

CATHAL COULDING

Representative of the Irish Republican Movement
Addressing 1st Annual Conference
National Association for Irish Justice

*A d'ádhairde, agus tóir an ard áise
seo, a d'ádhairde ba mairé tóir an ádhairde
an ádhairde agus bróo ar mhór ádhairde
ádhairde ádhairde ádhairde ádhairde.*

Mr Chairman, Delegates and Visitors; I would like to say that I feel honored and very proud to be asked to address this convention of the National Association for Irish Justice and its Affiliates. I would like to say also that I am further honored by the fact that I received this invitation from Mr Brion Heron who, as a member of the Connolly family who has been active in the cause of humanity in many countries. Not simply because he and his mother here, who I am proud to say I met this morning, are just members of the Connolly family but I believe that they have made a great contribution to the cause of liberty and civil rights in America as well. They are the personification of the irrefutable fact that the cause of liberty is the cause of humanity and that the fight for freedom is a class struggle and cannot support the cause of equality and freedom in our own country and be party to denying it to anyone else. Not only must we accept this but we must be seen to support it.

The National Association for Irish Justice is a new departure for the Irish and Irish-American community here and I wish now to express the hope that it will be successful and teach this section of the American community that it is their duty to love America and if they do that they must use all the influence and pressure they possess to assure that all sections of America are cherished equally, and that this great nation is not to be the instrument of aggression against weaker nations.

I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Civil Rights Movement in their activities in the Six Counties and to point out to this convention that one of the greatest gains that has been made by them is that they are in the process of breaking down the monopoly of power of the Unionist Government in the Six Counties. I further hope that their activities will help the Irish and Irish-Americans here to support the cause of civil rights in America.

I believe also that the Civil Rights Movement in Ireland must in the future extend its objectives to include political rights and social rights and by doing so will further educate the people of Ireland, by demonstrations, that this is the most effective way to teach people that the real power in any country lies in the hands of the ordinary people. The politicians who sit in government under the present established system in Ireland are not interested in this problem of the ordinary people. Those people must be taught to eliminate these problems themselves. The politicians have also been instrumental in stressing Britain's responsibility for the situation which exists in Ireland. It was they who framed the Government of Ireland Act. They have clauses in that Act that can curtail the activities and force the Unionist Government to legislate for civil rights in Ireland. It was they who first organized the B-Specials before the Unionist Six-County Government was set up and used them in the programs of 1920 and it is quite plain that they are prepared to use them again in the future under a more respectable guise. For if, as Mr. Calahan and Mr. Wilson claim, the British Army is quite capable of defending Northern Ireland from outside attack, why then do they want to maintain such a sectarian force except to suppress the underprivileged and to maintain the sectarian divisions which have been created and maintained by British Imperialism to further their aims of vested interests in all Ireland. We have a proverb in Ireland that --

Is fearr an zinnas ná an zinnas.
which means that "Contention is better than loneliness", and in this I would like to point out that a question that was asked here earlier on the basic difference between the P.D. organization and the Republican Movement. I think that the biggest difference between us lies in the lack of communication between us. They, and I agree with practically every word they said when they were explaining their objectives and their policies. The establishment of a workers and small farmers republic is also the objective of the Republican Movement, and the Republican Movement has been active in advocating these principles as the bases of their policies for the past number of years and we have not done this out of political opportunism, but we have done it because we believe in it. And we believe that these principles are essential to the achievement of complete freedom in Ireland. I see the role of the Republican Movement in Ireland at the present moment as in support of the civil rights movement and its activities.

to help both individually and collectively to maintain the progress of that movement. To extend the struggle for justice and freedom to the twenty-six counties. For, as a number of civil rights speakers here pointed out, we have an Act in the twenty-six counties called the Offences Against the State Act and it is very similar to the Northern Ireland Special Powers Act. Our role is to encourage the ordinary people, both North and South, to organize to demand their rights in the field of housing, working conditions, and to put an end to landlordism in Ireland. To get them to understand that their bosses and their landlord exploiters are banded together in an organization called the establishment. In the final analysis, the demands of the working classes, the landless, the small farmer or the homeless will never be met, unless with the obstruction of the ascendancy and because the establishment has at its disposal an army and a police force; well fed, well paid, and well armed, the final confrontation will be an armed one, and that the organization and the training, and the arming of the ordinary people for this confrontation is a most important essential.