

# Republican SINN FÉIN Poblachtach

Theobald Wolfe Tone Commemoration  
Bodenstown, County Kildare

*2011*

## Oration delivered by Galway County Councillor Tomás Ó Curraoin

A Chathaoirleach, a Uachtaráin and all Republican and nationally-minded people.

First of all it is an honour for me to be asked to speak here on this very hallowed ground today where many people spoke down through the years; I am not going to go into names. Pearse spoke here a year before his execution in 1915. Theobald Wolfe Tone has been on everybody's lips young or old.

Maybe that it is not been lectured in the schools or the colleges today because things like that are not fashionable today in this ugly Free State that we live in here in the 26 counties. Theobald Wolfe Tone as people know was of a middle class protestant family, his father at the time being a coach builder of the horse drawn type.

He probably could have turned his back with no need to become involved with the freedom of Ireland, he was probably comfortable enough. But funny enough all those people Robert Emmett included that took part in the 1798 Rising, many of them were of protestant or Presbyterian origin, and to hear that people say today that it was a religious war in the six occupied north eastern counties that the British hold to this present day, it sure tells them that it was not a war of religion and it is not a war of religion, it is a war of occupation.

Among the aims of Theobald Wolfe Tone was to break the connection with England once and for all, a connection that has never been broken. An inspiration that came from Tone and his comrades that inspired the men back after the great hunger that was bestowed on us by the British in 1845 or the common word that they like to use "the potato blight".

But it was a genocide brought on by the British Crown when they shipped all the food out of Ireland. They don't want to hear that but it is the bare facts of it. It inspired those men to rise in North America and Canada. They called themselves the Young Irelanders who were prominent in the upcoming fight of 1867 with the Fenians. A fight that carried on but defeat came again, but we were together.

In 1916 Pearse and Liam Mellows rose out against the British Crown. And I'm sure that 1798 was the flame that inspired them when they stood on the steps of the G.P.O. on that Easter Monday morning and proclaimed the Irish Republic, a 32 county

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Republic in arms in the face of heavy British military presence. Again we were defeated but we were together.

In 1920 we fought the Tan War and again there was the beginning of the signs of freedom when they were defeated in places like Kilmichael and other spots where they were ambushed all over Ireland and then the Treaty came and in 22' we were divided and Mellows and McKelvey, Rory O'Connor and Dick Barrett were the first four Irishmen to be executed under the new Free State government founded days before the 8th of December when they were executed by the Free State.

The very same men that were beside them, that slept with them on the run previous years. And there is no more evidence of that than in a county in Munster and that's the county of Kerry where they brought tar and petrol out from Tralee and threw it down on top of their comrades in the Clashmealcon Caves, because they knew where they were because they had used the same dug outs themselves. We were defeated but we were never divided until 1922 and we have been divided since. Joe O'Neill often said that no one ever defeated us except ourselves.

In the sixties we saw many things happening. The 1956 Border Campaign came to an end in 1962. The British were driven out of Aden and Charles De Gaulle came along and saw that it was no longer viable to hold on to Algeria so he gave them their freedom. But no talk of Irish freedom. Right down through the years again in the '80s many never heard of Nelson Mandela. Twenty-six years in a South African jail, just to sign a piece of paper and he would be released at any time. He stuck it out and became the first black president of his country. Again in the '80s the Berlin Wall came down, it was applauded here in Ireland by the Free State, in Westminster by the Brits and in America that Gorbachev at last had come along and he had given the Baltic people their freedom. Yet not one word of our freedom.

I remember being here in either '82 or '83 and the late Joe Cahill stood on that podium there and he mentioned the Stickies and he called them the despicable Stickies, but all the time they were going down the very same slippery road as those who previously went and sold.

There is no two ways that you can be a Republican. You are either one or you are not. You cannot be serving in Leinster House and Stormont or be part of the ring in Westminster and still be a Republican. You cannot do it, and I am saying to those people today to stay away from hallowed spots like this and to leave it to those who are willing to carry on the torch of Theobald Wolfe Tone and to break the connection with England.

We had two prominent heads of state recently visit our 26-County State. The Queen of England was here and indeed was made welcome by many who spoke but never got near her, so therefore the Queen's visit, let's face it' was not a success.

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The president of the United States of America came shortly afterwards and he could move around freely and mingle with the people. Not so for the Queen of England. She could not go out and she was protected wherever she went. So that's a sign that the fear is still in them. The fear of the risen people, who have never broken the chain with Republicanism and who never will break the chain with Republicanism until England are gone once and for all.

Many people are hoodwinked into thinking that this is the beginning of the unification of Ireland. Certainly the majority of the people in the cemetery today would not say so or neither would they think so. It is to strengthen English rule in Ireland. But I hope, lads, that you have your tape recorders over there to bring back the message to them, because we don't want them here.

We don't want the British government or any other type of government be it Westminster or Stormont. We want to get rid of them and have an All-Ireland parliament of our own and get rid of that sham that is below in Kildare Street or whatever they call it, Leinster House which is the cause of all the trouble today.

So the Queen's visit to Ireland was not a normal one, but I suppose if they are to force these things and these things are to happen, there are a couple of points I would like to make before I finish up. I wouldn't class myself as a Republican, I would class myself as a nationalist Irishman. I might not be good enough or worthy enough to be a Republican when I think of what these people that are buried in cemeteries like this have gone through, but I know one thing, she should never have been brought into the Garden of Remembrance. I know since the demons have been exorcised out of that place, people went down there and Republicans laid wreaths.

Most of all as a Cumann Lúthchleas Gael person I am galled that the GAA allowed her into Croke Park. It tells you the leadership we have in the GAA. But I will tell them when I meet them and I will tell Christy Cooney face to face when I meet him. They let her into Croke Park where in 1920 they shot 13 people and Michael Hogan that the Hogan Stand is called after. An association so gallant as the GAA, it tells you what they are gone to.

The ordinary people on the ground, even those who were not opposed to the Queen's visit that I had spoken to, they were galled that she went into these two places and they were galled that she went into Croke Park. So when you meet them tell them and put it to your clubs and mention it. It may not be carried but let them know that we have an opposition like we had an opposition to the British army being let into the GAA or to foreign games being let into Croke Park.

No, we have nothing against foreign games but we are a separate organisation. We are Cumann Lúthchleas Gael, even though our leaders at the top may not look it, these people who were out there on the grass roots, they are the people.

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It is very hard to believe that when you are in Donegal or in Leitrim or any of the so-called Border counties from Louth right through Monaghan and Cavan that you are right on the verges of another country which is completely untrue. And the British for all their might have all the times that they boasted that the sun had never gone down on their mighty empire, today they have nothing left of that empire but the Falkland islands, Gibraltar below in Spain, the Six Occupied Counties of the north-east Ireland, Wales, Scotland, the Isle of Man and of course we cannot forget our Celtic cousins who are also occupied and who do not class themselves as English, the Cornish people.

Go raibh mile maith agaibh go leor.

ENDS