

SPECIAL ELECTION BULLETIN

Produced by the Democratic Student Front

13 APRIL 1973

NEWS ITEM

DEMOCRATIC STUDENT FRONT FORMED! **CANDIDATES FOR SRC ELECTIONS NOMINATED!**

At a significant meeting held on Wednesday, April 11th in Trinity, a number of progressive students gathered and unanimously founded the DEMOCRATIC STUDENT FRONT - T.C.D. The basic aim of the DSF was outlined as being to fight exclusively for students' interests AS SPECIFIED IN THE DRAFT PROGRAMME (see next page) and to have as the immediate programme contesting the Presidential and Vice-Presidential elections.

During the meeting the DSF DRAFT PROGRAMME FOR THE SRC ELECTIONS was discussed and general consent gained for it. A number of people present were elected to form an organising committee for the DSF to look after the day to day affairs and to ratify and publish the DRAFT PROGRAMME as its first task.

Three students were present (two undergraduates and one post-graduate) who had contested the Faculty elections on a progressive platform. Of these three, all had won seats in the SRC Council. David Vipond and Bláithnín ní Cinneide were chosen to stand as DSF CANDIDATES for the

President and Vice-President respectively. It was agreed upon to call a Public Inaugural Meeting of the DSF right away to explain the platform to the students, introduce the DSF candidates and invite all progressive students and staff to join the DSF. Everyone at the meeting was serious and optimistic about this new development in the progressive struggles of Trinity Students.

All the candidates who are standing on the DSF platform are entirely dedicated to the implementation of this programme, and are standing only to serve the needs of the student body as a whole. They are totally against the careerist politics of the past SRC leaders and against those who contest the elections just so that they can play politics for a year for their own gain and amusement and use this as a training ground for acquiring posts from the government etc. after College.

The DSF candidates will work tirelessly before and after the elections to develop the DSF Programme, serve the students, and build a progressive students' council.

D.S.F. PROGRAMME 1973-DEVELOPS THE EXPERIENCE OF THE INTERNATIONALISTS' STUDENT MANIFESTO 1968

When the TRINITY INTERNATIONALISTS launched the "INTERNATIONALISTS STUDENT MANIFESTO" in 1968 large numbers of students, staff, and other progressive organisations on campus welcomed it, and one organisation, the ACADEMIC FREEDOM COMMITTEE agreed to make the fight to implement the Manifesto as its main aim. Genuine defence struggles of the students and progressive struggles of many kinds were consequently fought for by the AFC. The Internationalists' Manifesto pointed out that the SRC was the most undemocratic organisation on campus and called for its abolition, as well as the abolition of all the posts of Junior Dean, Senior Dean, and Dean of Women Students. In its place it called for the election of a genuinely democratic and representative and independent student-staff committee. The Internationalists' Manifesto was the first ever revolutionary and progressive programme to be developed in TCD and, summing up the experience of the students to date, put forward guidelines and proposals for defending, and fighting for the just and genuine interests of the students and building the progressive student movement. Due to the upsurge in favour of the manifesto the College Authorities made an attempt to abort the students' struggle by issuing a programme for the so-called "Democratisation" of the college. This consisted of taking the suggestions from the INTERNATIONALISTS MANIFESTO for a democratic, student-staff committee elected by universal suffrage and for informal student-staff committees to discuss the problems in the courses, and forming a series of student-staff committees which were nothing but extensions of the Board and its hierarchy. These committees needed students to collaborate with them,

to assist the Board in the carrying out of its procedure and these students were supplied by the elitist societies and ... most especially the SRC 'leadership'.

Thus the first attempt by students to develop a revolutionary programme in TCD was met with the expected response from the college Authorities (what can they do except increase the arbitrary rules and regulations and engage in deception) and with the complete betrayal of the most lackey sections of the students ... the SRC leadership. Since that time ... 1968, the SRC has been expanded as a farcical and undemocratic organisation,

mere spokesmen and collaborators with the Board under the guise of standing for "democratisation of TCD", being "different from the SRC prior to 1968", "being progressive" and other left sloganeering. Every clique in power in the SRC, from the Matthewsclique in 1968 which shamelessly collaborated and prostrated itself in front of the authorities and gave them every encouragement in their plans to mislead and deceive the students, to the present pseudo-progressive Giles-Stephenson clique who have done the same.

The DSF Draft Programme has taken up the experience of the TRINITY INTERNATIONALISTS STUDENT MANIFESTO and the struggle to implement it, has learnt from the betrayal from the SRC and is therefore calling for the end of self-promotion politics and careerism in the SRC, the abolition of its present undemocratic constitution and status and the formation of a genuinely independent democratic and progressive student society.

D.S.F DRAFT PROGRAMME

ADOPTED BY D.S.F. ORGANISING COMMITTEE

11th

1. Trinity College is an anti-student, anti-people institution, and always has been.

Throughout its entire 382 year history, the Trinity College Authorities have done everything to support, first British colonialism, and now neo-colonialism, backed mainly by British and U.S. imperialism, nurture fascism and racism, and oppose the just struggles of the people of Ireland and the world for emancipation from these evils. It trains the students to be small and big time lackeys of imperialism. It has consistently developed the university as a breeding ground for colonialist and neo-colonialist theories and has become renowned in the world for training colonial and neo-colonial agents to execute these policies on behalf of British and U.S. imperialism. It also encourages the use of the college as a platform for all pro-imperialist ideologues and politicians. It enthusiastically promotes and encourages all the research and scientific "development" which can be used against the world's people, and suppresses all the academic work which can serve the people.

As well, the Authorities have consistently taken a high-handed and arbitrary attitude towards the students, and have opposed all their struggles, big or small, to change the situation.

For these services the Trinity College Authorities have been warmly applauded and well rewarded by the British imperialists, the Irish comprador bourgeoisie, by the U.S. army and airforce and by a large number of imperialist foundations, especially U.S. imperialist foundations. They have all pumped millions of pounds into Trinity and its various projects. They laud it to the skies as a great centre for "the advancement of learning".

2. Trinity College is an entirely arbitrary and colonial institution, and the masses of people (including the students) have never had any role to play in its creating or development. The Authorities derive their so-called authority to rule solely from an arbitrary decree made by Queen Elizabeth I in 1591. This decree in the form of a charter was obtained by the lackeys of the English colonialists in Ireland for the pleasure of their masters. It is not in any way democratic, since it has never been approved either by the people of Ireland, or by the students and faculty at Trinity.

3. Throughout its entire 31 year history, the SRC of Trinity College has served as the agent of the Authorities among the students. It derives its authority solely from a resolution of the scholars (which were then a highly elitist and reactionary group) which was approved by the College Board, which is itself an arbitrary committee of the Authorities. The Board agreed to the establishment of the SRC at that time because they were worried about the growing student consciousness and they needed the SRC primarily to act as a more effective apparatus for the "discipline" of students who committed assorted acts of rebellion against the Authorities, and as a mouthpiece for the students which would not threaten the Board's own position.

All of the 31 annual sets of SRC leaders have fit more or less smoothly into this lackey role designed for them by the Authorities. For the first 25 years they were mainly straight-forward bourgeois characters who pledged their allegiance to God and the King, and used the SRC as their private social club, and as a stepping-stone in building their reactionary careers. Since 1967, under pressure from the upsurge in the struggles of the students, the rise of the Internationalists, and the development of the revolutionary student movement all over Ireland and England, some of these leaders have promised to change. They declared themselves to be "radicals", and tried to pass off the SRC as an independent, democratic organisation which fights for and defends the students' interests. They have even gone as far on two occasions as making changes in the constitution, once in 1968 under the leadership of Alan Matthews, and more recently under the leadership of Giles. However these "changes" did nothing to alter the arbitrary authority of the SRC, instead they made high sounding and abstract statements about "stimulation of student opinion", "promoting the general interests of students", "student involvement in decision making" and "democratisation", but never dealt with the question of what were the general interests of students and how to fight for them. The activity of these "radicals" has in no way changed the situation, and the SRC's fundamental character as a lackey of the arbitrary Authorities remains basically intact.

Every one of the 31 sets of SRC leaders without exception have practised the same anti-student and collaborationist politics:

- (1) they have co-operated with the Authorities and assisted them in running the university in the service of imperialism. (The "radicals" have even waged - and won - a sham battle for their right to sit as stooges on various arbitrary university committees and co-manage the university. This whole process is treacherously called "democratization" !);

- (2) they have refused to oppose the various fascist attacks which have been made against the students by the Authorities over the years. Either they have stood silently by, or they have actually supported such attacks and acted as unpaid policemen for the Authorities;
- (3) they have refused to wage protracted struggles on behalf of the students against the schemes of various levels of government to undermining the living conditions of the students (e.g. increases);
- (4) they have refused to take a consistent stand on behalf of the students against fascism, racism and imperialism. This has occurred either through the sheer indifference of these "leaders", or under the reactionary hoax that "we have no right to represent the students on political questions";
- (5) they have done nothing to encourage or develop the democratic contention of ideas among the students. Instead, both on their own accord, as well as by collaboration with the Board in various committees, they have developed various arbitrary rules and regulations to prevent the contention of ideas or keep it away from the masses of students. As well they have never seriously worked for and developed a general student newspaper, at an early stage 'Trinity News' was founded by the SRC, but the SRC allowed it to be taken over and monopolised by one small self-perpetuating anti-student clique or another. When one such clique used 'Trinity News' to directly oppose the clique in power in the SRC, a new paper 'Question' was started by the SRC. This paper, just like 'Trinity News', did not serve the interests of the students and soon collapsed. Since then 'Liaison' has become the newspaper of the SRC, but because the SRC has not changed, it too represents solely the leading clique in the SRC. From as far back as 1968, the Internationalists opposed the anti-student and unscientific nature of 'Trinity News', and 'TCD', and the giving of student money through the capitation fee to newspapers which were so anti-student that they could only be financed from money forcibly extracted through capitation fee and from advertising. The SRC instead of supporting this just principle, supports 'Trinity News' and 'TCD', and in fact the present clique is trying to merge 'Liaison' with 'Trinity News', and thus gain all the assets of 'Trinity News' unjustly extracted from the students.
- (6) they have done nothing to support the struggles of the foreign students resident in Ireland against racial discrimination they suffer here. They have done nothing to support the struggles against colonialism and imperialism waged by our fellow students the world over. As a result, they have been nothing but a road-block to developing the unity of all the students at Trinity on an anti-imperialist, anti-racist basis.

All the 31 sets of SRC leaders have lorded it over the masses of the students and refused to be accountable for their actions to anyone. They have treated the organisation as their own private property, and refused to admit that the masses of students have any role to play. They have practised various forms of corruption and graft, and have squandered the students' money wildly. This is particularly true in their patronage of USI and its travel organisation USIT, which is a notoriously profitable venture, has made large amounts of money for itself, provided lucrative jobs for a number of ex-SRC and USI hacks and for these qualities has recently been taken over by the Allied Irish Banks. The SRC gets a large amount of money from the capitation fee which it then tries to monopolise and prevent ordinary students from using. With the rise of the radicals the SRC President and Vice-President have won a sabbatical year which means that they are now full-time paid lackeys of the Board on the backs of the students and working people whose money finances the university. They have never contributed anything to the masses of students, and have instead presented themselves as a roadblock to the development of a genuinely independent, democratic and progressive student organisation. Because of their activities, the SRC is in serious danger of complete collapse. It generates little enthusiasm from the students, and has gained the reputation as a Mickey Mouse Club and a campus-wide joke.

There are two alternatives and opposing roads facing the SRC today. It can go on in the traditional pattern and continue to rot and eventually collapse. Or it can make a clean and definite break with its inglorious past, reorganize as an institution which derives its authority from the masses of the students, and stand up and fight.

4. The majority of Trinity students are in favour of change. In 1968, and since, masses of Trinity students rose up shoulder to shoulder with the youth and students all over Ireland, England and North America, and demanded fundamental change in the university and in the society. Over this period they showed beyond a shadow of a doubt that the basic sentiment of Trinity students is deeply democratic and progressive, and that they

FOR SRC ELECTIONS

AT ITS FOUNDING MEETING

April, 1973

are fundamentally opposed to racism, fascism, and imperialism in all its forms.

Trinity students are in favour of a general student organization which stands up and fights for their interests. They are completely opposed to having the SRC used as an agent of the Authorities.

5. The Constitution by which the SRC now operates is entirely arbitrary, colonial and undemocratic. It is a sell-out document to its core, and furthermore is completely illegitimate.

- a) the student body was not involved through mass discussion in the development of this constitution, instead it was just an outgrowth arbitrarily decided upon by one group of the so-called leaders. It takes no stand on the fundamental question of the arbitrary unjust undemocratic and pro-imperialist authority exerted in the college by the College Board etc. No-where in the constitution is the nature of this authority clarified thereby giving implicit support to that authority.
- b) it nowhere takes a stand on any of the fundamental issues facing the students, on the imperialist domination of Ireland, on the pro-imperialist nature of the university and all the manifestations of these.
- c) although it talks glibly about "student interests" nowhere in the constitution does it clarify whether it holds itself responsible to the students or to the authorities.
- d) as a direct consequence of this the bulk of the constitution is a list of bureaucratic rules and regulations which is directly opposed to developing any method which involves the mass participation of the students.

THIS LACKEY CONSTITUTION MUST BE THROWN OUT AND REPUDIATED AS THE FIRST STEP TO PROGRESS IN STUDENT AFFAIRS.

Upon taking office, the Democratic Student Front candidates will immediately work for the abolition of the present lackey constitution and all subsequent legislation originating therefrom.

- a) They will take steps to prepare conditions for the convening of a Democratic Student's Constitutional Conference, to be held no later than February, 1974. At this conference, all Trinity students will have the opportunity to express their views and vote to enact a New Democratic Constitution.
- b) Until the time the Democratic Students' Constitutional Conference takes place, DSF candidates will work to bring about a situation in which they will conduct the day to day affairs of the SRC through mass meetings of the students and in accordance with the proposals and principles contained in this Draft Programme.

6. The DSF candidates will resolutely oppose any and all attempts (by threats, blackmail, or arbitrary decree) to interfere in the affairs of the SRC. They will mobilize the students and take the initiative to fight without compromise to defend the integrity and independence of the SRC.

7. The DSF candidates will resolutely oppose all arbitrary and fascist attacks by the Authorities against the students, and will do its utmost to mobilize the students against such attacks and defeat them.

8. The DSF candidates will refuse to act in any way as disciplinary officers for the Authorities, and will refuse to allow the use of the SRC for this purpose. They will oppose in its entirety the present arbitrary and undemocratic discipline as exercised by the Junior Dean, Senior Dean, Dean of Women Students, and the so-called Student-Staff Disciplinary Committee.

9. The DSF candidates will oppose all the schemes of the Irish government to undermine the living conditions of the students. In particular, they will oppose, and will mobilize the students against, any government or university plan to increase fees. They will also oppose the imposed special financial burdens on foreign students.

The DSF candidates will defend the living and working conditions of the students in general, and will fight to improve them. They will make use of this struggle for reforms to strengthen the SRC as a democratic defence organisation of the students. They will resolutely oppose any attempts to use such struggles to weaken the SRC and convert it back into a lackey institution under the thumb of the Authorities.

10. The DSF candidates will resolutely oppose the Authority's policy of using Trinity as a breeding ground for racist, fascist, and pro-imperialist ideas and practices, and as a haven and a platform for hardened criminals and agents of imperialism. They will resolutely oppose the Authority's policy of concretely serving the imperialist policies of war and aggression through research programmes, etc.

11. The DSF candidates will, when appropriate, make use of the SRC representation on various arbitrary committees, e.g. the Board, the Senate, the University Council, all the student-staff committees which are run on the arbitrary authority of the Board with to date the collusion of the lackey SRC leaders. They will vehemently refuse to participate in any way in the co-management of the university in the service of imperialism.

12. The DSF candidates will guarantee unconditionally the right of students of any faculty or school to secede from the SRC if they so desire.

13. The DSF candidates will implement a vigorous programme to encourage the contention of ideas among the students (with the exception of openly racist, fascist, and imperialist ideas).

- a) They will organize and encourage others to organise, mass democracy meetings, teach-ins, seminars, academic activities committees etc. to democratically discuss various questions and allow various points of view to be developed.
- b) They will lead the SRC in developing a general student newspaper as a democratic and progressive journal which genuinely encourages the contention of ideas amongst the students. They will exercise rigorous control over the paper so that it may develop as the general organ of the students and will therefore insure that such a paper does not become the private property of (and a comfortable niche for) nazis or social-fascists. They will also make sure that in no circumstances it becomes autonomous from the SRC. The SRC will find ways in which to finance such a paper

14. The DSF candidates will call for the complete abolition of the capitation fee on the basis that any activity or organisation which enjoys support from amongst the students will be able to raise money by honest means to finance itself. In this context they will oppose all official support for institutions which are against the students i.e. which are imperialist, fascist, racist, anti-academic or elitist, such as the "Hist.", the "Phil.", the "Eliz.", TCD, and Trinity News. The DSF candidates will advocate that the SRC finds methods of financing itself which are democratic and based on mobilising students' support, but which are not compulsory.

15. The DSF candidates will support the right of students to build organisations of their own choice (provided they are not openly racist, fascist, or imperialist) They will enthusiastically encourage and support all such clubs and student societies to carry on and prosper.

16. The DSF candidates will put an immediate end to all corruption, graft, bribery, privileges, nepotism and free under-the-table handouts in the SRC and SRC-supported activities. The DSF candidates will put an immediate end to all squandering of student money through carelessness, laziness, indifference, opportunism or adventurism. The DSF candidates will resolutely oppose, and mobilise the students against, any attempts by careerists, opportunists and budding bureaucrats to use the SRC to lord it over the masses of students, build their careers, or make personal gains.

17. The DSF candidates will oppose the rabid exploitation of the students as a source of revenue by the money-hungry caterers who run the catering. They will resolutely fight on a protracted basis to mobilize the students to improve the quality and prices of food in the cafeterias.

18. The DSF candidates will support the struggles of the university-employed workers for better wages and working conditions.

19. The DSF candidates will abolish all arbitrary rules and regulations in the SRC affairs, they will guarantee all students (who are not openly racist, fascist or imperialist) equal access to all their facilities (duplicating etc.). The DSF candidates will also oppose the undemocratic control by the college authorities over the facilities of the college, e.g. rooms for meetings, and offices and rooms for student societies etc. They will insist that these and other facilities be brought under the immediate control of the SRC.

20. The DSF candidates will welcome all foreign students (who are not openly racist, fascist, or imperialism) and do everything to assist them to make a home here and contribute to the society. They will support their struggles, and fight alongside with them. They will support the just struggles against colonialism and imperialism being waged by our fellow students the world over. They will work hard to build and consolidate the unity of all the students at Trinity on this basis.

21. The DSF candidates will oppose any and all attacks by any level of government against the workers and students, whether it is through anti-labour legislation, anti-student legislation, or anything else. They will support the struggles of the people against such attacks.

22. The DSF candidates will develop relations with other student bodies and general student associations on the basis of friendship, equality, and opposition to racism, fascism, and imperialism. They will lead the SRC in supporting and fighting for a new national student association in Ireland based on the same principles. They will oppose attempts to rebuild parasitical anti-student organisations like the USI.

23. The DSF candidates will lead the SRC to take a firm stand against British imperialist domination of Ireland.

24. The DSF candidates will take a firm stand against national chauvinism of any sort. They will vehemently oppose the racist propaganda of British imperialism to create reactionary civil war in Ireland by having Irishmen fight Irishmen under the hoax of Catholics fighting Protestants. They will also vehemently oppose the attempts of the racist propaganda to turn the Irish people against the English people, instead they pledge all out support to the struggles of Irish and English people alike, against the common enemy, the British monopoly capitalist class.

25. The DSF candidates will take a firm stand against the imperialist policies of war and aggression, and the bullying and blackmail of the superpowers against the smaller countries, and will lead the SRC to organize on the campus against these evils. In particular, they will pledge their all-out support for the national liberation struggles of all the oppressed nations and peoples around the world.

26. The DSF candidates will take a firm stand against discrimination on the basis of race, religion or sex.

27. The DSF candidates will be guided by the following principles:

- (1) The students have the right to democratically determine their own affairs, and no one has the right to interfere.
- (2) It is just to oppose fascism, racism and imperialism, and to organise
- (3) There should be democratic contention of ideas among the students, and no one trend should arbitrarily monopolise everything.
- (4) It is just to be open and aboveboard in student affairs, and unjust to intrigue and conspire.

FIGHT FOR A GENUINELY INDEPENDENT, DEMOCRATIC AND PROGRESSIVE SRC!

JOIN THE DEMOCRATIC STUDENT FRONT!

FIGHT FOR A GENUINELY INDEPENDENT DEMOCRATIC AND PROGRESSIVE STUDENT COUNCIL



DAVID VIPOND
DSF PRESIDENTIAL
CANDIDATE



BLATHNAID NÍ CINNEIDE
DSF VICE-PRESIDENTIAL
CANDIDATE

VOTE FOR THE D.S.F. CANDIDATES!

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