

1979

## Ard Fheis - 1979 : Oráid an Uachtarán

Sinn Féin The Workers' Party

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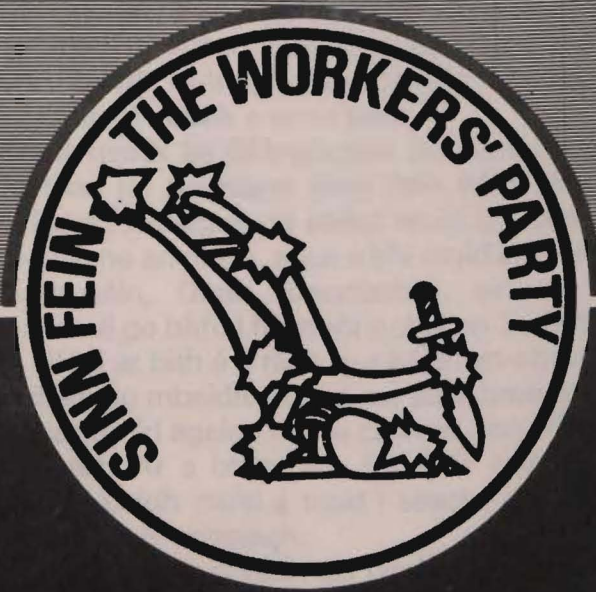
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ÁRD FHEIS 1979

ÓRÁID  
AN UACHTARÁIN

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Presidential Address  
Sinn Féin The Workers' Party  
Ard Fheis March 1979**



O bhunú Ghluaiseacht Cearta Sibhialta an Tuaisceart sé an cuspóir a bhí romhainn, Daonlathas a aimsiú don phobal 'na iomláine. Throid muid go daingean inéadan an tseicteachais. Chur muid go h-iomlán inéadan na polasaí meánaicmeacha seicteacha a bhí á brú ar an bpobal ag na Náisiúntóirí agus na Dilseóirí. Dhíol muid go daor. Chaill muid morán comrádaithe ionmuine as seasamh daonlathach soisealach an Pháirtí.

Dar ndoigh níl an troid thart go fóill ach is féidir linn bheith sásta go bhfuil níos mó de phobal Tuaisceart Éireann ag éisteacht linn anois ná bhí deich mbliain ó shoin.

Chruthuigh fo-thoghchán Carraig Abhann Lorgan é sin. Molaim an ballraiocht áitiúil as an sár-obair a rinne siad.

Anois roimh an Olltoghchán Breatanach is éigin dúinn chinntiú go dtuigtear go forleathan go sheasann Sinn Féin Páirtí na n-Oibrí ar son Comhairle Daonlathach don Tuaisceart agus go bhfuil muid lán comh tréan i gcoinne an imeaglu, cibe ón ultra-chlé no an dheis, agus a bhí muid ariamh.

Siothcháin, Obair, Daonlathas, sin an rosc toghcháin atá againn; sé mo bharamhail go bhfuil furmhór pobal an Tuaiscirt reidh len é a ghlacadh chuca féin.

Ní aiféal ar bith é a rádh gur bliain an-chruaidh oibre atá romhainn. I Mí Meithimh ní amháin go mbeidh muid a cur suas breis is céad iarrthóirí sna toghcháin áitiúla ach beidh iarrthóirí againn i cuile ceantar don Olltoghchán Eorpach, sa Deisceart agus sa Tuaisceart. Ar a bhárr sin, b'fhéidir roimh deireadh na míosa seo no'n mhí seo chugainn beidh muid a troid i seacht cheanntair, ar a laghad, san Tuaisceart san Olltoghchán Breatanach.

Ní gádh domh a rádh go gcaithfidh chuile ball a seacht ndicheall a dhéanamh chun chinntiú go mbaileófar isteach gach vóta ar son an Pháirtí sna toghcháin éagsamhla seo.

Comh maith le sin uilig beidh Toghachán do Udarás na Gaeltachta amach annseo agus is cinnte go mbeidh iarrthóirí againn i ngach cheanntair Gaeltachta.

Ó tháinig RTE a Dhó ar an aer is soiléir nach bhfuil aon polasaí ag an Udarás i leith scaipeadh eolais ar na ghnétheanna eágsúla den chultúr duthasach. Ath-craoladh scannáin puncánacha agus cláracha breatanach is mó atá le feictheáil. Cé'n fáth nach féidir sraith de cláracha ó na tiorthaí soisialacha a aimsiú, nó áit ar bith nach fé smacht an chultúr Sacs-Meiriceánach iad. Nó an é rud é gur rún daingean lucht stiurtha RTE Ameiricanaigh a dhéanamh de phobal na tíre seo?

Ní nach ionadh gur leisc leis an Roinn Oideachais scéimeanna chultúrtha a thoiseacht sna scoileanna nuair nach bhfuil ag na páistí ach eisiomplar RTE. Ní a chaint anois ar chúrsaí teangan atá mé ach ar gach ghné den saoil cultúrtha — drámaíocht, ceoil, péintéireacht agus a rl. Is bocht an todhchaí chultúrtha atá i ndán don tír agus sinne i dtuilleamaí RTE agus an Roinn Oideachais leis an t-aos óg a spreagadh.

Anois agus an dara channel ar fáil don tír is mithid do na ceard chumainn, go h-áithrid iad siud a bhaineann le cúrsaí oideachais, toiseacht a' bhrú ar RTE úsáid níos éifeachtaí a bhaint as RTE a DÓ.

Dála an scéil ní fheadar cé mhéid nóimead a thabharfaidh RTE don oráid seo. Pé ar domhain é tá sé socraithe agam nach mhairfidh sé thar an 52 nóimead.



We are reaching the end of a decade of regression and reaction. It was a decade which opened auspiciously with the continued momentum of the great democratic struggles of the 1960's and the high hopes of many young people that the 70's would be socialist. But the forces of reaction were already gathering.

The North became the focal point. The embers of sectarian bigotry and hatred were fanned into flame in a blind fascist fury. The cloak of Republicanism was used to cover the most heinous crimes against the Irish people. The British Government, which had been arraigned before the Bar of public opinion internationally to answer for its denial of civil rights in Ireland, was now acquitted and took on the role of protector of the people against mass murder and terror. The British Army could and did commit murder and mayhem with impunity.

Within months of the commencement of the bombings and assassinations some of the major gains of the long and bitter civil rights struggle were eroded, especially in the field of policing, judiciary and repressive laws. But even more devastating was the rapid growth of political reaction which spread quickly to the South. The Labour Party went into headlong retreat, abandoning its vanguard, and joined forces with its class enemy in Fine Gael. The SDLP performed a similar manoeuvre in the North going into coalition with the employer class in the Unionist Party. These hammer blows against the working people allowed democracy to be denied by Direct Rule in the North and left Fianna Fáil rampant in the South to implement the most bitterly anti-worker policies since the 1920's.

But all was not gloom in the 70's. There were many positive features to the decade. Many significant civil rights gains have been won and held. The monolithic sectarian pattern of politics in the North has been broken and there is a growing rejection by young people of the old Hibernian and Orange concepts. Similar changes are being reflected in the South where 50% of the population are now under the age of 25. They will not be satisfied with slogans or mere recollections of past history. They want to make their own history. So do the women of Ireland. During the past decade they have maintained a constant progressive movement and have now become a powerful political force. Women and youth did make their own contribution to history in 1977 by rejecting the Coalition Government with the biggest electoral swing in history. They will similarly reject Fianna Fáil and will swing to the Party which gives them the answers to the problems of the 1980's. Sinn Féin The Workers' Party is providing them with those answers.

The major battle confronting us in the next decade is the battle for jobs. We have recognised this for some years past and have given it a priority position in all our party work. The Research group of our Economic Affairs section have documented the role of the Banks and the Public Sector in job creation and in *The Irish Industrial Revolution* have set out detailed facts and figures showing how massive industrialisation is possible by direct state involvement in the development of our own natural resources.

When we speak of development of our natural resources we are not simply referring to our great mineral resources which are being robbed from under our noses nor just to our large potential supplies of oil and natural gas off our shores. These are of course of major importance in any industrial plan and it is outrageous



that we are still no further advanced in 1979 in the building of a lead and zinc smelter despite the firm promise given by Fianna Fáil in their election manifesto. In our industrial plan we are speaking about all our natural resources including fish, timber, leather, wool and farm produce.

In terms of jobs the industry with the greatest potential for expansion is food processing. But it needs a coherent plan for production and marketing. Such a plan could create tens of thousands of new jobs, could give a secure market to farmers and could lower the cost of food. It could also more than double the value of our food exports because our products would be fully processed and ready for the table.

But the Government leaves food production entirely in the hands of the free market forces. They have no food production plan, no farm structure plan and no industrial plan for expansion of food processing and marketing. The result is chaos and inefficiency with thousands of farms under capitalised and under utilised and at the other extreme many other farms with far too high capital investment in farm machinery and buildings and far too low productivity to pay for it. This leads to very high production costs for food so that the Dublin consumers pay more for their food than they do in New York although the US wages are nearly three times higher. There is little incentive for the Irish farmers to increase productivity and reduce costs while the EEC policy guarantees them the same price as the German or Danish farmer where labour costs are much higher.

Inefficient methods of production and lack of planning also leads to cycles of shortages and over supply, as in the case of potatoes or beet or irregular supply to processing factories as happens with beef. No argument about free market or the rights of private profit should allow the situation to continue where hundreds of cattle are exported weekly while meat processing factories are on short time and in danger of closing, while the leather industry is in a state of collapse with hundreds of workers laid off and while over 20% of the population cannot afford to buy meat.

The agricultural industry must be organised and planned to give a good standard of living to those working in it. But the planning must also ensure that food is produced at a price the consumer can afford and also that industries based on agriculture are assured of a regular and continuous supply of raw material. At present only the first of these criteria is being fulfilled and that only for less than 50% of farmers.

Drastic and revolutionary changes in farming structure must be undertaken soon if agriculture is to fulfill its primary role of feeding the population. The lead should be taken by state companies such as the Irish Sugar Company and Bord na Mona who should enter farming directly and pioneer the most progressive and efficient methods of food production. A beginning should also be made on the organisation of large scale co-operative farming to enable the optimum use to be made of farm machinery, buildings, labour and, of course, land. The Department of Agriculture should also play a more direct role in farm planning and it is they rather than the Banks who should be deciding the investment policy to be pursued by farmers.

I believe this 100th anniversary year of the founding of the Land League is an appropriate time to initiate discussion on farming structures. The ideas of Michael Davitt, and Fintan Lalor, are still very relevant. If Fianna Fáil or any other group are



going to commemorate Davitt this year then they better remember that he was one of the most advanced and dedicated socialists of his time. We will certainly be reminding them.

There is a growing tension between farmers and urban workers. This arises from the difficulty being experienced by workers inputting food on the table for their families and the refusal of farmers to pay tax on their incomes as the wage earner does. In the absence of a reduction in food prices and taxes workers have no option but to fight for a considerable increase in their incomes.

While the spotlight is at present on the low rate of taxes paid by farmers, and correctly so, there is a danger that the self-employed will continue to escape paying their share. They are by far the biggest evaders of tax. A closely researched booklet on taxation issued by the Research section of our Economic Affairs Department at the end of last year estimated evasion by the self-employed as high as £200 million per annum. These are the people who employ the accountants, consultants and experts in tax-dodging such as former Finance Minister Richie Ryan, to present evasive accounts to the Revenue Commissioners.

We recommended in our tax document that the Revenue Commissioners do spot checks on say a 10% sample of these accounts and that they do an intensive investigation of these including calling to their houses. In his Budget Mr. Colley, Minister for Finance, announced that he intended to do just that. However it seems he was just doing a cover-up for the evaders because his Budget provided for an increase of only 70 or 80 in the Revenue Commissioners staff and these apparently only clerical officers. This would be insufficient even to catch up with the current arrears in the tax office.

Isn't it odd that inspectors cannot be put on the job of chasing the evaders who rob the Exchequer of £200m yearly when the Minister for Social Welfare, Charles Haughey, has no shortage of inspectors for harassing the unemployed who try to increase their miserable pittance by a few days casual work. In a demographic study of the labour force in Ireland called *The Irish Worker*, which was published in 1971, James Deeny of the Institute of Public Administration made the following comment on the unemployed:

"Many have adapted themselves to a half-life at a low standard. Some may carry out casual work to supplement their unemployment allowances or alternatively, may regard their poorly paid, insecure, casual employment as their primary means of subsistence and supplement it with unemployment payments."

This has always been the case. But now Charlie Haughey has made it a major crime and has put hundreds of almost destitute people off the register simply to help bring down Martin O'Donohue's statistics of unemployed. At the same time the self-employed are let go tax free, have Wealth Tax removed and Capital Gains Tax and Corporation Profits Tax almost abolished.

Perhaps this is what American computer tycoon Ray Halbert had in mind when he said at the opening of his new factory in Finglas, Dublin two weeks ago: "I appreciate the purely capitalistic approach of the IDA..... There is a very positive approach to enterprise in Ireland compared with the creeping socialism evident in



other countries, even in America"! Last year US companies in the 26 Counties got a return of 29% on capital invested. This was the highest return on capital achieved by American multi-nationals in any country in the world. Truly we are a haven for the rich.

All parties now recognise that large scale industrialisation is essential to provide jobs for a rapidly growing population. It is also recognised that the native Irish capitalist class cannot be relied on to do this. In fact they have said themselves that they cannot do it, and every month brings news of closures of Irish industries. Sinn Féin The Workers' Party have put forward a coherent plan of industrialisation based on the development of our own natural resources by state enterprise. The solution adopted by both Fianna Fáil and the coalition governments has been to invite in foreign, mainly American, multi-nationals to do the job.

In recent years the only new industrial jobs being provided have been by the multi-nationals. In the context of massive and growing unemployment industries which provide new jobs must be welcomed wherever they come from. But we will not fail in our duty to point to the dangers to our national sovereignty in the new dominance of American monopoly capital in our economy. US investment now exceed British investment in the 26 County State, and this has already brought a dramatic change in the Government's foreign policy. Our long standing and respected position amongst the non-aligned nations has been abandoned. We are now in a position of total and contemptible subservience to US foreign policy and our refusal to vote for disarmament at the UN puts our claim to be neutral in question.

This is a very serious issue at a time when the world is hovering on the brink of war, when America's most recent ally, China, is engaged in a brutal war of aggression against Vietnam which is only just recovering from her victorious fight against US and formerly French Imperialism. The Irish people are at least entitled to an assurance that there will be no question of opening diplomatic relations with China while her aggression against Vietnam continues.

Some questions have been raised about dangerous or dirty industries coming in to Ireland. Since we are coming late on the industrial scene we can avoid most of the environmental and social problems which accompanied industry in other countries. We already have the appropriate expertise in the IDA, the IIRS and the Local Authorities to ensure that the highest standards are set and maintained. We can and we must ensure that our land, our rivers, our seas and our air are kept clean and fit to live in.

However we cannot industrialise without treading on some toes and upsetting some people's ideas of luxurious living. We have got to build factories, oil refineries, smelters. These must be functional and economic and will hardly win any prizes for the results of their architecture.

But the fact that people living nearby don't like the look of them should not be accepted as sufficient grounds for objection. Yet this was one of the main grounds for objection by the Sandymount residents to the building of an oil refinery in Dublin Port. They called it "visual pollution". This, they claimed, reduced the value of their houses. Although the proposed site was beside a powerstation and huge ugly oil storage tanks.



By their objection they denied jobs to 2,000 construction workers and permanent jobs to 350 skilled and semi-skilled operatives. Apart from the loss to the economy, the loss of the oil refinery reduced the value of the food on the tables of the unemployed workers' families. It reduced the value of the clothes on their backs, the condition of their housing and in some cases, affected their sanity or even their lives. Which is of greater value, property or life? Denial of the right to work can be denial of the right to life.

Similar action was taken with similar results by a handful of objectors in Shannon, and earlier by a few near Clonmel. Their right to safeguard the value of their property was conceded to be greater than the workers' right to safeguard himself and his family.

The Courts of the land have, for too long, been used to protect property rather than people. They must no longer be allowed to discriminate against workers. All environmental safeguards must be retained and upheld but property rights must be seen to take second place to personal rights.

Incidentally the issue of oil refining capacity here is going to be raised again and again by us. The major multi national oil companies who control our oil supplies refuse to allow a refinery to be built on the East coast which they supply from their Milford Haven refinery. When an independent company wished to set up a refinery in Dublin Port the Community lobby helped the oil majors to fight them off. The Whiddy Island disaster, for which both Gulf Oil and the Government must share responsibility is now being used by the so-called "Community group" as an argument against an oil refinery in Dublin Port. They say a similar disaster could occur at the off-loading of crude-oil for a refinery. But two million tons of oil are already off-loaded into oil storage tanks in Dublin. And most of this is refined oil, highly volatile petrol — a much more inflammable and explosive commodity than crude oil. All the ingredients already exist for a massive conflagration in the Port of Dublin. Why have we heard no concern expressed about this?

The whole question of agricultural and industrial policy as well as many other issues such as prices, taxes, neutrality and national sovereignty will be raised during the course of the coming EEC elections which we will be contesting. During the course of our opposition to entry to the EEC I spoke at meetings throughout the country both North and South. The issues we put in regard to problems for industry, prices for consumers and the absence of any real regional policy were the same in both areas although agriculture did not play such a dominant rôle in the debate in Northern Ireland where only 9% of the labour force are engaged in farming. We will now be the only party putting up candidates in both the 6 and 26 Counties and we will be asking for the support of all who are concerned about the operation of the EEC as it affects people in Ireland and especially urban workers whose case is not being put in the EEC Assembly.

All discussion of the EEC down here is dominated by the Common Agricultural Policy. This is the only common policy which is workin in the EEC and farmers have done very well from it. Our farmers have had long decades of struggle against poverty and tens of thousands of them had to give up the struggle and emigrate. No one begrudges them a reasonable profit and a steady market, so long as they don't



scoop the pool at everybody else's expense.

But this is precisely what is happening under EEC policy and it is happening in two ways. Firstly, 90% of the net transfer of funds from the EEC last year went through the C.A.P. to the farming community. Yet in 1977 only 21% of the labour force in the South and 9% of the labour force in the North was engaged in agriculture, forestry or fishing. So only 10% of EEC funds were left to spread over 70% of the population in the South and 90% in the North.

Secondly, more than half of Irish farm produce is consumed at home. Through high food prices on the home market, there is a huge transfer of resources from the urban consumer to the rural producers. The urban workers who get nothing from the EEC, are forced under EEC rules to transfer part of their earnings to the farmer. This system will be challenged by Sinn Féin The Workers' Party during the election.

Apart from the spectacular increase in food prices the most marked result of entry to the EEC has been the large scale of redundancies and closures of industries. In 1978 there were 13,000 jobs lost in the 26 Counties. In the 6 Counties there has been a similar experience leaving 64,000 unemployed there now or 11.7% of the workforce. The Common Agricultural Policy has been of little benefit to them and their receipts from the Regional or Social funds were too tiny to make any impact on the urban housing or unemployment problems.

The unemployment figure of 64,000 in Northern Ireland, bad as it is, does not reveal the real scale of job shortages there. There are over 50,000 jobs there depending totally on direct government short term subsidies like the Temporary Employment Subsidy, Selective Employment Premium and Small Firms Employment Subsidy and a number of Training and Youth Employment Schemes. These schemes could all be scrapped under a Tory Government in Britain or perhaps under some new EEC regulation. If this were to occur unemployment would jump to over 100,000 or over 20% of the insured population.

But this major jobs crisis is not the only problem facing the people of Northern Ireland. Prices there have risen faster than in any other region of the UK and at the same time workers there have the lowest level of earnings. One third of all families in the North are now living below the official poverty line. Is it any wonder that the trade unions have embarked on a major battle to increase workers' earnings?

Sinn Féin The Workers' Party, and especially our public representatives in the North have been directing our attention to these Social and Economic problems for some years past while other parties are still hung up on the old sectarian issues which are of little immediate relevance. When addressing you three years ago, I made the point that the people of the North were:-

"At an economic crossroads which is going to have a far greater bearing on their lives and the lives of their children than the Constitutional crossroads which is stirring up such great emotions.---- It is important that the people of the 6 Counties study the flimsy economic base on which their future hangs. They will then see that there is little, if any, power left for them to share."

The people of Northern Ireland are today facing up courageously to these economic realities. They are questioning the most fundamental political beliefs and attitudes in the North and are shaking some of the existing political structures to their



foundations. The SDLP don't understand what is happening and have retreated to their sectarian ghettos still crying for their lost powersharing and whimpering like whipped curs every time Mason lashes them. The Official Unionists are apparently bewitched by Enoch Powell and are losing touch with their grass-roots. Powell neither understands nor cares about the grave problems facing the working class people. He may soon find that the new mood of the people of South Down will no longer be satisfied to act as a launching platform for his reactionary integrationist and racist ideas. He will then presumably seek out a suitable constituency in the vicinity of Johannesburg.

The current economic crisis must be met by a united and determined political campaign. For this purpose we are requesting the Direct Rule Administration to convene an All-Party Jobs Forum through which the widest possible support, free from all constitutional wrangling, would be put behind a coherent job creation plan. We would hope that all parties, irrespective of their constitutional position, would recognise the real crisis which exists and in the interests of all the people, unite behind this effort.

Just as in the South, our party believes that private enterprise has failed the people in the North and can therefore not be relied on to provide the thousands of new jobs required. We therefore call for the extension of existing state sector companies to Northern Ireland both from the UK and from the 26 County State. In this we are in accord with the Quigley Report issued in 1976 which recommended the setting up of "a significant state manufacturing sector". There are great opportunities here for real North-South economic co-operation with say the British Gas Board and An Bord Gáis in the South working to a co-ordinated plan for the development of the natural gas industry in both areas. Nitrigin Eireann Teo could assist in the establishment of a fertiliser plant in the North and British Steel could put new life into the failing heavy engineering industry in Belfast.

In order to enable the people in Northern Ireland to work out their new thinking and to fight together for their future a democratic framework is required. The ending of Direct Rule is a priority. Maximum pressure should now be put on the British Government for devolution of regional powers to a Democratic Assembly elected by the normal democratic procedures under the proportional representation system. In calling for such an Assembly in my address to you last year I suggested that it should operate under a firmly entrenched charter of democratic rights and guarantees which would be signed by all parties participating in the Assembly and by the London and Dublin Governments. As a further guarantee I also suggested that such charter be then lodged at the UN and the European Commission on Human Rights.

Recent calls by our party representatives for devolved government in Northern Ireland have been represented by the SDLP as some kind of betrayal of the "nationalist minority". Well we are a non-sectarian secular republican party and we are not representing any minority group. We represent the large working class majority. We have consistently fought for democracy in the North since the sixties. We never called for the Dissolution of the Stormont Parliament, we called for its Democratisation and that's what the civil rights campaign was all about. it is the



SDLP, who were elected on the basis of their claim to support civil rights, who have betrayed their followers and led them back into the old 'nationalist' trap from which they thought they had escaped.

The SDLP's betrayal is even greater than this. It is they who have the ear of the Fianna Fáil, Fine Gael and Labour Parties in the South and they keep them all fed on the same old diet of sectarian and sloganising politics of the "Up the Republic" and "No Surrender" variety. Garret FitzGerald of Fine Gael regards himself as enlightened and above all that. Yet in his 44 page and apparently well researched Document on a confederal arrangement called *Ireland — Our Future Together* he proves to be far from enlightened.

"No one would conceive" he said, "of a solution in which the Nationalist minority would continue to be excluded from government in their own state and could also be excluded from the confederal administration."

Here he obviously assumed a permanent state of "Nationalist minority" and "Loyalist majority" on the basis of a sectarian head count. He is reputed to have spent a year working on this document and yet he never seems to have asked himself what a "Nationalist" employer like Paddy Duffy of the SDLP has in common with his "Nationalist" workers whose weekly pay packet is insufficient to provide adequately for their families or to the unemployed "Nationalist" whom he has made redundant and whose family now lives below the subsistence level. Obviously Duffy has much more in common with a "Loyalist" employer. This is the truth which is becoming crystal clear to the working people in Northern Ireland. However it escapes the keen mind of Garret FitzGerald. Or does it?

When Fine Gael, or Fianna Fáil or the SDLP, or even the *Irish Times*, whine about the "Nationalist minority" being excluded from government what they really mean is that the employer class of the "Nationalist minority" is being excluded. It is, they believe, the Bosses' right to be in power. In fact the people who are permanently excluded from Government are the working people, whether Loyalist or Nationalist. These are the people whom our party candidates will be representing in the forthcoming Westminster Election and also in the EEC Election.

We sadly miss the man who led our Party in the North through the many pitfalls of the past decade and who pioneered the road we are travelling today. Malachy McGurran had freed himself totally from all the sectarian shackles of the past and gained the esteem of friend and foe and the love of the working class whom he served with his very life. That the tributes paid to him at his funeral were no empty ones was proved a couple of months later when workers of all creeds and none, triumphantly returned Tom French to take Malachy's seat on Craigavon Council. Go mairfidh se buan in ár gcuimhne. The ideas and policies which Malachy McGurran put forward so articulately will be ably represented by our candidates in the Westminster Election. We are confident they will get the same widespread endorsement in Belfast and Derry, Mid-Ulster, Armagh and Down as they received in Craigavon.

We will also be contesting the Local Government elections in the South fairly extensively in June. We expect to make quite a significant impact despite Fianna Fáil's blatant gerrymander in Dublin City and some other urban areas. This will be an



opportunity for the voters to make Fianna Fáil answer for their record of robbing the poor by removing subsidies from food and paying the rich by removal of Wealth Tax and Capital Gains Tax. They must also answer to the homeless of Dublin City and other areas for their decision to build less Local Authority houses when far more young people than ever were being forced by the greed of private builders and Bankers to seek public housing.

The record of our public representatives, whether in Cork or Donegal, in Waterford or Belfast has been one of outstanding achievement and dedicated work on behalf of the working people of their areas. Let us all ensure that by our work we will add to their number in June.

Our party has grown and developed out of long and painful struggle over the past two decades. We have gained strength and clarity through our battles for democracy, our stand against militarism and terrorism, and our daily struggles on social and economic issues. "Men make their own history", Marx said, "But they do not make it just as they please, they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past." That is precisely how we have made our own history. We stand today proud of our part but not shackled by it, looking to the future with hope, in tune with the new generation and ready for the battles of the 80's.