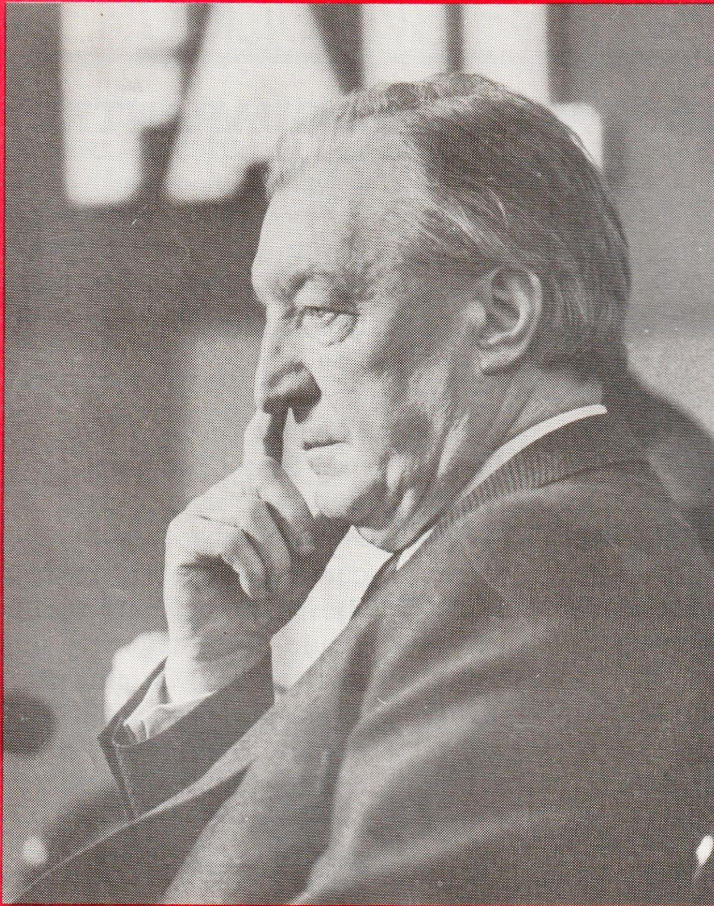




# CONGRESS '86



Summer 1989

Issue No. 7

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•GOODMAN'S MONOPOLY  
•NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT  
PLAN •FOOD POISONS



## HAUGHEY SURE CAN PICK'EM

COVER PHOTOS:  
DEREK SPEIRS / REPORT

Journal of The League of Communist Republicans



# SUMMARY OF THE PROGRAMME OF THE LCR.

## We Stand For:

**1. An Independent  
Sovereign Republic  
of All Ireland.**

**2. A Revolutionary  
Democratic Govern-  
ment, under the  
control of the Work-  
ers and Small Farm-  
ers.**

**3. Administration  
of the State to be  
under the supervi-  
sion of a National  
Assembly which  
practices Direct  
Participatory De-  
mocracy, ie depu-  
ties are subject to  
recall**

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## THE STATE MUST GUARANTEE ITS CITIZENS:

- Work at an acceptable wage.

- A home suitable to the citizen's needs.

- An education to the highest level compatible with the citizen's ability.

- Full and comprehensive health care.

- Social Rights, to include;  
Divorce  
Contraception and abortion  
Separation of Church

and State  
Meaningful equality be-  
tween the sexes.

To allow the Workers' and Small Farmers' State exercise control, it is imperative that the commanding heights of the economy, Finance, Trade, Industry, Production and Communication, be brought under the Democratic control of the Revolutionary Democratic Workers' and Small Farmers' Republic.

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## FROM LONG KESH TO A SOCIALIST IRELAND

**The History of the League of Communist Republicans.**

A new pamphlet has been published by Congress '86. **FROM LONG KESH TO A SOCIALIST IRELAND** is a short history of the origins of the League of Communist Republicans.

Available from 27, Delacy  
Park, Shannon, Co Clare  
Price £1.





# SINN FÉIN TO SURPRISE A LOT OF PEOPLE! (REPUBLICANS FOR THE MOST PART)

"Talk is Cheap is an old-fashioned but true adage. The test for any political party is what they do, not what they say they will do. For years we have been hearing about the "leftward shift" in Sinn Féin, about the growing professionalism and, in the build-up to the 15th June Dáil election, about how Sinn Féin were maximizing their efforts south of the border.

Regrettably the coverage of their electioneering in an article entitled "We'll surprise a lot of people, says Sinn Féin's McManus" (Sligo Champion 9/6/89), reveals a different story.

"Northern Ireland isn't coming up on the doorsteps and if people don't mention it, we're certainly not going to push it on them", said Sean McManus, Sinn Féin candidate in the Sligo/Leitrim constituency and also National Chairperson of Sinn Féin. From the position he holds we can assume that McManus represents the thinking of the party nationally.

McManus, who went on to poll 1,482 first preferences, regrets that people in the constituency weren't

us on those matters", Mr McManus informs us.

He identifies unemployment as a major problem and even offers a solution for his locality - the possible creation of 400 jobs in the North Leitrim timber processing industry. He claims that Sinn Féin also have very positive proposals to put in the area of mariculture and tourism.

Sinn Féin's New Economics. Then comes the gem. In response to the question of how his party would finance these projects he says, "Despite what Fianna Fáil say, the Irish Government's credit rating is much better than they admit. I would not be against borrowing more money to create employment providing the PAYE sector wasn't screwed to pay it back".

"And on top of that", he claims, "big businesses, banks, buildings societies, multi-nationals and the professional classes should pay their fair share of tax and, in this way, the Government could raise the

**We'll surprise a lot of  
people, says  
Sinn Féin's McManus**

By LEO GRAY

particularly interested in "what is happening thirty miles down the road"... but accepts it. This willingness to abandon perhaps the only progressive aspect of Sinn Féin policy, ie the mobilisation of support for National Liberation, is chilling. Such apathy towards a situation where people, many of them republicans, are losing their lives, is, to say the least, frightening.

If we thought for a moment that Sinn Féin has abandoned its fundamentals and replaced them with new progressive strategies and tactics, we quickly learn differently. "We're fighting this election on social and economic issues and people are quite prepared to talk to



What follows is the first of two articles written by a friend who lives in London. It is an examination of the state of Britain and the Irish workers who live there. We believe it should be essential reading for any young Irish person who is thinking of emigrating.

# THE IRISH EMIGRANT IN LONDON

London Town is falling down. The underground, unsafe at the best of times, creaks to overflowing each day. On any given morning, one in every three escalators breaks down. Safety is little better since the Kings Cross disaster, hundreds of staff are being sacked due to "overmanning", but at least profits are doing nicely.

Up at street level things are the same. As several million people try to get to work, they are faced by endless, worsening traffic chaos. Since the demise of the GLC and the moves towards deregulating the bus system,

**Unlike regular slaves, wage slaves are paid from nine to five, even if economic conditions force them to leave home at 6.00am and get back at 8.00pm.**

no-one really bothers to think in terms of London as a whole anymore. Plans are localised to each Borough, following the grand Thatcher strategy of divide and divide again. Many

workers now spend between three and four hours travelling to and from work each day, since they cannot afford the insane house prices closer to the centre, where a one bedroom flat costs £80,000.

Of course this three hours traveling has absolutely nothing to do with their employers. Unlike regular slaves, wage slaves are paid from nine to five, even if economic conditions force them to leave home at 6.00am and get back at 8.00pm.

At the end of a working day, more and more London workers,

*(continued from p.3)*

necessary money to pay back any extra borrowing that's needed".

No mention of revolution, (or, in keeping with the Chairperson's terminology, "structural change") before any attempt at economic policies based on "providing employment" as opposed to "maximization of profits" could be realistically considered. Clearly the National Chairperson of Sinn Féin believes that such revolutionary change isn't necessary. Indeed he fantasizes about Sinn Féin holding a balance of power situation, whereby he would hold out "for a Tony Gregory type deal for Sligo-Leitrim".

According to his statement, it appears that the present bourgeois

state is legitimate and that all that is needed to rectify the present situation is Government personality changes. Yes vote for Sinn Féin and help McManus and

**Sinn Féin, in a bid for bourgeois respectability, have clearly decided to tone down the nation-wide propagation of National Unity.**

a few of his friends into Cabinet positions - de Valera's crossroads rubbish is still being peddled.

Marx described the ideas and work of some early socialists, active before

the conditions for socialism had fully ripened, as Utopian Socialists. Now we are being presented with Sean McManus style Utopian Capitalism, at a time when capitalism in Ireland has proven to be a regressive force. His views are entitled to, and deserve, our utter contempt.

Sinn Féin, in a bid for bourgeois respectability, have clearly decided to tone down the nation-wide propagation of National Unity and have, perhaps as yet unconsciously, reached a position of loyal opposition.

Yet somewhere in the background we can hear, as so many republicans of this generation have heard, the shrill note of the piper playing at the funeral.



including tens of thousands of Irish workers, have to encounter another aspect of Thatcher's counter revolution. Since London industry has been virtually blitzed during the last fifteen years, most workers are involved in either service jobs or office work. This is where they encounter the joys of unpaid overtime. In most of these places if you put on your coat to leave at five, you are branded a disloyal slacker. Many work on unpaid to 7.00pm, yet the same boss who would be outraged at anyone who leaves at five would not dream of paying anyone after that hour.

All the above battles are reserved for those lucky enough to have jobs. Unemployment figures continue to come down, but unfortunately unemployment does not. The number of real unemployed, when added to the various slave schemes that Thatcher has implemented, is as high as ever. Thatcher is currently introducing the first steps towards American style "Workfare", with unemployed workers in London being pressed to take any job regardless of wages, skill or profession. Others are asked to produce endless letters applying for positions to prove their desire to work, just like Victorian workers had to go before a panel of "worthy citizens" to prove that they were "deserving poor".

The famous Thatcher push "Back to Victorian Values" unfortunately does not seem to extend to the progressive values. Child labour and clothing sweatshops are on the increase in Hackney and Tottenham, but the Victorian passion for useful civil works and industrial expansion are now ignored. The few remaining industrial estates in London are continuing to shrink or disappear. London is

filled once again, as it was in the reign of good old Queen Vic, with beggars and prostitutes. On some nights West London, around Bayswater and Paddington, looks like a scene from the last days of American rule in Saigon.

The rise in the number of homeless has to be seen to be believed. In a two hour walk



around the Thames embankment area I counted some two hundred people sleeping rough, in cardboard boxes in the rubble of disused railway arches that stink of piss and hopelessness. Many of them were young, and a frightening number were Irish. No matter how bad things are in Ireland, they must be better than sleeping on the cold, filthy streets of a foreign country.

Most of the Irish, on the other hand, seem to have integrated into the British working class, though some have done so too well and whole-heartedly embrace Thatcherism as a bloody good idea.

Still the majority of expatriate Irish in London retain at least superficial loyalty and ties to Mother Ireland. Sadly it is often those who talk about it least that care the most. In my local pub, one guy puts the "Men Behind the Wire" on the juke-box at least five times during the evening, drinks ten pints of Guinness and goes out the next day to work on the lump on a building site, giving neither Mother Ireland nor socialism another thought until he is once again within hailing distance of the bar.

There are many outstanding Irish men and women in the London Trade Union movement (and a few British ones too). At the other end of the scale there are many like our friend above who keep their politics in the pub while risking their lives working the lump on sites all over the city. When they do so, they undercut the rates fought for by UCATT, the building union, which also has some outstanding Irish activists. In doing so they forego many of their rights and the number of deaths on London building sites has rocketed during the last two years.

Yet perhaps the most noticeable thing about the Irish in London, is that they are so inconspicuous, despite their vast numbers. Most have submerged themselves in the day to day battle to make a living. Many recent immigrants have joined trade unions, often for the first time. They cover all parts of our class, from the nurses lured to London by the promises of latter-day recruiting sergeants in Dublin, to the builders, office workers and printers, as well as a small army of non-unionised young women working in Thatcher's dream jobs, waitressing and hairdressing.



# A PARTY OF SOCIAL REFORMS OR SOCIAL REVOLUTION?

Towards the end of his life Peadar O'Donnell made a famous retort to a jibe from Jim Kemmy. The Limerick man had described him as a "bamboozler on the left". "Well at least you've never bamboozled anyone on the left", said Peadar, "because you never were on the left!"

The reply was quick in coming and it was funny. Unfortunately it wasn't altogether accurate. Kemmy is on the left and he has bamboozled. Sadly he is not the only Irish leftist to have contributed to the general confusion. The Labour Party has for long fogged the picture and now the Workers Party seem determined to add to the chaff, cluttering our screens.

What is happening? Is it any different from what has for years constituted a major part of left activity in Ireland? To some extent the answer is ambiguous. On the one hand we are witnessing the usual parliamentary minuet favoured by "seat conscious" deputies. On the other there is a change of a more basic nature.

It is too simplistic to say that the right-ward drift of both Labour and the Workers Party is just the same old story. Is it that their socialism has always been suspect and what we are now seeing is only further proof of this?

True neither the Workers Party nor Labour have been revolutionary socialists. Yet to a greater or lesser degree both have offered, in their programme at any rate, a radically different economic system to the one in place. They at least paid lip-service to the idea of a planned state economy. No longer though.

The new thinking now favours "free markets, enterprise culture and the social partnership". With

unemployment, poverty and emigration causing widespread hardship it must seem strange that these parties are diluting their demands at this of all times.



Photo Derek Speirs/Report

Maybe it's not such a strange happening though. Ireland has changed a great deal over the past 25 years. manufacturing and service industries occupy a greater part of the modern economy. The working class make up a greater proportion of the population. We now have a country which is newly, and still only partly, industrialised. We have what is in effect a newly formed working class. The Irish left is going through a process of realignment and adjustment. Objectively its constituency is growing. This previously marginalised constituency is acquiring a potential hitherto unseen in Irish politics, ie a powerful working class lobby with majority support.

There are three tendencies presently active within this sector of Irish society. two are clear-cut and a third as yet uncrystallized but still potent. Of the two clear-cut tendencies, one takes the old Labourite path, the other a more up-beat social democrat line. However they are perceived, these two trends are essentially reformist.

The third tendency has different faces. We see it in the independent community. Politicians who campaign against unemployment, emigration or public service cut-backs. We see it in the various left groupings which surface within the established left parties. We also see evidence of it in many of the small radical groups and parties in existence.

So what we are witnessing today

with Labour and the Workers Party isn't just a rejection of socialism. Something bigger is taking place. The Irish left is dividing on to well known tracks of reformism versus radical change. In Lenin's words, what is emerging is the democratic parties of social reform and the parties of social revolution. At present the social reformers are making the running.

This is almost inevitable. the Irish working class has a proud history. In reality though its experience has been confined to a few centres. Where a trade unionist rather than socialist outlook held sway.

There remains a certain lack of self-confidence within the working class. A failure to recognise its own strength and hence a lingering faith in the efficacy of reformist intercession. It is through this gap that the reformers are moving with their message of free markets and social contracts.

Inevitably the reformist progress will be checked. If for no other reason than the fact that a flawed



system cannot be reformed. The drift into reformism isn't a cause for abject despair. It is a signal instead to show confident resolution, because in the Ireland of the late 1980s socialism isn't moving to the right. The expanding socialist base is dividing into radical and reformist.

At the same time, there is no room for complacency. Quite the contrary, There is a heavy burden on the radical left to organise a coherent and healthy unit. Conditions demand it and the time is right for it.

Radical unity isn't a call to split the left or reject unity around a popular standard. It is a call for recognition that without an organised and vibrant radical base, reformism will continue and "Social Democrats" will continue to bamboozle.

Their talk of perestroika and glasnost rambles along as if the essence of the Gorbachev initiative is an invitation to restore capitalism. Shades again of rogues in the British Labour movement who, during the 1920s used Lenin's NEP as an excuse to negotiate a series of craven deals with capitalism.

Take for example a challenge issued by the CPI to the Workers Party. The CPI offered to debate with De Rossa his party's rejection of basic socialism. The challenge has been ignored, why? Is it because the CPI estimation of a Workers Party U-turn is mistaken? No it is not. Bluntly, the answer is that the Workers Party feel no compunction to debate with the small CP (or any other small party for that matter).

To put an end to this arrogant dismissal by constructing a strong radical left, isn't splitist or disruptive. In fact it strengthens the hand of the entire working class. The best way to achieve left unity isn't to pander to social democrats. It is for radicals to dictate the pace through a confident organisation. Such an organisation is now an urgent requirement.

## A DANGEROUS TREND IN UNIONISM

The arrest in Paris recently of three loyalists causes even greater concern than such an event would normally give rise to. There is evidence that those involved in the arms negotiations enjoy a qualitatively different type of support than is the case with the UDA or UVF.

Apart from brief and periodic upsurges, the UDA and UVF have remained marginalised within the Unionist population. On occasion both groups have been manipulated by British agents and/or unscrupulous politicians. Yet, while for the most part mainstream Unionism has joined the RUC or UDR, the loyalist underground has seldom risen above being an armed and murderous equivalent of the British National Front.

Ulster Resistance, however, indicates a much more sinister and alarming proposition. Despite the eleventh-hour denunciation by Ian Paisley, it is clear that there is substantial support for Ulster Resistance. It is also clear, from the personnel captured and the locations of arms dumps uncovered, that Ulster Resistance attracts people of "some substance" in the loyalist community.

The very fact that South Africa and Israel are willing to deal with them indicates a level of business and political know-how to which the small-town racketeers of the UDA-UVF could never aspire. South African and Israeli involvement points to something else - approval of Ulster Resistance by these states. Do not be misled by the rifles for blowpipes story; there exists a Black International which has nothing to do with Bakunin.

A major danger with the rise of Ulster Resistance is that we are seeing the development of a new trend in the North of Ireland.



*Ulster Resistance: a sinister development*

Whereas in the past Unionism could be described as obdurate, right-wing, bigoted or even downright selfish, now there may be emerging a sizeable fascist element within it. Frustration in the DUP ranks following local government election set-backs might even exacerbate the trend.

There is no easy solution to this danger. So long as Britain underwrites the undemocratic division of Ireland the spectre of Loyalist Fascism remains. By the same token, a signal from London of its intent to withdraw may, under the present circumstances, see the danger realised.

This unpleasant fact is not an excuse for a continuing British presence in Ireland. It is a simple reminder of the reality.



# SEVENTY YEARS SINCE THE LIMERICK SOVIET, APRIL 1919

For some it was proof of what was possible during the Tan War, had the true revolutionary forces, the workers and small farmers, not been held back. Some blamed a weak labour movement for its collapse. LR O'Connor Lysaght in his excellent pamphlet, "The Story of the Limerick Soviet", blamed the union movement at the time. Others claimed that the incident was little more than a local labour dispute and to attribute grandiose titles like "Soviet" to it is little more than fanciful daydreaming.

## WHAT DID HAPPEN?

Most accounts focus around two, not unconnected, events although obviously the general situation in the country was a considerable contributing factor. On April 6th a prominent local Trade Unionist, Robert J Byrne was shot dead during an attempt by the local volunteers to spring him from British custody. He had been given a 10 months sentence in January 1919 for the possession of a revolver. In jail he had fought for political prisoner status culminating in a Hunger Strike.

A transfer to the Limerick Workhouse Hospital when his condition deteriorated led to the attempt to free him. The large crowds at the Byrne funeral led to clashes and riots. On Friday April 11th the British declared martial law.

Such events, one suspects, weren't exactly uncommon during the Tan War. What made the Limerick situation different was the existence of an experienced, organised and militant workforce. The British, aware of the strength and spirit of this workforce, had

probably been contemplating the introduction of martial law in Limerick for some time.

Prior to the Byrne funeral the 600 strong workforce of the Condensed Milk Factory in Limerick, owned by the Cleeve family had been on strike. The company settled the dispute but sacked the ITGWU shop steward, causing understandable resentment. For these workers martial law was considered the last straw. On April 12th the Condensed Milk Factory workers came out and called for a General Strike.

From Monday April 14th to Sunday 26th, Limerick was under workers control. The failure of the Labour Party and the Trade Union Congress to support them with a call for a National General Strike, forced the Limerick workers to call off their action.

## SOME LESSONS FROM THE LIMERICK SOVIET

The primary lesson from the Soviet is that working class strength lies in collective action. It lies in the class as a whole acting together. Sections of it, individual workforces, trade unions, or, even as in the Limerick case, whole localities organising is not enough. Only when the class as a whole acts is its full potential tested. That the working class in a revolutionary period cannot depend on Trade Union or political party bureaucracies was exposed. How many times have we seen the bureaucracies urging caution when they should have been advocating struggle? Where strong bureaucracies exist, and they do exist in Ireland, any plan of campaign must be capable of

operating despite their almost inevitable opposition,

Another lesson is that political hegemony is a practical prerequisite for revolution. Lenin argued that a class wasn't ready to come to power until it learned to articulate its demands with some clarity of force. According to Lenin what made a class revolutionary was the extent to which it was capable of representing and fighting for the "political" interests of everyone in society (hegemony).

The Limerick Soviet in 1919 survived for almost a month. This wasn't achieved by such a complex social unit without a lot of co-operation from people outside the organised working class. For instance, according to O'Connor Lysaght, the local farmers supplied the city with food. essential services were maintained. Good order and co-co-operation from a new section of society was the feature of the Soviet.

## A VANGUARD PARTY IS NEEDED

Often the use of the General Strike tactic as a tool to extract reforms from a bourgeois government is an under-use of such an important weapon. A class capable of organising a General Strike may well be capable of taking power and providing revolutionary leadership. Who would argue today that in 1919 Ireland wasn't ready for revolutionary change? History in general, and the Limerick Soviet in particular proves that collective action, fearless and honest leadership and the proper utilization of forces can most successfully be organised for revolution by the Vanguard Party.



Ireland is dominated by imperialism, British imperialism for the most part. This magazine is anti-imperialist, but what does this mean?

First let us say what, in our opinion it does not mean. Being anti-imperialist in an Irish context is not being a petit bourgeois xenophobe. In other words a narrow minded nationalist who sees all things foreign as dangerous. We are not anti-German, anti-Japanese or even anti-British.

To us, anti-imperialism means that we are against the exploitation of Ireland's working people by capitalism originating in these countries, or any other country for that matter. We are against Irish capitalism too.

Second, imperialism is not necessarily the crude and overtly oppressive system which typified pre-World War II colonialists. Aspects of that era remain admittedly. The Crown garrison in Armagh, for example, is hardly there to protect the locals against marauding troops from "Eire". Nor has the passing of time made London's control of the Six Counties any more acceptable.

Nonetheless, those who continue to reduce imperialism to a catalogue of British human rights violations in the North of Ireland, merely make a caricature of the problem. The situation is more complex than the reductionism implied by a Sinn Féin "Brits Out" slogan.

## **IMPERIALISM DOMINATES THE 26 COUNTIES**

Imperialism dominates not just the Six Counties but the other 26 as well. It has done so by reducing the working people to the status of share-croppers. Through the use of finance capital, imperialism causes Irish workers to forfeit a substantial portion of the wealth they create annually.

# **IRELAND STILL DOMINATED BY IMPERIALISM**

The IDA recently estimated that one third of the jobs in manufacturing in the South are controlled by multi-national companies. Half of the assets in the Irish industrial and service sectors are foreign owned.

One tenth of the South's annual Gross National Product is flowing abroad in repatriation of multi-national corporation profits and repayments of foreign loans. In 1988 alone, multi-national corporations repatriated profits to the tune of £IR 1.9 billion - equal to 16% of all 26 County exports that year!

In the days when British feudal landlords were rackrenting Irish peasants, the exploitation was obvious. Such extortion nowadays is carried out with the complicity of a native bourgeoisie from within a nominally independent state. It may not look so blatant, but it is all the same.

Under modern day imperialism, Irish working people are no longer subject to exploitation by Britain alone. Does this mean though, as Fintan O'Toole of the Irish Times suggests, that "Ireland is no longer dominated by British imperialism? It does not.

At certain stages a dominant imperialist power will extend to other capitalists a reciprocal right to exploit subject states.

The USA, for example, dominates

Chile, but permits other capitalist states to invest there. A similar situation pertains in North-West Africa, where the French-dominated zone is exploited by several imperialist countries. So with Ireland, British domination is not negated by the presence of multinational corporations with head offices in a variety of foreign capitals.

The Irish pound may be linked to the EMU, rather than sterling. However the Dublin Stock Exchange is a member of the Stock Exchange of Britain and Ireland. Most key Irish stocks are quoted in the London Bourse, and as Tim Healy, manager of the Dublin Stock Exchange says, "The two systems are locked into each other". Not only that, but most Irish banking and financial institutions remain British manipulated.

Coupled with this extensive economic influence is the actual physical presence of Britain's military establishment in the North. Together they ensure that Britain retains an imperialist hold throughout Ireland.

## **UNDERSTANDING ANTI-IMPERIALISM IN AN IRISH CONTEXT**

Here lies the key to an understanding of anti-imperialism in an Irish context. The institutions which promote and protect imperialism in this country must be removed. They must be replaced with an alternative system responsive to the needs and interests of all Irish working people.

Talk of removing a British military presence in the North while overlooking Britain's financial stranglehold on the South misses the entire point. Both are part of a common imperialism. Trying to separate them into two distinct problems is as sensible as cutting the tops off seeding thistles on a windy day.



# REMEMBERING THE

**A monument to the courage of the International Brigades passed since La Passionaria bade farewell to the Irish**

Bourgeois liberals have often attempted to portray the war in Spain as an internal matter tragically exacerbated by foreign intervention. Nine times out of ten what they lament is the support given to the Spanish Republic by the international working class.

The Spanish Civil War was much more than a domestic conflict. It was in fact part of the greater struggle between democracy and fascism. A battle which was waged from the early 1920s until the end of World War II.

Since Mussolini's march on Rome in October 1922, fascism had been gaining power across Europe. While the powerful and wealthy gave extensive assistance to their counterparts without regard to national frontiers, the working class faced oppression in isolation. This process was stopped in Spain.

European fascism was not defeated in Spain, but it was checked. Despite a Franco victory, the workers and poor of Europe had made a stand. It was a battle lost but one which had to be fought. We can see now with the benefit of hindsight the importance of holding the battle of 1936-39. We owe an enormous debt to those who had the courage to fight then.

In this issue we carry an account of the events in Barcelona which marked the 50th anniversary of the departure of the International Brigades. Our account is provided by Pat and Nora Hannon. Nora's brother, the late James Carroll, was a brigade member, so our old friend's trip was filled with mixed emotion.

With this article we pay tribute to James Carroll and to all internationalists who have struggled on behalf of the "wretched of the earth".

## FIFTY YEARS LATER

It was Deaglán De Bréadúin's article in "Tuarascáil" (Irish Times) which informed us of the proposed 50th Anniversary Commemoration of the departure from Spain of the International Brigades who had heroically fought to save the young Spanish Republic from the advancing forces of fascism. Fifty years later to that fateful day of 28th October 1938, the survivors planned to re-enact the poignant scenes of their last march down the Ramblas with the parting blessing of La Passionaria still

ringing in their ears, "Be proud! You are part of our history! You are legend!"

Nora's brother Jamesy had been wounded at the battle of the Ebro and had been incarcerated in San Pedro jail so having read the announcement we decided to go. We contacted Michael O'Riordan and Bob Doyle to book our passage and we were put in touch with the organiser of the Irish contingent Harry Owens.

Time had depleted the ranks of the survivors of that last march. Frank Edwards had

died a number of years ago. Bill Scott and Joe Monks within the last two years. The handful of Irish survivors included Michael O'Riordan, Peter O'Connor, Terry Flanagan, Bob Doyle and Paddy McAllister from Belfast. Another survivor unable to attend was Eoghan O'Duinín who had written a book of his experiences, "La Nonita Bonita agus An Róisín Dubh" His nephew represented him as also did Frank Edwards's daughter-in-law, Marie.

In Barcelona on the night of the 27th October, the co-ordinating committee welcomed the delegations of the International



# INTERNATIONALISTS

les was unveiled last year in Barcelona. Fifty years have  
internationalists who fought for the Spanish Republic.

## ¡NO PASARÁN!



### The VOLUNTEER FOR LIBERTY

*Organ of the International Brigades*

Vol. II - SPECIAL No. 9
Barcelona, March 17 - 1938

## ¡NO CEDER UN SOLO PALMO DE TERRENO

### DO NOT YIELD AN INCH OF GROUND TO THE ENEMY!

Defend every  
conquered position; hold our lines firmly; FORTIFY, FORTIFY, FORTIFY, THIS IS THE DUTY OF EVERY SOLDIER

Brigades Internacionales, congregación general y espontánea de hombres de los cinco continentes del mundo, que pelean una plaza para morir por la libertad.  
DR. JUAN NEGRIN

### GUADALAJARA HACE UN AÑO A YEAR AGO

En "Guadalajara" el enemigo poseía instrumentos de combate numerosos, mejores y mayores que los nuestros entonces. Sin embargo, fue primero contenido y después aplastado.

El factor decisivo de aquel gran episodio, como tiene que serlo junto a nuestros mejores elementos de combate en la lucha de mañana, fue la MORAL INQUEBRANTABLE DE NUESTROS SOLDADOS la firmeza, la decisión y el coraje de nuestros MANDOS Y COMISARIOS POLITICOS.

### AL ENEMIGO!

Defender bien cada posición conquistada, mantener fuertes nuestras líneas.

FORTIFICAR,  
FORTIFICAR,  
FORTIFICAR,

es el gran deber del soldado, mandos y comisarios.

Ayuda a los Comisarios para que no sufran un solo combente que ignore para que lucha y que es la que va a ganar con la victoria.

**The Volunteer for Liberty, newspaper of the International Brigades**

Brigades from the many countries whose young men had volunteered to fight for Spain and democracy. Many had gone despite the denunciations of church, state and the media. Present were former Brigade members who had become prominent in Trade Union circles. One such was James Larkin Jones from Liverpool who had become a towering figure in the English labour movement. At the commemoration he spent most

up to convey us to the inauguration of the monument to the Brigadistas. It was an inspiring sight to see, as group after group of veterans were introduced to the Mayor and the people, a large sculpture of David and Goliath was unveiled. After an hour of speeches the ceremonies ended with some stirring music while the gathered thousands renewed their friendships of earlier years. There were tears in the eye of many a veteran as

of his time pushing a former Brigade comrade in a wheelchair from one event to the next.

The morning of the 28th October was devoted to the reception of the Brigades by the Mayor and dignitaries of the City of Barcelona. That same evening in the Aula Magne of the University there were many speeches, the central theme was Peace, Democracy and Freedom. The Great Hall was overflowing.

On the morning of the 29th we left for Plaza de Cataluña where a large fleet of buses was lined

they recalled events which had long passed into history.

That evening our group discussed the events of the day. Some of those present were ex-Brigaders from England. One, a Cockney was very descriptive of the hardships endured by the poor and unemployed at the time of the Hunger Marches in the early '30s. He was a man of indomitable spirit who threw light on the history of the "haves and have nots" imbuing his listeners to fight inhumanity on all fronts.

**"Be proud! You are  
part of our history!  
You are legend!"**

On the morning of the 30th the Brigadistas and their friends and visitors were entertained in the Palace of Congresses. After four hours the Mayor of Barcelona closed the ceremonies and all adjourned to meet in the Italian Pavilion where dinner was served to over one thousand people. That meal officially ended the commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the last march down the Ramblas in Barcelona. We departed with the timeless war-cry of the Brigadistas running through our minds - "No Pasarán!"

*Pat and Nora Hannon*



**For ten years the woman has been Prime Minister. A full decade of harsh Tory government. The media has marked the anniversary with analysis concentrating more on the personality of Margaret Thatcher than the policy which is Thatcherism. By exaggerating the importance of one individual the real significance of an era has been overlooked.**



Margaret Thatcher is little more than the personification of a sectional interest within British society. A ruthless, avaricious section of the capitalist class which watched with growing alarm the decline of British capitalism after the end of World War II.

The post-war consensus with its Welfare State was never a socialist system government. It allowed the working class a measure of freedom and strength which was intolerable to most British capitalists. Trade Union strength prevented wage cutting and, coupled with the inevitable falling rate of profits, Britain's privileged class faced a dilemma from the mid-1960s.

The problem as they saw it was basically one of restoring capitalism's profit rate. Right wing intellectuals had long deplored any compromise on capitalist principles. By the late sixties early seventies they had regained their dominance over British economic and political thinking on the right. Their philosophy demanded that labour costs be squeezed to a minimum. Whatever means necessary for doing so were to be employed. Hence the need for a sterner and more repressive state machine.

A repressive state in every sense of the word. A state that positively encouraged unemployment in order to break the heart of workers and depress wages. A state that pampered its police force while crushing organised labour's efforts to protect working peoples' living standards. A state which sold off every available public asset.

Thatcher summarized this creed with the words, "an honest days work for an honest days pay." She didn't however say that an honest days work and an honest days pay is to be decided at the whim of the

# THATCHER'S



employer. Politics being what they are in a Western parliamentary democracy, it has often been necessary to dress the lens than put it in a more presentable fashion.

To disguise the naked side of its capitalism, Thatcherism has proclaimed itself a return to Victorian values. Evoking the imperial and industrial "triumphs" of that era, it conveniently ignores the more obvious parallel, ie a pitiless social and a chauvinist order.

One question which still baffles many though is: since Thatcherism has been such a trial for the workers and underprivileged why has it enjoyed uninterrupted electoral success? Should we opt for the false consciousness cop-out or is there a sounder explanation?

For a start let's make one thing clear. No Thatcher government has ever persuaded more than one third of the electorate to vote for it. Britain's electorate has given absolute power to a party with a minority share of the vote. That said however, the British have re-elected Thatcher governments twice. The first time may have been a unfortunate misunderstanding, a second and third time carelessness.

A major reason was that by the mid 'sixties British social democracy had demonstrably failed. The devaluation of the pound in 1967 and Wilson's acceptance of the IMF weren't just a loss of prestige. They were an acknowledgement that Labour Party type social democracy was unable to manage the economy. Indeed by 1979 the Callaghan led Labour government was monetarist in all but name.

When the "real article" came along in the same year it appeared

attractively coherent. A seemingly straightforward, albeit right wing, message preaching lower taxes, an end to trade unionism, the hard work ethic and the promise to make Britain great again. It gained enough working class support so that when added to the traditional conservative vote it brought the Thatcherites to power. Since then,

## **No Thatcher government has ever persuaded more than one third of the electorate to vote for it. Britain's electorate has given absolute power to a party with a**

Social Democracy in Britain has been divided over the correct response to the new right. Whether to move left or attempt to compete on the same ground with Thatcher. At present the argument to move to the right has been the clear winner.

This may indeed be the real long-lasting damage done by the Thatcherite years. Because, in spite of conservative party hype the tide is already moving against crude Toryism, as we have seen from recent by-election and European Election results. After ten years of monetarism it is obvious that Thatcher has cured no ills.

Social services are no better, unemployment and poverty are worse than in 1979, and even those City of London yard sticks, inflation and balance of payments are anything but healthy. Before long those "blue collared workers" who previously benefited from tax cutting and spin offs from privatisation will be caught up in

the next round of monetarist belt tightening. The cracks have already started to appear.

So what is to be the left alternative? From the available evidence, it will not be radical enough to change or even repair British society. By bending so far in an attempt to accommodate itself to Thatcherism, the British Labour Party has lost the ability to counteract the right. Kinnock now acquiesces to the anti-working class shibboleth of the Daily Telegraph, No to secondary picketing, no to unilateralism, no to nationalisation etc. Thatcher hasn't so much buried socialism, British socialism has contrived at its own demise.

The time to lay the seeds for a new radical element was during the Miners Strike. Had the Labour left forced a split then and formed a genuine working class party, there would be a true realignment in British politics now. It didn't happen of course and perhaps this is one of the lessons of the Thatcher decade. In a period of set-backs, leftists shouldn't abandon the principled position even at the cost of electoral reverses or at the risk of splits. Nor indeed should leftists waste time attempting to gain control of party machines which are largely controlled by hopeless reformists.

Thatcherism, whatever about the woman herself, is not immutable. It is but one other phase in capitalism's century long battle to stave off oblivion. We can by no means look forward to this inevitability with passive inactivity. There remains the daunting task in store for the working class in Britain. That is not a cause for despondency. A lot will depend on the ability of socialists organising to deliver the working class from the perils of capitalism.

Note: In this article we have deliberately avoided mention of Thatcher's influence on Irish politics. The omission is deliberate. We believe that it is important that the fundamental nature of Thatcherism should be examined, in its natural environment.

# BRITAIN



# A BREEZE NOW STIRS THE BARLEY

Since the past few election packed weeks we are now in a better position to reassess the Irish political landscape.

There has been a change. Not perhaps startling but significant all the same. Old certainties may not have quite collapsed but they have been challenged. New ideas have not altogether taken hold though there is ample evidence that people, working people in particular, are searching for a fresh direction.

South of the border there has been an increase in the vote for, what can broadly be called, the parties of the left. It has to be said of course that the parties benefiting from this new trend are mellow social democrats. Nonetheless, every degree of movement away from the right is to be welcomed.

A further point of interest in the 26 Counties is the substantial protest vote. Army wives, Greens, Anti-Rod Licence and Anti-Hospital Closure candidates all drew respectable votes. This protest element is not, strictly speaking, leftist. But it indicates a measure of disenchantment with the Southern ruling class.

A rainbow coalition in Dublin led by social democrats might just be capable of providing opposition of sorts to the Haughey/O'Malley axis. However the inherent tendency of social democracy to drift rightwards will, at best, only temporarily soften the impact of capitalism. Spring and De Rossa tinkering with taxation is no substitute for a

working peoples' democracy.

In the North things change more slowly, though movement is perceptible. Unionism is in a state of disarray. The Ulster Unionist constituency is equivocating over the merits or otherwise of opting for total integration with Westminster and/or the British Conservative Party.



Paisleyism, notwithstanding the Reverend's personal Euro-vote, is in no less a crisis. Local Government election results were bad for the DUP and ultimately it is the grass-roots support which counts.

As for the non-unionist camp, it is now firmly in the hands of the SDLP. Sinn Féin's "nationalism, socialism, bread and butterism, anything for a vote-ism" has caused that party to travel in ever decreasing circles. Offering no better excuse for their decline than "failure to get on the air-waves", Sinn Féin has not only conceded ground to Hume, but it is unlikely to recover it from him either.

Overall the political situation in Ireland, North and South, is complex but it does give grounds for optimism.

The long years of a Southern working class, passively accepting Fianna Fáil or Fine Gael promises,

appears to be over. Admittedly the social democrats are in the ascendency at present, though of itself this shouldn't be a cause for despondency.

Social democracy, like Trade Union consciousness, can often be a harbinger of a firmer socialism. Anyway some non-social democrat socialists, such as Declan Bree of Sligo, did achieve substantial support although failing to win seats.

In the North there is somewhat less reason for optimism. The erosion of DUP support and the stumbling of Sinn Féin has been offset by a drift towards the integrationists and the SDLP. Such a development is not altogether welcome. The North's problem can best be solved within an All-Ireland, working peoples' republic. An increase in support for the capitalists of either the SDLP or Ulster Unionists does not further this cause.

At the same time there is a lethargy in Northern politics which is not unhelpful. It is not simply the lethargy of weariness. Rather it is disinterest arising from no clear indication of a path forward. A situation which provides an opportunity for those with a relevant strategy.

This strategy must have, as its objective, the creation of a Worker's Democracy on all the island. A prerequisite to achieving that objective is the termination of imperialist domination of Ireland. Let there be no illusions about this - imperialism dominates us both militarily and financially. Since the two are an integral whole, there can be no realistic hope of ending one without the other.

To define and analyse the current situation properly is most important. To work for the creation of a mass working peoples' movement, capable of ending imperialist domination, remains our immediate task.

The conditions for such a movement are growing more propitious by the day.



## GALWAY HOSPITAL PRIVATISED

In the last issue of Congress '86 we dealt in general with the theme of privatisation and the effect this would have on the Health Services. Since then a case worthy of mention has been brought to our attention.

Calvary Hospital in Galway was run for years with great efficiency by the Little Company of Mary. However, in 1986 the nuns were confronted by a crisis. A fall in recruitment and a severe lack of funds left them with no alternative but to bow out.

This opened the path to the present owners, a consortium of British businessmen and Irish bankers, to swoop and buy this community service. Just as the name changed from Calvary to Galvia, so too did the medical ethics. From being a free service to the whole community, Galvia is now a profit motivated enterprise available at a price to those who can afford it.

Oppose the privatisation of our Health Services.

## SYMPATHY NOTICE

### DEATH OF OMAR al-QASEM

We have learnt with sadness of the death of Omar al-Qasem. Omar was only 42 years old when he died of kidney failure on Sunday 4th June. He died in an Israeli jail, having spent the last 21 years imprisoned. Omar al-Qasem, a member of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, had been captured following a gun battle in 1968. Despite failing health, no clemency was extended to him.

Two days after the death of Omar al-Qasem, Israeli President, Chaim Herzog, reduced the sentences of three Jewish men to 10 years. Originally they had been given life sentences for the murder of four Arabs at Hebron Islamic College in 1985.

Congress '86 regrets the passing of Omar al-Qasem. No explanation is needed to show why the LCR feels empathy with the deceased.

Farewell Son of Palestine. Your bones lie in the sacred soil.

## IS UNION AMALGAMATION ALWAYS STRENGTH?



This is the question we must ask ourselves since the news of the planned amalgamation of the two largest unions in the country, the ITGWU and the FWUI. This merger into one, up-market sounding "Service, Industrial, Professional, Technical Union" (SIPTU) is strength for the consensus wing of the labour movement. What of the rank and file, the low-paid and the unemployed?

The sector referred to as the consensus wing, led by John Carroll, of the ITGWU, Bill Attley of the FWUI, and Phil Flynn IGPSU, initiated its first move away from traditionally organised resistance in 1986. A year later this path ended in the cul-de-sac of a partnership with the Fianna Fáil government and the multi-nationals. Haughey, the statesman, developing his own brand of Thatcherism, was only too glad of the respite and camouflage this offered.

Justification is offered for this approach by the use of the negative argument that Fianna Fail, without the union's influence, would implement Thatcherism across the board and at a faster rate. A growing section of the working class, including this journal, disagrees.

The gulf between these two social forces is irreconcilable. Capitalism, especially in its imperialist stage, will attempt to squeeze the last drop of value out of labour. No

matter how good the agreement with the government may be it will invariably be subservient to the interests of the ruling class.

A union is the basic organisation of the working class, whose aim and objective can never be anything less than the protection, maintenance and defence in struggle of the fundamental rights of the workers. It should also be, as Peter Cassells of the ICTU put it, "fighting the scourge of low pay, always aware of the historic imperative to change the balance of power between capital and labour".

In comparison the Spanish socialist trade union, the UGT, found itself in total disagreement with its government's monetarist policies. Despite the fact that the ruling party was at the same time the fraternal party of the UGT, the UGT re-examined its position regarding the large and more radical opposition union, the communist CCOO and decided to work together. These two unions have created a new dynamic opposition to Spanish style Thatcherism and have recently organised a general strike across the country.

Could it be that what our unions are missing is a radical opposition similar to the CCOO in Spain? There, at least, the working class is forcing capitalism to take account of its demands.



This is the second of a series of short articles on political concepts for the uninitiated as requested by some readers.

# DEMOCRATIC CENTRALISM

The question of democratic centralism is basically a question of disciplined party organisation; the proper understanding and fullest implementation of which is crucially important to the development, creativity and ultimate success of the vanguard party of the working class.

As a method of organisation it was first touched upon by Marx and Engels and further advanced by Lenin and the experience of the Bolshevik Party in the early years of the 20th century. It should be noted from the outset that the concept is not a fixed, inflexible, set of systematic instructions to be applied regardless of the circumstances in which the party may find itself. Conversely, the concept has occasionally been misinterpreted, abandoned or vulgarised with unsavoury consequences for the socialist cause. This makes it urgently necessary that it be revived in its true form, as applied by Marx, Engels and Lenin.

First and foremost, the party is to be central. It is essential that the local party organs are guided by and subject to the party centre, ie the central committee, the party paper, majority decisions at party congresses and other party organs. Complementing this approach is the idea that the party is to be built from the top down rather than the ground up.

This support for a party based on

centralism stems from the realisation that only such a party can hope to resolutely confront capitalism in Ireland. Our calm foes are well organised politically and militarily; commanding the allegiance of a thoroughly pro-capitalist government, legal system, trained army, police force and prisons as well as a supportive press and other communication networks. It would be the utmost folly to imagine that capitalist rule could be effectively challenged with a disorganised patchwork of workers groups up and down the country.

***"The strength of the working class is organisation. Without organisation the man of the proletariat is nothing. Organised it is all".***

As Lenin expressed it in 1908, "The strength of the working class is organisation. Without organisation the man of the proletariat is nothing. Organised it is all". The same holds true for party life, for what is the party if it is not the highest expression of working class politics? It is essential that the party is thoroughly organised in order that it can be effective, to co-

ordinate its attack on capitalism, organise the Irish working class nation wide and maintain party unity and discipline.

However, let no-one forget, the party is democratic. It must be founded on the fullest possible use of the elective principle, the flourishing of collective discussion and debate, strict control over party activists and the implementation of majority decisions reached at regular party congresses. The unity of party action is only valid when it is accompanied by genuine freedom of discussion and criticism.

There can be no room in a genuine socialist party for personality cults, blind faith, authoritarian domination or humble unquestioning obedience. These are trends which can only undermine creativity and lead to stagnation, or worse. It is the duty of us all to look for new ways in which to avoid these pitfalls while remaining within the basic framework of democratic centralism. In a healthy party the definition "unity of action; freedom of discussion and criticism" should lead to a comradely tension between the centre and local branches.

In a nut-shell, a party employing democratic centralism discusses all major issues fully and democratically and following a majority decision all members endeavour to implement the decisions. The strength of such organisation lies in the fact that



the party can speak for all its members and all members represent the party.

Having outlined the general principles of democratic centralism we should not lose sight of the fact that the party must survive and adopt in the real, constantly changing conditions obtaining in a given country at a given time. In a situation of severe repression the party may have to go underground to save itself from extinction, in such times the democratic aspect may be restricted in scope.

**There can be no room in a genuine socialist party for personality cults, blind faith, authoritarian domination or humble unquestioning obedience. These are trends which can only undermine creativity and lead to stagnation, or worse.**

However, even then, it is the responsibility of party members to apply democratic methods without endangering itself, ie to advance the slogan "More Light, let the Party know Everything".

In circumstances where the party is legal, there should be no hesitation whatsoever in establishing democracy in its highest form. Indeed a working class consciousness heightens in the progress of the struggle for revolutionary change. So also does the working class become more doubtful of capitalism and reformist politics, thus paving the way for drawing the people into the running of party affairs and the simultaneous growth of even greater party democracy.

# MONOPOLY



Much furore has been made over the recent allegations in the Dáil concerning in the beef industry. The allegations centred on the operation of companies owned by Mr Larry Goodman, especially with regard to breaches of EC beef regulations. It was even alleged at one stage that the Department of Agriculture had imposed a hearty fine of £1 million on a Goodman subsidiary for the same breaches. Goodman International denied any wrongdoing and blamed the irregularities on sub-contractors, whose contract were terminated when legal action was taken against them.

While the problems of Larry Goodman were getting an airing in Dáil Eireann, it would be wise to say that most of it passed as an irrelevancy to the Irish working class. One purpose the whole fraud affair served the small farming community (and the Irish working class in general) was to put on centre stage the actual size of Goodman International, its affairs and the affairs of all companies owned and controlled by Mr Larry Goodman. Companies which account for 4% of this country's GNP. The promises which are being

offered up and down the country at present by the Goodman Group may look rewarding to the struggling farmer, but as the expansion of the Goodman agri-business continues, the monopoly which the Goodman empire enjoys can only spell disaster for the small farmer in the very near future.

The ICMSA are even forecasting that before too much longer there will remain only 1,000 very large farmers in Ireland.



**Lenin advised that we should seek out the interests of the ruling class from behind their political phrases and promises. If this criteria applied to the Haughey government's National Development Plan, it can be seen that the interests which are totally protected are those of imperialism, ie the class who own and control capitalism at its highest stage.**

# THE £9.1 BILLION NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 1989-93

"Taoiseach confident EC will support £9.1 billion National Plan" was the headline in the Irish Times. The composition of the £9.1 billion tells its own story. £3.6 billion is to come from the Irish Exchequer, £2.1bn from the private sector and only £3.4 billion from the EEC Structural Funds. The EEC money is, furthermore, governed by the "additionality clause". That is, it will only be given to those projects which have already been started by public or private funds. So the projects to be funded are those which would need "additional" EEC funds to complete them, eg roads, harbours, telecommunications.

Indeed some observers argue that the whole "additionality" concept provided a thin cover for a fraud. That the £9.1 billion would have been spent over the next five years anyway. In other words the plan doesn't involve any improved spending in real terms. In support of this argument it is interesting to note that the 1985 Budget (the annual 26 Co budget is £8bn approx) spent £1.8bn on what was called a Public Capital Programme (roads, school buildings etc). At that rate 5 budgets could be expected to spend approximately £10bn.

"The Plan seeks to: prepare the economy to compete successfully in the internal market when it is completed in 1992", was how the document stated its first aim. It doesn't claim to have as its aim the provision of full employment now or at some time in the future. Nor does it claim to have as its target the development of Irish industry. The interests of the people of the nation are clearly secondary to the interests of modern capitalism.

Let the plan speak for itself. "A principle purpose of the plan which will be central in the broad policy strategy the government intends to pursue over the coming years, is to accelerate the rate of private investment.... Obviously a marked acceleration in the rate of investment is needed if the Irish economy is to begin closing the gap in output and employment levels vis-a-vis the Community as a whole. The increased Structural Fund will be indispensable in helping to finance this investment".

This sounds like a logical enough proposal until it becomes clear that much of the increased investment is to come from what the plan calls "non residential investment". We are told that since "non residential investment" was £15bn in the 5

years up to 1985, it "might" be in the region of £19bn over the 5 years up to 1993.

Elsewhere in the plan we are told that 75% of Irish exports now go to the EEC market. This domination of our market by the EEC countries and the emphasis on "non residential" investment as the "hope" of the nation is a chilling statement on both our future within the capitalist sphere and in who's interests the country is being governed.

We might have expected a Fianna Fail government to defend the interests of its own class. However they are favoured in the National Plan only in so far as their interests merge with those of international capitalism. The message to Irish owned business is "shape up for 1992 or go under".

Whatever benefits there were for the bourgeoisie there was nothing at all for the working class or small farmer. It was a useful coincidence that the problems of long term unemployment and the provision of work for the young will be tackled in a separate plan. It's worth noting as well that the money involved will be much smaller, at £0.6bn.

Some account of proportion is also instructive. The Libyan Government's Development Plan 1981-85, with its population of 2.5 million people, was £62bn. The British Defence budget for one year in the mid '80s was £16.4bn.

While the optimistic projection in the National Plan of £18-19bn over 5 years is roughly £4bn per annum, we know that in 1988 multinational companies repatriated £1.9bn from the 26 Cos. Also the presenters of the plan boasted that it envisaged the creation of 30,000 jobs a year at a time when emigration is estimated at around 70,000. Perhaps there is a hint of what is in store for the youth and unemployed.

Above all else the plan illustrates once again the limitation of democracy in Ireland today. The logic of Ireland's position in the world's capitalist economy is that our future is tied to what marginal advantages can be won by a weak peripheral player. In James Connolly's eyes the Irish nation was its people. The plan proves once again that the interests of the Irish people, and especially those of the working class, are being betrayed by a small, powerful and relatively unchallenged minority.



It is sour grapes for socialists to portray salmonella as one of the attended "evils" of capitalism. The blame for it should be laid at the door of "bad luck, bad weather and bad cooks"

Going by the arguments being advanced to explain away the high incidence of salmonella and listeria discovered recently we could all be forgiven for following this particular line of reasoning.

But most of the arguments now doing the rounds either miss or deliberately conceal the point. New technology should be worked for the benefit of the broad mass of the working people, after it is the workers, scientists and engineers who have, over the decades, developed and tested it in practice. That things are not as they should be, is because new technical ideas are patented and jealously guarded by the owners of the monopolies which straddle the globe.

The "Agri-business" sector has, as far as productivity is concerned, advanced by giant strides over the last forty years. As a result of this advance many food products have become cheaper and "convenience foods" have overtaken traditional, more wholesome foodstuffs as the staple diet of a great many.

But the cheapening of these food-products has been achieved, not for the benefit of the consumer, but as a result of the fierce competition that rages between the vast conglomerates which control this sector. Each battling to control or enlarge their market share.

Concomitant with this process is the disregarding of health and nutritional standards as each firm strives to cut down on as many costs as possible in order to sustain profits.

The reason that salmonella is proving such a real danger today is that technology in

the battery-hen and food-processing sectors has been used to increase yields, speed-up production and reduce costs in the scramble

capitalist industry into the food business does not stop at the gates of the nearest food-plant. Increasingly it has extended its control into

# FOOD POISONS

for profits; often by deliberately lowering the nutritional and health volume of the products in question.

The dearth of investigation into the side effects of antibiotics (do they lower the fowls resistance to specific diseases or breed drug resistant organisms that pose other problems?) and the use of hen-feeds based on hen remains, infected or uninfected, are but two examples of the cost cutting and recycling which endangers the lives of people. Likewise food advertising on which billions are spent, is devoted not to telling us of the dangers or draw-backs involved in any purchase but to telling the desirability, or the "indispensability" of everything that appears on the market.

The author Susan George, has estimated in her essay "Technology Transfer", that only 10% of all the positive scientific break throughs patented by trans-national corporations are ever used. The rest are patented solely to prevent them falling into the hands of competition companies and non-imperialist countries.

This provides a keen insight into the waste and parasitism involved in late 20th century capitalism.

But the penetration of

cultivable land. The mortgaging of farm-land by banks is fast becoming a new type of ground rent exacted by world finance capital while intensive farming methods involving the latest in machinery, fertilizers and new hybrid crop types have meant that in the imperialist countries the productivity of the agriculture sector has for the first time equaled the average pertaining to other branches of industry.

While this has not happened on the same scale in semi-colonial countries like Ireland where farms remain small and investment low, the advent of 1992 and the predictions by our domestic economists that up to 80,000 small-farmers will lose their farms over the next ten years will hasten the process considerably. But this does not just effect the farmer. Once again the blatant misuse of technology to increase the yields and profits flowing to the food industry in the form of differential rent, will ensure increased dangers for ordinary working people.

A report in the Guardian 24.2.89, details how a cancer inducing fungus, Aflatoxin, is affecting over one third of the corn-crop in the largest corn producing states in the USA, the world's primary corn producer. Whether or

not the toxin will make its way into the breakfast bowls is as yet unknown, but in December such was the alarm that the British government introduced emergency legislation to safeguard corn based animal feeds. The article specifies last year's drought in the USA as the primary cause of the appearance of the fungus, but who would bet that the intensive use of fertilizers and the development and use of laboratory "hybrids", which produce higher yields than traditional corns, but are known to be less disease resistant, have not contributed substantially to this recent health scare.

Can it be any comfort to know that Ireland's farming sector is condemned to years of cut-throat competition between domestic monopolies like Goodmans and foreign transnationals employing whatever resources are available to cut costs, out-strip competitors and maintain their profit margins.

Can we then, as some of our "left" politicians argue, try to "limit the power" of these monopolies in the agriculture sector? No, we argue that this is pure utopianism, because the misuse of technology and the massive waste of potential resources is fundamental to the system of monopoly capitalism or "decaying" capitalism as it is also known.

It is a direct result of capitalist competition, or "market forces". Although governments can and will introduce various safeguards, these can only ever be partially effective. As the captains of industry, whether domestic or foreign have as a first priority, the expansion of their profit margins, and the struggle against a long-term fall in their rate of profits.

Full and proper use of the resources and the potentials available in modern technology will only be guaranteed when that technology is in the hands of the workers themselves. Only under socialism can the food-processing and agriculture sectors of our economy offer wholesome nutritional foods safe from diseases and within the means of everyone. Only under such a system can we be guaranteed that families in our major cities will not have to subsist on diets of bangers and mash while the Irish food industry profits by contributing to the growth of unusable food mountains in Brussels.





## CONGRESS '86

# BROAD FRONT

With Sinn Féin now offering a Broad Front, it is time to re-examine the Republican Congress concept. A broad anti-imperialist front and a Republican Congress have similarities. In fact a properly

**Anti-imperialism in Ireland of the late 20th century cannot be equated with simple anti-partitionism.**

functioning Republican Congress would assume many features of the said Broad Front.

As we have repeatedly pointed out in this magazine however, anti-imperialist unity and mass mobilisation in support of it is an important and essential stage on the path to victory, so important indeed that we must not aid or abet in the creation of a bogus impostor.

In 1934, the Republican Congress made a brave but futile attempt to mobilise the Irish working people. The great hopes of those days ended tragically in failure. Under no circumstances must history be allowed to repeat itself.

Anti-imperialism in Ireland of the late 20th century cannot be equated with simple anti-

partitionism. We have an island subjected not only to Britain's military and political influence, but also to international financiers and their native cohorts.

prevents them from playing a leading role. Any proposed broad front which fails, therefore, to place the organised working class at its head is destined to fall apart. Even should such a front allow for labour or social demands, this flaw would doom any basically "Brits Out" movement. In the words of James Connolly, "...Ireland cannot rise to freedom except upon the shoulders of a working class knowing its rights and daring to take them".

To guide the Irish working class along this path, it is pointless offering the option of the lowest common denominator, ie a bourgeois republic cast in the de Valera mould. It is equally pointless offering them leadership by petit bourgeois nationalism. No mass anti-imperialist movement will succeed if so constructed.

We have constantly advanced the slogan of a Workers' and Small Farmers' Republic. We continue to do so. However we are of the opinion that a Republican Congress must initially give greater emphasis to the organisation of the working class than to a loose broad front conglomeration.

Greater consideration should be given to the majority resolution of the Rathmines

While a small section of Irish society benefits from this arrangement, only one class takes the full brunt of its havoc - the Irish working class. This class alone can be depended on to provide determined, uncompromising leadership in the anti-imperialist struggle. Sections of the petit bourgeoisie - the small farmer in particular - will assist in the struggle, but their ambivalent position

**"...Ireland cannot rise to freedom except upon the shoulders of a working class knowing its rights and daring to take them".**

**-James Connolly**

meeting of the Republican Congress of 1934, a resolution which echoed Connolly's demand for a Workers' Republic and also advocated the building of a new political organisation to facilitate this struggle.

Just as a bird without wings can't fly, a broad anti-imperialist front without the organised worker in its vanguard can't hope to win. Our immediate task must be reviewed in the light of this cardinal truth.

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## CONGRESS '86

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