

SINN FÉIN.

BUNREACTH AGUS RIALACHA.

CONSTITUTION AND RULES

5 p.

Ní neart go cur le chéile.

SINN FÉIN

CONSTITUTION.

WHEREAS the people of Ireland never relinquished the claim to separate Nationhood, and

WHEREAS the Provisional Government of the Irish Republic, Easter 1916, in the name of the Irish people, and continuing the fight made by previous generations, re-asserted the inalienable right of the Irish Nation to Sovereign Independence, and re-affirmed the determination of the Irish people to achieve it, and

WHEREAS the Proclamation of the Irish Republic, Easter 1916, and the supreme courage and glorious sacrifices of the men who gave their lives to maintain it, united the people of Ireland under the flag of the Irish Republic, and

WHEREAS on January 21st, 1919, following the General Election of December, 1918, the duly elected representatives of the Irish people assembled in National Parliament, proclaimed the Independence of Ireland and ratified the establishment of the Irish Republic proclaimed in 1916, thus founding the Republic on the democratic basis of the free votes of the people of Ireland with Dáil Éireann as its Government; be it

RESOLVED "That we, the delegated representatives of the Organisation, in Convention assembled, hereby declare the following to be the Constitution of Sinn Féin":-

The name of the Organisation shall be Sinn Féin.

The Organisation is based on the following fundamental principles:-

- (a) That the allegiance of Irishmen and Irishwomen is due to the Sovereign Irish Republic proclaimed in 1916.
- (b) That the sovereignty and unity of the Republic are inalienable and non-judicable.

The objects of Sinn Féin are:-

- (a) The complete overthrow of English Rule in Ireland,

and the establishment of a Democratic Socialist Republic based on the Proclamation of 1916.

- (b) To bring the Proclamation of the Republic, Easter 1916, into effective operation and to maintain and consolidate the Government of the Republic, representative of the people of all Ireland, based on that Proclamation.
- (c) To establish in the Republic a reign of social justice based on Christian principles, by a just distribution and effective control of the Nation's wealth and resources, and to institute a system of government suited to the particular needs of the people.
- (d) To promote the restoration of the Irish Language and Irish culture and the widest knowledge of Ireland's history; to make Irish citizens conscious and proud of their traditional and cultural heritage, and to educate the citizens of the Republic in their rights and responsibilities as citizens.

MEANS:

- (a) Through Sinn Féin organising the Irish people into a united and disciplined movement for the restoration of the Republic and the achievement of the above ideals.
- (b) Through Sinn Féin assisting, as directed by the Ard-Chomhairle, all Organisations working for the same objects.

1. MEMBERSHIP:

(a) Membership of the Organisation, other than associate membership, shall be obtainable only through membership of a Cumann. Membership shall be open to all those over the age of 16, irrespective of sex, class or creed, who accept the Constitution and policy of Sinn Féin; who are prepared to work for the attainment of its objects, and who accept the rules and regulations governing membership, subject to the following provisions.

(b) No person who is a member of any political party organisation or who approves of or supports the candidature of persons who, if elected, intend taking part in the proceedings

of either the British or Partition Governments by which Ireland is ruled; or who approves of or supports the candidature of persons who sign any form or give any kind of written or verbal undertaking of intention to take their seats in these institutions, shall be admitted to membership, or allowed to retain membership.

(c) No person who is a member of a Secret Society shall be eligible for membership, and no person known to be a member of any Secret Society shall be admitted to membership.

(d) It shall be open to the Committee of any Cumann to refuse enrolment to any person applying for membership.

(e) The Ard-Chomhairle shall have power to refuse membership to any person applying for membership and to expel any member from the Organisation. Before being dismissed, however, a member must be given an opportunity of being heard in his own defence.

(f) No member of the British armed forces, nor any person who has taken any oath of allegiance to the British or Partition Governments by which Ireland is governed, shall be eligible for membership so long as he retains the office or position involving such oath.

(g) 1. The Sinn Féin Organisation may not make use of the Courts of either partition assembly for civil actions.

2. Recognition of these Courts in the case of political charges is strictly forbidden, unless specifically sanctioned or ordered by the Republican Government.

(h) New members shall serve a probationary period of three months. Probationary members shall not be entitled to vote on matters concerning or affecting the internal affairs of the Organisation except in the case of election of officers in a newly-formed Cumann or Comhairle Ceantair.

2. ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP:

Associate membership of the Organisation shall be obtainable only through and at the discretion of a Comhairle Ceantair, subject to ratification by An Ard-Chomhairle and on payment of a fee of two pounds (£2) per year. Associate members shall be responsible to the Ard-Chomhairle for the observance of the Constitution and Rules of the Organisation.

3. ELECTIONS:

All elections and co-options throughout the Organisation

shall be by ballot, and all positions specified in these regulations shall be honorary. Except in the case of a newly-formed Cumann a probationary member shall not be eligible to act as an officer and shall not be eligible for election or co-option to any executive committee of the Organisation.

4. CO-OPTIONS:

None but a member of the Organisation may be co-opted into any position of the Organisation. The co-option of members whose membership has not exceeded the probationary period must receive the express approval of the Ard-Chomhairle. Committees or Sub-Committees for special purposes may include non-members; but such Committees or Sub-Committees shall not form portion of the Organisation or act as such.

5. FOREIGN:

Foreign Branches of the Organisation shall be governed by the rules of the Organisation subject to modifications sanctioned by the Ard-Chomhairle to suit local conditions.

6.

Candidates selected by Sinn Féin 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 Féin.

(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 Féin, 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. "

7. No person who has not been a member of the organisation for at least twelve months prior to the date of nomination shall be eligible for election as an officer or member of the Ard-Chomhairle. In making co-options the Ard-Chomhairle may co-opt members of less than twelve months' membership of Sinn Féin, if this is necessary, provided such members have at least twelve months' membership of the Republican Movement.

8. The foregoing Constitution of Sinn Féin may not be altered or amended except by an Ard-Fheis, on the agenda of which notice of the proposed alteration or amendment appears. Any alteration of or amendment to the foregoing Constitution shall require a supporting vote of not less than two thirds of the duly elected delegates present at the Ard-Fheis.

RULES.

ARD-FHEIS.

9. MEMBERSHIP:

The supreme governing and legislative body shall be the Ard-Fheis, which shall be convened annually by the Ard-Chomhairle and shall consist of:-

- (a) The officers and members of the Ard-Chomhairle,
- (b) Two delegates from each Comhairle Ceantair,
- (c) Two delegates from each duly affiliated Cumann of twenty members or less. Three delegates from each duly affiliated Cumann of over twenty and under fifty members. Four delegates from each duly affiliated Cumann of over fifty and under one hundred members. One delegate in respect of each additional fifty members over one hundred.

10.

Teachtaí Dáil Éireann who are also members of the Organisation are entitled to attend and speak at the Ard-Fheis; but shall not vote unless present in any of the capacities (a), (b) or (c) above.

11. MEETINGS:

(a) The place and date of meeting of the annual Ard-Fheis shall be at the discretion of the Ard-Chomhairle and shall be announced ten weeks in advance.

(b) The Ard-Fheis shall elect its own Cathaoirleach from the delegates present at the opening of the Ard-Fheis.

12. RESOLUTIONS:

Resolutions must be received not later than six weeks prior to the Ard-Fheis, and must stand in the name of the Ard-Chomhairle, a Comhairle Ceantair or a Cumann.

13. NOMINATIONS:

(a) Nominations must be received not later than twenty-one days prior to the Ard-Fheis, and must stand in the name of a Cumann or Comhairle Ceantair.

(b) Members who have consented to nomination as officers or members of the Ard-Chomhairle shall not be allowed to withdraw their names on the day of election.

14. DELEGATES:

Delegates must be chosen and their names forwarded to Headquarters not later than 28 days prior to the Ard-Fheis. They must be resident members of the body they represent.

15. SUBSTITUTES:

Substitutes (in case of illness etc.,) may be allowed at the discretion of the Ard-Chomhairle; but they must in all cases be previously chosen at duly convened meetings of the body represented.

16.

(a) Nomination Forms must be sent to each Cumann at least five weeks before the last date fixed for the receiving of nominations. The Ard-Chomhairle will fix a closing date for the signed assent forms to be sent back to the Ard-Oifig.

(b) Cumainn shall be supplied with a list of those who have consented to stand for election to the Officer Board and Ard-Chomhairle.

17. Agenda must be sent to each Cumann and each Comhairle Ceantair at least fourteen days in advance.

18. Admission cards, agenda and list of nominees for election must be sent to each delegate at least seven days in advance.

19. EXTRAORDINARY ARD-FHEIS:

An extraordinary Ard-Fheis shall be summoned for a special purpose stated on a requisition endorsed by:-

- (a) Two-thirds of the entire available membership of the Ard-Chomhairle; or
- (b) One-third of the Cumainn of at least six months' standing.

20. (a) At least seven days clear notice must be given to all Rúnaithe, who shall, on receipt of the notice, summon their respective bodies to select delegates to the Extraordinary Ard-Fheis.

(b) An Extraordinary Ard-Fheis, when held, shall elect a new Ard-Chomhairle.

21. ARD-CHOMHAIRLE:

When the Ard-Fheis is not in session, control of the Organisation shall be vested in an Ard-Chomhairle comprised of the Officers, viz., Uachtarán, beirt Leas-Uachtarán, beirt Rúnai Oinigh, beirt Chisteoir Oinigh, and eight other members. The Officers and members of the Ard-Chomhairle shall be elected by the votes of the entire delegate representation at the Ard-Fheis. If, in the view of the Ard-Chomhairle, the interests of the Organisation can be better promoted by additions to its membership, it shall have the power to co-opt additional members to a number not exceeding five. In the event of a Province not having a representative elected to the Ard-Chomhairle, the Ard-Chomhairle shall co-opt a representative from that Province. A quorum shall consist of seven members.

22. COISTE SEASTA:

The Ard-Chomhairle shall elect from its members a Coiste Seasta of eight members who shall meet every week and shall have full power to carry out routine business between Ard-Chomhairle meetings. A quorum shall consist of five members. The Officer Board of An Ard-Chomhairle may attend all meetings of An Coiste Seasta. An Coiste Seasta shall submit reports of its meetings to An Ard-Chomhairle.

23. (a) The Ard-Chomhairle shall elect two National Trustees for the funds of the Organisation.

(b) The National Trustees shall be responsible for the safe custody of all moneys, the property of Sinn Féin, received by them or lodged to their account by the Cisteoirí. They shall make available from the funds of the Organisation to the Cisteoirí such sums as may be directed by the Ard-Chomhairle from time to time, and shall supply the Ard-Chomhairle with any information it may require concerning the funds of the Organisation.

(c) Na Cisteoiri Náisiúnta shall be responsible for keeping proper accounts of all moneys received and expended. They shall lodge all moneys received to the account of the National Trustees and notify them accordingly. They shall submit monthly accounts to the Ard-Chomhairle, showing details of all moneys received and expended by them.

(d) The accounts of the National Trustees and of Na Cisteoirí Náisiúnta shall be audited once a year by a duly accredited Auditor or Firm of Auditors. The Auditor's Report shall be submitted to the Ard-Chomhairle at least two weeks prior to the Annual Ard-Fheis, to which it shall also be submitted. An Cisteoir shall make available to each Comhairle Ceantair and Cumann represented at the Ard-Fheis a copy of the Financial Report, showing items of income and expenditure since the previous Ard-Fheis.

24. POWERS:

(a) When the Ard-Fheis is not in session, the supreme direction and government of the Organisation shall reside in the Ard-Chomhairle subject to any instructions given by the Ard-Fheis.

(b) The Ard-Chomhairle shall have and exercise on behalf of the Ard-Fheis, all powers, functions and duties of the Ard-Fheis, and all members shall be bound by decisions of

the Ard-Chomhairle. These powers, etc., shall include:-

(1) The power to remove or suspend from the Organisation or from Office any subordinate body or member thereof for incompetence, negligence or general unsuitability. Before being dismissed, however, a member must be given an opportunity of being heard in his own defence. The suspension of a member for an unspecified period shall become invalid after six months unless it is renewed.

(2) The right to refuse affiliation of any Cumann.

(3) The power to set up in any area a Committee for any particular purpose.

25. VACANCIES:

A seat or Office on the Ard-Chomhairle rendered casually vacant shall be temporarily filled by the Ard-Chomhairle.

26.

The Ard-Chomhairle shall meet within a period of one week from the date of the Ard-Fheis; afterwards it shall meet at least once a month. Special meetings shall be held at the discretion of an tUachtarán, or, in his absence, of either of the Leas-Uachtaráin or on a requisition of a majority of the members. Members of the Ard-Chomhairle being absent from three consecutive meetings without an excusing cause, automatically forfeit membership of the Ard-Chomhairle.

27.

All charges against members of the Ard-Chomhairle must be made in writing, and signed; the member so charged shall receive from An Rúnaí, in writing, a copy of the charge and notification to appear at the next meeting of the Ard-Chomhairle to answer the charge.

COMHAIRLÍ CEANTAIR.

28. GENERAL:

Each Comhairle Ceantair shall be based upon a County Electoral Area as defined from time to time by the County

Council, and shall have charge of all the Cumainn in that area; but this arrangement may be modified by the Ard-Chomhairle to meet exceptional local difficulties.

29. MEMBERSHIP:

The Comhairle Ceantair shall consist of:-

(a) Its officers (Cathaoirleach, Leas-Cathaoirleach, Secretary, One Treasurer, an Organiser, a Publicity Officer and Finance Officer),

(b) Two delegates from each Cumann,

(c) Three delegates from each Cumann may attend the Annual General Meeting of An Chomhairle Ceantair.

30. MEETINGS:

(1) The outgoing officers and the delegates for the ensuing year shall assemble within one month after the termination of the Annual Ard-Fheis, but not before all the new Cumainn Delegates have been appointed, and shall elect from their members the officers for the ensuing year.

(2) The officers of the outgoing Comhairle Ceantair attending the first meeting of the new Comhairle Ceantair shall not be eligible for election to the officer board unless they themselves have been elected as delegates to the new Comhairle Ceantair at the General Meeting of their Cumann.

(3) The outgoing officers shall have no vote in the election of the new officer board unless they are delegates elected by their Cumann.

(4) Members of the outgoing officer board shall not attend any further meetings of the Comhairle Ceantair unless they are co-opted as per Rule or are elected delegates by their Cumann.

31.

It shall subsequently meet regularly and, in addition, at any time upon a requisition signed by its Cathaoirleach or any five of its members. A quorum shall consist of one-fourth of its entire membership.

32. VACANCIES:

Vacancies shall be filled by the original electing body

in each case. If a Cumann Delegate or Rúnaí is elected an Officer of the Comhairle Ceantair the vacancy on the Comhairle Ceantair thus created, shall be filled by the Cumann concerned.

33. POWERS AND DUTIES:

The Comhairle Ceantair shall establish Cumainn as per Rule No. 39 and shall have charge of all the Cumainn in its area. It shall sanction their reports, audit balance sheets, etc., and transmit them with a list of Cumainn and their membership to An Ard-Oifig at least once a month.

34.

The Comhairle Ceantair may, after an inquiry, suspend or remove from office any Officer of a Cumann for incompetence, negligence or other adequate cause, and may order a new election. The person concerned must receive, in writing, due notice of the time and terms of the inquiry, and shall have the right of appeal to the Ard-Chomhairle.

35. FUNDS:

The Comhairle Ceantair shall have power to raise funds from its Cumainn, or otherwise, for the purpose of the Organisation, and shall submit quarterly financial reports to the Ard-Chomhairle.

36. DISPUTES:

Differences arising in a Comhairle Ceantair or between Comhairlí Ceantair, which the bodies concerned are unable to settle, shall be referred to the Ard-Chomhairle.

37.

The Comhairle Ceantair shall be consulted before public meetings are held in their area.

38. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS:

Note: This rule is suspended and can only become operative in the event of the Annual Ard-Fheis or the Ard-Chomhairle deciding to contest Local Government Elections.

The Comhairle Ceantair shall have control of all local elections in its area. It shall summon a Convention for the selection of Candidates in accordance with such instructions as the Ard-Chomhairle may issue, and shall call a special meeting of the Comhairle Ceantair for the purpose of ratifying or otherwise, the candidates so selected. Candidates shall

take the following pledge:-

"I hereby pledge my undivided allegiance to the Irish Republic as proclaimed on Easter Monday, 1916, and by law established on the 21st day of January, 1919, and I promise to work for the overthrow of English rule in Ireland, the complete social and economic emancipation of the Irish people based on the Proclamation of 1916, and the international recognition of the Irish Republic, and I further undertake that if elected to the Office of and if called upon by a two-thirds majority of the Ard-Chomhairle of Sinn Féin to resign that office, I will immediately do so."

DÁIL ÉIREANN ELECTIONS:

Rules governing Conventions for the selection of candidates for election to Dáil Éireann can be obtained from An Ard-Oifig.

Only those whose membership of the Republican Movement exceeds 12 months shall be eligible for selection and nomination as candidates in parliamentary or local government elections.

CUMAINN.

39. FORMATION:

Cumann shall be established in such areas as the Ard-Chomhairle or authorised Comhairlí Ceantair may direct.

40. No Cumann shall be formed without previous sanction from the Ard-Chomhairle or authorised Comhairle Ceantair for its name, meeting place, area and proposed members.

41. No Cumann shall be named after any living person.

42.

The initial meeting shall be presided over by a member of the Organisation accredited for that purpose, and its first business shall be to elect its officers (to hold office until the next Annual Election) and to arrange for forwarding to An Ard-Oifig its affiliation fee and list of officers.

43. MEMBERSHIP:

A Cumann shall consist of not less than five members.

The recommended maximum number of members shall be twelve.

44.

Its officers shall consist of a Cathaoirleach (ex-officio member of all Committees), a Leas-Cathaoirleach, Rúnaí and beirt Chisteoir, and shall be elected annually at a special meeting held on written notice, within fourteen days after the termination of the Ard-Fheis.

45.

Delegates to the Comhairle Ceantair shall be elected at the same meeting.

46.

No member or ex-member shall have any rights against a Cumann or against any other officer or member in respect of any act or omission in pursuance of its rules other than that of appeal to the Comhairle Ceantair or Ard-Chomhairle as in the rules provided.

47.

Candidates for membership must be proposed and seconded by two members of the Cumann and their admission as probationary members must be agreed to by a majority of the members present at a duly convened meeting of the Cumann.

48.

An annual registration of membership shall be implemented and records of membership held by the Comhairlí Ceantair and by An Coiste Seasta. The registration shall include a record of members' Affiliations to economic, social, cultural, or other specialist organisations. Membership implies a weekly subscription of at least 5p of which 1p shall go to the Ard-Chomhairle and the balance divided as directed by the Annual General Meeting of the Comhairle Ceantair. The Cumann Treasurer shall be responsible for registration and keeping records of payments.

49.

No person shall be a member of more than one Cumann at a time. Transfer facilities shall be made available to members who, for genuine reasons, wish to change from one Cumann to another.

50. AFFILIATION FEE:

The Financial Year of the organisation shall be the calendar year ending the 30th September. Cumann affiliation fees must be paid by January 31st of each year.

51.

The Affiliation Fee for each financial year shall be two pounds (£2) in the case of new Cumainn and six pounds (£6) in each subsequent year. A Cumann which has not paid the Affiliation Fee by January 31st shall be struck off the Register and can only be re-affiliated as a new Cumann.

52.

Each Cumann shall endeavour to meet frequently especially when there is specific business to be transacted. It shall be the responsibility of An Runaí to ensure that a meeting of the Cumann is summoned whenever circulars are received from An Ard-Oifig which indicate that a meeting of the Cumann ought to be held.

53. COMMITTEES:

The Officers of the Cumann shall meet in Committee to consider applications for membership, to prepare matters for Cumann consideration, or to carry out special work when required by the Cumann to do so.

54.

Other Committees of its members for special purposes, may be set up by the Cumann as required but each Cumann should realise that it is part of its work:-

(a) To see that the Irish language, games and pastimes, a knowledge of Irish History and Irish Culture in general, are promoted in its area, and that all social functions held under its auspices are of an Irish-Ireland nature.

(b) To foster increased production in local fields and factories, to promote the local consumption of Irish commodities and generally to carry out the Economic Programme of Sinn Fein thus reducing unemployment and emigration.

55. POWERS AND DUTIES:

A Cumann shall have power:-

(a) To fix a membership fee for its members and to make such further levies as it requires. To raise funds by entertainments or collections, subject to previous sanction from the Comhairle Ceantair.

(b) To suspend or expel any of its members and to suspend or supersede any of its Officers or Committee members before expiry of his normal term, for adequate causes, subject to

right of appeal to the Comhairle Ceantair and an ultimate right of appeal to the Ard-Chomhairle. The suspension of a member for an unspecified period shall become invalid after six months unless it is renewed.

56.

All charges against the members must be made in writing and signed. The member so charged shall receive from An Rúnaí in writing a copy of the charge and notification to appear at the next meeting of the Cumann to answer the charge.

57.

A Cumann shall keep in strict custody, a roll of its members, a minute book and an account of its receipts, expenditure, assets and liabilities. These shall be open to inspection by the Comhairle Ceantair, Ard-Chomhairle members and the Director of Organising.

58.

No Officer of a Cumann shall act as auditor for the Cumann.

59.

(a) An Rúnaí shall, at the end of each month, forward to the Comhairle Ceantair a monthly report on the activities of his Cumann. Where no Comhairle Ceantair exists, such reports shall be sent to An tArd-Rúnaí.

(b) Monthly report forms sent from An Ard-Oifig shall be completed by the Cumann and forwarded direct, along with the secretarial expenses, to An Ard-Oifig. A copy of this monthly report shall be sent to the Comhairle Ceantair, where such exists.

60. DISPUTES:

Differences arising in a Cumann or between Cumainn, which the bodies concerned are unable to settle, shall be referred to the Comhairle Ceantair for settlement subject to right of appeal to the Ard-Chomhairle.

61.

Any member of a Cumann holding that any particular decision of a Cumann is contrary to the principles, objects, or policy of the Organisation may require a statement of such decision signed by the Cathaoirleach, Rúnaí and Objector, to be sent for consideration to the Comhairle Ceantair, with the right of ultimate appeal to the Ard-Chomhairle.

62. Cumainn and Comhairlí Ceantair in parliamentary areas shall meet monthly where possible for a course of lectures and debates to be presided over by an Officer of Sinn Féin or a member of An Ard-Chomhairle.

63. The Cumann shall submit quarterly financial reports to the Comhairle Ceantair or where no Comhairle Ceantair exists, direct to the Ard-Chomhairle.

64. No Official or member of a Cumann or Comhairle Ceantair shall incur a debt in the name of that Cumann or Comhairle Ceantair without being authorised beforehand by a meeting of either the Cumann or Comhairle Ceantair concerned.

As altered and amended by An Ard-Fheis, 1970.

Ard-Oifig, Sinn Féin,
2A Sráid Chaoimhín Íoch,
BAILE ÁTHA CLIATH 8.
