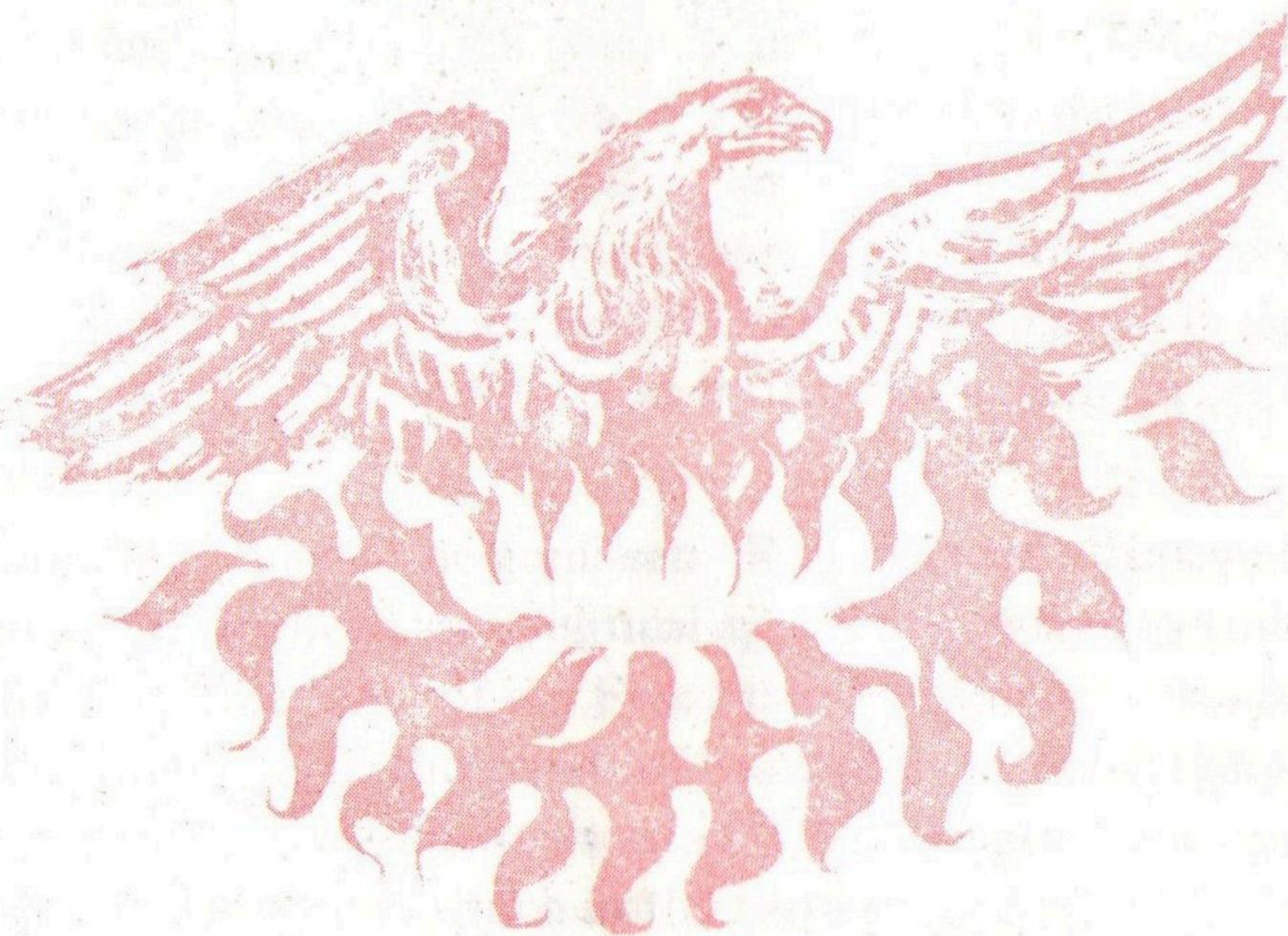


# SAOR

# EIRE



# MANIFESTO

## INTRODUCTION

In the six counties today the Butchers are at work again. The ghetto uprising of the Catholic - Nationalist population is the latest round in the Irish struggle for self-determination. But the rulers in the Free State are not in the least interested in the people North of the Border. They have shown beyond doubt, over many years, their "sincere" desire for moderation, for "peaceful" relations and the closest ties with the British state and its ruling class which have ruled and despoiled Ireland for eight centuries; who manipulated the divisions which colonialism had erected between the people of Ireland living in the North East and the rest of the country and used them to divide Ireland and keep it as an Imperialist pawn in 1921; who imprisoned the Catholic Nationalists of the six counties within an artificial statelet and has since thrown a protective cloak over the Orange terror which was used for fifty years against these people and which is now engaged in another exercise of naked terror to bludgeon the northern Catholics into submission.

The southern rulers - the gombeen "Republicans" - behave and are regarded as the financial and political agents of England in Ireland. In return for the "freedom" of the Free State "Republic" - freedom, that is, to drive hundreds of thousands of our people out of Ireland - they long ago opted for what Mellows called "the fleshpots of Empire". This Free State machine, which in the forties murdered Plant, McGrath, Harte and many other patriots, has again begun to grind, first with intimidation, persecution and harassment and now with legal frame-ups. They seem to think that under the pretext of a shot policeman they have a mandate to exhaust their "democratic" resources in repressing an opposition and make operative such a draconian piece of legislation as "The Offences Against the State Act". But of course the State is "democratised" body only as long as it can function i.e. to exploit, lie, cheat, rob and neutralise the voices of opposition in a "democratic" manner. At the first rumblings of popular discontent and extra

parliamentary opposition the facade is dropped and the "liberal democratic" mask is thrown aside. What the judiciary cannot silence it entrusts to its armed Special Branch thugs. Under a protective cloak of "popular opinion" generated by the communications media it can set to work eliminating the "troublemakers" of society in an attempt to construct a breakwater against the rising waves of discontent. If the measure of our seriousness can be gauged by the recent spate of persecution against our members and if this wave of repression has awakened one Irish person to the realities of Free Statism, then indeed Saor Eire has been very successful.

Dublin, May 1971.

## MANIFESTO

It was England's final and total victory which threw the mass of the Irish people down into a condition of unbridled class slavery from which we have never yet succeeded in fully emancipating ourselves though we have never yet, and never will - as the risings in each generation testify - cease to struggle against that enslavement.

Imperialism in Ireland must be overthrown because it has never meant anything and can never mean anything, but foreign domination and oppression of our people, despoilation of the country and mass depopulation, economic exploitation, and absolute subordination to the military and economic needs of the British ruling class, a permanent wasting away of the human resources of the nation - and finally the mutilation of partition, imposed by the British Empire and bringing with it chronic economic stagnation on both sides of the Border and the institutionalised division of the working class in the six counties. It must be smashed and replaced by a socialist system which reincarnates amidst modern conditions in Ireland the best communal values and principles of the ancient Gaelic tribal society which was wiped out by the successive assaults of feudal and capitalist England. The crisis in the occupied North shows this clearly as does the increasing political and economic dependence of the Irish Free State on Imperialism with its resulting miseries and exploitation of the Irish people. Revolution is now on the agenda and whether it will be brought to fruition in this epoch is now a matter for revolutionaries.

### **The National Revolution: Failures and Possibilities of Success!**

The cause of the failure of the Irish National Revolution has been basically a political question. The argument has been advanced by very genuine and sincere Republicans that if **only** we could have kept on fighting, victory would have been ours. They saw the lack of support among various sections of the community and any real signs of gain in this field as purely "military" questions. This has been one of the main failings of the movement and the realisation of the necessity for revolutionary politics has resulted in a political backlash where today we have the position that any brand of "socialist" politics is better than none. During the Civil War the inability of the Republican

cause to break outside the narrow political confines set by the Free State, led to its military defeat. For example in the west of Ireland the land courts, which had been in operation for some time beforehand, predestined the defeat of Republicanism in the West or at least the lack of enthusiasm for the cause there. When these courts took back the land which the landless men had seized they took back their "Republic". As every section of the people has its own economic interpretation of the Republic so also had the farm labourers - to them it was land. To the workers it was the economic holdings and properties of British Imperialism.

If we look at the main programmatic points of any national democratic revolution we can see that they are basically three:-

- (1) National Unity
- (2) Economic and political independence
- (3) The land question.

These were basically the three aims of the Irish National Revolution and as yet they remain to be solved. The National Democratic Revolution has yet to be completed in Ireland. This struggle has been waged for fifty years by various political identities, on various fronts, without any results and without any foreseeable successes. Parties ranging from Fianna Fail to Clann a Poblachta to the present day Sinn Fein have all sought, in their time and in their way, to complete this unfinished revolution. Their reason for failure are diverse but it is basically one of politics. They failed to understand and were incapable and unwilling to grasp the dynamics of the Irish Revolution and the inter-relationship between its Socialist and Nationalist aspects.

Connolly stated "if you remove the English army tomorrow and hoist the green flag over Dublin Castle, unless you set about the organization of the Socialist Republic your efforts would be in vain. England would still rule you. She would rule you through her....., through her landlords, through her financiers, through the whole army of commercial and individualist institutions she has planted in this country and watered with the tears of our mothers and the blood of our martyrs". This piece of Connolly's writing has been relegated to a series of cliches on the Irish political scene and political parties

are content to mouth such phrases as a substitute for formulating a programme which would show how the changing of property relationships is intertwined with the expulsion of British Imperialism. For tactically it is a question of indentifying the enemy and deciding where the real enemies of Irish independence lie, of realizing that the Free State ruling class is one of the loyal custodians of H.M. garrison in Ireland, and that only those who want to root out their system, root and branch, who are prepared to go all the way against the Free State can really oppose that master, British Imperialism.

### Free State - Friend or Foe?

Less concern should be given to the validity of "slogans" and more emphasis placed on the tactics and strategy necessary to carry them out. What determines the nature and outcome of any revolution are the programme, methods and strategy and not the slogans. It matters little whether some one is for a "Republic" on the one hand or a Workers' Republic" on the other, if a similar strategy can be agreed upon. If a "pure" Republican accepts the three points above as the basis for independence then it necessitates that his struggle must be in the 32-County context and not solely confined to the North. The Free State has not got political or economic independence from England and neither has the land question been rationalized. The Land Commission and the Land Acts undoubtedly broke up a lot of the old estates but they did not make agricultural employment and economic proposition. Witness the depopulation of the West and the drift back to the creation of large estates.

Fianna Fail, having failed in the thirties to build an independent capitalist economy have been forced further and further back into the Empire and depend for their very existence on British Imperialism. All they amount to are the financial supervisors of England's investment in Ireland. For this reason it is necessary to face the fact that owing to their watch-dog role, Fianna Fail are as big an enemy to Irish Independence as Imperialism is. The Irish Free State, since its inception has murdered far more Irish patriots in suppressing the independence struggle than the forces of Imperialism have. This necessitates that at some stage **during** the Irish revolution it will be necessary to defend

ourselves against the forces of the Free State. If the political reality of such a position is not grasped then we are doomed to failure. During the last campaign (1955-62) this was precisely one of the contributing factors to the defeat of the I.R.A. Young men who had risked their lives in border raids were ordered by an opportunist leadership to walk midly into the Curraugh concentration camp. The political leadership of the "official" movement today are still no nearer discovering a political solution. If they try and make the best of a bad job and enter the Dail and Stormont the system they denounce will just swallow them up. Experience from Fianna Fail to Clann na Poblachta shows that irrefutably. These so called "left-wingers" are more reactionary than any so called "right-wingers" they might have deposed. For though they may indulge in "socialist" phrase-mongering they have divested the Republican Movement of its revolutionary potential by dismantling and undermining its armed wing. They talk of two stages in the Irish revolution. First we establish territorial unity and then we tackle the question of property relations in the 32 counties. What do they think the Free State will be doing while they are trying to unite the country? There can be no distinct, separate stages in the Irish revolution. True there are stages, but these stages overlap each other and the tasks posed are inter-woven, thus giving an uninterrupted revolution which will drive out the forces of British Imperialism and their agents once and for all from Ireland. Unless this lesson is grasped by Republicans we are asinging ourselves to endless defeats.

### **One Method of Fighting**

Based on the premise of the necessity for armed struggle and the need to mobilise and radicalise greater masses of workers, small farmers and students, an overall strategy and programme must be developed. To limit the struggle to the confines of purely political parties and groupings is to relegate it to a process of endless discussion, ineffective motions, resolutions and debates and to sidetrack it into a political whirlpool. There are enough parties and groups in existence at the moment who claim for themselves the leadership of the coming struggle. It will not help to create another such organization. Action will test the validity of each distinct political philosophy and it is only in action that

leadership will be developed. New strategies and tactics must be developed for the Irish situation. Rural guerrilla warfare in relation to Irish topography and modern technological developments must be placed in its proper context and more emphasis placed on the urban guerrilla. Sabotage throughout the country, actions by small independent groups and political work among the masses must be the order of the day. Separate revolutionary groupings must be formed to confuse the police and in the interest of security. The banks and the State have all the resources, finance and armanents, to supply these groups and at a later stage a guerrilla front can be created.

Since our inception, we have strove to inject a new concept of political action into the bloodstream of Irish revolutionary politics. This concept of revolutionary struggle, new in the sense that tactically and strategically it has not been tried in Ireland during the present epoch, is as old in essence as the struggle against British Imperialism itself. The idea of a National revolution in 1916 was basically built around the belief that a small group of armed men could, by making what Pearse called a blood sacrifice, act as a detonator for the initiation of the fight for national liberation. None of the leaders of Easter Week 1916 believed that their action, taken in isolation from the rest of the country and surrounded by an apathetic populace, would in itself have the immediate effect of freeing Ireland. What they achieved was a sewing of the seed which blossomed two years later into the War of Independence. Their action was a defeat militarily, but a success in that it acted as a detonator for a popular explosion. All actions in present day Irish politics should be viewed in that light.

### **Relationship with the Mass Movement**

What is needed is a movement that is one step ahead but still in contact with the people and not a party which ends tail - ending the mass movement being a prey to all the backwardness of such a movement at it's present stage of development. The objective conditions for a revolution must not be waited upon but must be created from the material already existing. The inability or unwillingness of any party or group and their lack of success in this field has made it imperative to

create small armed groupings who can take an active part in creating these necessary conditions. There are sufficient diverse political groupings in existence at the moment and the creation of one more will only lend further to the confusion already existing. Thus such a movement must draw for its support and manpower on these same bodies and carry the struggle to a higher plane. There is no contradiction between the building of armed groups and the building of the mass movement. Such actions as they will carry out whether they be armed intervention in some labour dispute, the redressing of a social evil, or attacks on State property or its servants, will show to the people that there is in existence the means and the methods to combat and defeat a bureaucratic capitalist state. Such actions will focus the attention of the people on the wrongs and evils that exist in our society and will expose the dictatorial character of the state machine in its unwillingness to abrogate its privileges.

In theory at least, Republicanism is nearer to this correct tactical approach than the more developed Socialist groupings. It is not the quantity of Marx digested that makes a revolutionary but the ability to prepare for, take part in and make the revolution that matters. Some Socialist groupings, for various subjective reasons, hold to the belief that the mass of the people must be politically conscious and that the objective conditions must be ripe before we start to make this revolution. Such attitudes will condemn them to endless discussions, the continual analysis of actions after the event and eventually to political extinction.

What elevates the actions of Saor Eire to a serious revolutionary platform is the attempt to weld this political and military struggle into one unit. Any attempt in recent Irish history to perform such a task has resulted in an unhappy alliance with either a degeneration into conventional reformist politics or resulting in a group of a purely militarist nature.

Saor Eire was founded in the late sixties from members of the Irish Republican Movement and the Irish political left. We were then only a small revolutionary group with almost no resources. We were starting from scratch on a line of struggle which has defeated groups of much greater numerical strength than ourselves. We were a small

group of fighting men who had not carried out any revolutionary action that would have distinguished us from the numerous groups and organisations that were involved in unproductive discussions. Our first step was to expropriate arms. By this revolutionary action we were in a position to finance our group. Small groups of revolutionaries were organised with whatever weapons were available. Whatever support we commanded was solely on the basis of our revolutionary action. At the start the "authorities" believed these actions to be the work of armed bandits but when certain of our actions were claimed they soon realised their mistake. They still however resort to the old terminology—"armed bandits", "criminals", "gangsters", etc. With this form of defamation we have much in common with the revolutionaries of other countries.

From the very beginning we have used revolutionary warfare to attack the interests of the ruling class and imperialism in Ireland. It is only through revolutionary warfare that the people of Ireland will truly achieve the goal which has been fought for uninterruptedly over the many past centuries of unquenchable struggle and sacrifice for freedom. Republican Ireland has been at war with the Free State since its creation. There may have been ceasefires but no treaties were signed, and in the not too distant future it will be necessary to take up this struggle again.

**Title:** Saor Éire Manifesto

**Organisation:** Saor Éire

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