

WHO STANDS FOR THE SOVEREIGNTY OF THE IRISH PEOPLE?

By Eamon de Valera.

The following letter from President de Valera was read at the Meeting of Sinn Fein, at the Mansion House, Dublin, on July 17th, 1923:

"A Chairde Gaedheal:

... "That the entire ownership of Ireland, moral and material, up to the sun and down to the centre, is vested of right in the people of Ireland, that they, and none but they, are the land-owners and law-makers of this Island; that all laws are null and void not made by them, and all titles to land invalid not conferred or confirmed by them, and that this full right of ownership may and ought to be asserted by any and all means which God has put in the power of man."

That is the principle which we proclaim to-night and mean to stand upon. That was the faith of Fintan Lalor—it is our faith. That is what we mean by SINN FEIN—

... "Ireland her own—Ireland her own, and all therein, from the sod to the sky. The soil of Ireland for the people of Ireland, to have and hold from God alone who gave it—to have and to hold to them and their heirs for ever, without suit or service, faith or fealty, rent or render, to any power under Heaven."

And if this is not plain and concrete enough for those who will not see our objective, we can expand it still in the words of Lalor:

... "Not the constitution Wolfe Tone died to abolish, but the constitution Wolfe Tone died to obtain—Independence; full and absolute independence for this Island, and for every man (and woman) within this Island."

Who then stands for the sovereignty of the Irish people? This is no new-found faith with us. It was the faith that brought us to the side of Clarke, and Pearse, and Connolly. It was the faith later that brought us to the side of Cathal Brugha, when he stepped forward to take up Ireland's banner from where Clarke and Connolly and Pearse had laid it down in death, and it is because we have found it since to be the one true potent national faith that we have refused to abandon it, and that we ~~stand~~ it to-night in full confidence that those who believe will not be deceived, and ~~that~~ those whose task it will now be to raise the banner once more will rally the nation in this faith as they could by no other. We can have no quarrel then with those who really stand for the sovereignty of the people of this nation, and we have had no quarrel with them. Our quarrel has been with those who have conspired to hoodwink the people, who would deck them up with tinsel and tell them they had put royal robes upon them, who would practise upon them the arts of the mesmerist, and yet induce them to believe that their acts are of their own free will. We are ready, every one of us, to swear allegiance to the sovereign people of Ireland, but we will not swear allegiance to a puppet or an impostor, and we will never swear an oath of allegiance to a foreign king whether he be a symbol or a reality, nor will we ever become tools to execute the designs of a Lord Birkenhead or a Lloyd George.

Le meas mor agus le gach deagh ghuidhe,

Mise,

EAMON DE VALERA.

July 17th, 1923.

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