

Irish National Congress

P.O. Box No. 2814, Dublin 7



Comhdháil Náisiúnta na hÉireann

P.O. Box No. 2814, Dublin 7

April 1993

IRELAND CRIES OUT FOR PEACE

The deaths of two children in an IRA bombing and the rising death toll of Northern nationalists at the hands of loyalist paramilitaries has sparked a wave of revulsion that has led to a widespread demand for peace. While this is laudable, public goodwill alone cannot bring peace in the absence of the political changes necessary to create the conditions in which violence from all sides will end.

In the recent past peace campaigns, whatever the original hopes of their organisers, have tended to focus on almost exclusively on republican violence. This sectarianism was again present in a recent rally in Dublin where sections of the crowd booed members of the Caraher family, whose son Fergal was murdered by the British army, when they carried placards. Mothers of children killed by the RUC using plastic bullets were spat upon and abused by sections of the crowd and told to "get out" and to "go home", with no reprimand from the organisers. Some at least of those at the peace rally were unwilling to condemn the violence of the British army and RUC or even to allow others at the same rally to do so.

If a peace movement is to succeed it must avoid purely selective condemnations of violence and must not ignore the political conditions which sustain it.

The INC, with the vast majority of Irish people believes the only long-term solution which will bring peace is a British withdrawal from the North of Ireland and Irish reunification. It is peaceful ways to achieve this that we must seek. There can be little doubt that a declaration by the British government that they will enter into a Hong Kong style agreement to withdraw from North of Ireland would be the greatest single step towards peace which could be taken.

Other moves could also help. UN intervention in the form of an arbitration conference, UN Human Rights observers to monitor the security forces' own actions and to prevent collusion with loyalist murder gangs could all help to bring about a new situation where an immediate cessation of

violence might be possible while political talks continued. A major diplomatic initiative by the Irish government which sought to mobilise the Irish community around the world in an attempt to secure a commitment from the British, combined with UN intervention would be a powerful argument for peace in those northern nationalist communities where IRA support is strongest.

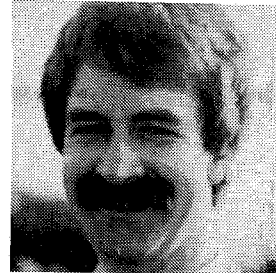
As long as condemnations of violence are one sided, peace movements will inevitably dwindle as memories of particular incidents fade. An exclusive focus on the IRA will lead a peace movement to having a narrow focus. It will alienate nationalist communities in the North of Ireland who suffer at the hands of RUC and British army violence. A peace movement which does not deal with the violence of the British forces and loyalist paramilitaries will be seen as showing no concern for those communities, who at present give strongest support to the IRA campaign.

If the outcome of the new peace demonstration is a campaign directed solely at one side of the conflict it will fail. What is needed to end the IRA campaign and the violence of loyalists and the British forces is a movement for political change which can mobilise popular support both North and South. The key demands of such a movement should involve:

- UN intervention in the constitutional talks;
- UN Human Rights observers in the North of Ireland;
- A diplomatic campaign by the Irish government which will mobilise Irish contacts abroad to pressurise the British government into a Hong Kong style agreement on the North;
- Opposition to all violence from wherever it emanates.

The INC is willing, indeed eager to see such a peace movement succeed and will work with other individuals and groups to promote a genuine peace process aimed at creating the political conditions to bring about peace.

Pressure increases on Articles Two and Three



Declan Bree was at the INC AGM

Albert Reynolds' much publicised 'defence' of Articles Two and Three in the Dáil debate needs close examination. While he ruled out any unilateral change, he explicitly said that he would consider abandoning Articles Two and Three in the context of any agreement in revived talks in the North. While such an agreement might seem remote now there is no doubt that the public is being softened up for the amendment of Articles Two and Three as soon as some deal is cobbled together for a new Stormont Assembly. Articles Two and Three must not be negotiated away in these talks. The effect of their abandonment would be the same whether they are sold or given away free. Their deletion or dilution would mean that the British constitutional claim would be uncontested in law. This would be a message to the world that the Irish people accepted British rule as legitimate and superior to a united Ireland. The amendment of Articles Two and Three would also have the effect of removing from everyone in the Six Counties the right to hold an Irish passport. The government should be seeking a commitment from the British for moves towards Irish unity. If Irish unity is still on the agenda, if the British claim to the Six Counties is to be challenged by constitutional means then Articles Two and Three must stay.

(continued overleaf)

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Membership fees for 1993 are now due. All INC members are asked to renew their membership and we also invite new members to join at this time.

(continued from overleaf)

Patrick Mayhew finally went public with a demand from the British government that the articles be abandoned while rejecting any concessions on the British government's claim to the Six Counties as set out in the Government of Ireland Act.

Albert Reynolds tried to silence the growing opposition to any change in Articles Two and Three within Fianna Fáil by threatening disciplinary action against any elected representatives or constituency organisations who speak out in defence of Articles Two and Three. Prior to his threat TDs Jim McDaid, John O'Donohoe, Ray Burke, Síle De Valera, Seán Haughey, Dermot Ahern and Michael Noonan and Senator Michael O'Kennedy had publicly stated their opposition to the abandonment of Articles Two and Three.

Albert Reynolds has tried to fudge his position, first of all he said Articles Two and Three were not for sale. Now he says they will not be unilaterally deleted — implying that he is willing to amend them in some circumstances.

Albert Reynolds must clarify his position. Will he abandon Articles Two and Three while

the British claim to the Six Counties remains? If so, then he is willing to abandon the constitutional demand for Irish unity and remove the right to hold an Irish passport from people living in the Six Counties.

Dick Spring's much hyped Mansion House speech offered little new. However, other comments by him and Ruairí Quinn in particular show that they are perfectly willing to abandon Articles Two and Three if they thought a referendum could be passed. Many people in the Labour Party oppose this view. Deputy Declan Bree and numerous Labour councillors have called for the retention of the articles and the pursuit of the traditional Labour goal of Irish unity.

The INC is organising meetings right across the country to build a campaign for the defence of Articles Two and Three. Now is the time to act. This government could well call a referendum. Do not be fooled by their fudge on the issue. This newsletter carries a list of things you can do to help.

ACT TODAY.

Articles Two and Three — What you can do to help

- Write to or phone your public representatives telling them to oppose any change in Articles Two and Three;
- With the help of the INC organise a public meeting in your area;
- Form a branch of the INC;
- Send us names and addresses of other people who might be interested or prominent people in your area who might speak out;
- Distribute our leaflets in defence of Articles Two and Three;
- Write letters to local papers;
- Phone in to radio programmes;
- Complain if you feel media coverage is biased or ill-informed;
- Get organisations you are a member of to pass motions supporting the retention of Articles Two and Three;
- Have INC speakers invited to address meetings of groups you are a member of.



July Festival to highlight Border Roads Campaign

A three day festival is being held at Lucky Bridge on the weekend of 12 July to highlight the continuing campaign to re-open cross-border roads. Events will include rock concerts, one specific women's day of action and border road openings.

This is simply the latest public event in a long running campaign. Campaign spokesperson Michael McPhillips set out the reasons for the festival. "Over 300 cross-border roads have been closed by the British army. This causes much hardship for local farmers, businesses and communities as distances of up to 60 miles must be travelled to make what should be a ten minute journey. People are forced to pass through permanent British army checkpoints where harassment and physical assault are regular occurrences. Border communities have a

right to keep their communities intact. The right to travel along cross-border roads is an essential part of this.

"The Festival is intended to complement the ordinary road re-opening which happens on an almost weekly basis. It follows on from the highly successful Day of Action on New Year's Day, when 3,000 people took part in various activities to draw attention to the fact that as other EC borders are opening up the British government is militarising the Irish border to an even greater degree.

Further information from the INC or Combined Border Roads Campaign
c/o Michael McPhillips,
Bridge St,
Newtownbutler,
County Fermanagh.
Tel: Newtownbutler 73579



Regular buses are organised from Dublin to road re-openings. For details and tickets phone Nora at 01-8202019.

AGM 1993...AGM 1993...AGM 1993...AGM 1993...

THE INC IS A GROWING FORCE

The 1993 AGM of the INC was held in Dublin in February and was the most successful to date with nearly 300 delegates in attendance. Margaret Urwin opened the meeting with a report on the work for the past year. It was a year when the INC moved from being a small Dublin-based group towards the beginnings of developing a national organisation. At the time of the AGM branches were active in Donegal, Sligo, Leitrim, Cork, Waterford, Meath and University College Dublin. Since the AGM, Dundalk, Limerick and Laois have joined the fold and Drogheda, Galway, Clare, Tipperary Town, Kerry and Wexford should hopefully be organised soon. The report detailed the activities which had been carried out to build the campaign in defence of Articles Two and Three. Five hundred thousand leaflets and 1,000 pamphlets were distributed, candidates in the November general election were lobbied, dozens of public meetings and a national conference were held, many public protests were organised and elected representatives were regularly contacted. The national executive also monitored the coverage which the issue received and complained when coverage was biased. Work was also carried out on the Border Roads Campaign and on justice issues such as the Caraher shooting, the Beechmount Five, Ballymurphy Seven, Casement Accused and the strip-searching of women prisoners in British gaols in the Six Counties.

The guest speaker for the day was newly elected Labour TD Declan Bree, who has been a supporter of the INC from our beginnings. He added his voice to those who are opposed to any change in Articles Two and Three and said he believed the INC could play a major role in mobilising those who wanted to work in a peaceful way for a British withdrawal and Irish reunification. He said partition was the root cause of the political crisis and conflict and called for a declaration by the British Government that they will withdraw from the Six Counties.

Bernadette McAliskey set out the need for a

national campaign on Articles Two and Three and said the campaign must begin now with meetings in every county in Ireland. The AGM agreed that this campaign would be a priority in the coming year.

Margaret Caraher gave a moving account of her own and her family's attempts to get justice after the shooting of her husband Fergal in December 1990, by the British army. It was a graphic description of the difficulties which any group of people seeking justice from the British authorities find themselves in and could equally apply to the families of the Beechmount Five, Ballymurphy Seven, Casement Accused or any of a number of justice cases which the INC is supportive of. The AGM resolved to ensure that as many observers as possible attend the trial of the British soldiers accused of Fergal's murder and to carry on the campaign for justice.

Martin Finucane, whose brother Pat, a well known civil rights lawyer, was shot dead by loyalist paramilitaries gave a very detailed account of the growing evidence of collusion between the British army/RUC and loyalist murder gangs. The evidence in the Brian Nelson case (a British army undercover agent in the UDA) showed clearly that the British army and RUC were supplying information and support to loyalist paramilitaries. The information uncovered in that case also suggested that Brian Nelson, while on the payroll of the British army was behind the smuggling of arms from South Africa to the UDA and UVF. These guns and grenades are now being used in the heightened campaign by loyalist paramilitaries.

Other speakers included Nora Comiskey on the need for a new campaign for British withdrawal and Michael McPhillips on the Border Roads Campaign (see separate article).

The format for the day included small workshops where every delegate had an opportunity to participate and this was welcomed by those in attendance. The meeting concluded with the address of INC Chairperson Robert Ballagh who in a wide-ranging address condemned the lack



NORA COMISKEY



MARGARET CARAHER

of response from the political establishment to the crisis facing Ireland. Three hundred thousand unemployed, widespread poverty, repeated evidence of financial scandals in high places, the continuing conflict in the North all made the year's headlines. It was the failure to come to terms with the northern conflict and the seeming inability of repeated governments to make any serious attempt to achieve Irish unity which has best summed up their failure. But this paralysis on the North also impacts and re-enforces stalemate on other issues, by creating a political climate among the establishment which protects the status quo above all else.

The meeting finished with an appeal to members and supporters to take the campaign on Articles Two and Three to every corner of Ireland and to ensure that by the next AGM every county and large town has an active INC branch.

Help form an INC Branch

One of the INC's most urgent tasks is to establish branches in every county and then in every town. Can you help? If so please contact INC Chairperson Robert Ballagh, PO Box 2814, Dublin 7 or Tel: 8202019/8210493.

Yes I can help form an INC Branch
(tick box if you are willing)

Order Leaflets or Pamphlets

Distributing Defend Articles Two and Three leaflets and our pamphlets entitled *The Case for the Defence of Articles Two and Three* are some of the best ways of spreading our message. Order some with this form while renewing your membership.

Please send me

..... leaflets @ £10 per thousand

..... pamphlets @ £1 each + (p&p)

Order Extra News-sheets

Could you distribute copies of this news-sheet, to others who might be interested in the INC?

If so order some on this form while renewing your membership.

Please send me copies of this news-sheet @ £10 per 1,000 including p&p.

Dublin Branch notice

Meets second Wednesday of every month at 8pm in the Teachers Club, Parnell Square. All welcome, including new members.

Léacht

An Tuaisceart mar atá i ndáiríre
An tAth. Des Wilson
8pm Aibreán 29ú
Clúb na Múinteoirí
Cearnóg Pharnell
Baile Atha Cliath 1

Tacaigh leis an chéad léacht as Gaeilge de chuid Chomhdháil Náisiúnta na hEireann.

All are welcome to this first lecture in Irish organised by the INC.

Results of £5 raffle

DRAW HELD AT AGM

- 1st Prize. Television. Jas Brady, Castleknock
- 2nd Prize. Microwave. P McCarthy, Ardee
- 3rd Prize. Deep fat fryer. Brendan Collopy, Ballymount
- 4th Prize. Ghetto blaster. Cathal Quinn, Letterkenny
- 5th Prize. Walkman. Aidan McCourt, Drumcondra.

Tá géargá le síochán

Tá sé soiléir do gach éinne ar an t-oileán beag seo go bhfuil sé in am do dheireadh iomlán le foréigin. Le blianta fada anuas ní raibh síochán ar an clár go dtí Warrington. Bhí fearg ar a lán daoine thall is abhus gur mharaigh an tIRA beirt pháiste i sráid síopadóireachta.

Chuir Susan McHugh tús le 'Peace '93'. Chuir Mairéad Corrigan agus Betty Williams tús leis an 'Peace Movement' i 1976 tar éis do tríúr páiste bás a fháil mar thoradh ar chath ghunna idir Arm na Breataine agus an tIRA. Cén fáth nár cuireadh tús le 'Peace '72' tar éis a 'Domhnach na Fola'? Cén fáth nár cuireadh túys le 'Peace '79' nuair a mharaigh an tIRA 18 saighdiúir de chuid Arm na Breataine i luíochán ag Caol Uisce i gContae an Dúin? Cén fáth nár cuireadh tús le tionscnamh síochána blianta ar bith eile le 25 bliain anuas?

Teipfidh ar 'Peace '93' síocháin a thabhairt don tír seo. Má tá an cáineadh an fhoréigin dírithe ar taobh amháin. Chun borradh bheith faoi is gá dó síochán a lorg trí gach fóiréigin a cháineadh.

Is eagraíocht síochána é Comhdháil Náisiúnta na hEireann. Táimid in éadán foréigin ó gach taobh. Molann muid gos cogaidh iomlán. Ar an drochuair, níl sé do mhisneach ag a polaiteoirí iarraidh ar gach dream deireadh a chur leis an fhulaingt leanúnach.

Molann an CNE go gcuirtear tús leis an phróiseas síochána le cainteanna síochána. Tá cainteanna síochána de dhíth láithreach le gach grúpa ins an tír seo páirteach iontu. Is cosúil go bhfuil an lá seo le theacht go fóill agus go líontar an bearna polaitiúil le tuilleadh foréigin. Nach trua tubaisteach scannalach sin? Níl síocháin ar an clár fós.

Financial Appeal — Help Open a National Office

The INC is planning to open a national office in the near future. While this will be a significant step forward for the INC, it will obviously increase the strain on our limited financial resources. We need help to provide interested people with publicity material. Every pound will be put to good use.

Please send what you can to National Office Appeal, The INC, PO Box 2814, Dublin 7. All donations will be acknowledged.

MEMBERSHIP 1993



Name.....
Address.....
.....
Tel.....



£5 waged/£3 unwaged.
Return to INC, PO Box 2814, Dublin 7.
(see over to order INC materials).