

IRISH REPUBLICAN PUBLICITY BUREAU

E A S T E R S T A T E M E N T 1973

From the

Leadership of the Republican Movement

The message of Easter 1916 has relevance for the Irish people to-day which needs to be underlined. Pearse and Connolly declared :-

"The right of the people of Ireland to the ownership of Ireland and to the unfettered control of Irish destinies, to be **sovereign and infeasible**".

They stated that the long usurpation of that **right by a foreign people** and government had not extinguished the right nor could it ever be extinguished except by the destruction of the Irish people.

The essential truth of the Easter proclamation has withstood the test of time. Fifty years of so-called independence has been exposed and shattered for the evil it is, and Britain in typical Tory tradition, has assumed direct military control of the occupied part of our country, and indirect political and economic control of the rest. The arrogant British claim to rule our country now stands exposed before the world, and in conflict with it is the assertion in arms of the God-given right of our nation to be master of its own destiny.

The Republican Movement has been consistent in maintaining the fundamental right of freedom and **sovereignty**. Acknowledgement of that right by Britain has been and still is the key proposal of our peace plan. History, truth and justice sanctions no other course and bitter experience has **taught** us that without freedom there will never be peace in our land. Great sacrifices have been endured over the last three years for that basic truth : - almost one hundred of our volunteers have died in action, nearly a thousand linger in prison camps and heroic splendid people of the North have withstood the terror of an Imperial Army.

The enemy has paid a high price for its action against our people. The casualties inflicted and the toll taken of British wealth and prestige have demonstrated the capacity of the Irish people to win their country's freedom. Our Volunteers have fought hard, conscious of the obligation to protect civilian lives and unmindful of the sacrifices they themselves have incurred to achieve final victory. Their dedication, courage and fighting ability have made them the true successors of the men of 1916 and assured for all a future in a new and free Ireland.

The Movement has outlined its political and economic proposals for the New Ireland. Account has been taken of the diverse traditions in our nation and we are confident that those Ulster Loyalists who have suffered insult and infamy at the hands of the Imperial Government will come to realise that their future lies with the family of the Irish people as a whole. The positive, practical proposals of our Movement surpass all others put forward to date and we urge all Irish people to work for their speedy implementation.

As in previous generations, certain sections of our people remain aloof from the struggle, while others actively oppose it. Church leaders in particular have developed a dual standard of morality, condemning the actions of resistance, while excusing the brutality and murder of the enemy. When this war is over, those people shall stand indicted before history for the wrong they do to their own people and the comfort they give to the enemy.

In conclusion, we affirm our pledge of loyalty to the people of Ireland. We are conscious of the grave responsibilities which weigh upon our shoulders. We are no different from previous revolutionaries in being condemned by the unthinking malicious and hostile. We are confident of the ultimate success of our struggle and we will pursue it until our ancient enemy recognises that peace must be based on justice; it cannot be founded on bayonets.

The struggle for Irish freedom has gone on a long time. It will be brought to a successful conclusion in our day with unity in our ranks, strength in our arms and the active support of our people. We have received it in the past, we enjoy it to-day and we ask for a greater measure in the future.

Signed: _____

P. O'NEILL (RUNAI, I.R.P.B.)