

**BRITAIN  
MUST DECIDE  
TO GO**

**AONTACHT ÉIREANN**

**REPUBLICAN UNITY**

**PRICE: 20p**

**BRITAIN**

**MUST DECIDE**

**TO GO**

**AONTACHT ÉIREANN**

**REPUBLICAN UNITY**

## **BRITAIN MUST DECIDE TO GO.**

### **THE PURPOSE OF THIS PAMPHLET IS:—**

- (a) To set down the reasons why we believe that a firm declaration by the British Government, of its intention to withdraw completely from Ireland over a period of time, is the essential pre-requisite to avert the danger of Civil War, to provide the basis for permanent peace in Ireland and to establish genuine goodwill between the Irish and British peoples,
- (b) To remind the Irish people that at this most critical time, after 800 years of occupation, when violence is escalating, it is the common policy of the three established political parties in the Twenty six Counties and of the S.D.L.P. to induce the British to stay, and
- (c) To proclaim that it is a matter of the greatest national urgency that the Irish people at home and abroad find a way to put forward the national claim, which has been reneged by the professional politicians.

### **1. THE IRISH CLAIM IS JUST AND DEMOCRATIC**

**It is first of all necessary to establish briefly that the claim for the basic integrity (which need not necessarily mean a single set of political institutions) and for the independence of Ireland is just and democratic.**

It is a historical fact that Ireland was never effectively colonised. There was always resistance, which assumed the form of a Republican movement from the time of the French Revolution. Even the extensive plantation of Ulster was unsuccessful. The native Irish were not supplanted. They continued as a substantial



proportion of the population (and, indeed, in so far as both the province as a whole and the major part of the Six Counties is concerned, as a majority of the population), and clearly by every test they remained part of the Irish nation. They are indigenous to the areas in which they live and they have at all times been Irish as surely as have the people of any other part of the island. They have never lost their Irish nationality and they are still like O'Neill "on their native heath". The members of the community, which originated with the Plantations, have equally clearly long since become part of the Irish nation and they have contributed not only to the development of Irish culture and traditions but also to the movement for independence. The fact that they now see their way of life and freedom of conscience threatened by separation from Britain and inclusion in a State, which would be preponderantly Catholic in composition — while it is an understandable and legitimate fear which in justice must be assuaged to their satisfaction — does not justify the coercion of part of the national majority out of their own nation. A Fortiori, it does not justify the retention in the United Kingdom of an area, devised so as to comprise the maximum area, in which the members of this community, concentrated as they are in a comparatively small corner, can command a viable over-all majority. The unwillingness of a minority to take the risk of domination by another religion should certainly be dealt with by ensuring that there cannot be such domination but this principle does not justify nor does it require the frustration of the legitimate aspiration of the majority and the coercion of a significant section of the majority.

The Act of Union, which was passed by the two Houses of the British Parliament and by the two Houses of the old Irish ascendancy Parliament, effected the Union of the two "kingdoms" of Britain and Ireland. The Home Rule Act, passed by the Parliament which resulted from the fusion of these two Parliaments, purported to restore Home Rule to Ireland — the unit, which had acceded to the Union in 1800. The Ulster protest in arms was against this decision by the successors of the two Parliaments of 1800, who were

now elected by universal suffrage, to revert to the former position. In the 1918 General Election, Home Rule not having been implemented, the Irish electorate opted by a very large majority for complete independence. Partition was, therefore, a concession to an armed refusal to accept both the legislative decision of the joint British and Irish Parliament and the democratic decision of the Irish people in an election in which this was the issue.

**While recognising the problem of the legitimate fear of the minority, which is in the main located east of the Bann, we assert as a fact that the Partition of Ireland and the retention of part of it in the United Kingdom, was and is unjust and undemocratic and that the demand for the completion of British withdrawal is just and democratic.** At the outset, therefore, we suggest that a solution in accord with the principles of justice and democracy — but with enforceable safeguards or special institutional political arrangements — is, of its nature, likely to be the most practical and effective solution and in the remainder of this pamphlet we will establish that this likelihood is, in fact, beyond reasonable doubt.

## 2. NO PEACE WHILE UNION LASTS

The creation of the Six County area as a separate entity for the first time in 1920 was based on sectarian division. The retention of the area in the United Kingdom conferred on the Unionist community the status of Loyalists. Their position was consolidated by British financial subsidisation and the British guarantee of the permanence of the arrangement, which meant in the last resort enforcement by the British army. They saw themselves as having the loyal duty to preserve the Status Quo established by the 1920 Act. Their fear of domination in a predominantly Catholic State and the material benefits of being the ruling class were other factors emphasising the importance of maintaining the Union. The national aspiration of the majority of the Irish people — including 40% of the population of the Six Counties — was, from the time of the practical



institution of Partition, mainly concerned with re-unification and by 1937 this was isolated as the last step to be achieved and this gradually became the universally accepted policy of the Twenty six Counties. The survival of the Six County area was consequently continuously threatened by the existence of a 40% Nationalist population within and by the policy of re-unification of the rest of the country. Loyalism, therefore, required a Unionist party and it required a permanent Unionist majority. This involved ensuring that the Nationalist community did not grow to outnumber the Unionists and this, in its turn, involved discrimination and victimisation. There could be no question of the Nationalist majority accepting the 1920 arrangement. Resistance to foreign rule, which developed into the Republican movement had been too tenacious over the centuries to disappear now and the achievement of independence in the greater part of the country served to ensure the continued determination to subvert the Status Quo established by the 1920 Act. Clearly, then, the Six County area, which was founded on the existence of sectarian division, depends on the continuance of sectarian division for its continued existence. As long as the union with Britain persists there is no possible meeting ground between the two communities. Their aspirations are diametrically opposed and not capable of reconciliation. There must continue to be a Loyalist and Nationalist or Republican community irrespective of any arrangement that may be made by professional politicians. No Bill of Rights can be effective because discrimination against and suppression of Nationalism, which to a Unionist is subversion, is an essential constituent of Unionism. The institutional violence and periodic physical violence, which has been a feature of the Six Counties was, then, inevitably involved in its establishment. It was only a matter of time until it escalated to its present scale.

**We assert, then, as a fact, established by the history of the Six Counties, that as long as the Union remains on the British Statute Book and as long as it continues to be supported by British military power and finance, there is no possibility of normal democratic conditions existing in the area.**

### **3. THIS WILL ESTABLISH GOODWILL BETWEEN BRITAIN AND IRELAND**

If on the other hand the Unionists are put on notice that their future is as part of Ireland, not of the United Kingdom, then the status of Loyalist disappears and with it disappears the international problem between the Irish and British people. The internal Irish problem will remain to be solved but it will for the first time be purely an Irish problem. We are satisfied that, if the British decision is taken in a responsible way and if the withdrawal is not precipitate, the Irish people will be able to devise a way acceptable to all, in which they can live at peace together. They cannot do this now because the British legislation retaining the Six Counties in the United Kingdom stands between the two communities and keeps them apart. It is quite clear that it is the uncertainty about British withdrawal and the unconvincing repetition of the guarantee of the permanence of the Union, that lies at the root of sectarian violence. If it is made clear that the end of the Union is in sight, it will be possible for the first time to discuss the future political structure of Ireland realistically. All sections will be anxious to find a way of peaceful co-existence and there will certainly be no significant body of opinion seeking the incorporation of the Six Counties in the existing Twenty six County State.

Every other solution has been tried and has failed. It has been established that a Unionist State cannot be viable. Direct British rule has also failed even as a temporary expedient. The "Power sharing" concept has failed as it was bound to fail because such a Government could work only, if the Nationalist representatives publicly foreswore their allegiance to the national cause, in which case they would obviously be rejected by their supporters. The bi-partisan policy of Government and Opposition in the Twenty six Counties, which withdrew the national claim for the purpose of fostering "moderate Unionism", has succeeded only in producing a recrudescence of Unionism in its most intransigent form accompanied by a campaign of sectarian assassinations. After five



years of this policy of trying to patch up the 1920 solution it is widely believed that the Six Counties have been brought to the verge of Civil War and it is extremely doubtful if Civil War could be prevented from affecting the whole country. In the new circumstances of the dramatically established failure of the joint Fianna Fail — Coalition approach we suggest a return to the national policy, which operated prior to 1969 and which consisted essentially of a claim for the ending by the British Parliament of the injustice to the Irish nation. Although this injustice was perpetrated as a concession to the dissident minority it has subjected them to the injustice of having to administer a discriminatory and repressive State and to living in a virtual state of siege. At the same time in the Twenty six Counties there has been a continuous situation of patriotically motivated people being in conflict with the institutions of the State. In Britain, itself, there have been periodic bomb outrages and British soldiers have lost their lives in a cause they don't understand, while the close and friendly relationship between the British and Irish people, which should naturally follow from the proximity of the two islands, their economic interdependence and their common international interests, has been inhibited from really developing by the continued incorporation of part of Ireland in the United Kingdom.

**Again it can be asserted as a fact that from the moment Britain formally declares its intention to withdraw from Ireland there will no longer be any enmity between the two peoples.**

#### **4. 1970 BI-PARTISAN POLICY HAS FAILED**

Although the original Free State party — Cumann na nGael, which was the predecessor of the present Fine Gael party, accepted the Boundary Agreement and registered it as an International Agreement at the Hague it eventually became the policy of all political parties in the Twenty six Counties to secure the ending of the 1920 arrangement retaining the Six Counties in the United

Kingdom. The following quotations from an article in the magazine "Studies" written by Mr. Eamonn de Valera, as Leader of the Opposition during the first Coalition Government, summarise the national policy:—

"To dismember a small nation, particularly a small island nation, whose only boundaries are the seas which demarcate its identity, to cripple it by dividing its territory, its resources and its people is perhaps the gravest injury one nation can inflict upon another. To every thinking person it must accordingly be clear that whilst such a wrong is unrighted it is idle to hope that there can be between the Irish and British peoples those good relations which the interests of both countries suggest, and which men of goodwill on each side of the Irish Sea desire."

"Were the excuses made for Partition to be accepted as valid no democratic state in the world could maintain its integrity. The basis of democracy is majority rule. If that be not accepted there is an end of democracy."

"Partition, brought about by an Act of the British Parliament, is continued and maintained by British power."

"In the outcome Partition can only be ended constitutionally as it began, by an Act of the British Parliament."

During this period also the following Resolution was proposed in Dail Eireann by the Taoiseach Mr. J. A. Costello, on behalf of the Government, seconded by Mr. de Valera on behalf of Fianna Fail and passed unanimously:—

Dáil Éireann,

SOLEMNLY RE-ASSERTING the indefeasible right of the Irish nation to the unity and integrity of the national territory,

RE-AFFIRMING the sovereign right of the people of Ireland to choose its own form of Government and, through its democratic institutions, to decide all questions of national policy, free from outside interference,



REPUDIATING the claim of the British Parliament to enact legislation affecting Ireland's territorial integrity in violation of those rights, and

PLEDGING the determination of the Irish people to continue the struggle against the unjust and unnatural partition of our country until it is brought to a successful conclusion;

PLACES ON RECORD its indignant protest against the introduction in the British Parliament of legislation purporting to endorse and continue the existing partition of Ireland, and

CALLS UPON the British Government and people to end the present occupation of our six north-eastern counties, and thereby enable the unity of Ireland to be restored and the age-long differences between the two nations brought to an end [*Taoiseach*].

The All-Party Mansion House Committee was established to promote this policy, which remained national policy on the unanimously expressed authority of Dail Eireann and accurately expressing the national will, until the announcement of new principles in 1970 by the then Taoiseach Mr. Lynch. What had happened was that the political parties in the Twenty six Counties had unwittingly over the years developed a vested interest in being the Government and the alternative Government in the Twenty six County State. This vested interest came to the fore and decided their attitude in August 1969, when the Civil Rights marches and their suppression culminating in the mob attacks on the ghetto areas in Derry and Belfast, brought the continuation of the Union and therefore the continuation of their comfortable position sharply into question for the first time since 1925. The new policy, which was aimed at the "restoration of Law and Order" the fostering of moderate Unionism and the elimination of violence developed from the pronouncements of Mr. Lynch on the eve of the Twelfth of July

1970. It continued with the acceptance of the British White Paper on Northern Ireland, which was based on the continued incorporation of the Six Counties in the United Kingdom, the acceptance without protest of a plebiscite in the Six Counties and finally with the Sunningdale Agreed Communique, which flagrantly proposed to circumvent the provisions of the Constitution of Ireland by an International Treaty recognising British sovereignty in the Six Counties. Throughout the five years since 1970 the Irish political parties, whether in Government or Opposition, have tacitly withdrawn the claim for the ending of the "injustice" of Partition and have co-operated to the full in every effort to re-establish an effective Government in the Six Counties as part of the United Kingdom. The result of this five years of the "New Departure" has been escalating violence and the inevitable forceful re-iteration by the Unionists of the truism that the maintenance of the Union requires a Unionist Government. Yet even now, when the policy of trying to buttress the Status Quo at the expense of justice, democracy and the fundamental principles of Nationhood has been such a demonstrable failure and when Civil War appears to be imminent, both Government and Opposition spokesmen publicly declare that at all costs the British must stay.

**We, then, further assert as a fact that the principles set out by Mr. de Valera and adopted unanimously by Dail Eireann are correct and that after more than half a century of the partition arrangement and after five years of the new Twenty six County policy designed to find a way to make it work, the solution involving a grave injustice to the Irish nation has clearly failed.**

## **5. DEMAND MUST BE MADE OVER THE HEADS OF THE POLITICIANS.**

It is surely time now to seek instead a solution based on justice and democracy. There can be no basis for realistic discussion on the future political structures until the Union is seen to be gone because



while the Union remains the future is decided — the future is Unionist, Nationalism is subversive and the Loyalist and the Subversive cannot conceivably mix in a viable Government. We claim, then, that it is clearly in the interest of peace in Ireland and of goodwill between the Irish and British peoples that policy should be directed towards inducing the British Government to make a formal decision to commence the process of withdrawal from Ireland. It is a matter of the greatest national urgency at this particular time that the Irish people should rise above the established political structures and assert this as their policy. The way to avoid Civil War is to sweep away the partition orientated political establishment as the Westminster orientated political establishment was swept away in 1918. Aontacht Eireann has consistently put this forward as its policy since its inauguration in September 1971, pointing out time after time that this was the only basis for peace. Prior to this the present Chairman of Aontacht Eireann had endeavoured to have this policy adopted by Fianna Fail by submitting the following Resolution for the 1971 Ard Fheis of that party:—

“This Ard Fheis RE-DEDICATES the Fianna Fail party to the first aim as stated in the Coru and, while recognising that, in order to achieve this, it is essential to bring about a real unification of the sections of the Irish people at present divided and that this cannot be done and should not be attempted by the use of force:—

(a) REJECTS the suggestion that a local majority has the right to opt out of the Irish nation or that any outside Parliament has the right to exercise jurisdiction over any part of the National Territory as defined in Bunreacht na hEireann

(b) REAFFIRMS the responsibility of the British Parliament for the injustice inflicted on this country by Partition and for all the evils of discrimination, victimisation, violence and bloodshed that have arisen and continue to arise from that injustice

(c) REJECTS the claim of the British Government that the Six Counties are part of the United Kingdom, and

(d) CALLS ON the British Government to announce its intention of embarking on the process of disengaging from this country.”

The Resolution was not allowed on the Agenda. Instead the new policy was endorsed without being specified.

**This is the first pamphlet in a series designed as the basis for a call on all the Irish people, at home and abroad, irrespective of their past or present political allegiances to make this demand now before violence develops into Civil War.**

**Aontacht Éireann  
10.10.75.**



# AONTACHT ÉIREANN

## REPUBLICAN UNITY

Aontacht Éireann will be organised in the 32 Counties of Ireland. Its policies will be derived from the following FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES:

- (1) To unite the people of Ireland in an Independent Republic.
- (2) To restore the Irish Language and to preserve and develop Gaeltacht areas.
- (3) To guarantee the Fundamental Human Rights of every citizen.
- (4) To ensure by encouragement and direct State action the optimum development of the country's resources for the purpose of improving the welfare of all the people of Ireland and providing full employment.
- (5) To promote and develop the co-operative movement and other methods to maintain the highest practicable number of farm owners engaged in the Agricultural Industry.
- (6) To have State control of the location of Industry so as to obtain a balanced distribution of population in all parts of the country.
- (7) Recognising that the human resource is the paramount interest in the economy, to ensure that this interest is given adequate consideration in decision making both in the Private and Public sectors.
- (8) To provide equal opportunity and adequate living standards for all the people; to ensure the weaker sections are given a just participation in the National Wealth and to ensure by means of fiscal arrangements related to capacity to pay that the benefits

of economic advance are made available for the whole community.

- (9) To take appropriate action to ensure that a major part of the nation's assets does not fall under the control of outside interests.
- (10) To safeguard the interests of the Irish people in any International Agreement or Alliance which may be concluded and to maintain our national identity and integrity in any such arrangement.

**If you agree with the contents of this pamphlet, you are invited to write to the Hon. Sec., Aontacht Éireann at Rossa House, 77 Marlborough Rd., Dublin 4, either to join the party or to offer to assist in collecting signatures supporting a demand for a British declaration of intent to withdraw from Ireland.**