of history; he later was a journalist in *The Irish Press*. His appointment was popular with the younger group now forming the unit and looking forward to an action that would force England to yield up the Six Counties.

In 1938, Pat Hannon who had been O.C. Fianna, joined the I.R.A. His older brother Sean was already in the unit, while another brother Seamus was a teacher in Dublin. Tom Hunt, a very young lad, whom one would regard as English, having been born there although his parents hailed from Sligo, joined at the same time. Hunt left Liverpool in mid 1939, at the height of the campaign, found a job with the Publicity Bureau at 17 Percy Place, was transferred eight months later to Paddy McGrath's training unit at 98a Rathgar Road and then, following the debacle of August 1940, ended with a death sentence (commuted) in September. Unlucky and lucky one could say, bearing in mind the temper of the times.

Others in the unit from early on were the three Ó Mongáins (Séamus meanwhile being in the O.T.C) Tomás McDonagh Byrne, Máirtín Standúin with his two sisters Mary and Eileen, (not in the unit but sympathetic). Also active in the group at this time were Peadar Dowley and Tommy Kelly. Somewhere on the periphery were Ted and Eamonn Scott whose parents, lately of Killarney, owned two pubs in Liverpool. As an insurance agent Ted had a means while knocking about of purchasing weapons, which at that time, could be obtained from soldiers for the price of a drink; Eamonn, who had been an I.R.A agent in the University, went on to be a doctor. The three Ó Mongáins returned to Ireland prior to 1938. Bob Foley, who lived in a cottage on the North Wall, a seaman on the Dublin - Liverpool run, brought explosives to Rita MacSweeney in the 1939 period.

#### PREPARING FOR D. DAY:

On a visit again to Ireland, in June 1938, at Ó Mongáin's request, Pat called to Wynn's Hotel where he was introduced to Sean Russell, meeting Maurice Twomey again. Twomey then being on a temporary six month contract in the run up to the Campaign (following which his post would be filled by chubby faced Stephen Hayes of Enniscorthy). It turned out to be a general meeting, including other delegates from London and the Midlands. The plan expounded was that the Campaign would commence with blows upon the Six County border in November, spreading later to England. That, in fact, is the way that it did commence. The Border explosions (with three casualties to the I.R.A) came in late November; 24 Belfast activists were rounded up on December 23rd. (the Six County government seemingly having got some wind of the word) and the bombs proper commenced in England on January 16, 1939.

Shortly after Pat's return in the June of '38, Twomey and Jimmy Joe Reynolds visited their unit in Gay Street. They were told to be ready for January; no further details being given. Then in October 1938, Belfast activist, Charlie McGlade arrived

on a tour of inspection. Pat met him privately upstairs in Eugene Spillane's public house. Jack McNeela was also there but at Stannard's. Unaccompanied by McGlade, McNeela was demonstrating small incendiaries; the potassium chlorate balloon bomb; a sensitive but somewhat hit and miss incendiary.

Pat says that the short Webley was demonstrated indoors but never fired; It was demonstrated on maybe three occasions, so their training in that was minimal. Earlier a .22 pistol had been used for drill in Wood Street but that had to be *sub rosa* as Wood Street was a Gaelic League club room. At this time also they were introduced to the intricacies of wiring up an alarm clock, but obviously by the autumn of 1938, their drill was still only of the most sketchy nature. If bombs were to go off in Liverpool, they would have to be made by the skilled bomb makers that would be imported from Ireland and not by the Liverpool unit. Pat made his declaration entering the Republican Army in October; with him at the time were Harry Goldberg and Tom Murnoch, although they later took no active part. Also inducted were Seamus Murphy, Tommy Hunt, and P.P.O'Reilly, later well known on Irish radio as a journalist and commentator. In a pep talk in Gay Street Moss Twomey advised them; 'stay together, lie low, great things will be required from you'. Early in January 1939, with Kathleen McSweeney, he went late night bill sticking the Lord Halifax ultimatum; *the Government of the Irish Republic..... reserve the right of appropriate action....*

It was signed by Russell, O'Flaherty, Hayes, Grogan, Fleming and George Plunkett. Máirtín Ó Cadhain refrained from signing because of its lack of social content. The ultimatum was addressed to Rt. Hon Viscount Halifax G.C.B. Foreign Secretary, who would certainly have only the vaguest knowledge of Ireland's problem, although as a well known expert on ghosts and apparitions, perhaps he thought that this one would disappear too.

Jimmy 'Scottie' Carroll, Nora's brother, returned at this time from Spain where he had seen service in the International Brigade, and had been imprisoned in Burgos with Frank Ryan. 'Scottie' had returned to England with Bob Doyle, another volunteer. A frequent visitor to the Carroll house at this time was James Larkin Jones, later General Secretary of the Transport and General Workers' Union. The stance of union leaders of the thirties, Larkin Jones, Big Jim and Helena Moloney shows how far the college trained union leaders of today have distanced themselves from national issues, Pat says.

Promptly upon his return 'Scottie' offered his services to the I.R.A (the Campaign had not yet started) but was refused by Joe Deighan who, for security reasons, considered communists unreliable. They had divided loyalties, he said. He had a good reason for this. 'Scottie' and another volunteer, by name Grennan, were in the Communist Party and may have talked there; a fellow comrade, Clutton, was later uncovered as an agent for M.I 5. His instructions were to keep watch upon Indian and Irish students at the University. Deighan had by now taken over from Stannard; his adjutant and close companion, Tom Martin, was later deported.

Pat's sole activity at the commencement was putting up the posters but, inevitably, because of his background and the circle he had moved in, he was arrested on January 29, along with his elder brother Sean, his father, Seamus Murphy and Peadar Dowley. John Healy, a London Irish businessman was arrested on a posses-

sion of explosives charge. Tommy Kelly was held in Liverpool on a charge linked to Healy, as was Sean Hannon. At this stage all of the Hannon males, Nicky Cleary, Seamus Murphy, Peadar Dowley and Patrick Fleming were held; through lack of evidence, some were released, but Sean Hannon and Cleary were sentenced, while Fleming was interned. Clearly the indigenous people ought not to have been activated.

Seamus was later attached to the Publicity Bureau in Dublin, and received a heavy sentence as a result of being found with Kit Quearney at 29 Lansdowne Park. He ended his working days in the Office of the Censorship of Publications Board. Peadar Dowley, a thick set man, was later interned in the Curragh, and with Tommy Kelly occupied for a time the former home of Mrs. Tom Clarke at Richmond Avenue, Fairview. Tommy escaped internment by becoming a purser on an Irish ship which was later sunk in the Atlantic but he was rescued and landed in Lisbon. Held with them that night was Patrick Fleming, one of the signatories of the Halifax ultimatum.<sup>(6)</sup> He advised each of them to contest the police evidence. Because of lack of evidence against Fleming himself he received only a light sentence although later interned for the duration on the Isle of Man. Tommy McDermott and Harry Goldberg were held overnight and then released.

The prosecutor at the trial on February 7, was David Maxwell Fyffe, later as Sir David, a prosecutor at Nuremberg, with Justice Stable, also at Nuremberg in 1946. Pat was released on the second day. Meanwhile Sean's advocate advised him to fight all the way unless they had something tangible on him. There was an explosion then against the jail wall of Walton; it achieved little but in noise and propaganda, Pat says, it achieved a lot. After a three day trial all were acquitted, except Sean, who got seven years. Acquittal was a prelude to deportation, and after the legislation went through in July deportations commenced on August 3, 1939.

#### MOTHER CAREY'S CHICKENS:

Back finally in Ireland, like Mother Carey's chickens, as the *Irish Times* reported, with the clear undertones that these Republican drifters could pose problems, Pat, and some of his companions, were put up for a week at Molly Gleeson's hotel in North Frederick Street, *An Stad*. With more deportees arriving weekly other provisions had to be made. The organisation was facing problems of accommodation that Sean Russell, now safely in America, could not have foreseen. The deprivations of those disemployed waifs and their uprooted families would tax the capability of the I.R.A and its adherents to support them, most of them after the initial welcome would be encouraged to fend for themselves, while, with mass internments soon likely, many of them would be locked up anyway.

After being entertained for a week in *An Stad* some had thought better of staying around and had taken to their heels. However Frank Quinn from Tyrone, Frankie Duffy, Dan O'Toole, Billy McNeill, Pat Doyle, Leo Casey (brother of Charlie), Tarlach Ó h-Uid, all from Belfast, Con Mackey from Limerick and a long distance runner Mick Walsh from Cork, Joe O'Connor from Kerry, Hughie McCormack from Leitrim, Pat Shannon from Galway, Liam Kirwan from Kilkenny and Pat Collins from Abbeyfeale, were sent to a country villa at Hazelhatch, on the border of County Kildare.

Pat has no knowledge of who owned the villa and he thinks that it has now been built over. After six weeks in Hazelhatch they were transferred to *Glencullen House*, a classical small lodge in a wooded setting in the Dublin mountains. Ostensibly they were fitters and labourers repairing the house. All of them were in Dublin one night when Hughie McCormack appeared among them having walked the six miles with his hair on end. *I have seen a ghost. A young girl appeared to me as I was alone; she was all in white.* Pat had already experienced a strange feeling there but had not confided it to anyone. One night going up the avenue to Fox's to obtain food supplies, he felt quite tense as he returned to the darkened house. There was no one there; later on he heard a story that a girl had been strangled in the lodge.

Glencullen House lies down a long tree lined avenue walled in from the roadway. It is a single storey classical villa over a garden level basement. One room, the library, was filled with fine books; it also had a billiard table on which some of the I.R.A men grew proficient. Each day a group went on a route march into Glendoo or over the mountain known as Prince William's Seat, while another party would walk into Dublin. They had no money; depending on what might be sent to them by relatives or upon the occasional drink stood to them by friends. After three weeks their stay in Glencullen House came to an end. Some of them, including Pat, were moved to a tall georgian house over a shop at 110, St. Stephen's Green owned by Liam Lucas, a wholesale grocer and long time friend of the Movement. There for the first time he met Belfast Republican and school teacher, May Laverty. By coincidence her near namesake Maura Laverty, playwright and cooking expert, had a brother Wally Kelly, a carpenter, who was also in the Movement.

There were nine others in the house, and Pat says that arms classes were held there. The deportees committee now tried to set them up in small business's and for two months after this he was in Dromin, Co. Louth, with Tom Martin, late of Liverpool, whose home was there. They were attempting furniture making but the venture failed.

Nora Carroll had now arrived in Dublin. With Maura Drumm she went to Belfast and they joined in a shop venture, but found herself interfered with by the R.U.C and deported back to Dublin. Kitty, her sister, a dark haired Irish colleen type was arrested later in 1940 in Art O'Leary's house in Drumcondra, and interned with Máire Ní Cuillineán (later the wife of Paddy Kenna), Sighle Ni Donnchadha, Fiona Plunkett (both veterans of 1916), Carmel O'Hagan and others. (7)

With Seán Ó Mongáin, Pat then attempted a business making suitcases but it went nowhere. World War 2 in Europe was now on for eight months; the hatches were battened down; there was no work. Then, in May, accompanied by Tom Cryan, Joe Delaney, Finian Moynihan, Jimmy Poole, Tomás McDonagh Byrne, Jack Hosey and others, on a route march over Cruach Mountain, seven miles from Dublin, they were arrested by an armed squad of Branchmen. Taken to the Dublin Bridewell, they were held for some nights before being transferred in an Army lorry to No. 1 Internment Camp, the Curragh, a newly built complex of seven huts capable of holding some hundreds of men. At this time there was only 70 there, and each morning Mick O'Shea, in his cultured English accent, would read from the one daily paper allotted to them.

The internees were not accepting visits, unless in exceptional circumstances, and only one letter outwards weekly was permitted. After a number of weeks Pat's group was moved to D. Wing of Mountjoy Jail, initially into basement cells with mice running about, preparatory to being charged before the Military Tribunal. During the weeks they were there Tomás MacCurtain of Cork, after being tried, was under sentence of death by hanging, in the hanghouse attached to their wing. They never saw him. Occasionally however Governor Sean Kavanagh would arrive and join with them in throwing the weight, a steel ball that was slithered underhand. Uinseann Mac Eoin invented a 'battleship' game, played by numbered squares upon a sheet of paper or a wall; the numbers could be called from cell to cell.

After a sentence of twelve months imprisonment on membership charges at the Tribunal in Collins Barracks in August, they were conveyed to Arbour Hill Prison where already there were 60 other Republicans. George Plant, who was later executed, was brought in upon a holding charge in September. *I do not expect that I will ever be released*, he told this writer on one occasion strolling about the yard in Arbour Hill. *They will not let me go*. Most of his days were spent walking with fellow Tipperary man Mixie Conway: George led the prisoners also on simple dietary talks and breathing exercises; seemingly quite harmless, but for some reason the authorities forbade them.(8)

In-mid February 1941, Pat and his friends went through the farcical process of release, re arrest at the gate, and internment. On a minor unproven charge of 'membership of an unlawful organisation'; he and his eight companions were now to face years of internment; a total between them of around 40 years. Was this administrative mindlessness or did it mean that the plain people of Ireland could sleep more peaceably in their beds: their imprisonment was certainly creating jobs, as their cars, fore and aft, were escorted by armoured vehicles and Bren gun carriers; the man power guarding them on the 30 mile trip amounted to 18.

#### NAILED:

On arrival down that dreary hill to the command hut outside the gates, they got their first taste of the reign of terror that prevailed. Jack Hosey, for failing to respond to a command, got beaten by P.A.'s. Then a brusque shoving through the timber gates of the Gualag carrying their allotted four blankets with them. Nor was there a welcome for them; only a sombre sense of oppressiveness. The gaps where the seven big huts had been were very evident. Now only their concrete base walls remained. Gaping holes disappearing into the ground showed the entry into the ambitious network of tunnels. Each night at nine o'clock, an officer with a posse of P.A.'s entered the hut for a roll call. The men then lined up and answered their names, a process that took a lot of swallowing as the slightest sign of disrespect could result in the 'mahogany trail' to the Glasshouse. Pat remembers only the cold of the place and the sense of starvation, although he too suffered Glasshouse treatment in February 1942 for 'adopting an insolent attitude'. For three days there he ate nothing, refusing their treatment of bread and water.

He admits to feeling somewhat wrong footed on De Valera's neutrality policy. Of course we were all in favour of neutrality, he says; he hoped to see England trounced but not occupied. Too many of his good friends around Liverpool might suffer!



On the other side of the coin, Paddy O'Daire from Donegal who was in Liverpool and in the International Brigade (though never in the Curragh) joined the British Army and rose to the rank of Major (9). Seamus Dowling's younger brother, influenced by Russia's involvement, signed out and joined the British Army as did half a dozen more.

Pat was in a hut with Norman Clarke from Dublin whom he regarded as a cut above the average, and with Pádraig Mac Caomhánaigh, the black bearded Irish scholar. He recalls an incident one night; enamel mugs heating on top of the pot belly stove, and Pádraig calling from his posture to Frankie Duffy, standing close to the stove, to see if his tea saved from the afternoon was warmed. Duffy promptly planted a testing finger down into the mug. Without ado Pádraig, who was quite fastidious even in jail, advanced over lifted the mug and tipped the contents through an open window.

He recalls Jimmy McDonnell, a hard chaw brick layer; Seamus Rickard, scholar and fisherman from Howth; Dermot Mac Giollaphádraig, tall, thin and fair, a Dublin bookseller, Jack Brady of Dublin, with a long record, worked in Guinness and later joined Clann na Poblachta; Phil Christie from Finglas, who joined Aer Lingus; Danny Conroy from Donnybrook, who in spite of ill-health and a young family, remained true but died shortly after release.

The three Fitzpatrick's, Jeremiah, John and Pat; always up to a prank; George Fluke; his parents Orange grand masters; friendly with 'Black Dan' O'Toole; Fluke emigrated to Canada but returned to Britain; Stephen Lally, deported with his family from Manchester 1939; was a survivor of the Connaught Rangers Mutiny in India, June 1920, and sentenced to death, but reprieved after the execution of James Daly of Tyrellspass; Paddy McLogan, former M.P. for South Armagh, living in Portlaoise; he asked me if I were a son of James Hannon with whom he had been on hunger strike in September 1917 when Ashe died; Jasper Hornibrook, a Dublin tailor, gaelicised his name Iaspar Sruthán na n-Adairce; a close friend of Johnny Keane also from Dublin; Paddy Prunty from Westmeath worked in the cookhouse; Wally Kelly of Dublin, with enormous spectacles; Mick Silke had the air of a refined gentleman, always well dressed and with his grey hair properly groomed; worked for nuns in Sligo; The brothers Ralph and Brendan Sealy of Dublin; John Henry Cummins of Mayo; he used to address the clothes lines in a variety of languages and was eventually released; Sean Shiels of Derry City, a fair haired chap, friend of 'Bird' Doherty; Jim 'Rocky' Burns of Belfast, full of fun there; got out and was killed in action against the R.U.C in Belfast in February 1944; Mort Lucey of Cork City, later a successful business man; Jim Lacey, or 'Flash', of Wexford was a voracious reader, and had gone through the entire volumes of *Gibbon's Decline and Fall*, to an extent that he could quote it to Pat; *I still remember episodes from it though I never read it myself*. Pat Mulcahy of Limerick City; Charlie Dolan, Tan veteran of Sligo; 'Ribs' Redmond (he'll split your sides laughing) of Dublin; Des Derwin, a student type, from Dublin; he thinks too of the 'Sagart' Mc Weeney, as a quiet refined person; of Tim Driscoll of Cork, who bathed every morning in the cold; of Liam Carey, brick-layer, of Dublin City; (10) and grand nephew of James Carey, betrayer of the Invincibles (although the late Sean MacBride held that Timothy M. Healy, first

Governor-General was responsible but could not be placed in the box).

Dinny Walsh, Pat says, joined the left group at an early stage, and as a result was disinclined to listen to the views of others. Sean, Jeremiah and Pat Fitzpatrick, three brothers from Ballykeeran near Athlone, Pat recalls as not too tall but happy and irrepressible. Benny McNally and Joe Reilly were elderly farmers from the Finglas area. Stuff from the Magazine had been dumped on their lands, so they were interned. They had both done service in the Civil War. Jim Coulton, O.C Fourth Battalion, not originally from Dublin, worked as a barman there. Respectably dressed and veering into middle age, he was of medium height and wore the now fashionable rimless glasses. He was netted with the first batch in September 1939; re-arrested on refusing to answer questions and eventually interned. After internment he won a Sweepstakes prize and bought a pub in Wexford Street. Jack Guiney, in Pat's estimation, was a very fine chap; he was a noted rugby player. He was a nephew of Commdt. James Guiney. He afterwards joined the gardaí. Sean Sugrue of Kerry was a quiet lad but a fluent Irish speaker. Dermot O'Riordan, an elderly farmer from Kerry, farmed at Swords. He too had stored Magazine stuff. John Tully of Cavan; the 'silent man', and later a Clann T.D, was a veteran of the earlier period. Peadar Dowley of Liverpool worked as a journalist in the *Irish Press* later. Seamus Murphy from Liverpool, about which much already appears in this book, died soon enough in 1959. He had contributed pieces and poems to *The Bell*; married Anna Cullen who had worked in Maeve Phelan's shop, next to Conradh (also Conradh) na Gaelige in Harcourt Street. Christy Oxberry, a typical Dubliner, was a pal of Jasper and Johnny Keane. Sean Ashe from Kerry originally, was a nephew of Tom Ashe of 1916 fame. Matt Kent, from near Bunclody, was a veteran already touched upon. Then there were three brothers Falvey; Mickey, Paddy and Jack from Co. Kerry; in fact close to Casement's Banna Strand.

You asked my opinion of the leadership with whom I now found myself incarcerated. I have got to say that I found some of our god's had feet of clay. But that does not go for the general run of the men or indeed of the leadership. It was simply that some of the big names from whom we had expected a lot turned out to be failures.

I will not go further than to observe that if you take any of the big *political* names who have ruled this state since then; Lemass, Corish, Fitzgerald, Jack Lynch. Would you consider them to be great or worthy people? They reach a certain pinnacle on the 'Peter principle' after which the media glamourises them, and they remain perched there.

On Free State brutality, Pat, a slight fellow, had plenty of tales. One night after nine p.m Commdt. James Guiney came raiding, accompanied by Callaghan P.A. and others. *Take down that case*, ordered Guiney. The case, a cheap pasteboard article, rested upon a shelf above another bed; it probably contained a man's books and papers. *It is not mine*, Pat answered. *Take it down*, shouted Guiney. For 'adopting an insolent attitude', as the official report has it, Pat got thumped with batons all the way to the Glasshouse. For three days the beatings followed regularly there. Liam Goulding was another, Pat recalls. John Quinlan, journalist on *The Kerryman* was another victim. He suffered for having a pipe in his mouth during the nightly check up.

In February 1942, a pretty desperate escape plan was proposed by Seamus O'Donovan to Harry White (11). Pat was in the same hut and he heard about it. *Can I come*, he asked White. *Well, you can, but you are very likely to get shot.*

In October of that year a 'split' that is frequently referred to occurred in the Camp. It must be stated that splits are endemic and a source of frustration in Republican camps; and while they should be avoided, it is not possible always to do so, Pat says. The jailers are the king pins; they lord it over you; some of your policies are seen to have failed; worst of all there is frequently a lack of flexibility within your own leadership. Without reflecting upon their *bona fides*, three of the men in the Curragh who could be counted as totally inflexible were Peadar O'Flaherty (there for a short time only, but a man with tremendous influence), Liam Leddy from Aragen, and Joe Crowe from Limerick City.

Extraordinarily, in view of his direction, since 1969, Cathal Goulding was strongly for discipline and orthodoxy, remaining upon the Leddy side; as less surprisingly was Sean Mulready, (although an extreme leftie after), Máirtín Ó Cadhain, Bob Clements, the Grogan's and Tony Magan. On Pierce Kelly's side there was freedom from that sort of discipline and orthodoxy, although, Army discipline was maintained. Kelly had not raised a banner, yet men found themselves cohering upon his flank.

I took to Neil Goold, Pat says; I had a high regard for him. *Bhí árd mheas agam air.* Later in 1946 he sought Pat's assistance in creating a 'peoples college' on his estate lands on Donegal Bay. but Pat had to turn down the offer.

I was released on war's end; on May 16, 1945, and I travelled on the train to Dublin with Tom Cryan, a tiler, and Tomás McDonagh Byrne, a budding journalist. He is the only person I know, Pat says, who was deported from England, had a father deported, and whose grandfather was also deported. I paid my own train fare, Pat adds, as I wished to hold on to the jail pass.

Soon after his release he got a labouring job in the Clondalkin paper mill. His father had known J.J. Walsh and Denis McCullagh who were directors. Later, in partnership with another, he opened a bakery in Sundrive Road, Kimmage. It prospered, but because his partner wished to release money, it had then to be sold. A job under Séamus Ó Mongáin in Phoenix Park loomed, but by this time he had bought a modest house in Connolly Gardens and had married Nora. In 1952 he transferred to Aer Lingus as a labourer, rising quickly to the rank of storeman. By then he was well qualified for the job having passed his Leaving Certificate with honours in 1958. While at work in the airport stores one day, he noticed a fellow worker sporting a Claddagh ring. That is a lovely ring you have, remarked Pat. *I got it from one of the bravest men I have known, George Plant. Gosh, said Pat; I knew George Plant. I was then a warder in Mountjoy, the man went on: and the day before execution he gave it to me. I would like to pass it on to a relative but I am afraid of the reception I might get.*

## REFERENCES:

1. Catherine Ashe, a close relation, was grandmother to film star Gregory Peck.  
On the same note, star Franchot Tone went to some trouble to establish his descent from a brother of Theobald Wolfe Tone. Descendents of Thomas Addis Emmet, by name Emmet, farm at Altadore Castle, Kilpedder, Co. Wicklow.
2. See the Appendix throwing doubt upon that.
3. See *Survivors* for frequent mention
4. See Mattie O'Neill's account of this historic meeting place.
5. It may have been convenient shorthand for the Russell group to imply that Sean MacBride had gone 'political'. Without denying movement in that direction; (he believed for instance that after the New Constitution was enacted in January 1938 that there was no justification henceforth for armed action against the Free State) he was the principal organiser in September 1931 for Saor Éire, banned shortly after; cool upon the I.R.A political party, Cumann na Poblachta, set up in March 1936, and still-born a few months later.
6. See Appendix for a note on the Fleming family.
7. See a full list of women prisoners in the Appendix.
8. *George Plant and the Rule of Law*: a recent paper by Michael Moroney, Tipperary Society, 1989, follows the case in detail.
9. Paddy O'Daire from Glenties had played his part in the last stages of the War of Independence; he had not shirked the Civil War, and after the Free State's clamp down upon employment of Republicans, had to emigrate to Canada. A fine ballad singer, he took up the worker cause in the Dominion, serving fifteen months and being then deported. From December 1936 until late 1938 he served in Spain, returning to be with the I.R.A in Liverpool, although he took no part in the Campaign. He afterwards joined the British Army, retiring with the rank of Major.
10. It is noteworthy that almost all Dublin men at that time came from inner city homes; unlike the socially fractured capital that we now have, the fruit of 50 years of maladministration.
11. This plan, which was not proceeded with, is described on page 91 of *Harry*.

## JOHN J. HOEY

OF BORNACOOOLA,  
LEITRIM:



*An early photo of John Joe*

Writing from New Jersey in 1993, where he made good and prospered after emigrating from Ireland, John Joe Hoey asked to be remembered to old friends, mentioning in particular Bob Clements, Pierce Fennell, Sean Talty, Tony McInerney, Jim Savage and Liam de Burca. His father was Michael from Bornacoola, Co. Leitrim and he was born 'in the same house where his father and grandfather were born'. It was a small farm, under 20 acres, half of which lay in Co. Longford and half in Co. Leitrim. They had a vote in both counties in local elections but could only vote in one county in general elections. His mother however, Briget Faughan, from Newtownforbes, in Co. Longford, took a chance in 1932 and 1933 on behalf of Fianna Fáil, and voted twice. Newtownforbes is a few miles only down the hungry Leitrim border from Bornacoola and a stone's throw from Ballinamuck where so many of Humbert's croppies were massacred on September 8, 1798 following their long trail across Mayo into the midlands; a chronicle of scintillating victories ebbing into defeat.

John Joe grew up in a land that that sociologists these days would describe as one of rural poverty but it was unnoticed by them. The land supplied their basic needs; they had the horse and cart and a bicycle for transport. Their range of travel was limited; they could reach Longford town or Carrick, but it was rare that they took a train for Dublin. John Joe's boyhood memories were not of sociological poverty but of trenched roads, blocking trees and burnt-out constabulary barracks, the left-over remnants of the Tan war in which Longford and Leitrim had played a vigorous part. That, and the stories told around a turf fire, influenced him when he joined Fianna Éireann in the last months of the Civil War in 1923.

Graduating from that, he joined Óglaigh na h-Éireann in 1926. In 1929 he went to live with his aunt in Co. Roscommon following the death of her husband, transferring to the local unit and being promoted battalion adjutant. He confesses to having been arrested a few times but avoided prolonged detention until the big round-up of June 1940.

Upon release after almost five years of detention without trial, he found 'a great change'. His aunt was now too old to take care of the farm which had run down in his absence. The cattle were sold and from then on 'it was a slaves existence'. He held on for a while after his aunt died at the age of 91 but in 1954, seeing no prospects for rural Ireland under the Dublin administration, he departed for America. I have enjoyed a good social life here with plenty of Irish parties, he says; every other week he speaks by phone to fellow exile Joe Bray, and he still flies back to Ireland.

#### A PERSONAL ACCOUNT FROM JOHN JOE HOEY:

The first Sinn Féin election was held in Roscommon in 1917. There was great excitement and enthusiasm when County Plunkett was elected. The men and women were so determined they went in droves to vote.<sup>(1)</sup> They had to try and walk to the polling booths, no vehicles could be used as they snow was seven foot in depth. Many times in after years when the old people would be telling some strange story they would be sure to say that it happened around the time of Plunkett's snow. And in 1918 when De Valera was speaking on a Sinn Féin platform in Dundalk, he said; *I want you to do what the people of Roscommon did last year, the young ones carried the old ones on their shoulders as the snow lay on the ground.*

I always thought that the electing of Count Plunkett and the other Sinn Féin candidates who won the by-elections in 1917 helped to make the way clear for the Sinn Féin victory of 1918. There was great unity among the Irish people at that time, and although the authorities did everything in their power to stop Sinn Féin from being elected, the people stood firm. Lloyd George was quick to recognise the unity among the Irish people. He said at the same time that every house in Ireland was a Sinn Féin stronghold and unless we kill men and women and children we cannot cope with the Irish people, and in the face of the world that is a thing we cannot do. But he soon found a way to cope with the situation through peaceful negotiations with Sinn Féin. He used the old tactics of divide and conquer, and he made a great job of it. The Treaty of 1921 caused confusion and mistrust among upright honest people who longed for the freedom of their country. They were divided; one half Free Staters, the other half Republicans.

They wiped each other out by ambush and executions that never would have happened were it not for the signing of the Treaty. Before World War 1, the same Treaty was there for the taking and was refused. Redmond and Dillon at Buckingham Palace in 1914 refused Home Rule for any such shameful surrender as the partition of Ireland, but after three years of bloodshed we took worse terms in Downing Street. William T Cosgrave speaking in Kilkenny in 1917 said, British Imperialism and Irish Nationality can never mix; one is a denial of the other. *We want no Ireland within the Empire that has nothing but centuries of bitter memories for us. All we want is freedom to be allowed to rule our land without British interference.* Yet within a few years he could be seen coming down the steps of Buckingham Palace in a jovial mood with King George V.

After the Civil War there was a terrible bitterness and hatred among the people that was to last for years, and to make matters worse the break-away of De Valera from Sinn Féin accompanied by some prominent members of the I.R.A left the Republican Movement weakened. They commenced then to organise and recruit for the I.R.A, Cumann na mBan and Fianna Éireann. By 1929 they were once again strong and could challenge the Cosgrave government.

A great rally was held near Drumshanbo, about July 1930 and Sean Russell was the principal speaker. There was a huge number of young people at it. The late Colonel Michael McLaughlin was home from New York city and he had great praise for the fine turn out of young men and women who were present. Michael had been a leader during the Black and Tan and Civil wars. His brother Terry was interned in the Curragh Camp in the forties. Michael was manager of an A & P store in New York, and shortly after going back he was shot dead in the store. He was exceedingly brave and fast and at first tried to disarm the gunman. It seemed strange there-

fore that the hold-up man took nothing, merely running out. His remains were taken back and the interment took place in Kilmore cemetery. Never before or since was there such a crowd of people from all parts of the country as came to attend the funeral. The parade to the cemetery stretched for miles, and all were marching on different roads leading to the cemetery. Jim Vaugh of Drumshanbo was in charge of the Leitrim parade.

When we were about two miles from the cemetery we were stopped by the C.I.D, they had the road blocked with three cars drawn across it. There was a scuffle then as the crowd rushed through the detectives, pushing the cars aside and continuing on to the cemetery. A detective hit Vaugh with the butt of his revolver knocking out two of his teeth. On the Roscommon side Pat McKeon of Croghan was in charge of what had become a huge parade. When we got to the cemetery the Free State Army had the whole place surrounded with machine guns mounted on the walls, determined to prevent a volley being fired over the grave.

The oration was delivered by Frank Ryan speaking in a loud clear voice. No one liked to see the Free State Army there, especially Frank Ryan because he knew that the people who came from Dublin, Cork and all over Ireland came to pay their respects to a soldier and leader. As Frank arrived on the platform to speak he seemed to pause for a few seconds as he looked over the huge crowd. *You have all heard of the Black and Tans, he called, but what took the Green and Tan here today to dishonour Mick McLaughlin?*

The Cosgrave coercion was a time of both excitement and fear. There were many arrests and many brutal beatings and most of the I.R.A leaders had to go on the run. I remember in 1931 attending an I.R.A meeting of the Western Command in a place near Strokestown, Co. Roscommon. The purpose of this meeting was about the I.R.A coming out in the open as Saor Éire, speaking on platforms at meetings. The majority objected saying that they should work under cover. Jim Vaugh, who was in charge of the Leitrim I.R.A at Mick McLaughlin's funeral, was one of those present. But within a few weeks after he was caught in a house near Rooskey, Co. Roscommon with Sean O'Farrell, who was O.C Leitrim at that time. O'Farrell was taken to Arbour Hill Prison and Vaugh, significantly, was taken to Ballinamore Barracks.

There the C.I.D beat him so unmercifully that within days he died. Vaugh was a powerful man, 27 years of age with the appearance and qualifications of a great leader but the Staters did not want a man like that around. He was in fact the 78th victim of the Free State government, and the 78th. victim of British Imperialism. Towards the end of 1931 things were getting worse; the Free Staters showing no mercy to Republicans. The C.I.D seemingly had a free hand to do as they liked and some got savage beatings.

Arbour Hill was full of Republican prisoners, Frank Ryan, the Gilmores and other prisoners refused to wear prison clothes. They were covered only in a blanket in their cells. I remember at that time Frank Ryan was brought before a court on a charge of some sort. *I decline to plead, he said; I demand a public inquiry into the treatment of the Gilmores and all of the political prisoners who are suffering a slow death in Arbour Hill Prison. This brutal action was the dying kick of the Cosgrave*

regime. It was this brutality that gave Fianna Fáil, under the leadership of Eamon De Valera, a great platform to work on. I remember being in Rooskey in 1932 on the eve of the general election and hearing Doctor O'Dowd, who was contesting the election for a Roscommon constituency, speaking strongly on the issue of Republican prisoners. He condemned the government in power and told us that provided Fianna Fáil was elected, there would not be a single Republican behind bars ever again.

Fianna Fáil was victorious and the prison gates were opened within days. Excitement ran to fever pitch as bonfires blazed in every town and village in Ireland. The boys who were on the run returned home. Thousands of people lined the roads awaiting the return of the prisoners, and torchlights were carried in long processions. Many in the I.R.A. voted for Fianna Fáil in the election. Everyone had high hopes and visualised a kind of Utopian state under the new government. Few realised it was just going to be a change of masters and that the west of Ireland and particularly Leitrim, would lose half its people within decades.

When Fianna Fáil took office in 1932 there was a world wide agrarian crisis. In Ireland, north and south, there was massive unemployment. In Belfast there were battles between the police and the workers; all of the workers. Unionists, Communists, Catholics, and Protestants fought side by side. For a few weeks there was no sectarianism. Many of Belfast's children were suffering from malnutrition because there was no work and there was no money to buy proper food. Fianna Fáil was faced with the same situation in the South. There was massive unemployment in the cities and towns; evictions of tenants and small farmers had begun.

One incident of this type happened in Longford where in November 1934 a tenants' association in the Longford area sought help from the I.R.A. in a dispute over ground rent. The agent, Gerald More-O'Ferrell, had threatened to evict a number of tenants. A public meeting was held in Edgeworthstown; Michael A. Kelly and Peadar O'Flaherty speaking at it. On February 9, 1935 a car carrying four men, one dressed as a civic guard, drove up to the More-O'Ferrell residence, *Lisard*, Edgeworthstown. They were I.R.A. men and their intention was to tar and feather the agent.

One of the men rang the doorbell, telling the maid he had a message from the garda superintendent in Longford. The maid, Mary Feeley, told him that her boss was dining, asking him to come back the following day. The man however pushed past the maid while the three others followed. They entered the dining room where they found More-O'Ferrell and two other men. This placed them in an awkward position; it was thought that the two strange men might be bodyguards: in reality they were his son Richard, and a Mr. Michael Scott. Ordering the father outside, he answered 'I'll be damned if I will go'. Two of the men dragged him from the chair, his son rushed to help him and in the struggle one of the men fired two shots; one at Gerald, the other at Richard. Gerald was saved by a cigarette case in his waistcoat pocket, but Richard was shot and died in St. Vincent's Hospital in Dublin 11 days later. A reward of £1,000 was offered for information about the death, but as soon as it was offered the road from Sligo to Dublin was painted in big white letters, *Spies Beware*.

At the end of March 13 men were in custody. In the identification parade that fol-



lowed on April 3, 1935, Marjory More-O'Ferrell, the daughter of the agent, picked out four men. The judge inquired if it was not a coincidence that she could identify the men while the maid could not identify anyone. At this juncture, Jimmy Joe Reynolds, one of the accused, stood up and said, *you cannot buy the poor; the imperialist dirt can be bought.*

The first trial was held on July 14, 1935, and ended after 11 days when the jury was unable to reach agreement. On December 3, a second trial was held. After eight days the jury brought in a verdict of not guilty and the four men were discharged. There were great celebrations for the men. They were honoured by welcoming processions in Mullingar, Edgeworthstown, Longford, Dromod and Mohill. The four men released were Jimmy Joe Reynolds, his twin brother John, Billy Mulligan and John 'Nipper' Shanley. The 'Nipper' was from Dromod, the Reynolds brothers were from near Dromod, Billy Mulligan was from Longford; he was interned in the Curragh six years later when he was O.C of the Camp in the early stages of internment.

#### THE '32 ELECTION.

Following the shooting and similar happenings, the Fianna Fáil government, who had opened the prison gates in 1932, had a change of heart. In June 1936 it declared the I.R.A to be an illegal organisation and by the end of the year Arbour Hill was full of Republican prisoners. It was a living hell in which Sean Glynn died a martyr's death from the torture of the silence regime maintained there.

There were many other strange happenings in Leitrim during the election of 1932. One extraordinary occurrence followed a Cumann na nGael meeting in Carrick on Shannon when a Leitrim Cumann na nGael T.D and two detectives on their way home pulled up and went to the house of a man they knew had changed his mind and was now going to vote for Fianna Fáil. The T.D and one of the detectives went to the house. The detective had his gun already drawn wherewith the man reached for a shotgun and shot both the detective and the T.D dead. That was the detective who had helped beat Jimmy Vaugh in Ballinamore Barracks a short time before, Detective Officer McGeehan.

In 1932 there was a big Anti-Imperialist rally in Longford town. Dan Layde of Dublin gave a rousing speech on unemployment and the cause of the crisis. Jim Gralton of Effernagh, Leitrim, also spoke, but within a few months he was deported back to the U.S.A for his political views. The Longford unemployed were busy that day; meanwhile I was selling badges of James Connolly *we shall rise again*. At that time I used to sell the *Irish Workers Voice* to the small farmers and a few of the railway workers in my neighbourhood, and strange to say there was never criticism from anyone about selling a left-wing paper.

Late in 1932, the I.R.A took over *Donamon Castle* in Co. Roscommon as a training camp. The castle was unoccupied as landlord Caulfield lived in England. Mick Price from Dublin and Sean McCool of Stranorlar were in charge. Kit Conway and Seamus McCann were our drill masters. We left there after a week. It seems that the news reached Caulfield in London that the castle had been taken over. The Special Branch came to the castle but Price would not allow them in. On their departure we

took our property, 50 mattresses, a load of blankets and other domestic materials to a house in Leitrim.

After the defeat of the Cumann na nGael party in 1932 they formed a fascist organisation eventually called the Blueshirts. It caused a big stir and there were many clashes between them and the I.R.A, although the Army Council was against any interference with the Blueshirts. Nevertheless there were fights and many arrests. Any I.R.A man arrested, or brought to court, got no help from G.H.Q, having disobeyed orders. I remember one incident in Mohill where the Blueshirts were then strong. They had a platform erected and the O.C of the I.R.A, Sean O'Farrell, got his men together and under his command the platform was burnt to a cinder.

The first inaugural meeting of the Republican Congress was held in Athlone on April 8 1934. An I.R.A Annual Convention had been held on March 17 1934. They differed on certain issues that had been building up for some time and that caused a split between left and right. Mick Price, Frank Ryan, Peadar O'Donnell and George Gilmore left the Convention and formed Republican Congress. It became a venue for good speaking and debating. Peadar O'Donnell said, *we want a Republic that uproots Capitalism on its way*. Frank Ryan spoke on misrepresentation and George Gilmore on foreign aggression. I was greatly impressed by Sheila Humphreys and Brian Corrigan, they were very good. What they said made a lot of sense.

A short time after returning home from the Congress I happened to be working in a field near the house. The mail man handed me some letters across the hedge, one was the Athlone manifesto. Just as I took the letters I saw two civic guards coming to arrest me; they seized the Athlone manifesto. Five of us were then taken to Sligo Jail and charged over an incident with the Blueshirts. After a lapse of two weeks we were taken to Strokestown to stand trial. The Athlone manifesto was then handed to the judge. Upon reading it he dismissed it as 'a document of a communist nature'.

#### JIMMY JOE

Jimmy Joe Reynolds, who was a staff captain of the I.R.A, was killed accidentally when a bomb exploded in a house in Donegal near the Border. Charles McCafferty and John Kelly were also killed. Jimmy Joe had called to see me on his way to Dublin as I had some money to give him from the annual I.R.A collection. The funeral was impressive. Tony D'Arcy called to my house with 'Sonny' Mullaney and Ned Maguire both from Kilglass, Rooskey, to pick up two rifles, and take them to a house about a mile from the cemetery where we would meet the rest of the firing party, all of whom were from Leitrim. Billy Mulligan from Longford was in charge of the firing party. He checked the rifles to see that they were in perfect working order. Then he gave the six men instructions on how they were to carry out the ceremony. Tony D'Arcy was in overall charge of the funeral. There was a large turn out of I.R.A from all parts of the country augmented by a big turn out of people from the neighbouring counties.

As the funeral arrived at the cemetery there was a strong force of civic guards and detectives waiting, with a machine gun mounted on the roadside close to the grave. The Mohill garda superintendent tried to show his authority that day. He rushed over to grab James McCormack because he suspected him of having hand guns under his overcoat. But James was faster than the super, giving him a knee in

the stomach whereupon there was a scuffle and a shot was fired from the machine gun. At that moment D'Arcy said, *Super, if you are looking for trouble you may get it right now.* The commanding voice of D'Arcy and his determination scared the super so much that he said, he was not looking for trouble, quietly walking away.

About 15 months later James McCormack was hanged with Peter Barnes in Winson Green Prison, Birmingham.

There was some surprise as Canon Grey was finishing the burial service. A car pulled up in the midst of the civic guards and detectives, and six men with rifles alighted. Billy Mulligan then led them down the slope from the railway bridge, and under his orders the firing salute was carried out over the grave of Jimmy Joe while Canon Grey stood motionless at the graveside. Then they retreated across the fields and along the railway to a safe place to hide the rifles and short arms. I was their guide as I knew the whole area, so we had no bother finding a safe place to hide the guns. The next day the gardaí and detectives searched all along the railway but they could find nothing.

In September 1939 there was a round-up of I.R.A. men as a precautionary measure at the start of World War 2. Knowing the old saying, England's difficulty is Ireland's opportunity, the government was taking no chances. There was not much excitement in Arbour Hill during the short internment. Four Cork men went on hunger strike on the first day of their internment; Mártín Callaghan from Clare was caught trying to escape, and Con Lehane did a hunger and thirst strike. However it was to be of short duration as Sean MacBride knew that there was no clause in the Act that allowed internment. He forced the government to set us free by a *habeas corpus* motion taken early in December whereupon we were released. A large crowd of people waited for us outside the prison, whereupon we all went to *An Stad* Hotel on North Frederick Street for the night. While in Arbour Hill I had become a close friend of Ritchie Goss from Dundalk; we spent a few happy hours in Dublin together after our release. On the way home I travelled with Tony D'Arcy and Bob Clements; Tony and Bob changed at Mullingar for the Galway train while I continued on for Longford. That was the last time I saw Tony D'Arcy alive, and indeed my last time with Ritchie Goss.

After Tony was released he attended a meeting in the Meath Hotel in Dublin with other officers of the I.R.A. The meeting had scarcely started when the police surrounded the place and all were arrested and taken to Mountjoy Jail. Tony and five of his comrades went on hunger strike. After seven days on hunger strike they were told they would have to stand trial. The following morning the prison doctor examined the hunger strikers and certified that they were unfit to stand trial, so the Fianna Fáil Minister for Justice, sent in an outside doctor who stated that they were fit to stand trial. At this point the prisoners held a meeting and agreed that they would abide by the prison doctor's decision and refuse to go to trial. Tomás MacCurtain knew that they would be taken by force. He told the prisoners to take a leg out of their tables to fight with if they had to. Then MacCurtain lined up the prisoners in three sections, taking charge of the first section. I am not sure who was in charge of the section two. Seamus Burke from Ballinrobe was in charge of section three. MacCurtain gave strict orders that when the fight would start every man must keep

his place. Section two was not to come in to the fight until section one was completely annihilated, and section three would keep their place until two was cut down.

The three leaders controlled the men in such a way that they did not get in each other's way. The police arrived then to take them to court, but the prisoners refused to go. When the police tried to use force a fight started; with the prisoners putting up such a great resistance that the fight lasted the entire day. Some of the police were taken away on stretchers. The prison authorities then brought in reinforcements. It was a wicked fight, and in the end, water hoses were used. The water was turned on at full force, so strong that it cut the skin off the prisoners faces. But they kept on fighting knee deep in water. Then the prison authorities brought in pick handles to beat the prisoners. Tony D'Arcy, Jack McNeela and Tom Grogan were very badly beaten. Tom survived, Tony died on April 16 1940 and Jack McNeela died three days later.

### BURIALS

The day before Tony D'Arcy was buried, Paddy McGrath arrived in Leitrim to see if he could have the same firing party over Tony as was over Jimmy Joe Reynolds in 1938. A firing party was picked but not exactly the same as over Jimmy Joe. The evening before D'Arcy's funeral, Syl Fitzsimons told me that they would pick me up in the morning on their way to the funeral. We arrived in Headford early and went to D'Arcy's house. When the funeral arrived at the cemetery there was a large force of gardaí and detectives.

The military had their positions taken already and were in full battle array with steel helmets and rifles. As soon as the family and relatives entered the cemetery behind the casket, the garda superintendent waved them in saying, all relatives, then he said, all wreath bearers. As soon as the relatives and wreath bearers passed, the super and the gardaí tried to stop the parade. At that moment Mrs. D'Arcy rushed at the super telling him that she did not want him giving orders at her husband's funeral. *Ye murdered him*, she shouted.

At that moment the funeral marchers had broken through the lines into the cemetery where a fight then took place. The wreath bearers were knocked around, my hands being cut with the wires that bound the wreath together. The super or the gardaí did not know that these six wreath bearers were in fact I.R.A men and all comrades of Tony D'Arcy.

Paddy McGrath meanwhile had everything under observation, and after deep consideration decided to call off the firing party. There was such a huge crowd of people in the cemetery that he did not want to have innocent people hurt or killed. Three days later we went to Jack McNeela's funeral in Ballycroy, Co. Mayo. Again there was a very strong force of gardaí and many truckloads of military. They were all around the cemetery but there was none at the church. As the casket was being taken from the church to the hearse a volley was fired over it. Brian O'Higgins gave the oration at the graveside.

After Sean MacBride got the prisoners released from Arbour Hill by *habeas corpus* motion, the Fianna Fáil government amended the Offences Act giving them the right to arrest people without trial. On June 3 1940 there was a big round up, but this time we were taken to the Curragh Internment Camp. There were some arrested

then who had been there in 1922. There were also young lads in their early teens. Billy Mulligan was appointed O.C of the Camp. He had a very good camp council of brilliant men who made every effort to improve the conditions of the Camp by negotiations with the Curragh authorities; conditions were getting better all the time. Each hut had its own O.C who at meal times lined up their men, numbered them off, and marched them two deep to the Cookhouse. As time passed there was a change in the Camp Council and a new one was formed.

The new Council was not long in operation when one day the Curragh authorities told them there would be a cut in the butter ration but they would get a substitute of jam instead. The Camp Council then told the authorities that if the full ration of butter was not restored drastic action would be taken. When a full ration was not restored, some of the prisoners began to burn the huts at the far end of the Camp, those that happened to be empty. It was a windy day however and more huts than they expected caught fire. In a short time the entire Camp was surrounded by military armed with machine guns and rifles. The burning huts sent out a heavy black smoke from the felted roofs.

There was a horse race on the Curragh that day and the smoke from the huts was so intense, according to reports, that it was called off for some time. The soldiers then began firing through the smoke wounding some of the prisoners. Bob Flanagan from near Kilmore, Co. Roscommon, was walking between two huts carrying a bucket; whatever he had the bucket for I don't know. He had not gone far when he met with a sergeant-major of the military police who shot him at close range; in fact he was right beside him. Bob was taken to the Military Hospital and was operated on, but where the bullet was lodged they considered it was best to leave it there. Bob carried that bullet until his death many years later. I was with Leo Faughan from Co. Leitrim; we moved towards the toilets to take cover, but as we crossed the main road a bullet hit the ground beside us. We were all forced back into the compound where we were kept for hours completely surrounded by soldiers. That night we were taken back to the huts feeling cold and hungry.

On December 16, after two days the huts were unlocked and the internees were allowed to go outside. Barney Casey was in the hut called the Icebox. It was so called because it had a concrete floor and no heating facilities and no seating accommodation. Barney who was O.C of the tunnels in the Curragh and as Ireland's greatest traditional step dancer bolstered the morale of his comrades during the lock-up with reels and hornpipes.

On the morning of the 16th, Barney left the Icebox to visit his cousin Pat Prunty, also an internee. I was standing at the store with Pat when Barney came in. We were only a few minutes talking when we heard the usual breakfast call 'grub up'. We left the hut for breakfast and, before we had time to line up in the orderly fashion a sudden shout was heard from the sentry at the gate. *Break it up*. At this point I witnessed a lieutenant giving an order and a volley was then fired. Walter Mitchell was shot in the foot and Barney Casey was shot in the back. Barney managed to get into the hut before he collapsed into the arms of Ted Connolly.

At once Billy Mulligan walked bravely up to the sentry at the main gate and, although they angrily shouted at him, called out that, they were after shooting a

man and they should get a stretcher and a priest. A stretcher was brought, and Barney was taken to the military hospital where he died two hours later. Walter Mitchell was knocked to the ground with the force of the bullet that hit him, and I think he might have been much worse were it not for the fact that he was wearing breeches and leggings; the bullet hit him where the legging overlapped the boot; his ankle afterwards being badly swollen.

On the morning that Barney was shot 'Red' John Reynolds from near Dromod, Co. Leitrim, twin brother of Jimmy Joe and O.C of a hut on the other side of the Camp, also heard the breakfast call. He lined up his men and they marched up the other road to the Cookhouse. Capt. Power and some military police were standing on guard. The military police were just waiting for the order to shoot but no order was given. Were it not for Captain Power, in my opinion, John Reynolds and perhaps more would have been shot dead that morning.

After the burning of the huts a great change came over the Camp. There was no marching to the Cookhouse in a military fashion, prisoners were taken to the Glasshouse, beaten and tortured. Every night the prisoners had to line up in the huts for a roll call. If a prisoner made any move, or even looked at the prisoner next to him, he was reprimanded. A friend of mine, John Ward, from Co. Roscommon, who was in the same hut as me, answered his name in Irish and right away he was taken to the Glasshouse; he got an unmerciful beating, every bit of him was black and blue. He was a complete wreck when he got back into the hut. Other prisoners returned in the same manner.

The morning that Paddy McGrath and Tom Harte were executed in Mountjoy Jail, it was a nice bright and sunny morning in the early days of September 1940. Yet it was different to other mornings for us when some prisoners would be out running a few rounds of the Camp and others playing a game of football. This morning there was no activity, no loud talk or laughing; the prisoners were in groups whispering to each other about the two men who walked out at daybreak to face a firing squad. That same morning a subdued meeting was held in one of the empty huts to commemorate the memory of the two men who were after being executed.

Paddy McGrath was a veteran soldier in the War of Independence in 1916. And the man who delivered the oration in the Curragh hut that morning was also a 1916 veteran. George, a brother of Joseph Mary Plunkett, who was one of the signatories to the Proclamation of the Irish Republic. After the meeting most of the internees were sitting around outside while some were walking. I was sitting on the grass with Sean Maxwell of Drumsna, Co. Leitrim. Sean was quietly writing a poem about the two men who had just been executed. Death affects us all in a different way.

#### REFERENCES:

1. Critical as the very first Sinn Féin victory following the 1916 Rebellion, Count Plunkett, 3022. Redmond party, 1708. It was soon followed by victories in Longford and Clare.

## DAN 'BALLY' KEATING,

of TRALEE,



Dan 'Bally' Keating

*A man who has travelled to almost every All-Ireland final in Croke Park and whose fighting goes back into Tan times.*

The 'Bally' is a nickname from a very young boy more than 70 years ago, and it stuck. Tall and spare, at more than 90 years of age he is not stooped, carrying himself with an easy grace; his face soft, not weather beaten. Yet he has spent much of his life time standing, having been a barman, in a string of public houses in Dublin; for a number of years in London, and then back again in Dublin, two cities that are well known to him.

My father, Cornelious, was in the U.S navy towards the end of the last century and he would have fought in the Spanish-American war of 1898. He came home then, settling, and marrying a local girl, Julia Hanifin, here in Castlemaine. Her family had no politics although she had a brother who had been in the police in Dublin, but who had resigned in 1916 to go into an insurance business.

In 1918, I was working in Tralee, in Gerry McSweeney's, and I got involved with the Tralee Boherbue company of the I.R.A. A man, a local soldier, was shot dead in a public house in Tralee, and, as a reprisal, the Tans burned the house. *This is war*, says I, so I bought a Lee Enfield rifle from a soldier then, for a pound; he would say he had been held up and the rifle taken from him; that was common enough in those days. I took the rifle to Farmers Bridge, a sound republican area; ah, a great area entirely, just east of here, where you had men like Sheehy, Johnny Connor, Johnny Duggan, Ned McMahon, Jack Corkery, Mossie Walsh, Josie Hassett, Jim Galvin, Jim Ryle, Mossie Galvin and Jim Whiston. Jim was later 'bat' to Cecil O'Malley, the brother of Ernie in Maryborough. Ah, sure, 'tis hard to remember them all; they were a young and terribly eager crowd. Anyway they made me welcome.

### CONFRONTATION IN LIMERICK:

In the run up to the Civil War of 1922, I was in the company of the I.R.A then occupying Listowel. There was a pro-Treaty group there too under Tom Kennelly, a good Irishman who was intent on avoiding friction. Before the real fighting commenced I was sent on to join our forces in Limerick where Ernie O'Malley had been in command. A scene of confrontation followed for the city was a touchy spot at this time. On March 11, however our side climbed down; I don't care what anybody says but it would have been better if we had squared up to the issue at the time before the Beggars Bush troops got stronger, but Donnachadha O'Hannigan and Mick

Brennan, representing the Free State side, and Liam Lynch and Oscar Traynor on our's, went all out to avoid trouble, even though it merely postponed it.

The Staters then brought in armoured cars and a company of Dublin guards under the charge of Tom Flood, although the mid-Limerick Brigade were still in possession of the Castle and the Strand Barracks. Unrealistically, after the Four Courts bombardment, Liam Lynch again attempted to make a truce with Mike Brennan on July 7, but that, needless to say, failed because Collins and the Free State were now committed to all-out war and they sent in forces under Eoin O'Duffy and Diarmuid McManus, within three days whipping O'Hannigan and Brennan back into line.(1)

McManus got definite orders before he left Dublin that there was to be no truce with the I.R.A.; that he was to attack, and that was done. McManus was sent by Collins and Mulcahy to break the truce; Collins was now a Free Stater and that was that (2)

Meantime I was detailed to go into Co. Tipperary to link with a column from Tralee with Gerry Myles in charge. With a group from Cork we were billeted in the Templemore area where there is now a Garda H.Q. We travelled south from there, to a place called Two Mile Borris, lying between Thurles and Littleton. There was a fellow, Anthony Maher, with the Cork column, who led us into a trap at this point. This was, unfortunately, common because of our non-existent wire communications, and because both sides for a while had green uniforms, while many were still in civvies. We were walked into an ambush; and, fighting back, we killed and wounded a number of them; but they had superior forces and they held all of us.

Gerry Myles was a wonderful soldier who had been badly wounded in the Castlemaine action against the Tans in June 1921. That time I helped to carry him part of the way to O'Brien's of Derrynafile. They were good people and Gerry was there for a while, but afterwards he died a young man as a result of these activities. His younger brother, a fair haired fellow, Terry, from Castlecountess, Tralee, was interned with us for nearly the entire period after June, 1940. You would recall him well yourself.

That was just before Michael Collins was killed in the ambush at Béal na Bláth on August 22, and before the 'Murder Bill' of September-October 1922. That was the brain child of Mulcahy and Ernest Blythe. Blythe, to my mind, was a thorough scoundrel, and that was brought home to me when they executed one of their first prisoners. It was a lad of 17, young Jim Fisher of Basin Street, off James's Street, Dublin, along with three more from the same area.(3)

They intended to execute Erskine Childers, whom they had captured, but in order to take the bad taste away from it, they picked out four unknown Dubliners, caught preparing a street ambush, and they shot them first. I later knew Fisher's uncle, as I was working in a bar in James's Street at this time; simple, good working people they were.

Come now to the execution of Joe McKelvey and Dick Barrett on December 8, and Rory O'Connor and Liam Mellows. Kevin O'Higgins came in late for the cabinet meeting on the evening that decided it. Rory O'Connor had been the best man at his wedding less than a year before, and when he heard what they had decided, he asked, *is there no other way?* But there was no other way because Blythe wanted



to pick out and shoot 12, and Mulcahy was keen to make a big noise, and the two of them, along with Eoin MacNeill, dominated the cabinet.(4) Cosgrave was one of the greatest scoundrels ever. Cathal O'Shannon in the Dáil the next day described it as the worst crime in Ireland in ten years.

#### THE CIVIL WAR DRAGS TO AN END:

At this time I was interned in Maryborough, wondering at times, if one of us might be brought out and shot as a reprisal. (5) As a protest against the bad state of the food provided our command decided in August that the jail should be burned. While the jail was ablaze and the fire brigade entering, we were driven, guns pointed, into the compound where firing broke out, and Jim Hickey of Cork was killed and some were wounded.

Tomás Ó Maoléoin was there with Joe Griffin, a Tralee man, who later rose to great things in the Irish Glass Bottle company as a result of his friendship with Joe McGrath, although I have got to add that when, in the early fifties, I was, with Sean O'Neill, collecting in Dublin for the Ballyseedy memorial. Joe Griffin talked his way out of giving us anything.

The Free State were now concentrating its 11,000 prisoners in Tintown on the Curragh, (6) in the large barracks in Newbridge and at Gormanston Camp. We were sent in 1923 to Tintown No. 2, where Sean Boylan, a Meath man, was in charge, but it was his second, McCormack who made all the decisions; a real bad type. He forced prisoners dig a trench around the camp by prodding them with a bayonet. There was plenty of football there, and we seemed to be getting along fine when the big hunger strike broke out in Mountjoy on October 10, 1923. We all thought we should join it, and that, of course, was our undoing; because not everyone can stand being on hunger strike, no more than you can stand being down in a tunnel under the ground.

Denis Barry of Blackrock, Cork, died in Newbridge in November; Andy Sullivan, of Mallow, died later that month in Mountjoy, and after that it was called off (7) by Tom Derrig.

Jim Hurley of Clonakilty and Sean O'Connor were two on strike that I can vividly remember. Jim was 42 days on hunger strike when it was called off, and he sat up and ate a full half loaf of bread, which he should not have done; but sure he had been one of Barry's top men, and doesn't Tom Kelleher tell his story in the fight against the Tans in *Survivors*. He went on to win; I think it was five all Ireland medals after. Yes; that was Hurley, a grand lad.

There is another story from there that I remember. It concerns the redoubtable 'Sailor' Dan Healy from Kenmare; with Con Looney he had shot dead the two O'Connors the time that John Joe Rice went in to capture the town. They were called upon to put up their hands, but instead, went to draw guns. So they were shot dead; they had no other option. There was this crowd of Free Staters baying for them. Looney was killed in action in September 1922, trying to take the barracks in Killorglin, so that left only 'Sailor' Dan. He was got in Tralee and sent to Limerick Jail where Denis Galvin from Kanturk was the Free State officer who was sent to take the prisoners to the Curragh. Galvin was a decent sort who should never have been in the Free State Army. Anyway, there was a transfer of prisoners taking place

in the Curragh; and at that time, as frequently happened, they would not have the correct names of all the people being held. 'Sailor' Dan felt he would be safer among the big crowd if he went to the Curragh, so he got himself transferred there. But, in the course of time they found out that he must be there and they set out to get him; and if they got him he was one man they would have shot. There were two officers there who knew him well; one was Commdt. Christy Moriarty from this county, and the other was Capt. Galvin from Sneem.

The prisoners were marched past them inside a hut but, although Dan was well known to them, they acted *moryah* that they could not recognise him. They did not betray him; and he went afterwards to America where he died only a few years ago. I often laughed afterwards with Christy Moriarty about it.

I was not released until March 1924, by which time nearly everyone had been released. When I came home I found that things were not good, so the first opening that presented itself, collecting insurance around Limerick, I took that. I went there and I stuck it for a few years until another post presented itself, namely as a barman in Dublin. I was in Dundrum in 1929 and then in James Street, close to the Guinness brewery; lodging in Clonturk Park, Drumcondra.

On June 12, 1929, a detective called O'Sullivan was blown up near Kiltrush by a decoy mine disguised as a box containing arms that he was sent to examine. On forcing it open it exploded.<sup>(8)</sup> I was still in insurance business in Limerick and into Clare, so I was arrested with a lot of others and held for a while in Limerick Jail. But, of course, I had nothing to do with that action. The people they were really after but could not pin anything on were T.J. Ryan, Mike Huxley, Mártín Calligan and Martin White. In the years before Fianna Fáil was elected in 1932 there was always trouble in the western end of Clare.

#### ON CHIEFS OF STAFF:

Peadar O'Donnell came to Kerry in the autumn of 1931, meeting all the brigade officers in Castlegregory. There he unfolded the plan for Saor Éire, but he made no progress towards converting them. The Army backed Fianna Fáil at that time. It took people a long time to discover that De Valera was no different from Cosgrave. And then the next thing was that Johnny Connor and myself were convicted in Tralee court before Judge McElligott on a gun charge.

We knew of a place where there were rifles and such like kept; Johnny had a shotgun, and he had it placed beside the fire when he was arrested with Michael Kennedy and charged in February 1933. A crowd of us went into the hearing from Farmers Bridge; and when Johnny was charged he answered; *as a soldier of the Irish Republican Army I refuse to recognise the jurisdiction of this court.* We cheered at that and this angered the judge. He pointed down the court, and two police went along and brought up Johnny Lynch. *Not that man,* he said; *the one in the pin stripe suit.*

He said I was guilty of contempt of court and he gave me three months. I said; *you can give me six if you like,* and he did. In the course of the evening McElligott grew windy. Tralee was a very republican town at that time, and the atmosphere was menacing. I was brought before him again; if I apologised to the court I would be released. I told him I would do the same thing again under similar circumstances, and so I found myself sent to Cork Jail. But earlier on there had been an impressive

march by the I.R.A through the centre of Tralee; strong political pressure was brought to bear by the local Fianna Fáil organisation, so I was released.

The Blueshirts in Kerry were all Free Staters; the dirt of the county at that time. Eoin O'Duffy was billed to come to Tralee for October 6, 1933, so a squad was got up in Johnny Connor's of Farmers Bridge, including John Duggan, Tadhg, my brother, and Joe Hassett of Ballyseedy. I was sent out to the railway bridge with Kit Leane. The cars were coming through Limerick city, where we had Tommy Barrett stationed with instructions to phone on the number of the car in which O'Duffy was travelling. Now, you must understand that our detestation of O'Duffy was not simply because of the Blueshirts; he was hated because of his part, as I have already related, in the Civil War in Limerick. After that he had been chief of police under Cosgrave, so there was no way we were going to let him rise again.

I got strict instructions about O'Duffy's car; if there was one car I was to fire a shot in the air, two shots if there were two cars, and three shots if there were three. Stephen Coughlan, a Limerick man, later the T.D, was then working in Tralee. On receipt of the phone message he was to bring the number to me waiting out at the bridge, but that is not what happened.

One way or another the number of his car got confused, and both General Eoin and Commdt. Ned Cronin arrived safely in Tralee. But, of course, as Tomo Costelloe has told you, he met plenty of opposition and turmoil there.

On the general run of Chiefs of Staff, and of course I was acquainted with them all, even along from Frank Aiken himself; a very taciturn man, (and I knew indeed his immediate predecessor, Liam Lynch.) I knew Andy Cooney who succeeded him for a year in 1925. He was a wonderful soldier and he had a great past record, but I will have to say that he had strange ideas for an Irishman. He thought that if you had a good squad, you could take over the North in a couple of hours; and that we know is not the way it is.

Maurice Twomey from Fermoy, who had an equally impressive record and was in charge for ten years, was solid, very solid; but he was also cautious. Mac Bride, in my opinion, while he too had a great fight record, did not know where he was going. He was half into arms on one hand and half into politics on the other. Tom Barry was a man who would do things; he would have to be doing things. He was a no nonsense man. Mick Fitzpatrick of Dublin came in as a stop gap, *sop in aghaidh na scuaibe*; for a year after Barry, just before the arrival of Sean Russell in 1938.

I knew Fitzpatrick well; I was attached to the Banba Hall in Parnell Square in Dublin and Fitzpatrick ran the dances there. As far as I could see Fitzpatrick did not want the Cork men and in that he was foolish. And Kerry was the same; always a question mark against us. Johnny Connor from Farmers Bridge, Frank Fitz from Castlegregory, John Joe Sheehy, myself; none of us were trusted. Now I do not mean that in a bad sense; I just mean that the Dublin leadership felt we were Barry's men, no matter who was at the top.

On St. Patrick's Day 1935, there was a meeting here and MacBride was the principal speaker, along with Sean Ryan and Con Lehane. My heavens, but Lehane was a powerful mob orator and a mob fighter. That was the occasion when a peeler was shot and wounded by Eugene Powell, and they charged us, and Humphery

Murphy got a belt of a fist. We had a march then to the Republican Plot where a wreath was laid by John Joe Sheehy; *some have betrayed you, we have not.*

That evening there was a council meeting attended by Sean Flynn, Gannon, Humphery Murphy, MacBride, Lehane, myself and some more. Johnny Connor proposed that action be taken against Reynolds the local superintendent here, and it was passed. But MacBride spoke up and said that if any action was taken he would deny it. The following morning, sure enough, there appeared in the papers a denial that the I.R.A had anything to do with it. Some years later Reynolds was transferred to Thurles, where he took part in the investigations against George Plant. Meanwhile I was charged with shooting Reynolds with intent to murder him; but that was not proceeded with, and I was charged instead with refusing to answer questions.

I found myself in Mountjoy shortly afterwards among the men charged with the More-O'Ferrall case; I being charged with matters arising from the Tralee meeting. Michael A. Kelly, from Roscommon, a very literate fellow, was also on remand. We would not be recognising the Tribunal, but Michael nonetheless offered to write out a speech for me which I was to learn and deliver before being sentenced. When it came to my turn the Free State officer, looking straight at me, complimented me on my intelligence, (he was judging me on my delivery of the speech) but said it was misdirected. Every man in our batch then got six months, but I got twelve.

#### ON SECONDMENT IN LONDON:

In 1937 I was asked by Johnny Connor (9) of Farmers Bridge, to leave my job in Dublin, and go over and spy out the lie of the land in London. Johnny had been in touch with Tom Barry, the Chief of Staff after MacBride, and it was evident from that that Barry had some ideas about doing something over there. I was supposed, with at the most three other people, to find safe houses, and to get to know the ins and outs of the city. No problem; I got to know the place, and I never had a difficulty with London.

Jimmy Joe Reynolds and Dickie Goss came over after that. They were pretty raw; they did not know the terrain the way I did. I knew every street and I knew every building in it because I made it my business. But I thought Goss was the most wonderful fellow I ever met; there was something special about Goss altogether. He was so happy go lucky about everything. He took marvellous chances and got away with them. He was one of those people; I don't know who I could compare him to now except to say he had the same kind of attitude as Tom Barry himself. When the chance came he would take it and do anything that was lined up. I thought he was great. Even after, when I came home and met people in Co. Louth; people that had known him; they all said the same thing. There was a T.D there, Joe Farrell, who had been in the Great Northern works; he thought the world of Goss, and he could not understand why a man who had done next to nothing should be executed.(10)

Jimmy Joe, I also got acquainted with in this run up period. I will tell you this; I was talking to him in London, and three days later; it was Tuesday, I read in the *Evening News*, where the three of them, Jimmy Joe, John James Kelly and Charles McCafferty were blown up by a faulty bomb at Castlefin, on the third last day of November 1938. It was a heartbreak for me. He was another patterned on Dick Goss; a brave lad who would take a chance at anything. The same happy go lucky way

about him; a dedicated and most wonderful Irishman. His brother, John, was a regular at Bodenstown; a grand fellow.

Eight months earlier in April, I had attended in Dublin the Convention that gave Sean Russell the green light for the Campaign. To my mind however, the real idea was to get rid of the Barry element within the Army. Moss Twomey, who had been released only a few months, did not want to don the mantle again. So when we emerged on to Marlborough Street we gave the impression that we were all now united, which was far from the truth. I was a Barry man, but I stuck by what was decided although some important men retired. I was not involved in bringing Russell back in; I thought he could do the job, but he was taken back solely for the campaign in England. Barry had wanted action but of a different sort. He was supported by the Cork, Kerry and Tipperary men; they had all found Mick Fitz, C.S for a short time only, too cautious. So, it became Russell's turn. I had come over specially from my job as a barman in London and I immediately went back to it.

There were too many people sent over who had no knowledge whatsoever of the country or where they were going; they were quickly caught, and among them there would be some useful key men. I was a Barry man as I said but, I was in support, and we had this place at 112 St. George's Road where Jim Wall was the owner. He was a Kildare man, and his wife a West Cork woman; a McCarthy, from great stock entirely. The idea with Jim Wall was that anyone I liked was welcome in his house.

It was still 1938 when I met Jack McNeela for the first time. My heavens, but he was a sound man. Great Christ, solid in everything; do the business and pass on. Very discreet, he could carry himself in London; with that tweed hat and his attire, he could pass for a country squire. Willie McGuinness too; a small man, could pass for a civil servant. He just went about his business and was never caught. There was Sean Fuller, from Kilflynn in this county. He was in charge of a section in London. My, but he too could play the part; like a country gentleman. You wouldn't be surprised to see him with a tweed jacket and fishing rod. A great man for the role; oh great altogether. Tommy Sheeran from Co. Tyrone, who had spent a while in the British Army, was with me also in St. George's Road. Jack Lynch, as I recall, spent only a little time in London; being based around Birmingham. I was sent briefly on a message to meet Brendan Behan, who had only arrived over, in Liverpool.

I was to meet him in Castle Street, but when I got there I realised there was a lot of police activity; I kept going anyway, wheeled around the corner into the next street and took the first train back to London. I knew he was caught; it was easy catching Behan because he could not keep his mouth shut.

For a long time I continued working as a barman in this pub, until it became clear to me that I should move out. You get to know the signs. I came back to Ireland at the end of November 1939, and I was around Dublin for two months when I was asked to go back again; yes, back into the jaws of imprisonment. Imagine me; out against the Tans, out again in the Civil War, interned then for two years, and now asked to return to London. There was hardly anyone left active there; they asked me to go back and try to get something going.

I joined Maggie Nolan, a girl married into the Adams family; Bill McAlister and Jimmy O'Neill. I was there only a couple of days when they moved to Rollinton

Road in Bristol. When I followed them there I found police in uniform standing outside where we were supposed to be, but our birds had already flown. I kept going anyway and took the next train back to London. I was joined there by Terence Perry of Belfast, who later died in Parkhurst Prison in July 1942; but I was able to put him up, and I had another fellow from this locality here in Co. Kerry, Jackie Daly.

At this time we had only a very limited supply of explosives; targets had to be carefully selected and reconnoitred. We did however get a few jobs done; like the Grosvenor Hotel in Park Lane, where there was an awful lot of damage done without killing anyone. We did another one then; a big store in Queen's Road, Bayswater, where there was another upheaval, and we got a great fire going in King's Inn Road that could be seen in the blackout for miles around.

When I returned to London I did not go near the old haunts. I stayed in a house in Battersea with Jackie Daly and an old Irish woman who was kindness itself. We had a small cell this time; only the three of us, and then the next thing Perry was caught. He was not staying with us; I had him in another house, so now there was only Jackie and myself.

The first German bombs had fallen in dockland; from now on our efforts would be pinpricks by comparison. There was no part for us to play any longer. Then one day, when I had gone to my dinner, I got a ring from Paddy Coffey, another barman; *the police are looking for you*. I ran upstairs to grab my belongings, meeting them on my way down. *Is Dan Keating here? He is just after getting on a bus back to work*, I answered. They turned away at once, and I went in the opposite direction.

I got to Liverpool, but the riddle was to get on to the boat without being spotted. There was a man then about ten miles from Liverpool, Tadhg, with a contract for providing certain supplies to the boat; a great Irishman; and he put me up. He knew the way the police were disposed on the boat; he landed me on this particular night when he knew there would be a policeman on duty with whom he was acquainted. We had a drink then, and I got back safely to Dublin. That was early April 1940, because I was just in time to attend the funeral of Jack McNeela in Co. Mayo.

**GEORGE PLANT: JOE O'CONNOR: HAYES: THE TRAP SPRUNG:**

On the presumed innocence of Stephen Hayes, which Dan for one moment, does not believe, he recalls that, some time ago travelling in the train to Dublin, he heard the theory under discussion with two other, obviously knowledgeable travellers, whom he then joined, and whose identities, completely *bona fide*, we know. (11)

George Plant was a particular friend of mine early in 1940 when, after returning from London, I found myself attached, second in command, to the south eastern (Wexford, Waterford, and Kilkenny) division. During much of that time, as I was on the run, I would stay with Seamus Malone, brother of Tomás, in Bishop Price school in Waterford. Seamus was a fine teacher and well thought of, although not liked by the local bishop, Kinnane. (12)

I was responsible for bringing Plant back into the Movement. He was a wonderful man, and a man of action. If you ordered Plant to do something, it was done. He was a man prepared to take orders. He was mad keen to come back in, and, of course, he was a great man for the job. Even though, after that, P'ádraig McLogan, for reasons unknown to me, never forgave me for bringing him back in.

On that score, and jumping now the years until 1946, after the Curragh period when the Army had ceased to exist; I recall a reorganisation meeting in Donal O'Connor's Castle Hotel, Gardiner's Row, Dublin, with Paddy Fleming, Sean Ashe and some more. McLogan heard of it after and he came to me where I was working; *what are ye about? Sure there are not six serviceable rifles left in all Ireland. When the campaign first started, said I; there were no serviceable rifles.* And later again, he did damage to our fund raising in America by spreading the lie that Sean Cronin was a communist.

Paddy was a grand man, but if Paddy ever went to heaven he would cause trouble there; it was in his nature to cause trouble. We never saw eye to eye; he did not like me and the feeling was mutual.

I was captured in August 1940, but I knew I had been set up. I happened to come up this day from Wexford to meet Mike Walsh 'the man with the slouch', who was associated with one of our divisional officers, Joe O'Connor. Walsh informed me that he had received instructions to shoot an old and seasoned Republican, Luke Roche of Thomastown, a former I.R.A quartermaster in 1920. This shocked and surprised me. Roche was accused of betraying an arms dump, but it appears that this was a very old cache where, if there were arms in it, they would be incapable of use anyway. Stephen Hayes was supposed to have issued these instructions through Joe O'Connor and O'Connor, was insistent that the instruction be carried out.

Rifles have gone bad on everyone, Michael, I said; there is no justification for this action. We went off then to Ted Moore of Mooncoin, a respected and experienced man; when Ted heard what was proposed he went near berserk; *I can go any night into Roche's house and be well received and minded; I can tell you, and you can tell Paddy Alyward, that there must be no shooting until I look into this.*

Joe O'Connor arrived then, to be told by Ted that this must not happen. It would be a bad act. O'Connor was most reluctant to accept this; in fact he blamed me for interference. Straightaway he set off for Dublin and upon his return informed me that he had instructions from Stephen Hayes to obey orders and to do what had to be done. These men are long dead now and there is no way of verifying this, but I would have to say that I believe O'Connor did receive such a message from Hayes. At any rate I at once told Ted Moore; I will settle this, said Moore, those instructions will not be carried out.

Shortly after that I called upon some of our men in New Ross; John Alyward and John Neville; great people, and I was told to call to Ned Carrigan of Knocklofty, Clonmel, on the Sunday. Ned was an old time I.R.A man, wounded in the Tan struggle; a noted soldier. We would meet there a commandant from the barrack in Clonmel having one half of a cigarette packet, I having the other half. For identity purposes he would produce his half and I would produce mine. We could talk freely to this officer who, I learned, was Commdt. Ryan. (13)

I proceeded to Clonmel where I was accommodated in a friendly house. The meeting in Carrigan's was scheduled for three o'clock, and I was present there. But the trap had been sprung; Ned was already arrested, and I found myself surrounded within the house. On searching me they found the half packet, whereupon Branchman Reynolds produced the other half. I then knew that I had been set up by O'Connor; it was official, because Hayes wanted me out of the way. He wanted a

'spy' shot in Wexford and evidently any spy would do and Commdt. Ryan had nothing to do with it.

I knew that Mixie Conway, who was close to Hayes, continued to believe in him; and for all I know where he is now, a monk in Mellifont, he still does. But Hayes was a spy even before he realised he was a spy; he fell into the hands of Larry de Lacy completely. He drank before 1939 but not to the extent that he did later. Dr. James Ryan, T.D. when it broke, said in court in 1941 that he had never met him but that is untrue; he was a guest at Dr. Ryan's wedding.

#### INTERNMENT: FIRE: I STICK BY LEDDY:

On the Camp Council at the outset was Billy Mulligan from Longford. In the course of a few months instructions came from outside, from Hayes presumably, that Larry Grogan was to be O.C and Peadar O'Flaherty his adjutant. Both were newly arrived, having completed a short sentence in Arbour Hill. Those now appointed, together with Willie McGuinness, had been on the Army Council; the batch arrested in Rathmines Park in September 1939. Billy Mulligan therefore had to resign, while I stepped down to make way. Paddy McLogan, was on the Council, but, due to ill health, as he spent much time in hospital, had also cried off. He did not resume on the Leddy council when it was reconstituted after the Fire.

My main worry when the Fire was proposed was, of course, the tunnels. I had previous experience too in Portlaoise in 1922 when the jail had been fired and Jim Hickey from Inchicore had been shot dead and numbers wounded. Also, in Arbour Hill, in 1935, when we had a dispute there and broke off doors, I thought it was not the right thing to do. When, therefore, it came o setting fire to our camp in December 1940, I was not in agreement but, nonetheless, I made a right good job of it.

I found afterwards that some of those most seeking a fire, or a big protest anyway, later repudiated the men who decided to have the fire. Some of them then made their own agreement, getting a hut to themselves, and taking everything that was offered to them. Tadhg Lynch was one who repudiated. He did not like jail and would not do it. Yet he was one of those who wanted the Camp burned. When it was burned he repudiated the men who did it; henceforth making his own decisions while, at the same time, making sure his own hut remained unscathed. He then invited Cork men back into it. They got privileges through bringing in the turf; anything they wanted they got. A number of people inside there were not capable of doing their jail and they were the ones who started the rot. When Pearse Kelly and Eoin McNamee arrived nearly two years later they could not see that part of it at all and they took their side. Leddy was unwilling to compromise as he and we felt that Tadhg Lynch had let us down and, so we were not prepared to tolerate it.

None of what I said about December 1940 can gainsay that Tadhg Lynch was a brave man; a man of great courage, and a great man in the street. I happened to be in Dublin for a few days in 1937 for the anti-Coronation protests of May 12 and 13. Trouble started anyway, and I was with Tadhg, and with Paddy Brown, one of the best; and there was Tadhg, his shirt red from the baton charges. We tried to escape down the lane behind the Gresham Hotel, only to be hemmed in, and we all got a terrible doing.

When Commdt. Guiney took over from McNamara, it was decided to renew



demands under Liam Leddy. It was taken for granted that the man making these demands would be beaten up to the Glasshouse. Liam Leddy immediately volunteered; he was from Araglen; a great Irishman and a great Irish speaker. When he went out however he was well received and conditions improved immediately. Sean Ashe of Kildare was put in charge of the Cookhouse, together with Jack Sullivan of Killarney, Purty Landers of Tralee, Jimmy Dolan of Sligo, George Duffy of Dundalk, Sean Talty of Clare, Jacob Lovatt of Ballybunion and Tadhg O'Flaherty of Cork. They did a wonderful job; the minute they went in everything improved.

#### PERSONALITIES:

Mick McCarthy of Cork city, whom you have in this book, has done more jail than any man in Ireland. A sterling character; I consider him one of the greatest Irishmen ever. He was particularly good in jail, especially with the younger fellows; making them see the funny side of things and keeping them going.

Charlie and Jimmy Dolan from Sligo were two of the old timers, faithful since 1920; armed and ready for anything. Two fine men whom you could travel with anywhere. The Mayo men, the Weafers, and Paddy McNeela; wonderful. They all stuck by Leddy.

Bob Clements: one of the greatest. He was a close friend of Ó Cadhain, always doing the rounds together. There is a perfectly true story told of Ó Cadhain when they commenced to organise the Irish classes. Seán Óg Ó Tuama, who was interned with us, had been elected President of Connradh na Gaeilge *in absentia*, and no one knew how to take this, although as a gesture, it was welcome to us anyway; but how do you commence classes among a handful of interested men? Ó Tuama was at a loss to know how to commence so someone turned to Ó Cadhain for an opinion. *Teach them first the curses*, said he, *and if you see they are learning these, well, you will know that they are making progress.*

'Lanty' Hannigan had done sterling service but he was famous also for the wild stories he told of himself. In fact, Roger McHugh, later professor, amused himself by collecting some of Lanty's stories, and then sending out for a book, *The World's Greatest Liar*, which he presented to him. Fishing on the Shannon one day, he missed a half-crown; big money in those days. Back a few days later, at the same spot, 'Lanty' hooked a fine fish, and guess; inside when it was opened up, what was found but the half-crown!

Mick Egan from Shanaglish, Co. Galway, was a famous runner; figuring in marathons. Mick would run every day at least 20 rounds of the Camp. Always a happy-go-lucky man; being interned did not appear to bother him.

Donal Keane was from Old Youghal Road, Cork city; he suffered from T.B, and I suppose by now, *go bhfuil sé ar shlí na fírinne*; but a grandfellow.

Gene Harrington was another great Cork man; he was the second along with John Neville of New Ross, to be caught in our 1943 tunnel, when its gravel roof collapsed. They were got out safely and the work restarted, but in the final night the Staters came in. It was suspected that a fellow called Rowan had been placed with us for that purpose.

John Hunt was from Athea, Co. Limerick, close to the Kerry border; (14) another sterling character. When our troubles ended he sought a new life in Chicago where, from all accounts he prospered.

'Pa' Weymes of Mullingar; his main pastime was a good game of cards whenever he could find anyone skilled enough to engage with him. This day, along with 'Moss' Hickey, I set up the cards for a game of solo. 'Pa' had eight diamonds, the ace, ten, jack, queen, king, and five clubs. Some fellow said, *I will go misere*; 'Pa' eyed him slyly and said; *I'll go the thirteen*. I had abstracted two clubs which I passed to 'Moss'. Each time 'Pa' threw a card he would cry out; *aha, Mr. Churchill*.

But when it came to the thirteen, he slapped down the eight of clubs, which 'Moss' immediately capped with a ten. *Up you, Mr. Churchill*, said 'Pa' disbelievingly, rising. We took his money alright, but we gave it back after three days. 'Pa' was a bookies clerk in Mullingar while his brother was a teacher.

A great man with hounds was Ned Drummond; he was arrested in Enniscorthy, but was a native of Tralee. He came to Dublin later; I had a special *grádh* for Ned.

Thackaberry was the medical orderly inside the Camp; I thought him a nice fellow although others distrusted him. However I am told he was dismissed and sentenced after for acting as our 'line' in and out of the Camp, carrying the communications.

Terry McLaughlin and Seamus Maxwell of Leitrim, along with Gerry, the 'Bird', Doherty of Derry and Sean McCool of Donegal, in the summer of 1943, went upon a hunger strike (unavailing) of 49 days before being persuaded off it. We were not involved as they were on the Pearse Kelly side of the Camp but, afterwards, it had a totally unsettling effect on Terry. When released outside he was found unfit for work. He became a heavy drinker; a complete alcoholic. That led to some funny situations, as one requires money for drinking and Terry never had money.

At this time, about 1946, he was living on board a boat at Ringsend and I was back at work as a barman with Fitzharris close by. This day Terry landed in tears, a telegram in his hand. MOTHER HAS PASSED ON. PLEASE COME HOME. At that time five pounds would buy you a shirt, jacket and trousers, and maybe shoes too, and pay a train fare to Carrick on Shannon. I had a great sympathy for him so I thrust a five pound note into his hand. Coming home that night, I got off the bus and was walking up O'Connell Street, and just there, on what was Kingston's corner, was Terry, and he after falling upon the footpath, and me bould Jimmy Fleming of Killarney trying, not too expertly, to lift him up. Afterwards Jimmy boasted to me that they had a great day on my five pound note. Terry was a brother of Commdt. Michael McLaughlin, who was shot dead by a gunman in New York in 1931.

Gerry McCarthy of Skibbereen, a great mathematician, was an expert on the P.R. system and could predict the outcome of an election before all of the results were in. In the May general election of 1944 (when Fianna Fáil was returned with a handsome majority), Gerry studied the early returns on the paper, there being no radio for us. Emerging from his hut, pencil in hand, after a while he surveyed us gravely. *Boys, said he, we'll rot here. The long fella is in again!*

Well, it was not quite as bad as that for I was released myself shortly after, getting a train ticket back to Castlemaine. My father however was no longer at home to greet me, having passed away in 1943. When I requested parole at that time it was refused to me unless I signed the form.

A few months after my return to Tralee I married Dolly Mary Fleming. Dolly

Fleming from Ferrybank, Co. Waterford, whom I had known before, because their home had been the headquarters of my command in 1940. I retired from work in 1978, leaving Dublin, and coming back to Castlemaine where I built this house.

I was not in Mountjoy when Thady Flynn of Beaufort, who got rid of the wife, Hannah, by having her fall down a deep well, was there, along with Barney Kirwan of Offaly who was in for murdering the brother, but one way or another, I knew both of them well. Thady was alleged, as sometimes happens, to be having an affair with another lady. He decided to do away with the wife anyway, and the handiest thing - they had turkeys - was to let it appear that she had fallen down the well going after a turkey. But he made a mistake in that he dropped the turkey in after her. And that was how he was convicted. His idea was that the wife went looking for the turkey and she fell in.

He was sent for a while to Dunderm lunatic asylum, and Barney Kirwan was very sore because he knew, with the whole parish speaking up for him, that that was what would happen, while, although a very nice looking girl used come and visit him, he had nobody. (You must understand at this point that it was only political prisoners in D. Wing who were allowed to mix with condemned men; they could be at risk if criminals got near them).

Thady Flynn, when he got home, sold the place. God rest the man, he is dead now. He went across to the Co. Waterford where he purchased a farm and was well liked. A German bought into the land after, Brenner; and his son became a star on the Waterford hurling team.

As for Kirwan, on whom 'tis said Brendan Behan based his play *The Quare Fellow*, hardly a better looking man would you ever meet. Yet he had cut up his brother and had done a big job of boiling and scattering the parts. 'Tis said he had experience as a butcher. On a particular day in the compound he showed the prisoners how easy it was to die by catching an old cat that was running around; he grabbed it and squeezed it to death in about ten seconds. *That is all it takes*, says he. The night before he had been speaking to Behan; *naw, they wont hang you*. (Behan was in on a charge of shooting at detectives in Glasnevin.) He lifted a glass of water then, and he held it upright, resting it in the palm of his hand. Not a tremor. The fact that he was about to die did not trouble him in the least. The priest used to be working on him, and trying to get him to realise what he had done but sure it was no use. Oh, he was a character.

I am telling you this because, although I was at that time in the Curragh, I had known Barney Kirwan in 1939 when I served in Corcoran's of Prussia Street, and he was a regular visitor along with other cattle men. Thady Flynn was from these parts, and I often spoke to him afterwards about the time he had spent in the 'Joy.

#### **'BALLY' KEATING; AND KERRY'S IRON CONSTITUTION:**

Why did I come to be called 'Bally' Keating, you inquired at the start. That is a special story. During the troubled time when we were active against the Tans we used always call to a special house in Fieries, Tommy Woods; he had a brother who was mentally handicapped but had a certain amount of sense; he knew and could see things. I went missing then because I was interned for the better part of two years in '22 '23 and '24. When we came out anyway Johnny Connor of Farmers

Bridge, Mossy Galvin and I, the three of us; we set out together one day to meet our old friends in Fieries.

It was a great place you know. Fieries was a famous parish, just west there from Farranfore, and with Currans north of it, and Kiltallagh where the Dálaighs came from. We set out walking to Fieries anyway and we went into Woods'. When we came in, Tommy, who was inside said; what is that man's name, for he remembered Johnny Connor and he knew Mossy Galvin. *That's Dan Bally*, said the brother. *That's Dan Bally*, and the name stuck to me ever since. If you were to ask in Tralee for Dan Keating, I would not be known.

I knew all of the Dálaighs; Tom, Charlie who was executed in Drumboe; May, who had the house burned over her by the Tans in 1921, and Tom, who remained active in the Movement into the thirties. May contested Kerry North, for Sinn Féin on an abstentionist ticket in 1957. Ah God, yes: that is Kerry. There is a tradition here in Kerry for abstention. It started with Austin Stack who headed the poll a number of times; haven't we got the Stack Mountains here. After that you had John Joe Rice and May Dálaigh; ah God, she was a fine lady. Today it is still the same thing; you will never sell Leinster House or Stormont to the Republicans of Kerry in my opinion; no matter how hard you try.

In my opinion there are certain people in the North and they don't fully understand the traditions of the South. They tell us our heads are in the sand; but, in my view, that doesn't work. Tradition dies hard and it must be respected.



*Indomitable Republican May Dálaigh of Co Kerry who had the family home burned over her by the Tans in 1921 outside the home in 1978. PICTURE SUPPLIED BY: COLMAN DOYLE*

## REFERENCES:

1. There is an excellent account of Limerick in *Green Against Green*; accounts also in *The Irish Republic*; in *O'Malley*; in *Survivors*, and in Florence O'Donoghue's *No Other Law*.
2. While all of this, with some historical infill, is a fair record of Dan 'Bally' Keating in 1994, on events more than 70 years before, it must also be recollected that quietly in the background were the political wire pullers, Alfred Cope in the Vice-regal Lodge and Arthur Griffith, closeted there and in Merrion Street.
3. The other three; Peter Cassidy, Richard Twohig, John Gaffney, all from James's Street, Dublin, and all shot in Kilmainham.
4. The four reprisal executions were in response to the shooting dead of Deputy Sean Hales of Cork county and the wounding of Pádraig Ó Máille deputy chairman of the Dáil, on a Dublin quayside. It was the result of a threat from Liam Lynch, C.C, Republican forces dated November 27, in which the Provisional Government was warned that, as a consequence of the 'Murder Bill', action would be taken against 'every member of your body' who voted for it. The Hales brothers, of West Cork, Tom, Bob, Sean, had fought against the Tans. In 1985 to the writer Ulick O'Connor, it was disclosed by his Intelligence Officer at that time Sean Gaffney, that the action had been carried out by Owen Donnelly, a north sider, who, in 1927, was still upon the H.Q staff of the I.R.A.
5. Both within the current new prison and the old jail in the town (to the right of the main street going south) there have been in the past many hangings of a non-political nature. In numbers of these (as in innumerable other Irish jails of the 18th and 19th centuries), the party hanged would be known to be innocent; but hanging a poor wretch on a summary charge of stealing, was a mere diversion before breakfast. See *A History of Queen's County*, by Very Rev. John Canon O'Hanlon.
6. Tintown No. 1, Tintown No. 2, and Harepark.
7. Two others are listed dying about the same time; John Whitty of Wexford town, in the Curragh on September 2; and Joe Lacey of Blackwater, Co. Wexford, on December 24, 1923.
8. *The following is from the official report of this incident, June 11, 1929.* Det. Officer T. O'Sullivan killed by a trap mine at Tullycrine, Co. Clare. Det. O'Driscoll of Knock station received an anonymous letter which read as follows: I found a box of ammunition and papers in a butt of hay in the haggard. The times are so dangerous I was afraid to keep it near the place. I left it inside the ditch at Lahiff Cross in Ardil's meadow yesterday. I want you to take it away. I do not want to get into trouble with people around here. *Farmer.*  
 Det. O'Driscoll discovered the box mentioned and carried it to Daly's farm at Tullycrine. There he met Det. O'Sullivan and Guard Cusack. They tried to prise the box open but failed. Det. O'Sullivan then put his knee on the lid of the box and loosened the clasp. When he did so there was a loud explosion. Det. O'Sullivan was killed outright and Det. O'Driscoll wounded in the hands, face and knees. Guard Cusack escaped injury. End of report.  
 No one was charged following this incident which almost certainly was unofficial and was not countenanced by I.R.A headquarters in Dublin; the event undoubtedly having been inspired by constant police harassment in the form of short term cat and mouse imprisonments of leading activists in the area.

9. Later Clann na Poblachta TD, died while driving on the main road at Meen, Knocknagoshel, Sunday, December 11, 1955. He was 55 years of age. A stone tablet marks the spot at the crest of the rise eight miles south of Abbeyfeale on the west side of the relocated road. See references in *Survivors, Green Against Green*, for Johnny.

10. At Oghill, Co. Longford, on July 18, 1941, a military/police party raiding the Casey home in the early hours at Drumlish, came across Goss and 18 year old Joseph O'Callaghan making an escape, although only partly dressed. A hand to hand struggle occurred, but after breaking and running for cover, shots were exchanged. Two bullets entered a lieutenant and a private who each suffered a wound, one in the neck and one in the abdomen, but neither could be traced to the gun used by Goss.

The Military Court in Collins Barracks sentenced Richard Goss to death. He was executed by firing squad in Portlaoise Prison on August 9, 1941. Joseph O'Callaghan, on the evidence, was discharged; re arrested and interned. See here the account of Paddy Murphy.

11. There has been in preparation two books, one Cork city based, and which this writer has seen, upon the presumed innocence of Hayes. That from Cork, by the late Oliver Murphy, carried some weight, because of its historical research, but suffered in at least two respects; (a) its writer had not known Hayes, and had met only Davern and Crofton in the course of his research; (b) because of the admitted unreliability of the confession, he had set out, overlooking all other evidence, to prove that Hayes was innocent; and in that way he succeeded in proving conclusively to himself that, indeed he was.

The second book by a journalist, who readily stated that he had not researched the period, consisted of a defence by Hayes, recorded while he was in a home in Enniscorthy prior to his death in December 1974. This book, so far as we know, has not yet been published.

12. See *Survivors* for Seamus and Tomás Malone.

13. This Commdt Ryan was a brother of the captain of the Tipperary team in Croke Park on Bloody Sunday, November 21, 1920, when 12 people mostly spectators, including some women, were shot dead and scores wounded by Tans firing into the crowd, as a reprisal for the overnight execution of 14 of Sir Henry Wilson's spies in Mount Street/Baggot Street area by 'the squad' under Michael Collins. (More overnight shooting of Republicans followed in Dublin Castle). Among those killed in Croke Park was player Michael Hogan of Grangemockler; a tablet commemorates him at Grangemockler, as does the name of the Hogan Stand. Tom Ryan of Wexford was shot dead while whispering an Act of Contrition in his ear.

14. See Pierce Fennell on Hunt.

**DERRY  
KELLEHER,**

*BATTALION ADJUTANT,  
CORK CITY I.R.A.:*



*Derry, with his dog in Greystones*

*The Hayes confession was for me, with a combination of other factors, my final breaking point.*

Strictly speaking I had no family tradition in the national struggle, says Derry Kelleher, formerly of Cork City I.R.A; but then, neither had Commdt. Gen. Tom Barry or Theobald Wolfe Tone for that matter. Discovering the organic relationship between the Republican past and the Republican present has taken me a lifetime. I make no apology for that however since the majority of those linked by family antecedents, and who rose to comfortable positions after the War of Independence, never seem to have comprehended in the heat of action what it was all about.

My paternal grandfather was Jeremiah Kelleher, a master tailor, and a Labour party alderman in Cork city for 18 years. His activities in the Labour movement dated back to the formation of the Irish Trade Union Congress in 1894, and that led to the fielding of election candidates when a new system of local government commenced in 1898 (1). These, with the land and labour associations, formed to contest the elections of that time, combined to create the Irish Labour Party in 1912. Fledgling socialist groupings were springing up in all the cities of these islands, while in 1896 in Thomas Street, Dublin, James Connolly was forming his Irish Socialist Republican Party, which 16 years later, with Connolly himself in command, contributed to the founding of the Irish Labour Party.

My grandfather, thus, had direct associations with such national figures as James Connolly, Countess Markievicz, Tadhg Barry, the Cork republican and a member of the city corporation. He had a close association with James Larkin also, while Kelleher's Buildings at Dillon's Cross are a testimony to his efforts in working class housing.

He seems to have been an integral part of the pre-1922 scheme of things, holding a post as magistrate, well regarded by the Liberals, not quite so well by the Conservatives, and successfully marrying his two daughters off to British Army officers then stationed in Cork.

His four sons, including my father, Patrick Kelleher, were relatively apolitical, although dad, as a youth, joined the Fifth Dragoon Guards whereupon he was promptly bailed out through grandfather's influence. My maternal grandfather, Henry Blackham, was English and Protestant to the core. A regimental sergeant

major in the British garrison in Wicklow, it was there that my mother Maud, was born. As my mother Maud was Catholic, this led to some mild tussles over the children's upbringing. At that time the boys usually went with the father and the girls with the mother, but in this case, as my grandparents died young, the Catholic Church won out; for the children were adopted by relatives in Ballymartle, all strongly of the Catholic persuasion, and determined that there would be no proselytising influences upon their young charges. Hence the Protestant sounding Maud, my mother, remained Catholic.

On the political side however the British tradition continued. Entering the army and navy, especially around Cork, seemed a perfectly natural way to proceed, hence my maternal uncles fought with the British forces in World War One, the '14 war. My grandmother on my mother's side was a Horgan and that side of the house claimed republican Tadhg Barry as a relative.

So, as regards republicanism or socialism, I had no clear indentures when born in Nurse Harvey's home on South Terrace, on August 3, 1919, from whence I was transported, to be baptised and christened in St. Patrick's Church. At that point some mild dissension surfaced as my mother wished I be named Jeremiah Dominic, but my grandfather's brother-in-law, Simon Murphy, an incipient nationalist, wished to fasten the name De Valera upon me in lieu of Dominic.

It has long been recognised that calling one after a still living personality can be a risky business, and in my case that was particularly apt when it was De Valera who interned me in the Curragh in 1940, 21 years later. Cork custom fortunately abbreviates the biblical Jeremiah to Derry; an attractive shortening, and it was by that ever since I have been known.

Five years later, 1924, and the British Empire Exhibition at Wembley presaged a second great change in my world view, for I found myself at the centre of the whole Imperial capital, exposed to its post-war jingoism and the razzmatazz that went with it. I was whisked around such sites as Paxton's great Crystal Palace, Regent's Park and the changing of the guard at Buckingham Palace. So excited and enthused was I by my London visit, that I made myself a guard's uniform from scissors and paste, cardboard and silver foil from cigarette packets as soon as I reached home. Had I been of age I might surely have joined the colours.

It was at this crucial stage of my childhood that I was abruptly brought to my senses by Mrs. Kate Manning - hailing from the former Orange town of Bandon - when she gave me a recital on the role of such Imperial regalia in Irish history. Spoil sport; no, for she gave me also simple booklets to read on Ireland's dark and dismal days, starting, surprisingly enough, with the Norman Catholic period, Adrian IV and all that, and the opening up of the Conquest, redolent with such names as Art McMurragh Kavanagh, Edward Bruce and Silken Thomas.

Nevertheless the sense of history which she bequeathed to me was of a sanguinary past which may be summarised by a verse learned in a voice production class run by Seán Óg Ó Tuama many years later in the Curragh Internment Camp:-



*They died in the flush and strength of youth  
 On England's gallows tree,  
 They died for the sake of their own dear land,  
 And for long lost liberty.  
 For the blood that was shed in ages past  
 On the block and the battle plain  
 Had scarcely dried ere the purple tide,  
 Was flowing once again.*

Coming as she did from Bandon, where they used to say that even the pigs were Protestant, Kate Manning was strongly coloured by the Catholic Protestant issue. In this she was no worse than all those hide-bound historians, orthodox and revisionist, who have failed to delineate the essentially republican ethos of the Dissenters as distinct from the Episcopalians or Protestants *per se*. She was replete with stories about Seán Dearnásh, whose cat was the devil himself, and who had inscribed on the gates of the town, NO PAPIST MAY ENTER HERE, under which a wag had scrawled,

*Whoever wrote it wrote it well,  
 for the same is written on the gates of hell.*

Then there was the Shamus Mackay presentations of the twenties at the old Cork Opera House dealing with such themes as 1798, the rising of the moon, and gallant, inevitably green coated, United Irishmen fighting rapier duels with the Redcoats. Accompanied by my parents and grandparents the performers aroused my patriotic enthusiasm. My father at this time was working in the engineering section of the Cork Harbour Commissioners where Tom Barry also worked, although in a different department.

My father, anti-republican but otherwise non-political, became a bosom and life-long friend of Barry's. Over the years, and up to a month or so before my father's death, I was frequently to encounter this hero of my youth in the street, or at the Harbour Commissioners, or in the Thomas Ashe or in the MacCurtain halls, where my parents attended for the then popular whist drives.

My father was also a friend of a local man, Tom McCarthy, who claimed he was one of the I.R.A. bodyguard at the lying-in-state of Terence Mac Swiney in October 1920 in the old Cork City Hall, later destroyed when the Tans burned the centre of Cork in December 1920. McCarthy had a good collection of rebel songs on gramophone records, including *Legion of the Rearguard*, extolling De Valera's leadership, and with whom I nurtured a childish affinity because of my middle name. Even a film, *The Irish Destiny*, recently screened again for the 75th. anniversary of 1916, played a part in this slow awakening of my national conscience.

#### SCHOOL YEARS:

From 1926 to 1929 I attended the Model School, a national school, before transferring to the Christian Brothers, now St. Nesson's, on Sullivan's Quay; and there I remained until I obtained my Primary Certificate in 1933. My teacher, in fifth class, Brother Murphy, stands out in my memory as a strong republican, being lenient with boys he knew to be in Fianna Éireann, while the goodies of the Catholic scouts he sought to penalise at every opportunity. He had the classic G.A.A. opposition to

foreign games, to a greater extent even than the other Brothers of the Quay. Those were the heady days, the days of great expectations, charting the rise of Fianna Fáil which, despite the split with Sinn Féin in 1926, still seemed like going somewhere, and still appeared intent on preserving its republican integrity.

In 1929, on the anniversary of O'Connell's Catholic Emancipation of 1829, we bought for fourpence, bronze effigies of the Liberator. The incongruity of the nationalism of the Brothers contrasted with O'Connellism would hardly strike a ten years old, especially as the celebration was nationwide, but I recalled it a few years later when perusing Brian O'Higgins' *Wolfe Tone Annuals*, where he exposes the narrow nationalism of Dan and the record of his pro-English background. My last year at Sullivan's Quay was marked by the emerging ideological struggle of a risen and vigorously anti-communist Church at odds with the now assured victory of a seemingly radical Fianna Fáil. It was an era of heady days and nights, torchlight processions, boycotts, economic warfare, damn your concessions, England; running neck and neck with the rising threat of Blueshirtism.

From 1933 to 1938 my secondary school days were spent at the Christian Brothers' College at Wellington Road. I considered it however a catchment for the progeny of the merchants of Montenotte and the professional élite of Patrick's Hill and Wellington Road. Here I had an encounter for the first time with what I recognised as the class character of our society, which might be summarised as, rugby for the well off, and gaelic games for the working people.

This was graphically highlighted for me when Tomás MacCurtain arrived one day with hurley and *sliotar*, only to be promptly told where he might bring it so long as he did not intrude it upon the school playing field.

My second shock came when Brother Fitzpatrick cancelled the concession of our Leaving Cert teacher Brother Normail to use a room for the practice of oral Irish and debates. That he was a close friend of Wm. T. Cosgrave, and was sometimes photographed when the Cumann na nGael leader was visiting his constituency may explain his coolness for the language. In the eighties he distinguished himself by compiling and publishing a biography on Edmund Ignatius Rice, founder of the Irish Christian Brothers, and a native of Callan, Co. Kilkenny. For my part I never distinguished myself at rugby, although I did finish up as swimming champion of the college and was a team member in the Senior Munster Schools championship of 1938. And on the academic side our oral group went on as *Gasra an Fháinne* to win for each the old gold *fáinne*.

#### AN ACTIVE REPUBLICAN:

The active Republican phase of my life began at this time, for in 1933 I had joined Fianna along with the sons of Tom McCarthy: Sean and Jimmy. I remember attending the Bodenstown of 1934; colourful bands and a great husting, its massive size drawn from all the winds of Erin. My mother, under pressure, had concurred in my membership of Fianna, but my father swiftly put an end to it when he observed me marching boldly at the head of a squad along the Bandon road. He had come under attack already from the Hierarchy, but our scout leader, by name Horgan, son of Big Jim of the Tan period, reacted by quoting lengthy extracts from *Forgotten Facts of Irish History*, a book then in the reference library, and one that I later sat in eagerly to

read. Meanwhile the I.R.A was being attacked as 'an oath bound society' - a lie - but they did not react as the growing pressure from a reactionary Fianna Fáil was of greater concern.

It is not correct, as Maurice Manning and J.J. Lee (2) have endeavoured to assure us, that the Blueshirts were not fascists because they lacked the sophistication of the organisations of Hitler and Mussolini. They resembled however a smaller nation edition such as Norwegian Vidkung Quisling's organisation, or, as Desmond Greaves used remind us, that oldest fascist movement of them all, the Loyal Orange Lodges; at one time strong in many parts of Ireland but now virtually confined to four counties in Ulster. By 1935 the bulk of Cosgrave's party, ashamed of the wild man O'Duffy connection, hived off from him into Fine Gael, while the remnant found a short lived home in Belton's Christian Front of 1936-37; some even joining the crusade in Spain, where, had they remained long enough, they might have found blood brothers in Franco's Falangists.

De Valera, egged on by Frank Aiken, now saw the destruction of the I.R.A as an attainable objective, and one made more attainable by its fragmentation, and a few years later by its seemingly pro-German attitude, and also by its questionable leader, Hayes. So there was, from 1935, a slow tightening of the coercion screws and the reinstatement of the discredited Military Tribunal. There was, *inter alia*, a spalling off of some of the younger I.R.A members into a new volunteer reserve which seemed to copy Hitler's Waffen S.S, while a greatly enlarged secret police analogous to Himmler's Gestapo - still with us - was developed from defecting I.R.A men.

Nevertheless, upon De Valera's accession to power in February 1932, Fianna Fáil contingents resumed marching with the I.R.A to Tone's resting place and at Easter time to display the Lily. However, after two years, as the message descended from the seat of power preferment and pension in Merrion Street, many of these 'veterans' ceased to be seen, while the Easter Lily was replaced among them by a paper symbol known as the Torch. It rapidly fell out of favour however, so that now, although the subject of secret police harassment, the Lily only has survived to honour the patriot dead.

Completely incensed by these developments, I failed to realise that the I.R.A had become undermined, and was being politically upstaged, and that the high ground of the Republic needed to be seized by ideological struggle rather than by apolitical militarism. Because they had realised this, people such as Peadar O'Donnell, the Gilmores, Charlie, George and Harry, the Prices, Frank Edwards and more had departed, and with Frank Ryan, were exposed to suffer attack as 'communists' from press and pulpit.

#### TIME WARP:

I joined the I.R.A during the school year 1935-36 while I sat for the intermediate examination. When I was arrested and interned on the June 3, 1940, I had never in those five years fired a single round of ammunition, or exploded a bomb or grenade, whilst my ideological outlook was encapsulated in a time warp with nothing to it, except such cant as England's difficulty is Ireland's opportunity, together with a smattering of ideas from Pádraic Pearse and Terence MacSwiney, but with no understanding that these required the added ideological rigour of James Connolly.

The departure of local I.R.A. volunteers Michael O'Riordan, Paddy Scanlan and Jim Regan to fight in the International Brigade against the forces of General Franco in Spain was not appreciated for what it was, namely the defence of republican democracy, in the tradition of the great revolution of 1789. We were too preoccupied here with the threat of godless communism being rained upon us to realise that the defence of the bourgeois Spanish Republic might be progressive in a Marxist sense. Adolf Hitler and his ideologue Alfred Rosenberg, had set for themselves as their primary target the destruction of the legacy of the French Revolution, and that required the destruction also of Madrid's embattled democracy. Thus the fight for the Spanish republic anticipated the issue of World War Two in microcosm, involving as it did all those who had a stake in the fight against fascism.

If the I.R.A. at G.H.Q. in Dublin was a law unto itself, this was reflected amongst the Cork command where a distinct distrust was nurtured of G.H.Q. and its erratic power shifts as faction succeeded faction within it. These however passed my comprehension until I later read such books as Tim Pat Coogan's *The I.R.A.*, or J. Bowyer Bell's, *The Secret Army*. My confidence was sustained only by the firm and humane leadership of the Brigade O.C. Tom Barry, and his lieutenants Tomás MacCurtain, Jack Lynch, and most notably, my immediate company O.C. Jim O'Neill, a west Cork man and brother in law of Jack Lynch, Paddy and Tadhg. They maintained a sense of discipline among us while showing little interest in political development. In fact, politics as represented by Sinn Féin, was viewed with contempt and ridicule by the average volunteer. I knew only one volunteer who was also a member of Sinn Féin and that was Eddie Mc Namara, but he was the most apolitical person I have ever known, so he may well have been planted there by his own intelligence officer.

Combined with our marked public relations failures, the ineptitude of the I.R.A. in dealing with Ireland's centuries of wrongs, and their failure in the domestic propaganda war against the steady progress towards a sovereign independent state by De Valera, was not simply inept, but at times bordered on the ludicrous; if I merely allude here to the Boycott Bass campaign, to their pyrotechnic activities upon Border huts, to the destruction of monuments and to the occasional assassination that fell short of a supply of convincing evidence.

On the other hand De Valera's *festine lente* policy did show positive gains in that it abolished the Crown within the Free State; it ended the Governor-General, appeal to the Privy Council, wiped away the Annuities, and by 1938 recovered the militarised ports; a recovery which made neutrality possible in World War Two. His New Constitution of 1937 superseded the British imposed constitution of May 1922, while its opening articles, 2 and 3 - so much sparred at by the British element within Ireland today - offers a grain of participation and hope to Northern nationalists.

Prior to my joining, the rift in Cork was marked by an open breach at a convention in the Thomas Ashe Hall when a large contingent under the leadership of Tom Crofts (3) walked out and ensconced themselves in new premises on Morrison's Island under the distinguishing title of Old I.R.A. What was at issue was the Fianna Fáil pension; whether a veteran who had been injured could take a pension, regardless of his economic circumstances, and remain in Óglaigh na h-Éireann. The I.R.A. stood upon the principle that the men who fought had been volunteers without

expectation of recompense, and to accept a pension was tantamount to taking a bribe.

**TOM BARRY:**

In the latter half of 1936 Tom Barry had been appointed Chief of Staff, and he now sought to prevent further fragmentation of his command by prohibiting recruitment of volunteers for Spain. As we know, over 140 Irish went (not all directly from Ireland, and not all in the I.R.A); 59 died, while the numbers leaving Cork exceeded nine. At the start, it had threatened to be a flood, so that he was probably correct in his action. It is necessary to emphasise however that the sympathy of Barry and his West Cork compatriots, Jack and Tadhg Lynch and Jim O'Neill and city men like Tomás Mac Curtain were all with the Spanish Republic, but Barry had a coup already planned upon the barracks and posts in Armagh City and he did not want Spain to interfere with that. This might also have required a seizure of the ammo in the Dublin Magazine Fort, but when he learned that this top secret information had leaked into the ranks of Cork Cumann na mBan, the entire operation was called off (4).

Apart from disaffection and inadequate training in arms, I gradually became aware of an alarming lack of security within the I.R.A despite the periodic admonitions against 'loose talk', as though this could be the one and only source of that information of which the authorities appeared to have no shortage. There was a nauseating self-congratulatory sense of inviolability that because we were, so to speak, the one true Republican church, our enemies, notably the Special Branch under Chief Inspector Moore, were imbeciles. Members were too frequently arrested in possession of the names of others, or were too easily followed. Meetings were too often called in places that were obvious republican hide-outs, and therefore should never have been used.

In June 1938 my confidence in the I.R.A, carefully nurtured since childhood, was suddenly overwhelmed by a simple event. With another volunteer and later internee, Denis MacSweeney, we heckled a Fianna Fáil general election meeting in Patrick Street with shouts of 'Up Tom Barry'. Retiring to the Thomas Ashe Hall afterwards we were jeered at because of our ignorance of his defection three months before at the Dublin April General Army Convention when he had been stood down in favour of Sean Russell. Within a very short time my hero would be supporting Fianna Fáil and De Valera because he was quick enough to recognise that, with the Ports agreement, we could now be neutral in the war that everyone - except perhaps Neville Chamberlain - saw coming.

At the Convention Barry opposed the plan of Sean Russell (who was not present) for a bombing campaign in England on the grounds that Russell, a court-martialled volunteer, and one engaged in a conspiracy against the leadership, was intent upon 'a damn fool idea' that had no hope of success. Numbers then resigned from the packed convention; Mac Bride was already gone a year before; he was now followed by a whole host of the older veterans (not all present at this convention), Barry, Con Lehane, Johnny Connor, John Joe Sheehy, Tomás Ó Maolóin, Jimmy Hannigan and more.

Of course, as later events demonstrated, they never completely severed their

support. I was not present in Unity Hall, in Marlborough Street, so it was only gradually that I pieced these events together, firstly from Tomás MacCurtain in late 1939 when he expressed his lack of trust in G.H.Q., and later in Hut C.1 in the Curragh from Jeremiah Daly, who did much to flesh out and make the story intelligible to me.

In retrospect Barry's action was politically fully understood by me. De Valera was securely in possession of the political high ground and this the new I.R.A. leadership, with their totally militaristic orientation, could not comprehend. Instead they became involved in a futile campaign which, before it petered out, was to become entangled in a web of intrigue with Nazi Germany where each side was trying to best the other and use it for its own ends. On the outbreak of war in September 1939 Peadar O'Donnell and George Gilmore published an appeal to the I.R.A. to cease operations and to dump arms until the war was over. In retrospect, and in view of some of their escapades, I have formed the opinion that De Valera could, with impunity, have executed more of us, except that our frail links with the earlier struggle may have been the restraining factor.

#### THE REPUBLICAN SWIMMING CLUB:

There seems to be a tradition in the Movement for cycling and for swimming; healthy out-door sports admittedly and ones that could benefit our political image. In Cork, development of *Cumann Poblachtach le Snámhuíocht* helped to counter the 'secret army' imagery. The swimming organisation was founded in 1926 in Dublin by such notables as Oscar Traynor and Joe Groome who were later to become so much part of the Fianna Fáil machine. It is historically noteworthy that in 1927, under the presidency of Traynor, the proceeds of their first swimming gala were destined, according to the published programme, for the I.R.A. Prisoners' Dependents Fund.

In Cork, although all the time competing in galas, the organisation made no significant advances until I joined in 1936. The following year I obtained third place in the 880 yards championship of Ireland, being narrowly defeated by Ritchie, brother of Willy Case, who came second. I was then entrusted with the task of running the organisation in Cork whereupon it began to compete in earnest in championship events, winning annually the Munster Junior Squadron championship. In the summer of 1938 the club won the first, second and third places in the prestigious Lee Swim. By that year our club had been broadened to include within its ranks non-members of the Movement. One such, Percy Barry, obtained first place in the Lee, followed by John Sullivan and myself. This handicap event, or Championship of the Lee, as it was miscalled, had for us some considerable propaganda value, being a public spectacle that attracted a vast concourse of the city's inhabitants. Membership began to expand and we commenced to think in terms of a youth movement to embrace other sports, but other events, unwittingly, were already overtaking us.

When in 1939 I won the Lee Swim, we swamped the field with 15 competitors. By this time we had negotiated through the aegis of a republican priest, Father O'Mahoney, from the University of Jacksonville, Florida, the procurement of the services of William St. Elmo 'Chic' Acosta, their coach, and an aspirant for the U.S 1940 Olympic team. These plans were scotched however by the outbreak of war, and 'Chic', already advised and arrived in Cork, had chosen me for his assistant, but the

know-how I was acquiring was soon to be lost as a result of my internment and, later on, enforced emigration.

In his farewell address to us in August 1939, Chic promised that, with more practice, we could win internationally; after this, with war clouds looming, he had to leave us, and years later we were to learn that he had been killed in action as a member of the U.S navy in the war against Japan.

By September 1939 I was first in Ireland with the butterfly stroke, beating the reigning breast stroke champion in a gala event in Eglington Street baths. But communications were so bad within the Movement that we were unaware that there was an equally good Republican club in Dublin, of which Cathal Goulding was a member; and evidently, if one is to judge from Liam Burke's account, they were at it in Belfast also.

#### MY UNIVERSITY CAREER:

In October 1938 I became a student at University College, Cork, thus leading ultimately to B.Sc. degree in 1943, followed by M.Sc. in 1944. The year 1938 was eventful, developing as it did to the formation of an I.R.A unit within the University, comprising, *inter alia*, the medical students Alf Martin, Tony Coleman and Ned Barrett from Kileady in West Cork. The others, included one from the Free State Army Regiment of Pearse, Tadhg Ó Tuama, a brother of Seán Óg, and another *gaelgóir* from the Arts faculty and myself. Vincent Crotty, a medical student, who was in the sixties to become chief of St. Loman's psychiatric hospital at Palmerstown, Co. Dublin, was originally a member, but he decided instead to concentrate his attention on setting up a University Republican Club. The club consisted of such personages as Maire MacCurtain, a sister of Tomás, a medical student, and Eibhlis Ní Donnachadha of the Arts faculty, a past pupil of St. Ita's, the school formed by Mary Mac Swiney, sister of Terence, and a T.D of the Second Dáil, still laying claim to government.

Vincent Crotty had written an article at this time in the old *Hibernia* on Wolfe Tone, in which he had described Tone as a liberal, which, I suppose he was; but it left him open to criticism from Brian O'Higgins who denounced the piece in his *Wolfe Tone Weekly*. However Larry de Lacy, then said to be in I.R.A Intelligence, made contact with him, eliciting his views, as a result of which, he began to write articles in a new, but short lived quality journal, *Republican Review* of late 1938.

Vincent was well able to write, being at one and the same time an ex-Redemptorist novice, a Marxist and a Republican. Early in 1960 he was instrumental in introducing me, over a pleasant meal in Roundwood, to George Gilmore, whom I already held in respect, and with whom I maintained contact until his death in 1985.

As is covered elsewhere, the English Campaign was launched on January 16, 1939, in a number of cities. Prior to this, on December 8, the *Wolfe Tone Weekly* had announced that the remaining members of the Second Dáil, sitting evidently in our own St. Ita's, had transferred *de jure* legitimacy to the Army Council I.R.A. The ultimatum delivered to Foreign Secretary Lord Halifax, was posted throughout Cork on January 12, and students at U.C.C were made aware of the event on Monday morning by copies posted overnight within the college, combined with, *Join the I.R.A.*, slogans.

This was the first operation carried out by our U.C.C unit, made up almost entirely of freshmen, five of whom were ex-Christian Brother college pupils. It was followed by an operation on the night of February 2, and fully supported by Brigade O.C MacCurtain, but, as he informed us later, frowned upon by the Army Council; and this was our effort at defacing the granite Lion and Unicorn symbol on an archway, behind which lodged the night watchman within the College. It turned out to be a Laurel and Hardy exercise for after 'imprisoning' our all too co-operative watchman, we found that our ladder was too short. But the watchman saved the hour by offering to procure a longer one stored in the medical building. With the aid of a sledge hammer, the emblem of British power was duly disfigured, green paint being then daubed upon it for good measure. The tied up man was then given a time limit, after which he could escape and call the gardaí; our members having dispersed in the early hours to their homes and lodgings within the city.

The operation received headlines in the *Evening Echo*, and those known to the Special Branch were duly visited by Inspector Jim Moore, but as they were not of the student variety, and as the freshmen were unknown to him, the matter ended there. Not so however with Professor Alfred O'Rahilly, the College President; he let fly in print at the 'young generalissimos', only to receive an immediate reply from the Republican Club, breaking our cover of course, and drafted by the facile pen of Vincent Crotty. The rebukes and the argument continued in the *Echo* for some time, although, in the end O'Rahilly had his revenge, and a substantial revenge it was too, when he denied us formal status as a club within the College, thus ending all chance of us really influencing graduate life. I was reminded of this on a morning in March 1966 outside Trinity College, when I was on my way to inspect the remains of the exploded Nelson Column; meeting there by chance George Gilmore, he dryly commented; *aren't we a great people for destroying the symbols of Imperialism while leaving the substance intact.* And indeed we are.

Bodenstown 1939, to which we now looked forward, was banned; we had been told not to attempt to come to Sallins, Co. Kildare, for Sunday, June, 24, but to hold a commemoration locally instead. The Cork I.R.A decided to stage a march from Fermoy railway station, through the town, to a meeting point in the public square, on the Cork side of the bridge that spans the Blackwater. A large contingent of gardaí were massed upon the bridge, and, as we were approaching from the north, that could prevent us passing over.

Marching at our head Tomás MacCurtain gave the order to charge. In the confused mêlée that followed I received a blow on the shoulder from a baton wielded by the friendliest garda in Cork, a man nicknamed 'Smiler'. (Sprained though it was I was able to alleviate its effects in time for the Lee Swim the following Friday evening). The scuffling and fisticuffs were so prolonged that a couple of armoured cars from the military camp at Kilworth were then moved into position, although it never really got out of hand; the soldiers maintaining a low profile while the gardaí moved back sufficiently so that a token meeting could be held.

With the Campaign in England still seemingly on course, but painfully aware of our own inadequate training in weaponry, Alf Martin and myself made an approach



to Tomás that we should be allowed join the Regiment of Pearse in order to receive proper training there. Tomás was however aghast that members of the I.R.A should wish to associate with Free State 'traitors', although we reminded him of the precedent of the Fenians training within the British Army 75 years before, and of the more recent advice proffered by the Soviets when in 1925 Russell, Gerald Boland and Pa Murray visited Moscow; they told them then, *are there not plenty of arms in the Free State Army. Cannot you train there?* Impractical advice perhaps, but the nearest the I.R.A got to those arms was the successful raid upon the Magazine Fort of December 23, 1939, although it was never clear to me what the follow up of that action was to be.

**TOMÁS MacCURTAIN:**

In October, five weeks after the outbreak of World War Two, I commenced my second university year. Ireland had declared for neutrality which all of us welcomed, and while it later emerged that the Germans had contact with the I.R.A, none of this percolated to the Cork organisation. (5)

By January 1940 many of the leadership were behind bars and our local organisation was under severe pressure. Following a short report that the film, *The Four Feathers*, then showing at the Savoy Cinema in Patrick Street, was propagandist, Tomás and a group of volunteers prepared to seize the film. It was at that moment, standing close to the Fr. Matthew statue, that Special Branch men moved in to arrest Tomás. In the tussle that took place, the weapon in the pocket of his trenchcoat accidentally discharged, mortally wounding D.O Roche. Much already appears on this matter in the account of Jim Savage who also covers the plan to rescue the prisoners later when arraigned in the Courthouse, a plan to which I was not privy, nor was I involved in it.

Denis MacSweeney and I had been attending the Palace Cinema in MacCurtain Street that evening. On emerging about eleven, we learned the news from Mick McCarthy who advised us to go on the run which accordingly we did. That entailed some discomfort as I had to change my abode and keep out of sight until the tensions subsided. Mick McCarthy was however picked up as was Denis Griffin, Battalion O.C, in Dunmanway. Jim O'Neill, Training Officer was also taken. After their departure Jobie Sullivan was appointed O.C, with Roger Ryan as his second in command. My position as Battalion Adjutant became difficult as his successor did not have the same competence.

I did not meet Tomás again until 1949 upon my return from Trinidad, when my wife and I encountered him near the old Parliament Bridge. He was a man of great valour and integrity, and I am proud as a Cork man, to say how honoured I feel to have known him.

On February 5, 1940, fervour for the Republican cause swept the nation with news of the imminent hanging on the 7th. of that month of Peter Barnes and James McCormack at Winson Green, Birmingham. Jobie Sullivan had returned some time before and he made it his business to place the full facts of their innocence, (despite their peripheral involvement), before Tom Barry. Barry, to give him his due, made this public and offered to travel to England, but it was to no avail. England's law took its course and left Ireland seething in anger. The aftermath of this release of

emotion however was a damp squib because of the impotency, the inability of the I.R.A., and the fact that they were now seen to be wrong footed on the issue of neutrality. Tom Barry had personally monopolised the immense protest meeting of the day before, which I had attended, and I groaned when at the end he admonished the crowd to depart quietly to the homes. Barry of course understood well the score and was sticking to his own wiser council regarding the priority now of Irish neutrality.

Matters for us were slipping from bad to worse at the evident failure of the English Campaign and, the frequent snatches for internment. 'Pip' Regan, the Spanish Civil War veteran was now in a British jail on a ten year sentence, while his comrade, Mick O'Riordan, was interned in the Glasshouse. At this juncture, Dan Barry, our Intelligence Officer, announced that the rigid rule on refusing to answer questions had been amended to one that allowed manoeuvre, and even recognition of the court. It was the result of some confusion and was not to last, but meanwhile I was approached by Inspector Moore, and was able blandly to dismiss him with the admission that, yes, I am a member of Sinn Féin.

Shortly after, the order being countermanded, we were attending a meeting in the MacCurtain Hall addressed by Jobie, dressed as usual in a high necked black pullover, flanked by Brigade O.C Jack Lynch. Suddenly there was a hammering upon the front door. Jobie immediately thrust a short in my hand, ordering me to cover the top of the stairs overlooking the hallway below. While the hammering continued, he and Lynch prepared to make an exit through the roof, dropping to the rere. Having surveyed his escape route he returned, instructing me to join the remaining volunteers. At this juncture the Branch men poured in, whereupon it transpired, their objective was simply the seizure of Easter lilies scheduled for sale on the following Easter Sunday; a day when we would all, or nearly all, parade to commemorate the 1916 Rising. I was again questioned on membership but managed to divert them with a Pavlovian version of what I had already told Moore. Kevin Neville overheard me however, and reported me to Jack Lynch, who duly questioned me severely at a meeting in St. Ita's when my explanation was reluctantly accepted.

I felt myself now upon the slippery slope as far as the I.R.A. was concerned; my confidence in it had sunk to zero, particularly as I could feel that somehow the Fianna Fáil government manipulated our every move. My studies for my second university exams were suffering, and on their approach, I went down with a chill, possibly pneumonia, from swimming too early in the sea, followed by an attack of dermatitis. I thus obtained permission to postpone my exams until autumn, but in the month of May, Hitler's armies swept across France, pinning the British Expeditionary force to the sea at Dunkirk. It seemed that the Swastika would soon bestride Europe. Yet there was nothing in all these events that could arouse me from my state of torpor; what Teilhard de Chardin was later to describe as the 'evil of disorder'.

I threw myself down and commenced to write my resignation to Brigade O.C Jack Lynch but, unable to complete it, I crawled fatigued and overcome, into bed. Next morning was the 3rd. of June; internment day, had I but known, and indeed I was very soon to know, because at eight o'clock heavy hammering commenced upon the hall door.

### BEHIND THE WIRE:

I was taken in a squad car to an open backed lorry, already filled with Cork No. 1 volunteers parked at the military prison. We were held there for a few days before being transferred to Cork Jail on the Western Road, whose site is now part of the University complex. It was there that I first encountered three veterans of the Tan war, already touched upon elsewhere; Paddy Whooley, Paddy Canty and Liam Ivors. They had set up business's in Cork after their return from the United States to which they had been forced to emigrate following the Civil War. Paddy Whooley was the founder of Metal Products Ltd, a developing firm that had provided numbers of former I.R.A people with employment; Dan Barry had escaped internment and continued to work there. The three were however suspected of the stick up of Cork radio station (6) when an announcement had been made warning of the dire consequences should Tomás MacCurtain be hanged. Whooley, I learned in later years, formed, with a group of Tan War veterans, a localised and self styled, Irish Republican Brotherhood which exercised considerable clout at leadership level.

A second surprise awaited me when I was settled in the jail. This was the appearance of two non I.R.A internees; one Seamus Hann from Kilcoole, Co. Wicklow, apparently registered as an alien, but who had a proficiency writing poetry in German, English and Irish; some of these poems lamented separation from his Irish wife. The second man, apparently arrested in his company, was 'Busty' McCabe, late officer of Southern Command, the Free State Army. They were not known to have any I.R.A connections and were released about the time we were transferred to the Curragh on August 27.

The round-up had involved volunteers from all parts of Munster, the majority of whom were housed in the north wing facing the Western Road, with Cork No. 1 mainly in the south wing, a woman's prison. The I.R.A administration of the south wing consisted of Jerry Cronin, Jimmy Farrell and myself. There were objections by some of the west Cork men, including Jer Daly, to Cronin's election. Cronin sometime previously had been arrested, finished up in the Glasshouse where he went on hunger strike demanding release; G.H.Q had ordered him to come off the hunger strike whereupon in anger he signed out (7).

This may have rankled with the west Cork men but I felt there was a deeper animosity and mistrust. In the late forties both he and Eddie Mac Namara were appointed Irish Transport Union officials in Cork after passing through Professor O'Rahilly's diploma course for trade unionists; a course that was intended to wean them away from post war 'communism'; although to my recollection neither showed unusual interest in educating themselves while in the Curragh.

The jail administration was under the benign control of Commdt. Mac Henry, so I was able to have my texts sent in for the continuation of my studies for the autumn exams for which I hoped to get parole. In addition to receiving food parcels from friends, we found that we were well fed. The only blot on this period of tranquillity was the gunning down of John Joe Kavanagh (8), led by Inspector Jim Moore, who afterwards boasted that this action was a reprisal for the shooting of D.O. John Roche. Kavanagh, with Roger Ryan, Connie Byrd and Jobie Sullivan, was engaged in tunnelling into the jail from the grounds of La Retraite Convent. The north wing

volunteers had already tried to tunnel out through the University grounds from the Cookhouse, but were caught in the act.

In this wing Eugene Powell, from Tralee, had made continuous protests, claiming he had an appendicitis or a dangerous inflammatory disorder. In the Curragh he continued the protest so convincingly, that he was transferred to the military hospital, whence he made the escape that all the time he had intended.

We were able to watch the funeral of John Joe Kavanagh, passing up the Western Road escorted by the Cork Volunteer Pipe Band as it passed in front of the north facing cell windows, to his burial place in the Republican Plot.

During all this time there was some solace in learning that the Republican Swimming Club had won the Lee Swim, having recruited a 'dark horse' by the name of Buster Dineen. We were transferred to the Curragh on a day in late August, handcuffed in trucks, forming part of a long convoy, with armoured personnel sandwiched between each lorry. At the Curragh all our belongings were seized and searched, and I suffered the ignominy of having my university text books on chemistry removed along with my lecture notes. All my efforts to recover them, while interned, was *saothar in aisce*, and when my grandfather contacted T. P. Dowdall, the Cork Fianna Fáil T.D, he was told by Minister Boland that it would not be in the interests of the state to allow me have them. This exemplified for me that superstitious view of science, so prevalent in bureaucratic circles, by which chemistry and explosives are indissolubly associated.

When, in the Curragh, a secret bomb making class was later started there was no conceivable need for my assistance. The transition from pure science to technology know-how which has so impaired Irish government thinking needs to be evaluated, not solely in terms of consequential financial losses but through giving industrial posts to academics, who in turn report to civil servants who have no understanding on how to follow up. Now retired, as a senior chemical engineer, I have no know-how of military explosives, although I will admit that I once wrote a monograph on dust explosions in the food industry!

#### DAY TO DAY:

The large influx of internees did not cause any change in the administration already established under O.C Billy Mulligan. Mulligan and his Council had been elected in accordance with that I.R.A standing order which decrees that all ranks wither upon imprisonment. Its efficiency was apparent in the educational system that prevailed, making it for me a second university; the two outstanding teachers being Máirtín Ó Cadhain, later Professor of Irish in Trinity College, and already a writer of note, and Michael A. Kelly, with his dual lecture series on history and economic theory; the two properly proceeding hand in hand. Kelly was a major influence in re orienting my whole perception of politics which, as a result, became firmly established in the socialist republicanism of James Connolly, with his fully avowed marxist interpretation of history, so that I saw clearly the need to relate events in Ireland to European developments.

Kelly was later the secretary of the ill-fated Clann na Poblachta Party of Sean Mac Bride; an involvement from which I tried to dissuade him one evening at his home in Drumcondra in May 1946 prior to my departure for Trinidad. He induced

in me also a flair for writing, encouraging me to produce my first article, dealing with science and socialism; and published in our replicated *Barbed Wire*. Occasionally there were debates within our huts, and, when appropriate, an address by a Council member in the Icebox, our assembly hall, on subjects of wider appeal. It was there that I first heard the word 'revolution' in the powerful northern accent of Seán MacCumhail. I had opted for residence in an Irish speaking hut, D.1, the O.C of which was Brian Lowe of Kilrush, a vocational teacher. Other occupants included, Sean Dunne, later a farm workers' leader, then a Workers' Union of Ireland man and a Labour Party T.D (9). Also there was Paddy Mulcahy and 'Lanty' Hannigan and Joe Bray of Limerick city, and Seán Ó Maolbhríde of Mullingar, a student of Galway University. I was quickly involved in digging a tunnel, part of an interlinked network. We took it in turns to carry out this work which was scheduled to pass under Hut C.1, the longitudinal extension of D.1, then to pass under two opposite huts, and then under one of the surrounding elevated sentry boxes outside the trench and outside the lines of barbed wire. Considering that there were numbers of other tunnels heading in the same direction, it was a prodigious undertaking in view of the fact that it was being carried out with the most primitive instruments and in circumstances of near suffocation and semi-darkness.

Those who would emerge, should we have succeeded, were expected to be, in terms of leadership, of a higher political calibre than their comrades still outside, but it was never clear where we were to go, except perhaps northwards. The possibility however of such an eventuality being short circuited in wartime was brought home to us by an event one night when we were awakened by the noisy rumble of armoured vehicles, with the sound of troops being marshalled. The cause, a false alarm apparently, was that Britain was about to move south. The only other event that I recall was the night disturbed on one occasion by the exploding of bombs, jet-tisoned by German planes, upon the Curragh racecourse, two miles distant.

The administration of the Free State Commandant Mattie Cummins had nothing in common with the humane quality of Mac Henry in Cork Jail. Whilst the food rations were said to correspond to those in the Free State Army, there were periodic outbreaks of food poisoning necessitating a procession to the latrine within the hut; those queuing up were waiting sometimes bent in agony. Several internees were at death's door and had to receive morphine during these regular visitations; a few being removed to hospital. The latrines were unventilated dry closets, and as they were locked inside the hut, the stench after an attack of 'Scribo', as it was called, could be foul. The night time use of the outside latrines on these occasions was not permitted.

Approaching Christmas 1940 there took place an event which was to radically interrupt the politicisation process. Senior I.R.A officers, notably Larry Grogan, Peadar O'Flaherty and Willie McGuinness, on completion of their sentence in Arbour Hill, were rearrested and transferred to the Curragh. Acting upon something close to the *Fuhrer Princip* principle of the Nazis, they took over the democratically elected camp administration. Billy Mulligan was replaced by Larry Grogan, while Michael A. Kelly, Seán MacCumbil, *et alia*, were dismissed from the I.R.A for attempting to undermine it, as Peadar O'Flaherty alleged, 'by seeking to set up a

political party'.

By the time they arrived in the Camp the food situation had improved, but the government, as part of an austerity programme, reduced their army's ration of butter from the daily one half ounce to one quarter ounce per day. Immediately a meeting was called in the Icebox, where O'Flaherty, from a stool, harangued us, standing there in military formation, with the threat directed at the Free Staters that *we will show them whether we are mice or men*. That sounded all very well until the morning of Saturday, December 14, when we were ordered to leave our huts and to repair to the playing field, as they were about to be burned as a reprisal for the cut in the butter ration. I hastily gathered up my effects into a large suitcase containing my precious books and notes, and complied with the order. I considered that, with the time so short, people had no opportunity to sit down, rationally to think it out and, most tellingly, to object, although sporadic objections, in the short time available, would have achieved nothing.

One of the first huts to be burnt down was ours, D.1, thus exposing the tunnel underneath, but its extension C.1, was preserved intact. Troops and fire fighting services were rushed in while we were put under cover of machine guns. Meanwhile soldiers marched among the internees, brandishing revolvers, and it was at that juncture that Máirtín Standúin had a gun fired at him, the bullet taking away the lobe of his ear.

That evening the military unceremoniously marshalled us into those huts that were unburned by the Fire although previously occupied, or into some that had never been occupied. No fuel was provided for the hut stoves, nor were trestle beds or bed clothing so that we had to huddle together using what covering we had such as our few overcoats. Commdt. Cummins was instantly replaced by Commdt. Guiney, a Kerryman, well known to north Kerry men and to Tadhg Lynch, former manager of Harolds Cross Greyhound Racing Stadium, frequently attended by him.

On Monday morning, cold and hungry, we were released from the huts. Where I had been situated was just a hut distance beyond the 'Icebox', so when the cry 'grub up' was heard I rushed to take up a position with my utensils in one hand near the head of a double file column. As I emerged I could see the 'Ice box' column, which had got itself out more quickly being fired on by soldiers lined up at the gate. One fellow, a stocky *plubaire reamhair* character appeared to be firing directly at Barney Casey, while another fired at and wounded internee Art Moynihan, who, however, succeeded in dragging himself behind the shelter of the hospital hut close by. Whilst all around fell silent, numbed by the shock of this minor massacre, there emerged from among the crouching men, the austere figure of Billy Mulligan walking over the intervening gravel towards an officer. Calmly he called for a stretcher for Barney Casey which, in the now silent atmosphere, was quickly provided, although Casey died two hours later.

Liam Leddy of Araglen in north east Cork replaced Larry Grogan on New Years Eve when, 52 'ringleaders' were removed to the Glasshouse, later to stand trial on the fire raising charges. The order then went out that the internees were not to draw the reduced ration of coal for the hut stoves. Tadhg Lynch, a hut O.C, and a contingent from west Cork, including some city men such as Tom Murphy and Seamus

Ronayne, chose to defy this order and, as a result, were ostracised to Hut C 1. I had no idea of their state of mind until Tadhg shouted loud and clear, sufficiently loud for me to hear, *that the I.R.A was now being run by Fianna Fáil*. Coming from one so high in G.H.Q circles his expression confirmed my deep felt suspicions and frustrations, and I immediately walked over to the Cork men who appeared to know what they were doing.

All my old misgivings on the evening preceding internment in June, seven months before, surfaced once again; did the I.R.A leadership or the considerable fraction of it that now ruled this Camp, know where it was going, and should I continue to follow it unquestioningly? What I had felt about the I.R.A leadership, which had been stimulated originally by Tomás MacCurtain, was now being made intelligible, not only to myself, but to the other defectors as well in Hut C.1. There Jim O'Neill informed me that he and Tadhg Lynch, to prevent the discovery of the tunnels, had approached O'Flaherty and company with an offer that they would selectively burn unoccupied huts underneath which there were no tunnels. Tadhg subsequently applied for parole, and this was granted under the formula of my word is my bond. In his negotiations with Commdt. Guiney he learned (if one is to believe the Commdt.) that the leadership had been informed on the day following the Fire that marching in military formation to the Cookhouse would no longer be permitted. There was talk also that the Staters feared that the gates would be rushed. Exaggerated as that might appear, it was matter which could have been put forward in evidence from the Free State side at the inquest on Barney Casey, but it was not. It is not surprising therefore that others and myself decided after this debacle that we were done with the I.R.A. *For my part this decision has been strictly adhered to.*

#### AFTERMATH:

By January 1941 all of the former Camp Council of my Tintown University days were gone or dethroned; demoralisation reigned supreme as we tried to occupy ourselves making match stick crosses, embroidering linen with sacred hearts or wheat sheafs, beating out rings from the silver coins of those days, or occasionally from gold sovereigns, or leather wallets embossed with celtic designs.

I applied for parole to undergo an operation, but had to settle instead for one performed by an army surgeon at the base hospital; the same hospital from which Eugene Powell made his escape, and the same in which Tomás MacCurtain, imprisoned in the hell hole of Portlaoise, was actually for a time (unknown to Eugene) convalescing.

After my operation I was quickly transferred back to the Camp again, into the small hospital hut, where I read an unexpurgated translation of *Mein Kampf* by one, Adolf Hitler, at that time bestriding much of the continent of Europe. (10)

There for the first time I read the 'facts' staring me in the face. The Germans were the master race and all others must bow to Teuton hegemony. There was a 'principle of aristocracy in nature' which the French revolution of 1789, and the Russian revolution of 1917, had sought to abolish. It was the task of the thousand years Reich to undo that. There would be no invasion of England as England, with its King, Lords and Commons, and its Germanic royal family - The Guelphs, alias Windsor - came close to the Hitlerite ideal, but the Soviet Union must be laid low, as it, after France,

was the great violator of 'the principle of aristocracy in nature'.

On June 22, 1941, Hitler launched Operation Barbarossa against the Soviet Union, a war that was to end with more than twenty million of their citizens dead and the sex balance of its population displaced even to the present time. Barbarossa was Frederick the First (1121-1190), elected Emperor in 1152, following which for 18 years, he was engaged in contention with the Papacy, ending finally in his submission. He later joined the Third Crusade, nothing more than a buccaneering expedition, and was drowned in Asia Minor.

The invasion opened wounds in many countries that had been barely taped over, even for us within the Camp. The initial revolt of C.1 hut on the mere question of drawing fuel, articulated the breach from the nihilism of the Russell led Army Council, which had by now transferred its authority to the questionable Stephen Hayes. Since January there had been a number of significant arrivals within the Camp, Neil Goold Verschoyle, preferring simply to be known as Neil Goold, Cathal Goulding, Johnny Connor and John Joe Sheehy of Tralee. Neil Goold, of the ascendancy class, like Countess Markievicz, had identified himself with the Republican cause; he had lived and married in the Soviet Union, and had written and replicated pamphlets defending its 1939 invasion of Finland then led by the allegedly Tsarist, General Mannerheim, (Finland counter invaded hand-in-hand with the Germans in June 1941). I failed to meet him personally although I found his treatise of great interest.

Johnny Connor (11) defied the proscription banning volunteers associating with the occupants of Hut C.1, and was frequently to be found in heated argument with Tadhg Lynch before a battle map of the new front in Europe, when they might be heard engaging on the merits of the tank led Germans, versus the massed man power of the Soviets. Within a few years however, the Soviets were producing their own thousands of tanks, while their white clad warriors were sweeping silently on skis through the winter snows upon the disheartened master race.

Like the rest of us in Hut C.1, Tadhg was pro-Soviet, but this in no way invalidated his friendship with Connor. United in the common cause of freedom, ideology has seldom permanently divided the bond between I.R.A members, or prevented them from associating again after incarceration.

Shortly after this Tadhg accepted an extended parole, while I on my part, was offered two weeks because of the serious illness of my mother. I was overwhelmingly relieved on arrival home to find her convalescing, whereupon I took the advantage to pull the swimming club together for the Lee Swim. We found ourselves handicapped out of the race however; evidently Gus Healy, later a Fianna Fáil T.D, considered us too good, while Conroy, president of our club, ordered our withdrawal. Oddly, Conroy had been secretary to Tan General Strickland (12) but had now joined Fianna Fáil.

Before returning after my two weeks of circumscribed freedom, I called to Union Quay Barracks and spoke to Inspector Jim Moore to request extended parole. He refused, but offered me the opportunity of signing out. This I turned down, reluctantly returning to the Curragh where I faced a bleak and, to me, meaningless future.



Shortly after my return, news leaked into the Camp of the arrest on June 30, 1941, of Stephen Hayes by the I.R.A. Command; and of his long spun out and questionable confession, and of his escape from his captors in Rathmines on September 8. Although in later years doubts have been cast upon details of the confession, for me, with the combination of other personal factors, it was my final breaking point; resulting in my signing out after sixteen months confinement, in October. All my books, except my Mick Kelly notes, presumably lost, were returned to me, and I left Tintown still hopeful for Ireland's future. To adopt a phrase of Napoleon; I now had, politically speaking, another marshal's baton in my knapsack.

Returning to the University, I found that Alf Martin and Vincent Crotty had come back also after a sojourn in the Free State Army, and very soon we resumed our political activities once more. These were to the chagrin of Alfred O'Rahilly who was shortly to become President of U.C.C.

We quickly joined up with Michael O'Riordan, after he and his comrades, Jim Savage, Donal Sheehan, Seamus Ronayne, Timmie Ahern and others left Tintown over a year later, to set up the Liam Mellows Branch of the Labour Party; and upon that being purged by a timorous headquarters, we created the phenomenally successful Cork Socialist Party. But that is a story for another time; and even with that my Odyssey had hardly begun.

## REFERENCES:

1. The Local Government Act of 1898 which abolished the Grand Juries, introduced a form of democracy for male ratepayers in local affairs.
2. *The Blueshirts, and Ireland 1912-1985*.
3. One of the Cork Republican leaders to survive the Civil War. See *Survivors, Green Against Green*, and *No Other Law*, for many references.
4. The details of this proposed incursion have always remained unclear. It is uncertain whether any of the Northern Command were consulted about it; but as we can now see, after the years of 'armed struggle' a single incursion into Armagh City was unlikely to topple the northern state. Séamus Ó Mongáin says that Mike Fitzpatrick of the Army Council, Dublin, Tom Barry, Chief of Staff and John Tully, O.C Cavan, went to Armagh early in 1937, when there had been a snow fall, to reconnoitre; they met other volunteers in the city. Later, for the reasons adduced above (there may have been others), it was called off.
5. In February 1941 after the Fenit arrests, Herman Goertz arrived to the door of an I.R.A volunteer in St. Brigid's Road, Cork, telling the family that he had received the address from John Joe Sheehy of Tralee. He sought refuge and the mother safeguarded him for weeks, until, through subterfuge, he was taken under the name of Patrick Murphy into the pauper division of the District Hospital where he remained for some further weeks before again returning to the household in St. Brigid's Road. From there he made inquiries, evidently seeking to obtain a passage on a vessel to Portugal (in the circumstances most unlikely), and seeking also a transmitter. He visited Bandon, and may have contacted there the Brennans, related to Seamus O'Donovan on the mother's side. All of this however confirms that, from Iselt Stuart onwards, Goertz used any name and contact he could find to drop in upon. In this respect he was taking advantage of their nationalist sympathies. Most of these people were persuaded to take pity upon the wanderer while feeling in no way mixed up in the Nazi conspiracy.
6. Related by Jim Savage
7. The official report states: Jeremiah Cronin and Jeremiah Crowley, who were interned in the Curragh on 12th. and 14th. March, went on hunger strike on the day of their internment but took food on 5th. April. Both had served a sentence of three months in Arbour Hill for refusing to answer questions and on their release were interned. The purpose of their protest was to enforce their demand for unconditional release. They both appealed to the Detention Commission against their internment and were released on April 13, 1940.
8. See the account of Jim Savage
9. See Tony Mc Inerney for some insights on Sean Dunne
10. The copy belonged to Larry Grogan but it would be unfair to assume he had been influenced by it. *Mein Kampf* was easily obtainable in Ireland where it was dipped into as an object of curiosity, and then quickly left aside because of its turgid prose style.
11. Dan 'Bally' Keating in this volume, *Survivors* and *Green Against Green*, for Johnny.
12. See *Guerilla Days in Ireland*, by Tom Barry, for General Strickland.

## MICK McCARTHY

*OF CORK CITY:*



*Mick at home in Cork, 1992*

*Mick McCarthy's support for the Republican Movement goes back a long time.*

My father was Thomas McCarthy and my mother's name was Margaret McGrath. Neither of them were natives of Cork city although they came eventually to live here. My mother was from Co. Waterford, and I myself was born on November 10, 1912, in the old town of Carrick on Suir, on the Carrick Beg side. So by the time this book is in print I will be 84 years of age, if God spares me that long. I have seen many changes in Ireland, many changes in society, and I am afraid they have left many people worse off. My father was a landscape gardener; there were big houses and estates in the Carrick, Cappoquin and Fermoy area, so that is where he had employment at the time. I would not say they had any particular nationalist background, but like most country people they would always support a pro-national stand.

I went to school with the Christian Brothers in St. Patrick's in Dunmanway, west of here, where we happened then to be living. In later years the well known republicans in that area were Joe Collins and the three Lynch brothers; Joe Collins was imprisoned for nine years later in England; he took a prominent part as a carpenter in the first phase of the Kilmainham Jail restoration in the late fifties under Lorcan Leonard, the engineer, while the Lynch brothers figure prominently in many accounts.

I am old enough to remember the hardships imposed upon the losers after the Civil War; not just the executions or the imprisonments - the latter fortunately did not last long-but the denial of work to them that followed. They were marked men; they were avoided; so many of them - certainly many in this county-simply had to get out; to leave for America. When De Valera came to power in 1932 a few of them trickled back.(1)

I was not knowledgeable enough at the time to think it was wrong but older men warned that the I.R.A were making a great mistake in supporting De Valera and Fianna Fáil prior to the two elections that brought them to power in 1932 and 1933. You are consolidating the Free State system and you are getting nothing for it; in time they will turn upon you, they said. Peadar O'Donnell had already presented Fianna Fáil with a sharp edged weapon when he commenced early on his withhold the Annuities campaign in Donegal, and when De-Valera came on to his platform in Ennis in 1931, he knew he had won but that the move would consolidate Fianna Fáil.(2)

Despite the falling away from Sinn Féin in 1926, and the foundation of Fianna Fáil as a normal parliamentary party taking its seat in Leinster House, a close personal relationship continued with the I.R.A leadership - O'Donnell with Lemass, MacBride with Sean T. O'Kelly, Moss Twomey with Frank Aiken, and so on right down the line into the tight community levels of rural Ireland. I.R.A companies and battalions were scarcely distinguishable from the F.F cumann. De Valera astutely bore with this; he knew that given power and the ability to lavish (minuscule) pensions on a wide scale, he could quickly sort out the post-treaty republican sheep from the post-treaty republican goats, and so indeed events proved.

The I.R.A had long broken with Sinn Féin; that breach occurred in 1925. (3) The remaining five members after the June election of 1927, and who disappeared in the subsequent election of September, were regarded as old fashioned and were openly derided in the columns of *An Phoblacht*. Through that paper, the I.R.A called upon all their followers to support Fianna Fáil in 1932 and in 1933, and so they did; with the results that some of the older men of my association predicted.

By the late twenties the people were swinging against Cosgrave, and the coercion acts of that time put the nails in his coffin. De Valera was playing the land annuities card; his chief henchmen, Lemass, Aiken, Bill Quirke and Sean T O'Kelly were on friendly terms with the I.R.A leadership, so in every area Fianna Fáil got their support.(4) It was their undoing of course, because he struck at them when he no longer needed them. Older heads of my association, as I have said, warned that we were mistaken in being so closely associated with Fianna Fáil; they will turn against you sooner than you know, they said, and, of course, they did. De Valera had his Document No. 2 agenda; we had the proclamation of Pádraig Pearse; they are not the same.

#### EMBERS OF THE CIVIL WAR:

We were back living in Cork city when the honeymoon ended. The I.R.A at this time had gone under cover to some extent. I belonged to No. 4 Company, which was on the south side of the city, in the Lough and the Barrack Street area. My company O.C was Denis Carey, and the brigade O.C was Jack Martin; but defections had already commenced in a two pronged way. First, there were those who fell away as a result of the inducement of a military service pension;(5) and then there was the much lesser number lured away by the attractions of Republican Congress in 1934, and the many good men and women associated with that idea. Jack Madden from Turner's Cross was one of those; and so also was my O.C Denis Carey. I did not myself feel I should abandon the Movement; I suppose I must have thought about it, but I stayed with the I.R.A.

Fianna Fáil cleverly directed a national hysteria against Cumann na nGael, Billy Cosgrave (6) as he was referred to, Dick Mulcahy, of the 77, and the Blueshirts, when they arrived. Of course, we all fell for that; to the extent that some joined the newly created Broy Harriers in order to fight them. Our own headquarters seemed to begin to understand this when they twice warned through *An Phoblacht*, in February 1934 and again in May, not to be drawn into these clashes.(7)

There were some hefty heaves in Cork city. One night in particular, on November 6, 1932, there was a real riot when William T. Cosgrave attempted a return visit to

his constituency; vigorously opposed by legions led by Tom Barry and Kit Conway. It was inevitable, I suppose, that the clashes would take place, as after all, they represented the executioners of the Civil War, nine years before, the embers of which had only to be raked over, to come alive again.

I could see afterwards that we should not have become involved but it was hard to stay away at the time. Later, when I was in Arbour Hill and then in the Glasshouse, I found that the considerable number of Blueshirts there dwindled rapidly as they signed out. By December 1937, when all of us were released, there were then only seven left under the late J.L. Sullivan, a man notable upon the Free State side in the Civil War; nonetheless I take my hat off to him for sticking it out.

#### IN CLINK:

I was arrested on November 10, 1935 with Dick McCarthy, and we were charged before the Military Tribunal with kidnapping a certain gentleman; tarring and feathering him and leaving him outside the Courthouse here, chained to the railings. A most public warning, and, apart from the shame, it caused no lasting harm. I do often think it was like putting a man in the stocks in the 17th. century, but the honeymoon with De Valera had ended and we were charged. I was somewhat shocked with the sentence we got; three years was heavy at that time.

I was not present for the hardship period in Arbour Hill as I was one of the lucky group transferred in April 1936, along with seven Blueshirts, to the Glasshouse in the Curragh. Myself and Tom Grogan of Drogheda were brought back however on Christmas Eve 1936 as we had objected to our cells being searched while we were absent on exercise. There being no good reason for this we protested physically, so the next morning the duty officer appeared and we were taken back to the Hill, where, for the first few days, we were upon a punishment diet. The attempt at criminalisation had ended there following the suicide of Sean Glynn in September 1936; suicides then, never, never occurring in a political jail, and being very rare indeed in a criminal prison.

There were around 30 prisoners there at this time; Mike O'Leary of Dublin, who with his brother Art, were prominent in the I.R.A; Mick later being interned again in the forties, his eyes being severely damaged in a fight at this time. With Fritz Langsdorf of Dublin, he was serving a five year sentence; unusually long for that time.

Present also was the legendary Tom Kelleher of Upton who had been through a dozen Tan battles with Barry; Maurice Twomey, originally also from Co. Cork, but long time Chief of Staff I.R.A; Joe Collins, Denis Conroy and Fox Walsh, Tomás MacCurtain, Bob Clements, Denis Conroy and Sean MacSwiney, he being a younger brother of Terence, while Tomás was son of the Lord Mayor killed in 1920 by the R.I.C.

I found Moss Twomey great company after he joined us from Arbour Hill in the Glasshouse. When it came to story telling, Moss was hard to beat. Sitting around the stove at night he would reel forth in that jovial way that he had all these old yarns of past times; personalities; places. There was scarcely a part of Ireland that he had not been in.

#### CAT AND MOUSE:

After my release, which followed the enactment of the New Constitution of December 29, 1937, I returned to the city and was fortunate, soon after, in obtaining a post with Cork Harbour Commissioners. I continued my association with the Movement; and whatever happened in Cork, I had a hand in it. At this time Barry had been planning to bring the war to the North, while Sean Russell, who succeeded him, wanted to bring it across the water: I doubt if I was mature enough, or knowledgeable enough to decide either way. Here in Cork we were a bit removed from Dublin so that I suppose some of us were unsure which was the proper policy to follow at the time. Nonetheless the Cork men were fully behind the Campaign; the Lynches, Joe Collins, Jim O'Regan, John Howell, Laurence Dunlea, John Healy; most of them suffering heavy sentences. There were numbers of girls from this area deported, but I tend now to forget all of the names.

At all events I was not approached; I was not asked to volunteer, and if I had been, I am not entirely sure what my answer would have been. That however never happened; instead something else occurred, for on September 15, 1939, a fortnight after the outbreak of World War Two, I was arrested in a sweep that was to rope in more than 70 of us into Arbour Hill. We were interned under Part VI of the Offences Act. Michael Lennon was the Governor in the prison; a Kilkenny man, whom most of us found reasonable and not overbearing.

The practice was long standing whereby the Governor, accompanied by two P.A's, visited your cell each morning and enquired, *any complaints?* Apart understandably, complaining at being *imprisoned without charge* - a complaint that would not be listened to (well, it would; you might be told that you could give an undertaking) - anything else, such as a minor request, would be noted. Promptly after that we would be released into the compound where free association prevailed.

Six persons went on hunger strike in this period of what proved in the end to be a very short internment; Jeremiah Daly of Cork, John Lynch, Charlie McCarthy, Dick McCarthy, Con Lehane, Paddy McGrath. I don't think they were acting in concert. They were protesting at being imprisoned without charge. Each of them was on hunger strike for around 26 days whereupon they were released. As it transpired, all were going anyway. The prison was cleared out as a result of High Court action, by December 2, 1939.

I was not a free man for long. I was rearrested four weeks later on January 3, 1940, after the shooting of D.O. Roche, an affray with which I had not any connection. However, I received a sentence of four months, on what would be described now as a holding charge. It was sufficiently long to hold me anyway until they could reimpose internment. I was released in April, as far as the gate; pushed into a car, and driven to the Glasshouse of the Curragh where I joined close on 50 others. As our numbers increased, and as the Glasshouse held only 52, we were removed from there in April and marched down the hill to the new No. 1 Camp, consisting of an assortment of seven hutments on the edge of a windy plain.

For the few hundred yards travel I was handcuffed to Máirtín Ó Cadhain; we were the first into the new camp. At that time there was a slang phrase popular amongst us, *cop yourself on*. Máirtín was asked for a translation and he came up with,

*beir bog ort fhéin*. It became, over the years, the most in-phrase amongst us; a measure maybe of spreading disillusionment.

Among my companions in the hut were Gene Harrington, my own brother Eddie, Seamus Goulding, Dan Lehane and Bill Kirwan; but apart from such men my closest other associates were Dan Gleeson and 'Bally' Keating, whose story you have. Most of my time however I gave to crafts; to leather work; to hand bags, and to beating out silver rings from shillings. All the time, next door, we could see them put together a much larger encampment of twenty four 60 man huts. That came into use in August when 171 internees arrived from Cork Jail.

The Fire; you ask, was it worth it? The possibility of our tunnel network being exposed was always there even before the fire started. After it, we were into a period of great hardship. In the 'Icebox', where many were older than me, our clothes were threadbare, and those in any way run down, became infected with lice. We did the best we could in the circumstances, but even when we returned to our huts, where we lay upon the floor, they continued to antagonise us; striking, shouting, rattling batons and leaving the lights continuously on at night time.

#### RIFT:

I was not aware, in the subsequent rift that developed with Hut C 1, commonly called the Cork hut, the O.C of which was Tadhg Lynch, that there was a latent bitterness or a grudge by the Camp Council against him because he was a 'Barry man' and not a 'Russell man'. I am answering the query in the way you expressed the question. I do not know if anyone had a grudge against Tadhg Lynch. From these small beginnings however a split emerged that eventually engulfed all of the Camp, whereby there were two almost equal sides; the side on which Liam Leddy was O.C, and the side on which Pearse Kelly was O.C. I remained on Leddy's side because, as I have already said, I believed in discipline and I have always adhered to it. So far as Pearse Kelly's side was concerned, most of us felt that a political party would emerge from it.

To your other query as to whether any of us felt that, because the government interned us, that we would admit to being some threat to neutrality in the war. All Irishmen agreed with neutrality, but that also meant not taking England's side for we are not, after all, a free nation. Therefore it remains that England's difficulty should be regarded as Ireland's opportunity. My first allegiance was to the Republican Movement; I could never see myself giving allegiance to anything else.

As for the shootings that occurred afterwards; well there was Barney Casey from Longford, Walt Mitchell from near Tullamore, and Máirtín Standúin from Liverpool, Arthur Moynihan from Millstreet; he was shot through the liver, and it was not thought possible that he would survive. Bob Flanagan of Leitrim was shot in the shoulder; four years later he carried that bullet home with him as it was lodged between two bones. Walt Mitchell was walking beside me when he went down; shot in the foot. Call it panic, or aggression; let us be charitable at this remove, and say panic.

By the time I came to be released, and counting the period from November 1935 to December 1937, and the duration of internment, I was approaching a total of eight years in prison. During all of that period I cannot remember that I asked for or

received a single visit. It is marvellous how one can carry on; sometimes a good letter from home is more fulfilling.

When eventually I was released in December 1944, and returned to Cork city, I was lucky enough to have some republican friends in the building industry; I got placed with Coughlan Bros. They gave me continuous employment until I could rejoin the Harbour Commissioners, which I did two years afterwards.

In 1945 I married Mary McCarthy of Evergreen Road, and we had two sons, Tomás and Micheál, both now with families of their own. My deceased wife, as you can see, had the same name as myself. So, here we are, near to 60 years on; the world evolves and time moves onward, and we all grow a bit older, but we do so without losing the beliefs we always held.

In the chat afterwards between Jim Savage and Mick; among the three of us the talk veered towards the personality of Tom Barry who had proved himself such a gifted guerilla leader. A small enough man, and very composed, but dangerous when roused, was the opinion of the two. As an example of this Mick related the story of Charlie Hurley.

Charlie, a great fighter, had been badly wounded at the battle of Upton on February 2, 1921. Lying, but recovering in the home of Humphery Forde at Ballymurphy, he was tracked down by a British raiding party within earshot of the biggest Irish victory of the Tan war at Crossbarry. Cornered in the Forde kitchen, but fighting them off with his Peter the Painter, he actually diverted some of them from the more important battle area, before they killed him.

Hearing of this, twelve hours later, Barry sent two scouts for a local priest, as Charlie could not be buried by day, and it was now between one and two of a spring morning. *He won't come*, said the boys on their return. *He said it did not suit him to come out. It doesn't suit him to come out*, said Barry, clearly exasperated. *I'll get him down*. Travelling over a boreen, he raced up to the presbytery door, throwing it open and rushing up the stairs. The startled priest was in blue pyjamas, but Tom had him quickly on his feet: *get down to the graveyard and say the prayers over Charlie Hurley*. This time the priest did not remonstrate or delay. He came quickly to the graveside.

Tom laughed about it afterwards; *blue pyjamas*; he kept repeating; *blue pyjamas. Did ye ever hear the like; I never slept in anything but my shirt*.



## REFERENCES:

1. The economic effects for Republicans in the war's aftermath are described in the accounts of Maire Comerford and Pax Ó Faoláin in *Survivors*.
2. When eventually De Valera was dragged on to our platform in Ennis in 1931, *I was immensely pleased. I was glad to let Fianna Fáil take control of it....But I was conscious that I was handing away a trump card....*Peadar O'Donnell in *Survivors*.
3. At a General Army Convention held in the Queen's Hotel, Dalkey, on November 14, 1925, there then being twelve upon the Executive and seven upon the Council, on the motion of Peadar O'Donnell the I.R.A severed its association with the Second Dáil. They accepted also a new constitution drafted by Frank Aiken, and a form of undertaking, instead of an oath.
4. The I.R.A did not participate directly in the campaign, but under the slogan 'Get Cosgrave Out' it threw its strength behind the Fianna Fáil effort. This caused no surprise, especially since Fianna Fáil promised that, if elected, it would immediately suspend the Military Tribunal and release its political prisoners. *The Blueshirts*, by Maurice Manning.
5. The Military Pensions Act of 1932 and 1934 covered, not alone the many thousands who claimed involvement, or loss, in the Tan struggle, but also those who fought on the Republican side in the Civil War. Many of the referees in the Griffith Barrack office, were themselves ex-I.R.A men; applicants were made feel at home with them.
6. The I.R.A leadership tried actively to discourage action against the Blueshirts but were manifestly unsuccessful. In February 1934 *An Phoblacht* carried an appeal to Volunteers not to be drawn into clashes' as this will divert their activities from smashing the Capitalist system'. The appeal was renewed again in its issue of May 5.
7. Maurice Manning in *The Blueshirts* describes W.T Cosgrave as quiet and unassuming. There was little of the mystique of leadership about him; his handling of his somewhat difficult colleagues was firm but unassertive. His principal other ministers, as Manning saw them, were Ernest Blythe of Finance; extremely unpopular; Desmond Fitzgerald of Defence; difficult manner, treated opponents with contempt; Patrick Hogan of Agriculture; realistic and pragmatic; Patrick McGilligan; identified with constitutional advance, and who largely pushed through the Shannon Scheme. He was the youngest, hailing from Co. Derry. Blythe, a *gaelgóir* and Presbyterian, hailed from Co. Antrim; and has been described by Peadar O'Donnell as a 'relapsed Orangeman'. It is now a long time since there were Six County people in the Dublin government; in other words the partition wall has been built higher by Merrion Street itself.

*In the case of Ireland, now there is but one fact to deal with, and one question to be considered. The fact is this - that there are at present in occupation of our country some 40,000 armed men, in the livery and service of England; and the question is - how best and soonest to kill or capture these 40,000?*

- James Fintan Lalor, 1848.

### 3 LEITRIM BROTHERS:

*BERTIE, HUGHIE AND  
J.L. MC CORMACK:*



*J.L. at home in Co. Meath*

The McCormack family of Roscunnish, Drumshanbo, were nationalist and republican from away back. Bertie the senior brother was born in 1916, and lived to prosper and survive comfortably with a family in south Dublin afterwards. Hughie was born in 1918, but is deceased some years now. John L was born in 1920, and years after leaving the Curragh, became, with his family a prosperous farmer in Co. Meath, to which his father had transferred in 1942. There was another brother, Arthur, the youngest, and a sister, Philomena. Their home was raided on numbers of occasions in the Tan times when, as Bertie describes it, they caused havoc. Their mother's name was Brigid Greene and her brother, Michael, was also in the Movement, while Sean O'Farrell, the local I.R.A leader, was a constant visitor to the house. Uncle Michael Greene and Sean O'Farrell took the anti-Treaty side, but when he joined Fianna Fáil in 1934, Jimmy Joe Reynolds took over. Bertie was close to Jimmy Joe, and before the operation on the Border in Donegal in November 1938 which ended his life, his last remark to Bertie was; I will see you on Tuesday in Paddy McWeeney's. Tuesday came, but never no more a Jimmy Joe. His last service to him was in the guard of honour to the graveyard at Cloonmorris. (1)

Questioned on the conflict with the local Catholic curate and his hall at Aughnasheelin which resulted in it being boycotted in 1938, John L explained that he had refused it for an Easter concert so the I.R.A felled tress, preventing its use for a parish function. As a result John Joe McGirl and Jack McLaughlin served 12 months; the Martin brothers were also in, John L says.

Bertie joined Óglaigh na h-Éireann about this time coinciding with the Blueshirt surge; a movement that, although short lived, created strong feelings in Leitrim: at this time he referred to a scrap in 1934 at Aughslane bridge when a Blueshirt group 'half murdered' a Republican group. In fact, he added, he knew, living near him, two brothers, Flynn; one in the I.R.A and the other in the Blueshirts, *and they used fecking well murder each other.* His two brothers joined the local company of na h- Óglaigh after Leo Duignan came home looking for volunteers. They went with Leo Duignan on the Campaign in England and were lucky to be only deported while Leo got ten years, all of which he served some under very severe conditions.(2)

The entire family were well known as Republican around Drumshanbo so it was almost inevitable that - and feck all to do with neutrality, John L asserts - they would be swept in during the big round-up of June 2, 1940. Some time earlier John L had done

a six month stretch in Mountjoy. He was interned two years when he was given four weeks compassionate leave to assist his father in the move from their small Leitrim farm to Garlow Cross in Co. Meath. 'My three sons are in the Curragh but if I could only get some help it would be grand'.



Bertie Mc Cormack with his wife residing in Dublin

#### BERTIE IN 1939: CAMP AT PORTMARNOCK

Paddy McNeela and Sylvester Fitzsimons from Drumsna were officers in a summer camp located in a house in Portmarnock in 1939 belonging to 'a sandie haired lassie' who had been in jail in England. She was in charge of food and domestic arrangements. Mixie Conway was the training officer. Fitzsimons, a stone mason from Co. Leitrim, was then working in Navan; Bertie was himself a skilled carpenter and joiner. After some weeks Fitzsimons took him to Navan, hoping to fix him with a job there but while there in mid-September they were both arrested. As O.C of the reputed tough Leitrim Battalion, Bertie was a sitting duck for internment on the outbreak of the European war in September 1939.

With around 70 others he was held in Arbour Hill until December 2, when, following the High Court decision, all were released. Arriving by train at Carrick on Shannon the party gathered into the well know hostelry on the west end of the bridge, Mrs Duignan's, *Shannon View Hotel*. It was there that Bertie learned for the first time of the intention to empty the state magazine in Phoenix Park three weeks later. Sitting close to Sean McManus of Drumshanbo he received a whispered inquiry about the availability of a reliable lorry, but, having then no ready answer, he undertook to turn one up later and to look out for a safe hide.

Bertie was not at liberty for long. The Offences Against the State Act was amended and he was again interned on February 7, 1940, with a dribble of others in the Curragh Glasshouse. Meanwhile 300 yards below on the gallops, the authorities were rushing ahead building upon the Brownstown side two hutted camps that could accommodate well over a thousand. In April, around 40 internees were escorted down, with O.C Billy Mulligan in charge.

When the heave came against him in October, Bertie, on the Camp Council, sided against Mulligan, who quietly stood down. 'I had a great regard for Peadar O'Flaherty and Larry Grogan; I did not want to go against them'. Almost in the same breath he

added; 'I had a great regard for Cathal Goulding as a great soldier and a hard line socialist'.

The take-over from the Council of Mulligan, McCool and Kelly by O'Flaherty, Grogan and McGuinness that occurred in November 1940 was preceded by a meeting of all hut O.C's when O'Flaherty announced that the Council had become too politicised and leftward leaning. When the heave came, John Reynolds, long associated with Billy Mulligan sided with O'Flaherty.

He remembers the disappointment felt by Barney Casey on that Saturday morning, December 14, the day of the Fire. He had done a great deal of work on the tunnels and now they were about to be exposed. *Burn all the bloody bed boards*, he called to Bertie; there were three upon threstles supporting each bed, and they, along with blankets, books and the clothing of seven huts were consumed in the conflagration.

At the end of January 1941, in a sudden night time swoop, the Staters removed 52 from the 450 in the Camp, beating them up the hill and into the Glasshouse where, 'as ringleaders', they were subjected to a reign of terror.

Bertie spent five weeks in the harsh regime of the Glasshouse which happens to be a small military prison on two floors enclosed within a twelve foot high walled enclosure holding 64 prisoners.(3)

Sergeant Ned Gill, an old timer, from the west of Ireland originally, came in each morning with the duty officer: Gill thought to curry favour by his heavy handed attitude to the prisoners. Boland and Aiken, chagrined by the devastation of the Fire, were insistent upon a harsh regime. You would have to say, 'yes sir', 'no sir', on the daily arrival of the officers or suffer a couple of very hard blows from the baton wielding Gill backed up by a posse of other P.A's. Bertie, being upstairs, had to collect his meals from below, conveying them generally up the staircase. This could be hazardous when the baton swinging Gill was about; oftimes one's tea or soup could be lost by a sharp smack applied to the legs. O'Flaherty and his officers suffered the same fate, having to sit at the same double table with the rest and help at bringing in coal for cooking and heating.

Eventually Bertie was taken with the others - in batches - to Collins Barracks, and sentenced on February 21, 1941 to three years.(4) He entered Mountjoy with a feeling of relief following the rigours of the Glasshouse. After 27 months he was 'released' from there and returned to the Curragh. Entering the now seriously split Camp he was allowed some time to consider his position; whether to associate with the Leddy group or the Pearse Kelly group. His closest friend, Paddy McWeeney was with Kelly; and Bertie and he had some sharp words when he decided to associate with Liam Leddy. He liked and was acquainted with Leddy, and that was why he stayed on his side, he says. But it took time for the wound to heal as discipline was so authoritarian upon that side that if a football came over from the Kelly side, you were not allowed to kick it back. At that point Liam Leddy approached him, asking if he would resume as their quartermaster, a role he had fulfilled prior to the Fire of December 1940.

In effect being quartermaster for the organisation meant simply doling out the boots and clothing that the Staters provided. His opposite number in the green uniform of the state was Capt. Casey, an officer respected as a straightforward military

man and not a jailer. Perspectives of the officer's differed widely; many disliked Capt. McNamara because of his officiousness but Bertie describes him as 'nice'. Commdt. Guiney, the O.C of the Camp was regarded by some as relatively harmless, a doggie man, but Bertie's opinion was less restrained.

'Tommy the Cook' as a P.A had a bad name among some, although not among all. Some years after the Curragh, Bertie, attending at Bodenstown, was approached by Tommy. 'You don't know me', he said disappointed; 'I am Tommy the Cook'. It was as though recalling them as pals and former associates, the erstwhile jailer wished to meet them again. Some people did not like him, Bertie adds, he was always half jarred anyway; going to the back of the huts rather than using the toilets

There was 'Piss in the Bucket' also, Lieut. Laurence Clancy, an officer who would use the hut bucket, although not supposed to, when seeking relief. He was noted in Florence O'Donoghue's, *No Other Law* on the death of Liam Lynch, as being in the party at 5 a.m above Goatenbridge on the morning that Chief of Staff Lynch died, on Tuesday, April 10, 1923, and is footnoted elsewhere.

John L speaks of Joe Bray mentioned in the account by John Joe Hoey. He did a period as a training officer in Leitrim in 1940; John Joe refers also to John Ward, and John L responds by relating s story of John Ward, who always answered his name in Irish, making a ring from the top of a spoon during the Fire period. The Staters came in and made a general search and in Ward's property they found the ring.

They asked him how he obtained the material (an army issue spoon) and he obviously told them, so they went out and then returned and they beat him up very badly. He was back in the hut next morning after the doctor had examined him. He studied Irish deeply and had joined Máirtín Ó Cadhain's class. John L remembers him as a lightly built man of medium height.

Patrick McKenna of Oldcastle who had been on the Magazine raid, and had procured a lorry for that, was also interned. He was noted as very religious, paying great attention to the altar flowers in the Curragh. He used to wear breeches, and sometime after the Fire was standing with his hands in his pockets. An officer ordered him to remove his hands from his pockets and when he refused he was batoned up the hill, and was put on bread and water in the Glasshouse for three days. He was very shook when he came back three days later as he had taken no food at all.

About the same time John Joe McGil was reporting to John L that he had just witnessed his brother 'getting a terrible time' from baton swinging P.A's in the compound. And that, smiled John L, should convince readers that being one of some hundreds of unconvicted prisoners in the Curragh Internment Camp was no picnic.

And the 'Priest' McWeeney; a sound and reliable man; he became known as 'Priest' because of the sober way that he dressed. Sober, silent and reliable, that was the 'Priest'.

#### TUNNEL ACCOUNT:

As John L relates it,(5) when he returned late in 1942 from parole after assisting on the farm move, he applied to get into the Leitrim hut but the Staters would not let him. He found himself instead with the brass hats, Tony Magan and Mixie

Conway. A tunnel had been started from there; he however was not being told, as they thought, having been on parole, that he might soon be released, although he himself saw no prospect of that. Nor, as he expressed it, would one need to be a psychologist to know that something was going on, for you could not fail to notice that all the time a discreet watch was being kept from a window while another tapped upon the floor when a P.A. approached.

The play-acting ended when Tony Magan approached him, saying; *do you know that we have something on here?* Well, I suspect there is, answered John L. Would he be prepared to stay and work on the tunnel? He nodded assent, and from then on he was down, every second day, poking away with a spoon or a knife in a dimly lit rabbit burrow that one could scarcely turn around in.

There were three huts linked to the single tunnel and all was set to break out on St. Brigid's Pastures when early on the morning preceding departure the Staters arrived and placed barbed wire in the entries. Then they collapsed it where it had shafted down and up - a difficult engineering job - to pass under the perimeter trench.

#### DEPARTURE:

When pressed as to why three brothers McCormack were in the Curragh at all in the height of Ireland's Emergency when the general public would have expected trained young men to have joined the official army; Bertie had a ready answer. All of our people were Republicans and Ireland was still far short of being free. In the early days some of my best friends in Leitrim were Protestants so I had no hang-ups on that, but I never forgot that England's difficulty must always be Ireland's opportunity. So far as De Valera was concerned he had done and continued to do desperate things to a Movement that he had once led; yet perhaps, looking back now, if Republicans could have foreseen the future they might have followed a different policy to what they then followed.

In the week before Christmas 1944, having served five and a quarter years, Bertie was finally released. It was a case then of quickly landing a job or starving. Through Jim Gallagher he earned his first fifty shillings clamping turf on the big stacks in the Park, but he was not a man to stick at that too long. He went for something else better paid but harder and, like the Park, out in all weathers. He approached Pete Kearney of the South of Ireland Asphalt Company, a man who had befriended many Republicans. *I will give you a job*, said Kearney, *at more than what you are being paid now, but, remember, it will be dog rough; dog rough.* Bertie slaved away at that for a while, eventually moving upwards into business, marrying and settling down in Goatstown, Co. Dublin.

John L and Hughie had been released a few months prior to Bertie's departure.

## REFERENCES;

1. See Packey Joe Dolan's account
2. See *Harry* for Leo's account
3. See Christy Quearney for his reference to 'the firebugs'
4. Other sentences: Seán Ó Broin and Frank Weafer, 7 years: O'Flaherty  
10 years. Willie McGuinness, 6 years; Rúairf Brugha, Paddy McNeela, Dominic Adams and  
Larry Grogan, 5 years.
5. See Sean O'Neill's account

## TUNNEL ACCOUNT

As John's father told him when he returned late in 1916 from prison after surviving  
the death march, he applied to get into the Liberties but the Dublin Council said  
no. He moved instead with his father into Terry Maguire and John



## Michael Anthony (Tony) McInerney

OF CO. CLARE.



Michael Anthony McInerney

On the expansive flat lands hemmed by the estuary mud, called locally the slob, of the River Fergus where it joins the Shannon, and where today the big planes land and take off, is the patrimony of the MacNamaras, the Lynchs and the McInerneys of County Clare. It is a land of stone keeps and castles, of big houses, many now gone to ruin, of small chapels a top the hill, and of roofless abbeys. Brigid MacNamara was Tony McInerney's mother, reared in the townland of Cleanagh, the place of the sloping ground. A wee way to the north is the rath of Crockadoon; the sound of which, thank heavens, is still unspoiled gaelic; the hill of the rath. To the east of the rath, a couple of stone throws, is Clenagh Castle, given to the McMahan family when they changed over to the reformed church. They died out, but memories in these rural parts where lands and fields are everything, and where footprints are not suffocated by the concrete of suburbia, never die; are never obliterated. For nearby is a well; a limestone fringed holy well; and to the south, no more than a mile, is the old church and graveyard of Kilconry, a bit down from *Carrigerry House* and chapel

The farm at Clenagh was owned by Tony's great grandfather, James Lynch, on his mother's side, and it was he, working in the fields one day, was confronted by a running girl, Jane Smith, in a distressed and tearful condition. *The Terry Alts have rowed across the Fergus and will take me away.* She had fled from Deenish, a small flat island, land connected, on the mud of the Fergus. There is Deenish and Feenish and Inismacnaghtan, without crossing the deep water to the host of flat islands on the western side. James Lynch took her home to his womanless house, went out and up on the hill to observe downwards the approaching crew whom he recognised as fishermen. He returned with the news to Jane and an offer of marriage. *You need not fear the Terry Alts; I will protect you henceforth.* Did ever anything happen more fortuitously?

James and Jane had six daughters; one of them married John MacNamara of Ballyhennessy, and four emigrated to the U.S.A. John had a brother James. He was a Fenian and when things got hot after '67 he had to go on his keeping, eventually escaping to America. We are told that the entire MacNamara family walked to the top of one of the low mounds looking out over the Shannon as his sailing boat, with James in disguise aboard, passed placidly down the river; the entire family meanwhile vigorously waving white sacks and shirts as he passed for ever into exile.

The fate of the Celt, then as now, economic exile or political exile.

Commdt. Michael Brennan of pre-Truce I.R.A, a man who made a reputation for himself in Clare at that time, but who later swung Free State, tells of a night he rowed across the Fergus from the west bank where he had been staying in a McNerney house in Coolmeen, three miles west of Kildysart, reaching uncle Jack MacNamara's house at Clenagh; Jack being their boatman. When it came to writing or having his book *The War in Clare* ghosted, Michael failed to mention these names because, of course, they had remained Republican while he was then an officer in the Free State.

#### GROWING UP IN CLARE:

From James and Jane came Brigid who married John McNerney and thus came Michael Anthony, or Tony; but *fan go fóill*; we have not yet exhausted history. A social picture of Clare, in many ways so similar to the rest of Ireland in the early nineteen hundreds, has still to be unfurled. Brigid's people, the Lynch's, were farming stock; small farmers. Two of the family became nurses while one came to Dublin and did a secretarial course. They had 30 acres of land, and therefore considered themselves a cut above the small farmers class.

Tony's grandfather was from farming stock that ranked if anything a rung lower. They had been brought up at Cooraclare but had been evicted out of O'Callaghans Mills near Broadford by the O'Callaghan Westropp's, landlords of the area, living in a mansion, *Mary Fort*, three miles east of Tulla; later called *Lismehane* and since demolished.

We are deep in *Cuairt a Mheadhon Oidche* territory here; what with Lough Graney, Feakle, Clareabbey and Quin, and the colourful places dreamed up by Merriman;

*A scandalous tongue, I could relate  
Things of that woman's previous state  
As one with whom every man might mate  
In any convenient field or gate  
As the chance might come to him, early or late!*

Although mildly nationalist in this century, in the seventies of the last the O'Callaghan Westropp's were anything but. The thatched *botháns* of the tenantry spoiled the view of the lake from the big house so the tenantry had to go. They were evicted out of that and sent west over the Fergus estuary to Coolmeen three miles beyond Kildysart on the Fergus. Can you imagine those poor people meekly trudging across country because the landlord had sent them? They might have had a cart and a jennet and some geese and hens, and maybe a bonham or two; all loaded upon the cart, and they walking alongside. In time they prospered, while today there is nothing left in Clare of the name of Westropp.

There was a famous teacher in the school of Cooraclare after that called McDermott, and he would have had up to 35 in his class. Depending on their application and ability to learn he streamed them for the post office, the civil service, India or the Chinese railways. Some years ago I met a fellow who had been 40 years in China. He was from our part of Clare, says Tony, taking up the story, and had gone out at the age of 18. He came back more Chinese than Irish. He used to visit my father with whom he had been at school.

My father qualified for the civil service; customs and excise. At first he travelled all over Ireland, Scotland and Wales, but he wound up in Tullamore where he met a Clare girl, my mother, who was there as a nurse. She was from Cleenagh too and had trained in St. Mary's, Paddington, going there directly from her home; travelling overland and donning a uniform without even a cup of tea. Eventually she transferred back to Ireland; to Tullamore, the county town, meeting there with my father in 1912.

His work confined him now to the King's County, Offaly; to the bonded warehouse of the distillery and to his excise duties. They settled down in a house in Grand Parade, in one of the spacious properties there. I was born in 1917 and, as things warmed up, my father, with his quiet nationalist background, was able to pass on help and information. In that he had the assistance even of the Governor of the jail. They were two men above suspicion. Men on the run stayed in our home; Tomás Malone was one of them. As a child I would hear movement upstairs. I thought it was a ghost. Todd Burns of Dublin, one of the premier house furnishers of that time, fitted out the home; in what you would call now a turn-key operation; with settees, beds, robes; down to the last knife and fork, for ninety pounds. I turned up their bill recently. With me in the family there were three brothers but no sisters.

About 1923 we left Tullamore, buying a house in Corbally, in Limerick city. Since all my family are from Clare, we are Clare people really and there is quite a distinction between Clare people and Limerick people. At that time there was great go among the people; nobody seemed to want the Cosgrave regime. It was natural therefore for me as a young boy to join a local Fianna *sluagh*, with Paddy Dargan and Mattie Fahy in charge. Like a great many more when Fianna Fáil came to power they joined that party. My father, who had been a treasurer however, became disenchanted with De Valera at an early stage and resigned. Meanwhile I was sent to Blackrock College as a border. My father could afford that being well up in the service and having a comfortable income.

After some years in Blackrock College I returned to Dublin to follow an accountancy course. There I met Paddy Nolan and he was the first person I met who had contact with the I.R.A. They had a campaign going in England and there was quite a buzz in the air. The European war had started; we had declared neutrality, but there was still the unfinished business in the North. He put me in touch with a recruits company in which two of the officers were Micky Mullen and Mick O'Brien. We were out this Sunday in April 1940 on Cruagh mountain, the Featherbed, training in extended formation; without arms of course.

The Broy Harriers crept up upon us, and after calling on us to halt, started shooting with Thompson guns; whether at us or over us I do not know. The others kept running and then surrendered. I dived into the heather found a gully and slithered along it. I don't know how long I kept going but I seemed to have got away because eventually I came out upon the Kilakee road; kept on walking and reached a bus.

#### CAUGHT:

I reported back to Micky Mullen who instructed me to join up again and continue my training on the north side as I had a room in a boarding house in Gardiner Place close to Mountjoy Square. The lectures were on guns; Thompson sub machine

guns and small arms, by Frankie Rogers. I was now in an accountant's office in Anglesea Street, so I moved to a basement flat at 117 Upper Leeson Street where the weekly lecture arrangements continued. Of course if I was under observation the arrival of numbers of young fellows at my flat would be noticed but they already had my name as Jackie Parnell, who was caught in the Park following the Magazine raid in December 1939, was carrying it. So they were inquiring for a certain Tony McInerney but they were not sure where he lived.

Unfortunately for me however one fine evening in June 1940 I walked into their hands. I called back to 18 Gardiner Place, my former boarding house, to look up Owen McDermott. Something told me I should not be there. As I knocked at the door I saw a scruffy little fellow like a tout nearby, and the landlady who let me in seemed unusually abrupt.

I ran upstairs, knocking at McDermott's door, but of course there was no answer; he had been arrested a few days before yet it occurred to no one to alert us. Downstairs they were waiting for me too; guns at the ready. Previously I had lived at No. 15, and now I tried to convince them that I had called at 18 by mistake, but it was no go. They had my name already and they seemed to know enough about me. I was lugged off to a filthy Bridewell where I was held for two nights, before being charged with refusing to account for my movements, and transferred on remand to D. Wing in Mountjoy.

I was there when Paddy McGrath and Tom Harte were executed by firing squad on September 6, 1940. I heard shuffling as they were lead out, and later a volley of shots. A terrible gloom descended then upon the entire prison. That is the reason why, I think, future executions were held in Portlaoise. When it came to my turn to be tried before the Military Tribunal at Collins Barracks, I was charged with Mr. 'A', Finian Moynihan, and John Gordon of Parnell Square, Dublin. I was sentenced to four months and taken promptly to the Provost's Prison at Arbour Hill. Of course I realised I was inside now probably for the duration, as they were interning everyone immediately their sentence was completed.

Others may have a different view but I did not think highly of Commdt. M. Lennon, the Governor. I had come from Mountjoy where I had been under Sean Kavanagh whom most Republicans thought a decent enough man; and most of the screws too. Now we were under Free State military rule; you could almost smell the cordite of the firing squads from their green uniforms. Of the people that were there, the ones who stand out for me are Larry Grogan, Peadar O'Flaherty and Mixie Conway; they were the leadership and you could not fail to notice them. There was another fellow from Blackrock College, making three altogether from my former *alma mater*. I wondered what John Charles McQuaid, our President, would have thought of us. Johnny Stack and a fellow called Mick O'Shea from Tralee were there; lovely guys. So too were the fraternity caught on Cruagh mountain; Jack Hosey from Blackrock, Jimmy Poole from inner Dublin, Joe Delaney, Pat Hannon from Liverpool, Tomás McD Byrne and a couple more. George Fluke, a Protestant from Co. Cavan, demanded a service for himself on each Sunday morning. Just like the Catholics, he said; otherwise it will be discrimination.

In the event the minister refused to come every Sunday, although he did attend

frequently. Sean Dunne, an enormous man, and later a Labour T.D, although never in the I.R.A, was there too. I will have more to say on Sean who was in every way a very likable and lovable character. He used play chess regularly with Frankie Duffy of Belfast, a tough root, but short in stature. He towered over him, and Sean's favourite taunt when they were playing was to screech, *Duffy, will you for God's sake get up off your knees!*

I wanted to tell you of the O'Malleys of Limerick who had been so prominent in Fianna Fáil politics since the sixties. That always astonished me, for in the twenties when we lived next door, the old fellow, Joe, and his wife, Mary, were rabid supporters of King and Empire; she used go selling poppies on the street in November. They lived on Mill Road, Corbally, in a house, *Rose Neath*, surrounded by beech trees. Come 1924 however, and with Paddy McGilligan and Thomas McLoughlin alternately courting one of the daughters, the O'Malleys found that their interests lay with the new Free State (1). To such an extent did this develop that by the 1933/35 period Dessie, *pere*, was cock o' the walk among the Blueshirts of Limerick. To avoid travelling home through the Republican area known as the Abbey, he used keep his martial regalia in Geary's Hotel in Catherine Street. Shortly after that however they gravitated towards Fianna Fáil.

When my short sentence ended I was 'released', only to be met as I expected by armed Branch men at the gate. I was handcuffed and put into a car between them, with an armoured car fore and aft. I got a right shock however when I reached the Curragh Internment Camp. Awful, I thought, that humans can sink to this, not realising that I must soon join them myself. Awful clothing, torn and shabby boots, heavy grey shirts and long beards. Anyone sent to a Gualag for the first time can expect such a shock, but quickly, like the vampires, they absorbed me too and I became one of them; a mere number in Free State records. A non-person.

I opted to sleep in the Limerick hut, with near 30 others, each upon a little paliasse resting on three planks supported six inches over the floor. A few months later when the big fire occurred, we lost the planks, and the paliasse rested for years thereafter directly upon the floor. As a result of that too we lost the use of sheets, and the lights in the huts were left lighting all night together with other rigours that the Staters introduced.

Joe Crowe, a steady and reliable I.R.A veteran, was O.C of the hut, in which also was 'Lanty' Hannigan, Joe Bray, who later went to America, Plunkett Danagher, Jimmy Collins, Maurice Hickey, Bill Darcy, a basket weaver by trade, Sean Mulcahy, his brother Paddy, and Christy Dineen. Plunkett Danagher was our town crier; *tá an sagairt istigh; tá an síopa istigh; tá an banc istigh, agus mar sinn de*. Joe Bray, a tall handsome blonde man, was never afraid to speak his mind. Ó Mongáin describes him as having that wild sense of humour that was a characteristic of many volunteers. He was adjutant to 'Lanty' Hannigan who had been O.C London for a short time around September 1938 (being replaced by Eoin McNamee), and was later on remand in the Spring of 1940 in D. Wing, Mountjoy, during which he participated in the two big fights there. He was afterwards in the Curragh. Paddy Mulcahy was a quiet shy fellow while his brother was the opposite; an extrovert that was always showing off. He had found a piece of rusty iron that looked for all the world like

human excrement. This he laid on the floor inside the door of the hut shortly before the Stater delegation arrived to do their nightly count. He dribbled water around it. When Lieut. Carroll arrived, he glanced appalled, then stepped gingerly over it; *who is responsible for this, he bawled? Oh, that, said Sean, looking over. Allow me;* and he walked across, lifted the rusty piece of metal and slid it into his pocket.

Jimmy Collins, from Limerick, had worked in the OLO mineral water factory. OLO are the initials for Our Lady's Own, and the factory itself was owned by the Bradshaw family, one of whom had been shot by the Staters in August 1922. Unlike the rest of us he was sure therefore to get his job back whenever he was released. Anyway this day we were told by a P.A to bring back into the camp a load of blankets which had been fumigated.

We turned to the right outside the gates where we saw a Free State soldier with a kit of tools repairing a dismantled door. At that moment he commenced to walk away. *Close that tool box,* the P.A. guarding us called to him. He returned and locked the tool box, and off he went. We lifted from within the stores hut armfuls of folded blankets. *Wait a minute,* said Olo winking; *set them on top of that door there,* silently pointing to it. We put six bundles upon it, some of which draped down the side. With Olo in front and me behind, it seemed a perfectly ordinary carry. Once inside the gates we trotted towards the hut. We could hardly believe our luck; we had got free firing, badly needed, from the Staters. We jumped upon the door smashing it into small pieces. It burned readily in the stove on which we were now heating mugs of tea. The balloon went up of course with the Staters; *where was the door?* In they rushed; into a couple of huts, but they never found the door.

Whenever there is a gathering of human beings in large numbers without access to showers and washing machines like you have today there can be an outbreak of lice. It depends on whether you are undernourished or not; on your bloodstream. I know that it never affected you there but it hit many of us, and when it did you reported it in your own interest through your O.C. When you did that all clothing and blankets in the hut were taken away and fumigated, while we would then scrub out the floor of the hut. That occurred in most huts, with many people experiencing the itch. After all we were lying for years on palliasses upon the floor, and sleeping in grey blankets without sheets.

And of course we were hungry; really hungry. I had this starry idea about comrades in arms but there was a number of our own people in the Cookhouse who had forgotten that. They had a way of cutting the loaf into quarters so that you did not really receive a quarter, while they had an extra slice from many of us for themselves or their friends. And the loaves that time, while wholesome, were cramped small things because of the grain content. One of those days when I unexpectedly entered the Cookhouse between meals, I found one of their cronies having a feed of rashers and eggs; something the rest of us never saw from one end of the year to the other.

The Camp Council should have clamped down upon that instead of the pointless and protracted row they started when they ostracised the Cork men in C 1, (2) John Varian, Tadgh Lynch, Seamus Ronayne, Harrington and around fifteen more for 'taking orders from the Staters'; to draw coal to heat the stoves in their hut during the month of December 1940, one of the coldest spells we had there.

They were ostracised for some time and the people, the 52 'ring leaders' of the holocaust of December 14, after which five of our lads were shot, had been beaten into the Glasshouse for their subsequent trial; I was only a five eight but I questioned this action by the Council led by Leddy, Clements and Ó Cadhain. I know that many other people did too. Here were good I.R.A men and we were ostracising them, and some had already gone on hunger strike to have it lifted.

I decided this day to go up the concrete steps and enter their hut and do my own investigation. I did not care a tinkers if I was seen and reported. Some of them were lying down and others were sitting around the stove chatting. I was well received when I explained what I was about; I told them I would not rest until the suspension was lifted.

I then met John Joe Sheehy, the famous Kerry footballer who had been interned in February 1941, and Daneen Ryan of Tralee. I told them that they had the weight and influence to press upon Liam Leddy and the Council to have the suspension lifted. They agreed with me, and I am sure they tried, but the suspension continued until it was subsumed in the larger split that developed between the Liam Leddy and the Pearse Kelly groups.

I had no warning that the huts were going to go up. It took me by surprise and of course I could save nothing; suit, shoes, books; everything went. When it came to release years later, I had to borrow a suit to go home in. I remember Pierce Fennell, whose account you have, away down B. line, near the wash house, on the verge of the playing fields, stuffing paper between the vee sheeting and the weather boarding.

I have the clearest recollection that day of Sergeant Matthews lying on the ground close to the hut, and Jimmy Doherty from Belfast beating him on the head with an iron bar. Matthew's cap had fallen off and I remember seeing his bald head covered in blood. I dragged Jimmy away and appealed to him; *for God's sake don't kill him*. Tommy Sheerin, the big boxer came in at this stage and lifted Jimmy back. It was ironic that Sergt. Matthews got it.<sup>(3)</sup> He, while a stickler on duty, was at the same time courteous and kind to the internees. At least that was my experience of him. Now if it had been Jack White or Dollard or Tommy the Cook who had been receiving a hiding .... Sergeant Matthews came back later to the Camp fully recovered, but he never knew who had hit him or who had saved him.

The fire situation was let get out of hand; it exposed the tunnels and we came more harshly under Free State control than we had been. So many of their P.A's; their military police, were ex-1922 men, the garbage of the rural slums; itching to shoot Republicans; just like the good old days of 1922, and no questions asked. I saw Jack White, a P.A, telling Máirtín Standúin to get back. We had been herded down the field at the time; the embers of seven huts still burning. Máirtín refused to move: to take an order from a Stater. The bullet grazed his cheek, leaving a streak of blood upon his ear.

The first thing we should have burned was the church. The parsons who came in, Fanning and Carey (a right name), were no friends to us; one of them had advised us from the altar to sign out. After that, had we the foresight, we should have burned the concrete floored 'Icebox'. But people got excited, and when the

Staters saw the exposed network of tunnels they crowded about in amazement. Clearly they did not know we had been at work.

After that we were herded down to the playing field, away from the huts, and with machine guns around us. Held there for five hours, we were led back and let into some huts, but many of us; around one hundred and fifty, were herded into the hut known as the 'Icebox'. I, being starry eyed, volunteered for it to relieve some older man who would not have survived lying upon a concrete floor for days and nights without covering in the month of December. One of those was Joe Clarke, 1916 veteran, whom I saved from the 'Icebox'. We remained locked in there for days without food so that many became really distressed. When therefore on the Monday morning breakfast was called from the Cookhouse, we all fell out and lined up quickly. It was then that the shooting started, because the Staters had given orders that we could not march, and besides they may have jumped to some silly conclusion that we were going to rush the gate.

The P.A's pulled their revolvers and fired at the crowd. It was B and C line people they were firing at; the other lines of huts D. were not involved as they approached the Cookhouse from the west; from the opposite direction. (See the map of the Camp layout on page 564)

The main gate was directly in front of the gravel avenue between B and C line at the top of the ascending road. I want to emphasise that there was no chance of rushing this gate nor was that even contemplated: it was covered by an elevated sentry post, by other guards, and there was a second gate outside. Inside the gate at this time a line of P.A's were standing with drawn weapons. I was in the first hut after the 'Icebox' on B line, and that took the brunt of the unexpected volley. None however in our hut was hit, and I must assume that most of the P.A's fired into the air as otherwise there would have been slaughter.

It was unexpected all the same; they were all dropping around me; I scurried into a hut. A dead silence fell upon the Camp, while a couple of fellows assisted Barney Casey into a hut. Another fellow, Connell, from Cork, got a bullet in the belly. There were others wounded.

At that moment I saw Billy Mulligan, the deposed O.C, walk out from a hut and step right up to the Staters, to Capt. McNamara; *there are men seriously wounded inside the huts*. It was not O'Flaherty or Grogan who did that; it was Billy Mulligan.

Peadar O'Flaherty was seen by many of us as autocratic; a disciplinarian who regarded himself as a cut above the rest of us. Larry Grogan was a complete moron. I cannot understand the postures of these people; Tony Magan, Willie McGuinness and Mixie Conway. How can I describe them? Martinets? It was after this episode they ostracised the Cork crowd in C. 1. I have to admit I was never a model of discipline myself; I could see too easily through the chaff and I was not going to go along with it. Yes, the standard of some of our volunteers was not what it should have been; the best I can say for them was that they were idealistic and they did not surrender. As for De Valera; we were not endangering neutrality. The only threat we posed to him was his big majority.

#### COMRADES AND FRIENDS:

Of the people who were there and whom I am invited to recall; well there were



the three Whelan brothers from Benburb Street in inner Dublin, Eddie, Paddy and Tom; gems of fellows; bricklayers if I remember correctly. Paddy had suffered an ear wound. When you spoke to him, he might hear you, but he would only nod.

There were the Lyons brothers too; all three of them, Mick, James and Johnny. One went on later to be in Dáil Éireann on the translations staff along with two other republican felons; Tarlach Ó h-Uid and Liam Ó Lunaigh. There were seven or eight Bradys in the Camp; all but two from Dublin.

Myles Heffernan, who had been on Dublin Battalion intelligence, always struck me as an affable bourgeois middle class type, and sure enough he lived in Rathgar. Jerry Cotter from Tralee was a witty funny fellow, while Máirtín Standúin, who spoke Irish perfectly, had a distinct Liverpool accent, and that always struck me as comic. I admired Tommy Sheerin; a very big fellow from Co. Tyrone and a professional boxer. He was a straight talker.

I remember two P.A.'s coming into the hut one day and pushing this fellow around. Tommy stood up and said; *would you like to try that on me?* They drew back and left the hut.

Liam Brady and Harry White were two fine violin players. Oh, there was Dick Mulready, Frankie Rogers and a dozen others; enough indeed, taking all he instruments into account, to have formed a major orchestra. I don't think that idea ever occurred to anyone. Harry was so gentle it is hard to imagine him running out of a Cavan farmhouse with a gun blazing.

Behan I liked and could tolerate while I was there. He was an acknowledged character; charming and full of life. Ten years later he was taking my children swimming on the shore at Monkstown. Yes, that was Brendan. And that too was after my Catacombs period, about which so much literary nonsense has been written. Keeping order in that iniquitous place, I was. Between Gainor Crist, Petra, Behan, Hoddie, John Ryan, Cronin and the rest. Has ever a georgian basement had so much rubbish written about it? It was J.P. Donleavy who hyped it.

There was a rotund middle-aged man in the Camp from Co. Wexford; very well read and skilled; 'Der Tag' we called him. I used join him and the Drummonds in a game of solo which they welcomed as they were quite eager for money; that is, the tin Free State money. I remember a funny incident when I came out this day with a spread misere. Neidín sprang up; what the blazes, glaring at 'Der Tag'. *Why did you not play your deuce?*

But 'Der Tag' never got ruffled. He thought they were too greedy so he let me win. He had a paralysed arm and a limp; but a fertile mind. Anything he had to say had substance. Neidín by profession was a mill wheel dresser; a very skilled occupation. He and his father used travel the country dressing the mill wheels with chisels and mallets. They had a big iron bar which they could move around the wheel, which itself was used for grinding flour. The mill staff lifted out the top wheel using sheerlegs, block and tackle. The bed wheel was then dressed in situ. The purpose of the iron flange was to ensure that the wheel was perfectly level after dressing. Meanwhile the wheat was ground on another set of wheels.

Mick O'Shea used read out loudly for us each evening in the hut the one newspaper that each hut, by virtue of what was called the camp rebate, received. Mick

was a good clear reader, with a pronounced English accent. Mick was also an accomplished engraver upon the silver rings beaten out from shillings, which at that time were real silver and not the base metal of today's money.

Tomás McDonagh Byrne was another with a cultured English accent; of average height, full faced with fair hair and wearing glasses, he had the appearance of an office worker. He had the unique distinction that, not only was he deported from England in August 1939, but his father and grandfather had been deported in the Tan period. His grandfather, Peter Murphy, owned the '98 Shop in Scotland Road in Liverpool which Ó Mongáin says was used as a call office and depot by Dick Goss and Joe Collins in 1939. With a name like that it did not last.

Mattie Casey from Longford, brother of Barney, swore that once his father died he would go after Capt. McNamara; but that never came about, which was just as well.

Frankie Rogers taught me how to take a Luger pistol asunder and put it together again when he was training officer at my flat in Upper Leeson Street. He was purged and flayed up to the Glasshouse after the Fire, and there badly beaten although he had nothing to do with it. Rúairí Brugha: he was purged too and beaten unmercifully. Did not the same people to uphold King and Empire shoot his father in Thomas's Lane behind O'Connell Street, Dublin, in 1922? (I was pleased later to meet the widow of Cathal Brugha but was then disappointed. Being approached so often with pleas and pleadings had made her brusque. It was a message I conveyed from Pearse Kelly. *No, I cannot help*, was all she said; *there is now no organisation.*)

Plunkett Danagher, from Limerick city, our town crier (*tá an sagairt istigh: tá an siopa istigh*), was a completely harmless character, but was also set upon and beaten when they had him on his own in the Glasshouse. It shows how intelligent they were: they thought he was an important leader.

Frank Mulvaney, 'the assassin', from Dublin, so called because of his thin saturnine face and deep set eyes, was an aspiring writer, I used to run into him in McDaid's afterwards.

Tom Cullimore, a teacher or a journalist if I am not mistaken, was from Enniscorthy, he was a quiet deep thinking lad. Nick Lally, from Connemara, was conductor after on the bus to Carraroe; a great traditionalist and an Irish speaker. Mattie O'Neill makes a reference to him.

Paddy Dalton was a quiet and reclusive veteran from Tipperary. He had lost an arm in the Tan war; nonetheless we found him interned with us 20 years after. Does it surprise you? He was a stickler on cleanliness which in that place, considering how we were accommodated, was difficult. He had the last bunk beside the door entering, and he kept it spotless. Always hanging his blankets to air outside, and constantly sweeping.

Liam Murtagh from Castletowngeoghegan was dark and thin, with eyes, which because of his poor sight, always seemed to be squinting. Even to read the tin coins, which we had for money, required that he hold them in the air close to his face.

Connie Byrd of Cork City had been arrested at the time of the attempt, from the convent grounds, to tunnel into Cork Jail on August 3, 1940, when John Joe

Kavanagh was riddled, and Roger Ryan seriously wounded, and Jobie Sullivan of Coburg Street also arrested (4). Connie was a big man, maybe six feet four, with an open cheerful face. He it was who introduced the game of *jackstones* to the Camp. It was played with five small stones, one of which was thrown in the air while one of the remaining four was grabbed up and the descending stone caught in the same hand. If they struck there was a crack, and the trick was to keep on doing this until all five stones were held in that hand, and none had struck each other to cause a crack. There was a complicated movement, they called, *lay the egg*, and *the finger and thumb*, followed by again throwing in the air in descending order, five four three until the successful player had no stone and no one heard a crack.

Needless to say there were wild arguments among the devotees, but Connie was so adept that he could play this simple game without a miss. For the rest of us it was looked upon as a children's game, and indeed was looked upon with scorn by some people.

Joe Birrell of Dundalk I recall as an exceptionally fast runner; the sort who could do the hundred yards, as it then was, in close to ten seconds; I could fairly shift myself. Altogether a nice guy. I remember with affection Murray Bolger of Wexford town; in with his brother Ted. Murray loved clowning around and being full of droll sayings such as, *oh, that man's mother was a Kildare man*.

Bill Coady from Ballinakill was one of our cooks; he walked with a limp.

Tom Costelloe of Boherbee, Tralee, was another of the cooks. It was he who after the Fire, when we had no food for two days, unwittingly caused the Staters to open up on us by calling, when he came to C line, 'Grub Up'. He returned to the Cookhouse as we all rushed out with our mugs, and then the shooting started.

Bob Clements was very much an intellectual and a man with an immense store of knowledge. Descended from a brother of the Lord Leitrim assassinated near Mulroy Bay in 1878, he had a brother who was a Lieut. Col. in the British Army, and who seemingly inherited much of what was going because the family, I need hardly say, did not approve of Bob's position among the hierarchy of the I.R.A. He was swept up in late 1940 and remained almost to the end; all of four years. Tom Leahy, whose address was given as Listowel, was actually from Co. Limerick, and afterwards qualified as a chemist.

Christy Dineen of Limerick city was always broke, but he earned some tin money by tapping out rings. He was adept at all sorts of craft work. When he had earned a few shillings he would stop, only to be pressed to finish the work promised and sometimes paid for in advance. *The bourgeoisie are dunning me*, he would complain, *and I have nowhere in this God forsaken place where I can hide*. One Christmas, by some freak of luck, he broke everyone in the hut playing pontoon. It went on for a week that he just could not lose. If he twisted on twenty he would get an ace. This happened on one occasion when he tried to let a friend win back a few bob. He then took on an assistant to deal the cards and to run errands. Come along my man, he would say when the shop was announced open.

On one occasion he bought all the bread in the shop and had it taken to his hut with a notice put up outside; *free bread for the deserving poor: double price for the bourgeoisie. Take it or leave it*. The poor he decided were his friends, while the bourgeoisie

were those who dunned him or who had refused to extend his credit. Of course like the man in the fairy tale.... his luck ran out eventually and so did the money, and he soon had to ask the same people for commissions.

Seamus Kelly, later Quidnunc in the *Irish Times*, was one of the concentration guards. He recognised me and called to me from the rows of barbed wire. I let him have it then, yelling back, *don't talk to me, keeping a fellow Irishman in a concentration camp.*

Strangely enough so also was Terry Flanagan of Dublin who had fought in the Spanish Civil War in the Connolly column. His old comrades in arms, Mick O'Riordan, Paddy Smith and others, were inside the barbed wire while my bold Lieut. Flanagan marched up and down outside. This appointment was indeed a deft piece of irony on the part of the Staters, but Terry went with it. Afterwards he ingratiated himself with Republicans by telling tales of the make up of firing squads. He it was that told me that the captain in charge of the execution of George Plant was the man later promoted Lt. Col. William J. Bergin of Tipperary, Plant's own county. Bergin died while I recorded this. *Sic transit gloria mundi.*

There was one other fabulous character in the Camp - indeed there was never a shortage of fabulous characters - namely Eric, or 'Lanty' Hannigan; tall, lean and from Limerick city; as brave as they come but the biggest liar in creation. You have a story about him in Killiney Castle in 1939 in *Harry*, and of course he was in England before he had to scurry back here. He was interned from earlier on; from February 1940. There is a story about him I must relate; it sounds just like Lanty but it happens to be true (5). He was drilling with a rifle a platoon of our lads in a field in the Plassey area and, as they stood in two lines before him, he went through the motions of presenting arms. Suddenly the lads fronting him turned tail and fled towards the hedge. Mystified, he swung around, to see a red bull - it was known as Bugler's Bull- head down and charging towards him. He judged that he would never make the hedge before the bull was on him, so he dropped on one knee and fired, hitting the bull between the eyes. It stumbled and rolled to a halt yards from him. The training session was then put off until another time. The single shot being reported, police called the next day but went off, suspecting agrarian trouble.

I remember another incident within the Camp concerning 'Lanty'. After the Fire we were kept locked in for long periods and those who smoked - maybe half of those there - were gasping. Suddenly through the top of the open window came a twenty packet of Players. It had been thrown in by a P.A, 'Thousands' Kelly of Limerick, a man known to Lanty, whose hut it was. Sean Dunne, later a Labour T.D. and an enormous man, I mean tall and powerful, scooped up the packet remarking, *Kelly is a friend of mine.* There was an argument then, but short of physical force it remained unsolved. Most of the hut agreed with 'Lanty', knowing we would get a smoke from him, but from Sean Dunne you could expect nothing. In fairness to Sean, and I have plenty to say of him later on, we had so little to share that we could only share with a close friend.

I taught mathematics there; elementary mathematics; I liked the subject. I attended other classes there; Irish and German. Paddy Drummond, Neidín and Tadhg's brother from Tralee was the Irish teacher; a great man when at liberty for greyhounds. You would rarely meet Neidín or Tadhg anywhere without a couple of dogs

on a leash. Tony Magan taught the German class and we learned a lot from him. Song and poetry was his method. We learned them by heart, and I had quite a lot of German when I was released. Neil Goold taught Russian. I did not know him very well, but we resented them forming a cell within the Camp. I thought it was disloyal, but they considered now that Russia was in the war that we should help England. They advised others to sign out and worked hard trying to persuade I.R.A men to join the British Army. Six may have done but that would be all.

#### ON SEAN DUNNE:

I met Sean Dunne many times after we came out and we developed a close friendship. He should not have been imprisoned in Arbour Hill or the Curragh as he was never in the I.R.A.(6) Although he adhered to the discipline and worked like a trojan despite his size, while the tunnels were under way. When he was released eventually he commenced to organise the agricultural workers. He was felling trees at this time, but through his union work, he built up what I will call, a socialist profile and eventually got elected under the Labour ticket to the Dáil. In fact, although he could quote reams from James Connolly, he had no real political philosophy at all. He was a member within that party at this time of a group said to be studying the Common Market, and on one occasion he addressed them in the Irish language. Big deal; he wrote the E.C secretary who gave his talk official approval. About this time he married Cora Ryan, a sister of Kathleen, the film star, and of John, the writer and painter.

They lived in comparative luxury (we are talking now of the early fifties, of the period of *Envoy* magazine and of an era which our shallow liberals of the nineties regard as barren; people spancellor by churchmen and unwilling to enjoy themselves. What rot), since their mother, Mrs. Agnes Veronica Ryan had built up a great business of fresh food shops in Dublin known as the Monument Creameries (from Parnell's monument) close to where the first one had opened.

The house where Sean resided, along with Cora's mother, was known as *Burton Hall*, Stillorgan; a big strung-out two storey mansion of a place inside well kept grounds, full of valuable paintings and antique furniture. It is there still although it has changed ownership.

Once at a family dinner, and I suppose there were many such, John Ryan recalls Sean at the head of this carved table, set with every sort of drink and delicacy you could imagine, a cigar dangling between his fingers, a glass of brandy close by, and there he was enunciating the principles of socialism. Damned inappropriate as a setting, John remarked afterwards.

When first he was elected, and passing along the corridors of Leinster House, he was introduced to Dan Breen. For a moment Breen was taken aback, and he told a friend after; *that is the living image of an R.I.C man I shot dead in 1920; can it be his son?*

The Ryan's had a factotum called 'Eddie the Wheel', for a while he was interned himself until Mrs. Ryan ordered him to sign out which he promptly did. He was her driver, and although cars were then off the road, she could not do without him. Later on, with cars back and Cora married, his unofficial duty was to drive the couple to the 'bona fide' pubs outside the city where late night drinking was permitted.

One night, after they had left the 'Dead Man's', beyond Chapelizod, Sean called

from the rear seat for Eddie to stop; *I want a leak*. Obediently Eddie pulled in to the grass and Sean emerged. Attempting to re enter on the traffic side, Sean thought better of it; slammed the door and commenced to walk around on the grass. But Eddie, hearing the door slam, put on a spurt and drove off. Meanwhile Cora, who was a bit inebriated and very deaf anyway, continued to prattle away to Sean who, of course, seeing the disappearing tail light and no car willing to stop after midnight, commenced the long walk home. Eventually he knocked at a door and got in somewhere; *ye know me; I'm Sean Dunne*. West Dublin being his constituency anyway he would be taken in. Like all T.D's Sean had a personal locker in Leinster House. One day, while Charles Haughey was Minister for Justice, he was called to that office. *This has been brought to me, says your man, laying a Luger on his desk. It was given in to me to surrender, says Sean, smiling.* He found Haughey accommodating in many of the no hope cases he brought forward, but the locker incident proved to Sean that there was a Branch man in Leinster House with a key to those that might be suspect.

Almost my last outing with Sean was in 1969 after the West Dublin constituency was divided and Ballyfermot and Crumlin came together, leaving him facing the popular vote-getter Dr. John O'Connell, also of Labour. Headquarters had decided to allow the two of them fight it although there was only a slight chance of Labour winning two seats in that constituency. Sean called me out to *Broomfield* on Knapton Road, Monkstown, where he was now living with Cora; Mrs Ryan having purchased the house for them.

He told me he was unable to fight the election because of the state of his health, but would I act as his factotum for the three weeks preceding. This I did and I enjoyed it. Sean was only barely able to get around. I drove him everywhere. I attended his meetings and was shocked to find that he did not give one damn about the Labour Party; its leader, Corish, or anyone in it. His sole object in life was to be back within the precincts of 'the House'. He was literally magnetised by the lure of parliament, and that seems to go for all of them. *Forget about Fianna Fáil or Fine Gael; the real enemy is O'Connell.*

He had helpers with strange nicknames; the 'Brush' O'Hanlon, out of Railway Street, 'Stalkey' O'Toole, 'One Round' O'Brien, 'Footloose' O'Hara and more. Miracle of miracles, both himself and O'Connell were elected but he died within days; yes, he died within days. In all my life I had asked him to do only one small turn for me; *get me a set of the Curragh coinage*. Minister Hilliard gave him a couple, but they fell into Cora's hands upon his death and I never received mine.

I don't suppose I was ever inside the hut used as a Chapel in the Camp. Pierce Fennell is therefore not the only one who did not go to Mass. Liam Brady was another, although he may have gone some of the time; he grabbed the chance of a quiet hut in which to practise his violin. I suffered some aggression from a Kerryman over this until after the Fire when we settled into county huts and I was with the Limerick and Clare men. Pierce was there too, and I well remember that story he tells of rigging up the makeshift electric fire that blew all the lights in the Camp. I also remember lying in bed regaled by his adventures. He told me that once coming home from a dance in Kilkee, he and his friend took horses from a field; mounted them and rode to Carrigaholt.

Leaping off, they then slapped them on the hind quarters and sent them back the road home. They had done this a number of times, but of course they had to know their horses; that they were not fresh ponies.

On the Mass thing, I recall being back in bed this Sunday morning; everyone else having departed. John Joe Callaghan of Tralee, older brother of Friday, entered. *Tá an sagairt istigh*, he shouted; *get up you fucking pagan*, pulling the blankets off me. My boots were beside the bed and I grabbed one, flinging it as hard as I could, catching John Joe in the mouth. He bawled in pain, jumping on me and raining blows. Covered in blankets I could not defend myself, but suddenly relief came. Paddy Pearl, from Coonagh, near Limerick, ran down the hut, catching John Joe with such a *luadar* that he toppled him to the floor. *I'll teach you to hit a man on the ground*, he shouted. He bate the shite out of him; then separated by others, they all trooped off like good Christians to Mass leaving me in peace.

I was released at the end of 1943, just three and a half years after my arrest on the doorstep of 18 Gardiner Place. I returned to the accountancy firm I had been working with, Purfills, and they at once sent me back to Newbridge to audit the books of Bord na Mona. I remained with Purfills a number of years; departed for London; did some writing there; returned here and married Teresa Hardy, a Dublin girl, in Haddington Road, having seven children later. I am still hanging on, and I expect to do so for a while yet.

## REFERENCES:

1. Thomas McLoughlin, the leading engineer behind the Shannon Scheme, later married one of the O'Malley girls.
2. See Seamus Ronayne's account
3. See John L. McCormack's account
4. See the account by Jim Savage.
5. 'Lanty' was remembered in *Memoirs of a Savoy Pageboy*, in the *Old Limerick Journal*, December 1979.
6. Séamus Ó Mongáin recalls Sean Dunne as a tall young man with a resemblance to James Connolly; he even sported a full Connolly moustache. He received a twelve month sentence for possession of a Mauser pistol and one round of ammunition. Playing basket ball he was almost as tall as the net which gave him an advantage, especially as he could swing it away when the other team tried to score. As we played it in Arbour Hill it was a rough and ready game, Séamus says, with few rules.



## GEORGE MOLLOY

### OF WEXFORD TOWN:



*George Molloy at home, 1993*

George lists friends from the town, and relates how he came to be a Republican, but first talking less about himself, George, now well over 80 years of age, allowed his memory range back over other Wexford men interned, commencing with Tom Cullimore, youngish, a school teacher, well able to write, and, according to George, naturally clever. He was an organiser, he thought, as he moved all over the country. (He was, actually, in 1941, O.C of the I.R.A in the county).

As for *Der Tag*, a nickname for Mick Conroy; myself and Peter Donnelly, he related, were invited this day to his home in Gorey. The house, was very good for a bachelor; tidy in all respects, and he appeared to read a lot.

Why did you bring us here, Peter asked, as they sat by his fireside. Because, he answered, I want you to know that I am as good as any man in the Movement. I may be older than many but I am as good.

Nicky Boggan of Ballycogley came from a family that produced great hurling people and Nicky was a sound full back. He organised things around Ballycogley, keeping the Movement going there. He came then into Wexford town where Hayes made him Quartermaster.

He had been O.C of Fianna when he was young, and even had travelled with dispatches in the Civil War. He was active from an early age, an exemplary Republican with good morals he was a fine type of person; altogether a man you could look up to. There was no other man in the Movement for whom we had greater respect.

There was David Grace of Island Road, Enniscorthy; but I cannot tell much of him as I scarcely knew him. Walter Sutton of Enniscorthy was older than some of them, but a hardy man. He was not a fellow who was physically active in the Movement as he had a small impediment, but he was one held in great respect as being very dependable.

Jim Kerr's people of Enniscorthy were in the watch-making business and hence they were comparatively well off. They were displeased that Jim had become mixed up with the I.R.A, but that did not deter him for, when he was in the Curragh a while, he teamed up with 'the Reds'.

Joe Leary of Clonroche was a nice fellow, although I never really got close to him. Tom Murphy of New Ross and Joe had the secretaryship of the G.A.A for a number of years.

Richard Daly of Ferns was a brother of Peter who went to Spain during the civil war, and covered himself with glory, being one of the bravest fighters of all time. He fell at Quinto in August 1937.(1). Richard was an easy going, sensitive chap, never guilty of any great activity in the Movement, but well liked.

Ned Drummond was an officer transferred from his home place, Tralee. He spent a number of years in Co. Wexford. He was a great man with greyhounds and equally given to book reading; given the chance, he would make off with some of yours, borrowed of course. Liam Connor thought Ned an awfully nice fellow, but inclined to take things too easy.

Eddie Kehoe of this town was a good man; he was Battalion Intelligence Officer for a number of years; he was an engineer with the Dept. of Post and Telegraphs. Bill Ryan arrived home from America shortly after Fianna Fáil came to power, hoping to get work under them but that did not happen. Like many more he turned then to insurance. He was a great character, a great man with a yarn; he could provide merriment when things were down.

John Neville of Arnestown, New Ross, was a farmer's son; and associated with John Alyward of *Talbot Hall*, New Ross. I cannot tell you much of the Boggans, beyond that they were fine hurlers from hurling country near Ballycogley.

Matt Kent: well, most people would have considered him an old man; still with his hair but rosy cheeked and wrinkled. He was from Ballycarney, near Bunclody, and he was not swept in until December, 1940. He was a great character, full of good humour; he had the reputation of having been out in the Land War.

After Fianna Fáil had formed the party in 1926 they came some years later to him saying he should not pay annuities on his land. 'I will not pay annuities,' he told them. Mind, I don't think he needed much prompting but he was put in jail and Wexford had its first land annuity martyr. (2)

When Fianna Fáil came to power in 1932 it was a different story: they demanded one half of the annuities from Matt. 'I did not pay before', he said, 'and I am not going to pay now'. So Matt was back in jail again in 1933, and that might have been the fourth time. It was hard to know why a man interested only in the security of his holding should have been interned but interned he was. He went into an Irish-speaking hut and all I can say is that he did his best. Everyone loved Matt.

To me, Peadar O'Flaherty of Enniscorthy was a very gentle person, and great company. He was a fine Republican, too, one of the best in this country. As his family was in the law business and well off, he need not have got mixed up with the I.R.A, but he choose to bring hardship upon himself and yet he stuck it out. I met him on a couple of occasions, and another time with Sean Russell, whom I thought was a great and inspiring personality.

#### LIVED WITH STEPHEN HAYES:

I knew Stephen Hayes very well, for I lived with him in Rosslare, where he had a house. It may have been on loan from a friend or it may have been rented. Anyway, I stayed with him one summer for about 10 days. He had his home in Enniscorthy, where his father had been a publican, and was arrested briefly after the outbreak there in 1916. There were seven boys and four girls in the family, his sister Mary later marrying Larry de Lacy.(3)

I remember, when in Rosslare, walking along the main road in the summer of 1935 and meeting Peter Daly, who later went to Spain. He had a machine gun, it might have been a Lewis, on the cross-bar of his bike and with no covering except a sack across the end of it. He had passed Kelly's Hotel on the way, in broad daylight.

Now, I considered that unwise but Hayes permitted it; or maybe it was a case that Daly would have done it, anyway. It was not yet a period of tension; nonetheless, I considered it unwise and it should not have happened.

At this time Hayes was giving me all sorts of organisational jobs to do and faithfully I carried them out. He seemed to me to be at pains to give the impression that he was a great Republican and full of business.

I knew Larry de Lacy, too, of Ballypierce, Enniscorthy, but not nearly so well. He kept to himself, being older than I, and entirely different from Hayes. Hayes always drank; everybody knew that, and it was a time when there was not much drinking done but Hayes could drink, and he even used our commemoration money for his drinking.(4)

I remember we had a staff meeting planned for Nicky Cleary's house in 1936, and Sean MacBride had come from Dublin to chair it. It was fixed for a particular time of the evening and, at the appointed time, there was no sign of Hayes. Now, you know how punctual MacBride was always and, as time passed his annoyance grew. After about an hour Hayes did turn up but, if he did, he was visibly under the influence. MacBride was very angry and told him off.

I cannot say what he reported back but, in the light of that, it was foolish for Russell to appoint him 18 months later to headquarters staff. Still, we were all shocked in the Curragh to hear that he had been arrested, although he had sown the seeds of suspicion for some time before that. He had shown himself the type of man who should never have been in that position, for he was never, except among a certain coterie, a popular man.

We Wexford men in the Curragh all felt terrible when he was exposed. We felt we should have known all along. We felt so low, we wondered if we should be ostracised since he was responsible for letting us all down. Mixie Conway, however, continued to believe in Hayes but that may have been because he was responsible for elevating him to H.Q. staff. Hayes had another defender too, from this county; Maire Comerford. She did not know him as well as we did, so that may be the reason she thought well of him.

Jim Crofton, who had returned from America and joined the Special Branch as the I.R.A. spy in the Castle was from this county, a man I knew well, a fine man and a fearless individual who would tackle anything that had to be tackled. He was married to a girl by the name of Hess who had worked in the Talbot Hotel; good people, too.

Jim may not have been betrayed by Hayes. He was caught in Fenit in February, 1941, with Johnny, 'Machine Gun', Connor, when they were there trying to secure the escape out of Ireland of Herman Goertz. To my mind, it was not worth losing men of that calibre for the sake of Goertz. For being, as the authorities saw it, a traitor, a special place was found for Jim: he was consigned for five years to the hell hole of

Portlaoise. In some circles Hayes was referred to as 'Little Benny' but I cannot explain why. Jim Crofton continued to believe in his innocence.

#### HOW I CAME TO BE A REPUBLICAN:

Dropping what was clearly to George a distasteful subject, he turned to his own inception into the Republican Movement. I was born, he said, in 1912. My family always was nationalist, and my mother, whose maiden name was Margaret Brown from Faythe, here in Wexford town, was in Cumann na mBan. I had three sisters and one brother, his name being Jack, prominent afterwards in the spring industry.

Though I never joined Fianna, I knew many in it, but I had my mind set upon the I.R.A although still only 16. I was living at that time in Faythe and I knew Peter Donnelly of Whiterock: he was long prominent and was a battalion O.C. One way or another, I stayed out until I was 18, having remained at school until that time, and again I contacted Peter. I had remained in school as I had intended going for teaching but insurance work turned up instead. I secured work with the Britannic Assurance in Wexford town, so automatically I joined the local company.

Moss Twomey was a frequent visitor here; I met him on numerous occasions. He was a fine Chief of Staff and a fine figure of a man into the bargain. He used bring us, accompanied by Peter Donnelly, to a field at Bishopswater where we went through drilling exercises. Then we would march through the town and disperse. It was in the early years of Fianna Fáil, when circumstances differed greatly from what they are today. But, even at that time, Fianna Fáil for me had no attractions. I could see that De Valera was motivated by this notion of power at any cost; and when, later, it came to suppressing Republicanism, time proved how right I had been.

#### ROUNDED UP:

I was rounded up, like most others, in June 1940, and brought to what we called the small camp at the Curragh. It was there that I met Billy Mulligan the O.C for the first time. Plenty has been said already, how he and his Council had come to be overthrown, and how ostracisation, with which I never agreed, began. Some say it was done to freeze out 'the Reds'; the Leddy side wanted them banished but we wanted them kept.

The Fire, of course, was a disaster; but many others have said that already. It was particularly annoying because it exposed our network of tunnels, one of which commenced under the floor directly beneath my bed.

I was always hungry in the Curragh, I used go down the field and pluck the wild sorrel from under the barbed wire. Yes, I was hungry, for I always had a good appetite and still have now.

A brother of Ned Drummond called Patcheen, a little fellow, had been a school teacher and a great footballer. He slept in a bed beside John Joe Sheehy. They were both Tralee men with a great record in football and, of course, John Joe had a great record from Tan times (5). But Patcheen, who looked up to John Joe, was always trying to wait upon him and do things for him, and that irritated John Joe; a great soldier but one who could not stand being waited upon.

Who else do I recall? Well, everyone remembers Seán Óg Ó Tuama who helped brush up my Irish. Myles Heffernan of New Ireland was on the Council, and Purty Landers, another close friend. When he visited Wexford later I made sure to bring

him to my father who had a high regard for the Kerry footballers and was tremendously pleased to meet Purty in person.

Neil Goold Verschoyle had a lot to say about the 'system', as he called it; he impressed me because he really believed in what he was doing. And Fursey Walsh of Galway; I remember him well as a comical fellow, he was one of a fine family.

I came home to a situation of no work and no job but, somehow, I slotted in. I knuckled down to it and, four years later with a house to my name, I married. I can say now looking back upon the years that have passed since then, that I had a wife and a family that were a treasure to me.

## REFERENCES:

1. Noted in Michael O'Riordan's *Connolly Column*
2. In the issue of *An Phoblacht* for July 18, 1931, Matt Kent is reported jailed.
3. Stephen Hayes was born on December 26, 1902, at the family residence, Court Street, Enniscorthy. He joined Fianna prior to 1916; left school in 1920, becoming a clerk in Wexford Co. Council. At that time he was a sprint athlete and played senior gaelic. He served 14 months internment during the Civil War in Hare Park, the Curragh. He died in Enniscorthy in 1974.
4. Conor Foley, in *Legion of the Rearguard*, states that Hayes was suspected of having embezzled money while secretary of the Wexford G.A.A.
5. See *Survivors* for John Joe Sheehy.
6. **The County Wexford Prisoners in the Curragh, 1940-1945**

The official returns for interned prisoners gives 19 as the number interned from the county. We list them below:-

Tom Cullimore, of Enniscorthy;  
 Mick Conroy ('Der Tag'), of Gorey;  
 Nick Boggan, of Ballycogley;  
 Peter Donnelly, of Whiterock;  
 David Grace, of Enniscorthy;  
 Walter Sutton, of Enniscorthy;  
 Jim Kerr, of Enniscorthy;  
 Joe Leary, of Clonroche;  
 Tom Murphy, of New Ross;  
 Pender Murphy, of Enniscorthy;  
 Murray Bolger, of Wexford town;  
 Ted Bolger, his brother;  
 Jim Lacey, of Barntown;  
 Ned Drummond, (native of Tralee);  
 Ned Kehoe, of Wexford town;  
 Bill Ryan, of Wexford town;  
 George Molloy of Wexford town  
 John Aylward, of New Ross;  
 John Neville, of New Ross;

Note: the list may not contain all then imprisoned

## EAMON Ó CIANÁIN:

### *BÉAL FÉIRISTE:*



*Eamonn Ó Cianáin*

*His father was in the Boer War and was seriously wounded in Flanders, but Eamon grew up with a deep love of the gaelic tradition.*

I had a great love of Gaelic songs and learned a lot from Gearóid Ó Maolmhichil. Gearóid was one of the finest men I have ever met. Steeped in the Gaelic tradition, he spread its message by his beautiful songs, and a deep melodious voice that was music to my ears when he spoke. I learned *Máire de Barra*, and *Skibbereen*, which he translated himself, and *Liam Ó Maol Iosa*, another song he translated from English. Then there was the 'Whack Song' as we called it, and *Amhrán an Dhá Shaoil*. I learned songs with Seamus Rickard who died recently, *go ndeanaidh Dia trocaire ar a anam uasal*. I grew up learning songs, and I am still learning songs. At the moment I am learning a lovely wee song we heard in Skye and North Uist Islands in the Hebrides.

I believe I got my love of songs from my parents, mostly from my father. My mother had her own small repertoire such as, *Ireland the Land of the Harp and Shamrock*, an old county Down patriotic song, and I learned the *Phoenix Park* from her about the Invincibles and 'Skin the Goat'. She had some wee rhymes she taught us as children. She was a lovely, kind, gentle person, and was in complete contrast to my father. She was born in Rahalp, just outside Downpatrick. Her family name was Greaves; the late Desmond Greaves hailed from there. They moved to Belfast sometime at the turn of the century. My mother and her sisters Margaret and Susan went to work in Greaves' Mill on the Falls Road; the Greaves there being Quakers. It was there she met my father. She was a doffer and I suppose he was an errand boy. He always said he was working in the mill from when he was ten years old.

His family were also from the country. They came from somewhere in Co. Armagh. They were brought up in Frere Street on the Falls Road. My mother's people lived in Cape Street which was next to Frere Street, or pretty near it. My father joined the British Army at the turn of the century. He was under age so he joined under the name of James Connolly, which was a funny coincidence.

He was in South Africa for the Boer War. He never spoke much about it but he had a huge collection of funny stories about his mates. He had a character in most of his stories called 'Bonny Man Reilly'. This character was a sort of hero to me and I loved to hear my dad relate all of his wild adventures. At this stage I will just tell one of his stories. He was supposed to be a terrible rogue, but no one could prove it was he. His mates asked my dad how was it he never got any money or things taken

from him by Bonny Man. My dad told them that as soon as he was paid he gave all his money to Bonny Man to mind for him; that way he couldn't pinch it! My father was a character himself. He was severely injured in the slaughter of the Somme in the summer of 1916, at a village called Ginchy; he got hit on his right side by shrapnel from an exploding shell. So fierce were the exchanges that he lay out in the mud in the open for three days and nights before he was brought to hospital. My father never told me that, but an old mate who was with him told me. As a result he had to wear a belt, about a foot wide with a soft rubber padding on it until the day he died. He had to use a walking stick as his right leg could not take his weight, thus causing him to bend his leg as he walked.

He had a great heart and was a very kindly man. He had unending patience with me and taught me card games, draughts and songs. Some of his songs were funny songs that he learned in the army or from the music halls. I was singing *It's a Long Long Trail a Winding*, and *Dolly Gray*, and *The Rose of No Man's Land*, *McCafferty*, *Kelly the Boy From Killane*, when I was five years of age. He had me up playing draughts in Dunville Park with some of the men he used meet in the summer house, where they would play cards and marbles anytime the weather was fine in the twenties and thirties.

We lived in Lincoln Street which was two streets from Dunville Park. I was born in 1921 at the height of the Belfast 'Troubles'. There were five in my family; my sisters Elizabeth and Mary, and my two brothers Harry and Patrick. I had a wonderful childhood down in Lincoln Street and have great memories of all my mates, Kevin Armstrong, P. McParland, John Kelly and brothers Peter and Jimmy Lawless, Jim Lunny, Arthur McGonigle, Johnny Keenan, Teddy Neeson, Jim Delargy, Gerry Reid, the two McAllister brothers, Danny and John, the Donnelly's, Arthur, and John, to name but a few.

We left Lincoln Street in 1932. That was the year when everything seemed to happen. First the Eucharistic Congress; then the O.D.R riots, (Outdoor Relief Riots), and my oldest brother Harry died at the age of 18.

All the men and boys were in the Clonard Confraternity in those years. I used to like the lectures the Redemptorist priests gave, but above all I loved the singing and music; *Confraternity men to the Fight*, and *We Stand for God, Hail Queen of Heaven, Lord Have Mercy and Compassion*, to mention a few. I loved the *Tantum Ergo*, and *Adoremus* at Benediction, and the Latin Mass. I believe for some, hymns are the best form of prayer. I am not too fond of the modern songs sung at Mass today. They are too like the Salvation Army for me.

The O.D.R rioters had their own songs that we used to sing as we dug up the paviers. Belfast streets were in the process of being concreted at that time. The corporation men were digging up the paviers street by street and laying down concrete. Lincoln Street had not been concreted when the riots started. We kids helped to dig up the paviers to make barricades so that the caged cars and the whippets of the R.U.C could not come up the street. I got caught up in a riot in Panton Street one day, as I was going to my sister Lizzie with a bowl of soup that my mother had made.

I was in the Falls at Dunville Park when the men started off on their hunger march to the Workhouse. They were singing *Up to the Workhouse We Must Go*, and *Mrs. McLaughlin Up the River with Your Ya, Ya, Ya*, a parody on *What Did the Robbers*



*Do On You, Stole My Dough and Stole My Brew.*

I saw a man being carried up to the Royal Hospital after he had been shot. Some men held him by the legs and some by the arms. Cars were not plentiful in those days, so I suppose they were doing the only thing possible. I believe he died afterwards. I will never forget it, because young as I was, I thought the man must have been very poor by the clothes that he wore.

My brother Harry died of consumption which developed after he had pneumonia. He slept out in the Convent fields with a mate of his who had a row with his father and was thrown out of his home. My brother would not leave him to wander about on his own. As a consequence he got pleurisy and was laid up for weeks. Later he lay in a sanatorium for two years before dying.

Harry had been serving his apprenticeship in Mackie's Foundry under Mr. John Annesley, the foreman. Joe McKelvey worked there before he was sent to Dublin; later to be executed with Rory O'Connor, Liam Mellows and Dick Barrett. I found out in after years that Harry was in the I.R.A or Na Fianna before he took ill. He had one song that I remember him singing; *Here's to the Memory of the Friends That Are Gone*. I've never heard the words again or heard anyone else singing it, but I would like to have them.

Every street on the Falls Road and in Catholic areas throughout the city was decorated for the Eucharistic Congress. Each had its own wee altar that the people set up, and the women then decorated it with flowers and holy pictures. The men had to sit up all night protecting them after a raid by the Orangemen when a number were wrecked. The Church had opened a savings bank in Oranmore Street where people could save for the big pilgrimage to Dublin. They went there in train loads.

It was heartbreaking when we moved to Springfield Avenue. I loved Lincoln Street and all my pals, and I kept going back for a few weeks until I got used to Springfield Avenue. I found out that there were plenty of good places for wee lads like me to play in. The brickyards, the Convent fields and Mackie's field. We had dug-out camps and dens made from corrugated sheets, and covered with old coal bags which made them waterproof.

Inside we lined the walls with old potato bags, coal bags or lino. Sometimes we made them so comfortable that some of the old tramps used to take over and camp in them. In the fields and brickyards there were dams we could sail rafts on. We made rafts from old sleepers that the railway used for the clay bogies. All my childhood memories are of a time when I had great fun.

In 1935 trouble broke out in York Street between Catholics and Protestants. The bands returning from The Field would play *Kick the Pope*, and *Dolly's Brae*, as they passed by Catholic areas, at the same time stepping up the drumming. That started stone throwing and then the gun would come out.

Poor 'Digger' Brady from Forest Street met a terrible death: a death that epitomised what the divide between the Catholic and Protestant means in Belfast. 'Digger' had been playing rally-oh just a few short months before. But he had reached school leaving age between 14 and 16. He had just gone into long pants. In those days all the wee boys wore short trousers until they started work, some even after. When you started wearing long pants you were called *Half a Man*, and some would try to avoid that nick name.

The 'Digger' started going to the dance halls in Coaches Street and the 'Ronte' (Rotunda). The yarn went about that he met up with a girl who was well known about the road. Some said she had been going with a fellow from the 'Nick' a notorious Orange area at the top of Conway Street. They came from that area in the 1969 riot when they burned Conway Street to the ground. This girl, it was said at the time, brought 'Digger' past the place in 'the Nick' where the other boys hung about just to flaunt him and make them jealous. They were approached by some of those men who were always hanging around, and they kicked poor 'Digger' up and down the street and then they shot him five times. I remember seeing 'Digger' in his coffin. *Go ndeanaidh Dia trocaire ar a anam.*

#### AN APPRENTICE IN MACKIES:

In 1937 I started serving my apprenticeship in Mackie's. As was the Custom with Mackie's the morning I started, 18 other lads also started, but only two were Catholic, Joker Byrne and myself. Joker lived in Beechmount, and he used to call for me at dinner time. We got into the habit of taking Monday afternoon off and going to the Hippodrome. We ended up getting suspended for going to see Alice Fay and Tyrone Power in *Rose of Washington Square*.

Mackie's always used apprentice labour, as their wages were very small. They employed many more Protestants than Catholics. I loved rebel songs and was always singing them. I used to teach them to this Shankill Road man, and he used to teach me Orange songs. He was a B. Special and an Orangeman and a bit of a bigot at times. But we used to get on well together; Tommy Blair was his name. When the I.R.A Campaign was going on in 1939 in England we used have to go putting *War News* (1) into the houses. We also had to go into Orange areas to deliver it which was very dangerous.

One night Tommy and I were going to the Broadway Cinema on the Falls. We met a good friend of mine who was a Cumann na mBan girl; Bridie O'Hare was her name and she was very attractive. Tommy fell head over heels in love with her and asked me to fix him up with a date. One Monday morning about a week or two after meeting Bridie, he came to work and told me the I.R.A had left some *War News* in his sister's baby's pram. He swore he would do terrible things on the person who left them if he could get hold of them. I could not very well tell him that Bridie and her sister Mary had been arrested in Tennant Street on the Shankill for delivering *War News* that very weekend. They both got two years for it; a wickedly unfair punishment for two young girls.

While in Mackie's in 1937 I joined Fianna Éireann. A fitter told me he was an I.R.B man and I believed him at the time, not knowing it was a long dead organisation. However he heard me singing a rebel song and asked me if I was in the Fianna; I said I didn't know anything about the Fianna or how to join. He told me he could get me in if I wanted to.

I agreed, so he gave my name to big Frank McKearney, one of the notable Republicans of that time, and that is how I came to join Na Fianna. I had to go to the Pearse Hall in King Street, where I met Liam Burke and Arthur McGonigle coming out as I went up the stairs. The Pearse was widely used by the Volunteers, Cumann na mBan and Fianna which, of course, played into the hands of the R.U.C touts

watching it. There were great *céilís* held and I started learning *céilí* dancing there. When it became known I could sing I used be asked to sing at a lot of *céilís*.

I began to go then to the *Árd Scoil* to attend Irish classes run by St. Joseph's branch of the Gaelic League. I enjoyed Irish dancing, and would not be seen dead in a 'Jig' as the dance halls were called. We called the fellows jiggers who used them and would laugh at the way they walked and dressed. We called them, more vulgarly, tight asses, as they seemed to walk as if they were in need of going to the toilet.

I graduated from Fianna into the Volunteers about 1938. We attempted to go to Bodinstown the following year, 1939. A couple of train loads left Belfast that June Sunday. We assembled upon the approach road down from Connolly Station. The *gardaí* were lined across to stop us going further. The Free State government had banned the Bodinstown parade that year, not for the first time. When we started to march the *gardaí* baton charged the head of the procession led by Clann Uladh Pipe Band. There was a scattering match then and some of the bandsmen lost their drums and instruments.

We reassembled again, but this time there was no band leading us. We just charged the *gardaí* ranks out of the way, and we marched through Dublin, up one side of O'Connell Street and down the other for about an hour. We assembled then at the G.P.O where *Rúairí Brugha* gave the oration and symbolically burned a Union Jack. He later became a Fianna Fáil T.D.; it's a very strange world.

While attending gun lectures and parades of the 'Phantom Army' we were also called mainly to parade publicly on occasion as a show of strength, and as a recruitment drive in safe areas. We were also involved in collections for the Prisoners' Dependents Fund, and we delivered *War News*. Then the reports of the heavy sentences being meted out to Republican prisoners reached us from England; Rory Campbell receiving 20 years, along with many others. There was dismay and anger at that, only to be followed by the execution of Barnes and McCormack; but by that time we knew that things were not going too well.

War had broken out in Europe, and that brought its own changes. The blackout, the ration cards, the identity cards; and Mackie's went heavily into war work. I was sent to help on aircraft parts. I found myself on the night shifts. In the meantime raids and round-ups of republican suspects were becoming all too frequent. My time came on Saturday the 8th. of February 1941 at five o'clock in the morning, a date I remember well. Six big R.U.C men came noisily into my room and told me to get dressed. One of them was an old soldier whom my dad knew; he called him all the names of the day for taking me away but it didn't do any good. I was taken to the Springfield Road barracks, and then to Hasting Street, and from there to Chichester Street. I was held there over the week-end and brought to the Crumlin Road Prison on Monday. I was then on detention, as distinct from internment.

There were already a number who had gone to the Appeal Board, and who had signed statements not to become involved with the I.R.A., but they refused to tell names of friends as was demanded of them - a form of blackmail - so they were held for nearly two years before being released. I met Gerry Doherty from Derry city while on detention, and we became good friends. We received then our internment

papers and were transferred immediately to the internees' wing. We had been held in C. Wing on detention, and the internees were in D. Wing.

Almost as soon as Gerry was behind bars he started to look for a way out. Some of the internees had been in since Christmas 1938. A lot had been in the Crumlin and then in Derry; then to the prison ship *Al Rawdah*, and back again to the Crum. A few attempts at escape had failed, and to some it seemed impossible to escape but we Gerry found a way out.

He observed from one of the top windows that the ordinary prisoners from C. Wing, who worked in the wood yard were taken back into their cells at 12.15 and 4.15 for their meals. The internees came in from their exercise yard at 12.30. and 4.30, leaving the wood yard empty for a quarter of an hour each morning and afternoon. He figured that, if we could get through the corrugated sheeting that separated the two yards, we could reach the wall in a few minutes.

#### THE ESCAPE:

He came to me three months after our internment and told me he had found a way out. I said I would go with him. There was another Derry man who wished to go; Paddy Gallagher. Gerry made a spanner from a dining spoon ladle to loosen the nuts in the fence. We made a rope from sheets, and a hook from reinforced plywood. At four o'clock we sat near the spot where we hoped to depart from. It was a lovely sunny day so a lot of the lads were sunbathing nearby. When we got the all clear at 4.15, Gerry loosened the nuts and pulled the corrugated sheet up high enough to pass through. As we were going out one lad said after me, *where are you going? To Dublin*, I answered. We reached the wall without any difficulty; Paddy threw the rope over the wall and the hook caught first time. He tried to climb up but the plywood hook broke in halves. We scurried back unobserved into our own yard just as they were about to go in to dinner.

During the following week we were approached by Liam Burke, Phil McTaggart and 'Bildo' Watson, all anxious to find out about our intended escape. They had been interned a year longer than us; they were intensely keen to break out if they could. They wanted to know of the possibility of another attempt with a stronger hook. Gerry and I could see no reason why we would not have another go at escaping but Paddy Gallagher thought it would be too soon to try again. A screw had seen us at the wall but he was a long way from us: he was a maintenance man who was always dressed in dungarees. He would have repaired the corrugated sheets we had pulled apart. Paddy thought that they might be watching us, so he decided we should lie low and wait. There was a real possibility that once exposed upon the wall you could be shot as all of those patrolling the wall carried guns.

I must mention that most of the men thought we were right to have a go at escaping, but there were those who thought differently. One well known Belfast Republican came to me and gave off to me having the cheek to try to escape, and maybe 'lose all the privileges enjoyed by the internees'. According to him we had no right to do so when there were men in for years and we were in only three months. I told him I thought it was our duty to escape and that we would do it again if the chance came.

During the week we got four tie bars from under the collapsible tables in the din-

ing hall. We used a large cardboard box to form the bars into the shape of hooks. Then we bound the hooks together as one strong hook capable of taking the weight of one man. The bars already had a notch at their end which would engage under the projecting wall coping. We decided to go the following Friday, a week after our first attempt, but agreed to go at 12.15 this time. I was to bring the hook down and get myself near the spot around 12 o'clock. It had been raining early on and the ground was wet. I had the hook concealed under my overcoat and I was walking around the yard with Harry 'Cornflakes' McKenna. Harry was from the Shore Road in Belfast. He did not like porridge so he had his mother bring in a large packet of cornflakes each week. He was nick named *The Bore* because his conversation tended to be childish. It was the fad at the time, especially with 'Rocky' Burns and big Seamus McKearney and a few others, to pick on people's interests and called them bores. I was the *Singing Bore* because I was always singing. Then we had the *Gaelic Bores*, the *Chess Bores*, the *Physical Culture Bores*, the *Football Bores*, the *Music Bores* and so on. I called Rocky (2) the *Messing Bore*. He was always messing about, wrestling, sparring or playing practical jokes. He was a great man and helped to make internment bearable. A skilled Gaelic speaker and teacher who loved fun and let nothing get him down. Prisoners always need a person like 'Rocky' Burns to help them do their time, or in this case, a limitless and seeming unending internment.

When it was time for me to be seated near the spot, I said to Harry that I was going to sit down, hoping he would go away. He didn't, and as I put my coat on the ground and sat on it he did likewise. As he sat down he put his hand on my coat and he must have felt the hook. He didn't say anything but immediately began to talk about escaping, asking me if I thought we could try again. We had promised to keep our attempt a secret between the five who were to go, so I had to put Harry off, but he persisted in trying to get me to say something until eventually he gave up and said he was going in, leaving me sitting there. There was a screw only about ten yards from where we were to go, but as the fence ran from the end of D. Wing parallel with the path we walked around, turning at right angles about ten feet from C. Wing, we were out of sight around a corner.

When Gerry, Liam, Phil and "Bildo" came it took only a few minutes to make an opening. The wood yard was now empty and, as we were going through, big Harry O'Rawe and Paddy Joe Doyle joined us but on condition they would be the last to go up the rope. They had spoken that morning to Liam and it was just as well as events turned out. We reached the wall at the same spot as before and again with one throw the hook caught. We had been very lucky with our throws. 'Bildo' was up the rope in a flash, making the hook sit better on the wall. He then jumped down the other side. I was up next with the help of Liam Burke who nearly threw me over the wall. Liam shot up next and Phil after him. Gerry was on the rope when two screws appeared. They grabbed at Gerry's legs but Big Harry and Paddy Joe pulled them out of the way and wrestled with them, giving Gerry the chance to get over the wall. It was lucky for Gerry that Harry and Paddy came in at the last moment or the man who made the escape possible would have been caught.

Liam and I and 'Bildo' ran along the side of the prison wall towards the Crumlin Road. There was another smaller wall about 20 feet from the main wall. It separat-

ed St. Malachy's playing fields and a convent beside the Mater Hospital. We got up upon this where we could see some nuns and two young novices walking around the grounds. 'Bildo' at this point tried to slide down the roof of a glasshouse built against the wall. His foot went through a pane however with a loud crash. That startled the nuns. Liam and I had jumped unnoticed to the ground, but 'Bildo' caught hold of a novice telling her not to be frightened; that we were republican internees escaping from jail.

All the nuns went scurrying about, running everywhere. The excitement was tremendous and Liam was asking to be shown the road out. I was shouting, *hide us, show us how to get out*. The sisters were anxious however for the younger nuns. The young nun 'Bildo' had caught, putting his hand over her mouth, had just been in the convent four weeks. She was only about 15 years old, from Clare or somewhere in the west, and she knew nothing about Republicans, internees, or prisoners, so it was one day that went down in the annals of that convent that will never be forgotten.

The Mother Superior came to the door at this point to see what was causing the uproar. She took the whole scene in, nuns running to and fro and four wild looking men seeking a way out. She calmly said, *follow me*, and led us through the convent to the main door. We thanked her profusely and left. Just as we stepped out, a car drove up. Liam Burke recognised the car immediately. It was his family's doctor, himself an old Republican of the twenties, born a Dubliner whose family were from Cork county, Dr. John Harrington. He told us to get into the car and promptly drove us to the Falls Road, to a house in Sultan Street, Sammy Benson's, then to a family in Servia Street called McGuire's; friends of Liam Burke.

My aunt lived just around the corner in McDonald Street, so I sent her word and she came to see me. My mother and father were absent; they had been evacuated to Killough after the Blitz. Phil McTaggart got separated from Gerry; he made his way to St. Malachy's school and got to safety. Gerry did not know Belfast but somehow he made his way on to North Queen Street. He did not know if he was in an Orange area or a Nationalist area. At that moment he noticed a Sacred Heart lamp burning in a house; so he walked in. There were two women around the fireplace; one of them looked at him; very quickly summing him up, she put her finger to her mouth, indicating not to say anything but telling him to sit down. The other woman got up then and said she would be going, and left. The woman who stayed lived in the house while the other was just a neighbour, but a Protestant neighbour and that was why the woman of the house didn't want Gerry to speak.

When Gerry told her who he was she went out to the door and spoke to a man who was working on the roof. He turned out to be a Volunteer, and he got Gerry to a safe house. I was transferred to another house which became my home for three weeks. It was a house on Mulhouse Street, off the Grosvenor Road where I was raised. Once I saw my sister Elizabeth walking down the road, but I couldn't call her in case she was being followed. They were kindly people, and they did all they could to make my stay pleasant.

After three weeks I was brought to Iveagh where Gerry was waiting in the house of Mr. and Mrs. Malone. We had some tea there, and we were then brought by car to Newry. Charlie McGlade and Liam Rice of our Belfast headquarters were with me

in the car. We were brought to the home of a Dr. Quinn, a well known nationalist and we had a meal there. We went then to the Newry / Dundalk Road where we waited until a car picked us up. Dr. Quinn herself drove the car, and as she was well known to customs officers, we had no trouble passing over the Border. Dr. Quinn's uncle, Sean, died in action at the Egyptian Arch, near Newry in May 1923.

#### FREEDOM, OR IS IT?

I used to imagine in those days that you could feel the difference once across the Border. I used to feel the air was different because it had the scent of freedom; that the whole atmosphere gave off the scent of freedom. I must have been a right idiot. I soon found out differently and if anyone were to ask me today how I felt, I'd tell them I felt as much oppressed in the South as I did in the North.

We were brought to Dundalk to the home of Mr. and Mrs. O'Hagan. Carmel, who later married Paddy McNeela, welcomed us and made us feel at home (3). The following morning I was brought to Dublin and put into *An Stad Hotel* in North Frederick Street. Gerry elected to go north to his home county of Inishowen. At *An Stad* Phil McTaggart was waiting so we had a happy reunion. I was introduced to a daughter of the murdered Lord Mayor of Cork, Tom MacCurtain, her name being Sighle, who was then stopping in the hotel.

After a fortnight we were told there was a job going for us with Michael A. Kelly. Mick was a Crown Entry man who had served seven years in A. Wing in the Crum. He was now the manager for a company cutting turf on the Featherbed, in the Dublin Mountains. I worked all though that summer of 1941 on the Featherbed (Cruagh Mountain), footing, spreading, stacking and carrying turf. I never worked as hard in all my life, but it didn't do me any harm. Most of the workers were from the borders of Mayo, Sligo, Roscommon. They were a rough gang of men, but they were hard workers; having worked on turf all their lives. For us it was different. I for one had never even seen turf; I didn't know what it looked like. When I asked the ganger on the lorry the first morning what all the forks and funny looking spades were, he asked me if I was joking. I told him I had never seen a turf bog in my life.

He told me the spades were called *slanes* and they were for cutting turf. He split his sides laughing when I said I had always imagined people bending down cutting the turf with long knives. I wasn't joking, I soon learned what turf cutting meant in the following weeks. My poor back told me every night.

I left the bog after ten weeks in August, and went then to Eamonn Martin's farm near the Naul with Cathal. I returned to Dublin after Christmas because I had met some lovely people, Gertie and Freida O'Sullivan, and their auntie. They were wonderful people and they were very kind to us all. I'll never forget them.

Then there was Molly Stapleton and her mother and father. No one could have better friends. Molly was my first love. She was full of fun and quite good looking; a great personality in every way and ever willing to help us. The Stapletons, like a lot of other families, had been deported from England. Her brother Ned had got a ten year sentence for I.R.A activities in London. The police came to the Stapleton home where they had lived since Molly and Ned were babies; they made Molly and her father Mick and her mother get into a car and they took them straight away to the port for Dublin. They were not permitted to settle any of their affairs or take any furniture with them.

They lost everything they had and they arrived in Dublin penniless, knowing no one and not knowing what was to become of them. This sort of uprooting happened all over England, and hundreds of Irish people came to Dublin in similar circumstances.

#### PROTEST SUPPRESSED:

When in March 1942 George Plant was to be executed there was very little protest from the people; all news being strictly censored. The night before he was to die a small crowd of people gathered in Cathal Brugha Street in Dublin. The protest was organised by a group who called themselves *The Young Irelanders*. They were led by Seamus O'Kelly. Seamus was very badly disabled and was very unsteady on his feet. He had great difficulty with his speech but he was endowed with a lively brain. He was well known in Dublin as a writer, and it was terrible that any government could issue an internment order against such a person.

They could not have thought that he would be able to commit any offence or that he could endanger the state in his physical condition. Yet they must have thought his mind or his ideas were too dangerous to let him roam about free in Dublin.

So they interned him in the Curragh, and he had to endure all the hardships that went with that. The meeting was addressed by a number of speakers. One of them, Brendan Behan, gave a hell-raising speech. He had just returned to Dublin after two and a half years in Borstal. He stood out, I remember, for he wore a long yellow cloth coat that night.

As we were returning from the meeting, Molly and I were walking behind her father and Charlie Church, a friend of the family, in Parnell Street. Molly and I stopped to look into a shop window. At that moment a car drew up beside us; four Broy Harriers jumped out and grabbed a hold of me. I was bundled without ceremony into the car and taken to the Bridewell. That was the way Gerald Boland dealt with peaceful protest in 1942. On the way one asked, *who was the bastard with the yellow coat? Oh that was that fellow Behan*, replied the other. *We'll have that bastard to-morrow*, came the reply. He was right, for the next night in the Bridewell I heard an uproar and the clanging of a door and then someone singing, *Take It Down From the Mast Irish Traitors*. I joined him then in some of his songs. Shouting, *who's that ?*, I told him who I was. We were kept over the weekend so we had a bit of a concert each night. We were interrogated over that weekend and brought to Mountjoy on Monday.

We exercised with Sean Harrington of Kerry, Liam Brady and Jackie Griffith of Dublin, and a wee Free State man and a Spaniard. The Spaniard was waiting to see if he would be returned to Spain and a concentration camp from which he had escaped, or be permitted into America. He eventually got to America.

We were kept for three weeks on remand and then I was sent to the Curragh, while Brendan was released, but not for long. Jackie was sentenced to ten years on a charge while Sean got three years. The Free State army man got five years and was sent among the ordinary prisoners. Jackie escaped about nine months after along with four others. Eight months later he was shot in the back as he rode on a bike in Dublin by men who could have arrested him; so shoot to kill is not a new phenomenon in Ireland.

And so I arrived to the turmoil of splits and divisions in the Curragh; it was a





Seated in Kilmainham Jail, Dan Breen and Charlie Harkin; Charlie from Donegal being husband of Nora Harkin, Secretary of the Ireland-Soviet Friendship Society

rude awakening. I have to say that the years in the Curragh were well availed of by me. I learned our language and I learned a lot of history. I met with some of the finest men our generation produced. I saw men who suffered a lot without complaint. I learned a lot from the likes of Gearóid Ó Maolmichil, Seamus O'Donovan, Eoin McNamee, Dan O'Toole, Paddy Hannon, Patrick Kavanagh, Joe Deighan, Johnny Powers, Mick Dunne, Frank Mulvany, wee Cathal Holland, Kevin Sullivan, Brendan Behan and a host of others.

John Henry Cummins was a Shakespearian actor. It was said he had been going round England doing Shakespeare's plays with a repertory company, but he was a showman and was always acting. Even as he walked about he would be stretching his arms out as if he was flying, or waving them as if waving to someone. It was all seemingly to address an audience and to attract attention.

He would even do deep breathing exercises so that everyone would notice him. The first day he came into the Camp a group of us were outside the hut nearest the gate. He was dressed very fashionably; a hat on his head, a sports coat and flannels with open necked shirt. His coat was draped over his arm. Remarkably tall, he came right up to us without saying a word. Then raising his two hands; as if he was about to shoot us, he cried out, bang, bang, at the same time throwing himself on the ground as if he had been shot.

Then he sprang to his feet and spoke; *I am John Henry Cummins; how do you do.* We just looked at him in amazement. He was a real character, but he was also very clever. He could speak French, German and Spanish fluently. I believe he had Gaelic although I never heard him speak it. He went to a Russian class being run by Sean Mulready. Sean had been taught by Neil Goold. They said that within a couple of weeks he knew as much as Sean himself.

John Henry's party piece was putting on a Churchill accent and repeating word for word his famous, *fight them on the beaches*, speech. John decided after a few months however that he had had enough. Why he was in there, only God knows, but I heard that one night in the hut he called on everyone to listen while he read a

letter addressed to Gerald Boland asking for his release. Usually if anyone wished to sign out they put a note in their boots and left them at the gate, ostensibly for repairs. But John Henry was letting everyone know that he was about to sign out, and was not ashamed of it.

Neil Goold was another individual whom I found to be a very gentle and good mannered person. I had been brought up believing communists to be the devil's disciples. I used to be puzzled when Neil kneeled with us during the Rosary each evening in the hut. The rest of the communists would go on reading while the prayers were being said. At dinner one day beside Neil, and never having spoken to him before, I asked him was it true he was an *atheistic communist*? He replied that he was. Why do you say the Rosary every night I then inquired. Looking straight at me he said, *I do not pray myself, but I respect the beliefs of others and I have no wish to show any disrespect. It is good manners in the first place and it is good for discipline as it doesn't cause conflict. It is no big sacrifice to kneel down for a few minutes while others wish to pray.* I thought it a very good answer but wondered why the other communists did not do likewise.

When we started a physical training class in the Camp it was organised by a big fellow called Tommy Mulligan, or perhaps Corrigan. However it was a bit of a giggle. He had us all out running around the Camp as soon as the P.A's opened up the huts. Then he had us doing physical exercises in the evening. Another time he had us sparring with boxing gloves. I was very lightly made up at the time, between eight and nine stone in weight. He put me sparring with big Joe O'Connor, who must have been a foot taller than I. As soon as we started boxing, big Joe just stuck out his fist and I dropped down, out for the count: that finished my physical training course.

Danker Farrell was a very small hardy fellow. He could be very funny at times. He had been in the British Army, but when he came home he decided not to return. He had been in the bomb disposal squad, and when they were dismantling a delayed action bomb he was photographed sitting on top of the bomb while the others were working dismantling it. I believe the bomb was near Westminster Cathedral or some important building. I remember seeing the picture myself.

He was able to run at full speed down the football pitch and sort of roll himself like a ball and throw himself on the ground. He was a very clever footballer; I never saw him foul anyone or lose his temper. He used to play poker with us. We were supplied with camp tokens to the value of any money that was left or sent into us. The stakes were never very high as we never had that much money. But one night as we were playing, 'Black' Dan O'Toole got four jacks; Danker got four queens. There was a 'full house' and a 'flush' at the same time. The betting went on until the 'flush' packed in. The 'full house' carried on a little bit more, then he packed in as well, leaving Dan and Danker in the game. They had been raising their poke over each other.

Then Danker ran out of money to 'see Dan'. Now the rule in poker is, if a person bets and raises and hasn't the money 'to see', he automatically loses the pool. So Danker said to Dan that he had money in his coat pocket on the wall beside his bed. Now Dan, full of confidence and wanting to win more money, and thinking he had Danker beaten, said it was OK by him to go. Danker went and got his money out of his coat and returned to the game, but instead of just 'seeing' Dan's bet, he raised the

stakes again. They had a few more bets and finally Danker called Dan up. Dan said triumphantly *four jacks*, and made to lift the pool. *Hold it*, said Danker, *I have four queens*. I will never forget O'Toole's face. He looked as if he was going to burst a blood vessel. I should own that pool, he said. But nobody agreed with him, so Danker had a good laugh about it.

Danker came into the Camp sometime in 1943 and was released in 1945. The next time I saw him in Dublin he was selling ice-cream from a wee cart. I'd love to know what happened to him, but wherever he may be I wish him well.

Cathal Holland was another great character of the Curragh. Cathal came to Dublin when something was found by the police in his home in Marchioness Street. Someone gave him our address in Dublin, and he arrived the day I was leaving to go to work at Weston House in the Naul. 'Bildo' Watson was to go with me, but as he was deeply in love with a girl in Belfast, he wished to return home and get married, which is what he eventually did when it was safe to do so. So Cathal and I went to *Weston House*. Cathal, like myself, was very fond of singing, and he had a lovely voice; that was in 1941. I am very glad to say he still has a good voice today in 1995, if not better.

Cathal was arrested in the Bog of Allen. He had gone there when he left *Weston House* sometime in 1942. When Maurice O'Neill was executed in November 1942, Cathal called for a one day strike with his workmates, and at a mass meeting of the turf cutters, he led them in saying the Rosary, and he made a speech condemning the execution.

The Camp was then surrounded by a battalion of the Free State Army in full kit. They took Cathal away. We said after that, small as Cathal was, it took the whole Free State Army to arrest him. The best laugh I had with Cathal happened one night in our hut about 1944. All the Republican prisoners serving penal sentences had been transferred from Arbour Hill to the Curragh by then. When they arrived they were mostly in one hut. Dominic Adams, Micky Traynor, Sean O'Neill, Paddy McNeela, Brendan Behan, Kevin O'Sullivan, P. McGinty, Georgie Parnell and many more. They refused to comply with the regulations that had been imposed on the internees since the Camp was burned down in 1940. Here they had sing-songs until a very late hour almost every night. Cathal and I were in a Gaelic hut for over two years. Things were too quiet for us as we both loved a bit of crack. When we heard what was going on in the Arbour Hill men's hut, we packed our mattress's on our backs and moved in with them.

One night after lock-up when the P.A's came in to do the count we were all standing by at our beds which was what the regulations had imposed in 1940. As they started the count wee Cathal said aloud, *flip this, I'm fed up with this carry on. I'm sitting down*. He sat down on his bed: everyone looked on in amazement including the Staters. The next thing, everyone of us sat down. The Staters looked at us for a moment undecided what to do. Then they just carried on counting us as we sat on our beds. From that night on until we were released, we never stood for the count. Ours was the only hut as far as I know that failed to stand and wee Cathal was responsible.

As I said about Cathal, he and I were alike in many ways. We loved all things

Irish, songs, dancing, language. We were both in St. Joseph's branch of the Gaelic League and learned to do *céili* dancing in the *Árd Scoil*. But Cathal would also do, what we called, English dancing; waltz's, tangos etc. I remember he was teaching me to do the moonlight canter one day, and was receiving some dirty looks from some of the gaels in the Camp. We would do it for a laugh to get on their goats.

I have never regretted those lost years, as some have termed them. One of my friends from Springfield Avenue said to me when I came back to Belfast that I should have signed out and got into war work where I would have earned big money. I looked at him; he was living in the same house, he was wearing dungarees, probably the same ones he used to wear when we went about together. I couldn't see any change in him. I thought to myself that he had missed such a lot that he wouldn't understand if I tried to tell him. I silently pitied him for all that he had missed.

#### RETROSPECT:

My mother often spoke about the night I was born during 'the Troubles' in the twenties. We were living then in Lincoln Street off the Grosvenor Road. It was the year of the Treaty negotiations, 1921, and things were bad in our part of Belfast. Curfew had been imposed and under the cover of the curfew police and B. Special raids on Nationalist homes were frequent and many murders took place on these raids; the McMahon family, the Trainors, the Duffys and many others; whole families being wiped out.

Shots were fired up Lincoln Street, and the grocer's shop at the corner of the Grosvenor road was burned down. It was said, at the time, that B. Specials were responsible as a reprisal for the burning down by the I.R.A of the Dye Works at the corner of Sorella Street, which was next door to the grocer's shop. The I.R.A also burned down the Model School on the Falls Road where St. Comgall's school now stands. Those two buildings were burned down because it was believed that the B. Specials were about to turn them into barracks, and in that way they would have hemmed in the whole of the nationalist Falls.

So I grew up with tales of the murderous activities of the R.U.C, B. Specials and Black and Tans, all my young life. No matter what the conversation would be you could bet with certainty that it would finish up with happenings during 'the Troubles'.

At an early age I began to learn the songs of 'the Troubles', and of Ireland's struggle for freedom. I was chiefly influenced by rebel songs and I loved to listen to yarns about the doings of the rebels. I was asked once by my brother Paddy how it was I became a Republican. I found that hard to explain for, as he said, we were both brought up in the same environment. My father was an old soldier, as I have related. He worked in Greave's Mill where he met my mother, and left when he was about 15 to join the British Army. He lied about his age and joined up under the name of James Connolly, for, of course, at the time Connolly was unknown. He fought in the Boer War in South Africa. As a result he had many a funny tale to tell. One of the yarns I liked was the one about the time he came home with £250 in his pocket that he had saved and which was a fortune in those days. He said his mother was on her death bed, but as soon as she heard her son Harry was home with his pockets bulging, she was up out of bed in her best clothes, and away with them both

on a shopping spree. He always said that the best cure in life for anything was a 'poultice of pound notes'.

As I have said my mother came from Rahalp outside Downpatrick. I suppose they were like all other families that came in their hundreds to supply the labour force for the mills that were springing up all over Belfast during the Industrial Revolution.

They came from every county in the north and a lot from the south as well. She always said her father was an old Fenian so maybe that was where I got my rebel streak. But as my brother said, we came from the same stock, so why the difference between us? I suppose it is in our own make up. Some of us have an interest in sport, some in religion or trade unionism or in politics, but I think that to be an Irish Republican one must be very nationalistic in his thoughts with a deep love for every aspect of his country's history, its culture, music and language. He must appreciate the sacrifices that have been made throughout our country's history by the men and women of former generations. He must learn to know the principles of freedom laid down by people who sacrificed their own lives to obtain justice and freedom.

## REFERENCES;

1. *War News*, the I.R.A propaganda sheet.
2. 'Rocky' Burns died in an R.U.C shoot-out in Chapel Lane on February 12, 1944. See *Harry*
3. As a result of giving assistance to unconvicted prisoners escaping from the North, the Dublin government interned Mrs Patsy O'Hagan, and later took also her daughter Carmel. See *Survivors*.

## SÉAMUS Ó GOILIDHE

AS CORCAIGH AGUS  
BAILE ÁTHA CLIATH.



*Séamus agus a bhean*

*A Cork city boy come to Dublin where his aunt, in the thirties and forties, was President of Sinn Féin.*

In his formative years, the twenties and thirties (although born on September 13, 1914), Seamus Goulding, Séamus Ó Goilidhe, had a straitened, almost harsh upbringing. It was in the context of the times: parents had to take what work was available and to move where the work was to be found. And if that meant separation from their offspring, the near abandonment of their children to kindly relatives, or relatives only slightly less burdened, so be it. There were none of the omnipresent services that one now expects; no fall back, only the orphanage or the workhouse.

His mother died when Seamus was only 10; his father survived until he was 20. But Seamus was the eldest in a small family that had only two other children, his sisters, Eileen and Joyce being two years and five years younger. At a very early age because of these circumstances, Joyce was sent to Scotland, growing up there in the charge of her aunt, a sister of his mother.

When his mother died of the dreaded consumption, tuberculosis, in 1925, she left literally three orphans behind; but already they had been orphaned three years previously when mama had entered a sanatorium in the city of Cork, and dad, who worked in a steel mill near Glasgow, had been forced to scatter the babes among relatives.

Father's name was Goulding, Patrick Joseph, a man of Cork city who was to spend much of his life in a steelworks near Motherwell, Scotland. His people came from Mourne Abbey, a small hamlet on the railway line south of Mallow; and he married Catherine O'Dwyer of Dundrum, a crossroad village in the upper part of County Tipperary, in 1914.

That they met in the city is fairly certain: she was one of a large, rural family, the girls of which had to find work away from the land; most of them, brothers as well, emigrating to America. So Catherine married Patrick, and in the course of five years there were three children: Seamus, Eileen and Joyce.

With dad working from before 1914 in Motherwell, and mum developing an illness, the children found themselves placed with different relations. Joyce was already in Scotland and Eileen came to Dublin, to relatives of mum at an early age. Seamus spent time back with his grandmother in rural Dundrum because he can recall men of the column coming into the house. There was Mick Sheehan, a colleague of Dan Breen's, and the outstanding and inadequately written up Seamus

Robinson.(1) Caught one day by gran cleaning his pistol in front of the child, *you'll put him to the bad*, she scolded Robinson.

Mick Sheehan (see footnote for Robinson) is almost as frequently mentioned, and, of course, Dan, massively headed Dan Breen, a sculptor's delight, had there been one around, was often in the abode, a long, low farmhouse that was home to the young boy for a spell, attending school there. After that the lad and his very young sister returned to Cork city.

Dad, an entirely non-political dad, had come home with mama from Motherwell, stopping first in lodgings under Shandon's bell, and then, phenomenal luck, he succeeded in obtaining a Corporation house, where they had a cousin, probably unpaid, from Tipperary helping to keep their home, as mum was now in the decline that comes with T B and no longer able to manage the two children. She was to survive for three more years; the retching coughing years of a sanatorium, visited by dad and the children, but whose home image of her to them was rapidly becoming a faded memory.

On St. Valentine's Day, 1925, Catherine O'Dwyer finally passed to another life and, from that day until his own death, at a shade under 50 in 1934, he was alone, quite alone, except during school holidays when the children would gather in, two from Dublin and one from furthest Albain. Then, for a few weeks dad could be dad to the two little girls and a boy growing towards teenage; a dad who, for nine-tenths of the year, was alone and lonely, but who, for six weeks maybe, held his own offspring under his own roof. His foundry experience in Scotland had procured him a job in the Ford Motor works from the week of his return. For, allow us to backtrack: Seamus, too, had been sent in 1925 into fosterage *ar altromacht, mar a deir sé féin*, with Mrs. Margaret Buckley, the sister of father, at Marguerite Road, Glasnevin.

She was married to Patrick Buckley, a civil servant in Revenue; and evidently, despite her political activity (she was for 13 years President of Sinn Féin), able to live in modest comfort.

They had married rather young for those times, in 1906, and her family was born in Glasnevin but evidently not in Marguerite Road, as Margaret bought in there only after Patrick 'a typical rugby-playing, British civil servant' had died.

#### MARGARET BUCKLEY; HIS REMARKABLE AUNT:

Seamus digresses enough to expand upon his remarkable aunt who, he affirms, did not influence in any way his own entry into the Movement. Cork was a hot bed in her time, he says, which was pre-1900. She was a very young follower of Charles Stewart Parnell, whilst her dad was also, we need hardly add, a strong supporter of the uncrowned king, and there was deep heartache at his passing. T.M. Healy was for them a hate figure, and this indeed may have polarised Margaret in her later life as Healy prevailed as Free State Governor-General until 1928.

Born in 1879, she joined Inghínidhe na h-Éireann, the brainchild of Helena Moloney, Bulmer Hobson and others, after 1900, having been earlier immersed in amateur operatic societies and deeply involved in music and choral work. But now, in the first decade of the Celtic Dawn, the nation, yes, the Nation of Davis, Tone, Lalor and Mitchell, called; and the cudgels then taken up were not to be laid aside until the July 24, 1962 when she passed on.



I have a feeling, Seamus tells, that her father in Cork took ill and she returned there to attend him. Mounre Abbey, which figures here in Seamus Ronayne's story, is quite an historic place into pre-medieval times, but Cork city even more so; and Margaret, now touching 40, was welcomed by the MacSwineys, the Mac Curtains, and everybody who was anybody in the excitement of the Tan struggle.

She was there. She was a judge in the Republican courts. What an experience it must have seemed, post-Bastille, to preside at all those new-founded functions of a seemingly independent Ireland. But, alas, this breakaway into independence and, with it, the creation of new, non-imperial, structures was not to continue.

With the collapse into Civil War, Margaret, as a marked figure, was interned, first in Mountjoy and then in Kilmainham until October, 1923. The 10 year old boy came to live with her then in the brick terraced suburb of Glasnevin, while she was Vice-President, and ever active, giving lectures and keeping the spirit alive. She was a very powerful personality, he concludes, and I, being a close relative, probably did not appreciate her as I should have done.(2)

Active as a member of the Women Prisoners' Defence League, founded by Maud Gonne and Charlotte Despard on the outbreak of the Civil War, she was arrested in January, 1923, being held in Mountjoy, the North Dublin Union and Kilmainham, where she participated in the great hunger strike. That story as told by her in *The Jangle of Keys*, was published in 1926. Released by the Free State in October, 1923 she returned to Sinn Féin, opposing the De Valera move to enter Leinster House in 1926.

Throughout the thirties and forties she continued as a leading figure in Sinn Féin 'with a refreshing command of wit and repartee'. From 1937 until 1950 she was President, thereafter Vice-President until 1958. In addition to *The Jangle of Keys* she contributed, as Margaret Lee, articles and stories, and a short history of Sinn Féin in 1956. Reminiscences appeared in the early fifties in the *United Irishman*.

Margaret Buckley died at her home in Marguerite Road in July, 1962 and was buried in St. Finbar's Cemetery, Cork, where former Sinn Féin T.D., John Joe Rice, delivered the oration.

#### SCHOOL DAYS:

I was an only child in that comfortable, book-lined house in Glasnevin. Each day I walked from there, the mile or so, down Whitworth Road, to reach the North Circular and into North Richmond Street, to O'Connell Schools. Later, I was allowed to cycle.

I would have been sent to the Christian Brothers anyway; we had a connection as my uncle, James Goulding, was a Brother, although stationed in England. Schooling in the late twenties, into the thirties, was free; the school books rarely changed; they could be passed on. Altogether, we lived and grew up then in a closed little world that was free of all the forces and problems surrounding children today. And what a world it was. I was, being of lithe and supple build, on both the hurling and gaelic teams in the school.

Our great rivals were those fellow Christian Brothers, the Eoghan Ruadhs from North Brunswick Street, or the boys from the south side, from Syngé Street. After that I joined the *Árd Craobh of Connradh* in Parnell Square. When not playing a match, of a Saturday, we went in a group by a small private bus that served the Scalp

or Enniskerry, or another bus in the direction of the Hell Fire Club. That entailed walking, scrambling over rocks, wading into the Glencree River, shouting, laughing and occasionally practising our Irish. *Ag an ám seo bhí mise an-líofa sa Gaeilge agus ag léamh a lán.*

The highlight at O'Connell Schools was their Centenary in 1929. This coincided with the centenary of what was called Emancipation; and that was followed three years later in June by the Eucharistic Congress, held for a week in remarkably fine weather in Dublin. The Congress was an international showpiece and a highlight, more important to us than if the Olympic Games itself had been held in Dublin.(3)

Having got my Leaving Certificate I left school that year. There was no waiting around at that time. Immediately you sought a job, and I was lucky enough to find one as a temporary civil servant in the Labour Exchange in Lower Gardiner Street, and then, close by, in Beresford Place. I was there for a couple of years, doing evening courses meanwhile, in costing and accountancy.

I joined the unemployed ranks for a spell then until I got another post as a costing clerk with the South of Ireland Asphalt Company in Crumlin, being taken back later to their offices in Abbey Street. Pete Kearney was an engineer in the company and Cliff O'Brien, an easy-going Welshman, was secretary. I remained there until the autumn of 1939 when, with the outbreak of war and the recession that was expected, my job was ended. I was unemployed then until I was arrested about Easter, 1940.

#### SINN FÉIN FUNDS:

Mrs. Buckley was not a hard taskmaster but she was also anxious that I should do well. I suppose she was busier than I realised with her work as an organiser in the Irish Women Workers' Union and within Sinn Féin. Her trade union work linked her to Louis Bennett, Kathleen Mc Dowell, Helen Chenevix and Helena Maloney, the latter two being sterling Republicans.

Mrs. Buckley held faithfully to the Republic of the Second Dáil although, even after the 1926 break and the foundation of Fianna Fáil, she continued to have admiration and respect for De Valera and for old friends within that party. She was not a vindictive person, nor could she be, but when it came to the issue of what was known as the Sinn Féin Funds she felt, after much heart-searching, that she and J.J. O'Kelly, Diarmuid Ó Laoghaire and Séamus Ó Ruiséal had to grasp the nettle and confront the government and the principals of Fianna Fáil in court.

That was in 1947, some time after my imprisonment and, as I say, it required much heart-searching, as the organisation did not recognise the legitimacy of the Free State government or the authority of its courts. Following the split of 1922 the party treasurers, Jenny Wyse-Power and Eamon Duggan, both with pro-Treaty sympathies, Duggan being a signatory, lodged the entire fund, £8610, in the courts of the new Free State where it remained until 1942, when Sinn Féin commenced an action for recovery, but which could not then for various reasons proceed.

By resolution of January 17, 1922, the funds were vested in De Valera but, by 1926, when he left Sinn Féin he had not succeeded in wresting the money from the courts.

In March, 1947, to forestall court action by Sinn Féin, De Valera introduced a bill

literally to confiscate the monies, now amounting to £24,000, and to apply them to another purpose, suggesting the promotion of the Irish language as one such purpose; another was to dispose of the monies to 'needy persons'. His argument in the Dáil and his case in the court was that 'the present body was not entitled to these monies either in equity or morally'.(3a) Meanwhile, he had contacted individuals on a former standing committee and had secured some sort of agreement from them. The Bill was passed, Fianna Fáil then having an overwhelming majority. Sinn Féin lost the subsequent action.

My aunt had sympathy with people attracted to Fianna Fáil after 1926, it seemed such an easy and logical road to follow. It promised everything without ever again having to fight for it. When Father Michael O'Flanagan,(4) who was on the *Árd-Chomhairle*, accepted an academic post from De Valera in 1933, editing the volumes of the translator of the *Four Masters*, John O'Donovan, and was later in January 1936 expelled from the party, she was not in favour of his expulsion. She could readily excuse people accepting posts and pensions, and would say, well, they have to live. She was supportive of the I.R.A. leadership of that period, of Twomey, MacBride and the rest, and she would have supported in spirit the Army Council campaign of 1939. Therefore, I was a Republican by instinct as much as anything else.

I was never one for meetings and gatherings, although I attended Bodenstown a few times. I cannot recall if I knew the Campaign in England was coming although probably I did. When it came to joining the I.R.A., my aunt did not persuade me although the home influences were inescapable, I was surrounded by them. It was, however, through a family in Finglas, then a rural village, that I came to join, and it was through Liam Ó Luanaigh (4) a long-standing member but then on the point of retirement - that I made contact. He introduced me to Dublin Battalion men, Peadar Heuston and Joe Dunne, who brought me in. Meanwhile, the war had commenced in Europe and, while it made little impact upon life in general at that time, we accepted De Valera's declaration of neutrality and we were all in favour of it.

Margaret Buckley would favour neutrality while being anti-British at the same time. During her 13 years as President she had lectured in every part of Ireland and in Scotland, and she spoke again in the fateful week before the execution of Barnes and McCormack. Now, as part of my very short-lived career in the I.R.A., I commenced in the Recruits Company attending lectures under our O.C, Mick Dunne, later an actor. Mick had access to the *An Óige* rooms in Mountjoy Square where, under pretext of a history class, he gave talks on military tactics with the aid of model soldiers; all very hush-hush and *sub rosa*.

Later, we were mobilised for field tactics in St. Anne's Park, Clontarf. This was the former Guinness estate, it had been the residence of Bishop, the Hon. B.J. Plunkett, still largely unbuilt upon, but at this time quite unfrequented. We must have been observed for, around 12 'clock, on our first outing to the estate, quite unarmed, we were surrounded by a group of Branch men under Denis O'Brien, soldiers, and the whole paraphernalia of power, and taken into custody; just under 30 of us, the entire Recruits Company of the Dublin Battalion.

Of course, at that time, with the tensions in the air, and the pressures and counter pressures between the government and the I.R.A., these outdoor drill parades should not have taken place.

**INCARCERATION:**

We were removed from Clontarf in cars to Howth garda barracks for note-taking; then, for two nights, kept in the Bridewell before arriving in Mountjoy, where we remained for close to one month prior to appearing before the Military Tribunal in Collins Barracks. They despatched us quickly enough. Mick Dunne, our O.C, got two years; Pádraig Mac Caomhánach, because of his more senior appearance, got 18 months; while the rest of us got 12 months. With internment, that would stretch over numbers of years, and some of our lads were mere boys of 17. In Arbour Hill, to which we were all brought, I developed my study of the Irish language, along with Pádraig Mac Caomhánach, and we both commenced to learn German; Pádraig keeping it up and becoming near perfect. My circle there included Norman Clarke, a tall, studious looking person, with glasses; Harry White, the direct opposite; Seamus Byrne, solicitor, and Séamus Ó Mongáin, about whom much has been said already.

Controversy surrounded Peadar O'Flaherty, one of the G.H.Q men. He did not have any understanding of human feelings, allowing emotion to control his actions. He was very friendly with one of our young recruits, Liam Ryan. This adversely affected them both as they became figures of fun. There were no newspapers or radio in the jail, current events being cut from letters. So I started a small journal composed from snippets, from rumour and from my imagination, and bolstered it with hand drawn maps. It ran for a while until December, when we were due for 'release', meaning automatic internment, being then transferred by covered lorry to the Curragh.

Compared to our compact, neatly attired, almost collegiate life in the Provost's Prison, the bare, windswept desert of Kildare was a shock to me. I was a newcomer to all of this and, apart from the folk accompanying me, I would be a stranger inside this encampment. It was a dreadful sight and I had never seen anything like it. The men looked like a race apart; the Free State officers and P.A.s likewise. They appeared aggressive towards us. Advancing with swinging batons one called upon George Fluke to remove his boots when, for whatever reason, misunderstanding or delay, he received a blow on the head which clearly dazed him, leaving him semi-conscious in my arms. I managed to reach the Cookhouse with him and to rest him there.

I was taken to the Leitrim hut and introduced, accompanied by fellow Dubliners, 'Ribs' Redmond and 'Mouse' Doyle. The O.C was John Joe Maxwell, a very nice fellow who had known Mrs. Buckley. I found them all a very agreeable group, the best of company; the three Mc Cormacks, Bertie, Hugh and John L, Frank Murray, P.J. Dolan, 'Sergeant' Frank Beirne, Heslin, the 'Priest' McWeeney, Seamus O'Kane, Paud Farrell and the rest.

It was almost the end of December, two weeks after the huts had been burned and after the leaders had been removed to the Glasshouse. As we had had no news in Arbour Hill this had been hearsay to me; but then I commenced to learn more of it; of the weeks spent in tunnels underground, and then for it all to be lost in one fell swoop, all conceived and planned by a coterie new to the Camp, the circle around Larry Grogan and Peadar O'Flaherty. Larry was inoffensive and was used by

Peadar, who disliked the camaraderie that had prevailed under O.C Billy Mulligan. They wanted an active struggle carried on within; their complaint about the butter ration was a mere excuse.

It took me a while to become acclimatised to the communal life within a 30 man hut. Compared to being master of your own room, that is your cell, the bleak, untidy appearance of a hut took some getting used to. And as to my fellow prisoners, what was wrong? Why were they so grey and seemingly all the time shuffling around? It was then I realised that they all wore misshapen Martin Henry suits, grey, and frequently unbuttoned army shirts, tieless, of course, bearded, and with clogs of boots that they seemed to drag around. Shuffle, shuffle; I hated to admit it but I knew I would soon be joining them.

Dick Mulready, of the noted Mullingar family, was lively and entertaining, as a conversationalist and as a violinist. A gifted musician, later he married deportee Mary Glenn, interned in Mountjoy. Mick McCarthy from Cork city, a marked man because of his long standing association with the Movement and his friendship with Tomás Mac Curtain.

Bill Kirwan, the country boy from Thomastown, who had been across to England on the Campaign, was captured, hammered by police and deported. I heard his story, and also that of Mac Bride from Co. Meath, both of whom had done training sessions before going, in Killiney Castle. Chased from England, they were accommodated for a while in a house the Movement had on loan near Clane; then to a tall house controlled by May Laverty in North Frederick Street. Bill was annoyed at the treatment May suffered from some of her guests in that house. They used her to the full, he said, while she had to manage for food on whatever she could gather. She was an extremely able person,<sup>(6)</sup> and they exploited her to the utmost.

Pádraig Mac Caomhánach ran a class strictly for Ulster purists. I was asked to run a class; Norman Clarke ran a class; and Seán Óg ÓTuama had a class for the Munstermen.

In Pádraig's hut were Seán Mac Diarmada, from Derry city, Sean Sheils, a fair-haired chap, also from Derry; Frankie Duffy, Eamon Ó Cianáin and Black Dan O'Toole from Belfast. Seán Óg had classes for choral singing which I often attended. Many will recall his later appearances on radio. He had a wide repertoire, and gave classes in singing as well as in ancient Irish culture. 'Spud' Murphy of Dublin, later represented the unemployed in Leinster House as a T.D until frustrated by the procedures there. In the Curragh he never gave any indication of political ability. Henry Cummins from Co. Mayo electrified everyone when he arrived, suddenly and alone, catapulted into the Camp, with his repertoire of Churchillian and Shakespearian speeches. Micky Hallinan from Clonmel was a pupil for a while with Mac Caomhánach, before tiring of the Ulster dialect and moving in with Seán Óg.

Following Pearse Kelly's internment in November, 1941, the section of the Camp opposed to ostracisation, rallied around him, eroding the support of the excessively rigid Liam Leddy council, until both groups became almost equal; in time, Kelly represented the greater number. Leddy had the legitimacy but that came under fire in April when Sean McCool, for a short time C.S, in-the spring of 1942, arrived with a

message from G.H.Q. that the dissension should cease and the split be healed.

The Leddy council refused to accept the directive and, in this, they may have been influenced by the fact that McCool,(7) although not a communist, had left-wing leanings and, in September, 1931, had spent time in a Soviet sanatorium.

I stood aloof from this for some time but, in the following year, after the abortive 49 day hunger strike by McCool, John Joe Maxwell, Terry McLaughlin and Gerry 'the Bird' Doherty, all of whom were on the Pearse Kelly side, along with Pádraig MacCaomhánach, I transferred over. That meant for me the loss of friends on the Leddy side.

Pearse Kelly, with whom I now became acquainted for the first time, I found to be a pleasant and unobtrusive person who had greatness thrust upon him. Nick Lally of Galway, whom I now met also for the first time, was to some a curio in that he had played rugby although turning to gaelic in the Curragh; bold as brass when on the field, he was a most gentle individual otherwise.

Bob Bradshaw, Roger McHugh and Seamus O'Donovan, more bookish than most, were close associates. Christy Oxberry, a Dubliner, wearing glasses, worked for Fuel Importers later. Johnny Sullivan of Tralee was a fine footballer. Sean Nolan from Herbert Lane in Dublin, was one of our recruits held in St. Anne's; later he worked as an electrician. Liam Brady from Dublin was a tailor and a fine violinist. George Fluke had been a bookie's clerk and was arrested early on in Listowel, although from the north of Ireland. Vain because of his pale red, wavy hair; he could be very entertaining with his stories of Belfast life. Jim McGuinness, who later became editor of *The Irish Press*, at that time gave little indication that he had leanings in that direction.

Sean Dunne, later a Labour T.D. was a very gregarious individual; he got a real sickener over the Fire as he had spent many hours in the tunnels.

Mattie O'Neill was a bit of a prodigy, with his span of interests and knowledge, I knew him principally through Ó Cadhain's class. Neil Goold impressed me by his industry and dedication and the effort he was making (by carrying the Dinneen dictionary perpetually around with him) to master the language.

Freddie Parnell, of Dublin, one of three brothers imprisoned, was a lively young fellow with a quick and comic tongue. Willie Joe McCorry of Belfast was in an Irish class; he was quite a good singer.

So far as the World War was concerned I would say that most of us, while not pro-German, hoped nonetheless that England would be trounced. We were ignorant of the Nazi philosophy as, indeed was everyone, until the war had ended. Despite his initial success, many believed Hitler eventually would be defeated, as happened, by the Soviet Union. De Valera, however, was suiting his own purpose by interning us.

It was a continuation of his struggle against the I.R.A and now he had an unarguable mandate. Personally, I never accepted that he was Republican; I faulted him as far back as I can remember. With his 'external association' idea he was close to accepting what Griffith and Collins had accepted. In that respect he bore some responsibility for the Civil War. That he could, in our time, turn around, shoot and hang Republicans, demonstrated to me that he was no better than the Free Staters of

1922 - 23.

It was on a morning in September, 1943, that a P.A sergeant came, as I was rising, to tell me that I could put my belongings together as I was to leave; I was being released. I was surprised and overjoyed and hurried away, after saying innumerable goodbyes. With two comrades, we trudged happily to the rail station in Newbridge. On Aston's Quay, I met Tony Wall of Wall's Hotel on Mountjoy Square. I entered a public house with him and 'phoned my aunt in Glasnevin who was, need I say, delighted not to have any longer an empty house. My first square meal for three years with her was a welcome homecoming. About a week later a strange thing happened when two gardai in uniform arrived: I was requested to sign a release paper. I answered firmly that I was not signing any release paper whereupon they departed and I heard no more of it.

I now quickly set about finding work, signing on at the Gardiner Street exchange and also contacting Séamus Ó Mongáin, working for Fuel Importers in the Phoenix Park. He appointed me a checker and I enjoyed being among them. Felix Cronin was the boss, Ó Mongáin and he were very friendly. Then there was Ned Kelleher, one of the Collins 'hit squad', later a Broy, but who had left when disenchanted with De Valera.(8) They were an extraordinary mixture, while the Park itself and the people in it was almost an extension of the Curragh.

Under a new government Peadar Heuston recovered his civil service job, although later he joined Smurfit's. Some dozens of fellows, taken on in the Park, graduated into state posts, Pat Hannon to Aer Lingus; Curtain, into External Affairs; Seamus Murphy to the Censorship Board, Ó Mongáin to teaching; Ó Cadhain, O'Donovan, McHugh and many more. In 1951, I was appointed to the Eastern Health Board, as it was later named, advancing to become a superintendent over much of the north suburbs. I had married Peggy Morris of De Courcy Square, which is close to Glasnevin, in 1948. *Ba bhearna mhór i mo shaoil é beith i bpriosún ach níl aon aiféala orm dá bharr.*

## REFERENCES:

1. From Ballagh, in Co. Tipperary. Was in Sackville Street in 1916. Commanded South Tipperary Brigade. Defied G.H.Q when he ordered all militarised Brits from the area. One of the 'Big Four' (Treacy, Breen, Robinson, Hogan) to lead the Soloheadbeg ambush of January 21, 1919, setting the flame alight. Led the Knocklong rescue of Hogan from certain hanging. Called to Dublin to operate with Collins. Attempted to assassinate Lord French, Lord Lieutenant, in College Green, and, more daringly, at Ashtown. Wounded and burned in action at Hollyford Barracks (Tipp.) but sprang back to to take part in an attack at Drangan. Rehill, and other exploits. See Breen's *My fight for Irish Freedom*, Dorothy Macardle (eight mentions); Sean Treacy, *Trodairí na Treas Briogáide, No Other Law*, (nine mentions); O'Malley, *Raids and Rallies* (14 mentions); *Survivors*, (seven mentions).

2. Peter O'Rourke in *An Phoblacht* 23.7.93, adds the following note (abbreviated) on Margaret Buckley.

Author, revolutionary and politician, she was President of Sinn Féin for 13 years. She joined Inghíndhe na h-Eireann in October, 1900, and was involved in anti-King protests in 1903 and 1907. She was among the group that founded *An Dún* in Cork city, in 1910. Arrested after 1916, she was released in the amnesty of June, 1917, playing a prominent role in the reorganisation aftermath.

Appointed a judge on the Dublin North City Circuit by Austin Stack, she was arrested again after 1920 but was released during the Truce.

3. The Olympics were held that year in Los Angeles, where two Irishmen shone: Dr. Pat O'Callaghan, throwing the hammer, and R. N Tisdall, in the relay.

3a. This was not the view of Justice Kingsmill Moore in 1948: present day Sinn Féin was legally the same organisation as that which was born in 1923. Nonetheless, as a consequence of a tawdry piece of legerdemain in passing the Sinn Féin Funds Bill in 1947, De Valera sequestered monies the value of which today would exceed £555,000. Anyone reading the chapter in Brian P Murphy's *Patrick Pearse and the Lost Republican Ideal* will find ample evidence there of De Valera's vigilance in diverting towards Fianna Fáil, and the *Irish Press*, monies which rightfully should have come to Sinn Féin.

4. See *Survivors* and many references in books of the period. *They Have Fooled You Again*, by Denis Carroll, published in 1993, is a life.

5. Liam Ó Luanaigh was imprisoned in Arbour Hill in the 'hard period' of 1936 and has written songs and poems of that time. Later he was Uachtarán, 1946-1949 of Conradh na Gaeilge. He ended his working career on the translation staff of Leinster House.

6. See Bob Bradshaw for her associations in Belfast



7. Mc Cool fought in Donegal and was sentenced after the Civil War (in Finner or Drumboe), remaining prominent in subsequent years. In the autumn of 1927 he served a short sentence in Sligo Jail 'for obstructing Planter landlordism in Tír Chonail' as *An Phoblacht* reported. In May, 1929, he was sentenced in Sligo to eight months for possession of documents. As a result of the Belfast Crown Entry courtmartial arrests in April, 1936, (along with Jim Killeen, Mike Gallagher, Michael A. Kelly, John Adams, and Liam Rice), he received six years, a considerable spell in those days. In 1948, he was prominent working in East Donegal for Clann na Poblachta, but broke with them on principled grounds for going into coalition. He was a sound and well-read Republican.

8. Séamus Ó Mongáin relates the following on Kelleher-

Ned Kelleher was one of Collins' squad prior to the Treaty of 1921. In the Civil War he remained on the Republican side. Afterwards he stayed close to the I.R.A. Times were hard and when De Valera put out that he needed a force to confront the Blueshirts in 1933, Ned joined what had become known as the Broy Harriers; a special armed detective force set up under Col. Eamon Broy. Broy who had been one of Collins' agents, took the Free State side from the beginning. Ned, however, whose only training was with a gun, was prepared to stay in until the Blueshirt threat passed. It never came to much anyway, and when Gen. Eoin O'Duffy, its leader, climbed down on his threat to march on Dublin in August 1933, it fizzled away. The I.R.A. had been making noises, so De Valera turned his attention upon them. Ned found himself, as did members of other Harriers, facing his old comrades. But Ned was not an ordinary policeman. He was on De Valera's bodyguard; he drove for him. He told De Valera that in these new circumstances he would need to have another job. All you have to do, said De Valera, is guard me. Yes, but I cannot stay in with a group who, one day, might be arresting my old comrades. De Valera spent an hour trying to persuade him; then he said, alright; leave it with me. I will find you work. Weeks passed by; then Ned re appeared at De Valera's office but Kathleen O'Connell, his secretary, would not allow him pass. He would be offered a job alright, she told him; he could join a post and telegraph outdoor squad digging holes for telegraph poles.

The first of these was the fact that the law was made of in Ireland. I have shown that her Majesty's government sustains itself in Ireland by packed juries, by partisan judges, by perjured sheriffs.

The second was the fact that the law was made of in Ireland. I have shown that her Majesty's government sustains itself in Ireland by packed juries, by partisan judges, by perjured sheriffs.

4. See *Journal of the Proceedings of the House of Commons*, 1848, p. 100.

5. See *Journal of the Proceedings of the House of Commons*, 1848, p. 100.

6. See *Journal of the Proceedings of the House of Commons*, 1848, p. 100.

*I have shown what the law is made of in Ireland. I have shown that her Majesty's government sustains itself in Ireland by packed juries, by partisan judges, by perjured sheriffs.*

- John Mitchell, 1848.

**MATTIE O'NEILL:**

*Another Dublin inner city man and student of Hardwicke 'college', Hardwicke Street: pays tribute to Joe O'Connor, Gearóid Ó Mongáin, Seán Óg Ó Tuama, Paddy Kenna and many more.*



*At the opening in the Dublin Civic Museum 1990 of an exhibition in memory of Máirtín Ó Cadhain, largely arranged by Mattie; his brother Christy, standing; Ita Ní Chionnaith, and her father Paddy.*

**THE HARDWICKE:**

A source for one of the rivulets and streams that meandered away, growing in volume, and finally tumbling into the sea of an internment camp could be Hardwicke Street, near Parnell Square, on Dublin's north side. Not the Hardwicke Street that we know now with its flatted, municipalised, poverty traps, but an elegant georgian street, each house three floors over basement with arched fanlighted hall doors, directed towards the spired portico of St. Georges Church. There were many other well springs and sources bubbling up in every county, town and village, contributing to the tide of Fenianism as shown by yet another young volunteer incarcerated, and some of them we will come to in time; but let us trace for a start the history of one, *Mattie O'Neill*, and treat the Hardwicke Hall in that street as his beginning.

No. 38, as it was officially, is no longer there. As a two storey brick faced building, it was distinctive in not being a house like every other building in the street. Stretching forty feet along the frontage it concealed an internal court (and that court might at one time have been a cloister for nuns), with a complementary rere building that in time became a workshop for the internationally famous *Dún Emer* carpet making guild.

In 1752 a Major Faviere (1) offered his home to a group of Poor Clares. Its gardens extended to what later became Dorset Street. The nuns built the two storey building to the front on what was also later to become Hardwicke Street. They remained there until 1804. After many vicissitudes, during which the chapel and the cells underneath, became a Jesuit foundation (pending the building of the great St. Francis Xavier church on Upper Gardiner Street), it was then developed as a day school that was later sold to the Methodists for whom it became a Wesleyan kindergarten and college.

It continued as a school under various guises until acquired in 1910 by Countess Plunkett. The Plunkett interests were concentrated mainly around Mount Street and

Ballsbridge, but at this time, in a near traffic free environment of wide streets and an all enveloping tramway system, the divorce between north side and south side Dublin that is so evident today was not then apparent. The *Dún Emer Guild*, established by Evelyn Gleeson in Dundrum, a village outside Dublin, came citywards in 1912 and occupied the parallel building at the rere.

The frontal building downstairs under Joseph Plunkett was used until 1920 as the *Theatre of Ireland*, a grandiose name for its spartan hundred seat accommodation, but in its time it developed as a literary milieu with such personalities as Joseph Campbell, Pádraic Colum and George Russell. It had close associations with Sinn Féin, with Thomás McDonagh, Blanaid Salkeld, a young musician called Arthur Darley, Edward Martyn, Eimer O'Duffy, Grace Gifford, Sara Purser, James Stephens and Joseph Holloway. He was accompanied on his first visit by Professor Starkey, and he was not enraptured by what he described as the gloomy cheerlessness of the place. 'Gloomy cheerlessness' would be an apt description for the building 20 or more years on; the street now commencing to sink into slumdom; the 1916 Rising a fading memory; Pearse and Plunkett's dream for these very people still only a dream; the ramshackle little frontal warren now occupied upstairs by I.R.A training groups in the former supper room. The Fianna were downstairs in the auditorium, the two floors being entered from a lobby which was on the left of the forty foot front, i.e. nearest when coming along the footpath from North Frederick Street. Fianna and I.R.A parades were seldom held simultaneously; Fianna were downstairs all of the time; never upstairs. Cumann na mBan did not as a body occupy it although individual members might be found there. The young children in Clann na Gael never paraded there.

Evelyn Gleeson and her busy carpet weavers still occupied the complementary building at the rere, a wing never intruded upon by the I.R.A or Fianna trainees, although many hundreds must have passed through the frontal building in its time.

There was an exit leading towards *Dún Emer*, yet not once, according to Christy Quearney, did anyone cross the courtyard even out of idle curiosity. We never met any of their workers and we were seldom there when they were in production. It would be after working hours that we would be there, he says. A motley throng unimaginable in the context of today. Seamus Forde actor, whose family lived close by, relates of his days in the early thirties, engaged nightly there on drilling, history lessons and deportment. One night, inquiring about the content of a high-up press far above his reach, he was diverted by the quip, probably apocryphal, that 'that is where the guns are kept'. But Seamus, then proceeding towards the priesthood, stopped short and failed to take the declaration that might have brought him into the I.R.A.

As a well spring of republicanism it seemed an appropriate destiny for a building owned by the Plunketts and in which, in 1915, Pádraic Pearse with the boys from St. Enda's produced his one act play *Iosagan*. As early as that time it came in also for occasional use by the Irish Volunteers and Fianna.(2)

It was in that street and in that hall in 1938 that this writer first made contact with the I.R.A. It was into this decrepit building that he went, hearing the sounds of Fianna drilling downstairs, and upon being directed upstairs, he was greeted at his

impressionable age by the most beautiful dark haired Irish colleen he had ever seen. Art will meet you, she told him, on next Saturday in Ballsbridge. And in Ballsbridge a week later he was to join the Recruits Company of the I.R.A under Training Officer, Frankie Rogers. But enough of that.

Hardwicke Street, as we had commenced to say, was also the fountain head, the bubbling spring, of one Mattie O'Neill, genially known and long respected by a wide circle of trade union people in Dublin, around whom most of his post-Curragh life evolved. But as frequently happens, his entire background, growing up at 49 Ellesmere Avenue, off Dublin's North Circular Road, was Republican. His father, at this time a vice president of Sinn Féin, along with Peadar MacAndrew who was honorary secretary: Liam MacGiolla Mhuire being the other, had been in the same battalion as Joe Clarke (the Third Dublin) in 1916. They were still very friendly and consequently Mattie saw a lot of Joe whom he describes a piece of history in himself.

He had, after all, helped to hold the fort at Mount Street in that epic week when on the Wednesday afternoon a battalion of Sherwood Foresters, fresh in from Kingstown, sought to force their way against a garrison of a dozen men posted in the corner houses of Haddington Road and Lower Mount Street. Three of the tiny garrison were killed but, in this most significant action of the Rising, the British Troops lost 216 killed and wounded. No wonder the young Mattie saw Joe as a piece of history in himself.(3)

He would arrive in Ellesmere Avenue on his bike, a squat, little, short sighted man, for all the world like a hunch back moving along. He ran a small bookshop of Republican publications from the top floor of a house on the corner of Henry Street and Upper O'Connell Street. It was a useful point of contact, as a result of which Joe, despite his age and his eminence in the struggle, was imprisoned, sentenced and later interned. Mattie's father held him in high regard, although not so Mattie. He was short tempered, he tells, and a terrible bloody man to scandalise and criticise people. No one was safe. He could damn perfectly normal fellows by declaring; oh, mind him. He is only a tout.

On the run after bolting through the window of his Synge Street classroom, ahead of a Special Branch posse, Seán Ó Broin, then O.C. Dublin, lodged with them for a while, as did Mixie Conway. A young man Seán, then in his mid-twenties, he was a great favourite with his step mother Lucy Hibbard. My people were Republicans, declares Mattie; my father and step mother indeed, and she had a particular smack for him because he was such a genial and pleasant character. He used to get away with saying Jesus and things like that which was surprising for my step mother. But he had a way; he was such a pleasant fellow, with a great grin and a smile. He was with us for some time. As a matter of fact he arranged that I was taken straight out of the recruits' company and put to work at headquarters level.

I was still parading with the recruits at that time. We used the second floor of the An Óige house at 39 Mountjoy Square. Our O.C. Recruits, Mick Dunne, a postman by day, was in An Óige, and he made surreptitious use of the upstairs room, *mar eadh*, as a history class. It was all very much on the Q.T. He used give little talks and readings from Brian O'Higgins (Brian na Banban) and 'Sceilg' (J.J.O'Kelly) in pam-

phlets on the Free State's 'betrayal' of the Republic. There were about 30 of us in Recruits then, and I remember on one occasion when he said; *I don't know what plans there are but it is the intention to do something in this generation, and if you people are asked to go North would you be prepared to go?* And of course all our hands shot up.

Micky Mullen was his adjutant. Most of them were later captured drilling in the spring of 1940 in a corner of St. Anne's Park, Clontarf, and many of them were sentenced. And they had not even made the declaration; they were not, strictly speaking, in the I.R.A. at all. Most of them went in, and some did many years. Liam Dowling was one of them, Jimmy Storey and Seamus Buckley. They were all picked up anyway. A few signed out but the majority, some of them very ordinary Dubliners, remained. Micky left from the Bridewell; his wife was not well but he was obviously a bit self-conscious of the fact. Years later when Seán Ó Broin was managing Kingstons, I used to go in and he would ask: was Micky Mullen ever in the Curragh? No, I would say, he was in the Bridewell. Sean thought it a great joke. But Micky's heart was in the right place all the time; deep down he remained a true blue Republican.

I was barely past 17 at the time but I was not captured in St. Anne's, because as I said, I was appointed to headquarters staff. About which more anon.

Mountjoy Square of course is very close to Hardwicke Street, and prior to this about 1934, 1935, while still in the Fianna, I used frequently be there although the real base of our *sluagh* was in Lower Grand Canal Street, on the south side, where we occupied a small property which has since been redeveloped. Seamus Grace, another of the nine survivors of Mount Street Bridge, was our O.C. Appropriately he lived in Percy Place, overlooking the bridge and the scene of his action. Fianna remained in that house, I suppose, seven years. I was enlisted in Grand Canal Street on the south side, having been born in Eblana Villas, off Pearse Street, so I had only an unofficial connection with the Hardwicke Street hall. Peadar McAndrew, a great and sterling Republican, and great *gaelgóir* from Co. Mayo, had a grocery shop and dairy there, on the side opposite the Hardwicke. So I would have been calling there anyway. Peadar also taught Irish in Artane Industrial School. It was a great street at that time; lively and full of people. And while some of the houses had gone into tenements, most of them were still private or in flats.

It was there I met Brendan Behan for the first time. He was from Russell Street, off the North Circular, only ten minutes walk away. He was the fine healthy fellow you once knew, with an open white shirt and a tidy mop of black hair; the very picture of health. Somehow or another, even at that time, I knew I was in the presence of genius. We had been sent this evening to the Hardwicke; I cannot remember now for what. It may have had something to do with Sean Murray, a Republican from Co. Antrim, who later joined the Communist Party, and it was then I commenced a long term acquaintance with Brendan.

Cathal Goulding too began with Fianna in Hardwicke Street. He was later put in charge of officers in Dublin, but at this time he was a fine cut of a lad; still is (4) in a sense, with fine golden hair, inevitably grey by now, stockily built with loads of courage. I got to know him better later when he was Intelligence Officer for Dublin. Very much the military man. He would have proclaimed himself a socialist, and

would sing the chorus of the Spanish republican song, *Banda Rossa la Triumphiana*.

Inevitably, I suppose, there was a bit of a dust up with some locals in the street. One word borrowed another. The people were on our side but there is always that few. The Fianna; maybe because of their uniforms, got themselves involved in a row with these locals. There was quite a dust up and how we were not all beaten out I do not know. There were handy boxers on both sides. At that time no one would dream of using a knife. We had Paddy and Jack Rowe and Paddy Rigney and Joe Buckley; all north side Dubliners brought up the hard way, and all good with their fists. We could have moved forward and beaten up the group but I would not hear of it. But when Rowe reported it back, some fellows with guns came later and shot up the hallway of the tenement. That was the sort of unofficial action that I would not countenance, and inevitably it led to some of our volunteers being imprisoned.

I was, as I alluded, attached to H.Q. staff and as such I spent my time in the training department headquarters then situated in 3 Prince of Wales Terrace, Ballsbridge. It belonged to the I.R.A or was rented to them and they had their own caretaker there although I cannot now recall his name; it may have been O'Flaherty. Norbet O'Connor, a brother of Rory, executed in December 1922, lived in no. 4, and that may explain something as it was seen as a possible escape route. It was there I met Joe O'Connor who later stood trial with George Plant on the Devereux affair in 1942.

We had classes for limited numbers in the house and Joe was a regular visitor, as indeed was Mixie Conway, Pearse McLaughlin from Howth, a top notch operator, a lad named Joe O'Donnell and Tim O'Driscoll from Tralee. Tim had spent years on wireless telegraphy in the R.A.F and he was now teaching us. Joe was there pretty regularly. He stayed nights in Ellesmere Avenue as did numbers of lads at that time. He was arrested on March 27, 1941, as was myself (but to my astonishment released shortly after), Danny Gleeson, Liam Noonan and Tom Doyle. Hayes was said to have been lucky; he got away from the Mount Merrion house, in The Rise where Joe and Danny were.

We were arrested in a sweep across Dublin, March 27, 1941. Bréid Ní Chuinnégain was picked up, as was my brother Christy, Joe O'Connell and Tom Doyle, staying in our house at the time, en route to work. As he was an official of the Dept. of Defence, it hit the headlines when sentenced to 14 years in March 1941. Linked to him and sentenced to two years one day earlier, were three girl civil servants, Maureen Twomey, Maureen Cullinane and Mary Spillane.

A little man, living in Innisfallen Parade, who had been in Fianna in 1916 was pulled in also. He could look out from D. Wing and see his own home. But, to return to Joe O'Connor; he was a fierce man with the Nazi salute. Of course it was a gesture of defiance, because we were all, or most of us, left wing. I caught up with Joe again in the Curragh. This was after his series of trials with Patrick Davern, Michael Walsh and George Plant, from November 1941 to the second last day of January 1942, when he was discharged by the Military Court. He had barely escaped the death penalty. The trials of the other three continued with Plant paying the ultimate penalty.

I remember him, fine ruddy fellow that he was, being carried shoulder high on his return to the Camp: later he had a nervous breakdown, and indeed he looked

like a man who had. He went, upon release to London, where he married one of the sisters of Geoffrey Palmer, though alas, it did not last. (Geoffrey, Protestant republican over 79, was the oldest member of the Communist Party of Ireland and a regular attender at Bodenstown until his death recently). He had joined the Workers' League, but he never forgot the I.R.A.; as a Kerry man he could not forget the I.R.A. He remained very much Republican. I remember him coming to me and giving me a contribution, a very handsome contribution, for Martin White who was standing for Sinn Féin in Co. Clare. Anytime I met Joe prior to his death in 1980, we talked always about the lads, the scrap, and various things like that. He was in no way jaundiced; he remained I.R.A. to the end.

#### WIRELESS TELEGRAPHY:

As a result of learning wireless telegraphy in Prince of Wales Terrace, I was seen as an expert, so when a hitch developed in the I.R.A transmitter in Jim O'Donovan's house, I found myself called upon one day in 1940 to go out and inspect it. Jim O'Donovan, then a fairly high official with the Electricity Supply Board, had been Director of Chemicals in the Tan War, and had been drawn back into our struggle by Sean Russell, his old friend, and former Director of Munitions. I always found him a very serious kind of man, not given to jokes or small talk. O'Donovan lived in a large house in its own grounds beyond Loughlinstown in south Co. Dublin. Tom Doyle, then Adjutant-General, sent me there to get it going and to operate it. It had been under the care of Pat Conway of the Wicklow Irish Lights, but Pat had been picked up by the Special Branch so I was asked to fill the gap. The man that brought me was Pete Kearney, a long standing friend of Moss Twomey; as noted in *Survivors*, he was at Crossbarry with Tom Kelleher.

He spent a time in America after the Civil War, came home and set up the South of Ireland Asphalt Company. Numbers of our lads got jobs with that company on their release when they found themselves barred from other employment.

O'Donovan and himself had a great welcome for one another on arrival, while Mrs. O'Donovan, who was a sister of Kevin Barry, was also there. I found her a lovely woman. I retained a great impression of her. She kept plying me with cigarettes which were scarce at the time.

Then O'Donovan took me upstairs to test the transmitter, which I believe was for keeping in contact with Germany (and you tell me that Henning Thomsen, the Embassy Counsellor called often to the basement office of Moss Twomey in Upper O'Connell Street. But, of course, in his position Moss would talk to anyone; whether one really learned anything from Moss was a different matter). But at that time there were any amount of transmitters, receivers and personnel maintaining contact with the English, so why should we not maintain contact with the Germans? O'Donovan switched on the transmitter and I took over. I had difficulty with the wave bands; it was missing a bit; it must have been the procedure as, after all, it was a completely new instrument to me. It was not that it was too fast for me, for I eventually mastered it and showed Jim how to operate it.

That seems to lead on to Fritz Langsdorf, who, of course, with his brother Herman, and sister Catherine were all Dubliners. Fritz served a term in Arbour Hill Prison in 1935 with Mick O'Leary, but at this time was on the run although still get-



ting around by bike. I suppose, despite having dyed his wavy fair hair dark brown, and cultivating a 'ronnie', he was still, with that dimple in his chin, recognisable. At this time we were up the mountains above Ticknock, accompanied by Mixie Conway and Jim McGuinness later editor of the *Irish Press*, and later still head of news in RTE. McGuinness had been in the British Army and was said to be skilled at map reading.

So the four of us were up around Ticknock and Three Rock this day, and looking down Fritz pointed to the Lambe Doyles pub as a landmark. Mixie however, being a pioneer, choose another landmark for our exercise. But I had time to get to know Fritz afterwards when he was one of the Ó Cadhain study group; always one of the boys and a very easy going character.

**PADDY KENNA:**

In 1991 I gave a short oration at the funeral of Paddy Kenna. The Kenna family were outstanding in the Movement at this time. I had not known him until we met in the Curragh but I was drawn to him immediately because, apart from being a staunch Republican, he was a warm fellow, a very broad minded fellow, and in that respect I felt a kindred soul.

He was completely lacking in rancour or bitterness towards those on the other side when the Camp divided. We knocked around together a lot, but the funny thing, although very keen for it, Paddy never mastered the Irish language. It was not for want of trying, so consequently, as I had a knack for languages, I tended to move in other circles in the camp. But my contacts with him continued through swapping literature, reading and being involved in drama.

Paddy and I took part in a number of pantomimes in the Curragh. Seán Ó Tuama used obtain the scripts of Jimmy O'Dea pantomimes through Harry O'Donovan. He would then adapt them to the circumstances of our internment, and somehow or another Paddy and I would be chosen for lead parts. As there were no women in the Curragh, Philip O'Kelly and myself nearly always fulfilled the parts of *les girls*. Phil, with his long dark wavy hair, made a very convincing female when made up, but there were others; Liam Hyland was one, who could play well the part of a lady. And of course we were following the Shakespearian tradition when all female parts were played by men.

I remember Paddy playing opposite me in panto when my name was Sally. I cannot remember what was his name but I know from the applause and laughter that we were a great success. Seán Óg on one occasion sent out a programme to Harry O'Donovan. It was specially done in fine script with Celtic scrollwork; it would be interesting if one could get a sight of it today.

Paddy was later joined in 1943 by his two younger brothers, Mick and Tom. And again I became very friendly with them. They were real Dubs, never taking themselves seriously and always good for a laugh. We were relatively old chaps when they were shoved in; Tom who was a tall man with golden wavy hair, was wearing a white raincoat. After a night or two in the hut, he suddenly commenced to sing a top of the pops number called *Kalamazoo-zo-zo*. Then with hips swinging, he hummed out the alphabet, *A,B,C,D,E,F,G,.....I got a girl in Kalamazoo-zo-zo*. In next to no time we were all jiggling around in line with our hands on each others hips

singing Kalamazoo. But that was the Kennas; they would really cheer you up, making sure you didn't become too serious about things.

My friendship continued with them when eventually we were all released. Frequently I visited their house in Fitzgerald Street in Harolds Cross where I knew their mother well. Her name was Sloan and she came from a great Republican family, some of whom were involved with Dan Breen. As I remember her she seemed to be permanently preparing food for the boys; cutting bread, making sandwiches, but I really loved her. Yes, I loved her. Paddy and I continued our friendship for long after because we became involved in a drama group, *Imritheóirí Sinn Féin*, the Sinn Féin Players, and we produced several plays. I remember one called *Tread*, a bilingual farce, which we staged for prisoner's dependants' in the Mansion House. Another was a Yeat's play, *The Walk of a Queen*. It finished with, and I had the final line; *did you see an old woman going down the road? I did not, but I saw a young girl and she had the walk of a queen.*

Paddy and I knocked around together and we drank together; although Paddy shortly after that gave up drinking at his mother's request and never drank again. We used to go into the Shakespeare Bar in Parnell Street and meet Seosamh Ó Cadhain there, a brother of Máirtín. I suppose we were more or less bumming drink if it came to that. We were penniless for a long time after coming out, so we were happy if somebody treated us and we got a few laughs out of it. Seosamh, who was secretary of *An Fáinne*, had his office in Parnell Square over Craobh Mobhi and I was a frequent visitor there. About the time of *An t-Oireachtas* in October, Seosamh would arrive in with a load of Connemara people whom he would entertain in a private room upstairs where we could sing to our hearts content and enjoy our drink.

That was a great congregating place for a lot of the Curragh lads; it was my first local; myself, Paddy, and the Dublin I.R.A lads. It was a convenient meeting place because we all attended *céilís* and socials in the area; the Sinn Féin hall, Conarchy's, the Teachers' and so on. The Prisoners' Relief Organisation office was in North Frederick Street, while another good reason was that the Shakespeare was then owned by Paddy O'Shea, a Republican from Co. Kerry, who married this girl we called the millionairess and ended up owning O'Shea's - now Madigans - in Donnybrook.

Anyway Paddy was always part of that scene, and after months of hardship without work, we all finally landed, through Séamus Ó Mongáin, jobs stacking turf in the Park where we felt rightly made up. Indeed, Andy, Paddy's father, who had been all through World War One, and was never involved in our activities, got a job there too. He was, as you might expect, a marvellous character. I can recall drinking with him and another big man who was later a commissionaire in Clerys, and the stories Andy had to relate would keep you in stitches for a long time.

He had been a post office labourer in 1914 and joined up one afternoon that he happened to have a load of drink taken. Almost the first he knew of it was when the supervisor came forward next morning and grasping his hand congratulated him; Mr. Kenna, *we are all proud of you*. Shifted quickly to England, he absented himself from camp, and drinking that much cider in Dorset somewhere he was AWOL for three days as a result. The Western Front was not much different for Andy. During

one big onslaught he and a number of his unit entered this large and shell pocked chateau, promptly falling through a floor into a subterranean basement where they discovered a cellar stocked with wine and brandy. While the battle raged to and fro overhead, they plied themselves with liquor to such an extent that, after three days they were in the horrors. Emerging then they found themselves within their own lines, but so disoriented were they, they were taken to be shell shocked and were promptly shipped to base hospital.

When Paddy's mother lay ill, she called her sons, Tom, Mick and Paddy to her side, and making them join hands, promise never to drink again. Paddy stuck to that, and from that day to his death he never touched liquor.

#### PERSONALITIES IN THE CURRAGH:

To return to the Curragh No.1 Internment Camp, which I appear to be skipping, I would like for the record to touch upon some of the people who passed through it. You know that in some quarters it was later described as Tintown University, and indeed in many respects, although getting less than no assistance from the authorities, it was a place where men could (and many did) advance themselves educationally. One of the prime movers in that was Seán Óg Ó Tuama, a man qualified in every respect, and for a time, while imprisoned, the elected President of the Gaelic League, *Connradh na Gaeilge*. I had never known him until I went to the Curragh and found that he had been interned already for almost two years. He was addressing a meeting in the big hut known as the Icebox, because of its concrete floor, and Máirtín Ó Cadhain was in the chair. Máirtín commenced to speak about class within Ireland and a bit of an exchange developed between him and Neil Goold Verschoyle, another intellectual, but from the far left. I got to know Goold well later and thought highly of him, but he always wished to portray himself as anti-establishment even while in the Curragh.

Seán Óg, on the other hand, was a very pious man, and religious. I attended his classes in mathematics which I found to be very beneficial afterwards, and I also attended his singing classes. He had Irish classes too, but I was already proficient in that, yet I really loved his singing classes. He himself enjoyed singing. He would get all of us together in his hut and teach us these marvellous traditional songs and melodies; English songs too, like *The Nightingale*. He was also interested in drama and stagecraft, producing plays and pantomimes, as I have related already. I took part in all of these with Seán, he was such a cultured individual. He taught Irish, Maths, English, and at one stage a bit of Latin. But the music and singing was his first love. He was a member of the Education Committee appointed by our Camp Council. Some people there thought him conservative and over zealous in religion; they may even have regarded him as anti-socialist, but I saw him as a cultured and brilliant individual. He was certainly no Marxist; the talks he gave on Economics at that time were pretty orthodox stuff inasmuch as there was any social content. They were based upon Catholic social ethics and *Rerum Novarum*, and although enunciated in 1891, Sean could demonstrate that our social condition fell far short of it, as indeed it still does.

I kept in contact with Seán after we had left the Curragh. We used meet on and off in the Gaelic League and *An Realt*. He gave a lecture there that I was glad to

attend, and he also taught music and singing in a gaelic club that we had in C.I.E. He was in every respect a fine person, and when he died, I arranged to have the Tricolour put on his coffin, and we gave him a guard of honour to Clarendon Street church. Tomás Ó Fiach, who was Cardinal at the time, referred favourably to the flag. I recall now, that on the occasion, I think, of his 65th. birthday, I was on a *Telefís* programme which included Séamus Paircér, Máire Ní Thuama and the choir he used have on Radio Éireann. It was a live programme and quite a celebration. Much was said live that could not later be said, for after that, with Cruise O'Brien as Minister, suspect programmes of that sort were recorded. More and more since that time programmes are subject to rigorous self-censorship with the result that the public are no longer given a truthful presentation of news. (With the arrest and sentencing of Journalist Kevin O'Kelly in November 1972, Fianna Fáil had already imposed a clamp down)

I was quite shocked when I heard of Seán Óg's death; it was all so sudden. Máire told me that he had been rushing to go off to Cúl Aodh when he had a seizure. It was all so sad as still, by my way of thinking, a relatively young man, with much to give, in the prime of life. He was one of the most healthy men I ever saw. He never smoked or drank, and while in the Camp, travelled about that windy place in an open shirt. I would have thought him as a person likely to live to a ripe old age. Perhaps it was a case of those whom the gods love die young; not going mad, but dying young. One could write a book on Seán Óg. He had a cousin in the Camp who was as different as chalk is from cheese; Conchobhair Ó Tuama; a beautiful Irish speaker too and a fine actor, but a really hard ticket.

Neil Goold wore old boots and cast-off army gear, straight from the bogs where he had been working, and was organising for communism. We all wore army boots, grey shirts and Martin Henry suits, but Goold, one suspected, wore them to show what a proletarian he was. Cold and clinical, he could be described these days as 'laid back' in his talk. He appeared before the Camp Council, making a case for a blackboard which he needed for his Russian language class, but in fact the meeting was called to discuss the Irish classes only so he was out of order. Ó Cadhain for some reason resented him. It may be, probably was, because he had endeavoured to organise a series of lectures not approved by Council, and understandably so, in my view. They would have been at variance with Republicanism despite the fact that Neil pleaded that they were in accordance with I.R.A. policy. I could see the problem although I had no authority, not then being on the *Cóiste Oideachais*, although I was on the Camp Council. Later on reading all of the correspondence relating to it, I could see the problem.

Mick O'Riordan and others organised a petition to the Camp Council on Neil Goold's behalf, but sanction was nonetheless refused. Gearóid Ó Mongáin gave his own series of talks instead. They were interesting; very learned and profound; perhaps too much so in a sense. Gearóid of course was excellent; travelled, a first class linguist, with a university degree and very well read. It wasn't just propaganda; too much of what we had been getting there was propaganda; I.R.A. propaganda. I remember passing with Máirtín a lecture being given by Sean O'Neill, and Máirtín remarked, *that is very objective history being retailed in there*. Pure Brian O'Higgins,

although I grant you Kerry has had a colourful history and anything Sean O'Neill would say, was bound to reflect that.

Gearóid was a scholar; his lectures were well prepared and had real content. He more or less ousted Gearóid Ó Maolmhicael. I only attended a few of Ó Maolmhicael's talks so it would be unfair for me to pass judgement, but I do know that Ó Cadhain was not too pleased with them. It was on record that he wished them changed. Too romantic, and I don't know what else, he considered them to be. When you recollect the type of people we had in the Curragh, you will agree that some of them were wide open to manipulation. Perhaps indeed they already were manipulated in other directions; but I think if you were O.C and of a traditional outlook, you would think twice about giving Neil Goold his head in a lecture programme.

I knew Neil well in the Camp and also in jail later. He liked always to put himself on the opposite side to the establishment; even, as I have related above, in the case of the *Cóiste Oideachais*, of being a martyr. There was a psychological approach to this. I saw it again in the Bridewell about the time Charlie Kerins was hanged when he resisted a mug shot, and fought against having his finger prints taken. I met him again when I gave the Easter oration in Glasnevin in 1945. I dealt with social matters as they then prevailed; with the Irish language and gaelic culture; the exploitation of workers and the Republican viewpoint. I hardly had it out when Neil came over and remarked that we should get together on some of the things I had been saying, but I declined the offer. I had a great deal of admiration for him; a great deal. More perhaps than many of the people who seemed to idolise him, but I was never under any illusions.

Liam Leddy will always remain a controversial figure for those who were to find themselves in what the Staters called the No. 2 Group under Pearse Kelly. I knew him as O.C of the Camp and I got to know him pretty well. The amazing thing to me was that he could join afterwards, even for a short while, the 'Stickies'. To my mind he was a straight and honest character, and if you were to fault him at all it would be to say that he was naive. On the other hand he was a disciplinarian, because he felt he had to be. Yet I saw him change his mind rapidly; to the extent that he reversed a preconceived opinion. Máirtín Ó Cadhain, Paddy Mulcahy and myself, with some others, submitted programmes to him which were undoubtedly of a revolutionary nature (educationally speaking) to what had been beforehand deemed suitable. Even I had misgivings about some of the subjects we lectured upon, yet Liam went along with the programme.

Some Irish classes were merged, while Economics and Sociology were included for the first time. The sociology would have been considered the revolutionary part and would have been anti-Marxist, not just non-Marxist; *Rerum Novarum* (5) and that type of thing. Máirtín Ó Cadhain was very much involved, and like a lot of his ideology at that stage it would have been a mixture of Connolly and Fintan Lalor with a spice of gaelicised Marx. He was reading a lot of philosophy at this stage, and Gerry Casey who had gone some of the way to being a priest, claims credit for directing Máirtín's attention to these matters. I can recall him reading those huge tomes and shouting things like, *eureka! Do you know we were wrong about that. 'That'* being some cherished economic theory, and he would proceed then to quote the scholastics in relation to authority and matters like that. It was all new to him and it

attend, and he also taught music and singing in a gaelic club that we had in C.I.E. He was in every respect a fine person, and when he died, I arranged to have the Tricolour put on his coffin, and we gave him a guard of honour to Clarendon Street church. Tomás Ó Fiach, who was Cardinal at the time, referred favourably to the flag. I recall now, that on the occasion, I think, of his 65th. birthday, I was on a *Telefís* programme which included Séamus Paircéir, Máire Ní Thuama and the choir he used have on Radio Éireann. It was a live programme and quite a celebration. Much was said live that could not later be said, for after that, with Cruise O'Brien as Minister, suspect programmes of that sort were recorded. More and more since that time programmes are subject to rigorous self-censorship with the result that the public are no longer given a truthful presentation of news. (With the arrest and sentencing of Journalist Kevin O'Kelly in November 1972, Fianna Fáil had already imposed a clamp down)

I was quite shocked when I heard of Seán Óg's death; it was all so sudden. Máire told me that he had been rushing to go off to Cúl Aodh when he had a seizure. It was all so sad as still, by my way of thinking, a relatively young man, with much to give, in the prime of life. He was one of the most healthy men I ever saw. He never smoked or drank, and while in the Camp, travelled about that windy place in an open shirt. I would have thought him as a person likely to live to a ripe old age. Perhaps it was a case of those whom the gods love die young; not going mad, but dying young. One could write a book on Seán Óg. He had a cousin in the Camp who was as different as chalk is from cheese; Conchobhair Ó Tuama; a beautiful Irish speaker too and a fine actor, but a really hard ticket.

Neil Goold wore old boots and cast-off army gear, straight from the bogs where he had been working, and was organising for communism. We all wore army boots, grey shirts and Martin Henry suits, but Goold, one suspected, wore them to show what a proletarian he was. Cold and clinical, he could be described these days as 'laid back' in his talk. He appeared before the Camp Council, making a case for a blackboard which he needed for his Russian language class, but in fact the meeting was called to discuss the Irish classes only so he was out of order. Ó Cadhain for some reason resented him. It may be, probably was, because he had endeavoured to organise a series of lectures not approved by Council, and understandably so, in my view. They would have been at variance with Republicanism despite the fact that Neil pleaded that they were in accordance with I.R.A policy. I could see the problem although I had no authority, not then being on the *Cóiste Oideachais*, although I was on the Camp Council. Later on reading all of the correspondence relating to it, I could see the problem.

Mick O'Riordan and others organised a petition to the Camp Council on Neil Goold's behalf, but sanction was nonetheless refused. Gearóid Ó Mongáin gave his own series of talks instead. They were interesting; very learned and profound; perhaps too much so in a sense. Gearóid of course was excellent; travelled, a first class linguist, with a university degree and very well read. It wasn't just propaganda; too much of what we had been getting there was propaganda; I.R.A propaganda. I remember passing with Máirtín a lecture being given by Sean O'Neill, and Máirtín remarked, *that is very objective history being retailed in there*. Pure Brian O'Higgins,

although I grant you Kerry has had a colourful history and anything Sean O'Neill would say, was bound to reflect that.

Gearóid was a scholar; his lectures were well prepared and had real content. He more or less ousted Gearóid Ó Maolmhicael. I only attended a few of Ó Maolmhicael's talks so it would be unfair for me to pass judgement, but I do know that Ó Cadhain was not too pleased with them. It was on record that he wished them changed. Too romantic, and I don't know what else, he considered them to be. When you recollect the type of people we had in the Curragh, you will agree that some of them were wide open to manipulation. Perhaps indeed they already were manipulated in other directions; but I think if you were O.C and of a traditional outlook, you would think twice about giving Neil Goold his head in a lecture programme.

I knew Neil well in the Camp and also in jail later. He liked always to put himself on the opposite side to the establishment; even, as I have related above, in the case of the *Cóiste Oideachais*, of being a martyr. There was a psychological approach to this. I saw it again in the Bridewell about the time Charlie Kerins was hanged when he resisted a mug shot, and fought against having his finger prints taken. I met him again when I gave the Easter oration in Glasnevin in 1945. I dealt with social matters as they then prevailed; with the Irish language and gaelic culture; the exploitation of workers and the Republican viewpoint. I hardly had it out when Neil came over and remarked that we should get together on some of the things I had been saying, but I declined the offer. I had a great deal of admiration for him; a great deal. More perhaps than many of the people who seemed to idolise him, but I was never under any illusions.

Liam Leddy will always remain a controversial figure for those who were to find themselves in what the Staters called the No. 2 Group under Pearse Kelly. I knew him as O.C of the Camp and I got to know him pretty well. The amazing thing to me was that he could join afterwards, even for a short while, the 'Stickies'. To my mind he was a straight and honest character, and if you were to fault him at all it would be to say that he was naive. On the other hand he was a disciplinarian, because he felt he had to be. Yet I saw him change his mind rapidly; to the extent that he reversed a preconceived opinion. Máirtín Ó Cadhain, Paddy Mulcahy and myself, with some others, submitted programmes to him which were undoubtedly of a revolutionary nature (educationally speaking) to what had been beforehand deemed suitable. Even I had misgivings about some of the subjects we lectured upon, yet Liam went along with the programme.

Some Irish classes were merged, while Economics and Sociology were included for the first time. The sociology would have been considered the revolutionary part and would have been anti-Marxist, not just non-Marxist; *Rerum Novarum* (5) and that type of thing. Máirtín Ó Cadhain was very much involved, and like a lot of his ideology at that stage it would have been a mixture of Connolly and Fintan Lalor with a spice of gaelicised Marx. He was reading a lot of philosophy at this stage, and Gerry Casey who had gone some of the way to being a priest, claims credit for directing Máirtín's attention to these matters. I can recall him reading those huge tomes and shouting things like, *eureka! Do you know we were wrong about that. 'That'* being some cherished economic theory, and he would proceed then to quote the scholastics in relation to authority and matters like that. It was all new to him and it

took him by storm.

We were not even aware at that time that there was such a thing as Catholic social teaching. I remember Paddy Mulcahy from Limerick had this book by a man called Cronin on Oxford Catholic social thinking; Seán Óg had a work on it also which I happen still to have. By and large at that time we would all have been reading and quoting Connolly and Fintan Lalor, and describing ourselves as socialists; but careful all the time to qualify that by adding that we were Republicans first.

I described myself as a socialist and resented some of what Máirtín was saying. I found it quite legitimate to assert that I was a socialist so long as I continued to recognise the Republic and refused the legitimacy of the Free State.

Inevitable in this sort of debate there were distinctions being drawn between the 2nd and 3rd. International; between socialism and communism. The communists would not admit of those distinctions, although the main argument that we had against them was that they, literally, so far as Ireland was concerned, were not politically strong enough and never likely to be. Subsequently when numbers of them signed out, and they went to join the R.A.F, that really finished them for us. I remember people like Seamus G. O'Kelly, who had been associated with Republican Congress in 1934, turning very anti-communist as a result; he used quote them on the basis that they were not loyal to what he perceived to be the Republican tradition and the true standpoint of an I.R.A man. I did not get to know Mick O'Riordan in the Curragh because we were apart, but when I did get to know him, I think he would concede much of what I have just said. As he told me himself, he had not much time for the I.R.A as such; to him it was just another vehicle.

The picture I recall of Seamus Murphy, ex-deportee from Liverpool and ex-member of the Publicity Bureau, is one of a nice, mild mannered, dreamy sort of fellow. He regarded himself as a poet and he made a few attempts to write poetry; not with any spectacular success, though in fairness he may have had things written that I was not aware of. I know that he had the manuscript of a book about an Irish family growing up in exile in Liverpool, *Parnell on the Wall*; it received favourable notice from Seán Ó Faoláin in *The Bell* although it was never published. I remember one little essay he wrote while in my class, on going for a walk in the countryside. It commenced to rain, and Seamus described the skies as 'crying'. It was in that vein; very apt, I thought. As I say, a mild and gentle person. Peadar O'Flaherty also made a few efforts at poetry and he regarded Seamus as a potential poet, although I must say I never saw anything from him that would lead me to believe that he would rise to being anything more than a minor versifier.

I knew a lot about Myles Heffernan, who had worked in New Ireland Insurance, before I was interned. Myles was Intelligence Officer of the Dublin Battalion in 1939, and had a lot to do with our training camp in Killiney Castle. But it was not until we met in the Curragh that I really became acquainted. He was just another marvellous character even though he never learned Irish. And unlike Paddy Kenna, I don't think he made any great effort; it seemed to pass him by. That is not to say that he was not interested in educational matters, for indeed he was. He offered himself as a penman, and I got him to copy out lectures that had been given; to write them into copy books and to circulate them around the huts. He was as happy as Larry doing



that kind of thing. While I was on the *Cóiste Oideachais* I got him to lecture on book keeping of which he had an excellent knowledge.

Who was on that committee? There was Máirtín as chairman, Paddy Mulcahy and a fellow from Skibbereen called Jerry McCarthy (not to be confused with the tall lanky man of the same name from Cork city). Now that may not be all. Martin White from Clare was on it for a while but he left it as he considered he should not be on it. Tom Doyle of Dublin, being a former civil servant, was on it for a while.

Jerry McCarthy was another unusual fellow; a close friend of Bob Clements, rail enthusiast, intellectual and scion of the Lords Leitrim of Loch Rinn. They used discuss books which Bob would receive from him in exchange for a smoke. McCarthy himself had a fine collection which he used lend circumspectly to a few. I remember Peadar O'Flaherty saying, after we regained our liberty and we were hoping to organise a circle, we will have to number Jerry Mc Carthy in our group. He was a bit of a hard chaw too, having worked for a time in England. He could talk of that; having a jar, women, anything. Refreshingly realistic, in every way a very human person; straight and kindly. He had an ailment in his stomach which prison life was not improving. From time to time it would upset him. I remember one day we were discussing sex; sex and drink. Liam Leddy was there too. And we were each saying what we would prefer had we the choice. And McCarthy immediately went for sex because, as he expressed it, that was a natural instinct while the other was an acquired taste.

A marvellous memory and was very well read; he lectured a couple of times on literature, and once on economics. He had that depth of intellect that could never, alas, expand to its full flowering within the confines of a prison camp.

#### CLEMENTS AND MÁIRTÍN:

Since I have mentioned Bob Clements, I have got to say that in some respects he was unique. Tall, gangling and of sallow appearance; he was a barrister, a Trinity graduate and a linguist with a fluency in Irish and Spanish. To top it all he held a high rank in the I.R.A. The Clements first came to the fore when the raised a a town mansion three hundred years ago in Henrietta Street, Dublin, and Nathaniel later built a hunting lodge which we now call *Árus an Uachtaráin* in Phoenix Park. These Clements are out of the direct line, as the man assassinated in Co. Donegal in 1878, William Sydney, was unmarried, and his estates passed to his brother.

In some ways Bob was an amazing man, but you could not organise him. I got him to give a few lectures on economics when we started the new scheme of education, but after that he did what he liked. I remember he gave a lecture on *Fíliocht Cuiqe Uladh*, I still have it. He would put a great effort into something and then just leave it there. On one occasion he took on the task of writing about 18th. century Irishmen in the Lowlands. He filled copy book after copy book, and then he just left it there. I don't think it ever came to anything. He was like that. He would not make the final effort; he did not want to shine as an intellectual. On the contrary he wanted to be one of the boys. That would come across on occasions. He was a great friend of Jerry McCarthy and they used to walk around the camp together, although some of us used to wonder how Jerry could put up with him; the things he used say. Ó Cadhain and Clements, as I said, were close friends although, deep down, I suspect

he felt distanced from him; he was lord of the manor; he represented the line. As a result Ó Cadhain used slag him and tell funny stories about him.

When, after serving a twelve months sentence in Arbour Hill, I arrived in the Curragh in the Spring of 1942, the split had already commenced and it was not long after that that Máirtín Standúin transferred over to Pearse Kelly's side. As I remained in the Leddy camp I had only a short time to become acquainted. Kelly, by the way, a recent arrival from Dungannon, was not the initiator of the split. Those who were being ostracised by the Leddy Council for speaking to the others, gravitated over, forming a separate series of huts and cookhouse, with Kelly as their figurehead. In the course of time the the numbers on each side were roughly equal. Máirtín was a Liverpool person, born and bred; he had worked for the Publicity Bureau in Percy Place, Dublin; he had been interned, and had become under Máirtín O Cadhain, fluent in Irish. People talked with awe of his fluency, although he spoke it with a Liverpudlian accent.

Máirtín did not go over initially. There had been an early split which is dealt with elsewhere, then further defections which swept him, Gearóid Ó Mongáin, Freddie Parnell and more across. Joe Deighan was another although, oddly enough despite a very good reputation from Liverpool, he did not cut much of a figure in the Camp. There was a slippage in Ó Cadhain's opinion of him, although the reverse should have been the case as Joe was well read and had superior Irish. Afterwards he was for many years gaelic editor of *Scéala Éireann*, *The Irish Press*, and he wrote at least one novel, although alas, neither he nor anyone else, until this one, attempted to grasp the nettle of recounting those salad days spent by five hundred men in the Curragh from 1940 to 1945 (and a few into December 1946.)

Peadar MacAindriú, who had been a close friend of my father and an honorary secretary of Sinn Féin, although advanced in years, was in there from the start. I cannot imagine that Peadar was active in the I.R.A; his name just appeared to be on a list. A Mayo man, he lived with his family, over their general grocery in Hardwicke Street, Dublin. I seem to have known him all my life, but in fact it was because of our close friendship while we lived a mile away in Ellesmere Avenue. On that account he was very friendly to me inside. A huge big loquacious man, rather loud, and with a vigorous red beard.

Gearóid Ó Maolmhichil paints a picture of him, that would not correspond with my recollection. He depicts him as a great Irish teacher. He was, in fact, a sound *bunrang man*. I am not going to deify Ó Cadhain but Máirtín used laugh at times at his *modus operandi*. When I became secretary of *An Cóiste Oideachais* I persuaded Peadar to lead at one of our debates. I remember one on *Democracy* and he was bloody marvellous. He gave a most inspiring address. In the mid-thirties he had been a regular speaker at *Release the Prisoners* gatherings in Cathal Brugha Street, but on this day in the Curragh, he gave a most resounding sermon; a fine piece of demagoguery. I remember how it finished; it is not less democracy we want but - rising to a crescendo - more democracy. Very rhetorical. I worked with him after release on the turf and I got to know him well indeed.

Pádraic Mac Caomhanáigh, from Belfast, but located in Dublin; because of his tall, dark, scholarly mien, appeared older than his years. He spoke Irish in a hard

northern speech, and spent most or all of his time translating Irish literature. Frankie Duffy, a tough root from that same city, but a very game soldier, slept close to Pádraic and his ambition, now that he found himself in prison, was to learn the tongue of his ancestors; to become as proficient in his narrative language as almost everyone who was there.

But, alas, try as he might, Frankie, with his clipped Belfast accent, could make no progress. For a long while Pádraic adopted a benign, almost fatherly attitude to Frankie, whose pronunciation at times could exasperate a saint, but, in the end, even he had to advise Frankie he should abandon his attempt.

Among the Kerry crowd, of which there was at one time nearly a hundred in the Camp, I can recall Jerry Cotter of Tralee. I can remember him quite well, and I would say, a decent sort and well respected although a bit sharpish. I would couple John Joe Landers with him. We worked together on buses afterwards. Danny Ryan from Tralee also. Himself and Dan Joe Conway were, by my way of thinking, similar. He had a hackney business there and, as a young fellow, had been in the Civil War. He was a real character; a joker and a great man, despite his age, at football. But so was John Joe Sheehy, from the same town, and out also in the Civil War; veterans, it was marvellous to see them leap for and run with the ball. In fact, on that question of being out in wars, we had a man there who had been out in the Land War, we had a Fenian, numbers who had participated in 1916; and a few ex-British soldiers who had been out in what came to be called the Fourteen War. We had numbers from the Tan War, the Civil War and a few International Brigade men from the Spanish Civil War. They were, one and all, among the quietest and most unobtrusive people in the Camp.

I remember Tommy Sheeran from Co. Tyrone, although I got to know him better after release when we both worked together stacking turf in Phoenix Park. A big fellow and a useful boxer but, like all such people, genial and never known to throw his weight around. Harry White was also a useful boxer although he much preferred music; great on a number of instruments but particularly on the violin.

I liked and admired Harry. Taciturn to some but good to listen to. A fellow I took to instinctively. Like Harry, Liam Rice was from Belfast, a tall handsome, dark looking man; he taught Spanish. Being on the Pearse Kelly side, like Harry and Sheeran, I scarcely got to know him while in the Camp.

I got to know Sean McCool only after release. We met quite a lot when discussing a political way forward; but then he joined Clann na Poblachta. I had known slightly Roger McHugh before I was arrested. I met him in the Sinn Féin rooms in Parnell Square where he had agreed to give a lecture on Barnes and McCormack on the first anniversary of their hanging. He came along to find it had been banned, but he got around that by explaining that it had to be banned, and in the course of that he gave the lecture. I recall him also speaking at other meetings; at one in the Mansion House prior to that hanging. But I was never close to him in the Curragh. He was very much the academic surrounded by his books. It made me conceive of him as a dry sort of man, which was probably wrong as he later wrote a number of plays; one that I recall being *In Green Street Courthouse*, although there were others, including *Rossa*. He wrote and edited a number of books; *Carlow in '98* is one of his. At heart a quiet

patriot.

Sean Ashe from Co. Kildare choose to work in the Cookhouse. Somewhat reserved, he liked physical work. I have at home a book he gave me, *Ballads of Ireland*, with his name in Irish upon it, Hut B.1, Tintown, the Curragh. He never became a great scholar and I don't think he ever became fluent in Irish.

Paddy Kelly, a tall thin man, was a friend of Charlie Gorman. Joe Casey of Co. Longford, was another man who never sought prominence. Barney's brother; he was a big mild mannered man; unassuming and unpretentious. He had been a miner in Arigna. Charlie Gorman with Jasper Hornibrook and 'Spud' Murphy, was one of the training group arrested in the now long defunct Crumlin brickworks round-up of 1941. Very much the I.R.A man, he took a great *grádh* to me after I found myself interned. With his friend Paddy Kelly, they remained so close that they could have been each others shadow. Both real Dubliners, but faithful and reliable Republicans.

Dan O'Toole from Belfast; 'Black Dan', a hard man, I had met earlier on the outside. He was involved in the attempt on the Castle with Joe Dougherty (Atkinson), in the Holles Street affair and other actions. Joe stayed underground in our house for nearly a year. He was coaching me to take over the office of Director of Training should he be arrested; in the end of course we both were, so that ended that. I can recall Andy Skelton from Lurgan. He fell foul of the police in late 1942 after which he arrived in the Curragh. He had been a training officer on Headquarter's Staff; a tall man with a slightly florid complexion; a model of efficiency I learned from others.

I was in Arbour Hill with Tony Ruane of Galway; he also extended back to the Civil War period. An awful man for telling whoppers. They used make the fellows whistle (sarcastically) as he relayed them, but I think he enjoyed telling them himself. Attired in a hat and riding breeches, he was the real man of the hills type, and looked it too.

I drank with Tomás McDonagh Byrne the day before he went off to seek work in Germany. That was in the mid-sixties before EU was dreamed of, but despite years of trying, although very well educated, he had not been able to find satisfying work in Ireland.

A grand fellow, and although a Liverpudlian, he had good Irish and still felt very much a part of the Movement. He was very pally with Jimmy Doyle and Myles Heffernan; the three often drinking together in McDaid's, although he was not part of that set. I enjoyed having a jar with him myself, especially that last hour we had together in the Dawson Lounge; I can still see him there.(6)

I was in the Recruits Company with Tony McInerney. He had already started accountancy when he was arrested and the next thing I find him, like one of the boys, on fatigues in the Camp peeling spuds. I was never that close to him however though I know after that he was a bit of a bohemian, and had played a part in the Catacombs of the late forties in Fitzwilliam Place. For a while I thought he resided there. People used come with six packs and in next to no time the big table in the middle of the floor would be filled with empties. A small inner circle of former Republican prisoners would occasionally be found there.

I was in Arbour Hill with Máirtín Calligan. He was highly regarded there as he had quite a history. Only Martin White from the same county of Clare could have been ahead of him in status. Roddy O'Halloran, a Galway city man, was a handsome, red haired, bright lad; bound to get on. He had learned good Irish. Talking of him brings memories back of Nick Lally from the same city; a marvellous character and a great friend of mine in the hut, more even than Ó Cadhain. Indeed, before even I entered the class, Nick was relaying the *Cora cainnte* he was learning there. A delightful person, with a good brain and very broad minded. He had boxed, played soccer, and he loved Irish and all about it. He was a remarkable scholar, with his own way on certain pronunciations.

I remember Ó Cadhain embarrassing him by trying to make him pronounce the aspirated C in Connaught, *chultur*. He never failed to look me up when he came to Dublin. A lovable man in every way; loved to sing and talk and was active in his union, at that time the Workers' Union of Ireland. They all knew him on the Ceathrú Rua bus run; he had settled there. Ó Cadhain had a real affection for him. I went west specially to his funeral, and I have a picture taken with Standúin and Paddy Fox just before I rose to say a few words over his grave.

I scarcely knew Tom Cullimore of Wexford while in the Camp but after release I got to know him quite well. A school teacher and a literary person, I was marching with him and 'Spud' Murphy in that great banned 1916 commemoration march of Easter '76, God be good to both of them; they are gone now. And later we went to that little pub in Marlborough Street, and we really enjoyed the *scéal* and the few drinks.

While, as I said before, I knew Brendan Behan in Hardwicke Street, I did not really become acquainted with him until he returned from Borstal. And of course he was charged here in 1942 and received a 14 year sentence. In June 1944, upon his transfer from Arbour Hill, he came to me to try to decide which side he should bunk in with. Brendan, I said, go and find the snuggest most comfortable spot where you will have peace and get your bit of grub. The creature comforts were all he was concerned about. There was never the slightest evidence that he leaned towards being homosexual. I never heard anything like that at the time; and neither did my brother Christy who was a close friend of Brendan; or Eamonn Martin, Colm O'Laoghaire or yourself. He never gave any indication. Now, at the same time I wish to be totally honest, and I would not discount that there could have been some little incident giving rise to this as there could be with anybody.

Most males have with some other males more enduring forms of friendship, but that is hardly what we are talking about. I know from where that rumour emanated and I would not place any credence on that particular source.

#### THE Ó CADHAIN DOCUMENT:

I alluded earlier to Fritz Langsdorf; map reading in Ticknock. I became closely acquainted with him in the Curragh. He was one of what was known as the Ó Cadhain group, which, by 1944, were trying to piece together the jig-saw that would show a political way forward for Republicans. Ó Cadhain had produced a document on this, and it was actually from Fritz that this document, the sole copy, was seized by Jimmy Fleming. I went to Fleming afterwards as I was very keen to study

the document, but he said that he had given it to our group O.C Joe Crowe.

Fleming had given Fritz a dig when he seized the document. At the time only a small group had read it; they included Sean Harrington, Liam Leddy, Seán Óg, Jerry McCarthy of Skibbereen, Mike Galvin, Sean O'Neill of Cahirciveen and myself. There was a big to do about it, and after a couple of meetings Sean O'Neill said we were selling out, and retired. Not all of us agreed with Ó Cadhain; very few of us in fact. I was opposed to much of it myself. His thesis was that, for the moment, we should recognise that the military effort had failed. So what should we do? There were various proposals which in some respects were a bit outlandish. Nowadays these would be talked about as socialism; but that was not all. There were even references to a monarchy!

It was given on loan for Fritz to read because he was one, like Paddy Kenna and others, who recognised very well the fact that there was a need for us to be honest with ourselves, and to acknowledge that everything should be up for discussion. Jimmy Fleming resented the document greatly, although I think there may have been a personal element in this as his brother Paddy, who had signed the declaration of war of January 1939 was interned on the Isle of Man. Years afterwards when Jimmy found himself with the 'Officials' of all people, he said it was the best thing that Ó Cadhain had ever produced. Of course he had it all arseways at that stage.

At all events that was the end of the document. It was a great pity. When afterwards I taxed Fleming about it, he became uneasy; 'ah, I gave that to Joe Crowe'. Joe Crowe was O.C of the group, having been elected when Leddy was overthrown. A most unimaginative man. A solid Republican to give him his due, but his line would be the strict Army line. He had been out in 1922, so there was no shaking his principles.

Following this, Ó Cadhain, myself and others were suspended pending a court-martial. It was at that stage that Paddy Kenna weighed in. He was in no way involved, but he came with us because he felt that things should be discussed whether one agreed or not. Things were bad then and there was certainly a requirement to discuss everything.

Goulding's attitude in all this is most interesting in view of his subsequent career. First of all he made no move towards the more relaxed Pearse Kelly side where all the lefties were and where you would have expected him to be. He stayed, if you like, on the right wing, where I was myself; on the side of orthodoxy, on the side of Leddy and subsequently Joe Crowe.

I have said earlier that he was very much the military man and would have proclaimed himself a socialist. If he was asked he would have declared himself so. It was very much in accordance with his viewpoint. Yet he was sore about the Ó Cadhain document which he regarded as betrayal of the Army, and yet it contained socialism; Irish socialism. Fair enough if that is how he felt. Cathal was a man who continued that way even into old age. I will say this much for him; he was a man of great courage. The Felstead raid of July 1953, with Sean Stephenson and Manus Canning showed that. Even earlier than that, in the Curragh; ever a very hungry man, he used to collect the scraps; heat them in the stove at night and eat them. Afterwards when we were all released I got to know him better when we were trying

to form an association of prisoners; a sort of felons' club. That never came to anything.

After my release I was as keen as ever to lay hands on the document. We were intent on seeing a political road forward and I had a good deal of the document in my head. So I went to Limerick and tried to trace it there, but Joe Crowe had emigrated. I called on Paddy Mulcahy but he had left the Camp before the document was circulated.

#### OUTSIDE THE WIRE:

Máirtín and I lamented the fact when Paddy Kenna gave up the drink; not that he ever went hard on it, but he adored a pint of Guinness and I can still see him in my mind's eye as he lowers his head in anticipation towards the glass. Drinking people are less happy in the company of one who once was a drinker. The crack is not the same, but Paddy had sworn off and was keeping out of the occasion of sin. He married Máire Ní Cuileanáin, whose family were republican, and she herself had been sentenced to three years in March 1941, being expelled from the civil service. She came from a strong gaelic background. Her father was Micheál Ó Cuileanáin, a teacher, and a man prominent in the Irish Ireland movement. There was a brother also, Cormack, who was younger, a Republican also; a poet and an editor of *Feasta*. They were all colourful people; a book could be written about that family.

My meetings with Paddy had become intermittent over the years but I did have him down when in 1990 we held an exhibition on Máirtín Ó Cadhain in the Civic Museum, South William Street, Dublin. He came with his daughter Ita, then President of Connradh, and he insisted on making a contribution to our exhibition which was otherwise unfunded. There is a picture of Paddy and myself, probably the last taken of him, at that opening. I visited him shortly before his death. The final illness had brought a great change in him although he was as alert as ever. He showed me a letter he had received from Maud Gonne MacBride while he was in the Curragh, dated December 23, 1943. He and I would have been in the same hut at the time. In the letter Maud Gonne spoke of his mother, and she thanked him and his brother for sending some leather work and table mats for her prisoner dependants' sale of work. Paddy was a great reciter; he did not sing but he was marvelous with his own pieces, one of which, by Gearóid Murphy (7) commences;

*Who dares to say forget the past  
To men of Irish birth;  
Who dares to say, cease fighting  
For your place upon the earth.  
Let remembrance be your watchword  
And our dead we'll never fail,  
Let their graves to us be milestones  
Along a blood soaked one way trail.*

Riveting stuff, that brought audiences to their feet the way that Paddy spat it forth.

Another favourite with him was Liam MacGabhann's *Rags, Rogues and Rebels*; MacGabhann, a Kerryman, was in the early days on the staff of *An Phoblacht*.

Another powerful one with him was *McCluskey, the Devil May Care: the dregs of gall or the back of it all in the heart of the devil may care*. That also was MacGabhann. An orator too; a sound man for a commemoration, and a passably good actor. Had he any acting experience before being interned in the Curragh? No, he had not; surprisingly not, but you would never think that with the professionalism he would show on the primitive stage we had there. I would like to put on record however what a marvellous human person he was. He could admire people who were diametrically opposed to him politically; he never confused the means with the end.

I was released scarcely a month when I found myself in jail again. It was the lead up to the hanging on December 1, 1944, for the alleged assassination of D.O. Denis O'Brien at Ballyboden in September 1942 of Charlie Kerins from Tralee. Kerins was arrested at 50 Upper Rathmines Road, the home of Dr. Kathleen Murphy in June 1944. After a prolonged legal process he was to be hanged by Pierrepont.

I was working on the turf in Phoenix Park, as indeed were many of the lads who were arrested. There was a nationwide collection, and they collected a fair amount of money. Cormac Breathnach, who was Lord Mayor of Dublin, was chairman. In the run up to the date of the hanging, around 20 of us were locked into the Bridewell for ten days; they could hold us then until the thing was over; and that was their sole purpose, to prevent any form of public protest. Peadar Cowan, solicitor, was in and out to us, and, maverick although some thought him to be, he did all that he could.

When it was all over and the execution had taken place, Peadar suggested that we be reimbursed for the loss of our wages. There was money there. Certain people, many of them married men, had lost their wages and they could ill-afford the loss. The story anyway was, and I believe it to be true, that when Joe Clarke heard of this he remarked, oh, they are trying to make money out of it. So that is the type they are. It was all very embarrassing. We were not looking for anything, though in fairness to Joe, he wanted to hold on to as much money as possible for the prisoners' dependants, and I would agree with that. But it caused annoyance that it should have been said; that we, the only people who had lost by it, should now want to be recompensed.

Mattie O'Neill continued to labour in the Phoenix Park for another few years until appointed, like many other ex-prisoners, a bus conductor with C.I.E. That was his introduction to the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, and shortly after, he married Áine Ní Alluráin with whom they had six girls and two boys. Fuair Áine bas i 1973. His brother Christy, also imprisoned, had married Molly O'Neill.

For some years Mattie was secretary of the hotel and catering branch of the Union over which Michael Mullen presided. A full time official then and a busy and much travelled man, he was appointed to the boards of Gaeltara Éireann and Udarás na Gaeltachta; this brought him even more closely into contact with friends of the past and the promising young people of the future. Mattie was a founder member and first secretary of the Irish Labour History Society which now has its own premises in the Museum of Labour History at Beggar's Bush Barracks in Ballsbridge. It is there that the annual Desmond Greaves Summer School is held.



## REFERENCES:

1. From *Drama in Hardwicke Street*, by William J. Feeney. Fairleigh Dickenson. Associated University Press, New York.
2. In 1947-48 the hall, leased by Countess Plunkett, became again briefly a theatre; the Rocklyn Players played there under Denis Keogh. After that for a few years it was given over to sweet making. By 1953 it was being bricked up by Dublin Corporation and made ruinous as a prelude to building in the later fifties the flats we see there today. A plea had been made to restore the 62 houses in the street but that was ignored.
3. Twelve men, spread between three houses, held up a regiment, inflicting 216 casualties. The three who died were George Reynolds of Ringsend, Pat Doyle of Milltown and Dick Murphy of South William Street. Their remains were not recovered as they were consumed within the burning buildings.
4. For Goulding's later extraordinary career and his attitude to Republicanism, see his full page interview with the *Irish Times*, December 29, 1983. Three quotes will convey its flavour.  
'The hunger strikers of the H. Block campaign were protesting for themselves, for something they wanted, and they represented no one'.  
'I accept the super grasses, with reservations'. Further along he is quoted as advocating tougher laws that would result in court actions and imprisonment in the Republic.
5. Séamus Ó Mongáin respects *Rerum Novarum*, saying that much of the philosophy of *Comhar na gComharson* was based upon it.
6. In 1995, Tomás, now living with his wife in Co. Tipperary, organised in Dublin, with Patricia Sharkey, a get-together of 22 former internees, in commemoration of the closure 50 years previously of the Camp.
7. In 1933 Gearóid Murphy was a civil servant in the Dept. of Defence.

Another powerful man with hair like McCluskey the Third, Mr. Conroy, was at the back of it all in the heart of the great success. That man was MacCluskey. As he

... I was standing on the street in Phoenix Park, an ancient well-known

... When it was all over and the execution had taken place, Foster suggested that

... many of them returned home had not their equipment been of a standard

... The story anyway was, and I believe it to be true, that when Joe Clarke heard of this

... Mattie O'Neill continued to live in the Phoenix Park for another few years

... The same year Mattie was secretary of the local and county branch of the

*Weary men what reap ye? Golden corn for the stranger.  
 What sow ye? Human corpses that await the avenger.  
 Fainting forms, hunger stricken, What see ye in the offering?  
 There's a proud array of soldiers - what do they round your door,  
 They guard our master's granaries from the thin hands of the poor.*

- Lady Wilde on the Famine.

## A DUO FROM CAHIRCIVEEN\*,

CO. KERRY:



*Mick Sullivan and on right Sean O'Neill brother of Maurice, at Mount Rivers, Cahirciveen, home of Derek and Mrs Mc Kenna*

Sean O'Neill from Letter, school teacher and Mick O'Sullivan from the town, a draper's assistant in his younger days; more recently into farming.

\* Cahirciveen, more properly Cathair Saidhbhín the Fort of Sive, a small market town, romantically embalmed among mountains, in the south west of Kerry. Close to the site of anchorites, of seventh century oratories, of a ring fort and of a McCarthy castle. Ruined *Carhan House*, was the birth place in 1775 of Daniel O'Connell, (controversially) the Liberator.



\* Party with hosts outside Mount Rivers, Cahirciveen, 1993; Writer, Mrs McKenna, Derrick McKenna, Mick Sullivan, Sean O'Neill

### I REMEMBER KIT CONWAY:

Looking back upon his career in Óglaigh na h-Éireann Sean O'Neill traced his early days in teacher training in Dublin during which he was active in the I.R.A. 'I remember Kit Conway being in charge of a squad of us training in the basement of 44 Parnell Square. Jack Brady was there at that time too; a good training officer'.

On completion of his teacher training he returned to Kerry as jobs were hard to find; going anywhere there was a vacancy and was glad to be a substitute at two pounds a week. For a while he acted for a man in Blackrock, Co. Dublin; who suffered from tuberculosis but he had to dispense with him after a few weeks as, having a family, he could not afford to continue paying Sean.

He did not get a permanent job until 1938, after he had attended the Army Convention of April held in Unity Hall, Marlborough Street, over the Saturday and Sunday. It was the first time they mentioned the proposed bombing campaign in England, and he was attending representing South Kerry.

Almost all of the leadership was there, but it was a controversial decision leading to a great division as many of the delegates, including Kerry and Cork, were opposed to it. Attended by people like Eoin McNamee of Tyrone, Tony D'Arcy of Headfort: (his brother had been brutally killed by the Tans in March 1921 and he himself was to die on hunger strike in April 1940). Jack McNeela of Mayo, Charlie Dolan of Sligo, James Kelly of Castlefin, Ted Moore of Kilkenny, George Plunkett of Dublin, Victor Fagg of Westmeath, Ned Carrigan of Tipperary and around a hundred more; most of them enthusiastically in favour. Sean Russell was not there as he was technically barred by an earlier suspension. Tom Barry bitterly opposed to the idea was present, and it was a sour pill for many of the delegates to run counter to Barry whom they looked up to and who always spoke with an air of authority and common sense. I was at another meeting later in 1938 held in a large house at Shankill the home of Billy Walsh, a bookie. There was a heated discussion there with Sean Russell, the main promoter of the English idea, present; those opposed to the plan felt that there was simply not enough resources or experience on the ground to carry it through successfully. In the late thirties Sean was attached to his local Cahirciveen unit I.R.A.; on moving about 1940 to Dublin he was relatively inactive although already teaching, but was drawn in again following the erosion in numbers caused by internment. He does not recall now how he became reinolved in north side Dublin but it could have been with the unit known as No.1 Company centred outwards from Gardiner Street to Fairview, where he was appointed O.C, attended by such colourful officers as bricklayer Paddy Brown, and language student and fisherman Séamus Mac Riocard of Howth. Paddy was arrested with him on May 2, 1941, at 10.00 o'clock at night in the Crumlin brickworks, over which there are playing fields and houses built now. Thinking back on it he says, it was the perfect police coup, netting a large part of the volunteer activists remaining in Dublin. Why we should have been summoned at that time and into such a place, I have never been able to fathom, he adds. A meeting was called of all the section officers and volunteers; 28 of them.

Paddy Kennedy, a former Kerry footballer of the period and a civic guard as well, sent word to Sean in the Bridewell, telling him that the entire area was occupied discreetly by Special Branch from Saturday morning until the trap was sprung at ten o'clock that night. The whole thing was a set-up and the Bridewell was handed over to the Branch for that purpose. It was a lesson to be learned, Sean remarks wryly, but too late for the 28 lads scooped up and held on remand in Mountjoy. Never one to lose sight of the humorous side of things, Paddy Brown guffawed loudly one morning; *look at me now and in 1932, when De Valera came to power, I voted forty six times for Fianna Fáil.*

They were tried within weeks by the Military Tribunal in Collins Barracks, each of them, except Tony Ruane and Paddy Brown, receiving a sentence of twelve months; the charges were minor as there were no arms at the meeting. However, with the practice now of automatic internment, they knew that imprisonment would last for as long as the war in Europe lasted.

Paddy Brown and Tony Ruane (1) acted as officers during the remand period as they knew the procedures having been in jail before. But, in a mischievous way, says Sean, 'we were a very undisciplined crowd'. 'Spud' Murphy, who became, in the late

fifties, T.D for the unemployed, was a likeable Dubliner, well matched by another droll character, Charlie Gorman. In a way they were ideal jail material as, in their demeanour, they showed that they could not care less.

There was a Detective in the Special Branch attending the court party, Tom Cryan, an R.I.C man's son from Cahirciveen, known to Sean; he used wait behind and slip a packet of cigarettes to Sean who was not then a smoker, but enough of the other fellows were. After a time, while still in Mountjoy, enough of the fellows signed out, leaving plenty of room, whereupon they were shifted into separate cells. Left to myself, he laughs, I soon started smoking and, in next to no time, I would have been a chain smoker had a supply been available.

Commdt. Michael Lennon, the Free State officer in charge of Arbour Hill Military Prison, to which they were conveyed upon being sentenced, was fair and upright. A year later, when Sean was brought there to visit his brother Maurice then sentenced to death, he found him quite glad to see him again. He could not however say the same for McNally, another officer, whom he described as vicious. There was an attempted escape while he was there; from the wash house, which was set apart near the front.(2) There was a gate outside with only a single padlock upon it. The intention was to break the padlock and run the gauntlet of sentry fire and get away. It would have been extremely hazardous and quite likely to fail, so fortunately it did not come off. There were two men in the wash house at the time; neither in on the escape plan, Paddy Brown whom we have mentioned already and Seamus Dowling of the Dublin Liberties.

Seamus had been a training officer in No. 4 Company, but in a session in May 1939, Volunteer Christy Bird, was accidentally shot dead by Volunteer Jack Campbell.(3) Seamus awaited police and ambulance men, taking the rap on a manslaughter charge. A cheerful fellow, with hair prematurely grey; he had two younger brothers, Liam and Sean also imprisoned: Sean being one of those arrested at Crumlin brickworks.

The escape attempt was made alright but it failed; our lads drew back under the threat of a cocked rifle, Sean relates, and it was just as well. It was then a case of privileges withdrawn; no letters in or out. Peadar Heuston was their own letter delivery man; they could see a pile of letters lying within his cell but none being delivered.

Because of Sean's peripheral involvement he had been sentenced to a month without letters; promptly at the end of the lunar month he complained only to be told; 'sorry chum you must wait another three days. It is a calendar month; not a lunar month'. At that time they were allowed two letters out per month and two in; some of those inward were so vigorously censored with a razor blade that the pages were ribboned with cuts.

There was no radio in Arbour Hill nor in the Curragh, although one newspaper was delivered to each hut there. However no radio, no newspapers and no outside news whatever - except family news - was permitted into Arbour Hill. There was however a P.A there who occasionally held his paper high enough for the headlines to be read.

Séamus Mac Ricard was full of devilment. In a way with his grey hair he reminded Sean of a *seanchaidhe*. In the evening the green enamel mug was left outside each door to receive milk with a slice of bread placed on top. Dissatisfied with the quantity, Séamus left a scrupulously clean chamber pot outside on this evening. There was laughter at this with a wag calling, Séamus, *you are never going to get released that way.*

**MAURICE O'NEILL:**

Maurice, the younger brother of Sean remained in the home place, as O.C. of the local unit in Cahirciveen until called to Dublin by Charlie Kerins very early in September. As Harry White was to relate of him afterwards; he was a fine big fellow, yet real polite, always removing his cap when introduced to a person. Sending him upon a message one day, as Harry recalled, we gave him a map of the city. It was evening when he returned. *What kept you*, Charlie asked. *It is a custom in our part*, said he, *to call into every church that you have not been into before, and to say a prayer. Well, said Charlie dryly, you must have been into half the churches in Dublin.*

Maurice had been called to the capital in connection with a hoped for push from Donaghmoyno against Crossmaglen and other Border targets following the execution in Belfast of Tom Williams on September 2 1942 (4). When that failed, the scattered Dublin leadership, hunted and harried, their lives hanging daily and nightly upon a thread, lay low in the few houses that dared to offer them shelter. It was in one such, on October 19, Kelly's of 14 Holly Road, Donnellycarney, that White and Maurice found themselves surrounded; and upon unwittingly emerging, walked into a withering hail of fire. Maurice retreated into the kitchen of the house immediately, but White - the quarry whom the Branch really sought, knowing nothing of Maurice - made good his escape and lived to fight another day. The police, as frequently happened, shot one of their own in cross fire, but a victim had to be found, and although not charged with the death but 'shooting with intent', Maurice O'Neill was executed by firing squad in Mountjoy on November 12 1942. In a neat twist by the authorities the firing squad was under the command of another Kerryman, Capt. Fitzgerald.

The death of his younger brother left a deep mark upon Sean, yet his impending fate caused scarcely a ripple with Maurice. In a remarkably calm letter from Arbour Hill Prison to Sean, interned some months before in the Curragh, he commenced lightly; *I suppose you saw in the papers where I met my Waterloo last Saturday night. Well, such are the fortunes of war. I must say we were very unlucky. if we had left the house one hour earlier, we would have got away clear. We would have gone only we delayed playing cards. That was what worried me, but I realise it would come to it sooner or later as they were pretty hot on my track for some time past. I am very glad my friend got away. I would also only I went back when I heard a groan but I should have realised it was every man for himself. It is no good to dwell upon these things now; what has happened cannot be set right. I am to be tried under the Emergency Powers Order W.8. That is the blood thirsty Bill. There is only one sentence death or release. So I believe it is the full penalty for me. There is no good in having false hopes, hard facts must be faced. (5)*

**ON THE PLAINS OF KILDARE:**

On the termination of his twelve months sentence - nine months with remission - Sean and the group with him went through the formality of release on to the public footpath whereupon they were promptly re-arrested and served with an internment order. Held for a few hours in the Bridewell, he had a visit from a first cousin, Maureen Smith and a teacher, Michael Bowler. Then, inside a draughty lorry they were brought to the Curragh. It was January 1942, and the Curragh, treeless and windswept, was even more miserable than usual. Sean was directed into the dimly lit Wexford hut when he arrived, being promptly buttonholed by Jack Sugrue from

Cahirciveen. 'I'll take care of your knife and fork and mug' he said, but when I received them back the spoon handle was missing. Spoon handles were used to make rings although a silver shilling was better; while the bowl of a large spoon could be carved into a Tara brooch.

The hut was quite crowded, mostly with Co. Wexford men although Sean found himself beside Sean Tully from Cavan. Tully was a much older man and had a disability pension as he had lost fingers in the Tan trouble. He had received in some jam; take as much as you like, he told Sean, and the pot was shared between them on the floor. It was tasty on the dry bread, there being next to no butter available. Sean remembers John Tully, long gone to his reward, as a genteel and cultured country man.

Ned Drummond of Tralee called into Sean a day after he arrived, taking him for a walk around the Camp, at the same time instructing him upon Curragh do's and dont's. *On no account, said he earnestly, are ye to play cards with 'Bally' Keating. (6) He doesn't cheat but he'll strip you naked.* Among the other dab players were Moss Hickey from Limerick, John Tully and 'Pa' Weymes from Mullingar. 'Pa' really fancied himself, and he always had money, camp money. They decided to play a trick on him; fixing the cards with the best of face cards going to him in a game of solo, but Bally was fixed with an even better hand.

*Aha, Mr. Churchill, 'Pa' would exclaim excitedly, as he capped each card; the tempo rising ever higher until Bally topped him with a joker, scooping the pool. 'Pa' was bewildered, until the next day when we owned up to the trick that had been played. But 'Pa' was like the joker himself; I recall him, says Sean, sitting there on a packing case he had saved from the Fire, gently rocking to and fro while he intoned, Holy Jesus, save us from Mother Ireland.*

*Mother Ireland I have loved thee,  
With a love that knew no fear;  
I have drawn the sword to free thee,  
At the flowering of the year.  
But a hand was raised to smite me,  
As I stooped to kiss thy brow,  
And the arm that would have freed thee,  
By my side hangs helpless now.*

#### THE TUNNEL:

The tunnel started from our hut, Sean relates, on the day, November 12, that Maurice was executed in Dublin. It was a north Kerry man, Jacob Lovatt, one of the Palatines, who started it. The story of the extensive network that had almost reached completion prior to the Fire of December 1940 is related elsewhere, but this single tunnel effort from the Leddy side is the one that is touched upon in other accounts. While it is almost certain that the Staters were unaware of the 1940 network, it is fairly certain that at some stage they became aware of this one but allowed it to continue. Hope, tis said, rises ever within the human breast, and after three years of seemingly never ending imprisonment, there were some eager to try their hand at scooping their way to freedom even if it were to be, within an island in a war torn world, a freedom of limited duration.

Inside the simple timber sheeted door in each gable there was an entrance porch with a second door inside. The floor of that porch was concrete but with a boarded top. The Staters emptied for examination each hut every three weeks, lifting floor boards and examining the sub floor for a tunnel but they never examined the small yard and a half by yard and a half porch area since it was concrete. It was into this concrete that Jacob bored.

Breaking through the concrete was a noise problem, covered up at the appropriate time by a burst of music, while boring down and tunnelling underneath could be done only by day; even then a P.A could open the outer door and enter the porch, so the timber floor had always to appear untouched.

'After a day tunnelling' Sean says, 'you would not be worth much; you would strip off to your under clothes to go down in overalls. There were coils of barbed wire blocking the old tunnels and you might have to get around that; the old tunnels were used to hold some of the clay. The opportunities for taking it out and scattering it around were nil. You were in real trouble if a call came for a fellow who was down, although sometimes a P.A would come in and just leave a list of names to be checked so that was alright; but if you were on the list you would have to come up, wash, dress and appear. But we made good progress, even linking up with adjoining huts, under the perimeter road - a gravel road - and down under the boundary trench by means of a shaft. A rod had been pressed up through the soil so nothing remained but to breakthrough. We were on the verge of popping out when it was broken into early one morning'. Andy Redmond and J.L. McCormack were to go down upon the final day to clean back from the shaft when Tony Magan called around 6 a.m; *are those two stone mad; do ye hear the noise they are making.* He did not know that the Staters had entered and were now blocking the tunnels. Sean heard afterwards in Dublin that they had known about the tunnel for a while; that they brought in a lorry filled with stones to burst through where the tunnel was, although despite being driven slowly upon the road it had not burst through.

It was within Easter week 1943 that they intended completing the tunnel, although only a limited number - perhaps 30 - could hope to escape from the three huts co-operating in the venture. Foolishly, all of the stock of chocolate in the camp shop was purchased; that, in itself, was a give-away. The night fixed for the escape was postponed until the following night, but it was about 6 a.m that the Staters burst in. They dug down into it and blocked every offshoot with coils of barbed wire. A soldier told Sean afterwards in Dublin that he had been part of a special unit of sharp shooters, and that they had orders to shoot to kill should anyone escape from the tunnel. Whether that be true or untrue it was easier to expose the tunnel before anyone could escape and in that way avoid further martyrdom.

#### FRIENDS REMEMBERED:

Sean could recall Jim O'Shea, Johnny Stack and Mick Dowling; all Tralee men, and sentenced with him in Arbour Hill for involvement against blacklegs. Three nice quiet lads of middle height; Mick being rather stout with a round head that would soon be balding.

Of Jack O'Shea of Killarney, he relates; a veteran of the Tan and Civil War in which



he saw active service. He was interned from the start in the Curragh in 1940. He describes him as an athletic person having being cox for the Muckcross Rowing Club over a long number of years. He was also a founder member of the Legion. Gaelic Football Club, serving at one period as chairman of East Kerry Board G.A.A. He was a fluent gaelic speaker and a lifelong promoter of its culture. Signs on it too, smiled Sean, he was one of the last to be released from the Curragh.

Perusing then an autograph book loaned by Denis Fitzgerald of Rock Street, Tralee, Sean lit upon the Kerry names: They brought back a flood of memories.

Michéal Ó Dubhlaing: *A leabhrán gabh amac fa'n saoghal  
Is do gach n-aon da mbuaileann leat  
Aithris cruinn go maireann gaedhil  
T'reis cleasa claon na nGall ar fad*

Seán Mac Gearailt, Traíghlí: *siad an chead dhá bliadhain na bliadhna is deaca. (Do chrait sin thú)*

Bill Cotter, quoting Pearse and Connolly,  
Sean Brosnan of Dingle:

*Go where brute force has conquered  
And tyranny makes its lair  
And your question will find answer  
The English flag is there*

Refreshing, are they not, laughs Sean. Nearly every second person there carried an autograph book.(7) Looking back upon the names now I realise that nearly two thirds of them have passed on. *Fé coimirce Dé atá siad anois.*

Reference has been made to splits in the Camp and there were splits; two major ones generally referred to as the Liam Leddy group and the Pearse Kelly group. As to numbers they were at the start almost equally divided, but the Kelly group was the most relaxed and tolerant being prepared to accept almost anyone under their banner provided basic discipline was upheld. Not so the Leddy group who maintained old style up-tight control. It was sometimes a matter of which side your friends were on, and Sean found himself under Leddy's banner although he considered that 'he did not have a lot of intelligence'. In the last 15 months of internment matters went from bad to worse on that side until Leddy himself was ostracised. (Leddy later joined the Workers' Party but only for a short time as the 'atmosphere' in that grouping could not have been to his liking). It may have had a connection with the mystery political document circulated about this time from Ó Cadhain, to which Mattie O'Neill referred. Ó Cadhain, although with a vein of droll humour, was a strict disciplinarian; he is credited with the advice that, fortunately he did not himself follow, that a man should wash, or be washed, only twice in his lifetime, namely after birth and upon his demise.

Gerry McCarthy of Skibbereen, we have noted already as an intellectual, very bookish and a close friend of Bob Clements who was equally bookish. There were three of the same name in the Camp and when the first releases commenced our Gerry refused to go as he persuaded himself it must be one of the other two; for 'Skibbereen' to go before them he considered would be a let down but he was eventually prevailed upon to leave.

Another character from Ballyseedy, was Jimmy Wisdom, an old timer who had lost a foot in the Civil War. Coming up to Christmas he received in a gift parcel of sausages and other foodstuffs.(8)

Purty Landers was one of our cooks; giving the sausages to Purty he must not have got the diction across clearly as Purty concluded the packet of sausages was a gift for the Cookhouse staff; to Purty he had said; 'take the sausages up and heat (hate) them'. Afterwards Purty apologised: 'I though you said take them up and ate (eat) them'.

He was called periodically to Dublin to have a new foot fitted. On these occasions he stayed with Donal O'Connor in the Castle Hotel. Entering a shop one morning to have a pair of new shoes fitted, the assistant motioned him towards a foot X ray machine, then all the vogue. It was a new machine which, of course, did not register when Jimmy inserted his stockinged foot. A look of astonishment passed over the young man's face until Jimmy explained.

#### AT LIBERTY:

Sean was held until after the war in Europe had come to an end in May 1945. There was close upon 70 still left, including sentenced men. Among those lingering he recalls Tom Doyle. (The state could never forgive him being a civil servant in the Dept. of Defence, Sean remarks). Left behind also were Paddy McNeela, Mattie Tuite, Frank Weafer, John O'Neill, 'the Assassin' Mulvaney and Séan Ó Broin of Ballyferriter.

Sean considers he was held over because - unreasonable as it may sound - of the association with his younger brother Maurice, executed two and a half years before. Some time earlier a question had been asked in Leinster House and Boland, Minister for Justice, had answered to the effect that those whom he had released were all that he would release. *I will keep the real hard core*, he replied brusquely; Sean added that there was a song made about that; *we are the real hard core*.

Alighting at Kingsbridge, Sean made straight for St. Patrick's in Drumcondra where he spoke to Dave Kelleher, secretary of the I.N.T.O, the teachers' organisation. Kelleher was in poor health and was eager to employ Sean as a sub. It was all done with the knowledge of the school principal, Gallagher, who knew that Sean was fresh out of internment. 'You need not teach catechism', he said; 'Paddy Hayes will do that, but you will have 43 in your class'. At the end of the month when the returns went to the Department Gallagher got notice to disemploy Sean as he had been sentenced under the Offences Against the State Act in 1941, and a ban resulting from that remained upon all state employment for seven years. The principal wrote at once to say that he would employ no other than Sean O'Neill; 'he is my substitute and will remain my substitute'.

But while Sean continued working he heard of a vacancy in nearby Dorset Street where he had taught prior to May 1941, so, calling upon Canon Kelly of Berkeley Road, the school manager, he made application in person placing, as he expressed it, all of his cards upon the table about internment and everything else. 'I will employ you, said the Canon, so long as you don't sue me for loss of wages while you were interned'. He had already received a notice that Sean was ineligible, but sniffing, he put it to one side.

Holiday time had commenced so Sean would not be entitled to payment until the resumption in July. However he would receive no salary from July to November whereupon he seriously considered working upon insurance with Paddy McNeela who had opened a shop in East Wall. At that very moment he got word that he had been sanctioned by the Department, receiving his first pay. A miserable four days back pay it was, although he had been working for four months. That little matter of Marlborough Street stinginess was righted years later under the inter-party government with Sean MacBride in office.

Sean continued to reside in Dublin, marrying in 1953, Ellen O'Sullivan; but he still retained his links with Iveragh in Co. Kerry. Tony McInerney (9) took a cottage for the summer down upon Kells Bay, below Glenbeigh, where he could do a spell of fishing and swimming when he was not helping Brendan Behan then working on Dan O'Connell's home at Derrynane; although, come to think of it, Sean adds, maybe there was more drinking done than anything else. One night anyway there was a sort of a party laid on in the cottage and somebody brought along this civic guard; I am sure it was harmless, Sean laughs, but Tony would have none of it. He quietly told the fellow escorting the guard; *look, get him away from here, or there will be no party. I have all sorts of friends here and they want to talk in a totally uninhibited way and they can't do that with a civic guard around. My lord, he added, I would far rather you had brought a bishop.*

Mick O'Sullivan, who partners Sean in the photograph, was picked up from the drapery house where he worked in July 1940 and conveyed to Cork Jail where the men of the south were held. In August they were all brought in lorries to the Curragh. Held there until April 1941, he was released for an operation on a burst appendix. He was left alone then until October, when he was arrested and interned again; he was then held until April 1944, when he was finally allowed to return home. A year or so later he married Sheila Guerin from the town, whereupon he turned his hand, as he express's it, to a bit of farming.

## REFERENCES:

1. Tony Ruane and Paddy Brown, seen by the Free State as ringleaders, received two years. Ruane from Bohola, Co. Mayo, was born in 1904. As a Fianna boy, and later in the I.R.A, he took part in the burning of the R.I.C barracks in Bohola and the capture of a Free State barracks at Ballyvary. He also saw service around St. Helens in Lancashire. He took the Republican side in the Civil War, and like hundreds of Republicans was forced to emigrate to America in 1924. There he joined Clan na Gael and the I.R.A Veterans of America where he co-operated with Pete Kearney of the West Cork column, Frank Colgan, John Snee, Mick Flannery of Tipperary and Mike McLoughlin, a Staff Officer of the Third Western Division, improving his military training in the U.S National Guard meanwhile.

On returning to Ireland in 1936 he teamed up with Kearney, now in charge of the South of Ireland Asphalt Company, and he joined the Dublin Brigade. Following sentence in 1941, he was interned until April 1945. He took an active part in the reorganisation of the Republican Movement and was National treasurer of Sinn Féin from 1966 to 1980. A man with a keen sense of humour, Tony Ruane died in June 1991, and is interred in Carlow.

2. See Christy Quearney

3. This writer was present, and remained.

4. Related in *Harry*

5. In an odd echo of the execution, Gerald O'Reilly, whom we frequently mention in these accounts, relates that while running a function in New York, he was joined by a young man who volunteered the information to him that he had been a member of the Free State squad that executed Maurice. *I have never had a moment's rest since that morning*, he told O'Reilly, *I was sure then as I am sure now that I helped to shoot an innocent man*. He then walked out upon the street before O'Reilly could persuade him to leave his name.

6. See his account.

7. Among other names in Denis Fitzgerald's book are:-

T. Ahearne, Cork; Jack Lynch, Seán Ó Ceirín, Béal Féirste; Liam Rice, Belfast; Ailbhe Ó Prís, Béal Féirste; Jim O'Hagan, Kiltel; Mattie Casey, Longford; Kevin Kelly, Dungannon; Séamus Mac Riocaird, Howth; Seán Mac Cumhaill, Tír Conaill; Séamus Ó Maoldonnaigh, Luimneach; Sean S. Maxwell, Liathdruim; Seán Ó Nuallain, Áth Cliath; Jimmy Mc Cann, Armagh; Terry Mc Loughlin, Leitrim; Denis Griffin, Cork city; Gerry Doherty, Derry; Liam Breathnach, Gaillimh; Tomás Ó Coillingeoir, Luimneach; Eighneachan Ó Laighin, Gaillimh; Seán Ua Brádaigh, Áth Claith; Seorse Ua Maolmuidhe, Loch gCarman; Jack Murphy, Dublin; Eric 'Lanty' Hannigan,





## MICHAEL O'RIORDAN

OF CORK:



Michael O'Riordan

*Upbringing in Cork city; with the International Brigade in Spain; he learns Russian in the Curragh from Neil Goold, and Irish from Máirtín Ó Cadhain.*

Of Michael O'Riordan, his long standing friend Jim Savage in the Leaside city has this to say; *I knew when I met Mick after he came back from the International Brigade in late 1938 that I was shaking hands with one of the bravest men I was ever likely to meet. And that was confirmed by our association thereafter. I knew that, on an operation, if I had to enter somewhere with Mick, I could count upon him that I would emerge alive.* He was Quartermaster of the Brigade here in Cork and he was involved in the planned rescue of Tomás MacCurtain from the Courthouse here in January 1940. MacCurtain, son of the Lord Mayor killed by the R.I.C on March 19, 1920, had resisted arrest from a posse of Branch men in Patrick Street on January 3, 1940, during which D.O. John Roche was shot dead.(1) It was during a remand hearing on February 2, and it was organised by Jobie Sullivan (2) and Michael was positioned in the doorway of a church in Liberty Street, at the reere of the courthouse, which fronts upon Washington Street. The courthouse is a fine classical monument but with a complex interior. Michael had a Thompson sub machine gun. Numbers of other I.R.A men, including Tom Kelleher, the man who almost certainly shot Michael Collins, were posted around. Jobie Sullivan and Skipper Mahoney and Bill Hayes entered from the reere the evening before carrying another Thompson. They were to await downstairs until three o'clock when it was expected proceedings would end, but proceedings closed at two o'clock unexpectedly, thus throwing the plan awry.

Jobie's father in Coburg Street had a bacon shop, and although hard to believe, he had provided Jobie with a sharp knife with which to cut off the hand of the detective should MacCurtain be manacled to him.(3) The full story of this attempted rescue, and of the three possible factors which enabled MacCurtain to escape Pierrepont's rope are told in the account of Jim Savage.

### GROWING UP IN CORK:

Michael O'Riordan was born on November 12, 1917, to his mother Julia Creed of Ballingearry, in the West Cork Gaeltacht. His maternal grandmother was a Cronin from Gougane Barra; that hilly countryside is dotted with Cronin's, he says. His father, also from that area, had one sister and six brothers, five of whom emigrated to the U.S.A. Michael's parents however emigrated eastwards to the booming city of Cork, coming to reside on the North Channel on the edge of the old city, on Pope's

Quay,(4) within sight and sound of the strikingly beautiful St. Mary's Church. *And that, combined with my place of residence, says Michael, is why I have always had a great interest in religion.*

Pope's Quay, of course, has nothing to do with the Roman Pontiff; the Popes being a powerful mercantile family two hundred and eighty years ago. Michael had two brothers and two sisters, and while his parents were native speakers, none of the children were. His parents did not speak it much in the city, not through any thought that it might be a drag upon advancement, he affirms, but simply that, as an urban language, it was slipping out of use. Their home however received a constant stream of Irish speaking relations, one of whom, Seán Fada Ó Suilleabháin, his godfather and an old I.R.A man, had been demoted when he refused to take a loyalty oath to the Free State government.

*As a child I imbibed and spoke the sound and music of the language in the poetry of Máire Bhuidhe Ní Laoghaire, a woman poet from my parent's birthplace; growing up after the North Monastery school however he began to feel that Irish was being used in an opportunist way that, for a while, repelled him. Later on he had ample time to rectify all that when he found himself in the Curragh Internment Camp under the cultural baton of Gearóid Ó Maolmhicael and Máirtín Ó Cadhain.*

His earliest memories as a young child are of trouble; what were then universally known as *The Troubles*, because, with a powerful English establishment still in power, no one could declare their sympathy by calling the times for what they really were, *war*. So, as a three year old child, he recalls witnessing with awe the dark Crossley tenders of the Tans swing out of the Bridewell, their principal barrack, across the river on Coal Quay, and go racing away. Growing up he saw Cork as a divided city, where the halves were the people clinging to the political establishment of Cumann na nGael, while the have-nots were the Republicans, outcast from under the umbrella of the Free State. In such an atmosphere he commenced to be politically aware; he had joined the public library in Tuckey Street and would wander into the adult section, standing on tippy toe to reach the selected book. His father's occupation after leaving Ballingearry was as a tram driver in Cork. Later on, from 1947 Mick himself worked as a tram conductor out of Dublin's Terenure depot. His father later took on a job as a car man with the City of Cork Steam Packet Co.

Following an accident however on the docks, dad, with the compensation, opened a lock-up shop in Adelaide Street. His memories from those times are a colourful kaleidoscope of episodes such as witnessing the removal in August 1922 of the body of Michael Collins across St. Patrick's Bridge, before transshipment to Dublin. Prior to that he recalls his mother chiding him in a half serious way for fraternising with a Tan sergeant by name of Chance. As he continued his development however, he was becoming aware that, although the O'Riordan's were themselves poorly off, there were thousands of others in dire poverty. In the area of the city known as The Marsh, the ancient core, one witnessed poverty on a wide scale. You could not fail to see it. That is the area in which Frank O'Connor's *Doll's House* story is located.

In 1932, unknown to his father, Michael joined Fianna Éireann, which at that time was seen in some quarters as the youth wing of the I.R.A. But Frank Ryan, with whom he was later involved in Spain, was the Chief Scout of Fianna, had a particular attraction for him even then.



At the same time, the strong Collins tradition in the country, combined with antipathy to Fianna Fáil resulting from the Economic War cattle sanctions imposed from England, was making progress by the Blueshirts easy throughout the countryside. (Fianna Fáil supporters were cushioned by modestly improved welfare and the prospect of Old I.R.A pensions; besides, they regarded the hardships as a patriotic duty). As the Army Comrades Association, formed mainly from ex-army people in 1932,<sup>(5)</sup> the Blueshirt organisation developed with the first appearance of the shirt as a uniform in Kilkenny in April 1933. Dr. T.F. O'Higgins, T.D of the opposition party, and until a short while before a cabinet member under President W.T. Cosgrave, was the movement's leader and presiding genius, until the dismissal in February 1933 of Gen. Eoin O'Duffy, Chief of Police, followed by the appointment of Col. Eamon Broy to succeed him.

O'Duffy was offered by De Valera an equally secure and comfortable post in the public service but he seized the opportunity instead to enter politics, and to attempt to lead the nation in a crusade against communism.

In all that period and until much later, the official labour and trade union movements stayed silent. We need not explore this intrusion into history further beyond remarking that indeed the Blueshirt movement, from, at one time claiming more than 100,000 members, on being officially banned and transforming itself in December 1933 into the League of Youth, and then being confronted with the bombshell resignation in September 1934 of its leader General O'Duffy, commenced a fragmentation process which caused it, within eighteen months, to disappear from the political scene. The few dozen short term prisoners who found themselves in Arbour Hill and the Glasshouse, as a result of their activities, quite properly sought release by giving undertakings to keep the peace. The outbreak of the Spanish Civil War, which created the Irish Christian Front, under political chameleon, Patrick Belton, might be seen as a successor, but apart from a series of remarkable public meetings, it left no permanent mark, beyond a residue of anti-republican and anti-communism, a residue that had always existed.

With the leadership mantle conferred upon Eoin O'Duffy, two contrary trends manifested themselves. De Valera, with Col. Broy at his elbow was strengthened, especially as numbers of first class I.R.A men now joined the enlarged armed detective force, the 'Broy Harriers', to confront the 'Blueshirt menace', and to ensure that the 'republican' De Valera and his cabinet, most of whom Cumann na nGael could say were 'ex-gunmen', remained securely in office. Those I.R.A who had not joined the Broy Harriers, and most had not (though many were now being suborned by old I.R.A pensions in a net that was spread sufficiently wide to include anyone with the faintest claim to participation from 1916 -23) now confronted the Blueshirts frequently in street battles.

The other trend was the eruption of an anti-communist hysteria which took hold in sections of the press, and in the Catholic Church, set alight in the run up to the Eucharistic Congress of June 1932. This reacted adversely, not only upon the Republican Movement but was widespread during the opening period of the Spanish Civil War, July 1936, to March 31, 1939.

At the age of 16, Michael, early in 1933, was at the public launch of the Blueshirt movement in Cork, at which Dr. T.F. O'Higgins, T.D. was the principal speaker. One may be sure that, as a Fianna boy, he was not there as a supporter but 'out to see what he could see'. We may be sure also that he was present at an earlier meeting, on November 6, 1932, at which the late President W.T. Cosgrave, was speaker, and which was broken up by Republicans.(7) *An Phoblacht* under Frank Ryan, was later running the headline, 'No Free Speech for Traitors'. although that was to be later countermanded by its new editor Donal O'Donoghue, in February, and again in May 1934, with the advice not to be drawn into clashes. The Blueshirts, on their part where their local strength allowed, also broke up meetings. With the build-up of their numbers there followed, early in 1934, an announcement of a 'monster' meeting, addressed by O'Duffy, Commdt. Ned Cronin and other lieutenants. The inevitable happened; tantalised, the I.R.A, lost for a political role, commenced filling it by organising physical opposition to the Blueshirts. A counter demonstration, entitled an anti-imperialist parade, led by Cork's own folk hero, Tom Barry, was mobilised, and Kit Conway, who later died in Spain, led a charge upon the O'Duffy group, augmented by a shower of milk bottles from Bradley's, a local dairy firm. Free State troops and uniformed police then formed a thin line to separate the groups.

Conway, whose all too short role in the I.R.A around Cork, Tipperary and inner Dublin, had made him a legendary hero, was a Tipperary man, a lowly figure, but one of extraordinary mobility and bravery; born near Burncourt, he had come through the Tan and the Civil War (surprisingly for a time on the Free State side;) had emigrated, like so many Republicans to the U.S A, where he worked on building sites in New York, returning then to Ireland like George Plant, Jim Galton, Breen and many more, expectant in the prospect of the 're establishment of the Republic' under Fianna Fáil; and finding evasion on their part, he resumed a role in the I.R.A where he became National Training Officer and prime organiser in Dublin. (8)

When the Congress split occurred with the I.R.A after March 1934, Conway adhered to his comrade from Elton, near Knocklong, Frank Ryan, joining him in Spain (9). Within months he was dead; at the critically fought (and won) battle of Jarama, which for another two years prevented the Franco jaws closing upon Madrid. The full story of this brigade of Irishmen is told by Mick in his account, *Connolly Column*, where he lists 59 Irishmen among the fallen, out of 145 who volunteered.

*There is a valley in Spain called Jarama,  
That's a place that we all know so well,  
For it's there that we gave of our manhood,  
And most of our old age as well.*

The major Blueshirt gatherings in the city were frequently led by the Parnell Guard, or the Fair Lane Band. They had taken to themselves the mantle of the 'Blackbird of Avondale', but the I.R.A were not having that, and as often as they sounded their drums, they were attacked.

#### A MEMORY OF FRANK RYAN:

Shortly after this Michael graduated into the I.R.A, meeting Frank Ryan for the first time. Everybody is agreed (10) on the enormous attractiveness, or charisma as it would be called these days, of Frank for all young people; for girls, for boys and young men. We may live in another world these days, but that is the way things were in the thirties. At *céilís* (he was frequently in the Dublin Mansion House), at song, or in a village dance hall at Baile an Fheirtéirigh, Frank, despite his increasing deafness, was 'heart of the rowl'. Closely associated with Connradh na Gaeilge, the Irish Tourist Association in Upper O'Connell Street, Dublin, where he was employed, he was also editor, after Peadar O'Donnell, of *An Phoblacht*, from the summer of 1931 until the spring of 1933, when he was succeeded by Liam MacGabhann, an out-of-work Kerry teacher, (Hannah Sheehy-Skeffington, assistant editor, retired with him). That night Frank stayed at Mick's home on Pope's Quay, and it is certain that he made much word play with the boy living at such a papal sounding address. Promptly next morning he set off by car for a Conradh *aeridheacht* near Julia Creed's old homestead of Ballingearry; Béal átha an Ghaorthaidh, the mouth of the ford of the wooded glen; how musical it must have sounded to him.

That second-hand Ford car of Frank's was legendary. Geoffrey Palmer, Ireland's oldest communist, whose father was a bank manager in Portarlinton, tells a story of the car being lost somewhere around Parnell Square. At that time there were no parking problems and there were literally thousands of people living in the tenements and housing around about; yet none of them would interfere with it. It had been abandoned for days, with Frank away elsewhere, when Palmer found it. Of course it required pushing, but fortunately it was facing downhill, and it was got away easily. And to demonstrate how times have changed, Palmer himself once left his motor bike beside the kerb in the Square.

He went down the country for days, but his bike was untouched upon his return. On another note, his daughter, Joy, married Joe O'Connor of Brosna, the man who went through the ordeal of the Plant trials, in London, in the fifties; they parted later.

Following the formation of Republican Congress in Athlone on April 8, 1934, when it issued a radical manifesto calling for a united front of all Republican forces, it drifted, torn by internal squabbles, until September 29, when division among the delegates virtually marked its end, although its tabloid monthly ran from May 1934 until December 1935. Its republican content largely filled in for the absence of *An Phoblacht*, driven underground in that period. In fact it was a duplicate almost of that news sheet. Michael sought contact with Congress at the start; any young man, frustrated with the lack of direction of the I.R.A was bound to be attracted to the Congress programme, but glowing manifestoes are not enough. Congress was overburdened by the sheer brilliance of the personnel at the top; figures ranging from Nora Connolly, to the Prices, Gilmores, O'Donnell, Cora Hughes, Bobbie Walsh and Frank Edwards broke on the issue of a United Front or a Worker's Republic. The 'Front' won by 99 votes to 88; but it was too close a margin for the embryo organisation to survive. Mick heard nothing more from Congress; besides the youngsters found Cork republican soil unfruitful for novel ideas. Barry, the Lynches, Tom Kelleher and Tim Collins would not hear of a 'split'. What was Congress anyway, some were heard to say, only a mirror image of the I.R.A itself; so why confuse the situation?

When the Spanish War broke on the 18th. July 1936, physically dividing the peninsula in two almost equal halves, with General Francisco Franco and his troops occupying the west, and the Government, or the 'Reds' as some Irish newspapers labelled them, holding the east, Michael decided that he must volunteer. He was aged only 19, but that is the age for adventure, and he was not deterred. He contacted Sean, or Johnny Nolan in Dublin, a founder member and the full time organiser of the Communist Party. Sean Nolan was manager of New Books of Pearse Street (now the Connolly Bookshop in East Essex Street), oldest workers' bookshop, where he presided from 1941 until 1988, during which he found himself a target (along with the *Irish Times*!) for some ultra right window smashing. Michael also approached Jim O'Regan, a fellow I.R.A man of Cork. O'Regan later volunteered for Spain; was fortunate to sustain only wounds, returned to Cork, took up again with the I.R.A.; played a part in the English Campaign (which Mick disagreed with), and was imprisoned there for nine years.(10A)

In Dublin Michael met old time I.R.A man Sean Murray, originally from Cushendall; a man who had been through the Independence War in north Antrim; was interned, worked in England, and after 1928 spent three years in the Lenin School, Moscow. With a briefing from Murray, he sailed the following night alone on the Liverpool boat from the North Wall. He had little spending money, so it was upon a bus he travelled, it being the cheapest conveyance available from the Mersey to London. Once there he immediately reported to the clandestine recruiting centre in Litchfield Street. There would be no opportunity and no spare cash for the young man, just out of Cork, to see the sights of Cobbett's 'great wen'.

It was made plain to Michael in the recruiting centre that, in Spain, volunteers would be welcome, but not adventurers. After February 20, 1937, recruitment itself became a punishable offence under the European Non- Intervention Agreement which, of course, Nazi Germany and Mussolini's Italy, or the Soviet Union, did not observe.

With three Scotsmen and a Londoner, Michael took the night train to Paris where they reported to an office located appropriately enough, in Rue de Combat. (It turned out afterwards that of the five travellers, only two returned from the battle front, and one of those was Michael). They had no travel documents for France, but their false identity papers permitted a week's stay. Leon Blum was Prime Minister; it was the era of non- intervention which France, despite its Popular Front government, was observing, so volunteers, if discovered, would be jailed by the French authorities; the men in the Rue de Combat had to tread warily. At 19 Mick was under age by two years for the Brigade, so he took fellow I.R.A man Tadhg O'Connell's birth certificate; Tadhg having earlier failed the medical test. Then, after passing the check himself and a political assessment, the volunteers were warned of the dangers they faced and of the very unequal battle conditions(11) that would confront them. Finally they were ready to go. *This now is your last chance to step out.* For many the lecture had been too real, and some did; they opted out of a war in which there could be no fun, and few real victor's. To those remaining, the sole advice given was, bring plenty of tobacco.

That night they entrained for Beziers, 50 kilometres from the frontier at Perpignan. From there they would have to literally leak across the line. Alighting at Beziers, they took a taxi from the station to a small hotel, where they were told they must remain inside for the night. After a day waiting inside, a French comrade collected them; driving them a distance of 25 kilometres on to a peasant farm where they were immediately ushered into a barn. There they awaited the arrival of other small groups; being conveyed then by bus to the foot of the Pyrenees. Dismounting there, they were guided in darkness, not a word being spoken, high up and over the mountains; it turned out to be an exhausting, and in places a precipitous path, but in the darkness they were aware only of how worn out the straggling band was and not of the hazards of the route.<sup>12</sup>)

Thereafter Michael chronicles a long saga of battle involvement against sometimes crushing odds; 'the line has crumbled, and groups of our men are making a fighting and orderly retreat; but the overwhelming might of the enemy has turned it into a rout.' But most times it was not a rout. Inch by inch however the Franco forces moved forward, vital territory being lost. First they whittled away at the independent detached province of Euzkadi while at the same time driving hard to close the pincers of Jarama and Guadalajara focused upon Madrid. As Sean Cronin opens his account of that defence in *Frank Ryan*.<sup>(13)</sup>

International battalions were organised initially along language not national lines: the Franco-Belge, for example. Despite their request for an independent unit the Irish were attached to the British Battalion. Later they gave the British two outstanding commanders, Peter Daly and Paddy O'Daire. The British training base was at Madrigueras, a village near Alicante. While Ryan was off with another brigade early in 1937, some of his men ran into difficulties with the British. The result was that they joined or were attached to the Lincolns, an American group, and were quite happy with the arrangement. They formed the Connolly centuria and trained at the village of Villanueva de la Jara, which Mick Kelly from Ballinasloe called 'Villanueva O'Hara. (It was Kelly who coined the caution, *Remember lads, 'tis a mortal sin to cross your own line of fire*).

The Connolly centuria included Paddy Roe McLaughlin from Moville by way of New York; the poet Charles Donnolly from Dungannon; the Power brothers of Waterford - John, Paddy and Willie; Hugh Bonar of Dungloe; Eamonn G. McCrotty, an ex-Christian Brother, of Derry; Liam (Billy) Tumilson, a Belfast Protestant republican; Jim O'Regan of Cork; Bill Henry and David Levy of Dublin; Peter O'Connor of Waterford. Eddie O'Flaherty commanded the centuria, and in a letter home O'Flaherty had this to say: 'with us are some swell fighting men from the old country, most of whom are I.R.A men'. The Irishmen enlivened their barracks with their songs, Thomas tells.

When Ryan returned to find his men split between two battalions he was furious. He blamed representatives of the British Communist Party. He told Gerald O'Reilly that he discovered that Terry Flanagan, the Irish section O.C, was under arrest and ordered to Barcelona to await deportation. This was too much. He had been 'framed' Ryan said. The letter to O'Reilly, written in embittered terms in Paris early in March 1937, explained how the English, principally a certain battalion com-

mander Wilfred McCartney, said to be ex-Black and Tan, divided the Irish section and punished Terry Flanagan of the Dublin Brigade.<sup>(14)</sup> Ryan developed a poisonous dislike of the British communists arising out of these incidents.

In another case, as Cronin relates it;

The Irish with the Internationals fought well, despite lack of knowledge of the terrain and bad leadership. They were thrown into battle without proper orders. Kit Conway from South Tipperary, a born soldier with long experience of tight situations, led the Irish in the British Battalion. Conway was 38 years of age, and with a fine record in the Black and Tan War. (He took the Treaty side and on the eve of the Civil War commanded a Free State Battalion; then decided he was wrong and rejoined the Republicans). He distinguished himself on the Cordoba front at Christmas 1936 as the commander of a patrol that held off an attack by a battalion of Moors. By all accounts, Conway's men had full confidence in him and idolised him. Here is Jim Prendergast's vivid account of the waiting before moving into battle.

'A group of Brigade officers passed us. They were back from the lines whence they had gone to find out about the situation. We would not be long now. Frank Ryan must be back too. I looked around for him. Somebody moved, it was Frank but he had a steel helmet on. This puzzled us because we knew he had fitted on hundreds and couldn't get one small enough.'

'Frank came over to us. *What are ye all looking at;* he said. *Did you expect me back. No, where did you get the steel helmet?* Frank explained, simply by sitting hard on it he had managed to squeeze it a tight fit. *We'll need them boys,* he said. *It's hell up there and we are in for a tough fight.* He told us of the position in the line and that the Fascists were expected to launch a powerful attack under cover of nightfall to finally capture the road. Our Brigade must move in to smash this attempt at all costs. Kit and Frank went away.

I went back to the group under the olives. I spread my blanket under a tree and lay down. It was impossible to doze however with the noisy chatter of the boys. Dan Boyle, a Belfast lad, gave me an English cigarette. Boy, that was good. Dan was in fine form although he had just read his obituary in a misinformed paper.

It was a happy group under our tree; Dan, Ted Bourne and Dick O'Neill. And before long three of us would be wounded and one killed. We could not read the future and did not care overmuch anyway. But Dan, handing the last of his fags around, did say his generosity was based on the possibility of not finishing them later.' *End of Cronin.*

Keeping closely in touch by letter with Gerald O'Reilly, the I.R.A man in New York,<sup>(15)</sup> Ryan returned briefly to Ireland in 1937; he helped to organise a short lived weekly, *The Democrat*, fought the July 1937 election for a seat in Dublin South Central; (nominated in his absence, having returned to Spain 3 weeks before); was earlier involved in a nasty brush with police at a public meeting in Beresford Place (outside the old Liberty Hall) attended by Tom Barry, Tadhg Lynch, Sean Keating of Kilkenny, Nora Harkin, Bobbie Edwards, Larry O'Connor, Sheila Humpheries, Jimmy Hannigan, Con Lehane and many more, almost all I.R.A. *Why go back,* Barry asked him in bed that night. *Would you have left your men to find their own way out after Crossbarry,* replied Frank.

In July the Republicans opened the Brunete offensive and won a surprising success, but it was quickly followed by a ding dong counter attack in which much of the ground was lost. Four Irish died. By August 1937 the isolated Basque province was overwhelmed. The Teruel salient, at this time pointing threateningly at the important Mediterranean city of Valencia, was fought over and captured by the Republicans, only to be retaken two months later on February 21, 1938, by the Franco forces. At Calaceite, on the Aragon front, less than 100 kilometres east of Barcelona, to which Ryan was sent towards the end of March, there were signals of the collapse that was finally to spell doom for Catalonia. That night, walking forward - the enemy were said to be 32 kilometres back, along with some others of the British battalion, he walked, in the dawn, into a group of stationary Italian tanks. Shortly after capture he was condemned to death.

We know now that life for him in Burgos Prison hung for another two and a quarter years on a fragile thread until his liberation into France in July 1940. Meanwhile the brave and confused fight of the Spanish Republic drew to a close in March 1939, only five months before the outbreak of World War 2. Catalonia was isolated in July 1938, while the main segment, the provinces of Castile with Madrid, Valencia, Murcia and the eastern half of Andalusia, held out to the south. Terms were not on offer from Franco so there could be no negotiated peace; only surrender.(16)

Catalonia was finally overrun in February 1939. Political and military fragmentation now followed rapidly; the splintered groups surfacing amid recriminations and anxiety. The final coastal towns of Almeria, Murcia and Cartagena were occupied on March 31. Scenes of anguish and fear preceded their entry. Executions taking place on both sides during the war now mounted on the war's conclusion to one thousand a month. In 1939 alone it is estimated that 9,000 were executed in a vengeful climax to a war that had already claimed 450,000.

In December 1938, with the war teetering to a close, Mick returned from Spain, arriving into Dublin with Jim Power, Jim O'Regan, Tom O'Brien, Mick Waters, Eugene Dowling and John O'Shea. They were the last Irish Brigade men to arrive. They marched, preceded by a lone piper, in a heavy downpour, to Abbey Street corner; the traditional meeting place, where they were welcomed by Father Michael O'Flanagan. Scarcely delaying, Mick was soon upon a train and bound for Cork. Catalonia was a separated province though not yet overrun, but they knew the end could not be far off. The decent thing had been done to get the foreign volunteers away from the place. Had they stayed they would have been executed.

To the charge that the Soviet Union could have done more for republican Spain, Michael has this to say. They were still exhausted after their own civil war; they had to make hazardous crossings from the Black Sea to the eastern ports of Spain (remember that Franco controlled the Balearic Islands), being attacked 86 times and loosing three ships. They assisted with 2,000 volunteers, including 772 airmen, though nothing compared with the numbers the Italians and Germans pumped in; but some of those, such as Malinovsky, Voronov, Pavel Batoy and Rodimstev, who defended Stalingrad, were outstanding three years later in defence of the Soviet Union itself.

Their personal armament was inferior, there are many references to the quality of their helmets. Ryan was able to squeeze his so that it stayed on his head, while George Nathan, the British commander, pointing to a hole in his remarked to Frank Edwards, *a stone did that*. The rifles also were below par; old five shot efforts, much under the standard of a Lee Enfield. Mick was surprised to see on war film later the Russians, in retreat from Brest- Litovsk in June 1941, using the same weapons. Judging by what was to happen their factories must have started producing Kalasnikovs soon after, he says.

Food was always scarce, and then only the roughest bread and meatless soup was available. To make a worthy occasion of Wolfe Tone's Day in June in 1938, a lull having returned to the front, they abstained from eating for two days.

Then Liam McGregor, Alec Digges, Tom O'Brien and Eugene Dowling from Dublin; Jimmy Straney and Hugh Hunter from Belfast; Mick Lehane from Kerry, the two O'Regans and Mick himself from Cork, and Jack Nalty and Paddy Duff from Dublin, made a banquet of black rice bread and mule meat washed down with vino rojo brought to them in a well scrubbed ash bin. Under its influence all anxieties about home and thoughts of Ireland faded away.

#### INTERNED IN IRELAND:

With shrapnel in his shoulder from the battle of the Ebro, Mick, on his return, had to take things easy for a while. He had a lot of friends to look up around Cork; a lot of people were shaking his hand who had feared never to see him safely return. But two weeks after the hanging on February 7, of Barnes and McCormack at Winson Green Jail, Birmingham, Mick was arrested with Mick Dowling and Tadhg O'Connell, with whose birth certificate he had enlisted in the Brigade, and interned under De Valera's amended Offences Act on the ground floor of the Curragh Glasshouse. There were Free State privates imprisoned upstairs, who, he says, were having a worse time. Imprisoned with him were Bertie McCormack (17) and Billy Mulligan, the latter, he said, sporting riding breeches, clearly marking him as cut out to be an officer, Mick smiles. In May, with the European war hotting up, they were transferred down to a newly built camp on the Brownstown side. It consisted of seven huts capable of holding sixty men each, with ancillary wash house and sanitary accommodation. An even larger camp was already being constructed west of it. It was evident that, with the Germans rolling towards the Channel, De Valera contemplated the mass internment of Republicans.

Of the principal people in the Camp that he recalls, he places first and foremost Diarmuid MacGiolla Phádraig, who, although on religion holding a stern view, he remembers as a friend to the left. Diarmuid had for many years a bookshop in Cathedral Street, off O'Connell Street, Dublin.(18) In the early thirties he produced poems and writings under the pen name of Somhairle MacAlister, contributing also to *An Phoblacht*. His last request was that Michael should give the oration over his grave when he died at the age of 74 in 1981, but Mick was then in hospital in Moscow.

Joe O'Connor, frequently mentioned in this work, accused with George Plant, he recalls as a reserved man who, on being returned discharged after the murder trial into the Camp, responded to the cheers of welcome by giving a fascist salute, which



of course was the direct opposite of his real feelings. Before leaving the Curragh he had joined the Communist Party, later going to London and working on the railway. Always a Republican, he died in 1980, and is buried in Newcastle West.

Máirtín Ó Cadhain, left of centre, but his philosophy was based on the Irish motivation of self-reliance and rural co-operation. Himself and Ó Mongáin in that respect were much influenced by each other. In a piece Mick wrote in *Feasta*, Deire Fomhair 1990, he had this to say of Máirtín; an intellectual man; odd in some ways; a greedy reader, sometimes quiet and sometimes talkative; he was anything but a soldier. Máirtín stood apart from those few fervent people who hoped the Nazis might win, and those such as Michael, who were opposed to fascism. Ó Cadhain translated the *Internationale* (which until 1940 was the national anthem of the U.S.S.R), and which was enthusiastically sung in the Camp in both versions.

Múscláig, a bhraitinn na cruinne,  
 a dhíogha an ocrais, aire dhaoibh!  
 Tá an tuiscint ina buabhall buile  
 Ag saighdeadh an duine chun malrait saoil.  
 De sheanré na ngeasróg deanam easair,  
 Ar na laincise, múscláig.  
 Sinné nach faic muid, gheobhaimid gradam  
 An seanreacht leagfar bunoscionn.  
 Is í an troid scoir í a bhráithre,  
 Éirimis chun gnímh,  
 An tInternationale  
 Snaidhm comhair an chine dhaonna,  
 Is i an troid scoirí, a bhráithre,  
 Éirimis chun gnímh,  
 Am tInternationale  
 A bhéas mar chine daonna.

Gearóid ÓMaolmhicheal, shortish, full faced and from Co. Galway, had all the appearance and attributes of the traditional Irish schoolmaster, which is what he was (near Mullingar). With his tweedy homespun approach, he played a great part in teaching Irish to ordinary blokes.

Joe Deighan from Armagh and Liverpool; I found him a diffident person. His reserve would prevent you from really getting to know him.

Sean McCool, or MacCumhail; he had been a guest of the Soviet Union in 1929 and 1930 when he suffered from T.B. The Nazi invasion however confronted him with a dilemma which he sought to solve by saying; *I do not want them to win but I hope England will lose.* That was a view that prevailed widely in the Curragh.

Michael's other close associates were Johnny Power of Waterford, the boyish looking Paddy Smith of Dublin; both of whom had been in Spain; Jim Kerr, Liam Dowling of Dublin, Michael A. Kelly of Roscommon, an intellectual, who with McCool had just completed five years in Crumlin Road following the Crown Entry courtmartial raid April 25, 1936, (19) and Neil Goold.

Of the Fire of December 14, 1940 Mick does not remember much that would be

new to our story. While he was aware of the tunnel network he thinks that Peadar O'Flaherty was not aware of it, or, if he was, he behaved irresponsibly in causing them to be discovered.

On World War 2 itself, Michael spoke fervently in condemnation of any reliance by the I.R.A on the Nazis. He knew that many hoped Germany would weaken England, believing in the old premise that England's difficulty is Ireland's opportunity; but in the case of Hitler's Germany, his opinion was that the regime must be seen differently. The view of Germany that Roger Casement had (although he himself was cynical about them) may be understandable but it conflicts with MacSwiney; 'if Ireland were to obtain its liberty at the expense of other peoples it would deserve all the execration she herself poured on tyranny throughout the ages'.

After nearly four years there Michael left the Camp in December 1943. By that time all of his Connolly Group were leaving or had left. If one takes account of the excess of over two years that he had spent in Spain, he emerged in 1944 after six years spent in defence of the liberty of others. But it was not all an entry on the debit side. Inside the Curragh he learned what for him were the world's two important languages, Irish and Russian. Arriving in Dublin, his first stop was at the Castle Hotel in Gardiner's Row where the proprietor, Donal O'Connor, not alone put him up for the night but thrust a five pound note into his hand; big money at that time, he says; but he had known Donal from the time he put him up after his return from Spain.

He came home to Pope's Quay, and within a few months had qualified for a job as a bus conductor with C.I.E. In 1945 he formed the Liam Mellows branch of the Irish Labour Party but, inevitably, as had so frequently happened with that essentially bourgeois grouping, he was expelled shortly after. He went forward then in the municipal elections as a plain socialist, staying in until the last count. In a Dáil by-election in 1946 he gained 3800 votes, coming in ahead of Tom Barry. He was in the I.T.G.W.U now, - since S.I.P.T.U - where the mode of address among members was *Comrades*, which, he laughs, shows how far we have *not* advanced since then. He was friendly with Barry Desmond's father, Con. They worked together in the Cork No.1 Branch I.T.G.W.U, and he held him in high esteem. His son now a wealthy man, is not a patch, he says: Jim Hickey was branch secretary at this time. In February 1938 as Lord Mayor he had refused to entertain officers from the visiting German training ship, *Schleswig-Holstein* (20). *Congratulatory cables and letters poured in from all over the world.* Can't you get them to stop, he pleaded to Mick who had only returned from Spain. Fire proofing himself against criticism from orthodox quarters, Hickey then declared that he took the action *solely because the Nazis had insulted the Pope!* Pius XI had been termed a 'political adventurer' in some German newspapers. At the time, says Michael, *Rearum Novarum*, the Catholic Workers' College, and the thinking of Professor Alfred O'Rahilly, held a great deal of sway in the Irish Labour movement; there was little accommodation for left wing thinking.

He took up residence in Dublin in 1947, three months after his marriage to Kay Keohane. The day of their arrival to their inner city house at Victoria Street on the South Circular Road, followed the mass funeral of Big Jim Larkin and one of the

worst snow blizzards to hit Ireland in 80 years. Kay was from Clonakilty, in West Cork, close to the birthplace of Diarmuid O'Donovan Rossa, while the town itself was the only part of Munster, that, under the leadership of Tadhg an Asna, joined Antrim, Down, Wexford, Wicklow and Mayo in the 1798 rebellion. They were to have three children, Mary, Manus and Brenda, and numbers, eventually, of grandchildren. Meanwhile Michael commenced work as a conductor on an assortment of buses, principally, in later years, No. 10 from Donnybrook to Phoenix Park. Can you confirm now for a laugh, that there was a particular old lady whom, when you would approach her for a fare, would solemnly bless herself? *I can confirm that, he answered smiling. And some children, if one is to believe a recent report in the Evening Press, were warned that if they saw me on the bus they should not travel on it!*

The works of James Connolly have had the most influence on Michael, and they continue to have. *Some say of Connolly, he remarks, that he betrayed his socialism by entering the G.P.O in 1916. I say it was a logical action on his part if we were ever to attain a measure of freedom; political, economic and social freedom which is the only real freedom, but which the freedom we boast of today falls far short of.*

At the funeral mass offered by Fr. Flannery in 1992 over Kay, his son Manus sang from the poem by Charlie Donnelly, *To You*; Donnelly, the Dungannon born rebel, having fallen at the Battle of Jarama in 1937.

In the days of bitter faces  
And cold eyes,  
I would go to the lone large places, the hills  
And the skies,

To the twilight of grey, great shadows  
And bird cries....

But you, my Jewess, having come, and gone,  
Where can I bring my soul,  
When the winds but mock, and the shadows  
Bring mirrors of thy soul?

In the days of bitter faces  
And cold eyes,  
I would go to the lone large places, the hills,  
And the skies,

To the twilight of grey, great shadows,  
And bird cries...  
And shadows would hide me, and the winds sigh  
With my sighs...

But you my Jewess, having come, and gone,  
Whence can I bring my soul,  
When the winds but mock, and the shadows  
Bring mirrors of thy soul.

## REFERENCES:

1. See the I.R.A.'s 'San Andreas Fault' in Seamus Ronayne's account
2. For one account of Mac Curtains narrow shave from the rope see *Survivors*, Sean MacBrides story. Jim Savage adds an interesting note highlighting administrative economy in these matters. The head warden in Mountjoy informed him afterwards that the coffin intended for MacCurtain was put back in the stores and taken out on the occasion of the execution of McGrath and Harte a few weeks later.
3. For an account of the career of the remarkable Jobie Sullivan, see the many other references.
4. Extracts of minutes of Council Book of Cork, November 3, 1718. 'That widow Pope have liberty to build a quay...between Browne's Quay and Farren Quay...is equal and within said quays and Mr. Woodside sees it built accordingly'. Generally the quays were built by merchants who were required to build river walls in limestone, owning then a swathe of land reclaimed within. Hence Lapp's Quay and others. Presumably this lady was the widow of Merchant Pope. The Dublin quay walls were promoted in the same manner leaving a generous slice of former tidal river on each side for the promoter to organise development upon.
5. Initial soundings commenced through Commdt Ned Cronin in 1931 for a welfare organisation, ('welfare' usually being a cover for other activities), with Dr. Tom O'Higgins T.D for Cork city prominent; Dr. Tom being a brother of 1927 assassinated Kevin. At the beginning British government reports viewed the A.C.A favourably as a possible 'White Army', that might topple De Valera, and as having a better class of leadership than the I.R.A. By the time O'Duffy gained power over the A.C.A, now the Blueshirts, interest was lost; it being recognised in Whitehall that De Valera's intention, according to himself, was not to challenge the Treaty of December 1921, but merely Britain's interpretation of it.
6. See *The Blueshirts*, by Maurice Manning; *Legion of the Rearguard* by Conor Foley, *Frank Ryan*, by Sean Cronin.
7. *Legion of the Rearguard*, by Conor Foley.
8. See Kit Quearney's account
9. Kit Conway was in the first batch of 80 to leave for Spain at the end of November, 1936. It included Frank Edwards of Waterford, Donal O'Reilly, Jack Nalty, Paddy Duff, Seamus Cummins and Jack Prendergast; all of Dublin, and Bill Scott of Dublin I.R.A, a Protestant brick-layer from Inchicore.  
See the Appendix for more on Kit Conway.
10. See Kit Quearney's account
- 10a. To the astonishment of Jim Savage, O'Regan volunteered for the English Campaign. In Killiney Castle, where he met both Paddy McGrath and Seamus O'Donovan, he held out no

hope for it. It could not possibly be successful on the resources they had unless they had other operations in mind such as the North. They replied that there would be actions in the Six Counties, and that promise may possibly have induced O'Regan, a man of slight build, to go.

11. See Frank Edwards in *Survivors*.

12. Some volunteers came... across the Pyrenees by secret paths unknown to, or watched by, the French police... Those who crossed would stay in the old castle of Figueras. By both routes nearly all went through Barcelona, or through Alicante, where they were greeted with enthusiasm by comrades shouting *salud, no pasaran* or *U.H.P.* Hugh Thomas in *The Spanish Civil War*.

13. Frank Ryan is described by Hugh Thomas in *The Spanish Civil War* as absurdly chivalrous. Conor Foley in *Legion of the Rearguard*, devotes two pages to Jarama and the Irishmen involved.

14. The Irish were divided between the Abraham Lincoln and the British Battalions. Those who joined the former did so because they objected to the British *Daily Worker* failing to mention that many of the fallen on the Cordoba front had been Irish. They had been serving with the British No. 1 Company, and had rioted when their first request for transfer was refused. Hugh Tomas in *The Spanish Civil War*.

(Frank Ryan had a public quarrel that time with André Marty, a French communist leader very influential in Spain; towards the end of his days in 1955, Marty was expelled from the party.)

15. See Appendix for Gerald O'Reilly, long time activist, who lived into this decade.

16. Eight months after the war commenced General Eoin O'Duffy's brigade, consisting of upwards of 700 ill-assorted volunteers who had arrived in three ship loads (the major portion embarking in secret from Waterford), lost two men when they were mistaken by a Franco group from the Canary Islands. Engaged for a time in trench warfare, they lost four more volunteers in March. During the following two months of April and May, four died of sickness, but by this time their crusading fervour had been knocked out of them and they were glad, by June, to return by sea from Lisbon to Dublin.

17. See Bertie McCormack's account

18. Episodes from Diarmuid's interesting career as a Republican of long standing and later an observer from the book shop he used as a listening post near O'Connell Street appear over four pages in *Survivors*. As related there, he told this writer how Frank Aiken, as a war-time Minister, called one day to his Cathedral Street shop. Viewing Diarmuid quizzically, but without engaging him, he departed. 'The next day the Broy Harriers (Special Branch) lifted me. I really believed Aiken fingered any active Republican he recalled from his own days, Aiken having been Chief of Staff from 1923 to 1925'. Tall and thin, it may have been his lugubrious appearance, although contradicted by droll humour, that caused him to be nicknamed, The Joker, he always went about (for thermal reasons) with his socks well up over his trousers.

19. See Bowyer Bell: See Tim Pat Coogan, *The I.R.A.*

20. This vessel fired one of the first salvos of World War 2 when on September 2, 1939, it shelled the Port of Danzig.



*I met the Love-Talker on the eve in the glen,  
His eyes were handsomer than any of our handsome young men,  
His eyes were blacker than the sloe, his voice sweeter far,  
Than the crooning of old Kevin's pipes beyond in Coolnagar.*

- Ethna Carbery (Anna Johnston) 1866-1902.

## CHRISTY QUEARNEY

of DUBLIN:



Christy Quearney

*On father's side of Huguenot stock: born into an inner city home.*

*Verdict: A seasoned Republican soldier.*

I was born in Dublin in a tenement house in Wellington Street, off Upper Dorset Street, north Dublin on October 11, 1918. It was a dirty wet Sunday night, I am told, not that that matters. We had two rooms, sharing a lavatory downstairs; while over us was an old lady known as Nanna Hanna, and her husband, a printer. Over that again lived a mother and daughter, while on the ground floor there was a huckster shop. It was as you can see a close and friendly arrangement. Half of Dublin lived in tenements at that time and ours was not the worst of them; living like that we were all very supportive of each other. My mother's parents came from Clahamon in Co. Wexford and my father's parents from Ballyfin in Co. Laois. My father's forebearer may have been Huguenot. My mother's parents of course were entirely Irish stock; Whelans and Doyles going away back. My mother's maiden name was Catherine Byrne and her mother's maiden name was Whelan. My father's mother's name was Glennon from Collinstown, Co. Westmeath, so we had a good spread over the province of Leinster.

My father worked in the Mountjoy Brewery close to Croke Park, starting initially as a labourer and then eventually becoming a works foreman. We were reared however on labourer's wages and things were rough which explains why he was a founder member of the Workers' Union of Ireland. He would always vote Labour and for Jim Larkin, senior, whom he admired, if he was in the constituency. My mother was a Republican through and through, although I imagine she would have voted for Fianna Fáil up until 1933. My father's first name was Patrick, and while he had great socialist ideas, he was also a devout Catholic. They could see the wrongs about them but the indoctrination of the Church would not let them see why things were wrong. My mother's background, being from Wexford, with its history of 1798 and all that, developed her Republican tradition, straddling the Fenian times to the present.

My father worked in the brewery from 1911 until its closure in 1956. That meant one more inner city industry gone. We left Wellington Street in 1928 for Joyce Road in Drumcondra, a couple of doors from where Dr. John O'Connell was born. You could say we were bettering ourselves, and so we were, but with a family now approaching 13 - eight boys and five girls - space had become a problem. In Joyce Road we had a two bedroom house, living room, bathroom cum kitchen or scullery.

The house was back to front. All of the houses on one side of the road were built that way so that the living area would face the sun. We stayed in Joyce Road for two years, and then we transferred to Cabra; to a three bedroom house. It was a Corporation purchase house; as a result of which we had to pay an extra £5 deposit; not easy to find at that time as it represented almost two weeks wages.

My elder brother however had commenced serving his time as a carpenter and was at the improver stage; while the second eldest was an apprentice: he was about 16. I started school in St. Peter's, Phibsboro; leaving it then, to go to a model mixed school in Glasnevin for boys and girls, opposite the Dominican Convent. My mother however considered that you could not educate boys and girls successfully together, so I was sent back to St. Peter's. I was about 12 when we first went to live in Cabra, and I remained there - except for my years of imprisonment - until I left to be married.

I joined Fianna about 1931 in the Hardwicke Hall, for a long time the traditional north side centre of the Movement. I was drawn into Fianna from reading history and the rebel influence of my mother and my mother's Aunt Mary whose husband and sons had been interned during the Tan and Civil Wars. There was a Rory Furlong, a step brother of Brendan Behan, in my class; we talked together about it, and ended up joining Fianna. Rory lived in Russell Street at the time, but when my mother found out I was in Fianna she nearly had a fit. I was whipped out immediately; but determined as I was to stay in, I called surreptitiously to let Cathleen Merrigan, married to Tom Merrigan, know that I had joined Fianna, and would my uniform be alright if it remained in their house. Tom Merrigan was a member of the 1st. Battalion and then, later, a member of Dublin Brigade staff. He was married to my cousin Catherine Kavanagh. He was arrested after the shooting of Kevin O'Higgins, and he was actually charged with the assassination but found not guilty. The priests in Church Street, the Capuchins, remembered speaking to Tom at the very time that Kevin O'Higgins was shot, so Tom was released.(1)

The Hardwicke Hall was a most unusual building, surrounded by tenements in Hardwicke Street. It was a long structure, and when you entered it, the main hall was immediately to your right. Owned since prior to 1914 by Countess Plunkett, it had been used as a theatre and continued occasionally so into the thirties. Upstairs there was the supper room; a long room in which I.R.A parades were held. Seldom however were I.R.A and Fianna parades on at the same time; the Fianna being confined down stairs. Cumann na mBan were not in the hall at all in the thirties; nor was the child group known as Clann na Gael. *The Dún Emer Guild* were at the back of the hall in a separate building.(2) Hundreds of young I.R.A and quite a lot of Fianna boys passed through the Hardwicke Hall, where there was a back exit leading into *Dún Emer*. Not once did anybody go out or try to enter it even out of idle curiosity. I never met Evelyn Gleeson who ran *Dún Emer*; we would be there only after working hours when the Guild was not operating.

#### FRIENDSHIP WITH FRANK RYAN:

After De Valera came to power and we were enjoying our Republican honeymoon, I rejoined Fianna, and stayed with them until 1934 when I was 16 and could graduate into the I.R.A. Peadar McAndrew of the recruits company was O.C at the



time. Peadar, besides running a small shop and delivering bread, also taught Irish to the boys in Artane Industrial School. I did my three months probationary training with Peadar who was delighted to have me. He put me as second in charge of the company, since having come from Fianna he felt I would be reliable. We were a company of the Second Battalion; all my cousins had been in the First Battalion; and Tom Merrigan was not pleased about my joining the Second. Claude O'Loughlin was O.C then and Willie McGuinness was on the battalion staff. Claude was a printer who had been through the Tan War and Civil War; when he came out he started a business with two others who had been in the Camp; O'Loughlin, Murphy & Boland in Dorset Street, the back of whose premises was near to Wellington Street. Jack Thompson was our training officer; a very tall thin man and an accountant by profession. Willie McGuinness was a printer or compositor; while a man we referred to as O B, O'Brien, was also in the printing business.

I was still a member of Fianna when the Congress split came. Frank Ryan was training officer of Fianna at the time as well as being on the H.Q staff of the Army. We all loved Frank Ryan; everybody did. Myself and Arthur O'Leary were in O'Connell Street shortly after and Frank was passing in an open touring car; he stopped instantly and we were talking to him. He inquired if we were still in Fianna; we said we were thinking of going into the Army; *would you not join Congress*, he asked.

We had to say, no; that Congress was no longer giving allegiance to the Republic and we could not give allegiance to an organisation that would not recognise the Republic. *It is only a matter of convenience*, Frank laughed, but I could see he was disappointed. He was a bit deaf at the time but nothing like he turned out to be. Later on, I met him in 1937, for a May 14, anti-coronation protest; he was home on leave after being wounded in Spain, and he was on the same platform with Tom Barry in Cathal Brugha Street. That had followed a bloodied encounter the previous night featuring Tadhg Lynch in a running battle from Beresford Place to the Smith O'Brien monument.<sup>(3)</sup> On the following night, when we met him in Cathal Brugha Street, all was peaceful; with Donal O'Donoghue, Gerald O'Reilly, Tom Barry, Tadhg Lynch, Paddy Rigney and Frank himself on the platform. It was a demonstration against King George VI, who had succeeded Edward VIII, who in turn had abdicated following the Mrs. Simpson affair. The Dublin Brigade was out in strength, and it is only right to say now that Frank Ryan got the loudest cheer from the people; a lot more than Tom Barry who was Chief of Staff. I made a point of meeting Frank Ryan later on his own. I said, *look Frank, what about organising some of us to go back with you*; there were at least four of our company already serving there. Tommy Woods, Leo Green, Paddy Smith who was wounded and was in the Curragh after, and John Gough who was killed. Three of them were killed and one wounded; a high mortality score. We knew that Spain was no picnic. Anyhow, Frank said *no; the Army is in a bad way and we are not winning in Spain. Stay behind and reorganise the Army, we may need it yet*. I thought however that experience could be gained in Spain, but he said; *we have enough I. R. A men in Spain, and they will gain experience and train you when they come home. When Paddy Smith came home he was wounded and incapable of doing much but we kept things going until 1938 when Russell took over. While he was at home Frank had been put forward as an election candidate in*

July 1937, and was getting a very rough time from the Church elements. We were having a meeting in O'Connell Street when Frank arrived on the back of a lorry saying, lads we are having trouble in Christchurch Place.

Anyone then who could not jump on the lorry with Frank, ran all the way to Christchurch and we broke up what was left of the hecklers; Christian Front types. Frank was asked then to stay behind and reorganise the Republican Movement because, not only was the I.R.A in disarray, but so was the whole Movement. Frank pleaded however that even if he wanted to he could not stay behind as he could not abandon the lads he had brought out to Spain. Apart from any social principle, I must declare that if I had not been in jail I would have been in Spain with Frank Ryan.

The first operation in which I was engaged was the smashing of the screen of the Savoy cinema in 1934 as a protest against showing the wedding of the Duke of Kent, such loyalist news reel demonstrations being anathema to the I.R.A. Shortly after that there was a strike in Bacon Shops, and Mick Fitzpatrick, being General Secretary of the Grocers' Union and on the Dublin Brigade staff, directed that support action be taken. Each battalion had a branch of Bacon Shops on its territory, and four out of six were invaded and smashed in the period of the strike. The shops were owned by the O'Maras (4) who had been good republicans at one time, but who, in this period, like most other business people, would have been supporting Fianna Fáil. So far as the public were concerned it was very clearly the I.R.A who had carried out the actions, but there must have been divided councils at the top, as they refused to claim responsibility.

Mick Fitzpatrick was a very affable fellow and a typical Dubliner, and a member of the I.R.A until 1938 when as C.S he was forced to step down for Russell.(5) Our battalion was still in a sound condition in 1935 although we lost a few men through raids. We did not possess a hall for training as such. The Hardwicke Hall belonged to the Third Battalion being in the gift of Countess Plunkett. They, being south side, rarely used it, so we were allowed to have it. The outdoor spots we did use for drilling and manoeuvres were in Cabra or Benevin and have long since been built over.

At this point I must touch upon a proposed action that has never been recorded. Our prisoners were suffering draconian conditions in Arbour Hill, and it was proposed to break in and rescue them. So, upon St. Patrick's Day 1936, a group of us - I being 17 at the time - reported to Terry Flanagan's (6) house at Portland Row where instructions would be given and the necessary arms made available for breaking in. However, when we were all within the house, Claude O'Loughlin, our O.C, arrived, and announced that, sadly, the action was off and we could disperse. Within a few months when I found myself inside Arbour Hill and talking over this with Tom Grogan, then O.C, he referred to it as a story best not told; when I pressed him on this he said *that there are too many personalities involved.*

We failed to grasp however that the clamp down was coming. Then in May 1936, on a fine Sunday morning, as we attended an outdoor company parade of the Second Battalion in Benevin, we found ourselves surrounded by Broy Harriers with Thompson guns who rounded us up and pushed us into a police wagon, like an

open truck. There was an ex-second battalion man in charge of it actually, Jack Cruise; he was now a Detective Sergeant, which shows how times were changing. We were taken to the Bridewell, being held there for a few days during which we gave no names or addresses; the reason being that by giving an address meant that our homes would be instantly raided. We did not want that to happen. Our people, of course, were very concerned about us being missing and they came inquiring at the Bridewell, or the Castle, and the reply they always got was, we have no information; we only know that we have 13 nameless bodies in the Bridewell.

The police were adept at playing a game where anxiety could be created. We were all only young fellows so our parents kicked up and wanted to know where we were; they wanting to bring in parcels. We were transferred after three days to Mountjoy and put into cells; it was my first time in the place, but it was heaven compared to the filthy Bridewell. While we were awaiting trial we knew there were already defections from the Army because of the formation of Cumann Poblachta na h-Éireann. There was quite a big and damaging split while we were inside. Claude O'Loughlin, Jack Thompson and Kevin Lowe, all men highly regarded in Dublin, had already gone. Peadar McGann was there when we were going in, but had retired when we came out.

It may have been discouragement, although I am not quite sure if it was discouragement; or if it was apathy or panic that caused our leaders to leave; or did they feel that, with no proper focus to its policy, the I.R.A was going nowhere?

Speaking in March 1935 to his party executive, De Valera made it plain that interference in trade disputes was the last straw. In a crack down following this, Michael A. Kelly, Tom Barry, Con Lehane, Tom Merrigan, Donal O'Donoghue, Peadar O'Donnell, Claude O'Loughlin and many more were pulled in. While some were released, those named above received six months except Con Lehane, who was sentenced to eighteen months, while O'Donnell and O'Loughlin were released.

In the Dublin Brigade the leaders were leaving, 'twas said because of the attempted politicisation of the Army. After Cumann Poblachta na h-Éireann had been abandoned by the Army however they did not come back. In the case of Claude O'Loughlin and Kevin Lawless, I would say it was disillusionment. They had been a long time at it; 15 years. How long can a man give to a revolutionary movement? If after years of activity, he still cherishes the idea fresh in his heart, isn't it enough?

#### DRACONIAN CONDITIONS IN ARBOUR HILL:

While we were awaiting trial in Mountjoy word came in on the grapevine about this major split; that the Dublin Brigade was decimated. Liam O'Connor, who was O.C prisoners, and who in the meantime had to deal with another batch in for illegal drilling, told us about it, and said it was up to ourselves if we wanted to go ahead with our trial or to sign out. If we had signed the form we would have been instantly released. I am very pleased to say that, to a man, everyone stayed put; no one signed out. We were sentenced at the Military Tribunal to twelve months for membership of an illegal organisation, to six months for unlawful assembly, and six months for illegal drilling; all to run concurrently.

We had no foretaste of what conditions would be like in the military prison of

Arbour Hill. When we got there we found the conditions were the most draconian that could be imagined. We were offered exercise for two hours per day provided we walked three paces apart and had absolutely no communication with each other. These were criminal conditions of the most demeaning sort. We refused of course, and the Governor of Arbour Hill, an ex-Second Battalion man from 1922, originally from Seville Place in north side Dublin, Commdt. Duffy, proved himself well capable of enforcing his criminalisation mandate. He was not satisfied with us being in solitary confinement 24 hours a day, but he also arranged an empty cell between each prisoner. That eliminated even a tapping upon the wall as a communication. Perhaps I should not blame Duffy; perhaps I should attach the blame where it belongs; to the Dept. of Justice; then as now the heaviest spending and the most obscurantist of all departments. The Minister at that time had been Mayo born P.J. Ruttledge, but had been succeeded by Gerald Boland, who one must assume, was prepared to carry out these measures.

Prior to our arrival in Arbour Hill there were quite a few in from Cork; Tom Kelleher, the hero of Crossbarry, and the withdrawal from Upton in 1921, was there; with Kit Ahearn and quite a few more. A man called Hogan, later O.C. prisoners, and Jerry McCarthy of Skibbereen, who first introduced me to the writings of Bello and Chesterton. (Máirtín Ó Cadhain introduced him to Brendan Behan ten years later in the Curragh, as the literary editor of the *London Times*.) They arrived in Arbour Hill in 1936 after quite a few arrests in Cork, following the assassination in March in Castletownsend of Vice-Admiral Henry Boyle Somerville. Whether this was the cause of the draconian conditions I do not know, but thinking about it in later years, I recalled that there was in Dublin an accidental shooting of one of our fellows in the leg; and he is still limping; Tom Mangan. They may have believed it was a punishment shooting, and this also may have prompted it, although I do not believe it could have. The Staters would not have known he was a member of our company anyway. Suddenly after September 13, conditions changed in Arbour Hill. We were all released into the yard this fine sunny day; a situation that was unprecedented. After months of semi darkness the light from the sky was causing us to blink. Walking around with Paddy Lawless, he told me; have you not heard; *Sean Glynn from Limerick was found hanging in his cell yesterday*. At that time prison suicides were extremely rare; and the authorities felt guilty over this one because they knew that the conditions imposed by them had caused it.

I was stunned; I could not understand it at all. Phil Christie, who was one of our unit from Finglas, was in the next cell but one to Sean Glynn; he did not know that he had died until he was summoned to the inquest. After I came out I read the report on the inquest.

Moss Twomey, it said, was called to give evidence, and describing the conditions, he said he considered himself a tough man but the conditions under which they were serving their time were worse than he had ever experienced. Apart from total cell segregation the arrangements were that no two prisoners ever sat together in church; a P.A sat between on each side of you. Moss Twomey was kept to one side of the church, and those of us receiving communion were in the body of the church, while those not receiving were in the gallery. There were skirmishes in the gallery in

the early stages. The only recollection I have of that however was Eugene Powell from one of the galleries attempting to make an announcement. Moss Twomey was separated from all the prisoners; even in church he was kept completely away.

Moss was in the tradition of Joe Clarke of Sinn Féin who died in 1976. He was a great officer and a man who commanded respect. I remember a friend of my father who was in the First Battalion, and who had been a staff officer after the Four Courts in the Civil War and who served with Moss. Sean Brunswick said he never came across a man so dedicated to the one single ideal. His whole life was dedicated to Irish freedom and nothing else mattered to him. Compromise was not in his vocabulary.

On February 8, 1937, I was released and at once reported back for duty. I was amazed how much the Dublin Brigade had been decimated by the defections. Jimmy Hannigan was O.C. at the time; Danny Guilfoyle was Adjutant. We had a smoking concert as a sort of a welcome home party; they were very popular in those days. The entire Dublin Brigade were there, numbering less than a hundred men. It was disheartening, and even when we started organising there were still more defections, even from those who had been in prison. Coercion and fear are potent deterrents where a freedom struggle is concerned.

We knew all about the intrigue that was going on in order to secure the appointment of Sean Russell as C.S. Russell was offering a promise of action through a bombing campaign in Britain. I knew it was coming off and I wondered about it for although Rory O'Connor had said in 1921 that the success of his volunteers in Britain brought about the Truce, I take leave to doubt it. Subsequently we saw the devastation of Hitler's bombers and I have no doubt that since that had such little impact on the people, our campaign could have even less upon the government. Even now I think the 1939 Campaign was a mistake.(7)

#### ON THE FIRING RANGE: FINDING DUMPS FOR THE FORT RAID:

I did not train in Killiney Castle, which was the launch pad for England. I was training men of the Dublin Brigade and was Company Training Officer, and I was lecturing on the making of Paxo and timing devices, such as they were then, and setting off a series of small demonstration explosions. Looking back now it was all really amateurish. The training took place wherever we could, even in my own house, although it was known to the police. Jimmy O'Hanlon, who had been a member of the Second Battalion was known because of his expertise, as the paxo king. E Company, Second Battalion, was an engineering company under Pearse McLaughlin. He knew all about explosives; after the blowing up of the George 2nd. statue in Stephen's Green in late 1938 as a dry run for the campaign in England; he went into the park collecting nuts and bolts as souvenirs. He left for England in October 1938 prior to the Campaign commencing. He invited me to accompany him, but when I asked for permission I was refused as I had taken over his position as Battalion Training Officer.

In earlier years we had trained in the mountains in Glendoo around 1934/35; and it was then nothing to see maybe two hundred men marching, from Glendoo to Glencullen for Mass on Sunday. The poor priest was delighted to see all those extra pennies. We used go over the mountain, up-on to the side of Glendoo and the

Featherbed, where we had a rifle range. In 1937/38 it was getting a bit hot as we were too near town and we then moved on to Kilbride where the Free State firing range is now. We used that for .303 practice as part of the lecturing sessions. In all my years in the I.R.A I suppose I shot off no more than twenty rounds of .45, but quite a bit of .303; we usually had a magazine for each man on the firing range.

De Valera's succession to government in 1932 and his forming of the Special Branch, or Broy Harriers, and augmenting it with I.R.A men, brought a new dimension into the Free State's struggle to subvert republicanism. When I was in Fianna some of the lads had fathers in the Broy Harriers. The 1916 veterans and the older men who had fought in the Tan and Civil Wars, and who would be too old for the Broy Harriers, were given small pensions, sufficient to buy them body and soul. Fianna Fáil commenced the process of thought control, through bribery and job coercion, that prevails today, and De Valera was its greatest salesman in this century; he succeeded where Cosgrave could not have succeeded. People are now beginning to realise that he was not the saint that they thought he was, and that his Machiavellian strokes spread everywhere.

The Campaign started with a small size proclamation stuck on every lamp post on January 12, 1939. We were out at four and five in the morning reporting to the Hardwicke Hall. George Plunkett was there, as he was a signatory to the proclamation. Recruiting became very intense at the start of the Campaign, and we rapidly acquired fine volunteers some of whom became very good officers. We had special classes arranged for potential officers, although I am sorry to say that when the World War broke out some of our lads were then drawn into the Free State Army. That was to be our loss and their gain. Things went well in England at the commencement, although as a concerted effort it was not on. Our lads were short of money and materials; at the same time they could not hold down jobs through having become known, so they had to be constantly on the move.

I was refused permission to leave Dublin, so I was in Dublin until I was arrested in September 1939. I was one of the group of about 70 in Arbour Hill; about 40 per cent were active members while the rest were there because they had been on a police list which was not updated. These arrests did not make a great difference to the Army because we had designated someone to take over in the event of an arrest. I was taken from work where I had been employed as a coffin maker on the North Circular Road; immediately I was pulled in there was a replacement on the staff as there was for all of the staff of the Dublin Battalion. The O.C at that time was Máirtín O Cadhain and the Adjutant was Myles Heffernan: Jim Coulton was Quartermaster, while I was Training Officer.

The *habeus corpus* came through as a result of the action by Seamus Burke of Ballinrobe, and we were released on December 2. I came home for the weekend, but went down to Celbridge on the Monday to do a weeks training with Tom Keely, Sean Ashe and Jack Guiney. I stayed with the Guineys at their mansion at Osbertstown, the Brothers of St. John of God have it now. It was quite an extensive place; Paddy McNeela and Mick O'Leary came down one morning, and Paddy told me to organise dumps for a big load of stuff, and to organise a lorry to collect it. I left it to the local unit to do this; I assumed they had the knowledge. I did not inspect

the dumps at that time although I suppose I should have. I came back after a week to the Hardwicke Hall and went upstairs to the supper room. It was now close to Christmas and we were instructed that we could be needed at any time.

Paddy McNeela was placed in charge of us, saying we would be required at two hours notice. He then told me what was afoot. *I will have to take you into my confidence; I was saying meanwhile, don't tell me anything I do not need to know. You need to know this*, said he; *you will have to go back to Celbridge and organise the thing there*; at the same time telling me about the Magazine. I arranged all that, promising to have the lorry in Dublin on Saturday 23. Jack Guiney drove that lorry; Sean Ashe, who was Q.M of the unit in Celbridge and North Kildare, remained behind to distribute the stuff. They were constructing houses at that time between Annamoe Road and Cabra Road; we parked the lorry there, leaving the two lads to make a rendezvous in town.

We met them waiting in a pub on the corner of Bridgefoot Street; we went upstairs together. I found I was the only one, apart from Mick O'Leary, who was not on the attacking party. There was to be a raid at the same time on Islandbridge Barracks, but that was aborted as they failed at the last moment to secure entry. As far as I know we were to get rifles and grenades from there, with the .303 ammunition coming from the Magazine. We were all of the opinion that this was a prelude to a mass attack on the North. The failure of the Islandbridge raid put paid to that. I was on the run then, staying away from home, during the winter of 1940; meanwhile I reported back to the Dublin Brigade. We were discouraged by the fact that so much of the stuff was found, although they did not recover as much in Kildare as they recovered elsewhere. We did not know now what lay in store; the only redeeming feature was that Germany was crawling all over Europe, and we had the hope that they would crawl over England also.

At the commencement of 1940 I reported back to the Dublin Brigade, but the man I had nominated to take over from me resigned as training officer; I took over again. Meanwhile Mixie Conway asked for me on the training staff at H.Q, but Mick O'Leary, who was divisional O.C, said no. He wanted me to remain in Dublin although I knew that, if I was on H.Q staff, I would be assured of three meals a day and a bed. Being on the run in Dublin meant that I was going from pillar to post and back to the same friends all the time; and they had little enough for themselves. I can remember envying the fellows who had been picked up already because they had a bed, and at least they would be warm. From April 1940 I was based in 29 Lansdowne Park; Mixie sent for me there as he had somebody recommended by Mick O'Leary but who had to be allowed back to his unit.

Mixie was quite a martinet; the first lecture I gave on the Lewis gun, he told me he was not impressed. I replied that I was not impressed either as it was the first time I had given a lecture to an audience of one. There is something missing, he said; yes, I replied, an audience.

One man from Kerry who was O.C prisoners in the 1939 period was Johnny Connor, 'Machine Gun' Johnny; he could use a Lewis gun from the shoulder, and did so in Kerry in 1922, when the Staters were coming into Tralee. The Lewis gun fired .303 ammunition, rapid fire, and in my opinion would be no good for urban guerilla warfare. We had then a very good lad; I have not seen him since we were picked

up in 1940, Pierce or Jim McGuinness, who had been in the I.R.A in Britain and had been picked up with Pearse McLaughlin and Jack Daly in London in February 1939. McGuinness and Jack Daly were released while McLoughlin was sentenced to ten years. Pierce, so my recollection goes, later joined the R.A.F, but they, for whatever reason, pronounced him *persona-non-grata*. He then returned to Ireland. I appreciated his knowledge of map reading and indeed his patience with me as I felt I should query him on every aspect as I would myself be giving a lecture in a few days. He was also good on the Lewis; a born lecturer, I would say.

At this point I would like to hop back to Bodenstown 1939 when George Plunkett was to be chief marshal. Elaborate plans had been prepared for it, and he had me in Kildare from May, on and off, most weekends. I would take a trip down there and test the ground for communications and things like that. I was to install a communications tent there, and I would have telephone communication from this tent to the cemetery in Bodenstown and to Sallins. George had such great plans for it that it reminded me in a way of how, his brother, Joseph Plunkett, prepared for the Post Office in 1916.

Meanwhile I had them persecuted to supply me with cable, although, off my own bat, I had already made plans to raid an electrical supplier and to obtain all the cable I required. I went to Count Plunkett's house in Elgin Road with Máirtín Ó Cadhain and Myles Heffernan. It appeared that things were not going well regarding Bodenstown and that all his grandiose plans were up in the air. He dragged out this old sack of wire; it was not properly coiled and was ravelled. *In the name of God*, I said, *that will not do*. Jack Plunkett was present and he just shook his head. Jack was, of course, a skilled technician. I took the sack anyway, intending to dump it.

On the way up we had to stop at a house in Cabra; Joe Brady's house. When we were leaving, Joe's sister came out and said, *Bodenstown has been banned*. I could only say, thanks be to God. I told Máirtín and Myles; well, they agreed, that solves a lot of problems. It would be held in O'Connell Street instead. Máirtín asked me to parade the recruits who had never seen a revolver, but to arm them and bring them into O'Connell Street in case of a disturbance. We assembled in the Boiler Makers' Hall in Lower Gardiner Street, picking up the guns from May Murray and Katie O'Connor who were in Cumann na mBan. They had been given the stuff by the Q.M, Jim Coulton, to bring down to me.

I then armed the lads, which was a risky thing to do, knowing that they had no experience, and that I still had to lecture them on the operation of revolvers and all that. Máirtín did not want any known volunteers to be involved with guns. If there were to be arrests we were to shoot at the wheels or at the tanks of the Broy Harrier's cars, which of course would compound the risk as they were likely then to shoot back. It is just as well nothing like that happened and that the real fighting took place at Amiens Street Station when the Belfast Battalion arrived, and that it was with fists and not with guns. They then fought their way through with their big blue flag to the G.P.O.

#### RAIDS AND MORE RAIDS:

Paddy McGrath, while awaiting trial in Mountjoy, went on hunger strike on October 23, 1939. After 23 days he was released. Following this it was contemplated



that he might again be arrested on leaving the hospital, so Myles Heffernan arranged for him to be taken out of the hospital and brought to a safe house. Paddy McGrath was on the training staff and when I arrived to join it, I found also Tom Harte and Tommy Hunt. Tommy Hunt knew nothing at all about training; he had been on the Publicity Bureau. I suppose it was a case of sending him somewhere. Molly Stapleton was also there in 98a Rathgar Road with Eileen O'Kelly. (A fateful house really; four men were to die over it). There was at this stage a large bunker being constructed under the floor by Liam Brady's father; it was almost finished at the time they were captured. I did not work on it because we were out all the time and Paddy having said that we could not be going around like working men; that we must be dressed properly.

Eileen O'Kelly was a sister of Phil O'Kelly; she was a dark, very attractive looking girl, who later married Nicky Cleary from Wexford who had done 10 years in England. Eileen did whatever typing was required. When Mixie Conway was arrested near Harold's Cross Bridge, early on the morning of July 12, he was on his bike when he was shot in the leg; and at that time there was a price on our heads for the Broy Harriers who would bring us in. Mixie was unarmed and he was shot by this laddie for the few pounds that would be on his head. I went into my call office the following day, and finding a note, the envelope of which was addressed to me, I was amazed to see that it contained instructions to replace Mixie, but the note inside was addressed to Paddy. I reached Paddy, giving him the letter, and the ten pound note that was enclosed with it.

Appointed the new Director of Training I went talking to Paddy that day and I have to say that he did not appear displeased that Mixie had been shot. *They have the gloves off now*, he declared, *they need expect no mercy from me*. I must say I respected Paddy McGrath as a 1916 to 1923 warrior, who had been out in Easter Week, and as a result had the use only of one hand. But I could see no sense in open warfare against the Free State Army or the Free State police; it would get us nowhere. We were unable to carry on the fight on one front, let alone two. That had been my point all the time that it just was not on. I had quite an argument with Paddy on that. Paddy McNeela had already been shot in Tibbradden by O'Brien, but I got the impression telling it to Paddy that night, that this was a continuation of the Civil War, and that Paddy was still fighting that war. Some time after that, a few weeks later, I was again at the shop in Rathgar and I noticed a Broy Harrier across the road sheltering in a doorway. On entering, I informed Joe Atkinson of Belfast, otherwise known as Joe Dougherty. *How come*, I said, *that this place is under surveillance*, but Joe denied all knowledge of it, and there for the moment it rested.

As we were all known as active I.R.A. members cycling freely around Dublin, we could have been picked up, or tailed to Rathgar Road.

A few days later, receiving a communication from Paddy McGrath, I travelled to Rathgar Road on my bike; and there was a crowd around 98a. I stood on the edge, and seeing that someone had been shot, I inquired; *German spies*, said the man. After Stephen Held in May and reported parachute landings here there and everywhere, there was a phobia about spies.

I edged my bicycle away, getting back unnoticed into town; I immediately got in touch with the A. G., who was Tom Doyle; with his courier rather, and told her what

had happened. She did not have a phone link to Tom Doyle because he was in the Department of Defence at the time. I went back to my digs at 29 Lansdowne Park, thinking, what is going to happen now. Prior to this, Paddy McGrath, when he arrived at our two houses, had made notes of the addresses. *When I saw this, I said, surely you are not writing that down, but he smiled; oh it will never be found.* I was so naive at that time that I believed him.

I thought later; there is always a possibility and unfortunately there was. One of the houses we had was 29 Lansdowne Park, where I resided, and the other was 3 Prince of Wales Terrace, Sandymount. The house next door to that one belonged to Norbert, brother of Rory O'Connor who was executed in Mountjoy on December 8, 1922.



*Christy Quearney lodged in a Headquarters House adjoining the home in Ballsbridge of Norbert O'Connor, brother of Rory O'Connor, best man in the wedding picture above, of Kevin O'Higgins. Rory O'Connor was executed within a year by the Government in which Kevin O'Higgins was a Minister.*

PICTURE FROM IRISH TIMES

After the raid on Rathgar I went down to another house at 43 Gloucester Place, in the north inner city, finding Tommy Hunt sheltering there. Tommy may have been my age, which was 21, but he appeared to me to be a boy. I found him there and told him, to lie low. He had taken no part in the gun fight and had escaped in the confusion, but apparently the address was found on Paddy McGrath, or it was possible that he had been followed for Tommy Hunt was picked up later. 29 Lansdowne Park was raided on August 22, just six days after Rathgar. It was a rented house, and I had no idea who the owner was. I was staying at 3 Prince of Wales Terrace most of the time. We had a lot of people there. One man who came there frequently was Tim O'Driscoll, ex R.A.F. He was the one who was receiving messages, and also transmitting from O'Donovan's house in Shankill in 1940. We had also Sean Harrington, Andy Skelton and Mixie Conway, Jim McGuinness and others were there from time to time, and we had an escape route organised from No. 3 to No. 4. There was however a shortage of beds, so some were sleeping on the floor upon the bare boards.

There was little money coming in; we were really strapped for cash at this stage. I got on to Lansdowne Park where Mrs. Ellen Keane was having a tough time. I

found that Prince of Wales Terrace was not big enough as a training house so I transferred to Lansdowne Park. Seamus Murphy was already there when I arrived, and Seamus was the only resident paying his way, although the Army was paying the rent. Seamus was contributing 25 shillings per week but that was not enough to keep the three of them; Mrs. Keane, Mairead Murray and himself.

I conducted classes there on the Lewis gun, map reading and guerilla tactics. At any time if the Special Branch had been alerted they could have had myself, Seamus Murphy, George Plant, Paddy McGrath, Danny Gleeson and Ritchie Goss. At one time there would have been from seven to nine of us there, including Tom Cullimore and others.

The raid took place about 6.30 a.m with Mrs. Keane bounding into our bedroom and calling, *they are outside!* There was no means of escaping from the house; it was semi-detached and they had it surrounded. Mrs. Keane (8) asked, *have you any guns; there are two here,* I said. At that moment there were heavy knocks on the door and Dinny O'Brien charged up the stairs, bloodhound like, leading the posse. He had a smart new .38 revolver which he shoved under my nose, saying *what is your name?* I replied calmly, *you know who I am;* adding, *I like your gun there, it is a nice article. It is a pity we don't have any of them.* That is where he said in evidence, *if I had a gun I would sign my name.* I did not use words like that, but O'Brien was determined in court to do me as much damage as possible. I continued to refuse to give my name, and at one stage Paddy Lanigan came up and said, *hello Kit.* Micky Gill then asked my name, but I said, *you know who I am; I am Kit Quearney.* I was only in the Republican movement two years when I was being referred to as Kit.

Seamus Murphy was a writer; he had no knowledge of arms. Anything that was said there was said by me and not by Seamus Murphy. They gave us just about enough time to dress, whereupon we were brought to the Bridewell, and taken up to the Military Tribunal in the afternoon, which was most unusual. The charges being read out, I stated that I would take responsibility for all arms, ammunition and incriminating documents found in Lansdowne Park. The two of us were then remanded and brought back to the 'Joy, to D. Wing. It was the commencement for both of us of a very long spell.

#### TEN YEARS:

When we arrived in D. Wing in Mountjoy among the other Republican prisoners, I was greeted by an old Dubliner, Tom Farrington; *are you alright? Fair enough,* I replied. I had got a couple of digs and knocks from policemen but was alright. Shortly after we were remanded however, there was an order made by the Minister for Justice, that anyone found with arms after a certain date would be liable to be sentenced to death.

I had a visit from my mother during this period; she asked turning to me, *are you praying? Keep praying;* I said, *what is this all about?* The rumour outside was that I was on line for execution. During the time we were awaiting trial, Tom Cullimore and a couple of Wexford lads were there; they came up to me and said, *you don't know Tom Cullimore: we will introduce him to you.* Tom had been picked up and now he was on remand. He said to me, *Joe Dougherty (Atkinson) should have told you you were being raided. Tell Stephen if I get Joe I will kill him for not telling me about the raid.*

Joe had been in Lansdowne Park the night before looking for a car battery; *there is a car battery here*, I said, giving it to him; he just drove off. Devereux, Tom Cullimore and some others of the Wexford lads, were occasionally in Lansdowne Park, and Devereux was there on a number of other occasions. He was always on to me about a certain sum of money that had been sent for ammunition for Thompson guns; I asked Mixie before he was arrested, and I asked Paddy McGrath, but they had no recollection of it. I had the impression that Devereux was a bit bombastic. Since he was not in a political party but as a member of the I.R.A and under military discipline he should not have been asking questions; he should have gone through the normal channels. He reckoned however that it had been paid by the Wexford Battalion to the training department for Thompson ammunition, but it was never issued or was not available, and he was seeking recompense for the stuff, which we did not have.

Candidly his story could have been correct and, if so, it throws a poignant light upon what was to happen to him.

The situation in the Tribunal was that Seamus Murphy had no knowledge of arms and I therefore took responsibility, as I have said. We were asked questions and we asked questions ourselves; especially about their assertion that if I had had a gun I would have signed my name; meaning I would have used it. I refuted that but they continued on the same tack. I asked questions about the possession of a Lewis gun, as there was no Lewis gun in the court and they had not found one. We were sentenced then, and I got 10 years penal servitude, with a further 3 years and eighteen months, to run concurrently.

I was relieved; my mother who was in court said audibly, thank God. It was a funny thing to say after her son had got ten years, but I understood. I was brought back to Mountjoy then, but before that, on the lorry, Micky Gill, Special Branch man, said to me, *you got away this time, but if I get a chance again I will shoot you. Any time you like*, I answered, *remember what you said because there are a lot of witnesses here*. I had been easy going up to then, but with the strain of being on the run, I had become erratic and forgetful; I was, therefore, almost relieved to be back in jail again.

In B. Wing in Mountjoy, when we arrived there after being sentenced, I was gratified to see Sean Kavanagh, the Governor, waiting for us. *How did it go*, he said? I said *I got ten, and Seamus got seven. Thank God, you are very lucky*, he evidently thought it could have been worse. The following morning I announced my presence to my fellow Republicans. Johnny Lyons inquired; *are you all right Christy; what did you get? Ten, but it could have been worse*. Cushy Ryan from Limerick called over; *have you any cigarettes*, so I threw him a few.

The following morning we went out to the yard where Johnny Lyons introduced me to Denis Griffin who was O.C. For some reason or another there seemed to be an instant clash of personalities between Denis Griffin and I; he did not appear to like me although I did not dislike him. The Council members were Denis Griffin O.C, and the Adjutant was Frank Kerrigan, and the Q.M was Jimmy Hannigan, a brother of Lanty: two Cork men and a Limerick city man. Tom Grogan was in hospital at the time, and he had advised Denis Griffin to put me on the Council with a view to putting me in charge eventually, but that did not happen because of this antipathy.

Tom, at that time I found, was very lucid and in control. He was described to me in 1936 as the most cantankerous man you ever came across, but nonetheless a good Republican and an out and out idealist. Larry Grogan was a very easy going man. I met him in Mountjoy later on; he was a little more worldly wise than Tom. He was sentenced after the Fire in the Curragh, with Seán Ó Broin and others. They were kept in D. Wing, separate from us, for two years. There were about 40 of us in B. Wing and around 15 in D. Wing. Not having been in the Curragh at the time, I suppose I should not say this, but it was a matter of gaining supremacy there from what I was told, so that when they came to Mountjoy they were kept away from us for the same reason; to reduce the risk of any challenge to the authorities.

The O.C we had at the time, Denis Griffin, was placid and easy going and went along with Sean Kavanagh; and what he said Denis Griffin largely agreed with. For instance in 1941, the German prisoners, the so called spies who had been sentenced to penal servitude were with us, and because of that Sean Kavanagh advised Denis Griffin that if we did not associate with them or become too friendly, it could be that we might get more privileges. Denis Griffin instructed us therefore not to speak to the German prisoners, but I said, *hump that, who is O.C here; is it Denis Griffin or Sean Kavanagh?*

During 1941, Cushenheim, who was from Limerick and was quite a character, suggested a debate on whether Ireland should have colonies. I had been talking this fanciful idea over with one of the German prisoners who had been an officer after the fall of Poland. I referred to the outrages we had heard about, and I remarked, *surely you, as an officer would not do that to innocent civilians, But we are the conquerors*, he answered, as if that had given them the right. I denounced him, strolling off, and that ended my conversations with the Germans.

I heard in July 1941 of the arrest of Hayes and of what was going on, from a friendly warder. He told me the details as he heard them, but I could not divulge them to anybody because of my source. However, Paddy Conway, a Wicklow man with Irish Lights, who was our adjutant, read out a statement regarding the Hayes betrayal to the assembled prisoners one day, so that they all knew then that Hayes had been under arrest but had escaped. They were exasperated by that and disillusioned. The following week I got a 'Dear John' letter, written in code which did not help matters. It resulted in a lot of discussion with disbelief expressed about the Army; about Hayes, and about how things were carried out. The consensus of opinion at the time was, why did they not shoot Hayes and be done with it; why did they hold him? That was the general opinion of Republicans all around. Some on the periphery said afterwards he was more 'sinned against than sinning'. That was Maire Comerford's opinion, but she was only on the periphery at the time. The general consensus of the Wexford people was, why didn't they shoot the buggar. Jim Crofton was released from Portlaoise to the Curragh shortly before his sentence was finished. I was speaking three years later to Jim Crofton in the Curragh but he still had faith in Hayes. I would say that Jim, not unlike others, was disillusioned and that says it all, for he, more than anyone, was closest to Hayes.

From what I could gather from Peadar O'Flaherty, Larry Grogan and Willie McGuinness (a year later when they joined our wing) it was necessary to take over

because they considered that things were going to rack and ruin in the Curragh, and that the prisoners were not getting a fair deal from the Staters; the butter ration was only the excuse for the upheaval. Talking to O'Flaherty and Willie McGuinness and Larry Grogan on that issue they considered that the prisoners were not being treated as internees but as convicted prisoners. That was Peadar O'Flaherty's justification for the upheaval when I spoke to him in 1943; that was three years after the Fire. As it turned out it should never have happened. As a result of the clamp down by the Free State the prisoners were back to square one; in fact the organisation lost out considerably.

Mattie Tuite, Jack Lyons, Paddy Martin, Tony Geary, Tom Doyle, Joe Atkinson - there may have been one or two others - were having German classes in a cell in Mountjoy. I was in on it as an extra, and I was to bring in Jack Lynch, Denis Griffin and Paddy McGlynn. To all intent and purpose they were studying German in the cell, but at the same time they sawed through the bars. Someone talked; it may have been Paddy Martin, I don't know rightly but on the night before the planned escape six other lads stole a march on them and escaped: 't was a night in early November 1942. None of them were on the original team and not one of them had any idea about organisation. Frank Kerrigan, Jim Smith, the two Luceys, Mick and Murt, Peter Martin and Jackie Griffith.

Early in 1943 we were all brought together into B. Wing where we could socialise and have occasional teas together. Coming together was a boost to our morale; it breathed new life into us. When we came into the wing for some reason there was a lot of sawing going on; cell bars were being sawn. The lads from D. Wing had been confined within the condemned yard as we called it and that was depressing, for there were two walls to get over. That would make escape more difficult. When they came over to us they had better contacts and with saws coming in, every other cell was engaged in sawing, so it quickly became obvious to the prison staff that they were not just sawing timber.

As a consequence we were all shifted over to D. Wing where there were two walls which you would have to get over to get out. There were no rigorous searches in B. Wing, but occasionally you had a body search. We had the walls decorated in our cells and a lot of our own personal things upon them. In D. Wing it was the same situation but we were only there for a few weeks when we were transferred to Arbour Hill in June, around 50 of us. I was disappointed when myself, Tom Doyle and Andy Nathan, as we were coming in, asked if there were any big cells left so that the three of us could stay together, but there were none left.

At one time in Mountjoy in 1942, Stephen Held (9) came over to me with that evening's paper. It was shortly after we were allowed to socialise together, and I said, *where in the name of Jesus did you get that?* I went over to the warder, Regan, and said, *get that paper off Held*; I saw that a mate of his had also seen it, a mate suspected of being a tout. Showing it boldly around would have the warder in trouble, as the tout would report it, and later, he was in fact consigned for six months to the bog, as Portlaoise was then known. My opinion of Held was that he was a rotten prisoner; not able to do his time. How he got involved I do not know as he struck me as a characterless fellow with no back bone.

I met Held again in 1959 when I was managing a club for the Irish Federation of Musicians. I went into the office to find Stephen Held there. He had, I knew, an adopted son who was interested in music and Held invested £5,000 to mount a show in the Gaiety for him. I was rushing into the office with Jack Flahive, who was assistant secretary at that time, and I merely nodded, saying, hello Stephen, and that was that.

#### 'HOME' TO THE HILL:

In Arbour Hill in 1943, I found that most of the red caps from my period there in 1936 were now departed; right bastards they had been. They constituted the élite of the Free State Army in 1922, and they also were the ones who were members of the firing squads at that time and into our own days as well.

Capt. McNally was there and Commdt. Duffy had also been there in 1936 when I was a prisoner; Duffy was a real 1922 man. I did not have pleasant memories of either. Michael Lennon was there in 1943, and I must say I found him a good soldier who saw to his defences, that they were right. After that he could not care less what the prisoners did in the confines of the prison so long as the basic rules were observed. I spent the winter in Arbour Hill in 1936/37, and portion of the winter there in 1939. And now I was in again for the winter of 1943/44, and with each winter the place seemed to grow colder.

It may seem extraordinary to say it but when I came back to Arbour Hill in 1943 it was like coming home, having been there on several occasions already. Although it was a cold place, it was, strangely enough, cosy as a prison. I became involved straightaway with Irish classes and leather work. When I had arrived earlier in Mountjoy, I found myself among such an unlearned bunch as could be found in all of the Republican movement; a less academic lot it would be hard to come by. Johnny Lyons pressed me to start an Irish class so I took on the *bun rang* in late 1940. I asked Governor Sean Kavanagh for some basic Irish books, and he laughed; *I believe you are teaching Irish, is it a case of the blind leading the blind: should I take it on myself?* I said, *I would be delighted if you did.* Tom Doyle came in then and, as he was competent, he took over as Irish teacher.

In Arbour Hill in 1943, Seán Ó Broin taught Irish, Peadar O'Flaherty taught French, but Tony Deery had given up teaching German after the escape of the six in Mountjoy. He was a post office official from Dundalk, and we were often talking later on about the future of the Republican movement, or indeed if it had any future. Tony would say, it has but I am damned if I will go back to forming fours! He was clever and intellectual; himself and Seamus Murphy were very close friends. Seamus was writing hopefully for *The Bell*, and I was doing a bit of scribbling myself with Seamus as my editor. In 1941 Seamus asked me to do an article for the Mountjoy paper. My piece was on Republicanism, but I was to see later on in the paper that he claimed it as 'the best article we have had from any source and we hope to see a lot more from this contributor'. I did not wish however to be tied down writing articles for the jail news sheet.

To pass the time we did leatherwork, matchstick work and tapestry work. Coming up to Christmas of 1943 we got small pieces of timber given to us from which simple toys were made for the prisoner sale of work in the Mansion House. I

kept on with the leather work right to the end of my stay. I must have made hundreds of handbags, wallets and belts.

In June 1944 the 50 prisoners remaining in Arbour Hill were transferred to join the diminishing numbers of internees in the Curragh where, counting us, there was now around 200 left. I was delighted to meet old friends again, but amazed to see some young volunteers who would be termed harmless, still held after four or five years. Young John McLaughlin from Howth, for instance, was a very young volunteer. It puzzled me the criteria they had for releasing internees. There were still three members of the Parnell and three members of the Kenna family, I had known Paddy but I never knew Tom, or any of the others. I was amazed at the apathy of the men in the Curragh. I can remember looking into their eyes and they were dead; there was no life there; as if all hope had been abandoned. When talking to them they would say, you are all right, you know when you are getting out; though for me it was still a few years ahead; four years ahead. The war was tapering off and Germany was quite clearly defeated, yet I will never forget the bleakness of their eyes.

Before I left for Arbour Hill in June 1943, Tom Doyle ex- Adjutant General I.R.A and ex-Department of Defence official, had been O.C of Mountjoy prisoners, having succeeded the academic Seamus Murphy(11) who in turn came after Cork city man Denis Griffin. Mountjoy, by 1943, ceased to be used for Republicans; upwards of 60 were transferred to the Hill, including the fire bugs (our slang), while in the Curragh there were still in excess of 500 internees. In Portlaoise were the 'forgotten men', MacCurtain, McCaughey, Crofton, Stewart, Murphy and some more.

#### ANTICS IN ARBOUR HILL:

In Arbour Hill I had long discussions with Peadar O'Flaherty of the Enniscorthy legal family; Peadar was long associated with the Movement and very well read but given to dogma. He appeared at this time to have distanced himself from such stalwarts as Larry Grogan, Willie McGuinness, Seán Ó Broin, Paddy McNeela, Micky Traynor and Dom Adams. The point at issue might have been the future role of the Army; whether to follow a course of constitutional politics or not, I was not clear.

In my discussions with him I found him very right wing and I pointed out to him that the Governmental Programme of Óglaigh na h-Éireann of 1934 (circulated earlier as the Manus O'Rourke document) was well to the left of his views. Peadar had secured support from Jack Lynch and Denis Griffin, former adherents of Tom Barry and now, seemingly, glad to line up against the Russell faction. At this time I had a visit from my brother Martin who was able to tell me that there had been a further split in the Curragh; on Peadar being told this by me he responded that he had expected such a happening, from which I deduced that he and Máirtín Ó Cadhain in the Curragh had some means of communication (12)

The policy/ personality split which now resulted in Arbour Hill left around 30 prisoners adhering to O'Flaherty and 20 with Larry Grogan. Larry had not set himself up as a leader, and in fact his 20 were leaderless and unrepresented, which caused F.S. Commdt. Michael Lennon to press him to have a spokesman selected. I was with the Larry Grogan section and our view was that we had been ostracised by the O'Flaherty group.



A remarkable aspect of this was that when we were transferred to the Curragh in June 1944, the hard line O'Flaherty men joined the stricter Leddy side which included Ó Cadhain, while the Cork men I mentioned above, and Ó Broin, McNeela, Adams, Traynor, Tom Doyle, Andy Nathan, Brendan Behan, myself and a few more, secured a hut to ourselves on the Pearse Kelly side; we, of course were not going to ostracise anybody. Jack Lynch and Denis Griffin would not now cross the line to O'Flaherty; their men in the Curragh had expressed disappointment to them that in Arbour Hill they had fallen into the trap of giving any credence to O'Flaherty. Later in the Glasshouse, I thought how ludicrous it was, in April 1946 - after they had been released in 1945 and arrested on March 9, 1946 on the occasion of the abortive Ardee Street meeting - to see O'Flaherty and Grogan walking the circle together considering the rancour generated among us by O'Flaherty in Arbour Hill in the autumn of 1943.(13) Jack Lynch and Denis Griffin stayed aloof and no wonder.

I was sick from April/May 1946 and was transferred out of the Camp to the military hospital in early June for about six weeks. Meanwhile, as I remarked, Larry Grogan and Peadar O'Flaherty came in in 1946, after their arrest in Ardee Street.(14) In July 1946 I was paroled, without applying for it, from the hospital. I said I had not asked for parole, but they said you are as well to take it and get proper treatment outside. The prison doctor had been a decent enough fellow.

Christy, on release, went to his own doctor, who was Doctor McKee, a brother of Dick McKee murdered in Dublin Castle in 1920. He recommended him to go to a consultant in the Eye and Ear Hospital where he went for some further treatment. He was advised then to take a holiday near the sea; fortunately he had a cousin, who was Kathleen Merrigan's sister, Sheila, and she was living near Cahore where she was married to Charlie Crowe. He went there and stayed for about three weeks. When he came back he went to the Castle and asked for another month's parole but Supt. Gantly told him he would not have to go back. So he took it that he was released although in fact, he was not. He was officially released in 1947 and as his former post as coffin maker was no longer available, he went to work as a cabinet maker at Annamoe Road, Cabra. He then got a job in Sisks for nearly two years until he married. Paddy Woods, a former prisoner, was at that time in charge in Sisks and he sent Christy to a building site which was where he wished to be; out of doors.

Liam Ryan, a young Dublin student, was a very close friend, while in jail, of Peadar O'Flaherty. I met him again in Dublin Castle in 1947. I had applied for a travel permit to visit my brother in Scotland as they were necessary at the time. I applied to the local station, Mountjoy, but they told me it was refused; I wanted to know why, so they referred me to the Castle. I was working in Sisks in their joinery shop in Wilton Place at the time. I went into the Castle and waited for Supt. Gantly; while I waited this young man came out, and introduced himself as Liam Ryan. He was a chef, and apparently he was applying for a job on one of the airlines abroad. When I went in Gantly told me I would not be allowed the permit unless I signed the form. *What do you mean*, I said; *Harry White signed the form. I will not sign anyway.* I found him a nice affable person who seemed anxious to put my name on this form and get it over with. I cannot say if Liam Ryan, who was in before me, had signed the form, but he was at any rate allowed travel.

In July 1949 Christy married Rose O'Brien, daughter of an ex-British army private of the First World War. She was also from the Cabra district and he tells of how he had been invited to tea on a certain occasion with some very sophisticated Unionist friends, and during the evening she had come to visit them; they were introduced, and it developed from there. He was only days out of prison at that time but that is how it happens. They had three children, Blaithín, Jacinta and Geraldine. And now, he boasts, he has nine grandchildren.

## REFERENCES:

1. Among those arrested or held were: George Plunkett, Owen Donnelly, Frank Kerlin, Mike Fitzpatrick, Brendáin Ó Cearrbháil, Kevin O'Carroll, Henry Hunt, Aubry Hunt, Joseph Reynolds and, later, Sean MacBride. It was an unofficial action, but the Free State response was an instant rounding up of the usual suspects. It was disclosed in *Harry* in 1986, that O'Higgins was shot by Archie Doyle (died in 1981), Bill Gannon (died in 1965: a red flag upon the coffin) and Tim Coughlan (shot dead by secret policeman Harling, in Dartry Road, February 1928.) See page 106 *Harry*.
2. See Mattie O'Neill's story; also *Drama in Hardwicke Street*, a U.S publication, by Wm. J. Feeney.
3. Sean Cronin, *Frank Ryan*, and *Survivors*, page 20.
4. James O'Mara of Limerick had been a trustee of the Dáil loan of 1919, while his brother Stephen O'Mara was a strong business supporter in that cause.
5. Fitzpatrick used playfully boast that he had held rank in the I.R.A from recruits volunteer to Chief of Staff. In 1948 he was elected a Clann na Poblachta T.D.
6. T.P Flanagan is the father of actress Fionnuala Flanagan who presented Mr. Gerald Adams in New York in March 1994. As a Second (or First) Battalion man in this account, T.P Flanagan had proven durable. In the spring of 1937 he reached Spain and is listed as one of the survivors in Michael O'Riordan's *Connolly Column*. Returning to Ireland he joined in 1940 - that other Óglaigh, namely the Irish Army, where he was listed as being on the garrison of the Curragh.
7. See footnotes under Bob Bradshaw for the distaste and the losses in personnel incurred with the Russell take-over. Chapter V111 of *Bowyer Bell* is a useful opener. But the I.R.A was adrift and, at least, it could now be said that this Campaign would give it a focus.
8. Ellen Mary Keane, otherwise Coll, had been active in England where her house over a small shop had been used and she herself had transported explosives. Mick O'Leary, when operations officer, London, had stayed there up to April 1939. The McGillacuddy boys, Denis and Joseph, staying there were arrested and each received 10 years. Raided, her husband, John Joseph, formerly of Limerick, got 10 years. He had been active in the Civil War, and had been sentenced to death in Kilkenny. Mrs. Keane was lodged in Holloway and then deported. Jerry Halfpenny of Dundalk was arrested at the same time. Mairead Murray was also active in England; her brother Tim, receiving 20 years on an explosive rap. They hailed from Waterford. On the Lansdowne Park charges, Ellen Mary and Mairead received two years each. On release they were asked to take charge of 19 Blessington Street where they sheltered Liam Kelly, Jimmy O'Hagan and more escaping from the North. Others who stayed there included Frank Driver and Rita McSweeney.
9. Stephen Held, metal fabricator of Francis Street and resident in a detached house *Kronstanz* at Templeogue, was chosen by Hayes to visit Germany where he had some business connections, and he did so in the spring of 1940 before Belgium was invaded; fulfilling his mission and returning. He was visited at Templeogue by Herman Goertz in May 1940 days after he had landed by parachute in Co. Meath, and, as a result, the house was raided and Held sentenced to five years. Money and documents found in the house - Goertz having made his escape - sufficed for the Dublin government to prove the 'German connection'.

10. Stephen Held, a moderately wealthy manufacturer, according to the U. S published *Shamrock and the Swastika* travelled, in April 1940 via neutral Belgium to Berlin, only days before the great panzer offensive upon the west. He presented the Abwehr with the *Artus*, or Kathleen Plan, designed, with I.R.A help, to liberate the North. Held was the personal delegate of Stephen Hayes, and this carefully honed scheme was the work of I.R.A strategist Liam Gaynor. Unknown to Held, while explaining the scheme, he was being observed from another room by Herman Goertz who was himself to parachute into Co. Meath, a month later, losing his transmitter (attached to a second chute) and eventually, after two short sojourns in Laragh and Shankill, ending in the home of Held in Templeogue, with disastrous consequences for Stephen.

Goertz had met, days before, Stephen Hayes at the house of Seamus O'Donovan in Shankill; O'Donovan, speaking German, had been twice in Germany on I.R.A business early in 1939. Days later the I.R.A brought Goertz to Templeogue, where he was again visited by Hayes. There, on the evening of May 24, returning from a walk, he found the house being raided. Hiding in the garden shrubbery, he was overlooked, but Held was arrested, charged and sentenced to five years, which he served, away from I.R.A prisoners, in Mountjoy. Found in *Kronstanz* were sufficient insignia, paraphernalia, together with 20,000 dollars to fasten 'the I.R.A connection', and this probably brought about the 600 man round up into the Curragh and into Cork Jail eight days later.

On his release in 1944, Held returned to his sheet metal fabricating business in Francis Street, Dublin, but some 15 years later, he sold the business, working then for seven years, employed as an accountant. Later he, his wife, and grown up son departed for the United States.

11. Later appointed a reader in the Censorship of Publications Board.

12. It does not follow that Ó Cadhain and O'Flaherty could be political bedfellows in a right wing sense. Ó Cadhain's instincts lay with Ó Mongáin's Comhar na gComhairsain programme which translates as a course of Irish economic and social self-reliance; factors recognisable in the roots of old Sinn Féin and old Fianna Fáil but entirely unrepresented in Merrion Street thinking of today. See refs on Ó Cadhain to the missing 'social content' in Russell's January 1939 ultimatum, and in Mattie O'Neill's account of a document prepared by Ó Cadhain in the Curragh in 1944.

13. See the tail end of Tom Doran on this very subject when it was sought to commence the whole charade again by ostracising Pat Shannon. O'Flaherty had earlier led the heave against O.C Billy Mulligan which resulted in the Curragh outbreak of December 1940, and earlier still, in October 1940, he had engineered the courtmartial of Séamus Ó Mongáin in Arbour Hill upon a minor misdemeanour. This resulted in Ó Mongáin's expulsion from Óglaigh na h-Éireann, thus securing his release and giving him greater scope for political activity thereafter. At Ballycroy on May 26, 1952, on the occasion of the unveiling of a memorial to Jack Mc Neela, O'Flaherty buttonholed Liam Burke of Belfast, (never having met him before) to express doubt about the guilt of Stephen Hayes. *He would*, Burke, who had been one of those holding Hayes, remarked, *since he was the one taken in by Hayes over the years.*

14. Arrested in Ardee Street in the Coombe, Dublin, at a would-be 'reorganisation' meeting (while the Chief of Staff Harry White was still on his keeping, but ignored, in Co. Derry) on March 9, 1946 were: Michael Conway, Cathal Goulding, Terry Sweeney, Dan McCafferty, Larry Grogan, John Joe McGirl, Peadar O'Flaherty, Paddy Fleming, Donald Keane, Tony Magan.

## MÁIRTÍN STANDÚIN

of LIVERPOOL:



Máirtín Standúin

*Born in Liverpool; interned in Ireland, he created a new life for himself in the West.*

In appearance and demeanour Pat Hannon and Máirtín Standúin could not be more different. Pat is slight and low spoken but with a striking note of sincerity; Máirtín describes him as a person of great integrity. He himself is burly, full faced and with a commanding dark countenance, and although born in Liverpool, is of west of Ireland extraction. He is outspoken in his opinions; matter of fact, a man of the world type. Their course of life ran parallel in two vital places; in Liverpool, with all of the personalities already spoken about by Pat in his account, and again in the Curragh; separated for a short time by the split there until Máirtín would have no more of it and spoke across to Pat. Máirtín still has the appearance of a business man; one would never suspect him of being a sentimental patriot.

My mother, says Máirtín, was Ellen McCannon from County Sligo; she was not an Irish speaker but she did have some Irish phrases which she frequently used. She met my father, a carpenter from Mayo, and I was born in Liverpool in 1918; therefore when it came to the deportations in August 1939 I could not have been deported; not that it made much difference. I was already in Dublin anyway and my mother and two sisters followed me two months later, obtaining a tenement room in North Great Georges Street.

Harking back however to my upbringing in Liverpool; when I was a year and nine months old my father died. My mother was left on her own at the commencement of the post war depression of the twenties, with my two sisters and myself, all infants to care for. My mother went out to work; it was as natural as that; cleaning houses and waiting on tables. We were poor but so was everyone around us, so poverty was less noticeable. I was eight when I went out after school helping a local milk man for a shilling a week. My mother could make three meals for us from that. When I reached twelve I got a job delivering early morning and evening newspapers for three shillings and six pence. That would be in the morning before school and after school. After a year of that I got a job delivering groceries.

I then moved behind the counter in Irwins, a large grocery store, where later I met Tommy Hunt. His people were from Sligo so we developed a natural affinity for each other. Inevitably however it has always been my mother who most influenced me. Her hold over me has been considerable, although I am not saying she directed me in the political line that I took. That has been entirely my own directing. I saw that England was holding a part of Ireland and that she must be made to yield it up.

I was totally opposed to the 1939 Campaign however, but I was of course carried along on the current like everyone else. I suppose we all thought the same thing; that there was a secret weapon or far more resources than we could see. Our unit was visited, as Pat reports, shortly after June 1938 by Moss Twomey, Jack McNeela and Jimmy Joe Reynolds; we were told to be ready. Our thinking however was immature; it was hard to look into the future. I learned later in the Curragh that Ó Cadhain himself opposed it. Well, we know that he did, but whether he opposed it on grounds other than lack of social content or even in hindsight is hard to say.(1)

Talk of resources; it almost makes me laugh now when I think back on it. All the material we had was stored upstairs in a premises known as the '98 Shop, in Scotland Road, where there was some gelignite, potassium chlorate, detonators and, I think, a solitary rifle. *If the police come*, said old Peter Murphy who ran the shop, *all I can do is set fire to the place*. It seemed a pretty desperate solution to me. We had no reserves, no money. It was all sheer lunacy; lunacy. Peter was the grandfather of Tomás Mc Donagh Byrne and had at one time himself been deported.(2)

George Stannard had been our O.C up to the spring of 1938. He devised a plan in 1936 to seize the cadet armament in the Isle of Man, but the plot failed and Séamus Ó Mongáin had to make a quick exit. George was a good man but he disagreed profoundly with Sean Russell and resigned. As a result of that he escaped deportation in 1939. A few weeks later in the summer of 1938, we were visited by Jack McNeela with whom I was later associated in the Publicity Bureau in Dublin. Jack was a breath of fresh air; he would inspire confidence. He was accompanied by Joe Deighan, our Operations Officer, and shortly to become our O.C. 'Lanty' Hannigan, briefly O.C Britain, visited us also.

#### PUBLICITY BUREAU:

I left Liverpool in July 1939, ahead of the deportations, arriving in Dublin where I was promised a job in the Publicity Bureau at 17 Percy Place, then being set up under Jack McNeela. We were all cross-channel in the Bureau; Seamus Murphy, Tommy Hunt and myself, from Liverpool; Kathleen Kelly, an attractive girl with a green sports car, from London. Mc Neela was encouraged to offer me the post by Ó Mongáin.

Kathleen later married Dave Guiney, then of the I.R.A and first cousin of Commdt. James Guiney, our jailer in the Internment Camp. Shows how small Ireland is. We also had Eddie Ryan, formerly of Waterford, who had spent a long time in London.

The Publicity Bureau was located in three houses, none of which was supposed to be known to the staff in the other two. There was *Ashgrove House*, Highfield Road; the radio H Q; there was 214 Pearse Street; an editorial office, let to us by Andy Clerkin's nephew, and there was 17 Percy Place, the main printing and distribution department. They are illustrated in this work. We lived with a family as boarders in Percy Place, and I must say we had a relatively happy time there for six months, from September 1939 until April 1940, suffering no raid or interference.

Prior to coming there we had been located for a short time with Mrs. McDermott in Baldoyle. Her house backed directly upon the Claremont beach, at that time quiet and unpolluted. We could rush down for a swim in the early morning; not a sinner

about. After we left it was taken over for a short while by Paddy Mc Neela and an active service unit.

Mrs. McDermott was from the north of Ireland, and she had a daughter Helen, with whom Jack McNeela was doing a line. Jack was a tremendously good looking fellow and always very well turned out. Helen was a fine dame, with honey coloured hair and, of all things, a skilled fencer. To see Helen fence; well, you would not feel like taking her on. One evening in the half light, practising in her downstairs room, she caught Jack and me looking in from the lawn, and immediately pulled down the blind. He laughed loudly at this; *oh, aren't ye cute*: he called: *aren't ye cute*.

We all took to the house in Percy Place; getting to really like it there. We lived in it as boarders, but it was a real home from home. For security reasons our friends knew nothing of it and never came there. We lived as part of the family, using the two first floor rooms as printing department and office, while the family occupied some of the hall floor and basement. (It was into that basement kitchen that Jack, Tom Doyle and Seán Ó Broin tumbled at two a.m. after the Magazine raid for a feed of bacon and eggs from our landlady; but for the same security reasons none of us were allowed participate in those operations). We were now printing on Gestetner machines 20,000 copies of our *War News* weekly.

I personally would question its propaganda value but orders are orders, it had to be done. I suppose it showed that the organisation was up and running; it may have held things together, but we got absolutely no feed back. Distribution was the most difficult part of it and that was my job. Remember also; the war had commenced, and there was most of the time a real difficulty in obtaining paper, inks and staplers. I used deliver brown wrapped parcels into the Dublin G.P.O. Some however were despatched locally by van, and Kathleen Kelly delivered more although her car was considered hot. Well; what would you expect from an English accented red head in a green sports car? These day you might suspect drugs but in those times it could only be the I.R.A.

We had no guns or arms in the house. For the purpose of creating confusion if there was a raid, we had a supply of gas grenades. I personally thought that if we were to throw those at Branch men they would think they were the real thing and would open up on us with guns and there would be carnage. One day that nearly happened. Our landlady, unknown to us, to raise the wind, had advertised her piano in the *Evening Mail*. Picture our surprise when a police car pulled up outside, and two of them strolled across. There we were crouched behind the drawing room windows; our machines knocked off (there was a warning buzzer from within the hall door), and each of us holding tightly a gas grenade at the ready. Well, it never came to that. Strolling in downstairs, they inspected the piano but it was not what they wanted; off they went.

Apart from Jack, I was the only one of our crew entrusted with the 204 Pearse Street address; ostensibly an upstairs office for a firm of fruit importers. I used go there to receive editorial matter from our principal editor, Séamus Ó Mongáin, who himself never came to Percy Place. Of course, travelling around Dublin at that time on a bicycle or by tram or bus, one had to take precautions. Evidently we all did as we were never tailed back. When the son of the house was arrested in May 1940, he

passed himself off successfully under another name as a blow-in from the North; that gave us ten weeks to find another safe house. I used also visit Maeve Phelan's fruit shop at the lower end of Harcourt Street, next door to where Connradh na Gaeilge is now. Maeve was a long time supporter and a close friend of the *Irish Press* journalist, Maire Comerford.

Maire Comerford wrote for *War News* but she disagreed with a lot of the content. So too did Larry de Lacy who lived in Hollybank Road, Drumcondra (3) and to whom I would also have to call. de Lacy was an *Irish Times* journalist, a brother-in-law of Stephen Hayes and a man who was afterwards seen as a double agent. I heard later that the editor, Séamus Ó Mongáin disliked the de Lacy pieces but because of the pivotal position of the brother-in-law as Acting Chief of Staff, they went in.(4)

Another writer, and one who is almost forgotten these days, but who at this period was well known around Dublin was Seamus G. O'Kelly, a Fermanagh born part-time journalist, who filled the role (when all else was censored out of existence) of recorder and poem writer. Seamus G. suffered greatly from cerebral palsy, resulting in a slow and very shaky movement, for which he had been treated by none other than Charles J. Kickham's friend, Dr. George Sigerson. Seamus G. O'Kelly died in 1974.

#### IMPRISONED:

Máirtín was interned in April 1940. It might be supposed that the Free State had tabs on all of the Mother Carey chickens that had come to Ireland nine months before. In this they would have been facilitated by the British authorities; because of the very nature of his work Máirtín had to move from call house to call house; he could not stay under cover. Besides, his two sisters and mother in their tenement room in North Great Georges Street were in near penury, so he would frequently have to call upon them.

When I arrived into the Curragh, Máirtín resumes, it was to the small seven hutment camp - the larger one next door was under construction - and the one thing that really stands out for me were the blistered arms of Joe Delaney. It was a prolonged warm summer and Joe had, as frequently happens, loved not wisely but too well. He had absorbed too much sun and people of his fair complexion suffer as a result. So too had burly Dubliner Jack Fitzsimons. His blistered back as he did the rounds of the field was a study. He was naked down to the waist. Jack, an old hand, was loud and expressive in his opinions. The Germans had chased, in the last days of May 1940, the British Expeditionary Force out of France, at Dunkirk. They were poised to invade England. Many people considered the war already over, but Jack roundly scotched that; *ye need not expect salvation or liberty from the Germans*, he scolded.

It took me quite a while to get to know Máirtín Ó Cadhain; he seemed so far removed from us intellectually and every other way. I was wrong, as Máirtín was an easy man to get to know but we were shy and slow to approach him. Seán Óg Ó Tuama seemed more approachable, so many of us who wished to scale the heights of language learning commenced on a rung lower down with Seán Óg.

In August the men from Cork Jail, 170 of them arrived: we were all in the large



camp then, upwards of 450 of us and our routine was now well organised with classes and crafts functioning daily.

A network of tunnels was underway also; upwards of ten huts being interlinked for the purpose of a mass break-out which, judging by their progress, would have occurred around Christmas 1940. It is pure speculation whether or not the Staters at that time had any inkling. I do not consider they had, although that is not to say a break out on the scale envisaged would have been successful. I was terribly keen on learning Irish and I spent much of my time, not less than four hours daily, studying, writing and reading Irish. It came as a bit of a shock to find the progress already made in the tunnels. I was never in one but I had to stay on guard for a period beating a ring, or pretending to read a book.

We had a system of signals when we saw the P.A's approaching; a sound signal that put a moratorium on digging until the peril had passed. It came therefore as a great shock to us all, the Fire of Saturday, December 14. We did not see any sense in it. There were others who felt likewise but in the euphoria of the moment got carried away. The cruelty of the Staters in the following days compounded this. I was told not to go near a particular hut, yet I saw Joe Nolan of Tipperary run into it and set fire to a mattress.

The gates opened then and a troop of military police wheeled in with six guns out; they commenced to fire and as I turned around a bullet scraped my cheek and whipped away the lobe of my ear. A near thing.

Three days after that Barney Casey was shot dead and numbers of others were wounded. I was staying in the hut opposite when Billy Walsh of Galway called the lads to fall in to march in orderly fashion to breakfast (it was our first meal for days:) as we had always done. With that the guns rang out and he was hit mortally. The guns were still smoking when Billy Mulligan boldly walked up to the gate and demanded that a doctor be called. It was the middle of a harsh winter; the reverse of the wonderful summer that preceded it. It was a bad time therefore to be exposed to the elements. The huts were hosed down so we had nowhere to sleep; no mattress's, nothing, except upon the wet floors. I remember there were two old men in our hut, one of whom was Sean O'Farrell from Sligo; they suffered greatly.

Joe Deighan and I then stripped sheeting from the walls, making a hammock, over which we threw the few spare coats we had. We got them to lie on that. We broke more timber; putting it in the stove to try and keep the place warm. That was in the nights preceding the shooting of Barney Casey.

As I say I could not see the sense of the blaze. We were going to lose the considerable independence we had within the Camp and yet we would gain nothing. Ultimately the blame lay on Liam Leddy who was appointed O.C. at this time, but there was a hard core, O'Flaherty, Grogan and others. It was difficult to know where to lay the blame. We had started the all-Irish speaking huts and we had a range of classes in academic and language subjects. It disrupted those and created hardship. I think it was very stupid; the lads were down to serious study and it caused them untold harm.

I don't know how Billy Mulligan, who had been Camp O.C came to be replaced. I can only say I found him an excellent O.C and a very brave man.

I cannot say I could have any complaint about the men apart from those I have alluded to in the leadership. They were all stout hearted, great fun, and well able to cope with adversity. The men in there were a real loss to this nation; you could have selected a cabinet for any government from among them. You had the likes of Gerry Casey from north Cork; a first class scholar with Greek, Latin and Irish; Ó Cadhain, Clements, Ó Mongáin, Sheehy, Rickards and many more. As the split developed over the silly ostracisation of Hut C. 1 we found, after a lapse of two years, that nearly half the Camp had moved away from Liam Leddy to the side known as Pearse Kelly's. It was not a question of personalities. Speaking for myself, I was annoyed to find myself ostracised for speaking to a man, Pat Hannon, for whom I had the highest respect. As I had spoken to him, however, I automatically had to leave the hut in which I was and transfer over. I was not for one side or the other; my sole interest was in the Irish language; but as a result I was to lose an entire year without Máirtín Ó Cadhain, as he remained on the Leddy side. I had worked my way through Standish O'Grady's *Sylva Gadelica* with him. If I could have spent that additional 12 months, I would have derived great benefit from it; but I was expelled and that was that. However, when Máirtín came out later I am glad to say, we were still as great as we ever were.

On the question of Republicans being seemingly wrong footed on neutrality; I had no great feelings about that. If anything, it was De Valera who was wrong footed by his stance on the execution of Republicans. He showed great viciousness there and lost stature when he could have negotiated with the I.R.A. I always thought of him as a man who had carried out something that he afterwards would regret. He courted the I.R.A to gain power and then turned his back on them.

I had a two week parole in 1941; my two sisters Maire and Eileen were now interned in Mountjoy and my mother was alone. There was no reason in the world why they should be interned except that they were my sisters. I had another two weeks in 1942 and then in 1943 another two weeks. My mother was then dying of cancer in a flat in Rathmines. If I had not got extended parole then I would have signed out.

#### A NEW LIFE:

This time I got work nearby; with Malachi Quinn,(5) a small-time grocer in Rathmines, at 35 shillings a week. To put that in perspective, four years earlier I was earning three pounds a week in Irwin's grocery store as a charge hand in Liverpool. Séamus Ó Mongáin offered me a job on the turf in the Park but I took this one; yet I felt insulted. 35 shillings a week for a man who had to keep himself and his dying mother. I scarcely had a trousers; the knees were thread bare and the back side was really out. I wore a burberry all through that summer to cover myself, sneaking into a shop coat when changing. Eventually I moved from there altogether, and bit by bit I managed. We had learned to live on very little in the Curragh, so I suppose my stomach had contracted. At any rate I could get along on two spuds a day and some bread. I used lock myself in, making wallets to supplement my wages. I was afraid to go out at night in case I met someone from the Curragh, and they would think I was a real mean bastard if I did not stand them a drink. Drink, did I say? I did not have money to stand anyone a drink, and I certainly was not drinking myself. I was

living in the flat in Rathmines with my mother, and I was saving hard to get married. Saving hard meant trying to put by a pound a week.

I was engaged to May Mulready of Mullingar; May, her sister Cáit and her two brothers had been interned. They were a talented Republican family, respected widely. In the summer of 1945 May returned to Mullingar on holidays and then went to Galway. There she saw this seaside property and she persuaded me, although I had never been in Spiddel, or An Spidéal as it is properly called, to come and see it. *Wouldn't it be great if we could buy it?* We went and saw the owner and struck a deal. He gave us two years credit. Imagine two years. We were set up. We took it over in May 1946 and we knuckled down to it. It had been a small drapery shop, and although everything was very scarce we built it up. From small beginnings we went into grocery, hardware, fertiliser, and the now well known home-spuns and crafts. We have never looked back.

## REFERENCES:

1. See Bob Clement's account
2. There were other small dumps including one controlled by Rita McSweeney in Canny Street, and Hoyton. Rita acted as a paymaster and co-operated with Dick Timmons, while Dick Goss brought stuff across. Séamus Ó Mongáin says it was 'the chief supply centre' for Manchester, Coventry, Birmingham and London. The resident units were employed as auxiliaries and guns were not issued.
3. Maurice Twomey told this writer that Supt. Mansfield stated to him that while he had instructions to arrest Hayes, he was told not to raid Hollybank Road.
4. After de Lacy's arrest by the I.R.A. in July 1941 and his short lived imprisonment in Glencree from which he escaped, doubts surfaced about his long term role going back to San Francisco 1918, and 'German Plot' arrests there, to which he had retired after the rebellion of 1916 prior to which he had been a member of the I.R.B. in Wexford. In San Francisco he joined Clann na h-Éireann, moving after a brief arrest, to New York where, once more, there was a spot of misfortune. 495 Thompson guns and parts, ordered from the Thompson company in April 1921, and held under his supervision for transshipment, were seized by U.S. customs. They were recovered through the courts by McGarrity in 1925.  
A piece in *The Irish Sword* of summer 1995 by Peter Hart of Newfoundland may exonerate de Lacy in this instance. The ship *East Side*, chartered by the charitable organisation, the Irish White Cross, lay at Hoboken, New Jersey, and Liam Pedlar, Harry Boland and de Lacy decided in June 1921, with a truce being talked about, to send the lot in one go. A ship, chartered, although for coal, by the Irish White Cross was most likely to be kept under observation by agents. The guns, wrapped in heavy sacking and labelled as legs of lamb, were moved on board, but unaccountably some left on deck, were brushed against and uncovered.  
This 10 page article by Hart accounts for almost every Thompson ever sent to Ireland, including those 109 captured in 1942 in Co. Mayo. They were first used by the Dublin Brigade on Dublin's north side in the closing weeks of the Tan struggle. Hart's opinion was that the Thompson was inaccurate except at close range, and that its .45 calibre had little hitting power. He considered short arms and gelignite to be more suitable for a guerrilla force. One wonders has he more recently considered agricultural mix?
- De Lacy returned to Ireland and was on the *Árd Comhairle* of Sinn Féin in the late twenties. De Lacy, early on, had developed a friendship with Joe McGarrity in Philadelphia, and it was in his home in Drumcondra later that sometimes, the McGarrity girls stayed. To this writer, Maurice Twomey professed that he did not like de Lacy. Nonetheless his standing could not have been higher. He married Mary, a sister of Stephen Hayes. Tall, thin and wearing a felt hat; a homburg, he drank a pint and could take his place in any company. A competent journalist, he had a deep interest in agricultural matters and a profound knowledge in the out-of-doors.  
Séamus Ó Mongáin recalls, while he was a turf supervisor in Drogheda, observing de Lacy there. He was at that time the editor of the *Drogheda Argus*. Ó Mongáin was accompanied by Paddy Mc Neela. They quizzed him on how he managed to escape from the cottage in Glencree. 'They had a man posted outside but out of my view', he told them, 'however when I saw birds moving upon the grass I knew he must have left his post so I dropped from the bedroom window'. Shortly after that conversation he joined the *Clare Champion* in Ennis. 'Quite a character', says Frank O'Dea, current editor, who arrived in 1959. He retired then to Ballinpearce, near Enniscorthy, his home, where he died in November 1973, at the age of 86. Hayes, born in Enniscorthy but long resident and at work in Wexford, died 13 months later, in December 1974, at the age of 76.
5. Jailed 3 months in Newry in 1935.

## SEAMUS RONAYNE

### OF CORK:



*Seamus chatting with Jim Savage*

*His father held that the Republicans should have accepted and worked the Treaty of December, 1921. As a result, he remained opposed to De Valera for the rest of his life. Seamus was among the first men ostracised in the Curragh. Is duine tréan é ar son an teagain beo.*

There is a battlemented, square arched stone gateway by the roadside near a place called Ardnagashel, between Bantry and Glengariffe, and it is there that Seamus Ronayne and his wife Eleanor now live. In a new house framed by a pine forest, with a view south over Bantry Bay, they have come to reside after retiring from Boreenmanna Road in Cork city, having moved to there from Douglas, where the three children of his first wife were reared. It is a bold, new move from city into county, of leaving a pleasant and comfortable terrace house, for the adventure of settling along the rocky, indented coastline of south-west Ireland. It is like the turning of a page, it is the commencement for them of a new epoch.

Both his mother and father hailed from a place 15 miles north of the city, Athnaleenta, whence his mother, Helena Cronin, came; and Burnfoot, a mile south of historic Mourne Abbey, was the birthplace of his father. There was scarcely a mile between them. As we know, that was the way it was in Ireland 80 years ago. So many of that generation were nationalist people that it comes as no surprise to learn that his father's brother, Patrick Ronayne, was in the Mourne Abbey ambush of February, 1921, and earlier upon the attack on Mallow Barracks. It was while going back to save a friend at Mourne Abbey that he was waylaid by English forces, taken to Victoria Barracks (now Collins), tried by drumhead courtmartial and shot on February 28, 1921.

With 24 year old Patrick died also 18 years old, Tom Mulcahy of Toureen. Mourne Abbey, as an ambush, was a minor disaster; three volunteers killed, two later executed and and six others prisoners.

By way of contrast, Mallow barracks, captured by a subterfuge the previous September, entailed no loss. Liam Lynch was O.C in both of these; at Mallow he had the assistance of Ernie O'Malley.(1)

Seamus's mother learned about it only on the morning of his execution; she travelled post-haste to the Barracks with Mrs. Wyse, mother of the current Pierce Wyse, reaching the place only an hour before the volley of rifle fire that would end the life of her own husband's brother. His body was taken to Cork Jail, bagged in sacking -

not confined - and buried in quicklime along with twelve other patriots already buried there. The practice of bagging and burning in quicklime was one of those inventions of English administrators to prevent later removal and reburial. Seamus can recall, around 1927, visiting Cork Jail with his father, then acquainted with the governor, and viewing a small yard, gravelled and levelled, but with no indication that 12 patriots lay buried there. However, as Seamus tells us, Providence has since seen fit to have erected in the grounds of University College, which now covers the site of the former jail, a fitting limestone memorial. The fact that this is prominently within Cork's principal seat of learning ensures that their sacrifice, and the continuing struggle for independence, will not be forgotten.

#### THE TREATY SHOULD HAVE BEEN BUILT UPON:

Helena, his mother, had many brothers, all engaged in the fight, one way or another. One of them, Dinny, landed in jail but, fortunately proceeded no further. Another uncle, Bill Cronin, secured a Tricolour to an inaccessible part of Barrett's Castle. It remained, tattered and wind-blown, but out of reach. Of such small events are revolutions made. The Civil War came then, but the Ronaynes and the Cronin families held back aloof. Despondency, Seamus supposes, at this outbreak between brothers, this outbreak that shamed the glorious, two year struggle that preceded it. De Valera, he contends strongly, should have accepted the Treaty, and persuaded his followers to accept and work it. But that did not happen; such was not to be, despite the fact that his Document No. 2 was only a hair's breadth in the difference.

Even the immense hurdle of the Oath (2) was to become 'an empty formula' within five years. In the weeks following December, 1921, Seamus quotes his father as saying that the Republicans did not really expect the British to leave; but leave they did, and power was devolved to the new government under Arthur Griffith. It was a mistake, his father said, not to accept the Treaty; they are falling into that English trap of divide and conquer. Personalities on both sides were responsible, he declared. He was a Labour man, playing a prominent part promoting the co-operative movement, he was very opposed to De Valera. When De Valera came to power in the thirties and commenced his actions against the I.R.A, he was even more forthright: 'he was trying to purchase with pensions one half while intimidating the other half. See him now, walking upon the bodies of the Free Staters and Republicans'.

I am a product of our Civil War and the Russian Revolution; the latter being now, alas, a footnote in history. Yet it was akin to the French Revolution in its initial impact and had a great influence in later years upon me. My mother, Helena Cronin, although from farming stock, came to Cork city to make a living.

With six children eventually in the family it was difficult enough through the twenties and thirties keeping body and soul together. Seamus was born in 1919 and, in due course, attended Sullivan's Quay school, just across from Grand Parade. He remembers vividly in 1932 going up by the North Infirmary and seeing barrels arrayed along the side of the street, with torches of turf sods which the boys set alight and held high upon ash plants.

It was the beginning of those epic, torchlight processions of that and subsequent years which created the ferment of excitement that brought Dev's new party, Fianna Fáil, to power: showmen that they were, now they had accepted the Treaty as a 'stepping stone' towards full independence. My mother was convinced that, henceforth,

the front pages of our newspaper would be in the Irish language. All Ireland would soon be, to quote Pádraig Mac Piarais *not free merely, but Gaelic as well*. She was soon disillusioned. None of the party T.D's, the men now going to parliament on fine salaries, had any Irish. Dowdall had none; O'Leary had none, and Flynn had none. They were unlikely, or too lazy, to promote it. Where, then, was the Gaelic rebirth to come from? De Valera was the only one promoting the language but, in effect, he was using it simply to achieve power. Yes, he considered himself more Irish and Gaelic than anyone else, and he had only to look into his heart to convince himself of it. Standing in his long black coat and always sporting a *fáinne*, he could be relied upon to open every address in Irish. Yet the county he stood for, Clare, was one third Irish speaking when he was elected there in July, 1917; but, when he retired in 1959, as its Teachta Dála, there was a handful only of old people left who could remember their native tongue.(3)

My mother, he recalls, had a strong mid-Cork *blas*, and although speaking in English, with her beautiful intonations, one would think for a while, that one was hearing Irish. She was only a generation away from when it had been spoken in her father's district, near Macroom, which had been in the Gaeltacht; and he had been a native speaker.

#### BARGAIN OR BREAK:

With his ascent to power, Dev now knew that he was in a prime position to bargain with or to break the I.R.A. It is always best to bargain; so, in March, 1932, immediately following his election, he met Maurice Twomey and George Gilmore at the residence of Dr. Farnan, a friend of long standing, at 5 Merrion Square. (4) He would be satisfied with Document No. 2 because a Republic was out of reach until the Six Counties would be brought in. And you, he said to the Republican leaders, have no solution for that. With his failure to convince them, Seamus continues, he turned upon their supporters, making widespread offers of small, mean pensions. There were jobs, too, in his Special Branch and as porters and messengers in government offices.

That way he skimmed off most of the old I.R.A men, while, with the measures he now enforced, he actively discouraged others joining. In these new circumstances the intelligence system, already in existence, was enlarged and became more widespread, more pervasive. They were preparing for whatever eventualities the future might bring. We are into the late thirties now; and here, in Cork, Danny Barry, a quiet spoken man, was in charge of Free State intelligence.

However, Seamus asserts, we were still hung up on the past, upon the aftermath of the struggle and the Civil War. To most people, De Valera was the great Republican, the great image maker. When I found myself imprisoned in the Curragh in 1940, I was amazed to find a few of my fellow prisoners who still believed in him; to hear some say that the Republic was quite safe and that we would yet achieve it.

Coming of age around 1929, Seamus joined Fianna Éireann, then a very strong force in the city of Cork. We used go on route marches through the streets, 30 or 40 of us dressed in our uniforms, and always ending up at MacCurtain Hall. It is upsetting that the building is not known any longer as Mac Curtain Hall and that we have lost it.(5) I remained in Fianna for years, carried on upon the still very alive memories of the Tan struggle and the Civil War. But, from a cultural point of view, he

considers, it missed out. Fianna had its emphasis mainly upon drilling and marching: it omitted the Irish language. Like Fianna Fáil and the government itself, there was a pious lip service paid but it failed in not promoting Irishness. Many of the people we have here in this account were in Fianna with him, Michael O'Riordan, Jim Savage, Mick Fitzgibbon and many more. One member that he especially recalls was Billy Doyle. Billy was a handy boxer who used give exhibition bouts in the MacCurtain with Jack Mulcahy. It gave the boys a sense of security having Billy along on the street marches, exposed as frequently they were to some hostility.

The Brotherhood, an unofficial body of older Republicans, listed among its members 'Wisdom' Murphy, Paddy Twomey and Christy Reagan. The Thomas Ashe Hall was burned by the British in 1921 but had been restored. It was quite large, with a band room on top, offices at intermediate floors, and a dance floor at ground level. When Tom Barry was O.C in Cork, he had his office on the first floor over the coach entry. Afterwards, it remained in I.R.A hands, one of the trustees being Sean Cullen, a local builder. After the releases from the Curragh it became a meeting place for a republican club. In the early seventies it passed to what became the Workers' Party, who allowed it run down although, for a while, they maintained a small bookshop there. It is now in a near ruinous state.

When it came to leaving school in the mid-thirties, his first job was in a pawnbroker's office. The recollection is still painful. There were long hours, from nine in the morning until eight at night and, on Saturday morning and Monday nights, even longer, and all for pitiful wages. He lost it speedily, however, when he attempted to bring in a union. *Better a hero than a martyr*, he laughs. Thereafter, he was idle for quite a while until he landed a post in a butter factory on Pope's Quay.

He was into the I.R.A by this time. It seemed a natural graduation from Fianna to the Army; besides, with England now involved in a war with an obviously powerful Germany, perhaps there was some sense in the strategy of the Republican Movement even, if at times, he failed to see it. He was not in any way supportive of the English 1939 bombing campaign, as far as he can now recall. That sort of way of putting a case before people was a negative one that inevitably rebounded. As it turned out later, when he had the opportunity to broach it with them, many of those who had been involved did not believe in it either.

However, there were organisational meetings to arrange meanwhile and numbers of them were held at their home, *Leaca Ban*, Togher Road. He was still quite young so he was not present at the meetings; but that there had been several in 1939, he was sure, attended by, among others, Denis Griffin and Micky Traynor. We had an intelligence service centred there; we saw it was a means of shielding people and we were not then under surveillance ourselves, so we sheltered people on the run.

Although not himself a military man, more a student of life, pen mightier than the sword, and all that still, they had plenty of arms. He recalls that, on occasion, for the house meetings, he had carried a revolver, as had many of those at the meetings. He had got a thrill from participating in this way though, he says now, it was a miracle they were never raided. At that particular time, he avers, by way of explanation, I did not stop to examine my conscience or look to the sort of Ireland our people really wanted or were capable of attaining. I was still dominated by the events in the



aftermath of the Civil War, the road side crosses, and the stories of ambushes that went with them would come flashing through my mind.

Nor could I overlook the Russian Revolution and the effect that it continued to have on young people the world over, young people who were in any way politically minded. We did not have the distractions then; clothing, girls, pop music, that exist now.

I remember my father quoting Tom Barry to me: Republicans should shoot straight; but, he added, they should also think straight. He had been associated at this time with publishing a Cork edition of *War News*; and, when Barnes and McCormack were executed, he wrote a poem on their sacrifice; I feel sure that all of this was influencing me, especially as it was quickly followed by the deaths on hunger strike of McNeela and D'Arcy. Thinking back upon those facets of our history, even today they continue to have an effect upon me, in as much as no one now speaks of them, or do they even know of them? Yet they all think of Eamonn De Valera as a republican; but what sacrifice did he make? Two years later in the Curragh, I was again moved by the execution of young Tom Williams in Belfast. I can remember receiving a letter from my mother, telling me of the wonderful protest meeting held with Tom Barry and other speakers on the Grand Parade; yet when we attempted to hold such a meeting in the Curragh, we were hosed out of it.

#### SWEPT IN:

The inevitable result was that I had come under notice; my head had begun to show above the parapet. Cork city at that time, with the particular Special Branch that ruled the roost there, was a place of grim and secretive surveillance. Where a lad might have escaped notice under another jurisdiction in another county, that did not go for Cork city. The people with the slightest Republican tinge, especially if they had their names or their house names in Irish, were going to be swept in.

At 5 o'clock on a fine morning, June 2, 1940, a lorry drew up at our home on Togher Road, followed promptly by heavy knocking. C.I.D men had arrived. I was taken out and put into the vehicle that already contained other fellows, including Billy Doyle, and hustled, first into the Bridewell, where I was held in the most primitive circumstances for a few nights, and then to Cork Jail, the identical fortification in which my uncle lay buried, the one who had been executed there, among 12 others, in the Tan period. What a reminder!

I soon learned that I had been taken on the second round-up; there had been 20 or more already roped in from the city, and more were still arriving. The place was almost filled; up to 170, with fellows from Cork, Kerry and other parts of Munster. I settled down surprisingly well, finding many friends from my own cultural background. I was not a refined Irish speaker while at school but now I had the opportunity of catching up, and I was well used to rural people as I had spent so many holidays around Mourne Abbey. Now that I found myself interned, my mother supported me; that, at least, was a consolation.

The jail itself, as then run, was a sociable, relaxed place. At eight o'clock each morning the cell doors were thrown open, and there was complete association, chat, amusement or classes, until eight that evening, when lock-up was prescribed and we could relax and read within our cells. In some respects, it was like college or the

religious life, and my youth and my light hearted outlook on affairs helped sustain me.

In August, we were brought (as indeed we knew would happen) in lorries, 20 to each, Bren gun carriers fore and aft, to the plains of Kildare. We were put into a large and bleak camp that would be home to us and many more Republicans for years to come. How many years we were not to know; the Germans had swept across Europe and it seemed the war must soon end. For a year, we lived with the constant expectancy that it would end but, of course it did not.

I was directed by our officers to Hut 3. C, where I was one of 30 others. I settled in quickly; what with lectures, classes and football, I had plenty to sustain me. There was an emphasis on learning Irish, though, of course, no compulsion. Some of our most prominent leaders and veterans never learned it or they could not grasp it even after trying. My own knowledge of the language, reading, writing and the grammar, progressed quickly. I was an avid learner, although I considered that English also should have been advanced, for purposes such as putting a case or reporting upon an issue. I played football, as I said, but then I sprained my ankle, as a result of which I limped around for a year and a half in a lame condition. The limited medical attention there was no use to me, so that ended my football. I felt lost without it.

In the hut with me was John Varian from the city; Jack Lorden from Bandon; a big, soft man who played a fiddle; and Jer Daly, Tim Murphy and a raft of lads from West Cork. All of these were great people and you only have to read Tom Barry to know of the Lordens. There were rumours going that we could shortly expect headquarters men from Arbour Hill; these would be Grogan, McGuinness and O'Flaherty. I did not know who they were, however, so it meant nothing to me. We were trying to have as good a life as we could without interference, to run our own show and to educate ourselves.

When it came, I was rather surprised at the decision to fire the huts. There were fellows there who must have known a great deal, but I could not understand why such a course was followed after all the work and effort that had been put into the network of tunnels that linked into half of the huts. It seemed such a wasted effort. Although not working upon the tunnels myself, I knew about them. The operational headquarters appeared to be a hut known as Hell's Kitchen. Mostly Dundalk men, they had a rough reputation which, I think, was put around purely to discourage people entering it.

#### NO P.R.O.'s IN THE I.R.A:

Still, after these seven huts were burned, and the entire network exposed, I found it hard to understand the reason for it. The cut in the butter ration seemed such a silly excuse. Were they afraid that they were already known to the Staters from the spies that are sometimes thrown in among internees? It is only supposition on my part, but did the authorities allow it proceed so that in due course, on the night of the great break-out, they might shoot down a number of us. That is not so far fetched as you might imagine, in view of the shooting that subsequently occurred within the Camp, and which I came to believe resulted from a sense of anger and frustration among our guards at seeing so many huts incinerated. It

might be that they had known of, and had been kept apprised of, our tunnel efforts and would show us no mercy if an escape were attempted. Someone within our ranks may have become aware of this and fired those huts where tunnels had been in progress simply to frustrate a break-out that might have had dire consequences. That, as I say, is only my supposition and is probably far-fetched. There may have been other reasons: all of that leadership are gone now, so we shall never know.

Some huts had been put on fire deliberately while others went on fire accidentally, carried by the wind; but how strange it seemed suddenly to look into the concrete foundations of Hell's Kitchen, and to look into the tunnel openings like enormous rat holes, all now exposed, with the earth tightly packed between the foundations where the timber floors had been. Yet, the fact remains that, after the Fire, there was utter confusion among our leadership, and a refusal to face the problems they had created. If I could put it this way, they had no P.R.O to explain things to us or to guide us, but then, I suppose, a secretive organisation such as the I.R.A does not carry a P.R.O.

Everyone was left to his own devices and that, I think, is why Tadhg Lynch, the O.C of our hut now, C 1, decreed that we carry in the turf on offer from the authorities and endeavour to bring a semblance of normality to a badly distracted Camp. It was the latter end of December, remember, in a particularly cold winter, and there were close on 500 men there with no heat whatsoever.

An order had come down from the new Camp Council, formed when Grogan, O'Flaherty and the rest - the H.Q men- had been removed to the Glasshouse, that there must be no co-operation with the authorities. Tadhg Lynch's instruction to us in hut C 1, that we draw the turf on offer to us, was seen as co-operation and, as a result, our entire hut of 20 or so men, mostly Cork men, were ostracised. Subsequently, all of the huts drew turf while coal was drawn to the two cookhouses, but we remained ostracised. We were in Coventry; *bhíomar fé thiar*. Personally, I believe there was more to it than that. It may have been a backwash from the Barry leadership of 1937, when Sean Russell was courtmartialled. Tadhg Lynch would be seen as a Barry man, while the Camp Council was composed largely of Russell supporters. (6)

As a result of what I considered a deep injustice by our own against our own, I went on hunger strike and remained on it for 12 days. I found it strange to be on strike against my own companions; others joined in but eventually it petered out, whether from outside pressure or not, I cannot say. We got no privileges from the authorities; that I can vouch for. It is my opinion that most of our subsequent troubles inside the Camp, among what came to be known as the Leddy side (No.1 group) and the Pearse Kelly side (No. 2 group), and later after my release, a third and minor group, led by Tom Wall, stemmed from that.

People coming into the Camp in 1941, and subsequently, were fed upon the fable that we had drawn coal (it was turf, actually) 'over the blood of Barney Casey'. Some of them assumed rather dramatically, that we had actually trodden upon blood stained soil, nothing could be further from the truth. I was in the hut when Barney Casey collapsed and I thought the bullet had penetrated and struck him there, but of course not: he had been hit along with numbers of others while lined up in an

orderly fashion outside upon the roadway. They were awaiting the order to march to breakfast, the first meal in two days, and we were all horrified by the sudden outbursts of firing that occurred from the look-out above us and from the PA's facing us.

I cannot account for it; they seemed to have panicked. This happened prior to the drawing of the turf episode, which occurred weeks later. In this earlier period, we were crowded into a hut with a concrete floor, afterwards called the Icebox, and left lying there, with no covering, for days and nights. I can well recall, as a result of this, the older men showing visible signs of aging, their faces wan and wrinkled, showed evidence of sleeplessness. As I was only 21, it had little effect on me. I bounced out large as life afterwards.

#### PERSONALITIES:

During my stay earlier on in Cork Jail, I found myself associated with Kerry men rather than Cork men so, in time, I became more accustomed to them. Besides, most of the lads from the city were from the north side. If I had been better acquainted with them I might have been more aware of the split created by this ostracisation, but I was not. Instead, suddenly I found myself being treated like a leper by former acquaintances, so I took refuge in my books.<sup>(7)</sup> I had always been somewhat of a loner and I found I could survive that way. All through my life, and even afterwards, in freedom, I could survive and enjoy my own company. So, in this new dispensation, I set myself to devour books; yes, I became ravenous for learning. I read any book I could lay hands on.

I can recall working through a great tome upon the history of England, of all things, and at last I got deeply into Irish. As I was not engaged in crafts I could give much of my time to it. I must pay tribute at this point to Sean Mulready, a graduate of University College, Galway, from whom I learned a great deal; and from Gerry McSweeney, a superb teacher, and his brother, Tommy, from Cork. Gerry was an ordinary chap like myself: however he was a genius and should have been a teacher. He left school early and learned his Irish in the Camp. He sailed for England on his release, a great loss to Gaelic Ireland, as was his brother, who also emigrated.

Dick Mulready, the brother of Sean, was another I felt drawn to; dark and very distinguished looking, and scarcely ever with a violin out of his hand. Another violinist was Liam Brady of Dublin, who arrived later than many of us. He was marvellous when it came to giving a recital, always commencing with *The Meditation*, from Thais by Massenet, so as to give his audience an opportunity in due course to appreciate and enjoy the violin solo. It is now one of my favourite pieces.

There was Johnny Power from Waterford city, a former International Brigade man, and Jim Kerr from Enniscorthy, and one of the Fitzsimons from Dublin; a low-sized chap, with whom I regularly played chess. I was constantly with Timmy Ahearne, of Spangle Hill, an exceptionally musical fellow, always playing the violin. I can recall some of the older Tipperary men, such as Paddy Kinnane, of Upperchurch, a big man but, for all that, a neat step dancer. He was a first cousin of the Bishop of Waterford, a man very much opposed to us.

Jer Daly, from Convent Hill, Clonakilty, was in our hut later; a fine big man. He had been on hunger strike for 25 days in Arbour Hill in 1939 before being interned

in June, 1940. There was Jack Lorden and Toss Sheehan from Bandon: Jack played the fiddle and was a fine tall lad, although balding early at 28 years. There was John Varian and Tom Murphy and Jack Connolly from Drinagh, always good humoured, and Con O'Donovan from Skibbereen, who worked upon the railway permanent way. There was, too, Charlie Murphy, or 'Cha', from Ballinascarthy, working in a smithy and very talkative, a well read individual who was wont to engage in philosophical discourse. One of his favourite authors was Donn Byrne, among whose works he rated *Power of the Dog* his best. There was Tadhg and Paddy Lynch, of course, from Dunmanway, with their brother, Jack, who was not incarcerated at this time, long standing soldiers of the Republic, and never free from controversy. Tadhg, as O.C had been the initiator of the move on turf in Hut C. 1, but he left the Camp within weeks. I am aware that later he returned to the I.R.A., and was outside and was involved with his brother, Jack, at the arrest and trial of Stephen Hayes 18 months later. I scarcely knew Tadhg who was much older than I; but he was well built and, with his independent bearing one could not fail to pick him out. Paddy, I knew well enough, as he was around my own age; a nice lad and a good footballer.

Sometime in 1942 I was released on a short parole and, having been fitted with spectacles, new shoes, and wearing a tailored suit, which contrasted sharply with the baggy Martin Henrys we wore in there, I was not immediately recognisable on my return; but that soon palled, especially after I had put the suit away in order to save it.

I associated in the Camp with the Connolly group. Looking back on it now, I never had any feeling that I was being conspiratorial by being among them, although that was freely alleged against us. I associated with them and with other groups, purely as one might with any organisation that wished to impart a message, and I wanted to hear and evaluate that message. Neil Goid I saw as a very devoted and tireless worker, and in all respects a very nice fellow. On May Day, 1942, I spoke to the hut, with Michael O'Riordan, and, I might add, that I have spoken in public only twice since then, shortly after release at a Liam Mellows meeting in support of the Irish language, and five years ago, at my uncle's commemoration in Mourne Abbey. Connolly group issued a magazine for a short while in the Camp. The name *Splanc*, or *Spark*, was derived, of course, from Lenin's little paper, *Iskra*, published from Munich in 1900. I wrote one article for *Splanc* about the influence of Marxism on the modern world.

As for Ireland's neutrality, on which you question me, I never believed that we were a threat to it. To a certain extent, I believe that we were being used as pawns by De Valera, enabling him to say to Sir John Maffey, the British representative in Dublin, that he should have no complaint, that Mr. Churchill could sleep easy and that he had the I.R.A. all locked up!

I ascertained, after my arrest in June, 1940, that my father, Michael, and my brothers, Patrick and Joe, had been pulled in and held over a weekend. *We will make a poor family of you yet*, was what D.O Jim Moore, said to him on raiding the house; *you will not be in a position any longer to keep fellows on the run*, which dad had been doing in *Leaca Ban*. He was also producing the local *War News*, so Moore was triumphant on finding boxes of staples there; but that turned out to be for the little

journal he published for the co-operative movement, so that absolved him.

I was released at the end of summer, 1943, being one of the first of the Cork group to return home. I was now face to face with the task of finding a job. I was equipped for a clerical job but I was willing to take anything. Across from us, however, in Togher Road, lived Jim Sullivan, a stevedore in the port.

Call to Mr. Heffernan, he told me; he had a travel agency, importing fuel, and had some association with the 'Troubles' in the past. Through him I landed a post as supervisor and, shortly after, was promoted clerk upon a weighbridge dealing with turf arriving and then being passed on to the merchants. It was a responsible job inasmuch as the turf was being paid for in advance. As a result, I did not finish until after midnight. It was at that stage that I was introduced to shipping, whereupon my younger brother, Finbar, arrived to help me. He is now manager of Ronayne Shipping Ltd.

In 1955 I married Nora O'Neill and, between us we reared, Tom, Helen and Ena. When Tom came to leave home, my words to him, inspired by Dúbhglas de h-Íde from his *De-Anglicization of Ireland*, were: Remember always you are not Republican, you are not a Free Stater, and you are not an Irishman, for that is an English label. You are a Gael, and your name is Ó Rónáin.

## REFERENCES:

1. See *No Other Law*, by Florence O'Donoghue
  2. Quoted in *An Phoblacht*, May 7, 1926, a very interesting letter by Dorothy Macardle to Mary MacSwiney on the dilemma facing the newly formed Fianna Fáil; of the Oath she wrote: 'one towering barrier....on this side of it all Republicans stand unfalteringly in their resolve not to cross it'. Dorothy Macardle was very friendly with De Valera and might be expected to reflect his view.
  3. One year prior to Eamonn De Valera's departure for the Presidency, a Commission on the Restoration of the Irish Language was set up. It had a distinguished membership of 28 chaired by Tomás Ó Fiach. It reported in January, 1964, with almost 300 recommendations, only a few of which were ever implemented effectively.
  4. See *Survivors*, page 567, 2nd Edition
  5. The Mac Curtain Hall in Mac Curtain Street was built after the Civil War. It was sold, Jim Savage says, in 1947 for about £700 by two members of the Brotherhood, Jerry Cronin and Ned Mc Namara, to pay arrears of rates on Thomas Ashe Hall, on the Fr. Matthew Quay, and on a debt owed since 1940 for the funeral of John Joe Kavanagh.
  6. Although the three Lynch brothers faithfully served on both sides of the water in Russell's English Campaign, significantly, in 1938, Jack was ousted and replaced by Russell favourite, Jimmy Joe Reynolds. Breaking point for Tadhg, O.C of Hut C. 1, may have been reached at that time. Fire, the loss of the tunnels, dissension and the stern military control of the Camp that prevailed, was seen as the fruit of the take-over in November of the Mulligan camp council by the H.Q men, Grogan, O'Flaherty and McGuinness, all of them in the Russell circle. The situation clarifies itself, thanks to Sean Cronin's *Frank Ryan*, if we step back in time to 1937.
- Tom Barry had succeeded Sean Mac Bride as Chief of Staff, and Barry's right hand man was Tadhg Lynch. Lynch was editor of the new series of *An Phoblacht*, which had been permitted publication while De Valera's 'New Constitution' was being debated by the country in the summer of 1937. Frank Ryan, during his short period home from Spain at this time, worked with Tadhg on *An Phoblacht*, which was printed by Ralahine Press.
- Barry took over the I.R.A under unusual circumstances. The Movement's political party had failed to dent Fianna Fáil, leaving the existing control under something of a cloud. The General Army Convention argued the merits of an English Campaign, propounded by Russell's supporters, combined with political agitation of Cumann Poblacht na hÉireann kind.
- Barry, O.C Cork and the legendary guerrilla leader of the victories at Kilmichael and Crossbarry during the Anglo-Irish War, condemned both policies and proposed in their place an armed campaign in the north of Ireland. His policy was adopted by the Convention and the new Army Council appointed him Chief of Staff.
- Barry was shocked by the depth of hatred which existed between various members of G.H.Q. Russell, the Quartermaster General, had been removed from his post and suspended by the old control. It was a courtmartial instigated by Barry and headed by Sean MacBride, and it may have taken place in the home of Dr. Andy Cooney. [As described to this writer by Dan Gleeson: 'I came to Dublin and met in this house Sean MacSweeney and Charlie Dolan for the courtmartial of Russell. Tom Barry was in charge. It was a private house, and this was early in 1937. Russell arrived late and he was drowned wet. He did not look good that night and he

made no defence to the charges on guns and money'.] As far as Russell was concerned, they were welcome to their courtmartial.

He took off to America as a guest of Joe McGarrity, Clan na nGael leader. Before leaving, Russell failed to tell the new Chief of Staff where the Army's equipment had been dumped. The first Barry knew of the Kildare dump, with its 12 Thompsons still in the U.S packing cases, was when police seized it. There was no money in the treasury. Barry had to borrow £5 from Peadar O'Donnell to send a G. H. Q officer to Galway to see about the dumps there.

Barry's campaign in the North would begin with an attack on Armagh military barracks. If this were successful, and won Nationalist support, help from the Irish in America would follow, he believed. He told McGarrity in very general terms of his plan of action, after taking over as Chief of Staff. 'Thanks for your personal note, which reached me along with official Clan communication....

With regard to Russell's proposed visit to you, the Army Council has decided that no speaker will be sent to the United States. I do not want to develop the reasons for this but leave it at that. The report of my messenger, who returned a few days ago, is not very encouraging, but I know that you are doing your best. We can and intend to start without awaiting the arrival from your side, but please remember there can be no sustained effort unless you succeed. I cannot quite agree with you when you say that work across the Channel is the work of most importance. I do agree with you that anything except propaganda in the Twenty Six Counties at the moment and in the very near future would be very bad tactics'.

Unknown to Barry, however, Russell and McGarrity had reached a 'perfect understanding' in the summer of 1936 on an I.R.A bombing campaign in England. Russell would take over the I.R.A; McGarrity would supply the war treasury. There was no attack on Gough Barracks, Armagh, and no campaign in the North. G.H.Q had established an Active Service Unit, drawn from Barry's own Cork Brigade, and 26 volunteers were chosen for the strike force. Then one day, an officer of Cumann na mBan said her members wanted to help the initial attack. When she was questioned as to how she knew of the attack, she told G.H.Q it was being discussed in Belfast, Dublin and Cork, among Republicans. As it was now no longer a secret, Barry wisely cancelled the proposed operation.

7. Harry White on the ostracisation: I got another shock when I came to the Camp. There was quite a number of men ostracised. Liam Leddy, the Camp O.C from Araglen, informed me that I was not allowed to speak to them. Now, one of them was Paddy Muldoon, O.C, Offaly, and I told Leddy plain and straight that I would speak to him: *I do not see why I should ostracise anyone*, I said.

Then there was a new development. Neil Goold, thought to be the principal communist activist in the Free State, was interned and put into my hut.

Once again Leddy came to me: I should keep an eye on him and what he was writing. Well, to be quite candid, I could not care less. Neil Goold was in there, a prisoner like the rest of us.

Of course. I did not agree with certain communists in there whom, when Russia was dragged into the war, said it was our duty to join the British Army. Those who were loudest with that sort of talk made sure themselves not to join the British Army.

Anyway, the people around me decided they would have no part in the ostracisation. There were about 60 of us, and we could make up two huts, including an Irish-speaking hut. All these strands came together eventually under Pearse Kelly when, indeed, they formed more than half the Camp, with no rules against speaking to the other half. But that happened later, in 1942, when I had left the Camp, out of the frying pan into the fire, so to speak, and was on the run; this time for my life.



## JIM SAVAGE

### OF CORK CITY:



*Jim Savage at home in Cork*

*His father a 1914 war veteran: born in Cork city, he joins Fianna and I.R.A. In countless scrapes: is imprisoned and interned: a leading member of the Connolly Group.*

My father, Jack, was a shop assistant in this city. He was a man totally devoid of a shred of nationalism or even of politics. When the World War came in August 1914, seeing nothing but penury in front of him here and the allure of adventure overseas, he joined the colours; He joined the British Army and like tens of thousands quickly found himself drafted to Flanders; to the flat, marshy, dyke ridden poppy fields of Belgium. He spent four years there in the muck and the slime, with rats and dead men for company, from 1914 until 1918 without even returning. He was lucky, I suppose, at the end of it all to be still alive even though twice wounded, gassed and in a condition of shell shock that lasted for the remainder of his life.

My mother was Elizabeth Brew; she came from the county here, from Donaghmore a village northeast, 10 miles outside the city. All her family had Republican sympathies, a thing that was quite beyond my father's understanding. He had returned home but he was in poor shape as a result of the shell shock. As a consequence of that he spent around six months of each year in Shanakiel Military Hospital being restored to a condition only a stage above total disablement. That hospital, incidently, was where Michael Collins was laid out following the ambush at Béal na Bláth. Dad rarely spoke in my hearing of his trench warfare experience; it was too nauseating for my mother to listen to his account of the scenes there; rats as large as cats eating limbs and whole bodies before they scurried off as the men struck out at them. He kept his silence, and I suppose, the horror gradually faded from his memory.

Our house was raided many times in subsequent years by the Black and Tans, and my father manhandled; being an ex-service man was absolutely no defence where they were concerned. Indeed circles within the Tans accused the ex-soldiers of helping to train the I.R.A. Another reason for the house raid may have been that my mother's cousins, the Conroy boys who lived next door, were wanted, and of course they were on the run.

I was born in a place called Rosemary Buildings, and we eventually came to live on Pope's Quay the same place as Michael O'Riordan, but seven doors away. Rosemary Buildings were normal inner city local authority terrace houses built in the early part of the century; called after the reigning Lord Mayor of the time; we had Roche's Buildings, Madden's Buildings, Horgan's Buildings and so forth. Ours happened to be Rosemary after the Virgin Mary as we adjoined St. Vincent's

Convent. They were swept away years ago to make way for what is known as inner city road improvements; the same bureaucratic destruction that was inflicted upon Dublin.

Dad had a one hundred per cent pension and a citation from King George V which I still have. He could have had one of the Earl Haig houses for ex-service men but mum refused it as she did not wish to end up among a ghetto for ex-soldiers.

I was born in 1923 so Michael O'Riordan is older than me by six years. When I reached six I commenced attending Presentation College, Western Road, while he went to North Monastery. He did not, needless to say, take much notice of me; I was too young, so he remained with the bigger boys. At the age of 12 however I joined Na Fianna. That was in 1935 while Tom Barry was O.C., and presiding at the Thomas Ashe Hall on Father Matthew Quay.

I had been friendly with Tom all my life, but he could be vindictive at times, especially if he thought you were against him for any reason or if he had drink taken. But he was already a part of history, and even at that time I recognised that. To have been an ordinary English tommy in Mesopotamia and to have come back and commanded the West Cork I.R.A at Kilmichael and Crossbarry says a lot. He proved himself a skilled leader who had all the natural capabilities of leadership; in the art and strategy of guerilla warfare he proved himself a genius.

Tom Kelleher told the story in *Survivors*, when Kelleher wanted to wait back and collect the Lee Enfields from the dead Tans; *no*, said he; *get your section on the move; we have no time*. That was the essence of Barry; he knew there would be a speedy reaction from the enemy, and he had to get the column away. *We have no time*; it could be written upon his tombstone. It showed the essence of his leadership when under pressure.

When I joined Fianna, the Movement in the city was under the control of Con O'Leary, a decent fellow, and a great O.C. Through the twenties and thirties the Movement in Cork was based on the Mac Curtain Hall or the Thomas Ashe. Con O'Leary was O.C in Mac Curtain, presiding there in state; but shortly after De Valera came to power, he defected and joined the Broy Harriers. A man of striking appearance; it was maybe that he saw the chance of a job 'to keep down the Blueshirts' and he took it. Many others did likewise; Fianna was very strong in the city at that time; I was always interested in numbers and statistics and I would estimate there were around 300 in it. Other associates of mine in Na Fianna at that time were Mick O'Brien, Gerry Collins and Mick Fitzgibbon, although he came later. We had drill and history classes in the Mac Curtain, and later on, after I had left, they started the Fianna band.

For all the world it was like a boys' club and we loved it; but then I moved from the north side into the First Battalion of the I.R.A and, even though I was still very young, I was delighted to be promoted. We used to hold regular parades with No. 2 Company on the north side of the city; parade in I.R.A parlance meaning, not a public march, but a secret arms or drill class held in a house or an isolated field. Roger Ryan then asked me to take on No. 2 Company after John Varian who was O.C was arrested in the roundup of March 1940. I agreed readily, although Jack Lynch thought afterwards that, at 17, I was too young. Things were hotting up now; we are

into 1940; it is war time and men were on the run; lying low, or finding themselves imprisoned. My profile was already high although I was working in the Dunlop tyre factory, but it was upon night work which meant that I was about only infrequently by day. Then one morning early they finally came for me, but I, not having arrived in from work, found they had arrested my brother Maurice, who had no connection with the Movement. They released him however four days later. He was two years older and in appearance looked like me, but I knew that from now on I could not remain in my home; I would have to go on the run. I was to be on the run for the next 18 months.

#### **TOMÁS MAC CURTAIN: RESCUE OR HANGING?**

The Fort raid had taken place in Dublin in December, and as a result of cleaning out the nation's magazine the I.R.A came to be seen as a public nuisance. Tensions were also rising in Cork, when upon a dark Friday evening, on January 3, 1940, to be precise, nine fifteen o'clock, four armed detectives moved in to arrest Tomás Mac Curtain near the bridge in Patrick Street. In the confused fracas that followed, John Roche received one bullet wound from which he died a few hours later. Mac Curtain was a well known figure in Cork; a fine looking man of 22, he had to be republican, his father, also Tomás, a former Lord Mayor (1) had been shot dead by 'unknown assassins' - they turned out to be Royal Irish Constabulary, in March 1920. Within hours the boy was charged with murder; and soon after was remanded to the Special Court - the Military Tribunal - in Dublin.

A revolver produced at the local hearing, allegedly had the initials T. Mac C scratched upon the stock. It was his alright. The state could prove their case to the hilt. At this stage his counsel, Albert Ernest Wood, attempted to have the charge reduced to manslaughter; 'this young man has lived in fear of his life from certain armed police in Cork,' he claimed. It was not to be; so far as the State was concerned, and the local detective force, Mac Curtain would swing. His national reputation merely deepened the hatred in which the Mac Curtain name was held by the local Special Branch. He had been O.C of our city battalion but had been stood down some months before this after Paddy Mc Neela arrived from G.H.Q in Dublin with an instruction to appoint the less colourful Denis Griffin in his place.

We ourselves however, though worried, were not idle. We planned a spectacular rescue right from the Courthouse, and, if it had succeeded, we knew we could bring him to safety. That it never took place was due to the fact that the hearing on the appointed day was remarkably brief. We were primed and ready but the plan required a further hour before it could be put into action. The inspiration for, and the prime movers behind the plan were Jobie Sullivan, Mick O'Riordan, Tom Kelleher and 'Skipper' Mahoney; four of the soundest Republicans in Cork, but it all depended upon our men securing admittance late on the evening before through the back door, down at street level, on Liberty Street, and remaining there hidden.

Mick O'Riordan, who had returned from fighting with the Connolly Column in the International Brigade in Spain scarcely 18 months before, was our quartermaster. Mick, known as Screwback, because of his skill with the billiards on the top floor of our headquarters in the Mac Curtain Hall, was the bravest man I ever met; if you went in anywhere with Mick you knew you would come out alive. You could say

the same for Jobie Sullivan. He had an unparalleled record going back a long time, and had survived in England during some of the dustiest episodes of the '39 Campaign. His father had a prosperous bacon shop in Coburg Street, near Mac Curtain Street, (it is funny the clash of the two traditions in these very street names, the Sax Coburg of English royalty and Irish Fenianism) and he brought with him a prime Sheffield knife to cut through the handcuffs, should he be tied to a Branch man; or indeed the policeman's wrist should that be necessary. You would need to have known Jobie; there was nothing beyond him; nothing he would not do, although personally, I thought him more of an adventurer than a Republican.

On the day appointed for rescue, Mick took up a position opposite the Courthouse on Washington Street, standing in the porch of the Franciscan church in Liberty Street, known as the Broad Lane church, at the rear of the Courthouse; a Thompson concealed under his coat. We had obtained a duplicate key of the rear door given to 'Skipper' Mahoney in Mick Leahy's pub on the corner of James's Street and Courthouse Street on the 2nd. of February; the evening prior to the opening of the trial.

Mahoney, accompanied by Bill Hayes and Jobie Sullivan entered and remained all night. (Bill was never imprisoned; he departed to the U.S shortly after). I can recall them entering, each with a bottle of milk and sandwiches. They ensconced themselves directly under the dock, where they could hear every word spoken, but the plans misfired because the proceedings folded prematurely, and to have acted then would have been disastrous.

The court abruptly adjourned, and our quarry, Tomás, was taken back to Union Quay and made ready to be escorted to Mountjoy. Eight weeks later on February 27, a hunger strike commenced which delayed any further legal action. Mac Curtain, along with Tom Grogan, Tony D'Arcy, Jack Mc Neela, Jack Plunkett and Mixie Traynor went upon a 54 day hunger strike on behalf of fellow prisoners in Mountjoy, (not on their own behalf be it said) so the trial on the capital charge of murder could not proceed until early in June following the conclusion of the hunger strike, during which Tony D'Arcy and Jack Mc Neela died. Mac Curtain would then be the next candidate for death and this time it would be a hanging by the British hangman Pierrepont.

Brought before the Military Court in Collins Barracks within four weeks of the conclusion of his fast, the 22 year old had recovered remarkably. Refusing to recognise the Court he argued that it was illegally constituted. It was clear that a black cap, had it been there, might have been donned; but it was not that sort of court.

The five officers retired, and, upon resumption, found the *prima facie* charge of murder proven against him, following which he was informed that, if he was prepared to take professional advice, an adjournment would be considered. In the face of his continuing refusal to plead however, the court, on June 13, sentenced him to death; fixing the execution date for July 5.(2)

There was an immediate flurry in the world outside. *Habeas corpus* was sought in the High Court but, on being refused, an appeal was made on the very day before he was to be executed, to the Supreme Court. It was then too late in the afternoon for that court to come together so the government, by Emergency Order, fixed a date

eight days hence for the sacrifice. But a breather had been obtained. And in that breathing space, despite the Supreme Court a few days later rejecting the E.A Wood/MacBride argument, Mac Curtain was reprieved and sentenced to serve instead life in Portlaoise.<sup>(3)</sup> A pine coffin was already purchased and held in Mountjoy. The execution not having taken place, it was put back in the store and used four months later to receive the body of Paddy McGrath.

**JOBIE SULLIVAN:**

I was on the run at this time and my part in the Courthouse action was solely as an observer beforehand, and a look-out afterwards. But that is not the only operation in which Jobie was engaged with me at this time. The other was a short lived take over of the Cork radio station which was then located in a part of the female jail on Sundays Well Road. It was the evening of the 12th. April, and it was entered, carrying guns, with two others, using a key made from a mould prepared for the occasion by Paddy Whooley of the Old I.R.A but then of Metal Products Ltd, a firm in the city.

Our purpose was to highlight the five man hunger strike then entering into its last fatal week in St. Brican's Hospital in Dublin. Interrupting the news in Irish, Jobie spoke for five minutes, following which a shot accidentally went off.

Meanwhile a number of us had been detailed to lie in wait around the jail. I was with Tom Kavanagh, a brother of John Joe, killed a few weeks later. We were lying concealed in bushes; a Thompson at the ready in my hand, and with instructions from Jobie that I fire on the first car that might arrive as he was sure it would have to be police. Fortunately no car came up the hill that night.

Personally, and leaving aside what I considered his adventurism, I have always had a high regard for Jobie Sullivan. An account of his whole career would make a colourful story, dare I say an incredible story. He was arrested in the effort to tunnel into Cork Jail from the grounds of the La Retraite Convent on August 3, where around 170 of our men were being held prior to their transfer to the Curragh. I am about to relate that, but I shall first follow Jobie a piece. Following his capture in our tunnel, he then found himself in Mountjoy where he kept up a running battle with the authorities there.

He had a phobia about prisons and he was determined not to stay. The chance to elope came when he was brought to the Dental Hospital in Lincoln Place, Dublin, under guard of course, but seizing his opportunity, because he was small and wiry, he escaped through a toilet window. I think it may have been during that period of liberty that he acted upon, or at least gave evidence, at the courtmartial in Castlewood Park, leading to the conviction of Stephen Hayes in July 1941.

Arrested again, he was so hyper active a doctor could readily pass him as mental and as a result, he again found himself one step nearer to freedom when he was transferred to Dundrum Criminal Lunatic Asylum. My brother, Maurice, called there to see him; they had long been friendly, living in the one area; swimming and all that. He was still the same old Jobie. But he was not idle; no, he was still plotting an escape.

Working in the garden where there was a green house, he had dug a big hole inside; covering it with planks over which he placed plant bedding. It had a per-

fectly normal ground like appearance. Biding his time, until one evening he then slipped into the cavity, hiding there and waiting for darkness and the escape alarm, following which, when the rumpus died, he really would escape. But it did not work out so; he was traced somehow and held.

Before I pass on, I must enlarge now on 'Skipper' Mahoney, an old time Republican and one who soldiered through the whole dreary internment period on the Curragh of Kildare. 'Skipper', a big tall man, was from Ballincollig, a few miles from here; he went to sea, and that is where the name came from. Strong as a lion, his favourite game was throwing the 56lb weight.

But, as I say, he ended up in the Curragh, where he got a beating supervised by Capt. Mc Namara. That was after the Fire when they could get away with anything; as a result his head required thirteen stitches. Leaving a wife and daughter penniless in his enforced absence. (now, I cannot say if this is quite accurate) they had to emigrate to England, and taking refuge one night from an air raid, they both died; so when release eventually came for poor 'Skipper', he had no one.

Meanwhile, in those early months of 1940, although I still held my night time job in Dunlops, I could not go home; I was on the run. I was not the only one; Jobie and Roger Ryan were in the same boat and, I am perfectly sure, throughout Ireland, hundreds of others. John Varian, another member of Óglaigh na h-Éireann, living in Fair Hill, had been picked up and interned in March. We used to go there for a scrap of food but we could not overdo that; John's father was an ex-English soldier on ten shillings a week so there was not much headroom there.

#### TUNNELLING INTO A JAIL:

Hope rises eternal however - sure where would we be without it - and we had this plan to tunnel into Cork Jail from the grounds of the La Reiraite Convent and rescue some of our men interned after June 3. Life for the Munster men held in that jail is described elsewhere by Pierce Fennell and others; but the jail itself is now long gone. It is absorbed within University College, although the classical entrance remains. As you know, to tunnel into a jail is easier than to tunnel out of one. Proper implements are available; it can be done in relays, and the disposal of the soil does not present the same problem. We must have been observed however from the windows of the convent - there is some evidence of that - and presumably a nun informed the police. Could she have foreseen the tragic results for us? A party crouched in a tiny hole tunnelling are in a particularly vulnerable position, especially as we had no armaments whatsoever. That must have been evident to the Special Branch in the city, but there were some in that outfit who were blood thirsty enough to be still seeking revenge for John Roche.

Jobie Sullivan, Roger Ryan, John Joe Kavanagh and Connie Byrd were our tunnel squad; all big men unfortunately, except Jobie; Connie particularly so. Jobie met me this night and told me; *I want you tomorrow. You are to go up to the mental hospital. You will find a pick axe there. bring it down to the convent. Hop over the wall and come down the side. Keep out of sight.* I proceeded up to the hospital but the pick axe was not there. I thought this odd because Jobie was quite exacting in his directives. I came down then, but passing near Western Road I heard the unmistakable rattle of a machine gun. Anxious now, I hastened along to Jobie's uncle, 'Din-Boy' Coughlan.

*Something has happened in the jail*, I told him. He was an old I.R.A man, so he clapped on a hat and dandered up by the convent, and was in time to see John Joe Kavanagh being brought out upon a stretcher, but in such a clumsy manner that he was allowed fall on to the roadway. There were Branch men all about; at the ready, with small arms and Thompson guns. I would say that they had been watching the activity for a number of hours. Collins, Gaffney, Curley, Barrett, Riordan, Conroy and Moore were those involved.

One would have thought they could have arrested the group easily. Instead they ripped into John Joe Kavanagh and seriously wounded Roger Ryan. Only that morning Dermot Crowley of the Western Star pub had observed Branch men in his premises. He told me afterwards that he saw Moore checking out the Thompson, and he was seen then upon the road by 'Din-Boy' Coughlan.

As I have said, none of the boys digging were armed; in such a confined space they were literally sitting ducks. Jobie had been in the hole with Connie while the other two were above ground. They could have been arrested; a killing need not have happened. Someone told me then that Roger Ryan was already dead.

I went to the Mercy Hospital - Branch men all around the place - but I entered from the old people's home, and going down a back stairs, reached the morgue, where I could hear nuns weeping. I lifted the sheet from over John Joe. He was riddled: bullets seemed to have penetrated everywhere. Immediately I took it upon myself to order two coffins; one for John Joe and one for Roger. But against all the odds Roger pulled through, as did Connie who was not injured; both ending up in Arbour Hill and the Curragh afterwards. With my own continued exposure, and having to travel about, I knew I must soon find myself among them. When I did, I learned their whole story.

Jobie was down the hole, with Connie at his back. Roger was at the opening, while John Joe was exposed above ground. Weeks later, when an inquest was opened in the South Mall before Coroner Mc Cabe on John Joe Kavanagh, an order arrived from



*Commerative party at the graveside of John Joe Kavanagh, shot dead in 1940 while attempting to tunnel into Cork Jail.*

PICTURE SUPPLIED BY JIM SAVAGE.

Gerald Boland suppressing it. As it was about to commence Moore strode in and placed the order on the table. Had an inquest been held the facts could have been aired and it would have been shown that the men could have been arrested. Instead, because

that would have embarrassed the Dept. of Justice and the local Special Branch, the inquest was not held.

A further small insight on the meanness of Moore's character was provided in the fate of John Joe's sister, Kathy. She was married to a serving soldier living in Cork. Moore saw to it that he was cashiered as a security risk from the army, following which the couple were obliged to emigrate to England, never to return. I was detailed after that to investigate Moore's movements as he was held responsible for the slaughter. I noted every detail of where he lived on Connaught Avenue; that there was a hedge and that one could fire from behind that. But the Monday night chosen he moved into Union Quay Barrack and, indeed I might add, in view of his eventful downfall in Dublin, it was best we left him go. He, and his fellow Branch men are long deceased.

#### **BALLINCOLLIG RAID: THE BROTHERHOOD:**

Meanwhile we planned a raid, inspired by Murt Lucey, on Ballincollig Military Barrack, guarded, not only by army, but by a local defence force known as the L.D.F. I was part of the detail outside, carrying a Thompson, and when approached in the darkness by a Sergt. White, I raised it, pointing it at him and he belted away fast. Later I was taken out of the Curragh by D.O. Moore on an identification parade attended by White. One of those on the parade, and one who had nothing whatever to do with the I.R.A., was a local hard case called 'Shea-boy'. Whether by accident or design White picked out 'Shea-boy' causing Moore to explode; *you stupid bugger; the party I wanted you to pick out was next to him.*

The ton of gelignite taken was brought to Liam Ivers's brother's house for safe keeping; Ivers being one of the Brotherhood. Two years later, Mick Quill was sent by Hugh Mc Ateer to recover it, but on its way north it was seized in Co. Dublin, so it fell back into their hands anyway.

Cork at the best of times has many complicated layers in its society as you can imagine. G.H.Q in Dublin did not rule us directly; it never could have understood us, and this cleavage was to manifest itself in the Camp afterwards. Advising us, and to a certain extent controlling us, was a brotherhood of older I.R.A men made up of Richard Murphy, Paddy Twomey, Christy Reagan, Jerry Cronin, Ned Mc Namara, Con Deasy, Johnny Condon, Liam Ivers, Paddy Whooley, 'Din-boy' Coughlan and John George Mc Carthy, father of the late Charles of T.C.D. The Brotherhood were old I.R.A men who had not joined Fianna Fáil, nor had they applied for military pensions. They had no official standing in the I.R.A either. They met regularly however at 'Din-Boy' Coughlan's house on Glasheen Road to discuss local strategy and to try to advise the younger fry like ourselves. They also helped out with sums of money and accommodation. They survived, in one form or another, until after we were released.

#### **RUN TO EARTH:**

I was finally arrested in 1941 and held for six weeks in the Cork Bridewell; not a nice place to be. I was then shifted to Collins Barracks for three weeks. I was transferred for some weeks to Mountjoy before being taken before 'Hanger' Joyce and the two other officers; whether Whelan, Tuite, Bennett or Mc Kenna - they rotated - I cannot recall. Moore was present in Collins Barracks when I received four months



on a minor charge; but it was of no consequence. With internment I knew that I was likely to be in for the duration. While in Mountjoy I found myself transferred with Jack Hartnett into a different wing from my comrades; I never knew the reason.

I was accompanied on my trip to the Curragh by Det. Sergt. Michael Gill whom I thought a friendly man. Leaving him at the gate of the Camp, he offered me a cigarette which he lighted as I entered. Commdt. Guiney and another officer, with a couple of *políní áirm* were inside the hut, but on seeing me Guiney strode over, snapped the cigarette from my mouth, and slapped me across the face. *There are two kinds of discipline here, he spat at me, the one you learn at your mother's knee and the one you learn in the army. Do not smoke in my presence again. Now strip off all of your clothes.* I was left so in the tin hut for an hour until a P.A entered, telling me to get on my clothes and carry my bed into the camp. I was left to wonder if Gill's kindness had been merely a sick joke.

The hut I entered had, among others, Pat Shannon, a Galway man, only recently deceased, whose experiences went back to the Civil War. Pat had seen service in England, and was of the sterling true blue type. There was also Dick Bell, a very cheerful fellow, who was later in charge of Fianna in Dublin. There was Bill Dowling from Athlone, 'Lanty' Hannigan, and Joe Bray from Limerick.

Unfortunately when Peadar O'Flaherty and Larry Grogan arrived from Arbour Hill - what I heard, as I was not present, was - that as former G.H.Q men, they flashed rank and took over from the easy going Billy Mulligan. Shortly after, on Peadar's instigation, there was the conflagration of December 14, and things were never the same again.

Ostracisation commenced under O'Flaherty's successor, Liam Leddy of Araglen - O'Flaherty and 51 others having been forcibly removed to the Glasshouse pending trial in the meantime - and the subsequent rows and splits enmeshed everybody. Tadhg Lynch, his brother Paddy, Seamus Ronayne and others mentioned here sought fuel, and on being offered turf, they drew it to their hut. Therein lay their great offence against camp discipline inasmuch as they 'had co-operated with the Staters', although very shortly after that, it then being the month of January, all of the Camp were drawing fuel for the stoves in each hut.

In fairness to Tadhg, there was no one else in authority in his hut; he was the elected O.C. There was no one to do anything and they were freezing. The Camp itself lay under a grim martial law regime; but Tadhg went direct to the Staters and said, we need fuel, and turf was given him. Tadhg, as you know, was not the most popular person in the world, being rather a bossy type. He had served in 1937 as Adjutant under Barry when Barry was Chief of Staff, and anything learned under Barry was always a bit hard to unlearn. So Tadhg felt that he still retained some devolved authority and that he should be listened to. There was no other spokesman in those turbulent few days willing to negotiate with the Staters, but it gave others the excuse to say he drew coal, even though it was turf, and so Leddy and company ostracised him.

The occupants, mostly fellow Cork city men, felt that Tadhg had been wronged, so they stayed in the hut although given orders by the Camp Council to leave it. However, as I have remarked, I was not myself present at that time. Seamus

Ronayne, who was present in the hut, has given his account.

Timmy Ahearn, from Spangle Hill, used to make the tinder boxes. A small tin box with a tiny strip of old singed blanket within it, could be caused to singe by the action of a razor blade drawing sparks from the head of a broken needle sticking from a small finger of wood. Once the spark caused the blanket to singe in its box, one pulled one's butt furiously from it, promptly then shutting the lid of the box to extinguish it. The real art lay in slicing a shortened match with a blade into eight parts. Surprisingly each of these could be struck to light a cigarette.

#### THE SPLIT: I MAKE MY CHOICE.

When the time came, after my arrival into the Camp for me to make a choice, I found it simple enough to decide that I should join with what was to become the Pearse Kelly side. I had no particular loyalty to either leader but the Kelly side was more relaxed, and most of my friends were already there although Kelly himself could be a bit of a martinet; I am O.C, take it or leave it, was his attitude. On the other hand Bob Clements was said to influence Leddy, who seemed to me a big innocent sort of a man in his own way. Pearse Kelly brought out a document in 1943 criticising Leddy and the Camp organisation as it then stood.<sup>(4)</sup> That may have deepened the split between them and antagonised them even more. I was in a hut which included Harry White and Neil Goold. All of us, left wing people and communists, had gravitated over to Kelly. There was less hassle under his authority. But the split, although not resulting in permanent enmities, was damaging and a source of demoralisation at the time. Afterwards I heard that one of the last requests from Maurice O'Neill of Cahirciveen to his older brother Sean - also an internee - <sup>(5)</sup> before his execution in Mountjoy on November 12, 1942, was that we should stop the dissension. Sean returned to the Camp but what the outcome was - as he was on the other side - I do not know except that the quarrel continued.

Máirtín Ó Cadhain describes the Curragh as Sibéir na h-Éireann, the coldest place in Ireland. It was also the most hungry place in Ireland. Connie Byrd, whom I have earlier said was a powerfully built man, was permanently in a famished state there. He conceived this notion that if he could trap a bird - the larger the better - he would cook and eat it. Believe it or not he succeeded in this. He dug a deep round hole between the huts, placing a bait at the bottom, and when this large bird which had been hovering around, flew into it he managed to strike it with a stick. Instantly he was up to the Cookhouse with his bird, where they gutted it, stuffed it and roasted it for Connie, who ate it with relish. He played a trick on Pat Shannon, who shared his hut. Knowing that Pat detested the sound of birds pecking upon the timber roof, Connie would throw crumbs upon it causing a veritable orgy of pecking. Pat was in the horrors with the noise. He had a red weather beaten face, and it became redder, but he never found out that Connie was responsible.

Connie, permanently hungry, used to eye Neil Goold's cabbage upon his dinner plate. Neil, who did not eat cabbage, would pass it to Connie who instantly wolfed it. He would then retire quickly to his hut, throw a double blanket across himself and lie down. *Too much exercise makes you hungry*, he would say, although in fact he was a fine footballer and a strenuous player. Inside half an hour he would sit upright. *Can it be grub time, Jim*, he would ask me. *Jesus, how can it be grub time, you*

*are asleep only half an hour. I am starved*, Connie would then say; I am starving to death. Connie's brother Charlie, worked in the Cookhouse but he was of no assistance to him.

There would be quarter loaves of bread upon the hatch for men to lift as they moved along. Connie would be eying the loaves as he approached as to which would be the biggest quarter and he would then dive upon it. The loaves were cut in such a way that what appeared to be the biggest would not be the biggest at all and Connie would feel cheated as he made his way back to his table. Connie would turn to me saying, look, *you are only a small fellow; let me have a slice of your loaf*.

I learned from Connie that while he was with George Plant in Arbour Hill Prison, Plant while seated, could place his bare feet in front of him, and have them tickled with a feather, and yet, because of his self-control, he could not be made to move them in the slightest.

We left wing people, had by this time developed our own reading circle, concentrating at first upon Connolly's works; but I also learned a good deal of Irish from Tom Lynch of Killarney. There was an educated group in this city who spoke Irish; after my release I thought I would go for the *fáinne*, and maybe I could then join them, but, between one thing and another, I never made it.

I was not into crafts in the Curragh although I made one celtic cross from matchsticks, and a silver ring from a beaten out shilling. I think I was just fascinated as to how one made these objects and, having made one, that was enough. My interest lay in reading, and, as I was now engrossed in the Connolly Group, it was entirely that sort of literature that I read. *The War for the Land*, by Brian O'Neill, which Peadar O'Donnell told me afterwards was one he wished he had written himself; it was one that took my fancy. It mentioned Matt Kent of Wexford, an old man, who was actually one of our fellow prisoners.

I read a number of Peadar's old books, *Storm*, *Adrigole*, *Islanders* and *The Gates Flew Open*. I imbibed the Communist Manifesto and all the left wing literature that I could lay hands on. The Connolly Group had already been formed by Neil Goold and it became the basis of my further education. The Soviet Union had been violently attacked by Nazi Germany in June 1941, so we all felt we should support its war effort. Russia, being drawn now into the war, formed an inspiration to the Group. While the Group had numbers of Cork men in it, it was not however Cork inspired.

We did not have Paddy Smith of Dublin, although he had been with the Brigade in Spain and had a distinct bayonet mark on the head to prove it. For whatever reason Paddy became withdrawn and did not attend our classes. All the time however we were supervised by a P.A., as distinct from other classes where P.A.'s wandered in and then went out again. Not so with us; they stayed. Someone was keen to know what we were doing. He would sit at the end of the hut; listen in, and when we rose, he left too. Johnny Nolan from New Books (6) kept us supplied, and the Staters did not interfere. I am not saying they took notes but they listened carefully. They only wanted to split the I.R.A. anyway. They shoved Goold into the Curragh when he should have been placed in Mountjoy for organising the unemployed and lying down on the streets; not indeed that that should be regarded as a crime.

His offence was of course Mountjoy material pure and simple; not Curragh

material. After a while Pearse Kelly took alarm and wrote to the Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin, Most Rev. Thomas Keogh; and whatever case he put forward, Goold, who had been almost three years in the Camp with us and was generally respected, was removed.

Máirtín Ó Cadhain never showed any interest in the left. I do not say that in any way to reflect upon him. It is said that he disagreed also with the English Campaign and had refused to sign the ultimatum to Lord Halifax; I don't know his reason for that.<sup>(7)</sup> His sole interest appeared to be old gaelic Ireland and the language, to the exclusion of all else.

Jim then turned up an interesting piece of history on the types in charge of those forties firing squads. I was talking to Danny Graney, a former British soldier, who lived in the cottages off Barrack Street afterwards. He told me that Capt. Mc Namara was in charge of the party that shot Richard Goss, and that Bonevene Murphy of Blarney Street was in charge of George Plant's execution.<sup>(7a)</sup> Both of them had been in the Free State Army since 1922 so they would be case hardened for any shooting. I asked Danny how was he so sure? *Wasn't I on it myself and didn't I know well Bonevene from Blarney Street. We grew up together* <sup>(8)</sup> His father used drive pigs down Blarney Street and Bonevene himself was born with a snout and two tiny eyes, the perfect image of a pig.

It was easy at a time like that to feel wrong footed on the issue of neutrality, I will admit. I was arrested in 1941 when others had flocked part-time into the defence forces. It seemed the patriotic thing to do. Now perhaps I was more sensitive on issues of nationality and history than some; I was not of the herd, but it does not do to be over sensitive. While I was held in the Cork Bridewell I was told that Mass would be on Sunday in the main compound. I was taken there in broad daylight to the very top under the eyes of everyone, handcuffed. I felt like a German spy: I was humiliated. Perhaps I should have refused to go, especially as the priest, a Father O'Neill from Kinsale, had a brother, Eamonn, who had been a leading Blueshirt.

Anyway, on this whole business of neutrality, I felt that if the Germans were ever to invade and occupy Ireland, they would take half of us out and shoot us. Certainly the Connolly Group would have been shot. And if England was ever driven to invasion, the likelihood was that on some pretext she would shoot the other half of us.

I noted that Commdt. Guiney in his December 1946 report, to the Provost Marshal prior to the release of the final few, described Jack Lynch, brother of Tadhg and Paddy, as a cunning type. I can only conclude that it was because, with 'Black' Dan of Belfast, he had earlier been engaged in making *poitin* within the Camp. Jack was a happy fellow and a real Dunmanway man; all his interests lay there. He was Brigade O.C Cork, with Denis Griffin as Adjutant. They were very close, and when it came to Griffin's arrest, Jack got away. Griffin put up a resistance and was fired upon, loosing a finger as a result. That was on June 5, two days after the mass internments, taking place at the rere of O'Driscoll's pub in the early hours, in Dunmanway. Incidentally the soldier principally giving evidence against him was a Private Berry; could he have been anything to the notorious Peter, of Boland's department?

After Denis Griffin's release in December 1946, we often walked out together;

just walking and walking along the road, but rarely speaking. On returning to my place, he would merely say, goodbye Jim, and proceed home. Denis was very reserved. Paddy Lynch was the third brother in the Lynch family, standing near six feet; the tallest of the family; a cheerful friendly fellow, who also did time interned.

Christy Quearney and Liam Carey from Dublin, mentioned in that official report, were both quiet self-effacing types. George Parnell did not have 'communist tendencies' as stated there, but he was a good barber. Tom Grogan was a good deal more vocal than Larry and in some ways could be quite funny. When the Soviet Union was invaded he called out; *oh, my beautiful Red Army is being attacked and my worker's paradise will be overthrown*. Denis Griffin I had known all my life; he hung in close to me. His brother Tommy was in the English Campaign; escaping back to Ireland, only barely in front of the posse, by the skin of his teeth. Tommy and his other brother Paddy also endured internment. The Griffins were good people.

Tom Doyle, late Dept. of Defence civil servant, mentioned in that report, was, in my opinion, highly intelligent and fit for any post. He later became an official in Jim Larkin's union, the Workers' Union of Ireland. His younger brother, altogether different and, to my mind, somewhat introverted, was also along with us. Brendan Behan was there too, but I had been released when he arrived from Arbour Hill Prison. He came to Cork, looked me up and followed me to my home on Pope's Quay where I was still living with my mother. He was already a hard drinker, although only 25 years of age. To pick up some money while he was here however, he wrote a piece for a Sunday newspaper about Banjo's pub on the Blarney road, where any night guards in uniform could be found drinking. It was a well known rendezvous for them, but a clanger came from Dublin about it, and Behan was very unpopular with some guards in this city as a result.

Let me come now to my eventual liberation in 1944. Numbers in our group, disenchanted and discouraged with the way national and world events had gone, and some of them blaming themselves as much as their leadership, felt that the best thing to do now was to take extended parole if it was offered. Well, in my case it was.

My mother was ill and she wished to have me home again; so home I went, to Cork, in mid-1944. The three months I had been given, expiring, I called to Collins Barracks where I was directed to this detective, Riordan.

Riordan, I could see, was a nervy type; only too anxious to be shut of me, and, fortunately, Moore was absent, or I might not have slipped off so readily.

*You are not now in the I.R.A*, he said, *so there is no point in going back*. He had already hinted at signing but I refused that. *The best thing for you then, said he, is to take my advice and go home and forget about the Curragh*.

#### POLITICAL AFTERMATH:

I had been released some time when Michael O'Riordan and myself formed the Mellows Branch of the Labour Party because we considered it to be the grouping nearest to us through its early association with James Connolly. We set up rooms in North Main Street where we ran a series of lectures; Mick spoke on the Palestinian question; while I spoke on India, and Seamus Ronayne spoke on the Irish language. We were beginning to cut a furrow in the city with our lectures, so much so that the Labour headquarters in Dublin took fright at being confronted with something that

was mildly radical and which they did not understand. Mick was expelled by Star Chamber tactics and the branch was then dissolved by a time-serving official called Luke Duffy. There was an election coming up, and, as our late lamented party was not, we could see, fielding a candidate, Mick went forward as a socialist, obtaining a very respectable number of votes; sufficient at any rate to give the city's establishment a fright. But shortly after that he moved to Dublin, and with our star attraction gone, that was a set-back for the rest of us.

It frequently happened after my release that I would require to travel from Cork to Dublin to meet Johnny Nolan at New Books in Pearse Street, but I could not afford the rail fare. Donnie Sheehan, who then worked on the rail road in Cork, would settle with me to wait at the entrance to the tunnel where the train would slow down. I could then climb on board, and Donnie would make it alright with the inspector. There was no tunnel leaving Dublin but Donnie would get me on anyway.

It was all in the family for Donnie was married to Mary Keohane, and Mick O'Riordan was married to her sister Kay. In 1940 Donnie had been seriously injured in the Sunbeam factory when he was caught by an unprotected machine which dragged him up in the air, damaging his arm and hand to a degree that when taken in for internment he was immediately discharged. At the end of the Emergency period, Donnie sought employment as a rail shunter but obviously, because of his incapacity, would not qualify for coupling wagons. Fortunately the interview board sat in Inchicore, Dublin, so a plan was cobbled whereby my brother Maurice, a fine athletic presentable fellow, travelled and went through the medical in Dublin as Donnie Sheehan. Maurice passed scrutiny with full marks as Donnie, while from that time to his retirement the real Donnie coped with his disability, and at the same time, managed in the course of his career, to successfully couple thousands of rail wagons.

Meanwhile, after much trying, I obtained employment with Universal Stores, an English furnishing outfit. I had sought my old job back from Dunlops, but you know how it is in these circumstances; I found myself barred. Even with Universal Stores, harassment, as so frequently happens, started from the Special Branch; in this case it was D.O. James Moore again. He had already taken upon himself to phone Dunlops; to phone Mr. Ryan, their manager; thus spoiling me there. Now he phoned Universal Stores in a further petty attempt to starve me out. Going in there on a Monday morning I was called to the manager's office. *I have had a visitor*, he said; *and I was told not to keep you as you are a criminal type*. He smiled then at that. *I am not paying the least attention to them*, added Mr. Murphy. *So long as you do your job here, what your views are outside is no concern of mine*.

## REFERENCES:

1. It is not widely known that his father in 1918 sought the renowned Fr. Dominic (O'Connor) Capuchin, also a Cork man, as chaplain of No. 1 Brigade I.R.A.; Fr. Dominic having then returned only the previous year from wartime chaplaincy in Serbia. At the end of the Civil War, Fr. Dominic was exiled by his church to Bend, Oregon, where he died in 1935. His friend, Fr. Albert, also exiled to Santa Barbara, died there in 1925. Both remains were re-interred in Ireland in 1958 at Rochestown monastery, Co. Cork.

Jury men, although approved by R.I.C found Lloyd George, Lord French and Ian MacPherson responsible for killing MacCurtain in his home at 1.30 a.m. They named also three inspectors, including D.I Swanzy. Sean Hegarty of Cork No. 1, forwarded by train to Joe McKelvey in Belfast, the personal 'short' of MacCurtain, and on August 23, it was used upon a golf course to assassinate Swanzy. The action however resulted in vicious attacks upon Catholic homes in Lisburn, Banbridge, Bangor and Belfast. See *The Irish Republic* by Dorothy Macardle.

2. Tomás MacCurtain was sentenced to death by hanging. Following his reprieve 5 other Republicans, McGrath, Harte Goss, Plant and O'Neill were executed by firing squad. Charlie Kerins was hanged in December 1944, and Harry White would have been hanged in December 1946. The distinction as to why hanging or shooting was directed by the authorities is unclear. Albert Pierrepoint, his father and his uncle, the official British hangman, performed all the hangings (criminal and political) since the foundation of the Irish state.

He was already in Dublin in July 1940, to hang MacCurtain, and had been enabled to appraise him through the Judas spy hole in D. Wing, Mountjoy. He was brought over to hang Kerins, and he would also have hanged White. Albert Pierrepoint died in Southport, England, in July 1992 at the age of 87. In his career he had dispatched 433 men and 17 women. He defended the noose as humane and quick; 'eleven seconds when done properly'. After retirement in 1956 he is said to have become opposed to capital punishment.

3. In those hectic few days between the High Court and the Supreme Court rejection, and within 36 hours of a grave opening, other factors may have come into play. At a function on 25 April 1992, Michael O'Connor of Macroom informed this writer that on the day prior to that fixed for the hanging, a delegation of Cork T.D's entered the office of Mr. Gerald Boland, Minister for Justice, and informed him that they would resign the Party should MacCurtain hang. They were Hugo Flynn, Sean Moylan, Sen. Dan Corkery, Ted Sullivan, Martin Corry and Sean Buckley. His Eminence Cardinal Joseph Mac Rory, very much a traditional gael, was enlisted also by Mrs. Brugha who had a sister a Reverend Mother in an Armagh convent, according to Tim Pat Coogan. While De Valera was skilled in brushing off representations, the one coming from *Ara Coeili* may have helped to save MacCurtain.

Sean MacBride's report to this writer was as follows:-

I was quite friendly with Sean T. O'Kelly. He helped me a lot at the time that Tomás MacCurtain was sentenced to death in 1940. He was very helpful at that period. He was trying to get a reprieve; he advised me to take any sort of delaying action I could in the courts, which I did. I planned the moves very carefully. I went seeking a conditional *Habeas corpus* at 3.30 in the afternoon, the courts then rising at 4 p.m. I knew that I would be thrown out. At 3.55 Gavan Duffy refused the order. I raced and lodged my appeal just before the office closed. MacCurtain was due to be hanged in Mountjoy the next day, so it was a very close shave. They tried to bring the Supreme Court together that evening, but they were unable because Murnaghan - not the present man but his uncle - was out, diplomatically maybe, walking with his dog. I think he guessed what was going to happen. Straightaway they had to postpone the execution

for a couple of days. After that I got it postponed upon one pretext or another, until eventually it was commuted to penal servitude for life. During all this period however, I kept in close contact with Sean T, Bill Quirke and others.

4. See Appendix for a summary of 1942/43 document.

5. See Sean O'Neill's story

6. Now Connolly Bookshop, 43, East Essex Street, Dublin 2, but at this time located in Pearse Street. Regularly its windows were broken by zealots.

7. Lack of social content in the programme of the I.R.A, it had been said.

7a. This conflicts with the officer named by Paddy Murphy of Dundalk.

8. Tony McNerney was told by Capt. Terry Flanagan, who had been in the I.R.A; in the International Brigade (see references in M. O'Riordan's account) and then in the Free State Army, that the officer was the late Lt. Col. Wm. Bergin, formerly of Tipperary. It remains uncertain. Another informant says that he witnessed McNamara being assaulted by a former internee at a football match.



## SEAN TALTY

OF COUNTY CLARE:



*Sean and his wife in the hill county*

*Although a sterling Republican, this 85 year old had warm things to say about some Free State personnel.*

Sean Talty is a tall quiet man. He spent much of his time behind the scenes in the Cookhouse and, therefore, may not be known to many. He returned home in December, 1943, after three and a half years of internment, to end up farming in that remote hillside country of Clare that lies midway between Milltown Malbay and Ennis.

I was born, he began, in 1911, so I am now over 80 years of age. My father's name was Patrick and my mother's was Margaret Horan. It was a great loss to me when she died. I was then only nine, a most sensitive age for that to happen. But what I remember clearly about her was her reading the local paper when it came in during the Tan war, and all the neighbours sitting there in the kitchen, listening to every word of it. You could hear a pin fall, they were that intent.

My father was a farmer, living in the townland of Dunsallagh, about four miles east of Milltown Malbay. He was not in the Movement, just a sympathiser. I was the third eldest, the first of five boys, Michael, Martin, Peter, Patrick and Joseph, and two sisters. One of my brothers was involved in the Movement but not as deeply as I was to be.

I joined the Republican Movement in the late twenties. The Cosgrave regime was still in power but it was evident that De Valera might soon be in government; that came four years later. This part of Clare has always been republican, or nationalist anyway, so joining the local unit of the I.R.A was a natural progression for a young lad like myself. We had a strong base in this locality.

We were able to bring in speakers who had been around at the time to Easter commemorations, speakers such as David Fitzgerald, Mary MacSwiney, Mrs. Sheehy-Skeffington, Moss Twomey, Jim Killeen, Mick Price and the like. Mrs. Sheehy-Skeffington used to stay with people back this road. Maud Gonne was to have come but something happened and she did not appear. Frank Ryan came, too, but mostly on Army business.

There was raiding by the C.I.D all the time in those years. T.J Ryan (1) a renowned Republican from Kildysart, south of here, on the Shannon, was arrested 21 times in six months in 1928. Another man, John Daly, was also frequently held and let go. Michael Huxley, of Cranny, was raided 12 times in 14 days. They even resorted to sending a disguised C.I.D man around to 'inspect the dumps' of the West Clare Battalion.

Peadar O'Donnell, who was editing *An Phoblacht* at that time, called it cat and mouse tactics but they kept at it. In June of that year a C.I.D man was killed when he went to open a box of explosives. Then, in reply to the beating that T.J. Ryan got, the Minister, Mr. Fitzgerald-Kenney, by way of explanation, stated that he had been kicked by one of his own cows. About this time some of the Sinn Féin people and the I.R.A leadership came together to form a political wing, Comhairle na Poblachta. It was short lived. Some meetings were held in West Clare but it never came to anything. Fianna Fáil had captured the high ground. In March, 1930, they were still persecuting T.J. Ryan; and Madame Charlotte Despard, who lived with Maud Gonne in *Roebuck House*, was sufficiently concerned to write that she personally had witnessed one such beating. At this time Sean Hogan was still held in Maryborough Jail; he had been imprisoned in 1923 for shooting a Free State soldier sent to disarm him.

In August, 1931, we had our first Saor Éire (2) meeting, with Sean Hayes as chairman. I played no part in it although a number of other meetings were held in the county. It was banned, along with many other organisations, in November, and never revived.

#### PREACHING REPUBLICANISM:

There were a lot of fellows around here who did not like Fianna Fáil for the way it had split the Movement. They were intense and very angry. I will express it this way for you. T.J. Ryan was imprisoned again under the Fianna Fáil government, having been released by De Valera in March, 1932. The first question everyone then asked was: how are you enjoying your freedom? The answer he always gave was: 'I would rather be a prisoner under Cosgrave than a free man under De Valera'. When he was asked why, he said: 'time will prove that Dev was the greatest traitor this country ever had'.

He followed on that by saying that De Valera was preaching republicanism and practising imperialism, and that was the way he would continue. He made that statement in the presence of 40 or 50 young lads; I being one of them. The older crowd were looking forward to drawing small pensions; they were welcome to them as times were rough, and any kind of an income helped them.

Our organisation however, forbade our officers, who had taken part in the Tan struggle, to sign forms for pension applicants; and, as you know, that rule was rigidly adhered to by men such as Tomás Malone, 'Machine Gun' Connor and John Joe Sheehy. But Dev was working away all the time. He armed the Broy Harriers; he more than doubled the Secret Service vote; and, in 1933, Fianna Fáil organised a separate Bodenstown, a week after the official Republican commemoration.

Frank Aiken set up the Volunteers in November, 1933, and thought that the I.R.A should join them. Their uniform was based on Casement's volunteers in Germany prior to 1916. Even under De Valera, T.J. Ryan was still being bruised. In August, 1932, he and George Gilmore were beaten badly by C.I.D in Kilrush.

I don't know if it was right for the I.R.A to become entangled with the Blueshirts; it is debatable by my own experience, anyhow. An editorial in *An Phoblacht* appealed to volunteers not to be drawn into clashes but the widespread presence of Blueshirts made it almost inevitable that there would be clashes. There were a few Blueshirts

in the village of Milltown Malbay, their head being a schoolteacher by the name of Bob Fitzpatrick. (3)

I could go through that town any hour of the day or night and pass freely and never was accosted or insulted by any of the Blueshirts, not even by the young recruits. The head I would meet, Bob Fitzpatrick, and we would have a debate, and he would stand with his shoulder up against the door: a fine stout man he was, and we would talk and discuss, and I never felt any antagonism from him. We understood each other and we felt free to enter a discussion. There was some violent action in this county but we were not a part of it.

In May, 1934, a Republican, Sean MacNamara, was shot at and wounded, and a fortnight later, Jim Glynn, who had been shot, died. Then in January, 1935, our own Máirtín Calligan, for a shooting incident, was sentenced to five years. That was the first heavy sentence under De Valera. I felt it was all misdirected involvement, but I could see there was a lot of truth in what T.J. Ryan had been saying three years before.

I was lifted in the big sweep of June, 1940, and brought to William Street garda barracks in Limerick. Then I was conveyed to Limerick Prison, where I spent a night before being taken to Cork where we were lodged in the new wing of the prison. We were there until mid-August, when around 170 of us were lorried into the Curragh. It was not even finished when we went in; the cookhouses were not properly ready and we were very hungry. But that is another story. I was not long there however, when I got notification from the medical orderly, Thackaberry, that the doctor wanted to see me. I was puzzled but I said I would go and see him anyway, as we would be there for a long time and we might as well start off that day.

The man I was introduced to in the Camp hospital was a big ball of a man whom I recognised from his brother, Bob, of Milltown Malbay, the same build and the same face, a man I had often debated with.

He asked if I was Sean Talty and I said I was. *Well, I am from Milltown Malbay and I have a letter here from my brother Bob. It seems you know him well. I do, I said. I do.*

He showed me the letter then. It started off by saying: you have a prisoner under your command, Sean Talty; and it went on to say what he thought of me, and that I was not looking good in 1939 when I had just got over an awful 'flu. He asked him to take good care of me and to see that I got enough to survive in the open. Away from politics, I was a decent sort and he was to see to me. That is a digression but it only goes to show how neighbourly he was.

#### THE MANUS O'ROURKE DOCUMENT: HIS OPINION OF RUSSELL:

George Gilmore came to Ennis on New Year's Day, 1934. It appears that this was for the Manus O'Rourke document, or Republican Congress, and not for Saor Éire 1931, which he did not favour, as he was in Arbour Hill. I said to myself that I would go to hear what he had to say. George made a speech, presided over by Sean Hayes, a county councillor from Killaloe who had presided at Saor Éire meetings three years before.

We ended up in Lally's restaurant in the evening and, by that time everything had been explained. A general Army Convention of the I.R.A had in January, 1933, adopted a social and economic programme based upon what was known as the

Manus O'Rourke document. There was no such person as Manus O'Rourke.(4)

However, there was one aspect of it I did not like because it would not work: nationalisation of land. Land was said to be unproductive but, if nationalised it could maintain a larger population with better jobs and better dwellings. A plan was being drawn up and literature on it would be circulated. The content was the same as contained in George's Sunday talk: the Republican Plan, as it was called at that time.

A few years ago a young fellow, a very intelligent chap, came here after the 1960 internment, and he asked me to search high and low for a copy of this document. I said: *what in the name of God do you want it for in this day and age?* He told me it had been discussed in the college and some of them there had thought it a wonderful document. *There is nothing wonderful about it, Michael,* I said. To cut it short, anyway, Michael went into the priesthood, and I said to myself: *that document is not going to end up in Maynooth or any other college.*

I spent four hours listening to Sean Russell in August, 1938. It was the time that Neville Chamberlain lost his umbrella in Munich. We were in a house in the convent grounds in Sligo, where Mick Silke was caretaker and living in the house. In the middle of the session I left the camp for a week as I had other commitments, departing on a Saturday evening for County Clare and returning the following Friday. We went into Sligo then and attended a *céilí* at the Town Hall. Then I went to stay with Mick Silke again and behold, wasn't Sean Russell there. I remained listening for three, maybe four hours, as he outlined his campaign.

I thought the plan to send over raw recruits was very cruel. I could get lost in the town of Ennis never mind the city of London: sending over lads with no experience, no resources and no proper training. The way he spoke you knew he had vast experience but did he not realise that in us he would be dealing with raw country lads having no practice with explosives or anything, and yet we would be expected to live like English people in London, Manchester, Sheffield and all such places.

I found Sean Russell frank and friendly. He might have been one of my neighbours at home. He would ask me what I thought and I told him. Mick Silke would glance over at me: I think he was a bit shocked that I was answering Russell freely and in such a fashion. But he listened to my opinion: he was seeking information but was not deflected from the campaign.

The camp was on the north side of Benbulbin, with hazel wood all around and an empty house where we had our meals. I can remember sleeping out on the hill one night and having a dream that I was going to roll down into the sea. That nightmare is still with me. There were up to 50 men in the camp: John Joe McGirl, a fresh faced blonde youngster; Micky Traynor, a low set, sheet metal worker from Belfast; Sean McCaughey, about whom much more would be heard, tall, dark and handsome; Dick Mulready, from Mullingar, a violin player; Willie Joe McCorry, of Belfast, and many more.

Peadar O'Flaherty was there, too, in charge of it. He was a silent man but very thorough about hygiene and keeping the place clean and properly looked after. He was a good O.C, insisting on strict discipline,; a bit extreme in that he allowed no half measures. We learned all about explosives in the camp; how to make paxo, wire

up detonators, electric coils, potassium chlorate and balloons. In the camp you learned everything off by heart as though you were back at school. There was very little discussion about the future campaign as such; there was no time for it. You spoke to the person you were sleeping beside at night, but among ourselves we did not think much of its prospects.

On arrival, we had reported in Sligo to Charlie Dolan, who had an office at the *Sligo Champion*. Jimmy, his brother, then took us over and brought us the eight miles northwards to the camp.

When the round-up commenced in 1940, Martin White, a Tan veteran, was already in. He had been O.C, succeeded by Brian Lowe, who was teaching Irish in the technical school. Joe McMahon was a national teacher in Inagh parish. Sean O'Connor was in insurance and so was I at the time. There was Brian Lowe, Sean McMahon, Sean O'Connor; De Lacy from Lisacasey, a creamery manager; Jack Hourigan. Michael Scanlan of Ennis, Jimmy Meade from Quin, Tom McNamara from Lisdoonvarna, Pierce Fennell of Carrigaholt, Paddy McNamara and Jimmy Lowe from Kilrush and myself.(5)

You ask me if the document found on Máirtín Calligan on May 7, 1940, caused the government to panic, resulting in internments? The document instructed *all Volunteers to attend to their religious duties between May 8, - May 24, and to do this in a way not to attract attention. Volunteers must not give any indication that anything unusual was afoot.*

Máirtín related to the West Clare battalion; I was with North Clare, and I never heard of that document. Along with the rest of the Clare contingent, I arrived in the new wing of Cork Jail, as I have already related on June 4, 1940.

I had no knowledge of the events following the discovery of the tunnel being dug into us on August 3, 1940, when John Joe Kavanagh was killed, Roger Ryan seriously wounded, and Connie Byrd captured. Our view was obstructed by the old prison; we overlooked the lawn. I volunteered after my arrival for the catering department. Corporal Minihan, P.A, showed us how to cut and twist the meat, turn it and put it in with a little bit of this and that to make soup. When it was nearly cooked he put three large apples into it, making a delicate stew.

The P.A's were nearly all ex-1922 men. This one was relaxing one day in the kitchen, taking it easy, with tennis shoes on. Suddenly, word came that General Costello was coming on a tour of inspection. Your man jumped up in terrible excitement. *I am ruined*, he said, *I will be stripped of my job and my uniform for having tennis shoes on.* He looked at me, then. *For the love of God leave off those boots and give them to me or I am finished.* I slipped off my boots and gave them over and he was just in time to come to attention as Costello entered.

The jail in Cork was like a hotel. You had your own room, as we called it, your bedroom: it was yours. And you had your own door which by day was never locked. You could move freely about. You could look at the nuns taking the sun and you could look across the harbour and see what was going on. You could also look from one angle of the prison out into the countryside, because at that time Cork was not spread out as it is today. All in all, we had no fault to find with Cork Jail except that, being interned, you had no idea how long you might be held.

That happy existence came to an end in late August, when the 170 men of Cork, Kerry, Clare and Limerick were transferred to the Curragh of Kildare. But, before we reached Kildare, Pierce Fennell (6) had every handcuff broken off everybody in our lorry and had them thrown out upon the road. He was a real Houdini. With a knife he sliced the canvas roof covering of the lorry, and it went blowing in the wind. Crowds of people, seeing us pass through, were sure we were recruits, or conscripts, maybe, being brought to the Curragh. You could see the amazement on their faces.

Anyway, we got to the Curragh and found it the coldest place on earth. The wind would shrivel you. That was late August and I felt cold, right through to the next summer. There was never enough food for the complement of prisoners, never enough bread, tea or potatoes.

In the internment camp in the Curragh, Charlie Dolan was behind what I call the 'coup', when Peadar O'Flaherty and the Rathmines Park former leadership arrived in from Arbour Hill and upset everything. There was a man already there, well known and well educated, Michael A. Kelly of Roscommon, who had done five years in Crumlin Road, Belfast, for the Crown Entry courtmartial.(7) He went into Clann na Poblachta afterwards. Michael and fellows like him were suspect and it is easy knowing why. He lectured in history but he had to be stopped for he knew too well his history.

#### LIFE INSIDE:

Early in December, 1940, there was a complaint against Commdt. M.J. Cummins (later replaced by Commdt. Guiney) in which Charlie Dolan played a leading part. I remember the day the issue was being voted upon. Charlie was inside his hut when I entered. I had known him since the Benbulbin days but, as I was now finished for the afternoon working in the Cookhouse, I was returning to my bunk for a rest.

'There is a meeting on, said Charlie, 'and I am keeping an eye around here'. I was surprised that Charlie was not inside at the meeting as he was one of the leading figures in getting rid of the Billy Mulligan council and installing the new one.

Things went on quietly until the occasion of the race meeting at the Curragh on Saturday, December 14. That day, we were ordered to take whatever bit of money we had, and you know we had not much, and also our belongings, and bring them to the compound. Some of us did not know what was going on. I happened to be passing by Michael A. Kelly and found him packing his books. *Going home*, I inquired? I knew them all very well because I gave out breakfast, dinner and supper in the Cookhouse. *No*, he answered, *I am not going home and neither are you. What is wrong then*, I said? *You will know soon enough*.

Come four o'clock that evening and the whole place went up in a blaze. They had packed newspapers between the vee sheeting and the weather boarding of the walls. They were tinder dry. The whole place lit up and seven big huts were destroyed. That was what the new Council gave as a first dose.

Everything had been going along fine: we had coal fires at night but, because we had lost half an ounce of butter, we were to lose everything. Well, I doubt if that is the entire story. I have still a muddle of thoughts going through my mind. Why did the Council order what they did that day? Billy Mulligan was a tolerant individual; it was wrong to unseat him.

We were driven down into the playing field, and I found myself beside Arthur Moynihan from Millstreet and, Jesus, didn't a bullet pass right through him. He was just standing talking to me with nothing in his hand. Who fired the shot? Why was he shot?

The Fire had started the trouble. We were now deprived of fuel. We lost our tunnels and one third of the Camp was burned. We had to go into the other huts. Some were not finished and we had no blankets, no beds and we had to lie on bare timber or concrete floors, with frost and snow outside. One night I was beside Sean O'Connor, a pal of mine from the Milltown parish, and Máirtín O Cadhain. Máirtín had a red shirt and he did not know whether to put the shirt across his chest or under him. I had a good tweed overcoat and trousers that I came in with. We distributed things as best we could, and we were that way for three weeks. It was my duty to call at every hut door when dinner was ready and I was instructed to so do on the Monday after the Fire. The military were all around and I did not know why. There was not a single prisoner to be found. Capt. McNamara was there with a group of soldiers. I went up, down, around, and back to where I had started and, if I did, McNamara was there in front of me at the gate.

Two mornings after the Fire young Casey came out of his hut with his mug and spoon. He passed me in the roadway, and then he was shot. He fell right in front of me, and I put my arm under him to prevent him falling. McNamara came over sharply and said; *get into the Cookhouse and mind your own business. We will attend to that.* He had the grin of a demon on his face. I went towards the Cookhouse but it was blocked by a group under Capt. Power, a small man from Co. Waterford. Rifles were stuck in my face, but Power said; 'leave him go', so I continued on in. That was how Barney Casey died, there was no reason for it, no one in front of him and no one behind him. He had just turned left out of the D. Line, close to the Cookhouse when he was shot. Casey's blood had been pumping out and had covered my shirt, but I had no alternative but to allow it dry there as the bread and tea had to be handed out. They said of course, that young Casey had gone to charge the gate; but I ask you, one man with a mug and spoon in his hand!

In the 'Icebox', the toilet, was a metal bowl below at the door, exposed to the world. There was no furniture of any description, no bits of cloth, no covering. I had a good overcoat, as I said; and, as I was out early, I left it, hoping it would help to warm another man. Slowly but surely matters got back to near normal. We got back palliasses which lay upon the floor, no beds as such for two years. And the lights were left on in the huts all night.

We refused to take their coal, however, on principle. Later, of course, that fuel question was ironed out and turf was accepted. But, in the weeks immediately after the Fire, accepting and drawing the coal from the Staters became an important test of principle.

The dissidents, under Tadhg Lynch and around a dozen Cork men (8) in Hut C.1, took the coal and that was the commencement of a serious split which, over a year and a half, grew wider until No. 1 Group of Liam Leddy, the original group, was pared down to 200 men, while No. 2 Group, under Pearse Kelly (who was not even in the Camp at this time) grew to equal it.

I was in No. 1 Group, the Liam Leddy side, until I was released in December, 1943, with Charlie Dolan. I had friends, plenty of them, on what became Pearse Kelly's side but I could not talk to them. I thought it very strange but what could you do when it was pointed out that they had let you down. When I was doing my cook-house rounds from hut to hut the P.A's would be there and, as a matter of course, I saluted them and they saluted me.

I will here tell you a simple story about Jimmy O'Brien and myself. He was Transport Manager at Shannon Airport later. During the hard days of the 'Icebox' campaign, I had Jimmy with me, assisting in giving out the food to each hut. They still did not trust you to be out by night. There was this P.A, a dour and sulky looking fellow, and he was leading in front in the dark. At a quiet spot he stopped, and seemed to hitch up his belt; but what was it? A packet of fags fell out. He walked on, ignoring the cigarettes he had slipped to me. That showed a bit of humanity.

I have already talked about Bob Fitzpatrick, whose brother was a doctor in the Curragh, and how he wrote and told him to look after me so that I would come out alive. I was three and a half years in the Cookhouse in the Curragh, from August 1940 until December 1943, and I did not find anything wrong with anyone. Maybe a P.A would be there a fortnight, before he would begin to get to know who you were passing into the Cookhouse. Then he would salute me, and I would answer 'fine day', and that sort of thing. Never did I find that it paid dividends to adopt a hostile attitude to a policeman or a soldier. A garda once said to me; *we have to do our duty. We don't mean to injure you unless provoked.* That is how they see us, anyway.

There was a Lieut. Carroll from Kerry, a young man who was said once to have been in the I.R.A and who was considered a right stickler when he dealt with our O.C. I know this will conflict with some of the accounts that you will hear, but Paddy and Sean Mulcahy, two right Republicans from Limerick city, never had a word to say against Carroll. He would come in for the nightly check-up, when the 30 men in the hut formed up in two lines for a count. You would see his lips moving the way he would be counting to himself. Sometimes he would call me Sean Salty, by mistake, and there would be a titter from the lads, knowing I worked in the Cookhouse.

McNamara, however, was a bad egg; he was the guy who was present when young Casey was killed. Commdt. Guiney would come in on his own and he would walk around, for all the world like he was looking after sheep on the land. He looked just like a farmer. Ted Moore from Mooncoin, who was out in all the Troubles, was friendly with Guiney; they would often walk around together. He had a nephew there, Dave, but he did not stay too long. He turned out to be a great footballer later.

We were interned because we were supposed to be aligned with Hitler. Quite untrue; but it was never brought out in public that we were not Nazis, that we were not on Hitler's side. Away from that, altogether, may I ask the question, was our own leadership united? Was the top brass united? I do not know. There were so many arrests: and the Movement was so over-run that it was difficult for them to maintain a coherent policy.

Seamus O'Donovan and myself had many chats. He said he would not like to



fault the leadership, either inside the Camp or outside. He found himself interned like everyone else although he was not convinced, in my opinion, as to why he should be there. He was not a member of the Council, although at one time he had held a high rank, and he had very little come and go with our top brass. In some ways he was an isolated individual, yet willing to talk to anyone although our top brass rarely spoke to him. Roger McHugh, a lecturer in English at U.C.D, was in a somewhat similar limbo.

Listening, however at night to the chat within the hut, from Ó Cadhain, Seamus Burke of Ballinrobe, Gearóid Ó Mhistéil, Bob Clements and a few more, you would swear to God you were in a university. Mattie O'Neill described it on television once, as 'Tintown University' and so it was. But that was all disrupted by the burning of the huts and what came after. Leaving the light on all night while we tried to sleep affected many of us: it has left its mark on my sight to the present day.

John Joe Maxwell from Leitrim was a light-hearted fellow; always with the bright side out, even when afterwards he went on a prolonged hunger strike. Paddy Kinnane from Upperchurch, a cousin of the Bishop of Waterford, was a big, heavy man, and yet he could step dance as lightly as a bird. He was a Clann T.D. later. Pat Duggan, from near Toomevara, was another Tipperary man, a farmer. Sean Harrington from Kerry, was Chief of Staff for a short period in 1942, when the leadership outside was being knocked like ninepins. He was a quiet man in the Camp; sliding about silently. Mixie Conway from Clonmel was music mad; playing classical pieces on the violin. He would be so absorbed in his sheets in the dining hall, where he would practise when meals were not being served, that he would hardly be aware of anything else.

In some huts where a nightly Rosary was said, Walter Mitchell, although a Protestant, dropped on his knees like everyone else. Walter was a veteran of the Tan struggle: his elder brother, Sean, travelled to Cork at that time, and became O.C of Cork No. 1 Brigade. That says a lot for him. 'Pa' Weymes of Mullingar, was a bookie's clerk and a droll character in his own right.

Paddy Dalton, Tipperary town, was also a bookie's clerk. He lost an arm in the 1914 war but he returned to Ireland and fought in the Tan War and the Civil War. Now, in the forties, he was in with us. Dick Mulready of Mullingar: I mentioned in connection with the camp at Benbulbin. A violinist, also, he was in with us, as was his brother, Sean. Joe Donegan, from Newcastle, Co. Dublin, was a farmer. Interned with him was his employee, Tom Molyneux. Joe Crowe of Limerick was a fine, easy-going man; he was O.C in Cork Jail while we were there. He was a very solid man with his feet on the ground.

When Ó Cadhain was dismissed from teaching in Co. Galway because of his activities, Joe invited him to Limerick to give talks. That was some years before internment. Peadar MacAndrew was our dancing teacher, a big red-bearded man who taught us Irish dancing. He was a special diet man, an ounce of bread and a pint of milk every two hours.

John Joe Sheehy and 'Machine Gun' Johnny Connor, found themselves interned in February, 1941.<sup>(9)</sup> They tried to bring the two sides in the split in the Camp together but, although of great standing within the Movement, they failed. They had

been in the No. 1 group, Liam Leddy's side, but they then transferred to Pearse Kelly.

Cathal Goulding was always late coming to the Cookhouse for his breakfast: at first it was brought to his hut but that ceased and it was left there. It was thought he slept in, because he was inclined to read very late at night up in the corner of the hut where he had his bed. He remained on Liam Leddy's side.

Johnny Power, of Waterford, who had fought with the International Brigade in Spain, worked with me in the Cookhouse, as did Mick Hughes of Co. Galway, and Tony Ruane of Bohola, another veteran of the Tan War.

I remember Mick Galvin, a journalist from Clohane, near Tralee; Andy Redmond, from Castlebar; Mick Egan, from Shanaglish, near Gort, and Paddy Kelly from the same parish; also Jack Murray, the Ennistymon shoemaker, yes, I can see them all. Where are they now? All but, maybe, two of the names I mentioned above are gone, *ar shlí na firinne. Go ndeantar trochaire ortha go léir.*

When eventually it came to my release from internment, I would have preferred to have remained for my fourth Christmas, although I suppose I was lucky. There would be some there for two and three Christmases after me. Anyway, it was on December 3, 1943, that I received a train pass back to Co. Clare and my own home. I think it was Sergt. Meaney from Kilmihil, whom I had known through the Glendine Coursing Club, who spoke for me. I believe he was instrumental in my release.

## REFERENCES:

1. T.J Ryan was reported 'wandering' in Scotland in 1958

2. Saor Éire was an entirely I.R.A concept of which David Fitzgerald of Cahir, located at 44 Parnell Square, was secretary. It advocated 'a united front of workers in towns and cities, of small farmers and agricultural workers, declaring that the community of interest of these classes and common pressure against British Imperialism in Ireland and its native allies should make them inseparable friends'.

The foundation congress of Saor Éire was held on September 26-27, at the Iona Hall, North Great Georges Street, Dublin. It was attended by 150 delegates. An attempt to hold it in the Abbey Theatre or the Peacock Theatre was refused. Its objectives were the abolition of private ownership of lands, fisheries and minerals; a state bank; state control of imports and exports, with wide state support for the creation of industrial workers' co-operatives. It gained neither public support nor I.R.A enthusiasm. When Fianna Fáil came to power Saor Éire was quietly forgotten.

The members of the National Executive were as follows: Sean McGuinness\* (Sub. F. Breathnach), Sean Hayes (Clare), May Laverty\* (Belfast), Helena Moloney, Sheila Dowling, Sheila Humpheries\*, David Fitzgerald (Tipperary), M. Hallisey (Kerry), M. O'Donnell (Offaly), Pat McCormack (Antrim), Tom Kenny (Galway), L. Brady (Laois), Nicholas Boran (Kilkenny), John Mulgrew\* (Mayo) Tom Maguire\* (Westmeath).

Asterisks denote those who later signed the manifesto of Republican Congress.

3. De Valera was preparing to throw off the yoke of the Labour Party with whom he was in coalition and go for another election. Sensing that additional Republican support was required he sacked Col. David Neligan, head of the 'Oriell House gang', as the C.I.D were called, in December, 1932, (while reappointing him to a higher executive grade in the Land Commission) and took a full page advertisement for Fianna Fáil in *An Phoblacht*, prior to the election of February, 1933, when he obtained an overall majority. *An Phoblacht* adopted a self-congratulatory tone for the occasion. It was followed by a new pensions act, giving annual allowances ranging from £30 to £100. Eoin O'Duffy, Chief of Police, was removed in February. He was offered a civil service post at an equal level of salary but refused it.

The evidence is clear that the Republican leadership, despite having a galaxy of talent, had no clearly defined objective throughout the thirties. De Valera, on the other hand, had; and in May, 1933, after moving Neligan and O'Duffy, gave a clear and sombre warning when he said: *there are people who will never be satisfied until there is a Republic for the whole of Ireland. But what they are not entitled to is to make an attack by force on the majority of the people.* The speech was made in Leinster House upon the occasion of the removal of the Oath of Allegiance.

4. The document was published in February, 1934, possibly in an attempt to pre-empt the formation after March of Republican Congress, Widespread nationalisation with centralised control was proposed. It was subjected to a severe analysis by Bishop Kinnane of Waterford.

5. The lists of persons does not purport to include all.

6. See Pierce Fennell's account.

7. The Belfast Brigade had plans to lift their O.C Eddie McCartney, who was serving 10 years for an abortive raid, carried out in the hope of nabbing 150 rifles from the arsenal at

Campbell College on December 27, 1935. The rifles had been removed a short time before the raid, and the police had been alerted and waiting in the gate lodge. This pointed in a certain direction bringing in its trail calamitous events for the Brigade. In the complex of the buildings, the eight I.R.A. men, firing wildly, got lost and were lucky to emerge with no casualties and with only four arrests later. One of them, Rooney, was cool enough, standing at a tram stop, to allow himself to be checked over by the police without discovery, though they lifted him later.

To help uncover the leak O.C. Tony Lavery directed Furey, Hugh Keenan and John Monaghan, three of the raiders, to be defended, resulting in their acquittal. To McCartney, refusing to recognise the court, Lord Justice Best said; *I have no power to order you to be whipped but I have power to impose a very heavy sentence.*

Recognition of the court by the three caused consternation at G.H.Q. in Dublin, with the result that Lavery was called to a courtmartial at Crown Entry on April 25, 1936. The court-martial, upstairs in the Craobh Rua Club, was presided over by Jim Killeen, Adjutant General, and Michael Kelly, of Roscommon. Present with Lavery was the entire Northern leadership; Sean McCool of Donegal, John McAdams of Derry, Mike Gallagher of Tyrone, Jimmy Steele, Charlie McGlade and Liam Rice of Belfast. Shortly after 3 p.m., acting on a tip-off, the R.U.C. swooped, with hatchets straight through the door, and arrested the entire personnel of the meeting.

They were arraigned in July before Lord Chief Justice, Sir William Moore, who said; *You will have as fair a trial as you can have under British law. If you do not recognise the court you will have to have my leave before you speak.* They remained silent. Sentences of six years down to two years, under the archaic Treason felony Act, gave them ample time to rue their rashness in coming together for such a top heavy meeting.

Following this disaster, the Army in Belfast did its sums and decided who the culprit was. In January 1937, Joe Hanna of the Brigade staff was courtmartialled in a club near Bow Street, found guilty, taken out to waste ground and shot.

Master of Arts, consummate reader and economics boffin, Michael A. Kelly, served close upon five years in Crumlin Road, returning early in 1940 to the Free State only to be promptly interned.

8. See Seamus Ronayne's account

9. See Tony McInerney's account

## CONVERSATIONS WITH MOSS TWOMEY:



Maurice Twomey

In 1959 this writer had long conversations at his home with Maurice Twomey, Chief of Staff of Óglaigh na h-Éireann from 1926 to 1936. He had succeeded Frank Aiken, Chief of Staff, from 1923 to November 1925, and would be in turn be followed by Sean Mac Bride, Tom Barry, Mick Fitzpatrick and Sean Russell.

### Michael Collins and the Assassination of Sir Henry Wilson, June 1922:

Twomey had no new information on this action, but referred to correspondence in the newspapers at the time and to Florence O'Donoghue's book on Liam Lynch published in 1954. The inference then was that Collins ordered the London assassination, which caused the Free State to attack the Four Courts six days later, but that its execution had been delayed. The Republicans in the Four Courts under Rory O'Connor denied complicity, while possibly hoping that it would bring the Free State back hammer and tongs against the British.

**John Mc Peake:** Mc Peake, 'tis said was the machine gunner who from the armoured car, killed Collins; although Twomey did not believe that. He returned on release after August 1928, to his native Scotland. The shadowy figure of Free Stater Emmet Dalton was also under suspicion.

**T. Derrig and Twomey 1923:** He told a good story of himself and Tom Derrig, later F.F. Minister, when brought to Oriel House, Westland Row, in April 1923. Derrig leaped from the lorry hoping to escape, but was caught at the station. He had been shot at; inside, he was shot at again and he lost an eye resulting from a hammering. Both he and a third man got a very bad beating although Twomey was not molested. They were questioned, in the knowledge that a slip could send them 'to Clondalkin', meaning, shot out of hand in the then countryside.

**The I.R.A Convention of 1925 and Frank Aiken:** This was the first held since March 1922. It was presided over by Patrick Rutledge, and was attended by such notables as Mike Kilroy, Sean Lemass and Oscar Traynor. Standing Orders, drafted by Aiken and adopted then, governed the Army for decades afterwards. Aiken probably drafted all of them, including S.O 24, forbidding the recognition of Free State courts. Aiken had put a lot into preparing for the Convention, assisted by Peadar O'Donnell and others. He was particularly adamant on updating the Standing Orders so that they would give a new and more active thrust to policy.

Twomey played no part in these preparations, having arrived hurriedly in Dublin on the night mail from Co. Cork. He had remained friendly with Aiken since the Civil War ended, often meeting him at Dr. Jim Ryan's office, or at a house in Mespil Road.

During the Civil War both had often slept together; Aiken then running over in private discussion with him constitutionalist ideas, such as an appeal to the *active citizens of the Republic*, for a 'verdict' on the Civil War. In 1923 Kevin O'Higgins referred to Aiken as a mad dog, so the term is not a new one.

**Aiken Removes Files:** Aiken, while under suspicion following the Convention of 1925, still had access to Headquarters files. He copied many of these documents, and was able afterwards in F.F. government to use an extract against Tom Barry who was out of Óglaigh na h-Éireann from 1923 until 1932. When challenged to publish the document in full however, he hesitated to do so, as it would reflect against others then in F.F. These files, Twomey added, remained intact at a headquarters house in Mountjoy Square until 1936, but what happened to them afterwards would be hard to say. (Intact files were found in a cellar of Twomey's own shop after he had departed; there whereabouts now is unknown.)

**Patrick Rutledge:** from Mayo, later F. F. Minister, had been a good man. When F.F. was formed in 1926 he might not have joined them but quailed as he would have been invited then to lead Sinn Féin. He joined F.F. as the lesser of two evils.

**Denis Allen of Wexford:** was much thought of - betrothed? - to Maire Comerford, but fell from favour when he accepted criminal status after an incident in March 1926. He joined F.F. on his release and was soon a T.D. in Wexford where his son also was a T.D. later.

**Jack Keogh's Rescue:** Commdt. Jack Keogh of Ballinasloe had been sentenced by O'Shaughnessy, a vindictive judge, to 30 years in 1924. Using a hijacked van belonging to Clerys, George Gilmore entered Dundrum Asylum in February 1926 and rescued him. He survived to farm extensively later. He was arrested briefly in the forties on a land charge, but remained consistently a Republican until his death in the fifties.

**De Valera:** De Valera was quite adamant in choosing the Free State road to the Republic in 1926. Anything else would be tantamount to revolution and he had done with revolutions, he said. Of his lieutenants later on, Lemass would be the one least concerned in coercing Republicans.

**Art Ó Conchubhair:** He succeeded De Valera in 1926 as 'President of the Republic'. Twomey was not keen on the Second Dáil masquerade.

Ó Conchubhair, although a nice man, made a milk and water president. Twomey never forgave him for accepting a judgeship.

**Assassination of Kevin O'Higgins, Sunday, July 10, 1927:** While it was first thought by the I.R.A. that it was the 'Mutineers' of 1924, or 'O'Duffy's crowd', it transpired quickly that it was an unofficial action by a 3 man I.R.A. party. Twomey, as C.S., would clearly not have approved, and within days he would have known names. He did not disclose them to this writer; two of them being then living.

**Dev and Sean T. at Markievicz Funeral:** The three Commissioners representing Dublin Corporation refused the Mansion House or the rotunda of the City Hall for a lying-in-state for Madame de Markievicz, so she lay instead in the building known as the Rotunda at the head of O'Connell Street. De Valera was appointed to give the oration later in Glasnevin Cemetery. The funeral procession on Sunday, July 17, 1927, was huge and impressive, although a strong cordon of Free State soldiers surrounded the Republican Plot, while men of the 'Oriel House gang' mingled with the crowd. Afterwards Twomey engaged in conversation with Dev and Sean T. O'Kelly. Discussing three impending new restrictive Bills on political activity; two of them designed to force acceptance of the Oath and entry into the Dáil; *Well, of course,* said Dev, *if these are implemented it will mean the end so far as we are concerned. Oh no, not at all,* said Sean T; puffing himself up: *I don't think so; not at all; not at all.* The two of them then departed under police guard as the I.R.A was supposed to have threatened them!

**Jinks, Traynor and the June 1927 Election:** After the June election the 44 F.F members presented themselves at Leinster House, but upon refusing the Oath, were not admitted. On reconsidering the position the oath was 'taken' on August 11 by signing the register presented by the Clerk of the Dáil, and entering. (The ostensible reason was to oppose the three very restrictive bills, one of which a new Public Safety Act, had been passed the previous day.) At this point Oscar Traynor, still a member of Sinn Féin, sought permission to bring on their 5 members which could have caused a change of government, but that proved impossible. Twomey says that in that case, with F.F and Labour joined, Tom Johnson, a Scotsman, would have been President of the Executive Council, but Johnson sought a guarantee that the I.R.A would not embarrass him. The proposition was put to the I.R.A by Gerald Boland. The opportunity however did not arise as S.F would not co-operate. Alderman John Jinks of Sligo, a member of the Redmonite National League, was persuaded to vote F.F thus creating with Labour, and six others of his party, a slender majority. At the last moment he imbibed too much drink in a hotel in Harcourt Street, being encouraged in this by Major Cooper of Markree Castle and R.M Smyllie, and so failed to present himself.

While F.F increased their vote to 57 at the September election, a coalition of Independents and Farmers kept Cumann na nGael in power until February 1932\*.

**Gerald Boland:** Twomey describes Boland as always a *pacifist* (with qualifications). In 1923 he recalls him being interested in Buddhism, about which he had read a lot. He was inclined to be bitter and irascible later on. He was particularly opposed to the I.R.A around the time of the assassination of Kevin O'Higgins in July 1927. Twomey jokingly suggested to a member of F.F that perhaps Boland was responsible; in F.F circles the action was at first attributed to 'O'Duffy's crowd'. Twomey treated these allegations as a joke although he remembered Boland swearing vengeance on individual Free State ministers, *that they would be seen swinging from lamp posts yet.* Boland and others like Eamonn Donnelly often 'egged on' the I.R.A in those years.

\* See *Chronology 1924* for more

**Twomey's Arrest at Crooked Wood:** This links secret agent Sean Harling (See *Curious Journey* and *Harry*), as Harling, although not in the I.R.A., carried the message from the call house and it appeared when examined, to have been tampered with. Twomey was driven to the appointed place some miles out of Mullingar by taxi, and was there arrested by Oriel House detectives awaiting him. This, and other matters, having come to light, the I.R.A. later attempted to shoot Harling in Dartry Road, but the plan misfired and Volunteer Tim Coughlan was shot dead. Harling was whisked away by Neligan to the U.S.; returning after a few months, he was given a post as a government messenger. (It must be added that his own account of past activity in *Curious Journey* is unreliable.)

**Mick Price and Moneylending Raids:** Price, who initiated money lending raids upon Dublin pawnbrokers, had been in the British Army in Egypt in 1916, when he mutinied. He was given a severe field punishment and sent back to England. He came to Ireland then and fought in the Tan struggle and Civil War. Twomey did not agree with the raids, and neither did many in the Army. Mick had a brother, Charlie, who was also active. His sister, Leslie, married Tom Barry, and was later in charge of the Irish Red Cross.

**Another Convention in Clontarf in 1929:** Marked men travelling from local areas could give away the location of a convention. In this case there was carelessness when some entered over the rear garden wall of a private house in Clontarf and the guards were called. Quick thinking by *bean a tighe* elicited from her the story that she was having a house party.

**An Phoblacht:** Terry Ward was a dental mechanic who, in the early thirties, was brought from Derry, being encouraged to come by Frank Ryan. *An Phoblacht* lost money hand over fist as a result of the many seizures. Alphonsus Farrell of Longford was the printer and owner; he was not a Republican but a strong believer in the right of expression, holding Ryan and Ward in high regard. He had a brother, a solicitor, who used to check the paper and complain that 'every line is sedition', but Alphonsus would set it up nonetheless. The first editor was Patrick Little, an academic and later F.F. Minister; followed by Peadar O'Donnell, Frank Ryan, Terry Ward, and Donal O'Donoghue. Assistant Editors were Geoffrey Coulter, Hannah Sheehy-Skeffington, Liam Mac Gabhann and Lyle Donaghy.

When the end came they owed Farrell a lot of money, much of which was never paid. Sean Russell, who was unconcerned about propaganda generally, saw the need for *An Phoblacht* and was sorry to see it go.

**Frank Ryan:** was noticeably deaf but a fine speaker. One of his principal U.C.D. lieutenants was Con Lehane; a promising young man from Belfast, then doing law.

**Peadar O'Donnell's Agitations:** They frequently existed more as figments within his head or as names upon paper. As an instance, the Working Farmers' Convention in Galway in 1931, badly let down the I.R.A., but on such occasions O'Donnell would merely shrug his shoulders and go on organising.

Saor Éire was another case where public meetings called, gathered only small attendances. As a result, the I.R.A. was dispirited and felt inclined to push its military policies for which it always had a resolute following.



**T.J. Ryan of Cranny, Co. Clare.** Constantly arrested and then released in the cat and mouse period of the Cosgrave regime; Twomey described him, as a born nihilist. On Spike Island in 1921, where Twomey first met him, he stayed in the wildest hut in the camp because he liked the sort of people in it. For meals, men were provided each with a basin, a knife and spoon. But Ryan's hut destroyed all of their basins, save two, preferring, like Arabs, to eat communally.

**Peadar O'Donnell**, in *An Phoblacht* played up the Ryan arrests, while Ryan enjoyed the publicity. Around 1950, Ryan was reported wandering in Scotland, whereupon, Twomey thought, that he was returned, to be looked after in Co. Clare.

**Maryborough Escape Plan:** Master of prison escapes - Mountjoy (November 1925), Dundrum (February 1926), George Gilmore had in mind for later in 1926, to complete the hat trick with a scheme to lift long term men, left overs from the Civil War, John McPeake of Glasgow, (6 years), John Hogan of Clare) (life), John Downey of Co. Galway, (10 years), Matt Hughes of Galway (3 years), Pat Dunleavy of Co. Galway, (3 years), John Maguire of Co. Donegal (3 years). Whether they would all have been accessible within the prison, and prepared to go, is unclear. Rather than become fugitives, the shorter term men might have preferred to remain.

An extraordinary link in the scheme was the Free State officer, Capt. James Murray, convicted in July 1925 for the murder of military policeman Joe Bergin at Milltown Bridge, near Newbridge, in a particularly brutal manner, touched upon elsewhere. Murray was a 'murder gang' man, who may have been one of those who killed Noel Lemass and other uncharted killings of the 1923 period. Sentenced to life, he died in Maryborough in July 1929. In the early spring of 1926, Gilmore however linked up with Murray inside the jail, making him privy to the plan. He had found this necessary, as Murray was so placed that he would have found out anyway.

Evidently he entered enthusiastically into the scheme - the details of which we do not now have - but it entailed passing out messages in code, to which the I.R.A. replied, using a code but backdated a week in order to mislead Murray; not to double cross, Twomey said, but simply to mislead. However the plan fell through for other reasons, and all of the prisoners came to be released in the normal way after serving their time. John Hogan and Con Healy (the latter imprisoned August, 1927) had to await F.F. They were released in March 1932.

**Fianna Fáil and the Annuities:** Twomey backed Peadar O'Donnell in his campaign to withhold the Annuities but he warned him that F.F. would take it over and use it as their political weapon. Sean Hayes, F.F. councillor in Clare and supporter of O'Donnell, called a public meeting for Ennis in 1930, extensively covered in *There Will Be Another Day* on page 94. Dev mounted the platform and proclaimed, 'yes, we will hold the Annuities'. From that moment it was F.F. gospel and the I.R.A. lost control of the campaign. The Annuities and 'Coercion' brought F.F. to power.

**De Valera and the Statute of Westminster:** When the Statute of Westminster\* was passed in parliament in 1931, Twomey met accidentally one day Michael

\* See: *Ireland Since the Famine*: F.S. L. Lyons.

Comyn, senior counsel, one of De Valera's constitutional advisers. *Let the boys know, he told Twomey, that we can have the Republic without firing a shot. I have prepared a minute for the Chief on the Statute.* Twomey had already read the text of the Statute, but expressed interest in the memo; Comyn immediately promising him a copy, which never arrived. From this conversation, Twomey deduced that Dev developed the Document No. 2 line which, in a private meeting with Twomey after coming to power in 1932, he stated he would follow. He considered that in 1921, holding two positions, as President of the Republic and as President of Sinn Féin, to have been a great mistake, as it tied the President to the destiny of the Party.

He refrained from going to London for the Treaty negotiations as it gave him freedom of manoeuvre; the delegates had been instructed to report back before signing, but they signed without reporting back. At the time of these conversations, Twomey considered De Valera had acted correctly in not attending the negotiations in London. Heads of state, he said, do not attend Treaty negotiations; they appear only for the final signings. Maurice Twomey considered that Britain had introduced the Statute to accommodate two of the rising stars of Empire; De Valera and General Hertzog of South Africa. (However, it germinated at the 1926 Imperial Conference, receiving a polishing in 1929 and its final format at the 1930 Conference, at all of which times the Free State delegation played an important part).

**I.R.A Conventions: Where Held:** The 1927 Convention was held in the St. Teresa's Theatre, Clarendon Street, a building that is still there. The 1931 Convention was held in a lovely house, Walshe's of Templeogue, opposite the bridge. 1932 was held in the Royal Hotel, Glendalough. 1933 was held in a ballet school, above the Home Market, at St. Stephen's Green. 1934 was held in the Queen's Hotel, Dalkey.

**Leitrim was Strong on Republican Matters.** Twomey recalls a public meeting in Drumshanbo organised by Sean O'Farrell, with a great husting, and with colourful banners and flags produced from Land League days.

**Strength of the I.R.A:** At this time around 1928, the political police from Oriel House were concerned who they raided as they did not rightly know who was F.F and who was still I.R.A. The F.F defections had denuded Sinn Féin completely and hurt the I.R.A; but the I.R.A, being based upon the youth and the ongoing rural and urban agitation, soon built up again. By 1931 they had an efficient organisation which became even better in the succeeding three years. They were right to back the F.F bid for power in 1932 and 1933, which F.F could not have won without the nationwide backing that they got; but Republicans were wrong to think that De Valera would do their job for them, or that they could force him by, as Peadar O'Donnell expressed it, snapping at his heels.

De Valera had a political agenda which emerged eventually as the Ireland of today (Twomey was speaking of the Ireland of 1958, which he saw as unsatisfactory in the light of Liam Lynch, his great mentor, of Pádraig Pearse, whom he could quote extensively, and of fellow Cork man Terence Mac Swiney: *unsatisfactory, culturally, economically and politically*).

\* Touched upon elsewhere

In retrospect he regretted I.R.A. involvement against the Blueshirts; H.Q. had twice cautioned against this early in 1934\*. He regretted 'other provocations' which he did not go into, although he could have been referring to three unnecessary shootings in this part of Ireland. These 'provocations' gave F.F. the excuse they needed to turn against the I.R.A.

They had already siphoned off support for the I.R.A. by the Pension Acts of 1933 and 1934; designed for that purpose, inasmuch as they embraced Civil War 'veterans', who at that time were mostly still under the age of 40; and, as Twomey expressed it, a ten shilling note weekly represented a useful increase in income at a time when the average rural man's annual income was under a hundred pounds. A minor factor was *An Phoblacht's* reference to them as 'the Pensioners'.

**Sean Russell:** Russell and Sean Mac Bride, although both on H.Q. staff, did not get along; Mac Bride frequently riling Russell about his 'organisation within an organisation'. Russell was adept at this, and at keeping his real movements a secret.

**Sean Mac Bride:** Peadar O'Donnell considered that Mac Bride shone in liaison with continental revolutionaries. He enjoyed being abroad and gave a good impression of the Irish movement.

**G.H.Q. and Socialism:** Twomey considered that G.H.Q. was ahead of the Army on questions of socialism, while the Army was ahead of the people. Small anti-socialist knots existed within the I.R.A., personified in Dick Batterberry of Waterford. Belfast Republicans generally were anti-socialist. Twomey emphasised that socialism for them meant a more revolutionary approach than Second International or Labour Party socialism. Twomey himself would have been considered moderate at this time.

**Sean Mac Bride:** He was cordial with Mac Bride, who was Director of Intelligence. He would not agree that Mac Bride was well disposed to any F.F. Minister, or that he expected any favours from that quarter. He was equally adept at politics or at soldiering when it suited him. Twomey first met him in Mallow, in August 1922, when he was aged 18, wearing a Homburg hat and a tight fitting jacket, which Twomey considered much in advance of his age.

**Twomey and Free State Army:** Prior to taking power in 1932, he said, the F.F. attitude had been that we had too large an army. Twomey did not favour a mercenary, or paid, army. In the proper circumstances we should rely upon a volunteer force which might develop from what is now termed national service.

**On Staff of I.R.A. in Early Thirties:** Maurice Twomey, C. S.; Tom Daly (brother of executed Charlie, and May of Kiltallagh, east of Tralee) AG; succeeded after ill-health, by long distance cyclist from Longford, Jim Killeen; Sean Russell, Q.M.G.; Sean Mac Bride, Director of Intelligence; Peadar O'Donnell, Mick Price, George Gilmore, Mike Fitzpatrick, Donal O'Donoghue, Frank Ryan, (with others) were staff members.

**Twomey and Frank Aiken in 1932:** Some of the H.Q. staff were in session over Phil Ryan's at 43 Usher's Quay early in March following the F.F. victory. Phil Ryan was an uncle of Monsignor Ryan of Rome, a papal secretary. Upstairs therefore remained a safe resort for meetings until 1942, when it was sold. There was speculation by Twomey that Aiken would contact him, which sure enough he did, through a message by Róisín O'Doherty; ostensibly it was to inquire who were the

official I.R.A in Arbour Hill as there were other unaffiliated prisoners there. He met Aiken who gave an assurance that the prisoners, around 20, would be released on the morrow. Aiken then inquired what the I.R.A position would be in the new set-up whereupon Twomey became wary. Aiken then suggested that they go back to the Cease Fire proposals of 1923. *Now Frank*, said Twomey, *when did you dream this one up?* He reminded him of the obstacle created to any such notion by the 1925 Army Convention which had accepted proposals put forward by Aiken at that time. The subsequent discussion did not proceed in a fruitful way. De Valera was sufficiently sure of his position, even in 1932, that whatever were the proposals for co-operation that the two men might have put to him, he could reject them.

**Private Meeting: Twomey and G. Gilmore with De Valera:** De Valera did not entirely rely upon Aiken's report of his meeting with Twomey. He was anxious to hear for himself what the I.R.A stance would be following Fianna Fáil's victory.

In March 1932, shortly after the election which brought him to power, De Valera requested, through Senator Bill Quirke, a meeting with the leadership of the I.R.A. Maurice Twomey and George Gilmore met him at the residence of Dr. Farnan, a friend of long standing, at 5 Merrion Square.

He spoke at great length until interrupted by Gilmore. Was his objective now a Republic or Document No. 2? The substance of his answer was that he would be satisfied with Document No. 2.

*We cannot have a Republic*, he said, *until we get the Six Counties, and neither you or we have a solution for that.* The office of Governor General he would reduce to the status of a Sean na Scuab (old brush), as he quickly and pointedly did.

Gilmore considered that at that time the broad policies of the two organisations hardly differed. Twomey observed that the 'wave of public support' which F.F had garnered enabled them to move ahead without the I.R.A. They would gladly have found a place for it provided it accepted the political programme enshrined within Document No. 2. Twomey was not to meet De Valera again; there were no further meetings between them. *Were there any cracks within F.F resulting from their moving against the I.R.A? No, apart from the Hales of West Cork, there were no cracks: it was monolithic.*

**Cumann Poblachta na h-Éireann Party 1936:** The party was launched early in 1936, and failed in two bye-elections in August; in Wexford and Galway, to attain more than a derisory vote. It was initially intended, Twomey explained, to rally Republican opinion. *Mac Bride would postulate that we must offer an alternative to F.F.*

Twomey felt however that each move by F.F, of cutting the ties with Britain, blurred the issue further. Even the impending New Constitution, when it came, would further disimprove the Republican cause. Mac Bride suggested, prior to the launch, that Twomey retire as C.S, handing over to Barry; donning instead the mantle of chairman of Cumann Poblachta na h- Éireann. As Twomey was a national figure that would have improved the party's chances, but only slightly. Twomey, however, refused.

**J.J O'Hara Hart Mission, November 1936:** He was a Philadelphia Quaker and also a friend of Joe Mc Garrity, who arranged that he meet De Valera to discuss peace and co-operation between the government of the Free State and the I.R.A. He came - while Russell, a party to the scheme, was in the U.S - and met De Valera, with pre-

dictable results. Twomey observed at this point that Mc Garrity and Russell were alike in single mindedness; they overcame obstacles by ignoring their existence.

Cumann na mBan, possibly prompted, published a letter at this time from Blathnoid Nic Carthaig (Florence Mc Carthy) advocating the same thing.

**Russell in U.S: Courtmartial:** Russell was later charged at a courtmartial (early 1937) on the O'Hara Hart issue, as well as misappropriation of funds and the loss of a consignment of 12 Thompson machine guns in Co. Kildare in March 1937. He attended a Clan na Gael meeting in September 1936 as a suspended volunteer, and the Campaign for England was publicly signalled in the *Daily Mirror* of August 14. (He was courtmartialled and suspended on his return. See B. Bell 136; Foley 174; Coogan 155).

The principals ranged on one side were Mac Bride, Mac Logan and Barry: with Russell, Tom Magill and Peadar O'Flaherty on the other. Twomey, being in jail, was not involved. But Russell was back at the top of Óglaigh na h-Éireann by April 1938; his antagonists having retired to the sidelines.

**The Arbour Hill Silence of 1936:** In this attempt by the Free State to impose criminal status (by insisting that men exercise in silence), Twomey's advice to the other 60 prisoners was that they should take the exercise; meanwhile seeking to break the regime by any and every means. He himself went out a few times but, as only a few joined him, he had to give it up. In the prison church, secreted in the gallery, on his first Sunday there, he sprang forward to the balustrade, calling out, *I.R.A Shun!* He called to those below to go outside and have the exercise. Taken by surprise the military police drew their batons and a *mêlée* followed. Prisoners in the church had a P.A. on each side to ensure that they could not communicate. On his last Sunday, before committing suicide on September 13, 1936, Sean Glynn attempted to speak but received a blow of a baton. The cells on each side of Twomey were empty to prevent communication by wall tapping.\* Twomey never knew that, arising from this treatment, there were hunger strikes in progress; nor did he know of the death of Sean Glynn until the inquest period after which the Dept. of Justice, in some disarray, terminated the silences and allowed free association.

**Dan Turley of Belfast:** The matter of the execution by the I.R.A. in Belfast on December 7, 1937, of this seemingly sound Republican (at Coalisland in 1916; on *Argenta* after, and whose family remained nationalist), has always been a matter of conjecture since, at the time, seemingly sound evidence of guilt was put forward.\*\* Mick Price, according to Coogan, was prosecuting counsel, but that seems unlikely as he had left the I.R.A. in 1934. Twomey had been arrested shortly after the court-martial: it is unlikely that in any event a C.S. would have acted upon it.

When however a query was put to him on the verdict, he avoided answering directly. *He would not have been shot had he followed my advice which was to remain in Scotland.* The I.R.A. courtmartial had banished him to Scotland, but after six months, he returned. Mc Nally, later a Six County senator, was the man originally, and wrongfully, accused of leaking information to the R.U.C.

\* See Christy Quearney's account for corroboration.

\*\* It is covered in some detail within *The I.R.A.*, by Tim Pat Coogan

**Stunts:** In the mid-thirties Twomey and Mac Bride discussed removing the Coronation Stone, said to be the Lia Fáil (or the Stone of Scone) from Westminster Abbey. (In the fifties Scots Nationalists did just that). Expenses were estimated at £300; it would come via Belfast. Removing some of the Lane pictures was also talked about.

**The Magazine Fort Raid:** A proposal to raid the Magazine was first mentioned by Mick Fitzpatrick to Twomey early in 1938. Maps, movements and contacts were already in the possession of Harry Simmonds, an intelligence officer. Twomey counselled against it due to the weakness of the I.R.A. It was clear from his discussion on this aspect that he considered the Army blundered in the December 1939 raid by not having prepared enough safe dumping places.

**On the English Campaign:** It was conceived, Twomey thought, by Russell and Mc Garrity during Russell's visit to the U.S in the autumn of 1936. It was not accepted at the 1937 Convention because of the obvious weakness of the I.R.A. Barry offered as an alternative, a raid upon Gough Barracks, Armagh, and he went scouting there with Donal O'Donoghue to survey its possibilities: the code word was *Operation Mallow*.

Séamus Ó Mongáin of Dú Thuama adds that Mick Fitzpatrick, John Tully, O.C Cavan, and Barry, went scouting there, on the day of a snowfall, which could place it in January. The seizure was planned for Easter 1937. At the 1938 convention - packed according to the anti-Russell faction - Russell's supporters carried the day, insofar as he was reinstated. England was scarcely alluded to although it was the issue. Twomey, released and in the chair, was very dissatisfied but agreed to co-operate (Two days after this conversation he rang this writer to clear up any ambiguity, by saying that while he did not favour the Campaign, once the decision was made *I resolved to uphold it and to do anything I could to assist it, especially for the sake of Sean and the lads.*)

In mid-1938 with Jack Mc Neela, he toured England and Scotland, inspecting units. He confirmed his earlier opinion of their weakness and inexperience; an opinion with which Mc Neela largely agreed but felt bound in loyalty to soldier on. Ó Cadhain, Larry Grogan and George Plunkett were wildly in favour of the Campaign; all were agreed that no action should take place in the Free State. A dog must not bark here, Russell had said, going mad when he uncovered a plan by O'Flaherty to blow up Nelson Pillar in Dublin, at the start of the Campaign. O'Flaherty was expelled as a result, despite begging and pleading; he then travelled to London, joining a unit there, where, for a while he worked in a coffee bar. Prior to that development, Twomey recalled Mc Garrity's visit in 1938 when they met in the Spa Hotel, Lucan, with Russell and O'Flaherty, sitting outside in the sunshine in a corner of the grounds. Russell, in glowing terms, was recalling the Liverpool docks activities of Rory O'Connor and others early in 1921, when Twomey interrupted.

*Sean, you have the wrong parallel there; compare instead the last desperate attempts of the Fenian dynamiters under Capt. William Mackay Lomassy who blew himself up in 1884 trying to destroy London Bridge. The I.R.A are too weak and are short of money. Mc Garrity made light of the money issue; the States, he said, would provide plenty.* In the face of such an undertaking Twomey could say nothing.

He foresaw how easily picked up, confined within lodgings, Irish chaps would be. Years earlier, David Fitzgerald of Cahir had described the peaked cap of the rural Irishman as 'the fight caps': with their fresh rural faces they could be readily identi-

fied. Twomey advised Willie Mc Guinness before he departed, to be perfectly suited, with soft hat and to carry an umbrella; advice which Mc Guinness faithfully implemented. Twomey's own strategy would have been for a couple of well dressed saboteurs, who lived well, and were free from all interference and with no other cares and no jobs to hold. Russell had assured him that there would be no adverse effects; they would use handy bombs that would not start a fire until hours later.

**The Deportees:** England commenced deporting suspects in August 1939 under the Prevention of Violence (Temporary Provisions) Act, introduced in July. Some of them had little connection with the Movement. Having himself commenced a struggling cake shop business at the corner of Upper O'Connell Street and Cathal Brugha Street early in 1938, Twomey arrived one Saturday morning to find a small queue of deportees awaiting him. His was the only address many of them knew in Dublin: they were penniless and stranded. Some were later accommodated in *An Stad*, courtesy of Mollie Gleeson, but with increasing numbers arriving, it was totally unable to cope with them. Russell had promised a bloodless revolution, while O'Flaherty had said that the I.R.A could prolong the fight for ever.

**Hugo Mac Neill and Twomey:** Early in 1941 Mac Neill met Twomey, at Mac Neill's request, in the Red Bank Restaurant in D'Olier Street. The Free State Army was perturbed by reports that the British Army was preparing to invade the 26 Counties and could the I.R.A in the North check on the situation. Twomey considered the request an odd one since so many of the I.R.A were held here; however he passed on the request. Mc Caughey and Charlie Mc Glade then called upon Supt. Carroll of the Special Branch in Dublin Castle. They requested that he first arrange to release Republican prisoners held here. Carroll, who probably know nothing of Mac Neill's anxieties, sent the two men along to Sean O'Grady, private secretary to Frank Aiken, Minister for Co-ordination of Defence Measures. Whether there were one or two meetings is unclear, but he turned down the proposal, and afterwards denied that he had met them.\*

**Joseph Mc Garrity and Larry de Lacy:** They were close friends, and the McGarrity children sometimes stayed in his house in Drumcondra when in Dublin. Twomey did not like de Lacy, so it is interesting to speculate if Russell was less influenced by him and more by Stephen Hayes, whose sister was married to de Lacy. Twomey could recall hearing from a comrade from the Tan times of the fine fellow de Lacy was. He made an impression upon people. He spent a long time in World War One in San Francisco, escaping to New York when a 'German Plot' was uncovered in 1917, although his confederates were arrested. Conceivably the Plot out there may have set off the Plot of April 1918 here.

\* Minister Gerald Boland in a Dáil debate of May 28, 1946, gave his version of these contacts, which it is safe to say were never seriously considered at cabinet level. Boland was replying to a motion by Michael Donnellan, Clann na Talmhain, Galway East, that a Select Committee be established to investigate the condition of detention of Sean Mc Caughey; the debate taking place two and a half weeks after his death on a hunger and thirst strike. The motion, supported only by Labour and C na T, was defeated. De Valera weighed in heavily during the debate, publicly retreating from his stance against the Cosgrave government in those years. 'Before a very short time had elapsed we saw that we were wrong'.

**Twomey and Stephen Hayes:** He had objected to Russell on his appointment of Hayes to G.H.Q. staff in 1938 on the grounds that he drank too much. He himself admitted however that he had never seen Hayes under the influence of drink. He regarded the Confession as 'not proven'. Whatever confidence he might have reposed in it was shattered in the clear misstatement that Russell had been taken from a U.S. vessel and shot in Gibraltar. The charge that the highly successful raid on the Magazine Fort was part of a government plot was wrong and in fact too far fetched to credit.

Tom Healy of Marlborough Street, and formerly of Mayo, who gave, or supplied evidence against Hayes, was regarded by Twomey as a 'chancer'; he had stated that he had seen Hayes enter the Shelbourne Hotel, but admitted afterwards that he had said it to 'damn him'. Hayes had promised Sean Russell that he would give up the drink, but he knew that he did not. Twomey considered Hayes 'over average in intelligence'.

Supt. Mike Mansfield, who had come from a very sound family in Dungarvan and who resigned out of the Special Branch about 1944, told Twomey that he had orders to arrest Hayes if found, but not to raid the home of Laurence de Lacy in Hollybank Road\* although they knew who his visitors were.

Dan Gleeson, who had been arrested strolling one night near a H.Q. house occupied by Joe O'Connor on The Rise, Mount Merrion, told Twomey afterwards, that being accompanied by Hayes (it was alleged that Hayes was allowed to get away while Gleeson, an equally important man, was caught) that evening was not significant. Hayes did not induce him out; he had to persuade Hayes, and when it came to the chase, he had helped Hayes over a garden wall because *it was a case of one or other of them*. Twomey advised Mc Caughey at an early stage not to publish the Confession; advice which the leadership succeeding Mc Caughey (Pearse Kelly?) choose to disregard not having heard it. Mc Caughey, Twomey considered *devoted but not particularly clever*. At the end of it all however, he admitted that for Hayes to testify, in a life or death trial against Mc Caughey, *was a black mark*. Later on, when Hayes himself was serving a five year sentence in Mountjoy, he spoke to Sean Campbell, one of the Visiting Committee, an F.F. person well know to Hayes; *pity I forgot about you*, he laughed, *or I could have put you in it* (the Confession).

\* Hollybank Road or Ormond Road, Drumcondra: one or the other. Twomey did not think kindly of de Lacy. He recalled arrests of Clan people in San Francisco in 1917, when he escaped the Federal net, turning up and ingratiating himself with Joe Mc Garrity in New York. A story in *Mc Garrity Papers* relates how he, Tommy O'Connor and Mc Garrity entered the office after midnight of Devoy's *Gaelic American* in order to obtain the full list of Clan members, Devoy at that time having fallen out with Mc Garrity. Their object was to swing Clan members behind the new organisation, the American Association for the Recognition of the Irish Republic launched November 16, favouring the De Valera policy. In April 1921, 500 of the newly invented Thompson guns were stored in a warehouse on the Bronx. These were brought aboard the ship *East Side* under the supervision of de Lacy, but the day before sailing, June 17, U.S. Customs raided and seized them. (They were returned by legal process to Mc Garrity in 1925). While raising a question mark, these allusions add up to nothing conclusive. de Lacy was on the Árd Comhairle of Sinn Féin in Dublin in 1927.



**Maire Comerford and Sean Mc Caughey:** Some time after Stephen Hayes was sentenced to death by an I.R.A courtmartial at 20 Castlewood Park, Rathmines, stretching over ten hours and reaching into the morning of July 24, 1941, Maire Comerford sought an interview with Sean Mc Caughey which Twomey arranged. They met privately upstairs in a house in Parnell Street; the cross fire, as Twomey expressed it, went on between the two for four hours until 12. 30.a m; long after bus time. The main contention on behalf of Comerford was that he had not received a 'fair trial'. She drew upon her own inner knowledge of recent events to demonstrate to the Belfast man that they had not got it right in respect of some of their charges, (e.g. the Magazine Fort raid was not an F.F plot, nor was Holles Street or the bomb in the Castle), and that since Hayes had refrained from defending his actions, the entire case collapsed and it could not therefore be fair.

His own confession had not been written at this time but it is possible that, seated there silently as an impartial observer, but also as an old time seasoned campaigner, Twomey had his own doubts strengthened sufficiently to cause him to pronounce afterwards that the prosecution case, in Scottish parlance, was 'not proven'\*.

They broke up amicably enough 30 minutes after midnight on to deserted streets of pelting rain, with scarcely a light visible; a city devoid of cars or taxis. Twomey set off through Parnell Square accompanied by Maire; he to continue a mile or so to his home in Glasnevin, and she to report her lack of progress to de Lacy's wife, Mary, the sister of Stephen Hayes, in Drumcondra. The last words exchanged between them came from Twomey; *for heaven's sake Maire, don't attempt to walk home to Sandyford that night.*

**F.B.I Needed:** The U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation was annoyed when Russell escaped to sea in late April 1940 attired as a crew man, having been assisted by Joe Curran and 'Blackie' Myers of the Maritime Commission. They grilled severely an Irish-American seaman, by name Mc Carthy; he was not allowed to sail again during the war.

**Frank Ryan Often Wrote Gerald O'Reilly in the U.S from Germany,** but Russell did not communicate from there although previously he habitually sent cards (signed ME) from parts of Ireland. It was understandable that in the four months he spent in Germany he would not write letters but this, Twomey said, was held as evidence that he had been taken off the U.S liner at Gibraltar and shot.

Twomey brought the news of his death to his people on the North Strand; they refused at first to believe it. Twomey had been told by Eduard Hempel, German Ambassador, the day before.

**George Plant:** Senator Bill Quirke, who had been in the Nier and Poulacappal, in the dying days of the Civil War, ran into Twomey in November 1941, shortly after Plant had been put on trial for the shooting of Michael Devereux. (Significantly Devereux's remains were not uncovered until some weeks after the escape of Hayes from the I.R.A in September 1941. Meanwhile Plant and Joseph O'Connor were

\* While agreeing with the criticisms made by Twomey this is quite definitely not the view of the present writer. At this point, if doubt remains, one should consult Jack Lynch, on page 68 of *Harry*, or George Molloy in this volume.

locked in Arbour Hill upon a holding charge). Quirke, who was very much upon the inside track in F.F. was forecasting doom for Plant. Following conviction in January 1942, Quirke made 'strenuous efforts' to save Plant. *I'll best Gerry Boland yet*, he told Moss, but he was, of course, unable. (Along with Margaret Pearse, he supported the Emergency Orders which doomed Plant).

## ON MAURICE TWOMEY:

Commdt. Tom Heavey, Adjutant No. 1 Brigade, 4th. Western Division I.R.A, veteran of Tan and Civil Wars, 'who never resigned from the I.R.A' had this to say comparing Frank Aiken and Maurice Twomey, the Chief of Staff who succeeded Aiken; *I could not compare them; they were two different animals. Aiken had the brusqueness of a Northerner, while Twomey had the smooth diplomacy of a Cork man.*

Maurice Twomey, always known as Moss, had a long and distinguished career with the Republican movement, but perhaps his greatest achievement was from the period 1926 when appointed Chief of Staff until 1936, when arrested, in holding together the wild horses; the colourful men and women within the Movement. On that score Peadar O'Donnell had this to say; Moss Twomey was closer to me than any of the rural men. The thing that held him back was that he was a great organiser, and the unity of the organisation was all important to him. And Walt Mitchell of Offaly No. 2 Brigade described him, going back to Tan times in Cork as, a solid man and a good speaker. I had a great regard for Moss, said Patsy O'Hagan of Dundalk; when my husband died he was the one person I was glad to see at the funeral.

Maurice Twomey was born in Fermoy in 1896, and died in Dublin in 1978 thus spanning 82 years. He took no active part in republican politics after the early forties though still remaining on the fringe for a chat and reminiscences on the period. His wife, Cathleen McLaughlin, of Inishowen, active in Dublin in the twenties and early thirties with Cumann na mBan and on missions for the I.R.A, a gifted and cultured woman, preceded him by six months. They had one son, a priest, and a daughter married.

Maurice was educated in Fermoy national school and with Fermoy Christian Brothers, and it may be partly due to them that his later nationalist zeal could be attributed. In his teens he was employed as a works manager by a local mill. He joined the Irish Volunteers in 1914 shortly after their foundation, becoming battalion adjutant in 1917, then brigade adjutant, and finally staff officer First Southern Division; all in the period before the Truce of July 1921.

Moss was thus, under Liam Lynch, a thoroughly experienced guerilla fighter, taking part in the Lynch action in Fermoy of September 7, 1919 when 15 rifles were taken from a British Army detachment on a Sunday morning church parade (the rifles probably were not loaded) and one soldier was killed and three wounded. Shortly after this Moss was promoted Brigade Adjutant. After that, with George Power (a principal in the 1920 arrest of General Cuthbert Henry Tyndall Lucas) he directed intelligence gathering from the post offices of the area. Meanwhile on his keeping he was on call-out for every emergency. Finally arrested, he escaped sensationally from Spike Island dressed as a nurse, although over six feet tall. Like the majority of I.R.A officers he vehemently opposed the Dáil acceptance 64 v 57 of the Treaty in January 1922, but, as a member of the H.Q staff I.R.A, was against the occupation by a faction of the Four Courts in late March 1922 in the lead up to the Civil War.

Years later, (in conversation with this writer in the late fifties) he recalled meeting Sean MacBride, then a very young if seasoned boy of 18, at Mallow, a few weeks after the outbreak of civil war. MacBride, he recalled, was properly dressed in an overcoat and homburg hat, evidently in an effort to enhance his age. He stayed close to Liam Lynch all of the time; being with him as a General Staff Officer in Limerick city in July (See Dan 'Bally' Keating on his opinion of Lynch's performance then); with him still in Aherlow in October; following him to a hideaway in the home of Michael Fitzgerald at Tower House, Santry, Co. Dublin, where he was noting in January 1923, the opinion of his Commander that, 'the abandonment of the struggle he would not contemplate'.

Playing his part in the desultory and aimless manoeuvres at the close of that campaign he was finally arrested at the same time as Tom Derrig, later F.F Minister of Education, in Dublin, and Twomey recalled the severe beating which Derrig received from the Special Branch of those days in Oriel House (corner of Westland Row and Fenian Street) as a result of which Derrig, a very mild man, lost an eye. They were both on stand-by to attend the important meeting at the home of James Cullinane, Bliantas, in the Monavullagh mountains north of Dungarvan on 23, to 26, March 1923, (adjourned and continued the following April 20, at Poulacappal, near Mullinahone).

While over 11,000 prisoners were being detained (Twomey thought now to be in Harepark) his future wife, acted as a skillful courier according to General Tom Maguire whom she brought to an Executive meeting held in the Elliot Hotel, Harcourt Street July 11 and 12, 1923. Around the corner was the house controlled by Miss Maud O'Day on Harcourt Road, now *Kilronan*, spoken of by Sean Dowling in *Survivors*.

It was in her house, where there was a hideaway, that some of the delegates stayed. The minutes of that Elliot meeting testify that the I.R.A was not, despite the dump arms of May, fragmented; that it was up and running (As is clear from Tom Kelleher telling of an early 1924 meeting with him, Mick Price, Dave Fitzgerald and a few more at Booley Hill, north of Upton. By God, said Kelleher on that occasion, *we'll not stop now. We will go on until the country is free, and we will get in the Six Counties eventually. Break the connection;* vintage Kelleher), but evidently it contained a small group (Aiken, Ruttledge, Quirke) who saw some future in a political role, if only, the Oath could be set aside.

Twomey, released early in 1924, does not pop before our eyes until November 14, 1925 at a General Army Convention, presided over by Patrick Ruttledge with General Frank Aiken, Chief of Staff, in attendance, held at the Queen's Hotel, Dalkey. The subjects of that meeting are dealt with in Bowyer Bell, but the most important outcome was that it ended the term of Aiken as C.S. He was suspected of colluding with De Valera (not in the I.R.A) on a political direction, which in the following years was to become the Fianna Fáil Party, and he was pressed upon this by George Plunkett and others.

Aiken bade a reluctant goodbye to the I.R.A, and even as late as 1933 with Fianna Fáil securely in power, he still hoped to subsume the Army within the confines of Parkgate Street. His failure embittered him against the I.R.A in later years.\*

Andy Cooney from Nenagh - physically a fine looking man but withdrawn; definitely not the sort you would crack jokes with, Con Casey of Tralee has described him - had been elected in place of Frank Aiken. Cooney however was still only studying medicine, so when he returned from the States in October 1926 and finding Twomey acting C.S from June, he was glad to leave him in place. Bowyer Bell describes him at this time as a 'tower of strength in the Fenian tradition, an excellent organiser with an almost faultless intuition'. From now on all of the many faults and failings of the I.R.A and of Republicans in general; all of their hopes and dreams, were to centre upon this big fine headed man. He was at all times accessible, rarely on the run, arrested and sentenced once only until his imprisonment in May 1936 when he received a three year and three month sentence; but upon his release in December 1937, apart from chairing the April 1938 Convention and an inspection trip (or trips) into English cities, Moss virtually retired from active Republican politics.

Aiken promptly departed for the U.S to promote a Fianna Fáil fund appeal. Andy Cooney followed six months later, but with Aiken already there and without the magic of De Valera's name behind him, the cards were not in his favour. Twomey meanwhile was arrested on November 5, 1926, and held briefly on a membership charge.

From 1926, as Army head, Moss was in the eye of the storm; at meetings, attending funerals, trying to hold the disparate threads and lines together as they swung from right to left, from military campaigns to politics, from Mick Price's pawnbroker raids, to raids on alleged slum landlords; or out in the sticks, to the left overs of the land war. Some of these actions may not have reached him for a beforehand approval ('tis certain they did not) but, nonetheless, he had to support them wherever support was decently possible.

One action that had his approval however was the attempted rescue in December 1924 of Republican internees from Larne in a steam vessel captained by MacBride and crewed by Tony Woods of Dublin, Tom Heavey of Mayo and Frank Barry of Cork. That saga is retailed at length by Woods in *Survivors*. Strapped as the organisation was for cash, Moss could not refrain from joking Woods on the 'first republican naval squadron' after the vessel was lost upon its first voyage in a storm off Dundrum Bay, Co. Down.

\*According to George Gilmore, speaking to this writer, Plunkett helped to unseat Aiken by confronting him with the charge that he was one of those considering entering the Free State Parliament. It was then that the I.R.A, as a result, ceased, on the proposal of Peadar O'Donnell to acknowledge the authority of the Second Dáil. They did however adopt new standing orders on non-recognition of courts - prepared by Aiken - which held them in a straight jacket for decades.

In January 1929 at a Convention, after Tom Daly of Kerry had had to resign because of ill-health, we find Twomey with a staff upon which were Donal O'Donoghue and Jim Killeen; men who were to survive with him until close to retirement. In November 1930 he is in New York at the invitation of Clan na Gael, to address meetings seeking fund support. Three months later in February 1931, he is presiding at a Convention in Templeogue in the house of Róisín Walsh, Dublin City Librarian. It was there that Eithne Coyle recalled, 50 years later, her delight at receiving a bar of chocolate from Cathleen McLoughlin. Eithne was no chicken; she headed Cumann na mBan, had been out in the Civil War, and two years later deputised for Moss to welcome Hannah Sheehy-Skeffington in Dundalk returning from a short stay in Armagh Jail after she had entered the Six Counties in defiance of an exclusion order. In those years he was fending off, or trying to hold a rein around the enthusiasts upon the radical wing who set up Saor Éire; its membership was the Army Council replicated under another banner, as he was to remark later.

Commending him for his attention to the Movement at this time, O'Donnell remarks; *It was just in the nature of things that Moss would know everything; he listened into the organisation breathing.*

Arrangements were made however at a private meeting in the friendly Elliot Hotel in Harcourt Street, with Twomey, MacBride and Fitzpatrick, which resulted in a foundation convention on September 26 - 27, 1931 at the Iona Hall in North Great Georges Street, Dublin. Coogan, in *The I.R.A.*, describes his attitude then as cautious; both on the score of politics, and fearing the taunt of communism. He was bold enough to answer in *An Phoblacht*, May 26, 1931, *is it communism to undo the conquest, restore heritage...?* The land annuities agitation, largely invented and vigorously pushed by Peadar O'Donnell, had to be delivered up to Fianna Fáil because they were in the political field and they had the organisation to carry it.

Nor is anything new under the sun. In the middle fifties a Republican group removed one of the disputed Lane pictures from London's Tate Gallery, while a Scots nationalist sortie resulted in the Coronation Stone disappearing for a time from Westminster Abbey. To Scots it is the Stone of Scone, while to the Irish it is the Lia Fáil of Tara. In the early thirties Sean MacBride, Twomey and Dave Fitzgerald discussed doing the very same thing.

After Fianna Fáil came to power Pax Ó Faoláin of Dungarvan tells of a court action he took to recover frozen funds of which he had been trustee, left over from the commencement of the Civil War. MacBride and Twomey were involved at the Dublin end but Pax was at considerable time and train fare expense for which he later refused all recompense when he handed the money to them. *I would not take a cent*, he told this writer. *Alright*, said Moss, *we'll give you a receipt*; there and then having one typed upon H.Q. paper.

In March 1934 he is at an Army Convention in St. Stephen's Green desperately trying to persuade the wild men advocating Republican Congress from breaking away. *Imperialist capitalism is our enemy*, he told them.

Duplicating in their personalities some of the Saor Éire people of two and a half years earlier they nonetheless went their ways, vanishing soon into the celtic mists. The radicals were doubting his staid leadership; Fitzpatrick, MacBride and himself were accused of rewriting the *An Phoblacht* editorials of Frank Ryan.

A few were heard to doubt if there was any difference between himself, MacBride and De Valera. But he had already responded; he played a major part in the drafting of the Manus O'Rourke document, a code name for a government programme, summarised in this work. It was adopted by an Army Convention in 1933 and published in February 1934. The intention then being to pre-empt the impending split on Congress.

Underlining the fact that the 1934 parting was not an embittered one we find him, with Pádraig MacLogan, Mrs. Brugha and Tom Barry addressing a January 1935 meeting in Waterford in support of Frank Edwards, a Congress leader, who had been sacked from the local Mount Sion school. Frank failed to get his job back and came to Dublin, eventually departing for Spain.

On May 21, 1936, he was among a number of the leadership arrested. The 'Blueshirt menace' was long disposed of - Moss was against Republican brawling - so the government could turn their full force upon the I.R.A. Even as vote fodder they were no longer required. He was sentenced to three years and three months; there are allusions to his sojourn in Arbour Hill and the Glasshouse elsewhere in these accounts. Killeen, O'Donoghue, Con Lehane, Barry and other leaders were inside around the same time. Effectively he was to serve under nineteen months, being released from the Glasshouse with ten others on December 14, 1937, in preparation for the launch of De Valera's 'New Constitution'. He had been followed as C.S. by Sean MacBride, and there is an interesting comparison in Bowyer Bell on the two, mainly centring on the political direction predictable from MacBride, and the certainty that that would arouse the ire of the 'militarists' such as Sean Russell, which in time it did.

Twomey was almost 42 years of age upon his release. It was understandable that he did not want to replace Mick Fitzpatrick, then acting in the C.S. post as an amiable stop-gap; still less did he wish to participate in the bombing campaign planned by Russell, still technically excluded from the I.R.A. But he did lend himself as an Acting Adjutant-General until quite late, until November 1938 (replaced then by Stephen Hayes) for Russell, which, together with his inspection trips of the English units, suggests either that he was wholeheartedly behind it, or that he felt unable to prevent it.

In conversation with this writer he considered the units he inspected ill-prepared for the campaign being embarked upon.\* Should he have voiced opposition? On the other hand, while some appointees over there (See Máirtín Standúin and Ó Mongáin) resigned before the Campaign, the notables, Hannigan, Jack Lynch, McNamee and White favoured it. Was it an unspoken thought among them that perhaps, it might succeed?

\* Together with Jack McNeela in April 1938 he toured the units. McNeela agreed with his opinion but felt bound in loyalty to Russell - *Survivors*. With Jimmy Joe Reynolds, Pat Hannon recalls him coming to Gay Street, Liverpool. Twomey may again have visited some units the following November. See also *Harry: Russell and Hayes should have taken account of the immense difficulties*. Peter Walsh on page 68 is particularly scathing: we need two more years, he told Russell in Dublin. Of course there would not have been two more years because World War 2 would have intervened.

His remaining excursions with the Movement may be briefly listed: in February 1939 he became unintentionally, the link in introducing the German Oscar Pfau to an I.R.A command meeting in Clontarf; shortly after that O'Donovan departed for Germany. The first deportees and their families commenced to arrive in Dublin in August; for many of them his shop was the only address they knew; as a result Twomey had the task frequently of helping them along, and that, doubtless, entailed putting his hand in his pocket for many of them. He was lucky enough not to be interned with several others in September, a factor which showed that his 'resignation' had been signalled to higher levels. Frank Aiken, Minister for Defence, used call to his shop, but the two, close to each other at one time, would by 1939, have been guarded in their conversation. Prior to 1933, Twomey told this writer, *I was not simply friendly with Aiken; I was very friendly.*

In July 1941, following the I.R.A arrest of Stephen Hayes, he was among the five invited to the cottage in the Cooley Mountains where he was held. The party consisted of Sean Harrington of Kerry, Dan O'Toole of Belfast, Jack Lynch of Cork, and Andy Cooney. We know that those four were persuaded of his guilt, but, as elsewhere related in this work, Twomey was, in the aftermath, less convinced. In Scottish parlance he considered the case not proven.

Was Twomey a Socialist? The answer must be a resounding one, that he was not. He was an Irish-Irelander with a deep sense of history, and a belief that Ireland had sufficient resources to provide a good living within Ireland for all of its people. He tried manfully to hold the diverse strands of the leadership together, some of them advocating a totally unworkable and unfitting socialism. When eventually he moved over, it was to start from nothing; literally nothing, his own business; and while being generous to all calls for aid, he created for himself and his family a prosperous and independent living; and how many socialists can claim to have done that?



## STATEMENT ON REPUBLICAN POLICY:

Internal evidence suggests that this document was compiled inside the Curragh Camp about the end of 1942. One of its main purposes may have been to give a focus and a purpose to a large body of men then sunken in apathy. It cannot be said however that it was drawn up with the intention of offering an olive branch to the Leddy group. That had already been offered and spurned.

The following is a summary of **STATEMENT OF REPUBLICAN POLICY**, a document compiled on the initiative of, presumably, Sean McCool, Pearse Kelly and others. McCool, only released from Crumlin Road following the Crown Entry arrests of April 1936, succeeded Sean Harrington as C.S in February 1942, but was himself arrested in late April 1942.

It opens under 5 heads stating the lines of educational policy to be followed within the Camp; e.g. revolutionary training, the national struggle in its proper perspective, the main objects of the Movement, and a means of forming a basis of co-operation with the Camp Council upon its educational schemes.

It will be necessary to be outspoken and candid so *that the Camp can become a school of training of leaders and fighters*. It proceeded to refer to classes in history and economics which were abruptly terminated in November 1940. This coincided with the arrival of P. O'Flaherty and the H.Q. men from Arbour Hill who perceived the talks being given by Michael A. Kelly as *political*.

The training however, the document stated, was based upon the 1934 Army Government Programme, the so called Manus O'Rourke document said to have been compiled by a committee under the chairmanship of Maurice Twomey.

Unfortunately, it then proceeded, due to regrettable circumstances, this scheme of training ceased in November 1940. It then went on to castigate what it called the Leddy Regime in not providing facilities for the study of social and economic questions but instead inflicting on internees a 'surfeit of German Victory dope'. It then referred to the arrival of Neil Gould in May 1941, 'a trained Marxian communist', who, it inferred, suborned members of Óglaigh na h-Éireann into a policy of support for the war effort of the United Nations. The Council - meaning the Pearse Kelly Council - sought discussion with the group, but, evidently failing to have them agree on a Republican social and economic programme, it endeavoured instead to set out in a document the arguments put forward by them; proceeding, then to counter them.

1. The war forced upon the Soviet Union has changed the entire aspect of this struggle.
2. We, Republicans, should therefore stand behind Britain.
3. As German fascism is now the prime enemy; it is only through its downfall that Republicans can aspire to the creation of a regime based upon the 1934 programme.
4. Any attempt at revolt now will play into the hands of native and British fascists.

On those grounds the group condemned the Northern campaign (which, by September 1942, had commenced).

The document then proceeded to give 'the Republican case against this misguided line of policy'. It followed with an onslaught on British Imperialism, showing links between it and German fascism; at the same time declaring sympathy with Germany, post-Versailles, on the ground of the harshness of that Treaty. It quotes remarks from James Connolly sympathetic to Germany, at the commencement of the 1914 war.

At this point the document admitted that 'the attack by Germany on the Soviet Union was a particularly unfortunate development'. It proceeded to give critical praise to the system and lauded 'their epic and mighty defence', while reminding us of Stalin's non-aggression pact 'with the monster fascism'. However Stalin was nationally minded enough to put the interests of the Russian people first, 'which is what we must do'. It refers to the Allies co-operation with French fascists in North Africa, and returns to Churchill 'the arch imperialist' who sought in 1919 to overthrow the Bolshevik revolution. So far so good.

'We now come to our main purpose' which is to show that the struggle of Óglaigh na h-Éireann is in accord with all who strove for Irish freedom in past centuries. The document then proceeded with copious references from Shane O'Neill, Geoffrey Keating, Dean Swift, Wolfe Tone, Davis, Lalor, Mitchell, Pearse, Connolly and Lenin. 'Our main purpose in quoting Lenin' is to show that it is the duty of subject nations to break free from the bondage of imperialism and capitalism, and 'in this way to contribute to the whole world struggle'. This is followed by further supportive quotations from Connolly, Tone's manifesto and James Fintan Lalor.

We are told that Ireland is part of the world and that we cannot cut ourselves off; evidently quoting an argument put forward by the group. That was dismissed as a vague generalisation. It would be futile, it said, to abandon our struggle because of a 'vague internationalism dependent upon hypothetical future situations'. A hefty denunciation of British Imperialism followed, concluding with the prayer that 'if Ireland's only enemy is weakened in this titanic struggle, then it is our business to seize that opportunity and, with God's help, smash England's grip on our island nation'. It closed that section by declaring that Council was 'very definitely behind the Army leadership in the present policy of attempting to mobilise the people against their imperialist masters'. It continued by relating details of the outbreaks around Belfast, which would date this document about November 1942.

There followed a short quotation from the 1932 *Address of the Army Council to the Men and Women of the Orange Order*. It averred that the I.R.A had no secret treaty with

a belligerent (meaning presumably, Germany), but it declared its support for those who would seek aid in the shape of 'weapons of warfare', whether 'they be from Birmingham, Berlin or the banks of the Volga; we will use them'.

Page 19 of the document is headed REPUBLICAN OBJECTIVES.

It quoted under 7 heads the objects of the Army as set out in its constitution. It then declared that the Republic inaugurated in 1916 still existed, and that, by virtue of the transfer of powers in 1938, the Army Council was now the Provisional Government.

It then proceeded after further quotations, to summarise over a number of pages the 1934 government programme (reaffirmed by the Army Council in 1942), a precis of which is as follows:-

The social and economic life of the people must change in a revolutionary way, thus ending social injustices and inequalities. This was to be furthered as follows:-

1. Rights of private property would be upheld so long as they were not in conflict with the common good.
2. The soil of the nation is the property of the people and shall be subject to their jurisdiction.
3. Large holdings, not productively used, shall be distributed.
4. The Land Commission and the landlord system shall be swept away.
5. Land occupiers, who comply with the reasonable requirements of the community, shall be guaranteed security of tenure.
6. The State shall market farm surplus at a guaranteed price.
7. Co-operative organisations shall be promoted and financed by the State banking institutions.
8. They shall be linked to the distributing and marketing institutions who shall regulate production and distribution.

At this point the programme broke off to quote in support J.F. Lalor, and Standish O'Grady.

'Our programme visualises a free Ireland in which the entire soil of Ireland belongs to the entire people of Ireland, to be held and used in the best interests of the community'.

Payment of ground rent and other forms of rent would eventually cease.

For the sale of agricultural produce the 'tortuous string of middle men' would be eliminated. Afforestation, drainage and reclamation would be advanced, while rural life itself would be enhanced.

9. Credit would be made available for the creation of a manufacturing industry; the workers therein being responsible for their operation under State control, and with full wage and employment security.

10. The productive organisations shall be coordinated with the distributive organisations. And it notes that the national requirements will have first call on production.

11. Inland and deep sea fisheries shall be controlled by the state. It notes that this would ensure the more wide spread use of fish in the nation's diet.

12. The State shall establish a monopoly in banking and in the creation and issuing of credit and currency. A long note follows setting out why this required to be done.

13. Exports and imports shall be controlled by the State.

14. An Irish mercantile marine shall be established.

15. Overseas and coastal trade shall, as far as possible, be carried out by the State Mercantile Board. A historical note then followed drawing upon everyone from Sir Thomas Molyneux of 1731 onwards, justifying the need to control our own fleet.

16. Railways, canals, airways, and all forms of public transport, shall be operated by a body set up by the National Economics Council.

17. All forms of Insurance shall be a State monopoly. It was clear that this would include health and social welfare insurance.

18. After a date to be fixed, the building of houses for sale or for rent would be declared illegal. Future demand required that this be adequately met by a proper National Plan.

19. Education would be free, compulsory and along vocational lines. It is all important that our system of education should be suitable and practical in every respect; spiritual, national, cultural and material.

This summary of the 19 points of the Programme concluded that it would require elaboration but that at any rate, the foundation was there. 'It would enable us to examine the many problems that will confront us in a free Ireland'.

A paragraph then followed asserting that the only organisation worthy of unstinted support was Óglaigh na h-Éireann, 'because we are adamant in the pursuit of our great goal, the abolition of foreign and domestic tyranny and the establishment of a democratic Republic'.

The document then arrived at what evidently was its main purpose; to set up a committee and to formulate a scheme of training and study of essential subjects. It then diverged to a degree, by recommending that Volunteers should study and analyse the writings of Tone, Lalor, Davis, Mitchell, Pearse, Connolly, MacSwiney and Mellows, 'to mention but a few'. They should have a good knowledge of Irish history, and be conversant with the Secret Manifesto of the United Irishmen, Emmet's Manifesto, Objectives of the Fenian Brotherhood, the Programme of Connolly's Irish Socialist Republican Party, the Constitution of the Irish Citizen Army, Pearse's orations, the Proclamation of 1916, the Declaration of Independence 1919, the Message to the Free Nations of the World, and the Democratic Programme of the First Dáil.

'Without the preliminary study we have above indicated in a general way, it is easy to lose all sense of proportion when studying the writings and teachings of those outside our country who had no intimate knowledge of Irish life and character and conditions here, and who, while possibly reliable guides in their own country, or even in countries which accept their philosophy of life, do not constitute the best and most reliable guides in many aspects of Irish affairs'.

The above quotation in the concluding pages of the document clarifies for us one of its purposes, namely to demonstrate the error in the ways of the Connolly Group. Most of them had a superficial knowledge only of the recent history of Ireland it infers, while at the same time the authors of this document would allege that only the most attractive aspects of communism were being placed before them. While agreeing that systems abroad should be looked at, the document held (and strongly emphasised) 'our programme must be suited to Irish needs and in keeping with Irish tradition'.

'We should not be blind to spiritual values; a nation has a spiritual as well as a material inheritance. Our cultural life (meaning the soul of the nation) must be restored, while for the body, there must be good housing, clothing, drainage, afforestation and all of these things. As in the Proclamation, we too place our cause under the protection of the Most High God'. Those in our own day who question the religious essence of De Valera's 1937 Constitution might pause and take notice how close, in at least one respect, these Republican internees of 1942 were to his way of thinking. One should add that such religious motivation was perfectly normal for the age that was then in it.

At this stage midway through World War 2, the compilers resigned themselves to accept that 'we are here for the duration', and that 'future activities' should be developed for the post-war period. It may be interposed here that in the post-war period, for many practical reasons (apart from the upsurge of Clann na Poblachta) there was no worthwhile follow-up Republican political development until we come to the *Éire Nua* programme of 1971.

It proceeded then to dwell hopefully upon the 'revolutionary situation' that might exist post-war in Ireland, and of course there was no such thing except for the short lived political flare-up of Clann na Poblachta. But, undeterred, it looked forward hopefully to men leaving the Camp and becoming 'revolutionary leaders' who would rally the mass of the people to throw off the foreign yoke and undo the conquest.

The document then announced that henceforth all social and economic questions would be related to the Governmental Programme of 1934, while ideas at variance with that programme would not be permitted at their classes. Note that that would not inhibit the discussion of other philosophys outside of the classes, but these should not 'propound a line of policy' for internees.

The document then apologised for not presenting the case in even greater detail but declared that it was the duty of all claiming membership of Óglaigh na h-Éireann to accept and support it. It then quoted a recent Army Order *calling for the moral support of all prisoners and requesting all volunteers to strive for unity and co-operation.*

(This Army order, if it existed, fell upon deaf ears so far as the Leddy side of the Camp was concerned).

'In conformity with that Order the Camp Council have hereby set out the objects, policy and programme of the Army in order that they may be the root and foundation of our activities here'. They then proceeded to congratulate the men on the strides the Irish language had made in the Camp over the last 18 months 'despite the discontent and friction that unfortunately existed'. A mild reproof was extended to those internees who had not seized the opportunity to acquire Irish. The document concluded by stating that the compliers had now discharged their 'compelling duty' if there was to be harmony, progress and discipline in the Camp. 'Dare we hope that the response will be universal and unanimous? We dare - but the final answer lies with each one of you who reads this'.

*From that, one presumes that numbers of copies of the document were made and that they were passed around the 330 men, or whatever number wished to read it (assuming that at this time, late 1942, early 1943, there were about 200 men on the Leddy side, who would not be reading it).*

The document, like much of the earlier socialist thinking of the Movement of the early thirties, would now be somewhat dated; many of its aspirations having been fulfilled. It commences, as they nearly all do, with the premise that the state can do no wrong, hence we must place ourselves in its charge. What nonsense. The state in our time we can see has done much economic and social wrong. It is wrong headed, inefficient and corrupt; It has surrendered basic rights to the European Union, notably the 'Irish Box' wherein lies a wealth of fishery rights. It has needlessly accumulated a mountain of debt, £35 billion or thereabouts, consuming in servicing (2.5 billion annually, leaving us materially the most impoverished nation in Western Europe.

And finally, its system has created 270,000 long term unemployed whom it has made unemployable, but they remain a pool of support at election time for professing socialists. It is noteworthy that the document calls only for a democratic Republic and not a democratic socialist republic.

Note: The 1934 Government Programme of the I.R.A had been debated internally in 1932 as the Manus O'Rourke document. Who is Manus O'Rourke, asked Mary MacSwiney rhetorically, piqued that *An Phoblacht* published it while giving almost no publicity to her Constitution of the Irish Republic unveiled for her by Sinn Féin in January 1929\*. (That Constitution would alarm all of Ireland's current liberals, although, tis said, that Mr. De Valera did more than glance at it in the formulation of his 1937 Constitution.)

The document was adopted by an Army convention in 1933 and published in February 1934. Predictably it brought a storm of criticism from the Bishop of Waterford, Dr. Kinnane, then the self-appointed moral critic tracking the I.R.A.

\* *Soul of Fire*, a biography of Mary MacSwiney.

## KIT CONWAY

### *the LAD FROM BURNCOURT:*

In a footnote to the account of Bob Bradshaw on page 427 we remarked that Kit Conway was a man who deserved a book to himself and that, needless to say, is an understatement when one studies Conway's short and colourful career. Bradshaw brings him momentarily alive as an I.R.A. training officer in a hayfield about 1934 near Portmarnock; the respect accorded to him and his way with people. There are references too in the accounts by Michael O'Riordan and Jim Savage, and indeed this writer can from a dim and distant past in the Dublin Battalion around 1938, when of course Conway was dead, recall allusions to him by volunteers like Jimmy Poole; allusions of such warmth that one felt they were speaking of a Dubliner who was still in circulation.

Kit Conway was born about 1897 near the small village of Burncourt, Co. Tipperary, half way between Cahir and Mitchelstown, and just off the main road. Burncourt lies in that wide valley between the Galtees and Knockmealdown Mountains in which also is situated the small town of Clogheen. It is said that it was in the poorhouse of Clogheen that, as an orphan, he was reared until the age of 14. At that age, as was common in rural Ireland, he was hired to a local farmer at a wage of around two shillings a week, his keep and an occasional suit of clothes. (Much of this information derives from an account by Seán Ua Cearnaigh in *Irish Democrat* of February 1987. Seán states that his father two years senior to Kit, was a close friend and gave Seán much of the account that he retailed).

As that story goes, Kit was largely self taught, highly intelligent and articulate; humorous and with a generous capacity for friendship. In Tipperary he was known as Christy; the name Kit dates from his later Dublin days.

From a sense of adventure or to escape an unrewarding life he joined the colours at the military barracks in Kilworth in 1915, but instantly regretting it, he feigned attacks of insanity so forcefully that, after a few weeks, he was discharged.

Came the Tan struggle, Kit participated in D. Company of the 6th. Battalion, Third Tipperary Brigade, moving over quickly to the more hectic flying column of Dinny Lacey, thereafter participating in a wide range of actions. With the onset of the Truce in July 1921 Kit, penniless, reverted to farm working, but when the new state emerged six months later, Kit once more adventure bound, joined its army. With the growing tensions between the Beggar's Bush troops and the I.R.A., it was a shock to the men around Clonmel to find Kit sporting the green uniform. But sport it he did, and fought too, for its first few weeks, in the Civil War; yet quickly disillusioned, he deserted and escaped into the cover of Dublin. There, in its closing months, it would appear that he took up the cudgels again, this time on the side of the I.R.A., but of any actions he took part in, we have no account.

It appears that he escaped the sweeping internments of 1923, staying out of jail and still keeping under cover as Kit Ryan rather than his real name of Christy Conway. Gravitating into building, he worked as a labourer until 1928 when he upped and left for New York. Those five years of labouring in inner Dublin would have given him a close knowledge of the complex social make up of the inner city, while in that same period he almost certainly resumed his links into the I.R.A. although we can find no mention of him in *An Phoblacht* accounts of that era.

He probably continued as a building worker in New York but, by 1932, when Fianna Fáil came to power, he returned again to Ireland, resuming his career in the Movement.

Disillusionment with Fianna Fáil, that a Connolly style republic would not instantly be created; the foundation (and split that followed) of Republican Congress, and then with the left's fading hopes at home, the outbreak of war in Spain, created the exact circumstances for militant heroism that men of the calibre of Kit Conway would welcome.

There will always remain among its residue the two views about the fight in Spain; should the 140 Irishmen have gone there, of whom 59 died, or should they have carried on a seemingly fruitless political battle at home? Kit Conway choose to go, and the story of his going is ably told by O'Riordan in his *Connolly Column*, the history of that epic.

As Ua Cearnaigh summarises it, Kit commanded a detachment in Cordoba, in Andalusia, and in February 1937 he led his countrymen in the crucial engagement in the Jarama valley at the mouth of Madrid. That was to secure the capital from the grasp of Franco for a further two years. 19 Irishmen fell, including Eamon McGrotty from Belfast, Dick O'Neill from the Falls, Rev. Robert Hilliard from Killarney, and Tyrone poet Charlie Donnelly. Jim Prendergast of Dublin was beside him on the ridge when he was hit. He had been directing fire but suddenly the rifle spins out of his hand and he falls back. *Do your best to hold on boys*, were his last words as he was taken away.

There are 14 references to him in O'Riordan's *Connolly Column*. There are three references in *Survivors*. There are six in Sean Cronin's *Frank Ryan*, and three in Conor Foley's 1992 *Legion of the Rearguard*. His summary on pages 165 and 168 reflects the frustrations of the Spanish war. Somehow though one prefers to remember him, as Bob Bradshaw does, in an Irish hayfield, among his own in Portmarnock, drilling his men, calling them to attention, then walking over to the women and girls for a chat and a laugh, only to return again to slump upon a bank, drawing lazily upon a cigarette in the sun.



## FATHER JOHN FAHY:

Father John Fahy was a native of Kilnadeema, Loughrea, Co. Galway, being born there about 1892. He was ordained in 1916, following which he spent four years, until 1920, on what was called the Scottish mission. Touched, possibly by Tan war happenings, such as the killing near Barna of Fr. Michael Griffin in November 1920, and by a friendship he developed with Peadar O'Donnell in the late twenties, he was noted briefly in *An Phoblacht* of March 1929 involved in local land agitation, when he came to the rescue, while curate at Ballyaun, outside Loughrea, of a widow woman about to be deprived of cattle on foot of a land annuity claim. Outside, helping to clear a graveyard at the time; he led a charge upon the bailiff driving the three cows, and soon had them spirited away safely to another farm. It did not end there for Fr. John; he suffered six weeks imprisonment in the jail of Galway (where the Cathedral now stands), and was transferred by Bishop Duignan to a thatched house near Clostoken.\* During the course of this campaign he wrote a play on the land war of the eighties; he compiled also an amusing *Catechism of the Dispossessed*, with a question and answer series; *how did England establish her claim on Ireland? By robbery. What is a bailiff? A bailiff is a land robber's assistant; and so on in great style*. This agitation was, most probably, linked to a group then known as the Irish Working Framers, cobbled together about that time by Peadar O'Donnell. They held a 'congress' on March 23, 1930, in Galway, sending greetings on the occasion to the European Congress of Peasants and Working Farmers in Berlin. On numbers being arrested charged with obstruction and brought before the Military Tribunal; they 'ratted', as Maurice Twomey expressed it to this writer. In those circumstances, says Twomey, O'Donnell would merely shrug his shoulders. The organisation however continued militant forms of activity in Clare, Galway, Wexford and Carlow into 1931, by which time non-payment of Annuities had become widespread.

About this time Fr. Fahy had accompanied O'Donnell to Achill, West Donegal and other trouble spots. The organisation meanwhile was reported, on July 4, in *An Phoblacht*, assembling in Limerick on a Saturday, and in Galway on a Sunday, where, according to O'Donnell, they would transfer 'the fight against landlordism, banks and combines to the most active fighters in the campaign'; namely the I.R.A. In October 1931, along with 11 other organisations, the Irish Working Farmers Committee, was declared illegal under Article 2 A of the Constitution. Ultimately of course, Fianna Fáil's halving of the annuity the following year, took the little heat there was in this campaign out of it, and the illegality rescript itself was lifted. Revolutions, as some have experienced, cannot be founded upon a complaint that a clause in the next budget will fix, and governments are quite cynical at fixing.

\* The full story is told in colourful style in Peadar O'Donnell's, *There will be Another Day*.

We do not hear of Fr. Fahy again until 1959 when he was reported involved in land agitation at Lusnagh, in Offaly, near where he then officiated. As a result of that he was suspended, but offered a curacy elsewhere. It may have been at that time or earlier that he was linked to *Lia Fáil*, a minor, and evidently short-lived political organisation (*Lia Fáil* being the coronation stone from Tara; said now to be at Westminster Abbey. The Scots also claim it). He had brought out a small newspaper, of which there were nine issues. Shortly after this, he submitted to Dr. Philbin whereupon he was appointed curate to Abbey, a rural hinterland near Loughrea.

In the sixties, on his retirement, he moved to the neighbourhood of Ballybrittas, to the gate lodge of the ruined mansion of *Bellegrove* which had been the home of Robin Adair (of Glenveigh ill-fame), a token that may have given him some satisfaction. For a national collection of that period, when called upon by Ned Bailey, he could not find his trousers in which was his wallet, but he did leave the then considerable sum of five pounds with Bill Hyland. Ned continued to carry out occasional repairs for him on the lodge, while Fr. Fahy would sometimes join him at his home in nearby Cappakeel for lunch.

At last, feeling in need of some care, Ned drove him to Co. Limerick, to inspect a home for retired priests. An old priest sat upon a seat outside. *Drive home*, said Fr. Fahy, unimpressed and retracing his steps; *they are not getting my money*. Some time afterwards, he bought a small house in Mountmellick, with a mobile home in the garden. Fr. John moved in, engaging Ned to repair a rere porch, but very shortly afterwards he entered the local hospital where he died about 1968, and was buried in his native place in Co. Galway.

A friend described Fr. John in his hey-day as, of somewhat excitable disposition, but quite wonderful with his stories after dinner. In all other subjects he was very much an orthodox Catholic priest, with a special devotion to the Eucharist upon which he had written a work.

**THE FLEMINGS:  
PADDY, JIM and  
DAVID of  
KILLARNEY:**

*(Compiled by a family  
admirer)*

Paddy Fleming's involvement came after the Civil War when he was employed in the Mental Hospital in Killarney where he was instrumental in having staff join the Transport and General Workers' Union. He subsequently lost his employment in the mental hospital because of his republican involvement. He was then organising the bombing campaign in England where he used the name of Patrick Walker. He was later interned in the Isle of Man: he had been picked up in September 1939 and interned. He had no complaint however about his sojourn in the Isle of Man where among others, he met Kim Philby's father who was interned there with Sir Oswald Mosley. He was impressed with Philby's father who told him that he was there because it was known that he did not want Britain to get involved in the European war: he felt that Britain should concentrate on the middle east, an area on which Philby was expert. Paddy said he had political discussions with him and was impressed by the calibre of the man and his intellect. Paddy did attempt to escape from the Isle of Man with another prisoner named Walsh from Listowel. They took a boat from a local farmer and were nearly in Dublin Bay when they were caught by the navy and handed back to the authorities.

Paddy worked for Bord na gCon upon his release; prior to that he had experience with the greyhound industry having been employed in Shelbourne Road and Harolds Cross tracks as a steward.

Paddy was involved in a peripheral way with the Clann na Poblachta organisation in south Kerry in 1948. He was also involved in the Mallon and Talbot reprieve efforts in the late 1950's. He was a close friend of Cathal Goulding and, philosophically anyway, he seemed to go along with him in the 1969 split. He was also linked to the Port and Docks Workers' Union. At the end of his days he seemed to have accepted the Worker Party's line on the Northern situation. He was living on Strand Road, Sandymount at this time until his death in 1983. He had married Eileen Tubbert, long time private secretary to Tim Pat Coogan, then of the *Irish Press*.

Paddy was described as a very political person; a Republican in the Wolfe Tone tradition; he was a non-practising Catholic, demonstrating that by his refusal of the last sacraments when he was dying in the Mater Hospital. He regarded the Roman Catholic Church as 'an adjunct to world imperialism'.

**Jimmy Fleming:** He was born in 1914 and was ten years younger than Paddy. He was, what we call in Kerry a very gay man. He was a talented footballer and had many medals, winning a Munster medal with the Kerry junior team. Jimmy's football career was interrupted by his internment in the Curragh. But later, on release from the Curragh, he played county championship football with the Killarney team. Sean O'Neill from Cahirciveen played also with the team. In 1938 he had been a training officer with the I.R.A in the Killarney area. A popular fellow, he was well able to look after himself, being physically fearless and handy with his fists, but never a bully. Politically his ideas were not as developed as Paddy's, yet he was a life-long Republican and did not deviate from his beliefs.

Jimmy came to Dublin in the early fifties and worked as a carpenter, turning out to be an excellent tradesman. This writer recalls working with him in Eccles Street. He did not have any further involvement in politics after his release from the Curragh; the opportunity, he considered being no longer there. He married a lady from Minish outside Killarney called Nora Lynch: sharing a house for a long time with Cathal Goulding.

**David Fleming:** He was born around 1920, the youngest of the five Fleming brothers: Nellie, a sister who was a teacher, residing around Killarney, being the last. There were three other sisters Breda, Maggie and Maisie.

David was regarded as quite academic in school where he was an outstanding pupil. The family in general were considered bright. Nellie won a scholarship to the teachers' college in Tourmakeady. David was different to Paddy and Jimmy, being placid and a thinker. He would have been left wing in his politics. His and Paddy's political ideas were close although they were different in temperament. David was sent to the North on active service, posing as a carpenter early in 1942, when an uprising was expected in the North.

It did not seem an intelligent move to send him to Belfast since he came from a very Republican family in Kerry, but he probably volunteered. He survived for a few months only before being arrested. His arrest came when he found himself at the top of a stairway firing down at raiding R.U.C. He had been a crack shot, having had plenty of practice in Kerry.

The raid occurred a week after the hanging of Tom Williams, on September 10, in the H.Q of the Publicity Bureau of the Northern Command. The Protestant editor of *Republican News*, John Graham, and the owner Sean Dynan were also held at the same time.

Arrested and charged, he shouted at the judge, that 'Stormont was ballot proof but not bullet proof'. After his release as a result of a series of prolonged hunger strikes, he spent a period in hospital and did not return to Killarney until 1960. He had suffered greatly from headaches and depression. When he left Crumlin Road Prison he was around six stone in weight, but he regained reasonable health eventually, although known to have been badly beaten in jail due to his refusal to conform. He was buried in his native Killarney in June 1961.

The Flemings were connected by marriage with the O'Sullivan's from Knocknahoe, Killarney. Tom O'Sullivan, Jack and Redmond were in the Curragh. Redmond died in Killarney; he had been Chairman of Kerry County Council a num-





## CON LEHANE:

Con Lehane remained an Irish Republican right until his death in September 1983. And although seemingly out of the I.R.A after April 1938 he continued in a pivotal position as an intelligence officer for six years subsequently, observing life from his solicitor's window overlooking the Liffey at Ormonde Quay. (Confirmed by Joe Clarke and Gearóid Ó Mongáin).

Con Lehane was born in Belfast in 1912 but the family transferred to Dublin in the pogroms, and he was educated at Synge Street C.B.S and in U.C.D in Earlsfort Terrace. Active in Conradh, the Gaelic League, in 1934 with other Republicans, he helped to stage an electoral *putsch*, taking over the entire *Coiste Gnotha* of the organisation.

He joined the I.R.A at 17 and was jailed on three occasions. In March 1935, following a more active role in the Dublin bus and tram strike, Lehane was among 43 I.R.A and Republican Congress men arrested. There were a hundred Republicans in jail then although there was less than a dozen in Belfast. Most Broy Harriers, Conor Foley remarks, had by this time in their pursuit of Republicans, adopted the hardened outlook of their police colleagues, while detectives retired from the Cosgrave regime were being drafted back into service to prosecute the clamp down. Con was a member of the Army Council at this time. Roped in with Leo Burdock, Tom Farrington, Pat McElroy, Tom Merrigan, Donal O'Donoghue (editor of *An Phoblacht*), Jimmy Hannigan. Andy Walsh, John Farrington, Joe Henley, Sean Brunswick, Jim Cole, Michael Neary and Laurence Carwood; all resident in Dublin, but not of Dublin: Dick Batterberry was Waterford city. And there was also John Nalty, Bill Scott and Mick Kelly. Tom Barry soon joined them.

Con was O.C then in Arbour Hill during a prolonged period of hardship and silence which lasted many months until Sean Glynn was found hanging in September 1936. Having served eighteen months, a substantial sentence at that time, he appeared at the big protest meeting in Beresford Place, Dublin, in May 1937, following the abdication of King Edward VIII.

It was attacked by police and Broys, and in the *mêlée* practically every well known Republican of that period from Barry to Frank Ryan (home on leave) suffered baton blows. That story is footnoted under Frank Edwards in *Survivors* and told again in this work. In 1937 Con 'my husband's greatest friend', was best man at the wedding of Sheila Humpheries to Donal O'Donoghue; ex I.R.A (can one ever be ex), ex *An Phoblacht* editor 1934/36, and former Army Council member.

After the packed April 1938 Convention many stepped aside and Con himself appeared also to do that. That the Free State authorities did not entirely believe it was shown when he was among 70 rounded up at the commencement of World War Two in September 1939. Con was among those then placed in Arbour Hill. By this

time, a solicitor, and commencing a meagre practice, he was not content however to remain; he embarked on a hunger and thirst strike. In the circumstances a person will not remain alive beyond twelve days. Bowyer Bell says it was 'unsuccessful', but he was released, to commence from then on an epic series of legal engagements in partnership with Sean MacBride which continued for forty more years right into the eighties decade. In 1977 he fought successfully in the High Court to have the right to privately consult a prisoner in Portlaoise. There are stories sprinkled through *Harry* of his subtlety and effectiveness in saving White from the rope; and earlier on Mick Quill. But they are two only of the many who had terms avoided, shortened or whose lives were saved.

Remarkably Lehane exuded bonhomie; cigar smoking, a flashy man of the world, the last person one would expect to have been in and out of jail or to be an associate of Republicans. Taking the political road with Clann na Poblachta in 1948, he won a seat in Dublin, but lost it three years later in the 'Mother and Child' debacle. He continued however, before and after that period to present and participate in the *Hot Seadh* bilingual stage shows. As an actor and comedian the stage, more perhaps than a court room, was Con's natural milieu. A committed Irish speaker, he was at home in it, whether on radio, the stage or in a street conversation.

Con's politics lay naturally to the left; left in this case meaning the development of Ireland, for the people of Ireland, or in Connolly's words; *Ireland distinct from her people is nothing to me*, or in the words of the 1916 Proclamation, *the unfettered control of Irish destinies*. With Sean MacBride he had tried to launch in 1931 the still-born Saor Éire. It was natural therefore that he should turn in July 1946 to launch Clann na Poblachta. It was the long awaited Republican challenge to the slowly rotting Fianna Fáil, a party which Con himself, as a boy, had helped at the hustings 17 years before. Such political zeal as Clann engendered had not been seen for a long time. For a while it seemed as though the young party could capture thirty seats, but fighting upon an old register that excluded everyone under 26 years they ended up with ten seats. Yet ten now for a new party would be thought a miracle. The spirit of 1918 and 1932 was again sparkling in the air, only to be lost in the sad tactical mistake of an 'inter party' government, which Con was dead set against. But fatefully, on a February night in 1948, it was carried and with it a torrent of dismay and discouragement enveloped the tens of thousands who had rallied to support Clann.

Con kept alive a rearguard action in Leinster House and as a councillor in Dublin's City Hall. But more and more he moved away to the courtroom and back upon the stage. Later still he campaigned against America's war in Vietnam. He was survived by solicitor son Donnchadh, and daughters Máire and Cáit.

Con Lehane is listed five times in T.P. Coogan's *I.R.A.*; twice in Conor Foley's, *Legion of the Rearguard*, and four times in Bowyer Bell; six times in Sean Cronin's *Frank Ryan*, all relevant points being already covered above.

Apart from Sean MacBride, Con was associated in the early stages of his legal career with Ernest M. Wood and with Alex Lynn, another Belfast man and Republican of integrity.



## ROGER McHUGH

Roger McHugh, professor of Anglo-Irish literature, a genuine Dubliner and temperate Republican, was born in July 1908 and passed away in January 1987. He received his degrees, B.A and M.A at Earlsfort Terrace, Dublin in 1928 and 1930, and in 1947 a Ph.D degree. Roger did a stint as Mellon Professor in Pittsburg in 1968, and in New York in 1972. He was a visiting professor in England, Scandinavia, Iceland, U.S.S.R and Japan. An author and playwright, he wrote, *Trial at Green Street Courthouse* and *Rossa*, produced in the Abbey Theatre in 1945. Books included *Grattan*, 1936, *Carlow in '98*, *Letters of Yeats to Katherine Tynan*, 1951 and *Ah, Sweet Dancer*, 1970. He contributed extensively to Irish and overseas journals. In 1967 he became a professor of Anglo-Irish literature and drama. Earlier, in the late forties, dismayed at lowered standards upon the Abbey stage, he mounted a protest there as a result of which Ernest Blythe banned him from attending. During the tail end of the Clann na Poblachta influence on government he was a Seanad member from 1954 to 1957. From 1954 to 1972 he acted upon the Senate of the National University.

In the middle period of his life Roger was close to many of the Dublin Republicans, some of whom gravitated towards Clann na Poblachta later; Jack Brady, who like Roger was interned in the Curragh, Con Lehane, Sean MacBride; but earlier in the spring of 1940, he was behind a short lived effort at politics in the form of Coras na Poblachta. The principals of that Mansion House meeting were Simon Donnelly, Sean Fitzpatrick, Con Lehane, Sean Gibbons, Tom O'Rourke, Sean Dowling, Col. Roger McCorley, Frank Thornton, Capt. Martin Bell and Peter O'Connor\*. Old I.R.A. men they came from both sides of the divide.

Introduced in mid-February 1941 with a simple two inch single column advertisement it proceeded:-

*Whither Ireland?*

PUBLIC MEETING

The Mansion House

Tomorrow 8 p m

The speakers will include:-

Sean Dowling

Helena Moloney

Micháel Ó Mullane

Roger McHugh

Con Lehane

Hugh O'Neill

*Coras na Poblachta*

In the circumstances of the Emergency and continuing mass internment Coras proceeded no further. Six months previously Roger had acted as master of ceremonies at a Terence MacSwiney commemoration lecture given in the Workers' Hall on Eden Quay, Dublin, delivered by Sinn Féin president Margaret Buckley on 24,

\* See Bowyer Bell

October 1939. J. J. O'Kelly (Sceilg) presided, and 'items were provided' by the Brugha sisters, Séamus and Máire Ni Thuma, Paddy Kenna, Sean and Miss Fitzpatrick.

His cottage in Glencree was used by Sean McCaughey and his comrades for a short while early in July 1941 to incarcerate Stephen Hayes; Larry de Lacy being there also 'by invitation', but beginning to suspect the worst. Looking down from a not very high window de Lacy noted birds alighting upon the grass. From that he knew there was no sentry patrolling outside. He quickly dropped from the window and made off. Alarmed by his escape and realising the consequences, McCaughey, Rice and Burke marched the obese Hayes in the darkness through Rathfarnham into Castlewood Park, Rathmines.

Seamus O'Donovan and Roger were close friends, more upon the literary side than the political side, and this is alluded to in Bob Bradshaw's account where he also touches upon the friendships between these men and Jack Brady who had been interned from day one. Following the escape of Stephen Hayes on September 8, 1941, the government no longer needing to conceal their informer arrested the two, clapping them in the Curragh where unity of a sort still prevailed, only the Cork hut C.1 being ostracised. It is not possible to say how these two mature and experienced men viewed ostracisation; neither of them had any influence with the Leddy council, and O'Donovan anyway spent his time transmitting 'secret' messages and formulating plans of escape\*.

Sometime late in 1944 they were separately released and they each resumed their careers; Roger in the university in Earlsfort Terrace, and Seamus with the E.S.B in Lower Fitzwilliam Street.

Roger quickly commenced his writing again, his public appearances and his talks. In January 1947 he acted upon the *Henry White Defence Fund*, the other members being: Charlie McGlade, Ben Doyle, Rúaidhrí Ó Driscoeoil, (*Cathaoirleach*) May Laverty, Mary Nelson (Hon.Sec.) Madge Daly, Madame MacBride, Mrs. Buckley, Bean Cathal Brugha, Bean Aibhistin de Staic, Bean Tomás MacCurtain, Mrs. O'Hagan (Dundalk), Maurice Twomey, James Killeen, Joe Clarke, Domhnall Ó Donnchadha, Charlie Reynolds (Tuam) Seamus Ryan (Strokestown), Clr. D.J. O'Driscoll (Carrick-on-Suir), Patrick McLogan (Portlaoise), John Joe Sheehy (Tralee). Their names still ring like a Who's Who of the Movement of 50 years ago.

About this time also he threw his weight behind the new white hope political party of Clann na Poblachta, remaining closely attached to it throughout its ten year lifetime.

\*See Harry, page 92

## FOOTNOTE ON THE DEATH OF PÁDRAIG MAC LOGAN,

*ex-M.P.:*

Pádraig Mac Logan was found shot dead in the rear garden of his bungalow home, *Sarsfield*, Herbert Road, Blanchardstown, Co. Dublin, on July 21, 1964, after Sergeant Stephen Corry had failed to gain entry at his front door.

His wife was not at home, when this daytime accident occurred, having been confined to hospital some time before and for some time after. As a result her name did not appear in the inquest reports in the three Dublin daily newspapers of July 30. They were childless.

Pádraig Mac Logan had a long and courageous career in the Movement having joined the Irish Volunteers in Co. Armagh in 1914 at the age of 17. He was on hunger strike with Thomas Ashe and others in Mountjoy in September 1917. He was then attached to H.Q Northern Division I.R.A, being officer in charge of north Antrim, and operating an active service unit in north Down, resulting in his being imprisoned in Crumlin Road, Belfast.

He fought on the Republican side in the Civil War and was interned in Newbridge. He was later elected 1933-1938, abstentionist M.P for South Armagh, while being active in Army leadership at the same time, and was area officer for the midland counties of Kildare, Laois, Offaly and north Tipperary. He disagreed on tactical grounds in 1938 with Russell's Campaign proposals, and, like many more, retired at that time to the sidelines. Meanwhile from 1923 until 1958, he owned and managed a licensed premises in the town of Portlaoise.

Interned in the Curragh in 1940; always looking a pale and sickly man, he was released on health grounds late in 1941.

In 1950 he succeeded Mrs. Margaret Buckley as president of Sinn Féin, remaining thereafter as President (with one short break) until June 1962; coinciding with the end of what became known as the Fifties Campaign.

He had encouraged the preparations for that Campaign prior to December 1956, remaining with Tony Magan and others until interned, with the entire *Árd Comhairle* of Sinn Féin - Mrs. Buckley excepted - in July 1957. About August 1958 he was released from the Curragh on health grounds.

As President of Sinn Féin and Chairman of the Army Executive he knew very little of the military preparations, and was unaware until the night before of the intended raid on Gough Barracks, Armagh, on June 12, 1954. 'I hope you don't loose

a butt of it' was his only comment. Although Tony Magan and himself were frequently coupled together, they were not particularly close.

Mac Logan had been associated with the National Graves Association in Portlaoise, and upon the termination of the Campaign early in 1962, and his resignation as President, it was thought by some that he actively resumed with the N.G.A in Dublin, but that does not appear to be so as Tess Ní Cearnaigh of the Association confirms that he was not a member of their committee. He was however an avid reader and collector of books, and in many other ways through his circle of friends, maintained an interest and a link with the older members of the Movement. He would not have agreed with the voluntary disarming and 'politicisation' of the I.R.A - the trend towards the Workers' Party - that was occurring at this time. Rúairí Ó Brádaigh speaks highly of him; 'utterly dedicated; the Tom Clarke of the Movement', he says. Ice cold in contention was Bowyer Bell's assessment. He had enemies, even within the Movement there were people who could not stand him; or Magan. By their rigorous approach they aroused hostility, but it is this writer's opinion that, now retired and aged 67, no one would bother to kill him.

Few people would be aware that Mac Logan was an expert armourer, with a collection of guns, especially shorts, concealed in various places, but which he overhauled and attended to with care. It was one of these which was found by his side, with his right temple shot through, lying upon the garden path. A Walther 9 m m pistol and a spent cartridge lay nearby. Dr. J. O'Gorman gave medical evidence that death resulted from fracture of the skull and laceration of the brain, and would have been instantaneous. A piece of wood had been chipped from a doorway leading from a scullery out of which he had emerged. It is a fair assumption that, in descending steps, an accident had occurred.

Sergeant Corry partly confirmed this in his evidence by observing that 'steps leading from the doorway could have been difficult to negotiate'. Con Lehane, solicitor, appeared to agree, suggesting that he may have tripped upon the steps, and that familiarity with weaponry may have bred contempt.

Jack Guiney of Dunboyne, a former internee, and close friend, who had been with him two days before, confirmed that he was in good health and had no domestic worries. He had known him for 22 years. 'He took a great interest in small weapons, and was often seen repairing them'.

Det. Sergt. Thomas O'Connor of the Ballistics Bureau said that the cartridge case, in his opinion, had come from the Walther pistol, but the bullet was so damaged (striking the door frame?) that it could not be positively identified as having been discharged from that gun.

Dr. J. P Brennan, Coroner, returned a verdict that death was self inflicted, but with a strong likelihood that it was inflicted accidentally.

Expressing sympathy, he added that he had known Mr. Mac Logan and had been associated with him in political activity\*. 'I knew him very well and all the time that I did know him I never found him to be other than a normal and sensible man'.

\* Reference to the short lived Cumann Poblachta na h-Éireann of 1936, touched upon elsewhere.

Earlier, Sergt. Corry had stated that foul play was not suspected.

There had been some rumblings that Mac Logan may have been the victim of a person later prominent in the Workers' Party. That can be ruled out. Equally so suicide; already largely ruled out by the inquest verdict, and by those taking part, Con Lehane and Jack Guiney. Needless to add that was the view of M. Ní Cearnaigh and Rúairí Ó Brádaigh. Pádraig Mac Logan's death was not suicide; it was the result of a gun accident.

It is of interest that around these days what became known as the Divis Street Riots, being the attacks of Belfast nationalist minded youngsters upon the R.U.C., were in full swing.



## JAMES L. (SEAMUS) O'DONOVAN

Any summary of Jim O'Donovan has to commence with the appreciation written at the time of his death (1979) by his friend and fellow nationalist Aodhagan O'Rahilly\*. 'James L. O'Donovan was the last survivor of the staff of Michael Collins from the start of the War of Independence until the Treaty split in January 1922. There were 12 in all. Their portraits, as painted by Leo Whelan, can be seen in the Hugh Lane Municipal Gallery in Dublin. This picture was painted during the Truce. O'Donovan was a true follower of Patrick H. Pearse. Both men worshipped heroes; Pearse worshipped Cuchullain and Wolfe Tone; O'Donovan - Casement and Pearse. They differed in a number of ways. Pearse cared nothing about money, his own or that of his friends. O'Donovan always repaid everything to those who had given him credit. He was a man of honour and courage. He was unpopular, as he did not suffer fools gladly.'

James Laurence O'Donovan was born at Castleview, Roscommon town in 1896; his father being an excise officer and his mother being Margaret Brennan of Bandon. Schooling for Jim was in St. Aloysius College, Glasgow, and at University College, Dublin, emerging as a Master of Science. Passing quickly from student role to I.R.A Director of Chemicals he was imprisoned in Mountjoy and Kilmainham and participated in a hunger strike. Released, he was rearrested and interned in Newbridge from which he escaped. He experimented with explosives, and invented the 'war flour' and 'cheddar' devices receiving a hand injury which he carried ever after.

When set free from Kilmainham in July 1924 he set up in a small way as a paint manufacturer. The emphasis was now upon the development of Irish industry, and as he was an industrial chemist, it seemed a direction in which to go; but the business folded within a few years. The Shannon Scheme had been launched by Dr. McLaughlin and Minister Patrick McGilligan; O'Donovan's qualifications landed him a job in the head office of the E.S.B.

Restless as ever, and still upon the fringe of idealistic nationalism, he founded in 1936 a literary and mildly political magazine, *Ireland Today*, whose aim in the light of the shortfall of Fianna Fáil aspirations, was to revive the spirit of Irish nationalism. However, Ireland (especially in the light of today) might be seen, culturally, eco-

\* See Memories of the Civil War in *Survivors* for Aodhagan, then a mere boy, who with his brother Nial, participated. Both, subsequently, helped to set up native Irish industry. Their father, The O'Rahilly, died in action in Moore Street during Easter Week 1916 as is amply referenced in the histories of that period. As are the Humphreys (see Sighle Bean Uí Dhoonchadha in *Survivors*) to whom the family was related. Sighle herself features as *Ghosts* etc. in Bowyer Bell, and frequently in Coogan and elsewhere, as an Ailesbury Road rebel; the 1922 fight to seize Ernie O'Malley took place in her house. Sighle was married to Donal O'Donoghue, the mild man, editor for a while of *An Phoblacht*, and later boss over Bob Bradshaw in Solus Lamps of Bray. Like Bluebeard it seems difficult to rub away the traces of Irish Republicanism.

nomically and socially, as a small pond surrounded by a rising, overlapping, ocean. That tide, steam rolling our individuality, has sluiced over and flooded in upon us - northern battles notwithstanding - but in 1936, albeit speaking the English language, we were still a rural Hibernian state. *Ireland Today* might then sometimes have been seen upon the shelves of newsagents; not suffocated as it most certainly would be now, and out of sight, under the weight of imported media.

Lifting one's head, even for a cultural purpose, above the parapet carried a risk. O'Donovan, the former Director of Chemicals, was rediscovered by his 'brother' Director of Munitions, Sean Russell, and entrusted with his project of a guerrilla and bomb attack upon the heart of the Empire, England. His S. Plan was accepted by Russell without question, and his directives on the manufacture of balloon incendiaries using sugar, sulphuric acid and magnesium, with potassium chlorate and paraffin wax, carried out to the letter. The classes in respect of this work were carried on in Killiney Castle, where Paddy McGrath presided; O'Donovan may have appeared there on odd occasions, although otherwise keeping a low profile.

In January 1939, the German Abwehr sent an agent Oskar Pfau to Dublin, but, so uninstructed were they in Irish affairs, that he called upon General O'Duffy at Mount Merrion. He was brought eventually to a house in Clontarf on February 3, through Maurice Twomey, where he met Sean Russell, Jim O'Donovan and several G.H.Q officers\*.

The I.R.A had launched their English campaign, planned since 1936/37, and not linked in any way to developments in Europe. All they sought now was money, some armaments and a radio transmitter. There was no question of attempting to unseat the Dublin government; the objective was, in the event of failure in England, to prosecute attacks upon the Six Counties, expecting naively that Dublin would not interfere.

Resulting from this meeting with Pfau, O'Donovan departed immediately for Hamburg. He had an admiration for what some conceive to be German efficiency and he spoke some German. In April he returned again to Hamburg but, as Bowyer Bell describes it, the only firm result was a courier route between Brussels and London using an exiled Breton. Everything else remained very tentative.

Despite this, he was called back again to Hamburg on August 23, moving on to Berlin. On that occasion he travelled with his wife as cover, and upon the same ship - although pretending not to recognise - was Joe McGarrity. On this occasion they had an unfortunate experience with officious customs people which subdued considerably his enthusiasm for that nation. Upon his return to Dublin, he again found German efficiency wanting for the vital radio code was missing. This is the continuing story of a long series of futile contacts made from the German side, and which were so amateurish and at times, hilarious, that we shall not seek to summarise them here.

This is particularly true of the accounts of agent Hermann Goertz, who spent 18 months at liberty in Ireland from May 1940 to November 1941, involving many people and fouling them up at the same time. Goertz, then accompanied by a young

\* See Bowyer Bell, *The I.R.A*



lady, had been arrested in England in 1935, after, for him, a particularly inept confrontation experience when he left spy documents in a suitcase before returning to Germany for a holiday. These, his English landlady uncovered. Serving a sentence, he got back to Germany just before war broke out. At the end of all hostilities in April 1947, Goertz swallowed poison in the Aliens Office at Palace Street, Dublin, fearing some obscure fate if he was returned to Germany. The Western allies had sought his deportation for interrogation.

Readers of this work will trip across substantial references to Jim O'Donovan, particularly in accounts from Mattie O'Neill and Bob Bradshaw, relating to his activities up to the time of his arrest in September 1941 and internment in the Curragh, accompanied by Roger McHugh. There are references thereafter to his presence there but these must be viewed in the circumstances that prevailed. He was involved in an abortive over the wire escape plan of February 1942\* when he held high hopes for the campaign projected for the North in the autumn. That campaign was launched following the execution of Tom Williams in September, but, with flagging resources, it gradually ground to a halt.

During his time there, Jim was with the Pearse Kelly group; he did not indulge in craft work but did a regular stint of walking, wrote a great deal and read whatever came to his hand, keeping closely in touch by letter with home and family. Jim's wife was Mary, a sister of Kevin Barry, and Jim had commenced an unpublished work upon him\*\* on which he worked for a number of years without ever completing.

In the increasing flow of releases Jim was let go early in 1944 and was quickly restored to his position with the E.S.B in Fitzwilliam Street. He took no further part in Republican politics, and he disapproved of the late fifties Border campaign. Jim had some useful connections; a brother Coleman, was an ambassador in many capitals; another brother was secretary of the Department of Social Welfare, while another followed his father's career as an excise man.

References to Seamus O'Donovan are plentiful amid some scatty reportage in a book *The Shamrock and the Swastika*, by Carolle J. Carter, published in California in 1977; there are 17. In *Spies in Ireland*, by Enno Stephan, published by Four Square in 1965, there are 18 somewhat more reliable references. Dorothy Macardle's *The Irish Republic* lists him but not in any detail; he is listed in Pádraic O'Farrell's *Who's Who In The Irish War of Independence*. He is mentioned by C.S. Andrews in *Dublin Made Me*, and has again one mention (following the 1923 hunger strike) in *Green Against Green* by Michael Hopkinson. There are five references in *Kevin Barry and His Time*, two in *Survivors*; two in Tim Pat Coogan's *The I.R.A.*; eight in *Legion of the Rear Guard*, eight in *Frank Ryan*; and nine in *Bowyer Bell*, and ten in *Harry*.

Leaba i measc na naomh go raibh aige.

\*See *Harry*.

\*\* In January 1989 Donal O'Donovan, nephew of Kevin Barry, authored *Kevin Barry and His Time*.

The first of these is the 'I am the mountain singer' which is a poem of great beauty and power. It is a poem of the voice of the peasant, the cry of the wind on the wooded hill, the leap of the fish in the stream. It is a poem of the life of the people, of the life of the land, of the life of the sea. It is a poem of the life of the people, of the life of the land, of the life of the sea.

The second of these is the 'The voice of the peasant's dream' which is a poem of great beauty and power. It is a poem of the voice of the peasant, the cry of the wind on the wooded hill, the leap of the fish in the stream. It is a poem of the life of the people, of the life of the land, of the life of the sea. It is a poem of the life of the people, of the life of the land, of the life of the sea.

The third of these is the 'The cry of the wind on the wooded hill' which is a poem of great beauty and power. It is a poem of the voice of the peasant, the cry of the wind on the wooded hill, the leap of the fish in the stream. It is a poem of the life of the people, of the life of the land, of the life of the sea. It is a poem of the life of the people, of the life of the land, of the life of the sea.

The fourth of these is the 'The leap of the fish in the stream' which is a poem of great beauty and power. It is a poem of the voice of the peasant, the cry of the wind on the wooded hill, the leap of the fish in the stream. It is a poem of the life of the people, of the life of the land, of the life of the sea. It is a poem of the life of the people, of the life of the land, of the life of the sea.

The fifth of these is the 'The voice of the peasant's dream' which is a poem of great beauty and power. It is a poem of the voice of the peasant, the cry of the wind on the wooded hill, the leap of the fish in the stream. It is a poem of the life of the people, of the life of the land, of the life of the sea. It is a poem of the life of the people, of the life of the land, of the life of the sea.

*I am the mountain singer -*  
*The voice of the peasant's dream,*  
*The cry of the wind on the wooded hill,*  
*The leap of the fish in the stream.*

- Joseph Campbell, 1879-1944.

## SÉAMUS Ó MONGÁIN,

*on the failed Holles Street  
ambush; the bomb in  
Dublin Castle, and the 3  
jail fights in the early  
months of 1940 in  
Mountjoy.*



Séamus Ó Mongáin, the seer of Dú Thuama, has contributed a colourful memoir on his experiences in the Movement, commencing in Liverpool in the early thirties, of which the following is his account of three later episodes. But first we must trace his family background, which, as frequently in Ireland, is a unique story in itself.

We belong to a Republican background, he commenced, as well as being natives of this place. My two grandparents were stone masons as well as being farmers part of the time. On my father's side we came from here, and this district is like a country that is separated from Ireland. We are divided on three sides by the sea, and to the east by trackless bogs and moorland that stretch to the Nephin Beg mountains. An engineer that came here wrote in the *Western People* of the fantastic heathered desert that is the Erris gaeltacht.

We belong to one of the oldest families in Dú Thuama. The Ó Mongáins are in Erris from the sixth century. We lived a bit further inland then, on the side of the Moy River, close to Ballina. A family that was closely connected with us were the Gaughans who had land near Crossmolina, called Moyheleog at the time. The Barret's came in, and the Burkes, and we were driven back, although Mangan or Ó Mongáin, remain plentiful in other parts of Mayo. Our names, the Séamus Ellens', the Gaughans and ourselves are two of the oldest and most plentiful families in Erris; and in 1855, in the villages here, there were 17 families of Gaughan and 14 of Ó Mongáin.

Other Ulster families settled here following the retreat from Kinsale and after the Flight of the Earls; thus you find McGintys and MacSweeneys although they were around Connaught as warriors for the O'Donnells since the twelfth century. So you have also the Henrys, now a surname of mixed antecedents in Ulster. They came from Tyrone; quite a lot of people here are descended from Tyrone ancestors. That is noticeable in the gaelic where Connaught Irish is overlaid with Ulster; for instance *pillfidh me* and *i leabaidh* (instead of), used only in Tír Connail, and perhaps in Tyrone.

My grandfather, on my father's side, was a Fenian, and also my grandfather on my mother's side. His name was Garret Mor D'Arcy from Co. Carlow. He roofed the chapel in Ballon. He also built a station in Carlow for the old R.I.C, and when his

comrades mocked him for such collaboration, he consoled them by saying, oh, sure, it won't last long.

Grandfather D'Arcy died young; my mother being only five years of age at his demise. His brother, my uncle Ned, only 19 at this time got married. He therefore had a family growing up when the Tan trouble started. He was out against them, as was his son, my cousin Paddy. My Aunt Kate married Hugh Canavan, but on the establishment of the Free State he went with them while Paddy and Ned stayed with the column.

Dú Thuama, as I have said, was so isolated that there was little fighting here but my uncles were in Sinn Féin, while my uncle Anthony was on the run. My own father was a shopkeeper; he started in Belmullet as a shop boy, going from there to Dublin, and finally ending in Liverpool where he owned a grocery. My mother was a teacher of domestic economy, trained in Kildare Street, and there were just four boys in the family; myself, Gearóid, Seán and Las, in that order.

We used to spend our time growing up, here, some time in Carlow, some time in Dublin and some time in Liverpool. In that way we were quite cosmopolitan.

I joined the I.R.A in Liverpool in 1932 when Paddy Hennessy was O.C, but it was a period of confusion as De Valera had come to power and Paddy had inclinations in that direction. He was succeeded by George Stannard who lasted until 1938. Some of the recruits who came in shortly after that were Sean and Pat Hannon, originally from Co. Tyrone, Rita and Joe McSweeney from Co. Waterford, Martin Staunton, in association with his two sisters, Maura and Eileen. Tommy Hunt joined later on, and there was also Maura Drumm, as little Mary McIntyre from Crossmaglen, about whom more would be heard 40 years later.

In 1933 I had commenced at University, and George Stannard asked if I would join the cadets there; the Officers Training Corps as they were called. I would be able to enter barracks and I might learn a good deal. In our unit also there was Eamon Scott and Ted Scott, cousins, both of whose fathers were from Co. Kerry, and ran pubs in Liverpool. Eamon was studying medicine at the University, so he also was asked and joined the O.T.C.

#### **The Jail Fights:**

For reasons that may be related elsewhere Séamus, having obtained his B. A, had to flit Liverpool in 1936, after which he attended University College, Dublin, Earlsfort Terrace, from which he graduated; Gearóid accompanying him. In the summer of 1939 he was appointed to the staff of the Publicity Bureau, I.R.A, under Jack McNeela, then operating from three bases in Dublin, and it was while in that role, and after an unexpected prison release in 1941, that he acquired a detailed knowledge of some of the sensational occurrences of that time. Three only of these are related here; in the first of which he was an active participant, namely the three successive fights for political treatment in Mountjoy in January and February 1940.

Following a raid on the radio H.Q at *Ashgrove House*, on New Year's Eve. Séamus, with Jack McNeela, Jack Plunkett and Seamus Byrne, were conveyed to the Bridewell and brought on the following morning to Mountjoy. We were in a *buacach* mood, meaning cheerful, Séamus relates. At prison reception, when asked had they any scars or infirmities; no, declared Jack McNeela cheerfully. We are perfect speci-

mens of the human race. As was then the practice in the jail they were led to the basement where the warders sought to place them in four cells. No, said Jack McNeela again, we stay together. They remained there for a few hours, following which they were brought to join the other Republican prisoners upstairs.

There were a few lads brought in following the Magazine Fort raid, Séamus resumes, Joe McDermott, Jackie McDermott, Jackie Parnell, and other people including, later on, a western contingent of over a dozen arrested at a conference in the Meath Hotel, Parnell Square. Peadar MacAndrew was O.C. We were being put into our cells at four o'clock until after seven in the morning. Jack McNeela was not satisfied with that. We then decided that we would remain outside D. Wing; that we would not enter at four o'clock. Extra warders, and dozens of guards swinging batons, were brought in, and there were three successive fist fights in that month. I was thrown into somebody else's cell in the first action. I at once took the end off the steel bed and commenced to break down the brick wall dividing me from my companion.

We were let out after some days, but at dinner time we refused to go back in again. Sean Kavanagh, the Governor, tried to reason but he had little room to manoeuvre; his hands being tied firmly by the Dept. of Justice. He was not too bad, you know. We marched out to the yard overseen by Warder Delaney, whose favourite expression, no matter what the circumstances was, *everything in the garden is rosy*. Well, it was far from rosy for the next thing Kavanagh appeared accompanied by a posse of around 150 guards and warders.

I was directly behind Jack McNeela who was conversing with Jack Plunkett. At that moment Kavanagh walked forward, and to one of his warders he ordered, *take this man*. As I was right behind him, I drew out and gave Kavanagh an almighty belt, and that promptly drew their attention on to me; advancing towards me with batons held aloft. I was holding my hands upwards to protect my face; I could not fall back or dodge the descending blows as there were too many other prisoners tightly packed around me.

A second lot moved in to attack McNeela; he was a mighty strong man so he placed himself back to a wall where he could try to fend them off. I could see, while I was being battered, that they were making rushes at him, and he would lunge out knocking one down, and then instantly jumping back to the wall. Of course the entire 40 of us were engaged in what had become a desperate four to one mêlée. Eventually they managed to trip him up, whereupon four spread themselves upon his body, Jack shouting meanwhile, *get up off me; get up*.

In another corner Joe Bray, a fine strapping fellow, had one of their helmets on his head while swinging out in all directions. Two of them were holding me but I pulled free and hit Kavanagh again. (Later he was to ask me in the privacy of his office why I hit him). They got hold of me again; one twisting my leg so much that for years after I suffered with my spine.

Dragged semi-conscious to the steps leading upwards into the wing, I took hold of the railing, kicking out in all directions, but one commenced to stamp upon my fingers and I had to let go. I was dragged then, and half carried through the door, my head banging on the stone flags, and thrown into a cell; a completely empty cell,

with only a broken window high up in the wall grinning down at me.

I was paralysed; I could not rise, and I lay there for a week - it was January 1940 - with eddies of snow blowing in upon me. Food, when it was eventually brought in was placed upon the floor beside me. Lying, as I was in my suit of clothes, and bereft of a blanket, I rolled under the heating pipe passing through the cell for warmth.

Shortly after this Jack was appointed O.C, as Peadar MacAndrew was removed to Arbour Hill. Some of our lads were now being sentenced, and where the sentence exceeded two years, as it did in the case of the Magazine Fort lads, they were being condemned to the prison gear and convict regime of Mountjoy. We were not going to tolerate that; we would be supportive of them, which explains the reason for the commencement of the second fight three weeks afterwards. It was done by barricading D. Wing, giving us some defence, but it was in the middle of that, while engaged in rough hand to hand stuff that my suit was torn to ribbons; so much so that I had to send an urgent message to Maire, my wife, for a new one. When it came it was a cheap rig-out, in tweed, from Gleasons, but of such a dazzling mix that Tomás MacCurtain used joke that he could not bear to look at me as the mere sight dazzled his eyes. After that fight we were left completely in control of D. Wing. We had our own stores and could make tea. But the position, calm on the surface, was deteriorating as two of the Fort lads in the convict wing were days on hunger strike for political status.

It was at that stage that the demand for political treatment on behalf of the five held convict in another wing, was submitted. *The I.R.A demand that in future all soldiers of the I.R.A who are tried and sentenced by the Military Tribunal serve their sentence in military custody, and get the same treatment that is being meted out to the men in Arbour Hill Military Prison at present.*

It was then discussed whether all of us would go on hunger strike although we were not directly involved, but that was ruled out. Instead six volunteered; Jack McNeela, Jack Plunkett, Tom Grogan, Micky Traynor, Tony D'Arcy and Tomás MacCurtain. They were not ordered to do so; no one ever was, and in fact McNeela did not believe in the tactic. They are all departed now, but anyone who knew these men would recognise that they were not of the martyr type.\*

After another week it was time for us four from *Ashgrove House* to appear at the Tribunal. I had been O.C for a brief while, and I now passed that baton on to Seamus 'Habeus Corpus' Burke of Ballinrobe. Seamus Byrne and myself before sentencing, were removed briefly to the basement prior to transfer to Arbour Hill so we were not present for the third fight which arose directly from the decision of the authorities to proceed and to bring the men, now on hunger strike, before the Tribunal. We all had been determined to prevent them being taken. Upstairs as soon as they com-

\* Two were to die; D'Arcy after 52 days, and McNeela after 55 days. At that stage the remaining four had come off the strike, and all seemingly recovered although faced with some years of imprisonment; MacCurtain still to undergo a hanging trial and then to serve his term in the rigorous conditions of Portlaoise.

menced to remove Jack and Tomás, he jumped from his bed and called their 24 companions to block them. They hauled out their beds, forming a barricade in the wing. Inevitably, after a hand to hand struggle, that was breached, and the four of us were in Collins Barracks by six o'clock in the evening, where Jack, now four days on hunger strike, lay upon the floor. Chairs were brought in then and the two sat upon them. Seamus Byrne, being a solicitor, engaged in close questioning with three officers, although the rest of us, apart from a query upon a Scotland Yard photograph from Jack, remained silent. Jack Plunkett then addressed Col John Joyce (they had both been volunteers in the Dublin No. 3 Battalion in the Tan struggle); *you are trying me now for something I attempted to do for the Republic. I can recall trying you for failing the Republic.* He was referring to the failure in 1921 of an attack upon the main postal sorting office in Ballsbridge.

Jack McNeela was sentenced to two years imprisonment on March 1, on a charge of conspiracy to usurp the powers of government; Jack Plunkett, Seamus Byrne and myself to 18 months; Micky Traynor, (not in court with us) being only upon a membership charge, received three months. Tomás MacCurtain was on a capital charge and was not in court with us. Tom Grogan, not in court with us received 3 years on the Fort charge and was then transferred to the criminal wing of Mountjoy.

We were brought back under heavy escort to Mountjoy where we were held overnight prior to being transferred to Arbour Hill, although the three on hunger strike would not be going there for some time (MacCurtain not at all). Lying next door to me, Jack managed to communicate. He told me that he had a serious gash in his cheek; in fact, although he did not know it, his cheek bone was broken as may have been some ribs, resulting in his being forced to lie henceforth upon his back until his death some seven weeks later. The gash in his cheek never healed. (The inquest later disclosed that Tony D'Arcy had severe cuts to his lips.) That cell conversation was my last with Jack McNeela.



Unveiling of Sean McNeela Memorial 1952 (Front Brendan McAndrew and Ned Murray, 2nd Row Tommy Mc Dermot)  
 PICTURE SUPPLIED BY JACKIE CLARKE

### The Bomb in the Lower Yard of Dublin Castle: April 25, 1940

The I.R.A. was not going to let rest without a response the death on hunger strike of two of their finest officers, so a few days later on April 25, their answer came in the shape of what the *Evening Mail* headlined as, 'A Terrific City Explosion'. It was a land mine, placed in quarters occupied by the Detective Division, or Special Branch, in the Lower Castle Yard. The explosion, about 5am, was heard four miles away, in Blackrock, while, as reported by the *Mail*, 'the havoc caused by the terrific impact was so enormous that the place was littered with broken glass and masonry as if an air raid had taken place'. Five detectives reported injury, as did a caretaker guide residing there. Glass and windows of the Chapel Royal and the State Apartments were destroyed.

Séamus Ó Mongáins account runs:-

Jim Crofton, the spy in the castle, presented the I.R.A. with an opportunity to place a mine in the Lower Castle Yard, in the portion occupied by the Special Branch then busily targeting Óglaigh na h-Éireann. It was planned as a reprisal for the recent deaths on hunger strike of Tony D'Arcy and Jack McNeela. The target was the communications room but, in the absence of Crofton who, as a loyal policeman, was establishing an alibi on the particular night, the mine was mistakenly placed adjacent to the sleeping quarters of five Branch men.\*

Brother Gearóid, as Intelligence Officer, Dublin Battalion, was involved in planning the operation. He selected Joe Atkinson ('Dougerty') and 'Black Dan' O'Toole, both of Belfast, for the job. O'Toole, a real hard man but one with a lively sense of humour, had been in numbers of close shave operations and would survive longer than most, while Atkinson, from H.Q., was steeped in literature and history. Frankie Duffy, also from Belfast, and another volunteer called Paddy, were also involved but remained hidden in Ship Street, at the rear.

Bolt cutters were required, and these had been left in a convenient place inside, but, on their first attempt, O'Toole and Atkinson took fright when an alarm was thought to have gone off; the bolt cutters were thrown aside and they scampered, climbing the spiked gates which hang under an enormous granite arch, back out upon a darkened Ship Street.

The favourite attire of an I.R.A. man at that time was a dark Burberry coat; the reason being that, buttoned in the right fashion, it could conceal a Tommy gun while the pan could be made slide flat within the pocket. Crofton, entering early on the morning, was wearing a Burberry, and spotting the bolt cutters, he slipped them inside his coat until he reached a press. Later on the same day he was in touch with Gearóid; *you will have to try again*, he said.

So, the very next night, the same pair, carried their mine over the gate again. Finding the concealed cutters, they sliced whatever bars stood in their way, entering an apartment, adjacent to, but not in fact, the communications room. Carefully adjusting the clock upon the mine, they sneaked out, where silhouetted above them the battlemented Birmingham Tower cast a dark shadow.

\* Crofton was not their only spy; there was another to whom the I.R.A. paid a retainer.



Stopping momentarily, Atkinson pointed upwards; 'it was from there around the eve of Little Christmas 1591 (old style) that Red Hugh O'Donnell, Henry and Art O'Neill, held as hostages, escaped from the English'. 'Forget Red Hugh', came back brusklly; 'it is Black Dan that is trying to escape now: come on'. And unimpeded, they moved like wraiths, back over the iron gates under the great arch onto Ship Street.

#### **The Failed Holles Street Ambush: May 7, 1940**

Were the I.R.A to seize confidential mails then arriving regularly to the office of the British Representative Sir John Maffey at 38 Merrion Square - later burnt out in a popular protest in February 1972 - they might yield valuable information as to the extent of co operation by Dublin with Downing Street, in combating the I.R.A. Conceivably there might be no such evidence in a single seizure of mails. But the Intelligence Staff, principally Gearóid Ó Mongáin and Seán Ó Broin were eager that it be tried, and Stephen Hayes, Acting Chief of Staff agreed to authorise it, as he had authorised all major operations at this time.

It was planned to take place on May 7, around 9 a m, only 11 days after the bomb in the Castle, itself only seven days after the last death on hunger strike. To that extent it was likely to lessen further public sympathy for the I.R.A except those most traditional in their adherence to Republicanism. (A year later in the Hayes Confession the Belfast men would allege that this was all part of a deep seated plot hatched with Dr. James Ryan, Minister and Senator Byrne to dissipate public sympathy for the I.R.A. But such risk taking by government would be hard to sustain).

The practice was that all cross channel mails arrived at Dun Laoire, were brought then to the sorting office in Pearse Street. Those for the U.K. office arrived in a sealed diplomatic bag and were then conveyed by combination motor cycle to Merrion Square. Holles Street was the direct line of access, and Gearóid had paid it particular attention in the days preceding. With Seán Ó Broin and Paddy, he planned to ambush the combination as it ascended the slight incline towards Merrion Square. A car, driven by Seán, with 'Black Dan' O'Toole, Joe Atkinson and Frankie Duffy would force the combination on to the left hand kerb. As the combination approached, Gearóid, moving along the footpath, demonstratively drew a handkerchief from his pocket, whereupon the car, engine ticking, drew from the right hand side to the left hand kerb, closing upon the combination and, and forcing it to stop.

Instantly 'Black Dan' jumped out while the others pointed revolvers at the three wheeler (Despite reports a Thompson was not used). The two Branch men shot up their hands, but when Danno moved in front of the I.R.A guns, they quickly drew theirs and shot at Danno, a bullet catching him in the thigh, whereupon he fell upon the street. The bag was strapped to the arm of Branchman Shanahan; who bravely wrapped himself around a lamp post while Branchman McSweeney, taking cover, continued firing.

Ó Broin could see they had failed; somehow 'Black Dan' was dragged on board, and the car, its engine running, sped up the street, turned a sharp right to head for Brennan's shop in Dorset Street, where Carmel, after only two months training in the Mater Hospital, drew the .45 bullet bloodily from his thigh. Gearóid, 'the innocent bystander' in this 60 seconds of excitement, mounted his bicycle and rode off.

Gearóid had been peripherally involved in a plan to assassinate the U.K Representative, Sir John Maffey, should the hanging of Barnes and McCormack proceed on February 7. The residence at that time was close to the Dodder in Milltown. Gearóid, with his educated English accent, exchanged polite words with Sir John as he passed in the early morning exercising his dog. He was satisfied from a number of observations that such a response to the hanging was feasible, but Hayes and de Lacy drew back from assassinating Maffey; it was felt that something else should be done.

#### **Gearóid Arrested**

Gearóid, studious and bespectacled, managed to avoid arrest until December 1940. When it was found necessary to remove the *War News* printing operation from 17 Percy Place. Gearóid combined his duties of Intelligence Officer, Dublin, with the job of editing. He decided that, instead of a Gestetner job, it would in future be printed. Journalist Dermot Brennan, then working for *The Standard* which was printed by *The Irish Press*, calmly lifted type from that paper for the purpose.

Gearóid was finally run to earth in December at the north side home of Brennan where he had a room. Both were charged with common larceny, sentenced to Arbour Hill and later interned.

*The Séamus Ó Mongáin Memoirs cover considerably more than appear in this volume but they cannot yet be published.*

## GERALD O'REILLY.

Gerald O'Reilly, long standing Republican and nationalist, was born at Bohermeen, Navan, Co. Meath, in 1903, and died at Long Beach, New York, in August 1990. A friend to all down the years, in recent times he continued to keep closely in touch with Jim Savage of Cork city, featured in this book. He has a sister-in-law surviving in Navan, Esme O'Reilly, and a grand nephew, now state solicitor.

After his death, Sean Cronin gave the following biographical notes on O'Reilly. He fought on the Republican side in the Civil War and was among the prisoners freed when Frank Aiken recaptured Dundalk military barracks on August 13, 1922, after which he served in Aiken's Fourth Northern Division.

In 1925 he participated, dressed in garda uniform, with George Gilmore in the takeover of Mountjoy, during which 19 republican prisoners, including such notables as Jim Killeen, Mick Carolan, Sean Russell and Dave Fitzgerald, escaped. He was arrested after the assassination of Kevin O'Higgins and held until Christmas 1927. On his release he emigrated to New York where he worked for the public transport system.

That workforce consisted of Irish emigrants like O'Reilly, many of them the defeated Republicans of the Civil War who joined Clan na Gael as soon as they arrived in America. Middle and top management consisted of Americans of Irish descent.

Skilled workers had their own unions, but no union catered for the rank and file. In 1933, the Clan and the Irish Workers' Clubs, founded by Jim Galton of Leitrim, who preached Connolly socialism, set up a secret committee to form a union.

They sought the help of Irish - American and Catholic organisations but on being turned down appealed to the Communist Party which lent support, with funds and organisers.

The Transport Workers' Union was launched in May 1934. Its leaders included Mick Quill, Austin Hogan from Cork city, Douglas MacMahon, an Irish American, and John Santo, a Hungarian communist student. John L. Lewis, the legendary coal miner's leader and founder of the Congress of Industrial Organisations, granted the T.W.U. a C.I.O charter to organise nationwide.

By 1934, although not severing his connection with Clan or the I.R.A., Gerald was lending a hand to Republican Congress in the States being persuaded by George Gilmore then visiting, but that small flame soon extinguished itself. On May 14, 1937, back again in Ireland, he was on an anti-royalty platform in Cathal Brugha Street, Dublin, along with Tom Barry, Donal O'Donoghue, Tadhg Lynch and more. It followed a night of scuffles in Beresford Place.

In June 1935, Gerald O'Reilly was a signatory among other Irish Americans to a singularly ineffective make-it-up appeal in the rising conflict between De Valera and the I.R.A.

Gerald O'Reilly was a close friend of Frank Ryan, the I.R.A leader who edited *An Phoblacht* in the early thirties. Their letters during the Spanish Civil War are valuable historical documents. There are no less than 30 references in Cronin's book to letters exchanged by Frank Ryan to him, on all manner of subjects; Congress politics, his health, financing the little paper, until finally and tragically, Spain, with its frustrations and tragic ending.

To Helen O'Reilly, his wife, Frank also wrote, and there are ten such references and some newsy letters from the happier pre-Spain period. In Conor Foley's, *Legion of the Rearguard*, there are eight overlapping references. In this writers *Survivors* there are 33 references.

He headed the U.C Committee for Frank Ryan's release from Burgos Prison, where he lay under sentence of death. Gerald O'Reilly was the first person with whom Frank Ryan communicated after his abortive journey by submarine to Ireland in August 1940, during which Sean Russell died of a gastric ulcer and was buried at sea. Ryan gave O'Reilly the details in a simple code.

The courier, a German sailor, was arrested by the F.B.I and O'Reilly was interrogated for several days in the spring of 1941; the U.S being still neutral.

He was pre-deceased by his wife. Helen (Beardsley) O'Reilly, an Irish- American, who opened a shop in old Ballymun after being trapped in Ireland by the outbreak of war in 1939. She returned to America in the early fifties. He is survived by daughter Eileen McDonnell, son in law Jim, and grand daughter Christina.

Gerald came every summer to Ireland. In May 1988 he attended the Gralton School at Carrick on Shannon where he met Desmond Greaves for the first time. So much for Cronin.

Connie Neenan, in *Survivors*, speaks of Gerald, and that 'simple code' he received following the demise of Russell; *John has passed away*, was the totality of the message which Connie later confirmed through the good offices of St John Gaffney, a former Consul General in Munich, and whom Connie knew to be favourable as he had written a book, *Breaking the Silence*, on British propaganda.

Three years earlier he had corresponded and encouraged the inception of the *Frank Ryan Release Committee* in Ireland. It consisted of: Chairman, Aodhagan O'Rahilly; Hon. Sec, Sean Nolan; Treasurer, Michael Cremin, with Sen. Margaret Pearse, Mick Price, Cú Uladh, Sen. David Robinson, R.M. Fox, Linda Kearns, Con Lehane, Mollie Hall, Simon Donnelly, Maud Gonne, George Irvine, Rosamund Jacob, Mrs. Austin Stack, Blathnid Ní Carthaig, P.J. Daly, Mrs. Aileen Walsh Edwards, Pádraig Ó Caoimh, Maire Comerford, Tom Barry, Eamonn de Barra and Roddy Connolly. In the end this committee was unable to accomplish anything; it rested finally with De Valera's minister in Spain, Leopold Kearney and of course, the Germans.

## EILEEN TUBBERT:

*The young girl whom no  
one knew, never arrested,  
never figured (Later Mrs.  
Paddy Fleming).*

Historians will search long and earnestly among the heroines of the republican movement, the Maud Gones, the Markievicz's, the Despard, without coming upon the name of Eileen Tubbert of Marrenstown, Co. Wexford, born 1901 and laid quietly to rest in Co. Dublin, in April 1974. With her sisters, Alice and Molly, both later sterling Cumann na mBan, and Desmond, they had come early to Dublin where their father was a master carpenter in Cramptons, being there 18 years, but dismissed on a one hour notice; his politics having come to the notice of the management. She is listed in a footnote in *Survivors*, second edition 1987, on page 303 where she is incorrectly designated Mrs. Tubberd. In 1928 when the Second Dáil Sinn Féin still had a quorum of 23 deputies, a group photograph was taken in Dublin, the photograph being still (1987) upon the wall of the home of the last survivor Tom Maguire; the caption underneath lists their names as follows:-

Pat Shanahan, Prof. Stockley, Mrs. O'Callaghan, Art O'Connor, J.J. O'Kelly, Miss Mac Swiney, Daithi Ceannt, Count Plunkett, Brian O'Higgins, Count O'Byrne, Eamonn Deale, Seamus Lennon, F.G. Colivet, Austin Stack, Charles Murphy, Sean O'Mahoney, Dr. Ada English, Thomas O'Donoghue, Dr. Crowley, Tom Maguire, Sean Mac Swiney, Sean O'Farrell, Brian Mellows, Mrs Cathal Brugha, Eileen Tubbert, stenographer, and Councillor Joe Clarke, courier.

Sean O'Farrell, although included, was not a member of the Second Dáil. The names are as printed in English upon the mount although half of the above used the Irish form normally.

Joe Clarke, we know as the last survivor of the Mount Street battle and one who is frequently mentioned in these accounts; and Sean O'Farrell I.R.A commander in Leitrim, later joining Fianna Fáil; but who was Eileen Tubbert? At this time she is described as a stenographer, but obviously being a stenographer with the Republic through the Civil War and into the dying days of the Second Dáil required an enormous reserve of trust and resourcefulness and a willingness to live very frugally indeed. Eileen Tubbert qualified for that in all ways. Her boss in the *Irish Press* on Burgh Quay, Dublin, where she was his secretary through the fifties and sixties, Tim Pat Coogan, described Eileen as a demure little woman in a twin set, whom most people would quickly pass by. Yet, he says, she was one of the finest persons he knew; utterly loyal, dependable and hard working.

When Harry White was being pursued by a death dealing Branch in 1942, as Tim Pat tells it, she was approached, he thinks by Fiona Plunkett, and Harry came to be accommodated in one of their houses upon Foster Avenue. Eileen laid down her conditions for the man; *he will communicate with no one and I will be the only person who knows his whereabouts*. Later when Harry returned to Belfast, he maintained communication with Charlie Kerins in Dublin through letters that were transmitted and reached Eileen.

Eileen married, in 1949, Paddy Fleming, one of the brothers, Jimmy and David of Killarney; he who had signed the January 12, 1939 Proclamation to Lord Halifax, as Secretary of the Army Council. She continued working in the *Irish Press* into the late sixties. She was getting past it but she loved the *buzz* of the place. A divergence which did not sour their relationship, had occurred between Paddy and herself; he, siding with the 'Stickies' of the Workers' Party and she remaining traditional. While her political attitude to the new Workers' Party, and their philosophy would be influenced by a deep belief in religion, she had an altogether more commonsense political judgement which consistently had proved sounder than Paddy's. They lived at 9 A Strand Road, Sandymount, in what appeared to be straightened circumstances, but more apparent than real, as the house's dilapidation was due to Paddy's eccentricity; he was in fact tolerably well off.

One of the last happy moments that Tim Pat recalls was, when he brought Eileen on her retirement to Aran, a place she had always wished to see. It was one of those fine summer days and Eileen loved every moment of it. *Now that I have seen Aran, she laughed, I can go home happy.*

## DE VALERA HAD A CHOICE IN THE EMERGENCY:

*He could have imprisoned or he could have executed: By executing six republicans has it left a stain upon his memory? Documents show that he co-operated with the allies on intelligence.*

To those who know their history of this period we would ask, has the reputation of Eamon De Valera suffered as a result of his treatment of Republicans from 1939 onwards? Undoubtedly his neutrality, and the entire management of government, the hand picked top civil servants and almost all of his ministers, enhanced and heightened his reputation. Neutrality was a policy favoured deep down by most Republicans even though the policy leaned more and more to favour the Allied cause in respect of the relaxed control upon Allied prisoners, of permitting overflights, of watchfulness and reporting on happenings around the coastline, and of very close police co-operation with what nationalists regard as the discredited regime in the North. We were a small but important larder for England; our national territory in the North was a safe landing place and training area for American troops; after the initial scares thousands of Irish moved to Britain and became a vital work force at all levels in their war industries and supply services; it is said that some thousands of trained Irish, from the Free State Army, left or deserted to join their forces. So De Valera's commendable neutrality in World War 2 had its advantageous side insofar as the Allied effort was concerned. But to exercise that did he need to imprison more than a thousand Republicans; it is well known, and he knew this too, that many of them were not members of the I.R.A; they were committed nationalists who would regard it as dishonourable to sign out.

Why should he co-operate with the discredited northern government by rounding up and imprisoning most of the twenty one brave young fellows (not charged with any crime) who tunnelled their way out of Derry Jail in March 1943? Above all why did he execute six; and of the six executed why did he bring in Albert Pierrepoint to hang Charlie Kerins of Tralee? Extraordinarily, he had Pierrepoint booked for his very first execution also; the near sacred figure of Tomás Mac Curtain would have swung in July 1940 but that exceptional pressures caused it to be commuted; and he would most certainly have hanged Harry White in 1946.

The I.R.A lost a total of 33 volunteers in this period through execution, hunger strike, accident or prison death. We will home in only upon the six that De Valera actually had executed (hunger strikes are rarely, if ever, countenanced by the I.R.A and might almost be regarded as a test of who will blink first). We consider that De Valera tarnished his reputation by stooping to execution; he was well practised at

imprisonment. By execution he lowered himself to the level of the Free Staters of the Civil War period whereby the two sides could now taunt each other; alright we executed prisoners but so did ye! (Completely overlooking the much greater number condemned by the earlier regime).

When Tim Pat Coogan in his great work upon *Michael Collins* concludes with the reported opinion of Eamon De Valera that 'in the fullness of time history will recall the greatness of Collins and it will be recorded at my expense', we would say (without passing judgement on that expression) that in the heart of nationalist Ireland De Valera, through his imprisonments and executions, has been lowered by many notches in the opinion in which he will be held in the future.

The question is being asked, could he not have stopped simply at imprisonment, (Make no mistake we are not advocating that) or were talks ever tried? (There was an obvious difficulty there while their own stool pigeon, if one is to believe the Hayes Confession, was controlling for much of 1940 and into 1941 all I.R.A activity; was De Valera aware of Stephen Hayes?)

In the course of this work we set out to try to read the mind of De Valera by seeking an opinion from a circle of people as to why he resorted to a policy of executing Republicans. Those we asked were: Kevin Boland, as a son of the relevant minister, Jim Mc Guinness, journalist; Prof. T.P. O'Neill, who with Frank Pakenham, had been his appointed biographer; Tim Pat Coogan, journalist and something more; Rúairí Brugha, his frequent visitor in Árus an Uachtaráin. It is fair to say and not unexpected surely that such a touchy question was probably never put to the man himself and hence no clear cut answer emerges. We commenced with Caoimhín Ó Beoláin, former Minister for Defence, Social Welfare and Local Government (Environment), until he resigned in May 1970.

*Caoimhín Ó Beoláin* said that the final arbiter in the administration of Justice policy would be the Minister, his father, but policy was unambiguously government policy. At this point we must remind ourselves that Gerald Boland had a long standing and very high regard for De Valera (he had assisted in the 1919 escape from Lincoln Jail; he was entrusted with negotiations with the Labour Party prior to Fianna Fáil entering Leinster House).

The private secretary to Boland was the opaque and bitterly anti republican Peter Berry. He would have exercised considerable influence (in the manner of case presentation, that is) although, in the final analysis, De Valera's control of government policy would be paramount.

Boland went on to say that he would almost certainly have realised that there would be people who would regard the executions as a blemish on his career, but he would have accepted that as one of the inescapable responsibilities of government at a critical time.

Neutrality was always on a knife edge and his impression, as a soldier at that time, was that invasion from across the Border was the most likely threat. (His dad, to Michael Mc Inerney in 1968, had the opposite view; 'I never believed the Allies would invade'.)\*

\* A series of articles of March 1994 from T. Ryle Dwyer in the *Irish Times* amply portrays the extent of co-operation; 'U.S military were quite happy with Irish neutrality; De Valera authorised a system whereby the Department was sent reports from Berlin, Rome and Vichy; the Irish, through Secretary J.P. Walshe, turned over much good intelligence....'



Kevin Boland proceeded to recall quite accurately the circumstances of each execution, and it would be fair to sum up that his view was, speculating upon his father's view and, by extension, De Valera's view, 'the time for leniency was past' after McGrath and Harte had been executed in September 1940. With the execution of the former 1916 hero Patrick McGrath, De Valera had crossed his Rubicon and from then on transgressing Republicans could be executed and ought to expect that they could be executed.

As for inviting Pierrepoint in to hang Charlie Kerins; the cabinet, he says, were incensed in a personal way at the killing of Dinny O'Brien. At this time, in June 1944, their opinion of the I.R.A was at its lowest; that it was an organisation which had been taken over by unscrupulous gangster types from Belfast.

*Jim McGuinness* was sought because of his wide background experience in the Movement in London, in Dublin, in the Curragh, and later when hoisted upon a journalistic pinnacle as *Irish Press* editor: moving a step upward when he was appointed Head of News in R.T.E. This corresponded with De Valera's term as Taoiseach, in opposition; as Taoiseach again and finally as Uachtarán. One would have expected a newsman so signally keyed in to have garnered some hint - certainly not an admission; still less a discussion - from the 'Chief'. But, no dice; Jim received the same round robin letter of queries from us on the six executed but professed to be quite blank on any view of what De Valera may have thought over that period.

*Prof. T.P. O'Neill* with Frank Pakenham, Lord Longford, compiled the authorised biography (now out of print) after De Valera retired to the Park. After careful consideration he was unable to say what De Valera's views were upon the executions, or whether, at a 25 year remove, they caused him any regrets. He did make three points which he would have gleaned in his conversations without any direct discussion of rights and wrongs;

- (a) after the 1938 Constitution De Valera considered there was no justification for physical force (we have heard that before and it appeared then like side stepping our question).
- (b) if he encouraged young men into the army and police he had to protect them. At this point he alluded to Richard Goss in July 1941 wounding two soldiers in Co. Longford, but, as we show in this account, of the two bullets, one was not found and one did not relate to the weapon used by Goss.
- (c) cabinet decisions were not always unanimous, and he gave as an example Paddy McGrath, who was released from internment in November 1939 on his order: Boland, he says, only learned of that later.

He confirmed that De Valera was the decision maker in all of these cases; not Peter Berry, then Boland's private secretary.

*Tim Pat Coogan*, journalist, *Irish Press* editor, and author of works on this period. He believes that De Valera led all the decisions. He discounts them being unanimous cabinet decisions although Vivion used refer to them as 'Gerry Boland's executions'; he seemed anxious to lay the blame elsewhere.

Why, queries Tim Pat, that he did not simply lock them up with the others 'so

they could go on making *poteen* in the Curragh' he does not know! Tim Pat regarded Boland's secretary Peter Berry as 'an unstable character'.

When his I.R.A book appeared, Berry posted him around forty pages of 'corrections' which, when he compared them with his text, he found to be expressions of opinion only.

Confronted with the use of Pierrepoint in the Kerins execution, Vivion challenged him and denied that a hangman had been brought over although he later accepted that, yes, a hangman had been brought.

*Rúairí Brugha* was selected because of his esteemed parentage; the fact that as a young man he was in the I.R.A; that he was interned for a short while and that he got a hard time in the Glasshouse in January 1941. Later in 1948 he stood for Clann na Poblachta in Co. Waterford, his father's seat for a short period; he was a Fianna Fáil T.D from 1973 to 1977 and then a senator. In the sixties he spent long periods in Árus an Uachtaráin reading to and conversing with De Valera. It appears however that this thorny question of how 'the Chief' felt in having himself partnered historically with Richard Mulcahy never came up. *Cé go raibh teangbháil agam leis ó ám go h-ám níor dhéineas an treimhse sin 1940-45 do phlé.*

*Only two of our interviewees would have had an opportunity of directly putting this 'thorny question' to De Valera. We are inclined to think that the question was never put in the manner of our introduction; that they may have been afraid to do so, and there it must rest.*

#### DE VALERA'S VISION OF IRELAND:

De Valera's attitude to promoting the revival of the Irish Language was peculiar, in the sense that it was odd. He had a knowledge and a great respect for the language and sported a *fáinne* on every occasion. He had married a teacher and a great lover of the language, Sinéad Ní Fhlannagáin, and all of their children grew up with a thorough grounding in Irish. But effectively he did very little to promote Irish, while out of power, or during the long period when in power. (It could be said somewhat maliciously that Ernest Blythe - Earnán de Blaghd - in the early Free State days did more.) Elected a *teachta dála* for County Clare in July 1917, he retired effectively in June 1959 when elevated to the Presidency. In 1917 a significant area of the western half of Clare was still Irish speaking or *breac gaeltacht*, but by 1959 there was no more than a handful of aging speakers left within the county. There were means, there were incentives, whereby a man of his influence could have rallied the nation into spreading a love of Irish, but De Valera, in that respect, did nothing that was worthwhile. Irish is not going to die but the De Valera's of this nation need take no credit for its survival.

Aside from the language, his 'vision' of Ireland, is so often misquoted by writers into *The Irish Times* or on radio that, in fairness to him, it must be noted here. It was his St. Patrick's Day 1943, broadcast, which, after the mundane advice that one could expect in the middle of a great world war, turned to the Ireland that the patriots of the celtic dawn would have foreseen:-

'Let us turn aside for a moment to that ideal Ireland that we would have', he commenced. 'That Ireland which we dreamed of would be the home of a people who valued material wealth only as a basis of right living, of a people who were sat-

isified with frugal comfort and devoted their leisure to the things of the spirit; a land whose countryside would be bright with cosy homesteads, whose fields and villages would be joyous with the sounds of industry, with the romping of sturdy children, the contests of athletic youths, the laughter of happy maidens, whose firesides would be forums for the wisdom of serene old age. It would, in a word, be the home of people living the life that God desires men should live....

It was the idea of such an Ireland, happy, vigorous, spiritual, that fired the imagination of our poets; that made successive generations of patriotic men give their lives to win religious and political liberty, and that will urge men in our own and future generations to die if need be, so that these liberties may be preserved.....'

There is in this no nonsense about comely maidens dancing at the crossroads. It is a perfectly attainable ideal; it does not inhibit or prevent air travel or a modern communications system. The countries of *mittel* Europe, Switzerland, Austria, Hungary, in their own fashion have attained it. Manifestly we have not and some of the blame may fall upon De Valera, and most certainly on a long line of governments since his time, but he cannot be faulted for espousing the dream of a perfectly reasonable and attainable prospect, which could have been followed. Up Dev!



Col. Eamonn Broy of Rathangan, Co. Kildare.

*De Valera began by trying to do the impossible, then the possible, and then failed to even attempt the possible.* C. Desmond Greaves 1913 - 1988.

When De Valera dismissed General Eoin O'Duffy as Commissioner of na Gardaí Siochána in 1932 he appointed Col. Broy in his place. A year later when it was decided to augment the armed detective force Col. Broy was placed in charge, hence the Broy Harriers.

Broy had a distinguished past record. One of the spies for Collins, he was in charge of the detective force in Brunswick Street, now Pearse Street. Arrested in March 1921 he was held until after the Truce in July. In October he was placed in charge of the security of the Treaty delegation in London

The first of these is the fact that the Constitution is a living document. It is not a static set of rules, but a framework that has evolved over time. The framers of the Constitution intended it to be a flexible document, capable of adapting to the needs of a changing society. This is why the Constitution has been amended so many times, and why it continues to be relevant and effective today.

The second of these is the fact that the Constitution is a document of compromise. It is the result of a long and difficult process of negotiation and compromise between the states and the federal government. The framers of the Constitution were aware of the need for a strong central government, but they were also aware of the need to protect the rights of the states and the individual citizen. The Constitution is a document that reflects the balance between these two competing interests.

The third of these is the fact that the Constitution is a document of hope. It is a document that expresses the hopes and aspirations of the American people. It is a document that reflects the belief that a government can be organized in a way that protects the rights of the individual and promotes the common good.

**THE VALERIAN VISION**

Dr. Valerian's vision of the future of the United States is a vision of a more just and more equitable society. He believes that the current system of government is fundamentally flawed, and that it is time to re-examine the principles upon which our society is based. He believes that the Constitution is a document that has been interpreted in a way that has allowed the wealthy and powerful to dominate the political process, and that it is time to re-examine the role of the government in our society.

Dr. Valerian's vision is a vision of a society in which the rights of the individual are protected, and in which the government is accountable to the people. He believes that this vision is achievable, and that it is the responsibility of all of us to work towards its realization. He believes that the Constitution is a document that can be interpreted in a way that allows us to achieve this vision, and that it is time to re-examine the principles upon which our society is based.

*We believe in constitutional action in normal times; we believe in revolutionary action in exceptional times. These are exceptional times.*

- James Connolly, 1915.

## GERALD BOLAND :



*Gerald Boland, late Minister for Justice, in his retirement at his home in Clontarf*

FROM THE IRISH TIMES

Gerald Boland, De Valera's Minister for Justice, in much of this period, came from a background that was not only Republican, but impeccably Fenian; indeed to an extent still is. Patrick Boland, his grandfather, left Co. Roscommon with the rest of his family in the closing stages of the Famine. He married Thomas Kelly's first cousin Eliza, in Manchester, and his son, James, was born in Manchester in October 1856. Spending holiday periods with his father's people in Roscommon and with his mother's people close by in Mount Bellew, he did not permanently reside in Ireland until he was 23 years old in 1880. As a boy however he had played a small part, in September 1867, in the rescue of the Irish Americans, Col. T.J. Kelly and Capt. Deasy for which William Allen, Philip Larkin and Michael O'Brien were executed. He came then to Dublin as general foreman for Worthington's of Liverpool who had obtained the contract for Dublin's street paving, commencing with Smithfield. At the same time he transferred to the I.R.B on the sponsorship of his close friend Pat Nally, a young man already on the Supreme Council. Jim Boland then founded its Dublin Directory; at the same time becoming an employee of the Corporation who had decided that they would proceed by direct labour with paving the city streets.

Having met his future Co. Louth wife in Manchester, they married in Dublin in 1882. On May 6, of that year the Invincibles assassinated Lord Frederick Cavendish, accompanied, walking in Phoenix Park to the Vice-regal Lodge (now Árus an Uachtaráin), by Under-Secretary Thomas H. Burke\*. To escape the attention of Superintendent Mallon's G Division, Jim left for New York where his first child, a girl, was born; and the second, a boy, Gerald, was born in familiar Manchester, to which the youthful family had returned. Soon after that they came back to Dublin where Jim resumed working with the Corporation.

\*Five were hanged between May and June 1883 in the yard in Kilmainham; Joe Brady, young Tim Kelly, Michael Fagan, Tom Caffrey and Dan Curley. Patrick O'Donnell, who shot dead the principal informant, James Carey in the *Melrose Castle*, was returned to Ireland and hanged in December. All were sentenced by Judge Peter O'Brien, otherwise known as Peter the Packer (of juries).

In his book, the *Union Jacking of Ireland*, by Frank O'Brien (Mercier Press 1993) the extraordinary story of the waiting and the missed opportunities of the ring of conspirators is related. So many were in the know by the day that disclosure was inevitable. Their original objective had been Cavendish's predecessor 'Buckshot' W.E Forster, but he had returned to England and was replaced by Frederick Cavendish.

It was at that juncture that he endeavoured to obtain the sinecure of City Marshall for the returned Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa, briefly back in Ireland. In the course of visiting his home, the child Gerald was occasionally seated upon the knee of the austere Fenian. The wheels within wheels of the committee voting system failed Jim; an alderman's son got the job, and Rossa returned to America. But the double-cross was known among the Dublin people, and may have contributed to the magnificence of the attendance at his funeral to Glasnevin in August 1915.

Three other children, Harry, Kathleen and Ned, were born in Dublin, before Jim died at the age of 38; his early death being caused by a fracas between Parnellites and Healyites for possession of the offices of the journal, *United Irishman*. (Much of this information was given by Harry himself in a speech in March 1921 and reported in the recent edition of Sean Cronin's *McGarrity Papers*.) Close acquaintance with relations still living in Manchester enabled him in the pre-1916 period, to find his way about the English midlands when he was engaged on G.A.A and I.R.B work.

Gerald meanwhile was apprenticed as a fitter to the Midland Great Western Railway at Broadstone; his widowed mother prior to this having opened a small shop in Wexford Street. Having joined the I.R.B and the Volunteers, he was in Jacob's factory in Easter Week within earshot of his mother's shop, under Thomas Mac Donagh and Major John Mac Bride. They were executed while he commenced an eight month internment in Knutsford, followed by Frongoch, being listed in the *Weekly Irish Times* handbook where he is correctly described as of 9 Vincent Street, South Circular Road, fitter. In Frongoch he met Michael Collins, but said (in an interview with Michael McInerney in 1968) that he disliked him; there may be more than a passing significance in that.

In 1919 he was jailed for a short while in Crumlin Road, Belfast; Terence Mac Swiney being also there. Shortly after, Harry, accompanied by Michael Collins, with the artist Frank Kelly and others, and a key made by fitter Gerry (it broke in the lock but De Valera had his own inside!) enabled the 'Chief' to escape in February, along with two other elected T.D's, Sean Mc Garry and Sean Milroy.

Not prominent in the Treaty negotiations, he had already expressed distrust for Arthur Griffith and Michael Collins. Interned following the Civil War, he was part of the great hunger strike of October 1923; enduring it for its full duration of 41 days. In the interview referred to, he confirmed, as is widely know, that Michael Collins had ordered the shooting of Sir Henry Wilson in London on June 22, an event which caused the British Government to press upon the Free State to attack the Four Courts on June 28. Brother Harry, travelled, experienced and a man of great promise, was gunned down, unarmed, in a hotel in Skerries on July 30. While still held, and released only with the last batch in August 1924, Gerald - although professing no political ambition - was elected T.D; replacing Harry for Roscommon. This came about in the unexpected resurgence of Sinn Féin in the August 1923 election, when the party arose out of civil war defeat, with 44 deputies; 36 of whom had been in the Second Dáil.

In June 1925, he hastened after Sean Russell and P.A Murray, on an I.R.A mission to the Soviet Union, which is covered elsewhere. He travelled under a passport as Charles George Woods, British subject; engineer. It was on an I.R.A mission seeking

arms and training from the youthful Soviet Union. Boland, almost certainly, was encouraged to accompany the two I.R.A. men as a 'minder' and to report back to De Valera. The Soviet Union could hardly have provided arms; there were no Kaliashnikov 47 rifles at that time. As Michael O'Riordan points out they were still sending five shot rifles to Spain after 1936, and they continued in use after the Germans invaded in 1941. Relations with England were tense too, following the bogus Zinoviev letter of 1924 (urging English communists to rise). They were well received in Russia but after a week the atmosphere became strained when it was learned that their visit had been leaked to an English communist. They returned empty handed to Ireland.

In 1925 there was a move, which he supported, to have Sinn Féin enter the Dáil, solely to vote down the Boundary Agreement which set the seal on Partition. De Valera, had he been able to drag the other 43 deputies with him, would have had the support of Tom Johnson's Labour Party. Henceforth the down-to-earth Dubliner was used always by De Valera in negotiating with the Labour Party.

In February 1932, on the success of Fianna Fáil, leaning for a while on Labour, Gerald was appointed Parliamentary Secretary to De Valera; an appointment that confirmed their long and close relationship. My father had a high regard for De Valera, Kevin Boland says, although they did not always see eye to eye. Because of his nature, he adds, De Valera would have studied my father and no doubt he came to know how to handle him in some types of situations, but he would have known not to try to do this on matters of principle.

In 1937, prior to the inception of his new Constitution, Boland, with others, persuaded De Valera to dilute Article 44 on the 'special position' of the Roman Catholic Church. (His original wording was more heavily in its favour: the article has since been set aside.) Boland in those times professed left wing, and virulently anti-Catholic views, but his loyalty to De Valera, for whom he professed 'a love', was unshakable. He briefly took over as Minister for Justice from P.J. Ruttledge in 1936, during which the I.R.A. was declared an illegal organisation. Ruttledge was pleading ill-health, which was true, yet the question must be asked did Dev want a 'strong man' in Justice, especially as Ruttledge retired finally in September 1939, just days ahead of the prolonged security onslaught upon Republicans.

Gerald Boland spoke of a 'comprehensive agreement' that existed in 1941 between the Free State Government and the British Government to repel the Germans should they invade. 'I never believed the Allies would invade' he said. Nor did they, because matters operated far better in the grey twilight of neutrality, a twilight that allowed the Free State to assist in many covert ways.

*There are no morals in politics; there is only expediency*

- Vladimir Ulyanov Lenin, 1917.



## PETER BERRY:

*Late Secretary of Dept. of Justice. Son of Sergt, Royal Irish Constabulary; he saw out 14 Ministers of Justice.*



*Peter Berry, high in Dept of Justice, 1927-1970. He saw out 14 Ministers of Justice, but was he unbalanced.*

PICTURE FROM MAGILL MAGAZINE.

In October 1973, five years before his death, Peter Berry, late Secretary of the Department of Justice, addressed an 'open letter' to Patrick Cooney, then his Minister. Addressing an open letter on a legalistic complaint (he was upset on grounds of job termination and his claim for compensation) is unusual and would not be countenanced by a solicitor acting for a complainant. Berry's letter was peppered with expressions like *scape goat*, *cooked*, *respectfully inquiring*, and such like. The nub of his complaint appeared to be that he had been made a scapegoat by the 'Lynch administration' and that the government had not compensated him for his premature retirement following December 1970.

It was quite clear from a study of his open letter that Minister Cooney was fighting off attending to his 'complaint', while equally clear that solicitor Patrick Cooney and indeed Taoiseach Liam Cosgrave, because of their backgrounds and their respect for a man worn thin by 40 years of unremitting struggle near the head of Justice 'fighting the I.R.A', not to mention his role in exposing the arms import scandal of May 1970 (which he had brought to the door of Liam Cosgrave, then in opposition) would be receptive to the complaint of such a man. They would be unlikely to put his censure on a back burner. And as to 'fighting the I.R.A', it can be said that it was always in terms of such belligerence that Berry saw his role.

The man of course suffered from paranoia, a paranoia that, in hindsight, one can see grew within him from that early day in January 1927 when he arrived, an ex-Christian Brother's boy from County Cork, to eventually captain one of the most important departments of state in the twenty six counties. His first Minister was Kevin O'Higgins. His assassination in Cross Avenue, Blackrock, on July 10 1927 by Billy Gannon, Tim Coughlan and Archie Doyle, three I.R.A men, but an unofficial action, made a deep impression upon him. Henceforth he saw the I.R.A as the enemy, indeed the only enemy Ireland had, an organisation that, by whatever means, must be put down. (O'Higgins was succeeded by James Fitzgerald-Kenny).

'I reminded you', his letter continues, addressing Cooney, *'that while it took 12 years and the pen of Zola, the force of public opinion eventually saw that Drefus got justice. I reminded you that I had to wait for 12 years and a change of government to make public the chicanery of the Lynch administration.....'*

While Berry had retired voluntarily after December 1970 it is evident, if one is to judge from a disordered and emotional letter, that he had been pushed. And pushed he most certainly was by somebody in the 'Lynch administration' whom he had befriended by 'exposing' the alleged arms conspirators; yet now, with a benign Cooney and Cosgrave in power, the run around on the question of compensation for his premature retirement (his words) continued. *Even now because of the Official Secrets Act I cannot reveal the immediate circumstances which precipitated my decision to retire.* The nation must have trembled at that in 1973 but not Minister Cooney. To the windy complaints made over many months he replied at intervals that he would not be in a position to study the documents 'until sometime next week'.

Months later it was to be 'in the near future' that the dire secrets might be probed. After another lapse when the political figurehead is accused of 'fobbing me off' a further note on the harp letterhead pleads, pressure of work and the time it would require for the 'examination of the various complex matters'. It is perfectly clear, with no reflections upon Cooney, that the poor devil felt that the Department, knowing the fragile state of his health (he died in December 1978) was indeed only awaiting his demise.

Berry's complaint at this time had little to do with politics or with our review of the reign of this strange man, but in his actions he showed the immense power that this permanent official exercised while the ministerial puppets moved across the stage. Evidently in 1967 the Comptroller and Auditor General sought proofs of expenditure within the Department. This is a fragile control on administrative wastage which of course, despite these cursory controls, runs rampant within all state departments. Berry refused some files on the grounds that they were policy, or administrative files.

This left the Comptroller unable to commence an audit, and that situation was raised in the Dáil in November 1968 by Sean Tracey T.D, a member of the committee of Public Accounts, in the following terms; *it was disturbing that the Secretary of the Department should have the audacity to refuse to the Auditor General what he considered to be essential information to assist him compiling his accounts.* Naming Peter Berry, he proceeded; *it gave rise to the belief that was growing in this country that vast power and control was vested in higher civil servants.*

Describing the course of the debate, most probably not read or understood by the vast majority of people, as a 'shameful episode' Berry concluded his open letter by again pleading to Cooney for 'justice'.

One might say that if ever anyone, presiding over this, the most backward and obscurantist department of state, was pleading for justice, he was in fact now receiving it. For Peter Berry, who had stood between Ireland and Armageddon during the lifetime of 14 ministers, from Kevin O'Higgins to Desmond O'Malley, was now receiving the come uppance of a department he had never been content to merely serve, rather insisting upon total and absolute control. No wonder then, that three and a half years earlier, in May 1970, he received this short letter of thanks from that most judgmental of people, Desmond O'Malley, the Minister for Justice:

*Dear Mr. Berry, Ireland has survived for 24 hours without you. Please feel humble. No longer are you the faceless one, just known and feared in the corridors of power. You are now spoken of in hushed tones by the peasantry of even a backward county like Leitrim.*

Why was Berry feared in the corridors of power? As a feint too frequently resorted to in T.V interviews, that is an interesting question, but we think we can supply the answer. According to Kevin Boland, Berry was well known to be, at least in his later years, a particularly domineering individual who would tirelessly try to mould his minister to his views. He laboured under the delusion that the security of the state rested entirely in his hands.

The Secretary of the Department of Justice (Defence also) has a secret service fund available to him for purposes that are not rigidly specified. Most use this very sparingly and only for strictly departmental requirements. It was notorious throughout the Civil Service that Peter Berry used it literally to provide himself with a private intelligence service, to the extent that other departmental secretaries were inclined to believe they were being spied upon. (In an extended piece in *Magill* of May 1980 this viewpoint is contested, but we believe it to be true).

I remember, continues Kevin Boland, that when Neil Blaney and Charles Haughey were sacked on his complaint in May 1970, Mr. Lawless, the departmental secretary, came into my office in quite an agitated state, and when, at some stage in our conversation, Mr. Berry's name was mentioned by me, he said, *but Minister, everyone knows he is mad*. A precise and careful dresser, frequently manicuring his finger nails, he exuded a haughty and removed attitude to those about him.

Gerald Boland was Minister for Justice for a few months only (during the indisposition of Mayo man P.J. Ruttledge) in 1936, and in June of that year the I.R.A was declared illegal. De Valera had some reasons for this; the I.R.A was fragmenting; Frank Aiken had failed to bring them into his Casement style Volunteers and he now viewed the organisation with aversion; its long time Chief of Staff, Maurice Twomey, was under lock and key, and there had been some fairly pointless assassinations. Nonetheless, the notion lurks that Boland was brought in to preside over something that Ruttledge was not willing to do. Boland was again appointed in September 1939 on the outbreak of World War 2 when Ruttledge finally retired, and he remained in place until February 1948, a tough and prolonged period. (He came back again in a later government).

Kevin Boland recalls that prior to 1940 a Joe McCarthy from the Department of Lands, acted for a while as Private Secretary, although perhaps not in Justice. Peter Berry, who had been in the Department from the age of 17, was then appointed, a mature man of 30 as his Private Secretary. And here one must understand that a Private Secretary, because he is assured of future promotion, works long and unusual hours, travels many places with his Minister, heads a small team of other secretaries and workers and has access to every file however 'secret'.

A diligent secretary will know much more about the ramifications of his department than any here-today-and-gone-tomorrow Minister.

We have the word of Tim Pat Coogan relating to this. When his book *The I.R.A* was published in 1970, Berry fine-combed it to such an extent that he could write, unsolicited, 40 pages of 'corrections' which, when Coogan compared them to the text, he found to be only matters of opinion.

Kevin Boland remarks that the only impression he had of that time, being little more than a schoolboy, was that Peter Berry was an *enthusiast* and that his father always bore that in mind. He himself had a great respect for Berry because he was

All Ireland handball champion. He added however that in moving up the ladder he became power crazy over the years. What was power crazy in the sixties may have been pardoned as enthusiasm in the forties, when, one suspects, he exercised considerable influence over Gerald Boland *in the manner in which he presented situations and manipulated cases*. As his Private Secretary he was better able and more ready to do that in the crucial late thirties/forties period than afterwards when he had ascended the rungs to preside over the Department.

At that level he could certainly juggle the secret service monies - we are not saying he put any of it in his pocket or that he advanced himself materially - but the fact that he knew that a consignment of Czech arms was to arrive in Dublin in May 1970 through Schipol airport indicates that he had indeed 'a private intelligence service' which was probably assisted by British intelligence; and that private intelligence service was probably in place and growing since the forties.

In Co. Kerry Gerald Boland conversing with Jack McCarthy of Lixnaw in the late forties remarked, *I could not run the department without Peter Berry*. Pressed on a related matter, he said; *I shall have to speak to Peter Berry on that*. McCarthy, a sound Fianna Fáil man, knew and disliked the breed, seed and generation of Berry. He suspected him of going overboard against Republicans: the occasion - related to this writer - was the pending execution of either Maurice O'Neill or Charlie Kerins.

Peter Berry was the son of Peter Berry, sergeant of the Royal Irish Constabulary then stationed (June 1909) in Killarney. The name is not unknown in west Cork but is not common in Kerry. (A Private Thomas Berry was present at an early morning raid in Dunmanway in June 1940 when Denis Griffin was shot at and slightly wounded).

Michéal Ó Morán, for a time Minister in the late sixties, stated also to Kevin Boland that Berry made use of secret service monies to keep in touch with recently retired top gardaí, indicating seemingly that some of them were part of his network\*. He revelled in his security role; he had total command of the situation; his grasp of every detail was stunning and his absorption total. As a result he continued to ascend the ladder in a department where being anti republican is a prerequisite for advancement before anything else. He became Assistant Secretary in 1957 and Secretary in 1961.

Peter Berry spent the years from 1971 patiently typing out his memoirs. In doing this he relied on piles of closely packed diaries and personal notes which he had assembled over the years. He intended initially that these would be published during his lifetime but later he decided to leave them for posterity. His papers are in chronological order for the later years and particularly the arms crisis period, in which we have a passing interest only. He had scarcely begun to work on the early part of his life story, where our main interest would be, when he died suddenly of a heart attack in December 1978 at the age of 69.

\*This situation still prevails. Some former top garda chiefs are known to be on retainers from private security firms and are thought also to be linked to the British S.I.S. Berry was not alone in having an R.I.C father; another top garda from that area also had an R.I.C father. Since the development of the state, the system has encouraged this in the search for 'reliability'. In time they have come to form a powerful self-protective lobby. When Edmund Garvey was dismissed by Fianna Fáil in 1977, a court awarded him a substantial compensation although it was known that Garvey entertained and cooperated with undercover forces in the North. On his death in 1989 no less than 900 gardaí, serving and retired, attended his funeral. Garvey did not deserve that. Nor can the recollection of the collaboration of C.3 Special Branch man Patrick Crinnion with admitted agent John Wyman be erased; the sole case ever brought to light. But there were, and are, others.

**FRANK AIKEN,  
1898 - MAY 18 1983.**

*Chief of Staff I.R.A and  
later Minister for  
Defence, and later still  
Minister for Foreign  
Affairs.*

Frank Aiken, from Carrickbracken, Camlough, Co. Armagh, had been a bold and resourceful guerrilla fighter in that countryside over four years, hunted, and with his homestead burned. He would have had little patience with the non-fighting theorists of the I.R.A of the later thirties - when to his mind independence had been largely achieved - and that would explain his breach with Maurice Twomey - another fighting man - after the latter's refusal of I.R.A co-operation in 1932, when Óglaigh na hÉireann still had a considerable number of Tan veterans within its ranks. Twomey and Gilmore refused co-operation, so Frank T. Aiken went ahead on his own, but with De Valera's blessing, to build up a Free State Army in a new and fresher image; a Free State Army only degrees away from the Civil War army of '22, '23, and one that would again provide a few firing squads when later they were required.

Lacking all similarities to De Valera - in the '21, '22 period he was closer to and much more of a Collins - yet Aiken was taken on by 'the Chief' and was to become his closest confidant, more so than the somewhat irascible Boland. From the moment that they had literally slept together in the home of James Cullinane at Bliantas, in the heart of the Monavullagh Mountains, in west Waterford in March 1923, Aiken, although now Chief of Staff I.R.A, commenced to see the political road as a possible way forward; as evidence of that the Army (with Sean Lemass as Minister for Defence) was held firmly in check and only recommenced raiding operations after November 1925 when Aiken and Lemass had moved on.\*

**His Father:** Frank Aiken's father was a builder, originally from east Tyrone; farming and building in south Armagh and Newry neighbourhood where he had a number of churches to his credit. His wife was Mary McGeeney of Corromannon, Beleeks, in the same locality. They lived comfortably, Frank having brothers and sisters; his mother dying when he was 13, after which he managed the family farm of 60 acres. Farms in the North are as a rule smaller than in the South; yet farming was in his blood, and in 1928 he was to buy another at Sandyford, Co. Dublin, which he was to continue to run until his death; and where he was one of the first to experiment with windpower. It is now built over.

James Aiken was the first Nationalist chairman of the local Board of Guardians,

\* Sean Lemass owed his appointment to the fighting reputation of his late brother Noel, as recounted by Tony Woods in *Survivors*.

but he declined an invitation to stand as an M.P. He opposed a resolution of welcome to Queen Victoria on her visit to Dublin in April 1900 'until Ireland is free'.

**Advance to Prominence:** Frank was educated at the Christian Brothers School, Newry, and in 1917 was elected chairman of the local co-operative society linked to those set up by Sir Horace Plunkett. When a Volunteer company was formed in the parish towards the end of 1913 he immediately joined, but it was not until the Clare election of July, 1917, that he had an opportunity to become deeply involved when he travelled there to help with that election, and on that occasion met De Valera for the first time. He was again with him the following February at Bessbrook when an Orange element tried to disrupt the meeting. After that he was elected captain of the Camlough volunteer company.

A year later Harry Boland came to White Cross, South Armagh, and Aiken marched his company to that meeting. For breaching the R.I.C ban on marching he was imprisoned in Armagh and Crumlin Road for one month. That would be his only stint of imprisonment, except for a few days in Dundalk military barracks, that Aiken would spend; a tribute to his will o' the wisp sense of security over the next seven years.

**Exploits:** In 1918 he was elected Commandant of the Camlough Battalion, but declined to become brigade commandant, preferring that Paddy Rankin, out in 1916, should hold it. Officer in Sinn Féin; active in Connradh na Gaeilge, he visited Donegal and Omeath colleges, becoming proficient. But he was still working on the farm when the armed struggle started in earnest. In December 1919, he led an attempt which failed, on the R.I.C barracks at Newtownhamilton. The following April, he returned, had a hole blown in its wall, and the building was destroyed by fire. In the autumn of 1920, while now an elected member of Armagh County Council, he was in command of the destruction of Newry customs house, and in December boldly mounted a large scale attack on Camlough R.I.C Barracks. Soldier reinforcements from Newry broke through an I.R.A detachment, posted midway at the Egyptian Arch, and relieved the barracks with losses to both sides. That night the newly formed B. Specials burned a dozen houses in Camlough and the following morning set fire to the Aiken homestead.

Widespread attacks were now taking place throughout the area despite the surveillance and spying mounted by the Orange element dispersed in the countryside. In a bitter fight at Cullyhanna, Aiken covered with rifle fire the retreat of his men as he lay crouched behind a stone gate post. The next week he struck again from the ruins of his home. A month later he led an ambush at Corregs within Co. Down. A big comb out followed but Aiken escaped the net. Innocent people, sympathisers and neighbours were not so lucky; many being arrested, beaten or shot out of hand. But Aiken was keeping a careful count and in time would even up with chosen reprisals. He was not above taking reprisals upon 'uninvolved' Protestants whom he knew had aided the English.

On June 23, 1921, following the opening on the previous day of the Six County parliament in Belfast City Hall, Aiken mounted an ambush at Ardavoyle on a military train returning to Dublin, close to the stone viaducts, wrecking the train, killing four soldiers and injuring many more. 80 of the horses engaged in the ceremony died. It was a dramatic 'no peace without freedom' answer to the peace address of King George V on the day before, and doubtless was widely mourned by 'animal lovers'.

The slaughter of Catholics in Belfast and around other areas of the newly created statelet caused him, early in June, to issue a directive calling for the general destruction of enemy property; property of Orangemen, reprisals of six to one, and

the shooting on sight of spies and informers.\* On the night of June 17 a column moved into Altanaveigh and Lisdrumliska, a mile out of Newry, bombing and burning eight farmhouses, killing five, and wounding many more described as Unionists.

Politically, among nationalists, Joe Devlin M.P and his group of middle class Catholics, held the high ground in the North; Aiken sought to dissuade the newly formed Provisional Government of the Free State from according them any recognition. He felt that so long as Collins was in charge there was a chance.

**Collins and Aiken: The recapture of Dundalk:** On his guard, and organising all the time during the Truce period, he worked desperately from January 1922 onwards to prevent a split in the ranks, a split that now seemed inevitable. On the one hand Collins was busy negotiating with Churchill and Prime Minister James Craig, while on the other hand the same Collins appointed Frank head of a secret Ulster Council of the I.R.A engaged in being rearmed with Free State weapons sent from the south.\*\*

He was to admit in the Dáil in 1927 that, yes, he and volunteers under him had delivered rifles into Belfast in May and June 1922; the purpose then being to ward off the murderous attacks, led by R.U.C and B. Specials, upon Catholics. Aiken reported regularly to the Collins G.H.Q in Dublin on I.R.A activities within the Six Counties, but these were quickly terminated by the commencement on June 28, of the Civil War in Dublin.

Six weeks earlier Collins had been brought back sharply into line by Winston Churchill\*\*\* at a meeting in London. He had already in May played a vital part in the Collins De Valera electoral pact (Broken by Collins in Cork on June 14 after meeting Winston Churchill in London two days before), yet despite the outbreak of the Civil War he worked harder than ever to pull the two sides back from the brink that now yawned. Travelling to Dublin he received an unhelpful answer from a committed Richard Mulcahy, whereupon he travelled to Limerick, meeting Liam Lynch, but upon returning to his barracks in Dundalk, found himself and his garrison arrested in an early morning raid by Beggars Bush troops on July 16. He was allowed to travel to Dublin again to meet Mulcahy, but the rift was widening. Returning from parole, he

\* Coogan in *Michael Collins*.

\*\* See Dan Gleeson on these transfers in *Survivors*

\*\*\* See Dorothy Macardle, *The Irish Republic*. This occurred following a meeting of May 20, resulting in the Collins De Valera Pact, whereby the forthcoming election of June would not be taken as deciding the issue of the Treaty (although of course, it was so taken). Collins and Griffith were summoned to London and crossed in the last week of May. Griffith would appear to have knuckled down before an angry tirade from Churchill. 'We have enough troops still in Dublin to re occupy the city'.

There were six battalions in Cork and others elsewhere. Collin's, still half defiant, was embarrassed, particularly when Churchill could tell him of his support for the I.R.A in the North, mentioning the name of Aiken at one point. There is no public record of what transpired at this meeting but Connie Neenan in 1978 was able to fill some gaps for this writer.

Arthur Griffith remained on in London where a draft of the Constitution of the Irish Free State was being pored over. Based upon the constitutional usage of Canada it was however, according to Macardle, regarded as an 'outrage' by Lloyd George. Blue pencilled throughout its opening clauses it was only published on the morning of polling day, June 16. Consult also Coogan in *Michael Collins*.

planned, with his adjutant John McCoy, still at liberty, a mass escape for himself and his garrison; a hole, with its intended location carefully paced, was blown in the wall, and his entire company of 120 escaped on the morning of July 28, nine days after his arrest. That break out was from the old barrack still there, behind the Crescent, to which, like criminals, they had been consigned. Early on the morning of August 12, Aiken came in from the Cooley Mountains and with 60 men waded the Castletown River; he approached the gates on the north and south ends of the military barracks, (the same military barracks as exists to this day) and carefully laying powerful mines, blew them open with devastating effect. As C.S Andrews, who was present, in *Dublin Made Me* tells it; as a guerilla operation the recapture of Dundalk was by far the most spectacularly efficient operation carried out by the I.R.A. 200 Republicans were released from the old jail, while Governor Barrows and his staff were clamped into cells.\*

Meanwhile a government committee, heavily loaded towards constitutionalism had been set up. Its report, presented August 19, completely overturned Collins' policy. 'As soon as possible all military operations on the part of our supporters in or against the North East should be brought to an end'. \*\*

Still offering peace overtures, Aiken held Dundalk from Sunday until Thursday after which his company withdrew. In September he was appointed on to the new largely symbolic Republican government; the members and soldiers of which were daily finding it ever harder to obtain a respite. Facing the inevitability of defeat, as his forces melted in the Border countryside, he was called by De Valera, with Tom Derrig, to accompany them to Co. Waterford for peace talks at Bliantas, followed two days later by their continuance at the cottage in the valley of the Nier.

Aiken typically was a man who always held his peace; it is not on record what points he may have put forward at this and the subsequent meeting at Poulacappal, but it would be safe to say that a spirited local commander such as he had proved himself to be would have had little confidence in a leadership that retreated from wilderness to wilderness. Almost the only recorded note upon the top level meeting of March 23 to 26 in the Nier Valley area, attended by the entire military leadership and De Valera is that covered by Sean Dowling in the second edition of *Survivors*. The political course then privately put forward by De Valera to Frank Aiken was said afterwards by Sean Dowling to have laid the basis for their future entry into government.

Aiken was again present at the adjourned meeting of the command staff at Poulacappal, near Mullinahone, when, with Liam Lynch now dead, the decision was taken to cease all offensive action. He was there appointed Chief of Staff, and so continued until the I.R.A Convention of November 1925, at Dalkey, when he was unseated in favour of Andy Cooney, who, shortly afterwards, stepped down in

\*. *Dublin Made Me*, C.S. Andrews.

\*\* It was this sharp twist of policy towards compliance with London that has caused some to believe that England had a hand in the killing of Collins three days later; the hand of ex-British soldier Emmet Dalton, accompanying him, being seen in it. This writer does not accept that.



favour of the durable Maurice Twomey. He was already an elected T.D, abstentionist, for Co. Louth, having been elected in August 1923.

Speaking, not too long ago, to Joe Farrell of Dundalk, now approaching his ninety second year,\* this writer sought his view on the character of the man who was probably the closest to De Valera over five decades. He was not a man given to talk, Joe declared; hence Joe could not say to what extent he was disappointed by the failure of the I.R.A leadership in 1932 to co-operate with Fianna Fáil in transforming themselves into a volunteer reserve of the Free State Army. Joe could not throw light upon that, but it is this writer's belief that the consequences were deeply wounding for Aiken who was already developing a strong admiration for 'his' army.

In introducing on December 16, 1932, a Military Service Act that would cover the main Republican veterans of the Civil War - its provisions would cover activity to the end of September 1923 - Aiken made the remarkable statement that the main qualification would be one's effort 'to evade capture by the Free State forces'.

De Valera and he continued close. At an election meeting in 1937 in Dundalk, De Valera called upon voters to put Aiken back at the top of the poll. 'I cannot afford to lose Frank Aiken'. Of course there was no danger that Louth would reject him, and De Valera's plea was intended only to ensure that Aiken would bring in another F.F person upon his coat tails, which he consistently did.

In 1939 Aiken remarked to Joe that he considered that the government had been 'too lenient' with the I.R.A. 'Either we rule or they rule'. He was not a bitter man, Joe added, and was ready at all times to give a person the benefit of the doubt on an issue. He was a true Irishman.

Two years after his retirement from politics, Joe visited him with a friend in Sandyford where he had farmed for many years. You are a man, the friend said, who could tell a story. I am not doing any writing, replied Aiken, because anything I could say would be challenged by somebody else.

Frank Aiken retired from politics in 1969, and died from Sandyford on May 18, 1983, eight years after De Valera, and was buried in Camlough graveyard, within yards of the resting place of Raymond McCreesh, one of the 10 hunger strikers of 1981; Aiken however had shown throughout his life style that hunger striking would not have been his chosen weapon.

Of his stint as Minister for External Affairs from 1957 until 1969, F.S. L Lyons in *Ireland Since the Famine*, has this to say:-

'Frank Aiken was one of Mr. De Valera's oldest associates - old enough, certainly, to recall that his leader's reputation at Geneva before the war had been based on the independent attitude he had then so clearly displayed. That attitude Mr. Aiken was prepared to try to reproduce (at the U.N) in New York. For several years he did so with remarkable success and the Irish delegation - intelligent, articulate, extremely well- prepared- played a part in the world of the Assembly far out of proportion to the size or international importance of their country. One has only to read the speeches the Minister delivered between 1957 and 1961 - some of them on issues still

\* For over 20 years Joe served as a Fianna Fáil T.D in Louth. He had 'just finished some gardening' when spoken to.

as crucial as when he first addressed them - to understand the extent to which a genuinely Irish foreign policy was beginning to emerge during those years'.

Much of this material was culled from *Politicians by Accident*, by Liam C. Skinner, and a lesser quantity from *The Sunday Tribune*, May 22, 1983.

**Footnote on the death of Liam Lynch.**

\* The death of Lynch is described by Frank Aiken under the pseudonym *Oglach* as follows:

We were about to have a cup of tea in a cottage, (the ruin of which was there until recently.) on the north facing slope of the Knockmealdowns above Goatenbridge when a scout came in to say that the Free State column was approaching 1000 yards away.

We numbered seven - Gen. Lynch and five officers and an unarmed volunteer. We were there only a few minutes when the Staters appeared over a rise, and the first shots were exchanged. We dashed up a shallow river bed affording cover for 250 yards. At the end we had to retreat up a bare uncovered shoulder. At 300 yards range around 50 Staters had a clear view of us. We travelled upwards about 250 yards, and meanwhile upwards of a thousand shots were fired at us. There was then a brief silence whereupon a single shot rang. My God, I'm hit lads, cried our commander.

Clearly exhausted by the riverbed, he had been assisted by Sean Hyde. Frank Aiken, Bill Quirke and Hyde then attempted to carry him; one saying meanwhile an Act of Contrition; intense firing being resumed. In terrible agony. General Lynch begged several times to be let down. We laid him down, taking his automatic and a note book and then left him. It would be impossible to describe our agony of mind in thus parting with our comrade and chief.

Liam Lynch died that evening at 8 p.m in the hospital in Clonmel. Forestry now covers the entire mountainside, but a memorial tower was erected in 1934-35, a little distance east of the spot.

## SERGT-MAJOR MICK FAHEY, NEWBRIDGE:

*Introduced by Courtesy of  
Col. Desmond A. Swan.*

Mick Fahey was born in 1913, and joined the Army as a private in 1932, transferring to the military police in late 1934, retiring in the seventies. He and Col. Swan have been on many peace keeping missions abroad. He is a tall spare upright man, hailing originally from the Clonmel area, but long settled with his family in Newbridge.

He had some experience with I.R.A prisoners in Cork Jail, and in Arbour Hill, where he knew officers Lennon and Duffy. He arrived in the Curragh in 1938.

**View on Free State Staff:** Taking names at random, he explained; Capt. Casey, Sergt-Major of military policemen in Dublin; he was from Kerry or Cork, and was Q M in charge of issues.

Capt. Gerry McNamara: He was Adjutant of the Camp; a 22 man. He was alright; real OK. He was in charge of records; in fact as he spent most of his time on administration. Mick Fahey was puzzled as to how he could have impinged upon the prisoners.

'Tommy the Cook': he could not recognise that name but Sergt. Ned Gill was an old timer. He was in charge of shifts and came from west of Ireland.

Commdt. James Guiney, he was friendly and talkative to everyone; a real Kerryman with no regard for rank. He was always tipping at greyhounds, he had been garrison O.C, but after Fire was placed over the Camp.

Corporal O'Connor was a big tall fellow and very athletic. He was from Kerry.

Capt Tennant was from the west of Ireland. He was quiet and at first appeared unsure of his bearings in the Curragh; nothing sticks out about him.

Carroll: (now Brigadier Gen. Bill is retired and is the sole person apart from Fahey, still alive). He is living in north Kerry: was a strict person and not popular with some Army personnel although Col. Swan liked him; could be described as meticulous and rather dogged. Was handsome.

Col. Swan has written a Prehistoric History of the 5000 acre Curragh, and has spoken to the Old Kildare Society.

Commdt. M.J. Cummins: he was 'eased out' after the Fire: I can't please everyone, he then said, (he had failed to report a warning he received from P. MacLogan).

Captain Larry Clancy (Piss in the Bucket): he was in charge of the sweep when Liam Lynch was killed on the Knockmealdowns above Newcastle, at Goatenbridge, on April 10, 1923. He is so listed by Florence O'Donoghue. A colourful character Fahey reports. He joined the Blueshirts, adoring O'Duffy, while on the Reserve. As a result he was dismissed, but taken back after applying in the Emergency.

Another brother joined 'Duffy's brigade for Spain. They were both '22 men. He

rode a bike and was a heavy drinker. His name and those of his two brothers are engraved upon a memorial the family erected close to the village of Drangan, lying three miles west of Mullinahone. A brother, Lieut. Patrick, aged 19, was killed in action there on November 19, 1920. It could not have been the same action in which Ernie O'Malley was engaged when he attacked the R.I.C barracks there. Another brother, Martin, aged 18, was killed by Crown forces at Knockroe, March 6, 1921. A grotto in the village commemorates the 7th. Batt. I.R.A.\*

Sergt. Jack White. Fahey considered him 'a bad type' and very rough. He struck Seán Óg on the back of the neck with a baton when Seán Óg had refused to sign for a parcel. Seán Óg had a boil or boils on his neck at the time, and his refusal arose from a brief policy of non-cooperation after the Fire.

Doctor O'Neill: as a medical officer he was a very young man. Thackabery was medical orderly and was married and living in Brownstown. It was well known to the staff that he had a rough tongue, and hence there was great surprise when he was apprehended. Fahey thought that his undercover work was due to a long admiration he had for Frank Driver.

Dinny O'Neill was a Sergt-Major: Sergt Fahey had nothing particular to say of him. Provost Marshal F.J. Henry was a Reserve officer from '22

Capt. Duffy and Commdt. Michael Lennon of Arbour Hill were both '22 men. Lennon had two brothers in the Army. He hailed from Co. Kilkenny.

**Chaplains:** are not subject to military law although in the British Army they are and carry the rank of Captain. Wearing uniform is discretionary but they are designated *Chaplain*. In the Camp there was Fr. Carey and Fr. McGurk. Mick Fahey thought that they passed occasional titbits of harmless information to some prisoners in Confession. On the other hand a prisoner could say he wished to sign out and they would arrange it by way of parole.

Mick Fahey was in the Glasshouse from early 1940: he still meets men who knew him but he is sometimes unsure is this an Army man or a former internee. He can recall well the 'characters' such as P. MacAndrew. M. Ó Cadhain, Behan, MacLogan, the Grogans etc. MacAndrew, and Driver 'insisted' they be interned. They would have felt hard done by if they had not been.

**Army Procedures:** Military police, he says, had no power over sentries as they were under Army command: A P.A could not direct a sentry in a box to fire his weapon.

**The Fire:** When this broke out on Saturday, December 14, Sergt. Fahey was in K. Lines, a barrack holding separately English and German prisoners. There were 10 barracks: A. Lines, B. Lines and so on.

All were at once rushed to the Camp but only 6 armed P.A's entered: normally they were not armed and they were never armed inside the Camp. On this occasion they were afraid to enter unarmed; they were in insufficient numbers and could easily have been overpowered. Commdt. M.J. Cummins had received a warning of an impending protest from Pádraig MacLogan but he did not act upon it hence (like

\* We are indebted to Kitty Harney and Enda O'Riordan from not too far away for this piece of local lore. Captain Larry's name, as is befitting, is also upon the roadside stone, even though he died in his bed; on January 12, 1956.

Capt. Curran in the Magazine), he was phased out or cashiered, although later reinstated. Fahey says Cummins 'was very nice:' he did not foresee trouble and failed to react.

The 6 P.A's he says could not enter for some time as the gate was barred, and even the brigade was prevented entering.

They realised that they had to break the new leadership after the Fire: hence the Glasshouse regime. Meanwhile the nights spent with no clothing subdued the internees. The cold, he says, near killed them.

Commdt. J. Guiney was not at the races, as rumoured, but he was now placed in charge. As a result the regime got much harder after the Fire. Liam Leddy, Mick Fahey considers, was very upright.

**Tunnels: Fog:** From talking to Mick Fahey, this writer's guess is that the Free State did not know of the tunnel network, but they probably did know of the 1943 single tunnel effort.

Leave them tunnel away, was an expression that Fahey heard around that time.

The Free State had sound detectors which Mike Fahey had the use of but they recorded nothing, he says. He points out that much of the Curragh is sandy and hence unsuitable for tunnelling. A rabbit, he says, will always burrow through clay.

Nonetheless a tractor was sometimes loaded and did the rounds to test for tunnels.

Bed boards, split, he learned afterwards, were used as supports, and replacements were got by pleading to Q.M Blanchfield that the board had broken. As a result Blanchfield was transferred.

In fog it was a regular practice that P.A's were placed outside the fence but he avers that they were not armed.

Sentries through the night regularly called the hour; 'No.1 post, eleven o'clock, and all is well'.

**Loaf supplies were cut:** Fahey was often on this duty. The person supplying the canteen shop was a civilian so the loaf was split to show that nothing was inside.

**Spring beds:** This sounds an unlikely story but Mick Fahey held that they were supplied in the Camp before it opened. Oscar Traynor saw this on an inspection at an early stage while noting that the P.A's had only boards. He directed then that they be switched.

**Parole for German and Allied prisoners:** At first both were (separately) in K. Lines, but about 1943 the Germans were brought down to the small camp beside the Republicans.

Both parties could 'sign a book' each morning for a daily parole whereby they promised to return about nightfall. Fahey says the Germans always seemed to have had plenty of money at that time.

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*Your have been told you are not strong, that you have no rifles.  
Revolutions do not start with rifles. Start first and get your rifles after.*

- James Connolly, 1914.

## NEIL GOOLD- VERSCHOYLE:

Jim Savage, his fellow internee, describes Neil Goold as generally respected. Jim was on the left; he was associated with the Connolly Group, and he attended his classes. Liam Burke of Belfast, who was opposed to communism and pro Russian politics, while not being a 'fascist' or a 'right winger', had this to say of Goold; one of the most generous men I knew. He taught French, German and Russian and was prepared to give his time freely to his students. He was in the same hut as myself, and he even mastered Irish. He lived like you would expect a dedicated communist to live; army boots, unlaced; an old Martin Henry suit, thread bare, and that sailor's cap of his. (When Mattie O'Neill looked him up in Moscow in 1966 he was still wearing it). *At night we laid bread on top of the stove until it toasted, but if Neil Goold saw someone short he shared with them. He was a dedicated communist, Pierce Fennel declares, but you could talk to him, and he would talk to you. There was give and take in him.*

In all of the conversations we have had it would be difficult to find a word of harshness or criticism of Neil Goold, and yet the liberal wing of the Camp, where Pearse Kelly presided as O.C, sought, after two and a half years, to have him removed. Kelly was a well educated young man from Dungannon and was not ultra Catholic or a right wing person; outside of his journalism he was an I.R.A person and very much a fenian and from a fenian background. He began to see Goold however as a threat to the philosophy of Irish republicanism itself. Kelly most probably helped to draft the little known 1942 *Statement of Republican Policy*, a synopsis of which is in this Appendix.

Anyone reading that will understand the widening breach created by those in the Connolly Group who felt they had to sign out in order to assist in Russia's revolutionary war, and the stoic Irish Republicans determined never to yield. Besides we have the word of Neil's friend, Jim Savage; *his offence was Mountjoy material but they shoved him into the Curragh instead*; the implication clearly being that the Staters wished to create trouble and divisiveness within the Camp.

That was occurring anyway, and would certainly have occurred without the presence of Neil Goold, but the fact that he was a declared advocate of signing out, although making no such move himself, caused Kelly in the end to press for his removal.

In the series of articles published in January 1969 in *The Irish Independent*, Pearse Kelly recounts, 'this development [giving lectures on communism] caused us grave concern and eventually it had to be brought to the notice of a Bishop. Within three days Goold was removed to Mountjoy prison'. The Bishop was the Most Rev. Thomas Keogh, Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin, and while one does not know what Kelly communicated to him, the gloss was sufficiently coloured to work wonders for the Army and to have Goold removed.

Hamilton Neil Stuart Goold-Verschoye had an astonishing, not to say striking

lineage, without even touching upon the pre Tudor background of his ancestry. Commencing only with the early 18th. century period he could list a Burke ancestor who descended from Gráinne Ní Mháille, while another had been the lawyer to Patrick Sarsfield and a co-signatory of the Treaty of Limerick.

In that period alone there repose so many distinguished people in his ancestry that it would be impossible to list them all here, but reference must be made to another, Thomas Goold, member of the Irish House of Commons, who spoke eloquently against the Union. Coming swiftly forward we find that his sister, Eileen, was sister in law of George Otto Simms, late Pastor of the Archdiocese of Dublin, while her daughter married the grandson of Douglas Hyde, and George Otto himself, although not directly related, was married to the great grand daughter of Young Irelander, William Smith O'Brien. As a throw away we might add that the second cousin of Neil's father was Constance Gore Booth, Countess Markievicz. There may be skeletons in the cupboard somewhere but clearly the shabby, unlaced, fellow captive we had in the Curragh came from a distinguished background.

We may commence entering upon that background with Thomas Goold (the same who opposed the Union), a barrister, who made a fortune at the bar around 1800, and purchased an estate (accompanied by the usual army of tenants and retainers), of 15,000 acres at Athea in the Co. Limerick area, close to the Kerry border.

Monelena, Athea, is of course, where Con Colbert, executed 1916 leader, came from. Thomas Goold's great grandson by now joined Verschoyle, is listed at a number of places but principally Dunkineely, a village on Inver Bay, five miles east of Killybegs, where Neil was born in December 1904.

The great estate at Athea by then was long gone; the family in Dunkineely lived modestly in a bay-windowed late Victorian house on the right hand side, going west, still known as the manor house. Like most townspeople at that time, they had a maid and one or two family retainers.

Neil is listed in *Burkes Irish Family Records*, as of Ballybodonnell and Cashelshanaghan, an estate in north Donegal which he sold in 1959; which was the year that he finally left Ireland and returned to his wife and son Pytor in the Soviet Union. Thanks to the good offices of Francis McKay of Lifford we have located *Castle Shanaghan* (two words on some maps) as halfway between Letterkenny and Ramelton, on the right hand side, and hence backing upon Lough Swilly. The barony is Cashelshanaghan and clearly at one time the estate covered a wide area, in which there are still some notable residences. The father of Geoffrey Coulter, Protestant republican, already noted in this work was bank manager in Ramelton. *Cashelshanaghan* is now known as *Castle Grove*\*.

Neil Goold - he dropped Verschoyle in the Curragh period - was educated at Cheltenham, one of England's foremost public schools, and at London University, where he graduated with a BSc, BA. This is the period of the 'Apostles' at

\* Desmond Greaves in *The Life and Times of James Connolly*, refers to the 'landlord Goold-Verschoyle' among those, with J.B. Armour of Ballymoney, resisting the Orange faction then vigorously entrenched against Home Rule.





Neil Goold, with son Pytor, a picture taken in the Soviet Union in the early 1960's.

PICTURE SUPPLIED BY /DAVID SIMMS

Cambridge; Burgess, Maclean, Philby, Blunt and others, all of whom were recruited for Soviet espionage. There was a pro Russian ferment among upper class English at that time, so it is quite possible that Neil was known to some of them. There however, the paths, had they ever converged, diverged, because Neil set off for Russia in 1932, and shortly after, married Olga Ivanovna Dobrova with whom he had a son Pytor, born in September 1933.

People could travel fairly freely to Russia in the late twenties and the early thirties and they could even marry into Russians. It was a short period of relaxation under Iosif Stalin, who had gained unchallenged control in 1927, but all of that ended with the assassination of his close colleague, Sergei Kirov, in Leningrad, in December 1934. Instantly a dark night descended upon the land.

Pre-occupying Stalin's thoughts at all times was the notion that the world's first socialist state was open to warlike attack, and hence dissent was a luxury not to be permitted. It is not known how the couple and their son survived, living, one presumes, in an apartment of sorts in Moscow, but in 1938, with the seeming imminence of war, he was obliged to leave and be separated from both his wife and five year old boy. It says much for his belief in the system that he remained a dedicated communist, despite losing all trace of his wife and son over a long period. They were located again in 1957, and Neil joined them once more, following his permanent return there in 1959.

We must here touch upon Neil's Dunkineely family and the sad mystery of his younger brother Brian. With father and mother there was Eileen, the eldest, Neil, Sheila, Brian and Denis. Early on Denis had departed for South Africa; Eileen became the mother of David Simms, while Sheila went to live in Wexford and was living there until recently. Brian however, perhaps influenced from Russia by Neil whom he had visited there, departed for Spain in the autumn of 1936, the civil war having then commenced. Aged 26, he was a radio specialist and he may have sought to offer his skills to the republican cause. Falling foul however of one of the many factions then in Catalonia, he was arrested imprisoned and extradited to the Soviet

Union where he died in a Stalinist prison camp.

His name is said to have been mentioned in some book although, almost certainly, he did not survive World War 2. It is extraordinary therefore that this harsh treatment of younger brother Brian did not cause Neil to deviate from communism.

Geoffrey Palmer recalls Neil's arrival in Dublin about 1931 and his association with the Communist Party; the leadership being then shared by Sean Murray, as secretary, and Jim Larkin junior.

When he first arrived in Connolly House in Great Strand Street, as Geoffrey recalls, he was attired in an old grey overcoat, rope tied, sloppy wellingtons, unshaven and smelling to high heaven. Sean Murray, taken aback by this apparition, nonetheless speaking with a cultured anglo accent, took him to one side and told him he would bring the party into disrepute if he did not spruce up. Thereupon he agreed to wash, and at subsequent meetings he appeared in a dark suit with white shirt, 'rather like a Christian brother'. At this time he used sell the English *Daily Worker* under the portico of the G.P.O and, as it was seen to be a communist newspaper, he frequently drew abuse from passers by. Shortly after this he slipped off to Russia, married, and, for a time, settled there.

As Geoffrey recalls and as we all know, upon his release at the end of 1943, he tried not very successfully to organise a rural group, the turf workers, and also farm labourers; which in fact were organised fairly successfully by Sean Dunne later on. But Neil always seemed to be on the periphery of things; scarcely accepted as a full member of the Party, many of whom looked upon him as way out and a bit of a crank.

For a while he was known to hold open air classes for north side youngsters in the park in Mountjoy Square. How permanent they were - at the time the area had teeming tenements in one of which Neil may have lived - one cannot now say. Gradually, in the years before his departure, Geoffrey says, he had become isolated from the Party.

Other friends, Nora and Charlie Harkin - Nora being a McGinley from Glen Swilly - recall Neil in the 1939 period, after he had returned from a five year sojourn in Russia. They were living then in Furry Park, Killester, a rendezvous 20 years earlier of Michael Collins and that interesting Irish lady Moya Llewelyn-Davies (the mansion still stands)\*; Neil, unfortunately, had lapsed into the smelly old down-and-out ways from which Sean Murray seven years earlier had rescued him. Attired in a tattered overcoat, muddy boots and unshaven he had, Nora says, all the appearance of a pre 1914 mid-European peasant.

At this time he was still selling papers, *The Irish Democrat*, from London and a republican tabloid, which could not have been *An Phoblacht*, then no longer in circulation, but might have been the *Wolfe Tone Weekly*.

Nora describes Neil as 'a vulnerable person'; in political matters she considered him naive. She would compare him however to a Quaker; as a person of great purity. Later on Nora was to be an officer in the Ireland Soviet Friendship Society from its foundation in 1946, and she remains faithful to the Third International until the present time. She had, of course, the honour of sheltering Peadar O'Donnell in his ten declining - and ever argumentive - years.

\* See *Survivors*

Throughout the sixties and early seventies numbers of Irish people were successful, although sometimes with difficulty, in meeting Neil in Moscow. Certainly Frank Edwards, Johnny Nolan of New Books and Michael O'Riordan tracked him down and met him there.

Pytor, now under the Russian name of Guverov, married in 1966 and is known to have a son. Olga, Neil's wife, died in December 1982, whereupon he married Vera Grotsuko, who still lives in Moscow. Neil died on September 30, 1987.

David Simms, his nephew in Dublin, to whom we are indebted, says that he called upon Neil in 1960 and again in 1966. The family properties were entailed upon Neil as the eldest son, but at no time did he attempt to influence him regarding the taking out of probate or the disposal of ownerships. There is a story of family silver stashed in a bank in England, because of Neil's reluctance to touch it; as silver is at all times readily saleable, and the rewards from it could have been used to advance party interests, we must treat that one as an unlikely story.



## RÓISÍN NI MHÉARA: CÉ HÍ SEO AMUIGH?

*The Story of an Irish Girl  
in Berlin During World  
War 2.*



Róisín Ni Mhéara, a photograph taken by Francis Stuart in Berlin in 1941.

Róisín Ni Mhéara, from an Irish background - her father dying in Flanders - was adopted by General Sir Ian Hamilton and Lady Hamilton in 1918 at their home, No. 1 Hyde Park Gardens. It was London's most posh address; Sir Ian, a distinguished Scotsman, then retired, was president of the British Legion, and it was at a very swank function in their house that Róisín's mother and the child first met the Hamiltons. Thereafter it was a royal and dazzling upbringing for the child whisked from one stately home to another; to rural Surrey, where the clan owned the manor house *Lullenden*; nearby was *Chartwell*, home of the Churchills, included in the Sunday visiting rounds; to another residence on the Riviera, or to the ancestral home in Scotland, *Deanston*, and the towering patrimony of the Hamilton relatives at *Blair Drummond* and *Lennoxlove*, where Rudolph Hess landed in May 1941.

The Hamiltons could trace their ancestry beyond Maire Stuart; his wife was the daughter of the Irishman who restored Bunratty Castle, Lord Gort; presenting it then to the nation. At soirées in their home the gatherings included, earlier on, Sir Roger Casement, then the Laverys, Sir Shane Leslie, opera singer Claire Sheridan, the poet Yeats, and hundreds more *daoine mór le rádh*. 'My little Irish colleen' cried Lady Lavery, clasping the child to her, on the eve of the Treaty social round, in which the painter's wife played a crucial part (leading to her portrait long adorning the old Free State bank notes).

In such a glittering company, as she tells it; *d'eirigh mé faichilleach, aonaránach, mórtas cine na h-Éireann ag borradh ionam*. And yet this strikingly beautiful Irish colleen fresh from the finishing schools of Paris and Munich, was to spend the entire life-time of World War 2 in Berlin, a witness to the pride and victories of Nazism, to the enveloping clouds, and to the rush headlong towards defeat. A priceless asset to the Rundfunkhaus with her fluent command of five languages and her knowledge of upper crust England.

She enjoyed living as she did, even in Berlin, in spacious luxury, until the night time of defeat closed in and she remained *aonaránach* among the bombed out ruins - the stricken were no longer being rescued from under them and she could see the fattened rats emerge - when, with the Soviet guns booming 30 kilometres off, she squeezed aboard a last train (going anywhere!) in mid-March 1945; dirty, unwashed and carrying her all in a sack, for the questionable safety of the mountain country to the south.

Róisín was a close witness from 1938 of a Europe staggering towards war; she

lived through it and tasted the aftermath of defeat; but here we will touch solely upon her wartime accounts of the tiny Irish colony in Berlin, and her view outwards on happenings in Ireland. In her last pre war visit to Ireland, she stayed with Helen Daly, but whether this is the Margarethe mentioned in Enno Stephan's *Spies in Ireland*, we cannot be sure.\*

Returning to Paris she brought with her Dorothy Macardle's *The Irish Republic*; the 20 year old upper crust British colleen was already bitten by her Irishness. A strong believer that Ireland in the coming war should not ally with England, she describes the growing interest in German news papers at this time in political events in Ireland and in Irish culture. Roger Casement's story was recalled; Maud Gonne's *Servant of the Queen* was listed for publication in translation. To an official in Vienna therefore she offered her services which, inevitably, would be in the field of broadcasting. Her first assignment was on a morning news programme when their broadcast was faked as the voice of Radio Warsaw. With the collapse of Poland she was speedily switched to Berlin having turned down an offer to broadcast from Danzig. At a very early stage, after his return to Berlin in January 1940, Francis Stuart commences to figure in her story.

Francis was to first seek that she type the manuscript of a new novel, a task she was able to avoid, forcing him to find girl students eager to slave for the 39 year old Irishman. Dr. Ruth Weiland, a middle aged academic skilled in translating the classical authors in English, roped the party together on an undoubtedly propagandist work, *Irische Freiheitskämpfer*, (Irish Fighters of Freedom). Francis would write on Eamon De Valera, Róisín on Pádraig Mac Piarais, Franz Fromme - who knew him - upon Roger Casement, Ruth Weiland on Maud Gonne while the Celtic Institute of Berlin would make other contributions. This was all in the era of the 'phoney war', weeks before the great German blitzkriegs upon Norway, France and Dunkirk, and a full twelve months before real bombs fell upon Berlin; real bombs that would eventually level the heart of that city and kill many of the people still holding on there.

Francis had with him photographs of Iseult and their two children, and these he showed Róisín, together with their home, the granite built barrack of Laragh - still there - and which was to be a short resting place for Goertz after his parachute jump into Co. Meath in May. Paradoxically Róisín held De Valera in high regard, paying tribute to his tight rope policy of neutrality at that time.

Early on too Lieut. Colonel Herman Goertz - Goertz, as we have it - makes his appearance in her account. They met in a restaurant in the company of Professor Franz Fromme, an old time cultural expert on Ireland, and they shared a bottle of wine together as he told her of his intention to be flown into Ireland. That was in the month of December in a cellar, in the Kurfurstendamm, and his objective, as he told her, would be to help to reunite again and to free Ireland; a tall order; and would Róisín act as a recipient of the radio messages he would send back from Erin?

She was not ready for that, nor did she wish for the involvement. Searchingly she

\* Margarethe Daly, was seemingly known to Frank Ryan, and in October/ November acting as a governess in Spain. She successfully brought upon the Japanese evacuation ship, *Fishimi Maru*, a new code and invisible ink pads for Goertz. See Enno Stephan, *Spies in Ireland*. But whether Margarethe was earlier in Ireland as Helen Daly we do not know.

sought from him who his contacts might be in Ireland. At this stage the name of Francis Stuart, who was on the point of arriving in Germany, was mentioned, while at the Irish end there would be a reliable transmitter\*.

Róisín knew of Francis Stuart as a writer, married to Iseult Gonne who was lauded in poetry through W.B. Yeats, who had himself sought 20 years earlier to marry her. She would soon become better acquainted with Francis when they came to share a large apartment together. *Thaobhaíomar le cheile go h-instinneach*. On their next meeting in the same restaurant, with Francis present, the four drank *an fíon ba rogha leis an Ollamh Fromme*, who then, as evidently was his wont, mounted the table and danced a jig, a display of frenzy that was unwelcome to Goertz.

Changeable weather forced a postponement twice of Goertz's departure for Ireland. Meanwhile he studied carefully maps and information on the country, with particular attention paid to the Glendalough and Shankill areas. Evidently he hoped or had arranged, that he be landed close to Laragh, rather than close to Trim, a location that was to result in a cross country journey of some days. Goertz was a military man and proud of it; proud of his membership of the Royal Guard in World War One when he had gained an Iron Cross.

Goertz, however, failed to understand the changed viewpoints between the 'Old I.R.A.' and De Valera and its acceptance of the *status quo* and the 'new I.R.A.', some of them with a left wing outlook,\*\* while others sought, now that England was heavily engaged, an immediate attack upon the Six Counties.

\* That was the one seized in *Ashgrove House*, in the same month of December. It should not have been used for I.R.A. broadcasts since regular broadcasting made a transmitter easily detectable. Later a set belonging to the I.R.A. was delivered to the house *Konstanz* the home of Stephen Held on Templeogue Road, but that was captured in the police raid upon the house on May 22, 1940. A short while later Tony Deery turned up another.

\*\*This is very clear from his diaries in the *Irish Times* of September 1947) where he wished that the I.R.A. cease all actions in the 26 Counties, assisting him instead in sabotage in the Six Counties; sabotage that never came to anything. They soon parted as the I.R.A. were not willing to co-operate, although Goertz clandestinely made use of Republican call houses.

One such account which we have is as follows: 'after the arrests in Fenit, February 1942 of Jim Crofton - when with the latter's aid, Goertz, feeling he could make no progress in Ireland, was endeavouring to sail to France - a strange man arrived at our door. My mother opened the door of our house in Cork city: outside there was a gentleman holding a message from John Joe Sheehy of Tralee. My mother invited him in, putting down the kettle. He said he was on the run, that he was wanted, that a number of them had been arrested in Kerry and could he stay with us. Speaking with a refined accent, he said who he was but it meant nothing to us. The first thing my mother did was to go upstairs, bringing down a pioneer pin and sticking it on to his coat. That would identify him as Irish; she later remarked to neighbours that our uncle from Blarney suffering from a nervous breakdown had come to stay with us. He stayed for quite a few weeks, but circumstances caused my father to become nervous as there was a number of L.D.F. men (Local Defence Force) living about. He had him transferred as a pauper into the district hospital, although keeping contact with us by messages passed to and fro.

After a few weeks he came back to us and, while staying inside a lot, used also go walking in the countryside with us. He asked me then for a good map of West Cork and, upon being given that, he departed. I believe he may have gone to the Brennans, prosperous bakers in the Bandon area, or he may have stayed with the Hayes family there. On his return he had with him a small transmitter which I gave later to a Fianna officer from whom it may have been captured. He was inquiring about Irish boats leaving Cork for Portugal, but I had only one shipping contact who was unlikely to be at a sufficiently important level to be of assistance to him. He left us shortly after'.

This would have interfered with Irish neutrality; Irish neutrality being then to Germany's advantage the Foreign Office in Berlin wished to have nothing to do with the I.R.A. In the end Róisín considered the mission a failure, suggesting British inspired sabotage from the Berlin end where Admiral Canarias was in charge of counter intelligence in *Abwehr 11*. He was executed as a traitor in 1945. Looking back she feels he was a fly in the ointment all along in that he did not properly support the venture. Hence Róisín points an accusing finger at him and at his chief Hans Oster, executed with him, comparing his relationship to that of Stephen Hayes and his controller Larry de Lacy. That the tribulations of war had made him an anti-Nazi was clear; that he was an agent all along is doubtful.

After dropping Goertz near Ballivor, Co. Meath, the pilot on his return on May 4, 1940 was unable to say precisely where he had dropped him as his attention was distracted by the sudden appearance of a British night fighter plane. The brief arrest of Iseult, which followed her visit to Switzer's - no less - buying mens' garments, upset the ambassador Eduard Hempel who had not been informed by his own authorities; Hempel being prickly in support of Dublin's neutrality. At this point Róisín casts doubt upon the good faith of Stephen Held to whose home at Templeogue he had been brought; a doubt that is not sustained by the evidence. A sub-office of Foreign Affairs, Berlin, carried on normal relations with official Dublin, while embassy messages were transmitted and received by radio from 58 Northumberland Road until 1942 when a government order closed their radio.

Sean Russell's arrival in Germany in May 1940\* brought her into contact with Kurt Haller and Dr. Veessenmayer for the first time. Haller, a low size man, was temporarily with *Abwehr 11*, while Veessenmayer was a foreign office man in touch with Irish affairs. Both of these figure frequently in the accounts where Russell and Frank Ryan are concerned. Róisín herself had a high opinion of Haller whom she found helpful and kindly; he survived until war's end in Berlin and for long after, to write the only accurate account of the secret Irish/German relationships of the period. She discounts completely the frequently quoted Erwin Lahousen of *Abwehr 11*, upon whom many historians rely, and whom, she says, engaged willingly in the prosecutions at Nurnberg.

\*He travelled, signed on - but not acting - as a fireman aboard the U.S liner *Washington* to Genoa where he was met by Professor Franz Fromme; a photograph taken then shows him with a pale emaciated face. He was coming to Germany at his own request as his American bail bond would expire on April 16, 1940.

He travelled to Berlin with Fromme on May 3, and was quickly accommodated in a week-end house on the outskirts of the city with an Austrian N.C.O by name Planer, as his batman. Dr. Edmund Veessenmayer of the Foreign Office, was in overall control, with section leader Kurt Haller as his close liaison. By a mishap of hours he had failed to meet Goertz before the latter flew on May 5 for Ireland: Clearly it would have assisted Goertz to have met him, and Haller, knowing this, rushed him to Kassel but the plane had flown. Two weeks after his arrival he commenced laboratory study of the latest sabotage techniques which he hoped to teach those engaged upon an incursion into the North. 'Russell firmly held that the Irish would accept German aid only on their own terms' is stated in the U.S published *Shamrock and the Swastika*, and that viewpoint emerges also from Enno Stephan's work. Yet how practicable that would have been for Irish neutrality in the shifting fortunes of a great war it is difficult to say.





Sean Russell, late Chief of Staff, I.R.A

To enable the conspirators to remain free from intrusion in a city where, despite the Gestapo, spying could be a hazard, Haller arranged an apartment sufficiently large for another refugee from Erin, and he bowled Róisín over when he informed her that this might be Frank Ryan. They were in luck with the accommodation that Haller found for them; the top floor of a mansion in the best part of the city, the owners leaving it for the rural safety of their castle in Pommerania. Francis, for ethical reasons, felt that he should introduce Róisín as his sister, causing the departing fraulein to raise an eyebrow at the obvious difference in their age and appearance. But, no matter, at first, and for perhaps another whole year, all would be brightness and joy. Across the tree filled square lived Lilo Anderson, whom they frequently met, authoress of *Lili Marlene* which John Steinbeck considered 'the most beautiful love song'.



Helen Daly, facing camera in pre-war Munich. Could this be the Margarthe Daly known to Frank Ryan and footnoted here? PHOTOS SUPPLIED BY: CÉ HÍ SIN AMUIGH

Róisín never met Sean Russell following his arrival as Haller had arranged a rural villa for him where he remained, keeping out of contact with the Irish colony; in contact only with those specialists with whom presumably he discussed tactics and methods for future guerrilla warfare. There are seemingly no records of this, but Róisín gives us to understand that he was held in high esteem by those in contact with him.

Róisín reports adversely on the 38 year old Frank Ryan who arrived, sickly and emaciated in the first days of August. \* She compares him to a spoiled child unwilling to be patient with the shortages and rationing of wartime. As with many deaf persons, he was suspicious of everyone around him. *Bíodh sé ag fáil locht ar gach uile rud.* The experience in the submarine off the coast of Galway, when Russell died and was buried at sea, did not help, for he now faced a purposeless future with a country and a war that was out of step with his outlook. Nothing had been said to Ryan about the intended journey; seemingly it was Russell's wish that he should accompany him (and indeed it appears to have been Russell who instigated his rescue from Franco in the first place) although, for security reasons, that was communicated to him only on the day preceding departure, August 8, from Wilhelmshaven.

Bearing in mind the number of times that English poison had ended the life of an Irish leader, Róisín is not above hinting that that may have been the case in the death of Sean Russell. By all accounts a reasonably healthy man when leaving Berlin, but recalling that Admiral Canarias was in charge of the operation from headquarters could a crew member have dispensed a poison, she asks. It is hard to credit; those of the crew who attended Russell during the seven days that they were at sea were closely questioned, as was Frank Ryan, upon the submarine's return.

If mystery it is, it remains; the cause of death of the 51 year old Russell was given as perforated ulcers.\*\* Taking the wider view, unsaid by Róisín, Russell's return to Ireland in August 1941, (although quite likely that he would have been speedily arrested) could have been a set-back, indeed unwelcome, for the Movement. Burial took place at sea 100 miles west of Galway; it had been intended to land the pair at their own request close to Ballyferriter.

Dr. Veessenmayer, who held Russell in high regard, ordered that his papers and personal effects be collected and held for his relatives, including a portrait that Veessenmayer had commissioned, but these were lost later in air raids. On his return Frank Ryan was lodged by Haller in a private house close to Róisín and Francis, there being an arrangement that he would eat with them. There were however difficulties; rationing was increasingly severe and Ryan's coupons did not arrive for some time. Francis would endeavour on these mealtime occasions to make conversation, to lift his morale, *ach bhíodar ro neamhchosúil ó na cheile.* Worse still, Róisín's cooking was far from perfect and, with her upper crust English accent, Ryan viewed her with suspicion. His flight by car with Haller from Madrid to an exotic interlude in Paris, had left him unprepared for the hard life in Berlin where he made no effort to move about unless Francis took him walking, or to understand the language; at this time Róisín had herself commenced to learn Irish from a fellow Irishman, Liam Mulally,\* who had found himself stranded in the east at the outbreak of the war.

Hitler, as we know, balked at launching an invasion of England. Whether it was

\* He 'escaped' from Burgos, Spain, on July 14, 1940, arriving in Germany on August 4; thus allowing him almost three weeks around Paris to recuperate

\*\* The U boat had no doctor, only a medical orderly who, at Ryan's request administered a mild purgative resulting in a violent sickness accompanied by severe pains, and these pains are said to have commenced shortly after leaving Wilhelmshaven. Russell was said later by his brother to have had a history of stomach trouble.

the natural risk of failure or a deeply held feeling, as one suspects, for the Anglo Saxon cousins, we cannot be sure. Róisín however was surprised to find herself called in October to the home of Graf Stauffenberg; they were about to invade, he told her, and she could assist by being into Surrey with the vanguard and leading it direct to *Chartwell*, the home of Winston Churchill (as if to find him in residence!). For a variety of reasons she flatly refused and the discussion ended.

Róisín recalled in May 1941 when Rudolf Hess flew to Scotland, landing at the Hamilton home of *Lennoxlove* (evidently in a last minute attempt to bring England into the impending war against Russia), how he had with his wife accepted an invitation from Sir Ian Hamilton to spend a holiday there in the summer of 1939 but, in the event, had been unable to do so. Unknown to Hess however, Hamilton would have had no influence with Winston Churchill; their ways having drifted apart on policy matters some years before. Confusion arose on this issue as the news media at the time seized upon the Duke of Hamilton as the quarry whereas it was in fact the foster father of Róisín. The papers are still under seal in England until 2010, and Róisín adds, for good measure, that Hess was held in Spandau prison in Berlin until his death in 1991, not because of Russian intransigence but on orders from London.\*\*

As for Frank, he was of course later on despondent that he had not landed in Ireland, although, with advanced tuberculosis, it is doubtful if landing would have prolonged his life. He was at all times properly treated in Germany although the shortages and hardships bore down inexorably.

The people who stood by him were the Clissmans, Budge and Helmut, Jupp Hoven, the former German student from the Ireland of 1930, the faithful Kurt Haller - Hoven and Haller being the two who had brought him out of Spain - Francis and Gertrude (Madelaine) Meissner. His health collapsed early in 1943, and from then on until his death in Dresden on June 10, 1944, he was continuously in and out of hospital. The remains returned to Ireland, and were buried from Whitefriar Street Church, all shades and surviving friends present, to Glasnevin Cemetery, on Friday, June 22, 1979.

22 Meitheamh 1941; a sunny morning with the windows of the apartment opened wide, as Róisín records, when the dread announcement came. Francis rose from the table, laying his pen down: *Bhí dreach scanraithe orainn araon. Bhí sé de thuar duinn laithreach go raibh an Ghearmáin caillte*. Operation Barbarossa; the invasion of Russia had begun.

In the light of this Róisín and Francis ceased to hope for a German victory; in their broadcasts they would support the cause of neutrality, while Francis would

\* Mulally survived the war

\*\* There is evidence, no more than fairly convincing, that his English jailers poisoned the old man; as with Napoleon on St. Helena in 1821; as, possibly Eoghan Ruadh in November 1649. Napoleon was safeguarded on St. Helena by Irish doctor Barry O'Meara, until he fell foul of English Bourbon agent Montholon after O'Meara was posted elsewhere. Always drinking wine from his own bottle, it was thought, while in the cask, to have been progressively doctored with arsenic by Montholon who held the key to the wine closet. See the *Murder of Napoleon*, Robson Books, U.S., 1982.

continue to visit Frank Ryan. At Kurt Haller's request, and evidently against his own judgement, he inspected a prison camp where there were some Irish airmen. *Turas in aisce a bha é*, says Róisín.

They used meet occasionally in the home of Moira Ponsonby, and elsewhere with William Warnock, *Chargé d'Affaires* of Ireland; he, in a gentlemanly fashion, never touched upon their work there. For a while that work had increased, under the gaelic scholar Hans Hartmann, to a daily quarter hour broadcast with a half hour at the weekend devoted to drama. The vast entrance hall of the Rundfunkhaus was a cross road for the many foreigners, now trapped by war, taking part willy nilly in programmes not all of them political. It was while passing out that Róisín met for the first time William Joyce, 'Lord Haw-haw,' whose voice for a while had become better known in England than Winston Churchill's. Rising from his seat she was approached by a small, stout, red faced man, who offered her a sheet from a note pad. It was a sketch of her two year old daughter waiting patiently for her; 'Joyce is my name,' he advanced; William Joyce, but he stubbornly failed to acknowledge any association with Ireland.

Speaking afterwards to his wife, Róisín learned that, yes, he was born in New York in 1906. Shortly after his parents returned to Galway where rumour had it that the youth travelled about in the Tan lorries; he would have been 14 at that time so the story must be accepted with caution. He remained some years in Galway, being educated by Jesuits before proceeding to London where he grew up. A deep scar on his throat was a relic of an anti left wing riot in 1924.

Later, in the thirties, he associated with Sir Oswald Mosley, but forsook that party because of its socialism; Mosley at one time being a front bench member in the Labour government of 1929 - 1931. It was then only that he founded the British Union of Fascists, which, incidently, was strongly opposed to relaxing English control of Ireland. When Róisín last saw him in the semi dark debris littered foyer of the Rundfunkhaus late in 1944, he was sitting morosely at a heavy table failing to notice her as she slipped past\*.

Is there more to tell? Yes there is; but before we leave Berlin reference must be made to John Francis O'Reilly, marooned on the Channel Islands when the Germans captured them in July 1940. He was interned in Brunswick, but was allowed to join the Rundfunkhaus staff where he broadcast to Ireland under the name of Pat O'Brien. Realising that Germany would not win the war, he was persuasive enough to have himself flown out as an agent, dropping by parachute into Moveen, near Kilkee in December 1943; taking care to hide safely the considerable sum of money he brought with him.

\* Joyce was tried under the same -1351, Act of Edward III treason statute that convicted Casement, and hanged in Wandsworth in January 1946. In many ways it was a travesty as it refers only to treason *within the King's realm*; he might have pleaded Irish parentage and U.S citizenship but he failed to do that. His autobiography was published in Berlin in 1940. His eldest child, Heather, now 68 years of age, fought a 20 year campaign to have his remains removed and buried in Galway. In that she was successful. Following a Tridentine Mass in 1976, the bones of William Joyce were laid to rest in the New Cemetery. See Michael Finlan, *Irish Times*, February 2, 1995.

He had been befriended in Berlin by Róisín, Stuart, the Clissmans and Ryan, so it came as a bitter surprise when Róisín learned much later that, after debriefment in Dublin (it is not clear whether he was ever imprisoned in Arbour Hill), he was permitted to travel to Belfast where, for sums of money, he spilled all he knew of the Irish colony to the British authorities there.

As Róisín express's it; *Nuair a thuirling sé go slán in Éirinn, níor lig an fear sin lá thairis gan a fhaltanas a agairt orm. Sceith sé a rún, thug sé eolas ar na h-éachtrannaigh go léir a bhí fostaithe sa Rundfunkhaus i mBerlin le scéalta idir fhúor is breag a chuir sé i gclusa na Rúnseirbhíse Breatanaí.*

When, however, one learns that his father was the policeman who arrested Sir Roger Casement at McKenna's Fort close to Banna Strand on Good Friday, April 21, 1916, one need not be astonished. What runs in the blood will come out in the marrow.

Some time in the latter part of March 1945, in a 'last train from Berlin' situation Róisín scraped into Heidelberg. With her little girl she was accommodated in the Grand Hotel overlooking the Neckar. Within days she was brought by car to Paris to be debriefed by Britain's secret service. Resting in a hospice there, the debriefing lasted some weeks. Many adventures followed, including a return to Berlin on behalf of Caritas where she was a witness to the awfulness of hunger, the cold and the ruination of a great capital. *Slán agat a Bheirlín. Cathair na dtubáistí, cathair mhaorga reabtha chéasta!*

Róisín Ni Mhéara has resided now in Austria for many years but holds tight to her links with Erin spending weeks of every summer on Inis Mór, Inis Mean, Inis Thiar, and she has brought to life some wonderful ideas in those places. She has written extensively on Ireland's golden age in Europe, from Columbanus to Fergil, to Killian; Tomás Ó Fiach himself was under a debt of gratitude for her assistance over the years in guiding him and his pilgrims into the shrines and holy places as they followed the footprints of the Irish saints in Europe.

The only message I have for anybody is to hold on and stick to the Republic.

Kevin Barry, 1902-1920.

In 1902, Kevin Barry was a young man living in the town of Carrigrohane, County Kerry. He was a member of the Gaelic League and was active in the nationalist movement. He was killed during the Easter Rising of 1916.

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- Kevin Barry, 1902-1920.

NOTES ON  
FRANCIS  
STUART AND  
WARTIME  
GERMANY:

*from the account by  
Geoffrey Elborn, Raven  
Arts 1990:*

Francis Stuart, a northern Protestant, married Iseult Gonne, daughter of Maud Gonne, and of Lucien Millevoye, both at an early age; he at 17 and she at 24, in April 1920. After he had many times proposed to Maud, the poet W.B. Yeats, then proposed to Iseult and had been refused. Iseult had been a lover of U. S wandering poet, Ezra Pound.

Francis Stuart, according to his biographer Geoffrey Elborn 1990, was born at Townsville, Australia in April 1902. His father, Henry Irwin Stuart was admitted to an asylum in Sydney a few weeks later, taking his own life on August 14 1902. Scarcely more than one year earlier, Henry had returned to Co. Antrim from his sheep farm in Queensland to marry Lily Montgomery, two miles from the Stuart family home of Ballyhithstock lying between Ballycastle and Bushmills. Lily later converted from Presbyterianism to Catholicism, as did Francis, years on. Mother and son did not return to Co. Antrim but choose to live with her sister Janet at Shallon, Co. Meath. Reaching seven, they went to live in Monkstown, Dun Laoire; Francis however spent long holiday periods in Co. Antrim. In 1912 he was dispatched to a Warwickshire preparatory school prior to spending some years in one of England's foremost public schools, Rugby.

Stuart's second cousin, Capt. Jack White, was a son of Field Marshal Sir George Stuart White, known as the Defender of Ladysmith, in 1899, during the Boer War. Capt. Jack had helped to found the Irish Citizen Army in 1913, and thereafter never lost interest in national affairs. During Stuart's first Easter vacation in Bournemouth he heard of the Rising in Dublin and, evidently, it made a great impact upon him. He first broke into print on nationalism when in 1918 he wrote a letter to the *Irish Independent* advocating Home Rule.

At the age of 17, accompanied by a medical student, he visited the Glendassan valley, near Glendalough, where Madame Mac Bride and her daughter Iseult were holidaying.

Beautiful, erudite and sexually experienced, Iseult, (who had already turned down Ezra Pound, Yeats and others), was attracted to the gangling, shy 17 year old,

although seven years his senior. 'Compromised' by a three month stay together in London, early in 1920, the couple returned to marry in Dublin in April. Madame then owned a house close to University Church at 73 St. Stephens Green, and it was from there that Francis, now Catholicised, was married. The reception was in Helena Moloney's house nearby. After a few months in London they returned to a topsy-turvy existence in a cottage - now the An Óige hostel - above Baravore in Glenmalure. The cottage figures in Synge's *In the Shadow of the Glen* and it was there, years later, that Dorothy Macardle put together much of her monumental *Irish Republic*. A year later a daughter, Dolores was born; she was to live for a few years only, and that with much else, including Maud's dislike of Francis, contributed to an unending tug-of-war existence between the couple.

In August 1921, accompanied by Sean and Maud, they travelled to Munich - Sean departing on an arms mission at that point - and later to Prague and Vienna, but as an enjoyable trio on holiday it could not be counted a success.

The outbreak of Civil War found Francis eager to help the Republican cause; he went gun running to Belgium, confirming a shipment that Sean had already arranged. He played a minor part then in some Dublin street fighting before being sent to Cork city. Returning after a few weeks he was arrested in Amiens Street Station, speedily finding himself interned in Maryborough Prison. In February 1923 he was moved to Tintown. He lingered in internment, like more than 11,000 others, until his release close to Christmas 1923. Poetry now seemed a more agreeable choice than warfare, and that, together with his literature, was to occupy almost entirely his time until his departure for Germany in January 1940. But there was always a shred of latent patriotism; early in 1924 he published a booklet, *We Have Kept the Faith*, and about the same time gave a talk on 'Nationality and Culture' to Sinn Féin.

We now advance quickly to the main purpose of this account, pausing only to record that in the thirties the couple came to live at *Laragh Castle*, still standing close to the roadside before it crosses the Glenmacnass River.

The 'castle' is the battlemented survivor of the string of barracks, Glenree, Laragh, Glenmalure, Aughavannagh, Leitrim (Imaal), together with the Military Road, built by the English across County Wicklow to suppress Michael Dwyer about 1800, and it was to Laragh, in May 1940, the German agent, Herman Goertz, after parachuting close to Ballivor, Co. Meath, arrived - very unexpectedly - after a wearisome four night overland journey on foot\*. Their son Ion, was born there in October 1926, being baptised in University Church where Iseult and Francis were married.

In April 1939, on an initiative of Iseult, Francis was recommended by Helmut Clissman, local head of the German Academic Exchange, for a lecture tour of Germany during which he was driven to Munich, Hamburg, Bonn and Cologne. His attitude to Nazism is unclear but as no outright condemnation emerges he must have had sympathy with its philosophy or its objectives for Germany. Elborn describes him as neither liberal nor socialist and not impressed by democracy either.

\* In his own words 'Mrs. Stuart was naturally not expecting me', and he had to endure 'anxious moments' until she believed he was a German officer. He had travelled a roundabout way from near Ballivor without food. She fed him and sent him to bed while she drove to Switzer's (!) to purchase a complete outfit of clothing. Within hours Seamus O'Donovan arrived, having being alerted by Iseult, and he was conveyed to Shankill. Days later he was brought to the house, *Konstanz*, of Stephen Held in Templeogue.



When Stuart had completed his early summer lecture tour, Professor Shirmer 'unexpectedly' invited him to return to the University of Berlin in the autumn as lecturer in English and Irish literature. He came home to Laragh in July, but found that the relationship with Iseult was one of mutual hostility. Despite the outbreak of war in September he was however determined to return, while his one-sided feeling of 'mutual hostility' was an added impetus. (A reading however of the circumstances of their marriage would cause one to think that this description is unfair to Iseult). Leaving Ireland, from *Roebuck House*, via Holyhead, he reached Switzerland - his London visa had to be for Switzerland, and not Germany - he arrived in Berlin at the end of January 1940. Shortly after he met officials from Abwehr 11 and to them he delivered an oral I.R.A message seeking a transmitter (The transmitter given to the I.R.A for transmitting and receiving messages, as stated already, was instead used for propaganda broadcasts and inevitably, was located and found in *Ashgrove House* on December 29, 1939). The delivery of this oral message was Stuart's last errand for the I.R.A. Henceforth his time was taken up with the University, broadcasting on German radio and socialising.

In February, at Professor Franz Fromme's instigation, he was approached by the Ministry of Propaganda to write items for transmission by radio into England and Ireland. Occasionally he sat listening to these broadcasts read by William Joyce, 'Lord Haw-haw', in the home of William Warnock, the Irish Ambassador. Joyce, born in New York in 1906, of an Irish father, actively disliked the Irish and was heavily into drink. Early in April he was introduced to Herman Goertz, who was being trained to drop into Ireland, and to whom he gave an Irish pound note and Iseult's address in Laragh; the latter with somewhat unfortunate consequences for Iseult.

It was Goertz who mentioned to Stuart before his departure that he knew an Irish girl, Nora O' Mara (whom we know in this account as Róisín Ní Mhéara) 'stranded in Berlin and half starved'. To what extent Róisín Ní Mhéara is Irish is difficult to say, but she has written in *Cé h'í seo Anuigh?* a most interesting biography, sparkling with colour but inevitably with a great deal of her own story omitted. Elborn says that they drifted into becoming lovers.

With Frank Ryan, who had accompanied Sean Russell on an abortive submarine journey to a point 100 miles west of Ireland, and with Nora, he accompanied Ryan after his return to a prisoner of war camp, although it is clear that he never seriously intended to emulate Casement's attempt to recruit Irish captives for an adventure.

Early in 1941 life became somewhat complicated for Stuart, still sharing a large flat with Róisín, but now finding himself 'taken up' with one of his students, Gertrud Meissner, a dark haired lively girl of Polish extraction whom he later married in 1954, being then known by her adopted name Madelaine. Shortly after the invasion of Russia in June 1941, he visited Vienna alone and upon returning found that Róisín had departed. Giving up the large flat he found rooms in the Rankenstrasse; serious air raids not yet having started rooms and apartments were still available in inner Berlin. There he lived openly with Madelaine. He ceased translating for the English station, going instead to a new building where he worked with Madelaine for Dr. Hans Hartmann, responsible for broadcasts to Ireland, being now well paid.

In the spring of 1942 the couple visited Frank Ryan whom they had not seen for over a year. He was glad to see them, and after a glass of vodka, gave Stuart some Irish newspapers and extra food, for supplies were now short. He was 40 in April 1942, and they had a quiet celebration with Frank Ryan at the Clissman's apartment. Frank had now formed an attachment, no more than that, with Madelaine's sister Gretel. Afterwards, in a comment on his birthday he wrote; 'forty and my youth gone; do I regret it?'

Trying to keep his talks to Ireland homely and uncomplicated, he altered the script of one at Ryan's suggestion, and then found afterwards upon reading it he was unhappy with it. Embittered about Germany - he had considered going to Moscow before the invasion - but then became outraged when he heard that six young I.R.A men had been sentenced in July 1942 to death in Belfast for shooting dead a policeman, although as it transpired, Tom Williams only was hanged while the other five were condemned to life terms.

In August he applied to have his passport renewed, but was informed by *Chargé D'Affaires* Cornelius Cremin that the Dublin government would not authorise it. Subdued, he departed with Madelaine to Vienna for a weeks holiday. About this time he conversed again with Ryan who, refusing to broadcast himself, tried to warn Francis about the nature of the Nazi regime\* but he ignored the proffered opinion, instead, writing of their discussion; 'I have a great admiration for Frank and all his activity in the past but he is obviously tired, isolated and a bit apt to attach undue importance to bureaucracy',

One detects here the antipathy that was emerging between Ryan, sullen at finding himself befriended inside an 'enemy' country, and the writer who, according to Elborn, had an ambiguous attitude to Nazism. In September, as a result of Ryan's criticism, they got together with John Francis O'Reilly to discuss their philosophical attitudes, although O'Reilly, in matters like that, was a weather vane. Not surprisingly it was of no help, and Stuart adds critically of Ryan that 'he made friends with some very nasty people' including Edmund Veessenmayer, but Veessenmayer, although described elsewhere as a shrewd and dangerous man, was the appointed 'Special Adviser, Ireland' and Ryan would have had to have some contact with him; 'I was never to be quite frank really taken with Ryan' he remarked a short time later. 'I remember walking down to lecture at the University and Ryan walked with me, and he was in one of his moods'. Weeks later he spoke out in one of his broadcasts in forthright praise of Hitler and the Nazi system. With the Germans beginning to look a defeated force in Russia this was risky; as Elborn express's it; he allowed his personal anxieties to influence his sense of the rational, and was speaking in terms contrary to what he was writing in his diaries at that time.

Christmas of 1942 brought longings of Laragh, the peaceful valley with the Glenmacnass River in its heart; full of nostalgia for Ireland. 'It would take armies to prevent me going back'. In January Ryan suffered a stroke which affected the left

\* It must be emphasised here that while the British and U.S authorities were well informed about the death camps, and could have taken measures to alleviate them, ordinary folk in Germany knew nothing.

side of his body. Francis visited him in hospital a few days later. Hugh McAteer, Chief of Staff, with Jimmy Steele, Pat Donnelly and Ned Maguire had escaped from Crumlin Road Jail on Friday, January 15, 1943. Ryan was full of this; he had heard that McAteer wished to reach Germany (in that he was mistaken), and sought to have his friends bring help to him. Impossible, in all the circumstances.

When Ryan returned to his flat he found windows and doors blown out, serious bombing of the centres of big cities - the widespread civilian devastation of 'Bomber' Harris - having begun. It seemed to symbolise how unwell he really was; he gave Stuart some soap and a shirt, realising that very soon he would have no use for them. At this point Róisín Ní Mhéara had returned from Bavaria to the Rundfunkhaus, so their paths, and Madelaine's, crossed again.

On May 31, he was urging Irish voters for the June election of 1943 to not vote for Fine Gael, the party of W.T. Cosgrave. His advice, in a 15 minute once weekly hard to locate broadcast, was unlikely to influence the scattering of Irish listeners who might have heard him but the Irish government protested against the 'interference', and William Warnock was obliged to dress formally to deliver the protest a morning later.

In August, the Redaktion, the broadcast organisation, was moved to Luxembourg to escape a smouldering Berlin. For a few months life brightened for both of them and Francis was even able to play rounds of golf before, in November, being called back to Berlin. Prior to leaving however he received a letter from Ryan; he had been in hospital with ulcers and, although out again for a time, required constant attention which was not always available. Francis and Madelaine were having their own accommodation troubles, and in December returned to Luxembourg where he prepared what would be his final five broadcasts for January 1944. The war was to drag on for another 16 months, but Stuart realised all too well that Germany was finished.

Back in Berlin in February their evenings were spent seeking safe cover in packed bunkers from the nightly bombings. In March they travelled east by train to Dresden to visit Frank Ryan in a sanatorium there. Trains were now sought as aerial targets and soon train travel would be impossible. It was the last time they spoke to Frank who died four months later on June 10.

(They were both present when his remains were buried in Glasnevin on June 22, 1979).

On September 10, with their world collapsing, they crawled out of Berlin for Munich, moving on quickly to Bregenz on Lake Constance where they had a meal with Cremin. At Dornbirn on the Austrian border they tried unsuccessfully for weeks to enter Switzerland. On May 2, the Russian troops stormed into a crushed and flattened Berlin while French troops reached Dornbirn on the same day. Francis, now temporarily separated from Madelaine, was writing to Iseult for money.

Impoverished herself she was willing to respond in any way that she could. At this stage 'preferring to be with the defeated' Francis rejoined Madelaine at Dornbirn. Swept into prison there by the French, they were held in the same jail, but not together, for six months from November. After a temporary liberty he was arrested again but finally gained a tethered freedom in October 1946, conditional

upon their remaining within the French zone.

Facing difficulties and separations they finally came together again in Paris, and by 1950 reached England. There, between writing and stints of odd jobs, they remained until 1954 when Iseult passed away in Laragh. Francis had been over in 1950 and now returned for the funeral. Madelaine and Francis married in Hammersmith in that year. She had been refused entry into Ireland prior to that but now that they were married there could be no hindrance.

Acknowledged writers and artists are awarded a status in Ireland from the Arts Council, known as *Aosdána*. It is limited to a total of 200 persons. They may, on being proposed, elect within themselves an elder celebrated member to the status of *Saoi*. Peadar O'Donnell and Francis Stuart are the only persons who, upon being proposed, were black balled and failed to be elected. But in July 1996, fortune smiled, and upon a renewed attempt he was elected.

## LIST OF INTERNEES, ARBOUR HILL:

*Sept 15 - Dec. 2, 1939.*

Members of the I.R.A and Republicans interned in Arbour Hill under Part VI of the Offences Against the State Act 1939. Those marked \* were previously convicted of a political offence. Where not otherwise stated the internees were released on December 2, 1939 by Government Order as a result of a High Court decision of Justice Gavan Duffy.

Note: This list, which he held secret, was compiled by Peter Berry, secretary to Gerald Boland. The Special Criminal Court formerly was the Military Tribunal.

Beirne	John	Leitrim	Released November 30.
Brady	Joseph	Dublin	
Burke	James	Mayo	
Byrnes	William	Kerry	Released November 6.
Calligan*	Martin	Clare	Sentenced to 6 months by Special Criminal Court 17/5/1940.
Carrigan	Edward	Tipperary	
Clarke	Joseph	Dublin	Released October 30. Sentenced to 4 months by Special Criminal Court 22/7/1940.
Cleary	William	Dublin	
Clements	Robert	Dublin	
Clerkin	Sean	Monaghan	Sentenced by Special Criminal Court to 3 months 11/1/940.
Coulton	James	Dublin	Sentenced by Special Criminal Court to 3 months imprisonment 11/1/1940.
Conboy	Patrick	Roscommon	
Conway	Daniel	Kerry	
Conway*	Michael	Tipperary	(Setenced to death, May 1936.) Sentenced to 2 years by Special Criminal Court 29/7/40.
Corcoran	Thomas	Monaghan	Released September 19, by Appeals Commission.
Coyne	Martin	Galway	
Coyne	Joseph	Galway	Released October 9 by Appeals Commission.

Dalton	Patrick	Tipperary	Released November 3. Sentenced to 3 months by Special Criminal Court 4/6/40.
Daly	Jeremiah	Cork	Released November 14, by Appeals Commission after 27 days hunger strike.
D'Arcy	Anthony	Galway	Sentenced to 3 months by Special Criminal Court 5/3//1940. Died on hunger strike 16/4/1940.
Dolan	Charles	Sligo	
Dowling	Seamus	Dublin	
Doyle*	Thomas	Dublin	Sentenced to 6 months by Special Criminal Court 9/2/40.
Drummond*	Timothy	Kerry	
Drummond*	Patrick	Kerry	
Duggan*	Patrick	Tipperary	
Flanagan*	Michael	(Bob) Roscommon	
Fitzsimons	John	Dublin	Sentenced by Special Criminal Court to 6 months imprisonment 11/1/1940 .
Gordon	William	Co. Dublin	
Goss*	Richard	Louth	Sentenced to 14 days 23/4/39 London.
Grogan*	Thomas	Louth	Sentenced to 12 years Penal Servitude by Special Criminal Court Fort Raid.
Hackett	William	Dublin	Released September 29 by Appeals Commission.
Hendley	Jeremiah	Dublin	
Hoey	Joseph	Roscommon	
Jordan	Daniel	Dublin	Sentenced to 4 months by Special Criminal Court 9/4/40.
Keogh	Edward	Dublin	
Kilcullen	Anthony	Mayo	Released November 10.
Landers	John J.	Kerry	
Leddy*	Liam	Cork	
Lehane*	Con	Dublin	
Lynch*	John	Cork	Released November 18, after a hunger strike.
Mahoney	John	Tipperary	
Meegan	Thomas	Monaghan	Released November 27.
Melia	Thomas	Leitrim	
Mitchell	Walter	Offaly	
Mullaney	Denis	Roscommon	Released September 29, by Appeals Commission.
Murray	Edward	Mayo	Released September 23.
Murray*	Timothy	Galway	Released November 6.

McCarthy*	Charles	Cork	Released October 12 after a hunger strike.
McCarthy*	Michael	Cork	Sentenced to 4 months by Special Criminal Court 6/2/40.
McCarthy*	Richard	Cork	Released November 18 after a hunger strike. Sentenced to 6 months by Special Criminal Court 2/2/40.
McCormack	Bertie	Leitrim	Interned 7/2/1940.
McDermott	Thomas	Roscommon	Sentenced to 6 months imprisonment by Special Criminal Court 15/3/1940.
McGinn	Michael	Monaghan	
McRory	Robert	Bray	Released November 3.
McWeeney	Patrick	Leitrim	
O'Boyle	James	Donegal	Sentenced to 4 months by Special Criminal Court 1/8/40.
O'Connor	John	Kerry	
O'Leary	Arthur	Dublin	
O'Leary	Michael	Cork	Sentenced by Special Criminal Court to 3 months imprisonment 23/1/1940.
Powell	Thomas	Dublin	
Powell*	Eugene	Kerry	
Quearney*	Christopher	Dublin	Sentenced to 10 years Penal Servitude by Special Criminal Court 16/9/1940.
Quille	Michael	Dublin	
Ryan*	Sean	Kerry	Released November 1.
Sarsfield*	Patrick	Dublin	
Smith	John	Kerry	
Tully	John	Cavan	
Twomey	Sean	Dublin	
Walsh	Patrick	Tipperary	
Ward	John	Roscommon	Released December 2.
Whelan	Patrick J.	Dublin	
White*	Martin	Clare	Sentenced to 4 months by Special Criminal Court 27/2/1940.

Total number interned - 73 (Remarkably only 21 were ever before convicted).

*[The following table contains names and titles that are extremely faint and difficult to read. It appears to be a list of individuals and their associated roles or positions.]*

*The people of a nation may not voluntarily surrender their independence; they may not vote it away in the ballot box even under duress. If some, even a majority be found, who through force or cupidity, would vote for such a surrender, the vote is invalid legally and morally, and a minority is justified in upholding the independence of their country.*

- Mary MacSwiney, 1922.



## LIST OF REPUBLICAN WOMEN PRISONERS HELD IN MOUNTJOY:

*From mid 1940 onwards: of Women sentenced in England, and Others deported.  
The following list is regretfully imprecise.*

Mrs. Helen Keane  
 Aoife Taaffe, 415 N.C. Rd.  
 May Mulready, Mullingar (married Máirtín Standúin)  
 Cait Mulready, Mullingar (married Eamonn Moynihan)  
 Brid Cunningham (married Billy McGuinness, Donegal)  
 Mary Spillane, Cork  
 Nóinín Brugha, married Seán ÓBriain, Dublin  
 Máire Ní Thuama, Cork  
 Patsy O'Hagan, Dundalk  
 Nora Higgins, Dublin  
 Máire Ní Cuillineán Cork, (married Paddy Kenna)  
 Peg O'Connor, Cork (married Jack Lynch)  
 Miriam James  
 Mrs. Weafer, Mayo  
 Peg Thornton, Dublin, 8 Adelaide Road.  
 Eileen Noonan  
 Maire O'Sullivan, (married Maurice Curtin)  
 Molly Gallagher and sister from London  
 Carmel O'Hagan Dundalk (married Paddy McNeela)  
 Sighle McNamara,  
 'Ma' Taylor,  
 Maisie O'Mahony, 32 Gardiner Place  
 May Laverty, (Belfast) 17 Wexford Street.  
 Sighle McInerney, 31, Harcourt Street  
 Máire Ní Fhaircheallaigh Dun Laoire  
 Maire Staunton - later a nun, 31 Richmond Avenue  
 Eileen Staunton, married Festy Conlon of An Spidéal  
 Leana O'Mahony - 32 Gardiner Place  
 Kitty Carroll, formerly Liverpool - married Pat Hannon  
 Sighle Murphy - 49 Heytesbury Street  
 May Murray, 9 Montague Court  
 Maireid Murray, married Ned Stapleton, 9 Montague Court  
 Siobhan Ashe, Straffan  
 Miriam James, 6 Synge Street  
 Pearl McCormack, Galway  
 Annie O'Farrelly, 5 Glenarm Avenue  
 Fiona Plunkett, 40 Elgin Road  
 Mary Anne Sullivan, 341 Iveagh Buildings

## SENTENCED IN ENGLAND:

Molly Gallagher, London, 3 years Borstal later married  
 Mary Glenn, Manchester, 7 years, later married (Mayo)  
 Mary Duggan, Manchester, failed to appear, later married (Tipp)  
 Mary Ann Furlong, Birmingham, 3 years, (Dublin)  
 Emily Mary Furlong, Birmingham, 5 years, later married (Dublin)  
 Evelyn Furlong, Birmingham, 2 years, later married (Dublin)  
 Rita McSweeney, Goodwick, 5 years, later married (Leitrim)

## DEPORTED FROM ENGLAND:

Josephine C. Murray, London, later married (Cork)  
 Maureen Dunn, Manchester, later married (Laois)  
 Sheila Dunn, Manchester, later married (Laois)  
 Margaret O'Flanagan, London, later married (Cork)  
 Mary Ellen Keane, London, later married (Limerick)  
 Mary Nellie Guiry, London, later married (Tipp)  
 Margaret Hughes, Salford, later married (Fermanagh)  
 Nora Scurry, London, later married (Waterford)  
 Margaret Murray, London, later married (Waterford)  
 Mildred Dolan, London, later married (Roscommon)  
 Mary Stapleton, London, later married (Wicklow)  
 Mary Kearns, Bootle, later married (Louth)  
 Teresa McNally, Coventry, later married (Tyrone)  
 Agnes Coleman, Salford, later married (Mayo)  
 Nora Whelton, London, later married (Cork)  
 Mary Hewitt, Coventry, later married (Belfast)  
 Briget O'Hara, Coventry, later married (Belfast)  
 Margaret Callan, London, later married (Kilcurry)  
 Dymphna Bradley, London, later married (Belfast)  
 Margaret Bradley, London, later married (Belfast)

## GEORGE GILMORE:

### A POEM:

Though blackbirds piped like pipers of the sidhe  
 And skylarks stormed the harps with heavenly praise,  
 Unheard and lost their music was to me,  
 Walking these heights in young triumphant days  
 Though skyborn motley danced upon the sea  
 And waving whin gold scented all the air.  
 Two skyborn eyes were all that I could see  
 And wind warmed cheeks and yellow wind blown hair.  
 The song birds now hold undisputed sway,  
 Long sunlit days are ringing with their din,  
 The hillsides flame in cavalcade array  
 Of purpling heather and of fading whin.  
 Seeing and hearing all, I care the less  
 Life's exultation rings on emptiness.  
 George Gilmore

Cora Hughes is believed to have been the subject of this unpublished poem.

George Gilmore was born at Seago, near Portadown in 1902: he died in Dublin in June 1985. His brother Charlie died in 1987, while Harry died in 1983. Their father was a financial advisor for landlord class unionists and the lord of Carrickblacker but the three boys all turned towards Irish republicanism. They all played a part in the closing years of the national struggle.

*I would cry out aloud in the midst of a crowd  
 When I think of his shroud and the death that he died.  
 Ah why did I leave him with foes to deceive him,  
 Or none to relieve him or stand by his side.*

- Joseph McGarrity on the death of Harry Boland, 1922.

## ROLL OF HONOUR:

### *They Died for Ireland 1936-46*

1. Sean Glynn, Limerick. Died in Arbour Hill Prison, Sept. 13, 1936
2. Peter McCarthy, Dublin. Shot by police, June 15, 1937
3. Jimmy Joe Reynolds, Leitrim. Killed in accidental explosion,  
Nov 28, 1938
4. John James Kelly, Clady, Tyrone. Killed in accidental explosion,  
Nov 28, 1938
5. Charles McCafferty, Tyrone. Killed in accidental explosion,  
Nov 28, 1938
6. Christy Bird, Dublin. Accidentally shot while training, May 13, 1939
7. Peter Barnes, Banagher, Offaly. Hanged in Winson Green Prison,  
Birmingham, England, Ash Wed, Feb 7, 1940
8. James McCormack. Mullingar, Westmeath. Hanged in Winson Green Prison,  
Birmingham, England, Ash Wed, Feb 7, 1940
9. Tony D'Arcy, Headford, Co. Galway. Died on hunger strike,  
April 16, 1940
10. Sean McNeela, Ballycroy, Co. Mayo. Died on hunger strike,  
April 19, 1940
11. Sean Martin, Ballymacarett, Belfast. Killed in accidental  
explosion, April 25, 1940
12. John Joe Kavanagh, Cork. Shot by police near Cork Jail, Aug 3, 1940.
13. Sean Russell, Dublin. Died overseas, Aug. 14, 1940
14. Patrick McGrath, Dublin. Executed Mountjoy Prison, Sept 6, 1940
15. Thomas Harte, Lurgan, Co. Armagh. Executed in Mountjoy Prison,  
Sept 6, 1940
16. Jack Gaffney, Belfast. Died on prison ship *Al Rawdah*, Nov 18, 1940
17. Barney Casey, Co. Longford. Shot by military police, Curragh Camp,  
Dec 16, 1940
18. Bob Clancy, Waterford. Died in Curragh Military Hospital, June 12, 1941
19. Richard Goss, Dundalk. Executed in Portlaoise Prison, Aug 9, 1941.
20. Joseph Malone, Belfast. Died in Parkhurst Prison, England, Jan 21, 1942
21. George Plant, Tipperary. Executed in Portlaoise Prison, Mar 5, 1942
22. Terence Perry, Belfast. Died in Parkhurst Prison, England, July 7, 1942
23. Gerry O'Callaghan, Belfast. Killed in action, Aug 31, 1942
24. Thomas Williams, Belfast. Hanged in Crumlin Road Jail, Belfast,  
Sept 2, 1942
25. Patrick Dermody, Co. Cavan. Killed in action, Sept 30, 1942
26. Maurice O'Neill, Cahirciveen, Co. Kerry. Executed in Mountjoy Prison,  
Nov 12, 1942
27. John Hinchy, Co. Louth. Died in Mountjoy Prison, Dec 28, 1942
28. Jackie Griffith, Dublin. Shot by police, July 4, 1943
29. Seamus (Rocky) Burns, Belfast. Killed in action, Feb 12, 1944
30. John Doyle, Belfast. Accidentally shot dead while training on his 16th.  
Birthday, April 10, 1944.
31. Charles O'Hare, Armagh. Died Isle of Man Internment Camp, June 2 1944.
32. Charles Kerins, Tralee. hanged in Mountjoy Prison, Dec 1, 1944.
33. Sean McCaughey, Aughnacloy, Tyrone. Died on hunger strike,  
Portlaoise Prison, May 11, 1946.

## THE LAST REPUBLICANS

*by Austin Clarke 1896-1974*

Because their fathers had been drilled  
Formed fours among the Dublin hills,  
They marched together, countermarched,  
Along the Liffey Valley, by Larchwood,  
Spruce, Pine road. Now, what a living shout,  
Can halt them? Nothing of their faces  
Is left, the breath has been blown out  
Of them into far lonely places.  
Sean Glynn pined sadly in prison.  
Jack McNeela, Tony D'Arcy,  
Sean McCaughey died on hunger strike.  
Wasting in ribbed light of dawn.  
They'd been on the run but every dyke  
Was spy. We shame them all. George Plant,  
Quick fighter and a Protestant,  
Patrick McGrath and Richard Goss,  
Maurice O'Neill with Tom Harte  
Were executed when Dev's party  
Had won the county pitch and toss.  
Pat Dermody, John Kavanagh  
Jackie Griffith, Barney Casey, black-and-tanned.  
At Mountjoy Gaol, young Charlie Kerins  
Was roped: we paid five pounds to Pierrepont.  
The Special Branch castled their plans.  
Quicklimed the last Republicans

ROLL OF HONOUR:

They Died for Ireland 1916-18

1. Sean Lyons, Limerick, Died in Arthur Hill Prison, Sept 1916
2. Frank McCauley, Dublin, Died in Arthur Hill Prison, Sept 1916
3. James Lee Reynolds, Dublin, Died in Arthur Hill Prison, Sept 1916
4. John James Kelly, Clery, Died in Arthur Hill Prison, Sept 1916
5. Charles McCaffery, Tyrone, Died in Arthur Hill Prison, Sept 1916
6. Charles MacDermott, Accidentally shot while training on the 1916
7. Peter Barry, Roscommon, Died in Arthur Hill Prison, Sept 1916
8. James McCannock, Wick, Died in Arthur Hill Prison, Sept 1916
9. Egan O'Donoghue, Co. Wick, Died in Arthur Hill Prison, Sept 1916
10. Sean McKeown, Ballycroy, Co. Wick, Died in Arthur Hill Prison, Sept 1916
11. James Moran, Ballymurn, Wick, Died in Arthur Hill Prison, Sept 1916
12. John McKeown, Wick, Died in Arthur Hill Prison, Sept 1916
13. Sean Russell, Dublin, Died in Arthur Hill Prison, Sept 1916
14. Patrick McQuinn, Dublin, Died in Arthur Hill Prison, Sept 1916
15. Thomas Harb, Lough, Co. Wick, Died in Arthur Hill Prison, Sept 1916
16. Jack Coffey, Wick, Died in Arthur Hill Prison, Sept 1916
17. Henry Carr, Co. Louth, Died in Arthur Hill Prison, Sept 1916
18. Bob Clancy, Wick, Died in Arthur Hill Prison, Sept 1916
19. Richard Gann, Dublin, Died in Arthur Hill Prison, Sept 1916
20. Joseph Malone, Wick, Died in Arthur Hill Prison, Sept 1916
21. George Hunt, Tipperary, Died in Arthur Hill Prison, Sept 1916
22. James Perry, Wick, Died in Arthur Hill Prison, Sept 1916
23. Gerry O'Callaghan, Wick, Died in Arthur Hill Prison, Sept 1916
24. Thomas Williams, Wick, Died in Arthur Hill Prison, Sept 1916
25. Patrick Dermody, Co. Wick, Died in Arthur Hill Prison, Sept 1916
26. Maurice O'Neil, Co. Wick, Died in Arthur Hill Prison, Sept 1916
27. John Hendry, Co. Wick, Died in Arthur Hill Prison, Sept 1916
28. James Coffey, Dublin, Died in Arthur Hill Prison, Sept 1916
29. James O'Connell, Wick, Died in Arthur Hill Prison, Sept 1916
30. John Doyle, Wick, Died in Arthur Hill Prison, Sept 1916

*Should we be beaten let us quit.*

- De Valera to Liam Lynch, March 1923.

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Periodicals, pamphlets and other sources are mentioned, and a few have been noted in the foregoing above. There has been published locally an extensive range of pamphlets of this, and every period; e.g. *George Plant*, *Charlie Kerins*, *Maurice O'Neill*, *Longford Remembers*, *Dick Goss and Barney Casey*, *D'Arcy and Mac Neela*, *Barnes and McCormack*. There is a pamphlet on almost every executed Republican soldier, but these now would rest in private collections or in the National Library; in the Linen Hall Library, Belfast, or in Trinity College Library. Normal book shops will not display pamphlets. In Dublin two which may carry what one seeks is the Connolly Bookshop at 43 East Essex Street, or 44 Parnell Square. There is another in West Belfast. Without taking events of the last 30 years into account, there would be, of pamphlets alone, enough to fill stacked on edge two metres of shelving. As I write

this I am picking up a photo copy of Gerald O'Reilly's 1947 pamphlet, produced in New York, on the last remaining prisoners in Portlaoise, at 25 cents, *They Are Innocent*. So there are many; indeed many.

Michael Mac Evilly has produced an impressive 13 page Library List of his own books covering the last 90 years. It is concerned solely with books and does not attempt to list pamphlets. There are many such private collections. Another acquaintance has developed and is constantly enlarging an Archive of Republican Material from Fenian times; material, including letters and manuscripts that otherwise would be lost.

Anti-Partition activity, from the late forties, produced its own well of pamphlets and books from the 1948 Mansion House Conference, with its compilation of figures on *Ireland's Right to Unity*, to the Dungannon Campaign for Social Justice, and their 35 page publication, *The Plain Truth*. At random in that field, and without venturing to enter the present - meaning the last 30 years (!) - one could read; *Ríocht Roinnte*, by Nollaig Ó Gadhra, from Foilseacháin Teo. *The Irish Crisis*, by C. Desmond Greaves, Lawrence and Wishart, 1972, *Up Off Their Knees*, by Conn McCluskey, published by him in 1989, and which carries a page long bibliography on the slide from social justice, to civil rights, to armed struggle.

of the book, and finally that the book is a very good one. It is a very good one.

The book is a very good one. It is a very good one. It is a very good one.

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#### Newspapers, Periodicals, Pamphlets

Newspapers from the United States and the United Kingdom are listed where they exist in the text. The United States of the period were not generally referred to as America in the text. The United States of the period were not generally referred to as America in the text.

Periodicals, pamphlets and other documents are mentioned in the text where they exist in the text. The United States of the period were not generally referred to as America in the text.

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When a police superintendent questioned Tom Barry on his arrest at Union Quay station, Cork, in April 1935, to explain the policy of the I.R.A, Barry promptly answered:-

1. To compel the British forces to leave Ireland
2. To overturn the two dominion parliaments
3. To stop the exploitation of people by foreign interests
4. To finally break the connection with England
5. To restore to the people the unfettered control of their own destinies and resources, while promoting their cultural independence.

Tom Barry, an outstanding guerrilla leader, and until 1938, high in the ranks of the I.R.A, died in July 1980.

The photograph, by Colman Doyle, was taken in 1979, while Uinseann Mac Eoin was researching in Cork city for his work *Survivors*.

# THE IRA IN THE TWILIGHT YEARS

1923 - 1948

## THE LINK

Influenced by the French Revolution, Irish Republicanism came first to life in the city of Belfast, where on October 18 1791, near the High Street, Sam McTier took the chair at what was to be the foundation meeting of the Society of United Irishmen. There were 28 members present, including Theobald Wolfe Tone, Thomas Russell, William Drennan, William Sinclair, the two Simms, Samuel Neilson, of the *Northern Star*, Haslitt, John Tennant and Henry Joy McCracken. A Dublin Society, and societies throughout Ireland, were quickly founded, and flourished until 1795, Dublin Castle, and the British Government, taking fright, the movement - the most promising in our history - was banned.

Wolfe Tone, now under pressure to flee Ireland, and hopefully to seek help from abroad, visited Belfast for the last time in May 1795, to enjoy the company of his friends. As he expressed it himself; "I remember particularly two days that we passed on Cave Hill. On the first Russell, Neilson, Simms, McCracken, and one or two more of us, on the summit of MacArt's fort, took a solemn obligation - which, I think I may say I have, on my part, endeavoured to fulfil - never to desist in our efforts until we had subverted the authority of England over our country, and asserted our independence". That bedrock link prevails to the present day.

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