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NA FLANNA EIREANN:
A CASE STUDY
OF A
POLITICAL YOUTH ORGANISATION

A thesis
submitted for the degree
of
Doctor of Philosophy

At the
University of Glasgow
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by
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SUMMARY

The present study traces the political history of Na Fianna Eireann, the Irish Republican youth organisation, from its foundation in 1909 to the replacement of the Official body in 1976. In addition to the main narrative several of the appendices provide accounts of organisations related to Fianna, including its Provisional off-shoot which bears the same name and survives to the present day.

The study is based on a variety of first-hand sources, including publications and internal documents of Fianna and the Republican movement, written statements, official records, contemporary newspapers and extensive interview material. The wider political background is adumbrated by reference to recognised primary and secondary sources.

Founded as a National Boy Scout body to rival the Baden-Powell movement, Fianna was soon transformed into a military organisation and as such participated during the decade 1913-23 in events that shaped the course of Irish history. Its members figured notably in the founding of the Irish Volunteers, the preparations for the Rising of 1916, Easter Week itself, and the Anglo-Irish and Civil Wars that followed it. After the latter it reverted to the role of non-participating cadet force and gradually declined in size and importance as the intransigent Republican movement of which it was a part became reduced to the status of irritant in the Irish political arena. Not until the outbreak of the most recent Troubles in 1969 did it again play a significant part in events of national moment.

The study attempts to reflect these fluctuations in its fortunes and concerns over the years, and while devoting considerable

space to its activities and the events in which its members participated seeks also to explain its inner development. Thus the author has inserted within the chronological narrative analyses of the ideological and organisational context of its foundation, its later structural changes, its development in relation to the adult movement and the effects upon it of radical changes in the movement after 1962.

Fianna's relationship with successive adult Separatist and Republican organisations in fact represents the most recurrent theme of the study, appropriately so in that they largely determined its character, development and final demise. Its position vis-à-vis the Irish Republican Brotherhood (1911-22) and the Volunteers (1913-22), its standing within the national army under the Republican Dáils (1919-22), its association with the I.R.A. over half a century following the Civil War, its own attempts to change in response to the metamorphosis of Republicanism in the 1960s and its reaction to the Provisional-Official split of 1969-70 are all treated in some detail. These sections of the study are of central relevance to the political history of Fianna, but in addition it is hoped that they may shed some fresh light on the history of Republicanism in general and offer points of comparison with other political youth organisations.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE TEXT

| | |
|-------------|--------------------------------------------|
| A.O.H. | Ancient Order of Hibernians |
| A.S.U. | Active Service Unit |
| B.P. Scouts | Baden-Powell Scouts |
| C.B.S.I. | Catholic Boy Scouts of Ireland |
| C.P.I. | Communist Party of Ireland |
| C/S | Chief Scout |
| D.M.P. | Dublin Metropolitan Police |
| G.A.A. | Gaelic Athletic Association |
| I.C.T.U. | Irish Congress of Trade Unions |
| I.D.Y.M. | Irish Democratic Youth Movement |
| I.R.A. | Irish Republican Army |
| I.R.B. | Irish Republican Brotherhood |
| I.T.G.W.U. | Irish Transport and General Workers' Union |
| I.V. | Irish Volunteers |
| N.U.S. | National Union of Students |
| N.U.S.S. | National Union of School Students |
| O/C | Officer commanding |
| R.I.C. | Royal Irish Constabulary |
| R.U.C. | Royal Ulster Constabulary |
| T.D. | Teachta Dála (Deputy of the Dáil) |

GLOSSARY OF IRISH TERMS USED IN THE TEXT

| | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Aeridheacht | open air entertainment |
| Aonach | gathering, fair |
| Ard Choiste | executive (lit. high committee) |
| Ard Chomhairle | central council (lit. high council) |
| Ard Fheinne | High Commander of the Fianna |
| Ard Fheis (pl. Ard Fheiseanna) | convention (lit. high gathering) |
| Ard Oifig | central office (lit. high office) |
| Ard Rí | high king |
| Ard Thaoiseach | Chief Scout (lit. high chief) |
| Bean na hÉireann | woman of Ireland |
| Beárna Baoghail | gap of danger |
| Buachail (pl. Buachailli) | boy |
| Buidhean na hÉireann | Irish Brigade (lit. retinue of Ireland) |
| Brian na Banban | Brian of Ireland (lit. Brian of Banba: Banba, poetic name for Ireland after ancient queen) |
| Cailín (pl. Cailíní) | girl |
| Cailíní na hÉireann | girls of Ireland |
| Caitlín Ní hUallacháin | (poetic name for Ireland) |
| Ceili | evening entertainment |
| An Chead Slua | the first troop (lit. the first host) |
| An Claidheamh Soluis | the sword of light |
| Clanna Ruaidhri | (erroneous genitive of) the children of Roderick |
| Clann na hEireann | children of Ireland |
| Clann na Fianna | children of the Fianna |
| Clann na nGael | children of the Gael |
| Clann na Poblachta | children of the Republic |

| | |
|--------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Clár | agenda |
| Coiste Ceanntair (pl. Coistí Ceanntair) | head committee |
| An Cosantóir | the defender |
| Cú Chullain | the dog of Cullan |
| Cumann (pl. cumainn) | branch (lit. club) |
| Cumann na gCailíni | the girls' association |
| Cumann na mBan | the women's association |
| Dáil | parliament (lit. assembly) |
| Dáil Éireann | the Irish parliament |
| An Dara Slua | the second troop (lit. the second host) |
| Droichead Nuadh | Newbridge |
| Dún na nGaedheal | House of the Gael |
| Eamhain Macha | (Eamhain - ancient capital of Ulster; Macha - ancient queen of Ulster) |
| Éire | Ireland |
| Éire Óg | Young Ireland |
| Eolas | information |
| Fáinne | ring (badge of fluency in the Irish language) |
| Feis (pl. feiseanna) | convention, gathering |
| Fian (pl. fiannai) | member of the Fianna |
| Fianna Eireann | army of Ireland |
| Fianna Fáil | army of destiny (lit. army of the Fál) |
| Fianna Gurean | ? |
| Fianna na h-Alba | army of Scotland (Scottish Gaelic) |
| Fianna na hÉireann | army of Ireland |
| Fianna na hÉireann Óg | army of young Ireland |
| Fine Gael | tribe of the Gael |

| | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| Garda | policeman (lit. guard) |
| Gasóga Catoilicí na hÉireann | the Catholic Boy Scouts of Ireland |
| Guth na bhFiann | the voice of the fian |
| Inighnidhe na hÉireann | daughters of Ireland |
| Leabhar na Buaidhe | the book of victory |
| Nodlaig na bhFiann | the fian's Christmas |
| Nuacht | news |
| Óglach | soldier |
| An tÓglach | the soldier |
| Óglaigh na hÉireann | soldiers of Ireland |
| Oireachtas | assembly |
| An Phoblacht | the Republic |
| Poblacht na hÉireann | the Republic of Ireland |
| Priomh-Aire | president (lit. first minister) |
| Rosc Catha | rallying song of battle |
| Saor Éire | free Ireland |
| Sean Bhean Bhocht | poor old woman ('Shan Van Vocht' - poetic name for Ireland) |
| Sean Fhear | old man |
| Seoinín | aper of the English, 'shoneen' |
| Sgoil Éanna | St. Enda's School |
| Sgoruidheacht | festival |
| Sinn Féin | our selves |
| Slua (pl. Sluaite) | troop (lit. host) |
| Smaoin | thoughts |
| Teoiric | theory |

Note:

Accents may be included or omitted over capital letters in Irish. Their inclusion or omission in the present text follows the usage of the original sources quoted.

Irish spelling has been modernised and standardised since the foundation of Fianna. In the present text both old and new spellings are used, according to the usage of the sources quoted, except in the case of words (such as 'slua' for example) which occur throughout the narrative; these have been given the modern standard spelling.

A NOTE ON NOMENCLATURE

For the sake of consistency the present study follows the normal word usage of the documentary and interview sources upon which it is based. Thus, for instance, adult Republicanism is commonly referred to as 'the senior movement', and Northern Ireland as 'the Six Counties' or 'the North'; the city of Derry is given its historical not its British name; and the term 'the Army' applies not to the British or Southern Government forces but to the I.R.A.

INTRODUCTION

THE STRUCTURE AND PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The study that follows is the first attempt to present an extended political history of Fianna Eireann¹, the Irish National Scouts. The fortunes of Fianna, as of the Republican movement of which it was a part, fluctuated considerably during the seventy years of its existence and its history falls into a number of fairly distinct phases. These are marked by chapter divisions in the present study.

During the first four years from its foundation in 1909, the infant organisation struggled to establish and define itself (chapter 1).

With the founding of the Irish Volunteers in autumn 1913 Fianna's role changed radically through its close association with the new adult army, in which many of its officers held dual membership. In 1915 it adopted a military structure appropriate to its increasingly military role (chapter 3).

The majority of its Dublin officers and seniors were mobilised for the Rising of Easter week 1916, in which they fought alongside the Volunteers and the Citizen Army. Juniors were excluded from the action, but a number found their way into the insurgent posts during the week. Fiannai were among those executed and interned after the surrender (chapter 4).

In the five years that followed the Rising Fianna expanded as Republicanism came to be the dominant political force in Ireland. At the same time its association with the Volunteers was progressively formalised until with the establishment of Dáil Éireann in 1919 it was incorporated into the 'Army of the Republic' as an autonomous section, under the Ministry of Defence. As such its

members fought in the Anglo-Irish War and continued to train after the Truce of July 1921 (chapter 5).

The Dáil's ratification of the Treaty with Britain in January 1922 split both the political movement and the Republican Army, decimated Fianna, and brought on a Civil War in which the evaporating remnant of the youth organisation fought on the side of the Republic to the point of virtual extinction (chapter 6).

Rebuilding after the defeat of 1923 Fianna relinquished its formal association with the I.R.A. and its directly military role, reverting to independent status as a scouting organisation within the Republican movement. From this date its Northern section developed a quite distinct character from its counterpart in the Free State, in consequence of its different needs and its illegal status under the Stormont government. The adult movement's resurgence from 1927 and its diminution after 1934 were reflected in a rise and decline in the membership of the youth organisation, which was in addition now forced to compete for recruits with the newly formed Catholic Boy Scouts of Ireland. Fianna did not participate in the I.R.A.'s 1940 bombing campaign in England with which the period ends (chapter 7).

Between 1940 and 1945, which mark the nadir of Republican fortunes, Fianna barely maintained the thread of existence. After a decade of partial recovery, dominated by controversy as to Fianna's standing with the movement, the I.R.A. opened its Border campaign in 1956, in which a number of Fianna officers took part. The public's initial enthusiasm for the campaign, which brought a brief upsurge of recruitment to Fianna, was already on the wane in its silver jubilee year of 1959 and had evaporated long before the ceasefire in 1962 (chapter 8).

The failure of the campaign prompted the Republican leadership to initiate radical changes in the movement, the effects of which were beginning to be felt in Fianna when violence erupted in the North in 1969. Fianna's military involvement, in Belfast particularly, greatly enhanced its membership and importance there and so further widened the gulf between the organisation North and South (chapter 9).

The crisis also precipitated the Official-Provisional split in the adult movement in 1970 in which, after a year of neutrality, Fianna took the Official side. But the split had further reduced an organisation already ailing in the South. The Official movement, which was now emphasising political action and had called a ceasefire in summer 1972, concluded that Fianna in its present form was dysfunctional to its aims - ineffective in the South and incorrigibly military in the North (chapter 10).

Between 1973 and 1975 the possibility of its radical re-organisation was investigated and, despite strong support for such a course in Belfast, finally rejected. In 1975 the movement voted to establish a new political youth movement to replace it, a decision implemented the following year (chapter 11).

During Fianna's year of neutrality its Provisional members, unable to gain a majority on the executive, established a separate organisation of the same name within the Provisional movement. As an offshoot of the constituted body, and thus not a direct descendant of the organisation founded in 1909, Provisional Fianna's subsequent history is not included in the main text of the present study. However, as an organisation that has outlived its Official rival and played a part in the military campaign of the Provisionals for the past decade it is made the subject of a major appendix.

Other appendices present accounts of the boys' organisation Fianna Eireann founded in Belfast in 1902, which provided a name for the 1909 body and to some extent influenced its form; the Irish Citizen Army Scouts (1914-1916) largely modelled on Fianna; Fianna's own sporadic attempts to set up branches outside Ireland; and Pensions Acts relevant to Fianna passed by the Free State Government.

Although the basic structure of the study is chronological it was not the author's intention to write an account complete in every detail, nor would this have been possible in a narrative of thesis length spanning seven decades. As the political history of a youth organisation the study has certain thematic aims, and it was these that determined the choice of emphasis and omission.

It attempts, firstly, to place Fianna as an organisational type at its foundation in the context of contemporary youth organisations, and to locate such structural changes as it underwent later; secondly, to place its genesis and subsequent development in the context of contemporary political events; and thirdly, to explore its ongoing relationship with the Republican movement and the influence of the latter upon it (for though Fianna influenced and was influenced by the wider political developments in Ireland the process was usually indirect: as a youth wing its first and most immediate 'context' was the parent movement itself).

In the course of his enquiry the author came to recognise these themes as keys to an understanding of Fianna's history. In structuring the thesis they have been woven into the chronological presentation that subserves them. Thus Fianna is defined as an organisational type and placed in the contexts of early twentieth century youth movements and of contemporary political events in chapter 2. The far-reaching organisational changes made in 1915

and reversed ten years later are analysed in chapters 3 and 7 respectively. The wider political context within which Fianna developed forms a recurrent theme through the study. Fianna's relationship with the adult movement is explored in a number of chapter sections - its domination by the Irish Republican Brotherhood in chapters 1, 3 and 6; its early association with the Volunteers in chapter 3; its absorption into the Army of the Republic (1919-21), in chapter 5; the temporary severing of its association with the Dáil and Army in spring 1922 in chapter 5; its relationship with the I.R.A. in later years in chapters 7, 9 and 10. The changes initiated within the adult movement in the 1960s, with the problems of relationship, role and identity that these posed for the youth wing, are analysed in chapters 9 and 10, and their solution traced in chapter 11. Finally, the Conclusion attempts an overall assessment of the subject based on the foregoing themes.

It should be clear from the historical overview of Fianna presented above that its history broadly corresponds to distinct periods in the history of the Republican movement as a whole. It was indeed a crucial characteristic of it, and one that set limits on its potential, that it was never able to develop independently of the parent movement and as such can only be understood in reference to it.

The fact that the present study is the first extended political history of Fianna is the main and (the author believes) sufficient justification for compiling it. But, as it has been illuminated throughout by reference to the senior movement, so it is hoped that it occasionally throws some new light upon the fortunes and processes of that movement which may be of benefit to those who study Republicanism. And in addition, as a case study it may perhaps offer some useful points of comparison to the student

of political youth organisations in general.

In view of the close association between Fianna and the adult movement it is of relevance to the present study that, in one important sense, the history of Republicanism between 1909 and the 1970s falls naturally into two parts, between which the years 1922-23 form a watershed.

In its pre-1922 era the movement was in ascendant. Though its adherents remained few in number before the 1916 Rising, at which date its influence appeared to be insignificant and its goals quite unrealistic, it can be seen with hindsight to have grasped the initiative and directed the course of events even in this period of obscurity. Before the end of the era it commanded the support of the great majority of Irish people outside the North-East and its aim of establishing an independent Republic seemed not beyond its reach.

Its post-1923 era was one of decline and initiative lost. Abandoning political processes for the argument of force alone, the movement was soon by-passed by developments in Ireland that it sometimes influenced but from which it itself gained no lasting benefit. Further reduced by division in its own ranks, within fifteen years it had become an isolated, extremist minority, an irritant on the periphery of Irish political affairs. And so it remained, rejected and almost forgotten by the mass of the people except when its military campaigns brought it briefly into the public eye.

It is true that from the 1960s Republicans sought to reverse its historical decline and isolation by developing an open, political movement, and that since 1970 the Official movement has taken this aim further with a measure of success, while during the same period the Provisionals have sustained a campaign that in strictly military terms has been more successful than any since 1921.

The verdict of history may therefore yet show the last two decades to have marked a turning point for Republicanism and the beginning of a new era in its history. To date, however, despite their respective successes, the Officials and the Provisionals remain minor movements.

As a mirror of adult Republicanism, Fianna shared its early historical importance and its later decline. And in addition it suffered a diminution of its own standing within the movement after the Civil War, since by relinquishing its association with the Army it was left without any defined status or demonstrably essential role. For most of its subsequent history it remained thus, and the changes of the 1960s - whatever benefit they brought to the movement as a whole - only hastened its decline and made its end inevitable.

The duality of Fianna's history has certain implications as regards the author's treatment of his subject. In particular, it has implications regarding the source material available to him.

THE SOURCE MATERIAL²

As might be expected, there exists a considerable body of written evidence, primary and secondary, for the early years, and a paucity for the post-Civil War era. In the latter case, secondary source material is virtually non-existent, and such first-hand references as are available are almost entirely confined to publications and internal documents of the Republican movement itself. The imbalance is aptly reflected in the brief history of the organisation in Fianna's own 1964 Handbook³, in which the years 1909-23 comprise five-sixths of the narrative and the following four decades only one sixth.

Among published primary source material available to the researcher the accounts written by Countess Markievicz⁴, Bulmer

Hobson⁵ and Liam Mellows⁶ are particularly revealing for the 1909-16 period, as the work of Fianna's co-founders and first national organiser respectively. A number of published reminiscences of the Rising include references to the participation of Fianna juniors or of Fianna seniors serving with the Volunteers. To these should be added the pamphlet The Fianna Heroes of 1916⁷ produced by the Republican women's organisation Cumann na mBan, which largely comprises brief biographies of those members who died in the Rising. Several of the series of Fighting Stories⁸ published by the Kerryman contain first-hand accounts of local Fianna battalions or of personnel, those for Kerry and Limerick providing fairly detailed records of the part played by the youth organisation in the Anglo-Irish war in their areas. The Dublin Brigade Review⁹ produced by the Old I.R.A. includes a chapter devoted to Fianna containing details of its role and organisation in the capital up to 1921. Briefer first-hand references for this period are to be found in the published historical works of Republican activists, accounts written for the press by former members, and in the Prison Letters of Countess Markievicz¹⁰.

Almost certainly, much valuable manuscript material concerning Fianna is contained within the corpus of statements written for the Bureau of Military History by persons who participated in the independence struggle, a number of whom held dual membership in Fianna and the Volunteers. Unfortunately, these statements remain meantime in the Bureau's archives and are not available to researchers. The author nevertheless acquired and has used copies of seven of them particularly germane to Fianna.

Of the private manuscript collections to which the study refers, the Bulmer Hobson papers, Barney Mellows collection and the Mrs. Sidney Czira papers in the National Library of Ireland, and

the collection of Eamon Martin (part of which is in private possession) are especially valuable for the statements and correspondence they contain. The first-named includes the minute book of Hobson's 1902 Belfast Fianna whose history is outlined in Appendix II. The National Library also holds the prison letters of George Plunkett to his family.

The papers of Richard Mulcahy, I.R.A. Chief-of-Staff during the period that Fianna operated under the Republican Ministry of Defence, contain vital correspondence with Fianna G.H.Q. staff, local Army Brigade reports pertaining to Fianna, and a crucial statement on the position of the youth organisation immediately after the Truce. The Mulcahy papers are a holding of the National University, as are the collected papers of Ernie O'Malley which include brief but important references to Fianna between the Treaty and the Civil War.

The archives of the National Museum of Ireland contain a bequest by Seán Saunders comprising Fianna G.H.Q. correspondence and internal reports which throw light on the organisation's standing in spring 1922 and its reaction to the split in the movement that followed the Treaty, particularly as this affected its relationship to the I.R.A. and the Dáil. This material is especially useful in view of the scarcity of documentary evidence concerning Fianna for this critical phase of Irish history.

Surprisingly, the holdings of the Kilmainham Jail Historical Museum include almost nothing of relevance to the present study.

From the founding of the Irish Volunteers in 1913 to the withdrawal of British troops from Ireland in 1922 Fianna regularly came under surveillance by British Government Intelligence, particularly on the eve of the Rising and during the Anglo-Irish war, as witness references in Royal Irish Constabulary County Inspectors' reports

1915-16 and 1919-21¹¹, police evidence given to the Royal Commission on the Rebellion (1916)¹², the Castle's collection of Documents Relative to the Sinn Féin Movement¹³, and 1921 issues of its Weekly Summary. The activities of Fianna personnel were also on occasion made the subject of questions in the British parliament, and thus receive mention in the pages of Hansard.

Following the Free State government's Military Service Pensions Act of 1934 committees were established to compile details of the service of Volunteers during the independence struggle and so assess their merit for state pensions. None of the information gathered has been made available to the public to date. One of the committees was appointed specifically to investigate Fianna service¹⁴. The author has made extensive use of copies of its notes and correspondence and its compilations for G.H.Q. staff and Dublin city and county organisation and personnel between 1909-23.

Such documentary material as exists for the post-Civil War era includes notes in the O'Malley papers of meetings held for the reconstruction of Fianna after the ceasefire of 1923, and references to the youth organisation in Department of Justice reports compiled preparatory to the Cosgrave government's anti-Republican legislation of 1931¹⁵. The author has been able to obtain little internal written documentation for the following three decades apart from an extended memoir covering the years immediately preceding the 1940 Bombing campaign written by Fianna's national organiser of that period¹⁶. Very probably, few records remain. In the impoverished youth wing of a hand-to-mouth movement, lacking permanent office facilities and under regular surveillance, communication was more often by the spoken than the written word, and where the latter was unavoidable documents were quickly destroyed.

For the years 1960-76 a considerable body of material is contained in the Fianna file at the offices of Sinn Féin the Workers' Party in Dublin, including A.G.M. agendas, correspondence, monthly slua returns, newsletters, G.H.Q. orders and Court martial details. The file is fortunately most complete for the years 1968-71, which cover Fianna's expansion from 1969 and the position it adopted during 1970 concerning the split in the adult movement. In addition it includes thorough documentation of the debate within the Official movement between 1973-75 concerning Fianna's possible reconstruction or replacement.

Separatist and Republican newspapers, journals, bulletins and other publications, including several series produced nationally and locally by Fianna itself, provide unbroken coverage of the youth organisation from its foundation, with the exception of the years 1940-48. The movement's publications have always served as vehicles for internal and external propaganda and for this reason statements printed in them sometimes err on the side of optimism: numbers may be exaggerated and plans or hopes described as accomplished facts. Nor in the case of Fianna has exaggeration been propagandist alone, but also occasionally the result of internal deception. It has been not unknown, for instance, for branches to be set up temporarily prior to A.G.M.s for the sake of voting power, while the secrecy necessary to the organisation in the North has on occasion been used to similar advantage.

Republican newspapers nevertheless provide very extensive coverage of Fianna and have been used throughout the study. For the 'middle years', particularly, Fianna notes in An Phoblacht (published from 1925 and through the 1930s) and The United Irishman (from 1948) compensate the sparseness of other written material.

The study also refers to national and local newspaper sources where these throw light on Fianna activities or the political events surrounding them.

Interview material represents a major part of the evidence collected by the author. In all sixty-nine persons were interviewed and a number of others made briefer verbal statements. In addition, use has been made of interview notes in the case of two early members now deceased. Interviewees' accounts span the entire history of Fianna and every critical point of its development, in which many of them played strategic parts. Most of those interviewed were themselves members of the organisation; in these cases the name list given at the conclusion of the thesis (pp.433 ff. below) normally only states their dates of membership and the ranks they attained, but it should be borne in mind that most graduated into the senior movement and a number to leadership positions in it, where they maintained an interest in and influence upon the youth wing.

Others interviewed include relatives and close associates of deceased Fianna leaders, those senior Republicans centrally responsible for the changes in the movement from the 1960s and for disbanding Fianna ten years later, the founder-leaders of the youth movement that replaced it, prominent members of Provisional Fianna, of Republican girls' organisations and of the two main non-political Scout associations in Ireland, and the sole surviving member of the Irish Citizen Army Scouts.

A certain urban bias may be levelled against the author's interview sources, a dominance of Dublin, Belfast and Cork that reflects but somewhat exaggerates the importance of these areas during much of Fianna's history. In addition, such material

carries the problem of reliability, particularly in view of the recurrent divisions in the Republican movement over the years and the bitterness that has often followed them. It was therefore desirable to hear both sides in order to form a balanced account of controversial matters such as the disputes over control of Fianna between its own leadership and the I.R.A., the events that followed the establishment of the Provisionals in 1970 or those that led to the disbanding of Fianna.

Such limitations, however, were more than compensated by the conceptual depth and articulateness of almost all interviewees, their thorough familiarity with the organisation and the real issues confronting it, and their objectivity which contrasted notably with the sentimentality of some written sources. In addition, they accorded the author an impressive, not to say at times a disarming frankness, barely veiling with the standard euphemisms of the movement matters sometimes well beyond the law. I remain conscious of my obligations to the living and have left some things unsaid and given to others a mask of anonymity. Interviewees from Northern Ireland - where Fianna was always illegal - have also been protected, those still resident in the North being identified in the text only by their initials.

Interview material is used throughout the study. But whereas in the earlier chapters oral evidence supports the written material the reverse is the case for the later era: there interviews, with newspapers, provide the main evidence, supplemented by such written documentation as is available. Newspapers and interviews complement each other at many points in the study. For while the first provide the detail, sequence and chronological accuracy often lacking in oral accounts, interviewees were often able to modify the

tactical optimism to which newspaper statements are prone.

To have leaned heavily upon oral evidence requires no apology: indeed one might argue its particular aptness given the size of Fianna, its local traditions and the importance of individuals within it. Verbal communication has in fact always had a special place in the Republican movement, as indeed in Irish politics as a whole¹⁷.

Though secondary sources have been appropriately used to fill out the political background of the narrative, surprisingly few make reference to Fianna itself, presumably because even in its pre-Truce period it was considered an auxiliary of the Volunteers. Such references as do occur are often cursory and apparently unsubstantiated and, even in the case of respected academic historians, not always immune from basic error¹⁸. Such strictures, however, cannot be applied to four secondary source works that provide a substantial and valuable introduction to the subject. I refer to Van Voris's biography of Constance de Markievicz¹⁹, Greaves's life of Liam Mellows²⁰, the biography of Eoin MacNeill edited by Martin and Byrne²¹, and Fitzpatrick's account of Politics and Irish Life in County Clare during the Anglo-Irish war²². Though not centrally concerned with Fianna their references to the organisation are almost always accurate and based firmly on first-hand sources.

Statements and accounts of Fianna produced by the Republican movement, it should be added, have often themselves been second-hand and even direct reprints or near-verbatim repetitions of earlier second-hand publications. More than one has been guilty of absurd inaccuracy²³. In others lore commonly takes the place of accurate statement and assertions are repeated whose veracity has gone unquestioned - the assertion that Fianna 'trained the men who fought in 1916'²⁴, for example, or that Heuston and Colbert

were mere boys at the time of their execution after Easter Week²⁵.

In addition, such accounts are at times vitiated by the partiality which has often coloured Republican source material in general, a product of its particular conviction reinforced by its isolation. Accounts of its own heroic years written in later decline, especially, are often marked by a simplistic location of good and evil which puts them closer to myth or hagiography than history. In the case of Fianna's own publications this quality is magnified by their need to provide a simplified narrative for young readers. It is revealed, for example in their partial elevation of Markievicz and Mellows as exemplars of the Fianna ideal by emphasising their separatism but rarely their socialism, or again in their virtual erasure of Bulmer Hobson from his rightful place as co-founder of Fianna, as being *persona non grata* to Republicans.

In sum, there exists an abundance of scattered primary source material for Fianna's pre-1922 era, as well as a number of secondary source references, the latter usually cursory and sometimes inaccurate. Although the author has gathered a considerable body of hitherto unrecorded evidence for this period the narrative in the main comprises a collation of existing primary source material. The emphasis is on the actions of public moment in which Fianna participated, as well as on the organisation's own development.

For the later era, documentation other than that of the Republican movement itself is virtually non-existent. The narrative is therefore very largely original, and in placing somewhat greater emphasis upon Fianna's internal processes accurately reflects the concerns of the organisation it describes.

Despite the unevenness of the source material and the fluctuation of Fianna's significance and role over time, the subject

nevertheless has an essential unity. To its own members the Republican movement never changed (until recent years at least), and even in its most reduced state remained the uncompromised remnant of the pre-Treaty body. Continuity was always its crucial validation. And in Fianna's case this was so a fortiori, since it not only shared in the Republican tradition but forged and preserved its own unique tradition, expressed in the 'Fianna ideal' and Code. It is this inner conviction above all that gives thematic unity to the present study.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. For the meanings of Irish words see the Glossary of Irish Terms Used in the Text, pp.x-xiii above, which includes translations in all cases except those of bilingual titles.
2. For a complete list of Sources referred to in the text of the study see pp.422-43 below.
3. Iris-Leabhair na bhFiann, The Fianna Handbook, 3rd revised ed. (Dublin, 1964).
4. Markievicz, C. 'How the Fianna was started', in Nodlaig na bhFiann, The Fianna Christmas (Dublin, 1914); also Markievicz, C. 'A few memories', nos. ii and iii, in Éire : the Irish Nation, 9-16/6/1923.
5. Hobson, B. 'The I.R.B. and the Fianna' and 'Gun-running at Howth and Kilcoole, July-August, 1914', in Martin, F. X.(ed.) The Irish Volunteers 1913-15 (Dublin, 1963). These accounts, with some changes, comprise chaps. 2 and 7 in Hobson, B. Ireland Yesterday and Tomorrow (Tralee, 1968).
6. 'The Irish Boy Scouts' by An Irish Volunteer Officer, series in The Gaelic American, 14/4/1917-4/8/1917.
7. The Fianna Heroes of 1916, Cumann na mBan (Dublin, 1931).
8. Kerry's Fighting Story 1916-21 (Tralee, n.d.); Dublin's Fighting Story 1916-21, told by the men who made it (Tralee, n.d.); MacCarthy, J. M.(ed.) Limerick's Fighting Story (Tralee, n.d.).
9. Iris Drong Átha Cliath, Dublin Brigade Review, National Association of the Old I.R.A. (Dublin, 1939).
10. Roper, E.(ed.) The Prison Letters of Countess Markievicz (London, 1934).
11. Inspector General's Reports no. 15, 1908-20, C.O. 904/99, State Paper Office, Dublin.
12. The Royal Commission on the Rebellion in Ireland, Minutes of evidence and Appendix of documents, Cd.8311, (London, H.M.S.O., 1916).
13. Documents Relative to the Sinn Féin Movement, Cmd.1108, (London, H.M.S.O., 1921).
14. For details of pensions awarded to Fianna veterans for war service between 1916 and 1923, and for the conditions of eligibility, see Appendix V.
15. See especially Department of Justice Reports of 4/4/1930 and 31/8/1931, its Memorandum regarding the activities of certain organisations (September 1931), and the C. S. Branch account of Organisations inimical to the State (16/10/1931); State Paper Office, Dublin.

16. Atkinson, J. Statement, typewritten, 110 pp.
17. Cf. Chubb, B. The Government and Politics of Ireland (London, 1971), espec. pp. 217 and 308.
18. For example, the assertions that boys flocked in their hundreds to join Fianna from the outset - Macardle, D. The Irish Republic (London, 1937; London, 1968 ed.), p.64; that Countess Markievicz supported Fianna's reorganisation of 1915 - Levenson, S. James Connolly, a biography (London, 1977), p.275; or that Fianna was transformed from an innocuous boy scout movement into a militant organisation under the Countess - Edwards, R. Dudley Patrick Pearse - The Triumph of Failure (London, 1977), p.213.
19. Van Voris, J. Constance de Markievicz, In the cause of Ireland (Amherst Massachusetts, 1967).
20. Greaves, C. D. Liam Mellows and the Irish Revolution (London, 1971).
21. Martin, F. X. and Byrne, F. J.(eds.) The Scholar Revolutionary, Eoin MacNeill, 1867-1945, and the making of the new Ireland (Shannon, 1973).
22. Fitzpatrick, D. Politics and Irish Life 1918-21 (Dublin, 1977).
23. For example, Ní Éireamhoin E. Two Great Irishwomen (Dublin, 1971) p.54, claims that Countess Markievicz founded Fianna with the help of Jim Larkin. The Trade Union leader later helped the organisation with premises but had nothing whatever to do with its foundation. The Countess did not meet him until 1910 - cf. 'Larkin, the Fianna and the King's visit', in Eire : the Irish Nation, 16/6/1923.
24. Wolfe Tone Annual, 1933, p.23 - 'Na Fianna Eireann' by 'Sean Fhear'.
25. 'A foolish enterprise', Fianna, May 1936, p.118.

Chapter 1. FOUNDATION AND EARLY YEARS (1909-13)

PREPARATION AND FOUNDATION

The background circumstances that led to the foundation of Fianna Eireann have been recorded in some detail by Countess Markievicz in an article first published in 1914 in the organisation's own Christmas magazine Nodlaig na bhFiann¹. In March of 1909 she had read a report in the Irish Times of a review of Baden-Powell Scouts by the Lord Lieutenant at Clontarf: "Somehow the idea of those young Irish lads haunted me," she recalled. Baden-Powell's movement, though only two years in existence at this date, already numbered a quarter of a million members within the Empire². It had gained a footing in Ireland and built up a small nucleus in Dublin³, though its strength was greatly overestimated by the nationalist press which reported it as having recruited two thousand boys "of all classes and denominations" in the capital alone⁴. The Countess recognised its effectiveness in fostering loyalty to the British flag and, believing that its methods might be used with comparable success in the cause of separatism, made up her mind to found a nationalist Boy Scout movement.

During the late spring she promoted her idea privately as well as through the press⁵ and at public meetings of Sinn Féin, but with disappointing results, receiving "very little response and less offers of help". Nonetheless, she was developing her ideas through discussion, especially with Helena Molony her friend from Inghnide na hÉireann, Dr. Patrick MacCartan and Seán McGarry, who became "a sort of informal committee, talking and planning and dreaming of our organisation that was to be". With McGarry she visited William O'Neill, the head teacher at St. Andrew's National School in South

Great Brunswick Street, who chose eight pupils for her whom she invited to form a nationalist scout troop. Apparently, half of them responded to her appeal⁶ and with this nucleus she founded the Red Branch Knights⁷. They were the immediate precursors of Fianna.

Organised "on the same lines as the English scouts" and with a similar programme, the troop resembled also the brigades of the day in its use of military drill⁸. Meetings were held at weekends through the summer at the house in Sandyford that the Countess had acquired as a studio, Helena Molony organising refreshments and the Countess herself training the boys⁹. The venture was marked by the enthusiasm and the complete ignorance of the adults. "None of us elders understood boys in the least, and no-one knew anything about the subjects we set out to teach." The first camp typified the organisation as a whole: the tents, pitched in the dark on a hill-side near Three Rock Mountain, were washed out on the second day, yet the boys managed to stay for a third. The camp convinced Madame that scouting could succeed with Irish boys if adapted to organisational methods more familiar to them; it also demonstrated amply that enthusiasm alone was no basis for success.

It was her meeting with Bulmer Hobson at the home of Helena Molony's brother in August that led directly to the founding of Fianna¹⁰. She put her plan to Hobson because of his previous experience in running boys' organisations and his understanding of boys. No doubt at forty-one she felt that he, a twenty-six year old, would be closer to boys in sympathy. He told her about an organisation, Fianna Eireann, that he had founded in Belfast in 1902 as a boys' hurling league, which had subsequently developed to include Irish language, history and drama, and had later been re-organised briefly as a brigade. (For an account of the 1902 Fianna see Appendix II). They agreed to start a scouting organisation in

Dublin together, though their recollections differ somewhat as to the proposed role that each would take in it¹¹. According to the Countess she "asked him to come along and help"; Hobson's version is that "she suggested we should start again in Dublin"¹², implying an equal partnership and a rather close connection between the new organisation and his earlier venture. The decision to go ahead was taken when she offered to cover the rental of premises, and within a few days she became the tenant of a small hall at 34 Lower Camden Street, formerly the home of the National Theatre Society¹³.

A public meeting was arranged for Monday, 16 August in the hall, to form - as the press announced - a "National Boys' Brigade" to be run on "National non-party lines" and managed by the boys themselves¹⁴. Over one hundred boys attended, Hobson taking the chair and the Countess recording the minutes. The meeting marks the inauguration of Na Fianna. Hobson was elected President of the new organisation. Despite initial objections to the admission of females the Countess was elected Vice-President jointly with Patrick Walsh. Joseph Robinson, now twenty-two and a veteran of the 1902 Fianna in Belfast, shared the duties of Secretary with Jimmy Dundon, and Pádraig Ó Riain was appointed Treasurer. The committee included Seán McGarry, Helena Molony and Con Colbert¹⁵, while other foundation members that night later to play a prominent part in the movement included Eamon Martin, Paddy Ward¹⁶ and Michael Lonergan¹⁷.

EARLY GROWTH

Fianna's first three years were ones of growth not always steady and by no means spectacular. The Lower Camden Street branch of Sinn Féin at once disclaimed association with the new body¹⁸ and the party as a whole "gently but firmly turned down" the idea of an organisation that aimed to prepare boys militarily¹⁹. And within

Dublin society, the Countess has recalled, "we got surprisingly little support from the young men, and the public for the most part laughed at us"²⁰. Nonetheless, recruiting was undertaken at once, at first by the boys taking turns to stand outside the hall holding aloft a large flag²¹, and later by visiting local schools²². Within six weeks Hobson was able to establish a second branch in Drumcondra²³ which was given the name An Dara Slua. The original branch was henceforth known as An Chead Slua, a title that would come to simply more than merely chronological precedence since it would provide most of the organisation's officers in Dublin in the early years²⁴. In October a slua was opened in Waterford²⁵, and a third branch was set up in the capital in the new year, associated with the North Dock district Sinn Féin²⁶. Known as Slua Emmet, it met at the Transport Union's premises in Beresford Place and was trained by Paul Gregan²⁷. Three further branches were established in Dublin during the summer of 1910²⁸, the two in Sandwith Street and John Street proving to be lasting ventures²⁹. In the meantime Joseph Robinson had moved to the West of Scotland where he successfully organised a troop in Glasgow, taking the office of o/c himself³⁰. This was the first of a number of attempts over the years to establish the organisation abroad, (see Appendix I, 'Fianna out-with Ireland'). So it was that when Fianna's first Ard Fheis was held in the autumn the national secretary could report seven sluaite in existence, with memberships ranging from twenty to sixty boys³¹. And before the end of the year the first small country town branch, at Clonmel³², and the first branch in Belfast, were opened.

Hobson had returned to Belfast in the autumn of 1909, and his arrival prompted attempts to establish the movement there. It appears that he did succeed in forming a slua, whose members in-

cluded several of his 1902 boys³³, but it collapsed after a few months. It was restarted in the October of 1910 on the decision of the Belfast I.R.B. and run by four members of the circle³⁴. After renting several premises the branch acquired huts in the Bog Meadows, Willowbank, at the top of the Falls Road, lending them in later years to Cumann na mBan and the Volunteers³⁵. By Christmas membership had grown sufficiently to necessitate a second slua, the two now taking the names Clanna Ruaidhri and Willie Nelson³⁶, and within a year or so there were over one hundred boys in four city branches, all situated in the Falls Road area of the town. This represented the ceiling for potential growth. In a city whose nationalist areas were dominated by Joe Devlin's party, recruitment would be severely curtailed after the Redmond-MacNeill split of 1914 when the organisation would again be reduced to a single slua³⁷. Meantime, in the spring of 1911 a branch for girls was opened in the town, the first in Ireland, and named after Betsy Gray. It had twenty-five members. Annie O'Boyle was made o/c³⁸, Ina Connolly secretary and her sister Nora 'captain'³⁹, (see further, pp.44 ff.)

At Fianna's second Ard Fheis, held in August 1911, it was reported that three new sluaite had been opened in Dublin during the year past, as well as branches in Limerick, Dundalk and Listowel, and that plans were in hand to organise Newry and Cork⁴⁰.

A slua was indeed founded in Cork the following October, after a visit to the city by the Countess⁴¹. Its first headquarters were at Dún na nGaedheal in Queen Street, at the time the chief meeting place for nationalists in Cork⁴². Later the boys borrowed the premises of the I.T.G.W.U. and of the Volunteers, first in Fisher Street and from 1915 in Sheares Street where they had the use of the ground floor and rifle range⁴³. The slua was guided by a committee of adults chaired by Cork's leading Republican Tomás

MacCurtain. Its first o/c was Walter Furlong, succeeded a year later by Christie Monahan, who was himself replaced by Liam O'Callaghan upon the foundation of the Volunteers⁴⁴. By now the branch numbered close to forty boys, including a number recruited from the Baden-Powell scouts. In the meantime growth in the city had been more than matched by progress in the county, with sluaite opened in Blarney, Kinsale⁴⁵ and Fermoy⁴⁶ by autumn 1912. By virtue of supporting three branches the Cork area became the third in Ireland to be accorded the status of a District⁴⁷, one which would prove itself in succeeding decades perhaps the strongest centre of the organisation outside Dublin and Belfast.

The establishment of Fianna in Limerick city and its prosperity there in the early years are to be attributed in large part to two people, the veteran Fenian John Daly and the young Seán Heuston. Where the former offered inspiration, guidance and financial help, the latter undertook the week-to-week organisation of the slua. Heuston's work with the Railway had brought him to Limerick in 1908. He played a prominent part in founding the movement there in the spring of 1911 when aged seventeen⁴⁸, and from that time until his return to Dublin late in 1913 he led the boys' training, being a fluent Irish speaker and a student of national history⁴⁹. His energy and enthusiasm were largely responsible for the progress of the slua, which by the end of 1912 was by far the largest in Ireland with 250 members, and boasted its own pipe band⁵⁰. So successful was it, indeed, that it was able to open its own hall, the first owned by Fianna in the whole country, purpose-built with the help of John Daly and "some Fenian friends" and able to accommodate several hundred people⁵¹. Hobson visited Limerick in December for the official opening of the premises in Little Barrington Street, and

his report back to Dublin prompted Tom Clarke to congratulate Daly on Fianna's achievements in the city - "You are way ahead of anything else in Ireland," he wrote⁵². The hall, which was constructed largely of wood, was afterwards burnt to the ground by the Black and Tans in the late autumn of 1920⁵³.

Reports of the national secretary at this time reveal the tenuous existence of some branches. Between the Ard Fheiseanna of 1911 and 1912, for instance, seven new sluaite were opened and three others collapsed⁵⁴. It is salutary to reflect that the problem of ephemeral branches which has often beset the organisation since was not at all unknown in its subsequently idealised heroic age.

"A branch would start up spontaneously, crowded with enthusiastic kids, all wanting to start fighting at once; and then they would gradually disappear one by one to more exciting pastimes when they found that they were not to go out and fight the English the next week," wrote the Countess in an unpublished memoir recalling those early years⁵⁵. That the problem was not confined to the rural areas is indicated by year-to-year variations within Dublin sluaite, as for example between the accounts given by Liam Mellows for 1911 and those published for the following year, which show the demise, rebirth and re-naming of several sluaite, movement of premises and some redistribution of branch leadership⁵⁶.

Mellows himself later commented bitterly that Fianna was "too strong" for most so-called nationalists at the time; "something with less milk and more water suited their palates, but the boys would not deviate". It took the Rising and its aftermath to change the public attitude to the movement, as he noted with irony - "today (1917) all such are separatists, extremists and Sinn Féiners: nothing is 'too strong' for them now"⁵⁷. Support was largely confined to

members of the Gaelic League and a few of the "young bicycle riding curates" who had come under the League's influence at Maynooth. The clergy otherwise were usually unsympathetic. The I.R.B. afforded the young organisation vital publicity between 1910 and 1914 through the pages of its paper Irish Freedom, as well as giving occasional financial aid⁵⁸. Among individual patrons, both Mellows and Hobson attest to the generosity of Roger Casement, for which there is also documentary evidence in Casement's own correspondence⁵⁹. But such cases represented exceptions: overall, Fianna struggled against the tide of public apathy in its early years.

Thus the leadership on occasion found it necessary to take a personal hand in the establishment of new sluaite, in order to raise local morale and lay solid foundations. When the Enniscorthy slua was opened in the summer of 1912, for instance, Hobson, Ó Riain and Percy Reynolds visited the area to supervise the organisation, camping on nearby Vinegar Hill⁶⁰. Nevertheless Fianna was at last becoming a genuinely national organisation, and the Ard Fheis in September looked back on twelve months' endeavour during which branches had been founded as far afield as Donegal town, Wexford and Rathkeale County Limerick⁶¹. When that same month Seán MacDiarmada attended the annual convention of Clann na Gael as I.R.B. delegate he estimated Fianna's membership at 1000, an obvious approximation in contrast to his precise figures for the Brotherhood itself, but one that was probably no great exaggeration⁶².

FORM AND STRUCTURE IN THE FIRST YEARS

Fianna's constitution was drawn up almost immediately after its inauguration and ratified at its first Ard Fheis⁶³. The object of the organisation was defined as being "to re-establish the independence of Ireland"⁶⁴. Beyond this remarkably bold definition no

more specific statement of the proposed form of independence was offered: Fianna was to be nationalist but independent of all political parties. Its Means were stated to be "the training of the youth of Ireland, mentally and physically, to achieve this object by teaching scouting and military exercises, Irish history and the Irish language". Members were required to make a declaration - "I promise to work for the Independence of Ireland, never to join England's armed forces, and to obey my superior officers". The unexpected reference to the British Army should be seen in the context of the objectives of contemporary British uniformed youth organisations, the huge numbers of Irishmen then serving in the Crown forces, and the anti-enlistment campaign in which Fianna participated prominently in 1912-13. As published the declaration took the form of a promise, but it appears that in some sluaite an oath was taken: the point is more than merely academic, given the historical implications concerning oathbound societies in Ireland and Fianna's later integration with the I.R.A.⁶⁵. In whatever form, the declaration was made after a probationary period of three weeks and the passing of the preliminary test.

The constitution gave specific instructions regarding uniform and emblems, details of which were at first disseminated via the nationalist press. It allowed a uniform of either green kilt and green knitted jersey with blue collar and cuffs, or knee pants and olive double-breasted shirt with brass buttons, in either case of Irish manufacture and worn with a slouch hat. The kilt uniform was the original version, conceived by the founders as an adaptation of ancient Gaelic dress for modern scouting, but it proved an embarrassment to the boys⁶⁶. An Chead Slua members continued to wear it, but some branches improvised with cotton shirts and blue shorts until

the alternative version was approved at the 1912 Ard Fheis and at once became standard. This was designed by the o/c of Slua Emmet, Michael Lonergan, on the pattern of the U.S. Army⁶⁷.

The Fianna emblem comprised a sunburst in gold upon a green ground bordered with white, or alternatively a sunburst upon a blue ground with the name of the organisation superimposed⁶⁸. The full sunburst on the badge was fifteen-pointed, symbolising the twelve points of the Fianna Code and the three of its Motto⁶⁹.

From the outset a structure had been established in which overall legislative authority was vested in the Annual General Meeting, and between meetings in an elected executive. But expansion during the first two years necessitated a less centralised structure, and the A.G.M. of 1911 ratified the following organisational pattern:

Ard Fheis (A.G.M.)

Ard Choiste (Executive), elected at the Ard Fheis and to include the following office bearers -

President
Vice-Presidents (2)
Honorary Secretary
Honorary Assistant Secretary
Honorary Treasurer

Coistí Ceanntair (District Councils)

Sluaite (Branches)⁷⁰

The A.G.M. of 1912 confirmed this existing structure in general, but added a number of specific requirements⁷¹. The Ard Choiste was to comprise the six principal office bearers and six others to be elected by ballot; it was to meet every quarter and be responsible for appointing slua o/cs. Coistí Ceanntair, composed of the o/c and secretary of each constituent slua, were required to meet fortnightly and to take responsibility for appointing local officers and arranging scout tests. Their establishment was dependent upon the existence of three or more branches within the region they

represented. Sluaite, whose minimum membership was eight boys, were to be divided into sections of eight (seven plus a section leader). Ard Fheiseanna were to be held annually or at the request of either the Ard Choiste or one third of the branches. Sluaite of up to fifty members were entitled to two Ard Fheis delegates, larger sluaite to one further delegate per fifty additional members, and Coistí Ceanntair to one delegate.

These and other points of the constitution as emended in 1912 were retained virtually in toto until the Ard Fheis of 1915 when the whole organisational structure was radically altered and in effect a new movement created.

ACTIVITIES

Within a year of its foundation Fianna could claim to offer members a range of activities that included scouting, drill, physical culture, boxing and wrestling, single-sticks, Irish language and history, singing, piping, hurling and Gaelic football⁷². In the first of these it followed closely the programme of the Baden-Powell Scouts - with camping, knots, first-aid, signalling and swimming - using the British organisation's handbook as its training manual⁷³. The boys were tested for proficiency in all the scouting skills as well as squad drill, Irish and history⁷⁴.

From the outset 'military' training formed an integral element in the programme. Drill was introduced the first week, and two of the older members, Con Colbert and Eamon Martin, were detailed as instructors, imparting whatever information they could glean from British Army manuals⁷⁵. An ex-British soldier, Seán Kavanagh, later assisted with instruction⁷⁶. Weekly route marches, usually held on a Sunday, became a routine practice of every slua, some of the poorer boys marching barefoot and bleeding. The Dublin branches would most

often make for Kilmashogue Mountain, Three Rock Mountain or the Hell Fire Club at Glendubh, and in bad weather the grounds of St. Enda's where every facility was made available for their camps⁷⁷. With a view to fostering a Gaelic environment at slua meetings Colbert devised drill orders in Irish⁷⁸.

Fianna drilled only with hurleys or dummy rifles in the first years. Although when published in 1914 its first Handbook devoted over twenty pages to weaponry, indicating the importance attached to this aspect of training, opportunity for practice was limited. Hobson has stated that "no serious effort was made to arm the Fianna" prior to the founding of the Irish Volunteers in autumn 1913; "side arms - i.e., bayonets - were common, but there were no firearms"⁷⁹. At least one rural slua had the use of a rifle range, however, and a number of older Dublin members were able to practice shooting under the personal guidance of the Countess. It was perhaps to these facilities that The Irish Volunteer was referring when it claimed that Fianna officers were armed at this time⁸⁰. The Countess was herself an excellent shot and provided the arms and the space to practice legally and safely, at first at her country cottage at Sandyford and, during 1910 and 1911, in the spacious grounds of her home at Belcamp Park⁸¹.

Inter-slua competitions also offered an opportunity to practice military skills. One such event on record was a mock attack and defence of 'a citadel' marked off in a field, involving some seventy boys from three Dublin sluaite and lasting the whole of an autumn afternoon in 1910⁸².

Most branches received at least elementary training in First Aid, and in Dublin a St. Patrick's Ambulance Brigade was instituted during 1910 in association with An Chead Slua at Lower Camden Street. Its members undertook a specific course of instruction devised by a

doctor, which may later have formed the basis for the Handbook section on First Aid⁸³.

Among cultural activities music and drama were prominent in the early years, especially in the capital. During its first winter An Chead Slua formed a choir⁸⁴, probably following rehearsals for a Christmas concert. Concerts certainly became a regular feature of the movement in Dublin, the efforts of the boys being supported by items from girls trained by the Inighnidhe⁸⁵.

Although cultural activities formed an essential part of the movement in theory, their practice was more random and dependent upon favourable local circumstances. Cork Fianna were always piped in public at this time, for instance, because one adult piper was interested enough to instruct, and one pupil to persevere⁸⁶. Similarly, the strength of drama in the Dublin organisation was due to the presence of the Countess and Helena Molony. The boys actually became involved in backstage work at the Abbey Theatre in the spring of 1910 because the Countess was acting there and had by now an entourage of youngsters who followed her wherever she went. She had also gathered a library and art gallery for the boys' use⁸⁷. But generally, despite the convictions of the leaders, it was easier to find adults willing to instruct and boys to learn physical skills than cultural. By the autumn of 1913 the national secretary admitted that Fianna was offering "a one-sided training" - "the culture of the body has monopolised our attention whilst the culture of the mind has, to a very large extent, been overlooked," he wrote⁸⁸. Already learning of a practical, and in particular a military, value was taking precedence. Music was considered primarily in terms of its function at public demonstrations and commemorations, in which members were already participating as stewards and guards⁸⁹. As to the learning of Irish, the organisation was clearly not every-

where equipped to take literally its own Constitution, in which the teaching and testing of the language were compulsory.

During 1912 and 1913 Fianna assisted the adult movement in its anti-enlistment campaign. The work chiefly involved postering and the disruption of recruitment meetings and filmshows arranged by the authorities⁹⁰. In Dublin, anti-recruitment posters were prepared by members of the Inghnide at Countess Markievicz's home, and the Fianna detailed to paste them to walls and lamp posts by night, touring the city on bicycles⁹¹. The posters could be construed as seditious - two senior Belfast fiannai were in fact charged with issuing seditious libel for postering in the summer of 1913⁹² - and in work of such doubtful legality boys were probably safer, and certainly faster, than grown-ups. Occasionally they posterized particular events, such as the visit of King George V to Dublin in 1911.

No doubt the members themselves would have considered their encounters with the Baden-Powell Scouts as among their most notable slua activities. Fianna had been founded to rival the British movement, and by 1911 it was succeeding well. That year Baden-Powell appointed Lord Meath Scout Commissioner for Ireland with the task of developing the organisation there⁹³. A staunch imperialist and advocate of military training for boys⁹⁴, Meath began a recruiting drive the following summer, convening a meeting "to advance the Scout Movement in Ireland amongst all classes and denominations"⁹⁵. The meeting elected a provisional Committee of aristocrats in the hope of eventually forming a Council of "Catholic and Protestant gentlemen of influence, interested in the Movement and representative of Ireland". The council was never formed, but the organisation received money, patronage and military facilities. Rivalry with Fianna grew, and scraps became almost weekly events which the res-

pectable B.P. boys usually lost. Understandably, therefore, when the Dublin press gave favourable coverage to a camp to be held by the British organisation for publicity purposes, Fianna intervened. Mellows has recounted that twelve of the younger members unofficially wrecked the camp of the advance party which they found conveniently deserted, adding that "this killed the attempt to revive the English Boy Scouts in Dublin"⁹⁶. His conclusion was more optimistic than factual, however. In reality, the Baden-Powell movement for both boys and girls continued to expand quite steadily in the city, albeit within a restricted section of society, with the approach of world war⁹⁷.

THE SPIRIT OF THE EARLY FIANNA

The accounts of contemporaries reveal not only the scope of Fianna activities but also the spirit in which they were undertaken. Above all, gaiety and intimacy marked these early years, particularly in Dublin. One contemporary remembers the boys "tearing down Union Jacks, swarming up lamp-posts to paste up anti-recruiting bills, ragging Baden-Powell Scouts, and playing off tricks on pompous British officials", and attributes their spirit to the mischievous, boyish presence of the Countess⁹⁸.

Certainly, an impromptu gaiety prevailed at Belcamp, and later at Surrey House, which from the time of its purchase in the autumn of 1911 became a second home to many a young fian. It was against the wishes of the rest of the adult leadership that the Countess allowed the boys access to the new premises, and they responded by using them like a club and taking possession of her drawing room every night of the week⁹⁹. Fortunately, her husband Casimir was as free and informal in welcoming visitors as she was¹⁰⁰. The 'Surrey clique' were made to feel an integral and natural part of the

Markievicz household - when important visitors called, for instance, they were always included in the introductions¹⁰¹. Undoubtedly, for these youngsters especially, Madame played an incalculable part in forging that closeness that characterised the early Dublin Fianna.

But other factors also played their part. The organisation was still small enough to be close, and part of a movement that prior to the Rising was itself small and intimate¹⁰². The very apathy and enmity of society against which it was obliged to struggle itself forged a comradeship, according to the Countess¹⁰³. In addition, the experience of democracy and the responsibility of controlling their own slua affairs undoubtedly exercised a profound effect upon the members. To this above all Liam Mellows attributed the "splendid spirit of camaraderie" within the movement, which as a result "was rapidly becoming a boys' community, the embryo of the Republic . . . It was," he added, "remarkable what a few years had done in forming the character of the members. No longer were they boys. They felt men, if not in years then in strength of purpose"¹⁰⁴.

Such factors, uniquely present in the first years, together created the spirit of the early Fianna. It would never be quite rekindled again. It is true that from the mid-1920s the particular quality of size and the closeness of the Republican 'family' would again stamp their mark upon the organisation. On the other hand, Fianna's status would never again be that of trail-blazer, but merely auxiliary; the Countess's personal influence would prove irreplaceable; and the original concept of a boys' republic would never be fully recreated, since Fianna would never again enjoy the autonomy within the Republican movement which was its prerequisite and which was indeed, as we shall see, already by 1913 being eroded.

THE POSITION IN SPRING 1913

A census conducted by the organisation early in 1913 revealed that membership now stood at over 2000¹⁰⁵. The considerable growth of the previous six months reflected on the one hand Fianna's particular organisational development towards a stage of consolidation. But principally it was an effect of the wider political context in the autumn and spring of 1912-13. The Home Rule Bill dominated all other issues at the time, being passed in the Commons but rejected by the Lords in January 1913. In the North, disparate groups of loyalists had been drilling since the abolition of the Lords' power of veto in 1911. In September 1912 over 471,000 people in one day signed the Solemn League and Covenant pledging to use "all means which might be found necessary" to resist Home Rule. The following January the para-military groups combined to form the nucleus of a unified and disciplined body, the Ulster Volunteer Force. Inevitably these events provoked reaction in the South. In the long term, it was Eoin Mac Neill's verdict that the Easter Rising and subsequent revolution were brought about "mainly by Carson"¹⁰⁶. But the immediate effect in the winter of 1912-13 was to spread alarm among the people - thus indirectly preparing them to embrace Volunteering - and in general to give a renewed purpose and a degree of public acceptability to militant nationalist organisations. For Fianna, therefore, the external conditions were right for expansion at this time.

Within the organisation, however, growth was restricted by the availability of officers of calibre and training. For whatever other activities were valued in theory, in practice it was drill and allied skills that attracted boys and gave week-to-week cohesion to the sluaite. But as yet many of the rural branches were ill equipped to provide adequate instruction in drill, skirmishing,

first-aid, etc.¹⁰⁷, with consequent loss of morale and recruits.

For this reason, such expansion as had been achieved was largely confined to Dublin, and the spring census revealed that country sluaite accounted for only one seventh of the total membership.

Moreover, measures aimed at creating a unified and disciplined organisation had as yet met with only partial success. Structures had been developed, certainly, but in the country districts particularly these were sometimes merely paper formulae due to a lack of effective co-ordination. Not only did rural sluaite feel themselves remote from a leadership they never saw, but - in the case of some of those founded on local initiative alone - it was questionable whether they were in fact a part of the Fianna organisation at all. The same political climate that had bred Fianna had seen the rise of other, independent and often highly localised nationalist organisations for boys, whose position in 1913 was ambiguous. It was with the aim of gathering them within the aegis of Fianna that Hobson had written the first Manifesto to the Boys of Ireland the previous year. Yet as late as 1915 Headquarters would claim that while some "unattached companies" had by now affiliated many others had not¹⁰⁸. Under these circumstances it is not surprising that the original standardised tests required revision and the inauguration of a tests' committee in 1913¹⁰⁹, and that uniform and equipment remained far from standard in the rural areas for a number of years afterwards¹¹⁰.

Thus in the spring of 1913 Fianna had reached a position where it could recognise its potential, and meantime saw its immediate needs as being to build and consolidate in the country areas, to provide specialist instruction, and to forge a unified and standard organisation nationwide.

FIANNA'S FIRST NATIONAL ORGANISER

It was to this end that its Ard Choiste, meeting on 13 April, appointed Liam Mellows as the movement's first paid official, to "act in the dual capacity of travelling instructor and organiser"¹¹¹. Pádraig Ó Riain formally proposed him for the office, but in fact the matter had been discussed and agreed beforehand. The suggestion came from Mellows himself. Countess Markievicz recalled later that he had made her "the amazing statement that he contemplated going on the road to organise the Fianna, that he had a bicycle and a good new coat, and that once he got clear of Dublin it would be cheap work and he would never need a train"¹¹². Finance had up to now been the obstacle to appointing a full-time official, the national treasurer's most recent report revealing a balance of only £10 11s. 6d. for the whole organisation¹¹³. Mellows' proposition of a salary of 10s. Od. per week without expenses made an appointment possible.

He had joined An Chead Slua in 1911 with his brothers Barney and Fred, and since 1912 had been Secretary of the Dublin District Council¹¹⁴. He was now promoted to Captain, and within a fortnight was on the road. More than usually complete details of his work are available because his diary, covering the first month of his journeys, was printed in full in the June 1913 issue of Irish Freedom. The entries show him based in Wexford but travelling as far afield as Arklow, Castlecomer and Cashel. He found that the Waterford slua and Slua Charles Kickham in Clonmel had collapsed, in the latter case through lack of a meeting place. Here and elsewhere he made contacts but was unable to obtain firm commitments for new sluaite. In Wexford itself he instructed the boys of Slua Father John Murphy in drill, bayonet practice, signalling and skirmishing with great success¹¹⁵.

After attending the annual Bodinstown commemoration, where the choice of Fianna as Guard of Honour for the first time was taken as a sign of its growing status in the separatist movement¹¹⁶, he continued his work further north and west, visiting the Dundalk, Limerick and Belfast branches and strengthening the successful Slua Leo Cathasaigh in Athlone¹¹⁷. The local Fianna sports took him in the autumn to Tuam, County Galway, where the branch founded in 1911 was in the charge of Liam Langley¹¹⁸. While still on the road in November he was recalled to the capital for the foundation of the Irish Volunteers.

In assessing his contribution to Fianna it should be borne in mind that he remained national organiser for only seven months, and that from the founding of the Volunteers he resigned from the Scouts. He occasionally trained local sluaite up to the time of the Rising¹¹⁹, and after a four year absence in America was again briefly associated with the Fianna leadership in 1921-22, though he never rejoined the organisation¹²⁰. During his term as organiser he visited over half the counties of Ireland, as Greaves has pointed out¹²¹, and left his mark throughout the country. His efforts certainly contributed to the change in Fianna's fortunes with which they coincided. But they do not amount to the myth that developed after his execution, that he transformed the organisation single-handed. "When he commenced his task . . . he found indifference almost everywhere, yet within a year the roads of Ireland resounded to the tramp of marching feet"¹²²: so the myth was expressed. It was perpetuated by the organisation itself¹²³, while a similar if more modestly phrased judgment has been made by the historians, Macardle among them¹²⁴. Against it should be set Mellows' own assessment, that the growth of Fianna at this time was as much the cause as the effect of his appointment, and was explicable in the context of current political developments in Ireland¹²⁵.

LEADERSHIP CHANGES

As organiser Mellows took his place in a national leadership staff that had changed considerably since 1909. The first changes had been made only six weeks after the founding of the movement, at a special general meeting convened to elect officials on a permanent basis¹²⁶. Hobson had been confirmed as President, with Pádraig Ó Riain and the Countess being newly elected to the offices of joint Secretary, and Colbert now sharing the post of Treasurer with Joseph Robinson.

At the first Ard Fheis the following August Countess Markievicz was elected to the presidency, and Hobson to the office of joint Vice-President¹²⁷. The reversal of titles was occasioned by Hobson's having been resident in Belfast for much of the year past, during which time Madame had presided at committee meetings, but it also reflected her outstanding contribution to date. The presidency was a 'personal' office and she was elected to it by virtue of her personal influence upon the boys. In addition, her seniority made her a natural choice. She herself later suggested that the election was a demotion of Hobson and was made because some members "doubted" him¹²⁸, but the assertion is vindictive and misleading and does less than justice to his importance and standing in Fianna.

Madame retained the presidency, with a break of only one year, until her death. Her election left Ó Riain as national Secretary, a task he undertook with energy and enterprise, assisted by Michael Lonergan and from 1913 by Alfie White¹²⁹. Between the 1911 Ard Fheis and that of 1913 the treasury was held successively by Jimmy Gegan, Pádraic Mac A'Bhaird and Frank Reynolds¹³⁰.

Whereas the above personnel were all Dublin-based, by 1913 the Ard Choiste as a whole reflected the expansion of the movement,

including as it did members from Wexford, Belfast, Limerick and Kerry¹³¹. Apart from Markievicz, Hobson and Ó Riain only Con Colbert remained of the original executive. And apart from the Countess the central leadership was now revealing a clear and significant pattern, one which indicated the growing domination of the movement by men of sworn obedience to the Irish Republican Brotherhood¹³².

FIANNA AND THE I.R.B. (i)

At the time of the foundation of Fianna the Brotherhood had appeared to be on the point of natural extinction. Dublin Castle did not consider it to pose any threat; indeed, successive reports of the Under Secretary between 1905 and 1909 claimed official intelligence to be unaware of "a particle of substantial evidence to show that there was in Ireland any secret political activity of which the Government need have the smallest apprehension"¹³³. The organisation which had once enjoyed a membership of 100,000¹³⁴ had declined to perhaps 2000 by the turn of the century, by which time also its leaders had become old men left behind by political developments. Shortly before 1909, however, it began a process of rejuvenation, a change of fortune that Devoy attributed primarily to the return of Tom Clarke from the U.S.A.¹³⁵, but which others ascribe chiefly to the influence of Hobson and Dennis McCullough¹³⁶.

As an oathbound secret society, maintaining not only external but internal secrecy through a system of circles and secret elections¹³⁷, it was the antithesis of an open mass movement. Its power latterly lay in infiltration of existing bodies and the setting up of front organisations. "It had members everywhere, its tentacles went into everything, it maintained a footing in every organisation and movement in Ireland which could be supported with-

out doing violence to separatist principles. And when money was needed at a pinch for any of the organisations which it regarded as key organisations . . . it found the money. Strange and transient committees and societies were constantly cropping up, doing this and that specific national work. The I.R.B. formed them. The I.R.B. ran them. The I.R.B. provided the money. The I.R.B. dissolved them when their work was done." Thus O'Hegarty.

Significantly, he included among the movements considered "key organisations" - along with the Gaelic League, Sinn Féin, the G.A.A. and the Volunteers - Na Fianna Eireann¹³⁸.

One should not be misled by 'the mythology of the secret society',¹³⁹ into making exaggerated claims for the Brotherhood. Maureen Wall, for instance, has argued that its practice of election and communication was rather different from its theory, and its infiltration and control of other organisations less thorough than has often been assumed¹⁴⁰. Internal secrecy enabled a core of individuals to make decisions, cut corners and 'apply' the constitution, so that it would be more accurate to say that persons or groups within the I.R.B., rather than the organisation as such, were 'behind everything' in the years that led to the Rising.

This certainly applied in the case of Fianna. No doubt, Hobson was well aware of the possibilities that Fianna could offer the I.R.B. and he probably discussed them with Colbert and Ó Riain before the inaugural meeting¹⁴¹. But Le Roux is in error in asserting that Fianna was founded "clearly at the instigation of the I.R.B. Supreme Council, who had got the idea from Bulmer Hobson, and which appointed Hobson to join the founders of the Fianna in order to keep it under I.R.B. control"¹⁴². His judgment betrays a lack of understanding not only of the founding role of Hobson -

and Markievicz - but also of how the I.R.B. worked. Hobson himself has stated on the contrary that in 1909 he was an ordinary rank-and-file member of the Brotherhood, "but that body took no part in the promotion of Fianna Eireann and was not consulted regarding it"¹⁴³. That he brought his young colleagues from his Teeling Circle to the inaugural meeting¹⁴⁴ was surely a natural as much as a conspiratorial thing to do. The connections subsequently developed as his contacts and friendships in both organisations gave him the opportunity to introduce more I.R.B. members into Fianna. Equally, as he rose in the ranks of the Brotherhood, he recruited into it older Fianna boys already trained and scrutinised, who in turn observed and recruited their fellow members¹⁴⁵.

When Seán Mac Diarmada delivered his I.R.B. report to the Convention of the Clann na Gael in 1912, he included (as we saw) an assessment of the membership of Fianna: the significant point is that he bracketed Fianna - and only Fianna - with the Brotherhood in his statement. By this date the I.R.B. was already taking a serious interest in the youth movement, throwing its discreet weight behind it, and planning a specific role for it. By now it had adopted a policy of domination. In the same year Hobson as Dublin Head Centre created an I.R.B. circle of Fianna members, which took the name of the John Mitchel Circle¹⁴⁶. It met monthly at the Fianna offices at D'Olier Street, Pádraig Ó Riain being its secretary and Con Colbert centre¹⁴⁷. Through his office Colbert swore in new recruits among promising senior fiannai. Michael Lonergan joined in 1912, and in Easter of the same year Liam Mellows was sworn in in an Fianna's camp at Ticknock after being sounded out by Eamon Martin at the instruction of the circle¹⁴⁸. Mellows in turn invited Garry Holohan to join during a weekend camp at Hobson's

cottage at Balroddery often used by circle members; he was sworn in at Fianna's Aonach¹⁴⁹. Colbert himself introduced four of the St. Enda's 'dogs' to the Brotherhood, apparently without the knowledge of Pearse, after recruiting during drill at the school. They were sworn in late in the spring of 1913¹⁵⁰.

The John Mitchel Circle, with Hobson as 'visitor', met before every Fianna Ard Fheis in order to decide policy and tactics and to fix elections¹⁵¹. Its influence was undoubtedly behind the election of I.R.B. men to all important local and national leadership positions, including that of Liam Mellows as National Organiser. Mellows' appointment was in fact a dual one, his main though secret work being that of itinerant organiser for the Brotherhood, without whose financial support he could not have travelled the country for the Fianna¹⁵².

Control at the hands of the I.R.B. had a profound and permanent effect upon the youth organisation. In the first place, it destroyed it as a 'Boys' Republic' as originally conceived. Decisions were no longer made by members as members, leaders were elected from without, constitutional autonomy (though claimed now and in later years) had become a myth. From this time Fianna would always be dominated and often manipulated by the adult movement, initially by the I.R.B. and later by the I.R.A. The fact that it would occasionally stand up to the adult movement - or more often enjoy a certain working freedom through the movement's neglect - does not alter the case. Secondly, domination by the Brotherhood changed the emphasis of Fianna's role. Whereas its founders saw it as a way of life and an upbringing in the Republican spirit, the I.R.B. viewed it more pragmatically and urgently as a training ground for cadres. Both points of conflict, the one of relationship and the other of role, would persist as strains within the youth organisa-

tion. Henceforth Fianna came to accept the status of auxiliary or 'youth wing'. The adult movement became its *raison d'être* and would mark its future path, demanding that it be a military-oriented organisation and denying it the opportunity to develop in its own right, as a cultural or political youth movement for instance. And this set bounds to its potential for growth and effectiveness, since it was tied to the fortunes of adult, military Republicanism both in ascendant and decline.

FIANNA FOR GIRLS

The Betsy Gray Slua, when founded in Belfast in 1911, was announced as the "First Girls' Coy"¹⁵³, but the anticipated expansion implied in the description was never effected, though the branch itself in time attained a parade roll of sixty and a membership considerably higher¹⁵⁴.

The slua uniform comprised a navy skirt and a green linen blouse, with the standard slouch hat. Aged between fourteen and eighteen the girls were older than the boys, but they shared the same premises, took the same oath and held political and social activities together. Their programme was almost identical - Irish language and history, camping, route marches, field drawings and (after the foundation of the Volunteers) target practice using guns loaned from the boys' sluaite. The glimpses of the Belfast Fianna given in Nora Connolly's Portrait of a Rebel Father, postering the Orange Day parade, collecting flowers for the victims of Bachelor's Walk, posting up anti-war propaganda¹⁵⁵, are of an intimate group of young activists, virtually a single mixed-sex slua.

From 1912 to 1914 Slua Betsy Gray was represented at the Ard Fheiseanna in Dublin. The girls and boys travelled down on the

coaster S.S. Carrickfergus, nearly filling it, piping and dancing the night journey away, and camping at Madame's cottage in tents lent by the Dublin Fianna. Since girls' sluaite were not yet recognised in the Constitution the presence of female representatives at the 1912 meeting prompted a debate on the formal admission of girls to the organisation. The matter was hotly argued, most of those opposed to admission favouring a separate girls' organisation¹⁵⁶. Nonetheless a Belfast motion was carried by one vote to admit girls and to instruct District Councils to establish female sluaite, "these to be affiliated with the Ard Choiste and governed by it until such time as they were strong enough to govern themselves"¹⁵⁷. Van Voris has credited the Countess with carrying the resolution, quoting from the contemporary Irish Citizen to portray her as the leader of an ongoing struggle for female rights in Fianna at the time. Her argument certainly accords with Madame's active interests and her strategic position in the chair. The further suggestion, that the I.R.B. Fianna circle led the opposition to girls, would be harder to prove. If they indeed took this position, they may have done so as individuals - it is likely that Hobson, at any rate, was against admitting females¹⁵⁸. However, Van Voris's assertion that "the resolution was never enthusiastically put into effect, and there were never more than a few girls in the Fianna" misleads by understatement. The resolution was in fact formally quashed the following month by the barely constitutional action of the Ard Choiste. They argued that because some branches had not attended the Ard Fheis the decision was unrepresentative. They claimed that if implemented it would "act to the prejudice of the Fianna", and took it upon themselves to hold a plebiscite of all sluaite "as to whether they were in favour of giving An Ard Choiste permission to change back the constitution". The

announcement was certainly tendentious, promising that if this point of the constitution was revoked an independent organisation for girls would be formed "shortly" and that the leadership would "do their utmost to assist it"¹⁵⁹. In the event seventeen sluaite replied to the plebiscite, twelve voting to reverse the Ard Fheis decision. Belfast alone and unanimously stood by the girls¹⁶⁰.

The promised organisation was finally established some years later as Clann na nGaedheal, and the very infrequent references to "girls' Fianna" during the 1919-22 period appear to refer to this body. Other Republican girls' movements were formed during the 1930s and 1960s but no attempt was made to re-introduce girls into Fianna itself for over half a century.

The Betsy Gray slua continued to meet until the spring of 1916¹⁶¹ when it appears that some members were drafted into the Cumann na mBan¹⁶². Several who joined the Ambulance Corps section were among those Belfast women who made their way to Dublin to take part in the Rising¹⁶³.

It was perhaps predictable that a place for girls in Fianna would be denied by the overall membership but recognised by Belfast. The Irish national movement as a whole at this time allowed women only an auxiliary role in the freedom struggle: it is significant that Cumann na mBan was founded separately from the Volunteers, and remained separate. Women were late on the nationalist scene; they virtually had to create their own role, and that role was always subsidiary, as some bitterly observed: "Today the women attached to national movements are there chiefly to collect funds for the men to spend"¹⁶⁴. In socialism, not nationalism, could be found an enlightened view of the female political role; in particular, outside the tiny suffragette movement, it was to be found in militant Trade Unionism. But in Ireland the Trade Union Congress was only

now beginning to advance beyond a moderate reformism¹⁶⁵. Only in Belfast, with its 'British' industrial economy, had a radical class consciousness already developed¹⁶⁶. In that city, where Larkin and then Connolly had organised labour and which had been awakened by a Lock-out six years before Dublin's, support for the Fianna girls came naturally to the children of Connolly's radical circle of socialist republicans. It did not outlive Connolly.

AN ATTEMPT TO ESTABLISH A POLITICAL PARTY FOR YOUTH

Under the same influence the Belfast Fianna participated in one other short-lived but unique initiative at this time, the formation of a Young Republican Party¹⁶⁷. It was established in October 1913 at the height of the Dublin Lock-out, which event (with the local threat of Carsonism) inspired it¹⁶⁸. Members were at first recruited from the Gaelic League, the Freedom Club, Fianna, and local working-class organisations. The banner was tricoloured, an orange sunburst on a green ground with a white inscription. According to the manifesto, drawn up by Cathal O'Shannon, the party was to have an educational and propagandist role and act as a cadre for youth. The members visited door-to-door and held public meetings, mainly on the anti-Partition issue. It is significant that the Belfast Fianna should attempt to develop a youth party, a discussion-action group to publicise young opinion, while elsewhere the organisation was becoming increasingly - and later often exclusively - military. As we shall see in chapter 10, Fianna would take up this role-concept again nearly sixty years later, when again Belfast would give the lead.

THE POSITION IN AUTUMN 1913

By autumn 1913 Fianna numbered close on thirty branches, with a combined membership well into four figures, and could consider itself a nationally structured and controlled organisation. On the other hand it had not yet attained a uniformity of practice and, though now a nation-wide movement it was by no means geographically representative, having established few sluaite in the small country towns and almost none in the West. It had not yet achieved the ubiquity and status which would make it a generally accepted part of Irish society. It would develop towards such a position after the Rising and especially during the War for Independence, in association with the I.R.A. But as yet something of a missionary situation obtained. Here and there particular local circumstances prompted the setting up of sluaite, as at Three Rock Mountain, where local people were inspired by the bravery of Fianna boys on camp during a drowning tragedy¹⁶⁹. Otherwise, outside the large cities, their foundation and fortunes depended perilously on individual leadership. The strong areas were strong because of the presence of energetic individuals, Seán Sinnott at Wexford, Heuston in Limerick, Eamon Leahy in Listowel for example. The organisation had not the momentum to carry it irrespective of personnel. Its fragility and vulnerability to fluctuation at this stage were characteristics that would re-appear in the 1920s. Between times they would be masked by Fianna's relatively heightened importance in Irish political life, between 1918-21 in particular, but generally during the decade of war or approaching war whose start coincided with the founding of the Irish Volunteers.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. 'How the Fianna was started', Nodlaig na bhFiann, Fianna Christmas, Dec. 1914.
2. 12th Earl of Meath, 'What the Boy Scout Movement may do for Britain', The Windsor Magazine, Dec. 1909, p.55.
3. The author has found no record of exact figures for this date, but judging by later press reports a total membership under 200 may be guessed at; cf. notes 93-7 below.
4. Sinn Féin, 3/7/1909.
5. An explicit article, unsigned, in Sinn Féin, 3/7/1909; a more indirect piece in Bean na hÉireann, May 1909.
6. Letter, George P. Murphy, Irish Independent, 5/4/1966. Murphy states that four of the pupils agreed to join the organisation - Harry Brennan, Paddy Walsh, Jimmy Fitzgerald and himself. Fitzgerald's older sisters were members of Inighnidhe na hÉireann, and it may well be that he and other boys were contacted through the women's organisation.
7. Bean na hÉireann, July 1909, announced the foundation which may therefore probably be dated in June.
8. It should be noted that the inclusion of drill was not at the time a practice exclusive to the Brigades and cadet corps. It applied also to many B. P. Scout troops. Indeed, the scouts adopted military activities increasingly with the approach of the Great War. In the North, for instance, a gathering of 40 troops in 1915 presented a display for Baden-Powell which included, as well as drill, sniping and musketry. Reported in The Northern Whig, 23/8/1915.
9. Murphy letter, Irish Independent, 5/4/1966; also Molony, H. 'The Countess and the Fianna', Irish Independent, 18/8/1966.
10. Hobson, B. Fianna Eireann with interpolations based on information supplied by Joseph Robinson, Statement to the Bureau of Military History, typewritten, n.d. Frank Molony's house was in Sherrard Street.
11. Hobson's recollections are available in several versions. His account prepared for the Bureau of Military History formed the basis of a version subsequently published in Martin, F. X.(ed.) The Irish Volunteers 1913-1915 (Dublin, 1963), and another, similar but with slightly different emphases, in his own Ireland Yesterday and Tomorrow (Tralee, 1968).
12. Hobson, B. Ireland Yesterday and Tomorrow, p.16.
13. The Countess continued to take responsibility for the rental of Fianna's first home even after the Rising - cf. letter Countess Markievicz to Eva Gore-Booth, Mountjoy, 16/5/1916, in Roper, E.(ed.) The Prison Letters of Countess Markievicz (London, 1934), p.139.

14. An Claidheamh Soluis, 14/8/1909; Sinn Féin, 14/8/1909.
15. Bean na hÉireann, September 1909. The full committee comprised S. MacCaisin, C. Colbert, G. Harvey, R. Harding, G. Sherry, S. McGarry and H. Molony.
16. Martin, E. A Brief Outline of Fianna Eireann from 1909 to 1916, Statement to the Bureau of Military History, p.3. Martin, who had heard of the venture from his old school master William O'Neill, took Ward along.
17. Hobson, B. Fianna Eireann, Bureau Statement.
18. Sinn Féin, 21/8/1909. Disclaimer signed by Seán Ó Dubhghaill.
19. Markievicz, C. 'The Fianna', no. 2 in the series 'A few memories', Éire : the Irish Nation, 9/6/1923.
20. Ibid.
21. Reynolds, J. 'Fianna Eireann - with the Dublin Brigade', Dublin's Fighting Story 1916-21, told by the men who made it. (Tralee, n.d.).
22. Statement by Eamon Martin to C. Desmond Greaves; letter, Greaves, C. D. to the present author, 17/11/1978. Visits were made by Colbert and Ó Riain.
23. Bean na hÉireann, October 1909.
24. Irish Freedom, February 1913.
25. Bean na hÉireann, November 1909.
26. Bean na hÉireann, February 1910.
27. Holohan, G. Statement to the Bureau of Military History no. 1, p.2. The slua later moved to Nelson Street, Liberty Hall and finally the Hardwicke Hall.
28. Bean na hÉireann, July 1910.
29. Holohan, G. Bureau Statement no. 1, p.3.
30. Bean na hÉireann, July 1910.
31. Bean na hÉireann, September 1910.
32. Bean na hÉireann, November 1910.
33. Bean na hÉireann, December 1909 and March 1910 confidently predicted the imminent formation of a slua.

34. O'Shannon, C. Evening Press, 20/5/1955. The four I.R.B. members were Joseph Robinson (temporarily returned from Glasgow), Seán Ó Suilleabháin, Albert Cotton and Cathal O'Shannon himself. O'Shannon gave lessons in Irish language and produced plays; Irish dancing and history were featured, with visits to such historic places as Cave Hill and the grave of Jemmy Hope - Connolly-Heron, I. 'James Connolly - a biography', Liberty, September 1966.
35. Nora Connolly O'Brien interview.
36. Bean na hÉireann, December 1910.
37. Nora Connolly O'Brien interview.
According to Irish Freedom, September 1912, the four branches were now named Slua Willie Nelson, Slua Henry Munroe, Slua Henry Joy McCracken and Slua Seáin Ni Néill. The Irish Volunteer, 4/4/1914, names three sluaite.
Re the reduction of the separatist movement after the Redmond split, see McCullough, D., 'The Events in Belfast', Capuchin Annual, 1966, p.381.
38. Bean na hÉireann, March 1911.
39. Nora Connolly O'Brien interview. Writing sixty years before the interview she had described herself as 'President' of the slua - Connolly, N. The Unbroken Tradition (New York, 1918), p.9.
40. Irish Freedom, September 1911.
The branch at Dundalk had been organised by Paddy McHugh, who was afterwards forced by the authorities to leave primary school teaching because of it. See McEntee, S. Episode at Easter (Dublin, 1966), p.59.
41. Royal Commission on the Rebellion in Ireland, Minutes of Evidence and Appendix of Documents, Cd.8311 (London, 1916), p.111.
42. An Dún was used by the Gaelic League, the Inighnidhe and the I.R.B. as well as Fianna. It was originally acquired by the Gaelic League in 1905.
See O'Donoghue, F. Tomás MacCurtain, Soldier and Patriot (Tralee 1971), pp.20 & 24.
Also, Ruiseal, L. 'The Position in Cork', Capuchin Annual, 1966; pp.372 f.
43. Healy, S. 'From boyhood to manhood in the service of Ireland', The Kerryman, 4/11/1951.
44. Ibid. According to Healy Seán O'Sullivan was secretary and Paddy Corkery the first treasurer. Florence O'Donoghue - in O'Donoghue, F. Tomás MacCurtain, pp.20 & 24 - states that MacCurtain acted as treasurer "for most of the period" 1911-14 as well as teaching the boys Irish; Seán O'Hegarty taught history; the committee also included Michael Ó Cuill, Martin Donovan and Tadhg Barry.
45. Irish Freedom, October 1912, February 1913.

46. Cf. Hammond, W. Soldier of the Rearguard - the story of Matt Flood (Fermoy, 1977), p.2. The slua o/c was Paddy O'Shea.
47. Irish Freedom, October 1912.
48. According to the official list of persons 'tried by field general court martial for complicity in the Irish revolt', Heuston was twenty-two at Easter 1916 - Mac Giolla Choille, B. (ed.) Intelligence Notes 1913-16 (Dublin, 1966), p.262.
49. Daly, M. 'Seán Heuston's life and death for Ireland', in MacCarthy, J. M.(ed.) Limerick's Fighting Story (Tralee, n.d.), pp.151-5.
50. Irish Freedom, January 1913.
51. Daly, M. in Limerick's Fighting Story, p.152.
52. Ibid.
53. The date was Monday night, 29 November 1920. See current national and local press; see also p.177 and p.196 note 99 below.
54. Irish Freedom, August 1912.
55. Fianna, a typed and duplicated booklet, n.d., National Museum of Ireland, EW 2396.
56. Compare Mellows, L. in The Gaelic American, 21/4/1917, with Irish Freedom, February 1913. The latter omits (from Mellows' list) Slua Michael Dwyer, Slua John Mitchel, Slua Lord Edward, Slua Owen Roe O'Neill (Malahide).
It refers to An Chead Slua; Slua Wolfe Tone, Beresford Place, under o/c Eamon Martin; Slua Rathmines, under o/c Capt. Con Colbert, (previously o/c An Chead Slua); the newly formed Slua Fintan Lalor, under Lieut. Seán Reynolds; Slua Patrick Sarsfield, under Liam Mellows with Alfie White second in command, based at Dolphin's Barn but soon to remove to Inchicore; Slua Emmet, initially under Capt. Michael Lonergan and latterly under Lieut. Frank Reynolds, with Garry Holohan second in command.
Only An Chead Slua, Slua Emmet and Slua Wolfe Tone appear in both lists.
Irish Freedom, March 1913, refers to a Slua named after Brian Boru at Dolphin's Barn, which perhaps replaced Slua Patrick Sarsfield.
According to Holohan, G. Bureau Statement no. 1, pp.2,3,15, Slua Emmet moved successively from Beresford Place to Nelson Street (early 1912?), to Liberty Hall (1913), to 41 Parnell Square (August 1913), to Hardwick Hall (Autumn 1913).
57. Mellows, L., under pseud. 'An Irish Volunteer Officer', 'The Irish Boy Scouts', The Gaelic American, 12/5/1917.
58. Hobson, B. Ireland Yesterday and Tomorrow, p.17; Hobson in Martin, F. X.(ed.) The Irish Volunteers, p.21.

59. See for instance Letter, Roger Casement to Bulmer Hobson, 4/4/1911, enclosing a gift of £10 for uniforms which Casement sent personally, being unable to get subscribers as requested. Bulmer Hobson Papers, National Library of Ireland, MS 13174.
60. Enniscorthy Echo, 18/6/1912 and 22/6/1912.
61. Irish Freedom, September 1912 refers to sluaite Vinegar Hill (Enniscorthy), John Mitchel (Derry), Finegal (Lusk), Fiach Mac Aodha (Baile Breach). Mellows, L. in The Gaelic American, 21/4/1917, refers to sluaite founded at Rathkeale, Athlone and Maryborough in late autumn 1911.
62. Cronin, S.(ed.) The McGarrity Papers (Tralee, 1972), p.32.
63. Martin, E. Bureau Statement, p.4.
64. Quoted in Irish Freedom, October 1911. Version as amended 1913 in Fianna Handbook, 1914.
65. Nora Connolly O'Brien (interview) stated that all Belfast members took the oath - "I call upon God to witness that if accepted as a member of Na Fianna Eireann I will be true to the principles and rules of the organisation, and that I will be ready to train and fight for Irish freedom as long as I live".
Coogan, T. P. The I.R.A. (London, 1970), p.44, quotes an oath from the 1923 Constitution of the I.R.A. The organisation was however often at pains to refute the accusation of being an oath-bound, secret society - cf., Constitution of Óglaigh na hÉireann, 4th imp. (Dublin, 1934). For a discussion of the historical implications of oath-taking see Williams, T. D. (ed.) Secret Societies in Ireland (Dublin, 1973), including the chapter by Murphy, J. 'The New I.R.A. 1925-62'.
66. Mellows, L. in The Gaelic American, 21/4/1917.
67. Holohan, G. Bureau Statement no. 1, p.3. Lonergan had family connexions in the U.S.A. and emigrated there in April 1914 (The Irish Volunteer, 4/4/1914). The 1912 Fianna Ard Fheis ratified his uniform as acceptable (Irish Freedom, August 1912).
68. The first version - Mellows, L. in The Gaelic American, 21/4/1917. The border was inscribed in Irish 'Remember Limerick and the Treachery of the English'. The second version in Van Voris, J. Constance de Markievicz, p.144.
69. According to the Code of Honour the Fianna boy is patriotic, reliable, diligent, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean, humble, temperate and punctual. The three points of the Motto read 'Truth on our lips, Purity in our hearts, Strength in our arms'. These remained unchanged - cf. Fianna Handbook, 1914, 1924, 1964.
70. Constitution as ratified by Ard Fheis, printed in Irish Freedom, October 1911.
71. Constitution as emended 1912, National Library of Ireland.

72. Bean na hÉireann, October 1910.
73. Molony, H. 'The Countess and the Fianna', Irish Independent, 18/8/1966.
74. Fianna Handbook, 1914. There were three grades of proficiency.
75. Hobson, B. Fianna Eireann, Bureau Statement, p.7.
76. Martin, E. Bureau Statement, pp. 5 ff.
77. White, A. Liam Mellows Biography, Statement to the Bureau of Military History, p.5; Holohan, G. Bureau Statement no. 1, p.5.
78. For details of Irish drill terms see The Irish Volunteer, 29/8/1914.
79. Hobson, B. Ireland Yesterday and Tomorrow, p.18; also Martin, F. X.(ed.) The Irish Volunteers, p.22.
80. There was a rifle range in Tuam used by the local slua - cf. O'Neill, S. letter, Irish Independent, 7/4/1966. The reference in The Irish Volunteer is from the issue of 27/2/1915.
81. Holohan, G. Madame Markievicz (her work in the Fianna Eireann), handwritten, n.d. in Mrs. Sidney Czira Papers, National Library of Ireland, MS 18817(2).
82. Bean na hÉireann, November 1910.
83. Reynolds, J. 'Fianna Eireann - with the Dublin Brigade', Dublin's Fighting Story.
84. Bean na hÉireann, January 1910.
85. Bean na hÉireann, March 1910, reports an early concert in which girls took part.
86. Sean Healy interview. There were no other pupils and no band. Tomás MacCurtain taught him.
87. Van Voris, J. Constance de Markievicz, pp.75 f.; White, A. Liam Mellows Bureau Statement, p.5.
88. Irish Freedom, December 1913.
89. See, eg., Irish Freedom, August 1913; also O'Donoghue, F. Tomás MacCurtain, p.25.
90. O'Brien, N. Connolly Portrait of a Rebel Father, p.194; O'Donoghue, F. Tomás MacCurtain, pp.24 f.; Royal Commission on the Rebellion, para.992.
91. Constance de Markievicz - a memory, Mrs. Sidney Czira Papers, National Library of Ireland, MS 18817(2).

92. Irish News, 28/7/1913 and 29/7/1913. James Toomey, 18, and Patrick Dempsey, 17, appeared in court charged with poster in Manor Street Belfast on the night of 6 July. They were granted bail of £10 pending trial at the Winter Assizes.
93. Meath 12th Earl of, Memories of the Twentieth Century (London, 1924), p.230.
94. Cf., his letter in The Times, 30/12/1903, explaining and extolling the aims of the Lads' Drill Association, of which he was chairman; also, on the same subject, Meath 12th Earl of, Brabazon Pot Pourri (London, 1928), pp.116 f. See also, Springhall, J. O. 'Lord Meath, Youth, and Empire', J.Contemp. Hist., 5,4,1970, pp.97-111.
95. Irish Times, 28/8/1912.
96. Mellows, L. in The Gaelic American, 2/6/1917.
97. In autumn 1914 the County Dublin Boy Scouts' Association was large enough to warrant being divided into a North and a South section. A parade at this time brought together 250 boys - Dublin Express, 12/10/1914. The following spring the B.P. Guides held their first Dublin area display where it was reported that they had increased four-fold in the past year and now had some 300 members - Irish Times, 16/4/1915.
98. Countess de Markievicz - a memory.
99. Holohan, G. Madame Markievicz (her work in the Fianna Eireann).
100. Cf., the recollections of a fellow artist - Orpen, Sir W., R.A. Stories of Old Ireland and Myself (London, 1924), p.71.
101. Statement of Seamus Pouch to J. Van Voris, 29/6/1964; copy of interview notes supplied to the author by Mrs. Van Voris, 28/1/1979.
102. See for instance O'Hegarty, P. S. The Victory of Sinn Féin (Dublin, 1924), p.164.
103. Markievicz, C. 'How the Fianna was started', Nodlaig na bhFiann, 1914.
104. Mellows, L. in The Gaelic American, 28/4/1917.
105. Ibid., 5/5/1917.
106. Memoirs of Eoin MacNeill (1932), in Martin, F. X.(ed.) The Irish Volunteers, p.74.
107. Irish Freedom, May 1913.
108. Fianna, September 1915.
109. Irish Freedom, January 1914.
110. Fianna, September 1915.

111. Irish Freedom, May 1913.
112. An Phoblacht, 28/5/1926.
113. Irish Freedom, May 1912. Bank balance of £3 10s. Od., with £7 1s. 6d. in hand.
114. Martin, E. Bureau Statement, p.5; also An Phoblacht, 31/12/1926.
115. Brennan, R. Allegiance (Dublin, 1950), p.27. Brennan also refers to Mellows leading the slua on a route march in the company of its o/c Seán Sinnott. On several later occasions Mellows stayed at the Brennans' home, where he drilled the slua.
116. Irish Freedom, August 1913, secretary's Ard Fheis report.
117. Greaves, C. D. Liam Mellows, p.51. Greaves's account is based on a verbal statement from Walter Mitchell of Tullamore (Greaves, C. D. letter to the present author, 19/11/1978). He states that Mellows set up the slua at this date, but in fact it was established in 1912 (Irish Freedom, September 1912).
118. Statement Liam Langley to Greaves, C. D. - letter to the present author, 19/11/1978. Also O'Neill, S. letter 'Foundation of Fianna Eireann', Irish Independent, 7/4/1966.
119. According to Martin, E. Bureau Statement, p.8, Mellows was transferred to the Volunteers immediately after their foundation. One of the sluaite he later trained was that at Galway (Sinn Féin, 26/4/1924). But the claim, made by 'John Brennan' for instance, that he organised the Volunteers and Fianna until 1916 is obviously not accurate - 'Brennan, J.' Fianna Eireann and the Rising of 1916, typewritten, n.d. Mrs. Sidney Czira Papers, National Library of Ireland, MS 18817(7).
120. See below, p.190.
121. Greaves, C. D. Liam Mellows, p.53.
122. Reynolds, J. 'Fianna Eireann - with the Dublin Brigade', in Dublin's Fighting Story, p.203.
123. See, eg., Fianna Handbook, 1964, where the statement is repeated almost verbatim.
124. Macardle, D. The Irish Republic (London, 1937; 1968 ed.), p.54.
125. Mellows, L. in The Gaelic American, 5/5/1917.
126. An Claidheamh Soluis, 9/10/1909.
127. Hobson held the vice-presidency jointly with Jimmy Grogan in 1910 and Joseph Robinson in 1913 - Bean na hEireann, September 1910; Irish Freedom, August 1913.

128. Markievicz, C. 'Larkin, the Fianna, and the King's visit', no. 3 of the series 'A few memories', Éire : the Irish Nation, 16/6/1923.
129. Irish Freedom, August 1913.
130. Bean na hÉireann, September 1910; Irish Freedom, August 1912 and August 1913.
131. Irish Freedom, August 1913.
132. The full Ard Choiste comprised - Countess Markievicz, Hobson, Ó Riain, Colbert, White, Reynolds and Lonergan (Dublin); Robinson and Sean O'Kelly (Belfast); Heuston (Limerick), Seán Sinnott (Wexford) and Eamon Leahy (Listowel).
133. Quoted in Ó Broin, L. Revolutionary Underground, the story of the Irish Republican Brotherhood, 1858-1924 (Dublin, 1976), p.127.
134. See (eg.) Rose, P. The Manchester Martyrs, the story of a Fenian tragedy (London, 1970), p.16.
135. Devoy, J. Recollections of an Irish Rebel (New York, 1929), p.392.
136. See Martin, F. X. 'McCullough, Hobson and Republican Ulster', in Martin, F. X.(ed.) Leaders and Men of the Easter Rising, (London, 1967).
137. Lynch, D. The I.R.B. and the 1916 Insurrection (Cork, 1957), p.22.
138. O'Hegarty, P. S. The Victory of Sinn Féin (Dublin, 1924), pp.13 f.
139. Roberts, J. M. The Mythology of the Secret Society (London, 1972), whose main theme is the distinction between the real and supposed influence of conspiratorial groups.
140. Wall, M. 'The plans and the countermand : the Country and Dublin', in Nowlan, K. B.(ed.) The Making of 1916 - studies in the history of the Rising (Dublin, 1969).
141. Martin, E. Bureau Statement, p.11; also White, A. Liam Mellows Biography, Bureau Statement, p.2.
142. Le Roux, L. N. Tom Clarke and the Irish Freedom Movement (Dublin, 1936), p.102.
143. Hobson, B, Ireland Yesterday and Tomorrow, p.17.
144. Con Colbert and Pádraig Ó Riain were already members of Hobson's circle. Seán McGarry, another I.R.B. man present at the meeting, had assisted Madame in running the Red Branch Knights - this fact, as much as his I.R.B. membership, should account for his attendance. Other inaugural members of the Fianna who later joined the Brotherhood included Jimmy Dundon, Paddy Ward and Eamon Martin.

145. Hobson, B. Ireland Yesterday and Tomorrow, p.17. By 1912 Hobson had risen to the position of Chairman of the Dublin Centres' Board and Leinster representative on the Supreme Council (Ibid, p.36). Among the Fianna officers who joined the I.R.B. at an early date were Cathal O'Shannon and Joseph Robinson of Belfast, and Alf Cotton, Paddy Ward and Eamon Martin (Martin, E. Bureau Statement, p.11.).
146. Hobson, B. in Martin, F. X.(ed.) The Irish Volunteers, p.21, recalls twenty-one of the members - Colbert (Centre), Eamon Martin, Liam and Barney Mellows, Garry and Pat Holohan, Heuston, Desmond Ryan, Joe Sweeney, Harry and Paddy Ward, Frank Burke, Lonergan, Frank and Jack Reynolds, Seamus Fox, Ó Riain, Eamon Bulfin, Seamus Cashin, and two members Shallow and Stynes.
147. Holohan, G. Bureau Statement no. 1, p.11.
148. Martin, E. Bureau Statement, p.11; also details of statement made by Eamon Martin to Greaves, C. D., in letter Greaves, C. D. to the present author, 7/11/1978.
149. Holohan, G. Bureau Statement no. 1, pp.10 f.
150. Ryan, D. Remembering Sion (London, 1934), p.167. The four were Eamon Bulfin, Joe Sweeney, Frank Burke and Ryan himself.
151. Martin, E. Bureau Statement, pp.12 f. On this source, supported by statements by Paddy Ward, F. X. Martin has based his account in Martin, F. X. and Byrne, F. J.(eds.) The Scholar Revolutionary, Eoin MacNeill, 1867-1945, and the making of the new Ireland (Shannon, 1973), p.120.
152. Martin, E. Bureau Statement, pp.12 f.
153. Irish Freedom, December 1911.
154. Nora Connolly O'Brien interview. Details in the following paragraph from the same source.
155. O'Brien N. Connolly Portrait of a Rebel Father (Dublin and Cork, 1935), pp.138 f., 186, 194.
156. Irish Freedom, August, 1912, Ard Fheis report.
157. Ibid.
158. Van Voris, J. Constance de Markievicz, p.94. Nora Connolly O'Brien told the present author in interview that Hobson did not favour the girls' slua in Belfast.
159. Irish Freedom, September 1912.
160. Ibid.
161. Nora Connolly O'Brien interview. It was still in existence when she left for U.S.A. early in 1916.

162. O'Shannon, C. 'When the girls enrolled in Fianna', Evening Press, 20/5/1955; also, Ní Chorra, E. 'A rebel remembers', Capuchin Annual, 1966.
163. See below, p.133.
164. Words of Countess Markievicz quoted in Van Voris, J. Constance de Markievicz, p.157. On the theme of women's role in the nationalist movement see Farrell, B. 'Markievicz and the women of the Revolution', chap. 18 of Martin, F. X.(ed.) Leaders and Men.
165. Mitchell, A. Labour in Irish Politics 1890-1930 (Dublin, 1974), pp.17 f.
166. Ibid.
167. O'Brien, Nora C. Portrait of a Rebel Father, pp.161-70. Also Irish Freedom, November 1913.
168. The Belfast sluaite joined Trade Unionists and socialists in collections for the locked out workers - Irish Worker, 1/11/1913.
169. Mellows, L. in The Gaelic American, 12/5/1917.

Chapter 2. THE CONTEXT OF FIANNA

In order to explain the kind of organisation that was founded in 1909 it is necessary to place it in the context of the time. As an organisation for boys it must be viewed in the context of the contemporary theory and practice of youth organisations, and as one serving a separatist purpose it must be seen in the context of the aims and values of separatist Ireland. The two contexts partly determined the kind of organisation that it would be. From the first it took both form and ethic, from the second ethic alone. Analysis of them will locate their spheres of influence both general and specific. At the same time it will reveal the origin of certain incompatibilities inherent in Fianna from the start, hidden at first but manifest later, which offer one key to explaining its destiny.

EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY YOUTH ORGANISATIONS

The concept of organisations exclusively for youth is to be found almost no-where in the Western world before the nineteenth century¹, and is a product of the industrialisation of society.

In some European countries - notably Russia, France and Germany - the movements initiated and led by young people themselves were dominant. Probably the first conscious gathering of youth was the Wartburg Festival of 1817. The Burschenschaft, founded a year later, could be considered the first formal youth organisation and its leader Karl Follen the prototype of student leaders². Subsequent movements were essentially intellectual with more or less consciously held and articulated ideologies. Their purpose was protest, against the rational, bourgeois and - as industrialisation

proceeded apace - the urban origins of their members. It expressed itself diversely, in the anti-rationalism of some German movements, the terrorism of Young Bosnia, the landschaftkultur of the Wandervogel, and the political identification with the working-class of the Russian and French students³.

In the latter and similar cases the students undertook radical political action and often played a leading part in effecting political change. From such movements, as they broadened their base among youth, developed the political youth movements proper. In almost every case they were established by young people themselves and only later taken over by the parties they supported⁴; they usually addressed themselves particularly to the political problems of youth.

The political youth movement as a type was already known at the beginning of the twentieth century and might have provided a model for Fianna. But in fact the Irish organisation had quite different antecedents and belongs historically within the British tradition of youth work whose typical form was the adult-initiated boys' club.

Such clubs were also, like the movements, conceived in answer to the conditions of industrial, urban society⁵, and had been founded for working-class youth by men of privilege. It is true that the Co-operative, Trade Union and other workers' self-help movements undertook youth work in late nineteenth century Britain⁶, but it was the Public Schools and Universities that largely defined its form and philosophy. By their definition it was 'service', an obligation upon the leisured class, one of the corporate works of mercy. The concept was in essence and origin religious, not political : it extended the hand of friendship across the gulf of class difference, with no vision of eliminating that difference. Through

it the deprived would be 'rescued' from themselves.

'Rescue' accounts for the fact that early twentieth century youth work was addressed largely to boys, the organisation of the clubs determined by the needs and interests of boys, and their leaders guided by a rough psychology of boyhood. Only in recent decades have girls been more than an afterthought in the British tradition.

'Rescue' accounts also for the characteristically moral purpose of 'improvement' among the early youth workers⁷, and the emphasis they placed on physical exercise and drill, on the didactic and overtly educational, and on esprit de corps. Even the authority structure of the clubs, by offering the responsibilities and relationships of house and prefect systems⁸, was designed to educate. Clubs were in fact envisaged as a compensatory experience for working-class youth, Public School surrogates.

It was within the British tradition - adult-led and -initiated, activity-oriented, with an emphasis upon physical and mental improvement and the role of club life in character-building - that Fianna was founded. Its co-founder, daughter of the benevolent landlords of Lissadell, was in the same social relationship to her boys as were the founders of the boys' clubs, and came to political action on the same impulse as the best of them came to youth work, "putting aside ease and station and taking the hard way of service"⁹. Within the same tradition, also, had developed the Boy Scouts and Boys' Brigades which afforded specific models for Fianna in 1909.

SCOUTING FOR BOYS

Scouting for boys may be formally dated from July 1907 when Baden-Powell held his experimental camp at Brownsea. As a skill and a way of life scouting had attracted public attention since the appearance of his Aids to Scouting for NCOs and Men at the beginning

of the century. Its possible application in the training of the young had been recognised among others by William Smith at whose suggestion Baden-Powell rewrote his book as Scouting for Boys¹⁰. This work, published in the autumn following Brownsea, caught the imagination of youth throughout Britain and led to the immediate and spontaneous appearance of scores of troops. In less than two years - that is, at the time of the foundation of Fianna - Baden-Powell was able to assemble 11,000 scouts at a rally at the Crystal Palace¹¹.

He accepted the orientation to activity of the Boys' Clubs, their explicit Christianity with its purpose of improving the young and its concept of fitness of body, mind and soul, and from them developed his original philosophy of woodcraft. He extolled the life of the frontiersman as a model of fitness, strength, skill, knowledge and endurance. He also recognised, as did the Boys' Clubs leaders, the relationship between social learning and club structure, and accordingly based his patrol system on "a boy's natural desire to be accepted as a member of a gang"¹². By the innovation of the Scout Promise he satisfied boys' capacity for commitment; by tests and insignia he satisfied their desire for visible success. In all this his instinct was faultless. The benefit of the outdoor life to minds and bodies of generations of children was incontestable.

More arguable were elements underlying Baden-Powell's concept. Behind the rejection of urban society and the Public School ethic of fortitude¹³ lay a philosophy of free enterprise - in "life's contest" only the fit prosper and "the out-of-doors man must always prove the better"¹⁴: Scouting would be a way of training for winners. Behind the idealised relationship of leader and boy, as knight and man-at-arms who stick together "through thick

and thin"¹⁵, lay a wider assumption of the scout's political obedience "to everyone who is above him, whether his officers or his employers" according to his allotted place in a society whose structures were sacrosanct¹⁶. The logic of Baden-Powell's concept of loyalty was his assertion of the classic bourgeois nationalist position in which all classes in a nation have a common aim: "Remember," he urged, "whether rich or poor, from town or country, you have to stand shoulder to shoulder for your country. If you are divided among yourselves you are doing harm to your country. You must sink your differences"¹⁷. In this way Scouting served the ends of capitalism and chauvinism, and - on the eve of the European war - of imperialist expansion.

Baden-Powell's was also a sentimental ideology. He extolled chivalrous utopias in the distant past and on the edges of the earth and displayed astonishing ignorance of social reality¹⁸. Advocating to the boys of Edwardian Britain the luxury of seeking out hardships to endure, he turned his back on the here-and-now.

Fianna was founded in conscious imitation of the Baden-Powell model, and it is significant that in launching the organisation Countess Markievicz praised every aspect of the British body except for the fact of its being "anti- (Irish) national"¹⁹. Its basic programme, including camp life, signalling, first aid, swimming and team sports, was adopted in toto, in the last case substituting Gaelic for 'British' games. Its insignia and three-fold proficiency tests were imitated, and fiannai were encouraged to "learn from the enemy" to do one good deed a day for Ireland²⁰. Its structure of troop and patrol became the slua and squad.

Fianna's moral code, like Baden-Powell's, was derived from chivalry, to which the first Handbook of 1914 devoted a notable chapter by Roger Casement. The twelve points of its Code of Honour

echoed the spirit and letter of the Scout Law. To read the Fianna Handbook, indeed, is to walk in a world often strikingly similar to Baden-Powell's; its very phrasing echoed the B.P. handbook, particularly in its references to the type of boy Fianna sought to "produce" - "trained in mind and body", "thoughtful and manly and independent", "strong and self-reliant and self-respecting", "never doing anything that would bring discredit . . . but striving with all his might and strength and energy to carry out the promise", a "fit citizen" of his country²¹. Prior to 1914 Fianna used Scouting for Boys as its training manual²² and (whether consciously or not) its own Handbook was directly inspired by the British publication.

BOYS' BRIGADES

Though soon to be known as the National Boy Scouts Fianna had in fact been founded as a 'National Boys' Brigade'²³, a title that indicates the influence upon it of William Smith's organisation in particular and British military youth movements in general.

Smith had founded the Boys' Brigade in Glasgow in 1883 as a means of fostering interest and discipline in his Sunday school classes by grafting onto them military ranks, uniform and drill. Himself a member of the 1st Lanarkshire Rifles, he took the concept not only from the British Army but from the Cadet forces that had come into existence since the 1860s. The latter were in the main Public School units attached to local Rifle Volunteer Battalions, and would in time be incorporated into the boys' clubs of many a Public School and University settlement²⁴. Smith did not share their frankly imperialist purpose. But in that he sought like them to instil discipline, responsibility and esprit de corps through military training, he stood firmly in the context of the Victorian-Edwardian Public School military mentality.

His undoubted success created a widespread demand for drill among young people and a proliferation of often short-lived Brigades²⁵. Among his more lasting imitators were the Anglican Church Lads' Brigade and the Catholic Boys' Brigade. The latter claimed eight thousand members in the early twentieth century, at least half of them in Ireland²⁶, and provided a local model for Fianna.

The Brigades gave Fianna its military structure and its drill-based programme. The B.B.'s enviable record of attendance and discipline certainly stood as a model for the insistence upon standards that characterised Fianna from the beginning. Most important, the Cadet forces gave an example, and a certain public legitimacy, to the bearing of arms by minors.

In general, Fianna set out to exercise an influence in Ireland comparable to that exerted upon British society by the cadets and Brigades explicitly, and implicitly by the Baden-Powell Scouts. It was the undoubted aim of the British organisations to prepare the young generation for the approaching European war²⁷. By socialising young minds over several decades they successfully influenced public opinion and played a vital part in instilling the patriotism that allowed the British government to recruit successfully and conscript with impunity. Fianna was founded as an antidote to their propaganda in Ireland. From an early date it became an explicit part of its purpose to train boys in military skills and the martial spirit so that "when Ireland needed soldiers they could take an important place in the firing line" in a war for independence²⁸. Pearse claimed that it rekindled the military spirit in the nation so as to make possible the Irish Volunteers²⁹. Before and after the Rising Fianna was part of the separatist armoury that cumulatively eroded the Irish people's loyalty to the crown and its faith in the parliamentary road to independence. This general influence was perhaps

its greatest political contribution.

EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY IRISH SEPARATISM

In what has been called the seed time of revolution in Ireland³⁰ following the fall of Parnell a minority rejected the aim of parliamentary Home Rule for a more complete separation from Britain. Many of them were associated with the Gaelic League, the G.A.A., Sinn Féin, the I.R.B., Socialist Republicanism, or the more-or-less conscious group of writers who comprised the Literary revival. These "small coteries"³¹ were in no sense unitary. Some stressed the cultural, some the political. They had in common only a conviction of Irish separateness. They created a climate but not a homogeneous movement, and the aims and methods of the separatists remained disparate: even in 1916 Pearse seriously discussed the possible investiture of a German prince as Ard Rí of Ireland, for example, while within the I.R.B. men held diametrically opposed views as to the legitimate tactics of insurrection.

In this context of undefined separatism Fianna was founded and its constitution drawn up. Its object - "to re-establish the independence of Ireland" - was stated without amplification. Its means - "the training of the youth of Ireland mentally and physically . . . by teaching scouting and military exercises, Irish history and the Irish language"³² - were specific enough but in no way specified how training would be translated into the achievement of independence. Just as the separatists had agreed neither goals nor tactics at this date so Fianna was established without a defined ideology or role. In later years this fact would prove crucial, for though ideologically it came to be tied to the Republican movement its role would remain to a great extent open to definition according to circumstance and as such a matter of recurrent dispute.

IRISH-IRELANDISM

One movement which found adherents in most of the small coteries, whose influence was paramount in establishing the ethic of Fianna, was Irish-Irelandism. Mazzini had argued in 1847 that Ireland could not claim true nationality because her people "did not plead for any distinct principle of life or system of legislation, derived from native peculiarities, and contrasting radically with English wants and wishes", nor claim "any high special function" for Ireland³³. When in 1892 Douglas Hyde lectured on 'the necessity for de-Anglicising the Irish nation' he referred to Mazzini's assertions³⁴. The Irish-Ireland movement that he was helping to create claimed precisely for a distinct native principle of life at the heart of Irish culture beneath the superimposed alien crust; some of its adherents further claimed a unique role for Ireland in the destiny of the world.

The movement took its impetus from the rediscovery of Ireland's ancient heritage preserved in legend and language. Since the publication of MacPherson's Lays of Ossian, in the wake of the European Romantic movement and its fascination with the primitive past, men of letters had made ancient Ireland their study. With the publishing of Standish O'Grady's History of Ireland in 1878 this world had been brought into the public eye. Thereafter, the work of the Irish Texts Society and the Gaelic colleges, the G.A.A., and above all the Gaelic League of 1893, together created a focus for the movement. As Thompson has shown³⁵, it had a typical ideology - England was the origin of Ireland's ills; industrial society was rejected, and Ireland's messianic role among the nations asserted. It drew the antithesis between past and present, small moral peasant nation and large decadent industrial empire, intuition and reason, Gaelic and English.

If the movement was in essence cultural it was potentially political, since the concept of Ireland's cultural identity led some to demand for her a separate political existence. Although the Gaelic League resisted attempts to make it overtly political, nevertheless for those of its members who had not joined merely "for the sake of is and ta" it was their tutelage in political separatism³⁶.

PÁDRAIC PEARSE AND FIANNA

Among the most articulate expressions of the vision of Irish-Ireland was that of Pádraic Pearse. His was a synthesis of cultural and political separatism, in which Ireland would be not free merely but Gaelic, not Gaelic merely but free. Although he was never formally connected with Fianna³⁷ his influence upon the youth organisation was profound through numerous points of contact in the years before the Rising. His bilingual school, St. Enda's, opened in Dublin the year before the foundation of Fianna. Its prospectus influenced the Fianna concept and was verbally echoed in its literature³⁸. Con Colbert instructed the scholars in drill³⁹. The I.R.B. Fianna Circle, which largely determined the policies of the youth organisation, included among its members at least four of the St. Enda's 'Dogs'⁴⁰. Pearse himself taught Irish to An Chead Slua from 1909⁴¹ and wrote Fianna's second Manifesto and a chapter in the Handbook of 1914 which placed the organisation in direct succession to the Gaelic, heroic Fianna of Fionn.

The motto of the ancient Fianna - "Courage in our hands, Truth in our tongues, Purity in our hearts" - was made the motto for St. Enda's and in turn for Fianna Eireann. Pearse in fact took Fionn with his boy troop for his model as a school teacher. To him education should be leadership by inspiration as in the ancient

Irish system in which the teacher was aite (fosterer) and the pupil dalta (foster-child). It was, he wrote, a "priest-like office" whose immediate task in the service of Ireland's independence was to restore the old "heroic spirit"⁴², by which he implied in particular the restoration of idealism and martial courage. The first he sought to teach through his own rigorous moral probity, and in doing so inspired the tradition of moral idealism that was later so marked in the Republican movement⁴³. The second he believed had been all but erased in Ireland and for want of it previous attempts at insurrection had failed. In the second Manifesto he argued that their restoration must be the chief task of the boys of Na Fianna⁴⁴.

In the hall of St. Enda's were written the words of Cú Chullain - "I care not though I were to live but one day and one night, if only my fame and my deeds live after me". For if Fionn was Pearse's model as a leader of boys Cú Chullain was his model for victorious self-sacrifice, and such was Cú's influence that a contemporary described him as an important if invisible member of staff at the school⁴⁵. It was Pearse's conviction that regeneration springs from self-sacrifice, that "from the graves of patriot men and women spring living nations". W. B. Yeats believed him to be a dangerous man with the vertigo of self-sacrifice; he himself believed self-sacrifice to be his destiny. And because, as he constantly stressed, nationalism is a religion⁴⁶, so Cú Chullain merged with Christ as his divine model for self-sacrifice⁴⁷.

The concepts of destiny, the chosen path of Christ-like self-sacrifice, and victory in death, passed into the ethic of Republicanism after Easter Week⁴⁸. As a part of the movement fiannai would learn by heart Liam Mellows' conviction, expressed on the

morning of his execution, that the way forward for Ireland "is a hard road but it is the road our Saviour followed - the road of sacrifice"⁴⁹. They were warned that it would take "the best and noblest of Ireland's children to win Freedom, for the price of Freedom is suffering and pain. It is only when the suffering is deep enough and the pain almost beyond bearing that Freedom is won"⁵⁰, and were themselves invited to choose the dreary cell of Tone, the gibbet of Emmet and the chains of the Fenians before a life of comfort⁵¹.

Pearse's religion of nationalism had its "credo" of received truth based on the "testament" of past Republicans and he believed that to alter it "by one jot and tittle" was to "blaspheme the cause". It was a belief upon which he was prepared to stake "all his mortal and all his immortal hopes"⁵². Its assertion of apostolic succession would give to later generations of Republicans a conviction of absolute righteousness and the incorruptible and exclusive possession of truth, and a deep moral obligation to keep faith with the past⁵³.

Pearse invested the eighteenth and nineteenth century Republicans with the character of the ancient heroes, so that myth and unreality take their place with history in his writings. They lack the realistic base of a serious historical or social-economic analysis⁵⁴ and are in fact a part of the literary tradition of Romantic Ireland which - as Mansergh has shown⁵⁵ - was characteristically simplistic in its interpretation of a golden past and eschatological in its view of the future. Their literary style is periodic and often apocalyptic.

It was Pearse above all who defined the ethic of Fianna Eireann in its formative years. From him it took a self-concept whose elements were idealism, service, sacrifice, an obligation to

keep faith with those who have gone before, and a conviction of sharing in Ireland's messianic destiny. From him, also it took a characteristic style, heroic, archaic, Romantic. Style and self-concept would be set before succeeding generations of fiannai:

Fianna! the future is as you make it . . .
 Before history began, the men from whom we were descended shone out above all the world for their gallantry and nobility. More than all the races of the world the Celt was noble . . . They were not of the Greeks, who fought by treachery. They were not of the Romans, who crushed weak peoples. They were not of the Teutons, whose god was gain. They were alone, these darling Celts, and in them was all the beauty of the world, and all the dreams . . . The Celts alone can give the world an ideal of perfection. That is their destiny, to teach the peoples of the world how to live . . .
 Are you going to fight for this cause, Fianna of Ireland? Are you ready to suffer death and shame, maybe, for the noblest cause that the world has known or will know? Pearse and Mellows, and Colbert and Heuston, and Barry and Sweeney - they are calling to you! . . . Yours it is to make the world worthwhile!⁵⁶

SEPARATIST YOUTH ORGANISATIONS

Fianna Eireann was not the first attempt to organise young people in the cause of Irish separatism but followed several other short-lived ventures some of whose features it incorporated.

In 1908 Countess Markievicz had joined Inghinidhe na hÉireann⁵⁷, the women's organisation that was the precursor of Cumann na mBan. She knew of Inghinidhe's work with young people that had developed from its Patriotic Children's Treat, staged to rival the celebrations of Queen Victoria's visit to Dublin in 1900. The women provided free classes of dancing, choral singing, Irish history and language, drama and drill to children of nine years and over in three halls in the capital⁵⁸. High standards were set, the children winning many prizes at Provincial feiseanna. The treats themselves attracted huge numbers and combined pleasure with patriotic education, the first summer outing being a picnic visit

to the grave of Wolfe Tone. The organisation's rule that children pledge never to enlist in the British forces may well have directly prompted the Fianna Promise; its emphasis on cultural education with drill certainly provided a model for the Fianna programme. It was, indeed, after Inghinidhe's classes were discontinued that the Countess first gave thought to establishing the new organisation⁵⁹.

Following the original Patriotic Treat Inghinidhe had sponsored a 'National Boys' Brigade' and actually enrolled 200 members. Its objects were to train boys in temperance, foster a spirit of Irish nationality, cultivate Irish history and language, and encourage national sports and pastimes. One branch only was established, in the Phibsboro district of Dublin⁶⁰. Funds were collected for the venture, which apparently also went under the name of the 'National Guard', but it collapsed after six months⁶¹.

In 1901 or early 1902 the Inghinidhe also established a Hurling Club for boys, Fianna na hÉireann Óg⁶², which may justly claim to be the original bearer of the name among twentieth century separatist youth organisations. It pre-dated by several months Bulmer Hobson's Belfast Fianna.

Hobson came to Republicanism from a Unionist background, having fallen under the influence of the heroic Ireland of Standish O'Grady and the Shan Van Vocht⁶³. He rose to prominence in the Belfast Gaelic League and the County Antrim Board of the G.A.A., and in 1902 had helped the boys of his Irish class to set up half-a-dozen hurling clubs in the city. When the G.A.A. rejected his suggestion to form them into a league he resigned from the Board and established his own league under the name Fianna Eireann⁶⁴. The subsequent history of this organisation is recounted in Appendix II. It remained essentially a hurling league, though adding Gaelic football,

athletics, Irish history and language, and drama to its programme at different times. An attempt was made in 1906 to re-establish it as a Boys' Brigade, while retaining the emphasis on members' decision-making that it had had from the beginning.

The Fianna of 1909 clearly showed the influence of the earlier venture : the name itself, the educationals in language and history and the practice of decision-making by the boys, all owed much to the Belfast organisation. But it would be an error to over-state the similarities, an error to which Hobson himself may have unwittingly contributed. His recent accounts of the two organisations⁶⁵ correctly redressed the balance after half a century in which his own role in the foundation of the 1909 Fianna had been undervalued. But by their strong emphasis upon the 1902 organisation and their reference to it as "the first Fianna" and the 1909 body as "a new Fianna"⁶⁶, they perhaps mislead and give the impression of a more direct relationship and similarity than in fact existed.

F. X. Martin has pointed out that the 1902 Fianna was not a uniformed or military organisation⁶⁷. But he does not mention an equally fundamental difference, that it was in no sense whatever a scouting organisation. Indeed he suggests the contrary, adding that "Hobson was undoubtedly, though unconsciously, influenced by the example of the then highly successful boy scout organisation of Baden-Powell". But in fact the Baden-Powell Scouts were not founded until 1907. The Belfast Fianna had no British prototype as originally established, and was a direct extension of the G.A.A. to boys. Martin's statement may give the impression of a closer affinity between it and the 1909 Fianna Scouts than was in fact the case. Their real similarity lay in the Gaelic-heroic ethic and in

their attempt to promote political separatism by fostering in boys a devotion to Irish culture and to idealism.

The founders of Fianna Eireann were thus able to draw upon the example of several earlier separatist youth organisations and to incorporate a number of their features into the new body. Its programme of activities, ethic and Brigade structure were all largely to be found in one or more of the earlier ventures. Only scouting was not. By 1909 the already highly fashionable B.P. organisation was recently established in Dublin, to provide the element that would complete the compound.

IMPLICATIONS

As we have seen, Fianna was founded within the context of the British tradition of youth work, adopting some of the structures and purpose of that tradition and using them for militant political ends. Thus a basic duality of role was introduced from the outset. Whereas the purpose of a military or political youth movement is the pragmatic one of serving a cause, the purpose of youth work is the social development of individual young people. In addition, as Fianna came to be associated inevitably with adult separatist organisations - the I.R.B. and later the Volunteers and the I.R.A. - it would be confronted by the recurrent problem, did it exist for the boys or for the cause and the movement? It was in part a moral problem, particularly acute when the demands of circumstance led its members into danger, imprisonment and even death. It was also a problem of relationship, at the heart of Fianna's many disputes with the adult movement in later years. But it was in essence a problem of role duality inherent in the Fianna concept - the organisation was in effect attempting to perform two different

roles, and would not always find them easily compatible.

A similar problem of role and relationship with adult associates confronted Fianna's British counterparts the Scouts and Boys' Brigade as a result of their active political-military involvement before and during the Great War⁶⁸. But in their case the problem evaporated as they developed in peacetime into the politically 'neutral' and independent youth organisations that they remain to this day.

The ambiguity of Fianna's role and relationship, though not the moral problem, would have been obviated if it had been established on the model of the political youth movements, since the purpose of the latter is unambiguously to mobilise the young as participants in and under the political authority of the movement as a whole. The model was available in 1909, but at that date Irish separatism was not even a united movement, far less a political party. Not indeed until after 1970, when the Republican movement developed as a party, would it look to the model of European party political youth movements for a re-definition of Fianna's role.

We have seen also that Fianna took its ethic from Irish separatism (represented above all by Pearse) and from its British models, adapting the latter - committed as they were to imperialism - in order to promote an ideology of freedom. The two sources appear at first sight diametrically opposed. But in fact a broad common ground existed between them. 'Pearse Republicanism' and Baden-Powellism were both romantic and had common antecedents in the European Romantic movement. Both looked to an ideal distant in time or place. Both neglected social, economic analysis - Pearse by his concept of the nation as a spiritual not a material

thing⁶⁹, Baden-Powell by his ignorance of social reality. Both were religious in impulse. Though Baden-Powell's sympathy lay with the ascendant class and Pearse's with the disinherited⁷⁰, both envisaged all classes united in the national cause⁷¹. Both displayed forms of national chauvinism, though Baden-Powell's was imperialist and Pearse's a defence against imperialism. There are, lastly, clear affinities between the military mentality of the British cadet and uniformed organisations of the time and Pearse's glorification of arms per se⁷².

The two sources gave Fianna an emphasis upon the ancient and heroic, the chivalrous and military, and an almost total neglect of social and political issues, that would remain its mark for sixty years.

Where Pearse stands for a certain type of Republican emphasis, Connolly is the exemplar of its converse. Against romanticism and the distant past he posed realism and "the exigencies of the moment"⁷³. Against spiritual nationalism he urged that the independence struggle was in essence a struggle for "the mastery of the means of life, the sources of production"⁷⁴. Against the assertion of bloodshed as a sanctifying thing he denied the possibility of humane war and justified force not as a principle but as a tactic, "with no delusions as to its elevating or civilising methods"⁷⁵. And against Pearse's united-class Republicanism and undefined separatism - "as if definitions mattered . . . "⁷⁶ - he asserted Socialist Republicanism with a rigorous class ideology, defined aims⁷⁷ and party organisation⁷⁸.

By their stature and their historical role Pearse and Connolly defined two distinct traditions which have co-existed within Republican political philosophy to the present day. Of the two Pearse

remained dominant though not unchallenged for half a century after his death, through his own speeches and writings and through a literature inspired by him⁷⁹. During this time Fianna's military form and structure, its military-heroic ethic, and its avoidance of political and social action would broadly suit the needs of the movement. But when from the late 1960s the movement turned to Connolly (and especially when the Official movement to which Fianna belonged developed as a Socialist Republican party after 1970) it would become clear that change would be necessary in its youth wing also. An attempt would be made to graft on to the existing scouting organisation a socialist ideology and a programme of social and political activity, but with only partial success. The movement would then be confronted with the question as to whether Fianna's traditional forms could be made compatible with its new role; whether, that is, the product of one context could adapt to fulfil the needs of another. Their decision, that the appropriate form of youth wing for a Socialist Republican party was the party political youth movement, would spell the end of Fianna.

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14. Ibid, p.32.
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16. Cf. still explicitly asserted, The Scout Leader's Handbook, p.18. According to The Policy, Organisation and Rules of the Scout Association (London, 1970 ed.), p.11., scouts should where necessary act as strike breakers.
17. Scouting for Boys, p.178.
18. B.P. could seriously suggest in 1907, for instance, that "some (boys) are certain to become rich men and some may die in misery and poverty. It pretty well depends on your own selves which you are going to do" - Scouting for Boys, p.167.
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41. Martin, E. A Brief Outline of Fianna Eireann from 1909-1916, Statement to the Bureau of Military History, p.5.
42. Pearse, P. The Murder Machine in Political Writings and Speeches, passim; also Political Writings and Speeches, pp.38 f. - "What the modern world wants more than anything else, What Ireland wants beyond all other countries, is a new birth of the heroic spirit. If only our schools would set themselves that task".
43. Cf. Coogan, T. P. The I.R.A. (London, 1970), pp.225 ff. An influential publication of the movement - Lynd, R. The Ethics of Sinn Féin (Dublin, National Council of Sinn Féin, 1917) - concludes "The only way to be a patriotic Irishman is to do your best to become a perfect man". This reference given to the author by Miss Máire Comerford.
44. Pearse, P. Second Manifesto to the Boys of Ireland, Irish Freedom, February 1914.
45. Cf. McCartney, D. Irish Times Supplement, 7/4/1966.
46. A religion into which members were "baptised" and which bore "the marks of unity, of sanctity, of catholicity, of apostolic succession".
47. Cf. Pearse's poem Renunciation, in which the poet's sacrifice is expressed in imagery which very directly refers to Christ.

48. For a brief discussion of the theme of 'sacrifice for Ireland as Calvary' in post 1916 Republican literature, see Martin, F. X. '1916 - Myth, Fact and Mystery', Studia Hibernica, no. 7, 1967, pp.15 ff.
49. Letter Liam Mellows to his mother, 8/12/1922, National Museum of Ireland, EW 2378.
50. Markievicz, C. in Fianna Handbook, 1914. And cf. her Christmas Message to the Fianna, 1925, "We of Fianna point to many a lad who carried his cross bravely and proudly to the end . . . etc."
51. Irish Freedom, various issues in 1910.
52. Variously from Pearse's 1913 Bodenstown address, Ghosts, From a Hermitage and The Separatist Idea; in Pearse, P. Political Writings and Speeches, passim.
53. "We have kept faith with the past . . . " - from Pearse's speech at his Court martial. The concept became a Republican commonplace and an unanswerable argument - cf. its use by Harry Boland against the Treaty in the Dáil in January 1922 - Dáil Eireann Official Report, Debate on the Treaty between Great Britain and Ireland (Stationery Office, Dublin), debate of 7/1/1922, p.304a.
54. Pearse's last work, The Sovereign People, shows him moving towards social-economic analysis under the influence of Connolly, and advocating state control of the nation's resources. Even in this work, however, he expressed the view that class and property are "an accident".
55. Mansergh, N. The Irish Question, pp.250 ff.
56. An Phoblacht, 8/7/1933.
57. See Van Voris, J. Constance de Markievicz in the cause of Ireland (Amherst Massachusetts, 1967), p.59.
58. The present account based on MacBride, M. Gonne Introduction to Inghinidhe na hÉireann, Mrs. Sidney Czira Papers, National Library of Ireland, MS 18817(6); and MacBride, M. Gonne A Servant of the Queen (London, 1938; London, 1974 ed.), pp.94 and 291 ff.
59. Molony, H. 'The Countess and the Fianna', Irish Independent, 18/8/1966. Helena Molony was of course a member of Inghinidhe as well as being present at Fianna's inaugural meeting.
60. The United Irishman, 12/5/1900.
61. Ibid, 11/5/1901; also MacBride, M. Gonne Introduction to Inghinidhe.
62. MacBride, M. Gonne Introduction to Inghinidhe.

63. Hobson, B. Ireland Yesterday and Tomorrow, pp.1 f.
64. Ibid, p.15.
65. The two accounts, with somewhat different emphases, are in Martin, F. X.(ed.) The Irish Volunteers 1913-1915 (Dublin, 1963), pp.12 ff.; and Hobson, B. Ireland Yesterday and Tomorrow, pp.14 ff. Both are based on Hobson's Statement for the Bureau of Military History, with few changes.
66. Hobson, B. Ireland Yesterday and Tomorrow, p.16.
67. Martin, F. X. and Byrne, F. J.(eds.) The Scholar Revolutionary, Eoin MacNeill, 1867-1945, and the making of the new Ireland (Shannon, 1973), p.117.
68. The Boys' Life Brigade was a breakaway from the Boys' Brigade in protest at the growing militarism of the parent body. During the war the Boys' Brigade came under pressure from official attempts to incorporate it as a cadet force into the Territorials. From 1916 several splinter organisations were formed which rejected the "jingoism" of the Baden-Powell Scouts and returned to an emphasis on woodcraft alone. See Springhall, J. Youth, Empire, and Society, pp.110 ff.
69. Cf. Pearse, P. The Spiritual Nation; also Ghosts, in Pearse, P. Political Writings and Speeches, p.224.
70. "My instinct is with the landless men against the lord of lands, and with the breadless man against the master of millions . . . etc" - From a Hermitage, 1913, in Pearse, P. Political Writings and Speeches, p.183. The essay was written during the Lock-out.
71. "My fellow-slaves whether capitalist or worker . . . etc" - From a Hermitage, in Pearse, P. Political Writings and Speeches, p.177.
72. Cf. especially his attitude to the death of millions in the European War - "the last sixteen months have been the most glorious in the history of Europe . . . etc" - Peace and the Gael, Dec. 1915, in Pearse, P. Political Writings and Speeches, p.216.
73. The phrase from Connolly, J. in Shan Van Vocht, January 1897.
74. Cf., eg., Connolly, J. Labour in Irish History (1910; Dublin, 1971 ed.), p.134.
75. Irish Worker, 30/1/1915.
76. Pearse, P. From a Hermitage, 1913, in Political Writings and Speeches, p.144.

77. Contrast, for example, the Constitutions of the Irish Citizen Army and the Irish Volunteers. The latter sought to "unite in the service of Ireland Irishmen of every creed and of every party and class" - Draft Constitution Irish Volunteers, passed by executive Committee 10/10/1914, Bulmer Hobson Papers, National Library of Ireland, MS 13174(i). The Citizen Army Constitution in contrast excluded from membership anyone not willing to accept the principle of equal rights and opportunities for all the people of Ireland, and to join his appropriate Trade Union; it had an international dimension also, pledging itself to support "the rights and liberties of the democracies of all nations" - cf., Fox, R. M. The History of the Irish Citizen Army (Dublin, 1944), pp.63 ff.
78. Connolly founded two socialist parties in Ireland, the Irish Socialist Republican Party (1895) and the Irish Labour Party (1912) - the latter "represented the consummation of sixteen years of labour" - see Greaves, C. D. The Life and Times of James Connolly (London, 1951; 1972 ed.), espec. pp. 74 and 282.
79. Notable in later Republican literature inspired by Pearse is the work of his "faithful disciple" Brian Ó hUiginn (Brian Na Banban) - cf. Martin, F. X. '1916 - Myth, Fact and Mystery', Studia Hibernica, no. 7, 1967, pp.20 f. Ó hUiginn had a profound influence upon Fianna to whom he was a "lifelong friend" (Fianna Handbook, 1964, p.6).

Chapter 3. TO THE RISING (1913-1916)

THE FOUNDING OF THE IRISH VOLUNTEERS

Óglaigh na hÉireann - the Irish Volunteers - was founded at a public meeting at the Rotunda Rink on 25 November 1913¹. Fianna officers helped to control the overflow audience of 7000 and to enrol 3000 recruits on the first night. Within a week a Dublin Brigade of four battalions was organised and the first parades were held².

Such a response indicates the readiness for a volunteer force that existed among the people of Ireland in the autumn of 1913. The Lock-out had shaken many men's faith in constitutional authority, while the Ulster Volunteer Force, with its open threat of invasion from the North, impressed on them the need for organised, armed defence and in effect altered the whole climate of opinion in favour of volunteering³.

It was a change of climate for which the Irish Republican Brotherhood was already prepared, as Bulmer Hobson has recalled: "In the I.R.B. we knew that Carsonism had opened a door that would not easily be closed again, and that we had but to wait and get ready to take advantage of the new situation that was rapidly emerging"⁴. The Brotherhood had been 'getting ready' for at least a year past, regularly discussing the possibility of a volunteer army⁵. Some Dublin members had paraded at Bodenstown in the summer⁶ and since then had been receiving secret military training from officers of the I.R.B. Fianna Circle⁷. In the event of a force being established they were to be its first officers.

The opportunity for which the Brotherhood had been waiting was provided quite unexpectedly by the publication of an article 'The

North began' by Eoin MacNeill in the 1 November 1913 issue of An Claidheamh Soluis. Hobson, through The O'Rahilly, at once approached MacNeill, who agreed to preside at an exploratory meeting to discuss the formation of a volunteer force. The final outcome was the public meeting of 25 November. Thus MacNeill's article had given the opening and the impetus, but the recruiting at the Rotunda Rink was the fruit of a plan conceived and nurtured over many months by the I.R.B., in which senior members of Na Fianna had played an essential part.

Although care was taken to avoid any appearance of sectional interest⁸ the Brotherhood in fact secured an unobtrusive hold upon the new army from the outset. Largely through the influence of Hobson five of its members were invited onto the original twelve-man organising committee, and fifteen were elected onto the final committee of thirty. The latter included five officers of the Fianna Circle as well as Hobson himself⁹ - they were elected as being trained Fianna officers, but they voted as I.R.B. men. To them was given the crucial role of selecting the Volunteers' first N.C.O.s¹⁰, thus guaranteeing promotions suitable to the Brotherhood. Finally, Hobson as National Secretary and Mellows as his assistant effectively controlled the army's internal communications.

As an organisation of four years' standing, with military discipline and expertise in drill, reconnaissance and weaponry, Fianna was called upon to play the major part in training the adult army until such time as it was able to produce its own officers¹¹. (The Scouts also gave training at this time to the newly established Cumann na mBan¹² and provided the Citizen Army with its first drill instructor¹³.) Óglaigh na hÉireann based its training course entirely on Fianna schedules which it published as a series in its own paper The Irish Volunteer¹⁴; from 1914 it used the Fianna

Handbook as its training manual¹⁵.

Such was the influence of the Scouts upon the foundation and early development of the new army; in turn, the advent of the Volunteers had an immediate and lasting effect upon Fianna as an organisation.

THE IRISH VOLUNTEERS AND FIANNA

In the first place, it offered a solution to the growing problem of unpromoted seniors in the juvenile body. "Long before the founding of the Irish Volunteers the officers of the Fianna were armed, and out of their own slender resources had planned to arm all the older boys as they reached a good standard of efficiency. The coming of the Volunteers relieved them of this latter task"¹⁶. A rule was introduced for automatic transfer to the adult army at seventeen years of age for all fiannai who had not reached the rank of Lieutenant¹⁷. For Fianna this solved the problem not only of arms but of what to do with a surplus of seniors without prospects of promotion; for the Volunteers it guaranteed a supply of recruits ready trained and disciplined.

The transfer of unpromoted seniors had the further effect of emphasising the distinction between officers and boys in Fianna, creating two classes of member visibly different in age. Fianna became more obviously an organisation with a mass juvenile membership and a topping of young adults, in which the rank and file were restricted (at least in theory) to a 'scouting' role, while officers comprised an armed military corps. Fianna became in fact two organisations in one, and this characteristic duality would remain throughout its subsequent history though its precise pattern might vary with time and place.

Secondly, the overt military function of the Volunteers, and the steps they were prepared to take to acquire arms, set an example for the youth organisation to follow. Within the month Fianna's National Secretary was openly inviting members to "arm, by all means, and as quickly as possible"¹⁸. At the same time new regulations raising the minimum age and height of recruits¹⁹ indicate the growing military emphasis. At the 1915 Ard Fheis delegates would unanimously pass resolutions to equip all third-class scouts with rifles and to make musketry a compulsory test²⁰.

Thirdly, Fianna suffered immediate losses of officer personnel to the adult ranks, particularly at the level of local o/c. It was estimated that nearly two-thirds of all slua officers joined Óglaigh na hÉireann²¹, while in Cork for instance many seniors and the entire organising committee were transferred²². In an attempt to allay such losses Fianna established its own Officers' Training Corps in the autumn of 1914, open to fifteen-year-olds of particular promise²³. At the level of central leadership the only loss was that of Liam Mellows. No-one was appointed to succeed him²⁴, and without the regular personal contact that only an itinerant National Organiser could provide several sluaite collapsed²⁵ - by February 1914 hardly more than 1000 boys were thought to be in training²⁶.

From this time it would be Fianna's permanent fate to suffer the loss of its officers - to the Volunteers, and in later years to the I.R.A.; to be cropped of those very boys who had proved themselves its most able members, at an age when they should have been most valuable to the organisation. Such recurrent loss would inevitably stunt Fianna's development as an independent youth organisation, and by limiting the scope for consistent and lasting local

leadership would contribute to the ephemeral quality that has often characterised it in all but the strongest Republican areas.

Finally, the 'climate of opinion' that created the Volunteers was itself clarified and advanced by their foundation. Within a week Tom Clarke was enthusing to McGarrity in America - "Joe, it is worth living in Ireland these times - there is an awakening . . . hundreds of young fellows who could not be interested in the National Movement, even in the milk and water side, are in these volunteers and are saying things which proves that the right spot has been touched in them . . . "²⁷. By the spring he reported the country "électrified with the volunteering business"²⁸.

Recruitment to Fianna benefited by a halo effect from the popularity of the adult army. In a number of areas the establishing of a Volunteer unit signalled the foundation of a Fianna slua²⁹, and by the new year of 1915 the youth organisation claimed fifty-four branches throughout the country³⁰. By midsummer the National Secretary was able to report a year's "really remarkable" expansion which he attributed in part to "the great revival of the national and military spirit in our people as typified in the Volunteer movement"³¹.

Outside the capital the area of greatest strength was Munster. The Munster Conference, held in Limerick early in the summer, revealed the existence of eleven sluaite in the province, at Cork, Fermoy, Clonmel, Tipperary, Queenstown, Foynes, Ballylanders, Limerick, Tralee, Waterford and Thurles. Nonetheless, the conference report admitted that "in Dublin it is not such a hard task to keep the Fianna alive as in the country"³². Dublin was the stronghold of the organisation as it was of the Volunteers, and would remain so until after the Rising³³.

The pattern established by 1915 would remain consistent for half a century or more : the strength of the youth organisation would almost always correspond closely to that of the adult army. Fianna would thrive where and when the 'senior movement' was strong. Sudden surges in the popularity of the army (during its military campaigns for instance) would at once be recorded on the graph of Fianna's membership - although because the youth organisation's potential would be restricted by a particularly heavy loss of training officers at such times the growth curve would normally be shallower. Equally inevitably, decline would match decline.

IMITATIONS

As early as 1912 Fianna's leadership had recognised that the organisation was only one of a "number of similar associations for boys" and had proposed a loose alliance of those in the Dublin area³⁴. In the shadow of a European war drilling was a natural and ubiquitous activity for boys, and diverse organisations were adapting it to their own needs. Some rival political groups saw in Fianna's success proof of the value of a youth wing in attracting recruits.

In the spring of 1914 the Belfast Parliamentary Party M.P. Joe Devlin was considering plans for a boys' organisation to operate as a juvenile A.O.H.³⁵. It is clear that these plans were not unconnected with Redmond's attempt to gain control of the Irish Volunteers³⁶. In order to steal the Redmondites' thunder, Clarke's Separatist friends made preparations to establish an Irish Volunteer Boys' Organisation, following the form and principles of the adult body³⁷ and counting on its glamour to outbid their rival. A steering committee of two Cumann na mBan women was appointed³⁸ and the first Company was established in the North Dock ward of

Dublin in September³⁹. Within a month, however, the Redmondites had been expelled from the Volunteers' Provisional Committee and Redmond had set up his own National Volunteers, taking into it all but 12,000 of the original army. On 11 October delegates at Fianna's Ard Fheis unanimously declared their support for MacNeill's Irish Volunteers⁴⁰. There is no record of any slua seceding in toto to the Redmond side though certainly some individual members, including local leaders, were lost at the time⁴¹.

It was also with the success of Fianna in mind that Countess Markievicz and others of the Citizen Army founded a juvenile Scout section in the summer of 1914. It remained small in number, never expanding beyond about twenty members. But it maintained a remarkably stable existence up to the time of Easter Week when its members were 'out' in almost full strength. (For a detailed account of the Citizen Army Scouts, see Appendix III.)

Finally, a number of independent scout troops had lately emerged in rural areas, under the inspiration of Fianna and considering themselves under its authority. The National Secretary came to hear of several such groups in 1915, organised as if bona fide sluaite, using the official uniform and declaration, but previously unknown to Headquarters⁴². They owed their existence, he believed, to the enthusiasm of the times and more particularly to the previous work around the country of Fianna's National Organiser.

TOWARDS CONTROL AND COMMUNICATION

At this time therefore the most pressing problems confronting the leadership concerned control and contact, particularly in the country. As a first step towards control they had set up a tests' committee in the winter of 1913, which produced standardised com-

pulsory tests for every slua⁴³. During the next two years the publication of a Handbook, a Christmas magazine and a monthly newspaper was undertaken with the aim of reaching all members, creating organs of contact and establishing a standard purpose and uniform procedure throughout the organisation.

The Fianna Handbook comprised three parts. The chapters on military, scouting and first-aid skills were the work of Pádraig Ó Riain and had previously been published in the I.R.B.'s paper Irish Freedom. Chapters on the historical and chivalric tradition of Fianna were specially written for the issue by Pearse and Casement. The remaining chapters defined the organisation's constitution and structure. The Countess, who had studied art in Paris, produced the artwork for the cover, and text illustrations were the work of Michael Lonergan and Eddie Morrow⁴⁴. There was an irony in the Handbook's printing: Messrs. E. Ponsonby Ltd., agents for government publications, undertook the work in the belief that it was an 'ordinary' (Baden-Powell) manual. On discovering their error they at first refused to complete it, but Hobson was able to hold them to their verbal agreement and received compensation for the delay. The firm deleted their name from the title page which thus bears no details of publication⁴⁵.

The magazine, Nodlaig na bhFiann, was produced for Christmas 1914. Though at the time envisaged as an annual the venture was not in fact repeated. The Countess herself collected much of the material including contributions from Connolly, George Russell (AE) and Maeve Cavanagh. (Several of the articles - notably her own on the founding of Fianna, Connolly's on 'Boys and their parents' and Ó Riain's on the Howth Gun Running - soon became standard items of Fianna lore, to be republished regularly over the years.) Percy

Reynolds as Business Manager was responsible for financing the venture, through advertisements from suppliers of scouting equipment and other sympathisers⁴⁶.

Following the success of the magazine the boys decided to attempt a monthly newspaper⁴⁷. The early issues included a serial from the pen of Pearse, 'Dates from Irish History', biographies, poetry and one page in the Irish language. Advertisements were largely for scouting requisites, but included one for Connolly's paper The Worker, no doubt through the influence of Countess Markievicz. Liam Mellows has stated that the paper was almost entirely the work of its editor Patsy O'Connor and Percy Reynolds his assistant⁴⁸. Enthusiasm they had, but scant resources⁴⁹, and the publication proved a failure financially. Addressed to boys it was ignored by adults and after five issues the decision was taken to "make a fresh start, not as a boys' paper but as a journal for man and boy combined"⁵⁰. The same month, June 1915, Patsy O'Connor died of the delayed effect of head-wounds he had received when struck by a police baton during the Lock-out eighteen months before. He was buried at Glasnevin in the first ever Fianna funeral⁵¹.

The new paper, under the same name and edited by Percy Reynolds⁵², ran from July 1915 into the new year⁵³ by which date it had built up a circulation surpassing 1000 copies a month⁵⁴. The December issue included an article by Connolly, whose open threat of independent insurrection by the Citizen Army had already established him as a dangerous man in the eyes of the authorities, and in addition strained his relations with the Volunteers' and I.R.B. leadership (it was only a month after this date that he was 'kidnapped' by the I.R.B. Military Council)⁵⁵. To publish his article was therefore in effect to assert Fianna's militant disloyalty to

the state, and at the same time its staunch independence within the Separatist movement - an independence which would always remain its hallmark. The police certainly considered the paper dangerous, bracketing it with adult publications such as The Irish Volunteer, The Workers' Republic, Nationality and The Gael, as "disloyal journals which spread dissent and exercised a deterrent effect on recruitment for the Army"⁵⁶.

ACTIVITIES 1914-15

Anti-enlistment activity in fact remained a major part of slua work at this time. The disruption of an Army recruiting film show in O'Connell Street by the Dublin Fianna in Spring 1914 was a typical tactic⁵⁷. But increasingly now, members were undertaking actions of an overtly military nature.

For juniors these largely involved communications and reconnaissance for the Volunteers - in the towns reconnoitring the streets, checking distance, traffic, shops and roads; in the country acting as guides for the army on manoeuvres⁵⁸.

For the officers and older boys it also involved collaboration with Óglaigh na hÉireann in acquiring arms. By the late spring of 1914 the Volunteers had some 50,000 members, but almost no arms or funds⁵⁹. On the initiative of Roger Casement money was raised to purchase Mauser rifles and ammunition in Antwerp, to be shipped to Ireland in two yachts. The first of these, Erskine Childers's Asgard, landed with its cargo at Howth on 26 July. Hobson was in sole charge of landing arrangements and had chosen Howth precisely because it was close to Dublin so that to land guns there in broad daylight would be a spectacular coup. Because it was a Sunday, the day for route marches, the Volunteers aroused no suspicions as they marched to the town, accompanied by a Fianna detachment under

Pádraig Ó Riain and Eamon Martin⁶⁰. Ó Riain was the one person with whom Hobson had shared the plan from the beginning. According to his own account⁶¹ the Fianna contingent largely comprised members of An Chead and the Inchicore sluaite. Ó Riain, Heuston and the Holohan brothers had brought their trek cart, filled with oak batons⁶².

Asgard waited outside the harbour, to make her rendezvous at noon. After receiving urgent signals from her⁶³, two Fianna members of the I.R.B. advance party at the quay were sent to hurry the main body of Volunteers who had been delayed⁶⁴. Yacht and marchers reached the quay together. The rifles were unloaded and distributed to every man. All but 2000 rounds of ammunition were brought into town in a fleet of taxis, the rest being loaded into the trek cart. Hobson has explained that the Volunteers though given rifles were still far too raw and undisciplined to be entrusted with ammunition, and that Na Fianna were the only body whose discipline he could count on. The cart was also filled with as many rifles as it could hold.

On their return to the city the party were met by police and military on the Malahide Road. After a brief mêlée Hobson was able to disperse most of the men who made their best way home. The main company, however, were stopped again at Fairview in a more serious encounter. Several Volunteers opened fire on the army who fortunately thought that the shots came from bystanders⁶⁵. The Fianna found themselves defending the trek cart not only from the enemy but from a number of Volunteers who were trying to get hold of the ammunition. The cargo remained intact and they managed to capture four rifles from the soldiers in the struggle⁶⁶.

As darkness approached the boys lay low in a wood, contriving to bury the rifles and ammunition under pretence of preparing a scout camp site⁶⁷. Half a dozen of them at last arrived at the Countess's cottage at Three Rock Mountain near midnight, knowing that they would find friends camping there⁶⁸. In the morning Madame drove them into Dublin where they met Joseph Robinson with twenty rifles which they brought back to the cottage. They decided against storing them there on learning that the cottage was not safe - Nora and Ina Connolly of the Belfast Fianna had discovered that a retired sergeant lived close by. Nora returned to Dublin to inform Liam Mellows who sent a taxi out to bring the arms back to the Volunteers' office. The girls concealed them by sitting on them into town and in the evening helped plant them in safe houses. For their work they were given a rifle each to take back to Belfast.

It is true that Fianna numbered only some seventy of the 900 who took part in the Howth operation⁶⁹, and that they retrieved less than one tenth of the cargo. On the other hand, their discipline was crucial in the encounter with the authorities, particularly that at Fairview. Moreover their role cannot be measured in terms of rifles, any more than can the gun-running itself. It was an adventure and a coup; as Casement declared, it had struck a blow for Ireland that would echo round the world⁷⁰. It only partly solved the arms problem of the Volunteers, but by the public reaction it inspired at home and in the U.S.A. it solved their financial worries almost completely. It gave an immediate boost to recruiting, as the Government recognised⁷¹; by early August the army was said to number close on 172,000 men⁷². It is the verdict of one scholar that "without Howth and Kilcoole there could hardly have

been a rising in 1916"⁷³.

The Kilcoole landing was made on 1 August. It was a secret operation by a smaller party, without the glamour of Howth but, in the view of one who participated in both ventures, more exacting and much better executed⁷⁴. Eleven of the fifty-one man team were Fianna officers, selected from among the delegates assembled in Dublin that weekend for the annual Ard Fheis⁷⁵. The party arrived by cycle, car and hired charabanc. Liam Mellows directed operations from the side-car of a motor-bike driven by a young little-known Volunteer named de Valera. The cache was brought in by night in small boats and manhandled to shore because of the shallowness of the strand. In the morning it was brought by lorry to St. Enda's for distribution.

Since the outbreak of war in Europe the shipment of foodstuffs out of Ireland had left a shortage at home which many shopkeepers were making the pretext for severe price increases. To Separatists it was England's imperialism in England's imperialist war that was hitting the Irish shopper. The Volunteers were therefore instructed to picket profiteering shops, in co-operation with the Trade Unions. From August 1914 Fianna sluaite were under orders from An tArd Choiste to support the pickets by preparing price lists for the shops in their areas⁷⁶. At the same time they undertook a major campaign in support of home industries. Florence O'Donoghue recalls the Cork slua being sent to challenge shopkeepers who failed to stock available Irish-made articles⁷⁷. Headquarters later organised a 'Supply Stores' "to supply Irish-made goods to Irish Nationalists and others, thereby to promote Irish industries"⁷⁸. The Stores operated as a postal information and distribution service for "anything made in Ireland".

RESOURCES

The failure of Fianna's first paper and the gamble of its second indicate the organisation's poverty at this time. Rank-and-file members were of the working class in Dublin and the country towns⁷⁹, like their colleagues in the Volunteers and like the Fenians before them. The organisation was generally despised by the middle class, Catholic and Protestant alike, and remained so until after the 1918 elections had shown the bourgeoisie where its political future lay⁸⁰.

Fianna recognised its poverty, especially in comparison with its rival the Irish branch of the Baden-Powell Scouts, whom it knew to be subsidised from London and to be loaned premises and instructors by the British Army⁸¹. It had no such friends and patrons. Its leaders therefore launched a fund-raising scheme of Honorary Membership in 1915. A membership roll was compiled, of "men and girls mostly, not being eligible to become active members"⁸², at 3d. per week. A similar scheme was established shortly afterwards in the United States by Michael Lonergan who had emigrated there the previous year. Known as the Fianna League of America, it included Joseph McGarrity among its directors⁸³. These were the first of several such schemes over the years in the organisation's constant struggle to survive.

Now as later, however, it made a virtue of necessity. A wealthy movement, wrote the Countess, would be one "which boys would join for what they could get"; Fianna's members had joined only for what they could give, overcoming difficulties through patience, work and self-denial⁸⁴. All the evidence of contemporary witnesses confirms the truth of her claim. It was a theme that would be repeated in hard days.

A crucial resource to a slua and a condition of its permanence was its drill hall. Before the Rising the purpose-built hall owned by the Scouts in Limerick was unique. More typical would be a room hired from a sympathiser and liable to be withdrawn at short notice. In the city it was usually possible to survive the loss of premises. Slua Emmet, for instance, had five homes in four years. Their first was a drawing room and adjoining room at 10 Beresford Place, the premises of the I.T.G.W.U.; the Union's expansion obliged them to move to a small hall in Nelson Street in 1911, but within two years the boys were back with the Transport Workers in a room in their new home at Liberty Hall; during the Lock-out all available space was needed at the Hall and the troop moved into the Volunteers' H.Q. at Parnell Square temporarily, before finally settling at the Hardwick Theatre⁸⁵. But in the smaller towns halls were less easily replaced and at least one slua collapsed through the loss of its meeting place.

From cramped and dilapidated drill halls Madame's cottage and Hobson's at Balroddery offered a retreat. St. Enda's and Surrey House were twin hermitages in the Dublin suburbs, and used at every excuse. The latter, particularly, was so constantly inhabited by fiannai by the winter of 1914 as to prompt a visiting journalist to remark that "Countess de Markievicz's Salon is not like a Salon but a G.H.Q.!"⁸⁶.

GROWING ASSOCIATION WITH THE ADULT ARMY

Given the role of Fianna in the foundation and early training of the Volunteers, the system of graduation, the similarity of training in the two organisations and their frequent sharing of premises, it was necessary and inevitable that a working arrangement of common policy-making should be established between them. Eamon

Martin has stated that from the outset the youth movement worked "in close unity" with Óglaigh na hÉireann, and that "no important step, involving policy or action, was taken by either without consultation with the other"⁸⁷.

Even before the founding of the adult army the Scouts had adopted a system of military ranks for officers⁸⁸. Now, within weeks of its foundation, sluaite in the capital were re-organised, becoming Companies of a Dublin Battalion, under the authority of a Military Council⁸⁹, and roughly corresponding to the Dublin Brigade of the Volunteers.

This arrangement allowed for a convenient system of dual membership for those Fianna officers who had been given commissions in the adult force - each paraded with his Volunteer unit and the corresponding local Fianna company where such existed. Seán Heuston, for instance, held the rank of Captain of D. Coy. in the Volunteers' 1st Battalion, and of No. 6 Coy. Na Fianna Éireann.

Once the semi-formal association of the two bodies was recognised, it became common practice for Fianna officers and seniors to attend Volunteer parades for supplementary training, since the adult organisation with its larger number of companies could teach a wider scope and great specialisation of skills. Thus Garry Holohan chose to train with A. Coy. 3rd Battalion under de Valera to improve his knowledge of rifle and field exercises⁹⁰. By 1915 dual training had apparently become the norm for the officers of the Dublin Fianna.

In that year, however, additional specialist training was introduced, for which they were instructed to parade together as a section of the Volunteers' 1st Battalion, D. Coy.⁹¹. This "special field training" prepared the ground for the setting up of

their own Active Service Unit, under the title Fianna Commando, later in the year⁹². The unit, which operated in close collaboration with the Volunteers, was kept together until the Rising⁹³.

Each of these developments brought Fianna into closer association with the adult force. The fact that from summer 1914 the back page of the Volunteers' newspaper was devoted exclusively to the youth organisation confirmed its image as the junior wing of Óglaigh na hÉireann⁹⁴. In effect the position had been reached in which its officers were considered colleagues and its juniors cadets of the Volunteers. This relationship was given formal recognition during 1915 : in the cities of Dublin, Belfast, Limerick and Cork, where numbers made it practicable, Fianna companies became officially recognised as units of the Volunteer Brigades⁹⁵.

Within Fianna itself, however, many felt an incongruity between its dominant military role and association with the adult army on the one hand, and on the other its own structure which remained at national level that of a boy scout movement. They sought to remedy the problem at the July Ard Fheis.

FIANNA ADOPTS A MILITARY STRUCTURE

The Ard Fheis of 1915 was considered the most important in the history of the organisation to date⁹⁶. At it, a radically new authority structure was adopted which formally changed Fianna from a scouting movement into a young army. The vital resolution was moved by Captain Eamon Martin. His three-part motion called for the office of President to be replaced by that of Fianna Chief, for the Ard Choiste to be replaced by a Headquarters Staff, and for the election of an Executive composed of County representatives⁹⁷.

He argued that a President was a "ludicrous . . . anomaly" in what

was now "essentially a military" organisation: Fianna required a military chief, to give a lead in military training. The H.Q. staff should share the routine work hitherto undertaken by the National Secretary single-handed. The Executive would appoint Headquarters personnel and act as watchdog over them. The resolution was opposed by Hobson who argued that if it was carried authority would fall into the hands of "a half dozen Fianna officers", and secondly that the "civil side" of the organisation - by which he meant its task of educating boys in citizenship and Irish culture - was more important than its military role. Con Colbert supported the latter argument, which however Barney Mellows nullified by pointing out that the cultural and educational work was itself already being undertaken by the military leadership. At the close of the debate Colbert seconded Captain Dalton's amendment "that a Central Council of twelve members be elected with instructions to appoint a Fianna Chief and Headquarters Staff at its first meeting". In this form the motion was carried.

The change had crucial implications. Whereas previously the national leadership was elected by representatives of the whole organisation in public session, in future a Headquarters Staff would be appointed by a small group in private meeting : power was thus placed in the hands of a caucus.

The Martin-Dalton resolution had the further effect of ousting the Countess from central leadership. As Martin himself remembers the meeting, she was in fact elected to the office of President, but precisely by being elected was disqualified from a more significant appointment onto the Headquarters Staff at the next executive meeting⁹⁸. Thus what appeared to be an acclamation of her was in fact a ruse to exclude her and reduce her to a paper title.

Madame was elected onto the national executive, with J. A. Dalton of Limerick and ten Dublin officers⁹⁹. At its first meeting on 18 July this body appointed the following G.H.Q. staff¹⁰⁰:

| | |
|--------------------------------------------|------------------|
| Chief of the Fianna | Pádraig Ó Riain; |
| Chief-of-Staff | Bulmer Hobson; |
| Adjutant General | Percy Reynolds; |
| Director of Training | Seán Heuston; |
| Director of Organisation and Recruiting | Eamon Martin; |
| Director of Equipment | Leo Henderson; |
| Director of Finance | Barney Mellows. |

The obvious choice for Chief (Ard Fheinne) in terms of seniority and ability would have been Hobson, while Ó Riain's proven flair for organisation would have fitted him admirably for the post of Chief-of-Staff. It was apparently at Hobson's own suggestion that the appointments were made as they were. Ill-will had been growing between himself and the Countess ever since her failure to persuade him to commit Fianna to the side of Labour in the Dublin Lock-out. If she was to be ousted from the position of Chief he felt that she would accept this more readily if someone other than himself succeeded her. In fact, Ó Riain continued to perform much of the work of a Chief-of-Staff¹⁰¹.

It should not be concluded that the new authority structure radically transformed the organisation. Rather it brought the de jure and de facto positions into line, giving "official sanction to a situation which had been gradually taking shape" for nearly two years¹⁰².

THE I.R.B., FIANNA, AND THE RISING

The Executive and the G.H.Q. Staff remained unchanged from July 1915 to the Easter Rising¹⁰³. Their composition is notable for the fact that, apart from the Countess, every member of both bodies was also a member of the I.R.B. Since the same already also applied to the Dublin Battalion staff, at least seven of the

nine Battalion company captains¹⁰⁴, and every senior officer throughout the country¹⁰⁵, the new appointments completed the Brotherhood's local domination of Fianna at the level of national leadership. Considering the independence this leadership now enjoyed under the new structure, the reality of I.R.B. control may be appreciated. It was in fact far tighter and more complete than in the case of the Volunteers.

Fianna's 1915 Ard Fheis, with its gathering of power into the hands of a caucus, the ousting of the Countess, and the methods by which these were effected, was in fact a typical case of I.R.B. engineering. Behind its main debate can clearly be seen the planning and manipulation of the John Mitchel Circle. Eamon Martin's resolution, his and Barney Mellows's arguments, Dalton's amendment were all on cue. Previous resolutions had created a suitably military atmosphere¹⁰⁶, and the national secretary had resigned with a strong recommendation for "reorganisation at headquarters". Even Colbert's 'opposition' should be seen as tactical, allaying fears that the resolution was the work of a clique and disarming delegates in the final vote.

Hobson's 'opposition' was less straightforward and is only to be understood in terms of the internal politics of the I.R.B. at this time. Already before this date a group had emerged within the Brotherhood around the leadership of Clarke and MacDiarmada¹⁰⁷. Its members were united in seeking an insurrection in Ireland at the earliest opportunity, an aim in defiance of the Brotherhood's constitution which expressly forbade any military rising without the sanction of the Irish people¹⁰⁸. Through the influence of this group the I.R.B. Supreme Council had already secretly decided upon a rising before the end of the European War¹⁰⁹.

In spring 1914 Hobson had been at the heart of the I.R.B. - a member of the Supreme Council and, as Leinster Centre, the elected representative of some three-quarters of all members¹¹⁰. But he was already distrusted by Clarke and MacDiarmada because of his close association with Casement and MacNeill and because like them he was opposed to an unprovoked insurrection¹¹¹. His tactical support for admitting Redmond's nominees onto the Volunteers Provisional Committee in May 1914 provoked a bitter confrontation with Clarke and MacDiarmada and, indirectly, his resignation from the Supreme Council. Having fallen foul of them his eclipse within the I.R.B. was inevitable¹¹².

By the time of the 1915 Ard Fheis, therefore, his attitude to the whole question of Fianna's role and the role of the I.R.B. within it may have become ambivalent. Certainly he was now suspicious of the insurrectionists, as "a secret society organised within a secret society"¹¹³; perhaps he had reservations about the very concept of secret societies, open as they are to such intrigue. Certainly the warning he gave at the Ard Fheis debate - that the proposed new Fianna structure would be a move towards militarism and élitism - was fundamental and prophetic. He had seen militarism and élitism working side-by-side in the plans of the I.R.B. insurrectionists. As one who had twice founded a 'boys' republic' he must have feared for their consequences in a juvenile organisation which had special obligations to its members as developing young persons. He may well have realised therefore that - although Fianna still paid lip service to 'the needs of the boy' (and on this criterion drew a distinction between its own educational role and the pragmatic role of the adult army¹¹⁴) - this prime and original aim was now being swamped by the élitist-military dictates of others.

In the meantime the insurrectionists continued to gather control within the Brotherhood. Effective power was passing from the Supreme Council itself to its standing committee of President, Secretary and Treasurer. In this committee of three the decision of any two was constitutionally binding. By arranging the election of Belfast-based Dennis McCullough as President, Clarke and MacDiarmada as Secretary and Treasurer virtually created absolute control for themselves in Dublin¹¹⁵. The executive appointed a military committee comprising Pearse, Plunkett and Ceannt in the summer of 1915, to which Clarke and MacDiarmada were co-opted in the autumn, and Connolly and MacDonagh the following spring¹¹⁶. This 'Military Council' quietly replaced the more dispersed Supreme Council, so that real power within the I.R.B. finally rested in the hands of its seven members. In January 1916 the Supreme Council had accepted MacDiarmada's motion in favour of a rising "at the earliest date possible"¹¹⁷. All more specific information was thereafter withheld from those, even of the highest rank, who were known to be cool towards insurrection - Dennis McCullough, for instance, who as President of the Supreme Council was president-elect of any Republic that might be established, only heard of the Rising plans by chance eight days before the event¹¹⁸.

The formal position of the Volunteers, and of their Chief-of-Staff, in the spring of 1916 was that a rising would only be justified in the event of an attempt to disarm them, forced conscription, or an invasion of Ireland¹¹⁹. The problem for the insurrection caucus was therefore how to guarantee their participation when the time came. They counted on working against the top leadership through the key positions held by their own men in the army. Pearse held the crucial post of Director of Organisation¹²⁰, MacDonagh and Plunkett those of Director of Training and of Military

Operations respectively. All five Dublin Battalion Commandants favoured insurrection¹²¹. 'Safe' men among the Volunteer leadership in the country included Seán Etchingham in Wexford, Tomás MacCurtain in Cork and Liam Mellows in Galway. Through these and others, it was assumed that the Volunteers would be committed to the Rising.

Although Na Fianna had no formal policy on the question, its position was in one respect identical to that of Óglaigh na hÉireann: its Chief-of-Staff was opposed to an insurrection. In addition, Ard Fheinne Pádraig Ó Riain could not be counted on. As with the adult army; therefore, it was necessary to by-pass the top leadership, deliberately keeping them uninformed, and to commit the organisation to the Rising via the rest of the G.H.Q. Staff and the other senior Dublin officers¹²².

The remaining Headquarters staff were summoned to a meeting at 2 Dawson Street on the Monday evening of Holy Week¹²³. It was in no sense a discussion meeting. Barney Mellows met the officers and informed them "that things were moving quickly and that they were to be ready for any emergency". Some were given more precise instructions - Eamon Martin for instance was ordered to select a squad of twenty fiannai for the Magazine Fort raid¹²⁴. Others were given further information severally as deemed necessary or as chance arose during the week that followed - thus Garry Holohan was not informed of his mobilisation until Holy Thursday evening.

It was on Holy Thursday, too, that Hobson stumbled upon the truth by chance at a Centres' Board meeting¹²⁵. He at once informed MacNeill. He also contacted Ó Riain, as a result of which the latter decided to leave the capital for Belfast¹²⁶. Thus the man whose natural leadership and industry had made him in Hobson's

view the dominating personality in Fianna from its foundation turned his back on the Rising and the organisation. Hobson himself, being powerful enough in the I.R.B. and the Volunteers to obstruct last minute plans, was arrested by I.R.B. men on Good Friday and held until the Rising was under way.

The senior Fianna officers were undoubtedly aware of Hobson's eclipse within the Brotherhood and of his opposition to a rising. For them there must have been something of a conflict of loyalties during Holy Week. They knew his record in Fianna and the movement, they held him in the highest esteem personally and retained implicit faith in him, though they realised that, unlike themselves, he did not enjoy the confidence of Clarke and MacDiarmada¹²⁷. He was still their Chief-of-Staff.

On the other hand there could be for them no ambiguity as to committing themselves and Fianna to the Rising. They were I.R.B. men and if it came to a conflict they took their orders not from their superior in Fianna but from the Brotherhood; because of the particular procedure of the organisation, this meant in fact from the Centre of their Circle¹²⁸. This was the case also for I.R.B. members of the Volunteers, but in Fianna's case there was a crucial difference. Whereas the Volunteers belonged to a number of circles all senior Fianna officers in Ireland belonged to the one Fianna Circle. Ironically, it had been set up by Hobson. Con Colbert, as its Centre, was their immediate superior. He had retained this crucial office, despite having relinquished his membership of Fianna itself the previous year¹²⁹. Unequivocally a Clarke-MacDiarmada man and one of their most trusted lieutenants, it was from Colbert that all instructions concerning the Fianna emanated during Holy Week. It was he who summoned the officers to the meeting of Monday 16 April, he who informed them of their

assignments¹³⁰. In the preparations for insurrection it is Colbert who is seen to be the real power behind Fianna. Through him, via the second rank leadership, the organisation was committed to take its place in the Rising.

PREPARING FOR INSURRECTION

Through the winter and early spring of 1915-16 Fianna meeting places in Dublin were being used as centres for military preparation. The Active Service Unit were training in explosive techniques at Fairfield under Tomás MacDonagh¹³¹. The Countess's home was now a store and clearing house for arms and ammunition, from which boys came and went with weapons and bandoliers under their coats¹³². Even explosives were brought there.

One of the main sources of explosive materials was the West of Scotland. Prior to the Rising it was still a fairly simple matter to make undetected shipments between the Clyde and Ireland, and a regular traffic had been built up by Fianna from 1913. Robbery and shipment of arms and explosives in fact comprised the main support work of the two Glasgow sluaite¹³³. By 1915 they were raiding continually for munitions, according to Seumas Robinson; "this activity increased as 1916 approached. The raids had become almost 'barefaced' - they had got away with so much for so long without detection"¹³⁴. On 15 January they attempted a "grand finale", rifling more than a hundredweight of Dynobel and Arkite from a colliery magazine in Uddingston¹³⁵. A dropped card led the police to Joseph Robinson who was arrested within days, a telegram in his possession implicating another Fianna officer, Seamus Reader. Reader was arrested in Glasgow where he had been sent to deliver despatches from Seán MacDiarmada to Volunteer and I.R.B. Contacts instructing them to post all able-bodied men to Dublin. A cache

of arms and explosives was found at his house. According to the police it was his statement that led them to search four Fianna houses in Dublin and subsequently to raid the Countess's home where the boys they wanted in connection with the Uddingston raid were found to be staying.

This was only one of several Special Branch raids on Surrey House in the early spring of 1916¹³⁶. They were not accepted meekly. The Fianna were armed and ready to "look to their revolvers"¹³⁷. Like Liberty Hall, the premises were on permanent guard and virtually a fortress. The boys were prepared to face the authorities with open confrontation and armed resistance.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. See Hobson, B. in Martin, F. X.(ed.) The Irish Volunteers 1913-1915 (Dublin, 1963), p.24; and Hobson, B. Ireland Yesterday and Tomorrow (Tralee, 1968), p.45.
2. Béaslaí, P. in Irish Independent, 5/1/1953; also in Martin, F. X.(ed.) The Irish Volunteers, p.82.
3. Cf. Hobson, B. in Irish Times, 6/5/1961.
4. Hobson, B. in Martin, F. X.(ed.) The Irish Volunteers, p.17.
5. Ibid., p.16; Hobson suggests that the germ of the idea dates from 1910.
6. Holohan, G. Statement to the Bureau of Military History, no. 1, p.14.
7. Martin, E. A Brief Outline of Fianna Eireann 1909-1916 (Statement to the Bureau of Military History), p.7. The officers were Michael Lonergan, Pádraig Ó Riain, Con Colbert and Eamon Martin.
8. O'Rahilly, The Secret History of the Irish Volunteers (Dublin, 1915), p.3.
9. Hobson, B. in Martin, F. X.(ed.) The Irish Volunteers, pp.30 f. I.R.B. members on the Provisional Committee were Piaras Béaslaí, Eamonn Ceannt, Seán MacDiarmada, Peadar Macken, Seamus O'Connor, Robert Page, Con Colbert, Bulmer Hobson, Michael Lonergan, Eamon Martin, Liam Mellows and Pádraig Ó Riain (the last six being Fianna members). Pádraic Pearse, Tomás MacDonagh and Joseph Plunkett were later recruited to the Brotherhood.
10. Martin, E. Bureau Statement, p.8.
11. Ibid.
12. Seamus Pouch interview to Van Voris, J., 29/4/1964; copy of interview notes given to the present author by Mrs. Van Voris, 28/1/1979.
13. See Fox, R. M. The History of the Irish Citizen Army (Dublin, 1944), p.47.
14. 'Campcraft Notes', The Irish Volunteer, 8/8/1914 and subsequent issues.
15. Reynolds, J. 'Fianna Eireann : with the Dublin Brigade' in Dublin's Fighting Story 1916-21 (Tralee, n.d.), p.204.
16. The Irish Volunteer, 27/2/1915.
17. Martin, E. Bureau Statement, p.8.
18. Irish Freedom, January 1914.

19. The Irish Volunteer, 25/1/1914.
20. Fianna, July 1915, Ard Fheis report.
21. The Irish Volunteer, 13/3/1915.
22. Healy, J. 'From boyhood to manhood in the service of Ireland', The Kerryman, 4/11/1967.
23. The Irish Volunteer, 24/10/1914.
24. The Irish Volunteer, 13/3/1915.
25. The Irish Volunteer, 17/4/1915.
26. Irish Freedom, February 1914.
27. Letter from Tom Clarke to Joe McGarrity, 8/12/1913; in Cronin, S.(ed.) The McGarrity Papers (Tralee, 1972), pp.37 f.
28. Letter from Tom Clarke to John Devoy, 14/5/1914; in O'Brien, W. and Ryan, D.(eds.) Devoy's Post Bag, vol. 2 (Dublin, 1953), pp.444 f.
29. Liam Mellows claimed that "wherever (the Volunteers) got a foothold the Fianna were quickly established"; Mellows, L. in The Gaelic American, 7/7/1917.
30. Will You Help? - appeal for honorary membership, n.d., but apparently printed c. February 1915.
31. Fianna, July 1915, Ard Fheis report.
32. Fianna, July 1915, Munster Conference report; cf. The Irish Volunteer, 14/11/1914.
33. In his evidence before the Royal Commission on the Rising, Col. Sir Neville Chamberlain, Inspector General of the R.I.C. - whose force policed all Ireland outwith the capital - stated that Fianna were at that time "mainly under the Dublin Metropolitan Police"; The Royal Commission on the Rebellion in Ireland; Cd 8311 (London, H.M.S.O., 1916), para.1142.
34. Irish Freedom, May 1912.
35. Letter from Tom Clarke to John Daly, 29/4/1914; Devoy's Post Bag, vol. 2, p.446, note.
36. Redmond's attempt to gain control of the Volunteers dates from very early in 1914 although it did not become a public issue until his press ultimatum on 9 June. See Hobson, B. in Martin, F. X.(ed.) The Irish Volunteers, pp.43-9.
37. Letter from Tom Clarke to John Daly, 29/4/1914, Devoy's Post Bag, vol. 2, p.446, note.

38. Letter from Tom Clarke to John Devoy 14/5/1914 (post script dated 15/5/1914); Devoy's Post Bag, vol. 2, p.446; the two women were Mrs. Clarke and Mrs. Patrick Bradley.
39. The Irish Volunteer, 12/9/1914.
40. Interview Eamon Martin to Greaves, C. D.; letter Greaves to the present author, 19/11/1978.
41. One such was Christie Monahan, o/c Cork Fianna - Healy, J. in The Kerryman, 4/11/1967.
42. Fianna, July 1915; The Irish Volunteer, 27/3/1915.
43. Irish Freedom, January 1914.
44. Cf. Mellows, L. in The Gaelic American, 5/5/1917, who attributes the art work to Lonergan; Hobson states that Eddy Morrow (E. Art MacMurchadha) was the artist -
Hobson, B. Fianna Eireann, Statement to the Bureau of Military History, with additions by Joseph Robinson. Papers in the possession of Mrs. Joseph Robinson.
45. Ibid.
46. Details from letter from Constance de Markievicz to Robert Brennan, n.d.; National Museum of Ireland, E.W. 740.
47. Fianna, February 1915.
48. Mellows, L. in The Gaelic American, 7/7/1917.
49. Cf. The Irish Volunteer, 13/2/1915: "Never was a paper launched with more daring or less capital. All honour to Patsy O'Connor and Percy Reynolds for their indomitable spirit and enterprise".
50. Fianna, June 1915, from the editorial of this the last issue.
51. Fianna, July 1915. The date of the funeral was 17/6/1915. The national press did not carry reports.
52. Editor not mentioned in the series; but cf. Fianna, Wolfe Tone Commemoration Number, June 1922.
53. Last copy in National Library is for January 1916; and cf. note 54 below.
54. See MacGiolla Choille, B.(ed.) Intelligence Notes 1913-16 (Dublin, 1966), p.163, footnote.
55. The date was 19 January 1916. The belief that Connolly was kidnapped in any full sense of that word is now generally discredited - for a recent assessment see Levenson, S. James Connolly, a biography (London, 1973; 1977 ed.), pp.282 f.

56. Inspector General's monthly Report, February 1916, no. 10893; CO 904/99; State Paper Office, Dublin; also in MacGiolla Choille, B.(ed.) Intelligence Notes, p.226.
57. Irish Freedom, May 1914.
58. Cf. The Irish Volunteer, 19/9/1914.
59. Hobson, B. in Martin, F. X.(ed.) The Irish Volunteers, pp.32-43, based on his Statement to the Bureau of Military History 'The Gun Running at Howth and Kilcoole, July 1914' (1948), Bulmer Hobson Papers, National Library of Ireland, MS 13170.
The Hobson account is also printed, with a great deal of other material, in Martin, F. X.(ed.) The Howth Gun-Running and the Kilcoole Gun-Running 1914 (Dublin 1964). The present account uses this source extensively.
60. Mellows, L. in The Gaelic American, 16/6/1917. Liam Mellows was an eye-witness, being one of the advance party at Howth.
61. 'The Part the Fianna Played at Howth' by 'Corporal Willie Nelson' (Pádraig Ó Riain), Nodlaig na bhFiann, December 1914.
62. Hobson, and also an eye-witness account in The Times 27/7/1914, refer to more than one cart. Ó Riain's account of a single cart is probably correct. Cf. Holohan, G. Bureau Statement, no. 1, p.39, for a full account; Holohan states that the four Fianna officers knew the purpose of their mission before they left Dublin.
63. Signals received and returned by a Fianna scout. The crew were worried both because of the weather and because the authorities were known to be on the look-out for gun-running. See Peadar Ó Cearnaigh in de Burca, S. The Soldier's Song - the story of Peadar Ó Cearnaigh (Dublin, 1957), pp.97 f.
64. Mellows, L. in The Gaelic American, 16/6/1917. The two officers were Archie Heron and Liam's brother Barney.
65. MacGiolla Choille, B.(ed.) Intelligence Notes, pp.113 f.
66. Mellows, L. in The Gaelic American, 6/6/1917.
67. Ó Riain, P. in Nodlaig na bhFiann, 1914.
68. Episode account based on Nora Connolly O'Brien interview; also Connolly, N. The Unbroken Tradition (New York, 1918), pp.9 ff.; and the substantially similar O'Brien, N. Connolly Portrait of a Rebel Father (Dublin and Cork, 1935), pp.177 ff.; also Heron, I. Connolly 'James Connolly - a biography', part 3, Liberty, August 1966, pp.19 f.
69. Hobson reckoned a total of about 900 including about 800 Volunteers. The witness in The Times, 27/7/1914, referred to "about fifty boy Sea Scouts".

70. Letter Casement to Mrs. Alice Stopford Green, 29/7/1914, Stopford Green Papers, National Library of Ireland, MS 10 454(10); the letter also printed in Martin, F. X.(ed.) Howth Gun-Running, p.168.
71. MacGiolla Choille, B.(ed.) Intelligence Notes, pp.81, 83, 85.
72. Ibid, pp.175 f.
73. Martin, F. X. in Martin, F. X.(ed.) Howth Gun-Running, p.xix.
74. Peadar Ó Cearnaigh in de Burca, S. The Soldier's Song, p.100.
75. Holohan, G. Bureau Statement no. 1, pp.42 ff., on which the present account is largely based.
76. The Irish Volunteer, 15/8/1914.
77. O'Donoghue, F. Tomás MacCurtain, soldier and patriot (Tralee, 1955; 1971 ed.), p.25.
78. Fianna, January 1916.
79. Breandán Ó Cearbhaill interview; Sean Healy interview.
80. Verbal statement R. Dudley Edwards; Professor Dudley Edwards was himself a junior fian from 1921 to 1922.
81. See Irish Freedom, October 1912.
82. Fianna, February 1915.
83. The Irish Volunteer, 20/3/1915. Lonergan had emigrated in April 1914 - cf. The Irish Volunteer, 4/4/1914.
84. Markievicz, C. 'How the Fianna was started', in Nodlaig na bhFiann, 1914.
85. Holohan, G. Bureau Statement, no. 1, pp.2, 5, 15.
86. Markievicz, S. 'Constance Markievicz', Irish Press, 4/2/1938.
87. Martin, E. Bureau Statement, p.9.
88. Irish Freedom, February 1913.
89. The Irish Volunteer, 25/1/1914.
90. Holohan, G. Bureau Statement no. 1, p.33.
91. Holohan, G. Bureau Statement no. 1, p.34.
92. Martin, E. Bureau Statement, p.9.
93. Military Service Pensions Act (1934), Fianna Advisory Committee, Anglo-Irish War 1916-1921, Dublin City and County, p.2.

94. The Irish Volunteer - 'National Boy Scouts' notes from issue of 11/7/1914; whole page from 25/7/1914; became regular back page feature.
95. Mellows, L. in The Gaelic American, 4/8/1917.
96. Fianna, July 1915, Ard Fheis report.
97. Fianna, July 1915, Ard Fheis report.
98. Martin, E. Bureau Statement, p.10.
99. The Executive comprised - Bulmer Hobson, Pádraig Ó Riain, Eamon Martin, J. A. Dalton, Con Colbert, Seán Heuston, Leo Henderson, Pádraig Ó Dálaigh, Garry Holohan, Barney Mellows, Countess Markievicz, Percy Reynolds and Niall MacNeill. Dalton was at the time o/c of Slua Lord Edward, Limerick, and the recently elected Secretary of the Munster regional Council (Fianna, June 1915). At their first meeting the Executive agreed to co-opt one representative from Belfast.
100. The Irish Volunteer, 24/7/1915.
101. Martin, E. Bureau Statement Notes p.2. The Lock-out detail from G. Hurley interview, on information given to Hurley by Eamon Martin.
102. Letter from Eamon Martin to 'John Brennan', March 1966; copy of the letter sent to the author by Professor F. X. Martin.
103. Pensions Advisory Committee Return no. 1, Outline of G.H.Q. Organisation and Personnel 1916-1923, p.1.
104. Pensions Advisory Committee Return no. 2, Outline of Dublin Fianna Organisation and Personnel 1916-1923, p.1. The captains were:- No. 1 Coy. - Philip Cassidy; No. 2 Coy. - Barney Mellows; No. 3 Coy. - R. Murray; No. 4 Coy. - Neil MacNeill; No. 5 Coy. - Garry Holohan; No. 6 Coy. - Seán Heuston; No. 7 Coy. - Seán McLoughlin; No. 8 Coy. - Leo Henderson; No. 9 Coy. - Pádraig Ó Dálaigh.
105. Letter from Eamon Martin to 'John Brennan', March 1966. Martin writes that this had been the case from at least 1912.
106. Neil MacNeill's resolution to arm and train all 3rd Class Scouts in musketry; Leo Henderson's resolution for musketry training and detailed proposals for tests; both resolutions passed unanimously.
107. See, eg. Wall, M. 'The background to the Rising; from 1914 until the issue of the Countermanding order on Easter Sunday, 1916', in Nowlan, K. B.(ed.) The Making of 1916, Studies in the history of the Rising (Dublin, 1969), espec. pp.169 ff.
108. Cf., eg., Ó Broin, L. Revolutionary Underground - the story of the Irish Republican Brotherhood 1858-1924 (Dublin, 1976), espec. pp.7 and 177.

109. Hobson, B. in Sunday Press, 1/5/1960; Dennis McCullough in Sunday Press, 8/5/1960.
110. Hobson, B. Ireland Yesterday and Tomorrow, pp.37 and 52 ff.
111. For the position of Casement, MacNeill, Hobson and the Volunteers, see Martin, F. X. 'Eoin MacNeill on the Easter Rising', Irish Historical Studies, XII, March 1961; Hobson, B. in Ant Óglach, June 1931; Lyons, F. S. L. 'Fenianism 1867-1916', in Moody, T. W.(ed.) The Fenian Movement (Cork, 1968), pp.41 f.
112. See the account of this episode in Martin, F. X. 'McCullough, Hobson, and Republican Ulster', in Martin, F. X.(ed.) Leaders and Men of the Easter Rising - Dublin 1916 (London, 1967), pp.103 f.
113. Thus he later described the group: Hobson, B. Ireland Yesterday and Tomorrow, p.72.
114. Cf. The Irish Volunteer, 1/5/1915: "They are different perhaps in this respect. In the Volunteers the training and keeping fit of a large military force as an efficient weapon for national defence is the main issue. In Fianna it is the boy himself, not the scouting or drill, that is the main factor. The training - in scouting, drill and military exercises - is the means to the end. To direct his military instincts, and to develop all the finer characteristics of the boy - that is the object" (original emphasis).
115. See Ó Broin, L. Revolutionary Underground - the story of the Irish Republican Brotherhood 1858-1924 (Dublin, 1976), p.166; also Lynch, D. The I.R.B. and the 1916 Insurrection (Cork, 1957), p.28.
116. Cf. Lynch, D. I.R.B. and 1916 Insurrection, pp.25, 47.
117. Ibid, espec. pp. 31, 101, 182.
118. Wall, M. 'The Plan and the countermand in the country and Dublin', in Nowlan, K. B.(ed.) The Making of 1916 (Dublin, 1969), pp.216 f. Her account also includes the dates on which other prominent I.R.B. members received word.
119. See Hobson, B. Ireland Yesterday and Tomorrow, pp.69 ff.; also Martin, F. X.(ed.) 'Eoin MacNeill on the Easter Rising', Irish Historical Studies, XII, March 1961.
120. His position became especially important after MacNeill's countermand. For an account of his I.R.B. role in the Volunteers see Thornley, D. 'Patrick Pearse - the evolution of a Republican', in Martin, F. X.(ed.) Leaders and Men, pp.159 f.
121. De Valera agreed to the plans despite having strong reservations - cf. Bromage, M. in Sunday Independent, 9/12/1956.

122. Niall MacNeill, o/c of E. Coy. (Ranelagh) was not informed, being the son of Eoin MacNeill. He did not mobilise.
123. The present account based on Holohan, G. Bureau Statement no. 1, p.49.
124. Martin, E. Bureau Statement, p.15.
125. For an account of the whole incident see Hobson, B. Ireland Yesterday and Tomorrow, pp.75 f.
126. Holohan, G. Bureau Statement no. 1, pp.51 f. Ó Riain left on Easter Saturday.
127. Attested to in the Bureau Statements of both Eamon Martin and Garry Holohan.
128. For an account of the I.R.B. procedure see its Constitution, quoted in Appendix J of Pollard, H. B. C. The Secret Societies of Ireland (London, 1922), sections 7-9.
129. Colbert had been heavily involved in Irish Volunteer training work in spring 1915 and had been phasing himself out of Fianna activities. This had prompted Pádraig Ó Riain to hint broadly in the Volunteers' own newspaper that Colbert's Fianna company was being neglected - ('Willie Nelson', The Irish Volunteer, 13/2/1915). According to Pensions Advisory Committee, Anglo-Irish War 1916-21, Dublin City and County, p.9, Colbert ceased active association with Fianna shortly after the July Ard Fheis, 1915. He also resigned from the G.H.Q. staff at this time (cf., letter Eamon Martin to 'John Brennan', March 1966, copy given to the present author by Professor F. X. Martin).
Colbert's continued membership of the John Mitchel slua was permitted since it was already the practice to allow non-Fianna men to join it. According to Peadar Ó Cearnaigh, Pádraic Pearse himself joined the circle - cf., de Burca, S. The Soldier's Song, p.94.
130. Martin, E. Bureau Statement, p.16; Holohan, G. Bureau Statement no. 1, p.50.
131. Holohan, P. 'The Four Courts area', Capuchin Annual, 1942, p.231.
132. O'Brien, N. Connolly Portrait of a Rebel Father, pp.265 f.
133. The original Glasgow slua had grown to a membership of 150 by 1914 when it was divided into two. A second activity for Glasgow officers was the carrying of despatches; Joseph Robinson was sent to Peterhead Jail for this in 1915 - verbal statement, Mrs. Joseph Robinson.
134. Robinson, S. Statement to the Bureau of Military History; copy in possession of Mrs. Joseph Robinson.

135. Inspector Generals' Reports no. 15, 1908-20, Monthly Report for January 1916 (no. 10664), State Paper Office, Dublin Castle, C.O. 904/99. See also MacGiolla Choille, B.(ed.) Intelligence Notes, pp.161 f. and 225, where the police report is printed. An abbreviated version, omitting names, given by Nathan to the Royal Commission on the Rebellion, pp.121 f.
136. Raids on 22 January 1916 (see Workers' Republic, 29/1/1916) and 24/3/1916 (see O'Brien, N. Connolly Portrait of a Rebel Father, p.266).
137. Connolly, N. The Unbroken Tradition, p.40.

Chapter 4. EASTER WEEK

THE UNSANCTIONED PARTICIPATION OF JUNIORS

The structure of Na Fianna, which well before 1916 had developed into a dual organisation with a junior scouting section and a military corps of seniors and officers, had provided the planners of the Rising with an obvious means of selecting members for participation : officers and seniors were ordered to mobilise and all others strictly excluded.

In the case of the Dublin juniors it was decided to ensure their exclusion by sending them out of town on Easter Monday morning, and for this purpose Barney Mellows arranged a route march for them to the Featherbed¹. Their itinerary took them through Rathfarnham where they passed Pádraic Pearse waiting at the tram terminus. They received the order 'Eyes right and salute', not knowing that Pearse was on his way to the city to proclaim the Republic. On arriving at their destination they became suspicious at the absence of any seniors and decided to return to town. They followed the railway as the only guide they knew, from Dundrum into Harcourt Street, and dispersed at Stephen's Green. Most went home, but a number found their way into the insurgent posts, either that day or later in the week.

Diarmuid Lynch, for example, recalls "several" boys under sixteen arriving at the G.P.O. at 12.30 p.m., having been ordered home from another position because of their youth, and being allowed to remain as part of the garrison². Another eye-witness remembers them "pleading for a gun of any description and begging to be allowed to take their places with the men at the windows, or on the

roof, or anywhere"³. Two of them at least got their way and took up sniping positions on the roof⁴.

Other juniors made their way to Boland's Mill. Alarmed by the number of boys in the area Commandant de Valera called a parade of all under-eighteens on Easter Tuesday at which he ordered the younger ones home. All were reluctant to leave and one, Richard Pearle, remained all week, ignoring the pleas of his mother whom he sent away from the post as being "no place for a woman". He was interned in Britain with the seniors after the surrender. Other boys arrived through the week, including Willie Fitzgerald who was constantly chased away only to return with fresh information concerning the movements of the enemy⁵. Boys like these had heard the gunfire and been drawn to the fighting areas, like the young Ernie O'Malley, to join "the grand adventure"⁶.

Quite a number of young fiannai joined the Citizen Army and Volunteers in the College of Surgeons. Some were certainly in the way⁷, but at least one, twelve year old Tommy Keenan, gave invaluable help bringing in food and medicine to the besieged post. On Tuesday he was persuaded to go home to tell his parents where he was. His father locked him in the house, but he escaped and returned to the College⁸. Another boy is remembered riding his cycle round the lecture hall where the men were trying to snatch rest. He stayed to the surrender when despite all attempts by the British soldiers he refused to give away any information⁹. The Fianna boys erected an altar in the hall of the College and their piety deeply impressed Countess Markievicz, undoubtedly influencing the decision she took that week to become a Catholic¹⁰.

No complete list exists of young participants in the Rising¹¹ and some of the eye-witness accounts that mention Fianna juniors

are no more than chance references which may or may not typify the overall position¹². Perhaps the participation of Fianna's most famous junior of Easter Week, Seán Healy, would not have been recorded had he not lost his life. Only fifteen years old, Healy had been a member of the North Frederick Street slua for three years¹³. He had spent Easter Saturday night transporting arms across the city, and having received no mobilisation order made his way to Jacob's on the Tuesday. That day Commandant MacDonagh gave him a despatch to carry to the senior officer at Phibsboro Bridge, probably choosing Healy in the hope that he would then return to his home nearby. The boy actually called home to tell his mother he was safe and was shot dead on his way back to Jacob's at Phibsboro Corner.

Carrying despatches was in fact, with sentinel duty and foraging, the main task of Fianna juniors in the Rising. As the insurgent positions became isolated from one another and lines of communication were cut, boys (and women) made the least conspicuous messengers among the Dublin crowds. But even in this the role of the scouts was limited for, according to Lynch, almost all despatch work was undertaken by the Cumann na mBan¹⁴. It seems indeed that the policy of excluding juniors was largely effective and that very few took part in the events of Easter Week.

THE ACTIONS IN THE CITY

Obedying their mobilisation orders, officers and seniors of Fianna's Dublin Battalion joined the garrisons as partners of the Volunteers with whom they had shared training for two years past. Two of them, Colbert and Heuston, held sufficiently senior rank in the adult army to be given commands on Easter Monday. Two others, Pat Holohan and Seán McLoughlin, took over commands during the week.

Others, young men like slua o/c Joe Cullen at the Four Courts¹⁵ and Battalion Quartermaster Seamus Pouch at Jacob's¹⁶, played a less prominent but more typical part in the ranks. In all, members fought in every post in the city except that at Mount Street-Northumberland Road, though since they were fighting as individuals in the adult army in which most held dual membership there are few specific references to Fianna as such in the literature on the Rising¹⁷. Only one action of the week could be termed a Fianna operation, undertaken by the organisation as opposed to individual members. This was the attempt to blow up the Magazine Fort in Phoenix Park which in the plans for the insurrection was to be the work of the Fianna A.S.U.

It was on Connolly's advice that Fianna was allocated the task¹⁸, for which a dozen members of the A.S.U. received several weeks' training in explosives under Thomas MacDonagh¹⁹. Paddy Daly, o/c of No. 9 Coy., was given charge of the attack force and also planned the operation and supplied maps, as one who knew the Fort well through having worked there as a builder's joiner²⁰. A week before Easter Eamon Martin was instructed to make final selection of the party of twenty. MacDonagh gave them five bags of explosives on Good Friday²¹.

The operation was intended to serve a three-fold purpose - to destroy or capture enemy arms, achieve an early morale-boosting coup, and audibly signal the start of the Rising throughout the city. It may have been a "side show" to the main actions, as Ryan observes²², yet it had many of the qualities that typified Easter Week - preparation, eleventh hour change of plan, confusion, initiative, adventure, misadventure.

With their original plans upset by MacNeill's countermand, the attack party were called to a meeting on Easter Sunday evening at

which it was decided to mobilise the following day at noon, apparently under the mistaken impression that the Rising was to begin in the evening²³. Learning on Monday morning that the attack itself must be made at noon Daly's problem was to contact his team in time. He was only able to reach Martin, the Holohan brothers, Barney Mellows, Eamon Murray and Louis Marie, and on Connolly's orders men were drafted in from the Volunteer units bringing the force to thirty²⁴. The party were equipped with .25 automatics, the explosives and, the most important item, a football.

Entry to the premises went according to plan. Under cover of a game of football the boys were able to approach close enough to rush the sentry and surprise and disarm the dozen soldiers in the guardroom. A second sentry was shot in the leg and died later of the neglected wound. The plan to blow up the building was abandoned when the key to the explosives store was found to be missing, and it was decided instead to try laying fuses over the ammunition cases. The result was two dull explosions and a fire that burned for a day. But even had the Fort gone up it would not have signalled the revolution as planned because the attack was a quarter-of-an-hour late and by then other posts in the city were already in action²⁵.

The get-away vehicle was a jaunting car, complete with reluctant jarvey - the Volunteer detailed to arrange a motor van had contrived to crash it and had commandeered the outside car as a replacement. Seven of the party climbed aboard with the captured arms, the rest making their way out on foot. At the park exit they caught up with the caretaker's teenage son on his way to raise the alarm; he was shot dead by Garry Holohan. The car was driven to the Four Courts where several lads including Paddy Daly and Barney Mellows jumped off. All the other Fianna members continued

to North Brunswick Street where they stayed to help build and man the barricades. Before taking his post, however, Eamon Martin walked on to the G.P.O. to deliver his report, and from there travelled in The O'Rahilly's car to the Holohans' house to pick up their equipment and weapons²⁶.

It must have been shortly after he left the Post Office that the flag was run up on the roof, the emblem of the Republic proclaimed three hours before²⁷. Green, and with the words 'Irish Republic' in white and gold, it had been made by the Fianna²⁸ and was now hoisted by Fianna officers with Volunteers and men of the Kimmage Garrison²⁹. After the surrender the pole was rescued by Fianna boys who cut it into blocks to keep as souvenirs³⁰.

Monday afternoon also saw the first Fianna death of the week. Brendan Donelan, Loughrea born and now eighteen years old, was one of a party of six retreating from Rialto Gate across the field inside the South Dublin Union, trying to reach the main party under Eamonn Ceannt holding the hospital. He was fired on by soldiers from the Rialto Buildings and fell wounded; further shots killed him. His body, with that of James Quinn beside him, lay for the rest of the day before being retrieved under cover of darkness³¹.

A second Fianna death occurred later that night. Twenty year old Gerald Keogh, who had joined the Scouts in 1913 and the Volunteers a year later, was one of the G.P.O. garrison. On Monday afternoon he was sent by his old headmaster Pádraic Pearse with a message to the remaining Kimmage reservists at Larkfield. One of these 'Lame Ducks' recounts that Pearse had forgotten them and only sent word of their mobilisation through at six o'clock that evening³²; Keogh's message probably concerned mobilisation instructions therefore. He remained at Larkfield until about midnight, and was

shot dead on College Green attempting the return journey, in the early hours of Tuesday³³.

The barricades in North Brunswick Street formed part of the extensive area defended by the Volunteers' First Battalion under Ned Daly for which the Father Matthew Hall served as headquarters. It was to here that Martin had returned on Easter Monday afternoon. The following evening he and Garry Holohan were chosen as members of a ten man squad under Dennis O'Callaghan and Peadar Breslin detailed to occupy Broadstone Station just outside the defended area. According to the original insurrection plans this strategic position was to have been taken immediately, but the operation had been postponed until Tuesday by which time, unknown to the rebels, it had already been occupied by British troops. Approaching the station as dusk fell Martin at the head of the party was unable to distinguish the colour of the uniform worn by the sentry at the entrance. As he advanced he was hit by a single shot that bored through his arm and chest, piercing his lung and passing out at his back. O'Callaghan was forced to retire to Church Street³⁴.

Martin was taken to Richmond Hospital from which, according to his own account, he made a remarkable escape. Apparently Sir Thomas Myles, the senior surgeon of the hospital, entered Martin's room and laying down his overcoat with an envelope upon it launched into a fierce tirade against the rebels, complaining that but for the fighting he would be boarding a ship that very day for a holiday abroad. He stamped out, leaving the coat and envelope. Martin picked up the envelope and noticed a boat ticket inside. Realising Myles's meaning at last, he slipped the coat over his pyjamas, walked out of the hospital door, found a cab waiting outside, drove to the North Wall where he reached his ship just as the gang plank was about to be raised, and so left the country³⁵.

On Wednesday morning (26 April) Garry Holohan joined O'Callaghan and his small raiding party in an attempt to capture the Linenhall Barracks³⁶. After failing to breach the wall with explosives³⁷ they attacked the main door. The building was surrendered by its occupants, forty unarmed British soldiers. It was then set alight with bedding, oil and paint. The fire quickly spread to nearby tenements. The volunteers were barely able to contain it with hoses and it raged through the night.

The youngest of the raiding party was Seán Howard, a seventeen year old Fianna piper who earlier in the week had destroyed a bridge with the help of Fianna comrades to prevent the enemy's advance on the Four Courts. Returning from the Linenhall Barracks he was defending the barricade at Red Cow Lane as dawn broke on Thursday. Severely wounded, he and a volunteer were carried by stretcher to the Father Matthew Hall. It is said that they were deliberately fired on despite a priest's appeal that they were wounded and might be allowed to pass. Howard died in Richmond Hospital later that day³⁸.

Con Colbert's part in Easter Week merits inclusion in the present account since, though he had relinquished his Fianna company command nine months previously and fought as a Volunteer, he remained a member of the National Executive and (as we saw) played a crucial part in Fianna's mobilisation. In addition, it was partly as a Fianna organiser that he was later judged and sentenced by the British authorities.

On Easter Monday he was given command of a garrison of fifteen men with instructions to occupy Watkin's Brewery, a support outpost of the main insurgent position in the South Dublin Union. After a day fruitlessly waiting to make contact with the enemy he

requested instructions from Major MacBride for redeployment of his force. On MacBride's order he moved at dawn on Wednesday to reinforce Seamus Murphy's garrison at Jameson's Distillery in Marrowbone Lane. This force already numbered a score of Volunteers, more than twenty women of the Cumann na mBan, and seven fiannai, among them fifteen year old Paddy Rigney³⁹. Colbert was made Second-in-Command. The post saw little action beyond a brief, sharp exchange on Thursday - it remained a defensive position while the British troops bypassed it, and one commentator has criticised the command for waiting "unimaginatively" for attacks which never developed⁴⁰.

In the original plans for the Rising Seán Heuston was to have commanded the Kimmage reservists at the G.P.O.⁴¹ but on Easter Monday morning Connolly informed him that due to the shortage of officers caused by the countermand he was to be sent to hold the Mendicity Institution with a garrison of thirteen men. Four of his party - P. J. Stephenson, Seán McLoughlin, Liam Staines and Dick Balfe - were officers of Na Fianna. His instructions were to delay the enemy for a few hours thus giving Daly's men time to entrench themselves in the main Church Street posts directly across the river. Not expecting to be in occupation of the Mendicity for long, therefore, the garrison carried no food and a minimum of ammunition⁴². Arriving by public tram Heuston positioned McLoughlin and two other marksmen as cover while he led the rush on the building. As soon as it was taken four men built a barricade of carts along the quay side. Hardly had they returned when a Regiment of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers appeared on the North Quays. They were on their way to the Four Courts, but carrying shovels not guns. The insurgents at once fired into the air above them⁴³.

The soldiers scattered but then regrouped with reinforcements and surrounded the area. With his means of retreat cut Heuston was forced to revise his plans.

Steady pressure was put on the post throughout Monday, Monday night and Tuesday, though Heuston was able to send McLoughlin out three times to bring in provisions as well as a box of bombs they had dumped earlier. McLoughlin called at the Four Courts and the Post Office to keep Headquarters informed of the situation⁴⁴.

Pearse finally sent a reinforcement unit of thirteen men of the North County Dublin Battalion late on Tuesday evening⁴⁵. British reinforcements were also arriving and on Wednesday morning General Lowe ordered the final elimination of this obstacle to his main objective. Residents were warned to evacuate as soldiers moved in to sniping positions at the rear and across the river⁴⁶. The post was now under heavy machine-gun fire. McLoughlin and Stephenson, returning from another despatch mission at the G.P.O., heard the firing and hurried back but at the Queen Street Bridge they were recognised and forced to dash back into Smithfield⁴⁷.

By noon the British were under the Mendicity wall, lobbing in grenades which the rebels desperately tried to throw back. The assault had lasted a quarter-hour when Liam Staines attempted to hurl back a bomb at the window which burst in his hand; both he and Dick Balfe behind him were severely wounded. It was probably this incident that persuaded Heuston to surrender⁴⁸. Twenty-three men filed out with the wounded youths; one, apparently the only man over twenty-three years of age, was shot dead by a soldier who perhaps had not seen the flag of surrender. The garrison had held out against some four-hundred troops.

Unable to reach his comrades McLoughlin returned to the G.P.O. to give his report. On Thursday afternoon (27 April) Connolly gave

him charge of thirty men with instructions to occupy the offices of the Independent newspaper in Abbey Street, to prevent an imminent attack on the Post Office⁴⁹. As he stood watching them from the street Connolly received the shrapnel wound that confined him to a stretcher for the rest of the week. On Friday morning McLoughlin was ordered to return to the G.P.O. where he assisted The O'Rahilly in removing bombs from the basement now threatened by fire.

By dusk the premises were no longer tenable and Connolly and MacDiarmada asked that McLoughlin, with his intimate knowledge of the enemy's positions in the surrounding streets, should organise the evacuation. He hurried the garrison out and into houses in Moore Street⁵⁰. As Connolly was carried across on his stretcher one of the Fianna juniors who had remained at Headquarters covered him by walking between him and the line of fire. Connolly was heard to murmur, "We cannot fail now . . . those young lads will never forget". The boy was barely fourteen⁵¹.

An emergency Headquarters Command meeting was held later that night at which McLoughlin claims he was given military command and Connolly's own rank of Commandant General⁵².

On Saturday morning (29 April) his plan for the garrison to burst out of Moore Street and link up with Daly's forces at the Four Courts was at first accepted and then abandoned when it was realised that it would inevitably involve a heavy loss of civilian life. The position was now hopeless. Pearse sent out a message of surrender, which General Lowe accepted only after Pearse and Connolly were themselves handed over to him. It was agreed that nurse Elizabeth O'Farrell would carry copies of the written surrender under escort to the insurgent outposts⁵³. She returned first to the Moore Street garrison, where McLoughlin and MacDiarmada organised and led out the men.

The Four Courts surrendered at about 7.30 p.m. One section of the force had been cut off from the main garrison and since the morning, when troops had occupied Reilly's Public House, had been pinned down in that immediate area, using Clarke's Dairy as their base. Pat Holohan had been given command of the party⁵⁴. His brother Garry was actually leading a small group tunnelling along Church Street to bomb Reilly's when word came of the surrender⁵⁵. Pat Holohan refused to surrender without a signed instruction but agreed to an over-night truce for the removal of the wounded. He had fifty-eight men under him and though it would have been possible to slip away during the night they all voted to remain to keep faith with comrades already in custody. They surrendered at about 11 o'clock on Sunday morning⁵⁶.

It was Sunday morning also before nurse O'Farrell visited the rebel positions on the south side of the Liffey. MacDonagh refused to surrender without speaking to Lowe personally and a meeting was arranged, which Ceannt also attended, after which the men at Jacob's laid down their arms. Ceannt finally surrendered at the South Dublin Union at 6.00 p.m., sending his order also to the support posts in his area⁵⁷. The garrison at Jameson's, now over one hundred strong, was given the order by Colbert on Seamus Murphy's behalf.

The story had been perpetuated in Republican accounts of Easter Week that Colbert assumed command at Jameson's before the surrender in order to save the life of his captain who was a family man⁵⁸. According to some versions, Murphy would not hear of the deception and the garrison were forced to depose him⁵⁹. In others the two exchanged uniforms - and this despite a difference of nearly a foot in their heights. Murphy himself always denied the incident⁶⁰ and

although such a sacrifice would have been in character with Colbert's chivalry and idealism⁶¹ the story is almost certainly a fabrication. It appears to have originated as an attempt to explain the subsequent execution of one who only held second command of a support outpost; but in fact there were other cogent reasons for Colbert's sentence.

THE RISING IN THE COUNTRY

Propaganda issued by the rebel Headquarters during Easter Week claimed that "the country was rising in answer to Dublin's call" and that the flag of the Republic was being "gallantly protected by the officers and Irish soldiers in arms throughout the country"⁶². Rumour spoke of armed Volunteers marching on the capital and even of a supporting German invasion. Only after the surrender did rebels and citizens learn that apart from a few vain and uncoordinated local actions the country had not risen at all.

Several factors account for the failure. Óglaigh na hÉireann had not yet been so thoroughly organised in the small towns as in Dublin⁶³. In many areas units were ill armed⁶⁴ and therefore hit particularly hard by the failure of the Aud arms landing. Insurrection plans for the rural districts were vague, unrealistic and issued at the eleventh hour, and because communication with Headquarters was inadequate were more severely dislocated by the countermand than was the case in the city⁶⁵. As Mary MacSwiney pointed out, "the provinces did not wish to be left out of the affair, but there certainly was a woeful disregard of the provincial conditions on the part of Dublin (who) . . . had been told again and again that without help in arms etc. the counties could do nothing"⁶⁶.

In those few areas where the Volunteers engaged the enemy, at Ashbourne, Enniscorthy, Kerry, Galway and County Louth, senior

members of Na Fianna appear to have participated with them⁶⁷ though the accounts of participants make no specific reference to the youth organisation⁶⁸. In several other centres, such as Limerick city, where Fianna units existed, officers and seniors paraded with the adult army on Easter Sunday before dispersing under the impression that the Rising was cancelled⁶⁹. In Cork over twenty seniors joined the 161 officers and men of the City Battalion at the Volunteer Hall⁷⁰. They comprised their own unit under the direct command of Seamus Courtney within the overall Battalion command structure. Because of conflicting orders received from Dublin their action was confined to a route march to Macroom and armed defence of their Sheares Hall headquarters throughout Easter Week.

The Northern contingent of the Volunteers assembled at Tyrone, planning to link up with the forces in the West. It included several Fianna girls of the Betsy Gray slua who had recently enlisted in the Ambulance Corps of the Belfast Cumann na mBan, and also three members of the city boys' slua. The girls already had experience instructing the Volunteers in First Aid and had been preparing medical kits for the Rising. On receiving the countermand on Easter Saturday the main body dispersed, but a number of the girls decided to make their way to Dublin where six were detailed to carry despatches back to the northern counties with news that the capital had risen⁷¹.

PRISON AND EXECUTION

Of the fiannai who remained in action until the surrender several, including Seamus Pouch and Joe Reynolds, evaded arrest. A number of others must have been released because of their youth although due to the indiscriminate methods of the authorities juniors were among those sent to internment camps in Britain. (It was said

that one fifteen year old on being released after only a brief internment in Wandsworth Jail bitterly resented this special treatment: "I don't know why they are releasing me", he complained, "I shot three of them"⁷².) Among those sent to Frongoch was Barney Mellows. Pat (P. J.) Stephenson, the Holohan brothers and Seán McLoughlin were all interned at Knutsford⁷³. McLoughlin escaped a severer fate through the help of one of the intelligence staff during interrogation at Inchicore: by stripping him of his rank marks he saved him from trial and certain sentence⁷⁴.

In fact the only Fianna officers apart from Countess Markievicz to be tried by field courtmartial were Colbert and Heuston. They were both tried on Saturday 6 May and received death sentences to be carried out at Kilmainham the following Monday.

On the Sunday Colbert asked that Mrs. Murphy be sent to his cell. The wife of his o/c at Marrowbone Lane, she had herself served in the garrison and was now also a prisoner at Kilmainham. She found him lying beneath a blanket on the flags of the unlit room⁷⁵. "I am one of the lucky ones," was how he broke the news of his sentence to her. On the Monday morning there was a moment of confusion in the prison yard⁷⁶. The soldier pinning the target to his breast placed it too low and Colbert noticing the error suggested that it be raised to cover the heart. The soldier offered his hand and shook Colbert's warmly before gently binding his arms.

Heuston spent the first hours of the day writing to his family. "Let there be no talk of 'foolish enterprises'," he had written to his sister, a teaching nun, "I have no vain regrets. If you really love me teach the children the history of their own land, and teach them that the cause of Caitlín Ní hUallacháin never dies." And in his letter to his mother he had asked her "get all the Fianna to pray for me"⁷⁷. At 3.20 a.m. Fr. Albert visited him and they prayed

together as the candle burned out. At 3.45 Heuston was summoned. He gave a last message to the priest, asking to be remembered to the boys of Na Fianna, the Staines brothers and his Volunteer company comrades. Bound and blindfolded and with the white paper pinned over his heart, he was directed to a soap box in the corner of the yard, on which he sat. His confessor had hardly stepped aside when the volley rang out. The priest rushed forward and noticed that Heuston's face appeared transformed with a grandeur and brightness that he had never observed before - he felt, as he recalled later, that he would have given the world to be in his place that morning⁷⁸.

The deaths of Colbert and Heuston were accorded a central place in Fianna lore and myths grew around the accounts as subsequently told to generations of scouts. One, which added to the impression of their courage and the authorities' crime, was that they were mere boys⁷⁹. In fact, Heuston was twenty-two years old and Colbert twenty-seven⁸⁰. Another was that they were Fianna twins (so to speak), alike in their lives and their deaths. But in fact it was by chance that they were tried and executed on the same day, for their roles in Fianna and the Rising had been quite different from one another. All courtmartial sentences after Easter Week were based on the roles of the accused in the Rising itself and their known records prior to it, for the authorities needed to make quick decisions on whatever evidence they had. Heuston must have been known to the police from his Limerick days, and since his arrival in the capital he would have become a familiar name to the Dublin Special Branch as a habitué of Tom Clarke's shop⁸¹. But it seems certain that he was sentenced to death primarily as the commander of a garrison which had inflicted heavy losses on the British Army.

Colbert on the other hand held only second command at the surrender, and that of a garrison which had barely engaged the enemy. But he was better known to the Castle authorities and had been under close surveillance for two years at least. His name was on their list of the founding Executive of the Irish Volunteers, a document which appears to have been one of their crucial guides in determining sentences after the Rising⁸². It also figured on the Special Branch list of suspected persons and as such had come to the notice of the Under Secretary as early as 1914⁸³. At that time the authorities had been interested in Colbert specifically for his activities in Na Fianna, and now with his execution they eliminated the organisation's central figure. Their sureness in going for the right man is particularly notable in that they could not have known of his role as I.R.B. Fianna Centre, nor had more than an inkling of the connection between Fianna and the Brotherhood.

Indeed, judging by the evidence collected from police and Castle sources for the Royal Commission, which makes no reference whatever to the youth wing in connection with the military actions of Easter Week⁸⁴, they were apparently unaware of Fianna's participation in the Rising at all. On the other hand, the fact that the organisation merited mention in the Report as "a training school for young rebels"⁸⁵ suggests that they recognised the indirect role that it had played in preparing the ground for rebellion.

AN ASSESSMENT OF FIANNA'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE RISING

While the present chapter has presented an account of the part played by fiannai in the fighting, any true assessment of Fianna's overall contribution to the Rising must also take account of this indirect role.

A notable characteristic of the rebel army in Dublin during Easter Week, one which Augustine Birrell remarked upon after the surrender, was the high proportion of young men in its ranks⁸⁶. The position in the country was similar - in Cork, for instance, "a great number in the ranks" were reported to be under twenty-one years old⁸⁷. It is clear that the low average age is partly attributable to the success of Fianna since 1909 in recruiting and training a generation for armed revolt⁸⁸. Though only a limited number of the insurgents were current members of the youth organisation a far greater number were former members. Exactly how many cannot now be ascertained, but some indication is given by the fact that a year before the Rising it was estimated that two-thirds of all Fianna officers to date had transferred to the Volunteers⁸⁹. According to Eamon Martin there was not a single post in the city or the country in Easter Week without its quota of ex-fiannai⁹⁰.

In this sense Fianna's real contribution to the Rising was made between 1909-16, and in particular from the founding of Óglaigh na hÉireann, in which it - or more correctly a body of young I.R.B. men holding officer rank within it - played an essential part. In his Manifesto to the Boys of Ireland Pearse asserted that Fianna had made possible the Volunteers in 1913⁹¹; in so far as his claim was true its corollary would be that Fianna made possible the Rising three years later. It is therefore unfortunate that the 1916 Proclamation itself, written largely by Pearse, while it referred to the training and organisation undertaken secretly by the I.R.B. and openly by the Volunteers and Citizen Army as a necessary preparation for a rising, failed to mention in the same context the preparatory role of Fianna. It was a notable omission, though no doubt explicable in terms of the aims of the document which were not primarily historical. No statement purporting to be histori-

cally accurate and complete could be so excused, should it omit to acknowledge the prominent contribution of Fianna Eireann among the forces that brought the Rising to fruition.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

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2. Lynch, D. Statement of operations in the G.P.O. area, written at the request of the G.P.O. Garrison Committee for a proposed Roll of Honour, National Library of Ireland, MS 11131, p.4.
3. O'Higgins, B. The Soldier's Song of Easter Week (1917; published Dublin, 1925), pp.44 f.
4. Higgins, J. 'Inside history of the Easter Week Rebellion', The Gaelic American, 29/7/1916.
5. Lyons, G. A. 'Occupation of Ringsend area in 1916', An tÓglach, 10/4/1926.
6. Cf. O'Malley, E. On Another Man's Wound (Dublin, 1936), pp.40 f.
7. Ó Briain, L. 'St. Stephen's Green area', Capuchin Annual, 1956, p.228. Ó Briain refers to one young boy, "one of a number of youngsters who should not have been there at all", damaging a valuable portrait with a bayonet.
8. Skinnider, M. 'In Stephen's Green, 1916', Irish Press Supplement, 9/4/1966.
9. Donnelly, M. 'With the Citizen Army in Stephen's Green', An Phoblacht, 19/4/1930.
10. Markievicz, S. 'Constance Markievicz', Irish Press, 5/2/1938. Also, Roper, E.(ed.) Prison Letters of Countess Markievicz (London, 1934), p.73. Also, Van Voris, J. Constance de Markievicz in the cause of Ireland (Amherst Massachusetts, 1967), pp.202 f., quoting the Countess's poem 'The Rosary - College of Surgeons' which refers to the altar.
11. Cf. Wall, M. 'The plans and the countermand : the Country and Dublin', in Nowlan, K. B.(ed.) The Making of 1916 (Dublin, 1969), p.246.
12. An example is the reference to three twelve year old scouts volunteering to help defend the Brunswick Street Convent when it was rumoured that the British Army were preparing to occupy it. The incident was only recorded as part of the account of the death of Seán Howard, because one of the boys was Howard's brother: 'Events of Easter Week', The Catholic Bulletin, vol. VI, no. 7, July 1916, p.406.

13. Account based on 'Events of Easter Week', The Catholic Bulletin, vol. vi, no. 10, October 1916; The Fianna Heroes of 1916, Dublin, Cumann na mBan, 1931; 'Na Fianna Eireann in 1916' by 'Sean Fhear', Wolfe Tone Annual, 1935; Wolfe Tone Weekly, 23/4/1938.
14. Lynch, D. (ed. F. O'Donoghue) The I.R.B. and the 1916 Insurrection (Cork, 1957), p.174.
15. Holohan, G. Statement to the Bureau of Military History no. 1, p.34. Cullen had recently been appointed o/c of Slua Michael Dwyer.
16. Seamus Pouch interview to Van Voris, J., 29/6/1964; copy of interview notes supplied to the author by Mrs. Van Voris, 28/1/1979. There were in fact several other Fianna at Jacobs according to a Cumann na mBan eye witness: Nic Shiubhlaigh, M. (Mary Walker) The Splendid Years, as told to Edward Kenny (Dublin, 1955), pp.172-86.
17. For example, many of the reminiscences in Capuchin Annual, 1966, and almost all those in the 1970 issue, make no reference to Fianna or fiannai. Of the accounts of the Rising in the Country, only that for Cork refers to Fianna (Ruiseál, L. 'The position in Cork', Capuchin Annual, 1966). Sources tend to mention Fianna where the writer was himself a member, or where membership would add poignancy to the account, as in the case of deaths.
18. An Phoblacht, 7/4/1928, article on the Magazine Fort action by 'One of them'.
19. Holohan, P. 'The Four Courts area', Capuchin Annual, 1942, p.231.
20. Martin, E. Statement to the Bureau of Military History, A Brief Outline of Fianna Eireann from 1909 to 1916, p.15.
21. Holohan, G. Bureau Statement no. 1, p.52.
22. Ryan, D. The Rising, the complete story of Easter Week (Dublin, 1949); p.204.
23. Cf. Caulfield, M. The Easter Rebellion (London, 1964; 1965 edition), p.67. At the Easter Sunday evening meeting Seán MacDiarmada had told them that the Rising was put back twenty-four hours; this they took literally. Caulfield's detailed and accurate account of the Magazine Fort raid is based on his interview with Garry Holohan.
24. Holohan, G. Bureau Statement no. 1, pp.57 f.
25. Caulfield, M. The Easter Rebellion, p.68, has the entry to the Fort at shortly after 12.17 p.m.
26. Holohan, G. Bureau Statement no. 1, p.62.
27. The flag was hoisted at about 3.00 p.m. Martin may have arrived at the G.P.O. about 2.00 p.m.

28. Cf. An Phoblacht, 13/11/1925.
29. Ryan, D. The Rising, p.126. Ryan of course was a member of the Post Office garrison.
30. An Phoblacht. 13/11/1925.
31. Account based on The Catholic Bulletin, vol. vi, no. 12, December 1916; 'Events of Easter Week', The Catholic Bulletin, vol. viii, no. 4, April 1918; 'Na Fianna Eireann in 1916' by 'Sean Fhear', Wolfe Tone Annual, 1935, p.58; 'The South Dublin Union area' by 'A Volunteer', Capuchin Annual, 1966, p.207.
32. O'Higgins, B. The Soldier's Song of Easter Week, pp.26 f.
33. Account based on The Catholic Bulletin, vol. vi, no. 11, November 1916; The Fianna Heroes of Easter Week, 1931; Wolfe Tone Annual, 1935, p.58; and 1960, p.49; Wolfe Tone Weekly, 23/4/1938.
34. Account based on Holohan, G. Bureau Statement no. 1, pp.63 f.
35. Statement of Eamon Martin to Pádraig Ó Snodaigh, retold to the author. Sir Thomas Myles was the owner of the yacht Chotah which had run arms to Kilcoole in 1914. The Richmond Hospital was raided several times for rebel suspects during the week but not a single patient was arrested: cf. Bean Uí Chonail, E. 'A Cumann na mBan recalls Easter Week', Capuchin Annual, 1966, p.276.
36. Holohan, G. Bureau Statement no. 1, p.54.
37. Ryan's account (Ryan, D. The Rising, p.207) suggests that the attempt to breach the wall was successful.
38. Account based on The Catholic Bulletin, vol. vi, no. 7, July 1916; 'A Dublin woman's story of the Rebellion', in The Gaelic American, 11/11/1916; Fianna Heroes of Easter Week, 1931; 'Na Fianna Eireann in 1916' by 'Sean Fhear', Wolfe Tone Annual, 1935.
39. See 'Events of Easter Week' in The Catholic Bulletin, vol. viii, no. 7, July 1918; also a full account by Thomas Young, one of the garrison, in An tÓglach, 6/3/1926; 'South Dublin Union area' by 'A Volunteer', Capuchin Annual, 1966, p.213; Ryan, D. The Rising, p.175.
40. Caulfield, M. The Easter Rebellion, p.184.
41. Cf. O'Higgins, B. The Soldier's Song of Easter Week, pp.22 f. Heuston himself understood that he was to be based at the G.P.O., according to Holohan, G. Bureau Statement no. 1, p.52. Heuston's original Easter Sunday mobilisation order is extant; it states his Company to be part of the H.Q. Battalion - see Company Mobilisation Order, 20/4/1916, in Ó Buachalla, S.(ed.) The Letters of P. H. Pearse (Gerrards Cross, 1980), p.475.

42. Brennan, J. J. 'The Mendicity Institution area', Capuchin Annual, 1966, p.190; also Ryan, D. The Rising, pp.155 f.
43. McLoughlin, S. 'Memories of the Easter Rising, 1916', Camillian Post, Spring 1948, p.6. Also 'A foolish enterprise', Fianna, vol. 1, no. 7, May 1936, which however is not a first-hand account.
44. Ibid.
45. See The Catholic Bulletin, 'Events of Easter Week', vol. vii, no. 8, August 1917, which includes a complete list of the reinforcement unit. The men were under the command of Dick Coleman.
46. Caulfield, M. The Easter Rebellion, pp.212 f.
47. McLoughlin, S. 'Memories of the Easter Rising' only refers to himself being on the despatch mission; but elsewhere the same author (McLoughlin, S. 'The heritage of Easter Week', The Irish Worker, 19/4/1924) refers to a companion. The companion was in fact P. J. Stephenson.
48. Ryan, D. The Rising, p.161.
49. McLoughlin, S. 'Memories of the Easter Rising', p.10.
50. McLoughlin's own accounts of the evacuation are corroborated by Dr. Ó Riain's version, written beforehand - Ó Riain, S. 'The six days - a doctor's experience at the G.P.O.', Poblacht an hÉireann, 20/4/1922.
51. O'Brien, N. Connolly 'The task of our youth - Fianna Eireann's noble tradition', part 2, An Phoblacht, 30/5/1931.
52. McLoughlin, S. 'Memories of the Easter Rising', p.13. If this is an accurate claim, it is not certain what 'the military command' implied during those desperate and confused hours. It was certainly Pearse and not McLoughlin who made final decisions.
53. O'Farrell's own account was printed in two parts in 'Events of Easter Week', The Catholic Bulletin, vol. vii, nos. 4 and 5, April and May 1917.
54. The Dairy had been occupied by a garrison for several days; on Saturday, with the wounding of the commanding officer, Pat Holohan was given command: Beasley, P. 'Edward Daly's Command, Dublin 1916', in McCarthy, J. M.(ed.) Limerick's Fighting Story (Tralee, n.d.), p.27. See also 'A Dublin woman's story of the Rebellion', Gaelic American, 11/11/1916.
55. Holohan, G. Bureau Statement no. 1, p.66.
56. Account based on Holohan, P. 'The Four Courts area', Capuchin Annual, 1942, pp.236 f.

57. O'Farrell, E. 'Events of Easter Week', The Catholic Bulletin, vol. vii, no. 5, May 1917. De Valera had also at first refused to surrender but had already done so before the South Dublin Union areas. Colbert must have been one of the last to give the surrender order in the whole city.
58. Among the better informed statements to include the story is Brennan, J. 'Fianna Eireann and the Rising of 1916', typewritten ms. in Mrs. Sidney Czira Papers, National Library of Ireland, MS 18817(7). Also, the account in An Phoblacht, 31/12/1926, which helped popularise the story in Republican circles.
59. Thus in Roper, E.(ed.) Prison Letters of Countess Markievicz, pp.30 f.
60. Statement to Pádraig Ó Snodaigh, recounted to the author.
61. Colbert was remembered by those who knew him as a man of chivalry and seriousness of mind - Daly, M. 'Chivalrous Con Colbert of Athea', in McCarthy, J. M.(ed.) Limerick's Fighting Story, pp.223-6. He was a Pioneer and a daily communicant. He continued his education through correspondence courses and Gaelic classes, and employed a military instructor to give him personal tuition in 1904 (see typescript of proposed book on those executed in 1916, based on statements of relatives and edited by J. F. O'Sullivan, suppressed by the authorities; National Museum of Ireland, no. 926). For the fullest account of Colbert's character, see Ó Snodaigh, P. lecture, The Kerryman, 18/12/1965.
62. Bulletin The Provisional Government to the Citizens of Dublin; and letter from Commandant General James Connolly to his forces, 28/4/1916. Cf. also, Irish War News, vol. 1, no. 1, 25/4/1916, p.2.
63. Some attempts had been made to improve matters towards the end of 1915 with the appointment of a Director of Recruiting and area organisers and the establishment of County Conferences and recruiting camps. Cf. reports at the Volunteers' 2nd annual convention, The Irish Volunteer, 6/11/1915.
64. Dublin Castle intelligence reported only 1887 rifles in Volunteer hands outside the capital in March 1916 - The Royal Commission on the Rebellion in Ireland; Cd. 8311, (London, 1916) Appendix Table B, p.123. The hundreds of men who took up arms in Galway only had sixty rifles between them (Ryan, D. The Rising, p.267). The 130 Volunteers in Dundalk had not a single rifle late in 1915 - McEntee, S. Episode at Easter (Dublin, 1966), p.60.
65. See Wall, M. 'The plans and the countermand: the Country and Dublin', chap. 8 of Nowlan, K. B.(ed.) The Making of 1916.
66. Letter of Mary MacSwiney to Peter MacSwiney, June 1916; in O'Brien, W. and Ryan, D.(eds.) Devoy's Post Bag (Dublin, 1948; 1953 ed.), vol. 2, p.492.
67. Martin, E. Bureau Statement, p.16.

68. Cf. Saturday Herald, 5/5/1916; The Gaelic American, 23/9/1916; The Catholic Bulletin, vol. vi, no. 9, September 1916; An tÓglach, 31/7/1926; An Cosantóir, nos. 24 and 25, 1941, and November 1946; Stack, A. in The Kerry Champion, 31/8/1929 - 21/9/1929; Sinn Féin, 26/4/1924; An Phoblacht, 3/12/1927 - 31/12/1927; Mellows, L. in The Gaelic American, January 1917 issues; Ailbhe Ó Monacháin in Irish Press, 5/4/1934. Also Ó Luing, S. I Die in a Good Cause, a study of Thomas Ashe (Dublin, 1970).
69. 'Fianna Eireann in Limerick City', in Limerick's Fighting Story, p.198.
70. Healy, S. 'From boyhood to manhood in the service of Ireland', The Kerryman, 4/11/1967; O'Donoghue, F. Tomás MacCurtain, Soldier and Patriot (Tralee, 1955; 1971 ed.), p.94.
71. O'Brien, N. Connolly Portrait of a Rebel Father (Dublin and Cork, 1935), pp.281 f. Also Heron, I. Connolly 'James Connolly - a biography', Liberty, September 1966. The three boys were Paddy and Geordie Nash and Seamus Mallon - Seán McNally interview.
72. 'Inside story of the Easter Week rebellion', The Gaelic American, 29/7/1916.
73. Holohan, G. Bureau Statement no. 1, pp.74 f.
74. McLoughlin, S. 'Memories of the Easter Rising, 1916', p.19.
75. Statement of Mrs. Seamus Murphy, typewritten, National Museum of Ireland, no. 926.
76. Evening Herald, 30/5/1916 and 1/6/1916. In the first issue the incident was reported as a joke between Colbert and the soldier; this was refuted in the second issue by Fr. Augustine, Colbert's confessor.
77. Letter Heuston, S. to his mother, 8/5/1916, in MacLochlainn, P. F.(ed.) Last Words. Letters and Statements of the leaders executed after the Rising, Kilmainham Jail Restoration Society (Dublin, 1971), p.114.
78. Letter of Fr. Albert, O. F. M. Cap., printed as 'How Seán Heuston died', Capuchin Annual, 1942.
79. Cf. The Fianna Heroes of 1916 - "Nobody thought that such young boys would be executed". And 'A foolish enterprise', Fianna, vol. 1, no. 7, May 1936 - "They were not at all terrified as many lads of their age would have been . . . "
80. The list of persons 'tried by Field General Courtmartial for Complicity in the Irish Revolt' stated Heuston (no. 262) to be twenty-two, and Colbert (no. 259) twenty-five - MacGiolla Choille, B.(ed.) Intelligence Notes 1913-16 (Dublin, 1966), pp.257 ff. However, Ó Snodaigh, P. 'Con Colbert' lecture, The Kerryman, 18/12/1965, has shown that Colbert was in fact born in 1888.

81. Holohan, G. Bureau Statement no. 1, p.40.
82. Almost all those on the Executive list who fought in Easter Week were executed. Eamon Martin of course was an exception. The importance attached by the authorities to leadership of the Volunteers is also implied in the death sentence initially passed on MacNeill despite his having taken no part in the Rising.
83. Under Secretary Sir Matthew Nathan used the police lists of October 1914 to make a private list of his own. The names included "C. Colbert (~~7~~ Capt National Boy Scouts)". Nathan Papers 470, Bodleian Library, p.276.
84. The Royal Commission on the Rebellion in Ireland, Minutes of evidence and Appendix of documents, Cd. 8311 (London, 1916). Even the account of the Magazine Fort raid attributes it to "Volunteers" (para. 23).
85. Royal Commission, para. 992 (evidence of Col. Sir Neville Chamberlaine).
86. Letter Birrell to Asquith, 30/4/1916 " . . . men (many of them boys) are surrendering freely . . . "; in Ó Broin, L. Dublin Castle and the 1916 Rising (London, 1966), p.114.
87. Report on the Rising in Cork by T. A. Howe, Chief Inspector R.I.C.; Royal Commission, p.112.
88. The point has been made by Wall, M. 'The Plans and the Countermand : the Country and Dublin', in Nowlan, K. B.(ed.) The Making of 1916, p.246 footnote.
89. The Irish Volunteer, 13/3/1915.
90. Martin, E. Bureau Statement, pp.16 f.
91. Pearse, P. Second Manifesto to the Boys of Ireland, Irish Freedom, February 1914.

Chapter 5. FROM THE RISING TO THE TRUCE WITH BRITAIN (1916-1921)

1916-1918

Within five weeks of the surrender all Dublin Fianna officers not in prison attended a meeting in the Lower Camden Street hall with the aim of re-establishing the organisation. A temporary committee was elected at the meeting, comprising Eamon Martin - chairman, Seamus Pouch, Liam Staines, Theo Fitzgerald and Joe Reynolds¹. Martin and Staines were elected in their absence, the one being abroad and the other severely wounded. Although the committee's formal locus was the re-organisation of the Dublin Brigade², it in fact acted as controlling body for the whole country during 1916 since no national authority structure yet existed. Its first aim was to re-establish the old companies, a task for which the time was ripe in the second half of the year.

The conviction of the leaders of the Rising, that they would die but that it would be a different Ireland after them³, could hardly have been fulfilled so quickly but for the insensitive and vengeful reaction of the British after the surrender, which "left nothing undone to assist the cause of separatism"⁴. By June General Maxwell was forced to admit "a strong recrudescence of Sinn Feinism" and a virtual halt in recruiting to the British Army⁵, while police reports from the counties observed that persons who had at first frowned on the Rebellion were now "completely changed"⁶. Many members of the Parliamentary Party also had "veered completely round since the military atrocities began"⁷, and by the autumn the party itself had quite lost the trust of the mass of the Irish people, whose support for it persisted only for lack of an alternative⁸.

'An alternative' was meantime gathering strength and clarity. British jails and internment camps were now schools of Republicanism, while in Ireland the immediate task of prisoners' aid brought people of diverse views together and gave some cohesion to the new Sinn Féin movement⁹.

It was in this climate of public expectation that Fianna attempted to re-establish itself in the early autumn. In Cork, for example, where the public had not yet responded openly to separatism, scouts took part in a recruiting concert in which they presented as a finale a tableau entitled 'The Wearing of the Green', featuring the tricolour and fiannai bearing bayonets. In the words of one of the performers the audience reacted as if their inner needs had been released - "any doubts there were about the spirit of the people being dead were dispelled that night. It was obvious that leadership was all the people wanted"¹⁰.

In Dublin o/cs were appointed to contact as many former members as possible to form the nuclei of the new companies¹¹. By December they had re-established seven of the nine pre-Rising sluaite and amalgamated the other two into a single eighth company¹².

All the interned Fianna officers except Countess Markievicz returned to Ireland with the first mass release of prisoners at Christmas. The organisation at once appointed a Headquarters staff to replace the temporary committee. The Countess was voted Chief of the Fianna in her absence and Eamon Martin, though now on his way to America¹³, was elected Chief-of-Staff. The other appointments were: Barney Mellows Adjutant General, with Pat Stephenson his assistant; Garry Holohan Quartermaster, assisted by Alfie White; Seán McLoughlin Director of Training with the duties

of Chief-of-Staff pending Martin's return¹⁴. At the same time a Dublin Battalion Staff was named, with Mellows Commandant, Philip Cassidy his Adjutant and Pouch Quartermaster. In January a ninth company was set up in the Battalion area, based at Sgoil Éanna and under the command of Niall MacNeill, a son of the former Chief-of-Staff of the Volunteers¹⁵.

With the releases of Christmas giving people and party the leadership for which they had been waiting, 1917 was to become a "year of awakening"¹⁶. President Wilson's January address on the rights of small nations, the anniversary of the Rising at Easter and the Irish bishops' manifesto against partition in May, each furthered the separatist cause. With most of its experienced officers now returned Fianna was in a position to match the expansion of the Volunteers and Sinn Féin. The youth organisation mounted a major recruiting campaign during the spring with successful results¹⁷. In Belfast, for example, which had only supported a single boys' company before the Rising, it was now possible to maintain three thriving groups with a total membership of some 150¹⁸. In early June the Countess received a "very cheering" report of the state of the organisation, sent to her in Aylesbury Jail¹⁹.

By this date, however, pressure was mounting for her own release, with that of the other leaders still imprisoned. On 10 June a huge protest meeting organised by Count Plunkett was held in Beresford Place, at which the police were attacked by the crowd. In the mêlée Inspector Mills was struck by a blow from a hurley, from which he died. The youth who struck him, Fianna officer Eamon Murray, escaped into the crowd. He would certainly have been arrested had he not turned and faced his pursuers with a

revolver: the weapon jammed but the move gave him time to make his escape. He was sheltered by the Countess while on the run, before being smuggled across the Atlantic. Mills was the first representative of British rule to be killed after the Rising²⁰.

Within a week the release of the remaining prisoners was announced, and with their return the adult movement, and with it Fianna, entered a new phase of development. Early in August the youth organisation held its first post-Rising Ard Fheis. Delegates confirmed all existing appointments to the G.H.Q. staff, except that of Mellows who had been re-arrested and imprisoned in the spring²¹. Martin was by now home to take up his post as Chief-of-Staff. The election of de Valera to the honorary office of Fianna Chief reflected his unquestioned position of leadership within the separatist movement upon return from prison. (He retained the post until January 1918, this being the only time between the foundation of Fianna and her death that Countess Markievicz did not hold office). The Ard Fheis also voted Brigade status to the organisation in Dublin, creating Battalions north and south of the river and appointing Brigade and Battalion staffs under Commandant Garry Holohan²².

The newly returned Republican leaders assisted the growth of the youth organisation in the second half of the year. In his victory address at the East Clare by-election in July de Valera urged all youths under eighteen in Ireland to enlist in Fianna²³, and in November he honoured the Dublin Brigade by delivering the address at its Manchester Martyrs' concert²⁴. The Countess paid a recruiting visit to Cork at the request of the city slua shortly after her release²⁵, and later in the autumn made a special appeal on behalf of Fianna at the Sinn Féin Aeridheacht at Newtown which led to the foundation of a new company at Bantry²⁶.

Equally important to Fianna's development was the return from prison of trained Volunteer officers. Their value was felt most strongly in the rural areas where their presence brought new adult companies into existence, and at the same time provided leadership for Fianna units which in areas of small population often trained alongside the senior army²⁷.

Finally, Fianna and Volunteers alike benefited from the reinvigoration of the political movement that followed the releases. The uniting of disparate elements within Sinn Féin begun by Griffith and Plunkett in the spring was now confirmed with the emergence of de Valera as undisputed leader. The party increased its membership twelve-fold between August and the October Ard Fheis, when de Valera's election as President and the adoption of an explicitly Republican programme completed the process of unification. By the end of 1917 "the inchoate movement which had existed at the beginning of the year had been transformed into an organised party"²⁸.

The recovery of Fianna after the Rising and its re-appearance on the streets in 1917 had not gone unchallenged by the authorities. Despite the ban on military parades the Dublin members began organising route marches early in the year, at first travelling to departure points with their uniforms hidden beneath overcoats. Police opposition was so half-hearted that they became progressively more provocative during the spring²⁹, with the result that they clashed three times with the D.M.P. in the summer³⁰. Members were also involved in a serious confrontation with the police in Belfast on St. Patrick's night. De Valera's public meeting in the town scheduled for 18 March had been banned, but it was decided to defy the authorities by beginning the meeting before

midnight of the 17th. His arrival had already signalled running fights in the Falls Road, and at midnight police charged the platform. Though defended by fiannai and Volunteers with batons he was arrested³¹.

The funeral of Thomas Ashe on the last day of September was made the occasion for the Dublin Brigade's first public parade since the Rising. The boys were among the estimated 9,000 Volunteers marching in uniform in defiance of the law³²; with Volunteers they stewarded the cortège from the City Hall, and their buglers sounded the Last Post at Glasnevin³³. In Cork, o/c Seamus Courtney and Lieutenant Seán Healy were arrested on a charge of drilling in the Sheares Street hall and sentenced to eighteen months' hard labour, later reduced to three months on account of their youth³⁴. Courtney went on a hunger strike that broke his health; he died the following summer³⁵.

At Fianna's Ard Fheis in January 1918 Countess Markievicz was again elected Chief, Eamon Martin was returned as Chief-of-Staff and Barney Mellows reinstated Adjutant General³⁶. It was decided to establish Brigades outside Dublin to meet the growth of the organisation in the rural areas³⁷.

Mellows held his post only four months, being one of the seventy-three Republicans arrested during the night of 17-18 May and deported for alleged implication in a 'German Plot'³⁸. He was imprisoned at Usk in Wales. The Countess was arrested the same night and interned in Holloway³⁹. If they were singled out for arrest on the strength of their work for Fianna, the youth organisation itself was nonetheless not considered important enough to be included among the Republican bodies proclaimed as dangerous associations in July⁴⁰.

The threat of immediate conscription and the nationwide pledge against it, and the escalation of British military repression backed by the law⁴¹, had the effect of swelling the ranks of Sinn Féin in the spring of 1918 and at the same time of fostering the expansion of the movement's military wing. By June the Volunteers certainly numbered over 100,000 men⁴². The conscription threat, particularly, also increased recruitment to Fianna : the Tralee Battalion, for instance, rose to a total strength in excess of 400 at this time⁴³. However, though complete numerical details are not extant for the period, it appears likely that the threat of the draft had a milder effect upon Fianna than on the Volunteers. For whereas it caused a stiffening of the will of the nationalist population that benefited both organisations, in the case of the Volunteers it also prompted men of conscription age to enrol for less selfless motives. The latter, who artificially swelled the numbers of Óglaigh na hÉireann in the summer and autumn of 1918, disappeared with the signing of the Armistice in November⁴⁴.

The ceasefire announcement itself signalled a climax of the mob attacks on Republican property that had been occurring sporadically since 1915. On Armistice night ex-British soldiers mingled with the crowds attacking the Sinn Féin election committee rooms in Dublin⁴⁵. The national headquarters building at 6 Harcourt Street was fired and badly damaged, and would have been destroyed had it not been defended by Volunteers aided by seniors of 'A' Coy. First Dublin Battalion, Fianna Éireann⁴⁶.

In the weeks that followed candidates and their supporters prepared for the general elections on 14 December. Countess Markievicz was standing for St. Patrick's ward Dublin from her cell in Holloway, and older members of the local Fianna companies were

enlisted to canvass on her behalf⁴⁷. In Belfast, where de Valera was standing for the West constituency, fiannai defended party workers against the nationalist supporters of Joe Devlin, and on election day helped at the booths. Devlin's victory led to confrontations between the two groups, particularly in the Pound Loney, but such incidents brought a surge of youthful recruits to Fianna and at least one new company, the Henry Joy McCracken in the Bone, was established in December⁴⁸. The pre-election work welded existing sluaite, while Sinn Féin's sweeping successes at the polls in every part of Ireland except the North East brought an influx of new members and companies into Fianna as into the the Volunteers themselves⁴⁹.

Even before the elections, in the face of British attempts to "suppress disaffection" which - it could be argued - themselves amounted to an incitement to rebellion⁵⁰, Republicans recognised the inevitability of war. Their own public statements, indeed, implied the existence of a state of war from at least the autumn of 1918⁵¹. In readiness for the inevitable their most pressing task was to remedy a chronic shortage of arms⁵². Fianna had been rebuilding its own stock of weapons during the year, independently of the Volunteers. Garry Holohan organised and led a successful night arms raid on a pawn shop on the Dublin Quays in April⁵³. The Cork Fianna units made several raids on Murray's gun shop and acquired other weapons by disarming R.I.C. men on the streets⁵⁴. Dublin companies recovered a surprising amount of British Army equipment from the Liffey at the end of the war⁵⁵. Because they gathered material where they best could and thus acquired a variety of weapons, companies effected frequent exchanges among one another and with the Volunteers⁵⁶; and because most remained short of arms thefts from one another were commonplace⁵⁷.

Army raids formed a part of the escalating pattern of unprovoked or retaliatory actions with which local Volunteer units met British repression, often without G.H.Q. consent⁵⁸, by which the country was drifting into war. Óglaigh na hÉireann had not formally declared war at this time upon the British, who for their part maintained as long as possible the fiction of a civil disturbance and denied the existence of a state of war at all. But if any date is to be taken as marking the beginning of the Anglo-Irish War, it should be 21 January 1919, the day of the inaugural session of Dáil Éireann, which appeared to give legitimacy to the actions of the Volunteers as the Army of the Republic and the military arm of a democratically elected government⁵⁹, and which effectively affirmed the existence of a state of war by its claim of belligerency status for Ireland⁶⁰. The same day also, by chance, witnessed at Soloheadbeg the first killings of the upholders of British rule.

THE WAR FOR INDEPENDENCE

As the Dáil deputies dispersed from their first session Barney Mellows was hauling himself over the wall of Usk Prison⁶¹. Plans for the escape of all twenty Republican prisoners in the jail had been thwarted by a national 'flu epidemic which had left only four men fit enough to attempt it. The four succeeded in reaching Liverpool where they were sheltered by the I.R.B. Two were smuggled to Ireland almost at once but Mellows waited a week before boarding a ship disguised as a seaman. He lay low in Dublin until the release of the German Plot internees in March, when he resumed his work with Fianna.

De Valera, who like Mellows had been on the run from prison, also emerged from hiding in March. It had been planned to honour

him with the freedom of the city of Dublin, with Fianna among the organisations represented at the presentation of keys, but the ceremony was proscribed by the authorities⁶¹ and on de Valera's insistence replaced by a more modest reception at Mount Street Bridge, with representatives of Sinn Féin, Óglaigh na hÉireann and Fianna⁶⁴.

De Valera attended the second session of the Dáil on 1 April, when he accepted office as Priomh-Aire and appointed his cabinet. In order to facilitate communication among the new ministerial departments whose offices were scattered throughout the city, a courier or 'orderly' was appointed for each minister. In nearly every case the appointee was a Fianna officer. Seán Harling was made courier for de Valera himself, and Seán Saunders for William Cosgrave⁶⁵. Other appointments were subsequently made to all government and Army departments, the last being that of Pádraig O'Hanrahan to Liam Mellows upon the latter's return from U.S.A. in autumn 1920⁶⁶.

From the spring of 1919 Fianna sought to improve its military organisation to meet the needs of the war. At company level specialist sections were established for Intelligence, Engineering, Semaphore and Musketry, which frequently worked in association with the Volunteers. Engineering sections, for example, normally received general mobilisation orders from the o/c of the local I.R.A. company's engineering section to meet with their weapons at specified rendezvous for detailed instructions⁶⁷. Almost every boy in a company was selected for one or other section and trained as such.

At battalion level Active Service Units were set up throughout the country. The Dublin A.S.U. had already been established as early as February 1918 to meet the threat of conscription, when

it had been envisaged that members would be posted into the country areas as guerillas to organise resistance in the event of a call-up⁶⁸. Modelled on the 'Fianna Commando' that had existed in the city before the Rising, it comprised selected officers and seniors under the command of Garry Holohan. Thirty youths made up the Cork city A.S.U. under Battalion o/c Paddy Hooley. They trained with small arms and rifles, and all had their own weapons which they stored in the graveyard of the Christian Brothers' monastery. In time they became in effect a full-time unit when forced to abandon their jobs and go on the run⁶⁹. Almost all Fianna's military assignments were given to Active Service personnel, either independently or as members of I.R.A. squads.

During the early months of 1919 their main work, like that of the Army⁷⁰, still concerned the acquisition of arms, ammunition and explosives⁷¹. But already they were turning to retaliatory action. As early as February the authorities had proclaimed Tipperary a military area in response to the attacks at Soloheadbeg and Knocklong, and children had been among those harrassed and interrogated⁷². By September no less than 5,588 raids on private homes had been reported throughout Ireland⁷³, in one of which fifteen year old Fianna boy Francis Murphy of Glann County Clare was shot dead through his kitchen window⁷⁴. Wherever possible Republican forces took retaliatory action against the government's representatives and propagandists. In December they destroyed the print shop of the Irish Independent newspaper in retaliation for its hostile report on the ambush of Lord French at Ashtown. The operation was carried out by a squad of two dozen men, many of them dockers who had brought sledge hammers from work. The party was commanded by Peadar Clancy and included Fianna's Quartermaster

Garry Holohan⁷⁵. In a similar operation carried out by over forty Fianna officers under Frank McMahon the Cork Examiner's presses were smashed. In the early part of the war, especially, when the people had not yet come down decisively on the side of the Republican forces, it was essential to minimise the effects of pro-British propaganda. At stations, and especially at dock-sides, armed Fianna units regularly confiscated and destroyed newspapers as they arrived from Britain⁷⁶.

Thus the war intensified through retaliation and counter-retaliation. The authorities stepped up their policy of repression following the urban and municipal elections of January 1920 in which Sinn Féin's successes in a peacetime vote confirmed the support they had registered in the general election during the European war⁷⁷. Republicans replied with ambushes and attacks on official property. In Kerry, officers of the Tralee Fianna A.S.U. joined local I.R.A. units in the ambushes at Castlemaine and Lispole, the destruction of official documents in the Tralee Custom House, and attacks on Black-and-Tans at Glenbeigh and the Fenit barracks⁷⁸. In Belfast fiannai assisted the Volunteers in burning the Tax Office, and in a combined operation engineers of the two forces succeeded in dislocating the electricity supply as far afield as Derry⁷⁹. In Cork city the organisation intercepted all vans delivering to Victoria Barracks where half a dozen of its officers were held prisoner, and distributed the goods to their dependents; its members later mounted a concerted operation in which every post office in town was raided on the one night and the stamps stolen⁸⁰.

Younger boys of the Dublin Brigade made their own protest in characteristic fashion. For their Aeridheacht in May they constructed wooden caricatures of police and soldiers and charged the

visitors to shy at them. The event was a "tremendous success" according to Countess Markievicz who no doubt inspired the joke⁸¹. After August, however, such a meeting would not have been possible. On 21st of the month the Restoration of Order in Ireland Act became law, greatly increasing the power and immunity of the military. In the words of the Commander of the Auxiliaries it opened the floodgates of crime by the Crown forces and enabled the British government to effect its pogrom plan for Ireland⁸².

On 22 August R.I.C. District Inspector Swanzy was shot on Collins' orders in Lisburn, having been transferred there for his own safety in the spring following the assassination of Tomás MacCurtain in Cork. His car registration number was known, and Fianna Intelligence sections had monitored his movements⁸³. This was only one of a number of Intelligence operations in which Fianna worked in close association with the I.R.A. Following suspected informers was a regular task; another was the location of British military vehicles for their destruction by visiting vehicle repair depots under the pretext of seeking work⁸⁴. Several of the most decisive operations organised by Collins in Dublin were the direct result of information relayed by Fianna's Intelligence department⁸⁵.

In the North Swanzy's assassination had the effect of intensifying the pogroms against the nationalist population that had broken out in several towns two days earlier⁸⁶. The pogrom continued in Belfast into September, prompting a retaliatory boycott of Belfast-made goods in some areas during the autumn⁸⁷. In support of the boycott Fianna raided suppliers trading with Belfast firms, intimidated proprietors, confiscated and destroyed their goods, and in Belfast itself distributed propaganda literature⁸⁸.

The I.R.A. took its campaign to England in the autumn of 1920, planning several operations including the destruction of the Stuart Street Power Station and the Clayton Vale Pumping Station in Manchester. Garry Holohan, who himself worked at the Clontarf Pumping Station in Dublin, was selected to organise the actions⁸⁹. Having visited Manchester in October and obtained a pass into the power station, he produced a detailed plan for an operation involving sixty-five men. This document was seized in a raid on Richard Mulcahy's home and published in the Irish Times⁹⁰, and although it had only been signed with his initials Holohan was arrested on Christmas Day.

Countess Markievicz was a prisoner in Mountjoy throughout the autumn, having been arrested on 26 September. While she was there Kevin Barry was hanged at the jail. The Dublin Fianna A.S.U. had been on standby for his rescue but the attempt was cancelled on Mulcahy's order⁹¹. Madame was eventually tried by Court Martial on a charge of conspiring "with other persons, and with one Eamonn Martin, to promote a certain organisation (Fianna Eireann) for the purpose of committing murders of military and police, the drilling of men, the carrying and using of arms, and furnishing and training of Irish Volunteers"⁹². Refusing to recognise the court she thoroughly discredited the prosecution case in cross examination⁹³. Nonetheless, when the verdict was at last announced almost a month later she received a sentence of two years' hard labour. Her spirits irrepressible as ever, she wrote her sister that Baden-Powell had received a baronet for a similar offence, and that at least the case was a "fresh 'ad' for the boys!"⁹⁴.

The curfew, first imposed in Dublin in February 1920, had been extended to every militant Republican area during the year. It

was in Cork, one of the curfew towns, that R.I.C. Sergeant Donoghue was shot dead on 17 November. His murder signalled a night of revenge. Shortly before midnight local residents heard shots fired in Broad Lane, and ran to find Eugene Connell lying dead, and Charles O'Brien, a sixteen year old Fianna boy, severely wounded in the mouth⁹⁵. Sometime after midnight men in police uniform entered a house in nearby Broad Street and fired on three people as they slept: one was seriously wounded, a second - who had thrown himself to the floor - was left for dead, and the third, Patrick Hanley, was shot through the heart. Hanley was seventeen and mentally retarded, and though other fiannai in Cork had ceased wearing uniforms for reasons of safety he had continued to wear his in public⁹⁶. It was undoubtedly for this reason that he was singled out, for contrary to the claims of the Chief Secretary for State the shootings were not random⁹⁷. Hanley was laid out in his uniform, the visiting crowds stewarded by his slua comrades. The shootings were brought to the attention of the British parliament, where it was urged that they had taken place after curfew hours and that eye-witnesses had identified police uniforms, but without satisfaction⁹⁸.

On 29 November the wooden Fianna Hall in Limerick was burned to the ground by the Black-and-Tans⁹⁹. Like Cork, the city was a 'military area'. Here, as in all towns under Martial Law, Fianna juniors played a particularly valuable part in maintaining supplies because persons under sixteen were allowed to come and go more readily than adults¹⁰⁰.

It was their unobtrusiveness, in fact, that determined the kind of support duties given to the younger fiannai throughout the country during the war. Despatches could be easily hidden inside a bicycle frame, and enemy communications effectively blocked by

cutting telegraph wires or digging trenches in familiar country roads; boys could stand unchallenged at crossroads with horse and trap, carry weapons to rendezvous in relative safety, and, as they had always done, distribute literature, paste up and tear down posters, steward Republican meetings and heckle those of their opponents¹⁰¹.

It would nevertheless be an error to exaggerate either the extent or the formality of the support role of the younger members. Boys helped the Army, after all, in areas where the youth organisation did not exist; and even where it did were probably often chosen for tasks through personal or family connections with Army men rather than through their membership of Fianna as such. Indeed for many juniors Fianna membership was only an extension and formalisation of family Republicanism¹⁰².

Moreover - and the point applies to juniors and seniors alike - the organisation was not uniformly active and militant throughout the country. On the one hand areas such as Tralee, which was later cited as the outstanding Fianna Battalion in Ireland¹⁰³, saw almost constant action. On the other, in companies like Ballymore, in the relatively inactive Kildare Brigade area where the Army itself was only established after the onset of the war, Fianna "did a few odd things" but had become moribund before the Treaty, most of the boys having "given it up because there was nothing to do"¹⁰⁴.

In this the youth organisation resembled the senior army, for the brunt of the war was in fact carried by a minority of I.R.A. Brigades, particularly in the South and West, while some others saw almost no action¹⁰⁵. As we shall see (pp.168 f. below) the areas of Fianna strength quite closely matched those of the Volunteers. The parallel was not fortuitous, but derived in fact from the close

association that had developed between the two organisations since the Rising¹⁰⁶.

FIANNA AND THE I.R.A.(1)

In recognition of its part in the Rising Fianna was re-organised from the autumn of 1916 to be a junior section of Óglaigh na hÉireann¹⁰⁷. The following year representatives of the senior army met the newly appointed Fianna G.H.Q. staff for tentative discussions towards the eventual integration of the two forces¹⁰⁸.

It was already becoming clear that in a protracted independence struggle the centre of Volunteer activity would move to the country and especially to the south¹⁰⁹. The Army's task, therefore, was not only to ensure a regular flow of trained recruits from Fianna in those areas where companies already existed, but also to extend the youth organisation in those rural areas where it was itself establishing new units. It was agreed that both aims could only be achieved effectively by matching the command structures of the two bodies. As a first step towards this end Fianna was re-organised on a Brigade basis at its 1918 Ard Fheis¹¹⁰. It appears, in fact, that the Republican leaders had already by this date drawn up long-term plans for a professional national army to be developed from the Volunteers, under the authority of a Republican government whenever the latter should be established, and supported by a National Guard and Fianna-style Cadets, the whole having an integrated regional structure¹¹¹.

The advent of Dáil Eireann in January 1919 brought such plans closer to reality and in fact totally altered the status of the Volunteers and Fianna. The Volunteers, hitherto an independent force answerable to its own executive, now became the Army of the Irish Republic¹¹² under the Ministry of Defence, and its members

were now required to swear allegiance to the government¹¹³. Fianna in turn became an official junior section of the new national army, under the control of the same government department. The youth organisation formally pledged allegiance to the Republican Dáil at its Ard Fheis of 1919¹¹⁴.

Early in the same year acting Adjutant General Pat Stephenson held discussions with members of the Army's Headquarters Staff with a view to formulating a common policy of organisation and transfer. After the meeting Michael Collins wrote Fianna's Chief-of-Staff relaying the Army's proposals:

In each Volunteer Company area where the Fianna does not exist a section Commander would be told off to do the necessary organising for you. Provided we come to some arrangement like this it will be an easy matter to fix up the details as to how it is to be done. Also the details as to how and at what age members of the Fianna will pass into the Volunteer ranks¹¹⁵.

However, as the war escalated it became clear that a common military policy could only be operated in practice under a combined central authority. It was for this purpose that a Composite Council of Fianna and the I.R.A. was set up by Minister of Defence Cathal Brugha in December 1920, composed of three members of each G.H.Q. Staff with the Minister or his nominee presiding¹¹⁶. The representatives appointed were: for Fianna, Liam Langley, Mellows and Holohan, and for the Army, Geároid O'Sullivan, Diarmuid O'Hegarty and Eamon Price¹¹⁷.

The Council at once addressed itself to the situation in the capital and instructed that Fianna's Dublin Brigade be re-organised into five Battalions corresponding to the structure of the I.R.A. in the city¹¹⁸.

It also discussed in detail the practical implications of partnership, agreeing procedures which were then circulated to all

companies by Fianna's Adjutant General. His memorandum¹¹⁹ explained that Fianna would "assist the Volunteers in every manner possible" under its own officers, and though acting in co-operation with them would "remain in most respects a separate organisation". All Fianna Battalion areas would be made standard with those of the Army, and in the case of incomplete Battalions the Army would be responsible for setting up and training companies until Fianna officers became available. Fianna's Battalion Commandants would act as liaison officers between the two organisations at Battalion level, and attend I.R.A. Battalion and Brigade Councils.

Fianna's military role would normally be confined to giving assistance "where required" in joint operations in which its own commanding officers would themselves be answerable to Volunteer officers of equivalent rank. Independent operations by Fianna Active Service Units would require prior sanction by the local Army Battalion Commandant.

The memorandum noted current plans for the selection of boys and officers to attend I.R.A. officers' training classes, pending which every Fianna o/c should instruct all ranks in skills required for the adult army. Transfer to the I.R.A. at eighteen was in future compulsory for any member "unless his services were necessary for the successful management of the company".

Within a month of the companies receiving Mellows' memorandum the British had captured documents of Collins that referred to the Council decisions and were aware of the imminent "linking up" of the two organisations¹²⁰.

Considering that in many areas the average age of the I.R.A. was little higher than that of Fianna itself¹²¹, it might have been

expected that the proposed association would be effected easily. But in fact the agreed procedures were by no means completely carried out in the five months that remained of the war. Few I.R.A. Battalions established their full complement of Fianna companies, even in the cities¹²². In some areas the Fianna company officers themselves resisted close formal association. Their own organisation after all pre-dated the Volunteers, and the deeply instilled, legendary ideal upon which it was founded made it in their eyes more than a cadet force of the purely pragmatic I.R.A. It had status in its own right, and they had standing within it¹²³. Others, fearing redundancy, were also determined to preserve Fianna's constitutional independence¹²⁴. The extent to which the agreed authority structure was observed also varied according to local conditions and in particular the conditions imposed by war. Brigades such as Belfast enjoyed association without subordination, and though protocol demanded permission to be sought from the Volunteers matters requiring prompt action were usually decided independently in practice¹²⁵.

Prime responsibility for any failure to implement the agreed procedures, however, appears to rest with the Volunteer Company o/cs, many of whom had little real sympathy with the aims of the youth wing. In his half-yearly report to Army Headquarters, written in August 1921, Fianna's Adjutant General noted that the Scouts still existed "in a more or less disorganised state" in many areas, through a failure on the Volunteers' part to honour the memorandum:

Strictly speaking, the only places where the spirit of the terms of (the Memorandum) is carried out are Dublin, Cork and Belfast. The attitude adopted by the I.V.(sic) towards the Fianna is one which is rather incomprehensible . . . We have found that in most cases the I.V. have not made the slightest attempt to avail themselves of the advantage of boys over men, and that the general opinion is that the Fianna are only youngsters and should be treated like children¹²⁶.

He added that in some areas the Volunteers refused to accept Fianna communications through their own lines, and suggested that in certain less active Brigades development of Fianna companies had been deliberately neglected because strong local sluaite "would force the Volunteers to get into the fighting". The nation-wide programme of training had similarly suffered. Bombing and musketry practice, in particular, had been neglected due to a shortage of grenades and weapons: "It was expected that the I.V. would loan these articles for lectures and practice", Mellows reported, "but outside the cities our boys have found it impossible to obtain this privilege": He warned that the Army's attitude would "require immediate handling" if recruitment of fiannai to the senior ranks was to be effective. Overall, he considered transfer "not very satisfactory" to date: Fianna Headquarters did not hold a complete record of transfers but calculated that in Belfast, Dublin and Dundalk some 150 boys in all had graduated to the I.R.A. over the previous six months¹²⁷.

In Dublin in fact perhaps fifty percent of members transferred¹²⁸, and in certain areas such as Cork the proportion was far higher¹²⁹. In others it was minimal - in one Battalion in the West, for example, which numbered 150 boys all ranks, only four graduated to the Volunteers before the Truce¹³⁰.

In all it is clear that neither aim of the Army - establishing Fianna companies in all Volunteer areas, and recruiting trained youths in number - was fully achieved during the Anglo-Irish War. It is apparent, also, that the agreed association between adult and youth forces was not effected with the thoroughness and harmony that have been claimed for it¹³¹; nor did it imply an equal partnership in any sense. Fianna did nonetheless operate as a section of

the Army of the Republic between 1919-21, under the authority of Dáil Éireann, and it is for this reason that parliamentary proceedings of the time made no specific reference to its separate existence¹³².

TRUCE

The truce was signed on 11 July 1921. Ten days later, as a direct result of it, Loyalist mobs launched a pogrom against the nationalist population of Belfast that started in the shipyards, spread to the Clonard and Lower Falls and eventually to all Catholic areas. The Volunteers managed to mobilise units in the Falls but elsewhere could only take their places as individuals in hastily mustered civilian corps¹³³. They were ill prepared and ill armed. Fiannai played only a minor part as individuals in the actions. But the pogrom had proved the vulnerability of unarmed neighbourhoods and the Scouts recognised the necessity of arming themselves. Weapons were acquired from the South, from the British Army, from dumps in County Antrim, and even from weak links in the Ulster Protestant Association willing to sell to anyone for cash¹³⁴.

Throughout the country Fianna's membership had declined in the intensity of the latter stages of the war. Many boys had resigned or been withdrawn by parents, and some companies had been disbanded by their own officers¹³⁵. The Dublin Brigade had been reduced to three battalions¹³⁶. But the ceasefire brought an immediate expansion, as it did in the I.R.A. itself. In the latter, some companies doubled their strength and many new units were formed composed wholly of 'trucers'¹³⁷. So too in Fianna, existing companies were swelled to twice or three times their former size by the 'Johnnie Come Latelies'¹³⁸, and a number of new ones were established. Reporting to Mulcahy in August Mellows

noted that almost one third of the companies known to be operating in Ireland had only sent in their returns since the Truce, and that many of these appeared to have been recently established since their existence was previously unknown to G.H.Q.¹³⁹.

His reports included a detailed breakdown of membership by Brigades, Battalions and companies, an abridged version of which is set out in Table I below:

Table I. Abridged breakdown of membership of Fianna, based largely on returns of company o/cs; August 1921

| Province | Total Brigades | Brigades for which company data available | Companies | Companies for which membership data available | Membership |
|----------------------------|----------------|-------------------------------------------|-----------|-----------------------------------------------|------------|
| Munster | 16 | 14 | 84 | 40 | 1114 |
| Ulster | 9 | 5 | 20 | 8 | 277 |
| Connacht | 8 | 3 | 10 | 5 | 74 |
| Leinster | 14 | 13 | 41 | 36 | 1193 |
| Total | 47 | 35 | 155 | 86 | 2658 |
| Cork city) and county) | 3 | 3 | 24 | | |
| Cork city | | | 7 | 7 | 338 |
| Limerick city | | | 6 | 6 | 180 |
| County Kerry | 3 | 3 | 37 | | |
| Belfast | | | 6 | 6 | 247 |
| Dublin | | | 16 | 16 | 785 |

From these data Mellows calculated a known membership of 2738 in 132 companies, statistics which cannot be readily matched with the

figures here presented. His membership total, however, covered less than three-fifths of the companies in only three-quarters of the Brigade areas. It did include the complete strength of the four largest population centres, which accounted for 57% of the total, and - since it was based on o/cs' returns - probably included the more effective areas. Taking these factors into account a realistic estimate of the total national membership in August 1921 might be something over 4,000 all ranks.

The provincial details revealed that in its national development Fianna had broadly but not exactly followed the I.R.A., with the heaviest concentration of sluaite outside Dublin and Belfast being in the active Army Brigade areas of the South and South-West¹⁴⁰.

The Scouts took the opportunity of peace to hold their Ard Fheis in August. Barney Mellows was re-elected Adjutant General and Garry Holohan Quartermaster, with a reshuffle of the rest of the Headquarters Staff. The offices of Director of Organisation and Director of Education, previously held by Eamon Martin and Liam Langley respectively, were now combined and Langley elected to the new post. Holohan, who had replaced Martin as Chief-of-Staff eight months earlier, was himself succeeded by Corkman Frank McMahon. Martin became Director of Training, and the Countess remained Fianna Chief¹⁴¹.

Pressure by the British government upon the Irish people to accept a treaty under threat of renewed war was from this date intensified and given the "whitest glare of publicity"¹⁴². Despite the ceasefire, therefore, development of the I.R.A. and the continued transfer of Fianna seniors into its ranks remained an imperative through the autumn. To meet this aim Fianna officer

training camps were arranged in a number of Battalion areas, and a major national camp was held at Loughlinstown in September, organised and financed by the I.R.A.¹⁴³. The latter took place in the field adjoining the Union, with over two hundred youths attending. Training, under the Army's Director Tom McMahon assisted by Seán Saunders, Holohan and Langley of the Fianna, included despatch carrying, route marches, close order formation, assault courses, first aid and weapon assembling. The chance to inspect one of the recently imported Thompson machine guns was a memorable experience for the boys¹⁴⁴.

The I.R.A.'s own Brigade returns for the autumn only served to confirm Mellows' August report that Fianna Battalions were incomplete and even non-existent in some areas¹⁴⁵. The Army's Director of Organisation Diarmuid O'Hegarty certainly considered the position serious¹⁴⁶ and sought a firm date for a meeting of the Composite Council to "determine the best means of securing the mutual co-operation of the two organisations" during the ceasefire¹⁴⁷.

The meeting was probably held during the Loughlinstown fortnight. Both sides agreed to the appointment of a national Fianna organising officer, with further officers in every Volunteer Division, following the precedent of the recent appointment in the 1st Southern Division¹⁴⁸. But they may well have put different interpretations on the role of the new officers. O'Hegarty and Mulcahy envisaged that they would replace Fianna's own G.H.Q. Staff altogether and made this recommendation to the I.R.A. Executive following the meeting¹⁴⁹. And since their memorandum also advocated a tighter control over Fianna units by Volunteer company o/cs¹⁵⁰ and their restriction to the role of "junior auxiliary",

it was in fact recommending total absorbtion and the surrender of all autonomy. It is hardly credible that Fianna's representatives on the Council interpreted the meeting in this sense, or that G.H.Q. would willingly have agreed to the Army's recommendations.

In the event, however, the youth organisation retained its own Headquarters command. In December the Treaty was signed, and with the signing any possible moves towards its abolition were put into abeyance.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Military Service Pensions Act (1934), Fianna Advisory Committee, Return no. 1, Outline of G.H.Q. organisation and personnel 1916-23, p.1; and Anglo-Irish War 1916-1921, Fianna Eireann, Dublin City and County, p.2.
2. Ibid.
3. Words of Tom Clarke, in Béaslaí, P. Michael Collins and the Making of a New Ireland (London, 1926), Vol. 1, p.122.
4. Béaslaí, P. Michael Collins, Vol. 1, p.123.
5. Letter to Lord French 16/6/1916, Dep. Asquith 42, quoted in Ó Broin, L. Dublin Castle and the 1916 Rising (London, 1966), p.134.
6. MacGiolla Choille, B.(ed.) Intelligence Notes 1913-1916 (Dublin, 1966), County Reports, pp.201-220.
7. Letter George Gavan Duffy to M. Fitzgerald 10/5/1916; quoted in Ó Luing, S. Art Ó Griofa (Dublin, 1953), p.268.
8. Cf. letter John Dillon M.P. to T. P. O'Connor 26/9/1916, quoted in Lyons, F. S. L. John Dillon (London, 1968), p.403.
9. Macardle, D. The Irish Republic (London, 1968 edition), p.188.
10. Healy, S. 'From boyhood to manhood in the service of Ireland', part 2, The Kerryman, 11/11/1967.
11. Breandán Ó Cearbhaill interview.
12. Advisory Committee Return no. 11, Outline of Dublin Fianna Organisation and Personnel 1916-1923. Intact companies were No. 1 (Camden Street) - Philip Cassidy remaining as o/c; No. 2 (Dolphin's Barn) - Seamus Pouch o/c; No. 3 (Inchicore) - R. Holland o/c; No. 4 (Blackhall Street) - Liam Staines o/c; No. 5 (Merchant's Quay) - Theo Fitzgerald o/c; No. 6 (Parnell Square) - Peadar Brown o/c; No. 7 (Ranelagh) - Hugo MacNeill o/c; No. 8 (amalgamation of the old Dollymount and Fairview companies) - M. Henderson o/c.
13. Martin sailed to U.S.A. on 31/12/1916: Holohan, G. Statement to the Bureau of Military History no. 2, p.1.
14. Advisory Committee Return No. 1, pp.1 f.
15. Anglo-Irish War 1916-1921, Fianna Eireann, Dublin City and County, pp.1 and 3.
16. O'Donoghue, F. No Other Law, the story of Liam Lynch and the Irish Republican Army 1916-1923 (Dublin, 1954), p.13.
17. 'Fianna Eireann' in Iris Drong Atha Cliath : Dublin Brigade Review (Dublin, 1939) National Association of the Old I.R.A., p.67.

18. Seán McNally interview.
19. Letter Constance Markievicz to Eva Gore-Booth, Aylesbury Prison 9/6/1917, in Roper, E.(ed.) Prison Letters of Countess Markievicz (London, 1934), p.174.
20. Holohan, G. Bureau Statement No. 2, pp.4 f.
21. Advisory Committee Return No. 1, p.2.
22. Ibid. Pat Stephenson was elected Brigade Adjutant and Joe Reynolds Quartermaster, Dick Balfe Training Officer and Pádraig Ó Dálaigh, who had led the attempt to blow up the Magazine Fort, Officer for Engineering and Explosives.
Battalion Staffs: 1st (South) Battalion -

| | |
|---------------|---------------------|
| Commandant | - Barney Mellows; |
| Adjutant | - Hugo MacNeill; |
| Quartermaster | - Dermott MacNeill. |

2nd (North) Battalion -

| | |
|---------------|--------------------|
| Commandant | - Theo Fitzgerald; |
| Adjutant | - Roddy Connolly; |
| Quartermaster | - Peter Byrne. |
23. Inspector General, R.I.C., Monthly Confidential Report, July 1917, quoted in Fitzpatrick, D. Politics and Irish Life 1918-21 (Dublin, 1977), p.200.
24. Holohan, G. Bureau Statement No. 2, p.6.
25. Healy, S. in The Kerryman, 6/1/1968.
26. See Deasy, L. Towards Ireland Free (Dublin and Cork, 1973), p.38.
27. In five of the seven districts in County Clare where police reported the illegal drilling of juveniles at this date, the boys were drilling in the company of the Volunteers (November-December 1917): CO 904/122. See Fitzpatrick, D. Politics and Irish Life, p.201 and notes.
28. The present account based on Laffin, M. 'The unification of Sinn Féin in 1917', Irish Historical Studies, vol. xvii, 1970-71, especially pp.270-6.
29. Holohan, G. Bureau Statement No. 2, p.4.
30. Anglo-Irish War, Fianna Eireann, Dublin City and County, pp.9 f.
31. Seán McNally interview.
32. Irish Independent, 1/10/1917.
33. Ó Luing, S. I Die in a Good Cause (Tralee, 1970), pp.187 ff.
34. Healy, S. in The Kerryman, 6/1/1968.
35. The Last Post, National Graves Association (Dublin, 2nd ed., 1976), p.67. Courtney died on 22 July 1918.

36. Advisory Committee Return No. 1, p.1; and Return No. 11, pp.2-5. Dublin Brigade appointments included:

Adjutant - Seamus Pouch;
Quartermaster - Joe Reynolds (succeeded November 1918 by Peter Byrne);
Commandant 1st Battalion - Barney Mellows (succeeded May 1918 by R. Holland);
Commandant 2nd Battalion - Liam Langley;

Garry Holohan remained Brigade Commandant throughout.
37. T.M. 'Tralee Fianna Eireann at war' in Kerry's Fighting Story 1916-21 (Tralee, n.d.) p.184.
38. Hogan, D. The Four Glorious Years (Dublin, 1953), pp.29-33.
39. For an account of her imprisonment see Van Voris, J. Constance de Markievicz, in the cause of Ireland (Amherst Massachusetts, 1967), pp.244 ff.
40. Strictly speaking the organisations concerned were not prohibited but their meetings were declared illegal. The organisations concerned were Sinn Féin, the Gaelic League, the Volunteers and Cumann na mBan.
41. Macardle, D. The Irish Republic (London, 1937; London, 1968 ed.), pp.227-32.
42. Béaslaí, P. Michael Collins, vol. 1, p. , based on Collins's own assessment. O'Donoghue, F. No Other Law, p.24, has a strength of 200,000 plus in June 1918.
43. T.M. 'Tralee Fianna Eireann at war' in Kerry's Fighting Story, pp.184 f.
44. Cf. Breen, D. My Fight for Irish Freedom (Dublin, 1924; Tralee, 1964 ed.), pp.31-3.
45. Hogan, D. The Four Glorious Years, p.48.
46. Anglo-Irish War, Fianna Eireann, Dublin City and County, p.10.
47. O'Hanrahan, P. 'In the ranks of Fianna Eireann', Easter Commemoration Digest (Dublin, 1966), p.45.
48. Seán McNally interview.
49. John Murray interview (Cork), Frank Sherwin interview (Dublin), Seán McNally interview (Belfast).
50. It was the view of Republicans that the British organised a regime of planned terror from the Rising to 1918, hoping to provoke a second rising by an unarmed people (Máire Comerford, statement to the author, 21/10/1977).

51. Cf. An tÓglach, November 1918 issues. The first unequivocal assertion of a state of war existing was in the editorial of 30/11/1918. But cf. the public statement issued after the Mansion House Conference on 18/4/1918 that the Westminster Bill "must be regarded as a declaration of war on the Irish nation".
52. The shortage had obtained since spring 1916 when the Volunteers were largely disarmed after the Rising. In County Cork there were 100 assorted rifles and carbines between 8000 men and serious weapon training was impossible - see Barry, T. Guerilla Days in Ireland (Dublin, 1949), p.207.
53. Holohan, G. Bureau Statement No. 2, p.7.
54. John Murray interview.
55. O'Hanrahan, P. Easter Commemoration Digest, p.45.
56. Ibid.
57. Breandán Ó Cearbhaill interview.
58. Cf. Hayes-McCoy, G. A. 'The conduct of the Anglo-Irish War', in Williams, T. D.(ed.) The Irish Struggle 1916-1926 (London, 1966), p.59. An indication of the ad hoc, local nature of the plans is given in Breen, D. My Fight for Irish Freedom, p.38. See also Ryan, D. Seán Treacy and the 3rd Tipperary Brigade I.R.A. (Tralee, 1945), p.53, for an indication of the motives behind the ambush at Soloheadbeg - " . . . the need to shoot an enemy . . . ".
59. Cf. Barry, T. Guerilla Days, p.12.
60. "We solemnly declare foreign government in Ireland to be an invasion of our national right which we will never tolerate, and we demand the evacuation of our country by the English Garrison . . . We claim for our national independence the recognition and support of every free nation in the world, and we proclaim that independence to be a condition precedent to international peace hereafter . . . ": Dáil Éireann : Minutes of the Proceedings of the First Parliament of the Republic of Ireland, Official Record, p.16a. And see Nowlan, K. B. 'Dáil Éireann and the Army : unity and division (1919-1921)', in Williams, T. D.(ed.) The Irish Struggle 1916-1926 (London, 1966), pp.73 f.
61. The present account based on that of two of the escapers: Shouldice, F. and Geraghty, G. 'The break-out from Usk Jail in Wales by four "German Plot" prisoners', in Sworn to be Free. The Complete Book of I.R.A. Jailbreaks 1918-1921 (Tralee, 1971), pp.25-34.
62. Advisory Committee Return No. 2, p.5.
63. See the account in Fitzpatrick, D. Politics and Irish Life, pp.154 f., citing CO 904/169/2, Public Records Office.

64. Anglo-Irish War, Fianna Eireann, Dublin City and County, p.10.
65. Frank Sherwin interview.
66. O'Hanrahan, P. Easter Commemoration Digest, p.46. Other orderlies appointed were Joe O'Reilly, Tommy Reilly, Alec Burke, Paddy McDonald, Jimmy O'Connor, Martin O'Neill, Joe Jordan, Tommy Wall.
67. Seán McNally interview.
68. Holohan, G. Bureau Statement No. 2, p.13; Anglo-Irish War, Fianna Eireann, Dublin City and County, pp.2 and 9.
69. John Murray interview.
70. Macardle, D. The Irish Republic, p.283.
71. Special squads from the Dublin Brigade made at least three armed raids to obtain or recover arms and explosives during the autumn of 1920: Anglo-Irish War, Fianna Eireann, Dublin City and County, pp.10 f.
72. Cf. Irish Bulletin, 22/12/1919 which refers to the kidnapping of Thomas Connors of Greenane, County Tipperary on 10 February 1919 by the police. He was confined in Phoenix Park Dublin for two months, taken six times to the Castle and interrogated about the Soloheadbeg ambush. Connors' case was reported to the Dáil - Dáil Éireann, Minutes of Proceedings 1919-21, Minutes for 4/4/1919, p.406.
73. Macardle, D. The Irish Republic, p.291.
74. Irish Bulletin, 30/12/1919 and 19/9/1919.
75. Holohan, G. Bureau Statement No. 2, pp.11 f. See also Breen, D. My Fight for Irish Freedom, p.95, which also includes a lengthy first-hand account of the Ashtown ambush (pp.87-93).
76. John Murray interview. In the Cork raids officers regularly boarded the Steam-Packet ship and dumped the newspapers over-board.
77. Macardle, D. The Irish Republic, pp.301-5.
78. T.M. 'Tralee Fianna Eireann at war', in Kerry's Fighting Story, p.185.
79. Seán McNally interview.
80. John Murray interview.
81. Letter Constance Markievicz to Patrick McCartan 6/5/1920, National Library of Ireland, MS.9934.
82. Crozier, Brigadier-General F. P. Ireland for Ever (London, 1932), pp.159 f. and 144. Hogan, D. The Four Glorious Years, p.245, gives figures for the escalation of murders by British forces between January 1920 and May 1921.

83. Seán McNally interview.
84. Ibid.
85. Dublin Brigade Review, p.68.
86. Cf. eye-witness account in Martin, H. Ireland in Insurrection (London, 1921), p.168.
87. The boycott was not at first supported by the Dáil but became official government policy from February 1921. It was kept up until after the Treaty.
88. George Hurley interview, Seán McNally interview.
89. Holohan, G. Bureau Statement No. 2, pp.14-20. Holohan recalled the date as November 1920, but in fact his two visits can be dated as 18-19/10/1920 and 25-26/10/1920 by his reference to the demonstration for Terence MacSwiney in Manchester on his second visit, which took place on 26 October.
90. The Irish Times, 25/11/1920. Cf. also Commons statement by Sir Hamar Greenwood describing the plan as "very carefully prepared . . . in most meticulous details" - Hansard, 135 HC Deb. 5s, 506-7 (24/11/1920).
91. Anglo-Irish War, Fianna Eireann, Dublin City and County, p.11.
92. Irish Independent, 4/12/1920.
93. Report in The Sligo Champion, 11/12/1920. Van Voris bases her account of the trial on this source - Van Voris, J. Constance de Markievicz, p.289.
94. Three letters Constance Markievicz to Eva Gore-Booth, Mountjoy Jail, 8/12/1920, 24/12/1920, 1/1/1921, in Roper, E.(ed.) Prison Letters, pp.258, 263 f., 266.
95. Cork Examiner, 18/11/1920 and 19/11/1920.
96. John Murray interview.
97. A third victim, shot in a separate incident in North Mall, was treasurer of the City I.R.A.
98. Cork Examiner, 3/12/1920. Also Hansard, 135 HC, Deb.5s, 1411-2 (2/12/1920).
99. See, eg., Cork Examiner, 1/12/1920. And cf. chap. 1, p.16 above.
100. 'Volunteer', 'Fianna Eireann in Limerick City' in MacCarthy, J. M.(ed.) Limerick's Fighting Story (Tralee, n.d.) p.198.

101. Frank Driver interview; John Murray interview. Fiannai were especially useful in bringing explosives into the Cork city centre which, because it is surrounded by two branches of the river and is only accessible by bridge, could easily be road-blocked by the authorities.
102. Frank Driver interview, Míceál Treinfhir interview.
103. T.M. 'Tralee Fianna Eireann at War', in Kerry's Fighting Story, p.185.
104. Frank Driver interview.
105. An analysis of areas according to number of actions is given in Rumpf, E. and Hepburn, A. C. Nationalism and Socialism in Ireland (Liverpool, 1977), pp.38-50, especially map 2, p.40.
106. Fianna was described by the Commander of the British Forces in Ireland as one of 'two powerful auxiliaries' of the I.R.A. (Cumann na mBan being the other): Macready, Gen. Sir N. Annals of an Active Life (London, n.d.), vol. II, p.463. The description is a fair assessment of the extent of Fianna's contribution to the war, but not of the relationship it held with the I.R.A. and its formal standing within the Army of the Republic after 1919.
107. Martin, E. A Brief Outline of Fianna Eireann from 1909-1916, Statement to the Bureau of Military History, foreword.
108. Unidentified newspaper report of court statement by Joe Reynolds, in Barney Mellows Papers, National Library of Ireland, MS 13771(i).
109. O'Donoghue, F. No Other Law, p.106.
110. T.M. 'Tralee Fianna Eireann at war', in Kerry's Fighting Story, p.184.
111. Documents Relative to the Sinn Fein Movement, Cmd.1108, (H.M.S.O., London, 1921), Appendix A(1) Memorandum on Irish Army Organisation (alleged to be a copy of notes found in possession of de Valera when arrested on 17 May 1918), pp.48 f.
112. Cf. Béaslaí, P. Michael Collins, vol. 1, p.377.
113. Cf. Nowlan, K. B. in Williams T. D.(ed.) The Irish Struggle, pp.71 f.
114. Dublin Brigade Review, p.68.
115. Letter Míceál Ó Coilean, Adjutant General Óglaigh na hÉireann, to Eamon Martin, 22/3/1919; copy in papers of Eamon Martin in possession of Mrs. Davis of Courtown, County Wexford.
116. Reynolds, J. 'Fianna Eireann - with the Dublin Brigade', in Dublin's Fighting Story 1916-1921 (Tralee, n.d.), p.207.
117. Holohan, G. Bureau Statement No. 2, p.31.

118. Fianna Advisory Committee, Military Service Pensions Act (1934), Notes of 2nd meeting, 1/4/1937, p.2, also Return No. 11, p.5. There were in fact six Volunteer Battalions in the Brigade, but No. 5 was an Engineering Battalion. Fianna's fifth Battalion was accordingly numbered No. 6, and covered the same area of the city as No. 6 Battalion of the Volunteers.
119. Memorandum No. 1, Fianna Eireann G.H.Q., 1921, over signature of Barney Mellows, Adjutant General, National Museum of Ireland archives, no code. A copy, dated February 1921, in Barney Mellows Papers, National Library of Ireland, MS 13771(1).
120. The Weekly Summary, Dublin Castle, no. 31, 11/3/1921.
121. The leader of the West Cork Flying Column, for example, was twenty-one years old and most of his men younger or little older - Butler, E. Barry's Flying Column (London, 1971), p.43.
122. Breandán Ó Cearbhaill interview.
123. Ibid..
124. Seán McNally interview.
125. Ibid. Fianna kept its own Intelligence files in the Belfast Brigade, though the I.R.A. had access to them upon request.
126. Fianna Adjutant General's Report for the period ending 15/8/1921, in Richard Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/23, p.133, National University Archives. His reference is to the Volunteers' Director of Organisation's Memorandum No. 2, which appears to have been the Army equivalent and source of Fianna's Memorandum No. 1.
127. Ibid., p.134.
128. Breandán Ó Cearbhaill interview.
129. George Hurley interview.
130. Michael Kilmartin Papers, quoted in Fitzpatrick, D. Politics and Irish Life, p.222.
131. Eg., Dublin Brigade Review, p.69.
132. Cf., Dáil Éireann, Miontuairisc an Chéad Dála, 1919-1921, Minutes of Proceedings of the First Parliament of the Republic of Ireland, Official Record (Stationery Office, Dublin).
133. Present account based on Seán McNally interview.
134. Ibid.
135. Cf. Fitzpatrick, D. Politics and Irish Life, p.222, citing Martin Whyte's handwritten autobiography re Fianna in Mid-Clare.

136. Report of Fianna Adjutant General, August 1921, in Richard Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/23, p.131.
137. O'Malley, E. The Singing Flame (Dublin, 1978), p.34.
138. Frank Sherwin interview, George Hurley interview.
139. Fianna Adjutant General's Report, August 1921, in Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/23, p.132.
140. Cf., p.178 and note 105 above.
141. Advisory Committee, Return No. 1, pp.2 f.
142. Hogan, D. The Four Glorious Years, pp.311 f.
143. Apparently a second national camp was cancelled at short notice by the I.R.A. leadership - Circular to Fianna company o/cs from Adjutant General Fianna, 12/9/1922, in Barney Mellows Papers, National Library of Ireland, MS 13771(1).
144. Details from Frank Driver interview, Seán McNally interview; both interviewees attended the camp.
145. For example, East and Mid Clare Brigades had complete number of Fianna companies, West Clare - three out of five companies; South Roscommon Brigade, 1st and 2nd Battalions - complete companies, 4th Battalion - half correct number, 3rd Battalion - no companies. See I.R.A. Director of Organisation's Reports for September and October 1921 in Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/25, p.121; P7/A/26, pp.50, 54, 58, 60, 391; also (S. E. Galway), P7/A/25, p.8; (1st Western Division) P7/A/28, p.198.
146. Letter Director of Organisation Óglaigh na hÉireann to Chief-of-Staff, 24/8/1921, in Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/23, p.126.
147. Ibid., and Report of Director of Organisation, September 1921, in Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/25, p.97.
148. Meeting held September 1921 (cf., letter I.R.A. Director of Organisation to Adjutant General Fianna Eireann, 1/9/1921, National Museum of Ireland archives, EW 1456). Also Director of Organisation's Report, September 1921, in Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/25, p.97.
149. Memorandum on Fianna, accompanying letter Chief-of-Staff I.R.A. to Director of Organisation, 22/9/1921, in Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/27, p.268.
150. Ibid. It was recommended that all Fianna correspondence should pass via the local Volunteer officer, who would also have the right of veto over the appointment of local Fianna officers.

Chapter 6. TREATY AND CIVIL WAR (1922-1923)

TREATY

The signing of the Treaty, and its acceptance by a majority of T.D.s on 7 January 1922, split the Republican movement and called in question the position of the Dáil, the Army, and thus also Fianna. De Valera at once appealed for unity in the ranks of the I.R.A., urging at a convened meeting of senior officers that the organisation must remain intact whatever the parties might say or do¹. And as early as 10 January Fianna G.H.Q. issued a circular warning company o/cs not to allow the political situation to interfere with normal work: "Political discussions of any nature are strictly forbidden in drill halls or at any Fianna meetings . . . Until the Ard Fheis meets it is expected that all ranks will stop the talk and get on with the work"².

With the ratification of the Treaty the Volunteers were accorded the status of regular professional soldiers. Fianna seniors and officers were granted the same standing and wages as members of the senior army³. Republican forces began occupying the local barracks vacated by the departing British Army and on the last day of January took over Beggar's Bush in Dublin as a national headquarters⁴. Acquisition of premises was made more difficult for Fianna by the premium on barracks, possession of which - it was becoming clear - would be strategically crucial in the event of the Army splitting. In some areas possession was effected by mutual consent. In Cork, for instance, it was agreed that the I.R.A. would share Victoria Barracks with senior Fianna officers, whose other ranks would be accommodated in the barracks

at Empress Place⁵. Elsewhere the Scouts were forced to occupy premises without authorisation. The Dublin Brigade took over the drill hall in North Great George Street in this way. Fianna's Adjutant General defended the action in the face of questions from Beggar's Bush, stating that it indicated the "desperate conditions" under which the youth section was forced to operate and requesting that the Minister of Defence should consider Fianna's needs when re-allocating barracks vacated by the British⁶.

The Sinn Féin party had succeeded in preserving a fragile unity, having agreed in February to postpone an election fought on the Treaty issue⁷. But the division within the I.R.A. was widening. On 26 March the long requested Convention of Army officers was held at the Mansion House. Fianna was not included in the prior invitation of delegates, but the agenda contained an early motion to admit the Chief-of-Staff and Adjutant General, as well as the Chief of the Republican Police⁸. The convention, which adjourned and re-met a fortnight later, voted to withdraw allegiance from the Dáil, pledging it directly to the Republic, and to vest authority over the Army in its own executive, to be elected⁹. The banning of the meeting by Mulcahy and his stipulation that attendance would involve suspension from the Volunteers in effect drove the anti-Treaty forces into the position of a rebel army. Within four days they occupied the Four Courts as a rival Headquarters¹⁰. The attendance of Fianna's two most senior officers at the convention served as an affirmation of its leadership's defiance of the Provisional government. The Dublin Brigade had already asserted its position publicly when on 2 April several hundred of its members took part in the anti-Treaty demonstration at Smithfield at which the oath of allegiance to the Republic was renewed¹¹.

Over the country as a whole, however, the organisation was in fact deeply divided on the issue. But whereas the I.R.A. was split as an organisation by Mulcahy's refusal to convene a full convention to decide its position and his effective expulsion of anti-Treaty volunteers, Fianna maintained its organisational unity by permitting a democratic convention but postponing it to the latest reasonable date¹², and meantime avoiding internal confrontation. The Ard Fheis was finally fixed for Easter Sunday, 16 April, before which date it was still open to individual members and companies to give political support to either side, since - though it must have been widely known that Headquarters opposed the Treaty to a man¹³ - no formal position had yet been decided by the national organisation. This freedom to choose is well illustrated by the situation in Belfast¹⁴. When the I.R.A. split in the city in March most of the officers and 'strong men' took the Free State side on the argument that 'if it was good enough for Collins it was good enough for them'. On 9 April the Fianna Brigade convened an extraordinary meeting to decide a policy to take to the Ard Fheis. Most of the company captains supported the Treaty and although a minority with Brigade o/c Johnnie Bateson urged the adoption of a neutral stance their arguments were brushed aside. Pro-Treaty delegates were elected to represent the Brigade in Dublin.

Prior to the Ard Fheis, therefore, the only major losses experienced by the organisation were through the transfer of senior members into the adult ranks. In South County Dublin, for example, every officer of the Battalion transferred into the pro-Treaty wing of the Army in March, with the resultant disbanding of all four local companies¹⁵.

THE 1922 ARD FHEIS

At Fianna's Ard Fheis, held one week after the anti-Treaty Army convention and three days after the occupation of the Four Courts, the leadership achieved almost all their aims and by winning crucial resolutions put the organisation unequivocally on the side of de Valera. In the first major resolution delegates voted to amend the Constitution whereby all members would be required to pledge allegiance to the Republic¹⁶. A further resolution was then carried recording "appreciation of those members of An Dáil who opposed the subversion of the Republic" and promising "to stand on their side in the gap of danger"¹⁷. Following the example of the banned Army convention, delegates then formally disassociated Fianna from the government and vested sole authority in its own G.H.Q. staff¹⁸.

The meeting passed two further resolutions of significance. The first, by which the ceiling age of membership was raised to twenty-one years with the arming of all over-eighteens¹⁹, was calculated to create a senior section equivalent to the Army within an independent Fianna. The second confirmed that independence by withholding support from both factions of the I.R.A. and permitting Fianna companies to carry out military operations without Army sanction²⁰. The clear aim of both resolutions was the development of an autonomous force able to defend itself. The decisions were undoubtedly taken because at that date in April delegates were uncertain of the final outcome of the Army split, or of the final political allegiance of the Army should it be re-united, and feared possible civil war.

Nonetheless, the decision to withhold support from the Four Courts I.R.A. appears out of tune with previous resolutions, and

is perhaps only to be explained in terms of the large minority of pro-Treaty delegates present. It was apparently impossible to prevent the decision or carry a more explicitly anti-Treaty amendment. Headquarters certainly regretted the position in which Fianna was now placed, which they saw as dangerous and open to local abuse as well as being contrary to their own aim of close association with the Republican forces²¹.

Despite the controversy of the spring Fianna had enjoyed the greatest expansion in its history during the nine months that followed the Truce, and Liam Langley reported to the Ard Fheis a total membership exceeding 26,000²². The figure was certainly an exaggeration, and in addition based on returns already out-of-date since by April membership was on the decline. It was challenged at the time by the Chief-of-Staff who suggested that a realistic total might be between one half and two thirds of Langley's claim. A comparison with membership figures for the Dublin Brigade between August 1921 and January 1922 offers a pointer to the national figure. During those five months membership in the capital rose from 785 to 2,515²³. If this expansion was typical for the country as a whole it would indicate a national membership of somewhat over 13,000 in January, in which case an accurate April figure might lie between 11,000-14,000.

The Ard Fheis returned Countess Markievicz unopposed as Fianna Chief; she was not herself present at the meeting, being at this date on a Republican propaganda tour of the United States²⁴. Delegates also accepted the resignation of Garry Holohan from the office of Quartermaster General, electing Joe Reynolds as his successor. Holohan nevertheless continued his daily liaison work with the anti-Treaty I.R.A.²⁵.

FIANNA AND THE I.R.B.(ii)

It appears likely that the Ard Fheis weekend was also made the occasion for solving the now pressing problem of Fianna's position vis-à-vis the I.R.B.

The Brotherhood had been re-organised under a temporary council almost immediately after the Rising, and within eighteen months had fully re-established itself under the control of a Supreme Council²⁶. It had also re-established its former dominance within the Volunteers, at least from the time of the latter's re-organisation in 1917²⁷. Before and during the Anglo-Irish War it recruited new members exclusively from the Army, concentrating on officers so that, though it controlled perhaps only one in twenty of all volunteers directly, it exerted its influence through the higher ranks and especially the central leadership which it totally dominated²⁸.

Its position within Fianna was certainly similar in Dublin, where almost all senior officers were I.R.B. men. Many held posts as orderlies for Government and Army departments, and since eleven of the thirteen Headquarters staff officers of the I.R.A. and half the Cabinet ministers of the Dáil were I.R.B. members, it was inevitable that Fianna's Dublin Brigade officers came in close and frequent contact with the Brotherhood²⁹. In addition, every member of the Dublin-based Fianna G.H.Q. Staff in autumn 1921 belonged to the I.R.B. In the provinces, on the other hand, the position was diverse. In Cork city the Brotherhood was thought of as an organisation for older men and apparently not even the highest ranking Fianna officers were invited to membership³⁰. In Belfast, also, hardly any Brigade officer was a member at the time of the Truce³¹.

The John Mitchel I.R.B. Circle, though originally composed

solely of Fianna officers, had already before the Rising been extended to include others who though young were not fiannai. Several alumni of Sgoil Éanna, and Jack and George Plunkett, were among those admitted³². After the Rising a number of former Fianna boys had retained membership of the circle after transferring to the Volunteers. In the spring of 1918 the circle was reorganised. The I.R.A. members formed a separate group retaining the name 'John Mitchel Circle', with the remnant group of Fianna officers adopting the title 'Fianna Circle'³³. The latter continued to meet on the eve of Ard Fheiseanna throughout the war³⁴.

The Brotherhood's Supreme Council, meeting four days after the signing of the Treaty and sensing division among the membership, decided against taking a stand on the question³⁵. Two days later its members in the Dáil were wrongly notified that the Council had ratified the Treaty but given individual T.D.s freedom of conscience on the issue. The Dáil's acceptance of the Treaty prompted an extraordinary convention of I.R.B. centres and Supreme Councillors on 10 January which, like further meetings in March and April, ended indecisively with a majority of the central hierarchy supporting the Treaty and most of the local centres opposing it. The division and indecision were fatal to the Brotherhood, shattering the discipline upon which it was founded, so that from February it disintegrated and ceased to function as a national organisation. The full Supreme Council never convened again, and local circles met irregularly. Many dissolved themselves. Among them was the Fianna Circle, the majority of whose members opposed the Free State. In the spring of 1922, very possibly at its meeting on the eve of Fianna's Ard Fheis, its members ejected the 'visitor' and voted to secede from the Brotherhood³⁶.

THE CRISIS OF LATE SPRING 1922

Local Fianna company officers, with their new-won independence, carried out a number of anti-government actions in the second half of April, on local initiative and to the disquiet of the Four Courts leadership³⁷. Similar incidents by the adult forces, which both Headquarters Staffs were anxious to curtail, were halted when a 'truce' was agreed between Beggar's Bush and the Four Courts on 4 May. Later in the month, following the political 'pact' between Collins and de Valera, efforts were made to re-unite the I.R.A. with the establishment of an Army Conference representing both factions³⁸. But Fianna was not bound by the 'truce' or the Conference and incidents involving its members continued. In two such in Limerick city in the first week of the truce scouts threatened and fired on young fellow members who had taken the Treaty side³⁹.

By adopting an explicit political position at its Ard Fheis Fianna now left no place in its ranks for any but convinced Republicans, and as a result suffered immediate and heavy losses of members. It had preserved its unity but in doing so its numbers were decimated. In the Kingstown area, for example, some thirty percent of seniors took the Treaty side⁴⁰, and in Cork perhaps half of the rank-and-file and a quarter of the officers were lost to the Free State army⁴¹. In the confusion of the times some youths made purely arbitrary decisions for one side or the other⁴². The only course for Fianna juniors, and for the neutral and the uncertain, was resignation, and many hundreds must have been lost in this way during April and May. Companies disbanded en masse, and in the two months that followed the Ard Fheis whole areas completely disintegrated. Belfast was one

such; there each company made its decision independently, with the total collapse of the Brigade by late May when Seán McNally reported the position to his old Commandant Joe McKelvey at the Four Courts. He was posted back to the city to attempt to re-establish some elementary organisation with the help of other dual members, but the tide was by now against it⁴³.

Even the national leadership were not immune from the exhaustion and disillusionment besetting an organisation which they saw breaking up and impotent to turn the political tide in Ireland. Eamon Martin, who had held unbroken office since 1909, wrote Barney Mellows in May tendering his resignation - "My only reason is inability," he wrote, "whatever help I could give the Fianna would now be irregular . . . I am spent . . . I see no immediate activity now for the Fianna beyond the plod-plod"⁴⁴. He was expressing what the others probably felt - there no longer seemed to be an immediate role for Fianna in halting the nation's plunge to disaster, and they must return to the hard graft of the long-term task of rebuilding from basics among the young generation for a future Republic. In June they announced the decision to return to Fianna's original and prime role, the Republican education of the young, which had been almost totally abandoned for some years due to the pressures of war, and for want of which (they believed) so many had defected:

The educational side of our programme has been completely neglected. For instance, how many of our officers and boys have qualified to wear the Fáinne? . . . While still keeping in view military training we must devote more time to the training of the mind and body. Physical training has had to be cut. Gaelic games have been neglected, both necessary if we are to raise up strong and virile Irishmen fit to take a soldier's part in the national struggle of tomorrow⁴⁵.

As early as 1913 individual leaders had warned that with the grow-

ing dominance of a military role Fianna was in danger of losing sight of its original basic aims⁴⁶. Every member of the 1922 leadership had grown up in the organisation as it had been before the founding of the Volunteers, and knew the old ideal. It appears, moreover, that they were again influenced by one who was now a legend of Fianna's early years, Liam Mellows, who since his return from U.S.A. in 1920 had become closely associated with the Headquarters staff through his brother Barney, his own friendship with Alfie White, and the fact that his Army department and Fianna's G.H.Q. shared the same office⁴⁷. He had been their guest at the 1922 Easter Week Commemoration concert and delivered the oration at their Bodinstown Commemoration in June⁴⁸. The programme of action for the Republican movement that he compiled in August included a section on youth that at once affirmed the crucial validity of Fianna's role and the primacy of the educational element within it. His cryptic prison notes echoed the hopes of Fianna's own leaders -

We must concentrate on youth - salvation of country lies in this - both boys and girls. Fianna never got proper help or encouragement. Fianna ideal can save future. The reason for so many young soldiers going wrong is that they never had a proper grasp of fundamentals. They were absorbed into movement and fight - not educated into it. Hence no real convictions
 . . . 49.

It is thus clear that in the summer of 1922 Fianna's leadership, and at least one enlightened leader in the senior movement, already grasped the priorities for the organisation now that the Republic seemed to be slipping from their grasp. Their long-term aims would be taken up again two years later, at Fianna's first Ard Fheis after the final defeat of the Republic. But meantime they were forced to shelve them in favour of the immediate military task. Their plans for the new educational emphasis had been

announced on 25 June, in the first issue of a Fianna newspaper launched explicitly to promote their new aims⁵⁰. But even before this date the Collins-de Valera 'pact' had been broken and the Free State Constitution published, irrevocably splitting the I.R.A.; Sir Henry Wilson had been assassinated and the Provisional government were already under pressure from Westminster to attack the Four Courts⁵¹. On 28th of the month they did so.

CIVIL WAR

For three days their forces bombarded the Republican Headquarters, using heavy artillery lent by the British⁵² and under the command of Brigadier Pádraig Ó Dálaigh, the same Paddy Daly who as a Fianna officer had led the attack on the Magazine Fort in Easter Week. By the morning of Friday 30 June the building was in flames and the garrison, unable to break out through the barricaded gates, were driven into the cellars. After an explosion in the chemical store had killed some thirty Free State troops attempting an entry, the Cumann na mBan nurses were sent out, and in the early afternoon the rest of the garrison surrendered on the advice of Brigade Commandant Oscar Traynor⁵³. Two men had been fatally wounded in the siege; one of them, Tom Wall, was a lieutenant in Na Fianna⁵⁴. After the surrender Free State forces found a further thirty-three people in the building. According to Rory O'Connor's contemporary account they were orderlies who had been herded into one room for their own safety⁵⁵. They were Fianna youths, none of them more than eighteen years old⁵⁶.

On the first day of the Four Courts attack Traynor had set up his Brigade headquarters in Barry's Hotel while his units occupied hotels and other buildings in Parnell Square and the O'Connell Street area⁵⁷. Moran's Hotel was used from Wednesday to Sunday

by nurses of the Cumann na mBan who set up a field hospital in the basement. Countess Markievicz was among them, having left her digs on hearing the first shells fired, and her marksmanship was welcome in defence of the position⁵⁸. On Thursday the Gresham was occupied by a force under the command of Garry Holohan, who also attempted to capture Free State-held posts at the upper end of O'Connell Street⁵⁹. The same day the Hammam was seized by Citizen Army men and made the operation headquarters. During the exchanges of fire in the area fian Willie Clarke was shot dead in Hill Street⁶⁰.

After a brief lull in the firing following the fall of the Four Courts the exchanges began again on Saturday afternoon, and by Sunday afternoon most anti-Treaty positions were under fire. The Cumann na mBan evacuated Moran's, retreating to the Gresham and later to the Hammam⁶¹. The Hammam itself was under sustained attack and at 7.30 p.m. Traynor ordered part of the garrison to surrender⁶². Among those in the building were Joe Reynolds, Garry Holohan, the Countess, and Barney Mellows who had been placed in charge of supplies for the Republican forces in the area⁶³. The last three were among the party who stayed on.

Government forces resumed their attack on the remaining posts before first light on Monday (3 July) and by noon the whole west side of O'Connell Street as well as several streets on the east side were in their hands⁶⁴. Traynor's plan was to evacuate the Hammam by stages. Barney Mellows organised the first group to leave, shepherding them to St. Thomas's Church whence they escaped under cover across Marlborough Street. The Countess was apparently with them. In a separate sortie Traynor, de Valera and Stack escaped unchallenged via Poole's Lodging House⁶⁵. By

Tuesday much of the east side of O'Connell Street had been reduced to rubble and only the Hammam remained in Republican hands. The surrounding area was cleared of civilians and Brugha was ordered to surrender with the seventeen men and three nurses who remained. The final assault began early the next morning. Sometime in the afternoon Brugha sent Garry Holohan with six men to secure the Gresham. They found the building burning beyond saving and attempted to evacuate. Trapped by the flames, they were forced to climb out by the fire escape and surrender⁶⁶. They were brought to Amiens Street Station, where they were later joined by the rest of the Hammam garrison who had at last been persuaded to surrender, leaving Brugha alone in the burning building.

Sometime later in the week the Countess, who had been in hiding at a friend's house, moved to Whelan's Hotel from where she sent a party of nurses to join the Republican forces in the West of Ireland⁶⁷. From now the war would be fought in the country, for with the fall of the Hammam the battle for Dublin was over.

The anti-Treaty forces had lost part of their National Executive and a number of rural Battalion officers in the Four Courts surrender, as well as other local captains who had been unable to return to their areas from the convention in Dublin. Thus handicapped they lost the initiative in the country from the outset and were never able to regain it. Lacking the resources of the enemy, their own policy of autonomous local commands denied them any concentration or mobility of those resources they had. Lacking any strategy beyond that of holding the 'Munster Republic', they were forced to wage a defensive war⁶⁸. And lacking the pragmatism of the Free State Army they were bound by the moral obligations of their own vision, yet increasingly unable to raise

a war-weary people to fight for that vision⁶⁹.

As early as mid-July many country units had been ordered to adopt guerilla tactics, and de Valera already favoured a cease-fire⁷⁰. By 11 August every major town between Waterford and Limerick, including the city of Cork, had fallen to the government. The role of the I.R.A. and Fianna changed from defence to harrassment.

On 12 August all barracks in and around Cork were burned down as Republican forces evacuated the town. Fiannai fired the Empress Place Barracks with whiskey and petrol, and assisted the I.R.A. in destroying the Victoria military barracks as well as all police barracks and the premises at Fermoy, Kinsale, Charles Fort and Ballincollig⁷¹. Two days later, after the barracks at Dundalk were retaken with the capture of the large Free State garrison occupying it, fiannai were detailed to guard the building and prisoners⁷². By now, however, such a success was rare. "By mid-August the feeling . . . that the war was over was general and welcome. The Press prophesied complete victory within a few days"⁷³. But the government's emergency measures introduced in September dispelled any chance of surrender and forged in Republicans a resolve to refuse amnesty and carry on the war "either to victory or utter defeat and extermination"⁷⁴.

Fiannai were among the victims of the government drive to crush resistance during the autumn. As early as August the Republican press reported a "systematic vendetta" against the organisation in the capital. It claimed that in one incident nineteen boys were taken as prisoners to Wellington Barracks after their drill hut had been surrounded and fired on by eighty Free State troops with armoured car and Lewis gun⁷⁵.

Later that month Seán Cole and Alfred Colley were seized by government troops at Newcomen Bridge, brought to Yellow Road and there shot⁷⁶. They were two of the most senior officers in Fianna's Dublin Brigade, nineteen year old Cole being Commandant of the Second Battalion, and Colley, two years his senior, Commandant of the First Battalion and Vice Brigadier⁷⁷. It appears likely, as both Republicans and British intelligence believed⁷⁸, that their murders were a reprisal for the shooting of Michael Collins. Colley was afterwards buried privately with a small Fianna guard of honour; Cole was given a military funeral with Fianna firing party and an oration delivered by Countess Markievicz⁷⁹.

On 27 September the government passed new legislation giving its forces emergency powers and licence, including the use of secret military courts, and Cosgrave warned that rebels would not be treated as prisoners of war. Within a day seventeen year old Bertie Murphy, captain of the local Fianna company, was murdered on the steps of the Great Southern Hotel in Castleisland as a reprisal for an ambush on a Free State patrol⁸⁰.

On the morning of 7 October two youths were found on the outskirts of Dublin riddled with bullets⁸¹. A third was found severely wounded close by, having apparently crawled away and fallen into a quarry in the darkness. He died later that day. The boys were identified as Eamon Hughes, Brendan Holohan and Joseph Rogers of Fianna's Dublin Brigade⁸².

17 November saw the first executions under the new emergency powers. One of the four young men sentenced was a serving member of Fianna⁸³. Coinciding with the opening of the military trial of Erskine Childers on a similar charge, the executions were intended to create a precedent for his own death sentence⁸⁴.

Fianna's national leadership were among the government's targets in the autumn. The Countess only avoided arrest by going on the run, using a succession of safe houses in Dublin⁸⁵. (She remained in hiding until the new year when she crossed to Scotland for a propaganda tour that kept her in Britain until the end of the war⁸⁶.) Before the end of September the entire G.H.Q. Staff apart from Mellows and Frank McMahon had been arrested⁸⁷. Without them all pretence of a national organisation was abandoned; and without central support, the local structures collapsed one by one.

In Dublin, where it was claimed that over 400 officers and boys had taken part in the fighting⁸⁸, the Brigade structure disintegrated almost as soon as the firing ceased, and the remnant of members were formed into semi-autonomous Active Service Units⁸⁹. By the end of August only about thirty members remained in four units, with former First Battalion o/c Tony Black now acting Commandant of the city⁹⁰. With Black's arrest, the disbanding of one unit and the mass arrest of two others in October, there now remained a single squad of eight members under Frank Sherwin. On 8 November this last remnant disbanded after the arrest of two of its number at Doody's Dairy following an I.R.A.-Fianna attack on Wellington Barracks⁹¹. A temporary A.S.U. was then formed of younger boys attached to the Army's 5th (Engineer) Battalion, and several seniors joined the I.R.A. as individuals. But as an organisation the Dublin Fianna appears to have ceased to function before the end of the year⁹².

Despite a paucity of documentary evidence for the guerilla war in the country, due to the erratic state of Army communications with Headquarters⁹³ and the destruction of almost all local records at the surrender⁹⁴, it is possible to assess the position of Fianna with some confidence. It seems certain that in most

areas companies were no longer strong enough to operate alone. With the outbreak of the war Fianna had revoked its 1922 Ard Fheis decision to disassociate from the I.R.A., and had returned to the former procedure of dual membership⁹⁵. In some areas, therefore, the few remaining Fianna activists must have joined the I.R.A.'s flying columns⁹⁶.

Cork was one area in which Fianna survived as a separate organisation, though even here every company disbanded after the evacuation of the city and remained in abeyance for several months⁹⁷. As in all Battalion areas, the members were known by the enemy, many of whose officers were former comrades. Some dozen were arrested and interned in the city jail, and the rest were forced to go to ground. It was late autumn before they were able to re-establish skeleton companies in the Blackpool, Firhill and Blarney Street districts, which were eventually combined into a single Active Service Unit of sixty youths. With the local I.R.A. virtually wiped out this unit became the main focus of Republican resistance though confined to hit-and-run actions. Hiding out in the country through the winter, where with some Army assistance it organised the armed attacks on Blarney, Bantry and Dunmore, its members returned to the city in the spring.

Unlike the War for Independence the Civil War was not the struggle of a people against an alien enemy, but of a people divided against itself. In many areas Republicans found themselves a besieged minority, and even in the anti-Treaty strongholds, as the civilian population became alienated by the need of the I.R.A. to live off the people, their active support dissolved⁹⁸. This affected Fianna in several ways. Recruiting could nowhere be undertaken easily or openly, and in an increasingly hostile popula-

tion the flow of new young members dried up. Parades and training became an impossibility and, in what was now turning into a war of localised mass vengeance, there was no longer a place for the work of communication between army and people that the youth organisation had carried out with such effect between 1919-21. These roles that it was forced to abandon were the very ones that had previously bound it to the local population and ensured its own survival and growth. But without them there no longer remained the membership, opportunity or call for sluaite as such. These fell into abeyance; only the directly military role remained, and the organisation, where it survived, contracted into tiny and tenuous groups on active service, isolated from one another and largely isolated from the people⁹⁹.

These remnant units were made up mainly but not entirely of seniors. Even in the first week of the war the anti-Treaty leadership had been accused of using mere boys in defence of the Four Courts¹⁰⁰. Later, as Republican resistance crumbled, the growing numerical disadvantage under which their remaining forces fought may well have forced them to draft juniors into the fighting units, just as it increased the part played by women¹⁰¹ and even, it was asserted, by young girls¹⁰². Certainly, boys as young as fourteen were among those interned in later months¹⁰³.

Hundreds of the 10,000 Republicans held in Irish jails and camps in spring 1923 were in fact fiannai. There were huts in some camps occupied entirely by scouts: Tintown 3 in the Curragh, for instance, held some thirty members including Headquarters Staff officer Alfie White who acted as hut o/c¹⁰⁴.

As the evenings lengthened, with no chance of victory or quarter for negotiation, the inevitability of surrender became apparent.

Advised that their units could not survive the summer, the Army Executive were already considering peace moves when the death of Liam Lynch on 10 April virtually decided the matter. After their first ceasefire orders and peace proposals had been ignored by the government forces a decision to dump arms was taken on 14 May. Chief-of-Staff Frank Aiken's order to this effect issued ten days later marked the end of the war¹⁰⁵.

In a letter written to O'Malley in Mountjoy a month after the ceasefire attempting to account for the defeat, Aiken presented an analysis of the Republican movement covering both its military and its civilian support organisations ("non-fighting men"). It was in the latter, rather than in military inferiority, that he believed the war had been lost:

I am continually impressing on our divisions the fact that the lack of civilian organisations to back us was chiefly responsible for our present position and that it is their duty to see that our civilian supporters are organized, also that the Fianna are re-organized and trained at once¹⁰⁶.

His reference to Fianna as a part of the movement's civil and not its military organisation was significant. He clearly envisaged its prime role to be that of providing recruits and support but not of direct involvement in war. In this he complemented the role concept of Fianna's own leaders and Liam Mellows in 1922 - the education of young people into Republicanism. In both cases its role would be preparatory not participatory; building a base for the movement through the recruitment and education of the coming generation towards the eventual reconquest of the defeated Republic.

In fact, the years of war were over, and with them Fianna's role and standing as an army. As would later become clear in retrospect, Fianna abandoned the role of direct military participation at the ceasefire of 1923, and only rarely and in exceptional

circumstances would it ever again adopt it. Recruitment, preparation and education would be its normal role from this date, as it entered the second, post-Civil War era of its history.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. O'Malley, E. The Singing Flame (Dublin, 1978), p.48.
2. Circular from Fianna Adjutant General to all Fianna officers, 10/1/1922, in National Museum of Ireland archives, EW 1450.
3. George Hurley interview, John Murray interview.
4. Macardle, D. The Irish Republic (London, 1937; 1968 ed.), p.597.
5. John Murray interview.
6. Letter Dublin Brigade Adjutant Beggar's Bush Óglaigh na hÉireann to Adjutant General Fianna Éireann, March 1922; and reply, 24/3/1922; National Museum of Ireland archives, EW 1473, 1475.
7. Macardle, D. The Irish Republic, pp.604 ff. Sinn Féin Ard Fheis-agreement of 22 February, ratified by the Dáil on 2 March.
8. General Convention - Instructions for selection of delegates, signed Rory O'Connor, pp. Anti-Treaty G.H.Q.; and Clár, item 4 (passed), in Ernie O'Malley Papers, P7/a/5, National University Archives.
9. Cf. O'Donoghue, F. No Other Law, the story of Liam Lynch and the Irish Republican Army 1916-1923 (Dublin, 1954), pp.221 f.
10. Four Courts occupied 13 April 1922 - Macardle, D. The Irish Republic, p.632.
11. Irish Independent, 3/4/1922. The demonstration included 5 battalions of Volunteers, numbering 3,220 men in all, and was addressed by Rory O'Connor and Oscar Traynor. Greaves, C. D. Liam Mellows and the Irish Revolution (London, 1971), p.306, states that the Fianna contingent numbered 300.
12. The date was originally fixed at 12 March - cf., Ard Fheis Resolutions, National Museum of Ireland archives, EW 1471. The final date was Easter Sunday 16 April (see Fianna, June 1922) and not 23 April as Greaves has it (Greaves, C. D. Liam Mellows, pp.310 f.). Greaves possibly assumed that the Easter Ard Fheis was held on the same day as the Easter Commemoration Aeridheacht. The latter was 23 April, i.e., the anniversary of Easter as it fell in 1916 (Fianna Éireann Dublin Brigade, 1916-22 Easter Week Anniversary Commemoration Booklet).
13. All took the Republican side in the subsequent Civil War.
14. Seán McNally interview, on which the whole paragraph is based.
15. Advisory Committee, Notes of Fourth Meeting, 22/2/1938, p.4.

16. Fianna, June 1922, Ard Fheis report - "I, ----, pledge my allegiance to the Irish Republic and promise to do all in my power to protect her from all enemies, domestic or foreign, and not to relax my efforts until the Irish Republic is universally recognised. I also promise to obey my superior officers".
17. Ard Fheis Resolutions, Amendments to the Constitution, National Museum of Ireland archives, EW 1471. The "gap of danger" is the beárna baoghail of Irish heroic legend and its military implication would not have been lost on the delegates.
18. Fianna, June 1922, Ard Fheis Report.
19. Ard Fheis Resolutions, Amendments to the Constitution, National Museum of Ireland archives, EW 1471.
20. Letter Adjutant General Fianna to S. Ó Donnghaile (Chief of Police for Army Council, Four Courts I.R.A.), 17/5/1922, in reply to his letter of 29/4/1922, National Museum of Ireland archives, EW 1454 and 1485.
21. Ibid.: "I may say that I do not agree with this and I find that most of the G.H.Q. Staff are at one with me, and we are making arrangements to meet the G.H.Q. Staff Four Courts with a view to coming to some arrangement in co-operating with your men".
22. Fianna, June 1922, Ard Fheis Report.
23. Report of Na Fianna Eireann Dublin Brigade for January 1922, signed by Seán Saunders, Brigade Adjutant, dated 4/4/1922. Numbers include all ranks; National Museum of Ireland archives, EW 1468.
24. Van Voris, J. Constance de Markievicz in the Cause of Ireland (Amherst Massachusetts, 1967), pp.310 ff.
25. Holohan, G. Bureau Statement No. 2, p.31. Holohan resigned for domestic reasons, having married in February.
26. Lynch, D. (ed. O'Donoghue, F.) The I.R.B. and the 1916 Insurrection (Cork, 1957), p.32.
27. Béaslaí, P. Michael Collins (London, 1926), vol. 1, p.175.
28. O'Beirne-Ranelagh, J. 'The I.R.B. from the treaty to 1924', Irish Historical Studies, vol. xx, 1977, pp.27 and 31.
29. Frank Sherwin interview.
30. John Murray interview.
31. Seán McNally interview.
32. Cf. Holohan, G. Bureau Statement No. 2, pp.2 f.
33. Holohan, G. Bureau Statement No. 2, pp.2 f. and 35.

34. Fianna Handbook, 1964, p.34.
35. O'Beirne-Ranelagh, J. 'The I.R.B. from the treaty to 1924', upon which the present paragraph is based.
36. Eamon Martin statement to C. D. Greaves. Letter Greaves to the author, 17/11/1978. It was the practice for a 'visitor' from the hierarchy of the I.R.B. to attend Circle meetings. In this case he would very probably have been a member of the Supreme Council. In view of the fact that the Centres' Conference was being held three days after Fianna's Ard Fheis, Fianna's circle would almost certainly have met early on the same weekend, especially considering the controversial matters to be debated and the ambiguous position of the I.R.B. It is likely, therefore, that Easter Weekend was the occasion referred to by Martin, on which the visitor was ejected, and the decision taken to stand by the Republic and dissolve the circle.
37. Letter Chief of Police for Army Council Four Courts I.R.A. to Adjutant General Fianna, 29/4/1922; reply, 17/5/1922.(Concerning raids in Wexford); National Museum of Ireland archives, EW 1485 and 1454.
Also, letter from ? Fianna to Adjutant General Four Courts I.R.A., 17/5/1922, admitting participation in a raid on the Post Office in Wexford, EW 1463.
38. For accounts of the 'Truce', 'Pact' and Army Conference see Macardle, D. The Irish Republic, pp.645, 647 ff., and 666 respectively.
39. Letter G.H.Q. Four Courts I.R.A. to Adjutant General Fianna, 17/5/1922, regarding alleged breaches of the truce in Limerick city, based on letter received from Free State I.R.A. Headquarters, Limerick; National Museum of Ireland archives, EW 1460.
40. Ned Lennon interview.
41. John Murray interview.
42. Ned Lennon interview. Lennon recalls youths in his area tossing coins to decide which side to take.
43. Seán McNally interview.
44. Letter Eamon Martin to Barney Mellows, 22/5/1922, National Museum of Ireland archives, EW 1464. Martin was apparently dissuaded from resigning.
45. Fianna, vol. 1, no. 1, June 1922, Editorial.
46. Cf., p.31 above. Hobson had given a somewhat similar warning in 1915 (cf., p.105 above).

47. Mellows and Fianna G.H.Q. moved from 42 Westland Row in early spring 1921, thereafter sharing a room in Alfie White's house at 9 Peter's Place - White, A. Biography of Liam Mellows, Statement to the Bureau of Military History, p.22. See also, Greaves, C. D. Liam Mellows, pp.228 f., his account being based on a statement made to him by Alfie White (letter Greaves, C. D. to the present author, 17/11/1978).
48. Cf., Greaves, C. D. Liam Mellows, pp.311 and 338. The Easter Week Commemoration was also addressed by Rory O'Connor - Fianna Eireann Dublin Brigade 1916-22 Easter Week Anniversary Commemoration Booklet.
49. Two versions of Mellows's letter were issued by the Free State Government Publicity Department as being "policy documents", and printed in Irish Independent, 22/9/1922. The letters had been sent to Austin Stack and Ernie O'Malley.
50. Fianna, June 1922, Editorial - "To develop on educational lines, a paper is more needed than ever".
51. The events from the breaking of the Pact are summarised in Curran, J. M. The Birth of the Irish Free State 1921-1923 (Alabama, 1980), pp.223-8.
52. Macardle, D. The Irish Republic, pp.678-85. See also, Macready, Gen. Sir N. Annals of an Active Life (London, n.d.), vol. 2, pp.655-9.
53. A full account of the events of Friday 30 June in Greaves, C.D. Liam Mellows, pp.348 ff.
54. Military Service Pensions Act (1934), Fianna Advisory Committee, Notes of Fourth Meeting, 22/2/1938, p.2. And cf., article probably by Joe Reynolds in Sinn Féin, 21/6/1924, stating that the second un-named victim was also a member of Fianna. The second man was John Cusack.
55. Irish War News, 18/7/1922, Statement by Rory O'Connor.
56. Irish Independent, 3/7/1922, statement by the Government Publicity Department. Also, Poblacht na hÉireann War News, no. 8, 4/7/1922.
57. See Macardle, D. The Irish Republic, pp.681-3.
58. Van Voris, J. Constance de Markievicz, p.325.
59. Holohan, G. Bureau Statement No. 3 - Civil War, p.24.
60. Sinn Féin, 21/6/1924.
61. Smithson, A. Myself - and Others (Dublin, 1944), p.255.
62. Neeson, E. The Civil War in Ireland 1922-23 (Cork, 1966; rev. ed. 1969), p.130.

63. Joe Reynolds interview given to J. Van Voris, 3/7/1964; copy of interview notes sent to author by Mrs. Van Voris, 28/1/1979. Re Mellows's duties, letter Oscar Traynor to Pensions Board, 2/12/1938, in Barney Mellows Papers, MS 13771(i), National Library of Ireland.
64. Irish Independent, 4/7/1922.
65. Holohan, G. Bureau Statement No. 3, p.26.
66. Ibid., pp.28 f.
67. Smithson, A. Myself - and Others, p.259.
68. Cf. Lyons, F. S. L. Ireland Since the Famine (London, 1971; Glasgow, 1973 ed.), pp.463 f; Curran, J. M. The Birth of the Irish Free State 1921-1923 (Alabama, 1980), pp.237 f.
69. Neeson, E. Civil War in Ireland, pp.294 f. and passim.
70. Ibid., pp.173 and 194.
71. Cork Examiner, 14/8/1922, and photograph 15/8/1922. George Hurley interview, John Murray interview.
72. Neeson, E. Civil War in Ireland, p.217.
73. Ibid., p.276.
74. Statement of de Valera, November 1922.
75. The Fenian, war issues no. 35, 24/8/1922, and no. 42, 30/8/1922.
76. A detailed account of the inquest in Irish Independent, 30/8/1922; also, Republican War Bulletin, vol. 1, no. 9, 29/8/1922.
77. Advisory Committee Anglo-Irish War, Fianna Eireann, Dublin City and County, pp.5-7.
78. Poblacht na hÉireann War News, no. 49, 30/8/1922; The Weekly Summary, 2/9/1922.
79. Republican War Bulletin, vol. 1, no. 10, 1/9/1922.
80. Macardle, D. Tragedies of Kerry (Dublin, 1924), pp.7 f.; Poblacht na hÉireann War News, no. 174, 6/3/1923, in list of "Free State Murders" entered as "Volunteer Herbert Murphy"; also Éire : the Irish Nation, 2/2/1924.
81. The Irish Times, 9/10/1922. The discovery was made at Red Cow, Clondalkin.
82. All lived in or near Drumcondra, according to the Irish Times report, and were therefore probably members of the 2nd (N.E.) Battalion.
83. Holohan, G. Bureau Statement No. 3, p.39.

84. Statement of Kevin O'Higgins in Parliament, reported in Irish Independent, 18/11/1922.
85. Van Voris, J. Constance de Markievicz, pp.326-8.
86. Her itinerary took her to Scotland (January-February), London and Birmingham (early March), returning to Scotland. Her last reported meeting was at Uddingston on 8 May. See Éire : the Irish Nation, issues between 3/2/1923 and 2/6/1923.
87. Advisory Committee Return No. 1, p.3.: Holohan arrested 5 July 1922, Barney Mellows 6 December 1922, Joe Reynolds 29 September 1922, Eamon Martin July 1922, Liam Langley 9 August 1922.
88. Sinn Féin, 21/6/1924.
89. Advisory Committee Return No. 2, p.11.
90. Frank Sherwin interview. The units were composed not according to area but the employment of the members - Half-day Monday, Half-day Wednesday, Half-day Saturday, and Unemployed.
91. Frank Sherwin interview. An account of the attack and arrests in Irish Independent, 9/11/1922.
92. Frank Sherwin interview.
93. Cf. O'Malley, E. The Singing Flame, p.147, re attempts to build an efficient communications system, " . . . Soon the words 'Are you in touch with?' became a joke with us" . . . etc.
94. Cf. Neeson, E. Civil War in Ireland, p.14.
95. Thus members' Pensions Service Certificates claim dual membership to the end of the Anglo-Irish War (11/7/1921) and again during the Civil War. Cf. Barney Mellows's Certificate, Barney Mellows Papers, National Library of Ireland, MS 13771(1).
96. An account of the composition of a flying column at this time in Neeson, E. Civil War in Ireland, p.284.
97. John Murray interview.
98. Cf. Neeson, E. Civil War in Ireland, espec. p.182.
99. George Hurley interview.
100. Irish Independent, 3/7/1922; cf. note 206 above.
101. O'Malley, E. The Singing Flame, p.147.
102. Béaslaí, P. Michael Collins, vol. 2, p.235.

103. Eg., account of Free State guards firing on Republican prisoners in Costume Barracks, Athlone, with one fourteen year old narrowly escaping death, in The Republican War Bulletin, vol. 1, no. 29, 19/10/1922.
104. Breandán Ó Cearbhaill interview. Re Republican internees see Irish Independent, 6/3/1923.
105. Events leading to the ceasefire summarised in Curran, J. M. Birth of Free State, pp.272-6.
106. Letter Frank Aiken to Ernie O'Malley, 27/6/1923, (smuggled into Mountjoy and found on O'Malley) in reply to O'Malley's letter of 20/6/1923; quoted in O'Malley, E. The Singing Flame, pp.306 f.

Chapter 7. INTO THE SECOND ERA (1923-1940)

RECONSTRUCTION

When the anti-Treaty forces laid down arms their position was one of military defeat without surrender. While recognising that "military victory must be allowed to rest for the moment with those who had destroyed the Republic"¹, they rejected the truce terms of a government whose legitimacy they denied. And for this they were considered "disaffected revolutionaries", and treated as such: "The government were strong, they were victorious and they called the truce, secure in the knowledge that they had made an offer to their opponents which had been rejected"². The "ferreting out" of Republicans began³.

A Public Safety Act passed in June 1923, allowing arrest without trial, swelled the number already imprisoned to 16,000⁴, about half of whom were now on hunger strike⁵. For those not in prison, the movement seemed on the point of disintegration, scattered, vilified in press and from pulpit and having lost nearly all of its party branches⁶. But preparation for the August elections and their surprisingly respectable outcome, the campaign for the release of prisoners and the very repression itself, strengthened it and kept it intact. The I.R.A. was able to heal its divisions, regroup and re-organise before the mass release of members in the summer of 1924⁷, while the continued recovery of the movement in the second half of that year was reflected in the foundation of over 700 Sinn Féin cumainn⁸.

Within months of the ceasefire the first steps were taken towards rebuilding Na Fianna. Since the new year there had been no national structure or headquarters staff, no communication, and

virtually no units, and the task was now indeed as the Countess described it, "to start again from the very beginning with nothing"⁹. As early as July 1923 the I.R.A. Executive discussed the position of the Scouts and agreed to donate £200 towards their re-organisation¹⁰. With the help of Army men selected for their previous membership experience in Fianna, sluaite were established on the North and South sides of Dublin and in Cork before the end of the year¹¹.

In December several thousand prisoners were released, among them Barney Mellows, Garry Holohan, Liam Langley¹² and the Countess¹³, and by the early spring of 1924 Fianna was able to hold its first Convention for two years, Madame presiding. Called hurriedly "for the purpose of getting the machinery working", the meeting's main open business was a formal ratification of the 1922 Constitution and the election of a caretaker Executive, pending a full Ard Fheis. For security reasons the election was conducted by secret ballot, and the names of the successful candidates were not published¹⁴.

Two Convention resolutions, though omitted from press reports, were of crucial importance in that they effectively dissolved the amalgamation of Fianna and the I.R.A. that had obtained with one brief interruption since 1921. The first instructed that "in time of peace the Fianna was to carry on as a separate organisation, distinct from the Army organisation, having its own Executive, G.H.Q., Divisions, Brigades, etc. In time of war it was to support the Army as far as in its power, both morally and physically". The second directed that "the Fianna control all arms which are proved to be their property"¹⁵.

In his report the Adjutant General noted that from the beginning of the War for Independence pressing military demands had

forced the organisation to neglect its educational role, the importance of which "was never realised until the Civil War broke out". Desertions to the Treaty side at that time were mainly attributable to members' lack of a sound national grounding, he claimed, assuring delegates that education would receive "special attention in the future".

Thus the major themes of the Convention were building and organisation, relationship with the adult movement, and role definition. They would remain the major themes throughout Fianna's subsequent history. In the meantime they represented urgent questions to be tackled in the first years of the Free State.

Building and organisation were directed initially by the caretaker Executive, and from the New Year of 1925 by a G.H.Q. staff comprising the following members:

| | |
|-------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Adjutant General | - Barney Mellows; |
| Assistant Adjutant General | - Alfie White; |
| Director of Training and Organisation | - Liam Langley; |
| Assistant Director of Training and Organisation | - Frank Sherwin; |
| Quartermaster General | - Joe Reynolds; |
| Assistant Quartermaster General | - Seán Harling ¹⁶ . |

The Countess remained Honorary President. During the year Barney Mellows was elected Chief-of-Staff¹⁷, Joe Reynolds added the duties of national Secretary to those of Quartermaster¹⁸, and the Headquarters staff was depleted by the courtmartial of Seán Harling¹⁹.

The main obstacle to rebuilding was a severe lack of resources. Fianna was bankrupt²⁰ and the I.R.A. themselves were in no position to help²¹. The Army could not even honour their undertaking to finance the printing of the new Fianna Handbook, for which Joe Reynolds, who was employed by the printers, was threatened with a deduction from his wages²². The incident illustrates the poverty to which Fianna and the movement were reduced at this time.

The organisation also often found it impossible to acquire premises. For the purposes of correspondence the national address was given as Frankfort House in Dartry Park, which was in fact the home of the Coghlan family where the Countess had lodged since 1921²³. The G.H.Q. staff either met there or at Alfie White's house²⁴. Sluaite found most owners unwilling to rent them halls because of the political situation. Of the three branches operating on the south side of Dublin in the summer of 1925, for instance, only one could find premises; the others were forced to postpone parades until a hall was acquired in High Street in the autumn²⁵. Under such circumstances it was difficult to sustain interest and establish permanent sluaite.

During the summer G.H.Q. arranged a meeting of invited Republicans to discuss possible re-organisation²⁶. De Valera was among those who attended. The consensus view was that Fianna should revert to being a boys' scouting movement. The age range was fixed at ten to eighteen years. An adult Re-organisation Committee was elected to co-ordinate development²⁷. As a first step towards abandoning the military structure that had operated from 1915, it was agreed that branches should be organised by the boys themselves under local adult committees approved by G.H.Q. Lastly, it was decided to revert to a solely educational role, training boys in ideals "clean and manly and Gaelic" through scouting and other activities closely similar to those originally envisaged for Fianna by its founders²⁸.

Press statements shortly after the meeting emphasised the radical change from military to social-educational role, and made specific reference to the Baden-Powell ethic: Fianna was now organised, they claimed, "on an entirely new basis, making it a complete

scouting and educational organisation, similar to the Boy Scout organisations throughout the world, teaching and training the boys to be good citizens and good Irishmen". Military training would be minimised, P.T. and squad drill retained "solely for disciplinary purposes", and weaponry excluded as "harmful to the youthful mind" and liable "especially at that impressionable age . . . to awaken an interest in methods of taking life"²⁹.

In line with these changes the organisation announced a return to a system of sluaite and comhairlí ceanntair³⁰, and abolished military ranks for leaders: 'o/c' was replaced by 'scoutmaster', 'adjutant' became 'secretary', and 'quartermaster' 'treasurer'; the office of Chief-of-Staff was discontinued³¹.

It might be supposed that the press announcements, published as they were within months of the passing of the Treason Bill³², were made more with an eye to the Government in power than with serious intent for change. But this was not the case. G.H.Q. had already issued orders for all arms to be dumped³³, and their determination to demilitarise Na Fianna was shared by the Sinn Féin and Army leadership and in particular by de Valera. A meeting was held in the autumn to discuss the subject, attended by most of Fianna's Headquarters staff, the I.R.A. Chief-of-Staff Frank Aiken, 'Minister of Defence' Seán Lemass, and de Valera himself³⁴. The Fianna representatives readily agreed to de Valera's demand that the organisation be restricted to a civilian, scouting role. It seems likely that Countess Markievicz especially now saw Fianna's role, at this time of her life and Ireland's history, as being to foster the national ideal and citizenship among the children of the poor³⁵.

During the autumn G.H.Q. also took the decision to dissociate Fianna from all political parties, thus complementing with political

independence the military autonomy declared the previous year³⁶. The decision was made at a time of strain between the military and political wings in the senior movement. It corresponded in fact to a similar decision taken at the I.R.A.'s November Convention, where delegates - fearing the imminent capitulation of Sinn Féin on the principle of the Oath - voted that the Army should dissociate from the party and operate under its own Executive³⁷. The effects of the latter decision, in the event, would be to separate the I.R.A. from Sinn Féin for a quarter of a century and to make it, constitutionally and in reality, a 'non-political' organisation³⁸: far reaching consequences for a body whose very *raison d'être* was to change the political status of Ireland. And in the same way the G.H.Q. decision made Na Fianna a non-political organisation, a role it would retain until the late 1960s, turning its back on political activities and the consideration of political solutions.

Despite its new position as a civilian and independent body, Fianna remained suspect in the eyes of the Cosgrave government. In December 1925 twelve Wexford scouts were arrested and held in Waterford Jail. Their arrest attracted widespread protest; a demonstration in Dublin was addressed by Maud Gonne MacBride and Mrs. Despard, and support was expressed by the Transport Union³⁹. The trial of one of the twelve, Patrick Connick, promised to be something of a test case, since the crux of the prosecution's argument was to establish that Fianna was a military organisation. Defence council referred to the unhindered drilling of Baden-Powell Scouts in Ireland, observing that if Fianna should be outlawed for drilling then so should they, and if for its name and uniform then so should the Salvation Army! The case was dismissed⁴⁰.

Poor, without premises and harrassed by the authorities⁴¹, the organisation laboured to re-establish itself during the first years of the Free State. Progress was made; delegates attending the Ard Fheis on Easter Sunday 1926 reported branches in Belfast, Waterford, Wexford, Tralee, Cork and Drogheda in addition to Dublin⁴², and by the end of the summer scouts were drilling in twenty-six counties⁴³.

At this time, however, the Dublin sluaite were shocked by further incidents involving Seán Harling⁴⁴. Following his court-martial, he had by now so far re-established himself within Fianna as to have been appointed o/c of the Dublin Command Staff. The appointment prompted Frank Sherwin - who as Fianna's unofficial Director of Intelligence had made the original enquiries that led to Harling's courtmartial - to restate to Countess Markievicz his conviction that Harling was a spy. Madame, who had a particular liking for Harling⁴⁵, apparently threatened to expel Sherwin from Fianna, whereupon he resigned, taking with him (in his own words) "practically all" the Dublin Brigade staff. Eighteen months later the I.R.A., satisfied that Harling was indeed a tout for the Free State police, tried unsuccessfully to assassinate him, losing one of their own gunmen in the attempt. The government's Tribunal of Enquiry into the shooting subsequently confirmed the Army's and Sherwin's suspicions⁴⁶.

In April 1926 de Valera launched the Fianna Fáil party, taking with him into it many leading Republicans. His relationship with the remnant of the movement remained for a while ambivalent : if some factions in Sinn Féin considered his new party a betrayal, faith in him as "the sole surviving commandant" of Easter Week died hard, and - at least while in opposition in the Dáil - he was given by the I.R.A., and gave to it, a qualified support⁴⁷. And since

Fianna Eireann had already declared itself independent of all parties and of the Army, it could justifiably give a general support to any Republicans, including Fianna Fáil, and in turn could reasonably look to help from them. De Valera had given the Fianna leadership a verbal promise of financial aid before the split with Sinn Féin⁴⁸, and they now approached his new party. Fianna's national Secretary addressed the party's first Ard Fheis in November, requesting help in the form of funds and through party cumainn setting up local sluaite⁴⁹. The request was given further point in June of the following year when Fianna's President took her seat for the party in the Dáil⁵⁰. The Treasurer's report to the Fianna Ard Fheis in September 1927 revealed that financial aid had been received from both the Fianna Fáil and Sinn Féin parties, as well as from individual wellwishers⁵¹. By this time, however, the Countess was dead.

THE DEATH OF COUNTESS MARKIEVICZ

She had died on the 15 July. Worn out and in poor health, she had continued to tax herself with her commitments and in fact took ill finally at a Fianna Executive meeting at the beginning of the month. The meeting was curtailed, she was helped home, and admitted to hospital the next day⁵². After her death her coffin was borne from Sir Patrick Duns to church and thence to the Rotunda on the shoulders of fiannai, and there lay in state with a Fianna guard of honour⁵³. It was said that "thousands and thousands" walked or lined the route of her funeral procession, which was led by an advance guard of Fianna. At Glasnevin six scouts marched ahead to the graveside⁵⁴ and at the burial itself the following morning a Fianna bugler sounded the Last Post.

In the short term her death actually benefited Fianna by drawing public attention to the organisation through its prominent role at her lying-in-state and funeral⁵⁵. The long term loss would be harder to assess. Her place in the public imagination, in affection and esteem, had always out-matched her actual role in the independence movement, in which she had been "a second-in-command, an instrumental but not a determining figure"⁵⁶. Similarly in the smaller world of Fianna, though in terms of real power she had been little more than a figurehead for a decade and a half, her personal authority among the younger rank-and-file remained unrivalled. Thus those of the author's interviewees who held leadership positions at the time, or who had fought with Fianna in the two wars, tended to minimise her loss. But those who had been ordinary scouts were likely to assert that her death "broke" the movement⁵⁷. It was Madame, more than the military command staff, whom they recalled. In the last years, approaching sixty, she was a mother to them; they were often at Frankfort House, as they had been at Surrey House in the old days; in no way in awe of her, they "loved her because she did mad things"⁵⁸. What Fr. Albert had written of the boys of the Rising perhaps still held good: "Her influence over (them) was remarkable: they had the deepest and most beautiful reverence for her. There was not one of those - and I have met hundreds of them - that would not die for her"⁵⁹.

Above all, her death severed Fianna from its heroic age. With the eclipse of Hobson she had come to be spoken of as the founder. By 1927 all the other original members and almost all subsequent leaders were gone: as in the movement itself they were either dead or had fallen away. Now with her death, in the year that some Republicans entered the Dáil, Fianna seemed to be moving into a new era.

In the circumstances it was decided to postpone the Ard Fheis scheduled for the last day of July⁶⁰ and to appoint national Treasurer Liam Langley to the Countess's post pending an election. A member of Fianna since 1911 and the founder and first o/c of the Tuam Slua⁶¹, Langley had been on the G.H.Q. staff throughout the Anglo-Irish War, holding the office of Director of Organisation⁶². With the arrest of Headquarters colleagues he had acted as temporary Director of Training and even as Chief-of-Staff for three months from December 1920⁶³.

When the Ard Fheis finally took place on 25 September Langley took the chair. He was formally elected Chief Scout by the large gathering who also re-elected Joe Reynolds to the office of national Secretary⁶⁴.

FIANNA IN THE NORTH

The passing of the Civil Authorities (Special Powers) Act (Northern Ireland) in April 1922 was of crucial importance to the subsequent development of Fianna in the North. The act gave the Minister for Home Affairs, or any R.U.C. officer delegated by him, authority to take "all such steps and issue all such orders as may be necessary for preserving the peace and maintaining order", including search and arrest without warrant, closure of roads and seizure of property. In effect, it made illegal a number of organisations, including the I.R.A., Cumann na mBan, the I.R.B. and Na Fianna. Passed initially as a temporary measure, the act was renewed annually until 1933 when new legislation gave it indefinite duration⁶⁵.

From it as much as from any social-political differences stemmed the differences that developed between Fianna North and South. It directly determined the conditions of recruitment and membership

in the Six Counties⁶⁶. There recruits had to be approached by Fianna (rather than vice versa) and required the recommendation of two current members, and the probationary period - which in the South was a formality - was used to scrutinise them for suitability and in particular for discretion. For whereas it remained a task of members in the Free State to win recruits by displaying their own membership, Fianna became a "closed mouth organisation" in the North. And while the Southern sluaite remained uniformed, North of the Border uniform was now confined to a badge worn behind the lapel, except at Republican demonstrations where numbers afforded immunity.

As with joining so with leaving: a simple even casual matter in the South, to leave Fianna in Belfast, particularly, required formal resignation in writing, since for security reasons boys could not be allowed merely to drift out of the organisation.

Illegality also posed problems in acquiring premises, and like other sections of the movement the scouts were obliged to hire or borrow rooms under false pretences. In Belfast, for instance, premises at Crown Entry off the High Street were used by the I.R.A. in the late 1920s under the front name of a 'Hall Committee', and lent by them to Fianna; and the small wooden hall in Ardoyne owned legally by Sinn Féin was borrowed by the scouts as well as the Army, Cumann na mBan and the Cailíni. Fortunately, the Falls sluaite still had the use of the old Willowbank huts. The G.A.A. and the Gaelic League were usually willing to accept requests from boys' 'football teams' or 'Irish classes' at face value, and school rooms might be used if the janitor was willing to risk lending the keys⁶⁷. It was normal practice to post sentries on the door at branch meetings, and frequently in addition to post a look-out with

flashlight up the road.

Drilling took place on open ground, often after dark, the football fields behind Falls Park and the Claypits at Whiterock being favourite venues though often in the eye of the police; if necessary the boys drilled on Divis Mountain⁶⁸. For summer camp they usually chose sites south of the Border or in County Down⁶⁹.

Despite all precautions, arrests were inevitable. Youths were charged merely for membership of Fianna, and if found guilty could face jail with hard labour. Even boys as young as twelve were convicted of 'promoting' the organisation by collecting⁷⁰.

Illegality had other less direct effects upon the organisation. If a positive attraction for the boys it was an obstacle for many parents, despite the pride in 'their' scouts that existed in the ghettos. And since the authorities and the Church could put pressure on boys through their parents many were never informed of their sons' membership. This in turn created a problem of conscience for slua leaders.

Because of the dangers, the illegality and the frequent deception of membership a threshold age of fourteen years was set during the 1930s in the North. In the South on the other hand a boy could join at seven and - if he persevered - might remain fifteen years in membership. In time in fact a northern and a southern membership type developed. The Free State type was - for the majority - pre-adolescent, and comprised a fairly brief and low-pressure training in the Republican ideal, with an emphasis on scouting, tests and badges; for a core minority it involved an extended and specific training aimed at producing officer material for the I.R.A. The Six Counties type was adolescent, and comprised specific, disciplined and martial training with the conscious pur-

pose of transfer to the Army, which in some ghettos was virtually automatic. The Northern type, with its demonstrably relevant role within the movement, came to enjoy a correspondingly greater status and glamour in the community than its counterpart in the South, accounting in part for the more consistent and buoyant state of Fianna in the Six Counties over the years⁷¹.

Finally, the fact that Fianna was an illegal organisation made for local autonomy in the North, at slua and particularly at Command Staff levels⁷². Dublin could not know the local problems, nor could time be afforded to request and communicate directives. Prompt and personal decisions had to be made locally by slua and Battalion leaders, taking their orders in practice from the I.R.A. Headquarters "seemed a world away, and left the North to its own devices". The only points of contact were the Bodenstown commemorations and Ard Fheiseanna; and even at the latter, because fear of the Law gave a pretext for anonymity, it was possible to maintain a degree of secrecy for the purpose of "standing up to Dublin".

In many ways, therefore, Fianna began to reflect the two states in Ireland virtually from the time of their foundation. And in time it developed into "two different organisations", whose unity lay mainly in their shared political philosophy and their name⁷³.

EXPANSION 1927-34

The Ard Fheis of September 1927 reflected the gradual recovery of the organisation after the Civil War. Recent expansion was indicated by the attendance of delegates from "practically every county of Ireland" as well as from Britain, and by the composition of the incoming Ard Choiste, with members from Dublin, Belfast, Wexford, Waterford, Clare, Glasgow and Liverpool⁷⁴. The meeting was marked by a spirit of optimism which in the event would be

proved justified: the consolidation of 1927 would be sustained for a further seven years.

The expansion of Fianna between 1927 and 1934 mirrored the growth of the I.R.A. during the same period. The Army increased its membership every year from 1925 to 1933⁷⁵. Its growth was in part attributable to the calibre of its leadership⁷⁶, and in part to a growing dissatisfaction with the Cosgrave regime and the re-emergence of Republican sentiment in the Irish people.

Although it was becoming clear that charges made on the grounds of Fianna being a military organisation would not be upheld in Free State courts⁷⁷, the organisation continued to suffer police harrassment. National headquarters were raided and damaged in the spring of 1927⁷⁸. Nonetheless, steady development over the next three years found the Scouts by 1930 "in a much healthier position than for some years" with sluaite operating in a number of areas, including Limerick, Cavan, Kerry, Sligo, Roscommon, Leitrim and London⁷⁹ in addition to the more permanent centres. Several branches, including those established in Clonmel later in the year⁸⁰ and at Cobh and Carrickmoss in 1931⁸¹, were the first in their areas since pre-Truce days. At this time too G.H.Q. staff moved into an office in Hardwicke Hall, a former Carmelite convent that had been acquired by the Plunkett family and served for most of the decade as the 'public' headquarters of Republicanism in Dublin⁸².

Fianna's acquisition of the office followed the election of George Plunkett as Chief Scout, a post he would hold throughout the 1930s⁸³. An Army man with no Fianna background, his credentials were otherwise exactly suitable. A brother of Joseph Mary Plunkett, as a twenty-one year old student he had been closely involved in preparations for the Rising, training the Kimmage Garrison,

(apparently) printing the 'Castle Document'⁸⁴, and being present at the conference of the Military Council at Liberty Hall on Easter Sunday⁸⁵. He had remained throughout the Rising in the G.P.O. and taken part in the final evacuation into Moore Street where he distinguished himself in aiding a wounded British soldier⁸⁶. Sentenced to death, his penalty was commuted to ten years⁸⁷. This would be the first of several terms of imprisonment - jailed twice during the War for Independence and again during the Civil War after surrendering at the Four Courts, he was finally released in 1924⁸⁸.

Some of his letters from prison were written in Irish⁸⁹; in his love of the language he became a member of the Irish Texts Society and raised his family in a bilingual household⁹⁰. He wrote Irish poetry, taught himself sculpture and the harp, and lectured on antiquities. He was a man of high moral ideals - it is said that on the morning of the Rising, when commandeering a tram to take his men into Dublin, he astonished the guard by insisting on paying the fifty-four fares⁹¹. His combination of national culture and idealism exactly matched the twin emphases of Fianna and his whole background made him a model for boys. His role as Chief Scout was in fact that of figurehead or patron: while real power and initiative lay with his Adjutants General his was the name that attracted boys and their parents⁹².

The Constitution (Amendment no. 17) Act of October 1931 was the culmination of a series of acts passed by the Cosgrave government which had progressively eroded the rights and liberties of the Free State constitution. It authorised the government to declare any organisation illegal, gave judicial authority in civil cases to a military tribunal, and extended the death penalty to a wide range of political offences⁹³.

The growth of Fianna in the last years of the 1920s and its recent provocative public appearances had brought it again under close surveillance by the police Special Branch, who had accumulated detailed information on the movements of its leaders⁹⁴. Not surprisingly, therefore, it was one of the twelve Republican and socialist organisations proscribed under the law⁹⁵.

Members were now liable to prosecution if in possession of Fianna documents or literature, and a number of charges were preferred⁹⁶. In some country towns the Scouts were driven underground and forced to resort to front organisations such as football or cycling clubs to remain alive; in others where they had an understanding with the police, they continued to drill and "keep the badge up" with impunity, the only effect of the act being to increase Fianna's appeal⁹⁷.

The determined opposition that the 1931 legislation provoked among Republicans precipitated a general election, and in the pre-election campaign gave the I.R.A. common cause with Fianna Fáil. In many areas the Army supported de Valera's party with "extra-legal aid", and with votes on the day, a support that contributed to election victory⁹⁸. The new government's first action was to free prisoners sentenced by the military tribunal and suspend the operation of the Act, giving the Republican movement a new freedom and impetus which had an immediate effect upon recruitment. The I.R.A. grew "by leaps and bounds" and within fifteen months was able to muster 16,000 at Bodenstown⁹⁹. Fianna expanded in proportion. Reports for the summer of 1933 showed sluaite established in Derry, Armagh, Tyrone, Clare, Tipperary and Waterford Counties; four branches operated in County Limerick, and it was claimed that new units were being formed "every week" in Munster. North County

Carlow supported a Battalion of five sluaite and a hundred members¹⁰¹, the Dublin Brigade were able to send "several hundreds" to their summer camp at Bohernabreena¹⁰², and numbers had so increased in Belfast that the city command was divided into a North and a South Comhairle Ceanntair¹⁰³. Six months later national secretary Seán Mooney reported that the organisation was in its strongest position since the Treaty, with 104 affiliated branches¹⁰⁴. Momentum was sustained into the summer of 1934 when 30,000 Republicans marched in "the greatest rally ever" at Bodenstown, which included a Fianna contingent of over 800 drawn from nearly thirty centres¹⁰⁵.

Republicanism's traditional ties with radical socialism, which had been suppressed during the 1920s, began to re-emerge before the end of the decade¹⁰⁶. The movement established socialist and international contacts¹⁰⁷, founded Saor Éire on socialist-republican principles in 1931¹⁰⁸ and on the same principles forged links with Belfast Protestant workers the following year¹⁰⁹. With the Labour and Trade Union movement ineffectual and divided, the I.R.A. became for a time the vanguard of the Left¹¹⁰.

Fianna reflected the new emphasis. From the late 1920s its educational programme treated the exploitation of Ireland in economic as well as political and military terms¹¹¹. Explanation was given of the socialist content of the writings of Tone, Pearse and Mellows; the social conscience of members was challenged¹¹² and Ard Fheis resolutions dwelt on the capitalist basis of British imperialism¹¹³.

Although the Scouts remained on good terms with Fianna Fáil at a local level, sometimes using their halls¹¹⁴, relations between the movement as a whole and de Valera's party had changed since the

latter's accession to power¹¹⁵. Where previously a common adversary had driven the two to find a common cause in opposition, the victory of Fianna Fáil forced the movement to re-consider its position. The I.R.A. gave the party only qualified support in the electoral campaign of January 1933, issuing a manifesto that urged the electorate to compel a new Fianna Fáil government to guarantee its freedom to arm and train. It was lending its support, it stated, in order to prevent the civil war which would be forced upon the country by a victorious Free State party¹¹⁶. The threat of war was real - Irish politics were dominated by violence during 1933 and into the following year, with the newly formed Fine Gael increasingly adopting the concepts and methods of European Fascism¹¹⁷. Fianna Eireann supported the adult Republican movement in its confrontations with the Blueshirts, particularly in Cork and in Dublin where sluaite were able to muster several hundred members armed with batons at any time for the purpose¹¹⁸. On more than one occasion Belfast Brigade members in Dublin on annual camp dispersed Blueshirt rivals at gunpoint¹¹⁹.

The movement's reconsideration of its attitude towards Fianna Fáil necessarily also involved a scrutiny of self; and self-analysis, at a time when the Army was moving to the left, revealed among its members divisions that had lain dormant since the Civil War. Broadly, the division was between those - led by Chief-of-Staff Moss Twomey and Seán MacBride - who wished to continue the nationalist emphasis of the 1920s, and those who - following Michael Price, Peadar O'Donnell, George Gilmore and Frank Ryan - wished to emphasise the movement's socialism and internationalism¹²⁰.

One effect of the division was that Fianna gained the services of Frank Ryan. A veteran of the Independence and Civil Wars he

had worked on the I.R.A.'s newspaper An Phoblacht since 1929, latterly as its editor. At the end of June 1933 he resigned the post, finding his editorial freedom restricted by Twomey; he was appointed Adjutant General of Na Fianna in September¹²¹. A Celtic Studies graduate, Gaelic Leaguer and Irish teacher, he became a highly successful Adjutant despite a lack of previous membership experience. He has been described by his successor as a leader idolised by the boys and perhaps the first since Mellows to give serious and creative consideration to Fianna's role within the movement¹²².

The division finally split the I.R.A. in 1934. O'Donnell narrowly failed to win support for the formation of a Republican Congress at the Army Convention in March, and the following month held a foundation conference for the new organisation in Athlone. All Army men who attended were dismissed by courtmartial from the I.R.A.¹²³, Ryan as a leading founder-member among them. His dismissal also involved resignation from his post in Fianna, after only eight months' service.

Though the Congress deprived the Army of many of its leaders and men, its direct effect on Fianna was slight. Ryan himself ensured that the youth organisation was not split, and the question of allegiance rarely arose¹²⁴. Even where families were lost to the movement the sons often remained in Fianna. In Cork, for example, many adult Republicans who remembered the miseries of the 1920s joined the Congress, but such was the personal influence of I.R.A. leader Tom Barry in the area that hardly a boy was lost¹²⁵. The Dublin Brigade was likewise barely affected, although Slua Cathal Brugha was forced to close on the south side of town and the boys to transfer to the Hardwicke Hall¹²⁶. At slua officer level a number of Congress men remained in Fianna despite dismissal from

the I.R.A.¹²⁷. The real and significant effect was indirect: the progressive diminution of the youth wing during the second half of the decade that followed the decline of the divided adult movement.

FIANNA AND THE I.R.A.(ii)

The Scouts had declared themselves independent of the I.R.A. in 1924, and of all political parties in 1925. Their constitution pledged allegiance only to the Irish Republic, and during the 1930s A.G.M. resolutions and public statements periodically reaffirmed this position¹²⁸. In practice, however, the Army exercised ultimate control over them as over all branches of the movement¹²⁹, a control based on its own history and the present circumstances of Republicanism.

During and after the War for Independence Óglaigh na hÉireann had enjoyed considerable autonomy even when formally under the Dáil's authority, and had resisted attempts to curtail its freedom¹³⁰. The Republican section of the Army interpreted this independence as giving it the "right" to ignore the government after the latter's acceptance of the Treaty in the spring of 1922, and at its subsequent Convention to vest sole authority in its own Executive¹³¹. In Republican eyes the legal and moral authority to govern lay with the Sinn Féin deputies elected to the second Dáil. Thus after the Army Convention of autumn 1925 which dissociated the I.R.A. from Sinn Féin, the Army came to be recognised as the sole and supreme authority within the Republican movement. It would retain this status until the mid-1960s¹³², augmenting it indeed from 1938 when the Republican survivors of the second Dáil ceded to the Army Council de jure authority for the government of Ireland¹³³.

The I.R.A.'s theoretical authority over the movement was confirmed in practice by the circumstances of the movement itself. Republicans were tied not only by ideology but by an extremely strong in-group awareness, born of shared struggle, persecution and danger and often reinforced by family and social ties¹³⁴. Except when specialist tasks were to be undertaken there was little conscious demarcation between sections of the movement, and thus a high sense of unity - "those who were in were in"¹³⁵. At the same time there had developed traditions of local freedom and loyalty, deriving from the autonomy of the local I.R.A. units in the War for Independence¹³⁶, whereby Republicans often looked first to their own local leadership.

It was therefore natural for Fianna to fall under the national and local control of the Army, particularly since - having lost its immediate role after the Civil War - it had assumed the role of Army cadet force. In addition, from 1930 control was effected in terms of personnel. By recruiting Fianna's best trained members and potential leaders the Army took away its capacity for freedom. Liam Langley was the last national leader with a Fianna background. After his retirement it became the I.R.A. practice to make good Fianna's losses by posting its own men to positions of central leadership, selecting them rather as exemplifying the Republican ideal than from their qualities as leaders of youth¹³⁷. George Plunkett and his assistants Frank Ryan and Diarmuid Mac Giolla Phádraig were three such appointments. Another was Séamus Grace, made Director of Training in 1933 and elected to the Ard Chomhairle the following year¹³⁸. An Army veteran, he had played a heroic part in the battle of Mount Street Bridge, one of the most celebrated actions of Easter Week¹³⁹. The I.R.A. also made local

appointments, placing its own men in charge of sluaite¹⁴⁰ or, more frequently, of the boys' training¹⁴¹. Their deployment further strengthened Army control, as did the practice of dual membership among slua officers, which varied locally but was certainly normal in Dublin, Cork and Belfast at this time¹⁴².

Fianna itself resented the I.R.A.'s domination and the appointment of leaders rather than their democratic election¹⁴³. It periodically warned against interference in the columns of the Army's own newspaper¹⁴⁴. A major article published in 1933, whose author held dual membership, claimed that Fianna's "greatest problem" was the I.R.A.'s failure to understand its real aims. The movement had "allowed the Scouts to struggle along as a complementary part, if not a junior branch, of the Republican Army, which was the worst thing we could have done"; most Army men considered Fianna solely as a recruiting ground and gave no thought to its other potential roles¹⁴⁵.

The Scouts' desire for autonomy should also be viewed in the context of the I.R.A.'s history of illegality and schism. Republicans were ever aware that the Army might at some future date either "go down" or "go wrong"¹⁴⁶. Should it "go down" an independent Fianna could survive for the movement to fall back on; should it "go wrong", as in the major splits of 1922 and 1934, only an independent Fianna could avoid following it into error.

Army control over the Scouts' military activities varied from area to area and over time. In some Dublin sluaite in the late 1920s arms training was given to all members over fifteen¹⁴⁷, but during the 1930s it was restricted to one specially selected senior slua in the city¹⁴⁸. Cork Fianna supported an A.S.U. trained by the Army until 1935 when it disbanded following a dispute over the ownership of weapons¹⁴⁹. In Belfast specialist training was

available to older members throughout the period, though latterly confined to those areas of the city where the I.R.A. itself was numerically weak¹⁵⁰.

At national level, military control was tightened in 1934 with the appointment of Diarmuid Mac Giolla Phádraig as Fianna Adjutant General. He accepted the post only on condition that arms training would be suppressed. On his estimate the "clean up" took two years¹⁵¹. Nonetheless, elements in the Army continued to press for the militarisation of the Scouts. A brief attempt was made in Belfast in 1935¹⁵², and one more serious after Michael Fitzpatrick had succeeded Moss Twomey as I.R.A. Chief-of-Staff in 1937, which culminated in the arrest of Fianna's Quartermaster by the Army Council in an attempt to force the development of the Dublin senior slua into an I.R.A. Active Service Unit¹⁵³. George Plunkett reluctantly accepted re-election as Chief Scout at this time solely so that, as a member of the Army Council, he could resist pressures from within the I.R.A. to militarise the Scouts¹⁵⁴.

During Seán Russell's term as I.R.A. Chief-of-Staff from April 1938 the military wishes of Fianna's Headquarters staff were respected¹⁵⁵. During preparations for the English bombing Campaign Russell readily complied with the determination of Plunkett and Mac Giolla Phadraig, which they had expressed at every Fianna Ard Fheis since 1934¹⁵⁶, that the Scouts would on no account be committed to the war.

FIANNA AND THE C.B.S.I.

From about the time of the Countess's death Fianna had faced a potential rival in its efforts to recruit members. Gasóga Catolicí na hÉireann, initially founded in 1926, may be said to have

become effectively established with the election of its first National Committee in November of the following year¹⁵⁷. It expanded rapidly during the first five years, partly through the benefits of Church resources and publicity, partly through its role in the Catholic Emancipation Centenary celebrations of 1929 and again at the Eucharistic Congress in Dublin in 1932, when scouts acted as stewards. By the latter date it numbered close to 15,000 members¹⁵⁸.

It was founded as a denominational scouting movement and "based totally on Baden-Powell's thoughts"¹⁵⁹. Whether it was formed with the conscious intention of edging out Fianna on the one hand and the existing Baden-Powell Scouts on the other is open to question. Certainly it was established with the blessing of a hierarchy who, having unanimously supported the Treaty side four years previously, now saw a growing trend back towards Republicanism in Ireland. Apparently, too, its recruiting drives were often in practice a direct reaction to Fianna recruiting¹⁶⁰. And it undoubtedly viewed the Baden-Powell Scouts as 'Protestant' and 'British' despite their mixed membership, because they were still at the time largely based on Church of Ireland parishes and led by Unionists and particularly because they continued to operate as an Irish branch of the London-based British section of the movement¹⁶¹. Ireland was not the only country in the 1920s in which the Catholic Church, losing its youth to scouting organisations of which it did not approve, adopted the scouting method and applied to it its superior resources in order to outbid its rivals¹⁶². By offering a sectarian and decently 'national' environment the C.B.S.I. confidently hoped to win the broad middle ground of Irish boyhood.

This certainly was how Fianna viewed its rival at the time. "Their aim is to capture for Imperialism those Irish boys who have too much National spirit to join the Baden-Powell organisation, but who may be hoodwinked by Imperialism masquerading as Irish Catholicism and teaching 'loyalty' to the 'Free State'", declared An Phoblacht's Fianna Notes in 1928¹⁶³. It pilloried the C.B.S.I. for sectarianism "which only aids England's old game of divide and conquer", for its "Cawstle Cawtholic" class ethic, and its "seonín atmosphere . . . imitating the British scouts in practically everything they do - soccer, jazz and foolish plays"¹⁶⁴. At the same time it emphasised its own Gaelic nationalism, its non-sectarian but nonetheless Christian ethic, and its civilian educational role, in the face of accusations of godlessness and militarism¹⁶⁵.

By 1930 the Republican movement faced the possibility that the C.B.S.I. might already be replacing its own Scouts¹⁶⁶. The extent to which this in fact happened during the next decade appears to have varied from area to area. Thus in Cork city Fianna remained "the organisation to belong to" and the Catholic Scouts had almost no effect upon its appeal¹⁶⁷, but - in the view of one Dublin contemporary - the rivalry eventually "smashed" the organisation in the capital¹⁶⁸. The effect was generally strongest in the country areas since in the city the C.B.S.I. tended to recruit from a different ("more respectable") stratum of society¹⁶⁹. Class had less relevance in the small towns, and since these areas could hardly support two organisations much depended on which established a troop first.

It is true that the C.B.S.I. had nothing to offer a boy with serious Republican intentions. But for the boy chiefly requiring an activity-based youth club, and who might perhaps - had he chosen

Fianna - have later acquired an interest in Republicanism, it offered an alternative whose resources appealed to him and whose Catholic, legal environment appealed to his parents. In effect, therefore, Fianna lost whatever minor inroads it might have hoped to make among non-aligned youth, and henceforth caught only the converted, the sons of Republican families and sympathisers. It thus became an inverted, self-perpetuating and diminishing organisation, failing to play what might have been its major role as a youth wing, to broaden the base of recruitment to the senior movement.

It should be said, however, that the rivalry of the C.B.S.I. represented only one factor in this process of diminution, which more generally reflected parallel developments within the Republican movement as a whole after 1934.

DECLINE 1934-1939

The second half of the decade was in fact marked by the decisive decline of the movement and its isolation from the mainstream of Irish politics. Divided and impoverished by the Congress¹⁷⁰, outmanoeuvred by the Fianna Fáil government¹⁷¹, with its army outlawed by the Church in 1935 and the Dáil in 1936, it also found itself out of tune with the people. Its "doctrines of militarism palled in a decade surfeited with violence"¹⁷², and in the new and profound equilibrium of Irish political life it no longer counted as a major force¹⁷³.

Fianna declined with the other branches of the movement. Only eighteen sluaite had delegates speaking at the 1936 Ard Fheis¹⁷⁴, and several of these had only a brief existence. Only in the traditionally strong Fianna areas of Belfast, Derry, Cork, Limerick, Dublin, and to a lesser extent Galway and Tipperary, were

the sluaite stable¹⁷⁵. The capital itself was reduced to three branches and able to muster fifty members at most for public demonstrations¹⁷⁶.

Na Fianna was made illegal in the Free State in June 1936, along with other Republican organisations¹⁷⁷. Being forced into clandestine activity had the secondary effect of inducing an attitude of secrecy within its own ranks. Several local 'jobs' were carried out unofficially and dumps were used unknown to G.H.Q. Discipline deteriorated¹⁷⁸, just as it did at this time in the I.R.A. In the latter case a number of ill-conceived local enterprises, including two assassinations, damaged the movement's name in the public mind and prompted many parents to forbid their sons to be associated with Fianna¹⁷⁹. Indicative of the contraction of the youth wing in the last years of the decade was the collapse of the Dublin Brigade structure in 1936. City sluaite operated from this date only under the general guidance of the Chief Scout and later attempts by Brigade Quartermaster Dan Stephenson to revive the structure were unsuccessful¹⁸⁰.

The Bodenstown Commemorations, which to a small and scattered organisation served as a rallying point of annual renewal, were also proscribed from 1936. The Scouts were nonetheless ordered to attend the 1937 gathering if possible. Those who succeeded met the same old faces, but fewer new members. It was clear that only the dedicated remained, and that it was now increasingly difficult to sustain momentum¹⁸¹. After the movement had "temporarily" laid down arms in 1923 Fianna had been left without any immediate role. The boys had been "kept busy" since then with drill, parades, messages for the Army and training "for the next round". But many of the 1936 generation had not been born when the Civil War ended, and

for them the inactivity and the promises had little appeal and the credibility of "training for the day" was wearing thin¹⁸².

Although the movement, having shed its left wing at the Congress split, gradually adopted the rightward nationalist-militarist path that led to the 1939 Bombing Campaign, it had remained for a while coloured by the influence of its former members¹⁸³. And when in December 1936 former Fianna Adjutant General Frank Ryan led the first contingent of Irishmen to fight for the Spanish Republic, his party largely comprised serving or ex-I.R.A. men¹⁸⁴. As the James Connolly Unit they at first joined the 14th International Brigade, and after that unit was disbanded took their place in the Abraham Lincoln 15th Brigade of which Ryan became Adjutant. In all 127 fought on the Republican side between 1936 and September 1938, of whom at least three were current members of Fianna Eireann¹⁸⁵. Fian Tommy Woods was killed at the front near Cordoba on Christmas Eve 1936¹⁸⁶; Assistant Adjutant General Eamon McGrotty fell at the Battle of Jarama; Paddy Smith survived wounding at Cordoba and Jarama to return to Ireland where he was among those Republicans interned during and after the 1939 Campaign. Ryan himself was captured near Aragon in March 1938 and received a death sentence later commuted to thirty years' imprisonment.

With the aim of instilling fresh purpose into the organisation delegates at Fianna's 1938 Ard Fheis voted to set up an Advisory Council composed of respected adult Republicans¹⁸⁷. Invitations were extended to Count Plunkett, the poet Brian Ó hUiginn, Máire and Aine MacSwiney and Madge Daly among others. Recruiting nevertheless continued to decline. The firm of W. J. O'Hora's had discontinued supplying Fianna items due to lack of custom¹⁸⁸, and in

the spring of 1939 the Irish Press noted that Fianna drilling had become a sporadic and local spectacle, "little more than a fast disappearing carry-over from the events of troubled times"¹⁸⁹.

Cork city and county was one of the few areas holding their ground. Morale and standards remained very high in the city branches, partly because of the quality of leadership (particularly that of city o/c Paddy Lane), but more specifically because of circumstances peculiar to Cork: the very strong Republican tradition, the long established Thomas Ashe Hall, the stature of Tom Barry and the MacSwineys. The country branches were still able to recruit a high proportion of the boyhood of the area. The decline that marked most other areas was not felt in and around Cork until after 1939 when Tom Barry resigned from the I.R.A.¹⁹⁰.

Belfast also remained strong, with sluaite in every nationalist neighbourhood though little sign of expansion¹⁹¹ until the end of 1938 when a significant rise in membership occurred, rapid, unexpected, and unconnected with any initiative on the part of Fianna. In December over thirty members of the city Battalion of the I.R.A. were arrested and interned in Crumlin Road Jail, including all the senior staff and a number of Fianna officers holding dual membership¹⁹². The result was sudden promotion for young men in both organisations - men with "1922 ideas" were replaced by others brought up in the 1930s; above all, known men were replaced by unknown. The movement in Belfast was now able to build "one of the tightest and best security systems ever in Ireland", and upon this base of security Fianna was able to fulfil its potential for development. Hundreds of boys, and whole new areas were recruited as a result of which it again became necessary to divide the city into two districts¹⁹³.

On 15 January 1939, after issuing an ultimatum, the I.R.A. declared war on Britain. The campaign had been planned since the previous April by a new leadership determined to end the aimless drifting that had characterised the movement since de Valera "pre-empted the stage" in 1936¹⁹⁴. The decision lost the Army several noted members, including Tom Barry and Seán MacBride, but it gave a sense of purpose and the promise of action to the average volunteer, and recruitment rose at once.

The same effect was not felt in Fianna. The youth organisation did not experience the direct impetus of participation in the war. Nor did it benefit from any significant quickening of the nationalist pulse in Ireland, since the campaign was conducted by Active Service Units operating far away in England, and was generally ignored by the Irish people and even opposed by some Republicans¹⁹⁵. Only after the execution of Barnes and McCormack in February 1940 was the public aroused to awareness and sympathy¹⁹⁶, in the wake of which Fianna enjoyed a brief upsurge in membership¹⁹⁷.

On the other hand it was obviously desirable to a movement engaged in war that there be a steady flow of recruits into its youth wing. To this end the Army's Headquarters staff discussed the appointment of a national Fianna organiser in spring 1939¹⁹⁸, and in June offered the post to twenty-two year old Joe Atkinson from the Short Strand¹⁹⁹. Atkinson held dual membership at the time, and was o/c of the East District of Fianna's Belfast Brigade. Equipped with a Rudge bicycle provided by the Army and, amazingly, a letter of introduction typed on Óglaigh na hÉireann notepaper, he covered almost all the South between July and December, lodging in Republican homes and calling roadside meetings. New sluaite

marked his route, in Longford and Roscommon in August, County Sligo in early September and Donegal at the end of the month²⁰⁰. In the first months of 1940 he worked with Dublin's o/c building up membership in the city sluaite, before being elected Adjutant General at Fianna's St. Patrick's Day Ard Fheis. Since the post required his residence in Dublin, Liam Nolan of Kerry was elected to succeed him as itinerant organiser. At the same meeting George Plunkett was re-elected Chief Scout, for what would be his last term - he was already on the run, having avoided the arrest suffered by most other members of the Army Council in September and February²⁰¹.

In the event, it would also be Fianna's last Ard Fheis for eight years. By March the Bombing Campaign was already all but over, the years of internment had begun, and the movement was sliding into despair and disarray. Fianna, which as usual reflected the fortunes of the senior movement, would before the end of the year have collapsed to a point of virtual extinction.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. See de Valera's message to the 'Legion of the Rearguard' accompanying the cease-fire order of I.R.A. Chief-of-Staff Frank Aiken, 24 May 1923.
2. Neeson, E. The Civil War in Ireland 1922-1923 (Cork, 1966; revised ed. 1969), pp.342 f.
3. The phrase is O'Malley's - O'Malley, E. The Singing Flame (Dublin, 1978), p.230.
4. According to letter Rutledge, P. J. to Joseph McGarrity, 1/10/1923, in Cronin, S.(ed.) The McGarrity Papers (Tralee, 1972), p.138.
5. Republican propaganda claimed 8,000 hunger strikers - Republican Bulletin, 23/11/1923.
6. Manning, M. Irish Political Parties, an Introduction, Studies in Irish political culture, no. 3 (Dublin, 1972), p.6. Of 1,500 branches in 1922, only 16 were still in existence in June 1923.
7. O'Donnell, P. The Gates Flew Open (London, 1932; Cork, 1965 ed.), pp.97 and 104.
8. Manning, M. Irish Political Parties, p.35
9. From letter Countess Markievicz to an unnamed friend, in Marreco, A. The Rebel Countess (Philadelphia and New York, 1967), p.296.
10. Minutes of Army Executive meeting 11 and 12/7/1923, item 15, Ernie O'Malley Papers, P17a/12, National University archives.
11. Paddy Brown interview.
12. Military Service Pensions Act (1934), Fianna Advisory Committee, Return no. 1, G.H.Q. Operation and Personnel 1916-1923, p.3. Garry Holohan played no further part in Fianna or the Republican movement after his release. Joe Reynolds had already been released in August 1923.
13. For the release of the Countess see Van Voris, J. Constance de Markievicz in the cause of Ireland (Amherst Massachusetts, 1967), p.333.
14. Report of the Fianna Convention by Adjutant, 2nd Battalion, ?Brigade to Brigade Adjutant, Ernie O'Malley Papers, P17a/148. Also, press report of the Convention in Sinn Féin, 29/3/1924.
15. Report of Fianna Convention.
16. Frank Sherwin interview.
17. Fianna G.H.Q. meeting 10/1/1925, Minutes, Ernie O'Malley Papers, P17a/148.

18. The first reference to the appointment appears to be an article signed 'S. MacRaghnaill, Hon. Secretary' in An Phoblacht, 30/10/1925.
19. Fianna G.H.Q. meeting 10/1/1925, Minutes.
20. Fianna G.H.Q. meeting 17/1/1925, Minutes.
21. Bell, referring to Óglaigh na hÉireann Financial Statement for May 1925, quotes the Army's total assets at £250 13s. 6d. Income from U.S.A. had dried up by this date. Bell, J. Bowyer The Secret Army (London, 1970; London, 1972 edition), p.69.
22. Fianna G.H.Q. meeting 24/1/1925, Minutes. G.H.Q. agreed to give the I.R.A. one week to settle the account, failing which they would attempt to raise a loan at the bank. The Handbook itself was a disappointment; it comprised a partial reprint of the 1914 text, with no additional material from the Rising or the two wars, and no new ideas. It was however used by the I.R.A. as well as Fianna.
23. Louise Coghlan O'Brien interview.
24. Frank Sherwin interview.
25. Minutes of Fianna Dublin South District Council meeting, 29/8/1925, and Report of meeting 7/10/1925; Barney Mellows Papers; National Library of Ireland, MS 13771(i). The operating slua used the Sinn Féin Club at Inchicore. Sluaite Liam Mellows and Cathal Brugha were without premises until October.
26. An Phoblacht, 14/8/1925.
27. Committee comprised Brian Ó hUiginn, T. D. (Chairman); Dr. D. Stopford-Price (Vice Chairman); Dr. J. Ryan, T. D. and Liam Langley (Treasurer); Dr. P. McCarvill, T. D. and Seamus Mallin (Hon. Secretaries).
28. Recommended activities were Irish language and literature, history, archeology, art, music, games and swimming, drill, scouting, signalling, First Aid, woodcraft, botany and natural history.
29. An Phoblacht, 16/10/1925, 20/11/1925, 27/11/1925.
30. An Phoblacht, 16/10/1925.
31. These changes were not published in the press at the time; details in An Phoblacht, 23/9/1933.
32. Treasonable Offences Act, 3 April 1925; see Macardle, D. The Irish Republic (London, 1937; 1968 ed.), p.804, where the act is described as "a comprehensive measure of suppression which provided for a great variety of activities the punishments of deportation or death".
33. Fianna G.H.Q. meeting, 10 April 1925, Minutes.

34. Frank Sherwin interview. The meeting took place in the Sinn Féin hall in Sussex Street. Representing Fianna were the Countess, Barney Mellows, Joe Reynolds, Seán Harling and Sherwin. The meeting must have taken place before the I.R.A.'s Convention of 14 November when Frank Aiken was replaced as Chief-of-Staff by Andy Cooney.
35. Louise Coghlan O'Brien interview. Mrs. O'Brien, in expressing this view to the author, added that Fianna's role of education in the national ideal was especially important in the 1920s since many of the boys who had joined were the sons of British Army World War I veterans.
36. Fianna Constitution and Rules, as revised, "Fianna Eireann is an Independent National Organisation for boys" . . . "No Fiann shall, in his official capacity, engage in party elections, political or otherwise". This wording, taken from the 1926 Ard Fheis, was repeated in the constitution resolution passed at the 1927 Ard Fheis - see The Nation, 8/10/1927. In practice, what was forbidden was electioneering and parading in uniform at elections - cf. An Phoblacht, 2/9/1933.
37. For a general account of events before, during and after the Convention see Bell, J. Bowyer The Secret Army, pp.69 ff. For the I.R.A.'s reasons for dissociation see 'Óglach', Óglaigh na hÉireann, Republican Information Bureau (Dublin, 1932), pp.11 f. For a detailed account of developments within Sinn Féin see O'Neill, T. P. 'In search of a political path: Irish Republicanism, 1922-1927', in Hayes-McCoy, G. A.(ed.) Historical Studies X (Galway, 1976), passim. And see also O'Donnell, P. There Will be Another Day (Dublin, 1963), pp.35 f. Peadar O'Donnell moved the resolution at the Army Convention to dissociate from Sinn Féin, but for different reasons than those that motivated most of the voters.
38. Cf., "The name Republican in Ireland, as used among Republicans, bears no political meaning. It stands for the devout lover of his country, trying with might and main for his country's freedom" - Austin Stack Commemoration Pamphlet, April 1927, in Coogan, T. P. The I.R.A. (London, 1970), pp.226 f.
39. An Phoblacht, 29/1/1926.
40. An Phoblacht, 5/3/1926.
41. Fianna claimed, for example, that the authorities intercepted and withheld mail addressed to the organisation: An Phoblacht, 27/8/1926.
42. Ard Fheis Report, An Phoblacht, 23/4/1926.
43. An Phoblacht, 20/8/1926.
44. Frank Sherwin interview, on which source the present account is based.
45. Paddy Brown interview confirms this point. Brown stated that the Countess "couldn't see past Harling".

46. Bell, J. Bowyer Secret Army, p.94, referring to Irish Free State Coughlan Shooting Enquiry, Report of the Tribunal of Enquiry, Dublin, 1928, and also to Irish Free State Department of Justice, Confidential Report of the Garda Commissioner, 27/7/1931, p.32, which shows that the government assisted Harling in leaving Ireland.
47. See for instance Gilmore, G. The Republican Congress 1934 (Dublin, n.d.), pp. 23 f. and 25.
48. Frank Sherwin interview.
49. Report of Fianna Fáil Ard Fheis, 24/11/1926; An Phoblacht, 10/12/1926.
50. Van Voris, J. Constance de Markievicz, p.346.
51. Report of Fianna Ard Fheis, 25/9/1927, An Phoblacht, 15/10/1927. The main individual donor was Archbishop Mannix. Donations were also sent by two Sinn Féin cumainn in Lanarkshire - The Nation, 13/8/1927.
52. Joe Reynolds interview to Van Voris, J., 11/12/1963; interview notes supplied to the present author by Mrs. Van Voris, 28/1/1979. It was Reynolds who escorted the Countess home from the meeting in Exchequer Street. See also Van Voris, J. Constance de Markievicz, pp.346 f.
53. The Nation, 23/7/1927. The Rotunda was used after the City Hall and Mansion House had been refused by the authorities.
54. An Phoblacht, 22/7/1927; The Nation, 23/7/1927.
55. Paddy Brown interview.
56. Van Voris, J. Constance de Markievicz, p.13.
57. For instance, Ned Lennon interview.
58. Louise Coughlan O'Brien interview.
59. Letter Fr. Albert to Eva Gore-Booth, 25/4/1917, in Roper, E.(ed.) Prison Letters of Countess Markievicz (London, 1934), p.35.
60. An Phoblacht, 29/7/1927.
61. See above, p.38 and p.56, note 118.
62. Military Service Pensions Act (1934), Fianna Advisory Committee Return no. 1, Outline of G.H.Q. Organisation and Personnel 1916-1923, p.3.
63. Ibid. Chief-of-Staff Garry Holohan was arrested on Christmas Day 1920 and held prisoner in Arbour Hill for over two months (Holohan, G. Statement to the Bureau of Military History no. 2, pp.21 ff.), during which time Langley filled his post.

64. An Phoblacht, 15/10/1927, report of the 16th Ard Fheis, Hardwicke Theatre, 25 April 1927.
65. Civil Authorities (Special Powers) Act (Northern Ireland) 1922 12 and 13 Geo. V C.5. Espec. Article 3 empowering civil authorities to prohibit visible membership of any organisation specified by them. For a brief survey see also Wallace, M. Northern Ireland, Fifty Years of Self-Government (Newton Abbot, 1971), pp.92 ff.
66. This and the following paragraph based on Joe Atkinson interview.
67. P.B. interview, L.F. interview.
68. J.C. verbal statement.
69. P.B. interview. P.B. attended camps in Down in 1931 and 1933, and Dublin in 1934.
70. Among those charged were - Rory Campbell and Seán McKenna, Belfast, charged with membership of Fianna in 1933 (G.D. interview and An Phoblacht, 23/12/1933); Billy Watson, Belfast, charged with possession of badges and notebook (Fianna Handbook, 1964, p.40); Alex McCloskey and Michael O'Beirne, Belfast, given three-six months hard labour for collecting for Fianna (Wolfe Tone Weekly, 13/8/1938).
Micky Smith was sentenced to three months hard labour for posterising for the release of prisoners in 1939 (Wolfe Tone Weekly, 1/3/1939). Four years before at the age of twelve he had been charged for collecting for Fianna. Before his release from the 1939 sentence internment was introduced and he finally served seven years in jail - A. McM. interview.
71. Analysis based on Joe Atkinson interview.
72. L.F. interview.
73. Ibid, and Joe Atkinson interview.
74. An Phoblacht, 15/10/1927; The Nation, 8/10/1927, Fianna Ard Fheis reports. Several members operated in Belfast at this date but it is not clear whether any sluaite or formal organisation existed: it is very probable that they did not. A few members sought to infiltrate the C.B.S.I. in 1927 but Moss Twomey forbade the move as sectarian. In 1928 Jimmy Steele and Tony Lavery were seconded from the I.R.A. to establish a Fianna organisation in Belfast - Seán McNally interview. The new organisation was at first known as the Ulster Scouts - P.B. interview.
75. See I.R.A. Council directive notifying units of the Convention, 18/2/1933, in Coogan, T. P. The I.R.A., pp.68 ff.
76. In particular it was attributable to the efficiency and dedication of Chief-of-Staff Moss Twomey - cf., Gilmore, G. The Republican Congress 1934, p.24. Peadar O'Donnell called Twomey "one of the very great Fenian organisers of all time" - O'Donnell, P. There Will be Another Day (Dublin, 1963), p.118.

77. An Phoblacht, 8/7/1927. Three months previously, however, four Cork fiannai were charged with military drilling (An Phoblacht, 29/4/1927).
78. An Phoblacht, 6/5/1927.
79. An Phoblacht, 9/8/1930, Report of 18th Ard Fheis, 3 August 1930.
80. Micksy Conway interview.
81. An Phoblacht, 27/5/1931, 1/8/1931.
82. An Phoblacht, 17/10/1931, announced possession of the office; issue of 24/4/1932 announced its imminent opening.
83. The present author is unable to locate the exact date of Plunkett's appointment. Dublin Castle Intelligence referred to Liam Langley as still being Chief Scout in April 1930 but being inactive through ill health (Department of Justice Report, 4/4/1930, Public Records Office, Dublin Castle, p.2.). Plunkett led the Fianna contingent at Bodenstown in June (Frank Driver interview). The Ard Fheis report (An Phoblacht, 9/8/1930) makes no reference to a change of leadership, which very probably took place therefore later in the autumn.
84. Ryan, D. The Rising - the complete story of Easter Week (Dublin, 1949), p.73. But see the statements of Hanna Sheehy-Skeffington and Geraldine Plunkett in The Irish Times, 4/1/1957 and 8/1/1957. For a detailed account by a participant of the Kimmage Garrison and of George Plunkett's leadership of it see Turner, C. 'The Kimmage Garrison in 1916', An tÓglach, 1/5/1926.
85. Fox, R. M. The History of the Irish Citizen Army (Dublin, 1944), p.187.
86. Ryan, D. The Rising, espec. pp.124, 133, 251; also Caulfield, M. The Easter Rebellion (London, 1964; 1965 ed.) espec. pp.19 and 333 f.
87. Mac Giolla Choille, B.(ed.) Intelligence Notes 1913-16 (Dublin, 1966), p.265, 'List of persons tried by Field Court Martial for Complicity in the Irish Revolt'.
88. See, eg., O'Malley, E. The Singing Flame, p.254.
89. Letters of George Plunkett to his parents, MS 11378, National Library of Ireland. Plunkett was imprisoned during 1918, 1921-22, 1923-24, in Sligo, Derry, Mountjoy, Kilmainham, Newbridge and The Curragh.
90. Seoirse Plunkett interview; other details also based on this source.
91. Ryan, D. The Rising, p.172. Seoirse Plunkett told the present author that this incident was entirely in character, adding that his father was nevertheless in no way strait-laced and that "we had a wonderful childhood".

92. Micksy Conway interview, Con Dillon interview, Diarmuid Mac Giolla Phádraig interview.
93. The legislation summarised in Grogan, V. 'Towards the new Constitution', in McManus, F.(ed.) The Years of the Great Test (Cork, 1967), chap.14.
94. Department of Justice Report on the present position as regards the activities of unlawful and dangerous Associations in the Saorstát, August 1931, Public Records Office, Dublin Castle, pp.5 f.
95. Saorstát Éireann, Constitution (Amendment no. 17) Act, Extract from Executive Council Minutes, 20/10/1931, item no. 2. See also O'Sullivan, D. The Irish Free State and its Senate (London, 1940), pp.264 f.
96. Under the act Michael Kennedy of Limerick was charged in December 1931 with being in possession of documents relating to Fianna - The Republican File, 9/2/1932.
97. The slua in Carlow established the Carlow Rovers Touring Club (cycling) and - with the local I.R.A. - Éire Óg Shamrocks (Gaelic football); unfortunately, a number of non-Republicans innocently joined for the cycling and football - Paddy Bergin interview. On the other hand Fianna were not harrassed at all in Clonmel and the new law "really put the slua on its feet" because of the glamour it gave to membership - Micksy Conway interview.
98. Bell, J. Bowyer The Secret Army, pp.116 f.
99. An Phoblacht, 24/6/1933.
100. An Phoblacht, 23/9/1933.
101. Paddy Bergin interview. Branches in Carlow town, Fennagh, Myshall and Bagenalstown.
102. Con Dillon interview.
103. G.D. interview.
104. An Phoblacht, 24/3/1934, Ard Fheis report.
105. An Phoblacht, 23/6/1934 and 30/5/1934. The Fianna contingent included members from Belfast, Cork, Limerick, Dublin, Tralee, Neenagh, Roscrea, Drogheda, Ballybay, Tipperary, Carlow, County Carlow, Kilkenny, Waterford, Listowel, Killarney, Sligo, Mohill, Longford, Meath, Castlebar, Galway city, Kilrush, South Dublin County, Arklow, Wexford and Port Laoighse.
106. Cf. O'Donnell, P. There Will be Another Day, pp.115 f.; also Murphy, J. 'The New I.R.A. 1925-62', in Williams, T.D.(ed.) Secret Societies in Ireland (Dublin, 1973), p.153.

107. McInerney, M. Peadar O'Donnell, Irish Social Rebel (Dublin, 1974), pp.110 f.; Coogan, T. P. The I.R.A.. pp.94 f.; Bell, J. Bowyer The Secret Army, pp.98 ff.
108. Nevin, D. 'Radical movements in the Twenties and Thirties', in Williams, T. D.(ed.) Secret Societies in Ireland. For Saor Éire's draft Constitution see Coogan, T. P. The I.R.A., pp.59 f.
109. Gilmore, G. The Republican Congress, pp.17 ff. Re Belfast see Bell, T. The Struggle of the Unemployed in Belfast, October 1932, The Communist International, 1932 (Cork, 1976).
110. Nevin, D. 'Radical movements', in Williams, T. D.(ed.) Secret Societies, espec. pp.173 f.; also Mitchell, A. Labour in Irish Politics 1890-1930 (Dublin, 1974), passim, espec. p.183.
111. For instance, lectures on Ireland's mineral resources, An Phoblacht, 28/7/1928.
112. For instance, an article such as 'What do the slums mean to you?', An Phoblacht, 30/6/1934, Fianna Notes.
113. For instance, 1930 resolution congratulating the boys of Egypt and India on their fight against British imperialism and capitalism - An Phoblacht, 9/8/1930, Fianna Ard Fheis report.
114. Micksy Conway interview.
115. Gilmore, G. The Republican Congress, p.8. Fianna Fáil's election manifesto had not even referred to the Republic.
116. Manifesto to the Irish People, Óglaigh na hÉireann, 8/1/1933.
117. Manning, M. The Blueshirts (Dublin, 1970), espec. pp.91-136.
118. Paddy Brown interview.
119. P.B. interview.
120. Lyons, F. S. L. Ireland Since the Famine (London, 1971; revised ed., Glasgow, 1973), p.532.
121. The present account based on Eilís Ryan interview except where otherwise stated. On Frank Ryan in general, see also Cronin, S. Frank Ryan - the Search for the Republic (Dublin, 1980).
122. Diarmuid Mac Giolla Phádraig interview.
123. Bell, J. Bowyer The Secret Army, pp.139 ff.
124. Diarmuid Mac Giolla Phádraig interview.
125. Jerry Cronin interview.
126. Con Dillon interview, Mattie O'Neill interview.

127. Cathal Goulding interview. Goulding cited the example of Jimmy Boland of Dublin who remained a Fianna officer until 1938 despite joining the Congress.
128. For instance, resolution at 1934 Ard Fheis forbidding members from belonging to any political or military organisation - An Phoblacht, 24/3/1934. And public statement in An Phoblacht, 2/9/1933, and Irish Freedom, September 1937.
129. G.D. interview, Con Dillon interview.
130. Nowlan, K. B. 'Dáil Éireann and the Army, unity and division (1919-1921)', in Williams, T. D.(ed.) The Irish Struggle 1916-1926 (London, 1966), p.72.
131. Ibid., pp.75 ff.; also O'Donoghue, F. No Other Law, the story of Liam Lynch and the Irish Republican Army 1916-1923 (Dublin, 1954), pp.220 f.
132. See pp.292 f. below.
133. Announced in Wolfe Tone Weekly, 8/12/1938.
134. The position of Republican activists in a post-Civil War Ireland settling to co-existence and parliamentary politics is well described in Williams, T. D. 'De Valera in power', in McManus, F.(ed.) The Years of the Great Test, pp.37 f. He refers to their rejection and suspicion of outsiders and their generosity towards their own, yet at the same time their tendency towards internal conspiracy and personal rancours.
135. Diarmuid Mac Giolla Phádraig interview.
136. See, eg., O'Malley, E. On Another Man's Wound (Dublin, 1936), pp.118 f.
137. Con Dillon interview.
138. Con Dillon interview. Séamus Grace trained the Fianna Dublin Brigade at summer camp 1933 - An Phoblacht, Ard Fheis Report, 24/3/1934.
139. See O'Connor, J. 'Boland's Mill area', Capuchin Annual, 1966.
140. Thus John Shaw was appointed o/c of the Carlow slua in 1930; he was resented by the membership and left in 1931 - Paddy Bergin interview.
141. Thus for example Jerry Cronin trained the Fianna Cork County Battalion. He was I.R.A. Battalion Director of Training and latterly Brigade Director of Training, but not a member of Fianna - Jerry Cronin interview.
142. Paddy Brown interview, G.D. interview, Gerry Cronin interview. All Battalion officers in Cork city and county held dual membership.

143. Con Dillon interview. Dillon recalled Army Council member Máirtín Ó Cadháin stopping him at the door of the hall at the 1934 Fianna Ard Fheis and instructing him to vote for Diarmuid Mac Giolla Phádraig for the office of Adjutant General. He was the Army's choice. The Fianna leaders themselves wanted Eamon McGrotty. Dillon voted for McGrotty.
144. For instance, An Phoblacht, 26/4/1932, 2/9/1933.
145. 'Stop discouraging the Youth of Ireland!', by 'Fian', An Phoblacht, 23/12/1933.
146. Con Dillon interview; the whole paragraph based on this source.
147. Paddy Brown interview.
148. Con Dillon interview.
149. Eddy Williams interview.
150. L.F. interview. L.F. stated that arms were "absolutely taboo" in the Falls Road sluaite since the I.R.A. was strong in the area, but were probably used in the Short Strand.
151. Diarmuid Mac Giolla Phádraig interview.
152. Míceál Treinfhir interview.
153. Dan Stephenson interview. Stephenson was captured at Hardwicke Hall and held for twenty-four hours on the orders of Chief-of-Staff Michael Fitzpatrick.
154. Seoirse Plunkett interview. He recalled this being discussed at home in 1938, he added that his father appeared to be ill at ease over Fianna; his belief is that his father would not have started such an organisation but - since it existed already - accepted the leadership in order to keep it under control. (Although George Plunkett was one of the signatories of the Declaration of War in 1939 he drew a sharp distinction between adult and juvenile involvement in military activity, strongly opposed introducing youngsters to a military attitude, and kept his own sons out of Fianna.)
155. Ibid.
156. Dan Stephenson interview.
157. The Scouting Trail, Official Handbook of the C.B.S.I. (2nd ed. Dublin, 1979), p.30.
158. Stephen Spain interview.
159. Ibid.
160. Micksy Conway interview. Conway, now a Catholic monk, believes that the C.B.S.I. was founded "to keep boys out of Fianna". He pointed out that in his own area in the early 1930s branches were organised at Fethard, Ardfinnin and Cahir as soon as, and not until, Fianna attempted to establish sluaite there.

161. Dennis Meyer interview. Meyer stated his belief that, had the 'BP' Scouts become independent of London upon the foundation of the Free State, there would have been little *raison d'être* for the C.B.S.I.
162. See for instance Mouvements et Organisations de Jeunesse en France, Notes et Études Documentaires (Paris, 1972), p.18.
163. An Phoblacht, 9/6/1928.
164. An Phoblacht, 9/6/1928, 15/2/1930.
165. "Boys' pastimes and boys' character moulding on Christian and virile national lines make up the sum total of our affairs" : An Phoblacht, 26/4/1932. 'Reading Fianna from the altar', with accusations of godlessness - and in the early 1930s with communism - is recalled by all the author's interviewees of the period.
166. "That Fianna Eireann is replaced by the Catholic Boy Scout movement is the expressed opinion of many" : article entitled 'Fianna or Catholic Scouts?' An Phoblacht, 14/6/1930. It was the view of Government intelligence that there was "abundant evidence" that membership of Fianna was "rapidly decreasing owing to the progress being made by the new Catholic Boy Scout movement" - Department of Justice Report, 4/4/1930, Public Records Office, Dublin Castle, p.9.
167. Diarmuid Mac Giolla Phádraig interview.
168. Cathal Goulding interview.
169. Con Dillon interview, Cathal Goulding interview, Paddy Bergin interview.
170. Coogan, T. P. The I.R.A., p.81. Coogan states that 4,000 volunteers were lost in Dublin alone.
171. It was outmanoeuvred particularly by the government's award of Pensions to anti-Treaty Civil War veterans and its establishing a Volunteer Militia. See Murphy, J. A. 'The New I.R.A. 1925-1962', in Williams, T. D.(ed.) Secret Societies, p.156.
172. Ibid., p.157.
173. Lyons, F. S. L. Ireland Since the Famine, pp.549 f.
174. Fianna, April 1936, Ard Fheis report. The actual number of sluaite represented was not recorded.
175. Dan Stephenson interview. Diarmuid Mac Giolla Phádraig interview.
176. Dan Stephenson interview, Cathal Goulding interview. The branches were Slua Seán Heuston, Weaver's Hill Newmarket; Slua Seán Healy, Phibsboro; Slua Con Colbert, Hardwicke Hall.

177. For the background to the Order made under Article 2A of the Constitution see O'Sullivan, D. The Irish Free State and its Senate, pp.443 ff.
178. G.D. interview, Cathal Goulding interview. Goulding cited the slackening of the rules on uniforms for slua meetings as an example of the general decline of discipline.
179. For the assassination of Vice-Admiral Henry Somerville and the shooting of John Egan that followed it, see Bell, J. Bowyer The Secret Army, pp.155 f. The killings prompted a wave of revulsion that probably damaged Fianna more than the I.R.A. itself - Paddy Bergin interview.
180. Con Dillon interview.
181. G.D. interview.
182. Cathal Goulding interview.
183. See espec. Coogan, T. P. The I.R.A., pp.82 ff. Examples of continuing ties of sympathy with socialism were the attendance of contingents from the Tramway Union strikers, the W.U.I., the Congress and the Unemployed Workers' Movement at the Army's 1935 Easter Commemoration, and the attendance of Scottish Communist Willie Gallacher in 1935.
184. Account based on O'Riordan, M. Connolly Column (Dublin, 1979), pp.60-75; also, O'Riordan, M. 'Ireland', in International Solidarity with the Spanish Republic 1936-1939 (Moscow, 1974), pp.190 ff.
185. Diarmuid Mac Giolla Phádraig interview, Con Dillon interview.
186. The Worker, 6/2/1937.
187. Wolfe Tone Weekly, 26/3/1938.
188. Atkinson, J. Autobiographical Statement, p.182.
189. Wolfe Tone Weekly, 10/5/1939.
190. Gerry Cronin interview.
191. L.F. interview.
192. Joseph Atkinson interview. And see Bell, J. Bowyer The Secret Army, p.187.
193. Atkinson, J. Statement, p.93. The districts followed the river, with however Ardoyne in the East District.
194. Bell, J. Bowyer The Secret Army, chap. vii, 'De Valera pre-empted the stage: the I.R.A. without direction, June 1936-March 1938'. See also pp.178 f. and 183.

195. Several recent ex-Fianna members took part in the campaign. Notable among them was Terence Perry of Belfast who had transferred to the I.R.A. the previous year and went to England as a seventeen year old. He died in Parkhurst in July 1942 - Belfast's Patriot Graves, Belfast Branch National Graves Association (Belfast, 1963); also Souvenir Booklet for Unveiling of County Antrim Memorial, Milltown Cemetery (Belfast, n.d.).
196. Bell, J. Bowyer The Secret Army, p.210.
197. Cathal Goulding interview. Barnes and McCormack were hanged in Birmingham on 7 February 1940. One hundred and fifty fiannai marched at their Dublin 'funeral' - Seamus Murphy interview.
198. Atkinson, J. Statement, p.118.
199. Joseph Atkinson interview. The present account is based on this and the previously cited source, as well as on a series 'Light in the Black North' written by Atkinson for The United Irishman, June and July 1975. The post was offered to Atkinson by the Army's Adjutant General Micky Trainor (the author's interviewee Míceál Treinfhir).
200. Wolfe Tone Weekly, 16/8/1939, 13/9/1939, 20/9/1939.
201. Seoirse Plunkett interview. For the G.H.Q. and Council arrests see Bell, J. Bowyer The Secret Army, pp.201 f. and 213.

Chapter 8. SURVIVAL, RECOVERY, CONTROVERSY (1940-1962)

THE THREAD UNBROKEN

The years 1940-1945 mark the lowest ebb in the history of the Republican movement. Although the I.R.A. did not formally declare a ceasefire until the spring of 1945¹ it in fact saw little action after February 1940 and by 1941 had ceased to pose any serious threat to the governments of Britain, Northern Ireland or the Free State. However, Leinster House and Stormont were determined to destroy it in its weakened state, and so heavy was its loss of manpower through internment, execution and hunger-strike that at one stage it was averaging a new leadership every six weeks². The internment camps themselves were riven by dissention and faction while outside the movement all but destroyed itself in the wake of the courtmartial of Stephen Hayes³. The I.R.A. in Dublin had become "little more than a truncated G.H.Q. staff living from day to day"⁴. In Cork the movement was down to a dozen men, the Army gone altogether⁵. In the country "the intricate and long-lived infrastructure . . . began to fray and break" by the autumn of 1942⁶. Even the security-conscious Belfast Brigade suffered losses and ceased to function entirely during 1943⁷. In the winter of 1944 the last thread was broken with the arrest of Chief-of-Staff Charlie Kerins.

By this date, however, the first of the internees were being released. Some came home to re-form their old units, while the campaign for the release of those still inside afforded a propaganda platform for the movement. In spring 1945 though the Army was still miniscule it was at least in a position to elect a new

Council and Chief-of-Staff⁸.

Any account of Fianna during the Campaign period must be limited by the nature of the evidence available. No internal documents survive⁹, communication across the country was at the time non-existent, and the Republican movement published no paper between 1939 and 1948. The author has been obliged to rely on verbal statements alone, made nearly forty years after the events they recall by participants who had no Fianna contacts outside their own areas. Given these limitations it would be difficult to judge the completeness of the present account or to confirm its accuracy in every detail.

One certain conclusion emerges, however. Fianna suffered with the decline and disintegration of the movement, both in its recruitment of boys and its loss of adult leaders. But, unlike the I.R.A., at no time was the thread of its existence completely broken.

In Belfast the organisation was confined to the Falls Road and even there was but a shadow of its 1939 strength¹⁰. Though sluaite continued to parade until the autumn of 1942, meetings had become irregular with most of the leadership transferred to the hard-pressed Army¹¹, and internment had alienated parents by taking the bread winners from their homes. Like the I.R.A. the Scouts were disbanded in 1943, but were re-established in October of the following year a month or so before the first internees returned to re-form the Army¹².

Fianna remained intact in Cork throughout the Campaign years though reduced in numbers, chiefly because its meeting place at the Tomás MacCurtain Hall was some distance from the I.R.A.'s headquarters on the south side and the boys were shielded from the

worst of police harrassment. The slua was unable to maintain its pipe band, but continued to drill¹³.

Four branches survived in Dublin in 1940. The largest and oldest, Slua Con Colbert, owed its stability to the Hardwicke Hall where it had paraded for almost a decade, but at least one other was obliged to meet in a private house and drill in the street¹⁴. The Battalion Command had been re-established and survived under o/c Jack Rowan until spring 1942. Despite its own pressing concerns the Army continued to support the youth wing by placing tried and responsible men from its own ranks into the leadership positions. City Adjutant Kevin Hudson was one such, as was Mattie O'Neill who on his release from a brief internment in April 1941 was considered too well known to risk active service; asked "to help with the Fianna" he was appointed o/c of Slua Seán Healy in Phibsboro¹⁵.

With the arrest of Rowan in May 1942 and the loss of the Hardwicke Hall in the same year the Battalion command again fell into abeyance. The city sluaite, now reduced to three¹⁶, operated in isolation though the older boys - among them Wattie Bell, Paddy Dillon, Mattie Carey and Noel and Dessie Goulding - kept up such communication as they could¹⁷. Being members of the small circle of Republican families they were known to one another; and having older members of those families interned they were also known to the police and under constant surveillance despite their youth¹⁸.

1943 was perhaps Fianna's most tenuous year. George Plunkett was released on parole in the spring, but he had suffered in the Curragh and took no further part in Fianna activities; he died prematurely the following winter at the age of forty-four. By now

the Dublin organisation had shrunk so far that its very existence had come to depend on one youth, Peadar Timmins¹⁹.

Timmins was the youngest of a family of active Republicans²⁰; his brother Dick had been interned in 1939. But Peadar himself was then only thirteen, and since he did not join the I.R.A. until 1943 he lived through the internment years neither on the run nor touched by the feuds within the adult movement. In January 1942, though only fifteen years old and small for his age, he succeeded Mattie O'Neill as captain of the Seán Healy Slua when the latter was arrested. In the vital period 1943-1945 he carried Dublin virtually single handed though holding no formal office beyond slua o/c. At this time staffs were merely names on paper, meetings were sporadic, standards and discipline slack. But by 1945 enough mature men had returned to the movement to inherit the tiny, ailing organisation and build upon it. Timmins's had been frankly a holding operation: in the words of one of his successors - "The great thing Peadar did was to ensure the continuity of Fianna, for us to be there in '45"²¹.

To a movement so deeply committed to keeping faith with the past 'the unbroken tradition' was at the very heart of its self-belief. And precisely because the thread had been briefly severed in the adult Army, the preservation of continuity by the youth wing was considered so important. It forestalled allegations that the Fianna of 1945 was merely the work of '1930s men' taken up again. And it ensured that "the uniform had been seen every Easter", as a public proof that another young generation of Republicans was 'coming through'.

UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF BELL - 1945-1952

When Dick Bell was released after five years' internment Timmins was grateful to hand over the leadership to him. Bell contacted other ex-internees, including Con Dillon, and with these and the surviving remnant was able to begin re-building. In the winter of 1945 he formed a 'G.H.Q. staff', drafting in Mattie O'Neill as his Adjutant and Dillon as Quartermaster²². For over a year it remained a Headquarters Staff in name only - its command extended no further than the capital with the Cork and Belfast sluaite still operating independently and in isolation.

Having no previous experience of Fianna leadership Bell sought advice where he could. He discussed scouting with local C.B.S.I. and B.P. leaders, made contact with Seamus Reader who had been in the Glasgow Fianna before the 1916 Rising and had many years' experience with the Catholic Scouts, and through Reader even met members of the Scottish Republican group Fianna na h-Alba. With the information he gleaned, and armed with map-reading and scouting manuals, he established leaders' courses in Dublin²³.

Though without any formal mandate for office from Fianna itself Bell and his colleagues came to be recognised in the movement for their work in re-building Dublin on a sound basis virtually from scratch, and it was accepted that if a national organisation was to be developed at all it would be by them. As a result, local Army men contacted them for help in setting up sluaite in their areas, and the existing sluaite in Belfast and Cork looked to them for a lead in establishing a national structure²⁴.

Towards this end a separate Dublin Command was formed in 1946, with Des Carron o/c and Bell's younger brother Wattie Adjutant. The able and articulate Carron had declined a place on the Head-

quarters Staff, preferring the Dublin post which kept him in touch with grass-roots members²⁵. In addition he undertook much of the national secretarial work, through which - with his natural ability and drive - he perhaps exercised as great an influence upon the developing organisation as Bell himself²⁶.

Both men held the view that the best hope of winning recruits lay in raising standards at slua level. Carron drew up merit tests in history, drill and woodcraft; punctuality and neatness were demanded on parade; uniforms - very few of which were to be seen in 1945 - were provided from funds, the boys themselves cutting down the material and supplying belts and buckles; every attempt was made to give members positions of responsibility²⁷.

The first summer camp, held in 1947, set a pattern for organisation and discipline, as a result of which Fianna parties were always welcome back at campsites. Attendance at camp was made a compulsory commitment of membership, as were the twice-weekly parades and the Sunday outings. The boys were encouraged to see membership as a commitment to an ideal and no mere pastime, and as such they appreciated the demands made upon them. For the type of boy prepared to make this commitment the appeal and satisfaction of being a fian were high. Strong loyalties were forged; turnover became insignificant, and gradually the organisation broke new ground²⁸.

In 1947 Carron and Wattie Bell cycled by tandem to Clonmel and Tralee where sluaite were established following their visit²⁹. By October of the following year Fianna was strong enough to hold its first Ard Fheis since 1940. Delegates - representing branches in Tralee, Dundalk, Clonmel, Cork, Tullow, Belfast and Dublin - ratified the existing command structure and leadership appointments. The meeting may therefore be said to mark the re-emergence of a

genuine and national organisation.

Of the sluaite represented, Tralee maintained a semi-independent existence because of its geographical isolation; the Dundalk and Clonmel branches proved short-lived; Cork enjoyed stronger ties with the local I.R.A. than its own Headquarters; the Tullow branch owed its existence entirely to one local man, Seamus Kavanagh, later Fianna's Adjutant General³⁰. There were now three sluaite in Belfast: those in the Lower Falls and St. James's had been set up in 1944, and a third serving Carrick Hill was established in the year of the Ard Fheis. They operated under a city o/c, but without a command staff³¹, and numbered in all some seventy boys. Despite the expansion achieved in Dublin itself the organisation there was restricted to a single slua due to lack of premises: the only available meeting place at this date was in the Sinn Féin Hall at 9 Parnell Square to which the boys had moved in 1942.

The recovery of Fianna between 1945 and 1948 was not matched by any comparable expansion in the Republican movement as a whole. It is true that the desperation of internment was now passed. But the movement struggled for its existence in the new Ireland that was emerging from its neutrality and isolation in a World War to even higher unemployment and emigration, an Ireland of declining agriculture and a rising industrial population³², now more concerned with social and economic issues than the question of the Republic³³. The founding of Clann na Poblachta in 1946 seemed to imply a recognition by many Republicans that the old path was now a blind alley. In 1948 the movement was at "rock bottom"³⁴.

Fianna had in fact expanded under its own momentum and its recovery was attributable almost entirely to the influence of a handful of men of calibre and energy. Indeed, the Bell era is

notable as the period when - perhaps more than at any time before or since - the organisation took its shape and character not from political events within or without the movement but from the influence of individuals.

After 1950, however, developments within the I.R.A. came to exert an increasing influence upon it. The Army was at last moving forward and in some areas, particularly in the North, its recruitment included wholesale transfers from Fianna³⁵. The Belfast sluaite above all were affected by the policies - and the internal politics - of the senior movement.

On their release from Crumlin Road Jail in 1944-1945 the Belfast internees had at once made a start at re-establishing Army units in the city; by 1948 they had a Battalion, but because its command staff were self-appointed they were never formally recognised by Dublin. The convicted prisoners - many of them household names in Republican Belfast - were not released until 1949 whereupon they formed a separate Battalion, recognised by G.H.Q. The old prison animosities persisted between the two groups, and each looked to Fianna for allegiance and recruits. In 1951 the Fianna o/c, a member of the ex-internees' Battalion, was replaced by a leading officer of the 'official' Battalion. The new o/c called a meeting of city officers early in the following year, at which the instruction was given that all fiannai over sixteen-and-a-half should transfer to the Army. In the resulting exodus Fianna virtually collapsed. Shortly afterwards the rival groups settled their differences at a meeting in Corrigan Park and re-affiliated. But the damage to Fianna was already done³⁶.

Bell and his colleagues were determined to preserve the organisation they had created. They had built it to a membership

touching four figures by summer 1951, with sluaite in Belfast, Derry, Lurgan, Sligo, Dundalk, Drogheda, Tullow, Cork and Dublin and able to parade close on 500 boys at Bodenstown³⁷. Through their emphasis on campcraft and standards of excellence they had steered it to a position where it was losing its image as 'the young I.R.A.' and attracting members as a youth organisation in its own right. (Indicative of its new standing were the Fianna Notes carried at this time by the Dublin Evening Mail, the first in a non-Republican paper for at least a quarter of a century.) Boys with no Republican background were being recruited, and the organisation was now in fact beginning to perform a role that it had notably failed to perform since the early 1930s, broadening its base among Irish youth³⁸.

The leadership considered it essential for the future well-being of Fianna to maintain its new role and image, and to safeguard its independence and immunity from the post-war divisions in the movement. It was a policy that inevitably brought them into confrontation with I.R.A. Headquarters.

FIANNA AND THE I.R.A. (iii)

On tactical grounds alone Bell and Carron would have wished Fianna independent of the Army, association with which had always restricted recruitment and invited police surveillance. But independence was also and more importantly a fundamental requisite of their whole concept of the youth organisation as an environment for personal development. The social maturity that they aimed to foster must also apply in the case of a boy's commitment to the movement. They "abhorred the no-thought situation prevalent in Fianna, the drift mentality in which it was assumed without question that in the small pond of Republicanism the tadpole scout must

necessarily grow via the Fianna officer into the Volunteer frog"³⁹. They believed that commitment should be freely given by conscious decision at a mature age. To this end they sought to abolish the practice of dual membership so that graduation to the Army would first require a decision to resign from the Scouts.

The leadership were in fact facing the conflict inherent in all ideologically committed youth organisations, between the needs of the individual members for personal development and the needs of the movement for the recruitment and training of cadres. They sought to pitch Fianna as far as possible towards the former: in Carron's own words, "We were Republican Youth, but we were more 'Youth' than 'Republican'"⁴⁰. At the same time, they were convinced that an independent Fianna could revitalise a movement that had become "incestuous and inward-looking".

Bell and Carron saw their policies not as any new departure but as a restoration of the original vision of Countess Markievicz and a return to the Constitution. As emended in 1924 the Constitution explicitly declared Fianna's independence of the Army. The I.R.A.'s practice of appointing Fianna leaders - which had obtained during the 1930s and outside Dublin still obtained - was in fact an unconstitutional intrusion to which time had given the appearance of law. To change the practice would now require an addendum to the Constitution specifying that such posts be filled by democratic election.

A resolution to this effect, concerning the election of the Chief Scout, was put forward for debate at the Ard Fheis of 1949. News of the impending move reached Army Headquarters in the spring⁴¹. The new Chief-of-Staff Tony Magan was rigid and dogmatic by temperament, and at a time when the movement's most pressing need was for unity and discipline⁴² he was certainly not pre-

pared to tolerate an independent youth wing. He detailed Seán O'Neill to relay an order to Fianna's G.H.Q. to declare its direct allegiance to the Army Council at the forthcoming Ard Fheis. G.H.Q. replied that constitutionally it did not have the authority to cede allegiance to any organisation.

The immediate reaction of the Army Council was to ban the Scouts from Republican parades and to deprive them of what was traditionally the main annual source of income for all branches of the movement, the sale of Easter lilies. (It was the custom for Cumann na mBan to make the lilies and sell them to the other Republican organisations for resale at profit.) In reply the boys made lino blocks, produced their own lilies and sold them so effectively that they were able to hold their summer camp on the proceeds. And on Easter Sunday though banned from the parade they took the biggest contingent to Mass and were eventually asked to lead the afternoon procession.

Magan now attempted to apply personal pressure on the Fianna leaders. With his Adjutant Gerry McCarthy he visited Des Carron's home, where after a fruitless discussion McCarthy drew a gun on his host. Carron put the two of them out⁴³.

A discussion meeting was subsequently arranged at which the Army Council was represented by its most prestigious member, Tomás MacCurtain, son of the murdered Mayor of Cork⁴⁴. He required an answer to two points - firstly, did Fianna recognise the Army Council's authority over the movement? secondly, if so, did it accept the Council's instruction to agree to its nominees for Fianna's leadership positions? The answer to his first question was affirmative - Fianna's Constitution declared allegiance to 'the Republic', over which the Army Council had been granted sole de jure authority by the surviving Republican members of the second

Dáil in 1938. As to the second question, the fact of the Council's authority was not disputed but merely its bounds of competence; G.H.Q. insisted that it could not be held to extend to the constitutional autonomy of Fianna, which predated the Army itself and had been recognised by Dáils.

At the autumn Ard Fheis that autonomy was re-affirmed, the resolution requiring democratic election of Chief Scouts was carried, and Bell was duly re-elected. The meeting gave a clear indication of the general support within Fianna for the policies of the leadership, and of the leaders' ability to pursue them in defiance of the I.R.A. with apparent impunity. It is not clear however to what extent this was a question of Fianna's mettle or the Army's lack of will. The Army did not even send a representative to the meeting, and certainly had other more pressing problems at this date - re-establishing itself, healing its own internal divisions and salvaging a respectable public image⁴⁵. Three years later and stronger, when it again turned its attention to the control of Fianna, it did so decisively.

The 1952 Ard Fheis was held in March⁴⁶ and it was known that Bell would not be seeking re-election. Tomás MacCurtain himself was proposed as his successor despite being a considerably older man and not even a member of the Fianna. In the event no election was held since MacCurtain was unopposed for office, and Army control was thus restored within the letter of the Constitution⁴⁷. MacCurtain held the position, an overseer rather than an active leader, for one year by which time his purpose was served.

From 1953 a succession of young leaders held office, usually for short terms of one or two years only, and this would remain the typical pattern into the 1970s. With one exception they were all

serving Fianna officers risen through the ranks, and not Army men on loan. But the I.R.A. was still able to retain control of the youth wing, though now indirectly, through the manipulation of Ard Fheiseanna, the re-introduction of dual membership, and above all by influencing the choice of Chief Scout.

It was standard practice for the Army Council to be represented at the Ard Fheiseanna of all sections of the Republican movement, including Fianna's. The visiting delegate never took a leading part at such meetings, more often than not confining himself to a read statement of Army policy on any controversial topics to be debated. He did not issue directives nor have the right to block votes. But such was the I.R.A.'s moral authority within the movement that a mere statement of its views normally ensured their being acted upon⁴⁸.

Traditionally, this authority derived from the Army Council's de jure position as 'the government of the Republic'. But by the 1950s such an appeal had become less meaningful for the younger generation of Republicans and the I.R.A. was coming to rely increasingly on control by co-operation⁴⁹. In the case of Fianna its main guarantee of co-operation lay in dual membership, which was re-introduced with the departure of Bell. From 1953 all slua officers of the Cork Battalion held dual membership⁵⁰; elsewhere in the South it remained the exception outside Dublin where it applied to the entire Battalion officer staff⁵¹; in Belfast, where Bell had never been able to enforce his policies fully, it had been virtually automatic for seniors to take membership of the I.R.A. since 1948⁵²; in Newry an Army man had been appointed o/c of the slua established in 1951⁵³.

Most important, dual membership applied in the case of the

Chief Scout. With the exception of one every Chief Scout since 1953 has been a serving member of the I.R.A. Moreover the power of the office increased during the 1950s, ironically as a result of the achievements of Bell. A Chief Scout remained accountable to the Ard Fheis in theory but in practice was never called to account⁵⁴. Having sole authority to appoint and dismiss his staff he controlled the organisation almost unchallenged. If the Army could control the Ard Thaoiseach, it controlled the Fianna.

At the 1953 Ard Fheis MacCurtain was succeeded by Ned Kelly, a young officer of the I.R.A.'s Dublin Brigade. The Army Council assumed that their control would be secure with his election, but in fact it was Kelly himself who challenged their authority and reopened the old questions of Fianna's role and relationship with the Senior movement. The controversy was to dominate his own term of office and dictate the election of his two successors.

QUESTIONS OF LEADERSHIP

Kelly was an able and sympathetic youth leader who commanded a loyalty from his boys similar to that which had marked the Fianna under Bell. He was indeed strongly influenced by Bell and shared his view of Fianna's role⁵⁵. He also emulated his success in broadening the organisation's appeal by making it more 'open' - to this end, for example, he established a parents' day at the annual summer camps⁵⁶. He believed strongly in scouting as a social training for young people, as envisaged by Baden-Powell whom he held in high regard. These considerations alone would have prompted him to guard Fianna's independence. But in addition, as an Army man he had watched at close hand the divisions growing inside the I.R.A. and knew the danger of Fianna being drawn into them. Already factions were looking to the Scouts for allegiance, with promises or

threats. His fear was that Fianna might itself be split and that boys and parents could be scared off. With its unique history and Constitution Fianna had always remained apart from and acceptable to all factions within the movement, and Kelly considered it vital to maintain this independence.

He therefore actively resisted the early transfer of his best officers to the I.R.A. Early in 1955 he contacted his local slua o/cs encouraging them to sever links with the Army units in their areas and informing them that the matter would be debated at the spring Ard Fheis.

At the same time, weapon training and field craft practice with live rounds had been introduced to selected boys of junior age⁵⁷. This development apparently began the previous summer after fiannai had been allowed to attend the I.R.A.'s national training camp as cooks and orderlies. It is claimed that when these boys were found handling weapons it was decided that they should receive formal weapon training for their own safety.

The Army Council were uneasy at the introduction of military training and the signs of growing independence, and detailed three Fianna officers to keep them informed of developments⁵⁸. On the basis of the reports they received and with a majority on the Council already opposed to Kelly⁵⁹, the decision was taken to courtmartial him. The main charge was that of permitting boys to train with weapons; lesser charges, including embezzling Fianna funds and failing to ensure that boys on camp attended Sunday Mass, were aimed at damaging his character and eroding the loyalty he commanded⁶⁰. His courtmartial was the Council's method of clearing the ground for replacing him with their own man.

After the verdict he was instructed to convene an extraordinary Ard Fheis. The meeting was attended by thirty-four delegates as

well as Tony Magan and the I.R.A.'s Dublin Brigade Recruitment Officer Seoirse Dearle⁶¹. Dearle had never been a member of Fianna but he had successful experience of scouting in the C.B.S.I. and Magan argued the case for him as Kelly's successor. The delegates, many of whom had dual loyalties, insisted on a secret ballot. The result was a conclusive rejection of Dearle who received only five votes.

Kelly declined to accept his election to office and urged that an Ard Choiste be appointed in a caretaker capacity pending the election of a successor. This body would be composed of adult ex-members and would be an advisory group only, without executive powers⁶². His suggestion was adopted and nominations for the Ard Choiste were taken, with provision for further co-option later.

He then formally resigned his office. Most sluaite refused to accept his resignation, and a number of boys - including a specially selected troop from Dublin whom he had groomed as future leaders - urged him to set up a 'Countess Markievicz Club' in defiance of the Council. He refused, adamant that he would make a clean break from the movement. The boys continued to meet at his home but there was no way forward for them in Republican scouting; eventually they all followed him into the C.B.S.I.

Two months after the extraordinary general meeting the Army Council called a full Ard Fheis, which Kelly attended as an invited guest. Dearle was elected Ard Thaoiseach in what was, as he himself admits, "quite bluntly a takeover by the Army"⁶³. Kelly read out a prepared statement signed by all members of the Ard Choiste intimating their acceptance of the Ard Fheis decisions and their resignation "in the interests of peace and unity"⁶⁴.

Some weeks earlier, however, Gearóid Ó Ceallaigh - as the most

senior member of the Ard Choiste - had volunteered to take on the office of Chief Scout in order "to save Fianna's name and pay its debts"⁶⁵. He claims that the proposal was accepted by his colleagues, although even if so such a ratification would have had no validity, given the status of the committee. Before the election of Dearle he had already in effect installed himself Chief of a breakaway organisation under the name 'Fianna'. The new movement sought to "restore the original aims of the Countess and Hobson". It supported three sluaite in Dublin and a fourth at Droichead Nuadh and, though it never exceeded 200 members, survived in its isolation for almost eight years. In autumn 1962 Ó Ceallaigh was ambushed at night by three Fianna officers and tarred and feathered at gun-point. If the attack was intended to ridicule him and his scouts it succeeded - he was sixty-one and badly shaken; he "decided he had had enough".

Dearle's term of office proved as controversial as the manner of his election⁶⁶. He discovered that Fianna was "organisationally a bit of a joke" but his attempts to increase efficiency met with the same local resistance as his efforts to eliminate military training and re-emphasise camp-craft. Ill will was especially strong in Dublin where personal loyalty to Kelly had been greatest. Furthermore, the factions that had threatened Fianna under his predecessor still divided the movement⁶⁷. Under the circumstances the Army Council concluded that the only solution to Fianna's continuing leadership crisis lay in electing a G.H.Q. staff untouched by the internal politics of the movement in the capital. They made their move at the 1957 Ard Fheis.

The two nominees for the post of Chief Scout that year were Frank Leigh of Dublin and Paddy Madden of Cork. It was calculated

before the meeting that Leigh commanded the vote of the majority of delegates, but many switched support after the Army Council's representative Mick McCarthy let it be known that "the I.R.A. believed that Madden should get the post". Madden was elected by a decisive majority⁶⁸.

He appointed a G.H.Q. staff from his own city Battalion, with Alfie Lane Adjutant and his own brother John Quartermaster. Dublin was given semi-autonomous status as a 'Leinster Division' and remained geographically the centre of the organisation, the monthly rendezvous for Headquarters Staff, Dublin officers and representatives from the North. The system worked well enough for Madden to accept a second term of office, which however he was forced to curtail due to his pressing duties as county Training Officer in the senior movement⁶⁹.

With his resignation the leadership returned to Dublin. But the period in Cork had taken the heat out of the disputes of the early 1950s. Fianna had tightened its ranks. The question of its relationship with the I.R.A. was put aside for the time being, and incoming Chief Scout Jimmy Cruise enjoyed a term of office largely free of controversy⁷⁰.

FIANNA IN THE '56 CAMPAIGN

By 1954 the patient rebuilding of the Republican movement was beginning to show results. The successful raid on Gough Barracks and the daring failure at Omagh gave it a new momentum that was reflected in the Sinn Féin vote in the Westminster and the Southern local elections the following summer⁷¹. The mood of the 1955 Army Convention showed that "the events of the previous year had transformed the I.R.A. . . . What everyone felt was that the momentum could not now be stopped. The Army was on the move"⁷². By

May 1956 the Army Council believed that it was ready and the political climate right for a military campaign in the North. They spent the autumn raising and training the Northern units and the four mobile columns which would spearhead the operation⁷³.

Fianna also profited from the Omagh and Armagh raids. The Belfast sluaite, for instance, which had almost collapsed in 1952, fully recovered their former strength by the autumn of 1954 despite pursuing a policy of strict selection⁷⁴. But over the country gains were erratic, being offset in some areas by losses brought about by the divisions within the movement. The Dublin Battalion in particular suffered from the Army's Joe Cristle split in the summer of 1956 though it remained intact and independent of the factions⁷⁵.

The Campaign was launched on 11 December. It has been described as a disaster that petered out within weeks⁷⁶. It is true that arrests in the first month took away most of the Army Council and G.H.Q. staff and that in their absence the military initiative was lost⁷⁷. But the political wing of the movement remained buoyant, commanding high polls and vast demonstrations and newspaper sales through the spring and summer of 1957⁷⁸.

From the start of the Campaign Fianna's membership rose and new sluaite were established. Forty-six branches were represented at the Ard Fheis of December 1957, the National Secretary reporting "a considerable increase in strength over the past year"⁷⁹. Reasonable momentum was held into the winter of 1958 despite the Army's diminishing success, with at least three dozen sluaite still parading, including eight in Dublin and a similar number in the North⁸⁰.

On the other hand the youth organisation failed to match its potential for expansion due to a shortage of local leaders. For

several years it had neglected the training of its own officers⁸¹, and now the traditional loss of its officers to the Army was exacerbated by the build-up of the latter before and during the Campaign⁸². Several men until recently holding leadership positions in Fianna now held prominent senior posts, the most notable being Noel Kavanagh now o/c of one of the I.R.A.'s mobile attack columns. Officers of the Lurgan and Derry sluaite were either on active service or on the run. And in the Army's severest loss of the Campaign, when four volunteers were blown up by their own mine at Edentubber in November 1957, one of the victims - Paul Smith - was a serving Fianna officer and a second - Oliver Craven - a recent recruit from the Scouts⁸³. Most damaging of all, twenty of the Dublin Fianna Battalion staff were arrested at a training camp at Colencree in the autumn of 1957⁸⁴.

With the loss of officers in many areas inexperienced youths were promoted and the average age of the leadership fell. Jimmy Cruise was only nineteen when elected Chief Scout in autumn 1958 and in addition undertook the role of acting o/c of two Dublin sluaite which otherwise would have collapsed⁸⁵. In several areas it proved impossible to maintain existing sluaite or to open new branches to meet demand, and elsewhere many a potential recruit was lost because parents hesitated to commit their sons to the care of teenage leaders.

In September 1958 the Campaign suffered a severe setback with the loss of Chief-of-Staff Seán Cronin. Momentum was irretrievably lost. The following spring a major feud broke out within the Army leadership with the loss of good men. By the winter the "rot of defeatism" had set in⁸⁶ - with the nationalist public disenchanted, safe houses scarce and the police vigilant on both sides of the Border, some harrassed units were hard put to remain intact at all.

Without the assistance of the adult movement or any resources of their own, the Scouts were unable to use their Silver Jubilee to mount a serious recruiting drive⁸⁷. They were themselves now under surveillance in all areas and a number of reports of police harassment appeared in the Republican press. The Finglas slua was watched repeatedly by Special Branch throughout 1960 and before the end of the year all the Dublin branches were reported to be under constant observation⁸⁸. The Six Counties sluaite, especially those near the Border, suffered similarly. Surveillance had long been an everyday fact of life for the Belfast Brigade in peace or war - it is said that the Branch trained new recruits by giving them Fianna assignments; it was therefore not particularly intensified during the Campaign. Although city sluaite had been used to check targets during 1956, the Campaign was so planned as to exclude military actions in the Belfast area and once it had begun the boys had little part to play except as carriers⁸⁹. With a number of its officers including the o/c interned, the Brigade was in fact probably less active between 1957 and 1962 than in the years of peace before and after⁹⁰.

By the autumn of 1961 the Campaign was all but dead in the North; the Military Tribunal had been re-introduced in the South, where the Dáil elections gave a stark indication of the movement's dwindling support. Fianna, under the leadership of Brian Ó Murchú for the past year⁹¹, was reduced in membership by about half with only six sluaite still operating in the Republic outside of Dublin⁹². The United Irishman carried an optimistic report of the September Ard Fheis: "In the opinion of long-serving members this was the most successful Oireachtas for many years . . . The Adjutant General's report showed that there is a 100% improvement in

the organisation, in all its aspects, over the previous year"⁹³.

It was an optimism akin to that of the I.R.A.'s own public statements at the time and bore little resemblance to reality.

The Army Council were in fact already considering a ceasefire⁹⁴, though another five months passed before they finally declared it in February 1962.

THE CHARACTER OF FIANNA IN THE MIDDLE YEARS

By its self-exclusion from parliamentary politics from the 1920s and its gradual isolation from the political mainstream thereafter, the Republican movement (whose policies had commanded the support of the great majority of Irish people in 1921) was driven increasingly to take on the role and character of an extremist minority. It neither sought nor enjoyed a mandate from the people but took its authority from a bygone Dáil and an immutable principle. Its ultimate mission remained the restoration of the betrayed Republic by force of arms, in preparation for which it saw its immediate tasks as training for the day and handing on the Republican ideal.

But as the rest of Ireland came to accept parliamentary democracy and the legitimacy of the state its own intransigence became increasingly unrealistic, and from the 1930s to the 1960s made it the willing victim of successive anti-Republican legislation⁹⁵. Disillusion with the high and seemingly fruitless price of membership, dwindling support, recrimination and faction were the inevitable results⁹⁶. Bypassed by the present, its consolation was to see itself as the true remnant keeping pure and uncompromised faith with the past.

A note of make-believe, in which the wish was made the reality, came to mark its propaganda. Past Republicans were canonised;

present rulers were dismissed as fools or knaves and their positive initiatives as political stunts at best⁹⁷; its own future triumph was inevitable since, no matter how few, "the angels were all on one side"⁹⁸.

In turn, Fianna reflected the senior movement in the middle years. Its role had been defined from 1923 as being to support the movement in its mission to restore the Republic, firstly by recruiting and training boys for the Army, and secondly by schooling some of each new generation in the Republican ideal⁹⁹. But in fact by the late 1930s its recruiting role had become largely ineffectual, in Dublin particularly¹⁰⁰, while the staple training it offered in the peripherally military skills of drill and scouting was now of little real value to a changing Army. In the South, at least, its first role was no longer usually considered seriously, and where it had declined the second, educational role rose by comparison. Each new generation still learned by rote the rudiments of Irish language and Republican history, the gospel of the martyrs and its own obligations, in order to be "worthy of all the noble and sacred traditions of Fianna, of its inheritance bequeathed by the boys of '16 and '23 . . . ready to hand on the torch to the coming generation"¹⁰¹.

The Scouts stood as the visible proof of the perpetuation of the ideal. But because of this, they had come in time to exist in the mind of the adult movement less as an organisation of flesh-and-blood people with day-to-day processes and problems than as a symbol and rallying point, to be paraded on the Republican feast days and forgotten between-times¹⁰². Their continued existence remained unquestioned latterly not because of their real effectiveness but through a belief among adult Republicans that "you had to

have Fianna in the movement"¹⁰³. But such a role concept formed no sound basis for the constructive development of the youth organisation. It accounts for the failure to create any serious machinery for support and liaison in the post-Civil War era, and Fianna's extraordinary neglect by the senior movement nationally, which often co-existed with a high degree of sentimental regard and support for it at a local and personal level¹⁰⁴.

The Scouts also faithfully mirrored the diminution and lowering of standards that befell the Republican movement from the second half of the 1930s, the damage done to it by internment, and its self-inflicted wounds of the 1940s and 1950s, so that - despite the achievements of Bell and others - they never recaptured the numbers, momentum or morale of pre-war days¹⁰⁵.

Like the parent movement, also, they were inclined to become super-purists¹⁰⁶, turning the high morality of the Code and Motto into a moral superiority. In some sluaite a court conviction, even for truancy, brought instant dismissal¹⁰⁷. Fianna's own courtmartial system, which appears to dominate its thinking by 1960¹⁰⁸, symbolised the impeding and introspective obsession with purity. But in a changing Ireland the strict and Gaelic environment fostered by the adult leaders often held less appeal for boys than the "soccer, jazz and foolish plays"¹⁰⁹ that they derided.

Fianna shared the escapism to which the movement was subject in that it made the wish of its own destiny and importance the reality. The deception allowed it to find significance even in its own insignificance, in that its very minuteness stood as proof that its boys were "the few" who carried the flame¹¹⁰: "if they saw few around them on parade they only had to look back, to Markievicz, Mellows, Heuston and Colbert, and all was well"¹¹¹. Its view was

therefore frequently restrospective, its concepts reiterative. Significantly, no attempt was made to revise its 1924 Handbook for forty years. Its literature in the 1930s largely comprised often verbatim repetition of pre-Rising publications¹¹¹, and twenty-five years later its notes in the Republican press were still repeating old refrains with much psychological comfort and scarcely a forward-looking thought¹¹³. The Fianna ideal could still "save the future". The ideal might be valid yet, but times had changed and with them Fianna's hope of influencing 'the future' one way or another in Ireland. The organisation was still doing fine work for a few young people against heavy odds, but conceptually it was atrophied long since : convinced of its mission, fettered by ritual, and fixated upon its own heroic age.

The Republican movement's commitment to physical force on the authority of a bygone Dáil and irrespective of the will of the Irish people, its self-exclusion from the political mainstream and its "absolute inability to read anyone's mind but its own", had led directly to the 1956 Campaign and to its failure¹¹⁴. Defeat would now lead it to self-analysis and re-appraisal. And re-appraisal would lead it to a radical metamorphosis from within, which would have crucial implications for its adult sections and its youth wing alike.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Ceasefire called 10/3/1945.
2. Bell, J. Bowyer The Secret Army (London, 1970; 1972 ed.), pp.257-68.
3. Atkinson, J. Autobiographical Statement, p.67; Joe Atkinson was Hayes' Adjutant.
4. Bell, J. Bowyer The Secret Army; p.225.
5. Eddy Williams interview.
6. Bell, J. Bowyer The Secret Army; p.273.
7. A.McM. interview.
8. Bell, J. Bowyer The Secret Army; pp.284 f.
9. Des Carron interview.
10. L.F. interview.
11. Among them the former o/c of Belfast's East Battalion and National Organiser, who was drafted in as Adjutant General of the depleted Army in spring 1941.
12. A.McM. interview.
13. Eddy Williams interview.
14. The four sluaite were - Aidan Sweeney (North City), Seán Healy (Phibsboro-Cabra), Con Colbert (Hardwicke Hall) and Seán Heuston (Drimnagh-Rathfarnham). Slua Aidan Sweeney met in the house of its o/c Seamus Murphy in Leinster Avenue and drilled in the front street: Seamus Murphy interview.
15. Mattie O'Neill interview.
16. These were Slua Seán Healy, Slua Aidan Sweeney and a third slua based in the Crumlin area. The last was led by Dominic Behan who despite his suggestions to the contrary was never given charge of anything more important than a slua - Behan, D. Teams of Times and Happy Returns (London, 1961; re-printed Dublin, 1979), p.171.
17. From Bob Russell, Cathal Goulding, Seamus Murphy, Con Dillon and Dick Bell interviews.
18. Mattie O'Neill interview.
19. This was the unanimous verdict of those who knew the period: Dick Bell, Con Dillon and Des Carron interviews.
20. Account based on interview with Mrs. Kathleen Timmins, widow of Peadar.
21. Des Carron interview.

22. Mattie O'Neill interview. In 1946 O'Neill was succeeded as Adjutant by Timmins.
23. Dick Bell interview.
24. Dick Bell interview.
25. Des Carron interview.
26. This is Bell's own assessment.
27. Des Carron interview.
28. Dick Bell interview, on which the whole paragraph is based.
29. Des Carron interview.
30. Branch details from Des Carron and Con Dillon interviews.
31. A.McM. interview. Con Colbert Slua, Lower Falls; Slua Joe McKelvie, St. James's. The Command Staff was established in 1951.
32. See Quinn, G. 'The changing pattern of Irish society, 1938-51', and Nevin, D. 'Industry and Labour'; chaps. 8 and 10 respectively of Nowlan, K. B. and Williams T. D.(eds.) Ireland in the War Years and After 1939-51 (Dublin, 1969).
33. Bell, J. Bowyer The Secret Army; p.290.
34. Murphy, J. 'The New I.R.A. 1925-62', in Williams, T. D.(ed.) Secret Societies in Ireland (Dublin, 1973), p.161.
35. D.M. interview.
36. Present account based on A.McM. interview.
37. Dick Bell interview.
38. Dick Bell interview.
39. Des Carron interview.
40. Des Carron interview.
41. Dick Bell interview.
42. Coogan, T. P. The I.R.A. (London, 1970), p.263.
43. Des Carron interview.
44. Des Carron interview; the whole account based on this source.
45. Cathal Goulding interview. Goulding believes that "if the Army had not wanted Fianna to pass the resolution, they wouldn't have done it".

46. The United Irishman, April 1952. The Ard Fheis was held on 17 March, restoring it to the traditional St. Patrick's Day date.
47. Ned Kelly interview. Kelly was at the time o/c Dublin.
48. Cathal Goulding interview, Jimmy Cruise interview.
49. Robert Russell interview. Russell was at the time a member of the Army Council.
50. Paddy Madden interview. There were at the time six sluaite in the Battalion, including Cork city (2), Blarney and Passage West.
51. Jimmy Cruise interview.
52. A.McM. interview, D.M. interview. By 1948 the post-war generation of boys were of an age to join the I.R.A.
53. S.F. interview.
54. Jimmy Cruise interview.
55. Ned Kelly interview; the whole account based on this source.
56. The United Irishman, September 1953.
57. D.M. interview.
58. Ned Kelly, Jimmy Cruise, Gearóid Ó Ceallaigh interview.
59. Gearóid Ó Ceallaigh interview. According to Ó Ceallaigh Robert Russell, Tom Doyle, Micky Trainor, Gerry McCarthy, Eamon Thomas and Tony Magan certainly opposed Kelly.
60. The embezzling charge was particularly ridiculous, if for no other reason than that Fianna had no funds to embezzle. Kelly in fact spent a lot of his own money on Fianna.
61. The present account of the extraordinary Ard Fheis is based on Ned Kelly interview. Delegate and voting numbers, which Kelly could not recall, are from Gearóid Ó Ceallaigh interview; Ó Ceallaigh's son attended the meeting though he was not present himself.
62. Ned Kelly interview. Kelly was most explicit on this point, which is of importance in view of subsequent developments. He took the concept of an Ard Choiste from a 1930s Constitution that he came upon by chance.
63. Seoirse Dearle interview.
64. Ned Kelly interview.
65. Gearóid Ó Ceallaigh interview; the whole paragraph is based on this source.

66. Seoirse Dearle interview.
67. Jimmy Cruise interview.
68. Paddy Madden interview; Donnchadha Ó Séaghdha interview. The Ard Fheis was held on 12 December (The United Irishman, March 1958).
69. Paddy Madden interview.
70. Jimmy Cruise interview.
71. Bell, J. Bowyer The Secret Army, pp.307-19. In the Six Counties elections in May the party polled over 152,000 votes and won the seats for Mid-Ulster and Fermanagh - South Tyrone.
72. Bell, J. Bowyer The Secret Army, pp.319 f.
73. For details of the plan of campaign see The Irish Times, 18/1/1957. The national press published the plan which had been captured by the police and used in trial proceedings.
74. D.M. interview.
75. Jimmy Cruise interview. The remnant were careful to avoid involvement in what was considered "an Army affair".
76. Insight, The Sunday Times Ulster (Harmondsworth, 1972), p.15.
77. Bell, J. Bowyer The Secret Army, pp.354-68. From this time the Campaign drifted into sporadic, low-scale sabotage actions.
78. Four Sinn Féin TDs were elected to Leinster House in March. Summer sales of The United Irishman touched 130,000 copies one month (Seán Garland interview). Recruitment to Sinn Féin rose dramatically - the Mountjoy cumann in Dublin, for example, rose in membership from a dozen to about two hundred in the first half of 1957 (Jimmy Cruise interview). Of all events connected with the Campaign it was the funerals of Seán South and Fergal O'Hanlon in January that had most roused public opinion.
79. The United Irishman, March 1958, Ard Fheis report.
80. Jimmy Cruise interview. Outside Dublin and the Six Counties he recalled sluaite in Cork (2), Waterford, Wexford, Bray, Tullow, Limerick (2), Galway, Sligo (2), Tralee, Drogheda, Dundalk, Monaghan and Ravensdale.
81. Jimmy Cruise interview. The deficiency was recognised by the leadership and an attempt made to rectify it in the winter of 1959 with the establishment of a training board (The United Irishman, January 1960).
82. The Cork Battalion alone lost five teenage officers who volunteered for active service in the North : Paddy Madden interview.

83. S.F. interview. Smith was 22 and Craven 21 years old. Their obituaries described them as I.R.A. members; see Irish News, 12/11/1957 and 14/11/1957.
84. Donnchadha Ó Séaghdha interview.
85. Jimmy Cruise interview.
86. Bell, J. Bowyer The Secret Army, pp.380-8. Bell records the number of actions by years:- December 1956 - 25; 1957 - 341; 1959 - 27; 1960 - 26. The Army feud began with a dispute within the Curragh and continued as a division between the internal G.H.Q. staff and its replacement staff. It resulted in the loss of Magan, MacCurtain and McLogan and the election of 'new men' to the Army Council at the I.R.A. Convention of May 1959.
87. Jimmy Cruise interview.
88. The United Irishman, May and November 1960.
89. D.M. interview.
90. A.McM. interview.
91. Brian Ó Murchú was elected at Fianna's Ard Fheis on 3 September 1960 (The United Irishman, October 1960). Cruise had resigned because he was contemplating marriage at the time.
92. The United Irishman, August and September 1961. Sluaite survived in Cork, Tralee, Sligo, Galway, Waterford and Dundalk. The Limerick branch, which had lapsed, was re-established in August.
93. The United Irishman, November 1961, Fianna Ard Fheis Report, 23-4 September.
94. The Army Council accepted the possibility of a ceasefire at their meeting after the elections of 4 October; see Bell, J. Bowyer The Secret Army, pp.392 f.
95. For example, because they did not recognise the legitimacy of the Free State Republicans refused to recognise the courts, answer questions (an offence under 1931 legislation), apply for gun licences, fill forms for legalising the Sinn Féin Fund, obtain collection permits, etc., and often received quite unnecessary sentences.
96. Cf., Williams, T. D. 'De Valera in power', in McManus, F.(ed.) The Years of the Great Test (Cork, 1967), pp.37 f.
97. Cf., Coogan, T. P. The I.R.A., pp.230 f.
98. Martin, F. X. '1916 - Myth, Fact and Mystery', Studia Hibernica, no. 7, 1967, p.20. Martin analyses the effect of the Pearse view of history upon the Republican movement through Pearse's followers and especially Brian O'Higgins, whose influential Wolfe Tone Weekly was published in the 1930s and his Wolfe Tone Annual throughout the middle years.

99. Cf., chap. 6, p.199 and chap. 7, pp.211 f.
100. Cathal Goulding interview. Seoirse Dearle, the Army's Dublin Brigade Recruiting Officer in 1954-5, stated that transfer from Fianna at that time was "minimal" (Seoirse Dearle interview). It was higher in Cork, and in Northern sluaite.
101. Fianna, May 1936.
102. Des Carron interview.
103. Seoirse Dearle interview.
104. Dick Bell interview.
105. Con Dillon interview. Dillon was well placed to make the comparison, having been active in Fianna's leadership from the 1930s to 1950s.
106. Cathal.Goulding interview.
107. L.F. interview. This was the case in the Belfast Brigade. The Republican organisations for girls were even stricter. Clann na nGael forbade any dancing in uniform except Irish dances; Cumann na gCailíni forbade make-up.
108. Seán Ó Cionnaith interview. Examples of courtmartial offences - stealing 7s. 6d. from workplace, missing four parades, shouting at o/c, refusing to collect firewood on camp; examples of sentences - suspension, dismissal from the ranks in disgrace, writing lines. The Courtmartial procedure was conducted in stylised, legalistic language (Court martial File 1957-60, Gardiner Place Records, Sinn Féin the Workers' Party).
109. An Phoblacht, 15/2/1930, Fianna notes.
110. Eg., The United Irishman, November 1961, "We are a very small organisation compared to other Boy Scout organisations, but to us quality is far more important than quantity", etc.
111. Cathal Goulding interview.
112. Fianna, issues 1935-6. But these excellent magazines also included reprints of articles from the 1920s, as well as up-to-date information.
113. See especially, The United Irishman, 1960 issues.
114. Bell, J. Bowyer The Secret Army, pp.361 f.

Chapter 9. THE YEARS OF CHANGE (1962-1969)

REBUILDING

In the spring of 1962 the Republican movement was at its lowest ebb since the 1940s, and "seethed with bitter faction and the advanced rot of despair"¹. The failure of the Northern Campaign and the ceasefire in February had brought about dissention within the movement itself, desertions from its ranks, and disenchantment among all but its staunchest supporters. Its military and political wings were in dispute and in the Army itself the old power holders found their views irreconcilable with those of the new. So much was apparent at the Army's autumn convention: "it was clear to all that for many the I.R.A. held no further charms. During the years in prison or on the run they had discovered alternatives, political or personal, forsaken violence if not their beliefs, and withdrawn into private life or the blurred periphery of Republican activities . . . there were many familiar faces missing. It was not a happy convention"². The position was perhaps worst in Belfast. There was not a single volunteer in the city when A.McM. was released from jail in 1961³, and the Belfast Brigade Commandant has stated that after the ceasefire the I.R.A. was "just a joke" in his area - "nobody wanted to know about it"⁴.

As usual, the state of Fianna mirrored that of the adult movement. Recruitment to the youth wing depended in general upon the climate of public opinion towards Republicanism and in particular upon the attitudes of the parental generation within the movement. Moreover, since at this time the day-to-day organisation of sluaite was in many areas left in the hands of the local I.R.A.⁵ their very existence depended upon the continued local presence of the Army.

Yet in the immediate post-campaign period Fianna was quicker to recover and rebuild than the I.R.A. itself. "Finance was the secret", according to Seán Ó Cionnaith who was chiefly responsible for its growth at this time⁶. In the autumn of 1962 Paddy Fitzmaurice had been sent from London to become National Organiser. The difficulties were considerable and he remained for six months only. The leadership envisaged the post as combining organisation and fund-raising, and the decision to give it to Ó Cionnaith was based on his proven flair for both. He had played a leading part in successful fund-raising while o/c of the London slua and was expected to do the same in Ireland. G.H.Q. were determined that Fianna should be made financially independent of the Army. Upon his appointment they set up a Department of Associate Membership⁷ with the same explicit purpose of giving it an independence of "other organisations" that it had lacked hitherto, and thus a greater immunity from fluctuation in their fortunes⁸. At the same time he was detailed to re-develop the national structure which had fallen apart in the latter stage of the campaign.

Ó Cionnaith's post was full-time with a salary of £5 per week. His base was Cashel, from where he covered the South and West, particularly the counties of Galway, Clare, Kerry, Cork, Tipperary and Wexford, using billets and transport provided by local Army units, as well as his bicycle, as Fianna organisers before him had done. He avoided areas, such as Waterford, where the I.R.A. was weak or for any reason unable to help. There were strong reasons for his making no attempt to organise in the Six Counties: Fianna was non-existent in Belfast at this time, its illegal status in the North would have hampered an itinerant organiser, and above all the movement was anxious not to jeopardise the campaign for the release of prisoners.

In practice fund-raising, organisation and recruiting went together. The contacts made seeking financial support also developed goodwill and enthusiasm, in some areas resulting in the foundation of sluaite. Thus some of the new branches set up - at Mitchelstown⁹, Cork City¹⁰, Limerick and Galway¹¹ - clearly reflected the itinerary of the national organiser. Ó Cionnaith nevertheless encountered certain problems. Disruption of the adult movement had left Fianna short of senior personnel, resulting in a very young local and national leadership. It was not unknown for a sixteen year old to be in charge of a G.H.Q. department. This had its effect in terms of experience and competence, but equally damaging for an organisation which was at best suspect in the eyes of the Law it made for wildness at a time when the movement needed restraint. He therefore recognised the need to establish a mature organisational structure whenever a slua was founded - in practice this involved the local Army unit taking care of the boys.

Despite these obstacles the Republican leadership considered that he had met with "tremendous success"¹², prompting G.H.Q. to appoint three further full-time organisers during the spring of 1964¹³. With them he completed a collection of £1,200, enabling premises to be rented in Dublin and a new Handbook to be published, the first in forty years. The elation with which its publication was announced¹⁴ indicated the part it was to play in bringing uniformity and financial stability to a small-scale and impoverished organisation.

The appointments allowed Ó Cionnaith to undertake new duties in Dublin in the spring of 1964. At its March meeting the Ard Choiste accepted the resignation of Uinsionn Ó Catháin as Chief

Scout and appointed Ó Cionnaith to the post pending the Ard Fheis¹⁵. The capital was a growth area at this time with new sluaite in North City¹⁶, Cabra, Rathmines and Raheny¹⁷, and over the Twenty-six Counties Fianna now numbered perhaps 400 members¹⁸. Expansion engendered a new optimism and the November Ard Fheis was considered "the most successful held for many years"¹⁹. The delegates formally elected Ó Cionnaith Chief Scout, a post he held however for only five months before being sent to England as the first National Organiser of the newly founded Clann na hEireann in March 1965²⁰.

Just as the '56 Campaign had damaged the adult movement more severely in Belfast than elsewhere, so Fianna suffered most in the city. Indeed from the last years of the campaign until 1965 it had ceased to exist at all²¹. Late in that year a group of some dozen boys approached the I.R.A. Brigade leadership to request its re-formation²². They were all from Republican families and the sons of Army men; all were aged thirteen to fourteen years. In response to their request the Commandant approached A.McM. to organise them. McM. was well experienced for the role, having previously held the post of unit o/c from the end of internment in the 1940s until himself interned in 1957. He held an exploratory meeting at the Dal Hall in Divis Street attended by some thirty boys. From it a slua was founded early in 1966 to serve the housing estates at the top of Falls Road. A second was added later in the year in the Ardoyne²³, and the following year branches were organised in the Lower Falls and the Bombay Street area of Kashmir Road²⁴. Membership was low, averaging perhaps a dozen boys per slua.

McM. considered it desirable that the boys should as far as possible organise themselves and for this purpose he established

Officers' Training classes with drill and semaphore and later weaponry and engineering. He impressed upon the members that the prime role of Belfast Fianna should be to produce officer material for the I.R.A.²⁵. This aim was amply fulfilled for from among the boys gathered at the inaugural meeting would emerge most of the city's Fianna and Army leaders in the years following 1969²⁶.

The Jubilee of the Rising, 1966, did not bring any significant upsurge of recruiting to the Republican movement. Membership had in fact continued to decline after the ceasefire, while the critically declining support reached its nadir about Jubilee year when monthly sales of The United Irishman slumped to 14,000 from nearly ten times that figure a decade before²⁷. Fianna on the other hand considerably extended the progress of the past three years. It marked the anniversary with a major demonstration in Dublin and Belfast, and set up a dozen new sluaite during the summer, from the east coast to Carraroe and from Tipperary to Donegal²⁸. Expansion in the West was such that it was possible to establish a Battalion in Mayo - Galway, with six sluaite and a total membership of ninety²⁹.

From the movement's incomplete files and contemporary Fianna publications it is possible to compile a list of branches in existence in the Twenty-Six Counties at this date. G.H.Q. records name twenty-four³⁰, to which should be added seven of those established during the summer as well as two other Dublin branches and at least one in the Country³¹. Slua membership varied greatly - the units of the Dublin Battalion for instance ranged from ten members in Slua Cathal Brugha, North City, to forty-three in Slua McKee-Ashe in the strong Fianna district of Finglas³². Total membership in the Republic might be conservatively estimated at 600.

In the North the organisation was still largely confined to Belfast with its thirty boys. Despite several attempts it had proved impossible to develop Derry beyond a small group unsupported by the Army³³. In Newry, where the slua had collapsed in 1957 upon the arrest of nearly all senior members, a tenuous continuity had been maintained since 1960 through a number of Army men in the town who held dual membership. A concert organised in 1965 to raise funds for an anniversary monument introduced several new recruits, enabling a slua to be set up again in 1967 when forty boys paraded³⁴.

THE METAMORPHOSIS OF THE REPUBLICAN MOVEMENT IN THE 1960s

Before the end of the Border Campaign in 1962 the Army Executive had already drawn their own conclusions as to the reasons for its failure. Announcing the ceasefire they had admitted that the main factor determining their decision had been the lack of public support for the war³⁵.

Defeat had brought recrimination and new men to the top with fresh ideas. Some of the new leaders - notably the Army's Chief-of-Staff Cathal Goulding, Seán Garland, and Sinn Féin President Tomás MacGiolla³⁶ - believed that the time had come to look again at the movement in an attempt to explain its consistent failure to win popular support. Their questions led them to a fundamental re-appraisal of Republicanism in the years that followed.

A complete account of their analysis and the radical changes that it prompted would be beyond the scope of this study, which confines itself to defining those elements that later directly affected the movement's youth wing.

The leadership believed that "the Irish Republican Army had become remote from the people. The people respected the stand

which they were taking and indeed they cheered from the sidelines. But they were spectators and not participants in the Republican struggle". Such an "elitist force, divorced from the struggles of the people, but calling on the people to support it, could never win"³⁷. This remoteness was seen to derive from "major weaknesses" in the Army, and in particular from its lack of a "solid political base among the people" and of a "clear-cut ideology which could define to the people what the struggle was all about"³⁸. Without the latter it had failed to recognise the real enemy, attacking the British military occupation of the Six Counties instead of the political, economic and cultural roots of British imperialism and native collaboration both North and South³⁹. From now on, the Border - which had dominated the minds of Republicans for forty years - should not be considered the fundamental issue⁴⁰. The central objective should be "the re-conquest of Ireland, not simply to place an Irish government in political control of the geographical entity of Ireland but to place the mass of the people in actual control of the wealth and resources of the Irish nation and to give them a cultural identity"⁴¹ - phrases which consciously echoed the socialist Republicanism of Lalor, Connolly, The Sovereign People of Pearse, and the Democratic Programme of the first Dáil.

It was recognised that mass support among the people was only to be won by giving them leadership in specific and relevant issues, "helping them to fight their immediate struggles for jobs, houses, land and civil liberties", and explaining the connection of these with imperialism⁴². Economic, cultural and political struggle would be supported and defended where necessary by military action⁴³. In short, 'Republicanism' was to take on a new and far wider meaning in terms of its objectives and methods.

From 1963 the task of the radicals was to win majority support among the leadership, take the grass-roots members with them, and so in time change the movement as a whole. To do so would involve a fundamental change of heart for those whose tradition had been intransigence, preservation and 'principle', since it would require at the outset a recognition that the movement was not "sacrosanct" but merely "a weapon or instrument" which if ineffective "must be ruthlessly scrapped and a new weapon forged to do the job"⁴⁴.

With the aim of raising the political awareness of members education courses were established in 1965⁴⁵. The new concepts were promoted through private and public statements, and in particular at the annual orations in Bodentown which traditionally were used to reflect current thinking and point the way forward. The old attitudes nevertheless continued to predominate for several years, most members neither contemplating change nor conscious of the need for regular political work as opposed to occasional parades. By 1967, with the movement bankrupt and in some areas virtually extinct⁴⁶, it was recognised that a new commitment to work was now imperative as a matter of very survival⁴⁷. Goulding chose the Bodentown commemoration that year to stress the need for radical change⁴⁸, and his speech marked a turning point. The local units began increasingly to undertake political action. Through their work in Tenants' Associations, Housing Action Groups and Citizens' Advice Bureaux existing members became politicised and a new type of recruit was attracted to the movement untouched by the former attitudes⁴⁹.

The new direction involved a tactical realism notably lacking in the past. Strategy had previously been determined more by a sense of moral obligation to earlier generations than by the question

of what was politically opportune, with the resultant military disasters justified in terms of Pearse's concept of victory in defeat - "We seem to have lost. We have not lost. To refuse to fight would have been to lose, to fight is to win"⁵⁰. In fact, as the leadership saw it, the movement had never given a thought to winning a war, but only to starting one⁵¹. If in future it was to avoid "vainglorious failure in another lost cause, fit only for romantic balladeers", they agreed, its tactics would need to be founded not only on Republican principles but also on a realistic analysis of the condition of the country and the people⁵². So the movement took on a new flexibility as the distinction came to be drawn between the small corpus of immutable principles and tactics which had been elevated into principles. The latter, if judged to be self-defeating, would be jettisoned.

A prime case in point was the principle of parliamentary abstention. An internal document presented at the Army Convention of 1964 first recommended abandoning the abstention rule⁵³, and the change was finally ratified at the 1969 Convention. Recognising the de facto existence of the British and Irish parliaments, though emphatically denying their de jure authority, the intention of the movement was to contest elections and thus subvert them from within, rather than condemn them impotently from without⁵⁹.

The new realism meant for Republicans a shift of attention away from Pearse's 'spiritual nation' to Connolly's 'exigencies of the moment'⁵⁵. It implied also the attempt to place their own movement objectively in its historical context, to replace myth with history and the old simplistic separation into good and evil by an analysis of cause and circumstance. Hitherto it would have been inconceivable, for instance, to suggest as Tomás Mac Giolla did at

Bodenstown in 1969 that - apart from exceptional individuals such as Mellows - the leadership of the opposing sides in the Civil War had held the same basic ideology⁵⁶.

Lastly, the new direction of the movement implied the subordination of its military to its political role. Traditionally its 'political wing' had been little more than a support group for the Army, providing publicity, finance and sanctuary, but now the roles would be reversed. Physical force would still be an essential element of revolution⁵⁷, but in future the I.R.A. would be used only in defence of political gains, or for offence only if supported by the great majority of the people. In short, it would be at the disposal of the political movement. Volunteers would be expected to carry out regular political work and could no longer remain "elite" military men. As Garland pointed out, "this changed drastically the movement's traditional line of tactics. There were no longer two different types of Republicans, physical force men and politicians"⁵⁸.

The reversal of the priority of military and political roles was matched by a reversal of the old primacy of Army over party. Since the coming together of Sinn Féin and the I.R.A. in 1948 the former had remained in theory an autonomous party under the authority of its own Ard Fheis and Ard Chomhairle⁵⁹. But in practice the Army Council had frequently made decisions binding on the whole movement without referring to the political wing, and had even vetted the election of the Ard Chomhairle itself. But with the gradual politicisation of the movement the need was felt in the local party cumainn for genuine decision-making authority, and the confidence now existed to demand it. (The demand in any case coincided with the wishes of the Army leaders themselves.) The standing of the Sinn Féin Ard

Chomhairle within the movement rose following discussions in 1964, and again in 1966 when the I.R.A. abandoned the practice of selecting its members. Finally, in the same year the Army Council handed over supreme authority to the party leadership. The authority structure of the movement now accurately reflected the subordination of its military to its political role. The term 'the leadership of the movement', traditionally a euphemism for the Army Council, came in time to be used by Republicans in reference to the Ard Chomhairle of Sinn Féin.

FIANNA'S FAILURE TO MATCH THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE MOVEMENT

From 1966 Fianna's leadership followed the parent movement in beginning a reappraisal of their own organisation. In that year they held discussions with the adult leadership on the question of Fianna's development, and it was agreed that change towards a more political role would be necessary sooner or later⁶⁰. The matter was not explored further at the time, but the general direction was clear.

The traditional staple slua activities of scouting, drill and occasional parades would become less important than regular political work. The educational programme would be revised with an emphasis upon political, social and economic training, particularly for senior members. Central, ideological control by Sinn Féin would in time replace the traditional local control by the I.R.A. based on the standing of the Army and its local commandants.

In the event, Fianna's development in the 1960s failed to match that of the adult movement. The Scouts, it is true, took part in a number of political actions undertaken by Sinn Féin and the I.R.A. in the South, including demonstrations against a Springboks' rugby tour⁶¹ and a campaign for the public ownership of the Powerscourt

estate⁶². In 1968 they played a part in the demonstration of the Dublin Housing Action Committee at the city's annual St. Patrick's Day parade; on the decision of the Committee, which was dominated by Sinn Féin, the Fianna contingent marching in the parade was chosen to make the protest, but the fact that the incident prompted a fierce dispute between the Scouts and the party indicates Fianna's failure to accept a political role at this date⁶³.

Members' education at slua level was based on the Fianna Handbook, published at great expense in 1964 and unlikely to be revised. In a sense the Handbook had been produced several years too early: it included no political content whatever and in subject and style perpetuated the romantic nationalism of the 1950s⁶⁴. The decision of G.H.Q. to include Casement's 1914 article on chivalry in it, and the dispute with the adult movement that this provoked⁶⁵, exemplify the different stages of political development of the two organisations at the time. Later attempts by Fianna's leadership to supplement the programme with socialist-Republican material probably had little effect upon the grass-roots members⁶⁶, and by the end of the decade they were obliged to concede that the organisation "had no educational policy on the political side and was lagging behind other branches of the movement in these matters"⁶⁷.

Several factors may be identified to explain Fianna's failure to develop politically during the 1960s. In the first place, it lacked any political tradition. Historically, its whole self-concept was military. Its boys had always been taught the physical force tradition, taught their role in rote-learned military slogans⁶⁸. Secondly, it lacked the necessary organisational machinery. Unlike the adult movement it had no 'political wing' through which to express political development in action. Most important, however, it lacked guidance and encouragement from the parent movement, whose

local and national leaders, with problems and pressures of their own, "simply never got round to Fianna" and remained largely uninterested in and unaware of its existence⁶⁹.

FIANNA FOR GIRLS

During 1968 the question of expanding Fianna to include sluaite for girls became a matter for debate. At the Ard Fheis in October an attempt was made to change the constitution so as to "re-form" the Girl Scouts, but after discussion an amendment was carried "that the matter be left to the incoming Ard Choiste and Ard Oifig"⁷⁰. During the following month some members of the executive held an inconclusive exploratory meeting on the subject with leaders of existing Republican organisations for girls⁷¹, shortly after which the movement in Dundalk founded a girls' slua on their own initiative and without permission⁷². The branch was named after George Plunkett, with Patricia Brown its first o/c. The Ard Choiste was thus presented with a fait accompli - and the new slua's minute book as evidence - at its next meeting and reluctantly agreed to recognise the existence of Fianna for girls in Dundalk meantime. A second meeting of interested parties was arranged for January at the Kevin Barry Hall, Parnell Square, before which however a second girls' branch, Slua Paul Smith, had been set up in Newry. The meeting was attended by the o/cs of both sluaite as well as representatives of Cumann na gCailíni, Cailíni na hÉireann and Clann na nGael. The last-named body, which had been independent of the Republican movement for forty years, chose to retain its independence. The other representatives agreed to support the foundation of Fianna Girl Scouts on the basis of equal status with the boys and the continued existence of their own organisations. The meeting, which took place on 5 January 1969⁷³, marks the establishment of the girls' organisation.

It is possible that girls were admitted into Fianna in Belfast even earlier than in Dundalk, though exact dates cannot be determined. Although no internal documents are extant due to the normal practice of destroying written evidence in the Six Counties organisation, interview evidence suggests a date at least as early as 1968⁷⁴. When K.O'K. undertook supervision of the city's Republican groups for girls in that year she found some twenty members of Cumann na gCailíni in the Lower Falls and Clonard areas, and in addition perhaps two dozen girls in the Lower and Upper Falls already organised into two Fianna sluaite "under the control of Belfast H.Q.". Although the Cailíni were a separate organisation under the aegis of Cumann na mBan, the reality in Belfast was that they were preparing for precisely the same adult military roles as the Fianna girls. It was therefore more appropriate to combine the two bodies into a single structure and then to re-divide the girls on the basis of age. By virtue of her position in Cumann na mBan K.O'K. had the authority to do this. She therefore re-established the Cailíni for the younger girls and Fianna for the thirteen to sixteen year olds. From early in 1969 she had established the beginnings of a Command Staff, a task completed during the year as sluaite were formed in most Republican areas of the city in the wake of the Troubles. From the outset the girls and boys worked closely together at both slua and command levels, in the latter case meeting monthly. It was a comradeship that would grow even closer as the military situation developed.

Belfast and Dublin were the only centres to maintain sluaite to the end of the year. The Dundalk branch disbanded late in August⁷⁵ because of the new military situation in the Border town: the Belfast Pogroms of 14-15 August had brought scores of refugees to Dundalk

from the North, and field hospitals and peace-keeping units from the South⁷⁶. The capital on the other hand enjoyed a steady development. Fifty girls had taken the declaration in March, of whom forty marched in the St. Patrick's Day parade⁷⁷. By the time of the summer camps four sluaite had been formed in the city, and The United Irishman claimed an attendance of over 100 girls at what was the largest Bodenstown assembly since the 1930s⁷⁸. The four branches were granted Battalion status in September⁷⁹ and early in the same month the Ard Choiste ratified a Girl Scout Committee as "the governing body of Na Fianna Girl Scouts . . . its terms of reference to be the complete control and organisation of Na Fianna Girl Scouts"⁸⁰. Liaison between the committee and the overall leadership was strengthened at the September Ard Fheis by the election onto the Ard Choiste of Hanna O'Farrell, Quartermaster of the Dublin Girls' Battalion⁸¹. At the same meeting the resolution was formally carried, post factum, to establish a girls' branch of the organisation⁸², thus securing the constitutional position. In practice however the development of girls' sluaite continued to meet obstruction from several of the Dublin leadership during the year⁸³, and an unsuccessful attempt was made at the 1970 Ard Fheis to reverse the constitutional position established in 1969⁸⁴.

The foundation of Fianna for girls must be viewed in relation to contemporary developments in the Republican movement and the Irish political context. It is true that the first girls' sluaite preceded the outbreak of war in the North. But the Troubles created mass recruitment of Republican youth, especially in Belfast, with which the existing girls' organisation, Cumann na gCailíni, was inadequate to cope. Cailíni was restricted in scope and numbers, not exceeding 100 members throughout the Thirty-two Counties even after

the autumn of 1969, and existing only in the capital, Cork, Limerick, Newry and Belfast⁸⁵. It was under the local authority of Cumann na mBan, the women's Army, each of whose branches was obliged by constitution to organise and support a girls' unit. All communication was conducted at local level, the Cailíni o/c being responsible to her opposite number in the adult unit. Cailíni was therefore in no sense a national organisation: it had no Constitution, no G.H.Q., no Ard Fheis, no destiny of its own. Clearly its potential for expansion was limited. It enjoyed a status inferior to Fianna's akin to that of Cumann na mBan compared to the Army. Furthermore, the position of Cumann na mBan itself was latterly in doubt and cogent practical and ideological reasons were being put forward for disbanding it - at a personal level it had long been a source of discord with the I.R.A.⁸⁶, while at the level of ideology the Republican leadership now favoured the Marxist concept of an integrated guerilla army of men and women. For several reasons therefore the future of girls in Cailíni appeared in jeopardy, and their future in Fianna secure.

EXPANSION IN THE NORTH FROM 1969

It is not possible to state with certainty the strength of Fianna between 1968 and 1970 and thus to gauge the effect on recruitment of the outbreak of the Troubles in 1969. Interviewees from the leadership of the period have remarked on the frequently short life of sluaite and the not unknown practice of setting up paper sluaite prior to Ard Fheiseanna for voting purposes, and have therefore not been able to offer an exact statement of numbers and locations in every case⁸⁷. Moreover, written records are non-existent for the Six Counties and incomplete for the South. However, it has been possible to compile an approximate list of branches in the

Twenty-six Counties from the monthly returns of o/cs, and a more exact profile of the North from the recollections of the Belfast leadership.

In 1968 there were some twenty sluaite in the Republic with a total membership of perhaps 350. Of these, three were in Cork where the organisation was divided into two areas corresponding with the city's natural geographical division. Boys from the north side enrolled in Slua Patrick Hanley. Those from the south drilled at the Thomas Ashe Hall where the stability and strength of Slua MacCurtain/MacSwiney reflected the long tradition of Fianna in the city. A second and by now ailing branch shared the Scouts' room upstairs, being maintained merely to preserve Battalion status for the city organisation. Its membership had declined to 3 by 1969 when it was absorbed into the older slua and the city's Battalion structure dissolved by G.H.Q.⁸⁸. Of the six branches in the Dublin area one was founded during 1968 and appears to have enjoyed a brief existence, but at least four - Sluaite Mellows, Colbert and Cathal Brugha and in particular Slua McKee/Ashe at Finglas - were permanent organisations. Outwith the two cities the branch at Portarlinton was newly established that summer⁸⁹ and only those at Letterkenny and Dundalk could be considered permanent⁹⁰. In the North sluaite now existed at Newry, Lurgan and Belfast⁹¹. The four city branches had expanded moderately to an aggregate membership of close on fifty and were able to muster half that number for a joint camp in Leitrim in the autumn. From that successful camp a fifth slua was formed in the New Queen Street area early in 1969⁹². The girls still had their two sluaite in the Upper and Lower Falls.

During 1969 reports in the Republican press gave the impression of consistent expansion throughout the Thirty-two Counties. The June issue of The United Irishman noted that Fianna's growth in numbers

"up and down the country" had brought an urgent need for more adult leaders. The number of boys and girls assembled for Bodenstown and the summer and Whit camps was the highest for years⁹³, as was the attendance of slua delegates at the Ard Fheis in November⁹⁴. In reality, however, expansion was almost entirely confined to the North and to Belfast in particular.

Interview data suggests that by the end of the year the Belfast Battalion comprised some fifteen boys' sluaite with a total membership of about 450⁹⁵. They covered almost every Republican district of the city - Unity Flats, Divis Flats, Lower Falls, Clonard, Beechmount, Whiterock and Ballymurphy, Turf Lodge, Andersonstown and Lenadoon in the West, and New Lodge Road, Old Park, Ardoyne and Ormeau Road elsewhere. Branches were also established in Cliftonville and Newington, and later in Glengormley and Bawnmore. In the two last named areas the usual process of I.R.A. activity preparing the ground for the formation of a Fianna unit was reversed⁹⁶. At the same time ten sluaite were established for girls in West Belfast and three others in the Antrim Road, Short Strand and the Markets, with a maximum Battalion strength somewhat short of 200⁹⁷. Overall, therefore, the organisation expanded at least eight-fold in the city as a direct effect of the Troubles.

On the other hand growth elsewhere appears to have been slight. By mid-1970 the Dublin boys' Battalion comprised six sluaite with only 57 registered members all told, though it is certain that a greater number were parading⁹⁸. The girls' Battalion numbered about 140 paid-up members in four branches⁹⁹, one of which was disbanded in the summer and its members absorbed into the other three¹⁰⁰. The traditional high turnover of members and sluaite persisted in the country towns - with the setting up of branches in Youghal and

Tipperary¹⁰¹ and their collapse in Ennis and Thurles¹⁰² - with however a general decline in numbers such that by autumn 1970 membership was said to be "practically non-existent in the country areas"¹⁰³. Total membership in the South was probably no greater in 1970 than it had been two years previously.

Over the Thirty-two Counties, therefore, Fianna emerged within a year of the outbreak of the Troubles a very differently balanced organisation from that of 1968. It was now concentrated in the larger urban areas and in Belfast particularly, where it now far outweighed the rest of the country in both numbers and political significance.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Bell, J. Bowyer The Secret Army (London, 1970; London, 1972 ed.), p.398.
2. Ibid., p.400.
3. A.McM. interview.
4. Liam McMillen, quoted in Sweetman, R. On Our Knees (London, 1972), p.188.
5. Seán Ó Cionnaith interview.
6. Ibid. The present account based on this source.
7. Fianna, spring 1963. See also The United Irishman, October 1962 and March 1964. The subscription was 10s. Od. or \$1 50 p.a.
8. Fianna, autumn 1963. 'Other organisations' is of course a euphemism for the I.R.A.
9. The United Irishman, March 1964.
10. The United Irishman, May 1964.
11. The United Irishman, December 1964.
12. The United Irishman, January 1964.
13. Fianna, 1964 (no month). The organisers were Míceál Bairead (Mayo), Seán Mulligan (Dublin) and Míceál Ó Rinn (Cork).
14. The United Irishman, July 1964. "We've done it at last! The most talked-about book for years . . . ". It sold at 4s. Od.
15. The United Irishman, May 1964; report of Ard Choiste meeting of 21 March.
16. The United Irishman, March 1964.
17. The United Irishman, December 1964.
18. Seán Ó Cionnaith interview.
19. The United Irishman, December 1964.
20. Seán Ó Cionnaith interview. Clann na hEireann was founded as the political support group for the Republican movement in Britain, the name being chosen in preference to 'Sinn Féin' to avoid possible legal confrontation.
21. A. McM. interview.
22. Ibid. The present account of the re-establishment of Belfast Fianna is based on this source except where otherwise stated.

23. Slua Pearse covered Ballymurphy, Turf Lodge and Andersonstown. Slua McCahy was based in the Ardoyne.
24. P.C. interview.
25. Ibid.
26. A. McM. interview.
27. Seán Garland interview. He suggested 130,000 copies for 1957 and 14,000 for 1966-7. No precise figures are extant for the period. Bell, J. Bowyer Secret Army, p.366, has 120,000 for 1957; Insight, Ulster (Harmondsworth, 1972), p.26 has "close on 100,000".
28. New sluaite at Carraroe, Spiddal and the Aran Islands (Fianna, June 1966); at Sixmilebridge, Athenry, Swinford and Ennis (Fianna, July 1966); at Bray, Letterkenny, Donnycarney, Saggart and Thurles (Fianna, August 1966). Castlebar slua founded July 1966 (Guth na bhFiann, Galway, Aug-Sept. 1966).
29. Guth na bhFiann, Aug-Sept. 1966. Sluaite at Carraroe, Swinford, Galway city, Athenry, Ennis and the Aran Isles. Battalion o/c was Danny Burke.
30. G.H.Q. Record Book, Gardiner Place Files, Sinn Féin the Workers' Party. The following entries refer to 1966:
 Dublin: Dick McKee (Finglas), Con Colbert (Islandbridge), Liam Mellows (Drimnagh), Cathal Brugha (North City).
 Cork: MacCurtain-MacSwiney (City), Patrick Hanley (City), Mary MacSwiney (Midleton), Spangle Hill.
 Kerry: Cathal Ó Ceirinn (Tralee), Muiris Ó Neill (Cahirciveen), Killarney.
 Wexford: Pádraic Pearse (Wexford); Enniscorthy, Roscrea.
 Oliver Craven (Dundalk), Séamas Ó Ciarán (Drogheda), Seán MacGloinne (Limerick), Seán Treacy (Cashel), Galway, Fergal Ó Hanlon (Bray), Ennis, Swinford, Thurles, Letterkenny.
31. Slua at Newcastle, Co. Galway; Dublin sluaite at Crumlin, Finglas, Drumcondra, Shankhill, Fairview and College Road (data from miscellaneous o/cs' correspondence to G.H.Q., Gardiner Place Files, Sinn Féin the Workers' Party).
32. Slua monthly reports, Gardiner Place files.
33. Letter A.McM. to the author, 31/1/1978.
34. S.F. interview.
35. The United Irishman, March 1962, ceasefire announcement.
36. Seán Garland interview. Garland referred particularly to Goulding and Mac Giolla as leaders of the re-appraisal; it is generally recognised in the movement, and by its opponents, that Garland himself was equally important in the process.

37. The I.R.A. Speaks in the 70s, Repsol (Dublin, 1970), pp. 1 and 11. This booklet was an expansion of a major statement 'The I.R.A. in the 70s' printed in The United Irishman, January 1970, issued by the Irish Republican Publicity Bureau over the usual Army pseudonym of J. J. McGarrity.
38. Ibid., p.2.
39. Ibid., pp.2 f.
40. Cathal Goulding Bodenstown oration 1967, The United Irishman, July 1967. The sources for other Bodenstown orations cited in the text are The United Irishman issues for July of the years concerned.
41. The I.R.A. Speaks, p.3.
42. Education Manual, I.R.A. internal document no. III, 1967; p.22. For a later summary, cf. Seán Garland 'Building Revolution', The United Irishman, May 1971.
43. The I.R.A. Speaks, pp.3-10.
44. Seán Garland, Bodenstown oration, 1968.
45. An Elementary Course in Political Education, no. 1; I.R.A. internal document, 1965. Educational Manual, vols. II and III, 1967. Topics included Political terms, Tactical objectives, Tactical methods, Support, pressure and channels of influence.
46. Cf. Goulding's statement that a meeting of the local leadership throughout Ireland held in August 1967 discovered that "we had no movement"; Ulster, Sunday Times Insight team (Harmondsworth, 1972), p.26.
47. Seán Garland interview.
48. Cathal Goulding, Bodenstown oration, 1967.
49. Seán Garland interview.
50. Pádraic Pearse, Speech from the Dock, Easter 1916.
51. Cathal Goulding, quoted in Sweetman, R. On Our Knees, p.141.
52. Seán Garland, Bodenstown oration, 1972.
53. Sweetman, R. On Our Knees, p.142.
54. The I.R.A. Speaks, pp.8 f.
55. Cf., Pearse, P. The Spiritual Nation, 1915; also Ghosts, 1915, Pearse, P. Political Writings and Speeches (Dublin, 1952), p.224 - "(some) have conceived of nationality as a material thing, whereas it is a spiritual thing . . . etc.". On the other hand, Connolly in Shan Van Vocht, January 1897, "(the national movement) must show itself capable of rising to the exigencies of the moment".

56. Tomás Mac Giolla, Bodinstown oration, 1969.
57. The point made in successive Bodinstown orations from 1966; and cf., Garland, S. 'Building Revolution', The United Irishman, May 1971.
58. Seán Garland, Bodinstown oration, 1968. The converse - that all political activists must join the Army - was not implied.
59. The whole of the present account from Tomás Mac Giolla interview.
60. Liam Mac an Ultaigh interview.
61. Nuacht, December 1969.
62. Nuacht, September 1969.
63. The present account based on Seán Ó Cionnaith interview.
64. For instance, the emphasis on triune fitness. Stylistically - the use of adjective clusters ("the long sombre years of oppression"), of personification ("when our land lies bleeding . . . "), of the embrasive singular ("the strong arm of the invader"), and the frequent use of "Alas!" are typical.
65. Míceál Bairead interview.
66. Donnchadha Ó Séaghdha interview.
67. Policy Statement, Fianna G.H.Q., November 1970, Gardiner Place files.
68. An example of such slogans was "The generous high bred youth of Ireland will never fail to blaze forth in the red rage of war to win its country's freedom".
69. Seán Garland interview, Liam Mac an Ultaigh interview.
70. Ard Fheis Clár, 28-9/10/1968, annotated.
71. S.F. interview. Representatives of the Ard Choiste met Hanna O'Farrell of Cumann na gCailíni and Joan Shannon of Cumann na gCailíni na hÉireann. All details of the girls' Fianna from this source except where stated.
72. Ibid. The present account based on this source.
73. The United Irishman, February 1969; Nuacht, March 1969.
74. K.O'K. interview.
75. Slua monthly reports, September 1969, Gardiner Place files.
76. For a general account of Border activity at this time see Deutsch, R. and Magowan, V. Northern Ireland 1968-73 (Belfast, 1973), vol. I, pp.39 f.
77. The United Irishman, March 1969.

78. The United Irishman, July 1969.
79. Nuacht, October 1969.
80. Nuacht, September 1969.
81. The United Irishman, December 1969.
82. Fianna, October 1969, cyclostyled. The girls' representatives in fact enjoyed voting rights throughout the A.G.M.
83. S.F. interview.
84. Ard Fheis Clár, 1970, resolution no. 60.
85. May Mac Giolla interview. Mrs. Mac Giolla was at the time o/c Dublin. The present account of Cailíni based on this source.
86. Cathal Goulding interview.
87. Lám Mac an Ultaigh interview, Donnchadha Ó Séaghdha interview.
88. Letter Ard Thaoiseach to Battalion o/c, 19/3/1969, Gardiner Place files.
89. Fianna, vol. 1, no. 2, 1968.
90. Slua monthly reports, Gardiner Place files.
Other branches in existence in 1968 were Slua Mellows (Galway city), Slua Brendan Behan (Carraroe), Slua Ó Mordha (Thurles), Slua Jackie Griffith (Ringsend). Nuacht, March 1968, reported branches in Lisdoonvarna, Limerick, Killarney and Wexford. A branch was formed in Drumshambo in the summer (Nuacht, August 1968) and at Drogheda in the autumn (Nuacht, November 1968).
91. S.F. interview.
92. P.C. interview.
93. The United Irishman, July 1969.
94. The United Irishman, December 1969.
95. P.C. interview.
96. A.McM. and D.R. interviews.
97. K.O'K. interview.
98. Dublin Battalion monthly reports, May 1970, Gardiner Place files. Slua Tomás Aghas, Cathal Brugha, Dick McKee, Con Colbert, Liam Mellows and Constance Markievicz.
The apparent lowering of rolls is due to the stricter application of registration regulations from summer 1969 (Nuacht, July 1969).
99. Fianna Girl Scouts, Dublin Battalion Report, February 1970 - 139 members, 7 o/cs, Sluaite: Anne Devlin, Nurse O'Farrell, Countess Markievicz, James Fitzharris.

100. Report, May 1970.
101. Fianna, July 1969.
102. Fianna, May 1969.
103. Nuacht, September 1970.

Chapter 10. DIVISION, DEVELOPMENT, DECLINE (1969-1973)

THE OFFICIAL-PROVISIONAL SPLIT

By 1969 the movement had progressed some way towards realising its objectives, but in doing so had disenchanted some traditionalist members who viewed the changes as an alien deviation and a betrayal of the martyrs who had not died "for any 'ism' but Republicanism"¹. Some of those who held this view had remained despite their reservations; others had left the movement but - in many cases - returned with the outbreak of the Troubles in 1969. The two groups together would form the nucleus of the future Provisional organisation.

After months of growing dissent the movement finally split following the I.R.A.'s convention in December, when a group withdrew their support of the leadership and set up a Provisional Army Council. The military secession was followed by a split in Sinn Féin at the party's Ard Fheis in January 1970².

The Provisionals particularly rejected the movement's de facto recognition of parliaments and what they called its "extreme socialism leading to totalitarian dictatorship"³. They immediately returned to the traditional nationalist objectives, re-emphasising military methods and the authority of the Army⁴. Claiming that they themselves stood firm "on the rock of the Republic" they castigated the Official movement as "Free State Party number four", that is, as the latest of those who had sold out the Republican principle for political advantage⁵.

1970 - A YEAR OF NEUTRALITY

Throughout 1970 Fianna maintained a position of neutrality towards the opposing camps. For several months it still seemed possible

that the rift might be healed, and even after it became clear that this would not be the case the policy of Fianna's leadership was to "keep out of what was considered an Army matter"⁶. For the G.H.Q. staff, in addition, there was a second, tactical, motive for preserving neutrality: the Chief Scout Lám Mac an Ultaigh had held the post since 1965, and like all Chief Scouts had originally been nominated and elected in consultation with the I.R.A. as acceptable to the Army leadership⁷. He was a Goulding man, a Socialist Republican, and had at once taken the Official side after the split. His most recent G.H.Q. staff had been selected as favouring the new path, and could also be relied upon to support the Official Republican movement. On the other hand only three members of the Ard Choiste were reliably of the same persuasion, and these included the Chairman with a casting vote only and the Chief Scout himself who only enjoyed the rights of observer. In effect the executive comprised one Official vote, four Provisional, and four neutral or neutralised. Mac an Ultaigh's tactic therefore was to avoid confrontations at executive meetings while attempting to win over the neutrals and replace opponents. Within the organisation as a whole he used G.H.Q. statements to maintain neutrality and at the same time to create pretexts for expulsion.

The focal points of controversy at this time which were most likely to put a strain upon Fianna's neutrality were the sale of rival papers and attendance at rival commemorations. On the first the leadership ruled that "the selling of either The United Irishman or An Phoblacht in Fianna uniform was completely out of line with the non-committal attitude of Na Fianna as regards the split in the movement"⁸. The second was more serious in that it involved the leadership also. The problem arose for the first time at Easter, the in-

struction of the Ard Choiste being that where there was only one commemoration in an area Fianna should take part in it⁹. The instruction frankly hedged the problem in an attempt to hold the membership in the face of reports of splinter groups formed or about to be formed¹⁰. In response to the same reports G.H.Q. addressed a circular to all slua o/cs in June reminding them of Fianna's position¹¹. The document pointed out that immediately after the split both I.R.A. Chiefs-of-Staff had agreed to the organisation's neutral stand, and that accordingly Headquarters had ordered sluaite to adopt a position of neutrality but permitted freedom of choice to individual members, a decision endorsed in March by the Ard Choiste. It warned against forming independent groups which would fragment an organisation already critically small¹². The circular was timed to coincide with the annual Bodenstown commemoration, for which the executive also issued specific instructions: the decision as to which parade to attend should rest with the local sluaite or Battalion staffs, individual members should retain the right to choose their allegiance, and G.H.Q. should attend both parades¹³.

At Easter the Provisionals had excluded several of the Fianna leadership from their parade and a confrontation was anticipated at Bodenstown. On the day several Fianna officers, including Seán McCabe of Portarlinton and Pat Varian of Cork - both members of the Ard Choiste - refused to march in the Fianna contingent and chose to take their place as individuals in the Provisional party¹⁴. They were ordered to join the Fianna ranks by the Chief Scout, who had decided that this was the opportunity for gaining a tactical advantage. His intention was to use the incident to secure their temporary suspension pending appeal in the knowledge that, constitutionally, disqualified members were unable to take an active part in

the organisation and that active participation was a condition of membership of the Ard Choiste. On this ground he hoped to gain their expulsion from the executive. He succeeded in his aim at the June meeting, though only on the Chairman's casting vote. In doing so he sacrificed the sluaite at Portarlinton and Cork.

The leadership of the Provisional movement were aware of the purpose behind the expulsions and of the threat to real neutrality that they posed. In September Seán Mac Stiofáin contacted the Fianna Ard Choiste, accepting the continued neutrality of the organisation on condition of four of the leadership being expelled¹⁵. Since one of the four was Mac an Ultaigh it appeared likely that Fianna would split as the Army had done should he be re-elected Chief Scout at the October Ard Fheis. It was a critical time. Two of the executive even took the precaution of going armed to the Ard Fheis since a rumour was about that Provisional members planned to take the meeting over at gunpoint¹⁶. Twenty minutes before the elections Mac an Ultaigh made a private arrangement with S.F. that the latter would stand for the office of Chief Scout and he himself withdraw his nomination, too late (it was hoped) for opponents to use the situation to advantage¹⁷. S.F. was a member of the Official movement, but as a Newry man was less well known and likely to be more acceptable than Mac an Ultaigh who had personal as well as political enemies among the Dublin delegates¹⁸.

In the election the vote of the Belfast delegates proved decisive. There is evidence that their unanimous vote for S.F. was the result of strong pressure and the threat of disciplinary action by their Battalion o/c in what should not have been a Battalion matter¹⁹. S.F. was elected in preference to his Provisional opponent, to become only the second Chief Scout from outwith the capital in Fianna's

history. His G.H.Q. staff, however, were all Dubliners and Dublin-based²⁰, and enjoyed greater power because of it. Mac an Ultaigh in particular, in the strategic office of Director of Training and Organisation and in close communication with the Official Army leadership, now had as much influence as before and more freedom of action. Most important, a split had been averted, formal neutrality preserved, and - with only one Provisional now on the Ard Choiste - the hand of the Officials strengthened²¹.

For Provisional members, in fact, the Ard Fheis was a turning point. They recognised that neutrality was now an empty formula and that their own future must inevitably lie not in the existing body but in an organisation of their own making.

ESTABLISHING PROVISIONAL FIANNA

As early as the spring of 1970 many had realised that because of the political complexion of the G.H.Q. staff Fianna's neutrality would not be to their advantage in the long term. They had therefore set about developing their own local groups and where possible withdrawing existing sluaite from the national organisation.

Four Dublin officers decided in April to break with G.H.Q. and set up new sluaite in the city²². They took a number of members with them, including almost all the boys of Slua Cathal Brugha, but no branch seceded entirely. In the following month three officers of the girls' Battalion followed the example of the men²³. Because slua officers in the north side of the city in most cases supported the Official movement all the new sluaite were based South of the Liffey.

During the summer branches under Provisional leadership were also established in Armagh and Dundalk²⁴, and the nucleus of a branch was set up in Newry comprising three ex-members of the existing town slua under the supervision of the Lurgan unit of the Provisional I.R.A.²⁵.

New branches were also organised in Belfast. After the split in the movement Republicans in the city had at first tended to align with one or other side less according to ideology than local loyalty, as a result of which allegiance during 1970 assumed a fairly easily defined geographical form²⁶. Thus, for example, the Lower Falls remained largely Official under the leadership of Liam McMillan and Jim Sullivan whereas Kashmir Road followed local leader Billy McKee of the Provisional Army Council. In the case of Fianna, slua o/cs enjoyed far less personal influence because of their youth and brief tenure of office before transfer to the I.R.A. Members' first loyalty was therefore given to their local Army leader, whose personal standing in the community was often very great. As a result, the pattern of allegiance in the city almost exactly matched that in the senior ranks..

During 1970 the Provisional I.R.A. became the dominant faction in almost all Republican areas of the city. In the second half of the year its numbers rose "dizzily fast"²⁷ to three or four times the manpower of the Officials who were at this time confined mainly to the Lower Falls and Turf Lodge²⁸. In the Provisional strongholds wholesale transfer of members to the newly established sluaite might therefore have been expected. But in fact such was the escalating military situation in Belfast that existing and new sluaite together were barely able to absorb the hundreds of new recruits, and while formal neutrality operated branches under Official leadership recorded very few defections²⁹.

In the city of Cork the Fianna Battalion in fact comprised two sluaite in 1970. Slua MacCurtain/MacSwiney was the older established, but Slua Patrick Hanley was now the larger branch. The dominant figure in the town organisation was Donal Varian, Fianna's representa-

tive for the South of Ireland³⁰ and, with his brother Pat, a member of the national executive. Both had joined the Provisional movement in the spring. In June Donal Varian sought the permission of G.H.Q. for his slua to acknowledge the Provisional movement but to remain within the national organisation; when his request was refused with the threat of expulsion³¹ the Cork Battalion staff agreed to honour the neutrality of Fianna scrupulously³².

But honouring neutrality was made a virtual impossibility for Provisionals after the October Ard Fheis at which their worst fears were confirmed. It appeared now only a matter of time before Fianna would take some step towards formal recognition of the Official movement. They therefore began preparations for an independent national structure. The four boys' sluaite in Dublin were at once brought under a Battalion command with Art Sherwin o/c, the five girls' branches were organised as a city Battalion under Bairbre Ní Láoire, and a combined Battalion staff was appointed³³. Belfast was established as a Battalion early in November³⁴, between which date and the end of the year the alliance of Provisional sluaite around the country openly styled itself 'Fianna Eireann' and undertook a major recruiting drive "with a view to taking over the name"³⁵. By now Cork was the only area under Provisional leadership to remain neutral.

The town Battalion staff had met after the October Ard Fheis and agreed to "give the new Ard Choiste a chance" despite their suspicions of the methods by which it had been elected³⁶. Staff meetings took place at the Thomas Ashe Hall which had been retained by the Official movement, and it is claimed that members were on several occasions intimidated by Official I.R.A. personnel who sought to evict them. They also received visits from G.H.Q. staff aimed at persuading them to give more overt allegiance to Ard Choiste policies. By December they had agreed, after an almost unanimous secret ballot, to

sever their association with Headquarters, but the decision was kept secret and formal neutrality maintained: their motive in this was a desire to retain use of the Thomas Ashe Hall, traditionally considered to be the home of Republicanism in the city³⁷.

The adult Provisional movement had meantime continued to make overtures to the existing national organisation in an eleventh hour attempt to secure its allegiance. As the seceding faction in the split it had particular need of recognition by prestigious organisations as it sought to establish credibility during 1970, and Fianna with its respected and relatively independent tradition within the movement was one such³⁸. Provisional Army Chief Seán Mac Stiofáin had arranged a meeting with Fianna's Chief Scout in November for this purpose at which he attempted to effect replacements on the Ard Choiste and the expulsion of several Official members. He was informed that Fianna as a constitutionally independent organisation owed allegiance to the Republic and not to any individual (even an I.R.A. Chief-of-Staff), and that a Chief Scout had no authority to alter an Ard Fheis decision³⁹. A second approach was made by Leo Martin in January 1971 at the Fergal O'Hanlon memorial parade in Monaghan. The message was now explicit - the Provisionals were "looking for allegiance". The reply was as before⁴⁰.

The position now was that the Provisional movement could not hope to win over the constituted body, and at the same time that they had sluaite in many parts of the country prepared to form a new national organisation. An exploratory meeting was held later in January to which all officers interested in establishing such a body were invited and which Ruairi Ó Brádaigh attended as representative of the senior movement⁴¹. Despite a plea by the Cork Battalion that they should remain and fight within Fianna delegates voted to create a new

organisation and fixed a date at the end of the month for an inaugural Ard Fheis. From the latter meeting, at which Gerry Campbell was elected Chief Scout⁴², may be dated the existence of 'Provisional Fianna' as a national organisation.

Donal Varian, the most respected member of the new body and subsequently its longest serving Chief Scout, still holds the view that the adult Provisional movement were misguided in creating a new organisation when they might yet have infiltrated the existing one⁴³. As a result of their action Provisional Fianna cannot claim to be Fianna Eireann in a constitutional sense and the direct descendant of the 1909 organisation, and this irrespective of the validity of claims to authenticity on the part of the rival adult movements. As such its subsequent history cannot rightly form a part of the present narrative. Nonetheless, as a significant offshoot of Fianna which has in fact outlived its constitutional rival it has been made the subject of Appendix IV.

FIANNA TAKES THE OFFICIAL SIDE

The October Ard Fheis had given Fianna a national leadership almost entirely composed of members of the Official movement. At slua level also all officers were now Officials except for a few politically neutral leaders whose interest in the organisation lay more in its scouting activities than its ideology⁴⁴. The fact that the Provisionals adopted an aggressive recruiting drive after October with the apparent aim of establishing a separate organisation itself prompted Fianna to adopt a more overtly Official position. This was particularly the case after the Edentubber Martyrs' memorial in November at which Fianna sent contingents to both Official and Provisional parades but were refused permission by the Provisionals to carry their banner. "They put us at the back and their own slua boys

up front", recalled the Chief Scout, "but we carried our flag. That pretty well set the seal on things. From that day we were determined to be Official de facto"⁴⁵.

The founding of the Provisional Scouts in January 1971 gave urgency to a reconsideration of Fianna's own political position. An emergency Ard Fheis was therefore called for 7 March and all branches were instructed to debate the question before the meeting. It was clear from the written resolutions received for the agenda that the outcome would lie between continued neutrality and allegiance to the Official movement⁴⁶. During the debate many slua representatives argued for the former course, but the resolution was finally carried by a majority of over thirty "that Fianna Eireann recognise the I.R.A. under the leadership of Cathal Goulding, and Sinn Féin under the leadership of Tomás Mac Giolla, as being the Official Republican movement, and that it respects the view of every member whether they be 'Official' or 'Provisional'"⁴⁷. The wording was decisive enough but was aimed at leaving sufficient room for manoeuvre to retain the greatest possible proportion of the membership. After the vote the defeated minority formally expressed acceptance of the national decision by unanimously supporting the resolution⁴⁸.

The way was now clear for Fianna to develop in unobstructed allegiance to Gardiner Place, with constitutional authority to enforce orthodoxy at slua level. At the end of the year the Ard Choiste tightened its control over individual fiannai, forbidding membership of any political organisation other than the Official Republican movement except by express permission⁴⁹. And at the October Ard Fheis the wording of the Constitution was further amended to bring the aims of the youth organisation into line with those of the parent movement, the definition of objectives being changed from "promote scouting among boys and girls" to read "promote, through scouting and youth

activities, the establishment in Ireland of a Democratic Socialist Republic"⁵⁰.

The most immediate result of the split for Fianna was loss of membership and particularly of local leadership. Almost every edition of Nuacht in the summer of 1970 had reported the resignation of obviously good slua o/cs. The split had also been used as a rationalisation of personal disputes, particularly in Dublin where dissent centred round the family of the boys' Battalion o/c and had originated at a 1969 summer camp⁵¹. It was G.H.Q.'s opinion that the effects of the split "would have been minimised if our membership had been united on other issues. It (was) a matter for great regret and sorrow that the split was used by members to push their own lines. The result had been disastrous . . . We will never know how many good people were lost unnecessarily . . . "⁵².

Losses had occurred at a time when the organisation in the South was already barely above a critical threshold size for existence, while in the North they were masked by the general upsurge in recruiting. Overall, therefore, they aggravated the growing imbalance of the national organisation.

Less measurable but ultimately more destructive was the effect upon internal morale and discipline. During 1970 acts of indiscipline had been committed by members in the name of loyalty and G.H.Q. had been forced to threaten dismissal to anyone attacking rival groups and the houses of Provisional officers⁵³. The problem persisted after the ending of neutrality.

Fianna's leadership recognised with hindsight that the split in the adult movement had inflicted decisive damage upon the youth wing⁵⁴, and pointed to 1971 as the beginning of a deterioration that thereafter gathered momentum so that within two years the organisation all but disintegrated in the Twenty-Six Counties⁵⁵.

FIANNA AND THE NORTHERN MILITARY CAMPAIGN 1969-72⁵⁶

Any explanation of Fianna's part in the hostilities of 1969-72 must take account of the position of the I.R.A. in the North at the time. A report received by the Irish Army Intelligence in Dublin in August 1969⁵⁷, describing the I.R.A. as undermanned, under-equipped and totally without finance, was undoubtedly accurate. It was numerically small; its organisation was incomplete and in some nationalist areas non-existent; it lacked expertise in some departments, notably engineering; it was certainly not in a position to take the fight to the British⁵⁸. In addition, its role was not so much an offensive as a day-to-day reaction to the contingencies of military and political developments partly of its own making but largely outwith its control⁵⁹. Its role was therefore quite different from those of either the 1939 or the 1956 campaigns which it had itself initiated. These factors in turn determined the role of Fianna and in general assured that its role in relation to the I.R.A. would be more important than at any time since the War for Independence. Between 1969 and 1972 indeed Fianna in Belfast has been described by one who held leadership positions in both organisations as "a part and parcel of the I.R.A."⁶⁰.

In the first place it supplied personnel, particularly in the summer of 1969 when the Army and whole communities were struggling to survive. At that time fiannai were reported in the Republican press to be "manning the barricades against machine guns, armoured vehicles and heavily-armed Crown Forces, with sticks, stones and petrol bombs" because of the failure of the I.R.A. in the South to send men and materials⁶¹. Two years later, when the Army was decimated by internment, scores of Fianna boys filled their places⁶².

Secondly, it was necessary for the youth organisation to undertake the I.R.A.'s work completely in several areas such as Bawnmore

and Glengormley where no Army units operated⁶³.

Thirdly, Fianna officers were required to give specialist training to the I.R.A. in the first two years of the campaign. Their own training was more advanced and rigorous than that of the adult army, and had since 1967 included engineering instruction with anti-handling devices, nail and petrol bombs, time bombs and explosives. In 1969 they were almost the only experienced engineers in Belfast⁶⁴. In some areas of the city they continued to hold the major responsibility for explosives until at least 1971, and it was while moving explosive equipment for the Army in the autumn of that year that Rose Currie and Gerard O'Hare blew themselves up⁶⁵.

On the other hand the organisation's part in gun battles was usually slight, being limited by a shortage of weapons. The major gun battle of the early part of the campaign, the Lower Falls Curfew of July 1970, well illustrates its role⁶⁶. The British Army's announcement of a curfew and house-to-house search prompted a decision by the Official I.R.A. to resist and defend the area. It was the heart of the only Official stronghold in Belfast at the time and its penetration would have involved a disastrous loss of men and materials. There were hundreds of Volunteers in the area. Perhaps because of this only one unit of seven Fianna officers was issued with weapons. The task given them, to cover Cullingtree Road and McDonnell Street, proved beyond their fire power and two of the boys had near misses through being dangerously exposed. Others deeper inside the district carried ammunition and organised the preparation of nail and blast bombs. The action exemplifies the generally auxiliary role that Fianna were given in joint operations, particularly those in which detailed pre-planning was not possible⁶⁷.

The main tasks of the boys on these occasions were reconnaissance,

look-out duties, and retrieving and removing materials and equipment, for which their youth made them well suited. Several met their deaths undertaking such tasks. One such was Gerard Gibson, on look-out duty near his home in Lenadoon when killed by a British or Loyalty sniper⁶⁸. Another was Patricia McKay, an I.R.A. officer and slua o/c, shot dead while attempting to remove a rifle from an exposed dump in an area ringed by the British Army⁶⁹. Girl fiannai indeed were even better equipped than the boys for duties as runners and carriers - the latter a traditional duty for girls in Republican Belfast - and as messengers for Volunteers on the run⁷⁰.

The two best known Fianna deaths however, those of Gerald McAuley and David McCafferty, were in fact civilian casualties. Fifteen year old McAuley was a member of Slua Joe McKelvey from the Kashmir Road area which abuts the southern end of the Loyalist streets that run from the Shankhill Road. On the afternoon of 15 August 1969 rioting had broken out between the rival communities during which an Orange mob burned Bombay Street to the ground. Gerald McAuley was in the street with teenage friends helping to extinguish fires and save property when he was shot dead⁷¹. In the evening chaos witnesses were uncertain of the source of fire - it might have been a Loyalist gunman or one of the R.U.C., who - it is accepted - abetted the attack that day and "used firearms with such freedom as to disqualify them from being called a police force"⁷².

David McCafferty, o/c of Slua Pádraic Pearse, Ballymurphy, was killed on 9 July 1972, the day the Provisional I.R.A. called off its ceasefire. During a day marked by scattered exchanges between the Provisionals and the British Army six civilians were shot in the Springhill-Ballymurphy area, including one for whom McCafferty was sent to bring the priest. When Fr. Fitzpatrick ventured into the

open to the body he was himself fatally wounded, and David McCafferty was then shot dead attempting to drag him to safety. At the inquests it was admitted that British soldiers fired the shots. The Ard Choiste later presented the parents of McCafferty with the highest Fianna award⁷³.

In addition to the huge increase in recruits a second effect of the military situation was to increase the proportion of members who graduated to the adult movement. Because of the strongly local and family-centred composition of Republicanism in the North, the proportion of graduates from Fianna to the movement was traditionally high⁷⁴. After 1969 almost all of those who remained any length of time in the youth wing later joined the Republican Clubs. Graduation to the Army, on the other hand, was often delayed since many members preferred to remain in Fianna as seniors or officers - some until their mid-twenties - because of its standing and role in Belfast and its initially superior training. As a result by the early 1970s the average age of membership in the city was notably higher than elsewhere⁷⁵.

A third effect was the prevalence of a particular type of recruit. In analysing motivation for enrolling in Fianna at this time it is possible to distinguish three main factors, which might operate singly or together⁷⁶. The first was a Republican family upbringing, the second, political awareness of the relevance of the aims and tradition of Fianna; the third, the need to defend one's area from attack. In 1969 the third was the most prevalent factor, and the least permanent. It affected all branches of the movement, but - since the young have less inhibitions and responsibilities in the face of risk - its most pronounced effect was upon Fianna.

Mushroom growth also brought a severe strain upon discipline, for which reason most senior officers "went full-time", being anyway

unemployed or unable to reach their places of work⁷⁷. Fianna was most fortunate in the calibre of its leaders at this time and their ability to control any tendencies to indiscipline brought about by the war conditions in the city. In the New Year of 1972, however, almost the entire Belfast Command Staff and shadow leadership were arrested and interned. For several months the youth organisation appeared in danger of degenerating into gangsterism, a slide only halted by the intervention of local Army units and by an excellent replacement for the post of Brigade o/c⁷⁸.

Finally, the day-to-day military demands seriously dislocated educational and cultural activities, precisely as they had after 1919. Hikes and camps were now an impossibility for an organisation in which members on the run were counted in hundreds and almost all other seniors were under surveillance⁷⁹. Sluaite nevertheless made conscious attempts to tackle the task of politicisation of members that had barely begun before the split and for which the way was now clear⁸⁰.

THE POLITICISATION OF FIANNA

The new emphasis became evident immediately after the abandonment of neutrality: within a month the Ard Choiste had instructed all slua o/cs to "initiate political education by whatever means were available locally"⁸¹ and later in the year organised an education conference which included lectures on the role of youth, culture and language in revolution⁸². The organisation printed two political newsletters regularly, while senior members were recommended to study the adult movement's occasional theoretical journal Teoiric⁸³. In October the Ard Fheis passed a resolution to increase Fianna's involvement in the anti-E.E.C. campaign⁸⁴. Indeed the growing political emphasis is clearly illustrated by Ard Fheis resolutions about this time - whereas in 1970 only two could be considered even marginally

political, three years later eight were directly so⁸⁵.

It is not clear to what extent the new awareness reached the level of the ordinary membership. One interviewee has suggested that in Dublin at least the boys were largely untouched by it⁸⁶, and this was probably the case wherever the members were predominantly pre-adolescent.

It was certainly not so in Belfast, and it was in this city that Fianna first and most thoroughly developed a political role. This was an effect of the age of members, and in particular of the military situation which, though it disrupted Fianna's own political programme, nevertheless threw up day-to-day issues which were politically educative. Notes of the Belfast Command Staff from this date show that every opportunity was taken to use local issues that impinged directly on the daily lives of members to involve them in what the leadership termed "action-for-education"⁸⁷. The youth organisation in fact led the movement at this time as regards political development⁸⁸. Its progress was epitomised by the 'Scenas' - entertainments on a class theme, performed at the clubs and based on drill, song and recitation - for which Fianna in Belfast was noted at the time⁸⁹.

After the Officials' cease-fire in May 1972 Fianna devoted itself increasingly to social and political action, particularly in education, and within two years its members had won leading positions in city youth clubs, school councils and students' unions⁹⁰.

Of all Fianna's actions in this field that attracting widest controversy was the occupation of the Christian Brothers' School in Glen Road in November 1974. The incident throws light on a number of aspects of Fianna's development in Belfast at that date. Perhaps 150 fiannai were involved in all. The particular school was chosen because its staff had opposed previous Fianna attempts to organise a

school council, and also because it was militarily suitable being on a main road but fairly isolated from housing⁹¹. Members burst into the classrooms, announced the take-over and escorted teachers to the staffroom. Pupils then gathered in the hall for what was termed a "teach-in". The main demands were for integrated education and a reform of the authority structure. Two pupil representatives were elected from each class to form a school council⁹², and a discussion was led by four speakers. Since Fianna was illegal it had been decided that the four should be masked, and thus they appeared in the press and on T.V. The enterprise succeeded well from the 'military' point of view, but tactically it was soon seen to have been a mistake. It provoked a protest meeting by some 1,000 Belfast teachers⁹³ and inevitable condemnation from public figures. It also prompted a bitter dispute with the adult movement and would later be used as prime evidence when the question of Fianna's future would be debated⁹⁴. The use of hoods and the failure to include the teachers at the meeting were seen as specific errors, the first as being elitist and adventurist, the latter in that it contradicted the Republican position on education. But such failings arose from the context of Fianna's relationship with the movement, according to the leader of the occupation⁹⁵. For two years it had received scant support for its education campaign, even Republican teachers ignoring it. Glen Road was therefore planned as a publicity coup, to be followed by further actions that would "make a statement" precisely by being non-military. (In the event the I.R.A. decreed that there would be no follow-up.) The occupation was thus among other things a *cri de coeur* to the movement.

In effect, Fianna's attempt to analyse society was bringing it to an analysis of itself. From recognising the working class as an

isolated class it arrived at the realisation that working youth is itself an isolated class, and that its own organisation had been allowed to become isolated from the movement⁹⁶. And in seeking support from other sections of the movement it was obliged to explore the question of its proper role and relationship within the movement. In sum, Fianna's politicisation confronted its members with these unavoidable questions; and in particular it forced them to consider the organisation's position vis-à-vis the I.R.A.

FIANNA, THE I.R.A., AND THE ADULT LEADERSHIP

Although political authority within the Official Republican movement had already passed to the party Fianna remained at local level under the effective control of the military wing in 1971. Dual membership generally operated from slua o/c upwards in the South⁹⁷ despite occasional local Army attempts to forbid it⁹⁸. In Belfast it applied in eight of the ten girls' sluaite as well as the entire Command Staff⁹⁹. In Newry the Fianna and I.R.A. o/cs were the same man¹⁰⁰. Nationally also the Army continued to influence Fianna's leadership through the crucial appointment of the Chief Scout, not as in the past by direct nomination but through its tacit prior approval of the organisation's own candidates. In effect, "if you were opposed by the Army you did not become Chief Scout"¹⁰¹.

But if the Army Council and the party Ard Chomhairle had the power they lacked the interest to control and support Fianna. Their almost total neglect of the youth wing is attested by both sides¹⁰². Good-will certainly existed and aid was given "willingly and with no strings attached" whenever the movement could afford it¹⁰³. But with few exceptions the adult leadership appeared unaware of Fianna's potential and uninterested in developing it beyond its traditional role. The attitude prevailed as it had for decades that a youth

wing was desirable, to be "brought out" when opportune and "always there" when called¹⁰⁴. Itself hard pressed, the movement preferred to remain in ignorance of the boys' activities except when these brought it bad publicity¹⁰⁵.

In the autumn of 1968 the I.R.A. had debated its relationship to Fianna at an officers' meeting held in North Tipperary, at which proposals for change had ranged between complete separation and the integration of senior fiannai into the Army¹⁰⁶. The majority decision, to retain Fianna as part of the movement with increased autonomy, had in fact merely avoided the problem since it failed to answer the related question of Fianna's role in the movement or the questions of support and control. As a result the I.R.A. had remained into the 1970s morally and publicly responsible for an organisation that now enjoyed greater freedom to be an embarrassment to it. The ambiguous relationship was interpreted differently by the two sides.

Fianna for its part sought greater support, particularly as regards recognition and a readiness to explore its potential role as a revolutionary youth organisation¹⁰⁷, while on the question of control it stood by its constitutional independence. In 1971 its Training Course warned slua o/cs -

It is important to note that the only people empowered to issue instructions or orders to a Fianna officer regarding Na Fianna are that officer's superiors within Na Fianna. Representatives of other Movement organisations do not have the authority to order Fianna officers with dual membership to take a certain line with Na Fianna. This is of course a delicate point, not conceded by the other Movement bodies"¹⁰⁸.

The Army's interpretation was different. Before 1970 and during neutrality it had for tactical reasons avoided pressing too hard to change Fianna's role. Subsequently, as Cathal Goulding stated to the author, "once they were with us the question was now what to do

with them"¹⁰⁹. Whereas the adult leadership envisaged a youth wing as an organ for explicit socialist Republican political education, it observed the reality to be otherwise¹¹⁰.

In the South it saw a scouting organisation composed largely of children and sometimes barely distinguishable from the C.B.S.I. except in having a mild Republican flavour and being poorer¹¹¹. In the North it saw an organisation numerous, adolescent and militarily active, and - because of the autonomy it had enjoyed during the year of neutrality - largely outwith Army control. In 1970 there had in fact been three military groups in Republican Belfast - the Official I.R.A., the Provisionals, and Fianna which was actually known at the time as 'the Third Force'¹¹². Now, a year after Fianna had given allegiance to the Official Republican movement, its Northern units were still operating under their own military authority.

Such a situation was intolerable to the Dublin adult leadership who therefore used the opportunity of internment and the consequent dislocation of Fianna's Belfast Command Staff to convene a meeting with the youth wing¹¹³. It was held in Dundalk late in 1971 and included Northern and G.H.Q. representatives from Fianna. From it instructions were issued that all slua o/cs in Belfast were to hand over arms to the local Army units, and that no operations should be undertaken except in conjunction with the I.R.A. Although not obeyed in toto the directives largely succeeded in their purpose and "spelled the beginning of the end of the Third Force". Liaison was further strengthened by the newly introduced policy of permitting Belfast Fianna officers from the rank of Battalion Quartermaster to participate in I.R.A. Brigade Staff meetings¹¹⁴. A potentially dangerous situation remained nonetheless. In the ghettos the youngsters were clamouring for weapons, and raids by the authorities

made it at once easy for fiannai to acquire them 'for safekeeping' and impossible for the I.R.A. to account for them¹¹⁵.

While the I.R.A. in Belfast tolerated the position, recognising the potential of the youth wing and indeed depending on it for very survival after internment¹¹⁶, the Dublin adult leadership saw Fianna as an embarrassment. Accounts of 'gangsterism' filtered through to them periodically¹¹⁷, and its leaders appeared able and willing to countermand adult directives¹¹⁸. Furthermore the Northern organisation appeared incorrigibly military. At the 1973 Ard Fheis, more than a year after the I.R.A.'s ceasefire, four resolutions from Belfast sluaite demanded more 'specialist' training while a fifth urged the organisation to set up a Catholic Defence Association¹¹⁹.

In sum the relationship of the adult movement to Fianna in the early 1970s was a matter of dispute. The youth wing saw it as control without responsibility, the movement as responsibility without control. The fact of neglect was agreed by all. It was in part a perpetuation of the movement's traditional sentimental attachment without practical involvement. But it also reflected the recent political development of Official Republicanism and its changing role expectation for its youth. The movement now generally considered Fianna irrelevant in the South and dysfunctional in the North¹²⁰, and viewed its drills and uniforms at best as relics of the past and at worst as insignia reminiscent of Blueshirtism¹²¹. Believing it outmoded and incapable of developing a revolutionary role the adult leadership's reaction was to ignore it and postpone the question of its future, though "always aware that sooner or later they would have to get down to it"¹²². In the meantime Fianna had been getting down to the question for itself.

SELF ANALYSIS

The divided loyalties of 1970 had forced it to look hard at its position. It had concluded that

to arrive at a definite policy it is first necessary to analyse our organisation, and recognise and understand the differing groups and various events which have had, and continue to have, influences on Na Fianna. By recognising and understanding the various forces it is easier to accept that the position in which our organisation now finds itself is the logical conclusion of the policies, or lack of policies, of recent years¹²³.

The statement revealed a willingness for self-analysis and a readiness to place the organisation in a context of social constraints rather than, as hitherto, to seek solutions in 'Republican' terms alone.

By 1971 Fianna's position made such analysis a matter of urgent need. The traditionally disparate character of the organisation, an effect of its local strength and central weakness, had become more marked since the Troubles of 1969, with a broad North-South polarisation. It had now given allegiance to the Official movement, yet it remained in fact a congeries of local groups whose unity was more emotional than organisational. In the words of a contemporary Chief Scout, "it could mean anything to anyone"¹²⁴. Within it young children and adolescents, and scouting, military and political activities co-existed uneasily. As Headquarters pointed out, the movement's neglect only made the question of role-definition more imperative - "The problem of youth as a whole is one the movement seems to be totally neglecting, and so it appears that until that role is examined and defined we in Fianna will have to find our own place"¹²⁵.

G.H.Q. therefore set out to encourage policy making at slua level, as befitted a socialist organisation¹²⁶, and during 1972 used

its national newsletter Nuacht as a forum for debate on Fianna's future role. At the same time it established a Structure Committee to consider the question, and invited contributions from local command staffs which it distributed to branches as a Discussion Document later in the year.

It was apparent from the proposals received that all sections of the organisation recognised the need for change to meet the developing requirements of the Republican movement. The Committee's own Proposals¹²⁷, and the Suggestions for Reorganisation submitted by the Cork city Command Staff¹²⁸, recommended a division of the existing body into age-group sections with graded political education, greater decision making by members and representation on the party Ard Chomhairle, but retaining the structure, activities and uniform essentially unchanged.

On the other hand two further contributions published in the Discussion Document¹²⁹ and a third produced at the same date by G.H.Q. itself¹³⁰ advocated fundamental reorganisation. They argued that Republican youth should be organised in two completely separate bodies. The first for children from six to fourteen years should retain the name 'Fianna Eireann', the scouting form and the uniform. The second should be a "Young Revolutionary Movement", quite distinct in name, role and structure, a solely political organisation, excluding all military training which should in future be strictly confined to the I.R.A.¹³¹. The three documents represented a radical departure in that they proposed the formation of an autonomous youth movement, on the pattern of political youth movements elsewhere and quite unlike Fianna whose prototype was scouting within the adult-led boys' club tradition.

The debate initiated in 1972 reflected Fianna's own current

ideological development. But in the meantime the urgent practical problems which had first occasioned it had escalated to a point that demanded that debate give way to decision.

THE POSITION IN 1973

There is no documentary evidence available for Fianna membership in the South for the year 1973, which is itself a significant pointer to the situation. Files are far from complete for 1971-2, but from them and from references in the monthly newsletter it is possible to compile a picture of the strength of the organisation that is probably fairly accurate. There were at least thirteen sluaite for boys in 1972, six of them in greater Dublin¹³², and if the monthly returns extant are representative the total membership may have been 220-30. Six sluaite were registered with the Department of Girl Scouts, one each in Limerick and Cork and the rest in the capital, but of the latter only Slua Anne Devlin had a full membership. It appears there were some sixty girl fiannai in Dublin, and perhaps 100 in the country altogether¹³³. Analysis of monthly returns from those sluaite which maintained regular contact with Headquarters is equally revealing. It shows the typical boys' slua as having a membership of only seventeen (a full complement was 29), of whom only three-quarters attended parade, and a high turnover of members reflected in month-to-month fluctuation of almost one-in-five¹³⁴. Girls' sluaite recruited and held their members with more success¹³⁵, but the overall impression is of an organisation of mediocre discipline and declining attraction. If attendance may be taken as an index of morale then morale was low, particularly in that the figures are based on the fourteen most efficient branches and no doubt flatter the organisation as a whole.

The Boys' Battalion in Belfast had declined in strength in 1971-2, years which mark the nadir of the Official Republican movement in the city and the greatest expansion of the Provisionals. In Fianna's case however decline was not the result of loss through defection and disenchantment - such loss had taken place in the winter of 1970-1, after which the sluaite held their members, now reduced to a stable and committed core¹³⁶. Decline in numbers continued through 1971-2 because the organisation was unable to make good the normal turnover of members graduating to the senior movement.

It was not until 1973 that the trend was reversed. Growth that year in general reflected new momentum within the Official movement, for whom the tide was also beginning to turn. More particularly it was a result of recruiting campaigns in the old strongholds, in areas where the Officials had regained a foot-hold, and in the new housing areas on the edge of the city¹³⁷. Probably twenty branches existed in all¹³⁸ and though total membership never matched the figure of summer 1970¹³⁹ the Battalion was certainly as strong in terms of active members as at any time since the beginning of the Troubles¹⁴⁰.

The development of the girls' sluaite had followed a rather different pattern, more gradual and without the severe decline of 1971-2¹⁴¹. Growth had remained steady and turn-over low between 1969 and 1973 during which time a Brigade had been established with a Battalion in West Belfast and a second covering the north and east of the city¹⁴².

Thus while 1973 marked a critical deterioration in the Republic it was a year of new strength, stability and effectiveness in Belfast. In reality the traditional differences between North and South were now so extreme that two organisations existed totally

different in all but their name¹⁴³. And while Ard Fheis resolutions called for closer relations between them¹⁴⁴ the two went their own ways. Belfast largely ignored G.H.Q. directives, and the occasional visits of Headquarters staff on matters of military procedure were received naturally enough with amused tolerance¹⁴⁵. The setting up of an autonomous Northern Command in autumn 1973 in no way altered the existing position but merely gave it decency¹⁴⁶, and in the same year the attempt was even made to give the North its own separate A.G.M.s¹⁴⁷.

It was not only in Belfast that Headquarters directives were ignored; the same applied almost everywhere, and in particular in Cork where Fianna had traditionally worked more closely with the local I.R.A. than with its own G.H.Q. In the words of Míceál Bairead, elected Chief Scout during the year, central control "was almost nil and applied in theory only" in 1971-2, and the organisation "operated under licence of the local chiefs"¹⁴⁸. Headquarters had no effective authority - they "could dish out what they liked" from central office; they could visit local sluaite, in the knowledge that the situation would revert to normal on their departure. The minuteness and fragility of the organisation in the South and its size and stability in the North, ironically had the same effect - Headquarters could not afford to attempt to change that which was. Even had this not been so, they lacked the necessary local knowledge. Communication was inconsistent and usually verbal; in some cases it was second-hand, in others it lapsed entirely to be picked up again once a year at Bodenstown. Under such circumstances it was impossible to control the conditions or know the facts of membership, and without knowledge or control G.H.Q. was very largely in the hands of the local o/cs.

By 1973 moreover the Headquarters staff was itself riven by disputes. Since the late 1960s at least "there had always been intrigue" within the small circle of Dublin officers¹⁴⁹. By 1973 the situation in the capital was one of total disarray, and executive meetings "just one continuous row"¹⁵⁰.

Fianna was therefore now a doubly divided house, the local areas set against a Dublin leadership which was itself fragmented, and the divisions had all but destroyed morale and purpose. It was a matter of urgency that the November Ard Fheis should tackle the question of its role and structure.

DECISION FOR CHANGE

The Ard Fheis debate was conducted on the basis of the documents produced earlier in the year. It was expected to reflect the positions of Belfast and the Dublin leadership, which appeared diametrically opposed.

In the eyes of G.H.Q. - and the view was shared by most of the Sinn Féin Ard Chomhairle - Fianna in the North posed problems of militarism, adventurism and indiscipline which could only be solved by radical change, while the organisation in the South was "dead in its present state, only coming alive at commemorations"¹⁵¹ and not to be revived by mere reform. North and South it had been left behind by a movement whose changes "had undermined the old without creating a new"¹⁵². It was now clearly necessary to create a new.

The Belfast leadership on the contrary considered themselves neither dead nor undermined, and saw a political and military future for Fianna¹⁵³. But because they believed that the changes advocated by Dublin were precisely what was already being practised in the North, they made common cause with G.H.Q. on the day. Thus it was ironically Belfast resolutions for change that were carried at

the Ard Fheis, against counter proposals that Fianna be reconstructed on the reformist lines recommended by the Structure Committee. Overwhelming support was given to their motions that the organisation be divided into two sections each with a separate command, that Group X retain the aims and objects of the Fianna Handbook and Group Y be developed as "an effective revolutionary youth movement with a definite role to play in the national liberation struggle"¹⁵⁴.

A further resolution moved by the Belfast Command Staff and passed unanimously, would later prove crucial. It provided that, on condition that the youth wing had representation at senior level, it would "be prepared to accept all the policies and decisions taken" by the party¹⁵⁵. In the name of party discipline Fianna in effect by this resolution relinquished its historic constitutional independence.

Belfast left the Ard Fheis looking for change to be accomplished within Fianna; most of the Dublin Headquarters Staff envisaged a completely new organisation. It would be two years yet before the question would be resolved. But since its resolution had now been placed in the hands of the adult movement, the views of whose leadership were known, there could be only one outcome.

The Ard Fheis had broken up in disorder and after 1973 there would be no further Ard Fheiseanna, no executive meetings, and no further written records¹⁵⁶. Deterioration in the South was now such that all pretence of organisational process was abandoned. It was clear that the question now was not whether or not Fianna had a future, but when, where and how it would be necessary to kill it off.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Words of Jimmy Steele, oration at the re-burial of Barnes and McCormack, Mullingar, July 1969.
2. See, eg., Bell, J. Bowyer The Secret Army (London, 1970; London, 1972 ed.), pp.430-3.
3. An Phoblacht, vol. 1, no. 1, February 1970, Provisional Sinn Féin statement. Also mentioned were the I.R.A.'s failure to protect the nationalist population in the North in summer 1969, the movement's support for replacing Stormont by Direct Rule, and internal methods of operation.
4. Ibid, Cf. particularly the quotation from Cathal Brugha.
5. Ibid.
6. S.F. interview.
7. Lám Mac an Ultaigh interview. The present account based on this source.
8. Letter Fianna Ard Thaoiseach to D. Varian (o/c Cork) 31/3/1970, in Gardiner Place Files of Sinn Féin the Workers' Party. The United Irishman remained the organ of the Official movement after the split, the Provisionals publishing An Phoblacht as their national paper.
9. Nuacht, March 1970.
10. Donnchadha Ó Séaghdha interview.
11. Letter to slua o/cs, dated June 1970, signed Chief Scout, Assistant Chief Scout and Director of Finance; Gardiner Place Files, Sinn Féin the Workers' Party.
12. For example, a Provisional supporter Tony Geoghan invited officers and seniors to a meeting on 25 March to pledge allegiance to the Provisional Army Council - Nuacht, April 1970. Despite being styled an "executive meeting" by An Phoblacht (April 1970) it was unofficial and convened by a man who had in fact seceded from the organisation before the movement split. Geoghan was not recognised by 'Provisional' Fianna officers in Dublin (Art Sherwin interview); he formed a short-lived splinter group as a result of the meeting.
13. Nuacht, June 1970.
14. Incident based on Lám Mac an Ultaigh interview. Confirmed by Pádraig Varian in verbal statement.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid.
17. S.F. interview.

18. Lám Mac an Ultaigh interview.
19. Donal Varian interview.
20. G.H.Q. staff comprised Lám Mac an Ultaigh (Assistant C/S and Director of Organisation and Training), Malachy Moynihan (Director of Education), Hanna O'Farrell (Director of Finance), Donnchadha Ó Séaghdha and Peter Mac an Ultaigh (Directors of Supplies).
21. Lám Mac an Ultaigh interview.
22. Art Sherwin interview. The officers were Art and Pat Sherwin, Mick Foley and Oliver Ryan.
23. Ibid. The officers were Una Holland, Frances Sherwin and May Foley.
24. Nuacht, June 1970. Armagh slua under Art McAlinden, Dundalk slua under Andy Corbett.
25. S.F. interview.
26. Tony Heffernan interview; the examples also from this source.
27. Ulster, The Sunday Times Insight Team (Harmondsworth, 1972), p.221.
28. Cf. Goulding, C. 'Inside the I.R.A.', Recon, vol. iii, no. 1, Philadelphia, 1975.
29. A.McM. interview, P.C. interview.
30. The United Irishman, March 1969.
31. Letter Fianna Ard Thaoiseach to D. Varian, 12/6/1970, Gardiner Place Files, Sinn Féin the Workers' Party.
32. Donal Varian interview.
33. An Phoblacht, October 1970.
34. P.C. interview.
35. Nuacht, November 1970.
36. Donal Varian interview.
37. Ibid; also Pádraig Varian verbal statement.
38. Donal Varian interview.
39. S.F. interview.
40. Ibid.
41. Donal Varian interview.

42. Ibid., and Art Sherwin interview.
43. Donal Varian interview.
44. Policy Statement, Fianna G.H.Q., November 1970, p.1, Gardiner Place Files.
45. S.F. interview.
46. Ard Fheis Clár, Gardiner Place Files. Three resolutions argued for neutrality and three for allegiance to the Official leadership.
47. Ard Fheis Report, Gardiner Place Files. Nuacht, April 1971 described support for the resolution as "overwhelming".
48. S.F. interview.
49. Nuacht, December 1971.
50. The United Irishman, November 1971, Ard Fheis Report (9-10/10/1971).
51. S.F. interview, Lám Mac an Ultaigh interview.
52. Nuacht, December 1970.
53. Nuacht, July 1970 and August 1970, references to daubing of Dublin Provisional o/c's house and instructions to avoid retaliation and refer grievances to G.H.Q.
54. Míceál Bairead interview.
55. Lám Mac an Ultaigh interview.
56. The 'war' situation which began in 1969 has lasted to the present day, of course. But the Official I.R.A. called a ceasefire in May 1972 and has maintained it since. Fianna's military involvement therefore ended at that date.
57. Ulster, Insight, p.93.
58. P.C. interview.
59. Ibid.
60. A.McM. interview.
61. The United Irishman, September 1969.
62. P.C. interview.
63. A.McM. interview.
64. Ibid. Selected girls over 14 years also received officer training from Fianna and I.R.A. officers, comprising political and leadership instruction and in some cases explosives and weapon training - K.O'K. interview.

65. P.C. interview. Their graves are dated 23 September 1971.
66. P.C. interview.
67. In one gun battle in the Lower Falls in September 1970 it is said that the local Army o/c ruled that every Fianna boy who had turned out to support should be allowed one shot!
68. P.C. interview. The date on her grave is 11 July 1972.
69. Ibid. Fianna were also largely responsible for removing weapons during the I.R.A.'s 'defence' of The Markets under Joe McCann.
70. K.O'K. interview.
71. Irish News, 16/8/1969. Cf. also Violence and Civil Disturbances in Northern Ireland in 1969, Report of Tribunal of Enquiry, Cmd. 556, H.M.S.O. (Belfast, 1972), ('The Scarman Report'), Vol. 1, pp.196-209, espec. 199 and 205.
72. Ulster, Insight, p.126.
73. Nuacht, September 1973; Irish News, 10-11/7/1972; P.C. interview.
74. A.McM. interview.
75. Ibid.
76. D.R. interview.
77. Letter A.McM. to the author, 31/3/1978.
78. D.R. interview, Lám Mac an Ultaigh interview. Mac an Ultaigh described some of the temporary leaders as "lunatics". Cf. also note 117 below.
79. Letter A.McM. to the author, 31/3/1978.
70. Cathal Goulding described the split as "a positive help in that it helped to clear the deck of all the flotsam and jetsam that was in our way" - Goulding, C. 'Inside the I.R.A.', Recon, 1975, p.18.
81. Nuacht, April 1971, Report of Ard Choiste meeting of 4 April.
82. Nuacht, September 1971.
83. Belfast Fianna produced Smaoin, G.H.Q. produced Political Comment in 1971-2.
84. The United Irishman, November 1971, Ard Fheis report 9-10/10/1971.
85. 1970 Ard Fheis Clár, 1973 Clár.
86. Donnchadha Ó Séaghdha interview.

87. Notes, Belfast Fianna Command Staff, n.d. but probably 1971, Gardiner Place Files. Action included research, agitation and organising common fronts; issues included housing, T.U. legislation and sectarianism.
88. A.McM. interview - Fianna was according to McM. "politically miles and miles ahead of the I.R.A." in 1970.
89. Letter A.McM. to the author, 22/1/1978. McM. was author-producer of the Scenas.
90. D.R. interview.
91. B.H. interview; details in the present account from this source.
92. Rosc Catha, November/December 1974. Due to timing of publication this English-based monthly carried the most detailed report of the incident.
93. The United Irishman, December 1974.
94. Tony Heffernan interview.
95. D.R. interview.
96. Ibid.
97. Míceál Bairead interview.
98. Eddy Williams interview.
99. K.O'K. interview.
100. S.F. interview.
101. Lám Mac an Ultaigh interview.
102. Ibid; Seán Garland interview; Letter Tony Heffernan to the author, 29/3/1976.
103. Lám Mac an Ultaigh interview; Seán Ó Cionnaith interview.
104. Lám Mac an Ultaigh interview; cf., Seoirse Dearle interview re the 1950s.
105. Lám Mac an Ultaigh interview, Seán Garland interview. The I.R.A. did not know, for example, that bus loads of Northern Fianna members were sometimes brought across the Border for training.
106. Eddy Williams interview.
107. D.R. interview.
108. Training Course, Na Fianna Eireann, Talk 9.
109. Cathal Goulding interview.

110. Ibid.
111. Seán Ó Cionnaith interview.
112. Liam Mac an Ultaigh interview.
113. Cathal Goulding interview, Donnchadha Ó Séaghdha interview, Liam Mac an Ultaigh interview. The meeting was called by the party Ard Chomhairle.
114. A.McM. interview.
115. Ibid. This situation led directly to one Fianna death.
116. P.C. interview.
117. Examples included disciplining members by Russian roulette, Belfast members brawling with residents in Summerhill, Dublin, after the 1972 Bodinstown commemoration, and an anti-underage drink campaign in Lurgan conducted by fiannai with hoods and axes.
118. Thus eg G. McD. interview gave the example of their refusal to mobilise Fianna for the Westminster election campaign in February 1974.
119. 1973 Ard Fheis Clár, resolutions 20, 21, 23, 24, 25.
120. Tony Heffernan interview.
121. B.H. interview.
122. Tony Heffernan interview.
123. Policy Statement, Fianna G.H.Q., November 1970, p.1, Gardiner Place Files.
124. Míceál Bairead interview.
125. Proposals for Discussion on the Role of Fianna, issued by G.H.Q. and signed by Donnchadha Ó Séaghdha, 1971, p.1.
126. Cf., Nuacht, February 1972.
127. Proposals for the Structure of Fianna, Structure Committee, Summer 1973, lent to the author by Gen. Sec. Sinn Féin the Workers' Party.
128. Suggestions for Reorganisation of Fianna Eireann, Cork City Fianna Command Staff, autumn 1972, lent to the author by Liam Mac an Ultaigh.
129. The documents were unnamed and their sources unspecified.
130. Some Suggestions on Group Y, the Senior Youth Group, G.H.Q., 1973. This document was in fact the work of Liam Mac an Ultaigh, by whom it was lent to the author.

131. "Those members of Stage 2 who have reached the age of 16 years and who wish to specialise in Group B activities would be required to join Group B at the discretion of the Movement" - from Second Document, p.3. 'Group B' is a euphemism for the I.R.A., employed to avoid legal action in the event of documents being acquired by the police.
132. Nuacht, 1972 issues and o/cs' Monthly Reports together refer to sluaite in Drimnagh, Finglas (2), Ballyfermott, Coolock, North City Dublin (all Dublin); Cork city (2), Bandon, Nenagh, Sligo, Killorglin County Kerry.
133. Reports, March 1972, written on all Dublin sluaite by Marie Kenny, Director of Girl Scouts. Officers' meeting Report, May 1972, predicted a parade of 75 uniformed girls at Bodens-town. (Both documents in Gardiner Place Files).
A fifth slua named after Nurse O'Farrell opened in Ballyfermott in the autumn (Nuacht, September 1972).
134. Monthly Reports of slua o/cs, 1971-2, Gardiner Place Files - Returns, 163; average membership, 16.73; attendance, 76.7%; fluctuation monthly, 17.2% of membership.
135. Ibid. Average membership, 43.1 (including cubs, in what proportion cannot be ascertained due to inconsistent form filling); attendance, 83.6%; fluctuation monthly, 5.2% of membership.
136. D.R. interview.
137. Ibid.
138. D.R. interview, P.C. interview.
The following branches were represented at the 1972 Ard Fheis: Seán McAughey (Ardoyne), Pádraic Pearse (Ballymurphy), Heuston and Colbert (Ballymurphy), Markievicz (Clonard), Joe McCann (Turf Lodge), Gerald McAuley (Beechmount), Pádraic Pearse (Unity Flats), Joe McKelvey (Twinbrook), Divis Flats, Lower Falls, Andersonstown, Lenadoon, Whiterock, Glengormley, Bawnmore, Old Park, Cliftonville, Newington, James Connolly (New Lodge Road), Joe McCann (Ormeau Road), a second Ormeau Road slua - Sederunt list of slua representatives, 1972 Ard Fheis, handwritten, Gardiner Place Files.
139. P.C. interview - assessed 450 in 1970; members' meeting late 1974 attended by over 200.
140. D.R. interview.
141. G.McM. interview.
142. Ibid. The strength of the First Battalion was over 80. The Second Battalion was far smaller, and created to enable an officer board to be set up.
143. Lám Mac an Ultaigh interview.
144. 1972 Ard Fheis Clár, resolution no. 29.

145. Donnchadha Ó Séaghdha interview.
146. Míceál Bairead interview.
147. 1973 Ard Fheis Clár, resolution no. 12 moved by Slua Joe McCann Belfast.
148. Míceál Bairead interview.
149. Lám Mac an Ultaigh interview.
150. Ibid.
151. Suggestions for Reconstruction, p.2.
152. Tony Heffernan interview.
153. P.C. interview.
154. 1973 Ard Fheis Clár, annotated. Resolution no. 2 of Ard Oifig defeated; Belfast Staff resolutions: no. 3 carried (35-0), no. 4 carried jointly with no. 5 (31-9), no. 7 carried (43-0).
155. Ibid., resolution no. 8 (carried 33-0).
156. Míceál Bairead interview.

Chapter 11. THE END OF FIANNA

DEVELOPING THE CONCEPT OF A REVOLUTIONARY YOUTH MOVEMENT

The decision of the 1973 Ard Fheis had been for the establishment of two separate organisations, the one for under-fourteens and in the tradition of Fianna, the other a revolutionary youth movement. Though the role of the latter was not specified it was recognised that it should be "definite", avoiding the role ambiguity of Fianna, and that it should be defined prior to inauguration. The type of organisation had indeed already been broadly determined by the 1973 documents, which - though formally for discussion only - expressed the consensus view of G.H.Q. and the Belfast Command Staff and as such were likely to become policy. In effect Fianna and the Republican movement by this date accepted that the revolutionary youth organisation would be a solely political body, under a new name, without uniform, and run democratically by the members¹. In order to develop and fill out this general concept Dublin disseminated two further documents the following year.

The first, entitled Some Ideas on the Formation of a Revolutionary Youth Movement², repeated the recommendation to adopt a new name and thus project a public image quite different from that traditionally inseparable from Fianna³. It reiterated that the age range of members should be between fourteen and twenty years, but proposed a ceiling age of 25-30 years for full-time workers to ensure continuity of experienced leadership. It envisaged the members being recruited from the younger elements in Sinn Féin "in association with the most advanced members of Fianna". It insisted that though the youth movement would "in all probability be working side by side with the Party" it should not be merely an auxiliary at

the call of Sinn Féin cumainn. Its central work should be in youth issues, particularly those of education and employment, and to this end members should participate in the Trade Unions, university, college and school organisations as well as local, national and international youth organisations. That its activities should be outgoing represented a fundamental departure from the practice of Fianna, which had always been a self-contained and inward-looking body.

The document recommended that "the youth movement should be structurally independent of the Party, but should declare its unity of objective with the Party in its constitution. If it (and the Party) wished it could have observers at Comhairle Ceanntair meetings. It should remain under the guidance of the Party, and regional and national officers should be Party members"⁴. It also saw the youth organisation's own structure in terms of a political party, "similar to Sinn Féin at present" and founded on democratic centralism.

The document argued against attempting to fashion the new body out of the old: though it recognised the willingness of some Fianna members to develop their organisation into a revolutionary movement, it considered that - schooled as they were in the existing slua practice and structure - they lacked the necessary political awareness and experience.

The second document⁵ reiterated the concept of a youth movement adopting a structure corresponding to that of the parent party, and thus serving as a "practice ground" for party membership. It emphasised the importance of control and the screening of recruits for political orthodoxy. But it went beyond previous publications in specifically advocating a relationship with the party modelled

on that of the Connolly Youth Movement with the Communist Party of Ireland.

Several observations may be made concerning the two documents, and the stage of development of the youth movement concept within Republicanism which they represent. In the first place, they are couched in a new language, one in which the terms of Marxism-Leninism have replaced the traditional idiom of Republicanism and of scouting, in which 'training for the day' has been superceded by 'educate, agitate, organise', and the idealism of Gaelic by the realism of English. This is not at all - as were the earlier documents - Fianna with a new face. The concepts of control, youth issues and education are directly from the Young Communist Leagues⁶. Corresponding to the development of the adult sector from movement into Marxist-Leninist party, the prototype now proposed for youth is the Komsomol.

Secondly, the documents represent the first statements on the future of organised Republican youth not actually made by the youth wing itself. The author of the first was a party member and a member of the Irish Union of School Students, but not of Fianna⁷. His position is significant: his party membership indicates Sinn Féin's growing interest in its youth and implies the possibility of party intervention on the question of the future of Fianna; his student background suggests that this growing interest stemmed less from experience of Fianna itself than from encountering student organisations in general. This was indeed the case: Sinn Féin was at this time establishing a growing number of contacts with socialist parties abroad through its International Affairs Bureau, and came to recognise the political potential of organised youth through meeting young party members in student action⁸.

Thirdly, the documents were primarily concerned with exactly those areas of youth organisation which in Fianna had proved least amenable to solution - structure, activities and control.

Lastly, it may be observed in retrospect that they contained the basis of all subsequent developments in the field of organised Republican youth to date. Thus by the autumn of 1974 the direction was already clear. It awaited only the stamp of approval by party, Army and Fianna itself, which would be given the following year.

INVESTIGATION AND DECISION

In spring 1975 the Sinn Féin Ard Chomhairle appointed a committee, chaired by the party's joint General Secretary Tony Heffernan, to consider the future pattern of youth organisation and within that context the future of Fianna. Its main brief was to hold exploratory meetings in those areas of the country where Fianna still operated. Meetings were arranged at seven venues and it was largely on the evidence gathered at them that the committee produced its Report later in the year⁹. The present account is based upon the Report, amplified by the committee's working notes and additional interview material supplied by Heffernan.

The meetings revealed that Fianna was now reduced to some 400 senior members throughout the country, of whom 250 were in Belfast, perhaps 110 elsewhere in the Six Counties, and only about forty south of the Border¹⁰. Outwith Belfast and Dublin sluaite remained only in Dundalk, Lurgan and Derry. The meeting at Cork was attended by individual fiannai from the city whose slua had recently collapsed through lack of support from the adult movement. Members gathered at Omagh from throughout County Tyrone; there was no slua in the area and most of them maintained contact through the Republican Clubs¹¹. Under such circumstances the central leadership were inevitably unaware of most Fianna activity and the committee

made several unexpected discoveries. Their report that fiannai in Tyrone were "apparently involved in some 'specialist' activities" exemplifies their extraordinary lack of previous knowledge in potentially damaging matters.

They also encountered a complete lack of uniformity from area to area, which they attributed both to the differences between North and South and the party's failure to define a role for its youth wing. "A combination of these factors," they reported, "has led to the present situation where groups of Fianna exist in various areas of the country operating in isolation from one another, with different local rules and varied degrees of involvement with the rest of the movement"¹². They gave as examples the ceiling age of sixteen years in North Armagh as against twenty-five in Belfast, and the Cork practice of attending Sinn Féin Comhairle Ceanntair meetings compared with that in Dublin where formal contact with the adult movement was non-existent.

The committee similarly found no uniformity of role concept among the branches, unless it was in their uniformly low level of political awareness. Among the Lurgan members, for instance, "when some areas of political activity for a youth group were suggested, their reaction was that if they 'agreed' to engage in political activity, then they should be allowed more specialist training 'in return', as a sort of reward"¹³. Predictably, therefore, the branches responded variously to the proposal to create a radically new youth organisation. Derry and Cork broadly supported change though not necessarily in the same terms as proposed; Tyrone favoured a political movement to supplement but not replace a traditional Fianna; Lurgan saw no necessity for change except in the direction of greater local autonomy and military training. But an equally

significant finding in the committee's view was the generally low salience of the opinions expressed. It appeared that Fianna simply did not command passionate loyalty in 1975, and that whatever decisions the movement might make as to its future would meet with little resistance¹⁴.

Only in Belfast was the position different. The general meeting there was turned into "a fiasco", being boycotted by Fianna members on the informal instruction of the Battalion Command Staffs who apparently feared that it would be used to disband the organisation¹⁵. A second meeting was called, restricted to Fianna and the Republican Clubs Comhairle Ceanntair, and on this occasion 450 seniors and juniors attended in a tactical demonstration of strength. The audience voted "pretty well overwhelmingly" against disbanding Fianna¹⁶ and the visitors noted from their experience of the two meetings that "great caution would be necessary in tackling the question in the city"¹⁷.

The committee prepared their Report in the autumn. Their overall recommendation was for a "more political" youth organisation, whose role should be to educate young persons in the principles of socialist Republicanism through a revolutionary action approach to youth problems, and thereby to recruit members for the adult movement¹⁸. They concluded that Fianna could not be developed to fulfil such a role, in that its public image of paramilitary and illegal activity and its military discipline, uniform and drill were unlikely to attract a suitable type of young person to the movement. Fianna was in fact now judged to be not merely valueless to Republicanism, but actually dysfunctional to its political development and credibility.

The committee therefore recommended the establishment of a completely new organisation. It would not be uniformed: the Report acknowledged the view widely expressed in the Northern meetings that uniform meets a need in young people to express a common identity, but considered "that any sort of formal uniform has para-military associations and this is an image we are obviously trying to avoid". This judgment illustrates the committee's overall insistence that the new movement should present a face as different as possible from Fianna's. To the same end they recommended that it "should be as public as possible and seek to get as much publicity as possible", to forestall allegations that it was merely perpetuating Fianna's subversion of the young.

The Report believed the "key problem" to be that of giving the youth movement maximum freedom "while at the same time assuring that it is closely tied to the movement, committed to its policies, and not likely at any stage in the future to prove an embarrassment by publicly going against movement decisions or policies"¹⁹. It suggested that control should be established through a declaration of allegiance in the Constitution, and selection of personnel in which the "vast majority" would initially be party or Fianna members; it should be maintained by granting the party limited powers of veto and building two-way liaison between party and youth movement²⁰. To further liaison it recommended that Sinn Féin appoint a full-time Director of Youth Activities and provide the junior body with a room at Headquarters. These initiatives, with in addition the provision of "some sort of permanent financial arrangement" which it left unspecified, would be seen as an indication of the movement's serious intentions towards its youth.

It is doubtful whether the views gathered round the country

from fiannai, diverse and often contradictory as they were, could of themselves have prompted the committee's conclusions. Rather they appear to have provided evidence to support conclusions that had already been reached. The committee had after all been appointed by the Sinn Féin Ard Chomhairle and their recommendations accorded exactly with current party thinking, following quite closely the arguments of previous documents but ranging well beyond the subject matter of the meetings. Thus though the spring tour was certainly undertaken with all sincerity, as a democratic exercise it was perhaps rather more apparent than real.

The appointment of the committee, and the conclusions they reached, should be viewed in the context of events taking place within the Official Republican movement at the time. From the summer of 1974 the movement had been faced with a threat of further defections - this time of the extreme left - associated with Ard Chomhairle member Seamus Costello. Following his dismissal by the Ard Fheis in January 1975 he gathered round himself and Bernadette McAliskey a new party, the Irish Republican Socialist Party, composed substantially of disaffected Officials and some ex-Provisionals²¹. Within three months of its foundation military elements connected with the new party were responsible for the death of three Official Republicans including the I.R.A.'s commander in Belfast, and the serious wounding of other prominent members²². It was the belief of the Gardiner Place leadership that former fiannai had played a leading part in the I.R.S.P. defection, and that some of those who shot their members in Belfast had learned their use of arms in Fianna²³. In fact, the author has ascertained from those closer to the situation in the North that apart from one explosives expert very few of the I.R.S.P.'s military personnel were ex-Fianna²⁴. However, the reality is less relevant than what was be-

lieved in the capital. Dublin's view was that Fianna had provided military training but failed to give political education, and that its incorrigible militarism had this time damaged more than just the movement's name. Moreover, during the spring exchanges - and again during the briefer feud with the Provisional I.R.A. in the late autumn²⁵ - they were forced to mobilise the youth wing and it was their fear that an armed, mobilised Fianna was at any time able and perhaps likely to set itself up as an autonomous breakaway group²⁶. It would therefore be correct to say that the military events of 1975 gave an urgency to the work of the youth committee in the spring, and had some influence upon their conclusions in the autumn.

In the light of the committee's Report the Ard Chomhairle of Sinn Féin were at once requested to offer a definitive clarification of the question of arms in the youth movement²⁷. Their decision was that there could be no place for an armed youth wing, and that young members desiring military activity should undertake it only in the Army, from the age of sixteen and under mature leadership²⁸. In effect it confirmed the committee's conclusions. The Ard Chomhairle now sought ratification of their position by the movement as a whole. At the party's Annual General Meeting in the New Year they introduced the following resolution:

Recognising that the need exists in Ireland for a political youth movement, and recognising that none of the youth organisations that exist at present can fulfil this need, this Ard Fheis of Sinn Féin instructs the incoming Ard Chomhairle to take steps to establish a political youth movement that would be:-

1. Committed through its constitution to supporting and advancing among young people the policies and objectives of Sinn Féin, subject to the overall control and direction of the Sinn Féin Ard Chomhairle.

2. Aimed at recruiting young workers and students in the 14-20 age group with a view to giving them an understanding of the basic principles of Republican Socialism, and involving them in the building of the revolutionary movement in this country.
3. Committed to fulfilling the need that exists for a young people's organisation that will provide a revolutionary approach to the many social and economic problems facing young workers and students.
4. Committed to working with other progressive youth movements to highlight and alleviate these problems.

The Ard Fheis further instructs the incoming Ard Chomhairle to appoint a committee, representative of young people from throughout the Movement, to draft a constitution and manifesto and to make the other necessary arrangements for the public launching of a political youth movement within a period of four months.

The Ard Fheis believes that Fianna should continue as a scouting organisation aimed primarily at those under fourteen²⁹.

The resolution was not unopposed on the day. Nine counter motions had been forwarded by Republican Clubs in Belfast, one of them seeking to delay the establishment of any new organisation for one year and a second urging that Fianna should spearhead the proposed revolutionary youth movement³⁰. The Belfast boys' o/c spoke as a guest against the resolution, but at the voting little serious opposition was encountered even from the Northern delegates. All counter motions were taken together as a single amendment to the main resolution and were defeated by a substantial majority³¹. This decision, reached democratically by the highest authority in the movement, appeared to signal the end of Fianna in its traditionally recognised form, relegating it to a solely scouting organisation for pre-adolescents.

GROUND S FOR RESISTANCE

The Belfast Fianna, which had openly opposed the conclusions of the committee's autumn Report, now challenged the Ard Fheis decision itself. Their grounds for resistance were threefold - faith in their own organisation, doubts about the proposed replacement, and

criticism of the movement's handling of the question.

They had good reason to consider themselves an effective organisation, in terms of size, activity and political development. Moreover, the old Fianna conviction of being part of a tradition of special excellence survived in the city, as a general concept with particular local meaning. Belfast fiannai were taught that their members had always been the most quickly promoted in the I.R.A., that they comprised the bulk of the adult leadership, and that 'the best of those who went forward and gave their all' over the years - Seamus 'Ratty' Burns, Tom Williams, Terence Perry, Joe McKelvey - had all been ex-Fianna officers³². Indeed, so the argument went, whenever Fianna had lapsed in Belfast, the whole movement there had lapsed³³; if an Army unit was wiped out, Fianna personnel replenished it; if the very movement itself was in danger of extinction - as in the first months of internment in 1971 - was it not Fianna who sustained it? If such things were made a myth, they were none the less fact. Similarly with the scouting ethic: if the skills and virtues of scouting were by now considered out-dated elsewhere, for Belfast youngsters harrassed by police and living with sectarianism the out-of-town camps and the 'citizenship' still had undoubted value, while the fitness and rough living were not meaningless to those with a future in prison or on the run.

Thus of their faith in past and present. As to the future, their conviction was that Fianna unquestionably had the potential to become a genuine revolutionary youth movement³⁴. It was precisely such a development that Belfast, virtually alone, had been urging upon the national organisation for some years; and it was exactly those virtues planned for the new movement - control, communication and political rigour - that the city Battalion had

campaigned for in 1973³⁵. Had their Ard Fheis resolutions been implemented, they believed, Fianna would already have become the revolutionary movement³⁶. Because they had not been, and in particular because the Dublin Fianna had become moribund, now ironically the senior movement in the capital was intervening to disband the organisation nationally.

On the other hand, the proposed replacement was seen as likely to be too intellectual and student-like, too small, and lacking the hard experience of working-class issues that had latterly given Fianna such conviction³⁷. Why, it was asked, abandon an organisation that worked for one untried? Why slavishly imitate the Connolly Youth movement, which cut no ice in the ghettos? The new movement would surely not appeal to the mass of fourteen-year-olds, few of whom join organisations for 'political' motives, unlike its predecessor which recruited on young people's terms and offered a political education afterwards. In a word, it would not suit the reality of teenage Belfast, and the city's Fianna leaders hotly resented its imposition by "textbook revolutionaries" from Dublin³⁸.

The Northern Fianna leadership were in fact critical of the senior movement's handling of the question in general, both before and after the Ard Fheis. They considered that they had been "isolated and kept in the dark" in the early stages when irreversible decisions had been taken, and rebuffed later when, following their own extraordinary general convention in the spring, they approached the Republican Clubs for help in developing along the lines specified by the party³⁹. The movement's response was to insist that they disband and fiannai as individuals re-apply for membership of the new organisation, a demand that became a sticking point for many who felt that they should have been educated into a new role but

instead had received an ultimatum⁴⁰. It was a bitter pill to those who had proved their loyalty through the crises of the 1970s; in the words of their o/c, "We were bitter to know that we were not trusted now. We looked upon ourselves as part of the movement, but they did not look upon us in this way. We were loyal, they were not"⁴¹.

What most strikes the observer in this episode is a mutual lack of sympathy, and consequently the adopting of entrenched positions. Mutual suspicion, however, applied in several conflicting directions. In one sense, it was the extreme and logical conclusion of the North-South polarity ever present in Fianna and the Republican movement since Partition - in this sense Belfast Fianna was at odds not only with the senior movement in the South but with its own Dublin organisation. In another sense it was a difference between those with a 'career' commitment to the Scouts, and those with little or no Fianna background. Thus the tenacity of the Belfast leaders was seen by themselves as loyalty to the past and present generations of youth, but by some others even in their city as a tenacious clinging to power⁴². In a third sense it implied a basic difference of attitude as to the proper role and status of the youth wing, between the adult movement which considered that it had acted with due tact and consultation⁴³, and the Fianna membership who saw themselves treated not as an integral part of the movement, with a voice.

LAYING NEW FOUNDATIONS

Following the Ard Fheis a 'national organising committee' was established, again under the chairmanship of Tony Heffernan, to lay the foundations of the new movement⁴⁴. Heffernan's role in the replacement of Fianna was thus twofold - earlier in guiding the party towards a decision, and now in preparing the way for its

implementation. That Sinn Féin's national secretary was detailed for the task is a measure of the movement's new seriousness with regard to organised youth, and also of its determination to maintain party control over it⁴⁵.

In May Heffernan arranged a country-wide series of meetings in order to establish local organising committees⁴⁶, at which also a name was agreed for the new movement: the 'Irish Democratic Youth Movement' was accepted "by a process of elimination, not because there was any great enthusiasm for it but because it seemed to raise less objections and problems than any other"⁴⁷. Local committees were set up in Dublin, Cork, South Down, North Armagh, Derry and Belfast⁴⁸, for each of which a liaison officer was to be appointed by the regional Comhairle Ceanntair of Sinn Féin⁴⁹.

The main duty of the local committees was to recruit a core of members for the new organisation prior to its scheduled inauguration in the autumn, following the Youth Committee's recommendation that there should be no public launching until a strong enough membership had been built to assure survival. Since this in effect involved the establishing of pilot branches without any formal national organisation, it was necessary to conceal them behind front names, such as the 'Belfast Youth Action Association'⁵⁰. At the Bodens-town Commemoration in June, the embryo movement's first chance for publicity, groups marched as 'Dublin Youth', 'Cork Youth', etc., agitating for specific issues⁵¹.

Although an image of autonomy was fostered now and later, care was taken to ensure that the organisation would be closely bound to the party. The aim was achieved largely by selective recruitment. Membership was at first almost wholly restricted to young party members and senior fiannai⁵², in the latter case following careful

screening especially in Belfast where loyalty and support for the new organisation were in doubt. Whereas recruitment to Fianna in Belfast had been on the initiative of the would-be members, in the case of the I.D.Y.M. it was the branch which approached the young person, local press advertisements 'inviting' membership being in fact issued to gain publicity not recruits⁵³. In Dublin recruiting was undertaken through the local Sinn Féin cumainn and was explicitly restricted to party members or "suitable outsiders" recommended by party members⁵⁴. Although in some other areas the procedure was more open, arrangements were such as to ensure that the core and dominant membership were committed and politically reliable⁵⁵.

The party also screened the nomination of local candidates for the forthcoming national executive, through the unobtrusive influence of the National Organising Committee. The latter reported to the area committees, recommending names from among those proposed locally and later advising as to the general composition of the executive⁵⁶. When the time came the entire body of ten comprised party members⁵⁷.

Recruiting for the local branches was hampered, as might have been expected, by opposition in Belfast - where loyalty to the existing organisation was intense - and elsewhere, where loyalties were weaker, by apathy. The Belfast liaison officer met with a resistance from young Republicans which he attributes to the obstructive response of the Fianna leadership in the city⁵⁸. He states that the girls' Battalion o/c explicitly ordered her members not to join the I.D.Y.M., that the boys' o/c insisted on members seeking his personal permission, and that both deliberately withheld information. On the other hand, discussion meetings were arranged for sluaite, to which representatives of the adult movement were invited.

And it is surely the case that if opposition had been merely drummed up by the leaders and not the spontaneous response of branch members, there would have been large scale transfer to the new movement once Fianna was disbanded.

In fact, transfer was minimal. At first, only about one boy in ten enrolled⁵⁹ while a high proportion of girls were lost especially in the housing schemes⁶⁰. Although ten branches were established, corresponding quite closely with existing slua catchment areas, probably no more than forty members enrolled in all⁶¹. Of the potential members lost, it appears that none joined the Provisional Fianna at this time. A small number defected to the I.R.S.P. A much larger group - most of the over-sixteens in fact - elected to join the Republican Clubs despite party discouragement, a move particularly demoralising to the younger members since the group included almost all the Belfast Fianna leadership. As a result, the greatest group merely drifted out of active Republicanism⁶². This appeared to confirm the claim that in the ghettos it was Fianna, and not a new 'political' movement, that the grass-roots members wanted.

That apathy would be the greatest problem in establishing branches in some other areas of the country was indicated from an early date by the reluctance of younger party members to serve on the local organising committees⁶³. The weak state or demise of Fianna in these centres set a ceiling on membership of the new movement. Cork could at first only muster seven members⁶⁴. In Dublin almost all of the small faithful remnant were held and by the autumn over forty members were organised in three branches⁶⁵. And at least half that number enrolled in North Armagh where again the new branch was largely composed of ex-fiannai from the Lurgan slua⁶⁶.

The pilot period before inauguration also allowed time and privacy to tackle two vital practical questions concerning the new movement. The first was that of confining it to a purely political role. It was one thing for the leadership to ordain the exclusion of all military activity and training. It was quite another for rank-and-file members especially in the North to accept it, given Fianna's traditions. The problem arose almost at once, during the first public appearance of any branch in Ireland, when the local leader paraded his members in military formation and enquired of Belfast visitors if they could help supply him with weapons⁶⁷. It emerged again in Newry, where the branch was composed of former senior fiannai who had operated not with the Newry Fianna slua itself but directly with the Army. It soon became apparent that they were not prepared to accept a solely political role or undertake mundane day-to-day political work. Shortly before the inaugural convention the local Republican Club in liaison with the I.D.Y.M. National Organising Committee stepped in and disbanded the branch⁶⁸.

The second question concerned the I.D.Y.M.'s precise relationship with the Republican movement, within the confines established by the Ard Fheis. There the delegates had agreed that the youth organisation should be "committed through its constitution to supporting . . . the policies and objectives of Sinn Féin, subject to the overall control and direction of the Sinn Féin Ard Chomhairle". But they had not specified whether its support of the party should be exclusive, nor what should be the form of party control. There still appeared to be room for debate, therefore, as to whether the I.D.Y.M. should be an integral part of the Republican movement, or an independent organisation of the broad left under the movement's effective control. The party leadership favoured the first arrange-

ment. The second had been recommended by the most influential of Fianna's leaders in Dublin (on the grounds that Republicanism was aiming to develop as a mass movement⁶⁹), and was now advocated by some branch members. The Derry branch among others proposed a broad left management for tactical reasons, seeing it as an opportunity to absorb the Connolly Youth Movement and create a stronger case for international recognition⁷⁰; it recommended eight outside bodies "which should be involved in setting up and running the I.D.Y.M."⁷¹.

The draft constitution prepared for the inaugural convention affirmed a commitment to support of Sinn Féin as demanded by the Ard Fheis. Its wording in effect upheld the first arrangement, in that it provided for a close association between youth movement and party, and while not formally specifying integration implied it through the exclusion of alternatives⁷².

Because the adult movement had prepared the ground through the National and Local Organising Committees and the youth cadres, the I.D.Y.M. emerged at its inaugural convention in October in effect a ready fashioned organisation. This fact was clear on convention day itself. The resolutions submitted by branches followed closely in scope, theme and spirit the draft Manifesto which had been prepared in liaison with the party and circulated several weeks previously⁷³. The draft Constitution was accepted almost in toto by delegates. Of seven amendments put forward against it six were defeated. The defeat of a Belfast amendment to include a "Fianna Eireann organiser" on area committees was particularly significant, in that it provided further evidence of the I.D.Y.M.'s determination to be actually and publicly dissociated from Fianna. The only amendment passed was for the minor addition of branch organiser to

the list of local officers⁷⁴. Only one resolution from the whole agenda failed to win a majority, and that a proposal that branches adopt the names of Republican heroes after the practice of Fianna sluaite and Sinn Féin cumainn⁷⁵. Since it ran counter to the I.D.Y.M.'s image of independence from the party and distinctness from its predecessor, its defeat was itself a victory for orthodoxy. Every other resolution was orthodox, predictable, and duly passed.

In all the business of the meeting was strikingly routine and predetermined. It was possible to get the foundations exactly right within the democratic process. Indeed, it might with some justice be suggested that the prime function of the inaugural meeting was the visible and public operation of the democratic process. In this sense October 1976 marked the formal foundation of the I.D.Y.M. and its first shop window, but May marked its real foundation.

TERMINATION AND SURVIVAL

The Ard Fheis resolution had not specified at what point Fianna should become an organisation for the under-fourteens. It was tacitly assumed that it should retain its existing form until the replacement had been established, and that the period between May and October would be a time of running down. The latter date would mark the termination of Fianna in its traditional form.

In most of the areas where it still functioned the dissolution of branches was effected willingly enough. The Dublin sluaite were disbanded in the spring⁷⁶; Derry had already accepted re-organisation⁷⁷; the branch in Cork had collapsed the previous year and had not been re-established, though younger boys still met regularly of their own accord at the Thomas Ashe Hall⁷⁸; the recently founded slua at Warrenpoint was closed during the summer, though

arrests rather than the party directive were the cause of its demise⁷⁹.

Voluntary dissolution of the Belfast branches could hardly be counted on, in view of their vitality and the opposition of their leaders to any successor. The senior movement itself therefore took "decisive action" to disband the city Battalions immediately after the meetings in May. In the words of those principally detailed to undertake the task, "the heavy hand was used"⁸⁰. The Brigade was informed that henceforth it ceased to exist as such, and that if sluaite elected to continue operating they should do so under a name other than that of Fianna. The city Battalions convened a meeting at the Cyprus Street headquarters in June to consider their position. At the meeting the delegates, representing the command staffs and every slua in the city, accepted the party instruction and dissolved their organisation⁸¹.

Nonetheless, Fianna for the over-fourteens did not disappear entirely. The long-established Newry slua continued to meet with a ceiling age of twenty years and was permitted to do so because military training and activities were strictly excluded⁸². The more recent branch at Downpatrick also survived, and there may have been several other more or less formal groups in existence by the end of the year⁸³. In addition, younger members of several Belfast sluaite remained together as they grew older, so that by 1978 perhaps half a dozen branches had a membership age range of 13-16 years. The Lower Falls group had some thirty members, boys and girls⁸⁴. Several of them had sampled the I.D.Y.M. but found its meetings boring and incomprehensible. As they saw it, Fianna was "a part of history" but the new organisation was "doing away with history". It was their hope to have Fianna officially reinstated and a command

structure established for the city. To date the local party cumainn, aware of the existence of these sluaite, had allocated a senior party member, B.McK., as their overall supervisor and local members to provide informal supervision, advice and political work.

In all, therefore, a number of areas survived or re-formed spontaneously, and each in its own way exemplified the response of young people to the Republican ideal, a response loyal to the movement but defiant of its policy on organised youth. They exemplified also the continuity that sentiment has often lent to Fianna at times when formal structure has been lacking, providing a momentum to bridge gaps in formal organisation, to outlive its temporary abandonment or to emerge spontaneously in its absence. Such momentum and continuity 'of the heart' are to be seen as both a cause and an effect of the phenomenon of 'the unbroken tradition' so deep rooted in Republicanism.

In a word, boys, girls and leaders in a few areas did not accept the end of Fianna in 1976. They maintained tenuous continuities then, which have been expanded in the interim.

The question therefore inevitably arises as to their standing. Can they properly be called 'Fianna Eireann'? It is true that Fianna agreed in 1973 to accept all policies and decisions of the party, and that the party voted for its discontinuance in 1975. But that decision in fact at least arguably gave it a loophole to survive. For though the intention of the 1975 resolution was clear enough the wording could hardly have been less decisive - "The Ard Fheis believes that Fianna should continue as a scouting organisation aimed primarily at those under fourteen" (present author's emphasis). The distinction between spirit and letter, which might have appeared academic at the time, is one to which the

survivors can appeal in arguing their validity.

In fact, the party has made no move to clarify the 1975 decision, and is clearly prepared to accept the position as it stands. It has effective control over both the I.D.Y.M. and the remnant of Fianna, and though it has had it in its power to terminate the latter at any time it has not done so. In this it has been pragmatic. While giving priority in terms of finance and resources to the new organisation⁸⁵, it has been obliged to accept the genuine desires of some young Republicans, despite its own political instincts. If it does not believe that Fianna is meeting their needs it recognises that in the meantime it is meeting their wants. And as a party seeking to become a mass movement it will not choose to alienate any section of its youth while it can control them.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Tony Heffernan interview.
2. Some Ideas on the Formation of a Revolutionary Youth Movement, typewritten, spring 1974; lent to the author by the General Secretary, Sinn Féin the Workers' Party.
3. Ibid., p.3: "The new organisation should not be called Fianna to emphasise its completely different nature from the old one, and because the name Fianna brings to mind in peoples' ears trainees for the I.R.A."
4. Ibid., p.2.
5. The Formation of a Youth Movement, typewritten, n.d., but autumn 1974, same source as previous document.
6. Tony Heffernan interview stated that this was consciously the case. The Y.C.L.s derived their broad principles of 'control by the party with independent structure', and 'engagement in youth issues, particularly education' from the works of Lenin - specifically from The Youth International, a Review, 1916, and The Tasks of the Youth Leagues, 1920; in V. I. Lenin on Youth (Moscow, 1970), pp.171 ff. and 235 ff.
7. Tony Heffernan interview.
8. Ibid. In 1973 the Official Republican movement set up a highly effective International Affairs Bureau, which maintained regular contacts with organisations abroad. The Bureau's bi-monthly journal Eolas was by the autumn of 1977 being received by over 2,000 organisations, individuals and government departments in sixty countries (Eolas, September-October 1977). Many of the contacts were made through the Union of Students in Ireland (U.S.I.), in which the movement had a strong footing. This background gives insight into the strong student/education factor in the movement's developing concept of a revolutionary youth movement.
9. Report on the Work of the Youth Committee for An Ard Chomhairle, written up by T. Heffernan, 1975. The report also used written evidence received by the committee.
10. Report, p.1. In the Twenty-six Counties the organisation was now confined to Dublin, Cork and Dundalk.
11. Committee Working Notes, passim.
12. Report, p.1.
13. Working Notes, p.5.
14. Cf. Working Notes, p.4: Derry meeting - "Nobody felt very strongly that Fianna should be retained and there would not appear to be any resistance to the idea of a new organisation."

15. G.McD. interview.
16. K.O'K. interview.
17. Working Notes, p.3.
18. Report, p.2.
19. Ibid.
20. Ibid, pp.2-3.
Veto powers to cover the appointment of national officers were recommended, "if this would not be considered undue infringement of their autonomy".
21. Both politically and militarily the I.R.S.P. has subsequently moved closer to the Provisionals, particularly with the escalation of the H Block campaign.
22. I.R.A. officer Seán Fox shot dead 25/2/75; volunteer Paul Crawford shot dead 12/4/75; Belfast I.R.A. o/c Liam McMillen assassinated 28/4/75; Sinn Féin national organiser Seán Garland critically wounded 1/3/75; Ard Chomhairle members Cathal Goulding and Mick Ryan bombed after Fox's funeral, etc.
23. Tony Heffernan interview. Heffernan expressed the view in 1976, but the point was earlier made to the author shortly after the military confrontation with the I.R.S.P., by Ard Chomhairle member Gerry Doherty (verbal statement, 6/6/75), indicating that this was the current opinion and not merely a later rationalisation.
24. P.C. interview; G.McD. interview.
25. The 'feud' broke out after a co-ordinated attack by the Provisional I.R.A. in Belfast on 29 October. One member of the Official Republican movement, Robert Elliman, was killed on the first day, and Tom Berry, John Kelly and John Brown within several days. For the most detailed account of these incidents and others, see The United Irishman, November 1975.
26. P.C. interview. In retrospect the fears seem completely unfounded. The Belfast o/c insists that there was no possibility of a breakaway (D.R. interview).
27. Cathal Goulding interview.
28. Tony Heffernan interview.
29. Sinn Féin Ard Fheis, January 1976, Clár, resolution number 47.
30. Resolutions 48-56. Details of Ard Fheis from Tony Heffernan interview.
31. No voting figures available - votes not counted because the show of hands revealed a large minority.

32. A.McM. interview. Seamus Burns joined Fianna at the age of ten in 1931, transferring to the I.R.A. in 1938. After being twice imprisoned he was shot while attempting to escape from custody in February 1944 and died in the Royal Victoria Hospital. Tom Williams had joined Fianna's Clonard slua in 1932 and transferred to the I.R.A. at the age of seventeen in 1939. Captured with five others in a gun battle in which he was wounded and a policeman killed, and believing himself to be dying, he took sole responsibility for the officer's death; he was hanged in September 1942. Terence Perry of Ton Street was the same age as Burns and Williams and served in Fianna during the same years. He fought in England in the 1939 Campaign, was interned and died in Parkhurst in 1942. Details from Belfast's Patriot Graves, Belfast Branch National Graves Association (Belfast, 1963), and Souvenir Booklet for Unveiling of County Antrim Memorial, Milltown Cemetery, Belfast Branch National Graves Association (Belfast, n.d.).
33. P.C. interview.
34. Letter A.McM. to the author, 31/3/1978 . . . "I believe they were the nearest thing, especially in Belfast, to a revolutionary organisation, politically aware and otherwise prepared".
35. P.C. interview.
36. D.R. interview. Several resolutions were ignored by G.H.Q. For security reasons not all Ard Fheis resolutions were recorded in the Clár and Report.
37. P.C. interview.
38. Ibid.
39. D.R. interview.
40. K.O'K. interview.
41. D.R. interview.
42. G.McD. interview.
43. Tony Heffernan interview.
44. Circular letter from Organising Committee to correspondents abroad, issued via the International Affairs Bureau, Sinn Féin, September 1976.
45. The United Irishman, April 1976, described the decision to establish the new youth organisation as "one of the most important but least publicised decisions" of the Ard Fheis.
46. Notes of Meetings, typewritten, May 1976; I.D.Y.M. files, Sinn Féin the Workers' Party, Gardiner Place.
47. Ibid., p.2.

48. Circular of the Dublin Organising Committee, 20/7/1976, I.D.Y.M. files, Gardiner Place. The United Irishman, July 1976, showed a certain public optimism in claiming the existence of a committee for Galway and predicting committees in Kilkenny/Waterford and Limerick.
49. Notes of Meetings, p.4.
50. G.McD. interview.
51. The United Irishman, July 1976.
52. Philip Moran interview.
53. G.McD. interview.
54. Circular letter to all Dublin Sinn Féin cumainn from P. Moran, Convenor, I.D.Y.M. Dublin Organising Committee, 20/7/1976. Placing trusted party members in newly formed branches was considered a normal tactic by the Sinn Féin leadership, and indeed the procedure was commonly used when founding new cumainn of the adult party. In the case of the I.D.Y.M., it was especially useful in giving branches a leaven of organisational experience (Tony Heffernan interview).
55. Philip Moran interview, Brian Lynch interview.
56. Seán Mac Cartaigh interview.
57. Philip Moran interview. The full executive should have comprised eleven members; since no branch had been established in Connacht the place of the representative of the province was left unfilled meantime.
58. G.McD. interview.
59. D.R. interview: Of approximately 200 senior fiannai only about 20 joined the I.D.Y.M.
60. K.O'K. interview.
61. The author does not have membership figures for autumn 1976. One year later, the Republican Clubs' I.D.Y.M. liaison officer stated that there were only twenty paid-up members in Belfast, but anticipated that late registrations would double this figure before the 1977 A.G.M. (G.McD. interview, October 1977). Also, B.H. (interview, autumn 1977) reckoned up to seventy members in the city, thirty to forty of them being "core members".
62. B.H. interview; K.O'K. interview.
63. Notes of Meetings, p.5.
64. Brian Lynch interview.
65. Philip Moran interview.

66. Ibid.
67. P.C. interview.
68. Tony Heffernan interview.
69. Lám Mac an Ultaigh interview.
70. Letter of Ciaran Mullen, Derry branch secretary, to General Secretary of Sinn Féin, 4/5/1976, I.D.Y.M. files, Gardiner Place.
71. Document accompanying the above letter. The proposed organisations were: the Connolly Youth Movement, Irish Communist Party, Sinn Féin, the Labour Left, I.C.T.U., Irish Union of Students (N.U.S. in the North), Irish Union of School Students (N.U.S.S. in the North), and the I.R.A.
72. "The Irish Democratic Youth Movement recognises that Sinn Féin is the only political party capable of leading the Irish people to the Democratic Socialist Republic . . . the I.D.Y.M. recognises the political leadership of the Sinn Féin Ard Chomhairle and pledges itself to co-operate with that organisation . . . No member of the I.D.Y.M. can be a member of any other political party or organisation, other than Sinn Féin, except with the permission of the National Executive": Draft Constitution, articles 3a, 3b, 4c.
73. The draft Manifesto (October 1976) was set out in sections as follows: Employment, Education, Sectarianism, International solidarity, Culture and Recreation, Young people and the Law. The Convention Agenda was divided into sections with identical titles and similar scope and order: Employment (resolutions 1-4), Education (5-8), International solidarity (9-11), the Law (12-14), Culture and Recreation (15-17), Finance (18-19), Miscellaneous (20-27; 30-31), Constitution (28-29; 32-37).
74. Resolutions 28, 29, 33-37 defeated; resolution 32 carried: I.D.Y.M. Inaugural Conference, List of Resolutions, annotated copy, I.D.Y.M. files, Gardiner Place.
75. List of Resolutions; resolution 26, Lenadoon Branch.
76. Tony Heffernan interview.
77. Notes of Meetings, Derry meeting 28/8/1975.
78. Notes of Meetings, Cork meeting 30/8/1975; and Brian Lynch interview.
79. S.F. interview.
80. G.McD. interview; P.C. interview.
81. D.R. interview.
82. S.F. interview.

83. Ibid. Sluaite existed in Dungannon and Wexford in 1977, the first appearing at Bodentown in June. A Finglas Branch arrived at Bodentown in 1978. In every case the oldest members were nearer twenty than fourteen. They appear to have developed spontaneously and perhaps even their own leaders could not easily fix the dates of their foundation.
84. Based on interviews with Patsy C., one of the branch supervisors, and two unnamed members of the Lower Falls group.
85. Letter Tony Heffernan to the author, 29/3/1976.

CONCLUSION

Though Countess Markievicz and Bulmer Hobson shared in the foundation of Fianna in 1909 they certainly did not share the same vision of its future role. She saw it as providing an antidote to the loyalist education of the day, and that of the Baden-Powell Scouts in particular, imitating the English organisation for the purpose of de-anglicisation. He recognised its potential value to the I.R.B. and envisaged using it to further the Brotherhood's aims. In this sense its co-founders represent the two very different traditions - of informal youth education and of physical force - from which it sprang. (This is not to say, of course, that the Countess was averse to the use of force in politics, or Hobson unaware of the educative role of youth organisations.)

A hybrid in its conception, Fianna revealed its latent duality almost at once, for while its Constitution specified a programme of physical and cultural education¹ and its Code and Motto set before boys a moral ideal, within two years weapon training had been introduced and the organisation was being used to train officers for an adult army. The use of arms was restricted as far as possible to senior members who thus became in effect a separate, identifiable section within Fianna, giving it an organisational duality corresponding to its duality of purpose. The two roles - the one idealistic and concerned with the development of the boy, the other pragmatic and concerned with the training of an army - remained throughout its history in uneasy co-existence.

Fianna was founded as an independent body within the separatist movement, there being at the time no dominant party or existing army with which it could be associated. Its Constitution in fact stated

that it should remain independent of all parties, its members pledging allegiance only to Ireland and their own superior officers. But this original vision of an autonomous 'Boys' Republic' evaporated as it fell under the control of the I.R.B. from 1912 and established an informal partnership with the Volunteers the following year. Again the Countess and Hobson may be said to represent the impulses towards independence and external control respectively, though ironically it was Hobson who first warned of the dangers of outside interference, after he had himself fallen foul of the machinations of the Brotherhood.

After the Civil War Fianna again declared itself independent of the I.R.A. and all political parties in the hope of regaining its old autonomy while yet remaining under the umbrella of Republicanism². But if it thought to enjoy the twin benefits of association and independence it in fact enjoyed neither, for like all other sections of the movement at this time it fell under the control of the Army Council, maintained in its case by the practice of dual membership and by direct or tacit selection of its leaders.

It was thus Fianna's fortune to be taken over by a movement which it had itself helped to create. Not having been originally designed as the youth wing of any adult organisation had left it particularly vulnerable since its relationship with the movement had developed ad hoc. It had also made the question of relationship a matter of recurrent dispute, for there were always those in Fianna who regretted and feared control by forces outside it which could dictate and alter its role. They considered its constitutional independence and its role of educating boys in an ideal to be crucial, and resisted any development that threatened to diminish either.

These fears were the basis of almost all Fianna's disputes with the movement over the years. They were behind Hobson's warning at the 1915 Ard Fheis, the reluctance of some officers to be absorbed within the 'pragmatic' I.R.A. in 1920-1, the restoration of independence and a 'citizenship' emphasis in the Constitution of 1925, the claims in the 1930s that Fianna's needs were not understood by the I.R.A., Bell's attempts to re-assert constitutional independence in 1949, and Kelly's confrontation with the Army in the 1950s.

For its part the senior movement appeared to view the question of relationship as a matter of control only - and that often negatively, in terms of its own public image - and failed to recognise that it was intimately bound to the question of role. It therefore rarely gave serious consideration to Fianna's potential as a youth movement; it controlled but it did not foster; from the first, in short, its attitude was one of neglect³.

The problem was never adequately solved, and was probably not amenable to solution short of the complete integration of Fianna within the I.R.A. (as obtained in 1920-1), its complete independence from it, or the subordination of both to party political authority, steps that the movement was not prepared to take.

Fianna is thus to be seen and judged as an organisation within a larger movement. During successive periods of its history not only was it controlled and its role dictated by decisions taken within the senior movement, it also took from it the most significant facets of its character.

In the first place, it took from it its lasting military mentality. The "heresy of the cult of armed men"⁴ that had developed during the Anglo-Irish War and the Truce - in part a conceptual heritage of Pearse, in part a residue of I.R.B. elitism, and in part

a deep suspicion of politics in the minds of fighting men⁵ - remained and hardened after 1923. The I.R.A. dissociated itself from Sinn Féin and for forty years remained a non-political, indeed an anti-political organisation, and under its dominance all sections of the movement took a similar position. So Fianna taught boys the argument of force alone and the military but rarely the political or social milestones of Ireland's struggle for independence. Between the short-lived Young Republican Party established by Fianna members and others in Belfast in 1913 and the developments of the 1970s it showed no interest in open political or social activity. Its military emphasis and its reputation as the cadet force of the I.R.A. remained, so long as the semi-secret military wing remained supreme within the Republican movement.

Again, as a part of that movement and serving the same working-class families Fianna inevitably also shared its poverty. It enjoyed neither the patronage nor the facilities from which its Baden-Powell and Catholic rivals benefited and had a constant struggle to survive. While it most obviously lacked material resources perhaps even more damaging was its inability to afford an adequate organisational infrastructure, particularly after the discontinuation of its national secretariat in 1940⁶. Pride in poverty, on the argument that "the rich are ever on the side of empire", had a limited attraction, and as rivals thrived in an Ireland of rising expectations⁷ Fianna became second-rate and increasingly unable to compete in the eyes of many young people.

It was its association with the I.R.A., also, that made it a suspect organisation, outlawed in Northern Ireland and twice proscribed in the Free State. But whereas its illegal status in the Six Counties turned it into a secret body closely tied to its own

local communities and the Army, its status in the Twenty-six - legal but under threat - prompted its progressive emasculation to the point of its sometimes being barely distinguishable from any other scouting organisation.

Being part of the movement in fact fragmented Fianna as a national body. For in addition to the North-South division the widespread practice of dual membership set slua officers problems of allegiance as between their own Headquarters and the local I.R.A., creating an organisation of local strength and central weakness whose organs of national authority were often more a formula than a reality, ignored, bypassed or challenged by the more powerful area commands⁸.

On the other hand it took from the movement the more fundamental unity of the Republican 'family'. It was a family bonded in many cases by actual blood ties and by a generational cycle of membership in which local Republican dynasties were perpetuated through the ranks of the Scouts; one which gave members a powerful sense of one-ness, reinforced by an awareness of their unique mission and of external hostility⁹; one whose solidarity was greatest during Fianna's earliest and latter years when the movement was a struggling minority.

Finally, Fianna's dependence upon the movement was self-perpetuating in that external control and the recurrent loss of its best officers to the adult section acted as disincentives to initiative. One must conclude therefore that on balance the effects of its association with the movement were stultifying and restrictive. Its membership of the Republican family prompted a certain introspection and insularity that inhibited outward development; its military emphasis at the expense of open political activity also minimised its expansion beyond its own circle (just as it led to a

gradual loss of popular support in the case of the I.R.A.); and its poverty, fragmentation and legal position all limited its scope for independent growth.

The overall pattern of Republicanism in the first six decades of this century reveals that it flourished most during military campaigns and suggests that, lacking either a clear role or mass support in times of peace, it sought to create the one and generate the other by initiating states of war in Ireland. Its campaigns were certainly undertaken with these two aims in view, and each one gave it a new impetus and its volunteers a new *raison d'être*¹⁰. But of them all only the War for Independence could be considered successful in itself, and it is significant that in this one case the Irish people's support for the movement, though generated by the war itself, was largely built upon Sinn Féin's successful political preparation that preceded it. After the War for Independence none of the campaigns (lacking as they did political preparation and relevance) succeeded in winning more than lukewarm and transient public approval; none, though they rocked governments, brought the movement's own aims any closer to realisation; each indeed left it weaker than before. This was in essence the problem confronting Republicans in the post-Civil War era.

Fianna had played an integral part in the movement's struggle between 1913-23, and like many twentieth century youth movements whose appeal to the young has been greatest in times of crisis, it had enjoyed a dramatic rise in membership during this period of its 'emergency role'¹¹. But the defeat of 1923 marked the end of its military participation and its return to the preparatory, educational role asserted in its Constitution, teaching Republican ideals as well as scouting and citizenship in the manner of Baden-Powell.

Henceforth, in the South at least, the average member lived on the promise of future not present participation and was 'found jobs to do for the I.R.A.' meantime to justify his existence. In time, and particularly after the campaigns of 1939 and 1956 in which Fianna did not take part, the credibility of its genuine involvement in the business of Republicanism inevitably wore thin. More rarely was it able to hold the interest of its members through adolescence; in many areas membership came to be thought of as a natural phase for small boys and recruitment was reduced to those whose family background made them automatic recruits.

In parts of the North the grievances of the nationalist minority, Fianna's own illegal status, and the recurrent need for community defence perpetuated something akin to its earlier emergency role and with it a correspondingly high appeal and sense of purpose. This became more noticeably the case from 1969 in areas of Belfast, Derry and elsewhere when the involvement of whole communities in resistance required and justified Fianna's wholesale commitment.

In the Official-Provisional split that arose directly from the events of 1969 the two sides represented the re-emergence and crystallisation of two distinct emphases within Republicanism. They represented also two contrary 'solutions' to the problem of the movement's ineffectiveness in the post-1923 era. The Provisionals' solution, based on the premise that previous failure had been military failure, has been to mount a militarily successful campaign. That of the Officials, on the premise that failure hitherto had been political, has been to build a popular political movement viable in peace or war, one that would continue to have a purpose "should the North come in with the Republic tomorrow"¹²; they have done so by

abandoning the military campaign and developing as a radical party concerned with political and social issues.

As a result, Provisional Fianna has to date continued to play the military 'emergency role' of 1971, particularly in the North, and as such has flourished within its limits. It will presumably continue to thrive and attract recruits, as will the Provisionals as a whole, so long as they can maintain the momentum of war. By their ceasefire of 1972, on the other hand, the Officials in effect shut the door on Fianna, which - because of its traditionally military emphasis, authority structure and image and its illegal status in the North - they had decided could never be made a suitable youth wing for the developing party. A political youth movement of the I.D.Y.M. type was the logical extension of their strategy into the youth sector.

It remains to be asked, how effective was Fianna as an organisation for Republican youth? For the years 1909-16 the fact of the Rising stands as sufficient answer to the question. In the period 1916-21 it developed into a highly successful fighting force (though a less effective recruiting ground for the Volunteers), but in the eyes of its own leadership culpably failed in its educational role. In the post-1923 era it continued to provide a general and specific training for the senior movement, giving members experience of discipline and officers a grounding in command and weaponry. But much of its programme, in particular the camping lore and drill, was in fact now more or less irrelevant to the I.R.A., who preferred to train their own recruits from scratch¹³. Its lack of any genuine participatory role in the movement at this time also lessened its effectiveness in preparing boys for the adult section since it gave them little opportunity to practise, think through and make mature

decisions concerning their Republicanism. Its success in recruiting boys to the adult ranks varied greatly: transfer was remarkably low in Dublin from the 1930s onwards, though higher in Cork, Belfast and other centres where closer ties were maintained with the Army. But it would perhaps not have been significantly less in the absence of an organised youth wing.

Because Fianna's role was never defined and therefore to some extent open to local interpretation, because it in fact played a diversity of roles, and because much of what it achieved was not measurable against any objective standard, the task of assessing its effectiveness is not an easy one. The researcher is thrown back upon general impressions, of standards and morale within the organisation and of its likely influence upon boys, as being perhaps as valid a touchstone of effectiveness as any more measurable criteria.

Those who remembered its early, pioneering years have remarked upon its strict standards and atmosphere of serious purpose, and claimed that in this lay its appeal and influence on boys¹⁴. And the available evidence suggests that in different circumstances and perhaps for different reasons standards remained high through the war years and the first decade of the Free State. But from the mid 1930s a distinct decline was recorded, coinciding with the decline in membership, and despite a brief recovery in the late 1940s the organisation never regained its earlier excellence. In the following twenty years sluaite in the South encountered growing difficulty in enforcing and sustaining the old standards, as is indicated perhaps by the increased frequency of courts martial at this time. With recruiting slack local officers could not afford to be as selective or demanding as before, and at the same time the tenuous survival of some branches prevented Headquarters from en-

forcing the standards it would have wished. Fianna remained a powerful Republican experience for some members, no doubt, but for many it was now "more like a youth club"¹⁵ that made few demands upon them and perhaps exerted little deep influence upon them. Standards were certainly maintained more successfully in the Northern sluaite, and particularly in Belfast. The young people there relished the semi-military conditions and the local status of membership, gaining from it an altogether more potent and dynamic experience and evincing a high degree of loyalty in return¹⁶.

The overall impression, nevertheless, is that the organisation was latterly unable to sustain its earlier effectiveness. It had diminished in size and influence certainly, and probably in quality¹⁷, before finally being caught stranded by the changing tide of the movement. One is tempted to suggest that in some areas it might have been disbanded a quarter of a century before it was without appreciable loss.

Why then did it last so long? - for until the 1970s apparently no-one ever questioned that there should be a Fianna. The answer lies partly perhaps in the fact that since its role in the movement was undefined its effectiveness was not readily open to disproof; partly also in the excellent work still being done in individual sluaite. But, more important, it lies in Fianna's symbolic value to Republicans¹⁸. By organising and training the young the movement fulfilled its pledge 'to keep faith with the past and hand on the torch', and as its own fortunes declined its need became the greater to prove its continued appeal to the coming generation¹⁹. Fianna parading on the streets helped Republicans to believe in themselves; and therefore - faute de mieux - its existence was considered justified. The attitude appears to explain the peculiar combination of attachment and neglect in which it was held by the

adult section over the years.

Recognition of Fianna's symbolic value must modify any rigorous conclusions as to its effectiveness. Its survival beyond 1976 is after all evidence of its undoubted significance to some boys, and of depths of loyalty to its ideal that should not lightly be ignored.

Perhaps the most that can finally be said is that because it was so closely tied to Republicanism from an early date and took from the association so much of its character, Fianna was inevitably what it was : for most of its history it was about as buoyant, attractive, influential and effective as the movement of which it was a part.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. The "military exercises" referred to in the original Constitution implied no more than the drill that formed a recognised part of the programmes of contemporary British uniformed youth organisations.
2. This independence remained a specific article of the Constitution until an emendment passed at the 1971 Ard Fheis gave recognition to the authority of the Official Republican movement.
3. Liam Mellows, whose intimate experience went back to 1911, stated that "Fianna never got proper help or encouragement" - Letter to Austin Stack, printed in Irish Independent, 22/9/1922.
4. The phrase is Peadar O'Donnell's - O'Donnell, P. The Gates Flew Open (London, 1932; Cork, 1965 ed.), p.75.
5. Re Pearse, see pp.77 f. above.
Concerning the glamour of conspiracy that the movement took from the I.R.B. cf., O'Donnell, P. The Gates Flew Open, p.75; also Greaves, C. D. The Life and Times of James Connolly (London, 1961; London, 1972 ed.), passim.
The Volunteers' suspicion of the politicians is well documented; concerning its perpetuation into the anti-Treaty I.R.A. see, eg., McInerney, M. Peadar O'Donnell, Irish Social Rebel (Dublin, 1974), p.72.
6. The office of National Secretary was established at Fianna's inaugural meeting (1909), abandoned with the adoption of a military structure in 1915, re-established in 1925. It went into abeyance during the collapse of Fianna in 1940 and was never formally re-established. Thereafter most secretarial functions were performed by the Chief Scout or Adjutant General.
7. The Scout Association of Ireland had a membership of 8,988 at the time of the author's enquiry (1976) - Denis Meyer interview. This represented a rise of over 200% in the previous decade. In 1977 the Catholic Scouts numbered about 23,000 members, again almost three times the figure of 1967 - Stephen Spain interview.
8. The I.R.A. itself also had a tradition of local autonomy originating in the conditions of the Anglo-Irish War. Organisational authority was also something of a formula in many cases in the I.R.A., belying the reality - cf. Coogan, T. P. The I.R.A. (London, 1970), pp.42 f.
9. Quite similar in-group/out-group awareness and solidarity, with similar side effects, typically characterises 'extreme', minority youth movements - cf., Keniston, K. Young Radicals - notes on committed youth (New York, 1968), pp.175 ff.

10. The War for Independence was the saving of the Volunteers, for "in the circumstances of the time the organisation might have crumbled, the creeping paralysis of inactivity might easily have killed it"; local commands virtually coerced G.H.Q. into giving reluctant sanction for it - O'Donoghue, F. No Other Law, the story of Liam Lynch and the Irish Republican Army, 1916-1923 (Dublin, 1954), p.44. The lack of a campaign in the 1930s imposed a strain on the I.R.A., which was eased by its confrontations with the Blueshirts. Peadar O'Donnell described the Blueshirts as "a godsend" to the 50,000 plus volunteers with nothing to do - McInerney, M. Peadar O'Donnell, p.156.
That there was an element of a campaign for a campaign's sake in the I.R.A.'s declarations of 1939 and 1956, see Bell, J. Bowyer The Secret Army (London, 1970; London, 1972 ed.), pp.175 ff., and 329 ff.
11. Numerous examples could be cited of the appeal of youth movements in times of national crisis. One close to home would be the cadet forces of Britain which enjoyed a dramatic rise in membership during the second World War because their role made members "publicly wanted" and gave them "a real initiation into adult life" - Barnes, L. J. Youth Service in an English County (London, 1945), pp.70 ff. Other more celebrated examples, from contrary ideologies, are the Hitler Jugend before and during the war, and the Soviet Komsomol after the Revolution. The enormous appeal of the former, the extreme demands made upon members and their astonishing courage in the late stages of the war, were all based upon the boys' genuine participation in the aims of the Third Reich - Koch, H. W. The Hitler Youth (London, 1975), espec. pp.95 and 240 ff., and Stachura, P. D. Nazi Youth in the Weimar Republic (Santa Barbara, 1975), passim. The ranks of the Young Communist League swelled greatly during the war that followed the Revolution, only to fall sharply when peace brought a crisis of morale, and even suicide, to some members; membership figures rose again in the late 1920s when the urgent national construction projects gave the organisation a new 'emergency role' - see Josephson, E. Political Youth Organisations in Europe 1900-1950, unpubl. Ph.D. thesis, University of California, 1959, p.261 f.; also Volkov, Y. E. et al. Soviet Youth and Socialism, transl. Vechor-Scherbovich, S. (Moscow, 1974), pp.217 ff. Volkov states that the demands made upon the young in crisis satisfied their "yearning for daring feats".
12. Tony Heffernan interview.
13. Cathal Goulding interview.
14. Cf., eg., An Phoblacht, 31/12/1926: "There was an atmosphere of serious purpose and sincerity about the early organisation which was attractive to boyhood . . . every parade night there was strict inspection for cleanliness and neatness; no slackness of morals was tolerated . . . etc."
15. Seoirse Dearle interview. Lám Mac an Ultaigh (interview) stated that leaders in the 1960s "couldn't be choosy about the boys we got and were in no position to stretch them".

16. Cf., for different periods between 1930 and 1976, L.F. interview, Joe Atkinson interview, A.McM. interview, D.R. interview.

17. The same point was made to the author concerning the I.R.A. and the movement as a whole by Robert Russell (interview). Well qualified through personal and family involvement to make a longitudinal judgement, Russell remarked upon the high calibre of the earlier movement and - for instance - the number of men of literary talent in its ranks, and pointed to a general decline in the overall quality of membership over the years.

18. The I.R.A. also, of course, has had symbolic as well as actual significance in Irish political events - cf., Williams, T. D. 'De Valera in Power', in McManus, F.(ed.) The Years of the Great Test (Cork, 1967), p.37: "The I.R.A. merits separate treatment, not as a powerful political movement but as a symbol of forces, emotions and ideals associated with the whole history of Ireland since the Fenians . . .".

19. The need is not only felt by struggling minority movements. The notion that a youth wing is necessary as evidence of the vitality of the party is commonplace. Cf., in the British context Layton-Henry, Z. Political Youth Organisations in Britain. A comparative study of the Young Conservatives and the Labour Party Young Socialists, Unpubl. Ph.D. thesis, Birmingham University, 1973, p.264. Layton-Henry argues that because the party youth wing plays this role its continued existence is vital irrespective of its tangible success or failure. It is assured of continued if negative support, because "parties dare not publicly dissociate themselves from youth" - Layton-Henry, Z. 'Labour's Lost Youth', J.Contemp. Hist., 11, 1976, pp.275-308.

Appendix I. FIANNA OUTWITH IRELAND

Sporadic references to Fianna outwith Ireland occur in press and other sources of the Republican movement, from the first year of the organisation's existence to the present day. In almost every case expatriate sluaite have been established in urban areas with large Irish emigrant communities.

The first such was formed in Glasgow in the spring of 1910 by Joseph Robinson, a former member of Hobson's Belfast Fianna of 1902¹. Within four years it had grown to 150 members and been divided into two troops, of which the larger was Slua Willie Nelson. Both were represented at the 1914 Ard Fheis in Dublin². Between 1913 and the Rising senior members were involved in raiding for explosives and their transportation to Dublin, for which several were arrested in 1916 and Robinson himself received a ten year prison sentence at the High Court in Edinburgh the following year³. The branches probably ceased meeting about the time of his arrest.

In spring 1914 Fianna founder-member and former assistant national secretary Michael Lonergan emigrated to the U.S.A., where the following year he established an honorary support organisation for the separatist movement under the title Fianna League of America⁴. It was perhaps from this adult body that he later developed the Republican Boys' Brigade that formed a guard of honour for Countess Markievicz at Madison Square Garden during her propaganda tour in May 1922⁵.

Fianna was re-established in Glasgow after the Civil War by Seamus Reader, a member of the pre-Rising slua. Reader attended the 1927 Ard Fheis as branch delegate, where he was co-opted onto the national Ard Choiste⁶. A second overseas representative co-opted at the same meeting was the o/c of the recently founded slua in

Liverpool⁷. This was a time of resurgence of Republicanism after the defeat of 1923 and the national secretary's Ard Fheis report referred to the possibility of further development in Britain. One other branch was in fact established in 1930, in Peckham, London, where it was "confidently expected" that a Division would be in existence before the end of the year⁸. In the event there was no such expansion in London or anywhere else, nor any further reference to the Peckham slua itself. The Liverpool branch survived for a decade, a small but thriving troop which paraded at the Gaelic League Hall in Wood Street and sent representatives to several Ard Fheis-eanna⁹. But it remained the only one in England¹⁰.

With the decline of the Republican movement in Ireland in the later 1930s, its virtual extinction during the following decade, and its gradual recovery in the 1950s, no record exists of Fianna activity in Britain for over twenty years after 1936. But in the new political climate kindled by the 1956 Border campaign several sluaite were founded by young emigrant activists with Fianna backgrounds in Ireland. The first of them was organised in London by Seán Ó Cionnaith in 1959¹¹, and drilled at Southwark Town Hall with a membership of twelve. After parading in uniform at a Sinn Féin demonstration in contravention of English law¹² it was forced by police pressure to adopt associate membership status in 1961, abandoning public appearances in favour of fund-raising for the home organisation. The slua lapsed briefly with Ó Cionnaith's recall to Ireland as national organiser in autumn 1962¹³, and despite an attempt at revival the following spring¹⁴ appears to have ceased to exist altogether early in 1964¹⁵.

Other branches were organised in the early 1960s in Manchester¹⁶ and Birmingham. The latter was established as a senior

section in November 1960 by a former member of the Mac Curtain slua in Cork¹⁷. It lapsed after his departure but was re-formed by Pádraig Yeates in 1965¹⁸ with a junior membership recruited mainly from the local Irish dancing class. Again the branch barely outlived its organiser, ceasing to function two months after his imprisonment in January 1966¹⁹.

The Republican movement also formed an adult support group in Britain in autumn 1963 under the name Clann na hEireann. Three of those responsible for establishing Fianna sluaite were elected onto Clann's central executive, one becoming its first national organiser in March 1965²⁰. The adult and youth ventures were in fact the work of the same small group, products of the same Republican activist circle emerging within the emigrant communities in Britain at this date.

Records also exist of branches in Australia and U.S.A. in the 1960s. The former, founded as a family slua of four members in 1961, enjoyed a steady growth for five years and even introduced associate membership for adults²¹. The branch established in New York in 1963 survived a violent dispute of leadership and continued meeting until at least 1967²².

Expatriate branches have been set up by both the Officials and Provisionals since the split of 1970. One such, which survived briefly in Leeds during 1971-2 under the leadership of members of Clann na hEireann, the support group of Official Sinn Féin²³, provided a cultural club environment for pre-adolescents with a special emphasis on dancing²⁴. More recently, the Provisional movement has organised a slua in California²⁵.

Fianna's existence outside Ireland has been sporadic, isolated, and minute in scale and significance. It is nonetheless

possible to discern a broad overall pattern which - in that sluaite have usually been established during or immediately following periods of buoyancy within the Republican movement as a whole - appears to bear some correspondence with political events in Ireland. More pertinently, however, their existence has depended on the often fortuitous presence of individuals, for in hardly any case have expatriate branches thrived after the departure of their founders. In this they have manifested in extreme form a tendency also observable in the history of Fianna in Ireland and which, it is said, has often applied to the Republican movement itself²⁶.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Bean na hÉireann, July 1910.
2. The Irish Volunteer, October 1914. Other prominent members included Barney Friel, Seamus Reader, Eamon Mooney and Seamus Robinson (Robinson, S. Statement, typewritten, in possession of Mrs. Joseph Robinson, lent to the author October 1977).
3. For the 1916 arrests see Inspector General's monthly Report no. 10664, January 1916, Reports No. 15 (1908-20), C.O. 904/99, State Paper Office, Dublin; also statement to the author by Mrs. Joseph Robinson.
4. The Irish Volunteer, 20/3/1915. And see p.98 and p.115. note 83 above.
5. Van Voris, J. Constance de Markievicz in the Cause of Ireland (Amherst Massachusetts, 1967), p.312. Mrs. Van Voris, letter to the author 16/2/1981, was unable to supply further information on Lonergan's Boys' Brigade.
6. An Phoblacht, 15/10/1927, Report of the Ard Fheis of 25 September.
7. Ibid. The Liverpool delegate was J. McSweeney.
8. An Phoblacht, 9/8/1930, 30/8/1930.
9. Named Slua Seán MacAodha (Seán Heuston), it was represented at the 1930 and 1934 Ard Fheiseanna and said to be "making great strides" in 1935. See An Phoblacht, 9/8/1930, 11/11/1933 (photograph), 24/3/1934, 9/3/1935.
10. Fianna, May 1936. This was the last reference to the Liverpool slua, whose members were at the time raising funds to start a pipe band.
11. The United Irishman, January 1960. The slua named after Pól Mac Gabhan (Paul Smith).
12. Letter Fianna Adjutant General to J. Crowley, 16/1/1961, Fianna Éireann files, Sinn Féin the Workers' Party, Gardiner Place.
13. Seán Ó Cionnaith interview.
14. Re-formed by Brendan Heapes; letter Heapes to Ard Oifig, 26/3/1963, Gardiner Place files.
15. Letter Heapes to Ard Oifig, 26/2/1964, referring to the proposed distribution of recruiting leaflets as a "last resort . . . if the leaflets fail the slua will cease to exist . . .", Gardiner Place files.
16. Letter, o/c Manchester slua to Ard Thaoiseach, 30/10/1962, Gardiner Place files.

17. The founder and o/c was John Crowley - letter Crowley to Ard Oifig seeking permission to set up a slua, 25/10/1960; letter Crowley to Ard Oifig announcing the existence of the slua with nine members, 3/12/1960; Gardiner Place files.
18. Letter Pádraig Yeates to Ard Oifig, 28/3/1965, Gardiner Place files.
19. Statement Pádraig Yeates to the author, July 1976.
20. The three were Yeates, Heapes and - later - Ó Cionnaith, the last-named also being appointed national organiser.
21. Slua Liam Mellows, Victoria, founded by Matt O'Donnell, had sixteen members in 1965 - various letters O'Donnell to Ard Oifig Dublin between 1961-6, Gardiner Place files.
22. Slua established by Niall Scanlon; splinter branch formed after violence between two factions; splinter group under leadership of Edward McGuinness disbanded by order of G.H.Q. in 1964 - letters, Scanlon in reply to membership enquiry, 11/2/1964; McGuinness to Ard Oifig, 3/2/1965; Ard Oifig to McGuinness, 27/5/1964; Slua records for 1967; Gardiner Place files.
23. After the split Clann na hEireann remained with the Official movement; the Provisionals established a support group in Britain under the name Sinn Féin.
24. Foundation of slua alluded to in letter to Ard Oifig dated 12/10/1971, Gardiner Place files. Details of slua supplied by Francis Devine, statement to the author, January 1981.
25. Ciaran McGlynn interview.
26. Cf. Coogan, T. P. The I.R.A. (London, 1970), pp.42 f.

Appendix II. THE 1902 FIANNA EIREANN

When the County Antrim Board of the G.A.A. rejected Hobson's proposal to organise the boys' hurling clubs of West Belfast into a league, he resigned from the Board and decided to form a league himself¹. To this end a meeting was held at the Catholic Boys' Hall, Falls Road, on Sunday 22 June 1902², attended apparently by nearly 300 boys³. It was agreed that the league should be called 'Fianna Gurean' and be open to boys of sixteen years and under. Eight teams applied to enter, their names taken from both ancient and modern history - Michael Dwyer, Éire Óg, Brian Boru, Fianna Eireann, Oisín, Red Branch and Geraldines. 'Fianna Eireann' was thus initially only the name of one participating club.

Officers were elected⁴ and the decision was taken to hold weekly committee meetings. At the first of these the league was renamed 'Fianna na Eireann' (sic), and subsequently 'Fianna Eireann'. By now further teams had affiliated and several others had changed their names so that most now carried the name of one of Fionn's warriors. Five teams proved viable, and to these was added a football league of eight teams in the August.

Hobson was given financial help by friends, one of whom donated a shield of beaten copper, and the clubs took turns to organise a Sgoruidheacht at Bank Street School to aid the funds. The league also staged an athletics tournament at Celtic Park in the summer, with running, jumping and hurling events, making a profit and new friends. It nevertheless remained handicapped by lack of funds. Medals were costly, and on losing their original playing field the boys had decided to take over Old Celtic Park. To use this enclosed field at a rental of £10 per half-year would have been beyond their pockets but the decision was taken on the guarantee of a

friend of Hobson's paying the rent⁵. Morale was high when the park was officially opened in November with a Gaelic tournament, but the venture proved a millstone when the benefactor ran into debt and left the league to foot the bill.

A second problem was the boys' inconsistent attendance at matches and committee meetings. Hobson himself set an example in this matter and despite other commitments was absent from the chair only once that year. Moreover, at least five venues were used for meetings to share the burden of travel⁶. Nonetheless the decision was taken in December to expel committee members for irregular attendance, and by November the football league had dwindled to five teams.

Precise evidence is not available concerning the fortunes of the organisation after 1902. Hobson himself wrote later that "as other work piled up I was able to give less time to the Fianna, and it became rather neglected"⁷. As a democratically constituted organisation it afforded its members experience in running their own affairs. But Hobson was a man of outstanding organising ability and inventiveness, as well as being three or four crucial years older than the other members, and his guiding presence was essential to its wellbeing. The league maintained a more or less unbroken existence for a further two years or so, though on a more restricted scale. A member who joined in 1903 recalls hurling being almost the only activity at this time⁸.

In the same year the sixteen year old Joseph Robinson became the league's voluntary organiser. The conditions of his employment gave him the opportunity to tour the clubs on his bicycle and maintain contacts⁹. He has stated that the organisation still had 150-200 members at the end of the year, but that it became defunct about 1904¹⁰. Nevertheless some of the teams certainly survived and no

doubt games were played occasionally on a friendly basis. It would be possible to justify lapses and revivals as seasonal matters and to re-establish the league more or less formally from time to time. Robinson believes that remnants of the 1902 Fianna probably survived in Belfast when Hobson and Countess Markievicz founded the new body in Dublin seven years later, and that in the meantime various efforts were made to "infuse new life" into the organisation. He cites evidence from 1906-7 supporting his view¹¹.

The most radical attempt at re-organisation was made late in 1906. The 1 December issue of Sinn Féin reported a meeting of "national boys of Belfast" staged by "Fianna na hEireann" for the purpose of forming a National Boys' Brigade. Over one hundred boys joined the new body, Hobson being elected President. Apparently the development had been contemplated for some time. It represented a notable departure, being clearly a reaction to the success of William Smith's Boys' Brigade and kindred 'British' organisations; as such it anticipated the 1909 Fianna whose foundation was inspired by the establishment of the Baden-Powell Scouts in Ireland. The Brigade was to be "Irish in all things and teach its members to become good citizens of the Irish nation". Its structure would be military with the boys in divisions of ten, but unlike the Boys' Brigade that inspired it it would retain a democratic process of decision making. Its programme was planned to include a pipe band and lectures in Ireland's language, history and resources. The last item implied a further development beyond the original concept of 1902. It revealed the growing influence in separatist circles and upon Hobson of Arthur Griffith, whose Resurrection of Hungary had been published two years before and whose National Council would amalgamate with Hobson's Dungannon Clubs to form Sinn Féin

in 1908. Thus onto the Gaelic and heroic nationalism of 1902 were grafted military and economic nationalism.

However, the ambitious impetus was apparently not maintained. During the first half of 1907 Hobson was engaged in producing his Belfast weekly The Republic¹², the first issue of which appeared only three weeks after the launching of the Brigade. Yet this lively little paper, which missed no opportunity to publicise any happening that might further the separatist cause, made no mention whatever of Fianna Eireann, whether as a hurling league or Brigade. The silence is hardly compatible with a flourishing organisation. Albeit negative evidence, it lends weight to the view of Cathal O'Shannon that Fianna had ceased to function by 1907¹³. If still technically alive after this date it was making no stir even in the close circle of separatist Belfast.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Hobson, B. Ireland Yesterday and Tomorrow (Tralee, 1968), p.16.
2. Minute Book of Fianna, minute of 22/6/1902, Bulmer Hobson Papers, MS 12176, National Library of Ireland. Hobson is in error - in Martin, F. X.(ed.) The Irish Volunteers 1913-1915 (Dublin, 1963), p.18 - where he dates the meeting 26/6/1902. The last recorded minute is 2/12/1902, not 2/12/1903 as Hobson has it. Except where otherwise specified, the present account is based on the Minute Book with additional material from the two published sources above.
3. Hobson, B. Ireland Yesterday and Tomorrow, p.15.
4. Chairman - Bulmer Hobson, Vice-Chairman - Dermott O'Brien, Secretaries - Thomas Aquinas McKenna and P. Madden, Treasurer - Thomas Collins. Richard McDaniel later replaced O'Brien (minute of 6/8/1902), and Arthur Robin replaced Madden (minute of 27/8/1902). Joseph Robinson was elected Assistant Treasurer in October (minute of 30/10/1902).
5. Hobson, B. Ireland Yesterday and Tomorrow, p.16.
6. Catholic Boys' Hall, Falls Road; St. Vincent's Hall, Albert Street; St. Catherine's School, Falls Road; Foresters' Hall, Mill Street; The National Club, Stephen's Street.
7. Hobson, B. Ireland Yesterday and Tomorrow, p.16.
8. Robinson, S. Statement to the Bureau of Military History, in possession of Mrs. Joseph Robinson.
9. Verbal statement to the author by Mrs. J. Robinson. Joseph Robinson was employed by his firm on a six months on, six months off basis. He journeyed well beyond the Belfast area, and it is therefore quite possible that clubs were established elsewhere in the North.
10. Hobson, B. Fianna Eireann, with interpolations based on information supplied by Joseph Robinson, Statement to the Bureau of Military History, p.2. It was in 1904 that Hobson added to his already crowded political life by joining the I.R.B.
11. Ibid., p.2, where reference is made to the article 'Fianna na hEireann' in The United Irishman, 1/12/1906 (the correct reference is Sinn Féin, 1/12/1906), and to an unidentified newspaper report from 1907 describing a police raid on "the rooms of Fianna Eireann in Belfast".
12. The Republic, weekly, 13/12/1906-16/5/1907.
13. O'Shannon, C. 'When the Girls Enrolled in Fianna', Evening Press, 20/5/1955.

Appendix III. THE IRISH CITIZEN ARMY SCOUTS

The Citizen Army formed its own scout corps in the summer of 1914. The Transport Union's weekly paper Irish Worker carried no account of the event, its first reference - in the issue of 25 July - being to a "junior section" of the Army already in existence. Fox has dated the corps from that month¹, but according to one who was a member from the outset the inaugural meeting in fact took place in June².

The formation of a scout section is to be seen in the context of a number of initiatives taken about this time with the aim of improving the effectiveness of the adult Army. In the spring of 1914 morale in the Labour movement had ebbed with the defeat of the Lock-out, and the Citizen Army seemed to be without direction at a time when the Irish Volunteers were enjoying sweeping success, numbering some 25,000 and recruiting a thousand new members a week³. With a view to increasing efficiency an Army general meeting was held towards the end of March at which a Constitution was drawn up, an Army Council elected, uniform standardised, and the force reorganised into three battalions⁴. At the same time, in order to broaden its appeal steps were taken to provide a social life for members. At the instigation of Larkin the union had already acquired Croydon Park as a recreative retreat for its tenement dwellers⁵. In May Larkin succeeded Jack White as Commandant of the Army, and every weekend thereafter throughout the summer Croydon Park was made the venue for social activities of a 'family' nature which his men helped to organise. Events included a "monster carnival" on Whit Monday, children's sports and several mock Western battles which combined serious training with family entertainment⁶.

The logical extension was to involve women and young people in the Army itself. To this end an ambulance class was organised for women and girls towards the end of the year, "under the control of and affiliated" to the Army⁷. This group was later developed into an Ambulance Corps and made an integral part of the Army itself⁸. In the meantime the Scouts were formed to serve a similar purpose among the boys. They were envisaged as a source of trained recruits to the Army and as an extension of the organised Union family.

The decision to establish a junior section was certainly influenced by the effective function that Fianna was already performing for the Volunteers. The Citizen Army had several obvious contacts with the Republican Scouts. It regularly used their drill hall in Lower Camden Street, for example⁹, and must often have observed An Chead Slua training. Larkin was very friendly with the Fianna, and Slua Emmet who used a small room adjacent to the Transport Workers' room in Beresford Place were often lent the Union's room there¹⁰. In 1913 Larkin had given the boys of St. Enda's the use of Croydon Park for their Fianna Aeridheacht¹¹. Connolly's three oldest children belonged to the Belfast sluaite whose members had collected for the locked-out Dublin workers¹². Above all, Countess Markievicz held positions of leadership in both organisations. Although at this time President of Fianna she had by her own admission been less active in it for a year past¹³: she may have become disenchanted with the dominance within it of the I.R.B.; she had certainly become a convert to Labour in the autumn of 1913 and had turned her energies increasingly to the Citizen Army on whose Council she now served as joint treasurer. Probably the suggestion of a scout corps was hers; she at any rate took a leading part in founding it and in its subsequent organisation.

One Sunday in June, perhaps one of the sports days at Croydon Park, with the help of Michael Mallin and Seamus McGowan she rounded up all the boys who had gathered on the field. She invited them to join a scout corps, to train at Liberty Hall and be attached to the Citizen Army, and if interested to attend a meeting on the following evening. Twenty boys duly arrived on the Monday and were enrolled¹⁴. Walter Carpenter, who was already about twenty years of age, was made o/c, Charlie D'Arcy Lieutenant and Paddy Carroll Sergeant.

Drill training was given on Tuesday evenings, at Croydon Park in the summer months and from October onwards in the 'Large Room' at Liberty Hall¹⁵. First Aid classes were later added on Thursdays under Drs. Kathleen Lynn and French-Mullen¹⁶. With the completion of the rifle range at Croydon Park in the autumn there was the chance of target practice on Saturday afternoons¹⁷, using the dozen .22 air rifles that the scouts possessed and occasionally, after Howth, Lee Enfields and Brownings. Instruction in the use and care of weapons was given by the Countess, who also measured the boys for uniforms, herself cutting the grey-green German napsac material which was then sewn by women members of the Union. The boys were turned out in slouch hats with a Red Hand badge, red ties and two rows of buttons. Their equipment usually included haversack, belt and jack-knife.

The corps was formally administered by a committee, though in fact the Countess and Seamus McGowan came to be its general organisers. It had in fact no autonomy, being run from above as a minor wing of the Army, while its internal structure was neither that of a scout troop nor a 'boys' republic' but a military hierarchy. There were no A.G.M.s, members' meetings or democratic process.

Furthermore, though it called itself a 'scout corps' the term was intended in the limited and specifically military sense of 'participating cadets' - such scouting elements as woodcraft, tests and camping had no part in its programme. In both these respects, though inspired by Na Fianna it departed radically from its model.

After the initial enrolment there appears to have been little subsequent expansion and few new recruits. It is true that a Company was reportedly formed in Kingstown in the autumn¹⁸, and a second city Company in the Church Road area of Dublin a year later¹⁹. But the former got off the ground only after concerted missionary effort by the Dublin members and may not have outlived their presence, while the latter was apparently formed as a measure to reduce winter travel and implied a division rather than an expansion of numbers.

On the other hand the little band maintained a remarkably consistent membership, hardly losing a boy in its twenty-one months' existence. Like its adult counterpart it had a cohesiveness born of shared adversity and cemented in many cases by family ties, for the boys were all sons of I.T.G.W.U. men who had lived through the Lock-out together, and some had parents, brothers or sisters in the Army or the Ambulance Corps. In addition, they latterly came to be accepted very much as a part of the adult Army, accompanying them on all marches, manoeuvres and parades from at least the autumn of 1915²⁰, and by now on first name terms with them. They considered themselves soldiers, and were treated as such, not being pressed into the usual 'political' tasks of a youth auxiliary, such as paper selling. These facts must all have contributed to their loyalty. Above all, there was the personal influence of Connolly, who held so much together which fell apart after his death. The boys addressed him as 'Commandant' and his easy, extraordinary auth-

ority induced in them an awe, so that to brush against him was for them "like brushing against our Lord".

Their loyalty was exemplified in the person of Charlie D'Arcy, who "gave up his home, his job and everything" to take his place in the round-the-clock guard on Liberty Hall during March and April 1916. "His father and mother came to the hall one night when he had been missing from home for about a week. After a long argument his father told him he would have to choose now between the hall and his home. He chose the hall without any hesitation and they left him there. It is doubtful if they ever saw him again"²¹.

For all of them it was a loyalty put to the final test in Easter Week. On Palm Sunday Connolly warned them of imminent action. After a week spent gathering arms and ammunition in their hand-cart, he called them together on Good Friday and asked their ages. Several were still fifteen. He now gave them details of Sunday's mobilisation, adding that "if you can't come it's all right". In fact, all but two were out on Easter Monday, making the Scouts perhaps the most fully represented of all the insurgent forces. At least six boys were in the G.P.O.²², and eight set off with the first Citizen Army party under Captain Dick McCormack, some eventually reaching Stephen's Green in the evening after holding Davey's Pub and Harcourt Street Station and barricading Harcourt Street itself against a British attack upon the Green²³.

It was by this barricade that the Scouts met with one of their three fatalities. On Easter Tuesday evening some members of the force which had during the day abandoned the Green and occupied the College of Surgeons were sent out to burn two houses beside the Russell Hotel. Among them was Fred Ryan, seventeen years old but looking like a man with his bandolier. As they attempted to enter

the ground-floor shop he was shot dead in the same burst of fire that wounded Margaret Skinnider standing at his side²⁴. He had been a member of Fianna since 1911 and had actually joined the Volunteers shortly before the foundation of the Citizen Army Scouts in 1914²⁵. For this reason he is claimed as a Fianna hero of Easter Week²⁶, though he had certainly relinquished membership two years before the Rising.

Seamus Fox also died a Citizen Army Scout, despite his inclusion among the Fianna martyrs. Aged sixteen and a native of Drumree County Meath, he had arrived from Liverpool only that weekend and was handed over to the Scouts by his father outside Liberty Hall on the Monday morning²⁷. He had no training for battle. The following morning, holed up in the Green beneath the windows of the Shelbourne Hotel now occupied by British troops, he panicked at the first volley and ran for the gate, being shot dead while climbing it.

The first of the Scouts to die was Charlie D'Arcy who was a member of the force attacking Dublin Castle under Seán Connolly. He was sent to snipe from the roof of Henry and James's in Parliament Street, where he was mortally wounded. At least one other Scout, fifteen year old Mattie Connolly, was with him on the same roof²⁸. The Castle area was the first to which reinforcements were sent by the British and the rebel contingent was soon outnumbered there by more than twelve to one²⁹. It was not until after the fighting was over that D'Arcy's body could be brought down; he was later buried in a pauper's grave in Glasnevin.

After the surrender all surviving scouts were gathered in the juvenile party held with the other prisoners in Richmond Barracks. They were later led out in groups of a dozen and instead of being shot as threatened were given a lecture - they were told that they

had been foolish boys, misguidedly following madmen, and were to go home. They formed ranks outside and marched together to Sackville Street where seeing the situation they dispersed.

That was the end of the Citizen Army Scouts. When the adult Army was re-organised in the summer³⁰ at least two-thirds of the boys became members of it. A number later played a part in the Independence War and the early stages of the Civil War in Dublin. In the latter, for instance, Walter Carpenter was a member of the Four Courts garrison, Joe Keeley was one of the party posted at Griffith's Boot Shop as cover for the retreat of the garrison, and Robert Norgrove served at several posts in the capital³¹. But the story of these and other boys after Easter 1916 is not a part of the history of the Citizen Army Scouts.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Fox, R. M. The History of the Irish Citizen Army (Dublin, 1944), p.108.
2. Paddy Buttner interview. Factual details in the present appendix are based on this source except where otherwise stated.
3. Letter The O'Rahilly to John Devoy, 6/4/1914, in O'Brien, W. and Ryan, D.(eds.) Devoy's Post Bag (Dublin, 1953), vol. 2, pp.426 f.
4. Fox, R. M. History of Citizen Army, pp.63-8; Ó Cathasaigh, P. The Story of the Irish Citizen Army (Dublin and London, 1919), pp.12-6.
5. Larkin, E. James Larkin (London, 1965; London, 1968 ed.), p.147.
6. Irish Worker, 30/5/1914, 6/6/1914, 13/6/1914. The children's sports were held on 7 and 14 June.
7. Irish Worker, 5/12/1914; Workers' Republic, 18/9/1915. The class was open to all members of the Irish Women Workers' Union.
8. Workers' Republic, 23/10/1915 contains the first reference to an Ambulance Corps.
9. Ó Cathasaigh, P. Story of Citizen Army, p.9.
10. Markievicz, C. 'Larkin, the Fianna and the King's visit', 'A few memories' no. 111, Éire : the Irish Nation, 16/6/1923.
11. Irish Worker, 13/9/1913, announcement of Aeridheacht to be held 14 September.
12. Irish Worker, 1/11/1913.
13. Letter Countess Markievicz to Eva Gore-Booth, 1/1/1921, in Roper, E.(ed.) Prison Letters of Countess Markievicz (London, 1934), p.266 - "It rather amused me to see that for starting the Boy Scouts in England Baden-Powell was made a Baron . . . I bet he did not work as hard as I did from 1909-1913".
14. Buttner recalled the following enrolling at the first meeting - Walter Carpenter, Albert Carpenter, Charlie D'Arcy, Paddy Carroll, Joe Keeley, 'Paddy' Byrne, Joe Duffy, Tom Duffy, Ned Lane, George O'Brien, Jamesie O'Raha, Paddy Lalor, Fred Ryan, Tom Gray, Paddy Sceery, Robert Norgrove, Freddie Norgrove, Mick Dwyer, Larry Corbally and Paddy Buttner. In addition Mattie Connolly joined in September and was at once made Lieutenant because of his experience in Fianna. Christie Carruthers joined in 1915 and was also promoted immediately.
15. Irish Worker, 10/10/1914.
16. Workers' Republic, 17/7/1915, 9/10/1915.
17. Workers' Republic, 9/10/1915. Reference to the completion of the range in Irish Worker, 31/10/1914.

18. Irish Worker, 12/9/1914.
19. Workers' Republic, 2/10/1915.
20. Army mobilisation and parade orders originally referred to "Citizen Army", "Scouts" and "Ambulance Corps" separately. From the end of 1915 such orders were issued to "all ranks" as one - cf. Workers' Republic, 11/12/1915, 18/3/1916. Night manoeuvres to St. Stephen's Green, 6 October 1915, included twelve scouts - cf. Dublin Metropolitan Police evidence in The Royal Commission on the Rebellion in Ireland (London, 1916), para.1197. Elsewhere the authorities failed to distinguish the Citizen Army Scouts from the Fianna, referring to them as Sinn Féin Boy Scouts (Ibid., p.119).
21. Fox, R. M. History of Citizen Army, pp.117 f.
22. According to the Citizen Army's official list, the following juveniles served in the G.P.O. - Louis Byrne, Patrick Campbell, Walter Carpenter, Roderick Connolly, Laurence Corbally, Fred Norgrove and Patrick O'Neill. Louis Byrne is Buttner's 'Paddy' Byrne. Roddy Connolly, still fifteen, was in fact still a member of Fianna being newly arrived from Belfast.
23. The official list names four juveniles in the party - P. Buttner, C. Carruthers, Joseph Keeley and Pat Sceery. To these Buttner added the names of Jamesie O'Raha and Mick Dwyer.
24. See Skinnider, M. Doing My Bit for Ireland (New York, 1917), pp.146 f. Also Skinnider, M. 'In Stephen's Green, 1916', Irish Press Supplement, 9/4/1966. Caulfield, M. The Easter Rebellion (London, 1964), p.268, contains an account of the incident based on personal interview with Margaret Skinnider.
25. Wolfe Tone Annual, 1960, p.49; 'Events of Easter Week', The Catholic Bulletin, vol. vi, no. 11, November 1916.
26. The Fianna Heroes of 1916, Cumann na mBan (Dublin, 1931), p.2; also 'Sean Fhear', 'Na Fianna Eireann in 1916', Wolfe Tone Annual, 1935.
27. Buttner's account here is supported in Robbins, F. 'The Citizen Army and Easter Week', The Irishman, 15/9/1928.
28. Connolly, M. 'Dublin City Hall area', Capuchin Annual, 1966, p.195.
29. Fox, R. M. History of Citizen Army, p.151.
30. See Robbins, F. Under the Starry Plough (Dublin, 1977), p.153. Robbins states that a number of Citizen Army men "began to pick up the threads" of the organisation after his release from Frongoch in August 1916.
31. Cited in Fox, R. M. History of Citizen Army, pp.218,220,237. Fox's book makes several brief references to the Scout section and also to boys who were in fact in the Scouts but it at no point identifies any boy as being a member of the Scouts.

Appendix IV. AN OUTLINE HISTORY OF PROVISIONAL FIANNA

Although a loose alliance of sluaite associated with the Provisional Republican movement had developed during 1970 under acting Chief Scout Andy Corbett, the inaugural Ard Fheis held at the Mansion House, Dublin, in January 1971 marks the beginning of Provisional Fianna as a constituted, national organisation¹.

The convention in fact took place in an atmosphere of "utter chaos", due largely to the inexperience of the delegates². Apart from the Cork and Port Arlington sluaite, which pre-dated the split in the movement, every branch had been in existence for less than a year. In that time the priority had been to establish sluaite quickly in order to stake a claim to the name 'Fianna', but this had been achieved at the expense of entry standards. Undesirable elements had been admitted, some attracted by the glamour of the Provisional I.R.A.'s military campaign, others dismissed from Fianna for disciplinary reasons before or during the period of neutrality³. In some cases inexperienced and unsuitable boys had won instant promotion, and now represented their sluaite at the Ard Fheis.

The meeting elected a Headquarters staff, comprising Gerry Campbell Chief Scout, Art Sherwin Adjutant General, and Daithí Ó Búitheach Quartermaster⁴. A Belfastman and known to few of the delegates, Campbell was elected more on his native city's name than his own and proved a totally inadequate Chief Scout. Supposedly on the run, he lived off the Dublin organisation for the next eighteen months⁵.

The adult Provisional movement continued to expand during the year. The assembly at its Bodinstown commemoration in June was the largest seen there since the 1930s⁶. But this very buoyancy exacerbated the problems of the youth wing. Sudden growth, re-

cruits often raw, apolitical and unmanageable, and a non-existent leadership, together produced severe problems of control for an organisation seeking to establish credibility⁷. Its responsible members recognised the urgent need for internal reform, and for this looked inevitably to the Cork o/c Donal Varian as the one man with national leadership experience in Fianna before and during neutrality⁸. Through his position on the Ard Choiste and his influence within the senior movement Varian was able to effect the gradual replacement of local and national leaders⁹.

In the late spring of 1972 the Provisional Army Council ordered the dismissal of Campbell and his G.H.Q. staff from office. A temporary replacement staff was appointed by Fianna's Ard Choiste, with Varian Chief Scout, his brother Pádraig Adjutant and Valerie Gaffney Quartermaster¹⁰. In August Varian contacted slua o/cs, informing them of Campbell's demotion and convening an extraordinary Ard Fheis to elect a nationally recognised leadership. At the subsequent meeting he was himself ratified as Chief Scout, his brother elected Quartermaster and Dermott Murphy Adjutant¹¹.

Significantly, all three were Corkmen. Provisional Fianna had not succeeded in establishing a strong base in Dublin, where the damage done by the previous national leadership was greatest and where the Officials were well entrenched on the north side of the river. Its Six Counties' sluaite, with their own highly localised needs and problems, maintained closer contact with local Army units than Fianna headquarters¹². Within the Republic the areas of greatest growth were in the South and South-West¹³ and the August appointments reflected this fact. But they created an unbalanced national structure, its organisational centre in the extreme south, its centre in terms of numbers and military significance in the

North. That it operated satisfactorily for five years was due in large part to the standing, ability and dedication of Varian¹⁴.

It took the new leadership perhaps a further year to "clean up the organisation"¹⁵. The Ard Choiste was gradually purged, a process simplified by the high turnover of its members during internment. Democratic processes were dispensed with - no A.G.M. was held in 1972-3, for instance¹⁶ - because Varian saw that the membership was not yet ready for them. In their place he built the organisation around individuals and at the same time sought the support of the senior movement at local level. Without the traditional ties that existed locally between Fianna and the Army, which he was able to redevelop, it would have been impossible to hold together the disparate elements that made up the youth wing.

He and his colleagues were nevertheless determined not to buy support at the cost of independence. Although at national level Fianna's constitutional autonomy was respected by both Provisional Sinn Féin and the Provisional I.R.A., especially during Mac Stiofán's term as Chief-of-Staff, this was not always the case locally. The youth leadership welcomed regular communication with the senior movement locally and nationally, but only on the basis of independent negotiation. The question appeared likely to arise chiefly in relation to the transfer of members. But in fact the Army's need for recruits en masse declined as it became established and, recognising the urgency for developing discipline and security within Fianna, it actively encouraged officers and seniors to remain in the youth organisation.

Close association between the two bodies was an inevitable consequence of the Provisionals' military campaign. It was not the author's purpose to enquire into the military role of Provisional

Fianna during the campaign. He was nevertheless informed that its contribution has included support work in the form of financial aid and propaganda, as well as direct participation by select Active Service Units organised in both the North and the Republic. The scale of its involvement cannot be measured from the movement's publicity statements since named participants have normally been designated as Army men in order to protect the young and Fianna's public image. It may be surmised, however, by the fact that at least ten of its members were killed on active service in the Belfast area alone during 1972, and a further five between 1973 and 1977¹⁷.

Although senior members in the South received military training and were in some cases selected for active service, the routine of the slua - particularly for juniors - was hardly affected by the campaign. This was not so in the Six Counties. The traditional gulf between Fianna North and South therefore widened in the first half of the decade, during which time the two sections scarcely met except at Ard Fheiseanna¹⁸. Ironically, the original cause of the divergence - Fianna's illegal status in Northern Ireland - now played little part in maintaining it because of the extent of the movement across the Border and increased harrassment of the supposedly legal organisation in the Republic. Role, and not the Border as such, thus determined the Fianna type, and sluaite in areas near the Six Counties such as Dundalk and Donegal came to be more closely associated with the Northern than the Southern organisation¹⁹.

Although the two types remained distinct they moved towards a closer organisational unity from 1975. The fact that the Northern Division that year for the first time sought election of its members onto the Ard Choiste commensurate with its numerical strength was

seen as an indication of willingness to develop closer ties with the national organisation²⁰.

The same year saw mixed sluaite introduced experimentally in Cork, as a departure from the national practice of separate boys' and girls' branches under a mixed central leadership. Following the success of the Cork initiative the new structure became standard from 1976²¹. In its aims and methods, however, the organisation remained otherwise broadly unchanged, its self-concept firmly bedded in the 'pure' traditions to which it had returned in 1971. The series of Fianna articles written for the spring 1975 issues of An Phoblacht, for example, echoed the old style and content²².

Entirely apolitical, they extolled the Gaelic and chivalrous virtues, borrowing from Casement's essay on chivalry that had been the subject of dispute between Fianna and the new leadership of the movement in 1964²³.

At the 1977 Ard Fheis Varian was succeeded as Chief Scout by Belfast Brigade officer T., though he continued as Munster organiser²⁴. In that he was a constitutionalist and traditionalist the change of leadership probably hastened change in the organisation. Certainly it coincided with the beginning of significant departures within Fianna that reflected developments in the senior movement at this time. Change was being forced upon the Provisional movement by new elements within its own membership²⁵, as well as by external events. In particular, the development of British intelligence during and after the truce of spring 1975 had severely damaged its military effectiveness and prompted a major re-appraisal of its methods over the next two years²⁶. At the end of this period the I.R.A. leadership issued a Staff Report which recommended "re-organisation and remotivation, the building of a new Irish Republican Army"²⁷. Specific recommendations included greater discipline

and secrecy, and to this end a cell system to replace the existing Brigade structure, as well as the radicalisation of Sinn Féin with a programme to include "agitation around social and economic issues". The document stipulated that the disciplinary and structural changes should apply also to Fianna, which "should return to being an underground organisation with little or no public image; (its members) should be educated and organised decisively to pass into the I.R.A. cell structure when of age"²⁸.

In response to the Report Fianna has restricted public and military parades since 1977, adjusted its authority structure to correspond geographically with that of the Provisional I.R.A., and adopted the cell system in the North²⁹. But in addition, the new and wider role of the party has brought a corresponding broadening of its own role. Its leaders, like those of the parent movement, "have come to realise that they must have political machinery ready when Britain's declaration of intent to withdraw from Ireland is announced"³⁰. They have therefore added to the existing programme of scouting, language and culture educational courses in Republican and general politics, and at the same time laid greater emphasis on political activity³¹.

The latter has developed principally out of their work for Republican prisoners. Traditionally this support took the form of social welfare and in particular fund-raising³². But as internment and prisoners' rights became political issues, particularly after the withdrawal of Special Category Status in March 1976³³, prisoners' aid in turn developed from simple welfare into a political activity. It remains the main thrust of Fianna's political work³⁴.

The attempt made at the 1978 Provisional Sinn Féin Ard Fheis to establish a Young Sinn Féin party is evidence of the importance the

adult movement now attaches to political activity on the part of its youth³⁵. And the fact that the motion was withdrawn in favour of an amendment "to support the existing youth organisation" indicates the movement's faith in the ability of Fianna to undertake such activity.

The new emphasis given by Provisional Fianna to education, and political education specifically, represents a change of attitude, a new openness and readiness to foster thought among its members, which in turn has implications for its relationship with the senior movement. Where before it was viewed primarily as a cadet force for the Army, with implicit assumptions of automatic transfer, its leadership now see it as "a holding ground where the members can sort out their views and reach their own decisions" concerning graduation; the members for their part, who previously looked to the leadership of the adult organisation as "gods", are now developing a capacity to criticise them and their policies³⁶.

It is not clear whether the initiatives of the last four years will result in time in a significantly new definition of the role of youth within the Provisional Republican movement. But there is already evidence that they have resulted in the recruitment of a more mature and thinking type of young person, an effect reinforced by a deliberate policy of more discriminate selection of applicants since 1978. If this has in turn brought a greater steadiness to the organisation, other factors - notably harrassment and a severe shortage of resources and premises - have made continued high wastage inevitable, especially in the winter months³⁷. At the time of the author's enquiry in summer 1979 the leadership considered that Fianna was holding its own generally, and making some small advances particularly in larger rural towns³⁸. Their detailed analysis of

structure and estimate of membership were probably as accurate as seasonal fluctuation, problems of communication and the demands of security would allow:

Table II. Analysis of structure and membership,
Provisional Fianna, Summer 1979

Structure

- Ard Fheis - meeting biennially (for organisational and financial reasons);
- Ard Choiste - 9 elected members plus chairman and secretary, meeting bimonthly;
- G.H.Q. staff - meeting regularly;
- Divisions - one - the Northern;
- Brigades - only Belfast large enough; Brigade structure made obsolete by cell system;
- Battalions - Dublin

Areas and Membership

| The Republic | | Northern Ireland plus Newry | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|
| Dublin | 60-70 | Belfast | 200-250 |
| Drogheda | 15-20 | Derry | 100 |
| Dundalk | 30+ | South Armagh | 40-80 |
| Monaghan | 20 | Tyrone | 40 |
| Castleblaney | 15-20 | Newry | 24 |
| Scotstown | 10 | Strabane | ? |
| Wexford | 15-20 | | |
| Sligo | 12 | Plus rural areas in contact with larger centres - eg., South County Derry with Derry city | |
| Cork city | 40-50 | | |
| Tralee | 12 | | |
| Limerick city | 10-15 | | |
| W. Limerick | 8 | | |
| Shannon | 30 | | |
| Galway city | 8 | | |
| Ballybofey | 10 | | |
| Cashel | 10-12 | | |
| Navan | 15-20 | | |
| <hr/> | | <hr/> | |
| Total | 320+ | Estimated Total | 600? |
| <hr/> | | <hr/> | |
| The above composed of Seniors (14+) and Juniors (6-14) in approximately equal numbers | | Modal age of members in Northern Ireland c.16-17 years | |
| <hr/> | | | |
| Estimated membership 32 Counties - c.900 | | | |

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. To the author's knowledge the Ard Fheis was not reported in the Provisional press. Nor have I had access to any internal documents that may exist for it. According to Donal Varian and Art Sherwin interviews it must have been held in late January 1971.
2. Donal Varian interview.
3. Ibid.
4. Art Sherwin interview.
5. Ibid.
6. An Phoblacht, July 1971.
7. Donal Varian interview.
8. Already a member of Fianna's Ard Choiste, Varian was appointed H.Q. representative for the South of Ireland early in 1969 (The United Irishman, March 1969). In 1970 he stood against S.F. for the office of Chief Scout. His younger brother Pádraig and Seán McCabe of Port Arlington also had brief experience of service on the Ard Choiste. Although not a member of the new organisation's Headquarters staff he was appointed national recruitment officer in summer 1971 (An Phoblacht, September 1971). The fact that he rather than a G.H.Q. officer laid the wreath at Bodenstown on behalf of Fianna indicates his standing in the organisation (An Phoblacht, July 1971).
9. Donal Varian interview.
10. An Phoblacht, July 1972.
11. Donal Varian interview.
12. Art Sherwin interview.
13. New sluaithe were established in Limerick city, Tralee, Passage West, Cork city, Tullamore and Monasterevin in the spring and summer of 1972 (An Phoblacht, July and September 1972).
14. Art Sherwin interview.
15. This and the following paragraphs based on Donal Varian interview.
16. An extraordinary general meeting was called in July 1973, however. It was held in the Provisional offices at 44 Parnell Square (An Phoblacht, 29/6/1973).
17. County Antrim Memorial, Milltown Cemetery, Belfast, now in the possession of the Provisional movement, lists Fianna members among the dead. See also The Last Post, National Graves Association, (Dublin, 1976 ed.).

18. Donal Varian interview.
19. Art Sherwin interview.
20. Ibid.
21. Ibid.
22. An Phoblacht, 21/3/1975, and issues from 9/5/1975.
23. Cf., p.294 and p.305, note 65 above.
24. Ard Fheis, 2-3 July 1977 (An Phoblacht, 22/6/1977). Art Sherwin became itinerant organiser of the weak Connacht area at the same time.
25. Under the influence of its own ultra-left elements many new recruits have shown impatience of the traditional Republican doctrine to which the movement reverted in 1970, and demanded Marxist analyses - cf. Coogan, T. P. The I.R.A. (London, 1970; revised and expanded ed., Glasgow, 1980), p.544. There have been other influences and developments from within. The movement can hardly have remained unchanged after the informal talks it has held at various times with the U.D.A., especially in 1976-7.
26. Cf., Coogan, T. P. On the Blanket, The H Block Story (Dublin, 1980), pp.64-7.
27. Extended extracts from the Report are quoted in Coogan, T. P. The I.R.A. (Glasgow, 1980 ed.), pp.576-81.
28. Ibid., p.580.
29. Art Sherwin interview.
30. Ibid.
31. Ciaran McGlynn interview.
32. An example of such work was Fianna's sponsored walk from Dublin to Cork in aid of prisoners in spring 1976 (An Phoblacht, 4/5/1976).
33. Special Category Status was first ceded to hunger striking prisoners in Crumlin Road jail in 1972. The Gardiner Report, published in January 1975, recommended ending the Special Category. In November of the same year Merlyn Rees announced that it would be discontinued as from 1 March 1976. The blanket protest began in September 1976. See Coogan, T. P. On the Blanket, espec. pp.47, 55 f., 67, 79 ff.
34. Art Sherwin interview.
35. Ciaran McGlynn interview.
36. Ibid.
37. Art Sherwin interview.
38. Art Sherwin, Ciaran McGlynn interviews.

Appendix V. A SUMMARY OF PENSIONS ACTS APPLICABLE TO FIANNA

The Military Service Pensions Act 1924 provided for the grant of military service pensions to persons

- (a) who had pre-truce service in certain prescribed National organisations (including Fianna Eireann), and
- (b) who served in the National Army at any time between 1 July 1922 and 1 October 1923.

(As there were no women members in the National Army there was no provision in this Act for the grant of pensions to members of Cumann na mBan.)

The Military Service Pensions Act 1934 provided for the grant of military service pensions to persons

- (a) who had pre-truce service in certain prescribed National organisations (including Fianna Eireann and Cumann na mBan), and
- (b) who served post-truce in such organisations.

This Act also provided pensions for persons who had not post-truce service but who served in one of the named organisations

- (i) at any time during the week which commenced on 23 April 1916, or
- (ii) continuously during the period which commenced on 1 April 1921 and ended on 11 July 1921.

The Act of 1924 provided for the setting up of a Board of Assessors, consisting of three members, to investigate and report on all claims referred to them by the Minister for Defence. The members of the Board were appointed by the Minister with the approval of the Government and one of the members was required to be a Judge of the Supreme Court, High Court, Circuit Court or District Court or a practising barrister of not less than ten years standing.

The findings of the Board of Assessors were final and conclusive and binding upon the applicant. The onus of proof rested on the applicant and he was at liberty to offer such evidence as might be necessary to enable him to discharge that onus.

The Act of 1934 provided that a Referee, assisted by an Advisory Committee of four should investigate and report on all applications referred to him by the Minister for Defence. The Referee was appointed by the Government and was required to be a Judge of the Supreme Court, the High Court, or the Circuit Court, or a Justice of the District Court or a practising barrister of at least ten years standing. The Advisory Committee consisted of a representative of the Minister for Finance, a representative of the Minister for Defence and two members of the I.R.A. nominated by the Government and who had held high rank before 11 July 1921. The Committee was advisory only and had no executive function. The findings of the Referee were final and conclusive and binding on all persons and tribunals. The onus of proving before the Referee any matters of fact alleged in an application rested on the applicant who was at liberty to offer such evidence as he considered necessary.

Where the facts in the application form showed a prima facie case the applicant was usually called before the Board of Assessors or the Referee or the Advisory Committee as appropriate and invited to give sworn testimony in support of his statements. Officers of the Battalion or Company in which the applicant claimed to have served might also be called to testify on oath.

Active Service was not defined in the Acts. The interpretation of the term was a matter solely for the Board or the Referee, who did not make any specific rules defining active service but decided each case on the facts bearing in mind that active service

must be continuous during either of the qualifying periods (1 April-1920 to 31 March 1921 or 1 April 1921 to 11 July 1921) or at any time during Easter Week 1916. It is understood that, in practice, the term 'Active Service' was interpreted liberally. There is no reason to think that the absence of a legal definition placed applicants at any disadvantage. Indeed such a definition might well rule out many meritorious cases which could benefit from the discretion vested in the Referee.

Basis of the Awards

The award of pension was calculated by multiplying the yearly amount appropriate to the grade or rank of an applicant by the number of years pensionable service awarded to him. The determination of the rank and pensionable service were matters exclusively for the Board of Assessors or the Referee whose findings were final and conclusive. The maximum service from 23 April 1916 to 30 September 1923 counted notionally as 14 years for pension purposes. Easter Week 1916 rated as 4 years and the three months before 11 July 1921 were reckoned as 1 year.

Military Service Pensions (Amendment) Act 1949

This Act gave an opportunity to persons who had not previously applied under the 1924 or 1934 Acts to apply for pensions and provided for appeals by persons whose claims for pensions had been refused earlier. All applications and appeals under this Act were disposed of and the administration of the Military Service Pensions Acts was wound up finally on 30 September 1958.

Disablement Pensions

The Army Pensions Act 1932 provided for the grant of pensions to, among others, members of Fianna Eireann, who were suffering from a wound or disease attributable to military service.

Statistics

Current rate of Maximum Military Service Pension - £3,490 per annum

Current rate of Minimum Military Service Pension - £155 per annum

Current rate of Maximum Disability Service
Pension 1932 Act (100%) - £1,814 per annum

Current rate of Minimum Disability Service
Pension (20%) - £412 per annum

Benefits available in the case of Fianna veterans

1. Free travel within the State, subject to certain conditions, for themselves and spouses.
2. Free electricity allowance and television (monochrome) licence subject to certain conditions (e.g. registered consumer, living alone or with certain categories of persons).
3. Special allowance payable if they are over 70 years of age and their means (including that of the spouse) is within a certain limit. In calculating their means Social Welfare benefits e.g. old age pension, widow's pension etc. are largely disregarded. Average special allowance payable is £326 per annum.
4. Funeral grant of £100.
5. Free telephone rental if living entirely alone. Estimated at £50 per annum.

Medals1916 Medal

Awarded to

(a) persons who were granted pensions under the Military Service Pensions Acts entitling them to pension in respect of Easter Week 1916.

(b) non pensioners who satisfy the Minister for Defence that their service was such as would have merited the grant of one if they had applied under the Acts.

Service (1917-1921) Medal with Bar

Issued to all

- (a) military service pensioners and those disablement pensioners whose disability was attributable to pre-truce military service.
- (b) non-pensioners who satisfy the Minister for Defence that their service was such as would have merited the grant of a pension if they had applied under the Acts.

Service (1917-1921) Medal without Bar

Awarded to non-pensioners who satisfy the Minister for Defence that they were members of one of the prescribed National organisations (including Citizen Army, Fianna Eireann and Cumann na mBan) continuously for a period of three months prior to 11 July 1921.

(The text of this Appendix is based on information supplied to the author by the Secretary An Roinn Cosanta, Brainse Airgeadais, Coláiste Caoimhín - Department of Defence, Finance Branch, Colaiste Caoimhín, Dublin; February 1979.)

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INTERVIEWS

Column 4 refers to highest ranks to which interviewees rose in Fianna. A number subsequently rose to prominence in the senior movement - such details not included here.

Interviewees included in parentheses were closely associated with Fianna or Fianna personnel but not themselves members.

| | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------|------------------|----------------------------------------|
| Nora Connolly O'Brien | Belfast | 1910-16 | Captain Betsy Gray Slua |
| Seán Healy | Cork | 1911-18 | Battalion o/c |
| Breandán Ó Cearbhail1 | Dublin | 1915-20 | Company o/c |
| Gearóid Ó Ceallaigh | Newbridge | 1915, 1918-21 | Also c/s breakaway 'Fianna' 1955-62 |
| Seán McNally | Belfast | 1917-22 | Company o/c |
| Frank Driver | Ballymore | 1917-22 | Company o/c |
| John Murray | Cork | 1917-27 | Battalion o/c |

| | | | |
|---------------------------------|------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| George Hurley | Cork | 1918-23 | Also Nat. Secretary Old Fianna |
| Frank Sherwin | Dublin | 1918-26 | G.H.Q. Staff; also Chairman Fianna Asso- ciation of Old Members |
| Paddy Brown | Dublin | 1919-20; 1923-35 | Slua o/c |
| Ned Lennon | Dún Laoghaire | 1919-22 | |
| Míceál Treinfhir | Belfast | 1920-22 | |
| (Louise Coghlan O'Brien | Dublin | 1922-27 | Countess Markievicz lodged at her home) |
| G.D. | Belfast | 1928-35 | Battalion Quartermaster |
| P.B.** | Belfast | 1928-38 | Brigade o/c |
| Cathal Goulding | Dublin | 1929-37 | |
| (Seoirse Plunkett | Dublin | 1930-40 | Son of George Plunkett, Chief Scout) |
| Mattie O'Neill | Dublin | 1930-34; 1944-46 | Adjutant General |
| Micksy Conway | Clonmel | 1930-36 | Slua Adjutant and founder |
| Paddy Bergin | Carlow | 1931-36 | Battalion Adjutant |
| (Éilís Ryan | Dublin | 1933-34 | Sister of Frank Ryan, Adjutant General) |
| (Peter O'Flinn | Dublin | 1933-34 | Flatmate of Frank Ryan 1929-36) |
| Dan Stephenson | Dublin | 1933-40 | Brigade Quartermaster |
| Con Dillon | Dublin | 1933-38; 1946-55 | Quartermaster General |
| (Jerry Cronin | Cork | 1934-37 | I.R.A. Brigade Train- ing Officer) |
| Diarmuid Mac Giolla Phádraig | Dublin | 1934-39 | Adjutant General |
| L.F. | Belfast | 1935-42 | Battalion o/c |
| (Eddy Williams | Cork | 1938-40 | Associated with Fianna through Pipe Band) |
| Joe Atkinson | Belfast | 1937-40 | National Organiser, Adjutant General |

| | | | |
|-----------------------|---------|---------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| Seamus Murphy | Dublin | 1938-48 | Brigade Adjutant |
| (Kathleen Timmins | Dublin | 1939-50 | Widow of Peadar Timmins, leader of Fianna 1942-45) |
| Robert Russell | Dublin | 1941-42 | |
| A.McM. | Belfast | 1944-57; 1966-71 | Brigade o/c |
| Dick Bell | Dublin | 1945-52 | Chief Scout |
| Des Carron | Dublin | 1946-52 | Brigade o/c |
| Ned Kelly | Dublin | 1948-55 | Chief Scout |
| D.M. | Belfast | 1948-56 | Brigade Command Staff |
| Paddy Madden | Cork | 1950-62 | Chief Scout |
| S.F. | Newry | 1951- | Chief Scout |
| Jimmy Cruise | Dublin | 1952-60 | Chief Scout |
| Donnchadha Ó Séaghdha | Dublin | 1954-75 | Brigade o/c, G.H.Q. Staff |
| Seoirse Dearle | Dublin | 1955-57 | Chief Scout |
| Seán Ó Cionnaith | Galway | 1960-65 | o/c London Slua, National Organiser, Chief Scout |
| Líam Mac an Ultaigh | Dublin | 1962-72 | Chief Scout |
| Donal Varian | Cork | 1962-78 | Chief Scout Provisional Fianna |
| Míceál Bairead | Dublin | 1963-75 | Chief Scout |
| P.C. | Belfast | 1966-72 | Brigade o/c |
| K.O'K. | Belfast | 1967-76 | Girls' Brigade o/c |
| Art Sherwin | Dublin | 1968-70; 1978- | Adjutant General Provisional Fianna |
| D.R. | Belfast | 1969-76 | Brigade o/c |
| B.H. | Belfast | 1970-76 | Also National Executive I.D.Y.M. |
| Brian Lynch | Cork | 1970-75 | Also National Secretary I.D.Y.M. |
| G.McM. | Belfast | 1971-73 | Girls' Battalion Adjutant |

| | | | |
|--------------------|---------|--------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| (G.McD. | Belfast | 1975-76 | Republican Clubs' Chief Liaison Officer for Fianna) |
| (Tony Heffernan | Dublin | 1975-76 | Gen. Secretary Sinn Féin W.P.; Chairman S.F.W.P. Youth Commit- tee; Chairman National Organising Committee for I.D.Y.M.) |
| 'Two fiannai' | Belfast | 1976- | Lower Falls slua |
| (Patsy C. | Belfast | 1978- | Republican Clubs' Slua Liaison Officer) |
| Philip Moran | Dublin | 1976- | First National Chair- man I.D.Y.M. |
| Seán Mac Cartaigh | Cork | 1976- | National Recreation Officer I.D.Y.M. |
| Tommy O'Driscoll | Cork | 1976- | Branch Education Officer I.D.Y.M. |
| Seán Garland | Dublin | 1962- | General Secretary Sinn Féin W.P. |
| Tomás Mac Giolla | Dublin | 1962- | President Sinn Féin W.P. |
| Paddy Buttner | Dublin | 1914-16 | Irish Citizen Army Scouts |
| Catherine O'Connor | Dublin | 1926-68 | Commandant Clann na nGael |
| May Mac Giolla | Dublin | 1934-48 1969-70 | Clann na nGael Dublin o/c Cumann na gCailíni |
| Tommy O'Flaherty | Dublin | | National Executive Connolly Y.M. |
| Ken Maloney | Dublin | | National Secretary Connolly Y.M. |
| Stephen Spain | Dublin | | National Secretary C.B.S.I. |
| Dennis Meyer | Dublin | | National Commissioner for Development Scout Association of Ireland |

**Interview conducted on the author's behalf by A.McM., Belfast.

In addition the author received from Mrs. J. Van Voris full notes of interviews conducted in the 1960s:

| | | | |
|--------------|--------|----------|----------------------------------------------|
| Joe Reynolds | Dublin | 1909-28? | Quartermaster General, National Secretary |
| Seamus Pouch | Dublin | 1912?-19 | Brigade Adjutant |

BRIEFER VERBAL STATEMENTS

Mrs. Joseph Robinson, widow of Joseph Robinson, Fianna Belfast (1902-06), Belfast (1910-2) Glasgow (1913-5).

Professor R. Dudley Edwards, Fianna Dublin (1921-2).

J.C., Fianna Belfast (1930s)

Pádraig Yeates, o/c Birmingham Fianna (1965-6).

Pádraig Varian, Fianna National Executive (1968-70), Slua o/c Provisional Fianna.

Francis Devine, Leader Clann na hEireann at time of Leeds Fianna slua, 1972.

Síghle Bean Uí Dhonnchadha (Sheila Humphries)

Máire Comerford

Gerry Doherty, Ard Chomhairle Sinn Féin the Workers' Party

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