



UNITED IRELAND

NEWSLETTER

IRISH REPUBLICAN CLUBS

243 MT. HOPE DR., ALBANY, N.Y. 12202

November 1977

Every public question is a political question. The men who tell us that labor questions, for instance, have nothing to do with politics, understand neither the one or the other. The Labor Question cannot be settled except by a revision of the whole system of society which necessarily implies political warfare to secure the power to effect it. If by politics we understand the fight between the outs and ins, or the contest for party leadership, then Labor is rightly indifferent, but to the politics which center around the question of property and its control, Labor is not, cannot be, indifferent.

- James Connolly -



News from Ireland

DUBLIN - An Amnesty International report released in late October by the Irish government makes the case for an impartial inquiry into allegations of Garda (police) brutality and, in the unabridged version that the government did not release, is critical of the Special Criminal Court's apparent attitude to these allegations. The Amnesty report says that maltreatment appears to have been carried out systematically by detectives who appeared to have specialized in the use of oppressive methods in extracting statements from people of suspected of involvement in serious, politically motivated, crime.

The report says that the allegations common to all of the 28 cases examined by the Amnesty team were that the victims were at various times beaten and punched, the most common targets being the ears, stomach and groin; that they were knocked or thrown against walls or furniture or from one officer to another, and that they were kned in the stomach or kicked. Several victims said that they were knocked to the ground and repeatedly kicked. It was also commonly reported that victims were pulled or swung by the hair, had their arms

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twisted behind their backs while they ewre punched, were spread-eagled against a wall and had their legs kicked apart. In five cases people report being beaten with objects, including a 'sort of blackjack,' a night-stick, a leather strap, a brush, a hammer, a rope and a chair. In all five cases medical reports stated that the injuries could have been caused by the treatment described.

DUNGANNON, CO. TYRONE - Lawyers from many parts of Northern Ireland have threatened to withdraw from all court proceedings involved with people charged with 'terrorist-type' offenses unless there is an immediate end to the ill-treatment of prisoners detained for questioning at the Castlereagh holding center in Belfast and other RUC (Royal Ulster Constabulary) establishments. (See story above.)

The meeting followed mounting criticism alleging police brutality, particularly in the specially constructed Castlereagh holding eenter in East Belfast, through which have passed 1,500 'suspects' this year. The number of complaints against the RUC has been rising for several years. Legal sources point out that the fact that statements of admission are rarely ruled inadmissable in court, coupled with the fact that almost all convictions in terrorist-type case rest entirely or almost entirely on the statements by accused persons places great pressure on the police investigators to induce suspects to make confessions.

DUBLIN - The Irish Farmers Association emerged in early November as the most powerful commercial lobby in Ireland with penetrating influence on the rural electorate and with a highly polished political machine. The IFA claims to represent the majority of the 26-Counties' 170,000 farmers. Although there may be some doubt about that claim, the IFA's leaders believe that the association exercises considerable influence over at least 20% of the electorate and deeply affected the last election. The leaders of the IFA came out of the Association's first National Convention evidently expecting to exact their pound of flesh from the Fianna Fail government which they evidently feel they elected.

RESULTS OF THE CONNOLLY-McNULTY 50 - 50 CLUB: The 50 - 50 Club was not as well subscribed as we had hoped. Nevertheless, we pulled the tickets as announced and the three winners are as follows: #1 J. Mullan, #2 R. Washington, and #3 E. Jordan. We do appreciated the support of those who participated. We will run another club after the first of the year.



Labor Report



UNIONS CALLED KEY TO PEACE IN NORTHERN IRELAND
by Edward Maher, Associate Director, District council 37,
American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees.

When you say Ireland, most people think of St. Patrick's Day, Blarney Castle and rolling green hills. But Northern Ireland is an armed camp, a police state, a place where concentration camps exist. The British government would not agree with this description, but then you could hardly expect the British government to be objective since it is one of the major causes of the virtual state of war that exists in Northern Ireland ...

One point constantly hammered home to me by everyone I spoke to—Catholics and Protestants, trade unionists and former Members of Parliament, priests and housewife—was that the conflict in Northern Ireland was not a religious war, despite the impression conveyed by

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the American media and certain politicians.

Union leaders such as Terry Carlin, an officer of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, which represents hundreds of thousands of workers in both the North and South of Ireland, emphasized that the primary cause of the trouble in Northern Ireland was the attempt by the British to maintain their historic stranglehold on the economy of Northern Ireland. They cited the many multi-national corporations that take advantage of the low wages and special tax exemptions and which therefore oppose any change in the status quo. They also pointed to British fear of losing control of the strategic Belfast ship yards. In the view of a broad spectrum of opinion in Northern Ireland, it is the crushing poverty of the country and the rejection of British domination that is the fundamental cause of the violence and bitter division that beset that society ...

At one extreme you have the Provisional I.R.A. and at the other extreme you have the U.D.A. and the U.V.F. who are 'Unionist' or 'Loyalist' paramilitaries. A key force between these extremes is the powerful Irish Congress of Trade Unions, which has launched a campaign to unify the people of Northern Ireland around a six-point program entitled "A Better Life For All". Their program calls for an end to violence by all sides, the right to a job, good housing, adequate social services and equality of educational opportunity, and the right to associate freely and advocate political change by peaceful means...

The American government has very conveniently stepped aside and ignored its responsibilities to press for the human rights of the Northern Ireland citizenry...

The same goes for those Irish-American politicians who talk about ending the violence of the Provisional I.R.A. and have nothing to say about the violence of the British Army and the Loyalist extremists.

As for the American labor movement, it has done very little to try to end the oppression and violence in Northern Ireland. I regret to say that some segments of the labor movement have actually contributed to the continuation of the violence by giving funds to the I.R.A. Provisionals. The general feeling of the Irish trade union movement is total disappointment with their counterparts in America.

The Connolly-McNulty IRC has printed a short brochure on the Better Life For All Campaign. For a copy just sent a stamped self-addressed envelope to: Connolly-McNulty IRC, 243 Mt. Hope Dr., Albany, N.Y. 12202

SINN FEIN THE WORKERS

The following is Part 1 of an interview given to the Guardian newspaper by Sean O Cionnaith, International Affairs Director for the Irish Republican Movement during his recent visit to this country.

ON THE "PEACE PEOPLE":

Their greatest weakness is that they pressured God for peace and didn't pressure the British government, which has overall authority in Northern Ireland. Their demonstrations were organized around singing hymns for peace and not organized to demand that Britain grant basic civil rights to citizens in Northern Ireland.

Progressive forces, led by Sinn Fein The Workers' Party and its branch in the North, the Irish Republican Clubs, initially welcomed the peace movement despite its political ambiguity. While arguing that the movement 'deserves all the support and encouragement it can get,' Sinn Fein also noted its 'spontaneity, localism and non-political character.' Unless the peace people firmly ground themselves in the working-class movement, the party said, the mass upsurge would quickly degenerate into a force demanding 'peace at any price,' rather than 'peace with justice.' Such a line, Sinn Fein noted at the time, would aid both the British and the paramilitary Catholic and Loyalist forces, which were all training their guns on the Northern Ireland working class.

In the first few weeks of demonstrations the peace people got mass support from working-class people, both Catholic and Protestant. There is strong feeling in all working-class areas that sectarian killings and violence from both paramilitary forces and the British Army must end. This is necessary so that people can become involved in the real struggle against violence in Northern Ireland - the violence of bad housing, unemployment and the denial of basic civil rights.



PARTY Party Program

But the peace movement leaders, who were closely allied with middle-class 'do-gooders' and conservative church leaders, failed the vast majority of their followers by not grasping what the real issues of peace in Northern Ireland are all about. They also failed by allowing themselves to be manipulated by the conservative church leaders behind them, who were concerned enough to keep control of the movement in their own hands.

They didn't democratize the movement because they feared it could become a weapon against the British government.

This stand was evident during a Dublin peace parade of 50,000 I joined in July 1976. A group of us marching with a trade union contingent had a banner reading, 'Workers against sectarianism.' The 'fur-coat' brigade leading the march objected to the word 'workers' saying it was 'too political.' We had joined the march in an attempt to raise the consciousness of the demonstrators and in the firm belief that violence must cease if ordinary workers are to become involved in the economic and social struggle in the North and South of Ireland.

The contradictions inherent in a political view that opposes 'violence on all sides' without taking a stand on its fundamental cause became evident three months later. The peace movement leadership, after denouncing 'British atrocities' being committed in Belfast's Catholic ghettos, bowed to a storm of pressure and termed the security forces 'the only legitimate forces of the rule of law.' The statement sparked splits in the movement, and began the erosion of its mass support.



The following letter was received from CABHAIR, the Republican Prisoners' Aid and Defense Committee. The letter is self-explanatory - we would urge all of our readers to start the holiday season by sending a donation to: CABHAIR, 30 Gardiner Place, Dublin 1, Ireland.

A Chara,

Once again the Christmas Bazaar is being organized, the proceeds from which will be used to take care of the welfare of Republican prisoners and their families during 1978.

With rising prices, the cost of maintaining welfare services creates a heavy burden on our small resources. Were it not for the dedication of a number of persons working very hard throughout the year our position would be untenable.

As an example of the work and expense involved; newspapers - £760, transport (bus and cars) - £490, release grants - £300, winter clothing - £1600, transport repairs - £400, books and educational materials - £350, telephone charges - £100. Add another £500 for general costs, and the cost of welfare work for one year is £4,500.

The only way we can hope to raise this sum is through the bazaar and to make that a success we need your help and support, as we have for the last two years. It should be pointed out that our Committee receives no financial aid from any other group or organization.

We therefore request our friends and supporters, whether at home or abroad, to continue to help. We ask you to help in any way you can either by providing saleable items or by sending a donation to cover the expenses of the bazaar.

The bazaar will be held Friday and Saturday, December 16-17 at the Cyprus Street Club in Belfast. We will need a large amount of items for stalls and for prizes.

All cash donations will be receipted by the treasurers. We would point out that where possible we would rather have goods than cash as this makes the Bazaar more of an event for families and friends. However, we need everything and anything.

Mise, le meas

Sue Clark



Cultural Notes

Society Under Siege, A Psychology of Northern Ireland by Dr. Rona M. Fields. Published by Temple University Press.

We don't have a formal review of this book ready for this issue of the newsletter, but our reviewer assures us that the book is well done and worth having. We mention it now in case you are looking for a Christmas gift for someone sincerely interested in Ireland and the problems she faces. The following is taken from the dust jacket of the book:

Rona M. Fields is a psychologist and sociologist who has focused her research on social prejudice and violence in many different countries. She is currently Associate Director of the National Center on the Study of Corporal Punishment and Its Alternatives. Her 1973 report on this research was censored and then withdrawn from the market by the British government.

The troubles in Ireland are not new. They have taken a heavy toll in lives and, perhaps more importantly, in psychological health. This book is not concerned with the events in themselves, although it includes historical analysis of the conflict in Northern Ireland. It does attempt to discover the human effects of long-term conflicts such as that in Ireland...Society Under Siege applies social-psychological theory to a concrete and ongoing situation in a way that is illuminating for the general reader and for the specialist. Dr. Fields has done what might appear obvious: find out the effects of stress on a population by going to that population and observing what their lives are like. The remarkable fact is, however, that until now no one has done that.

Another nice gift would be a subscription to AIS-EIRI, The Magazine of Irish-America put out by An Claidheamh Soluis [The Irish Arts Center] 553 West 51st Street, New York, N.Y. 10019. A subscription is \$5.00 for four issues. It's a well produced magazine that offers something to please just about any Irish-American.

PEACE PRIZE FOR SEAN MAC BRIDE (From The Irish People, Dublin)

Sean MacBride, S.C., holder of the Nobel Peace Prize, was awarded the Lenin International Peace Prize in late September. He is the first Irishman to be given the Lenin prize, and the only person in the world to hold both honors.

At the award ceremony in Dublin, an IRISH PEOPLE reporter congratulated Mr. MacBride on behalf of the paper and its readers. In a personal message to IRISH PEOPLE readers, Mr. Mac Bride said, "The most important single issue facing humanity is Peace - for without peace, we face the possible destruction of the entire human race." The Irish Government should add its voice at the United Nations to the call for world disarmament, he urged, and "every Irish citizen" should support this demand.

Mr. MacBride was presented the Lenin Peace Prize by Dr. Nicolai Blokhin, the distinguished Soviet scientist, before a large audience in Dublin, including Government Minister Denis Gallagher, T.D., Sinn Fein President Tomas MacGiolla, actress Siobhan McKenna from the Irish Presidential Council, and the Irish Peace Group Committee.

"The people of the world do not want war," Mr. MacBride stated, "and the leaders of governments must not allow militarist hawks or merchants of death to create a situation which will destroy humanity.

Sean MacBride is the son of Major John MacBride, who was executed for his part in the Rising of 1916, and Maud Gonne MacBride, the famous actress and leader in the early Republican movement. He served in the IRA and resigned as Chief of Staff in 1937. In recent years he has been High Commissioner for Namibia [South-West Africa] and is now International Chairman of Amnesty International, a world wide organization working for the rights of political prisoners.

IAN PAISLEY'S WAR ON THE UNIONS (From The Irish People, Dublin)

Paisley's Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) and the Ulster Defense Association (UDA) [a Loyalist paramilitary formation] have combined to launch an attack on the Northern Committee of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU). Following the defeat of the "Ulster Loyalist Co-ordinating Committee's" strike in May, Paisley set about strengthening the position of Loyalist extremist groups within the trade union movement. Paisley's strategy is to use his own special brand of sectarian politics to divide and rule the trade union movement.

Join the Irish Republican Movement



- We stand for the overthrow of British Imperial rule in Ireland
- We stand for an independent Irish Socialist Republic
- We claim the ownership of the wealth of Ireland for the people of Ireland
- We stand for the preservation and revival of the traditional culture and language of the Irish people
- We place the rights of the common man before the rights of property

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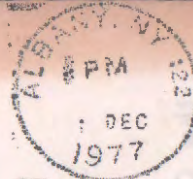
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ALL CONTRIBUTIONS WILL BE ACKNOWLEDGED