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SINN FEIN PUBLICITY COMMITTEE

31 Sraid Cill Manntain,

Ath Cliath.

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S T A T E M E N T

Sinn Fein would like the Irish people to consider seriously statements which have been made in London and in Ireland which suggest that some move may be on to tie the Irish Nation still closer to the British Commonwealth. Attempts have been made in London by Mr. De Valera to plug the British propoganda line that the "Irish Question" today is simply a matter of two sections of the Irish people being unable to resolve their differences.

In the course of a report of Mr. De Valera's Press Conference in London, the Irish Independent of March 19th quotes "Asked what he considered to be the first step necessary to end partition, he said it was to try to get Unionists in the North to realize that the most natural unity and the one which was going to be the most valuable was union with their own fellow-countrymen."

Surely, the first step in the re-unification of our country is to end British occupation and British interference in Ireland. Those are the twin evils which keep our land in subjection - both politically and economically. Mr. De Valera carefully avoided all mention of these evils in his Press Conference. Not once in the Irish newspaper reports of his statements is he quoted as referring to the armed forces which Britain maintains in the 6-counties to hold her bridgehead there. No word of the terror, misery and shame which our people in the 6-counties have to endure under an occupation army.

It was not right to have Derry and the other places he had mentioned (Tyrone and Fermanagh, South Down and South Armagh) cut off as had been done without giving them a chance to say whether they wanted to be cut off or not. So said Mr. De Valera at his famous Press Conference in London.

Quite true; it is not right. It was not right to have sold them to Britain by the 'Treaty' of 1922. It was not right to have ratified the sale in 1926. It was not right to have re-affirmed the sell-out in 1937 by Mr. De Valera's much-talked of Constitution - in the enacting of which the people of these same areas were "given no chance to say whether they want it or not". Nor have the people of these areas been given any chance to say whether they agree to Mr. De Valera's jailing residents of the same areas in the Curragh Concentration Camp. Neither have they been given any chance to say whether or not they wanted Mr. De Valera to collaborate with Britain and Stormont in trying to crush the fight to end British occupation and achieve national freedom in which these same people are engaged.

In none of these things - nor in many others - have the people of Derry, Fermanagh and Tyrone, and South Down and South Armagh been given an opportunity to say what they wanted. Yet Mr. De Valera continues his policy of collaboration and has the gall to state that in doing so he expresses the will of the majority of the people.

The Irish people are entitled to a clear and unambiguous statement from Mr. De Valera on the question of recognition of the Stormont Parliament. This Parliament was originally set up in 1921 by virtue of a British Act of Parliament. It was repudiated at the time by the all-Ireland Parliament, Dail Eireann, and this repudiation was endorsed by a vast majority of the votes of the people of all Ireland.

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Mr. De Valera stated that to accept the Stormont 'status' would be to "recognize as just, something we know to be unjust". If he admits the Stormont Parliament to be, what in fact it is, a British imposed institution imposed on the Irish people against their will and without their consent, how then does he deny the right of the people living within the "jurisdiction" of that institution to take steps to throw off its yoke? How does he deny their right to try to expel the British forces of occupation by which the "jurisdiction" of that Parliament is maintained? By what right does he throw residents living within the "jurisdiction" of the Stormont Parliament into the Curragh Concentration Camp because he suspects them of being engaged in efforts to end British occupation and coercion?

Mr. De Valera on one hand declares he does not recognize the Stormont set-up, yet, on the other hand he collaborates with them to the extent of affording them every assistance he can to crush the Resistance Movement. Between them, Messrs. De Valera, Brookborough and McMillian, have imprisoned over 600 Irish Republicans in the joint effort to hold the 6-counties for Britain.

Irishmen should be wary of yet another epic act of treachery. The Irish people should beware of what might be done by politicians in their name. Mr. De Valera is reported to have said that if Ireland were to re-enter the Commonwealth, the decision would have to be taken by the Irish people as a whole. Part of Ireland, thanks to him and other political manoeuvrers in the so-called Commonwealth and the other part which often gets the term 'Ireland' is so completely tied to the British financially and otherwise that it might as well be.

Sinn Fein states that the right of the Irish Nation to sovereign independence is inalienable and indefeasible. The people of Ireland have never relinquished the claim to separate nationhood and generation after generation of Irishmen have fought and died with supreme courage in defence of this right. No one generation can sell the birthright of all the generations that have passed - passed through the butchery of Cromwell, the pitchcaps, the famine and the dark penal night, nor can any one generation with a careless vote give away the birthright of future generations of Irishmen. So let us beware of what plot might be hatching among those who would wish to destroy us.

It is not without wonder that we read of Mr. Brooke admitting a possibility that until now he never would admit "if we want to join Eire" he is reported as saying "we will do it in our own time". And what Mr. McMillian had to say on the subject at an interview which Mr. De Valera sought with him on the subject we do not know. But this we do know, that whatever unholy alliances there may or may not be, or whatever political plots might or might not be in the making, this is one generation which should not be hoodwinked or allow the nation to be re-sold to England by Irish traitors. They have filled the concentration camps, North and South, and continue to intimidate and coerce the Irish people. Can they break the spirit of this generation?

Is the Resistance in the 6-counties to be used as a lover - are the jailings, torture, terror and coercion which our people are condemned to suffer in their efforts to end British occupation being used by Mr. De Valera in these discussions on Commonwealth association? In short, is Mr. De Valera cashing in on the sufferings of our people in the occupied area in an effort to foist a re-hash of his Document No. 2 on the nation? The Irish people must look to it that no such perfidy is committed in their name. Ireland is not for sale, and neither the sacrifices of those who have already died nor the sufferings of those who are now participating in this latest phase of Ireland's struggle for freedom, must be availed of to build a new pedestal for a fallen idol.

Seven men have given their lives last year, men in the occupied area are risking their lives every day undermining the British forces of occupation; the very women in Belfast showed with splendid courage that they will fight their corner. It is only necessary for the Irish people to stand together behind this courageous vanguard and save the Nation for the Irish people against the intrigue of English statesmen and Irish politicians.