

CONFIDENTIAL



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Our reference: C.S.2/1/104.

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Any replies to this communication
should be addressed to:

INSPECTOR GENERAL, R.U.C.

7th July, 1969.

Dear John,

I have been directed by the Inspector General, who is in London, to reply to your letter of 4th July. Therein you ask by Tuesday 8th for an assessment of the Civil Rights Movement, e.g., its intentions re marches, etc. and how far it is being riven by dissenting elements. You further ask if we can hazard a guess as to whether it will dissolve gradually or whether it will surmount its present troubles and remain a coherent, if troublesome, force in Northern Ireland. I can but attempt an answer along the following lines to meet the dead-line you set.

The term Movement is a more comprehensive one than C.R.A. and an assessment must take account of the various groups under the C.R.A. umbrella who influence its policies and actions and cash in on the emotional ground swell of the almost wholly Catholic masses who turn out to support its public events. These are the Republicans, Nationalists, extreme Leftists such as Communists and P.D. Trotskyites, and Derry Citizens Action Committee. It is between these we find the present struggle for power, though not always in the form of the moderates versus the militants.

C.R.A. membership figures cannot be given but in any event are comparatively very small in relation to the numbers they can produce for public demonstrations. For example at the Annual General Meeting of N.I.C.R.A. in February there was a Northern Ireland attendance of only 50, though Belfast branch business meetings have had an attendance of as high as 150.

Branches of N.I.C.R.A. continue to be formed in various towns and villages - particularly in Nationalist areas, but again the hard core membership is generally small. It is interesting to note here from an intelligence report in June that Republican Headquarters claim they now control the executives of two-thirds of all C.R.A. branches.

As far back as January a C.R. campaign document for 1969 said "..... it is very doubtful if marches will achieve much more and public reaction is not unlikely to continue marching and nothing else shows not only a paucity of ideas but could be pushed too far They should not be abandoned but should be an adjunct in a more positive programme". The search for new ideas produced Civil Disobedience which was to include:- occupation of buildings; picketing; strikes; boycott; non-payment of taxes; squatting; organisation of unemployed; C.R. local elections; etc. The reopening of their "Back to the Streets" campaign recently in Strabane and last Saturday in Newry seems to bear this out, if attendance figures are the criterion - Strabane, just short of 2,000: Newry - just over 1,000. Admittedly there was little or no danger from Protestant confrontation this time and no bans or re-routing. Otherwise the turn outs might well have been as of yore. It does suggest that marches have lost steam. The real measure of this yard stick, however, will come when Currie's C.R. Anniversary March takes place at Dungannon on 24th August. You will recall they failed to reach the Market Square on that date last year, and since, and it

will undoubtedly be their target this year. The protestant element continue equally determined to keep them off the Square. The second big date is 5th October when Hume plans his anniversary at Londonderry, with a coincident Trafalgar Square Rally on the same date. Much will depend here on the discipline over his hooligan element and McCann's radicals. We may also have one in Armagh though no plans have as yet been announced. I cannot see Burntollet Anniversary passing without a further show there.

In between much will depend on Paisley who has now decided to go back to the streets, starting with Newry. If the Reverend gentleman could only be persuaded to leave it to the Government and police, as he has been doing since his release, the C.R. attendances would probably continue to fall away. C.R. only feeds and thrives on such opposition. But I presume he too feels he must lead again to survive.

So far the Civil Disobedience operations have been mere pin-pricks. Squatting has been a nuisance here and there, but no more. In some cases, as you know, enough pickets could not be found to carry placards. But there is always a danger in these minor operations, depending on the place and the audacity of the protesters. The recent picketing of the Council meeting in Dungannon is but an example. But for tight police control over both elements this could easily have exploded into a major riot.

I now turn to the dissension at the top. The Government's firm and solemn promise of reform and the actual time table have brought the Movement to a crossroads, and a state of confusion. It is now the sincerity of the Movement itself which is in question and one must examine its evolution in recent months and the aims and intentions of the warring elements who struggle for power.

If the Movement is not to wane or founder it must of necessity become more militant - and there must come a new crop of impossible demands. The so-called moderates are caught up in this competition and must show increasing militancy to survive and stay in power.

In composition the Movement was and is Catholic, but in the beginning a Protestant sprinkling of idealists and do-gooders presented a broader facade. This has now largely been shed, however, apart from an element of radical Socialists and Communists. At grass roots the Movement has now crystallised into the familiar 'green' composed of Republicans and Nationalists, but still, as I have said, containing a vociferous minority grouping of Trotskyites or Revolutionary Socialists. I feel therefore the present struggle for power can best be seen against this background.

I could describe this bid for power in my own words but feel it is better explained in the words of some of the principal protagonists, the P.D. Trotskyites, which I take from the June issue of the New Left Review:-

Farrell: P.D. is not just part of the C.R. Movement. It is a revolutionary association influenced by the Sorbonne Assembly.

McCann: The transformation of Irish Society necessary to implement reforms is a revolution.

Farrell: We have radicalised the Catholic working class to some extent, but we have failed to get across to the Protestant working class.

Bernadette Devlin: Although I believe there is very little Christianity there is a lot of religion, and the way to unite Protestants and Catholics is by trying to get rid of both Churches at once.

Farrell: The Republicans have been of great organisational assistance, both to P.D. marches and C.R. in the towns, where they have often provided the stewards and so on. Initially C.R. committees tended to be of the local bourgeoisie with a token gesture of workers We have tried to swing the emphasis on to social and economic demands.

McCann: Derry Citizens' Action was elected by about 100 Derry middle class to steer the movement away from dangerous territory. There is a millionaire (Canavan the bookie) among its leading members and even though they have failed so far to channel in a safe direction they will always try to stop short of a confrontation.

Toman: Either they will have to reject us or we will transform C.R. into one based on socialist demands.

McCann: the idea of revolution is implanted in the minds of the Irish by the glory of 1916 and its martyrs there is always a link to Connolly and to 1916 We have to complete the national revolution

Farrell: We cannot call for all power to the Soviets because our present basis is not the whole working class: only a section.

McCann: We cannot form a Bolshivick party overnight. Rather than set up councils, we must try a radical socialist front between Republicans and ourselves.

Baxter: You can't have a revolution in Ulster alone, and our aim must be a Socialist republic, something on the lines of Cuba.

Farrell: The Border must go, but in the direction of a socialist republic and not just into a Republic which might at a future date become Socialist.

Toman: there was a terrible fear if Bernadette didn't stand somebody worse would. Austin Currie would not have campaigned on an anti-sectarian platform.

Bernadette: the people of Mid Ulster know a political opportunist when they see one and Austin Currie has a big X after his name.

Farrell: Nationalist M.P.'s. spoke on Bernadette's platform, which was a grave embarrassment. These people are green Tories, they are Capitalists and they are Catholic sectarians - and even their so-called left wingers are as much our enemies as the Unionists. Currie emphasises the unity of all Anti-Unionists which in practice means the unity of all Catholics against Protestants. We do not want reform of N.I. We want a revolution in Ireland.

The above gives a picture of three elements involved in the power struggle and the policies they represent, viz., the Nationalists, personified by Currie; The Derry moderates of the Action Committee; and the P.D. Trotskyites. The orthodox Communists (Betty Sinclair & Co.) are not a reckonable force at this moment of time. After rigged elections and re-elections at Belfast level some months ago they are now somewhat impotent in decisions taken by the Movement. This brings me to the last, but by no means the least, important element, viz., the official Republican Movement, in the shape of I.R.A., Sinn Fein and Republican Clubs.

As already stated Republican Headquarters now claims control of two thirds of the executives of all Civil Rights Associations. At top C.R.A. level five members of the fourteen strong Executive Committee are known Republicans or of strong Republican connection, while the chairman - Gogarty - is a member of the Wolfe Tone Society; the treasurer, Heatley is a former Sinn Feiner and still strongly Republican in outlook; the Vice-Chairman, McDowell, is former I.R.A.

The Republicans do not approve of P.D., despite the references by McCann and others to Connolly and a 32-County Socialist Republic.

What is the attitude of the Republican Movement to Civil Rights? I quote from one of their Headquarters' confidential political documents:-

1. To educate and organise the people for the achievement of a Republic there is need for freedom of speech, assembly, publications, etc. Hence the over-riding importance in the North for the C.R. struggle.
2. The methods of C.R. marches, meetings, sit-ins, sit-downs, boycotts, petitions, lobbies. Civil Disobedience carefully thought out from the point of view of public opinion, in particular, Protestant public opinion, and opinion abroad.
3. For Republicans: Separate and independent organisation, together with united action with other organisations for common and agreed ends.
(b) Medium Term: Six Counties to build a movement, with a legal existence, based on workers, farmers, self-employed and professional people, irrespective of religion, capable of winning allies and mass support with a high quality leadership and good discipline based on shared ideas and allegiance, so as to undermine the popular basis of Unionist Rule.
Short Term: Democracy, Civil Rights, Discrimination, Trade Union activity and job security - The gaining of maximum concessions while Wilson is still in power.
4. Tactics: No party political banners or tricolours - slogans and demands which will gain popular support. Claim right to march peacefully through central areas of towns. If stopped sit down, occupy roads, be carried off physically - no resistance - in this way expose the violence of the police and bring public pressure to bear on them. Maximum participation of women and children. Need to have press tipped off beforehand. The success of such techniques in U.S.A., India, Czechoslovakia - the power of an organised and disciplined people. Evading bans on routes by planned infiltration, with banners and slogans concealed and then unfurled when reformed. Sit-downs and occupation of central squares (diamonds) at peak hours, with press tipped off. No provocative flags or emblems - the use of these always to be judged by their effect in increasing or decreasing support.

The above gives some idea of Republican tactics at work in the Civil Rights Movement.

The Republican Movement under Johnston has now become a Connollyite Socialist Movement of the Left. The 'take-over' may be said to be complete. Their tactics have changed in the political field and they now resort to infiltration, manipulation and alliance with any group which serves their purpose for the time being, i.e., to destroy or undermine the existing system of government. Their hand will remain largely hidden while these processes are at work and until they consider the moment propitious for their "solution", viz., the final struggle for a 32 County Socialist Republic in the Connolly tradition. They do not, therefore, enter into the open struggle for power in the Civil Rights Movement. An overt Republican hand would not suit them. They are better served by the tactics described.

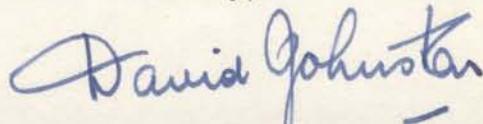
You asked specifically (1) its (C.R.) intentions in regard to marches, etc., (2) how far it is being riven by dissenting elements (3) for an informed guess if it will dissolve or surmount its present troubles and remain a coherent, if troublesome force in Northern Ireland.

In regard to (1) the answer is 'Yes'. They have announced "Back to the Streets" and have already done so at Strabane and Newry. I predict the autumn dates I have mentioned will be of greater consequence. I also predict all their marches will assume greater importance and danger if Paisley goes "Back to the Streets" in a big way. The minor Civil disobedience, squatting and picketing exercises have been a disappointment to them and a new gimmick is badly needed. We can but wait and see what this will be.

Reference (2) I think I have given a picture of the dissenting elements at War within the Movement. My prediction is the Movement leadership and policies will remain as at present - with the P.D. Trotskyites remaining a minority vociferous ginger group. In the competition though there is bound to be an increase in militancy by all groups.

Reference (3) My guess is that the Movement will survive and surmount its difficulties. All groups concerned know that it must survive if they are to further their own interests - and they will see that it does. It will continue to trouble us for some time to come. It would certainly not prosper to the same extent if Paisley would get the message that he is playing the game their way and that they thrive mainly on his reactions.

Yours sincerely,



County Inspector

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