

economic structure it adopts and we equally condemn American interference in Vietnam and Russian interference in Czechoslovakia and we would expect that they would condemn British interference in Ireland.

The Republican Socialist ideology is the only one which can unite the mass of the Irish people both Catholic and Protestant. If we are to create such a unity we cannot remain in isolation. We must be prepared to ally ourselves with other radical forces for the achievement of certain basic objectives.

A NEW REVOLUTION

It is just 50 years this month since the historic Sinn Féin victory in the 1918 Election which destroyed the old and corrupt Irish Parliamentary Party and set the Nation on a new revolutionary road. We are now witnessing what we hope is the beginning of the disintegration of two old and corrupt parties in Belfast and Dublin. A new generation of Irishmen are creating a new revolution in Ireland and this time they will not be satisfied with half measures.

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AR AGHAIDH LE SINN FÉIN

Presidential Address of

THOMAS Mac GIOLLA

to the 63rd Annual Ardfheis
of Sinn Féin, 7th December, 1968

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ORÁID AN UACHTARAIN

FAILTIÓ

A Chathairíreacht, a theachtai agus a chuairteoirí—Fáiltim romhaibh uile chug na hArd-Fheise seo, agus cuirimid beannachtai chun ar muintear i goéin atá ag obair ar son saoirse na hÉireann i bhfad uainn, agus go háirithe chun Clan na Gaeil i Meiricea, Clan na Saoirse san Astráil, agus Clann na hÉireann sa Shreatain Mhór.

EAGRAÍOCHTAÍ RAIDICEACH

Do'n chéad uair le blianta fada anuas tá cuairteoirí anseo againn ó eagraíochtaí éagsúla lasmuigh de Ghluaiseacht na Phoblachta—eagraíochtaí atá raidiceach, réabhlóideach, agus go bhfuil na bunaidhmeanna náisiúnta céadna acu agus atá againn féin. Ní gá dom a rá nach naontuighimid go hiomlán leo uile ina gcuid bpolasaí, agus ar ndóigín ní aontuionn siad san uile linne; ach ós rud é go bhfuil an dearcadh réabhlóideach céadna againn ar chúrsaí náisiúnta, nó cúrsaí sóisialta nó cúrsaí cultúrtha, is follas go mbeimid ag casadh le chéile go minic ar bhóthar na saoirse.

AGÓID

I rith na bliana seo caite, bhí Sinn Féin níos gníomhaí ná riamh ag tabhairt treóir do mhuintear na hÉireann agus ag cuidiú leo seilbh na ghlacadh ar mhaoin a dtíre féin. Leanadh ar aghaidh go ráthúil leis an agóid tithíochta i mBaile Átha Cliath, agus cuireadh tús le hagóid den tsaghas céadna in áiteacha eile sa tír, mar Corcaigh sa Deisceart agus Dolre Colmcille sa Tuaisceart. Chabhraiomar freisin le feachtas na dtionóntaí i Sandycove in aghaidh cíos talún, agus leis an Inland Waterways Restoration League ar son náisiúnta na haibhneacha. Ba chóir duinn i bhfad níos mó a dhéanamh ar an dá gceist seo i rith na bliana atá romhainn. Seo obair fónta don nGluaiseacht uile. Seo feachtas réabhlóideach ar son cearta Gaeil, feachtas nár chuir Conradh na Talún i gcrích nuair a bhíodar ag ruaigeadh na dtiarnaí talún as seilbh na tíre. Chuir **An tÉireanch Aontaithe** spotsolas an phoiblíocht ar na gceisteanna seo sa bhliain atá caite, agus spreagadh suim an phobail. Breathann sé orainne anois usáid a bhaint as an suim seo agus eagar a chur ar an bhfeachtas.

CEARTA DAONNA

Bhí baill Sinn Féin gníomhach freisin ar son cearta na ndaoine i ngach áird den dtír, pé acu tincéirí, tionóntaí, oibrítheoirí, feirmeoirí nó iascairí. Aon áit ina raibh ansmacht á thulaingt ag daoine, bhí Sinn Féin ann le taca a thabhairt dóibh. Ghlac na poblachtaigh sa Tuaisceart leis an bpolasaí seo freisin agus, d'ainneoin an tormeasac ar na cluanna poblachtaigh, leanadar ar aghaidh ag obair go hoscailte, agus tháinig méadú orthu da réir. Luigh se le réasún go nglacaidís páirt go fonnmar sa bhfeachtas ar son cearta saoránach, agus is féidir a rá gur bh é tionchar na bpoblach-

taigh is mó is reathaíoch. Tacaíodh ag éirí níos deacra as seo amach an smacht céadna a chur i bhfeidhm, ach caithfidh na poblachtaigh an dea-shampla a thabhairt agus a theasbáint don phobal go bhfuil an misneach acu leanúint leis na máirseáil agus an síocháin a choimeád d'ainneoin an rud a tharla in Árd Macha. Is fuirist bheith síochánta nuair nach bhfuil éinne ag cur as duit agus is fuirist bheith misniúil freisin. Ach beidh misneach agus smacht den chéad scoth ag teastáil má táthar chun an feachtas a choinneál ar bun, agus achrann seicteach a sheacaint.

AN TEANGA

Dhá bhliain ó shoin, chabhraigh Sinn Féin le heagraíochtaí eile chun chur in aghaidh an LFM a bhí nua-bhunaithe an uair sin chun ionsaí a dhéanamh ar na Gaeilge. D'éirigh go maith linn, cheapamar, agus bhí an LFM i bhfad níos ciúine ina dhiaidh sin. Ach má bhí, bhí Sinn Féin i bhfad níos ciúine freisin i gúrsaí cultúrtha, agus is beag tacaíocht a thugadar do chursaí na teangan ó shoin i leith. Ach cé go raibh an LFM ciúil, bhíodar ag obair go díograsach faoi thalamh ag iarraidh múineadh na Gaeilge a scríos ar fad as na scoileanna. Tá gluaiseacht na teangan ag troid faoi láthair lena gcúl le balla, agus tá sé de dhualgas anois ar ghach eagraíocht náisiúnta teacht i gcbhair orthu agus ar an dteanga. Caithfear "Paisleyites" an Deiscirt san LFM a scríos ar a ndéanfar an donas ar fad ar an dteanga agus ar an náisiúil.

HISTORIC MONTH

This 1968 Ard Fheis meets at a most stirring and exciting time in the life of the Irish people. A slumbering and despairing Irish nation has suddenly awakened and showing amazing vigour and maturity has given a severe jolt to two powerful political machines who have controlled the destiny of this partitioned country for nearly half a century. October 1968 was a truly historic month and will have a significant effect on the future course of events in both parts of the country. The power and discipline of the Civil Rights Movement in the North has shaken the Unionist Party to its foundations and the massive vote for democracy in the Referendum was a hammer blow from which the Fianna Fail machine will never recover. These two events have opened up new perspectives for all our people and give hope that the restrictions on progress imposed by religious and political sectarianism are being cast off.

CIVIL RIGHTS

There is nothing new about the demands of the Civil Rights Movement in the Six Counties. They seek to abolish discrimination in the allocation of houses and jobs, to extend the local Government franchise to all of voting age, to end the Company vote and to abolish the Special Powers Act. These restrictions on Human Rights exist since the Stormont Government was set up and they have been the staff of life of Nationalist politicians down through the years. Apart from election promises however, nothing was done simply because nothing could be done by a handful of inept nationalist

politicians at Stormont. Their only function for over 40 years has been to bolster up a blatantly undemocratic regime and give it the appearance of being a democracy. Had they withdrawn from Stormont years ago as urged by Republicans, they would have assisted considerably towards the break up of the Unionist Party while helping to draw anti-unionist forces together.

UNITY

Much good work has been done at grass roots level over the past couple of years to create an atmosphere in which all anti-Unionist groups could work together. It was obvious to all that this was what the people wanted. Following the banning of the Republican parade in Armagh last Easter, protest meetings were held in Armagh and Newry at which a variety of political views were represented on the platform. All were unanimous in calling for united action. When the N.I.C.R.A. organised its first Civil Rights march from Coalisland to Dungannon at the end of July it was evident to all that here was an issue on which all could unite. Here was an opportunity for the mass of the people who for so long had suffered under Unionist coercive measures to take direct political action themselves to gain redress. Parliamentary action had proved to be an abject failure so extra-parliamentary action would now be tried. It is the first effective political weapon which has been forged by the anti-unionist forces and already after four months it has succeeded in moving what was hitherto considered to be an immovable object. It was only slight movement but it was undoubtedly a notable victory which should boost the morale of the marchers and strengthen their determination to continue.

REPUBLICAN BAN

In spite of the Ban on Republican Clubs, Republicans have continued to act in an open and organised manner in the Six Counties and they have taken their full part in the Civil Rights Campaign together with other political organisations. It is only natural that they should since, in addition to denial of Civil Rights, they are denied the right of political existence.

POWER OF THE PEOPLE

For the first time the mass of the underprivileged people in the North realise the power that lies in their own organised strength, so long as they remain united and disciplined. They have exposed, in all its naked ugliness, the hatred and bigotry that lies at the core of Unionism. To those who have not seen and experienced the mass hysteria and mass hypnosis of extreme orange fanaticism, the Armagh exposure comes as a great shock. Those who are aware of the political situation in the North know that this extremely bigoted faction of orangeism have always controlled the Orange Order and the Unionist Party. The vast majority of Protestants were either unaware of this or ignored it because it did not affect them. Today they are horrified and frightened of it and can afford to ignore it no longer for they now realise that this faction is in effective control of the B Special Constabulary and the R.U.C. - an armed para-military force of

CRAIG'S ATTACK

In addition to the Unionist Party, all other political groups in the Six Counties including the Republicans must re-think their policies and strategy in the light of the new situation. In the wake of violent reaction against traditional Unionist attitudes there is a tendency amongst the young to react also against their opposites, the traditional nationalist attitudes, and this tends to include Republicanism. In the current ferment little distinction is made between our objective of a Socialist Republic covering the whole country and the existing capitalist Republic of the Twenty-six Counties, with its legacy of unemployment, emigration and anti-social legislation. Mr. Craig could score a good propaganda point by pointing to the colossal figure of 200,000 emigrants from the province of Connaught since the establishment of the Free State and contrasting this with the increase in population of the Six County area. The implication is that if the country were united and independent of Britain the North would be as badly off as the province of Connaught. It is of course a superficial argument and is easily countered even in the context of the existing economic and social structure. Craig is comparing a poor underdeveloped agricultural region with a highly-developed industrial region. A more appropriate comparison would be between the development region of Belfast and the development region of Dublin, both of which show increasing populations and expanding economies at the expense of the Western Regions.

EAST v. WEST

The partition between East and West based on economic laws is more real and dangerous than the partition between North and South based on religious laws. Both however are directly caused by the political law of British control, direct in the North and indirect in the South. It is quite obvious that the deliberate fanning of religious hatreds is only necessary as a weapon to maintain the British connection and that if the union with Britain were broken religion as a factor in our political development would gradually disappear. Economic development both in the North and the South is dominated by British capital which concentrates investment in the east of the country to the neglect of Derry or Strabane, or Sligo or Galway. Both the Belfast and Dublin regions are acting as vampires on the remainder of the country and the complete removal of the Belfast industrial region from the Irish economy and its integration with that of Britain has had a disastrous effect on areas such as Donegal, Sligo, Mayo, Leitrim, Monaghan and Cavan. Mr. Craig and his Government must take the blame for having driven a large share of those 200,000 people from the province of Connaught.

SELF-DETERMINATION

It must be remembered that both Belfast and Dublin belong to all the people of Ireland and not just to those living in them. No minority group has a right to opt out of the Nation even though it may have a claim to some special privileges or concessions within the Nation. The unit for self determination

can control. If it were to be accepted that the people of the Six Counties by majority vote had the right to opt out of the Irish Nation and unite with Britain, then it must be accepted that the people of Tyrone, Fermanagh, Derry city and many other areas had a right to opt out of British rule and unite with the remainder of the country. The minority in the Six Counties which is being coerced into union with Britain is 1/3 on population basis and about 1/4 on geographical basis. This is a far greater minority group than the Unionists constitute in the nation as a whole. The Civil Rights campaign is now at last bringing to the notice of the world the whole range of coercive measures which have been used for almost 50 years to keep this substantial minority in subjection.

It must be made clear, however, that Republicans do not ask the people of the Six Counties to come into the existing Twenty-six County state. We would not wish that fate on anyone. We ask the people of the Six Counties to join with the people of the Twenty-six Counties in abolishing both states which serve only British Imperialism, and in establishing a Democratic Socialist Republic for the whole island in which the workers who create the wealth will decide how and where it is used.

DIRECT ACTION

During the past few years Sinn Fein has been carrying out a policy of direct political action in the Twenty-six County area to put its economic and social policies into effect in so far as possible. We have taught the people the value of extra-parliamentary democracy, and gradually the system of political patronage is being broken down. It is now seen that direct action by the people is far more effective than a cap in hand approach to a T.D. With the growing power and independence of Trade Unions, Tenants Associations and Farmers Organisations, and their determination to guard their rights it was evident to Fianna Fail that power was slipping from the Party Machine to the people. They therefore made an all out do or die effort to abolish the P.R. system of election so that they could establish Party dictatorship and follow this up with new coercive legislation against the mass organisations of the people.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE BILL

In this attempt Fianna Fail suffered an overwhelming defeat and I am glad to say that Sinn Fein contributed to this in no small way particularly in rural areas where in addition to our own leaflets, we assisted in the distribution of the Trade Union literature. In spite of this reverse Fianna Fail seem to be determined to press forward with their coercive legislation starting with the Criminal Justice Bill and following up with the Anti Trade Union Bill which Mr. Hillery has ready for some months now. Since the text of the Criminal Justice Bill became available, Sinn Fein has helped to give its provisions the widest possible publicity and it is encouraging to see that the various organisations who will be affected by it recognise its dangerous implications and are prepared to defend their democratic rights. This notorious bill can be defeated in the

are forcing the Unionist regime to withdraw or amend the Special Powers Act—all who are opposed to it must come out on the streets and demonstrate their opposition. They must also make it clear that if it is steamrolled through in spite of all opposition, that they will refuse to accept its provisions and will continually and consistently disobey it.

FREE TRADE SELL-OUT

The Free Trade Area Agreement, with Britain, has been attacked by Sinn Fein since it was first being negotiated. It was a complete sell out to Britain and a restoration of the Act of Union on the Economic front. As I pointed out in 1966 the Twenty-six County Home Market was being handed over to British manufacturers in exchange for deficiency payments on cattle and I asked how long would it be before the Trade Unions discovered how they had been swindled. Now it is evident that while Britain is prepared to accept whatever advantages there may be in it for her, she is completely ignoring the Agreement as far as Irish rights are concerned. Her new farm support scheme to increase Home production of foodstuffs will whittle away any advantages the Irish farmer might have had and by her latest restrictions on Irish manufactured goods, Britain has completely shattered the Agreement.

This comes as no surprise to us as it is just one more in a long list of Broken Treaties with England. The Government now should be forced to repudiate the Agreement completely before any further damage is done to the Irish economy by flooding the market with British goods and forcing the closure of Irish factories. We have always advocated greater diversification of trade in order to eliminate our utter dependence on the sick British economy. Britain has never altered her outlook towards Ireland which she regards merely as a convenient off shore island to be exploited for her supply of cheap food and cheap labour. So far she has had little difficulty in manipulating her Puppet Government in Dublin to provide these.

REPUBLICANISM AND SOCIALISM

The year 1968 was International Human Rights year and it has indeed been most appropriately celebrated in Ireland. It is also the centenary of the birth of James Connolly and during the past year Republican policies have been further clarified for the Irish people. True Republicanism and true Socialism are identical as both are based on the Brotherhood of man. It is our policy to end the domination of Nation by Nation and of man by man. Socialism has nothing to do with, either Atheism or totalitarianism as is evident from even a superficial reading of Connolly. Neither is it a philosophy which must be imported. It is part of the Republican tradition since the founding of the United Irishmen, was deeply rooted among the Fenians, and was the driving force behind the 1916 Rebellion. We intend to learn from the struggles of other oppressed peoples and give them whatever moral support we can but we are not being dictated to or dominated by a philosophy designed for another country. No Nation has a

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