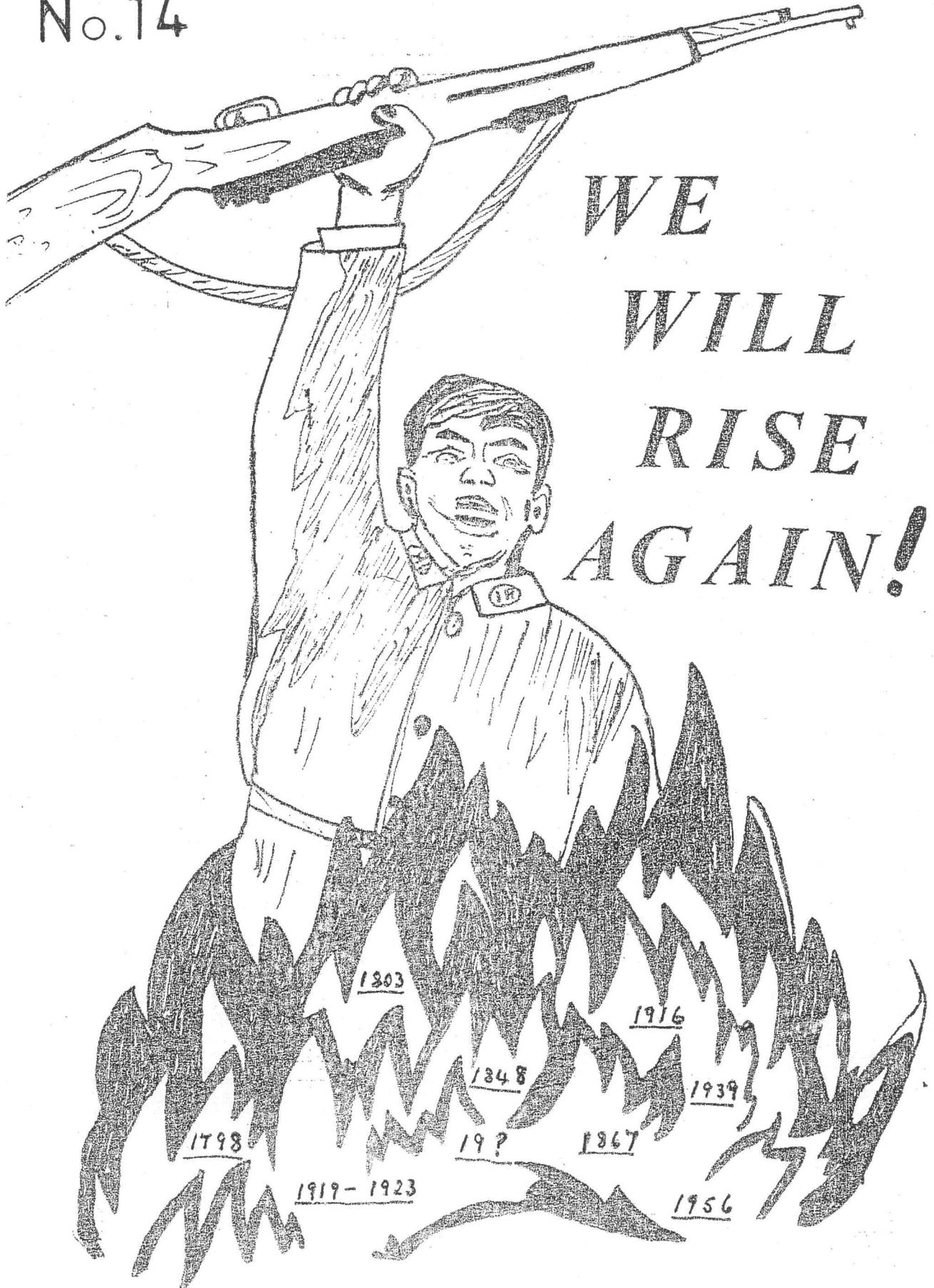


# AN PHOBLACHT

The Republic

No. 14



**WE  
WILL  
RISE  
AGAIN!**

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# EDITORIAL

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THERE IS MUCH HARD WORK BEFORE us, if we are to engage seriously in the job of rebuilding the Irish Revolutionary effort to the point where it can initiate a successful struggle against the bastions of neo-colonialism. Beginning almost from scratch, we must organize; we must educate; we must arm.

LET US NOT FOOL OURSELVES ON the true state of affairs as they affect us at this time. The revolutionary front is in bad shape. Popular support has been whittled away over the past few decades by poor leadership and incorrect policies; and our revolutionary base has also been seriously weakened and fragmented from similar causes. No knowledgeable person will suggest that all of this can be speedily rectified. It cannot. The task facing us is not just a relatively straightforward one of regrouping and rearming sufficient forces to launch yet another campaign in the North-East. The fact is, we are faced with the need to build a completely new effort; to launch a completely fresh revolutionary epoch reminiscent of the pioneering labours of the United Irishmen and the IRB. This is a big job, which will require the unqualified commitment of men possessed of determination, staying power and clear-headedness; men who coldly and calmly measure the odds against them, and who set themselves to conquer such odds, in the full knowledge that tangible results will come neither easily nor quickly.

WE SUFFER FROM NO ILLUSIONS as to the extent of such an undertaking; but neither are we intimidated by it. Over the past few years we have agitated for an unequivocal return to the revolutionary road, because we are convinced that regardless of the relative ease with which the Partitionist regimes have hitherto ward off assaults by organized Republicanism, revolutionary forces can win if they approach their task correctly. It is our firm belief that past failures have resulted not so much from the str-

ength of the enemy, as from the weaknesses of Irish Republicanism which, with a proper approach to revolutionary matters, can be largely eliminated. This remains our unshakeable conviction. The question still to be answered, however, is whether the now scattered remnants of the revolution have it in them to rise to the demands of the occasion, by placing their commitment to the Irish Revolution above all other considerations.

WE ARE WELL AWARE THAT ERSTWHILE rebels are now hard at work disseminating the insidious idea that the age of revolution has past in Ireland. We've heard that one before. These proselytes like to cover their spinelessness by projecting their image as that of realistic men motivated by the overpowering desire to come to grips with the every-day needs of the people. Evincing that fake sincerity that is the stock-in-trade of the professional confidence man, these politically dehydrated species will tell you the revolutionary road is now impossible in Ireland. Perhaps it is for them; but to a revolutionary serving a just cause -- as ours most assuredly is -- nothing is impossible; and that which may appear so to others will merely demand a greater effort for its solution. No problem is impossible; there are only those which take longer to solve.

OUR COMMITMENT IS TO THE IRISH Revolution. We believe in the justice of its aims; we believe in the inevitability of its victory; and we believe that the traditionally sound instincts of the people will respond to its demands once Irish Revolutionaries fulfil their leadership responsibilities. The has-beens can blame the apathy of the people for their failures, just as the leadership of the Republican Movement did early in 1962 when they issued a general order of retreat. We do not. The record clearly shows the consistency of the Irish People in supporting all adequately led revolutionary struggles, even those which had

but a minimum of relevance to their own class interests. It is our unshakeable belief that the Irish People will most assuredly respond to the leadership of a revolutionary organization whose programme is, for a change, based squarely on the interests of the people.

SO LET US NOT WRONGLY BLAME THE People for past setbacks; and let us not fret unduly about the improbability of their future support for the Revolution. Instead, Irish Revolutionaries would at this time be more beneficially employed, were they to concern themselves with the business of putting their own house in order, so as to better provide a leadership worthy of our people's revolutionary record. This may appear a tall order in the light of the prevailing disarray in revolutionary ranks. But let us look at it another way: present conditions absolutely dictate we start from scratch; this means we enjoy one of those rare situations that enable us to build a completely new structure for revolutionary struggle which, by learning from the past, can avoid those features that contributed to former set-

backs. This offers a great opportunity to Irish Revolutionaries, if they are big enough to grasp it.

CLEARLY, THE TIME HAS PAST WHEN petty considerations can serve as justification to put off making a decision on precisely where you stand in relation to the future course of the Irish Revolution. The Reformists have made their position crystal clear. To them a revolutionary struggle, with its associated goals of radical politico-economic change in the interests of the working classes, is out in favour of pork-barrel politics with a social-democratic slant. To go with them is to spit in the face of our long heritage of revolutionary struggle, and all the glib talk in the world cannot obscure this fact. To adopt the course advocated by us, is to project that heritage into the future; to continue by deed that worthwhile mission begun by our predecessors. This is the choice facing both Republicans and Socialists today; a choice all will have to make, because the time is on hand when all must declare themselves for or against the IRISH REVOLUTION.

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## "THE PEOPLE"

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IT IS THE PRACTICE WITH politicians of all shades to speak of their dedication and subordination to the will of "The People." Revolutionaries are hounded and killed in the name of "The People". Revolutions, in turn, are pursued in the interests of "The People". Clearly the term is one which, within limits, can be used to mean whatever its user desires. As employed in the vocabulary of the middle-class democrat, "The People" is an abstraction used to clothe the nakedness of a bourgeois dictatorship; and when used by Revolutionary Socialists it can stand for a political alliance between all exploited groupings in the struggle against political and economic subjugation. As a consequence, it is incumbent upon us to define precisely what we mean by it, because we too base our hopes and aspirations on what we term "The People."

IN THE CONTEXT OF CONDITIONS in contemporary Ireland, who are THE PEOPLE? As revolutionaries dedicated to the realization of Socialism in Ireland, we stand by that definition laid down by the

Fenians in THE IRISH PEOPLE of July 30, 1864: "the hardy, honest sons of labour; the working men at the counter or in the workshop, in city or hamlet, field or warf -- whom we call THE PEOPLE." We accept this definition because it represents the majority, as well as a unity of all groups who suffer most under the present political and economic order. "The People," as interpreted by us, stands for the working class, the working farmers and the self-employed petty bourgeoisie. It is our view that the forces necessary to promote a struggle for National Liberation must be drawn from these groups, and be welded into a dynamic people's effort under the leadership of a Revolutionary Socialist Organization.

THROUGHOUT ITS STRUGGLE FOR National Liberation, Ireland's revolutionary forces have been drawn primarily from the foregoing social groups, and we see no reason to fear that we shall be disappointed by them in the future. In the past "the People" have served under the leadership of the national bourgeoisie; and as a

result, the direction and extent of their efforts were determined by the essential interests and needs of the bourgeoisie. Insofar as the interests of the national bourgeoisie coincided with those of "The People", the latter undoubtedly benefitted from their efforts and sacrifices; but when they came into conflict there never was any doubt as to the outcome. Present conditions in Ireland are the result of such a conflict of interest. It is therefore the task of today's Revolutionaries to present "The People" with a leadership which will lead them forward to resolve the contradictions between their own interests and those of the present ruling cliques, by contesting the issue of State Power.

IN THE PAST, THE NATIONAL bourgeoisie rallied "The People" under the revolutionary banner in the name of the Nation; they called upon "The People" to subordinate their own interests to the so-called interests of the whole -- which in effect meant the interests of the bourgeoisie. Contemporary Revolutionaries must rally "The People" specifically on their own behalf, to free not alone the Nation from Imperialist domination, but as well to seize the political direction of the Nation, thereby establishing a sovereign State under the direct control of "THE PEOPLE." This is what we mean by "A People's Nation State" -- a state under the dictatorship of the Working People of Ireland.

## CORK IRA WILL BREAK WITH SINN FEIN

UNDER THE HEADING, "THE IRA SAYS "SPOKESMAN" SPEAKS," the November issue of SPECTRE, published by the UCC branch of the Labour Party, carried an interview with a spokesman of the Cork IRA. In it the Cork IRA stated their position on the question of Sinn Fein entering Leinster House in a manner which was straightforward and to the point. When asked: "What would be your attitude if Sinn Fein decided to enter Dail Eireann?" The reply: "This is most unlikely to happen. ..If however Sinn Fein decided to become part of the Twenty Six County establishment then the IRA would have no alternative but to break with them."

THE CORKMEN ARE TO BE CONGRATULATED; this is the first straight answer that has emanated from the IRA in over six years. Where there is life there's hope, and it is obvious that the IRA in the REBEL COUNTY still retains that old spirit which, in the past, has won them a position in the front ranks of our revolutionary struggle. Cork has spoken; now we know, and everyone else knows where they stand. They have set an example at a most crucial time, and it is to be hoped that it shall be followed by other IRA units throughout the country.

UNDOUBTEDLY, THE PUBLICATION of such sentiments just before the Sinn Fein Ard Fheis brought home to the "Progressives" the inevitability of a Split in the Republican Movement when they take the Free State road. Apparently, the failure of their recent efforts to establish a detente with the Lab-

our Party has made the Progressives a little unsure of themselves, so that whereas they were hell-bent on going Free State five months ago, split or no split, they have once again put the move on the long finger. As a member of the Ard Comhairle put it just before the recent convention: "the matter has been dropped for the moment, but it will have to go through eventually." The same party stressed the fact that the Progressives were confident of carrying the issue at any Sinn Fein convention, but they deemed it essential to put it off a little longer so as to reduce the effects of a Split to the minimum.

THE QUESTION OF SINN FEIN GOING Free State is purely a matter of time. If anyone should doubt this then we would refer them to Tom Gill, who, in answer to the question (put at a meeting of the UCC Political Debating Society last October) "Will Sinn Fein enter Leinster House?" said: "We in Sinn Fein do not make a principle of entering Leinster House; in fact, we could enter Leinster House within 3, 5 or 10 years, or even within the next 12 months."

IN LIGHT OF THESE FACTS, IT IS by no stretch of the imagination "unlikely" that Sinn Fein will become part and parcel of the Free State establishment. Consequently, it is incumbent upon all those now in the R.M., who say they will oppose a sell-out, to make adequate preparations to meet such an

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# THE QUESTION OF PRINCIPLES IN THE IRISH REVOLUTION BY

QUESTIONS ON WHETHER OR NOT organized Irish Republicanism should enter completely into parliamentary politics, which in effect means unqualified participation in Free State politics, presently dominate the Republican Movement. On the one side are the so-called "Progressives", who point to the bankruptcy of Abstentionism as practised by Sinn Fein over the past three decades, and who utilize this to justify taking the road to Free-Statism. The "Traditionalists", on the other hand, oppose all change; they propose a continuation of the old course of action on the strength of what they are pleased to style "Principle." This is but a very general outline of the differences that divide the two main groups in Sinn Fein; but it should suffice to establish the essence of the controversy that has been waged within Sinn Fein over the past few years.

AS REVOLUTIONARY IRISH Republicans we reject both proposals, for the very simple reason both are in effect reactionary. There is, however, a qualitative difference between the reaction inherent in each position; and this, coupled with that thin veil of truth used to cover the reactionary nakedness of each, tends to confuse Irish Republicans, who generally lack a thorough grasp of basic political theory so essential to the unravelling of such questions as those posed by the present controversy. In order to clarify this situation, with the view to clearing away the cobwebs of confusion that presently enshroud our true revolutionary objects, it is necessary that we re-examine the whole question in the light of the basic tenets of revolutionary theory, as they relate to the fundamental objects of Irish Republicanism and to the method employed to realize them.

## WHAT IS IRISH REPUBLICANISM?

IT IS THE PRACTICE TO RANT incessantly on the need to uphold the principles of Irish Republicanism. It is seldom, if ever, considered necessary to define what exactly these principles are; and more especially, what they stand for in relation to existing

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conditions. It is all very well to call for steadfastness to the principles of Wolfe Tone; but how can this be done when no attempt is made to clarify them in relation to the needs and demands of the prevailing situation? Unless we thoroughly understand and master these questions, it should be apparent that we cannot possibly possess that clearness in perspective and unity in purpose so fundamental to any revolutionary effort. Without such clarity and mastery Irish Republicans are like blind men. They must twist and turn as the leaders dictate, and hopefully rely on the good faith of such leaders. This state of affairs is intolerable and utterly unacceptable to any real revolutionary; and it is to a great degree responsible for the present mess.

TO START AT THE BEGINNING: Irish Republicanism as first announced by the United Irishmen, stood for the elimination of foreign domination, the elevation of the national community to a status of social dignity, and the establishment of a Republic sovereign in its political and economic aspects. Obviously, this could only be achieved by revolutionary methods, because it entailed not alone separation from Britain, but as well a realignment of social and economic factors within Ireland itself. All of this was fully understood by the guiding elite of the United Irishmen, and the movement was, as a consequence, a truly revolutionary one.

IT WILL BE SAID IMMEDIATELY: Irish Republicanism still pursues the same end, so why all this fuss. Unfortunately, it is not that simple. The fact is, present-day Irish Republicans cannot claim they are following in the footsteps of the United Irishmen by simply reiterating the same revolutionary formula. Admittedly, the formula remains structurally constant; that is, Political Independence plus Economic Independence plus Socio-economic reconstruction equals the objects of Irish Republicanism; and herein lies our

basic Guiding Principles. However, although the structure of this formula remains constant, the values of its constituent parts are subject to change due to the evolutionary nature of society. Consequently, unless contemporary Irish Revolutionaries consciously take into account these changing values, and apply them to the Formula of Guiding Principles, which is their heritage from the United Irishmen, they cannot seriously claim to be following in the footsteps of their predecessors. For example, as revolutionaries, the United Irishmen were governed in their interpretation of the social, political and economic content of their objects by the revolutionary criterion of their era. Their goals were revolutionary by the standards of their time. In like manner, present-day Irish Republicans must be governed by the standards of their time. When interpreting the content of their objects they must be directed by those revolutionary values currently accorded to social, political and economic factors; -- which differ radically from those of 200 years ago -- and which will therefore produce an Irish Republicanism that differs enormously from that of the United Irishmen. In other words, it is not sufficient in itself to repeat the formula of Guiding Principles originally conceived by the United Irishmen. To retain its revolutionary meaning this formula must also incorporate social, political and economic values determined by current revolutionary attitudes; and it is this combination of variable values fluctuating within a framework whose structure remains constant that represents the KEY to determining what Irish Republicanism means in social, political and economic terms at any given time.

WE HAVE NOW ESTABLISHED TWO things. First, that an allegiance to Irish Republicanism requires a conformity to demands determined by a framework, or formula, of Guiding Principles which are: Political Independence, Economic Independence, and the Socio-economic reconstruction of the country. Secondly, that this allegiance also stipulates the observance of the Principle of Revolutionary Conformity; that is, the value of the individual factors which make up the formula of Guiding Principles must change as the ideological content of revolution itself changes. Hence, it can be seen that although revolutionary values during the era of the United Irishmen differ radically from those

of today; and although the ideological motivation of the United Irishmen must, as a consequence, contrast sharply with that of present-day Irish Revolutionaries, this does not deny a continuity of endeavour on the part of all Irish revolutionaries between then and now. This is the only way in which an unbroken continuity in the "principles" of Irish Republicanism can be explained in relation to changing conditions; and it is the only meaningful manner in which contemporary Irish Republicans can talk in terms of struggling for those objects originally formulated by Wolfe Tone nearly two centuries ago.

TO INTERPRET IRISH REPUBLICANISM in any other fashion is to deprive it of rational meaning; and while this may well suit the designs of opportunists, by enabling them to alter the direction of Irish Republicanism at will to complement their own changing needs; it cannot possibly be acceptable to Revolutionaries, who must be governed by an uncompromising and well-defined set of principles, which at the same time retain an undiminished relevance over long periods of time, by inheriting the faculty of evolving in unison with the changing character of revolution itself.

TO DEMONSTRATE WHAT WE MEAN: it is, for example, illogical to contend that Irish Revolutionaries in 1968 must struggle to realize a Republic with the same political and economic content as that envisioned by their predecessors of 1798. To propose such a thing is to suggest the world has stood still for over 160 years; that economic and political conditions, along with man's appreciations of them, have remained constant; and that the needs of the people have continued unchanged. It does not require a deep political insight to see that such a suggestion is preposterous. Today's Irish Revolutionaries are faced with completely different conditions, while they are at the same time the inheritors of an unbroken revolutionary tradition handed down to them from the United Irishmen; and to retain a harmony between both they must therefore be governed by the theoretical interpretation of Irish Republicanism already outlined. A failure to do this must inevitably result either in the emergence of a blatant reactionary attitude; or of an extreme and totally disruptive left deviationism.

REACTION RESULTED WHEN Irish Republicanism was subordinated to Sinn Fein, at a time when the social, political, and economic values of the latter had ceased to represent the revolutionary demands of the people. In other words, the traditional revolutionary framework of Irish Republicanism was burdened with the non-revolutionary philosophy of Sinn Fein, and the effects from this politically indigestible concoction continue to haunt us today. Its most standard manifestation is to be seen in the sterile attitudes of the Sinn Fein "Traditionalists"; and in more varied form, due to the fact that external reformist trends have been combined with and have thereby reshaped internal ones, its results can also be plainly traced in the stance assumed by the "Progressives."

EXTREME LEFT DEVIATIONISM, ON the other hand, is exemplified by those who have cut themselves adrift from the anchor of our revolutionary heritage under the pretext, or mistaken and unfounded notion that it is no longer capable of supplying the motive power to propel the Irish Revolution to victory. To be sure, the people who subscribe to this error valiantly endeavour to retain a connection with the Irish scene by draping their "newly discovered" formula for victory with a little of our historical bunting. But this is transparently superficial. It may appear very advanced to liberate oneself from the petty considerations of a national struggle, and embrace the intoxicating abstract theory of International Revolution. But this is nothing less than a form of escapism which, regardless of the verbal thunder that accompanies it, is far less of a threat to the interests of Imperialism than the more modest aim of those who limit their sights to the overthrow of their own ruling class. The proposals of the Left deviationists, based as they are on a concept of International Revolution concocted on premises that have proved to be highly erroneous and mischievous, offer no solution at all to the problems of the Irish People.

WITHOUT DELVING DEEPER WE CAN therefore see that Irish Republicanism represents the National aspirations of the people, determined by the formula of Guiding Principles originally conceived by the United Irishmen, and governed by values deduced from the dominant ideological influence in

the universal struggle for human dignity which, for purposes of explanation, we have defined as the Principle of Revolutionary Conformity. Using these guidelines it is therefore possible to define at any given time, and in the prevailing political and economic terminology, what precisely Irish Republicanism stands for. Reduced to its simplest terms this means that during the era of the United Irishmen, and indeed for a great part of the 19th century, Bourgeois Democracy represented a revolutionary phenomenon directly applicable to a progressive solution of Irish ills; and as a consequence, Irish Republicanism could be defined as Revolutionary Bourgeois Democracy, tailored to complement specific needs and conditions in Ireland. However, times have changed, conditions in Ireland have changed, and the needs and demands of the Irish People are different than they were. Bourgeois Democracy is no longer revolutionary insofar as Ireland is concerned. It has been superseded by Socialist Democracy which now dominates the stage of all human endeavour for freedom. As a result, Irish Republicanism today must be defined as Revolutionary Socialism, adapted to meet the particular needs and conditions in Ireland. It is, perhaps, instructive to point out that in each of the foregoing instances, and despite the contradictions between each of the motivating ideologies involved, Irish Republicanism represents a harmony of universal--or international--and national interests. By its alignment with an ideology common to all peoples struggling for freedom it contributes to a real international solidarity between all exploited nationalities, and to an international solidarity against all exploiter nations. And, by its allegiance to the original Guiding Principles laid down by the United Irishmen, it at the same time and without any conflict of interest, pursues the special goals of the people it represents; and this is the obvious and primary responsibility of each individual revolutionary organization throughout the world.

BY USING THE FOREGOING SYSTEM the "principles" of Irish Republicanism can, as has been demonstrated, be correctly interpreted to deduce the precise goals of the Irish Revolution at any given time. These goals, however, must be correlated with the method of struggle selected to realize them. This

necessity opens up an area of revolutionary theory from which emerges yet another set of principles governing revolutionary activity. There is therefore not one but two distinct sets of "principles" governing Irish Republicans: the principles which determine their interpretation of Irish Republicanism's goals, and the principles which regulate their activity to realize these goals. This latter category relates to the Method of struggle selected and the Means used in association with it, and is derived not so much from our own experiences as from the sum of all hitherto revolutionary experience.

#### METHOD OF STRUGGLE:

METHOD AND MEANS ARE OFTEN confused. When employed in revolutionary theory each term has a distinct and specific meaning which must be clearly understood so as to avoid confusion. Generally speaking, Method encompasses the mobilization, organization and employment of revolutionary forces; and as such it corresponds to factors of strategy. Means, on the other hand, refer to the type of action engaged in so as to further ends determined by the Method selected; and relates therefore to tactics. In other words, Method represents the overall process whereby a revolutionary effort is built up, and is then manoeuvred into position so as to contest the issue of State Power in a manner which is considered most favourable to success. And Means refer to any form of action engaged in by revolutionary forces in the struggle with the enemy.

FROM THIS IT CAN BE SEEN THAT the Means employed are at all times subordinate to the Method selected; which infers of course that any form of action against the enemy, regardless of whether or not it be of a military nature, is revolutionary only insofar as the Method of struggle to which it is subordinated is revolutionary. This point is of the utmost importance, because it underlines the fact that unless a revolutionary organization is correct in the selection of its Method of struggle, any activity it engages in is not really revolutionary; notwithstanding the fact that such action may appear revolutionary by virtue of its aggressiveness. From this it can be seen that the theoretical principles governing revolutionaries with respects to Method of struggle are crucial, because a failure to comply with the laws

of revolution in this particular case automatically determines the ultimate defeat of all subsequent activity insofar as revolutionary results are concerned.

PRINCIPLES GOVERNING THE Method of struggle are derived directly from the historical truth that in a revolutionary conflict the question of State Power can only be resolved by force. This is a very simply stated principle, which at first appears to underline WHY revolutionary forces are built and employed, rather than HOW this is done. But it has, nevertheless, tremendously wide ramifications, because the demands of conforming to the reason WHY revolutionary forces are built and used (to settle the issue of State Power) has direct control on HOW the matter is to be solved. Without becoming immersed in the technical questions involved in this issue, it should be obvious that an organization which observes the principle of force, as the governing factor in the selection of a method of struggle most suited to success under existing conditions in Ireland, will mobilize, organize and employ its forces in a fashion vastly dissimilar from one which does not accept this principle. It is extremely difficult to elaborate further on this particular aspect of the question for the very simple reason that it would necessitate a delving into factors which may find application in the Irish Revolution in the future. This is not desired for obvious reasons. However, the outline already given should suffice, by its stressing of the fact that a revolutionary Method of struggle is one based explicitly on the existence of violent contradictions between the objects of the Revolution and the interests of the status quo; and which fully accepts the logical outcome: that force is the only solution. A non-revolutionary, and therefore incorrect, Method, is one which tends to avoid accepting the existence of such violent contradictions, and which, therefore, entails the hope that the issues in contest can be resolved without a resort to force.

PRIOR TO THE TREATY OF 1922, which resulted in the setting up of a neo-colonial regime in the Free State, the contradictions between Irish Revolutionary goals and British Imperialism were so obvious as to make the applicability of the foregoing principle of force to the method of struggle readily apparent. It was prac-

tically impossible to err on the matter. The issue was then devoid of those political complexities which constitute the heart of neo-colonialism; and which are designed for the specific purpose of making more difficult the mobilization of a mass support by revolutionaries, by the introduction of political factors capable of confusing the political responses of the people at large. To be sure, the basic issue remains a clear-cut one despite the political innovations introduced by the Treaty. However, the Machiavellian subtlety of granting a people the "democratic" right to elect their own "national" government, while at the same time upholding imperialism's essential economic, and indeed its political interests, through a continued and total economic domination of the new state, has proved to be one of the most fruitful and least costly gimmicks yet devised by the imperialists. There is no doubt but that this has resulted in problems which Irish Revolutionaries have as yet failed to master completely. But a failure to surmount the problems resulting from neo-colonialism is one thing; a failure to retain a clear perspective with regards to the unaltered continuity of the age-old and violent contradictions between the true aspirations of the Irish People and Imperialism is an entirely different matter. And it is this latter failure, more than anything else, that has contributed so much to the bastardization of principles which determine the real goals of Irish Republicanism, and to the confusion on the principles which dictate the method of their realization.

HAVING FAILED TO UPHOLD A logical criterion with which to clearly define their revolutionary goals in tune with changing conditions, Irish Republicans gradually slipped into the habit of ideological compromise with the neo-colonialism exemplified by the Free State. Admittedly, they retained, at least until recently, an uncompromising hostility towards the Free State as a political institution. But the fact remains this was primarily a subjective reaction rather than an objective one; with the result that as the subjective elements within organized Republicanism changed with the passing of time, so did the intensity of the hostility; until today, when it is at best but very weak indeed in official circles. Paralleling this failure, and as an inevitable product of it, Irish

Republicans also lost sight of the principles governing their method of struggle. Again, it is true that up until recently the principle of force was accorded what appeared to be its proper place. On closer examination, however, it will be seen that appreciations on its function were also subjective; and its applicability was, as a result, totally erratic and unpredictable. It was endowed with a here-today-gone-tomorrow faculty, further complicated by an ever-decreasing range of applicability each time it was dusted off for use. Inevitably, it too has been watered down to impotence with the passing of time.

ALTHOUGH WE ARE MAINLY CONCERNED here with clarifying and reasserting principles, rather than with the setting forth of specific goals, method and means which would result from the application of these principles to the current situation; it would perhaps be beneficial to examine more closely the incorrect methods of struggle which are presently in vogue in the Republican Movement, so as to expose them, and at the same time present a correct position on the matter. This will enable Irish Republicans of a revolutionary calibre to more quickly diagnose the errors now being preached and practised, and thereby make them immune to the false arguments that are being used to sustain erroneous courses of action.

BEGINNING WITH THE "PROGRESSIVES" who represent the dominant group in Sinn Fein at the time of writing (Oct. '67): They claim that the method of struggle explicit in the "abstentionist" policy of Sinn Fein and in the erratic armed forays in the Six-Counties, has demonstrated its complete inability to further the fortunes of the Republican Movement. As an alternative they postulate a more "realistic" alignment to Free State politics, and a reduction in the role of the IRA, with the object of tapering that body off into oblivion as rapidly as possible. For purely tactical reasons this latter aim is not so clearly spelt out as yet, but it is a necessary corollary to the first proposal, whose success relates directly to its speedy implementation. As we said at the outset the "Progressives" proposal, from the standpoint of Revolutionary Republicanism, represents downright reaction clothed in "that thin veil of truth."

IT IS INDISPUTABLE THAT

"abstentionism" is a ridiculous policy, except in very rare circumstances which, incidentally, seem less and less likely to appear again on the Irish scene. Furthermore, there is no denying that IRA campaigns, which were dictated more by frustrations in the field of Sinn Fein's abstentionism than by a realistic assessment of objective and subjective conditions, have proven disastrous to the standing of the Republican Movement. These truths, however, cannot be legitimately exploited to boost an argument for the adoption of a new method of struggle which entails an abject submission to the political norms of neo-colonialism. In effect, the proposals forwarded by the "Progressives" explicitly advocate the prostitution of Irish Republicanism to a course of action complementary to the interests of neo-colonialism which, by its very nature means the complete abandonment of objects fundamental to the responsibilities of the Irish Revolution. It is for this reason we unequivocally reject the "New Departure" devised by the "Progressives"; not merely because they advocate entry into Free State politics, but mainly because the method of struggle explicit in their proposals categorically rejects the pursuance of goals in the social, political and economic spheres, which are basic to the traditional aims of Irish Republicanism. In other words, the "Progressives" not only violate the principles applicable to the method of struggle incumbent upon all revolutionaries; but by such a violation they are also discarding those principles which govern the interpretation of Irish Republican goals. This is unacceptable under any condition to all real Irish Revolutionaries.

ON THE OTHER HAND, THE "Traditionalists" are equally reactionary, but for different reasons. Lacking the intellectual ability to grapple creatively with politics, they endeavour to seek justification in a course of action devised to combat the manifestations of a 19th century colonialism rather than those of a 20th century neo-colonialism. To them the ramifications of neo-colonialism as first introduced to Ireland by the Treaty of 1922, remain incomprehensible. Consequently, they blandly ignore reality altogether, and instead continue to think and act as if nothing had changed, by playing around with a Method of struggle originally devised to grapple with and exploit conditions that no longer exist.

This sort of thing relieves them of the responsibility to master the complexities of revolutionary politics; and they attempt to justify themselves by postulating the absurdity that by doing this they are upholding "traditional" principles. This is utter nonsense. As we have already shown, principles which fall within the spectrum of our revolutionary traditions relate specifically to the interpretation of Irish Republican goals, and do not relate to the Method of struggle selected to further these goals at any given time. If it were otherwise, it would mean that Irish Revolutionaries, in order to uphold their traditions, should continue to act according to the dictates of revolutionary methods in vogue during the 18th century, and should continue to rely on the "good old Croppy Pike", rather than avail themselves of the luxury of a sub-machine gun. In short, the political isolation inherent in "abstentionism" is out of date due to altered circumstances; and all the complicated and self-deluding efforts to relate Sinn Fein's participation in elections to such an abstention from society are based on a total impossibility.

HOWEVER, IT MUST BE GRANTED that as in the case of the "Progressives", the "Traditionalists" are also enabled to drape their reactionary position with "that thin veil of truth," which helps to defuse the nakedness of their obsolescence in the eyes of many. They can correctly demonstrate that Irish Republican objects cannot be realized via Leinster House. But they then proceed to perversely interpret this truth to back up their ownantediluvian position as outlined above. Of course "The Republic" cannot be reestablished via Leinster House; no more than a carcass can be restored to life by rerouting through the slaughter house. But surely when reduced to essentials this simply means that the constitutional mode of politics to which Sinn Fein is geared can no longer play a role in the attainment of Irish Republican goals; because the Free State is the living embodiment of that particular type of politics which is based on the formalities of a bourgeois democracy. Therefore, the only logical conclusion to be drawn is not that Sinn Fein should continue to align itself with bourgeois politics, while at the same time boycotting the institutions that have emerged in Ireland as a natural product of such politics; but that it must

discard such an alignment altogether if it is to succeed in extruding itself from an impasse. The "Traditionalists" refuse, or are unable to comprehend this necessity. With the result that regardless of what they do, and irrespective of whether or not they give a nodding acceptance to the idea of using force against the overt manifestations of imperialism in Ireland, any position they take must in essence be reactionary with respects to the interests of the Irish Revolution.

INSOFAR AS REVOLUTIONARIES ARE concerned, a primary dependence on constitutional political activity, as is proposed by the "Progressives", represents a method of struggle that is unacceptable, because it is incapable of resolving the fundamental antagonisms between the objects of the Irish Revolution and the interests of the status quo. Also, a reliance on abstentionism as a method of struggle is likewise unacceptable, because not alone is it incapable of producing results, but it is also an insult to the intelligence of any normal Irishman. What then? Irish Revolutionaries are faced with the unavoidable fact that violence, either in the sense of its direct use, or by posing the threat of its use, represents the only Method of struggle capable of solving their problems. Guided by this they must, as a consequence, regulate their activity according to a method complementary to the development of those subjective factors which will enable them to exploit, and even stimulate the emergence of, favorable objective conditions. This means Irish Revolutionaries must structure their efforts so as to facilitate a co-ordinated and efficient activity whose purpose is to build its offensive capabilities both politically and militarily, for the purpose of confronting the neo-colonialist regimes and challenging their ability to rule. The Method of revolutionary struggle must be one of confrontation with neo-colonialism, and not one that associates with, or ignores, its rampifications. Confrontation implies the existence of opposing forces prepared to assert their respective claims. The neo-colonialist regimes in Ireland continue to maintain their forces for such purposes; Irish Revolutionaries must therefore rebuild their forces if they are to serve a meaningful purpose by their continued existence.

WE HAVE NOW ESTABLISHED THAT

the principles which regulate the Method by which revolutionaries mobilize, organize and employ their forces are derived from the fact that the question of State Power can only be resolved by force. It should be apparent to all that if Irish Revolutionaries are so governed, they will proceed with their business in a manner that differs radically from the practices of those who place the greater reliance on elections and associated constitutional activities. The manner and selection of members will be different, the organizational structure will have to be different, and the policies governing the use of forces will be different. Surely, it should not be necessary here to spell out in detail the precise content of these differences? Therefore, having now dealt sufficiently with the question of Method, it is necessary to cover briefly factors relating to the Means used in conjunction with it.

#### MEANS USED:

AS WE HAVE ALREADY SAID: MEANS refer to the actual techniques resorted to during a conflict, which, when viewed by themselves, can be judged revolutionary or not only by reference to the Method of struggle which they serve. For example, a series of attacks on enemy installations in the Six Counties represent a Means of struggle which may, or may not be revolutionary. If these attacks are part of a process conceived to further the overall struggle for National Liberation, they would obviously be revolutionary. However, if they were promoted as propaganda-producing affairs by a movement whose eyes were on winning a Free State election, rather than on furthering Revolutionary Goals in the country as a whole, they could not be considered revolutionary. In this particular example, it is therefore not the actual fact of fighting alone, but the reason for fighting, which determines whether the activity is revolutionary or not. And this criterion holds throughout.

A PARTICULAR ACTIVITY CAN BE revolutionary under one set of circumstances, and non-revolutionary under another. Hence, it is practically impossible to characterize revolutionary action (or Means) as falling within certain well-defined limits. Due to the fact that a revolutionary organization begins operations from a position which is by far weaker than that of its adversary, it is

unavoidably forced to be very opportunistic with respects to the Means by which it proceeds to contest the issue of State Power. Of necessity, it must avail of all Means which proffer an opportunity to advance the fight.

THERE IS A GREAT TENDENCY amongst Irish Republicans to simplify the whole complex process of revolution by reducing it to a question of Means. Particular forms of activity are deemed revolutionary solely on the basis of their content; and for so long as an organization manages to make a periodic showing with regards to their use, it is accepted as being a real revolutionary one, although it may well happen that by no stretch of the imagination could its social, political and economic programme be construed as revolutionary. We have specifically in mind the factor of armed activity against British forces in the Six Counties. It would certainly make things easier for all of us if the problems of the Irish Revolution could be reduced to such simple terms. Unfortunately they cannot.

ALL DEDICATED IRISH REVOLUTIONARIES must be awakened quickly to the realization that the tasks ahead do not involve our playing an Irish version of a Cowboy and Indian epic as popularized by Hollywood. All must realize that, as an organization, our object is to gain control of the country for the purpose of implementing widespread changes in its social, political and economic structure. With this end in view, we are faced by a ruling class capable of intelligently and efficiently operating the machinery of state at its disposal; a class which has greater material resources at its avail than we, and who will use these resources to perpetuate its own rule. If the Irish Revolution is to succeed under such circumstances, its revolutionaries must master the complexities of revolution; and to do this they must first have an awareness of what is involved.

THE MAIN PURPOSE OF THIS article is to demonstrate that there is more involved than just singing the praises of our revolutionary martyrs. Revolution is a practical and realistic business which has little time for romanticism in its calculations. It is necessary to have clear ideas on what its goals are, an unambiguous understanding of the Method by which they are to be pursued, and

a ruthless determination to use all Means capable of furthering their realization. The nature of revolutionary goals determine the Method used, and justifies the Means employed. In this article we have tried to systematize the manner by which the objects of the Irish Revolution can be determined; to define the principles which regulate the Method of struggle selected; and to demonstrate that the Means used are subordinate to the Method of struggle, which, of course, is itself subordinate to the objects of the revolution. All three constitute an entity, and must be evaluated as such.

IN CONCLUSION, WE WOULD LIKE TO emphasize that we have but touched very briefly on a subject which would require much more space to cover it adequately than is available here. However, despite such limitations it is our hope that this will suffice to demonstrate that Irish Republicanism can uphold its traditional heritage, while at the same time retaining its dynamic properties, by regulating its affairs according to the two sets of principles which have been outlined. To us, the logic, indeed the necessity of distinguishing between principles which regulate the interpretation of our objects, and those which control our efforts to realize such goals, is obvious. This provides a well-defined and rigid code of behaviour to guide us, while at the same time it does not deny us that flexibility of action so vital to success. It is hoped that the ideas here expressed will stimulate further and wider study on the part of those seriously committed to the Irish Revolution. Naturally, we will welcome critical commentary or additional elucidation on the subject from such people.

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event. The time to prepare is now, and not when the Progressives have already made their move. The Cork IRA have at least cleared the decks by making their position on the matter public. Let others follow in their footsteps, while at the same time extending their preparations to meet the worst.

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QUOTABLE QUOTES

"Some people ridicule us as advocates of the 'omnipotence of war.' Yes, we are advocates of the omnipotence of revolutionary war; that is good, not bad, it is Marxist."

**Title:** An Phoblacht, Vol. 1, No. 14

**Organisation:** Irish Revolutionary Forces

**Date:** 1967

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