

SINN FÉIN

National Unity and Independence Programme

1. To convene the elected representatives of all Ireland as the National Assembly of the Independent Irish Republic.
2. To proceed to legislate for all Ireland.
3. To use every means in our power to overcome opposition to the Republic.
4. To repudiate all treaties, pacts and laws that in any way curtail the nation's independence.

Ní Neart go Cur le Chéile

Price : : : : : : 3d.

FOREWORD

The objectives of Sinn Fein are: to break the connection with England; to end the entire British Imperial system in Ireland; to end poverty and insecurity; to abolish the existing partition institutions of Government in Ireland and to replace them by a National Government having complete and effective jurisdiction over the entire territory of the Nation. The administration by such government of the affairs of the nation to be completely free of all foreign influence and unhampered or circumscribed by agreements conditioning its establishment.

Within the framework of the Republican movement which Sinn Fein, co-operating with kindred organisations, proposes to restore as the most effective means of achieving its objectives, the Irish people can again become invincible, as they were from 1918 to 1921. The unity of purpose and the determination to win freedom at all costs, which made them invincible during these years, has since been disrupted, and confidence in their own ability to secure their rights as a free people has been undermined through the compromise, opportunism and expediency practised by political party leaders.

Generally speaking, the aims and objects of the Republican Movement are but imperfectly understood by a large part of the generation grown to manhood within the past forty years. Part of the task, and a first duty of the leadership of the movement, is to rectify this deficiency of understanding and knowledge by endeavouring to attract the youth of Ireland and availing of the means at its disposal to enlighten them on the fundamentals forming the base on which the Republican cause rests.

ANALYSIS OF THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN IRELAND

Success in achieving the aims and objects of the Republican Movement depends on the co-operation and support of a majority of the Irish people. To obtain such assistance, it is necessary to indicate clearly to the people the line or lines of approach towards fulfilment of the task undertaken by the movement. In determining the line of approach and the means to be employed, cognisance must be taken of the relative situations, as regards their connection with Britain, that exist in the Six and Twenty-Six Counties.

Indubitably, both areas are ruled by partition governments, whose functions in maintaining a sundered and divided nation are identical. But whereas Britain maintains direct control over a major part of the affairs of the Six Counties and exercises a compelling influence over the remainder, a somewhat different situation exists in the Twenty-Six Counties.

The difference in the existing situations referred to makes the problem with which Republicans are confronted more complicated and in many respects more difficult to solve. It presents them with the immediate problem of deciding whether a single line of policy can be formulated suitable to a general application over all Ireland, or whether a different line will be necessary in respect of the two areas of existing government, with both lines complementary to one another, and dovetailing into a comprehensive policy for the whole of Ireland.

NATIONAL MOVEMENT NECESSARY

It should be borne in mind that any predetermined policy will require, as a first essential, to be of such a nature as to appeal to, and secure, a large measure of backing from the people as a whole. Minus the support of a considerable section of the people, North and South, any policy, no matter how well conceived and directed, contains few of the elements essential for success.

It will, therefore, be necessary, within the limits imposed by avoidance of expediency and sacrifice of principle, to frame a policy making a broad appeal to the reason, national instincts and popular imagination of the people, thus paving the way for a united effort to restore the Republic.

THE TWO PARTITION PARLIAMENTS

Britain directly controls and administers the major functions of Government in the Six Counties and maintains military establishments and an occupying force of varying strength, at present approximating to ten thousand personnel. The functions of government exercised by the Stormont regime are, in the main, confined to such matters as the maintenance of law and order, and local government administration. The regime maintains an armed police force of approximately 15,000, divided into 3,000 R.U.C. and 12,000 B-Specials. In addition, a percentage of the adult population may be reckoned as hostile to any attempt to unify the country under a National Parliament.

For purposes of parliamentary representation the area is divided into twelve constituencies, each returning one member to Westminster; and into 52 constituencies, each returning one member to Stormont. The respective distribution of pro-Irish and pro-British electors throughout the area allows a maximum of only three pro-Irish representatives being elected to Westminster, and usually only twelve being elected to Stormont.

Apart from the customary statutory regulations, no barriers exist to nomination of candidates entering the contest of elections to Westminster. Candidates seeking election to local government bodies must, prior to their nominations being accepted, sign a

declaration to take their seats if elected. In the case of elections to Stormont, candidates must testify on oath that they will take their seats if elected. In all cases, parliamentary representatives and those elected to local government bodies, must take an oath of allegiance to the King (or Queen) of England before permission is given them to participate in the proceedings of the administrations to which they have been elected. The restrictions imposed preclude Republicans from entering the contest of elections to Stormont and local government bodies. This narrows, for Republicans, the field of normal constitutional effort within the Six Counties, to the contesting of elections to Westminster on an abstentionist policy.

In the circumstances, it appears that means other than constitutional ones will have to be adopted. Whatever means it may be found necessary to employ, to drive the British forces from the area, and to overcome opposition to its inclusion within the jurisdiction of a National Government, will prove ineffective unless substantial and active support is forthcoming from the rest of Ireland.

To concentrate on the Six Counties alone and to neglect to take the necessary steps to organise and direct such support, would be fatal. Again, if means other than constitutional ones be employed, it is practically certain that the Free State Government, constituted on present or similar lines, will use the forces at its disposal in co-operation with the British and Stormont forces, to squelch the attempt to drive British forces from the Six Counties, and those making the attempt will be caught as in a pincers between the three forces.

Despite any constitutional changes effected during its existence, the Parliament of the Twenty-Six Counties remains in fact and substance, what it was originally designed to be: an institution of government established to administer the affairs of a part of the Irish Nation partitioned in the interests, and by the superior force of, a foreign enemy. This fact remains completely unaltered and unaffected, notwithstanding the measure of political and economic freedom achieved within the area of the Parliament's jurisdiction.

To accept it or regard it as otherwise is tantamount to acknowledging England's claim to exercise domination over the affairs of the Irish Nation. It is futile to hope that through sharing in its functions of government, or otherwise contributing to its maintenance, the partition of Ireland can be abolished and the restoration of the Irish Republic secured.

PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS

In the circumstances, therefore, it becomes necessary to formulate a policy designed to meet the variation in the situations that exist north and south of the border. In formulating such a

policy, the main factor to keep in mind is, that although general in purpose, the difference between the two situations will call for different means to deal with them. Because of this, the policy will require to be of a twofold character; at least, in so far as circumstances determine the need for employment of separate or additional means.

For example, a general policy can be applicable to the contest of elections in the Twenty-Six Counties and to Westminster; while elections to Stormont will require a different attitude. Likewise, the attitude towards Local Government in the Twenty-Six Counties will differ from that adopted towards Local Administrative Bodies in the Six Counties. Again, while it would be feasible through election machinery to obtain control over the Twenty-Six Counties, there is not, while the status quo remains, the remotest possibility of achieving control over the Six Counties by similar means.

PLAN OF CAMPAIGN

To formulate a policy of this nature presents many difficulties. Nevertheless, as the objective is an Irish Republic governed by a National Parliament, and since it will be necessary to supplant the partition governments by which the country is at present governed before the objective will have been reached, such a policy appears to be the most suitable, and in the circumstances, the one that should be adopted. Sinn Fein, therefore, recommends to the Irish people acceptance of the plan of campaign outlined below, as the only feasible one to translate into effect the age-long desire for liberty and the right of the Irish Nation to freedom.

1. Extend and intensify the effort to enlighten the people on the aims and objects of the Republican Movement. This can be done through an intensive propaganda campaign designed to rouse them out of the apathy and disillusionment created by the political parties, and to make clear to them that Republicans aim at uniting the people and ending the rancour and bitterness which those parties foster.
2. Coincident with 1, build up the strength and increase the resources of the Republican Movement. This can be accomplished in the normal way, by each of the organisations comprising the Movement giving attention to matters within their own sphere and at the same time co-operating with each other in matters of general concern to all, bearing in mind the absolute necessity for thorough co-ordination of effort at every stage of the forward drive.
3. As a corollary to, and a means of implementing 1 and 2, make preparations to enter the contest of Local Government elections in the Twenty-Six Counties; elected representatives to participate in the duties of the Local Government Bodies to which they have been elected. (Note: Of

a total of seventy-six Local Government Bodies in the Six Counties, the pro-Irish control not more than ten).

4. Make preparations to contest parliamentary elections in the Twenty-Six Counties. Republicans will not enter Leinster House as a minority group; given a majority, they are prepared to assume governmental control over the area, not through the present partition machinery, but through the Republican Government, constituted of elected or selected representatives as set out in paragraph 6 below.
 5. As a means of bringing the policy of the Republican Movement to the knowledge of the nationally-minded people of the Six Counties, of demonstrating to them that Republicans share with them the task of liberating the Six Counties and that they may with confidence rely upon the support of the entire Republican Movement in the accomplishment of that task, and of clearly indicating the national nature of the Movement, prepare to contest, on an abstentionist policy, all twelve constituencies returning representatives to Westminster.
 6. Having secured a majority of the elected representatives in the Twenty-Six Counties, issue an invitation to all members of Stormont to take their seats in the Parliament of the Republic and transfer their allegiance and powers to the National Government. It is most unlikely that the invitation will be accepted by more than twelve out of the fifty-two representatives. To cover such a contingency, and to make the national parliament representative of the entire country, members to represent those Stormont constituencies whose elected members refuse to sit in the National Parliament can be selected through constituency conventions or other agreed machinery.
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Candidates selected by Sinn Fein for election as Parliamentary representatives shall, on selection, and before nomination, publicly and solemnly pledge themselves as follows:—

- I freely and solemnly declare :
- (a) That, if elected, I will not sit in, nor take part in the proceedings of, any Parliament legislating, or purporting to legislate, for the people of Ireland other than the Parliament of the Irish Republic representative of the entire 32 Counties of Ireland.
 - (b) That, pending the establishment of the Parliament of the Irish Republic, in all matters pertaining to the duties and functions of a Parliamentary representative I will be guided by and hold myself amenable to all directions and instructions issued to me by the Ard-Chomhairle of Sinn Fein.
 - (c) That, pending the establishment of the Parliament of the Irish Republic, I will, at any time, if called upon to do so by a majority of the members of the Ard-Chomhairle of Sinn Fein, resign my seat as a Parliamentary representative for the Constituency of
 - (d) That I take this pledge voluntarily, of my own free will and in the full knowledge that any breach of (a) thereof will be regarded as an act of treachery, to be dealt with as such.

(Candidates for election to Local Government Bodies in the Twenty-Six Counties must make a similar declaration).

It should be noted that the policy, as outlined from Nos. 1 to 6 above, can and will be broadened in scope to meet varying circumstances as and when they arise.