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(S.3)

S_H_A_N_N_O_N_...Cathal.

"*Heenan's Journal*"
11-9-22

"*Irish Times*"
12-9-22

"*Irish Independent*" 28/9/22
"Re proposed setting up of
Military Courts"

A WAR OR PEACE POLICY

Mr. Cathal O'Shannon (Louth-Meath) was also rather indistinctly heard. He said there were far more urgent questions facing them than even the Constitution. There had been a certain amount of propaganda contributed to by members of that House, indicating that the business of that Dail was to be to a certain extent formal. But there was a matter of the life and death of hundreds, of thousands of people, through causes of the war, and other causes outside the war, and that concerned the whole House and the whole country. They wanted a definite answer from the deputy nominated as President. Was the new Executive now coming into power going to take a war or a peace policy? If they were going to take a war policy, they would know exactly where they all were. They would have war measures, and war regulations and restrictions would probably be called for. If, on the other hand, it was going to be a peace operation, then it must be a peace operation. At the moment there were hundreds of non-combatant persons in jails and in camps who had been arrested without warrant or authority, detained without any investigation or trial, or intention of trial. Some of them had occasion, as far back as April, to go to the heads of the then Executive and put a number of questions. One of the questions was whether there was a code of regulations of the army. They were told that, at the time, there was no such code and a suggestion was made that the relations between the civilian and the military should be defined. These were all questions that required immediate attention.

THE ARMY AND THE PEOPLE

From day to day, they had been getting nothing but chaos for the last two or three weeks, and the reason was that somebody had not sat down and taken the proper way to do it. They claimed that was the authoritative body in the country. The President, according to the Order Paper, was to nominate the Executive, and they must know the policy of that Executive. For instance, they wanted to know the relations between the army and the civil population, between the new Executive and the army. They did not know whether the armed forces were going to be responsible to that House or not. Statements had been made implying that that House would not have anything like extended legislative powers, that it would only be a constituent assembly. Their reading of the powers and authorities were that they had considerable powers of legislation.

The Acting-Chairman said, if elected to this position, it was his intention to implement the Treaty as sanctioned by the Dail and electorate, in so far as it was free to express an opinion, to enact a Constitution, to assert the authority and supremacy of Parliament, to support and assist the National Army in asserting the people's rights; to ask Parliament, if necessary, for such powers as are deemed essential for the purpose of restoring order and suppressing crime; to expedite, as far as lies in the power of the Government, a return to normal conditions; and, having established the Saorstát on a Constitutional basis, to speed the work of reconstruction and reparation.

LABOUR NOT SATISFIED.

Mr. O'Shannon said that the Labour Party were not satisfied with the President's statement. The President had not answered any of the questions that were propounded to him on Saturday. He had given information that day which nobody in Ireland had ever heard before. He (the President) had told them that a declaration of war had been made by the Republican forces on England. Why was not that fact published before now?

He referred to the "pact" that was entered into between the two sides previous to the June election, and alleged that there had been squabbling as to getting possession of the higher offices. Why had there been no single word of condemnation of that pact, or the panel, or the Ard Fheis agreement? The pact had been broken, and it was done in order that the dominant party in the country should retain its dominance. Until the bombardment of the Four Courts there was the utmost friendliness between the two parties, and even on the night proceeding the attack on the Four Courts, officers of both armies were fraternising with one another until 2 o'clock in the morning. Why was the country not told of these facts?

He was not speaking on behalf of the Republicans, but on behalf of the population of the country, who were the sufferers from the action of the two armies while these things were kept hidden. He asked whether or not that action was war or a police operation. Who was going to pay for all the destruction and ruin that was wrought? He (Mr. O'Shannon) knew that the working classes would have to pay their share in blood and money. They deplored the deaths that had been caused by the deliberate shooting by both sides.

Could he be told how long the war was going to last? He feared it would take many years to put down the irregular forces, whose object was to obstruct the Dail and prevent the Free State from functioning.

LANDLESS MEN.

The President had said nothing about the landless men, who were in many parts of the country. When a deputation waited upon the Minister for Agriculture they were told that the season was not then; that the Minister had plans up his sleeve, but that the irregulars would not permit them to be put into operation. The great bulk of the people were at the back of this Government, as they were at the back of Mr. Redmond for many years, but they were just as ready to change that position as they were in 1916.

The speaker next asked what about the prisoners, and what about the strikers that were arrested by the D.M.P. that day? He also wanted to know whether any arrangement had been entered into between the officers at the Four Courts and the officers at Beggars' Bush, by which certain things should be done in the six counties, and if any of the Executive forces had met their death while working at that job.

Mr. Cosgrave said that he had no knowledge whatever of that alleged arrangement.

Mr. O'Shannon said that he was glad to hear that. He hoped that there would be no more of these secret negotiations between any sections of Irishmen. Everything should be brought before Parliament—plain, straight, and honest. (Hear, hear.) He next wanted to know how much the Civic Guard was costing, and if it was a fact that a commission had been appointed to inquire into some irregularities in the Civic Guard. The President had said that he meant to make property and life secure and respected, he put property before life—

Mr. Cosgrave—I meant to put it the other way.

Mr. O'Shannon—There was no bombardment of the Four Courts until property had been seized. The common people were not considered so long as certain persons got good jobs.

NOT IN LEGAL FORM

LABOUR DOES NOT STAND FOR AMBUSHING

Mr. O'Shannon (Lab.), having first spoken in Irish, said neither Deputy Johnson nor those who supported him stood for ambushing (hear, hear), murder, plunder, or looting. Last week when a deputy brought forward a motion to legalise action against all those things, they were prepared to back that legalisation. But when a Minister came down with a resolution such as they had before them, and when he wanted the Dail and the people in the country to believe that that was the proper and best method of legalising any measures they might have to take against the irregulars, looters, or murderers, he and his party were against it, and he challenged the legal gentlemen present to justify it from a legal or constitutional point of view.

In as flippant a speech as ever he heard, the Minister who moved the motion told them not to quibble about legalities. He did not want to quibble; he wanted to stick to realities. He had a great admiration for many of the men and officers of the army, and perhaps for none more than the Minister for Defence, but he wanted them to remember that, with all their great and good qualities, the composition and origin of the army was practically the same as the composition and origin of the irregular army.

NOT QUALIFIED AS JUDGES.

The old I.R.A. was trained to fight in a particular guerilla way, and required certain definite qualities that were not the qualities that went to make a good soldier in an ordinary, long-established, regular army, and just because they had not that training, the ability or the experience in decisions involving big questions of law, he said

they were not fit to be judges in courts and have the power of life and death over hundreds of thousands.

They had asked the first day they came to the Dail for the Army regulations. They had not yet got them, but the President promised that if they were good boys, and passed this resolution, they would be forthcoming.

Mr. O'Shannon proceeded to describe treatment which, he alleged, had been meted out to prisoners, friends of his own, by soldiers of the National Army. One, he said, had been branded on the arm in Drogheda, and the other had been beaten and kicked by a Brigadier-General. He was not willing to trust to officers who did such a thing the power of life or death over anybody in Ireland, even over the worst irregular.

"THE BIG STICK"

When they did not register their votes in favour of resolutions such as these brought forward by the Government, they were told that they were trying to kill the Treaty. He appealed to the Ministry to withdraw the big stick of the Treaty and leave their followers free to vote as their hearts and consciences dictated. If that were done, he was sure six members would not vote for the resolution.

He asked to be told whether the present were military or police operations. They had pretended that it was not war, the censor even cutting out the words "civil war."

This was a war measure of the first order, and he doubted if there was ever such an extraordinary law as this.

TO ULSTER OR AMERICA?

Were the prisoners going to be deported to the Six Counties or to America, and he wanted them to take care that some would not be sent further. Labour wanted the restoration of law and order, and he wanted the Ministers to tell them what measures they were going to take to find out who shot Neville and the others.

They might have been irregulars, might have bombed, killed, and murdered, but if they were they had a right to go before their Maker after getting their chance in due process of law. There was provision in British Military Courts for the defence of prisoners, and the courts were held in the open.

Militarism and the military spirit in Ireland was as deep in one section of the armed forces as in the other, because both had come out with prestige from the guerilla war with England, and they had got such swelled heads that their only authority was that of the gun.

LABOUR WITHDRAWAL.

If there were executions under this resolution they could be sure that the ranks of the irregulars and the body of opinion behind them would swell. He was opposed to the motion because it would not do what the Ministry said it was intended to do.

It would take not weeks but maybe years to crush this insurrection. The time had come when he, if he had any influence amongst his colleagues and amongst those for whom he spoke, would use it to put an end to the sham being carried on there, and give plenty of opportunity to the Ministry without criticism or opposition to pass as many regulations as they very well pleased. "That may please you," he concluded, "but if comes to it, it will come to other things too."

'IRISH TIMES' 25-4-'22.

MESSAGE TO THE DAIL. UNITY OF ARMY WANTED.

Mr. Cathal O'Shannon, Vice-Chairman of the Irish Labour Party, who presided at the second platform, denounced the bogus "proclamation," and said that the workers had fought successfully against British militarism, and they would fight against Irish militarism in exactly the same way.

It should be understood that in speaking against militarism they were not speaking against the united military force which was essential for the defence of Ireland's aspirations. Unfortunately those in the Army were settling down to fight one another, but none of the so-called irregulars or so-called regulars had a right to ride roughshod over the people.

They protested against the action of those, whether from Beggars' Bush or Marlborough Hall, or the Four Courts, acting in the same way as the Black-and-Tans and Auxiliaries, rushing in lorries through the city. They protested against the men of both armies producing revolvers and saying: "That is my authority, and if you do not like it, you will get it."

The Labour Party wanted to put the responsibility for the whole situation on the proper shoulders. They wanted send a message to the present and late members of Dail Eireann, and those responsible for the Government of Ireland, their wish that both sections of the Republican Army should come together under one common command, and exercise discipline from the top of the Army down to the latest recruit.

*"Irish Independent"
13-5-'22.*

LABOUR AND ELECTIONS

FIGHT AGAINST MILITARISM

Mr. Cathal O'Shannon, Labour candidate for Louth-Meath constituency, speaking at a public meeting in Dundalk, said if the majority of the T.D.'s in the Dail had been Labour men the country would not be as bad as it was to day. The country was split from top to bottom, and, what was worse, the army was split, and instead of having a strong, well-disciplined army they had two or three sections, some of them more ready, in their foolishness, to fight one another than they were to fight the common enemy.

Labour would no more lie down under Irish militarism than it did under British militarism.

One of the most unfortunate things happening during the last six years was that many good Irishmen not alone learned to fight, but also to imitate the worst tricks of the Auxiliaries.

Dealing with the North, he said so long as there was disunion in the South so long would the pogromists continue. Every shot fired in the South gave them heart, and that condition would continue in Belfast until they had a united country ready to deal with any enemy.

*"Irish Times"
3-6-22.*

THE ELECTIONS.

SUPPORT FOR INDEPENDENT CANDIDATES.

It is now clear that the number of independent candidates who will be nominated for the coming elections will be larger than was anticipated a short time ago. Farming interests are determined to secure representation in the new Parliament, and especially in those constituencies where their nominees will have the support of Labour their chances of success are good.

Labour held its first election meeting in Navan on Thursday night, when Mr. Cathal O'Shannon, the independent candidate for the Louth-Meath constituency, addressed a large gathering. He said that Labour believed that it was time that there was a new Dail with new blood in it. There was a party in the field called the Ratepayers' Party. One of the things that that party wanted to cut down was the school-going age from 14 to 12 years, because they wanted cheap labour at 13 years of age. The people suffered from compulsory ignorance in the past imposed by the British. Were they going to suffer from compulsory ignorance imposed by the Irish people themselves? At the present moment there was a danger of war. He would say that the people of Ireland had a right now to know all about that war, if it was going to be a war—they had a right to examine what it was all about and why it was coming. The people of Ireland were peaceable, and if they could have peace they ought to have it, but if war was forced on the Irish people they would not run away from it. But they should know all about it. They should have no more secret negotiations with England or Ulster. Concluding a vigorous speech, he asked them to give their first preference vote to the Labour candidate.

*Irish Times
22-6-22*

LABOUR AND SENATE.

OPPOSITION THREATENED.

Speaking in Drogheda on Tuesday night, Mr. Cathal O'Shannon, the successful Labour candidate for Louth and Meath, said that there was one thing in the Constitution which the Labour Party would oppose to the death. It was that any judge and any court in Ireland could decide that an Act passed by the Irish Parliament was illegal and unconstitutional; in other words, that the men whom the people sent into Parliament could be over-ridden and trampled under foot on the veto of one single judge.

"We are damned if we are going to have that," said Mr. O'Shannon, "and you will be damned if you are going to allow it."

His principle was that if a deputy disagreed with his constituents, he no longer represented them, and should resign. That principle was not put into the Constitution. They had the "initiative" and "referendum," which were good enough in their way; but a thing that they wanted in Ireland was that the deputy should be the servant, and not the master, of the people.

Another thing was that they had established an Upper House. He saw no reason why they should have an Upper House in Ireland.

The charter of Irish liberty should be above the Treaty. "Who the blazes are the English Government that they should confer rights and privileges on us?" asked Mr. O'Shannon. "We are the Irish people, and we have got nothing that we did not take. We have got nothing by the Constitution within the last few months. What I say is that the Treaty ought to be apart from the Constitution, and that the Irish Constitution is the will of no man or no woman."

If people wanted to be slaves they could be slaves. They were prepared, and he was prepared, to squeeze every ounce of power, every ounce of authority, every piece of good that was in the Treaty or in any other document; but he was not going to admit that anybody had the right to say that the Irish people should go so far and no farther. They would go as far as the body of the Irish people were prepared to go.

MEETING ABORTIVE.

Only Twelve T.D's. Answer Labour Party Call.

LORD MAYOR PRESENT.

Only twelve T.D's. turned up at the Mansion House yesterday for the meeting of members of the Provisional Parliament, which had been summoned by the Irish Labour Party for the purpose of considering peace proposals. The meeting accordingly fell through.

Of the seventeen members of the Labour Party who signed the circular calling the meeting but eleven attended, it being stated that the others could not attend owing to the difficulties of travelling. The Lord Mayor of Dublin was the only T.D. outside the Labour Party who attended.

There was little public interest taken in the proceedings, but a group of women, including Mrs Despard, Mrs Sheehy Skeffington, Mrs Maude Gonne-McBride and others assembled in front of the building displaying posters calling for the release of the prisoners.

This demonstration attracted the attention of some passers-by, who assembled on the opposite side of the street and watched the proceedings.

THOSE WHO ATTENDED.

It is understood that the members of the Labour Party first met in private to discuss whether or not the proceedings would be open to the Press and after about three-quarters of an hour it was announced that a statement would be issued in the Oak Room.

There Alderman William O'Brien occupied the chair, and other present were - The Lord Mayor of Dublin, Messrs Thomas Johnson (Co. Dublin) John Lyons (Westmeath and Longford), Daniel Morrissey (Tipperary), Daniel O'Callaghan and Alderman Corish (Wexford), Cathal O'Shannon (Louth and Meath), Hugh Colohan and James Everett (Wicklow and Kildare), T.J. O'Connell (Galway) and William Davin (Leix and Offaly).

When the Press representatives had assembled, the Chairman said he had to announce that in response to the summons - a copy of which appeared in the Press a few days ago - the only member in addition to the available members of the Labour Party present was the Lord Mayor of Dublin.

THE ONLY COURSE.

In these circumstances, he continued, nothing remained for them to do except to announce that the meeting was abortive. The Labour Party believed that a good purpose would be gained by summoning that meeting, and as the invitations had not been responded to, the responsibility for the meeting not being held rested on other shoulders.

They had received communications on behalf of all the available Anti-treaty members stating that that party did not see its way to attend the meeting. They had received no communication from any other member or party, and in the circumstances they had nothing more to say except to bring the proceedings to a termination.

The meeting then adjourned.

O'SHANNON. Cathal. (Charles.)

27. Canning Street,
Belfast, and Liberty
Hall, Dublin, also
Oldcastle, Co. Meath.

Age. 25. (1920.)

Occupation. Clerk.

A Native of Drumsnagh, Randalstown,

Paid Sinn Fein Agent & Organiser for Counties Meath and
West Meath. (Ep. 53/5992 dated 1916.21.)

President of Socialist Party in Ireland for 1920. (Ep.53/2408.)

V/CHAIRMAN OF EXECUTIVE OF IRISH LABOUR PARTY & TRADE UNION
CONGRESS.

Editor of 'Voice Of Labour'.

An ardent Sinn Feiner and was at one time suspended by
Transport Workers' Union for mixing their business with
politics.

He is clever & dangerous & was suspected of conveying Sinn
Fein orders & information.

Frequently visited Belfast & associated with prominent
Sinn Feiners. (G/94971.)

Arrested. (Date unknown.)

Regarded as leader of Communist Party in Dublin and as
having Bolshevic tendencies.

Name found in list of supposed labour leaders in Sinn Fein
confidence in raid on Alderman William O'BRIEN'S house.(21.8.20.)

Quarrelled with McALPINE & 'Rod' CONNOLLY over attempt to
obtain aid from Russia.(I.X.0262.)

Revived 'Voice Of Labour' to combat the 'Workers' Republic'.
(I.X.0306.)

Invited to Berlin to 'Hands Off Russia' meeting, 4.12.21.
(I.X.0676.)

Unable to be present at above meeting. (I.X.0797.)

Continued next page

One of the speakers at the monster Labour Rally and Anti-Militarism Demonstration held in Dublin on Monday, 24th. April, 1921. A strike was proclaimed throughout Southern Ireland for this day by the National Executive of the Irish Labour Party & Trade Union Congress as a protest against the present military "Split" & political situation. (See Press cutting 'Irish Times' dated 25.4.22.)

Addressed large meeting at Charleville, Co. Cork, early in 1922 at which he advocated more violence on the part of the labourers than any of the most bloodthirsty Republicans have done so far. He strongly condemned the Treaty. Staunch for Workers' Republic. (See 6th. Div. W.I.S. dated 23.4.22. Page 3.)

Represented Labour Party at Irish Peace Conference held in the Mansion House, Dublin, on 26.4.22. (Ex. 'Irish Times' dated 27.4.22.)

Selected as Labour candidate for Louth & Meath to contest in Elections June 1922 (Irish Times 17-5-22.)

In addressing a meeting at Drogheda in support of his candidature he said that the object Labour had in view was "An Irish Co-operative Commonwealth" or "Workers' Republic". He also said that his desire was to assist to raise the workers from slavery to sovereignty. (Ex. 'Irish Independent' dated 30.5.22.)

Elected member of 3rd Dail.

One of the Labour leaders at a conference with the object of ending the conflict between P.G. Troops & Irregulars (Irish Times 6-7-22)

Expelled from Communist Party owing to his views not being extreme enough (J.X/1263.)

One of the signatories to a manifesto issued by the Irish Labour Party calling a meeting to discuss Peace proposals. This meeting fell through. (See Press cuttings dated 20. & 21. 7.22.)

Nominated Chairman of the 28th. annual meeting of the delegates of the Irish Labour Party & Trade Union Congress to be held at the Mansion House on 8th. 9th. & 10th. Aug. (Ext. "Voice of Labour" 5-8-22).

Made speech at first session of Third Dail in reference to the setting up of Military Courts in view of the conflict with Irregulars Forces. (See press cutting - "Irish Independent" 28-9-22).

O'SHANNON Cathal. (Contn'd).

There has been much talk of an entente between Republicanism and Labour, but Cathal O'Shannon's organ "The Voice of Labour" commenting on the condition of affairs in Kerry, says:-

"Perhaps an attempt may be made by some of our high-souled and empty-headed patriots to justify the state of affairs mentioned above on the grounds of 'military necessity' or perhaps it is the latest kind of propaganda. Enlist the sympathy of the workers to the cause of Republicanism by starving them - when every factory in Ireland is dismantled and every bridge broken Ireland will be free and it does'nt matter a damn whether or not the people of Ireland are starved to death in the process..... With the wanton destruction of these things by people with no end in view but a vision for the sould and a vacuum for the stomach we have neither sympathy nor approval."
(IX/1559 - 20/10/22).

