

**For National Liberation & Socialism**

# STARRY PLOUGH



## Time for an Independent Inquiry

**The families of Patsy O'Hara & Michael Devine  
Call for a Republican Investigation into the  
events of 1980 & 1981**

**More Inside**

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**THE VOICE OF REPUBLICAN SOCIALISM**

# STARRY PLOUGH

The Starry Plough magazine is the organ of the Irish Republican Socialist Party. The aim of this publication is to assist and develop republican socialist ideas as well as to create debate. This is your magazine. We constantly require input from our supporters. If you can contribute articles, photos, drawings, information on potential bookshops or stockists or anything else that you feel will help this project then please get in touch with us.

This magazine is put together by a volunteer collective of activists and is paid for only by donations, subscriptions and sales. We have no corporate backing nor do we want any.

We aim to produce the Starry Plough in this format as a quarterly publication to provide a republican socialist perspective that's not normally covered in other papers. We welcome contributions from all our readers that will further the objectives of republican socialism. Likewise we welcome all articles that will initiate discussion.

We welcome all if you feel that you would like to write something then please get in touch with the editorial first via email:

**starryplough@gmail.com**

The articles and opinions within the Starry Plough magazine do not necessarily reflect the viewpoints of the Irish Republican Socialist Party unless signed by IRSP or by a local cumann. All articles in the Starry Plough reflect the views of the author and no one else. Lastly, if any article contained within incites or inspires you then do get in touch.

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## INSIDE THIS EDITION OF THE STARRY PLOUGH

Since our last edition we have received many messages of support for our efforts. To those that have taken the time to contact us may we offer our thanks. This magazine would be nothing without our readers, supporters, distributors and contributors. Thanks to all!

This edition of the Starry Plough carries many great articles, particularly our special four page supplement on the 40th anniversary of the NICRA which is the first part of a two part series. We also carry in-depth coverage of calls for an independent inquiry into the events during the 1981 hunger strike period when it is claimed that a deal was accepted by the prisoners yet rejected by the outside leadership of the Provisionals. We have coverage of ongoing fight in Mayo against Shell oil and the upcoming Lisbon vote. If anything within this magazine inspires then please get in touch and join the debate.

## Hunger Strikers Families State:

# We Only Want The Truth!

The families of the Republican Socialist Hunger Strikers Patsy O'Hara and Mickey Devine gathered in Derry recently in a show of unity at an mural to the INLA Hunger Striker Mickey Devine. It came as senior republicans, journalists and mediator, known as the 'Mountain Climber', spoke at a public meeting in Derry's Gasyard Centre as further revelations became public surrounding the events of the 1981 H Block prison struggle.

At a recent photo opportunity the families told the Starry Plough the they were no adding their voice to the growing demand for a fully public independent inquiry into the horrific period.

In a statement by Tony O'Hara, himself a former political prisoner and brother of INLA Hunger Striker Patsy O'Hara, who spoke on behalf of the O'Hara and Mickey O'G Devine families said "We, the O'Hara and Devine families, would also wish to put on public record our full support for an independent Republican Inquiry,

which was first called for by ex-Hunger Striker Gerard Hodgins, into the controversial claims surrounding the events of the 1981 Hunger Strike.

"At a recent meeting in the Gasyard, Derry City, which we attended, compelling and disturbing evidence revealing that an offer made by the British which conceded four of the five demands, was accepted by the prison IRA leadership and rejected by elements of the outside IRA leadership.

Tony O'Hara went on to say that: "These claims which have been supported by former blanket men and ex-hunger strikers have led us to conclude that only an independent Republican Inquiry, free from party political affiliations, can heal the wounds of our families that this controversy has re-opened. We are only interested in the facts, the evidence and the truth and we would hope that all republicans would support us in our call and bring an end to this controversy so that we, the families,

have peace of mind as to what really happened during this period."

Following what was always going to be a highly emotion public meeting in the Gasyard Centre's, the Irish Republican Socialist Party added its voice as Derry IRSP Ard Comhairle Martin McMonagle said that the Party "wanted put on public record our support for an open independent republican inquiry into the truth behind the 1981 hunger strike as called for by the O'Hara and Devine families and also by former IRA hunger striker Gerard Hodgins.

He said that "Given the contradictory statements emanating from various spokespeople from Sinn Fein on this matter and the refusal of these people to partake in the recent discussion held in the Gas yard center in Derry we are firmly of the opinion that such an inquiry is the only course of action open to the republican community.

"We have come to this conclusion because of the weight of evidence from wide ranging sources who were directly involved which clearly contradicts the Sinn Fein version of events and which furthermore suggests that the lives of the last six hunger strikers may have been saved.

"The forthcoming Sinn Fein closed meeting with the families of the ten hunger strikers is purely another attempt to mislead and confuse events surrounding the 1981 hunger strike."

In this issue of the Starry Plough magazine (Page 12), we have published the entire text of the speech as given by the IRSP Ard Comhairle representative, Willie Gallagher during the Gasyard public meeting. The text also includes extracts of a taped conversation as part of the evidence presented to the IRSP in June 2006.



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# Ardoyne:

## A Community Under Siege

The Republican Socialist Youth Movement has commended the People of the Ardoyne district of North Belfast following the virtual siege of their community by the state and sectarian Orange marchers over the twelfth 'festivities'.

An RSYM representative told the Starry Plough that on Monday the 13th of July once again the seal of British normalisation was once again broken by the people of the occupied six counties. In areas such as Ardoyne, Rasharkin, Derry and Armagh the people of these areas against the face of armed RUC/PSNI members, resisted the occupation of these areas. The Republican Socialist Youth Movement commends the people of these areas for their resistance against attack from numerous elements of the communities of the occupied six counties, including the armed wing of the British state the RUC/PSNI and elements within loyalism.

Republican Socialist Youth Movement activists from Belfast were on the ground in Ardoyne when the events unfolded. First an Ardoyne resident's protest against an Orange Order parade through was attacked by the RUC/PSNI. When the protest began to maneuver to its position in Ardoyne, these actions by the RUC/PSNI angered the people of the area.

Around six o'clock before the loyalist parade had entered Ardoyne on its second run, the RUC/PSNI were attacked by youths from the area with numerous missiles, the violence continued from youths from that time on, violent reaction began by the RUC/PSNI with its various baton charges, input of water cannons and the firing of plastic bullets on the residents who were present in this situation. In defiance of these heavy handed tactics and occupation of their area, the people of Ardoyne resisted all these at-



tempts by British police. The Republican Socialist Youth Movement commends all those in Ardoyne who stood in resistance against the occupation of Ardoyne by the British state's paramilitary force the RUC/PSNI and the provocative and sectarian marches the RUC/PSNI protect and force through working class areas where they are clearly not wanted.

RSYM spokesperson Matthew Quinn commented on the events in Ardoyne;

"The Ardoyne people over numerous years have felt the full brunt of RUC/PSNI invasions, attacks from loyalism and the killing of people from Ardoyne by British run organisations, the people have simply sent out a message, that Loyalist parading is not welcome in Ardoyne and neither is the RUC/PSNI British paramilitary police.

"The Republican Socialist Youth Movement call on leaders of the Protestant/Unionist communities to get

real and cease these sectarian marches through Nationalist communities and also the Republican Socialist Youth Movement would like to send a clear cut message to the RUC/PSNI and its British masters, last night you were seen for what you really are, the face of the British occupation in Ireland."

Following several nights of intense rioting, the RUC/PSNI raided homes in the area of Republican activists, some of who had been vocal of their tactics during the Orange parade through the North Belfast interface, and that of other so-called 'republicans' who clearly sided with the RUC/PSNI against the besieged community. During one incident a pregnant woman was threatened with a Taser gun.

Several Republicans were arrested and taken to Antrim for questioning but released as family members with the support of the community stage a solidarity protest outside.

Shell to Sea

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# End The Occupation of Mayo

## Locals Intimidated by Private Security Firm

Shell Oil's aggressive pursuit of riches is not centered upon the Southern Niger Delta. Here in Ireland Shell, with the aid of the 26 county administration they have been preparing to help themselves to our own natural resources for some time now with no economic benefit to the Irish people whatsoever.

In a climate of fear, tension levels have been increased dramatically as Shell began to deploy their latest weapon, in the form of **Integrated Risk Management Services (I-RMS)** who style themselves as "security guards". Said to be run by former members of the 26 County 'elite' Rangers which carries out security for Shell not to mention Fianna Fáil. Coincidentally I-RMS are said to constitute the largest 'security force' in the country, outnumbering the Gardaí and military combined.

Not surprising some serious questions are now being asked by both members of the public and industry representatives about the Private Security Authority (PSA) performance just a few years down the road. Most notably, I-RMS personnel's treatment of protesters campaigning against the Shell's development of the Corrib gas

line in Mayo leading to numerous complaints including violent actions by the Gardaí.

As investigations on the ground continue to uncovered worrying details in to the backgrounds of Shell's 'security guards'. Particularly that of Tipperary man shot dead recently in Bolivia who was part of an attempt to trigger a civil war there. Another member said to have been a known member of the Hungarian paramilitary fascist group, Szekler Legion.

Likewise the levels of harassment and intimidation against activists, and locals alike have been totally unprecedented within the 26 county state since its formation.

Many locals have already described it as being on par with similar acts of aggression carried out against the nationalist community and republican activists by imperialist forces across the occupied six counties.

"To honest it's something which has got to stop as the community here are already saying that we have had enough. You can only be monitored, beaten, harassed and have your livelihood destroyed for so long. Some-

thing has to give." One activist told the Starry plough.

For ourselves as republican socialists we look to Costello's role of the IRSP, as he entwined the national and class questions as one struggle. Costello not only sought to involve the party in all struggles of the Irish people be it through trade union work, housing, fisheries, the struggle for women's emancipation, the national question, the struggle of small farmers, tenants, the cultural struggle, sovereignty, so to did he link the struggle for control over our own natural resources.

What we must add to the campaign increase our solidarity with the isolated communities of Mayo to give reassurance that they are not alone in the fight. This can be done in many ways in the shape of more solidarity actions at Shell and Topaz stations nation wide.

Organizing more pickets, benefit events, information stalls, public meetings as well as physically traveling to Mayo. The population maybe isolated and small in number, however they have shown the way as they battled ever since the 'great gas and oil give away' began.

## Republican Socialist Prisoners Appeal

Republican Socialist Political Prisoners in Portlaoise Gaol have asked the POW committee to ask supporters if they would be interested in helping them build up a political library in the prison.

They are asking if anyone has any books on politics and Irish history, that are surplus to their requirements, would they donate them to the prisoners.

They are also requesting original DVD's of any kind as well, political, educational or general viewing, preferably in their covers, to watch during their association time. Anything

that is donated will be greatly appreciated by the POW committee and the prisoners themselves. We would like to thank you for your time and effort on this Appeal.

Donations can be dropped in or sent to:  
**GERARD MURRAY, PRISONERS WELFARE, COSTELLO HOUSE, 392 FALLS ROAD, BELFAST BT12 6DH.**

OR TO:

**PAUL KELLY  
E4 LANDING, PORTLAOISE PRISON,  
PORTLAOISE, CO LAOISE, IRELAND**



# No Means No!

## Vote No Again: Against Imperialist Europe & Native Capitalism!

***The IRSP are opposed to any second referendum on the Lisbon Treaty. The people have already voted on this issue last June, and rejected the advice of the establishment and their parties and kicked Lisbon out.***

There is one thing for certain if, last June, the outcome of the first referendum had been favourable towards the establishment parties and Lisbon was accepted there would have been more chance of finding rocking horses running at Epsom than a second referendum.

The establishment are going ahead with this insult simply because they can! It can be reasonably argued that this issue, following a precedent being set after the Nice Treaty was re-run, signals the beginning of the end for the Irish Constitution. Referenda are all well and good provided they go the establishments way and when they don't, try again.

If the voice of the people is as sovereign as we are led to believe Lisbon would be dead and buried. It would appear that treaties in Ireland are similar to Brams Stockers character Dracula, the people think the beast is dead only to find it risen from the dead.

Recently our political leaders came back from Brussels with some half baked tale about promises "of legally binding guarantees" which are meaningless. They are not even guaran-

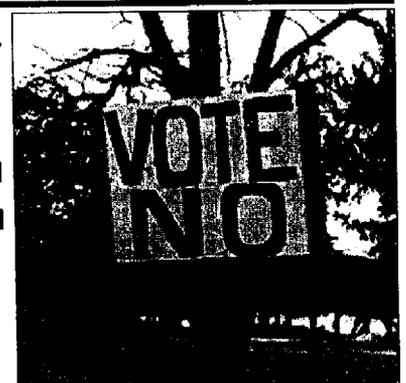
tees but merely "promises of guarantees" which are certainly not the same thing. Even the promises they have are not priority issues.

The issue of a commissioner was sited by around 2-3 percent of respondents when surveyed as to why they voted no! Things which really mater to people such as the possibility of public services going out to private tender and workers rights didn't even warrant a "promise of a guarantee".

Any workers rights will be subject to the needs of capitalism and the bosses being served adequately first meaning, the bosses will still have the right to trample all over workers except with the Lisbon Treaty behind them.

The European elite gave some vague recognition of respecting Irelands neutrality while at the same time continuing to speak of "Battle Groups". For what it is worth at a meeting, which the IRSP attended, at the offices of the European Commission in Dublin on Monday 15th December a speaker representing the Fine Gael party, Lucinda Creighton, when questioned by a representative of the Irish

**JOIN THE CAMPAIGN**  
  
**FOR A NO VOTE**



The IRSP are campaigning for a second **NO** vote in the upcoming referendum. If you feel you have something to offer such as putting up posters, delivering leaflets or organising locally then give us a shout and get involved.

To get involved email:  
**dublinirsp@live.ie**

Anti War Movement on Irish neutrality said Ireland "was not neutral".

Fine Gael are supposed to be the party of opposition in the Dail. However when it comes to defending the class interests of the bourgeoisie there is no opposition.

When the IRSP representative questioned Joe Costello, Labour Party, at the same meeting about his party's apparent change of heart regarding a second referendum he was unable to give a straight answer. The question was put to Joe that "the Labour Party were against a second referendum after the defeat of the first one" he answered "we are opposed to a second referendum in the same format, asking the same questions".

When the Chairperson of the forum, Kevin Raffter, pushed the labour speaker asking "if you had to vote tomorrow which way would you vote" to which the beleaguered Labour TD again could not give a straight answer. As far as the IRSP are concerned there should be no second referendum as it has already been decided by the people. However given the fact that there is going to be one we, along with our colleagues in the Campaign Against European Union Constitution, will be campaigning for another rejection of the Lisbon Treaty.

Lisbon mark one was essentially the ill-fated European Constitution, rejected by the French and Dutch electorate which was why these people were not allowed to vote on acceptance or rejection of the Lisbon Treaty. Just as Lisbon mark one was of no noticeable difference to the European Constitution, so too will Lisbon mark two be of any consequential difference to its ill-fated predecessor.

The Irish Republican Socialist Party would strongly recommend another rejection, not that there should be a re-run in the first place, of the Lisbon Treaty. We would warn people who may be undecided that any "promises of guarantees" are a far cry from written guarantees and must not be taken in the same light. Even if the government do manage to get something more concrete on the area of a com-

missioner how much importance would you, the people, place on this issue?

Also do not be misled with such clap trap as "we have received a declaration" from the European Commission because, like "promises of guarantees", declarations are meaningless. They are not protocols, they hold no legal weight no more than do promises. Finally we might remind people of the words of former French President Valery Giscard d Estang on the Lisbon Treaty, in order to deny the French people a referendum, the treaty should be designed to "head off any threat of referenda by avoiding any form of constitutional vocabulary".

This was echoed by the Belgium Foreign Minister, Karel de Gucht, who said "the aim of this treaty is to be unreadable", in other words don't let the people have a clue what they are voting on.

There will be no fundamental difference in Lisbon mark two to that of mark one, simply because it can't be changed without rewriting the whole document and it has taken too long for the European bourgeoisie to concoct for that to happen. The bottom line is there will be no change in the meaning or content of the Lisbon Treaty, make sure there is no change in the outcome of the vote. When the time comes vote NO.

Kevin Morley



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# The Art of Politics

Liam O'Ruairc reflects on the 'disneylandification' of murals

**Murals have been one of the most important visual symbols of the conflict in the North.**

**Since 1998 not only have most of the murals that actually date from the conflict disappeared, but the mural industry has been absorbed by the status quo.**

The state has been able to shape and neutralise the production of murals and their political content. In the past, security forces would throw paint at murals in an attempt to deface them. Now the state actually pays the muralists for their work.

The Re-Imaging Communities Programme, a project backed by the British state and funded by the Arts Council of Northern Ireland, pumped more than £3 million (€3.34 million) of government money into orchestrating the replacement of conflict themed murals with more 'positive' ones. The changes are very much evident. A look at the West Belfast Mural Map issued by Fáilte Feirste Thiar in 2008 will reveal that possibly only two of the murals are pre-1998 and few have an armed struggle or IRA theme. "In the staunchly nationalist Ardoyne and Falls areas, bellicose pro-IRA murals are nowhere to be seen. The themes covered now are historical, mythical, cultural, and international." remarked the Irish Times. (1)

Why this preminence of historical, mythical, cultural or international themes?

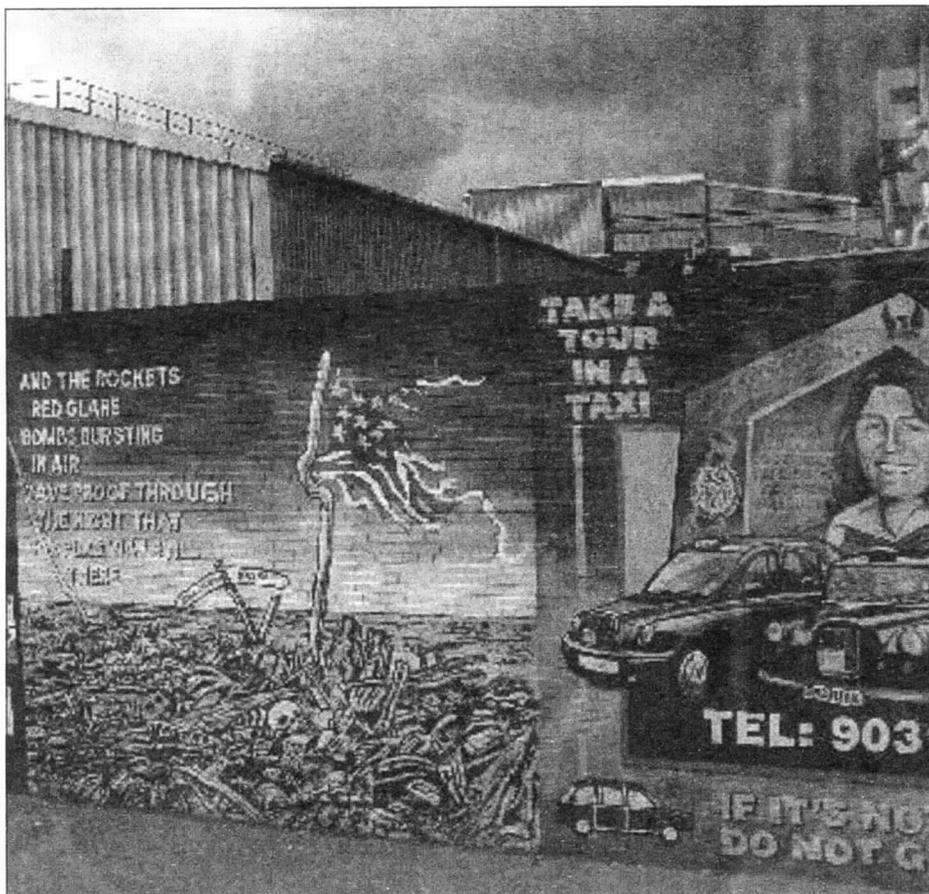
"The new murals, often funded by local government, come with conditions attached. There are strict rules about what can be depicted - and this has some artists and curators asking: "Well, is it really community art?" Deirdre Mackel of the Upper Springfield Development Trust admits certain things are off limits. "We are censored, yes," says Ms. Mackel, whose trust is funded in part by the Northern Ireland government. "We cannot paint any flags or emblems, and we have to steer clear of politics." (2)

This is why in republican areas, for some years now, militant murals have been replaced by inoffensive images representing traditional Celtic designs

or depicting historical Celtic myths like Fin MacCumhail and Cuchulainn; and in Loyalist areas murals of CS Lewis, George Best or the Titanic have replaced traditional depictions of gunmen. Loyalist muralist Mark Ervine hit the nail on the head when saying: "This is a case of outsiders trying to dictate how a community is. It looks to me like censorship, denying that the past ever happened, telling people how to think... The schemes are dreamt up by civil servants at Stormont who probably live miles away from the nearest mural. They're in complete control as they hold the purse strings, and I'm not sure that the community dialogue is in place. Painters are not informed before the Arts Council makes a decision. They are removing a tradition from the community which bore it."

Duncan Morrow, the chief executive officer of the Community Relations Council and a central figure in the Re-Imaging Communities Programme concedes that the policy does amount "to using murals as a social engineering tool." (3)

Kevin Rooney is right when describing this latest scheme as officialdom's attempt to replace the authentic voice of Belfast's working-class communities with state-sponsored art: "There is nothing spontaneous or authentic about the new murals, which are being pushed by the British government and local councils. Despite the language of 'inclusion' that now dominates all political discourse in Northern Ireland, it is clear that the old murals are excluded in the re-imagining process and only images acceptable to the authorities will be included. ..The Re-Imaging Programme does not only prescribe what is acceptable - it also draws artists into a crude form of instrumentalism... these new artists are paid to implement a British government agenda which has little to



do with art and everything to pol- ical." (4)

The purpose of this 'social engineering' exercise is to normalise, de-radicalise and de-politicise murals and replace them with 'cultural' and 'community art' whose purpose to 'assert identity'. "Their purpose is

shifting. Images from Northern Ireland's conflict... now claim to assert cultural identity; to be no more threatening than Morris dancing is in England." (5)

This is part of the British state's strategy " of transforming political aspirations into cultural ones". (6)

Before murals were an expression of struggle, now they are an expression of culture and identity. Even when the depict something from the conflict their purpose has shifted. The People's Gallery in the Bogside for example records political violence but in the form of more acceptable images. There has also been a conscious attempt to commodify them and reduce them to objects of touristic consumption. "There seems to be a real drive to commodify everything in Northern Ireland for the tourist market. Whenever that happens, communities lose their sense of ownership." (7)

Before, murals were off-limit for the tourist market, the Northern Ireland Tourist Board preferring to concentrate on the likes of the Giant's Causeway. Now they are an acceptable spectacle for tourist, every visitor to the North has to take pictures of murals. Murals are also depicted on postcards issued by the Tourist Board. The irony of course is that very few actually date from the conflict. Current murals are essentially a harmless spectacle for touristic consumption. Reflecting on his evolution, leading Republican muralist Danny Devenny told the Financial Times: "I seem to have gone from agitator to establishment figure. It gives me hope for the future of Ireland." (8)

The institutionalisation of murals mirrors the institutionalisation of the Provisional republican movement. From being the expression of political agitation they have become funded and supported by the establishment.

Liam O'Ruic

# Subscribe

The Starry Plough is produced by a volunteer collective of activists and it is our aim to raise awareness of the issues affecting working class people and to instigate debate on how best to achieve our goals. If you agree with the aims and principles of the IRSP as espoused in this publication then we ask that you support this publication by taking out a subscription or sending a donation.

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- (1) Neil Carnduff, Belfast's lines redrawn, The Irish Times, 15 May 2009
- (2) Brendan O'Neill, Backstory: Belfast murals reflect a change of art, Christian Science Monitor, 14 December 2005
- (3) Neil Carnduff, op.cit.
- (4) Kevin Rooney, Northern Ireland: Painting over the cracks, Spiked Online, 9 September 2008
- (5) Leader, Paintings of peace, The Guardian, 31 August 2007
- (6) Mark Ryan, War and Peace in Ireland, London: Pluto Press, 1994, 135
- (7) Bryan Coll, A blank canvas for a new North, The Irish Times, 3 July 2008
- (8) Teresa Levonian Cole, Danny Devenny - 'I learnt to draw in the Maze prison, on hankchiefs', Financial Times, 3 January 2009

# The Drugs Scourge & The Mass Movement

*What is to be done in the fight back?*

*As Republican Socialists we know only too well just how our young people and our communities are directly effected by the drugs scourge.*

*In his article for the Starry Plough, Chris Duffy takes a look at the increasing challenges and the battle against we, as a class, have in tackling the issues involved.*

Traditionally there have always been three enemies of revolutionary forces around the globe. These three are: the imperialists the revolutionaries struggle against, the native and foreign capitalists and of course the criminal. The struggle here in Ireland is no different. Through out the years we have seen Republicans tackle criminals.

In the 80s Republicans were at the forefront of the struggle in working class communities against drug dealers. Republicans were disgusted at the heroin epidemic which poisoned communities around Dublin. The community stood side by side with republicans, slowly a mass movement emerged from the growing unrest among the working class.

In working class Dublin, empowered communities began marching on drug dealers homes.

The communities were facing down the people who peddled heroin to their children. As the workers of Dublin began organizing themselves, the state began to notice.

The black propaganda unit of the free state went into full swing, the people of Dublin were told that anti drugs organizations were a front for the IRA, that the IRA and INLA were extorting drug dealers.

This was just the first stage in the states campaign against the working class of Dublin. Over the coming years they took it up several notches. They harassed community workers & ordinary people. They began beating marchers off the streets, they filed trumped up charges. Six people were sentenced to twenty months in prison. As Republicans we have to analyze why this happened. We have to address the question "Why did the state

make an all out assault on the anti drugs campaign?"

Of course there are several possible answers for this. The state saw a mass movement building momentum. This movement had many participants (ordinary people, socialists, republicans).

The state saw this as a threat, after facing down the drug dealers, what else would they do? The movement could of turned their attention to those in government around the period.

People like Garret Fitzgerald who removed funding from the most deprived areas in Dublin. What did the poor of Ballymun mean to him?

The above factors made the state act, they instructed the police to go out and 'face down' (beat, harass, intimidate, jail) the anti drugs activists.

The ferocity of the state campaign leads to more questions. Were the police happy to try and defeat anti drugs protesters because they were lining their own pockets?

Were they benefiting from the blood of young working class men and women, who fell victim to the heroin scourge?

As we enter 2009 the situation is bleak, drugs are more freely available than ever. There are probably more drug dealers then ever before. Ever since the overt anti drugs movement faded away in the late 90s, there have been cries for help from the community. Some republicans attempted to go it alone against drug dealers without the community knowing why. The state went into phase one (as seen in the 80s & 90s), they spread black propaganda. They accused republicans of being involved in 'feuds over

'turf'. The next week the papers said republicans were in partnership with the peopled they were 'feuding' with the week before.

The community did not know the truth behind what was going on, so they believed the propoganda issued by the states puppets in the media.

One prominent republican group was being criminalized daily; they was on the front page of newspapers 11 days in a row.

As republicans, we have to analyze the past to find out what direction to take for the future. We need to take lessons from the 1980s, from CPAD and COCAD. We as community activ-

ists need to first start doing surveys, organizing meetings, inviting community reps to take part.

Most of all, we must empower our class to fight the scourge of drugs. It is an enormous fight, but with the right preparation and ground work, we can take it on.

Chris Duffy

Opinion piece by Alex McGuigan

## So Are Drugs An Issue?

There is no escaping the fact that drug use/misuse is a 'constant' in contemporary society and working-class areas are in the frontline.

Forget the stylised Hollywood image of recreational hedonism, the reality was a recent report from North Belfast CFAD (Concerned Families Against Drugs) of a 13 year old being caught with a 'wrap' of cocaine or the recent appearance of the devastating Methamphetamine in the North! There isn't a family in Ireland which hasn't been affected in some way by substance misuse including alcohol.

As a complex problem afflicting our community, it stands to reason that solutions must come from within our community. As socialists we must stand with community groups like CFAD in Belfast in their stance against drug dealing in working-class areas. We should always stand against social parasites who prey on the poverty stricken, be they drug dealers, loan sharks or car thieves.

In the North to some extent, the modern phenomena of the brash drug dealing 'Hood' is a byproduct of the acid house/rave scene of the late 1980's/early 1990's and the ecstasy explosion on the club scene.

Like all commodities in demand, drugs are seen by dealers as a low-risk way of making enormous profits and because these commodities are illegal due to prohibition, criminals corner the market. In the 1990's many of these scumbag's names became common knowledge courtesy of the tabloid media. Prior to becoming drug dealers many of these parasites were career

criminals specialising in armed robberies, burglaries & theft - drug dealing just became a more attractive career move. It is widely accepted that many of these drug dealers were given free reign to ply their trade in return for supplying information on Republican activities within the communities they hailed from. There is also no doubt that the drugs explosion within working-class Republican areas was welcomed by the establishment as a pacifying measure, (there are after all documented precedents of this very strategy against the black ghettos in the U.S.)

As a response to the blight of drug dealing in our communities in the 90s, DAAD (Direct Action against Drugs) was formed by republicans who executed a significant number of high level dealers & exiled many more. These actions were generally well received by the communities affected. In the capital, communities blighted by the heroin trade organised pickets of dealers homes, meetings, protests & we saw popular direct action winning huge support.

As socialists we analyse the situation, not react to it in an alarmist tabloid fashion, for drug use/misuse is a very complex issue. Society's use of intoxicants is as old as Bacchus. Alcohol is classed as a dangerous drug and if cider were made illegal tomorrow, the same elements who are dealing coke would corner the market. In the long-term, some kind of 'de-classification or legalisation' should be appraised with an open mind. No-one would advocate the opening of 'Narcotics Off Licences' but there has been good progress in a model of addiction treatment in e.g., Switzerland,

where the anti-social effects of heroin use have been to some extent neutralised by their approach. Addiction is classified by the World Health Organisation as a notifiable disease & if drug dealers are predators then the addict is their victim. It is symptomatic of the marginalising effect of the present capitalist system that stupor & intoxication are seen as an alternative to the drudgery of the rat-race.

In the short term there is a need to support our communities against drug dealers. We should also avoid the pitfalls of scapegoating and personalities before principles. It is sad to see working-class areas that resisted military rule & oppression with dignity for 30 years being traumatized by scumbags.

The RUC/PSNI (or Gardai) has no solution nor do they care, in fact I dare say they think its payback time! Direct action against these scumbags is worthy of our support & it empowers communities again.

Many people have become isolated & feel the only alternative is to close the curtains hoping to escape the attentions of drug or drink fuelled hoods. How often have you wished there was a network of support & resistance to the drug fuelled savagery that occurs especially at weekends.

Groups like CFAD are worthy of our support. The alternative is that our working-class areas will become like those in Unionist areas where the local loan shark or drug dealer holds sway over the district - its an appalling vista that I hope never becomes a reality!

For Republican Socialist Merchandise visit:



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# The Truth Behind The Hunger Strikes

## Was There An Offer made In 1981?

***The following text was delivered by IRSP Spokesperson Willie Gallagher to a packed public meeting of republicans at the Gasyard Centre in Derry's Bogside on May 23rd.***

***Family representatives of the 1981 martyrs were also present at was to be an emotional gathering not seen for some years in the city.***

***The meeting was designed to not only examine issues surrounding that period but opened it up for discussion as well as to get to shed some light on the truth behind the Hunger Strikes.***

In early 2005 Richard O'Rawe's book 'Blanketmen - An untold story of the H-Block hunger strike' was published.

In that book he made an explosive and controversial claim that he and Bik, on behalf of the jail IRA leadership, accepted a British offer made on 5th July 1981 to end the hunger strike.

He (Richard O'Rawe) claimed that four of the five demands were in effect conceded and that these were passed to him by Bik, who received them from Danny Morrison. He claimed he studied the comm for a number of hours and then shouted to Bik, who was two cells away, that there was enough there. Bik agreed and stated that he would comm outside accepting. The following day a comm from the outside IRA leadership rejected their acceptance.

Richard's claims were immediately rubbished by SF leaders mainly Danny Morrison, Jim Gibney and Bik McFarlane in TV and radio interviews and also in the press. There was a multitude of interviews and press statements from them in what seemed an uncoordinated manner as there were glaring contradictions in their various positions on the claims.

Bik on UTV live on 1st March 2005 denied that any offer of any sort was ever made by the British at any point. Also in March 2005 in an interview with the Irish News Bik stated "There was no concrete proposals whatsoever in relation to a deal." He goes on to deny that the acceptance conversation with Richard ever took place.

Danny Morrison in the Irish Times on 5th February 2005 said "It is telling that not once in 24 years has the NIO stated that before Joe McDonnell's death it made an offer to the hunger strikers which was turned by the IRA's army council." Even though Danny contradicted Bik by saying that there were offers being proposed by the British but he stated that none of them were concrete. Bik later retracted his earlier claim in other press briefing that there were no offers and said he meant to say no deals.

Jim Gibney said in the Irish News on 12th May 2006 that "Joe McDonnell died on 8th July -the British did not offer an agreement before he died."

Those are just some of the multitude of examples of SF's public position on the O'Rawe claims and the debate turned into one of semantics of what constituted an offer or a deal. They steered the debate away from the IRA jail leadership's acceptance claim and focused instead on semantics over the definition of deals and offers but maintained that there were no concrete offers and because there were no concrete offers therefore the IRA jail leadership could not have had, in Bik's words, "accepted something that didn't exist."

During this period there was a demonization campaign waged by SF against Richard using their old and tested tactic of demonizing and smearing the messenger in order to rubbish the message.

During this period of 2005-2006 the IRSP, at first, were merely interested observers but were also very skeptical about the claims. We did not want to believe O'Rawe: we did not want to

# Parliamentarianism Liberty & Civil Rights

*Special Supplement on the 40th Anniversary of the NICRA*

***"Let Ireland seek help where Wolfe Tone found it, viz.,  
in the ranks of the democracy in revolt. Wherever the Socialist  
banner flies, there gather the true friends of freedom, there let us take our stand, and there  
let us prepare to raise the only worthy monument to the pioneers of freedom -  
the realization of that freedom for which they fought"***

James Connolly; Workers Republic **5 August 1899**

***Beginning in this issue of the Starry Plough Magazine, Belfast based, Veteran Republican Socialist activist Peadar Dubh, in a two part article explores the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association's five demands which was announced 40 years ago in June of this year.***

***This issue carries the first part of this article titled 'Parliamentarianism Liberty & Civil Right' which concludes in the next issue.***



***What is that in your hand?  
-- It is a branch  
Of What?  
-- Of the Tree of Liberty  
where did it first grow?  
-- In America  
where does it bloom?  
-- In France  
where did the seed fall?  
-- In Ireland  
when will the moon be full?  
-- When the four quarters meet  
United Irish catechism "four quarters" being the four Provinces.***

republican population went on rent and rates strike, gas and electricity bills were not paid. This was the height of the bombing campaign. It is significant that during the first swoop of internment (both the test run on the 2nd August 71 and the formal swoop on the 9th August) it was those who organised the civil disobedience strikes who were the main targets. Those who were suspected of organising the bombing came secondary.

The chairperson of the Tenants Association had to go on the run until captured in December 1971. Just look at the names of those arrested: most

In 1971 96% of the nationalist and

were members of tenants associations. The Chairperson in question was considered a Republican, a Communist, and a member of NICRA. Yet at the same time an individual claiming to be OC of the Provisionals could walk about freely. One might ask: who was the most dangerous to the state?

## Introduction

The 1st of June this year is the 40th anniversary, of the announcement of the five demands by NICRA.

The 1967 objectives of NICRA as follows

To defend the basic freedoms of all citizens  
To protect the rights of the individual  
To highlight the abuses of power  
To demand guarantees for freedom of speech, assembly and association  
To inform the public of their lawful rights

**These were later defined in five demands (In June 1969):**

- 1) **One man one vote**
- 2) **Votes at 18**
- 3) **An independent boundary commission, to draw up electoral boundaries**
- 4) **An independent mechanism to resolve local government grievances.**
- 5) **The abolition of the Special Powers Act and the disbandment of the B Specials.**

The Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association[1] was governed by two constitutions. The first was based on that of the British National Council for Civil Liberties. The second emerged at the 1970 annual general meeting as a consequence of changing strategies and mass membership. It was based on a thirteen-member committee representing all political parties.

The following were elected at the first meeting: chairman: Noel Harris (DATA); vice-chairman: Conn McCluskey (Campaign for Social Justice); secretary: Derek O'Brien Peters (Communist Party); treasurer: Fred Heatley (Belfast Wolfe Tone Society); PRO: Jack Bennett (Belfast Wolfe Tone Society); other members are Betty Sinclair (Belfast Trades Council); Billy McMillen (Republican Clubs), John Quinn (Liberal Party),

Michael Dolley (National Democratic Party), Joe Sherry (Republican Labour Party), Jim Andrews (Ardoyne Tenants' Association), Paddy Devlin (Northern Ireland Labour Party), Tony McGettigan (no affiliation).

It should be noted that there was a Republican strand running through the entire organisation. Jack Bennett, Paddy Devlin (an ex prisoner) Liam Mc Millan[2] and Joe Sherry are a few noted names with strong connections with the then Republican Movement. Gerry Adams claimed in the Irish News January 29th that he was one of "a small number [of] people present at the founding of the [Civil Rights] association" in Belfast.) Who is Adams trying to fool? It is a matter of record that no names of those who went on to form the Provisionals were noted in the minutes of the above meeting. The archives are in the Linen Hall Library in Belfast for anyone who wishes to check them.

NICRA [3] was about rights and determined to defend democracy. There are some republicans who believe that a revival of an Chéad Dail will realise full Civil Rights. But will the ruling class permit it? This is an issue that we ought to think carefully about. Is it possible to implement the Democratic Programme through a British-style Parliamentary system? The last part of this paper will look at this question.

## Formal or real democracy?

From the outset this paper does not claim that our everyday concept of democracy is democratic. Democracy has diverse meanings in different societies. More importantly, it has opposite meanings when considered from the standpoint of the contending classes. Oppression within the democratic process (both in the North and the 26 counties) is the inevitable result of this fact. Restrictions on human rights are necessary for such any system of class society to function.

The theory of democracy changes in accordance with the changing the needs of the state. The goalposts are moved when it suits the ruling class. Those who are pushing for United States of Europe conveniently forget the democratic idea that the people

decides. They overlook the inconvenient detail that the draft Constitutional Treaty was rejected by the majority of the people of Europe, who used what the ruling class likes to call the democratic process. Yet those who govern the system continue their attempts to implement it.

During the 1970s, it was discovered that the legislation to carry out the dawn raids was ruled illegal by the courts. Yet while the same courts were still sitting to decide on compensation, the legislation was backdated to include the raids. This shows just how flexible the ruling class is in its interpretation of the law!

## What has really changed?

Contrary what the media and the status quo politicians lead us to believe, the objectives of NICRA have not been met. Republican Socialists take the position that the NICRA objectives and demands are as relevant today as they were in the late 60s. But at the same time, we pose the question are these rights achievable whilst capitalism still exists?

Capitalism may give rights, or, to be more precise, the illusion of right. These rights may govern the conduct of individuals within the existing economic system, but not the right to replace it. This raises the question of the state's relationship with capitalism. Under capitalist formal democracy, anyone can say (almost) what they like, as long as the boards of directors of the big banks and monopolies decide what actually happens.

The War of independence 1919- 1921 was in the main about political independence with no challenge to the ruling class or indeed the existing class state. However, as ideas and strategies began to the direction of economic change, led by people such as Peadar O Donnell and the ICA strata within the volunteers, the state intervened and a truce was called.

The state apparatus, including the so-called justice system, and the coercive bodies like the PSNI/RUC, are not neutral and serve the interests of the ruling class. More importantly, those political parties that embody the interests and policy requirements of

the ruling class are enmeshed in the state of the exploiting classes.

For this reason the question of the state and the struggle for civil liberties is one of priority for Republican Socialists. We will fight for each and every democratic right, but we understand that the struggle for democracy, if it is to be consistent, will inevitably lead to a revolutionary struggle against the bosses and their state.

It may be argued that the liberty and emancipation of the Irish working class has been deferred by the reformist depreciation of the political and trade union leadership.

Even though the trade union movement played a major role in the formation of NICRA, the bureaucratic leadership of the Irish trade union movement, in supporting the Belfast Agreement in the North and the Social Contract in the 26 counties, is supporting the state and the capitalist system at the expense of civil liberties. Republican Socialists will therefore fight to maintain the total independence of the trade unions from the state and to maintain an independent class policy at all times.

Electoral boundaries may have changed; but they have been changed on a sectarian basis, which is a necessity for the Unionist-Nationalist set-up of the Belfast Agreement and the apparatus of the Executive and the Assembly at Stormont. We are well used to restrictions on civil liberties. That has become so much a way of life that such limitations are seen as an inevitable part of life, established by precedent and tradition. Such restrictions are even considered "democratic" insofar as said to "protect the democratic process".

Under the so-called "democratic" set-up we still suffer from a thousand and one anti-democratic practices.

Today in the North of Ireland Big Brother is alive and well. We enjoy the benefits of the highest concentration of surveillance cameras of any country in the world. Every political party office is within the scope of CCTV.

Every PSNI/RUC land rover pos-

sesses a permanent video camera. Conveniently, when it suits the authorities the recording systems of these vehicles seems to be loss or the camera was not in operation.

At a recent IRSP commemoration in Derry, in addition to the stationary camera, at least eight mobile cameras followed the Party activists and supporters. This is all part of the standard disregard for civil liberties, which is a hallmark of formal democracy in even the most "democratic" state, but which increases with the intensification of the crisis in the capitalist system.

### The role of reformism

The ruling class recognises that reforms act as a safety valve to cushion the class struggle. They have long ago learned to use the reformist leaders as counter-revolutionary tools. But reforms can only be used as a temporary palliative to ease class conflict. Fundamental human needs and rights cannot be realised through reforms. Class conflict is only resolved by revolutionary means to bring about a fundamental change in society.

That said, the fact that the state uses reforms and reformists to ease revolutionary threats does not mean that revolutionaries should ignore agitation for reforms or oppose partial changes that signify an improvement in the conditions of the masses. Our criticism of the reformists is not that they fight for reforms but that they do not fight consistently, that they tend to conciliate with the ruling class, vacillate, compromise and surrender. Our recent experience in Northern Ireland is sufficient proof of this.

Frank Mc Glade, a leading member of NICRA, and a senior member of the Official Republican Movements Ard Comhairle pointed out the dangers of using the reformist process alone. He took the view that converting all Republican Clubs into NICRA branches would distract workers from real political emancipation.<sup>[4]</sup> However, his warning came too late. But it should be a lesson for Republicans today.

### How to fight for reforms

It is true that NICRA demanded an end to the Stormont administration. But such a reform, in and of itself, did

not mean a fundamental threat to the state. It would not signify the political and economic emancipation for the working class. What was, and is required, is a qualitative leap from civil agitation to political action.

Every revolution has to remove power from the hands of the obsolete class. But all history proves that the old ruling class will not hand over power willingly. The Irish working class cannot base itself on the existing state power, but must overthrow and destroy it. Such political action may entail many forms of political activity, depending on conditions: from general strikes, civil disobedience, up to and including military action.

If real human rights are to be achieved, the old outdated political and economic institutions must first be removed. But workers do not draw such advanced conclusions all at once. They must go through a preparatory school, setting out from the struggle for all kinds of partial demands: both economic and political, including the struggle for democratic demands.

They will fight and demonstrate, among other things, for the right to work, the right for access to health and education, the right to live in peace. If there is sufficient pressure, provided there are no threats to the state, the ruling class will concede to some of these demands. The main thing is that through such partial battles the workers acquire a consciousness of their strength and this prepares them for greater things.

### How far have we come?

Republicans and Republican Socialists continue to pay homage to Tone and the United Irishmen. But what was the real message of Wolfe Tone? And how far have we progressed in the struggle for the rights of man and political liberty since 1798? It is evident that the teachings of Tone in isolation of the events since the late 18th century do not provide a solution to our problems today. Different times bring different tunes. But there are common features.

Over 35 years ago while the Provisionals were still considered a splinter group and dissidents of the Officials,



☐ Jack Bennett made the following comments

The great issues in dispute then and now are identical. Despite our growing involvement with modern problems and despite all the artificial efforts to impose normal modern politics upon the two abnormal partitioned areas of Ireland. Irish politics today and all the main conflicts in Irish politics, still revolve the two chief points in Tone's programme—the problem of unifying the Irish people and the problem of obtaining their political independence. ☐

It is clear that the working-class has developed socially and politically phenomenally since 1798. At the same time, by the very fact that the Irish people are legally divided at Stormont into Nationalists and Unionists deprives them as a right as a nation but more important; it deprives them the right to act as a class. Have we progressed since the struggle for civil rights objectives, which gave birth to the NICRA in 1967?

Even though many of the NICRA demands were eventually met, the crude reality is that Stormont has returned. It has returned with its class divisions formalised. Capitalist democracy is supposed to be about majority rule.

There is only one majority; the working-class. But under a British-created

parliamentary system, this majority is legally divided as Nationalists and Unionists. This is "justified" by the old argument of "cultural rights" and "different traditions", which does not bear serious historical examination.

The question of religion is historically full of contradictions. The Roman Catholics, Church of Ireland and Presbyterians all lay claim to the Irish language (paradoxically, the latter two saved it from extinction). There is no real division in culture. As for tradition, what are these two traditions supposed to be?

Unionism is a tradition based on an illusion of superiority, a history that supported the British Fascist Mosley and protested against conscription to fight the Nazis. It is a tradition used by the British ruling class to perpetuate the division of the working class, and encourage hatred for fellow human beings simply because they attend a different Church.

In reality, for workers there is only one tradition: a proud organised, militant and united working class: a revolutionary working class which created soviets from Belfast to Limerick.

Is it possible to have real workers rights within capitalism? Today there are more obstacles than ever to workers unity and greater limitations on human rights. Those Republicans who gather at Bodentown each June

conveniently leave out one of the most important elements of Tone's teachings.

The defence of this tradition is left to those who carry the mantle of Republican Socialism. That element is the secular approach, a secular society, and secular culture. Political and economic emancipation, based upon equal human rights, is not possible whilst society uses religious dogma to divide the Irish working class

"The democracy of Parliament is, in short, the democracy of Capitalism. Capitalism gives to the worker the right to choose his master, but insists that the fact of mastership shall remain unquestioned. Parliamentary Democracy gives to the worker the right to a voice in the selection of his rulers but insists that he shall bend as a subject to be ruled. The fundamental feature of both in their relation to the worker is that they imply his continued subjection to a ruling class once his choice of the personnel of the rulers is made." ☐

☐ It may be argued that the trade union movement conceived the Civil rights movement, but did not give birth to it. The Belfast and District Trades Council called a conference in the Board Room of Transport House Belfast (the ATGWU Headquarters) on the 8th of May 1965. All parties were invited and Republicans welcomed. The theme was to discuss the Government of Ireland Act in relation to the role of Stormont, the Special Powers Act, Unionist corruption in local government and most important it was moved that a civil rights campaign be organised (trades council minutes May 1965)

☐ Liam McMillan, the Officer Commanding the IRA in the city at the time, admitted he had enough members there to pack the executive, he held back to ensure that the movement remained broadly based.

☐ (Its first formal meeting and launch was held in the International Hotel, Belfast, on 29 January 1967)

☐ Officials Ard Fheis January 1971, the QUB Summer School

☐ The Official IRA called their ceasefire May 1972, the Provisionals were then termed / splinter group

☐ Jack Bennett, a member of the Wolf Tone Society, from an introduction Freedom the Wolf Tone Way; By Sean Cronin and Richard Roach

☐ Parliamentary Democracy by James Connolly. Workers' Republic, 22 September 1900

think that the IRA leadership would undermine the authority of the prisoners and reject the offer. Even more importantly we could see no concrete evidence that supported his claims despite the contradictory rebuttals by SF.

A number of our ex-prisoners and some relatives of our hunger strikers began raising questions on the claims and asked us to investigate them. At that point we knew absolutely nothing at all and we set up a series of meetings with senior members of the IRSP and INLA Army Council members who were involved in the strike at that time as well as with Rab Collins, the INLA H-Block OC.

All of them stated that they had no knowledge whatsoever about a substantial offer being made, nor of the acceptance by the IRA jail leadership or indeed of the mountain climber initiative.

The turning point in the controversy for the IRSP came after a publicized interview by Anthony McIntyre with Richard O Rawe which appeared on a website called 'The Blanket' on the 16th May 2006. A key paragraph in that interview jumped out at a number of us who were closely following

the debate and it is worth quoting here again-

"Q: Indeed. I think you realise there is a bit more than that. As you know I have enormous time for Bik. It goes back to the days before the blanket. But I can only state what I uncovered. I am not saying that it is conclusive.

"These things can always be contested. But it certainly shades the debate your way. If Morrison and Gibney continue to mislead people that there is no evidence supporting your claim from that wing on H3 I can always allow prominent journalists and academics to access what is there and arrive at whatever conclusions they feel appropriate. That should settle matters and cause a few red faces to boot. We know how devious and unscrupulous these people have been in their handling of this. They simply did not reckon on what would fall the way of the Blanket. Nor did I for that matter. A blunder on their part."

#### **ELABORATE:**

*IRSP confidentiality agreement*

I done this part from memory but will give a summary here of what was said:

*(There was contact between the IRSP and those who had possession of this evidence and after some negotiations we agreed to certain pre-conditions that were being placed upon us. Bear in mind that we did not believe O Rawe at this point, did not want to believe him and wanted to report back that there was no real evidence so that we could go round our Hunger Strikers families and say "ignore what you hear and read about O Rawe's claims-they're not true." We thought we would put the controversy to bed and little did we realise the opposite would happen. Jimmy Bradley, a senior IRSP person from Belfast were presented with this evidence which turned a skeptic and a non-believer in believing that there were indeed serious questions to be answered. In fact we believed Richard was telling the truth. We agreed beforehand that we could not talk about the content or nature of the evidence, until given permission to do so, but could only sum up whether we believed O Rawe or not. We believed him! We reported back to our leadership who instructed us to set up an ad hoc committee to investigate further.)*

In June/July 2006 the IRSP met with Colum Scullion, Richard's cell mate,



Funeral of INLA Volunteer Michael Devine

in the presence of Mickey Devine for over an hour. He sated a number of times that he could neither confirm nor deny the claims that Richard made. He said that there were some things about the Hunger Strike that he couldn't talk about and that was one of them. I pointed out to him that if what Richard claimed was untrue then it was an outrageous slanderous lie which was having an adverse impact on Mickey, his family and all the other families and that could he not now reassure Mickey that the claims were untrue. He again stated that he would neither confirm nor deny the claims.

We then briefed the INLA Hunger Strikers families as to our investigation but due to our hands being tied with the confidentiality agreement we could not tell them the nature or content of the evidence that was presented to us.

The controversy then remained out of public viewing until March 2008 when Eamon McCann in a radio interview verified Richard's claims. Eamon based his claims on conversations he had with Brendan Duddy who he describes as the mountain climber and Colum Scullion. This time SF learnt lessons from 2 years prior when they were full of contradictions and untruths. They remained silent but were able to produce Colum Scullion to counter the claims. Scully inadvertently, despite rubbishing the acceptance conversation, added weight to Richard's

claims by saying Bik did indeed make Richard aware of an offer on July 5th.

In March 2009 we became aware of documents that were released under the Freedom of Information Act prior to their publication in the media. Put together, these documents suggest that Margaret Thatcher proposed a deal with the IRA to end the hunger strike. This was first given "privately to the IRA on July 5th" according to the documents.

A further message was approved by Thatcher on the evening of July 7th and communicated to the IRA on the afternoon of 8th July. The documents further suggest that the IRA was cool at first but later in the day said that only the tone, and not the content, of the offer was unacceptable. As a result, a further draft statement, enlarging upon the previous British statement, was communicated to the IRA for their consideration. The documents say the IRA was advised that if they accepted this statement and "ordered the hunger strikers to end their protest" then the statement would be issued immediately. Otherwise a statement would be issued re-iterating the British government position of June 30th.

On the afternoon of July 18th the IRA asked for an official to go into the Maze to meet the hunger strikers. The British intention was that the official would explain the offer on

clothes set out above and clarify a previous private offer on work.

However, after some discussion, the British decided not to proceed without a prior indication of acceptance by the IRA. The documents clearly support Richard's version of events and disputes the SF version of no offers of substance.

We once again spoke to senior members of the 1981 IRSP/INLA, the H-Block OC and the families of the INLA hunger strikers families and briefed them all on the documents. The IRSP executive then drafted a press release based on all the information uncovered in their investigation and stated that the 1981 leadership of the IRSP/INLA and the H-Block OC would have ended the INLA involvement in the Hunger Strike if they had have had this information at the time.

All of them claimed that they were kept totally in the dark about the Thatcher negotiations or acceptance by the IRA prison leadership of an offer made on July 5th.

On the 6th April SF in the Irish Times denied the Sunday Times claims and bizarrely stated that the documents were a part of a British military intelligence conspiracy.

The IRSP on the internet pointed out that the only evidence of a British intelligence intervention was that which SF promoted with the John

## Extracts from a taped conversation:

### *Part of the evidence presented to the IRSP on June 2006*

**I am going to reference four separate segments of this conversation. There are more which are just as powerful. These quotations, we believe, more than confirm Richard O'Rawe's assertions.**

It should be borne in mind that the IRSP leadership had hoped that this day would never come; it was our honest desire that we would have been able to report that O'Rawe was either lying, or that his memory was playing tricks with him.

While our investigation is still ongoing, clearly it is getting increasingly difficult to dismiss what O'Rawe is saying. Here are the quotes.

#### **Make your own minds up:**

**Mr. A:** I have said to people, yes... it's true enough. A couple of people around here got at me about it, and I said 'Well, I don't want to get involved in this, but I do recall that conversation'.

**Mr. A:** I can verify it, it fucking happened; I don't want fuck all to do with it. It did happen. O'Rawe's telling the truth.....

**Mr. A:** Well, I can verify the first part of it, the offer ... except I thought it was three points rather than four and I know it was rejected – but I don't know who – and neither I do...

**Mr. A:** The reply, the reply... well, I know it was turned down – but I don't know by whom.

Bleloch interview who they claimed was an MI5 agent.

SF quickly done a U-turn on this claim and welcomed the documents claiming, again quite bizarrely, that they supported their version of events.

SF's position is now shifting from 'no offers whatsoever' to 'no concrete proposals whatsoever' to according to Barbara de Bruin on 2nd May 2009-

"There were negotiations, there was an offer, in fact a number of different offers but as the British refused to sign anything or give a public commitment to move before the hunger strike ended there was no 'deal'. Due to the way the British government had acted in the wake of the first hunger strike the hunger strikers wouldn't end their fast without some form of public guarantee.

Indeed, the timeline published by the Bobby Sands Trust also shows that the British government refused to meet the hunger strikers and stand over their offer."

It is worth rewinding back to Jim Gibney's public statement on March 2004 when during a speech on the anniversary of Bobby Sands 50th birthday said "I was shown a comm written by Bobby Sands that had come out of the prison the previous day, the day the first Hunger Strike ended). The following sentence

stuck out: "I will begin another hunger strike on the 1st January."

SF's position now seems to be relying on British duplicity at the end of the first Hunger Strike by claiming that the British reneged on a deal therefore it was imperative that the Brits stand over any offer they made. Why would Bobby Sands be writing a comm on the night the first Hunger Strike collapsed about going on an-



Brendan "Bik" McFarland who played a central role in 1981 on behalf of the PIRA prisoners.

other Hunger Strike if there was an alleged deal? Danny Morrison appeared on RTE, the same day Jim received this comm, saying that Bobby was "jubilant."

All the main players including of course the Brits knew that no deal was reneged on so why maintain this pretence and preconditions over an alleged deal that didn't exist.

The day following the Sunday Times exposes Danny Morrison inferred that Kevin McQuillan knew about the mountain climber initiative as did Kevin Lynch and Mickey Devine.

This was strongly denied publicly by Kevin as well as by Tommy McCourt and Seany Flynn, senior members of the 1981 IRSP who were in constant contact with the INLA Hunger Strikers, Liam McCluskey a former Hunger Striker and Rab Collins who was the INLA prisoners OC.

On the 7th April 2009 another ex-blanket prisoner confirms over hearing acceptance conversation.

*Elaborate* "Again last night I gave this account last night from memory but will give the following summary: An ex-blanket man phoned me the Tuesday after the Sunday Times article and confirmed Richards account.

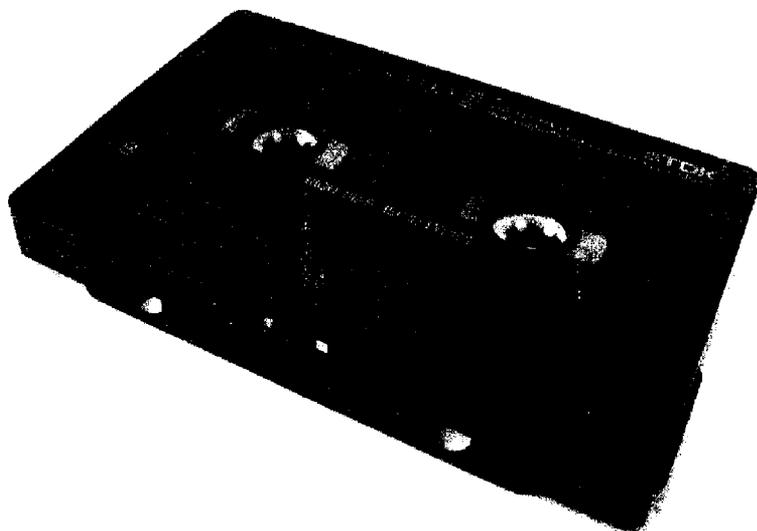
We met on Easter Sunday and in the presence of others once again confirmed Richard's account of and stated that he heard the conversation between Richard and Bik accepting the offer and agreed to meet the families and others if they wished.

"He is in this hall tonight and perhaps he may want to talk about this later during the debate or I can arrange a meeting with some family relatives in private."

The IRSP are very conscious of the pain and hurt that has been revisited upon the families and wider republican community.

We have had a number of lengthy meetings with four of the families in relation to this controversy which have been both heartbreaking and headwrecking experiences but also very humbling experiences. If we, the IRSP, added any further pain and distress to the families then I unreservedly apologise for doing so but I must add that we were duty bound to fulfill the requests of the relatives who did ask us to investigate these claims and to tell them the truth.

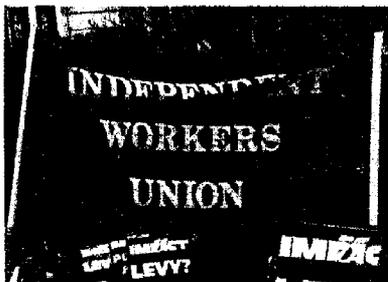
I hope others are likeminded and give us all the truth and finally closure to this controversy. On a final note, we in the IRSP would like to salute the memory of the Hunger Strikers and praise the dignity and courage of the families.  
Willie Gallagher, IRSP



# Building An Independent Workers Union

*The meaning behind our work place struggle*

**Tom s Gorman in-  
terviews Brian  
Garvey of the  
Independent  
Workers Union  
(IWU) for the  
Starry Plough in an  
effort to inform  
and highlight the  
aims and work  
carried out by  
Ireland's independ-  
ent trade union.**



**If you would like  
more information  
on the IWU and  
how to join, please  
visit them online at:  
[www.union.ie](http://www.union.ie)**

**Give us a brief rundown on the formation of the IWU?**

A group of Irish Trade Unionist were convinced that the Trade Union Movement in its present structure in Ireland has lost its way, and had become nothing more than an arm of the state and management. Its function has become more to control workers rather than advance their interests. People had worked for many years to attempt to reform the movement from within, and apart from some minor victories, their efforts have been continuously stifled by the powers that be within the present Trade Union hierarchy. It is now fair to conclude that the existing Trade Unions cannot be reformed for the advance of the Irish worker. Hence the formation of the I.W.U.

**What strength does the IWU have in Ireland?**

The IWU has grown from its beginnings in Cork to become a fighting union with members throughout Ireland. The strongest branches are in Cork, in Dublin, in the north here and in Donegal. The northern branch has offices in Monaghan and Belfast. The recession brings fresh challenges to a relatively new union and we are determined to grow in order to become the much needed force for change in the workers movement and so urge people to join us to this end.

**What are the IWU's key battle sites for trade union activism and does it see the unemployed as an important factor?**

Our membership is varied and includes, among others, butchers, self employed taxi drivers, stone masons and construction workers, migrant factory workers, the unemployed and

many NHS health workers. Our first responsibility is to defend these members and assure their dignity at work. So the workplace is a key battle ground. In the north we are making an important intervention in the public health trusts and are determined not only prevent ALL cuts but insist on front line workers making the decisions. We believe decision making should be collective and that top down management has had its day. But to dismantle that will take major shifts in thinking, the increased confidence of workers and a lot of effort. But it is necessary.

IWU recognises that in many ways there are less certainties in the workplace. And today ours is a much less industrialized workplace in the traditional sense and yet work itself has become more intensive than ever. Trade unions are going to have to forge much better alliances with social organizations, community groups, campaign groups, civil rights groups and the unemployed which of course is growing in size since the latest 'bust' of the economy. Issues of unemployment and the fact that society can not assure jobs for people in the future must be brought up the agenda of the trade union movement. This can be challenged effectively if the unemployed lead the agenda of much needed change. We are hopeful that some of our unemployed members will do exactly that and welcome others to join them.

**Some working class people are cynical about the trade union movement and how it's demands have gotten less and less radical to the point of continuously negotiating retreats. Will the IWU be campaigning more aggressively?**

The very formation of IWU was based on our drawing the same conclusions as many working class people you have mentioned. When the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, which represents all the larger unions, entered into 'social partnership' with the government of the Dail it was a betrayal of the principles of trade unionism so well set out by people like Larkin and Connolly. Similarly in the north, top trade union officials have too often assisted in managing workers on behalf of business and the public sector instead of fighting for them. Working class people, the poor, the unemployed, they know very well that the government does not have the same interests as them, so when they greater trade union movement entered into this partnership for 'common good', they knew the goods would float to the top and creamed off by the greedy and they would be left at the bottom. This is precisely what has happened in the current financial crisis.

#### **Does the IWU take positions on more overtly political matters?**

We are union and not a political party. That said, it is in our interests to campaign on issues and policies that affect our members and other workers and advance their interests. We did, for example, set out basic demands of councilors in the recent elections in the form of a minimum programme for their endorsement.

#### **What is the IWU position on the constitutional make-up of Ireland and its retardation of Irish politics as a whole?**

It is significant that IWU has grown organically from working people across the island of Ireland from many different backgrounds, nationalities and religions. It is our conviction that people must recognize their common interests in terms of health and educational needs, of what they do at work, how they work, who makes them work the way they do, and begin to push for any and all changes necessary to improve their lives as they best see fit. Whether from west Belfast, east Belfast, or north Limerick, working people and the unemployed are sub-

jects of superimposed solutions on long running problems that are not and will not be addressed effectively by planners Stormont, Westminster, the Dail. Divisions in society make their job much easier, not harder.

It is our determination that people will increasingly be in a position to create the type of society in which they wish to live instead of a situation where you turn out to the polls a couple of time a year and respond to top down policies. At present working people do not shape the policies that affect our lives. We know that front line health workers best now how to best care for the patients they encounter each day. The caterer will best know how to prepare food in the care home. They should therefore, make the decisions on how the services are run, on how the workplace operates, on how resources are allocated. Equally, the very people who have seen no change in their living standards in 20-30 years, given the opportunity, will best know how to improve lives in their community, will know best how to approach equality, will know how to shape society. Of course the opportunity will not be given to us, we must open it up for ourselves.

#### **Given the recent collapse of Capitalism, what does the future hold for the Irish working class struggle?**

I don't agree that Capitalism has collapsed, but it certainly faces a crisis, and I agree with Pit Wurher of Germany's Die Linke party who addressed the IWU April conference in Dublin. It was a crisis caused by factors much more important than greed of bankers, namely:

a) A tremendous redistribution of wealth from bottom to the top over the last 20-30 years.  
 b) Privatisation of the public sector, of health and pension systems,  
 c) tax reduction for corporations and a ruthless exploitation of workers... that has created huge amounts of money at the top. But because of competition for profit this money was not invested back in to society – we didn't find it in our schools, in our hospitals, in pension schemes – but went circulating in the financial

markets looking for maximum profits, where more and more risks were taken until control was lost. The public had to come to the rescue. The crisis has again shown that capitalism as a model does not work, it has shown that this system of exploitation and the neo liberal policies introduced to the world by Reagan and Thatcher are bankrupt. However, governments have bailed out the banks for now, at the expense of working people, and there has not yet been a credible and viable alternative presented when the world is crying out for one. Arguments for reform, regulation etc dominating the press all continue to stick to this neo liberal model.

People are angry, that is clear, and the working class movement needs to respond and take this opportunity to develop an alternative. And history is not on our side during recessions, and in fact people often swing to the right. While unemployment, health problems, suicides all increase during recessions so too does racism, so too does the threat of fascism. Pictures of Roma people fleeing Belfast and the election of BNP councillors in England shows this in a shocking way. There is a huge challenge to the working class movement, the unemployed, community and social organisations to organise, and find ways to organise together, with intent to set out a vision of a fair and just society and to work towards it, to fight for it.

This will take time. In my view we must begin with short term goals. More democracy in the workplace. Dignity among front line workers. Take decision making out of the hands of those at the top and put power increasingly in the hands of those on the floor of the workplace, on the streets. Campaign for jobs, for housing. Stop cuts in health care. Prevent private companies profiting from public services. Find common interests and goals between organisations. There is a struggle for ideas. To this end we invite people to help us form this fighting union and are very keen to meet and link with other individuals, social organisations and community groups to take on the issues put before us and meet the challenges in changed, difficult but exciting times.

# Black & Green Solidarity

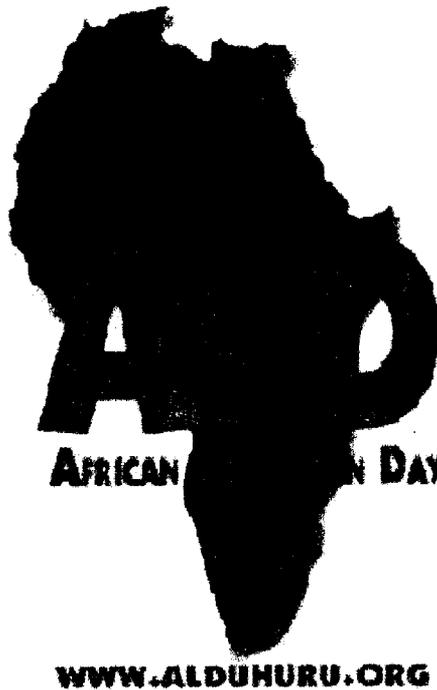
## Republican Socialists & African Liberation Day

The Irish Republican Socialist Movement, the Irish Republican Socialist Committees of North America sent solidarity greetings to our comrades in the All-African People's Revolutionary Party and African people worldwide on the occasion of African Liberation Day, a day celebrating the determination of the people of Africa to free themselves from foreign domination and exploitation.

We stand in solidarity with African people around the globe struggling for their liberation and the liberation of the African continent, and in particular we acknowledge those guided by the principles of Pan-Africanism and scientific socialism.

For nearly three and a half decades, the Irish Republican Socialist Movement, comprised primarily of the Irish Republican Socialist Party and the Irish National Liberation Army, has been on the front lines of the struggle for national liberation and socialist revolution in Ireland, while standing in solidarity with all people worldwide struggling toward the same goals.

Ireland was the first nation to fall victim to European colonialism and imperialism. The lessons learned by the British in colonizing and occupying Ireland would later be put to use by the British and other Europeans in colonizing and occupying Africa, the Americas, Asia, and the Middle East (especially in Palestine).



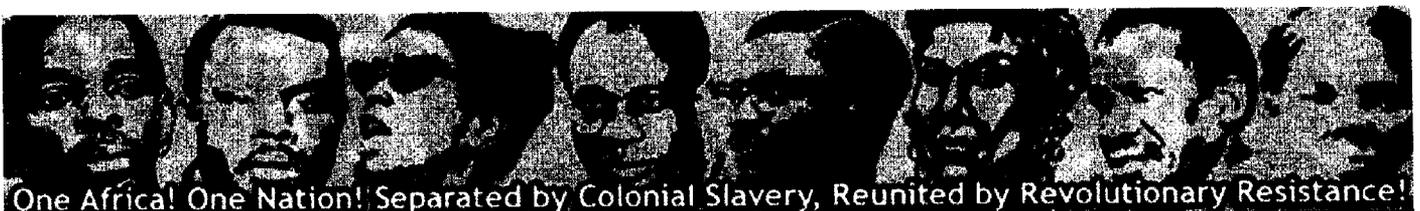
Even today, the Irish working class, native born and immigrant alike, continues to be dominated and marginalized by the capitalist class locally and internationally as the most exploited workers in western Europe, while the Irish government has played a strategic part of the new imperial order that is reshaping the world in its bloody image with the illegal occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan, allowing their country and its resources to be used as a staging point by the imperialist armies of the United States and Great Britain.

In the North of Ireland, the British continue to occupy part of the Irish nation, although now they prefer using local lackeys to rule on their behalf instead of doing so directly.

Like your brothers and sisters in Ireland, the African people of the world are of strategic and vital interest to the imperialist war machine. Whether you are used as cannon fodder in the American or British armies, starved so your resources can be exploited, or armed to fight each other in proxy imperialist wars, you are some of the most oppressed and potentially revolutionary people that exist. The building of Pan-Africanism and African unity through mass revolutionary organizations is perhaps one of the greatest possible threats that could arise for the rulers and exploiters of this planet.

African people are super-exploited across the globe. The resources of Africa are stolen to profit Western capitalism. Brothers and sisters, we stand in solidarity with you in opposing the racist capitalist system that oppresses us all.

From Port-au-Prince to Belfast, from Chicago to Cork, from Johannesburg to Derry, from Africa to Ireland and America, we are one class of people waging the same struggle for human liberation, boldly going forward in our shared struggle for socialism and the liberation of humankind from the shackles of capitalism and imperialism.



**One Africa! One Nation! Separated by Colonial Slavery, Reunited by Revolutionary Resistance!**

# Red Letters

## Starry Plough Reviews & letters

***This issue of the Starry Plough have opened up a new section to further publicise readers views thoughts and opinions.***

***This you would like to share yours then we would ask you to forward it to the editorial collective for possible inclusion in the coming issues.***

***You can do so by writing to us at: starryplough@gmail.com***

### **Book Review: Diego**

Just finished this book, it's an excellent story an autobiography, by 34-year-old Diego Fernando López Jaramillo, a member of the Colombian guerilla group ELN, who is serving 40 years in La Modelo Prison, Bogota.

The book was smuggled out of the gaol by Irish Republican Jim Monaghan, one of the Colombia Three, and has also been published as Gaeilge.

It's a story of poverty and oppression and explains why the Colombian peasants have risen up against a tyrannical government which oppresses them with the support of successive US governments, despite corruption and the government's and its allies' crucial role in the cocaine industry.

Diego's family and friends lived a hand-to-mouth existence, almost as serfs to the rich landowners. It is when he was studying at the age of 15 that he met students who belonged to JUCO, the Colombian Communist Youth. He joined the group, bringing up their membership to eight but their discussion and plans to demand union rights were seen as a threat and within a short period five of them were assassinated by Autodefensas Campesinas [AUC], organisations which were paid for by the ranchers and businessmen of the region.

Terrified, Diego ran away. Then he received news that his two other friends were murdered and he decided to join ELN, the National Liberation Army.

In his book he describes combat, the death of comrades and enemy soldiers, the culture in the camps and liberated areas, and how, one day on a mission to town and while he is staying with a woman friend one of his grenades goes off killing her and blowing off both his hands. He was captured and imprisoned. It was in prison that he met Jim Monaghan who encouraged him to write his story. Using a pencil held between the two stumps where his hands used to be, he had just completed it when he was moved to another prison and it was destroyed. Months later he was returned to La Modelo and Jim Monaghan again persuaded him to write it down all over again. This time it survived.

It is a very honest and modest book about the life of a Colombian Freedom Fighter and is worth every penny, some of which as pesos might just make their way back to him in prison and lighten his load. 'Diego' is available from all decent book shops around the country.

**Máirtín Óg Meehan**

A chara,

Is mac léinn in Ollscoil na hÉireann, Gaillimh mé agus tá mé i mo bhliain deireannach do chéim BA sa Ghaeilge. Tá Togra Taighde á dhéanamh agam mar pháirt do mo chúrsa, agus teastaíonn uaim chuntas a chur le chéile ar an 'Jailteacht'. Teastaíonn uaim roinnt agallaimh a dhéanamh le iar-chimí a d'fhoghlaim a chuid Gaeilge, nó a úsáid an

Ghaeilge go forleathan agus iad faoi ghlas sa Ceis nó sna blocanna. Cé go ndireoidh mo thaghdé ar an Ceis agus na blocanna tá súil agam eolas a baint comh maith maidir leis an Ghaeilge in Ard Mhacha, Port Laoise agus áiteanna eile in Éirinn nó fiú i Shasanna.

Más rud é gur chaith tú tréibhse faoi ghlas mar chimí poblachtacht nó mar imtheoirí agus tá fscéal le rá agat mar gheall ar an Ghaeilge le do thoil dul i

dteagmháil liom.

Is féidir leat dul i dteagmháil liom le ríomh-phost chuig c.davismcguinness1@nuigalway.ie nó thar an guthán ag (+353) 87 9345603.

Míle buíochas,

Conor McGuinness  
OÉ, Gaillimh

# IRSCNA Ard Fheis



## North American Section's Held Their Recent Convention For 2009 In Chicago

*We are pleased to be able to publish the recent Ard Fheis report as issued by our Section in North America, the Irish Republican Socialist Committees of North America Who held a successful Ard Fheis (or national convention) in Chicago, Illinois on 7 June 2009.*

*To date they have been increasing their efforts in pushing forward activity with plans for growth in the coming year.*

*The Starry Plough will of course be covering this in the months ahead.*

For the first time since a major reorganization of the North American section of the Irish Republican Socialist Movement in 2005, we held an Ard Fheis in consecutive years, and we look forward to making it three in a row next year. Meeting face-to-face as a group was a positive experience for all present.

The day before the Ard Fheis, members of the IRSCNA participated in a hunger strike commemoration at the Abbey Pub. The event was sponsored by the Chicago Hunger Strike Commemoration Committee, a group formed in 2006 by members of the IRSCNA and the Irish Freedom Committee.

Songs and a rousing speech were provided by Belfast-born singer and activist Ray Collins, a former member of the Irish Republican Socialist Party's Ard Chomhairle (National Executive), and we would like to thank Ray for his inspiring words and songs.

For the Ard Fheis, those in attendance came from various locations in North America—including Chicago, Kansas City, Minneapolis, New York City, and Seattle—bringing with them diverse experiences and contributions. We would like to thank everyone that traveled such a distance to be in attendance, as well as the Joe McCann Cumann for hosting the Ard Fheis this year. We would also like to thank Deirdre Fennessy of the Irish Freedom Committee for attending the Ard Fheis as our guest.

Motions were debated and passed on matters of ideology, policy, sending

solidarity greetings to our comrades throughout the world, and other issues of importance to the IRSCNA. Although a representative from our Saskatchewan (Canada) Cumann could not be in attendance, the cumann did contribute to the motions put before the Ard Fheis.

Lastly, a new Coordinating Committee comprised of Colm Misteil, Crios Ni Anthoin, Danielle Ni Dhighe, T.J. O Conchuir, and Mike Quinn (a co-founder of the IRSCNA in 1984) was elected by a vote of the members present.

The slow but steady growth of the IRSCNA's membership and level of activity will be sustained by the incoming Coordinating Committee's efforts to continue to work through collective leadership and regular meetings.

In conclusion, the IRSCNA's latest Ard Fheis was a success, and members left with a renewed sense of purpose for building support for the Irish Republican Socialist Movement and a 32 County Socialist Republic.

Anyone wishing to contact our North American Section can do so by writing to them directly at:

**Irish Republican Socialist Committees of North America**

**IRSCNA**  
**PO Box 901479**  
**Kansas City MO 64190-1479, USA**  
**irscna@irsm.org**  
**<http://www.irscna.org/>**  
**<http://www.irsm.org/irsm.html>**

# Youth Movement Conference

## Report From Republican Socialist Youth Gathering in Tyrone

The Republican Socialist Youth Movement recently held an internal national conference on 12th-14th June, in Strabane, Co. Tyrone. The purpose of the event was to discuss the political leanings of the organisation, to create a development and action plan for the future, to discuss the movements short and long term aspirations and to increase comradeship amongst our members.

The weekend also saw the election of the next RSYM Ard Comhairle, and we would like to take this opportunity to wish our comrades the best of luck in their new positions.

Over the past number of months a huge amount of work has been done by the RSYM to create a strong, vibrant youth movement that could fill the void in Irish politics for young people who are disillusioned with the current political system, and are ever-increasingly turning to radical leftist politics as a viable alternative to capitalism and imperialist occupation.

Testament to the great work put in by dedicated RSYM activists the Strabane national conference was ex-

tremely well attended, with members travelling from every corner of the island to this event.

The first day of the event saw the floor opened to each RSYM member, with everyone in turn given the opportunity to outline what they wanted to gain from the weekend as an individual, and what they thought needed to be discussed to progress the organisation. With that, the agenda was finalised and the work could begin on a formal basis.

On Saturday afternoon the conference was addressed by veteran republican socialist Willie Gallagher, who gave an exceptional speech on the history of the movement right through to the present day.

This proved an invaluable resource to the newer members of the RSYM, as it gave them a first hand account of how the IRSM has progressed over the years.

It also allowed members to ask any questions they had on any issue that arose, both historical and more contemporary issues.

Willie also gave his thoughts on the current hunger strike controversy and with this session lasting well over two hours, it proved a great educatory tool for our members.

The conference was characterised overall by lively debate between members, with many ideas and opinions being shared and up for discussion. Great enthusiasm was displayed as well as a firm grasp of republican socialist politics.

The whole weekend proved extremely productive and the RSYM looks forward to swelling our ranks and continuing our work to further the goals of republican socialism in Ireland.

The RSYM would like to thank the IRSP and Teach na Failte who facilitated the event, Willie Gallagher and Eddie McGarrigle who addressed the conference.

We would like to extend a special thank you to Paul Gallagher for his hard work in making the weekend a great success.

[www.rsym.org](http://www.rsym.org)



# Zionist Policy Of Isolation Won't Defeat The Prisoners!

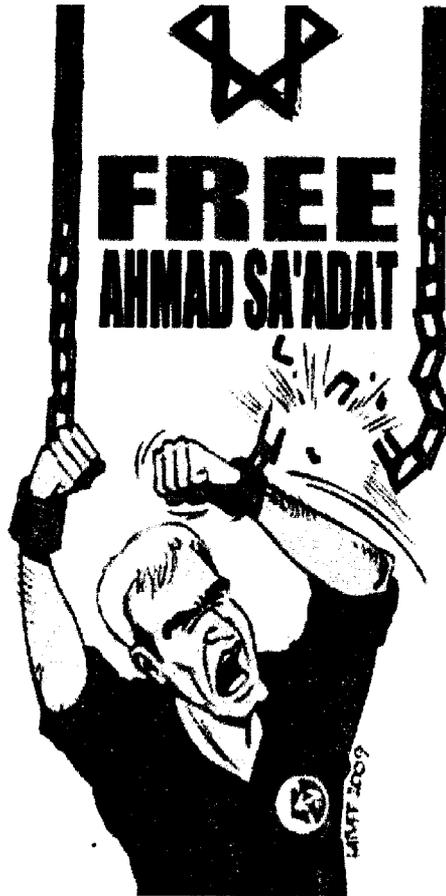
## *Solidarity With Ahmad Sa'adat*

Comrade Sa'adat: is in urgent need for national unity to confront the occupation and defend prisoners' rights.

The imprisoned General Secretary of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, met today, June 22, 2009, in Asqelan prison with Mohammed Barakeh, from Democratic Front for Progress and Equality in Palestine '48. Barakeh later conveyed a message from Comrade Sa'adat in which he expressed his rejection of Oslo and all that has followed and called urgently for national unity of the Palestinian people.

Barakeh reported that Sa'adat's health was stable following his hunger strike and that Sa'adat expressed that his hunger strike was a rejection of the policy of isolation practiced against Palestinian political prisoners by the occupation. Prisoners in isolation, Sa'adat told Barakeh, are denied family visits, books and magazines and access to fellow prisoners in the isolation ward. Sa'adat told Barakeh that there are a large number of Palestinian prisoners in an isolation ward for many years, including some in isolation for more than eight years, including one prisoner suffering from psychiatric illness. Isolation and solitary confinement is recognized as a form of cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment and is known to cause and worsen mental illness.

He stressed that prisoners are already denied contact with the outside world and many denied family visits and that isolation is just an additional form of punishment. He noted that among the new violations of prisoners' rights is denying them access to books sent by their families and restricting them only to books sold in the prison shop, which do not suit the needs or interests of the prisoners



and seek to imprison the prisoners' thoughts as well. This comes as an attempt, he emphasized, to break the prisoners' steadfastness and the role of the prisoners' movement in the Palestinian national movement.

Comrade Sa'adat expressed his full support for the cause of the Palestinian people in Palestine '48 as part and parcel of the Palestinian national cause, noting the war against Palestinians being waged by the Zionist regime and the fundamentally racist and illegitimate nature of the Zionist state, and furthermore expressed the danger of and his fierce opposition to the demand of Netanyahu that Palestinians recognize the racist "Jewish

State of Israel," in an attempt to force Palestinians into defeat.

Comrade Sa'adat also expressed the urgent need for national unity in the internal Palestinian situation, in order to fully confront the occupier. He stressed the importance of rejecting entirely the path of Oslo and "prior agreements" that has been a devastating path for the Palestinian cause, and of rejecting all so-called "negotiations" with Netanyahu and his racist regime. He stressed the importance of national unity and that any Palestinian security service must provide security to the Palestinian people against their occupier, not to small gangs or to the occupation itself through security cooperation. Furthermore, Sa'adat told Barakeh, national dialogue must include all factions and aim toward the rebuilding of the Palestine Liberation Organization and its institution on a democratic basis and firmly committed to the fundamental principles of the Palestinian national cause and Palestinian rights - return, self-determination and independence, including elections for a new Palestinian National Council.

Comrade Sa'adat extensively discussed the necessity of a project to rebuild the Palestinian left, emphasizing that such a project must begin at a grassroots level, including the development of committees among workers, students, and many other social sectors, to discuss key issues - ideological, organizational and political - and developing a strategic program through collective work with a clear and principled vision.

**He stressed the need to protect the resistance, and that the prisoners' movement will continue to struggle for justice and liberation for the prisoners and the entire Palestinian people.**

# An Bord Snip - "An Attack on the most Vulnerable"

## IRSP Respond to attack on Working Class

The recent release of the An Bord Snip Nua Report compiled by Colm McCarthy has advised the Irish Government on numerous ways it can save over €5 billion in public spending. The report calls for cuts to social welfare payments, child benefit, health and education budgets, changes to medical card qualification criteria, the axing of CE schemes to those on social welfare, and other cost cutting measures.

An IRSP activist in Dublin who works in a disadvantaged area of the north inner city described the report as outrageous. *"How anyone can support the slashing of public funds towards the poor in stark contrast to the way the government threw billions of Euro at the banks is beyond me. This shows clearly where the government's priorities lie. There is a lot of anger on the ground and we will be at the forefront in opposing any cuts that arise out of Colm McCarthy's stinking report."*

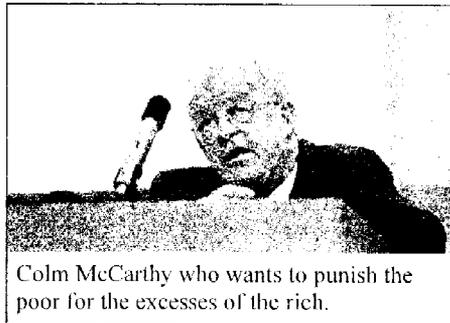
Another activist wrote; *"This report should be binned and the government should come up with alternative ways to raise the necessary billions it needs to drag us out of this economic meltdown which was mostly created by greedy bankers, speculators, and developers. Socialist alternative ways to raise the monies needed could include;*

**(A)** A 10% tax on the net profits of multi-national national companies who made an estimated €40billion profit in Ireland in 2008

### Estimated Revenue :

**€4 billion a year**

**(B)** A 25% reduction in the amount the National lottery gives to good causes over the next three years.



Colm McCarthy who wants to punish the poor for the excesses of the rich.

Money to be used by exchequer to increase expenditure in essential services such as health and job creation. In 2008 a total of €267.8 million was raised for good causes, up over €22 million from €245.5 million in 2007.

### Estimated Revenue :

**€66.75 million a year**

**(C)** An immediate Compulsory 20% reduction in salaries for all Judges, TDs, and Government ministers, as well as An Taoiseach and the President as well as civil servants on a yearly salary of €40,000 or more.

An immediate 50% reduction in public spending on state cars, government jets, helicopter travel, 5 star accommodation etc etc for government ministers and indeed the President and her staff.

### Estimated Revenue :

**€10 million or more a year**

**(D)** The abolition of Seannad Eireann which is a mostly an unelected undemocratic body where 60 Senators are paid 70,000 euro a year of taxpayers money

### Estimated Savings :

**€4.2 Million Euro a year**

**(E)** The immediate ending of tribunals investigating payments to corrupt politicians which have cost the taxpayer tens of millions of euros. The Mahon, Moriarty, and Morris

Tribunals could end up costing the State about €370m the majority of which will be pocketed by state solicitors, many of which are been paid €2,000 per day.

### Estimated savings :

**Tens of millions of euros**

### WHO ARE An Bord Snip?

It was drawn up by a cabal of neo-liberals and was biased from the very start. It is chaired by **Colm McCarthy**, a right wing economist. This was a group of neo-liberals who met regularly in a famous pub in Baggot St to promote their agenda with the political elite.

The other members of an Bord Snip, include:

**Pat McLoughlin**, a former deputy CEO for the HSE. Ironically, McLoughlin resigned from his €165,000 post in 2005 because it would not guarantee him a sufficiently high pension.

**Maurice O Connell**, a former governor of the Central Bank. At one stage, the Central Bank was informed of how bogus non-resident accounts were being set up to avoid DIRT tax but did nothing. O Connell defended this inactivity even though it led to a loss of €100million from state revenues.

**Mary Walsh**, A partner in Price Waterhouse Cooper, the top accountancy firm that is close to big business.

**William Slattery**, the managing director of State Street International. This company specialises in administering hedge funds. These are gambling pools which allow the wealthy to engage in vast speculation.

# JOIN THE IRSP



## FOR NATIONAL LIBERATION AND SOCIALISM!



**Title:** Starry Plough, No. 2

**Organisation:** Irish Republican Socialist Party

**Date:** 2009

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