

The Struggle for Socialism.

The revolutionary and radical essence of the Democratic Programme of the first Dáil is lost on few. The text and spirit of the document aims, in no mean way, to comprehensively map out a direction for a sovereign, and democratic Irish Republic, a clean break with the ruling British imperialists. To this end, it details exactly how the membership of that first Dáil, and indeed subsequent Dáil should set about their work. As history would have however, it was not to be and the programme remains largely unimplemented. Our task today therefore, must be to see to it that in our lifetime the aims of the Democratic Programme are implemented.

The extent to which the promises made in the Democratic programme were ignored by future Cumann na nGaedheal, and afterwards Fianna Fáil governments is appalling. You need not even finish the first paragraph of the document to see the blind eye Irish conservative governments turned to the demands of the Democratic Programme. I would challenge anyone in Fianna Fáil or Fine Gael, the two main culprits of inaction with regard to the Democratic Programme, to show how the nation's soil remains sovereign, or in how many instances public right takes primacy over that of private right.

Successive governments in this country have made a mockery of the Democratic Programme. Like the Proclamation itself the Democratic Programme is little more to them than a silly historical remnant, not worth the paper it is written on. It is just as James Connolly proclaimed,

“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 will be in vain. England will still rule you. She would rule you through her capitalists, through her landlords, through her financiers, through the whole array 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”.

And that is what we have today ruling this part of our country, a conservative government more interested in the well-being of the banks and prices of houses than Irish citizens languishing on trollies across the country while hatchetman Harney and the HSE decimate our public health service.

The reasons however why the Democratic Programme was never implemented are abundantly clear. The Democratic Programme of the Dáil was a horiffing prospect for

the ruling landed gentry. The Democratic Programme was an affront to the importance of wealth and class, instead the values of Liberty, Equality, and Justice for all were the basis of the document. And still today these values are at the core of Sinn Féin's policy and ideology. This blunt leftist direction for Ireland, enshrined at the heart of the Democratic Programme was antipathy for the ruling classes who had inherited control of the Free State from the British, and as such the first order of business upon taking the reigns of power was to quietly sweep the document under the proverbial rug and let it there to this day.

Fast forward to today then and the horrible irony of our situation couldn't be more vivid. We are in the midst of a National and International economic crisis. Workers find themselves unemployed with each passing day and the good old days of apparent economic stability couldn't seem more distant. A progressive and radical vision for change would be well suited to this situation, but the very remedy to our situation, the Democratic Programme of the First Dáil has been shunned by the political class, and as such even though it may hold the essence of a solution to the problems currently facing us it is unlikely to be resurrected.

The situation we find ourselves in today is, I imagine, a million miles away from what those gathered at the first Dáil envisioned for Ireland in the 21st century. Our country is divided, the working classes are suffering under the burden of neglect, and economic circumstance both of which have been foisted upon them by an inept dithering government. The European Union, and the Federalists' notion of a Euro-super state, is a constant threat to national sovereignty. Fine Gael and the self-proclaimed 'republican party' Fianna Fáil have betrayed those who bequeathed the reigns of the state to them, the people of Ireland. I doubt very much if Brian Cowen is even fully sure of the correct meaning for the word republican.

The struggle continues then, and it must be remembered that there is a proud history of struggle in this country, not only against an oppressive political élite, but also against a foreign oppressor. Tomorrow commemorates the 37th anniversary of Bloody Sunday, when that same foreign oppressor murdered 13 innocent Irish citizens, part of a group that were demanding their civil rights. As such this type of oppression from the British imperialists shows to us very clearly that we must, as well as demanding a political awakening, also ensure the re-unification of our country.

And so as we remember the name of this debate, The Struggle for Socialism, it is indeed that, a struggle. Nothing worth having comes easy, and if we are to be victorious we must remember that. It is the duty of each and every one of us here to do

all that is in our power to remind the political class of the proud heritage of this country the same heritage they have betrayed. Sinn Féin President made the point best at the commemoration of the First Dáil on 21st of this month, when he reminded the crowd that the government that forgotten the anniersary only remembering after Sinn Féin organised the commemoration. We must make them remember comrades, we must remind them on the streets, in our literature, and through whatever other means are available to us. And if we cannot remind them we must remind the supreme authority of this country the people.