ACCEPTING THE CHALLENGE



The Memoirs of Michael Flannery



ENGLAND GET OUT OF IRELAND



Edited by Dermot O'Reilly

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The Memoirs of
Michael Flannery

To Marie

with best wishes

Seán Ó Briain

11.03.01.

CLÓ SAOIRSE – IRISH FREEDOM PRESS

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Dans la guerre, comme dans la paix,
le dernier mot est à ceux qui ne se rendent jamais.

(In war, as in peace,
the final word rests with those who never yield)

GEORGES CLEMENCEAU
Prime Minister of France
1906-09 and 1917-20

Edited by Dermot O'Reilly
Consulting Editor Seán Ó Brádaigh

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RÉAMHRÁ

MICHAEL FLANNERY was by any standards a remarkable man. His career spanned almost the entire twentieth century and he has given his comrades and followers a shining example of loyalty, devotion and service to the All-Ireland Republic.

Mike was amongst those of whom the great Brian O'Higgins wrote when he said: "Liam Mellows and his comrades followed freedom through fire and blood, through poverty and strife and slander, followed it through the gates of death, gladly, proudly, uncomplainingly."

O'Higgins continued: "Their call to us is a call of hope and courage. They bid us remember that so long as there are even a few, be they weak or strong, who will not yield in their hearts to the English enemy, who will have no traffic with English trickery, who will keep the light of faith and love and service on the straight road they walked, so that others may see it and follow where they led, there is hope for Ireland still; and all the force and intrigue and treachery in the world cannot crush her down in defeat."

Mike Flannery, by word and deed, bade his followers to be strong in their faith, unyielding in their course, loyal to the very last as he was. Under his inspiration and following his noble example over almost 80 years, they must be content to do their share of the uncompleted task, not caring to whom will go the honour and the glory.

Mike died on September 30, 1994, just one month subsequent to the Provisionals' unilateral ceasefire in the Six British-occupied Counties of Ireland. He saw no good coming from this and certainly not a British withdrawal from Ireland. To guard against future misrepresentation he issued his last public statement on July 24, 1994 setting out clearly his attitude to what he saw as a collapse.

For those who remain true to Michael Flannery's ideals this is an inspiring book and not without a touch of humour. For those who do not follow in his path it is still an absorbing account of life in Ireland before and during the revolutionary

years 1916 to 1925 and in the ranks of Irish American activists up to 1994.

As the author Benedict Kiely wrote of the Irish poet and dramatist Pádraic Colum who like Flannery spent the greater part of a very long life in the United States: "The same sensitive eyes that when he was a boy looked out on the people of the Irish midlands... also looked out on the tumult of New York, which to many of us who did not know it as well as he did seems so often merely hostile and incomprehensible."

Michael Flannery was a highly moral man who sought nothing for himself and so much for others. His thoughts to the very end were entirely unselfish and with his good wife Pearl, who shared his ideals and predeceased him, he was concerned above all with the good of Ireland and her people at home and abroad.

For those who would emulate him their part is to serve as he did and seek the splendid goal of Irish freedom to which he devoted all his life from the age of 14 years. Other interested people who read Mike's life story from his own lips must surely achieve a deeper understanding of Ireland and of Irish America.

Amongst the Fenians with John Devoy and O'Donovan Rossa may his indomitable soul find rest.

Leaba i measc na bhFíníní go raibh aige de shíor.

Ruairí Ó Brádaigh
Fómhar/Autumn 1995

Editor's Introduction

When I was a small boy of about four years of age in Ireland in the nineteen fifties, my mother used to sing a popular song beginning with the words,

"The moon shone down on O'Connell Street
Where a dying rebel lay..."

Of course this is the ballad of Seán Treacy, but I never knew that until much later, since she never got to the last verse. In those days most people in Ireland sang those songs, but things have changed a great deal since. One way or another, it seemed a long time since Seán Treacy died in Talbot Street. I never thought that I would someday meet Michael Flannery who was a contemporary of Seán Treacy, a Volunteer in Tipperary at the time, and whose career would continue up until near the end of the century.

I did not know much about Michael when I first came to America except for some vague details about the trial of 1982. When I eventually met him, as well as being aware of the history he carried, I was of course impressed by his presence, courtesy and obvious integrity. He was recovering from major heart surgery at the time, but still was impressive for his clarity of thought and expression and his dedication.

His story would be a continuous one from before 1916 to the current time, and would be an important historical document. It was of some concern to me that it might not be recorded. Michael told me that he had been in contact with a person who to me seemed more qualified in the literary arts than I, but that nothing had come of it. I explained that my background was in physics and mathematics, as we discussed the possibility of writing an account of his experiences. I felt unqualified to be of the most worthy help. However, he had expressed a wish, as he put it, to have someone "help him to get it organised".

A year went by and there was no progress with any book, and his health was not getting any better. I approached him

and we began working on the project.

At this stage I should like to point out that my job was mainly organisational. I was also a focus for him to help break up the task into manageable parts.

My first visit to his home was on Memorial Day of 1992. It was a hot and humid day. We chatted for six hours. Actually, I should say that I listened for six hours. This was for no other reason than that I would not interrupt him, but even though I arrived with a plan we were making no progress. The same thing happened the next time. Finally, the approach we adopted was that Michael would write an essay every week and I would organize them into the book that we now have. I received these essays every week, and we had a chat about them. They were written in clear, strong longhand and with a fine script with which I certainly could not compete.



Editor and Author

The book actually sounds very much like Michael talking – hearty, lucid, and with his good humour. One concern I expressed was that he was not including enough of himself in the book but that was his wish. The title *Accepting the Challenge* was chosen by himself. His good friend Hugh O'Lunney encouraged us both.

I was often concerned for his health in the extremely hot and humid weather, and also during the winter. He insisted on walking down the steep stair from his apartment to let me in. Also, during the course of writing the book, Michael continued to attend functions and made speeches. However, around that time, he had some bad falls and this weakened him.

This book is a short account of a very long and active life. I am grateful to all who have helped to bring this book of memoirs to publication, in particular Seán Ó Brádaigh.

Diarmuid Ó Raghallaigh

KNOCKSHEGOWNA

Chapter One

THE HOUSE WHERE I WAS BORN, in 1902, is now occupied by a nephew. It was at one time adjacent to a very large wood of fully grown trees, mostly oak and ash. It was part of a large estate, and was alive with birds, squirrels, rabbits, foxes and badgers. It was a favourite haunt of mine; in daylight a perfect heaven, at night gloomy and foreboding. When my courage allowed me to venture into the wood at night, the hoot of an owl, or the scurrying of some small animal through the leaves, sent vibrations down my spine and caused a quick retreat home.

My father died when I was nine years of age. My mother was raised in America but she returned to Ireland. I had three brothers and three sisters, my brothers being the oldest, followed by two sisters, then myself and a sister who was the youngest. The disadvantage was that I had to grow up before I could share games with them. Not that I did not try. My little Kerry Blue dog and I always hopefully tried to tag along only to be told in a stern voice directed at both of us, "go home". We looked at each other and obeyed. Kerry would be so delighted that I thought he would wag his tail off, as he instinctively knew that to soothe my feelings we would go to the wood. Kerry would chase rabbits, squirrels, or anything unlucky enough to cross his path. It was seldom that he succeeded in catching anything as the wood was full of rabbit warrens, holes burrowed into the earth where they lived, to where they would retreat and make quick escape. The squirrels were always near to a tree up which they would quickly scurry. On one occasion Kerry gave chase to a fine cock pheasant. The pheasant flew up



Volunteer Michael Flannery, Tipperary No. 1 Brigade, IRA, pictured in 1921

on a hazel tree just out of reach. He tried to catch the pheasant by running jumps but failed. He then started running in circles directly beneath the pheasant. The pheasant followed the circle with his head twisting round and round until he fell right down, the victim of cocksureness and Kerry's instinct.

Sunday morning after early Mass was a very enjoyable time to ramble in the wood. On these occasions I left Kerry at home. In the springtime, the wild flowers, bluebells, snowdrops, hyacinths and primroses grew in abundance. The real joy was the birds' nests. The blackbird usually built its nest in the moss adhering to the earth on the roots of the oaks blown down in the big wind storm of 1903. The thrush built where the branch joined the trunk of the tree. The pheasant built in the leaves at the foot of the tree. The robin burrowed into a mossy bank and the wren in the blackthorn. In the summer, when the foxes preferred to sleep in the leaves under the big oaks, rather than in their dens, it was a certainty to find one in such a position on my Sunday morning stroll.

While the wood was all my own, there were other diversions which I shared with lads my own age. Hurling, football, rounders, jumping and running and swimming races. When we tired of the games we had the ruined mill with its mighty water wheel to explore, or sometimes raiding an orchard or pretending we were Fenians. We were healthy, happy children to whom life was one exciting episode after another. We had the good fortune of growing up in an age when there was neither radio nor television, learning history and folklore at our own firesides.

There were certain houses where neighbours would gather in the evenings. In some houses to play cards and in other houses to talk about life in general. The talk was never confined to any favourite subject. You might hear a discussion on the price of cattle and farming in general or the news of the day. What I liked most of all were their dissertations on history, local and national, the ghost stories and the folklore through which the spirit and culture of our people was handed down from generation to generation.

Our house had the honour of being the only house that George Nicholson, a Protestant neighbour, visited. George served six months in prison for not identifying a man who

while being chased by police, threw his shotgun over the garden wall where George was tending some vegetables. George had a fine singing voice and he often delighted us with national and humorous songs.

All the men were members of the Land League, an organization founded by Michael Davitt in 1879 to prevent the eviction of tenant farmers at the whim of the Landlords, and to obtain ownership of their farms. The Landlords fought back, in particular, Captain Boycott, who lived in County Mayo. Everyone refused to work for him and his crops needed to be harvested. He called on the army stationed nearby, but they did more damage than work, so he packed up and left the country. This episode added a new word, 'boycott', to the English language. I remember very little about the Land League except the talks about the fireside in the evenings, and watching perhaps their last parade to Knockshegowna Hill.

Many of the people in my locality, including my grandfather on my father's side, came to be there following a general eviction which took place along the Shannon, in Arra. They were all thrown out of their holdings and became tenants elsewhere. Such was the lot of the Irish people at the hands of the landlords and it would remain so unless they were removed for ever. Eviction and emigration were two possible fates still present following the Great Hunger of 1845 to 1850, when poor Irish people were allowed to starve even though there was enough food in the country to feed all of Ireland in comfort. My grandfather was evicted three times. This was unusual in so far as when a person was evicted once, it was very difficult to find a home again. My grandfather resisted his last eviction along with a Father Walsh on the same estate. They were thrown out by the Bailiffs. Their small houses were burned down so that they could not return. My grandfather was the equivalent of a Vet at the time, as he had many cures for the ailments of horses and cattle, which were in demand, so the Landlord, whose name was Kenny, offered him a small piece of land at the foot of Knockshegowna.

My grandmother on my father's side was a Larkin. Every year there was a commemoration in Birr, County Offaly, for the Manchester Martyrs, who were hanged as felons in Salford Prison, Manchester, England. One of them was Michael Larkin.

This commemoration continued as long as Larkin's mother lived. I recall her clearly myself as she attended this commemoration. There was a statue in the square where this was held, and this old woman would be the chief person in attendance. My mother and my aunt always attended these commemorations. As my grandmother was a Larkin they would go and meet this woman. There may have been a family connection but I never found that out.

The chief sport of the ascendancy was fox-hunting. This comprised of a pack of hounds and the ladies and gentlemen on horseback. Fox-hunting took place in the late fall and during the winter. At this time all crops were gathered into the farmyard or haggard, so the hunters could give chase over the whole countryside with minimum damage. The Ormond Hunt's territory was North Tipperary and South Offaly. On one occasion the League decided to stop the landlords from hunting over their land. It resulted in quite a row, causing my uncle and the local carpenter to spend a while in Limerick Jail. There was a fine ballad written about it, but I only recall the first two lines,

On the fourth of October on famed fairy hill,
The sportsmen all gathered poor Reynard to kill…

There was a fife and drum band in the Village and at the mere mention of Home Rule there was a parade, and challenging speeches made on the hill of Knockshegowna – The Hill of the Fairy Calf. Everyone in the parish, particularly the young boys, was there, and the excitement was terrific. There would be a bonfire and the speakers seemed very angry. From the hill you could see the country for miles around with the river Shannon flowing away in the distance.

The village of Ballingarry was situated about a half mile from the hill of Knockshegowna on the road to the West. There was a blacksmith and foundry in the village which was owned by the Kavanagh brothers. One of their chief products was a double boarded plough which was used all over Ireland to make drills for potato sowing.

The village police force consisted of a sergeant and two constables. These were the local members of the Royal Irish

Constabulary, or RIC. It was their function to maintain law and order but it was also their function to be the instruments for maintaining British Rule all over Ireland. In this respect they were an armed police force and so differed from their counterparts in England. It was general knowledge that the police in our area had not issued a summons in twenty-seven years, not that they didn't have the desire to do so, but even in a hero's heart, discretion is the better part. Theirs was the first barracks to be abandoned in the War of Independence.

The young grew fast, and soon I found that I was accepted on the junior hurling team. Hurling was a delight, and I still love to watch a game. Football I also loved but I was not a good player. In the summer, during vacation time or after practice at hurling or football, we would head for the river to go swimming, and then race around the field until we were dry. The river was a great place to go regardless of the season. There were trout and pike, and in the spawning season the salmon came up the river. The male came first to make the bed for the eggs. To do this he had two horn-like projections on the front of the upper jaw. With these he quickly made a declivity in the sand, and waited for the female to arrive. Then they both covered the bed, the female depositing the eggs and the male fertilizing them. Kingfishers, waterhens and otters were plentiful in the reedy marshes along the river. There were many water springs running into the river and for that reason the water was very cold.

I liked going to school and though learning was easy, the games were the big attraction. I was very active and got blamed in the wrong very often. I decided that a great many teachers were not fitted for their positions and that when I grew up, I would become a teacher with an ideal.

After school hours when I got home, and had a dinner, I was expected to help about the place. In the winter, feeding the cows and horses, and seeing that they were comfortably housed for the night.

My mother always said that I was not built for the farm, and my older brothers seemed to believe this also. They thought that I did not like farm work whereas the opposite was true, since I loved the farm. I was never taught how to milk a cow and so when I tried it the first cow kicked over the milk bucket

as did the second cow. I must have been doing something wrong, but it was simply assumed that I could not do it. However, a friend and neighbour asked me to show him how I went about it and when he saw what I was doing, straight away he said 'stop'. I was causing the milk to go back into the poor cow instead of out and it was no wonder that the cow was annoyed. I never tried it again and I said nothing about my lesson.

As for helping with the ploughing, we had two large and lazy old horses. I was set to work one sunny day walking the plough behind the two horses. Ploughing was in fact a skill that I felt that I possessed. However, after a while I began dreaming and so did the two horses and our pace was very slow indeed. When my brothers returned to see the fruits of our efforts it only helped to convince them further that ploughing was not a job I was cut out for.

I always felt that on the farm then they made work for themselves in an unnecessary way. For example they insisted on turning the hay by fork and this took a long time, when there was at the time, a machine that could do the job better and quicker, and it was drawn by a horse. I knew that a Protestant neighbour of ours had one of these machines. One day my brothers went to a wedding and as I was to stay at home, I was given the job of turning the hay in a large field. When I looked at the field I thought that I would never get it finished so I went to the neighbour who was a good friend and said "George," are you using your machine?" "No," he said. "In that case can I borrow it?" "Yes," he said, "any time."

I harnessed the horses and very soon we succeeded in turning the hay in the whole field. This machine also fluffed up the hay which helped it to dry more quickly in the sun. That day was a very sunny day and when my brothers returned they could not believe that not only was the hay turned, but it was also dry. I never said anything, and they had a difficult time wondering how the job got done.

I enjoyed the short days and long nights as I loved to read, and listen to the stories of those who came to 'coimhdeacht', which means they came without invitation. They expected no refreshments and received none, but were ready to discuss any and everything under the sun. I listened patiently to talk about

farm and dairy, but with great interest to stories of historical background. I also liked the ghost stories, as I have mentioned, because of their local settings, and I knew a great number of ghost stories. Where our farm was situated near the wood could become very lonely on a dark winter's night. However, I never minded remaining at home on my own when everyone went to a wake. I myself never went to wakes after a bad experience at one and would stay at home.

The nightly gatherings were the main means of passing on information also. They took the place of television and of course newspapers, which then did not have such a high circulation as they enjoy today. The newspapers were sold outside the Church after Mass on Sundays. The main papers available to us were the *Nenagh Guardian* and the *Midland Tribune*.

As well as listening to stories I loved to read. On a wet day when no work could be done I would take my books to a place I knew would always remain dry. It was an ivy covered wall and I would read while sitting among the oak leaves which would be blown in. My favourite books were Irish National stories for example *The Forge of Cloghogue, Convict Seventy Seven,* and such books by a man named Murphy, and those by Canon Sheehan. These were popular books in Ireland at the time. In the springtime when I would wheel the turf, I would often be called upon to tell stories and I would relate the stories from my books. I had a good memory for detail and it would take me three days to tell the story of *The Forge of Cloghogue* while the turf was being cut. I really liked best the stories of The Fenians. It was only forty odd years since the rising of 1867, Crowley murdered in Kilclooney Wood, and Bill Curry who took fifty lashes and how the skin was completely torn off his back, and how he slowly straightened himself and walked away. When asked afterwards how he could do it, he smilingly answered, "I was grinding a holy medal between my teeth." There were many local ballads too, about the shooting of Landlords, and it's a pity that they were not collected. Some were almost casual. "It was in the head he got the lead that laid the tyrant low".

In the year of 1913 the British Army had their War Manoeuvres in Ireland. They were camped for a week in our neighbourhood. We were on vacation from school and we were very excited trying to follow the battles between the Red and

White Armies. There was a great battle to capture the Hill of Knockshegowna, with soldiers running and jumping over hedges and walls, shooting and shooting. They fired blanks from their rifles without cease. What interested us particularly was the mounted regiment or Lancers.

They carried long lances for which they had a holder on the sides of their mounts. How they expected to use them I don't know, but over hedges and ditches they came, galloping and galloping. It seemed sort of silly to us at the time. When they were gone we found a great number of blank cartridges that they had left behind. They also left a very hard type of dog-biscuit which was very difficult to eat and must have been part of their rations. The older people at the time said that the government must have been preparing for war.

In 1913 when William Murphy locked out the workers in Dublin, and James Connolly and Jim Larkin were defending them we didn't have to listen to past history, for history was being made all around us. The Irish Volunteers were organized and drilling quite openly throughout the country.

Banna Strand

Chapter Two

THERE WAS A HOME RULE BILL passed by the House of Commons in 1893, and it was vetoed by the House of Lords. The hopelessness of ever getting a bill through the House of Lords was hotly debated at the time. In 1912 Home Rule was again introduced in the House of commons by John Redmond, who had succeeded Parnell as leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party. The bill was passed in the House of Commons, but was again vetoed by the House of Lords. However, in 1910 an Act was passed through the Commons which curtailed the power of the Lords. They could no longer veto any bill relating to finance, and they could only veto other bills for a period of two years. This meant that Home Rule for Ireland would become law in two years, in 1914. The certainty of passage caused great alarm in Ulster, particularly among the ranks of the Orangemen. Under the leadership of Edward Carson the Ulster Volunteers were organized, using the 1886 edict of Randolph Churchill, "Ulster Will Fight and Ulster Will be Right". Churchill was also responsible for introducing the divisive slogan 'Home Rule is Rome Rule'.

Soon the Ulster Volunteers were importing arms. On April 24, 1914, they landed 30,000 rifles and 3,000,000 rounds of ammunition at night in Larne. The government was aware of these gun running activities, but they did not go unnoticed by the IRB who saw no reason why they should not do likewise.

A monster meeting was called which took place in the Rotunda in Dublin on November 25, 1913. The Rotunda, capable of holding 4,000 people, was booked out with almost as many more being turned away. Speakers included Pádraig

Pearse and Eoin Mac Néill. There the "Irish Volunteers" were established. In October 1913 a meeting was held in Wynn's Hotel in Dublin and it was very well attended. Eoin Mac Néill, professor of Early Irish History at University College, Dublin, a vice president of the Gaelic League, and a Redmondite, was chosen as Chairman. He had previously asked of the Gaelic League:

"If Ulster can organize to defeat Home Rule, why can't we organize to defend it?"

The choice of Mac Néill was an astute one, as he was a Redmondite and while the Volunteers were controlled by the IRB, they would give the appearance of defence rather than defiance. This choice, however, was also to have a tragic bearing upon the eventual rising, and on the Volunteers themselves. About one week after the formation of the Irish Volunteers the British Government issued a Proclamation banning the importation of arms to Ireland.

Plans were made to import arms anyway, and a committee was set up for this purpose. The committee included Erskine Childers, who owned a very fine yacht called the *Asgard*, which was given to him by his American father-in-law as a wedding present. 1,500 Mauser rifles and 49,000 rounds of ammunition were purchased by Darrell Figgis in Hamburg. Some of the arms shipment was conveyed by Childers's yacht to Howth in Dublin at 12.45 p.m., on July 26, 1914. False information had been put out that arms would be smuggled to Ireland on a fishing trawler, and so the British had been searching all such vessels but they missed the *Asgard*. The incoming yacht was met by a party of 800 Volunteers under the guidance of members of the IRB and Sinn Féin. Unlike their brethren in the North, to whose arms importing activities the Government had turned a blind eye, the Volunteers at Howth were met by a large contingent of police who demanded that they surrender the arms. Assistant Commissioner Harrel asked them to hand over the arms as they were, he said, "contravening the Arms Proclamation". Bulmer Hobson who was at the head of the 800 armed Volunteers refused to hand them over. When the police were engaged in argument with Thomas MacDonagh and Darrell Figgis, those who held the arms took to the fields and disappeared. The police could only look on in dismay. That



Michael Flannery in 1939

same evening there were three people shot dead and 38 injured in Bachelor's Walk, in Dublin, by the Scottish Borderers. They fired indiscriminately into the crowd who had been jeering them. All this excitement served as a stimulus to build the ranks of the Volunteers.

In the beginning, the Volunteers drilled and paraded quite openly, and were not interfered with in any way. There were companies in every province in Ireland, including Ulster. My three brothers were members and I, too young to belong, never missed a drill or parade as an observer. The drilling took place after work in the long evenings and every Sunday there was a route march to one of the adjacent villages, three to five miles away.

A week after the Howth landing, the yacht *Chotah* landed 600 rifles and 20,000 rounds of ammunition at Kilcoole, County Wicklow. These were the remainder of the arms, and they were conveyed to Dublin by car without incident by Seán FitzGibbon and Seán T Ó Ceallaigh

The ranks of the Volunteers grew from about 10,000 in January, 1914 to about 100,000 by June, 1914. The Government became apprehensive at this and after some time asked Redmond to take control. This he tried to do, but he met with opposition. At first, rather than cause a split in the Volunteers, Pádraig Pearse offered Redmond a place on the executive. However, the Great War broke out on August 4, 1914, and on September 20, at Woodenbridge, County Wicklow, Redmond announced publicly that the Volunteers should fight for the British Army. He adopted an attitude of Rule or Ruin, causing a split in the Volunteers. From the split came the National Volunteers who supported him, and the Irish Volunteers who opposed him. The split only served to strengthen the IRB adherents, separating the chaff from the wheat. It also brought more attention from the Government and they started using the Defence of the Realm Act, DORA, to arrest and harass the leaders for seditious speech, and other small infractions of the law. Liam Mellows, Ernest Blythe, and Dennis McCullough were arrested and sentenced to six months each in prison. Magistrates were not allowed to pass sentences in excess of six months and local ones usually dismissed the charges. Some of the charges were amusing, like the one in Nenagh Court.

One Fair Day in Nenagh, a popular hurler who was a local Volunteer Company Captain came to the fair. He was observed by the RIC sergeant who followed him about. The man stopped to talk to a group of his friends with the sergeant standing closely behind him. Suddenly the man raised his leg and passed wind loudly in the direction of the sergeant. He was arrested, and was summoned to appear the following week in court. The case was called, and the sergeant gave the following complaint.

"I had this man under surveillance when he deliberately emitted a loud and odoriferous blast from his posterior right in my face, and to further aggravate the situation, he raised his leg in so doing."

All eyes were on the magistrate as he called for "Proof of evidence, Sergeant." The sergeant, taken by surprise could only stutter,

"e.. e.. evidence!"

The magistrate brought his gavel gently down and said:

"case dismissed for lack of evidence."

Meanwhile, Redmond became more and more involved in recruiting for the British Army, and pledging support for them. With the catch cry that it was 'war for the freedom of small nations', he succeeded in getting a great many Irishman to join the British Army. Out of perhaps two hundred thousand who joined, about fifty thousand were lost, not to mention those maimed, as the Irish were sent to the front and died in great proportion to their numbers. Many who had great potential were lost to Ireland, such as the poet Francis Ledwidge, and the idealist Tom Kettle, whose bodies now enrich the soil of Flanders.

Redmond also lost support in America. There a group called the United Irish League of America, who had previously given him financial and propaganda support under the chairmanship of Michael Ryan. Ryan ratified that this group would no longer support Redmond and the group ceased to exist. Clan na Gael never supported Redmond as their policy was complete freedom for Ireland.

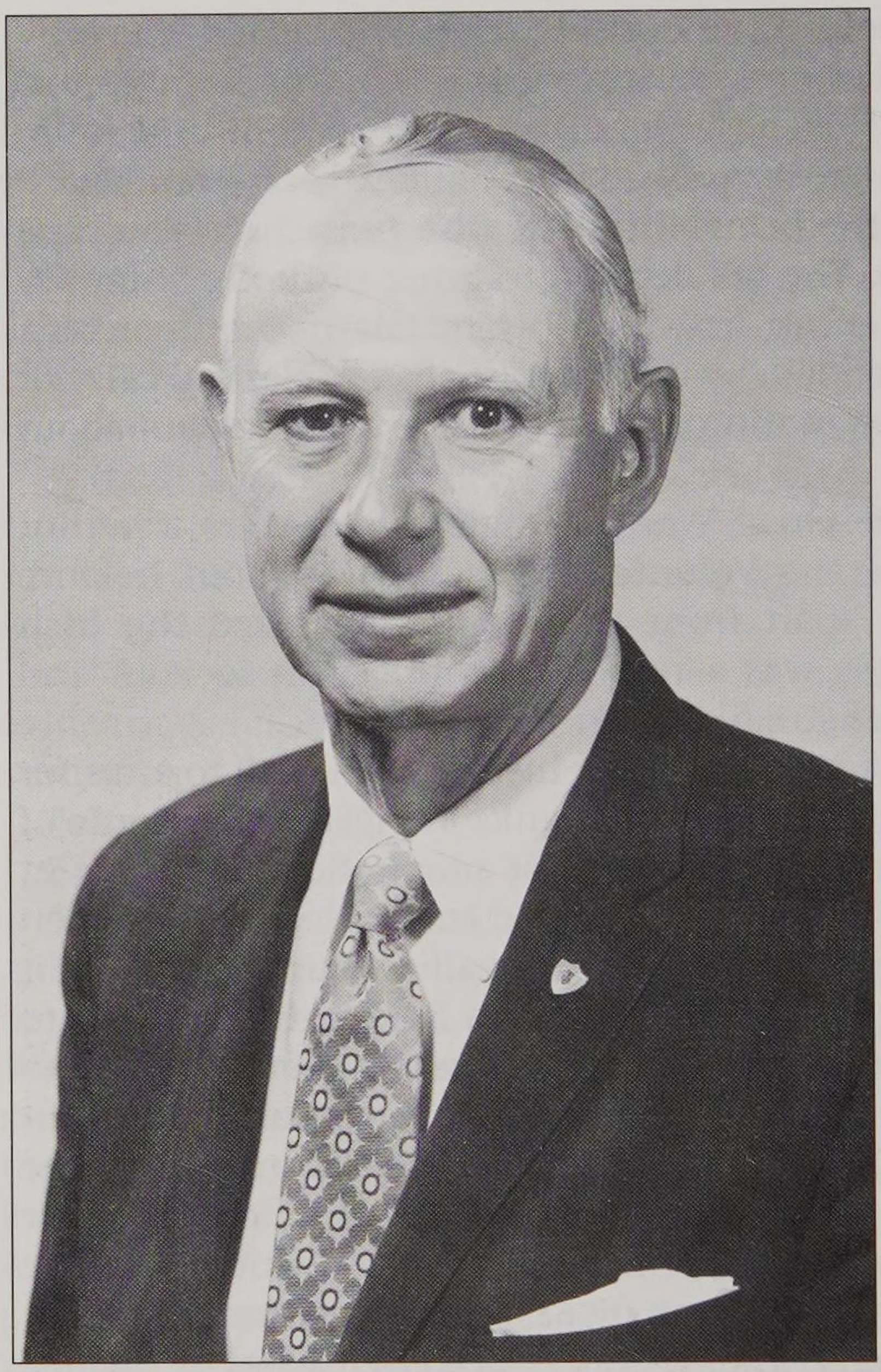
During all this time the Volunteers and the IRB were busy. They were drilling and preparing for action in whatever form it would take, and the IRB under the urging of Clarke and Mac

Diarmada was planning an uprising. They had at this time only two thousand rifles and because of the war, purchasing arms was impossible. However, they continued to drill and train. Their plans were greatly assisted by the death of Jeremiah O' Donovan Rossa, the beloved Fenian who passed away in New York in July 1915. The IRB decided to bring his body home for burial alongside other Irish patriots in Glasnevin Cemetery. The funeral, attended by thousands, was a clarion call for action and Pearse's oration at the graveside left no doubt about this.

Meanwhile, the Great War was raging. The Allies were not faring well, while the Volunteers drilled throughout Ireland. James Connolly, apart from all of this, organized the Irish Citizen Army. This was a response to the great lockout and long and torturous strike of 1913.

The oration has now gone into history as the call to arms for Irish Freedom this century, and ranks alongside the words of other great patriots of the past, but prophetic even today in 1993. "This is a place of peace, sacred to the dead, where men should speak with all charity and with all restraint; but I hold it a Christian thing, as O'Donovan Rossa held it, to hate evil, to hate untruth, to hate oppression, and, hating them, to strive to overthrow them. 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 in secret and in the open. They think that they have pacified Ireland. They think that 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".

The Dublin of 1913 was a city of two peoples. Affluence lived alongside extreme poverty. The well-to-do relished the role of



Michael Flannery about 1970

their city as a city of the Empire and they enjoyed its benefits. However, a great many of these Dubliners began to become aware that there were many in the city who were not so fortunate and they took a great interest in the fight for Home Rule. The working people of Dublin lived under atrocious conditions. They were poorly paid and poorly housed. Of the poor of Dublin, their clothes were whatever castoffs they could get and their food was bread and dripping, and potatoes and cabbage, with almost no meat. Eighty-eight thousand of them lived in tenements, many to a room. Illness was prevalent and infant mortality was extremely high.

Jim Larkin who had come to Dublin from Liverpool, the son of Irish parents, had organized the Irish Transport and General Workers Union, and he quickly became a hero of the people.

William Murphy, who was originally from Bantry in County Cork, organized the Dublin Employers Federation Limited. He was a ruthless businessman with, for example, interests in Clery's Department Store in O'Connell Street, the Dublin United Tramways Company, and the *Irish Independent* newspaper. On August 26, 1913, a Tram strike was called in support of



A family group. Michael is in the centre and his wife, Pearl, is on his right.



Family group, 1940s

men dismissed by Murphy for joining the ITGWU. On August 31, as workers assembled for a banned meeting in O'Connell Street, the Dublin Metropolitan Police charged them with batons drawn, bludgeoning all unmercifully. The response to the ITGWU by Murphy and his fellow employers was to begin a lockout which lasted until March, 1914. The result was starvation and hardship for the people of Dublin. Out of this grew the Irish Citizen Army. This was organized at the suggestion of Captain Jack White, who had returned from Africa, a veteran of the Boer War. Captain White took over command of this Army and with James Connolly it became a small but disciplined and organized force, separate from the Volunteers.

With unplanned events happening throughout the country, everything pointed to a revolution in Ireland. The government was talking about Home Rule without the inclusion of Ulster. Arrests were being made for seditious speech and German sympathy, and Irish labourers in Britain were abused as they rushed home to avoid conscription. These factors contributed to agitation throughout the country. Meanwhile, the Volunteers, who had been reduced to a smaller group of trusted and sworn members, were silently preparing for an open rebellion. They obtained guns under false excuses, and were now taking seriously the role that they would have to play. Out in the country this would take the form of attacking and taking over RIC barracks, and taking the guns and ammunition. Very little resistance was expected. No date was set, but they felt that they had to take action soon and take advantage of the war. England's difficulty was Ireland's opportunity.

The IRB had been secretly negotiating with Clan na Gael and Roger Casement in New York to import arms from Germany in preparation for a rising, while England was at war. It was impossible to import arms from New York, so Casement went to Germany for this purpose. He also intended to organize Irish prisoners of war, and to form an Irish Brigade to take part in the rising. This was a failure because it was difficult to recruit men who were already prisoners of war. With Casement's help, John Devoy did succeed in arranging for a shipment of arms to be delivered to Ireland in time for a rising.

While this was taking place, James Connolly, who did not belong to the IRB, was preparing to make a protest with the two

hundred strong Irish Citizen Army and without the knowledge of what was being planned by the IRB. When this information came to the attention of the IRB, they summoned him to a meeting where they told him of their plans. After three days of discussion, it was agreed to join forces. Connolly agreed to join them, provided that the rising would take place without delay, and so a date was set and the date was Easter Sunday, April 23, 1916. Connolly was appraised of the IRB involvement with Clan na Gael in America and he was told of the plan to import guns and ammunition. He wholeheartedly supported the plan.

Devoy, through the German Ambassador, was making plans for arms to arrive in Tralee Bay, Co. Kerry on Good Friday. Although England had decoded some of the dispatches, they ignored them. The English had set up a naval blockade and they believed that it would be impossible for any German ship to break through it. For safety reasons the plan was changed to have the arms delivered on Easter Sunday instead of Good Friday night. The dispatch for this instruction was sent from Clan na Gael in New York, but it arrived in Germany too late, as the ship bearing the arms had already left the port of Lubeck, in the north of Germany on April 9. It had embarked on a roundabout course for Ireland, that was to take it towards Iceland and then back to Ireland. The ship which was originally called the *Libau,* was renamed the *Aud* for the mission. It was disguised as a Norwegian tramp ship, and it was under the command of Captain Karl Spindler. Spindler's mission had been kept secret even from him by the German authorities until the last moment, and his crew were young unmarried men, aware of the fact that they were on a dangerous mission. The Aud had no wireless and so there was no way of getting word of the change of plan to Spindler once the ship had set sail. In any case the Aud arrived a day too soon in Tralee bay. There was no one to meet it. Austin Stack, who was to have directed the landing operations, had received no word from Dublin.

Five men had left Dublin by train for Killarney. There they were met by two cars which were to take them to Cahersiveen to finalize the plans for receiving and distributing the arms. What the IRB Military Command did not know was that the change of plan did not reach Captain Spindler. Therefore, the

IRB did not expect the Aud to arrive until Easter Sunday night. There was another tragic event that added to the confusion. One of the two cars, while on the way to Cahersiveen, met with an accident. Seemingly the second car depended on the leading car for directions, and missed a turn at Ballykissane pier. It drove into the Atlantic, resulting in the death of Con Keating, the wireless expert, Charles Monaghan, and Donal Sheehan. All of this time the Aud lay in Tralee Bay, with Spindler wondering what had happened, and fearing capture by the British at any moment.

Casement, while still in Germany, had persuaded the German Authorities to arrange for a U-boat to take him, Robert Monteith, and Sergeant Daniel Bailey to Ireland. He maintained that they wanted to help in the rising. However Casement's real objective was to stop the rising, as he had lost all hope for its success. He was given a U-boat, U 19. It set sail and arrived in Tralee Bay on Good Friday, almost at the same time as did the Aud. When the submarine arrived they actually sighted the Aud at anchor. However they made no attempt to contact it, but just wondered why it was lying there.

Casement, Monteith and Bailey went ashore in a collapsible dinghy, and still they met no one. They landed on Banna Strand, now made famous in song and story. With no one in sight, Monteith decided that he himself should go on to Tralee to find Austin Stack. Casement was in a state of exhaustion and unfit to travel, so he took refuge in a fort, McKenna's Fort, and Monteith and Bailey went on to Tralee. As fate would have it, a local farmer out walking on the strand, found the boat and reported this to the RIC. Also, a local girl who went out to milk the cows, saw Casement in the fort, and she reported this to the RIC. This led to Casement's capture at McKenna's Fort.

Meanwhile, a British cruiser had caught up with the Aud, and fired a shot across her bow. The Aud was then ordered to go to Queenstown (Cóbh) Harbour. Spindler obeyed, but on arrival in Queenstown the Germans scuttled the ship and blew her up in accordance with their emergency plans. The Aud sank and Spindler and her crew were taken prisoner.

It was my pleasure to meet Captain Spindler and Robert Monteith many years later in New York when they addressed Clan na Gael.

The British Intelligence were very embarrassed by the fact that their blockade was broken and they were outwitted. The daily papers highlighted the news of Casement's capture, and the capture of the Aud. When the news reached the IRB executive, there was some thought of calling off the rising. This was due also to the fact that Mac Néill had issued a countermanding order, by placing an advertisement in the Sunday Independent.

"Owing to the very critical position, all orders given to Irish Volunteers for tomorrow, Easter Sunday, are hereby rescinded, and no parades, marches, or other movements of Irish Volunteers will take place."

The once astute choice of Mac Néill had resulted now in confusion in the ranks of the Volunteers and this, coupled with the misfortune regarding arms importation, would lead to disaster for this rising in a practical sense. However it would lead to a triumph of a different kind, as the unfolding of the following events will tell.



Michael Flannery presenting the St. Brendan Cup to captain Tony Wall of the Tipperary Hurling Team on Sunday, September 27, 1959, in Gaelic Park, New York. On extreme right is Patrick C. Downey, President of the GAA.

Chapter Three

ALL OF THESE EVENTS, the capture of Casement, and the taking prisoner of Spindler and his crew, became known to the IRB leaders in Dublin. Having discussed the matter in conference with Connolly, they decided to go ahead with the rising anyway, believing it better to fight and to lose, than not to fight at all. Not to fight would be a terrible let down nationally, and it would have disastrous consequences. The date for the rising was now set for Easter Monday. Pearse had written the Proclamation, believing that all of Ireland would be involved, and that there was a reasonable chance of success. At worst, the struggle would now develop into guerrilla warfare throughout the country. It was intended to put the RIC out of action first, as little resistance was expected from them.

Easter Monday saw beautiful sunshine, and most of Dublin, including a number of army officers, were enjoying the day at Fairyhouse Races. Others were at the Spring Show which had opened in the RDS that morning. The Volunteers assembled at Liberty Hall, home of the Citizen Army, and the place where the Proclamation was printed. A raid on the Magazine Fort in the Phoenix Park was to herald the start of the rising. At about noon the party to carry this raid made their way to their destination by tram and by bicycle. The raid was only partially successful however, as an officer who had charge of the keys to the main armoury had brought them with him to Fairyhouse races. They succeeded however in blowing up a small arms store. One of the first casualties of the rising was the seventeen-year-old son of the Fort's Commander, a young man named

Playfair. The first fatal shot, was fired by Seán Connolly as he and his small section attempted to enter Dublin Castle, the symbol of British Imperialism in Ireland for hundreds of years. The Constable on duty at the gates was killed.

At about noon, Pearse and Connolly led about one hundred men and women to the General Post Office. They had no trouble taking it over and they made prisoners of some army officers who happened to be inside. These prisoners were accorded the respect due to them as prisoners of war. Meanwhile, groups of Volunteers who were assigned to other posts around the city, had by this time already occupied them. The Tricolour was hoisted above the GPO, and Pearse read the proclamation from its steps. He also had copies of the document posted on its pillars and on its walls. Pearse was President of the Provisional Government, and he signed himself as 'Commanding in Chief of Forces of The Irish Republic'. James Connolly was Commandant-General of the Citizen Army. He was in charge of military operations in Dublin, and the defence of the GPO. Other leaders present in the GPO were Thomas Clarke, Seán Mac Diarmada and Joseph Plunkett. The Volunteer Michael Collins, who would have a different role to play in the future was also present. The O'Rahilly was later to join them and later still to be fatally shot in action in Moore Street. The battle began in O'Connell Street, when a troop of mounted Lancers came galloping down past the Parnell Monument towards the Post Office. Six of the horses were fatally shot, and they lay where they fell on the street for six days.

The other positions that were occupied around the city were the Four Courts, the North and South Dublin Unions, Boland's Mills, Westland Row Railway Station, the Mendicity Institute, St. Stephen's Green, Jacobs Biscuit Factory, Marrow Bone Lane Distillery and the College of Surgeons. St. Stephen's Green was occupied by the Citizen Army, and in charge was Michael Mallin and Countess Markievicz. Éamon de Valera was in charge of a large area and his command post was Boland's Mills. The Dublin Metropolitan Police, being unarmed, were confined to barracks. Dublin Castle immediately called for reinforcements from the Curragh, Belfast, Athlone, Limerick, and Templemore. Two brigades of infantry and heavy guns

were dispatched from London.

Westland Row Railway Station was held by Captain Seán McMahon, and this was of strategic importance as it would hinder the arrival of troops by rail. Captain Seán Heuston captured the Mendicity Institute with about twelve others. He surrendered while greatly outnumbered and surrounded, after maintaining his position for three days.

The greatest losses suffered by the British throughout Easter Week were in their attempts to cross Mount Street Bridge. A large body of British reinforcements had arrived on Wednesday at Dún Laoghaire. They advanced towards the centre of the city on the direct route through Ballsbridge, and they chose to cross Mount Street Bridge across the canal. A group of about a dozen Volunteers of the Cyclists' Section under Captain Michael Malone had made their way to their posts around the bridge on Easter Monday morning. They occupied several vantage points in defence of Mount Street Bridge. One small section occupied 25 Northumberland Road on the side of the bridge towards Ballsbridge. A second section occupied Clanwilliam House on the city side of the bridge, which had a clear view of the narrow canal bridge. Four more Volunteers occupied the Parochial Hall on Northumberland Road. When the British arrived, Michael Malone was the sole defender of 25 Northumberland Road. Between his fire and the crossfire from the handful of men in the other posts the British, after many attempts to rush the positions held by the Volunteers, suffered many casualties, perhaps over a hundred. Four of the defenders fought their way out successfully from their eventually burning houses, and Michael Malone, Richard Murphy, George Reynolds and Patrick Doyle fell in defence of the city. A handful of men had successfully held thousands of British troops at bay.

After three or four days heavy guns arrived. They began to blow the city down indiscriminately without regard for women or children. There were many civilian casualties during this bombardment. James Connolly had always maintained that, "a capitalist government would never shell the city".

Now, with the Four Courts and the GPO burning fiercely and in order to avoid further loss of civilian life and hardship on the citizens of Dublin, Pearse surrendered. He sent Elizabeth

O'Farrell to General Lowe for conditions. The only option that the General would consider was unconditional surrender. Pearse had to agree, and in military tradition he surrendered his sword as a prisoner of war. The status of 'prisoner of war' for the Irish leaders would quickly be forgotten by the British.

Down in Tipperary we were not acquainted with what was taking place in Dublin. There was a confusion of rumours. A young Roscrea man working in Dublin came down on Thursday and delighted us with stories of the Volunteers being in complete control. We did not rejoice for very long, as news soon reached us of the surrender.

After the surrender, the Volunteers were assembled outside the Rotunda. A particular Captain Lea Wilson who was Irish, and who had a notorious manner was particularly insulting and harsh to his captives. Michael Collins later had him shot. Another British officer, Captain Bowen-Colthurst had committed atrocities in the city, having shot six people in cold blood. He was responsible for the summary execution of Francis Sheehy-Skeffington.

There were about 3,000 casualties in the Rising of Easter Week. Sixty two of the insurgents were killed, and two hundred and fifty six civilians. The centre of the city lay in ruins. Judging by the newspapers, the attitude of the city people seemed to be one of condemnation for the leaders, but also for General Maxwell who was sent over from London, with no limit to his policy of "kill, kill, kill". This policy became particularly evident only five days after the surrender, as he began to execute the leaders. On May 3rd Pádraig Pearse, Thomas MacDonagh and Thomas Clarke were executed by firing squad.

That night, Joseph M Plunkett and Grace Gifford whose marriage had been postponed to accommodate the rising, were married by candlelight in his cell under armed guard. On the fourth of May, Plunkett, Edward Daly, William Pearse and Michael O'Hanrahan were shot. On the fifth, John Mac Bride was shot, mainly out of vengeance for his part in the Boer War against the British. On the eighth, Éamonn Ceannt, Michael Mallin, Cornelius Colbert, and Seán Heuston were shot. James Connolly and Seán Mac Diarmada were shot on the twelfth. Connolly, who had been wounded and whose leg had become gangrenous had to be strapped to a chair for the execution.

Thomas Kent, who shot a policeman while resisting arrest at his home in Fermoy was shot in Cork on the ninth. Thomas Ashe and Éamon de Valera were sentenced to death, but public outcry and protests in Ireland and America became so strong that their sentences were commuted to penal servitude. Gradually across the country, the attitude of the people began to change as the executions dragged out. The people felt revulsion at the execution of Irish Prisoners of War. The execution of Pearse, for example, whose poetry and stories such as Íosagán, were known and whose manner was almost saintlike, greatly affected the attitude of the people.

George Bernard Shaw sent a strong protest to the papers in which he said:

"They were Prisoners of War, and should not have been shot in cold blood. England was making martyrs and heroes of them, and they now take their place with Tone and Emmet. We must vindicate these Irishmen, taken in a fight for Irish Independence against the British Government."

Even John Dillon, MP appealed to the government to stop the executions.

"It is not murderers who are being executed, it is insurgents who fought a clean fight, a brave fight," he said. Redmond used his influence privately.

The number sentenced to death by court-martial was ninety. The number arrested within weeks was over 3,500 including 79 women. About 1,000 men, and all but five of the women were released.

The prisoners remained in high spirits however, as they felt that the executions, though tragic and irrational, had turned what might have been a total failure into a re-awakening for Ireland, 'a Triumph of Failure', as it has been called. The English had ensured that Pearse, Clarke, Connolly and their comrades, would be true successors of Tone, Emmet, the Young Irelanders of 1848, and the Fenians of 1867. To add to their blunders, General Maxwell asked the Catholic Bishop of Limerick, Dr Edward O'Dwyer, to remove from his parishes certain priests who might have been in sympathy with the Volunteers. The Bishop answered:

"You took care that no plea for mercy should interpose on behalf of the young fellows who surrendered to you in Dublin.

No, you shot them in cold blood. Personally, I regard your regime to have been one of the worst and blackest chapters in the history of the misgovernment of this country."

To the hesitant and the lukewarm in Ireland, the British response was a verification and a justification of the cause, and to the Volunteers it was a blessing. Events were changing so quickly, that the Prime Minister made a hurried visit to Ireland, and reported back to the House of Commons on May 25. The Machinery of Government in Ireland had broken down, and it was time for a new departure. England was deeply concerned with the depth of feeling produced by the executions on the American public, as America had by this time not yet entered the war. An Irish Relief Fund was set up under the chairmanship of Dr. Thomas Addis Emmet, a relative of Robert Emmet, who was hanged in Thomas Street, Dublin in 1803. There were forty one Archbishops and a lengthy list of eminent citizens on the Relief Fund committee.

While all this was taking place, US President Woodrow Wilson was advocating the precepts of international justice. He said "We believe these fundamental things. First, that every people has the right to choose the sovereignty under which they shall live. Second, that the small nations of the world have the right to enjoy the same respect for their sovereignty and for their territorial integrity, that great and powerful nations expect".

A great and just statement, but Mr Wilson where Ireland was concerned, was a bigot and politically dishonest.

The British Ambassador in Washington, Sir Cecil Spring-Rice, became alarmed and warned Lloyd George that if something was not done to appease the Irish, America's entrance into the war was doubtful. Something was done. Home Rule was disinterred, and would be put in force at the end of the war. The double-dealing Lloyd George assured Carson that Ulster, whether she willed it or not, would not be allowed to go with the rest of Ireland. This was all unknown to the Irish Parliamentary Party at first, but when it became known, there was a loud protest from them and from the people and the clergy.

Then, on June 16, 1916, the trial of Roger Casement began. It transpired that there was no statute under which he could be

sentenced to death. The English however, rightly or wrongly, always find a way to suit their needs, so they resurrected a suitable statute from the thirteenth century when England and France were ruled by King Edward III. This, however, was in no way applicable to the trial. Casement was defended by Sergeant Sullivan. He was found guilty, sentenced to death and was hanged in Pentonville Prison on August 3, 1916. He was the last of the patriots to be murdered in 1916. The trial made a farce and an instrument of vengeance out of British Law. My friend, Seán Ó Mathúna, has written a detailed account in his book, *Frongoch: University of Revolution*.

Nineteen-seventeen began with the ongoing excitement generated by the homecoming of the internees from Frongoch and other prisons. The Frongoch Internment camp in Wales, had become a University of Revolution, as the interned Volunteers organized Gaelic language classes, and military tactics classes as well as other classes which were taught by the many teachers and experts among their ranks, such as Brian O'Higgins. When they came home, as they did, the short days and long nights of winter, and the lull in work on the farm, gave us ample time for celebrations and listening to the stories of life in prison.

In January of 1917, President Wilson addressed Congress and outlined the conditions under which America would be justified in entering the War. He said, among other things, that the only conditions under which America would be justified in entering the war and accepting the peace settlement that would result at its ending were:

"That every nation should adopt the doctrine of President Monroe, as the doctrine of the world. No nation should extend its rule or politics over another nations or people. That every nation should have the right to control its own destiny, unhindered, unthreatened, and unafraid, the small as well as the most powerful. I am proposing government by the consent of the governed. Those are American principles. They are the principles of mankind and must prevail. There must be a spirit of justice and freedom and of right."

British leaders had no qualms in agreeing with Wilson. Bonar Law pointed out that it was for that they were fighting. Lloyd George said:

"We are fighting for the freedom of small nations as well as big ones."

No Irish person could object to these sentiments. Unfortunately for us, President Wilson was blinded by bigotry and prejudice where the Irish were concerned, and Bonar Law and Lloyd George were hypocritical and immoral politicians. The Irish people still hoped that these principles would arise and be discussed with respect to Ireland, at the peace conference which would follow the war. However, this was not to be.

The Peace Conference was held in Versailles, Paris, with President Wilson presiding. It was set up to deal justly with all of the nations involved in the Great War, and to prevent wars happening again. It was an undemocratic body by virtue of giving an unqualified veto to the four large nations, namely, Great Britain, France, Russia and the United States of America, making it impossible to pass a motion that interfered, justly or otherwise, with their internal affairs. Ireland was not allowed representation at the Peace Conference. Even though she had lost a proportionate number of soldiers in the war, her plea would not be heard.

Mandate for a Republic

Chapter Four

THE TIDE OF NATIONAL FEELING was sweeping Ireland now, and in February, 1917 there was a by-election in Roscommon. Count Plunkett (father of Joseph, who was executed at Easter, 1916) was nominated as a candidate by the Volunteers and Sinn Féin. He was opposed by a Redmondite and independent candidates. It was a great opportunity to expound the principles of Republicanism and independence. A young priest, Father Michael O'Flanagan, was fearless in doing just this. Count Plunkett won the election by a margin of almost two to one, and the people celebrated and rejoiced enthusiastically.

The British were furious, and they reacted in their usual violent way. About thirty leaders were arrested, and ten of them were deported. A young man was fined five pounds for singing the song Easter Week, and four others were arrested during the election for singing national songs. Another was fined two pounds for shouting, "Up Sinn Féin". These were large sums of money at the time. Those arrested refused to recognize the court or pay a fine and they were sentenced to three months in prison. Not to recognize the courts became a general practice after this.

Meanwhile, Edward Carson was trying very hard to have England enforce conscription in Ireland. He thought it an easy way to get rid of the leaders of the Volunteers and of Sinn Féin.

"Conscript them and send them to the front where most of them will be killed and disposed of," he said.

Lloyd George did not think it was such a good idea. The people would resist, and it would have an adverse effect on

America taking part in the war. He placated Carson by saying that he was prepared to grant Home Rule to the rest of Ireland but that Ulster would be regarded as a separate nation. John Redmond and his Parliamentary Party, who were still attending the House of Commons, walked out in protest at this.

President Wilson was elected for a second term in November, 1916 and took office in March, 1917, and disregarding the principles that he had previously advocated, he allowed America to enter the War on April 6, 1917. The Allies were not doing well and the USA missed a great opportunity to help Ireland by refusing to enter until that small nation got its freedom.

Easter of 1917 came, and there were tremendous commemorative celebrations all over the country, particularly in Dublin, where the Tricolour flag was hoisted over the GPO. To the amusement of the huge crowd present, it took the police six hours to take it down. The speeches were determined and fearless, preaching the Republican doctrine. Dublin Castle seemed to think that the line of least resistance was the best policy and they did not interfere. The Irish Parliamentary Party members were still attending the House of Commons in London. They were confused, not only about the Roscommon election, but about the situation in general. Was the election victory an endorsement of the policy of a Republic as set forth by the Volunteers, or was it a victory for Arthur Griffith's policy of a Commonwealth with the King of England remaining as King of Ireland? To solve the problem, Count Plunkett called a conference. He believed that the victory was for a Republic. Delegates from seventy-four public bodies attended. Some were extreme Republicans, some were just angry with John Redmond and the Parliamentary Party, and some were just curious. It was no surprise that the meeting was a noisy one, and very little was accomplished. Arthur Griffith, as President of Sinn Féin, was still uncompromisingly advocating a settlement less than a Republic as outlined in the Easter Proclamation and as stated by Rory O'Connor.

Another by-election came along in May, 1917, and this time it was in Longford, a stronghold of the Parliamentary Party. Joe McGuinness, who was in prison in England, was nominated as the Sinn Féin candidate. His ardent Republicanism left no

doubt as to the policy. The slogan "Put him in to get him out" was very effective. Although the venue was a Redmond stronghold, McGuinness won the election by a margin of thirty-seven votes. It was the "death knell" for the Parliamentary Party.

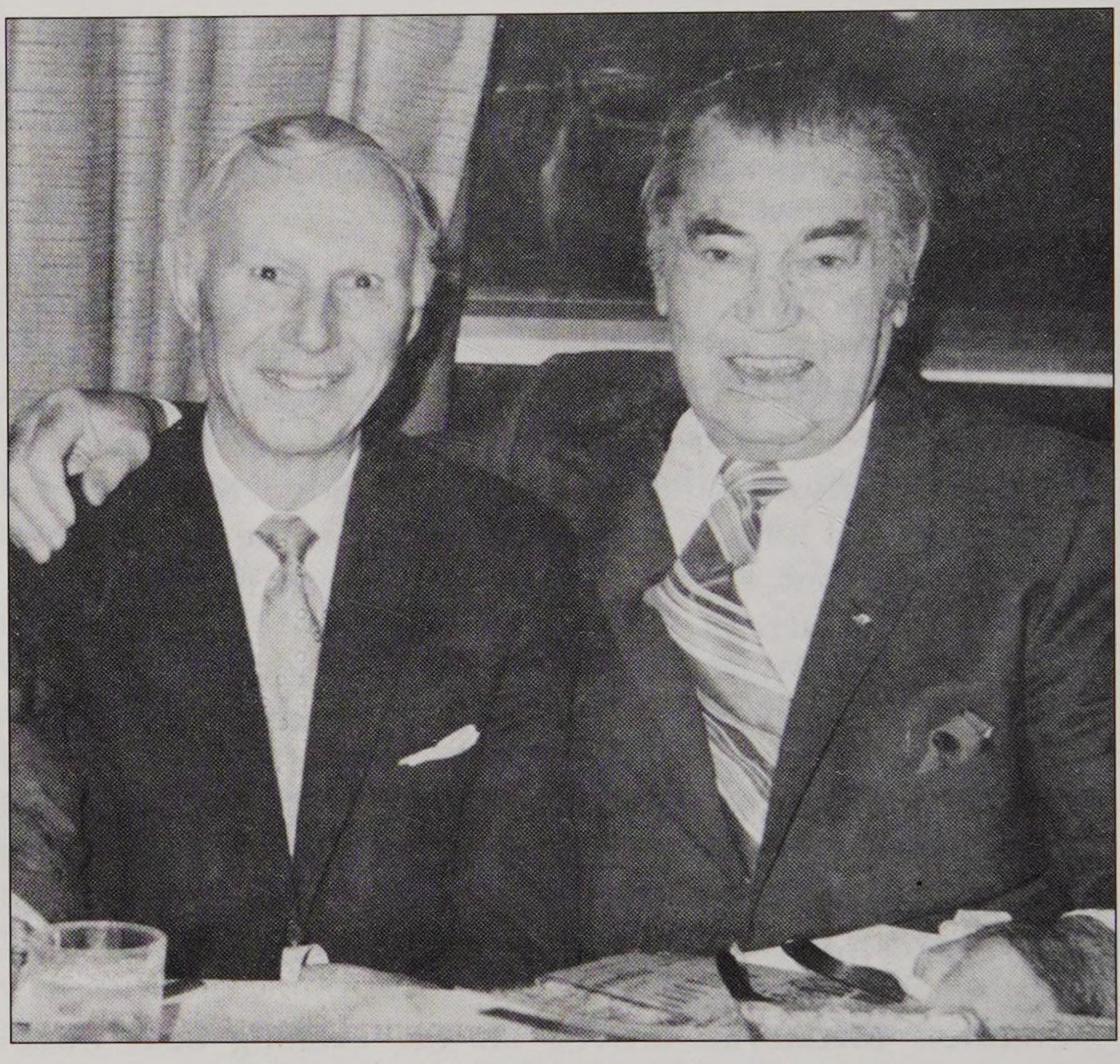
The victory was celebrated all over Ireland, with parades and speeches and bonfires including the one on Knockshegowna Hill. Flags were flying from all sorts of inaccessible places. Lloyd George continued to set up his bogus conferences and meetings, and Sinn Féin organized meetings and rallies for the release of the prisoners. Major William Redmond, MP for Clare, and a brother of John, was killed in action in the war and his seat became vacant. An election was held and de Valera was the Sinn Féin candidate.

On June 15, 1917, Bonar Law made an announcement in Parliament that all prisoners, including those doing life sentences, were to be released. This offered another great opportunity for rejoicing and recruiting. The prisoners were met by the Aldermen of Dublin, and the crowds were controlled by the Volunteers. As each prisoner reached his own town or parish the excitement grew and became nationwide and it lasted for days.

Countess Markievicz arrived on the evening boat from Aylesbury prison where she was the only political prisoner, but where she was regarded as one of the convicts. The Countess and the prisoners arrested after the rising, and who were marched to the boats through the streets of Dublin in silence, could hardly believe the change that had taken place now as they were regarded as heroes and were cheered home. It is ironic that the Countess was one of the women imprisoned by the Free State in Mountjoy during my own time there in 1923.

The leaders of the prisoners held a meeting before leaving Dublin, and they sent a cable to President Wilson reminding him of his declaration regarding the freedom of small nations, which was either an embarrassment to him or a waste of his time.

De Valera won the Clare election in July, 1917 with 5,010 votes to 2,035, and we in the country districts now saw no compromise or turning back. The press, both English and the Irish, were throwing in the towel, saying that Sinn Féin could



Michael with William Harrison (Jack) Dempsey,
World Heavyweight Boxing Champion (1919-1926)

not be stopped.

Lloyd George's scheming seemed to be at an end. Laurence Ginnell, Irish Parliamentary Party MP for Westmeath, resigned his post and joined Sinn Féin. With the victories of Sinn Féin, the humane and logical thing for England to do was to respect the will of the people and cease their bullying. But no, they increased it. The brutal and unlawful possession of Ireland would again become evident. Where tyranny is law, justice does not exist. They passed new acts and strictures under the Defence of the Realm Act. A group of young men in Ballybunion, County Kerry, while celebrating the Clare election victory, was fired upon. One of them was shot dead and the jury returned a verdict of murder against Constable Lyons, but the constable was not arrested.

The celebrations for the Clare election victory had scarcely stopped when there was another election victory, this time in Kilkenny City in August 1917. William Cosgrave was entered as the Sinn Féin candidate. He won.

In September 1917, Thomas Ashe, Austin Stack and sixteen others were arrested for seditious speech and other equally ridiculous charges. They were placed in Mountjoy Prison and treated as criminals. They protested, and demanded to be treated as prisoners of war. The response to this request was to take their bedding away, and so they went on hunger strike. The authorities decided to feed them forcibly. After a few days of hunger strike, a young doctor, not acquainted with the methods of forcible feeding, was ordered in the absence of the regular doctor to perform the operation of feeding Ashe. Instead of pumping food into his stomach, he pumped it into his lungs. Ashe collapsed and died in great agony. He certainly carried his cross for Ireland. A committee protesting his death and protesting the imprisonment of the others sent a message to world governments referring to President Wilson's declaration that "no people be forced to live under a sovereignty under which they did not desire to live". Dr. Patrick McCartan took this message to Clan na Gael in New York.

By this time, all of the prisoners were home from Frongoch, including Michael Collins who had organized a small secret group of followers around himself while in prison. The Executive Council of the Volunteers would now have to be reconstructed, and new members added. As head of the IRB, Collins was entitled to a seat on the Council. His approach to dealing with people who disagreed with him was simply to sweep them aside. There was some objection to the secret control enjoyed by the IRB, and to the secret group organized by Collins in Frongoch. The Volunteers had never been secret. Cathal Brugha saw danger in an organization that was secret and absolute in its control of the Volunteers.

The Volunteers and Sinn Féin, now under the leadership of de Valera, were endeavouring to avoid anything in the nature of armed conflict during the year. However, if conscription were to be enforced, they would oppose it. They were looking forward to the end of the war and to the peace conference. They continued to hope that Ireland would be included. De

Valera's leadership concentrated on building and strengthening the political struggle, hoping that the claim of small nations would be heard in accord with the pledge given during the war, and that the will of the Irish people would be recognized and respected. To make sure that the voice of the people would be heard and united, Sinn Féin clubs were organized in every parish. The Volunteers, well organized and with a fair amount of arms at their disposal, were not to be provoked into using them.

There was quite a shortage of food at this time, and Sinn Féin asked the large landowners to let out several acres of their estates in one acre lots at a reasonable rent to those who had no property so that they could grow food. This proved quite a success. The large estates were also ordered to set aside a certain percentage of their property for tillage and food production.

During this time, contrary to the "keep quiet" attitude, the Volunteers remained very active and many were arrested. They involved themselves with the job of procuring arms in whatever way they could, as well as continuing to drill and to train. In my own battalion, the Roscrea Tipperary Battalion, two young men, Paddy Maloney and Tommy Armitage, were identified in an arms raid and spent six months in Limerick prison. Two men were shot in Kerry. Armed raids were still carried out, and prisoners were still going on hunger strike to protest the brutal treatment to which they were subjected.

After the death of Thomas Ashe, there was no more forced feeding and the government tried another ruse. When a prisoner on hunger strike became dangerously weak, he was released, and when his health was restored, he was re-arrested again under the "Cat and Mouse Act".

There was a by-election in South Armagh, where the Ancient Order of Hibernians were still loyal to the Parliamentary Party. The Unionist candidate withdrew, and the Parliamentary Party candidate was elected. John Redmond died on March 6, 1918. Out of respect for Redmond, his son Captain William Redmond was elected to his seat in Waterford.

The month of April, 1918, was an anxious one for the Allies. They suffered many setbacks and losses along the front. The government passed the Military Service Act, or 'conscription.' Lloyd George once again pulled his old standby Home Rule

trick out of the bag, but no one was deceived by him this time. All parties were outraged. Lawrence O'Neill, Lord Mayor of Dublin, arranged for a conference of all shades of opinion to be held in the Mansion House on April 18, 1918. The conference drew up an anti- conscription pledge which was to be taken by the people in every parish in the country on the following Sunday of April 21, 1918. There were other motions passed, denying the right of any government to impose Military Service against the will of the people.

On the same evening, the Catholic bishops were meeting in Maynooth, and the conference requested a statement from them with regard to conscription. A statement was issued which said:

"We consider conscription an oppressive and inhumane law, that the Irish people have a right to resist with every means in accord with the law of God."

The Parliamentary Party, now under the leadership of Joe Devlin, remained in Ireland to help oppose conscription. In a by-election in Offaly, they withdrew their candidate in favour of the Sinn Féin candidate Dr. Patrick McCartan, who was elected unopposed.

On May 17, 1918, most of the leaders were arrested and were deported to England, and on May 18, a German plot was announced, but no one believed that it was true. On June 21, a by-election was held in East Cavan, an Ulster constituency, and the Sinn Féin candidate, Arthur Griffith, was elected against the Parliamentary Party candidate by a majority of 1,200 votes. The government now seemed about to enforce conscription. Their representatives were recalled, and were replaced by General Lord French and other unscrupulous men. A secret order was issued to the RIC, to exercise great vigilance in getting evidence on the disaffected, to be more cooperative with the military and to offer financial compensation for information received. On June 15 all of the cities and fifteen counties were named as 'Proclaimed Districts", under the Criminal Procedure Act of 1887. On June 18 certain areas were proclaimed from holding meetings, including fairs. On July 4, all national organizations including the Gaelic League and the Gaelic Athletic Association were proclaimed. The GAA answered by planning fifteen hundred hurling matches on



At a NORAID and Seanóglaigh na hÉireann function: Jack McCarthy; Michael Flannery; Matt P. Higgins



Washinton DC. Left to right: Red Murphy; Jim Maunsell; Michael Flannery; John Hurley and others. This was a picket against Margaret Thatcher who was addressing Congress that day.



Standing, left to right: John Lawe; Dáithí Ó Conaill; Michael Flannery; Peter O'Farrell; seated, left to right: Seán Keenan (Derry); Danny Gilmartin. In the photo on the wall is Mike Quill (Kerry). The photo was probably taken in the office of the Transport Workers Union.

Sunday August 4, all over Ireland, and on August 15 hundreds of meetings were held and many of the speakers went to jail. Prisoners were now tried by court-martial but there was no attempt to enforce conscription. The recruiting propaganda carried Wilson's declaration about Freedom and Justice for small nations and Lloyd George's endorsement of "That's what we are all fighting for."

There was little or no response to this recruitment however. On October 10, 1918, the Mail Boat, *The Leinster*, was sunk with the loss of four hundred and fifty lives. It was a known fact that, contrary to war regulations, it was carrying soldiers and arms without the consent of the owners. I knew one of the passengers, Mrs Quirk from North Tipperary, a landowner and a familiar figure at the cattle fairs.

It was now rumoured that conscription would actually be enforced. The Volunteers would treat this decision as a declaration of war, and the necessary plans were made to deal with the situation. The Volunteers now numbered over one hundred thousand. Some joined to escape conscription, and these were known to their officers and were not included in the plans to oppose it. Cathal Brugha was tireless in building up the army, and Michael Collins also did a remarkable job. *An tÓglach*, the secret but widely read paper of the Volunteers carried some very radical articles. Then Lloyd George surprised everyone by stating that:

"Any attempt to enforce conscription at this time would be suicidal."

On November 11, 1918, the armistice was announced. Fifty thousand soldiers born in Ireland and thousands of the Irish Race born in America, Australia and other countries of the world, now enriched the poppy fields of France. Lloyd George put a finish to hopes for Home Rule when he stated that:

"I can support no settlement that would involve the forcible coercion of Ulster."

On November 25, 1918, the British Parliament was dissolved. Polling day was set for December 15. Sinn Féin proposed to contest every constituency, and the Parliamentary Party declared that they would fight Sinn Féin with all the means at their disposal. Sinn Féin had to work under extreme difficulties as more than one hundred of its leaders were in prison. Most of

the country was still under military rule. Sinn Féin's newspapers were suppressed, and the regular newspapers were under censorship. They could not declare for an Irish Republic. They had to use "Self Determination" as a directive for elections instead. Robert Brennan, Election Director, was arrested and he was replaced by James O'Mara. With this provocation, Sinn Féin decided to vocally state without equivocation, its full demand for an Irish Republic, to withdraw from the British Parliament, to deny their right or the right of any foreign government to make laws for Ireland, and to use every means available to render void the power of England to hold Ireland in bondage by military force or otherwise, leaving no doubt in the minds of the voters as to what they were voting for. After all the unfair tactics of Dublin Castle, the RIC, and the military, the response of the people was heroic, resulting in a Sinn Féin victory, winning seventy-three seats, the Parliamentary Party winning six and the Unionists twenty-six. Clearly this was a mandate for an Irish Republic, sovereign and independent. The press, none of whom favoured Sinn Féin, had the following comments to make. The *Freeman's Journal*: "The meaning of the victory is as clear as it is emphatic". *The Irish Times*: "The overwhelming nature of the victory of Sinn Féin in the General Election was treated by all parties as a plebiscite, admittedly Sinn Féin swept the country."

Mr Short, Chief Secretary for Ireland said: "The Irish question would be settled peacefully or bloodily in six months."

Hopes for a peaceful withdrawal by England were never so high. In December, President Wilson went to Europe to attend the Peace Conference. Before he left, one thousand priests of the Diocese of New York sent an appeal to him requesting his influence in making the principle of self-determination applicable to Ireland. Another appeal was sent to him from a "Friends of Irish Freedom" meeting held at Madison Square Gardens, New York, at which Cardinal O'Connell of Boston was the speaker. Eoin Mac Néill then sent the Cardinal an invitation from a meeting held in Dublin, to visit Ireland. Once again Wilson allowed his bigotry to influence his thinking. He paid no attention to the requests and ignored the fact that the people believed him when he spoke of freedom and justice for small nations.

On January 21, 1919, the First Dáil Éireann meeting was held at the Mansion House in Dublin, in response to a demand from the leaders and the people to carry out the mandate given them in the election. Of the one hundred and five names called, only twenty-eight were present. The remainder were imprisoned in England or were Unionists or Home Rulers who refused the invitation. Cathal Brugha was elected to act as President and Chairman. Father O'Flanagan read the opening prayer in Irish, the roll was called, and around the room could be heard the response, "Fé ghlas ag gallaibh", (imprisoned by the foreigners) which was answered for those absent. The constitution of the Dáil was read and passed. Then, with everyone standing, the Declaration of Independence was read in Irish, English and French.

"Whereas the people of Ireland is by right a free people: And whereas for seven hundred years the Irish People has never ceased to repudiate and has repeatedly protested in arms against foreign usurpation... We the elected representatives of the ancient Irish people in National Parliament assembled, do, in the name of the Irish Nation, 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 ordain 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 that people will give its allegiance.

"We solemnly declare foreign government in Ireland to be an invasion of our national right which we will never tolerate, and we demand the evacuation of our country by the English Garrison".

The elected representatives of the people had obtained a mandate for an Irish Republic, and they were determined to exercise it, but this mandate for a Republic was contemptuously ignored by the British. The war ended and the League of Nations was established in Geneva with President Wilson of the USA as its Chairman. Ireland was not allowed to have a representative even though 50,000 of her people had died with the allies.

The Republic sent Seán T O'Kelly to represent them. He was sent to Versailles to try and arouse sympathy among the dele-

gates. He attended the assembly each day and took advantage of every opportunity to protest, only to be ejected by the Sergeant at Arms. Margaret M Egan who was studying for her PhD at a University there was very helpful to him, and she had many amusing stories to relate about his experiences. She provided him with a secretary, Ernie O'Brady. Her father, Dr. O'Brady from County Cavan had been teaching at Bonn University when the Great War broke out, was forced as a British subject, which enraged him, to leave Germany. I had a very interesting meeting with Seán T in Áras an Uachtaráin while he was president of the 26-County Free State. I took the opportunity to point out to him that we still did not have the Republic.

The League of Nations was not founded on democratic principles since the four big nations, USA, France, England and Italy each had the power of veto on any nation. The League concluded its agenda and President Wilson now returned home delighted to be known as the Father of the League and certain of a big welcome. To his great disappointment the people and Congress were disgusted at the domination of the League by the Big Four and refused to sanction it or to join it. This was a severe blow to Wilson's prestige. To remedy this, he went on a tour of the States but the Irish were everywhere to heckle and interrupt him causing him to have a severe stroke and the Irish Question was no further advanced.

War with England

Chapter Five

THE CAPTURE OF A LOAD OF GELIGNITE happened to coincide with the first meeting of the Dáil, on January 21, 1919. Séamus Robinson, Seán Treacy, Dan Breen, Seán Hogan, Paddy O'Dwyer, and four others in South Tipperary decided to capture a quantity of gelignite which was to be conveyed by horse and dray to a quarry at Soloheadbeg. Soloheadbeg is a small townland near the village of Hollyford in Tipperary. They set up an ambush and lay in wait near the quarry for several days. The horse and dray arrived on the twenty-first, accompanied by four men, two civilians in charge of the gelignite and two constables to guard it. The intention of the Volunteers was to disarm the police and capture the explosives. When the dray came opposite the Volunteers, they gave a loud command to halt. The police reaction was to raise their guns and attempt to fire. Constables MacDonnell and O'Connell were both fatally shot. There was quite an outcry about shooting men in cold blood, as neither of the constables fired his rifle. Paddy O'Dwyer told me afterwards that he distinctly heard the click of the police rifles, and he wondered what happened. They apparently had forgotten to release the safety catches. Controversy has always surrounded this event.

Tipperary was then placed under military law, and an intense search for the Volunteers began. For four months they hid out in Kerry, Limerick and then they returned back to North Tipperary, where on the thirteenth of May, Seán Hogan was captured in one of the most Republican houses in Ireland, Meaghers of Annfield. He was taken to Thurles, and from there he would be sent to Cork by train. Robinson and Treacy

decided that Hogan would have to be rescued, otherwise he would be hanged. The rescue was planned to take place at Knocklong station. On May 15, after a fierce fight involving a hand to hand struggle, in which Treacy was wounded, and two constables were killed, Hogan was rescued. Dan Breen was also wounded. Séamus Robinson issued an order, in the name of the Tipperary Brigade, that any of the enemy found in the South Riding of Tipperary after a certain date would forfeit his life. The Volunteer Executive cancelled the order. After the cancelling of this order, Cathal Brugha thought it necessary that the Volunteers should be brought under the control of the Dáil. Cathal Brugha who was Minister for Defence, and Richard Mulcahy, Commander-in-Chief of the Volunteers, met and decided on plans for control. The Volunteers had been told that the Dáil, in its message to the free nations of the world, had declared that a state of war had existed between Ireland and England which "can never be ended until Ireland is definitely evacuated by the armed forces of England". They also said that the Irish Volunteers were justified in dealing with the armed forces of the enemy, soldiers or policemen, as any National Army would treat an invading army, and that the Volunteers were bound to resist any attempts to disarm them.

The following article appeared in *An tÓglach*:

"The Irish Government claims the power and authority as a lawfully constituted government to sanction the use by the Irish Volunteers of the most drastic measures against the enemy of Ireland."

Volunteer activities around this time were mostly confined to securing arms and explosives and the objective was to avoid taking life when possible.

A Volunteer, Robert Byrne, became dangerously ill while on hunger strike in Limerick prison, and was moved to hospital. On April 6, an attempt was made by the Volunteers to rescue him. This resulted in one of his police guards throwing himself on the dying patient and shooting him. This policeman was himself shot by the rescuing Volunteers as well as another policeman who also was guarding Byrne. Byrne was rescued, but he later died of his wounds. I mention this because I knew one of the policemen's family, and they were a very Irish family. The reaction to this at the time was one of great shock.

It was a horrible thought that an Irishman would shoot a dying prisoner rather than let him escape. The raids for arms were mostly successful.

Many of the counties were now under military control. An International Labour meeting in Amsterdam demanded of the Peace Conference that the principle of 'self-determination' be applied immediately in the case of Ireland. The Peace Conference was not listening to any plea for Irish self-determination or justice.

At this time also, the Dáil was busy setting up the different departments; Seán T O'Kelly as speaker of the Dáil; Count Plunkett for Foreign Affairs; Arthur Griffith for Home Affairs; Cathal Brugha for Defence; Countess Markievicz for Labour; Eoin Mac Néill for Industry; William Cosgrave for Local Government; Michael Collins for Finance; Laurence Ginnell for Propaganda; Ernest Blythe for Trade and Commerce and Richard Mulcahy as Chief of Staff of the Irish Republican Army.

Things were happening in quick succession at this time. De Valera had escaped from Lincoln Jail in England, an escape organized and assisted by Collins. Pierce McCann, TD for Tipperary had died in Gloucester Jail and three prominent Americans had arrived in Ireland on their way to bring the Irish question to the Peace Conference in Paris. They were Frank P Walsh, Chairman of the National War Labour Board, Edward P Dunne, former Governor of Illinois, and Michael J Ryan, Public Service Commissioner of Pennsylvania. The United States Senate had also sent a message to the Peace Conference which ended by saying:

"...and further, the Senate of The United States expresses its sympathy with the aspirations of the Irish people for a government of their own choice."

The delegates meeting with President Wilson were told that there was an agreement between the Committee of Four that no small nation could appear before them without the unanimous consent of all four, allowing England to veto the proposal. Walsh reminded the President of his own declaration about the rights of small nations to self-determination. Wilson gave a lengthy answer which ended:

"You do not know the anxieties I have experienced as a result of the millions who had their hopes raised by what I

said".

The delegates returned, pondering over the futility of getting justice from the big nations. The Dáil went ahead with its own business. A National Arbitration Court system was inaugurated. Under its jurisdiction local courts were set up. A National Loan was floated, and trustees were appointed. Bishop Fogarty, de Valera and James O'Mara were the trustees. Robert Barton, Minister for Agriculture, submitted a plan for a Land Bank to help young people to buy land. Cathal Brugha proposed that the Volunteers be asked at their next convention to take an oath, swearing allegiance to the Republic and Dáil Éireann. This would also apply to every deputy, Officer, and Clerk of the Dáil. He suggested the following oath:

"I do solemnly swear that I do not, and shall not yield a voluntary support to any pretended government authority or power within Ireland, hostile and inimical thereto, and I do further swear that to the best of my knowledge and ability, I will support and defend the Irish Republic and the Government of the Irish Republic, which is Dáil Éireann, against all enemies, foreign and domestic, and I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same, and that I take this obligation freely without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion, so help me God."

Terence Mac Swiney seconded the motion. A few deputies opposed it. Strangely, Arthur Griffith, who previously was in favour of a Dual Monarchy for Ireland and Britain, and not an Irish Republic, said that he was absolutely in favour of it, even though it referred to a Republic. The motion to introduce the oath was carried. Members of the Dáil who were also Volunteers caused some argument and agitation however, and Michael Collins who also belonged to the IRB, did not want to pledge allegiance to the Dáil. Collins argued that some members of the Dáil had not proved themselves, or had not been fully tested, and that the Dáil might some day betray or compromise the Republic. It was ironic that it would be Collins and the IRB who would later compromise the Republic.

Collins controlled the IRB, and up to this point the IRB controlled everything. One wonders if it was the dilution of his power that caused his opposition. Those who supported Brugha in having the Army under control of the Dáil, carried

the vote and the Volunteers became the Irish Republican Army. The IRB still remained a secret independent branch. Collins continued to gain influence as Minister of Finance in the Dáil. He was Director of Organization in the IRA, and also Director of Intelligence. This kept him in touch with what was taking place throughout the entire country. He succeeded in setting up a counter spy system that had Dublin Castle completely baffled.

Shootings and raids on both sides were by now becoming more frequent and guerrilla warfare was fast developing. Early in June, for example, in Tipperary, District Inspector Hunt of the RIC made braggart speeches of how he was going to bring 'these ruffians' to heel. For this reason, he organised a parade of police and military in Thurles for the purpose of intimidating the people. During the horse races in Thurles on June 23,1919, he led a very large contingent of soldiers and policemen down the main street. Jim Stapleton and Jim Murphy stepped out of the crowd in front of the parade and shot him dead. Jim Stapleton was a poor shot and he had to go right up to Inspector Hunt to do this. With the military in disarray the Volunteers then mingled with the crowd and walked away. Jim Stapleton was also responsible for shooting another notorious District Inspector. The occasion was celebrated in a good ballad at the time,

At the races of Thurles Mike Hunt he was there,
With policemen and soldiers lined up in the rear,
When a bullet came whistling quite close to my head,
And the next thing I knew ould Hunt was shot dead.

Attacks on barracks were becoming an everyday occurrence. When the police surrendered, they were not harmed. When they decided to fight, some were sure to be killed. They had often unfortunately been trained, however, to expect no mercy from the IRA. In September, Liam Lynch, Commandant of the Cork Number Two Brigade, which had a good supply of arms, attacked the military barracks of Fermoy, while most of the soldiers were at Church. They got away with a good haul of guns. The following day the town was sacked and looted by the military as a reprisal.

The British Government now attempted to suppress the Dáil. Meetings were now risky and secret. The more coercion imposed at home however the more was the enthusiasm that was generated in America, and this helped in bettering organization there. Before the suppression of the Dáil, de Valera decided to go to America in spite of the fact that he knew that there would be conflict between the leaders of Friends of Irish Freedom over the money already collected, as to whether it should be used for propaganda in America or sent directly to Ireland. They also differed on whether to advocate recognition of the Irish Republic or continue using the "right to self-determination" as a slogan.

Already in America were Dr. McCartan, Liam Mellows, Harry Boland and Diarmuid Lynch, ably advised by Joe McGarrity on the one side. On the other side were John Devoy, Judge Cohalan and others. The loan was launched and proved a success. Over five million dollars was collected, but not a penny of it ever reached Ireland. In the late twenties, the Free State Government claimed it. The Republican Dáil which was still in existence however, although outlawed, also claimed it and rightly so, since it was collected in the name of the Republic. In 1927, three judges came to a decision that it should be returned to the bondholders, and a committee was set up for this purpose. Having myself met all those concerned, including Judge Cohalan, I felt that it would have been better if de Valera had not come to America at that time. He only intensified the differences between the groups on small matters. However, this is only my opinion. Liam Mellows and others thought that he did a good job.

By the end of 1919, England was making every effort to put Dáil Éireann out of business and to imprison and kill off the leaders of the IRA by suppression and an unheard of reign of terror. Each atrocity perpetrated against the Irish met with new courage and determination to establish the Republic and to defend its laws, even though these laws were proscribed as unlawful. Meetings that would ordinarily be held during the day were now being held at night, and every day brought new stories of British brutality and IRA courage and daring. There were now between 43,000 and 45,000 regular British Army soldiers in Ireland, and thousands of RIC. Lord French, an

unscrupulous scoundrel, was in charge as Lord Lieutenant, and he was doing his utmost to start an armed conflict which would give him the opportunity for wholesale murder. But, contrary to all the attention, both the Dáil and the IRA were getting their work done in a quiet and efficient way.

The Dáil was also taking control of governing the country. For example, the Agriculture Department had planted thousands of trees, and a committee to report on sources of food and power was set up. This was headed by Thomas Johnson, Secretary of the Trades Union Congress, and by Dr. Hugh Ryan, DSC, University College Dublin. Dr. Ryan was a Tipperary man and an ardent Republican. He was most helpful to Margaret Mary Egan, Jim Donovan and myself in the making of hand grenades and explosives. Margaret Mary Egan was studying chemistry and she was his student. She was a member of the University Cumann na mBan. Jim Donovan, also a student of Chemistry was attached to headquarters. Margaret M Egan was later to become my wife.

The Dáil and the IRB, in spite of cruel opposition, were steadily moving ahead. All newspapers in support of the Republic were suppressed, but Frank Gallagher and Erskine Childers were able to get out a bulletin every few days with all of the up to date news. The bulletin sometimes reached America and the Continent. It carried word of the atrocities committed against the Irish people. It was very successful, and many notables, even English, were very loud in their condemnation of England's brutal aggression in Ireland, and the regime of Lord French.

On December 19, at Ashtown on the edge of the Phoenix Park, where the Viceregal Lodge was situated, Lord French and his entourage were ambushed. The ambush was planned for some time beforehand. It was carried out by eleven important men, four of them from Tipperary, Seán Treacy, Dan Breen, Séamus Robinson, and Seán Hogan. Lord French was aware that he was a likely target as the fight became more intense. He became very wary about letting anyone know his movements. It was very difficult for the IRA to obtain up to date information on his movements. Many attempts were planned, only to end in failure, due to a change in his route at the last minute. In this instance information was very accurate. He would travel

by railroad, but he would not arrive at Broadstone Station in the city, but he would get off at Ashtown, a country stop built to accommodate the race horses coming and going to the Phoenix Park.

The difficulty this time was to find Lord French's exact position in the cavalcade of cars. The information received said that he would be riding in the second car. The plans were changed, and he rode in the first car. The wrong car was attacked and he escaped unhurt. A young IRA man, Martin Savage was killed in the attack and Dan Breen was wounded. A monument to Savage marks the site at Ashtown.

Lloyd George was now talking about a new settlement, but there was nothing new about it. In December, 1919 he introduced a bill in the House Of Commons. It was his "Better Government For Ireland Bill", proposing two separate governments, one for the six northeastern counties of Ulster, and one for the remaining twenty-six counties, both governments being subject to the British Government. This proposal was condemned by both the north and south of Ireland. In introducing the bill, Lloyd George tried to confuse the American people by using the word 'secession' when speaking about Ireland's claim to independence and by comparing the situation to the American Civil War, when the South tried to secede from the Union. Erskine Childers replied very ably to this false comparison by saying:

"We do not attempt secession. Nations cannot secede from a rule they never accepted. We have never accepted your rule and never will. Lincoln fought to abolish slavery. You fight to maintain it. Ireland has no armaments and no way of obtaining them, but we accept your challenge and will fight you with the same determination as the Americans put into their fight when they won their independence from you."

No matter what Lloyd George said or did, he was ignored, as the people regarded him as a lying, scheming scoundrel. But his motion introduced in the House of Commons would have a lasting and damning effect on Irish history, even to the present day.

The suppression of Dáil Éireann was tantamount to a declaration of war. Military activities were accelerated on both sides. The war had really and truly begun, and the people were sworn



Al Perry; Peter O'Farrell; John Lawe; Danny Cahalane; Bill Treacy; Frank Durkan; Michael Flannery.



Michael Flannery with, on right, Congressman Peter King (Rep.) in Washington DC

to the law of the Republic. All Irish organizations, even the County Councils, were outlawed. The British answer was more troops and a campaign of brutality, murder and arrest. They seemed to be provoking another rising. The IRA kept their heads and kept picking them off one by one. Michael Collins had a good intelligence service, and he had formed a unit in Dublin which came to be called "The Squad." This was a full-time paid group of men formed to counteract the G Division of the Dublin Metropolitan Police and Dublin Castle. The G division was a special division of detectives who operated against the IRA and Sinn Féin.

In January 1920, Dublin Castle Administration announced Municipal and Urban elections for Ireland, and that the method of voting would be Proportional Representation, which was the first time that this system would be used. The purpose was to confuse the people and have them spoil their votes. Sinn Féin did a masterful job in explaining the system to the people and very few votes were spoiled, resulting in an overwhelming victory for Sinn Féin. In Ulster, 23 towns had voted a majority Sinn Féin and 22 towns had voted a Unionist majority. Resolutions pledging support to the Dáil were passed by the Dublin and other councils. Belfast was the only city that elected a Unionist Mayor.

There was an effort made by the British authorities to seize the funds of Sinn Féin and Republican Clubs. A special commission of inquiry was set up in Dublin Castle and all bank managers were commanded to appear before it in an effort to trace funds to persons who might be acting on behalf of suspect organizations. The man who signed this order was a man named Alan Bell from Banagher, County Offaly.

Mr Bell had in the past helped to investigate the funds of the Land League. After serving many years as a Resident Magistrate he was sent to Dublin Castle where he assisted British Intelligence and he was now involved in tracking down the funds of Dáil Éireann and other moneys. It was a matter of urgency that the funds amounting to about a quarter-of-a-million pounds in the case of the Dáil Loan, were protected. On March 26, 1920 while going to work in a packed Dublin tram, Bell was approached by three of Collins's men, one of whom was heard to say:

"Mr Bell, your time has come."

He was taken from the tram and shot dead in the streets of Dublin. Those who did it walked away into the crowd.

The reprisals continued. Tomás Mac Curtáin, Commandant of the Cork Brigade was elected Lord Mayor of Cork City, and Terence Mac Swiney was elected as his deputy. Most men in his position would be "on the run", and not sleeping at home. His position as Mayor, and as the father of five young children made it necessary for him to stay at home. On the night of March 19-20, 1920, a group of masked men broke through the entrance door and shot him dead at the door of his bedroom. The military then, to make matters worse for his family, came and searched the house. The jury appointed for the inquest returned a verdict of wilful murder with the most callous brutality. The jury also stated that the murder was directed by the three inspectors of the RIC, and a verdict of wilful murder was returned against Lloyd George, Lord French and Ian McPherson.

One of the three inspectors involved, DI Swanzy, was transferred to Lisburn, Co Antrim, Ulster, which was considered to be a safe place. A short time afterwards, Joe McKelvey was chatting with a friend on a street in Lurgan when who comes strutting down the other side of the street but Swanzy. Joe called to him:

"Hey, Swanzy, I have a message for you. It is from Mayor Mac Curtáin," and he shot him dead. Joe McKelvey was one of the Four Martyrs executed on December 8, 1922, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, by the Free State Government, but more of this later.

The burning of towns, creameries and houses by the British, now commonplace occurrences, only helped to increase the resolve of the people. There was also disagreement in the British Army, and in the administration. Officers and men in high places were protesting the unnecessary and wanton brutality. Some had to be replaced. Lloyd George thought that the solution was his old standby of partition. He rushed through his "Better Government for Ireland" bill. It had its second reading on March 29, 1920, and it became law in December without the consent of a single Irish person, North or South. Lloyd George figured that neither North nor South

alone would be a viable state and with the oath of allegiance to the King both would be dependent on England to subsidize and maintain them.

Sir Nevil Macready became Commander in Chief of the military at the end of March. He depended a good deal on Sir Henry Wilson, Chief of the Imperial Staff at the War Office. When it came to brutal tyranny, Wilson had no equal. However, his actions sealed his fate as he was later shot by the IRA in London.

By now, because of the pressure they were under from ambushes and barracks attacks, there was a heavy toll of resignations from the RIC and recruitment was unsuccessful. A new special force was therefore recruited in England from a disreputable type of the unemployed and a supposed better type from the jails. They were highly paid and given a free hand to do as they wished in Ireland. They were an auxiliary force to the RIC, and were to wear the same uniform, but there were not enough police uniforms to go around so they borrowed from the army and appeared in two-tone apparel and were soon given the sobriquet of "Black and Tans", inspired by a pack of hounds of the same name in Tipperary. Another force made up of ex-officers from the British Army came to Ireland in June, 1920. These were well paid and became known as the Auxiliaries.

General Macready was still asking for more troops and Sir Hamar Greenwood had become Chief Secretary for Ireland in April, 1920. General Tudor became Police Adviser in May. England anticipated an early and brutal death for the IRA and Republicanism. The whole country was now so saturated with enemy troops and police that this looked an easy enterprise to achieve but this did not prove to be the case. The troops did not know the country and the RIC did not like their new partners. There was a good deal of friction between them.

Also, many of the spies and informants upon whom the British relied had by now, mid 1920, been eliminated by the IRA, and ambushes and shootings had increased with the Volunteers disappearing into the hills like the fairy folk of old, keeping the enemy in a constant state of nerves. Raids on RIC barracks were so successful that most of the outlying ones had by now been abandoned. Great credit must be given to the

members of Cumann na mBan (women's auxiliary organization) without whom it would have been hard for the IRA to exist.

In April of 1920 the prisoners in Mountjoy went on hunger strike. This caused great alarm, as it was not generally known that a person could live more than a couple of weeks without food. Night and day, crowds recited the Rosary outside the entrance to the prison. The Trades Union Congress called a strike and the prisoners were unconditionally released.

The Dáil set up arbitration courts and these courts worked very well despite the fact that the war had intensified.

During this time there were one hundred and fifty enemy prisoners captured, disarmed and released. Liam Lynch captured General Lucas and two Colonels, Colonel Danford and Colonel Tyrrell, on Saturday August 26, 1920, as they went fishing. Colonel Danford attacked Lynch in an attempt to escape and was wounded in the jaw. The other colonel was released to take care of him and Lucas was detained.

Lucas was detained under the supervision of the Brennan brothers, and he was treated royally, playing tennis, salmon fishing in the local river, and supplied with whiskey. After a month he decided to escape. He was lucky as he just missed an ambush carried out by Seán Treacy.

The war intensified over the summer and autumn of 1920. The burning of creameries, public buildings and farmhouses were everyday occurrences. Attacks on barracks, ambushes and the shooting of spies and of overly active enemy officers was now a regular part of the IRA campaign. An order from General Headquarters went out to all brigades to form and train full time units that would specialize in raids and ambushes if necessary. Everyone thought that the idea was good and timely. Our Brigadier, Frank McGrath, called a meeting of officers and those likely to be suitable for such a venture. The Brigadier questioned each one and each one in simple words endorsed the plan. Jim Murphy (Jennet) and another young fellow arrived late for the meeting and after the proposal was explained to them they were asked for their opinion. Jim really caught the spirit of the moment when he replied:

"It is a desperate situation and will need desperate men to solve it." His reply was greeted with an approval of "well said".

The question was then asked of the second young man. He solemnly replied:

"In the name of God let us be desperate."

Everyone laughed approval and the Brigadier said "Good lad." and

"Well, it is unanimous."

He then appointed a committee to select and train a unit to be know as a "Flying Column". These fighting units were to strike and then disappear into the countryside. They would be here today and gone tomorrow. Mobility would be the key to their success as would the assistance given to them by the ordinary people of the country. The trainer was usually an ex-military officer supplied by Headquarters.

Apart from the daily newspapers, everyone was kept well informed as to what was happening throughout the country through the prohibited *An t-Óglach* and through person to person communication. In this way, news of a British atrocity, or a daring escape or ambush travelled quickly around the countryside, and helped to encourage the people in their struggle.

The courts were taken over by Sinn Féin and were doing a fine job of administering justice to all parties, creeds and classes at a minimal cost. The RIC who used to deal with infractions of the law were now fully occupied themselves, carrying out the burning of homes and farms, looting and protecting themselves from the IRA. With a very small amount of arms and ammunition, the IRA had to adopt an effective way to deal with the superior forces of occupation. No more would we be so foolish as to walk into open confrontation against an enemy force that could draw on large numbers of troops, armoured cars and heavy equipment if required.

Ambushes

Chapter Six

THE IRA WAS BY NOW instilling fear and frustration into the enemy. The flying columns concentrated on attacks on RIC barracks in order to drive the RIC and British intelligence into the cities and give the IRA more space to manoeuvre. If anyone thought that the capture of the barracks would be easy since most of the occupants were Irish, they were mistaken. Times had changed and whereas at one time it might have been true, the RIC had now grown bitter and tough and proposed to resist in every way. The barracks were usually very solid buildings, and the only way to get the occupants to surrender was to get up on the roof and set the building on fire. The RIC sent up flares called Verey lights that could be seen for miles, to summon help from other barracks, RIC or military. This limited the duration of the attack, and the column had to often withdraw without material gain. One of the objectives of barracks attacks and ambushes was to seize much needed arms and ammunition, but sometimes the only advantage gained was to drive out the RIC and Black and Tans. This was true of the large and better equipped barracks like Kilmallock in Limerick which were attacked by a column led by Seán Forde, (Tomás Malone) on May 28, 1920. He had been previously successful in an attack on Ballylanders barracks. Other barracks attacked were Hollyford, Drangan, Rearcross, Borrisokane in Tipperary and Clonbanin, Co Cork where Seán Moylan had great success. These and reports from other parts of the country gave great courage and hope to the IRA in general and put fear in the ranks of the enemy.

On December 15, 1920, Canon Magner, Dunmanway, Co.

Cork was standing on the roadside talking to Tim Crowley and the local magistrate when they were accosted by a group of Auxiliaries and Military. Without provocation, Cadet Harte of the Auxiliaries, drew his revolver and shot the priest and Crowley dead. The magistrate reported the incident. There was an inquiry, and Cadet Harte was conveniently judged insane.

Also in December of 1920, at a dance hall in Bruff, Co. Limerick, the military fired several rounds into the hall, killing five and wounding seventeen. There were over three hundred unarmed men, women and children murdered or badly wounded during 1920. The murders increased to much greater numbers during January and February of 1921.

In spite of this, the many daring successes of the IRA kept morale high. There was the success of Tom Maguire at Tourmakeady, Co. Mayo where the fight continued all day. That was on May 3, 1921. Tom Maguire was elected a Deputy to the Second (All-Ireland) Dáil Éireann later that month. He voted against the Treaty of Surrender in 1922 and fought against the counter-revolutionary Free State in 1922-23.

As a surviving and faithful Deputy of the last All-Ireland Dáil which was suppressed but never dissolved, he and the remaining six TDs "delegated the executive powers of government" of the All-Ireland Republic to the Army Council of the IRA in 1938, to be held in trust.

As the sole faithful survivor in 1969, he repudiated the Official IRA when they accepted the 26-County Dáil and he recognized the Provisional IRA. He repudiated the latter in 1986 for the same reason and became Patron of Republican Sinn Féin. In 1987 he recognized the Continuity IRA as the successors of the 1938 body.

There was Tom Barry's success at Crossbarry, in March, 1921 where there was open warfare, all accompanied by wild martial airs played by one of Barry's men on the pipes. It was reminiscent of the siege of Lucknow, when the Pipers were given credit for confusing the opposition. At Crossbarry, Barry, Liam Deasy and the column, consisting of about one hundred men, outmanoeuvred 1,200 British troops who tried to surround them, and heavy losses were inflicted on the British. Barry and his column had previously instilled terror in the enemy by wiping out two lorry loads of Auxiliaries on November 28, 1920

at Kilmichael.

The ferocious and brutal aggression of the British became more intense in 1921. At Clonmult, Co Cork, in the spring of 1921, a group of fifteen IRA men were resting in an isolated farm house when an ex-soldier who was out trapping rabbits, became aware of their presence and informed the military. The house was quickly surrounded. The fight continued for two hours until the house was set on fire. They were promised fair treatment if they surrendered. They came out with their hands up but all fifteen were shot dead. The spy was subsequently shot by the IRA.

In the North Tipperary Brigade area, particularly around Newport and Keeperhill a great many houses were raided or destroyed. These raids seemed to happen after the visits of District Inspector Biggs to the home of Miss Barrington, the owner of the Barrington estate at Glenstal. Finally, the home of Patrick Ryan-Lacken, IRA Commandant of our area, was raided and burned. Ryan-Lacken decided to put a stop to these raids. Informed that the inspector had taken Miss Barrington out, he waited for their return. The car came to a quick stop. Ryan fired, but as he did so, Miss Barrington threw herself across the Inspector and the bullet killed them both. She was one of the first women to be shot unintentionally by the IRA.

During the summer and fall of 1920, when things were at their worst, and the murder of innocent people and the sacking and looting of towns were everyday occurrences, despite all this the different departments of the Dáil were able to do their work well and efficiently. The government of the Republic continued to carry out the work for which they had been given a mandate in spite of British attempts to maintain a government of their own by force and aggression.

Lloyd George and his ministers decided that the surest way to stop the IRA was to kill off their leaders, and to achieve this the British decided to bring the best of their international spies from Asia known as "The Cairo Gang" into Dublin. They would do this without letting Dublin Castle know anything about it. They were lodged in small hotels and other lodgings around the city. All of them seemed to have jobs, and they would have done tremendous damage if it was not for a haphazard incident that can sometimes change things dramat-

ically. One of the gang staying in a small hotel received a letter from a pal whom he had left in the East, detailing what had happened since he left, and wishing his friend good luck in his new undertaking. The recipient having read the letter just tore it up and threw it in the waste basket. The maid, a member of Cumann na mBan, put the letter together and was amazed at its contents. She made sure that it got to Collins, now in charge of Intelligence, who was equally amazed. He called in the squad and put every hotel and rooming house under observation as to the strangers staying there, and to collect information about them. He soon had the names, real or assumed, of all of the gang as they were based around Dublin. He told the Squad what to do, and they, with the help of some reliables, on the morning of Sunday, November 21, 1920 eliminated all fourteen of the "Cairo Gang" to the shocking amazement of Lloyd George and his ministers. This was also to the amazement of Dublin Castle, who were not aware of the presence of the spies. When news of what happened got out, there was a great rush of British agents and police to the safety of Dublin Castle in fear for their lives.

That day, Sunday, November 21, there was a football match between Dublin and Tipperary in Croke Park, Dublin. The game was in progress when the Park was surrounded by the military and in a little while, the RIC, Tans and Auxiliaries from the Phoenix Park arrived and opened fire on the players and about eight hundred spectators. The players all lay flat on the playing field but there was a stampede among the spectators. The shooting continued for about ten minutes. After the shooting stopped and things quietened down, the military searched for arms but none were found. Fourteen men and women were shot dead, and sixty-three were wounded on Bloody Sunday, 1920. Several hundred people were injured in the stampede. The Hogan Stand in Croke Park is dedicated to the memory of Michael Hogan, the Tipperary player who was shot on the playing field.

Later that day, November 21, Dick McKee, Brigadier of the Dublin Brigade, his assistant Peadar Clancy and Conor Clune, a teacher from Clare, and nephew of Archbishop Clune of Perth, Australia were arrested, taken to Dublin Castle and murdered that night.

The Dublin Brigade of the IRA had set up an Active Service Unit on full time and paid them a living wage. The contest between the Intelligence Units of Dublin Castle and the IRA Intelligence Unit was becoming more and more acute. The IRA would have been much farther ahead, I believe, if they could have persuaded reliable IRA men to join the RIC or military as spies, but no one wanted the job. They still had a very good chain of information in the Transport system however, and particularly in the Post Office Department whose help and service was a great benefit.

Liam Mellows was Director of Purchases and with the help of Robert Briscoe and Charles McGuinness, was keeping a steady flow of arms coming in at all times. Robert Briscoe later became Lord Mayor of Dublin and Charlie McGuinness went with Admiral Byrd to the South Pole.

It is quite possible that the elimination of the gang of special spies may have played a part in the rumours that Lloyd George was willing to try to negotiate a settlement. A resolution by the Galway County Council suggesting that the Dáil be free to hold their meetings was passed.

Archbishop Clune of Perth, Western Australia, had a meeting with Lloyd George and thought him willing to negotiate without the IRA having to surrender their arms. It was from Perth, that the *Catalpa* whaling boat under Captain Anthony rescued the Fenian prisoners in 1875. The Archbishop went to Dublin and was favourably received by the IRA. On his return to London he found that Lloyd George had changed his mind and would not allow his plan for the separation of the six northern counties to be discussed. The Archbishop packed his bags and returned to Perth.

An event that aroused great anger among the people was the death of Terence Mac Swiney after seventy-four days on hunger-strike. This event was watched world wide. It brought the attention of the world fully on the Irish struggle, as did the hunger strikes and the deaths of Bobby Sands, and nine others in 1981.

"It is not those who can inflict the most, but those who can endure the most who will ultimately triumph," Mac Swiney said.

His funeral brought thousands of people to view it on its

journey to Cork for burial. Another event which aroused the anger of the people was the death of Kevin Barry, a medical student, who was hanged in Mountjoy at the age of eighteen while the crowds prayed outside. Kevin Barry was captured after an ambush by the Dublin Brigade in the city. An escape from Mountjoy had been planned and arranged by Collins but could not take place because of the large crowds gathered outside.

The British became fearful of the adverse publicity. Archbishop Mannix of Melbourne, who was loud in his condemnation of British atrocities in Ireland, was about to come ashore in Cóbh, County Cork when the British arrested him and prevented his visit to Ireland. In Cork City, all the principal buildings in the centre of the city including City Hall, were burned out by the RIC and Black and Tans, on December 11, 1920, and the town of Balbriggan, Co Dublin was also sacked and burned. Coroners' inquests were prohibited, and law and order did not exist.

While the cities and their suburbs were living hell, the country areas were comparatively much easier to live in. The IRA kept picking away at the RIC and the Tans. Spies were now few and far between, and judging by rural Ireland we seemed to be gaining ground. An overzealous Magistrate was executed here and there, as well as an occasional over ambitious officer. In the North Tipperary Brigade area we had a magistrate who was over severe and who was executed without a proper trial. His body was sent to his home in his own horse-drawn trap. This and a few other executions that were carried out before approval was given from GHQ may have hastened the order to bring the IRA under the control of the Dáil. Many local Brigadiers believed that often the urgency for eliminating spies was greater than the need to await approval from GHQ.

However the British had no such qualms about killing. Two brothers named O'Brien were taken out of their beds and shot in Nenagh simply because their name was O'Brien. The O'Briens whom they intended to kill were very active during the Tan War and the Civil War, and were not connected with those killed. The activities of the IRA and the oppression of the British was now the normal state of affairs throughout the country. Our own area of North Tipperary was very active.

North Tipperary

Chapter Seven

THE LOCAL COMPANY MEMBERS were mostly living at home and going about their daily work although most of them were suspected by the Tans and RIC. A Volunteer who was trained for special service in the Flying Column, was not known to the rank and file. The weekly drill or meeting was very secret, and while news good or bad of what was happening in our own and other areas was discussed, all talk outside of meetings was strictly forbidden. In the event of an attack, Volunteers would be called on without notice, to block roads by digging trenches across the road or by felling trees. Usually the blocking of roads took place at the same time as the attack, and sometimes the road blocks were not cleared for several days, the military being afraid to go near them. Sometimes they waited until Sunday when everyone was at Mass. They surrounded the church and rounded up enough ablebodied men to make the road passable again.

On one occasion, after attending a Battalion meeting the night before, I was trapped in a surrounded church and had to do some quick thinking. I stayed behind talking to the priest who had rushed out to see what was happening. When I thought they had picked out enough men to fill in a trench, I walked up to the officer, smiled and told him I was the local lord's chauffeur, and had to drive him to the eleven o'clock service so "could I be excused". He smiled and said "Of course, of course" and gave me a friendly tap on the shoulder as I passed through the cordon. I am sure those under guard must have had queer thoughts about me. Afterwards, I was told that after filling the trench they were dismissed without abuse. They were lucky.

Men suitable and available to serve on the Flying Columns were selected from the Companies and Battalions and these were given special and intense training in a secret and out of the way location such as Ballymacegan, a large farm east of the River Shannon with only the herd's house on it, and a couple of working men, all of whom were reliable, including the store-keeper who kept them fed. With the training period over they returned to their homes, and gave the benefit of their knowledge to their local Company. Most of the Volunteers had local knowledge of forecasting the weather or locating the north pole by the direction the top of a pine tree pointed or by the moss growing at the foot of a tree. Now they were learning something new. Most of them had a good National School education without Geometry or Algebra, and were now delighted to be able to know the height of a building without leaving the ground, or to know the width of a river without crossing it as these might be everyday problems to be encountered.

We also became familiar with the bogs on the lowland and on the mountain tops or any dangerous terrain that we might be forced to navigate in an emergency. Instruction in the use of arms was a now a more regular part of every Volunteer's training, which meant greater caution had to be taken. The woods (no longer there now in North Tipperary) were a source of great protection. Company meetings were held weekly, and the officers, like the Battalion Officers, were always on the alert in case of necessity. The Seventh Battalion was lucky in the fact that Count O'Byrne's estate bordered on the edge of the town of Roscrea, and could be approached by different roads. The Count was a Sinn Féin TD, and he was a great help in every way. He presided over all of our public rallies, and he entertained the speakers, Mary Mac Swiney, Joseph McDonagh and others. The RIC were always present at these meetings, taking notes and making themselves look foolish. Laurence Ginnell was arrested at one of the rallies and charged with making a seditious speech.

The town of Roscrea escaped much of the burning and property damage that was suffered by other towns. Thurles, less than twenty miles away, seemed to be the target of all their wickedness, supposedly in revenge for the shooting of District Inspector Hunt. Not that Hunt was so important, but revenge



Liam Lynch commemoration, Knockmealdown Mts.,
Co. Tipperary, Sunday, 11 September, 1983.
(left to right) Eddie O'Doherty, Enda O'Riordan, Michael Flannery,
Ruairí Ó Brádaigh, Finbarr Kissane.



At a commemoration for Michael Doheny, Young Irelander:
Michael Flannery; Jim Grogan, Chairman of the event;
Pat Doheny (with beret).

for the brazen way in which he was killed in front of over a thousand onlookers, and six hundred RIC and soldiers in the main street of the town. It was a fitting answer to a boast of brutality. Thurles was in the Mid-Tipperary area under the command of IRA Brigadier James Leahy who paid them back blow for blow. With all the murder and brutalities now being carried out by England against a small nation trying to assert its God-given right to Independence, rightly England should not be classified as a civilized nation.

I felt that sometimes the manner in which we handled things could have been improved upon. Orders from Headquarters not to do anything without permission or a very good reason for doing so might, for example, have been an obstacle to success. I knew that Headquarters had to depend on reports which might not reach them before the bad news of a reprisal. For instance, there was an occasion when Pat O'Brien and Jim Stapleton tried to disarm some RIC and Tans in a pub in the village of Ragg situated close to Thurles which resulted in wounding the RIC sergeant and killing a Tan. That night, Thurles had one of its worst experiences of sacking, looting and burning as a reprisal for this. Headquarters looked upon the loss after an attack as far greater than the gain, and they were concerned about terrifying our friends in the towns upon whom we depended. We really missed great opportunities by not anticipating the reaction of the British, and attacking them when they started their drunken spree. Why indulge in hind-sight ? It is so useless. I believed with Tom Barry that we should not have allowed the enemy to exercise the initiative and that we should make the situation and attack on our own initiative.

Our most successful ambush in North Tipperary, Modreaney, is a good example, but more on this later. Sometimes in the excitement a small oversight or slipping could have negative results. The attack on Doon barracks on the Limerick-Tipperary border is an example. Everything went well, explosives were placed and only the button needed to be pressed. It was pressed but nothing happened. Pat O'Brien said to the man who had set the explosive:

"Did I hear you say the explosive was ice cold?"

There was a pause as everyone looked at each other, realizing that the explosives were frozen. After a few hand grenades were

thrown against the wall in the hope of causing the explosion but without result, we again called on the occupants to surrender. They refused to do so and we had to retreat as we were quite close to the military barracks in Limerick. In the village of Silvermines, about twenty RIC and Tans occupied their evenings carousing in the local pub. Pat O'Brien, whose home was in the village, decided with Pat Ryan-Lacken, and others, to attack the pub and the barracks. The plan was to discharge a short burst of fire outside the pub and the RIC men would dash out and those in the barracks would do likewise. The night was dark, there were no street lights then, the gun was discharged, and simultaneously the door opened and two local farmers stepped out. One said:

"Did you hear that noise Bob?" and Bob who evidently didn't hear the noise or the question said:

"I'd say there is a bit of frost in the air tonight."

The two moved down the street on their way home. The lights were extinguished in the pub and the barracks, but no one came out. Then suddenly two cigarette lights appeared in the pub door and there was a rush for the barracks. The two Volunteers, O'Brien and Ryan opened fire and bodies fell heavily on the roadway. Those in the barracks never emerged and Pat decided to withdraw.

Pat Ryan-Lacken, Commandant of the Sixth Battalion, had planned a raid on Rear Cross Barracks, which was situated in his own Battalion area, only to find himself suspended from carrying out activities without permission. The Battalion refused to act without, him and was also suspended. However, Pat decided to go ahead with the raid, without involving any of the other Battalions in the area, but he invited members of the Third Tipperary Brigade to assist. These included Seán Treacy, Dan Breen, Séamus Robinson, and Jim O'Gorman.

At the same time his Brigadier, Frank McGrath, had received permission for a raid on Borrisokane Barracks for the same date. He quickly contacted Ryan but nothing could be done as plans for both raids were about to be carried out. I will deal with the official raid on Borrisokane first.

On the evening of the attack on Borrisokane, on July 11, 1920, many Volunteers met in Toomevara. They proceeded to Borrisokane where a great many others had already assembled.

Work was found for most of those who were not directly involved in the attack, felling trees to block the roads, manning outposts and so on. There were men with rifles placed in the house on the opposite side of the street in front of the barracks, others in the adjacent building and at the back of the barracks. The usual plan of attack involved going through the roof, and if you failed to bomb them out you burned them out. Access to the roof from the adjacent house was easy, but the barrack roof was reinforced with wire netting and other obstacles making it very difficult to penetrate. Under the guidance of Andy Cooney who had come down from Dublin, and with much hard labour, they eventually got through the roof. All this time there was heavy shooting from within and without. Hand grenades were thrown inside but refused to explode. The fire was now raging. The call to surrender met with no response, and the shooting continued. Then Michael Kennedy, Nenagh, was wounded. He was attended to by Dr. Quigley and removed to Limerick Hospital where he died.

The shooting from within had stopped and we wondered if they were all cremated. The whistle for retreat sounded and we left another outpost destroyed but without achieving our main purpose of capturing arms.

It was later discovered that the barrack occupants had dug a large tunnel from the kitchen, covered the opening with a steel shutter and the exit with straw and weeds and that was how they made their escape. The rifles were completely destroyed by the fire.

As for the raid on Rear Cross Barracks, it was carried out without permission, but those from other Brigade areas did not know this. They were discussing final plans for the attack with Ryan when his brother, Martin, came running across the fields and handed him a dispatch from Mulcahy of GHQ, in Dublin, forbidding the raid. Ryan read it and calmly put it in his pocket. Seán Treacy and the others had no time to ask any questions as they saw two men approaching from the other direction. They quickly recognized Ernie O'Malley, guided by a local Volunteer. He was unaware that Ryan was suspended. The foursome detailed the plans to O'Malley, and Ryan proposed that since O'Malley was from Headquarters, that he should take charge. O'Malley consented to this.

With steel shutters and mountains of barbed wire, the building looked impregnable. One of the gable ends of the building faced a nearby farmyard, and fearing an attack from that end all the windows had been cemented up making it possible to climb to the roof there.

The ladder concealed in the farmyard for this purpose was produced, quickly erected, and O'Malley, Ryan and O'Gorman were quickly on their way to the roof while the others kept a steady tattoo of fire on the steel shutters. All the action was in the front as the only exit in the back was one door buried in the mountains of barbed wire. A field stretched from the back to a fence about one hundred and twenty-five yards away. There were three riflemen behind the fence with orders to shoot only if the door was opened in an attempt to get away. Ryan, Treacy and O'Gorman had now reached the roof. They crept to the other end where Ryan removed some slates and handed them to O'Gorman. Just then a slate slipped from O'Gorman's hand and went clattering down the roof bringing a barrage of rifle and machine gun fire up through the slates cutting an artery in O'Gorman's thigh. The Volunteers on the ground kept throwing slates back onto the roof to deceive the gunners, while Ryan dragged O'Gorman and O'Malley tried to staunch the bleeding. On reaching the gable end they found it about to burst into flames. O'Gorman was now down and lying under the barbed wired windows at the rear, while O'Malley was busy applying a tourniquet with bandages torn from Ryan's shirt to stop the bleeding. Suddenly the back door opened and an officer with a gun on each leg stepped out. He was mesmerized by what he saw, and drew his revolvers, but a shot from Paddy O'Dwyer meant instant death for him. O'Malley, Ryan and O'Gorman lived to fight another day.

The building was now an inferno, but the occupants still refused to surrender. O'Malley now ordered a withdrawal. Although there were no arms captured, the outpost was destroyed. The enemy engineers had turned one of the rooms into a fireproof shelter.

While planning new action and keeping body and soul together, Seán Gaynor, the Brigadier, paid us a visit and reported that there was a new officer of the Auxiliaries in Nenagh. Captain Hamilton was his name and he certainly

boded no good. He spent his time going about trying to find out as much as he could about the locality. At times he wore shorts and made himself familiar with everything in the town and country. He often took rides through the countryside on his motorbike, dressed as a priest. A few mornings after Brigadier Gaynor's visit, Joe Starr, Nenagh, brought word that the Captain had gone on his motor bike to Templemore where a military barracks was located. It was decided that four men would select a sharp bend on the road and make sure he did not pass. He came along just as expected, and is now listed among the dead. The people of Nenagh, and I am inclined to think some of his own people, shed no tears for his early departure.

There was a constant flow of armoured vehicles between Nenagh and Thurles, and an ambush was arranged for Latteragh with its steep hills. It was badly planned, having no trenches or other obstruction for cover on the road. The ambush was carried out but because of the poor planning it was not a success. It resulted in the enemy vehicles getting through with just a few of the enemy wounded.

On another occasion, while the column was resting in what they considered to be safe hill-country, they became careless. One morning when they were coming together after breakfast in the different houses in which they were guests, they were surprised and ambushed by the enemy military. Since they were still scattered, they were able to fight their way to safety. It taught them a lesson. Whether in Glenguile or other supposedly safe places, you must always be on the alert.

Pat O'Brien was very anxious to ambush a police patrol that left the barracks every day at 2pm, but Ned O'Leary who was the column leader at the time, would not sanction it because of orders from Headquarters. So, O'Brien put the idea up to the men in the column and succeeded in getting enough support to go ahead with the ambush. With everything ready for two o'clock and while O'Brien was having a cup of tea in the nearby farmhouse, the patrol surprised them, and came out a couple of hours ahead of time. O'Brien and his men jumped into action and the battle began. It was hectic while it lasted. O'Leary and the remainder of the column came running to the rescue but it was all over with four of the patrol dead and six wounded. Six rifles were captured along with ammunition.

The owner of the house was a Mr. Ryan. The baby of the family, Thomas, seemed to enjoy all the noise and excitement at the time and in later life he became a priest attached to Rome where he became secretary to the Cardinal destined to become Pope John XXIII. Pope John later appointed him Bishop of Clonfert, where my wife and I had the pleasure of visiting him.

There was a military patrol which patrolled from Birr military barracks to Nenagh a couple of times each week also. O'Brien, O'Leary, Devany and Whelehan went over to Kilruane to set up a site for an ambush. While they were reconnoitring, a car with a man passed by. Seán O'Leary thought he was an enemy officer from Nenagh, so they decided to go home. They had to pass O'Meara's pub and Devany insisted that they go in for a drink. O'Brien objected but finally went along. They had just received the drinks when the military surrounded the place. O'Brien, Devany and O'Leary made a dash to escape while Whelehan, who was not too strong, donned a bartender's apron and stepped behind the bar. The other three, running and shooting their way to escape, seemed to be putting distance between themselves and the soldiers when Devany was fatally shot while going over a ditch. Everyone was surprised when the other IRA men reported back in one piece, as the military had reported that they were all killed.

On the day of Devany's funeral in the town of Toomevara, the place was saturated with military and RIC. Only his family was allowed by the military into the church or near the cemetery which is part of the square right off the road to Dublin. Amid all the hustle and bustle he was laid to rest with the silent dignity which was experienced at the burial of Sir John Moore. O'Brien, O'Leary and Jack Harty later crept back to the graveside and fired the customary three shots over his grave and before they left, they fired a few more for good measure at the barracks.

There was a Kerry man, a sergeant in the Roscrea barracks who supplied Michael O'Brien who was teaching at the Trappist Monastery College, about one and a half miles west of the town, with inside information about arrests and raids. Michael O'Brien was the Brigade Intelligence Officer. The British courts were now out of business, and not even the

Unionists would do business with them. On certain dates, and under heavy police escort, they would open for a day. In May 1921, O'Brien received word from a friendly RIC sergeant, that the court in Borrisokane would open under the protection of a bicycle patrol of twelve RIC men from Roscrea and that the patrol would then come back by Cloughjordan. An ambush was set up at Modreeny which appeared to be an easy enough job. However it was complicated on the day in question, as a lorry load of military had unexpectedly joined the RIC patrol on that day.

The column arrived at the ambush site and occupied positions under the column commander,Jack Collison, and Brigade OC Seán Gaynor. Collison handed over command of the column to Gaynor. All positions were occupied and a young man, Bill O'Dwyer, would do the signalling from a hill with a good view of the Borrisokane road and in view of the site of ambush. Bill signalled that they were coming and everyone fell ready. Suddenly the signalling became frantic, and there was 'U' for bicycles, 'R' for cars and 'L' for lorries. Gaynor tried to get advice as to whether he should order a retreat or lie low and let them pass, but everyone wanted to fight. The party arrived in any case and the fight was on. There was great confusion among the bicyclists, as the first four were shot dead in the first volley. The dead included the sergeant, the friendly RIC man from Cloughjordan who had sent out information about the convoy and so had enabled the ambush to be carried out.

The driver of the car and the sergeant sitting beside him were badly wounded. The District Inspector jumped out and hid under the car, escaping injury. Luckily for the column, the lorry with the military never came around the bend and did not take part in the fight except to fire a few rifle grenades for which they did not have the range and so they burst without doing any damage. It was a new experience for the column. Joe Mangan crept out on to the road and pulled in the rifles. The whistle for retreat was sounded and luckily everyone got safely away to rest until night on Knockshegowna. The column then marched off into the hills near to the Devil's Bit mountain. It transpired that the military were on their way from Limerick to Port Laoise and then lost their way and upon arriving in Borrisokane they joined the patrol which promised to get them



Michael Flannery and Bernadette Devlin-McAliskey outside the Federal Court in October, 1982.

back on the right road. There was a local man who was suspected of being a spy and was held for a while. He thought that some of our officers were Auxiliaries and began talking freely about our movements. However, he was let go and forgotten about in the excitement and later given safety by the enemy.

After the Modreaney ambush, the rumours of police movements seemed to become more authentic and the English press were advocating negotiations for peace. Lloyd George, although his policy of wholesale murder during the month of February had failed, was still pursuing that same evil, blind and obstinate approach. On April 19, 1921 he told some protesting ecclesiastics that:

"The evil must go on as long as the leaders of Sinn Féin stand in this position and receive the support of their countrymen. Settlement is, in my judgment, impossible."

This statement strips the British Government of any sense of democratic right by denying the will of the people on which good government should be based.

The Truce

Chapter Eight

WHILE RUMOURS AND EFFORTS to negotiate differed little from day to day, Lloyd George started to work on his "Better Government for Ireland Act." This ill-conceived act to partition the country, was to be passed into law and general elections arranged for May, 1921. It became law in the House of Commons on December 23, 1920. Under this act there would be two separate elections, one for the 26 Counties and the other for an undefined territory in the six north-eastern counties. The election in the 26 Counties was held on May 19, 1921 and in the Six Counties on May 24. I believe that these elections should have been ignored by the people of Ireland, as the elections for the senate were ignored. By recognizing them, we recognized partition. We did, however, participate in the elections, and the result in the 26 Counties was a total victory for Sinn Féin, with only the four delegates representing Trinity College being elected in opposition. Lloyd George was delighted that he had divided Ireland and felt he could now negotiate with everything in his favour.

During the elections in the Six Counties, brutality and murder were practised without check or interference from the British. There were forty Unionists elected, six Nationalists and six Sinn Féin. Seán O'Mahony was elected TD for Fermanagh. The other five were prominent individuals who were elected for constituencies in the 26 Counties and for constituencies in the Six Counties. They were de Valera, Collins, Mac Néill, Milroy and "always there" Griffith. The Six Counties immediately set up a puppet government with James Craig as Prime

Minister. Lloyd George was overjoyed that his nefarious scheme was now an "accomplished fact", or as Churchill phrased it "from that moment the position of Ulster became unassailable."

Andy Cope, a charming and easy-going man with the reputation of a shrewd and able negotiator, was appointed Assistant Under-Secretary for Ireland, resident at the Castle. He was soon meeting with Collins and other important leaders. After some time, a meeting between de Valera and Lloyd George was receiving a great deal of support from elected and civic groups in Ireland and England. Lloyd George admitted that his secret gang of assassins had failed and the elections had proved the solidarity of Sinn Féin. General Macready, Churchill and Sir Henry Wilson were in favour of bringing all troops back from foreign assignments and concentrating them in Ireland, enforcing martial law, and commandeering all transportation. Andy Cope, who knew the situation better than most of them, said "nothing less would work", but he disagreed with it, and believed that the IRA were unconquerable since they were gaining worldwide support. Craig paid a visit to de Valera in Dublin telling him that the North was separate and that he ruled it.

The date for de Valera to meet Lloyd George was arranged for July 12, 1921 when the Orangemen would be parading and cheering, not with, but against, de Valera.

All these happenings were reported in the press and caused more agitation and strife. The Customs House, a very beautiful building situated at the mouth of the Dublin Dock Yards, the centre of nine British Government Departments and the depository of all Council and other records for the nation, was captured by the IRA on May 25, 1921, and was completely destroyed by fire. The attack was led by Oscar Traynor, OC of the Dublin Brigade. This resulted in the loss of Local Government records, dealing a serious blow to British administration in Ireland. Unfortunately, due to a delay in withdrawing, it resulted in the death of several Volunteers, and the capture of many others.

The opening of the Six-County parliament took place on June 22, 1921 and King George was invited to open it. It was reported that he was not satisfied with the speech prepared for

him and with the help of General Smuts and some friends, had it replaced by a more conciliatory one concluding with "the future lies in the hands of the Irish people themselves. The Irish people, North and South, under one Parliament or two, as they themselves may decide, shall work together in common love for Ireland upon the sure foundation of mutual justice and respect." On the same day the military while raiding a house in Blackrock, Dublin, arrested de Valera. The following day, to his and everyone's surprise, the Assistant Under-Secretary, Andy Cope, obtained his release. There were over 40 TDs (elected representatives of the Irish people to the Dáil) in prison at this time.

A couple of days later, de Valera received a letter from Lloyd George inviting him to a conference with a view to peace. De Valera could not accept the letter or its contents without recognizing partition with Sir James Craig as the Premier of Northern Ireland. De Valera replied as follows

"Sir, I have received your letter. I am in consultation with such of the principal representatives of our nation as are available. (Most of them were in prison). We earnestly desire to help in bringing about a lasting peace between the people of these two islands, but see no avenue by which it can be reached if you deny Ireland's essential unity and set aside the principle of national self-determination". Signed, Éamon de Valera.

De Valera and his party returned to Dublin where the Dáil endorsed his actions. There then began a series of letters between de Valera and Lloyd George which were not of much concern to me so I made no notes. I could not understand the argument about whether we were a Republic or a Colony, when Lloyd George was so quick to recognize a six-county puppet state created by himself and without the consent of the people and with no historical background of separation, and refused to recognize the Republic mandated by the will of the people in elections under the jurisdiction of His Majesty King George V's government.

After some correspondence, it was agreed that negotiations would continue between Lloyd George and delegates appointed by him and delegates appointed by de Valera. I was very disturbed when I heard the names of de Valera's appointees; Arthur Griffith as chairman, Michael Collins, co-

chairman, along with Edmund Duggan, Robert Barton and George Gavan Duffy, all of whom were TDs and two were cabinet members. Their credentials gave them power as Envoys Plenipotentiary from the elected government of the Irish Republic with the representatives of His Majesty.

I was particularly disturbed by Arthur Griffith's appointment, a man going to represent a Republic in which he did not believe. Only a few weeks before when accompanying de Valera to meet Lloyd George, Griffith was willing to accept Lloyd George's proposals. This was a man who condemned the 1913 strike led by Jim Larkin and James Connolly, a man who disapproved the 1916 Easter Rising. His appointment was unpardonable in spite of the fact that he was Minister for Foreign Affairs. Collins, after his association with Cope, had clearly given up hope of attaining an outright Republic. Duggan would always side with Collins. Barton and Gavan Duffy, however, still believed in the Republic. General Henry Wilson was appointed as Under-Secretary for Ireland. Field Marshal Sir Henry Wilson was Chief of the Imperial General Staff and his attitude to Ireland was one of bigotry, uncompromising hostility, and unrelenting cruelty.

The Irish delegation crossed to London on July 12. De Valera chose the following to accompany him: Collins, Mac Néill, Barton, Stack, Count Plunkett, Childers and the ever-present Griffith. De Valera was met by Lloyd George at 10 Downing Street on July 14. After the opening play with meaningless words, Lloyd George recited the privileges he was about to bestow on their colony in Ireland; Britain would be responsible for the protection of the whole island and the sea around, and also hold responsibility for foreign relations.

In return, Ireland would give allegiance to the Crown, and that Ireland would be guarded by restricted military recruitment. Ireland would share foreign debts and war pensions with Britain. Ireland would contribute a proportion of its wealth to the regular naval, military and air force and allow voluntary recruitment for these forces. Ireland would allow for the full recognition of existing powers and privileges of the Parliament of Northern Ireland.

De Valera told Lloyd George that he would not recommend such terms for consideration to the Dáil. Lloyd George threat-

ened to end the truce and that he would publish his offer. De Valera asked that his reply be published simultaneously. De Valera conferred with those who accompanied him and all vigorously opposed it with the exception of Arthur Griffith who pleaded to accept it.

To show what a malicious and dishonest politician Lloyd George was, he invited James Craig to Downing Street while still negotiating with de Valera. After the visit, Craig gave a statement to the press in which he said: "It now merely remains for Mr de Valera and the British people to come to terms regarding that area outside of that of which I am Prime Minister." De Valera sent a very able letter to Lloyd George pointing out his deceit and called off the negotiations.

June 28, the date of this letter was the date on which the "Southern Parliament" was to assemble in Dublin. The event was an embarrassing joke. Out of 64 senators only the fifteen who were appointed by the Governor General attended. Only four of the 120 TDs who were elected by the people, those representing Dublin University (Trinity) were in attendance. The Parliament met for fifteen minutes and adjourned until December. Nothing more was the heard of the Southern Parliament.

De Valera arranged a meeting to be held at the Mansion House on July 4. Among those invited were five Unionists, Sir James Craig, the Earl of Midleton, Sir Maurice Dockrell, Sir Robert H. Woods and Andrew Jameson. All but Craig attended. De Valera insisted upon a truce and with the help of Lord Midleton, obtained it. Arthur Griffith was released from Mountjoy prison and soon afterwards, Robert Barton, Eoin Mac Néill, Éamonn Duggan and Michael Staines were also released. American flags were flown from the front of the Mansion House and compliments to the United States Fight for Freedom and the Bill of Rights. De Valera explained to the delegates, Sinn Féin and Unionists, the terms of his reply to Lloyd George who was contacted and replied that he would be happy to see de Valera. General Macready was invited to the Mansion House and the principles governing the truce were agreed to and signed by General Macready, Colonel J Brind, G S and A W Cope, Assistant Under-Secretary acting for the British army, and commandants R C Barton and J Duggan acting for the

army of the Republic. On behalf of the British army, the conditions of the truce were, that there would be

1. No incoming troops, RIC and auxiliary police and munitions.
2. No provocative display of force, armed or unarmed.
3. It is understood that all provisions of this truce apply to the martial law area equally with the rest of Ireland.
4. No pursuit of Irish officers or men or war material or military stores.
5. No secret agents noting descriptions or movements and no interference with the movements of Irish persons, military or civil and no attempts to discover the haunts or habits of Irish soldiers or men. Note: This supposes the abandonment of curfew restrictions.
6. No pursuit or observance of lines of communications or connection.

On behalf of the Irish army it is agreed that:

(a) Attacks on Crown forces or civilians to cease.
(b) No provocative displays of force, armed or unarmed.
(c) No interference with government or private property.
(d) To discountenance and prevent any action likely to cause disturbance of the peace which might necessitate military interference.

These terms came into effect at noon on Monday July 11, 1921.

A further exchange of letters took place between de Valera and Lloyd George and everything seemed ready for what some hoped would be a historic meeting. The majority of the Irish people were not too optimistic as most of them believed Lloyd George was not an honest man and would not play the game as it should be played. The war fought for the freedom of small nations in which fifty thousand of their young sons gave their lives was still fresh in their memories and the League of Nations refused to listen to their pleas for justice. The IRA, without breaking the truce, were doing everything possible to prepare their minds and bodies for a resumption of hostilities. How did the Six Counties act? Orange mobs, and Special

Constables went wild. Fifteen people were killed, hundreds injured and one hundred and ninety homes were burned.

1921 was the most beautiful summer that I can remember and, contrary to the truce, there were training camps in operation and an air of enjoyment everywhere. The Gaelic games were back in full swing. The truce was well established when the delegates went to London with power as Envoys Plenipotentiary from the elected government of the Irish Republic to negotiate and conclude on behalf of Ireland with the representatives of His Majesty King George V. The following instructions were given:

1. They have power as defined in the credentials.
2. Before any decisions are reached on a main question, a dispatch notifying their intentions to make these decisions be sent to the members of the cabinet in Dublin and that a reply is awaited by the plenipotentiaries before a final decision is made.
3. It is also understood that the complete text of the draft treaty about to be signed will be similarly submitted to Dublin and a reply awaited.
4. In case of a break, the text of the final proposal from our side will be similarly submitted.
5. It is understood the cabinet in Dublin will be kept regularly informed of the progress of the negotiations.

There were also private instructions to the delegates. The British delegates were Lloyd George, Lord Birkenhead, Sir Worthington Evans, Austin Chamberlain, Winston Churchill and Sir Hamar Greenwood.

The delegates arrived in London on October 8. Collins did not travel with them, arriving on October 10 and he stayed at a different hotel. He was accompanied by Emmet Dalton. Dalton has since been suspected in some quarters of being a paid British agent while also being a top officer in the IRA. Collins, in charge of the Intelligence Department of the Republic, was never aware of any such allegation. Dalton was also in charge of Collins's party as he toured the south when he was shot dead, supposedly by the IRA, in an ambush at Béal na mBláth in Cork in August, 1922.

There were also two unofficial delegates, Tim Healy, whose varied career involved being an Irish Parliamentary Party member of the British Parliament, lawyer, agent for the British government and finally Governor General of the Free State. Healy had a particularly dubious past. His host was Lord Beaverbrook who had quite an influence with the British delegation. Healy's nephew, Kevin O'Higgins, who was in London on his honeymoon, frequently joined his uncle for lunch with the Irish delegates. Kevin O'Higgins would later sign the order to murder the Four Martyrs on December 8, 1922, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception. Later in the evening Healy would join his host, Lord Beaverbrook, for dinner. Beaverbrook in later times told the story of Griffith asking Healy for his advice. In this way, Lloyd George and his delegates had a complete breakdown on the weaknesses and strengths of the Irish delegation. Tim Healy played an ominous role in Irish History.

The negotiation proceeded with debates about naval bases, air bases, and topics which should not have been discussed until the main question of the type of national government was agreed upon. Griffith and the other delegates were in constant contact with Dublin and pressured them for a final document stating the last and only conditions they would accept. Each delegate received a secret copy of "Draft Treaty A" stating that Ireland should be recognized as a sovereign state, that Ireland agrees to become an external associate of the British Commonwealth, that Ireland should be a neutral state, that Britain should guarantee Ireland's neutrality and the integrity and inviolability of Irish territory, that the League of Nations and States not members of the League, guarantee Ireland's neutrality, and that Britain should support Ireland's application for membership of the League of Nations.

After the Treaty is signed all British military and armed police should be withdrawn from Ireland, and that they be recalled only if all other things failed. Lloyd George thought it time to try some of his old tricks – separate the delegates by talking to them in small groups or alone. To this end, he invited Griffith and Collins to a meeting at Churchill's home and to others of his friends' homes. While this pleased Griffith and Collins it had an adverse affect on the others. Soon it was Griffith alone attending those meetings. Lloyd George soon



In the Federal Courthouse, November 4, 1982:
left to right, George Harrison; Paul O'Dwyer, Attorney;
Michael Flannery and Tom Falvey.



The 'Brooklyn Five' pictured after their acquittal on arms smuggling charges in New York in 1983: left to right, Daniel Gormley; Patrick Mullin; Michael Flannery; Thomas Falvey and George Harrison.

discovered that Griffith would concede much if he could be sure of a United Ireland. He told Griffith that he and his cabinet would resign if Craig became impossible and in this way invited him to make many concessions, some of them in writing, without letting his fellow delegates know. Griffith reported to de Valera Lloyd George's plans, excusing himself by saying "they were his proposals, not mine". De Valera should have questioned Griffith as to how the other delegates thought about these deals.

Finally, when Lloyd George had Griffith in a compromising position he began to meet with the full delegation and Griffith began to realize that he was no longer the fisherman, he was now the fish. Lloyd George assumed his usual role of dictator and bully and though he was ably challenged by Barton and Gavan Duffy, who had the guidance of Childers, he was not in a mood to concede anything.

On Friday October 21, Lloyd George told the Irish delegation that they should be ready to submit their basic and final proposals which should include the following points considered crucial by the English side:

(a) Allegiance to the King.
(b) Voluntary inclusion of Ireland in the Empire.
(c) Granting of naval and air facilities that Britain held to be essential to its security.
(d) Cessation of IRA violations of the truce.

The (d) stipulation seems odd as murder and burning were currently rampant in the Six Counties.

A series of telegrams added interest to that conference, principally one sent by Pope Benedict XV to His Majesty George V expressing pleasure over the negotiations and asking God to bless them. This was supposed to have been prompted by Lord Beaverbrook and the Bishop of Leeds. It might have made sense at the start of the negotiations, not at the close and there was no message to the Irish. The King's reply, dictated by Lloyd George, ended with "the peace and happiness of my people". De Valera sent a letter to the Pope in which he explained that we were never the King's people and never intended to be.

Finally, Lloyd George called a meeting of all delegates, and

figuring he had Griffith in his power, he recited their terms. Barton and Gavan Duffy kept on trying for better terms. Lloyd George called for a recess stating that he wanted action when they returned. After a short time during which Griffith, Collins and Duggan said they would sign, Barton and Gavan Duffy said they would not. The British returned with Lloyd George and announced that there would be no further debate. Then, at the right psychological moment, an angry Lloyd George came storming in with an envelope in either hand and said "Gentlemen, the play has ended. We must have an answer by nine o'clock. If you accept this envelope there will be peace with honour. If you accept this one, there will be war, immediate and terrible war." Then turning to Barton and Gavan Duffy he asked them if they were going to plunge their country into a sea of blood. Griffith had eagerly announced that he would sign, followed by Collins, who remarked that he was signing his own death warrant. Barton and Gavan Duffy, deceived by Lloyd George's bluff, said they would sign under duress. Did none of them realize that they were breaking their oath and disobeying their instructions? With Griffith and Collins it was a matter of an important position in a Free State Government. Duggan would accept anything Collins would accept. There was not a James Craig among the whole lot.

De Valera was down south on a speaking tour and on Monday night of December 5 he spoke in Limerick assuring them that nothing would be accepted that would interfere with the essentials of freedom, and that we were not bluffing, even if it meant a return to war.

On Tuesday morning, December 6, the newspapers carried headlines announcing agreement on the treaty. De Valera hurried back to Dublin. On his way he paid a courtesy call on Bishop Fogarty in Ennis. The Bishop evidently had not heard the news and de Valera did not mention it. The Bishop never forgave him for not doing so. De Valera hurried on to Dublin, thinking that everything was all right and the delegates' demands were agreed to and was surprised that there was no message for him.

On arrival in Dublin, he was met by Austin Stack who could tell him nothing except what was in the newspapers. Éamonn Duggan came quickly in. He had arrived by the Mail Boat. He

handed de Valera a document in an envelope containing the agreement and told de Valera that it was to be published in London and Dublin at eight o'clock as agreed to without reference to the cabinet.

The terms of the agreement were published in the morning papers, accompanied by statements of approval by the English. Some of them did point out that it was a choice between an acceptance and immediate war.

Cathal Brugha, Austin Stack and William Cosgrave met with de Valera. The other members of the cabinet were still in London. De Valera asked for the repudiation of the treaty and removal from the cabinet of those members who signed the agreement. Cosgrave asked him not to take action until they had an opportunity to explain. De Valera foolishly consented to wait. He sent an urgent message to those in London to return at once.

At a meeting in our area of the Third Tipperary Brigade it was decided to send twelve men to meet the boat on which the delegates were returning and to take them prisoners to an unknown destination. They made the mistake however, of calling to Headquarters in Dublin on their way and found themselves taken prisoners until after the safe arrival of the delegates.

Before leaving London, Griffith issued the following statement to the International News Service of America: "These proposals give Ireland control of her own destinies. They put our future in our own hands. In short, we have won liberty after the struggle of centuries." The British government, without receiving any message from Dublin, ordered the release of all political prisoners.

On December 8, 1921, all the members of the cabinet, Gavan Duffy and Childers were present at a meeting which lasted for over five hours. On December 14 the Dáil was called to order by the Ceann Comhairle, Eoin Mac Néill.

After roll call, prayers were said by the Rev Pádraig de Brún. President de Valera then gave a lengthy talk, explaining the whole proceedings. There were many interruptions. He was followed by Michael Collins and a great many other speakers. De Valera said that the treaty was signed in the middle of the night and under duress. As to whether Collins signed under

duress or not, it is hard to understand other than that he did sign under pressure. The pressures on him were, first that of the Irish Republican demands, second to accept the British treaty and third, immediate and terrible war if they did not sign. Would he have voted for the treaty whether the threat was there or not there? Others also stressed the fact that they signed contrary to their instructions. It was also pointed out that their credentials from the Irish Republic were never presented and Lloyd George was clever enough not to ask for them. Most of the delegates spoke at great length and with many interruptions. Griffith defended his agreeing to the terms of the treaty, and said that he did not sign under duress. Barton and Gavan Duffy said they had signed only because of the threat of war. Cosgrave supported Collins and Griffith. Barton felt bound by his signature to vote for the treaty. Strange that he should think there was any honour connected to a signature given under duress. De Valera, Brugha and Stack did everything they could to persuade the others not to recommend it to the Dáil. That evening, de Valera issued a proclamation to the Irish people. "The terms of this agreement are in violent conflict with the wishes of the majority of this nation as expressed freely in successive elections during the past three years." He also said he was calling a Public session of the Dáil and asked the people to maintain strict discipline. Griffith issued his own statement the next day. "I believe the treaty will lay the foundation of peace and friendship between the two nations. The end of the conflict of centuries is at hand." He surely could not have believed it. The British government had not approved or rejected it but no-one had any doubts as to what they would do. De Valera explained that the treaty would not take effect unless ratified by the Dáil and the British government.

Dáil Éireann had assembled again on December 14, 1921. There were some confusing statements, or lack of statements, to be rectified. Dáil Éireann was never mentioned or used in any article of the treaty. To do so would be recognition of it. Dáil Éireann was the government of the Republic but it had no power to disestablish itself and the Republic was never disestablished. Another complication arose concerning the Northern Parliament. There were six Sinn Féin members of

Dáil Éireann elected in the North at the last election but five of them also held seats in the South. Seán O'Mahony, a representative of County Fermanagh only, was the sixth to be elected as a member of Dáil Éireann and was now in a position to foul things up.

Lloyd George, with no regard for legal justice and knowing that he could depend on Griffith and Collins, just ignored complications. It did not take the shoneens[1] and compromisers all around the country long to organize. On the same day that the Dáil met, the *Irish Independent,* a shoneen newspaper, then and still very much so today in 1994, published an article from fifteen of the Hierarchy of the Catholic Church supporting the treaty. The super-patriotic IRB, or those members subject to Collins, decided to vote with him, using the imbecilic phrase "What's good enough for Mick is good enough for me." His henchmen were faithful to him, despite their sacred oath. Arthur Griffith introduced the motion standing on his name: "That Dáil Éireann approves of the treaty between Great Britain and Ireland signed in London on December 6, 1921." Seán Mac Eoin seconded the motion and pointed out that now they would have a fully equipped army to defend the nation. (He was picked for the military job.) It was quite evident that he had not read the treaty. Robert Barton in a short speech said nothing about the treaty but defended the reason why he had to sign it under duress.

Griffith had become very cocky and arrogant. He and his supporters kept injecting Document No 2 into the debates, although it was never presented and had nothing to do with the treaty. Outside of Childers and Mellows, I thought the whole debate was below standard and full of lies and mean remarks. The most contemptible comment was that by Griffith when asked a question by Erskine Childers, which he found difficult to answer. He said "I refuse to answer any Englishman, any damned Englishman." Mellows left no doubt in anyone's mind what we were fighting for and must continue to fight for.

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1 Shoneens: little "John Bulls." Irish people who aspired towards English ways.

Cathal Brugha, Minister for Defence, was among the last to speak. He tried contradicting the false statements made by members during the debate. He said he would not have mentioned them only that they were mostly made by members present. He approached it with great reluctance and would not have dealt with it but for a statement made by Mr. Griffith in his opening remarks. He told us that Michael Collins was the man who won the war. To define Mr. Collins's position in the army it is necessary for me to say that the army was divided into many divisions. One of them was the Headquarters Staff, supervised by the Chief of Staff and divided again into sub-sections. One of these sub-sections was controlled by Collins. Brugha gave great praise to the Headquarters Staff, saying they were the best men we could get for the positions. Each of them, as far as I know, did the work assigned to him conscientiously and patriotically without seeking any publicity, with one exception, Collins. What responsibility Mr Collins had in promoting this false publicity we do not know, but he did nothing to stop it. So the Press continued to depict him as a mystical romantic with army titles he had never had and making it seem as if the IRA depended on one man. It may be true that Collins never fired a shot, as was often said about him, but in fairness to him it must be said that he and others in his position didn't have to unless to resist capture or other emergency. We should remember that it was the IRA man on the column or active duty who fired the shots that would have won the war. It is now over seventy years since that boast was made and the war still has to be won.

Mr. Griffith sneered at those who were late in joining the Republican Movement while it is true that he himself never became a Republican. The debate closed and the betrayers rejoiced, not realizing that in Ireland divided there would be no peace. That is the situation as we have it still today in 1994.

The last statement of the debate was a statement by Richard Mulcahy, Chief of Staff of the IRA, but who voted for the treaty. In answer to a question on a point of information he said: "What I said has not been understood and it has been suggested that I avoided saying what could have been said very simply. It is suggested that I avoided saying the army will continue to be the army of the Irish Republic. If any assurance

is required the army will remain the army of the Irish Republic."

This was a most deceptive manoeuvre on his part. If he didn't succeed in getting the IRA to come under the Free State, then it would give him time to build an army of his own from ex-soldiers and the unemployed and give good positions to any of the IRA who would join.

While the debate was still in progress, Lloyd George and Churchill started moving the RIC, the Black and Tans and the Auxiliaries out of their barracks. This was used as a strong propaganda pitch in favour of the treaty: "See they are moving out already." But the only move by the military was to the Six Counties. De Valera, Collins and many others were trying to arrive at a plan which would placate both sides until something better could be worked out.

There was an election due in June and Collins and de Valera agreed to a pact to be used in the election, to be called the "Pact Election". When Lloyd George and Churchill heard of it they were very angry and said it was a breach of the treaty and called Collins to London. When he arrived back in Cóbh in County Cork, before getting off the boat, he announced that the pact was off and that the election was open to anyone who wanted to contest a constituency.

With the pact broken and the voting register four years out of date, hundreds of young people not listed and the dead not removed from the lists, Griffith and Collins figuring that 95% of those to be added would vote Republican, were determined that the register would not be brought up to date. So we in Tipperary decided to use the names of those dead but still listed. We went from voting booth to voting booth and ended with an amusing incident. The polling booths closed at six o'clock and at five minutes to six, four of us entered the booth to find an argument between a young man and the officials. It seemed that his father had voted earlier and the official gave him the ballot marked junior. Now they refused to give the son the ballot marked senior. During the argument the clock struck six and the presiding officer ordered everyone out. I politely reminded him that we were in before six and entitled to our vote. I also asked who was responsible for giving junior's ballot to his father. This was done and I gave a name I still remember

– John Marshall, dead six months, and resident of the county. The others did likewise. John Dillon, last in line, who used the name of a townsman not long dead, McGrath, received his ballot but the old official at the end said in a loud sonorous voice: "The Lord have mercy on the poor man's soul" and then very demonstrably made the sign of the cross! In later years John and I had many a laugh over the fact that in a good cause, the dead can help in an active way. His family, particularly his son-in-law, Jim Ryan, enjoyed my visits, particularly the reminiscences.

Ireland Divided

Chapter Nine

THE MILITARY EVACUATIONS had begun and Mulcahy, now in control of the Free State Army, had a great advantage as he would be notified about specific evacuations of barracks, and the event would provide propaganda and publicity for them. There would be emotional pictures of the British troops moving out and the Free State troops moving in. Some of the large barracks were retaken by the IRA – Dundalk by Frank Aiken, Birr by the Officers of the 3rd Southern. Kilkenny and most of the barracks in Munster were in IRA control. I found myself in the Birr military Barracks situated on the Offaly side of the border with Tipperary and in the 3rd Southern area. On evacuation it was taken over by Mick McCormack, CO of the 3rd Southern Division who had joined the Free State. The officers who were still faithful took over and sent Mick back to Dublin.

Nothing eventful happened while I was there. On the morning of March 25 the Feast of the Annunciation, at that time a Holy Day of Obligation, I was called to the office where I joined Joe Mangan and Danny Gleeson. We were ordered to select eight men for Republican police work and proceed to Roscrea, then to send the six men who were stationed there back to Birr and try to solve the case of the robbery of a large jewellery store which occurred the night before. The day of the week was Thursday, market day in Roscrea. That, combined with the Holy Day, made sure that everyone for miles around would be in town that day.

After getting settled in, Joe, Danny and myself had a talk as to how we should proceed. Since Roscrea was my family shop-

ping centre they looked to me for an answer. I knew the people would linger about town much later. There was only one real trouble spot, Bunker Hill, an enclave of ex-British army men and their families, where I anticipated there would be drinking, fighting and general rowdyism until a late hour.

Now, said Joe and Danny, what should we plan to do? I jokingly answered: "put a curfew on the town". They, also in a good mood, thought it was a great idea. I said it was silly and tried to back out, but they insisted and a curfew was imposed. Notices were quickly made up and posted in prominent places, the largest on the Market House situated at the southern end of Main Street. Within an hour, everyone knew and talked and joked about the curfew. Joe and Danny were out enjoying the jokes and comments when I got a call to go upstairs. The lads had discovered a bundle of Verey lights left behind by the RIC. I looked in the corner of the room and discovered the launching tube. I explained that when a barracks was attacked the RIC and Tans would launch these. They would ascend quite a distance and explode into the most fantastic colours to summon help from the other barracks. They persuaded me to fire one and foolishly I agreed. I removed the cap, put the bomb into the tube and struck the match but nothing happened so I struck it a few more times without result. I told them it was damp and we could dry it out and let it go at night. Joe and Danny had returned and wanted to know what was going on. I, with the light still in my hand, explained. Joe took it and applied the match. It exploded bringing down the ceiling on our heads and making a furnace of the room. After cleaning up, we turned to making plans for the evening. Curfew had to be enforced, for a threat without enforcement had a bad effect. All the local IRA men working in banks, stores and other occupations were invited to a meeting at 9:00 pm bringing their guns with them. At 10:00 pm every street in the town would be patrolled.

The north of the main street ended by dividing into two streets, one going to Birr and the other to Bunker Hill, with the Joyce Bakery in the centre. At about ten o'clock the fight started in Bunker Hill. I got six lads with rifles and placed them three on either side. I stood in the middle with a dried-out Verey light. When the order was given, everything would go

off high in the air simultaneously. One of the volunteers went to the head of the street and ordered everyone to get indoors but came running back with bottles crashing at his heels. The order was given, steady, aim, fire and the Verey light was ignited with a stream of sparks coming back on my hands. I quickly dropped it and put my foot on the attached stick. Off it went but now at a very low trajectory hitting the rise in the street and then bursting into a fantastic display of colour. It was stopped by the large wooden door entry to Joyce's Bakery, setting it on fire. We grabbed everything that would hold water and rushed to the burning door. I looked down Bunker Hill and there was not a cat or dog on the street. The volunteers returned to patrolling and I, convulsed with laughter, went back to the barracks. It was a glorious moonlight night and everything suddenly became so silent that it was eerie. I took a chair and went out to sit on the sidewalk, impressed by the great silence that enveloped the town.

Then I heard someone running towards me on the Birr road. It was a man speeding down the middle of the road. I gave him the order to halt and he immediately slid to a stop. I asked him where he was going during a curfew on the town. Out of breath he stuttered "For the midwife, sir." I replied "On the double." I hoped that everything would be all right with his wife and thinking nothing else could happen, when the phone started to ring. I picked it up to hear the Rev Mother at the Sacred Heart Convent saying thieves were stealing their hens and chickens. I assured her that we would be there in a minute, blew the whistle and the patrols came running back. I had noticed earlier that there was a bicycle in the hallway. I decided to take it and ride down Limerick Street and arrive at the back of the convent while the patrol would go by the Templemore Road and meet me there. I mounted the bicycle and noticed nothing wrong outside of the mudguards making a terrible clatter. When I entered Limerick Street, which has a very steep decline, the bicycle being a fixed wheel type, took off and knocked my feet off the pedals. I held clear of them and off I went praying that I would not meet anything on the way. I passed Burgoo Bridge safely and resumed control again. I arrived at the back of the convent and everything was quiet with no sign of the thieves. There I was joined by the patrol

and we wondered what our next move would be. Suddenly there was a great croak from behind the wall on the other side of the road and the bags of hens and chickens were returned to the convent. I did not see the sisters because I was sure I guessed who the thieves were and went to see if they were at home.

The men I suspected were two ex-army men not associated with the town or Bunker Hill. Harte and O'Reilly lived by their wits and while not a team, were often seen together. I arrived at Harte's home where he lived with his mother, a very decent old lady. She sensed trouble and started to cry. I told her not to worry, I just wanted to talk to them and to leave the front door on the latch as I would be back again. After a short time I saw them enter and I went up to the front door, raised the latch and entered, to their great surprise. "Where the hell did you come from?" was their first question. I said "Never mind where I came from. I want to know what you did with the hens you took from the convent." Harte said: "I don't know what you are talking about." Just then I saw a couple of small feathers on his jacket. I pointed to them and said: "I am taking these as evidence." O'Reilly, known as "Buffer" laughed and said: "What's the use, Tom, sure he knows." I told them not to worry about the chickens, they were back on the roost and they would have to come up to the barracks with me. They had no objection to doing so. There was only one cell in the barracks. We provided them with mattresses and blankets and locked them in for the night. It was an exciting day and all of us went to sleep quickly.

I was the first to arise in the morning. I came downstairs, knocked on the shutter to the cell, pulled it back to see the two, sitting one at either side of the cell, chatting away without worry. I asked if they had a good night's sleep and they assured me they had. O'Reilly asked me if I had my breakfast. I told him I didn't and he informed me that they were both cooks in the army and they would be happy to get it for me. I thought it a good idea, unlocked the cell and in a short time had a plate of ham and eggs before me. I told them to get the same for themselves and they did. While we were eating they suggested that they would be very glad to do the cooking, cleaning and any other work in exchange for their food and the cell to sleep in. I

thought it a good bargain as there was nothing else we could do with them. They had no money to pay a fine and there was no prison available, Port Laoise being controlled by the Free State.

Joe, Danny and the rest of the force arrived to see myself and the two prisoners enjoying a hearty breakfast. The look of consternation on their faces was amusing. I explained the setup and they were delighted. The general routine was breakfast and then out to Count O'Byrne's estate for drill, games and other exercises. Back then to patrol the town and let our presence be known.

For Joe and myself it didn't last long as we were ordered to Nenagh to look after some patrolling, as there was trouble occurring there. The IRA and the Free State armies both occupied the town. Both had a patrol out every night from 10 pm to 6 am. Sometimes, when they met, arguments arose and on a few occasions, a fight. I took charge of our patrol and intended to go out with it every night for a month. I met with those in charge of the Free State patrol. Two brothers from Port Laoise, Cullen by name, one a captain and the other a lieutenant were in charge of the Free State Patrol. I pointed out that it was unnecessary to have two patrols at the same time and made the following arrangement. The IRA patrol would be on duty from 10 pm to 2 am for a week. The Free State would go from 2am to 6am, changing about every other week. This was agreed to and worked very well.

Now that I had made their acquaintance we also agreed that when the patrol would change we would contact each other at the Post Office, at that time in the centre of the town, to make sure that the town was always protected. There was a friendly greeting and a few idle remarks between myself and either one of the Cullens to which the patrols listened but did not take part. Things continued in this way and the business people were very pleased and said so. The Flapper Race meeting was to take place on June 29, the feast day of St. Peter and St. Paul and the committee asked if we would patrol the event. We told them we would be delighted to do so. However, the Free Staters were not happy with this arrangement and enlisted the Canon's support to have it changed. The Committee was annoyed and came to us for a solution. We told them that if

the Free State wanted to send four men under our command we would agree. To our surprise this was accepted and all went well.

The news from Dublin had not been good. Liam Lynch, getting wise to Mulcahy's deception, returned to the Four Courts. Collins, who was to furnish the guns for an IRA attack on the North, did not do so and was called to London and after threats, returned a subdued man. Leo Henderson, IRA, who was to lead the northern attack, was arrested by the Free State and in retaliation, the IRA arrested J J O'Connell, the Free State General.

Churchill demanded an attack on the Four Courts as its occupation by Republican Forces was a breach of the treaty. The Free State told him they did not have the guns or gunners to attack. Churchill ordered the guns and gunners down from the Six Counties. The Republic was again under siege from British guns and gunners. With a Free State officer, Tom Ennis, supposedly in charge and Emmet Dalton an ex-British officer helping the gunners.

The war with England is resumed. This time it is renegade Irishmen and Irish Clergymen who are doing the murdering. Lloyd George and Churchill are overjoyed. The Four Courts was attacked at four o'clock in the morning of June 28, 1922. Nothing unusual took place in Nenagh. We had meetings at which nothing happened, just waiting for instructions from Dublin when there was no-one to give instructions. I urged that all of Munster should use the element of surprise and become active at once. Nothing happened and with the races on the 29th bigger than ever, the day was a merry one. Back from the races a meeting was held and a decision to attack the Free Staters was arrived at, but the question was: How? They turned to me and said: "You are always full of ideas, what do you say?" I outlined a simple plan and it was accepted.

That night we were to patrol the town from 10 pm to 2 am. I would not take the patrol out until 1.45 am and I would march toward the Post Office. There were also some men hidden on either side of the street. When the Free State patrol arrived we would take them prisoner. The Free State patrol was not long about arriving. I let Fred do the talking, knowing that the subject would be Dublin. He asked what was going on and did

I think it was serious. I answered that it was so serious that he and his patrol were now my prisoners. Fred, calling on the Lord, said I could not do that. I told him to order his men to ground arms and take two paces to the rear, and I asked the men on the side to reveal themselves. Without orders the arms were grounded and the two steps taken. I took Fred's revolver and marched them back to our barracks. The Civil War had started in Munster.

The IRA had taken up strategic positions in the town and before very long the Free Staters were attacking the town. I was alone in the barracks with the prisoners who were locked in a very large room and supplied with cigarettes, bread and milk. There were two casualties, a Captain Burns, an ex-soldier from Port Laoise and Mrs O'Meara of O'Meara's Hotel. In the evening those occupying positions were called in and told that all barracks had to be vacated as we did not have the means to defend them. It was back to guerrilla warfare again. After planning where we would billet for the night those of us on active duty left Nenagh.

That night I stayed with some of the officers at a Mr. Toler's place. He was a direct descendent of the infamous Judge Toler. Our work from then on consisted of preventing the Free State Army and supplies reaching Limerick, by blocking roads and blowing up railroads and by ambushes. An unusual incident occurred at Birdhill, a village between Nenagh and Limerick. It was decided to blow up the bridge going over the railroad. A large explosive was placed under the keystone with the battery placed in an adjacent grove. The button was pushed but without result. The wires were examined and the button pushed again without an explosion. It was decided that the battery was dead and some moss was thrown over the battery and we sent out for one to replace it. While waiting, the officers decided to leave the guards in place and went for a cup of tea. I did not accompany them as I had noticed the largest wild strawberries on the sloping banks of the railroad and decided to have a feast. I noticed a man entering the grove and thought it was one of the Volunteers. Then there was a terrific explosion and I saw the keystone sailing up to the clouds. I rolled, tumbled and scrambled out of the way. The man in the grove needed to urinate and decided the moss was a suitable place.

The bridge was destroyed, a lesson was learned and everyone was happy that no-one was hurt.

The Free State supply convoys did not use the direct routes except when it was dark. Sometimes we attacked them in the darkness. They did not stop, just sped away. It was just a scare tactic since we were never sure of the route they would take. We would sometimes set up two ambushes. I remember such an occasion when we lay along a field of ripening barley. There was quite a wind making a rolling motion on the golden grain. I brought it to the attention of the young lad alongside of me and he, the possessor of a beautiful singing voice, crooned a verse of 'The wind that Shakes the Barley'. It was one of the few times I felt bitterness in my heart at those who betrayed us and were now paying British mercenaries and Irish renegades to murder us who refused to betray the Republic.

It was now November and the weather had a decidedly cold nip, when I was asked to do some special work which meant I went off active duty. The following night I stayed at a reliable republican house. I must have been seen and informed on, for the next morning I was awakened by the good woman of the house to tell me that there were Free State soldiers on the road, in view of the house, which was about a quarter of a mile off the road. I pulled on my pants and boots but did not bother tying them and joined her young son who was doing lookout. The soldiers were sitting on the wall alongside of the road and after a short time they got up, formed ranks and marched away. Breakfast was waiting, so I did not tie my boots or do any further dressing, and I sat down to breakfast. I was enjoying it and chatting with the woman when the lad rushed in saying the house was surrounded.

There was a fair sized wood at the back of the house. Using this as a shelter, they surprised the lad and were in the front yard. I dashed for the room to get my gun and realized that I had given my Webley in exchange for a small gun called a Bulldog, knowing that I could get another Webley. The Bulldog was known to be unreliable. I grabbed it, and removed the table with the basin and ewer from in front of the window. The window, a steel framed one with diamond panes, opened out in the bottom and on top on hinges set in the middle. I saw no soldiers as I tried to dive out and make a run for the wood. As I

was climbing through however, my boots being untied, became entangled in the window frame and I was left hanging there. As I dangled there, a Free State Captain came out of the shade of a big oak tree. I braced myself against the wall and fired at him only to hear the gun go click. The Captain stepped behind the big oak. For a second I thought of God, but it was not with a prayer that I dumped the gun into a thicket of flowers and backed into the room wondering why the Captain didn't shoot me.

I stepped into the kitchen full of soldiers in time to see the woman of the house knock a soldier to the floor with a hefty blow from a small rifle that I used to train recruits with during the Tan war which had been hanging over the fireplace. When the Truce was proclaimed, I had presented it to her as a souvenir and she had placed it over the mantelpiece where the soldier saw and removed it. I explained to the officer and asked him to leave it with the woman. He did. I stepped into the yard to be accosted by a Lieutenant who became very aggressive, poking me over the heart with his revolver and telling me he would blow it out of me, and I telling him he did not have the guts to do so. The officer in charge stopped him and was asking the usual questions when the Captain I tried to shoot came up and one of the soldiers came running with the revolver I had hidden. Seeing the open window he thought someone had escaped and was examining it when he stepped on the revolver. The officer in charge asked me if it was mine and pointed to the clay adhering to it saying it must have been there a long time. He then pointed it at a nearby tree and bang, off it went. He unloaded it and handed it to a soldier to bring along. All of this time my heart must have been beating a little faster as it was November 11, the month after the act to execute anyone who had been caught with a gun had become law. I was waiting for the Captain I had tried to shoot to speak. He never did and I owe my life to him. I later learned from one of the men who had joined me in prison, that he was a Cork man who had been very active during the Tan War and that he resigned from the Free State army the following week.

Murder by the Free State

Chapter Ten

IT IS A PITY THAT THERE ARE many people in Ireland who still do not know how the Free State Government adopted tactics even more ruthless and dishonourable than those of the British in 1916.

Having been captured, I was taken over to the Castle and Damer House, Roscrea, a historic Palladian building in the castle enclosure. I was put into a makeshift cell by putting dividers in a large room. While I was there, Pat McDonald, the Brigadier, was placed in another division. I didn't know who it was and didn't try to find out. After a short time he had a visitor and I soon learned his identity. Jack Collison, the old column leader and now a Major in the Free State army, was the visitor. Their greeting was friendly. Jack was trying to get Pat to take a commission in the army, telling him the IRA had no chance of victory. They might have men but no barracks and no arms and would all end up in prison. Pat said it was a matter of principle, a terrible thing to know that Irishmen were shooting Irishmen who preferred to remain faithful to the Republican ideal. Jack pointed out that it would be over in a short time and there would be no jobs available for anyone in the IRA. Jack swore to heaven that he would never shoot or abuse anyone. "I am taking the long view and maybe we will be fighting England together again," he said. Pat said: "It is a pleasant thought" and they shook hands. Not long after, Jack and Austin McCurtain were killed near Port Laoise. May they rest in peace.

The following morning I was moved to Templemore Military Barracks where there were about seventy prisoners housed in



Sitting, left to right, Tomás Mac Curtáin, Cork; Gerald O'Reilly; Tom Falvey. Standing, left to right, George Harrison; Mrs. May Mac Curtáin; Michael Flannery. Tomás and May Mac Curtáin were visiting their daughter in the US in the 1980s.



Michael with students at Richfield High School, New Jersey, who invited him to speak to them.



Michael Flannery, George Harrison and John Snee, both from Co. Mayo.



Michael Flannery in the Cross, Co. Mayo home of the late Comdt General Tom Maguire in September 1989.
(seated) Ruairí Ó Brádaigh, General Maguire, Michael Flannery.
(standing) Frank Glynn, Bob Murray, Nollaig Ó Gadhra, Dr Seán Maguire.

the gymnasium. Among the prisoners were Tom Lawless, Bluebell, Offaly, Lar Langton also Offaly, Tom and Pat Russell and Ned O'Shea, Borrisoleigh. Pat, and Ned's brother Martin, along with Fred Burke and Pat McNamara, were executed in Roscrea on January 13, 1923 for being in possession of arms as soldiers of the Republic should be. They were executed contrary to international law and contrary to Christian law. They were blessed because of it.

I was not there very long when I was removed to Port Laoise and after a very short stay I joined four Kerrymen on our way to Dublin in a Crossley Tender. It was dark when we reached Dublin. I distinctly heard the order to halt. We didn't, and a shower of bullets flew over our heads. They halted quickly and we were treated to a war of cursing and swearing. Owing to the lateness of the hour we were taken to Oriel House where we slept on the floor. To Mountjoy the next day and into C Wing. I did not have a haircut in ages and when I was taken before the Governor he asked my escort if there was a barber convenient and was told that there was one in the civil wing. He told him to take care of it. The only time it could be done was when the barber got to exercise.

I was taken to a grassy patch between the wings of the prison with a chair to sit on. Then a soldier, a warden and a small man carrying a horse clippers in his hand approached. I said: "Surely you are not going to cut my hair with that thing?" and he replied that it was the only thing they had. He pulled my hair apart saying: "there are no vermin, but since there are plenty of them here my advice is to cut it clean off." He started at the bottom of my right ear and cut, pulled and dragged a swath ending over my left ear. He then stopped and asked if I was an IRA man. I nodded and he began to tell me of how he killed a Black and Tan. He had a barber shop in Dundalk or Drogheda, I don't remember which. One day, a drunk Black and Tan came in for a haircut which he gave him. As he finished, the Tan asked him if he expected to get paid and he said yes, four pence. The Tan took his revolver out of its holster and said: "Your payment is in here." The barber, Peter Hynes by name, asked if he needed a shave, the answer was no. The barber looked around, saw a poker hanging in the fireplace, took it and with all the strength he possessed sunk it into the

Tan's skull. He hid the revolver and rolled him under the bed. Although a search was made and some arrests without results were made, it was only when the body started to decompose and a strange stench from the barber's shop was noticed, that the body was discovered. While telling me this story he ceased to do any hair cutting. I did not worry as I thought he would be allowed to finish the job, but when the hour ended he, despite my protest, was taken back to his cell and I was told that tomorrow was another day.

Early the next morning I was taken back to Oriel House and from there to Green Street Court where I would be criminally charged with the destruction of railroads in Tipperary. I was horrified to think of the weird haircut which gave such fun to my fellow prisoners being presented in court. I kept my hat on while waiting with two CID men on the stairway to be called. When called, one of them removed my hat and handed it to me. I promptly put it on despite the Judge's order for the prisoner to remove his hat. I was standing alone in a corridor leading to a most intimidating elevated crow's nest of a witness stand. The Judge, O'Shaughnessy, bellowed for the prisoner to remove his hat. I turned to him and said: "How dare you call me a prisoner. I am a soldier of the Irish Republican Army." The Judge, now very angry, kept shouting for me to remove my hat and I was telling him about the patriots who had been tried here before, when an overweight Dublin police officer approached me. I had not noticed until then that there was a depression in the floor of the corridor. You took one step down, then a short step and a step up on the other side. The officer took the step down and up and stood beside me and made a motion indicating that he was going to forcibly remove my hat. I instinctively threw up my left arm to protect my head. I hit him hard above his elbow, knocked him off balance and he fell backward into the depression and could not get up. I turned quickly and grabbed the top of the rails as if I was going to jump over and attack the Judge. The reporters all ducked and the Judge brought down his gavel and said: "court adjourned" and disappeared through the door at his back.

That was my last appearance in Court. I was taken downstairs to the street and put into a vehicle bound for Mountjoy. Before starting on our journey a policeman whom I had seen in

Court handed a bottle of Powers Whiskey to the man in charge, saying "give him that", and as I entered Mountjoy, he handed it to me. Being a pioneer I didn't know what to do with it but I kept it anyway. When I got to the reception desk there were six or seven fellows waiting there, among them my brother Peter, my brother-in-law, Pat Doorley, and two other fellows from the 7th Battalion, Bernard Ryan and Pat Landy. They were delighted to see me. I handed the bottle to my brother and he opened it and between them and the others whom I didn't know, they emptied the bottle. The soldiers only made a slight effort to stop them. We were assigned to 'C' wing. The OC was Andy Cooney from Nenagh and Dublin. We were delighted to see him and he laughingly welcomed us. The wing was over-crowded, mostly with prisoners from the Four Courts. We had to bunk three or four to a cell, built to accommodate one. Andy told me there was a tunnel being dug from within and without and was near completion. I was back again with my Kerry friends, Tom Daly whose brother Charlie was later executed at Dromboe Castle, Co Donegal.

We were there only a short time when the tunnel was completed, but that same day five of us were removed to the basement to do solitary confinement. We were placed in alternate cells, obviously to prevent any communication, which was silly as there was a pipe along the back of the cells on which you could tap out messages. The large stone flags in the floor were quite wet with dampness. There was no mattress, and the blanket lay crumpled in a corner and was soaking wet. The remains of a decomposing meal were in the other corner.

I planned to sleep under the large window, hoping that my rain coat was damp proof. My shoes with my hat on top, would be my pillow. I noticed a gas pipe over the entrance door, but paid no attention to it. It was December, 1922, and the days were short. I thought that I would sit or lie on the floor as there was no seat, when suddenly gas began pouring into the cell. I had my shoes off so I took one and stooped under the window and started knocking out the bottom row of diamond panes. I thought they were trying to suffocate me and that I would survive by breathing the fresh air. Just as I struck the last pane in the row a machine gun blew the remainder down on my head. The locks and bolts were opened and an officer asked:

"what's going on here?" I told him not to light a match unless he wanted to be blown up and pointed to the gas pipe. He ordered a soldier to have the gas turned off and asked what happened to the window. I told him some windy soldier saw my shadow and tried to get me and added: "I am a soldier of the IRA. If you want to kill me take me out and shoot me like a soldier." He apologized, saying it was an accident and told a soldier to have the sentry removed. They left but now I had the added discomfort of the freezing cold. I did the only thing I could do. I lay down to sleep. Not for long, as a tap, tap, tapping on the window made me arise to see what it was. I put my hand through the empty pane and caught a dangling cord with a piece of iron and a note attached. I took them off with the aid of a match and a short piece of pencil which I carried in the hem of my trousers. The note said "Tunnel finished. Will go about twelve. Will come up in your cell for air."

I knew the tunnel ran under the cell I was in but I had not figured on their having to come up for air. I lay down again but did not sleep. I heard the clocks strike out the hour and finally the boom, boom of twelve o'clock. I watched to see the big stone flags move but they did not. One o'clock and nothing moved. I prayed that nothing went wrong, maybe they used another cell, but there was no voice. Two o'clock and I was getting nervous. Then a mighty racket out in the vestibule and the cell door on my right being opened and a prisoner put in there. The same procedure in the first cell. The prisoner was asked who his leader was and the names of all those building the tunnel. He refused to answer any questions and they started to beat him. He cried for mercy which I thought was a weakness and I prayed that he would pass out quickly but he didn't and I figured they were going to kill him. They threw him heavily to the floor and his "Oh God, Oh God" became very faint and he passed out. Then into the other cell. This man told them to go to hell in strong language and started to fight. I thought the wall between our cells would come crashing in but eventually they subdued him. I didn't sleep and very early I was told by a sergeant to get up. I heard him tell my friends to do likewise. When we came out we saw the two beaten up prisoners on two long tables with four doctors, two at each table. We walked over. No one prevented us. We saw

the doctors stitching and trying to patch up their horribly abused faces and bodies. It was a terrible sight.

One of the men had a deep cut from over his left eye down through the eye and nose. The doctor had his eye resting on his cheek trying to get rid of the blood.

The deputy governor came down to see what was being done. When he saw us he flew into a rage and blasted the cockney sergeant in and out of hell. He was supposed to have gotten us out of there without seeing the two abused prisoners. The sergeant took us up to the compound and marched us around and around. At first we did not mind as we were looking for a means to escape. Not finding one, we told him to take us to some office and find out what to do with us. After much argument the officers decided that in order to keep us in solitary confinement, the only place they could put us was in an unused part of the women's prison and there we were taken. We were taken to the top floor.

The soldiers left and we were handed over to uniformed warders who put us in cells that seemed not to have been used for years. The wooden beds were still in them. I was put in the end cell and in locking me in, the warden told me his name was O'Brien from Waterford and that he would be retiring in six months. He had no use for the Free State, and was just hanging on until retirement. He also said if he could help by bringing in newspapers he would. I thanked him and said nothing, as I was wary that he was too friendly.

By standing on the wooden bed we could see from the small window the women prisoners away at the other end of the prison exercising. Madame Gonne MacBride, Máire Comerford and Sheila Humphreys were among them, women who had taken part in 1916. Monsignor Pádraig de Brún was in between on a path all on his own.

On December 8, 1922, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, we were taken to an early Mass. On our way back I noticed that O'Brien was sad and worried looking and asked him if there was anything wrong. He said: "Yes, they are shooting four of your fellows this morning."

I asked him if he knew where they were from, and if he knew their names. He said from C wing Rory O'Connor, Liam Mellows, Dick Barrett and Joe McKelvey. Tom Daly said: "My

God, they were all captured in the Four Courts. This is murder."

We all agreed. I asked if they were going to shoot all who were captured in the Four Courts and O'Brien said no, just one from each province. I asked who represented Connacht and he said Mellows. Tom Daly said: "I know that Mellows fought in Galway in 1916 but he is not a Connacht man." We concluded they wanted to get rid of him. He was young and uncompromising. When we reached my cell O'Brien also entered, stepped up on the wooden bed and motioned me to do the same. Looking through the small window he pointed to a high wall and said:

"They are going to be shot behind that wall."

He left, locked the door but I in a trance, stood looking out the window. The ladies were exercising and Monsignor de Brún was walking his path reading his breviary. The shots rang out and the dust arose from the wall. I went cold and prayed God to receive their souls. The ladies, oblivious to what was going on, kept marching. The Monsignor closed his breviary and hurried inside. I am sure it was then that he wrote that beautiful poem "Mary Immaculate guide them home."

I listened for the mandatory *coup de grace*, a bullet behind the ear, but only one shot was heard. After a few seconds I heard the other shots. I was curious about the single shot and asked O'Brien when I saw him. He told me that the main volley knocked Mellows to the ground but was not fatal. Liam jumped up and the captain in charge ordered the firing party to shoot him. They had only one round in their rifles, and they could not, so the captain had to shoot him.[1]

The warden, O'Brien, was the only source of my information. I have never seen it in print. O'Brien was worried since we were the only ones isolated up there that we might share their fate. We did not worry. The following morning, soldiers took over from the warden and took us downstairs. We were surprised to see six soldiers in two lines with fixed bayonets.

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1 Other accounts suggest that this happened in the case of Joe McKelvey.

We were placed between the two lines and marched toward the wall. Tom Daly said:

"It looks like we might be saying hello to God."

We all smiled, I think the soldiers smiled also. We did not slacken pace as we passed the blood-stained wall and in a few minutes we were being welcomed back to C wing where we joined in the crushing sorrow. Séamus Conaty gave me a little piece of a shirt belonging to Liam. It is still in my possession.

We settled in quickly and on the release of one of the daily orderlies I was given his job. There was an orderly for each day of the week. The soldiers brought the food for each meal to the gates, unlocked the gates and the orderly and his team took it in and divided it, giving each prisoner an equal share. He also received all visitors, and new prisoners, some of whom needed special attention, such as Count Plunkett, who was old, and had a nap every afternoon and so he needed a cell by himself.

I did everything I could to make him comfortable. He never complained, and looked like a patriarch of old. Rough talk seemed to cease then, and everyone seemed to give more thought to the struggle. Later, the Count was joined by his two sons, Eoin and George. George married Mary McCarthy and was later killed in an accident. Eoin never enjoyed robust health, but he had a good span of life and even endured a hunger-strike of 56 days in 1940.

Early one morning the whistle was blown and I went to the gate to see what the early call was about. There was a group of well dressed men outside and their leader was in evening dress. The gate was opened, and I was introduced to Mr. Art O'Brien with a group of prisoners from London who had been arrested and brought over on the night boat. They were tired, but quite jovial. Our OC, Andy Cooney, greeted Art O'Brien who was a leader in London, with "You must be the first to come to prison in evening clothes." Art was arrested while presiding over a formal dinner in London. The others were arrested either at their businesses or in their homes. We had a lot of shuffling to do in order to place them in cells where they would be close to each other. They brought excitement and fun to C wing. We had concerts, as there were some fine singers and one professional singer who had been performing at the dinner. Art O'Brien gave talks and lectures. The food was their

only complaint.

After about a month, I was called to the gate and told to get them together as they were being released. They were overjoyed, and while we were going to miss them, we were happy for them. There were hearty farewells and Art O'Brien left in street clothes which he had sent over. Back in London, Art, who was a prominent lawyer, sued the government and the Minister of Home Affairs for deporting them. To arrest them was all right but they had no right to deport them. They were all heavily compensated.

Things were back to normal now, which meant constant agitation between the soldiers and the prisoners. There was not a pane of glass left in the windows at the end of the wing. The only source of light from outside was the window running along the top of the roof.

Each evening we filed in, and formed four rows in the large vestibule and the Deputy Governor, escorted by two officers, would inspect and count us. One evening he came in as drunk as a lord. I was on the last file, with the blank file behind me. Assisted by the officers, he reached the end of the formation and demanded of me: "Where is the man who should be there?" pointing to the blank file. Taken by surprise, I answered: "You haven't caught him yet, Paudeen." Only his friends were allowed to call him Paudeen. He took out his revolver and pointed it at my stomach and said: "I'll let you know." Andy Cooney told him to put that gun away saying: "You never fired a shot in your life!" Paudeen O'Keeffe turned to Andy and in doing so fell on his two knees. The gun went off, and the bullet hit the heavy glass running along the roof and a large piece of glass hit the flag stones with a loud bang about twenty feet away. The officers picked him up and rushed him out of the wing. Andy turned to me, laughed and said: "You would raise a row in Heaven."

One day we could hear a lot of shouting outside in the city streets, and one of the prisoners called down to the soldiers outside the gates to find out how we were doing out there. This brought a fusillade of fire through the wing and everybody rushed for a cell, his own or the nearest one to him. When we were all in cells we were locked in. We soon had a plan to offset this. We got something hard to place behind the door and we

got a couple of fellows to strain the heavy door so it could not be locked. It worked and not a door could be locked after that in C wing. We slept on a mattress on the floor with one army blanket.

I was on the first floor, and the dampness from the basement made it necessary to raise the mattress each morning and place it along the wall to dry out as the shape of our bodies were outlined in dampness on the floor. There was an oat grain in my mattress and it started to grow and one day it burst into a head. The other prisoners all came to look at it and admire it. I don't remember what started it, but suddenly the place was full of soldiers and they threw out all of our mattresses and blankets, my beautiful stalk of oats with them. While the guards were working on the first floor, the prisoners on the second and third tiers pulled down the fences that kept the prisoners from jumping over and threw them down to the first floor. Finally, we were all put back into our cells, with the doors that couldn't be locked, and we were warned that if we came out again we would be shot.

We lay on the floor and when things quietened down I peeked out. The mattresses and blankets were piled so high I could not see the gates. I searched about for two of the cleanest and least vermin infested blankets I could find and brought them into my cell. My partner, an older man, wanted to know what I was doing. I told him my plan. I would roll up in the blankets and sleep until two o'clock while he kept watch. He would then awaken me and I would watch while he slept for the rest of the night. He thought it was a good idea and I went to sleep. I slept so soundly I couldn't believe it was two o'clock. I surrendered the blankets and he was soon asleep. I sat there for a few minutes. It was really very quiet, so I secured two more blankets and joined my partner in the blessedness of sleep. I figured I would be awake before him. I wasn't and he was angry with me. "You are some soldier," he said, "we could have been put into solitary if they had come by." I told him that we would keep the blankets, and each of us would sleep the whole night through. I tried to get a couple of mattresses but they were at the bottom of the heap with the fence and everything on top. I did, however, secure some lengths of piping for which I later found a use.

In a few days things were back to normal. Our principal meal was at mid-day and it consisted of some sort of stew. It wasn't bad except for the fact that the meat was so tough it was difficult to masticate.

The gas in the pipe over our door could be turned on and off. We took the aluminum pipe, bent it to suit our purpose and with a piece of wire fence we made a crude grill. We put the two dinners into a two quart can and re-cooked the whole mixture making it quite edible. The delicious aroma was aggravating the other prisoners' hunger..

Although a pioneer, I still had the privilege of drinking a thimble of poteen while in C wing. Some prisoners from the Galway Gaeltacht had taken some of the aluminum pipes and, taking a cue from our setup, got their relatives to send in large cakes of mash labelled as oat bread. The worm was made from the pipes and with the gas, they were in the distilling business. Monotony didn't exist in C wing, but peace was short lived too. War broke out again, resulting in our going on hunger strike. For the first two or three days, they brought the food to the gates but it wasn't taken in. We in C wing were the only ones on hunger strike. After a couple of weeks they decided to break up the strike by transferring us out of Dublin to a new addition recently added to the Tintown Camps known as Tintown number three. (These camps were in the Curragh, Co. Kildare, and were numbered one, two, three etc.) The march from Mountjoy to the railroad station received some publicity, and General Headquarters decided to put all camps and prisoners on strike. We were advised to stay in bed and to drink plenty of hot water with salt in it. Our only pastime was talking and some singing.

After some days in bed, I developed terrible pain in my hip bones. We had six doctors as fellow prisoners, and they came to me and said I had bed sores. I protested. I had no sores or abrasions on my skin but the pain was quite deep. They insisted I had bed sores and that I would have to get out of bed every day and sit around. I secured a couple of orange crates and with a set of chess, went from bed to bed playing chess. Because of this I was able to sleep. We were housed in huts that had been used for housing mules during the first World War. There was an iron stove in each hut, so we were able to heat

water, using the wood in the hut for fuel.

All the rats in Ireland seem to have assembled there to eat the carcasses. On rainy days when the empty spaces filled up with water, they were forced to the surface and chasing them with stones became the sport of the prisoners. At night they used to invade the huts, picking up the canned meat and fish we were served. There was a plague of vermin in the beds and it was rumoured that the canned food was the cause. Many of the prisoners refused to eat the canned food and saved it for a protest.

Someone with a busy mind, cut a small hole in all the cans just big enough for a rat to push his head through but not big enough for him to get out. That night everyone was awakened by a terrible noise of cans bumping against each other and against everything that was in their way. The night sentry came to see what was happening and flashing his torch light over the floor, all he could see were cans moving in all directions to the accompaniment of bangs and squeals. He swore a mighty oath and let his terrier dog off the leash. The slaughter was loud and fierce and the rat population was greatly reduced.

The strike was officially called off, and we wondered what we were going to get to eat. We didn't have long to wait. Trucks loaded with unwrapped loaves of bread arrived and were unloaded onto the muddy compound. Everyone grabbed a loaf as I did. I returned to the hut, and got some water and started to eat. Very soon there were cries of pain from everyone. The doctors set up an emergency relief table near the lavatories. I felt all right, and was looking at the others suffering. Later I had a terrible pain and felt sick all over too. The doctors in prison with us noted that I was running a fever and they called in the army doctor. They decided that I had stomach poisoning. I thought that I was going to die, but I pulled through with nothing worse than the loss of an enzyme or two, and this has been a problem all my life. I use hydrochloric acid to compensate for them.

I felt that this illness was due to eating the contaminated bread that was brought in to us after coming off the hunger strike. After forty days on hunger strike, a gruel would be the appropriate food. However the loaves of bread which were carelessly thrown about in the dirt easily helped to infect a

delicate and empty stomach.

Around Christmas of 1923, a large number of prisoners were released and number three camp was closed. Those of us who remained were moved to number two camp. Then number two was closed and we were moved to number one. I was lucky. Major David Robinson was among those kept there. He was an avid chess player and it's many a game we enjoyed. The Major had his life in the British Army, and upon retirement he came to Ireland to visit his cousins, Robert Barton and Erskine Childers. The civil war was in full swing, and he was in Barton's home with Childers on the morning that Childers was arrested. Childers was later executed in a vengeful way. The Major was imprisoned.

On May Day 1924, I was walking the compound with Éamonn Donnelly and Major Robinson, when a soldier came calling for prisoner number 886. No one answered and the soldier left. In less than an hour he was back again still shouting the same number. Éamonn asked me what my number was and I told him I didn't know I had one. He called over the soldier and asked him had he a name and he answered "Yes, Flannery".

We were all happy. I was given a pass and taken to the railroad station where I joined Pat McDonald, a cousin of the Brigadier of the same name. He was released from Hare Park camp. We exchanged our experiences until I got off at Roscrea where one of the Volunteers, now operating a taxi, picked me up and delivered me home. A welcome home party had been organized and I was back in business.

There was a meeting of all the Tipperary brigades and it was decided to concentrate on re-organizing those who had now reached their late teens to replace those who had to emigrate. A great number of Republicans were forced to emigrate.

We had great success as a reaction to the executions of Republican Prisoners by the Free State. The people became angry and more sympathetic, and we were well received. An order came from Headquarters ordering all Garda barracks to be raided on the same night and all papers, books and reports to be taken. No arms were to be taken and abuse was to be avoided. The raids were very successfully carried out with one or two exceptions. Those doing the raiding were from other

counties, as a precaution against identification. One of the exceptions occurred in Rossmore, Co. Tipperary, which was in Ned O'Reilly's territory. After collecting all the books and papers, the raiders were leaving when their leader from Cork looked back to see a garda about to shoot. The leader, gun still in hand, turned quickly and fatally shot the garda. The Press was loud in its condemnation, and the Gardaí began talking about O'Reilly, who for a long time was a wanted man and on his keeping.

Patrick Ryan-Lacken, an elected member of the Dáil, and who was also on his keeping, was walking on a mountain road one dark and misty night when a car approached him. Walking fast with his head lowered, he failed to see the car lights until he rounded a bend and was face to face with the car now stopped. He drew his gun and approached the car with its lone passenger whom he recognized as a Superintendent of the Garda, with Rossmore under his control. Ryan took his gun and sat in beside him telling him to drive to "The Thatch", a halfway public house in farming country. The daughter of the house answered their knocking. He went to the kitchen and told her to give whiskey to the Super and something that looked like it to himself. Ryan asked what he was doing on those roads at that time of night. He told him he was out earlier trying to get information on him. He visited a friend and stayed later than he intended.

After a few drinks and the fire starting to revive, the Super became mellow and talkative. When Ryan asked him about O'Reilly and what all the talk about him being guilty was about. "You know O'Reilly wasn't in Rossmore that night," Ryan said. The Super boasted that they knew he wasn't in Rossmore that night but they had found out that the barracks he raided was in Cork. That night Ryan asked what was behind all the propaganda and the super told him that the government was out to get O'Reilly.

He would be executed. Nothing would save him once he was captured. Eventually, O'Reilly was captured and brought to trial in Dublin. Ryan told of his talk with the Super and, still on his keeping, he volunteered as a witness. The trial opened in Dublin and witness after witness for the Government, swore that O'Reilly was guilty. Finally, the Super was called. He was

sworn in and proceeded to tell how O'Reilly was identified as the man who shot the garda. O'Reilly's lawyer told the judge that he had a witness who was on his keeping, and avoiding arrest, and would the judge give him permission to leave the court without interference by the government if he testified. Permission was granted and Ryan, discarding his disguise, stepped forward. When confronted with the evidence the Super refused to answer. The judge became angry, scolded the government and dismissed the case. Another murder by the Free State Government was thwarted.

In 1925 a bye-election took place in the Offaly-Laois constituency. The candidates were Art O'Connor, Kildare Sinn Féin, a veteran of the 1916 Easter Rising and William O'Dwyer, Cumann na nGaedheal, a lawyer from Roscrea. O'Connor, a friend of mine, asked me to canvass for him and I was delighted to do so. At a meeting attended by workers from both counties, Lar Brady from Laois stated that if Offaly did well, Laois would elect him. We concentrated on Offaly, and left Laois to Brady who was an elected Sinn Féin TD. I insisted that de Valera come down each Sunday to speak in Offaly and was surprised that there was any doubt that he would do it. He did come.

On the evening of the election, we were assembled at a hotel in Birr, County Offaly. De Valera, O'Connor and a great many others were there. Finally, the results for Offaly were tabulated and O'Connor won by a small number of votes. Remembering the predictions of the Laois men, we were sure of victory and overjoyed. After a short time, the Laois vote came in and they lost by a larger number than we had won by. The disappointment was overwhelming and the crowd drifted away leaving de Valera, O'Connor and me in the room. O'Connor turned to me and said: "Thanks Mick, and thanks to Offaly, the first county to redeem its Republican faith." He continued: "Mick, you and I will work together again but we won't have the Chief with us." De Valera hit the table with his fist saying: "Don't say that Art, don't believe him Mick." Art replied: "Everyone knows that you want to go into the Free State with Lemass." De Valera said: "That will be decided at the Ard-Fheis."

"If defeated at the Ard-Fheis that will be the end of the matter." (Fianna Fáil, the Party being set up to enter the Free

State Dáil.) It was defeated, but Lemass and de Valera went ahead with organizing Fianna Fáil, and under its banner contested the general election of June, 1927 where they won 44 seats to 47 seats gained by Cumann na nGaedheal. This was a great surprise and tantamount to defeat for Fine Gael. For Fianna Fáil, the oath was the big stumbling block and we wondered what they would do. They talked about it being only an empty formula, but found they had to take it.

With Fianna Fáil now in a strong position in the Dáil and with de Valera and his followers still swearing that they had not lost the faith and would do everything in their power to establish the Republic, it was felt that they would be able to take over the Dáil at the next election. It was decided by the members of the Second Dáil, which had never been dissolved and leaders of the IRA to cease military action unless in defence of life or other emergency. It was decided to concentrate on building up the movement in numbers and finances and to strengthen communications with Clan na Gael in America and our friends in England and Australia.

At a meeting in Thurles on October 3, 1926 where the third game for the Munster hurling final was being played, it was decided to send representatives to America, England and Australia to organize the thousands who were forced to leave after the Civil War. Paddy Ryan, Ned O'Reilly and I were to go to America.

To America

Chapter Eleven

AT THAT TIME YOU HAD TO GO to the provincial capital for your visa. I went and had no trouble, medical or otherwise. I booked my passage in Roscrea and I was ready to leave when I got a letter from the American Consul telling me I was not a fit subject to enter America. I got in touch with Headquarters and told them about it. They told me to go to Dublin as they might be able to do something. I did and was taken to see the Consul, Mr. Sterling. He was a very nice man and suggested that I enter the USA as a clerical student but I foolishly refused to do so. My excuse was that I didn't want to enter any country by way of deception. After further conversation, he told me he would have to recognize the fact that I was stopped. He would give me a letter giving me permission to enter as a partial refugee. The letter was written and put in an envelope sealed with the seal of the USA. He handed the letter to me and said: "Young man if that seal is interfered with you will come back on the same boat as you left on." I asked him if it prevented my becoming a citizen and he said: "If you follow my instructions and all goes well after six years you can make an application." His instructions were to keep entirely away from the Irish, to get a job and keep a clean nose! To which I replied "Yes sir."

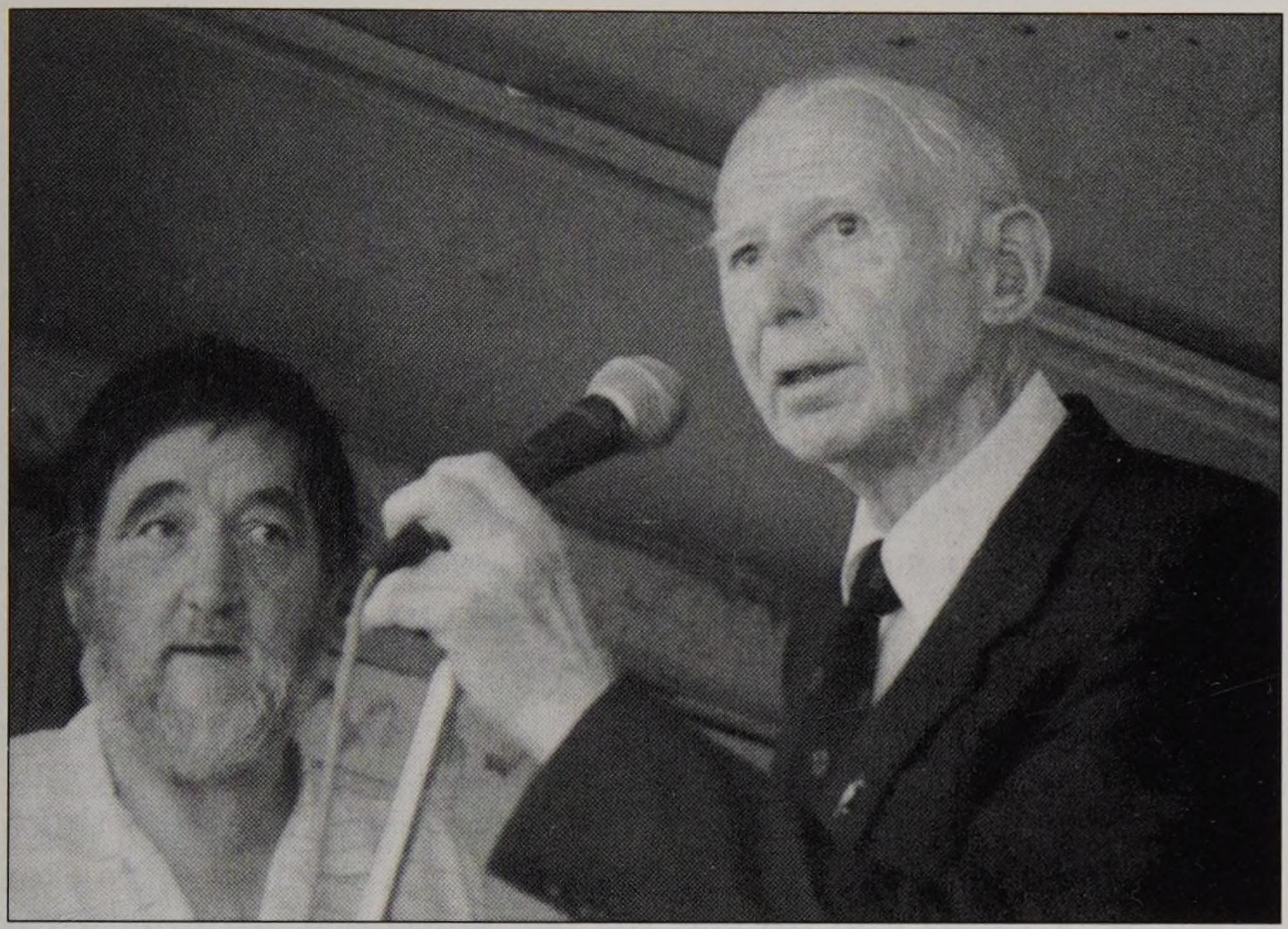
With these delays it was now close to the end of the year and my mother insisted that I would have to spend the holidays at home. I was glad I did. Finally, on February 5, 1927 I sailed from Cóbh. I boarded ship and we set sail. There were still a lot of young people travelling. The first day they were all merry and singing. I thought it was to hide their loneliness.



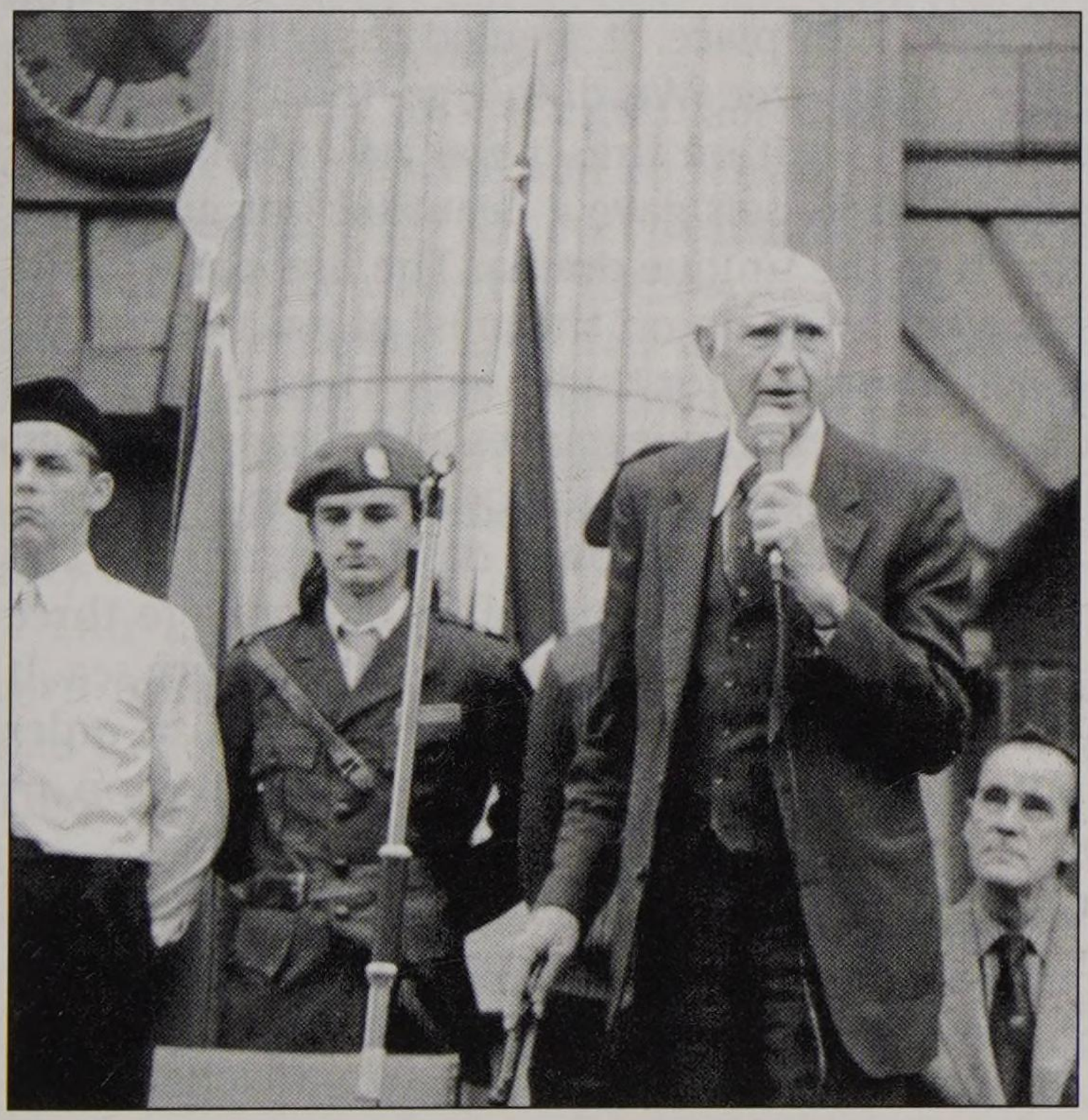
Michael as Grand Marshal of the New York St. Patrick's Day Parade in 1983. Bottom right: Michael's wife Pearl.



Michael with Dan McCormick in San Francisco.



Joe O'Neill and Michael Flannery at a H-Block Hunger Strike Commemoration in Bundoran, Co. Donegal.



Michael Flannery speaking at an eve of All-Ireland rally at the GPO in Dublin's O'Connell Street in September 1989. To his left is the late Dáithí Ó Conaill, Vice-President, Republican Sinn Féin.

On the second day everyone seemed to be sick. I felt very sorry for them but there was nothing I could do to help. There was one lady very sick and holding on to a rail when a sailor walking briskly past came along. She said to him: "Oh, sailor, what will I do?" Without breaking his stride he replied: "Don't worry madam you will do it" and she did.

In a day or two they were all well again. About six days out we ran into a big storm and then I got sick. When I was lying on my back or if I were up on the deck there was no sickness. The problem was how to get from my bunk to the deck without getting sick. The storm got worse and the captain decided to send everyone below deck to batten down the hatches. I decided not to go below and instead hid in the rigging in the centre of the deck.

It was a marvellous sight to see the ship being tossed about and the gigantic waves crashing over the prow. Suddenly there was action among the sailors. An SOS from a German oil tanker came in. A sailor had broken his leg, there was no doctor on board, and they feared gangrene would set in. The sailors lined up and the captain asked for ten volunteers. Every hand was raised and ten were picked. As the boat was lowered they stopped and put it back in place. It seemed that the Germans were bringing the sailor over. We didn't go too close to the tanker, as sparks might set it on fire. It was now dark and the search lights from both vessels gave a beautiful but grotesque and uncanny touch to the unique drama. The lifeboat with its sailors and lights went away up on the crest of a wave only to descend out of sight. I prayed for their souls. Then they began to ascend again. After several appearances and disappearances, they arrived back. There were two long poles pushed out from our ship so that their boat would not be dashed against it. The sailors caught the poles and were pulled in. There were three cheers for the captain and the boat again faced the angry sea. It was a dramatic moment and worth having disobeyed an order to witness it. The disabled sailor was taken off at Boston in good condition.

Upon entering New York harbour I was playing a game of chess with a friendly Rabbi and I was unaware that the ship had almost docked when I got a call to go on deck. I was told that two men in uniform wanted to see me. I approached them

with a smile only to get a shock when one of them said roughly: "Wipe that smile off your face" and he asked me to give him the letter which I had with me. It wasn't the type of greeting I expected. I got my luggage together and prepared to disembark. I was to be met by my mother's sister, my Aunt Brigid, whom I had never seen. When I reached the gang plank I looked down and there I saw all the lads from Tipperary waiting for me. It really was exciting. My aunt recognized me from a picture my mother had sent. She promised my old comrades that they could come after supper and take me to the Clan na Gael Hall which was located where Lincoln Centre is now. With all the excitement, I still thought of my promise to the US Consul to keep away from the Irish. It was gone with the wind.

When I left Ireland, I intended to go back in a couple of years but circumstances changed my plans. The year 1929 was the beginning of a world depression. I found myself working in the head office of an insurance company in New York City. Every day there were thousands of people laid off with no hope of getting other work. I had no worry about being laid off. By now I was head of Clan na Gael, and felt I had to do everything possible to help its members.

We were very lucky in the fact that an elite club, Healy's, closed up and we were able to rent the building for a low rent and moved in. They left everything as it was, even the expense accounts of their clients. The mayor was a patron. We had an excellent orchestra and had a well conducted dance every Friday, Saturday and Sunday night from seven o'clock to twelve o'clock. These dances were well attended as there were not too many other functions at that time. The admission was fifty cents.

Our unemployed cooks used the kitchen to prepare their own meals. They were allowed one good meal each day and had to depend on circumstances and good luck for any extras. They also served tea and small sandwiches at the dances for twenty-five cents.

We set up an employment bureau where you could hire a man for an hour, a day, a week or a month. Listed were lawyers, teachers, book-keepers, carpenters, truck drivers, plumbers and handymen of every description. It worked very well and what

they earned went into the kitty to provide little extras. Sixty-four men without relatives and little money were housed in the spare rooms, sleeping in two and three tier bunk beds made by the carpenters. We had one death, Michael Barrett, a teacher and Gaelic enthusiast who was dismissed from his school in Cork for political reasons. He had an operation for appendicitis and died suddenly from a blood clot to his heart. He is buried in St. John's cemetery. May he rest in peace.

There was an election in Ireland 1932 in which Fianna Fáil received the most votes and along with Labour support set up a government. It didn't work and there was another election in 1933, giving Fianna Fáil a working majority of seventy-seven seats, and enough for de Valera to carry out his promises, promises that he had never meant to be carried out.

Roosevelt became the Democratic President of the USA in 1932 and began to do something about the depression. He was aided by the fact that Adolf Hitler was creating political upheaval in Germany and eventually took over the German government. Rumours of war began to circulate and money became more plentiful. It is an ironic truth that there is always plenty of money to build the instruments of death and destruction, while none can be found to prevent hunger and suffering.

We hoped that the United States would keep their promise not to enter the war. England did not stop trying by every means to enlist our aid as Hitler seemed to have the upper hand at this time. Luck was in Britain's favour, as Japan raided Pearl Harbour . The result was that the United States did enter the war. British Intelligence knew of the plan to raid Pearl Harbour, but they did not warn the United States, who for their part did nothing to prepare for or prevent it. Roosevelt was happy to rescue the Allies for the second time, at the cost of thousands of young American lives being sacrificed, and nothing to compensate for it.

I was rejected by the Army for service, and shortly afterwards, I was stricken by a severe illness which was diagnosed by the experts, after spinal taps and other tests, as multiple sclerosis. They gave me not more than five years of a span of life. The company where I worked had a private hospital on top of Mount McGregor near Lake George. I was sent there where I spent almost two years under the expert attentions of

doctors and nurses and endured spinal taps, stomach pumpings, injections, etc. I slowly recovered and returned to work and for the next thirty years on the job, I never lost a day through illness, thank God. Obviously I did not have multiple sclerosis.

On my return to New York on recovery, I reported to Clan na Gael and was very disappointed to find divisions and disagreements in both Ireland and New York. In Ireland, the Republican Congress, a socialist offshoot of the IRA, had been introduced by Peadar O'Donnell. It failed to take root.

In New York, Paddy McLogan and others had differences that caused the Clan Leaders to take part on either side. The Chief of Staff of the IRA came to New York, and for a while I thought that we succeeded uniting the two factions, but not for long. The division remained until some of the leaders passed on.

Meanwhile in Ireland, the Nineteen-Thirties was a confusing decade in Irish politics. Fianna Fáil came to power, defeating Fine Gael and put de Valera in power to govern the Free State. Firstly he introduced the Pension Act, which was passed, which he had pledged not to do in 1934. He also introduced an act stopping the payment of land annuities to England. England responded by boycotting Irish cattle and goods, placing Ireland in a dreadful economic slump. This gave rise in 1933 to the founding of the Blue Shirts under Eoin O'Duffy.

The Blue Shirts were essentially an organization of farmers who could not sell their cattle. They were preparing to assist Franco in the Spanish Civil War and Frank Ryan was recruiting a unit to help the Spanish Republican government.

Meanwhile, the IRA was active trying to help the unemployed, whose numbers were increasing daily. De Valera began to arrest the most active of them. He finally compromised on the annuities by paying England a lump sum of ten million pounds.

In 1937 de Valera gave the Free State a new constitution, introducing Articles 2 and 3, which claimed jurisdiction over the whole of the island, and the seas around it, giving hope to his followers and alarm to the Unionists. The Blue Shirts decided to throw their lot in with Franco, but they found that they were not welcome, and returned home.

The Forties

Chapter Twelve

THE GREAT SPECTACULAR of the World's Fair was attracting millions to Flushing Meadows Park in New York City. I was away during the regular term of the Fair, but due to its success the management decided to continue it for another year, enabling me to see and enjoy it. When Seán Russell (who was Chief of Staff of the IRA at the time) was preparing to come to America, he appointed his next in command, Stephen Hayes, to take over. Hayes, from Enniscorthy Co. Wexford, was popular. He and his brother Peter had played football for the county.

Things went well for a while but then too many arms dumps were being discovered and suspicion of Hayes as an informer was being investigated by his fellow officers. There were too many IRA men being arrested, and the raid on the Magazine Fort in the Phoenix Park from which lorry loads of material were taken without too much trouble and dumped in secure places were only to be captured and restored to the Fort within a few days. Seán McCaughey, Officer in charge of the Northern Command of the IRA, was convinced that Hayes became aware that he was under observation. He planned to offset any efforts that might lead to the discovery of his double-dealing.

Michael Devereux, a fellow Wexfordman, and an IRA officer, was working for Shell Mex as a lorry driver. In this capacity he covered a large territory and was able to deliver messages and material to outlying IRA units. On one of his trips to Dublin he delivered messages to IRA Headquarters and while there was arrested by the Gardaí. He was held for three days and released. While he was held, an important IRA dump in Wexford was

discovered by the Gardaí and news spread that Devereux had informed while under arrest.

Hayes ordered the Division Officer Joseph O'Connor, a Kerryman, to arrest Devereux and execute him as an informer. O'Connor appointed two men to carry out the execution even though there had been no trial to prove his guilt. The two men appointed to execute Devereux, George Plant and Michael Walsh, never told him that he was under arrest. They kept telling him that there was a big drive to arrest him for shooting an important person. Finally an order came that in danger of his arrest they were to shoot him. Such a rumour did reach them and they started to climb the side of Slievenamon. Plant then executed Devereux and covered the body in a gully.

(Michael Moroney has given a splendid detailed account of this in a small booklet published by the Tipperary Historical Society in 1989.)

Seán McCaughey, in charge of the Northern Command, was very suspicious of Hayes and made his way down to IRA headquarters and after a brief exchange with Hayes, took him prisoner. He was held for more than nine weeks. Finally, he was brought to a house in Rathmines and tried by court martial. After a lengthy trial he was found guilty and sentenced to death. He asked for time, during which he would write his confession of the whole affair. It took some time, as it was lengthy and detailed and his guards became careless. On September 8, 1941, though tightly bound with chains he escaped through a window and made his way to the Rathmines Garda Station. He was then safely placed in prison away from all questioning.

A few days after Hayes's escape and imprisonment his confession was published by the IRA. In it he told the whole story of his work as an informer. It involved a Minister in the Fianna Fáil Government and other government people, all of whom denied any dealing with Hayes. Hayes didn't refute his confession until after the death of Seán McCaughey and others implicated in his trial.

Seán Russell came to America in 1939 seeking help for the IRA campaign in England. He was arrested in Detroit when the Queen of England visited Canada. He was released after her visit ended, and with the help of Joe McGarrity, went to

Germany. Frank Ryan who had gone to help the Spanish government, was arrested in Spain and through the intercession of those who had influence with Franco, was released to Germany. He joined Russell there and later both were on their way back to Ireland on a German submarine in 1940 when Russell died and was buried at sea. Ryan returned to Germany where he later died. His body was later brought back to Ireland for burial in Glasnevin in Dublin in 1979.

A year after Devereux's death, a Dublin detective masquerading as an IRA man evading arrest called at Patrick Davern's home in Grangemockler, Co. Tipperary, asking to be sheltered. In the exchange of conversation he became aware of the details leading up to Devereux's execution. Davern, Walsh, Plant and O'Connor were arrested and charged with the murder of Devereux. There were preliminary hearings, at one of which O'Connor's charge was dismissed on a technicality and the general behaviour or misbehaviour of the Courts became very controversial. It seemed that Plant was singled out for execution and there was a general protest by the people. Seán MacBride asked Seán Hayes and Bill Quirke, both elected representatives, to help. Hayes did nothing but Quirke, it was supposed, was doing his utmost to help. He didn't succeed and Plant was executed.

Some years later, I accidentally met Quirke and he told me how hard he tried to persuade de Valera to commute the death sentence. He was the only one with the power to do so. The night before the execution, he spent a considerable time with him and even suggested that Plant be judged insane and put in an asylum. De Valera had his mind set that Plant must go. I believed Quirke. George Plant was murdered in Port Laoise prison on March 5, 1942. Davern and Walsh had their death sentences commuted to life sentences. They were released after four years. The question arose, did de Valera fear that if Plant lived that the heads of those involved in the Hayes betrayal sooner or later would also roll, or was he just in a murdering tantrum.

For the record, during that period, in 1940 he let Tony Darcy and Seán Mac Neela die on hunger strike. John Joe Kavanagh was shot by the Special Branch in Cork. Patrick McGrath, a 1916 veteran, and Thomas Harte were murdered in Mountjoy

Prison and Barney Casey murdered by Military Police in the Curragh Camp. In 1941 Richard Goss was murdered in Port Laoise prison. Tom Williams was hanged in Belfast and Maurice O'Neill murdered in Mountjoy Prison. In 1943 Jack Griffith was murdered by the Special Branch in Dublin City. In 1944 Charlie Kerins, Chief of Staff of the IRA, was hanged in Mountjoy jail. They had to bring the English hangman, Pierpont, over to do the job. In 1946, Seán McCaughey was let die on hunger strike in Port Laoise prison. All of this took place under the leadership of de Valera who took part in the Easter Rising of 1916, who took part in the Civil War, and who condemned the murders under the Cosgrave Free State government. Concerning Ireland, de Valera had taken the thirty pieces of silver and the suffering would be extended for many years.

To regain some of his popularity, de Valera had declared Ireland's neutrality in the war. Neutrality for one part of the nation while the other part was fully engaged seemed a bit fanciful. The Germans did drop a number of bombs in Dublin, notably on the North Strand and in other places, as well as many in Belfast. Dublin sent its Fire Brigades to Belfast to help control the fires.

In 1948 there was a general election in Ireland, and Fianna Fáil was defeated. A coalition of Fine Gael and Clann na Poblachta, a new party under the leadership of Seán MacBride formed the government. It was a disastrous mistake on MacBride's part, as his party was almost wiped out at the next election. John A Costello became the leader and MacBride Foreign Minister. In 1949 Costello announced that Seán MacBride had sponsored a new addition to the description of the 26 Counties. The 'Twenty Six Counties' was henceforth to be known as the Republic of Ireland. De Valera made no objection even though it was an invidious attempt to make the Border a permanent fixture and to nullify Articles Two and Three.

The Fifties

Chapter Thirteen

MACBRIDE THOUGHT THAT BY bringing world wide pressure to bear on England, the northern question could be solved, as partition was solely her responsibility. An opportunity presented itself when the United States invited the Free State to sign the North Atlantic Treaty in 1949. MacBride pointed out that they couldn't do so while partition existed. The United States was equally friendly. MacBride kept pressuring without achieving any results. Dr. Noel Browne, a member of MacBride's Clann na Poblachta party, was the new Minister for Health, with a new and innovative programme to build hospitals and a health service. His Mother and Child scheme ran foul of the Bishops who condemned it as being socialistic, and not in accord with the faith and morals of the Church. This was wrong, and the people resented it, but MacBride was frightened into dismissing Browne from the party which he did. As a result the party was ruined. The good achieved by highlighting partition was lost in the controversy about Browne's mother and child programme, which was afterwards enacted in effect by Fianna Fáil. However, MacBride's party was responsible for pushing the government into the creation of the Industrial Development Authority, promoting large scale afforrestation of the country, and new export markets.

MacBride proposed to make the 26-County Dáil the parliament of all Ireland, by opening its doors to the representatives from the occupied six counties of Ireland. Some IRA officers led by Liam Kelly favoured the proposal and were dismissed by IRA headquarters. Kelly agreed with MacBride that the 1937

Constitution stating that the whole island of Ireland, its islands and the seas around it gave Northern Nationalists the right to attend the Dublin parliament.

In 1953 Kelly was elected as an abstentionist to Stormont. He was arrested for seditious speech and imprisoned. In 1954 he was elected to the Free State Senate. In 1955 he started a new political party, Fianna Uladh, (Soldiers of Ulster) with a secret military arm, Saor Uladh (Free Ulster). In November of the same year he attacked a police barracks in Roslea, Co Fermanagh. Too weak to continue, this venture faded away.

In 1956 the IRA started a new campaign of armed resistance. Its aims were to guard the honour and uphold the sovereignty and unity of the Irish Republic as declared in 1916, and to build its military strength by raiding military barracks. The most daring raid was made on Armagh. An attempt at Omagh failed and eight IRA men were captured. While in prison two of them were elected for the Mid-Ulster and Fermanagh-South Tyrone constituencies. With very little military equipment and very little money, it was amazing how they kept fighting until 1962. The campaign had a sad climax on New Year's Day 1957 when a raid on the RUC Barracks at Brookeborough, in County Fermanagh, where Seán South of Limerick, and Fergal O'Hanlon of Monaghan were killed. O'Hanlon was a popular young athlete and South was an important leader of the IRA and an Irish language enthusiast. His funeral from the North down to Limerick was witnessed by thousands of people who gathered in every village, town and city through which it passed.

During that period, I was elected President of the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) in New York. During my term as always, the Association continued to help by passing resolutions and promoting field days to raise money to help the fight in Ireland.

In 1956 Kerry and Dublin met in the All-Ireland Football Final. Kerry won and it was agreed that it was the greatest exhibition of the game ever seen. There was a rush to bring the teams on a tour to New York. There was some mix-up about applications and it looked like no team would get permission. At a meeting of the New York Association, one of the few I was unable to attend, I was delegated to go to the annual conven-

tion of the GAA to be held in Dublin on Easter Sunday where I was to ask for a replay by Kerry and Dublin in New York. It seemed a certainty that permission would not be given. I didn't ask who made the motion but accepted it as a challenge. I went to the convention and to everyone's surprise got permission for a replay of the Kerry-Dublin game in New York. The game was played in Yankee Stadium, New York. After another great game, Dublin was the winner. It was Dublin's only visit to New York, and they appreciated it by having me as their guest at any subsequent GAA Congress I would attend.

The 1960s

Chapter Fourteen

IN 1964, THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY of the founding of the GAA, in New York, the Association under the guidance and leadership of John Kerry O'Donnell and financed by Ballantines' Brewing Company, decided on a world tour by the New York football team. I wondered if there were any ladies travelling and there were, paying their own way but enjoying the reduced fares and functions, so I decided to travel with my wife, arranging our own hotel accommodation but also enjoying the reduced fares. While preparing for the tour I attended a function in Tavern On The Green where I met an old acquaintance who was now President Johnson's (1964) official envoy, to give the world a better picture of life in America as opposed to the shoot and kill movies and the news that the media put out. I told him we would be glad to act as ambassadors of goodwill and asked him if had he any ideas. He said if I would give him our itinerary he would be glad to contact all the governments and have us officially received as promoting goodwill to all peoples. He gave us appropriate emblems to wear on our blue jackets. It made our tour very pleasant, as banquets and sightseeing buses were arranged for us in every city and country we visited. We missed nothing worth seeing.

Our first stop was San Francisco where a game was played and a dinner given, then on to Los Angeles and Hollywood. After sightseeing there, we left for Honolulu where we had a tour around the island and lunch in a very elaborate Irish establishment owned and conducted by Mr Harrington from Cork and his charming wife from Scotland. Our next stop was the Fiji Islands where the attendant at the duty free counter

was a pretty girl from Co. Cavan. I asked her how she came to be there and her answer was that her brother was a priest on the island.

We left Fiji and arrived in New Zealand to a very great welcome in Auckland. The welcoming delegation led by the Archbishop gave us an enthusiastic reception. There was great joy in meeting old friends, some of whom we had not seen for forty years and some young priests whose families we knew. The Archbishop knew Ireland very well, having spent several vacations there with his cousins in Birdhill, about six miles south of Nenagh. The banquet was a very memorable one with priests from all over New Zealand and opera singers singing Irish songs. The following day we were taken by bus out to the caves, the dwelling place of millions of glow worms. The glow worm was a wiry little worm about one and a quarter inches with a tiny lamp like a small shirt button on its head and a half inch of sticky string hanging from its lower lip to catch the tiny gnats of which the cave was full. There were boats on the lake at the bottom of the cave and to row on the lake was something you never forgot.

Then it was on to Rotorua, a Maori settlement. There were no fires, as everything was cooked by steam which constantly erupted through the openings in the surface of the ground. There was a hot stream of water flowing through the settlement and a geyser of boiling water which erupted every seven hours to a height of thirty feet. We found the Maori people friendly and interesting.

We left New Zealand and entered Australia at Brisbane, on to Sydney and Melbourne and Geelong, playing games in Sydney, Melbourne and Geelong. The game in Geelong was against an Australian football team. The rules were altered to make this possible. My wife and I had a great many friends in Sydney and Melbourne. The Columban Fathers, Father Dunlea, founder of Boystown and Alcoholics Anonymous, born in Nenagh, and Eric Drew, Chairman of the City Council along with Father Dunlea drove us to Botany Bay which had a great association with Irish rebels. We also went to Waverly Cemetery nearby where Michael O'Dwyer, the Wicklow Patriot, is buried. The monument over his grave is elaborate and historical. The Columban Fathers organized a banquet in their very spacious

and beautiful headquarters. It was built by the descendants of Henry Joy McCracken, the 1798 patriot. It was a memorable night. The Fathers invited all the Irish priests within travelling distance and many of them were known to members of the team. It was a wonderful and joyous evening but with plenty of tears as we said good-bye, especially by the young priests. We had the pleasure of being present at the Australian Football Final where the attendance was 104,000 and the pageantry delightful. We then went to Canberra, the capital of Australia, where we were wined and dined without pause. Back to Sydney to tour Katoomba and the Blue Mountains. After a week in Sydney we left for Hong Kong, passing over Perth from where the Fenian prisoners were rescued by the Catalpa whaling boat in 1875.

We arrived in Hong Kong, toured the city and contacted some friends, Father McCarthy SJ and some Christian Brothers, without whom my wife would have starved to death. In spite of the intense heat we were glad we made the visit. We left Hong Kong and arrived in Delhi and after checking in at the hotel, those of us interested went on a small plane to Agra to tour the Taj Mahal. The heat was intense and the people with their sarongs thrown over their heads to prevent sunstroke were sleeping everywhere. We also visited the Fort, a huge arrangement of brick buildings on the river where the buffalo were submerged in the water along its banks.

Back to Delhi and from there to Bombay where after a short tour we left for Cairo where we stayed overnight at the Nile Hilton Hotel. The next day the group went camel riding to the Pyramids. Our next stop was Rome where all the cardinals and bishops of the world were gathered to help Pope John XXIII open the windows and allow a little confusion to enter. Joe Carey, my wife and I availed of the occasion to visit some of the Tipperary bishops we knew, including Bishop O'Donnell from Fethard, now Bishop of Brisbane.

We were to fly from Rome to Dublin but instead went to Lourdes and from there to Dublin. There were games arranged against Offaly to be played in Birr. There was a large attendance and to the surprise of everyone after a brilliant display of football, New York won. The outstanding player of the day was Tom Feighery whose father was from Offaly and his mother



Michael with Republican Sinn Féin President Ruairí Ó Brádaigh at the 1989 All-Ireland Hurling Final in Croke Park, won by his native Tipperary who over-came a gallant Antrim team.

had Tipperary roots. After an unforgettable tour, everyone was glad to see their own people or relatives and relate the wonders of the world. Back to New York and back to the job where the wonders of the world were told and retold.

Casement home to rest

Chapter Fifteen

FOR YEARS, DR HERBERT O MACKEY, a Dublin surgeon, had been trying to have Roger Casement's name vindicated and his body returned to Ireland to be buried according to his last wish overlooking his beloved Murlough Bay, Co. Antrim. It was a constant fight during which he had written books pointing out the illegality of burying Casement at all, and particularly in prison ground alongside one of England's notorious criminals, Crippen, but there he was, buried in quick lime.

Dr. Mackey's interest increased after he met and became a friend of Father James McCarroll, the prison chaplain, who would have reconciled Casement with the Church. He had contacted Cardinal Bourne for permission to do so, but the Cardinal wanted Casement to make a statement expressing sorrow for any scandal caused by his actions, private or public. Casement wrote to the Cardinal telling him that he had no scandal either private or public to be sorry for. The Cardinal's action deprived him of the conciliation of the Sacraments until the eve of his execution when Father McCarroll heard his first and last confession and for the first and last time he received the Holy Eucharist on the morning of his execution. I had the pleasure of becoming acquainted with Dr Mackey and enjoying some golf with him on the Dún Laoghaire golf course. He kindly autographed his book *The Secret History of the Forged Diaries* for me. He exposed the British for not allowing the diaries to be examined and embarrassed them by pointing out that Casement was tried under a law instituted in 1351 when the King of England was also King of France and which never applied to Ireland.

The year 1966 would be the fiftieth anniversary of Casement's death, and pressure for his return increased. To lessen publicity, Britain decided to return the body in 1965, not to Dr. Mackey and his committee, but to the Dublin government who were very pleased, although they had done nothing to help Dr Mackey. As a matter of fact, they tried to put a damper on his work. Casement would be returned and buried not at Murlough Bay where he wished to be buried but in Glasnevin, Dublin. It possibly would have been very awkward for de Valera and his cabinet to cross the border. Dr Mackey was completely ignored.

I decided to go over to Ireland for the funeral and the GAA asked me to represent them which I was glad to do. John O'Connor, Donegal, representing the United Irish Counties, travelled with me from The United States. We arrived on a Saturday. John continued on to Donegal and I booked into Wynn's Hotel. Seán Ó Síocháin, Secretary of the GAA called and invited me to go down to Navan where the inter-provincial football match between Leinster and Connacht would be played. Sunday was a glorious day and the games were very good. When Seán finished doing business with the delegates from Connacht and elsewhere we (Seán's family was also along) headed up North for dinner but didn't go far when it started to snow. He turned back and we dined at the airport instead. Then back to Dublin for a magnificent Céilí, music, song and dance and then back to Wynn's.

The next morning I was up early and looked out the window on Abbey Street to see icicles hanging from the houses and the roads slippery. I decided to go to eight o'clock Mass at the Pro-Cathedral and acquaint myself with the funeral arrangements and to meet some of the old IRA who would be working on the committee. Back to the hotel for breakfast at which I was joined by two Englishmen, old friends of Casement, over for the funeral. Lord Brockton and his friend whose name I have forgotten, had some interesting stories about Casement. Back to the Pro-Cathedral where I was to meet Alf Murray, President of the GAA. Coming down from Armagh was a dangerous journey. He and Seán Staunton did not arrive until about three minutes before Mass. The usher, who was a friend of mine, took us to the front section marked GAA but the section was over-crowded.

The first pew marked 'relative' was occupied by two ladies who were nieces of Casement. The usher asked if we could be seated and they graciously consented. It was a biblical solution – "the last shall be first." The Mass was edifying and solemn.

After Mass de Valera and his wife, followed by his cabinet, and foreign diplomats, who were all seated on the left side of the aisle, all disappeared. We reached the doors, and while pausing, there a mighty roll of thunder which surprised and frightened everyone. An old lady standing off to the side asked a young priest if he thought Casement was happy. Without hesitation he answered: "so happy that the heavens are rejoicing". She smiled and piously said: "Thank God."

The immense crowd started to line up at the General Post Office to march to Glasnevin. We decided to have something to eat first. When we finished, the last of the marchers had gone and we would have to take a cab. It was bitterly cold and almost impossible to get a cab. Finally, one pulled up in front of us to discharge some people coming from the airport. The driver asked what section and was told the GAA. Don't worry he said, I know where they are located and I will get you there. Joined with the GAA, we still had a long wait. There were two lines of foot soldiers lined up for half a mile leading to the cemetery with their rifle muzzles resting on their toe caps and their hands over-lapping on the butts. The poor kids were falling over from the cold and lack of movement. Finally we were admitted to the graveside. The volleys were fired and de Valera, supported by Frank Aiken, gave the eulogy in Irish and in conclusion prayed for all the dead patriots. I wondered if he included his 1916 comrade, Paddy McGrath, and the others he had murdered in the early forties, in his eulogy.

After the funeral I visited an old college friend of my wife's. While there, a business friend of his called. They were engineers with the Electricity Supply Board. Introducing him, my friend said I had been at the funeral. He said he thought it a silly idea to make such a fuss over a few bones when his dust remained in England. I was glad to inform him that the lime and cloth in which Casement was buried had formed a casket around him and those removing the remains were careful not to let a particle of him remain in England. He apologized and said that while credible, it was a remarkable occurrence.

The Failure of Partition

Chapter Sixteen

IN OCTOBER OF 1968 a march of a few hundred nationalists who were working from the basis of civil rights, which had been denied them under partition, attempted to march to Derry City Centre. They were surrounded by the Royal Ulster Constabulary who battened them and clubbed them unmercifully. This event was seen world wide on television. A march from Belfast to Derry City was organized. It took place and the marchers were attacked by RUC and loyalists. The crowds awaiting them in Derry were also attacked by the RUC. This event was also seen world wide.

In 1969, the Civil Rights Movement had grown and was making headway and receiving good publicity. All of this resulted in a new organization being started in New York. I attended their first meeting, which was held in the Irish Institute building. The meeting was well attended with delegates from Philadelphia, Boston and Buffalo. An executive of twenty-one members was elected and the name chosen was 'the American Congress for Irish Freedom'.

The meeting received some publicity, after which we had a few more successful meetings but then arguments started. They were mostly about the United States participation in a foreign war, in which England was supplying war material to the enemy. A minority thought that we should emphasize this in our propaganda but the majority thought that we should concentrate on the trouble in Ireland. This caused a split with both sides using the same name. To avoid further conflict the majority decided on a new name, "The Irish Action Committee". Although the name was not well chosen we were

very successful and found favour with most of the Irish organizations and organized labour. Our success came to the notice of the Communists, and they decided to infiltrate. Firstly, there was a young man, Irish born, and who had a connection with Easter Week. I had never met him, but knew a good deal about him. He came from California and he did not join in the regular way, but wanted to take over the organization. He brought in another man from California, who was not Irish and whom no one knew, but a call to California informed us that he was high on the Communist roll and had just completed a prison term for pushing dope. It was a tough fight to get rid of them. As Chairman, I was determined to do so and did.

Our first public meeting was held in 1969, during the height of the fighting on the barricades in Derry, so the attendance filled the hall. Quite a few fellow travellers were planted throughout the meeting.

When the meeting was in progress, there erupted quite a commotion on the floor caused by the arrival of Bernadette Devlin in the company of two friends. I did not know anything about her coming and she was taken to a side room. One of her friends came to me, and demanded that I call on her to speak straight away as she was tired after the journey. I told him that the meeting was in progress, that we had no notice of her coming and that I would accommodate her as soon as it was convenient. He said: "then she will not speak". I told him that was a choice only she could make. After a few minutes she returned, saying that she would speak. I adjourned the meeting and then welcomed her, and introduced her. She explained that she left the barricades that morning and she gave a very fine speech and explanation of how things were at home. Under the guidance of her two friends, she made a nation wide tour which was very well supported, taking in over a million dollars as she estimated. However she received only the cheques that were made out to her. When she got wise to her assistants she quit the tour and went back to Ireland.

Earlier in the sixties, the removal of Casement's remains to Ireland had rekindled some of the old fires, but in general the Republican Movement in the early sixties at home and abroad was in the doldrums. There was at the time also a general

roundup of all arms for refurbishing and better distribution. When the return of the arms was sought, it transpired that they were not available. They had been supposedly loaned to the Welsh and Scottish nationalists. The truth was that Tomás Mac Giolla, President of Sinn Féin, and Cathal Goulding, Chief of Staff of the IRA had supposedly come under the influence of Roy Johnson and had adopted a socialist-communist policy of politics and they were about to enter the Free State parliament. I had a long talk with Goulding, trying to dissuade him, pointing out de Valera's fiasco in 1926 but to no avail. At the 1970 Ard-Fheis, the split took place, and those determined to carry on under the principles of Tone and the Proclamation of Easter Week 1916 walked out and because of their adherence to the Proclamation, became known as 'The Provisionals' or 'Provos', The Provisional IRA. Those who remained became known as the Officials, the Official IRA. I was surprised that Séamus Costello remained with Goulding, but this was not to be for long. He asked to be re-admitted to the IRA but as a person in charge of his own group. The Provisional IRA would not agree to this, and so he formed his Irish Republican Socialist Party, whose armed wing became the INLA.

We now had three armies, all independent of each other. Unfortunately, they spent more time feuding than fighting. Liam McMillan in charge of the Officials in Belfast, was killed, and sometime later Séamus Costello was killed and in turn his assassin was killed. This sort of behaviour went on and on.

The Provos, however, gave a very good account of themselves, fighting the British and the RUC and other paramilitary units. The fight was waged against all odds. The nationalists in the northern counties had been suffering much at the hands of the B Specials, the RUC and loyalist mobs.

At our next meeting in New York, in 1970, we tried to contact Ruairí O Brádaigh of Sinn Féin, and have someone come over to America to enlighten us on the situation in Ireland. We closed out the Irish Action Committee and we had the treasurer Tom Enright send the funds which amounted to about $9,000 on to the proper authority and obtain a receipt for it. Tom did so. In this way we got rid of the troublesome element within the group. Seán Keenan was sent over and a new organization was founded under a more appropriate

name, the Irish Northern Aid Committee. This would be controlled by three trustees, and an executive consisting of Chairman, Treasurer, and Secretary. The organization got off to a flying start both socially and financially. In order to give Seán something to take home, I went collecting, and through the generosity of a few businessmen, and labour unions, we were able to present Seán with a cheque for ten thousand dollars.

The first big publicity break was occasioned by the tragic and brutal murder of thirteen unarmed people in Derry on January 30, 1972. (A fourteenth person died subsequently). They were taking part in a civil rights march when the British Army opened fire on the crowd and the civilians were murdered indiscriminately.

In New York, the INAC staged a funeral with a coffin carried on the shoulders of the members, and thirteen children, each carrying a cross with the name of the deceased on it. The funeral ended at the Carmelite church, on East 28th Street in Manhattan, where a Requiem Mass was celebrated. Thousands took part and the news media, press, television and radio gave ample coverage to the event. England, without intent, was giving us publicity material damning to themselves, that money could not buy.

After Bloody Sunday and other brutalities, the House of Commons (British parliament) decided to abolish the Stormont Government, (puppet parliament in the Six Counties, a regime that was later condemned by the European Human Rights Commission). This was done in March, 1972. This gave Britain an opening to present a peace offer resulting in the Sunningdale Agreement, a power-sharing executive, representing Unionists and Nationalists. The Unionists would have no part of it, and killed it by a strike, organized in May 1974. Knowing that Britain would not use force to support the power-sharing agreement, the Unionists achieved their objective as they did when they successfully defied Britain in 1914, and again against Home Rule in 1921, and again with the Treaty, and in 1925 with the setting up of the border. The British were therefore not likely to use force against the Unionists in 1974 for power-sharing, although they do not mind using it against nationalists. It matters not whether it is Stormont or direct rule from London, the murders, assassina-

tions and brutalities continue.

In 1973, the INAC was busy conducting pickets at the Irish and British Consulates. They also began holding rallies and various functions where important persons from Ireland, Dáithí Ó Conaill, Joe Cahill, Ruairí Ó Brádaigh, Seán Keenan and some released or escaped prisoners took part or spoke. The Easter Week memorial breakfast held in that year on Easter Sunday was an outstanding success.

When Michael Gaughan died on hunger strike in Parkhurst Prison, England on June 3, 1974, after 67 days on hunger strike, there were large rallies at the British Consulate, at 51st Street and Second Avenue. Gaughan was buried in the Republican Plot at Ballina in his native County Mayo. Two years later Frank Stagg died on hunger strike in Wakefield Prison on February 12, 1976. The Free State Government, in collaboration with Britain, decided that there would not be a repetition of Michael Gaughan's funeral with IRA propaganda. Acting in a barbaric and brutal manner, they seized the body of Stagg and had it flown back to Ireland to Shannon instead of Dublin. No one was allowed into the church, and they ignored his wish to be buried next to Michael Gaughan. They buried him in another grave and then covered the coffin with tons of concrete so as to prevent it being removed. Later however, his family and friends dug deep alongside of the cemented grave and removed the body from beneath the concrete. They then buried it alongside Michael Gaughan in accordance with his wishes. These tragedies kept us busy with commemorative Masses and rallies and helped to ensure a steady income of funds. They also strengthened the determination of the United States Justice Department to put us in INAC out of business. For sometime we were fighting a legal battle against being designated as a foreign agency. Right or wrong, we were told that we were such an agency, and so we had to submit a report on our collections and how we disposed of them.

The Justice Department and the INAC continued the legal wrangling without the department ever proving that we were a foreign agency and in the same way I was named as a foreign agent and had to sign a sworn statement that our reports were true. All our funds were sent to and duly accepted by An Cumann Cabhrach, a charitable organization, recognized as

such by the authorities, set up to assist families of political prisoners. After sixty days our reports became public property and could be examined by anyone so interested. The British Embassy staff were probably the only ones who did examine them, and on a few occasions they had the audacity to call me and question the report. On one occasion, the query was why the total amount of the reported funds had increased. I replied "why not". Then I was told that London had sent over four expert propagandists to put us out of business. I told the inquirer to tell London to keep sending them, as their presence coincided with an increase in our collections. They did not call again.

The fact that we were a national organization with one headquarters was a big advantage in reporting our activities to the Government. At first they tried to have each city chapter register separately as foreign agents reporting all activities separately. This would have been very awkward and very expensive as it would mean having lawyers in every city. Fortunately, our lawyers were able to keep us a step ahead of them and they did it with very little thanks and no compensation. I will always feel indebted to them.

In 1975 I had a call and later a visit from a Mr O'Malley of Boston, seeking to involve INAC in financial and moral support for a convention of all Irish organizations, 26 Counties and Six Counties, regardless of their affiliations, whether Unionist or Nationalist. Also all religious denominations would be involved, and it was to take place at Amherst University in August, 1975. All expenses were to be met by the committee. I told him I had no objection to such a convention but that the INAC could be of no assistance as we had to account to the US government for every penny collected in a sworn statement every year. All the organizations received visas except the IRA and Sinn Féin. The committee asked me if I would represent these organizations, and I told them that under no circumstances could I or would I represent them. They then invited me to be an observer and this I accepted.

The delegates arrived and were accommodated and fed at the university which was a marvellous feat of organization. On the morning after arrival, the delegates were seated in the auditorium at 8:45 am. The chairman was selected from one of the

Press personnel in attendance. He introduced the representatives of the organization to be questioned. The representative was allowed twenty minutes to outline the policy, aims and objectives of his organization and was then open to questions from the floor. At twelve noon we retired for lunch. The delegates were advised to mix as much as possible and to talk about related subjects.

The afternoon session began at 2:00 pm with a different chairman and a different organization. It was very interesting to hear the Nationalists and the Unionists go at it. The most interesting debate took place when Séamus Costello was introduced at the morning session. The questioners had to use the microphone in the centre aisle. There was a line up to tackle Séamus. With the greatest of ease he demolished them one after another. Those who suffered most were Tomás Mac Giolla who was foolish not to have waited for his own turn at the podium and the Rev Martin Smyth, head of the Orange Order who was so vulnerable he should have just listened. In conversation with some of the more conservative of the Unionist businessmen I found them quite partial to the ideas of Éire Nua, the four provinces state-like government. (Éire Nua is a proposed form of federal Ireland. The four provinces of Ulster, Munster, Connacht and Leinster would have provincial governments. A federal government would exist in a central town such as Athlone.)

I had to leave before the close of the conference as I was joining my wife for our annual visit to the hurling and football finals in Dublin. We had also booked to Rome for the canonization of Blessed Oliver Plunkett. While waiting to go to Rome we visited our friends in Callan, Mullinahone, Nenagh and Roscrea.

While in Dublin, my wife told me she had arranged a luncheon with some old friends for twelve noon at the Gresham Hotel. I asked her to meet me at the Garden of Remembrance at 11:15 to view the new statue by Oisín O'Kelly which she had not seen. On my way to the Garden I called at the Sinn Féin office at 44 Parnell Square. On leaving to walk over to the Garden I noticed two Special Branch men sitting in their car doing daily surveillance on all who came and went from the offices of Sinn Féin and that they were paying attention to me.

They followed me, and before reaching the Garden stopped me and aggressively asked for identification. I took out my wallet and among other cards were my Holy Name membership card. I handed it to him. He looked at it and said: "Oh, displaying your religion while murdering in the North." I answered:

"Is it not you and your Free State that's responsible for the murder in the North?"

His pal then countered with:

"This is our country, why don't you stay at home?".

I told him that all 32 counties were my country, and asked how many counties were in his country.

This brought laughter from the bystanders. He then used a threat that I had better watch out and I replied that it was he who should watch out.

There were so many going to Rome on Friday the eleventh of October that Aer Lingus could just shuttle them over to London from where the Italian or French planes would complete the journey. Arriving in Rome, we found a huge line of buses awaiting us. Everyone rushed for a bus, but my wife and I saw no necessity to rush and took our time. Arriving in the city we were informed that we would not be staying in the hotel into which we had booked. The police had decided to empty the buses into the hotels and get the buses off the street. We were lucky to be accommodated in a nice quiet hotel on the edge of the city with adequate bus service and tours. On all our other visits to Rome we enjoyed beautiful weather but on this visit there was only one day on which it didn't rain at some time. Even after the canonization ceremony there was a downpour. We took in all the tours, and what we enjoyed most was the visit to Assisi.

Back to London next, to find that the Irish Airports were closed down because of a dense fog all over Ireland. We were bussed and fed at a very nice hotel and later on Saturday we got back to Dublin. On Sunday we left for New York. While I was waiting for our luggage to come through, a man came up and stood beside me. I immediately figured he was an FBI agent. When the first piece of luggage came, he looked at the name and asked for the luggage tickets. I gave them to him. He gave them to another agent and said: "come along with me." I told my wife to join us and we went way down to the other end of

the customs examiners where there was a lone customs examiner. He told him who we were, and said: "you know what to do". The examiner assured him he did. He then asked me for my passport which my wife was holding in her hand and she gave it to him. I grabbed him, trying to take it back but the customs examiner caught me and said "you don't argue with the FBI". I said: "How did I know who he was?" The examiner apologized and said that telling me so was the first thing he should have done. He did a very neat job of examining the luggage and had a hostess take my wife to inform those meeting us that there would be a delay.

After a long time the agent accompanied by a younger agent came back and told me to follow him. He took me to an office, unlocked the door and told me to step in. He locked the door and told me to strip off, which I refused to do. He then started to search under the arms, around my body, my buttocks and genitals. I shouted at him asking what on earth he was trying to do. He answered that he was looking for a large sum of money. I said: "Too late mister, six weeks too late. I take large sums out, but never bring back any." He then asked me where I had gone to, while in Rome. "You did not stay in the hotel in which you were booked. You were not to be found in Rome." I laughed and said: "Isn't that beautiful, just beautiful", that seemed so funny.

"They could not find you in Rome so they thought you were gun-running in the East. They know you fellows can have customs stamps eradicated so that the human eye cannot detect it but the x-ray will show it up."

I received my passport and thanked him. I also asked for, and complained to one of the supervisors and threatened to sue for assault and battery. I was never interfered with again.

In 1979 and 1980 conditions in Long Kesh internment camp were so brutal that the prisoners agitated for political status. Mrs Thatcher, the Lady of the Iron Heart, and un-Christian attitude, was cruelly opposed to granting any of the demands of the prisoners. They rightly demanded political status. Bobby Sands was the leader of the prisoners. They considered the traditional option of Irish Prisoners, and that was the hunger strike, as a means of winning concessions. They had hoped to find another way however. On October 10, 1980, the prisoners

made the following statement:

"We demand, as of right, political recognition, and that we be accorded the status of political prisoners. "

This was a logical demand, since they were captured in armed conflict with the enemy in the struggle for national liberation. However, the British were set on a policy of criminalization. Seven prisoners went on hunger strike on October 27, 1980. Demonstrations and protests by the people of Ireland had no effect on Mrs. Thatcher and the struggle for political status received a setback when the traitor to Ireland, Gerry Fitt, made a statement in the House of Commons that under no circumstances should the prisoners be given political status. Fitt also criticized Cardinal Tomás Ó Fiaich, who had visited the prisons and seen the atrocious conditions, for his statements against these conditions. The Cardinal had criticized the conditions on humanitarian grounds. Mr. Fitt was rewarded with the title of Lord Fitt, conferred by the Queen of England.

The protests continued and now they included the Dublin Government. The Taoiseach, Charles Haughey, described the situation as the most important issue facing his government, and the Irish People, and that the Six-County statelet was a political failure. However, he made absolutely no move to help solve the situation of the prisoners, even ignoring requests from the prisoners' families.

One of the prisoners, Seán McKenna, was by now almost blind and was sinking fast when the Northern Ireland Office made an effort to solve the situation if the strike were to be called off. As McKenna was near collapse, and with no time to bargain, the strikers decided to call it off on December 18, 1980, after 53 days of fasting. It was called off with the approval of Bobby Sands, the prisoners' commanding officer, having received a 32-page document from the British outlining certain new conditions for the prisoners. This document was reneged on in the New Year.

During this first hunger strike of this period, on December 8, Mr. Haughey and Mrs Thatcher met in Dublin, and although it was not on the agenda, they had to give some consideration to the hunger strike which by then was well under way. Officially their talks were about relations between the 26 Counties and the Six Counties. Apart from a nice luncheon, nothing was

accomplished. Haughey agreed with her that only a majority of the people in the Six Counties could decide whether or not those counties were to become part of a United Ireland.

This was absurd nonsense, as the people of those counties had nothing to do with the establishment of the Six Counties as a separate statelet. It was solely a figment of Lloyd George's evil mind. Thatcher thought that there should be more co-operation with regard to 'security' between the Six Counties and the 26 Counties, and Haughey agreed.

Now that the strike was over, the British, true to form, denied that they were about to make any concessions and claimed a victory. We in New York, while we were glad that no one had died, were very angry with Thatcher and her henchmen in the North for using deceit in dealing with seven dying men. Bobby Sands felt the same way and he prepared to go on strike himself with the intention of either dying or getting political status. A new hunger strike was planned to begin on March 1, 1981. Bobby Sands began the strike, with the plan to stagger the days on which the men would begin their fast. It was arranged that at intervals another prisoner would go on strike so that there would be a continual list of prisoners dying unless they were granted political status. Bobby Sands spent the time writing beautiful essays and poetry.

Then on March 5, Frank Maguire, the M.P. for Fermanagh and South Tyrone died of a heart attack. There was a by-election. Bobby Sands was named as the nationalist candidate. The SDLP did not contest the election. Harry West, a very popular Unionist was Sands' opponent. Sands won, receiving 30,492 votes to West's 29,046 votes. Sands was by now forty days on hunger strike, and there was much speculation as to whether Mrs. Thatcher would allow a fellow Member of Parliament to die. Her Iron heart did not soften. Many around the world were stunned at her un-Christian attitude.

Bobby Sands died on May 5, 1981, after 66 days on hunger strike. His death was followed by that of by Francis Hughes who died on May 12 after 59 days. Raymond McCreesh died on May 21 after 61 days. Patrick O'Hara also died on May 21 after 61 days. No one died in June. Joe McDonnell died July 7 after 61 days. Martin Hurson died July 13 after 46 days. Kevin Lynch died on August 1 after 73 days. Kieran Doherty on August 2

after 73 days. Thomas McElwee died on August 8 after 62 days. Michael Devine died on August 20 after 60 days.

During the 173 days of the strike there was a picket outside the British Consulate with the names of those on strike and the number of days on strike. When they died, there was a funeral procession, with a coffin draped with the Tricolour on which rested a beret and gloves, from the Consulate to Dag Hammarskjöld Plaza of the United Nations. A Mass was concelebrated by about fifteen priests for the repose of their souls. On Saturdays, the pickets were huge and spread out for several blocks. We worked in conjunction with the police to accommodate the traffic.

Meanwhile, London and Washington became very worried about the increase in the financial reports of INAC, brought about by the tragic circumstances of the hunger strikes. They determined to put a stop to it.



Left to right: Congressman Mario Biaggi (Dem.); Michael Flannery; Judge James J. Comerford, speaking; Joseph Roche, President of AOH, is behind the judge, on his right.



Left to right: Frank Beirne; Michael Flannery; Hugh O'Lunney, in 1991.



At Michael's 90th Birthday Party:
Noel Moloney, grand-nephew; Michael Flannery;



At Michael's 90th Birthday Party;
left to right: Michael Kennedy, Attorney;
Monsignor Kevin Flanagan, Roscommon; Michael Flannery;
Congressman Mario Biaggi (Dem.); Frank Beirne, Leitrim,
Chairman of NY St. Patrick's Day Parade.
Behind on left: Frank O'Neill, Chicago and Des Long, Limerick.

The Trial

Chapter Seventeen

With an active campaign being carried on by the IRA it was obvious that they were receiving an adequate supply of arms from some place. There must have been a good contact in Ireland taking care of things. Jack McCabe was such a contact and his death was one of the greatest losses sustained by the Republican movement. His death while working on an explosive mixture was caused by a piece of steel falling on the concrete floor causing a spark and an explosion that blew everything to smithereens making things here and at home very much more difficult. A visit from an army representative didn't make things any easier in America, making it necessary for several people to join forces before they were sold out by a supplier that George Harrison was doing business with for a long time.

This arms supplier was George DeMeo. He was caught in some deal by the FBI or CIA and sentenced to ten years in prison. DeMeo now made a deal with the authorities to have his sentence shortened if he gave them the names of those shipping arms to the IRA. The deal was made, and DeMeo, all wired up with listening devices, visited George Harrison. He told George not to worry, and that he would introduce him to a new and reputable supplier to replace him. The introduction was made. The new supplier was an agent named John White (real name Winslow) who continued to supply arms on a small scale before arranging the big deal. When he had gained George's confidence, he decided to spring the trap. He arranged for one big deal, consisting of almost one hundred guns and plenty of ammunition. The down payment was

$20,000 and George needed $17,000. We knew that all our phones had been tapped, but the delivery was arranged for the following night, so George had to get in touch with me.

One night I got a call from Harrison asking for some literature. I replied: 'OK George.' He then said that he needed a greater supply than usual as we were to have a couple of affairs to cover. Again I said OK. He asked if it was all right to pick it up the following evening. Again, it was OK and I hung up. I knew instinctively that the FBI would have had the house under surveillance the following evening. I decided that I would not leave the house. After dinner each day I took out the garbage and deposited it in the garbage receptacle. When my wife said "the garbage Michael" I forgot about the agents and took it out and then came back in. Harrison did arrive. He was admitted and received the business envelope with the money in it, tucked it safely away and left to take the subway to where Tom Falvey was to meet him. More about this later.

Early in June of 1981, I went on a tour with the Tipperary National Benevolent Association to Gettysburg, Pa. While there I purchased the local paper and was surprised to read of the arrest in New York of George Harrison, Tom Falvey and Pat Mullin on charges of exporting guns and ammunition to Ireland. I thought it strange, for George had told me that those he was dealing with had Government connections.

Just around then, my wife and I went on our annual visit to Ireland for the hurling and football finals. Some days after our return I was arrested. One morning while coming out of church, four FBI agents, three men and one woman approached me and placed me under arrest. I was handcuffed and marched back to my house where their cars were parked. They ordered me to get in. I told them I was going into the house as I wanted to tell my wife, and change my clothes. They said they would tell her and would I please get in the car. I then told them that I was going in whether they liked it or not. I was going to call my attorney. All of us went in and my wife was surprised, but not excited. I told her I was under arrest but would be back for dinner to which one of the agents replied: "that depends." I told them the cuffs were not necessary but they said they were.

We left and headed for the Federal Building in downtown

Manhattan. Arriving there, I was fingerprinted, a board was hung around my neck and pictures were taken. After a front view the photographer told me to turn for a side view. I told him if he wanted a side view he would have to do the moving. He did. I was handcuffed again and taken down to the lobby. While there, a lawyer friend of mine was passing by and saw me. He asked what was wrong and I told him. He told the agents to remove the cuffs and take me out of the lobby. They took me downstairs. After a short time I was driven to the Federal Building in Brooklyn and taken to the Marshal's office. The Marshal was very friendly and told me I would have to be fingerprinted and have photos taken. I told him that they had already been taken in New York. He said: we have nothing to do with what happened in New York", but if I didn't want to have them taken I would not get bail. I told him I didn't want bail but my attorney was on his way and we would decide then about the fingerprints and photos. I, however, would not accept bail. He said that was up to me.

Frank Durkan, Attorney, arrived and fingerprints and photos were taken. Frank said he would be back later, when I would go before the judge. One of the clerks then called me and said he had to have some information also.

The usual routine questions were asked. I was asked if I was ever in jail. I answered "no", but one of my guards said "you are a liar, you were." The clerk looked at me and I asked if they were dealing with my life in America or was Ireland included. He said strictly America. I told him then I was never in jail. He wrote "No" and asked the agent not to interfere. Then he said "I am curious now about Ireland." I told him "you name the jail and I was in it." He laughed and said "good for you."

I was approached by a young well dressed man who told the agents that he wanted to speak to me and he took me aside. He then asked me: "what is this thing about bail? Do you think because of your age the court will be sympathetic?"

I told him age had nothing to do with it. "I believe I am innocent of any crime and accepting bail would make me guilty." He said "bail is set at $100,000. Suppose we reduce it to $25,000." I said "reduce it to one dollar and I still won't accept it." He left and the agents took me upstairs to a large room.

In this room there were eleven or twelve men sitting around,

all of whom seemed to be agents with nothing to do or who were waiting to be assigned to duty. There was a lively debate about world affairs in which I took part. A difference of opinion about a historical event arose between two of the men present, and I tried to correct it when one of them inquired in a refined English accent if I knew as much about American history as I did about European. I was surprised by the accent and I told him I was prepared to discuss any phase of American history he chose. He said the choice was mine. I deliberately named a major event in the War of Independence but one that is not always given the credit it deserves, and this was the Battle of Trenton.

All of them had heard of the battle, but none of them had any detailed knowledge of it. I asked if they had ever heard of General Edward Hand. None of them had. I then gave them an account of how Washington was caught in between the rivers. Cornwallis was waiting in Princeton to attack in the morning, remarking that he had the old fox in his den and that he would never escape. Washington's only hope was to send out a skirmishing party that would attack and delay Cornwallis's march until darkness had set in. Colonel Edward Hand, an able and courageous officer, did an admirable job of causing the necessary delay until darkness was beginning to set in by the time they reached Trenton. Cornwallis decided not to attack until morning, but in the morning, Washington and his army had gone. If Washington had lost at Trenton the war would have been over for the Revolutionaries. This silenced the man with the accent and the conversation turned to more jovial topics. During the talk and laughter, a man who seemed to have authority came to the entrance and looked everyone over. Stepping away he encountered another man and asked him if that was 'The Bird" in there. The other man answered him that it was, to which he replied: "he doesn't seem to be very concerned". The other man replied: "On the contrary, he is having a ball", at which all in the room, including myself, laughed.

The authoritative one returned, and asked me if I would like a cup of coffee. I replied "not particularly", although I had been fasting since early morning. The others in the room all said that they would like coffee. The man disappeared and

returned with two others carrying trays of coffee. He had a small tray on which there was a cup of coffee and a bottle of some sort of intoxicant. He gave the coffee to me and said "put a good dash of this in it, it will do you good". I showed him my Pioneer badge, and had to explain to him why pioneers abstain from intoxicating drink. He went away and Frank Durkan arrived and I was taken into court.

Frank, Sheila O'Donaghue, a lawyer friend of mine, myself and the Prosecuting Attorney stood before the judge who asked Frank about me. Frank gave a glowing account of how important a person I was, respected not alone in New York, and the neighbouring states, but from California to the rock bound coast of Maine. When Frank finished the judge said that he was going to free me into Frank's custody, without bail, and he asked if the prosecuting attorney had any objections. There were none. If ever silence was a sign of joy, it was that moment. For a whole minute there was not a sound to be heard. Frank then thanked the Judge and we went to celebrate.

The surprise over, it was back to the regular routine of pickets, meetings, dinners and dances, leaving everything concerning the arrest in the hands of the lawyers. Irish Northern Aid now, with or without consent, was named as a Foreign Agent, which meant endless filing of forms, and sworn accounts of all moneys collected and distributed. There was an ongoing legal battle as to whether I was a foreign agent or not; with me denying that I represented any foreign society and the government saying that I did.

The trial of Thomas Falvey, Daniel Gormley, George Harrison, Patrick Mullin and myself was presided over by Judge Joseph McLaughlin. My attorney was Michael Kennedy. Frank Durkan defended George Harrison, William Mogulescu and Lawrence Vogelman defended Thomas Falvey and David Lewis defended Daniel Gormley. David Kirby acted for the prosecution.

It took place in the United States Courthouse, Brooklyn, and went on from September 23 until November 5, 1982. The accusations against us were that we were involved in a conspiracy to purchase arms, ammunition and implements of war, and to ship them to the Irish Republican Army in Ireland to help them carry out the war to rid Ireland of the British. I was

accused of being "the back-up money man".

The main evidence against us were the tape recordings of DeMeo and agent Winslow which were made when he met with George Harrison. There were also the wire taps of phones. In the opening remarks by the prosecution however it was pointed out that we were not on trial for our political beliefs. Our defence was based on the fact that we would not deny the charges. In fact some of them were admitted with pride. However we operated with the full knowledge of the United States Government and therefore we did not break any law of the United States.

In an opening statement for the defence, Frank Durkan pointed out how George Harrison met DeMeo who was an arms dealer. Through him arms were purchased and sent to Ireland over a period of many years. DeMeo, he said, operated as a representative of the United States Government and was a member of the CIA. The Government at all times, knew exactly where all of his weapons went. They supported the exportation of arms to Ireland, as they had supported the sending of arms in a covert way to many other countries.

In the opening statement for the defence by Frank Durkan, he said that the defendant whom he represented, George Harrison, not only did not deny sending arms to aid the struggle in Ireland, but admitted with pride that he had been doing so for the past twenty-five years with the full knowledge and approval of the US government.

In my opening statement I pointed out that I joined the IRA at a very early age and that if what I did then was right and if what I stood for then was right, then it must be right today, as the people in the IRA are still fighting for freedom against the same enemy. I made my own opening statement in which I pointed out that America would not be a Republic if it were not for George Washington and his army and their success against the same British Crown. I mentioned that when I spoke to Senator John F Kennedy in 1957, he said that he would help Ireland if he became President. I believe he would have done so had he lived. Sitting alongside us, the defendants, would be Washington and the other patriots of America and sitting alongside Mr. Kirby at his table was his companion prosecutor, the Attorney General of Great Britain. Anyone who did trans-

port arms to Ireland from here had my full blessing. I pointed out that I regretted that the United States Government was collaborating with the British government to indict us as criminals which we were not. I regretted also that the reason that we now stood accused of arms exporting to Ireland was because they wanted to stop me from raising money and sending it to Ireland, which I did do, to feed and clothe the distressed people in the war-torn British occupied northeast counties.

The prosecution was furious that we were allowed to address the jury and complained. Mr Kirby demonstrated a very vindictive attitude to us throughout the trial. The case for the prosecution began with the testimony of an FBI agent, and the playing of tapes of conversations between George Harrison and DeMeo. This FBI agent admitted that the FBI from time to time had contacts with the CIA but at no time did they try to discover if or not DeMeo was an agent of the CIA.

The prosecution admitted that there had been contacts between the FBI and the RUC and British Intelligence, but when asked for specific details declared that it was classified information. All of this served to strengthen the case for the defence in the eyes of the jury and to add weight to a conspiracy behind the scenes. All of this mystery was supported by DeMeo when he took the witness stand. His testimony consisted mostly of invoking the Fifth Amendment so as not to incriminate himself. He did seem to link himself to many countries in Central America and elsewhere to where arms exporting had been going on from America.

The testimony of a retired Military Intelligence officer further helped to link DeMeo with the CIA, although DeMeo continued to deny this. The prosecution was considerably frustrated by this line of defence and could find no avenue of approach which would add credibility to their denials that DeMeo was a CIA agent. The dilemma of the situation was made clear by the testimony of an ex-CIA man, in which he said that in the national interest it was often necessary to lie to allies and Congress as well as to enemies. Therefore the jury could not be confident that anything said on behalf of the prosecution could be taken as being the truth, since the defence asserted that there was a CIA involvement.

The following are some extracts from the trial transcripts:

Mr. Kennedy: You're the Michael Flannery accused in this indictment and a defendant in this case, are you not?
A. Yes.
Q. Where do you reside?
A. Jackson Heights, Borough of Queens, New York City.
Q. How long have you lived there, Mr. Flannery?
A. About fifty-five years.
Q. With whom do you reside?
A. With my wife, Margaret Mary Egan Flannery.
Q. And is Margaret Flannery in the Courtroom today?
A. She is.
Q. When and where were you and Mrs. Flannery married?
A. In 1928, in a church in Rockville Center, Nassau County.
Q. You know George Harrison, do you not, Mr. Flannery?
A. Yes.
Q. Will you tell his Honor and the ladies and gentlemen of the jury when it was you met George Harrison, and what your relationship with him has been over the years?
A. I met George Harrison about twenty-five years ago, and ever since have been associated with George in Irish national organizations, such as 'The National Graves Association,' which takes care of monuments to heroes of the Irish struggle.
Q. In reference to these four men and yourself, or any one of them, was there ever a time when you planned or worked with them to violate the laws of the United States of America?
A. Never.
Q. To your knowledge, was there ever a time when any one or all of them conspired to break the laws of the United States?
A. Never.
Q. You are a United States citizen, are you not?
A. Yes.
Q. But you weren't born here?
A. No.
Q. Tell us where you were born, and what year it was.
A. In Tipperary, Ireland, in 1902.
Q. So you're now in your 81st year?

A. No, 80th, I believe; 81st, yes, you're right.
Q. You decided to become a citizen of the United States?
A. That's correct.
Q. When was that?
A. I came here in 1927; and after six years became a citizen. 1933 or so, I believe.
Q. At the beginning of our Great Depression?
A. Yes.
Q. When you became a citizen, you had to take an oath to support and defend the Constitution of the United States, didn't you?
A. That's right.
Q. Also an oath of loyalty to the Government of the United States, didn't you?
A. Correct.
Q. Are those oaths that you took, serious oaths to you?
A. Very serious.
Q. Have you ever, Michael Flannery, done anything to knowingly violate your oaths to the United States Constitution or to our Unites States Government?
A. Never.

And later..

Q. Over the years, Mr Flannery, have you raised money for victims of English oppression in Ireland?
A. Yes.
Q. You do that to this day?
A. I do.
Q. And will, so long as you draw breath?
A. That's right.
Q. Have you also gotten money, specifically, over the years, for the use of the Irish Republican Army?
A. I have.
Q. Tell us how that came about; how you came into possession of funds or money for the Irish Republican Army.
A. Well, I was a member of the Irish Republican Army until I left Ireland. There had been a general exodus of young Irish men and women from 1924 to 1927; and I came here purposely to organize these people so they would be a help to the movement, to the IRA at home, to complete the freedom of Ireland. So when I came, I was widely known by

those people. Thousands of them knew me from Ireland; and those who didn't got to know me. Most of them came from the Republican Movement. Therefore, it was an easy job to organize them.

Q. And those efforts of yours, on behalf of the freedom cause in Ireland, are efforts you have continued in all of the fifty-five years you've lived in the United States?

A. Correct.

Q. Right to this day?

A. Yes.

Q. Mr. Flannery, what is your religion?

A. Catholic.

Q. Is that a religion you take seriously?

A. Certainly.

However, when Mr. Kennedy asked how frequently the witness attended at Mass, Mr. Kirby objected, and was sustained.

Q. Are you an active member of your parish?

Again Mr. Kirby objected; nevertheless, the answer went on the record.

A. I am.

Q. What parish is that, sir?

A. Blessed Sacrament, Jackson Heights.

Q. How long have you been active in that parish?

A. Well, almost since I came. The parish was not formed until 1939, I believe. Before that I was a member of Saint Joan of Arc, also in Jackson Heights. In '39 I took a major part in the formation of the parish, and in the building of the Church and the School.

Q. You were a member of North Tipperary Brigade of the Irish Republican Army, weren't you?

A. That's correct.

Q. At what age did you join the IRA, Mr. Flannery?

A. At 14.

Q. 14?

A. Yes. The legitimate age was 16, but I was as tall at 14 as I am now. My older brothers (seven to fourteen years older than I) were all members, so it was an easy matter to get in. In fact, nobody asked me my age.

Q. Were you one of the founders and directors of Irish Northern Aid?

A. Correct.
Q. When did you form, or help found, that organization?
A. 1970. There were other organizations previously, but the name was changed in 1970 to Irish Northern Aid.
Q. You're also a member of fraternal organizations connected to your home county of Tipperary, are you not?
A. That's correct.
Q. And a member of the Gaelic Athletic Association?
A. Yes.
Q. Did you hold office in that Association?
A. I did.
Q. What office?
A. President, New York. And, after the Presidency, I was a delegate to the Association's conference in Ireland, which is held once a year.
Q. Do you continue to serve as a delegate to the Gaelic Athletic Association's annual meetings in Ireland?
A. Yes.
Q. You mentioned that you knew Patrick Mullin through the Ancient Order of Hibernians. For how long have you been a Hibernians' member?
A. I don't remember. I'm not a joiner; the reason I belong to so many Irish organizations is that I feel there's a need for them. They were all national; and I felt it was better to belong in order to promote the ideal for which I lived, which was – freedom of Ireland.
Q. Are you a member of the Pioneer Association?
A. I am.
Q. A lifetime Association member?
A. Well, this is my 68th year as a member; and that continues for life.
Q. Tell us what the Pioneer Association is, Mr. Flannery.
Mr. Kirby objected; but the Court said the question would be allowed.
A. It's an association that prohibits you from drinking. We do it as a sacrifice for those who overindulge, become alcoholics, break up homes, things like that. To bring these people to their senses and encourage them to live normal lives.
Q. But you don't drink alcohol at all?
A. No.

Q. Sir, what is the Clan na Gael?

A. Clan na Gael is a national organization formed here in America in 1858, as a result of a rebellion in Ireland immediately after the Famine. I don't like to call it 'Famine;' it was a Great Hunger. There was no famine in Ireland at the time; food enough to feed all of Ireland in comfort. The poor people were shipped out to England, to other countries, were allowed to starve. It was a Great Hunger. After the rebellion, people were transported to New South Wales and other parts of Australia; also to South America; and some of them were lucky to escape and come to America –

Mr Kirby: Excuse me, your Honor. I object. This is irrelevant to the whole proceeding.

The Court: It is beginning to wander, Mr. Kennedy.

Mr. Kennedy: Because of the relationship of the Clan na Gael to the IRA – I'll tie it up if I'm given another moment.

A. (continuing) I'm sorry. It was established by these people who came here, for the sole purpose of promoting the freedom of Ireland.

Q. Were you a member of the Clan?

A. Yes.

Q. Did you serve as national president of the Clan?

A. I did.

Q. Have there been occasions, sir, when you joined with Irish Protestant or Orange societies to try to bring peace to Ireland?

A. Yes.

Q. Describe that for us briefly, please.

A. Well, I met recently with Glenn Barr, who was the PRO of the UDA at the time. I met with Andy Tyrie, President of the UDA.

Q. What is the UDA?

A. The Ulster Defense Association.

Q. One of the IRA's primary antagonists in Ireland?

A. The chief antagonist.

Q. For what purpose did you meet with these gentlemen?

A. To try to bring about peace; to talk to them as Irishmen, and get them to speak to the IRA, to settle things once and for all. The only thing we want, and the only solution, is for England to leave Ireland. But, to use the exact words of

Glenn Barr, "We have a good thing going; while we can keep it going, we will."

There was an objection by the prosecution.

The Court: I'll sustain that. We're going back pretty far now, Mr. Kennedy.

Mr. Kennedy: The fact that the United States Government has chosen to indict an 80-year-old man doesn't mean you can't go back 80 years?

The Court: It does mean you shouldn't go back 100 years.

Mr. Kennedy: His character is going into evidence.

The Court: I sustain the objection. Move to something closer.

Q. Was your family an Irish Republican family, or were they nonpolitical?

A. An Irish Republican family; they had suffered much.

Mr. Kennedy: Let me ask: Suffered what, and at whose hands?

Mr Kirby: Objection.

The Court: Sustained.

Q. It wouldn't be the Irish, would it?

The Court: Sustained.

Q. I gather, Mr. Flannery, you bear a faint dislike for the English?

A. Not exactly. I dislike them for their invasion, and cruelty and brutality in Ireland. But outside of that I have no dislike for English people.

Q. Then you distinguish, do you, between the English people and the English Government?

A. Well, the English Government is what I'm totally opposed to. They're the ones who keep aggressive possession of Ireland. The English people I have no ill will towards.

Q. Tell us where you received your early education.

A. Mostly at the Trappist Monastery.

Q. Located?

A. Outside Roscrea, in Tipperary.

Q. Is that Mount Saint Joseph's?

A. Mount Saint Joseph's Monastery.

Q. When did you leave Mount Saint Joseph's?

A. At age 16.

Q. Did you have further formal education after Mount Saint Joseph's, Mr Flannery?

A. Well, much of my education was received in prison. I was

associated with some great educators, fellow-prisoners, and it is to them I give credit for most of my education.

Q. Did you also for a period of time attend Columbia University here in New York?

A. Yes.

Q. What did you study at Columbia, Mr Flannery?

A. The Arts.

Q. Does that – Mount Saint Joseph's, the things you learned in prison, and then Columbia University – does that comprise the bulk of your formal education?

A. Yes.

Q. The rest has been self-education?

A. To a goodly extent.

Q. In terms of self-education, has one particular field attracted you?

A. History, both Irish and American.

Q. You told us you joined the IRA at the age of 14. That would be in 1916, correct?

A. That's right.

Q. Where were you, sir, what were you doing, at the time of the Rising?

A. I was standing by a bicycle in County Tipperary. We were waiting for word from Dublin to take part in the rebellion.

Q. Did the word come?

A. No.

Q. Why not, Mr Flannery?

A. Well, originally there was an order; and then, a countermanding order. We never got another order after the countermanding order.

Q. Did you begin a career as a guerrilla fighter with the IRA in 1916?

A. You could say so, but I didn't do any fighting until 1919.

Q. In 1918, there were General Elections in England and Ireland?

A. There were.

Q. Tell us very briefly the results of those elections in Ireland.

A. Well, the Sinn Féin organization – which was, and still is, the political wing of the IRA – contested in those elections, and won over 80% of the vote.

Q. What is 'Sinn Féin'? 'Sinn Féin' is Gaelic, is it not?

A. Meaning,'Ourselves Alone.'
Q. When Sinn Féin won 80% of the seats in the 1918 elections, what was the reaction of England?
Mr Kirby: Objection.
The Court: I'm going to sustain that.
Q. Did there come a time when a parliament called 'Dáil' was formed in Ireland?
A. Yes; in January, 1919.
Q. Did you, sir, become a liaison of the Dáil?
A. Yes.
Q. What year was that?
A. 1920.
Q. What was the function of a Dáil liaison?
A. We had taken over the law courts and the government of Ireland. So, when litigants would come to our courts, I was one who would get all the facts, etc., and bring the opponents, litigants, face to face because the courts were secret.
Q. Then, how long did you work – Mr. Kirby: I move that testimony be stricken. It's not relevant.
The Court: I'll allow it. But if you'll move along, Mr. Kennedy -
Mr. Kennedy: I'm going to. We're going to get him out of Ireland in 1927.
The Court: I'd like to get him out in 1982.
Mr. Kennedy: Mr Flannery has asked me to complete it before he dies of old age, your Honor. I'll do the best I can.
Q. In 1919 and 1920 you were a guerrilla fighter for the IRA, were you not?
A. Yes.
Q. Fighting the Black and Tans?
A. Yes.
Q. Who were the Black and Tans?
A. An auxiliary force of the Irish Constabulary. They were the criminals of England. When the Royal Irish Constabulary failed in Ireland, they were brought over from English jails.
Q. The IRA was engaged, and you were engaged, in fighting the Black and Tans in 1919 and 1920, weren't you?
A. That's correct.
Q. Did a time come in 1921 when you were captured by the British Army?
A. Yes.

Q. Were you put into prison?
A. Yes.
Q. What prisons were you put into?
A. Port Laoise first; and then Mountjoy.
Q. Mountjoy?
A. In Dublin. It's called after Lord Mountjoy. There was no 'joy' in it.
Q. How long were you in prison?
A. Six months.
Q. Did a time come, while you were in prison, when the IRA made significant advances in its fight against the British?
A. Yes. The English, or British, called a truce. We were evidently winning. And one way to prevent it was to call a truce, and thrash it out at a treaty table. Which they did.
Q. During the fighting, where was it the bulk of the money and weapons for the IRA came from?
A. From America.
Q. And has that tradition continued to this date?
A. Yes.
And continuing..
Q. In that period, 1922, was Ireland partitioned, divided by the English?
A. Yes.
Q. How, Mr Flannery?
A. By an Act of British Parliament, not one Irishman of any creed or denomination taking part or knowing about it.
Q. How was the line drawn to partition Ireland?
A. A Border Commission was set up, and the Irish refused to take part in it. An Irish member was nominated, but he refused to take part; so it was set up on entirely sectarian grounds.
Q. And the geographical basis would be the Six Counties of the north, in Ulster, is that right?
A. Correct?
Q. Where there was then, and remains today, a Protestant majority?
A. Yes.
Q. And the counties in the south formed the Free State?
A. Yes; with three of the Ulster counties.
Q. This partition of Ireland – the north from the south – was

that, to your knowledge, at the time it occurred in 1922, designed to be a temporary partition?

A. Yes, that's what they called it.

Mr Kirby: I object. This is history, has no relevance to the trial.

The Court: Well, I'll permit it as background for the jury to understand the nature of these charges. But again, Mr Kennedy, if we could move on with more dispatch, it would be appreciated.

Mr. Kennedy: Thank you. I'll try. It forms such a part of his character that I have to bring it out this way.

Q. The partition, originally designed to be temporary, exists to this day, does it not?

A. Yes.

Q. Sixty years later?

A. Yes.

And later...

Q. While you were at Mountjoy, and later at the Curragh, did you engage in a hunger-strike?

A. I did.

Q. For how many days were you on a hunger-strike?

A. Twenty-eight.

Q. Why were you on a hunger-strike?

A. Well, because of conditions in the prison.

Q. And were there other prisoners on hunger-strike?

A. There were.

Q. Was Mr de Valera among them?

A. Yes.

Q. He was someone you knew personally?

A. Yes.

Q. Among the prisoners in the Curragh with you in 1922 and 1923, were there lawyers, doctors, poets, writers, people of the sort?

A. Right.

Mr Kirby: Objection.

The Court: I'll allow it.

Q. And among them were people from whom you received your education in the Arts?

A. Yes.

Q. Seán Ó Faoláin was one?

A. Yes.

Mr. Kirby: Objection.
The Court: I'll permit it.
Q. There came a time when you got out of prison, out of the Curragh?
A. Correct.
Q. When was that?
A. May, 1924.
Q. And we know you came to the United States in 1927. What did you do between 1924 and 1927 in Ireland?
A. I was reorganizing the Irish Republican Army.
Q. Why did you come to the United States, Mr Flannery?
A. Part of the Irish Republican party decided to go into the Dáil. I disagreed with them. They told me they were going to get a Republic in three years, freedom for all Ireland. I gave them the benefit of the doubt. And the leaders who did not agree with them decided that I and others should come here to organize the thousands who had already come to America.
Q. It was 1928 when you met Margaret Mary Egan Flannery, correct?
A. Yes.
Q. Where had you and she first met?
A. Well, her brothers were members of the Irish Republican Army. I met them first. Meeting her was easy after that.
Q. You met her in Ireland, did you?
A. Yes.
Q. Was she from the same county as you?
A. Yes, Tipperary.
Q. You and Mrs Flannery didn't have children of your own?
A. No.
Q. You have raised approximately fourteen nieces and nephews over the years?
A. Yes.
Q. Raised and educated them, right?
A. Yes.
Q. How many of those fourteen did you educate here in the United States, as opposed to Ireland?
A. Seven here, and seven in Ireland.
Q. And during the years 1949 to 1969 you continued to work on these various committees, organizations and associations

you have told us about, in the cause of Irish liberty?
A. With all my energy.
Q. Directing your attention now to '69, that was the year you founded, and became one of the representatives or trustees of the Irish Northern Aid committee, is that true?
A. No. It was known by another name then, Irish Action Committee. In 1970 it became Irish Northern Aid.
Q. And did a time come when, to your knowledge, you and Irish Northern Aid began receiving the wrath of the British Government?
A. Yes.
Q. Did a time come when you received some attention from the United Kingdom, or British, Government?
A. We received attention, and it increased over time.
Q. What form did the attention from the British Government take? We're talking about 1969 through the decade of the '70s.
A. They tried very hard to put Irish Northern Aid out of business, by letters to the United States Government.
Q. Letters from the British Government to the United States?
A. To the United States Government. And much adverse publicity in English papers, mentioning me by name, pictures of me, and so forth.
Q. What was it about you, or Irish Northern Aid, that the English Government seemed to be disliking, that would cause then to protest?
A. Because the Irish –
Mr Kirby: Objection. How does he know what the British Government thinks?
The Court: I'll permit it. Go ahead.
A. Irish Northern Aid was set up specifically to help the distressed, and those whose breadwinners were in prison. In England, they didn't like this because one of the methods (they employed) was to starve revolutions and rebellions.
Q. Also, in 1969, what has come to be known as the Civil Rights movement in Ireland began, did it not?
A. That's correct.
Q. Patterned after our own Civil Rights movement, in the southern part particularly of the United States, correct?
A. Correct.

Q. Directing your attention to November, 1969, do you recall the march from Belfast to Derry?
A. I do.
Q. What happened there?
Mr. Kirby: Objection.
Mr. Kennedy: Very briefly, your Honor.
A. Well, the march was intercepted by the Royal Ulster Constabulary. And they (the marchers) were beaten almost to death.
Q. Then, in 1970, did the British Army move into the north of Ireland and occupy it?
A. Correct.
Q. They're there to this day, are they not?
A. Yes.
Q. In 1971, was an Emergency Powers Act re-implemented in the north of Ireland?
A. The Emergency Powers Act has been in effect in the north of Ireland since the institution of that government over fifty years ago.
Q. In January of 1972 an event called 'Bloody Sunday' occurred, did it not?
A. It did.
Q. The war in the north gained momentum, did it not, through the decade of the '70s?
A. Correct.
Q. With killing and bloodletting on both sides?
A. Right.
Q. During that period of time, to your knowledge, what was the source of the bulk of the weapons and money with which the Irish Republican Army fought the British armies in the north of Ireland?
A. America. I don't believe that the bulk of the money was directed to the Irish Republican Army. To my knowledge, there was some, but not the bulk. The bulk of the money from America went to Irish Northern Aid, a benevolent association.
Q. Any of the money you or your fellows raised for the Northern Aid committee itself, did any of that, to your knowledge, go for weapons or munitions?
A. None.

Q. You're sure of that?
A. Well, the United States Government must be sure of it also, because we had to give the Treasury Department an account of every penny we collected.
Mr Kirby: Judge, their account has been the subject of a civil suit in the Southern District. Where the Government has alleged that they have not made a proper accounting. I think that that's a completely outrageous statement.
Mr Kennedy: He has opened the door, your Honor, so I'll discuss that a little bit, if I may. I'm grateful to Mr Kirby.
Mr Kirby: Your Honor, I object to the testimony.
The Court: On the ground you don't believe it?
Mr Kirby: No, on the ground that it is not accurate.
The Court: That means you don't believe it. You bring that out on cross.
Mr Kennedy: Who is he to say what is accurate or inaccurate.
Q. Is it a fact, to your knowledge, and through your own efforts, that the money raised for Irish Northern Aid was used exclusively to aid victims of English oppression in the north of Ireland?
A. Correct.
Q. Did one penny of the money raised for Irish Northern Aid go for the purchase of weapons, munitions, or implements of war and destruction?
A. Not one penny.
Q. Aside from your fundraising efforts for Irish Northern Aid, you told us that, on occasion, moneys would be given to you specifically for the Irish Republican Army?
A. That is so.
Q. What would you do, sir, with the moneys you'd get that would specifically be given to you for the Irish Republican Army?
A. I would make sure it got to the Irish Republican Army. I don't have any direct connection with the IRA, but I know ways of getting it to them.
Q. What were those ways and means of getting the money into the proper hands in Ireland?
A. Well, I can't disclose that because, naturally, those people would be subject to harassment, probably death in some cases.

Q. Did you keep that money separate in any way – that is, the money given to you by people who had designated it for the IRA?
A. Always kept it separate.
Q. Tell us how, Mr Flannery.
A. It was kept in my home; (but) no longer.
A. It's not safe to do so any longer.
Q. To direct your attention back to the late '50s or early '60s: Did there come a time when George Harrison came to see you with a particular plan or proposal?
A. Yes; at that time he told me he had gotten a very good source, government protection, to send arms to Ireland.
Q. And did he mention the name, if you can recall, of this very good source with government connections?
A. He did.
Q. What was the man's name?
A. DeMeo.
Q. Did you ever meet this Mr. DeMeo?
A. I didn't; and, as a matter of fact, had forgotten the name.
Q. Did you tell Mr. Harrison you would help him in terms of giving him money?
A. Yes; I think that was one of the reasons for his coming to me in the first instance. He was one of the very few who would know that I had gotten, and had transferred, money to the IRA, if it was given to me for that purpose; and I always honored the trust that was put in me.
Q. So, over the years, you knew that Harrison was buying weapons from this man with Government connections, did you?
A. I did.
Q. How did you come to accumulate such a sum as $20,000, Mr Flannery.
A. That was an extraordinary amount to have. It was due to the hunger-strike. Three months, four months, some of them were on hunger-strike. Everybody I met seemed to be giving me money, and exclusively for the IRA, because all those men who were on hunger-strike were IRA members.
Q. That's the hunger-strike in which Bobby Sands participated, about which we've heard?
A. Yes; ten prisoners died on that strike.

Q. Directing you back, Mr. Flannery to October of 1969, did a time come when an article in the New York Times struck your attention?
A. Yes.
Q. Was that article with reference to Mr DeMeo?
A. It was.
Q. Did you know it to be the same Mr DeMeo, or were you not sure?
A. I wasn't sure, because I had almost forgotten the name George had mentioned to me; and I met George, and asked him, "Is this the man you were doing business with?" He assured me it was. I said, "What mess is he in?" George assured me, "Don't worry about it. This is going to blow over." Words like that.
Q. That article reflected that someone, at least, thought DeMeo was a member of CIA, did it not?
A. That's correct.
Q. Did you ask Mr Harrison about that?
A. Well, he assured me – I assumed it was something like that when he first told me about it – but, he really meant for certain, at that time, that he (DeMeo) was connected with the CIA.
And later
Q. After Sturm Ruger was stopped from sending weapons to the Constabulary, did the interest of the British in you and in Irish Northern Aid increase, insofar as you can tell?
A. It certainly did.
Mr Kirby: Objection. What would the witness know about whether the interest of the British increased or not?
The Court: I think he can answer that.
Mr Kennedy: Tell us how you know that the interest of the British increased in you and in Northern Aid.
A. By the articles published in British papers; by threatening telephone calls I got; and I felt, without proof, that my phone was tapped at that time.
Q. We had talked about this phone conversation you had with George Harrison in 1981, and your subsequently taking $17,000 in cash and giving it to Harrison. You recall that?
A. I do.
Q. That $17,000, so we're clear on it, came from what source,

Mr. Flannery?

A. From people who were very (Irish) Republican. I'm not free to give names, because it would incriminate them.

Q. Just the generic source, if you will?

A. People I knew for a long time. I had the trust of these people. They knew I would get that money to Ireland or to whomever was interested in that.

Q. Money designated specifically by people for the use of the IRA, money you kept separate from the Northern Aid money, correct?

A. Positively. I kept that in my own house. I never kept any Northern Aid money in my house.

Q. Where was the Northern Aid money kept?

A. In the office, deposited immediately in the bank.

Q. On the weekend of the 19th and 20th of June, the weekend Harrison and Falvey were arrested, where were you?

A. In Gettysburg, Pennsylvania.

Q. What were you doing there?

A. I had to meet a group to lecture to them on the battlefield of Gettysburg.

Q. At the time you were there, did you learn of the arrests of Harrison, Falvey and Mullin?

A. Yes. On the Sunday morning I came – I'm not quite sure of the name of the paper, Gettysburg Journal, or something like that – I read about it in that paper.

Q. Were you surprised?

A. I was very surprised.

Q. Did you have occasion, after that, to try to get together with Harrison, Falvey and Mullin?

A. The following Saturday we met at the picket. There was a picket outside the British Consulate.

Q. Manhattan?

A. Every day of the week, 3rd Avenue between 51st and 52nd Streets.

Q. Did you expect, on this Saturday morning, to be able to find Harrison, Falvey and Mullin there?

A. Correct.

Q. How did you know that they might be there?

A. Well, it was their habit to be there, particularly on Saturday. They never missed it, as I myself didn't.

Q. On that occasion, did you have a conversation with them?
A. I did.
Q. Tell us about that.
A. Well, I asked them what had happened. And they, likewise, were wondering what had happened – DeMeo and the Government withdrawing their support, or whatever way you want to put it.
Q. You were curious as to why they were arrested, inasmuch as DeMeo was connected to the Government, is that it?
A. Exactly.
Q. Were you able to decide, or figure out among yourselves at the picket, what the reasons were?
A. We came to some conclusions, right or wrong. But the conclusions we came to were (that) because of the arms being stopped to the Royal Ulster Constabulary, the United States Government figured, "Well, if we're stopping (shipments) from one source, we'll have to stop them from the other."
Q. By the way, did you have a similar discussion around that time with the attorney for the Northern Aid committee, Mr. Frank Durkan?
A. I did.
Q. Now, you were not arrested until several months later, were you, Mr Flannery?
A. About four months later.
Q. That would bring us to October of 1981?
A. Yes, the second day of October. I returned from Mother Ireland the evening before.
Q. When you were arrested on these charges, Mr Flannery, where were you?
A. I was coming out of church.
Q. And you were arrested by representatives of the Federal Bureau of Investigation?
A. Yes; three men and one woman.
Q. Tell me this: From any of the money you collected for Irish Northern Aid that went into the bank accounts, did you profit, or make, one penny?
A. No.
Q. To your knowledge, did any of your fellow defendants, Mr Harrison, Mr Falvey, Mr Mullin or Mr Gormley, profit one

penny?
A. No.
Q. Would you, sir, have given the money to Harrison if you had not known that DeMeo was connected to the Government?
A. I don't believe I would.
Q. Because you did not intend to violate the laws of the United States, correct?
A. Exactly.
Q. I gather, Mr Flannery, that over your life you've been willing to do just about anything you can for the cause of Irish unification and the freedom of the Irish people, have you not?
A. That's correct.
Q. But would you, sir, ever violate the laws of the United States to bring about that goal of yours?
A. Never consciously would I violate the laws of the United States.
Mr. Kennedy: Thank you, Mr Flannery. Those are all the questions I have, your Honor.

Mr. Kirby's cross-examination of Mr Flannery then began.

The jury found the defendants not guilty on all accounts. The court erupted into an applause and the judge praised the jurors saying that the country owed them a great debt for a job well done. Some of the jurors joined members of the defence for a get together at a popular Brooklyn pub afterwards.

Grand Marshal

Chapter Eighteen

WITH THE TRIAL BEHIND US NOW, we were back to take our place in Irish societies again. However, in order to bring the events of 1982 into proper focus, I must go back several years. Shortly after my arrival in the United States, I met Jim Comerford, who at that time was studying law. The fact that we had fought on different sides during the Civil War in Ireland in 1922 and 1923 did not prevent us from becoming friends. We were both active with the St. Patrick's Day Committee, of which he later became Chairman. Later, he was appointed as a Judge. We also shared membership of other organizations, some of them very national. From time to time he would mention that he would like me to be Grand Marshal of the parade, something to which I paid little attention. Apart from the fact that delegates were in control of whom to nominate and whom to elect, it seemed to be an unwritten law that the Chairman's selection for Grand Marshal was nominated and selected. In 1981, some delegates without my permission placed my name up for nomination. I immediately declined, as I thought that the nominee for that year, a man very prominent in the labour field, was a very good and deserving choice. In 1982, the voices for my nomination grew much louder, and the judge became a little anxious and asked me if I would accept the nomination. I told him if he told me whom he had in mind I would give him an answer. He then named a good friend of mine, an educator of repute, and an outstanding Irishman. I told him how delighted I was. He asked me if I could control the delegates and I told him not to worry.

Eventually, I became aware of the increased pressure that I

accept the nomination to be the Grand Marshal of the Parade. I did not resist or encourage this. Soon it was the talk of the town and I was asked for an answer. I told them that I would accept. I figured it was now or never. At eighty-one years of age, time was running out on my being able to walk the full distance. The Chairman, Judge Comerford, had to be aware that I had agreed to the nomination, but he went ahead and named a delegate of his own choice anyway. His excuse was that I had declined in the two previous years. He may have been under pressure from some of the anti-Republican elements that became very opposed to us later. The man who had got the nod from the judge called me to tell me that he was selected by the judge, and asked me if I would withdraw. I told him that I would not withdraw. I was acting within the rules and bye-laws, and that he had every right to make a contest of it, but in his position he should talk it over with the judge and the person who was going to nominate him. This he did and he withdrew. I intended to march up Fifth Avenue, as all previous Marshals had done, but as soon as the nomination became likely to happen, the opposition started.

The Dublin Government, through its consul, tried by every means to stop my nomination. They tried to persuade the delegates that I would make an IRA parade out of it. They tried to use the press and television, only to find, in fairness to the news media, that I was always there in front of the reporters or cameras to defend myself and the IRA. Some of those with whom I debated were prominent in politics, such as Governor Carey and others. They tried very hard to have Cardinal Cooke make a statement but they failed. I had no thought of making the Parade a platform for the IRA, but the opposition did a very good job of making it so.

The press carried articles and interviews. Almost every night there were interviews and debates on television and radio. The debates gave me a golden opportunity to expose the brutal occupation by England of the six north-eastern counties of Ireland, all of them represented in the parade with marching units. My defence of the IRA was that their only purpose was to get England out of Ireland, and to let the people of Ireland live in peace.

There were statements from Senator Moynihan, Governor

Carey and others, saying that they would not march in the Parade. Mayor Koch however, was not intimidated and he marched. The Irish Consul who usually had a place in the Grand Stand, announced that they would not be represented. I was delighted to be the cause of their absence, and I hoped that it would be permanent, as none of them was representative of the 32 counties of Ireland.

On the morn of St. Patrick's Day, I arose early, as I had no experience with the long-tailed suit the judge insisted I should wear. Just as I was looking it over, the doorbell rang. At first I thought it was Bob McCann, who was to accompany me. I looked out the window to see a television crew whom I told to go away and come back when I was dressed. The morning was quite cool so my wife let them in. Bob arrived and after a cup of tea suggested to the driver that we better make an early start as we might have difficulty on the Fifty-Ninth Street Bridge. He agreed and we arrived at the Cathedral at 9:35. I was surprised to see so many policemen among the crowds on the steps. One of the officers opened the door and a young priest whom I did not know, introduced himself and said he was the Public Relations Officer for the Cathedral and he said that the Cardinal, Cardinal Cooke, would like to have a word with me. I said I would be glad to have a word, and I introduced my wife and Bob and all of us went with the priest led by a number of policemen. The Cathedral was packed, and the police had to make a passageway for us to reach the main aisle.

When we reached the aisle, an unholy burst of clapping, cheering and noise arose which was deafening. When we reached the back of the altar, the Cardinal's Secretary, Monsignor McDonagh whom I did know, took me into the office where the Cardinal was sitting. He arose and greeted me. I kissed his ring and we both sat down. The Cardinal then said: "Michael, I thought that I should assure you that anything I might say or do must not in any way be taken as a reflection on your Irishness or your religion. I have been talking to Cardinal Ó Fiaich and he has assured me on both. I also want to assure my own Irishness, too." I told him I had no doubt about his Irishness as I had read an article in a diocesan paper by him, and thought it was excellent if the last sentence was omitted. He asked what was wrong with the last sentence, and I quoted

the last paragraph "There will never be peace in Ireland until England decides to withdraw," Now if it ended there, we all would agree. However, the last sentence said "This can never be brought about by the violence of the IRA." It spoiled it. He said we will have to agree to disagree. "I don't think there is anything more to say." I said: "Pardon me, Your Eminence, there will be some derogatory remarks made and if I could stop them I would. As the Shepherd of this diocese dedicated to St Patrick and this Cathedral being one of the largest monuments to him, I think you should be on the steps to honour him. You may send a release to the press saying that you have nothing to do with Michael Flannery or his politics."

The Cardinal said: "Too late Michael, they have already got this release," and then he asked me to send my wife in. When I finally got to read the release it said that the Cardinal would not be appearing on the steps of the Cathedral until the Grand Marshal had passed by. I felt sorry for him as I felt that he had been badly advised. During our conversation, I thought that he looked quite ill. No announcement had been made to that effect however, and when I asked my wife she said that she did not notice anything. After Mass, we were driven to Hugh O'Lunney's restaurant for a hearty and delicious Irish breakfast. After breakfast my wife was taken to the Grandstand and I took my place on the starting line.

For a few years an ugly feature of the parade was the behaviour of crowds of young people, mostly students and mostly from out of town, drinking beer and acting up on the sidelines. The Committee made great efforts to stop it. The big problem was that the High School Basketball Championship Playoffs were held in Madison Square Garden on March Sixteenth, bringing thousands of students into the city to be joined by many more youths who came by train and brought cases of beer. This caused the rowdy drinking on the sidelines during the parade. The solution was to have the proper authorities suggest to the Garden to change the date of the Championship, which they graciously did. The police then were placed at the railway stations and they relieved the young people of all the beer that they illegally possessed. The result was the absence of rowdiness and a very dignified parade for that year.



At the 1991 Easter Sunday Commemoration in Gaelic Park, New York: (left to right) Mary Holt Moore, Grand Marshal, St. Patrick's Day Parade; Mae Murphy Brennan, 1916 Veteran; Michael Flannery, Chairman, Cumann na Saoirse; Mary Agnes McSweeney Moriarty, Cumann na mBan Veteran; Des Long, Vice-President, Republican Sinn Féin; John Kerry O'Donnell, New York GAA; Frank Durkan, Attorney.



Group at Michael's 90th Birthday Party, includes Bridie Quinlivan; Mary Devlin; Martha McElhone; Jeannie McLaughlin; Eileen O'Flaherty; Des Long; Mary Shanahan.

When given the order we stepped off. It was impossible not to share in the excitement and enthusiasm of the crowd. We arrived at the Cathedral where as I expected there was no Cardinal and the doors were closed. The Parade stopped for cross traffic and I had time for the welfare of the Cardinal. There would be no unruly act during the parade.

We reached the Grand Stand where the Marshal usually takes his place among the dignitaries. I had decided to walk to the end and after greeting all, I was on my way again . The committee had a car waiting to take me back to the Grand Stand where I joined my wife. While it was a perfect day for marching, it was a little cool on the stand, but this was offset by Frank Burne's wife, Mary, serving hot coffee and delicious sandwiches. It was great to see the different societies striving to look their best. The Tipperary Association broke a rule in stopping at the Grand Stand, facing it and playing a Charles Kickham national air. The parade ended at 6.15 pm and I was to go to the Friendly Sons Dinner which was to begin at 6.00 pm. With the kindness and help of Hugh O'Lunney, I was able to make a quick change into my Tuxedo and arrive at the hotel in good time. I was surprised to enjoy a friendly word with Judge McLaughlin who was the speaker of the evening.

It was possibly the last appearance at any public function for Cardinal Cooke, as he died a short time later. The following day I left for San Francisco to take part in the parade there. Dan McCormick made my stay there a very pleasant one. I had dinner with John Maher in the Hospitality House. Dan's Youth Band won first prize in the parade.

For some time the INAC branches in different cities were asking for speakers from New York to answer questions and to give them a closer acquaintance with the Head Office. I went on a extensive tour of the cities and covered the Universities that had asked for an INAC speaker. Travel was expensive, but the honourarium from the colleges went a long way towards meeting the expenses.

Back in New York, the papers were full of Cardinal Cooke's death. It was quite a shock, as most people did not know that he was ill. I wished to go to his funeral Mass but admission to the Cathedral was by ticket only. A friend of mine called me and asked if I would like to go. I asked him to meet me at the

Cathedral, which he did, and we were directed to the main entrance where my friend was warmly greeted by another, who directed me to the place indicated by the colour of the ticket. A man then took my ticket and looked me over, looked at the ticket again, its colour had not changed, so I was on my way to sitting among the dignitaries. From the procession of Cardinals, Archbishops, Bishops and Church Dignitaries to the celebration of the Mass the event was very edifying and inspiring. One felt as near to Heaven as one could get in this world. With Mass over, getting out of the Cathedral was a very slow process. Finally we reached the doors.

Paul O'Dwyer told me to be very careful in any interview with the press. I told him that I was giving no interviews, and I did not change my mind, though the press were very aggravating. When I got home, my wife told me about the television announcer in the Cathedral who was there with a priest to identify the dignitaries as they walked in. The announcer saw and recognized me and kept asking the priest how I got the ticket and a whole lot of other questions. Finally the priest told him to please stop asking questions.

After the funeral, the regular routine of meetings, dinners and concerts was resumed. I attended many out of town affairs. The INAC had become very popular, and one of the most successful Irish American organizations in the history of Ireland's fight for freedom, and for the right of the Irish people to determine their own destiny.

1994, The Proclamation Still Unfulfilled

Chapter Nineteen

DURING MY ANNUAL VISIT TO IRELAND in 1985, to witness the All-Ireland Hurling and Football Championships, I was given an agenda of the forthcoming Sinn Féin Ard-Fheis. Reading it over, I noticed that one of the resolutions the new leadership of Sinn Féin put proposed that Sinn Féin would participate in the Free State election, and if elected would take their seats in a 26-County Dáil. I was absolutely opposed to this and I told Joe Cahill, and the leaders that I and the organizations in America would no longer support them. The motion was defeated, and things continued as they were. On my next visit to Ireland in 1986, I noticed that the resolution was once again on the agenda. When I returned to New York the previous year in 1985, I had called a meeting of the executive of INAC and I explained the resolution to them. They were, like myself, very much opposed to it. The main reason for its defeat in 1985 was the opposition to entering the Dáil by the IRA. During the intervening year, Sinn Féin put a great deal of effort into persuading the IRA not to oppose the motion, and they sadly succeeded in convincing them.

In 1986 the resolution was passed, causing another split in the ranks of Republicans, out of which came Republican Sinn Féin who favoured not taking a seat in the Dáil. It was an exact repeat of Tomás Mac Giolla's tactics in 1969, when he and the IRA leadership defected. The only difference was that in 1969 Sinn Féin was not very strong, and the IRA was barely alive,



Michael reading the 1916 Proclamation at an Easter Dinner in Gaelic Park, New York. Also, from left: Judge John P. Collins; Frank Durkan, Attorney and Father Martin(?) Keaveney.

whereas in 1986 both the IRA and Sinn Féin were very active. While I thought that there would be no split in New York, and that we would withdraw our support and await developments, it did not turn out that way. Some of our members thought that it would be a condemnation of the IRA.

I resigned from the INAC, and I organized a new support group for those who remained faithful to the Proclamation of 1916. The new group was to be known as Cumann na Saoirse. However this did not end the trouble in the INAC, and most of the workers revived an old organization, Friends of Irish Freedom.

We in Cumann na Saoirse found that our aims and objectives were compatible with those of Friends of Irish Freedom and we cooperated in most of our endeavours. In 1994 the quest for Irish Freedom is stymied by the Hume-Adams-Reynolds-and-Major bluff and blunder negotiations, while England refuses to admit that they and they alone have the answer. It was England that created the monster of the Six Counties and it is England that has the power and the responsibility to destroy it. Until England develops the courage and honesty to do this, negotiations will be fruitless.

Disunity is the curse of politics, fed by the ambitions and greed of some of the leaders. The few times that we united we were successful. When Brian Boru united Ireland, even though he had to use force in doing so, he was able to challenge the Danes who were in occupation for two hundred years and defeat them in battle at Clontarf, Dublin on Good Friday, 1014. Unfortunately he was killed while praying in his tent and Ireland returned to its old dissensions. Another show of unity was in 1918 when Ireland overwhelmingly voted for the establishment of an Irish Republic. The Republic was established on January 21, 1919 and was never dissolved even when the treaty was accepted and the Free State became the de facto government of 26 Counties.

At the moment, there are six or seven parties in the 26-County Dáil and the same number outside that Dáil, a hopeless situation and one that keeps the IRA and freedom advocates actively hoping to enlighten and get the support of nations and people to right a wrong and bring the brutal occupation of Ireland by a foreign power, England, to a peaceful end.

In 1947, an Irish Race Convention was in New York at the Commodore Hotel on East 42nd Street. It was well attended with delegates from every state in the Union, and the Senate and Congress were well represented. Mr Donohue, Philadelphia, acted as chairman. Many resolutions were passed and presented to the proper authorities urging British withdrawal, a united Ireland with peace and goodwill toward all people regardless of race, colour or creed. It got fair publicity and could be considered a success. I attended it and took part in some of the discussion, fully aware that England had blinded its eyes and hardened its heart to truth and justice. There were many other functions that I attended without obligation. In the early seventies I travelled to many cities and universities recruiting new members and explaining our aims and objects.

Wolfe Tone's axiom, "To break the connection with England, the never-failing source of all of our political evils," and the Proclamation of 1916, "The right of the people of Ireland to the ownership of Ireland, and to the unfettered control of Irish destinies" cannot be changed. I have received many honours here and in Ireland over the years, many of

them undeserved but accepted in the name of the cause. I enjoyed meeting members of organizations, and sympathizers with the cause, and I appreciate their kindness to me and to those who came to the United States, with or without a visa for a rest after suffering the brutality of Castlereagh Interrogation Centre, and Long Kesh internment camp. Some of them were arrested here in America, and unjustly extradited at the demand of the British. It is sad to think that Washington and 1776 has been forgotten.

I praise and bless all those who worked so hard over the recent years, especially the ladies who worked and walked the picket lines in the heat of summer and the cold of winter. A prayerful remembrance to those who now rest in the land where all are free and tyrants taint not their heavenly bliss.

I include the following historic episodes for the benefit of readers who are not acquainted with the reason why so many Protestants, Church of England and Presbyterians came to be in Ireland and why they are so numerous in the six northeastern counties.

When the O'Neill and O'Donnell clans were defeated at Kinsale in 1601 they gave up hope of removing England, and Irish resistance ceased. Queen Elizabeth died in 1603 and ironically King James VI of Scotland, son of Mary Queen of Scots whom Elizabeth had beheaded, succeeded Elizabeth as King James I of England. In 1607 O'Neill and O'Donnell and their kinsmen to the number of about 100 left Ireland for the Continent, an event referred to as "the flight of the Earls." As soon as they left, King James seized their lands and planted them with Presbyterians from Scotland without any compensation to the rightful owners. And when the last of the O'Neills, Phelim O'Neill, surrendered his lands in Antrim, King James brought over Church of England Protestants and planted them in Antrim as his favourites. The Presbyterians were now called Dissenters and they were treated to much the same abuses as the Catholics. They joined the Catholics in emigrating, mostly to America where seven of their descendants became Presidents of the USA.

In 1790, a young Protestant lawyer in Dublin resented the abuse of the Catholics and the Dissenters and organized the United Irishmen to break the connection with England, the

never-failing source of all our political evils and establish a republican form of government. To do so he sought and received help from France. England became aware of the plan and attacked before French aid could arrive with the result that the rebellion of 1798 was lost before the French arrived. The United Irishmen, led mostly by Protestants from the north, with a little luck and help from the French could have won. The French did arrive, but too late in Killala, Co. Mayo. They had a great victory at Castlebar before being defeated by the English and sent home. England was greatly shaken and resolved to prevent such rebellions in the future. The Catholics were greatly involved in 1798, the Dissenters wholeheartedly and the Catholics by necessity. The British scheme was to buy the clergy and the people would follow. They gave large concessions to the clergy whom they expected to control the people. Unfortunately the Dissenters and Protestants did follow the clergy but the Catholics did not, leading to mistrust between themselves and the Protestants who now became a privileged class. Respect for the Catholic clergy became less apparent and they were classified as being either for or against the national movement.

England used her old tactic of divide and conquer. In 1795 the Orange Order was founded, taking its name from William of Orange who usurped the kingship of England from his father-in-law King James II at the Battle of the Boyne in 1690, the difference being that James was a Catholic. Unfortunately, the Orangemen have abused the nationalist element without pause, under the supervision of England in an effort to drive out the nationalists and maintain an ascendancy.

In 1918, when Ireland voted to establish a Republic including the thirty-two counties, there was public protest in Ulster. It was the unprincipled Lloyd George whose evil mind conceived the plan to divide Ulster and set up a government in the part in which he would be sure of a loyalist vote.

In 1975, I had a meeting with the President and the Public Relations officer of the UDA, and was not surprised to find that they had a thorough knowledge of the situation in the six north-eastern counties of Ireland, but refused to act honestly or courageously. They had a good thing going and while they could keep it going they would do so. When I pointed out how

immoral it was that people were dying because they were having a good time, they countered with: "Is not the Dublin Government doing the same? They too have a good thing going and do not want to get rid of the border." It is indeed a very sad situation.

I further sum up the events that might have made a difference. I go back to 1916. When the rebel position became impossible and the lives of the people indiscriminately destroyed by the British big guns, Pearse wisely decided to surrender to save the people and the city from further destruction. Thomas Ashe suggested that the city be abandoned and to start guerrilla war throughout the whole country. I believe that it would have been quite successful. The Volunteers were prepared, and most if not all of the police barracks could have been captured, making it very difficult for the British to operate.

When de Valera went to meet Lloyd George in London he went as President of the Irish Republic, but when the second meeting was arranged the delegates went not as representatives of the Republic but as plenipotentiaries to negotiate a fair settlement. Why were they not sent as representatives of the Republic? I have already stated my objections to Arthur Griffith, the weakest member of the Dáil. When the illegally signed treaty was submitted to the Dáil it should not have been subject to discussion but immediately rejected as it was signed by delegates without authority to do so, and under the threat of immediate and terrible war. No matter what Lloyd George might have done, it could not have been worse than the dreadful civil war that followed the treaty's acceptance.

After the treaty's acceptance, the IRA who were overwhelmingly opposed to it, should have taken over the Dáil and waited for Britain's next move. These were the thoughts of an unsophisticated young member of the IRA who now, in old age, still thinks there was some logic to it.

There will never be peace in Ireland until the doctrine of Wolfe Tone and the Proclamation of Easter 1916 are realized. Yet with these just and unalterable documents available to everyone, we have had and still have people looking for half measures or outright betrayal. It began with the Treaty as a stepping stone to freedom, but the stone was submerged in the

blood of martyrs and lost in the mud of intrigue and fraud.

In 1926, Mr de Valera broke faith and took the oath to love and obey the King of England. He told us it was an empty formula, but he never broke it, and he added to the terror in Ireland which he said he would abolish, by murdering soldiers of the IRA including a 1916 veteran, Paddy McGrath. In 1969 there was another breakaway from the movement, ending in oblivion. This happened again in 1986. After eight years they are still knocking at the sinners' door hoping for someone to negotiate with. Those of us who have kept the faith will continue to do so and sooner than we think, le cúnamh Dé, we will achieve God's peace in an Ireland United, Gaelic and Free.

Appendices

MICHAEL FLANNERY ELECTED PATRON OF REPUBLICAN SINN FÉIN

By unanimous vote of the 200 delegates assembled in Lucan, Co Dublin last weekend (November 13-14) Veteran Republican and long-time activist in the USA for the cause of Irish Freedom, Michael Flannery, was elected Patron of Republican Sinn Féin. He succeeds as Patron of the organisation the late Comdt-General Tom Maguire, last surviving member of the Second All-Ireland Dáil up to his death on July 5 this year at the great age of 101.

Michael Flannery (91) is a native of North Tipperary and served with the Irish Republican Army in the War of Independence and the Second Defence of the Republic. He emigrated to the USA in 1927 and became active in Clan na Gael and the GAA. He has lived in Jackson Heights, New York for many years.

He was one of the 'IRA Five' charged with gun-running along with George Harrison, Tom Falvey, Pat Mullin and Danny Gormley in 1982. They were all acquitted. In 1983 he was elected Grand Marshal of the St Patrick's Day Parade in New York City, the largest civilian parade in the world. Michael Flannery took the principled Republican stand in 1986 and gave his allegiance to Republican Sinn Féin, becoming a founder and trustee of Cumann na Saoirse in the USA. On his 90th birthday, May 15, 1992 over 800 friends, including several US Congressmen, paid tribute to him at a special function in Queens, which was sponsored by a large number of Irish-American organisations.

At the Republican Sinn Féin Ard-Fheis Michael Flannery was proposed as Patron by the President of the organisation, Ruairí Ó Brádaigh.

Press Release, Republican Sinn Féin,
November 16, 1993

NORAID FOUNDER FORECASTS PROVISIONAL SPLIT OVER CEASEFIRE

Veteran Republican and lifelong Irish-American activist Michael Flannery has forecast a split in the military wing of the Provisionals on the issue of a ceasefire and said that peace will only come when England gets out of Ireland and hands back the Six Counties. Flannery, a founder of NorAid in the USA, says that the leadership of Gerry Adams has set back the cause of the Republican Movement.

In a statement issued on July 24, the day Provisional Sinn Féin met in conference to discuss their response to the Downing Street Declaration, Michael Flannery said that if the Provisionals' military wing are really controlled by the Provisionals' political wing then there will be a ceasefire. He hoped that this was not so and that the fight would continue "because it is the only way to show the world the just cause in Ireland."

Michael Flannery said that the Joint Declaration will not bring peace to Ireland and neither Albert Reynolds nor John Major have any idea of what will bring about peace. "This is not time for play-acting because the strife will continue while they play with meaningless words and bide for time," he said. "Peace will only come when England gets out of Ireland and hands back the Six Counties. Anyone who says different is not thinking wisely," he stated.

Speaking at his home in New York, the Veteran of Tipperary No 1 Brigade, IRA said that Partition was created by Britain without the consent of the Irish people so the claim to unity must not be abandoned. "I do not agree with a ceasefire, because while England is in the North, there will be a justifiable war. It is a just war. To fight for the liberty of one's country is recognised world-wide as a just war.

For example, George Washington was described as a terrorist by the British; they used the same tactics back then, but after peace was won, America became a great nation. The same will happen in Ireland; England is not sincere, never was, never will be, England will have to be forced out... it is a lot of nonsense

to say stop fighting, it pushes us back another fifty years," he declared.

In 1982 Flannery was acquitted on IRA gun-running charges after he had been arrested by the FBI on his way home from early morning Mass in the borough of Queens, New York. The father figure of Irish Republicanism in the USA revealed that he has held talks with the UDA and claimed the unionists will not fight if Britain withdraws.

– Saoirse, August 1994

Forthcoming Biography

In his forthcoming autobiography *Accepting the Challenge,* Michael Flannery tells his life story of involvement with Irish Republicanism on both sides of the Atlantic. Flannery claims that in 1986 he warned Sinn Féin leader Gerry Adams that any move by the party to recognise Leinster House would result in a NorAid split. "I don't know why Adams defected," he said. "We had examples in the past, one of the greatest being de Valera who made promises of gaining a Republic; then we had the split of 1969 which caused some splinters and divisions in the IRA.

"What Adams was thinking of I don't know; he seems to have been misled by the political support for the hunger strikers at election time... so far he has succeeded in having no one elected – and I don't think he will – so far as Adams Sinn Féin is concerned, it has been a complete loss to the Movement . . . I believe Adams and company have set back the Movement but I'm not going to say for how long, because we are in a changing world, and things could happen very quickly, and maybe justice will prevail," he declared.

Today Flannery is head of Cumann na Saoirse in the USA which is linked to the Friends of Irish Freedom and to Republican Sinn Féin in Ireland. Former NorAid figures such as Jim Maunsell, Pat O'Connell, John Hurley and Al Madden are now leaders of FOIF.

Their activities in Boston and Chicago have come to the attention of the FBI who paid an informer to infiltrate the organisation. Media sources in the USA maintain that the FBI fear that a new more militant army may be formed in the event of a ceasefire by the military wing of the Provisionals. The FBI source claimed that undocumented young men were being asked to join the Republican Movement in the USA.

— *Saoirse, August 1994*

Death of Michael Flannery, New York

The death occurred in New York on Friday, September 30 of Michael Flannery, long-time Republican activist, Patron of Republican Sinn Féin and founder of Cumann na Saoirse. He was 92.

A native of Knockshegowna, Co. Tipperary he was a veteran of the Tipperary No. 1 Brigade IRA who fought during the Black-and-Tan and Civil Wars. He emigrated to America in 1927 and supported the cause of Irish freedom throughout his long life.

In a tribute Ruairí Ó Brádaigh, President of Republican Sinn Féin, said "While his roots were in the freedom struggle at home in Ireland in the 1920s, he will be remembered as the leading and outstanding supporter in the United States of the Republican Movement in Ireland over three generations."

He is survived by his nephew Noel Moloney and wife Eileen, Jackson Heights, New York and nephew Andrew Flannery and niece Mrs. Ann Ormond, Co. Tipperary.

His removal takes place to a funeral home in Jackson Heights, New York today, Saturday, October 1 and he will be buried beside his wife Margaret (Pearl, née Egan) on Monday, October 3. Republican Sinn Féin Councillor Joe O'Neill, Bundoran, will travel to the USA to give the graveside oration on behalf of the Republican Movement.

— Press Release, Republican Sinn Féin,
October 1, 1994

Michael Flannery dies in New York aged 92

The New York Irish American community and indeed the Irish community worldwide, was deeply saddened by the death of Michael Flannery on Friday, September 30, 1994 at the age of 92.

Born in Knockshegowna, Co. Tipperary in January 1902, Michael's life was one dedicated to the cause of Irish freedom. An underage member of the Irish Volunteers and later the IRA, he was 14 and ready for the Rising at Easter 1916. He saw no action during the Rising due to MacNeill's countermanding order. Michael was active and saw action in the War of Independence (Black-and-Tan War). When the truce was called Michael served as an officer in the Republican Courts.

With the signing of the Treaty in 1921, Michael remained loyal to the Republic and found himself fighting his former comrades, now turned traitor in the Free State army. After many close calls, Michael was captured and held in Mountjoy Prison where he later remarked, "There was no joy". While in Mountjoy he met many of the men whose names have entered into the Pantheon of Irish Republicans. Michael's name now joins them. One of Michael's most vivid memories of the prison was the murder of the Four Martyrs on December 8, 1922 – Rory O'Connor, Joseph McKelvey, Liam Mellows and Richard Barrett – four soldiers true and loyal to the Republic executed without trial by Free State traitors. Michael remained in Mountjoy for two years and took part in the Hunger Strike of 1923 and many other prison protests. He was finally released in 1924.

Emigrated

Finding work difficult to come by on release, Michael opted to emigrate to the USA to help organise the thousands of Irish who came before him. After some difficulty, Michael was allowed to leave Ireland and he landed in New York on February 14, 1927.

Michael wasted no time in looking up old comrades and getting involved in the Irish organisations in and around New York. From the day he landed there to the day he died Michael never forgot Ireland, her people or his commitment to the cause of Irish freedom.

Michael gained employment with the Metropolitan Insurance Company, where he rose to the position of supervisor before he retired. A few years after arriving in New York, Michael married Dr Margaret Mary 'Pearl' Egan of Mullinahone, Co. Tipperary. She herself was a member of Cumann na mBan and present at the opening of the First Dáil. A charming woman and gracious hostess, Mrs. Flannery predeceased Michael on November 12, 1991.

Michael never forgot his oath to the Republic and worked for Irish freedom through the War years. He and other Republicans continued to aid those on the ground in Ireland through the 1950s and 1960s.

When the latest campaign of the armed conflict began, Michael was one of the founding members of the Irish Northern Aid Committee in 1970. He continued to speak out against the Brits in Ireland and travelled the length and width of the US to get the message out.

In 1982, Michael, along with Pat Mullin, Danny Gormley, George Harrison and Tom Falvey was indicted in US Federal Court on charges of smuggling guns to the IRA. Michael's dignified and eloquent delivery on the stand won new respect for the cause and refuted the prosecution claim that these five men were "terrorists". All five defendants were found not guilty of all charges.

Grand Marshal

As a mark of the esteem and respect Michael was held in he was elected Grand Marshal of the New York St. Patrick's Day Parade in 1983. Despite the Free State government boycott of the parade because of Michael's unwavering Republicanism, the year 1983 still stands as the largest of all New York St. Patrick's Day parades (itself the largest civil parade in the world). Michael's dignified bearing in the face of the Free State boycott; the refusal of the late Cardinal Cooke to greet him at

St. Patrick's Cathedral and the failure of some politicians to attend stood out and was a testament to the calibre of man Michael was.

All through the years Michael was never one to back down from challenging those who abandoned or questioned Republicanism. He did so in 1922, 1926, 1946, 1969 and lastly in 1986.

In 1986, after the Sinn Féin Ard-Fheis, Michael remained with those who remained loyal to the Republic – Republican Sinn Féin. As a result Michael left his position of Trustee of Irish Northern Aid, which remained affiliated with Provisional Sinn Féin. Michael then founded, along with George Harrison and Joe Stynes RIP, Cumann na Saoirse – The Irish Freedom Committee. Michael continued to speak at events organised by Cumann na Saoirse and organisations continuing to champion the cause of Irish freedom.

Michael's death leaves a pair of shoes no man or woman can ever fill in the struggle for Irish freedom. But Michael taught the next generation well. The fruits of his labours will be realised when Ireland is a true 32-County Irish Republic. This generation now picks up the torch and carries on the work.

— Saoirse, November, 1994

Tribute to Michael Flannery from Ruairí Ó Brádaigh, President, Republican Sinn Féin

"Tá an laoch mór ar lár. The great warrior is dead.

The leadership of the true Republican Movement in Ireland, of which Republican Sinn Féin is an integral part, expresses its sorrow on the death of Michael Flannery and sends condolences to his relatives, his comrades and his many many friends on both sides of the Atlantic.

While his roots were in the freedom struggle at home in Ireland in the 1920s, he will be remembered as the leading and indeed, the outstanding supporter in North America of the Republican Movement in Ireland over three generations.

For close on 80 years, from that day in 1916 when at the age of 14 Michael enrolled as a soldier in the Irish Volunteers, he gave unstinting service throughout a dedicated life to the All-Ireland Republic of Pearse and Connolly and to the First (32-County) Dáil Éireann.

Michael showed his physical courage in the ranks of Tipperary No 1 Brigade, Irish Republican Army throughout his fight against the Black-and-Tans and later against the Free State. But he had that rare quality too of moral courage. He never failed to expose and challenge in public those who abandoned Republican principles in favour of a career in constitutional politics. He did so without hesitation in 1922, 1926 , 1946, 1969 and again in 1986.

He took this action from a stern and deep sense of duty — never engaging in personalities or stooping to abuse of opponents. His unfailing allegiance to the Cause of Irish Freedom and to his soldier's oath to the All-Ireland Republic was his guiding star throughout an unusually long life of service — longer even than those of the Fenians John Devoy and O'Donovan Rossa.

Just as his comrade Joe McGarrity spent three fortunes in support of the Republican Movement, Michael Flannery lavished his personal savings throughout his life in the same

cause. His outstanding contributions in this connection were in the years since 1986 when he realised fully that compromise with British rule in Ireland must inevitably lead to the abandonment of the active struggle.

With characteristic modesty Michael attempted to disguise these donations from a lifetime's labour as contributions from anonymous donors but we his comrades in Ireland knew well the real source of such income and we respected his intentions in this regard.

Above all else he sought to re-activate the armed Republican struggle on a principled basis, strong in the knowledge and conviction that this was the only basis which would last. Time has again borne out this unshakeable conviction of Michael Flannery.

While public honours left him unimpressed, he did consent last year to succeed his counterpart in Ireland, the late General Tom Maguire as Patron of Republican Sinn Féin. He did so solely to assist the Cause of Ireland's Liberation.

Ach anois tá an laoch mór ar lár. The great warrior is dead. We his comrades salute in all humility his extraordinary lifetime of service. For us he lives on, inspiring us to greater effort still. The memory of this great Irishman will abide with his followers and his successors in that never-failing well-spring of support for the freedom of Ireland which is Irish-America. Ní dhéanfar dearmad ort, a Mhichíl. Beidh tú mar réalt eolais romhainn ar bhóthar achrannach na Saoirse. (You will not be forgotten, Michael Flannery. You will remain our guiding star on the difficult road to Freedom.)

Ar dheis Dé go raibh d'anam calma, uasal, gléigeal! (May God receive your bright, noble and courageous soul.)"

Signed on behalf of the leadership.

Ruairí Ó Brádaigh
President
Republican Sinn Féin

Tribute from George Harrison

In Memoriam

Michael Flannery, County Tipperary, January 1902 – September 30, 1994, New York

He was close to 93 years of age when his brave heart failed and he went to join his beloved wife Pearl in a land where there will be no parting, no exile. For close to eighty years of his long and distinguished life he devoted all his resources and talented mind to the centuries old struggle to rid Ireland of British rule. He experienced the high points of advance in the struggle; and also the depths of defeat and betrayal. He avoided controversy of any kind with those who sought an easier route to achieve independence, but quietly and firmly refused to be intimidated or change course.

He held all the senior positions in the major organisations in the Irish Community in this City and performed his duties with credibility and credit. In his long career he remained true to the memory of his comrades who died at the hands of the British hangman and before Free State firing squads, for the sacred cause which led them to early graves.

He was a close friend and contemporary of John Kerry O'Donnell, founder of Gaelic Park; of Michael Quill, founder of the Transport Workers Union; of Paul O'Dwyer and Bill O'Dwyer, both of whom achieved high positions of influence in the political life of this nation. But he never forgot the foot soldiers who did the necessary chores to supply the where-withal to drive the British from his native land, where they never had a right to be.

A founder of Irish Northern Aid, he became a friend and colleague of the late Dáithí Ó Conaill who was taken from us suddenly and unexpectedly over three years ago. They were of a different age and generation but they blended closely in their commitment and dedication to their common goal of a Free and Unfettered Ireland.

In the personal sense of the word he was a great source of strength and advice to me through many long and difficult

years. It was indeed a privilege to have known him as friend and comrade and an even greater privilege to be called to stand trial with him in Federal Court, shadowed and influenced by the evil spectre of Margaret Thatcher who had coldly presided over the long agonising deaths of Bobby Sands and his comrades.

This was the woman who ordered the sinking of the Argentinean cruiser *Belgrano* outside the zone of war which sent 400 young Argentineans to their deaths in the South Atlantic, an act of infamy which brands her for all time as a war criminal.

Michael Flannery led us out of the courtroom to the applause of his many friends, a victory which shook the highest levels of the British government and their colleagues in Washington, DC and the Special Branch in Dublin. He has left us a legacy we must live up to if we are to complete his unfinished work which very simply is "British Out", based on a referendum for all the people of Ireland as one unit, followed by a constituent assembly, which will restore our lost Republic.

Those of us who are determined to stay on the traditional course will not rebuke those who see events of today in a different light. But neither will we accept intimidation or provocation, overt or covert. The immediate and unconditional release of all political prisoners including those held in the United States is a priority. In the long years they have been entombed in enemy dungeons they have learned to never trust the enemy. They will be a major influence in the leadership and events of the future. They will insure that there will be resurrection of the revolutionary spirit of our apostle Theobald Wolfe Tone who saw the connection with England as the never failing source of all Ireland's problems. They will insure that current events will be a rallying point or staging area for the next advance which will make the first goal of Michael Flannery's life a reality — namely, an Ireland free and unfettered from the shackles of British Imperialism.

The great warrior has now gone to join all the great heroes of the long struggle in the Irish Valhalla of bravery and heroism. We send our condolence to his family and relatives in Ireland and America. Life for some of us will not be the same without him.

— *George Harrison*

Funeral of Michael Flannery, New York

The funeral of Michael Flannery, Patron of Republican Sinn Féin and long-time Republican activist in New York, took place today (Monday, October 3) in Queens. A native of Knockshegowna, Co Tipperary, Michael Flannery (92) died on Friday, September 30.

Republican Sinn Féin Councillor Joe O'Neill (Bundoran, Co Donegal) gave the graveside oration on behalf of the Republican Movement. A tribute from Ruairí Ó Brádaigh, President, Republican Sinn Féin, was read by Michael's long-time associate in the cause of Irish freedom, George Harrison.

The organisation's Vice-President and Burtonport, Co Donegal resident Mary Ward was one of the last Irish visitors Michael Flannery met before his death. She met him in New York on September 15 during her tour of the USA on behalf of Republican Sinn Féin.

Michael Flannery is survived by his nephew Noel Moloney and wife Eileen, Jackson Heights, Queens, New York. Among the attendance at his wake on Saturday were columnist Jimmy Breslin and lawyer Paul O'Dwyer.

— Press Release, Republican Sinn Féin,
October 3, 1994



The coffin being carried from the Blessed Sacrament Church, Pictured (left to right) Jim Maunsell, Friends of Irish Freedom; Barney Mulligan; Frank Durkan; Tim Garvey; Ann Marie Moloney-Stevenson; Peter Quinn; Joe O'Neill; Hugh O'Lunney.

All Irish organisations represented at wake

Michael Flannery was waked at McGrath's Funeral Home in Jackson Heights in what one mourner described as one of the largest funerals seen in the city. A Guard of Honour was in place both days of the wake; organised on Saturday by Barney Mulligan and on Sunday by Pat O'Connell, both long-time friends of Michael.

Members of every Irish organisation in the state and several from around the country were represented at the wake. These organisations included: Cumann na Saoirse (New York, New Jersey and Boston); Friends of Irish Freedom (New York, Chicago and Boston); Sean – Óglaigh na hÉireann; Gaelic Athletic Association; Ancient Order of Hibernians; Gaelic League; Pioneer Total Abstinence Society; Irish Northern Aid; Clan na Gael (New York and Philadelphia); United Irish Counties; Irish American Unity Conference; Police Emerald Society; Irish American Fenian Society of New Jersey; New York St Patrick's Day Parade Committee; Brehon Law Society; Irish Action Committee; the various 32 Counties associations; and his own native County Tipperary Association and Tipperary GAA.

Organisations in his own parish – Blessed Sacrament – where he and his late wife Pearl were both active were also present. Members of the Rosary Altar Society; Legion of Mary; St Vincent de Paul Society; Knights of Columbus and the Holy Name Society. As a final farewell to their long-time member, members of the Holy Name Society pinned the Society medal on Michael.

Chief mourners were, in the US: Mike and Eileen Moloney, his nephew with whom he lived, their children Noel, Ann Marie, Geraldine and Patricia, and grandchildren, Saoirse and Michael; Aidan and Pat Moloney and family; his nephew Enda Moloney; Mary Flannery, his niece; and in Ireland the Moloney and Flannery families. Also, the Egans of New York and Tipperary, the family of his late wife Pearl, who predeceased him on November 12, 1991.

Guard of Honour

Many old friends and comrades took part in the Guard of Honour for Michael on both days. The first two on Guard of Honour were long-time friends of Michael, Paul O'Dwyer and George Harrison (Trustee and co-founder of Cumann na Saoirse). Dozens of others took part in the Guard of Honour.

Many hundreds attended the wake. A sampling of those present would include: Martin Lyons, Danny Gormley, Bob and Ann Loughman (INA -Rockland); Jack Salmon (President — NYGAA); Jim and Helen Grogan (Tipperary Association); Oliver O'Donnell (Tipperary GAA); Dan Danagher (Emerald Societies); Seán McGovern, Jack Sweeney, Willie Joe Cunningham, Mike and Peg Meehan (Donegal Association); Eileen O'Flaherty and Bob Daly (Fenian Society of New Jersey); Mary Shanahan, Doreen Gavin, Pat and Sally Markham, Kathleen Montague, Cathy O'Brien, Charlie and Jeannie McLoughlin (Friends of Irish Freedom, New York); John Hurley, Al Madden, Jim Maunsell, Joe Dillon, Michael Lafferty and Martin O'Sullivan (all Boston friends of Irish Freedom); Frank O'Neill (Friends of Irish Freedom, Chicago); Mike McGinley (Clan na Gael, New York); Matt Regan and Patricia McManus (Clan na Gael, Philadelphia); Ken Tierney (Fort Worth Five); Martin Galvin (INA); Margaret O'Keeffe (IAUC); Peter and Ellen Farley; Mike and Tom Costello (Cumann na Saoirse, New Jersey); Tim Garvey (Cumann na Saoirse, Boston); Mickey Whelan, Peter Quinn and Joseph Salvayon (Cumann na Saoirse, New York); Judge O'Sullivan, Frank Durkan, Adrian Flannely, Mike Skeahan, Bob McCann, Barney McKeown, Bridie McManus, Dorothy Hayden Cudahy and Mary Holt Moore (both former Grand Marshals of the New York Parade); John Beirne (former Sports Editor of the *Irish Echo*); BJ Kevney; Congressman Tom Manton, DA Charles Hynes, Elizabeth O'Hara (sister of hunger-striker Patsy O'Hara RIP), Michael Kennedy, Attorney during the Arms Trial, Michael Dowd and the rest of the Arms Trial legal defence team, Bianca Jagger, Séamus O'Doherty and so many, many more who cannot possibly be named due to space and in some cases their own modesty. Apologies to all not named.

In tribute to Michael flags were flown at half mast on Sunday at Gaelic Park for the former NYGAA President and

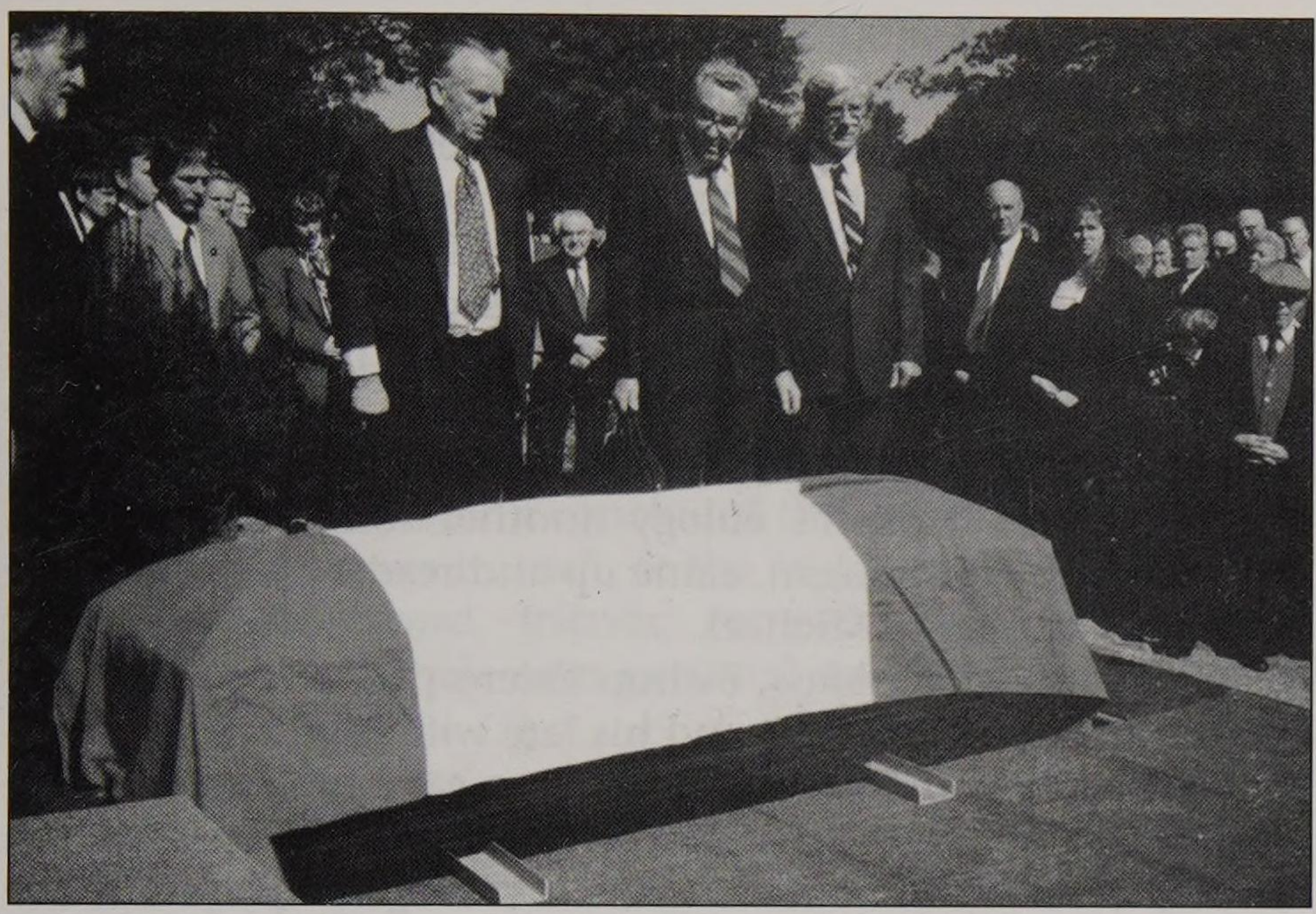


The Final Salute to a soldier of the All-Ireland Republic: a volley of shots is fired over Michael Flannery's coffin following the oration.

delegate to the GAA Convention in Ireland; also the Tipperary teams wore black armbands in his memory.

Before the close of the wake on Sunday evening, members of Cumann na Saoirse, of which Michael was a co-founder and Trustee, formed the final Guard of Honour. Orders were given in Irish by Joe O'Neill. The overflow crowd sat in silence for nearly half an hour during this last watch. Members making up the Guard of Honour were: Peter Quinn, Mickey Whelan and Joseph Salvayon. Towards the end of the watch, Miss Terri O'Callaghan, a lifelong friend of Michael, came forward and led the crowd in prayers in Irish and English.

Several hundred mourners assembled at the Funeral Home on Monday morning. The Pallbearers and Guard of Honour from the Funeral Home were Hugh O'Lunney, Frank Durkan, Pat O'Connell, Barney Mulligan and Councillor Joe O'Neill. The hearse and Guard of Honour were led through the streets of Jackson Heights to the Church by Bob Lynch of the Co Tyrone Pipe Band. Michael's family and several hundred mourners followed in procession to the Church where they



(left to right) Joe O'Neill (Donegal); Séamus Ó Dubhda, George Harrison and Peter Quinn (Longford), who folded the National Flag and presented it to Mike Moloney, nephew of Michael Flannery.

were met by several hundred more mourners.

Michael's casket was carried by the above-mentioned Pallbearers into the Blessed Sacrament Church and placed at the altar. Mass of the Resurrection was concelebrated by seven priests and Most Rev Reno Valero, auxiliary bishop of Brooklyn-Queens. Fr Séamus Quinn of Derry and Philadelphia was the principal celebrant.

Miss Terri O'Callaghan read the First Reading, Ann Marie Moloney-Stevenson, grandniece of Michael, sang "Here I am Lord" as responsorial Psalm and Noel Moloney, grandnephew of Michael, read the Second Reading. Fr Quinn gave the Homily in which he praised Michael's life and his devotion to Church and the cause of Irish freedom. Fr Quinn concluded by reading the 1916 Proclamation. The gifts were brought to the altar by Mary Flannery, niece of Michael, and Eileen Patricia Moloney, grandniece of Michael, and were accepted by Fr Quinn. During Communion *The Boys of the Old Brigade* was

sung by Ann Marie Moloney-Stevenson a capella, a rendition much favoured by her late uncle Michael.

After communion Frank Durkan, noted NYC attorney and long-time friend and associate of Michael, gave the eulogy. Frank Durkan outlined Michael's life of service and many contributions to the cause of Irish freedom. He recalled the Arms Trial. "Are you a member of the IRA?" Michael was asked, to which he replied "Let me save you some time, I joined the IRA over 60 years ago and I don't ever recall resigning."

After Frank Durkan's eulogy another longtime friend of Michael, Barney Mulligan, came up and read a poem he wrote himself in tribute to Michael.

At the end of the Mass, Bishop Valero paid warm tribute to Michael, remembering his and his late wife Pearl's devotion to Church and parish. Bishop Valero then gave the final blessing over the casket. The Pallbeaers who carried Michael into the Church escorted him out as *The Soldier's Song* was played on the organ. Before carrying the coffin out of the Church, Pat O'Connell and Councillor Joe O'Neill placed the Tricolour back on the coffin.

As Michael was placed back into the hearse by his longtime friends, the Co Tyrone piper played on and the hearse was accompanied by the Guard of Honour, made up of Cllr Joe O'Neill, George Harrison, Peter Quinn, Mickey Whelan, Tim Garvey and Joseph Salvayon. The funeral party then made their way to Mount Saint Mary's Cemetery in Flushing, Queens.

The hearse was met at the gates of Mount Saint Mary's by the same Guard of Honour as named above. They proceeded through the cemetery, followed by the family and several hundred who came to the graveside. The casket was carried on the shoulders by the members of Cumann na Saoirse, led to the grave by George Harrison, sole surviving founder. At the grave Mickey Whelan chaired the proceedings and Fr Quinn officiated. After Fr Quinn offered a prayer, the Tricolour was folded by Joe O'Neill and Séamus O'Dowd and presented to Mike Moloney by George Harrison.

Introduced by Mickey Whelan, George Harrison then read the tribute from Ruairí Ó Brádaigh, President of Republican Sinn Féin. Mickey Whelan then introduced Professor John

McGrath who paid tribute to Michael's long life of service to the cause of Irish Freedom on behalf of Clan na Gael, of which Michael was a former National President and lifelong member.

Longtime friend and associate of Michael, former Congressman Mario Biaggi was then introduced. He gave his tribute and closed by thanking Michael for being his friend. Mickey Whelan then introduced Councillor Joe O'Neill who, as per Michael's wishes, gave the graveside oration. At the conclusion of Cllr O'Neill's oration the final salute, a volley of shots, was fired. Fr Quinn concluded the graveside services and gave the final prayer in Irish, at the end of which members of the assembled crowd, friends, comrades and family came forward and said their own personal and silent goodbyes to Michael.

— Saoirse, November 1994

England out of Ireland his only fitting Memorial

Funeral Oration by Councillor Joe O'Neill

Councillor Joe O'Neill began by expressing the sympathy of the Republican Movement, Republican Sinn Féin and himself to the Moloney, Flannery and Egan families on the death of Michael. Joe said that many had spoken that day, and if 100 more had spoken each could say something new about Michael:

This is the greatest honour of my lifetime that Michael requested me to give the oration. The principles that Michael Flannery stood for over the last 70 years were Michael's bond. He had a saying that I first heard from the late Seán Keenan RIP, of Derry, who was also a lifelong Republican and Honorary Vice-President of Republican Sinn Féin, "Never follow a man or woman, only follow the cause. Men and women will let you down, but the cause will not!"

Michael did not mind telling a white lie for the cause of Irish freedom. When he was only 14 years old he joined the Irish Volunteers saying he was 17 years of age. From then on he worked to build the Movement. He organised support in the 1918 election for Sinn Féin. He fought the Black-and-Tans and British forces in Ireland in 1920-21. Michael did not accept the Treaty and took the Republican side and fought as he said himself, in that Civil War the Brits put the Irish into. He was jailed by the Free Staters, who by now were worse than the Brits. Michael went on hunger strike for political status in 1923 and was finally released in 1924 and remained with the IRA.

In 1926 Michael was asked to join Fianna Fáil – he would not as they betrayed Republican principles. At the time, like many other Republicans, there was no work for him. So he emigrated to the USA in 1927. Michael took with him the cause of Irish freedom like his good friend, Joe Stynes RIP of Dublin. For their lifetimes they never turned their backs on the cause of Irish freedom, or Ireland's people.

In the 1940s Michael continued to send funds to the IRA. In 1946 Republicans were divided again, but Michael remained true to his principles and loyal to the Republic of 1916. From 1956-63 he continued to send funds and whatever else was needed to the IRA. 1969 saw Republicans divided yet again, and again Michael stayed true to the IRA. In 1970 both Dáithí O Conaill RIP and Seán Keenan RIP came to New York to help set up an organisation to raise funds for those back home. Michael together with Jack MacCarthy RIP, John McGowan RIP, Matt Higgins RIP, Martin Madden RIP and others set up the Irish Northern Aid Committee. You, the Irish in America know the good work that group has done.

In 1986 again Republicans parted ways and again Michael Flannery stayed with those who backed Republican principles and backed Republican Sinn Féin. Michael founded, together with George Harrison and Joe Stynes RIP, Cumann na Saoirse. All three served as Trustees of that organisation.

Michael's family was the people of Ireland. Especially the men and women who fought and died for Irish freedom, those in jail and their families. Michael had a great regard for the Hunger Strikers and came to the Annual Commemoration in Bundoran to speak and honour these men. Just three years ago this past August, Michael flew into Ireland on Friday, was picked up and driven to Donegal, got up Saturday and went to Mass before speaking at the commemoration, spoke, met the families of the Hunger Strikers and many of the people who attended and signed autographs.

He had his meal and left Bundoran about 8pm that evening for Dublin. On Sunday he attended Mass, and then went to watch the All-Ireland Hurling Final.

His wife Pearl RIP, who predeceased him in November of 1991, at whose funeral I was privileged to speak as well, always backed him all the way. Both were devoted Catholics and attended Mass daily. They loved everything Irish – games, music, language etc. They also worked to help Irish immigrants for over 60 years. Michael never abandoned the cause of Irish freedom. Though he had many differences of opinion with people over principles of Republicanism, he had that way with him that he could remain friends with those with whom he differed.

No matter what house Michael visited, he could always partake of conversation with the young and old. And he would leave that house being known as Uncle Mike. Never great or grand, just plain Uncle Mike. That was one of the many qualities of this great Irishman.

Michael loved his native Tipperary that gave many great men and women for the Irish cause. He had a great regard for Terence Mac Swiney, Lord Mayor of Cork, who died on hunger strike in London in 1920. And on many occasions he would quote Mac Swiney, "In matters of principle, there can be no compromise".

No matter how bad things were in the Republican Movement we were always left with a link. We had those great Fenians O'Donovan Rossa, the Tyrone man Tom Clarke, they carried the cause of the Fenians to the 1915-1916 stage, Tom Clarke being one of those who signed the 1916 proclamation. Tom Maguire, TD for the Second Dáil from County Mayo who lived to over 100 years and died in 1993, passed on the right of Republicans all down the years to those who held onto the Republican principles, the last time being in 1986. Joe Clarke RIP, last surviving member of those who fought on the Mount Street Bridge in 1916, who died in 1976. These are some of the men who held onto Republican principles and passed the torch down to the next generation.

Michael often quoted Patrick Pearse. One of his favourites was *Mise Éire*.

Mise Éire, sine mé ná an Chailleach Bhéara
Mór mo ghlóir, mé do rug Cúchulainn cróga.
Mór mo náir, mo chlann féin do dhíol a máthair.
Mise Éire, uaigní mé ná an Chailleach Bhéara.
I am Eire, I am older than the Cailleach Bhéara,
Great my glory, brave Cúchulainn was my son.
Great my shame, my own sons who sold their mother.
I am Éire, I am lonelier than the Cailleach Bhéara.

Michael is a great loss to the Irish in America, but a greater loss to the Irish at home and the cause of Irish freedom. If we are to build a memorial to this great Irishman than let us work

for what he believed in – in short, England out of Ireland. That is the only fitting memorial we can build to this great Irishman.

The Soldiers of Ireland bore him on high,
On their shoulders with solemn tread;
And many a heart, with tearful sigh,
Wept over our patriot dead.
In silence they lowered him in the grave,
To rest till the reckoning day:
Seán Treacy, who died his home to save,
In Tipperary So Far Away.

In loving memory of the late Michael Flannery

His final battle is over.
He has gone on to his reward.
The greatest of all honours,
Will be given to him by God.

An outstanding Irish Catholic,
He would go to any length,
To receive the Blessed Sacrament
The source of all his strength.

He wore his Christian principles
Upon his proverbial sleeve.
And for his tortured homeland
He did openly plead and grieve.

Dignity was his armour,
Justice was his sword,
Principle was reflected
In his unbroken word.

The fulfilment of the document
That was read by Pádraig Pearse,
Was to Mike the only road
To a just and lasting peace.

To that famous document
He was loyal, staunch and true.
Next to his Pearl, his only love
Was his beloved Róisín Dubh.

All you rebel Irishmen
And Irishwomen too,
Will mourn the death of
Michael,
A faithful son of Róisín Dubh.

He carried his cross to free her,
As he played the patriot game,
And upon the scroll of honour
You will find Mike Flannery's
name.

He stood tall as a patriot
In the ranks of the heroes brave.
May his soul be safe in heaven
Ere his body meets the grave.

– Barney Mulligan

'I was fortunate to know Michael Flannery for half a century. During his many years in America, he held, at one time or another, the highest ranking offices in all of the organisations which constitute the Irish community: President of the Gaelic Athletic Association, President of the United Irish Counties and, for more than one term, President of his native County Tipperary Association.

It was indeed a singular honour to have known this heroic and historical figure and to have been one of his foot soldiers in the long unending struggle to end British colonialism in Ireland and put the Irish people, Protestant, Catholic and Dissenter in control of their own destiny.'

– George Harrison, New York,
January 26, 2001

Dermot O'Reilly is a teacher of mathematics and physics, and is also a researcher in physics. Originally from County Meath, he is currently living in New York, with his wife and daughter. During the last two years of Michael Flannery's life, Dermot met with him regularly and helped him to organise his autobiography.

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Ruairí Ó Brádaigh

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