
Materials

Workers' Party of Ireland

1974

Ard Fheis - 1974 : Secretary's Report

Sinn Fein

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SINN FEIN ARD FHEIS 1974.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

The Ard Comhairle met 12 times during the past year. The record of attendance of each member is set out below:

Tomas MacGiolla	12	Kitty O'Kane	8	Des O'Hagan	8
Sean Garland	12	Tony Moriarty	9	John McCormick	6
Cathal Goulding	12	Liam McMillan	9	Eddie O'Hagan	6
Tony Heffernan	11	Mairin de Burca	8	Paddy Kilcullen	5
Don. MacRaghnaill	11	Liam de Paor	8	Joe Sherlock	5
Eamon Smullen	10	Sean O Cionnaith	7	Derry Kelleher	4
Mick Ryan	10	Jim McQuaid	6	Seamus Costello	4
Eoin O'Murchu	10	Francie Donnelly	6	Micky Doherty	3
Malachy McGurran	9	Ronnie Bunting	6	Jim Kerr	3

It should be pointed out that on a number of occasions, excuses were received from various members. On some occasions members were abroad on Movement business and regional representatives were sometimes engaged locally. However the poor record of attendance on the part of many regional representatives was a feature of last year's Ard Comhairle meetings. The Kilkenny/Waterford/Wexford regions failed to elect a representative.

The following officers were appointed by An tUachtaran and ratified by the first full meeting of the Ard Comhairle:

Vice President:	Malachy McGurran,	Dir. of Organisation:	Sean Garland;
Ard Runaithe:	Tony Heffernan,	Dir. of Education;	Des O'Hagan,
	Mairin de Burca;	Dir. of Publicity &	
Treasurers:	Donnchadha MacRathnaill,	International Affairs:	Sean O Cionnaith,
	Michael Ryan;	Dir. of Economic and	
		Industrial Research:	Eamon Smullen.

Tony Heffernan and Sean O'Cionnaith were co-opted on to the Ard Comhairle at its first meeting.

The Coisde Seasta made up of the officer board and available members of the Ard Comhairle met on 40 times during the year.

A great deal of the time of both the Ard Comhairle and Coisde Seasta were taken up with internal disciplinary matters during the past year, particularly in relation to the case of Seamus Costello. This member was suspended for six months by the Ard Comhairle at its meeting of May 4th and subsequently dismissed from the organisation by the Ard Comhairle at its meeting on July 13th. All areas were fully informed by circular letter of the sequence of events which led to both the suspension and the dismissal of Seamus Costello. In addition, meetings were held in many areas of the country, at which members of the Ard Comhairle explained in further details the reasons for the Ard Comhairle's actions. In July of this year Ronnie Bunting was dismissed by the local organisation in Belfast. Both Micky Doherty and Jim Kerr have resigned within the last two months although nothing has been received in writing from either individuals.

Arising from the motions passed at last year's Ard Fheis calling for the formation of a broad front, a number of informal approaches were made to various groups without any success. Shortly after the last Ard Fheis, An Ard Comhairle accepted an invitation from groups of Republicans from the forties, to meet with them and representatives of the Provisionals to discuss possible areas of common action on repression. The meeting was not a success as the Provisionals refused to attend. In accordance with the motion passed at last year's Ard Fheis a committee to examine various aspects of the sectarian problem was established. Unfortunately it was only possible to hold one meeting of the committee due to the other commitments of the members and the difficulty in finding a suitable date.

Since the last Ard Fheis, the organisation has contested two Westminster Elections in the North, the Local Elections in the South, a Dail Bye-Election in North East Cork and a Local Government Bye Election in Co. Down. The number of elections which we have

contested over the past two years- six in all- has put a considerable strain financially and organisationally on the movement. Results have varied from area to area. Without doubt the best result of the past year was the performance of Joe Sherlock in the recent North East Cirk bye Election. There he received 5,363 first ~~preference~~ preferences-over 13% of the total vote. This result illustrates clearly that our policies will appeal to a large section of the people, if we have a candidate with a proven record of work on their behalf, and if we present our position in a clear and intelligible manner. Francie Donnelly's encouraging vote in the recent Westminster Elections was also significant and showed that the sectarian parties on both sides have not altogether won.

The Six County Executive of Republican Clubs ceased to exist during the year despite the efforts of the Ard Comairle and the decisions of several general and delegate meetings. The main difficulty seems to have been the inability of or unwillingness of delegates to travel to Executive meetings. A decision was taken in principle to establish the Six County Secretariat which would cover finance administration and publicity. This has not yet been put into effect and should be a priority for the incoming Ard Comairle.

Publicity was once again a problem. In addition to the continued operation of section 31 of the Broadcasting Act by R.T.E. there seems to be a deliberate conspiracy by some sections of the media to prevent the Sinn Fein position on matters of importance being made known to the public. Two examples from the past two weeks will clearly illustrate this point. A statement from the Coisde Seasta on Joe Sherlock's vote in the Bye Election was completely ignored by all the national newspapers, despite the fact that the Sinn Fein vote was widely considered to be the most significant thing about the contest. On the day after the bombings in Birmingham we issued a statement condemning the outrage. This was surely a matter on which the public were entitled to know the position of Sinn Fein, yet the statement was completely ignored by the Irish Times and the Irish Independent, while the Irish Press carried one sentence from the statement and managed to omit the fact that we had condemned the bombings.

Nuacht Naisiunta.

When the postal charges were increased last year, the frequency of the Nuacht was reduced from ~~one~~ one to two weeks. The Nuacht was sent out every fortnight up to September of this year when it was suspended due to preparations for the Ard Fheis, and other pressure of work. As a result of a further increase in the postal charges recently the incoming Ard Comairle will have to examine the position of the Nuacht. In the past year it did not appear to be fulfilling any obvious or useful role and there was no feedback or ~~any~~ reactions to its content.

REPORT OF ECONOMIC DEPT.

The Movement has set up an Economic Department in order to discover what is actually happening to our economy. It is common knowledge that the whole economy is being taken over by foreign multi-national companies and that most of the IDA grants go to enterprises of this sort.

In order to combat this development it is necessary to give our movement, and to make available to organisations of the people, exact information about what is happening and the possible alternatives to economic policies which are supported by the main political parties in Ireland.

One example of work of this nature is our Oil and Gas pamphlet. The pamphlet gives detailed information of what is actually happening to our oil and gas resources - that they were sold for the sum of £500 and that we are being asked to buy back our own gas at a much higher price than Britain is paying for North Sea gas. This pamphlet has put into the political arena the idea that Ireland's natural resources should be used for the industrial development of Ireland.

The research side of the movement is at present working on other aspects of the economy and these will be made available to our membership as quickly as possible. The price of money; the increasing measure of control of our economy by foreign merchant banks; government borrowing from such banks at fantastically high rates of interest and government IDA grants to firms owned by these banks is just one aspect of the economy at present being studied.

A study made of the economy of the West of Ireland has shown that there is a movement of people from the land and self-employment to wage and salary earning. In the county of Sligo, for example, there are now more people living by means of a wage packet than by any other source of income. This is typical of what is happening in Ireland today.

Organisations of the people cater for many sides of life; such organisations cover people's problems with housing, rents and problems at the place of employment. The trade unions are not in the same category as tenants' associations, flat-dwellers and bodies of this nature. Trade unions fighting for progressive policies can, if they have the will to do so, stop the economic life of the country.

It is obviously not in the best interests of trade-unions to have our resources exported to give employment in other countries while their members are unemployed. It is obviously in the best interests of trade unions that this country should be industrialised on the basis of what we produce ourselves. Such questions are without doubt political and will move the unions in a political direction. Irish capitalism has shown that it cannot industrialise Ireland; to push this question is to push for revolution.

We intend to know more about the economy of this country than any other political or economic organisation; we intend to use this information as a weapon in the battle to give the ownership of Ireland to the people of Ireland.

Economic research and the use of the products of that research has been organised as one Department because experience has shown that our industrial work is best carried on in this way. Our members have made progress in this side of the life of the nation.

Sinn Fein Ard Fheis,
November 1974.

International Affairs Bureau.

The main work of the International Affairs Bureau during the past year was the organising of the Anti-Imperialist Festival. This festival, held from 22nd July to 3rd August in Dublin and Belfast, was attended by 235 from over 23 countries and proved to be a great success both publicity wise and financially. The festival cost just over £800 to run and made a profit of £900.

Eolas the monthly newsletter of our movement has been sent to over 1000 in over 50 countries during the past year. It proves to be a good method of regular contact with groups and States and has made our policies and struggle better known in many countries.

During the past year many tours were organised abroad by the Bureau; Mairin de Burca toured England, Norway, Denmark and Holland in April, Mairin did a short tour of West Germany in October; Sean O Cionnaith toured West Germany, Holland and Switzerland in May; Mick Ryan attended the Congress of the Communist Party of Germany (KPD) in July; Tony Heffernan toured the USA in October; Dessy O Hagan and Eamonn Smullen visited Britain during the year to speak at meetings organised by Clann na hEireann and the British Peace Committee.

During June 1975 the Bureau will hold a Wolfe Tone Week in Dublin to coincide with the International Women's Year and a committee is at present planning this Week.

PUBLICITY:

During the past year statements were issued to the press by both an Ard Comhairle and Coiste Seasta covering the political, economic, social problems in Ireland. Statements were also issued on international events. During the recent Westminster Elections a script factory was established in Belfast responsible for national press coverage for our five candidates and this proved very effective in getting us good publicity in newspapers and TV and Radio during the election campaign. The same method of organising publicity was done during the North East Cork Bye Election with the same good results.

The Department of Publicity brought out four issues of the internal PRO Bulletin, "ROLLSCAIRE" during the year and organised a National PRO School in Mornington during September, which was attended by 16 PRO's. Attempts to organise other PRO schools at Mornington early in the year failed for lack of support from Cumainn PROs. We still find that many Cumainn did not elect a PRO during 1974. We would hope that this would change during the coming year as we cannot afford to let the work of local publicity remain unorganised.

The PRO Handbook brought out late last year is still available from the UI bookshop and all Cumainn should purchase at least one copy.

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UNITED IRISHMAN AND IRISH PEOPLE:

The United Irishman remains as the most important publication of our organisation; we expanded it to 16 pages in July with colour in some pages. Due to many increased costs - printing, postage, freight etc, we had to increase the price to 8p. It will be extremely difficult to avoid another increase very soon as these costs continue to rise. Needless to say we will attempt to maintain the present price for as long as we can, but this is dependent very much on members paying their bills and most important making U.I. sales an important and necessary part of their activity.

Over the past two years the U.I. has fallen in circulation. This drop in circulation is probably a fair reflection of the downturn in the situation in Ireland over the past 2 years. In some areas, notably education and consciousness among members we have strengthened our position over the past few years, the high emotional peak of these years has passed. An example of some of the problems the U.I. sellers face in maintaining sales is the reaction of people to the anti-civilian bombings such as occurred in Birmingham and elsewhere.

The Irish People, which is now over 18 months in existence has still not made the breakthrough that it requires in order to be viable. The movement continues to subsidise it. We are in no doubt as to its importance and the role it can and should play. Our first initial conception of a radical weekly topical paper geared towards industry is still valid. The problems of widening its influence and distribution is all the time occupying the attention of the staff. One reason for its slow growth is without doubt the lack of commitment of many members of the Movement to the weekly paper.

I.P. cont.

Without doubt the members of this organisation have more than enough work to do in order to make a Revolution in Ireland but foremost of all the tasks that face us is the selling and distribution of all our publications. If anyone needed proof of how valuable how vital our papers, weekly and monthly, are to us, one has only to look back over the events of the past year and see how the mass media, press-radio and T.V. has, on every occasion ignored, distorted our view of what is happening in Ireland.

It is recognised that each of our papers needs an editor who is responsible solely for one paper. The task of editing the U.I. and I.P. has been carried out very capably by D. O Hagan, for the past months. We are seeking another editor to share the load for it is a tremendous burden. But here again when one is unable to offer a decent salary the field becomes limited, for not everyone is willing or able to work for the money we pay. All of the people who work full time for our movement do so at enormous sacrifice - long hours - hard work - low pay.

Here I would make the point that for too long too few members have carried the burden of ensuring that the movement not alone survives but expands. We must insist that membership of this movement is conditional on work and that members must be prepared to contribute much more than many do now financially, towards all the many expenses the Ard Comhairle incurs in running the organisation. We need only look at how other political organisations subsidise their publications and their other activities to realise how important they regard this field.

We have the aim to secure our own printing machine and all other equipment necessary to producing our papers. A conservative estimate of what this might cost is £25,000. Such a task will certainly require that every member must contribute in some way towards this fund. If we ever hope to succeed in having our own press and being free to print what we feel should be printed instead of as at present being held to ransom by a gombeen printer, then the task cannot be left to the centre alone.

Another area where finance is urgently required and of where the response from Cumann and members has been poor is our H.Q. fund. We need a total of £8,000 and another £10,000 for repairs. We have only raised the bulk of it from our supporters overseas.

Over the past year the print shop has more than played its part in Movement activity. Hundreds of thousands of leaflets for elections? North and South. We are now engaged in reprinting all the Repsol pamphlets, some of which are on sale here, along with some new titles. We have established a silk screen department which is now able to produce many kinds of posters. It too played an important role in producing many thousands of posters for elections and other propaganda purposes. Both the print and poster shop are in need of more and better equipment but until and unless we can solve the financial problems there is no hope of any improvement there.

The U.I. bookshop which is one of the best stocked in Ireland is now on a fairly good financial basis. It has built for itself a reputation particularly in the field of socialist-republican literature. Again I must return to the question of finance. Too many members seem to feel that the U.I. and the bookshop can and should be used to finance other activities. We sent many threatening letters out over the past year about overdue accounts. This point cannot be stressed too much. Money owed for papers and books must not be used except for paying of bills to the office. We cannot and as I said before, will not, allow any cumann more than two months credit. We must pay our bills promptly so any cumann more than two months in arrears will not receive our papers.

REPORT OF STRUCTURE COMMITTEE

The Structure Committee was established by a resolution of the 1972 Ard Fheis. Its terms of reference were to "examine the organisational structure of the Republican Movement, and to produce a draft report within three months".

There were originally 12 members of the Committee - six representing each body, three members of Fianna were invited to join the Committee and there were two further co-options, bringing membership to a total of seventeen. Eleven meetings of the Committee were held between January 1973 and the publication of the discussion document in August of that year. Attendance at the meetings was generally poor. As explained in the interim report presented to last years Ard Fheis, the General Election in the South and later the Local and Assembly Elections in the North, and contributed to making it impossible for the Committee to complete its work within the specified three month period. The considerable argument and dispute at committee meetings, particularly over matters of procedure also delayed the publication of the document.

Following its publication in August of last year, the Document was distributed to all areas. The Committee requested that meetings be held in all areas to discuss the ideas outlined in the document. (It was stressed that the document was only for discussion purposes and did not in any way represent final proposals from the Committee.) Members of the Committee were to attend the regional meetings.

Regional meetings were held in the following areas: Wicklow, West Cork/Kerry, Derry, Armagh, Dublin, Waterford/Kilkenny/Wexford, Belfast, Limerick/Tipperary/Clare, Cork City, Louth/Meath/Monaghan, South Down/South Armagh. Despite repeated requests from both the Committee and the Ard Comhairle certain areas failed to hold meetings. The first meetings were held in October of last year and meetings in various areas dragged on until the early summer of this year. The Committee did not reconvene until September of this year in the hope that the outstanding areas would hold their meetings.

The Committee at its reconvened meeting (again the attendance was poor) discussed the work of the Committee to date and what action should now be taken. There was a general feeling that the Committee had not succeeded in the task put to it by the 1972 Ard Fheis. It was felt that due to circumstances outside its control, the Committee had taken too long to produce a discussion document. In addition the areas meetings had dragged on over such a long period that much of the impetus of the original decision to set up the Committee, had been lost. The fact that so many members of the Committee were continuously involved in other areas of Movement work, resulted in poor attendances at meetings and difficulty in getting people to attend area meetings. Many members of the Committee also felt that discussion documents on structure and organisation, which they had presented in good faith and on the request of the Committee, had been completely distorted by certain people, some of whom have now left the Movement. This had contributed to a climate which made it almost impossible to have rational discussion on the relative merits of particular ideas contained in the document.

(2)

It was the unanimous opinion of the Committee, at its last meeting that it could no longer fulfill any useful purpose and that it should now dissolve. The outgoing Committee felt that a new Committee should be established. This should be made up of three members of each body who were not fully engaged in other work at national level. The members should be appointed by the respective executives of each body and should report back within three months. G The members of the Committee would have the power to consult with any member of section of the organisation throughout the country.

The Ard Comhairle when it receives the report of the Committee would then decide if a Special Ard Fheis was necessary to implement whatever the Committee may recommend. (Any changes in the Constitution would of course, require an Ard Fheis decision.)

Tony Heffernan

As stated in the Secretary's report the S.C. affair occupied not only a great deal of time at Coiste Seasta and Ard Comairle meetings but also a lot of time spent by members of Hwad Office travelling to cumann. This was felt necessary in order to acquaint members of the true position; for if nothing else S.C. with the help of a few people within and some others without spread a good deal of confusion by lies, half truths and distortions.

You have all heard the statement from the representative of the [redacted] These are the facts on which the Ard Comairle acted. I do not propose to dwell too long on this individual, too much time has already been spent on him and this may please him and some few others but for the majority of our members in this movement who are concerned to ~~X~~ make a revolution in this country there are too many other important issues that we need to do. The first hint that any member of the leadership had that there was a conspiracy was just before last year's Ard Fheis when we learned 1. That Tomas MacGiolla was in bad health and unable to fulfil his duties as President. 2. That Cathal Goulding's ~~xxx~~ health was bad and 3. that I too was unwell. It seemed that a plague had struck but only you will notice certain people. There are no prizes now for guessing where these stores originated—yes—the one person whose health was good and who was ready to step in and not alone do one job but three men's jobs was S.C. It didn't take much to dispell such stories ~~fx~~ for the very foolish people who were peddling thme May Hayes and John Roche knew no better and were only creatures of S.C.

The most serious thing occurred at last years Ard Fheis when this individual made a determined and concerted effort through every underhand and dirty method possible to pack the Ard Comairle. Lists were circulated and block voting was organised in order to defeat the democratic process of the Ard Fheis. I would say here that not everyone on the lists knew that there names were being circulated by Costello. Some of them are loyal hard working members whom Costello thought wrongly I would say that he could manipulate. He failed as we know to secure control of the Ard Comairle though some members of the movement still feel bound to this individual either through fear or because they have gone so far along the road he has gone

Of course this did not just start last year, as you heard from the A stateemnt he started long ago as many here can testify. He was always ready to combine with any person or group to secure his own conception of what was right and he was always ready again to sacrifice any person or principle. He succeeded for a while especially with new inexperienced members using his position and authority in the movement to con and subvert policies and leadership. In the end like all political opportunists the politics or in this case the lack of class politics will be shown up and they destroy themselves by their lies and dectet. ~~xxxx~~ His latest attempt to win support is to talk about the middle ground, between the militarism of the Provos and the constitutionalism of our organisation. If ~~xxx~~ such a ground exists I feel sure that Fianna Fail has it which is perhaps where S.C. will finish up. Contrast that line to what he has said to other people, depending on how he assess you his line will vary, if for instance he thinks that you want only polotical activity he will tailor his approach to this and if on the other hand he thinks that you are primarily interested in bombs and bullets he will tell you of what should be done in this field promising all the time that he will be able to supply all needs in the particular field

.After the Court of Inquiry many members of the Ard Comairle felt that he should be instantly expelled for his threachery eventually the Ard Comairle decided by 17 votes to 3 to suspend him for six months and they imposed on him certain ~~x~~ other conditions of his suspension namely not to stand as a candidate in the local elections. Some have asked why this condition, weel here was a man whom the Ard Comairle ~~xxxx~~ knew was not to be trusted who had betrayed every trust placed in him how then where they to ensure that they could not only guard the moveemnt against his activities but also the people so they decided that he would not be a candudate. The suspension was also seen as a test of this person's loyalty, to see if he would be willing to accept movement discipline. He failed all the tests. Another instance of his hypocrisy, he went around stating that he was standing on a Sinn Fein policy and that he supported Sinn Fein candidates yet ~~h~~ when a co-option came up on the Bray U.D.C. he did not propose a Sinn Fein member who had only missed a seat on that Council by 7 votes.

Over the past few months ~~some~~ effort has been made to have a so-called fair play for S.C. On ~~xxx~~ this point the Ard Comairle would like to k make it clear that he got every opportunity to explain his actions, the Ard Comairle were more than patient with him and granted him every facility he asked for. It is recognised that when such a person who has been a leading figure is expelled people are anxious to know the whole facts. The Ard

The Ard Comairle has done this and if some people say that the punishment was too severe then let them remember that because of the position that S.C. occupied in the organisation, there was an obligation on him to act in a manner befitting his position. Since his dismissal for refusing to abide by the terms of his suspension he has continued to spread lies and slander and attempted to create dissension among members. He has now embarked on a policy of forming his own group. He has made efforts to recruit members of our movement to his new group and has gathered to himself a collection of individuals who are either past members of our organisation or the Provisionals or Saor Eire. We are confident that such a combination will not go anywhere but will, because of the motley crew that makes it up, finish up eating each other as all such unprincipled combinations do.

Over the past years we have been attempting to more clearly define tasks and methods of work for all fulltime people. We are gradually getting on top of this problem with the appointment of members to specific areas of work-specialist activity- One field in which we are anxious to have some member engaged fulltime is in Agriculture. At the present moment due to the crisis in Agriculture there are opportunities for our organisation. Many farmers have now seen through the pro E.E.C. lobby particularly the I.F.A. but unfortunately they are unable to see any alternative. It is up to our organisation to provide that alternative which we must do if we are to become the Revolutionary organisation of the Irish People. The nature and broadness of the movement and in some areas because of scattered membership, the variety of tasks the movement engages in makes it difficult at times for a fulltime organiser to gauge exactly what activity to concentrate on or even judge what progress is being made. At times to maintain contact with members is itself a fulltime job. As was stated last year unless and until we equip our fulltime personnel in terms of a decent wage, transport etc we are not in a position to correctly assess this work. The task of providing all these necessary things cannot be the responsibility of Head Office alone. There must be greater support forthcoming from all members.

Clann na h-Eireann.

The recent situation makes an objective analysis difficult as we are not yet sure how the new Bill passed by the British will be applied to us.

We intend to maintain our position that we are a bona fide political organisation and will fight any attempt to drive us off the streets or out of the Labour Movement in which we

have worked for some years. There are 26 Croagh and 5 working groups of Clann in Scotland and England. The paper Rosc Catha is produced monthly and has a circulation of around 6000. The U.I. is sold by all members as are Easter Lilies etc. The production of leaflets and pamphlets, like Spies in Ireland, is also engaged in.

Clann has a consistent record of work for prisoners in England and now with only 3 members still inside we are raising money for the prisoners in Ireland through the Republican Prisoners Welfare Committee.

There is much that needs to be done on the Immigrants Charter for example and we are still cursed by problems of size. The Provo bombing campaign has slowed recruiting making the whole question of long term plans difficult to put into effect-for on many occasions in the last twelve months we have had to stop what we were doing to combat and mobilise where possible the growing racist divisions that are developing.

The Clann Ard Fheis was held last week with 50 delegates attending and some 15 visitors. Considering the effects the pub bombings in Birmingham had this was a very good turnout and lastly on this point of the bombings the bombs went off at 8:30.p.m. we had statements out to the press giving the movement position on such tactics by 11.p.m.

If we are to be serious about making the revolution in this country then occasions such as Ard Fheiseanna must be constructively used. If we are here to take stock of our position, to examine policies and tactics, to review our position overall, then the only useful review of our organisation, its strength and its potential is a realistic one. Let us look at the reality. We are a small organisation. We have none of the resources of finance, manpower, publicity or administrative capacity that others have. We have not yet the mass support which they, by fraud, self-interest or emotional appeal, now command. We do not control the press, radio or television, the educational system, the propaganda machine. They do. The people in whose interests we are working, in whose interests lie the whole reason for our existence as a political organisation, do not control industry, or agriculture or fisheries. These are controlled by the allies in business of the big parties. Our influence is small.

But we have members throughout the country, spread through every county in Ireland. We have tens of thousands of people who support our organisation. And those who are our members and those who support our organisation are not the pawns of an emotional appeal. They are not people who work for us or back us because we have power and patronage at our disposal. They are not businessmen who pay their subscriptions because they know we can grant them aid for their industries. Those who work for us and those who support us do so because they are convinced that only through the achievement of a socialist republic can the problems that face the Irish people be resolved. And that is now more important than the size or strength of our support.

We have carefully analysed these problems during the past decade. We have, slowly and carefully, produced a programme designed to solve them. We have honestly and fairly presented our programme to the people. And the results have not been discouraging. We know that progress is slow. It must be slow - we are living in a counter-revolutionary period. We know that we cannot overnight provide the political education that would be required to win acceptance for a revolutionary programme. We know that because we do not control, and in many cases are denied access to, the means of communication we cannot immediately or consistently reach the majority of the people. Despite all this, progress is being made. The organisation is attracting new members. Our members are winning support.

We have not promised revolution around the corner. People who seek it will not come to us. We have not promised that the ending of partition will end all of our problems. People who believe that will not support us. We are a political organisation, an organisation whose aims are political aims and an organisation determined to use every means at our disposal - social, economic, industrial, agitational - to achieve them. We are a revolutionary organisation, and we will not shrink from taking whatever action, popular or unpopular, to assist us on the road towards revolution. But we must at all times understand the nature of our struggle and nothing that we do must deflect us from that road.

We need to continue, through these days when our progress is slow, the work of education. We must educate and continually re-educate ourselves, not in an academic sense but in practical ways. We must continue to analyse each development in our society and explain our analysis to as many people as we can reach. We must win people to our side. We cannot win them by standing aside from them and their problems. We must engage in the education of involvement - in local communities, trade unions, tenant associations, trade organisations. We must be seen to share with the people of this country their concern for the unemployed, the underprivileged, the mass of the people, the workers and small farmers of Ireland. Their causes are our cause. Their struggle is ours, whether they are yet conscious of the identity of interests or not. If they are not, it is for us to explain it to them.

We must continue to demonstrate our role as a 32-County organisation, with international links, which is capable of understanding and solving the problems of the people. We must not differentiate in sectarian fashion between people. The only differences that we recognise are between the ruling class and the working class, between the international corporation and the interests of the people, between the forces of oppression, sectarianism and opportunism and the civil rights and full freedom of the Irish people.

We must not now, in times of danger, refuse to recognise the dangers that exist. Yes, we are threatened with sectarian civil war in the Six Counties and beyond the borders of the Six Counties. We have said that this would be a result of the Provisionals' anti-civilian

bombing campaign. We condemned it, long before it was either popular or profitable to attack the Provisionals. We continue to do so. We recognise the danger of fascism in sections of the Protestant working-class who have again fallen under the control of middle-class sectarian leadership. That danger stands exposed. We have warned, time and again, of the real possibility that opportunistic politicians, north, south and in Britain, would attempt to impose a solution on the Irish people with regard only for the interests of their rulers. That is what the opportunists have attempted.

Our approach to the political affairs of this country is a principled approach. We stand in the line of Tone and Davitt and Connolly, of the Fenians and Pearse. But these are not just names to be rung like the bells of history so that the Irish people may come to pray at their graves. We know what they mean, what these men stood for in their lives, why they fought and died. We stand for separation from all imperial control whether it is militarily or economically imposed. We stand for ownership of the resources and control over the fate of this country by the Irish people - control exercised in a socialist Republic by the force of the people's will. We stand for a society that gives full equality to all of the Irish people and guarantees their civil liberties without interference by Church or moneyed seekers of power. We are the inheritors of no alien influence but the history and experience of the Irish people.

Knowing that we must win a broad base of support for our policies we have entered elections in the Twenty Six Counties and in the Six Counties. Elections have put our organisation more closely in touch with the people North and South and, in turn, have advanced the education of our members. Once, republicanism was wrongly considered an elitist philosophy and it was thought unnecessary to contest elections or make any but a crude emotional appeal to the mass of the working class. That policy failed. Mellows outside the Four Courts lamented - the workers were not with us. We have learned from our mistakes and the errors of other generations. We cannot succeed without the broad base of understanding and support. We will continue to contest elections, as tactical and organisational considerations dictate, as one weapon in our struggle towards a socialist republic.

We have made gains. The fine achievement of our comrades in the bye-election in Cork North-East, not only doubled Joe Sherlocks' votes but heightened the consciousness of the people of the constituency and won for our organisation a share - though by no means a just share - of publicity. We considered it correct that we should contest the Westminster elections, Assembly and Local elections in the Six Counties for the same reasons and with the same effects. Using the gauge of tactical and organisational needs we will contest the Convention elections although we still do not regard any assembly in Dublin, London or Belfast as adequately representing the interests of those whom we represent.

We recognise the dangers of civil war. We recognise the urgent necessity of defending the civilian population against murderous attack. But we recognise, too, that we are not at present equipped, nor does it appear that any organisation is both equipped and willing to defend all of those civilians who may come under attack. We have called upon the trade union movement to accept its responsibility as the organisation which covers all of the country and all areas of the Six Counties and organise a force to control and guide the working class population. We appeal again to other workers' organisations to control, in their interests and in ours, the criminals who are responsible for sectarian assassinations. We will pledge ourselves to the same purpose in the areas where our strength lies.

The sectarian assassinations are stimulated and "excused" by the anti-civilian atrocities of the Provisionals. One campaign has provoked the other and both lead downhill towards disaster in which the people who will suffer most will be the working people of the Six Counties. In the same way, those who ordered and are now executing an anti-civilian campaign in Britain are alienating the British working class, bringing the Irish people in the country under suspicion and threat, and allowing the Cosgrave regime in the Twenty-Six counties to intensify its repression. The British and Cosgrave Governments have reacted in the way of regimes presented with such opportunities in any country and at any time, using them to tighten their already harsh grip in the lives of the people.

The governments of repression know well that they face serious economic difficulties in the present crisis of capitalism and that they may, in the months ahead, need to use against workers and unemployed the powers they have now taken to themselves. For no one doubts now that capitalism is in crisis and let us not doubt that in this crisis there are

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both opportunities and difficulties for a revolutionary political organisation. In a time of great social unrest people threatened with loss of jobs, people who have already lost jobs and people who have suffered a loss in their standard of living, move out of their traditional moulds, which means that they are open to more radical influences. But do not live under any illusion that they will automatically swing to support for our policies and programmes. They will not, and even if they did, their support would neither be lasting nor deeply rooted. If we can take advantage of the crisis, however, to educate and agitate as we have decided our function ought to be, then we can win a broader base of support than we have at present.

In a situation and particularly one where the establishment is in crisis, it is not enough that the credibility of the establishment be destroyed but the credibility of the revolutionary organisation to solve the crisis must be correspondingly increased.

I remember reading some years ago a short description of what it takes to win: "to make a revolution you need revolutionaries. Conscious, informed and experienced revolutionaries make successful revolutions." This then is our task to build such an organisation that will have the backing and support of the working people of this country, North and South and will be assisted by all the democratic and progressive forces in Britain and the rest of the world.