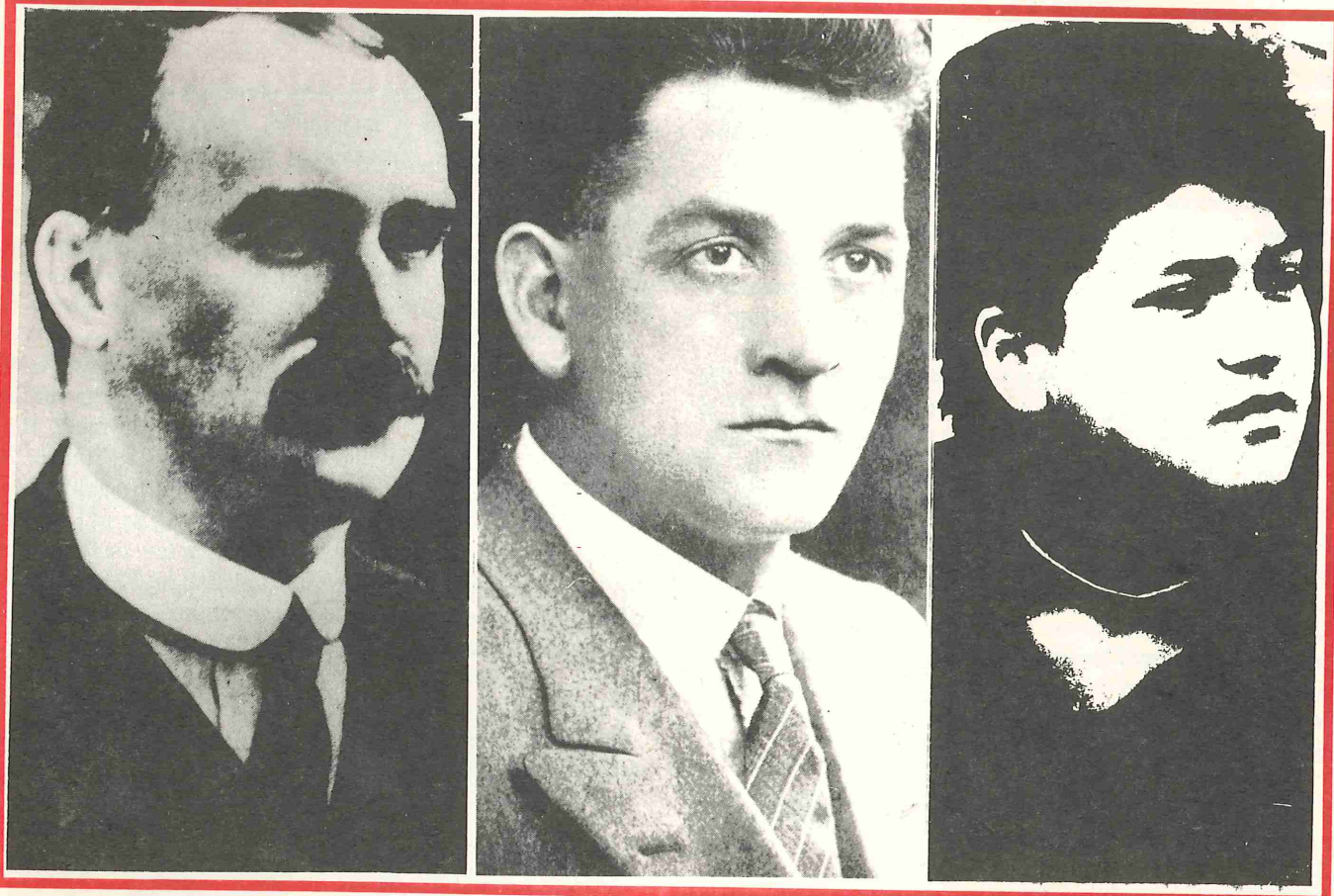


CONGRESS '86



For far too long the cause of labour and the cause of Ireland have looked upon each other with suspicion. With one notable exception, the concept of unifying, both have failed. On occasions failure has been due to the lack of will by either or both sides. At other times short-sighted political sectarianism has caused a breakdown. And yet another method of attempting to combine the both in one party has merely married the reformist elements of both. In this latter case a multitude of contradictions has meant inevitable recrimination which fueled splits. In Ireland Socialism and Fenianism are not mutually antagonistic forces. They share certain limited common objectives.

They are however different forces. Socialism with its insistence on a Workers State is not identical to Fenianism with its insistence on an Egalitarian Republican State. Any unwillingness to face up to this difference or any attempt to gloss over it, prevents a fruitful union of the two. It would be, as always it has proved to be, utterly disruptive for one to subvert or override the other. Until Socialism and Fenianism learn to co-operate on common objectives, while each retains freedom to organise the propagation of their unique principles, neither will make measurable progress.

Once and once only during this century has this desirable situation been achieved successfully. Connolly and Clarke had the range of vision coupled with the strength of personality to build A United Front between Socialist and

Fenian. Though they did not live to see it, they changed the face of Irish history. Without them their adherents became increasingly lost.

Irish Labour, abdicating its commitment to National Liberation, drifted from one compromising liason with reaction to another. Fenian Republicanism, with its concentration on National Liberation to the exclusion of Social Liberation, survived with only minority support. Both suffered by rejecting the other.

It will continue to be so until the message of Connolly and Clarke is relearned. The two men recognised their respective partys' strength and weakness. Easter 1916 would have been a poor showing without Dublin's contribution. And without the drive and organization of The Citizen Army would Dublin have fought so well? By the same token The Fenian Organization was to give the Movement its eventual country-wide scope. That both were to be eventually betrayed was not the fault of either Connolly or Clarke.

The events leading up to Easter Week and its aftermath are now matters of historical fact. What remains relevant is not so much the ebb and flow of battle but the concept which underlay the realization of Socialist and Fenian of the need for co-operation and the form which unity took. Of equal relevance too is the sad and sorry tale which arises from the failure to work together since.

Any party of Labour which fails to recognize the role of British Imperialism in maintaining Capitalism in Ireland, does not merit the title Socialist. Without actively campaigning to end partition, such parties represent in effect Socialist Chauvinism.

Should a Fenian party refuse to co-operate with a genuine Socialist Party (i.e one which strives for social and national liberation), their Republican Fenian faith must be called into question. Fenianism is a movement for the establishment of the Irish Republic. To refuse to assist any group genuinely seeking the same on grounds of Party Political Sectarianism would be a negation of Republicanism. It would furthermore be a lingering manifestation of infatuation with Partitionist Parliamentary aspirations.

So what do we propose? We advocate the refounding of the Republican Congress. The idea of course was excellent in its conception, its execution was the reason for its failure. It would be futile to now apportion blame. Faults lay on all sides. To say that a congress must collapse now, because it did so in the past would be as illogical as declaring that because Republicans failed in 1867 they were bound to fail again in 1920-21.

Past mistakes should be viewed as invaluable lessons which prepare the ground for future success. The essential first requirement for success in this is that there exists a mutual will to reach agreement.

If we can accept this obvious first step, several other important points must be understood.

The first step must be a general acceptance of each party's freedom of organisation and expression. Even to the extent that each party retains the right to voice reservations on the others policies if one group expects the other "to toe a party line" they are not asking for co-operation but for capitulation.

Since the parties retain their own distinct programmes it then becomes imperative that areas of common agreement are established. Several aspects should emerge where there is little divergence. On such issues maximum co-operation should be possible and positively encouraged. National Liberation must be one such area. The Peoples Economic Liberation must be another.

Occasions will arise when either side will wish to give priority to a specific issue. Mature and sensible discussion can ensure that such events are reduced to a minimum. However, when such occasions arise political maturity must prevail. Just as a well adjusted couple would resolve the question of whether to watch television together or both go to a football match by each going to their favourite, so with congress.

It goes without saying of course that on several issues there cannot be total agreement. In fact there may be fundamental differences. But unless these differences were of such a radical nature that they obviated the principles of the Common Limited Objectives, an accomodation can be arranged.

Take for example the emotional debate on abortion. Socialists and Fenians might well have diametrically opposing views. Fine. As Democrats we can argue our respective positions and abide by the majority. Indeed debate of this nature is healthy and can only strengthen the pact. It can show us a practical path for avoidance of internecine strife in the post-unification period.

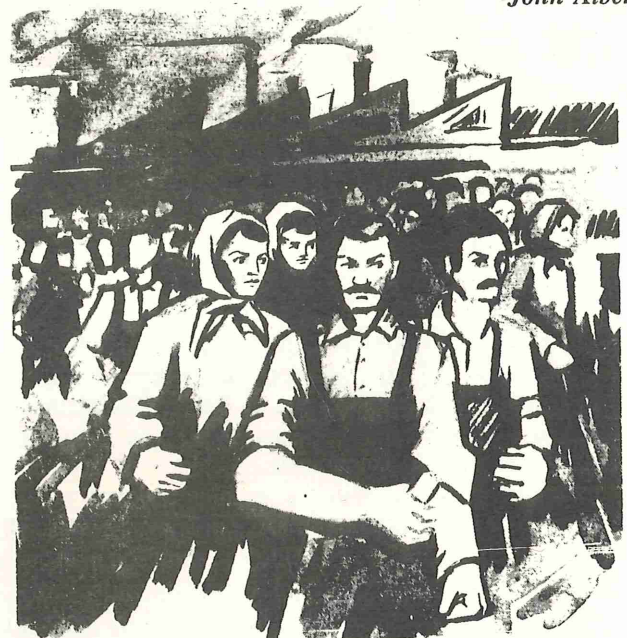
A final stipulation is that no party presumes to speak for the other. Unless there is unanimous agreement, declaration must be made on an individual or party basis.

Many objections major and minor may be raised. The very use of such a development may be questioned. Sceptics may query the role for a Republican Congress. Narrow-minded sectarians will always bring up problems and objections.

The answer is twofold. One is to list the many areas where co-ordination is clearly beneficial. Areas such as unfair laws, police brutality, emigration and unemployment. But of greater significance and importance is to initiate a progress, small step by small step, whereby Ireland's only radical sectors can forge a proper liaison. It would be too prosaic to view the Alliance in terms of a few extra papers sold or a few extra people at a demonstration. This is a case of the sum of the two being greater and vastly more dynamic than the simple addition of the parts.

At times great causes need great actions. Those who have the capability at present must prove adequate to the great demand. Build a new Republican Congress.

John Albert.



This message has been written by a group of prisoners in jails in the 6 co's and represents a major new contribution to the struggles and debates within the Irish working class. As Communists the positions expressed here by the contributors are offered in a comradely and honest form. It is the wish of all revolutionaries that their work be taken seriously. Read on then in the spirit of the magazine and decide issues for yourselves.

A. Comrade

THE VANGUARD

There is a belief in many quarters that Politics is somehow akin to popular music industry. That to succeed the art lies in finding an unexploited niche and to then give the market what it seems to want. Political support therefore assumes the form of a party Jam Club rather than a co-ordinated effort of a class working for an objective, i.e. its own liberation.

In the light of this assessment it is only natural that socialism receives such scant attention. There is no noticeable clamour at present for a workers state, indeed the very idea often brings a hostile reaction from even the people of labour. Those who would build party Jam Clubs therefore deem any action for socialism as ultra-leftist, unrealistic, unhelpful, or unattainable at present.

From their position they are probably right, to admit otherwise would cause their self-destruction. To the narrow minds of the Petit-Bourgeois revolutionists the world of class politics is a confused, swirling and incomprehensible mass.

This party rejecting Marxism, stubbornly refused (or it would be more correct to say was not able) to understand the need for a strictly objective appraisal of the class forces and their interactions before undertaking any political actions.

And whenever this common mistake is made, there exists a misconception. This is that Socialist parties are recruited. They are not. Socialist parties (and Socialism itself) are built. There is no such thing as the right time - Organisation begins now.

Concrete conditions may be favourable or otherwise. Without such conditions revolution is not possible. No-one would say different. However, this by no means cancels out the need for a revolutionary party - The Vanguard Party.

Socialism has long since advanced beyond its early Utopian stage. It is now a scientific doctrine or it is nothing. The science or objective appraisal of class forces demonstrates where different class interests lie. For the working class this interest can only be the establishment of workers power. That this fact has not been perceived by a majority of workers is not an indictment on scientific socialism, it is rather an indictment on those who understood the theory yet failed to bring it to life among the majority of workers.

For a socialist revolution to take place, Lenin once said that it is necessary for a majority of class conscious thinking politically active workers should fully understand that such a step is necessary. That they should be willing to sacrifice their lives for it. Such a situation cannot and will not come about spontaneously. It must be cultivated and developed by the Vanguard Party, no other organ is capable of carrying out this work.

So what is a Vanguard Party?. It is a party of people dedicated to working full time for the creation of a Socialist state and for the advancement of all toiling people. It is a party without honorary or associate members. Discipline is firmly maintained by a commitment to the ideology of Marxism/Leninism. It ensures it is revolutionary by striving to turn its theory into practise, because a Vanguard Party is above all, a party of action rather than debate.

There are two stages in the early life of a Vanguard Party. The first is when it is found necessary to win over to socialism a majority of the progressive people within the working class. Stage two is when this conversion has been achieved and the Vanguard Party must provide the guidance and leadership which brings victory to the working class.

Of most immediate interest to us at present is the first period of conversion. This is the period of Propoganda, Agitation and Organisation. These are the accomplishments which are not picked up easily or without training. The founders of the Vanguard Party must make immense efforts to equip recruits with the theory and practice of Leninism. A later stage may find a party school but at the start, education may require personal instruction.

By the very nature of the demands it makes on its members, a Vanguard Party almost always finds itself with few adherents at its inception and for possibly sometime afterwards. It is most important therefore that the role of numbers is fully understood least disillusionment sets in.

A Vanguard Party aims to become a popular party, not a populist one. There is a vast difference. Where the populist party draw the applause (and by extension the votes) of a majority if it is to survive, the Vanguard seeks to mobilise the masses into a movement for the masses self liberation. For the Populist party power is in itself victory. For the Leninist Vanguard Victory is unimaginable without the workers taking power.

True Socialists therefore measure success not merely by an ability to guide workers to a polling station but by guiding them to political power. No doubt there is a degree of overlapping in both cases but they cannot and must not be confused. As Mick McCaughey once said "Don't confuse mass meetings with a mass movement".

When new members develop a clear understanding of their role in developing conditions they can begin to grasp their own potential. One or two people working together in a factory or wherever to propogate, agitate and organise have an impact beyond their numbers.

At first the Vanguard progresses by contagion rather than by spectacular leaps. The great advantage the activists enjoy over all other party hacks is that he or she promulgates the timeless logic of scientific socialism and not the cosmetic benefits of careerist parliamentarians.

It is patently obvious that socialism will only prevail through mass participation and will only arise when the message of socialism is understood and accepted.

Clear and patient education of the working class is the first essential. This is the Cadres first task. "As imperialists discovered in Vietnam with Buddhist Monks, even one man with a single minded determination to teach, can convert an enormous number of people in a short time".

We are in no doubt that conditions in Ireland today are crying out for a socialist explanation and a socialist answer. We are equally confident of our peoples' willingness to accept this message, conservative Ireland is an unfair slight on this most indomitable of peoples.

Ireland always rises when Ireland is convinced of the need. The great challenge today is to build a Vanguard Party capable of convincing the people. Our immediate demand there is:-

**BUILD THE VANGUARD
AND BUILD IT NOW.**

ANOTHER TYPE OF SECTARIANISM???

Religious sectarianism is a dangerous evil which we properly deplore. No serious Leftist could do otherwise. What a pity therefore that we don't apply the same standard when dealing with political sectarianism. The mentality of "which duck" or no dinner is so prevalent one would be tempted to think that Irish Capitalist Political parties had been vanquished many years ago. We seem to have lost sight of the instruction to "Everywhere support every revolutionary movement against the existing social and political order of things".

The long history of antagonisms and of inability to co-operate on shared objectives, is nothing short of depressing. So jealously protective are we of functional prestige and power that defeat is often preferable to seeing a competitor group share the rewards of victory.

If the goal was not so important and the current situation not so tragic it might even be possible to laugh at our predicaments. Each group searching for an issue to work on and then like old gold prospectors; staking a claim for the right to develop it.

Other groups are welcome to help of course but on a well known set of conditions. All others must first bury their own party group identity. Second they must be entirely willing to play a subdued role. Marching, Picketing or Voting as an anonymous crowd - - Yes. Speaking or representing in public ---Most definitely No. For the politically sectarian, there is a clever logic for this course. If the "others" were seen to be too prominent in any campaign, "They" could make political capital out of "our" cause. This would never do of course. They might even steal votes or popularity from "Us". What matter about only having a penny, so long as the neighbour has only three farthings.

In the final analysis there can only be one reason for this general state of ignorance. A total failure to see that revolution involves bring the party of the working class to power. But this is not so much a party victory as it is a class victory. The genuine party of the worker serves no narrow interest. It serves the interest of the working class or it is not socialist.

Irish history provides us with two very useful examples of this form or selfless work. Strangely neither example is purely socialist. We can learn from both, though one was our Old Fenian Movement, the more recent Civil Rights Movement. The Brotherhood never was socialist but none can deny it was Revolutionary. Its objective was the establishment of the Irish Republic separate and sovereign and for this end they worked in many fields.

Creation and Cultivation of the Separatist was of prime importance for them. Unless the majority of Irish people understood and accepted the need for an independent Republic, the Fenians knew that their prospects for activating the nation were small. They also realised that in the long run, it mattered little who won the initial glory for promoting the Separatist ideal.

Having this perpicacity, the Fenian Brotherhood worked quietly within the Land League; the G.A.A., the Gaelic League. The Cultural Revival and on occasions were even prepared to help the constitutional Home-Rule Movement. The Brotherhood sought no narrow sectional gains from this. They knew exactly who would triumph when their day would come, and don't let us underestimate their success either. The mightiest of Empires was forced to give ground to them in 1921, that Post Treaty Ireland has not turned out as many of us would have wished is not altogether a failing of

Fenianism. The fault lies more with us socialists. It was us who should have turned radical Republican Nationalism into workers revolution.

We mentioned the Civil Rights Movement and will look at it briefly. From its inception until its demise in the early 60's it provided a common ground for diverse interests. Its strength lay in that it allowed different groups to co-operate on mutual interests. It collapsed for two reasons, one was developing circumstances but equally to blame was the sectarian take-over orchestrated by a selfish party, surely a lesson for us all. Two examples from which we can learn much yet Irish Liberation both National and Social is not the prerogative of any particular sect. Those who look for sectional advantage are not serious about liberation either National or Social.

Only when we understand this can we know the reason for much of the peculiar behaviour we experience in Irish Politics today. However, it is not enough to interpret history we have a duty to change it.

This demands that we be sufficiently clear in our analysis and confident of our approach so that we can work for our objectives. Even if it results in some noxious personality or party gaining the credit in the short run. Although contemporary Ireland finds few people following the tactical lead of the Fenians, we at least have their example. If we care to look. However, the specifics of the Fenian Organisation deals only with national liberation; a further effort must be made to adapt its strength for social liberation.

What is required is an identification of the broad picture needed for a Socialist Revolution. We must search out and if necessary create the organisation within which these needs can be catered for. It is of course of great importance also to remind ourselves that we do so, not to gain influence or prestige but to genuinely advance the cause of labour.

It would take another article to detail the type of organisations which we refer to here. What can be briefly said is that for the main part we do not talk of groups designed to alleviate the symptoms of workers distress. We stress the need to develop movements which highlight the Irish workers fundamental problems, that is capitalism and capitalisms Imperialist. Unemployment, emigration, poorly paid work and the plight of the small farmers, these are the basic issues around which we must organise, develop and cultivate without consideration for narrow party gains and we shall achieve the only gain worth talking about - - an independent and socialist people.

There are many issues of the "symptom" variety which serve only to enhance certain carrerist reputations. Lets not waste our times on them. On the fundamental issues, however, lets not be sectarian about them.



THE SELECTION OF THE PRACTICAL MEANS

Very few important questions have simple answers, yet this is not to say that important questions cannot be answered. Often the solution lies in grasping the essence of the broad picture and at the same time realising the nature of the details.

In the world of economics this is described as the interaction between Macro and Micro policies. Similarly in the field of politics there exists Macro and Micro tasks. The unresolved national question and the conflict of social relations are Macro problems. The multitude of disputes in factory, office, dole queue or farm are our Micro problems.

For the purpose of this essay we shall assume that the larger picture or backdrop has been adequately analysed beforehand. Our intention here is to develop the role of the components which make up the Micro scene.

So to avoid confusion though a brief resume of what encompasses our Macro analysis is required. Clarity on this point prevents confusion at a later stage.

Our overview is thus. We understand that fused together into an inseparable whole is the question of national and social liberation. One cannot be obtained without the other.

This belief is based on the estimation of present day Ireland. The current Status Quo serves the collective better interests of the Northern Labouring Aristocracy and its Orange Masters cum benefactors.

In exactly the same fashion, the reigning Status Quo serves the collective better interests of the Southern middle class. In alliance of course with the large farmer and the rat-bag of interests which includes partly; the Southern Aristocracy of Labour and partly the Petit Bourgeoisie.

It would be irrational to believe that any of the above mentioned groups, would or could be persuaded to struggle for a political Denouement which would terminate their privileges. Just as one cannot square the circle neither can one build a socialist state and cater for those "people of privilege".

Two groups remain therefore in whose interests it lies to end the Status Quo. They are the non privileged workers either the employed or the unemployed and the poor small farmer. That the support of the small farmer is conditional by no means renders invalid his role in the tasks that lie ahead.

What also remains beyond doubt is that the worker (and the small farmer) can only be expected to undergo the trials of struggle if victory brings with it certain assurances. Put bluntly this must mean a clear assurance of having their present plight alleviated. A sure guarantee of material and social improvements.

In order to bring about this realisation and hence commitment from the workers and the small farmers; two criteria must be filled.

Firstly, the people must be taught the exact nature of their problem. They must be shown that partition in all its guises is not an act of fate but rather an essential by-product of capitalism. They must come to see the symbiotic relationship between Capital and partition.

When our people understand this relationship with all its ramifications, the validity of our assessment that Ireland North and South must be changed fundamentally will be accepted.

Our belief is that Ireland is utterly irreformable by restricted parliamentary means alone. To counter this slide into reformism we must have this conviction shared not only by our vanguard but also by our people.

It is this analysis that leads to the second criterion. For to educate our people we must make propaganda by active involvement on the issues of inherent contradiction. And not any passive spectator-like involvement either but by the involvement of clear and sensible guidance.

This is emphatically not a call for direct action, forms of involvement. It is not a defence of the propaganda by the deed. These methods of so called enlightened are the essence of anarchy. It is simply the resort of despair, or of those who disdain workers so cruelly that they believe them open to dramatic circus acts performed with the titillation of volatile power.

On the contrary our involvement must be basic and indigenous. It must go further than demonstrating, it must also show potential for victory. The path must be outlined. We must set ourselves the task of bringing back to meaningful life Connolly's slogan that, "the cause of Labour is the cause of Ireland".

What changes history to the workers advantage is action by popular masses. None but the working class will liberate the working class. To succeed the worker must be confident, optimistic, vibrant and above all organised.

History teaches us, that without a vanguard this cannot be achieved. That without the guiding hand of the party, workers will merely develop a containable form of Trade Unionism.

The responsibility which rest on party people is enormous. For theirs is the task of mobilising, training and guiding the people. No remote or distant councillors are they. Vanguard is not a lightly chosen description. It means what it says in the fullest sense. The Vanguard is the most enlightened section of the workers. It is the most disciplined and determined. To earn this honour it must pay the price - any price - whatever price - . The first price is serious deep and realistic training of every member.

THE EUROPEAN AGRICULTURAL POLICY

Well before the end of World War II, plans were laid for the organisation of the post world war. Two major factors confronted those in power in the west. First the Soviet people had demonstrated immense endurance and the Socialist system was not about to collapse, secondly, incredibly short sighted protectionism in the 1920's and 1930's had placed an intolerable strain on capitalism. An immediate consequence was Fascism and war, a long-term outcome being a radicalised working-class.

To cope with the basic threat to their power, the west's wealthy opted for far reaching and quite comprehensive measures. In its overt form this became the creation of anti-Soviet hysteria, (Through McCarthyism, Iron Curtain etc.) and an arms build up. Equally important though less perceivable was their economic programme.

Their economic strategy was to come in overlapping stages. Priority was given to the rapid re-building of the western zone through the Marshal aid plan and its parallel in Japan. Plenty of work and relative prosperity therefore defused the labour sections claim for radical change.

To consolidate this achievement, the old problem of protectionism was tackled by the creation of free-trade zones in the west, Western

Europe's fragmented political entity had to be additionally rectified. A common market was the agent for this.

As a third and concomitant stage, the question of West Europe's large population of small farmers was dealt with through a common agricultural policy.

To grasp the reasons behind the C.A.P. it is very important to understand that it was never an integral part of a grander scheme. The intention was never to make a large number of small farmers wealthy. As the declaration of stress (1958) said it was to make less dangerous the transition from rural life to urbanisation.

"Professional retraining of the agricultural work force and a great industrialisation of the rural regions should allow the gradual solution to the problem otherwise posed by farms which can not become economically viable (From perspective for the C.A.P. - Agric Information review of E.E.C.

As the Economist (28.9.85) put it "France, Germany and Italy had too many farmers, so therefore the high prices paid to them under the C.A.P. eased the pain while the fast growth of world output and trade during the 1950's and 1960's provided jobs in the cities for their sons and daughters".

From the point of view of big business the policy was a success. In the countries mentioned above agricultural employment has declined by over 60% in the years 1960-83. And this without having to face the dangers of widespread political destabilisation. West Europe's bourgeois did not make the mistake of underestimating the danger to them arising from an enraged rural population acting in concert with confident industrial labour.

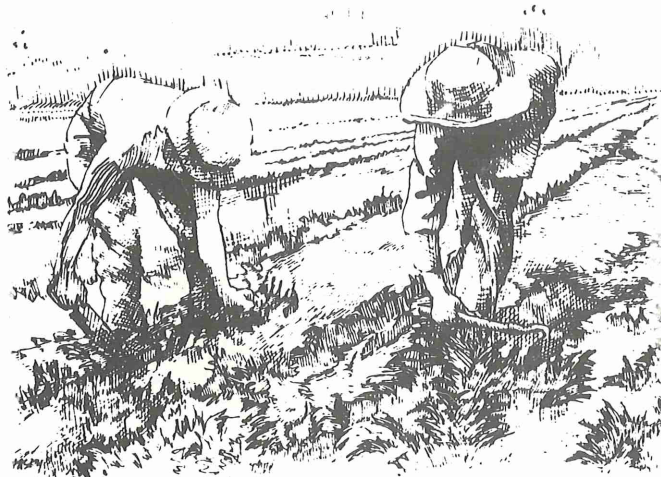
Subsidizing agricultural produce was not naturally something applicable to the small farmer alone. Subsidized prices were of course available to all farmers. The inevitable outcome of this was the gradual reduction of the number of farm holdings. No matter how well subsidised any product is the large unit with its ability to buy machinery and avail of scale savings has the enormous advantage. The larger farms were after all selling more material while obtaining a guaranteed price. Inevitably the richer grew larger while the poorer left the land.

Having brought about the peaceful reduction of agricultural labour by the early 1980's West Europe's leaders were in a position to re-analyse the overall situation with the sole exception of Italy (12.4). No major industrial E.E.C. state had more than 8.3% of its working population, engaged in farming. The real politics was simple and brutal, whether or not the farmers wished to rebel on the continent or Britain was no longer of crucial importance, they just didn't have the numbers any longer to frighten the European Capitalists.

So what of Ireland's position with its large 23.6% population of farmers. Well, Europe's offshore newly industrialised country is simply inconsequential in a world context, sitting as we do on the fringe of the West Atlantic. As everybody knows the Irish are always fighting about something anyway. Nobody in Brussels would worry unless we seemed on the verge of establishing a Socialist Republic.

If factors dating from World War II and earlier, determined the establishment of the Common Market and C.A.P. what now leads to the present E.E.C. perspective.

Changes in the structure of world industry and trade has found the E.E.C. States falling farther and farther behind in the International economy. The superficial answer is to blame the current recession for this, but the cause goes much deeper.



Free market economies have a constant tendency to develop excess capacity which causes profits to decline or even disappear. In motor-car production alone Europe has now the means to produce annually 2 million more cars than it can sell. The uneven spread of wealth ensures that many of the potential markets are unable to buy at the required price. Production in this situation can only be maintained or expanded by exporting, and by doing so at prices much less than competitors. We have seen this happen over this last 20 years at least. Japan and other Pacific states, through lower wages and/or greater efficiency managed to undersell both the Americans and more particularly the Europeans, and do so even in the Europeans and Americans home markets.

Now this problem is essentially a structural one. Over-capacity coupled with an unequal division of wealth. The long term answer lies in remedying these factors. However, the leaders of the E.E.C. and U.S. see it as a question of making their industries more competitive and thereby beating the Japanese and other Pacific Nations at their own game. To do otherwise would involve for them the unacceptable consequence of having South America, India, Black Africa, more wealthy, (which obviously means more politically strong).

It is in the light of this analysis that we search for the new attitude to C.A.P. The E.E.C. current policy for agriculture is seen by European and American monetarist economists as suffering from several major failings. From the Europeans point of view the primary objection is the actual cost. At present the C.A.P. accounts for 80% plus of the E.E.C. budget. Europe's business section see this as having two disadvantages for them. The allocation of finance away from industry and the rising of food prices.

With more money available for industry instead of farming, the businessmen feel they can improve their manufacturing efficiency with agricultural product prices lower, they see an opportunity to keep workers wages lower and hence improve their competitive advantage internationally.

Most European industrialists and politicians recognise that these measures alone, will not restore them to their old position of economic pre-eminence, however, they do see them as important steps in this process.

Adding to this belief is the realisation that cheap food from abroad (America in particular), during the last century helped contain workers wages in Europe. It is no accident either that the U.S. Government is therefore making such strong representations to the E.E.C. to be allowed open access to Europe's markets for American agricultural produce.

U.S. industrialists are having their own problems coping with Japanese and other Pacific Nations competitive trading. They wish to be rid of subsidies for American farmers just as their counterparts in Europe do. For once U.S. and E.E.C. business interests are in perfect harmony.

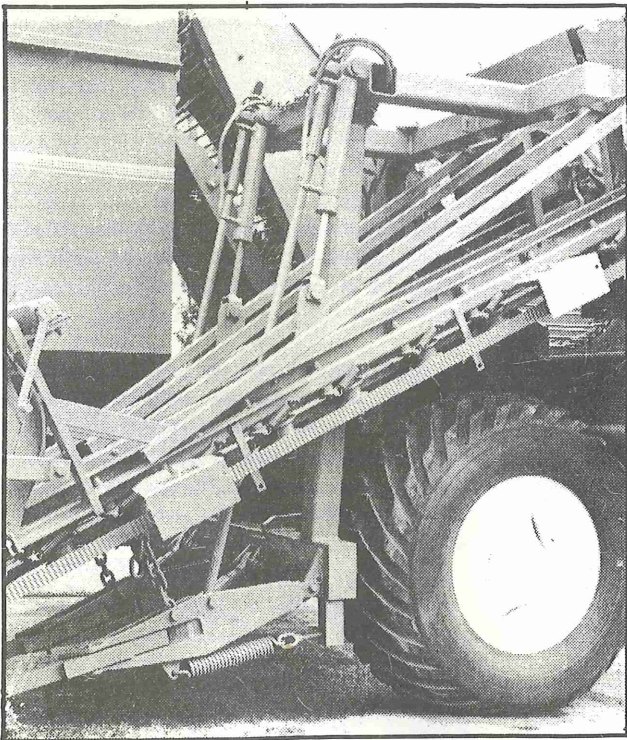
If Europe was to abolish all tariffs on U.S. farm produce and open European food markets to competition from U.S. farming, two objectives could be achieved at one stroke. On the one hand European businessmen will have dispensed with the costly C.A.P. while getting lower food prices. On the other hand the U.S. have won a further market for their own farmers, allowing them to force the American farmer to rely on sales and not federal assistance to agriculture.

Does this projection fit in with the views expressed in the latest green paper from the E.E.C.'s Agricultural Commission, "Perspectives for the Common Market Agricultural Policy". It does indeed.

Amidst a lengthy paper and obscured by numerous palliatives we find the clear evidence of intention, over and over again the determination to open European agriculture to market forces is expressed.

That is why the present commission, like its predecessors, has insisted on the need for a more market orientated approach for the C.A.P. (E.E.C. green paper P3) or more specifically "The elimination of monetary Compensatory amounts also remains a continuing preoccupation" (P8).

And again "Farmers have the liberty and responsibility to adjust their production in the light of the changing economic environment and commercial realities" (P48).



The theme is re-occurring, read the report for yourself if you wish, elsewhere unambiguous mention is made to U.S. and world markets. The potential for obtaining cheap food from abroad is recorded.

"And if the switch to lower prices contemplated in respect of U.S. agricultural policy is confirmed (P5) that E.E.C. wishes to avail of this is obvious. "The Community must play its part to restore order and stability and avoid conflict on world markets" (P.5).

More evidence. The price gap between internal E.E.C., and world markets, and the export risk have thus remained entirely a charge on the community budget (P.40). We have quoted at length from the green papers, but it's best to let the paper speak for itself. Therefore we can't be accused of attributing intentions that don't exist, of course there are plenty of reminders throughout the green paper of the E.E.C. concern to protect the social fabric of the agricultural society. It's not their intention they say to impoverish and depopulate the land. But you can't have a free market exposed to U.S. factory farming methods and a large number of European family farms. We've known in Ireland for a long time that it's impossible to whistle and chew barley at the same time. The green paper as we have said, is lengthy and filled out with much bureaucratic dissemination but the message is plain. The days of price protection are drawing to a close. It may be a short or lengthy process but the days of the small farmers as we know them are over with - in the E.E.C. Is there a way out?

Facing facts, no matter how unpalatable is essential, the E.E.C. is moving away from a system of agricultural subsidisation. Every opportunity, such as this year's bad summer will be used to persuade the small farmer to abandon the land. We are a small nation within a large grouping and our tiny voice will not influence Brussels decisions.

So does the answer lie in withdrawing from the E.E.C.? In the long term this may well be the only option and probably would suit. It does not answer, however, the small farmers immediate needs nor would it automatically cure the basic structural problem. For the most part the small farmer is faced with two dilemmas. One is the capital/or debt crisis. Many now find themselves with either the inability to obtain money in order to buy machinery and housing or have difficulty keeping up with the interest repayments on money borrowed. Two is the harsh fact that the world food production market is fiercely competitive business. Trade after all is a matter of mutual advantage and no nations will buy from us at inflated prices.

Remedying the first problem of debt and/or capital inadequacies is administratively simple though probably politically difficult under current circumstances. A once and for all moratorium on interest and capital repayment would relieve farmers immediate distress.

In the final analysis though, the long term solution can only lie in organising Irish agriculture in such a way that its produce is both price-competitive and internationally required. Foreign markets therefore must be found and then supplied at a price. To do either needs positive state intervention. The fact is that there are markets abroad for Ireland's agricultural produce and always will be for that matter. But we just cannot expect a 40 acre farmer in Leitrim to find a marketing niche for his goods in N. Africa or E. Europe, let the state find the market and ask the farmer to supply it.

As for competitiveness, the answer lies in productivity. Double your output and sell for 75% of the price. There are many ways of co-operativising production which makes for highly effective use of capital input without having to suffer the trauma of either the creation of rancher or mass collectivisation. But the state alone has the wherewithal.

The small farmer has two options. He either forces his government to do this, or he gets a government which will. The alternative to this is to take the bus to town via the bailiff court.

Politically there is a poor choice. Fine Gael/Labour is the coalition of business and rancher, Fianna Fail has no longer the courage to take the necessary steps. The Workers Party show a Menshevik hostility to the farmer. Farmers you need to find a party prepared to support your demands, but don't put it off too long, the days are getting shorter.

BANKS, NATIONALISATION & DEFAULT

Interest rates, Third World Debt and Bank profits are seldom missing from the news programmes on our televisions or the pages of the press. What the media does, however, is to limit the debate on such topics so that all serious suggestions fall within the boundary of acceptability for a bourgeois state. I want here to question the conventional wisdom and ask questions on a much larger scale, to in fact, ask why are the banks allowed to remain in private hands. The second point I want to address is that of foreign debt. The Irish people can continue to pay huge sums in interest to foreign banks or we can simply refuse to pay anymore.

Profits is the dynamo of the capitalist system, and this affects every decision banks take. The shareholders want a return on their investment and the directors and managers act accordingly. Loans will be granted where collateral exists and the projects appear to offer a reasonable chance of success. In any industry, management tries to minimize costs and this entails keeping the wage bill as low as possible. Investment in labour saving technology is generally readily funded by banks, regardless of the social usefulness of the commodity to be produced or the number of people thrown onto the State dole. As a result, if it is desirable that the investment is directed in the interests of people as opposed to profit making individuals, they must come under the control of the Government.

Nationalisation would allow planning on a national scale, with all new investment at the discretion of the Government. Taxation can be used to shape existing industries. With legislation guaranteeing a minimum wage and profits curtailed by taxation, we can ensure maximum benefits for our people. This allows for a centrally planned economy, but one which avoids the rigidity which has troubled other socialist countries. So long as there is strict control of capital entering or leaving the country, industry which remains in private hands can be controlled. So nationalisation of the banking system is an essential first step towards a socialist republic.

The second, related point is that of debt. According to Ken O'Brien Irish times, July 7th 1986, Irish debt is 125% of G.N.P. and the Magill Magazine of November 1986 claims that foreign debt per capita amounts to 57% of G.N.P. per capita. There is a continuous flow of wealth out of the country and the question is, why do we continue to pay?

There is a consensus amongst existing parties that this debt should be paid. To understand why this is so we must expose their class interest in maintaining the status quo. The banks themselves are going to considerable lengths to offer options other than default. They are rescheduling existing debt and making new loans to enable interest payments on previous ones. They know only too well that were several major debtors to default it would shake the financial world to its very core. This in turn would have a disastrous effect on the world economy, including those which defaulted. As a result of the economic collapse, there is every possibility of social upheaval and political change which would cost the ruling class its position.

Hence, the desire to pay the debt! In order to do so governments must cut their public spending. Here they will choose very carefully, pruning health, education and social welfare payments but ensuring strong and well paid police and armed forces. There has in fact been an increase in spending on repressive forces from 2.5% of G.N.P. in 1974 to 4.1% in 1984. They act to bolster the existing social order. It is in the interest of the capitalist class to

keep us tied to the western banks to maintain their own privileged position. The scenario they paint in the event of a default is one of anarchy and poverty and its important to expose the sophistry of their argument.

One of the first objections raised is that a refusal to pay the present debt will effectively cut us off from future loans. At first glance this would appear to be quite a deterrent but on closer examination it becomes less so. At present most of our borrowing (and this is true for many other debtor nations) goes to repay interest. In 1986 the total borrowing of the Free State Government was £2141m. and of this £1710m. was used to repay interest (Budget 1984). So we are borrowing money, thus adding to our total debt, in order to pay off interest. The more we add to our total, the more we need to borrow to pay interest on it, which in turn adds to our total. The percentage of the money borrowed each year that is spent on interest repayments must inevitably rise. The allegedly vital access to international credit is in fact a millstone around our necks.

It is also suggested that our assets overseas would be seized in partial repayments of these unpaid debts. To be realistic we have little to lose on this count. Some of the capitalistic class would undoubtedly lose out, but the loss to our people in general would be slight.

A third problem opponents of default cite is the possible damage done to our international trade. They argue there will be a loss of confidence internationally, and foreign firms will refuse to trade with us. This is a definite possibility, but by no means a certainty. In the past when governments nationalised industries on coming to power, this hurt the multinationals concerned. It did not, however, mean that the banks refused to extend credit to those governments. We must remember that capitalism is not monolithic, and we must seriously question the bland assertion that we'll be isolated. When Mexico was recently in difficulty, they took the simple step of ensuring that their exports became the legal property of the buyer before they left Mexico which stopped confiscation. This problem of being ostracised is admittedly a serious one, but a couple of statistics convinces me the dangers must be faced. The present solid economic system has seen the emigration of 1,125,000 between 1922 and 1971, almost 40% of those born in the 26 counties in that period. Of those who remained 23.4% of the working population is unemployed, 38% of the workforce is employed by the Government and the Government must cut its spending to survive.

The situation facing us is complex and this results in a state of paralysis by analysis. The more we examine the problem the more obvious it becomes that basic structural change is necessary to rectify things, yet people are reluctant to take responsibility for such decisions. Reluctant or not, however, the question of banking and debt must be squarely faced before we can begin to talk of building a socialist republic.

DOCHASACH



THE ECONOMY : ANOTHER STEP BACK

Despite the recent change of management following the 26 counties election we must again consider the unemployment, poverty and debt faced by so many people on this island. It appears strange at first glance that no bold new initiatives are being tried. Why is the same tired old theory which has failed so miserably in the past, wheeled out again with only minor alterations? The answer needs repeating over and over again if it isn't to be drowned amongst the platitudes offered to us by those in positions of authority.

Whilst many Irish people facing hardship, those in economic and political control of the nation are doing very well for themselves, and any structural change would impinge on their position of privilege. If we take a look at the income of a couple of T.D.'s and compare them with someone else's income from the State, it needs little elaboration. The average old age pensioner in the Free State received £6.07 per day from the State in 1984. Fitzgerald on the other hand took home a tidy £131.18 per day and Spring £109.44 per day from the State coffers. Income from private sources must be added of course. The media people, business people and others who shape the debate on the nation's future are in similar position, they're all comfortably well off. These people, who have a clear stake in the present system, cannot ever be regarded as neutral or impartial "Observers" as they subtly reinforce the status quo. Historically, material well being has led to a conservative outlook. Change always appears dangerous to a ruling class, and the Irish ruling class are no exception. If we take even a cursory look at the present policies on offer as a solution to our problems we'll see how completely they've failed us.

In the existing economic system, Government simply tries to create an attractive environment for capital. The decision of where to invest, when and how much, rests with those private individuals who have access to capital. Irish Governments have built advance factories, they've collected only negligible rates and employed a tax system favourable to business. In "Shaping Our Future" Liz Leonard gives us an example of just how favourable the tax system has become. In 1965, corporate and property tax amounted to 24.2% of total tax revenue. By 1982 it had fallen to only 8.2% of the total. The whole thrust of Government action has been to accommodate capital, and labour is only a secondary consideration.

Internationally Governments are vying with each other to offer capital the most attractive package. Nationally, local councils argue over which area is most conducive to big profits. For them capital is of paramount importance and must be courted. It uses its supremacy to squeeze more and more concessions from workers. The drive for profits has resulted in the development of a technology which cuts down on labour requirements. It hasn't only reduced the demand for labour, however, but has also changed the composition of the workforce and led to a de-skilling in many areas. Skilled male labour which was traditionally well organised in trade unions is being replaced by unskilled poorly paid female labour. Women tend to face even greater exploitation, because it is difficult to organise a transient population. Due to family commitments they enter and leave the labour pool more often than men. Another factor resulting from increased use of technology which is worth mentioning is the further fragmentation of the working class as the percentage employed in white collar jobs increases.

In making these comments on technology, I'm not suggesting a Luddite approach to the problem but I would suggest a re-examination of the role it plays. Machinery increases our wealth producing potential, but instead of benefiting all of humanity it has been harnessed by the few to increase their ability to exploit

the many. The problem facing us now is not an inability to produce. The problem is in deciding what to produce and how it will be distributed. Industry produces for profit, so the process of production is geared towards satisfying the desire of those with money and those in most need are unable to effect changes in production.

That technology is developed and used by industry to cut costs and increase profits, is true. That such must always be the case, however, is not true. The alternative is that the Government establishes research and development facilities and then follows up with publicly owned industries as they do in the Free State; instead of making grants to privately owned industries who employ a graduate in a research capacity, as they also do, let us establish our own factories. Instead of funding all sorts of schemes to attract foreign investment let us market our goods internationally. Foreign investors, as common sense will tell us, are not interested in the welfare of people like you and I. In 1984, according to an Irish Press report, December 2, 1985, they took \$940 million in profits out of the Free State. According to an E.S.R.I. report, the net increase in jobs in foreign owned industries between 1985 and 1990 will be 1,600. A drop in the ocean. Only Government intervention in the economy on a massive scale can bring about change.

To paraphrase Gandhi, our objective must be production for the masses instead of mass production.

This process can only begin within those who **CREATE ALL WEALTH**. The time has now come for the mobilisation of the working class the "*Agency of their own Liberation*" and the only true guarantors of their social, economic and political well being.

As presently constituted this country offers us - the working class - no future. A system in which the top 50% of households take home 71.8% of disposable income and the bottom 50% take only 28.2% is crying out for structural change through social revolution. We can rest assured though that many leaders in our country will bitterly oppose suggested changes, on economic, moral and theological grounds. It is our responsibility to expose their actions as simply an attempt to maintain their privileged position.

**Sinn Fein Philosophy :
Revolutionary or
Reformist?**



The recent Ard Fheis allowing S.F. delegates if elected to enter and take their seats in Leinster House has left many Republicans and Socialists within the movement and the class as a whole reappraising their role within that movement. The walkout and formation of Republican Sinn Féin is well enough documented elsewhere not to warrant further debate or discussion here. What is worth much more discussion and debate is, in what light should the revolutionary Socialist element view the decision to end abstentionism in particular and Sinn Féin's philosophy as expounded by Sinn Féin in general. It would be a great mistake to try and separate the two, as only when we examine Sinn Féin's philosophy from a materialistic analysis can we truly see the decision to end abstentionism in its true light.

The taking of seats in bourgeois parliaments is generally seen by revolutionaries as a tactical option and is the line most often quoted by those who support the decision to enter Leinster House. The

taking of seats in bourgeois parliaments is indeed a tactical option for revolutionaries. However, at this stage it is necessary to point out that sometimes those who call themselves revolutionaries are in fact opportunists and reformists hiding behind revolutionary rhetoric. Irish history affords us the opportunity to analyse those who in the past called themselves revolutionaries and socialists and who took the same path to Leinster House as Sinn Fein are preparing to do at present.

Fianna Fail in the 20's, Clan Na Poblachta in the 40's and The Workers Party (nee Official Sinn Fein) in '69, all these parties have one thing in common, they all claimed that they were only going into Leinster House for tactical reasons and would never allow themselves to sink into the mire of what passes for politics in the Free-State. History is the final judge and as we all know each of the above mentioned parties not alone sank into the mire but they remerged as staunch upholders and guardians of the status quo as dictated from Leinster House. On hindsight it is easy for us to see that the above mentioned parties were merely opportunists and reformists hiding behind their own particular forms of rhetoric. Tragically the fact remains that at the time many people put their faith and trust in these parties only to have that faith and trust betrayed at a later date.

For those of us who believe that only socialism, only communism can end the ruthless economic exploitation, political oppression and foreign occupation of our country we have a direct obligation to ensure that no such betrayals ever again, by any political party, shall hinder us in our forward march towards a socialist republic.

The marriage between republicanism and socialism has never been a happy one, and could be at best described as a marriage of convenience. The whole question takes on a new sense of urgency in the light of the abstentionist issue and recent remarks made by the President of Sinn Fein Gerry Adams in an interview which appeared in the Irish Times 10/12/86. Mr. Adams stated that "Socialism was not on the agenda" also in his recently published book 'Politics of Irish Freedom' in which he said "Republican struggle should not at this stage of it's development style itself Socialist Republican as this would imply that there is no place in it for non socialists". The historical precedent which immediately springs to mind is the now infamous caution of DeValera when he stated that "labour must wait". Not a very encouraging precedent.

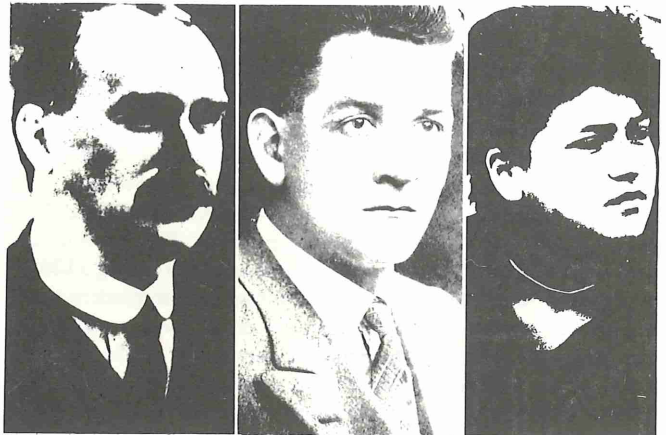
In no sense of the word can such an ideology be regarded as revolutionary and clearly must be delegated to the marshy ground of opportunism and reformism. For those of us who believe that if there is to be a revolution there must first be a revolutionary party and that without a revolutionary party built on the Marxist-Leninist revolutionary theory and in the Marxist-Leninist revolutionary style, it is impossible to lead the working class and the broad masses to victory, the weakness and flaws in the ideology of Sinn Fein are obvious for those with the courage and clarity to see them.

The question now arises, what is to be done? Firstly we must learn from history. The old cry don't embarrass Fianna Fail must never be allowed to be converted into the don't embarrass Sinn Fein. It is clear that we as revolutionary socialists must vigorously struggle against all attempts to entrench non socialist ideology in the working class. As revolutionaries it is our duty to expose all flaws and weakness that are inherent. The time comes in the life of any socialist when there remains only two choices, submit or resist.

That time has come for Irish socialists, we shall not submit and we have no choice but to resist. The time has come when the unhappy marriage between republican and revolutionary socialists must be terminated. We must put our faith in the most creative class, the working class and the broad masses. We must set about the task of building a revolutionary party, a party built on the

Marxist/Leninist theory. Then and only then shall we be equipped and capable of leading the working class and masses to victory. Socialists everywhere must get together, expose, plan organise and build the very defence of our people, our future and our freedom depends on our ability to tackle the tasks ahead.

Comrades let us not be found wanting in the months and years of struggle ahead.....



DIALECTICAL MATERIALISM

There can be no revolutionary movement without a revolutionary theory. It is absurd to contemplate any type of successful organisation which does not have a well thought out and carefully considered plan. From the well drilled football team to the complex calculations required for building a sky scraper, one can see the essential need for preparation. To make this call on behalf of rational and considered planning by no means denies the role of the practical or more physical part of the operation. The architect's blue print would indeed be worthless were it not for the realisation of its potential by the work-force and their machinery. Yet, by the same token it would be easy to imagine the hopeless muddle which would arise if a general and thorough plan did not exist.

In political terminology this question is referred to by two words **THEORY** and **PRACTICE**. We do not try to separate the two. It is as impossible to envisage a successful removal of either from the revolution as it is to think of a one-armed boxer. Quote: "Theory becomes purposeless if it is not connected with revolutionary practice just as practice gropes in the dark if its path is not illuminated by the revolutionary theory".

We must work hard to counter the all too common attitude that study of theory is something for ineffective book worms. It matters little whether we refer to political or military affairs. The reality is that the best considered strategy has always the upper-hand. Those who describe themselves as practical and sneer at the need for study and careful planning are merely cavalier cow-boys who in fact, **harm** the cause of Irish revolution.

We need an overall acceptance of the importance of logical planning, of study and careful thought. Only by having a well understood theory can we hope to carry out a successful revolution. Theory helps us to distinguish our movement and policies from the

other political groups in the field. For example S.D.L.P. claim as does Fianna Fail and Fine Gael that they wish to see a British withdrawal. It is important that we know, and can inform the public, that this does not mean we seek the same overall objective as the above mentioned.

Another point is that in our struggle for a socialist republic, we must avail ourselves of the lessons learned by all other people and peoples who have striven for the same "cause".

"An incipient government in a young country can be successful only if it makes use of the experience of other countries". Further we must make sure that our thoughts are progressive and that we don't fall into the trap of sticking to out-dated and ineffective theories. In other words, it is important that we teach ourselves to recognise the best parts of the old and the new, - both in the field of thinking and equipment.

The reader may well say of this stage that yes he agrees with the sentiments but how does one go about forming this theory? There are many and conflicting ideas in the political world today, so how can one be sure that the idea of theory on display is correct and proper. The answer is that we must have a proper attitude to

thought and theory before we go about setting out our plan. When we talk of a political plan or theory we must have some positive yard-stick by which to measure it; we must find ourselves in a position where we can honestly say that we know the plan and strategy of the republican movement is correct, not just because we have been told so by public figures, but also we can demonstrate by the use of proof that this is the case.

The need for theory of thought is obvious and the answer is contained within the principle of Dialectical Materialism. The fundamentals of the process of thought are quite straightforward and should not deter anyone. We shall explain the process here as simply as possible. The recognition of the importance of theory and its examination through the D.M. method leads logically to the most important stage of constructive self-criticism/analysis. The old chess playing maxim that "one learns more by a defeat than a victory" is partially true in the field of revolution, we must progress by analysing critically our entire movement and methods. The proper understanding and application of constructive self-criticism/analysis is of immense importance and benefit.

THE THOUGHT PROCESS



If we except the above, we must then acquaint ourselves with the method and progress of theory, of its scientific application to a plan. The basics of D.M. are quite easy to understand if we are prepared to spend just a little time and effort with it. Many of the important aspects of the D.M. method are very basic. It is important that the fundamentals are stated clearly and to avoid misunderstanding, repeated frequently, Let us take the task in two steps: first we shall look at one - materialism, this is the part of the method which shows us what evidence we may include and what must be excluded during our search for a strategy. It may well seem too simple to insist on hard facts, but this is the key to our own yard-stick for permissible evidence.

Step Two: The Dialectical: is the selection and arrangement of evidence presented. Step two allows us to make an assessment or

decision "surely any fool can recognise this" you may say "we don't have to undergo political education to know that superstition (piseog) and unsubstantiated assumptions should not figure in the analysis". You declare true, but let us look honestly at some of the ideas which have at various times, been prevalent and widely accepted within our movement. It is true is it not, that in the 75-76 period a common view held by many republicans was that a British withdrawal was imminent? So widespread was the misconception that eventually the Bodenstown annual oration had to be given over to its correction. What of the other fundamental mistaken belief that the sole requirement for a socialist republic was for the Republican Army to force a declaration of intent to withdrawal and that grateful nation would accept and elect an I.R.A. government in power in the ensuing euphoria, (great, magic). This misguided view was eventually curbed by the article "Scenario for a socialist republic" written by G. Adams for the Republican News. It is regrettable but true that both the above mentioned mistakes were made. Admittable they were eventually corrected but only after causing considerable harm. Only if we are deliberately stubborn can we deny that other errors have taken a grip on our movement at other times to lesser degree. What of the wild and exaggerated claims, types of equipment etc. These are but a few albeit important examples of our divergence from the cold facts of hard evidence.

The concrete analysis of the concrete situation must be our target, we must by common consent refuse to permit erratic (habit) and unsubstantiated assumptions to enter into our analysis. Though it may seem to be stressing the obvious, we must have a very firm commitment to real and scientific evidence and ruthlessly reject any attempt to enter conjection (a guess) or ceaseless assumptions. This of course does not mean that we refuse to use initiative or imagination nor does it mean that we stop having a positive and optimistic attitude to the revolution in general. Broadly speaking, therefore we begin to recognise the materialist approach towards thought on evidence. We must practice the habit of basing our planning on hard provable facts. Naturally the occasion must arise when the full facts are not available, but this must be acknowledged in our assessment, we should at all times insist on this approach to theory and install all members of our movement with a correct respect for materialist logic rather than for nebulous (unclear) assertions.

Having established what evidence is admissable, we then move forward to decide how we are to use the material we have. This is

step two: The Dialectical method. The basic idea of the dialectical method accepts that everything in the world is in a constant state of movement and that from this progress is determined by the outcome of conflict or contradiction between the forces of advancement and stagnation. Stated as boldly as this some may find the idea too vague. However, if we use the example of Ireland a clearer idea may emerge. The present struggle is one between the progressive force of Irish Republicanism (advancement) and the conservative forces of British capitalism (stagnation). If we give this idea some consideration we can use the basic principle repeated throughout the world of politics, science and nature. (It may well be a help to read 'The Naked Ape' by Desmond Morris).

While the general principle of contradiction or conflict inherent and integral (important part) within all movements is accepted, we now turn our attention to the problem of relating this principle to the particular problem of revolutionary theory.

In many cases the easiest way to grasp this process is to take the canonisation process of the catholic church as an example. While we remind ourselves that the church and their theology denies the materialism concept as a matter of principle, the system of canonisation court in the vatican gives us a useful insight into the dialectical method.

The church court, sets about judging the case for canonisation by appointing a devil's advocate on one side and a saint's advocate and sitting in judgement is the ecclesiastical panel. The role of the devil's advocate is to uncover whatever disreputable evidence exists in the life of the candidate for sainthood. The saint's advocate plays the Alternative role of uncovering the beneficial evidence. Both men are obliged to reveal to the other whatever facts they might uncover whether it assists their own case or not. In theory therefore, the panel can use the facts presented to make a decision free from error.

While stressing the need for proper and concrete evidence we use a roughly similar method for sorting out our facts and making our decisions. The dialectical has been alternatively summarised in the phase thesis/antithesis = synthesis. (Thesis means a statement or theory put forward and supported by argument). (Antithesis means the direct opposite of something, opposition or contradiction) (Synthesis means the combining of separate parts or elements to form a complete whole). We assess all the relevant facts possible first then we sort out facts which tend to support the argument. The next step is then to make a decision on the basis of the two cases in contact. It is not necessarily a question of one side or the other gaining a definite victory. The point is to reach the truth through a logical method and recognize the valid points in both. In theory the conclusion should be unchallengeable truth, but we must recognize the possibility of human error.

If for example a decision must be taken on the basis of incomplete information. (Quite often many of the facts cannot be uncovered or are unknown). This of course weakens the effectiveness of the method. The people who use the logical theory of dialectical materialism know that their system is as liable to make mistakes as any human construction or science. Dialectical materialism does not claim the ability to make clairvoyant prophecies. It does claim the ability to make the best possible analysis and to give those who use it the opportunity to reduce the margin of error as far as possible and a greater degree of insight than those who refuse to think scientifically.

The main point in considering the dialectical (materialism) method is to remember that when the decision has been arrived at, the process begins again. The final result of a round of examination is the synthesis. We must be very sure however that we do not allow our action to stop at this point. This synthesis becomes the new thesis and so the process of progress continues (in a new or different way, but still continues). An example of this is the

removal of a certain contradiction from the Irish political scene in 1922 with the withdrawal of the British army from the 26 counties of Ireland. Yet we can see clearly that this did not remove the contradiction, as the contradiction then moved into another stage. The point to bear in mind is that dialectical is an ongoing process and that a synthesis made, even 25 years ago can well be superseded even now. Not to acknowledge the fact that old reckoning can be outdated is to deny the dialectical and leave us in danger of being dogmatic or doctrinaire, we shall see below how to avoid this danger. Before continuing we must take a look at the role of a contradiction in the process of dialectical materialism. Contradiction is the word used to describe the collision or conflict between the force of stagnation and the forces of progress (advancement). The overall rule is that contradiction is a fundamental or basic rule of movement. However we must break it down into two more specific sectors to avoid the pitfall of becoming mechanical or even reactionary. "There is a creative Marxist and a dogmatic Marxism". We should aim to be creative! The first sector is the general, as distinct from the particular. The second sector is antagonistic, as distinct from the non-antagonistic contradiction.

It is by recognising that each situation has both a general and a particular contradiction that we can identify the distinctive characteristics in a situation. This allows us to apply the relevant answer at the relevant time and place. Let us examine an example so we may make this idea simple. We shall use the example of Ireland today. In Ireland the general contradiction is the conflict between the Irish revolutionary working class and the forces of international capitalism. We share this oppression with many other peoples throughout the capitalist world and the problem is universal. The fact that our battle is fought in the most local levels with the forces of British imperialism/capital and their Irish allies gives us the particular contradiction. We can immediately see that if we fail to seek out both the general and the particular, we cannot make a proper assessment of the situation. The failure to identify the general contradiction leaves us totally askew.

There is no need to discuss this, but failure to find the particular (a much common failing), results in our being unable to assess the changing circumstances. We end up being dogmatic and try to apply the solution to yesteryear's problems to today's trouble. We are right to honour the fenians, but it would be foolish to repeat their actions.

We finally come to the sector on antagonistic and non-antagonistic contradictions. This position teaches us that certain factors which are in dialectical conflict are not necessarily antagonistically so. In production, a conflict exists between the farmer reaping a crop and elements resisting his efforts. Clearly there is no antagonism involved. Alternatively our conflict cannot be adequately resolved without violent struggle. It is antagonistic.

The main lesson to be taken from the above division of contradiction in antagonism and non-antagonism, is that the path to revolutionary victory is one of both battle and alliance. We never compromise our ideology or our aims, but we are not unwilling to accept assistance. We do not expect utopian socialism (perfect 100% socialism). We believe in the dialectical evolution and revolution. Antagonism and contradiction are not all and the same thing. Under socialism the first will disappear but the second will remain.



Title: Congress '86, No. 1

Organisation: League of Communist Republicans

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