

SAOR EIRE

DRAFT
Constitution and Rules



1931

The Proclamation of 1916, asserting once again the inalienable sovereignty of this nation, challenged British rule in Ireland and stated its challenge and its call in these terms :—

POBLACHT NA H EIREANN.
THE PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT
 OF THE
IRISH REPUBLIC
 TO THE PEOPLE OF IRELAND.

IRISHMEN AND IRISHWOMEN: In the name of God and of the dead generations from which she receives her old tradition of nationhood, Ireland, through us, summons her children to her flag and strikes for her freedom.

Having organised and trained her manhood through her secret revolutionary organisation, the Irish Republican Brotherhood, and through her open military organisations, the Irish Volunteers and the Irish Citizen Army, having patiently perfected her discipline, having resolutely waited for the right moment to reveal itself, she now seizes that moment, and, supported by her exiled children in America and by gallant allies in Europe, but relying in the first on her own strength, she strikes in full confidence of victory.

We declare the right of the people of Ireland to the ownership of Ireland, and to the unfettered control of Irish destinies, to be sovereign and indefeasible. The long usurpation of that right by a foreign people and government has not extinguished the right, nor can it ever be extinguished except by the destruction of the Irish people. In every generation the Irish people have asserted their right to national freedom and sovereignty; six times during the past three hundred years they have asserted it in arms. Standing on that fundamental right and again asserting it in arms in the face of the world, we hereby proclaim the Irish Republic as a Sovereign Independent State, and we pledge our lives and the lives of our comrades-in-arms to the cause of its freedom, of its welfare, and of its exaltation among the nations.

The Irish Republic is entitled to, and hereby claims, the allegiance of every Irishman and Irishwoman. The Republic guarantees religious and civil liberty, equal rights and equal opportunities to all its citizens, and declares its resolve to pursue the happiness and prosperity of the whole nation and of all its parts, cherishing all the children of the nation equally, and oblivious of the differences carefully fostered by an alien government, which have divided a minority from the majority in the past.

Until our arms have brought the opportune moment for the establishment of a permanent National Government, representative of the whole people of Ireland and elected by the suffrages of all her men and women, the Provisional Government, hereby constituted, will administer the civil and military affairs of the Republic in trust for the people.

We place the cause of the Irish Republic under the protection of the Most High God. Whose blessing we invoke upon our arms, and we pray that no one who serves that cause will dishonour it by cowardice, inhumanity, or rapine. In this supreme hour the Irish nation must, by its valour and discipline and by the readiness of its children to sacrifice themselves for the common good, prove itself worthy of the august destiny to which it is called.

Signed on Behalf of the Provisional Government,

THOMAS J. CLARKE.

SEAN Mac DIARMADA

THOMAS MacDONAGH.

P. H. PEARSE.

EAMONN CEANNT.

JAMES CONNOLLY.

JOSEPH PLUNKETT.

On that Proclamation we take our stand and we call to the "incorruptible custodians of the tradition and struggle" to collect around committees of themselves so that we may move solidly forward to our battle-ground.

In 1916 British rule was exercised nakedly by British officials. Power was in the hands of planters and landlords and their associates in banking and industrial combines. The mass of the Irish people were in bondage to the few and an army and a police force were stationed here to see that the slaves behaved and made their masters rich. The State was the association of rifles and batons, jails, bailiffs and thuggery, with the wealth of the aliens and traitors, to rob and strangle a sovereign people.

To-day Dublin Castle, they say, is no more. But the aliens have not been dispossessed: landlordism has not been abolished, and landlords have not been made disgorge: banks, which are the pooling of money stolen from us, have not come under our control: and the machinery of the State is to-day exactly as in pre-Treaty days—a tyranny associated with the interests that beggared us. The Free State Parliament is only an *associated agency* for carrying out the Imperial purpose, and just as the individual land agent waxed rich in his master's service, so now an association of Imperial agents prosper on the ruin of their country and squabble among themselves for the offices. For we tell you choice of government for the State is nothing except choice of agents for the class that enslave us. Good or bad government means what the good or bad agent meant in other days, and good men in office no more means the end of slavery than a good agent meant the end of landlordism.

In N.E. Ulster the working-class are torn in the mill of exploiting imperial finance: the middle-class there are weak against the highly-concentrated power of the big Imperialist industrialists. So the N.E. Parliament is only a gilded dust-bin around which Belfast derelicts collect for crusts and partition marks the new Pale.

All those who have passed into the service of the State machine have betrayed the Irish cause. We must build on those alone who are being crushed by it, and who alone have the will and the power to smash it. It will not be dismantled from the top: it cannot be geared to exploit slowly: a change of drivers is no good, for it is the same machine with the same nature and the same tasks. On the ruin of their State we must build ours: we must organise to smash theirs, rescuing the masses from their illusions about it.

And amid these masses the hardest hit are the line of rally: the unemployed worker, the part-time-worker, the

men and women waiting the short-knock, the men and women putting up with slave conditions because to assert their dignity as human beings means the sack, the thoughtful worker who is a comrade to his fellows and sees the blasphemy of a system that starves human beings amid plenty: the farmer who cannot bridge the gap between the yield of what he has to sell and the cost of what he must buy, who sees his family strive mightily and live meantly, who sees his children denied education, who has the bailiffs thundering round his house for the rent, and the banks roaring for their interest; who sees the combines make his crops valueless in his fields while they build mighty reserves: the fisherman who potters about in an open yawl and sees his food pass into the raiding vessels of big finance; the small shopkeeper who sees the multiple shop drain his tills. All these must assemble, with the working-class in the van, and build committees to collect resistance to the whole sweep of the enemy State, until we achieve again a revolutionary government to take the place of that which British firing parties shot down in 1916.

The ultimate backing for our enemies will be sought among the demoralised upper stratum of the workers, among the small owners and traders, and to this section we would especially direct an appeal to rescue them from the illusions that are being developed among them. The whole experience of the past few years points inevitably to the fact that small industries can't last and small traders can't live. They must hire into the services of the combines and become their yeomen, or they will take their place as the comrades of free men and women striving to achieve a freely functioning Irish Republic and the organisation of a Workers' State.

Here, then, is our declaration of allegiance to an Irish Republic with power in the hands of those alone who can really achieve freedom, and when achieved defend it. We call on all those who share our ideals and believe in our means to set their hands and their heads to the task before us.

SAOR EIRE.

SAOR EIRE

(An Organisation of Workers and Working Farmers)

CONSTITUTION AND RULES.

NAME.

The name of the organisation shall be SAOR EIRE.

OBJECTS.

(1) To break the connection with England and secure for the Republic of Ireland free expression of its National Sovereignty.

(2) To vest all political power within the Republic in the Working-Class and Working Farmers.

(3) To abolish, without compensation, landlordism in land, fisheries and minerals.

(4) To make the National wealth and credit available for the creation and fullest development of essential industries and mineral resources, through Industrial Workers' Co-operatives, under State direction and management, the workers to regulate internal working conditions.

(5) To develop by State credits, the Agricultural Industry, through Co-operatives of Working Farmers, and Groups of Agricultural Workers.

To promote the development of the Fishing Industry on a Co-operative basis, and to develop the Mineral resources, by State credits, through Industrial Workers' Co-operatives.

(6) To establish a State monopoly in Banking and Credits.

(7) To create a State monopoly in Export and Import services, and to promote co-operative distribution.

(8) To have all forms of Public Inland Transport taken over by the State, to be operated and administered by a body set up by the National Executive Council.

(9) To make the provision of Housing for citizens a State responsibility.

(10) To guarantee a minimum standard of living for each citizen in work, and for whom work is not available.

(11) To establish a Social Insurance Scheme which will make provision for old age, widows, orphans, and for the maintenance of the physically and mentally incapacitated.

(12) To end the payment of every form of Imperial Tribute.

(13) To restore and foster the Gaelic Culture, Language and Pastimes.

(14) To bring about the closest co-operation between workers in agricultural and in rural districts, and those in cities and towns ; to bring them to realise that their interests are mutual ; that, therefore, they should be allies, as they are all victims of the same exploiting agencies.

MEANS.

(1) To organise Committees of Action among the Industrial and Agricultural Workers to lead the day-to-day struggle of the Working-Class and Working Farmers against exploitation, and to secure a revolutionary leadership for their common struggle.

(2) The mobilisation of the mass of the Irish people behind a Revolutionary Government, for the overthrow of British Imperialism and its allies in Ireland, and for the organisation of a Workers' State.

MEMBERSHIP.

Membership of the Organisation shall be open to all those, over the age of sixteen, who accept the Objects and the Means of the Organisation.

The Branch Committees shall have power to suspend membership and to recommend expulsion to the National Executive.

ORGANISATION.

The unit of organisation shall be the Branch. Each Branch shall consist of not less than twelve members, who shall pay an initiation fee of 1/-, and a monthly contribution of sixpence. Fifty per cent of all such fees and contributions shall be forwarded to the National Executive.

The administration of the Branch shall be in the hands of a Branch Committee, consisting of a Chairman, Treasurer, Secretary, and four other members, who shall be elected at the Annual Meeting of the Branch, to be held in January of each year. The persons elected shall hold office for one year, but may be removed by the majority vote of the members. The Branch Committee shall meet at least once a fortnight. Monthly Reports must be sent by the Branch Secretary to the National Executive.

As far as possible, Branches shall be organised on an industrial or vocational basis. Members, however, may be assigned to such Branches as the National Executive considers most desirable in the interests of the Organisation.

DISTRICT AND PROVINCIAL COMMITTEES.

District Committees may be formed with the permission of the National Executive, where a number of Branches consider it advisable.

The District Committee shall be composed of representatives from the Branches elected on the following basis :

For each Branch of twenty members or under	....	2	delegates
„ „ over twenty and under fifty	....	3	„
„ „ over fifty and under one hundred	....	5	„

One extra delegate for each fifty additional members.

No Branch shall have more than ten delegates to a District or Provincial Committee.

CONTROL.

The supreme governing body of the Organisation shall be the National Convention when in session.

The National Convention, which shall meet annually, shall be composed of the members of the outgoing National Executive and of delegates elected on the following basis :—

For each Branch of twenty members or less	....	1	delegate
„ „ over twenty and under fifty	....	2	delegates
„ „ over fifty and under one hundred	....	3	„

And one delegate in respect of each additional fifty members up to a maximum of ten delegates.

The National Convention shall elect the National Executive, consisting of a President, Vice-President, Treasurer and Secretary, and twelve other members. The National Executive shall hold office until the next Convention. It shall meet at least once a month.

The National Convention shall elect a number of substitutes to fill any vacancies that may arise on the National Executive.

The National Executive shall be the controlling authority when the National Convention is not in session. They shall have power to appoint Committees and shall define the powers of such Committees.

Seven members shall form a quorum of the National Executive.

A Special Convention may be called by the National Executive or on a request by a majority of the Branches.

The National Executive shall prepare Agenda of the National Convention and issue it at least two weeks prior to the Convention. Resolutions, etc., from the Branches for the National Convention must be sent to the National Executive at least six weeks before the Annual Convention, excepting cases of Emergency Resolutions.

The National Executive shall be responsible for the conduct of newspapers and other publications of the Organisation.

EXPULSION.

The power to expel members lies with the National Executive. Expelled members have the right to appeal to the National Convention.

Title: Saor Éire: Draft Constitution and Rules

Organisation: Saor Éire

Date: 1931

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