

S T A T E M E N T

On Saturday night the 22nd of February 1969 a picket, under the auspices of the Sligo branch of the Connolly Youth Movement, in which members of Sinn Féin took part, was mounted at 9 pm outside Kelly's Hotel, Sligo, where a meeting of the Sligo executive of Fianna Fáil was taking place. The picket was in protest against the Criminal Justice Bill and anti-trade union laws which Fianna Fáil are attempting to force through the Dáil, and also against the gerrymandering of the constituencies of Sligo/Leitrim by Fianna Fáil.

This peaceful demonstration lasted for about 20 minutes, when the proprietor of the hotel, Mr [redacted], took out his car and indiscriminately drove it at the picket with the intention of killing or maiming its members. Later, the proprietor's wife attacked the picket with a bucket of boiling water. At the same time, members of the Sligo Fianna Fáil executive rushed out of the hotel and attacked the picketers. Five of these people dragged a member of the Connolly Youth Movement, Declan Bree, along the ground towards a bridge over the Garavogue River, shouting 'Drown the bastard'. The other members of the picket succeeded in rescuing him.

While all of this was happening, members of the Special Branch and gardaí from Teeling Street, led by Sergeant [redacted] and Branchman [redacted], stood by and allowed the peaceful picket to be assaulted. When complaints were made by members of the picket to Sergeant [redacted] regarding the attack made on the picket by Mr [redacted] in his car, Sergeant [redacted]'s reply was 'I didn't see anything'. The attitude of the police, from the moment the picket commenced, was one of harrasment and threats that they would be arrested for a breach of the peace.

It is clear that the police allowed themselves to be used as a partisan force by Fianna Fáil.

On behalf of the Irish Republican Army we now issue this statement:

Whenever and wherever Irish men and women wish to make a protest against any of the injustices so prevalent in Ireland, we, the Irish Republican Army, assure them of our full support. Further, we will not hesitate to take direct action against any individual or group of individuals, official or otherwise, who would attack these Irish men and women or deny them their rights.

Issued by General Headquarters, Irish Republican Army:

Desmond Fitzgerald

Adjutant General

The recent action at the Mannin estate was carried out by a unit of the Irish Republican Army in support of the demand by local farmers that this estate be acquired by the Land Commission and divided among the thirteen neighbouring smallholders, in order to improve the living conditions of those with no means of support other than their uneconomic holdings, and to prevent the estate falling into the hands of foreign or native speculators.

It is now up to the small farmers of Connacht to take the initiative and establish land leagues throughout the West wherever there are large estates — whether owned by native or foreign landlords — and demand that they be acquired by the Land Commission and divided among neighbouring smallholders, or re-organised as co-operatives, jointly owned and controlled by the people who work them.

To those who have fallen victim to the propaganda of the ruling class, or who unknowingly repeat the landlords' defence of the 'rights of private property', our answer is Fintan Lalor's answer:

'To any plain understanding, the right of private property is very simple. It is the right of man to possess, enjoy and transfer the substance and use of whatever he has himself created. This title is good against the world; and it is the sole and only title which can give a valid right of absolute private property a place to vest.

'But no man can plead any such right of property in the substance of the soil. The earth, together with all it spontaneously produces, is the free and common property of all mankind, of natural right, and by grant of God; and, all men being equal, no man therefore has a right to appropriate exclusively to himself any part or portion thereof, except with the common consent and agreement of all men.

'The sole right of property which I acknowledge to be morally valid is the right of common consent and agreement. Every other I hold to be fabricated and fictitious, null, void, and of no effect.'

The Republican Movement has committed itself to being in the vanguard of the people's fight for the re-conquest of Ireland, and the return of the land, fisheries, industry and general wealth of the nation to their rightful owners, the Irish people.

SELL OUT OF IRISH LAND.

SERIOUS PROBLEM I gCO. na MIDHE.

The recent economic resistance operation in which a foreign owned mansion was destroyed by a unit of Oglaiigh na hEireann focused public attention to the widespread and large sell out of Irish land to foreigners. This silent cheque-book conquest has now reached serious proportions in gCo. na Midhe. In the past 2½ years alone large holdings of 200, 300, 500, 600, 900, and in one case 1,500 -yes 1,500 acres have fallen into the possession of foreigners, and of course, it is all good land. There are more than 30 English landowners in Meath, 19 Germans, 4 Americans, 2 French, 1 Pole, 1 Swiss, 1 Portugeuse, 1 Czech and at least two international syndicates. Between them they have thousands of acres of the best land in the country!

These new planters can pay such high prices for land that many local farmers cannot afford to buy extra land to improve their holdings. Indeed some of these new Cromwells have been out-bidding small farmers for corn acreage, thus depriving an industrious small farmer of the chance to increase his income.

Small farmers, of course, have little or no part in the Common Market future that Fianna Fail are intent on imposing on the people of this country. Large scale production of beef, butter, milk, & wheat on huge ranches is to be the order of the day with, of course, the classical capitalist idea of highest possible production with lowest possible costs and therefore lowest possible labour force. Already, in Meadh, this trend is operating.

An Englishman with 1,000 acres supplies 1,500 gallons of milk [REDACTED] each day and he receives the standard milk subsidy of 4d per gallon so he is obtaining £175 each week in milk subsidy alone, more than the combined incomes of twenty small farmers. Before last Christmas a German put 5,000 turkeys on the market! What chance has the small farmer of competing with such giants! What chance indeed when the Government that is supposed to be protecting their interests allows and even encourages rich foreigners to buy up all the land they want. In almost every case when a foreigner takes over a farm local people are prevented from using paths, rights of way etc. that the public have used for generations. Members of the archaeological society were refused entry to a graveyard in Meath recently. The "keep out", "trespassers prosecuted" signs inevitably appear soon after the arrival of one or other of the master races. The shotgun toting German or Englishman accompanied with savage alsation dogs is becoming a frequent sight in Meath and other counties and if the present sell out is not stopped the ordinary people of Ireland will be denied the right to walk the fields in their own land.

But who is going to stop this silent conquest? Certainly not Fianna Fail - the TACA boys, the real power in the party, are making fortunes out of the big business that the sale of land has become in recent years. Fine Gael, being backed by much the same interest will not do anything. Labour may talk about it but "Soitheach follamh is mo torman."

What about the NFA? It would be expected that this organisation would be spear-heading the resistance to foreign takeover of land but instead of this, the NFA actually accepts the foreigners as members and indeed send their organisers to solicit subs from the Germans, the English, Yanks and others who have aquired our land- and in some cases have been bluntly refused by arrogant members of the master races.

So far, in Meath at any rate, only the Republican Movement has taken action against the land grabbers. A land league is in process of being formed and it must be concerned with the protection of our people and for the preservation of the family farm.

Only the people concerned, the farmers and farm workers of Meath can fight this problem by organising, resisting and educating the entire people regarding the new conquest of recent years. The Republican Movement as the revolutionary movement of the Irish people will support the fight for the land and the peoples right to it.

CURTHA AMACH AG GLUAISEACHT NA POBLACHTA.

Title: Republican Movement Statements on “economic resistance” actions in the Republic of Ireland during Spring 1969

Organisation: Sinn Féin [Pre 1970]

Date: 1969

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