

IRISH REPUBLICAN SOCIALIST PARTY

an camchéachta



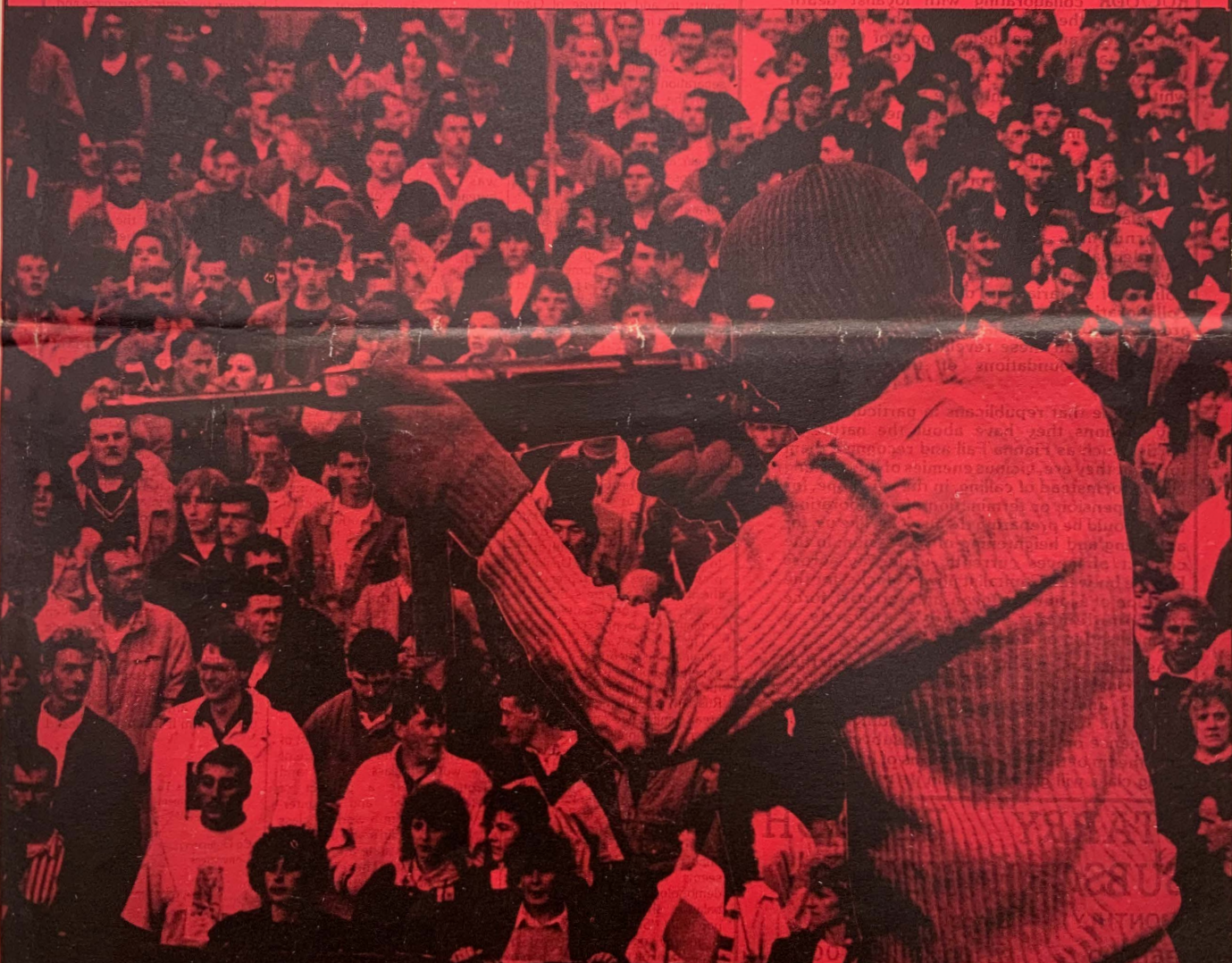
THE STARRY PLOUGH

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For National Liberation



And A Socialist Revolution

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STARRY PLOUGH EDITORIAL



The continuous revelations in the press on an almost daily basis of new 'security leaks' and the existence of an 'Inner Circle' of RUC officers dedicated to bringing down the Anglo/Irish agreement and 'terminating' republican activists comes as no surprise.

Recently we have witnessed yet another armed attack against a member of the nationalist community, this time gunmen targeted Sinn Fein councillor Brendan Curran who was visiting his father at the time in Lurgan. Those who carried out the gun and grenade attack did so with military precision and obviously had access to, and were able to pin-point, the councillor's movements.

We have stated many times in this paper that it is not just a question of elements within the RUC/UDR collaborating with loyalist death squads, but the fact that the British control and direct these and use them as part of their war machine against progressive forces in Ireland. We will therefore be inevitably faced with a white-wash in the form of the Steven's inquiry. Like all its predecessors it is designed to sanitise the bloodstained image of British imperialism.

There is no doubt that after the first security leak revelation, certain prominent people in the Loyalist camp, saw this as a way of putting strain on relations between the Dublin and British governments, and so, bit by bit, more confidential documents were released. These loyalists of course, immersed as they are in the politics of sectarianism, do not realise that the collaborating 26 county government's interests are tied to that of British imperialism and it will take more than these revelations and leaks to shake the foundations of the Anglo-Irish agreement.

It is time that republicans in particular, bury any illusions they have about the nature of parties such as Fianna Fail and recognise them for what they are, vicious enemies of the working class. So, instead of calling, in the vain hope, for the suspension or termination of collaboration, they should be preparing themselves, like us, for a refining and heightening of repression, in the context of moves currently underway across Europe between Capitalist power blocks, for the creation of a joint European 'anti-terrorist' force to complement the move towards a harmonisation of legislation.

As marxists, we have always realised that these class enemies will go to any lengths to suppress and subjugate progressive elements within the working class. The handing over of intelligence on those they see as subversives is only the tip of the iceberg in terms of how far the ruling class will go to maintain its rule.

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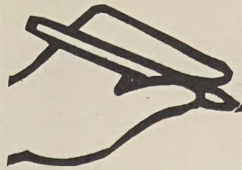
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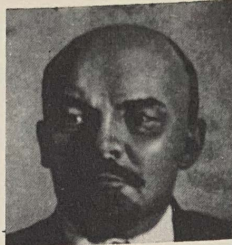
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Workers' State



Comradely greetings to the I.R.S.P., I would like to make some points to add to those of Gary O'Halloran in last month's "Starry Plough" on the nature of the Workers State.

First, capitalism depends on the separation of the working class from the means of production. The plant, machinery and factories which have been made by the workers themselves, appear as an alien force enabling the bosses to employ or sack them, pay or discipline them. This separation has its parallel in the bourgeois state. The bourgeois state is based on the separation of the working class from the state, that is the instruments of repression. The armed forces and police must be kept separate from the unarmed people. The bourgeoisie have of course all sorts of schemes to try and cover up this basic fact of economic and political life. For example, workers' participation schemes, worker-directors, employees' share schemes and parliamentary elections.

A Workers State or Dictatorship of the Proletariat is the first type of state in history in which this separation or alienation is overcome. For the workers state is the working class, organised into Soviets or Councils and with arms to enforce its decisions. Unlike all previous states which represented the minority of exploiters, this state meant the organisation and arming of the oppressed majority.

This idea wasn't invented, rather it was theorised out of the experience of the working class in the Paris Commune and later the Russian revolution. It is not of great significance one way or the other which intellectual was able to draw the correct lessons for workers democracy. Was it Marx, Engels, Lenin, Trotsky or Stalin? Unless we are looking for heroes and villains, who cares? It is the validity of a particular theory rather than its author that is important. However since Gary seems to stray into Leninist demonology we should set the balance sheet straight. Lenin's pamphlet "State and Revolution" is in my opinion the greatest exposition of the marxist theory ever made. In this Lenin quotes Marx's conclusions extensively.

One example will sum up the thrust of Lenin's argument about the democratic workers state. He says "the Paris Commune appears to have replaced the smashed state machine "only" by fuller democracy; abolition of the standing army; all officials to be elected and subject to recall. But as a matter of fact this "only" signifies a gigantic replacement of certain institutions by

Letters

other institutions of a fundamentally different type... democracy, introduced as fully and consistently as is at all conceivable, is transformed from bourgeois into proletarian democracy." (Lenin SW2 p267).

Let us turn from theory to practice. If the Russian revolution provides our greatest experience, how did the working class become separated in practice from its state?

In October 1917 a genuine workers' state was established. This dictatorship had peculiar features because the working class was only a small minority of the population. The dictatorship of the working class was necessarily the dictatorship of a minority. (Gary doesn't seem to have taken this into account).

In early 1918 a civil war broke out and the democratic features of the workers' state began to disappear. The revolution under siege met terror with counter terror. As Gary will appreciate, it is not possible to have a democratic debate when a fascist has his hands around your throat.

Nevertheless by 1920 the armed working class were victorious and began to seek the restoration of Soviets and democratic rights. This culminated in the Kronstadt uprising of March 1921. The significance of this event was that it marked the separation in practice of the working class from the workers' state. After that it was a steady march of bureaucracy into totalitarianism.

Bearing these events in mind, we can assess the three major theories of the workers state which developed out of the Russian democratic revolution and its aftermath - Lenin's "State and Revolution", Stalin's "Socialism in one country" and Trotsky's "Degenerate Workers State".

Of these three, only Lenin's was pre-1921. It was written in 1917 and reflected the optimism of the rising struggle of the working class and its great achievements. It concerns democracy and the unity of the working class with its own state.

Stalin's and Trotsky's theories were post 1921 and a product of The defeat of the working class and the separation of the class from the state. They are both theories of "a workers' state without the working class." All versions of that must be condemned as anti-marxist and anti-working class. Hence it is possible through the prism of either of these theories to see China as some sort of "workers state" even though the working class has no political power, no democracy and no guns.

Lenin's theory was a product of the revolution and the advance of the working class. Stalin's and Trotsky's were a product of defeat, retreat and counter-revolution. From a working class standpoint, Stalin's and Trotsky's theories of the state are counter-revolutionary. Therefore the question is, on which theory of the state does Red Action stand - Lenin's, Stalin's or Trotsky's?

Perhaps one final point of criticism, when Gary says he doesn't want to "enter the rhetorical arena and simply takes in the seemingly eternal debate between the state capitalists and the degenerate workers state theorists." Well, the only reason this debate seems eternal is because comrades have failed, through liberalism and sitting on the fence, to condemn Trotsky's theory as anti-working class at every opportunity. Gary should make it clear that even if he is sceptical about "state capitalism" at least he is having no truck whatsoever with

Trotsky's "workers state without the working class."

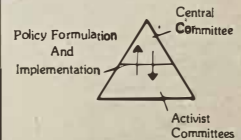
Dave Craig
Supporter of Republican
Marxist Bulletin.

Party Structure

A chara,

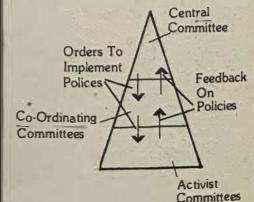
With the party having committed itself to the formation of a revolutionary vanguard, in the Leninist mould, we should now make use of the columns of 'An Camcheacht' as a forum to discuss the type of vanguard the Irish working class would best relate to and how such a structure might best be applied to the conditions which exist in our country.

A very simple model of a Leninist vanguard structure would take the form of a pyramid with the central committee at the apex and the various activist committees forming the base (fig 1). The rationale being that central committee policies can be both formulated and implemented through the direct interaction between the central committee and the activist committees.



It is obvious that with a national organisation, various levels will appear between the central committee and the activist committees. In order for such a structure to operate smoothly, an efficient chain of command becomes essential for central committee policies to be implemented in an efficient manner. Since an effective chain of command requires full co-operation throughout the structure, a feedback system is equally essential, to ensure that central committee decisions are not out of touch with the conditions at activist level.

This would leave us with a structure which resembles that shown in fig 2. In applying such a structure to conditions here in Ireland, we must be sure to take account of two very important characteristics of life in Ireland. Firstly, there is the division, albeit Brit imposed and maintained, between north and south. Even though our aspirations include removing this division, to achieve anything at all on a practical level we must first recognise that its existence has created different priorities amongst the people upon whom it has been imposed.



In recognising this division, we will be well on the way to understanding ourselves better and it is from this understanding that we will be able to develop a strategy which caters for all our needs. Secondly, there is the more natural social division between our urban and rural communities. Again recognition of this will allow us a better understanding of our situation, the different problems, facing urban and rural cadre and the need for a strategy which caters for the needs of both.

It would seem then that for a vanguard to be in any way

successful here, it must ensure that it represents the needs and aspirations of all our people. Any structure which does not take account of the needs of all sectors of our working class will become a vehicle for division rather than unity. It is therefore essential that the right of all sectors to representation at the highest levels of the vanguard is enshrined in our party constitution. This will not only serve as a safeguard for unity but will also remove the danger of sectional or clique control of both our party and the vanguard.

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Gary Adams
 Republican Socialist POW
 Portlaoise Prison

Letters Welcome

If you have any comments, questions, or you want to reply to any of these letters. Please write to the Editor, Starry Plough, 392 Falls Road, Belfast 12, Ireland.

Sinister Raid



The I.R.S.P. have condemned the R.U.C. for what it describes as a "particularly sinister" raid on the home of Mr. James McCafferty on Monday 2nd October. Four RUC personnel with blackened faces forced entry into Mr. McCafferty's home.

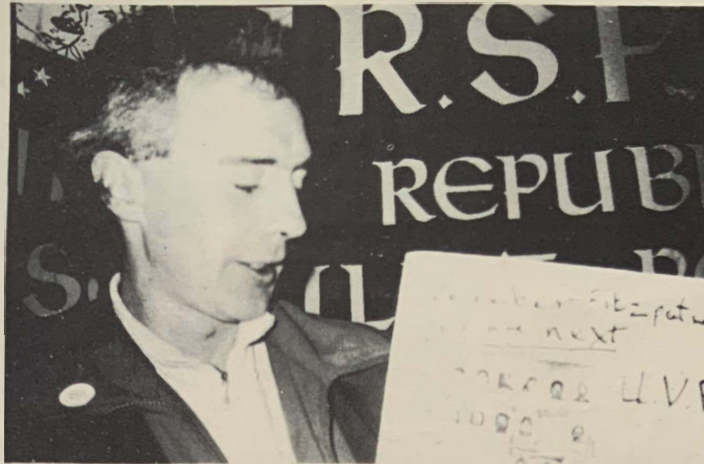
Strabane I.R.S.P. spokesperson, Eamon McCallion said "There were six people in Mr. McCafferty's home at the time, including two young women, who were verbally and physically abused in the most sexist manner. All were put on the floor with guns at their heads. Whilst the occupants were held to the floor they were verbally abused by the R.U.C. who demanded to know "where the rifles were?" Needless to say nothing of this nature was found, nor do we believe, did the R.U.C. expect to find anything."

Two youths in the house were severely assaulted, one of whom was later taken to hospital needing treatment for a suspected broken hand.

Mr. McCallion went on to say "This is the latest in what has become an almost weekly occurrence at Mr. McCafferty's home. The I.R.S.P. view these series of raids as part and parcel of a campaign of repression against those within the community who remain unbowed and defiant in the face of British occupation and Free State/S.D.L.P. collaboration.

The nationalist community have come to expect no better from an inherently bigoted force such as the R.U.C. No amount of re-structuring will change this, and no amount of S.D.L.P. semantics will make them any more acceptable to those who truly hold republican aspirations."

Going For A Leak!



I.R.S.P. spokesperson Eamon Mullen holding up a montage of photographs sent to a party member by the U.V.F., at a press conference held on the 22nd September, 1989.

The month of September witnessed enough 'leaks' to make it the wettest month in recent history. On August 29th the downpour began when the U.F.F. put on display to the B.B.C. a montage of photographs which they claimed had come from their sources within the 'security' forces. The file was produced to substantiate that organisation's claims that they had murdered Loughlin McGinn because he was included in a security force 'suspects' file and was therefore a 'legitimate' target. It was to be the beginning of a montage deluge. The difference with these 'leaks' being that there was an alternative motive for their surfacing.

Throughout September, file after file appeared in every imaginable newspaper. Virtually every political party then began to

receive intelligence dossiers through the post. On September 14th the S.D.L.P. produced a list of 25 Newry men which had been sent to a Newry solicitor. On September 22nd the I.R.S.P. held a press conference to expose a U.V.F. threat to I.R.S.P. member Hugh Torney. The day previous, comrade Torney had received a letter containing his personal details together with those of 12 other Nationalists. Scrawled across the top of the photocopied document was a threat to comrade Torney, mentioning another of those listed in the document Pat Fitzpatrick. Mr. Fitzpatrick had been seriously wounded in a U.V.F. murder bid, no doubt utilising intelligence contained in the document. Then on September 24th Sinn Fein Poblachtach held a press

conference to highlight the cases of 25 Donegal people whose photographs and details taken by the Gardai had been passed to fascist murder gangs via the R.U.C. only to end up in the London based *Independent*.

The political reverberations were to have two effects. Just after the S.D.L.P. display of the montage sent to a Newry solicitor with the resulting angry reaction from all shades of liberal and progressive opinion, the R.U.C. Chief Constable Hugh Annesely announced that he had requested that an inquiry be set up under the auspices of English deputy chief constable John Stevens. It was obvious for all to see that the public confirmation of what had been known to Nationalists for years, that there was an active working relationship between the state forces and fascist murder gangs, was having a knock-on effect to the support of the

S.D.L.P. for Britain's occupation in the six counties and putting under scrutiny the role of the Free State government in the Hillsborough accord. This in the eyes of loyalist extremists, could possibly do more for their anti-Anglo/Irish agreement campaign than anything that they had done over the past four years.

Accordingly, on October 2nd they obligingly upped the ante by directing one of their number to the *Belfast Irish News*. In a series of meetings with reporter Terry McLaughlin, the contact made McLaughlin aware of what he called an 'Inner Circle' of highly placed people within the R.U.C. who had compiled a detailed dossier of Socialist and Republican activists whom they were intent upon 'neutralising'. The convincing proof that a well placed conspiracy of senior officers committed to thwart, by whatever means necessary, the 'Republican menace' should have put paid to any glimmer of hope held by constitutional Nationalists that the Stevens inquiry would unearth anything other than what the R.U.C. wanted them to.

It is our firmly held belief in the I.R.S.P. that no matter what dead end conclusion the Stevens inquiry arrives at, both the Free State government and S.D.L.P. will give it a guarded welcome. The fact that the inevitable whitewashing of working collaboration between state forces and fascist gangs will result in the slaughter of countless more Nationalists, (to date the details of over 600 people have been publicly 'leaked') is nothing, put against the possible unearthing of what lies behind this 'tip of the ice-berg'. The reality that there is a policy of cabinet sanctioned murder of political activists. That both the vested interests of British and Irish capital are inextricably linked, further serves to ensure that nothing is permitted to destabilise their relationship.

Henry Taggart.

Papermills - Clondalkin End Of The Road



The Clondalkin Paper Mills Action Committee at Leinster House

The seven year saga of Irish workers' attempts to preserve fine papermaking ended with the announcement that an unidentified 'developer' has purchased the site of Clondalkin's papermills.

As yet it is not known what the purchasers' aims are, but they certainly do not include papermaking. It is still unclear who has bought the machinery or where it is going.

Speaking to 'An Camcheacht', Gerry Courtney, former shop steward and chairman of the Action Committee said: "This is

the end of the road for us. With the removal of this machinery, papermaking skills will be lost forever. It's a sad day for us all. The most we can hope for is a few jobs in the demolition and removal."

Courtney went on to say: "I am very bitter that we have ended up like this. We have tried every type of action we could think of. In 1982 we occupied Clondalkin Paper Mills when it initially went into liquidation. We received commitments from the Fianna Fail Party to

nationalise it. They didn't do it. After fifteen months occupation, trying to get imported paper blacked and so on, we finally succeeded in forcing the government to buy the plant and site. It took another year to get them to open it up. Two of the committee members went on hunger strike and after fifteen days the Fine Gael/Labour coalition announced it was being bought by a Canadian outfit.

It reopened in 1985 with £6 million aid from the United

States. At Christmas 1986 it closed once more - the Canadians ran out of cash. We were breaking into the markets against fierce competition. Foreign mills were dropping their prices in order to squeeze us out. This time the government refused to intervene. We were thrown to the wolves."

When asked if this situation could have been prevented, Courtney replied: "Definitely, it could. If the trade union movement had met its responsibilities and backed us totally we would have won. All we got really was some financial support and representations on our behalf to politicians, the Industrial Development Authority, and so on.

What we needed was for the movement to fight. We needed official support for an embargo on imports. We needed the unions to stand with us in the courts, to risk their financial assets for the sake of the good name and fighting traditions of Irish workers."

And how does he see the future? "I am not optimistic, certainly not in the short term. With emigration and unemployment so high, the bosses are having a field day. Kids today are working for slave wages. Conditions have gone back to the fifties. They have no protection, the unions are only money collectors. It will take a generation to build back up the movement."

I.R.S.P. Support Group Activities

Republican Socialist Prisoners Aid



Peter Jordan, a 65 year old Republican Socialist POW, was viciously assaulted on Monday 7th August by a squad of six prison officers and the next morning forcibly transferred from Long Lartin to Full Sutton in York.

Mr. Jordan had been in Long Lartin jail for several years and received regular visits from his family and those of his friends who had been 'approved' by the Home Office.

His mother who is well into her 80's is just recovering from a fall which resulted in her breaking an arm and a kneecap and Mr. Jordan had a visit booked for her to occur on Wednesday 9th August. This would have been the first time he had seen her since her accident.

At 5 p.m. on the 7th August, Peter had brought his tea back to his cell and closed the cell door behind him. Instead of his door locking automatically with the others, his door burst open and he saw a squad of six officers led by a security governor. He was told by the security governor that he was being taken to the Segregation Unit. When he asked why, he was told he was to be transferred to another prison the next morning. Peter asked to see the Duty Governor but was told by the security governor that he was Duty Governor that night. Peter then explained that he had a visit booked for the 9th and he insisted on it taking place as arranged at Long Lartin.

Peter was at this time sitting on his bed. The security governor insisted that he get off the bed and come with them but Peter refused. The command was given to "get him" and six officers leapt at him, one to each arm and leg and two others grabbing his body. The officers on his arms placed him in hand and arm locks, exerting severe pressure on his wrists causing him to shout out in agony and he felt sure that the officers would deliberately break his wrists.

He was then brought out into the corridor and forced to shuffle forwards by means of the continued hand and arm locks. He was forced down two corridors and two flights of stairs. Each time they were made to stop, increased pressure was applied making Peter scream in pain. He was taken to a segregation 'strip' cell and forced face downwards on the floor. Then his clothes were physically ripped off him and he was left naked in a cell with no windows and no furniture for over an hour.

Later he was taken to a normal segregation cell and by this time his wrists, especially his left one, were severely bruised and swollen. He was seen by a medical orderly but given no medical attention, instead he was told he was alright and would be seen in the morning, leaving Peter in extreme pain.

At 7.30 the next morning, still without any medical attention, he was placed in a prison van. He asked his escorting officer to

handcuff him by his right wrist but this was refused. After two hours non-stop driving he was finally told his destination - Full Sutton. Apart from Frankland, this is the most distant top security prison from his family. Due to her ill-health, his mother cannot possibly travel so far to visit him and Peter is refusing to issue any visiting orders as he doesn't expect people to travel so far for only a short visit.

Kevin McQuillan spokesperson for the IRSP in condemning the assault on Pete Jordan said "The IRSP views the use of regular prison transfers as a means to further punish Irish Political Prisoners and increase the difficulties for the families wishing to visit these prisoners. We utterly condemn the assault on Peter Jordan which, in respect of his senior years, can only be seen as a vicious and sadistic attack by the prison staff."

Due to his advanced years, the authorities cannot possibly perceive Mr. Jordan as a security threat and earlier this year admitted that he poses no physical threat, but is seen as dangerous because he is both intelligent and articulate.

Republican Socialist Prisoners Aid condemns the vicious and sadistic attack on a defenceless POW and will seek legal advice with a view to prosecute the officers concerned. We further demand the immediate return of Mr. Jordan to Long Lartin and will campaign on his behalf to achieve this. For further information, contact: R.S.P.A., 265 Seven Sisters Road, London N4.



Zimbabwe Departs Irishman At Britain's Behest!

Nick Mullen, a London based Irishman, appears set to become the latest victim of British 'justice' as applied to Irish people. Mr. Mullen was arrested at Gatwick on his arrival there, after he had been deported from Zimbabwe at the behest of the British government.

Prior to his deportation, Mr. Mullen had been holidaying in Zimbabwe, staying at premises he jointly owns with his business partner. These premises were raided by armed police early in the morning of Monday February 6th, 1989 and Mr. Mullen was arrested and detained. Later, he was served with a deportation order and taken to the airport in Harare.

During his detention, he was refused access to a telephone and also denied legal representation. Mr. Mullen demanded leave to appeal against the deportation order, a right which was clearly stated on the deportation order itself. This was refused outright and he was forced at gunpoint to

board a flight bound for England.

On his arrival at Gatwick airport he was met by Special Branch detectives and arrested under the Prevention of Terrorism Act and held at Paddington Green for seven days before being charged with conspiring to cause explosions. He appeared at Lambeth Magistrate's Court and was remanded in custody to await trial.

Mr. Mullen is now in a top security wing in Brixton prison where he will remain until late April, 1990 as the start of his trial, originally scheduled to begin on September 4th, has now been deferred twice at the request of the Crown Prosecution who claim to need further time to prepare a case against Mr. Mullen. This will result in his being in prison for 14 months on charges he has pleaded not guilty to.

The reason behind Mr. Mullen's ordeal lies in the discovery of a large amount of Semtex explosives and automatic weapons in a South London flat used by an IRA Active Service Unit. The police and prosecution claim that Mr. Mullen knowingly provided members of the ASU with premises to operate from and a vehicle to use. They further claim that Mr. Mullen knew of their activities, hence the charge of conspiracy to cause explosions. These are claims that Mr. Mullen categorically denies.

The facts are, that he was approached in the course of his normal business and asked to procure a rented flat and a vehicle. This he did and continued with his normal life, leaving England with his ex-wife Ms Jenny Payne and eight year old daughter Jessica on December 21st for a holiday in Zimbabwe.

Ms Payne was arrested three days after returning home and held for four days at Paddington Green. She was held in solitary confinement for this period and on the rare occasion she was allowed to take some air the police insisted that she wore handcuffs. Her daughter, Jessica, was taken into care for this period leaving the child severely traumatised.

In view of the lengths they have gone to in order to bring Mr. Mullen to trial which include: coercing the Zimbabwe government to illegally deport an Irish citizen to Britain; the planting of sensationalised stories in several newspapers alleging that Mr. Mullen was allowing his premises in Zimbabwe to be used as "a terrorist camp", which was near the route Mrs. Thatcher would use on her proposed visit to Zimbabwe; the implication that Mr. Mullen is a highly dangerous man needing the use of armoured vehicles and armed police to ensure that the short journey from Brixton prison to Lambeth Magistrates Court passed without incident totally belie any pretence that he will be afforded a fair trial.

If we are to avoid a repeat of the Birmingham 6, Guildford 4 and Winchester Three outrages, then we must immediately mount a high profile campaign in support of Mr. Mullen. We therefore invite you to join with us in our campaign to thwart the intentions of the British state to convict another innocent Irishman. For further information contact:

R.S.P.A. 265 Seven Sisters Road, London N4.

Glasgow I.R.S.P. Support Committee

In early September, Comrade Marron, spokesperson for the I.R.S.P. was in Scotland to conduct a speaking tour, organised by the Glasgow I.R.S.P. Support Committee.

On arrival at Glasgow Airport, comrade Marron was detained for 10 hours under the P.T.A. which resulted in the cancellation of the Edinburgh meeting. Despite this setback, the comrade went on to address a number of public and private meetings on the appropriate theme "Ireland 1969/1989 - 20 years of struggle".

In his speech, comrade Marron looked at the trajectory of events from the emergence of the Civil Rights Movement and the use of state violence to prevent organised protests by nationalists. Once it became clear that the Northern state was irremovable, there followed a renewed struggle for national liberation.

Commenting on the present

situation, comrade Marron stated that the struggle has reached an impasse and lacks direction. He stressed the need for the working class to fully participate in all aspects of the struggle. The comrade contrasted the high level of street activity in the 70's to the present situation in which the role of working class people in nationalist areas is confined to voting for anti-imperialist candidates in elections and taking part in the occasional march and rally.

Comrade Marron also explained the party's position on a number of important questions. He stressed that for the anti-imperialist struggle to overcome its present limitations, working class leadership was needed. By taking a leading role, communists would ensure that the struggle would not stop short of Brits out but would continue on to the achievement of a Socialist

Republic. As a communist component in the national liberation struggle, the I.R.S.P. recognises the dialectical unity of the national and class struggle and would resist all attempts to counterpose them.

It was pointed out that the I.R.S.P. recognises the internationalist dimension to the Irish struggle and therefore supports all genuine struggles for national liberation and socialism in the world today. He pointed out that support from the British working class for the Irish struggle would be a key to its success or failure. Moreover it is in the interests of British workers to see an end to British imperialist involvement in Ireland since it would hasten their own emancipation as a class.

Comrade Marron was also in Scotland to hear different perspectives on how Irish solidarity work could be conducted. This included

constructive discussions with activists involved in the L.C.I. and the *Time To Go* campaign.

The comrade also addressed a very successful social benefit for Republican Socialist Prisoners which was packed to capacity.

Commenting on the tour, Sean O'Neill of the Glasgow I.R.S.P. Support Committee stated "Despite the detention of the speaker under the P.T.A. the tour was a success, judging by the diversity of socialist and anti-imperialist organisations and individuals who attended and the quality of their questions. It is evident that there is a genuine interest in the I.R.S.P. and growing awareness of the need to build a revolutionary communist party in Ireland in order to ensure the success of the struggle for national liberation and socialism."

Irish Republican Socialist Committees (North America)

The I.R.S.P. Support Group in Regina is currently petitioning the Canadian Government to re-issue a visa to Viraj Mendis. The group want to give Viraj "the option" of temporary/permanent residence in Canada.

I.R.S.P. supporters organised a week long series of meetings in Saskatchewan for Luis Peralta, a representative of Radio Venceremos, the official voice of the F.M.L.N. (El Salvador). During his stay, Comrade Peralta was presented with a statement from

the leadership of the Republican Socialist Movement to the F.M.L.N. and the Salvadorean people. The statement will be broadcasted on Radio Venceremos to celebrate the 9th Anniversary of the founding of the F.M.L.N.

The formation of a new solidarity network in Western Canada appears certain. Spokesperson for the group, Gerry McKinney, stated that the time was right for the formation of the United Irish Solidarity



Committees, given the positive response to the distribution of the "Starry Plough" in Western Canada. The new committees are expected to merge with other support groups in Winnipeg and Regina.

The James Connolly Committee spokesperson, Sean O'Neill stated that a number of anti-imperialist groups are prepared to picket the British consul in Edmonton. This follows the arrest and detention of an I.R.S.P. spokesperson in Glasgow recently. The Brits in Canada are particularly sensitive at this time given the proposed visit on May 13th next year by Maggie Thatcher. Labour and anti-imperialist will ensure that Thatcher's visit to Saskatchewan is "disrupted from start to finish".

Press Officer:
Box 3962
Regina, Saskatchewan
Canada S4P 3R9



'These Obstreperous Lassies' (A History of the I.W.W.U.) by Mary Jones, Published by Gill and Macmillan.

'These Obstreperous Lassies' is a history of the Irish Women Workers Union from its formation in 1911 to its amalgamation with the F.W.U.I. in 1984.

It's an important work, both from the point of view of the history of the Irish Trade union movement and of feminism in Ireland. It provides a wealth of information about a vitally important part of our history, and the courage shown by these women in fighting for the right to work, equal pay and better working conditions and illustrates the gains which can be made when workers are organised.

Because it is the history of a particular union, it does go into great detail about struggles with particular employers and the day to day business of running a union, which might seem off-putting to a general reader. But all of these battles are placed in the context of what was happening in Ireland at the time and through them, we not only see the development of the union and the membership, but also the impact they made on the rest of the trade union movement and on Irish society as a whole.

The author refrains from drawing conclusions about the conflicts, both within the union

itself and outside the union. However when reviewing the book from a political perspective, it is these conflicts which are important because of the issues raised for eg. overcoming the artificial divisions created in the working class by capital, divisions between male workers/female workers, married women workers/unemployed which are important today.

The union was formed in 1911 and speakers at the inaugural meeting included Countess Markievicz, Delia and Jim Larkin and James Nolan. The need for a separate women's union arose because male trade unionists felt they were being undermined by cheap female labour and so there was great resistance to having women in their union. Also, given the inequality which prevailed, women would have been treated as second-class members of any other union they joined, their rates of pay would always have been negotiated as a percentage of rates negotiated for the men.

Notions of equality however, were far from the minds of the founder members, with perhaps one or two exceptions; women didn't even have the vote at that stage. It was because of this question of equal pay however, that the union remained a women's union for so long. When in 1934, men in the Garment industry applied to join the union, it was recognised that although it would be more beneficial for workers to organise by industry "the logic of organising by industry was so closely aligned to equality of remuneration that it became self evident folly to attempt one while the other was so clearly absent from the agenda."

The I.W.W.U. was involved with

the rest of the trade union movement in the fight for union recognition in the 1913 lockout. However when it was over, more than half its members were not re-employed and the union itself was in disarray. It fell to James Connolly with the assistance of Helena Moloney, who was to play a vital role in the union, to help resurrect it. They formed a workers co-op to develop the skills of women workers and it was from this co-op that the 'workers republic' was printed. All the women connected with the co-op were members of the I.W.W.U. and bore arms for the Irish Citizen Army. The events leading to 1916 somewhat overshadowed the normal business of running a trade union as all the leaders of the I.W.W.U. were involved in the fight for national independence and not by just making flags to hang at the GPO.

However, after 1916, with Connolly dead and Helena Moloney interned in England, the IWWU was nothing other than a name. It was then that the vital question of leadership arose. Louie Bennett was the woman who reorganised the union, a pacifist, who disagreed with linking the cause of nationalism to that of the trade union movement. It was she who, until her retirement as General Secretary in 1955, directed the manner in which the union was run. Unlike Helena Moloney she did not see that the interest of workers and capital were fundamentally opposed and she wanted reform rather than revolution.

However Ms Moloney and Ms Bennett did manage to work together for more than 20 years and did make massive gains for the women they represented, but in the absence of a clear political

perspective there would always be a limit to what could be achieved.

One of the most fundamental issues raised in this book is that of the divisions within the working class created by capitalism, which has the workers fighting over the scraps rather than claiming the joint of meat. This can be seen most clearly in the fear held by men of women worker's undermining their position. Because women were paid so much less, men were afraid, quite justifiably, that women's cheap labour would be used to replace them. The book outlines the history of the conflicts between the I.W.W.U. and the Craft Unions in particular.

As late as 1935, in a debate at the Irish Trade Union Congress on section 12 of the conditions of Employment Act which would empower the Government to ban or restrict the employment of women in industry, the delegate from the Typographical Association observed that "man was the breadwinner, woman," he said, "is the queen of our hearts and of our homes, and for God's sake let us try and keep her there."

Needless to say despite appeals to the Labour Party by the IWWU, Section 12 was passed.

However the same conflict arose within the women's ranks on the question of married women working. In 1926 in 'An Bhean Oibre' one writer to the problem page who was considering working after her marriage was told. "I think you are exceedingly selfish to want to take up a job which you don't need when there is so much unemployment." This was a commonly held view really until the 60's and 70's when the number of women wanting to remain in

work forced the IWWU to develop a policy more attuned to their needs.

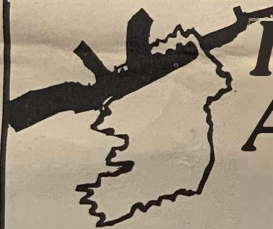
Compared to other general unions the IWWU was small and in the increasingly complex area of negotiations, it didn't have the resources to serve its members fully. The traditional areas in which it represented members like printing and the garment/laundry industry had been badly hit by new technology and many of its members made redundant, so its income was steadily decreasing. In 1984 after discussions with several unions, they amalgamated with the F.W.U.I.

The lessons are very clear for us today, it is in the interests of all workers, both men and women, to stand united against the common enemy. Today we are faced with massive unemployment and emigration and cheap labour schemes. Unless the unions unite to fight these issues, to fight for jobs which are well paid, the working class will continue to sustain the losses it has suffered in the past few years. It is clear from reading this book that when united action was taken in the printing and laundry industries in particular, workers could win.

It is impossible to raise all the questions which stem from this book as it is a fairly comprehensive study. It is definitely a book which should be read by workers and is very valuable as a reference book. It shows both the strengths and weaknesses of the trade union movement, what can be achieved when workers unite, but also the damage which can be done by inter-union rivalry and the lack of a political perspective. Buy it or else insist that your local library gets it.

Deirdre Collins

This review had to be edited, due to lack of space.



I.N.L.A. Actions

THE FOLLOWING ARE TEXTS OF STATEMENTS ISSUED TO THE REPUBLICAN SOCIALIST PUBLICITY BUREAU.

BELFAST SATURDAY 29th July, 1989

"At 8.00 p.m., a sniper opened fire on a military checkpoint set up on the Monagh Road. The volunteer returned safely to base."

FRIDAY 11th August, 1989

"At 10.30 p.m., an Active

Service Unit opened fire on a Brit/RUC patrol as they were entering the gates of the New Barnsley R.U.C. station. All volunteers returned safely to base."

TUESDAY 15th August, 1989

"At 11.20 p.m., an Active Service Unit opened concentrated fire upon New Barnsley R.U.C. station and a D.M.S.U. patrol leaving the main gates. No hits of occupation forces are claimed, no fire was returned and the A.S.U. returned safely to base."

WEDNESDAY 25th September

"The Belfast Brigade of the I.N.L.A. claim responsibility for the wounding of John Heuston and Thomas McCaughey in



Moyard Parade.

This action was taken with reluctance after repeated complaints and demands for action, by the local residents. We have an obligation to protect the people who enable us to continue to struggle. To this end, if necessary, we will take the ultimate action against the rest of this gang and their sort if they do not immediately desist from this activity and get off the backs of the people. The I.N.L.A. is a Revolutionary force not an alternative policing group.

These men are part of a gang (the rest of whom are known to us) who have been involved in the selling of drugs to youths, breaking into houses and 'joy' riding (one incident injured a child in Glenalina Rd.).

In order to give them free rein to carry out their deeds, a campaign of threats and physical intimidation was levelled against the residents of Moyard. This 'mob rule' was facilitated by the R.U.C. who have a working relationship with these people. For example, Heuston participated in a Sinn Fein press conference last year publicly admitting that he had been working for the R.U.C. in return for a blind

eye being turned to his 'activities.'

We do not relish being put in the position of having to take this type of action. 'Punishment' shootings at best deter, but fail totally to tackle the underlying root cause of anti-social behaviour in working-class areas. We give our full and unequivocal backing to the proposal put forward by the I.R.S.P. that a conference, representative of community groups and interested parties be called, to begin the process of a people-based initiative against all aspects of anti-social activity."

TYRONE THURSDAY AUGUST 17th 1989

"At 5.45 p.m. an Active Service Unit took up positions around the Townsend Street RUC station Strabane opening up with automatic fire into the forecourt. As the unit was withdrawing, Volunteers covering their withdrawal engaged a British army patrol who were running from the front gate. One soldier was seen to be hit in the 'flak' jacket in the region of the chest ... thereby saving his life. We

would urge that he views himself lucky and takes immediate steps to extricate himself from this no hope position by taking himself back home to Britain."

SUNDAY AUGUST 20th 1989

"At 3.35 p.m. after securing the area around the 'Camels Hump' permanent check point in Strabane, an INLA Active Service Unit opened sustained fire on the military personnel present. Although none of the enemy forces were seen to be hit, a military ambulance was on site within minutes of the attack."

FRIDAY AUGUST 25th 1989

"At 8.30 p.m. an Active Service Unit directed concentrated fire at the Townsend Street RUC Station, Strabane. All volunteers returned safely to base."

ARMAGH THURSDAY 14th August, 1989

"An Active Service Unit opened fire on the R.U.C. Barracks at 11.00 p.m. No fire was returned. All volunteers returned safely to base."

FRIDAY 29th September, 1989

"An Active Service Unit of the Irish National Liberation Army claims responsibility for the armed attack this morning in Armagh, on an R.U.C. armoured patrol. Because of the continued armed occupation of our country by the British Army and its active allies in the R.U.C. and U.D.R., the I.N.L.A. will continue to seek out and attack these forces of oppression whenever and wherever it is possible to do so."

Fighting Fund

The republication of **An Camchéachta** (The Starry Plough) has from initial reports been met with a positive response. This is good to know.

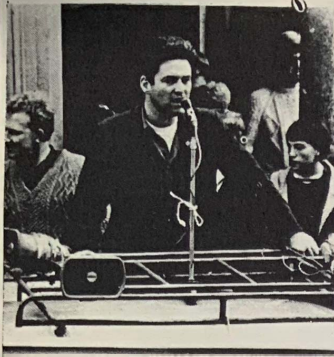
It is hoped that **An Camchéachta** can become the **Iskra** of Ireland and help build the revolutionary party which is essential to the success of the struggle for socialism in Ireland. We realise at this time that **An Camchéachta** is not of the same calibre as **Iskra** but it is a step in that direction. To change an essentially Republican paper to a vanguard paper does not happen overnight.

The importance which we, as revolutionaries, attach to the

up-keep and survival of **An Camchéachta** must be recognised. However, papers do not produce themselves out of thin air, furthermore no left-wing publication runs at a profit. Therefore in order to ensure that **An Camchéachta** can continue to appear regularly every month, a monthly fund of £600 needs to be realised, comrades. We need you to send in regular donations. Help maintain the raised banner of revolution! Send whatever you can to:

An Camchéachta Fighting Fund, 392 Falls Road, Belfast 12.

'I owe my allegiance to the



Seamus Costello addresses a meeting outside
Bray Council Chamber following his removal for
"undesirable conduct"

October 5th, is the 12th anniversary of the assassination of Seamus Costello by the Workers Party. Seamus, one of the main founders of the Irish Republican Socialist Party, was a revolutionary in the true sense of the word.

"He saw clear and far, and dared greatly. He dared to take up the unfinished task of James Connolly. Singlehandedly, as republicans and socialists all around him deviated into reformism and one-sided concentration on the class or the national struggle. Seamus Costello gave clear leadership on the unity of the anti-imperialist and socialist struggle and on the need for a revolutionary approach. He had the socialist vision - "WE ARE NOTHING AND WE SHALL BE EVERYTHING" - which the establishment recognises and fears." (Oration at the funeral of Seamus Costello, October 8th, 1977).

Seamus Costello was born in old Connaught Avenue, Bray, County Wicklow in 1939. He attended Ravenswell National School in Bray. In 1950, at the age of eleven, he moved with his family to Roseville on the Dublin Road in Bray. There were nine in his family, Seamus being the eldest.

His first interest in politics came when he read of the arrest of Cathal Goulding in Britain in 1953 following an arms raid on the Officers Training Corps School at Felstead in Essex. Costello subsequently "devoured" newspapers, according to his family, and at the age of 15, on one of his many visits to Crowe Park, he bought a copy of the *United Irishman* and immediately applied to join the republican movement. However, he was told to "come back next year." Costello did and was accepted into the ranks of the IRA and Sinn Fein.

The first Sinn Fein cumann was started in Bray in the same year, comprised mostly of members of the Dun Laoghaire cumann, their activity confined to *United Irishman* sales. However, it wasn't long before it was being sold in every area in Co. Wicklow.

During the campaign of 1956-62 Seamus, at the age of 17, commanded an active service unit in South Derry, their most publicised actions being the destruction of bridges and the burning of Magherafelt courthouse. Those under his command described him as strict but radiating confidence.

He was arrested in Glencree, Co. Wicklow, in 1957 and sentenced to six months in Mountjoy. On his release he was immediately interned in the Curragh for two years. Seamus, as a prisoner was described by fellow internees as quiet, rarely joining others in playacting, preferring deep discussion and reading. He was a member of the escape committee which engineered the successful escape of Ruairi O'Bradaigh and Daiti O'Connell amongst others.

He is remembered by one internee reading Vietnamese magazines and it impressed Seamus that peasants badly armed but with a deep political ideology could defeat their enemies. In later years he always referred to his

days in the Curragh as "my university days." He took part in the critical analysis of the 50's campaign, agreeing that it had failed due to lack of popular involvement as distinct from popular support.

On the ending of internment in 1959 Seamus assisted in the reorganising of the Republican Movement or as he put it "the cars started flying around again".

Meanwhile he began to build a strong local base in Co. Wicklow. He maintained that republicans should build a strong home base and that these could then be linked up together at a future date. He also became full time political organiser for Wicklow at this period and developed a strong link with every conceivable organisation in Wicklow that dealt with the interests of the working class. He managed to involve the Bray Trades Council in the 1966 Easter Commemoration and helped found a strong Tenants Association in Bray. He also became involved with the Credit Union movement and farmers' organisations. During this period (1964) he married a Tipperary woman Maoiliosa who became active in the republican movement.

In 1966 he gave the historic oration at the Wolfe Tone commemoration in Bodenstown which marked the departure to the left of the republican movement, the result of years of discussions within the movement ably assisted by Seamus. "We believe that the large estates of absentee landlords should be acquired by compulsory acquisition and worked on a co-operative basis with the financial and technical assistance of the State... our policy is to nationalise the key industries with the eventual aim of co-operative ownership by the workers... nationalisation of all banks, insurance companies, loan and investment companies..."

But Seamus always maintained not only the right to use armed force but the necessity for workers to be armed and this remained his position up to his assassination. "The lesson of history shows that in the final analysis the Robber Baron must be disestablished by the same methods that he used to enrich himself and retain his ill-gotten gains, namely force of arms. To this end we must organise, train and maintain a disciplined armed force which will always be available to strike at the opportune moment." (Bodenstown 1966).

He pushed for Sinn Fein to contest the local election of 1967 in selected areas and he stood with Joe Doyle in Bray. Indicative of his organisational abilities is the fact that not only were Sinn Fein the only political party to canvass every house in Bray but they won two seats on Bray Urban Council, one on Wicklow Co. Council and collected more money during the election than they had actually spent during the campaign.

At council meetings Costello and Doyle always put their cumann's views in accordance with what had been decided at their meetings. A strong attempt was always made to involve the people's organisations in any controversy or local issue. Seamus headed huge deputations of local organisations to council meetings and demanded they be heard.

He demanded the public not be barred from council meetings. So insistent was he that unsuccessful moves were made to have him removed from the council. He became involved in all local problems; housing, road repairs, water and sewerage, access to local beaches, land speculation, etc. and such national issues as ground rents, the anti-EEC campaign, anti-repression campaigns, natural resources, the national question, etc.

Meanwhile Seamus and Sinn Fein continued to build their strong links with local bodies always striving to show them their own strength while getting overall republican socialist policies across.

In 1968 he stood in a by-election in Co. Wicklow, polling an impressive 2,000 plus. He was instrumental in getting Sinn Fein to subsequently drop its abstentionist policy. Seamus remained a revolutionary, maintaining that parliament should be used, but totally rejecting that there was such a thing as a parliamentary road to socialism. He was cool-headed enough to realise this while others claimed it was sacrilegious abandonment of a republican principle. He was not an opportunist as he undoubtedly could have had a ministerial position in any government had he been willing to abandon his revolutionary politics. He stood again unsuccessfully in the general elections of 1973 and 1977.

County Wicklow he felt was Ireland in miniature. "It has within its borders all the problems common to a nation - small

farmers trying to eke out a living on poor mountain farms; inadequate housing, and industrial workers with a depressed standard of living." (RTE election broadcast March 1968).

Seamus was one of the original promoters of the civil rights strategy on the national question. He pushed hard for the establishment of the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association to involve the mass of the northern workers in the struggle. But he was a genuine republican who rejected the Anglo-Irish treaty and partition, and so did not hold the treatyite position held by many civil rights leaders that the South of Ireland was a democracy and that, on the national question, what was needed was a "democratisation of the North", a Bill of Rights and other liberal reforms in the six-county area, within the framework of a stable United Kingdom.

Seamus's response to the argument about the anti-imperialist national liberation struggle alienating Protestant workers was trenchant: "The British presence in Ireland is the basic cause of the divisions between the Protestant and Catholic working class in the North... It is the principal obstacle preventing the emergence of class politics in Ireland."

In fact while the beginning of the civil rights movement saw some Protestant and liberal involvement, the orange card was soon played. The civil rights struggle raised the national question because the sectarian Stormont government treated it as a rebellion and responded with the traditional colonial reaction.

Seamus acknowledged and adapted to the changed situation. He had adopted the legitimate demand for civil rights as a tactic in the struggle for a socialist republic, but as a genuine revolutionary he did not see such a reform as an end in itself, or a "stage" which must be gone through even at the cost of holding back the struggle for national liberation.

Seamus stayed with what became known as the Officials when the republican movement split in 1969-70. He did not want a split, and did all in his power to prevent it. Even after the split he continued to attempt to heal it, working closely with intermediaries.

The Officials began to abandon militant actions in the South and eventually in the North with the ceasefire of 1972. Seamus maintained before his assassination that he should have broken away at this stage and not waited until 1974. The two years in question were taken up with Seamus fighting a rearguard action to have accepted policy implemented while a section of the leadership implemented their own policies oblivious to Ard Fheis wishes.

Disillusionment set in the rank and file with many dropping out while a witch-hunt began of all dissidents, orchestrated by the clique in the leadership. Eventually Seamus was charged with irregularities at the 1973 Ard Fheis and tried by Sinn Fein. He was found not guilty. However, the Official IRA tried him on similar charges, with the exact same evidence (ensuring Costello's witnesses didn't turn up) and found him guilty. They dismissed him "with ignominy."

Meanwhile Sinn Fein suspended him, despite their having found him not guilty. He was refused permission to stand in the local election of 1974. Costello knew he was finished with the Officials and stood as an independent Sinn Fein candidate as he began to organise the setting up of a new party that would entwine the class question and national question as one struggle.

He topped the polls for Wicklow County Council and Bray Urban Council where he was immensely popular, being a member of the Wicklow Agricultural Committee and president of Bray Trades Council. The leadership of the Officials were dismayed by this victory. He was nevertheless dismissed ("general unsuitability") from Sinn Fein at the Ard Fheis of 1974, memorable for its undemocratic procedures (delegates refused entry at the door because they supported Costello etc.).

In December 1974 Seamus along with other disillusioned republicans and socialists, many with years of involvement in the republican movement at leadership level and with a deep involvement at local level, formed a new political party. There immediately followed mass resignations from all over the country, north and south. Entire cumann came over. And so was born the Irish Republican Socialist Party, named after James Connolly's party of 1896.

There had existed a minority opinion in the leadership of the Officials at the time of the Provo split who felt that the Provos should have



Seamus talking to a trawlerman in Arklow Harbour during the 1968 election campaign

been crushed. The growth of the Provos merely strengthened this opinion. The Officials decided to employ this tactic against the IRSP and picked Belfast to launch their campaign of murder, driving the IRSP into hiding.

Seamus, who always had a deep appreciation of the damage of "feuds", as the Officials campaign was being called by the media, and the demoralisation it would cause throughout the anti-imperialist movement, sought mediation with the Officials who refused. Eventually, Michael Mullen, head of Costello's union, the ITGWU, acted as mediator and the Officials called off their murder campaign, mainly due to their bad showing in the Galway by-election and the Northern Ireland Convention election. The "feud" had seriously affected the growth of the IRSP and stopped most resignations from the Officials. Three IRSP members were dead and scores injured. Indeed a bloody baptism for the IRSP.

In the 26 counties the State was bent on destroying the IRSP culminating in the arrest of Costello along with over 40 IRSP members, supporters and relatives in April 1976. Nine were severely tortured and six framed with the robbery of a train in Co. Kildare. Costello pushed the IRSP to sue the State and brought Amnesty International's first involvement in Ireland when they demanded "a full and independent inquiry" in May 1976 into the arrest of IRSP members and their ill-treatment.

Seamus always maintained that there existed a State conspiracy to smash the IRSP and the IRSP has ample evidence to prove this charge.

During Seamus Costello's leadership of the IRSP, he was attempting to build a strong republican socialist party that would entwine the national and class questions as one struggle. He sought to involve the IRSP in all the struggles of the Irish people; trade union work, housing, fisheries, the struggle for women's emancipation, the national question, the struggle of small farmers, tenants, the cultural struggle, sovereignty, the struggle for control over our natural resources and the struggle against repression etc.

He could speak to Dublin's unemployed, Derry's harassed population, or Wicklow's farmers, and reach them all. No struggle of the working class was too insignificant for his involvement and despite his national commitments, his organisational duties as full time IRSP political organiser, he always found time to honour his commitment to his constituents in Co. Wicklow.

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the working class': Seamus Costello



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At the time of his assassination he was a member of the following bodies: Wicklow County Council, County Wicklow Committee of Agriculture, General Council of Committees of Agriculture, Eastern Regional Development Committee, Bray Urban District Council, Bray branch of the Irish Transport and General Workers Union, Bray and District Trades Union Council (of which he was president 1976-77), the Cualann Historical Society, chairman of the Irish Republican Socialist Party. From the period between 1964 and 1974 he held the positions of Adj. General, Chief of Staff and Director of Operations in the Official IRA and the position of vice-president of Official Sinn Fein.

Seamus Costello 1939-1977 Political Biography, published by the Seamus Costello Memorial Committee.

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It is important in the assessment of any historical figure and Costello in particular to remember what he himself said in 1968: "The dead don't belong to us, we don't belong to the dead." Even after twelve years, the subject of Costello's political life and aspirations culminating in assassination still arouses an emotive reaction, especially in the party which he was instrumental in founding and totally dominated for its first three years of existence.

In this case it would be easy to fall into either of two trends; that of knocking and demolishing the figure in order to demonstrate a break from the past and the left nationalist position which the I.R.S.P. held at that time; or, on the other hand, a non-critical approach which eulogises the hero and sees the embryo of communism in his left nationalism, an embryo which was not allowed to develop. In attempting an analysis, it is vitally important to remember that individuals do not make history. They may influence events, but they themselves are a product of the political and economic conditions in existence at a given time.

It is with this in mind that we must examine the legacy left to the IRSP by Costello and assess its value to a party which aspires to be the vanguard of the working class.

The assassination of Seamus Costello in 1977 was a severe blow to the Party in more ways than one. By 1977, to all intents and purposes, he was the IRSP. His workrate, dynamism and sheer force of character left him, in effect, in total control of the Party. All these excellent character traits added up to a very serious organisational weakness, which was painfully exposed on his death. The

analogy of the headless chicken which has been used to describe the IRSP after Costello's death aptly describes the period of confusion and lack of direction which lasted many years.

His organisational methods would not find acceptance in the IRSP of today. His idea of republicans building a strong home base which could be linked at a future date, runs counter to the concept of the party being run on democratic centralist lines. The "home base with future links" was a recipe for independent and totally uneven growth, and a fertile ground for the emergence of little power bases for the personally ambitious and without the dominance of the unifying figure, the unity was largely non-existent.

The various manifestations of Ard Comhairle in the succeeding years were little more than liaison committees between the various areas. Political action on a national scale was confined to reactions to major events such as the massive escalation of the H Block campaign with the onset of the Hungerstrikes of 1980-81. The organisational shortcomings were obvious to a newer membership in the early 1980's as was the distinct lack of political theory and direction.

While the military campaign waged by the INLA continued in the six counties, there was little to distinguish it from the IRA and the Party had clearly failed to develop into the revolutionary socialist vehicle which Costello aspired to develop.

Until 1984, when the Ard Fheis formally adopted a marxist position, there was a distinct lack of theory - there was no firm direction beyond the slogan of "for national liberation and socialism", with the result that there was no clearly defined goal to be aimed for. What emerged was a situation where the call for the "Broad Front" became the be-all and end-all of IRSP policy.

The question of the Broad Front has been examined in 'An Camcheacht' No. 4. However it is worth touching on it briefly, and quoting a small part of the IRSP proposal to the anti-imperialist Front in 1977, if only because it has resurfaced as a Sinn Fein scenario for a post-British withdrawal situation.

"That the Irish anti-imperialist Front demands the convening of an all Ireland constitutional conference representative of all shades of political opinion in Ireland for the purpose of discussing a democratic and secular constitution which would become effective immediately following a total British military and political withdrawal from Ireland."

Perhaps because it was the last major political effort before his death and one to which Costello attached such importance, the pursuit of the Broad Front assumed a level of importance to the IRSP which was totally out of all proportion to the realities of the political situation in Ireland. Certainly the years of quest for the holy Grail of the Broad Front was of no benefit to the IRSP's basic raisons d'etre, the emancipation of the working class and the achievement of national liberation.

Costello's concept of the Broad Front was a natural development of his past political methods and experiences. He always sought to involve every group or organisation, which was affected by a particular issue, should they be local farming associations, tenants' associations, trade unions etc. in every issue in which he was involved. He took part in what was de-facto a united front and these united fronts achieved countless local victories. Naturally his experiences led him to believe that the same tactics could and should be applied to the anti-imperialist struggle, encompassing both the social and national struggles.

Of course the problem became that of confusing tactics and strategy. The elevation of tactic to strategy did not bring success. Anti-imperialism was much too broad a concept to be tackled in the same manner that single, clear-cut issues could be. The different elements involved (from economism to nationalism) each had their different conceptions of the immediate tasks facing anti-imperialists. Judging by the seven basic demands put forward, the Front was anti-British occupation. In other words it leant strongly towards nationalism.

In hindsight, it is easy to see that the IRSP itself, the prime movers of the initiative, had not fully studied the implications nor worked out any specific steps, timetable or logical sequence of priorities in the pursuance of anti-imperialism. In effect the IRSP was willing to submerge its particular political outlook in order to act as some kind of catalyst which would bring about the formation of the old National Liberation Front/Popular Front.



Seamus Costello speaking at Bodens town

That the party in the years after Costello's death should continue to hang on to this concept shows a serious lack of analysis, not only of the Broad Front idea, but also of what imperialism was. Clearly, the left nationalist approach saw it as the yoke of British domination and not as "the highest stage of capitalism." It was totally contradictory for a revolutionary socialist party to seek to submerge itself in such an amalgamation of divergent forces.

Of course Costello was always a person of practice rather than theory but some of the statements he made show an instinctive understanding of the basic problems of the "Irish question". He saw one of the reasons for the failure of the 1956/62 campaign as being the lack of popular involvement as opposed to popular support.

The present impasse in the national liberation struggle can be blamed on the lack of popular involvement. In fact the last instance of major popular involvement was the Hunger strike campaign in 1980/81. The IRSP believes that the working class, through a genuine communist party, must be actively involved in the anti-imperialist struggle for the overthrow of both capitalist forms of government in Ireland.

It is clear, that in the north for the past twenty years there has been a revolutionary situation. The subjective forces (mainly the republican movement) have taken a lead and influenced the direction of the struggle. That lead has, unfortunately, nationalism as its basis and nothing beyond nationalism apart from outbursts of social democratic rhetoric. Thus the national liberation struggle through the purely nationalist nature of the main protagonists, has been confined to the six counties. As the war has continued, it has been allowed to become less and less relevant to the working class of the 26 counties.

This of course suits the pro-imperialists of the Workers Party and Labour Party who under no circumstances want a revolutionary change in Irish society. Attempts have been made through the anti-extradition campaign and most recently, the Forum for a Democratic Alternative (FADA), to mobilise some kind of mass involvement, but these campaigns have been diluted to such an extent that not even the all encompassing nature of the appeals can have anything more than a minimal impact. The recognition of the need for "popular involvement" has produced another useless talking shop, where a march is seen as positive action.

The largest body promoting national liberation continues to rely on popular support whereas Costello advocated, and where possible practised, popular involvement. Involvement brings an identification with the struggle on no matter what level; passive recipients of the benefits provided by a few, an elite, will only passively defend those benefits should they come under attack.

The "physical force" approach which is still at the basis of republican nationalism was recognised by Costello. In 1976 he severely criticised this approach: "Because they were nurtured in the tradition of the heroic and lonely sacrifice and the tradition of carrying the torch to the next generation,

they saw themselves as an elite sect who would hand freedom to the people on a plate. The fact is that the elitist and conspiratorial approach is no substitute for the development of a people's struggle."

What Costello said was correct, but we would be more specific and say that the struggle must be of the working class, with a revolutionary party of that class in the lead. At a time of discontent in the Free State, with massive cutbacks in every field from welfare to education, all of which hits the working class (employed or unemployed) hardest, there is an obvious need for a revolutionary party which can expose the "socialist" rhetoric of the Workers Party and Labour Party and which seriously aims to overthrow the present rotten system. It also gives a whole new impetus to the question of national liberation, and the border which divides the working class of the island as a whole.

Certainly Costello's attitude to a parliamentary road to socialism cannot be criticised: "It would be the height of folly for anybody who claims to want to see a socialist revolution in Ireland to ignore the fact that all key personnel in the political parties, the civil service, the judiciary, the military, para-military and police forces are drawn from the capitalist class and are going to protect that class, come what may." And again there can be no argument about how to overcome that class as he pointed out in 1966: "The lesson of history shows that in the final analysis, the robber baron must be disestablished by the same methods that he used to enrich himself and retain his ill-gotten gains, namely force of arms."

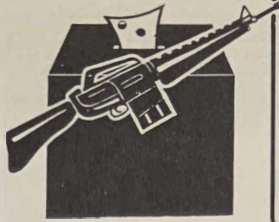
At the present time, the IRSP is a marxist/leninist party, committed to the overthrow of the capitalist system of government in Ireland. How are we different in 1989 from what we were in 1977? is an obvious question. To answer this it must be said that the party of 1977 must be seen as "left nationalist" rather than communist.

Today we see ourselves as the only party capable of educating, agitating and giving political direction to the working class. We see the struggle of the working class in its international context; the working class transcends all borders. However we cannot live under military, economic and political domination from another state, hence our support for the use of arms against armed aggressors.

We have a way to go before we can call ourselves the vanguard party of the working class. Yet the only hope of success for the struggle for the liberation of the working class and the liberation of Ireland lies with the working class. As Lenin wrote in "What is to be Done?": "For it is not enough to call ourselves the 'vanguard', the advanced detachment; we must act like one; we must act in such a way that all the other detachments shall see and be obliged to admit, that we are marching in the vanguard."

Francis Glenn.

"Armalite And Ballot Box" Strategic Failures



A Commemoration was held in Derry on Sunday, 4th September, to honour the three I.N.L.A. Hunger Strikers, Patsy O'Hara, Kevin Lynch, Mickey Devine and other dead Volunteers of the organisation from Counties Derry and Tyrone.

Around 250 people led by an eight person I.R.S.P. colour party and the Vol. Brendan Convery Band (Bellaghy) marched to the Republican Socialist plot in the city's cemetery. There was a heavy RUC/British army presence in the area from early morning. However they kept their distance and the march passed off without incident.

At the cemetery the assembled crowd was addressed by party spokesperson Eamon Mullan who recalled the sacrifice made by the people now buried within the plot. Wreaths were then laid by the relatives of the dead Volunteers, the G.H.Q. staff I.N.L.A., Central Committee and Derry I.R.S.P. A minute's silence in memory of the dead was followed by the introduction of the main speaker, Dermot McBride of Dublin I.R.S.P.

Giving a Socialist/Republican assessment of the struggle to date, McBride examined the combined 'Armalite-Ballot Box' strategy of

Sinn Fein. "The strategies of the Armalite and Ballot Box have failed to defeat British imperialism both separately and together. Twenty years of sustained warfare has failed to dislodge the military grasp of the six counties. Republican gains from electoralism in the six counties have reached their limit. In the twenty-six counties there have been none."

McBride then went on to ask what programme must be adopted to achieve victory? "To win we must develop new political strategies which will mobilise the working class throughout the 32 counties in the fight for National Liberation and Socialism. The 'Scenario for peace' much vaunted by Sinn Fein does not figure in this strategy. The plans initiated by their call for the formation of a Broad Front clearly shows why. In place of calling on various groups with well established records as pro-partitionists and pacifists to search their consciences and come to our aid, we must instead set about deepening the struggle with a determined effort to rouse the natural allies of our cause.

Throughout the 32 counties

we must rouse the unemployed, the low paid, the bankrupted smallholders, the youth facing emigration, the women denied equality and all oppressed sections of the community. We must cultivate a consciousness of class independence and self-reliance in them. We must win them to the banner of socialist revolution and national liberation. None of this is included in Sinn Fein's scenario for building a democratic alternative."

McBride concluded "Developing this revolutionary strategy is our key, our guarantee for victory. This is how we will repay the debt owed to the Volunteers we honour. This is how we meet our obligation to end the suffering of the Irish nation. This, comrades is how we liberate our country and our class."

I.R.S.P. On U.D.R. Bullets Issue

Reacting to Peter Brookes confirmation that the U.D.R. are to be trained and issued with plastic bullet guns, I.R.S.P. spokesperson Kevin McQuillan said.

"The statement from Peter Brook on their intention to follow on with the issuing of Plastic Bullets to the U.D.R. at a time when the regiment is at the centre of the 'leaks' controversy, shows clearly the contempt in which the British hold the input of the 'Irish' government to the Anglo-Irish process.

"If this is the position of the British on such a sensitive issue, one does not have to guess what their attitude will be to 'Irish' demands on the 'security force' collusion with Loyalist murder gangs.

"Charles Haughey should at least have the decency to admit that the only role for the 'Irish' government in the Hillsborough agreement is to rubber stamp draconian counter-insurgency actions in the six counties," concluded Mr. McQuillan.

Coming Events

March and Rally against the Broadcasting Ban
October 19th.
Assemble outside BBC, Portland Place, London W1 (Oxford Circus Tube) at 12 noon.
March to rally at Dominion Theatre (Tottenham Court Road Tube).
Lobby of Parliament, St. Stephen's Entrance, House of Commons at 2.30 p.m.
Organised by the N.U.J.

Terence MacSwiney Commemoration
March and Rally
Saturday, October 28th
Assemble Kennington Park (Oval Tube Station) at 12.00 midday.
Organised by the Terence MacSwiney Commemoration Committee.

Manchester Martyrs Commemoration
March and Rally
Sunday November 26th
Assemble Longsight Market, Dickenson Road, Manchester at 12.30 p.m.
Organised by the Manchester Martyrs Commemoration Committee.

Seamus Costello Commemoration



A well attended commemorative march took place in Bray, on Sunday 8th October in honour of our comrade and founding member, Seamus Costello, who was assassinated by the Workers Party, on October 5th, 1977.

A seven person colour party led the colourful parade, which included the St. Kevin's Pipe Band and the Brendan Convery Flute Band from South Derry, which made its way from the Town Hall to St. Peter's Cemetery.

At the Seamus Costello Memorial, Comrade Eamon Mullan opened the proceedings by calling on the St. Kevin's Pipe Band to play Amhran na bhFian, this was followed by the laying of wreaths on behalf of the Central Committee I.R.S.P., G.H.Q. staff and volunteers, I.N.L.A. and Republican Socialist Prisoners. A minute's silence was observed followed by a lament played by the pipe band.

Comrade Mullan spoke briefly on the outstanding contribution that Seamus Costello had made to the struggle for national liberation and socialism, and then

introduced the main speaker, Dublin comrade Paul Billings. Comrade Billings opened his address by paying tribute to Seamus Costello, a dedicated and committed revolutionary stating: "Today, we honour the memory of a comrade whose contribution and relevance to the development of the Irish liberation struggle is woefully neglected and underestimated by the anti-imperialist movement as a whole.

As the founder of the Irish Republican Socialist Party and the Irish National Liberation Army, he strove to place the interests of the working class and the poor farmers at the centre of the national struggle. As a true successor to James Connolly, Costello saw no point in freeing our land of foreign oppressors in order to let our own exploiting classes flourish in their place.

Tragically, 12 years ago this month, he was murdered in the prime of his life by counter-revolutionary assassins of the Workers Party, former comrades who had crossed

over the barricades to the side of the enemy."

Comrade Billings went on to talk about the Broad Front and its central role in the strategy of the I.R.S.P. in its formative years and where the I.R.S.P. stands in relation to the Broad Front now: "The aim of the Broad Front was to widen the base of the liberation struggle to more than military resistance to British occupation forces.

Our criticisms today do not in any way diminish the farsightedness of Seamus Costello's political leadership. It does not negate the progressive character of the Broad Front initiative. At its heart was a concrete understanding of the necessity to develop a full social and political programme on a truly national scale, which would extend the anti-imperialist struggle beyond the narrow limitations of the armed struggle.

It is a measure of how advanced was the formal political programme of the I.R.S.P. at that time, when we consider it has taken the

Republican movement up to the late 1980's to reach even this position. It is also an indication of the damage to the working class and liberation movement that his untimely murder represents. Not only was the Republican Socialist movement beheaded - but the class struggle as a whole suffered painfully the consequences of the loss of this great revolutionary leader.

Our criticisms of the Broad Front are directed at its status as a strategy rather than as a tactic. We do not disagree with its essential aims, a broadened base for our revolution, but with its methods. Yes, we are for the widest possible involvement in the national liberation war. Yes, we are for unity in action with other anti-imperialist forces. But the difference is this: We see the Broad Front, or more correctly, the United Front as only one tactic and not as our entire political programme.

We are for joint action with other political organisations on specific issues with specific goals. But underlining all our campaigns, whether they be alone, or in unison with others, is the recognition of the necessity to build the revolutionary party as the only true instrument of liberation, nationally and socially, for the oppressed people of Ireland. And this party can only successfully be built, if it is based on the scientific socialist theory of Marxism. It must be guided by the revolutionary doctrines which inspired James Connolly in 1916, the Bolsheviks in 1917, and all subsequent conquests made by the international working class and national liberation movements."

Comrade Billings gave praise to the determination of comrades to defend the movement, often paying with their lives: "For the pioneers of our movement, the primacy of politics came to mean, above all else, the primacy of the survival of our movement. And this, comrades is one of the most important, if

not the most important legacies of our comrade Seamus - the determination and the readiness to defend ourselves, our cause and our class by any means, no matter the cost.

That we are gathered here today, regrouped and reorganised, with our paper re-established and our politics revitalised, is proof that this is a living legacy.

It lives in the courage and heroism of the volunteers of the Irish National Liberation Army who defended in 1987 this party's right to exist. Their steadfastness in the face of counter-revolutionary terror in those dark months and their unyielding commitment to socialist republicanism, marks these comrades as true and worthy inheritors of the Costello tradition."

In closing, Comrade Billings reminded us of the tasks that lay ahead: "Seamus Costello did not leave us any ready made solutions to the Single European Market of 1992. Or to the Anglo-Irish agreement, or to Extradition or the state sponsored Loyalist death squads, or to unemployment, emigration, or the National Recovery Plan and all the other problems facing us.

What he did leave us, comrades, was the example of his life as a revolutionary socialist and the founding of the Irish Republican Socialist Party and the Irish National Liberation Army.

This is the political bequest of the man whom we commemorate today. Let us do justice to his life. Let us honour the memory of the greatest product of the Irish working class, and its greatest leader since James Connolly.

Build the Party of Seamus Costello - the Irish Republican Socialist Party.

Onward to National Liberation and Socialist Revolution!"

Comrade Mullan in closing, read a short tribute written shortly after Costello's death by a close friend and comrade. He then thanked everybody for attending and a special thanks was extended to the bands.

F.M.L.N. 9th Anniversary



Revolutionary greetings and solidarity from the leadership of the Republican Socialist Movement to our heroic comrades in the F.M.L.N. (El Salvador) on the 9th Anniversary of their inception.

The Irish Republican Socialist Movement sends revolutionary greetings to the Farabundo Marti

National Liberation Front on the 9th anniversary of the founding of the Front. The endurance and heroism of the F.M.L.N. and the Salvadorean people are an inspiration to all those who are fighting against repression throughout the world.

Imperialism is international and it pursues its hegemony by every means, through puppet governments and open threats against those who would aspire to self-determination. Basic human rights

are not part of the imperialist make-up.

In Ireland, the yoke of the oppressor has been on our backs for 800 years. We are still fighting against that oppressor, but we in the Republican Socialist movement recognise that national liberation is only part of the struggle. As revolutionary communists, our goal is the destruction of the capitalist system and the establishment of a workers' republic.

We also recognise that the struggle for socialism and the socialist ideal transcends all borders. For this reason, expressions of revolutionary solidarity are very important. Internationalism is not a matter of mere rhetoric. It should be a concrete reality, a reality which will eventually bring about the destruction of the world-wide system of exploitation. Every blow struck, in whatever country, against that system is one which will further weaken capitalism.

Once again, we salute the fortitude of the F.M.L.N. and wish you a full and total victory against the forces of reaction in El Salvador.

Victory to the F.M.L.N. and the Salvadorean people. Victory to the I.N.L.A. and the Irish working class.

72nd Anniversary Of The Russian Revolution

On November 7th (October 25th, old Russian calendar), we mark the 72nd anniversary of the single most important event of the 20th century. In 1917, the Bolshevik party led the Russian working class to power in the first ever successful socialist revolution.

This historic victory validated Marxism for all time as the science of working class revolution. It confirmed Marx and Engels' theory that the class struggle was the driving force of history and that the working class was the only historical force which could replace the capitalist system. It proved that its role was a revolutionary one - and that given the correct leadership, the working class is quite capable of fulfilling it.

By seizing power in Russia, which was an underdeveloped semi-feudal economy and an empire, this great revolution demonstrated two other significant features which are of direct relevance to revolutionaries in Ireland. These are (1) in this age of imperialism where the developed capitalist powers dominate the world economy, there is no possibility of a new independent capitalist class developing in the subjugated colonies and nations, with the ability to achieve full political and economic sovereignty; and (2) because of this situation, the working class in these countries must lead its anti-imperialist allies in the struggle for national liberation and socialism.

The October Revolution not only teaches us that capitalism can be overthrown but through the creation of Lenin's Bolshevik party, it gives us the model instrument for carrying through this task.

Seventy-two years on, the ruling Communist Party in the Soviet Union is wrecked by enormous social, economic and political problems. Food queues lengthen as shortages grow. Workers are forced to resort to strikes to secure basic wages. The entire population of the USSR and its allies in the so-called Eastern bloc is in turmoil. Racial pogroms have re-emerged, with forced emigration of ethnic groups; voluntary emigration by young, skilled workers. Huge movements have developed for cultural and religious rights and national independence.

The Communist Party is itself in grave crisis, torn between the so-called hardliners and advocates of Gorbachev's glasnost and perestroika campaigns. As the soviet ruling bureaucracy turns increasingly to world imperialism for assistance in overcoming its economic failures, more and more voices are being raised in favour of the restoration of capitalism. In Poland the Communists no longer form the government. Their replacement has declared openly for the restoration of the free market system and is being encouraged openly with material and political aid by the United States. Hungary hints at leaving the Warsaw Pact. This is only a tiny portion of the problems besetting the Soviet Union and eastern Europe today.

These developments pose questions of fundamental importance for revolutionary socialists. Has the 1917 October Revolution, the first socialist revolution, been in vain? Have all/some of the gains been lost/overturned? Is socialism unattainable and/or unworkable? Is imperialism invincible ... and so on?

These are only some of the issues which must be confronted, squarely and honestly. How else can we define our vision of a socialist Ireland and our theory and practice of achieving it, except by reference to the history of the October revolution.

It is impossible to achieve goals that we do not believe are achievable or do not believe deep down worth achieving! We must be totally clear on all our goals. We must fully understand the best way to bring victory. Our very existence, our struggles, our sacrifices, mean in practice that we do not believe that Marxist objectives are unrealisable. We are engaged in the revolutionary struggle - we have no choice but to respond to the situation we find ourselves in.

This is a major point to bear in mind as we examine the relevance of marxist revolutionary theory, of all the 'isms', the lies, the slanders, the betrayals, the victories, the truths and the successes. The history of humanity's social development has created the situation, regardless of anybody's wishes or beliefs, where there is, and there has to be, a struggle by the working class for socialism. That is the starting place, and Irish republicans and socialists are a long time started. For many of those who have dominated the theoretical 'debate', who have 'proved' this and that, there has always been the luxury of abstention from the fight.

The success of the October revolution, and it was a success, was due to the role of Lenin's Bolshevik Party. In acting out its historic mission as midwife to the workers' revolution, Lenin's party confirmed for all time the validity of Marxism as a scientific guide for revolutionaries. Not as a recipe or a prescription for guaranteed success but as a set of theories that most correctly understood and interpreted historical reality.

In saluting the achievements of the 1917 Revolution, (the conquest of power by the working class, the social ownership of all property, the planned economy and state monopoly of foreign trade) we do not of course blind ourselves to the dangers they face today. The threat of capitalist restoration is very real. The task is posed now for marxists to understand how these difficulties arose and to affix political responsibility for them. The gains of 1917 have not yet been lost. Their continued existence, let alone their expansion, depends on the world communist movement. And the communist movement depends on resolving in the struggle for world socialism, the question posed now by history; **What has gone wrong in the Soviet Union since that great day on November 7th 1917?**

Sri Lankan Terror

In the early hours of January 18th, Viraj Mendis was forcibly taken away from the Church of the Ascension in Manchester where he had sanctuary. He was deported two days later to Sri Lanka. For over two years, Viraj had been fighting his deportation, citing that he faced certain execution by government forces and their right wing death squads. The following is an extract from one of many reports sent by Viraj Mendis about the current situation in Sri Lanka.

"The dark water of the Kalu ganga (Black River) had bloated the dead body to double its size and turned most of the skin white. The face was jet black from burning and its features unrecognisable. The fast flowing water spun the spread-eagled naked male body as it took it to the open sea.

As I regained composure, two young boys were staring at my feet. I had not been able to avoid splattering my feet as I threw up all over the brand new bridge, but I had succeeded in avoiding vomiting into the river where the body was. The boys, eight or nine year olds, were watching me with knowing eyes. They had obviously seen it all before, including the vomit. I asked them how many bodies they had seen, one of them replied "hundreds".

As I walked away I tried to concentrate, to put out of my mind the feeling of powerlessness and terror, and to put out of my mind the urge to do something to facilitate the burial of the body. I chanted to myself "there is nothing I can do about this" over and over again. The whole point of the exercise, these killings by the armed forces, was to strike such terror into the people, that they would not support the "subversives", the J.V.P.

I did not have to wait long for a repeat performance. Two days later, on arriving in Kalutara, I saw another body - this time it was washed ashore and was being pushed up and down by the waves just in front

of the house I was to stay in. This time the body was clothed.

That afternoon a reporter from the "Island" turned up suddenly at my relatives house. He wanted to interview me about my "plans". I reiterated that I did not wish to speak to him about my "plans" and told him to stop harassing my relatives. I asked him why he should be interested in me now, six months after my deportation, and at a time when there is total censorship. I told him his time would be better employed exposing the terror unleashed by the armed forces. "You mean like the six bodies found in the river today?" he said, and started to complain that the censorship does not allow it.

At about 8 p.m. that evening, a police jeep filled with men armed with sub machine guns turned up at the house inquiring about me saying they had received a phone call for me from someone in Kurunagalla and they were just checking if this was the right house, and if this person were to phone again they know where to come! I don't know anyone from Kurunagalla. The next day, Friday, a jeep load of armed police arrived, again looking for me. This time at 7 p.m. I have informed a human rights lawyer about this and asked my Kalutara relatives to refer the police to him if they come again.

The slaughter during the last few weeks in the South by government forces has been unprecedented. Hundreds of dead bodies have been found in each village where a JVP presence is detected. The British SAS trained "Special Task Force", who were first used to slaughter the Tamil people in the North, have now been unleashed on the Sinhala poor with powers under the emergency regulations to do virtually anything. The complete arrogance of the Security Forces is such that yesterday they left a burning



body on the roadside and because they heard the flames had been put out came back and set it alight again.

Under the censorship laws imposed in Sri Lanka and with a great deal of self censorship practised by the western media (the BBC world service which generally broadcasts many reports from Sri Lanka had nothing at all to say about the slaughter during the last two weeks) has provided the Sri Lankan regime the cover to launch a genocidal attack on Sinhala villages while the Indian "Peace keeping force" unleashes its own brand of terror against the Tamil people and their representatives the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam.

24.7.89, Sri Lanka

The campaign to find a country willing to offer political asylum to Viraj Mendis so that he can leave Sri Lanka, continues, so also the campaign to stop further deportations from Britain, as there are several people in sanctuary facing the same fate as Viraj Mendis, unless there is enough support to stop it happening.

Hands Off Ireland

Due to the fact that we have only recently received the latest copy of the Leninist along with a reply to our letter, (which they saw fit to print in their paper) which raises many points and criticisms of the

I.R.S.P., the article due to be included in this issue on Irish solidarity work in Britain has been deferred to the next issue of An Camcheachta/Stary Plough.

How Broad is Broad!



The 1989 January Ard Fheis saw Sinn Fein launch its Broad Front Strategy. It called for the creation of an "anti-imperialist mass movement for self-determination."

On the 18th February an 'invitation only' meeting was convened in the Clarence Hotel, Dublin. Those present included representatives from Sinn Fein, Socialist Workers Movement, Communist Party of Ireland, Peoples Democracy, Pöbal and various 'lefts' and republicans.

Out of this meeting, the Forum for a Democratic Alternative (FADA) was launched. Citing the two significant dates in the history of Ireland's development as a country i.e. 1919: the Dail Eireann adoption of the Democratic Programme and 1969: the British Troops on the street; FADA declared it "aims to reflect on the lessons of these two events and move forward to realise the central unachieved demands of the Democratic Programme."

It instituted a series of events around the themes 'National Self-determination', 'What the last 20 years has meant to Irish people', 'the denial of national and democratic rights and the effects of partition on the country'. The programme of activities included conferences and political dialogue, public meetings, speaking tours, press conferences, pickets etc. The culmination was to be the national march in Dublin on August 19th, marking the 20th Anniversary of the deployment of British troops on Irish streets.

This latter was a successful march. Over 10,000 turned up on

the day and this was a significant achievement given the low morale prevalent in the anti-imperialist movement. Considering the stagnation of Sinn Fein's electoral policy - in particular, its inability to make any breakthrough in the 26 counties - the FADA march was a timely boost. However, it must be put in the perspective of the aims of the FADA campaign and especially of its principal component, Sinn Fein.

What new forces were brought on the political scene? Sinn Fein could have mobilised this support without the 'flag of convenience' of the FADA title. Those few newcomers were not basically supporting the Republican struggle, but voicing concern and disappointment or whatever, at the failure of the democratic (i.e. parliamentary) system to resolve the struggle for national self-determination. Surely after all these years 'militant republicans' should be basing their strategy on winning support for a revolutionary resolution - not comforting the worried or distraught democrats. Is not the failure of the democratic structures and process (the Dail, the Anglo-Irish agreement, the EEC, etc., etc.) the principal lesson of 20th century Irish history? If this be so, then there is no advantage to be gained in reinforcing illusions in the 'Democratic Alternative'.

This weakness has underscored the Broad Front policy expressed in the FADA exercise. Quite correctly, the FADA founding document says: "It is time to accept that the economic and social systems based on

partition have failed. It is important to work out alternative views and solutions." However it goes on "FADA aims to facilitate this vital task by bringing together people who, broadly speaking, accept that there is a relationship between partition and social and economic backwardness."

The vital issue here is; How "broad" is "broad"?

There is no intelligent being in this country who does not accept that there is some connection between partition and social/economic underdevelopment. What matters is, however, how they interpret that connection.

Attitudes range from seeing the border as the primary problem to be tackled in isolation from all other issues; through to placing it as a minor irritant in contrast to the bread and butter everyday problems of the populace. It follows from this that the commitment to end partition, that is, British rule in the six counties, depends on its relevance to the material interests, privileges, power etc. of those many sections of the Irish nation.

It seems that the FADA/Sinn Fein view is that everybody who dislikes (never mind hates) partition can unite as a cohesive force to defeat it. This is simple, unadulterated and unsuccessful Irish nationalism of the SDLP/Fianna Fail school of thought. The anti-imperialist movement of the past 20 years has been, in practical everyday experience, a denial of this conception. It has been, and is based on, the people of no

property, the proletariat, the urban and rural working class and the poor farmers, mainly in the six counties.

Understandably and correctly, the inability of this minority of the total oppressed in Ireland to dislodge British imperialism, has forced the republican movement to look for new ways of mobilising new layers of support. This conception of the (Broad) Anti-imperialist Front is not the way forward. Fair weather friends, no matter how 'democratic' they may be, will not commit their lot to the liberation of the Irish working class. This can be seen perfectly clearly in their role in the 'independent' 26 county republic.

The only consistent republicanism is that based on the working class and its allies. Socialist Republicanism cannot, and must not, submerge its revolutionary class interests in the counter revolutionary swamp of 'national democracy'. Certainly we can and will unite with militant, committed non-working class nationalists in the anti-imperialist struggle in specific campaigns with specific aims. We will not, however, surrender the historic interests of our class to the strength-sapping expediency of playing the 'Democratic' game.

FADA states "By coming together, and in one voice, demanding an end to the nightmare, north and south, we will be taking a giant step forward. Partition has not worked nor have the economic and social systems that came with it; we need a new democracy, let us begin to discuss how we can build that new democracy."

Republican Socialism recognises that our task is not to demand of others an end to the 'nightmare'. Our job is to lead the

revolutionary forces to end it themselves. And further, it is not a new democracy that we want but the democracy of our class, a socialist democracy in a United Workers Republic.

We welcomed the call for unity of the anti-imperialist forces, which Sinn Fein launched last January. We did criticise the wisdom of looking to political organisations which are essentially rooted in acceptance of partition in deeds if not in words.

There is one major constituency which militant republicanism has not been able to win, that is: the 26 county workers. The near total absence of southern working class organisations (trade unions, unemployed groups etc.) was, and is, an undeniable indictment of the fallacy of the SF/FADA campaign's belief that they are 'taking a giant step forward'.

It is all very well organising discussions and dialogue (and it is necessary to continue to do so) to put the national question on the agendas of other political parties, which may have some small base in the labour movement. But unless the historic interests of this class are maintained and pursued by the revolutionary movement, then surely this Broad Front will only lead to the revolution ending up on the Broad of its back.

For our part, the IRSP is committed to co-operation, joint work, etc. with all aspects of anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist struggle. We do so from the perspective of Socialist Republicanism and not middle-class democratic nationalism.

As 1989 draws to a close, let the abiding lesson of all the anniversary reviews, seminars, discussions etc. on the 20 year war, be the need for a revolutionary alternative **Demro McBride**.

Non Event Of The Year

On Monday September 11th, a private meeting of invited groups and individuals took place in Buswells Hotel to discuss the formation of an Irish National Congress. The meeting was called by a group of ex and "disillusioned" members of Fianna Fail, and those attending included Sinn Fein, members of Neil Blaney's organisation, the Ray Crotty campaign, the Paddy Ryan campaign, the Anti-Extradition Committee, FADA, CPI, '68 Committee, Green Party and various justice groups.

The meeting discussed the idea of an "Irish National

Congress" which would draw up a "freedom charter" for the Irish people. The main discussion centered on "militant" versus "democratic" republicanism and whether the two could co-exist within the framework of a National Congress. Some Fianna Fail members present argued that they would find it difficult to sell the idea of the Congress to other Fianna Failers and to their supporters if it

included individuals or organisations who support the armed struggle as a tactic to remove the British presence. The counter-argument, that any genuine republican socialist would find it very difficult to be part of a Congress which would include people who are still members of the very party which is at the moment extraditing republicans to British "justice" and collaborating in an unprecedented way with the British presence, as well as slashing spending on social services in the 26-Counties, was not put in any real way. In fact, one of the F.F.ers present actually admitted that disillusionment in Fianna Fail stemmed not from health, social welfare or education cuts; nor even from extradition - but from the very principled position of being totally opposed to doing deals with Dessie O'Malley!

It was obvious from the discussions that the congress would run into very serious difficulties indeed if the question of the make-up of the 26-County State and its capitalist, pro-imperialist, pro-EEC structures were to be raised.

An ad-hoc committee was set up and charged with the task of organising a conference for early next year at which the discussion would be continued and widened.

T.V. Licence Inspectors Intimidate Community

The I.R.S.P. have criticised what they claim is 'illegal and intimidatory' methods used in North Belfast by Television licence inspectors.

Party spokesperson Eamon Mullan said "Over the past month we have been receiving reports from residents in the New Lodge area who, having answered a knock at their door, have found themselves confronted by men demanding to know if they have a

Television set and if so whether it is licenced or not.

In one case a father sitting at home looked up to find one of these people demanding to see the television licence. This 'person' having gained entrance to the family home by the front door which had been left ajar.

On each occasion the 'inspector' was in the company of the R.U.C. whilst the British army maintained a heavy

presence in the area.

The I.R.S.P. utterly condemns the presence of armed R.U.C. men with these people as a blatant form of community intimidation. Furthermore we would urge residents if approached by these people to refuse to co-operate in any way with them. They have no legal right whatsoever to enter your home without your prior permission, even if they are in the company of the R.U.C."

THE I.R.S.P

Please send me more information about the Irish Republican Socialist Party.

Name:

Address:

SEND TO: Secretary, I.R.S.P., 392 Falls Rd., Belfast 12.

Ireland



Seminar On Health

A half day seminar organised by the West Belfast Health Monitoring Committee was held in the Andersonstown Leisure Centre on the 12th September, 1989. Speakers included Inez McCormick (N.U.P.E. Divisional Officer), Josie Ferris (Home helps' shop steward), Linda Leonard (Central Services Agency) and Dr. A.M. Levy G.P.

The purpose of the seminar was to inform the public about the cutbacks in the health services and how they will affect the community. It was well attended by a broad cross-section of the community as well as councillors, community groups and health service employees.

Marion Kennedy (W.B.H.M.C.) opened the seminar by pointing out that the Royal Victoria Hospital's budget is to be cut by £1.5 million this year, despite the fact that West Belfast is one of the most deprived areas in Western Europe.

Josie Ferris painted a bleak picture for both home-helps and the elderly. Home-helps' hours are being cut back to a minimum with many young people on ACE schemes replacing the home-helps. No time is given for collecting pensions or shopping. Elderly people are more isolated as the home helps' hours do not leave time to talk to the old people. Constant pressure is being put on the pensioners to force them into sheltered dwellings.

Linda Leonard outlined how "Members of our Area Boards

are to be cut from 24 to 10", Linda Leonard told the audience "and as a result there will not be enough people to deal with complaints or to handle hospital Trust funds." She went on to say that the government report concentrates specifically on hospitals and completely ignores community care, local GPs etc. It does not allow for multiple sclerosis or mental health sufferers' care. Private hospitals will be allowed to set their own rules and terms of employment.

"50% of medical students are female, yet fewer than 20% of consultants are women," pointed out Dr. Levy G.P. She explained that the present rigid structure relating to GPs, allows no job-share, so many female doctors are unable to work. As far as hospitals are concerned, specialities must compete with each other for resources. Community health facilities including family planning clinics are to be phased out.

No pilot studies were done to support the government report proposing to carve up the N.H.S. Health is now a commodity,

doctors are being forced to work inside a budget, ordering cheaper drugs. Any GPs found overspending, will be penalised.

Inez McCormick told the meeting: "The proposals in the government paper are already being put into effect and that by next June, each Health Board must give reports on proposals for re-structuring management. Businessmen will now be in charge. Boards will not operate in a democratic way and there will be practically no consultation with doctors or workers. Patients will have little choice of treatment."

The final part of the seminar, "Where do we go from here?" was thrown open to the floor for discussion. Many people stressed the importance of community involvement in the fight against the health cuts and welcomed the setting up of the West Belfast Health Monitoring Committee, which involves both community activists, and health service workers. It is hoped to set up similar monitoring committees in other areas of the six counties.

against four Trinity College student leaders, prohibiting the distribution of abortion information. In reply to this, the Union of Students in Ireland stated "no group, in this case, S.P.U.C., has the right to interfere with the right of our union to carry out policy passed by its members. As a national student movement we will continue to give out information on all pregnancy options including abortion."

The fourteen student leaders face possible imprisonment if the injunction is granted by the court, as they have already stated that they will not abide by the injunction.

The I.R.S.P. fully supports a woman's right to choose in relation to abortion and totally endorses the stance made by the students' movement in Ireland in the face of reactionary forces determined to claw back what little progress women in the 26 counties had made in their fight for equality. We call on all sections of the labour movement, socialist and republican activists to unite with the students in defence of a woman's right to choose.

Right To Choose

As we go to print, fourteen Student leaders from various universities and colleges in the South of Ireland are appearing in the High Court in Dublin where the extreme right wing S.P.U.C. (Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child) is seeking an injunction to prevent student unions from providing information on abortion.

Since the pro-life campaign succeeded in having the constitution in the Republic amended to include a clause forbidding abortion (even though it was already illegal), the full implications are only now coming to light.

In 1986, S.P.U.C. brought a case against the Well Women Centre and Open Line Counselling on the basis that it was not only illegal but

ACCESS to INFORMATION on abortion and a woman's right to CHOOSE to have an abortion.

Useful Numbers

Well Women's Centre (Dublin) 728051
 DUBLIN: 01 680043/794700
 CORK: (021) 502848 -
 Mon. evening
 BELFAST: (084) 324914/
 249696
 Irish Women's Abortion Support
 Group (London) 031 251 6332/3
 (Tues. 6-9 p.m. for direct contact)
 Merseyside Nursing Home
 (Liverpool) 035 7271851
 Raleigh Nursing Home (London)
 031 6711541/2
 South Manchester Clinic
 036 4872660

Terror Tactics in Craigavon

On September 20th, at around 10 p.m., two Special Branch men on foot, kicked in the front door of a party activist in the Brownlow area. They remained in the house for 30 minutes, during which time the comrade was physically assaulted and verbally abused. He was asked for information on other party members and

In Memory

The Central Committee of the Irish Republican Socialist Party remembers with love and pride our fallen comrades:

Vol. Seamus Costello, Dublin Brigade, I.N.L.A., murdered by the Workers Party, October 5th, 1977.
 Vol. Ronnie Bunting, Belfast Brigade, I.N.L.A., assassinated by the SAS, October 15th, 1980.
 Vol. Noel Little, Belfast Brigade, I.N.L.A., assassinated by the SAS, October 15th, 1980.
 Vol. Tony McClelland, Armagh Brigade, killed on active service, October 16th, 1979.

We have sown the seeds of revolution, let us step forward, comrades, and reap the harvest.

The Irish Republican Socialist Committees (North America) remember with loving pride:

Vol. Seamus Costello, Dublin Brigade, I.N.L.A., murdered by the Workers Party, October 5th, 1977.
 Vol. Ronnie Bunting, Belfast Brigade, I.N.L.A., assassinated by the SAS, October 15th, 1980.
 Vol. Noel Little, Belfast Brigade, I.N.L.A., assassinated by the SAS, October 15th, 1980.
 Vol. Tony McClelland, Armagh Brigade, killed on active service, October 16th, 1979.

The struggle must be well thought out. It must be mature, but once it has begun it must be continued to the end. There can be no compromise, no middle terms, no peace that will only half guarantee the stability of our country. The victory must be total.

The James Connolly Prisoners Welfare Committee (New York) remembers with loving pride:

Vol. Seamus Costello, Dublin Brigade, I.N.L.A., murdered by the Workers Party, October 5th, 1977.
 Vol. Ronnie Bunting, Belfast Brigade, I.N.L.A., assassinated by the SAS, October 15th, 1980.
 Vol. Noel Little, Belfast Brigade, I.N.L.A., assassinated by the SAS, October 15th, 1980.
 Vol. Tony McClelland, Armagh Brigade, killed on active service, October 16th, 1979.

"It is not those who can inflict the most but those who can endure the most who will conquer in the end."

BUNTING Ronnie. In proud and loving memory of my husband and our father, Ronnie, assassinated 15.10.1980. Always missed by his loving wife Suzanne and children Fiona, Deirdre and Ronan.

The Staff and Vols of the I.N.L.A. remember with loving pride our fallen comrades:

Vol. Seamus Costello, Dublin Brigade, I.N.L.A., murdered by the Workers Party, October 5th, 1977.

Vol. Ronnie Bunting, Belfast Brigade, I.N.L.A., assassinated by the SAS, October 15th, 1980.

Vol. Noel Little, Belfast Brigade, I.N.L.A., assassinated by the SAS, October 15th, 1980.

Vol. Tony McClelland, Armagh Brigade, killed on active service, October 16th, 1979.

In death as in life you remain an inspiration to all those who believe in the cause of Irish freedom.

The Republican Socialist Prisoners of War in Long Kesh, Maghaberry, Magliigan, Portlaoise and England remember with love and pride our fallen comrades.

Vol. Seamus Costello, Dublin Brigade, I.N.L.A., murdered by the Workers Party, October 5th, 1977.

Vol. Ronnie Bunting, Belfast Brigade, I.N.L.A., assassinated by the SAS, October 15th, 1980.

Vol. Noel Little, Belfast Brigade, I.N.L.A., assassinated by the SAS, October 15th, 1980.

Vol. Tony McClelland, Armagh Brigade, killed on active service, October 16th, 1979.

"There is no source or foreign force can break one man who knows that his free will no thing can kill and from that, freedom grows." Bob by Sands.

The I.R.S.P. Support Committees in London, Glasgow and Bristol remember with love and pride our fallen comrades:

Vol. Seamus Costello, Dublin Brigade, I.N.L.A., murdered by the Workers Party, October 5th, 1977.
 Vol. Ronnie Bunting, Belfast Brigade, I.N.L.A., assassinated by the SAS, October 15th, 1980.
 Vol. Noel Little, Belfast Brigade, I.N.L.A., assassinated by the SAS, October 15th, 1980.
 Vol. Tony McClelland, Armagh Brigade, killed on active service, October 16th, 1979.

"We will fight for our cause with words when words are useful and with arms when arms are needed." James Connolly.

LITTLE Noel. Fond memories of Noel assassinated 15.10.1980. A true friend such as Noel is impossible to replace. Remembered always by Suzanne and the children.

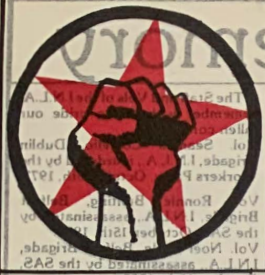


Irish Republican Socialist Plot in Milltown Cemetery vandalised two weeks ago, no doubt by Brits. UVF and PAF were spray painted in white gloss paint over the headstone.

threatened that he would be systematically arrested unless the requested information was provided.

A local party spokesperson, commenting on this latest attack on the party said "This is just the latest in a long litany of harassment of party members, one member having recently received a death threat at his

place of work. It is obvious that the RUC are attempting to thwart the growth of the party, and to intimidate people into becoming informers. The I.R.S.P. appeals to anyone in this position to come forward publicly, as this is their only protection from the Branch's activities."



THE STARRY PLOUGH

Debate On USSR

The following article is part of the continuing debate on the nature of the Soviet Union and is in response to the article which appeared in 'An Camcheacht' (no. 4).

The socio-economic nature of the USSR is a topic which induces forceful reactions from most socialists. Indeed, the defence of a particular analysis of Russia frequently forms the theoretical core of a revolutionary socialist organisation. To many working class people this often seems to indicate an absurd fetishism of what should be a minor theoretical plank. As an active socialist, one is repeatedly informed that the USSR is on the 'other side of the planet' and that Irish socialists would be more gainfully employed if they sat down and thought about this country for a while.

In truth, our analysis of the USSR is central to our entire conception of socialism. Rather than being an abstract debate it, more or less, determines or reflects what we understand by social revolution.

Francis Glenn understands this, hence his somewhat feverish riposte in 'Starry Plough' no. 4 to an article on Glasnost which I wrote for the preceding issue. My article did not directly concern the ever-raging wranglings relating to Russia, but it did implicitly offer a raw delineation of my impression of Russian society. When I wrote of 'exploitation', lack of 'genuine democracy' and suggested that mass working class action (rather than the CPSU) is the key to 'genuine socialism', it clearly signalled my dissatisfaction with the socio-economic system in the USSR. To readers with a minimum of acumen, it was obvious that I do not consider Russia to exemplify a Workers State. A fairish number of socialists, Comrade Glenn included, view such an opinion as nothing short of heresy. In point of fact, the mere use of the designation 'Russia' provoked an exercise in semantical pedantry from Comrade Glenn. The nature of Russian society is, rightly, an extremely touchy and much fought over subject.

Francis Glenn has projected a particular image of the USSR. To him it is a workers state and the 'centre of world socialism' albeit with some eradicable failings. To the present scribe it is nothing of the sort. The USSR, I would suggest, is State Capitalist. Before outlining precisely what is meant by this, let us briefly examine Comrade Glenn's rejoinder to my article.

Without attempting to deprecate Comrade Glenn, I must suggest that his article was banal, crude and dangerous in political terms. As a defence of the thesis that the USSR is a workers state it is less than cogent or convincing.



Slogans in the center of Moscow: 'Communism is power to the Soviets'

The argument that the USSR is a workers state is, largely, the property of those Communist Parties once connected to the long-deceased Comintern or the remnants and factions of such parties. In latter day Ireland the only party that maintains Comrade Glenn's viewpoint is the discredited Communist Party of Ireland, although the Workers Party has in recent times indicated support for the 'workers state' perspective. Such bedfellows!

The Glenn article is banal in the sense that it reads like a hackish reflex-action to criticism of the Soviet Union. Aside from an unfortunate attempt to reestablish the purity of the 'workers state' by attacking the bureaucracy and then disengaging them from the essence of a workers' state, Comrade Glenn provides nothing more than assertion to underpin his argument. He denounces the idea that the bureaucracy forms a distinct class by declaring that "for all its faults, the bureaucracy does not exploit the working class". However, in the very next line, he writes that it is "more equal than the others". I'm quite sure that Comrade Glenn realises that this short pithy means that they are in actuality better off than the others. In short, the Soviet bureaucracy occupies a rather privileged niche in Russian society, a position which must be financed by somebody. Obviously, it is the USSR working class which objectively produces the wealth and thereby sustains the bureaucrats' 'more equal' lifestyle - a lifestyle which the western media periodically 'exposes' as a means of discrediting communism. If such parasitic living on the backs of workers is not exploitation then what is?

Democracy

In relation to the inter-connection between the bureaucracy and democracy, he admits that the bureaucrats deny democracy. Strangely, Comrade Glenn doesn't appear to consider such a denial as a negation of his argument. Democracy is intrinsic to socialism and to a workers state. In the USSR workers control over the means of production and distribution and over the polity should exist if it is to be judged a workers state. How can it possibly be a socialist state under workers control if neither



Where do we go from here? 'Glorify to Work!'

industry or the state is controlled democratically by the working class?

Only an asinine CP'er, or the woefully ignorant, could possibly claim that the USSR of 1989 mirrors the governmental structures of 1917, or claim that it is currently under working class control. The democratic Soviets are long gone and state control is solely vested in the Communist Party and its bureaucratic apparatus. In 1929, the remaining vestige of workers' control over industry, the Troika, was abolished. Since then the socialist USSR has indulged in many heinous acts of repression and imperialism. Internally democracy was nullified and oppositionists were often arrested, jailed or simply executed. Is Comrade Glenn now telling us that the essence of a workers state has survived Stalin and his no less bureaucratic replacements?

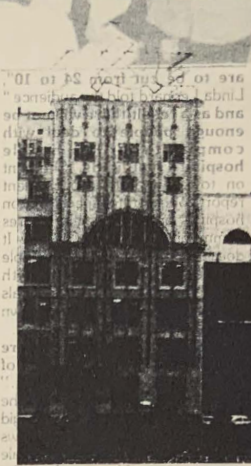
It is germane to note that what happened in socialist China recently was tacitly supported by socialist Russia. Gorbachev described the Chinese students as hooligans and urged them to return to their homes. The USSR under Stalin engaged in a more covert rendition of the Chinese massacres, and the present regime is capable of replicating that. A CPSU hegemony clearly exists in Russia, a hegemony that is maintained by a duo of opposites: direction allied with domination, and persuasion allied with force. Any faltering of the hegemony invariably results in an imbalance in favour of domination and force. Thus when Hungary showed signs of weakening in 1956 control was restored by adjusting the balance.

Socialist democracy exists where the working class directly controls the socio-economic infrastructure. Mediation of this control by an unaccountable group, such as the CPSU, makes a nonsense of democracy and a mockery of socialism.

It is silly and contradictory to write, as Comrade Glenn does, of "workers' alienation from their own system". They wouldn't be alienated if it was their own system.

State Capitalism

There are three chief analyses of



the USSR. Comrade Glenn's analysis of Russia as socialist is shared primarily by 'official' Communist Parties and by groups such as the Workers Party who perceive gains from cuddling up to the Soviets. To them it is largely a question of lineal descent from 1917, as if once established socialism is immutable. A second analysis is that proposed by Trotsky, and propagated by orthodox Trotskyites, which argues that it is a 'degenerated workers' state'. A common quip is to inquire of a proponent of this view whether, by this, he/she is suggesting that Russia is populated by 'degenerated workers'. In reality, Trotsky's analysis was a failure to come to terms with the enormity of the counter-revolution in Russia.

The third analysis is the claim that Russia is simply a variant of Capitalism. This analysis, which I believe to be the correct one, proposes that the USSR is State Capitalist, and that, while externally it doesn't appear so an examination will reveal that its underlying dynamic is thoroughly capitalist.

Often we associate capitalism with external and non-essential trappings thus failing to appreciate its basic dynamic. "Capital..." wrote Marx "...is not a simple relation but a process, in whose various moments it is always capital". This process possesses a bilateral dynamic. Firstly, workers must be separated from the control and ownership of the means of production. Real workers control over industry is anathema to capitalism. As is manifestly obvious, Russian workers do not control, much less own, the means of production in the USSR. The state owns them and the state is exclusively controlled by the CPSU and its bureaucracy. The first section of the central dynamic of capitalism thus exists in Russia.

The second aspect of this dynamic is the existence of competition between those who possess the means of production. Competition forces capitalists to accumulate capital on the basis that a failure to do so could generate his/her economic demise. "Competition..." claimed Marx "...makes the immanent laws of capitalist production to be felt by each capitalist, as external coercive

laws." It creates an economic race.

Does Russia engage in competition? Considering the question of economic competition between the 'two world systems', Brezhnev in 1970 said: "This competition takes different forms. In many cases we are coping successfully with the task of overtaking and outdistancing the capitalist countries in the production of certain types of output...but the fundamental question is not only how much you produce but also at what cost, with what outlays of labour...It is in this field that the centre of gravity between the two systems lies in our time". In a certain sense Russia can be seen as a large firm operating within the parameters of international capitalism. The development of sections of the 'western' economies invariably spurs Russia into developing its own similar sectors. In the same way, there is competition regarding arms production. The 'cold war' and the arms races are clearly examples of competition financed by the exploitation of Soviet workers.

It would require far more space to properly sketch the State Capitalist analysis, but it should be clear that not only is Russia not socialist but that it contains the central dynamic of capitalist society. Economically it is only socialist if one believes that nationalisation equals socialism; politically it is only socialist if ones conception of socialism involves a dislocation of democracy from socialist theory. In Marxist terms it would be farcical to describe it as socialist.

It is unfortunate that some socialists continue to argue that the USSR is a workers state. Frequently it is a soft-option to do so if one is trying to define ones socialism. It means that a ready made ideological framework can be embraced and the difficult business of working out ones own politics can be shelved. It is also dangerous because it means that our struggle becomes a struggle for another undemocratic and exploitative system. To quote Rosa Luxemburg: "Bourgeois class rule fights its last battle under a false flag, under the flag of revolution itself".

Robert Lake

Title: The Starry Plough, No. 7

Organisation: Irish Republican Socialist Party

Date: 1989

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