

IRISH REPUBLICAN SOCIALIST PARTY

an
camchéachta



THE STARRY PLOUGH

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BRITAIN 40p.

20 Years Of British Army Occupation



The Republican Socialist Movement takes this opportunity to salute the heroic resistance of the nationalist working class in the occupied six counties as we approach the 20th anniversary of the massive direct intervention of the British Army.

Since their arrival we have been used as a training ground for counter-insurgency techniques. Many of the techniques used by the British Army here have been exported to various other 'democracies' for eg. Israel and South Africa. British experts are in demand by repressive regimes the world over. The apologists for British Army intervention state that they came here to save the nationalist community from being massacred, but the facts of their occupation speak for themselves.

They have been directly involved and used loyalist murder gangs. They have interned us without trial, they have shot and batoned us off the

streets, they have wrecked our homes, brutalised our youth, murdered our children with plastic bullets, tortured us in holding centres, sentenced us before no-jury courts. They have used paid informers and introduced legislation to gag our voices. They have selectively assassinated our leaders. They design our housing estates to suit their security needs, subject our areas to curfew at whim, and surround us with their forts. They have destroyed and taken over areas marked out for industrial development, they continue to uphold and foster sectarian discrimination in housing and jobs. They have encouraged through bribery the pro-imperialist catholic clergy to act as their eyes and ears inside our communities.

These terrorist tactics have, we must admit, taken their toll, but they have failed miserably to break our resistance to British rule. For the

British soldier who walks our streets, there is no welcome, there are no cups of tea and no smiles, only resentment and hatred for what he represents.

The British Army came to the six counties for one reason and one reason only, that was to prop up their puppet regime which was in danger of totally disintegrating. The proof of this, is that despite twenty years of direct British intervention, the nature of this sectarian little statelet has changed not one iota. There are less civil rights today than there were 20 years ago and even the pro-imperialist S.D.L.P. are tongue-tied when it comes to explaining what their collaboration has gained for the nationalist people.

The British have tried to reform the six county state and have failed because they need the support of the extreme right-wing and downright fascist elements in the loyalist ascendancy in order to maintain their

presence here. They realise that the six county state is unreformable and in recent years they have given up all pretence of even attempting moderate reforms. They have settled for a policy of brutal repression and have secured an agreement with the reactionary 26 county state to smash all progressive movements and ideas.

Let 1989 be a year where we try to rebuild our confidence and understand our weaknesses. We must make up for the lack of political direction over the last number of years. We must seek a coherent strategy that will enable us not only to survive but to make giant steps forward in the year ahead. We must make our voices loud and clear, not only do we want the British army off our streets, but imperialism out of Ireland altogether. We are not out for a capitalist united Ireland, but for a socialist Ireland where the working class are in control.

STARRY PLOUGH EDITORIAL



The acquittal of IRSP member Terence Moroney and the refusal of the 26 county state to extradite Patrick Ryan can be seen as minor victories in a year that has brought very few causes for cheer. The hysterical ravings of Maggie Thatcher and the Tory gutter press on these issues leave no-one in any doubt that the collaborationist 26 county state will continue to pursue the destruction of the IRSP and continue to extradite Republicans and Socialists.

There is no doubt that the case of Patrick Ryan was a very special one. Having been deported from Belgium rather than extradited to Britain, the 26 county ruling class faced a dilemma. Extradition is not very popular with the traditional republican elements in Fianna Fail, especially extradition to Britain where the blatant frame up of the Birmingham Six and Guildford Four and other recent cases have proved very hard to swallow. Added to this was his age, the fact that he is a catholic priest, and also the fact that he was prepared to go on hunger strike. The 26 county ruling class did not feel strong enough in this case to extradite him but the extradition of working class persons, especially northerners will continue.

In the Terence Moroney case the state was sloppy and careless. Having already jailed Don O'Leary from Cork on similar evidence without much outcry, they resumed the courts would rubber stamp Terence's charges. But the case against Terence was so badly prepared that despite the ineptitude of the defence representatives, it was blown apart by a senior member of the IRSP, Kevin McQuillan, to such an extent that even the subservient judiciary could not ignore it.

For the new year, the message is clear. Despite the minor setbacks, the state will continue with greater ferocity in its attacks against the National Liberation struggle because their interests are tied to British Imperialism. For them it is a struggle they can not afford to lose. They know what is at stake even though the major element of revolutionary nationalism appears not to. The years of neglect in building working class support have allowed this offensive to develop. One example of this was the complete lack of solidarity shown at the picket of the Special Criminal Court in defence of Moroney.

Despite the fact that The Dungarvan anti-state repression committee have invited various political groups and individuals including Sinn Fein, P.D., C.P.I., Tony Gregory and John Mitchell. To their credit the only ones who did turn up were several members of the S.W.M.

The downturn in the struggle that is persisting into 1989 calls for a major offensive against state repression in the 26 counties. This collaborationist state represents the weak under belly of imperialism in Ireland. It is there that the future of the Irish revolution will be decided. Only by building a revolutionary party which is capable of confronting this state can the Irish revolution be brought to a successful conclusion.

The I.R.S.P. is attempting to build that revolutionary party with the Starry Plough as the essential vehicle for disseminating marxist theory, stimulating debate and giving leadership to the Irish working class in their struggle to overthrow the capitalist system in Ireland. To build the Starry Plough into the organ of revolutionary thought and action in Ireland entails an enormous financial commitment. It is the duty of all communists in Ireland to contribute both politically and where possible financially towards this goal.

THE I.R.S.P.

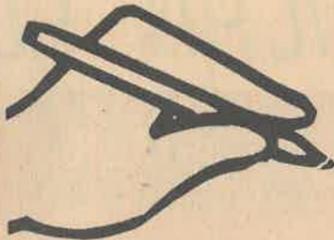
Please send me more information about the Irish Republican Socialist Party.

Name:

Address:

SEND TO:- Secretary, I.R.S.P., 392 Falls Rd., Belfast 12,

Ireland.



Right to Work For Loyalists?!

A Chara,
I would like to comment on the problem posed for socialists and republicans by the threatened demise of Harland and Wolfe and Short Brothers.

Sinn Fein has a position of defending these jobs so that they can be available to Catholic workers when discrimination has been ended. The Communist Party of Ireland and the Workers Party lend their voices uncritically to the plea-cum-threat of the Loyalist controlled unions.

As a revolutionary socialist, I view the possible closures as reflecting the historical contradictions of British imperialism in decline - and I welcome it. In no way would I favour the maintenance of the status quo under a bogus fight for the right-to-work for loyalists/protestants only.

The industries in question have always been tied to the fortunes of British imperialism and have shared its relative and absolute decline. Their survival rests entirely on political patronage from the Westminster exchequer through massive subsidies and government contracts. As such, these enterprises are and have been a part of the infrastructure of the loyalist statelet and of British rule.

The only socialist policy in relation to these jobs is; only on the basis of a **non sectarian employment policy is it of any benefit to the Irish working class as a whole that they remain open.** However this brings to mind the modest civil rights demand of '68 and the hard won lessons since then.

If there can be civil rights without national rights then, similarly there can be no equal rights for all workers without dismantling the sectarian state and all its social and economic infrastructure.

The question of the loyalist workers is raised here as a problem for socialists in putting across their programme. It is not conceivable that any accommodation to loyalist workers can be made in a socialist programme for Ireland. It is wrong to use the term 'Protestant working class' as this only tends to confer legitimacy on their (protestant-loyalist) alleged separateness.

There is only one working class on this island and the bulk of the protestant workers in the six counties whose loyalty is to British imperialism are, it could be said, scabbing on the majority of the Irish working class.

While socialists can make no concessions to Loyalism or sectarianism, they should as a matter of principle keep the door open for the possibility of these workers rejoining the ranks of the Irish working class.

P. Doyle
Dublin

No Exploitation In Soviet Union

Dear Editor,
Robert Lake's article (Starry Plough Vol. 3) on Glasnost is littered with references to exploitation of workers within the Soviet Union, which suggests an erroneous analysis of a workers' state.

The Soviet Union has a socialized economy, there is not

Letters

private appropriation from labour. Comparing increased efficiency within a socialist economy to capitalist exploitation ignores the obvious and fundamental differences between diametrically opposite economic and political systems. Socialism isn't and shouldn't be solely about increasing wages. If productivity increases by 15% and wages by only 6% it doesn't represent private appropriation but a surplus which accrues socially to be enjoyed by the worker in the form of better housing, education, health, public transport etc.

Perestroika will indeed see the closure of loss-making enterprises but the effects of these cutbacks and closures differ from restructuring in the West, in that workers' rights to a job are enshrined in the constitution. Wasteful unemployment will not follow.

Perestroika is not an increased exploitation of Russian workers but a necessary restructuring of a stagnant economy, an attempt to increase efficiency and productivity by harnessing the socialist potential of the workers through increased democracy.

Yours sincerely,
Thomas Byrne.

Religion And Reality

A Chairde,

The last issue of *The Starry Plough* published some letters which referred to my article on Marxism and religion. Two of these letters disagreed fundamentally with my article - one because he saw it as a misinterpretation of the Marxist position, the other because he feels that Marxists should remain quiet on the issue. Having read both letters carefully, I must declare myself thoroughly unimpressed by both gentlemen's arguments.

Sean Ryan, of the *Irish Workers' League*, writes disapprovingly "much invective written against religion in general and the Catholic Church in particular." He goes on to say that we should "show the Church for what it is without alienating the opinion of the Irish working class. We must not give the craven priesthood the opportunity of pointing their finger at us communists and saying 'Here are the Anti-Christ's'..." Essentially his argumentation, if adhered to, means the cessation of all criticism of the essence of religion, while instead, criticising its form, Marxist philosophy must be muted in favour of expediency, because, after all, "...communists are by the very essence of being Communist...atheists".

This is opportunistic nonsense! It is also typical of the Irish Left. If we continue to censor ourselves out of fear of "...the craven priesthood" and their ever-pointing finger, then it is we who are craven. We, as Marxists, are anti-religion and, I suppose, as such are the Anti-Christ. So what? Let them point their fingers. We can bite back through polemic and ultimately through revolutionary action. As the struggle against bourgeois society progresses, workers will more and more see religion and its institutions for what they really are. When social revolution occurs, we will bite back so hard that that irritating sanctimonious finger will recoil and disappear.

Objective conditions very from state to state and in Ireland the strength of religion means that it is undoubtedly an objective condition here. The struggle against religion must, of course

remain secondary to the struggle against the bourgeoisie, but it is nevertheless a struggle that has to be fought. It should primarily be waged by exposure of the socially repressive nature of the Church as well as its links with Capital. We must always make clear that our opposition to the Church is not for oppositions sake, but because we see it as an impediment to mankind's fight for social, political and economic emancipation. Religion hinders man's struggle for self-emancipation. Sean Ryan is correct when he says that we should show the Catholic Church for what it is. We should, as this is the best way of combatting their power, but sooner or later they will react and we will be questioned on our attitude to religion. Let us make our attitude clear now, let us be honest in our work. Dishonesty is for opportunists and cowards.

John Forde's letter is a little bit more interesting in that he is of the opinion that Marxism and religion are compatible. It is also interesting in that it appears that he doesn't seem to have properly read my article. Solely for the benefit of Mr. Forde, I will restate one of the theses in my article which he clearly missed.

It would be both principally and tactically incorrect for socialists or a socialist society to persecute or physically repress any religion (unless, of course, that religion entailed inflicting suffering on others). Everybody in a socialist society would be entitled to believe in and practise whatever religion he/she adheres to.

How John Forde can, bearing the above in mind, waffle on about advocacy of persecution is beyond my comprehension. The claim that communism and religion are compatible "...depends on what type of communism", according to Forde. Certainly it does, but the implication that, because I believe them incompatible, my communism is the 'communism' of Stalin, Mao and Hoxha is absolutely ludicrous. Forde seems to have an obsession in this regard which leads him to claim that any socialist who sees Marxism and religion as incompatible hasn't read Marx but "...those who distorted Marx after he died". Rubbish! For pity's sake, did Forde read my article at all? Did he not see that the views of Karl Marx himself were quoted throughout?

In his letter he claims that Marx's writings on Christianity were mainly directed against the political influence of the Lutheran Church in Prussia. Apparently Marx had no problem with theology. I think somebody better tell Marx! Anyhow, perhaps I'm paranoid, but I detect a hint of apologetics in Forde's letter. According to the Marxist David McLellan, and I agree with him: "It is true that Marx had in mind the religion of contemporary Germany dominated by a dogmatic and over-spiritual Lutheranism, but he wrote about religion in general and his rejection was absolute. Unlike so many early socialists (Weitling, Saint-Simon, Fourier), he would brook no compromise. Atheism was inseparable from humanism, he maintained."

In my article I quoted directly from Marx to illustrate the revolutionary socialist attitude to religion. One more shouldn't go amiss. "Criticism..." wrote Marx "has plucked the imaginary flowers from the chain not so that man may bear chains without any imagination or comfort, but so that he may throw away the chains and pick living flowers. The criticism of religion disillusiones man so that he may think, act and fashion his own reality as a disillusioned man come to his senses; so that he can revolve around himself as his real sun."

Religion is only the illusory sun which revolved around man as long as he does not revolve around himself." It all comes down to what one considers communism to be. According to Marx, it was more than politico-economic liberation - it was also spiritual liberation. If man's consciousness is not freed from the shackles of false ideologies then it is not true communism.

Forde's appreciation of Marx obviously hesitates at understanding his methodology and conclusions. Dialectical materialism totally rejects idealism including theology, but then Forde seems to confuse Marx's dialectical materialism with the 'materialism' of Aristotle. He claims that Marx's materialism was "inherited from the ancient Greek philosophers" and that Marx "was the inheritor of the ideas of Aristotle." This sounds like claiming that Connolly's ideas were directly inherited from those of so-called 'celtic communism.' Yes, Marx read Aristotle but he also read Hobbes, Spinoza, Plato, Montesquieu and many others. Aristotle did not influence his methodology which came through a critical analysis of Hegel and, in a subsidiary way, Bruno Bauer and Ludwig Feuerbach. Rather than advising others to re-examine the writings of Karl Marx, I would suggest that Forde do so himself.

Karl Marx rejected religion decisively and those that tell us that he didn't simply ignore reality. They tell us that black is white and white is black. They tell us that they haven't yet grasped the essence of Marxism.

To finish, by declaring Marxism anti-religion does not mean that I think that socialists should become intolerant towards those with religious beliefs - that sort of behaviour only befits a fascist. We must continue to work with all those who strive for revolutionary change. Sectarianism will only serve to isolate us from the community and thus render us impotent. We must continue to fight alongside theists, but we must at the same time be honest in our attitude to religion. People like Des Wilson, and others like him, are more than worth working with, especially if constructive dialogue occurs. Let us go forward on an honest and coherent footing.

Is mise,
Robert Lake

Responses to S.F. Stance



The Leninist

Dear comrades,

The Leninist notes with concern the instances of exclusion of members of the IRSP from platforms, events and even clubs at the behest of Sinn Fein.

Political differences within the anti-imperialist movement cannot and should not be resolved in such a way. Anti-imperialists in Ireland and Britain have a right to hear the opinions of the different sections of the anti-imperialist movement, and thus to make their own minds up as to the rights and wrongs of the differences between them. It is sad indeed that Sinn Fein should see fit to bypass such a principled and democratic process by operating its own de facto 'Section 31' against the IRSP, an organisation which through its years of struggle has earned the right to be represented on anti-imperialist platforms.

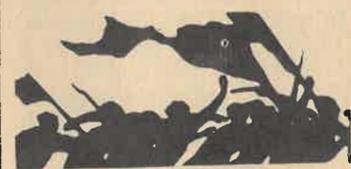
The attacks on the IRSP by a grouping once associated with the republican socialist movement in the 1986-87 period do not negate

this right, nor should be used as an excuse to write the IRSP off as 'finished', and thereby exclude it. The Leninist defends the right of the IRSP to exist and present its views publicly now, as we did when the IRSP was under attack by the IPLO gang.

We sincerely hope that Sinn Fein will abandon this sectarian approach to the IRSP so that differences can be aired openly. Only in such a way can principled anti-imperialist unity be achieved, both in Britain and in Ireland.

"Publicity is a sword that heals the wound it itself makes." (Lenin).

In solidarity,
The Leninist
BCM Box 928,
London, WCIN 3XX.



Red Action

A Chairde,

As an organisation, we in Red Action are not and have never been in the business of publicly criticising the activities of the political or military wings of the Republican Movement. We believe that our record of consistent support for anti-imperialist initiatives in Britain and Ireland is testimony to the importance we place in offering solidarity in any practical way. On being approached by various groups in Britain (eg. Troops Out Movement, Bands Alliance, Wolfe Tone Society, Manchester Martyrs Commemoration Committee) we have always been happy to provide support i.e. propaganda, stewards etc. as required.

However, with regard to Sinn Fein's policy in relation to the I.R.S.P. and to the forthcoming Manchester Martyrs Commemoration march in particular, we have been invited to comment and we will. Sinn Fein's stance is divisive and sectarian and so deserves to be condemned. Sinn Fein are fully aware that their refusal to support and provide a speaker for the Manchester Martyrs Commemoration will damage the credibility of the organising committee in the eyes of the local Irish community. The organisers are equally aware, that Sinn Fein pulling out will indeed affect the turn out, thereby negating the months of effort that have been put in to ensure that this years march is as big and successful as possible. Faced with the dual threat of police harassment and fascist/loyalist violence there is an obvious need to present a united front, Sinn Fein's policy is particularly unwelcome.

The very existence of the Manchester Martyrs Commemoration March which has slowly been rebuilt from 200 in 1982, to one of the biggest and most colourful and confident marches in 1986 (being banned in 1987) is now in jeopardy. By forcing the organisers and supporters of this or any solidarity event, to choose between political principle and expediency is clearly wrong and unworthy of them. Principle apart, tactically it proves disastrous and it destroys any hope of co-ordinating support among political groups for genuine solidarity work in Britain.

The disgusting behaviour of the so-called Birmingham Hunger Strike Committee in refusing for the first time to extend speaking rights to the I.R.S.P. last May caused Red Action to cancel their mobilisation for the march. We felt after discussion that to support the march would in effect endorse the sectarianism of the committee. The fact that the march was small

and badly stewarded and was subsequently attacked by fascists/loyalists gave us no call for rejoicing. The success of the fascists in disrupting the march will only encourage them to try harder, leaving the march even more vulnerable to attack or police ban under the public order act next year.

In any event, the examples from Manchester and Birmingham clearly demonstrate, regardless of whether solidarity groups accept or reject the pre-conditions for support of their initiatives laid down by Sinn Fein (ie. No platform for the I.R.S.P.), the actual result is contrary to the declared objective which is, building support for a genuine withdrawal/solidarity group in Britain. For what it is worth, we would urge them to reconsider their position in the light of these events.

G. O'Halloran
Red Action National Council
P.O. Box 158m
Hatfield m
Herts.



R.D.G.

Dear Comrades,

Thank you for your letter of 7th November '88 and the copy of the letter from Sinn Fein's British desk outlining their National Council's decision not to appear on platforms alongside the I.R.S.P. These were discussed at our last Organising Committee meeting. We are very disturbed by the contents of your letter and the possible implications for the working class movement in Ireland and 'over here.'

In principle we are totally and unequivocally opposed to any and all sectarianism within the working class, trade union and political movements. We condemn the poison of sectarianism wherever this exists and is manifest. It is totally destructive and, if not corrected, can only lead to total confusion, division, fragmentation and eventual demoralisation within the ranks of the working class forces so necessary to wage successful class struggle.

We will be writing to Sinn Fein to enquire about the reasons for their refusal to speak, and indeed to work, alongside the I.R.S.P., as outlined in your letter. You will appreciate that we cannot take the matter much further until Sinn Fein have stated their reasons for their behaviour towards the I.R.S.P. If and when a reply is received from Sinn Fein then we will further evaluate the situation and in attempting to help heal the serious divisions between yourselves and Sinn Fein.

We look forward to continuing the Republican Socialist dialogue with the I.R.S.P. and send comradesly and solidarity greetings to you and the Revolutionary Republican and Socialist Movement. Your struggle is our struggle. Our struggle is your struggle.

Yours in comradeship,
Secretary,
Organising Committee of the
R.D.G.

Letters Welcome

If you have any comments, questions, or you want to reply to any of these letters. Please write to the Editor, Starry Plough, 392 Falls Road, Belfast 12, Ireland.

The Editor reserves the right to edit letters due to lack of space.

Hands Off Ireland



"Time To Go"

This year, as we are all too aware, sees the twentieth anniversary of the deployment of British troops onto the streets of the occupied six counties of Ireland. This is of significance as much to British people as to ourselves, hence the organisation of a major demonstration under the banner of "Time To Go."

The problem with this particular demonstration and similar past demonstrations has been their wishy-washy "do-gooderist" attitude to the problem of British occupation of part of our country. whether through political naivety or deliberate blindness, such campaigns ignore the political significance of the deployment of the army in the first place. It had nothing to do with, as was suggested by Clare Short at a recent Time To Go meeting, the fact that "the local security forces weren't neutral, somebody else had to go in and intervene." The "intervention" was made simply because the "local security forces" couldn't handle the situation and there was a real danger that the situation would have gone well beyond the realms of any kind of governmental control. The Labour Government decision to send in the army certainly was not neutral. The organisers of Time To Go refuse to recognise this basic reality and actually promote the notion that the British presence here is in some way well intentioned!

At the same London meeting, Bob Rowthorn advocated a commitment from the British Government to withdraw in a given period of time and the arming of the Free State army to enable it to take over the six counties! Presumably he is referring to much heavier gear than that presently possessed by the Staters, which is a disturbingly familiar scenario. The Free Staters were armed in 1922. They defended British interests against Republicanism then and have continued to do so ever since. Such a solution would merely hand over to the Twenty-six Co. government the responsibility of suppressing revolutionary forces in Ireland as a whole.

Given that this is the level of the Time To Go analysis, it is of the utmost importance that their pro-imperialist credentials are exposed. At the present time their campaign of mobilisation for the 1989 demonstration is gaining momentum with meetings being well attended but without a sufficient exposition of their political basis. Naturally Time To Go cannot be ignored. Boycotting from a "holier than thou" position would be worse than useless, as would be any attempt to organise a totally separate campaign. This fact has been recognised by those in Britain who believe that it has always been time to go.

Recently an initiative was taken with a view to organising an overtly anti-imperialist contingent on the Time To Go demonstration under the banner of "Hands Off Ireland." The founding meeting was called by The Leninist, with invitations to various groupings of the "Left" in Britain to take part. From the beginning, it was apparent that the sectarianism which plagues the British left was a stumbling block, as were the methods of procedure used by The Leninist which amounted to the presentation of a fait accompli.

At a second meeting which resulted in a deadlock similar to that in which the first meeting ended, a vote was taken. And here there is a major contention between The Leninist and the others present, including a representative of the IRSP. Whereas everyone else was under the impression that the vote was simply a gauging of the feeling of the meeting towards the various proposals, those representing The Leninist took it to be definitive and published a report to this effect, thus giving the impression that the initiative was endorsed by the IRSP. This was not the case as the IRSP have reservations about the way a supposedly multi-group initiative actually manifested itself as a purely Leninist affair, and no decision on its endorsement had in fact been taken by ourselves.

We also have reservations about the basic slogans adopted by Hands Off Ireland ("Troops out now" and "Self determination for Ireland") on the grounds that they do not sufficiently distinguish Hands Off Ireland from the ineffectual Troops Out Movement. These slogans must be expanded through whatever posters and literature produced, emphasising support for the struggle and the anti-imperialist nature of Hands Off Ireland. The argument that a principled political position combined with a high work-rate will sort out the wheat from the chaff will only be proved in time, and as regards the Time To Go campaign, time is of the essence.

After twenty years of struggle here in Ireland it is high time that the question of a principled solidarity movement in Britain be discussed. For many years the Troops Out Movement have been an ineffectual withdrawal movement which has never really progressed beyond the call of "Bring our boys home", and in latter days have become even more muted. The Irish Freedom Movement is seen (with good reason) as an RCP front and it shows no intention of ever progressing beyond this.

The obvious failures of these and similar attempts by individual groups to set up "Irish Fronts/movements" should prompt a very basic re-evaluation of the situation. Obviously there must be co-operation on the left if a principled anti-imperialist solidarity movement is to be realised, since it cannot come from the Labour Party, any more than the emancipation of the British working class can come from the Labour Party. Equally obvious is the fact that if such a movement is based purely on the various political groupings of the British left without achieving the active participation of the working class then it becomes an exercise in building castles in the air. Naturally, given the practical difficulties involved, any such attempt would be a long term project. Yet the attempt must be made if serious British revolutionaries believe that the "Irish Question" should be tackled once and for all.

These criticisms notwithstanding, we welcome any initiative which challenges the political basis of such passing phenomena as Time To Go and would urge therefore that Hands Off Ireland be supported.

Francis Glenn

The Voice Of Principled Hypocrisy!

Sectarian and opportunist is the only way to describe the attitude and position of both Sinn Fein and a large section of the factionalised English left. We are sure that over the years these facts have become self evident. However their respective positions in relation to the 1988 Manchester Martyrs Commemoration exposed for any free-thinker to see, just how serious these people take their petty-minded attitudes, and by all accounts they seem perfectly willing to accept the damage done to the struggle in the process.

The Manchester Martyrs Commemoration

Since the re-emergence of the Manchester Martyrs in 1981, the I.R.S.P. have been invited and have spoken at each annual event. This has been alongside speakers from many other Parties, Groups and Campaigns. Also present, until last year, were Sinn Fein. In 1987, despite receiving travel expenses and confirming arrangements, Aine Connolly of Sinn Fein, at the last moment contacted by phone not only the Organising Committee of the Manchester Martyrs but other groups (such as the Scottish Bands alliance and T.O.M.) to state that they would not now be coming because (a) the message from the platform, that being, support for the armed struggle, would alienate large sections of people in England and (b) that Sinn Fein would not share a platform with the I.R.S.P.

We in the I.R.S.P. are in total agreement with the sentiments of mobilising as broad a base as possible in support of the struggle for self determination, and by this logic we would be against restricting the appeal of a withdrawal campaign. However the Manchester Martyrs Commemoration has never placed support for the armed struggle as a pre-requisite for either participating in or speaking at this commemoration. So this excuse did not stand up. The second reason, the sharing of the platform with the I.R.S.P. needed some explanation.

At this time the I.R.S.P. made direct contact with a senior representative of Sinn Fein. He, on behalf of Sinn Fein, refuted the 'alleged' phone calls made by Ms Connolly, and stated that there obviously had been some misunderstanding. "Sinn Fein are not in the business of politically suffocating the I.R.S.P." was the statement made to back up his interpretation of the events. The highly charged and the overly sensitive climate in the wake of Enniskillen, with the possibility of an anti-Sinn Fein protest was the real reasoning behind their non-appearance. Having made our concern apparent and with reservations over the obvious glaring differences between the initial refusal to attend and the explanation given, it was decided

by the Party not to proceed any further with the matter.

Recurring Theme

This year, the I.R.S.P. were again invited to speak at the Martyrs Commemoration. According to the organisers everything was running smoothly, until the 25th of October when a letter arrived from the Ard Chomhairle of Sinn Fein declining yet again to speak at the commemoration and citing as the reason, their refusal to share a platform with the I.R.S.P. The organisers immediately contacted us seeking clarification. We in turn made contact with Sinn Fein and explained the situation. Initially it was once again denied that this was their position. When they were made aware that we had the letter from Ms Connolly in our possession, it was requested that a copy of the letter be made

available to them. This was given to them on Wednesday 2nd November. It was arranged that both parties would meet in 2 days time to discuss the issue. Representatives of the I.R.S.P. upon arriving at the venue found no one from Sinn Fein there. During the following two and a half weeks in the run-up to the Martyrs Commemoration various attempts were made including phone calls and messages being left at Sinn Fein advice centres, to get some response on this issue. All to no avail.

Anti-Elitism

After the receipt of the Sinn Fein letter, the I.R.S.P. met to discuss the matter. In the general opinion of those present, it was felt that a response was needed to this, the latest in a long line of sectarian and elitist actions against the I.R.S.P. which included the banning of I.R.S.P. members and supporters from 'Republican Association' clubs, the exclusion of the I.R.S.P. from campaign committees controlled by Sinn Fein etc, the attempted manipulation of our POW's through the withdrawal of their Green Cross (prisoners dependance) payments. Also the monotonously regular calls for our disbandment. This went to the extent of cynically using the death

of an I.N.L.A. volunteer on active service to repeat this call through the medium of the bourgeois press.

It was the unanimous feeling of all present that the position of the I.R.S.P. in relation to our refusal to make public criticisms of Republican Movement actions was being abused and used by Sinn Fein to snidely attack us. It was decided that the position of the I.R.S.P. not to publicly criticise I.R.A. actions should be maintained. Nevertheless, it was incumbent upon the Party to respond to the arrogant and elitist conduct of Sinn Fein. Not to do so would permit this inverse reaction, to continue unimpeded, with dangerous implications, not only for revolutionary communists in the I.R.S.P. but also for the sacrifice shown and the ongoing struggle of the Irish working class.

In keeping with this decision a detailed briefing was sent out to all progressive and interested groups working in solidarity with the Irish struggle. In this briefing the I.R.S.P. catalogued instances of Sinn Fein's behaviour towards the I.R.S.P. It called on these Parties/Groups to state where they stood in relation to sectarianism and elitism - it did not call upon anyone to side with the IRSP against Sinn Fein - it was a straightforward matter of standing

for or against anti-imperialist unity. These letters were sent on November 7th 1988 to the Socialist Workers Party, the Revolutionary Communist Party/Irish Freedom Movement, Red Action, Revolutionary Communist Group, The Leninist, the Pakistani Workers Association, Revolutionary Democratic Group, Internationalist Faction, Troops Out Movement, Communist Party of Ireland, and the Manchester Martyrs Commemoration Committee.

At the time of going to press, the only responses to be had, despite follow on contact and 'phone calls, were from the Manchester Martyrs Commemoration Committee, The Leninist, Red Action and the Revolutionary Democratic Group (see letters page). This obviously says a lot about the watery tailist mentality of most 'revolutionary' groups in England. How can anyone, never mind the state, be expected to treat seriously the revolutionary intent of people, who so readily vacillate in the face of tactics which can only aid British imperialism. It needs to be said, they stand guilty of duplicity by their deafening silence.

Henry Taggart.

Manchester Martyrs March On!



A march and rally to commemorate the 121st anniversary of the Manchester Martyrs took place on Sunday 20th November. The march saw about 850 people parade through the streets of Manchester to the tunes of three flute bands. The bands, The Andersonstown Martyrs, The Billy Reid and the Rising Phoenix, travelled down from Scotland, and gave the event its usual lively atmosphere. Despite the presence of 150 fascists/loyalists, the parade was a peaceful and dignified tribute to three men who laid down their lives for Irish freedom in 1867. The commemoration called for complete British disengagement from Ireland and demanded that the Irish people be given back their basic right to determine their own destiny.

The rally was addressed by representatives of amongst others, the Derry Frontline project, the Broadwater Farm Campaign, the P & O strikers and the Viraj Mendis campaign. Liz Lagrua of the I.R.S.P. was the main speaker. After paying tribute to the memory of Allen, Larkin and O'Brien, she then stressed the importance of events such as this in the context of continually

reviewing and analysing the struggle, "that is why we welcome the opportunity, as Irish communists, actively engaged in the struggle for national liberation and socialism, to put forward our perspective from this platform."

Repression

Ms Lagrua also related what the position of nationalists was three years after the signing of the Hillsborough accord, and how with the duplicity of the S.D.L.P., the "neutral" British had tightened the repressive screw... "the introduction of a Section 31 type media ban on people supporting proscribed organisations, the onus of guilt before innocence if a suspect chooses to maintain his/her right to silence."

International Unity

Ms Lagrua went on to give the analysis of the I.R.S.P. in placing the struggle in Ireland and the methods and legislation employed against it in an international context. "What we see here, has its beginnings in the working committee of the T.R.E.V.I. group of counter-insurgency

experts made up from the countries of the Western Alliance. It is through their offices, that we have witnessed almost simultaneously across Europe the introduction of the use of agent provocateurs and paid perjurers to indite in massive show-trials, activists from Euskadi through Italy and Germany to Ireland. The special high security isolated goals for political prisoners. The use of divisive tactics, such as the paid government agent Danny Cohn-Bendit, the one-time revolutionary who now tours gaols at the behest of the German government offering better gaol conditions and early release in return for the renunciation of the revolutionary struggle. Likewise, our own Father Faul who, at the behest of the British government and the Catholic hierarchy, does the same job in calling for the release of lifers who will openly renounce the struggle."

...that despite its inherent contradictions, capitalism, in order to maintain its interests in the face of rising working class militancy had developed a unified strategy. The creation of a computerised intelligence bank to which all Western alliance agencies as well as the U.S., Israel and South Africa contribute and exchange information. This enables them to keep tabs on opposition groups in order to facilitate either the extradition of activists or, as in the case of comrades Farrell, McCann and Savage in Gibraltar, a more covert and fatal approach."

Building For Withdrawal

Ms Lagrua questioned why after 20 years the withdrawal movement had achieved little in the way of its stated aims. Why it had failed to act as a vehicle for change in the perception of Ireland by the British people? She made reference to the Labour left's (sic) latest 'initiative,' 'Time to Go Charter' and after analysing its chances of success, made this call "From this platform, we in the I.R.S.P. call upon all those here, who are serious in their commitment to a social revolution to get their

priorities right and to start the process of discussion and indeed heated debate about the creation of the only thing (outside Ireland) that could possibly pose a serious threat to imperialism in Ireland, that is the formation of a solidarity movement." Ms Lagrua committed the I.R.S.P. to play any role necessary to facilitate or accommodate the bringing about these discussions.

In her conclusion, Ms Lagrua said that the I.R.S.P. was under no illusion in respect of the future of the struggle. The Republican Socialist Movement for all its size has suffered more arrests, torture, imprisonment and death than any other resistance organisation in Ireland. There was everything to indicate that the prospect of building a revolutionary communist organisation in Ireland will ensure the full repressive weight of the state and its allies. However, said Ms Lagrua, "We are part of the Irish working class which is a large section of the Irish nation, a nation who for over 800 years has repeatedly shown their resistance and resilience in the face of continued savage atrocities. The revolutionary zeal that was alive in Allen, Larkin and O'Brien in 1867 and in all the martyrs that have followed, typifies the spirit of a people who intend, by whatever means necessary to be free. Thatcher's government, just as with Botha's and Shamir's know, that no matter what methods they employ, no matter how many people they imprison, no matter how many of us that they murder, that others will follow in our footsteps. And just as surely as the Nicaraguan people overthrew the tyrant Somoza, so our moment of history is coming. Victory to Freedom Fighters throughout the world. Venceremos agus tlochfaidh ar la."

Despite the banning of the commemoration last year, the manoeuvring, re-routing and massive state-police presence this year, the compliance by their absence of the media, the constant haranguing and assaults of fascists and finally the confusion and frustration caused by Sinn Fein's absence - the Manchester Martyrs commemoration was a particularly successful show of force. The message from the organisers and participants was clear - **WE WILL NOT BE SILENCED.**

Mass Hunger Strike In Turkey



Relatives of Bursa prisoners stage protest hunger strike.

The following is the text of a statement issued by the Committee for Defence of Democratic Rights in Turkey.

The biggest hunger strike by political prisoners in Turkey has entered a critical phase. For over 40 weeks approximately 2,000 prisoners in 14 prisons plus many hundreds of relatives have staged solidarity hunger strikes. Today at least 1,000 are still on hunger strike many facing death.

The hunger strikes are in protest at worsening conditions for political prisoners as a result of new prison rules imposed on August 1st by the Turkish regime.

The response of the regime to the prisoners' demands was brutal. In one case prisoners taking part in a hunger strike in Gaziantep prison were tortured -

two prisoners - Nesimi Yaman and Ali Gunqor suffered broken bones as a result. The mother of a political prisoner Hanim Sonmez who set herself on fire in Istanbul as a protest has been arrested on release from hospital. The authorities have cut off supplies of sugared or salted water to the hunger strikers thereby turning the entire hunger strike into a fast to the death. Prime Minister Ozal has stated that the prisoners are "free to die".

Political prisoners from most Kurdish and Turkish revolutionary organisations are taking part including: PKK (Kurdistan Workers Party, Acilciler Dev Sol (Revolutionary Left), Iscinin Sesi (Workers Voice), Kurtulus (Struggle), TKP-ML (Partizan) etc.

Faced with the revolutionary determination of the prisoners and the unprecedented level of solidarity by people outside, in several prisons the authorities have been forced to give in to the prisoners' demands. This has smashed the main intention of the regime which was to impose a uniform system of oppression in all prisons. However, in many other prisons a fast to death continues

Prisoners Demands

Political Prisoners status to be recognised.

End the practice of adding new prison sentences when prisoners have served the original ones.

Change the August 1st guidelines issued by the ministry of Justice which violate international human rights agreements.

The right of prisoners to speak the language of their choice (eg. Kurdish).

Rules against torture drawn up after the last hunger strikes must be enforced.

Prison uniforms must be abolished.

More visits and greater access to families and lawyers.

Freedom to write and receive letters.

The right to possess radios, tapes, pencils, books, periodicals and typewriters.

An end to solitary confinement.

In a vain attempt to stop the hunger strikers, the authorities transferred many prisoners - particularly Kurdish revolutionaries to other prisons. However, this just lead to the strikes spreading.

Hunger Strikers Critically Ill

Many hunger strikers are now critically ill. Recent information particularly mentions three prisoners in Diyarbakir and two women taking part in solidarity hunger strikes by families outside Diyarbakir and Bayrampasa prisons. In addition two Kurdish prisoners who had been severely tortured in Sinop prison tried to hang themselves. Guards

intervened but one, Salih Sezgin is in a coma in Hospital. Kemal Adtas, another prisoner, as a result of the hunger strike is said to be on the verge of death in hospital.

Solidarity Outside

There have been many protest actions outside the prisons in solidarity with the heroic hunger strikers. Many people particularly women and students have defied brutal attacks by the political police and para-military gendarmerie to stage demonstrations. In Diyarbakir 270 relatives of prisoners have been on hunger strike for over 30 days. There have been running battles with the police and almost daily "illegal" protest marches in Istanbul.

The Committee For Defence Of Democratic Rights In Turkey Calls For Maximum International Solidarity With The Hunger Strikers. The Situation Is Now Urgent.

For further information contact:

Committee for Defence of Democratic Rights In Turkey, 84 Pond Road, London. N1 4AJ. Tel: 01-254 0387.

Political Prisoners Massacred



Since the ceasefire between Iran and Iraq both these monstrous regimes have turned their attentions to destroying any internal dissent. Iraq has bombarded its Kurdish minority with chemical weapons killing untold numbers and forcing a large number of Kurds to flee to the tender mercies of Turkey and Iran. From reports coming out of Iran, it is clear that the regime is murdering systematically all political prisoners. The Mujahideen-e Khlaq have recently released the names of over 1000 prisoners who have been executed and estimates of the total number executed range upwards from 3000.

The following is a text of a statement issued by the Communist Party of Iran - The Committee Abroad.

"Live Aid" For Iran!

There is no cause for astonishment! In Iran no draught has set in, no earthquake has occurred. But thousands of human beings have been killed and thousands more are awaiting death. In Iran it is the outpour of bullets that creates death. It is not vibrations in the crust of the earth, but the convulsions of a reactionary, despotic government in an effort to stabilise itself that causes death in Iran.

The death of thousands of human beings in Iran is not an inescapable natural disaster. On the contrary, it is the deliberate plan of the leaders of a government that has based itself on suppression and killing throughout ten long years.

The Islamic Republic in Iran which presented the world with an

image of medieval barbarity and the denial of all human and democratic rights during the ten years of its existence, has extended its criminality within the last few months by putting thousands of political prisoners to death.

How many thousands of people have been killed during these months? No one can know for certain. No figures are exact. Under the dark oppression that kills by such dimensions no exact statistics and information can be found. The Iranian government is keeping its mouth shut. But fathers and mothers, husbands and wives are searching for the mutilated bodies of their loved ones in mass graves. Under such conditions the figure 3,000 is an extremely conservative estimate.

If the campaign to save human life in the face of natural disaster is humane and justified, the campaign to save human life in the face of the brutality of the Islamic Republic is twice as important. If no such effort exists, if the government and the mass media keep silent about what is happening in Iran, the reason can

only be found in the economic and political interests of the governments.

But you should not remain silent. You cannot remain impassive. Take steps to save the lives of thousands of human beings. It is not financial contributions that is required, no blankets or the coat you have on, not the meat under cold storage, or boxes of medicine in the warehouses. It is enough to want that thousands of people in Iran should stay alive and to articulate this demand, Protest the massacre. Ask your government to put political and economic pressure on the Islamic Republic. Demand the freedom of political prisoners in Iran.

To help save human life, not in the face of earthquake or draught, but against the savagery of a reactionary regime today is real Live Aid. You who take action to save those who may be alive under the rubble, should not allow those already alive to be buried in Iran.

Help Political Prisoners In Iran!

I.N.L.A. Actions

The following statements were supplied to the Republican Socialist Publicity Bureau.

August 10th, 1988 - Volunteer James McPhilomy, Tyrone Brigade I.N.L.A. is killed in action (see report page 11).

August 17th, 1988 - The I.N.L.A. in Belfast shot and killed the well known U.V.F. man Fred Otley in his fruit shop on the Shankill Road. The Belfast Brigade in claiming responsibility said "Otley was targeted after our intelligence section had confirmed his role in collating and forwarding

information instrumental to the murder of nationalists and in particular the callous murder of Ballymurphy grandfather Francis Nantarantonio. The I.N.L.A. now take this opportunity to warn the fascist U.V.F. and U.D.A. death squads to immediately desist from their attacks on nationalists or face the immediate consequences."

September 2nd, 1988 - "The Belfast Brigade I.N.L.A. claim responsibility for mounting an attack on the R.U.C. in the Sugarfield Street area of the Shankill Road. The R.U.C. prior to this, had been seen colluding with a loyalist mob that had, over a period of weeks, been stoning and petrol

bombing nationalist homes on the periphery of the Clonard area. Upon coming under automatic fire, the R.U.C. and loyalist gangs withdrew from the area".

November 3rd, 1988 - After lengthy surveillance volunteers of the North Armagh I.N.L.A. shot and seriously wounded an R.U.C. Special Branch Officer in Waringstown, "... despite media censorship and oppression, the struggle will continue until British imperialism is smashed."

November 21st, 1988 - The D.H.S.S. in many of their offices in the six counties staged a lightning walk-out after they claimed that staff at their Portadown branch had been threatened by the I.N.L.A. Much play was made of this alleged threat by the Uncle Toms of what passes for trade unions and 'labour' orientated groups. No-one, including the media, attempted to validate these "threats" with the organisation concerned. Rather they

stampeded over each other in their haste to let it be known of their "solidarity with the workers" and of course their condemnation of the armed struggle. Such a pity that they are not so militant, articulate or active in their defence of the rights of workers to organise or the living conditions of the unemployed. In response, the I.N.L.A. in North Armagh issued the following statement. "The I.N.L.A. in North Armagh refute entirely the reported threats allegedly issued by the I.N.L.A. to workers in the Portadown D.H.S.S. offices. However, our position on state mercenaries, crawling around deprived ghettos dole snooping is clear and a matter of record. Notwithstanding, ordinary staff members of the badly paid and grossly understaffed D.H.S.S. offices can be assured of having nothing whatsoever to fear from our organisation."

December 24th 1988 - Over the past few months, harassment of nationalist youth in the Greater

Ballymurphy area by the Brits and R.U.C. has escalated. Many local people have been injured by the hundreds of plastic bullets fired indiscriminately. On Saturday, 24th December, an I.N.L.A. unit moved into the New Barnsley/Moyard estates and secured the area. Shortly after 7.45 p.m., an eight person R.U.C. foot patrol started to make its way towards the Whiterock junction. They were immediately engaged from two firing positions with heavy automatic weapons. The R.U.C. beat a hasty retreat.

We wish to apologise for the non-appearance of the Starry Plough. This has been due solely to lack of finance coupled with the abysmal response to our Fighting Fund. Comrades, this is just not good enough. So - come on then, comrades, dig deep, ensure the voice of revolutionary communism will continue to be heard and listened to! Send all donations to: An Camcheachta, Fighting Fund, 392 Falls Road, Belfast

The achievement of anti-imperialist unity in Ireland has long been sought after by socialists and republicans. Faced with an entrenched and tenacious loyalist State, the adage 'United we stand, Divided we fall' seems to take on a grim reality. This maxim is correct but, for the Marxist movement, a qualification must be added. The fact is that 'united' we could still fall. Submersion in a predominantly petiti-bourgeois movement would be a recipe for organisational disaster and numerical diminution. As a result, the primary consideration, for revolutionary socialists, is to analyse thoroughly the objective and subjective conditions before entering into any form of anti-imperialist broad front. Should Marxists contemplate alliance, in a formal manner, with non-communists?

Hegemony

Revolutionary socialists must explore every path in the struggle to gain political hegemony of the working class. Hegemony cannot be achieved if Marxist organisations remain aloof from the class. Elitism prevents the Party from assuming its role as assistant to the social revolution and puts it on a non-socialist trajectory. Existing as foreign bodies outside the working class, Marxists become objectively irrelevant, ineffective and often may succumb to Jacobinism or academic philosophising.

In order to establish organic links with the working class, the Party must be drawn largely from its numbers and must be seen to be a component part of the proletarian body politic. This means that socialists fight on all issues that affect workers rather than hibernating until the revolution 'occurs.' By proving ourselves as working class fighters, our influence grows. The greater the intensity of non-revolutionary class struggle, the greater the possibility of revolutionary struggle emerging. This, quite simply, is why Marxists ally themselves with social democrats. The revolution, said Vladimir Lenin, "may blaze up even though it has begun with the struggle for something partial." During periods of relative stability, socialists must concentrate on winning workers during fights for reforms etc. equal pay for women, right to unionise etc. In the course of these struggles it is possible to gradually expose, even if in a limited manner, the limitations of social democracy and thus disillusion many previously purblind workers.

United Front

By fighting alongside social democrats, one simultaneously exposes them. This thesis was at the heart of the Communist International's decision to adopt the 'United Workers Front' policy in December 1921. This policy was directly inspired by the German communists' successful application of a temporary alliance with the social democrats in Saxony at the time of the Kapp putsch. Now, the Comintern was requesting that its national sections work with 'socialist' parties to improve the material conditions of life for the working class. According to Alfred Rosmer, a prominent Comintern official, the policy was activated at this time because "a certain hesitancy was obvious among the workers, whereas the bourgeoisie, virtually moribund at the end of the war, had gained sufficient self-confidence to attack, and was already doing so with some success. The appropriate tactics required a stress on the workers immediate demands; this would mean that the communist parties need not fear being isolated among the working class." The tactic was adopted, wrote Lenin, because of "the pressure of the capitalist offensive against..." the working class.

The Comintern itself, in a directive issued in 1922, stated that by a 'United Front' it meant a "united front of all workers who want to fight against capitalism, which includes those who still follow the anarchists, syndicalists etc..." The directive noted that "Considerable sections belonging to the old social democratic parties are no longer content with the campaign of the social democrats and centrists against the communist vanguard, and are beginning to demand an understanding with the communists. But at the same time they have not yet lost their belief in the

Marxism And T

reformists." It was these workers that the Comintern wished to win to revolutionary socialism. This was to be achieved by fighting alongside them on reformist issues while at the same time propagating for communism. "While supporting the slogan of the greatest possible unity of all workers' organisations in every practical action against the capitalist front, communists may in no circumstances desist from putting forward their views." Comintern policy dictated that all work was to be conducted on an honest and Marxist basis.

The 'United Front' tactic is an open and principled tactic wholly in line with the Marxist tradition. For Marxists, it is a means of unifying workers around short-term reformist demands, strengthening their defences, building their confidence and ultimately creating an anti-capitalist offensive. Revolutionary socialists work alongside reformists, but also work separately and strive to expose social democracy's bankruptcy.

Popular Front

Contemporary Moscowite 'communists' tend to equate Lenin's 'United Front' tactic with 'Popular Frontism' - an opportunist mutation advocated by Josef Stalin. Stalin's 'Popular Frontism', from 1934 onwards, involved collaboration with social democratic parties to the extent that CPs were induced to act as mere reformist pressure groups. Revolutionary politics were played down in order, as Isaac Deutscher claims, not "to frighten away middle class liberals by unduly radical demands and anti-capitalist slogans." The defence of bourgeois democracy against fascism (something Stalin ignored during his 'ultra-left' period of 1928-33) was declared to be the primary task of communists.

The 'Popular Front' tactic was, initially, conceived by the Comintern in the late 20's. By that stage, the Communist International had become completely dominated by the CPSU, which, in turn, had become dominated by Stalin and his supporters. For Stalin the Comintern was simply an instrument to be used in line with foreign policy, thus 'Popular Frontism' should be seen in the context of his aim of constructing 'socialism in one country.' Placation of bourgeois reformists and a subdued international communist movement was deemed necessary for the facilitation of the task of 'building socialism' in the USSR. Internationalism was effectively eliminated in favour of the CPSU's nationalism.

'Popular Frontism' had a lasting and disastrous effect on many communist parties. Its application in China in the 1920's provides one of the clearest examples of its bankruptcy as a tactic for revolutionaries.

The Chinese Communist Party, in line with Comintern policy, subordinated itself to the 'progressive' bourgeois nationalist Kuomintang between 1925 and 1927. Even as repression, then massacres, of workers increased under the KMT (Kuomintang) government the Comintern demanded that they "remain in the KMT and work to change it into a really mass organisation." Stalin, despite the KMT massacres, also ordered that they "remain in the KMT, intensifying their work in it..." as withdrawal would mean abandoning the battlefield "and leaving in the lurch... allies in the KMT, to the joy of their enemies." Frustration at this policy grew within the CCP. "What about ourselves?" asked Liu Chih-hsun "we were in a quandary. On the one hand we had to fight against the feudal forces of local bullies and bad gentry and the bourgeoisie; on the other we had to co-operate with the KMT which represented them...we had to prevent workers and peasants from solving their problems by themselves. We told them to wait for orders from the headquarters of the KMT."

The alliance continued, at the Cominterns insistence, until eventually in 1927 the KMT predictably turned on the communists, massacring thousands throughout the country. Only those forces led away, against CCPS orders, by Mao Tse Tung and Zhu De survived. The CCP, which had been largely urban based, was destroyed in the towns and cities. "our union organisations have been reduced to a minimum...recorded an internal CCP circular of November 1928, "our party units in the cities have been pulverised and isolated. Nowhere in China can we find



one solid industrial cell."

'Popular Frontism' remains an optional tactic for pro-Moscow Communist Parties, and continues to plague revolutionary movements throughout the world. A recent example of its tragic consequences was the fate that befell Allende and the Chilean communists in 1973! Marxists make a fundamental mistake when they submerge themselves in popular coalitions.

Broad Front

In Ireland, the strategy of 'Broad Frontism' found a strong advocate in Seamus Costello, Costello, while a leading member of the 'official' Republican Movement in the 1960's and early 1970's, had experience of the 'officials' attempt to establish a 'National Liberation Front'. This 'Front', which was to include the Communist Party of Ireland, was essentially an attempt to form a 'Popular Front' in Ireland. It failed, but Costello maintained that such a 'Front' could succeed if organised on an explicitly anti-occupation basis.

When he founded the Irish Republican Socialist Party in 1974, Seamus Costello placed his 'Broad Front' policy at the centre of his party's strategy. He elaborated his conception declaring that "as a party we...recognise the absolute necessity of securing a constitutional solution to the present crisis which will allow the Irish working class the freedom to pursue their interests as a class in the context of the development of normal class politics." Brits out, then socialism can be put on the agenda was, in essence, what he declared. This is not fundamentally different from Gerry Adams statement that "an anti-imperialist movement cannot be built around the

slogan of socialism until socialism comes on the historical agenda."

The aim of Costello's 'Broad Front', in keeping with his 'realistic' outlook, was not to be a Workers Republic, or even a democratic socialist Republic, but "a 32 county Democratic republic with a secular constitution." This was to be achieved by "convening...an all Ireland Constitutional Conference representative of all shades of political opinion in Ireland."

As Costello was a radical left-republican rather than a Marxist, the above outlined formula is understandable. It does, however, reek of 'Popular Frontism' and any Marxist organisations throwing themselves into such a 'Front' would have to make massive compromises. The struggle for socialism would have to be put on a back burner. Quite simply, socialists might as well join the Republican Movement rather than partake in such a limited anti-imperialist front.

Republican Congress

Another 'Broad Front' proposal, emanating from anti-imperialist circles, revolves around the idea of re-establishing the Republican Congress of 1934-36. The Long Kesh based League of Communist Republicans are the foremost advocates of this view. The Socialist Republican Collective (a euphemism for the IPLO) have also seemingly taken up this call. As this proposal is the only current proposal calling for the creation of an anti-imperialist front, it is worth examining in some detail.

The LCR begin from the correct basis that, at the moment, Ireland has no revolutionary communist Party and, as such, this needs to be built. From there on, they begin to diverge from

The Broad Front

Organise



the Marxist tradition.

Marxists argue that the establishment of an embryonic organisation or proto-Party is the first and essential step in the struggle to build a revolutionary workers party. Individual socialists, with similar ideas, gather together and initiate a process of theoretical clarification. Theory is developed and solidified and new members are gained. With a cohesive theoretical base, the organisation involves itself in day to day struggles, preparing itself to take advantage of peaks in the class struggle. During times of relative stability, the organisation grows slowly, but properly prepared its membership should increase substantially during times of strife within bourgeois society. The process culminates in the creation of a mass party which exists as a part of the states objective conditions. The creation of a mass party is a dialectical process, involving both spontaneity and conscious action.

The LCR wish to build a revolutionary party, but this is not how they wish to build it. Recognising that socialist organisations expand greatly under certain objective conditions, they strive to conjure up those required conditions. The party is not being built first, the conditions are! Thus Tommy McKearney, of the LCR, can state, in a letter to the British Leninist, that "conditions must be created which allow for the emergence of a strong party. And the activity of a Republican Congress would create those very conditions."

The Republican Congress is to be a unified (sic) mish-mash of republicans, left-republicans, socialists and other 'progressive people.' This anti-imperialist front would, they optimistically assume, be a mass movement involved in mass action, and from it a socialist

party would organically emerge. "With the new circumstances created by popular action..." claim the LCR "there will develop a changed political landscape. The Left will experience profound change. One of the present groups may adjust and grow into a large, stronger party capable of leadership. Alternatively, a realignment on the Left may take place and, from this, will emerge the party of leadership."

The Congress is projected as an alliance of all anti-imperialist parties and individuals. The aim of those communists, working within it, would be to gain hegemony over the movement. Is this feasible? The LCR clearly think so. They believe that "whoever propagates the correct line will succeed." This, I must humbly suggest, is a mite naive. Revolutionary socialists, according to the LCR formula, would enter the Congress without a viable party and would exit with one. Now, any logical person must balk at this thesis. How, a logical person would ask, considering the weakness of their forces relative to those of nationalism, could revolutionary socialist gain in such a front? If you enter weak and/or unorganised you cannot hope to gain hegemony. Wouldn't socialists simply be submerged, assimilated, neutralised in a sea of nationalists?

It would seem that the LCRs major problem lies in its fear of becoming trapped in that incestuousness that is the revolutionary Left in Ireland. It wishes to build a relevant revolutionary party, but is appalled by the sectarian groupings of many of Irelands left-wing organisations. They are seen as ineffective. "There are..." says Tommy McKearney "at least a dozen circles or groups in this country...none of whom are making an impact. Will another

pretentious claim fare any better? Workers are, in general, indifferent or even bemused by all these tiny aspirants to the title." They wish to create a party with organic links to the working class, and in striving for this aim they reject what they see as ineffective methods.

The method they chose, however, is in Marxist terms opportunistic and, in purely realistic terms, a dead end. McKearney speaks of a Republican Congress with "a small group to lobby the development of the vanguard party." Marxists do not 'lobby' for the creation of a party, they get together and establish a proto-Party. It is a serious mistake to underestimate the conscious element in the development of a revolutionary Marxist party.

Unrealistic

In practical terms the Congress proposal is totally unrealistic. It takes no account of the subjective state of the anti-imperialist movement. Who is going to relaunch the Congress anyway? The Republican Movement? Certainly not! 1988 is not 1978. Sinn Fein has matured. The I.R.S.P. for example, was a sizeable organisation in 1978. It had to be taken very seriously by Sinn Fein which itself was passing through a weak phase. That is now no longer the case. The Republican Movement has grown stronger and Sinn Fein has successfully assimilated those left-republicans who would previously have allied themselves to the IRSP, LCR or other such groups. The Republican Movement is, at this present time, objectively the anti-imperialist movement and it sees itself as such. Unfortunately, socialist groups are objectively peripheral. The Republican Movement, therefore, would have to be involved in the proposed congress and because of its relative size it would dominate. Whether it would actually involve itself in such a front is highly unlikely anyway. It would have little to gain. Sinn Fein is not going to participate in an altruistic attempt to build the Irish Left nor is it going to risk losing vital revenue from the U.S. because of links with Irish 'commies.'

In any case, the present aim of the Sinn Fein leadership is not the achievement of anti-imperialist unity. They don't wish to effect an alliance with radicals or socialists, but with bourgeois nationalists such as the SDLP and Fianna Fail. The aim is to create a "pan-nationalist agreement so that the problem can be solved within the context of national self-determination." According to Mitchel McLaughlin, of Derry Sinn Fein, they "are out to persuade Irish nationalists that nothing but self-determination will suffice. The SDLP, Fianna Fail and other parties in the 26 counties are on record supporting the concept of independence in one way or another. This support must now become a practical campaign with a minimum objective of a negotiated British withdrawal. After that it will be up to all Irish men and women to decide in an amicable fashion the structures within which the Irish can live and prosper." Sinn Fein wants to sit down with the 'establishment' not with socialists.

From both a pragmatic viewpoint and a principled Marxist viewpoint, the Republican Congress proposal is not on. It is wishful thinking abstracted from reality. Nevertheless, it is excellent that the LCR is seeking a way forward. This particular avenue, however, is not the correct one.

Overall, Marxists only participate in 'fronts' that do not entail serious compromises, and only if they are strong enough to gain rather than lose. According to the LCR, they "are only too well aware of the need for a vanguard party and it is incumbent on us, as communists, to set about fulfilling that task. But, as communists, we also heed the advice of comrade Lenin. 'Only those who are not sure of themselves can fear to enter into temporary alliances.'" As communists, also, we must be capable of self-criticism and self-analysis. If the LCR recognise the absence of a strong Marxist movement then they must realise that we cannot at this stage, be 'sure of ourselves'. We are in a state of severe weakness and remain so until we set about establishing a firm theoretical base around which a party can be built. Until then, we should "fear to enter into temporary alliances" in which we would be a tiny minority.

International experience clearly demonstrates that 'broad frontism' is fraught with danger for the socialist movement. For most of the struggle for socialism, it will be a somewhat isolated fight. Socialists rely largely on a hard-core of tenacious and dedicated class fighters to maintain and build the movement during periods of low class struggle. Principled unity with reformists can sometimes be advantageous, but it is only through a coherent analysis of the subjective and objective conditions that this can be perceived. The United Front is a tactic not a principle.

From Ireland to China, we find examples of 'broad frontism' destroying socialist organisations. These are the fruits of the class collaboration contained in 'Popular Frontism'. For socialists, 'Popular Frontism' is unity around the lowest common denominator, it is unity on the reformists terms not ours. As such, Marxists must steer clear of these type of alliances. For Marxists, it should be a 'United Workers Front' or nothing.

Here in Ireland, 'broad frontism's' most ardent advocate effectively scuttled his own organisation because of his conversion of a tactic into a principle. Placing the 'Broad Front' policy at the centre of IRSP strategy, stunted theoretical development. The IRSP's worship for the 'Broad Front' caused it to drown itself intellectually. In the rush to remain comradesly to everybody, theoretical growth was forgotten. No coherent base of its own was achieved, as a result no hard political criticisms of groups like the Provisionals were advanced aside from the vaguely argued claim that they were not socialist enough. The IRSP, in fact, remained vague on everything and expressed itself in an essentially populist manner. When it entered the anti-H-Block campaign, members simply tailed the Republican Movement. It wasn't until the early '80's that serious theoretical debate took place. The same fate awaits all organisations that install 'broad frontism' as their pivot.

At the moment subjective conditions definitely rule out 'broad frontism' as a tactic. The primary task must be to organise the revolutionary socialists of this country into an efficient and effective fighting machine. A socialist Party needs to be built. In advance of this, however, debate must occur. Nothing can be built without a base, so it is absolutely necessary that that be established now. Theoretical clarity is the plasma of every Marxist organisation. Without this clarity there is no real communist logic in the work of an organisation. Armed, however, with a coherent and cogent theoretical base, it will become possible to construct a revolutionary socialist Party which would strive to transform Ireland's anti-imperialist struggle into an explicitly anti-capitalist struggle. This must be the aim of Irish Marxists. It is an aim that can be achieved, but not if we indulge in illusions and abstractions, and not if we submerge ourselves in nationalist dominated 'broad fronts.'

Robert Lake

NOTES

1. Examples of this include the 'foco theory' and groups like the Red Brigades, also 'critical theory' and academic groups such as the Frankfurt School and the American 'Telos' group.
2. V.I. Lenin - 'Collected Works' (Moscow, 1960-70) Vol. 35 Page 268.
3. A. Rosmer - 'Lenin Moscow' (London, 1987) Page 165.
4. Lenin quoted by E.H. Carr in 'The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917-23'
5. 'Directives on the United Front of Workers' in H. Gruber (ed) - 'International Communism in the era of Lenin' (New York, 1972) Page 326.
6. 'Ibid' Page 319
7. 'Ibid' Page 324
8. I. Deutscher - 'Stalin' (Harmondsworth, 1986) Page 412.
9. Quoted in Jerome Chen - 'Mao and the Chinese revolution' (New York, 1967) Page 119.
10. Quoted in 'Ibid' Page 119.
11. 'Ibid' Page 120.
12. B. Schwartz - 'Chinese communism and the rise of Mao' (Cambridge, Mass, 1979) Page 128.
13. For a good account of this see I. Roxborough et al - 'Chile: the State and Revolution' (London, 1977).
14. S. Costello - 'The Broad Front' in 'Seamus Costello, 1939-77' (Dublin, n.d.) Page 63.
15. G. Adams - 'The Politics of Irish Freedom' (Dingle, 1986) Page 128.
16. S. Costello - 'Ibid' Page 64.
17. 'Ibid' Page 64.
18. 'The Leninist' 21/1/88.
19. 'Congress 86' Vol. 1, No. 3, 1988.
20. 'Ibid'.
21. Letter to 'The Leninist' 20/6/88.
22. 'The Leninist' 21/1/88.
23. Gerry Adams quoted in the 'Sunday Tribune' 17/7/88
24. Quoted in the 'Irish Times' 18/5/88
25. LCR letter to 'The Leninist' 27/12/87.

IDATU Sacks John Mitchell

Trade unionists, socialists and republicans must condemn the sacking of John Mitchell from the post of General Secretary of the Irish Distributive and Administrative Trades Union (IDATU). Resolutions and messages of support should be sent to the Executive Committee of IDATU calling for Mitchell's reinstatement. It is the duty of every class conscious worker and trade union militant to do all in his/her power to reverse this bureaucratic victimisation. Mitchell is one of the few trade union officials in Ireland with the courage and principles to support his members in struggle and to expose the corrupt collaborator's conspiracy known as the hierarchy of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions.

Since his appointment in December, 1982, John Mitchell has secured a list of very impressive achievements. These include: pay increases for members above the norm of other unions; improvements in annual leave and conditions of employment; consistent support for and organisation of part-time workers; steadfast and prompt support for members in industrial disputes; legal aid schemes and trade union education for members; maintenance of membership levels in a period of general union decline; computerisation, financial planning and modernisation of the union system; opposition to apartheid and the pursuit of social justice at home and abroad; support for Irish language and culture.

Given this proud record, why then was he sacked? In whose interest was it? John Mitchell says it was because the Executive "prefer the ways of the old regime." So what, were these old ways? A cosy existence composed of 'cordial' relations with employers and an uncritical membership of the ICTU, coupled with silent acceptance of its manoeuvres, manipulations and class treachery.

Having gained international respect for its stand against apartheid in South Africa during the Dunnes Stores strike, IDATU under the leadership of Mitchell



and his supporters committed the cardinal sin (in the eyes of the pro-British establishment and middle class liberals) of raising the issue of Irish apartheid. By daring to recruit nationalist workers in the six counties and exposing the complicity of the ICTU and the trade unions in the anti-nationalist/catholic discrimination, Mitchell stirred up a veritable hornets' nest of reaction.

Suspension from the ICTU followed in 1987 but it did not deter IDATU from its commitment to support victims of imperialist oppression north and south. At the Easter conference this year, IDATU delegates passed resolutions condemning extradition and the massive series of house raids in the 'Republic' known as Operation Mallard. The union continued to give financial

support to a wide range of agencies involved in social justice and political reform, eg. unemployment centres, all-Irish schools, womens' rights groups, third world projects etc. Mitchell condemned the ICTU's role in agreeing the 'National Recovery Plan' by which low wage increases for the public sector were traded off for empty promises of job creation. IDATU secured increases above the ICTU norm. Obviously the 'rebuke' from the Congress hierarchy was to no avail. IDATU was continuing to do what a trade union is supposed to do - fight for its members best interests. Now the attack on trade union militancy and solidarity with victims of class oppression had to come from within the IDATU.

Several weeks after the annual conference, where there appeared

to be general satisfaction with the state of the union's affairs, Mitchell was suddenly 'found guilty' of six charges by the Executive committee. These included the letting of the union hall for a meeting without permission (which Mitchell admitted but explained he was unable to prevent, since notice to cancel came only two days before the date and he had practical difficulties in arranging cancellation. Nevertheless he accepted responsibility and agrees a reprimand was in order).

He was disciplined on the basis of a secret report which he did not see and which he could not make a defence, this alleged, amongst other things, the serious "crime" of meeting with Gerry Adams! Also visiting political prisoners in jails; supplying misinformation on membership figures for the north; allowing non-union personnel to make a phone call or use the photocopier in the office! All of these were deemed evidence of "pursuit of political activities which have been perceived (not proven or established) to give the Union an undesirable political orientation not consonant with the views of the National Executive Committee or the membership generally."

There was also a letter from a 'concerned member' (Gabrielle McMorrow) citing information from a Workers Party friend (Liz Hackett) that money donated to Conradh na Gaeilge in Donegal was in fact going to a Provo 'safe house.'

These outrageous slanders were used as a basis for forcing Mitchell to desist from activity in the six counties. There would be no more recruitment in Derry or Belfast. Nor could he make any more visits to the north without the permission and knowledge of the Executive.

While the membership in Derry and Belfast organised to fight this betrayal and abandonment, the Executive commenced a smear campaign throughout the union's officials and branches. It was revealed that Mitchell had been convicted of driving with excess alcohol and had failed to inform

the union. Mitchell had, in fact informed the union's solicitor and insurance company. He was also accused of socialising with and giving moral support to members of the Derry branch!

Innuendoes and inferences were being made about the £50,000 spent in the six counties with so little to show for it. In fact this went on 4 years' salary for Elaine Harvey, full-time organiser in Belfast until early this year when she was due to be replaced by two part-time officials, plus normal office expenses. The intention was to create the suspicion that the union's funds were being diverted into non-union activities, some of which might even be 'subversive.'

With Derry activists gaining support from the Cork and Dublin branches to have their disbandment overturned, the Executive acted on November 15th to sack Mitchell. They refused any attempt to resolve the situation, even with third party intervention. They insisted that he must go, on the basis of "lack of trust." Subsequently, branch secretaries Daly, Higgins and Archibald were reprimanded for not actively supporting the Executive's decision.

It is an urgent task, obligatory on every trade union activist to make sure that this action by a group of reactionaries in the Executive Committee of IDATU does not succeed in inflicting a damaging blow to the cause of working class people in Ireland and to one of their foremost defenders. It is obvious from the inability of these inquisitors to specify any charges, that the only thing Mitchell was guilty of was being a principled fighter for his members' rights and a friend and ally to anti-imperialists in Ireland and abroad.

Already the Drogheda and Dublin administrative branches of IDATU have passed resolutions calling for his reinstatement. A committee has been set up and any queries should be sent to:

**380 Nutgrove Ave.,
Dublin 14.**

The I.R.S.P. pledges to support his campaign and calls on its supporters, nationally and internationally, to rally to the cause.

Mitchell Speaks Out

In the midst of his 'difficulties' with his employers (see report), John Mitchell took time off to be interviewed by An Camcheachta.

Q. What is your current situation?

A. Well, I have been sacked basically because of my political outlook which embraces a fighting perspective for trade unionists - both leaders and rank and file. I refused to resign and they refused third party mediation. With my supporters I am organising a campaign for my re-instatement. I have taken legal advice on my dismissal but we have also undertaken picketing of union meetings and the distribution of leaflets to the membership, the response has been very encouraging.

Q. Why do you think the executive acted at this time and in such haste?

A. Because support was building up for my position. All my actions have been endorsed democratically by the membership. It appears that the deadline for IDATU to get back into the ICTU, which is coming up, has spurred some of the Executive into action.

They seem to resent the loss of the perks of ICTU membership for officials. They no longer can sit in on the various tribunals and panels which would afford them extra income and, I suppose a certain amount of status as they would see it. They also wanted to get this matter out of the way so that I would not be available to defend myself at our annual conference. They certainly did not want an open debate. And no doubt they have been encouraged to say the least by employers groups and various political interests in the trade union structures.

Q. Since your politics are such a central feature, how then would you describe them?

A. I consider myself a socialist. I want to see a united Ireland free from all foreign domination militarily, politically and economically. This means for me, a socialist Ireland in which the workers will control not only the factories, banks and so on, but also have state power.

Q. From that perspective how do you evaluate the potential of the 'left' in Ireland?

A. Firstly, I think that the largest party on the left, the Labour Party, is a rotten, anti-socialist party. It no longer claims to be socialist, and its

record is one of unremitting attacks on working class conditions and living standards. It has participated in vicious right-wing governments; introduced and propped up the Anglo-Irish Agreement; it is actively anti-republican, pro-partition; a vehement supporter of extradition and all the repressive legislation introduced in collusion with the British government. It's thoroughly compromised with decent working class people. Its base is in the trade union careerists and the conservative complacent layer of better paid workers. In my view it is beyond recovery - indeed it is beyond contempt.

Similarly, I reject the politics of the Workers Party. To me this is a constitutional type Unionist party. Its thin veneer of socialist rhetoric does not disguise its rabid anti-republicanism, its servile imperialism nor its Free State parliamentary sycophancy. It has captured many trade union positions through stealth, ashamed of its real politics. It has played a contemptuous role in RTE where it has facilitated the creation of the slavish Section 31 mentality which now passes for journalism in Montrose Studios. Its vision of socialism

is that of the USSR under Stalin, that is why it is not against political censorship by the state - it just secretly harbours the ambition to run the state. The Communist Party is a similar outfit to the Sticks. It controls the ICTU northern committee in alliance with the loyalists. It does nothing to challenge them politically and hides its cowardice behind the smoke-screen of trade union unity. It played a leading role in having my union suspended from Congress.

Q. What of the Republican Movement?

A. Well, Sinn Fein is a mass organisation in the 6 counties. It has very little support in the rest of the country. I don't agree with its strategy of a pan-nationalist alliance. It does seem that its leadership has the view that socialism is not on the agenda, despite Adams' claim that he is quoted out of context. Is it not ridiculous to try to build a base in working class areas in the south with working class people being screwed by Fianna Fail as an attractive project? I think the republican movement should be making more of the connection between public spending cuts and the massive cost of maintaining the border. Of course, my criticisms are not hostile ones. I have a high regard for Sinn Fein members and my remarks are 'within the

family' so to speak. I'd prefer to see them making alliances with socialists and working class militants.

Q. What sort of socialist movement do you see as necessary?

A. With low inflation and high productivity we still have huge rates of unemployment and emigration. It has never been more obvious that this system does not work and should be replaced. What is needed is a socialist party which has as its objective putting the working class, the overwhelming majority of the population, in power. Such a change won't come from parliamentary democracy through Leinster House. That is not to say that elections as a tactic for building the party and gaining support should be ruled out, but it should be geared towards mobilising thousands and thousands of the oppressed to take control of society in their own interests. It must be prepared to use direct action when necessary and not be tied to protest politics or craving for respectability and approval from the capitalist media the way the Labour Party and the Sticky Workers Party do. Real socialists do not see their role as whinging on behalf of their electorate in the hallowed halls of Dail Eireann. They will not be on invitation lists for British or Irish government functions.

Defend The Clinics

In 1983, Article forty of the twenty-six Counties Constitution was amended in a referendum creating a situation whereby the embryo took priority over the woman's life. The fact that this was enshrined in the Constitution was to have long term effects for women's rights.

At the time Revolutionaries and Members of progressive Organisations warned of the long term effects of this reactionary Amendment. Subsequently these warnings are now seen to be totally correct to the extent that counselling a woman on the options open to her in relation to her pregnancy becomes a criminal offence.

During the Campaign the Pro-Amendment Lobby received the support of the most reactionary elements of Irish Society. The Catholic Church put their full weight into the Pro-Amendment Campaign and used the pulpit to advise people to vote yes. This was a blatant political act making a mockery of their repeated claims to be non-political. Large segments of the media especially The Provincial Press took the Pro-Amendment line as did the vast majority of the establishment politicians. The Pro-Amendment Lobby liked to project themselves as caring people and put themselves forward under emotive titles such as S.P.U.C. (Society For the Protection Of The Unborn Child), while in actual fact their undeclared long term aim was to claw back what little

cont. from opposite

Q. Where would you see such a party's position on internationalism?

A. It certainly could not have an isolationist attitude. While it would lend and seek solidarity with anti-imperialist and working class movements, it could not act slavishly as the agents of any foreign state power. Obviously we would have to take on board the lessons of other struggles but we cannot lose sight of our own Irish peculiarities.

Q. Is there the basis for such a party?

A. Yes. There is a largescale process of reassessment going on in political circles. Out of this I would be hopeful that those who agree with the views I have sketched out could come together and eventually form a coherent and decisive organisation and lay the basis for a real revolutionary socialist leadership.

Q. Finally, how do you assess the politics of the IRSP and its potential role in this suggested process?

A. I must say I have been impressed with the content of the Starry Plough in recent times. However, I do feel that a proper judgement cannot be made just yet. It is my view that the promise shown in the political debates in the paper must stand the test of time before any final conclusions could be properly made.

(Dermot McBride)

progress women, in the twenty-six Counties had made in their fight for equality.

The Anti-Amendment Campaigners tried to fight the Campaign on the facts but they were confronted with pure emotionalism and slandered with meaningless phrases such as 'Anti Life'.

The Hamilton Decision

The full implications of the passing of the Amendment did not come to light until 1986, when the extreme right wing organisation S.P.U.C., brought both Open Line Counselling and the Dublin Well Woman Centre to the High Court to stop their service which enabled women to discuss without fear, their unplanned pregnancies and the options open to them. Both of these Organisations are largely voluntary and give invaluable information to women about various aspects of their lives, including the various options open to women in relation to unplanned pregnancies, including the option of Abortion.

The role of S.P.U.C. in the court action was subsequently taken over by the twenty-six Counties' Attorney General which shows the anti-woman bias of the twenty-six Counties' Establishment.

The High Court under Justice Liam Hamilton ruled that the services of the two Clinics in counselling pregnant women was contrary to Article forty of the Constitution. This decision was subsequently upheld in the Supreme Court under Judge Finlay.

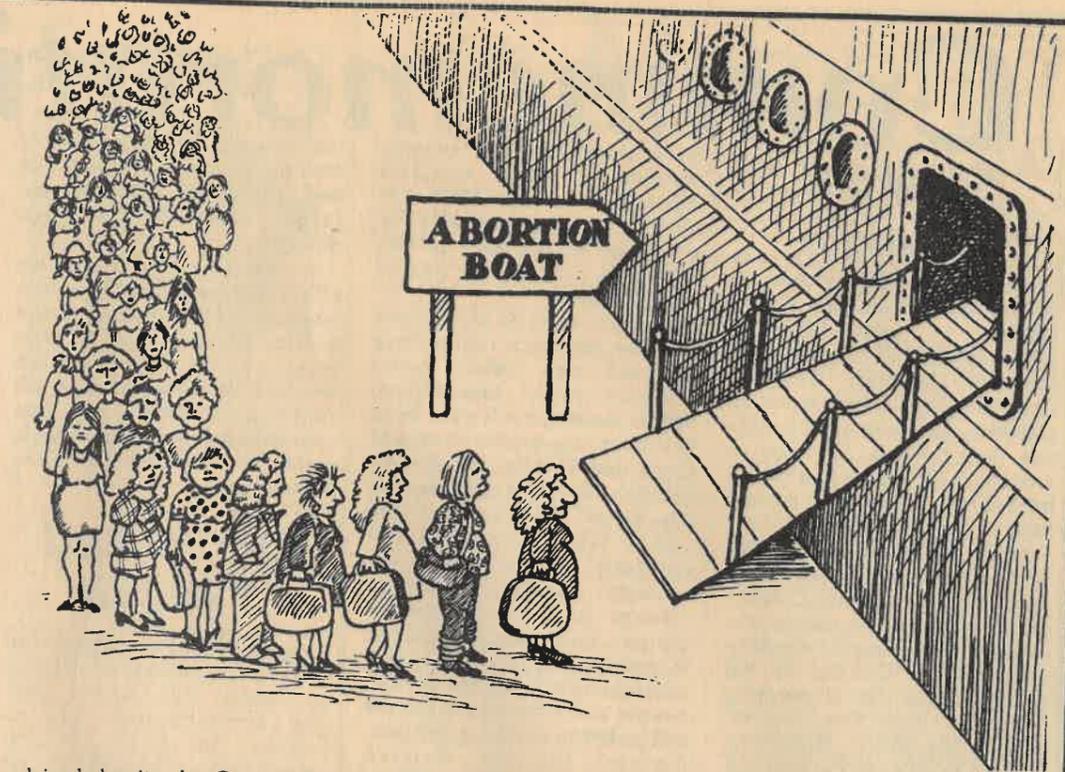
Implications

The situation after these rulings is that information on Abortion and Non Directive Counselling is outlawed, and as a result certain contraception methods such as I.U.D. and The Morning After Pill could be banned.

A situation, now exists within the media Especially R.T.E. where you have a form of self censorship in relation to this issue. The N.U.J. in R.T.E. while posturing at opposing this censorship end up taking the same attitude as they do to Section thirty-one of the Broadcasting Act; that is they pay lip service to it's opposition to save face while at the same time taking no action which would endanger the censorship policies, which means that they are in cahoots with the Establishment.

The annual figure for women from Ireland who go to Britain for Abortion is 4,000. This figure however, is got from women who give their Irish addresses. The reality is that there are many more who for various reasons do not give their real address. These hidden numbers bring the annual figure up to an estimated 10,000. These women now have no legal access to any form of guidance or counselling or even a correct address to go to.

This totally denies a woman's democratic rights and just access to information as well as increasing the emotional trauma at this period in their lives. It also makes her feel totally isolated and criminalised. The defend the Clinics Campaign say that fifty women a week are still being



advised despite the Court ruling denying them access to this information.

People who were active in counselling from various Advice Centres are now continuing counselling from private phones. These people are under constant threat of a Civil Action being taken against them by the state or the reactionaries in S.P.U.C.

Alton Bill

The recent failed attempt by David Alton M.P. to introduce a Bill in Britain would have reduced the time limit on Abortion in Britain from twenty-eight weeks to eighteen weeks, and further diluted the limited rights to Abortion of the 1967 Act. This attempt was interesting because it exposed the collusion between reactionary forces in Ireland, Britain and further afield to undermine and reverse Women's Rights.

David Alton first announced his intention to bring forward this Bill at a meeting of a British Branch of S.P.U.C. One of his supporters at the standing Committee stage was Bernard Braine, a Member of the National Executive of S.P.U.C. in Britain. Alton was also supported by the Unionists and the S.D.L.P., M.P.'s who shared a platform with him in Belfast. This should show working class people who support these Parties that while they posture at divisions they are united in their oppression of the working class.

All this shows how little difference there is between establishment politicians from one country to another and it is up to the genuine Revolutionaries of the Left to internationalise the struggle against these reactionaries and their Front Organisations.

Conclusion

We in the I.R.S.P. unreservedly support the woman's right to choose in relation to abortion. We believe this to be a fundamental democratic right of women. It is on this basis that we support the basic aims of the 'Defend The Clinics Campaign'. While we obviously support the Campaign and feel there is a great necessity for it, we also feel that the way in which the Campaign is being fought will not be successful in the long term.

There appears to be an over emphasis and reliance on getting the support of Celebrities and Liberals. By the Campaign's own admission they had difficulties in getting 100 signatories of that element to support the aims of the Campaign thus showing the futility of that strategy. We offer these criticisms in a fraternal way and only as a contribution to the success of the Campaign.

The fact of the matter is that the

closing of the Referral Clinics is a direct attack on working class women. We base this statement on the fact that the vast majority of women who utilised these Clinics were working class women. The Clinics were the only easy access to information on abortion available to working class women whose lack of finance means that they do not have the options open to the wealthy for whom the financing of a trip to Britain is a mere triviality. The power of money gives greater access to information, a power obviously denied to the working class who were vulnerable because of their reliance on the Clinics.

This makes it obvious that the Campaign should be orientated to and led by the working class. We do not mean this to be just a cliché and we know it is a lot easier said than done, but in actual fact there is no alternative.

At the moment the availability of the Help-Line phone lines set up after the High Court decision are extremely limited. Working class housing estates will have to be leafleted, there will have to be an attempt made to contact left wing political activists who will distribute information in their work places and outside Dole Offices, etc. In this way the Help-Line phone numbers would become so widespread that prosecutions would become untenable.

This is emphasised by the recent threat of a Civil Action by S.P.U.C. against The University College Dublin Students Union

who were giving information on abortion in their literature. If as we said the information was widely available this type of threat would be totally unworkable. The Campaign cannot be looked at in total isolation and must be seen as part of the overall attack at present being made on the living conditions of the working class such as Hospital Closures, Unemployment, Emigration etc. The Campaign also has to be seen not only as a defence of the Referral Clinics, but as part and parcel of the fight to achieve the woman's right to choose in relation to abortion here in Ireland.

Postscript

Since the above Article was written there have been further developments in this on-going Campaign. The Dublin Well Woman Centre has decided to introduce limited counselling. In regards to abortion information will be limited to the fact that abortion exists outside the jurisdiction of the State.

Due to the restrictions of the Court decisions they will be unable to give addresses of Clinics, etc. Meanwhile, Open Line Counselling are maintaining their Telephone Service. The decision of the Irish Courts is to be appealed in the European Court but this should not be seen as an end in itself or as a substitute for direct action as outlined above.

Jon O'Hanlon

The Campaign's main slogan is -

ACCESS to INFORMATION on abortion and a woman's right to CHOOSE to have an abortion.

Useful Numbers

DUBLIN: 01680043/794700
Well Women's Centre (Dublin) 728051

DUBLIN: 01 680043/794700
CORK: (021) 502848 -

Mon. evening

BELFAST: (084) 324914/
249696/667345

Irish Women's Abortion Support
Group (London) 031 251 6332/3

(Tues. 6-9 p.m. for direct contact)

Merseyside Nursing Home
(Liverpool) 035 7271851

Raleigh Nursing Home (London)
031 6711541/2

South Manchester Clinic
036 4872660

Commemorations

Seamus Costello

On Sunday 9th October, a commemoration was held by the I.R.S.P. to mark the 11th anniversary of the murder of their founder member Seamus Costello. The commemorative gathering of upwards of 100 people was led through Bray by a uniformed I.R.S.P. colour party, headed by a man bearing the red flag.

At St. Peter's graveyard, the burial place of Costello, the ceremony was chaired by Caoimhin Mac Uighilin who spoke of the continuing relevance of the politics espoused by Costello in the struggle today. "It is patently

Wreaths were then laid on behalf of the I.R.S.P., Republican Socialist POW's and the Staff and Volunteers of the Irish National Liberation Army, after which a minutes silence in memory of fallen comrades was held.

Mr. Mac Uighilin then introduced the main speaker, Liz Lagrua, who began by outlining the contribution Seamus Costello had made to revolutionary politics in Ireland

Ms Lagrua then tackled the issue of repression in the 26 counties. "Today, for the Republican Socialist Movement, little in the way of repression and attack has changed. What however has changed, is that we are not the only people to suffer at the hands of the Free Staters. Now anyone who confronts the state on issues as diverse as neutrality, the cuts through to abortion are more than liable to the 4.00 a.m. knock, arrest, harassment and surveillance. Literature deemed by the state

to be subversive simply because it either contains references to the I.R.A. or I.N.L.A. can lead as we have witnessed in the case of Dor O'Leary to five years imprisonment.

Today it must be recognised that the southern ruling class are full and willing collaborators with Imperialism. Whilst we may no longer have British troops on the streets of Cork and Dublin, the British occupy the south of Ireland as surely as they occupy the north. While you have the spectacle of the Irish state willingly handing over its citizens to a foreign power, which has been indicted internationally for its torture and injustice towards the Irish people and where Irish people will be left to rot in English jails, framed by the British establishment. The almost certain collaborating role of the Irish government in the gunning down of three young Irish people in Gibraltar. We must have no illusion about Fianna Fail's green nationalism, they are the sworn enemy of working class people and must at all times be treated as such."

Ms Lagrua then went on to comment on the recent S.D.L.P./Sinn Fein talks. "Of recent much talk has been publicly vaunted by parties as divergent as Sinn Fein and the S.D.L.P. about the convening of a pan-nationalist conference, this conference to include Fianna Fail. We in the I.R.S.P. state here and now that there can be NO political collaboration with these our class enemies. Any accommodation with these people that invariably will water down

the struggle on the pretext of making it more respectable and therefore more acceptable, must be rejected outright."

In closing she said "Today we affirm that we will not allow the memory of Seamus and the politics he stood for to fade from the scene of Irish revolutionary politics. We will continue to ensure that this commemoration will be a focal point for revolutionary ideas and analysis."

Derry And Tyrone

Around 200 people attended an I.R.S.P. commemoration in Derry on Sunday 16th October 1988. The commemoration was to honour the dead I.N.L.A. volunteers from Derry and Tyrone which included the Hunger Strikers, Patsy O'Hara, Kevin Lynch and Michael Devine.

I.R.S.P. spokesperson Kevin McQuillan opened his address by welcoming the gathering and stressing the importance of this year's commemoration. "On behalf of the Irish Republican Socialist Party, I would like to welcome you all here today, to honour and commemorate the memory of our fallen volunteers from Counties Derry and Tyrone."

Mr. McQuillan was speaking at the I.N.L.A. plot in the city's cemetery after a march through the Creggan area which was headed by a uniformed colour party. There, wreaths were laid by representatives of the families of the Hunger Strikers and dead volunteers, the I.R.S.P., I.N.L.A., Republican Socialist Prisoners of War and Support Groups.

He went on to say "Many are tired and burnt out by years of struggle. There is no clear political direction being given and ordinary people feel left out with no input into the struggle other than their physical presence on marches. In some ways it is inevitable that the level of the struggle will ebb and flow, but today it is very clear that there is a complete lack of any analysis of how the struggle can be developed and how it can burst out of the straitjacket confining it to the six counties. This strait jacket is a product of petty bourgeoisie nationalism which is the dominant anti-Imperialist force at this time. It must be made clear that if confined to the six counties, we face inevitable defeat, with the only option being one of some sordid deal with Imperialism and the division of the revolutionary forces."

In closing McQuillan recollected and paid tribute to the struggle and sacrifice of dead I.R.S.P. and I.N.L.A. members and the inspiration that their sacrifice had given to the Republican Socialist Movement.

Clady

The biggest ever security cordon seen in years swung into operation around the small village of Clady in County Tyrone from the early hours of Sunday the 27th November. All traffic and pedestrians entering and leaving the village, were stopped and searched. Local farmers and mass-goers complained of being delayed for up to forty-five minutes, at the many R.U.C. and British Army road-blocks. Despite this, the bitterly cold weather and

a bomb warning allegedly from the UVF which was phoned to a local shopkeeper, around 200 people attended a ceremony to unveil a plaque erected to the memory of I.N.L.A. Volunteer James McPhilomy, who was killed during an exchange of shots with British soldiers in the nearby barracks in August 1988.

Addressing the gathering Kevin McQuillan of the I.R.S.P. National Executive paid tribute to McPhilomy, whom he described as "one of the most eager and dedicated young revolutionaries that it was my privilege to have known."

McQuillan went on to say "In this the 3rd anniversary of the Hillsborough accord, we have to look at what it has done for us, the nationalist people, the ones with the nightmare. If anything has to be said it is that the nightmare has got worse. Increased raids, increased finance for the implementation of repressive legislation currently being introduced through the revised and now permanent P.T.A. All this proves, if any further proof is needed, that the boasts of the RUC's mouthpiece, Jolly Jack Hermon, that the war is won and that the Republican Freedom Fighters are on the verge of defeat is just so much more crap. Young people of the calibre of James McPhilomy and their persistence, even until death, for the liberation of our people and country, are the guarantee that no matter what, our day will come."

McQuillan then introduced Mrs. Peggy O'Hara, the mother of the I.N.L.A. Hunger-Striker Patsy O'Hara, who after thanking the gathering for attending in such numbers, "despite the attempt by the RUC and British Army to prevent access to the village", unveiled the plaque mounted on the wall at the spot where McPhilomy died.

IRSP VICTORY AGAINST THE STATE

On Tuesday 6th December, a decisive victory was won in the Special Criminal Court in Dublin when Terence Moroney, secretary of the I.R.S.P. Dungarven, Co. Waterford, was acquitted of the charges of possessing incriminating documents and I.N.L.A. membership. This victory was the result of a concerted campaign conducted by the Dungarven Anti-Repression Committee coupled with the ineptness of the local gardai and Special Branch, who having no evidence against Terence, proceeded to cover up the weakness of their case with lies and innuendos.

On the 15th of February 1988, his home was searched by plain clothes and uniformed police. As a result of the search he was charged with possession of "incriminating documents" contrary to section 12 of the Offences Against the State Act 1939 and on the basis of this he was also charged with membership of the I.N.L.A.

These so-called "incriminating documents" were simply five 1988 calendars, 17 posters, three booklets on the recent history of the I.R.S.P. and two song books. All of these items were produced outside Ireland by support groups and can be purchased openly. He received these charges on the 18th



of August 1988 to appear in court on the 14th September 1988.

Almost seven months elapsed between the time of the search and the subsequent charges and all this time Mr. Moroney lived openly in Dungarven.

Protest Actions

Apart from the countless letters, sent by the Dungarven Anti-Repression Committee highlighting Terence's case, protest actions also took place. On the 3rd November, the I.R.S.P. Support Committee in London along with other political activists including comrades from The Leninist, Irish Freedom Movement and Red

Action, mounted a picket outside the Dublin Embassy in London to coincide with the preliminary enquiry taking place in Dublin into Terence's case.

On the day of Terence's trial, the London I.R.S.P. Support Committee again mounted a picket outside the Dublin Embassy, where a letter was handed in to the Irish Ambassador demanding that charges be dropped against Moroney and the immediate release of Don O'Leary. Simultaneously, a picket was held in Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada and outside the Special Criminal Court itself.

The evidence against Terry as

described above was pitiful, the arresting officers had made no notes relating to the search of Terence's house and could not agree as to what questions they had asked him or what his replies were. Their only hope lay in the Assistant Chief Commissioner, who stated that through information received, which of course he wouldn't disclose, and the 'incriminating literature', he believed that Terence was a member of the INLA. When questioned about Terry's membership of the IRSP, he said he knew nothing about this!! Equally pathetic was Terence's defence, who failed to challenge the evidence presented and

seemed to think that it was a forgone conclusion that he would go to jail.

Throughout the trial IRSP members were observing from the public gallery, and came to the conclusion that a senior member of the organisation should intervene and expose the prosecution's case, which clearly at that stage the defence were not doing or seemed likely to do.

Kevin McQuillan, Vice-President of the I.R.S.P. took the stand, and proceeded to demolish the prosecution by pointing out that the so-called 'INLA' booklet was in fact a collation of newspaper cuttings, and together with the poster and songbook were produced by people outside of Ireland. He then raised the question of whether it was now an offence to receive literature through the mail that was openly sold in bookshops in Ireland as well as other parts of the world?

The three judges took only five minutes to reach an unanimous verdict of not guilty on both charges.

The acquittal of Dungarven I.R.S.P. member Terence Moroney was a great victory for the right of the I.R.S.P. to politically organise in the 26 counties. If Terence had been convicted it would have heralded an open season on I.R.S.P. members.

But this victory gives us no reason to be complacent. Don O'Leary is serving four years in Portlaoise under exactly the same circumstances and we can be certain that this particular piece of legislation will be used again against political activists.

Tribute - Vol. James McPhilemy



The death of I.N.L.A. Volunteer James McPhilemy, whilst on active service, occurred on August 1988. Vol. McPhilemy was part of an active service unit which had moved through the County Tyrone village of Clady to mount an attack on the British Army garrison stationed there. It was whilst taking up his position in the main street to cover the withdrawal of his comrades who were due to mount the attack, that Vol. McPhilemy was spotted and shot by a British sniper.

Killed whilst just 20 years of age. James was born and reared in Strabane. As with most nationalist youth of his age group, James was a child of the war. He grew up knowing full well the effects of imperialist occupation and repression. He was no stranger to the harassment and beatings that is the norm for the nationalist community.

At 18, he decided that he had to try and do something to rectify this. After discussing with republican activists James found that his political aspirations would be best accommodated in a revolutionary socialist organisation and so he joined the I.N.L.A. James joined the I.N.L.A. at a time of crisis, the battle lines were drawn between reaction and

revolution personal power and peoples power.

Through his own admission, James was far from conversant or knowledgeable in the intimate workings of marxism, but he had a basic working of socialism, a thirst for knowledge and the over-riding belief in the future liberation of the working class. During the onslaught of counter-revolutionaries in 1987, James typified the calibre of the I.N.L.A. volunteers of that period, and stayed firm in the face of reactionary terror.

He went on to play an active role in the process of educating and building the Republican Socialist Movement in Strabane. His commitment to this, is best shown by his attendance at a week long educational seminar held in Belfast. To attend and participate in such an event is a credit to a man of such a young age. When asked about this his response was "How can I be expected to play any part in the construction of a revolutionary movement, if I can't prove and improve myself as a revolutionary first?" Such was the man who was known to his friends and comrades in the movement as 'Dan'.

During his wake, the state forces blocked all entrances and

exits to the family home. Mourners were stopped, searched, questioned and in some cases arrested. The homes of all I.R.S.P. members in Strabane and outlying areas were raided in an attempt to disrupt the funeral. On the morning of the funeral hundreds of people from all parts of Ireland flocked into Strabane to pay their respects to a brave young soldier. At the family's request the funeral was a private affair. However, immediately following the funeral ceremony a small and solemn tribute was paid to 'Dan' by his comrades and friends and wreaths were laid.

Once more the Irish people bore witness to the burial of another of its youth, slain by the guns of British imperialism because he struggled, because he dared to be free. It is incumbent upon us to ensure the successful conclusion to the war that has cost us so dearly.

In Memory

The Central Committee of the Irish Republican Socialist Party remember with love and pride our fallen comrades:

Vol. **Ta' Power**, Belfast Brigade, I.N.L.A., murdered by the I.P.L.O., January 20th, 1987.

Vol. **John O'Reilly**, Belfast Brigade, I.N.L.A., murdered by the I.P.L.O., January 20th, 1987.

Vol. **Neil McMonagle**, Derry Brigade, I.N.L.A., murdered by the S.A.S., February 2nd, 1983.

Vol. **Mickey Kearney**, Belfast Brigade, I.N.L.A., murdered by the I.P.L.O., February 18th, 1987.

Vol. **Hugh Ferguson**, Belfast Brigade, I.N.L.A., murdered by the Workers Party, February 20th, 1975.

Vol. **Tommy Trainor**, North Armagh, I.N.L.A., murdered by loyalists, March 8th, 1978.

When the freedom of our country and class is won, let us guard it well, remembering it was paid for in the blood and lives of those now dead.

The Republican Socialist Prisoners of War in Maghaberry, Long Kesh, Portlaoise and England remember with love and pride our fallen comrades:

Vol. **Ta' Power**, Belfast Brigade, I.N.L.A., murdered by the I.P.L.O., January 20th, 1987.

Vol. **John O'Reilly**, Belfast Brigade, I.N.L.A., murdered by the I.P.L.O., January 20th, 1987.

Vol. **Neil McMonagle**, Derry Brigade, I.N.L.A., murdered by the S.A.S., February 2nd, 1983.

Vol. **Mickey Kearney**, Belfast Brigade, I.N.L.A., murdered by the I.P.L.O., February 18th, 1987.

Vol. **Hugh Ferguson**, Belfast Brigade, I.N.L.A., murdered by the Workers Party, February 20th, 1975.

Vol. **Tommy Trainor**, North Armagh, I.N.L.A., murdered by loyalists, March 8th, 1978.

The I.R.S.P. Support Committees in London, Glasgow and Bristol remember with love and pride our fallen comrades:

"Believing that the British government has no right in Ireland, and can never have any right in Ireland, the presence in any one generation of Irish men and Irish women of even a respectable minority ready to die, to affirm the truth, makes that government forever an usurpation and a crime against human progress." James Connolly. Will never be forgotten.

The Staff and Vols. of the I.N.L.A. remember with loving pride our fallen comrades.

Vol. **Ta' Power**, Belfast Brigade, I.N.L.A., murdered by the I.P.L.O., January 20th, 1987.

Vol. **John O'Reilly**, Belfast Brigade, I.N.L.A., murdered by the I.P.L.O., January 20th, 1987.

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Vol. **Tommy Trainor**, North Armagh, I.N.L.A., murdered by loyalists, March 8th, 1978.

"Whenever death may surprise us, let it be welcomed, provided that this our battle cry may reach some receptive ear and other hands reach out to pick up our weapons to intone our funeral dirge with the staccato of machine gun fire and new cries of Battle and Victory." They will never be forgotten.

The Irish Republican Socialist Committees (North America) remember with loving pride:

Vol. **Ta' Power**, Belfast Brigade, I.N.L.A., murdered by the I.P.L.O., January 20th, 1987.

Vol. **John O'Reilly**, Belfast Brigade, I.N.L.A., murdered by the I.P.L.O., January 20th, 1987.

Vol. **Neil McMonagle**, Derry Brigade, I.N.L.A., murdered by the S.A.S., February 2nd, 1983.

Vol. **Mickey Kearney**, Belfast Brigade, I.N.L.A., murdered by the I.P.L.O., February 18th, 1987.

Vol. **Hugh Ferguson**, Belfast Brigade, I.N.L.A., murdered by the Workers Party, February 20th, 1975.

Vol. **Tommy Trainor**, North Armagh, I.N.L.A., murdered by loyalists, March 8th, 1978.

"To carry on no matter what odds are against you. To carry on no matter what torments are inflicted on you. The road to freedom is paved with suffering, hardships and torture. Carry on, my gallant and brave comrades, until that certain day." Tom Williams They will never be forgotten.

sympathies to the Lynch family circle from all the comrades in the Republican Socialist Movement.

Catney Ian (18th January). It is with great sorrow that we learn of the murder by the U.V.F. of Ian Catney, beloved cousin of our comrade Kevin, and we extend our deepest sympathies to the Catney family circle and friends. From all the comrades in the Republican Socialist Movement.

Catney Ian (18th January). It is with great sorrow that we learn of the murder by the U.V.F. of Ian Catney, beloved cousin of our comrade Kevin and we extend our deepest condolences to his family and friends from the Republican Socialist prisoners in Maghaberry, Long Kesh, Portlaoise and English jails.

Deaths

Lynch Winnie (14th December). It is with great sorrow that we learn of the death of Winnie Lynch, beloved mother of our comrades Billy and Patsy Lynch and our good friend Sandy. We extend our deepest sympathies to the Lynch family circle from the Republican Socialist Prisoners of War in Maghaberry, Long Kesh, Portlaoise, Crumlin Road and England.

Lynch Winnie (14th December). It is with great sorrow that we learn of the death of Winnie Lynch, beloved mother of our comrades Billy and Patsy Lynch and our good friend Sandy. We extend our deepest

Media Ban



Responding to the introduction of the latest forms of legalised repression, Kevin McQuillan, spokesperson for the I.R.S.P. said "The media ban on groups, organisations and individuals that support the struggle, in conjunction with the withdrawal of a detainees right to silence and compulsory mouth swabbing (genetic fingerprinting) comes as no surprise. Not content with the self-censorship already in practice by the B.B.C. and I.B.A. coupled with the existing draconian section 12 (7 days) detention orders and Diplock courts, the British have once

again shown, both the contempt in which they hold their bourgeois notions of free speech and individual freedom, whilst also confirming the fact they have long since lost the propaganda war for the hearts and minds of the Irish people."

In closing Mr. McQuillan said "In 1952, the South African government sent a fact finding delegation to Britain to explore the workings of the Special Powers Act, in 1988 we have history repeating itself, and once more the Apartheid regime is learning from the 'Mother of Democracy.'"

Curfew

The I.R.S.P. accused the British Army of curfewing Ballymurphy by closing the Springfield Road for sixteen hours, while workers laid a power cable, and accused the R.U.C. of lying when they said the work had nothing to do with their base. Residents had high intensity beams trained on their homes during the night to prevent them from viewing the large number of civilian workmen who were later seen to be wearing balaclavas and scarves around their faces to hide their identities. The lorries that the workmen were using also had concealed number-plates.

The unprecedented raids and daily harassment by the Brits, lead to protests being mounted outside seven Brit/RUC barracks on Monday January 24th.

The I.R.S.P. also condemned the recent nightly attacks, in Springhill, by loyalists in collusion with the R.U.C. who having made sure that the loyalists get safely back into Springmartin, then proceed to open up with plastic bullets against the nationalist youth who have come out to defend their area.

Loyalists Continue Murder Campaign



On Wednesday, 18th January, the UVF claimed their first victim of 1989, when they shot dead 25 year old Ian Catney who was working in his mother's shop in Smithfield, claiming that he was a member of the I.N.L.A. The I.N.L.A. in a subsequent statement denied that Ian Catney was a member of their organisation.

The previous night, loyalists had shot and seriously wounded a New Lodge man on the Crumlin Road, and a former Sinn Fein candidate in the local elections, Joe O'Donnell escaped a murder bid by minutes, he had just left the

house when gunmen burst in looking for him.

Eamon Mullen on behalf of the I.R.S.P. condemned the murder of Ian Catney and the two other murder attempts, and urged nationalists to be vigilant. "It is clear that these British fostered murder squads have launched another sectarian campaign against the nationalist community. These same terrorist tactics have been used by British and American imperialists in countries around the globe in order to stifle resistance."

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THE STARRY PLOUGH

Bureaucracy And Socialist Democracy



The significance for Irish Marxists of the changing nature of the Soviet Union may not be immediately apparent. Comrade Lake's contribution towards the development of IRSP policy is welcome in that it has broached the subject. Unfortunately his article does not appear to recognise just how important that country and the events taking place there, are.

It is written in such a way as to be flippantly dismissive. His continual references to "Russia" shows a non-recognition of the fact that the state in question is the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. The dismissive off-hand style totally belies the importance of the events in the Soviet Union for revolutionaries on a world wide scale.

For all its present day warts, the Soviet Union is the first instance of the rule of the working class - the dictatorship of the proletariat. It is the centre of world socialism, the country in which the working class movement has reached its highest level of development. That it has reached the present state of impasse/stagnation requires the utmost serious examination if our own revolution (and ultimately world revolution) is to be successful. There can be no communism in one country, and so long as the Soviet Union continues to follow an international policy of appeasement of imperialism and suppression of revolutionary activity, combined with a reformist domestic policy, so long will world communism be delayed.

Perestroika

As has been pointed out in previous articles on Afghanistan and Angola, perestroika has an international dimension. Yet the internal ramifications of perestroika are of as much significance internationally as the obvious changes in foreign policy. It poses basic questions for all communists. Certainly what is not needed is any kind of unquestioning acceptance of Glasnost/Perestroika/Gorbachevism - its popularity in the imperialist countries should

immediately sound warning bells.

The upsurge of unrest in the socialist states shows a disenchantment with the status quo which begs the obvious questions - why is there such dissatisfaction among workers in a workers' state? Why do workers in a workers state find it necessary to go on strike? Ygor Ligachev has stated in a speech reported in the Guardian 15.8.88: "Socialism is the system of working people and going on strike against themselves is quite simply an absurdity." Yet it happens. There is an obvious need for change but what should be the nature of that change? Any return to capitalism is obviously out of the question for genuine communists and revolutionaries. The two big questions are democracy and the bureaucracy, questions which are inextricably linked.

Bureaucracy

The popular misconception of the Soviet bureaucracy as some kind of separate "class" has to be countered. For all its faults, the bureaucracy does not exploit the working class. It is, unfortunately, occupying the Orwellian position of being "more equal than others" - but certainly not a separate class. By its nature it denies workers the active participatory role which they need, to feel identified with the workers' state. The ruling bureaucracy recognises that there is a need to develop productive forces yet this same bureaucracy through its denial of democracy is the cause of the working class losing faith and interest in the system.

Gorbachev is quite correct when he said "A house can only be put in order by someone who feels like he owns the place" but glasnost and perestroika as presently practised cannot bring democracy. Genuine proletarian democracy cannot come from within the bureaucracy, since this would entail the loss of its privileged position and careerists will never willingly allow this to happen.

Comrade Lake points out that perestroika, a la Gorbachev, means exploitation of Soviet

workers - at least as exemplified by the Novossibirsk experiment. While not agreeing with his terminology, there is no guarantee that this is not a pilot scheme for a more general attack on the working class.

In his concluding section he states "Only when genuine socialism has been established will genuine Glasnost and workers democracy occur." He gives no definition of what "genuine socialism" means, nor does he expand upon what is meant by "democracy." Obviously he does not regard the Soviet system as genuine socialism. He fails to expand on his point-in fact his contribution ends on a high rhetorical note which says nothing. Perhaps a very elementary explanation is required.

Briefly, democracy is the rule of the minority by the majority, without destroying the rights of the minority. "In its essence, democracy is the principle of election. No amount of acrobatics can hide this truth." (R. Yurukoglu; speech on the 67th anniversary of the Communist Party of Turkey) Socialism is the transitional stage between capitalist society and communist society. (Capitalism being the system based on exploitation of the producers of wealth (the working class) perpetuated by a system of covert coercion which ensures that "democracy" equals the subjugation of the majority - i.e. the producers - to the minority

the exploiters...

Communism being (again very simplistically) a classless and stateless society of workers where questions of subjugation are redundant and the principle of "from each according to his/her ability, to each according to her/his needs" is the basic tenet. Socialism is generally defined as "the rule of the working class, social ownership of the means of production and a planned economy."

Democracy

Where the planned economy of the Soviet Union falls down, of course, is in the lack of participation of the working class in the decision making processes of the central plan. As R. Yurukoglu points out in *Living Socialism* (p.137) "the proletarian dictatorship, as the rule of the exploited majority, requires democracy, which is the rule of the majority, for this reason the political form most suited to the dictatorship of the proletariat is mass democracy ... To the extent that the state becomes bureaucratized, that the working class loses active control over it, the fusion of the labour force with the means of production may become nominal." Clearly this is the case in the Soviet Union and is the cause of workers' alienation from their own system.

Party and State

The monolithic nature of the CPSU means that all the contradictions inherent in socialism as the transitional stage (the remaining vestiges of capitalist society as well as the beginnings of communism) are embodied in that party - it is much too closely identified with the state as an entity to provide the political leadership which the workers of the Soviet Union require.

Clearly at the most basic level what is required in the Soviet Union is a separation of party and state which can be clearly seen. Equally clearly the Communist party must be seen to be distinct from all other interests bar those of the working class and this must entail a multi-party system through which genuine democracy can be exercised in elections. Also at the basic level, workers must be in direct control of the workplaces. These are simple requirements for democracy in a socialist state. As was pointed out in the report of the 27th Congress of the CPSU, the people cannot wait any longer. Society will no longer accept the life of yesterday. The necessary radical reforms will not be achieved by "Gorbachevism."

It is of the utmost importance that the IRSP as a communist party develops a positive policy towards the Soviet Union which recognises its special historical significance in terms of world revolution, is critical of its shortcomings and which does not dismiss events there as irrelevant to the Irish revolution.

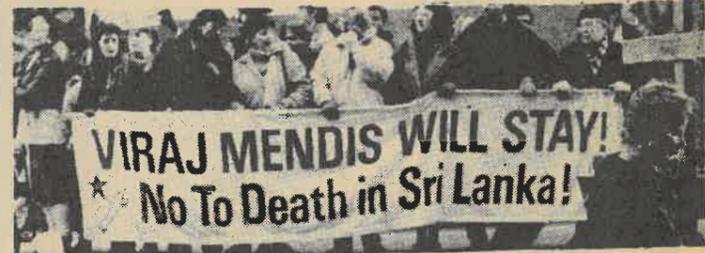
Unfortunately Comrade Lake does not appear to have engaged himself in serious consideration of what the end result of that revolution should be. In this context, the IRSP must be clear and unequivocal; it is part of the world communist movement; its end goal is revolution in Ireland as an integral part of world revolution - a goal to be reached by whatever means necessary.

Francis Glenn

British Racialism In Action

In the early hours of Wednesday, January 18th, a 100 strong task force smashed their way into the Church of the Ascension in Manchester after having cut off all telephone communication. In a Gestapo style racist attack the police went on an orgy of destruction and dragged Viraj, who had handcuffed himself to a radiator, away still dressed only in his pyjamas. He was then told that he had until Friday to find another country which would accept him.

After all attempts by his lawyers to prevent the deportation, he was put on an aircraft bound for Sri Lanka. Widespread condemnation of the racialism of the British state came from many quarters, demonstrations sprung up immediately in Manchester and London.



For over two years, Veraj Mendez had been living in sanctuary, fighting his deportation to Sri Lanka where he faced almost certain execution because of his political beliefs at the hands of either the government or one of the many right wing death squads who operate there. Amnesty International in condemning his deportation cited the case of two people who were deported to Sri Lanka who were subsequently murdered shortly after their return.

Viraj was a revolutionary communist who came from the majority Sinhalese community and in line with communist beliefs he

supported the right of the Tamil minority to self determination. Recently he was visited by a member of the I.R.S.P. where he also voiced his total support for the Irish struggle against British imperialism.

We in Ireland are no stranger to British racist policy, the P.T.A. is a virulent form of racialism against Irish people. The difference between Thatcher and the fascist movement in Britain is just a thin veneer of respectability.

As we write this article news reports from Sri Lanka state that over 50 people have been murdered in one day alone.