

24/10

R.

RESTRICTED

Miss Elliott

Mr Spence of 20/6
Mr Sullivan

To see a return pl

MM 357x

cc ✓ *MM*
Mr Spence
Mr McConnell
Mr Bell
Mr S Hewitt
Mr Burrows*

*(without enc)

Sinn Fein Slogadh on the Irish Language, Navan

I enclose for information a translation of AP/RN's account (25 September) of the Irish language conference which Sinn Fein held at Navan on 20/21 September. (To make full sense it needs to be read alongside the original article, which was partly in English.) This is of some interest for Sinn Fein's attitude to the political exploitation of Irish. I would be grateful if Mr Burrows could pass on my thanks to those who translated it.

S.L. Rickard

S L RICKARD

CPL

28 October 1986

RESTRICTED

SLOGADH SHINN FÉIN

[From An Phoblacht/Republican News, Thursday, September 25th 1986.]

by Mairtín Mac Diarmada.

150 Irish speakers and Republicans gathered in Navan [An Uaimh] in County Meath last weekend for SINN FEIN's first 'Slógadh' [Irish Language Gathering]. Despite the 26 County's Government attempt to ban the Slogadh, SINN FEIN's Culture Department managed to set up one of the largest and most rousing gatherings ever for Irish speakers.

[Para in English:] On the weekend,...

....for many years.

TÚS

[beginning]

The Slógadh was begun on the Friday when Ruairí Ó BRÁDAIGH, former president of SINN FEIN, gave a lecture on the theme of the *Republican Movement 1966-1968*. He put special emphasis on the Movement's stance on elections and how a change has come about on that stance. "a zig-zag", he called it.

He reminded the audience that sectarian murders in this century began in 1966 by the Loyalists, a time when the Irish Republican Army [Óglaigh Na hÉireann] were not active at all, although they are blamed for sectarianism by the Dublin Government.

COMORTAS

[competition]

Later on in the evening the host gathered for the Slogadh's Ballad Competition. As the proposer, Liam Ó CONCHUBHAIR, said, the standard was very high.

'The Struggle For Freedom' was the theme for the composers and the song *Fáilte Roimh an Mhaidin* [Welcome to the Morning] by Sean Mac CORRÁIDH from Belfast won the first prize. It is a beautiful translation of the English language song *Irish Ways and Irish Laws* and Sean himself sang it.

On Saturday morning SINN FEIN's president, Gearóid Mac ADHAIMH, officially opened the slogadh. Concerning the Dublin Government's restriction he said;

"Ó Tuathail [pres. Patrick O'Toole] gave as one of the reasons for the ban the fact that I would be present. A couple of days ago I got a ticket for the Ireland Championship Game and I'll be there tomorrow in *Parc an Chrócaigh* [??Croke Park] hoping to see Tyrone's victory. Does that mean that the Freestate Government will ban the Ireland Championship match or the Gaelic Sports Association?"

He continued;

"It was because the cultural renaissance worries the Dublin Government that they put a bit into in the Hillsborough Agreement saying that there would henceforth be recognition of Gaelic culture. They understood that Republican people were raising the question of culture and they were worried that people would think that no one was standing for the rights of the Irish language but the Republicans."

DIOSPOIREACHT

[discussion]

After the President's speech there was a discussion under the title *The Irish Language in the Movement- as it was, as it is, and how it should be*. One of the most interesting views was voiced by Father Piaras Ó DUILL. He said that he agreed with the idea that the same importance should be attached to the work of the renaissance as is attached to the question of the country's political freedom:

" It's the foundation stone and the main importance of rising up, the desire of the people in freedom; and that desire founded on self knowledge, on understanding of the homeland and of the heritage. Without that understanding there will be no point fighting for freedom."

" That was understood in Prionsias STAGG's deathbed speech, and the same question was debated in the heart of Bobby SANDS: ' They'll never break me because the desire for freedom is in my heart.' And concerning the ordinary working people of this land it is already clear that they will always stand with their homeland if they have direction.."

Lisburn

COMHAONTU

[agreement]

Pádraig Ó MAOLCHRAOIBHE , a SINN FEIN councillor in Lios na gCearrbhach [I regret I don't know what this is in English], gave a lecture under the title *The Agreement- A hinderance to freedom*. (We publish selections from the lecture below) ,

[Para in English;] Aine Nic GIOLLA EASPAIG co-author of...
...the best contribution of the weekend.

He said that he went into Portlaoise Prison in February 1979 and that the prisoners had done a lot of work from 1974 , although there was a anti-Republican regime in the prison in those years. Mac CURTAIN said that it was because of the spirit and the stance of the prisoners themselves that the situation improved in Portlaoise in 1979.

In that year the Irish classes were reorganised with proper standards, fainni [badges worn by Irish speakers] and tests, both the middle test and the high test and after that the prisoners made progress, although, as Coireall Mac CURTAIN said " We don't have any qualifications, we don't have any degrees but, at the same time we did our level best."

GAELTACHT

He gave an account of the establishment of the Gaeltacht in Portlaoise in the beginning of 1982 and he said:

" It gave us extra courage, and more important than that it was our example to other prisoners and to people outside - that the prisoners could defeat the obstacles. That Gaeltacht is still alive today. When it was started at first there were only 19 prisoners - at present there are almost 40. Nearly 60 or 70 people have been through the Gaeltacht since it was first begun."

Coireall said that he thought that there were 5 fundamental things about Irish, that there were 5 things about her or any other language:

" It is a weapon of the intellect, it is a means of fighting, it is another view of the world, it is a key to literature and it is pride, self respect for yourself."

CAGES

[Para in English;] Coireall Mac CURTAIN also served...
 ... "a new type of McCarthyism."

GRADAM

[degree]

The Saturday's events were finished with a bestowall of the Degree of the Republic. Cait Bean Uí Mhuineachain from Mullingar recieved the degree from Gearóid Mac Adhaimh. Cait is an old Republican and an Irish speaker who spent a period in prison in the 40s and was a founder of Comhaltas Ceoltoirí Éireann [Irish musical society]

[Final para in English]

BAC AR SHAOIRSE

[A Restriction on Freedom]

Below are extracts from the lecture that Pádraig Ó Maolchraoibhe gave to the Slógadh on Saturday 20 September.

" Nearly a year after the signing it is possible to say that no improvement - indeed its opposite - has come to the lives of Nationalists in the Six Counties. Of the small things they were promised not one has come about.

The SDLP said that the Nationalists of the Six Counties would be able to proudly raise their heads.

CINN FAOI

[heads down]

Any Nationalist who agrees with the Agreement after all the suffering every one of them have gone through should hang his head with shame. The only things that Nationalists of the Six Counties have got up to now are intimidation and beatings and murder on the streets and in the houses.

If Nationalists were under pressure and a great change was in sight it would be bad, but to suffer all of this without any change at all - that is terrible.

As in the past, after 800 years of fighting for national freedom, the Agreement is only an attempt to tighten English power in the north of Ireland by throwing sops to Nationalists - with the full support of the SDLP, the Church and the media; north and south- and without any support from the Republican Movement , the only radical answer to British Imperialism in this land.

For the first time ever the Dublin Government gives 100% support to the plans of British Imperialism.

The interest which Britain , NATO and the United States have in Ireland is to do with military factors, to do with economics and to do with power. If you aren't with us, you are against us and it doesn't matter if you are independent or non-aligned. You have no right to be independent; you must be with us.

Fitzgerald's Government were satisfied to leave the Agreement to the United Nations, that is to say they were satisfied that the Agreement have 'treaty status'. That means that they have turned their back on articles one and two of the constitution of the Twenty Six Counties and the English can say, at international level, that it isn't a colonial problem and that not only the SDLP but the 26 Counties' Government admit that they have a right to be there. This is a great help to England in the field of international politics.

COMHAIRLE

And what did Fitzgerald get as payment for this? Yes, that he would have the right to advise the British Government about affairs to do with nationalists in the 6 Counties. Who gave him the right to speak for us? We don't even have the right to vote for Fitzgerald, even if we would want to- but England gave him the right to speak for us...and the SDLP.

Not that the Government of England are going to take any notice of what he says anyway. In an interview Tom King gave to the *Belfast Telegraph* at the beginning of July this year he made his mind clear. He said: "The British Government is not sharing that (authority) with anyone."

That is to say that what Fitzgerald got was responsibility without power.

FONN GAIRE

[a desire to laugh]

We are told that before long we'll have the right to hoist up the Irish flag in the 6 Counties, that we'll have the right (this makes you laugh) to have street names in Irish. We've already done both these things ourselves already despite England but neither of these mean home rule freedom for the Irish people. As Republicans we want freedom - not false improvement in our world of captivity.