

SOCIALIST International



Berne 1919

The Leader of the Irish Labour Party Tom Johnson and a senior Irish Transport Union Labour Party colleague Cathal O'Shannon attended the international Labour and Socialist Congress in Berne, Switzerland in February 1919.

They were recognised as an independent socialist delegation, separate from the British Labour delegation.

Cathal O'Shannon addressed the Congress and demanded self-determination for the Irish people and the recognition, by the Paris Peace Conference, of the Republican Declaration of Independence at Easter Week. He pointed out that this had been confirmed by the people at the December 1918 general election.

Both Johnson and O'Shannon, as representatives of Ireland, were elected to the Permanent Commission which the Congress established to implement its decisions. They drafted a memorandum on the 'Irish situation' for the Congress delegation to the Paris Peace Conference. This aroused considerable interest and was quoted extensively in continental newspapers.

Copies of the Democratic Programme which had been endorsed at the opening session of the first Dáil, were brought to Berne by the Irish delegates and circulated widely. The Sinn Féin leadership, at the time, had requested the Irish Labour Movement to use its contacts and influence internationally to promote the objective of Irish independence..



Cathal O'Shannon and Thomas Johnson, Labour's first Representatives on the Labour Court established in 1946.

The Labour Court is now located in Tom Johnson House, Haddington Road, Dublin 4.

The Labour History Museum is located beside Tom Johnson House

DEMOCRATIC PROGRAMME OF THE FIRST DÁIL ÉIREANN

Dáil Éireann - Volume 1 - 21 January, 1919

DEMOCRATIC PROGRAMME.

We declare in the words of the Irish Republican Proclamation the right of the people of Ireland to the ownership of Ireland, and to the unfettered control of Irish destinies to be indefeasible, and in the language of our first President. Pádraig Mac Piarais, we declare that the Nation's sovereignty extends not only to all men and women of the Nation, but to all its material possessions, the Nation's soil and all its resources, all the wealth and all the wealth-producing processes within the Nation, and with him we reaffirm that all right to private property must be subordinated to the public right and welfare.

We declare that we desire our country to be ruled in accordance with the principles of Liberty, Equality, and Justice for all, which alone can secure permanence of Government in the willing adhesion of the people.

We affirm the duty of every man and woman to give allegiance and service to the Commonwealth, and declare it is the duty of the Nation to assure that every citizen shall have opportunity to spend [23] his or her strength and faculties in the service of the people. In return for willing service, we, in the name of the Republic, declare the right of every citizen to an adequate share of the produce of the Nation's labour.

It shall be the first duty of the Government of the Republic to make provision for the physical, mental and spiritual well-being of the children, to secure that no child shall suffer hunger or cold from lack of food, clothing, or shelter, but that all shall be provided with the means and facilities requisite for their proper education and training as Citizens of a Free and Gaelic Ireland.

The Irish Republic fully realises the necessity of abolishing the present odious, degrading and foreign Poor Law System, substituting therefor a sympathetic native scheme for the care of the Nation's aged and infirm, who shall not be regarded as a burden, but rather entitled to the Nation's gratitude and consideration. Likewise it shall be the duty of the Republic to take such measures as will safeguard the health of the people and ensure the physical as well as the moral well-being of the Nation.

It shall be our duty to promote the development of the Nation's resources, to increase the productivity of its soil, to exploit its mineral deposits, peat bogs, and fisheries, its waterways and harbours, in the interests and for the benefit of the Irish people.

It shall be the duty of the Republic to adopt all measures necessary for the recreation and invigoration of our Industries, and to ensure their being developed on the most beneficial and progressive co-operative and industrial lines. With the adoption of an extensive Irish Consular Service, trade with foreign Nations shall be revived on terms of mutual advantage and goodwill, and while undertaking the organisation of the Nation's trade, import and export, it shall be the duty of the Republic to prevent the shipment from Ireland of food and other necessaries until the wants of the Irish people are fully satisfied and the future provided for.

It shall also devolve upon the National Government to seek co-operation of the Governments of other countries in determining a standard of Social and Industrial Legislation with a view to a general and lasting improvement in the conditions under which the working classes live and labour.

AN CEANN COMHAIRLE: Iarraim ar an dTeachta ó Chluain



Title: The First Dáil

Organisation: Labour

Date: 2010 c.

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