

I R E L A N D T O D A Y  
AND SOME QUESTIONS ON THE WAY FORWARD

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## INTRODUCTION

This document must not be regarded as final.

It must, however, be studied closely by *every member of the Movement*, who must ask himself the questions: (a) are the arguments fairly presented? (b) are there possibilities which have been ignored? (c) is there a credible, practical way forward among the alternatives?

He must write down his views, in his own words, and send them in to Head Office.

Note that Section 1 is simply an evaluation of the social forces in Ireland today. If the facts in this are judged to be wrong, it is necessary to say so.

Section 2 outlines two alternative ways forward. A choice must be made, or another one proposed.

Section 3 examines exhaustively and fairly the arguments on electoral policy. If any good arguments on either side have been left out, let them be filled in. Remember, the Commission has not yet made any recommendations. It wants the evidence complete first.

Section 4 contains many ideas with which people will already be familiar: this, however, in its final form, will depend on the consensus on Sections 2 and 3, so that it is to be regarded as tentative and provisional. Nonetheless, comment is welcome.

*Section 1*

*IRELAND TODAY*

(A) IRELAND AND THE UNITED KINGDOM

Ireland as a whole is under the influence of English imperialism.

English imperialism consists of a small group of extremely wealthy monopolistic companies, dominated by the petroleum, chemical, electronic and automobile industries, together with associated financial interests in the City of London.

This group dominates the whole of the English economy and also dominates those nations which have remained under neo-colonial control despite, in some cases, formal political independence in part or as a whole.

The English ruling class functions independently of whatever government is in power. So closely integrated is it with the civil service and armed forces that such Labour governments as have nominally held power have been unable to make any fundamental changes, even had their subservient leadership been willing to.

The main features of imperialism in Ireland are:

- 1 Occupation of the Six Counties directly by British troops, and also by US troops as a result of membership of NATO, and political integration with the UK.
- 2 Economic domination of both Six and 26 Counties by foreign monopolies — mainly English, but increasingly also US — resulting in capital outflow, high unemployment and emigration, take-overs and closures.
- 3 Lack of democracy in the Six Counties and the use of political and religious discrimination to divide the working people.
- 4 The exploitation of 26-County agriculture by the artificial rigging of the UK market.
- 5 Use of the financial system to channel Irish savings abroad.
- 6 Political subservience by the Dublin government in foreign policy and trade.
- 7 Cultural domination by English language, literature, ways of thinking, in all fields of human life.

The influence of English imperialism is in relative decline, due

to neo-colonial rivalry from the US and Europe. Areas once dominated by English capital, such as Canada, are passing under US influence.

English reaction to this decline has been to strengthen her hold over what she has got, Ireland being the oldest, closest and most important overseas colony.

Ireland, for the English ruling class, is a source of cheap food, a source of cheap labour, and a market for exports. The smashing of Irish nationality, long an objective, has proceeded no less rapidly under the partition structure than under the Act of Union: gombeen capitalist shadow-independence in the 26 Counties has been unable to take control of the economy, prevent the outward flow of people, or reverse the cultural erosion.

Similar processes at work in Scotland and Wales have produced national movements similar to the Irish movement in the first decades of the century, with demands limited to the achievement of conditions of freedom for native private enterprise to develop.

The most impoverished part of the United Kingdom is the Six Counties: it has the highest unemployment rate. Its impoverishment has been attributed, in a series of government reports, to its remoteness from the market with which it is integrated, coupled with lack of control over its own economy. In other words, the Six Counties, viewed as a region, has as much a case for independence as Scotland or Wales, or Ireland as a whole had before 1916.

Thus, there is as much a case for an all-Ireland independence movement as ever there was, viewed even from the angle of traditional capitalist economics as propounded by Griffith.

26-County experience, however, has shown that Griffithite independence is not enough. Enterprise is not necessarily related to capital: capital, if allowed freedom, flies overseas to safe investment with high dividends. Social control is necessary, and has been lacking.

#### (B) THE SIX COUNTIES

The Six Counties are the key to English influence in Ireland. By means of division of the nation and occupation of part, England has introduced such disunity and complexity into the Irish question as to defy the best efforts of two generations of Irish revolutionary thought and action.

The class structure in the Six Counties consists of the following elements (the figures in parenthesis are an estimated percentage of population):

1 (1%) A mainly English property-owning ascendancy, sitting on the boards of the larger firms, as well as in the prime positions in the state machine (both civil and military). There is also a strong US-linked element in this, associated with interests such as Du Pont.

2 (2%) A closely associated Irish-based unionist property-owning ascendancy which shares control of the commanding heights, though in a junior position. This group contains a strong land-property element, typified by Brookeborough and Chichester-O'Neill.

3 (3%) A large number of medium-sized firms under Protestant ownership and oriented towards the English market: Herdmans, Larmors, Bairds, Cyril Lord, etc. This group, under the leadership of the ascendancy Chichester-Brookeborough group, form the backbone of the Unionist machine. Its relative decline due to competitive pressures is typified by the Cyril Lord bankruptcy and the Larmor suicide.

4 (5%) Some thousands of Protestant family firms whose sons and relatives, together with the strong farmers, provide the leadership of the Orange and Paisleyite movements.

5 (3%) Rather fewer Catholic family firms whose class interests are complementary to rather than competitive with those of group 4: contracting, retail trade, etc. This group in the past provided the leadership of the AOH and the Nationalist Party: however, they are currently swinging over to support O'Neill's brand of unionism.

6 (8%) Large farmers on good land, mainly Protestant; the agricultural counterpart of groups 4 and 5.

7 (13%) Small farmers on bad land; mainly Catholic. These are one of the worst-oppressed sections, being decimated by emigration and at the mercy of the produce buyers, who would belong mainly to groups 4 and 5. They constitute both the rank and file and the leadership of the AOH. There are appreciable numbers of Protestant small farmers in Armagh, Antrim and Down.

8 (15%) Skilled workers in the developed areas; mainly Protestant.

9 (11%) Skilled workers in the declining areas, both Protestant and Catholic, suffering more from discriminatory unemployment than group 8 above. Protestants in this group tend to support Paisley.

10 (25%) Unskilled and part-time unemployed in the developed areas, mainly Catholic. Protestants in this group, especially if not unionised, tend to support Paisley.

11 (15%) Unskilled and chronically unemployed in the declining areas, predominantly Catholic.

There is also a student and young graduate population, which used to be drawn from groups 1 to 6 to the exclusion of the rest, but which

now, thanks to UK educational reforms, is also drawn appreciably from the other groups as well. This has resulted in an appreciable development of democratic, though not yet national, consciousness among the students. Political and organisational reflections of this are such bodies as the National Democratic Party, the New Ireland Society and People's Democracy.

Groups 8 to 11 are nominally organised in trade unions, though this is not universal. Trade union democracy functions badly, if at all. It functions better in the skilled craft unions than in the general unions, though in some cases the democratic forms are negated by underlying sectarianism. Group 7 is practically unorganised, with the exception of some co-operative groups: the Ulster Farmers' Union is under the leadership of group 6, so that no suitable framework exists. Politically conscious members of group 8 tend towards the Communist Party of Northern Ireland, groups 8 and 9 towards the Northern Ireland Labour Party, and groups 7, 9, 10 and 11 towards the Republican Movement.

Traditionally, Unionist rule has depended on the leadership of groups 1 and 2, naturally supported by 3, being followed also by 4, 6 and 8. The main lever for controlling 8, numerically a large group, was patronage in jobs and housing. The method of controlling 4 and 6 was to farm out to it the right to control local government and to exercise its own patronage.

This delicately interdependent structure has been shaken to the core by the Civil Rights movement. The 'one man one vote' demand has gained support from some elements of groups 7 to 11, as well as the students; similarly the points system for housing. These demands, if conceded, seriously weaken the control of groups 1 and 2 over group 8 and groups 4 and 6.

Group 4 and the Protestant element of group 6 together constitute the basis of Paisleyism and the B Specials, together with Protestant elements from groups 9 and 10. If backed by large property to the full, they would constitute a fascist threat. However, this is not the English strategy: they want integration of the whole of Ireland with the UK, under the control of a puppet régime constructed from the O'Neill brand of unionism and the Lemass/Lynch brand of neo-unionism. Paisley and his supporters appear to have attracted some youthful hooligan support, though an above-normal proportion of his support appears to be middle-aged.

The rejection of the Paisley groups by O'Neill and the accession to O'Neill of group 5 has brought the Stormont government into closer alignment with the Dublin set-up.

In class terms, the way forward is to unite as many as possible of groups 7 to 11 on a democratic and civil rights programme.

together with a demand for westward movement of capital; to neutralise as far as possible groups 3 to 6, and to concentrate the main attack on groups 1 and 2.

The achievement of democracy and civil rights will make the way open for linking of the economic demands to the national question. Those who see the former as an end in itself are confined to group 5, and insofar as they compromise the present leadership of the NICRA they may be expected to lose interest as rights are gained. They must then be replaced by more consistent people from groups 7 to 11.

The only way to do this is to work for maximum co-ordination of effort between the principled radical elements and to work out in that framework a tactic for winning support from the NILP and the trade unions, using contacts with rank and file to pressure the existing compromising leadership.

It is essential that the civil rights movement include all elements that are deprived, not just republicans, and that unity in action within the civil rights movement be developed towards unity of political objectives to be obtained once civil rights are won, and that ultimately (but not necessarily immediately) the political objective agreed by the organised radical groups be seen within the framework of an all-Ireland movement towards the achievement of a 32-county democratic republic.

### (C) THE TWENTY-SIX COUNTIES

While the Six Counties are the key to English control, the 26 Counties are the area in which the greatest anti-imperialist unity is possible and where there is most experience of the economic laws of neo-colonialism in operation, initially despite, now through, a Griffithite native ruling class.

The class structure in the 26 Counties may be summarised as follows:

- 1 A completely anglicised Anglo-Irish ascendancy, sitting on the boards of the top companies, which they share with their English counterparts. The names are familiar: Guinness, Goulding, Carroll, Goodbody, Dwyer, Stanley. Many also own large estates; there is an appreciable Catholic element in this group. They are linked with banking and financial interests, dominated by the Bank of Ireland. These, and the following group, are also linked with the state and semi-state bodies, by directorships: this exposes the state-capitalist nature of those bodies and refutes the claim that they are in any sense socialist.
- 2 A larger number of medium-sized firms, some with their roots in the thirties period of attempted Griffithite independence, which are now vertically integrated with the larger firms or with cross-channel monopolies (See *UI* from September 68 onwards).

3 Some tens of thousands of smaller firms, mainly under family control. In declining areas, these are being squeezed by contracting markets; in the developed urban areas, by property speculators, rising rents and congestion costs.

4 Some hundreds of thousands of farmers, the majority of whom are on small-holdings, employing no labour outside the family. A small minority run large farms as successful businesses, employing labour: these group themselves with 3.

5 Skilled workers in the developed areas; an expanding group. A high proportion of these are employees of state and semi-state bodies: this feature is absent in the Six Counties.

6 Skilled workers in the declining areas. This group is often self-employed or acts as small local employers, rising up to 3 if it can.

7 Unskilled and part-time unemployed in the developed areas, often recent migrants from the country.

The unskilled and part-time unemployed element in the declining areas, listed in the Six-County analysis, is virtually extinct, as it has been forced to migrate to the cities (joining 7) or into emigration, due to the low rates of pay and unemployment benefit.

There is also a substantial student and young graduate population, drawn however from the better-off classes to a greater extent than in the Six Counties. It constitutes an unstable radical force while its members are young, before the patronage of the state and the ascendancy firms has asserted itself.

Groups 5 to 7 are largely organised in trade unions. Trade union democracy has, however, become moribund and the leadership is largely in the hands of a bureaucracy hostile to democracy and under the influence of the state (by directorship in state companies) and the employers (via the 'Workers' College'). This is a serious obstacle to the development of the workers' understanding and has given rise to considerable alienation of the membership. Some progressive leadership, however, has come forward mainly through the efforts of the Irish Workers' Party, but the extent of this is not great, only four members of the Dublin Trades Council being in the IWP out of a total membership of some hundreds. There is some progressive politically conscious trade union middle leadership associated with the Labour Party.

The farmers' organisations are fragmented and mainly under large-farmer leadership. Worker-farmer alliance is almost non-existent: it is government policy to play off one against the other. Small-farmer organisation exists in local land leagues: these have sought worker support in their agitations on a few occasions. Small-farmer support for the NFA exists in the West, Northwest, Northeast and Southwest.

In the South and Southeast, small-farmer support has tended to crystallise round the ICMSA which acts also as an organised calf-suppliers' pressure group, in conflict with the Eastern NFA interests which tend to be rancher. The NFA has a local club organisation which is democratic and more open to influence from below than the ICMSA.

Politically, group 1, originally unionist, backed Fine Gael, while group 2 was emerging under the Fianna Fáil banner. In its early days, Fianna Fáil was led by group 2 and depended for support on sections of group 3 (those which were industrial rather than commercial), sections of group 4 (the smallholders) and the less politically conscious elements of groups 5, 6 and 7.

At present, Fianna Fáil is under the united leadership of groups 1 and 2, controlling by patronage large sections of group 3 (contracts), group 4 (grants, with the dole for the lower strata) and groups 5, 6 and 7 (housing). It also control the graduate element by means of jobs in or near the state machine and in the management of the major firms.

Fine Gael relies now on some group 3 support (mainly small commercial), some group 4 (large-farmer), and draws its leadership from Dublin large-property-oriented professionals. It has fulfilled the function of providing on behalf of the ruling class an alternative government, on the English pattern, to give the illusion of change while in fact changing nothing. In this it has been backed by the Labour Party.

There are signs that the senior rôle in this phoney alternative is now being assigned to the Labour Party with (the ruling class hope) Fine Gael as support.

The breaking of the hold on politics by the ruling class (that is, groups 1 and 2 as listed) is going to depend on the radical left being strong enough to defeat this strategy.

The Labour Party draws its support mainly from group 5, together with those elements of group 7 who have been urbanised for a long time. Originally it provided its own leadership: now it increasingly draws on university professionals for its leadership, who have no direct experience of the class struggle and no theoretical socialist understanding. It carries the affiliation of the major trade unions: this is a potential for radical influence of its policy, provided trade union democracy can be developed and used as a means of educating the membership. The existence of the trade union affiliation is the deciding factor that distinguishes Labour from Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael and renders it part of the broad Labour movement, despite its present compromising middle-class leadership.

The Republican Movement complements the Labour Party in that it depends for its support on some elements of groups 3 and 4 (small family-owned business under national-minded management; small farmers without adequate capital) as well as group 6 and those elements of group 7 who are recent migrants; also increasing numbers of group 5, for which the Labour Party and Republican Movement are in competition.

It would be wrong to consider the structure of the Labour movement without examining also the Workers' Party. Based mainly in Dublin, where it draws its recruits mainly from groups 5 and 7; it is numerically of comparable strength to the Republican Movement in the city. Sales of the *Irish Socialist* to the *United Irishman* are comparable in Dublin. It has consciously espoused Connolly's Marxism from its foundation in 1948; its older members had deep roots in the preceding Labour and Republican movements. It has worked consistently for democracy in the trade unions in Dublin, and is not without influence in the Trades Council.

Thus between them, the Labour and Republican movements represent the conscious national and social aspirations of some of group 3, most of group 4, and all of groups 5, 6 and 7. These groups, if united, would constitute a formidable class alliance before which groups 1 and 2, and their dependents in group 3, would not stand a chance.

The question is: who is to lead this alliance?

The strategy chosen by the Republican Movement will decide this.

## Section 2

### TWO ALTERNATIVE LONG-TERM STRATEGIES

A movement capable of liberating Ireland from imperialism must unite all of groups 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11 in the Six Counties, together with groups 5, 6 and 7, and the working owner-manager elements of groups 3 and 4, in the 26 Counties.

It must have principled, theoretically clear leadership which understands and acts on the principles of Connolly. It must have trade union links and substantial influence in other mass organisations (farmers, tenants) through the organised pressure of its membership.

It must have an active local organisation, with education for its members. It must also be organised on a factory and specialist basis. Its local bodies must be co-ordinated by a strong regional and national organisation, democratically structured and disciplined. It must have an all-Ireland newspaper, and an electoral policy that unites the masses of the listed groupings behind it. Its policy should be to contest elections and take seats, or not, according to tactics (that is, needs). It must have adequate discipline and control over representatives. It must be prepared to defend its political gains from counter-revolutionary attack, using such force as is necessary to do so. It must also be prepared to use tactical militancy in an aggressive manner where the net result is to strengthen the organisation of the people.

There is some theoretical clarity among the leadership of the radical groups, including the middle leadership of the Labour Party.

Trade union affiliations to the Labour Party exist; experience of trade union work exists in the Workers' Party and the Republican Movement. The Republican Movement has experience of work in tenants' associations and farmers' organisations (though the latter is only in isolated areas). The Republican Movement has the all-Ireland paper. The Labour Party has electoral experience, but no positive experience of control of deputies by the movement. Physical defence experience exists in the Republican Movement.

Thus, most of the component elements for a movement as outlined exist. The question is how to weld them into a cohesive whole.

There are two possible paths that might be advocated in the present situation:

1 To develop co-ordinated action between the movements which have the greatest clarity of thought, and to wean the Labour movement away

from middle-class leadership. This may be called the road of the national liberation front.

2 To seek alliance with the Labour Party as it is now, building up the Republican Movement specifically in those areas where the Labour Party is weak, thus leaning more on groups 3 and 4 in the declining areas; to seek short-term electoral gains by dissociation from the organised radical groups. This may be called the Clann road.

The second course will undoubtedly have attractions for some. However, this is the path of compromise that the abstentionists correctly fear; for a parliamentary movement hostile to the Left, without a disciplined organisation and a correct theoretical base, is open to becoming the compliant tool of the ruling-class groups which at present manipulate Fianna Fáil and are organising, by injection of compromising leadership material, to manipulate the Labour Party.

The first road is the only reputable one, and the Ard-Fheis resolutions 8, 9 and 10, defining as they do a positive attitude towards co-ordinated action with the radical Left, give a clear mandate for it. It will not lead to short-term electoral success, but it will generate a more principled movement which will be able to influence the Labour Party from the left via direct contact and via the trade unions. When the existing Labour Party leadership exposes itself as compromising, the contacts and machinery will be ready to take in rapidly the many socialist defectors, and the road will be clear to build a revolutionary movement on the lines indicated at the beginning of this section.

It would also have the effect of strengthening the existing Labour Left and rendering it more difficult for Labour to ally with Fine Gael, as the long-term perspective of allying with the socialist-republican Left would exist in the minds of Labour supporters. Denunciations of communism from Fine Gael would make the Labour rank and file choose sides, and the attraction of the united socialist-republican Left would be strong.

In order to make this strategy effective, however, it is necessary for the Movement to examine closely, and make any necessary changes in, its structure and tactics.

### Section 3

#### ARGUMENTS ON ELECTORAL POLICY

The arguments in relation to the electoral policy of the Movement must be considered in the light of the historical context.

Historically, the abstention policy developed in a situation where an alternative state machine was in gestation, and rapidly becoming accepted by the people.

This situation existed in the twenties, but following the military defeat of the army of the Republic by the counter-revolutionary forces with imperial support, it became more and more difficult to convince the people to continue to give active support to the shadow of the original Republican state.

The recognition of this by de Valera and the rise of Fianna Fáil, together with the world crisis, gave rise to a situation when, if abstention had been abandoned, an independent principled voice in the parliament could have exposed the compromising leadership of de Valera during the course of the thirties. The social forces which the Republican Congress rallied for a period would have provided the radical social objectives and social consciousness necessary to link a revolutionary movement with parliamentary representatives.

Instead, the then IRA leadership, having given tacit support to Fianna Fáil in the 1930-32 period, found itself in the political position of attacking the Congress from the right, with the result that the Movement lost many of its socially conscious members.

What was left of the IRA, after it became clear that de Valera had betrayed them, and having lost the bulk of its most politically conscious element, had no option but to maintain a purely military rôle, as during the forties and fifties there did not exist a well-defined and accepted radical political, social and economic programme capable of guiding a parliamentary group, had such existed; nor was the purely military organisational form adapted to this purpose.

The adoption of Sinn Féin by the IRA in 1948 did not alter the situation in any way.

The primary objective of the Movement in the fifties was the military campaign, and the political wing of the Movement played a purely supporting rôle. Electoral victories, such as that of 1957, were not used to build a mass movement or to build links with the people by agitation or organisation. Opportunities presented by the mass unemployment in the fifties, and land agitation in the midlands, were passed over.

It is fitting that the nature of abstention and the historical circumstances which gave rise to it should again come up for examination. The purpose of this section is to see, in the light of the analysis of the present situation, whether abstention is still relevant or not, examining the arguments for and against, and to draw what the Commission consider to be a valid conclusion.

*The traditional arguments for non-participation in parliament can be summarised as follows:*

1 **WESTMINSTER** Rejection of the right of Britain to govern any part of Ireland or to interfere in any way in the internal affairs of Ireland must mean refusal to send representatives to her parliament and to give any allegiance to her head of state, the Queen. By sending representatives to Westminster you may make short-term gains in propaganda if you have men of the right calibre, but you weaken your base of opposition and you divert the attention of the Irish people from action at home to achieve independence by giving them a vague hope that something tangible can be achieved at Westminster. A people seeking freedom, no matter how determined they may be, will always try the easy way, and the will to tackle the more difficult direct way will be sapped if there is any slight hope that an easy, though roundabout, way exists.

Republicans in Irish history are the ones who have always pointed the more direct way, whether it be one of direct political action, as in the United Irishmen's Back Lane parliament, the Fenians' Land League, or Sinn Féin's Dáil Éireann in 1919; or military action, as in many other instances. There may have been instances of individual republicans taking the parliamentary road and going to Westminster, but never at any time did the Republican revolutionary movement make a decision to send representatives to London. There had never been an Irish republican in Westminster until Larry Ginnell left the Parliamentary Party and joined the Republican Movement. In the eyes of the Irish people, it would be a very retrograde step for a republican to go there now.

2 **STORMONT and LEINSTER HOUSE** Both of these parliaments had their origins in a British Act of Parliament: the Government of Ireland Act 1920 - the 'constitution of Northern Ireland'. At the time it was passed by Westminster, Dail Eireann - the parliament of the Irish people - existed. This parliament rejected the Act in the name of the Irish people. A year later a treaty was forced on the Irish people, and this Act was the basis of that treaty. Republicans rejected the Treaty as they had previously rejected the Government of Ireland Act. The effect of Fianna Fail's entry into Leinster House was that Fianna Fail thereby accepted the terms of the Treaty, just as the Nationalists in the Six Counties accepted the Treaty by taking an oath of allegiance to the Crown. The Republican Movement has never accepted the Treaty, even as a framework within which to act. By not accepting it, they have

also refused to accept Stormont and Leinster House as legitimate parliaments. This is the principle to which the Republican Movement has held, and this is the principle which would be abandoned at last if we sent representatives to Stormont and Leinster House.

To abandon this principle at the present juncture would have two immediate effects:

1 It would be a major tactical victory for the Establishment, as it would indicate that the only major political group of dissidents within the state — both states — had at last come to heel, and accepted the constitutional framework. It would strengthen parliamentarianism and weaken the will to revolt. It would even indicate that republicans believed they no longer had the *right* to revolt.

2 The widespread belief of the Irish people in the basic integrity of the Republican Movement would be shattered. Even at the worst of times, when the image of the Republican Movement was bad, when they appeared to have no policy, etc, the people always knew in their hearts that they could not be beaten and could not be bought, and that they sought nothing for themselves, but were willing to give all for the nation. This is why such widespread mass support was always ready to flock to the Republican Movement whenever they had a victory — whenever the people saw that they were in with a chance they gave them their full backing because they trusted them. When they failed, they were abandoned.

Apart from these arguments, there are many others for maintaining a policy of direct political and military action and abstaining from parliamentary action at present.

If the Republican Movement becomes a parliamentary party, they will gain the support of the more moderate republicans and lose the support of the hard-line militant republicans. Appeasement and compromise, first on small issues, later on larger ones, will gradually begin, in order to hold the support of a wide number of people. Expediency is essential in politics, as otherwise you will lose the votes, and there is no point in being in parliamentary politics unless you try to get the votes. A structure in which the parliamentary group would tend to dominate the Movement, as in the case of the Labour Party, would arise. While the Republican Movement is thus engaged in parliamentary politics, it is most likely that the more militant revolutionaries who have no trust in parliaments will form their own revolutionary movement, thus taking from us our whole revolutionary base.

Great progress has been made in the past few years in undermining the confidence of the people in the Establishment and the political parties, and in exposing the inadequacy of parliamentary institutions in the North and the South. We have taught the people the value of

direct action and must not do anything which would restore their confidence in the present political or social framework by giving the impression that good men can reform it from within.

*Arguments for participation in Leinster House and Stormont in the present historical context*

The basic principle of the Movement is the establishment of a 32-county socialist republic. The *methods* whereby this is achieved can only be described as *tactics*. It is unsound to elevate any particular tactic to the status of a principle.

The arguments may be subdivided into (1) arguments that have arisen from the changes in the external situation, and (2) arguments arising from the internal development of the Movement.

*External arguments*

(a) The 26-County people in the referendum have shown quite clearly that they value and want to use the existing electoral system in order to defend themselves as best they can against the dictatorship of large-property acting through the property-based parties, Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael.

(b) The Six-County people have shown by their support for the civil rights demand, one man one vote, that they are interested in and want to use the existing electoral system, provided it is improved in respect of local government.

They have also shown in the February 1969 Stormont election that they are prepared to support a radical alternative to unionism, on a non-sectarian basis. The crushing defeat of the Nationalists, and the vote for the moderate radical group involving Hume and Cooper, together with the significant vote for the People's Democracy candidates, can only be regarded as a significant expression of a wish to vote for a radical alternative within the Six-County framework, illusory as this may be. The fact that this voting pattern has not reflected itself in seats to the same extent is a result of the inflexibility of the English electoral system. PR would have thrown up a significantly changed Stormont.

The failure of the people to vote Nationalist despite Blaney's appeals is a further rebuff for gombeen nationalism of the old type. The only principled body with an all-Ireland organisation is the Republican Movement. It can, *if it asserts itself now*, provide principled leadership within a broad anti-unionist and anti-imperialist alliance with progressive social objectives. *Such an alliance will develop, whether the Movement participates or not.* But without Republican participation, the danger is that the long-term objective of a 32-county republic, and the need to build an all-Ireland anti-imperialist movement, will be lost.

(c) There is a steady trend of young radicals into the 26-County Labour Party: these would come to us were we more credible. There is no doubt that the Labour Party, despite its apparent radicalism, has a basically opportunist leadership, and these people will be disillusioned in due time. If there is no credible movement to the left of them they will be disillusioned for good, and there will intervene a generation of political doldrums like that which followed the thirties.

All these external arguments add up to the fact that there is a need for a principled 32-county radical group, in the national revolutionary tradition, based on Connolly's teachings, to the left of Labour.

The Republican Movement represents the great mainstream of the national and social revolutionary tradition. The Labour Party represents a tradition of national and social compromise. The key to the future is the establishment of means whereby the radical element of Labour can be swept into a genuinely revolutionary position in the Connolly tradition. The Republican Movement can and must develop these means: basically, the present agitations on housing and trade union democracy must be kept up, and so organised as to involve all existing radical political groups, as well as trade unionists and homeless people.

But the next step will not be clear until the Republican Movement takes up full political participation. For if the Republican Movement, by continuous agitation, succeeds in forcing the Labour Party into an apparently genuine radical position, the rôle of the Republican Movement in doing this will be ignored, and the Labour TDs, with full publicity, will reap the benefit, *unless the Republican Movement itself* puts up TDs to sit and give independent principled voice to the demands of the agitations. On the other hand, if the Labour party conservatives retain the lead to the extent that the Labour Party radicals become disillusioned **and leave, they will have nowhere credible to go unless the Republican Movement is organised to receive them and to put up principled TDs to take their seats and voice the demand of the dispossessed.**

*Either way,* the external argument that the Republican Movement will lose out to the opportunist-led Labour Party, whether radicalised or not, unless it engages in independent political action, is strong: to ignore it would consign the Movement to historical limbo, as its sources of recruits dried up and its members became disillusioned, their ideas being stolen and partially implemented by a basically opportunist Labour movement.

The negative tradition of 'glorious failures' which has been with us for so many centuries will continue unbroken through a further generation of frustrated effort.

## Internal Arguments

There are a number of internal arguments:

(a) The Movement has already, by implication in the campaign for civil rights and PR, committed itself to the defence of such democracy as exists against repression by the unionists and neo-unionists. This battle could be waged more strongly by good men in the places where the repressive laws are made.

(b) The Movement has from time to time organised pressure on TDs, together with other groups, to stop repressive or bad laws being passed. It is easier to press a TD if he is part of the Movement, and responsible to its leading bodies.

(c) The Movement in the Six Counties has committed itself to the support of demands for democratic reforms such that, if conceded, there would be nearly as much limited democracy in the Six Counties as there is in the 26 Counties. This will be small consolation to republicans in the Six Counties unless they are able to manoeuvre more effectively within the slightly wider framework. Indeed, the involvement of republicans in the local government arena in the Six Counties is of the highest urgency, if the favourable situation created as a result of Republican involvement in civil rights is not to be capitalised on by other pseudo-radical parties such as the NILP.

It is worth noting that the Six-County local authorities as at present constituted have more actual power than those of the 26 Counties, the latter having been curbed in 1941 by the County Managers Act, which puts the real local power in the hands of the civil service. Thus, the participation of Republican councillors in Six-County local elections, especially if strengthened by a broadened franchise, would have an even more positive effect in helping the people to organise to fight for their rights than has been possible in the 26 Counties where the Movement and its local representatives have worked successfully together.

It is therefore necessary to build up experience throughout the whole country of *combining revolutionary parliamentary action, agitation, work in mass organisations, and occasional aggressive militancy in such a way as to show results* in the form of building the Movement and awakening the people. Otherwise civil rights, if achieved in the Six Counties, and other agitational demands in the country as a whole, will be of no use to the Republican Movement, and they will be used to the full by opportunist and gombeen elements such as always arise to dominate the people when the latter are without effective principled radical leadership.

(d) The impact of the Criminal Justice Bill has made it quite clear that the Leinster House machinery, although not very potent for

producing good laws — for which reason, among others, participation has been rejected hitherto by the Movement — is an effective body for producing bad laws, such as to reduce the level of democratic rights to that available under Stormont.

Clearly, the presence of principled TDs in the place where the bad laws are made would help to prevent them being made. Thus, provided the TDs had no illusions about using the existing state structure for positive purposes, and were *actively engaged outside the Dáil in laying the basis for a 32-county state structure based on the organisations of the people*, they would fulfil an important rôle within parliament, exposing and hindering repressive legislation.

It is necessary to analyse the corruption process of Fianna Fáil and the Clann. They became corrupt because they (a) had no theoretical base in the Connolly tradition, (b) had no disciplined revolutionary organisation with conscious understanding, (c) had no organic links with the organised working people. The elements which were missing in the twenties and forties *have now been developed sufficiently to enable the Movement, if it had TDs, to instruct them specifically on all key issues* with a policy of democratic resistance to the re-conquest by English and other foreign monopolies, and a policy of national and social emancipation.

It is necessary to lay down guidelines covering:

- (a) the choice of candidates;
- (b) the relationship between the elected representatives and the Movement;
- (c) the relationship with individuals, mass organisations, and representatives of opportunist political parties;
- (d) relationship with the state machine;
- (e) electoral programmes.

The following guidelines, if implemented, would enable a principled political movement of a new type to be developed that would be the incorruptible inheritor of the Connolly tradition.

(a) To say that we should not take part in parliamentary action now does not mean that we should never take such action. A movement with a political objective must obviously assume political power to achieve it. Such power can be gained either by extra-parliamentary methods or by popular vote. If it can be done by popular vote, then we should be ready to do it that way. But we must not negative the possibility of the extra-parliamentary methods. **Therefore, it is of utmost importance to make the right decisions at the right time. Just as certain conditions for success must be present when taking extra-parliamentary action, so also certain conditions must be present before taking**

parliamentary action. It is up to the leadership of the Movement to evaluate whether these conditions are present at any particular time or place. When we take parliamentary action in Leinster House and Stormont (and we must open both options together) it must be evident to the people that we have had a series of successful political actions, have a broad base of support, have a widespread and disciplined organisation, and that our participation in parliament is a logical extension of successful revolutionary action. We will have a mandate, not from the moderates for reforms, but from the extremists for revolution.

Candidates would not be chosen unless the Movement has had a consistent prior record of public activity and links with the people's organisations in the constituency. A candidate would be local and would personally have local roots; he would be experienced in revolutionary theory and practice. He would be prepared to sign over his whole salary if elected and claim from the Movement his original salary plus vouched expenses. He would also resign all local and regional office, acting as a paid organiser for the Movement. He must, of course, be agreed by the Ard-Chomhairle. He would retain national office if elected by the Ard-Fheis, but should not attempt to act as a regional delegate, handing over to a substitute.

(b) Relationship with the Movement must be based on regular meetings with the local, regional and national executives of the Movement, to discuss and co-ordinate actions by individuals, cumainn, the mass movement and other bodies with the current agenda in whichever of the three assemblies he acts, in resisting all repressive and retrograde legislation and exposing the inadequacy of the existing structure, and the hypocrisy of the leadership of the opportunist parties by pressing for the implementation of their verbal reforms.

(c) Relationship with others must be based on the following principles:

1 Individual cases to be channelled to the Movement via citizens' advice bureaux;

2 common solutions to problems common to many individuals to be found by means of organisation;

3 criticism of or support for other organisations to be based on policies rather than individuals; good relations to be cultivated with ordinary members and middle leadership while exposing compromising policies of top leadership;

4 voting of individuals into positions to be based on an evaluation of objective merit, in consultation with the mass organisations concerned, rather than on rigid party considerations.

(d) Relationship with the state machine to be based on the assumption that the latter is often composed of men of good will constrained by a foreign structure; flaws in the structure to be sought and exploited

by organising a co-ordinated attack both in the assembly and from the mass organisations concerned.

(e) Electoral programmes to be without unrealisable promises, objectively stating the difficulty of obtaining significant advances within the Six/26-County structure, stressing the need for the people to press forward outside parliament with their own organisations, guaranteeing support for this as far as possible within the constraints, and stressing the urgency of resistance to repressive and regressive legislation by the unionists and neo-unionists.

Finally, on the question of oaths of allegiance, it is necessary to state, with Connolly, that the taking of an oath devised by the enemy to discommode the consciences of members of the Movement may be regarded as null and void by the latter, just as is an oath taken under duress. It has for centuries been the practice for Irish revolutionaries to join the British Army to work within that body to undermine English rule, taking an oath which they disregard.

It is of course necessary to fight against the oath as a civil rights issue as well, but members of the Movement should have no hesitation in taking it, as did many Fenians and others, in order to achieve the main objective of smashing English imperial rule in Ireland.

#### Section 4

### PROPOSALS ON THE STRUCTURE OF THE MOVEMENT

In this final section there are proposed a number of organisational changes which will enable the Movement, whatever strategy and tactics are adopted, to develop its understanding, its actions and its links with the people in such a way as to achieve the maximum effect for a given amount of effort.

The proposed organisational changes are such as to leave open a number of strategic options and tactical methods, being adaptable to a rapidly changing situation.

The organisational changes may be summarised under two heads:

- (a) integration of the existing Movement into a unified whole;
- (b) development of co-ordinated action with other radical groups.

#### *Integration of the Movement*

The appended Constitution (Appendix 1) is intended to combine principle with flexibility. It is not final: some detail remains to be filled in. The main principle is that of a single, unified leadership, to which all regional and specialist functions report.

It is envisaged that the specialist functions represented at the regular meetings of the Ard-Chomhairle should include all existing specialist functions - commemorations; youth work (Fianna); Cumann Cabhrach; trade unionists' groups; farmers' groups; *The United Irishman*; action groups concerned with physical defence of the people, etc.

Specialist functions would have voice but no vote, unless the personnel concerned are regional delegates, or elected by the Ard-Fheis.

Elected representatives on local authorities would constitute specialist groups at regional level. Similarly, elected representatives to assemblies at national level would constitute a specialist group, should such a group be judged to be necessary. Such a group would meet frequently with the Coiste Seasta on national issues, having previously been briefed by the Movement in their own individual areas.

It is necessary to stress the priority of the political objectives; the role of all specialist groups must be subordinate to the integrated leadership of the Movement.

The historic link with the Republican government, at present vested in the Army Council, must be preserved. The continuity may be maintained

by vesting the powers of the Republican government in a shadow cabinet, with links into a shadow state structure composed of the people's own organisations, as soon as such a body becomes credible.

The tactical desirability or otherwise of sending elected representatives to take their seats and assume the function of full-time paid agitators under the control of the Movement is, of course, subject to the consensus of the Movement on the arguments advanced in section 3.

### *Development of Co-ordinated Action*

Already the practice has been established of members of the Movement acting on ad-hoc committees with other radical groups on issues such as housing, civil rights, trade union democracy.

It is envisaged that this work, if it continues to develop positively, may be prosecuted more effectively if a Convention of Radical Groups, or National Liberation Front, were to be set up.

Association with such a Convention is provided for in the constitutional notes (Appendix 1).

Some preliminary notes towards a constitution for such a Convention are given in Appendix 2. It is premature to attempt to define more precisely the structure of the Convention, but it is necessary to allow for the possibility that a number of distinct conventions may emerge on a local or regional basis, taking into account the different situations which exist in various parts of the country. It would be the policy of the Movement as a whole to work for the maximum co-ordination and ultimate unity of all such conventions.

### *The Shadow Republic*

It is necessary to stress that in proportion as the Movement is successful in drawing together the people's organisations into joint councils at local and regional level, and as such councils develop standing and resources, there will be emerging a new form of state structure, close to the people, that will be capable of replacing the old state machine inherited from the period of direct English rule.

This genuine revolutionary road, if it is followed consistently, with the maximum organised unity of principled and disciplined radical groups, will lead in the foreseeable future to a situation where 'North and South will again clasp hands, again it will be demonstrated, as in '98, that the pressure of a common exploitation can make enthusiastic rebels out of a Protestant working class, earnest champions of civil and religious liberty out of Catholics, and of both, a united social democracy' (James Connolly, *Labour in Irish History*).

## Appendix 1

### NOTES FOR A DRAFT CONSTITUTION OF THE REPUBLICAN MOVEMENT

**AIMS:** The achievement of a united 32-county democratic republic in accordance with the objectives of the 1916 Proclamation, in which the Republican principle of democratic control shall be extended throughout the social and economic structure of society, and in which the principal means of producing society's wealth shall be socially owned and managed in the interests of the Irish people.

**METHODS:** The building of the maximum unity of all Irish workers and farmers and working owner-managers in the defence of Irish social, economic and cultural life from encroachment by foreign imperialistic interests and by large-propertyed monopolistic interests whether native or foreign.

The education and involvement of existing mass organisations to this end.

Association and affiliation with broader bodies on a national or regional basis as considered tactically appropriate.

If and when considered tactically desirable, the nomination of candidates for election to the Dail, Stormont or Westminster, as well as in local government in both Six and 26 Counties.

**ORGANISATION:** A national executive shall be composed of

- (a) ten members elected by the annual conference;
- (b) one member from each regional executive, the size and composition of the regions being ratified annually by the annual conference on a motion from the outgoing national executive.

The national executive shall elect its own chairman who shall appoint a staff, not necessarily composed of executive members, subject to ratification by the executive.

The staff shall consist of specialist officers defined as necessary from time to time.

Specialist officers shall, if necessary, appoint committees to help them in their work.

Regional executives shall be constructed of delegates who shall be leading members of local cumainn. They shall elect a chairman from among their own number, who shall proceed to nominate a specialist staff, subject to ratification by the regional executive.

Regional or national officers shall not hold cumann office for more than one month after appointment.

Specialist officers may hold specialist conventions on a national and regional basis from time to time.

Such specialist conventions may recommend the composition of the national committee concerned with the speciality to the specialist officer appointed by the national executive.

The national executive shall meet at least quarterly, taking at least two days for its deliberations. It shall hear reports from all regional and specialist officers and shall decide policy for the coming period.

The day-to-day implementation of the policy shall be the responsibility of a standing committee, consisting of the chairman and principal officers and other specialist officers as tactically necessary; every specialist officer must report to the standing committee at least once a month.

FINANCE shall be based on a monthly subscription of local to regional bodies, brought by the delegate in person; likewise, regional delegates shall transmit to the national executive all money due on the occasion of the national executive meeting.

MEMBERSHIP shall be defined by (a) regular attendance at meetings; (b) regular payment of dues; (c) acceptance of the objectives and methods of work; (d) implementing decisions and reporting back; abiding by the discipline of the cumann.

## Appendix 2

### NOTES FOR A CONSTITUTION OF A DEMOCRATIC CONVENTION

#### *Aims*

The achievement of a government pledged to the maximum democratisation of social and economic life in the interests of the people.

To resist foreign political and economic control.

#### *Methods*

To unite all forces prepared to work for the above objective.

To strengthen the democratic organisations of the people.

To co-ordinate efforts with other bodies both in Ireland and abroad having similar objectives.

To defend and extend civil liberties.

#### *Organisation*

National, regional and local; delegates from (a) existing bodies, affiliating for a registration fee proportional to effective membership; (b) Convention Clubs founded for the above objectives without prior existence.

#### *Membership*

Direct or by affiliation.