

# *Resistance*

THE STORY OF THE STRUGGLE IN  
BRITISH-OCCUPIED IRELAND

BY

J. McGARRITY

“But let England make no mistake. The generous highbred youth of Ireland have never failed to answer the call that has been passed on to them. They will never hesitate to blaze forth in the rage of war to win their country’s freedom. Other and tamer methods they leave to other and tamer men but they must do or die.’

THOMAS MacDONAGH

Publishers:  
IRISH FREEDOM PRESS

## **THE REBEL**

I am come of the seed of the people, the people that sorrow,  
That have no treasure but hope,  
No riches laid up but a memory  
Of an ancient glory.  
My mother bore me in bondage, in bondage my mother was born,  
I am of the blood of serfs;  
The children with whom I have played, the men and women with  
whom I have eaten,  
Have had masters over them, have been under the lash of masters,  
And, though gentle, have served churls;  
The hands that have touched mine, the dear hands whose touch is  
familiar to me,  
I have worn shameful manacles, have been bitten at the wrists by  
manacles,  
Have grown hard with the manacles and the task work of  
strangers.  
I am flesh of the flesh of these lowly, I am bone of their bone,  
That I have never submitted;  
I that have a soul greater than the souls of my people's masters,  
I that have vision and prophecy and the gift of fiery speech,  
I that have spoken with God on the top of His holy hill.

And because I am of the people, I understand the people,  
I am sorrowful with their sorrow, I am hungry with their desire;  
My heart has been heavy with the grief of mothers,  
My eyes have been wet with the tears of children,

I hate yearned with old wistful men,  
And laughed or cursed with Young men;  
Their shame is my shame, and I have reddened for it,  
Reddened for that they have served, they who should be free,  
Reddened for that they have gone in want, while others have been  
full,  
Reddened for that they have walked in fear of lawyers and of their  
jailors  
With their writs of summons and their handcuffs, Men mean and  
cruel  
I could have borne stripes on my body rather than this shame of my  
People.

And note I speak, being full of vision;  
I speak to my people, and I speak in my people's name to the  
masters of my people.  
I say to my people that they are holy, that they are august, despite  
their chains,  
That they are greater titan those that hold them, and stronger and  
purer,

That they have but need of courage, and to call on the name of  
their God,  
God the unforgetting, the dear God that loves the people,  
For whom He died naked, suffering shame.  
And I say to my people's masters: Beware,  
Beware of the thing that is coming, beware of the risen people,  
Who shall take what ye would not give. Did ye think to conquer the  
people,  
Or that law is stronger than life and than men's desire to be free?  
We will try it out with you, ye that have harried and held,  
Ye that have bullied and bribed,  
Tyrants, hypocrites, liars!

- P.H. Pearse
- **PREFACE**

Since the Campaign of Resistance opened in Occupied Ireland on  
December 12, 1956, seven young Irishmen have made the supreme  
sacrifice. Scores are serving long, terms of imprisonment.  
Hundreds of others are held without charge or trial by the British  
Occupation authorities. Many others are in the Curragh  
Concentration Camp by order of the 26-County Government. They  
are there because the British Imperial Government has told Dublin  
that Republicans must be curbed in what Irish politicians like to  
call "the free part of Ireland".

What these men are fighting for can be very simply stated: the  
withdrawal by Britain of her forces of occupation from Ireland. The  
Irish people can then settle their own affairs in peace . This is  
hardly an immoderate demand and yet it is one that is ignored by  
Britain—or resisted when she can no longer ignore it.

Irish Republicans know that in making this demand they are  
expressing the will of the overwhelming majority of the Irish  
people. Some British spokesmen put forward a specious plea of  
ignorance when dealing with Irish affairs. They disclaim  
responsibility for what is being done in their name to the Irish  
people. They deny that British troops in Ireland are waging an  
unjust war on the Irish people.

The Resistance Movement in Occupied Ireland is fighting for the  
right of the Irish people to rule themselves as free people. The Irish  
people have never recognised Britain's right to rule in Ireland or to  
control part of it. Irish Republicans consider it their sacred duty to  
defend this right of their people. That is what is happening in  
Occupied Ireland to-day. It will continue until this Occupation ends.  
British propaganda follows this line of argument: Ulster Protestants  
will not submit to a Catholic Parliament in Dublin, that is the  
partition issue. Otherwise Ireland is free  
but divided.

This leaves British imperialism out of the question altogether and that is exactly what British Imperialism wants. Sectarianism is not the issue in Ireland. It is used as a weapon by British Imperialism and some Irish politicians have played this game for Britain in the past. Doubtless they will continue to do so in the future.

There is no question of Protestant Irishmen being asked to submit to a Catholic Parliament. Irish Republicans are not fighting for the incorporation of the Six Counties in the Southern State. They are fighting positively for Irish freedom.

They say neither north nor south can have independence in the full sense of the term while the country is divided and part of it occupied by British forces. The enemy of Irish unity still remains British Imperialism—not the Orange rank and file of north-east Ulster.

As far as economic independence is concerned no part of Ireland has that. The 26-County economy is as shackled to the British Empire as is Occupied Ireland.

Irish Republicans then want an Ireland with the shadow of imperialism removed from it forever. They want an Ireland where economic independence will be as much a reality as political independence. They want an Ireland where Catholics, Presbyterians, Methodists, Baptists, can live in harmony and peace—as Irish citizens.

Because Britain occupies part of this land, the whole is tied to Britain. The whole is controlled by Britain. We have an example at hand in the current financial mess when British financial policy—to create a pool of unemployment in the United Kingdom—is automatically applied to this country (north and south) despite the fact that we have the highest unemployment rate in Europe. And our emigration rate is the highest proportionately in Europe also.

Irish politicians cannot stand reality. They are also great believers in the curtain of silence. They hope that if a problem is ignored or not discussed it will go quietly away. That is won't bother them. That's what they hope will happen the Resistance in Occupied Ireland. They are sick and tired of the Resistance. They are frightened by it. It threatens their positions and their politics. Many of them have done quite well out of the division of Ireland.

We care not referring here to one particular brand of politician. In Ireland we have the Union Jack Tories and also a newer variety, the Green Tories. Economically speaking there is little difference between them. Politically there is not too much difference between them either. Both groups mouth sectarian catch-cries. Irish Republicans go beyond both to the people—all the people.

This Resistance is surely as brave as any in our history for it fights against terrible odds. But the one great fact to be taken away after this book has been read is this: in Ireland to-day men are fighting for freedom, men are suffering for freedom, men are dying for freedom.

These are our people. One may be moved by the struggle of the Cypriots, the Algerians or the Hungarians. But these are OUR PEOPLE in Occupied Ireland who are fighting tyranny. Let us stand by them. It is a little thing to ask.

This book is about the men who are fighting for freedom in Inland to-day.

J. McGarrity - December 1957

### **1 —Ireland Today**

On December 12, 1956, a full-scale revolt broke out in Irish-Occupied Ireland. British statesmen thought the Irish question had been decently buried with the Partition Act of 1920, the 1921 Treaty and the 1925 Boundary Agreement. But here it was back in the mainstream of world events demanding an answer from the sponsors of the “final Irish settlement”—the British imperial Government itself.

The “final Irish settlement” was no settlement at all but a piece of political sharp practice to postpone a harsh fact—that is the unwillingness of the Irish people to be ruled any longer by British Imperialism. The way out for that Imperialism was to carve the country into Occupied and allegedly free zones. The former was called Northern Ireland and embraced the six northern-eastern counties of Ulster. The remaining twenty-six counties were called first; The Irish Free State, then (in 1938) Eire, and finally (in 1949) The Republic of Ireland.

Occupied Ireland continued as an integral part of the United Kingdom. The local legislature at Stormont Castle, near Belfast had limited powers in all matters except the administration of justice. It administered little justice to the one-third Nationalist population except a set of totalitarian Acts (called the Special Powers Bill) as inhuman as the Nuremburg Decrees of Hitler’s Third Reich.

The Unionist party ruled. This grouping is a thinly disguised branch of the British Tory party. The disguise is for the benefit of Belfast Protestant industrial workers who vote for it because they have been told for generations that in a united and free Ireland they would be swallowed up (perhaps even literally) by their Catholic

fellow-countrymen, the Irish Hierarchy and maybe even the Pope of Rome.

The Unionist vote is secured by the Orange Order, a semi-religious body, through which the Tory linen and shipbuilding barons and the Ulster landlords maintain their power and privileges. The Lodges of the Orange Order also supply a steady flow of recruits to the B-Special Constabulary, a body we shall deal with more thoroughly in later pages.

The Orange Order came into being in 1795 as a weapon to destroy the Presbyterian United Irishmen of the north. British Imperialism has used it as a medium of propaganda and an instrument of dissention ever since. The Presbyterians were won to its ranks after the Act of Union and during the rise of Daniel O'Connell's Repeal Association. There have been occasional acts of rebellion within the Orange fold itself, notably back in 1905 when the Independent Orange Lodges issued a manifesto to the Irish people calling on them to stand by their country.

"Irishmen," this manifesto ran, have never learned to think nationally, but have involved, with disastrous results, the intervention of external influences, instead of appealing to the latent spirit of Irish patriotism and citizenship."

The Ascendancy class took fright and scattered the rebels. There has been little display of the national spirit since.

Actually, the Ulster Protestant is no more loyal to the British Crown than his Nationalist neighbour. But he has been reared on shibboleths and fed with bigotry. And he lives in genuine fear that an independent and united Ireland would mean rule by the Catholic Bishops. To keep him thinking this way is good policy from the point of view of British Imperialism. And it is good policy from the point of the Ulster Ascendancy who depend on Britain for their wealth.

The combination insures the division of the Irish people. Without that kind of insurance British rule in Ireland would be in a very bad way indeed.

For the outsider getting at the facts of the Irish situation is always difficult. So difficult indeed that few even bother. Censorship and propaganda are the stock-in-trade of all occupying powers. And in such matters British experience in Ireland is fairly exhaustive. It should be, after almost 800 years.

Back around the turn of the century, Arthur Griffith, a founder of Sinn Fein and later one of the signatories of the 1921 treaty complained of the “paper wall” Britain built around Ireland. Griffith was a journalist himself and knew something about this “paper wall.” On the outside, Griffith said Britain wrote what she wanted the world to know about Ireland. On the inside she wrote what the Irish should know about the world. Either way precious little was written on the walls and that little was distorted. The outer “paper wall” still remains.

There were times, however, when neither censorship nor propaganda could muffle the rumble of Irish events from the ears of the world. And there were many such rumblings. Mostly they coincided with periods of armed revolts: 1798, 1848-49, 1916, 1918-21. These revolts were directed against British rule. The Irish people wanted independence. They wanted to be masters in their own house.

On December 12, 1956, as noted, another such rumbling reached the ears of a world grown tired of talk about armed revolts. Asia was in ferment. The uprising of the Kenyan people had been put down with fierce savagery by Britain. In Malaya, a jungle war had plodded its way through nine years. In Hungary, the people had risen against their Russian occupiers and the world press was full of the story. And then guns went off on an ice-cold winter’s morning in Occupied Ireland.

The new campaign brought the Irish question to the fore. It showed again the deep hatred of oppression, the yearning for freedom that has characterised Irish history. The Six-County Premier, Lord Brookeborough, and the 26-county Prime Minister, Mr. J. A. Costello, did their best to hide the gravity of the situation. Britain described it as a flash-fire which would be doused in no time at all. At the time of writing, one year later almost, it is still going strong and, if anything, is gathering strength. Mass internments north and south of the border could not stop the revolt. Belfast-packed juries didn’t stop it. The condemnation of scores of young Irish Republican Army freedom fighters (a term popular when put on Hungarians but decidedly unpopular when applied to Irishmen fighting British Imperialism) to hundreds of years imprisonment, didn’t break the revolt.

A pre-dawn swoop in one county alone netted 145 prisoners for the security forces of the British Crown. They had been taken from their beds and many had to be later released since they obviously had no connection with the fight. Two-nights later in that same county there were three attacks on British Occupation forces.

At this time it became obvious to thinking people that there was something behind this revolt that wasn't going to be snuffed out by jail sentences, torture of prisoners, threats of death sentences and mobilisation of British forces. Brookeborough and his Ascendancy clique took fright. Within a few weeks of the revolt breaking out, the Six-County Premier went on the air in Britain and solemnly told his listeners that in Occupied Ireland lived only "Englishmen, Scotsmen and Welshmen." Not an Irishman in the bunch. Brookeborough's real fear was that he might be deserted by the British Government. He was reassured on this point by no less a person than the former Chichele Professor of the History of War at Oxford University, Capt. Cyril Falls. In an estimate of the Ulster situation Falls wrote in the "Daily Telegraph" (Oct. 17/57):

"A long time has elapsed since there has been the slightest wobbling in a British Government and the curious thing that this was Conservative, the Baldwin Government. The Labour Government did not wobble. Mr. Morrison, backed by Mr. Attlee, was stalwart, fortified by the lessons of war. There is no weakness now."

The uninitiated may find this puzzling. By "wobbling Captain Falls means doubt on the part of the British Government as to whether they should do the right thing and get out of Ireland and leave the country to the Irish, or stay on regardless. He, of course, expects them to stay on and show "no weakness now."

But on other points Falls was not reassuring—from Brookeborough's position that is. He wrote: "The evil (he is referring to the Campaign of Resistance) still exists. It is resolutely faced but it may worsen before it is cured."

Speaking in Sheffield, England, on October 12, 1957, Lord Brookeborough himself was not over-reassuring. Noting that more than 200 major attacks had been made by the Resistance in ten months and as many minor ones he went on to say:

"The I.R.A.'s campaign of terrorism may continue during the winter—but it will fail—as it has always failed, to dent the armour of a people strong in their loyalty to the Crown and certain that only in association with Britain can their true destiny be fulfilled."

The 26-County External Affairs Minister, Mr. Frank Aiken speaking in Leinster House (the 26-County Parliament) on October 23 on a motion calling for United Nations observers to visit the occupied part of the country and for a plebiscite of the Irish people under U.N. auspices, said "It must be said to Britain and everybody else, that partition must be ended some day and that there would be no

rest until it was ended." He said that all that was wanted from Britain in Ireland was what Britain was demanding from Russia for Germany.

On the Resistance in the north Mr. Aiken had this to say:

"It was a fact that there were young men—and some not so young—who had arrogated to themselves the right to settle that matter by force of arms. The reason that these men had taken up arms was the refusal of the British Government to accept for this country what it demanded for Germany. It was the British which were responsible for arrogating to themselves the right to take six counties of this country for their own ends."

After ten months it had become apparent to all that the Resistance wasn't going to be liquidated by talk of "cross border raiders." It was becoming apparent that the "evil" which Captain Falls wrote of (he meant the Resistance) still existed, and would continue to exist, as long as British forces of Occupation remain on Irish soil. And it was becoming more and more obvious that even were this Resistance to be beaten and now, some future generation would rise up to challenge Britain's right to rule in Ireland.

It had taken ten months to drive these facts home. The Costello administration had first moved against Republicans in January, 1957 when scores were jailed on charges of "not accounting for their movements," "membership an illegal organization," "possession of documents" and so forth. After the July 4 Forkhill ambush in Armagh, the new de Valera Government re-invoked war-time powers of internment and eventually put 125 in the Curragh Concentration Camp — including almost the Ard Comhairle (Executive) of Sinn Fein. During the summer and autumn of 1957, Stormont and Dublin Castle vied with one another in arresting Republicans and indeed co-operated many instances.

By October, more than 250 were held in Belfast Prison and long-range swoops occurred nightly in nearly all Nationalist areas of Occupied Ireland. Arms dumps and Dug-outs were found. Ceaseless interrogations of prisoners occurred. There were some bad cases of beatings by police. Long terms of imprisonment were handed out by the authorities in Belfast. The Lord Chief Justice threatened death. Top level security conferences were held with British Senior officers in attendance. Press releases to news told of extraordinary security precautions being taken by the Occupation forces.

Within week new attacks broke throughout the area and a state bordering on hysteria seized the Occupation authorities. Their

official announcements and the speeches of their official spokesmen were contradictory.

They had the press of Britain and the Six Counties on their side. Little news about events in the north came to the people of the 26-Counties because of the terms of the Offences Against the State Acts (1939/40). They had Britain's armed might on their side in the shape of concentrated military, naval and air bases. They had the full force of the Special Powers Act. They had the militarised and mechanised R.U.C.-Commandos, the B-Specials, the ordinary armed R.U.C. and the Orange Lodges.

They used this total power against what they called an unrepresentative" Resistance Movement and still, as the months went by, this Resistance Movement grew in strength. Many people began to ask "Why?"

To understand the "why" one must understand the background to the Irish question. This work will try to fill in that background.

## **2—Revolt in the North**

In the early hours of December 12, 1956, some 20 British Occupation installations were attacked in the Six Counties, bridges were blown, arms and explosives were seized, roads were blocked, communications cut and a general alarm was sent from Belfast to London and to all British ground, air and naval forces in the area. Simultaneously walls and buildings throughout the Occupied zone were plastered with the following proclamation:

"Spearheaded by Ireland's freedom fighters, our people in Six Counties have carried the fight to the enemy. They are direct victims of British Imperialism and they are also the backbone of the national revolutionary resurgence.

This is the age old struggle of the Irish people versus British aggression. This is the same cause for which generations of our people have suffered and died. In this grave hour, all Irish men and women, at home and abroad, must sink their differences, political or religious, and rally behind the banner of national liberation.

We call on Irishmen in the British armed forces to stand by the motherland and refuse to bear arms against their countrymen. We call on members of the R.U.C. and B-Special Constabulary to cease being tools of British Imperialism and either stand one side or join us in the fight against tyranny. We warn them that should they reject this plea they will be

adjudged renegades by the Irish people and treated accordingly by the Resistance Movement.

This is the fight of the Irish Nation struggling to be free and in it all Irish men and women must play their part. They must recognise too that we want no aid from any foreign power and have received none and that in the final analysis it is the Irish people themselves—by their sacrifices, their endurance and their will to victory—who must free Ireland.

The whole of Ireland — its resources, wealth, culture, history and tradition—is the common inheritance of all our people regardless of religious belief. The division of this country by Britain, and its subjection to British political control in the north, and to British economic domination in the south, must now be ended forever. It is up to this generation of Irish men and women to resolve for all time our unity, independence, and freedom from foreign domination. The alternative, if the present situation continues, is extinction as a nation.

The foe will use his considerable resources to divide us by fanning the fires of bigotry and sectarianism — twin enemies of Irish Republicanism. Let us be on our guard~ a free Ireland cannot tolerate the one or the other.

Out of this national liberation struggle a new Ireland will emerge, upright and free. In that new Ireland we shall build a country fit for all our people to live in.

That then is our aim; an independent, united, democratic Irish Republic. For this we shall fight until the invader is driven from our soil and victory is ours.”

The attacks ranged from the British air and radar installation at Torr Head in Co. Antrim, round the 300-mile long line to Derry where a second radar station at Barricault was blasted, the B.B.C. relay transmitter station in Derry City blown up, and a courthouse at Magherafelt gutted.

Military posts. Government buildings and other centres were hit. Roads were blocked and bridges destroyed. Communications throughout the area were cut. Running gun-battles took place in towns and villages with British soldiers. R.U.C. and B-Specials.

In Armagh City the British military garrison barracks was attacked. An R.U.C. Constable was wounded when a police patrol opened fire on two Irish freedom fighters in a parked van. In Newry, a B-Special training hut was destroyed. A new Territorial Army

Barracks was blasted at Enniskillen, Co. Fermanagh. In the same county two bridges across the Erne—the Lady Brooke bridge near Derrylin and the Cary Bridge at Inishowen Island—were blown. In Newtownbutler, R.U.C. and B-Specials fired on freedom fighters but their fire was returned and they withdrew.

Two bridges over the Bann—linking Antrim with Derry— were cut. In all centres magazines of explosives were seized. The biggest hauls were in Fermanagh where more than 1.000 pounds of gelignite was taken and at Goraghwood, Co. Down.

In Antrim, 3,000 troops, R.U.C. and B-Specials set up what they called “ a ring of steel” around the Ballycastle area of North Antrim mountains. They carried out a field-by-field, farm-by-farm search with spotter planes and tracker dogs. Three freedom fighters were arrested after mistaking an R.U.C. patrol car (it was a private car) for one of their own and the gun-battle which followed thwarted the attack and scattered the Column.

On December 13 the Inspector-General of the R.U.C., Sir Richard Pim, was informed by the Resistance Movement that contrary to the demand of the Proclamation of December 12, R.U.C. and B-Specials had participated in attacks on freedom fighters, co-operated in searches and acted as guides for the military.

On December 14 backing up this warning, R.U.C. garrisons in the Co. Fermanagh area were attacked, roads were blocked, communications cut, and two bridges between Maguiresbridge and Lisnaskea were destroyed. The R.U.C. posts hit included Lisnaskea itself where a major attack was put in. and Derrylin. A diversionary attack occurred at Roslea.

From London came word of pressure on the Dublin Government. One London evening paper noted editorially that “Northern Ireland was as British as Surrey.” On December 13, police headquarters in Dublin announced:

“As far as we know the matter has begun and ended in the North. We have no confirmation of any vehicles or persons concerned in the incidents having crossed into the Republic afterwards.”

Next day the Dublin Government announced that more troops and police would be sent to the border.

Stormont Home Affairs Minister Topping declared: “It is astonishing that those who are responsible for these acts of violence have not yet learned that bullets cannot shoot beliefs. We believe in Britain and the British way of life. We are British, and British we will remain.”

On December 18, the British Ambassador in Dublin handed, what a Belfast Tory newspaper described as “a note . . . couched in fairly stiff language” to the 26-County External Affairs Minister. The note might have been more severe, said the Belfast newspaper, but for Mr. Costello’s statement condemning the attacks.

On December 19, Deputy Jack McQuillan urged Mr. Costello to stop using “military and Gardai as instruments of British policy” in Ireland. On December 16-17 thirteen men were arrested in a farmhouse at Knockatallon, on the Monaghan-Fermanagh border. Military surrounded the disused house where the unarmed men were sleeping. They were later released because, as a Government announcement said they carried no arms and they had no documents in their possession.

These dates are significant. Mr. Costello’s statement on December 14 had made it clear that military and police were being sent to the border. Yet on December 18, the British Ambassador found it necessary to call again on Mr. Cosgrove, the External Affairs Minister, to hand him a British Government note “couched in fairly stiff language.” Obviously the London Government wasn’t satisfied that Mr. Costello was doing enough to help them put down the Resistance in Occupied Ireland.

Now comes the most significant item of all.  
December 19, Prime Minister Sir Anthony Eden rose in the London House of Commons to make the following statement:

In the Ireland Act, 1949 the Parliament of Westminster declared Northern Ireland to be an integral part of the United Kingdom. This is a Declaration which all parties in this House are pledged to support. The safety of Northern Ireland and its inhabitants is therefore a direct responsibility of Her Majesty’s Government; which, they will, of course, discharge.”

And the British Premier went on even more significantly:

“Immediately after the outbreak of violence on December 12, Her Majesty’s Ambassador in Dublin arranged to see the Republican Minister for External Affairs to obtain further information from him and to express the serious view which Her Majesty’s Government would be bound to take of these events.

As the house will know on December 14, the Republican Government issued a statement on their own initiative which they said that they had determined to take in conjunction

with the police and Defence Forces of the Republic such steps as they deemed necessary and appropriate to prevent activities which if they were allowed to continue would inevitably cause loss of life”

Now that was on December 14, but the British Ambassador had to call again on December 18 - because the British Government did not consider that the steps taken meantime were “appropriate.”

Sir Anthony went on: “In the light of this Her Majesty’s Government decided to direct Her Majesty’s Ambassador to deliver a communication expressing their very great concern at the recent incidents in Northern Ireland and the hope that the important objectives which the Republican Government had proclaimed in their statement would be effectively and successfully secured.”

It was after this that Mr. Costello brought into force Part One of the Offences Against the State Acts (1939/40), obviously in compliance with the wishes of the British Government. The British Prime Minister had made it clear that

1. Northern Ireland was part of the United Kingdom and therefore would be “safeguarded” by the British.
2. The Ireland Act, 1949 made it an integral part of the United Kingdom for all time—or until the Tory party at Stormont decided to change the status, which would amount to the same thing.
3. The 26-County Government was not taking effective and successful steps to stop the revolt.

On the same day Lord Brookeborough, the Stormont Premier, told his Assembly: “. . . at least we know there is now a full appreciation of our situation, with the undertaking we will be protected like any other part of the United Kingdom.”

And that evening in Dublin, Mr. Costello announced that his use of troops and Gardai along the border was “to safe-guard the institutions of this State.”

Who was endangering the institutions of the 26-County State? The Resistance in the Six Counties? Surely not. Surely it had enough on hands attacking the “institutions” of the British Occupation authorities? Who then?

The Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland noless. That was the point the Irish had reached after 35 years savouring their “measure of freedom” from British rule.

### **3—They Keep Faith**

Christmas 1956 in Occupied Ireland....

Lord Brookeborough went to Britain and made speeches on the grave situation facing the British in Ireland. He held press interviews. He urged the British people not to let down the Ascendancy class in Occupied Ireland.

He appeared on a B.B.C.-Television programme to urge his viewers on to greater heights of patriotic intensity for the good of British Imperial rule in Ireland. Then dramatically he announced that just before he came on the air an R.U.C. patrol had been ambushed near his own country seat in Co. Fermanagh and a Constable had been shot. He called for military action by the United Kingdom Government.

The ambush he spoke of was interesting from another point of view. The R.U.C. patrol was fired on by a party of jittery B-Specials. The truth was never released to- the British public-or indeed to the Irish public.

On December 21-22 some 30 men were arrested throughout the Occupied area and lodged in Belfast Prison without charge or trial. Every county in the north was represented in the dragnet. Day by day more arrests were made.

On Dec. 31, Derrylin (Co. Fermanagh) R.U.C. Barracks was attacked again by freedom fighters. In the battle which followed an R.U.C. Constable was killed. Throughout the Occupied area other attacks took place.

Some of the toughest Resistance struggles now occurred in Fermanagh. At night no one moved on the roads— British military, R.U.C. or B-Specials. Two flying columns of fighters operated there, one in North Fermanagh and the other in South Fermanagh. The main Nationalist areas (Fermanagh is a predominantly Nationalist County) had their local units. They moved freely at night. The British garrisons stayed in their barracks and waited.

On New Year's Day, 1957, the North Fermanagh Resistance column attacked Brookeborough R.U.C. Barracks two hours after dusk had fallen on the town. Their mines failed to explode. They were raked with machine-gun fire. Two men died. Four others were badly wounded. The column moved across Slieve Beagh in a grueling night march, dumped its arms and scattered. The wounded men were attended to and aid was summoned.

Police and military of the 26-Counties came instead. In all, 13 members of the column were arrested including the wounded. They

were taken to the Bridewell, Dublin, held under the Offences Against the State Act, sentenced to six months imprisonment in Mountjoy, and transferred to the Curragh concentration Camp within a few days of completing the sentence.

The men who died at Brookeborough were Sean Sabhat and Fergal O'Hanlon. Sean Sabhat, a 28-year-old native of Limerick and an Irish scholar, was killed outright while manning a machine-gun from an open truck. Fergal O'Hanlon was wounded about the legs, lost consciousness and was taken with Sean Sabhat to a byre where his enemies found him. He died later and his comrades believe he was killed when R.U.C., B-Specials and British military came on him where he lay with his dead section leader.

Fergal, a native of Monaghan town, was only 20 when death came to him as he faced the enemies of his people and country in Occupied Ireland. He had been with the column only a short time and this was his first engagement.

Brookeborough seemed a defeat for the Resistance because two fine men lost their lives there. But it was a turning-point in the struggle. The Irish people now saw more clearly the issues involved. The funerals of the two martyrs were the largest seen in Ireland for years. In Limerick 50,000 turned out to pay tribute to Sean Sabhat.

An editorial in *The Kerryman* summed up the feelings of most Irish people. It was called "Nobody Can Deny" and its opening paragraphs ran:

"The Government and the Opposition cannot ignore the spontaneity with which the people turned out in huge numbers to pay funeral tributes to Sean Sabhat and Fergal O'Hanlon. If transport difficulties were not present it is safe to say that these tributes would have been on a far larger scale. Funeral tributes can mean much or little, but nobody can deny the fact that on occasions they have proved turning points in Irish history—O'Donovan Rossa's and Thomas Ashe's to name two.

Sabhat and O'Hanlon, young men of exemplary lives, imbued with the very highest of patriotic motives have gone down to early graves because they believed that physical force, as the last resort, was the only means by which the unity of the country could be effected. They paid for their beliefs with their lives. Others may follow them into the grave; certainly others will spend a goodly fraction of their lives behind prison walls for holding similar ideas about the partition of their country.

Their deeds and their memories will be honoured by a virile, uncompromising section of our people. Rightly or wrongly, they are determined that this question of partition will not be relegated or ignored.

They intend to keep it in the forefront by drawing violent attention to it and accepting the consequences of doing so.

It was a remarkable performance of Mr. Costello to speak for 18 minutes on Sunday on the subject of armed attacks on the Six Counties without once referring to the presence there of British armed forces or to the fact that the Six-County Government could not exist unless it were heavily subsidised by Britain. Occupying forces are not welcome in any country.”

For the remainder of January, 1957, large-scale arrests of Republicans occurred in the 26 Counties. They faced the usual set of charges: not accounting for their movements, possession of documents, membership of illegal organizations, and so forth. The sentences varied from two to six months imprisonment. There were protests from many quarters but the Dublin Government ignored them.

But despite the mass arrests north and south the Resistance continued. The attacks became more widespread although on a smaller scale than during the December-January period.

The story of Irish Resistance to British aggression began to reach the ears of the world. News correspondents came from the U.S.A., Canada, Australia, many European countries as well as Britain. Some of them searched diligently for the facts. Others had preconceived notions about what was happening and had these prejudices strengthened in London, Belfast and Dublin.

It was not easy to get the Resistance side of the story because the Resistance was underground and difficult to reach. The scattered nature of the Irish countryside made it difficult to dig deep for the truth and only in the rural areas of the north would they find that truth where the strength of the Resistance lay. In the towns, if they did get to the people, the latter would be too afraid of the authorities to talk.

And so what the world was told was most often incorrect. The world was told of raids across the Irish border—of getting that this border was not an Irish border but one dividing Ireland. The actions and speeches of the Costello Government in Dublin and Mr. de Valera’s Opposition Party confirmed the border raid stories. And the legend grew.

Forgotten was the tortured background to the crisis in Irish affairs. Forgotten or never known was the story of how, against the wishes of the Irish people, England cut their land in two and carved herself an enclave in the north-eastern section aided by the Ascendancy landlords and industrial barons who based their strength on the Orange Lodges who in turn based theirs on fear and prejudice and petty privileges.

But, as the Resistance continued over the months, it began to dawn on many that there was more to this story than cross-border raiding. As there was indeed; a great deal more.

#### **4—Operation Harvest**

On the night of January 8, 1957, 26-County mobile police patrols chased a car through three border towns and across the Six County concession road which was then open to general traffic and so to the town of Belturbet, Co. Cavan. The occupants of the hunted car were unaware that they being chased until police blocked their way, and they were seized.

Subsequently two of the men were tried in a Dublin court under the Offences Against the State Acts (1939/40). In the home of one was found a 15-page typewritten code-named "Operation Harvest," and defined as "a general directive for a Guerrilla Campaign."

In fact the document was not what the State purported it to be. The Resistance build-up in the Occupied area had been going on for a long time. This particular document was an earlier outline on which a general plan of campaign he based. However, it sufficed for the 26-County to strike a blow at the Resistance, for it named targets to be attacked and suggested the general lines of organisation of the guerrilla forces.

There is no doubt about it: it was a Cabinet decision to release the document. In this way the terms of Sir Anthony Eden's declaration on the "effective and successful" destruction on of the Resistance were being carried out. This was co-operation indeed.

Objection was raised to the reading of the document and the District Justice asked if it was necessary to release it publicly since the defendant took responsibility for it. The prosecutor, from the Chief State Solicitor's Office, said he had been instructed to read it.

The instructions came from the 26-County Attorney-General who was acting on the orders of the 26-County Government.

The man from the Chief State Solicitor's Office also denied that publication of the document would affect young Irishmen fighting

for freedom in the north. His answer to that was that it contained no names. When asked: "Why was it necessary to publicise the document?" he again repeated that his instructions were that it should be read.

The Directive dealt with the selection of training grounds for guerrillas, of training organisers for the Occupied area, of a preparatory period of three months intensive course on guerrilla warfare. It named mountainous bases where this training could be carried out.

The document went on to speak of the raising of flying columns to assist local units in the north. Four of these columns would be ready when operations opened. Four more columns were to be raised by GHQ later.

The document said the columns should have battle uniforms if possible. The suggested armament for each group was: one Bren gun, ten rifles, 13 sub-machine guns, grenades and explosives. It set out the Resistance forces within the Occupied area and named Derry City, Derry North, Derry South, Derry South-East, East and West Tyrone, Fermanagh South Armagh, North Armagh, South Down, North Antrim and Belfast as their bases.

The mission of these forces, it said, was to cut all communications, telephone, road and rail; destroy all petrol stations and enemy vehicles; hit enemy strategic strong points; strike at their supplies and their administration.

The Campaign of Resistance was divided into phases. In the opening phase the following targets would be hit in each

In Derry City— Lisahally oil refinery, G.N.R. Station and L.M.S. Station, B.B.C. relay transmitter station, Custom House and Tax Office. Derry North — Radar station at Barricault.

Derry South— Destruction of Territorial Army Barracks at Magherafelt and mining power plant in the same town; seizure of Dungiven R.U.C. post; blowing up field guns at Newbridge Airport and destruction of the base itself; blocking of the Derry-Belfast road at Glenshane Pass and preparation of an ambush there; destruction by local units of Ballyroan R.U.C. post and B-Special range.

In Derry South-East— Destruction of bridges across the Bann at Toome, New Ferry, and Portglenone.

Tyrone—Attack on Lisonelly Camp by column combined with attack on Omagh R.U.C. Barracks by local unit. Destruction of R.U.C.

transport. Mine Territorial Army Barracks at Dungannon. Blow up Dungannon petrol installation. Hit Blackwatertown R.U.C. for arms and follow up with ambush at Dunamore.

North Armagh— Destroy Territorial Army Camp telephone exchange at Lurgan. Destroy Portadown rail junction and T.A. exchange at Portadown

North Antrim—Destroy Radar station at Murlough. Take Dunboy quarry for explosives.

South Armagh—Seize Camlough R.U.C. post for arms. Ambush of jeep patrol between Keady and Newtownhamilton junction.

South Down—Destroy Territorial Army station at Newry and burn down courthouse. Destroy Banbridge Territorial army Station. Seize short-wave Radio transmitter in Newry shipping office. Hit Warrenpoint R.U.C. Barracks. Raid Bishops court Radar Station.

All the areas mentioned had code names and all targets likewise. Regions, where the flying columns would operate. were also named.

Further the document said: “Our mission is to maintain and strengthen our Resistance centres throughout the Occupied area. To break down the enemy’s administration until he is forced to withdraw his forces. Our method of doing this is the use of guerrilla warfare within the Occupied area and propaganda directed at the inhabitants.

In time, as we build up our forces, we hope to be in a position to liberate large areas and tie these in with other liberated areas—that is areas where the enemy’s writ no longer runs.”

The document said that operations would be in three phases. These were:

Phase one—one month’s period: destruction of listed targets.

Phase two—three month’s period when we build our forces and continue guerrilla attacks, maintaining ourselves.

Phase three—continuation of the struggle to higher level “when we can co-ordinate our tactics on a more perfect communications basis.”

In an “Analysis of the situation” the document said:

“The Resistance of the people (Nationalist) can be built up by clever propaganda on top of guerrilla successes. From the point of view of guerrilla warfare, the co-operation of the people is essential. If this is lost—or never received—the guerrillas cannot win.”

A second document introduced at the trial and entitled "Outline of Operations to Date" noted:

"Fermanagh experience we can prove that where guerillas are active and aggressive, the enemy grows scared and confused. If we had Fermanagh's activities all over (the Occupied area) we would be in a tremendously strong position in the Six Counties.

We still hold the initiative in all areas, and our limited supplies in most cases remain intact. We got more gelignite than we ever hoped for."

It noted the lessons learned during the campaign and went on:

"The enemy is attempting to say that this resistance is only trans-border raiding and his cry is taken up by the politicians here. For that reason, under no circumstances, will arms be carried in the 26 Counties and the area will only be used in cases of extreme necessity when a column has no other choice but to pull back. In such cases arms will first be dumped in the Six."

The analysis continued:

"The Specials are now practising ambushes so the roads are out. Also we must make greater use of early evening attacks, even, on occasion, daylight attacks. The guerrilla attack cannot still be bettered: that is the covering fire with Brens, the placing of mines, the assault and the withdrawal. Our volunteers must be lectured to in their billets on the campaign. The long withdrawals, the constant moving, may appear to them as pointless. They must understand the enemy's job to hit us. Our job is to draw him out. We are doing that now and are successful. It was said that no column could survive in the Six Counties. We have proved otherwise. The people are behind us. And we must back up their trust."

The publication of this document under the guise of evidence in a court caused anger and dismay among many sections of the population. It was interpreted as a method of informing the British authorities in Occupied Ireland of the general lines of action and planning being followed by the Resistance Movement. But if its intention was to break that Resistance it failed dismally. It certainly retarded the development of the fight.

In other ways, however, its publication was helpful. It showed that the fight in the north was something more than a series of cross-border raids as British and pro-British propaganda attempted to depict it. In its appreciation of the situation—especially in sections which were quite frank as to the difficulties facing the freedom

fighters—it gave the lie conclusively to those who disseminated the “cross-border” cry.

It showed that arms were not carried in the south, that men did not move from bases in the south, that they only retreated to the southern side of the border “in cases of extreme necessity when a column has no other choice but to pull back,” and even then “arms will first be dumped in the Six.”

It also showed the success achieved by the campaign during its first phase: “Targets selected were hit in most cases...we still hold the initiative in all areas...”

And finally: “It was said that no column could survive in the Six Counties. We have proved otherwise. The people are behind us. And we must back up their trust.”

In the British House of Commons, Mr. Knox Cunningham, the Tory M.P. for South Antrim, said that the documents “would show the people of Britain the seriousness of the situation and the planned violence which was being used to attack an integral part of the United Kingdom.” A field artillery regiment was moved into the Six Counties.

One day after the publication of the General Directive, a target listed, Dungannon Territorial Army Barracks was seized by freedom fighters and blasted in two explosions. The Stormont statement put in the now usual bit: “The men made off towards the Border.” The B.B.C. did likewise after putting Dungannon right on the Border. Next day the R.U.C. admitted finding a car which “the raiders used” in a section of Co. Tyrone, north-east of Dungannon – Or in the apposite direction to the Border.

Other targets mentioned in the document were also hit later. They included the blocking of the Derry-Belfast road the Glenshane Pass and the destruction of B-Special training huts.

So publication did not break the morale of the freedom fighters. The mass arrests by the 26-County Government did not break their morale either. They continued to fight. And their Resistance gathered strength as the months went by.

## **5—Our Better Government**

Three nights before Christmas 1919, the British Tory scheme for the partition of Ireland was introduced in the London House of Commons by Prime Minister David Lloyd George. With tongue in cheek he labelled it, “a Bill for the better government of Ireland.” It was not difficult to improve on the military dictatorship at that time governing Ireland by terror but this new device for Imperial control

was approved by the British Parliament during 1920 without reference to Ireland, her people or her representatives.

And yet the wishes of the Irish people were never in doubt. They were not only demanding independence, they were fighting to obtain it. Lloyd George himself was quite emphatic on this point for he told the Commons:

“If you asked the people of Ireland what plan they would accept, by an emphatic majority they would say: ‘We want independence and an Irish Republic.’ There is absolutely no doubt about that. The elected representatives of Ireland now by a clear majority, have declared in favour of independence.”

In 1919, the elected representatives of the Irish people met in Dublin’s Mansion House, established a national assembly called Dail Eireann and issued to the world a Declaration of Independence which took its stand on the 1916 Proclamation of the Irish Republic. It said in part:

“Whereas the Irish people is by right a free people.....and whereas the Irish Republic was proclaimed in Dublin on Easter Monday, 1916, by the Irish Republican Army, acting on behalf of the Irish people.And whereas the Irish people is resolved to secure and maintain its complete independence in order to promote the commonweal, to re-establish justice, to provide for future defence, to ensure peace at home and goodwill with all nations and to constitute a national policy based upon the people’s will with equal opportunities for every citizen.

Now therefore we, the elected Representatives of the ancient Irish people in National Parliament assembled do, ratify the establishment of the Irish Republic and pledge ourselves and our people to make this declaration effective by every means at our command.

We order that the elected Representatives of the Irish people alone have power to make laws binding on the people of Ireland and that the Irish Parliament is the only Parliament to which the people will give its allegiance.”

This Parliament elected a Government and within the apparatus of British administration that Government began to govern—from the underground, from the jails and from the hills. The people built a wall around the Resistance and the Resistance in turn struck back at the British Occupiers and protected the people from their terror. Out of suffering and sacrifice a nation was being built.

Lord Oxford and Asquith noted in a speech at Euston Theatre on February 19, 1921:

“I say deliberately that never in the lifetime of the oldest among us has Britain sunk so low in the moral scale of nations. . . Things are being done in Ireland which would disgrace the blackest annals of the lowest despotism in Europe.”

And yet British terror could not stop the Irish people. Another way had to be found by British Imperialism to bar the rise of a free nation on England’s western flank. It was hoped that Lloyd George’s “Bill for the better Government of Ireland” would do the job. As Sir Winston Churchill noted in his book “The Aftermath”, British Imperial policy would not countenance an independent Ireland. And flow an independent Ireland was almost a reality.

No one in Ireland wanted partition. Not even the Tory Ascendancy clique of north-east Ulster wanted it. They had stirred up the Orange rank and file to stop Home Rule in the years before the First World War and had threatened to form a Provisional Government with the aid of the Kaiser’s Germany. But it was a big bluff to embarrass the ruling Liberal Government and stop Home Rule. Its authors were highly placed British Tories—civil and military—not a grouping of Irish Protestant rebels as the world was told. And now the chief spokesman of that movement, Lord Carson, was saying about partition and the proposed legislature at Stormont: “I know Ulster does not want this Parliament.”

But the British Tories saw in partition the salvation of their rule in Ireland. The task now was to enforce it against the will of the Irish people. The first thing to do was to break down the united resistance of the people by conference and negotiations. The Prime Minister whose Government had forced war on the Irish people now sued for peace. On October 11, 1921, the Anglo-Irish Conference opened in London. It ended seven weeks later with the signing of the Treaty.

The Treaty embodied Lloyd George’s 1920 Partition Act, which provided for two Irish Parliaments (Belfast and Dublin) both subservient to London. Under the Treaty, the Dublin parliament received wider powers and Commonwealth than Provincial status. The Dublin Parliament has extended its powers in the meantime but the essential part of the 1920 Act remains—the partition of Ireland.

The men who signed the Treaty for Ireland gave two reasons doing so:

1. They were threatened by Lloyd George with “immediate and terrible war” unless they signed
2. They were promised a united country when a clause calling for a Boundary Commission to draw the border between Dublin’s 26-Counties and Stormont’s Six into effect.

Michael Collins, who with Arthur Griffith was the main Irish negotiator, explained the second point like this: “...we would save Tyrone and Fermanagh, parts of Derry, Armagh and Down by the Boundary Commission ... Lloyd George it that I myself pointed out on a previous occasion north would be forced economically to come in.”

The areas mentioned in the Collins memo were Nationalist strongholds where the majority of the people wanted Ireland united and free. They were now being forcibly placed under British-Stormont regime. Under the promised Boundary Commission it was believed a plebiscite would be held, these areas would join the 26-Counties, and the remaining Unionist area Belfast would be forced, for economic reasons to join the rest of Ireland.

But the Boundary Commission was a farce (as it was from the beginning) and no plebiscite was ever held. Lloyd George had played his ace of trumps and the Game was his. The Irish people fought a Civil War following the Treaty and some of the greatest of the Resistance heroes gave their lives defending the Republic. Michael Collins also died in that bitter aftermath to the struggle for freedom.

Note here the order of British diplomacy: the big stick and the carrot. Immediate and terrible war—the big stick. A Boundary Commission—the carrot. Britain would have failed had she attempted to force Partition as well as Dominion status on the Treaty delegates. Lloyd George wrote Sir James Craig—afterwards Lord Craigavon, first Premier of Stormont:

“Your proposal would stereotype a frontier based neither on national features nor broad geographical considerations, by giving it the character of an international boundary. Partition on these grounds the Irish people will never accept, neither could we conscientiously attempt to enforce it.”

Partition “on these grounds” of course the Irish people would never accept. But partition on more subtle grounds—on the grounds, for example, of a plebiscite—the political representatives of the Irish people could be fooled into accepting. And that is precisely is what happened. By 1925, the Free State Parliament in Dublin had

ratified the “frontier based neither on national features nor broad geographical considerations.”

When King George V opened the Stormont Parliament in 1921, its first act was to pass a Public Order Bill. Only by coercion and repression could Stormont enforce its rule. The position hasn't changed in this respect. Stormont is still involved in Public Order Bills though it has codified the lot now in the Special Powers Act, which is part of the normal law process in Occupied Ireland.

Under the Special Powers Act the defendant is guilty unless he can prove his innocence. And innocence in Stormont's book means loyalty to Britain. It compels a defendant to incriminate himself and punishes him unless he does so. It allows jailing without charge or trial and for any length of time the Home Affairs Minister deems necessary. It abolishes trial by jury and in special cases even Coroner's inquests. It permits deportation of Six County residents and compels them to reside in one particular area, town or village while reporting to the police daily.

Under the Special Powers Act private correspondence, homes, buildings, bank accounts can be seized at the direction of the Stormont Home Affairs Minister. Homes may be raided without warrant and by force at any time of the day or night. Meetings can be banned, monuments and Memorials destroyed. Among its other attributes the Special Powers Act revives flogging as a punishment. It allows no appeal from its provisions and may deprive a prisoner of his right to see or communicate with a lawyer.

These laws have been termed by the British Civil Liberties Commission as being “contrary to the fundamental principles of democratic government.” Arrest and interrogation procedures have been described by the same Commission as follows:

“Persons arrested or detained, whether under charge or not, been subjected to interrogation frequently of many hours duration by large numbers of police. The prisoner having been questioned as to his name, address and movements by one squad of police is passed on again to other squads by whom the process is repeated. During the interrogation the prisoner is surrounded by his questioners and unsatisfactory replies produce blows. These interrogations are often held late at night and are carried on until the prisoner's strength is well-nigh exhausted.”

The description understates the facts. Despite prosecution threats, prisoners have announced many instances torture from the dock during the trials of the past year. Members of the Royal Ulster Constabulary, a paramilitary force, were the culprits. They, aided by a terroristic and sectarian organisation, organised along military

lines and called the Ulster Special Constabulary (or B-Specials) enforce the Special Powers Act. Sir James Craig once proclaimed that "it is also from the ranks of the Loyal Orange Institution that our splendid Specials have come," leaving no doubt in any one's mind as to their anti-national character. Originally established in 1920, at the same time as the Black-and-Tans, by Sir Hamar Greenwood the Specials operated exclusively in the north. England supplied the money, the arms and the training.

There is also a force called the C-Special Constabulary composed for the most part of superannuated B-men. They supply information and tout on their neighbours. Behind in these forces stands the British Army of Occupation. The latter's task, the G.O.C. British troops in Northern Ireland, Lieut.-Gen. Sir Brian Kimmins, has explained thus

"The police do the job but we back them up. And if there is any trouble, the police will say what they want and we will do it."

Stormont also uses religious discrimination and political gerrymandering to keep the Unionist party in power and to provide a parliamentary front for what is in effect an Ascendancy class dictatorship. Even in industrial Belfast partitionist Labour groups have never been able to oust the Unionists for as a spokesman for one of these groups (Mr. David Jackson) has explained:

"They (the Unionists) know that they will lose seats if they fight it on purely political issues. They have no worthwhile social or economic policies and can get votes only by keeping the old religious animosities alive."

Thus British rule in Occupied Ireland is maintained. But such methods would be ineffective and pointless without the strength of British arms to support them. As the 26-County Prime Minister, Mr. Eamon de Valera, noted in the Dublin Senate in 1939:

"There is not the slightest doubt that if there were not British military forces in those areas, those people would come in with us, and we would certainly take them. Britain, then, cannot wash its hands either of the responsibility for enacting Partition, or of the responsibility for keeping it, particularly in its present form."

However, there is little the 26-County Government can do about these things. Its economy is in a backward state. The main political groups are like the Unionists in that they have no worthwhile social or economic policies. Lack of unity and independence thwart every forward move. The British threat of immediate and terrible war still

seems to haunt the Dublin Government. We have already referred to the events of January and July 1957 when, in response to a note delivered by Her Majesty's Ambassador, scores of Irish Republicans were flung into jail and Concentration Camp. Mr. De Valera, in justification, has explained to foreign newsmen that as long as Ireland is divided democracy will of necessity be limited not only in the north but in the south also.

## **6—Guerrilla Warfare**

A people cannot be conquered by physical power alone. The British Conquest never succeeded in Ireland and the long struggle for freedom of the Irish people proves that. And its essence is this: the determination of the Irish people to be free. In Ireland to-day, the British Occupation authorities have been forced to admit that the Resistance Movement is now stronger than it was on December 12, 1956.

The General Officer Commanding Northern Ireland District, Lieut.-General Sir Brian Kinimins, said on October 31, 1957, that Occupied Ireland could catch fire if it were allowed to as in the 1920s. It was not yet another Cyprus, the General said, but it might be. He was referring to the inability of the British authorities to liquidate the Resistance. If he had a little more knowledge of Irish history he would have understood the reason. The Resistance springs from the people and without their support a handful of freedom fighters could not exist three days in the conditions obtaining in Occupied Ireland.

These young freedom fighters are called by their enemies "terrorists," "gangsters," "gunmen," "killers" and other less choice names. The cry is taken up by the elements we in Ireland call the West Briton class: those who though living in Ireland remain pro-Imperialist in their outlook and attitude. To the mass of the Irish people, however, the Resistance has not changed in all the years there has been need for such a movement in Ireland. In 1798 there were the United Irishmen. In 1848 there were the Young Irelanders. In 1867 the Fenians fought for Irish freedom. In 1916 we had the Irish Republican Brotherhood, the Irish Volunteers and the Irish Citizen Army welded together to form the Irish Republican Army which fought Britain to a standstill, from 1918 to 1921. To-day the volunteer freedom fighters of the same organisation carry on the tradition of united struggle, guerrilla warfare and revolt.

Centuries of experience have taught the Irish people that only by guerrilla warfare can a small nation; fighting for its right to live, hope to defeat a vastly superior Imperial enemy. The Guerrillas of to-day are the spearhead of the Resistance in Occupied Ireland. When they strike at the enemy and pull away the people become their protecting shield.

The life of a guerrilla is a hard one. In regular warfare the objective is to destroy the enemy in battle by concentrating superior numbers and armaments at a time and place that will prove decisive. The rest is manoeuvre towards this end. The guerrilla uses surprise to strike his enemy suddenly, disengages and then withdraws to base. He strikes many small blows, gnawing constantly at the enemy's strength. He depends on darkness, mobility, aggressiveness as well as tactical surprise to attain his ends.

The regular soldier is a cog in a vast and intricate machine. The Guerrilla remains an individualist. Unlike the regular soldier he cannot depend on air and ground support, units to his right, left and in reserve, supplies, transport and communications, welfare benefits and pay. He must be elusive, change his tactics constantly, and be independent of terrain and lines of communication. Whatever the price extracted in blood, sweat and sacrifice, he must carry on for between him and the enemy stand only his endurance, determination and the will to win. But these precisely are the qualities that triumph in the end.

The Irish Republican freedom fighter in Occupied Ireland understands the general strategy of the Resistance Campaign. He must cripple the enemy's administration; drain his man-power and resources. He knows that the enemy's job is to liquidate the guerrilla columns for if he fails in this it means that the Resistance is winning. The young Irish freedom fighters of to-day know that the guerrilla columns are growing stronger. He sees this happening around him.

As a member of an Active Service Unit the young guerrilla will be with the Resistance on a full-time basis. But not all guerrillas are members of these units. The majority are local men who work during the day, go about their normal routine, and then strike at night. Their job is to stay constantly on the offensive, keep the enemy off balance and keep him guessing.

The task the Irish guerrilla sets himself is hardly an easy one. Danger follows him like a shadow. He must evade the fine-comb search of the British military, R.U.C. and B Specials. He must hide out patiently through the long, long periods of waiting. He must move from base to base. If he is a member of an Active Service Unit more likely than not his home is a dug-out, a hole in the ground where ventilation is limited and where the foul air he breathes will come late from his mouth in still fouler breath. Like a rabbit he burrows deep under the ground. These dug-outs are not resting places primarily. Training goes on. Political education goes on. Operations are planned. Past mistakes are analysed. An iron discipline prevails because security requirements demand this.

The guerrilla seldom strikes at the same target twice running. He cuts communications, raids enemy bases, ambushes enemy patrols and convoys. He deceives the enemy as to his intentions. Movement is on foot over bog, mountain and marshland. Rivers are crossed by fording them. Walls are climbed by scaling silently hand over hand. Roads have to be avoided for at night heavy armored enemy patrols scour them. It is a life of danger and great comradeship and yet a life where morale must be watched closely. A hayshed on a cold night will seem more comfortable than the most luxurious hotel.

What makes for good morale? The freedom fighter's aggressive confidence in his own fighting skill and the historic role he is playing in his people's struggle for freedom. Such pride leads him to do the apparently impossible, to attack apparently impregnable, and to destroy the apparently indestructible. Darkness is the guerrilla's friend. At night the enemy's tremendous superiority in numbers, equipment and communications count for less. Accurate, aimed fire is impossible. The guerrilla force can strike and then dissolve. At another base miles, perhaps days, away they will reassemble.

The Guerilla column is small. Sometimes there are no more than a dozen men; sometimes there are as many as 25 or 30. The strength depends on the operation, the terrain and the people. The men are trained to work as a team. The basic unit is the battle-team of two men with one in a position to cover the advance or withdrawal of the other. Two battle-teams with a section leader make up a section. There can be any number of sections in a column.

Surprise is the column commander's secret weapon allowing him to use small forces to strike big blows. His tactics are fluid but he follows a battle-drill for operations by splitting his column in two groups: an assault group and cover group. The former blasts its way forward by using explosives, grenades, sub-machineguns under cover of the latter's withering machine-gun fire. The battle will seldom last more than five or ten minutes.

The British Occupation forces have used many stratagems to counter the guerrillas. They have cratered many roads and blocked almost all the rest. Patrol check-points guard the entrances to towns and villages. Curfew, a standard weapon of occupying authorities, has also been used in Occupied Ireland. A mass round-up of local youths occurs after operations, and great efforts are made to encircle columns. British military provide the cordons, the R.U.C. Commandos are the flying wedges, and B-Specials act as local guides.

Enemy success has been relatively small. Some dug-outs and arms-dumps have been taken. But the successes can hardly be said to be commensurate with the forces involved or the time spent. As well, many civilians have been wounded by the road-patrols and enemy prestige has suffered accordingly. In the Resistance, great care is exercised to safeguard civilian life. At least one ambush almost failed because a civilian walked into the line of fire at the last moment and as the patrol sped by. Since the campaign opened no civilian has lost his life as a result of Resistance activities.

Despite this the terms terrorist and terror gangs have been employed by news-correspondents who, though not British propagandists themselves, are the victims of British propaganda. Neither the structure, spirit, outlook, methods of warfare or programme of the Resistance is terrorist. Their job is to combat the terrorism of foreign oppression. They are a People's Army in the real sense of the term for they are recruited from the people, are aided and sheltered by the people and fight in the interests of the people. They are an underground army with their own battle-teams, sections, columns, units, GHQ, chain of command and elected control.

The organisation's Constitution has been published and available to the general public. The supreme authority is the annual delegate Convention which elects an Executive of 12 and six substitutes. The Executive in turn elects a Council of seven to deal with general policy, overall planning and strategy. Heading the General H.Q. staff of five departments (Administration, Intelligence, Operations and Training, Supply and Publicity) is the Council-appointed Chief of Staff who selects his Department Directors and puts their names to the Council for ratification. G.H.Q. implements the Council's decisions and carries on the day-by-day staff work of the Resistance.

The Republican Movement aims at securing the unity, independence and sovereignty of the Republic of Ireland as proclaimed in 1916. It also aims to secure the civil and religious liberty and equal rights and opportunities of all Ireland's people. Guerrilla warfare is the weapon used in this struggle. Freedom fighters do not strike at individual members of the British garrison although they reserve the right to take reprisals. Their operations are planned on a long-term basis. They are the enemies of British rule in Ireland and they typify the determination of the Irish people to be free.

They take their stand on the Proclamation of 1916:

"We declare the right of the people of Ireland to the ownership of Ireland, and to the unfettered control of Irish destinies, to be sovereign and indefeasible. The long

usurpation of that right by a foreign people and Government has not extinguished the right, nor can it ever be extinguished except by the destruction of the Irish people.

In every generation the Irish people have asserted their right to national freedom and sovereignty six times during the past three hundred years they have asserted it in arms. Standing on that fundamental right and again asserting it in arms in the face of the world, we hereby proclaim the Irish Republic at a sovereign independent State, and we pledge our lives and the lives of our comrades-in-arms to the cause of its freedom, of its welfare, and of its exaltation among the nations.”

It was signed by Thomas J. Clarke, P. H. Pearse, Sean MacDiarmada, Thomas MacDonagh, James Connolly, Eamonn Ceannt. Joseph Mary Plunkett. They gave their lives for It.

As may be seen from the above the Resistance Movement is thoroughly democratic in character and outlook. Its organisation is geared to fit the requirements of guerrilla warfare. It is highly disciplined. All these facts are known to the Irish people for revolutionary Republicanism is not new to them. They know that the Irish freedom fighters of to-day are fighting for the establishment in Ireland of true democracy where the ownership and control of the country will be in the hands of those who live here - the Irish people themselves. It is a cause worth fighting for.

### **7—In Preparation**

Dressed in the uniforms of British Army Territorials, 15 men on a quiet sunny Saturday afternoon on June 13, 1954, seized, held and raided the fortress-like Gough Barracks, Armagh, taking with them 340 rifles, 50 Sten guns, 12 Bren guns, and an assortment of drill purpose weapons. It was the biggest arms-haul from a British Occupation Barracks since the days of the Black-and Tans. It put weapons in the hands of Irishmen eager to end British rule in their country.

Three years previously almost to the day (June 6, 1951) Ebrington Barracks, Derry City, was raided in broad day-light when the local Territorial Battalion's Armoury was entered and a quantity of arms and ammunition taken. Although 11 men were later held for questioning in Derry, no charges were preferred against them and no other arrests were made. This Ebrington raid put arms in the hands of Irishmen in Occupied Ireland— for training and so that others could be trained as time went by.

The period of preparation was on. Arms for training; arms for use; and later ammunition was to come. Britain was to supply the

armaments with which she was later to be fought when the tactics of guerrilla warfare would be utilised to drive her forces out of Ireland. But many men would pay with their freedom and lead felons' lives before that day would dawn.

Shortly before 3 p.m. that Saturday afternoon in Armagh City, a civilian strolled up to the gates of the British military Depot and asked the sentry on duty how he would go about joining the army. While the sentry called another to answer the question, he was overpowered, the guard was taken, the main gates were opened, a cattle-lorry rolled through to the Armoury 200 yards away. Two British officers who came to investigate the occurrence were arrested, sentries were posted by the attackers, the truck was filled and ten minutes later, raiders, lorry and arms were gone.

All available British troops, R.U.C. and B-Specials were alerted and warnings were flashed to all stations. In Portadown, eight miles away, the British Governor-General of Occupied Ireland, Lord Wakehurst, with senior army officers in attendance, was receiving an official welcome. In Dublin, enjoying a quiet week-end, the Officer Commanding Gough Barracks was visiting friends. An embarrassed British Army was forced to admit that this was the most daring, well-planned, efficiently-executed coup they had ever been subjected to in north-east Ireland.

The R.U.C. said it had all the hallmarks of "being carefully planned and organised." It took place at a time when arms had been called into the armoury for an Ordnance check-up. Most of the officers and men were on week-end leave and the garrison was at minimum strength.

The exploit seized the imagination of the Irish people. Public bodies passed resolutions of praise. The Dublin Government was told to adhere strictly to a policy of non co-operation with the British Occupation authorities. Lord Justice Porter told Armagh Assizes that the Armagh raid was "an irregular military adventure against a portion of her Majesty's dominions which amounted almost to an international incident."

Four months later, on October 17, 1954, the headquarters of the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers at Omagh, one of the largest barracks in the United Kingdom, was entered and almost taken after a small party of Volunteers scaled the and seized a sentry. But the terrified screams of the ungagged sentry raised the alarm and a running gun-battle started which ended 15 minutes later in the wounding of two members of the garrison and two Volunteers. All that day, under driving rain and foul weather conditions, the manhunt was on for the Omagh raiders with Alsatian police dogs, helicopters, the

King's Own Scottish Borderers, R.U.C. and B Specials—all in radio communication. It ended with the capture of eight men.

The Omagh plan to infiltrate the Barracks, take the guard, at the main gates to admit transport and reinforcements, almost succeeded. But in the confusion of the unexpected withdrawal some of the men got separated and had to make their own way to safety. The prisoners were: Tom Mitchell, Philip Clarke, Eamonn Boyce, Paddy Kearney — all of Dublin; Sean O'Hegarty, Liam Mulcahy and Sean O'Callaghan—of Cork City; Jack McCabe of Leitrim. Now they were put on trial, first for attempted murder and later treason-felony.

Eamonn Boyce, the man who led the attack, was sentenced to 12 years penal servitude. The seven others were given 10 years each. Extraordinary precautions were taken by the British authorities during the trial. The prisoners were brought in two convoys from Belfast via a circuitous route to Omagh, with four Crossley tenders, six jeeps and a radio lit in attendance. The prison vans were backed into the door of the courthouse which was ringed by an armed guard. The public was barred from the court. The reporters present had their credentials checked and double-checked. The men were handcuffed in the dock.

The eight refused to plead, made no apologies for their actions, and won the admiration of the Irish people by their stand. Congratulatory resolutions were carried by many County Councils. In Cork, the mover and seconder were Fianna Fail members and a deputy of the same party. Mr. M. J. Corry said as one who believed there was only one way they could recover the Six Counties, he wished to be associated with the vote."

Stormont grew jittery. On December 23, *The United Irishman*" (organ of Irish Republicanism and "Resurgent Ulster" (published in Belfast), were banned in Occupied Ireland. On Christmas Day national collections for the Prisoners' dependants were held throughout the country Cardinal D'Alton, Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All-Ireland, in his Christmas address in St. Patrick's Cathedral, Armagh, said the injustice of Partition was glaring, that it could not continue but every true lover of Ireland should pray that it would end in an atmosphere of goodwill.

"In the years since 1922," said a Republican statement to the Irish people;

"the apparent differences between the political parties in the 26 Counties have become less and less until we have eventually reached the state of almost complete unanimity on

that greatest of national evils—the continued occupation of part of our country by a British Army.

In Leinster House and at their party conventions they have stated their views. They will do nothing to end it and they can do no more than express the hope that at some unspecified time in the future Orangemen will ask for a United Ireland.

But there are men in the Occupied territory who are not satisfied with this policy of laissez-faire. There are men under the heel of British tyranny who are not satisfied to wait 20 or 30 years for that most unlikely change of heart upon which the professional politicians base their hopes for a united Ireland.

The people of Ireland stand once more at the historical cross-roads. Once more for them the hour of decision is at hand. Once more they are asked to decide whether they will give support to those whose only policy is one of mealy-mouthed appeasement and placation or to the men who are pledged to the doctrine of Tone and Emmet and Pearse.”

The policy statement said that no Irishman of any class or creed or political persuasion had anything to fear as long as he gave his first allegiance to our common country. And it went on:

“England still holds part of our land by force and in the 800 years of occupation never once has given the slightest measure of amelioration except under force or the threat of force. The dispassionate, logical conclusion to be drawn from the history of the two countries is that Ireland can only achieve unity and freedom when the whole people of Ireland tell the British Army to get out or be driven out.”

Sinn Fein, the constitutional political wing of the Republican Movement, heard its President, Tomas O’Dubhghaill, tell the annual Ard-Fheis that they would contest all 12 constituencies of Occupied Ireland at the British Imperial General Election. They would enter this contest, he said, demanding the re-establishment of 32-County Republican Parliament. And he explained:

“Their candidates would not take their seats in any other but an All-Ireland Parliament. . . . The urgent purpose of the Irish people should be to get the British Occupation Forces out of the Six County area. As a kernel of the Sinn Fein programme denies the right and opposes the claim of the British Government to rule Ireland or any portion of Ireland, so they were delighted in the fact that there were still men willing to

fight and, if necessary, to die to get the invaders out of their land.”

“We call on all our people.” said Mr. O’Dubhghaill, “to unite with us in our urgent demand: “The British Occupation Forces must go. England get out of our country.”

Easter, 1955, saw the largest Easter Commemoration throughout the land for many years. Speakers stressed the new spirit that had arisen among the people, thanks to the exploits of the previous year and the sacrifices of so many young men. The Easter Statement from the Republican Movement went to great pains to point out a number of errors that had been propagated by those who attacked Irish Republicanism.

Young Irishmen asked to come into its ranks were not joining an oath-bound organisation. All they were asked to do was make a simple declaration saying they would promote the objects of Irish Republicanism and obey their superior officers. They were not joining a secret society every year delegates met in Convention and elected their own controlling body and every year at Easter, members paraded openly and honoured their dead. The Easter statement went on:

“It now remains to place before the young men of Ireland the ideal of service, and to point out to them that the issue is now clearer than ever-Ireland and Ireland’s right to freedom, against England and England’s army of Occupation.”

In the Stormont House of Commons, Home Affairs Minister Hanna asked for £37,000 extra for his Department because during the past year attacks made on military establishments force us to strengthen our security arrangements in certain directions. The money would be needed for arms and ammunition and for the reconstruction of police barracks. He said there were occasional disturbances of the peace brought about by people who wished to attack “our constitutional position.”

In the British House of Commons, Sir Anthony Eden the man who succeeded Sir Winston Churchill as Tory Prime Minister announced that the British General Election would take place on May 26. As part of the United Kingdom, Occupied Ireland sends 12 representatives to Westminster. Sinn Fein Conventions picked candidates for all 12 constituencies. Among them were many of the men seized after the Omagh attack.

### **8—Election By Court Order**

Elections in Occupied Ireland are notorious for a number of reasons including gerrymandering, misrepresentation an

personation. The Tory-Unionist machine is all-powerful and the Orange vote is piled up to the rhythm of the Lambeg drums. The Pope, for some inexplicable reason, enters a lot into such affairs and Stormont spokesmen are apt to come out with such famous quotations as: "This is a Protestant Parliament for a Protestant people." The elections are fought on sectarian not political or economic issues.

Corruption is rife and traditional. Mr. Desmond Donnelly Labour M.P. for Pembrokeshire in the British House of Commons, amused his colleagues in November, 1955, when he told them of some experiences he had in 1949 as British Labour candidate for Down.

"On polling day," he said, "I found myself in a queue which eventually led to an old man sitting at a desk. He said to me: 'You are O'Shaughnessy. You vote for him.'

I replied that I was not O'Shaughnessy, but undeterred, he assured me that it didn't matter as that gentleman was in Liverpool. He added: 'You will vote for the official Unionist candidate.' I said to him: 'You know I'm Donnelly, the Labour candidate.' He took one look at me, jumped to his feet and ran away."

That story, of course, brought laughter to the front and back benches of Her Majesty's Government and Her Majesty's Opposition at Westminster. If it had happened in England it would have resulted in an explosion and demands for an inquiry. But it happened in Ireland, was typically Irish, and therefore highly amusing. The main point about it, though, is that it happened in Ireland in the interests of the British connection and to maintain that connection. That fact takes much of the fun out of it for Irishmen.

For good measure, Occupied Ireland holds two sets of elections. The people vote at the British general election and send 12 members to London. They also vote at the Stormont election. And then a few who have property, vote at the local elections—as often as six times legally if they are big businessmen. On May 26, 1955, they voted at the British general election and Sinn Fein contested every seat in the interests of a united and free Ireland and won 152,310 votes as against the solid Unionist block of 442,647, British Labour's 35,614 and Irish Labour's 16,050. It was a tremendous achievement for Sinn Fein and Irish Republicanism. The result of this election, however, is that 12 Unionists hold 12 Six County seats in the British House of Commons. For those who refuse to go behind the parliamentary screen of the Tory-Unionist dictatorship in Occupied Ireland this may come as something of a

shock. In the interests of democracy it is enlightening to trace how such a one-party state came into being. The May, 1955, British Imperial Elections do not tell the full story, but they throw a neat spotlight on the workings of the democratic process in an area not too far from London and which is inside the United Kingdom.

Sinn Fein nominated Tom Mitchell for Mid-Ulster (North Tyrone and South Derry), Philip Clarke for Fermanagh-South Tyrone, Manus Canning for Derry, Eamonn Boyce for West Belfast, Paddy Kearney for South Belfast, Liam Mulcahy for East Belfast, Frank McGlade for North Belfast. Michael Traynor for South Antrim, Sean Duggan for North Antrim, Joe Campbell for North Down, Kevin O'Rourke for South Down. Tomas MacCurtain for Armagh. Tom Mitchell won Mid-Ulster and Philip Clarke Fermanagh-South Tyrone for Sinn Fein. Tomas MacCurtain received 21,386 votes in Armagh, Kevin O'Rourke got 19,624 in South Down. Manus Canning secured 19,640 in Derry. These last three seats are kept in the Tory-Unionist fold by outright gerrymandering. The other candidates obtained close to the maximum Nationalist votes in their areas.

The Nationalist people of the Six Counties had spoken with a united voice (except for West Belfast where the sitting Irish Labour member, Jack Beattie, was defeated after refusing to withdraw in favour of the Sinn Fein candidate) for the first time since 1918. Factional struggles were put one side. In Newtownbutler, Co. Fermanagh, Very Rev. Canon I. Maguire told his people:

“We have unity and goodwill so far. Let that thought and that alone prevail on polling day. This unity we are prepared to give to Sinn Fein and its policy may avert military force to solve partition. Let us be wise and far-seeing and not blinded by party prejudice.”

Sinn Fein made it amply clear before and during the election campaign that its intention of pursuing its policy would remain unaffected by the results. Its election workers went into Unionist strongholds and brought the national issues before the people. There were few interruptions and the election was conducted in an orderly manner. Personal attacks on opponents were not countenanced. After the election Sinn Fein pointed out that the results would strengthen the determination of our people to continue the effort of establishing and maintaining the sovereign Independence of the Irish nation.

Sinn Fein stated in its election address:

“Ireland and all its resources belongs to the Irish people. Sinn Fein will, with the consent of the Irish people, organise

and develop the resources of the nation for the benefit of its citizens irrespective of class or creed. The continued occupation of Ireland by England makes such development impossible, since England has succeeded in making effective in Ireland the imperial dictum of 'Divide and Conquer, thereby impoverishing not only the Irish people but the material resources of the country as well.

Sinn Fein appeals to all Irishmen to forget past dissensions and to demonstrate by their support of Sinn Fein candidates their opposition to English occupation and their determination to achieve national independence."

The people of Tyrone, Fermanagh, South Derry, Derry City, South Armagh and South Down, made it abundantly clear that they opposed English occupation and were determined to achieve national independence. And it was around these areas that the Resistance Movement was later to build itself and develop. In this British Imperial election they followed a constitutional road but where gerrymandering failed to still their voices the way was blocked by order of the British courts.

In Fermanagh-South Tyrone the courts were petitioned to unseat Philip Clarke as a "convicted felon." The British House of Commons decided that the election of Tom Mitchell for Mid-Ulster was invalid and a second election was ordered. This was held on August 11, 1955, and Mitchell was re-elected with an increased majority. Twenty-two-year-old Philip Clarke told the court set up to unseat him that the electorate of Fermanagh-South Tyrone owed no allegiance to English law. He declared:

"It is a generally conceded principle in most civilised countries that the origin of political authority lies in the people. It would however, appear that the origin of political authority does not lie in the people but rests on the will of a High Court judge. The very basis of democracy—the right of the people to vote in a free election—is being denied."

Philip Clarke was unseated and the Tory-Unionist defeated candidate who, as a British Labour Member of Parliament pointed out, whatever he represented he certainly did not represent the people of Fermanagh-South Tyrone was elected by order of the court. That man has since been appointed to high rank in the British Government. Thus the Irish question still works to the detriment of democracy in England itself.

The same result was achieved in Tom Mitchell's case. His Tory-Unionist opponent Charles Beattie, a farmer and auctioneer, was given the seat. When he entered the House of Commons it was

discovered that he held offices of profit under the Crown at the time of his candidature and election by court order. He was disqualified and a third-round election was ordered for Mid-Ulster. Sinn Fein again nominated Tom Mitchell.

The British court which disfranchised the people of Mid Ulster was told by Tom Mitchell when he came before them from his cell in Belfast prison:

“The people are on trial and it is only right that I should come here because I am their representative and would like to state their views in electing me. When the obvious result of these proceedings is announced it will mean in effect that the majority of the people of Mid-Ulster have been disfranchised.....apparently, under British democracy, the people’s word can be nullified, in this particular case it has been nullified by two men. So under British law two men are as good as 30,000.”

And he told them in conclusion:

“in going before the people we stated our policy, which is a simple one: all Ireland for the Irish people.”

Back-stage conferences were now held on all levels as the third Mid-Ulster election loomed. The old-line Constitutionalists and Parliamentarians, true successors of Redmond and Devlin, sought and received advice in Dublin. Sinn Fein warned the electors of Mid-Ulster:

“Beware of propaganda which will be spread by those who are striving to make political party gains out of the subjugation of our country. . . . The main issue is that Britain has no right in our country and therefore it is a waste of time to speak of seeking to obtain justice from those who have not the right even to administer justice.”

The old-line Anti-Partitionist Party now stepped into the breach Britain had created for herself and nominated Michael O’Neill, a former M.P. for the constituency, to run against Mitchell. There seems to have been an understanding that the Unionists would not this time nominate a candidate. Thus the people of Mid-Ulster would be asked to choose between a Conservative Constitutionalist and a Sinn Fein Republican. With all the established authority behind O’Neill, it was hoped there would be no doubt about the result. The Unionists did not put up candidate, but an “unofficial” Unionist (who had the backing of the party and blessing of its purse) stood. The Belfast correspondent of the Irish Times (May 8, 1956 explained the position like this:

“There is little doubt that the policy of abstention had the support of the Unionist party leaders who now recognise that they have nothing to gain in Mid-Ulster. Outsiders already see the Six Counties as a rather dusty corner of British politics; the sooner the spotlight is turned off Mid-Ulster the better. For the Unionists to win the twelfth and last seat of the Ulster seats at Westminster would only give strength to the impression that Northern Ireland is an unhealthy one-party State in which popular opinion is freely thwarted at the polls.”

The British Tory Government may have pointed out to its minions in Belfast that nothing was to be gained by contesting Mid-Ulster. The British Tory Government for reasons of high State policy may have wanted the spotlight turned off Mid-Ulster. But the local Tories wanted to win the area after the Nationalist vote was split. And since Occupied Ireland is an unhealthy one-party State anyway where popular opinion is freely thwarted at the polls, they were not too concerned about the spotlight which might embarrass the British Government.

From the Sperrins to the mountains of Pomeroy they came in their thousands, small farmers and workers and trades people, to vote for Tom Mitchell on May 8, 1956. His second majority had been a three-fold increase over the previous one. Now with an Anti-Partitionist in the field there was no hope of electing Mitchell again, but the people seemed determined to expose those who played England's game in Ireland. When the results were posted up for the second-round fight in August they had gathered around the counting office in Omagh town—where Tom Mitchell had been led away, a felon in chains, to Belfast Prison scarce ten months before—and sang such songs as A Nation Once Again, A Soldier's Song and God Save Ireland. Sinn Fein's jubilant election agent, Charles Laverty had told them: “The people of Mid-Ulster have clearly shown that they owe no allegiance to English law. We are indeed entitled to be jubilant.” But now on May 8, 1956, where once there had been victory shouts there was silence as the people waited for the count.

Forrest, the Unionist, was returned on a minority poll. The combined anti-British vote swamped him. The Anti-Partitionist splitters had done their work and yet it gave them little satisfaction. Their candidate, O'Neill received only 6,421 votes and lost his deposit. Tom Mitchell polled the unbelievable total of 24,124. The real victory lay with him and with Sinn Fein. Commented the Irish Times (May 10, 1956):

“Sinn Fein has established for itself an entrenched position in Mid-Ulster.”

The three Mid-Ulster elections were interpreted as the death-knell of the old-line Parliamentary approach to the Problems of Irish unity and independence—even the limited independence they advocated. These elections represented a turning point in Irish history. The swing-over to Republicanism during 1955 and 1956 was decisive. The Anti-Partitionist members and Senators at Stormont were called on to resign from these bodies since the people of the North did not wish them to dignify that Assembly as a Parliamentary Legislature any longer. They were asked to set up a united Nationalist front and rid the country of British Imperialism.

The Derry Journal (an Anti-Partitionist organ) noted editorially on May 11, 1956:

“The result of the Mid-Ulster by-election is one that the Irish Government cannot afford to ignore. Twenty-four thousand Nationalists voted against a candidate who, rightly in our opinion, held that the solution of partition was the responsibility of the Government and Dail. This was not a vote in favour of physical force; it was a clear indication of dissatisfaction with national leadership, or the lack of it, where the country’s outstanding national problem is concerned. The Dail—Government and Opposition—was on trial and was found wanting.”

The democratic process was now closed to the people of Mid-Ulster and Fermanagh-South Tyrone. British-administered courts were now the electoral machinery for naming M.P.s to the British House of Commons—as far as the Nationalist people of Occupied Ireland were concerned. This not only denied democracy but made a farce of it. An Irish Catholic editorial put it like this:

“We do not like violence and we do not believe that it is the civilised or Christian way of settling affairs. But it sometimes seems, and especially in relation to Ireland, that Westminster only wakes up when force is used. An American Jesuit recently quoted a Northern Ireland priest as saying: ‘We must be against the use of force. But the lesson of our history is that force is the only argument that the English pay any heed to.’”

## **9- A Felon’s Cap**

In the early morning darkness of Saturday, August 13, 1955, a small group of Irish volunteers raided a military camp at Arborfield near London, and, after overpowering the 18-man guard, withdrew with more than 80,000 rounds of ammunition, 10 Bren guns and some 50 Stens. They spent one hour in the camp guarded by their own sentries who had taken the place of the gagged and bound camp guard and who stayed on for an extra hour to give the withdrawal a head start over the general alarm.

But ill-luck dogged the venture. Joe Doyle of Bray and Donal Murphy of Dublin were stopped by police doing a routine traffic check-up at Ascot as they sped towards London in a two-ton van. Later that Saturday evening James Murphy of Castledermott, Co. Kildare, was arrested in London. He had not been on the operation itself but had prepared the dumps for the arms. The three were charged with armed robbery.

A general alarm went out all over Britain and the Six Counties of Occupied Ireland. Air and sea routes were closed. The British Minister for War and the Chief of the Imperial General Staff were kept informed of developments. The C.I.G.S., Field-Marshal Sir John Harding, who was to achieve infamy in Cyprus later, visited Arborfield Camp. On August 16, Scotland Yard detectives discovered the rest of the arms and ammunition in the basement of a derelict shop in Caledonian Road, King's Cross, London.

On October 5, 1955, Mr. Justice Cassells sentenced the three Irishmen to life imprisonment. As they stood to attention in the dock, Joe Doyle, speaking for the three told the court:

“These arms were to be used against the British Army of Occupation in Ireland. We have no regret and do not apologise for our raid on Arborfield. Our only regret is that it was not a success.”

Passing sentence, Mr. Justice Cassells declared: “This was an act of war. They were prepared by sheer desperation to achieve their aim.” The life sentences shocked the world. Mr. Sean MacBride, S.C., made this comment:

“The young men who have just been sentenced to suffer life imprisonment in Britain are the latest victims of Britain's invasion of the democratic rights of the Irish people. It is symptomatic of this situation, and I hope that world opinion will note it, that while these harsh sentences are being imposed on young Irishmen by a British court in England, other British courts, operating in Ireland without the sanction of the Irish people, are busy disfranchising the Nationalist population by unseating their elected Parliamentary

representatives. To British rule in Ireland neither democracy nor the will of the people matters.”

The harshness of the sentences imposed overshadows any doubts which may have existed as to the wisdom of the policy which led to these events. Ireland will nieriely recall:

*Wise men have told us that their  
cause was a failure,  
But they loved dear old Ireland and  
never feared danger.*

The three men of Arborfield were joining other Irish Republican prisoners in English jails. On July 25, 1953, an Officers Training Corps School at Felstead, Essex, was raided late at night and 99 rifles, eight Bren guns, 10 Stens. one PIAT, a 2” Mortar and Browning machine-gun were taken. A policeman held up the vehicle for a technical traffic violation, glanced inside, saw the arms and summoned help. Cathal Goulding of Dublin, Manus Canning of Derry City, and Sean Stephenson of London, were subsequently sentenced to eight years’ imprisonment each. Another Republican prisoner in an English jail was J. P. McCallum of Liverpool who was arrested with ammunition in his possession.

Leo McCormack of Dublin, Hugh Brady of Lurgan and Joe Campbell of Newry were in Belfast prison serving four-year sentences for Republican activities. When the sentences were served the Campaign of Resistance had opened and the three were interned “for the duration” - although Leo McCormack was technically a “foreigner” in Brookeborough’s book.

The attempts to arm the Irish Republican Movement for the coming Resistance struggle cost plenty in terms of young lives condemned to heavy terms of imprisonment. As the struggle for freedom grew more intense more and more young men swelled the jail population for this has always been the way of English law in Ireland. Their comrades on the outside carried on despite the pain caused by this terrible waste of young lives. And in time scores of other young Irishmen joined the ranks left vacant by the men in jail. For this too is the result of English rule in Ireland. The message from the jails has always been the same:

“Don’t worry about us. We will meet the future with courage.  
Your job is to carry on.”

After the December 12, 1956 attacks, six men in all were arrested. Three Cork youths, Tony Cooney, William Patrick Gough and James Joseph Linehan, were held by R.U.C. at Torr Head, Co. Antrim, near the R.A.F. Radar installation there following a brief gun-battle and

were sentenced to a total of 32 years' imprisonment. Tony Cooney was given 12 years and the others 10 years each. Near Armagh City, Seamus Heuston of Keady and James Oliver Smith of Bessbrook, Co. Armagh, were seized in a parked car and beaten up by B-Specials. Seamus Heuston's arm was broken and he received 18 stitches to his head. Following a jury disagreement at the first trial, a packed Belfast jury found them guilty of possession of arms. Seamus Heuston was sentenced to 10 years and James Oliver Smith to eight. Leonard Magill of Lurgan was arrested near Dungannon and was given an 18-months sentence.

Seven men were arrested in a disused house at Clonallon near Warrenpoint, Co. Down, after a large force of British military combed out the Mourne mountains on January 4, 1957. The seven were: Pat Considine of Dublin; Seamus Hand, Peter Duffy and Pat Shaw, of Dundalk; Christopher Loy, Bernard Loy and Thomas Kearns of Newry. They were sentenced to eight years each. On December 30, 1956, three men were captured in the Dunamore area of Co. Tyrone. They were John Kelly of Belfast, John Oliver Madden of Cork and David T. Lewsley of Lurgan, Co. Armagh. They were sentenced to eight years imprisonment each. Peter Monaghan of Dunamore, Co. Tyrone, was charged with aiding and abetting them and was sentenced to three years..

Two Dublin men who were captured in a cottage neat the Glenshane Pass, Co. Derry, on January 15, 1957, Pearse Doyle and Pat Hodgins, were sentenced to six and five years respectively. Phelim McStravick of Lurgan was sentenced to four years, after telling the court that an R.U.C. Head Constable had asked him who his confessor was and what the priest's politics were after offering him money to become an informer.

Eamonn Timony of Derry City was sentenced to four years first and a few months later brought up on a second set of charges and sentenced to 10 years. He was arrested on March 30 while on the run. He proved conclusively in court that the R.U.C. witnesses had perjured themselves when giving evidence against him. Patrick Joseph O'Kane of Dungiven, Co. Derry, who was arrested on June 9, 1957, was sentenced to 10 years on a charge of possession of explosives and documents.

Patrick Fox of Derry, arrested on May 24, 1957, was sentenced to 10 years. Matthew Monaghan and Lawrence MacGowan, both of Derry who were arrested with Patrick Fox were given six years imprisonment each. Daniel Ignatius Donnelly, an 18-year-old student of Omagh, Co. Tyrone, was sentenced to 10 years in October, 1957, and John McHugh of Beragh, Co. Tyrone, was also sentenced to eight years. Seven others who pleaded before the court and were alleged to have made statements to the R.U.C, were

sentenced to terms of imprisonment of from six to four years. Lord Justice MacDermott when sentencing these men threatened not only whipping and long jail sentences for Resistance activities but also death.

Thomas O'Malley (55) and Patrick Collins (48) two Belfast men, fathers of large families, who were arrested in Bangor, Co. Down, and charged with putting up a Resistance Movement Proclamation were sentenced to six and four years each. The only evidence against them was the statement of an R.U.C. Sergeant that "their hands were sticky." At the opening of the Belfast City Commission in October, 1957, Lord Justice MacDermott said (as reported in the "Belfast Telegraph." October 17):

"While he was not suggesting they should take the law into their own hands they could at least show quite clearly that they would not stand for that sort of conduct, and that in itself would be of great assistance to the authorities."

Such a statement was a direct invitation to the Unionist rank and file and the B-Specials to do as they pleased-bearing in mind that it takes little enough incitement to set the latter body on a rampage. It is the kind of reckless statement one might attribute to a Unionist politician. Coming from the Lord Chief Justice of what is in effect a British Province it takes on a completely different complexion.

In addition to those mentioned above who were charged with specific offences and given long terms of imprisonment hundreds of others in the Occupied area have been jailed without the formality of charge or trial. They are housed in Belfast Prison which is now described as one of the most impregnable jails in Europe. Extraordinary security precautions prevail. The massive walls have been increased in height by six feet all round. The entire jail is ringed on the outside by powerful arc lights set on concrete standards 30 feet above the walls with automatic swivels to floodlight the entire area. Three reinforced pill-boxes, with gun-slits on all sides, were built at key points to cover the inside of the jail and give a bird nests view of the outside. Guards are in touch by walkie-talkie between the posts.

### **10—The Cost is High**

For those who wish to maintain the British connection In Ireland the cost in lives, money, misery, backwardness is never too great to pay once their own interests are looked after. Typical of this British garrison attitude is Mr. N. Minford, a Unionist member of Stormont. He said when discussing increased estimates for the Home Affairs Ministry in May 2, 1957:

“No measure could be severe or repressive or bad enough for them. We should have the same laws here as in Cyprus. Anyone found helping these fellows should be taken out and shot . . . The hanging machinery should be kept in very good order.”

Mr. Minford also said that the internees should be kicked out of the country.

Lest Mr. Minford’s voice be taken as an isolated one, the Home Affairs Minister, Mr. W. W. B. Topping on that same day defended the military training of the R.U.C. and B-Specials on the grounds that it was needed to defeat the Resistance. But the R.U.C. and B-Specials had been receiving specialised military training for something like 35 years.

After the rights of private property were abolished under the sweeping new powers adopted by the Stormont Government in January (homes and land could be seized for defence purposes), and the Sinn Fein organisation was banned overnight, the Anti-Partitionist spokesmen in Stormont grew scared that they too might become affected in some way. One of them, Mr. J. McSparran, told Stormont that it had only itself to blame for the present state of affairs and he gave some facts to back up his statement.

In Derry City, he said, where there were 30,000 Nationalist and 18,000 Unionists, the latter had eight members on the Corporation while the former could elect only four. In Omagh, with 62 per cent. Nationalists there were nine Nationalist representatives and 12 Unionists. County Tyrone, with 64 per cent Nationalists and 36 per cent, Unionist had seven Unionist representatives and two Nationalist. In County Fermanagh with 35,000 Nationalists and 24,000 Unionists, there were six Nationalist members and 18 Unionists.

“These facts,” Mr. McSparran said, “can be verified in any way by an impartial observer. I appeal to you as reasonable men who are aware of these facts: Do you think that in the course of time this situation will not create such a condition of dissatisfaction as will provide a feeding-ground for a policy of physical force?”

Referring to the Mid-Ulster by-election, Mr. McSparran added:

“When we were defeated by a candidate representing a policy of Sinn Fein, all the thanks we got for our efforts were speeches made by members from the other side of the House stating that as a political group we had ceased to exist. I

warned you not to gloat as were our party destroyed by your efforts and those who differ from us—Sinn Fein—you would be confronted by a far more dangerous enemy and a far more dangerous situation.

I would appeal to members of good sense to remember that you cannot go on taking from the minority here one night after another. You cannot go on with that policy indefinitely without destroying any policy of restraint, any policy that seeks by constitutional means to end this problem. You cannot go on doing that in increasing measures year after year.”

Lord Brookeborough congratulated Mr. McSparran for the courage he showed in condemning the Resistance but answered the rest of what he had to say by attempting to link up Russia with the Resistance Movement. He suggested that the Russians hoped the Resistance would remove the N.A.T.O. military bases from Occupied Ireland.

As swoop after swoop on young men occurred almost nightly in Nationalist areas, other Anti-Partition Party spokesmen were moved to call on Stormont to stop the policy of coercion and victimisation. Said Cahir Healy:

However regrettable they may be, these things will go on.

They happen in every country where a great section of the people are dissatisfied, and we cannot hope for anything different here. Many of these men recall 1912 and Craigavon, where Unionists formed a Government in opposition to the King’s Government, They were successful rebels—that is the only difference.”

Mr. Eddie McAteer, Stormont M.P. for Derry City, commenting on the raids on homes in Occupied Ireland, said:

Raids! Raids! Raids! After 30 odd years of Unionist assurances that the Border has been stabilised, we find our selves right back in the terrible twenties. This is the harvest sown by years of repression and Unionist plotting against the minority entrusted to their tender mercies. How long Oh Lord, how long?”

It was going to be quite a long time if the Tory-Unionist dictatorship had any say in the matter. According to the Ireland Bill of 1949, only the Stormont Houses of Parliament could change the United Kingdom status of Occupied Ireland. And the Tory-Unionist policy was to insure that whatever Nationalist opposition there might be in that legislature it would be quite ineffective. They

added to their election powers on June 11, 1957, when Mr. Topping introduced a Bill to limit candidates in Stormont elections to those who acknowledge the authority of the Stormont Government. Under the Bill, a candidate must sign in the presence of a Justice of the Peace or Notary Public or Commissioner for Oaths, a declaration that he recognises the lawful authority of the Stormont Parliament and that he will take his seat if elected. Some Stormont members on the Anti-Partitionist side had abstained from taking their seats because an oath of allegiance to the British Monarch) is required.

A few Anti-Partitionists thought this might be an infringement of the Government of Ireland Act (1920) which provided that the Six-County Parliament should be elected in the same manner as members returned to the Westminster House of Commons. If it was an infringement of that Act obviously the British Government had been informed and was going along with the measure. Prior to the new Bill a declaration of intention to take the seat if elected was required of Stormont candidates.

Another agreed-on measure between the parent Government in London and the group in Belfast was announced during May, 1957. The Minister of Finance, introducing the Budget for the Six Counties—which is almost a rubber stamp of the British Budget—announced that the cost of combating the Resistance Movement in Occupied Ireland would be borne by the British Exchequer. It would be taken out of the annual Imperial Contribution the Six-County Government—by virtue of the 1920 Act—is supposed to pay to Britain. It is Stormont's contribution to the upkeep of the Royal Family, the British armed forces, Civil List, Foreign Office, National Debt and all other matters that come under the Imperial domain.

As part of the United Kingdom, taxes collected in Occupied Ireland go to the Imperial Exchequer in London. Belfast gets back what is needed for local administration. The balance—whatever it may be—becomes the Imperial Contribution. As Frank Gallagher remarks in his book, "The Indivisible Island" it is a contribution which is taken, not given!

Under the Government of Ireland Act, 1920 the Imperial Contribution was set at £7,920,000 and this would pay the Six Counties proportionate share of the United Kingdom's expenses—as part of the United Kingdom. The 1956-57 contribution was approximately £12,000,000. During the inter-war years it dwindled down to less than a million pounds—going as low as £75,000 in 1933.

Why has Whitehall never insisted that Stormont pay her proportionate share of Imperial expenses? Most authorities agree that the Imperial Contribution is ignored deliberately by London as a bribe to Stormont Tory-Unionist leaders.

According to the Treaty Agreement, this Imperial Con— to keep the Occupied area safe for British Imperialism. The contribution couldn't be reduced without the consent of Ireland! It was on that undertaking that Michael Collins based his unity belief (coupled with the Boundary Clause) backed by Lloyd George's assurance. However, in the years that followed, the British Government must have interpreted " the consent of Ireland to mean the "consent of Stormont.

Dr. Labhras O Nuallain in his work "Ireland: The Finance's of Partition," shows that for the period 1950-55 the gross imperial Contribution is returned as £77,816,000 but that British Exchequer grants and payments during that period amounted to £91,755,301. And he makes this comment:

"The one incontestable conclusion that emerges from a study of the financial relations between the British and the Six-County Governments is that ever since the establishment of the latter Government some 30 years ago, it has for the most part been carried on the backs of the taxpayers in Britain. Despite the deceptive appearance of the large wartime gross imperial Contribution the area is quite definitely not bearing a proportionate share of the Imperial liabilities and expenditure."

He concludes:

"Apparently they (the British Government) are indifferent as to whether the Six-County area does or does not make a proportionate Imperial Contribution so long as a Government is upheld in that area which is willing to hold fast to the status quo and resist all attempts to upset it."

Britain has it both ways. The Ireland Act, 1949, lays it down that the Occupied area's relations with the United Kingdom cannot be changed without the consent of the Stormont Parliament. And if by some miracle—despite discrimination, sectarianism, gerrymandering and all the other devices used to keep the Tory-Unionists in power— a Government sympathetic to the idea of a United Ireland were elected in the North, it would be financially crippled in less than a year by the insistence of the British Government that the proportionate share of Imperial expenses be paid by the Occupied area's Government.

As far as the Irish question is concerned. Britain would appear to hold all the cards still.

### **11-For Law and Order**

Lord Brookeborough has taken credit for originating the B-Special Constabulary. He once served as a County Commandant in that group but the father of the organisation, as was pointed out in an earlier chapter, was Sir Hamar Greenwood, and the brains behind the scheme was Field Marshal Sir Henry Wilson.

As has also been pointed out before, no civilian has been personally injured by the activities of the Resistance Movement in Occupied Ireland. Great pains are taken to ensure that this state of affairs will continue. The following list will give an idea of the pains the B-Specials and R.U.C. take to ensure that no civilian is injured by their activities. It might also be noted that since the opening of the campaign and up to the time of writing, the B-Specials as an organised force have not been in action once against the Resistance Movement. Since the Resistance Movement recognises that the B-Specials are Irishmen who have been misled by sectarian and British propaganda, deliberate attacks on this body have not been part of its guerrilla policy up to now.

March 5, 1955: Eighteen year old **Arthur Leonard** was shot dead by a B-Special patrol between Keady and Darkley, County Armagh. He was driving a van at the time. His companion, 16-year-old **Clare Mallon**, was seriously wounded.

March 6, 1955: **Austin Stinson**, a 23-year-old native of Derrygonnelly, County Fermanagh, was seriously wounded by a patrol of B-men on the Aughnacloy-Augher road while driving a car.

October, 1955: **Thomas Corrigan** (33) of Ann Street, Dungannon, was, in his own words, "brutally attacked by a party of armed B-Specials on the outskirts of Dungannon." He received medical treatment to his head, arms and legs.

October, 1955: A B-Special Constable, **Daniel Richmond** (26), was shot dead while drilling with other Specials at Park Hall, Armoy, County Antrim.

December 26, 1956: **Charles Hilliard** (38) of Brackley, Ederney, County Fermanagh, was wounded in the leg by a B-Special patrol while driving home early in the morning.

January 1, 1957: Five young Tyrone people were fired on by B-Specials as they drove home from a New Year's party, near Caledon. **Una Buchanan** (12) lost the sight of an eye. **Maurice Buchanan** (19) was seriously wounded in the back. **Florence**

**Buchanan** (14) and **Ruby Buchanan** (17) had hand injuries. **Mervyn Mulligan** was wounded in the arm.

January, 1957: A B-Special shot his own son as the latter approached a road-block between Dungannon and Coalisland, Co. Tyrone.

February 1, 1957: Special Constable **Kenneth Elliott** of Newtownbutler, County Fermanagh, was motor cycling near his home at 8.15 p.m. when he was fired on by a police patrol and received serious abdominal injuries.

April 8, 1957: Special Constable **Robert Henderson** (24) was shot dead in the day room of Trillick Barracks, County Tyrone, by another B-Special.

April 1957: Special Constable **Robert Henderson** (24) was shot dead in Newtownards R.U.C. Barracks by an R.U.C. Constable.

June 9, 1957: Mrs. **Margaret Martin** (42) of Belfast, was wounded in the shoulder when a mixed B-Special R.U.C. patrol opened fire with Sten guns on her husband's car near Killeen Customs Post, County Armagh. Subsequently it was established she will be paralysed for life.

June 24, 1957: After wounding his daughter **Elizabeth** (24) in the neck and his son **Irvine** (22) in the left hand, R.U.C. Constable **Thomas McK. Holmes**, aged 54, Maytown. Bessbrook, County Armagh, shot himself dead.

June 5, 1957: A B-Special patrol fired on the car of Mr. **James Hay**, Strabane on the Swatragh-Maghera road.

July, 1957 : Special Constable **Joseph Ewing** (21). Cullybackey, County Antrim, received a bullet wound in his leg when an automatic weapon was discharged while he was on duty on the Dungannon-Moy road.

August 14, 1957: **Robert Brown** (25), Crossgar, County Down, was shot dead by a member of the Ulster Special Constabulary on the Kilmore-Crossgar road.

September 21, 1957: While motoring home at about midnight, **Kevin John MacManus** (35), of Lisnaskea. County Fermanagh, was seriously wounded after being fired on by a B-Special patrol. November 13, 1957: **John Collins** (45) a motorist of Clanrye Avenue, Newry, was wounded about the head after being fired on by a B-Special patrol on the Armagh-Newry Road at 9.30 p.m.

The Ulster Special Constabulary was established on a full military basis, but it lacks the discipline essential to an army. It has changed little since a Manchester Guardian special correspondent described it thus in 1921:

“The Unionists have an important ally-“they have a coercive police force of their own.” The writer went on to say:

“ Some of them, the ‘A’ class become regular R.I.C., the rest the B ‘ and ‘ C’ classes parade their districts at night with arms harassing, threatening, beating and occasionally killing their Catholic neighbours and burning their homes.”

Matters are not quite that bad yet in Occupied Ireland. But if they aren’t, it certainly is not the fault of the B-Specials, the Stormont Government or the British authorities.

These shootings by road patrols are now a regular occurrence. Witnesses have established time after time that signals, which can be clearly understood, are seldom given. The usual practice is for the B-patrol to lie in ambush at what is regarded as a “strategic point” waiting for guerrillas to show up. So far they have encountered no guerrillas but they have fired on many innocent motorists. In the case of Arthur Stinson who was himself a B-Special and a member of the Orange Order, he was quite definite that no signal was given when the B-patrol opened fire. The first warning he received was a bullet which crashed into the left-hand window of the car.

In the Arthur Leonard case, William Johnston McAllister, a member of the B-Special patrol responsible for the killing, told the inquest that his duty that night was to intercept any car which failed to stop. He said he fired two shots towards the front of the van, one when the bonnet was opposite him and one when the van had passed by. Asked how was he taught to intercept cars he replied: “There is only one way. To shoot at the engine.” He was 18 years of age and he had been in the Specials for 14 months. He made no reply when asked if he had passed a test before receiving firearms but volunteered the information that “he was a fairly good shot.” Another B-Special, who also opened fire on the car, said it passed within 10 yards of him and was travelling at about 25 miles per hour.

On December 17. 1956, an R.U.C. Constable was seriously wounded on a lonely stretch of road between Lisnaskea and Brookeborough when the patrol car in which he was travelling was ambushed by B-Specials. Stormont tried to cover this up by saying bombs were thrown at the patrol car as well and that the attackers

made off in the darkness. Indeed Brookeborough used this incident on a British television interview in London to announce:

“We are Queen’s men and nothing whatsoever is going to shift us from that position.”

Stormont has never admitted that this particular ambush was the work of her own B-Specials.

On October 30, 1957, Seamus O’Hare of Magherareagh, Kilkeel, Co. Down, was arrested at his own door and not allowed into his home. The house was raided and private correspondence seized. The youth was taken to Kilkeel Barracks, held incommunicado, and later transferred to Newcastle Barracks. His family tried to get in touch with him but police would give no information as to his whereabouts. On November 1, two days later —Mrs. O’Hare did get some information at Newcastle Barracks; she was told Seamus was now back in Kilkeel. She went to Kilkeel Barracks and was told the boy was in hospital. She found him there guarded by a B-Special Constable. He was in a drugged sleep and appeared to be in a coma, his eyes open, unmoving.

The family got a brain specialist to examine him and the youth was released from police custody. He had been in perfect health the night of his arrest. The specialist removed him to a Belfast hospital for observation. After R.U.C. interrogation throughout the night of October 30, October 31 day and night, and the morning of November 1, he was fit for a mental hospital. At Stormont the Nationalist M.P. for South Down. Mr. J. Connellan, raised a query on the youth’s treatment. He received this reply from Mr. Topping:

“Members of the Opposition would be better engaged trying to dissuade young men from getting mixed up in these affairs with such ghastly results as they had seen recently.”

The O’Hare family have been subjected to R.U.C. raids of this type for years. An uncle of the youth died some years ago as a result of a beating he received in Kilkeel Barracks at the hands of the Royal Ulster Constabulary.

Torture stories are not new. But the inhuman treatment meted out to young Irishmen in the name of British law in Occupied Ireland may be news to many. The unwritten orders of the R.U.C. are that a “confession” must be got at any price. And this “confession” must not only involve the youth who is being interrogated but many others also.

Near Coalisland, Co. Tyrone, an R.U.C. Sergeant named Ovens was killed in an explosion in a disused house at Brackaville, in August, 1957 (See Chap. 12). The Stormont authorities had publicised a

scheme of rewards for information leading to the capture of Irish freedom fighters. Accordingly, British military and R.U.C. guides were rushed to Brackaville after being told by telephone that young men had been seen entering the disused house. Ovens, acting as a guide, was killed when a mine exploded.

The British authorities turned East Tyrone into a terror-area. Scores of young men were arrested, interrogated, beaten, released, re-arrested—and the torture process repeated to force “confessions.”

Kevin Mallon, James O’Donnell, Francis Talbot and John O’Neil were arrested at various times on Monday, November 18, and Tuesday, November 19, by the R.U.C.

They were taken to Dungannon Barracks where the first interrogations began at 7.30 p.m. on November 19 and lasted until midnight. They received no meals and a request for tea was ignored.

They were questioned continuously by relays of three men and in the course of the first questioning were beaten with fists, punched in the stomach and face, caught by the hair and their heads banged against the wall.

At 12.10 p.m. they were taken from Dungannon Barracks and informed they were being moved to Belfast. They were handcuffed. Somewhere between Lurgan, Co. Armagh and Lisburn the cars swung up a by-road and stopped. The youths were removed from the cars and again beaten on the roadside.

In Belfast they were taken to Crumlin Road R.U.C. Barracks. The time was about 2 a.m., Wednesday, November 20. Relays of interrogators now pounced on them. The questions were couched in the foulest language.

They were threatened that their homes would be destroyed and their families thrown on the streets; that their brothers would be put away for 20 years, that it made no difference who was got but that “someone was going to be got for the Brackaville job and it might as well be them.”

The interrogation took the following form: One of the four would be returned to a cell after about three-quarters of an hour of beatings combined with threats and questions. He would hear clearly the screams of his comrades and the shouted oaths and threats of the police. The police would roar the following:

- (1) You are a dirty, rotten Communist
- (2) Your mother is nothing but a \_\_\_\_\_
- (3) You killed Sergeant Ovens.

- (4) No man ever went through our hands that we didn't break.  
And we're going to break you.

When one of the youths returned to his cell in the dark and lay on the bunk he discovered the pillow was covered in blood. A detective followed and said: "This is the sheet that covered Ovens." And he added: "It will cover another body soon."

The interrogation continued all through the night. Between 5 and 6 a.m. the four returned to their cells. They were in bad shape physically and mentally.

At 6 a.m. they were pulled out of their cells. Squads of three men now started the questioning in relays. Cocked revolvers were placed against the stomachs, throats and temples of the youths. Sticks were pressed into their bodies. Handkerchiefs were twisted around their necks. A cloth soaked in a foul-smelling liquid was pushed against their faces while their noses were held. They were thrown on the floor, their arms pinioned; the cloth around the neck was woven tighter and tighter. Then it would be snapped off and they'd be told to "confess."

Now they were beaten around the head and body with rubber truncheons. These beatings continued in different forms throughout all day Wednesday and from midnight to 6 a.m. Thursday morning. Then they were returned to their cells and put in solitary confinement.

A detective, whom they had not seen before, rushed into the cells almost immediately and acted like a maniac. He clawed all over them. He said "I'm Ovens. I'll haunt you for the rest of your lives."

After this they were taken out of the cells and the torture and questioning began again. This went on through Thursday.

They were told the torture and ceaseless questioning would continue until they signed the statements the R.U.C. had prepared.

Mentally and physically exhausted from the torture constant questioning, lack of food and sleep, fearful of its continuation and what might befall their families they eventually "admitted" anything the police wanted them to admit. They signed the statements.

Their ordeal is typical of what happens Irish freedom fighters when they are captured by Crown forces in Occupied Ireland.

Five Armagh City youths, arrested on December 7, 1957, were put in tubs of cold water for more than two hours, had their feet

stamped on and their bodies beaten with rubber truncheons while standing naked before their interrogators.

A father and son arrested in Derrylin, Co. Fermanagh during the early part of December, 1957, were mercilessly beaten by the R.U.C.. The father was later shifted to Ornagh Mental Hospital.

The British torture list grows.....

## **12-Ulster is Ours**

Throughout 1957 guerrilla warfare continued in Occupied Ireland. In some areas activity was intense. In others it was sporadic. Lord Brookeborough was again appealing to Britain. He was explaining in October that up to September some 200 major outrages had occurred in the Six Counties. As many minor outrages had taken place the Stormont Premier explained. Men and women were fined for having copies of the "United Irishman" (the organ of Irish Republicanism) in their possession. Children were arrested for posting up manifestoes of the Resistance. But in August the most wide-spread posting of a Resistance Proclamation took place in every townland, hamlet, village, town and city of the north.

### Resistance Proclamation

"To the people of Occupied Ireland The campaign of Resistance in Occupied Ireland which opened on December 12, 1956, is now more firmly based among our people than ever before and grows stronger by the day. The fight is directed against British Occupation of the Six Counties only. Attempts by our enemies to misrepresent the struggle for national unity and independence and, to further their own ends, channel it along sectarian lines, have failed and will continue to fail. No Irish man or woman is deceived any longer by this blatant British propaganda tactic.

When events during the last nine months exposed the falseness of the 'cross-border' raiding cry, the new one of 'Nationalist versus Unionist' had to be adopted. The struggle of the Resistance Movement is most certainly not against the Unionist population of the Six Counties. It is not directed against any section of the Irish people or against any Irish man or woman. Its only target is the British Occupation of our country and it will continue until that Occupation ends

The Irish people know this well, as they know that British interference in Irish affairs is backed up by military, naval and air garrisons and bases. They know that Ireland will have no peace until this imperial garrison is withdrawn. When this has been done the Irish people themselves will resolve their differences and their nation's future in friendship, mutual understanding and peace. False propaganda slogans, which are designed to divide us, serve

only to maintain British Imperial control over the affairs of the Irish nation.

At this hour we appeal to all our people to rally around the banner of a free Ireland and to ignore the differences that have kept us divided in the past. We must end foreign exploitation of our country so that its resources will be handed back to their true owners, the Irish people, and used for the benefit of all. We want to build here a free nation and people with full control over their own political, social and economic life. If this nation is to survive beset as we are by emigration, unemployment and poverty—this is an imperative need.

In a proclamation issued to the people of Occupied Ireland on December 12, 1956, we warned members of the R.U.C. and B-Special Constabulary that they had nothing to fear from the Resistance provided they did not allow themselves to become the tools of Britain's armed forces. We told them their place was on the side of the freedom fighters. We asked them to stand aside from the struggle altogether if they found such a step too big at this time. Since then these forces have been put on a war-footing and are used in conjunction with British forces to screen military installations, terrorise the civilian population, patrol and search the countryside, engage in punitive expeditions, and generally hound, harry, torture and imprison Irish freedom fighters. This is doing England's bidding with a vengeance.

The Resistance can hardly be expected to differentiate between men, trained, organised and equipped along military lines (although clad in police uniforms) and British troops. To members of the R.U.C. and B-Special Constabulary, we repeat our call of December 12, 1956. We ask them to remember that they are Irishmen. We ask them to stop being England's dupes in Ireland.

We regret to see the 26-County authorities embarking on a policy of coercion and repression. We ask them to look at Irish history and recall the ruinous effects for Ireland and her people in the past of political repression. Such measures are no solution for the problems facing our people. Such policies can only result in giving aid and comfort to British Occupation. They do not have the consent of the Irish people to proceed against Republicans. Their actions will not stop the Resistance although they may make more difficult the lot of our people in Occupied Ireland. The people had hoped for, at least, the moral support of that part of Ireland styling itself free.

To all the Irish people, to our glorious dead, to our imprisoned comrades, we pledge this struggle will go on until British Occupation ends and our country is allowed settle its affairs in

peace. In the days ahead, the men and women of the Resistance will find courage in the knowledge that history is watching them and is on their side; that their cause is great and is unconquerable.”



Simultaneously with the posting of the manifesto, attacks occurred in many areas of Occupied Ireland. Night after night installations were hit in the Newry area. A curfew was clapped on the town of 13,000 people. The people lined the streets and refused to obey the curfew. Armoured cars moved through the town. Military waited outside. Heavily armed R.U.C. Commandos ringed the crowds in the Square. As curfew hour (11 p.m.) came, the people of Newry stood to attention and sang “The Soldier’s Song.” Then they cheerfully waited a few minutes and went home. They broke the curfew symbolically almost every night. And the police did not interfere with them.

Leaflets appeared on the streets urging the people to defy the curfew and not to be intimidated by British Crown forces. They were told “ British guns will not stop us walking the streets of our own town in our own country.”

Stormont grew afraid of what it saw happening in Newry. It had over-reached itself. The mood of the people was ugly. The people were being driven and their point of no return seemed not far away. One week later when in Coalisland, Co. Tyrone, an R.U.C. sergeant was killed after military and police surrounded a deserted house and a booby-trap exploded, Home Affairs Minister Topping was asked if he would apply the curfew to East Tyrone. His reply was “No.” The curfew weapon had failed.

The members of the Resistance were under no illusion that the struggle against oppression and tyranny would be a short one, or that victory was just around the corner. Victory was a long way off, they knew. All the resources of a ruthless tyranny would be employed against them to destroy them. The rights of the people would be trampled on. Individuals would die lonely deaths. Hundreds and maybe thousands would languish in England’s jails. Unarmed citizens would be willfully murdered. Unionist politicians would use still fiercer words to incite more attacks on the

Resistance and torturers would be rewarded with awards and promotions. New capital offences would be created

But the Irish people who have always resisted this tyranny would resist it again. In a land where every generation has witnessed an armed uprising against British rule, the reasons and necessity for armed uprising are readily understood. In this way 1957 differs no

way from 1921 as 1921 did not differ from 1867. In this way the continuity of Resistance is maintained.

The Resistance went on with its task. It penetrated the enemy's defences in every sector of the Occupied zone. Enemy transport was disrupted. His bridges were destroyed. His roads were mined. His patrols came under fire. His armour was bombed. Many of his installations were turned into ruins. His superiority did not avail him for the Resistance struck at his weaknesses and left his strength severely alone. All through the winter, spring, summer, autumn and winter again he was hit, periodically, sporadically, and in many places incessantly. He boasted of his security against the poorly-armed, inadequately-trained Resistance. And no sooner had he uttered his boast then he would be hit again in a completely new area.

Derry City, South Derry, South-East Derry, East Tyrone, West Tyrone, North Fermanagh, South Fermanagh, North Armagh. South Armagh . . . . One area or the other would blaze into sudden, fierce activity. By day, R.U.C. and British military scattered in searches across the face of Occupied Ireland. By day and night the homes of the people would be raided systematically. Whole families were arrested. In one area a father and his three sons. In another seven of the same family. Yet, instead of weakening, the people's determination to resist was strengthened. The Nationalists in Occupied Ireland had hardly the right of public assembly any longer. The Press was gagged. The only voices heard out of the Six Counties were those of Brookeborough and his kind talking of the "indissoluble British link." And the more they talked the less they were believed by those who thought of the Irish problem at all.

The blows may not have been great. They certainly weren't decisive. One might call them pinpricks. But, as one great Irish revolutionary pointed out, a pin stuck in the heart of a giant can be decisive enough. And the blows of the Irish Resistance were striking close to the heart of the British Imperial giant in Ireland.

A nation fighting for its freedom has many weapons at its disposal. Guerrilla warfare is only one. As the Resistance developed, other weapons would come into play. But the vital thing was for the Resistance to grow, to expand, to gain strength, to stay in existence. It could only do these things supported by the people. And throughout 1957 it was growing, expanding, gaining strength, staying in existence, despite the efforts of the British authorities, Stormont and even the Dublin Government.

In October, 1957, a new series of attacks occurred throughout the Occupied area and were accompanied by the distribution of leaflets warning the British authorities that the drafting of mechanised

units into the Six Counties would not solve the Irish problem. Said this leaflet:

“Britain must withdraw her Army of Occupation now. Britain is pouring more troops into the North to keep us in subjection. Her puppet Government at Stormont has ringed the area with fortifications and, in the guise of a police force, is using armoured formations to strike at the Resistance Movement.”

“This is a struggle for freedom and it will not be stopped by British guns.”

During this period the Republican Publicity Bureau told the world the facts of British Occupation. The London Times had stated that the Resistance in the north was being “contained” by the R.U.C. and other Stormont-based security forces such as the B. Specials, and that British troops were hardly used at all. The Publicity Bureau statement pointed out the facts of British military occupation and the use of British military forces against the Resistance.

Col. Topping, Stormont Home Affairs Minister, said of the Irish Republican Publicity Bureau statement on Britain’s forces of occupation:

“I do not think I will be giving very much away when I say that for once they are not very far out in the picture they paint.”

Around that time too a United States correspondent travelled with a Resistance column in Occupied Ireland and saw the facts of British Occupation by British military forces for himself. This British propaganda attempt to fool the world had little success. International News Service correspondent, Edward Ford, toured the Occupied area and reported what he saw:

“Fear swept the province and near panic ensued at Stormont, seat of the Northern Ireland Government, near Belfast. The precise planning, evident in the perfect timing, smooth operation, and strategic value of the targets involved, alarmed the military authorities. This was different from the sporadic raiding of border areas which the I.R.A. had been engaged in.

The popular estimate that the I.R.A. was just a bunch of undisciplined thugs, content to harass Crown authority and keep alive the emotions of frustrated nationalism among the Republican minority, had to be reappraised. Here was

organised deadly and deliberate war (N.Y. Journal-American, October 29, 1957)".

But there was tragedy too. Shortly after midnight, during the small hours of November 11, five men were blown to pieces in an explosion at Edentubber, Co. Louth, near the Carrickarnan British frontier post on the Newry road. They were: Paul Smith of Bessbrook, Co. Armagh, and Oliver Craven of Newry, Co. Down, both nineteen; George Keegan, 29-year-old Enniscorthy man whose father had played a heroic part as Commandant of the North Wexford Battalion during the Black and Tan War; and 27-year-old Patrick Pane of Wexford Town. Michael Watters, a 55-year-old forestry worker in whose cottage the explosion occurred was the fifth victim of the tragedy. The two Six County youths were buried with Michael Watters at St. Patrick's Cemetery, Dundalk. The bodies of the Wexfordmen were taken home. Thousands on foot and hundreds of cars followed the Tricolour-draped hearses.

Stormont was fearful of anything nationalist or of anything that might raise, however remotely, a national echo. The mails were censored. The Nationalist-angled newspapers were watched carefully lest they contravene the Special Powers Bill in any way.

The John Ford film, "The Rising of the Moon" (based on the Lady Gregory play of the same name) was banned in Belfast. At the Abbey, the play itself was banned by Dublin Castle back in the 1918 period. One would think it spouted extreme revolutionary propaganda. In fact most Republicans considered it dealt with the Royal Irish Constabulary altogether too kindly. But anything with the word "Rising" in it is suspect by the British authorities at times of "stress" in Ireland, it is feared that the "disaffected" might become still more "disaffected" and even disaffect the already loyal. In Ireland the term "loyal" is always applied to those who stand for British rule.

The poet, T. M. Kettle, who was killed at Ginchy on the Somme in 1916 fighting for what he firmly believed was the cause of democracy and small nations, had long ago expressed in verse what the men and women of the Resistance were now proving:

*Ulster is ours, not yours,  
Is ours to have and to hold:  
Our hills and lakes and moors  
Have shaped her in our mould.  
Derry to Limerick Walls  
Fused us in battle flame;  
Limerick to Derry calls  
One strong-shared Irish name.*

### **13—Out of the Past**

The struggle for a free Ireland has continued down the centuries and from generation to generation. The British Conquest never succeeded fully in subjugating the mass of the Irish people. Even the colonisation of Ireland failed. Despite attempts at extermination by war, famine and emigration, the native population was not driven from the land. Force did not compel them to surrender their national rights. The Irish people consistently resisted the tyranny of British rule in Ireland. Almost every generation witnessed at least one armed uprising.

The historian Lecky writing of the 18th century penal code noted:

“It was directed, not against the few, but against the many. It was not the persecution of a sect, but the degradation of a nation. It was the instrument employed by a conquering race, supported by a neighbouring Power, to crush to the dust the people among whom they were planted.”

Since the Protestant religion was privileged, the penal code had the further object of splitting the Irish people on the basis of religion. The Dublin Parliament of the 18th century represented only the Protestant Ascendancy landlord and manufacturing interests, in 1791 the Society of United Irishmen was formed in Belfast to establish in Ireland an independent Republic and to end the divisions between Catholics, Protestants and Dissenters. The majority of the leaders were Protestants. The guiding spirit of the organisation was a Dublin-born Protestant barrister, Theobald Wolfe Tone. Its inspiration was the French Revolution.

Wolfe Tone slated his aims:

“To subvert the tyranny of our execrable Government; to break the connection with England, the never-failing source of all our political evils; and to assert the independence of my country—these were my objects To unite the whole people of Ireland, to abolish the memory of past dissensions, and to substitute the common name of Irishman in place of the denominations of Protestant, Catholic, and Dissenter—these were my means.”

Tone sought aid from the French in 1791 he had written a pamphlet addressed to the Presbyterians and called “An Argument on behalf of the Catholics of Ireland.” He attacked the Dublin Parliament as an instrument of tyranny and an oligarchy which defended class and privilege. He went to America in 1795 and afterwards sailed for France. In 1796 he organised the first French expedition to Ireland—the ill-fated Bantry Bay adventure. In 1798 he sailed for Ireland with another French force, was captured by the British,

arrested and tried for treason. He was condemned to death. He died in prison, on November 18, 1798, of a self-inflicted wound in the neck, according to the testimony of his enemies.

The 1798 Rising was put down with savage ferocity. But the spirit of Wolfe Tone lived on. Less than three years later the Act of Union between Ireland and England was made law and the Dublin Parliament abolished. In 1803 Robert Emmet organised the United Irishmen of Dublin, Wicklow and Kildare and prepared for another Rising. The rebellion was confined to Dublin and was a failure. Emmet was tried and hanged. Another '98 leader, Thomas Russell, was also hanged.

During the 1830s, Irish opposition to English rule was expressed in the mass Repeal Association movement led by Daniel O'Connell. This called for repeal of the Act of Union. Supporting O'Connell at the time was the Young Ireland group around *The Nation* newspaper who were guided by Thomas Davis. *The Nation* became one of the most powerful mediums of separatist propaganda Ireland has ever produced. Davis wrote articles, essays, ballads and poems and was its inspiration. But he died before his time in 1845 and the extreme and moderate wings of the Young Irelanders flew apart.

John Mitchel and James Fintan Lalor were the main exponents of revolutionary Republicanism during this period of the Great Famine. They called for revolt. Mitchel was the son of a Presbyterian Minister. He founded the *United Irishman* after breaking with *The Nation*. In 1848 he was arrested, tried and sentenced to 14 years' transportation. In his hook "The Last Conquest of Ireland (Perhaps), he explained how he thought the Great Famine could have been prevented:

"I had watched the progress of the Famine-policy of the Government and . . . had come to the conclusion that the whole system ought to be met with resistance at every point, and the means for this would be extremely simple: namely, a combination among the people to obstruct and render impossible the transport and shipment of Irish provisions; to remove all aid in its removal; to destroy the highways; to prevent everyone by intimidation from daring to bid for grain or cattle if brought to auction under duress . . . in short, to offer a passive resistance universally, but occasionally when opportunity served to try the steel."

James Fintan Lalor suffered tremendous physical handicaps but was one of the most vigorous and revolutionary intellects of the '48 period. After Mitchel's arrest he contributed to the *Irish Felon* and the *Irish Tribune*. He declared:

“The principle I state and mean to stand upon, is this: that the entire ownership of Ireland, moral and material, up to the sun and down to the centre, is vested of right in the people of Ireland: that they, and none but they, are the land-owners and law-makers of this island; that all laws are null and void not made by them, and all titles to land invalid not conferred or confirmed by them; and that this full right of ownership may and ought to be asserted and enforced by any and all means which God has put in the power of man in other, if not plainer words, I hold and maintain that the entire soil of a country belongs of right to the entire people of that country, and is the rightful property, not of any one class, but of the nation at large .

And he stated his aims:

“Not to repeal the Union, then, but the Conquest- not to disturb or dismantle the Empire but to abolish it utterly for ever—not to fall back on ‘82 but act up to ‘48- not to resume or restore an old Constitution, but found a new nation, and raise up a free people, and strong as well as free, and secure as well as strong....”

Lalor was arrested after the failure of the 1848 Rising. His bad health forced the authorities to release him. He organised another insurrection in September, 1849. This too was abortive and Lalor died three months later. The moderate Charles Gavan Duffy, editor of *The Nation*, said of Lalor that “of all the men who have preached revolutionary politics in Ireland, this isolated thinker was the most vigorous and intense.”

In England a Royal Duke was saying about Famine in Ireland: “I understand that rotten potatoes and seaweed—or even grass—properly mixed, afford a very wholesome and nutritious food. We all know that Irishmen can live on anything, and there is plenty of grass in the fields even if the potatoes should fail.”

Emigration became the main English remedy for the Famine. To force the pace of emigration, evictions and rack-rents became general. Irish agitation concentrated on tenants’ rights but sectarian divisions split the Protestant Ulster farmers off from the rest of the country. Charles Gavan Duffy became sickened of the whole struggle and declared there was “no more hope for Ireland than for a corpse on the dissecting table.”

But there was hope for Ireland and the Fenian Movement provided it. The Fenian journal was the *Irish People* which was first published in November, 1863. John O’Leary and Thomas Clarke

Luby were the editors. Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa was the business manager. Fenianism grew as the paper grew. The *Irish People* said editorially

“The overthrow of tyranny has always been the work of the people. It is by their combined and determined efforts that rulers are made and unmade. America and France have furnished us glorious examples of this.”

And again:

“By force of arms Ireland was wrested from her rightful owners, the Irish people. By no other means will she ever be restored.”

After the failure of the 1867 Rising and the jailing or exiling of the Fenian leaders, the movement continued as a force in Irish life albeit with less influence than in the 1860's. Its members formed the hard core of the land and Home Rule agitation of the 1880s. A former Fenian prisoner, Michael Davitt, founder of the Land League, found inspiration for his ideas in the writings of Fintan Lalor. Davitt allied himself with Charles Stewart Parnell in constitutional agitation.

To combat the Parnell agitation in 1886, Lord Randolph Churchill first developed his idea of using “the Orange card”—thus cutting off the Protestant population of north-east Ulster from their fellow-countrymen. British Prime Minister William E. Gladstone strongly opposed the idea of partition. He said on June 18, 1892:

“That particular plan has not been desired in Ireland and much to their credit, the Ulster Protestants . . . have entirely and vehemently protested against the plea.”

Parnell put it this way:

“We cannot give up a single Irishman. We want the energy, the patriotism, the talents and the work of every Irishman to insure that this great experiment successful one. The best system of Government for a country I believe to be one which requires that Government should be the resultant within that country. We cannot give away to a second Legislature the talents and influence of any portion or section of the Irish people.”

But the British Tory party toyed with the idea of partition to defeat Home Rule for Ireland or, if they could not defeat Home Rule, to maintain Ireland for the British Crown. In 1911 the Tory Special or told the Orange leaders:

“We are convinced that if these questions are placed before the people of the United Kingdom they will defeat the scheme of the (Liberal) Government for destroying the Union.”  
Partition would be their method of defeating this scheme.”

But even the London Times was not happy at the idea of partition. It noted on September 25, 1911:

“No man could draw the frontier between Ulster and the South, and any attempt to separate them would only substitute for the present problem two others, each more difficult.”

Even Carson, the leader of the Ulster Tories, was saying, (in 1912):

“Ulster asks for no separate Parliament. She never has in all the long controversy taken that course.”

The British Prime Minister Asquith was saying:

“You can no more split Ireland into parts than you can split England or Scotland into parts.” And again: “Ireland is a nation; not two nations but one nation. There are few cases in history, and as a student of history in a humble way, I myself know none, of a nationality at once so distinct, so persistent, so assimilative as the Irish.”

The forces of revolutionary Republicanism were still at work in Ireland. Republicans rejected the sectarian politics of Redmond’s Home Rulers and Carson’s Ulster Tories. They exposed the foundation on which British rule in Ireland was based. When the First World War came they told Irishmen to stay at home and fight for their own freedom. The Irish Volunteers were formed in 1913 to defend the passage of Home Rule. The Irish Republican Brotherhood remained in the background but one of the most vigorous opponents of the separatist idea, wrote in “The Sovereign People”:

“And I come back again to this: that the people cite the nation; the whole people, all its men and women; and that laws made or acts clone by anybody purporting to represent the people but not really authorised by the people, either expressly or impliedly, to represent them and to act for them do not bind the people; are a usurpation, an impertinence, a nullity.”

And at the graveside of the great Fenian, O’Donovan Rossa, in 1915 he declared

“Our foes are strong and wise and wary; but, strong and wise and wary as they are; they cannot undo the miracles of God who ripens in the hearts of young men the seeds sown by the young men of a former generation. And the seeds sown by the young men of ‘65 and ‘67 are coming to their miraculous ripening to-day. Rulers and Defenders of Realms had need to be wary if they would guard against such processes. Life springs from death; and from the graves of patriot men and women spring living nations. The Defenders of this Realm have worked well secret and in the open. They think they have purchased half of us and intimidated the other half. They think that they have foreseen everything, think that they have provided against everything; but the fools, the fools, the fools! They have left us our Fenian dead, and while Ireland holds these graves, Ireland unfree shall never be at peace.”

James Connolly who like Fintan Lalor allied the social and political objectives of Irish Republicanism, wrote one month before the Easter 1916 Rising:

“The people saw clearer and clearer, that nothing had changed in Ireland; that Ireland was still denied every prerogative that makes for true nationhood; that her interests were still subject to the interests of a rival country: that the Home Rule Bill expressly declared the subjection of Ireland as permanent; that the Redmond-Devlin party had sold the birthright of their country, in return for the valueless promise of a Government that did not even keep faith with its own countrymen and countrywomen; that the British Empire and the freedom or prosperity of the Irish people were two things that could not exist together in Ireland.”

Two things that could not exist together in Ireland.....

James Connolly had stated the case. Two things that could not exist together in Ireland and would never exist together in peace. The 1916 Proclamation put it down for all time:

“We declare the right of the people of Ireland to the ownership of Ireland and to the unfettered control of Irish destinies to be sovereign and indefeasible. The long usurpation of that right by a foreign people and Government has not extinguished the right, nor can it ever be extinguished except by destruction of the Irish people.”

Pearse became President of the Provisional Government of the Irish Republic in 1916. Connolly commanded the Dublin Forces in the Rising. Both were court martialled and shot after the surrender.

One month after the Rising, Lloyd George was promising Carson that Home Rule would never apply to all Ireland. He did it this way. He promised Redmond, the Irish Home Rule leader, that the British Government would bring the Home Rule Act for Ireland into immediate operation subject to an Amending Bill which would exclude six of the nine Ulster counties “ as a strictly War Emergency Act to cover only the period of war and a short interval after it.” The British Imperial Parliament would control these six counties during that period. Lloyd George told the Nationalist leaders this was a temporary measure due to the war situation. But he told Carson and the Ulster Tories that it was permanent. His letter to Carson ran:

*My dear Carson:*

*I enclose Greer’s draft proposition.*

*We must make it clear that at the end of the provisional period Ulster does not, whether she wills it or not, merge in the rest of Ireland.*

*Ever Sincerely,*

*D. LLOYD GEORGE.*

*Will you show it to Craig?*

But in the years that followed the Irish people swung to the Republican principles of Tone, Emmet, Davis, Mitchel, Lalor, Pearse and Connolly. They rejected the double dealing of the Home Rule leaders, Redmond and Devlin. They resisted British tyranny. They were on the road to victory when Lloyd George pulled his other deal involving the Treaty. The six counties of northeast Ireland were permanently excluded. Lloyd George had “made it clear that Ulster would not, whether she willed it or not, merge in the rest of Ireland.”

He was keeping his promise to Carson and the British Tories.

#### **14—Towards the Future**

What do the Irish people want! The answer is simple. They want to own their own country, to rule it so that its resources may be used for their benefit and not that of a foreign power. They want the terms of the United Nations Charter applied to their country: “The principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples.” Is this such an immoderate request? Should men be jailed, tortured and killed for expressing this hope and fighting for it in 1957-58?

Why must Britain defy the expressed will of the Irish people by holding on to part of their land, by accepting responsibility for the bloodshed which must ensue, when in the end her Government will

be forced to grant justice to Ireland! Perhaps the British Government and people have been fooled by their own propaganda. Perhaps they do not really believe they are responsible for the troubled state of Ireland. But they created the Irish problem in the first place. Its solution rests with them.

The British propaganda mill may grind out a thousand explanations. No matter how they may attempt to disguise it this fact will always return to haunt them: they are holding part of Ireland and against the people's will. They are denying the Irish people the rights sovereign nations enjoy. They forced us into rebellion.

Irish Republicans recall the words of Fintan Lalor:

“As regards the use of none but legal means, any means and all means might be made illegal by Act of Parliament ... As to the pledge of abstaining from the use of any but moral force. I am quite willing to take such a pledge if, and provided, the English Government agree to take it also; but if not, not. Let England pledge not to argue the question by the prison, the convict-ship, or the halter; and I will readily pledge not to argue it in any form of physical logic. But dogs tied and stones loose is no bargain.”

British coercion has been tried in Ireland before. It may succeed for a time but it has failed to get the Irish people to accept the British Conquest. There was a time when to have a pike or spear (and this in the age of gunpowder, mark you) or instrument serving as a pike or spear was to commit an offence punishable by transportation for seven years. British legislators said it was necessary because of the large number of “disaffected persons” in Ireland. The forces of the Crown in Ireland always had the right to enter any man's house on suspicion. Sir Robert Peel, one-time Chief Secretary in Dublin, said, when introducing a new Arms Bill (or Special Powers Act) for Ireland, that there was only one way to treat the Irish and that was to give them an Arms Bill and nothing but an Arms Bill. It was a neat expression of British ruling class political thinking in regard to the Irish question.

A New York Times correspondent (Drew Middleton) commenting on the Resistance Movement thought Irish Republican propaganda dated because it referred at the time to Sir Robert Peel and William Orr. The former symbolised British coercion in Ireland and the latter Irish Resistance. Orr was a Presbyterian farmer and the first Irish Republican hanged for the cause of Irish freedom. But coercionists like Peel still enforce British law in Ireland and Ulstermen like Orr still suffer for trying to resist it. If that “dates” us then you must blame the masters we do not want. Justice,

unfortunately, can be as easily denied in the 20th-century as in the 18th. And terror can just as easily be imposed on defenceless victims by Imperial powers.

The struggle for Irish unity and independence is to-day being fought in the hills and glens, towns and villages of historic Ulster. The mass of the Irish people are on the side of the Resistance but their voice is stilled. British law in Ireland is propped up by British bayonets. Have they not heard of that accepted principle of international law giving a people the right to rise against tyranny when adequate machinery for constitutional change does not exist? No adequate machinery for constitutional change exists in Occupied Ireland.

The Resistance grows stronger. Nothing the Occupation forces have done has been able to stop the guerrillas. Without the people the Resistance would be helpless. The political and economic needs of the hour are forcing the Irish people—and more especially the Nationalists in Occupied Ireland who are directly victimised because of Partition—to the conclusion that they must win control over their own affairs now. They are proving it can be done. Despite the condemnation of the 26-County Government support for the Resistance has not diminished. The Nationalists of the north are the direct victims of British aggression in Ireland. Up to December 12, 1956, they were content to be passive victims. They may be victims still but they are no longer passive.

No one need explain the issues to them. Separate armies, States, Governments, bureaucracies are matters about which they have expert knowledge. No one has yet been able to better their slogan of “one country, one people, one nation.” They stand for that. They suffer for it. To prove its truth they are fighting against terrible odds.

Their demand is that Britain takes her forces of Occupation out of Ireland NOW. After that the Irish people can settle their affairs in peace. Sectarianism is not an issue in Ireland although Britain has tried very hard to make it an issue.

On December 12, 1957, on the anniversary of the Revolt, the following manifesto was posted up in every part of Occupied Ireland:

### **To the People of British-Occupied Ireland**

On this the first anniversary of the December /2, 1956, Revolt against foreign tyranny and occupation we send you greetings on behalf of the heroic freedom fighters of the Irish Republican Army and the men and women of the

## Resistance Movement.

Your sacrifices during the past 12 months have proved to the world that the historic Irish Nation still lives, that it has not accepted and will never accept British Imperial domination over the affairs of our country.

You have suffered in the cause of national Resistance. Your homes have been raided systematically by day and by night. Your sons have been jailed without charge or trial and when not jailed, increasingly interrogated and intimidated. Intensified police terrorism has not broken your spirit. You have consistently stood up against this tyranny to the utmost of your power.

Be assured that the people of the 26 Counties and Irish exiles everywhere are slowly becoming aware of your sufferings for the cause of Irish liberty and unity. Be assured that victory will be ours in the end.

Since this Revolt began seven of our comrades have made the supreme sacrifice. We shall not forget them. Their deaths have made us more determined to carry on the work for which they gave their lives. Their names will live on in the annals of our people while the flame of freedom burns among us. Scores of our comrades are serving long terms of imprisonment. Many more are jailed without charge or trial. But their places in the Resistance have been filled ten-fold and now on the hills, in the glens, through the towns and villages of historic Ulster the young volunteer freedom fighters of the Irish Republican Army are intensifying the struggle.

The Resistance is growing stronger. It will continue until Britain takes her forces of occupation out of our country. By force of arms our country is kept divided and unfree. By force of arms our people were robbed of their rights. By force of arms the usurper maintains his rule. Only by force of arms can Ireland be restored to her rightful owners—the Irish people.

We have no quarrel with any section of the Irish people or with any Irish man or woman. The puppet Assembly at Stormont—representing the vested interests of Tory Unionism who are tied to the British Empire by bonds of wealth, power and privilege—in appealing to sectarian passions have attempted to misrepresent us. Stormont has failed. The Protestants of Occupied Ireland have not ALL been blinded by the propaganda of this Ascendancy class.

They are thinking for themselves. They know that Republicanism was born among them 167 years ago. They know that Protestant Ireland—and Protestant Ulster especially—has given some of her best sons to the cause of Irish Republicanism. They know that only

in a truly Republican Ireland will equal rights and equal opportunities for all our citizens be assured, the memory of all past dissensions be abolished, and the common name of Irishman be substituted in place of the designations Protestant, Catholic and Dissenter.

The Republican faith is not dead among them. They will yet return to the allegiance of Tone, Emmet, Mitchel and Davis, Orr and McCracken. The lies of those who stand to gain most by the British Imperial tie will then be exposed. The Irish people will then be united for the welfare of their country and the prosperity of the nation.

God speed the day!

We must recover for the Irish people possession of the natural resources of our country. We must win for the Irish people the ownership and control of our nation. We must secure for the Irish people democracy, unity and sovereignty. To achieve these objects we must end forever interference in our affairs by an outside power. We must drive from our shores the forces of this outside Power. We must establish national independence.

That is the task the Resistance has set itself. With the help of the Irish people we will reach our goal.

ALL BRITISH FORCES MUST WITHDRAW FROM IRELAND NOW.

★

It says all that need be said at this time about the struggle for freedom in Ireland to-day. The remaining chapters will be written in the years to come.

**December, 1957.**