

**FIANNA  
FAIL  
AND  
THE  
I.R.A.**



CHAPTER 1

PREFACE

Political parties represent classes or coalitions of classes. The class represented is determined by their programme, whose interests the party works for, the social composition of the leading elements in the party - executive, cumann committee members etc., - and the social composition of the rank and file and supporters. The position of a party in politics is determined primarily by the programme and leadership and by the motives and interests actuating both.

Fianna Fail is the party of the national bourgeoisie or native capitalists, in particular those industrialists and capitalists engaged in manufacture rather than commerce, trade and the professions, which tend to be Fine Gael.

At the beginning of this century the national bourgeoisie was interested in developing the home market and, being small, in protection and opposition to free trade with Britain. Therefore, it was anti-imperialist to a degree. For many years the national bourgeois policy was essentially that put forward by Arthur Griffith in the early days of Sinn Fein. This amounted to protection for native industry, support for home industry, but in Griffith's programme, was reconcilable with a system of Dual Monarchy. In other words, when their class interests were met the bourgeoisie would be happy with a share in the Empire if they could get it. This explains how the early Sinn Fein could at once be anti-imperialist on the one hand and anti-working-class on the other, e.g. Griffith and 1913.

Griffith and Co. joined in the post-1916 Sinn Fein alliance so as not to be left out of events. Labour opted out of the national independence leadership after the death of Connolly. Significantly, it was De Valera who enunciated the policy "Labour must Wait" at the 1918 election. Connolly's second-in-command in the Union, William P.O'Brien, became a director of the Bank of Ireland before he died some years ago. Cathal O'Shannon ended his days in a whiskey and gin pickle in the foyer of the Gresham Hotel in Dublin.

Griffith had opted in, however, and the stresses of the Civil War forced him to adopt a very Redmondite and pro-British policy. It was left to De Valera in time to try out the Griffithite policies of protectionism as the economic policy of Fianna Fail. In the 1920's Griffith adopted Redmondite policies; in the 1930's De Valera adopted Griffithism.

The Civil War was a military fight to defend the Republic - not a political one. The I.R.A. was the leadership while Labour opted out as an independent force. Mellowe's intervention came too late to affect events. De Valera quickly became the political leader and he represented essentially a socially conservative force, though anti-imperialist on certain matters or up to a certain limit. He was no radical.

The Civil War defeat of Republican forces led to a new situation. Labour's non-intervention was critical to the result. The new Free State was established and consolidated after the Civil War. The Cumann na nGael policy was essentially the same as the old Redmondite one and not even as advanced as Griffith's original Sinn Fein one. It was dominated by the commercial bourgeoisie, who wanted Free Trade with Britain and the big cattle ranchers who were very anti-worker and anti-small farmer. The mass of small farmers, urban workers and small-businessmen were left outside political power and their support would go to the political force that could fight Cumann na nGael.

De Valera recognised that the new State was established and also that power could be taken from Fine Gael. To this end he inaugurated a political struggle, founding Fianna Fail in 1926 with a pledge to get rid of the "empty formula" of the oath of allegiance. Cumann na nGael wanted to keep the Fianna Fail deputies out of the Dail altogether - hence the oath business. De Valera was quite right in describing the oath as an "empty formula" but he wanted to achieve power in the interests of the national bourgeoisie, not the mass of the people; but he needed mass support to achieve his ends.

Hence the ambiguous and two-sided character of Fianna Fail. It advocated certain measures necessary for mass support and was progressive up to certain limits - the limits being anything which entailed interference with the rights of capital. By flaunting the Republican cloak Fianna Fail captured the leadership of the national movement and this meant it was doomed to failure, compromise and eventual backtracking before the continued inroads of imperialism.

The Fianna Fail strategy was to get mass national support for the aims of the native capitalist class; it was they who decided the programme, strategy and tactics in essence and provided the money. This

facet of Fianna Fail support has got great prominence in recent times with its open expression of support in return for patronage in the form of TACA.

The great success of Fianna Fail in achieving mass support was helped by the ineptitude of the opposition, Labour and Republican; it was further helped by the anti-national character of Labour and the divisions among Republicans as to policy which prevented the Republicans from facing and fighting Fianna Fail on its own grounds. The Fianna Fail political line vis a vis Britain could be described as one of 'thus far and no further' - far enough to wean support from the Republican workers and small-farmers but never far enough to challenge the reality of imperialism. Fianna Fail got away with it because no one else was able to give a political leadership to the anti-imperialist struggle.

The I.R.A. during the '20s and '30s was an army purely and simply - not a political leadership. They left politics to Fianna Fail, thinking politics would spoil their "purity". What they were doing, in fact, was opting out of the main area of struggle just as the Labour Party had done for different reasons in 1921. The native capitalist class was naturally very pleased to have no one contending with it for political leadership. It waxed confident in the early '30s. The I.R.A. tried to broaden its appeal by economic agitations, pushed in this direction by its left wing (O'Donnell, Ryan and Gilmore), but avoided politics, despite the urgings of the left wing.

In the 1932 General Election the I.R.A. effectively supported Fianna Fail. The land annuities campaign, pioneered by Peadar O'Donnell, was used by Fianna Fail as a vehicle to achieve mass support in the political field. This campaign was initiated and fathered by non-political Republicans. The Republicans did the work but others reaped the political gain. One cannot opt out of any field - and the political is the most important, not the least.

Fianna Fail found Republicans very handy in helping Fianna Fail consolidate itself in office in the period after their election victory of 1932 when the Cumann na nGael or many of them went fascist. Republicans were recruited into the Garda or the Broy Harriers; I.R.A. pensions were instituted to tie the allegiance of many more. The I.R.A. were used against the Blueshirts, and when the Blueshirts were dealt with Fianna Fail then cracked down on the I.R.A.

Again, in 1932, Fianna Fail got the support of the Labour Party and then ditched it when the time was opportune and Fianna Fail had gathered sufficient mass support from Labour to dispense with its services. Political reforms were pushed through - the obnoxious oath was abolished, so was the Governor General and the Cumann na nGael Free State Constitution.

Economic advance was also made under Fianna Fail - not via Socialism, however, but via State Capitalism. Protection and licences were given to their businessmen supporters. This led to the growth of the manufacturing industry and also of the working class and was objectively in the national interest. Britain replied to the cessation of payment of the land annuities and this protectionism and mild radicalism with the economic war. With slump conditions prevalent in the capitalist world at the time it proved a testing time, but Fianna Fail continued to retain its mass support.

Nevertheless the fight with the British in the economic war pushed Fianna Fail's business support as far as it would go. They could not indeed go further within the capitalist system. A change began to occur from 1935 onwards Fianna Fail radicalism began to ebb. It now wanted to make peace with Britain: it balked at taking the more radical measures which would have struck at the rights of capital. The national capitalists had to choose between turning to the Irish people or making peace with capitalism. They chose the latter course and the consequences have been working themselves out for several decades now.

From a Republican point of view the Republican Congress was an attempt to face Fianna Fail on political ground and win Labour to a national position. But the effort came too late and proved too precipitate for the Republican Movement. There was also the distraction of the Spanish Civil War and the continuing success of Fianna Fail consolidating itself in a country facing the international slump and the threat of the World War.

The I.R.A. split into left and right, letting Fianna Fail off the hook. The Labour Party adopted the Workers Republic slogan to head off support for the Congress idea and then later abandoned it under pressure from the Catholic Church when the Republican Congress had been defeated. Then followed the Fianna Fail crackdown with the Offences Against the State Act and the banning of the I.R.A.

The economic conservatism of Fianna Fail capitalism reveals itself in the refusal to tackle the banking and financial ties with imperialism and the corollary refusal to prevent investment of Irish capital in Britain and abroad. This also explains the refusal to organise cooperatives in the countryside, which would have helped the farmers during the economic war and since: the refusal to nationalise foreign trade or protect British companies like Guinness, despite the imperialist or Cumann na nGael connections.

In his 1937 Constitution De Valera made his peace with the Church outlawing divorce and contraception and stating the "special position" of the Catholic Church. In this latter aspect De Valera's Constitution was worse than the original Free State one and shows that Fianna Fail had no real intention of trying to win the Northern Protestants.

The I.R.A.'s preoccupation with the 1939 Bombing Campaign and their confinement to militarism played right into the hands of Fianna Fail.

The first major deal with imperialism was the 1938 Trade Agreement. This succeeded in regaining the ports which were strategically valueless to Britain, who benefited from Irish neutrality in the following World War, but popular with the Irish people at large.

The Fianna Fail success was due to progressive measures in the political and economic fields, though they stopped well short of the Republic and were compatible with the continuation of mass emigration and high unemployment. Then there was the lack of any effective opposition. Fine Gael was openly pro-imperialist. Labour was anti-national and concerned with narrow trade union issues. Republicans were divided and anti-imperialist in the military sense only when this was no longer sufficient.

During the war years Fianna Fail rode the crest of the wave as a result of the popularity of the neutrality policy and ruthlessly asserted itself as the Government in its dealings with the I.R.A., showing all the determination of a class holding on to its gains and privileges and not allowing these to be usurped by any other force.

The military preoccupation of the I.R.A. during this time is a reflection of its weakness and relative isolation rather than its strength or mass support. The mass of the people continued to support Fianna Fail, despite the growing obviousness of Fianna Fail's bankruptcy on the national issue.

The late Forties were to witness the demagoguery and opportunism of the Anti-Partition League campaign and the De Valera argument on the North - "we will join N.A.T.O. if you give us the North" - echoed in turn by McBride of Clann na Poblachta.

Clann na Poblachta was an abortive attempt to tackle Fianna Fail on the political level. Its rapid growth showed the possibility of this approach and the gaining of mass support. Fianna Fail were very worried and showed a quick response with the 1948 General Election. The Clann was to be destroyed by the opportunism of McBride compounded with inadequate political preparation.

Ever since the late 1930s there has been a hardening of the social arteries of the Fianna Fail Party and its supporters. The economic crisis of the 1950s showed that the development of an Irish economy on lines acceptable to the class interests of the national bourgeoisie had gone as far as was possible for them. Politicians were years in office and the businesses established in the 1930s and 1940s had grown as much as they could on the basis of Fianna Fail

economic principles - protection of the home market with no control on foreign investment. The Coalition Government with Sweetman as Minister for Finance were in office to deal with the crisis in 1956. The Whitaker Report was commissioned and made the recommendation that further development in the future could only be realised by bringing in the foreigners. This was the logical outcome of the accommodation with Britain begun in 1938. De Valera left office and Sean Lemass formally inaugurated the new pro-imperialist era.

The economic basis of this change was the capitulation of the Irish national bourgeoisie to imperialism as symbolised by the repeal of the Control of Manufacturers Act in 1958. Under this Act 51% of shares in new Irish companies had to be in the hands of Irish nationals.

Now the task of attracting foreign capital began and the pattern of foreign companies taking over Irish companies became an established feature of Irish economic life. Very often the original Irish owners were left in charge as managers. More and more Irish companies became branches of British companies. As the rate of economic integration progressed the Irish Government policy became more and more subordinate to British policy. The national bourgeoisie was making its peace with its one time enemies as the alternative to a radical attack on imperialism which would have imperilled its class interests.

The present Lynch era sees the steady progression towards economic subservience to Britain. The Free Trade Agreement increased enormously the pace of economic integration with Britain. More and more overt neo-colonialism appears on the political level. The policy of entry to the Common Market follows logically in the path of the Free Trade Agreement. The abandonment of Irish neutrality is the next logical step. The take over of Irish industry and the home market by British and other foreign firms goes on apace. The small farmers are being run off the land as the original land policy of Cumann na nGael and the first Free State Government is re-introduced by Fianna Fail.

The utter degeneration of Fianna Fail is shown by the reaction to the Northern crisis. Blaney, Haughey, and Boland speculate on a sectarian civil war in the north which would divide the Irish working class more than ever before. Witness their alleged pun-running and demagoguery on the one hand and the sell-out to Britain in the Common Market by Lynch and Hillery on the other.

Fianna Fail are still in office, however, due to Republican divisions and the failure of Republicans to date to oppose Fianna Fail politically as well as in other areas. Then there is the Labour Party leftism. The Labour Party, just as it did in the '30s, instead of exploiting Fianna Fail's sell-out to imperialism, reverts to a sterile

left-sectarianism, going "socialist" and letting Fianna Fail off the hook. Anti-imperialism is avoided under the guise of leftist phrasemongering.

Fianna Fail is again being saved, as in the 1930s, at the time of the Congress split, by a combination of unthinking physical force republicanism and leftist sectarianism in Labour. Both have to be exposed as the diversions they are by a republican and anti-imperialist movement able to tackle and defeat Fianna Fail on its own ground.

The most hopeful aspect of political developments in recent years has been the successful manner in which the Republican Movement repelled the attempt by the Haughey/Boland/Blaney faction of Fianna Fail to harness the movement to their ends in the manner pioneered by De Valera. Their success, nevertheless, in splitting the Movement and in using their dupes in the North to foment sectarian strife represents a failure of political awareness within the Movement.

This pamphlet is intended to fill that vacuum to some extent and also to give factual information of the progress of Fianna Fail-L.R.A. relationships since February 1969.

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

... "We decided, you and I, in Convention and Ard Fheis, at Comhairli Ceantir and staff meetings, to make an all out attack on the take-over of Irish assets by foreign interests..... This movement has room only for revolutionaries, for radicals, for men with a sense of urgent purpose who are aware of realities, who are not afraid to meet hard work, men who will not be defeated and who will not be deceived".

- Cathal Goulding, Bodenstown, 1967:



CHAPTER 2

1926-1944

Twice in the past, in 1932 and again in 1957, Fianna Fail used the I.R.A. to gain political power and then turned on it and put it down savagely. The latest attempt, in 1969, by a section of Fianna Fail to again use the I.R.A. for its political advantage failed because of the political awareness of the I.R.A. leadership. But the failure was not complete as evidence of the present tense situation in Belfast between rival I.R.A. groups.

De Valera dominated Fianna Fail-I.R.A. relationships during the period of greatest trial from 1926 when he broke with the I.P.A. and Sinn Fein to found Fianna Fail until 1945, when the remnants of the once numerically powerful I.R.A. were released from the prisons and the Currash internment camp. Again, briefly, in the pre-1957 General Election period De Valera flirted with the I.R.A. until his return to office when he quickly opened the Currash once more to eliminate any possible threat to Fianna Fail political hegemony.

The next period of Fianna Fail interest in the I.R.A. occurred in the days following August 14, 1969 in Belfast when Fianna Fail saw their political position threatened by political developments in the North over which they had no control. This time a section of Fianna Fail - the Haughey-Blaney-Boland faction - tried to harness the I.R.A. to their own sectional advantage inside Fianna Fail. Their failure to do so is part of contemporary Irish history but it is still too early to estimate the full damage done to the I.R.A. resulting from the attempt.

How did Fianna Fail outmanoeuvre the I.P.A. between 1926 and 1932? Why did the I.R.A. leadership support Fianna Fail in the crucial 1932 and 1933 elections? What happened between then and September 13, 1936, when the first of many I.P.A. men died in solitary confinement in Fianna Fail's Arbour Hill prison in 1936?

All this happened because basically the I.R.A. had no political programme geared to the actual needs of the 26 County population in those years. The I.P.A. of those days thought in terms of gaining the support of the people for the army rather than of the army spear-pointing a popular struggle. This attitude had been made inevitable

by historical circumstances. It took decades before the lesson was fully learned that a change in attitude was overdue. To the majority within the I.R.A. the maintenance of the military force, rather than the revolutionary movement that produced it, had become the tradition as George Gilmore points out.

Connelly had written of the danger of crystallising nationalism into a tradition: "Traditions may, and frequently do, provide materials for a glorious martyrdom, but can never be strong enough to ride the storm of a successful revolution".

The initial split between the I.R.A. and Fianna Fail in 1926 was not seen by the I.R.A. leadership as a political gulf - it was to them nothing more than a matter of tradition. They saw the Fianna Fail party as a break with Republican tradition rather than as a new viable alternative to the Cosgrave government. The mass of Republicans in the country were not satisfied with the Free State administration and whereas De Valera saw this in the political context the I.R.A. leadership looked for the solution in "the second round" of the War of Independence.

While De Valera was learning the Parliamentary ropes in the five year opposition period from 1927 to 1932 the I.R.A. were still awaiting the opportunity to continue the military campaign against the Free State and Britain.

While in opposition the Fianna Fail party under De Valera kept their eyes focused on what little political activity the I.R.A. were actively carrying on and when the 1932 election came along they were in a position to capitalise on the land annuities' campaign, which Peadar O'Donnell had organised.

This they were allowed to do by the apolitical I.R.A. leadership. During the 1927-'32 period the main dilemma to many in the Army was that there did not exist a clear alternative in their minds to the Fianna Fail path to the Republic through the usurping Dail. A few in the Army, like O'Donnell wanted a move from the left but the pure in the Republican Movement of that day felt that this would lead them away from the Republic and the real struggle.

De Valera out of office avidly courted the apolitical I.R.A. The March 1929 edition of the Fianna Fail "Nation" paper could say that "Fianna Fail did not condone brutality 'but' they did not wish to associate themselves with the equally brutal, inefficient, useless methods of repression adopted by the Free State Government".

Regularly through 1928 and 1929 De Valera rubbed the relic, stressing the validity of the ideals of the men outside the Dail. "Those who continued on in that organisation which we have left can claim exactly the same continuity that we claimed up to 1925".

At the 1931 Bodenstown Commemoration, De Valera could be seen with the Fianna Fail delegation "off to one side, listening to the soaring words of O'Donnell and testing the seething enthusiasm of the crowd". Peadar O'Donnell, who gave the oration that day recalls the scene in his book. "There will be another day" describing De Valera as "waiting in the wings". De Valera did not have long to wait. Within nine months, on March 9th, 1932, De Valera led Fianna Fail to electoral victory and to its first spell in office.

In November 1932, the Army Council of the I.R.A. rescinded the General Army Order prohibiting Volunteers from voting or working in Free State or Northern Ireland elections. No I.R.A. policy would be put forward but Volunteers might co-operate in putting Cosgrave out. The schizophrenia was visible in the wording of the Order .... "The Army Council would, however, emphasise to Volunteers that while advocating voting at these elections, our objects cannot be achieved by the methods of politics of the parties seeking election". This blind spot gave De Valera a wide open field of approach to appeal to Republican supporters over the head of the I.R.A. leadership in the 1930s.

Once he gained political power De Valera first consolidated his position by neutralising the I.R.A. This was accomplished by releasing several men, including George Gilmore, from Arbour Hill military prison where they were held under sentence by the military Tribunal. With the possibility of the Republic being around the corner the ranks of the I.R.A. swelled and in their initial burst of enthusiasm they began open drilling while the uncertain police force looked the other way. The 1932 march to Bodenstown included a Fianna Fail delegation, this time not in the wings but in the centre of the stage. On the surface the I.R.A. were free to act but they had no political direction in which to turn and they waited for the Fianna Fail Government to act so that they could react.

Remaining an exclusively military organisation the I.R.A. slipped into a para-military blind alley while De Valera using the political experience he had gained while in opposition, slowly but skillfully strengthened his position. In his initial skirmishes with Britain De Valera secured on the surface what rank and file Republicans regarded as important concessions from the old enemy - the non-payment of land annuities for example. He was in effect saying and doing what the I.R.A. felt they should have been saying and doing - at least he was giving political leadership and as such he slowly drained support away from the I.R.A.

The process is well described in James Bower Bell's book "The Secret Army". It describes the formation of the present F.C.A. at this time as intended to cut off potential recruits from the I.R.A. "The idea attracted those who wanted a bit of excitement, a new uni

and didn't care to risk paternal or priestly disapproval of the more militant I.R.A.", the process of chloroforming continued in other ways. "In the Dail, several Bills were passed, compensating Republican supporters for property losses suffered during the Civil War and providing pensions for the wounded. It was even rumoured that a military service pension for old I.R.A. men would be introduced later in 1934. All these measures gathered Republicans more firmly into the Fianna Fail fold. The end of the oath, the reduction of the Governor General to a strawman, the promise of more Republican manoeuvres in the days ahead, and the economic war under De Valera's generalship convinced many that Fianna Fail was on the high road to the Republic". Ever so gradually Fianna Fail outflanked the I.R.A., tranquillized their old supporters and secured the confidence of the mass of the people. The defection of leftward thinking people who realised the need for a revolutionary alternative left the Movement politically rudderless.

After a year in power De Valera called an election to strengthen his position in the country. He had not been wasting his time but the only direction that the semi-isolated I.R.A. could give to their supporters was a negative one - they were determined to work and vote against Cosgrave. This time De Valera did not need to rely so heavily on the support of the I.R.A. and although he was returned with an uncomfortable majority of one, De Valera felt confident to move against the I.R.A. They had helped him to gain power the previous year, they had not stood in his way that year and now they were no longer needed. Indeed they were a possible threat to his position of power and influence and he was about to move against them.

At this time the main I.R.A. activity was one of militant opposition to the Blue Shirts and with these two organisations in conflict with each other De Valera could wait on the side and pick up the pieces. The Republican pieces he was able to imprison legally, generally on arms charges or in relation to the break-up of Blue Shirt meetings. At the same time he slowly but surely moved against the I.R.A. in the legal field by passing legislation which although initially shelved was to be used before the thirties were over.

A new 'S'-Branch under Colonel Broy was formed and this presented hundreds of Republicans with the opportunity to serve the Republican Party (Fianna Fail), to smash the Blue Shirts and to earn a good salary with the prospects of promotion and pension. This was a double-edged weapon - it cut off the number of recruits to the I.R.A. and it provided a good intelligence service to smash the military organisation of the Movement.

The Fianna Fail Government moved against the I.R.A. in strength in 1936 after the I.R.A. had intervened in the Dublin tram and bus workers strike. De Valera saw the danger of political involvement

by the I.R.A. and this, he said, "was the last straw". At once the Military Tribunals began handing out sentences. Con Lehane, Donal O'Donoghue, Claude McLoughlin and Tom Barry were among the first to be sentenced.

"An Phoblacht", the I.R.A. newspaper of the day was suppressed and in its last issue it stated: "Mr. De Valera can no more succeed in intimidating Republicans from the defence of the Republic than Churchill or Greenwood, Collins or Cosgrave succeeded. The Republican Army will continue in its training and organisation, preparing for its task of overthrowing British imperialism and native treason. That is our answer to Mr. De Valera."

Mr. De Valera had one more card to play before finally dispensing with the I.R.A. Although he had banned them in 1936 he allowed their Bodenstown march to go ahead that year because he needed the Republican vote to ensure that his new constitution the following year would be accepted in the plebiscite. It was accepted, De Valera was firmly in power and the I.R.A. were now fair game for the Broy Harriers. Fianna Fail had succeeded in moving against the I.R.A. as they had considerably weakened their power-base. The I.R.A. had brought Fianna Fail to power, and that power had been firmly consolidated by the isolation of the I.R.A. Now that they were isolated they were about to be crushed.

The man to do the crushing was Gerry Boland and the place was the Curragh. Opened in 1940 the Curragh housed hundreds of internees throughout the war years under the Emergency Powers Legislation. By 1944 the crushing of the I.R.A. was almost complete. At least sixteen active Republicans had been hanged, shot or executed by Fianna Fail by that time in the 26-County area. In the Dail the Fianna Fail Minister for Justice, Gerry Boland, announced with pride that the I.R.A. was dead and that he had killed it. The I.R.A. had constituted a threat to Fianna Fail in the early nineteen thirties but it was intended to make sure that such a threat never arose again.

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

FIANNA FAIL AND THE I.R.A.

CHAPTER 3

1957

It was 1956-1957 before the paths of De Valera and the I.R.A. crossed again. Again De Valera was out of power and on the opposition benches. His 1948-'49 world-wide anti-Partition tour had been more than just a valley period occupation. It was intended to stress Fianna Fail's copyright claim to the Republican tradition: and it was certainly a help in restoring Fianna Fail to power in 1952. The anti-Partition campaign was then dropped: it had served its purpose. But in 1954 a Coalition Government was again in power with the support of Glann na Poblachta's three Dail deputies.

Fianna Fail's flirtations with the resurgent Sinn Fein and I.R.A. began. The organisers of the meeting in Pomeroy which ended in a riot on the occasion of Liam Kelly's release from prison were interviewed in the Dail restaurant by an enthusiastic De Valera. What Ireland needed, he declared, was "more Pomeroy's".

At local level in politics in the South it was often difficult to tell the difference between Fianna Fail and Sinn Fein Councillors. Fianna Fail was re-discovering its militant Republicanism. Friendly Fianna Fail people provided facilities for I.R.A. training camps and gave fiery speeches from public platforms.

At this time there was a Republican fervour sweeping the countryside. The spectacular raids carried out by the I.R.A. in Armagh and Omagh had reoused the interest and won the support of a large section of the population. The skill and courage of the young I.R.A. volunteers had captured the imagination of thousands. Their actions, however, had another effect. De Valera was out of office and he needed the support of the ever-increasing number of Republicans to regain power. Just as in the early nineteen thirties the Fianna Fail courtship of the I.R.A. began again with the same purpose in mind - power for Fianna Fail.

On May 26th, 1955, Sinn Fein candidates in the Westminster elections in the North polled a total of 152,310 votes. The Nationalist Party was buried in the rush to elect I.R.A. prisoners Tom Mitchell for Mid-Ulster and Phil Clarke for Fermanagh-South Tyrone.

The I.R.A. decided on a military guerilla campaign inside the North. As in the 1930 Campaign in England it was expected that a policy of doing nothing in the 26 Counties would be reciprocated by the Government of the day. This attitude went out in the inner councils of the I.R.A. despite warnings to the contrary and the lessons of the past. In the North the I.P.A. columns were to face apathy among the Nationalists and hostility among the Orange majority. In January 1957 the Coalition Government under John Costello began to arrest the known I.R.A. leaders as the campaign started in spectacular fashion.

Pressure came on the small Clann na Poblachta party to withdraw from a Government that was jailing Republicans. De Valera seemed preferable in his present mood. Wiser counsel failed and an election was declared for March 5, 1957.

Sinn Fein seemed to be riding the crest of a wave. So too was De Valera - and it was the same wave. Sinn Fein put forward 19 candidates in 40 constituencies and elected four, polling a total of 65,640 votes out of the total 1,127,016 cast.

Rory Brady was elected in Longford-Westmeath, Einaehan O' h-Anluain in Monaghan, J.J. McGill in Sligo-Leitrim and John Joe Rice in South Kerry. But De Valera took the lion's share of the wave and Eod Fianna Fail to its greatest ever electoral triumph with a smashing 79 seats.

With Fianna Fail back in power, the honeymoon was suddenly over. The Offences Against the State Act was re-activated, the Curragh reopened and Republicans swept into it from all parts of the country. On July 6, 1957, the whole Sinn Fein Ard Chomhairle were arrested with the exception of Mrs. Buckley. De Valera did not even need the advice of British Ambassador Sir Alexander Clutterbuck that a failure by the Southern Government to take firm action against the I.R.A. would lead to economic sanctions against the 26 Counties by Britain. A successful I.R.A. campaign would lead to competition for him for political power in the 26 Counties. He was going to crush the I.R.A. challenge by a ruthless use of the power they had helped him gain.

The Curragh Concentration Camp was soon overflowing with the victims of the Offences Against the State Act whose real crime was their potential to offend against Fianna Fail power.

The lesson was the same as before - Fianna Fail used the back of the I.R.A. as a stepping stone to power in Leinster House. When that power had been achieved it was used to crush the I.R.A. The purely military character of the I.R.A. failed to achieve even limited military success and politically it was there only to be used by others.

It was obvious that the I.R.A. could not succeed in its existent form and for this reason the leadership of the Movement decided on a major reappraisal of its structure and policies after the failure of the Border Campaign. Twice in the past the I.R.A. had been used by Fianna Fail but the post-campaign leadership were determined that it would not happen again.

In 1965 major decisions were taken which turned the I.R.A. from an exclusively military organisation to being a revolutionary one. It was realised that the battle in which they had been engaged over the years was not a purely military one as such but that it was in fact political. For this reason the I.R.A. was changed from an organisation which looked for help from the people in its battles to one which they helped the people in their battles against injustice and oppression. A definite political stance was adopted and it was based on the teachings of the great men of Republicanism of earlier times.

A new policy was adopted in which the I.R.A. decided on a new campaign - a campaign on behalf of the common people of Ireland for the ownership of Ireland. In the Twenty Six Counties this took the form of housing action, intervention on behalf of striking workers, fishing and ground rent agitation and a general campaign on behalf of the working people. In the North, however, the problem was different because in that area there did not exist the basic democratic conditions necessary for normal political activity. For this reason it was necessary to concentrate the initial agitation towards gaining these conditions.

It would have been impossible for Republicans to do this on their own and they joined in an alliance with all other radical groups in the North to fight a joint campaign. This was in keeping with their policy of organising a mass front in unity against a common enemy. The broad front in this case was the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association. The triumph of Civil Rights was also a triumph of justification for the new policies of the Movement.

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

....."This changes drastically our traditional line of tactics. There are no longer two different types of republicans; physical force men and politicians. We in the Republican Movement must be politically aware of our objectives and must also be prepared to take the appropriate educational, economic, political and finally military action to achieve them".

Sean Carland, Bodenstown, 1968.



CHAPTER 4

AUGUST 1969

The August crisis of 1969 in the North threw Fianna Fail into confusion. At Government level there was need for a speedy action to cover all immediate contingencies arising from the chaos radiating from Derry and Belfast. At party political level there was need to respond to the pressure from grass-roots level to make use of the situation in the North in order to advance towards the Republic. The explosion in the North had caught Fianna Fail in the paradoxical situation of having a Government in power pursuing the Redmondite policy of subservience to British Imperialism while the party itself posed before the public as a Republican party.

This contradiction was heightened to crisis point by the doom-laden atmosphere emanating from the North and the response towards it by the public of the South. The whole Fianna Fail party were caught between the upper millstone of an Imperialism which they had come to terms with and the nether millstone of a genuine Republican following which felt that the day of destiny had dawned at last for the party of destiny.

This contradiction blazed in the face of the emergency Fianna Fail Cabinet meeting which met to discuss the battle raging in Belfast. What was the reaction to be? Military intervention was out. Any intervention that could be construed as an act of war would be met by a containing action by the British army and an economic blockade of the South that would bring a collapse within a week. Where large sections of the Nationalist population were threatened by pogrom in border areas military intervention would be contemplated - only with the permission of Britain.

But something must be seen to be done. Refugee centres were set up. Military ambulance units were dispatched to border areas to be treated wounded. The Army was placed on full alert: the Army Reserve was called up. An embarrassed Chief of Staff explained that the Army had two days ammunition and three thousand fit men. This was later to lead to the "Mighty Mighty Ranger" recruiting drive aimed at enlisting one thousand men to bring the Army near full strength.

But there was a danger that the outlawed Irish Republican Army might win the allegiance of large masses of public opinion by effecting action in defence of minority areas in the North. This was political

worrying because it would lead to the collapse of a Fianna Fail vote upstaged by the Republican Movement. Steps had to be taken. The Intelligence Unit of the Army was instructed to concentrate on I.R.A. personnel and sympathisers along the border, to discover everything discoverable about their contacts, cross-border routes, activeness, etc. This dossier would be of critical importance in foiling any major push of I.R.A. units from the South across the border in the event of future crisis in the North.

Captains Kelly, Drohan and Duggan were set to work. Jack Lynch appeared on Telefis Eireann to tell the Nation that he would not tolerate any illegal group usurping the powers of the lawfully elected Government of the 26 Counties. This was the public response to the I.P.A. statement announcing that already northern units of the I.P.A. had been in action "in defence of the lives and homes of the people which have been attacked..."

Everybody in the Cabinet agreed with the immediate steps taken to meet the crisis. But the crucial question was yet to be discussed. What was the attitude towards Britain to be? Two attitudes immediately emerged. One argued for a hard line diplomatic approach and an open demand for U.N. intervention pointing out that the grass-roots or "cloth-cap" republican support must be assured that Fianna Fail would make the maximum use of the situation. Only by appearing to be Republican could the allegiance of this life-line of the Fianna Fail party be restrained from joining more extreme Republican groups. Without this support the party would crumble.

The other faction argued that this was impossible: Fianna Fail's electoral success depended on their economic policy. This policy was one of attaining short-term prosperity by becoming economically subservient to the British economy.

The Free Trade Agreement was the corner-stone of this policy. A tough-line with Britain would jeopardise this policy. Britain had already twice broken this agreement unilaterally and the effects on the Irish economy had been bad. Ireland had jumped to being Britain's third best customer from being ninth best in the space of four years as a result of this policy. Also, Britain's co-operation in the Common Market negotiations was vital if the Irish application was to succeed. This, also, would be put in jeopardy by even the appearance of a tough line.

As to keeping the Fianna Fail supporters happy with the Government's handling of the crisis a press propaganda corps could be despatched all over the world to talk about Partition. Material used by De Valera in his 1948 anti-Partition World tour would be available from External Affairs. This was agreed to but was not enough.

But the Lynch faction was adamant. No temporary crisis in the North caused by the Civil Rights Movement would be allowed upset relations with Britain. All Lynch would agree to do was to send an aide-memoire (the lowest form of diplomatic communication) to Wilson asking him to ask the British Government to request a peace-keeping force from the U.N. for the North. After all, he argued, the crisis might pass.

But the crisis did not pass. Fighting continued on an ever widespread scale in Belfast. Radio Telefis Eireann steadfastly broadcast pop-music as people were slaughtered in the North. Government orders were that everything should be kept as normal as possible. But just as relentlessly the crisis grew. The Cabinet met again.

Lord Chalfont had given a public refusal to consider the request in the aide-memoire. It was decided that Hillery would have to go to the United Nations. He would go to see U Thant, the Secretary General, and keep public opinion happy. By the time Hillery had reached New York the crisis had not abated and it was decided that he would use his right as a visiting foreign Minister to ask a hearing from the General Assembly.

Russia, Finland and Zambia supported the request. But Hillery could not push for a Security Council decision. Irish foreign policy, in conformity with the pro-imperialist policies of the Fianna Fáil Government, had aligned itself distinctly with the Anglo-American camp on issues that cropped up at the U.N. Now that the 26 County Government was embroiled with one of the major partners in the Anglo-American bloc it could expect no sympathy or support from either the Arab nation or the newly emergent African nations. Missionary activity accounted for any residual respect remaining in these quarters for the Irish people.

Hillery's speech at the U.N., typically, was anti-partition - that was the only text available from the Department of External Affairs.

At home a special fund for northern aid was approved at Cabinet level and the special press corps established. One of these appointments was Scamus Brady, brother-in-law to Neil Blaney, Minister for Agriculture, had the job of collecting data in the north to service the other members of the team sent abroad. Brady, because of his relationship with Blaney, had been retained previously to do public relations work for Fianna Fáil and also held the public relations account of An Bord Rialtais from the Department his brother-in-law headed. Mr. Haughey told the Director of the Government Information Bureau, Mr. Eoin Neeson, of Brady's appointment on August 15th. Mr. Neeson subsequently stated to the Northern Aid Fund Daily Inquiry that he had no knowledge of Mr. Brady's appointment until informed by Mr. Haughey who told him that the appointment had his approval and that it had been arranged with the Department of the Taoiseach.

Free State Army Intelligence Officers Kelly, Drohan and Duggan were already at work in border areas trying to find out as much as possible about the I.R.A. and compiling lists of activists for the Director of Military Intelligence.

Captain J. Kelly's usual approach was to tell Republican sympathisers that he felt that the Free State Army should cross the Border, that he was sympathetic and wanted to get guns across the Border to the people in the North. Could the person he was talking to put him on to anyone who might help? In this guise he moved along the Border fooling many genuine Republicans and building up a picture of names, addresses and contacts of as many I.R.A. sympathisers he could discover. As Captain Kelly himself claimed when the arms crisis blew up in 1970 everything he learned was communicated directly with Jim Gibbons, Minister for Defence. What remains controversial is Gibbons' knowledge of Kelly's other activities - the building of a Fianna Fail-type I.R.A. inside the North to replace what he was destroying as part of his official duties.

Meanwhile Haughey had taken steps to approach the I.R.A. with an offer of money to buy arms with on certain conditions. One way to knock out the I.R.A. challenge was to get it to concentrate on purely military activity inside the North and leave the politics to Fianna Fail in the South and its supporters in the North.

Such a policy on the I.R.A. side would enable Haughey and Blaney to come to power inside the Fianna Fail party and depose Lynch. A special fund separate from the Northern Aid Grant was in the course of being collected to meet the expenses of the plan.

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

".... Let no mealy-mouthed sentimentalist tell us that we must preserve the Movement as traditionally constituted if this proves impractical and hand on these impracticalities to the next generation.

Sean Garland, Bodenstown, 1968.

CHAPTER 5

VOICE OF THE NORTH

Whether the attempted take-over of Civil Rights was an official or unofficial Fianna Fail plan is still a matter of dispute. One thing is certain: there was a sustained, well-planned and well-financed attempt to infiltrate and take over all areas of policy-making in the North both in Citizens Defence Committees and Civil Rights branches. This attempt involved prominent Fianna Fail Government Ministers like Charles Haughey, Kevin Boland, Neil Flaney and Padraig Baulkner. It was backed by two funds. One was the official Government grant-in-aid for northern aid and the other was a fund subscribed by Fianna Fail TACA supporters in Ireland and England.

Money from both funds was used indiscriminately by the Ministers involved as they were confident of success in their efforts and had no fear of failing with the whole Government and Free State Army apparatus to back them.

The first news of this plot was exposed in the November 1969 edition of the United Irishman following months of intensive investigation. To add emphasis to the story and to highlight the very real dangers involved to the progressive movement in the North if the take-over succeeded, The United Irishman gave a press conference to launch the edition.

The lead story stated the bones of the plot: "Spearhead of the Blaney-Haughey-Boland conspiracy to subvert the Civil Rights movement is the Aidan Corrigan group in Dungannon and Seamus Brady, a journalist up to recently attached to the Dublin Government's propaganda corps.

The finance for the take-over job involves large injections of Fianna Fail money channelled from Messrs. Blaney, Haughey and Boland through Brady, former P.P.O. of TACA, who has been given a huge sum of money per week by his masters to induce Civil Rights people and others to follow the Fianna Fail Government's line and go along with it when the sell-out to Britain comes.

The infiltration of Civil Rights is being conducted on many levels. The method is to provide money, services hard to come by and to undertake the printing of propaganda for the Civil Rights cause.

At first the Civil Rights propaganda is intended to be plausible and innocuous; but as its influence is built up over a period of time it will be able to swing large sections of Civil Rights opinion behind the Southern Government line when the moment comes.

The rather obvious mixture of Civil Rights news and Fianna Fail image-making in "The Voice of the North" paper brought out by Brady and Corrigan is proof of this progression in the moulding of public opinion.

It is hard to believe that Mr. Jack Lynch is unaware of this cynical double-dealing by his Ministers. These Fianna Fail politicians are doing their best to disrupt Civil Rights and anti-Unionist forces in the North whose successes have been politically highly embarrassing to them.

Other questions arise. Is this plan an official Government or an official Fianna Fail plan? How much of this work has been financed directly by Government money? How many people do Fianna Fail want to elect on the Executive of the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association at next January's annual meeting?

The leading questions raised in that expose have not yet been satisfactorily answered but the allegations of a take-over attempt, scoffed at at the time, have since been proved beyond any doubt. The arms crisis of April/May 1970 brought the story to the surface.

The United Irishman story went on to give details of other elements of the take-over attempt. One was the provision of services hard to come by in order to work agents into positions of trust in the Civil Rights and Citizen Defence Committees. One such book, "Terror in Northern Ireland", was written by Seamus Brady and printed without an imprint in the Cityview Press, Dublin.

The contents were a factual and accurate account of events in Belfast on August 14/15 and the appearance of the booklet facilitated the infiltration of Fianna Fail plant Hugh Kennedy as P.R.O. of the Central Citizens Defence Committee in Belfast. Once in Hugh set about building up the image of Tom Conaty, a Bishop's and a Fianna Fail man. Conaty is now Chairman of the C.C.D.C. and has used his position frequently to attack the Republican Movement in Belfast.

Another booklet printed at the Cityview Press about this time was "Eyewitness in Northern Ireland" by Aidan Corrigan. This sectarian document was paid for out of one of the two funds despite the denials of Mr. Corrigan. Also, a false imprint appeared - "printed and published in the Province of Ulster" - to give the impression the booklet was printed in the North. The booklet was launched at

a press conference in Dublin arranged by Seamus Brady in order to build Carrigan's image and stature with the people of the North,

Almost at the same time N.I.C.R.A. headquarters in Belfast were receiving heavy affiliation fees from the Dungannon area. It was reported in Belfast at one stage that 50 fl fees were handed in at the one time.

The major item of expense, however, and the major instrument for the controlling of public opinion in the North was to be the weekly publication "The Voice of the North". First published on October 12th 1969, it claimed to speak for "a group of people who have decided that there is need to speak out fearlessly for the Irish people of the Six Counties". Seamus Brady was the main promoter of the "Voice" with the help of Aidan Carrigan and the Kelly brothers, John and Billy, who distributed the paper throughout the North. Sean Keenan of Derry and W.P.O'Hanlon of the Anglo-Celt, who printed the "Voice", were named as directors.

Brady had once described his task in a conversation in the Monaghan Relief Centre shortly before the "Voice" was established as producing a paper that "would be Civil Rights, Republican, but not I.R.A." Any reading of the contents of the "Voice" shows the thinly disguised Fianna Fail propaganda under the Civil Rights overlay. By October 26 the "Voice" was featuring a centre-page spread on a speech about partition delivered by De Valera to the Dublin Senate on February 9th, 1939.

Brady's reply to the United Irishman expose was to deny an connection with the "Voice". "This is all a pack of lies. These people couldn't tell the truth if their lives depended on it" he said.

The Dail Inquiry was subsequently told that £5,000 was taken from the Government's Grant-in-Aid to pay for the "Voice". The account was known as the Anne O'Brien account. During the Dail Public Accounts Inquiry a clash emerged in the evidence of the Director of the Government Information Bureau, Eoin Neeson, and his former employee Seamus Brady as to the background of the "Voice". Brady claimed he had launched the "Voice" with the consent of the Government Information Bureau while Neeson denied this. In all respects the clash of evidence as between Brady and the Bureau parallels the clash between Captain Kelly and Gibbons about the alleged attempt at the importation of arms.

It was during the trial of Charles Haughey, Captain Kelly, John Kelly and Albert Luyx at the Four Courts that the "Voice" again became prominent with a message for the politically conscious.

A series of explosions had taken place in many parts of the North to help build up atmosphere in favour of the accused persons during the trial at the Four Courts. In one of these explosions a man was killed. His death was one of the earlier results of the use of genuine Republicans as Fianna Fail's private army in the North.

Michael Kane died as a result of a premature explosion near an electricity sub-station at New Forge Lane in Belfast. The car in which Kane was driven to the spot where he met his death had been bought for Billy Kelly, its owner, by the Fianna Fail monies backing the split in the Republican Movement. Copies of "The Voice of the North" were found in the boot. Michael Kane was at first repudiated by a statement from the Provisionals signed by P.O'Neill. Under pressure locally from Belfast Republicans who respected the courage and idealism of Kane another Provisional statement on the following day, Saturday, claimed him as a Provisional Volunteer. Sean Mac Stiofain gave the oration at the graveside some days later. The Fianna Fail tail, as evidenced by the appearance of the "Voice" at the scene of the tragedy, was even then wagging the Provisional dog.

The "Voice" was kept in circulation during the Four Courts trial in the hope that the inevitable acquittal would lead to a new lease of political life for Blaney and Haughey. This did not happen and the latest edition of the "Voice" appeared at Christmas, 1970. One of the most daring and barefaced attempts to harness or destroy the Republican Movement and to monopolise and mislead the Republican instincts of the minority in the North had failed.

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

"....The first information he received on Mr. Brady's appointment in the bureau came as a result of a casual conversation with Mr. Haughey on August 15th.

Mr. Neeson, Director of G.I.B. told the Aid Inquiry Committee.



FIANNA FAIL AND THE I.R.A.

CHAPTER 6

FIANNA FAIL APPROACH THE I.R.A.

In February, 1969, the first approach to the I.R.A. was made to a Northern O/C in Co. Derry by a representative of Neil Blaney. The offer was money and guns on the condition that the O/C set up an independent Northern Command. The O/C reported back to F.O. and it was agreed to play along in order to discover the motivation and see what might be gained from the contact.

The second approach, with the same condition, came in June of the same year. A meeting was arranged for Donegal but was later changed to Leinster House and was eventually held in the Shelbourne Hotel. Gerry Jones of Bandon was the main spokesman at this meeting which concluded little business. There was little urgency as yet in the conditions of the North.

The next approach was made to Cathal Goulding on Sunday, August 17th, two days after the dramatic events in Belfast. Contact was made through Father Dore, then head of the Irish Centre in London. The news was that there was an unlimited supply of money available to buy arms if it was guaranteed that these arms be sent direct to the Six Counties. To arrange this a leading member of the I.R.A. would have to go to London to meet the man involved. Goulding flew to London and was introduced by Fr. Dore to Mr. Padraic Haughey, brother of the Minister for Finance.

Having discussed the situation in the North, Padraic Haughey said he was willing to help and asked if Goulding was in a position to supply the people in the North with arms if money was forthcoming. Goulding informed him that the I.R.A. had a contact to supply arms but that it would not supply small arms and that an initial sum of £50,000 would be needed to start negotiations. Padraic Haughey handed over £1,500 and said that the £50,000 would be forthcoming. Several conditions were stipulated, the most important being that the Republican Movement cease political involvement in the South. Subsequently a total of £600 was handed over by Padraic Haughey but his attitude had changed markedly and despite promises never gave any further money.

The conditions attached to the money were not being met by the I.R.A. leadership but Captain Kelly could report that discontented elements in Belfast inside the I.R.A. were amenable and could be talked to.

The conditions that the I.R.A. General Head Quarters had rejected were acceptable to the old I.P.A. men who had flocked back into action after August '69 and who were dissatisfied with the performance put up by the I.R.A. during the attempted parer. They were also dissatisfied with the socialist policies of the Movement. Jimmy Steele, prominent among the "provisional" I.R.A. Before his death had used the re-interment of Barnes and McCormack in Mullingar in March of '69 to underscore this opposition to political involvement.

As early as Sunday August 24th, a meeting of these elements and a Fianna Fail agent had agreed to overthrow the Belfast Staff of the I.R.A. by an armed coup and set up an independent Northern Command. This decision was made easy by rumours of boatloads of arms and by the fact that the Director of Intelligence of the I.P.A. at that time, Sean Mac Stiofain, favoured the idea.

At this stage the Fianna Fail agents had orders to split the Movement as they were in contact with the two sides, one hostile and the other willing, and the conditions were arranged accordingly.

The new policy soon became apparent. One of the agents active in Belfast at the time working in conjunction with the Free State I.O.s was Michael Mills, political correspondent to the Irish Press. On the second Sunday in September, 1969, he met the I.R.A. staff in Belfast and arranged a meeting on the following Thursday in Dundalk with Charles Haughey. Blaney arrived at the venue and the question of money and arms was discussed. It was arranged to open a bank account into which monies could be paid. This was done with a £5 but not one single penny was subsequently paid into the account.

On September 22nd the planned coup took place at a meeting of the Belfast Staff of the I.R.A. Sixteen armed men produced guns and informed the Staff they were taking over the I.R.A. in Belfast. A discussion took place, however, and the O.C. demanded a vote of confidence and got it. A compromise solution was agreed to with the Staff to be increased from the original number of six to sixteen to include all shades of opinion and that this new Staff would have a trial period of three months. The four conditions laid down by those in favour of the coup were:

1. Break with H.Q. and set up Northern Command.
2. Abandonment of socialist policy i.e. political involvement.
3. Non attendance at the coming Army Convention.
4. Four members of the Army Council to be removed; the Chief of Staff, and three others.

Leo Martin, the former I.R.A. Intelligence Officer in Belfast stated that he was prepared to stand down in favour of Captain Jim Kelly when the election of the Staff was proceeded with.

About the first week in October, roughly two weeks after the coup and compromise solution the first of the Fianna Fail gold arrived in Belfast. Paymaster General was Paddy Kennedy M.P. Kennedy was taken in by the I.R.A. to be questioned about the money and was persuaded to write a cheque for £2,000. This was repeated the following week with a further £2,000. At this time Sean Keenan in Derry and the Kelly brothers, Billy, John and Oliver, of Belfast became involved with the "Voice of the North", the Fianna Fail publication being organised by Seamus Brady to look after the political business that the I.R.A. were now expected to neglect.

Captain Kelly then went ahead in an attempt to set up a Northern Defence Committee of his own choosing to subvert the I.R.A. throughout the entire North with the help of the Belfast dissidents. Kelly's liaison men were John and Billy Kelly and Paddy Kennedy M.P. Headquarters, on receiving information as to what was afoot, called a rival meeting in the Oriel Hotel, Monaghan, on the same day and frustrated the takeover attempt. At this meeting a Republican Six County Central Defence Committee was established which Captain Kelly was forced, albeit reluctantly, to accept. Captain Kelly had frequent meetings with the Belfast I.R.A. during the months of November, December 1969 and January 1970 as Captain Kelly felt that a breach with the National leadership had been achieved.

Discussion at these meetings always centred around the talk of revolution in the South, forgetting all about socialist policies and "politics" and concentrating on "national unity" i.e. an extension of Fianna Fail rule to the Six Counties by means of a Federal deal.

In November 1969 Sean Mac Stiofain called on the O.C. in Belfast to impress on him the necessity of attending the Army Convention fixed for December and stated that if a certain four people were removed from the Army Council that everything would be alright. The four names mentioned were the same four that had been mentioned by the group attempting the coup in September. The idea was, apparently, to get the Belfast Staff to attend the Convention in breach of the agreement entered into with the coup group and so give them the leverage with the rank and file volunteers in the struggle that Mac Stiofain knew would occur after the pre-arranged walk out from the Convention. Belfast stuck to the terms of the agreement and refused to attend. Mac Stiofain did attend and subsequently announced the establishment of the Provisional Army Council. The three month period agreed to in Belfast had now expired and an open breach was formalised.

The walk out from the Sinn Fein Ard Fheis at the Intercontinental Hotel in January 1970 and the establishment of the Caretaker Sinn Fein by the breakaway group saw the ultimate victory of the Fianna Fail strategy made public.

Early in January the O.C. had been asked to allow a member of the Provisional Army Council address the staff. Permission was granted and Sean Mac Stiofain spoke to the staff and blamed the Army Council in general and the Chief of Staff in particular for the poor showing in August 1969.

The attitude of the Belfast Staff was that if any of the Army Council or Head Quarters Staff were to blame both Rory Brady and Sean Mac Stiofain were equally to blame as members of the Army Council at the time complained of.

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

".....Those who would destroy Republicanism in their own selfish, sectional interests, accuse the leadership of the Movement of having gone soft on the question of Partition. Those who hate Republicanism, these among us who are actors, playing a role in which they have long lost faith, people with no conception of revolution, with but a slender grasp on reality and those combeen men in our midst who have a stake in the present set-up and who would change nothing fear the risen people, distrust and are confused by the policies of the Movement.

Both groups would wish to destroy us utterly and will do so if we play the game according to their rules. But we will play the game according to the rules which we will formulate."

Cathal Goulding: Bodestown 1967.

**FIANNA  
FAIL  
AND  
THE  
I.R.A.**

