

1978

Árd Fheis 1978: Clár

Workers' Party of Ireland

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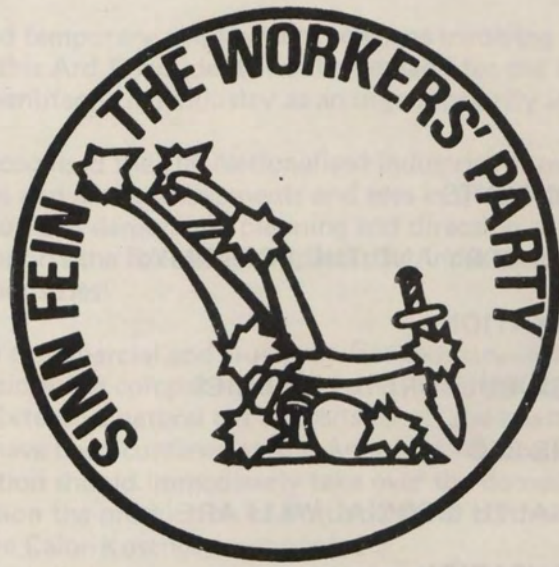


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Árd Fheis

1978

Clár

CONTENTS

INDUSTRY AND THE ECONOMY	1.
TAXATION	8
AGRICULTURE & FISHERIES	10
THE EEC	13
HEALTH & SOCIAL WELFARE	14
EDUCATION	16
LOCAL GOVERNMENT & HOUSING	18
INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS	22
CIVIL RIGHTS	24
YOUTH	27
CONSTITUTION	28
FINANCE	29
ORGANISATION	29
MISCELLANEOUS	32

INDUSTRY AND THE ECONOMY

1. With unemployment and temporary employment schemes involving some 15% of the workforce in Northern Ireland this Ard Fheis identifies the demand for the expansion of public sector corporations into manufacturing industry as an urgent priority in the Northern Ireland economy.

Our Party has clearly recognised the UK Nationalised industries as major progressive gains of the British working class and labour movements and sees in their extension into NI a major new vehicle for jobs creation and democratic planning and direction of the economy.

This Ard Fheis fully supports the following proposals for industrial development involving specific UK nationalised industries:

(a) Public Sector Gas:

The Northern Ireland Commercial and Domestic Gas Industry is dominated by Calor-Kosangas, American exploration companies and a variety of small scale private and municipal gas corporations. Extensive natural gas deposits lie off the coast of Antrim and Derry and drilling operations have been confined to the American Amoco Corporation.

The UK Gas Corporation should immediately take over the domestic gas industry in NI and include in its operation the production of bottled gas for commercial and industrial use, hereby breaking the Calor-Kosangas monopoly.

The UK Gas Corporation has an extensive exploration programme in the Irish Sea and has found natural gas fields off the coast of North Wales. The operations of the Gas Corporation in NI should include a comprehensive exploration programme in the Larne, Rathlin and Malin Basins.

(b) Steel Mill for Belfast Harbour:

The Quigley Report on the Northern Ireland Economy called for the establishment of a mini-steel mill in NI processing the region's 100,000 tons annual scrap metal exports. The South African based Abercom Group, in conjunction with the Northern Ireland Development Agency has just completed a preliminary study on the project.

In order to complete this study and to translate its findings into meaningful industrial jobs the publicly owned British Steel Corporation should immediately undertake the development of this important industrial sector.

With the total failure of private industry to generate economic recovery, Public Sector spending in NI has been the main engine of jobs creation over the last 15 years and since 1974 in particular.

This Ard Fheis condemns the Public Sector cuts in NI as having the double blow of reducing public services and undermining the jobs creation programme.

We therefore condemn the tendency to divert public expenditure away from the broad programme of new state manufacturing enterprises into the bottomless pit of small producers and community industries.

In order to promote and expand marketing and research facilities for the State Sector, a Central Planning and Research Unit for all publicly owned industries, capable of drawing on and expanding, the marketing and technological research of companies like Shortts & Harland and acting as a nerve centre for the planned expansion of the State Sector and for the development of our natural resources.

Belfast Comhairle Ceanntar.

2. Taking cognizance of the recent report by the Fair Employment Agency, this Ard Fheis calls for a crash programme of industrialisation in areas of high unemployment.

South Antrim Comhairle Ceanntar.

3. Recognising that unemployment provides capitalism with its necessary reserve pool of labour, and prevents the growth of full working-class solidarity and strength that this Ard Fheis instructs the Ard Comhairle and the Six County Executive to intensify the campaign for the extension of the present public sector and for the creation of new ones in the fields of industry, credit, transport, agriculture and fisheries, as the only credible short term alternative to capitalism, and to incorporate in that campaign the necessary demand of full workers' participation within such structures.

Strabane Rep. Club.

4. That the British Government fulfill some of its obligations to the people of the North by providing public sector industry in areas of high unemployment particularly in West Belfast, and further call on the Department of Commerce to take over the Whiterock Industrial Estate to provide secure and well paid employment.

Henry Joy McCracken Rep. Club. Turf Lodge.

5. That in view of the recent collapse of local co-operatives, in West Belfast, in particular Ballymurphy Enterprises and Antrim Crystal, this Ard Fheis reiterates its demand for major state investment in manufacturing industry as the only viable solution to our unemployment problems and rejects the insular, sectarian thinking of those who stand in the way of proper economic development with their schemes for self-employment.

Orr/Gray Rep. Club, Ballymurphy.

6. With the closure of traditional textile industries in areas such as inner city Belfast and with the increase in female unemployment in particular, that these closures have caused the development of all derelict land of an industrial nature in North and West Belfast, is an urgent priority.

The creation of new large scale industry is the only solution to unemployment in the inner city areas. Community industries and self-help schemes are totally unsuited to the massive programme of job creation needed for these areas.

With the tradition of textile finishing in inner city Belfast, this Ard Fheis calls for a major effort by Government to establish and develop this area as the base for processing and finishing industries associated with the man-made fibre industry in Northern Ireland, as recommended by the Quigley Report on the Northern Ireland Economy.

Perry/McMillen Club, Lower Falls.

7. This Ard Fheis while recognising the role of foreign investment in creating jobs in Northern Ireland, and in thereby strengthening the northern working class, calls for:

1. The immediate extension of the UK Industries Act (1975) through which the multinational corporations will have to enter into planning agreements with central government and thereby laying a further basis for state planning of the economy in which the various sectors of private industry will be subject to economic planning and production targets;
2. The re-organisation of the fragmented jobs promotion agencies in NI into a single comprehensive industrial development agency on similar lines to the IDA in Southern Ireland.

Belfast Comhairle Ceanntar.

8. That this Ard Fheis calls upon the Resources Protection Committee to launch a campaign in N.I. to make people aware of the existence of Natural Resources and their potential to create jobs.

Twinbrook Rep. Club.

9. Ireland is now facing the worst youth unemployment crisis ever. The private sector industries, which for years have been protected by successive governments, have failed to provide jobs for our growing youth population. This Ard Fheis sees the growth in unemployment and the growing number of young unemployed as a clear condemnation of the economic policy carried out by government and private industry alike. We call upon Sinn Fein The Workers' Party to support the Irish Democratic Youth Movement in its Youth Unemployment Campaign launched this month (March) and to seek full employment for all the unemployed in Ireland. To that end:

1. That this Ard Fheis demands the use of Ireland's resources to achieve industries which would, under State Control, bring full employment for the Irish people.
2. That Sinn Fein The Workers' Party seeks a full training programme which will correspond to State industries' needs for a future expanding economy and on a programme of full employment.
3. The Ard Fheis refutes the idea of an acceptable level of unemployment being reached by the early 1980's and joins with the IDYM in calling for jobs as the only alternative to the emigration of Irish youth.

Belfast Comhairle Ceanntar.

10. Recognising that N.I. has an annual unemployment figure of over 11% and that this figure tends to rise to as high as 30% in some areas of West Belfast and Sth Antrim, this Ard Fheis calls upon the Minister of State in N.I. to launch a programme of industrial development in the Sth Antrim area.

In order to achieve such a programme this party recommends that:

1. The 122 acres of industrial land set aside in the Poleglass/Logmore plans be secured immediately.
2. That the department of Commerce and N.I.D.A. draw up an industrial development plan for the area which would contain proposals for the establishment of large scale labour intensive industries.
3. That the dept. of Commerce and the N.I.D.A. take on the role of entrepreneur and create such industries.
4. That steps be taken to integrate the labour force in the Twinbrook, Dunmurray, Lisburn area by the improvement of road and rail links and a programme of advertising to attract labour from Twinbrook into the Lisburn area.
5. That an Industrial Training Centre be established in the Twinbrook/Dunmurray area.

South Antrim Comhairle Ceanntar.

11. This Ard Fheis calls for the establishment of a car manufacturing industry in Ireland and urge that approaches be made to foreign car manufacturers in Europe, Asia and America to consider the setting up of such industry.

The use of zinc, lead and copper which Ireland has in plentiful supply makes such a course a sensible development.

Ard Comhairle.

12. The Irish Sugar Company's engineering division manufacture agricultural machinery of high quality which is well regarded in overseas markets supplied from this source, Irish Steel Holdings should be developed to produce special purpose steel as well as increasing and modernising the production of present lines manufactured. Increased production should be for the purpose of developing a serious engineering industry in Ireland and not to export at low prices to the engineering industry in Europe.

Ard Comhairle.

13. Realising the vast wealth that exists in our offshore oil and gas fields this Ard Fheis opposes any dilution of our claim to a 200 mile exclusive limit around our coasts including Rockall. A surrender of our fishing rights is the first step in abdicating control of our territorial waters.

This Ard Fheis further condemns the refusal of the Government to exercise its existing powers to bring exploration and exploitation of our offshore oil and gas fields under national ownership and control. At present our gas off Kinsale Head is being resold to us at exorbitant prices and our oil wells plugged by US companies which do not find them commercially viable to exploit although they could be providing valuable jobs, energy and added value wealth to our national economy.

Martin O'Leary Cumann, Dublin North East.

14. That in view of exploitation of unemployed by employment agencies, they should be taken over by Man-Power.

Larkin Cumann, Ballyfermot Dublin.

15. That Sinn Fein The Workers' Party should oppose National Wage Agreements. From their introduction unemployment has been on the increase and they have been of no benefit to the lower paid workers.

Hope Cumann, Dublin.

16. That Sinn Fein The Workers' Party, along with the trade union movement, cease talking about the scandal of our resources leaving the country, and resort to action, i.e. the placing of pickets at all ports where resources such as ore, hides, cattle on the hoof etc. are being exported.

Hope Cumann, Dublin.

17. That this Ard Fheis calls on the Minister of Labour to implement the Protection of Young Persons (Employment) Act 1977 in particular with regard to the widespread abuses within the Hotel and Catering Industry.

Galway Comhairle Ceanntar.

17a Sinn Fein The Workers' Party demands that the Government proceed with the Modernisation Plan for Irish Steel Holdings. We further call for more finance to be made available to Irish Steel Holdings in order to establish an integrated Steel Industry utilising the most advanced technology, which in turn would ensure the expansion of Irish Steel Holdings into the engineering and metals industry, thus creating more jobs.

Pearse Cumann, Dublin.

18. That this Ard Fheis calls on the Government to reject the attempt by the EEC to close down Irish Steel Holdings. Instead, we call for the expansion of steel production for use in Irish manufacturing industry. Such expansion should be combined in a plan for industrialisation, which would include the building of a zinc smelter, and which would use the zinc ore and steel to set up a car manufacturing industry.

Such an industry should include the building of trucks, coaches and farm machinery.

Larkin Cumann, Ballyfermot Dublin.

19. That a campaign be conducted by our party to guarantee the establishment of a state construction company to realise the full potential of the industry for job creation and economic development. The wasteful use of public money in this industry has clearly not benefited the Irish people but has subsidised well known supporters of the Fianna Fail Party at the expense of jobs and houses.

William Thompson Cumann, Dublin.

20. This Ard Fheis calls on workers in State and Semi-State employment to co-ordinate their activities in defence of their jobs in view of the fact that there are vicious concerted attacks being made on State companies, e.g. CIE road freight, Irish Steel, by private enterprise who, in over fifty years and with millions of pounds of taxpayers' money in subsidies, has failed to provide for full employment, North or South.
- Cork City Comhairle Ceanntar.
21. The Ard Fheis notes that all employment growth in Irish manufacturing industry in the last decade came from new industries introduced by IDA: That existing "Irish" industry was stagnant and laid off workers, condemns the hypocrisy of Dr. Martin O'Donoghue of Fianna Fail and John M. Kelly of Fine Gael, who have been the chief propagandists of the illusory "self help" policies which involve petty capitalists and gombeen sweat shop owners, helping themselves to public funds and grants in the name of "Irish industry".
- This Ard Fheis resolves to expose the propaganda that Irish capitalism can create full employment, resolves to maintain pressure on public opinion on this question and while supporting serious large scale projects by the IDA, will at all times tell the Irish working class that the long term security of employment must rest within the public sector and the state production companies.
- Ned Stapléton Cumann, Dublin.
22. That this Ard Fheis calls on the incoming Ard Comhairle to initiate a public programme at national level supporting our demands for the expansion of the Public Sector.
- Pearse Cumann, Dublin.
23. That this Ard Fheis condemns Fianna Fail's Economic Programme which calls on the working class in the words of Professor Martin O'Donoghue "to gamble" their future on a Sector which in the past has constantly failed to provide employment; namely the Private Sector. We also condemn the Government's recent initiative through the Industrial Development Authority to undermine the Public Sector by enticing its ablest Personnel into the Private Sector. This "Entrepreneurial Scheme" is an attempt once again to revive the dying Private Sector.
- Pearse Cumann, Dublin.
24. This Ard Fheis noting that the Fianna Fail White Paper promises to create 29,000 new jobs every year by increasing foreign borrowing, holding down wages, holding back the public sector and introducing "Buy Irish" campaign; restates: that none of all of these measures will be successful in creating 30,000 new jobs each year: that they are a true expression of the party gombeen class policy of Fianna Fail which has failed in the 1930's, 40's and 50's and in each decade since 1921. The reasons why they will fail have been explained in the publications and policies of our party.
- We resolve to step up party work to drive home the only policies which can deliver full employment, namely the expansion of the public sector into manufacturing, the expansion of the state companies into agriculture and fisheries, the elimination of small-man profiteering and inefficiency and the making of an Irish industrial revolution based on the application of state companies to industry, agriculture, mining, oil, gas and natural resources.
- Ned Stapleton Cumann, Dublin.
25. That we initiate a vigorous campaign in the coming year for the establishment of a State Construction Company, with an emphasis on the construction of high standard Local Authority Housing.
- Dublin Comhairle Ceanntar.

26. This Ard Fheis condemns the recent promise of IDA funds to workers who abandon the Public Sector and offer to set up sweat shops. The Ard Fheis notes that this means using public money to entice workers from productive public companies like Aer Lingus and Bord na Mona who have strong unions, good wage rates and humane conditions of employment and to encourage these workers to exploit their fellow men and women in non-union, fly-by-night and low wage projects.

The Ard Fheis notes the attempts by the media to glorify the few paltry attempts at such ventures and calls on public sector workers to advance the cause of the great State Companies and their achievements in the Irish economy.

Ned Stapleton Cumann, Dublin.

27. This Ard Fheis asserts that the recent Government White Paper can lay no claim to be a plan for the Irish economy. All it does is to underline Fianna Fail's commitments to native private enterprise. At least 113,000 workers presently on the dole is testimony to the capacity of this private sector to provide jobs.

A pre-requisite to creating conditions for full employment is a comprehensive plan of industrialisation. This plan must entail:

1. Public control of Finance. The Banking system is the key to a planned economy; the banks must be nationalised and put to work to build up industry in workers' interests;
2. A comprehensive tax system embracing farmers and self-employed;
3. Expansion of State Companies and their development into manufacturing industry;
4. Public control of our natural resources, the reduction of the extraction rate at Navan mine and the establishment of a state smelter as pre-requisites for the subsequent down-stream industries;
5. The short-term advantages of massive capital injection into the construction industry are obvious to all. The fact is that 70% of monies spent in this industry (2nd largest) is State funded. A State Construction Company is the only way to ensure that this State money is used to provide adequate housing and facilities for Irish workers.

Joe O'Connor Cumann, Dublin.

28. The construction industry in N.I. plays a key role in the economy with its net output amounting annually to 6%-7% of the Gross Domestic Product and with the expansion of the construction materials sector is making an increasing contribution to exports.

The tendency towards monopoly is in an advanced stage with four main builders now commanding 70% of total work and complete monopolies being established in the cement, plasterboard, brick and glass sectors of the supply industry.

At present building workers represent one quarter of the total unemployed and are deprived by the instability and insecurity of the industry of most of the rights of other industrial workers. It is nonsensical to keep 16,000 building workers on the dole in the face of immense areas of social need and in view of an industrial strategy which demands major investment in modern industrial buildings and infrastructures.

This Ard Fheis therefore calls for a Back to Work Campaign in the Construction Industry involving:

1. A Five Year rolling programme for public spending programmes with a monitoring unit to direct annual "capital underspending" back into the industry.

2. The expansion of Enterprise Ulster into a properly instituted Direct Labour Organisation with –
 - (i) the capacity to recruit a permanent workforce,
 - (ii) the right to compete for all construction work in N.I. and including cross-border development projects,
 - (iii) a clear modern accounting system distinguishing between social costs borne by the enterprise and its commercial operational accounts,
 - (iv) the full right to Construction Industry Training Grants and Facilities,
 - (v) the immediate establishment of bases and training centres in the areas of need in Belfast with a full involvement in inner city development built into its next ten year programme.
3. The introduction of the UK Industries Act to N.I. and by its extension to cover construction bring the large private contractors and suppliers into the planning agreement system.
4. The creation by Department of Manpower Services of a register of Construction Industry Employees and Employers with the aim of guaranteeing –
 - (i) Conditions of Employment,
 - (ii) Manpower planning and apprentice training schemes;
 - (iii) Full back pay for period of casual unemployment for employees on registration financed by levy on all employers,
 - (iv) Full scheme of pensions payments and other general benefits for the industry based on length of service on the Manpower register rather than with a particular private employer.
5. Construction Site Code of Practice outlining the highest safety standards and welfare facilities for the industry including a definite clear set of joint consultation procedures.

Belfast Central Branch.

28a. The Northern Catholic and Protestant middle class see a way out of their present economic difficulties in the emigration of 400,000 working class people over the next 20 years. This figure is expected to include one quarter of a million young people between the age of 15 and 20 years and this is forecast to bring a drop in the net population of 4% by the end of the century.

This Ard Fheis rejects the attempts being made to harness sectarianism in order to carry through such policies. It also rejects attempts to introduce backward economic policies based on the most retarded sectors of the NI economy behind a cloak of co-ops, community projects and attempts to revive "small man" projects – to substitute these for large scale capitalism.

It is of crucial importance to expand the public sector as the most durable foundation on which to unite the Irish working class and to create the conditions for an agreed move towards an Irish Workers' Republic.

This Ard Fheis welcomes the creation of the new N.I. Economic Council and believes that it would obtain best results along the lines of the following programme:

- 1) It should have planning powers and a planning role linked to the UK Department of Planning on the one hand and an industrial planning authority in Southern Ireland on the other. This would give NI trade unionists access to the planning process in both Ireland and Britain and be a means of putting pressure on British and Southern capitalists to introduce systematic planning in all areas.

- 2) The step by step translation of the UK economic subvention to NI into a planned expansion of the state sector in new manufacturing industry and involving the established UK nationalised industries in such fields as steel production, off shore gas and the chemical industry. These three areas in particular offer the best prospects of co-operation with the state sector in the South to the benefit of both the northern and southern working class.
- 3) The creation of an Irish Economic Development Commission bringing together the representatives of public sector industries and the trade union movement North and South to develop a dynamic integrated system of publicly owned industries based on mineral, oil and gas and agricultural resources of the Irish people.

Belfast Central Rep. Clubs.

TAXATION

29. This Ard Fheis, noting that some 16,000 capitalist farmers are paying an effective tax rate of only 1%, while their labourers in common with all other PAYE workers are paying a tax rate of 15% minimum, further noting that 160,000 Irish farmers have assets on acreage of £1,000 per acre in contrast with PAYE workers, who have no such capital assets, calls for the progressive taxation of all farmers, both on their profits and on the capitalist assets represented by land.

Ned Stapleton Cumann, Dublin.

30. Sinn Fein The Workers' Party demands that the position whereby 87.5% of all income tax is paid by the working class be redressed immediately. To this end we support the call of the Trade Union Movement in their call for a system of taxation which would require the farmers, Professional Persons and Self-Employed to contribute on the same basis as the PAYE Sector.

Pearse Cumann, Dublin.

31. That Sinn Fein The Workers' Party campaign for the establishment of a State run Insurance Company, to give the people complete and adequate cover for Life, Motor, Property and Public Liability Insurance.

Frank Ryan Cumann, Drumcondra Dublin.

- 32 Noting that:

1. Ireland is one of the most heavily indirectly taxed countries in Europe,
2. indirect taxation is intensely regressive and bears most heavily on those least able to afford it and
3. direct taxation in the form of income tax is at present also regressive since PAYE accounts for approximately 87% of all income tax revenue,

This Ard Fheis calls upon the Government to reduce the burden of both indirect taxation and PAYE and to amend the income tax legislation so as to render taxation in Ireland proportional to the individual's ability to pay.

Cork City Comhairle Ceanntar.

33. Government finance is mainly raised by Taxation and Borrowing. This money is spent on providing necessary services such as health, education, welfare, housing etc. It is also spent on encouraging industrial development both directly through state bodies and by grants to private companies, and indirectly by providing the necessary infrastructure e.g. roads, communications, credit facilities etc.

It is highly undesirable that finance for government expenditure be raised through borrowing except for productive purposes. Money borrowed must ultimately be repaid and this has to be repaid from Tax Revenue. The cost of paying the interest on the National Debt will be £404 million this year (1978) – enough to develop Tara Mines, build a smelter, an oil refinery in Dublin Bay and still have approximately £150 m. over.

The bulk of taxation comes from income tax, Value Added Tax, and excise duties. Corporation Tax, Customs duties and Capital Taxes make a smaller contribution.

Workers, through the PAYE system paid 87.5% of all income tax in 1977. Farmers and all other self employed paid the balance. Farmers – with an estimated income of over £700m – paid £14m. tax – which is only 2% of their incomes. (About one eighth of farmers will be required to pay tax from 1978 onwards).

Value Added Tax and excise duties are charged to all consumers, irrespective of their ability to pay! Farmers are entitled to repayments of VAT on their farming inputs. Corporation Tax is paid by limited companies. The rate of tax is 45% in theory, but in practice, the rate is far lower with many companies not paying any tax. Companies are entitled to export sales relief, generous capital allowances and stock relief etc.

The capital taxes have now been rendered virtually useless. The Fianna Fail government have abolished Wealth Tax, reduced capital gains tax to a shadow of what was already a weak tax, and reduced capital acquisitions tax even further.

The tax system is geared to benefit the rich. The wealthier you are the more you benefit from income tax allowances and reliefs. The richer you are the more you benefit from tax relief for mortgages, life assurance, dependent relatives etc. Tax allowances have been used as a cheap alternative to a proper social welfare system.

Therefore, this Ard Fheis recognises that –

1. Taxation is primarily to raise funds to pay for government expenditure. It cannot be regarded as a major instrument for social change. This must take place through state control of productive, distributive and financial institutions.
2. A more simplified income tax system is necessary combined with a comprehensive social welfare and health system.
3. All incomes, from whatever source, must be taxed on an equitable basis. Farmers, Doctors, Solicitors and all other self employed must pay tax on their true incomes. The present "Notional system" of taxation of farmers must be scrapped.
4. Any attempt to move from an income based tax system to an indirect or consumption tax system must be resisted.
5. Agricultural and Fisher Co-ops are similar to any other business enterprise and must therefore pay the same tax as other companies.
6. Relief for mortgage interest should be made at source by direct government subsidy and not through the tax system where the richer you are the less you pay.
7. School books and newsprint should be exempt from VAT.
8. It is essential that a major anti-evasion campaign be undertaken and that the Revenue Commissioners recruit and train special anti-evasion groups to examine the accounts and other records of the self employed and other business interests.
9. Capital taxation, as well as raising finance, is also an anti-evasion device. Wealth Tax must be re-instated with meaningful rates. Capital taxation, with income tax must be part of the tax system.

AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES

34. This Ard Fheis recognises that —

1. On a world-wide basis the proportion of the workforce engaged directly in agricultural production is falling. This trend is also evident in Ireland.
2. Agricultural production is increasing due to mechanisation, use of fertilisers and adoption of modern methods.
3. Of the total EEC budget approximately 70% is spent on agricultural support: keeping prices artificially high to the consumer. Of Ireland's share over 80% is spent likewise.
4. The size of an economically viable farm holding is constantly increasing. In Ireland it is now in the 80 to 100 acre bracket.
5. In Ireland there are 11.9m acres in agricultural production (10.6 of which is in pasture) plus 1m. acres of afforestation. That there are 180,000 farmers, 110,000 under 50 acres, 22,000 of these under 15 acres. In comparison to the industrial sector almost one-half of our farmers are over 55 years of age... 37,000 of these are over 65. Those farmers in the 'uneconomic category' are continually pushed in pursuit of an industrial job. Many of the large industries in rural areas find an increasing number of part-time farmers among their workforce. (n.b. the smaller holdings are mainly on the Western Sea board West Cork to Donegal plus Monaghan and Cavan).
6. That the economic needs of the Irish people demand that land be recognised as a major natural resource — an asset that must serve society's needs. The land must provide the raw material for a processing industry — a major area of 'job creation'.
7. This cannot happen at present because the optimum utilisation of the land is impeded by the high incidence of owner occupancy; a limited land market; late inheritance; 11 month conacre system; a shift towards part-time farming plus scattered and divided holdings.
8. State involvement in agricultural production is necessary to develop new crops, new methods and to provide regular and continuous supplies to the food processing industry.

Therefore this Ard Fheis recognises that the following steps should be taken:

- (a) That the State must be directly involved in the reform of land structure.
- (b) Land under tillage and forestry must be increased.
- (c) To enable uneconomic and older farmers to leave agriculture job security and pensions must be provided.
- (d) The State regulate the transfer of land through inheritance, leasing or sale in keeping with regional production quotas and improvement schemes.
- (e) Part-time farming invariably means land more inefficiently used, while the economic needs of the Irish people dictate that our land resources be exploited to their full potential, therefore those part-time farmers in secure employment should not remain in farming.
- (f) We also demand that the movement of people out of direct agricultural production be co-ordinated with the development of the food processing plants, improvement schemes, fisheries and forestry so that employment will be produced.
- (g) That a large part of the money now being spent by the EEC on Agricultural price support should be directed towards providing secure industrial jobs for people leaving agriculture.

Dublin Comhairle Ceanntar.

35. Recognising that the system of food subsidies bolsters up an inefficient Agricultural Sector and fattens the pockets of individual farmers, Sinn Fein The Workers' Party notes:—

1. That food subsidies are a form of tax in kind taken from PAYE workers.
2. That they serve to artificially deflate the cost of farm produce to the consumer.
3. That they act as a private grant to private farmers;

Therefore we say that the cheap food policy of Sinn Fein The Workers' Party is the only method of providing a constant, plentiful and cheap supply of food.

We therefore demand the expansion of Bord na Mona, Irish Sugar Company, into the Production, Marketing and Processing of food.

Pearse Cumann, Dublin.

36. Recognising the crucial importance of the food industry to our economy we call for the maximum development of Irish agriculture to achieve full productivity and thereby guarantee adequate supplies of raw materials for the food processing industry. Immediate government action must be called for to eliminate the criminal export of live cattle, sheep and unprocessed fish.

William Thompson Cumann, Dublin.

37. Britain is an importer of food and Ireland an exporter of food. An examination of this question, therefore, shows that producers of food in Ireland have a common interest on an all Ireland basis.

A common agricultural policy for Ireland is therefore in the best interest of all in order to win and supply markets outside Ireland. The agricultural industry can in this way best be developed to ensure constant supplies for the developing of a food processing industry with a substantial increase in jobs in this part of our economic life.

Present differences in investment and development schemes can be brought into line and a common effort made to ensure that this industry will, in the future, be modern, efficient and prosperous.

Ard Comhairle.

38. This Ard Fheis noting that the IFA like the IFO represent the owners of production, land and fisheries, noting that the IFA like the IFO are actively hostile to trade unionism, noting that both will sell their produce to an international market to the detriment of processing industries at home and to the detriment of the Irish consumer, firmly opposes any attempt by these bodies to enlist working class support for any of their chauvinist aims by waving the green flag over land or seas which properly belong only to the organised Irish working class in solidarity with European working class parties.

Ned Stapleton Cumann, Dublin.

39. The food industry is the biggest employer, and the most important industry in this country but it is also one of the industries most in need of urgent planning.

Due to the lack of planning in 1974 the beef producers found themselves in a crisis, when too much beef was produced and the prices fell with drastic effect on the small farmers.

In 1975/76 the shortage of potatoes and the soaring cost to the consumers led to a surplus in 1977.

In view of this urgent need of planning we urge the Government to implement a centrally planned economy for the agricultural sector.

Kevin Barry Club, Garvagh, Co. Derry.

40. That this Ard Fheis condemns the present trend of wealthy people, who do not derive their livelihood from fishing, plundering the lobster fishing grounds around the coast thereby endangering the livelihoods of small fishermen and urge the Government to restrict lobster fishing to those who earn their living from it.

Donegal Comhairle Ceanntar.

41. That every effort be made to assist the campaign for maximum national control of our seas in order that Ireland can develop a planned programme of fisheries development. This programme means protecting, conserving and planned development of both the processing sectors of the industry.

The role of BIM must be expanded to enable a proper state development plan to be implemented, ensuring guaranteed supplies of fish to the processing sector and the application of the most modern and efficient industrial methods in all areas of the industry.

We should point out the complete inability of this country to create a rational and progressive fishing industry by relying on primitive fishing methods and heavily subsidised private ownership of trawlers in a chaotic, unplanned industry.

William Thompson Cumann, Dublin.

42. Fishing:

Recognising the importance of our fisheries as a vital national resource, the importance of conservation of fish stocks, the potential for the Irish fishing industry to create both off-shore and particularly on-shore jobs, and the massive financial input made by the Irish State to the industry, this Ard Fheis:

1. Commends the people and government of Iceland on declaring and maintaining an exclusive 200 mile fishing limit on their waters, and congratulates them on creating, as a result of this policy, the most prosperous fishing industry in Western Europe.
2. Calls for Irish State control of our waters (including all mineral and exploration rights) up to 200 miles, with an absolute minimum exclusive fishing limit of 50 miles, and insists that there must be no sell-out of this important natural resource to our so-called 'partners' in the EEC, who have already fished their own waters empty.
3. Emphasises the vital importance of conservation of fish stocks within the 50 mile limit by our own fishing fleet, and suggests the creation of national fish conservation zones to allow stocks to replenish.
4. Recognises the massive Irish State investment in the fishing industry in harbour and shore facilities, fishery protection, training schemes, development finance in the form of grants and low interest loans from Bord Iascaigh Mhara, BIM boat-building, and BIM advertising and promotion campaigns; and urges the creation of an Irish State fishing industry through BIM involvement in catching, processing, marketing and export of fish; and calls for all fish caught in Irish waters to be landed in Irish ports, and for all fish exported from Ireland to be exported as processed and finished products, rather than unprocessed as at present, and points to the example of Denmark which has a ratio of 7:1 people employed on-shore for every person employed off-shore, compared to Ireland with a ratio of only 1:1.
5. Warns of the possible danger to Ireland's position of neutrality involved in EEC 'protection' of our waters using what are in effect NATO military warships.
6. Recognises fishing as an important unifying 32 county issue, with an identity of interest North and South, and urges the closest co-operation between all sections of the industry and unions involved, in both the 26 county and Six County States, and commend the ITGWU who are already putting this policy into effect.
7. Rejects the arrogant policy of the employers' IFO in refusing to recognise the fishermen's branch of the ITGWU, and gives complete support to the demands of working deckhands for Union recognition, full social welfare rights, sick pay, holiday pay, redundancy rights, and rights to minimum notice of termination of employment; and points out that these absolute minimum rights are taken for granted by workers in any other industry.

Dublin Comhairle Ceanntar.

THE E.E.C.

43. This Ard Fheis having regard to the progressive aspects of EEC membership in common with other European workers' parties resolves to reassess the role of the party in a European context. The Ard Fheis notes that progressive measures such as equal pay and "opening the books" legislation have been forced on an unwilling Irish gombeen class which itself led the campaign for EEC membership.

This Ard Fheis resolves therefore to reassess in the interests of the Irish working class the total effect of EEC membership, without regard to any previous tactical positions in the past.

This Ard Fheis noting also the failure of the gombeen parties to oppose reactionary tendencies or to force comprehensive industrial policy from the EEC resolves to fight the European Parliament elections in accordance with the present needs of the Irish working class and to this end will consult with the great workers' parties of France, Italy and Spain who have successfully used the EEC in the interests of their respective countries.

Ned Stapleton Cumann, Dublin.

- Infoshan*
44. Having regard to our consistent opposition to the EEC, and the confirmation of our predictions re the effects of EEC membership on the Irish economy and in particular on the working class and noting the undemocratic nature of EEC institutions, that this Ard Fheis resolves not to put candidates forward for the forthcoming direct elections to the European Parliament.

Galway Comhairle Ceanntar.

45. That the Party does not participate in the EEC Elections as—
(a) the amount of money and effort required to run such a campaign would achieve a far greater return if spent on the forthcoming Local Government Elections: and
(b) because this country has nothing to gain from the Common Market as the larger and more powerful nations will continue to dominate the Commission to their own benefit.

Frank Ryan Cumann, Drumcondra.

46. That we decide not to contest the European Parliament Elections, as we feel it is inconsistent with our Policies of being opposed to Entry to the EEC.

Tralee Cumann.

47. The decision of the Irish people to enter the EEC reflected their belief that this country could not stand on its own under the present economic and political structures and that the EEC was therefore the only alternative to complete isolation.

All the powers of national capitalism and its political parties, Fianna Fail and Fine Gael, along with the large farmers and the naive idealists combined to defeat the real interests of the people. The Irish Labour Party's opposition to the EEC was confined to shadow boxing they had neither the will nor the interest nor the political leadership. The end result is that the Irish working class is in the EEC and Sinn Fein The Workers' Party, although still opposed to the articles of the Treaty of Rome recognise that reality.

This Ard Fheis therefore notes:

- (a) The need for our party to contest the coming European elections in order that we may defend the interests of our workers and prevent them from being political isolated within Europe.

- (b) The growth in awareness among the people as to the real nature of the EEC and the consequent demand for a political grouping to fight for their interests.
- (c) The hypocrisy of both Fianna Fail and Fine Gael in blaming the EEC for ills which they created or which because of their adherence to private enterprise they cannot solve. The failure of these parties to resist the effects of the EEC means that our party must give a lead to the working people of Ireland, contesting the EEC elections on their behalf as part of our overall struggle for an independent socialist republic.

McMillen Cumann, Dublin.

HEALTH & SOCIAL WELFARE

48. That recipients of the deserted wives' allowance, the unmarried mothers' allowance and unemployed breadwinners be given free electricity and free travel allowance.

Dick McKee Cumann, Finglas Dublin.

49. That Sinn Fein The Workers' Party call on the Government of the day to pass legislation within the state making retirement compulsory at 60 years, optional at 55, in order to ease the unemployment situation.

Hope Cumann, Dublin.

50. That this Ard Fheis calls for the extension of the Free Fuel for the Needy Scheme to rural areas.

Edentubber Martyrs Cumann, Dundalk.

51. This Ard Fheis of Sinn Fein The Workers' Party protests at continued blatant discrimination against young unemployed females in denying them unemployment assistance. There is a double wrong being inflicted on them in that as well as denying them monetary assistance the Government is refusing them the right to employment in manufacturing industry since the premium of £20 will only be granted to employers if they take people off the live register.

Larkin Cumann, Ballyfermot Dublin.

52. That this Ard Fheis, aware of the grave hardship being caused to domestic consumers by the exorbitant cost of electricity and gas in the North demands:

1. An immediate revocation of the use or the Payment of Debt Act against those defaulters.
2. That all pensioners as of right receive free energy.
3. That domestic consumers pay only half their bills for fuel supplies and that the Government pay the rest until such time as there is a fuel service offering cheap domestic supplies to consumers.

Belfast Comhairle Ceanntar.

53. That this Ard Fheis demand the immediate introduction of all currently means tested benefits as statutory rights for all citizens and pledges to work on the broadest possible front to have means tested benefits removed from future social legislation.

Belfast Comhairle Ceanntar.

54. That this Ard Fheis deplores the growing incidence of poverty in the country and expresses growing concern at the strain being imposed upon Social Service Agencies as a result. Increasingly these agencies are being called upon not to provide the safety net for the unfortunate few but the main stay of the many.

Aware that financial cut-backs in these services have, over the past two years, imposed very severe hardship on both those providing the service and those receiving it this Ard Fheis demands:

1. The immediate restoration of spending levels to those existing prior to the cut-backs taking place and a planned transfer of the burden from those least able to meet the cuts to those most able to pay;
2. Much greater emphasis, in future budget allocation, and resources, to be placed in preventative work but not at the expense of currently existing curative measures;
3. Government cease attempts to make poverty acceptable by piece meal means tested benefits and rather concentrate its efforts on the provision of real socio-economic programmes in the areas of greatest need;
4. That we call upon Government agencies to provide a multi purpose single application form for the payment of benefits.

Belfast Comhairle Ceanntar.

55. The standard of health in the Six Counties is a major cause for concern. The standard of child and infant health is an indictment of the prevailing social and economic conditions to which the majority of people are subjected, and also of the present health service, which although extensive remains undemocratic and deficient in many respects.

The Health Services have along with other areas of public spending been subject to severe cut-backs in expenditure. These cut-backs have been fought against by Health Service Trade Unions and should be continued to be fought against by Sinn Fein The Workers' Party.

At this time attacks are being mounted on the very principle of a free and comprehensive health service by reactionary and elitist elements in the medical profession aided and abetted by the private health insurance schemes. Part of this attack involves the building of a large private clinic in Belfast which will enable the wealthy to queue jump, direct much needed staff from the health service and enable a few reactionary consultants to line their pockets despite the fact that their medical education, training and a large part of their income will come from public funds. To deal with this problem this Ard Fheis demands an end to all private practice associated with the NHS and the introduction of a contract for consultants employed by the NHS which excludes private practice and that General Practitioners become salaried employees of the NHS.

While welcoming the increasing number of Health Centres coming into operation, this Ard Fheis demands:

- (a) The creation of Patients' Committees in all health centres.
- (b) An inquiry into the present unsatisfactory deputising system used by many GPs.
- (c) The full and immediate co-operation of all GPs in the development programme, local Health Centres.

Recognising that a large amount of ill health has an occupational source, this Ard Fheis calls for the creation of an industrial health service, integrated with the NHS in full co-operation with the Trade Unions, which would protect the interests of the workers as opposed to their employers.

Belfast Comhairle Ceanntar.

56. This Ard Fheis calls on the Government to:
1. Immediately implement a hospital scheme free to all the point of delivery.
 2. Extend the General Medical Service to all citizens.
 3. Give the National Drug Board statutory powers to control the price as well as the safety and efficiency of drugs.

Wicklow Comhairle Ceanntar.

EDUCATION

57. Introduction:

One of the most controversial political questions in Irish life is that of Education. In spite of the lip service paid in capitalist society to ideas of equal opportunity, democracy and fundamental human rights it is clear that the Irish Education system, North and South, is permeated by privilege, sectarianism and anti-democratic forms of control.

Equally the system, partly for historical reasons but largely because it is an education system dominated by the values of an archaic and grossly inefficient bourgeoisie, is drastically in need of replacement by a modern, egalitarian, efficient education system capable of providing the workforce to enable Ireland to achieve full employment within the next decade.

This is not to say that there are not other functions which the education should perform, such as the transmission of values and attitudes etc. but that at this time any restructuring of the system must be related as a first priority to the economic future of an industrialised Ireland.

How is this to be achieved? The actual details are a matter for government but there are fundamental principles and perspectives to which Sinn Fein The Workers' Party firmly adheres. These derive from our commitment to working for a socialist society and our belief in the Republican anti-sectarian maxim of substituting the common name of Irishman for the denominations of Protestant, Catholic and Dissenter.

Education is not concerned with the handing on of inert factual material. Indeed its fundamental preoccupation is with the transmission of values. Currently the value system which dominates our educational institutions is that of capitalism. It exalts individual success, a competitive rather than a co-operative ethic. These values learned and taught, consciously and unconsciously are reinforced by the mass media, in particular through television.

Sinn Fein The Workers' Party therefore calls for the establishment, under the relevant Departments of Education, of a Curriculum Review Body composed of representatives from the educational organisations and trade unions to report on the possible value implications of the present curriculum and to propose changes in the curriculum which would promote a social rather than an individualistic ethic.

1. Central to our proposals on Education is the demand that there must be full State control of every aspect of the education services from the provision of Nursery Education to the training of teachers, including the provision of books, meals, and transportation.
2. Sinn Fein The Workers' Party in calling for the end of private education also seeks the implementation of the comprehensive ideal throughout the educational system. That ideal opposes the current sexist structuring of schools and colleges and the equally explicit sexist nature of the curriculum. An effective comprehensive scheme must not only end middle class privilege, it must state clearly its determination to create educational structures imbued with a totally democratic spirit.
3. This Ard Fheis recommends to the incoming Ard Comhairle that the Party's public representatives take up all the issues raised in this resolution at both local and national levels and especially that they are put forward to the people during the Local Elections in the South and the Westminster Elections in the North.

58. That while recognising that the Educational system needs to be completely re-structured this Ard Fheis is opposed to the principle of the Means Test and seeks as an interim measure the immediate raising of the Income limit of £2,000.

Louth Comhairle Ceanntar.

59. That this Ard Fheis calls for the introduction of legislation to prohibit corporal punishment in all schools.

Ann Devlin Cumann, Dublin.

60. That this Ard Fheis calls for the introduction of a full free comprehensive system of education at all levels and under democratic control.

Ann Devlin Cumann, Dublin.

61. That the Department of Education in Northern Ireland phase out immediately elitist 'grammar' school and private education by withdrawing all forms of public assistance to any of these schools which would continue to operate a fee paying percentage within their system after the end of this school year – June 78 – and that the Dept. immediately revise their document "The procedure for the transfer from Primary to Secondary Education" to comply with this, and that the Dept. of Education in NI demand an end to single sex education in all schools and colleges at primary, secondary and third level education (e.g. the sexually segregated St. Joseph's and St. Mary's) on the road to full comprehensive education in the real sense.

Belfast Comhairle Ceanntar.

62. As education is the direct responsibility of the State, that final control of it be vested in the Department of Education in the North and that all voluntary bodies – including religious ones – be relieved of any and all responsibility for the same, in terms of management control and direction.

In conjunction with this that all education from pre-school (under 5), right up to third level (University and College), be totally comprehensive, secular, integrated and free as a basic human right, with due consultation with the various local Education and Library Boards, in the North, educationalists, parents and students and responsible community representatives.

Belfast Comhairle Ceanntar

63. That the Department of Education introduce immediately a comprehensive scheme of adult education to:

- (a) cater for a large section of the population previously denied basic education and
- (b) make full use of existing facilities.

Belfast Comhairle Ceanntar.

64. In view of the overcrowding, undermanning and bad facilities in schools in the inner city areas this Ard Fheis condemns the continuing education bias against working class areas of Belfast and calls for a major effort under the Belfast Area Needs programme to direct more financial resources and more teacher provision into the educationally deprived areas.

Perry/McMillen Rep.Club Lower Falls.

65. That Sinn Fein The Workers' Party support in principle the aims and objectives of groups such as C.A.S.E. (Campaign for the Advancement of State Education) in their efforts to consolidate fully comprehensive state education as the only acceptable form of education in Northern Ireland.

Belfast Comhairle Ceanntar.

66. That the Department of Education, through Education and Library Boards implement an immediate programme for the provision of day care facilities for all children under five years and that Republican Clubs The Workers' Party be to the forefront of such a campaign. In addition that we demand an end to the involvement of all Churches in the provision of educational facilities at all levels as the only way forward to achieving a meaningful secular, integrated and comprehensive education system.

McCracken Club, Turf Lodge.

67. Nursery School accommodation, existing and planned, is totally inadequate to meet the needs in NI in general and in urban areas in particular. Recognising the contribution which Nursery schools can make to the health and education of the under 5 age group, this Ard Fheis calls for a planned expansion of nursery school facilities involving a shift away from voluntary provision and into a system run by the State and fully comprehensive.

Perry/McMillen Club, Lower Falls.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT & HOUSING

68. This Ard Fheis of Sinn Fein The Workers' Party:

- (a) Re-affirms our opposition to the principle of Ground Rents,
- (b) Welcomes that section of the legislation announced in January which will prohibit the creation of new Ground Rents and prevent landlords from evicting Ground Rent strikers,
- (c) Rejects the scheme in the same legislation for buying out Ground Rents which is only a marginal improvement over the present situation,
- (d) Calls on the Fianna Fail Government to honour its election pledge to end Ground Rents, and
- (e) Urges the holding of a referendum to enable the electorate to express their opinions on the matter and to overcome any constitutional difficulties, real or imaginary, which it has been claimed prevent the abolition of Ground Rents without massive compensation for landlords.

Ann Devlin Cumann, Dublin.

69. This Ard Fheis condemns the failure of successive governments to abolish Ground Rents, and in particular the failure of the present Fianna Fail administration to do so after categorical assurances made to the contrary to the people in the last General Election.

This Ard Fheis maintains that Article 43 of the Constitution does not prohibit the abolition of Ground Rents. The scandal of feudal property rights being protected within a modern democratic state must end.

This Ard Fheis denounces all attempts to provide compensation to Ground Rent landlords. Any compensation should be paid to the long suffering tenants. Finally, this Ard Fheis calls upon the Government to use its control of financial institutions, such as Irish Life, to immediately order the dropping of all court actions by these bodies to recover Ground Rents from tenants on Ground Rent strike and relinquish all claims to further rents from these estates.

Cumann Martin O'Leary, Dublin N.E.

70. That this Ard Fheis condemns the Fianna Fail Government over its handling of the Ground Rents situation.

Col. Leonard Cumann, Drogheda.

71. This Ard Fheis deplores the attempt by Fianna Fail to renege on their specific election promise to abolish ground rents. We reiterate our call for a state agency which would act as a court of arbitration and decide the compensation due to those who have been paying this iniquitous rent, and would make grants available to those in poor circumstances who may be in hardship due to loss of ground rent income.

Dick McKee Cumann, Finglas.

72. That this Ard Fheis condemns the Fianna Fail Government's failure to abolish Ground Rents, and demands that if constitutionally necessary a National Referendum be held on the issue.

Louth Comhairle Ceanntar.

73. This Ard Fheis, aware of the high level of unemployment, low wages, overcrowding and lack of housing accommodation in the Greater West Belfast area and recognising the development potential of the Twinbrook/Derriaghy area calls for the drawing up of an industrial social and economic blueprint for this part of the South Antrim area which would include:

- (1) The building of the Poleglass Logmore housing and industrial scheme in its original form.
- (2) The prioritising of industrial development projects both through the State and private sectors.
- (3) The provision of a full range of health and social services and recreational facilities to coincide with the development of the area.

Twinbrook Rep. Club.

74. That this Ard Fheis calls for a public inquiry into Housing Finance.

Clarke/Larkin Club, Whiterock.

75. While arguing for much radical overhauling of the present system, Republican Clubs The Workers' Party remains firmly in support of the Northern Ireland Housing Executive as the only effective agent for housing development, management and allocation, and pledge to resist the concept of a unitary public body for housing being broken up into regional boards or the hands of twisted political bigots.

Nevertheless the NIHE should show itself to be more responsive to both tenant and community and we urge the opening of local sub-offices as the best way of ensuring effective and efficient liaison between tenant and officials.

Belfast Comhairle Ceanntar.

76. Recognising that the housing crisis identified by Republican Clubs The Workers' Party in 1976 is still endemic and regretting the failure of the DOE to take the steps necessary to solve that crisis in the interests of the working people this Ard Fheis re-iterates the policy spelt out at previous Ard Fheiseanna, but draws delegates attention to the following matters:

1. The growing proliferation of Housing Associations representing a further squandering of public money into private enterprise. We totally reject any further donation of public money to these bodies who are under no obligation to house one homeless family save their own members, and over whom the public have no control.
2. We are concerned that the growing emphasis being placed on rehabilitation work, particularly in the inner city areas of Belfast, will only paper over the cracks in the interim and urge that much stricter controls be enforced the declaration of any potential re-development area as re-habilitation instead.

3. We deplore the continuing low standard prevailing in the building industry and re-iterate our demand for a Direct Labour Organisation for Public Sector Contracts, to:
- (a) provide competitive standards with the private sector,
 - (b) effectively reduce new housing costs to both NIHE and tenant,
 - (c) introduce new concepts of safety at work on building sites,
 - (d) provide secure jobs in the industry instead of traditional piece-meal work.

Belfast Comhairle Ceanntar.

77. This Ard Fheis calls for a National Plan to create community facilities in all new estates to ensure that proper social facilities are provided. A special emphasis should be placed on providing youth centres as youth form the fastest expanding section of the population and face serious problems of alienation due to the present unemployment crisis. Such centres should provide advice on matters such as career guidance and job placement as well as leisure facilities.

Martin O'Leary Cumann Dublin N.E.

78. That Local Authorities, particularly in densely populated suburban areas, finance and operate Civic Centres. These centres to provide facilities for Theatre, Cinema, Creche, Credit Union, Indoor Games, Meeting rooms etc. These centres would act as a focus for a community and could be self-supporting, though they need not be so.

Dick McKee Cumann, Finglas Dublin.

79. That as thousands of houses have been built, under contract for the National Building Agency, without fireplaces and incorporating central heating, and that the tenants of this type of house now finds it impossible to pay for central heating which is essential to maintain the houses in a habitable condition; This Ard Fheis calls on the Dept. of the Environment to:
1. make a grant available to subsidise the cost of central heating for seven months of the year;
 2. to make funds available to the Local Authorities concerned to instal by direct labour fireplaces in all of these houses at no cost to the tenants.

Dick McKee Cumann, Finglas Dublin.

80. That the policy of various County Councils of selling off scarce and expensive land or sites to private builders be discontinued particularly in the light of the failure of successive governments to implement the provisions of the Kenny Report (1971) in relation to the compulsory purchase of land by public authorities.

South/O'Hanlon Cumann, Leixlip.

81. That the creation of further Town Commissioners and Urban District Councils on an ad hoc basis in response to the inadequacies of the present Local Government and planning systems be opposed. Instead emphasis should be placed on the reform of the Local Government system, particularly in relation to urban areas where the need for strong centralised control of physical planning is not in evidence.

South/O'Hanlon Cumann,
Leim an Bradan (Leixlip)

82. That Sinn Fein The Workers' Party re-affirms its support for the National Association of Tenants' Organisations.

Louth Comhairle Ceanntar.

83. Recognising the outdated structure of local government in the 26 County State (still basically the system inherited from British rule), and the inequities in its financing, this Ard Fheis instructs the incoming Ard Comhairle to set up a committee to draw up a programme of thorough reform of the powers, functions, structures and financing of local government based on the following:
- (1) All local representatives (other than appointments to port authorities and other specialist functions) must be democratically elected and answerable to the electorate;
 - (2) Each level of local authority must be capable of carrying out its functions in an efficient manner;
 - (3) Each level of local authority must have adequate responsibilities to justify its existence.
 - (4) Each level of authority must have powers to ensure that its own decisions are carried out;
 - (5) Local government must be answerable to and co-operate with central government and State organisations;
 - (6) Increased local government powers relating to planning and development, with the powers to compel developers to work to a local development plan;
 - (7) Local government should be based around a regional structure, for example, IDA or Health Board regions, 8 and 9 respectively.
 - (8) Structures should be suitable to the size of the State, with a 26 County population of approximately 3 million.
 - 9) The need for to facilitate cross-border co-operation.
- Financing to be based on:
- a) Specific grants from central government for major functions, e.g. Roads, Sanitary Services, Housing, so that these would be provided on a need basis throughout the country.
 - b) General grants payable from central government, based on size of area, ages of population, density of population, local conditions etc.
 - c) Receipts from local government housing etc.
 - d) Local authority commercial activities eg. commercial refuse collection etc. charges for services such as planning applications etc., charges on development land and vacant property or sites, particularly in urban areas.

Dublin Comhairle Ceanntar.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

84. This Ard Fheis of Sinn Fein The Workers' Party notes with approval the increasing awareness of and involvement by cumainn and members of the Party, in the sphere of international solidarity.

International solidarity is a two way process. It makes our Party aware of the struggles of other movements and helps us benefit from their experience while at the same time communicating to an increasing worldwide audience the realities and problems of our own struggle for the reconquest of Ireland.

It commends the International Affairs Bureau for mobilising support within the Party for many practical acts of international solidarity. Examples are:

The successful fundraising in support of the South West African Peoples' Organisation (SWAPO) campaign for the liberation of Namibia from South African control;

The purchase of an electrocardiograph heart machine which is presently in use in the regional hospital of Dalatando in the People's Republic of Angola helping with the speedy diagnosis of heart ailments and thus helping with the task of general reconstruction underway in that newly liberated country;

and the present fundraising in aid of urgently needed medical supplies for Socialist Vietnam.

The International Affairs Bureau has also represented Sinn Fein The Workers' Party at important international conferences abroad. A highlight of the year was the representation of our Party at the World Peace Council "Builders of Peace" Conference in Poland which enabled important fraternal links to be forged as well as gaining valuable international publicity against oppression by the British forces in Ireland. A Party representative also met and discussed mutual problems with the Puerto Rican Socialist Party in Puerto Rico.

This Ard Fheis endorses the strengthening of international solidarity by the very successful tours of Ireland which were organised by our Party in aid of the struggle in Chile, and in aid of the United Farm Workers of California. These successful tours would not have been possible were it not for the increasing interest and involvement by members and cumainn in the area of international solidarity.

We welcome the invitation to the Palestine Liberation Organisation (P.L.O.) to tour Ireland in April. This invitation, from our International Affairs Bureau, has been accepted by the P.L.O. and will strengthen already existing links with the struggle of the Palestinian people.

Other activity included organising signatures in support of the Stockholm Appeal and our commitment to the World Peace Council through our membership of the Irish Peace Group.

During the year also, we were able to give valuable publicity to the cause of the African National Congress in South Africa and that of the Patriotic Front for the Liberation of Zimbabwe.

Our youth section — The Irish Democratic Youth Movement — is working actively on the Irish Preparatory Committee of the X1 World Festival of Youth & Students which will take place in Havana, Cuba next July.

This Ard Fheis expresses solidarity with the Cuban people and believes that this world gathering of youth will strengthen our international ties abroad and aid the struggle for socialism at home.

This Ard Fheis sees the range and extent of our international solidarity work as a major force in increasing understanding abroad and solidarity with our struggle here at home. It calls on all members to give renewed support to the International Affairs Bureau in the coming year.

Ard Comhairle.

85. This Ard Fheis salutes the historic achievements of the great working class parties of France, Spain and Italy, who by an independent and critical analysis of the class forces in their respective societies are now within striking distance of state power.
 This Ard Fheis sympathises, from its own experience, with these parties' heroic pursuit of democratic methods in the teeth of state violence and ultra left terrorism.
 This Ard Fheis restates the essential solidarity of all European workers' parties in the fight against ultra-leftism, terrorism and social democracy and pledges its solidarity to its European brothers and comrades in these struggles.
 Ned Stapleton Cumann, Dublin.
86. Recognising that Ireland is part of the Continent of Europe, this Ard Fheis calls on the International Affairs Bureau to develop its links with the Communist Parties of Europe.
 Pearse Cumann Dublin.
87. Recognising the serious danger to world peace posed by the Neutron Bomb, which kills human beings without destroying property, and that this obscene weapon represents a significant escalation of the Arms Race, and a major threat to detente, —
 This Ard Fheis calls on the Dublin Government to join the world-wide campaign of protest against the manufacture and deployment of Neutron Bombs by the USA, and particularly opposes its stockpiling and deployment in Western Europe by the NATO military alliance.
 Cumann Martin O'Leary, Dublin N. East.
88. That the party should revert to a more national outlook and drop its international flavour, as this is no help to the party at election time, Local or National, and
 That the Party should consider cutting back on the International Affairs Bureau and spend more time and energy building up the movement at home.
 Connolly Cumann, Tralee.
89. Recognising that the democratically elected government of Chile was overthrown by a fascist coup, organised, financed and armed by the USA through the Central Intelligence Agency, and that the Pinochet regime has been, and continue to be, guilty of mass murder, torture, kidnapping, illegal imprisonment and the exile of thousands of Chilean citizens; this Ard Fheis:
- (1) Endorses the UN resolution condemning the fascist Pinochet regime;
 - (2) Totally rejects the farcical 'referendum' staged by Pinochet in a desperate attempt to gain some legitimacy and credibility for his murderous dictatorship over the Chilean people.
 - (3) Demands the immediate release of the thousands of political prisoners in Chile, and a clear explanation from the regime of the fate of 2,500 missing prisoners kidnapped by the Chilean secret police, and whose whereabouts (if still alive) has never been revealed by the regime;
 - (4) Urges sympathetic and helpful treatment for the Chilean refugees in this country;
 - (5) Deplores the hypocrisy of the USA in condemning at the UN the Chilean fascist dictatorship which they placed in power, and to which they continue to give financial, military and political support;
 - (6) and pledges complete solidarity with the Chilean people in their struggle for the restoration of full democratic, human and political rights in their country.

Cumann Martin O'Leary, Dublin N. East.

90. This Ard Fheis notes;
- (1) That 1978 has been declared " Anti Apartheid Year" by the United Nations;
 - (2) That the number of political prisoners murdered by the South African regime has sharply increased since June 1976 and that the regime has instructed legislation whereby progressive and mass organisations have been banned or exiled.
 - (3) The increasing military strength of the South African armed forces — an increase due largely to supplies of arms from the USA, Britain, France and West Germany!
 - (4) This Ard Fheis welcomes the increasing successes of the liberation forces in Southern Africa and supports the call of the people of South Africa and the ANC for a complete boycott and especially urges economic sanctions against South Africa.

Wicklow Comhairle Ceanntar.

91. That this Ard Fheis condemns any sporting ties with South Africa or any other oppressive regime. Also local authorities who donate rate-payers' money to such activities should be exposed and condemned.

Edentubber Martyrs Cumann, Dundalk.

CIVIL RIGHTS

(see also Resolution 95a; page 37)

92. That this Ard Fheis condemns totally the continuing lack of Civil Rights allowed to women of this country. Despite the fact that over the last 10 years the progressive demands of the women's movement have gained widespread support they have not been met by either the Coalition or Fianna Fail Governments. Therefore in order that these demands may be translated into political action we urge all our members to participate, especially at local level in this important struggle for rights for women in Ireland.

Wicklow Comhairle Ceanntar.

93. That this Ard Fheis re-iterates its stand on the unacceptability of the RUC and calls for their:
- (a) Disarming;
 - (b) Those guilty of torture and murder be brought to trial.
 - (c) The setting up of an unarmed community controlled police service.

Clarke/Larkin Club, Whiterock.

94. That this Ard Fheis re-affirms its non-acceptance of the RUC because of the sectarian political bias in both its structure and methods of operation, and further, that this Ard Fheis instructs the 6 Co. Executive to intensify its campaign of denouncing the RUC and at the same time calling for the total disbanding of this neo-fascist force prior to the setting up of a non-political policing service consistent with our present policy.

Strabane Rep. Club.

95. This Ard Fheis notes that despite the recent decision of the European Court of Human Rights, that Britain was guilty of inhuman and degrading treatment but not torture, that nevertheless torture has continued as the case of Peter Hand clearly demonstrates. Therefore, while recognising the limitations of such bourgeois measures we reiterate our demands for : (1) A Bill of Rights (of the NICRA type); (2) An independent complaints body and (3) A civil Police Service to enforce these demands.

96. That the Prison Authorities in Northern Ireland look carefully at the general conditions of prisoners and that more effort be made to improve their conditions, visits, and vocational training of prisoners, and that the incoming Ard Comhairle pressurise for the same.

South/Crawford Club, Beechmount, Belfast.

97. That the Party do more to highlight the plight of political prisoners in the various jails throughout Ireland.

South/Crawford Club, Beechmount Belfast.

98. That this Ard Fheis instruct the incoming Ard Comhairle to establish a Legal Review Panel to undertake a study of all juvenile and family law in order that comprehensive discussion documents can be drawn up for the next Ard Fheis based on their findings.

Belfast Comhairle Ceanntar.

99. Go ndeanfaimid ar ngach ndicheal chun cearta sibhialta agus cearta daonna na Taistealaithe (Tinceiri) a chur chun cinn.

McKee Cumann, Finglas Dublin.

100. This Ard Fheis oppose the plan to build a new Women's Prison in Kilbarrack because:

1. The average female prison population in Mountjoy does not warrant the building of a new prison;
2. The crimes committed by women offenders, such as prostitution, begging and shoplifting do not warrant imprisonment;
3. Most of these crimes are rooted in social problems which would be better catered for outside of prison.
4. A Community based rehabilitation system would cost a fraction of the cost of a prison (which is estimated at £3 to £4 million);
5. Building a prison at Kilbarrack would deprive over 3,000 children in the area of most of the area's open green space. An area that could be developed as a Community Amenity Centre.

Finally, that this Ard Fheis calls upon the Minister for Justice to improve conditions in the existing prisons under his control rather than build new ones and use an open rehabilitation programme for the limited number of women offenders as a pilot scheme which could later be extended to male prisoners, thus reducing the prison population providing effective rehabilitation and cutting the bill to the tax-payer.

Martin O'Leary Cumann, Dublin N.E.

101. Recognising an unwarranted and unjustifiable increase in the level of attention and harassment by the Special Detective Unit members on supporters and members of Sinn Fein The Workers' Party and recognising that this activity is not unrelated to the lifting of the overtime ban on garda remuneration occasioned by the change of Government in 1977.

This Ard Fheis condemns this repressive political role and use of the police as a direct interference by the Government in the constitutional rights to freedom of expression, association and beliefs, both political or otherwise, of our citizens.

We, the Ard Fheis, direct the incoming Ard Comhairle to monitor the future activities of the Special Branch in interfering with our members and supporters and take whatever action be necessary to safeguard the future security and peace of our party.

Cumann Sean Ruiseal, Ath Cliath.

102. This Ard Fheis notes with alarm the possibility of further repressive legislation being added to our statute books alongside the already draconian laws introduced to deal with political and labour dissent. The possibility of restrictions being placed on the constitutional right to bail and the right to strike together with inadequate responses to allegations of fingerprint cover-ups and Garda brutality must demand careful consideration by our party.

This Ard Fheis in response to these threats calls for the following:

- (a) Active support of serious and principled groups involved in issues of civil liberties;
- (b) A campaign of continuous education to explain to the public the nature, extent and class bias of our repressive laws;
- (c) Repeal of all repressive legislation notably the Forcible Entry Bill, The Offences Against the State Act and the Prevention of Terrorism Act;
- (d) The setting up of an independent tribunal to investigate charges of brutality by the Gardai and general breaches of civil liberties;
- (e) Condemnation of the proposal to establish a juvenile prison and an end to the present policy of saturating working class areas with Gardai as a method of solving the problem of vandalism.
- (f) The setting up of a commission composed of Department of Justice officials, Gardai, social workers, trade unionists and NATO representatives to examine the present training system of Gardai, which is entirely inadequate in helping Gardai to cope with their duties and totally lacking in any conception of community relations and social justice.

McMillen Cumann, Dublin.

103. That this Ard Fheis instructs the Six County Executive to:

- (a) Intensify its effort to achieve full human rights in the North;
- (b) Prepare a full and comprehensive report for publication on the state of human rights in the North incorporating proposals for the implementation of civilised standards.
- (c) To highlight through Party organs and a general publicity campaign the state of prisoners' rights, women's rights, tenants' rights, and the rights of minorities;
- (d) To press for the replacement of present repressive legislation with a full and comprehensive Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland.

Connolly/McNulty Rep.Club.Lodge Rd.

YOUTH

104. That a youth liaison officer be included in the Ard Comhairle officer board of Sinn Fein The Workers' Party, to ensure complete co-operation and understanding between the Ard Comhairle and the National Executive of IDYM.

Larkin Cumann, Ballyfermot,

105. That all persons under twenty years of age applying to join the Party be instructed to join the IDYM in order to build up the Youth Movement.

McCracken Club, Turf Lodge.

106. That cumainn and club members under the age of 25 years take up an active role in the IDYM in their local areas. If no branch of the IDYM exists in their respective area they are to go about the immediate organisation of one.

Larkin Cumann, Ballyfermot Dublin.

107. That more co-ordination exist between Sinn Fein The Workers' Party and the IDYM; i.e. that a SFWP delegate attend the IDYM branch meeting at least once per month and vice-versa.

Casement Club, New Barnsley.

108. Acknowledging the valuable work being carried on by the IDYM and the importance of a youth movement to the long term development of our party, this Ard Fheis recommends that a liaison officer be appointed within each club or cumann with responsibility for co-ordinating activity between the IDYM and the Party.

Twinbrook Rep. Club.

109. That the Party makes a great effort to involve youth in its work also we should have far more policies orientated towards youth and youth activities as a means of gaining greater support within the community.

Colman Rowntree Club, Newry.

CONSTITUTION

110. Realising the developments of the Party over the past 10 years and recognising the need for all members to be actively involved locally in having party policy adopted, the 1979 Ard Fheis will be the 1st of Sinn Fein The Workers' Party biennial Ard Fheis.

The two-yearly Ard Fheis will give the party branches a better opportunity to work on policy adopted and allow for progress reports on all aspects of party work to be given, and discussed at Ard Fheiseanna.

Oliver Craven Club, Newry.

111. That the Ard Fheis be held on a two yearly basis.

Clarke/Larkin Rep.Club, Whiterock,Belfast.

112. That the Ard Fheis be held on a two yearly basis.

Belfast Comhairle Ceanntar.

113. That the Ard Fheis be changed from a yearly to a three yearly basis.

Connolly/McNulty Rep. Club. New Lodge Rd.

114. That this Ard Fheis agrees that the name of the Party be The Workers' Party of Ireland, and that it be known as this both North and South.

Connolly/McNulty Rep.Club. New Lodge Rd.

115. That the number of delegates from each Club be restricted to no more than two. The Secretary and one other.

Connolly/McNulty Rep.Club.New Lodge Rd.

116. Addendum to Section F. Subsection 1. Add:

In areas where a number of electoral areas would come under one comhairle ceanntar the Constituency Councils would have the same power as Comhairle Ceanntar with regard to delegates to the Ard Fheis and motions to the Ard Fheis. The Constituency Councils shall have no administrative powers other than those decided by the Comhairle Ceanntar.

Larkin Cumann, Ballyfermot, Dublin

117. Recognising that over the past troubled years for Sinn Fein The Workers' Party the annual Ard Fheis has been the guarantor of Republican Socialist tradition and direction, when division and confusion were rampant, it spoke as the clear decided voice of Socialism in Ireland.

Our organisation has now reached a level of political maturity, its militants deeply involved in genuine revolutionary activities. The annual congress is now a major course of disruption in Party activities, during the month prior to and immediately following Ard Fheis. We feel that the better interests of the Party would be served by holding bi annual Ard Fheis which would be held over a longer period of time and receive more widespread publicity.

Martin McAlinden Club, Newry.

FINANCE

118. That this Ard Fheis calls for the centralising of fund raising within the Party under a sub-committee of the Ard Comhairle, with the objective of increasing Party Funds and with the aim of reducing the weekly contributions of members in full employment, particularly those on low wages.

Perry/McMillen Rep. Club. Lower Falls.

119. That the present weekly membership fee be done away with and be replaced with —
(1) A Cumann affiliation fee of £20 per annum and
(2) yearly membership individual fee of £10.00.

The Cumann affiliation fee to be paid within one month of this Ard Fheis and the individual fee to be paid within 3 months of this Ard Fheis. Membership cards to be sent out within one month of receipt of £10.00 fee.

Eamonn Waters Cumann, Mallow Co. Cork.

120. That apprentices pay the same rate of stamp within the organisation as unemployed persons and students.

McCracken Club, Turf Lodge.

121. That the incoming Ard Comhairle review the dues structure, taking into consideration low income members such as apprentices, part time workers, and those on Family Income Supplement. A third dues rate of perhaps 25p should be struck.

Roger Casement Rep. Club. Moyard/New Barnsley.

122. That the registration fee be reduced to £10 per year as the present system and amount is totally impractical and unrealistic, and can only reduce membership, and make recruitment of potential members impossible while recognising the urgent need for funds, we feel that members are more important than money.

Connolly Cumann, Tralee.

ORGANISATION

- 123 In view of the spectacular increase in Irish People sales during the past year, and recognising that the paper has become a major publication through which Party policies can be presented to the electorate, this Ard Fheis directs that the incoming Ard Comhairle make the promotion of Irish People sales a priority of the Party in 1978.

This Ard Fheis also appeals to members and branches of the Party to avail of the facilities provided by the paper for publicising local issues and activities of the Party.

Cumann Martin O'Leary, Dublin N. East.

- 124 Recognising the important role of the Irish People as a weapon of propaganda this Ard Fheis calls on the incoming Ard Comhairle to commence a promotional campaign with a view to increasing its readership.

Pearse Cumann, Dublin.

125. That the Irish People, for a month's trial period, be placed in the UI for general distribution throughout the country (free of charge) to bring it to the attention of as many people as possible.

Orr/Grey Club, Ballymurphy.

126. That the leadership of Sinn Fein The Workers' Party realises that the United Irishman is not a paper for mass circulation amongst the ordinary working people in its present form. Whilst it is important for Party members to understand all aspects of party policy, some of the content of the U.I. is not easily understood by the majority of the people who buy it.

Orr/Grey Club, Ballymurphy.

fall 127. That the front page of the United Irishman should carry Banner Headlines dealing with issues of National Unity, as with any newspaper, it is the front page that sells the paper.

Connolly Cumann, Tralee.

fall 128. That the United Irishman drop the United World Page because this is no help to the party at election time or anytime.

Connolly Cumann, Tralee.

129. Recognising the role which elections play in the propagation of our policies, the need for this Party to be organised in each constituency and the need for a strong unified structure in every area,; To this end this Ard Fheis proposes:

- (a) Constituency Committees be formed in each constituency where there are cumainn.
- (b) That each committee consist of at least two delegates from each cumann in that constituency.
- (c) That these committees meet on a regular basis.
- (d) Be responsible for the external work of the Party in each constituency.
- (e) That in areas, such as Dublin, of high population and numerous constituencies the Comhairle Ceanntar be permitted to have delegates to the Comhairle Ceanntar from either Constituency Committees or Cumann.
- (f) That Constituency Committees convene, at least four times per annum, council meetings consisting of Party members and associates.
- (g) That these associates be as far as possible associate membership:
- (h) The work of these councils be formulated at Cumann and Constituency Committee level.

Cumann Sean Ruiseal, Dublin.

130. That this Ard Fheis would welcome more emphasis on Marxist discussion and long term political aims of the Party in Party publications – especially the United Irishman and at Club level.

To this end the Ard Fheis instructs the incoming Ard Comhairle to:

- (a) Ensure the publication of Teoiric on a quarterly basis.
- (b) Ensure that the Education programme gives adequate weight to the importance of imparting the basic tools of Marxist analysis to the membership, making increases use of audio-visual aids.
- deleted* (c) That the Education Manual be expanded to include sections on the role of the Trade Union Movement and the role of the Party in it.
- (d) That the need for a general, concise policy document or manifesto be recognised.

Connolly/McNulty Club. New Lodge Rd.

131. That the incoming National Director of Education impliment immediately a written more up to date national programme of education coupled with regular consultation with area education representatives.

Belfast Comhairle Ceanntar.

132. That Sinn Fein The Workers' Party immediately put into effect a strong education programme for all its members and a series of meetings for the general public in putting across our policies to as wide a range of people as possible.
Orr/Grey Rep. Club. Ballymurphy.
133. That Sinn Fein The Workers' Party continue to build up a library of films and slides in the manner of the highly successful "Going Going Gone" and that a complete list of visual aids be sent to each education officer throughout the country. This list to be revised on a regular basis.
Belfast Comhairle Ceanntar.
134. That all proposals from all Clubs be discussed at Comhairle Ceanntar level and that the Comhairle Ceanntar have the power to veto.
Connolly/McNulty Club, New Lodge Rd.
135. That Old Age Pensioners be exempted from paying weekly membership fees.
Ard Comhairle.
136. That a work programme, on a national basis, be drawn up for councillors and representatives of Sinn Fein The Workers' Party and that a national structure be put forward in terms of a support team for each representative.
Orr/Grey Club, Ballymurphy.
137. That the attendance record of Ard Comhairle members be sent out along with pre Ard Fheis nomination forms etc.
Sth Down/Sth Armagh Comhairle Ceanntar.
138. That branches of the organisation cease to use the names of deceased republicans and instead simply adapt their local area name as a descriptive title.
McCracken Club, Turf Lodge.
139. That in all future references to the Party words such as "organisation", etc. be discontinued and "The Party" be simply used.
Connolly Cumann, Riverstown Cork.
140. That the incoming Ard Comhairle should make it one of its first priorities of building up the movement and that a well known figure in the Party should visit every election constituency (area).
Connolly Cumann, Tralee.
141. The Ard Comhairle be instructed to inform all clubs within one month of Ard Fheis of all amendments and agenda passed at Ard Fheis and the resolutions to which they pertain as it is impossible for delegates to take notes of these for accurate reports for clubs.
Coleman Rowntree Club, Newry.
142. Noting the considerable impact made by the party spokesmen on Economic Affairs and Health since their appointment, that this Ard Fheis instructs the incoming Ard Comhairle to appoint spokesmen for the following areas: Education, EEC Affairs, Agriculture and Local Government affairs as a matter of priority: Such spokesmen to have a specialised knowledge of their subject and to be capable of promoting new policy developments within the guidelines of general party policy.
Galway Comhairle Ceanntar.

143. That this Ard Fheis mandates the incoming Ard Comhairle to write to all journalists and the media in general to request that they refrain from using the names "Official Sinn Fein", "Sinn Fein (Gardiner Place)" or "Sinn Fein" when referring to this Party. Rather the full name "Sinn Fein The Workers' Party", or (S.F.W.P.), should at all times be used.

Galway City Cumann.

144. Recognising that the Ard' Fheis is the supreme policy-making body of the Party; recognising the importance of the fullest opportunity of discussion there; recognising the tendency towards substantial resolutions; recognising the unity of purpose of the Party; —

That this Ard Fheis instructs the Ard Comhairle to appoint a committee to investigate the procedure of Ard Fheiseanna with the intention of retaining and enhancing the democratic rights of members and of elected leadership, by taking proposals and looking at other systems, and to report and make recommendations to the next Ard Fheis.

Dublin Comhairle Ceanntar.

MISCELLANEOUS

145. That another Anti-Sectarian Campaign be initiated by the Six County Executive in 1978 with special emphasis on spreading the campaign to Protestant working-class areas, perhaps through postal methods.

Casement Club, Moyard/NewBarnsley.

146. That this Party without exception have been most consistent on the question of sectarianism, call on this Ard Fheis to instruct the incoming Ard Comhairle to direct a more intensive campaign to kill onœand for all the evil of sectarianism.

Clarke/Larkin Club, Whiterock.

147. While recognising the limitations of legislation alone to eradicate discrimination in our society we welcome the passing of the Employment Equality Act 1977 and the setting up of the Employment Equality Agency. We ask all our members, particularly those in trade unions, to take action to ensure that employers, vocational training bodies, the media etc. will comply with the principles of this legislation.

Wicklow Comhairle Ceanntar.

148. That the Party educate its members more thoroughly on the question of Women's Rights and do more to attract female members to its ranks.

McCracken Club, Turf Lodge.

149. That this Ard Fheis recognise that there is a need for the restructuring of the Irish Trade Union Movement under the umbrella of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions and that the reasons for this would be:

- a) That, at present, as there are over 100 individual unions affiliated to Congress, this situation makes it very difficult for the I.C.T.U. to act decisively and to speak with the mandate it needs to be effective in pursuing the needs of the Irish working class;
- b) That the desired amalgamations of unions, particularly the smaller ones, would result in extra benefits being available to them in the form of specialist services which can only be provided by the large unions;

c) In general, to further strengthen the organisation of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions by eliminating causes of conflict between unions, to improve their service to workers and to play a more effective and influential role in national policy making and development. Recognising that any rationalisation of Trade Union structure can only be brought about by the Trade Unions themselves, we seek that Party members should be encouraged to work within their respective unions towards this objective.

What is needed therefore is not an abstract model of a logically thought out blueprint but rather the will by union members to understand the traditions, emotions and often needs which cause the differences between unions. Enlightened by this understanding, to strive, first of all, to overcome differences that exist between unions catering for similar categories of workers and then bring about better co-ordination between the resulting larger unions.

The overall factor must be the unity of all Irish workers in mind and purpose under the one supreme organisation, the Irish Congress of Trade Unions.

Cork City Comhairle Ceanntar.

150. That this Ard Fheis urges all members and supporters of our party to support fully the efforts of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions to resist blatant and obviously co-ordinated attempts by both the employers and the government to divide and weaken the trade union movement. We must endeavour to prevent the democracy and independence of the working class movement being undermined by any brand of ultra-left sectarianism or so called "rank and file" groups intent only on discrediting the elected union leadership and therefore objectively assisting the boss class in Ireland.

The role of politically conscious trade unionists should be directed towards achieving progressive socialist policies through the legitimate structures of the trade union movement.

William Thompson Cumann, Dublin.

151. This Ard Fheis calls on the Minister responsible to amend the Harbour Authorities to provide for equal representation from Trade Unions, at least equal to that of commercial interests presently being represented on the authorities.

Cork City Comhairle Ceanntar.

152. That Sinn Fein The Workers' Party recognise the importance of the Trade Union and Community Association work as a necessary part of the revolutionary struggle; and that Sinn Fein The Workers' Party make a greater effort to encourage its membership to take a more active leadership role within these organisations.

Sth Down/Sth Ármagh Comhairle Ceanntar.

153. That the document, Irish Industrial Revolution, become part of official Party policy, and that a greater effort be made at all levels in the Party to make members aware of the document and its importance.

Sth Down/Sth Armagh Comhairle Ceanntar.

154. That this Ard Fheis, while noting the publication of the Irish Industrial Revolution as a significant achievement for the party, recognises that some of the sentiments expressed in the book were not in accordance with party policy and not an accurate reflection of the attitudes of the membership, and therefore urges that future publications be fully vetted by the Ard Comhairle and carry some indication as to their status (i.e. whether or not they are policy documents).

Devlin Cumann, Sth. Co. Dublin.

155. This Club wish to express their annoyance that publications such as the Irish Industrial Revolution was not made properly available to Republican Club members. We express our concern in the hope that such a situation never happens again due to the controversy and embarrassment caused to the membership as a result.

South/Crawford Club, Beechmount.

156. That this Ard Fheis supports a fully comprehensive, integrated transport system for urban centres in Ireland and that our approach is based on the belief that private transport alone cannot meet the transportation needs of a modern city, and the severe limits on the role it can play will increase with the increasing financial and environmental costs it generates.

Republican Clubs' policy is based on a balanced transportation strategy involving cars, buses and rail services. The emphasis is placed firmly on modern traffic management rather than seeking an optimum vehicle handling capacity. The objective is an urban environment with a transportation system which serves the housing, leisure and employment needs of its people.

In Ireland in 1978 this means a transportation system which places more priority on public transport and essential vehicles than on commuter traffic.

Belfast Comhairle Ceanntar.

157. This Ard Fheis views with concern the offer of naval protection vessels from other EEC countries to Ireland. Use of these ships would compromise our traditional policy of self-reliance and neutrality in matters of defence and foreign affairs.

This Ard Fheis reiterates its support for our traditional policy of neutrality and non-alignment. We especially reject any moves to bring Ireland into NATO.

Martin O'Leary Cumann, Dublin N.E.

158. That this Ard Fheis re-affirms that the fundamental objective of Sinn Fein The Workers' Party is the creation of an All Ireland Socialist Republic in which the working people will own and control the wealth and resources of the country, and recognise that whatever political strategies may be adopted from time to time North or South, are not necessarily an end in themselves, but a means to enable us to move towards that objective.

Ann Devlin Cumann, Sth. Co.Dublin.

159. This Ard Fheis recognises the status of the "Irish Industrial Revolution" (Part 1) as being an important contribution to the study of Irish political economy from a socialist viewpoint. As such it should become the basis for further constructive critique and analysis and should be used as the starting area for a better understanding of our political economy notwithstanding its initial mistakes.

It also recognises that Part 2 of the IIR is an economic plan formulated in accordance with party policy and as such is open to amendment in the light of further research and new developments.

McMillen Cumann, Inchicore Dublin.

160. That Sinn Fein The Workers' Party should actively encourage the people and particularly the youth of Ireland not to accept blindly all that is thrust at them by the local and international media but to look more to their own resources for cultural activities such as theatre, literature, music and sport and to develop these along Gaelic and class conscious lines and that to this end the incoming Ard Comhairle set up the necessary machinery to examine what positive action the party can take at both local and national level.

Co. Derry Comhairle Ceanntar.

161. As the Party of the Irish working class we must be concerned with all questions which affect the lives of our people. To that extent our concern for the cultural needs of the people must be as great as our concern for their purely economic needs. We see the essential truth of this position in the simple slogan used by Jim Larkin – "Bread and Roses".

This Ard Fheis therefore calls for:—

- a) The setting up of a separate government ministry to be known as the ministry of Culture and Sport.
- b) The allocation of funds under the direction of this ministry to bodies involved in the promotion of traditional Irish music and modern musical composition. Such bodies would also co-ordinate their activities with other state agencies with a view to preserving and making available to the people our musical heritage.
- c) The allocation of state funds (under the direction of the Ministry of Culture and Sport) to a dynamic and progressive Arts Council whose function would be to provide support for artists, writers and other creative workers. Its funds should be used for a wide variety of purposes: to provide scholarships for young writers, accommodation for young artists and advances to persons engaged on long term projects.
- d) The building of a large national concert hall in Dublin and the development of cultural centres throughout the country. Alongside this we call for the granting of increased aid to theatres and drama groups in the form of more and better buildings and facilities.
- e) The development of an awareness as to the extent and meaning of our culture and its traditions as part of the educational curriculum of schools at all levels.
- f) The creation and expansion of a truly national film board along the lines of the National Film Board of Canada.
- g) The development of a wide range of sporting activities for our young and old alike, and the development of centres of higher training for those sufficiently capable and interested in pursuing a career in sport.
- h) The revival of the Irish language as part of an overall policy of raising the cultural level of the people and in accordance with the realities of modern Irish society.

McMillen Cumann, Dublin.

162. This Ard Fheis welcomes the publication of the 'Belfast Area Needs Study' as the most extensive and serious study yet undertaken of poverty and social deprivation and inequality in the inner city areas of Belfast.

Rising unemployment due to the collapse of traditional manufacturing industry is one of the main factors in maintaining these large areas of poverty. On top of this the inner city areas of Belfast contain heavy concentrations of backward, traditionally low paid and small producer industries operating generally in the worst possible employment conditions.

Breaking the grip of unemployment and low pay is the key to revitalising the inner city areas and this Ard Fheis calls for:

- a) A comprehensive plan for the Development of Port as the major new industrial location for jobs provision in the inner city areas and involving the creation of a new Port Development Authority to replace the existing Harbour Commissioners.
- b) A major re-construction programme involving clearance of derelict and obsolete industrial slum land in the inner city area and the creation of modern industrial estates as the basis for new manufacturing industry.

Belfast Central Cumann.

163. This Ard Fheis supports the struggle of the Puerto Rican Socialist Party for national liberation and the re-conquest of their natural resources for the benefit of their people. We call on the US A to withdraw its oppressive economic and political presence and to allow the people of Puerto Rico the freedom necessary to build democracy and socialism in their country.

James Connolly Cumann, Bray, Wicklow.

95a.

- (a) It is resolved that this Ard Fheis, in the 10th Anniversary year of the first NICRA marches, recognise:
- (1) The role which NICRA has played in the struggle for universal democratic rights in NI and reiterate the Party belief that NICRA is an important non-party political vehicle whose "Bill of Rights", programme encapsulates the significant democratic demands around which progressive elements in the community can be rallied.
 - (2) That a broad base of administrative and legislative reforms have taken place on a fragmented basis in N.I. as a direct result of the constant campaign for the implementation of a Civil Rights programme. In particular the following changes have been achieved:
 - The centralisation and reform of local government services, the abolition of the property vote and the winning of universal franchise.
 - The dismantling of the gerrymandered boundary system and the break up of the political patronage rackets in jobs and house allocation exercised by sectarian Party bosses.
 - The victory of PR in local and regional elections and its proposed basis for election to the EEC parliament.
 - The creation of the Housing Executive as a centralised housing agency and the establishment of a points scheme for the allocation of housing.
 - The provision of fair employment codes in public services, the removal of the archaic oaths of allegiance and the establishment of Fair Employment Legislation and institutions. Nevertheless, the British Government continues to refuse to recognise that granting full democratic rights in the North is a vital factor in establishing lasting peace.
 - (3) That a vicious circle of violence is maintained in the North by 3 main sources, the so-called "Security Forces", the Loyalist and right-nationalist para-militaries.. That each source is consolidated by establishment party politicians in NI, the 26 Counties and Britain, who seek cheap political gains at the expense of the NI community.
- (b) This Ard Fheis therefore calls for:
- (1) The repeal of all repressive legislation in the North extending across the political and socio-economic fields, and the urgent introduction of a firmly entrenched comprehensive "Bill of Rights", based on the NICRA model.
 - 2) The withdrawal of the British Army, the disbanding of the UDR and the creation of a community 'police service' by reform of the R.U.C. which sees its role as servicing the community, not repressing it. An end to the torture, inhuman and degrading treatment techniques, the break up and bringing to justice of the R.U.C. and B.A. torture and interrogation teams, as well as the reform of the judicial system

The introduction of a comprehensive Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland bringing together and consolidating the fragmented reform legislation and with the outstanding reforms of repressive legislation, legal and police procedure creating an entrenched declaration of Human Rights as the basis for the government in Northern Ireland.

Ard Comhairle.