

AN PHOBLACHT

The Republic

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EDITORIAL

IN VIEW OF THE EVER INCREASING trend towards Free-statism in the Republican Movement, which is apparently destined to reach its peak by the end of this year, it is obvious that all real Irish Republicans will soon have to make their move. Clearly, the question is no longer one on whether we need a newly constituted organization to pursue the hopes and goals of Irish Republicanism; but one on how various groups and individuals of a revolutionary commitment throughout the country can establish a common ground upon which to meet and determine a united course of action.

WE AWAIT THE COMING MONTHS with apprehension. Knowing, as we do, the course of action that has already been decided on by the "Progressives"; and knowing as well of the widespread dissention especially within IRA ranks in reaction to the course hitherto pursued by Sinn Fein; we fear that when the Sinn Fein "Progressives" make their final move to integrate with Free State politics, there will be a tendency amongst the militants in the IRA to momentarily lose perspective, and their ranks could well disintegrate into a series of "splinter groups" on a regional basis. Above all, we do not want to see this happen.

SHOULD THIS EVER OCCUR, REPUBLICAN ranks would be so fragmented as to make ineffectual our ability to counteract the traitorous activities to be expected as a matter of course from a Sinn Fein that has thrown in its lot with the Free State. In addition, and of more importance still, such an event could deny us the capability of organizing our efforts with the object to reestablish Irish Republicanism on its proper road of revolutionary action. There can be no doubt but that the coming months may well decide if Revolutionary Irish Republicanism is to be carried forward by this generation; or, if it is to fall into the background to await a future generation which is endowed to that necessary degree with the strength of character, the intensity of purpose and the political

understanding essential to a struggle for the successful realization of Irish Republican objects.

REPUBLICANS AROUND THE COUNTRY had better start thinking on these problems; they should begin preparations to meet them now, and not wait until the last moment. If the "Progressives" are allowed to retain the initiative within the Republican Movement, they will possess a good chance of achieving a maximum success in their designs, and of creating a maximum chaos throughout the ranks of their opponents in the movement. This is what they hope to do, and their plans rely very much on the natural hesitancy of Republican activists to act in forceful opposition to the established leaders.

THERE ARE MANY REPUBLICANS who agree with us on all of this, but who still hesitate to "stick their necks out." This is natural enough. However, we fail to see how one is really "sticking his neck out" by participating in secret preparations to counteract the adverse effects from a sell-out on the part of the Sinn Fein "Progressives." We do not seek the cooperation of men for the destruction of the Irish Republican Cause; and we do not seek the allegiance of men to a "rival" organization. Insofar as the destruction of the Cause is concerned, the "Progressives" are bent on doing just that without help from anyone; and all we are striving to do is to establish a common ground for all real revolutionary Republicans, so as to prepare effective countermeasures to that betrayal, and to be in the position to swiftly regroup Republican activists in a new organization when events dictate that this is essential to the perpetuation of Republican objects.

PARTICIPATION IN THIS VITAL WORK does not require an open commitment to the "Committee for Revolutionary Action," which is responsible for the publication of AN PHOBLAUGHT. As we have said: the CRA is not an organization; by self-definition, it is a "Committee" whose object is to combat reactionary trends within organ-

ised Republicanism, and to make preparations to bring a new organization into existence only when this is absolutely necessary. Many of our original members continue their membership in the Republican Movement; and many of those who have joined us over the past year or so have also remained in the movement on our advice. In this way we have strenuously laboured against the emergence of "splinter groups", while at the same time building a structure designed to act with the minimum of delay and with a maximum nation-wide effect when the need arises. If the need does not arise, and at this stage this appears an extremely remote possibility, then our people can continue as active workers within the Republican Movement, and the CRA will dissolve. On the other hand, if the need does arise, and we see it coming in the very near future, at least some preparation will have been made to meet the obvious demands of such a situation.

BY ACTING IN THIS FASHION THE CRA is contributing to the Republican Cause in a manner not often appreciated, even by those who are in full sympathy with its activities. Firstly, we combat the emergence of "splinter groups" as a result of dissatisfaction with present reactionary trends. We do this through our advice to individuals and groups who have inclined towards such a step, and there have been many, by giving them a solid and positive purpose to work towards while remaining in the Republican Movement. Secondly, our efforts at least strive to prevent a fragmentation of the activist elements throughout the country when the "Progressives" make their final move towards a complete alignment with the Free State. The greater the number of activists who co-ordinate their efforts through the medium of the CRA, the lesser will be the degree of disruption and confusion within activist ranks when the crisis strikes. In this way we hope to minimize the emergence of "splinter groups" after the "Progressives" have made their final move. No one else is engaged in this work, and it is for this reason that it is so necessary to co-ordinate all efforts through the only body which is--The Committee for Revolutionary Action.

ALL REPUBLICAN ACTIVISTS WHO, up until now, have hesitated to make contact with our co-ordinating committee, should consider

carefully all the facts we have presented. They should clearly understand that such revolutionary coordination as we advocate does not entail a dual allegiance. We advocate only one allegiance, which is to the revolutionary principles of Irish Republicanism. When such principles are discarded by the leadership of organized Republicanism, we fail to see how any true revolutionary Republican can possibly consider working with us in violation of his allegiance, when our primary object is to see these principles reestablished in their proper place. For the information of those who may not be fully aware of our methods of work, we would also like to emphasize that groups, such as IRA units, who subscribe to the co-ordinating efforts of our committee retain their autonomy. That is, they retain the power to control their own men, as do they retain the power to withdraw from the association with the knowledge that no disclosure whatever will be made on their connection with the CRA. Security procedures are strictly enforced to ensure the greatest possible protection for all working within the network. Surely this fact has been dramatically demonstrated over the past two years, during which we have most actively engaged in our work, without the leaders of the Republican Movement discovering our membership, other than the few people who, of necessity, have to operate more or less in the open. Furthermore, should conditions dictate the necessity to found a new organization, all groups and sections within the CRA will decide such a move at a Conference called for that purpose. On such an occasion the original committee, as a group, will possess no more power than any other.

WE HAVE DEALT OPENLY AND forcefully on the need for preparation amongst activist Republicans, because we believe that present trends will soon culminate in an open rupture in the ranks of organized Republicanism. There is no longer a need, as in the past, to expose the rot that has eaten away at the foundations of the Republican Cause. This is so apparent now that no one who wishes to see it can avoid doing so. At this stage it is imperative that the real revolutionary Irish Republicans be brought to the realization that they must act swiftly and with determination if they are to protect their heritage. If this is done then, as we see it, 2 any move the "Progressives" make

towards Free State politics will, in the long run, be in the best interests of the Cause, because it will clear our ranks of undesirables who would always be a source of weakness. Today, the Committee for Revolutionary Action is the only body which has begun preparations for the rebuilding of Republicanism into a new and dynamic revolutionary force; a force which, in the light of world-wide events, could very well see the long

awaited victory of our objects. It is for this reason that we ask all activist elements to co-ordinate their efforts through the CRA. If there were another, or more capable body in existence, our position may be open to question. There is no such body, so it is up to all activist Republicans to become part of that effort to save the Cause. Let all true men take their place in the ranks of the Revolution.

THAT FINAL STEP

TO INDULGE IN COMPROMISE, NO matter how insignificant the initial commitment may be, is like stepping on an escalator. Once you step on you are carried to the end of the line whether you like it or not. Over the past few years we have continually stressed that this was the case with the Republican Movement. And now, according to our information, the course of compromise initiated by the so-called "Progressives" is to extend to its logical conclusion. That final and inevitable step is soon to be taken, when the "Progressives" will make their move to incorporate the Republican Movement in the political life of the Free State.

THIS FINAL ACT IN THE DRAMA WAS apparently decided upon at a special meeting held in Dublin during mid-July. At this meeting, and under the influence of our old friend Comrade Johnson, the decision was made to present the next Sinn Fein Ard Fheis with the proposal to extend full recognition to the Free State and enter actively into its milieu. With this object in mind, the plotters have now set themselves the task of quickly completing the job of eliminating or intimidating the pockets of resistance which still remain in the movement. True to form, they do not intend to take unnecessary chances; using their leadership positions they intend to make certain that the Ard Fheis will be packed with the necessary number of "right delegates" to provide the votes required to carry their proposals.

THE DEVELOPMENT HARDLY COMES as a great surprise to us. Such a capitulation to the Free State neo-colonialist position is a logical conclusion to the course embarked on a few years ago under the

influence of foreign controlled agents. It was only a matter of time; if the move was not made this year, then it would have been made next year or the year after, when the "Progressives" felt sufficiently sure of their ground. However, now that the final and open act of betrayal appears certain in the immediate future, it is important to set a few facts straight for the guidance of Irish Republicans.

NO ROOM FOR COMPROMISE!

THE FUNDAMENTAL REVOLUTIONARY objects of Irish Republicanism are unalterable for so long as they remain unfulfilled; and an allegiance to them is not a matter open to manipulation. An individual automatically decides to give unreserved allegiance to these objects on joining organized Republicanism. At best, the right is reserved to withdraw this allegiance; but it cannot be changed or modified under any circumstances. It is imperative to get this pertinent fact straight: on joining the ranks of Irish Republicanism the ONLY allegiance exacted is to the revolutionary objects which the organization purports to uphold. The allegiance is to the objects and not to any organization as such. If and when the organization, by vote or other means, decides to change or modify its fealty to these objects, the commitments of allegiance demand an immediate and complete severance of association with the organization. On this question there can be no such thing as majority rule in determining an overall acceptance of continued membership in an organization that has altered its relationship with the revolutionary objects of Irish Republicanism. Each individual is bound by the terms of his allegiance to act

in unequivocal opposition to such a condition by terminating his association with the movement.

IT IS NONSENSICAL TO propose that all have the "democratic" right to advocate any course whatever for Irish Republicanism. This is not so; it never has, and it never can be the case. Such "democratic" rights do not, and cannot apply to a freedom of action to undermine or destroy Republicanism. This is a hard and fast rule to which there can be no exceptions; and if it had been adhered to in the past, as it should have been, the present move towards Free-statism would have been avoided, because the men who are mainly responsible for it would have been kicked out of organized Republicanism long ago.

FURTHERMORE, IT MUST BE CLEARLY appreciated that any move on the part of Sinn Fein to go Free State effects the IRA directly. As is well known, the Sinn Fein Ard Comhairle and the Army Council are closely integrated at present. Consequently, any major policy change by the former infers a conclusion on the part of the latter, unless of course a public statement is made to the contrary. If such a statement is not forthcoming, this means in effect that the A/C has betrayed its trust; under which circumstances it is completely unacceptable to suggest that IRA men should, or must remain "loyal" to the leadership. There

is no justification whatever for such "loyalty", and there is certainly no common basis for such a continued loyalty and an allegiance to the Revolutionary principles of Irish Republicanism. On this point there can be no room for doubt.

IT IS IMPERATIVE AT THIS TIME to speak out clearly and strongly on these issues. There has been too great an indulgence in compromising practices these past few years, and it is to be greatly feared that a widespread demoralization has resulted, and has penetrated deeply into IRA ranks. The need for steadfastness to principles has been undermined; the practice of gradually discarding the demands exacted by principles has been insidiously fostered; with the result that a confusion prevails which, in the minds of many, may well obscure the fundamental issues at stake. The plotters are depending heavily on such a confusion to disrupt activist ranks during the initial stages, which would give them a breathing space to consolidate their newly established position. In other words, they are relying on the loyalty of the rank-and-file IRA man, and they have every intention of using that loyalty to betray the very principles upon which it is founded. All activist Republicans must awaken to this shabby scheme before they are, so to speak, stabbed in the back by their own leaders.

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A POOR ANSWER TO OUR CHARGES.

FOR OVER TWO YEARS AN PHOBLAcht has maintained its campaign. During this time it has fought reformist and compromising trends in the Republican Movement, and it has agitated for a return to revolutionary politics. At the outset those whom we opposed ignored our paper's existence, in the vain hope it would soon disappear. But it did not; and as AN PHOBLAcht began to have effect by its continuous hammering away at basic truths, the sell-out artists began to grow more uneasy by the month.

THE HARD FACTS PUBLISHED BY AN PHOBLAcht eventually resulted in the asking of more and more awkward questions. In an attempt to discourage these questions the Reformist leaders in the Republican

Movement at first simply snarled: "They are only tools of the Special Branch; ignore them and they will go away." At best this was an unimaginative approach, and it served its purpose only for a short time. It was, after all, difficult to explain WHY "tools of the Special Branch" kept exposing developments within the movement that were complementary to the interests of the Free State, and WHY "tools of the Special Branch" should persist in their efforts to redirect Irish Republicanism back on the one path that is certainly not in the interests of the Free State -- the road to REVOLUTION.

TIME ALONE EXPOSED THE FALLACY of calling AN PHOBLAcht a "tool of the Special Branch." All sincere Irish Republicans gradually awakened to the realization that there was more to it than that. The

Reformists, now growing more desperate, hit on yet another and equally unimaginative explanation; AN PHOBLACHT was merely the voice of "soreheadedness," and those publishing it were motivated by nothing other than pure "spite." This is a vague and hollow defence whose success relies completely on the "blind faith" of the rank-and-file in the leadership. It is an old gambit, used over and over in the past to explain away disension, and no doubt the Reformists prayed it would do the trick --at least once more. Unfortunately for them this trick too has nearly run its course, and only the more naive continue to be duped by it.

IN OUR VIEW THE REFORMISTS GIVE their own measure in the miserable attempts to discredit AN PHOBLACHT. We knew of course they could never give a straight rebuttal to our statements, because the truth of our position remains unassailable. But at the outset we really did anticipate at least a more sophisticated effort to "sidetrack" the issues raised by us. However, it would now appear that not alone are the Sinn Fein Reformists totally wrong with respects to Republicanism's correct course of action, but they have also shown themselves to be completely devoid of the intellectual ability to defend even that course of action they have embarked on.

ONE IS NORMALLY COMPELLED TO HAVE a certain fierce hatred for Reformists who are intellectually equipped to manipulate the untenable position they advocate by sheer double-talk. But Reformists such as the bunch now in Sinn Fein, who are also stupid to boot, at best warrant but a paternal condescension. A moronic Reformist is a pitiful species of the human race, and one that certainly could never generate an emotionalism which would rise to the tempo of "spite." We are sorry to disappoint them, but we actually have no personal spite whatever for the present Sinn Fein Reformists. A certain pity perhaps, but most assuredly not "spite"; and if they should feel otherwise, we are forced to attribute it to nothing but a perverse egotism on their part.

THE ATTEMPT TO ANSWER THE CLEAR and unambiguous political position forwarded by AN PHOBLACHT, by the weak rejoinder that it is only spite, has a certain old-womanish tone about it that is characteristic

of dead-beat politicians. We have no intention of wasting time arguing on such a "garden gate" level. We offer our ideas on the needs of Irish Republicanism, and leave the clear-headed men evaluate them on their merits. In the final analysis, anyone who is deterred from examining our proposals by the cry that they only represent "spite," is of no use to the Irish Revolution, and is therefore of no interest to us. We do not seek the applause of zombies, but a dialogue with those who are able to think for themselves and who are capable of assessing the worth of any idea without guidance from official puppeteers. It could well happen that some of our ideas are not wholly correct; but if this is the case let the man who thinks so state his objections squarely. We are always ready to listen to sensible and constructive criticism, and we are willing to change on any position proven wrong. But it must first be shown that we are wrong; and this the Reformists have failed to even tackle, not to mind prove. To rant and rave about "tools of the Special Branch" and personal "spite" cannot obscure this failure; and it is about time all Republicans saw this type of thing for what it really is: the last ditch stand of bird-brained politicians who do not possess two particles of grey matter to rub together.

TO OUR READERS

BEGINNING WITH THIS ISSUE WE will publish a series of articles dealing with such things as organization, principles, the role of the Army, etc. These shall serve as a necessary introduction to a "suggested" Draft Programme which is in the process of compilation.

WE THINK IT NECESSARY TO DELVE into matters such as the correct relationship between the political and military wings of a new effort. This should enable Republicans to get a clearer picture on what is needed when we begin to build anew the Republican movement. We also feel it is necessary to examine the whole question of our Principles, so as to define just what we mean when we talk of them, and what they stand for with respects to social, political, and economic values. In all, we hope these articles will be of some value to all Republicans who wish to return to the revolutionary road. All suggestions and criticisms will be welcome, and may be sent through the usual channels.

POLITICS AND ORGANIZATION

IN REVOLUTION. BY EOIN McDONAILL

TODAY, REVOLUTION IS A HIGHLY sophisticated and technical process in both its political and organizational aspects. The time of haphazard political understanding and elementary organizational techniques no longer suffice to overthrow the Ruling Class domination of State Power. The machinery of the state has become more complex and all embracing; its defensive organs more powerful due to technological advancements; its general awareness of danger more sensitive, and its response to it more rapid due to the ever-rising tides of revolutionary upheaval throughout the world. Consequently, the demands of revolutionary success have intensified. Success now dictates a high degree of political understanding and capability on the part of revolutionaries, and also a high finesse in organizational matters. Political knowledge and understanding wedded to sophisticated organizational techniques are now the main tools of the revolutionary organization in its struggle to conquer power in the modern state.

IN THE LIGHT OF THE FOREGOING, the inadequacies of the Republican Movement, in terms of revolutionary capability, should be readily apparent to the perceptive observer. Its political direction and motivation exemplifies a unity of confused, contradictory and reactionary trends, and its organizational framework is more suited to the perpetuation of failure than to the attainment of success.

WE HAVE DWELT ON THE POLITICAL inadequacies of organized Republicanism on numerous occasions. Undoubtedly, they will have to be covered again so as to demonstrate more fully their incapacity to meet the prevailing needs of the people. However, what we would like to stress now is that the failure of organized Republicanism to attune itself politically to changing conditions has, in turn, resulted also in its failure to restructure itself organizationally; with the result that at this juncture it is necessary not only to alter the political content of Republicanism, but also its organizational content, if it is to be in a position to fulfil its traditional revolutionary role.

REVOLUTION IS SAID TO BE THE locomotive of history. Politics, in turn, can be styled the locomotive of revolution; while organization can be seen as the tracks over which it proceeds to its destination. In this context the elements of politics and organization are inextricably entwined; so much so that their separate treatment is in many respects but a handy expedient to simplify their examination.

SINCE POLITICS CONSTITUTE THAT force which energizes a revolution and keeps it headed in the correct direction; the political organization, regardless of what shape or form objective conditions dictate it assumes, must therefore represent the core in the overall organizational network. It is of utmost importance that Irish revolutionaries in particular grasp the necessity of, and the reasons for the dominance of correct politics in revolution, because it is a factor which has contributed more than its share to past setbacks.

IN ORDER TO UNDERSTAND THIS fundamental law of revolution, it must be borne in mind that the Irish struggle for liberation is above all a political one. That is to say: regardless of conditions which may dictate that the issue be contested primarily on a military plane, it remains a struggle between the political aspirations of the Irish people, and the entrenched political system of British Imperialism. Political aspirations dictate in the first instance that an armed struggle be engaged in; and if these aspirations are to be realized on the termination of the armed struggle, it is mandatory that they be formalized and organized in concrete political terms, so that they can exert a commanding influence throughout, and on the success of the conflict with imperialism. Only by the adoption of such a course can it be assured that the armed struggle will fulfil the hopes which first sparked, and then bore it to fruition. Because although force can break the connection with imperialism, only the presence of a correct political guidance at the helm will ensure that the connection remains broken.

PAST EXPERIENCES TEND TO cultivate amongst Irish Republicans, an aversion, and even a downright hostility towards politics. Past experiences, wherein the revolutionary cause was "betrayed" within the political organization, are interpreted to justify the complete rejection of politics as the guiding force in the Irish struggle. A purely military organization, "protected against the temptations of politics," is seen as the only answer.

WHAT SUCH INTERPRETATIONS FAIL to take into consideration is that you cannot have a revolutionary force which is purely military in content. You could have a purely military organization -- say in the form of an IRA divorced from all politics; in which case it either fails dismally in attempts to secure mass support for its objects; or, its efforts are exploited by a quasi-revolutionary political organization. In many respects this latter condition applied, and continues to apply in the relationship between the IRA and Sinn Fein. In any event, in the context of a "Liberation Struggle" you simply cannot have a revolutionary army divorced from politics. Politics will determine if the armed struggle is to develop to formidable proportions; and politics will decide the emergence or non-emergence of tangible socio-economic benefits to the people from that struggle. Hence, the lesson to be learnt from past experiences is not to shun politics, but to ensure that the correct politics are in command at all times.

HAVING SHOWN THAT THE POLITICAL organization must constitute the guiding hand in a revolutionary struggle, it is necessary to amplify on what is meant by such an organization, the responsibilities incurred and the role assumed by its members in the struggle.

TO BEGIN, IT MUST BE EMPHASIZED that a revolutionary political organization is not a haven for those who wish to participate in the liberation struggle without assuming all the risks involved. It is not an organization which offers a certain protection to its members, by limiting its involvement to non-combative activity, and thereby bestowing on its members a defacto non-combative status -- as is the case with Sinn Fein. Because the political organization represents the very heart of the revolution, its members must of necessity represent the very finest in revolutionary

ranks. The political organization must provide the leadership for, and represent at least a high percentage of the revolutionary army. Without exception, the members of the political organization, both male and female, must be militants of an uncompromising calibre, because it is their responsibility not alone to grapple with, understand and master the political problems of the struggle, but also to lead that struggle both on the battlefield and at the conference table. In capsule form: it can be said that while all members of a revolutionary political organization must be fully committed militants; all militants in the ranks of a revolutionary army need not necessarily be fully developed revolutionaries in the political sense. There are many good sound men who do not possess an aptitude or desire for involvement in political matters, and they can play an important and positive role in an army which enjoys the security of an uncompromising political leadership. However, there is no place in the ranks of the political organization for men who may be capable politically, but who shrink from the demands and commitments of a militant posture.

EVEN FROM THIS BRIEF SKETCH IT is possible to see at once the difference between a correct relationship of the political and military arms, and an incorrect relationship, as presently exists within the Republican Movement. It can also be seen that a correct condition dictates not alone a drastic revision in the political content of Republicanism, but also an equally drastic restructuring of the whole movement.

UNDER PRESENT CONDITIONS, AND regardless of what may be thought to the contrary, Sinn Fein enjoys a position of dominance over the IRA; while at the same time it can avoid the harsher repercussions from Republican activities of an aggressive nature, which are invariably borne alone by the IRA. This is so because, since politics must dominate in all such situations, Sinn Fein must therefore unavoidably possess the leading role, irrespective of what the members of the IRA may think, and regardless of the fact that the IRA must bear alone the burden of the struggle and carry out its most dangerous assignments. In addition, since Sinn Fein is constitutionally and organizationally separate from the IRA, its membership is deemed, and rightly so, a mere second-class threat by the enemy, who will invariably hit

hardest where it counts -- the man with the gun in his hand. You therefore have the paradox of Sinn Fein possessing the leading position within the movement due to its control of politics, while at the same time representing but a secondary threat to the security of the enemy due to the limitations of its involvement to constitutional political activity. Obviously, this contradiction is one which has to be resolved before a meaningful change can be said to have taken place.

AS A GENERAL RULE IT CAN BE said that it has been the practice for the potentially better men to go into the IRA, while the more politically dubious element gravitates to Sinn Fein. How else can the presence of able-bodied men who limit their commitment to Sinn Fein be explained? And what about the Crisis of 1922, when the majority of the IRA held firm to the Cause, while the decision to take "the stepping stone" road was determined by a majority within Sinn Fein? It is futile to contend that this potentially reactionary situation has changed. It cannot change or be changed for so long as the conditions in organizational relationships which harbour and cultivate it prevail.

IN ORDER TO ELIMINATE THE foregoing weaknesses it is necessary, as we have said, to restructure the Republican effort so that revolutionary political aspirations are clearly formulated and organized in a position of dominance. First of all, this would require the establishment of a political organization firmly founded on a selection of the more stalwart and politically determined elements; and this organization, having clarified the political issues, would in turn proceed to reorganize the military wing in close harmony with itself. In the overall sense, a highly disciplined and dedicated politico-military "hard core" could then proceed, according to avenues of endeavour determined by objective and subjective conditions, to develop and co-ordinate a mass support for its efforts.

IT SHOULD, PERHAPS, BE stressed that this process entails a disciplined politico-military revolutionary organizational complex which bases itself on mass support; and does not represent a mass movement, which implies a conglomeration of diverse political convictions. The unwary very often fall into the trap of interpreting both to mean the same thing. This is not so.

IT IS A FACT, PROVEN BEYOND question by historical experience, that a revolutionary organization can never become a "mass movement" until after it has conquered political power. It is important to realize this, and the reasons for it, so as to avoid the snares of reformists who talk incessantly about organizing a "mass movement" for revolutionary action.

IF ONE GIVES BUT A MINUTE'S thought to the question, it can be seen that the demands of revolutionary action require a combination of two distinct entities; a disciplined and tactically mobile vanguard organization to lead the struggle; and the mass support of the people behind the efforts of that vanguard. Here you have a precision-gear~~ed~~ effort in the form of a vanguard organization, which is capable of reacting to any given situation with the minimum of delay, debate and confusion, and a mass support, which, having accepted the leadership of the vanguard, will readily adapt itself to its changing needs and demands. This is the only way in which it is possible for a revolutionary effort to manoeuvre effectively and swiftly in the face of a materially superior enemy, and at the same time concentrate an overall popular pressure at a desired point and within effective time limits. Under such conditions you have a highly efficient, disciplined and politically sound vanguard force operating within the context of a mass base. In other words, a revolutionary organization based on mass support.

IN DIRECT CONTRAST TO THE foregoing, stands the mass movement concept, based on the "umbrella" theory. This organizational proposition is typical of pseudo-revolutionary thinking, and is advanced as a corrective to what is falsely construed as sectarianism. According to the crypto-reformists, the revolutionary effort cannot hope to progress if it insists on restricting its content to the fully committed; which in our case means fully committed Irish Republicans. According to them, this idea is far too narrow, too sectarian. "We" are not strong enough on our own, they will tell you; "we" must co-ordinate our efforts with all shades and forms of opposition under one "umbrella", and in this manner form an invincible mass movement. Anyone who has closely followed the events of the past few years will immediately recognize this to be the line now pursued by the Republican Movement.

THE CONTRADICTION BETWEEN A mass movement and a revolutionary organization based on mass support should be obvious. The latter represents an organization whose criterion is quality, and whose object is leadership of the people in a decisive struggle against the enemy. The former represents a movement whose guiding motto is quantity, and whose purpose is to represent the people in political interplay with the status quo.

IN A MASS MOVEMENT SITUATION, the more advanced section must invariably compromise, if it is to secure a workable detente with those who are less "extreme" than they. In other words, the "practical" politicians in opposition to the status quo will most assuredly refuse to come under the same "umbrella" with those who have hitherto been deemed "extremists", unless they are convinced the latter have truly mellowed and have discarded their more "extreme views". On this basis it is possible to create a mass movement; but it can never represent anything but a political patchwork whose cohesion is maintained by an overall adherence to compromise policies. Furthermore, the very nature of a mass movement determines that the support it secures from the people will be variegated; that is, the overall support will reflect the composition of the movement, and will therefore lack that unity of commitment so essential to any protracted confrontation with the enemy.

WE WILL READILY ADMIT THAT ON the event of a serious crisis, a Republican Movement which had committed itself to the mass movement line, could rapidly and successfully mobilize an effort, and even see it committed to a truly revolutionary course of action. However, the essential facts cannot be obscured or circumvented. On such an eventuality, a unanimity for revolutionary action within a mass movement is created by external pressures alone, rather than by a unity of internal conviction. Consequently, an adroit manoeuvring by the enemy, aimed at temporarily mitigating the political or economic pressure in certain areas, can successfully undermine the cohesion of the mass movement, and thereby effectively disrupt its revolutionary momentum.

TO SUGGEST THAT ON SUCH AN eventuality the revolutionary faction could counteract by seizing

sole control, is to blandly ignore certain pertinent facts. First: since the popular support for the effort has been built in terms dictated by the patchwork nature of the mass movement, the transformation to sole revolutionary control is not limited to within the confines of the movement. The issue has to be contested both internally and externally, which will bring into play all the sectional interests and personal loyalties, with the result that serious disruption is inevitable, and the avoidance of a complete fragmentation nothing short of a miracle. Revolution is not successfully pursued by such a reliance on miracles. Secondly: the revolutionary faction itself must be considered. If this faction pursues a mass movement line, it must reorientate itself both psychologically and organizationally to complement the particular demands of the mass movement; otherwise it cannot hope to mobilize or participate in it. On the event of an internal crisis in the mass movement, the revolutionaries cannot therefore be prepared either psychologically or organizationally to seize control, because the demands of such action stand in direct contradiction to the demands of participation in a mass movement.

IT IS EASY ENOUGH FOR POLITICALLY naive people to confuse the fundamental differences between a vanguard organization based on mass support, and a mass movement. In our own situation, the mass movement line now being pushed in the Republican Movement is nothing more than a variation of the "United Front" tactic as used so frequently in the past by European Communist Parties. As a course of action, this particular interpretation of "United Front" tactics has proven relatively successful for the pursuance of limited goals; but the hard fact is, they have never proven capable of providing a base for revolutionary success. This is the crucial point, and the one which determines our attitude on the question. To be sure, it appears different, in degree at least, from the course pursued by Irish Republicanism over the past forty years. But this can hardly be considered progress in light of the fact that the "mass movement line" was essentially that pursued during the 1917-22 period; and look at what developed from it then! It can hardly be denied that on that occasion the results were substantially as we have depicted they must be throughout this discourse. And there has

been innumerable instances between then and now to demonstrate the inherent weaknesses of the arrangement, so that there is really no excuse for it to happen again in Ireland.

IT IS IMPORTANT THAT REPUBLICAN activists grapple with and understand problems such as these, because today we are faced not merely with re-establishing the military punch in Republicanism, but in fact with the more comprehensive task of re-establishing the whole effort from the ground up. Not only must Republicanism be rearmed, it must be rebuilt. The present trend towards a total reliance on non-violent methods is but a symptom of the decay which has undermined the old foundations of the Irish Revolution. As a result, it will not suffice to just aim at the opening of yet another military campaign, because for so long as the political foundations upon which such a campaign must be based remain unrenewed, the campaign itself must inevitably end in failure. It is for this reason that we have stressed throughout the vital need for an understanding and mastery of political questions. This does not mean that we underestimate the importance of the military element; far from it. But it does mean that we fully appreciate the overall decisive nature of politics in the revolutionary process. Furthermore, we know from historical experience that unless a correct perspective is maintained from the very outset on the political question, the military effort, no matter how thoroughly prepared, lacks depth; so that although it may be spectacular for a period, it cannot possess that decisive element of success.

IN CONCLUSION, TO REITERATE IN capsule form the gist of the article:

POLITICS REPRESENT THE DETERMINING factor in revolution. Consequently, it is necessary not only to formalize revolutionary aspirations in concrete political terms, but it is also necessary to organize them in a commanding position from the outset.

IN TERMS OF TODAY'S CONDITIONS, this means that Irish Republicans of a revolutionary calibre must, by some means, come together in secret council and hammer out their aspirations in the form of a Draft Programme. Then, on the basis of such a programme, a Revolutionary Political Organization must be founded, to serve as a

means of co-ordinating the labours of all the revolutionary activists; to recruit on a highly selective basis new revolutionary elements; and to train cadres to function in leadership positions in an expanded organizational framework.

HAVING ESTABLISHED ITSELF, and having formalized its activities, the Political Organization must then regroup a military organization in close harmony with itself. It must provide the main leadership for the Army; and unless specific circumstances determine to the contrary, all members of the Political Organization must function as dynamic elements at all levels of the Army. In this context, it will be seen that it is no longer the man who only shoulders the gun who represents the greater threat to the status quo, but the politically conscious and competent member of the Political Organization who also shoulders the gun. As a consequence, the political personnel will become the prime targets of the enemy, because they are dangerous not alone through the ideas they propagate, but also through their commitment to fight at all times in the front ranks for the realization of those ideas. Again, this is as it should be and must be, and is in marked contrast to the present role played by Sinn Fein.

HAVING SECURELY STRUCTURED its effort to this point, it is then necessary for the politico-military organizational complex to extend, through the medium of subsidiary organizations, its connections with the broad mass of the people. In practice, this secondary ring of so-called "Front Organizations" need only be created in skeleton form prior to the opening of the revolutionary offensive. The skeleton can, as it were, assume its flesh and muscle during the course of the open struggle, and under the stimulus of it. However, it is necessary to have this "skeleton" structure formalized at least on paper, and the personnel to be allotted to its key positions selected beforehand; otherwise bodies of support under independent parties may emerge, and represent a source of future trouble.

FOR OBVIOUS REASONS WE HAVE NOT dwelt on the more technical aspects of organization. These questions are, at any rate, ones which would have to be decided on by an actual effort that had been set in motion. In addition, neither have we dealt with what we be-

lieve should be the fundamental political content of such an effort. This is a subject which requires separate treatment; and as well, it pertains to factors which can only be decided on by a gathering of revolutionaries to determine such matters. What we have endeavoured to do is to draw a general overall picture, and show

the correct relationship between the basic elements within it. This can at least serve as a stimulus for more detailed study amongst the revolutionary inclined groups, and thereby agitate for the setting up of a truly revolutionary organization in Ireland. This has always been, and continues to be, our primary object.

A WARNING TO "PLOTTERS"

WE REPRINT BELOW A RECENT Sinn Fein directive which has come into our possession, to demonstrate the amateurishness of their attempts to offset the many pertinent questions raised by AN PHOBLACHT. Of course they have not the guts to name our paper, but it is clear enough what they are getting at.

* * *

SINN FEIN

"IT HAS BEEN BROUGHT TO THE NOTICE of the Ard Comhairle that members of the Republican Movement are associating with, and/or, expressing the views of a reactionary (?) group outside the Republican Movement. While it is understood that revolutionary and militant expressions find favour with odd individuals, the present policy of the Republican Movement does not contemplate such a course of action, and disciplinary action is at present contemplated against certain individuals. It is the duty of all earnest republicans to report such individuals to the Ard Comhairle.

"THE REPUBLICAN MOVEMENT MUST guard against the infiltration of its ranks by splinter groups and their attendant Special Branch contacts, and present a united front at all times."

* * *

THE FIRST INTERESTING POINT ABOUT this epistle is the admission it makes. We have said all along that the leadership of the Republican Movement had sold out the Irish Revolution; and we have, amongst other things, been called agents of the Special Branch for saying so. Yet, in their own directive they admit outright that this is true. They say: "While..revolutionary and militant expressions find favour with odd individuals, the present policy of the Republican Movement does not contemplate such a course of action." Take note of the phraseology: "does not contemplate such a course of action." In other

words, they oppose "revolutionary and militant expressions" because these advocate a course of action contrary to that of the R.M. Now, if the R.M. opposes revolutionary action, it must advocate constitutional action. This is exactly what we have claimed all along and because we have done so we must obviously be agents of the Special Branch, because who but the Special Branch would suggest that Republicans must pursue a revolutionary course of action if they are to remain true to their heritage? This is a queer and twisted sort of logic, the product of mentally retarded and politically depraved individuals. It is about time all Republicans awoke to the fact.

WITH RESPECTS TO THE REFERENCE to "splinter groups and their attendant Special Branch contacts," let this be clearly understood by all concerned: insofar as we are referred to, we hold all leading figures of the "fake" left, along with their puppets responsible for such base slanders, and as of now consider ourselves at liberty to take corrective measures -- without further warnings being issued -- when we deem it necessary.

WE SERIOUSLY ADVISE ALL REFORMISTS, be they of the "fake" left or "fake" Republicans, that we are neither amateurs nor platform revolutionaries; we mean what we say, and the sooner they get that through their thick skulls the better all round. The reformists can go their own road; but the sooner they stop trying to cash in on our revolutionary heritage the better. That is not of their domain. We do not deny them the freedom to express their views; and we certainly will not be cowed into silence on ours. They had better learn to live with this fact. For their own good.

**WHERE DO YOU
STAND! FOR ACTION?**

Title: An Phoblacht, Vol. 1, No. 13

Organisation: Irish Revolutionary Forces

Date: 1967

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