

The Army Council of the Irish Republican Army, acting in its capacity as the Provisional Government of the Irish Republic proclaimed in arms in 1916, and ratified by the universal suffrage of the Irish people in 1918, hereby calls on all Irishmen and Irishwomen, both at home and in exile, to forget all divisions and differences of the past and to stand in unity against the forces of British imperialism.

Already Northern units of the Irish Republican Army have been in action in defence of the lives and homes of the people which have been attacked by deliberately fomented sectarian forces, backed up by the B-Specials, with the aim of destroying the natural solidarity and unity of working class people. These units have played their part in defensive operations in Bogside, Derry, where they have put their discipline and experience at the disposal of the Citizens' Defence Association. In Belfast in the recent period the I.R.A. and other Republican Organisations have cooperated with the Citizens' Defence Groups and used their all too limited resources in the attempt to hold off the terrorist forces of reaction which have been unleashed upon peaceful men, women and children. The people of the Falls Road area have gratefully acknowledged this assistance in the past few days and have contrasted it bitterly with the failure of the Dublin Government to act in their defence.

For a number of years past the Republican Movement has been committed to support of the moderate demands of the Civil Rights Movement in the genuine hope that reforms obtained by constitutional agitation would provide a framework within which a peaceful settlement might be arrived at to the outstanding problems of our people. Unfortunately however, because of the intransigent stand of right-wing Unionism, and their meeting of moderate demands with terrorism and violence, we have been reluctantly compelled into military action to defend the lives and homes of the people in the Six County area.

In response to urgent calls for help from an almost defenceless people and because of the failure to date of the Dublin Government to use the forces at its disposal for the defence of the nation and its people, the Army Council has placed all volunteers on full alert and has already sent a number of fully equipped units to the aid of their comrades in the Six Counties and to assist the local Defence Committees, Citizens' Action Groups and other popular organisations which are at present the only recourse of the people of the North in the face of terrorist attacks from sectarian Unionist gangs.

These forces of the I.R.A. are being used in a defensive capacity wherever the people are being terrorised by Unionist mobs, backed up by armed B-Specials. Control will rest with local leadership and the instructions given to Volunteers are that they must cooperate fully with all local popular organisations, living with and merging themselves with the people they are called upon to defend.

At this vital juncture in Irish history we repudiate the British Government's political confidence trick of trying to represent her military forces as saviours of the people and arbiters between Irishmen. The sectarian B-Specials rampaging through the streets of the North of Ireland are as much the responsibility of the British Government which permitted their establishment in the first place as they are of the bigoted Unionists in Stormont.

In this connection we issue a warning to the young British soldiers who now find themselves patrolling Irish streets and towns because of the Unionist Government's refusal to grant the just demands of the Civil Rights Movement and the criminal misgovernment and incompetence of the British Parliament at Westminster which has persisted in turning a blind eye to the situation in the Six Counties for so long.

As a result of your Government's continued interference in Irish affairs and its refusal over the years to insist that the North

of Ireland be ruled with fairness and democracy, you now find yourselves caught between the terrorised Catholic minority on the one hand and the Orange m's, supported by thousands of armed and uniformed "Specials", on the other. Irishmen have no quarrel with you as individuals, but we warn you that until the Westminster Government disarms and disbands the B-Specials, legislates for all the Civil Rights demands, and indeed removes you from the country altogether, you are in a very perilous situation. For this is not your country. It is our country, which your Government and Parliament have divided in order to serve the interests of the imperialist monopolies, financiers and aristocrats who are a curse to the people of England, Scotland and Wales, as they have been a curse to Ireland.

We warn you that if you allow yourselves to be used to suppress the legitimate attempts of the people to defend themselves against the B-Specials and the sectarian Orange murder gangs, then you will have to take the consequences.

To the Dublin Government we say this: You must immediately use the Irish Army to defend the persecuted people of the Six Counties. You must then call an urgent meeting of the United Nations Security Council, followed by a meeting of the General Assembly in order to expose the British claim that what is happening in the Irish cities of Belfast, Derry, Newry and elsewhere is Britain's own "internal" affair, for the insolent and ludicrous lie that it is. Britain must be exposed to the searchlight of world opinion for the mess she has made of the Six Counties, which she has tried to hide from the world for so long. The Irish delegation at the United Nations must talk about Ireland for a change, after years of talk about Tibet and Peru.

We recognise that a political solution to the present crisis in the North will have to be found in time. The only solution acceptable to Republicans and to the Irish people as a whole is one in which Britain gets out of our country altogether, withdraws her troops, and control over the whole of Ireland passes to a 32-County Irish Parliament, elected from among all the people of Ireland, North and South, on the proportional representation system of election, the only fair system which will be just to both Catholics and Protestants, under United Nations supervision. For a united, independent, democratic Republic is the only possible constitution within which Protestants and Catholics can live together in friendship under the common name of Irishmen, in which civil rights will be guaranteed to all, the Irish working class be reunited in one political community, and the way opened up for progressive advance in all fields of our national life, leading to the establishment of a socialist workers' and farmers' Republic for the whole country.

Irish people in the 26-Counties.....Put every pressure you can on the Dublin Government to support the victimised people of the North. Make Dublin justify its claim to sovereignty over the whole of the national territory. Contribute generously to the relief funds being set up to relieve Catholics and Protestants turned out of their homes. Organise rallies, meetings, demonstrations of support within the coming period. Trade Unionists, farmers, students, people of all political views....let us stand together in this hour of crisis.

The soldiers of the Republic are in the field to serve the people. Let all Irishmen support them so that we may build in our time a united Ireland and lay the basis for democracy and socialism in our country.

(signed) Cathal Goulding
Chief of Staff,
Irish Republican Army