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Republic we
fought for?"
Cork Meeting
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The Starry Plough

An Camchέαhta

Series 11 Number 1

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EASTER 1916 - 2006
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Irish Paper 3

**90 YEARS ON
THE STRUGGLE GOES ON!**

The Voice Of Republican Socialism!

Repatriation is a Right!

An Irish prisoner serving a 22-year sentence in HM Belmarsh Prison in England may have to undergo an operation to remove his leg as a result of extreme medical neglect.

27-year-old Aiden Hulme was imprisoned for alleged involvement in the 2000/2001 'Real' IRA bombing campaign in London. Prior to his arrest Aiden was involved in a serious motorcycle accident that left him with a severely injured leg. After the accident he was receiving treatment in a Belfast hospital and was on the mend, but once detained in Britain's notorious Belmarsh Special Secure Unit (SSU), his condition took a sharp turn for the worse.

In response to political pressure the Belmarsh authorities reluctantly acquired the services of a medical specialist to examine Aiden's injured leg. After a brief examination the Belmarsh-appointed specialist informed him that the injured leg should be amputated. Aiden's family and friends, disturbed by and suspicious of this opinion, immediately sought a second opinion.

After intensive and prolonged lobbying by various human rights groups an independent specialist was permitted access to Belmarsh SSU to examine Aiden. After the examination the independent specialist deemed the limb 'saveable' - contrary to the opinion of the prison-appointed specialist - but only if Aiden received adequate treatment. Aiden underwent surgery, but due to continuing medical neglect he is now once again facing amputation.

The authorities in Full Sutton Prison, where Aiden is now detained, have shown themselves to be every bit as callous as those in Belmarsh SSU. They have decided to gradually withdraw Aiden's pain-killing medication claiming his suffering is 'purely psychological'.

Aiden, along with all other Irish republican prisoners in Full Sutton prison, are currently confined to their cells 23 hours a day. Michael Holden of the Irish Political Status Committee is at the forefront in highlighting Aiden's plight and he believes: "This is probably because we have been drawing attention to Aiden's and the rest of the lads' plight recently, and also due to the fact that Aiden's legal team is taking the Home Office to court over the coming weeks due to the medical neglect Aiden has suffered".

A campaign aimed at getting Aiden returned to Ireland for the remainder of his sentence has been launched in a last-ditch attempt to secure the much-needed medical treatment. The campaign has been led by a small number of Irish republican and human rights groups but they have managed to secure the support of several mainstream Irish politicians. SDLP leader Mark Durkan has contacted the British Home Office and the Department of Justice requesting that Aiden's repatriation application be processed without delay, and Sinn Féin General Secretary Mitchell McLaughlin has also called on the Irish Government to intervene immediately. He said: "Aiden Hulme's application for repatriation to an Irish prison has been with Michael McDowell in the Irish Department of Justice since last September (2005). I call on Mr McDowell to process this application immediately so that Aiden Hulme can come back where he will be close to his family and receive the much needed medical attention that he is entitled to."

But despite these efforts, Aiden is still awaiting transfer to Ireland and he is still facing an operation to amputate his leg. The shocking nature of the position he now finds himself in means many ordinary people are eager to support him. But as so often is the case, those in a position of power are simply turning a deaf ear. Paul Doyle

The Starry Plough

The Starry Plough or An Camhéachta was first established in 1975 as the national newspaper of the Irish Republican Socialist Party. For all correspondence write to:

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If you would like to highlight an issue of concern in your area and would like to have it published in the pages of The Starry Plough then get in touch at the address above or contact a local IRSP representative, The Starry Plough is your paper.

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An Camhéachta is
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Freedom For Dessie O'Hare: Taking it all They Way!

INLA political prisoner Dessie O'Hare, qualifying for release under the Brit designed Belfast Agreement has launched a new High Court action in Dublin in a new attempt to obtain his freedom.

Dessie O'Hare, who is currently serving a 40 year imprisonment has a legitimate expectation that he would be released in 2000 when he was declared a 'qualifying prisoner' under the terms of GFA, or at the latest by July 2003 as Irish 'Justice' Minister indicated that an appropriate pre-release pro-

gramme would be put in place for him, which has still to develop.

Dessie has stated that the continued failure by the Irish administration to release him breaches his rights to fair procedures and natural and constitutional justice, and he has been unlawfully detained by the Irish state since November 2000.

The Irish High Court also heard that a number of psychiatric and psychological assessments carried out on Dessie have clearly

shown no evidence of mental illness, psychosis or personality disorder.

He was granted leave to bring judicial review proceedings and is seeking a number of orders, including a declaration for being unlawfully detained and an order to be immediately released.

In 1987 Dessie was jailed for 40 years and at previous hearings was described as a member of the INLA and Officer Commanding the INLA prisoners in Portlaoise

Prison.

Dessie O'Hare is currently detained at Castlereagh Prison and supports the INLA ceasefire.

You can send letters of support and solidarity to Dessie by writing to him at:

Dessie O'Hare POW
Number 2, The Grove
Castlereagh Prison
Harristown, Castlereagh,
Co. Roscommon, Ireland

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The Irish Republican Socialist Party has Cumann established in cities, towns and villages in Ireland as well as Republican Socialist Committees in Europe, United States, Canada and Britain. Each IRSP cumann meets regularly to activate, educate and organise events locally such as public and political educational meetings, solidarity protests, pickets and demonstrations from community to workplace struggles. To find out more about the IRSP in your locality then use the contact details listed below.

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Republican Socialist Youth Movement www.rsym.org

IRSP Abroad: ircsna@irmsm.org

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PO Box 8266
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Online: <http://www.irmsm.org/irsp/ircsna/>

IRSC and FIRSCA has members, supporters and contacts active in working class struggles and prisoner solidarity campaigns throughout United States, Canada, Latin America and in towns and cities throughout England, Scotland and Wales, and across Europe and other areas. Write for further details on how you too can actively participate with like minded individuals in solidarity with the struggle in Ireland.

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Costello House, 392b Falls Road, Belfast, BT12 6DH.
Tel/Fax: 028 90 238321

Teach Na Failte (North Belfast):
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Ardoyne Phone: 028 90 751 705
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Free Dessie O'Hare Campaign
[www.irmsm.org/irsp/free_dessie](http://irmsm.org/irsp/free_dessie)

James Connolly Society: www.wageslave.org/jcs/

Larkspirit: www.larkspirit.com

Cork IRSP Online: www.irmsm.org/cumann/cork

Derry IRSP Online: www.angelfire.com/spac/derryirsp

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Republican Socialist Martyrs Flute Band - Belfast
<http://www.irms-belfast.com/>

'Irish Army' to March With Flag of Irish Citizens Army

Bertie Ahern has approved plans for the Irish Army to carry the Starry Plough flag during his controversial Easter Rising celebrations in through the capital.

In an angry reaction to these developments, Derry IRSP spokesperson Martin McMonagle slated the plans by the Free State Army and said that such a development to carry the Starry Plough flag during the government's planned Easter commemoration in Dublin this year is laughable.

"The Starry Plough is the flag of the Citizen Army and of the Irish Working Class. It is not the flag of a capitalist and corrupt state. Bertie Ahern's plan to wrap himself in the flags of republicanism and socialism will fail as the people will see through his ploy and his futile attempts to portray himself and his government as republicans and socialists. The use of the Starry Plough by the Free State army is an anathema to all things socialist."

Mr McMonagle went on, "This is an army that for years that the free state has existed

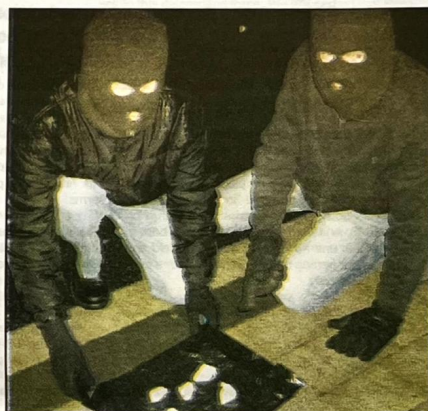
has been used to hunt down, imprison and murder Irish Republicans and Socialists without censure.

"This army was formed to protect a partitionist statelet and does not hold the values that the Starry Plough flag represents, in fact the Free State army is now nothing more than cheerleaders for the US led Nato. We in the IRSP demand that the free state forces abandon their plan to carry the flag of the Irish Working Class during the Easter commemoration.

He concluded by saying: "The fact that the partitionist state plans to hold this event is bad enough for Irish Republicans but is adding insult to injury by carrying the flag of the Irish Working Class. They have no right to do so and will only earn that right when they stand by the ideals of James Connolly and the Irish Citizen Army which is a long way off at present."

(See centre pages for Republican Socialist Movement Easter Commemoration Oration).

INLA SMASH CRIME GANGS



On the 30th March 2006 the Irish Republican Socialist Party recieved the following statement and photograph (sent to media) from the Derry Brigade of the INLA:

"The Derry Brigade of the Irish National Liberation Army can confirm that our volunteers were this week involved in an operation to smash a North-West based crime gang concerned with the supply and distribution of Class-A drugs. During this operation volunteers recovered a substantial amount of Cocaine estimated to be worth thousands of pounds. These drugs were then handed in to a priest in St Joseph's parish in Galligh last night.

"The Irish National Liberation Army view the sale and distribution of these dangerous and highly addictive drugs with serious concern and we take this opportunity to warn all others involved in this trade to come forward to and make themselves available to any member of the Irish Republican Socialist Movement.

"The Irish National Liberation Army will not allow the working class people of this city to be used as cannon fodder by these criminals whose only concern is profit by whatever means available to them."

As well as the action in Derry the INLA in Strabane also disrupted a crime gang involved in the drugs trade. The following statement was recieved by the IRSP on the 06th April from the North-West Brigade of the INLA:

"A criminal gang operating in the North West was last night dismantled by a unit from the North-West Brigade of the INLA and have been ordered to desist from all criminal activity or face a military response. This particular gang which is headed up by a well known career criminal have in the past been involved in robberies, house break-ins, assaults and have more recently moved in to the drugs trade. It came to our attention that this gang was selling drugs to children after the mother of a 15 year old school girl informed the INLA that her daughter and friends of a similar age were taking ecstasy tablets. Last night a number of these gang members were arrested by one of our units and confiscated almost one thousand suspected ecstasy tablets and were instructed to pass them on to Teach na Failte representatives for destruction. Teach na Failte representatives have since handed these drugs on to the Drugs and Alcohol Awareness Project group in Strabane, in the presence of the local press, for destruction. We would like to take this opportunity to warn those involved in the drugs trade that they face a military response if they continue to target children in particular for drug use".

An IRSP spokesperson responding to the latest developments congratulated the INLA for their actions but cautioned that the INLA were not a police force but will take action where necessary to protect working class communities from drugs and other forms of criminality.

Republican Socialist Youth Condemn Harrassment

On 23 March 2006 a member of the Concerned Group for Republican Prisoners charity organisation was detained and held by Free State authorities under section 30 of the Offences Against the State Act. The person in question was denied access to a solicitor, access to telephone or a doctor. These abuses have been specifically condemned by human rights advocates such as Amnesty International for years now.

In a report from 1999, "Amnesty International urges the Committee to recommend that the government ensure that the internationally guaranteed rights of each person arrested or detained under the OAS Acts are respected, including among

other things, the right to counsel and access to counsel including free assistance of counsel during the investigation and questioning." (Submission to the Committee to Review the Offences Against the State Acts and Other Matters)

Republican Socialist Youth urge all republicans to unite against an attempt to criminalise republicans after the events in Dublin. Republicans will continue to oppose sectarianism and invoke their peaceful right to protest Loyalist supremacism. Republicans and progressives should view this recent detainment as yet another form of internment without trial.

Republican Socialist Youth Movement Ard Comhairle

Mural Project: This mural featuring INLA hungerstriker Patsy O'Hara was the first completed by IRSP members in Belfast in memory of the 1981 Hungerstrikers. Other murals are planned for the city. In Derry also murals and memorials will be unveiled in memory of the hungerstrikers. More details in the next issue of the Starry Plough which will focus on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the 1981 hungerstrike.



James Connolly: Myths & Reality

A look at Ireland's foremost Revolutionary Marxist

James Connolly, Irish revolutionary Marxist, trade union organiser and Commandant General of the Irish Citizen Army the first red army in Western Europe of the 20th century executed by the British May 12th 1916. There are many myths which surround Connolly, not least of all his date and place of birth. There is a commonly held belief that the man was born in Monaghan in 1870 but, sadly, for those who wish to believe this in order to authenticate Connolly's pure Irishness by birth that is all it is, a myth.

Neither is the date of his birth proclaimed by some misled historians such as Tim Pat Coogan in his book 'The Easter Rising' correct. In fact Coogan claims both the Monaghan birth place and false year of his birth in his book on page 30. The fact is that Connolly was born at 107 Cowgate Edinburgh on June 5th 1868. Another myth is that he was born in Athlone but this one however is not widely held and refers to another person named Connolly over a hundred years previously.

However this is the kind of mythology which has plagued Connolly since his death in 1916. Connolly's first arrival in Ireland was as a young British soldier serving with the Kings Liverpool Regiment, which was known as an Irish regiment, and because of such was generally not wholly trusted by the crown. The regiment was in Ireland from precisely July 1882 to February 1889 which would obviously mean so was Connolly. Very little is known of his army life only to say that this was his first excursion to Irish soil which destroys the nonsense about been born in Monaghan.

Connolly's early political experiences were spent in the Scottish Socialist Federation and Independent Labour Party in the company of such people as John Leslie, Harold Hydman and James Kier Hardie and was very much a victim, like most but not all socialists of his environment. John Leslie had a liberating affect on Connolly and because of this he could strive forward with new confidence.

His new rooms at 21 South College Street became a hive of socialist industry. At this time socialists were immensely optimistic about the future and working class emancipation but there was much rivalry between in Scotland between the SSF and the ILP which was often kept in check by comrades holding joint membership.

Common aims and the goodwill of men like Dickinson, who began to publish his Edinburgh and Leith Labour Chronicle in October, 1894, and gave full publicity to the SSF. On its front page Connolly read the words of Camille Desmoulins, which he quoted so often "The great appear great because we are on our knees. Let us rise". Despite many efforts the differences between the SSF and the ILP did surface. For example when Kier Hardie gave the SSF a date in October 1894, for an appearance and speech and the ILP claimed him (Hardie), the SSF waived their claim. The SSF decided to offer James Connolly, not as independent Labour but as a Socialist candidate.

From James Connolly's point of view there was much at risk in accepting this candidature because even though it was not a legal requirement to give up his employment in order to stand he would be forced to be absent from his place of wage slavery which could, and in those days more than likely would have led to dismissal. To counter this and avoid giving the employer the satisfaction of dismissing him Connolly resigned his employment. Connolly's decision to stand was also influenced greatly when he overheard the liberals and Tories discussing their tactics for carving up the electoral wards.

During the election campaign and for some time afterwards Connolly contributed a monthly article to the "Labour Chronicle" under the pseudonym 'R.

Ascal' (rascal) in which local and national issues are discussed with sharp insight and playful wit. However Connolly's theme always returned to the Irish theme. His first article put the situation forward in these terms.

The intelligent and hard-headed elector and the shrewd and political-minded voter have returned to Edinburgh. Rumour has it that they have already been heard of in St. Cuthberts Ward where Mr Thomas Blaikie

stands as ILP candidate against Lord Provost Russell they are at present the most important persons in the British Empire until 8 o'clock on the evening of the polling for the municipal elections. After that their place will be taken by our other old friend the mob, the lower classes, the great unwashed, the residuum, and other such great names the organs of the classes are so fond of applying to the masses.

Many of the masses were Irish immigrants, as were Connolly's parents John and Mary, and elements within the capitalist system then, as often now, were fond of referring to these people forced from their homeland through famine, poverty and various other diseases carried by imperialism as filthy, unwashed and any other derogatory name the parasitic persons of the ivory towers could think of.

The first candidate to present himself in the St. Giles ward was a Mr Gardiner who claimed support as "a Catholic and as an Irishman" however Connolly, having heard the conversations outlined above had ideas of transferring the Irish vote from Liberal to Labour. Gardiner had previously figured as one of Mr Goschen's committee when that gentleman had won East Edinburgh by placarding the town with anti Catholic manifestoes. Now Gardiner was appealing to the Irish vote. Connolly's early life in Edinburgh was spent, as was the rest of his days serving the cause of working class emancipation and socialism. There are those who would argue that as time passes Connolly shifted from the socialist camp into the nationalist arena, once again this is a myth. In the case of Ireland which, it could be reasonably argued the cause of socialism and that of nationalism are not antagonistic towards each other at least until national liberation is achieved which can not be realised unless class emancipation accompanies it. That theory is as true today as it was in Connolly's time and applies in countries which operate a regional political system such as Spain with the struggles faced by the Basque and Catalan peoples.

Connolly's situation in Edinburgh was becoming desperate due to abject poverty as he and his family approached destitution. At this point more myths surface regarding Connolly at that time. One such piece of fiction was that he was to emigrate to Chile, had obtained his passport and that the "Chilean Government had offered the passage and a grant of land and tools" (The Life and Times of James Connolly C. Desmond Greaves P.69). Another myth related to the Chilean story was that "he contemplated founding a socialist colony in Chile". Well firstly passports were not a requirement of travel in the late 19th century which casts a more than a shadow of doubt over the claim that he had obtained his passport. Secondly "it seems unlikely that a townsman born and bred would contemplate farming so lightly" (ibid). There is no record at the Chilean

Consulate of this supposed transaction simply be cause it did not occur. It is almost certain that the idea of emigration did cross Connolly's mind at that time but the probabilities are that he was dissuaded from this course of action by John Leslie who promised to write a special appeal in 'Justice' seeking employment from somewhere within the labour movement. A response was received to this appeal which must, for Connolly, have come as a message from heaven. It was an invitation from the Dublin Socialist Club inviting him to become its paid organiser. This Connolly accepted, his wage was to be 31 pound per week when he could get it but this was of little consequence to Connolly as he set to work on the reorganisation of the Dublin Socialist Club. Part of this reorganisation would include restructuring and renaming the club and, in 1896, the Irish Socialist Republican Party was born. The new party was to be based on the policies and principles espoused by Karl Marx earlier in the 19th century and on Connolly's experiences with Hydmans Social Democratic Federation, which also aligned itself with the teachings of Marx, in Scotland. As if to emphasise the Marxist connection Karl Marx's daughter Eleanor and her husband Edward Aveling became members of the ISRP. The ISRP under Connolly's stewardship were involved in a number of political initiatives including opposing the visit of Queen Victoria, christened the "famine queen" by Maud Gonne, in 1900 and organising the centenary commemoration of the United Irishmen in 1898 (to do justice to the ISRP would be too voluminous for this article).

The programme of the ISRP was very similar to that of the Marxist SDF with the exception of thing specific to Ireland, as the SDF had issues specific to England for example abolition of the House of Lords. The ISRP programme was as follows.

1. Nationalisation of railways and canal 'Abolition of private banks and money-lending institutions and the establishment of state
2. Banks, under popularly elected boards of directors, issuing loans at cost.
3. Establishment at public expense of rural depots for the most improved agricultural machinery, to lend out to the agricultural population at a rent covering cost and management alone.
4. Graduated income tax on all incomes over 3400 per annum in order to provide funds for Pensions to the aged, infirm and widows and orphans.
5. Legislative restriction of hours of labour to 48 per week and establishment of minimum wage.
6. Free maintenance for all children.
7. Gradual extension of the principle of public ownership and supply to all the necessities of life.
8. Public control and management of National Schools by boards elected by popular ballot for that
9. Free education up to the highest university grades.
10. Universal suffrage. (The Life and Times of James Connolly C. Desmond Greaves P.76)

In 1903 Connolly fought an election in the Wood Quay ward in Dublin. Standing on a socialist ticket he was condemned by the priests from the pulpit and

any catholic who voted for him was threatened with excommunication so much was the fear of the establishment of Connolly's politics. After the Wood Quay affair Connolly moved to the USA where he quickly became involved with the labour movement. He joined the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), or the Wobblies as they became affectionately known. Connolly often got into many a heated argument with American labour organiser Daniel De-Leon particularly De-Leon's bourgeois stance that high prices were a response from the employers to excessive pay increases. This notion Connolly rejected, quite rightly so, arguing the opposite meaning that high wage demands were a response to a greedy bourgeoisie who insisted on high prices to amass huge profits. Therefore as a response to high prices and in order to survive workers must demand higher wages allowing them thus to purchase the necessities of life which they have created in the first place. Needless to say Connolly and De-Leon did not view life through the same telescope. While he was in the United States James Connolly became active in the affairs of the working class of Irish America, often pointing out the contradictions in their arguments. On one occasion, when addressing an audience of the said congregation he asked them how, quite justifiably, they could 'oppose British imperialism' and yet on the other hand support for the domestic and foreign policies of the USA?

The domestic [policies of the United States has left the indigenous population landless and on the verge of starvation, in much the same way as British imperialism has done to Ireland. It also is discriminatory against groups of workers of a different coloured skin. American foreign policy, at the time was beginning to enter an imperialist stage, though it had a long way to go in order to catch Britain (remember we are talking of nearly 100 years ago). Connolly argued, justifiably so, that there was no 'logic' to their arguments. There was certainly no continuity. How could these people complain about low wages and exploitation of themselves and by the same token be quite happy, in the majority of cases there were of course exceptions, to sit idly by and allow the exploitation of the women, Hispanics, Negro's and not to forget the indigenous population. When Connolly addressed these points which he did on more than one occasion the hall full of would be Irish Americans (those who claim they can trace their roots back to Ireland, in many cases this is true but in a minority of cases, then as now cases of invented Irish Grannies occurred) would fall into deep silence.

In 1910 James Connolly returned to Ireland, leaving his wife, Elizabeth, and their children in the United States. After a few months he sent for them to join him promising they would not face the poverty they left. To what extent this poverty had been eliminated, if at all, is open to question however Lillie (as she was known) and the children did rejoin Connolly in Dublin. On his return to Ireland James Connolly immediately submerged himself into the socialist cause and became heavily involved with the Socialist Party of Ireland (SPI). In 1911 he wrote, critical of the Independent Labour Party (ILP) particularly in Belfast and their loyalty to the British Trades Union movement the following. The ILP in Belfast believes that the Socialist movement in Ireland must be a dues paying organic part of the British Socialist movement whereas the SPI maintain that the relations between Socialism in Ireland and Great Britain should be fraternal and not organic, and should operate by exchange of literature and speakers rather than by attempts to as one, two people of whom one has for 700 years nurtured an undying martyrdom rather than admit the unity or surrender its national identity. The Socialist Party of Ireland considers itself the only internationalist party in Ireland, since its conception of internationalism is

IRSP Protest Against Attempts to Criminalise

....Continued from Previous Page

that of a free federation of free peoples, whereas that of the Belfast branches of the ILP seems scarcely distinguishable from imperialism, the merging of a subjugated peoples in the political system of their conquerors. (The Rebel Countess The Life and Times of Constance Markievicz, Anne Marreco P.137). This is as true today as it was in the time of James Connolly, fraternal comrades yes, bedfellows no. Perhaps one of Connolly's best known activities was the part he played in the heroic struggle of the working class during the 1913 Dublin lock-out. The lockout itself would be worthy of an article and historic review of its own and would be too voluminous to cover in depth here. It is merely necessary to say that Connolly was the right hand man to Jim Larkin in the Irish Transport and General Workers Union (ITGWU) and it was he who ordered the closing of the Dublin port in Larkin's absence. James Connolly often deputised for Jim Larkin and some would argue was as instrumental if not more so than Larkin himself in keeping up working class moral. It was Connolly who had the brain wave of forming the Irish

Citizen Army whose members were to be drawn from the locked out men of Dublin and would be trained by an Ulsterman, Captain Jack White. Connolly inserted the clause, seconded by Constance Markievicz that "all applicants to the army must be members of a trade union, recognised by the Irish Trades Union Congress". So in November 1913 the first Red Army in Western Europe of the 20th century was born. After the lockout ended in 1914 Connolly busied himself agitating against the coming of the 1st World War. And at the end of August 1914 he wrote in "The Irish Worker" the English wanted to wage war on Germany so that British and Irish capitalists should be enabled to steal German trade. He went on to write the following "The British capitalist class have planned this colonial crime in order to ensure its uninterrupted domination of the commerce of the world. To achieve that end it is prepared to bathe a continent in blood, to kill off the flower of the manhood of the three most civilized nations of Europe. Yes, this is the war of a pirate upon the German nation. And up from the blood soaked graves of the Belgian frontiers the spirits of murdered Irish soldiers of England call to heaven for vengeance upon the parliamentarian tricksters who seduced them into the armies of the oppressor of their country" (The Rebel Countess, Constance Markievicz Anne Marreco P. 193). Connolly also taunted the leader of the Irish parliamentary party, John Redmond who committed the volunteers, or a sizable majority of them, to Britain's war effort when he said "Full steam ahead John Redmond said that all is well chum, home rule will come when we are dead and buried out in Belgium" (Ireland The Key To The British Revolution David Reed).

Perhaps without any doubt Connolly's most heroic and historically famous revolutionary participation was that of Easter week, 1916. On April 24 of that year he led the Irish Citizen Army along side the Irish Volunteers (that was those volunteers who had correctly defied Redmond and refused to go to the slaughter in France and Belgium, thus retaining the name Irish Volunteers) into the General Post Office in Dublin in what has become known as the Easter rising. However what many don't realise or refuse to consider is that the rising, laudable and heroic as it was may well have been very much a second choice for Connolly. All of his politics hitherto suggest that his first preference, though not his only one, for revolution would have been one led and carried out by organised labour. It could, and has been argued, that he was hoping the rising would bring out the working class onto the streets in defence of Ireland. Unfortunately this did not happen and Connolly was perhaps the most heroic and dedicated fighter of Easter week. His aims and objectives differed greatly from those of the other leaders, Pearce, Clarke,



James Connolly Pictured with his family

Plunket, McDonough, McDearmod, Ceannt, as Connolly was out for economic and class liberation and the ultimate goal was Socialism. James Connolly was firstly a Marxist and analysed quite correctly that in the case of Ireland the socialist and the nationalist were not antagonistic towards each other. However before the rising he did point out to the Citizen Army "In the event of victory, hold on to your rifles, as those with whom we are fighting may stop before our goal is reached. We are out for economic as well as political liberty" (The Life and Times of James Connolly, C. Desmond Greaves P.403).

This statement summed up the ideological differences which lay beneath the surface within the insurgent movement. However for the duration of Easter week these differences would, it appears, be put on the back burner. James Connolly was executed by the British on May 12th 1916.

Despite Connolly's heroic stance during Easter week it may well be, as has been suggested, that a rising of this nature was his second option. However once committed there was no turning back for Connolly. As Connolly argued with comrade Victor Berger "the rifle is of course, a useful weapon under certain circumstances, but these circumstances are little likely to occur. This is an age of complicated machinery in war as an industry, and confronted with machine guns, and artillery which kill at seven miles distance, rifles are not likely to be of much material value in assisting in the solution of the labour question in a proletarian manner" (James Connolly's Collected Works Volume Two P. 243). Connolly was speaking in the United States at the time and a few years later in Ireland these circumstances which he thought were "little likely to occur" in the USA did evolve. Unfortunately as Connolly was acutely aware without the participation of a sizable section of organised labour the rising was perhaps doomed to failure. However this is not to suggest that it was wrong to go ahead but merely to point out that a rebellion without the masses was less likely to succeed.

This year is the ninetieth commemoration of Easter Week and we salute all those who took part.

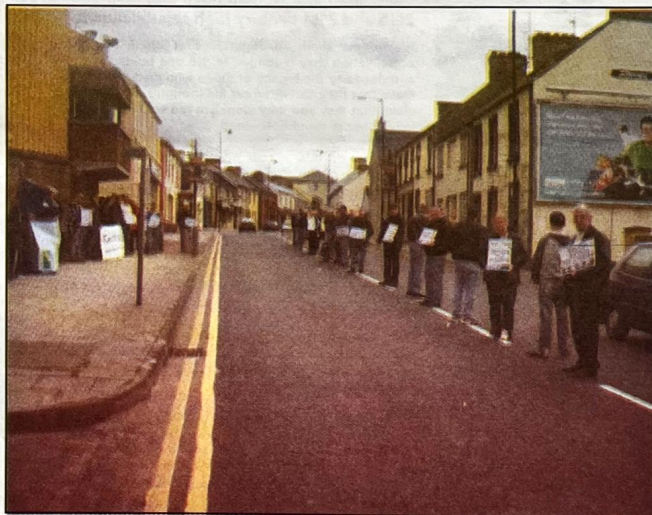
Kevin Morley

Members of the IRSP protested outside Dungiven RUC/PSNI barracks to protest against attempts to criminalise the Republican Socialist Movement by the North's police force.

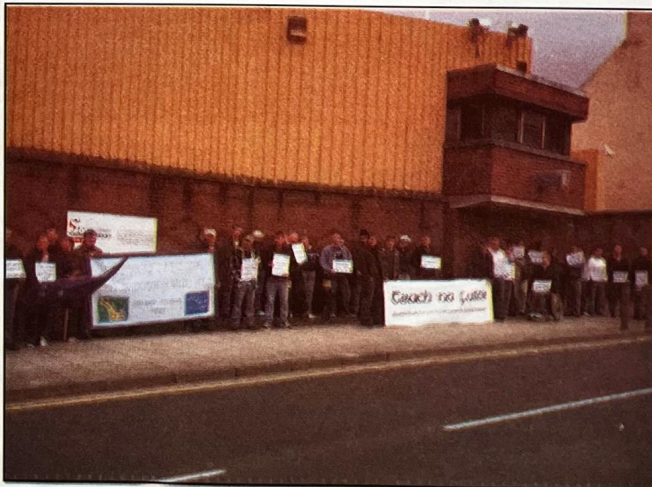
The protest followed eighteen raids by the RUC in a "money laundering" probe. Homes and businesses in Park, Dungiven, Claudy and Derry City were raided. Most of the premises raided had no connection whatsoever with the IRSM and are being seen as nothing more than a harassment exercise. It is believed that the raids are nothing more than an attempt to "even up the score" following raids and seizures by the Assets Recovery Agency against other political and criminal groups.

An IRSP spokesperson in North Derry described the RUC actions as laughable. He said, "We are continually told that there is a new dispensation when it

comes to policing, we have seen that today, they have news emblems and a new name, that's it. The same anti-republican attitude obviously still exists within this discredited force. We are certain that they will uncover no evidence whatsoever in relation to money laundering or crime simply because the IRSM are not involved in any of this activity. We cannot be any clearer than that. No arrests were made, no-one has been charged and nothing of note was found. Following on from these raids the IRSP have organised a number of protests against the actions of the RUC, but we are not deluded in thinking these protests will change their out-dated attitude towards republicans. But we would appeal to all republicans to come out and support our protests and to show those involved in making these decisions that their attempts to criminalise republicanism and in particular the Republican Socialist Movement will not go unanswered.



Members and supporters of the IRSP protesting against the recent raids making their presence felt on Dungiven's Main Street.



Honouring Ireland 1916 - 2006

90th Anniversary Easter Statement of the

The following speech was delivered at Milltown Cemetery during the IRSP's National 1916 Commemoration. The speech began: Let us first remember why every year we gather, as thousands do all over this island, at grave-yards and memorials. We stand here to pay homage to and remember all those who died in the struggle for national independence.

Since the first stirrings of the separatist movement in the latter part of the 18th century, many men and women have lost their lives in the pursuit of Irish freedom. In the 18th, 19th 20th and 21st century Irish republicans have died in the struggle for freedom.

We honour them all, regardless of which republican organisation they belonged to. No one holds the rights and deeds to the legacy of those who died. No one can claim that they can interpret the thoughts of the dead or claim that they and they alone are the sole heirs and followers of the republican dead.

Of course on this special occasion we as members or supporters of the Republican Socialist Movement and family representatives of dead volunteers remember in particular our own dead comrades and friends who devoted their lives to republican socialism. The reading out of their names on our roll of honour cannot do full justice to the lives they led nor ease the pain of their families. No one knows what they would have become or what they could have achieved if born in a different time and place.

Unfortunately, they grew up in a country partitioned and with its nearest neighbour claiming jurisdiction over part of this island. That neighbour, Britain, was and is an imperialist power.

Some might find the use of that word, imperialist, archaic, outdated, or old fashioned. After all, we live in a world of instant communications and where shopping in super and hypermarkets is the new religion. Celebrities and fashion dominate the main news. There is a rising standard of living for many of us in the European Union. Those who denigrate the Easter Rising and revise history to suit their current political direction, these revisionists and reformists, say "move on, look at the bigger picture. Forget 1916 it was a mistake anyway"

Well here is the bigger picture. Britain and the USA, two major imperialist powers, one junior and one senior, are bogged down in an imperialist war in Iraq. They threaten Iran, refuse to recognise the democratic mandate of Hamas in the occupied Palestine land, try to undermine the Bolivarian revolution taking place in Venezuela. They gave aid and arms to the King of Nepal to suppress a

popular uprising. They torture political prisoners; force-feed hunger strikers and support corrupt dictators in Africa. They turn a blind eye to multi national companies using goons and murder squads to assassinate trade union leaders. They have blockaded Cuba for over forty years, and are destroying the very planet we live in.

That is imperialism and that is the enemy. Our enemy is not the British working class. Our enemy is not the protestant or loyalist or unionist working class. Our enemy is most certainly not other republicans. No comrades and friends, never, never, never fall into the trap that so many on the left fall into, of seeing those closest to us in outlook as being our main rivals and therefore our main enemy. Of course, we have differences with others. That is why we exist. We place our movement firmly within the working class and have a socialist analysis. We categorically state no socialism without national liberation and no national liberation without socialism.

But our differences we must be able to state, without rancour, without bitterness, in an open honest fashion and treating those, with whom we disagree, with respect. That is the republican socialist way. Those who lie, slander, spread gossip as fact, back bite, bitch, and try to turn republican against republican, socialist against socialist, are objectively the agents of Imperialism. They have no part in this movement.

In recent times, there has been a sustained campaign to undermine and subvert Irish Republicanism by linking Republicanism with criminality. That same tactic was used 25 years. The deaths of ten hunger strikers put paid to that fallacy. No genuine republican is involved in criminality for no republican joined the struggle to make money.

However, an intelligence led media black operation has tried to link our own movement and in particular key members of our movement with criminality and drugs.

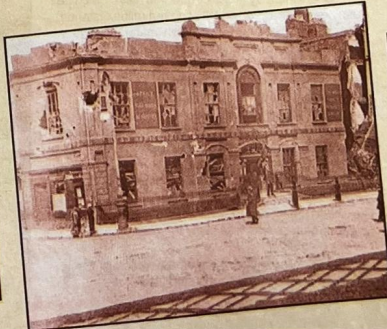
We utterly refute those allegations. However, we do acknowledge and deeply regret that some of those involved in drug dealing were once members of our movement. All those involved in the drug trade, apart from destroying the lives of countless working class youth, leave themselves open to manipulation by the intelligence agencies.

The world over, the drugs business has been used by the CIA and other intelligence agencies to undermine and destroy popular movements of resistance. The flooding into working class communities all over Ireland of cocaine and heroin is no accident. Drugs kill the will to resist. A dependence on drugs leads to an acceptance of capitalist values and eventually a dependence on capitalism itself. We have all seen how the British intelligence services cultivated loyalist murder gangs, gave them carte blanc to murder Catholics, protected them from arrest, used them as informers and turned a blind eye to their wholesale drug dealing which has destroyed many protestant working class communities.

The current political impasse in the North confirms our original analysis of the Good Friday Agreement. Eight years on and the Good Friday Agreement has still not been implemented. All that has happened has been some tinkering with the system. Sadly a small return for years of struggle sacrifice and death. Some republicans now must bitterly regret going down that road-a road that increased sectarianism, solidified partition and legitimised British interference in Irish affairs.

Currently we now have far more direct British rule than we have ever had. As the British overlords prepare to introduce a wide range of punitive charges on us, private public companies and assets and pay off the RIR with at least £28,000 per soldier they must have a strong sense of satisfaction with a job well done. British right to rule in the North is now recognised internationally. Articles 2 and 3 are gone. The armed struggle is over, complete, gone.

And a good thing too. For in the current local national and international context the continuation of armed struggle is not merely futile but is counter-productive to the aims and objectives that republicans seek. To those genuine republicans who sincerely believe that armed struggle is the only way forward at this time we say: look at the meagre gains that the struggle from 69 to 98 achieved, when it had the full backing of many working class nationalists. Do you really think that you can achieve more especially without the support of working



Ireland's Dead

The Irish Republican Socialist Movement

class nationalists?

It is time for genuine republicans and genuine socialists to sit down together without grandstanding and chart a new way forward for radical democratic republicanism. We don't care who convenes such talks or where they are, or if its in a forum, a federation, a congress, a seminar, a conference, a workshop or a summer school. We are prepared to play our part in a politically non-sectarian way without pre-conditions.

For friends and comrades be in no doubt there is a growing sense of frustration especially among young people at the direction mainstream politics is going. There is still a place for those who still have beliefs, not interests, integrity not opportunism, principles not pragmatism.

We must reach out to channel that frustration into positive politics. In the language of the business world place there is a market out there for republican politics but only if we adapt.

For Irish Republicanism itself is in crisis notwithstanding the electoral gains of Sinn Féin. If anyone doubts that then ask yourself how many organisations now exist claiming to be republican and how closer to the republican ideal have those organisations brought us? We say this not in bitterness but in a spirit of realism. Claiming to be the true, the real inheritors of 1916 and carrying on as if nothing has changed from say 1916, or 1969, or 1974, or 1986, or 1997 is plainly not on. It ignores not only reality but also shows some contempt for the mass of the Irish people.

If that is the case then it is unfortunate for it is the mass of the people who we need to win over to the struggle for our Republic. And comrades and friends that mass of people include those brought up to consider themselves British or Unionist.

If republicanism is to be relevant, it has to renew itself and adapt to the times that are changing. And in changed times we also change. If republicans are not involved in the everyday struggles of the people, in the struggles of the tenants, of the trade unionists of the political prisoners of the migrant population, of the low paid exploited worker, of the old, of the sick, of oppressed women and oppressed gays and don't fight for the dignity and liberty of all, then republicans are irrelevant to our society.

We are republican socialists. We see the relevance of the

class struggle and the importance of taking an internationalist perspective on issues. Daily Irish neutrality is whittled away while USA planes use Irish airspace to move weapons of war and tortured prisoners around the world. Meanwhile the EU continues to move towards a centralised bureaucracy, undemocratic in reality while on the face of it answerable to the people. It is the bureaucrats who rule and who push forward economic liberalism that will see the selling off of national and publicly owned assets to the private sector.

1916 kick started the struggle for national independence and sovereignty. In 2006 90 years on we see that independence, limited as it is, and that sovereignty, limited as it is, handed lock stock and barrel over to the bureaucrats of Brussels who act not in the interests of the people but in the interests of the multinationals or corporate world.

Was it for this that the greatest of the men and women of 1916 James Connolly gave his life? And while we are asking questions may we ask if the possibility of having Ian Paisley as the first Minister in a revamped Stormont was what the campaign over the past decades was about? Were the deaths of the 10 hunger strikers for political status in vain, as we observe that Political status was negotiated away as part of the Good Friday Agreement?

Three of those hunger strikers were members of this movement, Patsy O'Hara, Kevin Lynch, Mickey Devine. We abhor and condemn attempts by mainstream political parties to use their names for strictly party political purposes. They did not die for the IRSP. Nor did they die for Sinn Féin. They died for political status; for the right to be regarded as political combatants and not criminals. No one but no one had the right to bargain away gains made by their deaths. We call on all republicans no matter from which organisation to support the continuing struggle for political status.

It is sometimes argued that Republicans are obsessed with the North and ignore what goes on in the 26 counties. If that is so then that attitude is wrong. Republican and socialists should be actively involved in the many struggles going on. Not because it will win kudos for republicanism but because it is right.

It is right to stand with the migrant workers exploited in both fields and factories by the modern day gombeen men who pay low wages and treat migrants as no better than slaves.

It is right to expose and highlight the brutality, lies and corruption that are part of the culture of the Garda. They needed no lessons from the RUC. We need to channel the resentment of working class youth towards the Garda into a positive political direction.

It is right to campaign against partnership deals with employers that tie the vast majority of trade unionists to relatively low wage increases, while profits continue to rise.

In short, it is right to stand with the weak against the strong with the protester against the multinationals, and with all those who strive to save our planet from destruction.

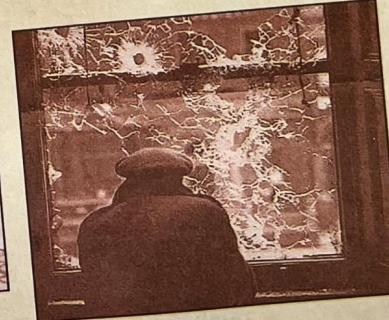
In honouring the men and women of 1916, we must remember they had no mandate. Wolfe Tone had no mandate. Robert Emmet had no mandate. Liam Mellows had no mandate. Seamus Costello had no mandate when he helped set up our own organisation.

However, what they all had was a burning sense of indignation against injustice and oppression. And friends they acted on it. Their actions covered the full gambit of political action from the party meeting; the committee room; the picket line; the handing out of leaflets; the mass meetings; the political discussion to convince; and ultimately the taking up of arms when no other alternative was available to them.

If all of us today acted as they did in no time at all we could rescue republicanism from the doldrums, transform this organisation into the vanguard of the struggle and act as dynamic magnet for those seeking a different way, a different society and a socialist republic.

But sadly many of us will see this day as only a day to honour Ireland's dead and then quietly go back to our private lives. That will not either honour the dead nor achieve our goals. Those who sacrificed all did so because they believed. They believed in republicanism and they acted upon it. Let us all ask ourselves what acts have we taken over the past year to advance the goals of Republicanism and socialism.

It is not enough to criticise others and claim others have sold out! What have we done? What have I done? Ask yourself that question. Then resolve to do better. Don't look to others to be leaders. Don't look to others to show leadership. Show leadership yourself.



Venezuela: Lessons from Ireland

It has been argued that the reforms brought into being by the post war Labour government, granting wider access to education among other things was the very seed that blossomed into NICRA and eventually open conflict on the streets of the six counties. Once working class Catholics, nationalists and republicans were able to benefit from a more comprehensive education system, their new enlightened aspirations were completely out of check with the material realities that faced them outside of the campus.

By Tomas Gorman

in national sovereignty.

The new seed was of course germinated by the supremacist policies of the Unionist bourgeoisie who kept the structures of their failed statelet in such a way that 40% of the population were kept at an untermenschen status: deprived of the dignity of employment, housing and democratic franchise.

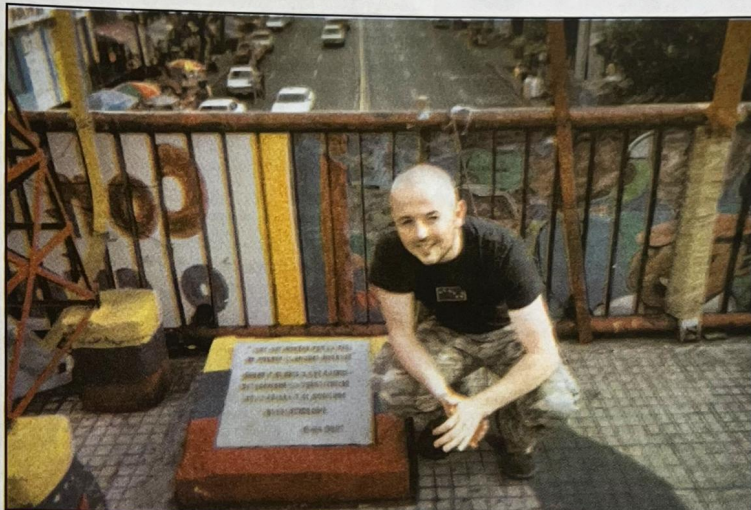
A new wave of educated radicals spurred on by material necessity agitated for basic right and came up against the full force of brutal local Unionist sectarianism and British intransigence while pogrom style raids were made into Catholic areas. Before long the clashes nurtured a culture of defenderism from a mixture of conservative Republicanism and youths keen to stand up for their community. This group would later come to dominate the separatist struggle. Some elements of the greater republican family recognised the inseparable link between the struggle for Independence and the struggle for a socialist, secular society based on republican principles. They were then and are today in the minority.

Today, as a result, Irish politics are in a period of counter revolution. The original campaign for a better material existence was never developed upon and when the struggle developed and took an armed, physical character, conservative elements within the main republican narrative ensured through the stageism compromise, that socialism was the poor cousin to a change

It is also possible that the new enlightened population, after gaining basic rights, still found themselves within a socio economic framework largely unchanged by the ongoing struggle. The six counties as well as the other 26 still operated within capitalism and gradually over the years a new Catholic middle class grew in a steep curve up to today. Material basis for radical social change became less and less relevant and the (P)Sinn Féin as the main body in the republican family became not only a coalition of the left and right but of the haves and have nots. Policies that swung to the left at the beginning of the most recent campaign slowly drifted back to the centre with some conciliatory leftist rhetoric.

The political climate is of crisis management within a centrist position that is creating a multi layered social class system and with it immense social ills and very little scope for radical Socialist Republicanism to apply its politics.

On the other side of the world, in Venezuela, the working class people found themselves much in the same position in the late 80's as Northern Catholics found themselves throughout the early days of Unionist Stormont rule up. In an oil wealthy country, the unequal wealth distribution left millions below the poverty line whilst constant free trade imposed by the US forced rural workers from the failing agricultural sector to the city for



employment. An attempt by the government at the time to impose IMF restructuring resulted in an uprising in February 1989 known as the Caracazo, in which ordinary people vented their anger at what one Venezuelan commentator called the governments attempt "to massacre the people through their stomachs".

The rising was violently put down by the Venezuelan State forces with thousands of deaths. This was the genesis or seed of the modern day Venezuelan struggle for independence from US dominance and the oppression of neo-liberal capitalism. The subsequent rise of Chavez and the coalition of the MVR (Movement for the 5th Republic) has seen massive state programs of reform with universal access to education, much

more comprehensive than the post war Labour initiative, that has seen a massive awakening in public political consciousness within the working class; a collectivity among the people that overturned a violent CIA planned coup.

Chavez continues to build parallel social structures and stacking more and more odds with the countries poor against a counter revolution from the native capitalist class and aggressive USian foreign policy with new media, government/worker management, popular militias etc, his greatest enemy may come from within. Conservative elements within Chavez's MVR coalition are holding progress towards more tangible measures such as nationalisation of economic structures therefore protecting a

capitalist status quo into which a new Venezuelan class will inevitably grow due to the education, health and employment reforms. The new Venezuelan middle class will view radical reform as distantly as the new Irish nationalist middle class do. An acceleration of economic/Industrial/Agricultural restructuring towards more governmental intervention and control is in the interests of the Venezuelan working class.

Failure to do so could mean that today's most fervent revolutionary working class in Venezuela today could be the most conservative in time to come. Venezuela need look no further than Ireland and South Africa for historical examples of this most cruel and ironic betrayals.

Communiqué by the National Peasant Front Ezequiel Zamora

Communiqué by the National Peasant Front Ezequiel Zamora

We, the peasant movement, take to the streets of Caracas coming from different federal states in order to get the contracts implemented which we have achieved by our struggles.

We demand:

1. Representation of the peasant movement within the institutional framework. Election of the functionaries. Compensation of the victims of violence by the big landowners. Appointment of special prosecutors and a special parliamentary commission to persecute the perpetrators of crimes against the peasants within the armed forces and the police.

2. Implementation of the decisions of the Miraflores workshop: The results of this meeting between the peasant representatives, the governors and local administration as well as high ranking officials of the armed forces have not been implemented so far. On the contrary the assassinations of peasant leaders continue - since the

meeting some 20 were killed. More than 300 are under protective measures and others linger in prison because they claimed the land they till.

The corruption of the functionaries in the agrarian administration persists. We take to the streets because we can no longer accept to sign contacts which are not respected while our brothers keep dying by the bullets of the big landowners. Corrupted elements of the authorities still legalise the usurpation of land by them. We call upon president Chavez to intervene in order to stop these practices. We do not need new promises.

We tell to the Venezuelan people and to the world that the homeland of Bolívar is not for sale and will be defended against the imperial threats. The peasants stand arms in hand to fight imperialism.

We invite the revolutionary Bolivarian people to lend its solidarity to the peasants' struggle which is a struggle for all. Only united we will achieve the food sovereignty and the agrarian revolution which will free us from the empire and the oligarchy.



IRISH REPUBLICAN SOCIALISTS SHOW SOLIDARITY WITH THE CUBAN REVOLUTION

This is the second and final part of the report of the solidarity trip recently undertaken by IRSP comrades to Cuba.

The next day we were taken on a tour where we experienced the making of Cuban rum in the Distillery, which was quite interesting. Also we were invited to a meeting to explain to us how they dealt with people who were either blind, deaf or with disabilities, again very interesting. This meeting took place in a complex that would be classed as an aquatic centre. We were able to see shows with killer whales, dolphins and seals, which was a change from our usual procedure. We then met with representatives of the local government who gave a few speeches where after two school choirs gave a small performance of Cuban music. When we arrived back at camp it was time for anyone who had brought supplies over to give them to the manager of the camp. As medical supplies were part of our donation we decided to let the camp doctor take some badly needed tablets. There were a lot of unsettled stomachs in the camp due to the different diet so his supplies were limited. We then handed over the rest of the materials, which were then to be distributed among local schools and hospitals.

The following night was to be the one night that every Brigade had to participate in, The Cultural Night. This was an evening where all the Brigades had to perform some form of entertainment relating to their culture in front of everybody. Remember there were twenty something different countries. Some of the Brigades had been practising singing and dancing routines for a few days and were looking forward to it, but us, the Irish Brigade were apprehensive to say the least. After much deliberating, and a few bottles of good Havana rum, it was decided who would be the performers. The good thing was that there would be no winners as it was all to be in good fun and Brigades performed in alphabetical order, which gave us some breathing space. Our total instruments consisted of one guitar, two castanets and an empty bucket that we used as a drum plus a girl who would dance an Irish reel. I have to admit that when the routine was over the band, performed admirably and was greeted with a rapturous round of applause. The rest of the evening was taken up with much admiration and laughter and was finished off by general socialising and consuming of the local Havana rum. A tipple that graced many a Brigadiers' pallet during their stay at the camp!

The next day brought the news that everyone had been expecting. Hurricane Emily was heading in our direction. This was a whole new experience to the majority of the comrades in the camp, as they would not have witnessed the destruction that something like this could cause. The camp staff called everyone together to the main stage area and outlined the procedure that everyone had to follow when the Hurricane would strike. As this was still early morning there were still a few hours of calm before the actual wind and rain came. There were a lot of safety features to take into account so everyone was arranged into groups and allocated a job. This consisted of removing all movable outside chairs, tables and large sun parasols, secure the water tanks on the roof and generally make sure that there was nothing available for the wind to catch. This was very important as flying objects could inflict untold damage to the camp or worse still hit some unsuspecting individual in the vicinity while circling around in the wind. All the time we were getting regular updates on when the Hurricane would strike and what force it would be when it did come. The deadline was 8.00pm so then everyone had to be in his or her rooms, with the steel doors closed behind them, by 6.00pm in case there was a miscalculation on the Hurricanes speed. By approximately 4.00pm all the safeguards around the camp had been finalised which left everyone at a loose end. People were walking about aimlessly; some were sitting at the bar while others were in their rooms getting ready for the forthcoming upheaval. It was a strange scenario because everyone seemed to be in limbo, not wanting to do anything constructive because of the deadline and just wishing that the hurricane would strike and get the whole thing over with.

When it was announced over the microphone that it was 6.00pm there were very few people left out around the camp as most had retired to their rooms and settled down. By five past six the place was eerily quiet with not a soul in sight. Through all this a bit of good news was announced. The eye of the Hurricane had veered 2 degrees off from its intended course. This meant that the intensity of the storm, when striking the camp, would be diminished somewhat. As there was eight of us in our room there was no shortage of conversation, mainly about the forthcoming Hurricane as none of us had ever witnessed anything like this before. By 7.00pm we could hear the wind gradually increasing with the rain beginning to fall more heavily. The camp staff had got their calculations correct. By 8.00pm the rain was torrential and the force of the wind was incredible. Looking out from the shuttered windows we could see the large trees all bending in half with the force of the wind and the rain was coming down in torrents. The rainwater could not drain away in time and the concrete walkways and paths were just like raging rivers. Outside was very dark at this stage, as

can be imagined, but inside our spirits were high as we were warm, dry and most importantly, safe. Unfortunately, not everyone was in our frame of mind. There were some women who were really frightened, and who could blame them, so some of our group had to meet them and reassure them that as long as they stayed inside their rooms, they would be safe. Luckily our words of reassurance worked and they emerged from their rooms the next morning with grateful faces of relief. It was probably the longest night of their lives. Our minds constantly wandered to what was happening in the rural areas where Cuban homes seemed to us to be incapable of withstanding such a storm. We were to find out the following day that the Cuban people were very resourceful during times like these. After a few hours, with no sign of the storm abating, we all bedded down for the night, and waited for the tranquillity of the following morning.

Everyone woke early and with some trepidation, ventured outside to see what damage had been caused and to make sure everybody came through it all right. The good news was that, as the camp was built with mostly bricks and mortar, there was no structural damage caused to any of the buildings. Securing all the movable objects had served its purpose and the camp had survived yet another storm. God only knows how many storms this camp, and others like it, have survived during their lifetime. There was a bit of general tidying up with fallen branches, leaves and debris but other than that things were as normal. Everyone gave a helping hand, brushing up, gathering rubbish and replacing all the furniture in its rightful place. In no time at all the place was back to its former glory although the camp staff informed us that we were lucky the storm had veered slightly of its course otherwise the damage would have been more severe. To all of us, the Hurricane was as severe as we would ever want to witness. Luckily there were minimal casualties and destruction anywhere in the island so obviously the Cuban people know how to live and deal with these natural occurrences.

Our final tour or visit that was planned for us was a stay in a hotel in Pinar Del Rio in the northern part of Cuba. This was something that was eagerly awaited by all who were to be involved. I say this because it was mainly the English-speaking Brigades who were to visit there while the other Brigades where going to Matanzas, which was situated in the southern regions. It was a two-hour drive to the hotel, and it was during this that we experienced the real aftermath of the Hurricane. There were trees lying at an angle with one half of their roots protruding from the ground, rows of bushes totally uprooted and lots of debris strewn around the surrounding fields. The surprising thing was that there did not seem to be too much damage to actual dwellings although most of them did need some sort of repair work done. Anyway taking all this in helped make the journey seem short and it was not long until we reached our destination.

The hotel itself was at the edge of the town and was just like any other that one would visit so we knew that getting settled in was our first priority. After leaving our bags in the room a bit of exploring was in order! There were plenty of things to catch our attention. Along with the shops and restaurant there were a number of bars, a nightclub and a large swimming pool. After two weeks in the camp this was a nice luxury. It was not long before most people had donned their swimming gear and were lounging around the pool, sun bathing or generally taking a dip. On arrival our group had been split up into different rooms in different parts of the hotel because of our size. My comrade and I were in a normal twin room, but three of the others got a first class room. This was something else, as there was far more space in it and it even had a place for a bar. The boys soon availed of this opportunity and it was not long before everybody was offered up for drinks. The word soon spread and soon the room was a hive of activity. Comrades from all different countries and the camp staff were all frequenting it and mixing freely. It was just another opportunity for us all to make new friends and share experiences. I must stress that on all these occasions when we were talking to our foreign friends, they were always very interested in the Republican Socialist Movement, what Teach na Failte was all about and especially about our time in prison. We often spent many hours answering questions on which we were, explaining our position and what we were trying to achieve. I must admit there were many enjoyable discussions and I am sure that we were able to help people understand what the R.S.M. was all about. Our days at the hotel were planned very similar to those at the camp with excursions and trips organised for us. The one event that was slightly different to the norm was when we went into the town and met the local families. The local children put on a party for us and invited us into their homes to meet their families. Speaking to these people was an interesting experience and an unusual one because ordinary tourists would not be able to avail of this opportunity. The majority of them spoke enough English for us to hold a conversation so through this we were able to gather that most families had sons and daughters away studying to be doctors, lawyers and other white-collar occupations. To us this was a significant achievement for these people

as Cuba is usually classed as a third world country. Surely it is not possible that with so much expertise being assembled in that tiny little country, the larger, richer and more powerful countries should not be able to benefit from it?

The town of Pinar Del Rio was much smaller than Havana but very similar to the old part of that city. Again there were some interesting historical buildings, the usual hustle and bustle of every day life and the standard 1950's American automobiles. It did not cease to amaze me, that although fifty years of age, these cars were still road worthy. Some of these cars seemed in pristine condition so that says a lot for the people who owned them as I am sure spare parts for them would be non-existent. Everyone was eager to do some sightseeing with the local cigar-making workshop, being high on everyone's priority list. One thing that myself and my comrades did notice was that there were a number of memorial sculptures, dedicated to people who lost their lives during the revolution, situated around the town. This was something that we took an interest in as we too have memorials dedicated to people who lost their lives for something they believed in. Beside the hotel there was a thirty-foot sculptor dedicated to two brothers who died while fighting Batista's army. This was a very imposing feature with the faces of the two young brothers adorning the top and could be seen from a great distance away. Again all the comrades at the hotel were invited to lay a wreath at the foot of it and a short speech was given detailing the history of its origin. Although the duration of our stay in the hotel lasted only three days, it was a welcome break, and helped us get a different insight into another part of Cuban life. It was an enjoyable time but all too soon we were packed again, leaving our luxurious life style behind us, and heading back to our familiar surroundings of the camp.

On arrival back at camp we found that each room had been locked since we left and everything was as we left it. Somehow everything looked so empty and different. Maybe we had just got accustomed to hotel life or it was just coming near to our going home but the place seemed somewhat different. We also found out that the group who went to Matanzas encountered very bad weather and so did not get the best from their break. Anyway as there were only two days left to our departure, time was generally spent packing, acquiring addresses and phone numbers from new found friends and generally socialising with each other. The last day of camp life was a really hectic one. There were three departure times for different groupings depending on what part of the world they were flying to. This took a bit of time because you must remember there were approximately 350 people from 24 different countries all eager to return home. There was plenty of embracing, good lucks and hand - shakes all round with promises of letters and phone calls to cement new found friendships. Of course the camp staff were at hand seeing everyone safely on board the buses and they seemed genuinely saddened at everyone's departure. As our bus was leaving the camp for the last time we saw the first of the new Brigades from South America arriving. I remember saying to myself that I hoped they would have as good a time as I did during my stay at the camp, although I was still looking forward to going home. Although the plane had its fair share of mishaps, with flight delays and baggage arriving late, everyone just settled down and relaxed and waited till they arrived back on home soil.

Looking back on the trip I must say that it was an experience of a lifetime as it gave everyone a chance to see what ordinary Cuban life was all about. Although our time there was not spent in plush surroundings the camp provided us with a different insight on how other people lived. As I have said before the camp has no airs and graces but it catered for families and people of all ages who all went home better educated on the way of Cuba life. I can honestly say that there were very few low points during our stay as everyday had something different to offer. The tours, meetings, scenery and even the socialising all held different levels of interest for us all, and for anyone interested in Che Guevara, there is no where else more dedicated to his memory. The visit to Santa Clara is definitely a must for anyone visiting Cuba with the end of July being particularly special as Fidel Castro makes an annual speech there. Although the usual procedures of injections required for tropical countries are needed, the heat, heavy rain showers and occasional insect bites are all bearable to the normal person. From my own point of view a trip with the Work and Solidarity brigade to Cuba is a must and, along with some of my other comrades, I will definitely be travelling back.

Before I finish I would just like to thank Kilmaster printers in Belfast for supplying over five hundred T-shirts along with writing materials. I would also like to say a big thank you to everyone who answered our appeal in the local paper for medical supplies. I can assure everyone that everything was handed over and went to a deserving cause.

GERARD MURRAY

"Is This The Republic We Fought For?"

At a packed meeting in Cork to discuss the current situation involving Republicanism in Ireland Gerry Ruddy gave an IRSP analysis. Also on the panel was Tommy McKearney. The meeting was organised by the Irish Freedom Movement and took place on Thursday 6th April. Here we print extracts of Gerry's speech.

Gerry began by quoting the current president of Ireland Mary McAleese, "It's fundamental idea was freedom or in the words of the proclamation, 'the right of the people of Ireland to the ownership of Ireland. The kind of Ireland the heroes of the Rising aspired to was based on an inclusivity that famously would cherish 'all the children of the nation equally' oblivious of the differences which have divided a minority from the majority in the past. There is a tendency for powerful and pitiless elites to dismiss with damning labels those who oppose them." Attacking those who tried Irish nationalism as somehow narrow, sectarian and introverted, she said when talking about the participants of the Rising, "Others of them were active participants in the international working class movements of their day. Whatever you might think of those involvements they were universalist and global rather than constricted and blinkered"

That's the tradition from 1916 that our movement and I identify with, the universalist and global. Given the wealth that exists (in Ireland), there is no need for anyone to go hungry, live on the streets or even have unfulfilled ambitions to develop their talents to the maximum. And yet in both states in Ireland nearly a quarter of the population have literacy and numeracy difficulties and over a quarter of a million children live in poverty whether we call that real of relative it is still by today's standards poverty. There is also the growth of the low wage economy particularly in the service industries and the exploitation of migrant workers.

When the five advisors to the man responsible for the health service, Prof Brendan Drumm, earn a minimum of €163,000 and have an overtime rate of €1,500 a day then I know I'm not in the republic that James Connolly died for. People in both states, when in hospital have to almost fight to hold on to their trolleys if they want to go to the toilet. Trolleys mind you, not beds, for there are not enough beds in the health service. And it is unlikely that Mary Haney or her British equivalent in the North will deliver what is an abundantly clear-more beds.

In Bunrana, County Donegal former workers of Clubman Omega have picketed the company over its failure to implement a Labour Court recommendation regarding redundancies. Workers from Poland doing subcontracting work at Moneypoint ESB Power station were paid one third of the legal limit. Although entitled to €18.97 they were in fact paid €5.20.

On policing it appears also that the Garda have a lot to answer for. Apart from the serious allegation, that Garda stations regularly bug the conversations between solicitors and their clients, (something that the PSNI proudly boasts of), it is clear that the culture inside the Garda is wrong. It seems there is nothing wrong with casual brutality to prisoners, nor to also double jobbing as landlords and using intimidatory tactics against tenants, and to planting false evidence against people. Of course, republicans have always known this but now it is gradually seeping into the consciousness of the public. Part of the reason behind the Dublin riots over the Orange Victims march in Dublin was the justifiable hatred of working class Dublin youth for the Garda force, which regularly harasses and intimidates them. Do not forget that at least one youth has died in mysterious circumstances while in Garda custody.

The setting up of tribunals including the Morris tribunal seem to have uncovered a wide net of corruption that embraces many of the great and good in this society. Two of the biggest issues facing politicians in the six-counties have to be the peace process and the political process. They are two separate processes.

On the peace processes, we in the IRSP have clearly and unequivocally embraced that process. We have worked extremely hard to open up channels of communications with progressive sections of the protestant working class and entered into serious dialogue with them. We have done our best to act in such a manner that no working class area feels under any threat from our form of republicanism. We have acted as a moderating influence on issues such as parades and have encouraged ex-combatants to act in a positive way within nationalist communities against the many negative influences that arise there. The INLA have assured us that they are not a policing force to curb anti-social behaviour and that their primary purpose at this time is to act if absolutely necessary in defence of working class areas.

We said in 1998 that the Good Friday Agreement was a failed flawed document and that if produced the good in five years we would hold up our hands and say, we were wrong. Well friends we were right. Eight years on and what have we got.



Tommy McKearney, James Mc Barron (Chair) & Gerry Ruddy speaking at an Irish Freedom Movement meeting in Cork

A Stormont Executive that fell four times, Articles 2/3 gone, the Northern State enshrined in an international treaty thereby legitimising the partition of Ireland, a massive increase in sectarianism between Catholics and Protestants, 28 new peace walls built since the GFA, the prospect of Ian Paisley as a First Minister as right wing unionism is strengthened, 4 Major acts of decommissioning by republicans and British sovereignty in the six counties strengthened as well as the removal of political status for Irish Republicans and the bargaining away of the gains won by the sacrifices of 7 IRA prisoners and 3 INLA prisoners. Nobody but nobody and I do not care what mandate they had, had the right to negotiate away political status. Shame on those who did. The hunger strikers died for the right to be recognised as political prisoners and rejected the then criminalisation policy.

Today guess what? In the absence of armed struggle, Republicanism is being criminalised even more successfully than 25 years ago. This criminalisation policy by both the Brits and the Fianna Fail/PPD coalition is designed to frighten off the middle class voters who may have been attracted by the surface radicalism of Sinn Féin. But it is also because the establishment and the intelligence services recognise the revolutionary core at the heart of republicanism.

I utterly reject the argument from those on the so-called left that republicanism is either reactionary or past its sell by date. Let me put to you a very simple proposition that I as both a Marxist and republican adhere to. The duty of any revolutionary is to support anti-imperialist forces in their struggle for national self-determination. That is not an endorsement of the politics of the anti-imperialists but recognition that without national liberation there can be no socialism. Therefore, friends when you meet so-called revolutionaries today ask them a simple question. "Do you support the armed resistance to the Imperialist occupation of Iraq?"

If the answer is either no or equivocal then you know you are not talking to serious revolutionaries. You do not even have to ask them their position on the fundamental contradiction in Ireland. It is equivocal. Possibly verbal support for the anti-imperialist struggle but nothing practical and certainly these same people would not be seen dead on a picket line or protest in support of Irish political prisoners. We place our movement firmly within the working class and have a socialist analysis. We categorically state no socialism without national liberation and no national liberation without socialism.

But we recognise that others have a different perspective. Our job is to persuade by rational argument, analysis and by our actions on the ground that our view and vision are the way forward for the working class. For example take the crucial issue of policing. Our view is straight forward. North and South the police exist to defend the status quo and defend the rights of property over the rights of individuals or the majority.

It is time for republicans and socialists to sit down together without grandstanding and chart a new way forward for radical democratic republicanism. We don't care who convenes such talks or where they are, or if it is in a forum, a federation, a congress, a seminar, a conference, a workshop or a summer school. We are prepared to play our part in a politically non-sectarian way without pre-conditions.

In any such talks based on our own experiences we will argue that there is nothing to be gained at this moment in time in trying to build an Anti-Good

Cuimhneamh

Fallen Volunteers & political activists remembered

In Memory of all those who gave their lives in the struggle for National Liberation and Socialism

Vol. Hugh Ferguson Assassinated 20 Feb 75 Co. Antrim
Vol. Danny Loughran Assassinated 6 April 75 Co. Antrim
Vol. Brendan McNamara Assassinated 8 June 75 Co. Antrim
Vol. Ronnie Trainor Assassinated 15 Dec 75 Co. Armagh
Vol. Seamus Costello Assassinated 5 Oct 77 Co. Wicklow
Vol. Colm McNutt Killed in Action 12 Dec 77 Co. Derry
Vol. Tommy Trainor Assassinated 8 March 78 Co. Armagh
Vol. Tony McClelland Killed in Action 16 Oct 79 Co. Armagh
Vol. Miriam Daly Assassinated 26 June 80 Co. Antrim
Vol. Ronnie Bunting Assassinated 15 Oct 80 Co. Antrim
Vol. Noel Lytle Assassinated 15 Oct 80 Co. Antrim
Vol. Jim Power Killed in Action 7 May 81 Co. Antrim
Vol. Matt McLamon Killed in Action 10 May 81 Co. Antrim
Vol. Patsy O'Hara Died on Hunger Strike 21 May 81 Co. Derry
Vol. Kevin Lynch Died on Hunger Strike 1 Aug 81 Co. Derry
Vol. Michael Devine Died on Hunger Strike 20 Aug 81 Co. Derry
Vol. Roddy Carroll RUC Shoot-to-Kill 12 Dec 82 Co. Armagh
Vol. Seamus Grew RUC Shoot-to-Kill 12 Dec 82 Co. Armagh
Vol. Neil McMonagle Killed in Action 2 Feb 83 Co. Derry
Vol. Brendan Convery Killed in Action 13 Aug 83 Co. Derry
Vol. Gerard Mallon Killed in Action 13 Aug 83 Co. Armagh
Vol. Joe Craven Assassinated 5 Dec 83 Co. Antrim
Vol. Paul McCann Killed in Action 15 June 84 Co. Antrim
Vol. John O'Reilly Assassinated 20 Jan 87 Co. Antrim
Vol. Thomas "Ta" Power Assassinated 20 Jan 87 Co. Antrim
Vol. Mickey Kearney Killed in Action 18 Feb 87 Co. Antrim
Vol. Kevin Barry Duffy Assassinated 21 March 87 Co. Armagh
Vol. Emmanuel Gargan Assassinated 21 March 87 Co. Antrim
Vol. James McPhilemy Killed in Action 10 Aug 88 Co. Tyrone
Vol. Alex Patterson Killed in Action 12 Nov 90 Co. Tyrone
Vol. Gino Gallagher Assassinated 30 Jan 96 Co. Antrim
Vol. John Morris Killed in Action 5 June 97 Co. Dublin
Vol. Patrick Campbell Killed in Action 10 Oct 99 Co. Antrim
POW Colm Maguire 10 Oct 87 Portlaoise

Always Remembered by their friends and comrades in the
Republican Socialist Movement

Clarification

In our last issue the name of Volunteer John O'Reilly wasn't included in this section of the paper. This was a purely clerical error and for this we offer our sincere apologies to anyone who was offended in any way.

Insertions:

If you would like to place an notice into Cuimhneamh then please contact the Starry Plough office with details as soon as possible before you want it to appear. Our contact details are on page 2. Family notices are especially welcome.

Friday bloc of republicans. The IRSP have always been open to co-operation. It is inherent in our broad Front policy. We were happy to facilitate other republicans in Portlaoise Gaol. We have supported prisoner protests. However, it is clear that republican unity-whatever that means is not on the agenda.

The IRSP have made its views about the Good Friday Agreement clear. However, we are now 8 years on and we have to look at what is happening today. Those who become obsessed with the past repeat the mistakes of the past. There are huge issues affecting the working class that need to be tackled now and if republicans are not in the forefront of the class struggle then Irish republicanism will become an irrelevance to the needs of the Irish working class because by ignoring the class it will ignore that which gives it its revolutionary potential.

We in the republican socialist tradition do not intend to see that happen. Irish republicanism has a proud revolutionary tradition and we do not intend to see that disappear. However, republicanism has to adapt to the prevailing conditions of today and renew itself with each generation. Socialism is the way forward for republicanism.

No other republican group shares our analysis. Therefore, while we can co-operate in short term issues in the long term the only course open to us to build our own internal party strength to ensure that there exists a revolutionary core capable of advancing the struggle.

Now is the time for the head to rule the heart. The only road forward is the political road. Only by engaging in the everyday struggles of the working class can we make revolutionary republicanism relevant to the class. Come join with us in the only struggle that will make a difference.

An

STARRY Plough

Camcheachta



Pairtí Poblachtacht Soisialach na h-Éireann

The Proclamation

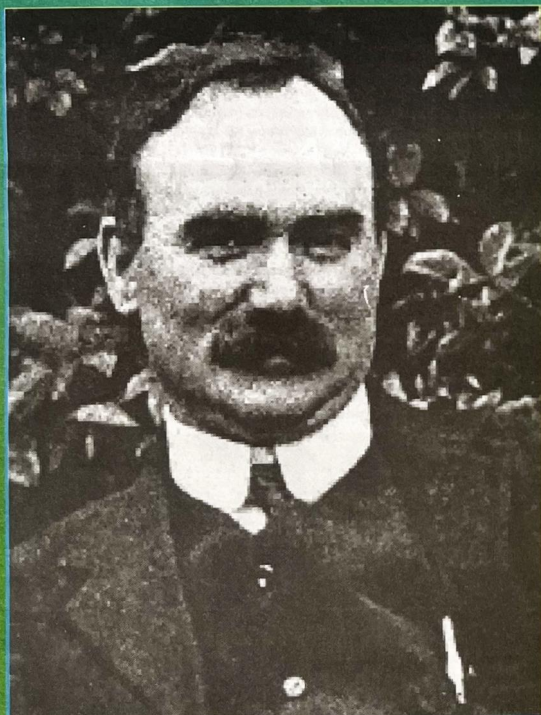
The seven signatories of the Proclamation of Independence were among those executed in 1916. The drafting of the Proclamation was one of the final steps taken by the Irish Republican Brotherhood Military Council who planned the Rising. Its flowing phrases suggest that it was composed mainly by Patrick Pearse, probably aided by the others, particularly James Connolly. Certainly all seven Council members approved it on 17th April 1916 and later signed it; in doing so, they were virtually guaranteeing that they would face the firing squad should the insurrection fail.

On 23rd April, the Council agreed to proceed with the Rising next day, Easter Monday. It also decided that the Proclamation should be read to the public outside Dublin's General Post Office

(after it had been occupied by the rebels), by the President of the Provisional Government of the Irish Republic. At the meeting this post was offered to Thomas Clarke in recognition of his services to the republican cause.

He declined but as a tribute to his past sacrifices, his signature was given pride of place at the head of the list of seven names who had signed the document. It was then agreed that Pearse should act as president. He had the presence and the requisite oratorical gifts. As arranged, at 12:45 on Easter Monday, Pearse accompanied by an armed guard stood on the step outside the GPO and read the Proclamation.

Though the occasion was historic, the crowd who gathered there was sparse and mainly indifferent. There were a few perfunctory cheers but no great enthusiasm.



POBLACHT NA H EIREANN

THE PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT OF THE IRISH REPUBLIC TO THE PEOPLE OF IRELAND

IRISHMEN AND IRISHWOMEN: In the name of God and of the dead generations from which she receives her old tradition of nationhood, Ireland, through us, summons her children to her flag and strikes for her freedom.

Having organised and trained her manhood through her secret revolutionary organisation, the Irish Republican Brotherhood, and through her open military organisations, the Irish Volunteers and the Irish Citizen Army, having patiently perfected her discipline, having resolutely waited for the right moment to reveal itself, she now seizes that moment, and, supported by her exiled children in America and by gallant allies in Europe, but relying in the first on her own strength, she strikes in full confidence of victory.

We declare the right of the people of Ireland to the ownership of Ireland, and to the unfettered control of Irish destinies, to be sovereign and indefeasible. The long usurpation of that right by a foreign people and government has not extinguished the right, nor can it ever be extinguished except by the destruction of the Irish people. In every generation the Irish people have asserted their right to national freedom and sovereignty; six times during the last three hundred years they have asserted it to arms. Standing on that fundamental right and again asserting it in arms in the face of the world, we hereby proclaim the Irish Republic as a Sovereign Independent State, and we pledge our lives and the lives of our comrades-in-arms to the cause of its freedom, of its welfare, and of its exaltation among the nations.

The Irish Republic is entitled to, and hereby claims, the allegiance of every Irishman and Irishwoman. The Republic guarantees religious and civil liberty, equal rights and equal opportunities to all its citizens, and declares its resolve to pursue the happiness and prosperity of the whole nation and all of its parts, cherishing all of the children of the nation equally and oblivious of the differences carefully fostered by an alien government, which have divided a minority from the majority in the past.

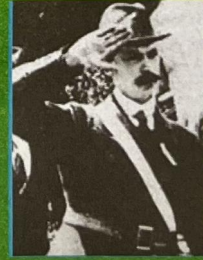
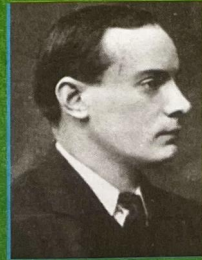
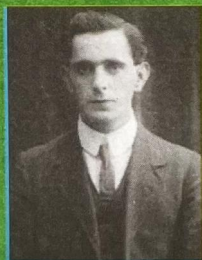
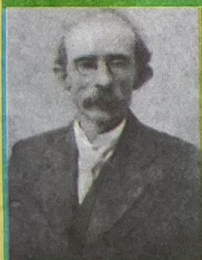
Until our arms have brought the opportune moment for the establishment of a permanent National, representative of the whole people of Ireland and elected by the suffrages of all her men and women, the Provisional Government, hereby constituted, will administer the civil and military affairs of the Republic in trust for the people.

We place the cause of the Irish Republic under the protection of the Most High God. Whose blessing we invoke upon our arms, and we pray that no one who serves that cause will dishonour it by cowardice, in humanity, or rapine. In this supreme hour the Irish nation must, by its valour and discipline and by the readiness of its children to sacrifice themselves for the common good, prove itself worthy of the august destiny to which it is called.

Signed on Behalf of the Provisional Government.

THOMAS J. CARKE.

SEAN Mac DIARMADA. THOMAS MacDONAGH
P. H. PEARSE, EAMONN CEANNT
JAMES CONNOLLY JOSEPH PLUNKETT



FOR NATIONAL LIBERATION & SOCIALISM!