

Irish Republican Socialist Party

*Republican Socialism
into the New Millennium*

Arto fheis
CLÁR



Dublin

5th December 1998

Ard Fheis

Running Order

9.00-9.30am: Registration

9.30am: Conference Standing Orders

One minutes silence in memory of all those killed in the conflict

Introduction.

10.00am: International solidarity messages.

Solidarity address from North American support group

Solidarity speech from British support group

Support message from POW's Portlaoise

Support message from POW's Long Kesh

Ard Comhairle Report

Debate on report and vote

Motions on A/C report

1.00: Lunch

2.00pm: Constitutional amendments

2.30-4.00pm: Public Discussion 1

Media Debate - Paul Little

International Affairs - Tony O'Hara

Community Policing - Jimmy Bradley

Community mobilisation - Gerry Burns

What is Republican Socialism? - Gerry Ruddy

Associated motions

4.00pm: Private Session

Members Open Forum

5.00pm: Ard Comhairle Election

5.30pm Closing Address

Introduction

The year 1998 will be remembered in Irish history as the year the 'Good Friday Agreement' emerged as an answer to the age old conflict between Ireland and Britain.

The 'Good Friday Agreement' is the latest in a long line of stalled 'solutions' that fail to address the core issues of the conflict.

IRSP reject the 'Agreement', we believe that far from offering the people of Ireland Justice, Equality and Peace it is in fact a betrayal. Not a betrayal of nationalism or unionism, though some would argue that it betrays both, but a betrayal of the genuine hope of the people for a peaceful future.

We opposed the G.F.A. in the joint referenda because it institutionalises sectarianism, fails to properly address the imperialist role that Britain has played in Ireland and locks the Irish people into a capitalist alliance that will benefit only the rich to the detriment of the Irish working class.

The IRSP has always taken the view that the conflict in Ireland was more than a struggle against British occupation, it is our view and remains our view, that the removal of the British presence is a prerequisite to tackling sectarianism and addressing the capitalist system that continues to inflict poverty on the vast majority of the population in what is one of the richest economies in Europe.

The Good Friday Agreement has elevated sectarianism into in acceptable political philosophy, the continued sectarian murder and intimidation campaign by loyalists bears witness to this elevation, for Unionists the GFA is as much a weapon to oppose the nationalist working class as the rifle or grenade.

We also take this opportunity to condemn without reservation a number of sectarian attacks carried out by so called nationalists on protestant homes in the Blacks Road area of West Belfast. To inflict blind sectarian and attempted forced evictions on people is to perpetuate the myth that sectarianism is the sole cause of our problems.

Having stated our political opposition to the 'Agreement' and committing ourselves to a Republican Socialist agenda, we also have to acknowledge that the 'Good Friday Agreement' is a reality, it has changed the political climate in Ireland. Time will tell whether the changed political climate will benefit the Irish working class, it is our view that it will not. Having acknowledged the changed political climate it was imperative that the IRSP began the programme of work, internal and external alongside the debate and consultation relevant to the political climate in which we have to work.

The out going Ard Comhairle have provided the leadership and direction necessary to steer the party through the changed political climate in 1998, this has been achieved without compromising our Republican socialist and working class politics.

We remain unreconstructed Irish Republican Socialists, our objective is the removal of British presence both political and economic from Ireland and the establishment of a 32 County Independent Irish Socialist Republic.

We take this opportunity to thank the members of the Ard Comhairle who resigned for personal reasons during the past year. We acknowledge the personal sacrifice these comrades have made over the years in pursuit of republican socialist politics, but for their contribution and sacrifices the IRSP would not be in the healthy position that it is now, we wish them well in future endeavours in the knowledge of their continued support for the republican socialist movement.

Comrades, our objective is clear, we have learned from Connolly, Mellows, Costello and Power, they have shown the way forward. However having learned from the past we now look to the future. As we enter the new Millennium it is imperative that republican socialist politics remain relevant, that is the task for all of us. Let the 1998 Ard Fheis signal the beginning of that work.

Conference Standing Orders

All comrades are required to be prompt and arrive on time for the various sessions. This is a one day conference and much work has to be done, time is of the essence.

All Party badges etc. are to be removed when leaving the Conference room e.g. during lunch. This is to respect the political independence of the venue, parts of which are in use by others.

All motions are numbered and will be called by the conference chairperson at the appropriate session.

Speakers will be time limited by the conference chairperson.

Motions speakers will be limited;

Proposer 5 minutes, Secunder 3 minutes, Rebuttal 5 minutes.

In all matters pertaining to the running of the conference, the conference chairperson has the final decision.

If any comrades are unhappy with the Chairpersons decisions, the matter will be referred to the first meeting of the in-coming Ard Comhairle.

We would remind comrades that our party constitution states that "all comrades are equally valued", Thus comrades are required to refrain from personal criticisms and bad language

This conference is non-smoking, but in recognition of smokers rights the conference chair will endeavour to ensure a limited number of smoke breaks.

ARD Comhairle Election 1998-1999

Nomination paper

name

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

MOTIONS

O'Hara, Lynch, Devine IRSP Cumann H Block 3. Long Kesh

1. The Cumann endorses the entire leadership of the R.S.M. and supports the strategy adopted since the last Ard Fheis.
2. The Cumann wishes to thank the POW representative for his work over the past year and hope he can continue in this role in the coming year.
3. The Cumann supports the effort to date to produce a monthly newspaper and hopes this task can be achieved within a definitive time frame. We would suggest the setting up of a working committee to ensure this task can be completed.
4. The Cumann recognises the need to establish the IRSP more effectively in major centres such as Dublin, Derry, and in other areas where the IRSP has previously had a strong presence.
5. The Cumann calls for the establishment of a standardised education programme for the movement.
6. The Cumann calls for voting rights to be amended so that each cumann voting strength will be proportional to the size of the cumann's membership.
7. The Cumann calls for the work of Teach na Failte to continue.
8. The Cumann expresses solidarity with our support groups world-wide and with our fellow POW's in Portlaoise and Maghaberry.

DownPatrick Branch

9. This Ard Fheis ensures that all major policy decisions taken in the past six months are kept constantly under review.

10. This Ard Fheis recommends to the incoming Ard Comhairle that the issue of disarmament will not be on any future agenda for our movement.
11. This Ard Fheis will instruct all Party members regardless of position to fully involve themselves politically and socially within their own communities. This should not be optional but must be a prerequisite for all party activists.
12. This Ard Fheis oversees the drawing up of a comprehensive economic strategy document outlining the party's definitive position on all economic matters as they effect the working class.
13. This Ard Fheis expresses its support for the Cuban and Iraqi people who continue to be denied basic medical equipment and medicines by the United States led economic blockades.
14. This Ard Fheis sets a time-scale for the publication of a party paper and delegates an editorial board to oversee its production.

Executive Committee

15. That this Ardl Fheis ratifies and applauds the courageous decision taken by the Irish National Liberation Army to declare a cease-fire on August the 22nd 1998 on the recommendation of the IRSP Ard Comhairle.

Belfast Branch

16. This Ard Fheis opposes attempts to down grade the Mater Hospital in Belfast this will resulting the loss to North Belfast of acute services.
17. This Ard Fheis calls for the establishment of a major Educational establishment in North Belfast. (*North Belfast has less than 1% educated to degree level compared to 48% for South Belfast*).
18. This Ard Fheis calls for the scrapping of tuition fees for Third Level Education. Tuition fees exclude students from low income families from getting 3rd level education.

International Department

19. We reiterate that a party Ard Fheis remains the highest decision making body of the Irish Republican Socialist Party, and that it is the responsibility of the Ard Comhairle to implement the will of the membership as expressed at the Ard Fheis at which they themselves are elected.
20. The Ard Comhairle will be responsible for recording the minutes of its own minutes of its meetings, including the reports from delegates from throughout the 32 counties. Minutes will be distributed to all branches and support groups following the Ard comhairle meeting. Minutes should include departmental reports.
21. That the IRSP reiterates its analysis that all classes within society have a unique and mutually opposed class interests. Accordingly, the IRSP recognises that it is responsible to the Irish working class alone, and rejects the concept that there are social interests of the 'people', that supersede the interests of the Irish working class.
23. The IRSP reiterates its commitment to the establishment of a 32 County Socialist Republic, and its understanding that such a revolutionary transformation of society results from class war.
24. The IRSP reiterates its analysis that the partition of Ireland remains a primary obstacle to the attainment of the Interests of Irish Workers, that the six-county statelet is irreformable and that the struggle for socialism in Ireland is inseparable from the struggle for national liberation.

25. The International Secretary of the IRSP's Ard Comhairle shall be responsible for keeping members in Britain and supporters abroad informed on developments impacting upon, or initiated by the Irish Republican Socialist movement in a timely fashion. Accordingly all party statements will be made available to the North American co-ordinator. Should similar support organisations arise in other nations, this policy will be applied to them as well.

IRSPGB

26. That this Ard Fheis accords full party status and representation on the Ard Comhairle for members of the party in Britain.

Dublin

27. This Ard Fheis condemns the use of criminal legislation to imprison workers involved in legitimate industrial action.

Strabane

28. This Ard Fheis rejects the use of punishment beatings and shootings as a method of community justice. We call on the IRSP to enter into dialogue with local communities on the basis of the Community Policing and Justice service paper.

Pressure of space does not allow each and every motion to appear on the Clár.

A limited number will be allowed from the floor.

Irish Republican Socialist Party Constitution

1. The name of the Party shall be the Irish Republican Socialist Party.
2. The fundamental aim of the party is to establish a Socialist Republic on the island of Ireland.
3. A Socialist Republic would be the one based;
 - a) on the democratic principles throughout all aspects of political, social, economic and cultural life and guided by the maxim; from each according to his/her ability to each according to his/her needs.
 - b) would be non-discriminatory on the grounds of religion, race, nationality, gender or sexual orientation.
 - c) on the spirit of workers unity and internationalism.
4. Membership of the party shall be open to all who accept the constitution of the I.R.S.P. and who loyally carry out the policies of the party. All comrades are equally valued in this party.
5. The supreme authority of the party and the movement shall be the Ard Fheis which must meet at least once every two years.
6. The Ard Fheis shall elect the leadership of the party to be known as the Ard-Comhairle shall consist of 12 members elected by the Ard Fheis with delegates from branches elected locally within three weeks of the Ard Fheis on the following basis:
5-10 local members = 1 delegate 11-20 local members = 2 delegates
20-30 local members = 3 delegates, and so on until a maximum of 5 delegates from a local area are elected.
7. The Ard Comhairle shall meet at least four times a year - shall be responsible for its own administration and bye laws and modes of working. These must be available for all comrades to see and be made available at the subsequent Ard Fheis.
8. At its first meeting following the Ard Fheis the Ard Comhairle shall elect, from its own ranks, but with the power to co-opt one non Ard Comhairle member, a committee to be known as the Executive Committee and consisting of seven comrades. The Ard Comhairle also has the authority to set up party departments to oversee party work in various fields. These departments shall be answerable to the Executive between Ard Comhairle meetings.
9. The Executive Committee shall be the working leadership of the movement with full authority between Ard Comhairle to implement party policy, impose party discipline and develop strategies for the development of the movement. It shall have the full authority of the movement and has the power and authority to direct comrades in their party work, oversee the development of branches, control publications and statements and delegate all party work.
10. Branches are the representative structure of the party and can only be set up with a membership of at least four comrades. Branches can be based on occupation, geography, sexual orientation or specific interests. All branch activity is subject to the authority of the Ard Comhairle and between its meetings the Executive Committee. Only the Ard Comhairle can give approval for the setting up of branches.
11. All party comrades are subject to the Code of Conduct copies of which they must receive on becoming a member.
12. This constitution for the party can only be changed by a 2/3 majority of the delegates at a subsequent Ard Fheis. The organisation for Ard Fheis should be the responsibility of the Ard Comhairle.

Appendix

IRSP

Submission to the Independent Commission on Policing

The I.R.S.P. believe that the R.U.C. is a totally discredited police force which should not be reformed but abolished. It's history, practice culture and personnel are so steeped in the sectarianism of unionism that tinkering with it or attempting to reform it will fail to flush out the naked sectarian hatred that nationalists have endured.

We as a political movement have suffered at the hands of the RUC. They have tortured our members in the police holding centres. They have planted agent provocateurs in our movement. Only recently following the INLA cease-fire they encouraged one such agent to break the INLA cease-fire by murdering a South Belfast drug dealer. This latest incident, taken with their use of a policy of 'shoot to kill' in the early 1980's is clear evidence that it is a militarist force without respect for human rights or civil liberties.

They have also used the evidence of perjured supergrasses to bring charges against our members, charges which were politically motivated. In so doing they have brought the judicial system which colluded in these charges into disrepute.

However, our opposition is not based only on our movement's experience of the RUC. It is based on the historic role the RUC have performed. They are and have been and have seen themselves as the police force of the unionists of the north.

We would readily concede that there are many good individual police personnel who consciously try to serve all the community. No doubt there are many who want to be effective police. But that cannot be possible so long as the RUC continue to exist. Their history is against them.

Daily, in working class nationalist areas, the members of the RUC have engaged in sectarian abuse of nationalists whether acting in a security role or as traffic policemen. They have fired hundreds of thousands of plastic bullets in nationalist areas. They have leaked files of nationalists to loyalist murder squads.

They have covered up, colluded with and are believed to have guided to their nationalist targets, loyalist murder gangs. In short they are a sectarian police force incapable of reform.

They are a clear example of a political police force so identified with one political tendency that nationalists could never accept them as their own police, nor even believe them to be impartial.

The IRSP believe that superficial changes relating to modifications of their name, changing their uniform, removing symbols of Britishness/Unionism from police barracks and promoting more catholics and bringing in high flyers to command positions from Britain will not fundamentally change the nature of the force.

It is the considered opinion of the Ard Comhairle of the Irish Republican Socialist Party that the only solution to the problems of the Royal Ulster Constabulary is its abolishment.

Ard Comhairle of the Irish Republican Socialist Party September 14/09/98

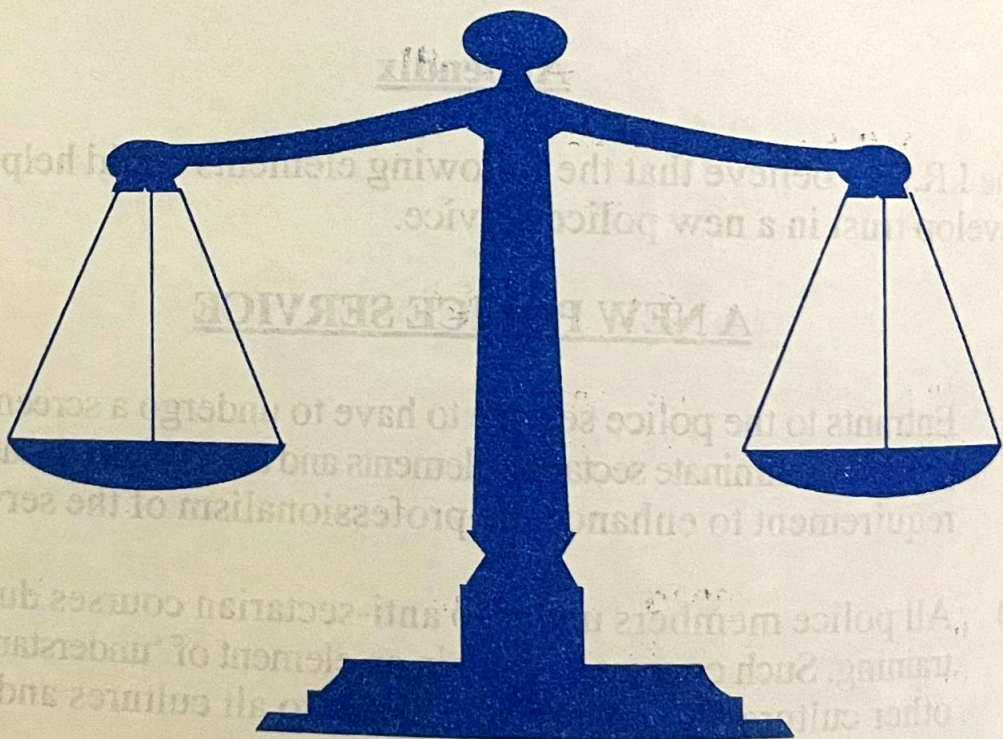
Appendix

The I.R.S.P. believe that the following elements could help to develop trust in a new police service.

A NEW POLICE SERVICE

- 1) Entrants to the police service to have to undergo a screening process to eliminate sectarian elements and also a high education requirement to enhance the professionalism of the service.
- 2) All police members undergo anti-sectarian courses during training. Such courses to contain an element of 'understanding other cultures' to ensure sensitivity to all cultures and to minorities of what ever kind.

- 3) The police service to contain an element of community policing that allows for the drawing of some of its membership from local communities where they operate on a part-time reserved basis and deal with local specifics.
- 4) The police force to be unarmed but to have available a professionally trained quick response unit, capable of dealing with dangerous situations.
- 5) The new police service to have no decision making role in relation to marches.
- 6.) The police force to draw its membership equally from the different traditions and sexes, be allowed membership of a trade union or professional federation which has the same rights as other trade unions, and be permitted to affiliate to both the Irish Congress of Trade Unions and the British Trades Council.



ARD Comhairle Representatives 1997-1998

Willie Gallagher - County Tyrone
Linda Cooke - County Dublin (resigned 1998)
Jimmy Bradley - County Antrim
Paul Carson - County Antrim
Paul Little - County Antrim
John Martin - County Armagh
Gerry Burns - County Dublin
Tony O'Hara - County Derry
Kevin McQuillan - County Antrim (resigned 1998)
Ciaran McLaughlin - County Derry (resigned 1998)
Gary Adams - County Louth (resigned 1998)
Fra Halligan - County Antrim Co-opted 1998
Eddie McGarrigle - County Tyrone
Rusty Cunnane - County Louth
Sean Hanna - County Antrim
David Clinton - County Down



Roll of Honour

Irish Republican Socialist Party Irish National Liberation Army

Volunteer Hugh Ferguson	Volunteer Matt McLarnon
Volunteer Danny Loughran	Volunteer Seamus Srew
Volunteer Brendan McNamee	Volunteer Roddy Carroll
Volunteer Colin McNutt	Volunteer Colin Maguire
Volunteer Gerard Mallon	Volunteer Neil McMonagle
Volunteer Brendan Conberg	Volunteer Joe Craven
Volunteer Seamus Costello	Volunteer Paul McCann
Volunteer Tony McClelland	Volunteer John O'Reilly
Volunteer Ronnie Trainor	Volunteer Thomas Power
Volunteer Mariam Daly	Volunteer Mickey Kearney
Volunteer Ronnie Duntins	Volunteer Emmanuel Sargan
Volunteer Noel Little	Volunteer Kevin Barry Duffey
Volunteer Patsy O'Hara	Volunteer James McPhilomey
Volunteer Kevin Lynch	Volunteer Alex Patterson
Volunteer Mickie Devine	Volunteer Sino Gallagher
Volunteer Jim Power	Volunteer John Morris
Comrade Rose Campbell	Comrade Dominic McGlinchey
Comrade Hugh O'Neill	Comrade Mary McGlinchey
Comrade Pearse Moore	Comrade Mickey Montgomery
Comrade Bessy Phelan	

*"The struggle for any dream is worthwhile,
for in the struggle lies the strength and
fulfillment to fight for what you believe in."*