

Republican SINN FÉIN Poblachtach

Theobald Wolfe Tone Commemoration
Bodenstown, County Kildare



2004

“Let ‘Resistance’ be the watchword”

THE annual Republican pilgrimage to the grave of the Father of Irish Republicanism, Theobald Wolfe Tone, at Bodenstown, Co Kildare took place on Sunday, June 13.

Republicans from all over Ireland, as well as from England, Scotland and the United States assembled in brilliant sunshine in Sallins village and marched behind a National Colour Party as well as contingents from Cumann na mBan and Na Fianna Éireann to the graveyard. Music was provided by a piper from the Glens of Antrim Band.

At the graveside Chief Marshall Dan Donoghue, Dublin handed over the parade to Chairperson Des Dalton, Kildare, Vice-President of Sinn Féin Poblachtach, who welcomed those present. Des Dalton congratulated all the areas which had contested the local elections.

“All of our candidates put in more than creditable performances. Unfortunately this did not result in any seats gained. However our campaign for the 2009 26-County local elections starts now.

“We are determined to improve on our performance by winning seats. Our candidates will once more go before the people proudly under the banner of Republican Sinn Féin.”

He then called on Kitty Hawkins, West Wicklow to lay a wreath on behalf of the Republican Movement. He then handed the parade back to the Chief Marshall for

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the sounding of the Last Post and Reveille by the bugler, released republican prisoner Johnathan Bermingham.

Des Dalton then introduced Peig Galligan of the National Graves Association who gave a short but interesting oration before introducing the main speaker, Sarah Murphy from Bearna Uladh, South Armagh who gave a rousing oration.

The following is the text of Sarah's oration:

"I feel deeply honoured to address you today on the occasion of the Wolfe Tone commemoration, here at this graveside.

Theobald Wolfe Tone was born in Dublin on June 20, 1763 and we commemorate his birthday, not the anniversary of his death.

To give you a brief summary of his early life, he was the eldest of a family of 16, only five of whom survived. He was born into a family of landed Protestants, most of them descendants of those who had acquired land confiscated from Catholics earlier.

This tiny group of landed Protestants held total political power — the Catholic population, though comprising two-thirds of the population, was excluded from political rights and heoretically from land ownership. His father, who had a coach-building business in Dublin, when coaches were in demand, inherited the family estate of 200 acres here in Kildare, and the family moved here and took up residence in the family home near this church.

Educated at a private school, Tone went on to Trinity College where he joined the Historical Debating Society, studied law and later became a barrister. He was a product of Ireland's Protestant elite, but his experience as a barrister at the corrupt Irish Bar soon led him to emerge as a leading reformer and campaigner for Catholic rights.

As early as 1791 when he was 28 he issued a pamphlet entitled An argument on behalf of the Catholics of Ireland, which exposed the fundamental injustice of excluding Irish Catholics, who were two-thirds of the population from the political life of the nation.

His political writings became best sellers, brought him to the notice of radical opinion and he was invited to Belfast to help found the Society of United Irishmen, soon to become the first Irish Republican Movement. For the next three years he acted as chief publicist for the United Irish Society and the Catholic Committee, an organisation campaigning for the total repeal of the penal laws against Catholics.

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However, when the United Irish Society was suppressed in 1793, Tone was publicly associated with treason and was forced to go into exile.

For the remainder of his life he acted as Republican agent abroad, first in America and then in France where he attained the rank of Adjutant-General in the French army. It was Tone who personally convinced the French to send military aid to free Ireland and sailed with a full-scale French force in 1796, with a Franco-Dutch venture in 1797 and on a last fateful expedition in 1798 which culminated in his capture, conviction of treason and death in a Dublin prison. He was 35 years of age.

Tone has been called the Father of Irish Republicanism, a title he richly deserves. He left us a legacy of revolutionary Irish Republicanism, a dream of uniting Catholic, Protestant and Dissenter in an Ireland freed from English rule by force of arms.

Now in the Ireland of today we are still not free, and if we are to achieve our goal of a free, independent Ireland, we should be under no illusion about the uphill battle we are facing. After enduring a war for 30 years that is still continuing, with its attendant murder and torture by British occupation forces, we are faced with a coalition of Church, Free State and Provos united as one in their support for Partition and British occupation.

The Provo leaders, some of whom shouldered the coffins of the Hunger Strikers and freedom fighters killed in action, now shoulder England's burden, and administer her affairs as the colonials did in India. They show their total loyalty to England's army by laying wreaths on British war memorials and act as Her Majesty's loyal ministers of the Crown.

The latest profession of allegiance to the English monarch was printed in the Irish News on June 9 last in a report that was headlined 'SF Mayor will represent city in royal visit'. This is Provo-speak for the Provo Mayor of Derry announcing that he is now willing to bow the knee and give a warm welcome to the Commander-in-Chief of the British army, or any of her kith and kin, however minor. This is the same Commander-in-Chief who gave medals to her Parachute Regiment after they murdered 14 innocent Irish citizens in Derry on Bloody Sunday. People of Derry take note! After accepting every other vestige of British rule this was the last hurdle and indeed puts the Provos at the top of the list as being 'more British than the British themselves'.

It is worth noting that, as in colonial India, they are well rewarded, that is if they don't step out of line. However their English bossmen have proved to be strict taskmasters as was seen lately when the Provo colonial servants had their rent and expenses reduced in retaliation for some minor offence. It is also worth noting that the people of India eventually rose up and threw out the British and their colonial servants with them. Speed the day when Ireland does the same! Just to bring you up to date here

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in the neo-colonial Free State I saw a headline in a newspaper which said there was a landslide for the Provos in the local elections, so all hail to the new Fianna Fáil!

Remember the Provos are not following in the footsteps of Pearse and Connolly but in the footsteps of Éamon de Valera and in time will be absorbed as a junior partner into this brown paper bag organisation.

If you want more evidence of this it is in the recent election where the Provos got their seats from Fianna Fáil. But out there somewhere are the Republicans who abstained or voted for Republican Sinn Féin candidates in this election — we must be their spearhead.

Meantime the British pro-consul is going about the world telling all and sundry that the conflict in Ireland is over and that all of us, like the Provos, have settled for British occupation, and it is now time for peace and reconciliation.

Someone should tell him that the conflict is not over and that it will not be over until the British Occupation Forces leave our shores forever. Then and only then will it be time for peace and reconciliation.

There can be no one in the civilised world with a grain of humanity in them who has not been outraged and sickened by the reports of the torture and murder that has been carried out in Iraq by the American and British Occupation Forces. Here in our own country we have been further outraged and sickened by the fact that Bertie Ahern, by his support and hospitality at Shannon to those perverts travelling from the USA to perpetrate this murder and torture, has brought Ireland into an enormity of disrepute. He has brought the Irish nation down to a parcel of rag-bag followers of the Bush and Blair war machine. He is as guilty as Bush and Blair and should, along with these two international criminals, be brought before a court and charged with war crimes.

Like the murder and torture by the British army in the Six Counties which was authorised from the very top in the British government, the torture in Iraq has been authorised from the very top in the US. This has been revealed by Colonel Thomas Pappas, the commander of the local intelligence brigade who were responsible for implementing interrogation techniques in Iraq.

He has shifted the blame from himself to the very highest level and said that the interrogation policies were enacted after a visit last summer by Major-General Geoffrey Miller, the commander of the prison at Guantanamo Bay who had been sent by the Pentagon to help with the extraction of intelligence from prisoners in Iraq. So now we know, Bush has set up Guantanamo Bay as a school for torturers and murderers.

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Now to promote himself into the big boy's league, little jumped-up Ahern is inviting this international war-monger Bush to come here, though as everyone knows there is absolutely no need for his presence nor is he welcome. Ahern would be better advised if he would spend more time sorting out the corrupt fraudsters and porn addicts in the banks and courts over which he has control.

I note that a Catholic cleric, Bishop Walsh, has already voiced his concern about the Bush visit, but only because it may damage Ireland's relationship with the US if there are protesters. I don't give a damn about Ireland's relationship with the US. Unlike the Provos, we are not in hock to the Bush Administration.

I call on the people of Ireland to come out in their thousands in protest if Bush comes to this country.

I note also that Seán Brady, Archbishop of Armagh, is strangely silent on the Iraq issue. He being so eloquent lately when calling on Irish freedom fighters to lay down their arms. American and British arms and wars of occupation and the torture and murder of thousands of innocent Iraqi people hardly merit a mention. Well, no surprise there! After all the Catholic Church is part of the British establishment and depends on the continued partition of Ireland for its power.

Further proof of the complete and fundamental integration of the Catholic hierarchy into the British establishment was the attendance of the head of the Catholic Church at a ceremony in April 2000 when the English monarch honoured the RUC with the George Cross.

This is the same RUC which with the Northern Ireland Office, the British army and the British secret services were found guilty by Judge Cory of collusion in the murder of Catholics.

Notwithstanding Judge Cory's report in April this year, Archbishop Seán Brady continues his public support for the British Occupying Forces by calling on Catholics to join the new RUC/PSNI which is made up of the same people found guilty of collusion in murder of members of his church. There's loyalty to the Crown for you!

Meantime the Catholic Church is rocked to its very foundation by the silence and cover-ups of the scandals of perversion and child abuse.

We in Republican Sinn Féin do not feel obliged to take advice from such an organisation, we will follow our own conscience and will advise others to do the same.

Take away the British occupation of the Six Counties and we will put in its place ÉIRE NUA, a united, secular, free Ireland where the power will be in the hands of the people, Catholic, Protestant and Dissenter. Tone's dream realised.

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I have outlined here today the obstacles standing in the way of independence in Ireland. The Catholic Church, the Provos and those in Leinster House. All are satellites of Britain and all are dependent on Westminster for their power.

Ahern's support for the Iraqi war by allowing the use of Shannon was a tribute owed by him to the Bush and Blair coalition.

We in Republican Sinn Féin must wait for the turn of the tide, when armed with our Irish Republican principles, which we have inherited from Tone and his comrades, we shall claim our inheritance. Freedom from English rule. While we wait, we shall organise.

I want to thank everyone for your attention to this oration and in closing it is customary to end the Wolfe Tone Commemoration with a quote from one of our patriot dead. Departing from tradition,

I want to quote an Englishman, one, Winston Churchill, who when his country was under threat of occupation from Germany said:

'We shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills. We shall never surrender.'

In reply to this quote I have a quote for the British Forces of Occupation.

'We have fought you in south Armagh, we have fought you in the Bogside of Derry, we have fought you in Tyrone and around the lakes of Fermanagh, we have fought you in the Glens of Antrim and in the foothills of the Mourne, we have resisted you in our country for 800 years in the prisons and internment camps, we will continue to resist you and we shall never surrender!'

Safe home, everyone, and may the spirit of Tone go with you and let your watchword be Resistance."

Des Dalton closed the proceedings at the graveside and said:

"We leave here sure in the knowledge that we are the inheritors of a proud and noble tradition, the tradition of Tone and the United Irishmen. We are member of the oldest revolutionary Movement in the world. We go from this place with our banner aloft rededicated to our task of 'Breaking the connection with England'."

Following the oration, the parade regrouped and marched back to Sallins Village, where the order to dismiss was given.