

# CONGRESS '86

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## THE EXTRADITION DEBACLE



Midnight Vigil at Killeen, before the Extradition of Robert Russell

Derek Speirs/Report

How did it happen that the extradition of Robert Russell wasn't prevented? At the very least why was it possible to have the man extradited with so little tangible effect on southern public opinion? Complacency coupled with a fundamental miscalculation were, in the final analysis responsible for the failure of the Anti-Extradition Campaign.

In the first instance there was almost an unwillingness to accept the full import of Dominic McGlinchey's deportation in 1984. Rather than recognise the case for what it was - a fundamental change in Dublin policy - an unspoken opinion prevailed that McGlinchey was the author of his own fate and that this wouldn't be repeated. Even the

subsequent extradition of Seamus Shannon was felt to be a "one-off" affair.

Well meaning statements aside, no comprehensive effort was made to overturn the new policy until late in the day. The new Fianna Fail government, it was hoped, wouldn't comply with British demands. Too often extradition was portrayed as a lack of republicanism on the part of the major parties. Eventually this misconception led to a miscalculation that an emotional appeal to the supposed "republican grass-roots" of Fianna Fail could foil London's design.

Apart from a few small groups and a handful of individuals

*Continued/back page*

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

THE PRICE OF SOVEREIGNTY

DIRECT DEMOCRACY

BOOK REVIEWS

HUMES OFFER

AGITATION STOPS EMIGRATION

NICARAGUA

TORIES OUT NORTH & SOUTH

# THE PRICE OF SOVEREIGNTY

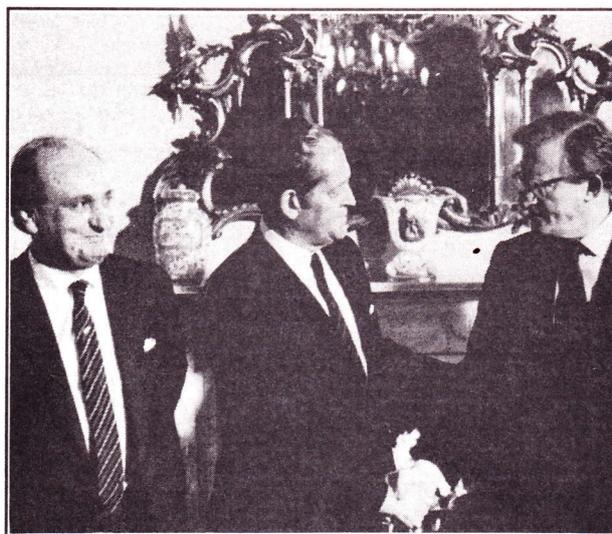
Britain has no right to be in Ireland. British troops have no right to shoot anyone in Ireland and it makes not one tiny bit of difference whether the victims are armed or not. The execution of the Harte brothers and Brian Mullin at Drumnakilly are no more acceptable than had the gunmen of the Crown carried out the same murderous deed in County Monaghan.

Count heads, count votes, count whatever you like to prove the IRA's lack of a national mandate, it is not difficult to do. One thing that nobody will ever prove though, that is when the Irish ruling class concedes to Britain the right to kill Tyrone men in Carrickmore there remains a healthy claim to national sovereignty.

The week following August 27th gave us an illustration of the extent of Irish sovereignty under Fianna Fail. With the surrender into British custody of Robert Russell and the obvious approval, by southern politicians, of the Tyrone killings, who can now speak of a Sovereign, Indivisible Republic?

Lament the politics of the IRA, as this magazine does. Criticise the tactics

COLLINS & LENIHAN HANDING OVER  
IRISH SOVEREIGNTY



of the IRA, as this magazine does - but don't tell us, as Barry Desmond does, that if the Provisionals want to wage armed struggle they deserve to be shot by the SAS. At least don't do so and still deny that you are other than an apologist for British imperial influence in Ireland.

This applies equally to those who timidly ask for inquiries and investigations, ostensibly to ascertain who fired first or if arrests were possible. Implicit in these calls is an acceptance that under certain circumstances, Crown executions are justifiable. Not so, just not so. British crown forces are never justified in killing or arresting or interfering with anybody in Ireland.

Having made this much clear, several questions remain: We must ask what exactly is the strategy of the leadership of the Provisional Republican Movement? With Irish sovereignty being eroded if not totally abandoned, what is the logic in seeking an alliance with those determined to dispense with it? How can Adams and McGuinness explain their courtship of Hume and Haughey when these men are working to trade away what little self-determination the Irish people retain?

What, we must also ask, is the rationale being used by the IRA leadership? Is it one of throwing men at the British until the SAS run out of bullets? With a campaign seemingly capable of merely provoking the British into brutal retaliation, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that there are serious inadequacies in IRA thinking.

There is only one alternative to this apparently deepening dilemma. We have to break from the cul-de-sac of ghetto nationalism without falling into the right wing cosmopolitanism so prevalent among southern politicians.

We must struggle for sovereignty on a 32 County wide basis. We must do so from within a movement which recognises and encompasses a leading role in the struggle for the Irish Working Class.

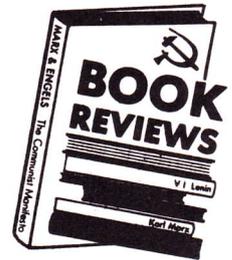
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*John Albert*

BOOK REVIEW  
**FIGHT, STARVE OR EMIGRATE**

The Larkin Unemployed Centre,  
57/58 North Strand Road,  
Dublin 3.

Price : £1.50



It is no coincidence that those who maintain a stranglehold on our media and education system choose to ignore or distort the history of the struggles of the oppressed for social justice. The reason for doing so is simple. Were our masters to dwell on the history of the oppressed they might expose unpalatable truths about themselves. Undoubtedly such close examination might also motivate today's oppressed to demand real change in their living conditions.

Therefore all those involved in the making of this booklet, "Fight, Starve or Emigrate", are to be highly praised for their fine work in compiling this brief history of Irish unemployed movements in the 1950's. The pamphlet itself is no academic exercise; written by people committed to the cause of the unemployed today, it reflects their concern about "getting something done".

The main body of the pamphlet examines the history of two successive unemployed groups, The Dublin Unemployed Association of 1953 and the Unemployed Protest Committee of 1957. In the concluding chapter lessons are drawn from the experience of these two movements and proposals are put for the advancement of the unemployed cause today. Among these are the need for organisation, Trade Unionisation and education.

This pamphlet is a valuable contribution to the education of the unemployed and at only £1.50 is within the price range of those to whom it is directed. Buy a copy and pass it around among your friends.

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## PROGRAMME OF RECONQUEST

It is perhaps stating the obvious to say that amongst the tools needed to effect political change in Ireland is an agreed Programme of Reconquest and a practical journal linked to it providing theoretical and organisational support. Of course this has been stated before, but it should be stated again and again until revolutionary change becomes a working reality.

What we mean by Programme of Reconquest is something along the lines of the Freedom Charter of the African National Congress. What we call it is not important. It should, however, contain a broadly agreed outline of the proposed ends. It should also include broadly agreed means to attaining them.

The associated journal wouldn't be

aimed at literary attainment or be a vehicle for creative writing. Instead it should be the vehicle which would outline regularly and in all its complexity, what we will call here the Programme of Reconquest. Its contents should be aimed at winning recruits to the Programme. It should direct and encourage those who have been won to the idea. Above all it should be available as a vehicle to express the evolving views and lessons of those involved in the struggle.

Stating the obvious again - imperialists don't want revolutionary change. Only serious anti-imperialists do. The question we must ask is why Irish anti-imperialists have not boldly outlined their programme of Reconquest. Without the vision to act, political movement simply

becomes dependent on spontaneity. A Programme of Reconquest would provide that vision.

The journal should be under the control of an editorial board representing the interests of the forces who would draw up and implement the Programme. The editorial board would ensure that the Programme journal served as a unifier and propagator. It would provide core material for and direction of the practical implementation of the Programme. The journal should help convert the vision into practice.

# DIRECT DEMOCRACY IMPLEMENTS THE MANIFESTO

That a politician's election manifesto is not a politician's practice thereafter, is a well known truth. Indeed what better example than the present Fianna Fail Government's "U-turn" following the last General Election. If the Trades Description Act applied to politics, Charlie Haughey would appear before the magistrates more often than a Dublin street vendor.



Why is it then that in a so-called "democracy" peoples' wishes are so easily set aside? The fact is that what pleases to call itself democracy in this country is but a limited form of parliamentary representation. Every so often we are permitted to select someone to represent us for the following three, four or five years. Afterwards, we have absolutely no means of challenging the representative's behaviour.

By making extravagant promises, scoundrels and whole parties of scoundrels can win elections. Once elected, the parliamentary process ensures that even sincere people fall victim to a horse-trading roundabout. "Don't press for this and we'll give you that. Ignore such and such a blunder and our contacts in the media will ease off on the 'lunatic-left' articles" etc.

**HEALTH CUTS HURT THE  
OLD THE SICK AND THE  
HANDICAPPED.**

*THERE IS A BETTER WAY -*  
**Fianna Fáil**

A system of patronage mixed with double dealing prevails. Pulling strokes, as it's known. The promise of a new factory to deflect criticisms over a hospital closure; hints of a regional grant to mask rising unemployment and emigration. The latest wheeze is to rearrange multi-seat constituencies. Nothing other than making their rules as they go along.

What facilitates this charade is the anti-democratic division of wealth within capitalism. The small sector who control the wealth of the state has immense and disproportionate influence as a result of its ability to switch or direct investment. Those who represent capital's interest in parliament have a huge pork-barrel to barter with.

Generally speaking, most of us are well aware of this. We know of political skullduggery and we realise how irrelevant a Fianna Fail or Fine Gael manifesto is. Yet we despair of seeing any improvement, while sharing the view that if voting changed anything - they'd ban it.

There is something that can be done though. We should struggle for the creation of full and proper democratic structures. Demand the institutions of a direct, participatory democracy. A system which gives citizens the right to immediately recall and replace any deputy who no longer implements his or her manifesto.

Direct participatory democracy alone will not smash the dictatorship of capital. But it gives us an opportunity to confront it at close quarters. This is an indispensable stage in the struggle for socialism. "The proletariat cannot become victors save through democracy, i.e through introducing complete democracy and through combining with every step of its movement democratic demands formulated most vigorously, most decisively". (Lenin Oct. 1915) It is complete democracy which we are denied and which we must demand. The corruption of politicians reneging on the manifesto, which won power for them, must cease.

**We need direct participatory democracy because -  
Direct Participatory Democracy Implements The  
Manifesto.**



# HUMES OFFER

**The Sinn Fein - SDLP negotiations are over, for the time being at least. Despite claims that neither side shall meet again, the way has been left open for a resumption of the dialogue. This may happen sooner rather than later.**

**One reason for suspecting that the rift may not be unbridgeable is that very little, apart from the use of force, separates the two groups. A reading of the documents released by both parties at the end of the negotiations, shows clearly that on only two issues is there real disagreement. These concern the role of armed struggle and whether Britain is a neutral actor on the Irish scene.**

Less insistence by Sinn Fein on the gun, less naivety about Britain's intentions from the SDLP, and it's not hard to imagine the coming together of the one big happy nationalist family in the North. So determined have Sinn Fein been to promote the concept of Pan-Nationalism throughout the period of talking. That this family reunion might not be such a distant possibility as it now seems.

Sinn Fein's options are growing fewer. Local Government and EEC elections are looming early next year. A consecutive, albeit marginal, loss of support is both a likely and a demoralising prospect for Sinn Fein. Making good the deficit by armed action may not be feasible. If not - what then?

Notwithstanding their participation in the '68 Committees, nothing in recent Sinn Fein activity suggests a willingness to move towards a 32 County



*Sinn Fein Ard Fheis 1987 - 1989 to prove interesting?*

Anti-Imperialist Movement. To do so and continue to woo the Haughey and Hume camps would be impossible anyway.

Should the London and Dublin governments move to step up the pressure on the entire Republican Movement (as seems likely) how long will Sinn Fein retain the ability to stand "in splendid isolation"?

Repression, remember, does not inevitably increase support for a cause. It can equally lead to despair, especially after twenty long and trying years.

At such a stage, John Hume's offer of an All-Ireland, All-Nationalist party, round table conference might seem attractive to Sinn Fein. Although

rejected to an extent at the last series of negotiations, the proposal is now out in the open and available for inspection by party members.

**The next Ard Fheis, but one, should be worth watching.**

# AGITATION STOPS EMIGRATION

While the developed capitalist countries boost of their fifth consecutive year of expansion, the Irish economy has been overwhelmed by unemployment and emigration. Since the conception of the twin statelets the constitutional parties have miserably failed to steer the social-economic ship into calm and prosperous waters. Instead of adopting policies to protect and rejuvenate all sections of the economy, the establishment has abdicated its responsibilities to the advantage of the multi-nationals.

One thing now seems certain: the present downward trend will be exacerbated by the introduction of the Single European Market. Invariably 1992 and beyond will mean the concentration of production in the hands of the giant conglomerates. With the result that "peripheral regions" like Ireland will be further relegated as a source of cheap labour to mainland Europe. In a recent survey of Ireland, that great defender of bourgeois economy, *The Economist*, confirmed this trend and predicted that employment would continue to decline so that by 1992 unemployment would affect 23% of the population.

If we compare the state of the economy today to that of eight years ago, a clear picture of chaos emerges. Although, over this period, output in production actually increased by one sixth, there has not been any parallel improvement in the standard of living. On the contrary there has been a decline. For example, since 1980 unemployment has risen from 100,000 to quarter of a million: the national debt more than doubled from £11,489 million to £24,580 million in 1987.

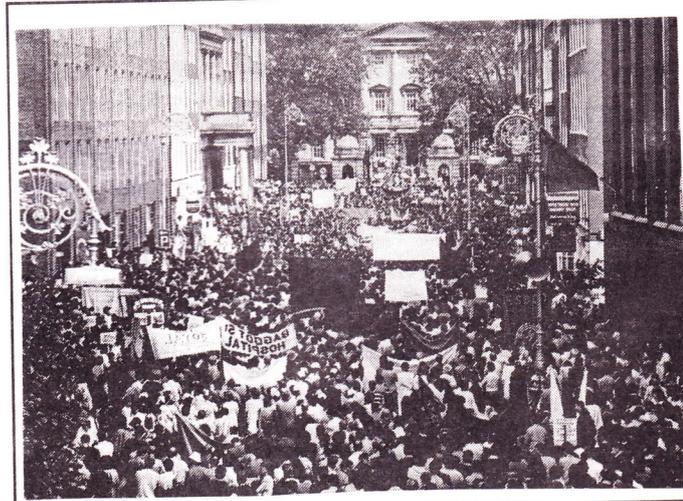
It is within this context of an economic disaster that mass emigration, currently running at 25,30,000 annually, has become an option. Without any prospects for the future and with high unemployment ever increasing, many are being forced to seek their living abroad. In numerous cases this has also meant the acceptance of low wages and exploitation.

Recent government policies, whether Fianna Fail or Fine Gael/Labour, have been to step back from the economy and encourage the multi-nationals to take a more active role. To this end the state offers the foreign conglomerates an attractive package of incentives. This normally includes millions of pounds ungrants and no-tax deals on the export of profits. In the four years to 1985, the outflow of our wealth had already increased at an annual rate of 39%, so that £1316 million ended up in foreign banks.

## STATISTICS

The irony of it all is that while big capital arbitrarily close their Irish subsidiaries, there still remain domestic and foreign markets for our industrial and agricultural produce. Although these markets may not fulfill the exorbitant profit criteria of the multi-nationals, positive state intervention could co-ordinate and expand the small and scattered economic units. To make this possible the contradictory position between the alleged democratic nature of the state, on the one hand, and its subservient role to the transnational on the other, must be exposed and defeated.

Photo—Derek Speirs/Report



This the working people, urban and rural, can do in two ways. Both of which, by necessity, must be centred around mass agitation and mobilisation. Firstly, a united strategy should be devised to force the present Fianna

Fail government to abandon its anti-worker policies of privatisation and cut-backs in favour of a more productive state input. Secondly, and more fundamentally, the forces of the working class and the small producer could strategically shift into a higher gear and challenge the system by organising themselves as the alternative form of government.

At the end of the day the only solution to emigration and unemployment is to be found in the framework of a truly democratic system which would reflect the real interests of the Irish working people in a centrally planned economy, Agitation around these demands will put an end to emigration and unemployment. Remember **AGITATION STOPS EMIGRATION**

### TOP 20 RECIPIENTS OF IDA GRANTS 1986

**Grants approved total £275,281,000 and this was only to 20 companies. Almost all of the 20 are foreign owned.**

*Source: Business & Finance Magazine*

Ranking (Last year's ranking)	Company (Locations)	Total Approved Grants £'000s	Total payments to end 1985 £'000s	1985 payments £'000s
1 (2)	Hyster (Dublin)	39,320	12,041	4,869
2 (1)	Mostek <sup>1</sup> (Dublin)	25,631	5,369	896
3 (3)	Burlington <sup>2</sup> (Tralee, Longford, Tullamore)	25,113	20,749	1,062
4 (4)	Wang (Limerick)	20,758	10,588	1,977
5 (5)	Analog Devices (Limerick)	18,940	10,210	4,357
6 (7)	Digital (Galway, Clonmel)	14,544	10,207	2,593
7 (6)	Abbott (Sligo, Donegal, Cootehill)	14,442	10,558	216
8 (8)	Fujitsu (Dublin)	13,695	3,184	468
9 (-)	Braun (Carlow)	12,884	4,688	485
10 (11)	Verbatim (Limerick)	11,739	8,765	516
11 (10)	Guinness <sup>3</sup> (Dublin)	11,606	7,387	2,340
12 (12)	Aughinish Alumina (Askeaton)	11,155	10,469	306
13 (14)	Waterford Crystal	9,838	4,032	325
14 (15)	Bausch & Lomb (Waterford)	9,674	2,744	113

Ranking (Last year's ranking)	Company (Locations)	Total Approved Grants £'000s	Total payments to end 1985 £'000s	1985 payments £'000s
15 (16)	Nixdord (Bray)	9,548	3,108	307
16 (-)	Amdahl (Dublin)	7,647	3,300	250
17 (17)	Imed (Letterkenny)	7,633	4,037	210
18 (19)	Arlington (Portlaoise)	7,072	5,600	6
19 (20)	Lirelle (Portlaoise)	7,053	7,034	60
20 (18)	Tarkett (Mullingar)	6,989	5,348	328

**NOTES:**

1. Mostek decided to shut its factory in Blanchardstown in October 1985 but was still in receipt of IDA moneys during that year.
2. The grants received for the Burlington plant in Gillogue, Co Clare (closed in 1984) have not been included in these figures. After that closure, Burlington embarked on expansion programmes at other plants.
3. Most of the approved grants, some £10.4m, is for re-equipment, a scheme which has been discontinued by the IDA. Guinness was approved before then.



**Collected Works  
of  
James Connolly,  
New Books 1988,  
£7.50**

Pity James Connolly. Abused in his lifetime, misused more often since his death. What other Irish political figure, apart from Wolfe Tone perhaps, has been so selectively dissected to serve such a variety of interests?

His legacy has been hijacked and distorted by Irish nationalism in an effort to solve its social conscience. His portrait (and little else) has been elevated by exhausted leftists in an attempt to mask their lack of radicalism. More recently his very stature as a Marxist has been questioned by those determined to foist their own pet theories upon us.

In the light of such confusion, the recently

published Volume 1 of Connolly's Collected Works must receive a hearty welcome. Rather than depending on the often dubious interpretations of others, we can at least read what Connolly himself had to say.

Included in Volume I is "Labour in Irish History" and "The Reconquest of Ireland"; a collection from his newspaper articles, and an appendix containing manifestos and programmes. Broadly speaking the contents of this first volume are thematically linked by Connolly's views on socialism and nationalism in Ireland.

Having so much material available in a single volume is instructive and convenient. It makes possible the development of a clear picture of the mind and method of an influential revolutionary. From this collection emerges a blunt but incisive characteristic of the man. A personality which often sought to slash the gordian knot rather than attempt to unravel it.

*Cont./over*

Not that he was naturally crude or violent. These writings demonstrate that his uncomplicated opinions did not stem from uninformed ignorance. What typified him was practicality. "Less philosophy and more fighting", as he put it in 1909 when recommending a slogan for socialists in Ireland.

The passing of time has no doubt left some of Connolly's concerns dated. Dublin monarchists and impoverished agricultural labourers are no longer plentiful. However, the main thrust of his argument in this volume remains remarkably relevant to contemporary Ireland. If only because so many of the battles he fought remain to be won.

He was unequivocal in his conviction that Ireland had to achieve independence and sovereignty if socialism was to become a reality. Those who argued otherwise were mercilessly castigated. On the other hand, his constant dismissal of bourgeois nationalism leaves no doubt that he was unwilling to merely "break the connection" and leave events in the hands of capitalism.

Nonetheless his writings reveal little comfort for many who presently claim his mantle. Connolly's masterpiece on physical force is contemptuous of those who agree on little save the use of guns to settle the ancient dispute with Britain. The mentality which,

regardless of principle, attaches importance only to methods.

Yet he was not a liberal pacifist. In this volume we find him reminding those who would confine working class progress to workerist legalism that "agitation to attain a political or economic end must rest upon an implied willingness and ability to use force. Without that it's mere wind and attitude singing."

In short this volume shows that Connolly's legacy is not one which can easily be appropriated. Neither by left-wing reformist nor by physical force nationalist, of either left or right.

The essence of Connolly is his belief that the liberation of the Irish working class can only be attained by that class, leading the struggle for national sovereignty and social liberation. Much of the rationale which underpinned the declaration of the inextricable connection between both struggles is to be found in this volume.

To paraphrase a sentence from the introduction, this volume should be compulsory reading and study for contemporary Irish labour republican, socialist and other parties. At an economical £7.50, no serious political activist should be without this book.

## REVIEW

### AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL REPORT NORTHERN IRELAND: KILLING BY SECURITY FORCES

The early 1980's was a turning point in British counter-insurgency strategy in Ireland. Faced with a revitalised IRA and INLA, whose ranks had swollen in the wake of the 1981 Hunger Strike, what are now commonly known as the "supergrass system" and "shoot to kill" policy became the main planks in the British programme of repression.

Between 1982-86 hundreds of Irish people were railroaded through the one-judge no-jury Diplock Courts on the word of paid-perjurers. Scores have been shot dead on the streets, many of them unarmed. The zeal shown by the legal system in staging mass show trials and in praising the actions of state death squads, clearly demonstrated that it is an all too

enthusiastic cog in the big wheel of state repression. The forced removal of the persistent Stalker from his inquest as a result of an M15 style smear campaign, indicates for us to see that the state will go to any lengths to attempt to obscure the true repressive nature from the public.

Amnesty International, the world-wide human rights organisation, have, in their report, added their voice of condemnation to the wave of outrage felt by many Irish people. It is refreshing to see that Amnesty have once again the courage to challenge the British establishment abroad that condemn their system of "justice" in the six counties is nothing more than republican propaganda.

The report itself is a clinical documentation of the brutality which we already know and have experienced, it is a confirmation of our conviction that the British establishment can only impose its rule in Ireland by a succession of repressive policies which translate into bulging prison walls and premature graves.

## **"Armed Struggle" - A Pamphlet of the Communist Party of Ireland 28pp 60p**

This pamphlet is an unedited compilation of the correspondence in the debate about armed struggle carried in the CPI papers Unity and Irish Socialist between July '87 and June '88.

The debate began with an open letter to the Provisional IRA from the National Executive Committee of the CPI. This open letter called on the IRA to declare a ceasefire on the grounds, amongst others, that the armed struggle was divisive. It also claimed that armed struggle achieved nothing other than inducing even greater oppression and was hindering revolutionary development. The CPI proposed a mass mobilisation of the Irish people as the alternative.

The IRA did not respond but a group of Sinn Fein members did. They defended the armed struggle and described the alternative offered as "light and airy". If this pamphlet is to be judged in terms of the alternative offered, as I believe it should, being already convinced of the ineffectiveness of armed struggle, then the alternative outlined in the CPI letter did indeed deserve the "light and airy" label.

What evolved from the input of the other contributors to the debate, (Eoin O Murchu in particular) was that the Civil Rights Campaign of the 1960s is what the CPI looks to as a model on which to build the alternative.

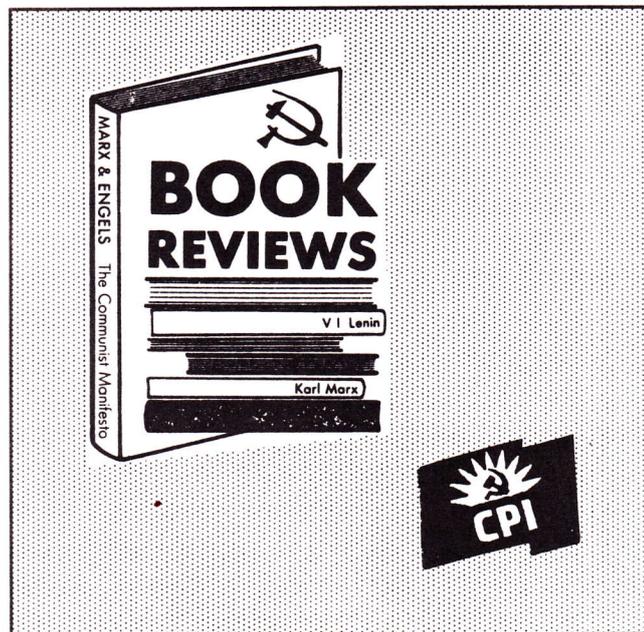
A call from one contributor for Republicans to "inject an anti-imperialist perspective into the economic question by campaigning for the plugging of the black hole, for rescheduling of the national debt, for import controls and for withdrawal from the EEC" led to another contributor calling for a further debate on "the practical steps necessary" to build the alternative.

If any conclusion is to be drawn from reading this pamphlet it is that "debate" denotes a lack of action. A debate can be an excuse for inaction or a preparation for action.

A lot of people are impatient with the arguments and contributors to Congress '86 support the view that arguments are endless and, on their own, useless. Those who advocate another way should organise it and illustrate by action its effectiveness.

They won't find much of "practical" use to that task in this pamphlet. However, its contents do indicate that sections of our revolutionary left are searching and (hopefully) are willing to learn. It is also clear that we all have a lot of learning to do.

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** At the time of writing this review, only one copy of the pamphlet had managed to slip past the prison censors. All others had been refused entry. I am assured that attempts are still in progress to have this situation rectified. I would also like to point out that letters from two regular contributors to Congress '86, James Tierney and Tommy McKearney, are included in this debate on "Armed Struggle".



# TORIES OUT , NORTH & SOUTH,

**This country is at present suffering from the unlovely effects of imperialism. Its effects are not only confined to the Six Counties. Imperialism's influence extends throughout the island. Undoubtedly in the North, this takes the easily recognised form of a British military presence. Yet be under no misconceptions, the 26 County state delivers a large proportion of its annual income to overseas bankers. It has transferred a significant measure of sovereignty to Brussels. It encourages mass emigration and meekly collaborates with every whim of London's security policy. Is this the mark of anything other than a colony?**

Like a cancer, imperialism may take different forms but in the final reckoning the result is just the same. South as well as North, imperialism prevents Ireland's working majority from control over their political and economic life.

Using this fact as a starting point, something becomes clear. The ailment that is imperialism will not be cured by localised surgery. Resistance to this imposition cannot be confined to one part of the country. In short, it is useless focussing all the attention on the six north eastern counties to the exclusion of the other twenty six.

The weakness which concentrates exclusively on partition is that it fails to bring all of Ireland into the struggle. If there is any doubt on this, contrast the degree of active support given recently to demonstrations protesting against hospital closures, with the amount of support for the anti-extradition campaign.

As long as Dublin governments can successfully divorce their Northern policy from their social policies this gulf will remain. They have been, and unless challenged will continue to be, free to deal with the six counties in practically whatever way they wish. No substantial swell of 26 County opinion prevents a Dublin

government from total collaboration with British imperialism.

One reason no such swell of opinion exists is that Dublin has succeeded in disguising the inextricable connections between imperialism's physical and military presence in the North and its more subtle yet very real hold on the South.

Consequently what should be one unified struggle has been divided into two separate and unrelated parts, this is to the detriment of both.

Southern governments have isolated the six county question. They have effectively limited support for this struggle to a minority within the North East. Simple arithmetic alone shows the absolute vulnerability of those who battle along under such adversity. Heroism alone can never compensate for inadequate numerical weight.

While isolating the North, Dublin simultaneously portrays its own social and economic deficiencies as temporary and curable mishaps. By not having these lamentable social conditions exposed as

the direct consequences of subjection to imperialism and capitalism, Dublin regimes escape the perils of close scrutiny. An examination which would threaten the core of the 26 County state.

It goes without saying that London in particular and imperialism in general, are only too willing to have this charade continue. The benefits for them are enormous. By accepting the role of native bailiff, Dublin governments protect the interests of imperialism and island-wide unrest is defused. While the troubles in the North have only minority support, they can be dismissed as merely a "law and order" issue. And just as important, having only minority support, can be dealt with by "law and order methods".

Therefore until the struggle against imperialism assumes a 32 County wide basis, a gaping hole will remain in any revolutionary strategy for this country. Remember the fatal flaw of so many defeated revolutions was that of rising in isolation.

To rectify this problem several steps are essential. Not the least of which is a serious examination of current tactics and conduct. The anti-imperialist movement in Ireland today is weak, divided and largely ineffective. Its efforts will remain so regardless of what it attempts unless, that is, a mass movement of active participants can be rallied to the cause. There is no chance of bringing about change otherwise. Only the willfully blind deny this. Those who have laboured long in barren fields are painfully aware of the limitations imposed by isolation. The absolute imperative is to burst from this isolation by mobilising a mass anti-imperialist movement. A movement which draws its strength from the people and does not restrict itself to the stultifying path of electoralism or parliamentary cretinism. In reality, a process which relies chiefly on the development of extra-parliamentary activity.

A movement at the same time which transcends the narrow ground of single-issue pressure group. Taken in isolation or out of context, such group

# TORIES OUT , NORTH & SOUTH

address the symptoms of imperialism and not the evil at its roots. Unemployment, emigration, health and education cut-backs, poor housing, impoverished small farmers - these are not separate and unrelated problems. They are the tentacles of a single corruption and must be identified as such.

The recent deplorable spectacle of small farmers and unemployed scuffling outside Leinster House cannot be allowed to recur. Single-issue campaigns always have a tendency to drift in the direction of self-interest. Rivalry sets in as different campaigns attempt to capitalise at the expense of each other. A mass anti-imperialist movement has to rise above sectional interests and draw to it all the disenfranchised.

In view of this the League of Communist Republicans has proposed the establishment of a Republican Congress in order to facilitate the development of a mass movement. A Congress having as its slogan - For a Republic, Under the Revolutionary Democratic Control of the Workers and small Farmers. Two points must be clarified however. One involves the role of physical force in the building of a mass movement and the other, what role is there for parliamentary involvement.

On the first question, let us have no fetishes about physical force. Neither an obscene worship of the sanctifying properties of blood-letting nor a cowardly horror of the battle. Physical force is the ultimate recourse for effecting change and is neither an agent of propaganda, nor a means never to be contemplated. A simple fact of life though is that without popular support physical force is a doomed tactic. Claims that a burst of gunfire is sufficient to win mass support borders on dangerous nonsense. Irish history is littered with examples of these misconceptions, from Emmet's failure to that of the 1956 Border Campaign.

If and when conditions demand arms, it is essential that arms are used and used properly. But no sentimentality must ever be allowed to influence this decision. We must "never play with insurrection..." (For a more detailed examination of the fallacies surrounding the use of arms we would refer the reader to Critique of the Propaganda War, Congress '86 No.2).

The second question relates to what role, if any, for parliamentary involvement. What role would the use of such parliaments play in the development of a mass movement?

Since we have already mentioned that the primary concentration should be on extra-parliamentary action, it must be obvious that no exaggerated expectations should be held for any parliamentary path. Yet this is a matter which must be considered pragmatically and not theologically.

With every mass movement which is in the ascendancy, there always comes a critical turning point. A time when it must face the dilemma of whether to make its power felt through the constitutional machinery or opt for open insurrection. For opportunists and reformists the choice is easy. They seek to contain the momentum within electoral chambers and thus emasculate the movement. This we naturally reject.

Genuine revolutionaries, however, are prone to make a mistake at this juncture too. A mistake due perhaps to excessive ardour but a mistake none the less. The revolutionary's desire to press forward often leads to a headlong rush into conflict before a support base is convinced of the necessity for it. At the crucial time people must be allowed the opportunity to see once and for all that their faith in bourgeois parliaments is misplaced. Otherwise they will refuse to back any effort to replace those same undemocratic institutions.

In practice this means that the responsibility for making a tactical intervention in parliaments must be kept open. Reality dictates that this can only be done successfully in Leinster House. It is there that a pragmatic intervention stands the best chance of destabilising the establishment.

No such option exists in Westminster. Under present circumstances and for the foreseeable future, attendance at the British House of Commons would serve no purpose other than to validate the British imperial claim to sovereignty over Ireland.

Some may disagree fundamentally with this assessment. Others may find it difficult to accept in parts. One thing I would ask though, is that it be considered. We cannot remain in this unholy limbo indefinitely. The revolution which began in 1968 has been stagnating for some time and stagnation is always the death of any revolution.

**Tommy McKearney**



## Armed Struggle

It is against this broad vista that armed resistance to imperialist domination re-established itself in 1956. In September of that year a young man named Rigoberto Lopez Perez executed the dictator Somoza Garcia. In so doing he forfeited his own life. There then followed a period when up to a score of different armed movements shattered the hegemony of the Somoza regime.

The FSLN was founded against this background in 1961. Borge has been quoted as saying, "This historic event signified the peoples' alternative as opposed to the bourgeois reformist method in the struggle against Somoza."

Although the Coco River and the Bocay guerrilla front of 1963 was the first major action of the FSLN, the front in the mountains of Pancasán in 1967 was the first to be organised within Nicaragua itself, and not as an "invasion" from Honduras. The Pancasán Front was led by many of the vanguards top cadres, but despite the hopes pinned on it, the front ended in the massacre of an entire guerrilla column. By this time though the Sandinistas were testing the strategy and tactics that were to be proven historically correct.

The final period is the last two years of struggle from 1977-79. During this time the FSLN regrouped and pressed home the initiative after a number of severe setbacks suffered in the mid '70's, including the death of founding member Carlos Fonseca. This period was characterised by spectacular military successes by the vanguard and popular insurrections in the cities. It was the triumphant culmination of 18 years of tireless work with such groups as the peoples Civic Committees and the Revolutionary Students Front, spear-headed by the fighters of the FSLN.

## Primacy of Politics

Practically every patriotic liberation struggle this century has held up for emulation a hero who embodies the spirit of courage and self-sacrifice required to win. One would have thought that when Rigoberto Lopez sacrificed his own life to execute one of the most hated dictators in Latin America, that he would have been made just such an

untouchable symbol. After all, his action, in many ways, marked the beginning of the end for the dictatorship itself.

However such was not the case. Instead his action, while acknowledged as heroic, was subjected to a critical analysis which pointed to the shortcomings of the deed. Perhaps though this should be no surprise. Marxism teaches the necessity of a "concrete analysis". In the words of Tomas Borge "It is necessary to say also that it corresponded to the conditions of underdevelopment and economic and cultural backwardness that prevailed at the time. Under such conditions there is a tendency to individualise social conflicts... This also helps explain why a personal military dictator was an adequate instrument for guaranteeing foreign and oligarchic domination." The message here is that the action of Lopez Perez was inadequate and ill-conceived. This is not to suggest that Borge would have approved of it had the assassination formed part of a wider plan. Indeed such "plans" in the shape of the abundance of armed movements which arose after 1956 were found wanting after thorough analysis...

"The armed opposition movements repeatedly covered Nicaraguan territory with blood, but at no time did they manage to involve the entire people in the armed struggle... At that time there was still no theory that could make it possible to determine the character of the social forces in conflict, and to guide their strategic and tactical priorities". - Borge's stand is uncompromising. It didn't matter whether resistance to imperialism took the form of armed campaigns. His analysis always hinges on the effectiveness of "their strategic and tactical priorities" and on the social forces that they represent.

## Against Guerrillaism

Just how far the FSLN leadership were to go in their criticism can be seen from their outright opposition to one of the most widely used tactics of the Latin American freedom movements, the guerrilla foco. This idea was popularised by the experience of the Cuban Revolution under Castro. It held that a small group of trained guerrillas moving into an area could rouse and politicise the masses by the act of armed struggle itself.

However although the Sandinistas were opposed to this from the start, believing that it "isolated guerrilla warfare from the mass movement", they fell into an almost similar trap. This was during their first armed action in the Bocay and Coco River campaign. This action involved a group crossing the border from Honduras with a minimum of local infrastructure. Borge analysed this defeat as "a lack of unity between theory and practice".

In an attempt to rectify this the Sandinistas set about establishing more contacts in the barrios, workplaces, student milieus and in the rural unions. In 1967 they were ready to form a new front in the mountains of Pancasán, prepared and organised from within Nicaragua itself.

It was in the same way they documented their programme and strategic line, it was a programme which had made a complete break with "Guevarism". — "We had already made a critical analysis of the notion of the guerrilla foco... Carlos Fonseca and all the rest of us viewed it with something more than distrust. Our critical analysis of this notion was of great value in finding an adequate strategic road".



Nicaragua  
Must Survive

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Nicaragua  
Must Survive

## Mobilising the Masses

From all of the above it should be clear that the Sandinista's critical analysis - whether of Rigoberto Lopez Perez, the previous guerrilla bands, or of adherents to the foco theory - did not mark a turn to reformism. It was instead a sober calculated evaluation of the direction and effectiveness of the various movements. It enabled the vanguard to realise, what Borge called "an adequate strategic road...The combination of guerrilla struggle with mass movement, through a dialectic in which the guerrillas become the people and the people become an army".

This was the road that led, in 1978, to insurrection in the cities of Esteli, Masaya, León and Chinandega as well as popular uprisings in a number of barrios in Managua. Finally in May '79 it culminated in a general strike combined with a country-wide uprising which brought final victory to the people. Their analysis, and the whole basis of their campaign had been justified.

## Ireland : A need for Anti-Imperialist unity

So will we benefit from the Nicaraguan experience? Can we learn from the victorious Sandinistas? The Irish anti-imperialist position is in a shambles.

For this reason it is of paramount importance to state clearly that when we call for the emergence of a "vanguard party", we are referring to a body which will have the courage and the will to confront imperialism.

Having said that, it must also be stated that this article does not attempt to establish an exact model for a "liberation alliance". Obviously the concrete conditions are different here from those in an undeveloped Nicaragua under Somoza's dictatorial regime. Therefore it would be incorrect to use the FSLN as the model for Irish Communists.

Neither is this an attempt to advocate an immediate general strike throughout the 32 Counties against the latest excesses of colonial rule. Nor do we envisage instant mass demonstrations in Dublin, Limerick, Cork and Galway against the latest dictates issued to Haughey by the IMF and the World Bank. No, we understand that things are not that simple.

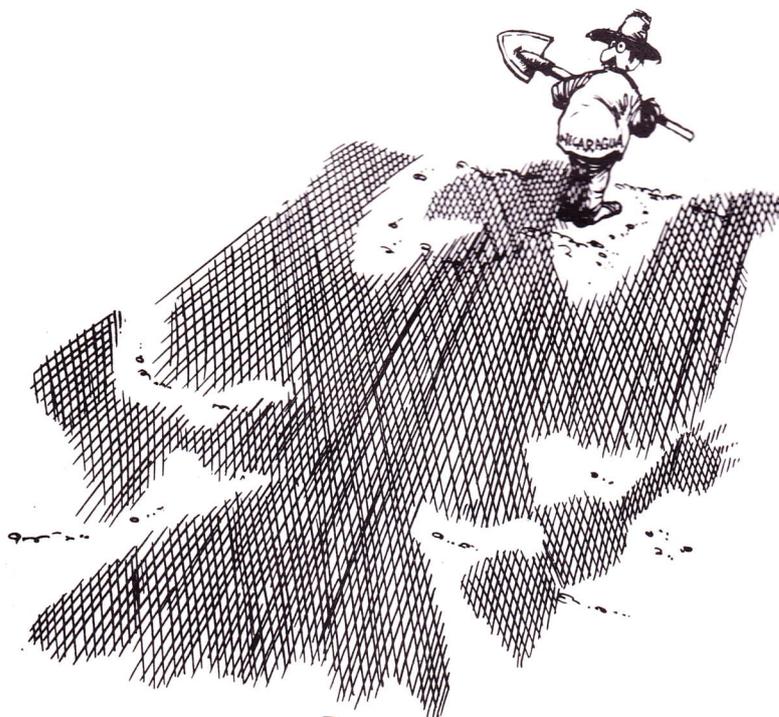
What is being stated is that Ireland, with a native bourgeoisie unable to manage for itself, is the achilles heel of 20th century imperialism. Irish communists therefore are faced with a huge complementary project. On the one hand we must find the courage to make an analysis of the concrete conditions in this country and plot a strategic

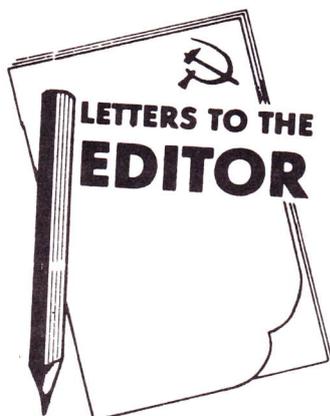
course that can successfully overthrow imperialism. On the other hand we must be clear of our own ideas and check ourselves from offering uncritical support for every militarist who happens along the way.

The task confronting us is massive, but we shouldn't fall into despair, our problems are not insurmountable. We should be inspired by the revolutionary dictum of the Sandinistas: "Pessimism or optimism? Calculation of forces. Sober approach and fervent dedication". These are the qualities that we will need.

### Sources:

*"The FSLN and the Nicaraguan Revolution"* by Thomás Borge  
*"Moving into Surplus despite cash flows"*.  
Paul Tansey, Sunday Tribune 7/8/88





## WHY CONGRESS '86?

Friends,

I recently received copies of Congress '86 from a friend active in the labour movement in Dublin. He told me a little about the origins of the group that produces your journal. As I understand it a sizeable group of Prov. IRA/Sinn Fein political prisoners of war decided that a revolutionary socialist alternative to the leadership of the Provisional Republican Movement was needed. Links were established with like-minded comrades on the outside and Congress '86 was the result. It certainly sounds like a healthy development.

I'm a bit uncertain though about what led you to break with the RM leadership. I read the piece by Liam O'Connor on the "Propaganda War", for e.g, but I'm unsure what your conclusion is. Do you advocate a cessation of armed actions against the British occupation forces until the movement builds to a level of a mass popular insurrection, (a Gaelic version of the final days of the Somoza regime in Nicaragua)?

Also do you have a critique of what went wrong with the two major previous splits from mainstream republicanism, i.e the "Officials" and the IRSP?

Considering the past experience of these latter, I guess the question I'm getting at is how does your grouping hope to avoid the "Three Plagues" that have afflicted the Irish left and republican movements at various times, namely Reformism, Militarism and Gangsterism?

**Stan Woods,**  
Oakland, California, USA.



A Lost Opportunity:  
Workers all over Ireland demonstrated  
in support of The Hunger Strikers

## REPLY FROM THE H-BLOCKS

Comrade,

Ideologically we moved away from the IRA/SF in the early 1980's. But the straw that broke the camel's back and led us to sever our links was the Ard Fheis of 1986.

Political movement in the aftermath of the Hunger Strikes took a definite up-turn. A mass movement was on the move. Left leaning organisations hoped to see the movement grow into a street-based militant organisation. We had similar hopes.

Given the proper direction, we believed there was the potential to broaden the struggle into the 26 Counties. We argued fight; for national self-determination yes but also agitate among the unemployed, the low paid and the small farmers. In short agitate and organise for a Workers and Small Farmers Republic.

Sadly things were not to take this direction. SF's stranglehold stifled the growing activity of the people. Other groups were welcome to help, but only if they buried their own party identity. The SF view was: we must not allow these groups and their members to come to prominence on the campaign, or they'll capture "our" cause and damage the electoral strategy.

The political movement drifted along into electoralist Social Democracy. The promotion of class consciousness was contemptuously pushed aside. Left Nationalism with its socialist rhetoric was in the ascendancy.

From 1982 we had been wary about the dangers of this trend. By 1986 electoralism was well entrenched. To continue to think about changing from within at this stage was day-dreaming. Anyone with a knowledge of the Republican Movement's make-up and structures

knew only too well that serious change from within meant complete rupture. Remember it's militant republicanism we are talking about. No comrade, this would have been disastrous. The winner would have been British Imperialism.

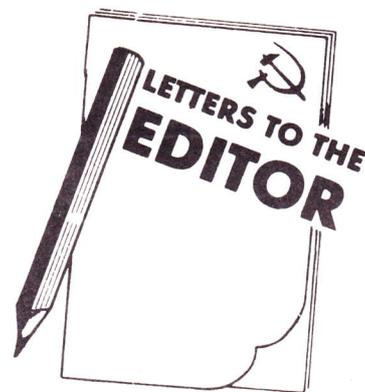
The point of departure had arrived. At the Ard Fheis the abstentionist policy was dropped without a hint of safeguards to even monitor deputies, if elected. In principle we had no objections, nor have we now, to taking seats in Leinster House. If it helps expose the Gombeenman's "democracy", sharpens the class contradictions in our society and provides a platform from which to guide the working class — participate.

Sinn Fein's populism and "sure we're all Irish" philosophy views the taking of seats differently. Expanding the electoral machine becomes an end in itself. The abortion debate at the same Ard Fheis was confirmation of this electoralist slide. An Ard Comhairle member argued that the "woman's right to choose" should be dropped, because it seriously damaged the party's popular appeal to voters. He gave an example to illustrate his point: when canvassing in a previous election, he said he was physically attacked by irate voters opposed to this civil right. Needless to say his motion was successful. Remember this decision was taken after the so-called "right wing" element (RSF) had left the Mansion House. Some would say they were blissfully unaware of their opportunism. We would say not. Objectively the result is the same.

"Do you advocate a cessation of armed actions etc." The use of physical force should be regarded as a tactic, not as a principle. But for the IRA it may not be that simple. Political violence is almost endemic to the Northern state, indeed right from its inception. The result is that the IRA are more a social phenomenon than a well drilled firm where the board of directors marshal their workforce. The IRA is not a monolithic organisation. Therefore calling on them to review the use of physical force would not have the desired effect.

Having said that, we do not hesitate to criticise the inadequacies of "propaganda by the deed". It is imperative that we continue to battle ideologically against the mistaken thinking and methods of militarism. However calls for peace should, at this point, be left to preachers and pacifists. Marxists must concern themselves with building a vanguard party and a mass popular movement, with the aim of establishing the political power of the workers and small farmers. To conclude this point, we are Marxists and therefore not pacifists. We do not condemn political violence on principle. Revolution, and all it entails, is the mid-wife of great social change.

The "Officials" and the IRSP - what went wrong? To examine this question properly more space would be needed but for now a brief sketch. A party moving to right wing social democracy, in this case the Workers Party, is not just an Irish Phenomenon. International socialism has been plagued by this tendency since the turn of the century. How do we stay clear of this



reformist trap? By remaining true to the principles of Marx, Engels and Lenin. A cursory glance at the Workers Party's position on the State, on finance capital, and the use of force, clearly shows that they have abandoned Marxism and are now pro-imperialist. Whether they were ever guided by scientific socialism is another question. But at times they were.

The INLA/IRSP never insisted on Leninist ideology. Happy to call themselves Marxist-Leninist, though their actions proved otherwise. They took the path of militarism from the start. All their energies and resources were directed into the military campaign. The IRSP, as a party, was relegated to a position of popularising the INLA's armed activity. They adopted in full the strategy and tactics of the IRA and became in effect a smaller version. Despite grandiose claims about liberation, they were objectively playing at revolution. A costly game for all those involved, involving hardship of every kind, jail or death. We have nothing but respect for the courage of their people, but the time has come to build the "other way".

Unfortunately the present INLA and IPLO are showing by their action that they do not understand the meaning of Lenin's words when he talked of the "other way" we need look no further than their most recent operations.

Documents on the shelf never prevent deviations of reformism and militarism. Any grouping that claim to be Marxist must study and use the teachings as a guide to action. Leadership must be ideological rather than charismatic. It's journal must be theoretical rather than popular. The rules of democratic centralism must be adhered to, above and below. New members must be taught the basics of Marxism and from then encouraged to discuss and study on their own initiative.

It is only by hammering out policies in the spirit of the above that a group or party can develop theoretical clarity. Only by doing so can reformist and militarist deviations be avoided. Gangsterism is a difficult area. By its nature it is secretive. But if fiefdoms are prevented from developing and no individual beyond reproach, then it is possible to prevent it. This is a practical example of the need for democratic centralism.

# Marxism and Force

## Continuing the Debate

In "Critique of the Propaganda War" and "Marxism and Force" (issues 2 & 4) Liam O'Connor called for a reassessment of tactics in the present struggle. The following letter from Sinn Fein member Seán Cullen and O'Connor's reply extends that debate. Further contributions are welcome.

Comrades,

It was with considerable interest that I read issues 3&4 of your journal. The articles and many of the ideas expressed, confirm that the communist republican prisoners and associates have a valuable contribution to make in the struggle for a 32 county socialist republic. In particular your recognition of the need for a marxist-leninist vanguard party of the working class to lead the struggle for national liberation and socialism should find a favourable response among all revolutionary socialists. Likewise revolutionary socialists will concur with you on the role of the state, and on the conditions applying to participation in bourgeois parliaments and on the purpose of such participation. Your observations on the dangers of electoralism; the limitations of "pure" republicanism; the malaise of bourgeois social reformism; the class treacherous nationally suicidal nature of pan-nationalism, and the converse value of a united anti-imperialist front; are extremely important and of contemporary practical significance.

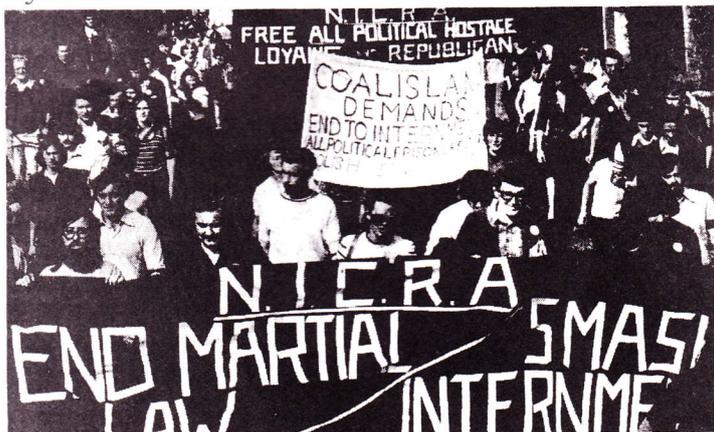
However, on one fundamental matter I must voice what is intended to be constructive criticism. That concerns Liam O'Connor's evaluation of the current armed struggle for Irish national liberation in Issue No. 4 He says, "the current campaign does not enjoy broad popular active support....As for the exhausting of constitutional means the problem here may be...that the limits of legality have never really been tested."

This is exactly the type of argument used by pro-imperialists to discredit the present armed struggle, to demonstrate its "futility", and cajole anti-imperialists into the constitutional process. The constitutional process has not been exhausted. The limitations of legality have never really been tested. The current armed campaign on the other hand has been tried and tested and cannot play a productive role in forcing a British withdrawal.

On the contrary the current campaign enjoys broad popular active support. The ability to sustain a guerilla campaign - admittedly at low intensity - over 20 years is indicative of mass active support for the IRA. Likewise the provision of safe houses and transport; participation in anti-repression marches, demonstrations and protests; acts of defiance by nationalist

working class youth against the British imperialist army of occupation, are all indicative of mass active support for the struggle for national liberation. Of course in one sense mass active support has not been attained - in the 26 counties - and it is imperative that such support is built to ensure the victory of the struggle for nationalism and socialism.

Furthermore the contention that the "limitations of legality have never really been tested" could not be further from the truth. Who could forget the manner in which loyalist state agents batted peaceful civil rights protesters into the ground or the way imperialist Britain - that bastion of bourgeois democracy, law and order - clinically executed the queen's writ on Bloody Sunday or changed the rules of election when Bobby Sands was elected MP for Fermanagh-South Tyrone?



1969: Marching for civil rights at Coalisland

The fact is that the present national democratic revolution has exposed the limitations of legality and of the constitutional process throughout Ireland. Whether the public manifestations have been of mere anti-sectarianism or mere anti-partitionism, whether the peoples' aspiration was for civil or national rights, the response of the British imperialists and their loyalist underlings was always the same - repression and violence. Similarly in the 26 counties the neo-colonial regime has sought to suppress the struggle for national liberation, censor and imprison the militant revolutionary democrats. No matter who leads the anti-imperialist struggle, national democrats or socialists, the limitations of bourgeois legality and constitutionalism are quickly exposed.

*Continued on page 18*

# O'Connor's Reply

Seán Cullen's letter displays some of the most amazing contradictions. He proclaims the need for a revolutionary Marxist-Leninist party, and then dispenses with the use of Leninist logic or process. However since this thinking is common to a number of radical elements both within and outside the Republican Movement, comment is necessary.

For a member of Sinn Fein, he makes some remarkable political admissions but then goes on to tackle what some perceive as the achilles heel of the Congress '86 group, the stand on armed struggle.

So let's just look at what Seán lists as our "valuable contribution". The need for a Marxist-Leninist party and our view of the state; our warning about parliamentary cretinism; the limitations of "pure" republicanism; the malaise of reformism and the treachery of pan-nationalism.

The point about this list is that it is not some blinding revelation, recently discovered. These points (or valuable contribution) are nothing more than basic Leninism and any party not subscribing to them is unlikely to ever become Leninist.

Sinn Fein is one such party and how a man in one breath can support Sinn Fein while claiming Leninism, is inconsistent to say the least.

If Seán believes that the "fundamental matter" of armed struggle somehow exonerates the Republican Movement for its political failings, then a sad disillusionment is in store for him.

On the question of the armed struggle, the usual trite inanities are rehashed. The evidence offered to support the claim of mass active participation is; safe houses, transport, duration of struggle and youth marching. Twenty-six County indifference is admitted but glossed over.

Apart from the fact that Seán's "evidence" of mass active participation is nothing of the sort, (some participation - yes, mass active participation - no) his glib treatment of the 26 Counties is puzzling. What kind of battle for national democratic rights is it that fails to draw in twenty six of the thirty two counties? Seventy per cent of the nation is apathetic and somebody dares talk of mass active

participation! This without straying onto the thorny ground of the non-republican people in the Six Counties.

As for Seán's selective use of "limitations of legality", this is used dishonestly to draw ridiculous conclusions. Did he read the article? What did he make of "History does not give one example of the bourgeoisie peacefully relinquishing power. From the Paris commune to Allende the lesson is taught in Blood". Does this indicate a retreat into bourgeois constitutionalism?

What my article did was outline a revolutionary Marxist stance on the use of physical force. Revolutionary Marxism never rules out the use of force - it sets rules for the conditions necessary for its employment. And before leaving the subject, i.e. force against the state would Seán care to remind us what "Standing Army Order No 8" states. Not for us is the touching faith in the heirs of Willie Cosgrave and Dev.

No comrade, before patronising us with talk of our "valuable contribution"  
*Continued on page 19*

## *Marxism and Force continued*

Comrade O'Connor makes "neither a call to arms nor a denial that they may be necessary". In so stating he rejects the use of arms now. "They may be necessary" connotes that they are not necessary now. While arguing against the current form of armed struggle (labeled the propaganda war) it is significant that Comrade O'Connor argues for the fallacious assumption that the "limitations of legality have never really been tested". Comrade O'Connor is correct in saying that he is not making a "call to arms". Instead he is (wittingly or unwittingly) making a call for a return to constitutional normality. In short the problem with Comrade O'Connor's assessment of the current armed struggle is that by seeking an end to the current form of armed struggle in order to further test the limitations of legality, and by adding for good measure that he is "neither making a call to arms nor a denial that they may be necessary", he repudiates national democratic revolution in practice for bourgeois constitutional normality in practice and socialist revolution in

theory. This is classic ultra-leftism and serves imperialist interests.

There should be no ambiguity about it. The national democratic aims of national self-determination and economic sovereignty will be accomplished only after mass revolutionary democratic struggle (i.e. people's political and armed struggle) defeats the British imperialists and overthrows their southern neo-colonial collaborators. The socialist revolution can be accomplished only after the national democratic revolution has succeeded. At the present time that means that communists must support peoples' political and armed struggle in the Six Counties and strive to create subjective conditions for mass revolutionary democratic struggle in the 26 counties, while continuing their efforts to build a marxist-leninist vanguard party of the working class to carry through the national democratic revolution to socialism.

Seán Cullen, Wexford

# WOMEN AGAINST POVERTY

By Cathy McCafferty

On Saturday October 1st women from all parts of the 26 Counties attended the National Tribunal on Women's Poverty in Dublin. The object of the Tribunal was to put Irish society on trial for the crime of poverty. Many "witnesses" gave personal accounts of how they are affected by poverty. For the purpose of this article it is unnecessary to detail these personal cases, it is sufficient to say that all of these women are living below the bread-line and are struggling to make ends meet. All of the women who spoke felt the need for radical change.

A number of workshops were also held for specific interest groups. At the end of the session each workshop proposed a series of demands. For instance the Travellers' Workshop called for travellers to be recognised as an ethnic minority. It also called for anti-discrimination laws to tackle problems experienced by travellers in gaining access to libraries, shops, pubs etc. It was also felt that there is an urgent need for a programme of further education among travellers. Because of inadequate education many travelling people have no opportunities of finding work.

The workshop on Single Parents objected to the discriminatory labels "unmarried", "separated" etc. Their demands included child-care facilities to be provided by the state. Equal payments for all women parenting alone, and that both parents should be held responsible for the rearing of children.

The Social Welfare Workshop discussed at length a new feeling of solidarity among working class women, who are all involved in the same struggle. Demands included the abolition of the dependency status of women; the abolition of the cohabitation ruling; an end to the discretionary powers of Social Welfare Officers; the provision of education for women; and that womens' work in the home be re-

cognised as a major contribution to society. Following from this that women receive a wage from the state for this work.

These are just a few examples of the workshops, there were many more. Finally the Tribunal concluded that Irish society was guilty of keeping women in poverty. Working Class women have now begun to unite against poverty, they must now fight to achieve a society which treats everyone as an equal.

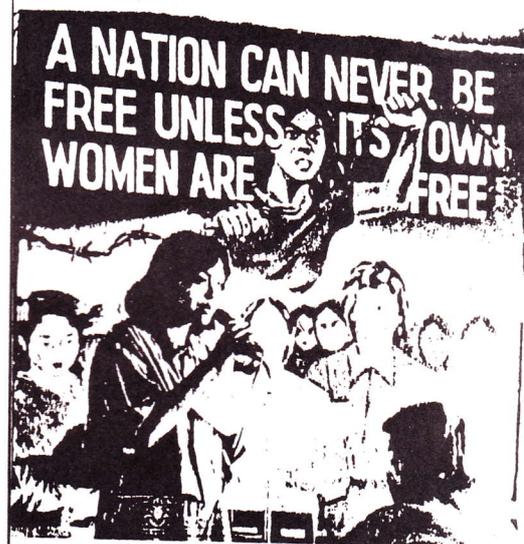
Many, if not all of the demands made by the women will, of course, be ignored by our current power brokers. Women cannot achieve full emancipation under the capitalist system. Capitalism condemns women to the role of child rearing in order to reproduce labour power. The capitalist system also requires women to remain in the home as a reserve workforce which can be used cheaply in times of economic crisis. Women will never be paid for work in the home under the present system because such work can never be made into productive labour, from which profit is made.

While continuing to organise around this programme of demands, even though some are essentially reformist, women must work to build a working class movement to oppose the present capitalist system. They must work towards the emancipation of the Working Class in general. After all womens' oppression is not biological in origin, the oppression and exploitation of women is rooted in the nature of Capitalist Society.

What is now needed is the emergence of a working class women's movement, joining ranks with the unemployed, the low-waged, community groups and anti-repression groups. An action programme must be initiated. This must include organising ourselves to fight the attack on jobs; fight low wages, particularly amongst women; oppose emigration. Women must also

demand the right to control over their own fertility and the basic right to a decent income for every home.

While the Women Against Poverty Campaign is indeed a welcome development, what is most needed now is the building of a revolutionary vanguard party to fight the very roots of poverty. It is Capitalist Society which is the cause of poverty in Ireland. Partial reforms of this system can never liberate women. Only the complete expropriation of the capitalist class will allow real power to pass to the working class. It is only then that working class women will be free from exploitation.



*Continued from page 18*

tion" and then damning us as bourgeois constitutionalists, you really should contemplate on what we are saying. Just because we have cast off the dear old soiled shirt and put on clean linen doesn't mean we've capitulated. When Alex Ulyanov died and his brother declared that there must be another way, was he capitulating or was he, in his own words - taking a few steps back, so that a proper leap forward could be made.

Liam O'Connor

## THE EXTRADITION DEBACLE *Continued*

(paradoxically, not many of whom were directly effected by the legislative change) extradition was misinterpreted. There was a frequent inability to explain it as a consequence of the dilution of national sovereignty resulting from the Anglo-Irish Agreement and commitment to the Single European Act.

Hence the reason for the main anti-extradition organisers retaining a simple faith in Fianna Fail until the very eve of Russell's departure. Indeed letters continued to be addressed to Charlie Haughey asking him to reconsider. Fifty

years after D'arcy, McNeela, Plant and others died in their custody, a strategy aimed at the "republican grass-roots" of Fianna Fail was actively encouraged.

Perhaps the most disappointing aspect of the campaign was the fact that its dependence on Fianna Fail caused many genuinely concerned people to distance themselves from the committee. No serious representative of working people could be expected to approach the hacks of a party responsible for mass unemployment, huge emigration and

vicious public service cut-backs, to ask for favours.

Kow towing to Fianna Fail was a cardinal error. If the mistake is to be rectified a new strategy must be deployed. Painstaking work must be done to gain support from the Irish working class in the struggle against extradition. Every encouragement should be given to winning leaders of organised labour, radical politicians and other representatives of the industrial working class to not only join, but to help lead the campaign. ●

### Congress '86 No. 5

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On behalf of all contributors and readers Congress '86 extends deepest sympathy and condolences to our comrade Pat Mullin, his family and friends, on the tragic and untimely death of his brother Brian and comrades Martin and Gerard Harte at the hands of British forces of occupation, August 30th 1988.

"You cannot imprison ideas. You cannot impale people's ideas on bayonets. You cannot crush thoughts. You cannot concentrate views behind barbed wire; and no amount of suppression, no amount of brutal force to hinder people in the expression of their political views and the attainment of their aspirations will ever succeed."  
Sam Kahn, South African Communist.

### Winners of Friends of Congress '86 Grand Draw

1st Prize £100 Kerry Lawlis / 2nd Prize £75 Alice Flemming/  
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