

Ireland has unfinished business!

The history

The 1916 Rising has recently come under attack from journalists, historians and politicians from all sides, claiming that the 1916 rebels were “fascists” and that the action was a “terrorist” one. We as young people need to understand the true nature and historical context of 1916 if Ireland is to continue its long struggle to freedom. We need to understand that the rising was not an isolated event, or a blood sacrifice.

The rising took place in direct opposition to the needless slaughter of millions of young people on the Continent for the profits and spoils of British and German imperialism. It took place against the backdrop of the arming of unionist volunteers and the mutiny of the British army in Ireland. It followed on from the frustration, anger and desperation felt by 400,000 Dublin workers and their families in the 1913 lock-out. It represented the new feelings of consciousness and self-worth that became so evident two years later in the 1918 elections, when the overwhelming majority of Irish people voted in favour of the ideals of 1916, those of independence and equality.

The 1916 Rising was a crucial moment in the democratic development of this country, just as 1798 was before. George Russell, the artist and writer, summed up the main cause of the rising well when he wrote:

“If the authorities were wanting to make Dublin a place with the bombs blazing in the street they were going the right way about it. It was labour supplied the personal element in the revolt. It had a real grievance. The cultural element, poets, Gaels, etc., never stir more than one per cent of a country. It is only when an economic injustice stirs the workers that they unite their grievance with all other grievances.”

Unfinished business!

Ireland today remains divided. Partition still prevents democracy being fulfilled here or in England, and inequality and poverty are growing throughout both countries. The struggle for the unity and freedom of Ireland is a democratic struggle for both peoples.

In the Six Counties the ratio of income between rich and poor in 1988 was 3:1; now it has increased to 5:1. Poverty figures in 2002 show that 30 per cent of households live in poverty: that is, 502,000 people out of a population of 1.69 million.

In the 26 Counties, incomes for the poorest 10 per cent between 1996 and 2001 rose by 33 per cent, while incomes for the richest 10 per cent in the same period rose by 62 per cent. The

latest research also shows that poverty has increased drastically. In 1998, 20 per cent of the population of the South lived in poverty; by 2003, that had risen to a staggering 23 per cent.

Democracy throughout this country is now laughable. The scandal over Shannon Airport and the re-run of the Nice Treaty referendum are but two important examples. Dependence on foreign direct investment and the ever-increasing assimilation into the European Union are decreasing the ability of Irish people to determine their own future.

Who are we?

Rising Youth is a committee of young republicans, communists and other democrats who share the ideals of and are committed to achieving an Ireland independent, sovereign, and equal. In keeping with the most advanced form of republicanism, Rising Youth contains members from the different religious traditions in this country. The committee is tied to no political party and is completely independent in thought and action.

The committee's immediate purpose is to commemorate and celebrate the ninetieth anniversary of the 1916 Rising by producing pamphlets, holding vigils, and generally raising awareness and action among the youth of this nation. Young people played an important role in 1916 and will have to again if Ireland is to achieve freedom and independence. Rising Youth aims to encourage and provide an outlet for these young people. Its non-party affiliation also enables the group to bring together like-minded individuals from different parties and organisations in co-operation to achieve their shared goals.

Take a stand!

Rising Youth is committed to continuing the struggle for a free Ireland. The objectives of 1916 have never been met, and Ireland remains controlled by imperialism, north and south. Neither state, either the “Republic” or “Northern Ireland,” can provide freedom, democracy and peace to the people of this country. It is time for young people to come together and get active for our own future and for our children's future. United we can make a stand and a difference.

For more information, or to join Rising Youth, e-mail risingyouth@dublin.ie or phone 087 7540547.



Rising Youth
Aiséirí na nÓg