

AN ALTERNATIVE DEFENCE FOR IRELAND

SOME CONSIDERATIONS AND A MODEL OF DEFENCE WITHOUT ARMS FOR THE IRISH PEOPLE

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Czechoslovakia 1968; citizen's anger, soldiers' dismay.

PREFACE

This is a very limited attempt to put down on paper a possible non-military plan for a defence of and by the people of Ireland, more particularly the people of the Republic.

The primary necessity at this point is to show that a non-military defence is possible for Ireland and that it offers a better defence for the people of Ireland than the current system. There are dangers that such a plan for civilian-based defence could be added to the current military defence (such as it is) without any changes in either the hierarchical nature of society or lessening in the size of the military defence; it would be, in other words, an extra defence.

There are dangers here. But the problem is in a sense an intellectual one — is an alternative defence possible? Do people *believe* it is possible? The purpose of this paper is to try to demonstrate that it is indeed possible. If people are persuaded that it is possible we can then start to move further along the road — a road which does not have an end. It is a road made of internal, self-affirmed, non-military strength, of individual people coming together to work for justice at home and abroad and to oppose those who would destroy the world through attempts to dominate it.

We do not need weapons. For our own peace of mind we may however need a viable defence against possible aggression, from whatever side it comes. This article is intended to sketch out some of the possibilities for that defence. And what is relevant to external threats is also relevant in this case to internal threats.

To point out the possibilities of this I have certainly simplified some things and assumed difficulties can be overcome. However separately to outlining the model, I have also tried to explore briefly the main difficulties. Overcoming these would certainly be a problem. But if we are not to play a (negative) part in the downfall of the world then the will must be found.

FROM WHENCE THE THREAT?

Those who see 'the threat' to Ireland being solely from Eastern Europe and more specifically the Soviet Union are mistaken. Both Britain and the United States of America have considerable strategic interests in relation to Ireland, and both exercise varying degrees of pressure on the Republic to ditch neutrality and join NATO (see Gordon Thomas' article 'Operation Turn' in DAWN 81 pamphlet 'Neutral on whose side? Irish neutrality today').

During the second world war (see e.g. T Ryle Dwyer's 'Irish neutrality and the USA 1939-47') there was a real possibility that southern Ireland could have been invaded by either Allied or Axis powers. The Allies initially wanted the south's bases, and might have invaded on a pre-emptive strike had they been convinced Germany might try to use it as a base from which to attack Britain; likewise there was some consideration in Germany of invading Ireland though it was never developed very far.

The situation is identical today in that Ireland runs the risk of invasion from either side of the great divide in the Northern hemisphere — from NATO or Warsaw Pact. This is only likely, however, in the context of conventional or nuclear war which threatens to engulf the whole of Europe.

Britain fears missile attacks from Russian 'Backfire' bombers from the west (e.g. off the coast of Ireland) and would welcome a 'stable' Ireland as a member of NATO (and speculation has gone on about the possibility of a 'deal' over uniting North and South in return for becoming a member of NATO).

In the context of a nuclear or high-level European 'conventional' war the most likely invader would in fact be NATO, in the shape of the USA using Irish facilities to

send reinforcements to Europe, or Britain erecting defences against Soviet attacks from the Atlantic. It is possible that in this context the Soviet Union might consider a pre-emptive strike to deprive NATO of any possible Irish facilities, but given the geographical position of Ireland an invasion by NATO is more likely since it would be less costly and more beneficial. If the USA intervened militarily in Grenada in 'peace-time', would she hesitate to invade Ireland in 'war-time'?

Indeed, evidence over the past few years shows NATO settling in already, with telecommunication facilities of use to NATO and with war exercises in the Irish sea.

But in more normal circumstances there is no indication that the Soviet Union sees any possibility of 'expanding' in Western Europe, having enough difficulty trying to keep control in Eastern Europe as it is.

While the risk of nuclear war is greater than it has been, and many are convinced that it will take place soon, we cannot eliminate the possibility of 'conventional' war even in the most unlikely places (this is one of the lessons of the Falklands/Malvinas war). Response to the threat of invasion should therefore take into account a variety of forms of invasion and international contexts. In some contexts (e.g. Vietnam) 'conventional' war can be tenable but escalation to nuclear war unthinkable (because of the likely effect on the 'first use' country — i.e. the USA in the case of the Vietnam war). (Boserup/Mack p.177).

IRISH NEUTRALITY — SITTING ON ONE SIDE OF THE WALL

'Neutrality may be much safer than involvement in alliances, especially in a world where alliances include nuclear powers, and for countries which have no reason to feel themselves under direct threat.' ('Defence without the Bomb', Alternative Defence Commission (Britain) p. 103).

Initially fashioned principally as an anti-partition instrument, there have at times been positive aspects to Irish neutrality and foreign policy, e.g. in the 1930s and 1950s. However today foreign policy follows almost slavishly that of the EEC, and divergences are the exception to the rule.

Unlike Sweden, which is a highly armed neutral country, the Republic has no real defence policy against invasion. The armed forces may do something for national identity and morale (as currently conceived) but their main functions are a) symbolic of national identity b) counter insurgency role in relation to paramilitary groups and the North c) some involvement in serving under the United Nations flag abroad.

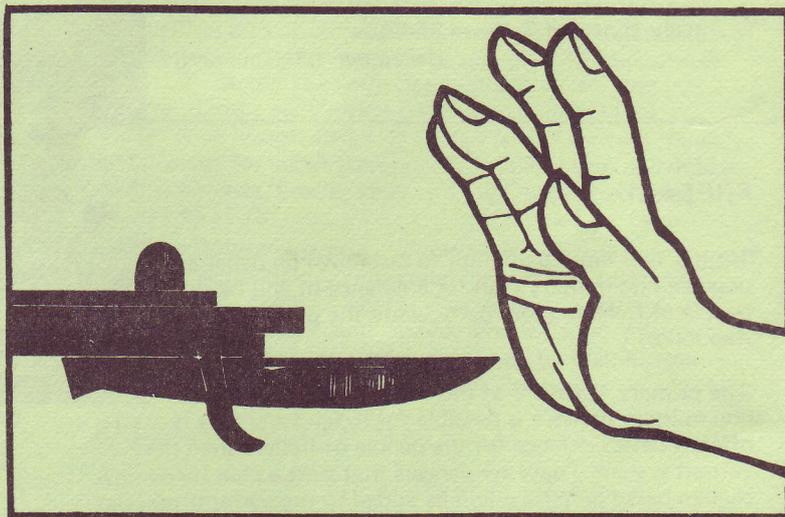
Even from a military point of view, Irish neutrality is threadbare. Brian Quinn in an article on 'Can we really defend our neutrality?' (Irish Independent, early 1983) concluded: 'We are not neutral. We are just devious. We save on the Naval Service by insisting on its fishery protection rather than military role. We thus dodge on cash and, in an underhand way, maintain the neutrality posture. An honourable posture? One wonders.'

In the second world war, the military resistance against Axis or Allied invasion would have lasted a few days. Today resistance against superpower invasion wouldn't even last that long. Meanwhile some are happy to hide behind the NATO 'shield' (e.g. Defence minister Cooney's statement in the Dail, quoted in DAWN 92 'What a state!' '83' p. 1). Not alone is this dishonest but it means that the scope for Ireland to play a constructive

international role is limited since the Republic is clearly in the Western camp — a fellow traveller with NATO if not actually a member.

But neutrality is a political position with considerable popular support around the country. If Ireland is not to join NATO (joining would add to international tension, exacerbate East-West relations, and mean we would play an even greater negative role in cold war politics) what then can we do?

For many reasons I believe a military defence policy for Ireland makes no sense (see Appendix on the moral basis). Ireland could be overrun by a superpower within a day. Pragmatism is one very important reason for Ireland to adopt a nonviolent social defence system. Adopting such a defence would be an important step away from any involvement on our part in the suicidal nuclear confrontation between the superpowers. It would help our survival chances in the event of war. But it would also lead by example to other countries.



THE MODEL

1) OVERVIEW

Basically I am proposing what could be described as 'transarmament', a phrase first coined by Theodor Ebert; it has been defined as 'the gradual transition from one type of defence — armed and nuclear — to another type of defence — popular and nonviolent' (... 'transarmament, c'est-à-dire de passage gradué d'un type de défense, armée et nucléaire — à un autre type de défense — populaire et non-violente', Hugues Colle article in 'Non-violence politique', No. 60, Juin 1983). Since the Republic has no nuclear weapons and little military defence against attack, the process of transarmament could be relatively easy. Various writers have written of the necessity of 'social unity' for nonviolent defence to be fully effective. Despite gross inequalities in Irish society I consider that sufficient 'social unity' exists in Ireland given the historical experience of other societies.

There are some situations where neither armed nor unarmed defence will deter aggression. It is clear from the Republic's lack of military defence that it would be no deterrent *in military terms*. The deterrent would be in terms of damaging the invader's status in international public opinion. This, coupled with denying an invader the facilities that they would wish to use, and making continued occupation as untenable as possible, would be the main prongs of a nonviolent civilian defence plan. The people should be prepared to defend themselves using economic, social, political and cultural weapons (WRI Triennial 1982 report).

2) DEVELOPMENT OF NEUTRALITY AND NON-ALIGNMENT

The Republic should develop its neutrality to be a fearless advocate of disarmament, international understanding, and opposition to aggression and injustice. This would certainly cause problems in the West since Ireland is generally placed in the Western camp, but would not be welcomed East or West on the occasions when it led to them being respectively criticised. Nevertheless, it would lead to increased, if sometimes grudging, respect for Ireland in the international scene and make any military action against Ireland less likely because of the infamy which it would cause to be heaped on the aggressor.

Neutrality would not just be an external policy but taken into account internally. For example, national or multinational firms would not be permitted to operate in the Republic which had any linkage in the production of equipment for military or nuclear purposes; in cases in question, it would be up to the firm in question to prove that the equipment concerned was not used for military purposes. Telecommunication links of possible benefit to the military would be prohibited.

A further aspect of neutrality would be the development of Irish representation of the interests of the poorer, third world, countries in the EEC, since world peace depends not just on better East/West relations but a fairer North/South economic system. As a relatively poor country in the EEC this should not be an impossible role for the Republic to play.

The extent to which this development of neutrality would be possible while remaining a member of the EEC is uncertain. At the moment it is quite possible that such Irish neutrality could be accommodated, but if further moves were made to develop foreign policy and military policy within the EEC then the Republic would have to leave or seek some external association.

In all this, the policy of neutrality would seek to build on the positive aspects of neutral policy in the past. (see DAWN pamphlets on neutrality, Dawn 43 + Dawn 81)

3) METHODS AND HISTORICAL EXAMPLES OF CIVILIAN DEFENCE

An occupying force depends on the submissiveness of the people in the area it occupies. The aim of nonviolent civilian defence in an occupied country is to a) deprive the occupying force of anything useful in a material sense b) make it self-evident to the occupying force that its actions are immoral, based on false ideas and totally opposed by all the population c) generally make the occupation as untenable as possible with the aim of driving the invader out (either through 'conversion', or through counting the cost of occupation).

Basil Liddell-Hart was involved in the interrogation of German generals after the Second World War; violent forms of resistance in occupied Europe had not been very troublesome to them generally but 'Their evidence also showed the effectiveness of non-violent resistance as practised in Denmark, Holland and Norway - and, to some extent, in France and Belgium. Even clearer was their inability to cope with it. They were experts in violence, and had been trained to deal with opponents who used that method. But other forms of resistance baffled them - and all the more as the methods were subtle and concealed'. ('Civilian Resistance as a national defence', ed. Adam Roberts, p.239/240.)

This also applied in the spontaneous resistance in Czechoslovakia to the Warsaw Pact invasion of 1968 (see e.g. Boserup/Mack p. 102). The initial spontaneous non-violent resistance in Czechoslovakia was successful in preventing anyone collaborating with the Russians: it was a gradual political process and making concessions that eroded resistance (Boserup/Mack p. 113).

In Czechoslovakia in 1968 it is reputed that some trains of Russian equipment came across the border and went for long trips in the Czechoslovak countryside before re-emerging back at the Russian border! Radio was an essential element in providing people with the real situation. Soldiers were met with varying responses, none of them welcoming, and many geared to question the moral authority of the military intervention and the individual soldier's part in it; as a result many soldiers had to be replaced by the Russians and new units brought in included ones from the Soviet Far East with whom the Czechs and Slovaks would have had greater problems in communicating because of language difficulties.



Czechoslovakia 1968; only signs to Moscow were reliable.

Czechoslovakia in 1968 was not a victory for the people but it was a sample of almost entirely nonviolent resistance by a population who had no preparation in it, no training for it. The resistance grew up spontaneously. Certainly the battle was lost in the political bargaining which then took place rather than in the ineffectiveness of the resistance, though that was naturally difficult to sustain over a period. Poland more recently has provided us with material to study regarding *internal* repression, if again at the behest of the Soviet Union.

Had Czechoslovakia and Poland had the chance for the people to prepare themselves in nonviolent civilian defence then the story might have been that little and significant bit different.

There are thousands and thousands of examples of civilian resistance either to internal or external aggression which merit attention. This includes resistance in Latin America at a political and economic level through strikes, fasts and other tactics.

Above all in Ireland it would be necessary to build on the experiences that people have themselves and to extend from there. It would not at all be a matter of suddenly switching on a civilian defence policy but, as the next section indicates, a gradual process of building up people's capabilities in this area.

4) CIVILIAN PREPARATION AND TRAINING

There would be a gradual introduction of the concept of nonviolent civilian defence. This could not be accomplished in the manner of compulsory military training but rather of a gradual process over a period of a decade or so. Adam Roberts has given the possible stages as follows; (Civilian Resistance as a National Defence p. 338)

1. Research and investigation into civilian defence, in order to judge its workability, relate it to a specific country's defence problems, and develop strategic and tactical concepts so that the proposal can be presented in concrete and practical terms.
2. General public education in non-violent action and civilian defence; concentrated training of key groups and individuals; organizational preparations.
3. Application of civilian defence in specific areas without complete abandonment of military defence policy.
4. Public commitment to use civilian defence in resisting all threats formerly dealt with by military methods. Completion of process of transarmament.'

Firstly, public involvement should be as voluntary as possible. Information and interest have to precede involvement, and involvement should be a gradual process through voluntary, trade union and community associations. However all of Roberts' model above does not apply here since there is no real military defence plan, and the Irish public would be more receptive to the idea of nonviolent civilian defence because of this.

Civilian training could initially consist of a) Information on nonviolent civilian defence and relevant historical examples of nonviolent action b) strategy games regarding the possibilities of invasion (macro level) c) role plays of the situation following invasion (micro level).

As well as studying some of the well-known international examples of nonviolent resistance (Czechoslovakia, Poland) in recent times, the Ruhr in 1923, occupied European and Scandinavian countries during World War II) there are plenty of Irish examples of collective nonviolent action; O'Connell, Boycott, the Land League, the creation of alternative political institutions during the War of Independence etc. It would be important to build on these to concretise the possibilities provided by examples from abroad. (see DAWN 38-39 'Nonviolence in Irish History') On the other hand some attention should also be given to the aims and methods of the superpowers and of historical instances of aggression and the threat posed by modern war, nuclear or conventional.

Civilian planning would be based on 'alternating' responses. That is, choosing the most appropriate responses at a particular time. Limited, unlimited, or partial strikes might be appropriate at the start of an invasion; non-cooperation might be more appropriate later on, or go-slows, apparent compliance but actual defiance of the orders of invaders etc. Plus of course boycotting the invader and making them completely unwelcome.

As to possible strategies and tactics, a 'list' could be developed of ones appropriate to the Irish situation (see e.g. Gene Sharp's tactics typology in 'The politics of nonviolent action') without dependence being developed on particular forms of action and without inhibiting initiative and innovation in response. And imagination should always be used to introduce innovative actions and ideas.

This process of coming to grips with nonviolent civilian defence would also act as a force for democratisation within Irish society. Nonviolent weapons for use

against an external aggressor could also be appropriately used against internal injustices and aggression.

As well as alternating strategies and tactics, decision making could alternate between national and local level. Some decisions could be made at a national level, and be communicated as possible by underground radio or newspapers or hand-to-hand (the Polish experience indicates that reliance should not be put on a telephone system which can be closed down). But equally decisions could be made as necessary by local cells, whose autonomy in decision making has been pre-arranged so as not to conflict with others. Most especially local cells or regional coordinating groups would come to the fore if resistance at a national level was curtailed through leaders being put out of circulation (and reliance shouldn't be made on a particular leadership) or national media being closed down.

5) SCUTTLING OF FACILITIES

The forgoing relates to ongoing resistance to an invader. But in the context of a nuclear war where 750 million dead is a 'reasonable' estimate either side will be willing to conduct a horrifying 'blitzkrieg' which would not worry too much about civilian resistance as opposed to *immediate* 'necessities' to their side.

In this situation, Ireland is of a certain strategic significance for its airports, ports, roads and telecommunications. There should therefore be realistic plans to destroy these and any other installations or material of use to an invading force. Given the short timescale between war breaking out and a possible invasion, contingency plans should be at an advanced stage during peace time. If war began it should be essential that these facilities were destroyed before invasion, although 'guerrilla sabotage' after invasion is a *possibility* but more likely to lead to deaths and reprisals (than if destruction is carried out prior to the invasion).

The denial of facilities to a possible invader would be a key element in deterring invasion. An invader would have to import and/or construct any facilities that they wished to utilise, and in the context of nuclear war there might not be time for this.

But more generally by realistically denying any Irish facilities to be used in war, Irish policy would make war *less* likely since the strategy of a possible invader could not rely on using Irish facilities. But this fact has to be made known around the world.

6) ECONOMIC DEFENCE

Ireland is a trading country and heavily dependent on international trade. Nevertheless, contingency plans should be drawn up for as near to self-sufficiency as is possible in the modern world — again as part of deterrence. In addition, treaties could be entered into with other countries regarding economic sanctions etc. which would apply to an aggressor against Ireland. While Ireland is a relatively small market in the European context with only 5 million odd in the entire island, such economic sanction treaties with other countries could offer Ireland further protection against the likelihood of aggression.

7) DEMAND FOR REMOVAL OF NORTHERN NATO-USEFUL FACILITIES

As part of the development of a meaningful neutrality, the Republic should demand the removal of all facilities useful to NATO from Northern Ireland, and could embark on a diplomatic campaign to this end. 'Ireland neutral — from Ballycastle to Bantry' might be difficult

to achieve because of the utility of facilities such as Bishops court radar station to the British war machine and to NATO, but it is certainly worth attempting. It would also demonstrate the determination to be a real neutral while it would be unlikely to diminish the chances of attack on Northern facilities in the case of war. Realistically Britain *could* continue to position NATO-useful facilities in the North while the North remains part of the UK. But the Republic could attempt to use public opinion, in the Republic, in the North, and in Britain against this.



8) WORLDWIDE PUBLICITY AND PROPAGANDA

A just and fearless neutral policy would gain credibility for Ireland around the world, and thereby deter an aggressor through the international political repercussions (Sean MacBride has often spoken of the growth in the power of public opinion internationally which can influence governments). (see e.g. interview with Sean MacBride, DAWN 57)

Nevertheless, it would be important to publicise the Irish position worldwide and in particular to people who might not be very sympathetic to it. Initially opposition to and criticism of the Irish position could be expected to come principally from the USA and NATO countries who might have thought of Ireland as being in their 'sphere of influence'.

As well as helping to provide security for Ireland against aggression, such information and publicity should be designed to encourage other countries to follow Ireland's lead in unilateral disarmament and the development of transarmament.

9) ABOLITION / TRANSFORMATION OF THE IRISH ARMED FORCES

As the process of transarmament proceeded the Irish armed forces of 14,500 people could be disbanded (Costa Rica hasn't had an army for 30 years) (see Leonard Bird's pamphlet, 'Costa Rica — a country without an army') or transformed into an emergency/rescue/international service brigade. To get away from the military mentality it should be either totally abolished or transformed so as to be unrecognisable, and, of course, disarmed.

Many Irish people have taken a certain pride in the service which the Irish army has given under the United Nations flag in varying parts of the world. In many cases the authority which such UN forces command is determined by the fact that they are a neutral body rather than that they are an armed one. So there could still be a role for an Irish unarmed body serving under the United Nations flag.

10) CIVILIAN PROTECTION IN THE EVENT OF WAR

It is debatable to what extent it is justifiable to attempt protect the population in the event of war. The current situation where those rich enough can buy themselves nuclear shelters is obscene. However in the situation of a just foreign policy it might be considered providing the *whole* of the population with protection. Whether if there really was a nuclear war people would be better off being killed initially is possible; however with a really neutral and effective policy of deterrence Ireland would be less likely to be attacked and thereby more likely to have people with a higher chance of survival. But the world would certainly not be as we know it now. And radioactivity would be imported from Britain on the wind, if not from the North. The whole ecosystem could be killed by nuclear war.



The primary object of Irish policy should be to avoid war and avoid any Irish participation, willing or unwilling, in it. Over a period though it might be justifiable building nuclear shelters for the *whole* population. Realistically this would take a couple of decades.

Contingency plans should also be drawn up for subsistence living and economic and other decentralisation in the event of war. Decentralisation plans could be carried out anyway, since far too much is centralised in Dublin anyway. A decentralised society is much more likely to be able to survive the aftermath of war.

There may also be some justification in stockpiling limited quantities of essential resources (e.g. oil at Whitegate etc.) but stockpiling has many drawbacks, not least the cost. In addition 'Stockpiling is no substitute for a determination to create a more equitable, and consequently more secure, world supply system.' (Alternative Defence Commission (Britain), Supplementary Paper No. 3 on 'Economic Defence').

11) ECONOMIC COST OF TRANSARMAMENT

While there would certainly be costs involved in changing to a nonviolent civilian defence after the initial period there would be considerable savings since the army would no longer exist — certainly not in the form it exists at the moment. The Republic's current military budget is over IRE200 million. Nonviolent civilian defence, while it would require initial full-time trainers and coordinators, would be a voluntary activity. The number of personnel initially required would be small, compared to the size of the army, and other costs (e.g. printing) would not make up the difference. And savings should be divided equally between helping to eliminate poverty at home and abroad.

There would be other economic costs in refusing national or multinational firms to have any international military connections or sales. However these costs could be thought of as an insurance policy against attack. Other possible costs, e.g. of civilian protection through fall-out shelters, would be the same whether under nonviolent civilian defence policy or a military defence policy. But studies in both the USA and Britain indicate that an equal amount of money spent in useful areas such as schools and hospitals creates considerably more jobs than an equal amount of money spent on the military.

DIFFICULTIES

a) THE NORTH AS PART OF NATO

The difficulty here is that part of the island of Ireland is part of a member state of NATO, and this side of some form of unified foreign and (non-) military policy (which presupposes some form of unification or even an independent North, or a neutral Britain) the existence of the North as part of the British military machine poses problems for the Republic. Firstly, various installations in the North would very definitely be targeted in the event of war; while some could be 'taken out' by 'conventional' weapons, with the threshold of nuclear weapons being reached they would certainly be used in the North too. This would have a devastating effect on the whole of the island.

So because of the geographical proximity there is a real problem for Irish neutrality. However, while Britain would continue to try to use the North (e.g. Bishops-court and Killard Point etc.) as useful installations for war preparations, Britain has always recognised the different nature of the North vis-a-vis Britain itself, as witnessed by the fact that conscription was never introduced in Northern Ireland in the second world war (nor in the whole of Ireland in the first world war).

The Republic should continually press for and demand the North to be made a 'neutral' area and oppose any NATO or nuclear installations of weapons being based there. It should also emphasise the possible offensive nature of an installation like Bishops-court radar station which is essential for any NATO first-strike against the Soviet Union (since it would be needed for the defence against a Soviet counter-attack).

Obviously there is a role here for people in the North to oppose all aspects of the British NATO-related machine.

b) IRISH MILITARY NATIONALIST TRADITION

Partly because of a tradition of violent resistance to British rule, and especially because of the role of guerrilla fighters against the British forces during the War of Independence, the Irish army has a position which is closely identified with the people's conception of the state and nationhood. The fact that the position of this armed force in relation to modern warfare is totally inadequate, not to say ludicrously outdated, is not contemplated by most people; the possibility of war engulfing Ireland is studiously ignored.

Ireland may not have a military-industrial complex of any size but the army is firmly entrenched and supported by the political parties. Education needs to be done on the irrelevance of the Irish armed forces in the context of modern international war. People also need to be made aware that an identity which comes from such institutional trappings as opposed to an identity from what people *are* is a surrogate identity and potentially dangerous.

A more thorny problem, and this relates directly to the Irish military nationalist tradition, is the North and the related paramilitary organisations. A major role of the Irish army is in counter-insurgency, anti-paramilitary activities, either at the border or in anti-paramilitary security throughout the Republic. The problem is that paramilitary violence is a response not only to injustices and perceived necessities (I make no distinction here

between Protestant and Catholic paramilitaries) but to their respective military traditions.

So plans to replace the army and de-militarise defence are obviously threatened by continuing military and paramilitary activity in the North or in the Republic related to the North. However an initial step could be the cessation of any military activity which is related to external defence. Another step would be investigation of nonviolent alternatives to paramilitary struggle for the people of the North.

There is no instant answer to the problems posed here, where the bulk of the population would remain committed to having armed forces for 'internal security'. However that is no excuse for refusing to begin a process which could develop as the situation changed.

Of course there is a danger that civilian-based defence would be merely added to what exists (or doesn't exist!) at the moment, and what would be achieved would be the worst of both worlds. However, in proposing an alternative this is a risk that has to be taken. (The danger has been defined by Bob Overy thus: 'What I object to is civilian defence as a half-way house, in which the attempt is made to strip non-violence of much of its radical content in order to make it acceptable to the powers-that-be. Such compromising strategies - for instance, in most disarmament, world order or military peace-keeping proposals - seem to me always to lose the peace movement more than they gain.' In 'Civilian Defence & Civilian Offense', Peace Pledge Union, last page).

There are also those who actively promote a combination of non-military pacifist defence, para-military defence and conventional military defence. (e.g. Johann Galtung in his talk to the War Resisters International Triennial in Perugia, 1982; see text in WRI Newsletter, April 1983, p.193) In the context of a small neutral country like Ireland which is relatively poor compared to most of the rest of Europe I would regard nonviolent civilian defence as the best bet. And we are talking about bets in a sense; there are situations (virtually any international war situation involving Ireland) which could not be coped with by military means, likewise there will be situations where nonviolent action, however well prepared, may not succeed. What I would say is that nonviolent action is most *likely* to succeed and *least* likely to entail unacceptable costs in terms of massive civilian deaths etc.



Army, naval service and air corps;
from an Irish defence forces advertisement

c) NATO and EEC PRESSURES

The Republic would have to become prepared to withstand NATO and EEC pressures against both a fearless neutral policy and a policy of unarmed defence. These pressures would undoubtedly be great, and often subtle. However, if we were convinced of the correctness of the Irish policy then we would not be deterred.

d) NATO INTERNALISED

Another problem is that there are those (in the army, in political parties, in other establishment quarters) who would like the Republic to join NATO. There are others who would swap a united Ireland for joining NATO. This internal opposition would have to be faced, and while it is powerful it represents only a minority. This aspect of the problem, Irish people having internalised a belief in NATO, relates to the Irish military nationalist tradition though the two are by no means identical, many more people with a military nationalist perspective would reject NATO than accept it. However some 'modernists', particularly army officers for whom it would mean enhancement of role and status, support joining NATO.

There is also the argument that as part of Western Europe the Republic should play a part in its 'defence'. (see quotes in DAWN 81) However when the superpowers and their allies are conducting a suicidal arms race the obligation is surely to provide a sign of hope, sanity, and *disengagement* from nuclear war. By providing a non-military model of defence, Ireland could demonstrate possibilities to other countries for non-military defence for themselves.

THE NEXT STEP

Government committees and commissions are the death of many a good idea, especially when the solutions are already known to many involved in a particular field. Nevertheless this is a field where there is little awareness in Ireland. The suggestion (made to the government during recent Peace Weeks) of devoting 1% of the military budget for 'training in non-violent techniques of peace keeping' is inadequate insofar as it could represent 'nonviolence' being used to merely make the military better at their job. Rather a fraction of 1% should be spent on producing an in-depth study of both the possibilities in nonviolent civilian defence and a detailed model for Ireland.

However, 'handing over' to a government-sponsored investigation of nonviolent civilian defence would be the end. Rather all those interested in developing such an approach should continually lobby (once it had been set up) so that the commission does its work adequately and that its findings didn't disappear into governmental limbo-land.

In addition, voluntary and political groups should be developing their own approaches to neutrality, nonviolent action and training. There is a need here to explore how the tools used in nonviolent action training at a micro-level might be utilised at the macro, countrywide, level. Political parties and trade unions especially should become involved in this process.

Irish neutrality and defence policy is in a woeful state. It is certainly a big step to reach towards a nonviolent civilian defence policy but it would undoubtedly be the biggest step Ireland has ever made towards world peace. The question is — are we big enough in the contribution we want to make to world peace to make that step?

Appendix A THE MORAL BASIS

In writing this proposal I have sought to do so on pragmatic grounds, since these are the ones most likely to be perceived as relevant (i.e. nonviolent civilian defence is the most effective way of defending Ireland against the threat of war). However, as a Christian I believe not just in the moral superiority of such a course but its absolute necessity through the reading of the teachings of Jesus. Why, then, was the early Christian church totally non-violent in its approach for the first couple of hundred years?

I am not here seeking to develop a Christian analysis of violence and nonviolence. People who are Christians can examine their own faith. I would like to throw in some other moral considerations, however.

Using somewhat romantic language, Ciaran McKeown said the following at the United Nations 1st special session on disarmament in 1978: 'I look forward to the day when the Northern Irish, so long considered incurably violent, will, in fact, be in the vanguard of the struggle for a non-violent world. Indeed, as an Irishman, I hope that Ireland will find the confidence, the vision and the courage to lead the small nations of the world in freely deciding to live without armed forces, and thus once more become a light to Europe and to the world as it was a thousand years ago.' (quoted in IFOR report at the time) Symbols are important, and Ireland could provide an important symbol of hope and disarmament.

Then there is the question of what is to be defended. Marty Deming has put it this way: 'The question arises: What or who is to be defended? Is it the state itself, or social organisations and values (which may come under attack from the state)? These questions exist in military defence as well. For example, in a coup or installation of a puppet regime by an outside government, will the army defend the new order or the old order?' (IFOR Report, June 1981).

Bob Overy has written that 'civilian defence aims to convert the wrong groups in society to non-violent action. There is no short cut. Our priority should be to build a non-violent revolutionary movement which will radically transform the institutions and practices of our society. Second, we should not permit non-violence to be stripped of its spiritual and social content.' ('Civilian Defence & Civilian Offense')

I take it fully that what is to be defended is the people and their life and values. I agree that we should try to build up the nonviolent movement. But I also feel that we have a duty to share our vision with the wider society. We therefore have to show that nonviolence isn't pie-in-the-sky but relevant and practical. That has been the purpose of this paper.

I would like to end this section by quoting from a War Resisters International Triennial Working Group report on transarmament and nonviolent popular defence (Perugia, 1982): 'It is clear that the subject of nonviolent defence is not the defence of a territory but a defence of those values which are necessary to reach a more egalitarian society on economic, social, political and cultural levels. Nonviolent Popular Defence is part of the struggle for a change of society now, and cannot be a result of a possible change of society in the future. It is also a transnational process.'

point which relates to the amount of it — on non-military defence; while there are numerous research institutes there are actually none. If it is 'peace research' institutes whose work is a point made by Christian Mellon (a point made by Christian Mellon in *Review*, No.58, Avril 1983, in a useful review, of the general situation in non-military defence and peace studies).

It is also noted by the fact that some standard works on *Civilian Resistance as a National Action against Aggression*, edited by Gene Sharp, published in Pelican (paperback), in the category. If trying to track it down it is useful to know it was originally published by Pelican as *The Strategy of Civilian Resistance* in the USA as *Civilian Resistance as a Strategy*, 1968. It is a useful book in this matter and origin and views of its

Non-violence in National Defence by Andrew Mack (Frances Pinter, 1974) is a valuable general study based on the behest of the Danish government.

(Come!) on the strength and possibilities of non-violent action in general is Gene Sharp's *Non-violent Action* (Porter Sargent, Boston, 1970) in paperback in three volumes (see

on non-violence and nonviolent action in general and nonviolent civilian defence or contain Edward B. Gregg's classic *The power of non-violence* (Clarke, London, 1960, originally published by

Alternative Defence Commission's *Defence without the bomb* is basically outlining a strategy for Britain. However, it is only 40 pages on 'civil resistance'. *Defence without the bomb* is published by Taylor and Francis, London, 1983.

In the pamphlets and articles there is a wide choice available. The Peace Pledge Union in London (WC1H 0DX) have published *Civilian defence and civilian offence*, edited by Egbert Jahn (a socialist-critic) and Bob Overy (critique of truth). It's priced at 35p.

A series of mainly duplicated pamphlets from the Peace Pledge Union, some of which are priced at £1.50 for 3 issues) and some have also appeared in their *Non-violent Action* (subscriptions £4 a year).

at 55 Dawes Street, London W1P 6JL. They are preparatory papers for the International Fellowship of Reconciliation conference on *Defence* which took place at London in July 1983. The WRI will be publishing this conference shortly (an article appears in *Peace News* of 1983) reports occasionally on other aspects, and their address is 8 Elm Avenue, London W1P 6JL.

mentioned in WRI *Newsletters*, e.g. No. 184, September 1981. It has an article *The myths of the German and taken from the *Asurzelrevolution* did on (1981). Subscriptions to the *Newsletters* are £5 a year.*

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Much other relevant material has appeared in *IFOR Report*, the magazine of the International Fellowship of Reconciliation, Hof van Sonoy 15-17, 1811 LD Alkmaar, The Netherlands. The issue of June 1981 had a feature on *Defence; Another way?* with material from Marty Deming, Gene Sharp, Robert Polet and Theodor Ebert. Subscriptions are £6.50 a year.

Costa Rica — a country without an army by Leonard Bird (available from Housmans, 5 Caledonian Road, London N1 6AA) — your best bet for English language publications on the subject, price 40 pence plus postage. Useful and interesting illustration of how a country with no more pacifists than here — and situated in a politically and militarily difficult part of the world — can do without an army.

Readers of French will find material in *Non-violence politique* (20 rue du Dévidet, 45200 Montargis, France). MAN (Mouvement pour une Alternative Non-violente), 20 rue du Dévidet, Montargis 45200, CCP La Source 7185 A, France, have produced *Se défendre sans se détruire; pour une défense populaire non-violente* at 18 francs a copy, post paid.

Alternatives non violentes (Craintilleux, 42210 Montrond, France) has also produced material on civilian defence, e.g. No.39 *La défense civile en question*, price 15 francs, with articles by Jacques Semelin, Gene Sharp, Adam Roberts, Michael Randle and Gilbert Girondeau — plus a look at the Bolivian hunger strike of 1978. No.33 (price 6 francs, add postage for either issue) has two features on nonviolent civilian defence; Prague 1968 and the Dutch governmental project 1974-78.

So far as German material is concerned unfortunately the standard works on nonviolent defence are not translated into English; Theodor Ebert *Gewaltfreier Aufstand ('Nonviolent Rising')* and *Soziale Verteidigung ('Social Defence')*, in 2 volumes, both published by Waldkircher Verlagsgesellschaft, Waldkirch, West Germany.

RELEVANT DAWN MATERIAL

Nonviolence in Irish history (Dawn 38-39) is highly relevant for the way it demonstrates Irish people have eagerly used nonviolent action in difficult circumstances before now. 24 pages, 1978, 30 pence plus postage.

Dawn's second pamphlet on neutrality (the first was Dawn 43, now out of print) is *Neutral on whose side? Irish neutrality today*, 16 pages, 1982, 30 pence plus postage. It is obvious that a good understanding of the limitations and possibilities of Irish neutrality is a necessary precondition for trying to develop a nonviolent civilian defence.

Although directed at a micro- rather than a macro-level, *An introduction to nonviolent action training* (Dawn 72, price 30 pence plus postage, 1981) has relevance to nonviolent civilian defence. What are the methods and possibilities of training people in nonviolent action?

A 4-page broadsheet *Irish Christians and Disarmament* (from Dawn 94) sets the scene for the Christian churches' response to nuclear weapons and disarmament in general. 7 pence each plus postage, 15 for £1 post free.

No. 2 of Dawn's occasional publication *Dawn Train* has a lengthy discussion of training in relation to Ireland, as well as numerous articles on *The parents of nonviolence*. 40 pence plus postage.

Dawn will continue to cover nonviolent civilian defence and any campaigning and responses on the issue. Minimum subscription is £3.50 for 10 issues, supporting sub £6, to the Dawn address below.

If there is particular material you're trying to get hold of but can't then we may be able to help, e.g. by photocopying something for you.

Further copies of this 8-page pamphlet, *An alternative defence for Ireland*, are available at 20 pence a copy, plus postage, or 5 copies for £1 post free.

DAWN, 1 Belgrave Square, Rathmines, Dublin 6.
In Belfast phone 647106.

Appendix B BIBLIOGRAPHY

There is one important area of literature — or lack of it — that it may be thought that there are no institutes on non-military defence. What there is plenty of literature on concerns are much wider than in *Non-violence politique* review, for readers of *Peace News* concerning non-military

The problem is exacerbated by the fact that many of the works are out of print. *Defence; Non-violent Action* by Adam Roberts and Porter Sargent, 1969, comes into this category. In a library it may be useful. It is published by Faber and Faber. *Defence*, and appeared in *Defence*, Stackpole Books, 1970. Its breadth of subject matter is impressive.

War without weapons; the possibility of a non-violent war by Anders Boserup and John G. D. London, 1974) is another work they did at the time. It is into non-military defence.

The best general work (in the field) of nonviolent action is *The Politics of Nonviolence* (1973) which appears in *Peace News* review in Dawn 46-47).

Many other works on nonviolence are relevant to nonviolent action. Chapters on it, e.g. Richard D. Clarke *of nonviolence* (James C. Clarke, published 1935).

The British-based Alternatives Centre report *Defence without the bomb* (non-nuclear but military) is a good chapter on non-nuclear *Defence without the bomb* (Dawn 72, Francis at £4.45 in the UK).

Coming on to specific pamphlets there is a rather larger choice available. The Peace Pledge Union in Britain (6 Endsleigh Street, London WC1H 0DX) has published a pamphlet entitled *Civilian defence and civilian offence*. This contains an article on nonviolent pacifist approach and criticism, and argument in defence of nonviolence (add postage).

Studies in nonviolence is a series of pamphlets produced by the Peace Pledge Union which are relevant (subscriptions £4 a year) articles on civilian defence in the monthly magazine *The Peace Pledge*.

War Resisters International (WRI) SE17 1EL) published the report *Joint WRI/International Fellowship Building nonviolence* (Santpoort, Netherlands) in 1981. It is publishing the report from the conference. Article by Albert Beale on 22/7/83; *Peace News* reports on aspects of civilian defence in Nottingham, England.

Other material has appeared in *Peace News* No. 184, September 1981. It has an article *alternative defence* (translated from the special issue *Grassroots civilian defence*, Summer 1981) *WRI Newsletter* are £5 a year.

Dawn 95-96 page 16,
An alternative defence for