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Parole Policy Changed

Northern Ireland's Secretary of State, Patrick Mayhew, announced on August 25th the reinstatement of a parole policy that will result in the release of most imprisoned paramilitaries after they have served half of their sentence.

The policy change could result in 130 political prisoners being released by the end of this year, according to British officials. The change in policy comes six years after it was first suspended. There are approximately 1,200 paramilitary prisoners in Northern Ireland.

Sinn Fein officials criticized the policy change claiming that it would only result in 40 republican prisoners being released before the year 2000. They further complained that about 100 of the 600 republican prisoners who are serving life sentences would not be eligible for early release.

CLMC Will Not Restart War

A statement released on August 25th by the Combined Loyalist Military Command pledges that Loyalists paramilitaries will not be the ones to end the peace in Northern Ireland.

The CLMC, which purports to represent all loyalist paramilitary groups, said that "provided their rights are upheld, the CLMC will not initiate a return to war. There shall be no first strike." They also added that they will not surrender their arms until the IRA does likewise.

This statement follows a threat by Progressive Unionist Party member Billy Hutchinson that the peace process is about to break. He warned that Dublin might be the primary target of loyalist paramilitaries if the peace process ends.

Reynolds Criticizes British

Former Irish Prime Minister Albert Reynolds has criticized the British government for its insistence that the IRA surrender their weapons before Sinn Fein can be included in all-party talks. Reynolds said that he would not have signed the Downing Street Declaration if they had at the time insisted on the IRA surrendering their arms.

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It's the Veto -- Stupid

Michael Ancram, the British Civil Servant negotiating with the McGuinness delegation, holds a funny title -- Minister for Political Development. Mike's clearly having a tough time: the Orange Order's use of violence, intimidation, and the RUC in strutting its triumphalism in Portadown and the lower Ormeau Road; the calculated provocation of by-passing hundreds of political prisoners produced by the conflict to release one of dubious distinction -- Lee Clegg. All this drives home the fact that the North is going through anything but political development.

It's easy to forget that there has been a political development of monumental proportions -- an IRA ceasefire almost a year old. Yet, no equivalent British gesture has materialized in response. True, army foot patrols have lessened in some areas, and around one thousand of the nearly 30,000 security forces in the North have left. But re-enforcement and expansion of army/RUC bases continues, and now many British troops returning from Europe will be garrisoned in Ireland instead of Britain, making a joke of the troops-reduction claim. To top it all off, on July 27 *The Boston Globe* quoted a senior British official as saying brutal interrogation centers such as Castlereagh may be dismantled ... in August 1996!

Despite a year of British foot-dragging, and provocation, the republican movement has issued a steady stream of statements indicating a desire to work out -- in common -- new political structures in Ireland. Acknowledging the process may take decades, a variety of scenarios and options have been hinted at. (Ironically, some sounding remarkably like the once-vilified *Eire Nua* federalist program still advocated by Republican Sinn Fein.) Regardless of the specifics, what is being sought is discussion and dialogue -- an alternative to continued killing.

But dialogue doesn't have a prayer of growing if unionists are not prodded into engagement. The countless government pronouncements of the last seventy-five years have smothered political development by enshrining the unionist veto. Taylor, McGimpsey, etc., are absolutely right in asserting that it is their decision if and when to meet Sinn Fein. Left to their own devices, they never will.

Genuine political development and progress will only occur when Britain commits itself to removing all pre-conditions to an open dialogue. Moving or releasing some or all political prisoners, or lessening the visible trappings of the security state, will not permanently end the conflict. In private or public, the reality of the veto must now be removed to allow the natural development of dialogue. As evidenced by recent street violence, the alternative is as certain as it is obvious.

"It is almost 12 months since we had an IRA cease-fire, followed by loyalist cease-fires, and it's not unreasonable to expect that we would have passed the point where people would have been sitting down to talk. Nobody should be afraid of peace, nobody should be afraid of talking about peace. It's time to start the talks process."

The IRA Should Reconsider -- IRSP

A spokesperson for the Irish Republican Socialist Party, the political wing of the Irish National Liberation Army, said that recent brutality by police in Derry and Belfast should make the IRA reconsider its cease-fire, said Ciaran McLaughlin.

"Twelve months into a cease-fire, how much further are we on? Nothing has changed in this State. This is an intolerable situation that seriously needs addressing. It is not a blip or hiccup in the peace process. It is the true intent behind it. Gerry Adams must take note and act before he is consigned to the footnotes of history as yet another duped constitutional nationalist politician."

Report of IRA Preparation

Senior commanders of the Irish Republican Army have instructed IRA activists to prepare for the resumption of war according to the July 9th edition of the Irish newspaper *The Sunday Tribune*.

The paper also reports that the IRA will review the status of the ceasefire at the end of the summer. In addition, IRA members have been ordered to begin intelligence gathering on Royal Ulster Constabulary targets. The paper further reports that the IRA's Northern Commander has toured all northern brigade areas in order to impress on middle ranking IRA figures the need to be able to "swing back into action."

Subsequent press reports have discounted the *Tribune* story as an attempt by the IRA to show the British that the peace process may be in jeopardy if no movement is made soon. The *Tribune* however believes that the violence following the release of British paratrooper Lee Clegg has proved that the threat is very real. Security sources, cited by the paper, point to hoax van bombs that were constructed like genuine IRA bombs only without the explosives.

British Solider Lee Clegg Released

After serving four years of a life sentence for the murder of a joyrider, British paratrooper, Private Lee Clegg, was freed from a British jail in July. Clegg was convicted of murdering Karen Reilly on September 30, 1990. Clegg's release was widely condemned in Northern Ireland, and widespread rioting took place on the streets of Belfast and Derry.

The release of Clegg further raised tempers because the British Government still has not released any political prisoners from the nationalist or unionist camps. Sinn Fein chairman Mitchel McLaughlin, said that the release of Clegg may harm the peace process. "Those republicans who have been very suspicious about the British government's attitude to the prisoners issue, and the peace process in general, have had their suspicions confirmed."

Pat McLaughlin, a republican prisoner who is serving time for conspiring to bomb the Chelsea army barracks, went on a hunger strike to protest Clegg's release. He was later talked out of the protest by his family.

The release also angered Progressive Unionist Party leader Billy Hutchinson who said that the release has caused widespread anger through all loyalist paramilitary groups. Hutchinson called for the immediate release of all political prisoners.

Briege Gadd, a chief probation officer for Northern Ireland, resigned from the Life Sentence Review Board to protest Clegg's release. She called the release a deviation from the principles and practices of the board.

Smyth Ruling Overturned

On July 27, a federal appeals court in San Francisco reversed a ruling that Jimmy Smyth would face political persecution if extradited back to Northern Ireland. Smyth along with Pol Brennan, Terry Kirby and Keven Art Barry, who are all escapees from Northern Ireland's Long Kesh prison, are fighting extradition back to Northern Ireland. The four men escaped the prison back in 1983.

The three member panel unanimously overturned a previous ruling that found that Smyth would indeed face political persecution. The appeals court admitted that Smyth may find cruel and harsh treatment if returned to Long Kesh prison, but that he did not prove that treatment would be a result of his religious or political convictions.

Prison Protests and Releases

Frustrated by conditions and treatment within English prisons, several Republican prisoners went on a "Dirty Protest" last month. The protest stemmed from the lack of movement from the British Government in releasing prisoners, and from its hesitation in returning prisoners to jails in Northern Ireland. Prisoners were also angered when they were requested to do work with ordinary prisoners. The protest for a number of the prisoners ended when a number were transferred to Maghaberry Jail in Northern Ireland as they had requested.

One of the protesting prisoners was Martin McMonagle, a member of the Irish National Liberation Army. McMonagle, serving 25 years for explosives, was also transferred Northern Ireland but his family detailed the abuse he has faced while in prison.

"In contrast to the Clegg case, he is getting very hard time and it seems to be getting worse," said his brother John. "It is one law for Irish prisoners and another law for every other prisoner." His family has said that he was being forced in 24-hour lock-up for weeks when he has violated no prison rules. His family has also been restricted in their visiting times.

Loyalist prisoners has also started a hunger strike in the Maghaberry Prison, while another INLA prisoner has also been on a hunger strike to protest special treatment received by IRA prisoners.

The peace process has once again been given a lift by the Dublin Government in their release of 12 political prisoners. In early August, 12 imprisoned members of the IRA were released from the Portlaoise prison. The latest release leaves only 25 members of the IRA imprisoned in the South. Justice Minister Nora Owen called the release a significant contribution to the peace process.

More Secret Talks

Once again it has been learned that the British Government has been holding secret talks with Sinn Fein. Sinn Fein President Gerry Adams and Northern Ireland Secretary of State Patrick Mayhew and Minister for Political Development Michael Ancram met for two hours on July 18 in the city of Derry.

The meeting was an attempt to push forward the peace process which has stalled under the British Government's demand that the IRA surrender its weapons. The meetings reportedly resulted in no new agreement between the two groups. "The next phase requires the British government to call all-party talks and let those of us who want to make peace get on with doing just that," said Adams after the meeting was revealed to the press.

Another round of talks is expected to take place between Adams and Ancram sometime in September.

Paras to be Removed

The 2nd Battalion of the Parachute regiment is expected to be withdrawn from Northern Ireland sometime in August. The Paratroopers are responsible for some of the more deadly actions by British soldiers in Northern Ireland. In 1972 the paratroopers achieved notoriety for killing 14 unarmed civilians on Bloody Sunday in Derry. The regiment has also been responsible for numerous civil rights violations and general intimidation of the nationalist community. There are presently 17,500 British troops now left in Northern Ireland.

An Independent Northern Ireland?

Glenn Barr, a leading loyalist from the mid 1970s, has said that the only reasonable political solution in Northern Ireland would be to set up an independent state. Barr, a key member of the Loyalist Workers Strike in 1974, said that loyalists must cut their ties to Britain while nationalists must realize that a unified Ireland is not possible at this time. The independent state would be free of links to London or Dublin and have its own constitution, said Barr.

"Forget about past wrongs or injuries, that is the situation that exists today. We have to have a negotiated settlement, an agreement amongst our own peoples here. Neither community will accept a solution that they see favors the other side: that is where an independent Ulster becomes a stepping stone to a new era of peace and stability."



Win, Lose or Draw?

by Jim Dee

Sinn Fein has won the first stage of the peace -- hands down. Since the mid-1970's, the vast majority of the general public has equated the IRA and Sinn Fein with crisis (e.g., the Hunger Strikes, Gibraltar and its bloody aftermath, Warrington, etc.). Today the republican movement has transformed its public image, conveying an image of flexibility via a leadership quickly learning the ropes of international statecraft. And while no delusions should be harbored regarding rewards to date -- there have been no tangible rewards -- republican flexibility signals a maturing and growth of the movement which will serve them well in the days ahead.

Irish republicanism has never been solely about force. The movement has a rich history of political thought and action. From the time of the land rebellions of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, on through the theoretical and political exhortations of republican icons such as Tone, Lawlor and Connolly, Irish republicans have tenaciously and eloquently articulated their right to secure change by any means necessary. This tradition is a tradition the current leadership of the republican movement draws upon, and expands, today.

In passing political commentary or judgment, it is easy to be purest, and wrap one's self in the warm security of a theoretical blanket, condemning outright any deviation from the sanctified course. But realities on the ground must be acknowledged. If not, events can quickly outpace movements, leaving them in the dust of history. As Martin McGuinness underscored to *NIR* in 1992 "I have to look at Irish society in 1992, not Irish society 1922, or 1942, or 1952." Sinn Fein's entry into electoral politics and subsequent dropping of abstentionism in the South were simple acknowledgments of modern realities -- the vast majority of human beings on the island recognize the Dail as a legitimate representative political institution. By contrast, Republican Sinn Fein, in failing to recognize the same, has paid the price in its increasing marginalization and irrelevancy. Orthodoxy and "purity" often win barstool arguments but they just as often calcify movements and lose wars.

The post-ceasefire world now finds the republican movement light-years from the narrow confines from which it found itself in mid-1994. The world has again taken notice -- camera crews and reporters now flood the North in numbers not seen in over a decade. In the process the conflict has been re-examined. Adams & Co. now appear as rational, intelligent, political representatives; energetic and serious in their pursuit of a peaceful settlement -- an image that will play a key role in the next phase of the peace process.

As evidenced by recent violence and intimidation, political realities have not changed in the North. A resumption of some kind of military action by the IRA is a certainty if events continue on their present course. What happens if the bombs start exploding again? No doubt condemnation will be swift and shrill. But the republican movement seems to have plotted its course carefully. They have sharpened their ability to argue, discuss, and debate the toughest of

points, accessing a variety of often hostile settings, repeatedly driving home the point that they desire peace.

In contrast, Britain demonstrated no *desire* to work through the current impasse. Britain has come off as struggling to remain aloof, conveying a cold and inflexible stance -- lacking the same commitment to forging a lasting peace that Sinn Fein has demonstrated. Even a simple handshake has sent Major and his crew into near hysteria. Should the IRA resume operations, the entire peace process will again be sifted through and analyzed by endless pundits and instant experts. While on one level there will be predictable anti-Sinn Fein/IRA tirades, there will also surface a significant new element to mainstream analysis which takes into account that republican spokespersons have conducted themselves in a reasonable, articulate, diplomatic manner, unilaterally suspending operations while seeking dialogue and compromise. The upshot of all this is important: *Britain will no longer be viewed as a neutral, impartial party.* Such an evolution in public perception will in itself represent a major triumph for the republican movement.



■ Good-bye to Britain?

If and when the armed struggle is resumed, it certainly will not last long. It will be tactically employed. Of course, to resume operations is to court disaster -- a La Mon, Warrington, or Shankill bombing at this juncture will erase any diplomatic benefits accrued thus far, and likely deep-six the struggle for this generation of republicans. Barring such a catastrophe, the resumption of IRA activities could bring significant outside pressure to bear on Britain to be more flexible, as new internal and international acquaintances scurry to get the peace process back on track.

When the ceasefire began last year there was a lot of speculation that John Hume had prevailed upon Adams to change course, convincing him the armed struggle was fruitless. Scant analysis focused on what Hume sought from the alliance. Easily forgotten is the fact that Hume languished for years in round after round of jam sessions with

the "No Surrender" choir. The most recent failure of his fruitless discussions with unionists was in 1992, and it was no small coincidence that his next political foray involved a venture with Adams. Hume's allying with Adams was a simple acknowledgment that Sinn Fein was far more committed to movement and progress than any other faction in the conflict. Surely Adams did not convince Hume that armed struggle was morally correct. More likely an understanding was reached allowing a common strategy to be explored, conditional upon its progress, enabling the creation of a powerful Dublin/SDLP/Sinn Fein axis to act as a catalyst for movement -- a scenario spelled out in Sinn Fein's *Towards a Lasting Peace in Ireland* (1992).

The pursuit of some aspects of the international strategies proposed in *Towards a Lasting Peace* have rightly caused many in the US and Ireland dismay as Adams rubs shoulders with the likes of Al D'Amato, Peter King, Donald Trump, and an ever-expanding train of corporate executives. While it is possible that Adams has changed his political tune, it is equally plausible that such moves represent a growing confidence that the republican leadership can, and will, articulate their views in any forum, exploring all options to breaking

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NIR INTERVIEW:

TALKING WITH MAIREAD KEANE

NIR's John O'Connor recently interviewed Sinn Fein's Mairead Keane. Keane, who heads Sinn Fein's Washington D.C. office, is a member of the party's national executive. The interview took place on July 13th.

It has almost been one year since the IRA declared a cease-fire. Where does the peace process stand right now?

We are in a crisis at the moment. We have a situation where the British government has not engaged in this peace process. The IRA initiative, the ceasefire that happened last August, is almost one year old. We have to look at how far things have progressed, and where has the momentum come from. It is our view that it has come from the Irish side. That is, the Dublin government, John Hume, Gerry Adams, the SDLP, and Sinn Fein -- and the role of Irish-America, the pro-active role of President Clinton. The British have not engaged in anyway in the peace process, they have had to be dragged and pushed. So far, they have not acted in good faith.

Sinn Fein's role, as a political party, for the last three years has been the peace process. All our resources -- both human and financial -- have been devoted to that task. We feel that the onus is on the British to get involved in this process. We feel that it is important, now, to bring the Irish-American card back into play. And to have President Clinton play a role in the peace process. There needs to be a push in there to move it along.

The recent release of the British soldier Clegg fuels the tension on the ground. Where you have had no movement at all on the issue of political prisoners, which sends the wrong signals to the people in the communities in Ireland.

How would you respond to those who argue that the peace process is just another British attempt to demoralize and defeat the Republican movement?

The British have never engaged in a positive way in Ireland. The IRA was influenced to call a ceasefire, because an alternative emerged. It was Gerry Adams, John Hume, and the Albert Reynolds government -- and Irish America -- who came up with an alternative way of meeting an objective. That is still in place. What needs to happen is for the British to be pushed and persuaded further.

So we never had the perception that the British were going to engage in this process with open arms. The catalyst, the push, is going to come from the alliance of all those forces.

...this is true even with Sinn Fein's secret contacts with the British government?

From the contacts, it appeared that they wanted to do a lot of different things. But when it came down to it, they pulled back from their talks with us, and they lied about all those contacts. Which points toward their attitude to Ireland.

British policy on Ireland, in a sense, has to be focused by alternative methods; in terms of getting them to engage on the issues. So far, this has met with very little success.

We have built momentum on the peace process in Ireland and here, with the visa issues, which exposed British policy, and highlighted their repressive legislation, censorship laws and all that.

At this moment in time the British are being exposed for their bad faith. If you look at other conflicts around the world, the focus is on all-party peace talks. Everyone must push them into that position.

There is no time frame for all party peace talks. The framework document is sitting on the shelf rusting. In order to resolve the conflict, everyone needs to come to table and discuss the issues.

Even if the IRA decommissioned their arms -- as the British want -- do you believe that the unionists would then sit down for all-party talks?

No. I think Ian Paisely has already said that the DUP will not sit down with Sinn Fein even if the IRA gives up all its weapons. Also, most recently, at the Orange march in Portadown, David Trimble was talking about never sitting down with Sinn Fein.

The whole decommissioning issue was raised by the British and not in a serious way. It was never raised in all the talks we had privately with them. It was not raised prior to the IRA cessation. It is a red herring put in there to fracture the Irish nationalist consensus. And, to bring the British into a situation where the British can run the peace process, at their own time and at their own level.

...yes, but what are you going to do about the unionists. At some point, you're going to have to deal with Ian Paisely, Ian Paisely is going to have to deal with you.

Exactly. We have always said that we want to take the gun out of Irish politics. That has to be the goal of all serious people in Ireland. Everything, like the decommissioning issue, should be discussed at the negotiating table.

In terms of the unionists, most recently, you can see how the unionists have reacted in terms of the RUC's decision to block them from going into Portadown and nationalist estates. The Official Unionists and the DUP after the community allowed some of them to march, without their paraphernalia, went and made speeches that they would march down that road, that it was their country and all of that. There was no flexibility. The language was bigotry. What needs to happen in the unionist community is, it needs to develop a leadership, a de Klerk, someone who looks at the new situation, and that hasn't happened at this stage. It is our view that the reason it hasn't happened is because there is no reason for the unionists to move because they're backed up by the British.

If the British don't persuade the unionists that they have to sit down and talk, why should they talk? The British are very important in this area. We have certainly tried to engage grass-roots unionist opinion on Ireland. We realize that it is difficult to get at them at the leadership level in those parties.

What is the party's position on the role of the Ulster Democratic Party and the Progressive Unionist Party? Do they have role to play?

We see them as having the right to sit at the table as well. We feel that the British use and manipulate the loyalists to further their own agenda. This is clearly seen in the Brian Nelson case. The British try to equate those parties with Sinn Fein, but we are a political party, with a mandate, representing people. Whereas the UDP and the PUP don't, they represent the loyalist paramilitaries. That's what they are there for. But the way the British use them is to paint us in a paramilitary light. Rather than treating us as a political party with an electoral mandate. It is denying us, and the people who vote for us, equality of treatment.

Is the party happy with the Southern governing coalition's contribution to the peace process? These are three parties that not too long ago Sinn Fein described as being neo-unionist.

If you look at the situation a few years back, the parties in the 26 counties said that the IRA was the problem. Now the guns have been silent for almost 12 months, people must look at what is the real problem. There has been no movement on the part of the British. This may have educated people in the 26 counties, and the political parties, on the nature of British rule in Ireland. I think this may have surprised them at times.

When Albert Reynolds was Taoiseach, you had a stronger government there. You had a Hume/Adams and Reynolds axis, which was, for us, more comforting. We certainly were worried when there was a change of government. But having said that, they have worked the peace process. Why? Maybe, they don't want to see the peace process wrecked under their tenure in government. That consensus is still together. However, we are saying now that we need the Dublin government to put more pressure on the British. And, also to engage the Clinton administration, because the British are engaging all the time everywhere, in their counteroffensive to blacken Irish republicans. So the onus is on the Dublin government to be more proactive in the months ahead.

In the next election in the North, will we see a SDLP/Sinn Fein electoral pact of agreed upon candidates?

Well, quite clearly all the political parties in Northern Ireland have their own political programs, their own agenda. We are certainly open to situations like that. We certainly wouldn't rule it out. But we understand that people have to build their own party. In that sense, people are competing against one another.

It was always our position that we were very open to running one candidate. So, who knows? For us what is important at the moment is the peace process. That is the key issue. The key factor in moving that along is to keep everyone on board in terms of the alliance. We all have different agendas, with different constituencies. We have different philosophies in lots of different ways. But the broad demand is for Irish national self-determination, for inclusive negotiations in order to achieve a democratic settlement, for all party peace talks. That's what we want to keep together, because that is what is going to change the nature of Ireland.

If IRA violence were to resume in the North, would Sinn Fein lose all its new-found allies and friends?

Well, we are optimistic. We want to focus on making this work. We don't want to dwell on what could happen. Our focus on this peace process, if you look at our document *Towards a Lasting Peace*, that came out a few years ago, all of the elements are within that document. So, we don't want to focus on the negatively of the failure of the peace process.

In terms of the IRA, the IRA have always been a symptom of the problem in Ireland. It has developed because people thought they couldn't express their democratic rights in other ways. They were persuaded and influenced to take that gigantic, major step last August. It is up to all of us now to ensure that we take all the guns out of Irish politics permanently by getting around the table. And by building a free and democratic Ireland.

What role does the party's Washington office play?

Well, in terms of the elements we feel are important in moving the peace process forward -- Irish-America has quite clearly been identified, the administration here and Congress. So, we felt it was

important because of visa denial and censorship to have our views put forward here in Washington D.C. And more to present the views of the Irish peace process, to push congress, to lobby the administration and also to influence the media here. We have titled this exercise in Washington as a diplomatic mission. It is not designed to open up chapters around the country. It is clearly focused on Washington. With myself acting as the U.S. representative.

It is the first time that we've ever had a Sinn Fein representative on the ground in the U.S. We are working on those three areas: the administration, Congress, and the media. And also linking up with the Irish-American constituency. I think the presidential election of 1996 will be very important in terms of influencing the candidates, both Republican and Democrat, on Ireland. It is an opportunity that shouldn't be missed.

How much money has the party raised in the U.S. since the cease-fire?

The Gerry Adams tour raised around \$800,000. Of course, expenses come out of that, so I'm not sure what the final total would be. Larry Downs is dealing with that. So, it was successful but you're talking about after 25 years of never being able to raise money. We are a very badly organized party in terms of coming into the twentieth century with computers, offices and all of that. So we are using that money to upgrade the offices in Ireland. To build a party. And also to build our initiatives here, like this office and the New York back-up facility.

How does the party view Clinton's 'love-the-one-you're-with' attitude? That is, saying all the right things when he is with Adams and saying all the wrong things when he is with Major?

Well, we recognize that the U.S. administration has foreign policy considerations with the British. There is obviously a relationship. It might not be the same as it was. Gerry Adams made the joke while he was over here, that "the British have 600 people in their Embassy and we have one Irish woman." We have a long road to go. They have access in the State Department and other areas, we have to just make sure that our position is in there.

I think that President Clinton has been right on Ireland. For the most part, he took a risk on the visa issues and all of that. His heart is in the right place.

...why is he so slow on Irish prisoners in this country?

I suppose it is because he needs to be pushed on those issues, And lobbied more effectively. The prisoners issue here is probably linked to the way Britain is dealing with prisoners. We certainly have been raising those issues with the administration. There may be a bit of hostility coming from the Justice Department and the State Department. We have to change attitudes and perceptions that people have here. The British have been here a long time, and they have a lot of people. We just need to work to make sure that those issues are resolved. Because there will be no settlement without the release of all political prisoners here and in Ireland.

How does Sinn Fein reconcile its own policies when it deals with filthy right-wing conservatives like Peter King, Richie Neal, and the Kennedys, etc.?

It is very simple for ourselves. The issue for us is to build support for the Irish peace process. We want bi-partisan support for those issues. We don't get involved in peoples domestic views. The focus has to be to galvanize support -- right across the board -- for all party peace talks, and resolution of the conflict in Ireland. That is the issue for us.

Martin Dillon -- Ireland's Greatest Living Storyteller

by Tim O'Connor

Just after noon on Saturday, March 20 1993 two bombs, planted by the Irish Republican Army in the English town of Warrington, exploded in two small trash cans along Bridge Street as people were conducting their Mother Day shopping. The bombers gave authorities a warning of only thirty-four minutes before the two devices were set to explode. Two children, aged three and twelve years, died in the explosions.

A little more than a month later in Bishopsgate, the heart of London's financial district, a truck containing a ton of home-made explosives was parked by two IRA members outside the Hong Kong & Shanghai Bank. A warning was phoned but no bomb-disposal officers were available at the time. The ensuing blast left the financial district nearly destroyed with damages estimated to be approximately two billion pounds. A photo-journalist was killed in the explosion.

Although these two explosions came only a month apart they both epitomized the highs and lows of the IRA's campaign on the English mainland. The Warrington bombing left the English disgusted and determined never to negotiate with the IRA. But the Bishopsgate bombing made world bankers wary of doing business in London and pressure was placed upon the English government to negotiate an ending to the war despite public sentiment.

It is this potential for success, wrapped in the very real potential for disaster, that has been the history of the IRA's bombing campaigns on the British mainland. Irish Republican Army operations on the British mainland have always garnered mixed results. Although the bombings have no doubt often pushed the British government towards negotiations, they have also resulted in much negative publicity that has done harm to the republican movement and its goals.

In the *Enemy Within - The IRA's War Against the British*, BBC journalists Martin Dillon returns once again to the Irish war. On this occasion Dillon follows the activities of the IRA on the English mainland from its start in the 1930s until present day operations.

Dillon is now five books into his proposed trilogy on Irish terrorism. His past contributions have included *The Shankill Butchers*, *The Dirty War*, *Killer in Clowntown*, and *Stonecold*. These books, as well as the current offering, are largely the reproduction of reports generated by the security forces or the RUC on the various activities of IRA members, loyalist paramilitaries, informers as well as others on the periphery of the war.

Apparently now considered the "greatest living authority on Irish terrorism," Dillon has made a career, if not a pretty penny, from adding journalistic color to police accounts. Dillon's formula is simple. First one picks a subject -- either a notorious terrorist or a particular event -- and then one rewrites police reports while adding color and commentary as needed. Admittedly this can result in a lot of fun reading, but it surely falls short of trying to get at the "roots of the problem" as he claims he is attempting. Dillon's books often read like any newspaper's account of a crime but without the phrase "police said"

attached to show source. Dillon never shows his sources because they are all far too obvious to mention.

His past subjects have included loyalists paramilitaries Lenny Murphy and Michael Stone, as well as the IRA's Joe Doherty. The profiles of these men were not motivated by Dillon's stated aim of getting to the root of the war but rather his own desire to prove that the war was being driven by two mindless "tribes" that will never know peace until they are dismantled and disarmed. In this latest contribution, Dillon follows his own revelation that the IRA has an "England Department" which is in charge of running operations on the mainland. This department was the outgrowth of their experience of conducting military operations in England over the course of 50 years. The department's purpose, according to Dillon, is to ensure that IRA operatives can function independently -- with virtual impunity -- over long stretches of time within England.



■ "Let Me Tell You a Story"

It was the success of this department in the 1990s that Dillon believes led to the extended negotiations between the IRA and the British government. After meeting with the IRA in 1988, Dillon explains the reasoning behind the "England Department" and the mainland bombing campaign: "[The IRA] regarded the bombings in England as a way of 'focusing the British mind' on the need for a political settlement. They argued that Britain could cope with an 'acceptable level of violence' in Northern Ireland but would 'think twice' when that violence was exported to English cities...The British, they claim, wanted to withdraw from Northern Ireland but they had to be pushed. A campaign in England, they argued, was economically damaging to the British economy and generated a loss of civil rights for British people who were opposed to a continued presence in Northern Ireland."

Whether the IRA should risk civilian casualties by operating in mainland Britain has been long debated inside and outside of the Republican movement. It is however Dillon's belief that the bombs and destruction in London have been the sole cause that moved the British government back into negotiations with the IRA during the 1990's. And it was those negotiations that eventually led the IRA into the ceasefire declaration and the present peace process.

As Dillon writes, "...the IRA strategy of concentrating many of its operations in Great Britain forced the British government to re-establish contact...History may show that the extension of terror to Britain was a catalyst in a renewal of contact between the IRA and Downing Street, however unpalatable that may be for many who lost loved ones, or who lost their livelihoods."

But while the mainland campaign may, if Dillon is to be believed, have led to the present peace initiatives it has also come at a cost. Apart from the obvious tragedies of death and destruction, the Anglo-Irish have also suffered more subtly from the IRA's campaign. Dillon only briefly mentions the consequence of racism and bigotry that the Irish in England must face because of IRA activities. While Dillon can reproduce police reports on arrested IRA members, he fails to do similar reporting on the actions and motivation of police officers whose work left so many individuals wrongly imprisoned for years.

Continued on Page 7

Dee, Continued from Page 3

the deadlock. To date the republican movement has not run up the white flag. Quite the contrary, in a recent interview on Radio Ulster, McGuinness answered a caller's query as to at what point Sinn Fein would enter a newly constituted local parliament, by emphasizing they would do so only if it was clear that a British withdrawal was in the cards.

The fluctuating machinations of peace negotiations can foster healthy skepticism. Unfortunately, such uncertainty opens the door for silly US-types, prone to dressing up in foolish berets and sunglasses (and calling themselves "units"), to spew forth about the true path of "the struggle." To these people, the pain of those whose close relatives and acquaintances have died or been maimed for life seems to pale in comparison to having something "dangerous" and exotic to say at cook-outs and parties. There are many "Troubles Trivia Hounds" who could no doubt recite Adams' dental records from birth (while engaging in a heated polemic regarding his brand of dental floss). No doubt these same bizarros would draw a blank on the identity of Leonard Peltier, Fred Hampton, or Danny Casolaro.

Note to Readers

Remember *NIR* is a "loose" bimonthly, with subs running by number of issues not calendar time. Unfortunately, due to lack of resources, we are back to eight pages.

O'Connor, Continued From Page 6

It is, after all, these civil rights violations that in the long run will do more harm to British society than any number of IRA bombs.

Ironically, the strength of this work is in Dillon's detailed analysis of how the British hid their negotiations with Sinn Fein. In this case Dillon strangely relies solely on Sinn Fein documents to prove that the British government lied continuously to hide the fact that they were engaging in dialogue with the IRA during the 1990s. Dillon also debunks the British government's claim that they IRA initiated the recent contact in order to ask how best to surrender. Unfortunately this angle is only followed for a chapter.

In the end, Dillon's contributions cannot be mistaken for serious history, but they also cannot be completely dismissed either. Dillon does have the ability to ask important questions about this conflict, he just seems incapable of finding the answers to them. At his best, Dillon is a police reporter caught in a war setting; at his worst, he is a mouthpiece for the government.

Whether or not the IRA's "England Department" returns war to the streets of London now seems solely in the hands of the British government. But what can be assured if they do it will most likely be worse than anything that we have seen up until now.

NIR is an independent publication and is not affiliated with any political party, group or organization in Northern Ireland or the United States.

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Having political knowledge is often a far cry from having political awareness.

Real death, real blood, real pain and suffering, compel an ongoing strategic evolution by representative leaders with the strength, courage and confidence to be flexible. Flexibility must not be confused with selling out -- de Valera's ghost has too long immobilized many Irish republicans. Bernadette McAliskey and others have expressed valid objections as to the way in which Sinn Fein and the IRA have dealt with the broader republican community during the peace process. Sinn Fein and the IRA are far from perfect organizations. Sinn Fein has its share of deluded, self-important egomaniacs with hardly an original thought in their heads -- but the same can be said for most movements and organizations. Sinn Fein and the IRA also possess a large pool of creative and energetic thinkers who have guided and maintained a movement in the face of two-and-a-half decades of a relentless onslaught by a vastly superior foe. Many, many questions and potential pitfalls remain ahead but the drive for national self-determination is in far better standing today than one year ago. Now, more than ever, blind faith is the province of fools -- but so too is knee-jerk cynicism.

NEWS...NEWS...NEWS...NEWS...NEWS...NEWS**James Molyneux Says Good-bye**

On August 28th, James Molyneux resigned as leader of the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP), Northern Ireland's largest political party. Molyneux, aged 75, resigned to allow the party to choose a new leader before the next general election. He had been leader of the UUP for the last 16 years.

Molyneux's support of the present British government had allowed Prime Minister John Major to hold power by a mere nine votes. In the summer of 1993, there were rumors that Major and Molyneux had struck a deal over the North in exchange for the UUP votes on the European Union treaty. But Molyneux had been recently critical about British and Irish government agreements on the future of Northern Ireland.

Candidates to succeed Molyneux are expected to be John Taylor, Ken Maginnis, William Ross, and Rev. Martin Smyth. The change in leadership could have a major impact on the future of the peace process.

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Thanks: Mairead Keane, Joanna Volz, Pol Brennan, and Leueen Molloy. As always, *NIR* welcomes all submissions, contributions, letters and reaction.

Special Thanks: Jan Cannavan and Joseph McShane

Report/Review

Committee on the Administration of Justice "It's Part of Life Here..." The Security Forces and Harassment in Northern Ireland

Excerpted by Tim O'Connor

Over a quarter of eighteen year-olds across Northern Ireland say they have been harassed by the security forces, according to CAJ's report released last December. This important report was compiled by Dr. Robbie McVeigh after a one year project funded by the Roderick MacArthur Foundation of Chicago.

This is the first quantitative examination of harassment and the security forces in Northern Ireland. It uncovers a disturbing pattern of abuse which cuts across religion, class, gender and employment status. It reveals that harassment is a routine component of everyday life for many people, irrespective of their political, social or economic background.

Research for the book draws on a random quantitative survey of 1,132 18-19 year-olds throughout Northern Ireland. The quantitative analysis is supplemented by interviews with community workers. The report details the experiences of almost 600 young people (an impressive response rate of 51%).

Findings

Harassment was reported by:

- * 26% of all respondents;
- * Nearly half of all Catholics;
- * Almost 60% of students;
- * 12% of Protestants;
- * Over 20% of unionists/loyalists;
- * Over 50% of nationalists; and
- * 30% of working class young people.

Sites and Types of Harassment

Over 20% of respondents alleged harassment at vehicle check-points such as unnecessary provocative delays. Fewer respondents have been subject to stop and search procedures, of these, 40% complain of unnecessary delays, physical abuse, and even death threats. Only 5% of respondents had experienced a house search but 39% of these report harassment.

Instances of general abuse include a being spat at, ridiculed, drenched with a bucket of water, made to walk barefoot through a town, physical assaults and death threats. Many women respondents report sexual harassment. Members of minority communities, including gays and lesbians and ethnic minorities, also report harassment. Most complaints were about the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC). Other complaints related to the Royal Irish Regiment and the British Army.

Complaints Mechanisms

Only 9% of those respondent reporting harassment bring their complaint to a statutory agency such as the Independent Commission for Police Complaints. Of those, almost 70% are dissatisfied with the response they receive. These figures suggest a profound lack of confidence in available mechanisms. They also indicate that, to a large extent, people in Northern Ireland perceive harassment as "part of life here" -- a worrying example of the normalization of harassment. Additionally, many young people, particularly Catholics and Nationalists believe that the system is biased against them or that taking steps will only exacerbate the harassment.

Addressing Harassment

While recognizing that real and lasting change in the nature of policing in Northern Ireland can only come through far-reaching change to the security forces, the report makes a number of key recommendations which will go some way toward improving the situation in the interim. Among them are that:

- * victims should keep records and report harassment both formally and informally to statutory agencies and non-government organizations;
- * authorities should strengthen complaints mechanisms, ensure more balances recruitment into security force structures, demilitarize policing and move away from reliance on emergency legislation; and
- * human rights organizations should target specific communities for awareness-raising and improve and standardize monitoring of harassment.

(The Committee on the Administration of Justice can be contacted at 45/47 Donegall Street, Belfast BT1 2FG, Northern Ireland)

Irish Republican Socialist Committee Beyond the Pale: A Republican Socialist History of Ireland from the Conquest to the Contemporary (San Francisco: Republican Socialist Publications, 1994).

by John O'Connor

The IRSC is the organization sanctioned by the Irish Republican Socialist Party (IRSP) to represent the interests of the Irish Republican Socialist Movement in Canada and the U.S. The IRSC puts out the quarterly bulletin the *Irish Workers' Republic* and is a source of many excellent pamphlets and reprints. Whereas the voice of republican socialism is difficult to discern these days in Ireland, the IRSC has been a steady and important outlet of socialist analysis in the U.S.

Beyond the Pale is a 48 page primer on the ongoing struggle for national liberation and socialism in Ireland. As an introduction to Ireland, it is both comprehensive and informative. The pamphlet contains four separate yet related essays that sketch a quick history of Irish resistance. In all, the pamphlet moves quickly across time, outlining the conquest of Ireland and the birth of Irish republicanism through the 1980 and 1981 hunger strikes and the quandary that Irish national liberation forces find themselves in the early 1990s.

Not unexpectedly, *Beyond the Pale* focuses on the highs and the lows of the Irish Republican Socialist Party and the Irish National Liberation Army. But more importantly, the pamphlet raises a number of historical and contemporary questions.

In his essay "Nine Centuries of Domination and Resistance," IRSC leader Peter Urban highlights the importance of Irish nationalism's class divisions in determining the reactionary direction of both Ireland's national revolution and civil war. Urban's discussion leads one to wonder whether class divisions, which are very much alive and well in Ireland today, will constrain, and/or sink, the Dublin-SDLP-Sinn Fein alliance. Likewise, Mary McLroy's "Ireland Since the Hunger Strike" documents the economic, political, and social changes that have engulfed the island since the early 1980s. Yet, rather than revivifying the forces of national liberation, these internal changes (along with profound external changes) have left Ireland, as McLroy notes, at a troubling crossroads.

As a republican socialist history, *Beyond the Pale* comes up a little short. In fact, the pamphlet would more accurately be described as a republican socialist checklist, with those individuals, organizations, and parties struggling for both national liberation and socialism being acknowledged but not really analyzed. In all fairness, however, in such a brief work, all the authors can hope to do is whet our appetites. An objective they clearly accomplish. Similar to all good, short pamphlets, the IRSC's work leaves one hungry for more. For those looking for an accessible and quick introduction to Irish history, with a socialist bent to boot, he or she would do well to pick up a copy of *Beyond the Pale*.

(the Irish Republican Socialist Committee can be contacted at 2057 15th Street, Suite B, San Francisco, CA 94114)