

THE IRISH NATION



Uimír 4

Aibreán2022

IRISH NEUTRALITY & UKRAINE FREEDOM

Following the foundation of the Irish State in 1922, the issue of Irish neutrality in relation to a major military conflict in Europe first arose in 1939 when Britain and France declared war on Germany. At that time, the State was still a member of the Commonwealth and, while other members of that association also declared war on Germany, it was decided by the Dáil not to do likewise. Therefore the position assumed was that of non-belligerence or, as otherwise expressed, neutrality.

NATO & EU

When NATO was formed in 1949, it was decided by the, then, Irish Republic not to join and thus neutrality was effectively maintained. The question of possible departure from a stance of neutrality next began to arise in the 2000s in the context of developing defence and security cooperation, and proposals for same, within what is now called the European Union. As a result, the Irish Constitution was amended (Article 29, section 4, subsection 9) which stated that: “The State shall not adopt a decision taken by the European Council to establish a common defence pursuant to Article 42 of the Treaty on European Union where that common defence would include the State.” Along with that, there are the amendments to the Defence Act of 1954 which provide that

Irish participation in UN peacekeeping missions require, along with a Government decision, a UN Security Council resolution (or one by the General Assembly) and an enabling resolution of Dáil Éireann. The latter provisions have come to be known as the “triple lock”. However, there is no constitutional or statutory barrier to joining NATO, although, currently, any such membership would have to be construed alongside the triple lock.

PROGRAMME FOR GOVT

In 2020, the Programme for Government made the following commitments:

“The Government will ensure that all overseas operations will be conducted in line with our position of military neutrality and will be subject to a triple lock of UN, Government and Dáil Éireann approval.

“Ireland’s participation in PESCO projects will be maintained on an ‘opt-in’ basis, with contributions being entirely voluntary. Any projects undertaken within PESCO will be approved by Cabinet and Dáil Éireann.

“The Government will not participate in projects that are incompatible with our policy of active military neutrality and non-membership of military alliances.

“Within the context of the European Peace Facility, Ireland will not be part of decision-making or funding for lethal force weapons for non-peacekeeping purposes.”

THIN END OF WEDGE

Nonetheless, there is a serious doubt as to how far the Irish involvement since then in PFP, PESCO, EPF[♦] and coordinated defence procurement is in fact consistent with the policy of neutrality and these involvements need to be seriously reconsidered. Moreover, there are questions about prospective Irish involvement in EU Battle Groups. These developments may be intended as the thin end of the wedge as regards the full abandonment of Irish neutrality.



NEUTRALITY & CONSTITUTION

On the other hand, from time to time, it has been advocated that Irish neutrality should be both defined and enshrined in the Constitution. A precedent for this is the situation in Austria. The essential constitutional terms there are: “Austria declares ... her perpetual neutrality.”; and “Austria will not join any military alliances and will not permit the establishment of any foreign military bases on her territory.” These provisions are to be interpreted further, as necessary, according to international law as outlined in the Hague Convention of 1907 concerning “Rights and Duties of Neutral Powers”. The latter is incompatible with the use which has been made of Shannon Airport by the US military (Article 5). Insofar as that is the case, it should be pointed out that the assertion by the Minister for Foreign Affairs that we are militarily neutral, just because we are not in a military alliance, is therefore not a completely accurate statement.



[♦] (NATO) Partnership for Peace, Permanent Structured Cooperation (EU), European Peace Facility (EU).

POLITICAL NEUTRALITY

In public debates about Irish neutrality, it has been asserted that there is a difference between military neutrality and political neutrality. This is in fact the case insofar as the policy of neutrality by a State, as generally understood, does not conflict with it adopting a position such as in the case of the Russian invasion of Ukraine whereby this has been rightly denounced, taking account of basic morality, international law, national sovereignty and popular democracy. However, a clear distinction must be maintained between not necessarily being neutral politically, while being decidedly neutral militarily. There is a tendency by some people to attempt the non sequitur of the first being portrayed as requiring negation of the second. Moreover, one wonders why the Establishment keeps on saying that we are not politically neutral when nobody is suggesting that we are; they are in fact just knocking down their own Aunt Sally and thus trying to distract from the fact that we are not fully militarily neutral. It seems we are being subtly prepared for the complete abandonment of military neutrality, at least in connection with an EU defence dimension.

BULLYBOY TACTICS

Otherwise, there have been various efforts made over the years to denigrate the policy of Irish neutrality with bullyboy tactics. First of all, it has been said that the State is free-riding on NATO whereby it allegedly benefits from a defence umbrella provided by that organisation’s nuclear and conventional forces. But it has not been

demonstrated what threat of attack the Irish State needs to be concerned about and is being protected from.

More recently, the line has been put out that the State should participate in structures for the defence of the European Union of which it is a member. But it should be remembered that the EU is not the European Federal State which some people would like it to be and is still fundamentally a free trade area with an accompanying internal economic market. If some member States feel that there is a threat to their security, presumably in current circumstances from the Russian Federation, it is a matter for them to make national and international arrangements accordingly, some of which may be met by them through NATO, if they so wish. It is not a legitimate expectation of neutrals such as Finland, Sweden, Austria, Ireland and Malta to have them get involved in the resultant military alliances, especially where their own national security is not at risk.

UKRAINE CRISIS

In respect of the current crisis in Eastern Europe, focused on Ukraine, it has been asserted that this justifies the expansion of NATO subsequent to 1991. The picture is being painted of former Soviet dominated countries being otherwise open to aggression if they were not in NATO. In fact, this may be viewed as a distorted perception. If, at least the countries bordering the Russian Federation from the Baltic to the Black Sea had instead been 'Finlandised' in a state of armed neutrality outside of NATO, but with international guarantees against foreign aggression, thereby not having to have NATO troops or weaponry installed on their lands, we might not be in the situation we are in now. In fact, it was indicated to Gorbachev that, upon Soviet evacuation from Eastern Europe, NATO would not expand eastwards – even 'East Germany' was mentioned in that regard. That commitment was therefore reneged on. Attempts are made to portray

such observations as being in some way just Leftist and pro-Russian; these are again just bully-boy efforts to draw attention away from the project of further consolidating NATO and tying Europe into greater dependency on the United States, as is evident, among other things, in the scheme of restructuring the basis of European energy supplies.

At the same time, one has to observe that Ukraine has been far from perfect in the past, with attempts to discriminate against the Russian language and incorporation of fascist elements such as the Azov Battalion into its armed forces. Moreover, Ukrainian oligarchs still have too much power and corruption is endemic in the system, which Zelensky undertook to tackle. There is a lot of reform which has to be carried out in the future.

WHERE WE ARE NOW

Whatever about how we got to where we are, we can only proceed from the current situation. The demands should be as follows: [1] an immediate bilateral ceasefire (not unilateral on the Ukrainian side as Russia is demanding); [2] acceptance that Ukraine will not become a member of NATO (as President Zelensky seems to have conceded); [3] confirmation that Ukraine will be able to provide adequately for its national defence in the same way that Finland does (not disarmament Russian-style); [4] international guarantees that Ukrainian neutrality will be protected; [5] referenda under OSCE supervision in the Donbas and Crimea on whether or not those regions (or parts thereof) wish to remain within a Ukrainian state (in contrast to dubious ballots held under Russian hegemony).

In the latter connection, what would be recognised are the democratic rights of the peoples concerned rather than acquiescence in the assertions of either Kyiv or Moscow. While reference has been made to the legal settlement made in 1991 concerning the boundaries of Ukraine, there is no reason why that should not be

reassessed in terms of the fairness and equity of same. Law and justice do not always coincide. For example, it has to be recalled that the Crimea was transferred from Russia to Ukraine in 1954 by Khrushchev within the Soviet Union, which was hardly a democratic operation.

AT THE CROSSROADS

However, the whole scenario has been thrown into disarray by the Russian invasion. The actions of a murderous thug and self-glorified autocrat, Vladimir Putin, have not only failed in their own objectives, but played directly into the hands of right-wing forces in the euro-atlantic sphere. NATO, which Macron earlier proclaimed “brain-dead” has been immeasurably strengthened and may well expand further into Scandinavia (Finland & Sweden), the

Balkans (Yugoslav remnants and Moldova) and even into Transcaucasia (Georgia). Furthermore, Germany is rearming, while being forced by the US to abandon its Baltic Sea energy pipeline link to Russia.

Putin is suffused with Great Russian chauvinistic imperialism and even denounces Lenin and Stalin for allowing a merely puppet Ukrainian State to emerge after the October Revolution. No wonder he is sometimes referred to as Tsar Vladimir.

But, particularly in the light of what happens in Donbas, Putin could be deposed, yet more likely by more cautious oligarchs and disgruntled military chiefs than by popular revolt. That won't bring much joy to Russia domestically, although it would be the lesser of two evils internationally.

IDENTITY IN IRELAND

Self-Description & Significance

In addressing identity in Ireland, one needs to begin by mapping out historically the various traditions that have developed or been introduced over the centuries.

Ireland is now understood to have known human habitation dating back 33,000 years in an interglacial period and there may yet be further discoveries that will lead to revision even of that most recent calculation. (The earliest trace of homo sapiens in Britain so far has been dated back to 40,000 years ago.)

CELTIC IRELAND

But the first identifiable tradition is that of the Gaelic with only perhaps substratal traces of pre-Celtic to be found in it. For over two thousand years, Ireland has experienced Gaelic culture and language to one extent or another. There is an ongoing debate as to how initially this came about, with various contending theses

being put forward, latterly particularly sparked by archaeo-genetical research and seeking to examine the very source of the Celts in Europe. However, they need not detain us here as our focus in this article is on culture and society today, not DNA and blood-lines or geographical provenance.

VIKINGS & NORMANS

The initial addition to the Gaelic ethos was Nordic from the 8th through to the early 11th century, to one degree or another, in the shape of the Vikings. They left lasting marks, evident in some cultural remains, ethnic characteristics (e.g. red hair) and especially town-building (often signalled by the suffix in nomenclature of 'ford'). But one cannot say that there is currently a pervasive Nordic phenomenon of a cultural and identifiable nature in Ireland.

Next, came the Anglo-Normans in the late 12th century. While often spoken of simply

as 'the English', they were as much (at least the commanders) notable for their French as their Anglo-Saxon speech, perhaps more so, and influenced the Gaelic language to a degree (e.g. 'boy': 'garçon' - Fr, 'garsún' - G). Gradually, many of them were Gaelicised and came to be described as 'more Irish than the Irish'. However, that did not necessarily lead to a switch in political allegiance. A further complication was introduced in this group with the onset of the Reformation, leading some of them to convert to Protestantism, while others remained Roman Catholic.

TUDOR CONQUEST & PLANTATIONS

In the wake of the eventual completion of the conquest of Ireland under the Tudors, the 16th century witnessed the start of significant migration into the island from the Britain of that time. The Confederation of Kilkenny (1642-49) saw those adhering to Roman Catholicism among the original Gaels and the Anglo-Normans and their descendants becoming broadly integrated ethnically, religiously and politically (albeit not linguistically) in resistance to British Protestant hegemony. But the Confederation was defeated by Cromwell and a new wave of land confiscation and settlement followed.

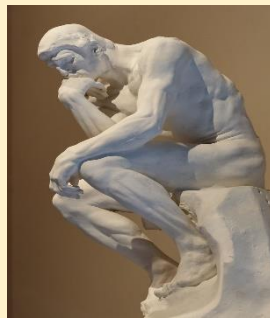
In the case of Ulster, unofficial and subsequent official 'plantation', as it was called, involved Protestant dispossession of the Catholic natives. There were plantations elsewhere in Ireland, but these did not endure in the long run, while those in Ulster did. The end result is that, today, there are two broad political traditions in Ireland, namely unionist and nationalist, as well as two jurisdictions, namely Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic. It is in regard to the traditions mentioned that the

consideration of identity has to take place.

TWO IDENTITIES?

There has been a tendency on occasion to go on to speak of two identities in Ireland as well as the two traditions just referred to. However, the reality of the situation is much more complicated than that. Research has shown that, in Northern Ireland alone, there have been at least five expressions of identity over the years, which can of course be overlapping to one extent or another. These are: British, Irish, Ulster, Ulster-Scots, and Northern Irish.

In the Irish Republic, most people seem to refer to themselves simply as Irish, but anthropologically one could break this down analytically into Gaelic and Hibernic. We introduce the latter neologism in order



to cover those who are not imbued with the Gaelic language and its particular culture, but nonetheless categorize themselves as Irish along with their fellow citizens who are so imbued.♥ (At the same time, those in the Hibernic category usually tend to be sympathetic to

the Gaelic ethos and most of them, not least due to the education system, are not totally unfamiliar with it.) A Gaelic-Hibernic breakdown would appear to be evident among nationalists in Northern Ireland as well.

NORTHERN IRISH

There is a point, which arises in the case of unionists, and that is about commitment to perpetuation of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and where one lives. There is an obvious adjectival logic arising from the latter consideration in the designation 'Northern Irish', while at the same time not precluding the option of also classifying oneself as

♥ We do not use 'Hibernian' because of its association with the likes of the Ancient Order of Hibernians.

British. In fact, in recent times, Doug Beattie, Arlene Foster and Edwin Poots are all on record as not disdaining to describe themselves as being Northern *Irish* in some measure.

SOCIO-CULTURAL CONTENT

Given the variety of self-descriptions referred to, there is the question of the socio-cultural content of some or all of these. One might approach this in terms of everyday culture and political culture. In the first instance, if one looks at the ways in which people conduct their everyday lives in respect of elementary customs and speech, it is hard to say that there is much if any difference under this rubric across the communities in Northern Ireland. Even in English speech, there are distinctive traces everywhere of Ulster-Scots, and Gaelic irrespective of religious or political affiliation.

It is with regard to political culture that differences become evident. These are apparent concerning flags, emblems, songs, historical memories and preferred self-descriptions. In the last case, as we have already noted, the situation is complicated.

At the same time, a nationalist, while perhaps, additionally to 'Irish', accepting 'Ulster' and 'Northern Irish' to an extent, is unlikely to endorse the classification 'British'. On the other hand, some unionists, while not excluding 'Irish' and 'Northern Irish', and perhaps preferring or adding 'Ulster' or 'Ulster Scots', would only do so in the context of also being 'British'.

In recent years, there has been a tendency to suggest that everybody might be got to describe her/himself as Northern Irish, while choosing, for example, to hold either a British or Irish passport.

SPORT & LANGUAGE

The position with regard to sport is also somewhat involved. It depends on whether one is talking about soccer, rugby, or Gaelic athletics. We are all familiar with the

kaleidoscopic perspective under this heading and there is no need to go into it here.

The situation in regard to the Irish language is also becoming involved. While the preponderant attitude among Unionists is indifferent or hostile concerning that language, there is of course the phenomenon of some unionists beginning to take a cultural interest in it. Of course, some nationalists see an expression of their nationality in the language and demand rights for it accordingly. Unfortunately, this has been perceived by some as a 'weaponising' of the language. It is important, therefore, for Irish language speakers to continually make clear the distinction between rights and imposition, as the latter should not rise in any instance.

PEACE & HARMONY

It is against this background that one seeks to realize peace and harmony in Northern Ireland. However, this task has to be set in the context of the constitutional position. Following the Good Friday Agreement, this can be stated as settled in accepting that Northern Ireland is currently a part of the United Kingdom in accord with the wish of unionists, while it is agreed that, should a majority in a border poll opt for a United Ireland, that will then be brought about in some form or other.

That means that there should be in place structures, laws, policies and practices which are suitable for the conduct of everyday life in the immediate future. The basic structures are there in the shape of the Legislative Assembly and the Executive. The laws have also been significantly amended to ensure the necessary equality. Policies flowing from these arrangements must be endorsed by both unionists and nationalists. Practices have to be monitored officially to be consistent with the foregoing.

There is then the question of individual practices, behaviour and attitudes among people in general. This is where the

maximal amount of understanding and tolerance is required. It is also where, not only official bodies, but institutions and associations in civil society have an important role to play in taking account of

the points addressed in this article and promoting, through educational and social efforts, the necessary changes in outlook beyond those which have prevailed hitherto.

A Century of Irish Statehood

The year of 2022 is the centenary of internationally recognised Irish statehood. An all-Ireland Republic was proclaimed in 1916 and ratified by the First Dáil in 1919. However, it was only following on the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921 that general recognition was secured for an Irish State of 26 counties.

PRO AND ANTI TREATY

Following the Treaty of December 1921, opposition to that accord manifested itself within Sinn Féin. When the Second Dáil met in January 1922, this opposition narrowly failed to win a vote against the Treaty. In June that year, the opposition again was unsuccessful in obtaining a majority among the electorate in the 26 counties for rejection, returning 36 TDs while pro-treatyites got 92. Even if all the Sinn Féin elected representatives in the north (6) had been added to those anti-treaty TDs, there would obviously still have been an overwhelming majority for the Treaty.



OPTIONS FOR ANTI-TREATYITES

The question then arose as to how the anti-treatyites should proceed in their opposition. One choice would have been to take their seats in the limited Third Dáil, and perhaps also the Belfast parliament, merely signing but not orally swearing the oaths of allegiance to the King as Head of the Commonwealth, and under duress. The second choice would have been to abstain from the legislatures and strive politically to

win support for their position with a view to achieving an elected majority in at least the Fourth or a subsequent Dáil. The third choice, which was adopted, was to take up arms, mainly against the newly established Free State, which was in fact done.

The result was a civil war, chiefly in the 'south', which highlighted the oath of allegiance and underestimated partition. The situation was a godsend for northern unionists and helped consign two generations of northern nationalists to an apartheid statelet.

The course of action ended in defeat within a year. Three years after that, the anti-treatyites split and Fianna Fáil was established, with it accepting the first option described above of entering the Dáil according to Free State rules and under duress (1927). Eleven years later, in 1937, Fianna Fáil managed to transform the Free State into a full republic in all but name, with its Constitution laying claim to rightful, even if not being able to exercise actual, jurisdiction over the whole island.

THE IRA & SINN FÉIN

The remaining anti-treatyites, by then the only party designated as Sinn Féin (Cumann na nGaedheal having been formed in April 1923), endured as an abstentionist republican opposition whose elected representatives combined with the residuum of the Second Dáil of 1921, which amalgam claimed authority over a by then aspirational all-Ireland republic. This

authority was transferred to a residual army council of the IRA in 1938 which thenceforth asserted that it was the legitimate government of Ireland.

Alternatively, the 26 county State could have been viewed as a valuable first step, albeit in a situation of retrenchment, towards the realisation of a true *Republic of Ireland*, and maximal control sought within it, along with imaginative defiance within the north. And, from 1933 at least, an oath of allegiance would no longer exist and have been an obstacle to participation in the Dáil.

It was not to be until 1986, that Sinn Féin, with the endorsement of the IRA, dropped its abstentionism, both in regard to the Dáil and an eventual devolved parliamentary body within the UK in Belfast. In effect, the whole republican movement then also came to recognise and seek to participate in official Administrations, south and north.

TACTICS & STRATEGY

Looking back on it now, it may be seen that the anti-treatyite tactics from 1921 to '26 and Sinn Féin plus IRA tactics subsequently in respect of the official institutions in Dublin and Belfast, even in the context of an armed struggle in the six counties, were mistaken and lacking in revolutionary, and even specifically military, wisdom. In fact, they left much of the way open to anti-national and anti-left forces and hamstrung a lot of potentially radical resistance to them for over half a century.

In the south, at first, Cumann na nGaedheal was allowed to dominate with its class base of big farmer and haute bourgeoisie, while adopting a neo-Redmondite stance towards the north and Britain; next Flanna Fáil assumed power

there, societally resting initially and principally on the small farmer and petty bourgeoisie, while at the same time making limited populist concessions to the urban working class and also engaging in verbal republicanism.

Throughout, the Labour Party was more like a minor extension of trade unionism than a genuinely socialist party and effectively tried to pretend that the national question didn't really exist.

In short, and to emphasise the point, it was not appreciated by republicans that the 26 counties could have been a vital bridgehead in the overall national struggle and could have been secured by addressing the social needs of the underprivileged within that polity.

THE WAY FORWARD

Saying all this is not to deny recognition for the commitment, courage and heroism of many of those who were involved in the republican movement over the earlier periods referred to. It is rather that one has to discern the tactical errors of the past and affirm that those sects which continue to adhere to them are rejected, while making sure that mainstream republicanism will never revert to the previous state of affairs.

Our enemies devoutly wish that we would go back into the cul de sac of dogmatic purism and self-inflicted ineffectuality. Then they would feel safe in their arrogant and reactionary exclusiveness. But that is not going to happen. We are at last proceeding realistically and meaningfully throughout the island towards the attainment of a truly sovereign independent Ireland of social justice under the guidance of a reborn republicanism. Let us ensure that Emmet's epitaph will at last be written.

Saoirse.Aontáct.Síocáin

SELF-DETERMINATION & SOVEREIGNTY

It is generally accepted in the world today that peoples have the right of self-determination. That is to say no that no people has the right to dominate another or others, unlike in the imperial era. This then raises the issue of what is a people. A people may be defined in both objective and subjective terms. Objectively, one has to take account of history, language, culture, economics, and territory. Subjectively, there are the considerations of consciousness and solidarity.

VARIETIES OF NATION

A people may be characterised by all of these features being present in common or a particular combination of some of them. For example, in Europe, Hungary is an example of the first situation in its virtual homogeneity, while Switzerland might be taken as an illustration of the second in its diversity. When a people exercises its right to self-determination, this usually results in the establishment of sovereign independence, in other words a nation-state.



In the Atlantic Isles (dubbed by some as the 'British Isles'), there are two States recognised in international law - one, officially titled the 'United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland' and another consisting of 26 Irish counties, the official description of which varies, but legalistically amounting, in effect, to an Irish republic as so far established. The extent of the United Kingdom on the island of Britain comprises three elements: the nations of Scotland, England, and Wales; the remaining UK element is found on this island and consists of six north-eastern counties, often referred to by the establishments in London and Belfast just as a 'Province' (as distinct from the historic province of Ulster).

SCOTLAND & WALES

The principle of national self-determination has been acknowledged in Britain in regard to Scotland as evidenced in the referendum of 2014. However, this showed that self-determination does not always result in support for independence. Nonetheless, there will probably be a second Scottish referendum on the matter in the next few years which, given present indications, may well then result in secession from the UK. The position in Wales is that there has not yet been a majority in the Welsh parliament calling for a referendum on independence. But attitude surveys in recent years have shown the demand among the populace for independence growing from 10% to 30%. If Scotland in fact leaves the UK, the signs are already there that this figure will continue to increase and, should it exceed 50% and be reflected in the Welsh parliament, there would probably have to be a referendum on independence for that country as well.

NORTHERN IRELAND

The provision in respect of the north of Ireland is outlined in the Good Friday Agreement of 1998. In that document, it is stated "that it is for the people of Ireland alone ... to exercise their right of self-determination". The method for doing this is envisaged as involving plebiscites in the two jurisdictional areas on the island on the option of a united Ireland. Republicans have assented to this, taking account of demographic and political developments in recent times which indicate the likelihood of that approach actually enabling the fulfilment of the Irish national objective.

It is clearly understood that such self-determination would involve the emergence of a sovereign independent

Ireland. Of course, following a positive outcome of the stipulated plebiscites, there would have to be negotiations about the content of such a polity. All sorts of detail have been raised about structures, devolution, language, flags and emblems, anthems, recognition of identity, bills of rights, and so on. These would all have to be addressed meaningfully and republicans have stated that they would not be found wanting under these headings.

The key point about self-determination that needs to be stressed is the sovereignty made possible by it, which signifies that British power in Ireland will at last come to a complete end.

THE PEOPLE OF IRELAND

Returning to our initial observations, it is an interesting question as to how exactly one defines the people of Ireland, bearing in

mind the objective and subjective factors referred to at the beginning of this article. However, the full realisation of that task is something that will take time and need not detain us unduly in the context of working out the immediate political implications of the Good Friday Agreement. Nonetheless, one can currently envisage the construction of a concept of at least civic Irishness ranging from the Gaelic along a spectrum of identity to the Ulster-Scots.

It is notable that most unionists reflect the attitude towards them emanating from the neighbouring island in that they generally acknowledge some sort of Irishness as part of their self-description. After all, their name for the entity to which they are attached is 'Northern Ireland'



AN NÁISIÚN ÉIREANNAIC

POBLAUGHT NA hÉIREANN

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 herself, 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 of 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
SEÁN MacDIARMADA THOMAS MacDONAGH
P. H. PEARSE EAMONN CEANNT
JAMES CONNOLLY JOSEPH PLUNKETT**