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IN celebrating the Golden Jubilee this year of its foundation in 1926, Fianna Fail does so with pride in a distinguished record of achievement and service to the nation throughout the fifty years of its history. Reading the articles in this supplement will give some glimpse of the endlessly exciting stories which underlie that record of progress and achievement. There is the extraordinary rapid rise and strengthening of the party, the drama of its early years in Government; the difficulties and endurance of the war time years; the disappointments and national frustrations, surrounding two periods of Coalition rule, then the resumption of progress and the successes of the 'sixties, culminating in the disappointment of 1973 which finds us once more in opposition — the position which we occupied in 1926.

While there will be an understandable pride in re-living old victories, and interest in debating old issues, a full celebration of our Golden Jubilee calls for more. It demands also the repetition of the dedication and motivation of fifty years ago applied to the changed circumstances of today.

Those who allege that a national movement such as Fianna Fail, now fifty years old, has no place in

## An introduction by Party Leader, Mr. Jack Lynch

the Ireland of today, can be quickly refuted by facts. Today there is the same need to tackle and to solve major national issues as there was in 1926. Today there is the same need to press for urgent action to create employment as there was then.

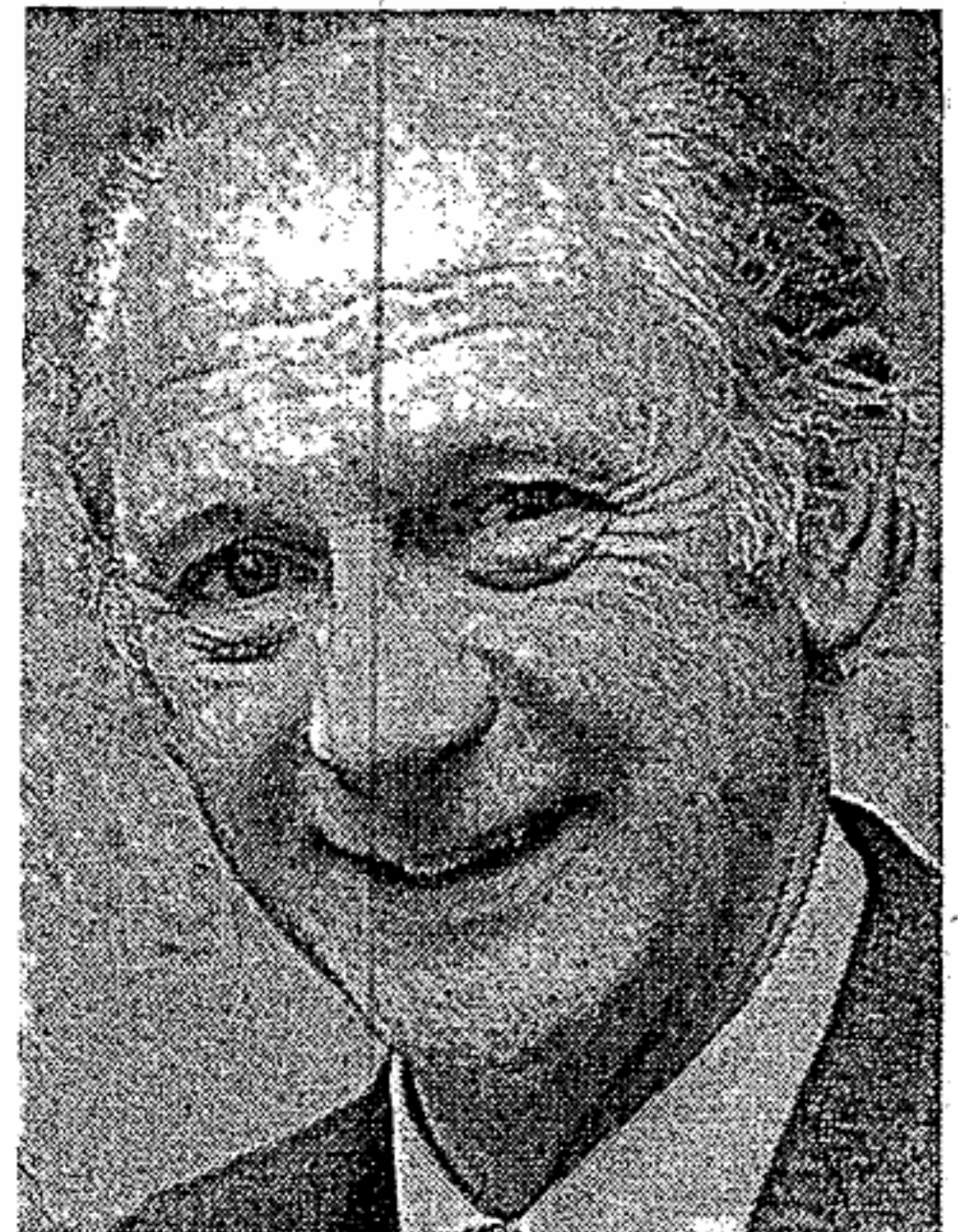
There is also now as then, the same need to replace a government which was paralysed and devoid of policy, blaming our ills on the rest of the world, with a Fianna Fail government with clear leadership and dedicated and committed support which quickly demonstrated that we could do a great deal to overcome our problems.

Once again, we need the same virtues of patriotism, loyalty, belief in our future as a nation and a people, and a readiness to face up to the difficult as well as the pleasant tasks which were all characteristic of the Fianna Fail movement and were the foundations of its success.

Fianna Fail succeeded because it reflected and truly represented the Irish people. It continues to do so. Indeed the fundamental basis of any republican movement is that it believes in the supremacy of the people.

Today there is a growing realisation that political freedom which is not accompanied by economic freedom is built on shaky foundations. That is why the most urgent task is to press for the growth in employment which will ensure economic security and independence for all of our people, but especially the young, who will be called upon to transmit in their turn, a belief in Ireland and its future to the young people of the future.

The past fifty years have seen the attainment of many things which were ideals and hopes to the founding fathers of Fianna Fail at its inception. Our task is to continue that progress until the ideal of a peaceful, prosperous united Ireland has become a reality.



Fianna Fail party elected to the Dail in June, 1927. Back row: T. Powell, T. MacEllistrim, S. Hayes, M. Kennedy, S. MacEntee (interviewed inside), G. Boland, F. Carney, P. O'Dowd, W. O'Leary, M. Corry, S. French. Middle row: D. Corkery, T. Derrig, M. Killilea, J. Colbert, S. Moore, A. Fogarty, J. Ryan, P. Boland, P. McCarvill, N. Blaney, P. Smith (interviewed inside), T. O'Reilly, P. Belton, M. Kilroy, T. Tynan, P. J. Rutledge, S. Lemass, F. Aiken, P. Houlthhan. Front row: S. Holt, M. O'Reilly, J. Victory, T. Mullins (interviewed), Countess Markievicz, E. de Valera, Mrs. T. Clarke, D. Buckley, F. Carty, T. Crowley, J. Tubridy, P. J. Little. (S. T. O'Kelly, F. Fahy and E. Mullen were members, but do not appear in this picture).

# GOLDEN JUBILEE OF FIANNA FAIL

TO COMMEMORATE the 50th anniversary of the founding of Fianna Fail, *The Irish Press* has produced this Commemorative Supplement blending objective historical analysis of aspects of the party's development and influence with personal recollections of its founders. It provides a history and an assessment of some of the most important and exciting years of our country's development.

Fianna Fail, the largest political grouping in the country, has in the course of its existence touched on every aspect of the country's life and *The Irish Press* Supplement is aimed at providing a record that will be of value and interest to the general public north and south of the Border as well as to either university students or young people still at school anxious to know something of their country's origins and development.

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# Birth of the party

IT IS impossible to understand the reasons for the establishment of Fianna Fail in May 1926 without looking backwards to the history of the preceding few years.

The high hopes of 1919 and 1920 foundered on the Treaty of 1921. The united national movement of Sinn Fein, which dominated the political scene in the period, was split into pro-Treaty and anti-Treaty factions and the bitterness spilled over into Civil War in 1922 and 1923.

It was in the prison camps of that Civil War that the foundations of the political future of the anti-Treaty movement were laid. Lectures were organised by the prisoners on how proportional representation worked, on publicity and canvassing and on the various aspects of party organisation. They were being trained to transfer the Republican struggle to the political field.

One of the major difficulties, however, lay in the fact that the Sinn Fein party which emerged from the Civil War had become atrophied in a rigidity which hampered its development. The policy of abstention from the Free State legislature was being made an issue of principle. De Valera's view was put in a letter to Mary MacSweeney in August 1923:

"If the Oath were removed to my mind the question of going in or remaining out would be a matter purely of tactics and expediency, and had best be left to be decided either by a convention or by the elected members. Circumstances will have them in a sufficient strait-jacket without our adding unnecessarily to its straitness."

In the years that followed it was the Mary MacSweeney view that took root. By the time de Valera emerged from Arbour Hill in the summer of 1924 the Sinn Fein party had taken up a rigid position. In vain did de Valera try to bring it back to a more realistic attitude.

Events at the end of 1925, the leaking of the Boundary Commission Report and the consequent consternation and disappointment at the outcome of the much vaunted boundary clause of the Treaty, found Sinn Fein in no position to offer an effective opposition. Indeed the party was unable to capitalise on the affair. As de Valera told Austin Ford, editor of the *Irish World* in New York, it was clear—

"That to remain as we were meant ultimate extinction as an effective political force—reduced to some such position as that of the French monarchists."

The Republican opposition could easily have gone that way. To make a final effort to stem this development de Valera put a resolution to a special Ardheis Sinn Fein in March 1926, hoping thereby to make it possible for elected deputies to take their seats in the

Dail if no oath of allegiance were imposed.

It was an unavailing effort defeated by a narrow majority. De Valera resigned from Sinn Fein and left.

He was followed by a substantial number of others — perhaps most notable among them Sean Lemass. Lemass had already won a by-election in Dublin city. He was to take the initiative which led to the formation of a new political party. First of all he gathered together a committee of those who had supported de Valera's policy at the Sinn Fein Ardheis in 1925. Gradually the new movement took shape. De Valera was not in attendance at the first meeting. The organisation was growing, however, round him and his policies. The original title, Republican Party, gave way, under de Valera's guidance to the more subtle Fianna Fail—an ancient Irish name which carried with it nuances of a more recent past.

If Lemass was the driving genius there was no doubt that de Valera was the key figure.

In the way in which the Fianna Fail party grew de Valera established himself in an unchallengeable position. He had not wasted the years in the wilderness. He was the leader with a policy and those who joined Fianna Fail did so in that knowledge. No other leader of the party could ever be in such a strong position of leadership.

At the very first public meeting of Fianna Fail, the inaugural meeting held in the La Scala Theatre 50 years ago, de Valera was still insisting that he was there "simply as a private" but his speech was no private's speech. He set out a policy for national advance to freedom—the isolation of the oath of allegiance as the first symbol of foreign supremacy to be destroyed.

Once it was gone he could see ahead promising ideas for a further advance. He had ideas for economic development to improve social and material conditions. Basically it all depended on the people who had, such a short time before been given by Civil War.

"The problem is," he said, "how to re-unite them and make their desire for independence effective." It was to do that that his policy was developed.

Fianna Fail had many advantages at its inception — willing workers throughout the state who had forged their loyalty in the prison camps. Enthusiasts like Gerry Boland, Dr. Jim Ryan, Sean MacEntee (interviewed elsewhere), Countess Markievicz, Paddy Rutledge, Frank Aiken, Sean T. O'Kelly and a host of other lesser-known names were to gather together the support of Dublin and of the countryside.

By November 1926, the first Fianna Fail Ardheis was called and there de Valera was elected to his first office in the party—President. It is notable that six of the 15 executive members elected that day were women.

## by T. P. O'Neill



Biographer of the late Mr. de Valera and Lecturer in History, UCG.

The new party was committing itself to a policy but not tying itself too rigidly. "To pledge ourselves at this distance ahead as to every step we shall take, and the moment we shall take it, would be absurd," warned de Valera.

The first task, after the initial organising throughout Ireland had begun, was the preparation for a general election. The importance of this, in fact, called for urgent and extended effort in forming Comhairle Daicentair and local cumainn. The party had already a solid organisation behind it by the time the election came in June 1927.

While it might initially be expected that this general election would be fought between Fianna Fail and the Government party, Cumann na nGaedheal, in fact this was not really so. It was primarily to be a clarification as to which party would represent Republican voters, Sinn Fein or its new rival.

Would the policy of de Valera carry the day? Of the outgoing Republican deputies 23 had stayed with Sinn Fein. Twenty-two had joined Fianna Fail. As a result of the election Fianna Fail had 44 deputies returned; Sinn Fein was reduced to 5.

In the second election that year, in September, Sinn Fein failed to enter the contest while Fianna Fail increased its first preference votes from 300,000 to 412,000 and won, at the same time 57 seats to the Government party's 62. Sinn Fein had been wiped out almost as completely as it had done to the Irish Parliamentary Party in 1918. The challenge now lay between Fianna Fail and Cumann na nGaedheal.

The next five years were to be ones for consolidation of the Fianna Fail organisation—a task which was to play a great part in the party's future success. The barrier of the oath had been surmounted between

the two general elections in a manner which was always to rouse criticism from opponents but which in fact won ballot box approval.

Those years were to see the establishment of *The Irish Press*. It was to break down a communication wall erected by a hostile national press and help to pave the way for the electoral success which brought Fianna Fail to office in 1932.

It was the first and only party to get over half a million first preference votes in Ireland and it was never to get less than that number. Indeed in many of the elections over the following four decades it was to get the support of over 600,000 voters.

The first Fianna Fail government included, of course de Valera as head and such notable ministers as S. T. O'Kelly, in Local Government and as vice president, Dr. Ryan in Agriculture, Frank Aiken in Defence, Sean MacEntee in Finance, T. O'Deirig in Education and P. J. Rutledge in Lands—all names to be long associated with the government of the State.

In ways the most remarkable of them was in industry and commerce, Sean Lemass. He was to hold that portfolio for a total of 22 years and was never to be out of that Department in any Fianna Fail administration until he became Taoiseach in succession to de Valera in 1959. In the economic sphere he was to leave his mark on modern Ireland in a distinctive way. He was an important figure who never sought to rival his leader. Indeed the remarkable feature of all these men was their loyalty to de Valera.

The Labour Party supported the Fianna Fail government of 1932 and indeed without its support it could not have been elected as no party had an overall majority. The taking of office was to start an era of assertion of independence, beginning with the removal of the oath of allegiance and culminating in the new Constitution passed by plebiscite in 1937. It was an era of depression made worse by British economic sanctions aimed to prevent the movement to independence.

Within a remarkably short few years the Treaty arrangements were dismantled and the final dissolution of that instrument came with the Anglo-Irish agreement of 1938.

Without fanfare great progress had been made. The war years were to show how much had been achieved. Ireland's neutrality was in fact something more than a standing aside from a world conflict. It was an assertion of the freedom of the State and it was pursued with all the skill and determination of the leader of Fianna Fail, de Valera, who was both Taoiseach and Minister for External Affairs.

In this period new political challenges were to emerge in Clann na Talun and Clann na Poblachta and in 1948 a coalition between

these and other opposition parties brought about the end of the first 16 years of Fianna Fail power.

Inter-party governments between 1948 and 1951 and from 1954 to 1957, were to be but intermissions in an era of Fianna Fail dominance. This period did not see great contributions to the development of Irish politics except in one sphere—that of Church-State relations. This handling of the difficulties in this area under the guidance of Eamon de Valera was tactful and firm.

De Valera's long era of leadership was, however, already drawing to a close. In the last election he led Fianna Fail to the greatest victory it ever achieved—78 of 147 seats in the Dail.

In 1959 de Valera resigned from the presidency of Fianna Fail and leadership of the government and was elected President of Ireland. His successor was Sean Lemass under whose leadership new economic horizons were opened by the 1960s. He was also to succeed in opening lines of communication with Captain Terence O'Neill, leader of the Northern Ireland government.

There was new hope of normalising relations between Irishmen within Ireland. The Fianna Fail party supported Lemass in his activities in which he made contacts in Belfast which had eluded his predecessor. The aim of the party regarding reunification had hitherto made little progress.

The 1960s were not, however, to meet the political needs of a Northern Ireland minority long discriminated against. It was the slowness of progress that brought about the explosion of the Civil Rights campaign — an outbreak which de Valera foretold as long ago as 1935 when talking to Neville Chamberlain, the British Prime Minister.

The troubles in the north-east of the island had repercussions south of the border. There was considerable heart-searching. The leader of Fianna Fail, Jack Lynch, who had succeeded Sean Lemass in 1966, won a great electoral victory in 1969.

Lynch became the only Irish leader, apart from de Valera, to lead a party to an overall majority since the foundation of the State. The disturbances and the heart-searching raised difficulties for his government. It led to differences in the Cabinet and consequent resignations and demotions.

One might have expected all of this to cause a rift in Fianna Fail. In fact it did not erode the support of the party. In the 1973 general election Fianna Fail received more first preference votes than it had got in any election since 1938. Those votes were not reflected in electoral victory largely because of the unity of an alliance between the opposition parties.

Fianna Fail was out of office again after a second 16-year term of office. Yet it remained the largest single party with its public support as strong as ever.



The party's vote-catching powers are unique, even by European standards

# Crossing class barriers

FIANNA FAIL  
1926 50 1976

IRISH PEOPLE are so accustomed to Fianna Fail as a permanent part of the political landscape that they sometimes forget how unique it is among dominant political parties in Western democratic countries.

Most Western European countries have tended to have party systems centred around the three "classical" ideologies of modern Europe—liberalism, Catholicism and socialism, in differing national formulations. Generally, since the Second World War Western European countries have been ruled by parties or groups of parties which correspond broadly to these ideologies.

Irish party politics does not seem to fit into this European pattern; our parties have no immediately obvious class-based patterns of support, neither do their ideologies "fit" into the usual European categories.

In particular, there is no clear-cut left-right dimension

More a national movement than a political party

In Irish party politics. Our party system in general, and Fianna Fail in particular, seem to be mavericks in the Western European world, so much so that foreigners are sometimes bewildered by our traditional party alignments.

## CROSS-CLASS

One way of understanding Irish party politics is to look at the patterns of support for Fianna Fail and of the other large parties among the electorate. At the leadership level, Fianna Fail was, of course, dominated by the radical wing of the old pre-1922 Sinn Féin party, and there is a lot of evidence which suggests that Fianna Fail inherited much of the organisation and personnel of both the pre-1922 Sinn Féin and even of the pre-1922 Sinn Féin.

Fianna Fail has always tended to characterise itself as a "national movement" rather than as a political party in the usual sense of the term. This is partly a result of Fianna Fail's claim to be the true inheritor of the mantle of the "national front" Sinn Féin of 1918-1922, and partly reflects the extraordinary cross-class, cross-sectional character of its support in the electorate since the 1930s.

In its early years, however, Fianna Fail voter support was not quite as cross-class

as it later became. It inherited a body of voters from the Sinn Féin party of 1923-1926. At the 1923 general election, the Republican Sinn Féin party won much less than one-third of the votes, and the votes it did get tended to be concentrated in the poorer and less urbanised parts of the country; it tended to be far stronger in the western constituencies than in the east and to win a noticeably greater proportion of its total number of seats in western areas than did Cumann na nGaedheal.

Statistical analysis suggests that its vote was concentrated among the non-urban and the non-rich in its early years, among the smaller farmers, particularly in the west, in areas that had a land League tradition, high emigration rates and bad housing.

## EXPANSION

The early Fianna Fail clearly appealed to those who felt that the existing social order was loaded against them, and who saw that social order as a continuation of the British regime; anti-establishment nationalism was the common bond between these small-farm, farm labourer and working-class groups.

After 1926, of course, Fianna Fail expanded dramatically, and added other groups of western voters. During the late 1920s and early 1930s, for example, Fianna Fail made successful appeals to medium-sized farm owners, to landless labourers, and to the small working class of the cities and towns.

## CONVERSION

It seems that the working-class Fianna Fail vote, for example, was the product of a rather later conversion than the original small-farm vote for the party. In particular, de Valera's decision to enter the Dail in 1927 was immediately followed by a general broadening in the party's popularity among the voters.

As the party grew in size, it continued to display a western, "poor man's" image while also absorbing voters who had earlier supported Labour or the various Farmers' Party candidates or who had not voted at all previously. By the late thirties, the farmers in general were probably the central group in the party's vote.

During this period the ideological image of the party evolved. It was in power, government policy became markedly nationalist and welfarist in character, it also became eventually unambiguously anti-IRA as well as anti-fascist and the new Constitution of 1937 symbolised the dominance of Fianna Fail over the Irish political system.

## A BIAS

The evolution of Fianna Fail from a radical nationalist party to an established governing party was eventually reflected in its support among the voters. In 1943, Fianna Fail finally lost the distinctive "western" bias which it had possessed up to that date: in 1943, for the first time, voters in the Dublin area voted for the party in proportion with the national average.

The "Emergency" of 1939-1945, and the rise of a generation of voters who saw the Treaty split as irrelevant may have encouraged this development of a truly cross-

sectional support for the party of de Valera.

Since that date, both Fianna Fail and Fine Gael have developed into "cross-class" parties, with Fianna Fail being more successful at maintaining a "national" support profile in the electorate than its old opponent: Fine Gael lost much of its original support and subsequently gained support elsewhere, particularly from the voters who had supported Clann na Talmhan during the 1940s. Fine Gael also benefited from a diverse, pro-Coalition and anti-Fianna Fail support after 1948.

## PRESTIGE

Thus, by 1948 or so, Fianna Fail had lost much of its earlier pristine national-populist character; it had developed a businessmen's wing and appealed to middle-class groupings of a kind which would not have been attracted to it in previous years. It also became the party of government par excellence, and enjoyed the added prestige that being in government gives.

Opinion polls in recent years have confirmed this picture. By and large, Fianna Fail's support in the electorate disregards class lines, and cuts right down through the social pyramid, ignoring the class-distinctions so important in the British party system, for example. Echoes of the older patterns persist: small farmers and westerners are somewhat more likely to

support Fianna Fail than are large farmers, for instance. By and large, however, the usual social distinctions have relatively little impact on the proportions of supporters of the party. Fianna Fail has also tended not to appeal to the youth as much as it used to, although this may be changing again.

The other two parties cannot rival this classless pattern. Fine Gael still tends to have disproportionately large support in the middle and

upper-class groups, while the Labour Party is clearly working-class in character, and has a particular appeal to the youth of the cities.

Interestingly, Fianna Fail's support among workers has tended to be rather larger than that of Labour. It has been pointed out by several writers that Fianna Fail's vote and the votes of the other two parties added together are roughly equal in size and in social background. Family tradition



Mr. de Valera in his famous black cloak which formed part of his charisma at election time.

the State is so nearly unanimously Catholic that anti-clericalism has been relatively irrelevant.

A more intriguing parallel is afforded by the Scandinavian countries, in particular those Scandinavian countries—Iceland, Norway and Finland—which have had an experience of foreign domination. In all of these three countries the national independence movement tended to be associated with parties which were originally rural rather than urban in character and which tended to emphasise national revival and independence as prime political values.

While not overdrawing the parallel, it is true that national-populist values are a common feature of countries going through a post-colonial phase, and Irish politics have tended similarly to have a certain populist and almost anti-ideological flavour because of the overriding importance of issues connected with national independence.

The Irish party system has, perhaps, outlived the original issues that formed it. In this, it has certain similarities to the American party system, the main lines of which were laid down, like ours, by a civil war.

## PRAGMATIC

In Western Europe, by way of contrast, clear ideological distinctions persist between the parties in many countries, partly because of the classical character of the original ideological disputes which prompted their formation. Governments' policies have tended to reflect these political divisions.

In Ireland, however, ideological differences between Fianna Fail and Coalition governments have been rather minor and Irish political debate has become overwhelmingly pragmatic in quality. That this is so is partly a result of the very success of Fianna Fail in resolving the national question, at least as far as the twenty-six county area was concerned.

That very success has, ironically, tended to encourage some people in the State to forget that these issues were once of enormous importance and that issues of a similar kind persist in the North to the present day.

## THE FUTURE

What of the future? In Ireland, the performance of a party in government has tended to be crucial in deciding future voter support or opposition to that party. There is an old aphorism that opposition parties don't win elections, governments lose them.

This was certainly true in 1932 of Cumann na nGaedheal, and possibly true of Fianna Fail in 1948, and of the Coalitions in 1951 and 1957.

It probably was not true of Fianna Fail in 1973, when the party's defeat was a very close-run thing. However, it could be true in the next election; it is probable that the next election will be fought on the attractiveness or lack of it of the Coalition rather than on the merits of a Fianna Fail alternative. This Coalition has done better than previous ones in holding together and has not done too badly in many policy areas. It is not invulnerable, but Fianna Fail may have its toughest election ever in front of it in the next year or two.

by Dr. Tom Garvin

Lecturer in Politics, UCD.



seems to have a lot to do with the persistence of these loyalties over generations, and it may be that the descendants of small farmers retain the loyalty to "De's" party even though they themselves are townsmen.

This picture of a party system in which the two smaller parties have class backgrounds while the largest is cross-class in character doesn't correspond very well to the European norm.

## PARALLELS

In some ways, the "Fianna Fail-versus-the-Rest" pattern reminds one of the Italian situation, with the cross-class Christian Democratic Party dominating the system while the class-based socialist and right-wing parties form the opposition.

However, there is no traditional clerical / anti-clerical division in Irish society corresponding to that which encouraged the growth of the Christian Democrats in Italy:

# Hero in the limelight

By Gerry Flanagan

ON an April day half a century ago a "26-year-old veteran" of the War of Independence and the Civil War received a brief note from Sean Lemass requesting him to attend a meeting in a room which was used as a store on the top floor of a building in Suffolk Street, Dublin.

The meeting—which was held on Good Friday, 1926—was presided over by Eamon de Valera with Lemass acting as secretary, and the young Dublin man who had earned distinction as a freedom fighter, Paddy Brennan, remembers that the furnishings of the room consisted of only a table and a few chairs.

Only seven other people attended that memorable meeting—to establish the Fianna Fail party—but they were all people who had played major parts in the events of the preceding decade.

They included Mrs. Sheehy-Skeffington, widow of Francis Sheehy-Skeffington, the

pacifist, who was murdered by a British officer in 1916, Ben Doyle, Liam O'Doherty, Dr. Patrick McCarville, P. L. Sweeney, and two men who were later to become Ministers in the Fianna Fail Government, Tom Derrig and Gerry Boland.

Today Paddy Brennan is a sprightly 76-year-old retired civil servant. A man who never sought the limelight, he did trojan work for the party and did much to prepare it for victory at the polls in the 1932 general election.

Born of Kilkenny parents in Dundrum, Dublin, in 1900, he was a member of the Fianna Eireann scouts in 1916. He joined E Company (de Valera's own) 3rd Battalion, Dublin Brigade, in the Gaelic League rooms in Ely Place in October, 1916, and in March of the following year he transferred to a newly-formed company in Dundrum.

In September, 1919, he was promoted to the rank of First Lieutenant and the following month was dismissed from the British Civil Service for refusing to take an oath of allegiance to the King. During the ensuing War of Independence he took part in several attacks and engagements with British forces in the south County Dublin area.

After the signing of the Treaty he was posted to the new Irish Army GHQ in Beggar's Bush Barracks and in March, 1922, he took over Mountjoy Prison. But after the "banned" Army convention in the Mansion House in April, 1922, he refused to serve under the Free State, left Mountjoy with the entire garrison and arms and returned to his own area—Dublin No. 2.

In the intense fighting that followed he commanded the capture of Rathfarnham Barracks from the Free State garrison and set up Battalion HQ there. Later he moved with his unit to Blessington and was involved in several clashes in the Wicklow and Kildare areas.

On his return to South Dublin he was appointed Brigade Adjutant. He was subsequently called to Field Headquarters in Alleshbury Road where he met Commandant General Ernie O'Malley who appointed him Brigade Commander at the "ripe old age of 22".

In his new post he was responsible for the routing, conveyance and protection of GHQ officers and members of the Republican government,

particularly Mr. de Valera and General Liam Lynch whenever they undertook journeys to the country.

In 1923 he was captured and interrogated at Portobello Barracks and later moved to the hospital in Mountjoy Prison. He joined the general hunger strike in October 1923 and was transferred to the Curragh. He had been fasting for 38 days when the strike was called off. He was released in the general amnesty of March, 1924.

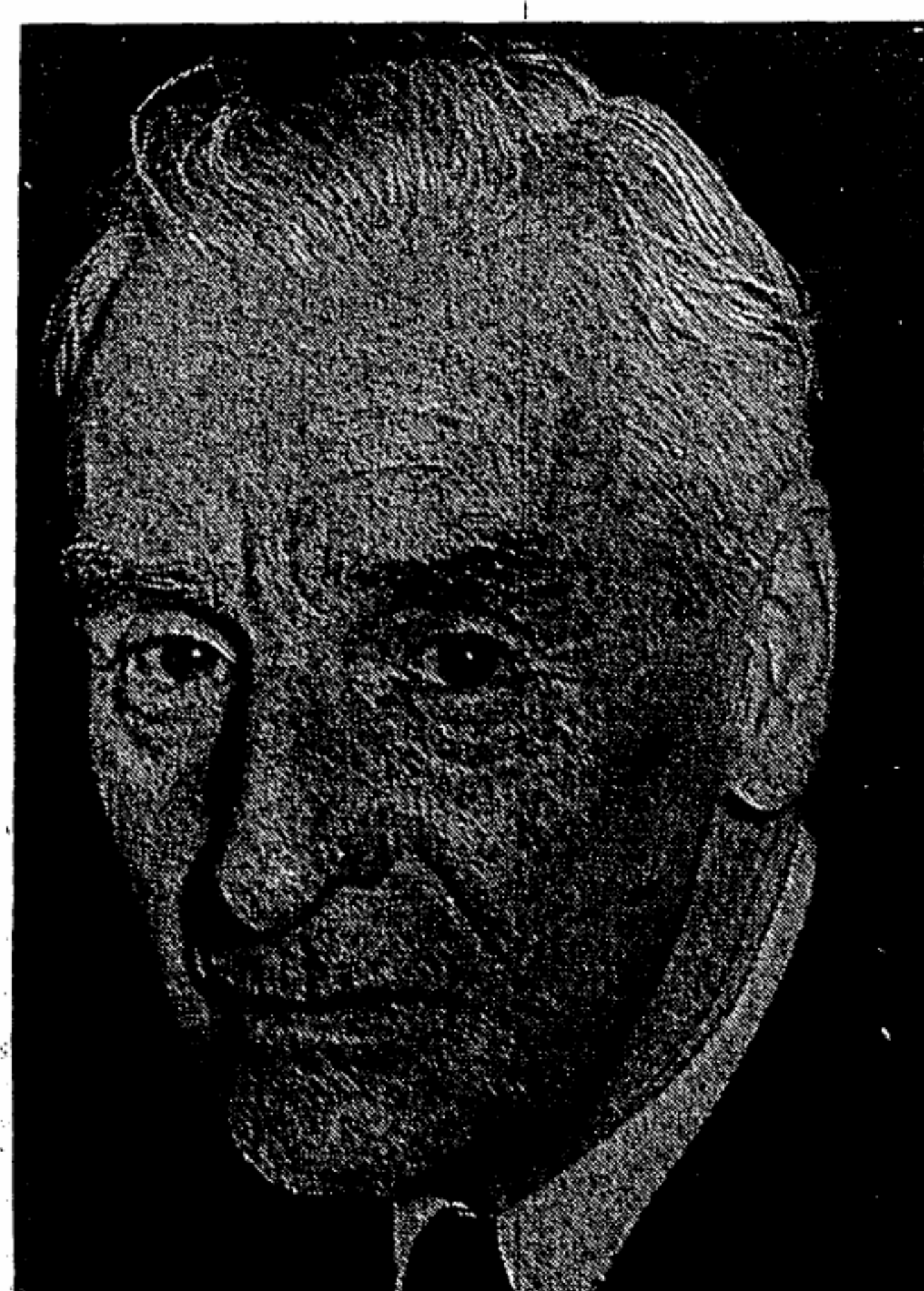
At that meeting in Suffolk Street two years later Paddy Brennan seconded two motions—one by Sean Lemass nominating the late Liam Pedlar as general secretary and the other by Mr. de Valera proposing that the name of the organisation be Fianna Fail.

After the establishment of the party a special committee was set up under the chairmanship of Countess Markievicz to organise the three constituencies then in the Dublin area—North, South and County. Paddy Brennan was appointed secretary: "It was a tremendous task and I had to report on progress every Monday afternoon personally to Mr. de Valera," he said.

In 1932 Mr. Brennan was reinstated in the Civil Service and he retired in 1966 having held the post of secretary to the Bureau of Military History (1913-21) for the last 12 years of his service. He was a close personal friend of Mr. de Valera, Mr. Sean MacEntee, the late Mr. Oscar Traynor and General Liam Lynch, who was killed at the end of the Civil War.

One of a family of ten, Paddy Brennan is a brother of the late Col. Sean Brennan, who had been ADC to President de Valera and who had also been active in the fight for independence. Two of his sisters, Brid and Nellie Brennan, both deceased, also played major parts in the War of Independence and the Civil War and carried despatches. He has three brothers still living—Tom Brennan, who is employed in the Board of Works, Michael Brennan, and the Rev. Martin Brennan, S.J., a lecturer in UCD.

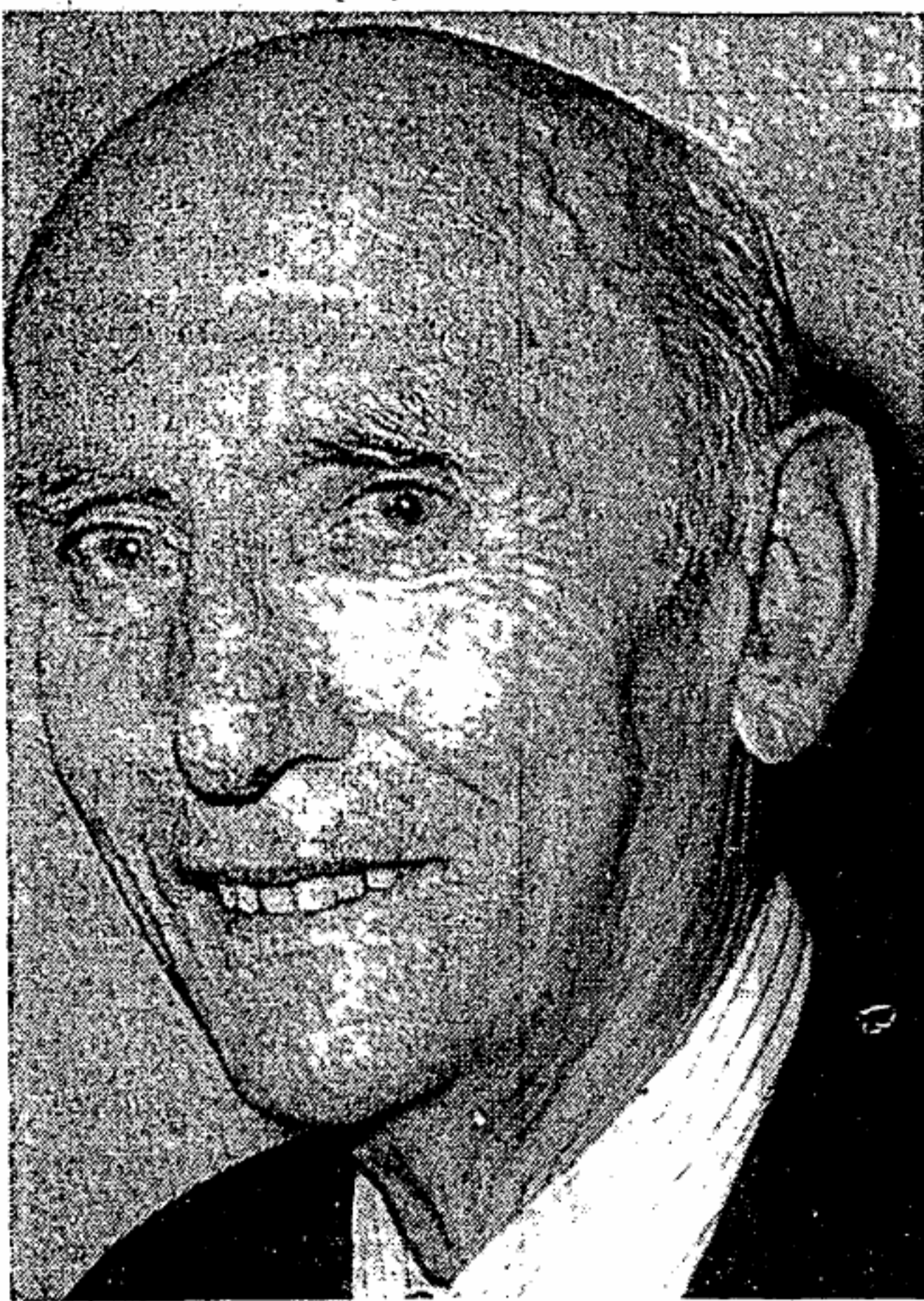
Looking back to that Good Friday in 1926, Mr. Brennan said: "Anybody who forecast then that Fianna Fail would develop into the greatest political party in the country's history—a position it still holds today—would have been considered a super-optimist."



Paddy Brennan, founder-member and 1916 veteran

Steering the nation through the war years

# Dev and neutrality



Joe Groome, his name is synonymous with the party.

## Bulwark of the Organisation

By GENE MCKENNA

FOR AS LONG as he can remember, Joe Groome's heart and home have both been at the service of the Fianna Fail Party. And now, even in his retirement years, his feelings for the party, its ideals and policies are stronger than ever.

Since its formative times, he has been one of the organisational bulwarks on which the party machine was built. As the Golden Jubilee is celebrated, he is one of the men who can look back with pride on his contribution in helping the party reach this landmark.

He can recall the good times and the times of trouble, the elations and the crises, the triumphs and the tragedies which have marked the half-century of achievement, tinged with disappointment.

Joe Groome came from a strong Republican background and that has had an enormous influence on his life. His father, also named Joe, was imbued with a Republican outlook which the young Joe took up as early as his tenth year when he joined Fianna Eireann.

As soon as he was old enough to do so, he joined the I.R.A. his resolve having been strengthened by all he had seen happening during the traumatic decade of his teens. He remembers well the night he "demobbed" himself from the I.R.A., a move which was to allow him carry on an uninterrupted association with the Fianna Fail party lasting to the present day.

The orders from the I.R.A. officer which induced Joe to hand in his Webley were delivered in the Hardwicke Hall in 1927. "The orders were to shoot jurors on their way to jury service in the courts," he said. "The officer asked that anyone who objected to the orders should take two paces forward. I did so."

He recalls, too, the first meetings in Dublin to set up the Fianna Fail organisation. "There was tremendous enthusiasm all round," he said. "The meetings were packed and there was a great spirit of endeavour about everybody."

Joe Groome was on the party's organisational committee from 1928 and was the committee chairman for many years, until he began his 30-year stint as the party's hon. secretary.

He only relinquished this position within the past couple of years and is now, in his 68th year, an honorary vice-president of Fianna Fail.

The family hotel at Cavendish Row, which has been Joe's home since the family moved from the North Wall to his father and mother bought the block for £200—shortly after the turn of the century, has been an unofficial party headquarters down through the years. It was an automatic meeting place for T.D.s and party supporters travelling to Dublin from various parts of the country and was a particularly lively spot at Ard-Sheis time. It is now almost three years since Joe and his wife, Pat, sold the hotel and moved to their present home at Sandy-

cove, where the life is "much quieter after the hurly-burly of the city centre for so long." Joe feels Fianna Fail has been very fortunate in the three leaders—Eamon de Valera, Sean Lemass and Jack Lynch—which it has had. "In my opinion, moral courage is the most important of all," he says. "All three of these great leaders were blessed with an outstanding form of moral courage and this has stood to the party in a big way."

Mr. de Valera, he says, was a man who impressed him from first moment he met him. "He was a man in a million," said Joe. "I doubt if we will ever see his like again. We were hoping he would be alive for this anniversary."

Joe also had the highest admiration for Sean Lemass. "He was a man of endless enthusiasm and energy," he said. "He was a great picker of men and would never ask anybody to do anything he wouldn't do himself."

Looking back on the early years of Fianna Fail, Joe says: "The amount of work which was put into the organisation of the party all around the country was tremendous. I travelled a good deal in helping to organise. I often thought I would come across people in remote parts of the country who were doing even more. It made me feel very humble."

He recalls with fondness key men on the organisational side of affairs, like Sean O'Donovan, Liam Pedler and Liam O'Doherty, and talks in glowing terms of Oscar Traynor—a "truly great man."

And he remembers the fact that, despite all the troubled times they went through, there was always "a great sense of humour" among party members, interspersed with the hard work. "Men like Sean Moylan and Bill Quirk were wonderful characters," he says.

Mr. Groome concedes that the trials and subsequent crisis for Fianna Fail had an effect on the party. "It was bound to have some effect on us but we will recover," he says, confidently.

And he is also in no doubt about the future well-being of Fianna Fail. "I think the party has played an invaluable part in the development of our country over the years," he says. "There has never been any change in the party's ideals, and objectives and these still stand."

"I am very confident that the party will continue to develop along the lines it has been pursuing since it was formed," he says. "Any organisation must get its lead from the men at the top. We have always got good leadership and this is what has stood to us."

"Example is very important for a child from his parent. In the same way, young people in Fianna Fail are getting this example from the men at the top," he added. He sees the Northern problem as one which will not be soon solved. "I don't think a solution will be found in my lifetime but it is inevitable that it will happen some day," he says. "I would certainly die a happy man if I saw the end of partition."

NEARLY everyone who has written or talked about Irish neutrality during the Second World War agrees that de Valera's conduct of that policy was not simply successful. It also provided what might be described as a text book classic in the art of maintaining a successful neutral position. This involved not only keeping out of the war, but also keeping one's friends, and making no new enemies in the process.

It was certainly during these years that de Valera established himself as a most effective practitioner on the stage of international politics. True, he had talked at length, and secured passing attention at the League of Nations in Geneva as President of the Council and also as President of the Assembly.

But fine words do not always shape a policy; and there is no doubt that the mastery and efficiency of his diplomatic art reached its summit between 1938 and 1945.

de Valera (and Ireland) were confronted with certain special difficulties in the pursuit of their neutral policy. Other neutral countries had their problems too, and the European states chiefly involved included Spain, Portugal, Turkey, Sweden and Switzerland. Sweden was particularly exposed to pressures from a number of fronts: the Russians and the Germans—both neighbours—also the western powers from more distant fronts. Spain and Switzerland were open to Western pressures quite apart from those of Italy and Germany. But Sweden had a strong army and from an economic—as well as a military viewpoint—was in a fairly safe position.

Switzerland was a much stronger power than her numerical numbers might indicate. Anyhow she had her Alps. Turkey remained neutral as long as she wanted to do so, and this required some skill in diplomatic posture and contrivance. But she was to abandon neutrality and succumb to economic pressure of the Soviet and Western powers as soon as it suited her. Neutrality was never for her a principle; it was only a temporary means.

### PRINCIPLE

Spain too yielded gradually after 1943—though Franco showed historic greatness in resisting the allurements and the menaces from former allies in Berlin and Rome, before the turning of the tide in favour of the western and eastern powers.

Portugal under Salazar played its neutral game with elasticity and skill but without very much conviction. In fact there were three states which demanded neutral regard as a matter of principle as well as of practice: Switzerland, the Vatican and Ireland under de Valera. The Irish problem was at least as great as those confronting the other two.

The Irish story has been told by a number of writers—including in particular Joseph Carroll and Nicholas Mansergh. Some of the actors have also touched upon the relationship of Irish policy to the powers chiefly concerned.

These actors include Churchill, Gray, Sumner Wells, Anthony Eden, Malcolm MacDonald and indirectly Franklin D. Roosevelt, Lord Longford and T. P. O'Neill have given their version of de Valera's behaviour, as he saw it, in their authorised biography. The German papers cover the actions and motives of Hemptel, Minister in Dublin, of Ribbentrop, and of Hitler himself.

Others include the spy in chief himself—Vesenmayer—and his associate Helmut Clissmann (now permanently ensconced in Dublin). Enno Stephan from Germany has written a book "Spies in Ireland" and this is useful in throwing some light on German policy and its relations with the I.R.A. Major Goertz and lesser known agents of the German Intelligence Services.

That book tells a lot about the problems facing de Valera and the internal front with which he had to contend in steering Ireland through some of the rougher waters of neutrality.

Anything worthwhile knowing about de Valera's policy is probably now available to historians. At least the evidence concerning British, German, American and Vatican activities is there for those who wish to write about this topic. And of course we now have— for what they are worth—the records of the proceedings of the Irish cabinet in the documents recently opened for inspection in the State Paper Office.

It looks as if those cabinet papers throw very little new light on the major issues of neutral policy—though they may be most valuable in dis-



July 11, 1938, Mr. de Valera as Taoiseach took over the ports from the British. Picture shows the party arriving to hoist the Tricolour on Spike Island. With Mr. de Valera were Frank Aiken, Dr. Ryan, Oscar Traynor, Maj.-Gen. M. Brennan, Chief of Staff, Mr. Hugo Flynn, the late Col. Sean Brennan, Lieut. (now Major) Vivion de Valera. In the foreground are Kevin Boland and Eoin Ryan.

playing the detail and varying months employed in the pursuit of policy.

de Valera had decided on neutrality long before the war began, and in 1938 he gave no guarantee to Neville Chamberlain that in return for the handing over of the ports he would enter any forthcoming war as an ally of Britain.

He did not expressly rule out such a policy in the event of unification of the whole island. But again, he did not specifically commit himself—even though he was to imply that the abolition of Partition might change his and fellow southern Irish attitudes.

Most of the European powers were convinced that Ireland, in the long run, could not remain out of the war in which British forces were involved. Certainly such was the initial assumption of the German and Italian ministers in Dublin; it was also assumed that Ireland would enter as a result of British economic and military pressure, if British vital interests were ever invoked to secure the return of the ports in the event of a major threat to British naval supplies.

Three powers could be viewed as potentially threatening to the continuation of Irish neutrality: Germany, Britain and, eventually, the United States.

Many years after 1945 de Valera stated he had feared a British more than a German invasion. In fact he feared at different times invasion from both those powers and, to a lesser extent, invasion from the U.S.

There were a number of especially dangerous points in the story which, if they had turned out differently might have caused neutrality to be abandoned and Ireland to find herself a battle centre after all. There were other smaller powers which pursued neutrality up to a certain stage and then were obliged to become involved; as for example, Norway, Belgium, Denmark and Holland.

A major difference between the Irish and the other cases lay in the fact that neither of the two major power blocs did in fact violate de Valera's neutralist policy and Ireland therefore was never compelled to make a firm choice as to which side she would support.

Indeed, it was one of de Valera's outstanding gifts as a statesman that he managed to convince the three main parties: Hitler, Churchill and, to a lesser extent, Roosevelt, that he would resist aggression from what-

### DANGERS

ever side it first came.

The leaders and their agents were agreed on one point: that as far as de Valera was concerned his sympathy would naturally lie with the "democratic" powers. At the same time he managed to convince them all that irrespective of his private views he would abide by the fundamental rules of neutrality as laid down by the international code. At least he appeared to observe that code in general, if not always in every particular case.

What then were the danger points? Well, the first nine months of the "phony" war passed by with no serious incident and Irish neutrality appeared to be of little consequence to the warring states.

The first crisis arose after the involvement of Belgium, Holland and France on May 10, 1940. Some alarm was shown in Dublin in the following weeks during which it looked as if at any point the Germans could and would invade Ireland as part of a general invasion of the British Isles.

Secret talks of what proved to be a non-committal nature were then initiated between the Irish and British governments and between representatives of the British army in the North and a few Irish officers in the South.

Contingency plans were drafted, many archives were

destroyed and the Irish gold reserve was flown from Dublin to Foynes. The expected invasion did not, of course, take place and by the autumn the immediate threat from the German side appeared to have passed.

On November 5, 1940, Winston Churchill delivered himself of a sharp attack on Irish neutrality in a speech during a House of Commons debate; and from this time onward de Valera's worries were often to centre around British rather than German policy.

The U-boat war was now growing intense; and the fall of France and the use of French and Norwegian bases began to represent a vital threat to British interests.

Hitler's "Sea-Lion" operation got underway during those months. He agreed with his naval Commander-in-Chief that the occupation of Ireland by German forces could contribute to the conclusion of a successful war. But the distances separating Ireland from German bases was far too great to offer any secure prospects for an invading force.

### THREE VISITS

In any event, Hitler eventually decided that there would be no question of collaboration with Irish forces in an attack on the British as long as de Valera's consent to such a policy was not given.

From November 1940, therefore, the Taoiseach was concerned to keep Britain out of

both exercised considerable influence over the shaping of Irish policy towards Ireland throughout the war.

The next crisis then arose during the Christmas season of 1940-41 when the Germans sought permission to appoint military attaches to the German legation in Dublin. De Valera feared that if this proposal were to be accepted the British Government would regard it as confirmation of the general propagandist thesis that Ireland was being used as a base for espionage directed against Britain. He and the Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs, Joseph P. Walshe, endeavoured to impress on Hemptel the dangers involved for German and for Irish interests.

Military attaches might well provide the British with a final argument in favour of occupying the 26 Counties. The Germans continued to press on this matter and it was only finally dropped in February of that year.

In theory the Germans would have been entitled in international law to have a military attaché attached to their legation. In practice such an attachment aroused the spectre of immediate British intervention, and it was from the British side that de Valera came now to fear the violation of Irish neutrality.

But on December 24 of 1940 alert notices were issued to the Irish Army directed chiefly against the landing of British attaches at Rineanna. At this time, too, there was one other very thorny prob-

lem which gave rise to delicate negotiations between German diplomats and the Irish leaders. It concerned the use in the German legation of a wireless transmitter which, since the beginning of the war, had occasionally been operated for the purpose of passing on to Berlin weather reports, which were or could be of relevance to shipping in the Atlantic "approaches."

De Valera feared, too, that any development of this kind would be employed by the British in their propaganda against neutrality. A similar situation arose in Switzerland and in Bulgaria, where the British diplomats used transmitters for similar purposes—directed against German interests.

### RADIO

But what was sauce for the goose was not sauce for the gander. The wireless issue cropped up intermittently between 1940-1942. Hemptel used the instrument sparingly, but the Irish Government kept on remembering it. Hemptel finally agreed under the direction of J. P. Walshe and F. H. Boland, to hand the offending transmitter over to the custody of the Munster and Leinster Bank where it remained for the rest of the war.

This issue was to be raised again in February 1944, and it constituted one of the arguments employed by the Americans when they and the British sent separate notes of protest to the Irish Government shortly before the Normandy invasion.

The British knew that the wireless had been handed over to the Irish Government; surprisingly, the Americans were allowed to remain in ignor-

ance of this fact, indicating all over again the absence of full co-operation between British and American intelligence services.

Meanwhile from 1941 the war continued remorselessly in Europe, and a major turning point was provided by the entry of the US into hostilities in December. It was at this point that the British resumed their pressure on the Irish Government.

Churchill sent a celebrated telegram to de Valera on December 8 calling upon "Orange and Green" to unite in common resistance to German tyranny throughout the world. He demanded that immediate conversations be opened between the two countries.

Maffey was instructed to seek an immediate interview with the Taoiseach himself. On Christmas Eve, de Valera received Maffey in his dressing gown at his home in Cross Avenue. The Taoiseach was almost convinced that this was a prelude to active British intervention.

His policy was to receive Maffey, hear what he said, sound the alarm for the Irish Army and direct the various divisions to the North with a view to defending the frontier from British invading forces. In such an event the objective would have been not to defend Irish territory, which was indefensible, but to show the preparedness of his Government to shed blood in defence of Irish neutrality.

De Valera, however, gained time, and with the passage of time Churchill's exuberant hopes subsided. In fact nothing specific emerged from this pseudo-crisis. But no one could be certain at that time that the crisis merely sprang from the emotions of the British leader. So much depended on the whims

and caprices of a few men. Throughout this whole period the policy of the Irish Government has to be understood in the context of domestic development inside Ireland and in particular of the IRA. This organisation represented no serious threat to the stability of the State. But there was always two major dangers of which de Valera had to take constant account: one was that the British would use IRA activity to justify the long-feared intervention; the second was that the Germans would make overtures to the IRA and then open negotiations with them and other discontented nationally minded circles.

Meanwhile the mysterious "spy", Captain Goertz, went from one part of the country to the other, from one house in Dublin to the other, pursued by the Irish police and Army until he was eventually arrested by the security forces on November 21, 1941.

Goertz had remained in sporadic contact with Hemptel and the Counselor of the German Legation, Herr Thomsen. Goertz never achieved anything of real significance. But he did succeed in entering into some kind of conversations with a few senior officers of the Irish Army. It was the potential danger of his actions which worried de Valera and his advisors.

All this foreign policy has to be viewed in the context of home policy—and this included the problem of the IRA. That organisation by itself possessed little power. In normal peacetime circumstances it had presented little threat—even during the bombing campaign of 1938-39.

Captain Goertz in an early burst of optimism informed his German superiors that at least 8,000. By November 1941, nearly all his illusions had vanished. They were cer-

tainly of no use to the German High Command, but de Valera could hardly be sure of this as long as the war lasted and as long as their presence could be used as a pretext for intervention by the British and subsequently the Americans.

No one really knew or knows what were the instructions given to Sean Russell before his fatal journey to Ireland in August 1940. No one at that stage knew very much about the activities of Frank Ryan in Berlin. In fact he had been dropped and was to die in June 1944.

But some German plotting was taking place and this did not entirely escape the attention of the British Secret Service. Meanwhile occasional vicious encounters took place between the police and the IRA. Charlie Kerins, George Plant and others were executed.

The German plotting took the form of a plan to drop three or four officers in Ireland—equipped with some guns and munition, but more especially a wireless transmitter and money. At one stage over a hundred select troops from a specially trained sabotage regiment were envisaged but all these notions were abandoned. Again de Valera could not have been sure of what was going on or of what was not.

Between the end of 1941 and 1945, some scheming continued in Ireland, and here it was that some army officers were involved. General O'Duffy offered to organise a group of greenshirts to be sent to the Russian front. He also tried to establish lines of communication with "nationally minded" circles—including the remnants of the IRA. Agent provocateurs, informers and double agents also lurked here and there.

From 1943 to 1945 sporadic efforts were made by the Americans and the British to induce Ireland to enter the war—even at that late stage. This pressure culminated in the celebrated "ultimatum" issued by the British and the American governments—in separate notes this so-called ultimatum led to nothing and it was to a large extent the brainchild of Roosevelt and of his cousin, Gray, the American Ambassador. It was quite clear that this particular initiative came from the Americans and not the British.

### RANCOUR

It almost looked as if American policy was being formed by the personal rancour of Roosevelt and his ambassador. Gray indeed was extremely fertile in his constant schemes for forcing de Valera's hand. On one occasion he advised that two American ships should enter "Queenstown"—one full of food, and the other full of troops. All this was sheer folly, almost infantile, but it was, nonetheless, dangerous.

After the Normandy invasion of June, 1944, the allies were to meet with yet another rebuff from the Taoiseach. He was asked to reassure them that he would hand over all German weapons wanted by the British or the Americans for alleged war crimes. This he refused to do.

Such was the public role. In secret, however, he was to authorise some concessions of advantage to the allied troops based in Northern Ireland. At an earlier stage he had authorised for several years the holding of informal conversations between the Irish Chief of Staff and a British officer, General Franklin, and also with Biggs-Ellis.

If news of these conversations had ever been published, they might have constituted a breach of neutral law. Hemptel suspected that de Valera's co-operation with Britain was not directed against Germany; but it was rather designed to prevent the English from over-representing his general policy. Indeed, to some extent that policy was to embarrass his overseas critics with gifts, the provision of which remain undisclosed and therefore harmless.

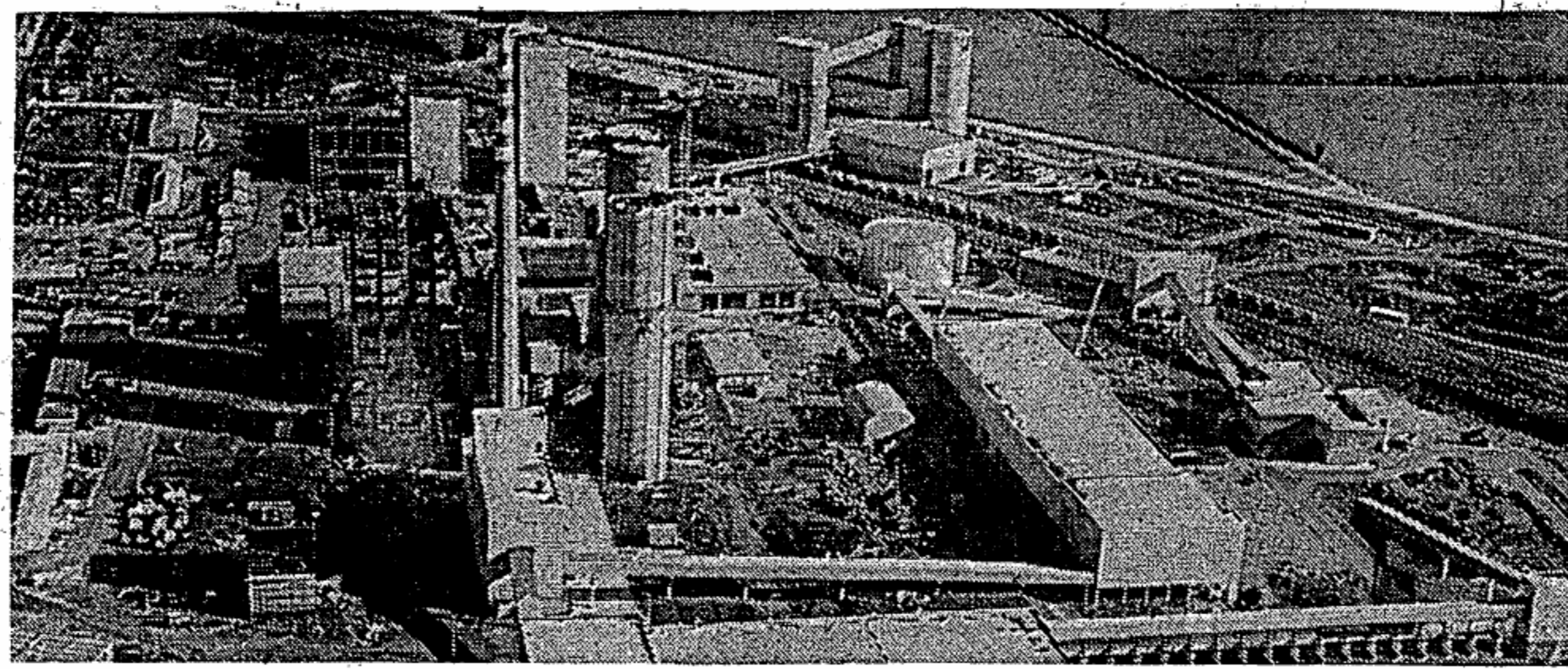
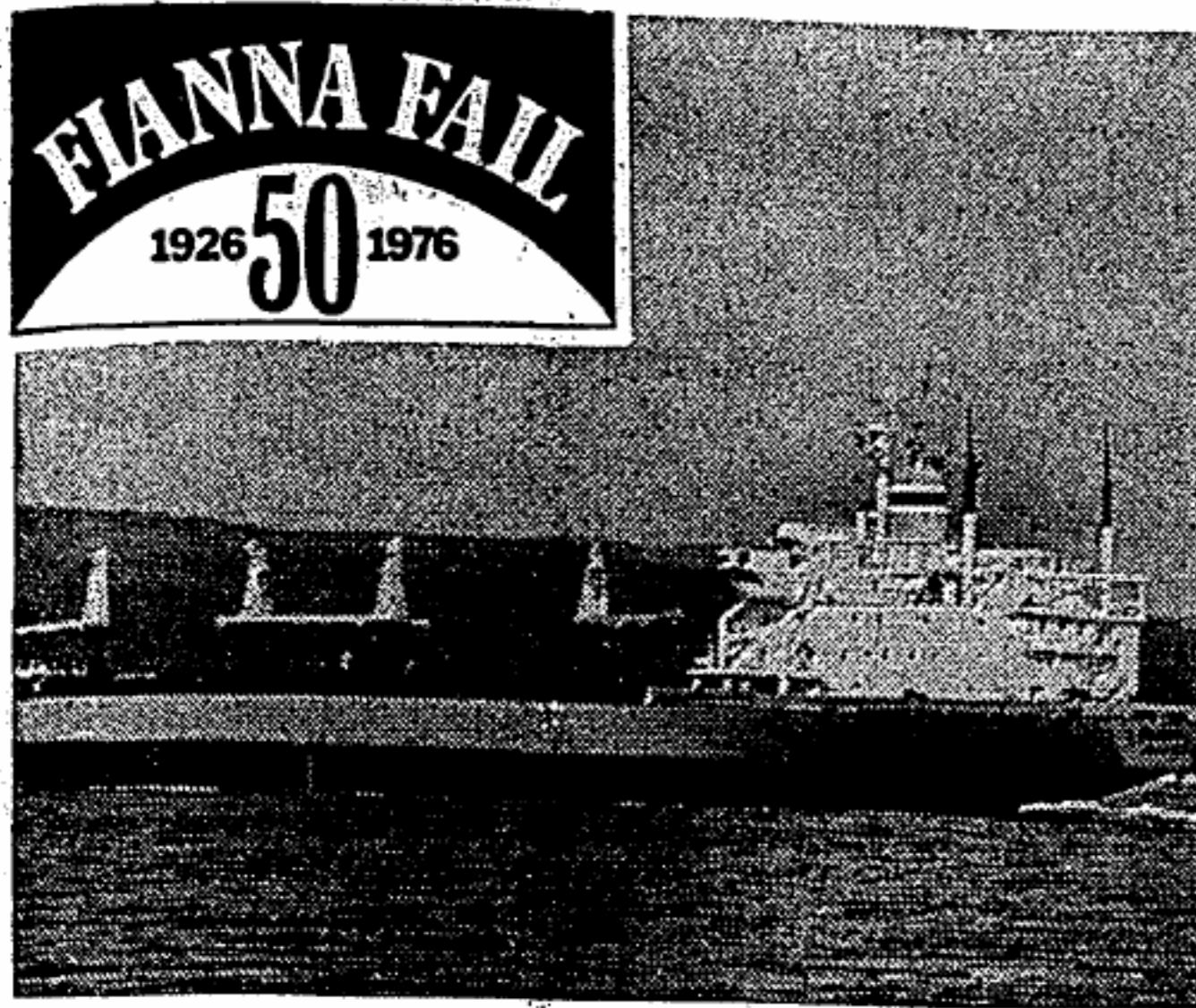
The final episode in the history of Irish neutrality in the Second World War is almost too well-known to bear repetition. It concerned the exchange between de Valera and Churchill on May 8 and May 13, 1945; and it was preceded by the Irish leader's visit to Hemptel and the expression of his condolences with the German Minister on the collapse of his country.

De Valera was hoisting his flag on the very day when other States were pulling them down. This shocked all his advisers and they deprecated the lack of prudence in appearing to have some sympathy with the losing side. But it was done with Christian dignity. The world's memory is short and this was a fitting end to that particular period of de Valera's career.

by Desmond Williams  
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### MYSTERY 'SPY'



SYMBOLS OF ACHIEVEMENT. Left: Irish Shipping, centre; the cement plant at Drogheda, and right, an Aer Lingus Jumbo jet.

# From protectionism to the EEC

THERE IS A very simple view of Irish economic policy since the foundation of the State which goes somewhat as follows. For the first eleven years, the William T. Cosgrave era, the idea was to foster agriculture since that industry employed the great majority of the people and to go alongside it a very restricted protectionist policy for Irish manufactures.

In 1932 Fianna Fail came to power in the middle of a world-wide recession on a full blown policy for industry involving high tariffs to preserve the home market for the products of Irish factories. This continued until 1938 even though two Coalition governments intervened for six out of the twenty-six years.

Then the late Sean Lemass, probably under the influence of Dr. Kenneth Whitaker, changed tracks towards an open economy in which industry would essentially rest on exports and the home market would be thrown open to the world. No doubt forward thinking towards joining the E.E.C. was part of the plan and it was preceded by the Anglo-Irish Free Trade Agreement.

By the early 'seventies the open economy was fairly established and we are currently in the last throes of abandoning the "Ourselves Alone" outlook. Inevitably, this is a contributing factor to our current economic difficulties.

Fianna Fail had started with the Arthur Griffith approach to economic ideas and these were the early inspiration of the economic-political attitudes of the party. They reflected traditional ideas of its leader, Eamon de Valera. The doctrine was accepted by a bare majority of the people that with a State of our own we could do for ourselves anything that outsiders could do and were then doing for us.

This kind of inverted jingoism tallied with the moods of the last great depression and was widely reflected in attitudes in other countries.

The Second World War brought radical changes. The hardships endured quietly by the people in the six or seven years of that conflict were to an extent instigated by the preparatory work of the Fianna Fail governments between 1932 and 1938. In some respects, for example, the use of native fuel this relatively short period had produced remarkable results which sustained the war economy forced upon the State.

But the emergency period raised many questions as to what indeed Irish economic plans should be. The aftermath of the struggle in Europe and the coming of American global help through the Marshall plan together with the application of Keynesian monetary theories brought the country into a new era.

IN RELATION TO these out of work and to the educational and health changes brought about by the new conditions of the 'fifties and 'sixties, the Fianna Fail record is quite outstanding. This is seen particularly against the party's philosophy of the balanced budget.

Yet it was in these two decades that the full programme of capital development was brought forward and here the philosophy admitted, indeed required, extensive borrowing for capital purposes. The essential difference between then and now, often echoed by speakers such as Mr. George Colley, is that when discretion as to borrowing is thrown open, board in order to finance the current budget, then all credibility as to the base for a sound capital budget is lost.

The more extravagant we appear in our day to day operations, the less the country will be trusted as worthy of support in the long-term objectives. Certainly this is a human reaction; the present coalition Government, after three years, has proved it to be an economic one.

or not there were jobs at home.

To deny this is the same as denying that the oil crisis did not precipitate current economic problems even though it was not the sole cause. Equally whatever economic planning is done for the State we are a potentially emigrating people and can scarcely hope to hold on always to our full growth of population.

Economic difficulties and massive emigration brought down the second Coalition government. Their regime saw streets of newly-built corporation houses in Dublin empty because the workers for whom they were built were in London, Birmingham, Coventry or elsewhere.

Even today the question is asked why the change in government in 1957 back to Fianna Fail suddenly reversed that extraordinary situation? That a remarkable change took place is there on the record and would be well worth a fuller study. On the surface it appeared that the Coalition Government had no money and therefore no spending power and its successor, the new Fianna Fail Government had and used them both immediately.

This raises the question whether the original policy of 1932 of building up Irish home-owned industry and capital had in fact been more successful than it appeared to have been? Had it created a merchant manufacturing middle class sufficiently interested in their chances in the country to react quickly to favourable government policies?

It had provided substantial employment in small industries, quite a number of which survived to become large. Even so the party's architect of policy, Sean Lemass, changed his ground. He removed the restrictions on capital investment from abroad and built up the attractions for foreign com-

panies to come in and use Ireland as an export base. He prepared the ground for the full open economy and ultimate accession to the E.E.C.

Lemass experienced little or no opposition to this change of direction in economic policy. The great majority of the people, including the much criticised industrialists, welcomed it and whatever meagre capital was in native hands was left to fend for itself.

This may be the most significant aspect of the change. Except in very special cases, such as the discovery of rich mineral and oil resources, it takes more than one generation to build up a capital base in any country.

Ireland had nothing of this kind to boast of in 1920 (outside of her land) and by 1950 or 1960 its growth was quite small. Even now in the 'seventies any measurement of private capital gives an insignificant figure in relation to what the country requires. The absence of a capital base means an absence of the corresponding class structures which produce native investment and entrepreneurial skills.

It would be quite foolish to delude ourselves any more on this point and the society we are opting for is equality at a low level of opulence requiring taxation at high rates right across all the people like the Italians, only more so, we are a society of "impiegati", that is employees and clerks.

Perhaps it is asking too much to enquire whether this was what the founding fathers of Fianna Fail envisaged. They were an entirely different breed of men to what the party has today and they lived in an era which now seems at least

100 years ago even though it is only fifty. Their leader for so long, the late Eamon de Valera, was one of the strongest personalities ever seen in Irish history and exerted a powerful magnetism on the electorate.

The most characteristic memory he left behind him was his belief that the Irish should be a frugal people, living on the fruits of their own soil and being content with the way of life he knew from the nineteenth century. The changes taking place around him, particularly in the latter days of his political power, saw the cities and towns growing, the countryside declining, the people opting for the bright lights which if they could not find at home they were determined to seek abroad. Before his eyes Ireland was transforming itself from an agricultural community into the patterns set by advanced

## RESOURCES

More than anyone else he was responsible for the rise of the Irish trade unions into the dominating position they hold today. He had his difficulties with this very intractable and powerful element in our society but the record shows that he handled it very well and had many notable achievements to his credit in the area of industrial relations.

His major weakness was the national one, an inability to think through policy to its end results. He seems to have realised from the 'fifties onwards that industrialisation could never succeed on the entirely inadequate base provided by native capital. Hence he very characteristically reversed his whole thinking and went all out for the Whitaker plan to convert the country rapidly to the concept of the consumer society backed by liberal monetary policies.

In retrospect it would seem that both he and Whitaker like the originator of this policy, the Cambridge economist John Maynard Keynes, were eventually defeated in their plans by their mistime in the hands of lesser people. Yet it was these two who brought the greatly increased standards of living to the people in the 'sixties and 'seventies.

## BUDGETS

This may be held to be a prejudiced view. But the significant point in relation to the financial policies of Fianna Fail was they seldom strayed far away from financial orthodoxy. They mirrored the view of the average elector that a country, like a person, should pay its own way as it went along and there were no Bras funds or reserves.

This was equally true of the two previous coalitions and only since 1974 has the leap into extravagance taken place. Probably one cannot yet see the effects of this for the long-term of the State but they hardly look good. The table at left illustrates the changes in government financing over the past seven years.

## FARMING

In 1932 there were radical differences between Fianna Fail and its major opposition party (now Fine Gael). The latter was the traditional party of the larger and medium sized farmers. Fianna Fail had early on captured the votes of the small farmers and the poorer agricultural areas in the West of Ireland.

Their approach was simple and pragmatic. They recognised that Irish small farmers were scarcely farmers at all and introduced supplementary social welfare benefits which made them dependent on the State.

It was a palliative rather than a policy. The best that can be said about it is that it slowed up a decline which external pressures and natural climatic forces made inevitable. Industrialisation has today brought some balance to the west, and there are hopes that the decline may be halted.

Perhaps Fianna Fail can claim that it prevented the complete collapse of a non-viable area and they did much to raise the standards of living there. The price paid was terrible, particularly in the flight of the young people abroad and the consequent loss to the country of the best and most intelligent of the people.

As a nation we were never too careful of our human resources. In purely electoral terms today the west is open country for any political party and the centres of voting power are concentrated in the east and south.

The traditional support for Fine Gael among the larger farmers stemmed from that party's continued adherence to a national livestock policy. Yet this meant no more than that the party could not conceive of any alternative to the relatively simple form of agriculture this involved.

Fianna Fail's early emphasis on tillage to some extent antagonised the bigger farmers, although here again it was to prove the salvation of the country in the war years.

These lines of difference have disappeared. In the 1920s Fine Gael (Cumann na nGaedheal) had attempted to develop the idea of meat processing as an ancillary industry and had failed. It required many decades under Fianna Fail before this particular farm derivative industry became well established.

by Joseph Charleton  
Economic commentator and accountant



western nations. The economy required planning to adapt to these conditions.

Lemass, while an entirely different type to his predecessor as Taoiseach, was more interested in the day-to-day requirements of the country than in long-term planning. His own great political significance was that he understood and was appreciated by the urban worker.

More than anyone else he was responsible for the rise of the Irish trade unions into the dominating position they hold today. He had his difficulties with this very intractable and powerful element in our society but the record shows that he handled it very well and had many notable achievements to his credit in the area of industrial relations.

His major weakness was the national one, an inability to think through policy to its end results. He seems to have realised from the 'fifties onwards that industrialisation could never succeed on the entirely inadequate base provided by native capital. Hence he very characteristically reversed his whole thinking and went all out for the Whitaker plan to convert the country rapidly to the concept of the consumer society backed by liberal monetary policies.

YEAR		GROSS RECEIPTS (millions)	DEFICIT (millions)
1970	Fianna Fail	£482	£9
1971	Fianna Fail	£551	Nil
1972	Fianna Fail	£615	£35
1973	Coalition	£755	£39
1974 (9 months)	Coalition	£699	£81
1975	Coalition	£1,115	£242
1976	Coalition	£1,356	£327

# For those in need . . .



Donogh O'Malley, introduced free secondary education in 1968.

contributions to the less well off would also grow, it never became necessary to accentuate budget difficulties by borrowing the money to pay the huge deficits on current expenditure.

The different attitude is also emphasised by the fact that Fianna Fail wished to be regarded as a party for employment. Had it not been for the growth rates sustained in the last decade of its government, say from 1963 to 1975, the fall in agricultural employment might very well have made today's high figures of unemployed the norm. In some way, the Party must revive a policy of job creation in accordance with its tradition that this is the best social welfare for Ireland in every circumstance.

Actually, it was another major move by the party which has affected the whole employment outlook. This was the introduction in 1968 by the late Donogh O'Malley of the free secondary education scheme which was subjected to much criticism at the time.

In retrospect, it was a policy which had to come and he was ahead of his contemporaries. What has yet to be learned is whether the system of secondary education we have is what Ireland really needs.

jobs remains less each year as secondary education continues to attract greater numbers.

More important still is the fact that inevitably the type of jobs most looked for will be those which will justify the investment in that education, not only on the part of the school-leavers, but also of the parents who continue to contribute in divers indirect ways. And, of course, the State should look for a return on behalf of the general body of taxpayers.

The late Mr. O'Malley was less successful in his efforts to re-organise the universities. Perhaps there is some significance in the fact that the controversies in this area died down with the change in government in 1973, even though or because of the fact that the coalition is by and large an academic team. But the twin objectives remain, a new school system and better geared, and more realistic, degrees from the third level to suit the country's needs.

It would be impossible to develop here fully all the pressing objectives now facing the country socially as well as economically. The chaotic state of this Government's finances almost from its inception never permitted it to plan and certainly never resulted in any planning in any of these areas.

Whether the excuses made were ever valid (such as the all crisis and the world trade recession) is now immaterial, since the facts are a crying need for jobs for a much better-educated people than we ever had, not for a system of social welfare which would have them permanently depending on the State, and it in its turn dependent on an ever narrowing number of gainfully employed people in productive employment.

Just as in the purely economic field, the challenge is there for a single cohesive and determined political party.

The present widespread network of health, organisations throughout the country were developed in the late 'sixties and early 'seventies. A fair record was reached with the



The late President Childers, distinguished record as Minister for Health.

medical profession, the regional Health Boards were organised and the high technical plans following on the Fitzgerald Report were set working although not without some opposition.

Of all the Ministerial posts, Health seemed to bring out the best in the men who were Ministers and the particular dedication of the late Erskine Childers deserves to be put on the record.

The social budget today is overshadowed by the ex-

chequer deficits and in all areas the strictest economies are to be enforced. Yet the 1972/73 budget foreshadowed a deficit of only £28 million; this year, only three years later, the deficit is £327 million, nearly 12 times greater, all of which will have to be borrowed.

How far the social budget can now go is a matter of speculation, but it should not hide the positive constructive planning initiated in the Fianna Fail period.

A fair example of the Fianna Fail social budget inside the gross State budget between 1959/60 and 1972/73 is indicated by the following table of close approximations.

Year	Total Budget	Social Welfare	Education	Health
1959/60	128	25	8	8
1972/73	628	90	58	63
Increase	5 times	3½ times	6 times	8 times

extent antagonised the bigger farmers, although here again it was to prove the salvation of the country in the war years.

Obviously its success had the result of reinstating livestock as the key agricultural product whether for processing or export on the hoof. With it went the equally traditional milk industry and the processing of its products.

The importance of the combined industries for the future cannot be overstated and the development of a comprehensive agricultural policy on this base may well be the greatest single effort required in the years ahead. A party like Fianna Fail, always convinced that it held full title to being the national party, will ignore this at its peril.

Fianna Fail can claim that in the 16 years prior to 1973 there was a massive growth in the milk co-operatives and beef manufacturing industries which transformed the total agricultural situation. Whether this has yet solved the imbalances in Irish farming remains doubtful.

Our system is hardly paralleled in any other part of the world whereby a single small territory is split between those who initiate production of livestock and those who finish it off and reap the greater economic benefits. The concept of total farm production on single units hardly exists.

Added to this is the growing dependence on policies which start in Brussels. The results of our accession to the E.E.C. have produced the expected dislocation of industry and have, to a large extent, handed over the control of agriculture to an outside authority. Equally, it has widened the factors and political implications affecting decisions at home.

Political parties tend more and more to think in terms of what is happening in Europe and our government ministers spend more and more time outside the country. For the two western islands, Ireland and Britain, this is a new experience whose effects have yet to be measured. They could result in external shaping of home policies which may not be always acceptable to the people.

PROSPECTS

A national party with the long record in power which Fianna Fail has had in the past and may very well experience in the future should be about its homework. Politically the coalition of the two opposition groups can be on a temporary basis only unless one of them is prepared to sink its identity altogether.

The great danger is that the electorate will come to see no difference between Fianna Fail and the others, that politics will become simply a game of musical chairs and the Dail the best club in the country. Only a positive policy for manufacture and agriculture set out for the people and accompanied by a full educative programme will draw the lines of distinction clearly.

For those who care this is the real task ahead of Fianna Fail and the one on which the ultimate verdict on the party will be given. There is great scope to revive the initiatives of private people in industry, services and agriculture. The alternative which is starting us very much in the face is the monolithic state heading always to the dictates of outsiders.

We are not a people notable for original thinking in economic terms and some one must give the lead now in what is a crossroads in our history. From where can it come if not from the Fianna Fail party?



# Breaking the IRA link

MILITARY distrust of politicians has always been a dominant feature of the Republican movement. It lay behind the decision of the IRA convention in November, 1925, to sever its connection with the Republican "Dail" and Sinn Fein; henceforth the IRA would be responsible only to its own executive. This decisive step was the prelude to that reappraisal of policy within Sinn Fein itself which resulted in de Valera's resignation from the organisation and the subsequent foundation of Fianna Fail.

The new party soon absorbed the bulk of Republican support in the country. The rank-and-file Republican supporter might admire the inflexible principles of the Sinn Fein rump who were adamantly opposed to the sending of "representatives into any usurping legislature set up by English law in Ireland", but admiration did not imply support for the futility of continuing abstentionism. The rout of Sinn Fein at the 1927 elections was clear proof of that.

## PRINCIPLE

The break between the IRA and Fianna Fail was, at the outset, more a matter of strategy than of principle, and years were to elapse before it became irrevocable. Though the new party rejected an IRA council proposal in 1927 for a common abstentionist front, there were no bitter recriminations at this early stage. Indeed, the average IRA man saw no contradiction in still regarding de Valera as the republican leader.

What Fianna Fail and the IRA had in common in the late 1920s and early 1930s far transcended their differences. Both organisations shared a common social and political background and, if we except the then insignificant minority Republican left, much the same ultimate political objective. The fuller context of Seán Lemass's oft-quoted phrase in a 1928 Dail debate makes it clear that the party then regarded itself almost as a parliamentary front for Republicanism.

## AGITATION

"Fianna Fail is a slightly constitutional party. We are perhaps open to the definition of a constitutional party, but before anything we are a Republican party. We have adopted the method of political agitation to achieve our end because we believe, in the present circumstances, that method is best in the interest of the nation and of the Republican movement, and for no other reason.

"Five years ago the methods we adopted were not the methods we have adopted now. Five years ago we were on the defensive and perhaps in time we may recoup our strength sufficiently to go on the offensive. Our object is to establish a Republican government in Ireland. If that can be done by the present methods we have, we will be very pleased, but if not, we would not confine ourselves to them."

## MOTIVES

On more than one occasion in those days, de Valera defended the ideals of the IRA. In opposing in the Dail the Cosgrave government's public safety measures in 1929, he

described IRA men as being "animated with honest motives." Those who continued on in that organisation which we have left can claim exactly the same continuity that we claimed up to 1925." Of course, Fianna Fail was opposed to IRA "ruthlessness in intimidating juries but as the party organ, the Nation, pointed out, neither did Fianna Fail "wish to associate themselves with the equally brutal, inefficient, useless methods of repression adopted by the Free State Government."

However, when the IRA reluctantly moved to the left and approved the radical Saor Eire programme in 1931, it became clear that there was a wide gap between the populism of Fianna Fail and the total transformation of Irish society envisaged by Peadar O'Donnell, George Gilmore and Dave Fitzgerald.

## ALLIANCE

But as election time approached in early 1932, the common aim of "putting Cosgrave out" brought about an informal alliance. The Army Council revoked a previous order prohibiting volunteers from voting or working at elections, though it warned that "our objects cannot be achieved by the methods of politics of the parties seeking election."

The IRA backing for Fianna Fail in the election campaign was substantial and vigorous if uneven throughout the country, and de Valera's accession to power was followed by a honeymoon, marked by the release of Republican prisoners and the suspension of the drastic security measures of the previous years.

## EUPHORIA

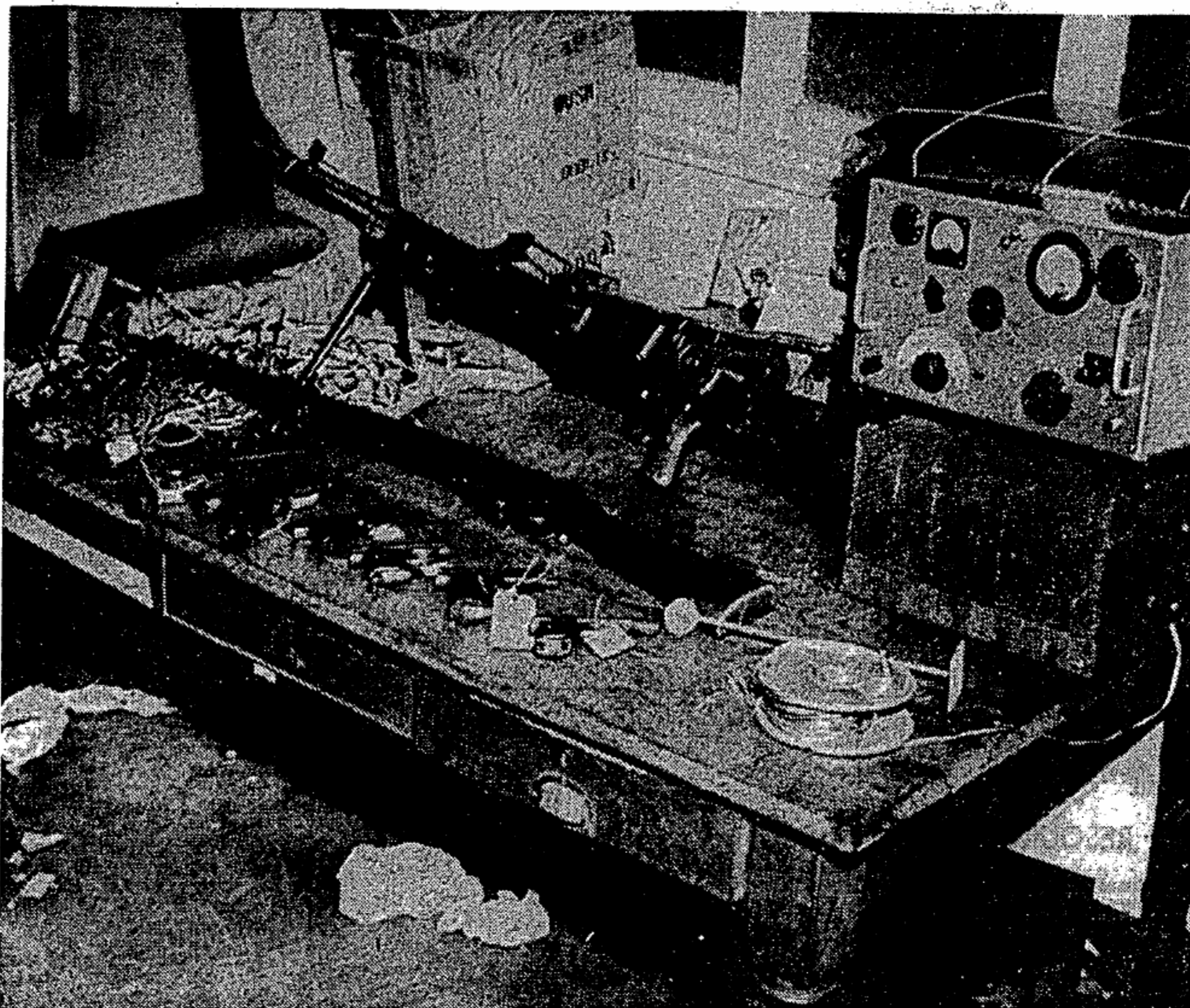
Despite the general euphoria, the IRA leadership was under no illusion that de Valera would overnight reject the Free State and dramatically proclaim the Republic. But the extra-parliamentary Republicans hardly realised the extent to which five years in Dail Eireann had constitutionalised their allies in Fianna Fail.

The writing was ominously but as yet faintly on the wall for the IRA when de Valera stated in January 1933 that "no section of the community will be allowed to arm. All arms shall be completely at the disposal of the majority of the elected representatives of the people." Yet, whatever reservations the Republicans might have, they still hoped to put de Valera towards the attainment of the Republic, and to exacerbate the economic war to the extent of involving him in deeper conflict with Britain.

## BLUESHIRTS

In the 1933 election the overriding imperative was still to keep Cosgrave out, and at that turbulent year the Blueshirts had to be fought as well. Meanwhile Fianna Fail, from a position of strength in the Dail and the country no longer needed the IRA.

During the bitter struggle in 1933, Cumann na nGaedheal might with some justice complain that the government's policy of arms seizure did not extend to the Republicans, but there were many signs that the honeymoon was over. An Phoblacht insisted that de Valera's spectacular constitutional changes were no substitute for the real thing; severing "some of the imperial tentacles like the oath and the governor-generalship" did not mean that the



Radio transmitter, guns and other IRA military equipment found in an arms raid in Dublin in 1958. Right: Peadar O'Donnell, Republican who took a more radical stance.



# Taking the constitutional path

by Prof. John A. Murphy  
Professor of Irish History, U.C.C.



movement could "give allegiance to a cabinet which accepts or functions within the British Empire."

After Fianna Fail took office, there were inconclusive talks between de Valera and the army council and as late as 1934 Sean Russell was fruitlessly trying to persuade the Fianna Fail leader to declare the Republic. De Valera's refusal to carry out the expected purge of army and police force disappointed not only the IRA but many of his own followers at Cumann level.

## SOCIALISTS

The disillusion — if there ever had been illusions — of the socialists within the IRA were much more profound. For them de Valera's moves against British political imperialism were superficial and his measures against Irish capitalism non-existent. Indeed, the policy of industrial protection would simply buttress that capitalism. People like Peadar O'Donnell wanted a much more radical solution of the land annuities than a mere cessation of payment to Britain.

The split within the IRA in 1934 between the traditionalists and the socialist dissidents (with their Republican Congress idea) was, in one sense, a division on how to combat the growing success of Fianna Fail. The attitude of the mainline leadership was that Republicanism must be kept pure and uncomplicated so that in time de Valera's disillusioned supporters would turn to the IRA for leadership; but that Republican involvement in social and economic issues was divisive and dangerous.

In theory, the argument of those who advocated the

Republican Congress idea sounded impressive. It was based on the premise that while the Fianna Fail leadership was dominated by old-style Sinn Fein conservatism, its mass support, workers and small farmers, could be turned aside from their misguided adherence and brought back to the high road of the Republic if only the Republican leadership would go all out to give them the necessary revolutionary leadership in their socio-economic struggles.

The great flaw in this line of thought was the assumption that the masses were imbued by either republican or socialist fervour. In fact, de Valera's mixture of populism and adventurous constitutional change — and the promise of more of the same — was quite enough to satisfy the social and nationalist aspirations of the great majority.

By the mid-1930s, the IRA, whether militarists or socialists, had been ousted by Fianna Fail. The awarding of military pensions helped to reconcile republican sentiment and the final touch was the setting up of a volunteer reserve which would provide a safe alternative outlet for martial ardour.

## ENDORSED

Perhaps ambivalence at certain levels persisted (as when rank-and-file party men endorsed an Irish-American call in 1935 for a republican common front, a proposal condemned by the Irish Press) but it could safely be ignored.

The Fianna Fail leadership was now bent on the destruction of the IRA, since the movement couldn't be reconciled through constitutional changes, but it was neither desirable nor necessary to create any martyrs at this

stage. The IRA had already been played off against the Blueshirts, as it were, and its excesses were now tarnishing its own image. There was no public outcry when the Government declared it illegal in June 1936.

## EXTREMISTS

After the Blueshirts, public opinion was accustomed to firm action against extremists. By the end of the 1930s, internal dissension, superior Fianna Fail policy and strategy, and state coercion had put paid to the IRA's chances of being a major force in Irish politics.

From his assured position after the Anglo-Irish agreements, de Valera made certain that the IRA would not be able to operate a safe base at home for the bombing campaign against Britain or to do anything really effective to sabotage the neutrality policy.

The Offences Against the State Act and other drastic measures were the prelude to the dark days of the early 1940s when internment, execution and deaths from hunger strike widened beyond repair

the breach between Fianna Fail and the IRA. The bitterness of betrayal finds expression in the ballad for one of the Republican martyrs, Maurice O'Neill, hanged in November 1942 for allegedly shooting Detective Mordaunt.

Let no voice plead for me with the traitor  
He cried when his death hour was nigh,  
Let the young men of Ireland be faithful  
To the cause that has called me to die.  
When the deathless Republic of Ireland  
Is rescued from thralldom and shame,  
I ask but a place in her memory  
And her soldiers' salute to my name.

## DECISIONS

Though de Valera might use IRA activism as an anti-partition argument, as he did more than once with Chamberlain, there is no doubt that the painful decisions to be made in these years were a cause of deep personal distress to him. In the Dail in October 1939, he referred with emotion

to IRA prisoners on hunger-strike. "We do not wish them to die. We would wish — Heaven knows I have prayed for it — that these men might change their minds . . . and realise what our obligations and our duties are."

Yet firm Government action in all its dealings with the IRA ensured that the movement was more of a nuisance than a threat during the emergency period, and its futile wartime intrigues further diminished its waning support.

## CONVERSION

Republican strategy in the 1950s underwent a radical change as the new leaders converted their followers to the policy that there should be no use of force against police or soldiers south of the Border. As the plans for a Border campaign built up, it was essential that the home base should not be any more hostile than it already was.

Fianna Fail were out of office as the campaign began and perhaps that helps to explain the astonishing fact that you young Republicans approached Eamon de Valera and asked him to endorse, or at least not condemn, this new wave of activity; not surprisingly, the approach was firmly rejected, they were told that Partition must be solved peacefully and that forceful means would only cause harm and suffering.

## IRA UPSURGE

It was the Second Coalition that initially had to face the renewed IRA upsurge but when it perished in a welter of mainly economic troubles, Fianna Fail, which had been given a mandate of despair to deal with the economy, was also strongly placed to deal with subversive activity.

Internment took place on a considerable scale but by the middle of 1937 the crisis of violence was over and it became possible to release the interned Republicans without threat to public security. As the economic position also improved, the public wave of emotional sympathy ebbed away and the handful of Sinn Fein abstentionist seats in the Dail were lost in the 1961 election.

In the 1960s the politicisation of the IRA might well have posed in the long run a greater threat than the old militarism to what Fianna Fail had come to represent.

And after the IRA split, the Officials were the clearly-recognised ideological enemy. Whatever the historians will eventually say about the involvement of leading Fianna Fail members with the Provisionals in 1969-70, two interim observations can even now be firmly made.

## SYMPATHY

Firstly, as in the 1950s, the revival of Republicanism evoked the dormant sympathy of many Fianna Fail followers, though it receded as the real nature of the Northern tragedy revealed itself.

Secondly, the Fianna Fail leadership reacted firmly against those under suspicion within its ranks as against the Provisionals at large.

When the accusation of ambivalence is today laid against the party it should be remembered that ambivalence in the past was not confined to Fianna Fail; the Fianna Fail government has historically been ruthless towards the IRA and that, in view of the party's origins, the IRA has been for Fianna Fail a particularly haunting spectre.

By GENE McKENNA

AN ORDER from the I.R.A. Army Council was directly responsible for giving Fianna Fail in Meath one of its most prominent members — who was to become a Government Minister — 44 years ago.

Mr. Michael Hilliard recalls how, in 1932, an Army Council instruction went out to its area commanders that they should "make themselves available" at "constituency headquarters of Fianna Fail throughout the country and help have the party returned at the elections."

"I told them plain and straight that if I was going to do that, I would join the Fianna Fail party — and so I did," recalls Mr. Hilliard, whose influence on the party throughout Meath, and particularly in the Navan area, has been enormous.

## ASSISTANCE

"I presided at Dey's meeting in the Market Square, Navan, shortly after I joined the party," he says. "I gave my full assistance to Fianna Fail in that election — and at every subsequent one."

Mr. Hilliard, who has survived two death sentences — one during the Civil War for his part in the 1923 fighting and again in 1932 when he broke with Sinn Fein to join

# Survivor of two death sentences

Fianna Fail — retired from active politics three years ago, after a career which saw him serve as a Parliamentary Secretary and as Minister in two departments — Posts and Telegraphs and Defence. He was also brigade intelligence officer.

## ROTUNDA

Mr. Hilliard, now aged 73, was not a founder member of Fianna Fail. "I was not present when the party was founded," he says. "I did not belong to the organisation at all. I attended the Rotunda meeting in 1928 and voted for Fr. Flanagan's amendment and against Eamon de Valera's proposals."

dealer and dairy farmer. "I took an active part in all the I.R.A.'s activities and spent my weekends in training exercises. I became company adjutant and then company captain," he says. "I was also brigade intelligence officer."

## FOUR COURTS

"I took the Republican side in the Civil War and was directly in touch with the Army Council at the Four Courts," said Mr. Hilliard. On the evening before the Four Courts was shelled, I was there on business with Thomas Duffy of Navan, a Republican man in the national movement. That afternoon, as we left the building, Liam Mellows put his hand on my shoulder, shook my hand and bade me adieu. He said we might never see each other again — and he was right.

"Back in Navan, I took my available motley crowd, with an assortment of rifles. We had action at Carraghtown, in which one of our men was killed. I was taken prisoner and spent some time in Trim and in Dundalk jails. I got out through a hole in the wall from Dundalk Jail. It was in January, 1923, when I was captured again. It was very tough during those two years on the run — very few people would let you into

their houses. I was taken back to Trim, where I was tried before a Military Court and sentenced to death. I spent several months in Trim without going outside the cell door. Then I was taken to Dublin and finally on to the Curragh. There, I voted against a mass hunger strike and was very unpopular with the other prisoners because of that. But I went on hunger strike, just the same, and, in fact, stayed on it for 28 days. There were only 21 of us who stuck with it that long out of over 1,000 prisoners. Even after de Valera was released, I was still in prison for another two months."

## PROPOSALS

"After the Sinn Fein Ard-fleats at which Dev's proposals had been put, many of the people actively involved with the I.R.A. left the movement and joined Fianna Fail to put the organisation into operation in Meath," said Mr. Hilliard.

Murray and his wife, Margaret, and John Conroy, all of Dunscaughlin; Liam Sheridan of Okecastle; John Hughes, James Weldon and Ed. Foylan of Nobber; James Ginnety of Kells; Michael Downes of Duleek and Paddy Purfield of Gormanston.

In the Navan area specifically, Mr. Hilliard says Peter Healy, chairman of the original command in the town and of the Comhairle Countair, did an enormous amount of work. Other Navan people who were prominent in those early days included James and Thomas Kinseha, Nicholas Nauly, Seamus McNamee, Peadar Quilty, James Lynch, Mrs. Rose Anne Boland, Mrs. King, Cait Lalloway and Margaret Austin.

From 1933, he was a constituency delegate to the National Executive, stood as a candidate for the first time in the 1943 elections and was returned as a T.D. for Meath-Westmeath.

## DIVIDED

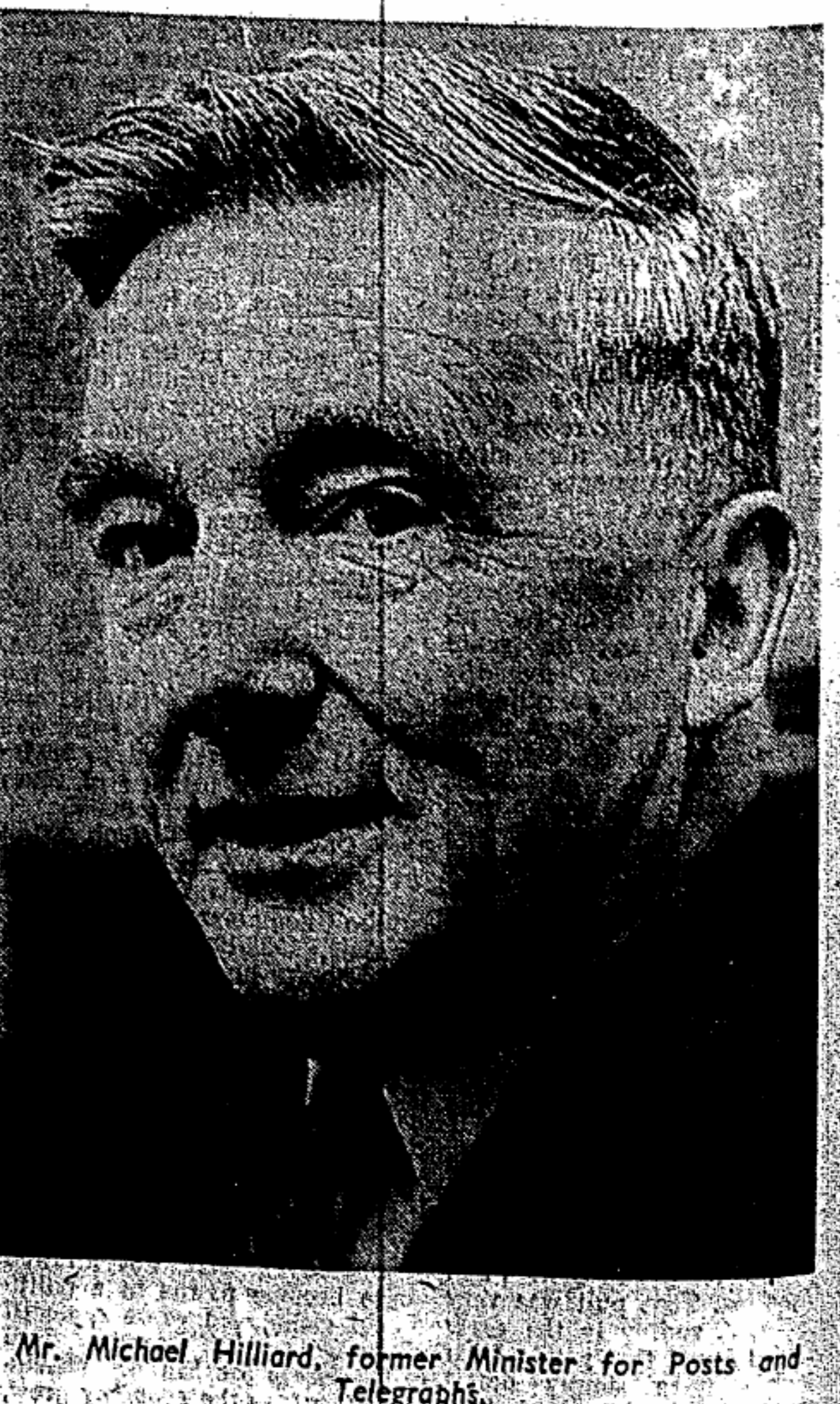
In 1958, he was appointed Parliamentary Secretary to the then Minister for Industry and Commerce — Mr. Sean Lemass. "The following year, when Dev was elected President, Mr. Lemass sent for me and told me he was appointing me Minister for Posts and Telegraphs," he said. "I asked to be left where

I was, saying I felt I was doing useful work for the country," said Mr. Hilliard. "But he told me there would be no such position, as he Commerce into two separate was dividing Industry and sections. So I accepted my new office as a challenge."

## RTE IMMINENT

Said Mr. Hilliard: "I told Mr. Lemass that TV was imminent here and that I did not know much about it. But he said he wanted an organisation that would be a business organisation and that, I think, is what I gave him. I also set up the RTE Authority."

"I set about modernising the practically obsolete telephone system. I introduced the advisory commission on stamps and I inaugurated the scheme whereby students from vocational schools were taken in for training as technicians, rather than recruiting people into the post office engineering section from the Labour Exchange," he said. "And I also persuaded the Government to adopt satellite links, despite opposition from some of the more 'conservative' Ministers at the time."



Mr. Michael Hilliard, former Minister for Posts and Telegraphs.



# View from the North

By Dr. Con O'Leary  
Reader in Political Science  
Queens University

THE foundation of Fianna Fail in May 1926 did not evoke any reaction from *The Belfast Newsletter*, then as now the leading Unionist newspaper in the North. In fact, the only event during the month in the Irish Free State to merit an editorial comment was a speech delivered to the annual conference of Cumann na nGaedheal (May 11) by President Cosgrave in which he justified the Boundary Agreement of December 1925, which "maintained intact the Free State territory" and "had removed those cancerous elements in their relations with Northern Ireland which were a constant source of ill-feeling and a very real menace to peace North and South."

The *News Letter* approved and paid Mr. Cosgrave this warm tribute: "It is a great thing for the head of a government thus to turn away from a long-pursued policy of territorial aggression in a contiguous State. It requires the courage of sheer conviction and a high standard of political moral (sic) to do so." (12 May, 1926).

## DEVELOPMENTS

BETWEEN the foundation of Fianna Fail and the outbreak of war in 1939 there were several highly important constitutional developments in Ireland. Those effected by de Valera after his accession to power in 1932 are well-known—the abolition of the Oath, the diminution of the Powers of the Governor-General, the passing of the External Relations Act, all leading up to the enactment of the new Constitution of 1937 which created a Republic in all but name.

But another constitutional change is rarely linked with these, because even historians tend, perhaps unconsciously, to adopt a "partitionist" approach and either ignore events in Northern Ireland or at least fail to set them in the context of all-Irish politics. The other important constitutional change was the abolition of P.R. for Stormont elections in 1929.

The single-transferable vote system of P.R. had been prescribed for parliamentary elections in both parts of Ireland by the Government of Ireland Act, 1920. The Unionists never liked P.R. and their aversion was deepened by the results of the Stormont election of 1925 in which they lost eight seats—seven in Belfast.

They were to lose another six seats from their existing total of 32 (out of 52) their majority would have vanished. So a Bill abolishing P.R. went through both House of Commons and Senate in time for the elections of 1929, though resisted by the entire opposition (Nationalist, Labour, Independent Unionist and Independent).

DISGRUNTLED  
In the 1929 election the Unionists recovered to 37 seats, the N.I.P. was almost wiped out and there began the nearly forty-year period of permanent one-party rule and perpetual, disgruntled opposition that characterised Stormont politics.

Any student of politics knows how unprofitable it is to speculate as to what might have happened in a given situation, but the present writer may be forgiven for asserting his conviction that a chance existed in the late 1920s for the development in Northern Ireland of a genuine multi-party system which in time would have blunted the edge of partition.

after he succeeded to the premiership on the death of Craig, to Major General H. M. de Valera, Montgomery, the founder of the Irish Association (devoted to co-operation between North and South): "I suggest that you have come a little nearer to my way of thinking since you have discovered how anti-British the Free State leaders actually are and how impossible it is for Ulster leaders ever to work with them; their views and ours are really as far apart as the poles."

It was plain that Mr. Andrews seemed satisfied with this state of non-co-operation.

However, after the election which brought into office the First Coalition under John A. Costello de Valera, now Leader of the Opposition for the first time since 1932, went on a speaking tour of England in which he brought to the attention of the British essentially the same arguments as he had advanced ten years before. It cannot be said that the speaking tour was a success. The English listened politely, but were unconvinced. It was too soon after the war, and the misconception about Irish neutrality, as malevolent rather than benevolent, were still current.

The decision of the Costello Government to repeal the External Relations Act and formally sever the remaining link with the British Commonwealth has never been adequately explained—and the relevant cabinet papers will not be released until 1978. It caused blank astonishment in Unionist circles.

Unionists could not understand how the party of W. T. Cosgrave could suddenly become more republican than de Valera. But they turned this unexpected development to their own advantage.

A snap election on the "Ulster-in-danger" slogan wiped out all the Labour gains of 1945. Shortly afterwards, a special conference of the Northern Ireland Labour Party formally committed the party for the first time to upholding the Northern Ireland state.

After 1949, Unionists regarded all parties in the Republic as "anti-British" and paradoxically came to regard Fianna Fail more favourably than the rest, on the ground that its policy had the merit of consistency.

The short-lived I.R.A. campaign of the fifties caused just a slight upset to Unionist complacency. By 1958 there was in Stormont a "loyal" opposition, comprising four N.I.P. members of whom Mr. David Bleak was the best known. There followed

accentuate the differences between North and South. In the early 1930's Fianna Fail speakers made little reference to Partition; their immediate objective was to reshape the political system in the Irish Free State. Nor, indeed, did there appear a recognition of the fact that Northern Ireland was undergoing a severe recession, particularly in relation to the twin bases of Northern prosperity—textiles and shipbuilding. The "economic war" and its ramifications monopolised attention.

The turning point came in 1938. In February of that year de Valera negotiated with the Chamberlain Government what has come to be regarded as his greatest diplomatic triumph, the agreement ending the economic war on favourable terms and returning the Treaty ports.

When the negotiations were nearing completion Craigavon wrote to complain that under the proposed terms "Eire" could impose tariffs on imports from Northern Ireland, and was politely reminded by Chamberlain that he had not very much to complain about, since Harland and Wolff had just been awarded a substantial Government contract and that the British Government set great store by this agreement.

Later in the year, November 8, de Valera in one of the first of a long series of interviews on the subject of Partition said to a reporter from the *Chicago Tribune*: "Partition is so absurd and so contrary to right and reason that it could not possibly last in the world of today."

## ARGUMENT

He went on to point out that any argument advanced to justify severing the Six Counties from the rest of Ireland could with equal justice be applied to the nationalist areas in Tyrone, Fermanagh, Down and Armagh.

However, what was to prove a recurring embarrassment to successive governments in Dublin also started in 1938—an I.R.A. bombing campaign in England. This led to the passing of the Offences Against the State Act in 1939 and reviewing the previous year at a Fianna Fail convention in Cavan (February 18, 1940) de Valera spoke with uncharacteristic emotion:

"The things I would have done in the last year to end Partition I have been unable to do because my hands were tied by actions that were moving in the contrary direction. I cannot promise that we will solve the Partition problem, but neither can they (the I.R.A.) produce a solution of Partition, and they can lose us the result of 25 years of consistent effort of a small people. They can get the country in a mess that the whole Government and the whole country cannot get them out of."

How well these efforts, which culminated in the most draconian legislation the country has known, were appreciated by the Northern Ireland Government can be assessed by perusing a confidential security report sent by the Inspector-General of the R.U.C. to the Minister of Home Affairs (Sir Dawson Bates) dated February 23, 1939:

"The Treaty signed in early 1938 between the British Government and Mr. de Valera practically removed all the grievances of Southern Ireland except Partition. The whole weight of the Government of Eire and of the I.R.A. therefore is concentrated on obtaining their remaining demand, a United Ireland, though outwardly their methods may vary."

With this degree of mutual incomprehension the two governments faced the Second World War. While de Valera strove successfully to maintain Irish neutrality, the Unionists continually protested their loyalty to the Empire. (In his last broadcast, in 1940, Craigavon said: "We are King's men and King's men we shall remain.")

## OPINION

It may also be mentioned that from this period, organs of opinion in Northern Ireland tended to ignore events south of the Border. An un-instructed foreign reader of the *News Letter* or *Belfast Telegraph* during these years would not realise that Dublin is a mere 100 miles from Belfast, while London is 700.

The end of the war brought in its train the overwhelming Labour victory in the Westminster general election and a sharp loss of Unionist support in the Stormont election of the same month (July 1945). The prospect of having to work with a British Government committed to a Lefty programme of socialist legislation made the Unionist Government, now led by Sir Basil Brooke—he and Craigavon between them held the premiership for 39 years—to adopt a low-profile.



Trying to break down the barriers in 1965... the then Taoiseach, Sean Lemass, went to Stormont to talk about a policy of co-operation with Terence O'Neill. Centre is Dr. T. K. Whitaker who played an important role in engineering the meeting.

## BOUNDARIES

This then is how Anglo-Irish relations appeared in 1926. The two states in Ireland had accepted each other's boundaries and were joined in a treaty of accord. Far from regarding the boundary settlement as a diplomatic defeat after the manner of subsequent generations the Free State Government represented it as a triumph for good sense—as Mr. Cosgrave's speech quoted above indicates.

The eruption of Fianna Fail on the scene was most unwelcome to the Northern Unionists. Mr. de Valera was greatly distrusted by them. In their only encounter (in Dublin, in 1921), Craig found him obsessed with the past, and Unionist suspicions were further aroused by de Valera continuing to stand for the South Down constituency for which he was elected until 1938.

This they regarded as a challenge to the legitimacy of the Northern Ireland system. On two counts; his Republican beliefs and his insistence on the "natural unity" of Ireland. Unionists knew they could never expect from de Valera the comfortable accommodation provided by the Cosgrave Government.

At this point it is well to mention the valuable insights into official thinking in Northern Ireland which scholars can now enjoy thanks to the recent decision of the British Government to deposit in the Public Record Office in Belfast all the Cabinet papers and most of the departmental records for the period 1921 to 1925.

The tons of papers now available will take an appreciable time to sift and catalogue, but the following letter may be taken as typifying the continuing Unionist attitude to Fianna Fail. It was written by Mr. Andrews on 16 December, 1940, shortly

is enamoured by the present mode of "direct rule." To sum up, therefore, the story of Fianna Fail and the North is just one facet of the complex history of this island over the past half century. It is undeniable that for most of the period neither Fianna Fail nor the Unionists tried to understand each other. But even before the present troubles shook all groups in Ireland out of their complacency the initiative taken by Mr. Lemass in 1965 and pursued by Mr. Lynch meant that the process of mutual understanding through regular contacts was already under way.

Subsequent attitudes have been coloured by events. Mr. Lynch's "we cannot stand by" speech in August 1969 evoked an instant and hostile reaction in Belfast; his Tralee speech, in the following month was widely regarded as statesmanlike.

The Arms Trial of 1970 evoked mixed feelings—an appreciation of Mr. Lynch combined with distrust for his former colleagues. Naturally, since February 1973, Unionists of all shades of opinion have paid more attention to the utterances of Mr. Cosgrave and his ministers than to the spokesmen for the opposition.

This was to be expected. But there is a difference of kind, not just of degree, between the present approach of all but the most extreme groups into which the cataclysms of recent years have shattered the old Unionist monolith and their predecessors.

It lies in the tacit assumption that in any future constitutional arrangements for Northern Ireland, friendly relations with the main parties in the 26 Counties will be essential and that there is no question of returning to the isolationism of Craigavon, Andrews, or Brookeborough. Or to express it in the simplest terms—a recognition that Northern Ireland is part Ireland.

## FORMER STORMONT PREMIER

J. M. Andrews... "impossible for Ulster leaders to work with the Free State leaders."

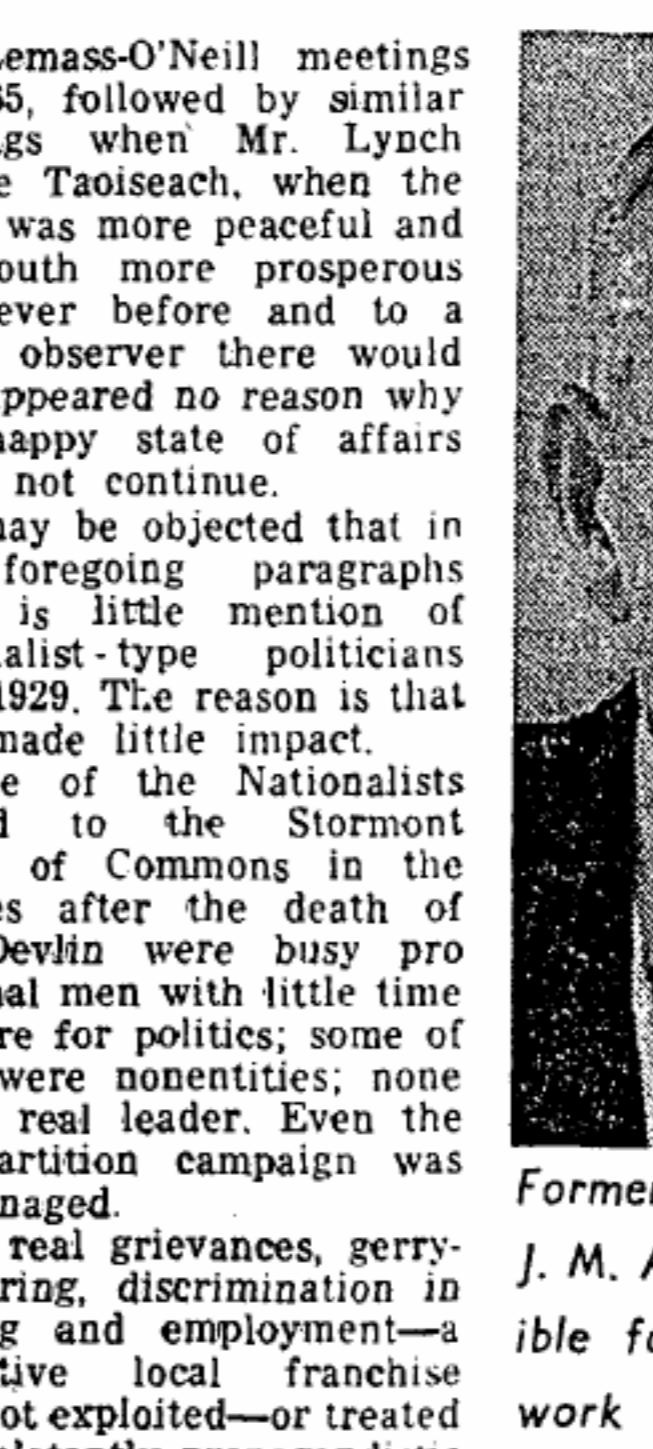
Disillusionment with the British is both profound and general and in some cases has gone to the extreme of dallying with the notion of an "independent Ulster."

The present lull after the storms in the Assembly (1973-4) and the Convention (1975-6) may lead to a fresh round of negotiations between the S.D.L.P. and the more realistic Unionists, since it is hard to find anyone who

divine generalisations may, however, be offered. Beginning with Mr. Callaghan's decision (as Home Secretary) in August 1969, that British troops would thereafter be under the control of Whitehall, not Stormont, successive British governments "interfered" in the governing of Northern Ireland in a way that would have staggered Lord Craigavon and that induced in every species of Unionist politician an agonising reappraisal of their entire political creed.

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Former Stormont Premier J. M. Andrews... "impossible for Ulster leaders to work with the Free State leaders."

Lloyd George, the British Prime Minister (left), who threatened to wage immediate and terrible war if the Treaty was not accepted, pictured here with the then Colonial Secretary, Winston Churchill, who in his time said: "Whatever Ulster's right may be she cannot stand in the way of the will of the rest of Ireland. Half a province cannot impose a permanent veto on the nation, Half a province cannot obstruct forever the reconciliation between the British and Irish democracies."

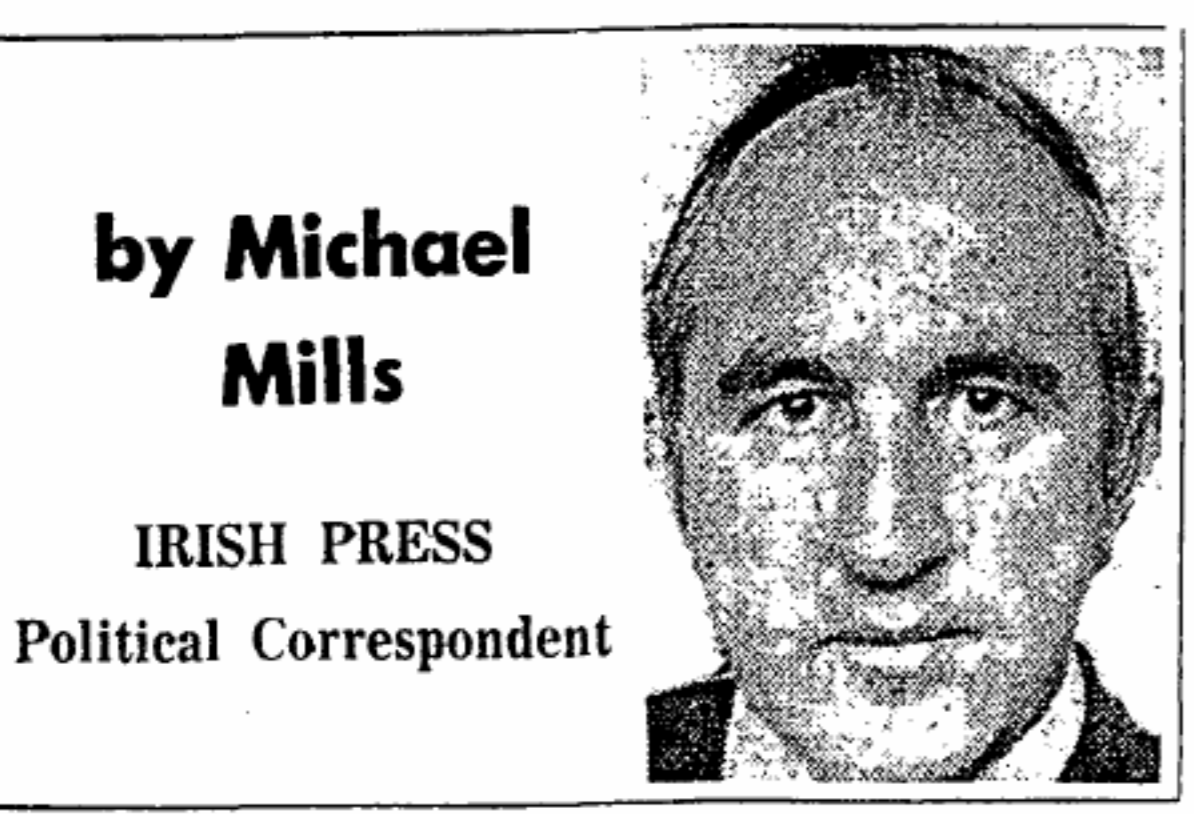


Lloyd George, the British Prime Minister (left), who threatened to wage immediate and terrible war if the Treaty was not accepted, pictured here with the then Colonial Secretary, Winston Churchill, who in his time said: "Whatever Ulster's right may be she cannot stand in the way of the will of the rest of Ireland. Half a province cannot impose a permanent veto on the nation, Half a province cannot obstruct forever the reconciliation between the British and Irish democracies."



# The Arms Crisis of 1970

NONE OF the political parties in the 26 Counties was emotionally or strategically prepared for the problem created by the turmoil which broke out in the North in 1969.



by Michael Mills  
IRISH PRESS  
Political Correspondent

The Civil Rights movement had been gathering momentum in the previous year and when the organisation became actively involved in street politics its actions were looked on with benign enthusiasm by politicians in the South.

August, 1969, Ministers having been hastily summoned from their holidays. Some members of the Government were in favour of the Irish Army's going across the border to relieve the situation in Derry. Such a development, it was suggested, could also lead to the creation of an international incident which would inevitably lead to the demand for the immediate despatch of United Nations troops to Northern Ireland.

The attack on Derry's Bogside and on Catholic areas of Belfast by Protestant mobs led by RUC and "B" Specials brought a new dimension to the Northern problem and a despairing appeal for help and protection to Dublin.

The Fianna Fail Government of that time was placed in the kind of dilemma none of its predecessors had to face. For the first time television brought into the homes of people in the South the reality of the besieged position of Catholics in the Bogside and Falls. Because of Fianna Fail's commitment to united Ireland and its primary aim of party policy, the besieged minority looked with particular confidence to the Government in Dublin.

Many frustrated people in the South, also anxious to relieve their Catholic neighbours in the North, waited hopefully for a move by the Government. The situation was obviously desperate and it was necessary that decisions be taken quickly.

It is difficult for many people in the South now to appreciate the extent of the fear that gripped the Northern minority in 1969 in Derry and Belfast. There was widespread conviction, particularly in Belfast, that unless help came quickly from the United Nations, Dublin, London, hundreds of Catholic families would be wiped out. At the height of the attack in Belfast, well-armed and police-led mobs were held off by men and boys with sticks and stones and with a small collection of ten guns. A gun would not work. A judicious distribution of the weapons and the creation of much noise led the attackers to believe that the defence was much better equipped.

Other Ministers were against the proposal on the grounds that it would put Catholics in Belfast and in isolated areas of Northern Ireland at much greater risk than they were already, apart from the consideration that it could lead to a confrontation with the British Army. Most of the information available at the time suggests that the British Army had instructions if they met the Irish Army in the course of their duties to bid them "good morning".

One senior Minister, impatient with the turn of events and convinced that action needed to be taken immediately, left the Government meeting in some anger determined to bring help with a group of friends from Dublin to the Bogside. He was persuaded by President de Valera when he went to Aras an Uachtairian to abandon his scheme. His friends went by car to Derry with help.

Northern spokesmen claimed that they were promised the means to defend themselves. Mr. Kevin Boland, who was then a member of the Government, also claims they were led to believe that help would be made available to them.

That the Irish Government was prepared to come to their aid in a doomsday situation there is no doubt as later developments showed. In April, 1970, on the orders of the then Minister for Defence, Mr. Gibbons, a consignment of guns was sent to a Border barracks from Dublin for another member of the Cabinet, Mr. Neil Blaney, had him stopped by Gardaí in Naas to receive a telephone message that Ballymurphy was under another savage attack. Mr. Gibbons was unable to contact the Taoiseach, Mr. Lynch, that evening for advice but he countermanded the order the following day when it was learned the attack was not so serious as was first reported.

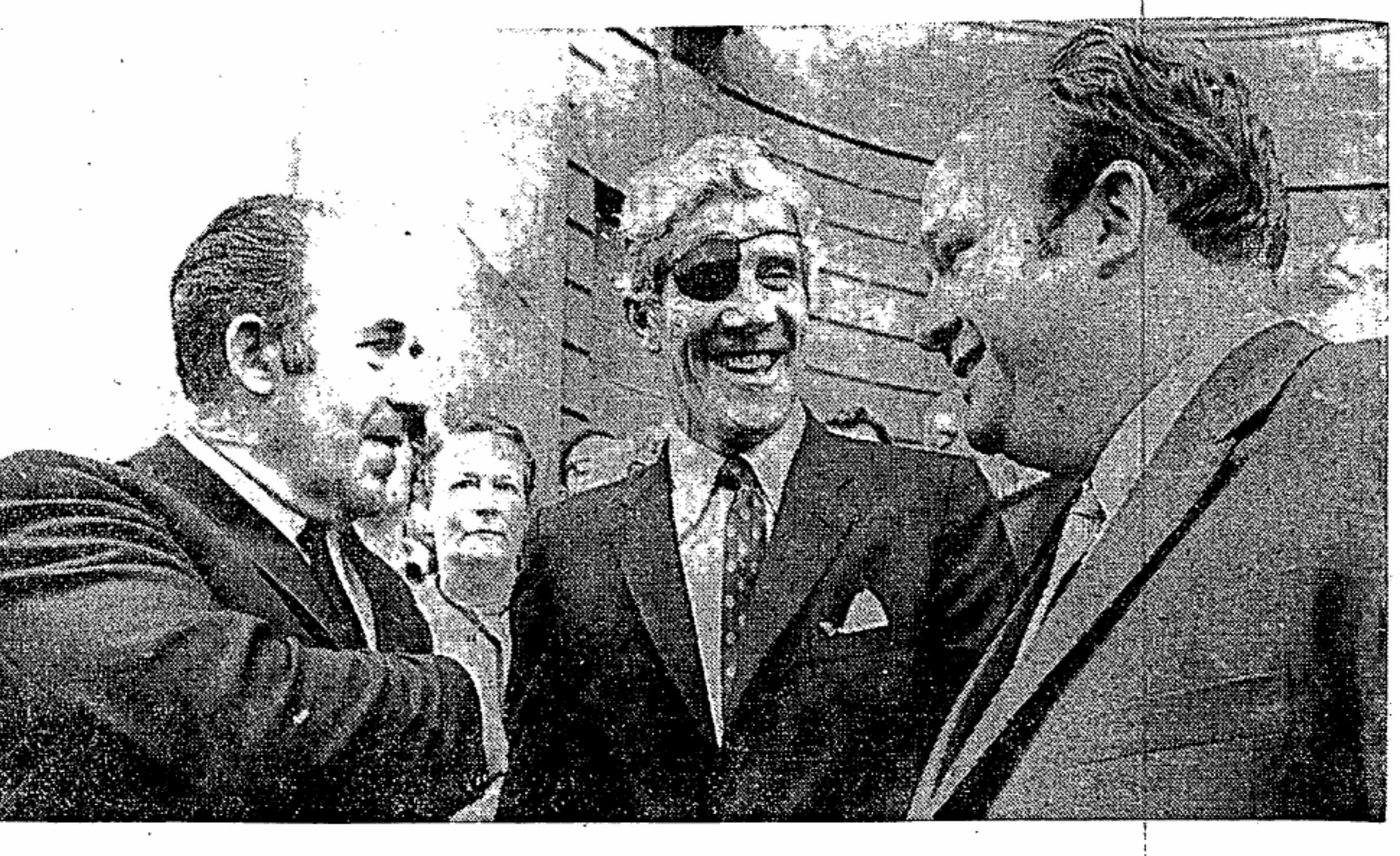
Mr. Gibbons was then a comparatively junior member of the Government in terms of experience and it is highly unlikely he would have made his order in the first place had he been aware of a Government decision to provide for a desperate situation.

There was the further development that men from Northern Ireland were admitted into the Defence Forces where they received basic training—including the use of weapons. This was one of the requests made by members of different deputations from Northern Ireland who came to Dublin seeking help.

Considerable confusion has remained in the public mind about the nature of the assurances given to these deputations by members of the Government.

Mr. Lynch told the Dail subsequently that he made it clear to any deputation he met personally that neither overtly nor covertly would guns be made available. A senior member of the Cabinet also told me that on any occasion he met these deputations he assured them of the Government's concern but was equally adamant that guns would not be handed over.

Other members of the Government must not have been so explicit. All the evidence suggests that many of these groups went back to



Outside the Four Courts, Mr. Blaney, Mr. Jerry Jones and Mr. L. Maguire.

the North believing that the Dublin Government would not see them abandoned. Most of these Northern people had nothing to do with paramilitary groups and were horrified by the later savagery of the Provisional IRA.

### NO LET DOWN

They were peaceful men who were terrified for the safety of their families. They came in fear, they went home happy, at least, that if the worst came to the worst—and their terror led them to believe this was inevitable—Dublin would not let them down.

For the Fianna Fail Government other internal party matters had unconsciously complicated the Northern problem. Mr. Lynch had become leader of Fianna Fail in 1966 after Mr. Blaney and Mr. Charles J. Haughey had withdrawn from the contest and after Mr. George Colley had mounted an unsuccessful challenge.

When, three years later, Mr. Lynch became ill at a Fianna Fail dinner in the west, reports suggested that his ill-

ness was more serious than it proved to be. In fact, his illness was caused by smoking a cigarette after he had forgotten to bring his own brand to the function.

About the same time it was suggested that President de Valera, now old and feeling the strain of a second term in office which he had never really wished to undertake, was anxious to retire. It seemed a possible development that Mr. Lynch would go to Aras an Uachtairian in his place. The succession race started again behind the scenes.

### ADMONISHED

Another complication arose from the fact that some people in Fianna Fail had never quite accepted the party policy ruled out violence in all circumstances as a means of achieving a united Ireland.

Mr. Blaney was one of these. In support of his thesis, he made a well-publicised speech in 1968 claiming that Fianna Fail's objective was a peaceful solution to the Northern problem but that the party had never ruled out force if the circumstances warranted it.

Mr. Lynch immediately issued a statement in line with de Valera's message nearly 50 years earlier that even if the North could be brought into a united Ireland by force, he would not wish to have any part "such a solution".

Mr. Blaney took the correction lightly and went off to make a second speech along the same lines as before. Mr. Lynch admonished him: Mr. Blaney shrugged it off. No love was lost between the two men when after the 1969 general election, Mr. Lynch indicated he was considering moving Mr. Blaney from Agriculture to a new post.

Mr. Blaney is said to have thumped the table vigorously and to have banged out of the room.

A further complication for all the parties in the South was that none of them had ever properly clarified its attitude to violence emanating from within Northern Ireland. Over the years since independence, Irish governments had dealt with IRA violence from this side of the Border by means of interment and general Garda activity against known members of the organisation.

### A CHALLENGE

Now, there were indications of the growth of a new IRA movement, later to become known as the Provisionals, mainly from within Northern Ireland itself.

Violence was ruled out in all circumstances to bring about unity. Speeches were made by a number of delegates asserting the right of the people of Ireland to take up arms for a united Ireland, but Mr. Lynch got the endorsement by an overwhelming majority for the policy of peaceful means only.

Mr. Lynch's call to the grass roots of Fianna Fail was the inevitable outcome of the arms crisis which threatened to tear the party apart between 1970 and 1973.

Efforts to secure guns by sections of the Northern minority, particularly in Belfast, had continued without cease from the time of the August, 1969 attacks. Several groups in Belfast were storing small quantities of arms in late 1969 and early 1970 from whatever source they could be obtained, believing it was only a matter of time until another pogrom was launched. The presence of the British Army was regarded at best as a temporary respite.

It was at this stage that attention turned to Europe as a possible source of guns and ammunition. The later arms trial and the investigation by the Committee of Public Accounts into the expenditure of the sum of £100,000 voted by the Dail for the relief of distress in Northern Ireland brought to light the most extraordinary story in modern Irish politics.

The country first became aware of the strange events that rocked the Fianna Fail Government when in the early hours of a May morning in 1970, Mr. Lynch announced to the nation that he had sacked two Ministers, Mr. Haughey and Mr. Blaney.

### ESTRANGED

A third Minister, Mr. Kevin Boland, a close friend of Mr. Blaney, resigned in protest. A fourth member of the Cabinet, Mr. Micheal O'Morain, had resigned shortly before these momentous developments.

Mr. Lynch told the Dail that the sacking of Mr. Haughey and Mr. Blaney was connected with an attempted airlift of arms from the Continent. Both men were subsequently charged but Mr. Blaney's case never got beyond the District Court and Mr. Haughey was later discharged by a jury.

On the same morning that Mr. Lynch announced the dismissals, British newspapers, already tipped off by British intelligence, carried stories about attempted arms imports.

Mr. Lynch told the Dail he had first become aware of these attempts only a matter of days previously and had immediately initiated enquiries. The Special Branch at Dublin Castle had, as it turned out, been engaged in investigations into the case for some months previously.

What the government in London, which was ultimately responsible, and in Dublin, had not foreseen or made provision for dealing with the 1969 attacks on the minority in Northern Ireland, it was not possible nor should it be expected that the people under attack would act without considerable fear and confusion. Neither should it be cause for surprise that some of the people whose help was being sought.

### DIVISIONS

The disappearance of four senior Ministers from the Fianna Fail Government at the height of the Northern crisis was the most damaging event in the history of Fianna Fail. Even more catastrophic was its effect on the rank and file of the party throughout the country.

But, there were embitterments; friends of long standing became estranged and within the Parliamentary Party the tie that had bound the group in the golden days of the sixties when Charles J. Haughey, Neil Blaney and the late Donogh O'Malley were looking at the political future so enthusiastically, were weakened more than the opponents of Fianna Fail could ever have accomplished.

It is not possible for any party to lose one-quarter of its Frontbench at one fell swoop and hope to recover easily from the blow. When the earlier death of Donogh O'Malley and the departure later for Europe of Dr. Paddy Hillery is taken into account, it can be estimated what a loss of talent Fianna Fail suffered in a few years.

### INDEPENDENT

That talent has not been replaced to any appreciable extent and even though Mr. Haughey's return to the Frontbench last year has strengthened the quality of the Opposition, there remains the question of what might have been if 1969 had never happened. Certain it is that Mr. Blaney would not today be sitting in a lonely Independent seat in the Dail benches and that Mr. Boland would not be on the sidelines.

It was Fianna Fail's misfortune to be faced in 1969 with the kind of problem that no previous Government had to consider. The large numbers of people from Northern Ireland came south in those terrible August days to seek help and protection is not open to question or to criticism; that another Government or other political parties might have responded differently will never be known. A senior member of the present Coalition Government spoke the truth when he remarked some time ago: "We were lucky not to be in Government in 1969."

Fianna Fail was not the only party to have to come to terms with the Northern situation after 1969. The subsequent election of the Government and the actions of prominent members of the Labour Party indicated Labour was going through the same trauma as Fianna Fail.

Even Fine Gael, for all its apparent unity on law and order, would have had a problem in dealing with the flood of appeals from Northern Ireland. It is difficult to envisage any Government in Dublin rejecting coldly and without qualification the pleas of that time, even though it is equally difficult to envisage the manner in which protection might have been provided. But, people standing safely on the shore do not tell a drowning man they cannot find a lifebuoy, they say they are searching for one.

### CONFUSION

What the government in London, which was ultimately responsible, and in Dublin, had not foreseen or made provision for dealing with the 1969 attacks on the minority in Northern Ireland, it was not possible nor should it be expected that the people under attack would act without considerable fear and confusion. Neither should it be cause for surprise that some of the people whose help was being sought.

The dust of 1969 has not yet settled on politics, North or South, but the events of that year and their tragic sequel have, at least, forced many people to think more deeply about the complexity of the Northern problem and to discard forever any hopes, much of the superficial thinking of the past. No more is given to the proposition that the simple removal of the Border would bring about the unity of southern Catholics and northern Protestants.

## 'Mind the organisation', said Dev

By GENE MCKENNA  
WHILE most of the main objectives of the party had been fully or partly achieved, Mr. Tommy Mullins, one of Fianna Fail's leading organisational figures during the past 50 years, has one major regret — that the party never extended its activities to the North.

Mr. Mullins, a vice-president of Fianna Fail who was general secretary of the party for a record 29 years, says: "It was a mistake that we did not organise in the North. We should have gone in and I feel our presence could have solved a lot of the problems up there."

Mr. Mullins recalls that, at the first Ardheis he held in 1926, representatives from the North were in attendance. "They advised us that it would only worsen matters up there if we organised Fianna Fail up North."

"We accepted their advice and the decision was that we would not go in," recalls Mr. Mullins. "But, looking back now, I feel we did the wrong thing. We should have organised there long ago."

"His other great regret on looking back over the half-century that Fianna Fail did not succeed in putting the Irish language on a footing whereby it would be a bilingual nation. "I feel we made great strides with the preservation of the language but we still could have done more," he says. "And, with the present Government's attitude towards the language, we will have to do an awful lot of work for it when we get back into power, as I am sure we will at the next General Election."

brated figures, being a T.D. between 1927 and 1932, leader of the Senate for 16 years from 1937 until his retirement in 1973 and a member of Cork County Council for six years.

He was director of publicity for the organisation for 12 years from 1933 before beginning his long stint as general secretary, on the completion of which he received a special presentation from party leader, Mr. Jack Lynch, for his long service.

A special presentation was also made on the same occasion to Mr. Mullin's wife, Bridie, who herself has been a tireless worker by her husband's side for 41 years.

He was close personal friend and confidante of the late President de Valera and worked side-by-side with him for many years. He first met "The Chief" in Ennis in 1917 and his last meeting was a week before Mr. de Valera's death. Mrs. Bridie Mullins recalls: "Dev told Tommy as they were leaving him that day: 'Mind the organisation.'"

As soon as he was 12 years of age, Tommy Mullins enrolled in Fianna Eireann and transferred to the volunteers at 16. A year later, he was facing a British court martial and serving a six-month sentence in Wormwood Scrubs. He spent 34 years in jail in all, including Belfast, Ballykinnear and Spike. He was sentenced to death after another court martial during the Civil War and served time in Waterford, Mountjoy and Harepark.

### FIRST MOTION

The birth of Fianna Fail was now not far away. "When the camps were emptied in 1924, we all had a terrible feeling of depression. We had lost the war and there did not seem to be much hope for the Republic. All that was happening was the drift to the emigrant ship. I remember going down to Cork every week and seeing the many fine young men and women going away," he says. "He recalls: 'We all joined the Sinn Féin organisation in being at the time and worked away for about a year and a half. But, around the middle of 1925, it became clear to most people that we were not going to achieve anything that way. Although we had won moral victories in by-elections. Once the initial details had been worked out for the foundation of Fianna Fail, we began to get down to the hard work of organising meetings and forming

cumann. It was a Republican party, because nobody was in it except ex-prisoners."

Mr. Mullins recalls that it was he who had the honour of proposing the first motion at the inaugural Fianna Fail Ardheis on November 22, 1926, when he was a delegate for Cork West. This motion was to the effect that the party's primary aim "should be defined as the achievement of one Ireland and that free." After discussion, this was changed to read: "to achieve the unity and independence of Ireland as a Republic." Mr. Mullins also proposed three other motions on that historic occasion.

One of these was a motion, which was adopted, that they ask each branch of the associations in America to "adopt" a constituency and help him to finance elections. "Our American friends really did us proud and provided the 'sinews of war' for the two elections which were to come within three months of each other in 1927," he said. "But Dev laid it down after that Ardheis that we would never again go outside the country for financial help and that has always been adhered to."

One of the fund-raising ventures resulting from this decision was the national church gate collection which realised £2,000 in 1928 and which last year brought in £106,000.

"We had some difficulty with the Church — and in particular with some bishops and parish priests — about this collection," recalls Mr. Mullins. "And, indeed, the problem was not fully ironed out until 1960. Some of the clergy, apparently, felt they owned the streets outside, as well as the churches. We often had sermons from the pulpit denouncing the collection. But eventually we came to an agreement and the arrangement whereby we would not put our tables on church grounds solved the problem."

Fianna Fail, says Mr. Mullins, was the one party in Irish history which succeeded in abolishing disension and uniting people from both sides in the Civil War. "It was totally non-sectarian. As eventually we came to an agreement and the arrangement whereby we would not put our tables on church grounds solved the problem."

Mr. Mullins says: "The backbone of Fianna Fail was the dispossessed class, not those with the big jobs. People who had little, like the unemployed, stood solid when it mattered and we came through."

Speaking of the democracy which, he says, was always a feature of the party, Mr. Mullins says: "Dev was a greatest democrat I have



Mr. Tommy Mullins

man, Rev. Dr. J. A. Hamilton Irwin, on the national executive. He would come along year after year and offer himself for election. And he would invariably top the poll, beating such people as Sean Moylan, Oscar Traynor and Paddy Rutledge."

Mrs. Mullins recalls the many years of effort expended by her husband in the forefront of the party's organisational machine. "Often Tommy would be here until 2 o'clock in the morning working on publicity with the late Mr. Erskine Childers. But we have never thought very much about time we have devoted to Fianna Fail as work. It has been our life."

Mrs. Mullins, a former schoolteacher who comes from Curraha, Co. Meath, says: "We remember the times when we had very little. We often did not know how we had enough to eat. When Fianna Fail began, it was a do-or-die effort for the country, for we knew if we failed it would be the end of the Republic in earnest."



IT HAD BEEN freezing to college boys spent the tea on the avenue so that they would view Dev's arrival for the Square. There had been run would be no free time that what the Dean of Studies, Mr. Deane, meant that the grave's election poster at the College on the night of a Gaedheal meeting. It was a the Dean and most of the both lay and clerical, were meant that the students were hell or high water. And the business of the Bishop's se Mass on Sunday.

THE BISHOP often spoke in the pulpit, but there was an occasion. As he always said, Bishop, everybody knew that little man with the black suit and the shock of creamy grey on the priest-die before the President Cosgrave himself. I during Mass except to open the Bishop approached with head remained bowed while Communion to a handful of up at the rails.

There was a precautionary throats as the missal was Last Gospel and the Bishop pulpit. Ecce Sacerdos Magni look in the water. And the stably biblical figures that lo the stained-glass windows. Hi was that of a Roman emp sance prince. He waited for those outside the door, who ha Grable's chance in the C coked an ear.

After a short homily on the Good Shepherd and how and mine know me", he subject: "Dear beloved brethren Christ, on next Wednesday the historic diocese of Killalee polls to record their votes in a l, as your Bishop, on this oc p, shall confine my remar exhortation that all who are e should avail themselves of a right to exercise the franchise of a secret ballot was duly fathers before you, who fough for Catholic Emancipation ensured Daniel O'Connell's gre Vesey Fitzgerald in the s Election of 1828.

Down through the years, kin and diocese, by side wit in the struggle for faith and I cannot gloss over the regret in more recent times, there unfortunate tendency on the p inopportune, perhaps I immature among you to be sw cries and slogans, rather th guidance of your pastors. T such confused thinking is t guided individuals have tur

THE attempt to discuss the relationships between a political party and a Church is more complex than that of discussing relationships of Church and State in the same period. However, the fact that the political party in question, Fianna Fail, formed the government for 32 of the 50 years of its existence and that the Church with which we are mainly concerned, is a hierarchical church, enables one to trace certain overt relationships more easily.

The origins of Fianna Fail in the anti-Treaty group in the Dail and subsequent anti-Treaty forces in the Civil War seem to set a clear pattern for future relationship with the Church. The bishops' joint pastoral condemning the activities of the anti-Treaty forces and the excommunication of the members of these forces, might have been expected to turn any subsequent political organisation of these forces into a firmly anti-Church or anti-clerical force.

Irish revolutionaries have hitherto always been able to distinguish their "patriotism" and their "religion" — their differentiated loyalties to Ireland and to the Church. Mr. de Valera voiced this clearly in his parting message to the Pope's delegate, Monsignor Luzzo, who had come to study conditions in Ireland during the Civil War:

"Please give to the Holy Father my dutiful homage. Though nominally cut away from the body of Holy Church, we are still spiritually and mystically of it, and we refuse to regard ourselves except as his children."

Not all of the anti-Treaty men who later joined Fianna Fail would have shared de Valera's intense personal piety or his careful insistence on "nominal exclusion," but they shared a tradition which strongly distinguished between acceptance of bishops' directives on the national question and ultimate allegiance to the Church. In this of course as ordinary parishioners they were not "with it," support among the lower clergy. The eventual significance of the official break is hard to assess. The leading members of Fianna Fail were regarded with suspicion by many bishops and clergy



Boyhood recollections of a de Valera rally in Clare by Mícheál O hAodha.

FIANNA FAIL  
1926 50 1976

# Clare's great hero



IT HAD BEEN freezing for weeks and the college boys spent the tea-break sliding on the avenue so that they would have a good view of Dev's arrival for the final rally in the Square. There had been rumours that there would be no free time that night to prevent what the Dean of Studies called organised hooliganism. He meant the burning of Cosgrave's election poster at the front gate of the College on the night of the Cumann na nGaedheal meeting. It was as simple as this: the Dean and most of the other teachers, both lay and clerical, were Free Staters, which meant that the students were for Dev, come hell or high water. And then there was the business of the Bishop's sermon at second Mass on Sunday.

THE BISHOP often spoke politics from the pulpit, but there was an excuse on this occasion. As he always stayed with the Bishop, everybody knew that the small, dapper little man with the black suit, the fly-collared and the shock of creamy grey hair, who knelt on the prie-dieu before the High Altar was President Cosgrave himself. He never stirred during Mass except to open his mouth when the Bishop approached with the Host. His head remained bowed while the curates gave Communion to a hundred college boys lined up at the rails.

There was a precautionary clearing of throats as the missal was changed for the Last Gospel and the Bishop ascended the pulpit. Ecce Sacerdos Magnus. He did not look in the least out-of-place among the stately biblical figures that looked down from the stained-glass windows. His unmitigated head was that of a Roman emperor or a Renaissance prince. He waited for silence. Even those outside the door, who had been debating Grakle's chances in the Grand National, cocked an ear.

After a short homily on the parable of the Good Shepherd and how "I know mine and mine know me", he warmed to his subject:

"Dearly beloved brethren and children in Christ, on next Wednesday the people of this historic diocese of Killaloe will go to the polls to record their votes in a General Election. I, as your Bishop, on this occasion as in the past, shall confine my remarks to a sincere exhortation that all who are entitled to do so should avail themselves of their God-given right to exercise the franchise. The privilege of a secret ballot was dearly bought by your fathers before you, who fought the good fight for Catholic Emancipation when they ensured Daniel O'Connell's great victory over Vesey Fitzgerald in the historic Clare Election of 1828.

"Down through the years, your kith and kin have stood side by side with your Bishops in the struggle for faith and fatherland. But I cannot gloss over the regrettable fact that, in more recent times, there has been an unfortunate tendency on the part of the more impressionable, perhaps I should say, immature among you to be swayed by catcheries and slogans, rather than to accept the guidance of your pastors. The outcome of such confused thinking is that some misguided individuals have turned their backs

on those who stand firmly for the maintenance of law and order in public life and have given their unthinking support to those who would substitute for the ballot-box the petrol can and the bullet.

"I need hardly remind you of the dire consequences which followed on such anarchy in our recent and tragic past. It was perfidy of this kind that resulted in the deaths of President Griffith and General Collins. Arthur Griffith died of a broken heart, and I need not recall for you the horror of Michael Collins's end. Never, never, did the Woman of the Piercing Wall cry so bitterly as that day at Beal na Blath.

"But, as Scripture warns, let it not be said of us that the children of this world were wiser in their generation than the children of light. So we can only pray that all the Saints in Heaven, the Cherubim, Seraphim and Chorus, shall join with Saint Flannan, Saint Molua and Saint Senan to plead before the Golden Throne that God may look down on all the Dalcaissians gathered here in this ancient See of Killaloe to ask before God's altar for Divine protection and guidance for our great President, William T. Cosgrave, to whom we extend a cordial welcome to this ancient town of Ennis. In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, Amen."

For seconds, his ringing tones seemed to echo in the Gothic crevices of the Pro-Cathedral. Even the punters outside had to hand it to him that it was a powerful sermon which confirmed what they already knew, that it was hardly likely that Saint Flannan or the Bishop would vote for de Valera.

THE MONOTONY of the singing was broken by the distant boom of a brass and reed band in the Clarecastle direction. They were still a mile or more away, but the drums reverberated like cannon over the level frozen fields. The headlights of a car shone blue as the stars which made an arch from the Shannon to the sea.

At last the torchlight procession came into view. The shoes of trotting farm horses knocked sparks from the road metal. The outriders, with meal bags for saddles and caps with peaks reversed, surrounded the black saloon. The more agile on horseback held pitch-forks with turf-soaked in paraffin which gave light and heat to the frozen marchers. Some carried banners with inscriptions - Dalcaissians Abú - A Dha Saor Éire - Tradaree Remembers - To Jesus Heart All Burning - Tulla's Little Children.

In a fog of exhaled breath, the Newmarket-on-Fergus Temperance Band pounded out Clare's Dragoons. The college boys sang the words they had learned from the little Belgian organist who was their music master: The flags we conquered in the fray Look lone in Ypres's choir they say. We'll win them company today. Or bravely die like Clare's Dragoons.

The big black saloon suddenly stopped at the College gates. A couple of stewards with Sam Brown belts and trench coats clicked heels and gave the salute as the tall figure descended. He felt for the step with his foot.



Dev addressing a rally in Ennis in the late 'twenties.

He was covered by a great black frieze coat down to his heels. When he reached the ground he stood to attention, his soft felt hat across his forehead, as if for the anthem:

Then fling your green flag to the sky. Let Limerick be your battle cry. And charge, till blood flows free lock high.

Around the track of Clare's Dragoons. The tall man in the black frieze coat made all others look small as they lined up behind him four deep. The band switched to Step Together, and the crowd marched after him as if he were the Pied Piper. At least fifty college boys skipped over the wall and joined the procession to the O'Connell Monument in the Square of Ennis.

THAT Black Mick's sermon kept the priests at home was the on-the-spot verdict of one of the Praetorian Guard with the Sam Brown belts, who were busy keeping the shawled women of the Turnpike from going down on their knees before the leader to ask his blessing. A few young priests, teachers in the College, viewed the proceedings from the upstairs lounge of the Old Grand Hotel. These were known to read THE IRISH PRESS in the priests' jakes, but were always careful

to hide it again in the deep recesses of their soutines.

As the procession swung into O'Connell Street, Dev broke ranks and turned left into the Market, where he bent himself in two to enter the one-roomed cabin of a blind and bed-ridden old woman who had done a week in jail for shouting "Up de Valera" during the East Clare Election of 1917. All around her hat she wore a tri-coloured ribbon, even when in bed; and at the risk of suffocation by the crowd, she wouldn't take her leave of Dev until he heard her sing of a true love she never more would see.

It was little detours like this which undid the harm of Black Mick's sermon. Even Dan O'Connell seemed to have lost his grip on the Banner County as he looked down from his pedestal on a greater horde of dissenters than he had ever addressed on that Square. From the highest window of the convent, O'Connell's left, a daft nun waving a Papal flag, screamed "The Land for the People and the Road for the Bullock".

THE Praetorian Guard seemed nervous and plunged their hands into the pockets of their trench-coats as Dev ascended the platform. He had been arrested on that very spot at a meeting after the Split, but even his most

loyal supporters could not bear to hear him once more begin his speech - "As I was saying when so rudely interrupted..." Erect and deadly pale, he looked down on the swaying crowd which roared and tossed beneath him like an Atlantic breaker. With the cool accuracy of a mathematician, he knew how much each roar was worth in votes. An icy calm does not allow the disorder all around him to disturb his inner being. At last there is silence, save for the screaming nun, and he begins in a flat monotone.

Compared to Black Mick he is no orator. He goes on and on about the Republic - the Republic - the Republic - but the crowd listens in hushed awe. He stirs some chord and there is a ringing in their ears as he talks about an ancient wrong in a new way.

Although it was fifteen years since he first came to Clare, he was still a stranger, a Spaniard, a rugby player from Rockwell. But he could talk to them in their own language; the voice was not that of the Bronx or of Booterstown, but of Brurea, Croom and Bruff, and of the rich County Limerick farmers who took their holidays in Lisdoonvarna.

Still there was a cold menace in his argument that tore at their breasts. Foeled and bewildered by the windy rhetoric of Tom Steele, the O'Gorman Mahon, Captain O'Shea and Major Willie Redmond, the very simplicity of the slogan, "No Annuities", gained the trust of those who were so often beaten and betrayed. It was the continuation of a long fight against the Vandaleurs and the O'Callaghan-Westropps, against the Inchiquins and Murrough of the Burnings.

He struck placename-like heads on a rosary of remembrances: the men of Tulla, Bodyke and Corfin cheered wildly, madly at every mention of their parish. There was, and is, a distinctive Clare roar, once heard never forgotten, hard to reproduce in sobriety, but more frightening and terrible than an army with banners. This barbaric yawp could stir some feelings of independence in that most abject of men - the farm labourer - then no better than a slave. It was not the promises he gave, for he gave few, but it was his indignation at their lot that moved them in the dark recesses of their souls.

A TUB-THUMPING chairman brought the meeting to a close with a call for "Three Cheers for the Hayro". A frenzy seized the crowd, who saw the Hero-Light play around the head of the Ice-man. They felt in their bones that this winterman in the long black frieze coat would lead them out of bondage. For better or for worse, for richer or for poorer, they were tied to him until... By the waters of Babylon they would never more weep. Black Mick and his friends, Buck Mulligan Gogarty and Willie Cosgrave had stepped into their niche in the past to dream of Ireland of the Dalcaissians, of hopes, conspiracies, of Arthur Griffith now... they have forgotten Kevin Egan, not he them. Remembering Thee O Son.

The author is deputy director of Radio, RTE, and a director of the Abbey Theatre.

# Church-State relations

THE attempt to discuss the relationships between a political party and a Church is more complex than that of discussing relationships of Church and State in the same period. However, the fact that the political party in question, Fianna Fail, formed the government for 32 of the 50 years of its existence and that the Church with which we are mainly concerned, is a hierarchical church, enables one to trace certain overt relationships more easily.

The origins of Fianna Fail in the anti-Treaty group in the Dail and subsequent anti-Treaty forces in the Civil War seemed to set a clear pattern for future relationship with the Church. The bishops' joint pastoral condemning the activities of the anti-Treaty forces and the ex-communication of the members of these forces, might have been expected to turn any subsequent political organisation of these forces into a firmly anti-Church or anti-clerical force.

Irish revolutionaries have however always been able to distinguish their "patriotism" and their "religion", their differentiated loyalties to Ireland and to the Church. Mr. de Valera voiced this clearly in his parting message to the Pope's delegate, Monsignor Luzzio, who had come to study conditions in Ireland during the Civil War:

"Please give to the Holy Father my dutiful homage. Though nominally cut away from the body of Holy Church we are still spiritually and mystically of it, and we refuse to regard ourselves except as his children."

Not all of the anti-Treaty men who later joined Fianna Fail would have shared de Valera's intense personal piety or his careful insistence on nominal exclusion, but they shared a tradition which distinguished between acceptances of bishops' directives on the national question and ultimate allegiance to the Church. In this of course as ordinary parishioners they were not without support among the lower clergy.

The eventual significance of the official break is hard to assess. The leading members of Fianna Fail were regarded with suspicion by many bishops and clergy

when they eventually entered politics in 1926 and still more so when they came to power in 1932.

This perhaps set the style of aloofness and independence in relations to the Hierarchy which they sometimes claimed for themselves, in contrast with Fine Gael for example. However, matters were never so simple as the impact of political philosophy of particular issues and of leading personalities over 50 years reveals. Leaving aside the violent revolutionary background which their main opponents shared with Fianna Fail up to the Treaty, the national, political and socio-economic programme of the original Sinn Féin which Fianna Fail embraced owed no particular inspiration to Catholicism and yet contained little scope for conflict with a church which had given little attention to most of these issues in terms of political and social thought in the first quarter of this century.

The abolition of the Oath and revising of the constitutional links with Britain were largely a matter of indifference to churchmen and the proposed economic development and self-sufficiency were regarded as desirable no doubt but purely a matter of political planning and decision. The Economic War did draw some episcopal fire but the early years of Fianna Fail, both in opposition and in government, scarcely impinged on Church attitudes and positions. Political philosophy was not very developed or clear for anybody.

Two quite separate developments one in the State and the other in the Church, came very near to providing a more discernible political philosophy for each and so the elements of conflict between them. The first of these was the development of the 1937 Constitution which came to replace that of 1922. There is no need to rehearse present criticisms of that Constitution aligned to its assessment by Nicholas Mansergh in 1953 as attempting "to reconcile the notion of inalienable popular sovereignty with the older medieval conception of a theocratic state".

Yet for some of the hierarchy at the time and in particular its chairman Cardinal McRory, as de Valera once personally explained to me, Article 44 on the special position of the Catholic Church did not go far enough as it did not recognise the Catholic



by Prof. Enda McDonagh  
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Church as the one true church. This was also the position taken by Pope Pius XI despite the representations of his Secretary of State, Cardinal Pacelli, and his papal successor as Pius XII.

Both Pope and Cardinal however kept silent, as de Valera maintained his position and put the Constitution before the people. Some of the people were not content to be silent and led a vigorous campaign into the 'fifties for full recognition of the Church.

It is one of the tiny ironies of Irish history and of the relations between the Catholic Church and the Fianna Fail party that Mr. Lynch should have initiated a referendum which led to the removal of all that paragraph on the churches in Article 44, while Cardinal McRory's successor, Cardinal Conway, declared that he would not shed a tear at its removal.

More significant from the point of view of political philosophy and prospective conflict with the Church was the enthusiastic adoption and development of the Catholic social thinking of the 1930s, following Pius XI's encyclical Quadragesimo Anno of 1931. The foundation of Muintir na Tire, the interest in local community and co-operative movements, particularly in rural areas, the acceptance of "subsidiarity" and local voluntary effort, the centrality of the family and parents' rights - these all found their echoes in the men and message of Fianna Fail.

Some expression was given to them in Article 41 on the family and Article 45 on social directives. It would however be a mistake to see any direct link between episcopal and government thinking. They were only responding to the needs, pre-

occupations and traditions of a people who might not have articulated them in this way but could recognise a particular articulation as to a large extent valid.

The further development of this emerged in 1944 with the publication of the Report of the (Government sponsored) Commission on Vocational Education under the chairmanship of Bishop Michael Browne of Galway and of a pamphlet by Bishop Dignan of Clonfert on Social Security: Outlines of a Scheme of National Health Insurance.

The rather peremptory dismissal by the Government of both these documents effectively ended any movement towards the acceptance by the government of de Valera of Catholic social thinking as the basis for social reform. The manoeuvring of the Fianna Fail Government in defence of the 1947 and 1953 Health Acts did not substantially modify this attitude in Fianna Fail.

In later and more harmonious times when the row over the Mother and Child Scheme under the first Coalition Government had receded, Mr. Lemass could speak in glowing terms of the encyclicals of Pope John and their use by ministers. But then both Fianna Fail and Church leaders had moved a long way in their attitudes to Catholic social thinking and it was not in the direction of the vocationalism, corporatism and subsidiarity which had divided them in the 'forties or 'fifties. "Socialisation" had ecclesiastical respectability; State-intervention and semi-State bodies were the Government's response to a multitude of problems.

Independent assurances from both Cardinal Conway and Mr. Lemass in 1966 show little contact there had

been between Hierarchy and Government on particular issues will not surprise the thoughtful observer or lead him to reinterpret their remarks as not excluding secret pacts or covert collusion. Historian John Whyte in his highly praised book, Church and State in Modern Ireland 1923-1970, finds that there are 16 items of legislation out of about 150 in which "one or more bishops were consulted or made representations".

As he rightly remarks, legislation is not the only form of Government activity and policy-making, and in some areas where administrative decisions were vital, consultation or representation no doubt took place. This applies particularly to development of educational policy in the 'sixties.

The relationship of Fianna Fail with the Church on particular issues involving legislation or not, is at the official level therefore fairly tenuous. However, both in their early opposition days, as for example in regard to the appointment of a librarian in Mayo in 1931, they seemed, on issues of possible difference, to espouse the official church line.

This was reflected in their governmental days in The Criminal Law Amendment Bill of 1935 and the constitutional exclusion of divorce laws for example. How far Fianna Fail or any political party was consciously echoing official Church policy on these matters and how far it was (rightly) interpreting the mind of its voters it is difficult to say.

On a number of issues involving legislation and other policy statements and decisions, it showed its independence on what were, or were taken to be, the attitudes of the Hierarchy. How far Fianna Fail leaders were rightly interpreting and reflecting wider public attitudes and how far they were going beyond this to give a lead in opposing ecclesiastical attitudes is again not easy to determine. In some instances they did display independence certainly and probably leadership.

Apart from de Valera's difficulties about Article 44, his reaction to the Spanish Civil War was particularly noteworthy for its independence. Despite the widespread sympathy in Ireland with the Franco side, the Fianna Fail Government refused to withdraw its recognition of the Republican Government and in February 1937 the Dail passed the Spanish Civil War

(Non-Intervention) Act, which forbade Irish citizens to enlist on either side.

This was in line with the refusal to endorse the Communist scare which had certain episcopal support in the middle 'thirties. At a much later date a similar independence was shown by party members at a rather trivial level in regard to the Yugoslav football match in 1955 and at a serious level in regard to the proposed United Nations debate on the admission of Red China at the end of that decade.

It is worth recalling also de Valera's dignified and forthright statement in the Dail on the Fethard-on-Sea boycott of 1957, in sharp conflict with some episcopal pronouncements and the reply of Mr. Lynch in 1962 to some episcopal criticisms of its Department of Industry and Commerce.

In legislation, the key issue of conflict was undoubtedly health. It would be as naive and unfair to see the members of the Coalition Government (1948-51) as either episcopal lackeys or men of staunch Catholic principle as it would be to see the members of the previous and succeeding Fianna Fail governments as either heroic resistors of improper episcopal pressure or men indifferent to Catholic principle and episcopal office.

Fianna Fail succeeded in first of all avoiding conflict and then resolving it by a combination of good luck, greater government unity, more experience and skill in dealing with such difficulties, a tradition of aloofness from the official Church and above all a commanding leader in the party and in the country.

On other issues such as the Adoption Bill they consulted closely and finally yielded on the issues of adoption by parents in mixed marriages, for example, more than would now be considered acceptable. Later developments in relaxation of censorship, which would be an obvious area of potential conflict with churchmen, passed almost unnoticed because of the changing need of the country and no doubt of the church. Educational developments in the 'sixties created some flurries and will continue to do so, particularly as the present Fianna Fail leader, Mr. Lynch, is on record as favouring some form of integrated or multi-denominational schooling, perhaps the most serious of the potential explosive points in Church-State relations in Ireland in the coming years.



Mr. de Valera with Pope Pius XII during a visit to Rome in the 'fifties.

In its present opposition role, apart from Mr. Lynch's statement in schools, Fianna Fail has been rather ambivalent in matters affecting Church-State relations... it has accepted the necessity for legislation on the availability of contraceptives in the aftermath of the McGee case, it is hard to see its rejection of the 1974 Bill as any stand in principle for "Catholic morality". After 16 years and some of the traumas of its later years in Government the party is still in the process of rebuilding and renewal.

In the area of its relationship with the Church at the official as well as the popular levels, the Fianna Fail party has quite an honourable record. By its stance of dis-

tance, influenced no doubt by its origins, it has managed to maintain some of the necessary distinctions between Church and State. Men like Erskine Childers and Robert Briscoe helped by keeping its lines of communication open to faiths other than that of the majority Church.

The religious sincerity of its members and particularly of some of its leaders prevented aloofness or independence becoming self-indulgent bishop-bashing or anti-clericalism. As any party with real roots in the Irish people it has had to discern and support the distinction and the balance between religion and politics essential to the health of both individual and society.

# The language barrier



AS de Valera prepared to launch his new political party at La Scala Theatre, Dublin, in May 1926, he listed as its second ultimate aim: "The restoration of the Irish language and the development of a native Irish culture."

For the previous few years he had shown growing disquiet about the precarious position of Irish. "The language cannot wait," he wrote in 1924, "until the dispute between the Free State and the Republic is settled... The Republic could be rebuilt even if it were ten times as low. But if the language is lost, it is lost for ever."

It was a sentiment to which de Valera would often return during his public life, but out of office he could do little about it. He was watched impatiently on the sidelines therefore as earlier colleagues of his in the Gaelic League — Mac Neill Blythe, Mulcahy, Fionan Lynch and the rest — worked out, bit by bit, how the resources of the State could be placed behind the revival of Irish.

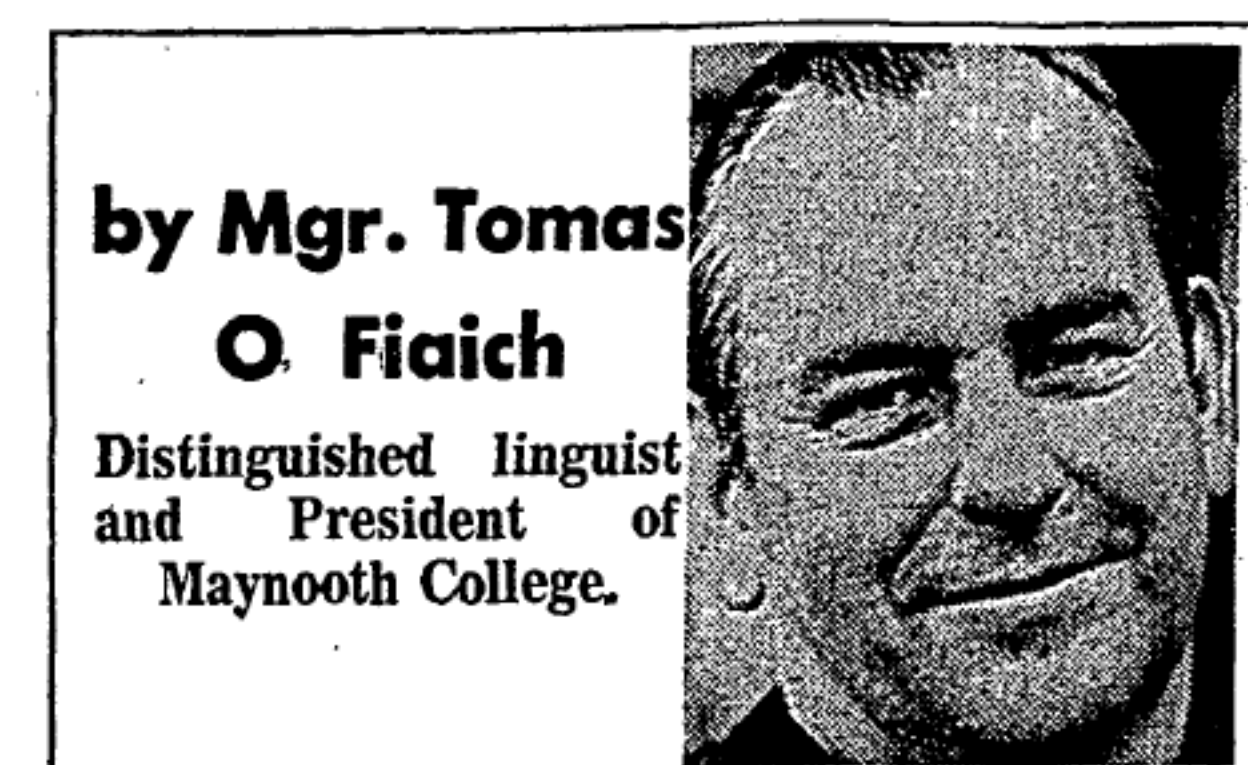
## SUPPORT

By the time Fianna Fail came to power in 1932 the whole edifice of State support for the language had already been erected. From the introduction of Irish into the Primary Schools programme by the Provisional Government on St. Patrick's Day in 1927, Cumann na nGaedheal had gradually extended the place of the language throughout the whole educational programme.

The Second National Programme Conference in 1925-26 recommended that all the work of infant classes should be in Irish, that the language should be taught as a subject to other classes and should be gradually extended to them as a teaching medium. In order to provide a new generation of Irish-speaking teachers the Government had organised special courses in 1922-23 and set up the residential preparatory colleges from 1926 on.

## GRANTS

In 1925-6 special capitation grants were offered to secondary schools, teaching some or all subjects through Irish and the classified into A schools, B1 schools and B2 schools came into being. In 1927-8 the language was placed on the programme of all secondary schools and became an essential subject for the Intermediate Certificate. It was Cumann na nGaedheal, too, that had introduced instruction through Irish at university level by increases for this purpose in the annual



**by Mgr. Tomas O. Fiach**  
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grants to the constituent colleges of N.U.I. in 1927-7 and by the U.C.G. Act of 1929.

In regard to the Irish speaking areas of the country, the Congreve Government based its policy on the findings of the Gaeltacht Commission, set up in January 1925. Its report, presented in July 1926, led to the delimitation of the Fíor-Ghaeltacht and Breac-Ghaeltacht areas which remained in force for 30 years.

The Government implemented several — but by no means all — of the Commission's recommendations, particularly those aimed at promoting the use of Irish in education and in local administration. Before leaving the Cumann na nGaedheal regime it is necessary to refer finally to some of the schemes which it introduced for the promotion of Irish in cultural and everyday affairs. Of these the most productive — though also probably the most criticised — was its scheme (popularly known as An Gúm) for the publication of general literature in Irish.

## CREDITABLE

From its first faltering steps in 1925 it had built up a small but creditable output. By 1926 it had also, under the influence of the late Eamán de Blaghd, begun the change-over of books in Irish to Roman type, something which was suddenly halted with the change of government. It initiated the practice — admittedly on a very small scale — of giving grants to non-State agencies to assist them in their promotion of the language.

It was necessary to indicate thus at some length what had already been initiated before 1932 in order that Fianna Fail's efforts on behalf of the language might be seen for what they really were — a continuation rather than a new beginning. This was not necessarily a bad thing, as Irish seemed to be making steady progress in the schools at the time of the change of government and for many years after.

Fianna Fail came to power in 1934 with the image of being a more "Irish" party



Left: Donogh O'Malley with an tAth. Colman O Huallachain. Right: Tom Derrig, former Minister for Education.

than its predecessors and for the next 30 years or so it probably held on to the majority of Irish-speaking voters, both in the Gaeltacht and outside it.

Not only Dev himself, but many of the old guard like Sean T. O Ceallaigh, Tom Derrig, Frank Aiken etc., paid frequent visits to the Gaeltacht, opened feiseanna, urged the learning and speaking of Irish and gave a fine example themselves.

If Fianna Fail came to be identified as the party of "compulsory Irish" in the 1960s, and Fine Gael as the party opposed to it, it was almost completely due to this one measure. Yet the earlier Interparty and Coalition governments had taken no steps to repeal it.

## IMPETUS

Hence the threefold promotion of the language — which their predecessors had inaugurated in the educational system, the Gaeltacht and everyday life — received a fresh impetus under the new regime.

The Department of Education report for 1930-31 had stated: "It does not seem as if, under present circumstances, the work in the national schools will be done through Irish until the late 'forties of the present century." Fianna Fail continued to encourage the change-over and by the 'forties the number of primary schools teaching through Irish had almost trebled. But by that time the early enthusiasm was beginning to wane, and there was raised for the first time a serious opposition and Fianna Fail desisted from further efforts to make Irish the language of the primary schools.

The alternating governments of the 1950s left Irish more or less where they found it, as far as the primary schools were concerned, but by 1960 it was obvious that Fianna Fail were having second thoughts about teaching through Irish. Under a Fianna Fail Minister for Education the Department began phasing out the use of Irish as a teaching medium. With the amount of time devoted to Irish under attack it became imperative to seek more efficient teaching methods and an tAth Colman O Huallachain's pioneer work in applying modern linguistic analysis to the

language — which led to the production of Buntús Cainte — must have come as a godsend.

Certainly Fianna Fail seemed to pin their faith on it during their remaining years in office.

To the position of the language, as they found it, in the secondary schools Fianna Fail added two important measures which can now be seen to have produced mixed fruits. The first of these resulted in Irish becoming an essential subject for the Leaving Certificate from 1934 on.

During the controversies about "compulsory Irish" in the 1950s and 1960s it was noticeable that the main fire of those opposed to compulsion was concentrated on the Leaving Certificate. What made the policy particularly vulnerable was, of course, that some students failed the whole examination annually because of failing in Irish, and the language came to be looked upon as an obstacle to advancement.

Turning to the Gaeltacht during the Fianna Fail years one thinks immediately of the great housing drive of the 1930s of the glasshouses of the 1940s and of the industrial estate at the end of the 1960s. One thinks too of the deontas, the grant given to Irish-speaking children from 1934 on. Originally £2, it was increased to £5 in 1947 and to £10 in 1965.

The grant was attacked both as "money for nothing" and "a miserable pittance", yet people who knew the Gaeltacht well before 1934 assure me that in those years the deontas was the most effective of all State measures to preserve the language there. Whole townlands were going over to English when seen an dá phunt was launched and the trend halted almost overnight.

The decision to establish Irish-speaking communities in Co. Meath from 1935 on was the most imaginative of all Fianna Fail schemes for the language. Many can still recall the enthusiastic groups in the newspapers as pictures being forwarded to their relatives in English when seen an dá phunt was launched and the trend halted almost overnight.

The political leaders talked of the "Celtic renaissance". What went wrong? After 40 years, without further backing from Church or State, Meath still possesses two small, vigorous, self-reliant, Irish-speaking communities.

One has only to listen to the beautiful Gaelic hymns sung in Oristown church at the 9.30 Mass every Sunday or overhear the children chattering in third-generation Connemara Irish around Rath Cairn community centre to realise that there was a splendid foundation which ought to have been built upon year by year. All credit to Fianna Fail for kindling the flame but no credit to anyone for cutting off the fuel supply.

Another area of language development in which the initiative was taken by Fianna Fail — or perhaps in this case it would be more correct to say by de Valera personally — was that of standardisation. Having waited in vain for years for the scholars to reach agreement he made a dramatic break-through at the end of World War II by assigning the task to the Translation Department of the Oireachtas.

The standardised spelling was first issued in 1947, followed by the standard grammar in 1953, and gradually they have been accepted by a new generation of writers and have proved a great boon to the learner. Dev then turned his attention to the need for a new dictionary and De Bhaldraithe's English-Irish Dictionary (1959) was the result.

It is perhaps not generally known that it was also the Taoiseach who took the initiative in the standardisation of the ordinary prayers in Irish. He asked the Biblical Commission in Maynooth, headed by the late Fr. Donagh O Flainn, to prepare a version, and when he



Left: Donogh O'Malley with an tAth. Colman O Huallachain. Right: Tom Derrig, former Minister for Education.

universities to be allowed to retain their mastery in this field, and in a few years Dublin was the world centre of Celtic Studies.

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The political leaders talked of the "Celtic renaissance". What went wrong? After 40 years, without further backing from Church or State, Meath still possesses two small, vigorous, self-reliant, Irish-speaking communities.

realised that dialectical differences might prevent its being accepted in every diocese he urged its approval for Maynooth alone, knowing full well that the newly-ordained priests would soon bring it into every corner of the land. Some of Mr. de Valera's friends may have been surprised to receive a small prayerbook. No doubt it was a gift from him in 1957 but he knew that in the religious sphere, as in so many others, possession was nine points of the law.

One could write out a long litany of other practical measures taken by Fianna Fail to aid the language endeavours of others: the grants to periodicals in Irish from 1947-8 on, the institution of Bord na Leabhar Gaeilge to assist private firms to publish books in Irish in 1952, aid to Gael-Linn for films, drama and a large-scale scheme of Gaeltacht scholarships, to An tOireachtas from 1939 and the Comhdháil from 1943.

As examples of direct government intervention Kevin Boland's efforts to Gaelicise the Military College at the end of the 1950s would have to be mentioned, as also the commissions and councils of the 1960s, evidence of a growing realisation that the expected progress was not being made.

Even at the height of their power, however, Fianna Fail never succeeded in making Irish a widely spoken language in Dail Eireann and Seanad Eireann. It is true that an occasional T.D., like Sean O Ceallaigh of Clare, and an occasional senator like An Seabhac, made a point of using no other language in

parliament, and around 1960 five or six ministers used to introduce the estimates for their departments at least partly in Irish.

Yet Professor J. L. McCracken estimated in Representative Government in Ireland that in the decade 1936-46 the amount of Irish in the Dail debates increased only from slightly under 1 per cent to slightly over 1 per cent of the whole. It was a poor response to the promptings of a leader whose devotion to the language cause was never for a moment doubted by either friend or foe. And it was unworthy of the higher place which he had given to Irish in the new Constitution.

Thus after 50 years of striving, two-thirds of which was spent in government the party must be saddened by the slow-rate advance made towards the achievement of one of the twin national ideals of its founder. Certainly there has been progress — far more Irish speakers, a new and exciting literature, the popularity of songs in Irish, an abundance of periodicals, an acceptance of the language at all levels of Irish society.

But the Gaeltacht has only half the population that it had in 1926 and the national will to restore the language seems to have weakened considerably. These, however, are things over which no government can exercise much control and it is unlikely that any other party in office would have done even as well.

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ONE of the key tests of any political party is the quality, style, strength and integrity of its leadership. It is one of the great ironies of popular democracy that instead of becoming less important, personal leadership has become more important than ever.

Now, not just election, but important issues as well, become personalised contests between rival party leaders, while the parties themselves — in normal times at least — elevate the role of the leader into a position of near-impregnability — and at the same time make demands of him which no leader can ever hope to satisfy.

In this country the buildup of the position of the leader within the party has been little different to that of other countries. Within this country, too, there have been broad similarities between the parties in certain aspects of leadership. One obvious one is the very small number of leaders each party has had over a period of more than fifty years.

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The similarities soon disappear however when we come to examine the style and performance — the individual leaders. This is particularly true of the three Fianna Fail leaders — partly no doubt because of the origins and organisational structure of Fianna Fail, partly too because it has been for so long a party of government and its leader has been both Taoiseach and party leader, but most of all, because of the reverence in the personality and impact of the three men who have shared the leadership over these past fifty years.

De Valera

THE BASIC facts of Eamon de Valera's leadership are easy to state. He led the party for thirty-three years — a record of leadership

Looking

By GERRY FLANAGAN

DEPUTY Patrick Smith, of Cavan, doyen and father figure of the Fianna Fail Parliamentary Party, has survived 17 general elections and held a number of parliamentary secretaries and ministries over the years.

He is the longest-serving deputy in the Dail but his long tenancy in the national parliament — 53 years now — has done little to dampen the enthusiasm or zeal of this great Ulsterman.

Born in Tonduff, Co. Cavan, shortly after the turn of the century, this big broad-shouldered son of the soil has dedicated most of his life to the Irish language, and it was as Minister for Agriculture that he made his greatest mark in his long and chequered political career.

The son of Terence Smith, the future Minister spent his early years after leaving school on his father's farm near Bellebrow. Unlike many who succeeded him in office, he never lost his deep love of the land and his concern for the families — like his own — who eked out an existence from it through good years and bad.

During his period as Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Finance he was in direct charge of the Board of Works from 1943 and was responsible for the Drains and Drainage Act which he explained minutely to both Dail and Seanad by prefacing it with a White Paper which was almost an innovation in Ireland then.

This piece of legislation exists largely intact on the Statute Book. But this was not his only major achievement. He was also responsible for the bovine TB eradication scheme.

Speaking of work on the farm once, he said: "You must be devoted to the calling — you must love it, study and support it by every available means."

But the farming career of the young Smith was abruptly interrupted by the War of Independence. He went on full-time military duty with a Flying Column. In May, 1921, he took part in a large-scale engagement against British forces in the billy area of County Cavan. The fight went on all through a late spring day and ended with several casualties on both sides.

Finally, Smith and ten of his comrades were captured and taken under heavy escort to a Belfast... by Court... and sentenced... But the fates... because he... the day of... subsequent... twenty... ment and... the resulted in... sentence. It... January, how... Father's farm... INTE... When the... out he rep... active serv... respite at... on the Repu... was capture... 1923, and... Dundalk, Dro... the Curragh... While inter... local and... ment and... Fein Dail... Fianna Fail... and entered... He was cr... joined the... the Valente... promoted to... Company Qu... the time the... dence was... was a Conn... Cavan. He... youngest con... country at... Recognition... Smith's de... loyalty to... Finance. He... Parliamentary... the Taoiseach... and Chief... Secretary to... Minister for... 1944 and Mi... Government... In 1957, th... again became... Local Govern... Welfare but... Agriculture... later he cre... by resigning... important... cause of wh... a breach of... agreement... union... His resigna... 1964, conce... beginning of... a long-draw... dispute. In... resignations... a leader... from the... demands that... have only... costs... In the sam... "This is not... uniform... I refuse to... live with it... And so Pa...

# The crusty old warrior

By T. P. O'MAHONY

EVEN now, at 85, he cultivates the image of a "crusty old warrior", belligerent, unpredictable and embittered. And Martin Corry makes no apologies to anyone. "When I joined Fianna Fail at the beginning I did so in the firm belief that we'd one day have a 32-county republic. We still don't have that after 50 years. Looking back, that's what I think of most. And of course I'm disappointed. I'm bloody bitter about the whole mess."

Never a man to mince his words, Martin, who was born at a place called Tully Cross, in Co. Clare, on December 12, 1891, missed an opportunity in 1969 — to "re-unite" the country. "If we had sent two 60 and 30 regiments into Belfast then the whole thing would be over. The British weren't ready for us at the time, but we did nothing."

Not surprisingly, given these sentiments, he has not been the greatest fan of Mr. Jack Lynch since that time. "I think if I was in the Dail today, I'd be with Blaney — or maybe I'd have left with Boland. It makes me sick to think that our police are looking for men who are fighting the very same battle we fought half a century or so ago. I get fed up with it all the times."

"So far as Martin is concerned, neither the passage of time or change of circumstances have altered the situation. "The only way to get anything off John Bull is by force. We never got even a bloody old land tax except through force. And it's still the same. The situation hasn't changed. I don't believe it has anyway."

Although he has been active in politics since the founding of Fianna Fail, he remains deeply ambiguous about the role of politics and of politicians, especially in the first context. "At times I hate politicians,

THOUGH frequently stigmatised by opponents as a "machine party" in which dissent was not tolerated, Fianna Fail always contained a strong radical element, one aspect of which is exemplified in this interview with a colourful old party figure, Martin Corry.

Part of me always had a strong dislike of politics. I was a soldier basically and the whole business of politics was too slow.

"I could never be entirely happy about a situation where politics took years to achieve what force could achieve overnight. Something about the effectiveness of force has always appealed to me. Maybe it was because we'd never delivered the Six Counties. "The funny thing is I always believed the old boy would do it. I was always convinced he had a plan. And I think he would have done it but for World War II."

"De Valera, according to Corry, was "as cute as a fox". He says that you never knew what "The Chief" was up to. "I suppose I wanted to believe he'd get us the North. I regarded him, after all, as the greatest Irishman of the lot. And I still do. I think I believed that even up to the day he died. Dev would do something. There was no one like him. The new crowd are different."

Martin smiled sourly and fiddled with his pipe. For a while he was lost in his own thoughts. "I was a member of the Republican movement since 1913. And I got to be a staff officer in the 1st Cork Battalion. We went through a lot."

"And I never regarded the Free State as a step in the right direction. We wanted a republic, and we had sacrificed too much for it. We had paid too high a price. I've never changed my mind about that. And I'm bloody bitter about it still."

Outside the rain was coming down over the green fields of Martin's farm at Glouneane, about seven miles east of Cork city.

"Dev was a very strict man, you know. When something he meant it. Once he made up his mind about something, that was it — like neutrality in World War II. He was like that. An inspiring figure being raised for most of my life. And I'd do it again. He even changed my mind a bit about politics."

He smiled sourly and shook his grey head. "The people who are close to Martin say that he has always been disappointed that 'The Chief' never gave him even a junior government post. But he claims himself that he doesn't mind. "I was to be Parliamentary Secretary under Paddy Rutledge. But I was informed I'd have to go into the Department of Lands and so as I was told. That was enough for me. I told the Chief I wasn't interested. And he never offered me another post."

Martin Corry was a T.D. for 42 years up to 1969, and today he is still active in Cork County Council. The slightly hunched, grey-haired figure with the pipe is a familiar sight in the council chamber. And, although he takes the odd "slugging" from his political opponents, Martin is respected more by those rumbustious interventions invariably attract attention.

Despite his age his memories of the early days of Fianna Fail are still fresh. "I really enjoyed the day in 1927 when we entered the Dail. All that fuss about signing the book and taking the Oath was ridiculous.

"Dev pushed the Bible to the other end of the table. And I think Doctor Jim put it on the floor. We treated the whole thing as an empty



Mr. Martin Corry... strong sentiments.

gesture. The important thing was to get into the House."

About the good years Martin will talk until the cows come home. The "bad" years — and apart from the 1939-45 War years, the bad years always mean the Interparty years for Martin Corry — are best forgotten, he says. "Anytime we had a Coalition — he spits out the word — we ended up as bloody paupers. Sure isn't the same thing happening today. That bloody shower was never any good. And they never will be."

He was still grinning hugely as I left him amid his photos of Dev and Lemass and other old comrades from the past, many of them now dead.

"We were a great crowd in those days. And a great party. But it's not the same today, I'm sorry to say. Fifty years is a long time, and I suppose people change."

"Some do, some don't. Martin Corry hasn't. Not one bit."

# A desire to help their countrymen

By SEAN BRYSON

SOME PEOPLE enter politics looking for the fame and the glory. Others go into the political arena because they feel they have something to contribute to their country.

They have a desire not just to communicate but to get things done and better the lot of their fellow countrymen. And a number of politicians never achieve high office, but they have the satisfaction of knowing that, in their own way, they have helped their party and country, to make some of their aspirations become a reality.

Donnchadh O Brian of Cnoc an Doire, a small village near Rathkeale in West Limerick is such a man. One of the founders of the Fianna Fail party in the county, he epitomised throughout his political life the grass roots of the party.

Now in his 79th year he lives quietly with his wife Eileen in the district he has known all his life. Donnchadh O Brian was for 36 years a T.D. He first entered the Dail in 1933 and retired from political life in 1969.

His career spanned some of the most turbulent and progressive years in the history of the State. He was at one time parliamentary secretary to the then Taoiseach, Eamon de Valera, and also Chief Whip. And he confesses readily that some of his happiest years in the Dail were under de Valera and later Sean Lemass.

They are the years he looks back on with joy and pride. Donnchadh O Brian became interested in politics at an early age. His father was a creamery manager in West Limerick and his mother was a dairymaid.

Donnchadh became a fluent Irish speaker and later a Gaelic League organiser. He helped to found the Fianna Fail party in Limerick city and county, and cycled on a push bike hundreds of miles

throughout the country organising meetings in different parishes and towns. In those days he was paid £3 a week by the party as an organiser for the county.

Recalling that period Donnchadh O Brian said: "I did so much cycling all over the place that I think it was that exercise on the push bike that has helped me to keep fairly healthy over the years."

"I don't really like to be known as one of the founders of Fianna Fail in the county of Limerick. There were plenty of other people who worked just as hard as myself to get the party moving."

"Politics fascinated me when I was quite young. And yet many of my former school friends showed little interest in politics. And many of them were pro-British and against the Rising."

"Looking back, I may be a Fianna Fail die-hard but I don't believe in the party as the language. What does give me great sadness about the party is that two of its main objectives have been complete failures."

"And they are of course, the re-unification of the country and the restoration of the language. I see both these objectives now being further away than ever."

"They were two of the main points of Fianna Fail and I'm afraid that now they will never be realised. But in most other things I think the party did achieve what it set out to do."

Donnchadh O Brian was sitting talking to me before a blazing peat fire. In some ways he resembles "The Chief". A very tall man, he was dressed in a dark navy suit with grey tie and black shoes.

He is a gentle man, and when he was talking about the present Government there were no harsh words. He merely said with a dry chuckle: "They're gambling now on finding oil to get us out of this financial mess."

He thinks it's going to be a very hard fight at the next election. "I believe it will be very difficult for Fianna Fail to win the next general election, particularly since the constituencies have been re-drawn. I think Jack Lynch is a very able man but it will be a hard task for Fianna Fail to get back into power."

On the question of the outstanding figures in the party over the years, Donnchadh O Brian has no hesitation. "I put them in the following

language and it saddens me to see it spoken so little. We might have made a mistake in making the learning of Irish compulsory. I sometimes think of the Welsh people. There the language is very much alive and spoken by great numbers of people. And Welsh, of course, was never made a compulsory subject."

"I see little chance for the language now. Only a miracle could lead to the restoration of the Irish language. The young people are not interested in learning it, or not enough of them are."

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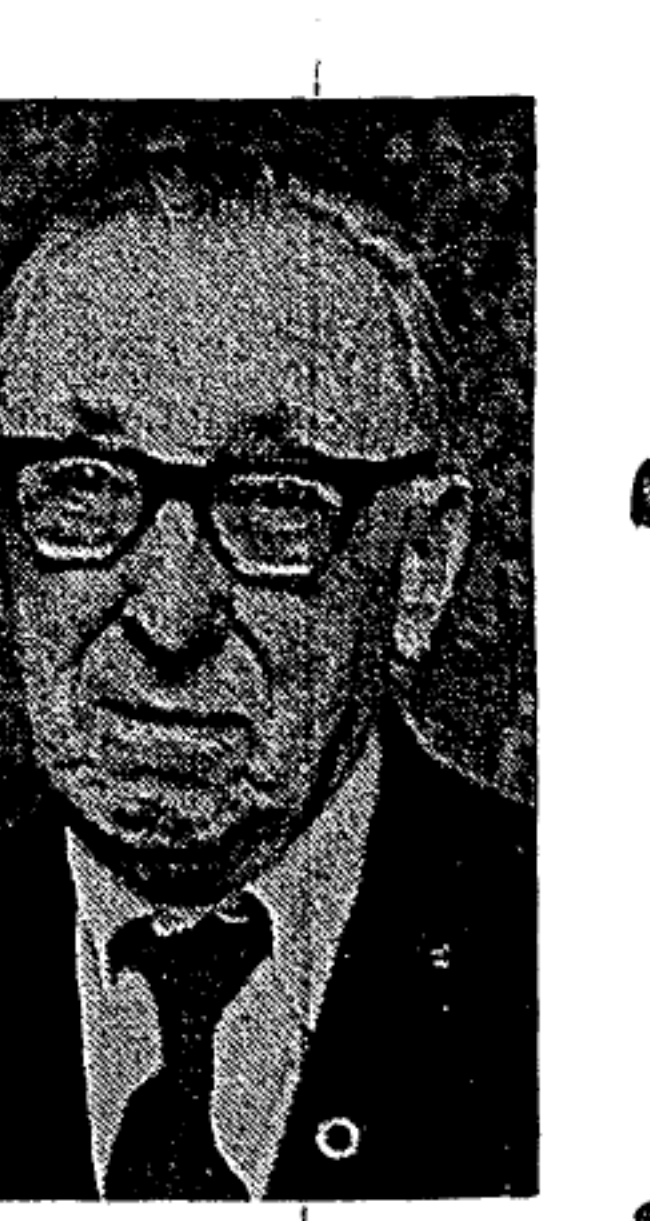
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order, Mr. Eamonn de Valera, Mr. Sean Lemass and Mr. Frank Aiken. Those three men in my own humble opinion did magnificent work for the party and indeed on the eve of his death, Fianna Fail without thinking of those three.

"Mr. Lemass was a very practical man and a very hard worker. He was more of a business man than a politician."

When Mr. O Brian first became a T.D. he earned £30 a month. It might not seem much but it went a long way in those days."

Donnchadh got married in 1940. His wife Eileen, was a nurse and they met at a friend's wedding. "She was a bridesmaid and I thought to myself now she's the one I want." They have no children, and he spends his days quietly now, occasionally reading a historical novel.

He has a fine collection of books, nearly all in Irish. He gave up smoking cigarettes some years ago, and

# Leaders and statesmen

FIANNA FAIL  
1926-50-1976

ONE OF the key tests of any political party is the quality, style, strength and integrity of its leadership. It is one of the great ironies of popular democracy that instead of becoming less important, personal leadership has become more important than ever.

Now, not just election, but important issues as well, become personalised contests between rival party leaders, while the parties themselves — in normal times at least — elevate the role of the leader into a position of near impregnability — and at the same time make demands of him which no leader can ever hope to satisfy.

In this country the build-up of the position of the leader within the parties has been little different to that of other countries. Within this country, too, there have been broad similarities between the parties in certain aspects of leadership. One obvious one is the very small number of leaders each party has had over a period of more than fifty years.

Fianna Fail has had three leaders, Fine Gael five and Labour four. In addition, no party leader (apart from General O'Duffy) has ever been forced out of office by his parliamentary party, and, until recently, none ever had to face the threat of revolt or dissent.

The similarities soon disappear however when we come to examine the style and performance of the individual leaders. This is particularly true of the three Fianna Fail leaders — partly no doubt because of the origins and organisational structure of Fianna Fail, partly because it has been for so long a party of government and its leader has been both Taoiseach and party leader, but most of all, because of the impact of the three men who have shared the leadership over these past fifty years.

## De Valera

THE BASIC facts of Eamon de Valera's leadership are easy to state. He led the party for thirty-three years — a record of leadership

by Maurice Manning

Lecturer in Politics, U.C.D.

equalled in contemporary European politics only by Hjalmar Branting of the Swedish Social Democrats. He fought twelve general elections as leader of Fianna Fail; he emerged with most seats from ten; after eight he formed a single-party government.

His own leadership and authority within the party was never once questioned; he retired in his own time and then only to run for the Presidency. It is a record of achievement which very certainly will never be equalled. To go beyond this record of success is more difficult and the reasons for it must be a mixture of personality and historical circumstance. Certainly no mere catalogue of qualities will fully explain it.

But insofar as they can be catalogued, de Valera's strength as a party leader was based on the sense of mystique which surrounded him, his ability to communicate, his sense of timing, his discipline and perhaps most of all his ability to instill fierce loyalty among his colleagues and supporters.

There was undoubtedly an aura of mystique or charisma surrounding de Valera. This aura was a consequence of a variety of factors — his foreign name, his part in the Rising, the fact that he had been "President de Valera" as early as 1919, the international acclaim and the fact that he had been abroad as the personification of the emergent Republic.

He himself was never slow to foster this mystique — the long black cloak, the white horse, the torch — and he had to a capacity for courtesy and thoughtfulness in his personal dealings which evoked a positive response while still maintaining a sense of distance.

Even more important was his ability to communicate, to get through to mass audiences. When he spoke there was an obvious rapport between him and the audience. He knew them and clearly what he said struck a responsive chord and evoked a real response. He was the first Irish politician to realise the potential of radio and quickly used that medium to great effect.

He had, too, an instinctive



ability to rise to the occasion — certainly his supporters felt that he had and that he did as in his famous reply to Winston Churchill in 1945, when in fact he unified the people in a way which hadn't been done since the days of Sinn Fein.

And yet in retrospect this quality is something of a mystery. That it existed is clear — the question is why and how. He was not a colourful speaker; his prose was often tedious and long-winded; his manner schoolmasterish; his argument tortuous; his delivery could be hesitant and fumbling and his subjects boring.

Many an objective outsider has been astonished at the disparity between the quality of his speech and the reception given it. The point which matters however is not what outsiders thought; it is that there was a chemical reaction between him and his crowds. He was a master of the hustings.

His sense of political timing and strategy was superb. He knew instinctively when best to call an election — the moment of greatest surprise and maximum inconvenience for his opponents. He did it successfully in 1933, 1938 and 1943; the gamble almost worked in 1948.

Even then, by calling a quick election to force Clann na Poblachta into battle before that party was

ready and gave it no time to consolidate its early gains. The result was that even if de Valera lost the immediate battle he won the war — his tactic helped destroy what was potentially a serious threat to the supremacy of Fianna Fail.

As far as party discipline was concerned his own personal authority was such that the question rarely if ever arose. When it did he was swift and decisive. He was basically an authoritarian leader and there was never any doubt that the buck stopped with him. In a basically authoritarian society this was something which was expected and which evinced approval.

But if he was authoritarian his approach to decision-making was never arbitrary or hurried. He liked to have what Sean MacEntee has described as "a multitude of counsellors"; he liked the fullest possible consultation; he liked to talk people into consensus — and this meant that while few mistakes were made and processes were always painstaking and thorough — there was too often a consequent appearance of overcaution and absence of dynamism.

Undoubtedly too, Mr. de Valera's own policy preferences had an important bearing on the development of party policy and



thinking. On constitutional matters and questions of relations with Britain he was capable of being radical. On economic and social questions his views were essentially conservative — his ideal society was rural — and traditional. More important he never showed any great interest in economic and social engineering — in how to bring about the type of society he desired.

## Lemass

SEAN LEMASS was the obvious successor to de Valera, yet their styles of leadership could hardly have been more different. For a start his style of speech-making was very different. His speeches were rarely concerned with abstractions; they were usually tough-minded and pragmatic, concerned with immediate issues and problems.

He was no orator — in fact he distrusted oratory and cultivated a manner that was brisk and to the point. And yet for a man who shunned the colourful phrase he could be devastatingly trenchant and effective in debate and in many ways was a much more formidable Dail opponent than Mr. de Valera. Fianna Fail was extremely fortunate to have had Lemass

development, into the party which in some ways symbolised the new mood of the 1960's. He did that without any break in the party's continuity.

It was also under him that Fianna Fail's famous electoral machine — which he had done so much to found — was updated to the extent that it was capable almost on its own of winning by-elections and general elections.

## Lynch

JACK LYNCH was the first Fianna Fail leader to have to fight a contest for that position. His term of leadership has undoubtedly been more difficult than that of his predecessors. This was partly due to the nature of the times especially the Northern crisis and the Arms Trial. His position was also different in that he inherited a Cabinet of strong personalities, not all of whom accepted his style, his pace of governing or indeed the substance of some of his policies and against whom he had to assert himself.

And then, after the Arms Crisis, he was faced with the task of rebuilding his Cabinet, bringing in young and inexperienced ministers and all this against a background of smouldering discontent among sections of the party.

Jack Lynch showed qualities during all of these crises which few could have anticipated from his earlier ministerial career. He showed a remarkable and enduring toughness, a sense of timing, a sense of knowing when to be patient even under provocation and of knowing too, when to strike.

He showed astuteness and a certain courage in the manner in which he forced both his party and the wider community to face up to the changed realities caused by the Northern crisis. One of his great strengths as a party leader is that his personal appeal transcends party divisions. Whether on television or at public meetings he manages to establish a rapport with his audience — and this in spite of (or maybe because of) an easy, almost conversational style which, while never exciting, emphasises the essential integrity and decency of the man.

This appeal was clearly demonstrated in the election of 1969 and even more so in the 1973 election when Fianna Fail, in spite of all

the troubles and dissensions of the previous three years, increased its vote and lost the election largely because of bad organisation and rivalry between candidates in two or three individual constituencies. This popular appeal is as strong today as it was in 1973.

Jack Lynch's great weakness as a political leader is that he too often gave the impression of not really wanting to use the power which he had. He has appeared to be over-cautious in his exercise of power — more concerned with the orderly continuation of the status quo, as careful as any civil servant or lawyer about precedents and procedures, of reacting to events rather than seeking to innovate, to cause them, of being a man without any clear vision of the society he wants, of having no real passion for reform or for change.

Jack Lynch has shown that he will give up the leadership of Fianna Fail, only when he chooses. Whether this is early or late, whether or not he brings Fianna Fail back to power, Jack Lynch has already left his stamp on Fianna Fail in two enduring ways — and in the process has put the party in his debt.

The first was the skill with which he brought it through the trauma of the Arms Crisis, sustaining its unity and morale and then expediting the healing process.

The second is the way he has forced the party to face up to the reality of its loss of office — forcing it to realise that there is no automatic and guaranteed return to power, that the long years in office have left weaknesses in the structure and personnel of the party and that unless the process of internal reform and reappraisal was set in motion the party might never regain its former eminence.

Probably the final test of any party leader is whether the party he hands over to his successor is stronger than the party he inherited. In some ways it's an unfair criterion for there are many events and historical currents over which no party leader can have control or influence.

But by that standard it can be said that both Eamon de Valera and Sean Lemass were brilliantly successful. On the evidence to date, and in spite of the loss of the 1973 election, the same may well be said of Jack Lynch when he chooses to retire.

## Looking back with pride

By GERRY FLANAGAN  
DEPUTY Patrick Smith, of Cavan, doyen and father figure of the Fianna Fail Parliamentary Party, has survived 17 general elections and held a number of parliamentary secretaryships and ministries over the years.

He is the longest-serving deputy in the Dail but his long tenancy in the national parliament — 53 years now — has done little to dampen the enthusiasm or zeal of this giant Ulsterman.

Born in Tonyduff, Co. Cavan, shortly after the turn of the century, this big broad-shouldered son of the soil has dedicated most of his life to the interests of farming, and it was as Minister for Agriculture that he made his greatest mark in his long and chequered political career.

The son of Terence Smith, the future Minister spent his early years after leaving school on his father's farm near Ballyborough. Unlike many who succeeded to high office, he never lost his deep love of the land and his concern for the families — like his own — who eked out an existence from it through good years and bad.

During his period as Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Finance he was in direct charge of the Board of Works from 1943 and was responsible for the Arterial Drainage Act which he explained minutely to both Dail and Seanad by prefacing it with a White Paper which was almost an innovation in Ireland then.

This piece of legislation exists largely intact on the Statute Book. But this was not his only major achievement. He was also responsible for the bovine TB eradication scheme.

### THE SOLDIER

Speaking of the work on the farm, he said: "You must be devoted to the calling — you must love it, study and support it by every available means."

to a Belfast jail. He was tried by Court Martial on July 11 and sentenced to death for "treason and levying war." But the fates were on his side because he was sentenced on the day of the Truce and the subsequent negotiations between the British Government and the Irish delegation resulted in a stay of the death sentence. It was the following January, however, before Paddy Smith got back to his father's farm.

### INTERNED

When the Civil War broke out he reported back for active service after a brief respite at home and fought on the Republican side. He was captured in January, 1923, and was interned at Dundalk, Droichead Nua and the Curragh.

While interned he studied local and national government and was elected Sinn Fein TD for Cavan. When Fianna Fail was founded he was one of the first members and entered the Dail in 1927.

He was only 16 when he joined the local Company of the Volunteers and was soon promoted to the rank of Company Quartermaster. By the time the War of Independence was in full swing he was a Commandant of the Carrickallen Battalion the youngest commandant in the country at the age of 19.

Recognition of Paddy Smith's dedication and loyalty to the party came in 1939 when he was appointed Parliamentary Secretary to the Taoiseach, Mr. de Valera, and Chief Whip. He was subsequently Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Finance before becoming Minister for Agriculture in 1944 and Minister for Local Government in 1951.

In 1957 the Cavan deputy again became Minister for Local Government and Social Welfare but returned to Agriculture in 1963. A year later he created a sensation by resigning from this most important Department because of what he claimed was a breach of the national wage agreement by leaders of the trade union movement.

His resignation in October, 1964, coincided with the beginning of critical talks on a long-drawn-out building dispute. In his letter of resignation he accused trade union leaders of being led from the rear in making demands that they know have only one result — rising costs.

"In the same letter he said: 'This is not legitimate trade unionism — it is tyranny and I refuse to prepare myself to live with it and accept it.'"

And so Patrick Smith went

into a life of comparative political obscurity after holding the limelight in his own modest fashion — for many years. And his successor as Minister for Agriculture was Charles J. Haughey.

But his loyalty to Fianna Fail has never waned even as a back-bencher. In the 12 years since his resignation from the post of Minister for Agriculture he has been in the forefront of the drive to keep his party in office and the defeat by the National Coalition in 1973 was a great disappointment to him.

Since he was first elected in 1923 — the tallest and the youngest deputy in Ireland — he has only spent 13 of his 53 years as a parliamentarian in opposition. "I hate opposition," he told me recently. "It is really a futile experience. I feel that a party like ours has all the ingredients to tackle any problems coming up or hanging over from a previous administration."

"We would not be always in complete agreement — few governments in any country ever are — but we would be able to reach a consensus without sacrificing the essentials of a proposal simply because there was some minor disagreement between us."

### JUBILEE

Mr. Smith will celebrate his 75th birthday in July. At a function to mark his first 50 years in the Dail in 1973 tributes were paid to him by Mr. Lynch and his parliamentary colleagues and he received a silver silver bearing an engraved portrait of the founder of the party, Eamon de Valera.

Few politicians alive today knew Mr. de Valera as well as Paddy Smith. "When I was his Parliamentary Secretary in the war years I knew his problems well," he says. "He always consulted his Cabinet colleagues on everything. I know because it was the practice of the Parliamentary Secretary to the Taoiseach to attend all Government meetings then."

Moreover, he would totally disagree with the picture which some sections of the public sought to paint of Mr. de Valera. "What annoyed me more than anything else was this attempt by so many public figures and even journalists to give the impression that Mr. de Valera was an austere, dictatorial man," he told me. "I knew him well enough and I say he was nothing of the sort."

"I never met any man who

was so fond of generating discussion on proposals that came to any Minister from his Department. He always sought to assist and consult with his Ministers on all matters with the object of getting agreement on proposed changes of any kind."

Any Minister who showed a reluctance to participate fully in this kind of discussion was regarded as lazy, he said. But many proposals from Departments were complicated and difficult and de Valera liked to be sure that his Ministers were thoroughly au fait with everything, had shown that they had done their homework, had read documents pertaining to the respective departments thoroughly and were in no doubt about the elements in them.

### APPROACHES

Although they got on well together, Paddy Smith's assessment of Sean Lemass was somewhat different. He thought the Lemass approach to matters was often "too much trimmed" in the sense of a businessman's approach when the whole thing could be more speedily dealt with by a simple "Yes" or "No". These kind of business methods could not always be successfully applied to the sort of business which governments had to undertake.

Of the former Taoiseach and present leader of the party, Mr. Lynch, he says: "You couldn't ruffle him in the transaction of business. But he can be more firm than most men in vital matters. You would find it hard to find fault with him, however."

An optimist who has never known defeat in his own constituency, Mr. Smith says he cannot see how Fianna Fail could not at the next general election surmount the obstacle of the constituency reshuffle carried out by the Minister for Local Government, Mr. Tully.

An expert of long standing in the politics of the Border counties, he is confident that Fianna Fail will win three of the five seats in the new Cavan-Monaghan constituency. And he also sees his party doing well in the new five-seat Donegal constituency.

Mr. Smith, who lives with his wife near Cotehill, attends Lenster House and the Dail debates regularly while keeping a close watch on his constituency and its problems. He has six in family — four sons and two daughters — and 16 grand-



Paddy Smith, T.D., doyen of the Parliamentary party.

## Recollections of a young organisation

BY GENE MCKENNA

THOUGH he is now 85 years of age and is one of the oldest surviving founders of the Fianna Fail party, Mr. Liam O'Doherty still has vivid recollections of those early days for the young organisation.

"I was in Mountjoy with Dr. Jim Ryan and Gerry Boland," recalls Mr. O'Doherty. "And when we came out, they must have suggested to Mr. de Valera that I should be asked to join with them in Fianna Fail."

"Anyway, Dev asked me to call and see him, which I did," he says. "I told him I would support him if he went into the Dail. I was fed up with the business of not recognising the Court, for instance. He said to me: 'We may have to do that yet.'"

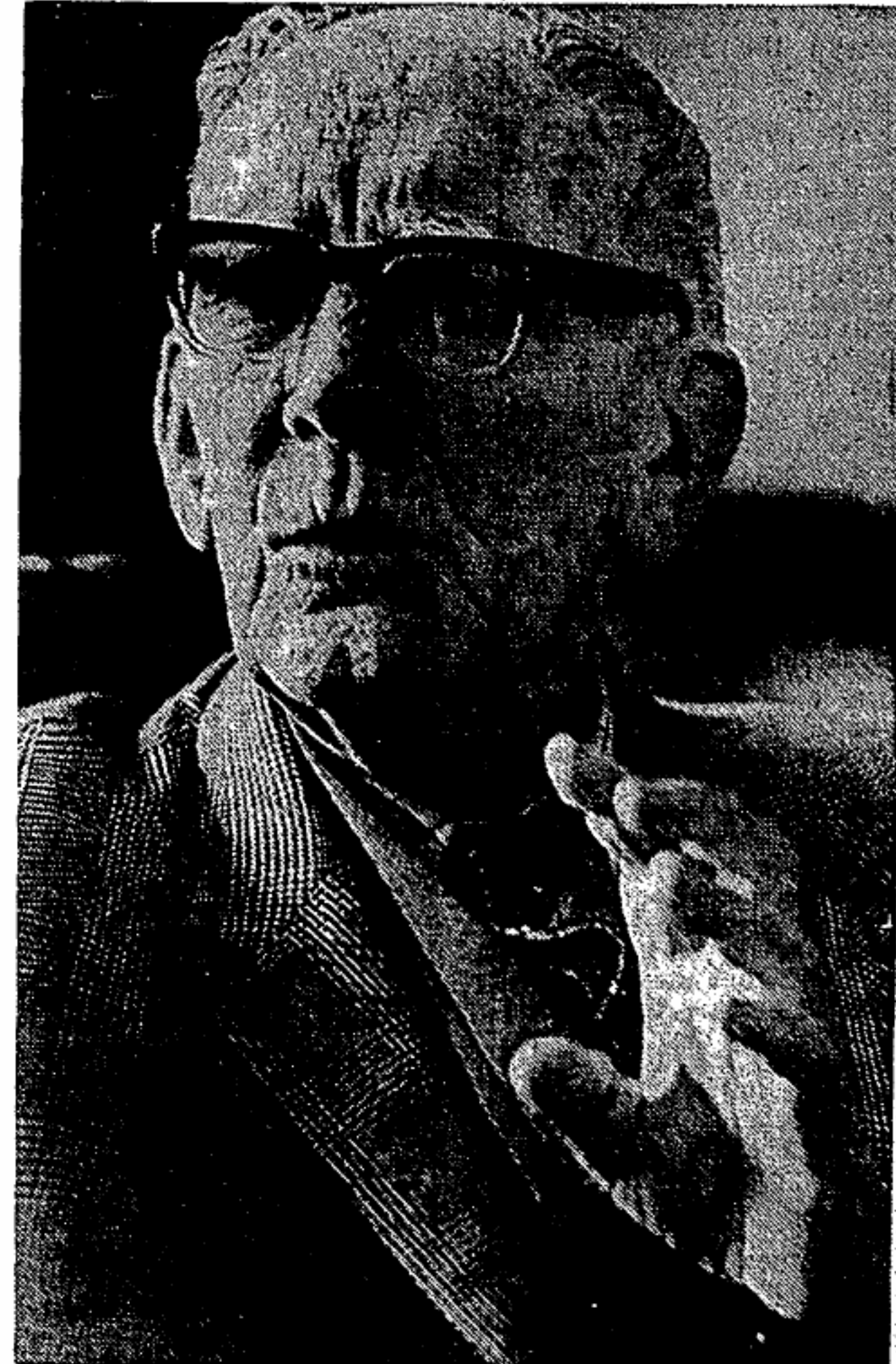
Mr. O'Doherty thus joined the founder-members of the organisation who met in 1925 above the old Sinn Fein headquarters in Suffolk Street, Dublin for their first get-together. The other two survivors are Mr. Sean MacEntee and Mr. Paddy Brennan.

Another of those in attendance at that inaugural meeting was Mrs. Hannah Sheehy-Skeffington. "She was outstanding, as far as I was concerned," said Mr. O'Doherty, who lives at Foxrock. "I have never come across anybody like her."

Another man for whom Mr. O'Doherty had great admiration was Sean Lemass. "He was a tremendous worker. I remember him telling me once that he had not seen Dublin on a Sunday for three years. He would travel the country from Donegal to Cork organising the party workers. He was our ablest and greatest worker."

Mr. O'Doherty was born in Blarney and, when he was 17 years old, went to work at the British Admiralty in London. He then moved on to the engineering department of the Post Office there and was later transferred to the Savings Bank, "where I worked with Michael Collins."

Returning to Ireland in 1912, Mr. O'Doherty worked with the Post Office here for a while. But, like many another young man of his age, Mr. O'Doherty became embroiled in the troubles and



Liam O'Doherty, founder-member and 1916 veteran.

he fought from 1916 right through to the end of the Civil War. He was O/C of the 5th Battalion, Old I.R.A. for several years and took part in the burning of the Custom House.

But Mr. O'Doherty had done a great deal of studying prior to this and he became a member of the Chartered Institute of Secretaries and Administrators, of the Institute of Cost and Works Accountants and of the Institute of Certified Accountants.

He was auditor of the Fianna Fail books for about 12 years from the early 'thirties and he also served for a similar period on the

National Executive. "But I never had the inclination to become a politician myself," said Mr. O'Doherty. "I was an Army man, more than anything else."

He added: "If Dev asked me to do something I would do it but I did not want to become an active politician myself. I had my own practice as an accountant." Mr. O'Doherty said he never had any quarrels with men of other parties at the time, such as former I.R.A. Chiefs of Staff, Moss Twomey and Sean MacBride. "I could always meet and talk with them," he said. "In fact, Moss Twomey still comes to visit me once a week."



Sile de Valera, grand-daughter of the former leader, writes on . . .

# Youth's inheritance

ANY POLITICAL movement, organisation or party must presuppose as basic criteria continuity, development and growth. If this were not so it would only become a mere transient phenomenon.

The very fundamentals which prompted the founding of Fianna Fáil had of necessity to rely on such criteria, for it was clear to its founders that some of its aims, aspirations and ideals would require time, perhaps even generations, before being brought to fruition.

Many of the aims and aspirations which were enshrined in the formulation of Fianna Fáil policy in 1926 have long since been achieved. Amongst these were the abolition of the Oath of Allegiance, and the replacement of the Free State Constitution which had in the main, been dictated by the British in 1922. Fianna Fáil introduced the Constitution of 1937 which was accepted by the electorate.

This constitution enshrined the political, social, economic and cultural life of the Irish people. A further major step forward in the implementation of Fianna Fáil policy was that which arose out of the agreement with Britain

in 1938. This agreement was of the greatest importance and far-reaching in its consequences, for not alone did this agreement end the so-called "Economic War" and bring the question of land annuities to an end but of greater importance, it secured the restoration of the Irish ports and the cancellation of other facilities accorded to the British by the terms of the 1922 Treaty.

The ending of the land annuities were far more than a mere payment of a sum of money to rid the country of this burden, but it was in political terms the final end of any British interest relating to land within this state.

The result of repossession of the ports and the cancellation of other military, air and naval facilities were of dynamic consequences, for as long as the British right to the ports and facilities remained, neutrality for this country in the ensuing War would have proved impossible. This is something which my generation often fail to realise. Do they, I wonder, reflect sufficiently upon what the preservation of neutrality has meant to them?

One brief reflection on the disaster which befell Belfast following air raids ought to be sufficient illustration as

to what undoubtedly would have happened in Dublin and particularly the towns and cities of south and south-east Munster.

Merely events proved otherwise and all credit for this can be claimed by the leaders of Fianna Fáil at the time. It is thanks to their vision, determination and political acumen that this country was spared the ravages of war. My generation should not lightly forget their efforts.

Notwithstanding the enormous strides towards total freedom during the 1930s, two major aims remained and, alas, still remain outstanding. These are of course that of the restoration of the Irish language and the ending of Partition.

True the founders were only too well aware that time and great effort would be required. It is here that the most fundamental aspects of continuity arise.

Many of the first generation of Fianna Fáil who put forward these aims are now dead or advanced in years. There is however ample evidence to show that there are many, especially in the younger generation of the party, who have the same dedication, firmness and the same drive as had the founder members.

This will ensure that the hopes and aims of those who first formulated the party's policies will not die. If on the other hand there is a failure of continuity here then Fianna Fáil has lost its true identity and failed the very reasons for which it was founded.

As far as the Irish language is concerned, while progress is slow, and at times perhaps even disheartening, far more people have a knowledge of Irish, both within the ranks of Fianna Fáil and without, than was the case when the party was first founded.

If we compare Fianna Fáil with any other political party or group it can be truly claimed that this party is the direct successor of the ideals, aims and aspirations in terms of a United Ireland as were those of Tone, Emmet, the Young Irishmen, the Fenians, the Republicans in the Civil War in 1922.

This is because Fianna Fáil is as much concerned with the unity and freedom of this island as were any of these past movements. There is therefore a continuity of interest.

Youth has always been in the vanguard of political movements and this has been particularly so in Irish history. Each successive move-

ment from the time of Wolfe Tone has had youth in the forefront. Fianna Fáil is no exception.

The majority of men and women who first joined Fianna Fáil were themselves young. The party has never failed to attract the youth and this remains true today. This can be amply proven by the youth conferences held by Fianna Fáil over the last few years which displayed such vitality, idealism and enthusiasm.

It is indeed well that there are such young people, for it is equally true to say that nowadays there appears to be a cult among some politicians, intellectuals, teachers and others who would wish to dilute, misrepresent or misinterpret events in Irish history over the last half century or so.

There are even those while calling themselves nationalists and Irishmen who question the wisdom of the rising of 1916. The sincere adherent to Fianna Fáil policies however rejects such views and remains staunch to the party's fundamental aims.

Even on a lower plane and at pure domestic level Fianna Fáil can be commended to those of my age group who may feel less committed in terms of national issues. The

party covers a wide social spectrum in that it is not affiliated to any particular social class. It has had far greater experience in government than any other party or group of parties since the foundation of the State.

This of course presupposes the underlying confidence of the people not alone in its policies but in their implementation. Because of this experience and length in government there is continuity.

Fianna Fáil is in a unique position but if it is, it has a grave responsibility and, being the biggest political party in the island of Ireland a duty lies hard upon it to strive for the fulfilment of its policies and to pass on to succeeding generations the ideals for which it was founded.

The greatest responsibility of all rests with the youth today, but they may take encouragement if they refer to the words of the party's founder, Eamon de Valera, when he said: ". . . The inestimable heritage of a great tradition has been handed down to you, but you, yourselves, must give it life by your own service and by your own devotion."



# MacEntee's fruitful career

FEW MEN have had such long and fruitful careers in politics as Sean MacEntee, now in the twilight of a life woven from the fabric of modern Irish history.

by MICHAEL MILLS

His political successes were achieved almost entirely in Dublin but, strangely enough, it is to Belfast, the city of his birth and quite obviously, his first love, that his thoughts turn most frequently these days.

He has vivid memories of the city he left more than 60 years ago with its intense poverty, its mean back streets and the fierce pride of its people in paying their way in life.

It is the same Belfast thrift that makes him look back today with considerable nostalgia on the budgets, 12 in all, which he brought into the Dail from 1932 to 1939 and again from 1951 to 1954.

He recalls that in 1939, even after the decade of the Economic War, the State had a balance-of-payments problem, no budgetary deficits, no deadweight (i.e. unremunerative) debt and no external debt. Mr. de Valera's government in the eight years prior to World War Two had liquidated all financial obligations to Britain and had repaid the American loans raised by the first Dail in 1919-21.

The poverty of Belfast in the early 1900s and the fact that a man could work up to 60 hours a week for as little as 15 shillings left a deep impression. Many Catholics waited unsuccessfully at the tail-end of employment queues through the months and the years.

Sean MacEntee's parents came from Co. Monaghan. His father, James MacEntee, a Belfast publican, had been active for many years in Nationalist politics. Following the passing of the Local Government Act of 1898 he was one of a small group of eight, who were the first ever Catholic Nationalists to be elected to Belfast Corporation.

When the "Parnellite split" occurred, he supported Parnell and accordingly, found himself in opposition to the late Joseph Devlin, then coming to prominence as the leader of the anti-Parnellites in Belfast. This antagonism prevailed until the general election of 1904, when the Register of Electors indicated that if a full Nationalist poll were secured, Tom Sexton's former constituency of West Belfast could be recaptured from the Unionists who had held it for some 12 years.

MacEntee's senior came out in support of Devlin. Alex Carlsle, managing director of Harland and Wolff shipyard, but also grandson of a United Irishman, standing as an independent attracted 432 votes and "Wee Joe" was elected by 16 votes. The former opponents became friends and Joe Devlin was one among many of James MacEntee's friends, Orange and Green, who worked strenuously to save Sean MacEntee from execution after 1916.

It comes as a surprise to discover that Sean MacEntee's first political party was James Connolly's Socialist Party of Ireland. "I saw an advertisement in a local paper that James Connolly who was then organising the Irish Transport Workers Union in Belfast was to address a meeting in a hall in North Street."

"I was a member from 1912 until I left two years later to take up an appointment in Dundalk and became actively involved in the organisation

of the Irish Volunteers there."

Mr. MacEntee was an engineer in the Belfast Electricity Department when he joined the Socialist Party and was in regular contact with James Connolly over the next two years. He corresponded with him later during his period in Dundalk, particularly in relation to some articles on street fighting written by Connolly about 1915 for the Irish Volunteer magazine.

One of these letters was later used against Sean MacEntee in the trial in which he was sentenced to death, though this was later commuted to penal servitude for life. While awaiting the outcome of their trial, MacEntee and three other fellow Dundalk Volunteers were held in Kilmainham Prison in mid-June, 1916. Six years later, in mid-July, 1922, he was again a prisoner in Kilmainham, this time as a prisoner of the Provisional Government during the Civil War. He is prepared to wager that he is the only man alive today who was twice imprisoned there.

"James Connolly was first of all a Nationalist," he says. "His part in 1916 proved that. So also did his early career in Dublin; his involvement there, for instance, in activities like the 1898 movement to commemorate 1798."

"Then there were the articles he wrote in the militantly separatist monthly, 'The Shan Van Voelt' and later those he published in his own magazine, 'The Harp.' All this was a manifestation of his fervent patriotism, which, with his love for his fellow workers shaped his whole life."

"In Belfast about 1911, when there was a strike of cross-channel dockers, he bridged the sectarian divide and brought out the men of his own union, the Irish Transport, the mainly Catholic deep-sea dockers, in support of their Protestant comrades. Those were the days when he had Orange and Green marching together through the streets of Belfast in their common cause. And he adds almost in despair: 'Look at what the Provisionals have done to widen the division today!'"

"After leaving Belfast, he did not meet Connolly again until the morning of Easter Monday, 1916, in the old Liberty Hall, in Dublin.

He met Padraic Pearse at the same time, after he had come from Dundalk to seek clarification on the orders and counter-commands that had thrown the Volunteers in Co. Louth into confusion.

He remembers Pearse as a "remotely impressive" person, in his appearance, carriage and speech. He had seen him hold an audience spellbound in Belfast in an address on the Irish language, heard him later in Carrickmacross and again when Pearse made his famous declaration at the grave of O'Donovan Rossa in Glasnevin.

"He had the gift of leadership," he says. "There is no other explanation for his acceptance as leader by men of the toughness of Sean

MacDermott, Tom Clarke with his years of gaol behind him, extroverts like Tomas MacDonagh, and strong and stubborn personalities like Connolly and Ceannnt. There was no doubt at all about his authority."

He remembers Pearse also as "a far-seeing politician" who would have accepted the Irish Council Bill of 1907 because it would have given control of education and the Boards of Education to representatives of the people.

Mr. MacEntee regards the rejection of this Bill, which provided for the setting up of an Irish Council to administer the domestic affairs of the four provinces, as a cardinal political mistake. "Ireland might not have been partitioned," he suggests, "had the Bill been implemented. Not only would we have had control over primary and secondary education, but also over local government, agriculture and technical instruction, public works, the Congested Districts Board, etc."

"Catholics and Protestants throughout Ireland, working together in the Council and controlling the administration of solely Irish affairs, were likely to develop a unity of purpose and interest, even if it were only in making common cause against the British Treasury."

He recalls that Pearse also spoke, despite considerable criticism, on a Home Rule platform in Dublin in 1913 although he was a separatist but regarded Home Rule as a development that could lead to independence.

Mr. MacEntee fought at the corner of Earl Street and O'Connell Street in Easter Week and succeeded in getting into the G.P.O. on Friday.

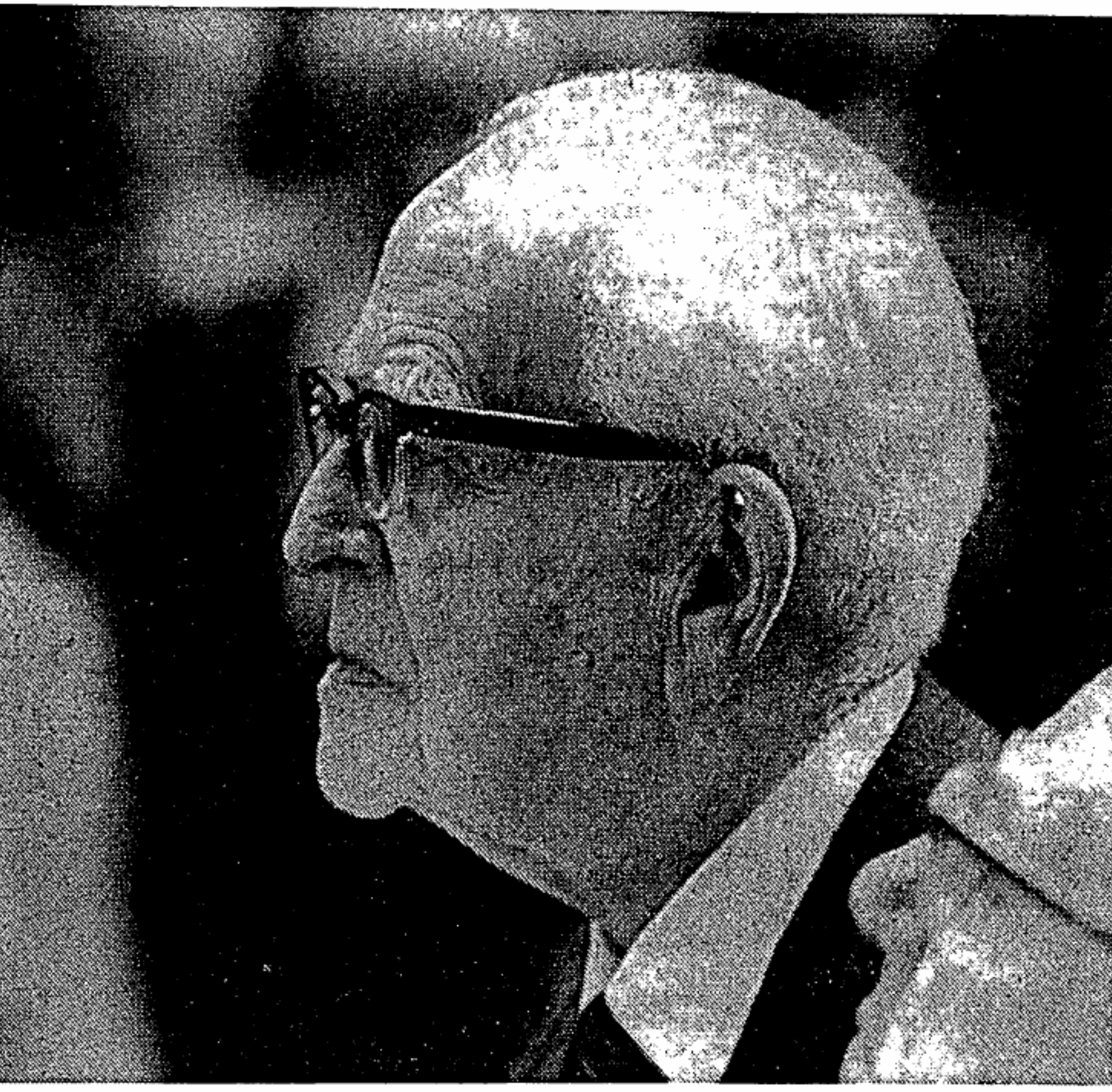
When Pearse eventually told the mtheey were evacuating the building, he recalls the message was mainly delivered and there was no panic. Mr. MacEntee was not surprised later to be tried and sentenced to death for his part in the Rising because he was well-known to the police from his Volunteer activities.

He has still a vivid recollection of the day in Kilmainham when he and his comrades from Dundalk were paraded before a British officer to learn their fate. MacEntee's name and his crimes having been recited, the officer, reading from a document, informed him that the court-martial had found him guilty and had sentenced him to death and that the General Officer Commanding had confirmed the verdict.

"Then after a tedious pause, the officer went on to say that the G.O.C. had commuted the sentence to one of penal servitude for life," he says. "I was immeasurably relieved."

He did not oppose the Treaty because of the Oath of Allegiance but solely on the grounds that it was creating Partition. "The true significance of the Treaty," he says, "internationally and domestically, lay in the fact that a majority of those elected in May 1921 to represent the people in Dail Eireann, that is the sovereign Parliament of Ireland, had agreed to cede a substantial portion of the national territory to Britain."

"The Treaty which had provided for this became an international instrument when in 1924 the Irish Government of the day registered it with the League of Nations. This was the case also with the amending agreement of 1925 which fixed the frontier between Saorstát Eireann and the ceded territory by making it conform with the western



Sean MacEntee — joined up with James Connolly in Belfast in 1912.

and southern boundaries of the Six Counties. Since 1925 the Border has been an internationally recognised frontier. Those who talk about our troops crossing it should bear this fact in mind."

Sean MacEntee was not a candidate at the General Election in June 1922. Having married in May of the previous year, he withdrew from active politics and in partnership with Fergus O'Kelly, whom he had first met in the G.P.O. in 1916, tried to set up a practice as consulting engineers.

He remembers well the morning of June 28, 1922, when he and his partner set off early for Wexford where they had been retained by the local corporation to design a system of street lighting. There they learned of the shelling of the Four Courts; but the news was sketchy and vague and, of course, disturbing. It was only when they got back to Dublin that evening they heard of the Government's ultimatum.

They heard also of the artillery borrowed from the British. Though he had not previously identified himself with the Volunteers in the Four Courts and, indeed, had been critical of their actions, "anger and resentment that guns should be turned on my old comrades drove me to report to the headquarters of the Dublin Brigade in Barry's."

Eventually he found himself in the Hammer Building in O'Connell Street under the command of Cathal Brugha, who put him in charge of what was then the Marlborough St. Post Office.

The importance of this post lay in the fact that it commanded Waterford Street and the approach from it to the rear of the O'Connell St. block.

Early on the Wednesday, he was ordered by Cathal Brugha to evacuate his small garrison and to report for further orders. He was to make his way through the Free State lines. With the help of a youth, who knew the district well, he succeeded in getting to his home

where he slept for the next 24 hours.

A couple of days later, he was summoned to a meeting of IRA officers, presided over by the late Frank Henderson. He was told that a plan to rescue Rory O'Connor and his comrades was being considered and asked if he could construct a tunnel into Mountjoy from a house in Glenariff Parade, which would be vacated for the purpose.

He agreed to try and some days later with a team of captured, the unarmed "Diggers" and loaded them into the lorries.

Before the day ended, Sean MacEntee found himself for the second time in his life passing through "the gruesome doorway of Kilmainham Jail."

"Over the succeeding weeks I was joined by Sean T. O'Kelly, Oscar Traynor, Tom Barry (who subsequently escaped from Gormanston), Paddy Houlihan, Michael Tannan and others who were later invaluable in the early days of Fianna Fáil," he recalls.

"The stay in Kilmainham ended when in the autumn all the prisoners were transferred to Gormanston Camp, where conditions were completely different. Gormanston had been an American Air Corps camp during World War One. It was laid out in comfortable baths, each with a shower, bathrooms, the compound within the barbed wire perimeter was roomy and there was a playing field with a football pitch and space for other sports."

"Inside the compound, everything was run by the prisoners with Oscar Traynor as O.C. Oscar, in the old days before 'the Split', dauntless O' of the Dublin Brigade, commanded the respect, not only of his fellow-prisoners but of the custodians as well. Most of the guards, from Col. Christy O'Malley, O/C Gormanston, through Captain Corry, right down to the ranks had served during the Black and Tan" war under Oscar and continued to refer to him and respect him as "The Brig."

Of course, in relation to the question of the Treaty, the division between old comrades was marked and definite; they were pro-Treaty, we were anti-Treaty. But regret that we were thus divided was the predominant emotion, particularly between Oscar and Christy."

Oscar Traynor appointed Sean MacEntee prisoners' Adjutant to organise and regulate within the barbed wire the administration of the camp and its daily routine.

ten or twelve men — who became known as "the Diggers" — he was smuggled into the house after dark and started work the following morning at daylight.

But, the attempt was doomed to failure; the work could not be done noiselessly, the neighbours were awakened and before long the whole neighbourhood was aware of strange happenings in the house. The result was that in the afternoon Free State troops arrived in lorries, burst into the house,

"The morale of the prisoners was high. With very few exceptions they were men of character and self-respect and in the mess, were respected by their guards. Not that they fraternised with each other — after the killing of Rory and Liam and Dick and Joe on December 8, there was a line of blood dividing them — but there was no individual animosity between them."

The prolongation of the Civil War was a torment to Sean MacEntee. He saw how it was "enabling James Craig and the Northern junta to consolidate their position and helping them to justify that position to the doubters among their own people." He is strongly convinced that when the Treaty was signed, the number who doubted the wisdom of Partition and the secession of the Six Counties was not insignificant.

"The consolidation of Partition" he says, "was the inevitable and possibly, irredeemable, consequence of the Civil War. But all this is being wise after the event."

"How to undo Partition has preoccupied me as it did our great leader. For 50 years, de Valera worked patiently, constantly, quietly, indefatigably to win the confidence of his Northern fellow-countrymen."

Those years of patient endeavour culminated in the meeting of Terence O'Neill with Sean Lemass. This would have initiated a new era in Ireland's history, but the initiative was frustrated when the candidate of the People's Democracy intervened in the Bannside to deprive Terence O'Neill of a smashing victory over Ian Paisley and thereby, ensured the defeat of O'Neill's rapprochement."

"Now, we have a new civil war in Northern Ireland; though, what it is about is a matter for conjecture, whether it is between rival mafias for the control of the clubs, the shebeens or for reasons of sectarian hate is anyone's guess. The one certain thing is that if the policy of the British Government in Northern Ireland is 'divide et impera', no agent is more seditious and efficient in making that policy effective than those who have dishonoured the name of the Army which saved the duly elected Government of the Irish Republic from 1919 to 1922."

Mr. MacEntee's internment of course kept him removed from the bitter incidents and the atrocities on the two sides in the Civil War.

But, had as some of the incidents were, he claims they bear no relation to what he describes as "the zenith of evil of the Provisionals' campaign" today. The men involved then, he says, were active combatants, not innocents by-standers blown to pieces by bombs or killed in sectarian attacks.

The IRA's opposition to the Treaty he sees as a difficult question to answer, even now. In his view, there was a breach of contract between the Government and the IRA whose loyalty to the Government was conditional on the Government's attachment to the idea of a Republic. "Whether it was sufficient to justify mutiny or legitimate protest" he is not sure.

The issue at stake, he claims, was whether we were going to have a monarchy or a Republic. "Arthur Griffith was not merely a monarchist; he was strongly anti-Republican. He did not believe in Republicanism as a stable form of Government at all. Sean MacEntee, the spider became the practical politi-

cian with the entry of Fianna Fáil into Irish politics and the formation of the first Fianna Fáil Government in 1932. He is very happy at the achievements of Fianna Fáil in those early days and at the enactment of the first Constitution approved by the people in 1937.

"My best job was done as Minister for Finance," he allows himself a slight boast, which he immediately deprecates. "But consider what we did in the field of social services over the years — with the old age pension, the introduction of pensions for widows and orphans, children's allowances and unemployment assistance. We were one of the most progressive governments in Europe."

"At the same time, we undertook a vast housing programme. I provided the finance and Sean T. O'Kelly carried-out the programme. And we owed not a penny to any foreign country. In Belfast we used to say — 'keep out of debt; don't take your clothes to the pawn.' I always remembered that."

Deficit budgeting and foreign borrowing he regards with considerable fears about the effects on the country's future. "We are going to have to pay for all this in the future," he predicts, "with young people having to go without jobs and the consequent danger of a revolutionary situation. Already, I can see the growth in lawlessness in the country with almost daily bank robberies. I am very pessimistic about the future."

The present troubles in Northern Ireland have disturbed him more than most, because of his Belfast background. He used to go back to his native city regularly until 1969. He thinks the passive resistance of the civil rights workers would have achieved much because they were directing world-wide attention on Northern Ireland and the British Government would have been forced to act.

He was deeply shocked by the Arms Crisis of 1970 and disturbed by its effects on the country and on the party he helped to found. "It is impossible to understand," he says, "it was a terrible pity."

He is totally uncompromising in his attitude to the Provisionals, repeating his charge that it is "blasphemous" to suggest that it is any relation between them and the men of 1916. "Can you imagine James Connolly or Padraic Pearse planting a bomb or encouraging others to plant a bomb that is obviously possible to blow innocent people to pieces," he asks.

He sees the only solution to Partition as the creation of friendship and trust between the Northern communities and between North and South. He accepts there is immense bitterness on both sides but suggests that a start will have to be made to heal the wounds and to get people working together in harmony.

In his book-lined study today, Sean MacEntee looks with some satisfaction at Fianna Fáil's achievements over the past 50 years, recalling with extraordinary accuracy the names of places and people of long years ago.

"We were not in any sense socialist revolutionaries," he smiles, "but we believed if we could get control of our own affairs we would do things much better. You would have to know what life was like in Ireland before 1916 to realise how far we have come today."



Oscar Traynor — "Commanded respect of fellow prisoners".