

# Northern Ireland Report



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## NEWS

### Albert, We Hardly Knew Ye!

The Fianna Fail/Labour governing coalition imploded in November, as it was revealed that Albert Reynolds had deliberately misled the Dail during a speech on the appointment of Attorney General Harry Whelehan to the office of president on the High Court.

Whelehan's office had ignored a RUC extradition order for seven months on a priest convicted of child abuse. After Reynolds refused to change his unpopular appointment, Labour leader Dick Spring withdrew his party from the coalition.

After trying to stitch together another Fianna Fail/Labour coalition, it was revealed that other Fianna Fail ministers knew about Reynolds' deception. Labour then went on to form a government with Fine Gael and the Democratic Left, both having strong anti-republican positions.

The loss of Albert Reynolds puts the sluggish Northern peace process in jeopardy.

### Out for Christmas

Three hundred and fifty prisoners were released for a one week Christmas parole from Northern Ireland's Maze prison. Their numbers included many republican and loyalist prisoners, but despite the ceasefire the total released was one hundred fewer than last year.

Ulster Volunteer Force prisoner Billy Giles, who is serving life for murdering a Catholic 11 years ago, said on his release that there is an unease among loyalist prisoners over the current political situation. He added that there was a belief that too many concessions were being made to republicans.

In the south, thirty of the fifty-five republican prisoners were also granted a week long Christmas leave. The thirty, including one woman, are double the number that were given a temporary leave last year.

In addition, new Justice Minister Nora Owen is granting the conditional release of nine republican prisoners. The government is attempting to release the men with conditions ensur-

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## A Major Mistake

"Because of the continuing harassment of the civilian population the Irish Republican Army began a series of retaliatory actions." So read the November 15, 1975 announcement on the front page of *Republican News* ending that year's historic nine-month ceasefire. Four months into the current IRA ceasefire, the British government again seems unable, or unwilling, to check security force aggression against republican areas. In one recent attack, former IRA POW Martin Meehan was headbutted, knocked to the ground and kicked repeatedly, suffering a heart attack in the process. As in 1975, such provocations pose a central threat to the fragile peace. The question is not whether these attacks can be stopped but rather why haven't they been?

It is possible that Major's inability to stop the harassment, as well as his diplomatic delaying tactics, reflect an utter ineptitude in dealing with delicate, ground-breaking negotiations. It is also possible that his government is attempting to sow dissension within republican ranks, thereby splitting the movement (a fatal blow at this point), and discrediting the current leadership amongst a small -- but sizable enough -- segment of its own community. Many in republican areas have never trusted the British government to deliver substantial change. Each provocation, coupled with continued stalling on the diplomatic front, builds resentment. It is only a matter of time before that mistrust and resentment produces renewed hostilities -- hostilities which would no doubt dampen the current world media fascination with Gerry Adams and his message.

Adams & Co. are walking a tight-rope. True, they can claim some successes: the McGuinness delegation's historic meetings at Stormont; equal participation in Reynolds' Forum for Peace and Reconciliation; Adams accessing the White House. But it is too easy to confuse access to the corridors of state power with the acquisition of real political power. To all appearances, Major remains intent on isolating the republican movement, as evidenced by his refusal to participate in Reynolds' Forum, and his exclusionary slight blocking Sinn Fein's participation in the recent Belfast economic conference. As such, rank-and-file republicans must ask: What concrete concessions has Major offered so far?

If serious about peace, Major must now take steps to prove it, including: the initiation of multi-party talks; the immediate release of all prisoners; the disbanding of the RUC; and an end to security force harassment, followed by a withdrawal to barracks of all troops. If swift progress is not forthcoming, either due to a lack of vision, or a cynical divide-and-conquer strategy, John Major risks condemning another generation of Irish and British citizens to violence.

ing certain behavior. But the prisoners have requested that they would rather receive a general amnesty. A decision on the type of release could be made as early as late January. All nine were expected to be released in November but were detained after the Newry robbery and shooting. The nine are: Owen Gallagher (44) serving four years for arms possession; Gerard Hamilton (34) serving seven years for possession of explosives; John Harnett (36) serving three years for arms possession; Gerard Burns (38) serving six years for arms possession; Richard Comerford (44) serving three years for arms possession; Patrick Griffin (54) serving nine years for robbery; Michael Daly (49) serving four years for arms possession; Aaron O'Connell (35) serving life for murder; and Eamonn Nolan serving life for murder.

Owen said that the releases were to be seen as a significant gesture to the developing peace process. Sinn Fein Vice President Pat Doherty said that the good will of the southern government is contrasted with the "niggardly" attitude of the British towards the political situation. "It is sadly obvious that the British government have not acted in the spirit of the peace process," he said.

Newly published crime figures show that in the three months before the IRA ceasefire 54 people were charged with republican related paramilitary offences, and only 11 were charged in the three months following the ceasefire. On the loyalist side, 55 people were charged in loyalist related paramilitary offences while another 37 were charged after the ceasefire.

## Doherty Appeal

Former political prisoner of the United States government, Joe Doherty was granted permission to appeal a decision by Patrick Mayhew that the nine years he spent in U.S. would not be credited as time served. Doherty's barrister, Barry MacDonald, said that the appeal will be based on the notion that Mayhew made no consideration between an escaped prisoner who is a fugitive and one who is in custody.

## Secret Talks Begin

In late December the British government began their private talks with representatives of Sinn Fein, the Ulster Democratic Party and the Progressive Unionist Party. The talks are being hosted by Northern Ireland Office deputy secretary Quentin Thomas in the secrecy of Stormont Castle.

Sinn Fein's delegation is headed by Martin McGuinness and includes Sean MacManus, Siobhan O'Hanlon, Lucilila Bhreatnach and Gerry Kelly. Sinn Fein has indicated that they will focus on demilitarizing the province, political and constitutional change, and the right of self-determination for all Irish people.

The Ulster Democratic Party is being represented at the talks by Gary McMichael, Tommy Kirkham, John White, Joe English and David Adams. The UDP said that they will be focusing on the creating of a new assembly, a bill of rights, and the release of all political prisoners.

Representatives for the Progressive Unionist Party include Billy Hutchinson, William Smith, Jackie Manhood, Lindsay Robb and David Ervine. The party will be pushing for the release of political prisoners, the return of power to the people of the north and economic investment in poor areas.

## War of Words

As the cease-fire continues on, conflicting stories, based solely on security forces or anonymous sources, are now being regularly reported on the state of the IRA and its ceasefire.

London's *Sunday Times*, citing "senior security sources," reported in November that a group of 50 hard-liners from Counties Armagh and Tyrone have broken away and have given the IRA Army Council a deadline of March to achieve the "total surrender" of the British government. The group, the newspaper reports, has formed a skeleton command structure and appointed military commanders.

The newspaper also states that the IRA has been carrying out intelligence gathering, training and recruitment programs since the cease-fire. In addition, the Army Council

is also reportedly conducting "dummy" operations in Ireland and Britain in order to keep the rebel group in line by demonstrating their ability to carry out operations at a moments notice. No legitimate source has confirmed any information contained in that report.

However, on December 18 a two pound bomb, made of plastic explosives and gasoline, was found outside a furniture shop in Enniskillen. A warning was phoned to police and the bomb was defused. No group claimed responsibility, and the IRA has denied any involvement.

The *Irish Independent* reported that the Enniskillen bomb was planted by the Irish National Republican Army, a new group. The paper claims, that the group is attempting to derail the peace process and recruit disgruntled members of the IRA.

That newspaper also reports that the Newry Postal robbery by IRA members in November, in which a 53-year old postal worker was killed, was the result of a shortfall in funds within the IRA. The paper states that the IRA is now "feeling the pinch" because the ceasefire has reduced available funds. The newspaper also claims that the Irish police are investigating an IRA link to another robbery in Co. Monaghan in mid-December.

Police are also reportedly investigating several threats on councilors, teachers and community leaders by the IRA. The threats, made over the telephone, warned individuals in south Armagh not to attend a Christmas function sponsored by the RUC. Police are said to be unsure whether the threats are real or pranks.

Despite this news, a "republican source close to the leadership," has told the *Irish Echo* that the IRA's "campaign is finished for good." According to the newspaper the IRA will handover all weapons in 1995. However they will not turn their weapons over to the British, but rather will turn them over to an independent authority who will oversee their destruction. Again, no other source has confirmed any information in that report.

## Blair Wants Weapons

During a trip to Belfast, British Labour party leader, Tony Blair, has said that talks with Sinn Fein and representatives of loyalist paramilitaries should be limited to an exploratory nature until all weapons are surrendered. "What the British government has said, and what we reiterate very strongly, is that all parties who participate on the basis of total absolute commitment to the democratic process... There must be absolutely no question at all of talks taking place with the threat of the re-use of weapons hanging over those talks." Blair also said that the British government should not be the "persuader" for Irish unity with Unionists as declared by some Republicans.

## Framework Document Expected

The long awaited framework document between the British and Irish governments is expected to be formalized in January. After a December meeting with the new Taoiseach, John Bruton, the British Prime Minister said that "substantive progress" needs to be made on the removal of arms from the IRA and loyalist paramilitaries. Major said that the issue of weapons must be removed or other parties would not participate in future talks. "Inclusive talks with a lot of empty chairs are not inclusive talks," he said.

However, Irish Prime Minister John Bruton warned against a "one-item agenda." "In the present, preliminary discussions with Sinn Fein and loyalist paramilitaries, it is very important that they should see that whilst this issue is going to be pressed and discussed, and pushed and dealt with, other issues can also be discussed and dealt with as well," said Bruton.

Bruton added that there would be no change in the Irish government's approach to the peace process with the change of government. He said that the question of "constitutional balance" was a central requirement in any settlement.

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"Without Peter King's strength I couldn't have made it. As the Irish peace process goes forward, it is important that we continue to have his voice in Congress. I urge all Irish Americans to vote for Peter King."

-Gerry Adams

**RE-ELECT  
CONGRESSMAN  
PETER KING**  
Republican, Conservative

■ **Republicans - Here and There**

## Radical Changes Needed in Policing

by Caitriona Ruane

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In 1976 the Irish Government initiated an intergovernmental complaint against the United Kingdom Government about actions of the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) and the British Army. The European Commission of Human Rights found that the U.K. Government through its security forces was involved in the infliction of inhuman and degrading treatment. The court accepted the British Government's reassurance that they would give urgent consideration to the implementation of a Bill of Rights and an effective complaints system. Eighteen years later we are still waiting for both of those. In 1991 allegations of ill-treatment by RUC officers in Castlereagh were made by Amnesty International and the Committee for the Administration of Justice (CAJ) at the United Nations Committee Against Torture in Geneva. Report after report by international human rights agencies have documented that there is a serious problem with the RUC.

People might have expected that loyalist and republican cessation of violence would lead to a reduction in RUC and Army harassment especially given the RUC justification of human rights abuses in terms of their response to non-state violence. In many cases there has been an increase in harassment and other abuses in republican and loyalist communities throughout the North of Ireland.

The RUC is 92% Protestant and 8% Catholic. However, an even more telling statistic is that they are 100% unionist. Seamus Mallon rightly points out that the question is not how many Catholics are in the police force, but how many nationalists feel they can join a force that is perceived as the 'armed wing of unionism.' At a recent meeting chaired by David Cook, chairperson of the Police Authority of Northern Ireland, a woman introduced herself to me by saying, "I'm a Catholic and I'm on the Police Authority, but I'm not political." I kindly but firmly let her know that the Police Authority is no more acceptable to the nationalist community because of these facts.

The major problems we have here is that the RUC do not see themselves as a part of the problem. They appear to think that now we can move from military style policing in a conflict to 'normal' policing. They proudly point to a community attitudes survey that 65% of Catholics reported that the police dealt fairly with everyone and try to gloss over the fact that neither Sinn Fein or the SDLP sit on the Police Authority -- or "toothless Quango" as Seamus Mallon calls it. They reject out of hand any suggestions made of structural changes to the RUC and argue that only the British Government can lead the debate of policing. They rubbish criticisms coming from loyalists, republicans, church groups, human rights groups, academics and communities as according to Blair Wallace, Deputy Chief Constable, "these people are politically motivated, unrepresentative, dubious barometers of public opinion and of being the sort of people who spoke loudest at meetings." They insinuate that anyone calling for a new or reformed police service disregards or in some way minimizes the suffering of families of RUC men and women killed or injured.

In the North of Ireland we need a new police service or services that is accountable, representative and responsive to the communities it

serves. We need an independent effective complaints system where the law is applied equally to police officers as it is to civilians. We need the immediate lifting of all emergency legislation. The CAJ in a recent submission to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Foreign Affairs, called for a wide ranging review of policing in Northern Ireland. They say it should be independent, have an international dimension, draw on international human rights experience and should report to the British and Irish governments and all parties to the negotiations. In conjunction with this they call for a wide ranging consultation with local communities and that the army and secret units should play no more further part in policing.

At two recent conferences I was at in Belfast and Derry the overwhelming feeling was that we need radical changes to policing in the North of Ireland and that the RUC will never be acceptable.

It is worth looking at international examples of the creation of new police services in South Africa, El Salvador and Palestine. In each of these countries there has been serious problems with the creation of new police service and already serious human rights abuses have occurred. Nonetheless there are lessons for us here in the North of Ireland. In a recent paper I gave on the lesson from El Salvador I identified the need for the following:

- a) An inclusive political settlement that has the support and agreement of all groups within society is essential. If the settlement is not accepted, then a police service answerable to the new structure will not be acceptable.
- b) International monitoring in the interim period should be put in place, especially where the old police force is still on the streets. We need to look to the UN, the CSCS and other international options.
- c) A new police service needs to be created that is accountable, democratic, representative and responsive. Reform of the old police force, which was involved in human rights abuses is a recipe for disaster.
- d) Training of new police service is essential, this training should provide human rights awareness. In El Salvador the National Academy for Public Security was established to facilitate this.
- e) Radical reforms of the judiciary and legal system is essential otherwise the best conceived police service in the world will founder. During negotiations there is a tendency to form a new policing and military structures and to underplay the importance of judicial reform.
- f) Human rights work by local non-governmental organizations should continue and increase. Funding for human rights groups should be part of the new investment program. Part of the is funding should also be made available to re-insert combatants from a guerrilla movement and ex-army and police into society.

We are being told that we must forget the past and look to the future. Many people tell us it is divisive to bring up old wounds. We should just forget. I think one of the greatest lessons we can learn from El Salvador or anywhere else for that matter, if we bury the past deep inside us without dealing with it, without hearing people say "we're so sorry for what happened to your child" be he or she an IRA volunteer, a RUC officer, an informer, a British soldier or a loyalist, we can forget about true reconciliation.

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## Austere Reformism, Part 1: A Historical Primer on the Irish Labour Party

by John O'Connor

Keynesian conservative Sean Lemass, the former Irish Taoiseach and one of the founders of Fianna Fail, once described the Irish Labour Party in the following terms: "The Labour Party are a nice, respectable, docile, harmless body of men -- as harmless a body as ever graced any parliament." Apart from the fact that women are now meaningful members of the party, Lemass's statement is as accurate today as it was back in 1966.

Amidst mass unemployment, high levels of emigration and Catholic Church authoritarianism, the Irish Labour Party has consistently failed to make the case for socialism in Ireland. The story of the Irish Labour Party, similar to labour/social democratic/communist parties throughout the west, centers around two main themes -- loyalty to the existing order and the defusing of working-class militancy and struggle.

In a country where internationally respected Marxists James Connolly and James Larkin breathed life into the Irish labour movement, it is remarkable that the Labour Party has become so timid, so reformist and so rabidly anti-working people. In explaining why a class-based party is so de-classed, many commentators point to the following Irish peculiarities: the conservative nature of Irish society, the hegemony of the Catholic Church, the individualism of Irish political culture, the weaknesses of class cleavages, emigration, the colonial legacy, and the lateness of industrial development. While the above factors define the context in which the party operates, they tell us little about its historical development.

**A Quick Historical Overview** The history of the Irish Labour Party is extremely interesting and complex; the party has changed ideologically, organizationally, and policy-wise numerous times. Moreover, the history of the Labour Party is filled with many interesting and infamous characters, such as Brendan Corish, Noel Browne, Conor Cruise O'Brien, Matt Merrigan, William Norton, Frank Cluskey, Emmet Stagg, Michael D. Higgins, Michael O'Leary and David Thornley.

The pre-Dick Spring history of the party can be broken up into three distinct periods: party formation (1912 to 1957); emergence and transformation (1957-1973); and government player (1973 to 1977).

**Party Formation** The actual origins of the Labour Party are in dispute. For some the party was founded in 1912 by the Irish Trade Union Congress (ITUC). For others, 1920 marks the party's birth, since that was when the party entered the local electoral arena for the first time. Yet, some claim 1930 as the date of the party's formation, when it separated from the ITUC and stood on its own.

The party contested its first general election in 1922, winning 21.3% of the vote, with 18 of its candidates elected to the Dail (Irish Parliament). By 1933 its vote had slipped to 5.7% and only eight TDs (members of the Dail) were elected. The Labour Party took part in government for the first time in 1948-51 and again in 1954-57 (these were Inter-Party governments).

From its inception the Labour Party has run on socio-economic issues, whereas the Irish electorate -- and other political parties -- divided over the 1921 Anglo-Irish Treaty. Before the 1930s the

Labour Party was described as "a party of trade unionists for trade unionists." In fact, at this time, membership was actually limited to affiliated trade unions and councils. Not unexpectedly, with Ireland being an agricultural country, the party in its early years could not attract more than one-fifth of all Irish voters.

**Emergence and Transformation** With the state becoming increasingly involved in promoting and cultivating industrial development (Lemass's 1958 'Program for Economic Expansion'), the political landscape of Ireland changed, as did the Irish Labour Party.

After the 1957 Inter-Party government fell, and the Labour Party suffered significant losses in the subsequent general election, the party underwent a long period of transformation. Central to this transformation were changes in party leadership and ideology.

In 1960 when Brendan Corish replaced William Norton (leader since 1932) as party leader, Labour was struggling to put forward a distinct political image. Prior to Corish, the party was more a collection of individuals than an organization committed to a concrete ideological agenda. Within and outside of the Dail, the Labour Party was considered little more than the political voice of the trade unions.

One of Labour's first attempts to forge a clear, ideological agenda was its attempt to create a 'unity of progressive forces.' This move to construct a progressive bloc of parties (including the National Progressive Democrats and Clann na Poblachta) accepting the Free State constitution (Sinn Fein was excluded) marked the first time that the party wanted to become a broadly accepted political player. Although there was no real merger between the three parties after the 1961 election, Labour did begin to transcend its traditional, conservative image as a trade union pressure group.

Ideologically during this time, the Labour Party was struggling internally over three distinct questions: one, should the party remain in opposition or should it allow itself to join a coalition government?; two, what was the party's position regarding the border?; and three, is the party socialist and what form of socialism does it advocate?

**Coalition** Regarding the question of coalition, the Labour Party was of one mind over the decade from 1957 until 1967. As a result of the party's discouraging experience within the Inter-Party coalition, the majority of party members (especially the party's left-wing) were strongly anti-coalition, making it, in fact, a party principle. By remaining in opposition, it was believed that the party would accomplish two goals: one, it would be able to develop coherent policy and long-term strategy; and two, it would be an obvious alternative to the Civil War parties (Fianna Fail and Fine Gael).

In 1967 the party leadership retreated somewhat, stating that the party would take part in a coalition if it was the majority partner. The party's anti-coalition position was watered down further when Fine Gael became more liberal in outlook and criticized the Labour Party for not helping to defeat Fianna Fail. By 1970, the party had no choice but to scrap the no-coalition policy. The party's Administrative Council wrote, "Labour's policies were not designed for permanent opposition but for implementation. To be socialist is not to be condemned to perpetual opposition, but rather is to be committed to achievement, whenever the opportunity arises to do so, with honour."



William Norton

Thus, similar to all Irish political parties, power for the sake of power became Labour's goal.

**Nationalism** In Ireland the party's position regarding the border is unique in that it has tried hard to stay neutral. In privileging social and economic issues over the treaty, the Labour Party has allowed members to hold diverse views on the north in order to prevent a split within its ranks. Yet, early in its history the party did support many nationalist positions, such as the removal of the oath of allegiance to the crown and it opposed Fianna Fail's anti-IRA emergency legislation. In 1947, party leader William Norton called on the British to unify the island.

In all, party members held two distinct views on the north: one, the traditional nationalist position, where the British should relinquish their territorial claim; and two, a two communities approach, where the six county majority was sacrosanct. From the late 1960s onward, under the direction of ultra-reactionary Conor Cruise O'Brien (the party's spokesman on the north), Labour increasingly embraced the two community view as policy. As party spokesman, O'Brien constantly stated that "partition [was] not the root cause of the matter." In ignoring the undemocratic nature of the creation of Northern Ireland, O'Brien argued that anyone who didn't ascribe to the two community approach was both sectarian and fascist, and not acting in the best interests of Ireland.

In a 1972 statement on the north, the Labour Party stated that it was for the "voluntary reunion of all Irish people and territory," unequivocally repudiating the use of force to achieve a united Ireland.



■ **Brendan Corish and Conor Cruise O'Brien**

**Socialism** During the Norton years the Labour party was (as regularly and laughingly pointed out by Lemass) one of more conservative parties on the island. Yet, under Brendan Corish, the party moved toward the left, becoming a proponent of something called 'Christian socialism.' In trying to define 'Christian socialism,' Corish could mumble little more than it was the use of state bodies and semi-state industries to absorb the surplus workforce, reducing unemployment. Through much of its history, the leadership -- and the party's rank and file -- were always afraid that they would be labeled as beyond the pale of traditional Irish politics.

Not surprisingly, Labour's eventual drift toward social democracy did not come about through internal discussion or debate. The party was forced to move because Fianna Fail (in 1958) and Fine Gael (in 1964-65) had already shifted to the left, and Labour risked being shut out and left behind. Even after being pushed the party's progressive policies consisted of little more than a desire to see more public enterprises and limited economic planning.

By 1966 Corish was suddenly brave enough to declare the party socialist, going so far as to state that the party was out for a socialist republic. In backing up Corish's bold statements, the party even applied (and was accepted) for membership in the Socialist International. In addition, during this time, closer ties to the unions were established, reversing the previous trend. Of course, no new policies were put forth nor was socialism ever defined.

In a historic party conference in 1967, 'the Seventies will be Socialist' slogan was adopted by the party. Corish backed up the

party's slick slogan by explaining that by socialism the party now meant, "a belief in freedom and in the right of every man to develop as he wishes." It took the party two years to develop policies that eclipsed Corish's embarrassing comments.

Not until 1969 did the party actually contest an election on what could be construed as a soft socialist program. These infamous '1969 policies' covered agriculture, workers' democracy, foreign policy, local government, social welfare, taxation, industrial development, and banking and financial policy. And, in all fairness, these 1969 policies were far and above anything that any other party was campaigning on.

Labour's flirtation with social democracy was short-lived, however, as Fianna Fail unleashed a vicious 'Red Smear' campaign, causing the party to lose 4 seats from its 1965 total. Through advertisements, speeches and interviews, Fianna Fail alleged that Labour's 1969 policies were both communist and alien to Ireland and inconsistent with the teachings of the Catholic Church. Fianna Fail's attack on the party was so over the top that Brendan Corish was actually described as being a puppet of "the modern Marxist elite" and the party was characterized as wanting to impose Cuban socialism on the island.

After Fianna Fail's successful attack, and the poor performance in the 1969 election, the party suffered numerous defections and long standing tensions between rural and urban members were exacerbated. As a result, and in spite of Noel Browne's protestations, Labour slowly but surely distanced itself from all talk of socialism and its progressive 1969

policies.

**Government Player** During the 1973 general election, after Labour's left turn debacle, the party forged a coalition agreement with Fine Gael. Underpinning the coalition agreement was a 14 point plan that was long on platitudes, but woefully short on specific promises. Through its deal with Fine Gael, the Labour Party promised to "transform Ireland into a modern progressive society based on social justice."

All through the campaign Labour candidates (56 in all, 43 fewer than in 1969) celebrated the 14 points of agreement, being sure not to discuss the progressive 1969 policies.

This total repudiation of progressive policies can be seen in the way the party willingly contributed to Fine Gael's conservative agenda once in power. Apart from Labour's partial success in the areas of social welfare and worker protection legislation, the party allowed inflation to soar over the government's four years, with prices increasing by 90%. Moreover, thanks to Conor Cruise O'Brien's doomsday IRA fantasies, the Fine Gael/Labour Party coalition implemented draconian security legislation, significantly eroding the civil liberties of all Irish citizens.

From the end of the coalition in 1977 to the emergence of Dick Spring as Labour's leader, the party underwent little change.

**(NEXT ISSUE -- Austere Reformism, Part 2: The Misadventures of Dick Spring)**

## NIR INTERVIEW:

### TALKING WITH RUAIRI O'BRADAIGH

*NIR's Tim O'Connor recently interviewed Ruairi O'Bradaigh at Republican Sinn Fein's office at Arran Quay in Dublin. O'Bradaigh, who has a long history in the republican movement, is President of Republican Sinn Fein (RSF). RSF broke away from Sinn Fein in 1986 over the issue of abstentionism.*

#### Can you tell me the history of the party since the split in 1986?

Well it doesn't begin with the split, it began in 1905 when Sinn Fein was founded and, of course, in 1917 when it became a definite republican organization. At the same time it went into double harness with the volunteers who later became the Irish Republican Army. So with all this talk about the ballot box and the armalite, that is only modern talk, in fact, this situation dates from 1917. Then of course, we had the various crises which came along. In 1922, there was the counter-revolution. Out of that came the Fine Gael party which was the first split. And four years later in 1926 there was another schism and the result was Fianna Fail becoming a constitutional party. Here I would draw a distinction between constitutional politics and democratic politics. Constitutional politics, to our mind, means operating within the existing structures; democratic politics then is based on the will of the people -- in our case, we would say the people of all Ireland. So the first all-Ireland Dail of 1919 was democratically elected -- that is beyond contest. But it wasn't constitutional because the constitution operating at that time was British rule. And they did not accept it, so it was a revolutionary body that was democratically elected. So we would say that we have been in democratic politics all the time but we haven't been in constitutional politics. And all of this resulted from somebody within the movement -- some grouping of people -- opting for a constitutional way forward, accepting the existing British proposed structures and trying to work within them. And inevitability, those of them that achieved power ended up aiding the British against their former comrades. That is what happened with Fine Gael and Fianna Fail. Then in 1969 we had the Workers' Party emerging from within the movement. They have not achieved power, in fact, they have split again themselves. They are our most bitter opponents, and there are no more jealous upholders of the institutions of the Free State and, indeed, the colonial state of the north than our former comrades in the Workers' Party and the Democratic Left. These are people who were imprisoned with us, and on the run with us, in the 50s and 60s.

Now the latest split is the most tragic of all. Once again it came around that there was a shortcut to Irish freedom and that this could be achieved through the stepping stone of the present 26 county state. It was pointed out by us at the time that this was no shortcut, that this was the way into a quagmire. Inevitably people who engage in that will find themselves absorbed into the system and compelled to defend that system. Eventually that would mean defending the system against us who would be continuing as usual. We would say then that the recent cease-fire is not something extraordinary or unexpected. We would say that it has been inevitable because since 1986 the Provisionals have accepted the 26 county state, the neo-colonial

state, the collaborationist and confessional state. In other words, instead of regarding it as part of the problem as we have and the Republican movement has all down the years, they now see it as part of the solution. And if they see it as part of the solution it was only a matter of time until they would ask that state for assistance -- and that they inevitably did through Mr. John Hume. When they did so, a year ago, the price put on such assistance was that they turn off their active campaign against British rule. That is what has happened. We feel that they are once more being absorbed into the system and that the general public are seeing it a lot more clearly now and they are saying to us "you are the only Republicans left."

#### So then you could foresee this cease-fire back in 1986 by the political posturing of Provisional Sinn Fein?

Yes, it is what is called the inevitability of gradualism. This had to come. It is very important that these situations are seen not in terms of personalities -- they change every decade, they don't matter -- what counts are the forces, the trends, the tendencies involved and the inevitable results that occur. In fact, at our last Ulster meeting we were told that older people in the Nationalist community were quite angry at the turn events have taken because they have seen it all before. Younger people were more inclined to wait and see because their life span and their experiences are much shorter and they haven't been led around the mul-



berry bush before.

#### Would your party give political support to any group that takes up the armed struggle in place of the IRA?

What we have been saying very clearly is that as long as the British government remains in Ireland there will be a revolutionary movement to oppose that government's rule here -- the British government have no right here, they never have and never can have. And that this will inevitably happen regardless of personalities. The only question in our mind is how soon or how strong such a revolutionary movement emerging would be. But the cycles of Irish history are very, very clear. The whole thrust of Irish history has been towards expelling the British government from Ireland and governing ourselves. History didn't stop on the 31st of August it keeps evolving. Nor did history start in 1969 as some people would have us believe. It's not just 25 years, it is 825 years of invasion, colonization, but continuous resistance and that is where we are in the latter category.

#### Can you tell me about the recent raids by Irish police on members of your party?

The homes of over sixty of our members were targeted by the Dublin government in police raids over the 22nd and 23rd of October. It was our members only who were hit in this series of raids. It was really unprecedented in that they occurred in every one of the twenty-six counties. In all cases there was a clear political message presented.

It was that we should get involved in the current process, as it is called, and that if we did not, there would be dire consequences for us. In fact when the editor of our paper was held -- there were six arrests for varying periods up to 24 hours and all were released -- but in the interrogation of the editor, he was told: "There was a cozy seat for you in the Dublin Castle Forum next Friday with expenses of 150 pounds a day, now why don't you get into that comfortable position and not be in the situation that you are in now? If you were a Provo and I had arrested you," said the detective, "you would complain about me to Adams, and Adams would complain about me to Spring and Spring would pull on me for having arrested you at all, now why don't you get yourself into that secure position instead of carrying on the way you are?"

Another man in Offaly, Emmet Walsh, was told that neither the government nor the Provos were prepared to tolerate any interference with the present delicate situation. He called it the "delicate situation at hand." And he went on to say that their intelligence showed them that he lived in a very isolated place and that he would be quite vulnerable to a Provo attack. Which, of course, was a downright threat. But the message was the same in all cases. As they raided the houses, one of them would confront the house holder and give off this political message and the others would search around.

**Do you expect this harassment to continue?**

Oh yes, they were outside the door here this morning when I was coming in. I don't know if you saw them? Some days there are up to three cars out there.

**Has this harassment begun only after the cease-fire announcement?**

No, it has been ongoing, but it has gotten heavier. It has always been that way and it has never stopped after '86 -- it is continual. Our homes have been raided and our members arrested and harassed and all that type of thing. But it was always piecemeal -- maybe one county now, another county again and so on. But this time it was a totally concentrated one right across the state in every county. So the message was conveyed, it was tapped in very, very clearly.

**Has your party been harassed at all by Provisional Sinn Fein or the IRA?**

We have had a few instances in the six counties. We had these, of course, in '87 and '88 when we were reorganizing but we didn't give way and it stopped. But there has been a fresh outbreak in the past year. The Easter lily sellers were confronted on both sides of the border last Easter and told to desist and get out. Since the 31st of August there have been threats issued in a number of places in the border area. These were generally withdrawn because the people who delivered them came along later and said, "Ah well, it all over now, forget about it." But in South Armagh a leaflet [reprinted on page 12 -- eds.], not prompted by the head office, got out and was circulated locally and it was circulated at the all-Ireland football final. But following that, two women who are prominent in the South Armagh/Newry area as activists on our part got very deliberate threats. A message was left for them with another member saying that they had not been popular with the Provos since '86 and that they should watch themselves now -- that the Provos would be checking on them. The response of the women was why didn't they come directly to us and say this.

Belfast, again, was more serious. In that a supporter was lured to a house under false pretenses and he was seized, abducted as it were. He was bound and hooded and held for some hours. He was interrogated. That was on the 3rd of October in the Ballymurphy area just off the Falls Road. He was questioned about Republican Sinn Fein and while they had him they raided his own house and his mother's house. Eventually they told him that they would run Republican Sinn Fein out of Belfast and then they released him.

Following on that, later in October, a young women member was collecting signatures for a petition for an all-Ireland referendum. A singular referendum in all-Ireland to decide the future of Ireland with the British committed to leaving. She was in a club in West Belfast where a function was being run by a pipe band from county Antrim. She asked the pipe band if she could collect signatures and they told her to go ahead. She had collected something like thirty signatures when a member of the Provos refused to sign it and objected to her collecting the signatures and complained to the barman who disregarded it. Then she was told that there was a man at the door wanting to see her and wanting to seize the copy of the signatures. Now the

text of the petition is in the public domain, it didn't have any particular interest to anyone so the only interest was getting the signatures and the addresses of the people who had signed it and possibly to visit them and attempt to intimidate them. This was done twice and she refused. Later when she and another young woman left to go to another club in north Belfast they found a white car outside with two men in it who turned their headlights on them when they came out the door and followed

them right across the city to north Belfast. Now at this stage a Belfast member of our Ard Chomhairle heard what had happened and visited the club in north Belfast and collected the sheet with the signatures which is now in the head office.

In the beginning they invaded our meetings physically and tried to break them up, then they threatened our people for selling our paper, *Saoirse*, for distributing lilies, and for collecting for the prisoner's dependence fund. And now we see that they still object to our selling Easter lilies or engaging in these political activities. But what we say is that we have a legitimate analysis of the situation to which we are entitled, and we are making a political commentary on that analysis and we are not going to be deflected. We are entitled to this analysis and this political commentary. And whether it be the power of the Dublin government or this interference and harassment from the Provos we will forge ahead because Irish history will march ahead regardless.

**Do you think it is somewhat ironic that people like Martin McGuinness of Provisional Sinn Fein are now using the term federalism as a possible solution when your party has been the primary proponent of this idea?**

Well it is indeed, because our policy here, *Eire Nua*, which provides for a four province federation, including a nine county Ulster was drummed out by them, out of the united movement in 1981 to the slogan that this was a sop to unionism. Now they are talking versions of federalism, all very vague of course, which is highly ironic. Meanwhile we have re-adopted *Eire Nua* and have updated it.

What we are saying is that in the nine counties of Ulster the Unionists would have a slight majority somewhere between 2 1/2 to 5%. So they would have a working majority there with every power of government except foreign affairs, national defence and overall financing as would the other three provinces. But that the National-

ists would be close behind them, within reach of taking power. And within the provinces there would be massive devolution so with strong regional bodies and local district councils power will go right down to the local communities. In other words, in west Ulster and south Ulster if people still voted along Unionists/Nationalists lines with the British gone -- we would prefer that they would vote along class or economic lines -- it would mean that west Ulster and south Ulster would be nationalist controlled where east Ulster and Belfast would be unionist. But even within those four regions the district councils would be according local majority. So this is natural power sharing -- it's horizontal power sharing, if you like. As opposed to enforced power sharing which we saw twenty years ago and which didn't work. What is more is that in a federation, as opposed to regional government like Stormont, it would be entrenched and the Ulster Parliament or the Munster, Leinster or Connacht Parliament could not be abolished by the stroke of the pen of the central government as happened when Westminster abolished Stormont.

Further we see the complete separation of church and state and a pluralist society -- it is fundamental to all of this. An additional point is that we see policing being done by the local district councils so that according to local majority the Falls council would have their own police service and likewise the Shankill. Of course, certain specialist functions might have to be exercised at a regional level but the really important policing will be done locally.

**So you then believe that the southern government is unreformable?**

Yes, experience has shown that. The Leinster house government, as we call it from where it sits, and the Stormont government were set up by the British government when they divided Ireland in 1920. That was their alternative to the all Ireland Republican parliament democratically elected and was enforced on the Irish people through a counter revolution and a bloody civil war in the south and a pogrom and repression in the North. So we see the role of the Dublin government as supporting British power. And it became a confessional state. Because when you have a 95% Roman Catholic state, what do you expect would be the result? Of course, in the north there was 2/3rds Protestant, it is now something like 57% to 43%, and it was proclaimed by the Unionist Party, all fifty years that they ruled, as a Protestant parliament for a Protestant people. So we got a sectarian state in the north and a confessional one in the south, and those differences were accentuated.

What we see is an all-Ireland franchise, an all-Ireland unit of decision. Where, when you take the southern Protestants into the equation something like 25% of the people will be Protestant and then allowing for non-believers and people who don't practice as much as one third would not be bound to this solid Roman Catholic base. We believe that this would be the leveling, this would be much better. What we say is that we need the Protestants, who are in the north mainly unionists, we need them, their work ethic and their business ability. We are very charming, writing poetry and that kind of thing, but the bread has to be put on the table.

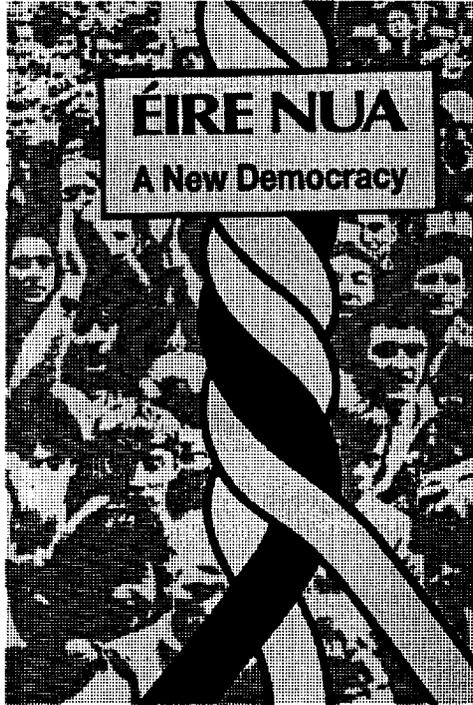
**Where do you see things going in the next few months?**

Its very, very difficult because the situation is quite volatile. I can see what the British scheme of things is. They felt, in fact, John Chilcott, who is a top British civil servant in the six counties, has said to one of the security advisors that the fatal mistake made by the Provisionals was in the Hume/Adams document, which has never been published and the reason why it is secret is also secret. Paragraph 5 has been read aloud over the radio and television by the SDLP continuously and it provides for a Unionist veto. That the majority in the six counties would be able to block Irish self-determination. Now, that was called, according to Chilcott, the fatal mistake. This is where they were trapped. And their political organization on the 25th of September 1993, and their military organization on the 4th of

October 1993 both accepted this. Then there was the joint Downing Street declaration and that, of course, reaffirmed the Unionist veto, not once but five times, while it was couched in nationalist rhetoric. The substance, the content was solidly unionist and it is on that basis that this whole alleged peace process has taken place. What we have been saying is that we are not against this process, we are not against the ceasefire, but what we are saying is that they just will not work. They just will not work and Irish history teaches us that. Indeed, on the night of the 31st of August when opinions were being sought around the Six Counties, we saw the veteran civil rights leader Paddy Short being interviewed in his pub in Crossmaglen and his comment was one sentence: "Does this mean then that we have to have this all over again in another 10 years."

**Has the ceasefire been a boom for your party?**

It hasn't in that sense, it has clarified things enormously, especially for thinking people -- people who are able to be detached enough to see things as they are. We have an overview of things, and we should not be confused by the personalities involved and those who are involved in wishful thinking. One of the Leinster house parties, the Progressive Democrats, had a deputy on a question and answer program on TV ten days ago. She said in order to get this process going there had to a certain amount of self-delusion on all sides. Well we have not been deluded, we've been saying this all very clearly and we saw it since 1986. We said that a military campaign without the full republican ideology behind it was bound to collapse, even to collapse inwardly which is what has happened at the present time.



■ **RSF Policy Document Eire Nua**

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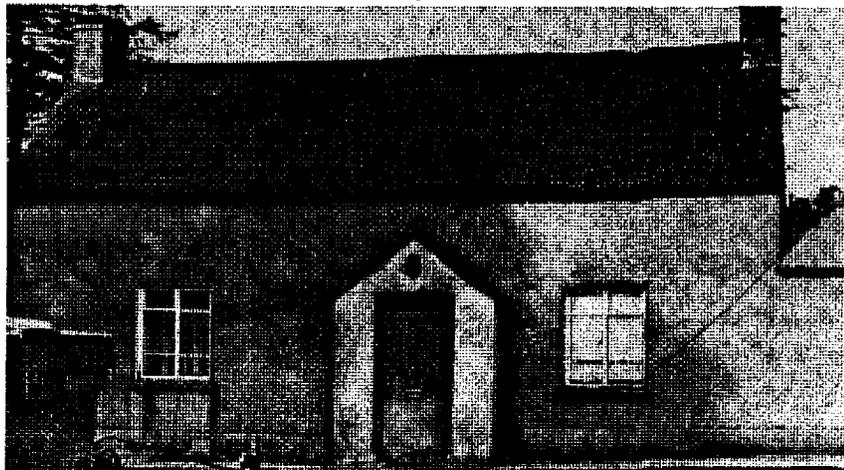
**Special Thanks: Caitriona Ruane, Ruairi O'Bradaigh and Republican Sinn Fein, Des Wilson, Pol Brennan, and Danny Burke. As always, NIR welcomes all submissions, contributions, letters and reaction.**

## Escape! – Part Two: Hiding Out in Dromore

by Pol Brennan

*The following was written by Pol Brennan to coincide with the anniversary of the Great Escape. Mr. Brennan was arrested in January of 1993 in San Francisco on passport violations. Currently Brennan is fighting extradition (along with Kevin Artt and Terry Kirby, also H-Block escapees) back to the Six Counties. Donations to the Pol Brennan Defense Fund should be sent to his wife: Joanna Volz, 2111 Stuart St., Berkeley, CA. 94705.*

It was about 100-200 yards before I reached the crest of the hill and then down the other side, out of aims reach. Others were beside me, panic on all our faces. We'd reached a small road and further on a smaller lane leading to a farm. I ran panting up the lane to the farm house to find some of our guys already there. Brendan "Bic" McFarlane, who was one of the planners as well as the former prisoner's Commanding Officer during the second hunger strike of March 1981, had already reached the small farm house. Gerry "Blute" McDonnell was also there and had the keys to a green four door Mercedes that was parked outside the house. I made my way into the car, scrambling for a place. Soon Bic was behind the wheel with 7 of us, myself included, crammed into the large sedan. We had to prevent others from overcrowding the car as more prisoners were arriving and commandeering anything that remotely resembled a motor vehicle.



■ The home in Dromore, where the escapees hid out

Driving nervously because he hadn't driven in years, Bic headed East towards Belfast, but I and others argued that if we hit a road block, it would be all over; so we did a 180 and headed West and then due South into more rural areas. After what seemed like a reasonable amount of time, it was suggested that we dump the car and take over a house to get out of harms way. We reached consensus on this as we had no idea of how good the security response would be and a car full of men would surely attract too much attention. We decided to pick a house. After passing a number of places along the country road we were now traveling, we settled on what looked like an isolated cottage. Inside the car were Seamus McElwaine, Terry Kirby, Tony "Tank" McAllister, Jim Clarke, Dermot "Oda" McNally, Gerry "Blute" McDonnell, Brendan "Bic" McFarlane and myself. Either Bic or Blute had managed to salvage one of the 6 small calibre pistols smuggled into the jail for the escape. Two of us took the pistol and were dispatched to take over the house, going around the back way hoping for an open or unlocked door. The back door was ajar and it was discovered that the occupants of the cottage were a small family: a husband and wife, two boys and a small child, all of whom were very frightened by seeing two strange men with a gun walk into their home. They feared the worst, that they were going to be harmed. It took a little while to calm their nerves, but they were even more apprehensive when, after the all clear was given, the rest of us teemed in.

Once inside the house, we began to organize ourselves to secure the place. We quickly hid the car in the cluttered garage the we'd

hastily cleared. Suggestions were flying fast and furious amongst us. Even though Bic was officially in charge, he listened when anyone made good or logical suggestions. Different tasks were assigned. Three were sent upstairs as lookouts, two to search and collect food and provisions that might be needed later and someone to talk with the parents to reassure them that they were in no danger from us. This was my task. Finally, someone was needed later to play with the kids so as not to frighten them. God knows what was going through their minds at the sight of us all.

When we had established that no visitors were immediately expected, we settled down a bit and turned on the radio and TV to find out what had happened since we'd left the prison. Sure enough, around 5:30pm it started to trickle in and soon became the main story, with bulletins every half hour. When one station's coverage was finished, we'd switch channels to catch more news. This way we kept abreast of the latest press and security releases.

We quickly learned our present location and if the family expected any one to visit later that day. The man of the house was a lay preacher who was to give a sermon at a local church hall around 6pm that evening. We had him cancel this, citing a child's illness as a reason. One person actually did call at the front door, but the lady was able to send her away without arousing suspicion. News broadcasts were now primarily focusing on the

Maze escape and it was clearly becoming a major embarrassment to the authorities inside, and more importantly, outside the prison. Camera crews had already converted part of the parking lot within the prison grounds into a media camp, waiting for interviews from prison officials and tidbits from any guards willing to offer them. Newspapers in the days following would be full of diagrams and aerial shots of the prison showing the escape route. Doctored mug shots of us were broadcast. I looked like one of the Ayatollah's henchmen in the photo they released of me [see issue #19 -- eds.]. This would be a help later in that it meant that it wouldn't take much to change my appearance.

We now had some hours to kill before it would be safe enough for us to be able to think of leaving. We used this time well, gathering enough provisions and information from the parents and boys for a couple of days journey. Seamus McElwaine was a country boy with extensive background in going across country. It made him the logical choice to find out about the surrounding geography. Seamus and Bic talked with the wife while Blute and myself concentrated on the husband. Sometimes we switched. Our task was to convince these good people of our benign intentions towards them, that we were not the maniacal monsters of the news reports and Unionist myth. This family was, after all, Protestant and probably Unionist themselves, so we had an uphill battle, but I believe our actions towards them, while probably initially frightening because of the circumstances, helped as this was more than likely their first encounter with Irish Republicans.

Still, we had no way of gauging what would happen once we left the cottage. We needed to be sure that we put enough miles between us and them before they raised the alarm. Expecting them not to was just not realistic and was not even considered by us. We had to develop a ploy that would serve to keep the family silent long enough to allow us to get away. A ruse was created by the four of us wherein we would tell the parents that in order to keep our whereabouts safe, we would take one of the boys (the oldest was perhaps eleven years old) along with us as a guarantee that they wouldn't alert the cops or the Brits. Of course, we had no intention of ever doing so. A child would have only caused complications and slowed us down. Our real hope was that upon hearing this, the parents would immediately promise their silence to keep the boy. This little bit of reverse psychology only half worked. Unfortunately, they believed we were actually going to take their son, and while protesting, seemed resigned. So we put it to them that while we really didn't want to drag the little boy along with us, we had no choice, except for one possible alternative. Since the family was a very religious one, we would allow them all to swear under oath on their family bible, that they would keep their story quiet for 72 hours. We concocted an oath for them to this effect which I helped administer to both the adults and the boys. This was a long shot and we weren't sure it would work. We decided to gamble and hope that the family would not break their word, though truth to tell, none among us would have blamed them.

Soon it would be dark and we had decided to leave that night. At around 10 pm we put the family to bed in the main bedroom upstairs telling them we had decided to stay until morning and while some of us would be in the field outside as scouts, the remainder would be downstairs. We also told them that we would be heading the direction opposite from our intended route. In this way we would have at least eight hours start should the alarm be raised. As we left the cottage, we had a pretty good idea of where we were headed thanks to the good debriefing by Seamus and Bic of the woman of the house who had also drawn a crude map of the surroundings for us.

Before leaving and while the family were all upstairs in the bedroom, we cut the phone lines. No sense in tempting fate. We also took an inventory of all we had taken: food, rucksacks, flashlights, a radio, a compass, maps, and clothes. The inventory was signed by Bic on our behalf, so they could reclaim everything or it's worth from the Republican movement. We were, after all, not thieves. The family accepted this list as more proof of our sincerity. Entering the bedroom where they were huddled up in the big bed together, I had a terrible sympathy for them and felt the weight of the ordeal we had visited upon them. Before I left, as I was the last one to see them, I once again apologized for the trouble we caused them this day. I ended by telling them not to be frightened, that it would all be over soon. Then I turned and left. Once downstairs, we all departed silently.

Soon we were making our way along the small country roads flanked by the hedgerows so familiar in the Irish countryside. These may make for pretty postcards, but for us that night, leaping over those hedgerows every time we heard a vehicle or saw headlights, it was a nightmare. Eventually one of our number, Tony "Tank" McAllister,

sprained his ankle severely by going through such gymnastics and landing badly.

Finally, we decided to stick to the fields with Seamus leading and Blute bringing up the rear. Those in between took turns helping Tank, the biggest and heaviest of us all (hence his nickname), hobble along.

We barely missed a number of security forces' jeeps traveling those roads and could hear the crackle of their radios as they passed while we hid behind the hedges. As luck would have it, a thick heavy fog descended over the countryside. It shielded us from the probing glare of army helicopter search lights that were sweeping overhead periodically. Everywhere the farm dogs were barking furiously, probably because they sensed us, but this did not seem to stir anyone as we surely expected it would. I thought if we got through this night, it would be a miracle.

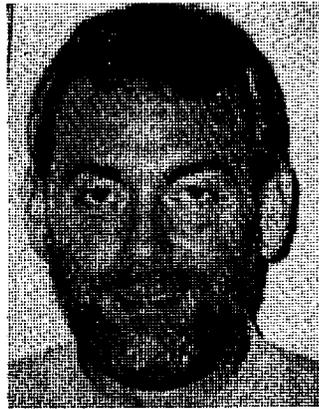
Part of the provisions we took from the cottage were a compass and a map. After walking for quite some time, the fog lifted and revealed a beautiful dark sky full of stars. Having been always interested in the night sky, I was able to discern from the pole star and the asterism, the Starry Plough (as its known in Ireland) or the Big Dipper (in the U.S.), that we were headed in the right direction. The compass concurred and we were on our way again. We would use this method of direction finding over the upcoming nights.

Early the next morning saw us come upon a large country estate that was surrounded by a long high wall which we scaled. We passed partially through the grounds and decided to bed down in thick shrubs and bushes not far from some large greenhouses in the middle of the estate. That afternoon a gent came along the small road leading up to the greenhouses accompanied by two dogs on leashes. Big black dogs. From his accent, heard as we called to his dogs, he was English and probably the owner of the estate. His dogs sensed us and began barking in our direction though he seemingly took no notice, thinking perhaps that they were barking at some small animal. He soon left with his hounds. We sighed relief. About fifteen minutes later, to our utter dismay, and RUC vehicle appeared and stopped within a stones throw of our position. Two RUC men stepped out brandishing 9mm Sterling machine guns. I glanced at Blute who had readied the little .25 and thought, "Great!". We were frozen and ready to dash should we need to. I had that awful feeling in the pit of my stomach again. Adrenalin raced through my veins and I'm sure everyone else's. But the RUC men looked more bored than concerned, as if they'd been here before on false alarms. After interminably long two or three minutes, one cop stubbed the butt of his cigarette under foot and climbed back into the car. The other followed and they drove off.

As soon as they were out of sight, we were out of there. Scrambling on our bellies through our cover of thick foliage, we were soon sliding down a steep embankment into the waters of the Bann river which was up to our necks in places. We were eager to put distance between us and our close encounter with the law.

#### **Note to Readers**

**Remember *NIR* is a "loose" bimonthly, with subs running by number of issues not calender time.**



■ **"Bic" McFarlane**



■ **Seamus McElwaine**

## Keep Your Money!

by Des Wilson

*Rev. Des Wilson is the director of the Springhill Community Center in Belfast. Rev. Wilson is the author of **An End of Silence**, and was awarded the Pax Christi Peace Prize in 1975. He can be contacted at 6/7 Springhill Close Belfast BT12 7SE.*

In West Belfast after the IRA and loyalist ceasefires it was clear that neither the police nor the British army had declared a ceasefire. A group of young men, one of whom had foolishly thrown a bag of potato chips at a fully armed soldier was attacked with plastic bullets. Soldiers walked the streets with rifles pointing as usual at citizens going about their normal business. Promises that troop levels would be reduced and helicopters would not fly under 500 feet were broken.

Hugh Annesley, chief of police during the period when police colluded with death squads and thousands of files were given to killers, was not asked to resign. In Derry and Strabane troops were drawn back to barracks, ready, as Mayhew said, to come out again at a moment's notice.

The only body to declare an effective ceasefire was the IRA.

What then was gained? The soldiers and police still insulted citizens in their own streets, Ford still discriminated against Catholics while tribunals found them faultless.

And individuals and groups organized to get hold of the money due to come in from the USA and Europe.

Injecting money into this situation is the height of folly. If it were promised as help after a democratic settlement is reached there would be sense in it. But to give money while the regime is still in place and knowing it will be disbursed and controlled by the same government agencies who caused the problems of inequality, inefficiency and waste in the first place, is a kind of financial masochism which democratic citizens hoped was a thing of the past.

After the lamentable waste of money in the early days of the International Fund for Ireland and of thousands of millions of British tax payers' money squandered in pandering to political parties, churches and consultants, some thought that wiser counsels must prevail and good money would not be thrown after bad. President Clinton thought otherwise, as did the financiers of the European Union.

This money will be used less for development of underdeveloped areas than for the financing of those already financed. Business people who already have access to money in the normal way will be given money in an abnormal way. The British government will have services paid for which it should be paying for itself. Poor areas will get a few more retail outlets, a few more local amenities, whose upkeep they will have to provide for themselves until they are sold off a few years down the road, and an increased number of casual jobs at one pound thirty an hour, not even above the poverty level.

In Ireland as elsewhere in the world such money is meant to help the well off rather than empower the poor, and it will do this job as well as possible in face of the inevitable waste and sharp practice which free money always attracts.

This is a harsh judgment on what is happening in the wake of a welcome ceasefire, but one has seen it all before in other countries. As in many such places, those who cry out in anguish, "Stop sending this money," are looked upon as enemies of progress and peace.

Associations in West Belfast have suddenly blossomed as discussion and conference facilitators, with two subjects uppermost on their agendas -- how to spend the money that will be coming in and how to police the under-developed areas. Some of the most bizarre plans are being created for both of them.

Civil servants and clergymen, who have turned away in disdain from business as a way of life for themselves, will be given millions of pounds to make businesses for other people.

Because they have been so inept in the past, clergy are being replaced in some areas by community groups who will get the money instead. Among the business people, retailers and hoteliers -- who often pay low wages for part time jobs and who in any case are well able to look after themselves -- will be favored. A group of women in West Belfast who want to start a bed and breakfast house, but have not the capital to do it, have been kept waiting for four years while their request is processed over and over again -- but the International Fund offered, unsolicited, a substantial grant to one of the richest hotel chains in the world. The hotel chain refused the millions and the women still wait for the few thousand which would set them on their way.

Meanwhile professional consultants are enjoying unexpected prosperity. Every project put forward for financial help from the incoming money will have to be approved by consultants who ask the project originators for all their ideas, put them between glossy covers and get perhaps five thousand pounds for their trouble. Every project must begin -- and often end -- with thousands of American tax dollars going to rich and often ineffectual consultants.

And yet in the midst of this political and financial theater of the absurd, democratic citizens continue to hope in the wisdom of leaders like Gerry Adams, John Hume and Albert Reynolds. It is unlikely that such people could be fooled by what is happening.

They may indeed not be fooled, but for such rational men as these the tragedy will be if they have to play along with it for too long.

### Community Policing, continued from Page 3

Reconciliation is about bringing everything out into the open, dealing with it, acknowledging the pain and suffering that has happened and then when people are ready, moving on.

We have heard expressions of regret about suffering caused from the IRA, the UVF and the UFF. To date the British government has never acknowledged that they have inflicted hurt and pain, that they too have been responsible for many deaths in this conflict. We need genuine discussions on new policing arrangements. Then and only then can this peace process move forward with everyone accepting responsibility for their actions. We need to be imaginative and creative and see how other societies throughout the world deal with this complex issue. None of us have all the answers but together we can and must create a police service, a legal system and a political solution that has all our support. The RUC and the Army are part of the problem until they and, equally importantly, the British government recognize this there is no possibility of a lasting peace.

**A MESSAGE OF FREEDOM AND HOPE** *to the  
people of NEWRY AND SOUTH ARMAGH*

*from*

**REPUBLICAN SINN FEIN**

People of Newry and South Armagh, Republicans, Freedom Fighters:-

In 1921 a disastrous treaty was signed dividing Ireland into two parts, the Free State and the six counties. The first being neo-colonial and the second an occupied colony of Britain. It was signed by former Irish Resistance fighters who became collaborators for the sake of personal power and privilege. This treaty bequeathed us 73 years of turmoil and slavery.

It is now 1994, and after 73 years of continuous struggle for our freedom including the terrible, terrifying torture we have endured from the occupying forces for the past 25 years, we are about to have this treaty copper-fastened and reinforced by the present day leadership of the resistance fighters turned collaborators, and for the same reasons, power, privilege, international recognition, foreign visas etc.

The Irish Republic of Pearse and Connolly has been sold once again and we can look forward to nothing more than continuing turmoil and continuing British occupation of our country.

**LET US FACE THE FACTS . . . . .**

- In the new treaty there will be no withdrawal of the British occupation forces or their agents from our country.
- The unionist veto will remain intact.
- The orange state will be guaranteed for the second time by the signatories.

**THE WHEEL HAS INDEED TURNED FULL CIRCLE.**

People of Newry and South Armagh, Irishmen, Irishwomen, awake, awake!

Was it for this the volunteers gave their lifeblood in the springtime of their youth?

Was it for this the hunger-strikers died the slow, sad, silent, lonely death in the prison cell?

**NO IT WAS NOT!**

They died for love of their country and to free the people of Ireland from the slavery of British occupation

**LET NO ONE DISHONOUR THEM BY SAYING OTHERWISE FOR THEY  
LIT THE TORCH OF FREEDOM WHICH WILL NEVER BE EXTINGUISHED.**

People of Newry and South Armagh: The torch burns low and the Republic of Pearse and Connolly is in mortal danger. We in Republican Sinn Féin are pledged to rekindle the flame of freedom throughout the length and breadth of Ireland. JOIN US.

**GLORY AND HONOUR TO OUR PATRIOT DEAD!  
LONG LIVE THE FREE IRISH NATION!  
LONG LIVE THE FREE IRISH PEOPLE!**

• Issued by Newry and South Armagh Republican Sinn Féin •  
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