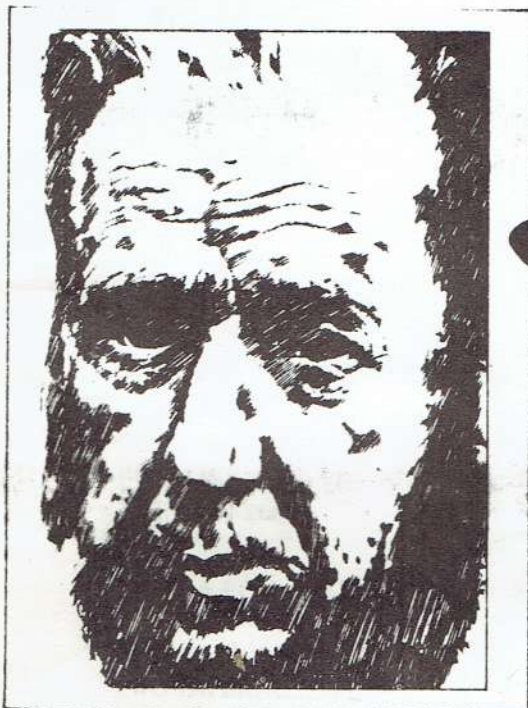


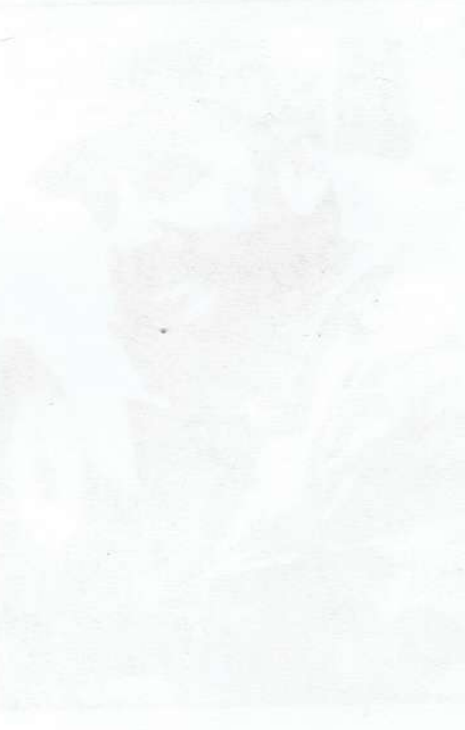
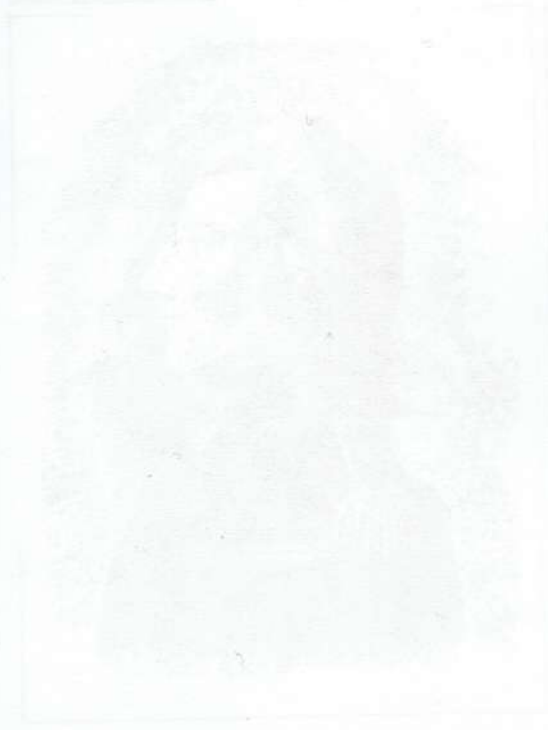
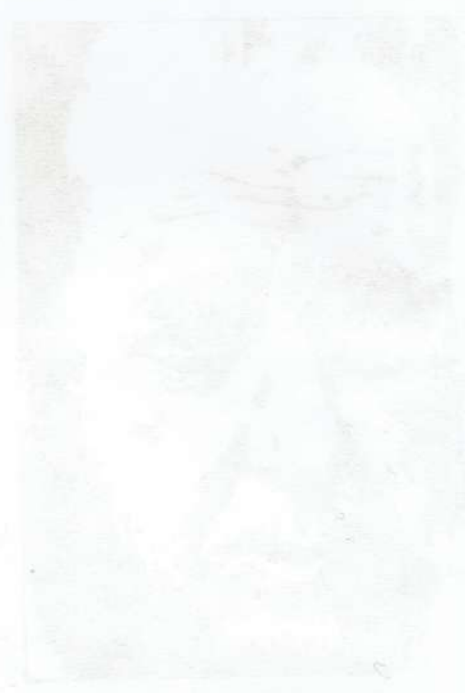
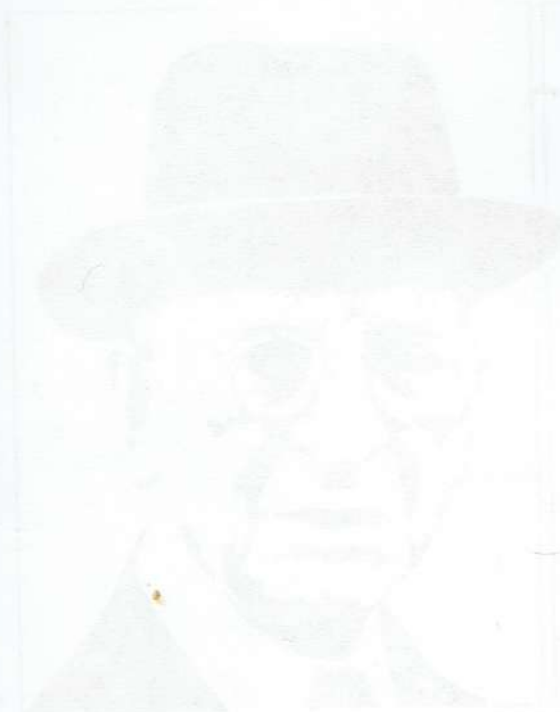
# THEORIC

Theoretical journal of the Republican Movement



# DISPATCH

Published by the [illegible] of [illegible]



**CONTENTS**

**SOLZHENITSYN SERVES CAPITALISM**

Jim Savage 1

**FROM TONE TO THE WORKERS' PARTY**

Des O'Hagan 19

**FIANNA FAIL AND THE 'SMALL MAN' ECONOMY**

Eamonn Smullen 21

**TWO IMPERIALISMS?**

Fidel Castro 29

**NOTES ON ART IN IRISH SOCIETY**

Patrick Gillan 36

---

Designed and printed by Clo Naisiunta Dublin.



TEORIC  
Theoretical Journal of the Republican Movement  
SUMMER 1973

## Editorial

If Ireland really is the 'island of saints and scholars' it would be true to say that the former greatly outnumber the latter. The person most recently elevated to saintly status in Ireland is the millionaire, Alexander Solzhenitsyn. The most widely-known – but least read – writer in the world has emerged as the champion of the Cold War revival. In analysing what made Solzhenitsyn famous, Jim Savage shows clearly that Alexander Isayevich doesn't allow the truth to spoil a good – and profitable – story.

Des O'Hagan concerns himself with specific questions and tasks facing the Republican Movement. **From Tone to The Workers' Party** is of general theoretical significance and combines strategic concepts with tactical questions.

As the 'small man' revival gets under way, Eamonn Smullen examines Fianna Fail's contribution to a concept which has, in practice, resulted in nothing but economic misery.

In his speech to the 4th Conference of Nonaligned Nations in Algiers in September 1973, Fidel Castro dealt with the falsehood of "two imperialisms" from a solid class approach. This speech carries a special message, and has a special significance, to socialists the world over.

Finally in **Notes on Art in Irish Society** Patrick Gillan examines a subject too often ignored within the working-class movement in Ireland, and makes the case for more dynamic State involvement in this area.

This is the first Teoric to appear this year. Our apologies but many events intervened to prevent its production. It is hoped that subsequent issues will appear on a more frequent basis.

# Solzhenitsyn Serves Capitalism

Jim Savage

I have no reason to doubt the obvious sincerity of people who showed concern for Alexander Solzhenitsyn. Most well meaning people say "The Soviet system is good but the Soviet Government should be more liberal with their writers". But everything is not just black and white: one must hear both sides before coming to any conclusions as to who was right and who was wrong. The word "Solzhenitsyn" can now be seen in the pages of Western newspapers and heard on T.V. screens as frequently as the words "Energy crisis" and "inflation", and although it does not heat the homes and does not add to the gold content of the chronically ailing currencies, it does exert some kind of psychotherapeutic action by distracting attention from the disorders in the West's own house. If Solzhenitsyn were only a pill for indigestion prescribed by a family doctor, he would not be worth talking about in so great detail. But he is assigned a more sinister role and it is the opponents of international detente who are pushing him into the proscenium of modern politics.

In this role there is no monologue "*To be or not to be*"? If Solzhenitsyn did not exist, he would have been invented. The story about what Solzhenitsyn is will answer the question "*Why is Solzhenitsyn?*" In his early childhood Alexander Isayevich Solzhenitsyn fell from a tree. That was the family tree of rich landowners, which had struck deep roots in the Stavropol Black-earth soil. The October Revolution knocked down that tree, and handed over the land to the farm hands who had sweated for the rich Solzhenitsyns. The bruises and bumps that he got when falling, Alexander Solzhenitsyn has entered into the list of claims he is now laying against the Socialist system.

The October Revolution was a drama for the Solzhenitsyn family. And he regards it as an accident in the history of the people! Herein lies the ideological meeting ground between Solzhenitsyn and those in the West who view the October Socialist Revolution as an accident in human history. As a feature of the portrait it should be said that, sensitive as he is to family grievances, Alexander Isayevich does not have a grudge against Grand Duke Nikolay Nikolayevich, who, in August 1914, commandeered the Solzhenitsyn Rolls-Royce (of which there were only nine in Russia). The Grand Duke could have easily become a



## SOLZHENITSYN SERVES CAPITALISM

target of scathing sarcasm for the author of "August 1914", as he was the supreme commander of the Tsarist Army. However, Solzhenitsyn reserved all his venom for the Russian soldiers, whom he described as a gang of marauders, putting the question to them "What is your hope? Can you vanquish a civilized people?"

The 'civilised people' in Solzhenitsyn's eyes, the Kaiser's soldiers — marked August 1914 in the following way: 384 people were executed on the 23rd in the Belgian Town of Tamines. On the same day, in Dinan, the Kaiser's soldiers drove a crowd of peaceful inhabitants to the town square, forced the women to kneel on one side and the men on the other and shot them. Among the 612 dead bodies was the body of a three week old child. He would have been 60 now, and he would hardly have joined the ranks of admirers of Solzhenitsyn's work. The crimes committed by the occupationists in Belgium and France shocked Romain Rolland. He wrote to Gerhart Hauptmann — "Who are you, descendants of Goeth or the descendants of Attila's Huns?" Did Solzhenitsyn know these facts? Certainly. He had carefully studied the Russian and world press of that period. Any wonder then that this "Humanist" and "Christian" defends the racist regime in South Africa, slanders the Vietnamese patriots, blesses the outrages of the Fascist Junta in Chile, and calls upon the U.S.A. to prevent the process of Detente? Any wonder then that among the most zealous propagandists of Solzhenitsyn's work are such relics of the Cold War as the Radio Stations Liberty and Free Europe. It is well known what forces these stations support. The anti-Soviet and anti-communist uproar which was recently raised in the West around the provocative statements of Solzhenitsyn, a campaign whose tone was set by Radio Liberty and Free Europe was a gross interference in the internal affairs of socialist countries.

Another supporter of Solzhenitsyn is the Hitlerite henchman Mr. Orekhov, the Editor of the magazine Chasovoi, published in Brussels. A former retainer of White Guard Generals Wranger and Kutepov, he is frantically preaching that the sole worthy form of Government is the Tsarist Monarchy.

Solzhenitsyn's book "Gulag Archipelago" is in fact an apology for betrayal, a rehabilitation of those who hated all that is socialist — those who in the years of the revolution, the Civil War, the construction of Socialism and Second World War fought against the Soviet people. It has been repeatedly pointed out that his work is autobiographical. But the very start of his literary career was marked by attempts to rehabilitate the traitor Vlasovites. In his first work, the verse play "The Victor's Feast" which he now renounces, Solzhenitsyn portrayed Soviet Army Officers as marauders and rapists. He gave the laurels of his only positive character to the one who helps the mistress of a Vlasovite. Why does he record the play as a failure? Apparently, he is embarrassed by the feebleness of this work. Solzhenitsyn is highly conceited and claims a top place of honour at the table of writers. Remember his words, "The Russian writers older than me have bypassed the main theme of our recent history or touched upon it superficially. So I must try". The writers who "touched superficially" upon the war and revolution include the giants of Russian Literature, Maxim Gorky, Alexei Tolstoy and Mikhail Sholokhov.

Alexander Solzhenitsyn's biggest blunder was his accusation that Lenin was "just as bad as Stalin". One of Lenin's personality characteristics was his

amazing clemency. Two of those executed after the Moscow trials were Kamen-  
 ev and Zinoviev. Both had betrayed the Revolution as early as 1917. They  
 continually professed to repent, but continued their treachery and were shot  
 during the Stalin period. The horror camps described by Solzhenitsyn did  
 exist, only they were in Germany, not the Soviet Union. If the work camps to  
 which Solzhenitsyn was confined were so awful, how is it that he is alive?  
 This is no rhetorical question. The recorded facts are that Stalin by sending  
 Solzhenitsyn to a work camp inadvertently saved his life. The man had stomach  
 cancer and because he was in a work camp, under close medical attention the  
 cancer was discovered early and cured in a hospital in Tashkent. It was the  
 Whites, not the Reds, who butchered hundreds of thousands of peasants during  
 the Civil War. It was the Whites not the Reds, who executed their prisoners as  
 a matter of course. One may say "*But Solzhenitsyn is a Nobel Laureate*".  
 Yes, but not in the province of Literature, only in that of anti-Sovietism. Even  
 Springer's Welt stated that "*the awarding of a Nobel Prize to Solzhenitsyn is a  
 political demonstration.*"

During the Second World War, the most despicable defector to Fascism was  
 Andrei Vlasov, a Soviet General who not only surrendered to the enemy but  
 joined the Fascist invaders against his own people and country, organising a  
 detachment of turncoats to serve Hitler. The Vlasov Group was used to carry  
 out the most cruel operations against Soviet and Allied peoples. It should not  
 be forgotten that the Vlasov Gang were among the most loyal collaborators  
 of the Hitler minions in murdering millions of Jews. So it is not strange that  
 Solzhenitsyn, who has consistently expressed his love for the Tsarist brass in  
 old Russia and the U.S. Imperialists today, comes to the defence of Vlasov.  
 From Solzhenitsyn's blind hatred of socialism one could be led to conclude  
 that not only was Tsarism better, but even Hitler's Nazism would have been  
 preferable. This point finds expression in the chapter of his "opus" in which he  
 defends the traitorous Vlasov. When Vlasov was captured by the Soviet Army in  
 the final weeks of the war he was courtmartialled and executed as a traitor.

The publication of *Gulag Archipelago* came as a result of a planned and well  
 timed decision. The extreme reactionary forces in the West held Solzhenitsyn's  
 "opus" as a last desperate propaganda against detente and Solzhenitsyn was a  
 willing partner to this task with a fiery ardor. Solzhenitsyn's bitter hatred of the  
 Soviet Union breathes from the chapters of his books printed in the capitalist  
 press. Close to his heart is the brutal and bloody Tsarism which for hundreds of  
 years held the huge masses of the Russian Empire in darkness and slavery. He  
 does not speak of his fatherland as one who sees shortcomings that need to be  
 overcome, who wants improvement, but as an enemy filled with poisonous  
 hatred, one who wants to annihilate and destroy. "*Gulag Archipelago*" has trig-  
 gered another round of anti-Soviet hysteria and the Soviet writer's journal had  
 this to say: "*it incorporates the many thoughts that were voiced in such writings  
 as the play 'The Victor's Feast'*". In "*Gulag Archipelago*" he attempts to make  
 his fabrications appear truthful and refers to works and documents of Vladimir  
 Ilyvich Lenin. Readers of this book may be unaware of minor details of the  
 history of the U.S.S.R. It is on this that Solzhenitsyn relies in giving an arbitrary  
 and distorted interpretation of it. But he forgets that Lenin is not only admired  
 but also read throughout the World and this offers the possibility of showing  
 how false and distorted are statements contained in "*Gulag Archipelago*".



## SOLZHENITSYN SERVES CAPITALISM

From Solzhenitsyn's point of view, the main and determining feature of all the U.S.S.R.'s history since 1918 was the reign of terror directed against every section of society — the workers who took power in their hands (see Archipelago, page 40) the Kulaks described by Solzhenitsyn as "the Best Corn-Growers", (Ibid. p.67) and the intelligentsia, i.e. against all social groups, including working people. This terror, according to Solzhenitsyn, is a typical feature of the entire history of the Soviet state in which the "stream of 1937 and 1938 was neither the only, nor even the main one" (Ibid., p.37). And the one who stood at the source of that terror as "Gulag Archipelago" alleges was none other than Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, who supposedly not only sanctioned but also theoretically substantiated its necessity in the new society. Solzhenitsyn even quotes Lenin as saying, "*Terror is a method of persuasion*" and gives the reference (Vol. 39, pp. 404-405). Let us see what Lenin actually writes in the place indicated.

He writes of the interventionist and counter-revolutionary troops that operated in the territory of Russia at that time "*If we had attempted to influence these troops, brought into being by international banditry and brutalised by war. If we had attempted to influence them by words and persuasion or by any other means other than terror we would not have held out for even two months and we would have been fools*". And further "*the terror was forced on us by the terror of the entente, the terror of mighty world capitalism, our every victory over this prime cause of the reason for the terror will inevitably and invariably mean that we shall be able to run the country without this mean of persuasion and influence*". (Vol. 39, pp.404-405). It means persuasion of and influence on the open enemies of the revolution and the Soviet State, rather than the working people, on those against whom any "persuasion" other than coercion is not only useless, but even harmful. That is the real essence of Lenin's words which are deliberately distorted by Solzhenitsyn.

Further on, in substantiation of the same slanderous idea, Solzhenitsyn cites two notes by Lenin to the People's Commissar of Justice D. Kursky (in Solzhenitsyn's book he is given as L. Kursky). These notes deal with the articles of the criminal code of the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic (RSFSR) which are concerned with capital punishment. Solzhenitsyn declares that these notes are some of the "*last earthly instructions of Lenin, not yet attacked by disease, an important part of his political Testament*" (see "Gulag Archipelago" p.357). Let us see which are the other questions dealt with by Lenin in May 1922 in addition to those covered in these documents. They include questions of Foreign Trade (Vol. 45. p.188), the Genoa Conference (Vol. 45, p.192). The promotion of Radio Engineering (Vol. 45, p.194). Reducing the Red Army (Vol.45 p.202). Altogether, following these "Last Earthly" documents, Lenin wrote more than 80 works (The reference is only to what was published). So nothing comes out of the "political Testament". These notes are a small part of the vast business correspondence carried on by Lenin at the time. An examination of these notes will show that even elementary honesty should have suggested to Solzhenitsyn to tell the readers that capital punishment (commutable to deportation abroad) was proposed by Lenin as punishment for bribing the press, recruiting of agents, and working for War (see Vol. 45, p.189) that is, for very grave crimes, which in many countries are punishable in exactly the same way. At the same time Lenin's idea was to put forward publicly a thesis that is correct in principle and politically (not only strictly juridical) which explains the substance of terror, its necess-



ity and limits, "and provides justification for it" (Vol. 45, p.190). Yet it is precisely these ideas of Lenin that Solzhenitsyn leaves without any comment. That is further proof of his dishonesty.

Lastly, he is attempting an open forgery regarding Lenin's entire and comparatively large work. He asserts that even in 1918 Lenin "proclaimed the General aim to clean the Land of Russia of all Vermin". And Vermin in Solzhenitsyn's view, was understood by Lenin as not only all alien classes, but also "workers who shirk their work" for example, "compositors in Petrograd" ("Archipelago" page 40). And further "envisaging and prompting the main directions of punishment." Lenin proposed making the work of finding the best methods of cleaning the object of competition among the communes and communities. "Thus," according to Solzhenitsyn, "Lenin had no other task but to struggle not only against 'alien classes' but also against the workers who came to power in Russia". The quotation given by Solzhenitsyn has been taken from Lenin's article "How to organise Competition?" (January 1918) What is the subject matter of the article? Lenin writes of competition as a new motive force of social development which under workers and peasants power, creates the possibility of "actually drawing the majority of working people into a field of labour in which they can display their abilities, develop the capacities, and reveal those talents, so abundant among the people" (Vol. 35, p.195) What kind of labour is this?

Lenin gives a clear and precise answer "*To work for oneself and moreover to employ all the achievements of modern technology and culture in one's work*" (Vol. 35, p.196). This is a field in which "*the working man can reveal his talents, unbend his back a little, rise to his full height and feel that he is a human being*" (Vol. 35, p.196). The revolution in Russia, however, did not take place in a vacuum. Russia was ringed by a circle of hostile forces. A civil war was breaking out. In those conditions the young Soviet Republic was compelled to wage a bitter struggle against all hostile elements. Lenin said time and again that coercion and terror are not characteristic of Socialism itself, but trust upon it by the enemy. The counter-revolutionaries "have practised terror against the workers and peasants in the interests of a handful of landowners and bankers while the Soviet Government is taking strong measures against the Landowners, marauders and their underlings, in the interest of the workers, soldiers and peasants" (Vol. 35, p.186) Who then are the targets of Lenin's words deliberately distorted by Solzhenitsyn? Here is what Lenin writes, "*War to the death against the rich and their hangers-on, the Bourgeois intellectuals, war on Rowdies*" (Vol. 35, p.200). This is the sort of "vermin" meant by Lenin. And these are the ones whom Solzhenitsyn seeks to put the case for. It is important to note that Lenin calling for struggle against the thieves, and idlers, does not exclude the possibility that the "rich, the bourgeois intellectuals, the rogues and rowdies who are corrigible will be given an opportunity to reform quickly" (Vol. 35, p.204). But Solzhenitsyn ignores this. By tearing out of Lenin's article what seems to him to be "suitable" words he makes a most trivial forgery, not uttering a single word about what the article speaks of, against whom it is directed, and whom it defends.

A person who forges business papers is punished under law in all countries. A forgery in a literary work inevitably entails contempt for the man on the part of honest people. Adolf Von Thadden, Leader of the National Democratic Party,



## SOLZHENITSYN SERVES CAPITALISM

has, in a lengthy article published in the Hanover Neo-Nazi weekly *Deutsche Wochen Zeitung* applauded the writings of Solzhenitsyn, describing "Gulag Archipelago" as "splendid". One of the main "merits" of this book is that it is levelled against "the left forces of the whole world". Lest readers have any doubt as to what in Solzhenitsyn's writings is particularly dear to the West German political storm-trooper an illustration accompanying the article carried the caption: "*Vlasovites who are fighting on the side of the Hitler Reich*". Solzhenitsyn's forgeries purporting to be propositions set out by V.I. Lenin, and the distortions of Soviet policy on the Hague Convention and prisoners of war, (attempting to excuse Hitler for his plan to annihilate 30 million slaves) — these and other deeds in the service of World reaction still being catalogued, form the shabby record of this self-proclaimed "great writer". The close association by the writer with Western press and publishing people to organise in advance a well-orchestrated ballyhoo became clear. His manuscript was sent abroad well in advance with the publishing date fixed. A world wide campaign was launched, radio stations and newspapers had already prepared carefully selected excerpts from it. Translators in different countries were completing translation of the book into English, German, Swedish, and Spanish. The London weekly *Observer* had publishing rights to print excerpts as did the French *L'Express*, the West German *Der Spiegel*, the New York *Times*, the Chicago *Tribune* and the Montreal *Star*. "Liberty" Radio station was given the special honour of transmitting the text word for word. The Western press smacked its lips as Solzhenitsyn declared in his book, "*I came to understand the falseness of all history's revolutions*", and argues that things were better under the Tsar — even the jails were better. The Capitalist propaganda machine which huffed and puffed mightily when Solzhenitsyn was arrested has been reduced to uncertain spluttering with the newly made millionaire's arrival in the West. It is now obvious that the hysteria about Solzhenitsyn's actual arrest was indeed blown out of proportion. Instead of being killed, or sent to Siberia, as both Solzhenitsyn and his supporters in the West insisted would be his fate, he was kicked out of the Soviet Union.

He was charged under Article 64 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation with Deeds deliberately committed to the detriment of the state and expressed in rendering assistance in the pursuance of hostile activities against the U.S.S.R. The procedure was as follows: At 5.00p.m. on February 8th he was summoned to appear at the investigation department of the prosecutor's office. He failed to appear. A second summons was issued on February 11th. Solzhenitsyn, upon receiving it, typed across the document his categorical refusal to appear and handed it back to the messenger. For disobeying a summons, he was then subject under Article 73 of the Criminal Code to arrest and, on February 12th was taken to the Investigation Department's cells. He was informed by Mikhail Malyarov of the procurator general's office that criminal proceedings had been launched against him under Article 64. His folder number case 3.4774 contained materials showing Solzhenitsyn had systematically engaged in criminal activities aimed at undermining the Soviet system, and actively assisted the most reactionary forces in their attempts to frustrate the process of detente and galvanise the cold war. In accordance with Article 7 of the Law on Citizenship of the U.S.S.R. he was deprived of his Soviet Citizenship and expelled from the country on February 13th. Contrary to the press charge that he was "arrested without charge", Solzhenitsyn was charged, arrested and expelled



## JIM SAVAGE

under the prevailing laws of the U.S.S.R. In Ireland, if you or I had received a summons to attend court, and refused to take it, we would probably be arrested very quickly. To complete the political portrait of Solzhenitsyn we can take the statement of the U.S. publicist Phillip Bonosky, "*In Solzhenitsyn's works everything shows that he simply deeply hates Socialism*".

Guenter Goerlich, well known for his novels on contemporary G.D.R. life, expressed the view that "*it is Solzhenitsyn who deliberately has cut himself off from the first socialist state*". That, Goerlich said, is clear from his last book and enthusiastic reactions of fanatical communist-haters all over the world for this alleged literary work. Goerlich held that "*with the best will in world, and examination of the circumstances in which Solzhenitsyn's book has been appearing in millions of copies in many countries in West, on centrally-planned dates, plus the fact that this time bomb has been set for a period in which the trend for relaxation of tensions is growing, reveals that what is involved here is not a literary affair but a political matter. Those who have not forgotten the devastation of the last war, with 20 million dead in the U.S.S.R. alone, will clearly understand that there is no room for such a person in the land which he derides and whose efforts in the struggle against fascism he mocks.*" And Gunnar Fredrixsson, the Editor of the Swedish Aftonbladet, noted that this action "*will be met with approval in certain circles and organisations operating outside the U.S.S.R. which in particular, are circulating anti-Soviet leaflets which, under scrutiny, prove to be essentially fascist.*"

An interesting comment came from Heinz Kahlau, one of the most talented lyricists among poets now writing in the German language, "because I am for Socialism, I am against errors it may make. But I differentiate between what I might find to be an error and what the enemies of socialism attribute to it as errors. Further, even when my personal viewpoint leads me to a personal judgment, I am certain I will never stand on side of its enemies. I want to improve Socialism and its enemies want to destroy it. Now I hear that Solzhenitsyn claims the Fascist Vlasov Army fought in Hitler's rank to liberate the Soviet Union from Socialism, and that Tsarism was more humane than Socialism. Ever since I could first think, I have taken part in the struggle for a peaceful and humane world. If less were at issue than the existence of humanity it would be easier to say well, this man is mistaken and that in no way diminishes the power of the truth. But as matters stand, it is necessary to declare that whoever makes himself and his views a tool of the most reactionary ideology of our time, of anti-communism, identifies himself with that ideology".

Haraid Hauser, who fought with the Maquis in France during World War II and has written about its struggles, provided a series of tests on the basis of which to judge Solzhenitsyn. Why, he asked has this supposed democrat and dissident favoured, not the Chilean people, but the Fascist Junta which overthrew a government chosen by the people? Why does he say nothing against the Fascist Dictatorship in Greece, against the crimes committed in Vietnam, Angola, Mozambique, Rhodesia? On the contrary, say Hauser, Solzhenitsyn seeks "*to justify these crimes. This spectacle will in a few years be just as forgotten as the Alekseyeva (Stalin's Daughter) spectacle is now forgotten*". Weaner Neubert, Chief Editor of Neue Deutsche Literatur, organ of the G.D.R. Writers federation, a publication in which many G.D.R. Literary works first appear, stated, "*These*

## SOLZHENITSYN SERVES CAPITALISM

*campaigns are aimed at diverting attention from the accelerating moral collapse in the Capitalist world from the Watergate Affair, from tendencies to Fascism and White terror in some parts of the Western world.* Solzhenitsyn serves those who are seriously frightened by the active implementation of the Soviet peace programme, which has led to the relaxation of international tension. The task of the opponents of detente is to prevent the stabilisation of peace and the development of cooperation between states with opposing social systems. To achieve this end the Soviet system must be discredited. And this is precisely what Solzhenitsyn is doing. He was in Socialism like a worm in an apple, refusing to leave the U.S.S.R. and vilified the Soviet system from inside. Now that he has fallen out of the apple, his usefulness to his external patrons and instigators is fast drying up. Since he pointed out that the West too had its evils, he is described by the liberal intellectuals who once supported him as a "right wing" idiot. His literary work is now being called into question. Solzhenitsyn claims to be a Christian but is opposed to peace (Detente). At a Washington banquet he upset his audience as he condemned not just Communism but capitalism, British Trade Union Leaders, the 1972 Vietnam Truce, the European security conference and Franklin Roosevelt the former U.S. President who was greatly supported by the American Trade Union Movement.

More recently, Solzhenitsyn embarrassed even his most fervent admirers with his book "Lenin in Zurich". It proved to be a spectacular failure. The literary facade is rapidly crumbling to reveal a morbid, war-mongering mediocrity. The once vast throng of admirers has melted away. Only the likes of George Meany, (U.S. Labour leader and CIA agent) and Margaret Thatcher remain faithful. It is in the company of such riff-raff that Solzhenitsyn will from now on rattle his sword and count his dollars.

# UNITED IRISHMAN

An tÉireannach Aontaithe

MONTHLY NEWSPAPER OF SINN FEIN

SUBSCRIPTION RATES (12 Issues)

Ireland & Britain.....£2.50

Europe.....£3.50

USA & Australia.....\$10

THE UNITED IRISHMAN

30 Gardiner Place Dublin 1



# From Tone to The Workers' Party

Des O'Hagan

*The following is the text of the oration delivered by Des O'Hagan during the course of the Annual Wolfe Tone Commemoration at Bodenstown Churchyard on June 20th 1976.*

Comrades, friends, supporters of the Republican Movement; allies in the struggle for peace, freedom, democracy and socialism in Ireland.

One of the dominant features of politics today is the fact that the Irish people are being assailed from all sides by both subtle and blatant propaganda, primarily to persuade them that in this age Republicanism is based on myths. And that while once these myths may have sustained them they now constitute a reactionary doctrine which simply preaches naked irrational violence, religious hatred and nationalistic enmity for the people of our neighbouring island.

This perversion of Republicanism is put forward as a truth by a combination of liberals, right-wing politicians, ultra-left and right-wing terrorists. Daily it is sustained by the conscious and unconscious propagandists of Anglo-American imperialism in all its exploitative forms.

These agents are past masters at insinuating that their sole concern is for the people. Yet they wheel and deal not only to sell out our vast economic potential but also assist in maintaining the divisive, corrupt sectarian system which dominates our country and contributes to the ever growing death toll in the North.

Our presence here at Bodenstown, representing all areas of Ireland, all religions and none, all generations, is living concrete proof that Bodenstown is no myth. It is a recognition of Ireland's most important dynamic historical reality which continues, in spite of immense odds to maintain its over-riding significance for the Irish people.

The significance of Bodenstown, of the commemoration of the birth of Wolfe Tone, is not a nostalgia for a golden age nor a nationalistic adoration of martyrdom. It is significant because we recognise by our presence here, as the vanguard

## FROM TONE TO THE WORKERS' PARTY

party of the Irish people not only our origins, our history, but the meaning to-day of those origins. For our concern as Sinn Fein, the workers' party, is for the future, the future of the Irish working people.

From this graveyard, not of hopes, (but) the source of the living vital Irish revolutionary political tradition, we call for the creation of a united Irish working class and extend the hand of friendship and comradeship to the working people of all nations.

We furthermore assert the reality of Republicanism in opposition to the continuous creation of political and economic myths which are insidiously foisted on the Irish people by every propaganda trick which money can conjure up.

It is well to examine these myths and their makers.

We are a poor country with no mineral wealth. This was the lesson taught in every Irish school. It has now changed, but not beyond recognition. Now we are told that we are too poor to exploit the millions of mineral wealth which our country has but which our people do not own. This in spite of the millions in the greedy hands of the banks and finance companies.

Or we are told that we lack the industrial experience, the technological and scientific skills to develop our own oil and gas. Yet we can manage to run the ESB, CIE, Bord na Mona, Aer Lingus and the other major state companies.

Who then are the myth makers, the liars? Republicans who have told the truth about our mineral wealth, about the banks, about our native abilities in the public sector or the imperialist lackeys who feed fat from the profits of multinational exploiters.

Leading Northern and Southern politicians say, as an excuse for their collaboration with the British, that there can be no resolution to the Northern sectarian problem which does not recognise the fears of the Northern non-Roman Catholic population.

True. But when Republicans put forward hard solutions which would create a united Irish people they are dismissed as unreal. Why? Because we alone insist on the fundamental unity of the Irish people; not the unity of adversity; the unity of exploitation, of unemployment, of poverty, of homelessness.

But unity in our desire for peace, unity in our desire for work, unity in our desire to create a country in which the ownership of all our wealth would be exploited not in the interests of foreign companies and their local sycophants, but for the Irish working people.

We are told that we are living on myths by the O'Briens, the Humes, the Lynchs, the Cosgraves, the O'Bradys, the Paisleys and the Craigs.

But it is clear that they are the cynical purveyors of myths and that Republicans are firmly on the side of historical truth. Truths which the mass of the Irish



DES O'HAGAN

people are slowly beginning to grasp as they turn from the sectarian killers and the pie-in-the-sky promises of Leinster House.

Let us dispense once and for all with the doubts which occasionally can assail us.

Republicanism is the total expression of the political and economic possibilities of our time. It is a creation of centuries of struggle. It is the promise which draws the people annually to the grave of Wolfe Tone, the unity of Protestant, Catholic and Dissenter, for the common ownership of Ireland.

There is nothing more substantial in politics today than that promise.

But we are informed that that goal was unreal in Tone's day, that it is unreal in our day.

Some therefore have sought to buy us off and others to threaten us. They have murdered our members in their vicious attempts to crush the revolutionary Republican tradition of the Irish people. They condemn us for spreading an alien ideology, socialism – ignoring the fact that the most alien feature of Irish life is the capitalist system. Sectarian bigots have attacked us for not declaring war on the Protestant population; 26 County right wing nationalists have bitterly opposed us for refusing to mount a campaign "to free the North". While ultra-left gangsters and their middle class intellectual allies have sought our physical destruction because we continue to cultivate the "myth" of the unity of the Irish working class.

There are also those who say we have "exclusivist" politics.

Certainly we are "exclusivist" if we are told to reject the fundamental theory of Republicanism. Are we being asked to join with the sectarian killers or with the bourgeois agents of Anglo-American imperialism? Are we being told to surrender the notion of a united people? To cease to teach the age old doctrine of a secular society, of the separation of church and state? Or to join with those who sold out the struggle for democracy in the North for seats in a sectarian executive? Or are we being asked to concur with the perpetuation of two sectarian client states of Britain?

If this is what is meant, then we will go forward in our "exclusiveness" until it embraces all the Irish working people from the Glens of Antrim to the Ring of Kerry, from Belfast's Shankill Road to Gurrabraher in Cork City.

\*\*\*\*\*

We welcome here today many visitors from Europe, Britain and the United States as well as comrades from parties who perceive the struggle of the Irish people in a similar manner to our party. Their presence at Bodenstown is evidence of the growing solidarity which ensures the success of the fight of our people to overthrow our common enemy, Anglo-American imperialism.

## FROM TONE TO THE WORKERS' PARTY

We are reassured in these links that the common enemy is weakened, as our struggle assists the fight of other peoples for peace, democracy, national liberation and socialism.

Let us determine to strengthen these bonds, to resolutely oppose all who would divide us. For there are some, often seeming to profess the same aims who speak in socialist or liberation slogans and yet who cooperate with the common enemy, whether it be in Portugal, Chile, Angola, Germany, Britain, the USA or Ireland.

Infiltrated, often financed by British, or American or West German Intelligence, they engage in slander campaigns not only against the forces of national liberation but against the socialist countries whose aid and moral support have helped to win so many battles this past fifteen years.

We draw the attention of foreign comrades to the lessons of recent Irish history.

Members of our party, North and South, can bear testimony to the vile murderous campaign carried on against us, by pseudo-socialists and corrupt right-wing nationalists. They have been encouraged in these attacks by motley gangs of internationalist conspirators who seize on terrorist violence and underwrite it in the language of false internationalism, of latterday Trotskyism.

They possess no roots in the working class anywhere and are the tools of reaction, factionalism and of the destruction of socialist revolution.

Our party recognises the need to create a genuine proletarian internationalism stemming from our different but complementary revolutionary traditions and supporting the efforts of the socialist countries, in the fight for world peace and co-operation among the peace loving peoples of the world.

However various brands of Trotskyist organisations have deliberately sought to sow confusion in many countries by distorting the nature of the Irish struggle against Anglo-American imperialism; unfortunately they are occasionally aided by discontented individuals who seek to impose their aims on Sinn Fein, by asking us to ignore or condone the actions of terrorists in Britain.

Our earnest wish is for the creation of solidarity between the British working people and the Irish people, between Sinn Fein and the principled organisations of the British working class. We vehemently reject and condemn the bombs left in public houses, in underground stations, in exhibitions as criminal assaults on working people and as totally reactionary and counter revolutionary.

In no way can we identify with nor will we condone these actions. The people responsible cannot claim to be acting within the tradition of revolutionary Republicanism and we assure those British workers who continue to support our struggle, in the face of political, police and military intimidation that the action of these gangs has no support among the Irish people.



## DES O'HAGAN

We stress yet again our solidarity with the national liberation struggles of all oppressed people and our recognition of the continuous fundamental support of the socialist countries for those struggles.

\*\*\*\*\*

Comrades, we have the revolutionary Republican theory which is, as has been rightly said, the most practical weapon possible in the struggle to overthrow Anglo-American imperialism. But, if we are to go forward to our goal of the Democratic Socialist Republic it is necessary that we should make concrete analyses of concrete issues.

The immediate situation in the North today is one of the absence of real politics — class politics, as the sectarian gunmen continue to terrorise the working people and the sectarian politicians engage in discussions to win some crumbs from the Westminster table for themselves.

We have called repeatedly for the withdrawal of British troops to barracks, prior to their full withdrawal from the country. That call which was mocked at as reformist has now become the central theme of recent Provisional statements. At the same time we have always recognised the primacy of the aim that the old sectarian mould must be shattered, once and for all.

Hence our demands for democratic guarantees which would enable political dialogue to begin, and sweep away the Orange and Green sloganising which has always been to the benefit of the British ruling class and their puppets in the North.

Furthermore there are clearly elements, encouraged by the British which seek to plunge the North into a full scale sectarian civil war.

It is incredible how the interests of those who talk of forcing the Protestant people to recognise "the reality of an all Ireland" and those of the British who seek to ensure a solution which guarantees them real continuing power, now coincide.

Such a civil war would leave the Green and Orange politicians in a power-sharing sectarian government, the people sickened, afraid and prepared for peace at any price; and no change in the disastrous economic situation, either in terms of ending imperialistic control or simply of easing the present gross economic and social deprivation.

The North faces total economic collapse, not as a result of the so-called Provisional economic war, but due to the economic policies of the British government and the deepening crisis of international capitalism.

Over 50,000 unemployed workers stand as casualties of the same sectarian capitalist system as is responsible for the maiming of over 15,000 and the death

of almost 1,600. That this system has failed cannot be challenged.

Sinn Fein asks the workers of the North, particularly those in the ship-building industry, the engineering industry and the subsidiaries of the multi-nationals, what party has offered an alternative to the dole queues, to a divided working class, to gross exploitation?

It is only Sinn Fein, through the Republican Clubs, which has spelt out the answers.

Our campaign under the slogan "Sectarianism Kills Workers" was for a long period the only voice of sanity in Northern politics. We therefore welcome and fully support the courageous guidance shown by the Northern Committee of the Irish Congress of Trades Unions in their "Better Life for All Campaign". There must now be no question of sidetracking this effort with vague promises from the British Government of future action someday on the crucial issues of democratic rights, jobs, houses and an end to sectarianism.

All Irish workers and British workers, through their trade unions, are fully behind the Northern ICTU. The only opposition comes from the fascists and racists who must be totally isolated. Many of those fascists and racists are in the ranks of the RUC and UDR. Sinn Fein has consistently opposed the existence of sectarian armed police forces and we have spelt out the alternative in our document on the need for a civilian controlled police service. The need for this has never been more clear following on the brutal attacks by armed members of the RUC in Springfield Road barracks, Belfast, over a period of seven days on members of the Republican Clubs. Sinn Fein calls on all democratic forces both in Britain and Ireland to join with us in the strongest possible condemnation of the continuation of torture in these barracks.

The British Labour government, while it maintains its claims to sovereignty in the North is absolutely responsible and must be pressurised by British and Irish workers, in their own interests, to initiate a full scale emergency programme to attack all the economic and social problems which beset the Northern people.

\*\*\*\*\*

Equally in the South, Comrades, the Coalition government and Fianna Fail have been totally incapable of providing any answers to the extremely critical Northern situation. On the one hand there is the rejection by Labour Party spokesmen of the principles of Connolly in their approach to Northern workers. Fianna Fail oscillate between the Provisionalism of Blaney and their traditional commitment to stamp out Republicanism. They now are at one with the anti-democratic legislation of the Fine Gael blueshirts. Indeed, the Coalition enfold some strange bedfellows.

The profile of the 26 County State has never been more haggard. The illusion



of freedom conjured up by the trappings of political sovereignty bears testimony to what Connolly warned of over 60 years ago. The green flag which flies over Dublin Castle disguises the Union Jack and the Stars and Stripes; even the small measure of national independence conferred by Britain at the setting up of the Free State has now been eroded.

The politics of all the Leinster House parties are on a path designed to lock Ireland in more firmly than ever to the capitalist system. The alliances formed within the EEC logically and economically drive the not-unwilling free staters, into the military alliance of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation.

We are being compelled to take our position with the reactionary forces of imperialism against the progressive forces in the world. Such is the extent of 26 County sovereignty. No where else is this more clear than in the manner in which the ruling parties have dealt with Ireland's natural resources and our manufacturing industry.

Multi-national corporations dominate Irish industrial life totally. Our oil and gas resources are in the bloody hands of the Seven Sisters — an international conspiracy of such dimensions that they manipulate governments and peoples as pawns in their real life "game" of monopoly. Literally billions of pounds are being gifted by Irish traitors to these corporations in return for a few shares and seats as directors in front companies.

Parallel to this surrender of our wealth is the frontal assault by the proponents of private profit on the state companies which have provided both the infrastructure and the capital gifts which have enabled private exploitation to garner immense profits to the detriment of the Irish people.

Sinn Fein has pointed out to the workers in state industry the nature of this attack and its purpose. The attacks made by Minister of Finance, Richie Ryan, on that vast range of workers from teachers, nurses, technicians, to the managers of state enterprises has been exposed as another form of defending the exploitative role of international big business in Ireland.

Over 120,000 unemployed are further testimony to the lack of national economic strategy of the ruling parties.

They have no answer to this disaster because they are politically and philosophically committed to its perpetuation in the interests of capitalism.

\*\*\*\*\*

We have declared Sinn Fein to be the vanguard party of the Irish working class; but we have in conjunction with the Communist Party of Ireland and the Liaison Committee of the Labour Left created in the Left Alternative the beginnings of the first real challenge to the reactionary politics which dominate the entire country.

## FROM TONE TO THE WORKERS' PARTY

Sinn Fein however is a party in its own right, it is a workers' party, for we reject organisation by conspiracy or the politics of the privileged few.

To the working people of Ireland whether they are on the shop-floor in a factory, labouring on the land, in the universities, engineers or trades men, computer operatives or office staff, we ask them to examine that programme, to analyse it and to accept it as the most far reaching realistic economic, social, and political programme presented by any party in the country.

The ranks of Sinn Fein are open to all who are prepared to work, study and devote their time and abilities within a democratic-centralised disciplined party structure, to the achievement of the Democratic Socialist Republic.

\*\*\*\*\*

Our programme on the North is based on the recognition of three facts:

- (1) the denial of democracy;
- (2) the gross sectarian structure of the community and
- (3) the inability of the Six County State to solve the chronic unemployment situation.

Underlying this analysis is the fundamental theoretical principle of the United Irishmen "to break the connection with England the never failing source of all our evils".

That principle has been translated into a hard, practical programme.

The strength of sectarianism is linked to the denial of democratic rights and discrimination in employment and housing. But that discrimination has ceased to be as meaningful as it was in the old, almost economically closed, six county society. The linen barons, the landed squirearchy and the Coombe Barbour's have been gobbled up by the multi-nationals; they now own 75% of Northern manufacturing industry.

The sectarian card has almost lost its face value for the economic sector of society.

Our commitment to the human rights struggle, to democracy in the North therefore is a cardinal point in ripping apart the last archaic vestiges of sectarianism which enables the system to perpetuate itself.

But we have not tackled the political question in isolation. Increasingly the economic proposals of the Republican Clubs are winning the attention of Northern workers, desperate for jobs and sick to despair with the sectarian politicians and gunmen.

We have pointed to the real Irish dimension, which links the engineering and technical skills of the North with the resources potential of the South.

In this way Sinn Fein shows its real concern for the future. We have outlined how Belfast shipyard can avoid closure; we have called on the Minister of Posts &



Telegraph Dr. C.C.O'Brien, to channel his proposed investment to preserve the jobs of the workers in STC in Monkstown. There has been no response from the Southern politicians who profess so much concern on their election platforms for the Northern people. The A.T.G.W.U., the largest union in the North, with a membership of 80,000 workers passed a resolution at their annual convention condemning C.C.O'Brien for not placing this order with STC in Monkstown or with BICC in the North.

We therefore call for the establishment of an Irish economic Development Board composed of representatives of the commercial and development ministries, North and South, representatives from the State sector industries and from ICTU, charged with the development of Ireland's natural resources through a planned comprehensive expansion of state sector enterprise into energy, petro-chemical, plastic and metallurgical industries. Again the ATGWU endorsed the establishment of such an Economic Development Board.

Capitalist firms such as the Metal Box Company, Portadown, are not slow to exploit the Southern market and reject the sectarian slogans of some Northern right-wing politicians who want nothing to do with 'fenian oil and gas'. Workers must learn how to act in their own interests also.

The fight is for jobs, for homes, for peace. Military elitist action is no answer to the forces of Anglo-American imperialism. Northern workers of all religions and none are being compelled by the harsh winds of economic change to turn their attention to their own interests.

These interests can only be fully met within a unified Ireland, governed by a strong central democratic government fully committed to an economic policy which will eradicate unemployment and exploitation, whether native or foreign.

Proposals to further sub-divide the country into additional artificial units which not only perpetuate sectarian mini-states are totally unrelated to the need of the Irish working class. At the best they are gimmicks and at the worst they pander to further sectarian fragmentation.

The retreat from "negotiated independence" by the SDLP is not a move towards recognising the need to solve the democratic problem in the North or to equally solve the disastrous economic condition. The SDLP still persist in sectarian answers to the Northern question.

The Republican Clubs, will this year produce a comprehensive economic plan for the North. It is the Republican answer to those who argue for the connection with Britain and who deny our ability to create an Ireland where only the people will be lords and masters.

Ar na mallaibh ins an toghchan i mBaile Atha Cliath Thiar Theas rinneadh iarracht cur in iul ag dream nua-cheaptha darbh ainm TIONOL gur feidir ceist ath-bheochaint na Gaeilge a scaradh o ceisteanna eacnamaiochta agus ceisteanna eile nach mbaineann le slanu na teanga.

## FROM TONE TO THE WORKERS' PARTY

Chur Sinn Fein in iul le blianta anuas go dtuigimid narbh fheidir ceist na Gaeilge, ceist slanu na Gaeltachta, a bhru chun cinn ach sa chiall beacht naisiunta soisialach a thuig Mairtin O Cadhain, go gcaithfidh Gaeil an tir a athghabhail ina hiomlan.

Cen ciall ata le sin? Dar linne go gciallionn se go soileir nach feidir duine a mholadh cionnas go gcuireann se an teanga chun chinn le linn do bheith ag deanamh dearmad ar an phobal a labhras an teanga. Mar sin creideann Sinn Fein gur cuma sa tsioc ce acu a bhfuil Blueshirt mar Eoin O Dubhthaigh baiuil don teanga nuair ata se ag cothu dearcadh eacnamaiochta agus polaitiochta ata naimhdeach don aicme is isle, an pobal is dearolai sa tir, an aicme oibre — is leir duinne gur naimhde e de bharr sin do chuis athchur i reim an naisiun Ghaelach.

Tuigimid fosta go gciallionn slanu na Gaeltachta ni amhain an ceangailt a bhriseadh le Sasanaigh ach an tImpireachas, go h-aithride meon an Impireachais a scrios ins an Ghalltacht.

Is eigin do muintir na Gaeltachta sin a thuigbheail comh maith. Ni feidir an Ghaeltacht a choinneailt beo gan aithint go bhfuil iomlan cumhachtaí na h-Impireachta Sacs-Phoncanach dirithe ar a scrios.

Go cinnte caithfidimid troid lena gcearta fhein a bhaint amach do phobal na Gaeltachta. Bheirimid lan tacaíocht don eileamh Udaras no Bord daonfhilathach neamhspleach a chur ar fail do na ceanntracha Gaeltachta.

Ach is iarracht e seo a bhaineas le cursaí mar ata. Fiu amhain da ngeillfeadh Teach Laighean don t-iarratas seo ni fheadfadh don tUdaras maireachtaint ach tamaillin iontach gearr nuair ata iomlan forsai an Stait gallda dirithe ar threo eile.

Treo a chiallios scrios na Gaeltachta, scrios an mheoin Ghaelach agus tabhairt isteach go hiomlan d'fhorsai na hImpireachta Sacs-Phoncanach.

Duirt an Cadhnach gurbe athghabhail na hEireann slanu na Gaeilge agus gurbe slanu na Gaeilge athghabhail na hEireann. Ni thiocfadh ach le Poblachtanach an abairt gearr ghonta sin a chumadh. Ta faitios ormsa go bhfuil go leor Gaeil san la ata inniu ann nach dtuigeann an meid a duirt an Cadhanach agus an aguisin a chur me lena chuid focal.

Dar liomsa nach bhfuil ach an taon doigh amhain ann le sin a athru. Caithfidh Gaeil a n-intinn a dheanamh suas ce acu a bhfuil an cuid deireannach diobhtha dhul ag imeacht mar sneachta on chlai no an bhfuil siad ag dhul fíor iarracht a dheanamh iad fein a shlanu tre cumhacht stait d'aimsíu.

Sibhse, Gaeil. ata i ndairire fa cothu agus leathnu na Gaeltachta impim oraibh claru le Sinn Fein, pairti an lucht oibre, pairti an choismhuintir, pairti ata go h-iomlan i ndairire fa cumhacht stait a bhabhail, agus bhur gcuid fein a dheanamh do.



The recent Dublin South West by-election has adequately demonstrated that we are a party which will increasingly be seen by the Irish people as being the party which articulates their interests and their interest only.

Tomas Mac Giolla, Uachtaran Sinn Fein, not only doubled the Sinn Fein vote in that constituency but he brought to the election a policy, a team of workers and clear cut political ideas which do not depend on the building of emotional support in the North. Rather did we go into the election determined to show as a workers' party that we were presenting a programme which answered the pressing needs not only of voters in the area but of the entire country.

Apart from the apathy engendered by the other parties what is most striking was their refusal to debate the issues with Sinn Fein.

We are ready and anxious to force that debate and we will do so with all our ability, on a national scale, whenever a general election is called. In the meantime we will continue to apply our Ard Fheis slogan, "Peace, Work and Class Politics" to every department of life in the South.

The attacks on workers' living standards, the cut-backs and in particular the promotion of private enterprise at the expense of the State sector must be exposed on all possible occasions as part of the colonialist gobbling-up process which we see operating every day in the South.

We again challenge Minister Richie Ryan to tell all those workers whom he accuses of 'sponging' off the private sector what subsidies he gives to make private fortunes from the profits of state companies and from the tax payers.

Our party programme envisages a progressive expansion of the State sector not in any piecemeal fashion described as "indicative planning" by the Coalition.

There can be no planning which does not conceive clearly of the total control of raw material to finished product.

This is why we in Sinn Fein stress the immediacy of gearing the Southern economy to the goal of full employment by 1986.

Our draft full employment document is the only serious economic plan presented by any party to the Irish people. It is based on a totally realistic assessment of our needs, our abilities, our raw materials, our population projections and our financial requirements.

We need 44,000 new jobs every year for the next ten years, our population by that time will be 3.7 million (in the South). What has the Coalition or Fianna Fail to say to these two frightening figures? Frightening, for them, for they are tied to 19th Century economic solutions.

\*\*\*\*\*

But comrades, Sinn Fein sees this period as a time of opportunity, a period of

## FROM TONE TO THE WORKERS' PARTY

enormous potential growth not only for ourselves as a party but for the genuine left.

The disillusionment of youth and the disgust of intellectuals with a society which rewards only greed and exploitation, must be turned into progressive channels.

We are now on the threshold of establishing ourselves as the serious left alternative in Ireland.

We must devote our energies in the coming five years to recruiting into our party the best, the serious and the most willing from all sections of the working class. During that period we must extend our efforts ten fold to ensure that the Irish people are aware of what Sinn Fein has to say, of where we stand on the momentous issues of our time.

We have expanded our capacity to publish our own material, no little achievement, that capacity must be utilised to the full in the propaganda war which rages ceaselessly to defraud the Irish people, to sap their energies and maintain national inertia on every question from natural resources to national liberation.

Comrades, let us enter into this latter half of the '70's steeled by these previous years and determined to advance our struggle, the workers' struggle, the people's struggle towards the Democratic Socialist Republic.

# REPSOL

## PUBLICATIONS

**Titles include:** *The Making of the Irish Revolution* (Tomas Mac Giolla), *The Great Irish Oil and Gas Robbery*, *The Public Sector and The Profit Makers*, *The*

*Banks*, *The Republican Tradition (Deasun O hAgin)*, *Ground Rent is Robbery*, *The Rights of Women in Ireland*.

Individual/Trade orders catered for.

For full list write to:

**REPSOL PUBLICATIONS**

**30 Gardiner Place,**

**Dublin 1**

**Telephone 741045.**



# Fianna Fail and the 'Small Man' Economy

Eamonn Smullen

Fianna Fail this year celebrates its fiftieth birthday. But the party which governed this state for thirty years is finding it difficult to enter wholeheartedly into the festive spirit. The 'golden days' are gone and show no sign of immediately returning. The once-mighty electoral machine no longer runs smoothly. And none of the present leadership seem capable of adopting De Valera's charismatic mantle.

So, while the party faithful console themselves by reflecting on past glories it is timely to examine a little-known – but important – aspect of Fianna Fail: its' various economic policies. This examination is particularly timely because many of the early economic policies of Fianna Fail are being advocated not only by the Provisionals in their Eire Nua programme but also by some sections of the orthodox Left.

## ROOTS

Fianna Fail was established by De Valera when he recognised that the Free State was too strongly entrenched to be overthrown by force. Circumstances were favourable to a new party. De Valera had been President of the Republic during the War of Independence; he was President of Sinn Fein when that party won a landslide victory at the polls in 1918. Furthermore, De Valera's understanding of politics was much greater in 1926 than in the early Twenties when he had been badly out-manouvered by both Griffith and Collins. The Ireland De Valera addressed himself to was the Ireland of small farms and small businesses.

Propaganda for small business activity was then coming from several seemingly progressive sources. Roosevelt in the USA won the Presidency by posing as champion of the small farmers many of whom were ruined by the Depression. Reports of Roosevelt's battles with the banks and giant industrial trusts were carried by

## FIANNA FAIL AND THE 'SMALL MAN' ECONOMY

all Irish newspapers but with special emphasis by the *Irish Press*. Propaganda for small business and a policy of support for the 'small man' (sometimes called "the Irish People") was a notable feature of the *Irish Press*. This propaganda ranged from international news, local 'success' stories right through to stories for children — the 'turfcutters donkey' stories etc. Large-scale industry was depicted as an evil. Thomas Davis's writings on the horrors of the Industrial Revolution were to be found not only in the *Irish Press* but in children's schoolbooks. There was probably no conscious propaganda intent in placing a story about the joys of playing in a hayfield beside the Davis writings, but it did create an attitude to life.

Gandhi's struggle against British colonialism in India was also used by Fianna Fail to boost the 'small man' policy. Gandhi was seen as a religious man who wanted to turn the clock back to 'village industry'. It would be interesting to discover if one of the stated aims of Fianna Fail — "to promote the ruralisation of industries" — originated in the Gandhi economic programme for India.

Gandhi's policy survives today through the spinning wheel at the centre of India's national flag. Meanwhile India has discovered that in order to secure economic independence it was necessary to industrialise. One step towards industrialisation taken by India was the building of a steel mill. Capitalist countries refused to assist this project in any way and the steel mill was built by the Soviet Union. Gandhi's policy survives in Ireland on the back of the Fianna Fail membership card and in the Provisional Eire Nua programme. The innocent aspect of Eire Nua no doubt derives from an uncritical acceptance of everything in the past as 'good'.

Heavy industry was seen in Ireland as 'bad' for several reasons. It was associated with the trusts in the USA — Roosevelt's enemies; it was associated with Britain; it was associated with the USSR.

Roosevelt's popularity in Ireland stemmed from several factors. He appeared to be successful in reducing the numbers on the breadlines; what he said about the 'small man' struck deep chords in Ireland; and the establishment of the Tennessee Valley Authority\* was seen as government intervention to help the 'small man' — not as an example of state economic activity which should be extended.

Roosevelt's successes in America contrasted sharply with the paralysed state of British industry. The giant factories and shipyards lay idle, throwing workers in their hundreds of thousands on the dole queues. Roosevelt's success and British industry's failure was seen to confirm in Ireland that 'small is beautiful'.

\*The Tennessee Valley Authority was a federal agency established by Act of Congress. It concerned itself with the generation, transmission and sale of electric power, with flood control and with the development and production of fertilisers. The Authority built 21 dams. It was greatly resented by private enter-



## THE 1932 ELECTION CAMPAIGN

But the 'small man' could only flourish in a small market. Fianna Fail therefore opposed free trade. "Britain's policy of free trade," De Valera complained in 1932, "has been forced on this country." Pointing to the falling price of land and to collapse of small industries he continued: "Sinn Fein in 1917 had provided the answer — 'protection' — this would solve unemployment, if Fianna Fail gets into power we will protect the home market for the farmer just as we will protect it for the manufacturer."

There is some evidence in a speech made by Sean Lemass in 1932 that the Cumann na nGaedhal Government was turning towards a policy of protection. He accused the Government of stealing from Fianna Fail policy by placing tariffs on imports of oats, butter and bacon. This he described as "throwing Hogan and Hoganism overboard" (Hogan was Minister for Agriculture). Lemass went on to accuse 'some people' of making big profits by selling foreign goods dumped on the Irish market to the detriment of Irish industry and promised that "all their Unionist Gold" would not prevent a Fianna Fail electoral victory.

In 1932 also, Frank Aiken was even more on the side of the 'people' than either De Valera or Lemass. "Where," he asked at a meeting in Athlone, "has the ordinary man been marching for the last ten years? He has been marching to the poor-house and to the Labour Exchange. The farmer has been marching to the shopkeeper looking for credit and the shopkeeper to the banks on a similar errand." "All three classes are marching to ruin while the King's Irish are marching to prosperity. It is time we had a government of our own, of working men, which would utilise for the benefit of the people the wealth bestowed on the country by Almighty God and put an end to poverty and starvation in a bountiful land."

Frank Aiken was known as 'Fiery Frank who burned forty trains.' It does not matter whether it was really true or not. What did matter was that the people believed it and considered it a great thing to have done during the 'Tan War'. Fianna Fail in the Thirties and Forties always gave details of their candidates' military records in the Tan and Civil Wars.

In a speech during the 1932 election campaign, Fianna Fail's Johnny Geoghegan said that unemployment figures were so bad that the Government shirked publication. He claimed that nine-tenths of the farmers were 'more afflicted' than under landlordism and that the Army cost £1½ millions to maintain and that Ireland was over-policed in comparison to England and Scotland.

In Carrickmacross Sean Lemass stated that it was a very serious thing for the country that people with the mentality of Hogan and McGilligan had power to enter into agreements which might prevent the taking of action to develop our own resources. The home market was, he stated, most important — only the sur-

## FIANNA FAIL AND THE 'SMALL MAN' ECONOMY

plus should be exported. Fianna Fail election literature complained that £3 millions worth of goods were bought from Britain resulting in an adverse trade balance of £16 millions. There was a budget deficit of £1 million and unemployment stood at 60,000.

In Clara, County Offaly, De Valera explained that the Fianna Fail programme did not mean 'money for towns' but for agriculture which was most important. Britain, he claimed, was costing Ireland £5¼ millions every year. Land annuities cost £3 millions; RIC pensions £1¼ millions; the balance went to pay for damage caused by the Black and Tans. In Germany, he explained, £20 out of every £100 went towards War Reparations; in Ireland, £24 out of every £100 was paid to England.

Fianna Fail was charged with being sympathetic to Communism and replied that 'Cosgrave and Company' had sold their souls to Freemasonry.

Cosgrave tried repression to disrupt the Fianna Fail 1932 election campaign. Frank Gallagher, editor of the *Irish Press* was brought before the military court on a charge of sedition.

Cuts were made in Garda pay and also in the teachers' pay. Sean Lemass, speaking at Mallow said, that it was un-wise to cut Garda pay but that the force should be reduced in numbers.

P.J. Rutledge speaking Mayo, said that it was the government's duty to give work to those who could work and to give assistance to those who could not work. He also claimed that the Fianna Fail tariff policies would provide work for 90,000 people.

Evidence of the scale of confusion in political thinking at that time is provided by a pro-Mussolini article in the *Irish Press*.

Cosgrave argued in 1932 that it was no part of a government's job "to provide work". It was claimed by the government that the depression was due to "world conditions over which we had no control". Fianna Fail claimed that this attitude to the economy and to the unemployed was "in direct negation to the Papal Encyclicals".

At a meeting in Naas it was said that Fianna Fail would establish a National Bank in the "right sense of the word".

Sean McEntee speaking at Rathmines in Dublin ridiculed the Shannon Scheme saying that it was supposed to cost £5½ millions but had cost £16 millions.

"The majority of the Carlow Sugar Beet executive", McEntee said, "are foreigners and with less than half the time of their contract gone the Belgians had



collected in cash £2 million of the £3 millions which were made available to them by the Free State Exchequer."

Cosgrave's policies were described by Fianna Fail as the policies of 19th Century English Capitalism. They would be replaced by Fianna Fail by a policy of diffusion of wealth, protection of agriculture and industry and encouragement to the "small farmer".

Sean T. O'Kelly, attacked Cosgrave and MacGilligan for stating that it was not the Government's job to provide work and described Fianna Fail policy as the "the Papal policy".

## IN GOVERNMENT

The first Fianna Fail Government promised to:—

1. Carry out a scheme for the co-ordination of all public transport services to eliminate wasteful competition and to preserve the railways which are essential to the country's economic development.
2. Speed up the work of the land commission.
3. Re-organise the Irish Sea fisheries.
4. Eliminate all political tests for employment in the public service etc.
5. Direct the economic affairs of the country with a view to building up a strong and prosperous self-reliant, self-supporting nation.
6. Not to seek economies by restricting the social services or by cutting the salaries of the lower grade civil servants.

The seventh Dail opened on Marcy 9th 1932 — ministers' salaries were cut.

The first Fianna Fail Budget was introduced on May 12, 1932. Finance Minister Sean McEntee called it the most dramatic budget ever: "one thing we shall not do — we shall not cut the social services. We shall also, as far as possible, suit the burden to the back".

It was described in the *Irish Press* as "a poor man's budget at last".

The main features of the 1932 Budget were:

1. A tax on foreign investments; duties were imposed on 43 items.
2. An increased profits tax with wide profit margins for Irish owned companies.
3. Super tax on incomes of £1,500 plus.
4. A Sweepstake tax was imposed on the Hospitals share of the proceeds.
5. No punishment if 75% of taxes due were paid off by easy stages.

6. Special relief schemes, "decentralised industries" everywhere, a housing programme, road building, agricultural relief, milk for the poor.

These were the stated objectives of the budget. On May 16th 1932 De Valera spoke at the Industrial and Agricultural Fair in Cork. "If we succeed, and I am confident we shall, the welfare of our own country will be secure and our own people will have given to other nations an example which may go far to establish justice in social relations and save the world from anarchy".

He went on to speak about re-constructing the social order in "accordance with Christian principles".

De Valera was handed a resolution by representatives of the unemployed in Cork city thanking him for efforts to provide employment and welcoming the Budget as "a step in the right direction".

An editorial in the *Irish Press* before the 1933 elections stated: "One thing this government and the Labour deputies who helped it may claim to their eternal credit is that they have changed the course of Irish economic life to a new and immeasurable vigour".

De Valera spoke in Dundalk on January 7th 1933. "If we find that private enterprise is not doing the work of making the nation self-sufficient, we may have to decide that the state should step in and do its part, but we hope that stage will never be reached".

Sean Lemass in the 1933 election campaign claimed that 300 workshops were set up since Fianna Fail took office. The Banks held £8½ millions more deposits than the previous year. The Government intended to borrow to improve the social services.

In January 1937 at the Gresham Hotel Sean Lemass spoke in reply to the toast "Saorstát Industries": "We had to rely on final process to encourage industrialisation, it is now necessary to get to native raw materials, for example, we had to get boot factories established and a market for leather created before we could set up our tanneries. That policy, to which there was no alternative, had however, its disadvantages, because it resulted in the maintenance of free imports of the partially manufactured goods they used and which, in their own interests, were not favourably disposed to any restrictions on them. It is necessary that every industrial concern which utilises imported materials in its process of manufacture should understand that it will be expected to take these materials from internal sources when their production here is undertaken on a practical scale and it is the government policy to encourage their production".

In April 1937 there was a budget surplus of £1 million.



## EAMONN SMULLEN

"Since 1932", McEntee said, "We have become in every way more self-supporting, more self sufficient and self reliant. We have given practical and effective expression to the patriotic and economic principles of Sinn Fein."

In the *Irish Press* the editorial again called it "A poor man's budget" and Norton welcomed the Budget on behalf of the Labour party.

### IN OPPOSITION

Speaking in Wicklow Lemass spoke about the importance of restoring the Irish language, teaching Irish history and developing Irish culture. He also said: "Economic and social matters, however important, must not be allowed to overshadow our responsibility for national unity".

De Valera speaking in Ballinrobe during the same 1948 election campaign said: "The whole economic and social policy has been built on the land system and more in the future will be based on the land".

Lemass speaking on the new Coalition Government Budget when dealing with defence cuts: "On the very day that the Pope has asked for prayers for peace, that Cardinal Spellman has said that the sands of peace are running out and President Truman said this was crisis year...." Lemass did not want cuts made in defence spending.

On February 7th 1951 the *Irish Press* pointed out that the adverse trade balance had increased to £17.6 millions.

On May 8th 1951, Sean Lemass spoke at Dalkey: "The 1948 Fianna Fail programme stood unchanged" he said, "save for modifications. The aim was to build up productive capacity of industry and agriculture so as to enable the country to maintain reasonable standards of living and public service. Fianna Fail believes that government has the function of leadership in economic matters but the attitude in normal times favoured the minimising of government interference".

In 1951 on May 17th, an editorial in the *Irish Press* said of Fianna Fail aims for government: "industrial revival, encourage tillage, speed up land division."

In the course of a speech in Clare on May 19th 1951, De Valera was more specific: "We have," he said, "a policy to develop the nation's resources and to feed the people. We have a policy to develop mineral resources and we have, in addition, a social policy. We do not stand for extreme socialism – our principle is this: that the individual and the family are fundamental things. The individual because he has an immortal soul and has a life to look forward to after the life here.... everything else must centre around that. Next to the individual in that way is the family as a unit group in society."

## ECONOMIC MISERY

Despite Fianna Fail's concern for individuals and families, one million Irish people have been forced to emigrate since the foundation of this state. Despite the 'national records' of its' leaders (both in a military and an Irish cultural sense) Fianna Fail delivered the country into the hands of international finance capital. It is clear that a 'peoples' party (which is what Fianna Fail set out to be) is not the cure for our economic ills. On the contrary, Fianna Fail's policies have contributed greatly to the creation of those ills. Remedying the sick economy is too big a job to be left to the 'small man' – whether he is of the Fianna Fail, Provisional or Fine Gael/self-help variety. The policy of industrialising Ireland by State owned and controlled heavy industry and the expansion of the State sector is the only road to full employment.

Fifty years of Fianna Fail was fifty years of economic misery. All De Valera's lofty sentiments failed to provide sufficient down-to-earth things like food and jobs. One observer who lived through the lifetime of Fianna Fail expressed himself on the subject: "Dev toured the country at election times in a big black hat and cloak as if he were another Dan O'Connell. The people of the country, even the poor people, stood around at his meetings, listened to him and looked up at him in awe. Their friends and relations marched down to the emigrant boats in fours."

\*\*\*\*\*

THIS WEEK — EVERY WEEK

*The  
Irish People*

THE PAPER NO TRADE UNIONIST CAN AFFORD TO MISS

\*\*\*\*\*



# Two Imperialisms?

Fidel Castro

*The following speech by Fidel Castro was delivered at the 4th Conference of Nonaligned Nations in Algiers on September 7th 1973.*

Mr. Chairman;

Distinguished Heads of State and Government;

Representatives of the Heroic National Liberation Movements;

Delegates:

In expressing to you, Comrade Boumediene, to your compatriots and the distinguished representatives of the peoples meeting at this Conference the greetings of the Cuban delegation, we would like to emphasise the meaning we assign to the fact that this 4th Conference of Nonaligned Nations is taking place in Algeria, whose people, with their heroic and sustained struggle, awakened the admiration and served as encouragement for the countries that have fought for our national independence against the oppressors.

I want to remind you that Cuba is a socialist country, Marxist-Leninist, whose final objective is communism. We are proud of this! On the basis of that concept of human society, we determine our domestic and foreign policies. We are, above all, loyal to the principles of proletarian internationalism, and my words will be consistent with those ideas. All revolutionaries are duty-bound to defend their views in valiant fashion, and that is what I propose to do here as briefly as possible, since I don't intend to speak for an hour and a half, in order to respect the rights of others to speak at the Conference too.

There has been talk at this Conference of the different ways of dividing the world. To our way of thinking, the world is divided into capitalist and socialist countries, imperialist and neocolonialized countries, colonialist and colonialized

## TWO IMPERIALISMS?

countries, reactionary and progressive countries—governments, in a word, that back imperialism, colonialism, neocolonialism and racism, and governments that oppose imperialism, colonialism, neo-colonialism and racism.

This seems to us to be basic in the issue of alignment and nonalignment, because there is nothing exempting us in any way from our central obligation of steadfastly fighting the crimes committed against humanity.

The movement has grown without any question, and that is a source of satisfaction to us, as is the case of Latin America, when the presence here of three new states — Peru, Chile and Argentina — is due to progressive political changes in those countries. But the quality and not the number is what should take primary for the purposes of this movement if we really mean to wield moral and political force before the peoples of the world. If this is not the case, we run the risk that the reactionary forces could succeed in penetrating its ranks to thwart its aims, and that the unity and prestige of the nonaligned countries could be irremediably lost.

Although the economic issues connected with the interests of the countries we represent take on justified and necessary importance, the political criteria we uphold will continue to be a basic factor in our activity.

In this political terrain there has been an observable tendency during the months of preparation leading up to this Conference that unquestionably militates against our cause and serves only imperialist interests, to seek to pit the nonaligned countries against the socialist camp.

The theory of "two imperialisms," one headed by the United States and the other allegedly by the Soviet Union, encouraged by the theoreticians of capitalism, has been echoed at times deliberately and at others through ignorance of history and the realities of the present-day world, by leaders and spokesmen of nonaligned countries. This is fostered, of course, by those who regrettably betray the cause of internationalism from supposedly revolutionary positions.

In certain political and economic documents drafted for this Conference we've seen that current come to the fore in one way or another, with different shadings. The Revolutionary Government of Cuba will always oppose that current in all circumstances. That is why we find ourselves obliged to deal with this delicate matter as an essential issue.

There are some who, with patent historic injustice and ingratitude, forgetting the real facts and disregarding the profound, unbridgeable abyss between the imperialist regime and socialism, try to ignore the glorious, heroic and extraordinary services rendered to the human race by the Soviet people, as if the collapse of the colossal system of colonial rule implanted in the world up to World War



## FIDEL CASTRO

11 and the conditions that made possible the liberation of scores of peoples heretofore under direct colonial subjugation, the disappearance of capitalism in large parts of the world and the holding at bay of the aggressiveness and insatiable voracity of imperialism — as if all that had nothing to do with the glorious October Revolution!

How can the Soviet Union be labeled imperialist? Where are its monopoly corporations? Where is its participation in the multinational companies? What factories, what mines, what oilfields does it own in the underdeveloped world? What worker is exploited in any country of Asia, Africa or Latin America by Soviet capital?

The economic cooperation that the Soviet Union provides to Cuba and many other countries comes not from the sweat and the sacrifice of the exploited workers of other peoples, but from the sweat and efforts of the Soviet workers.

Others regret the fact that the first socialist state in history has become a military and economic power. We underdeveloped and plundered countries must not regret this. Cuba rejoices that this is so. Without the October Revolution and without the immortal feat of the Soviet people, who first withstood imperialist intervention and blockade and later defeated the fascist aggression at the cost of 20 million dead, who have developed their technology and economy at an unbelievable price in efforts and heroism without exploiting the labour of a single worker of any country on the face of the earth — without them, the end of colonialism and the balance of power in the world that favoured the heroic struggles of so many peoples for their liberation wouldn't have been possible. Not for a moment can we forget that the guns with which Cuba crushed the Playa Giron mercenaries and defended itself from the United States; the arms in the hands of the Arab peoples, with which they withstand imperialist aggression; those used by the African patriots against Portuguese colonialism; and those taken up by the Vietnamese in their heroic, extraordinary and victorious struggle came from the socialist countries, especially from the Soviet Union.

The very resolutions of the nonaligned countries aid us in understanding where the dividing line in international politics comes today.

What state have those resolutions condemned from Belgrade to Lusaka for its aggression in Vietnam and all Indochina? The imperialist United States. Whom do we accuse of arming, supporting and continuing to maintain the Israeli aggressor state in its rapacious war against the Arab countries and in its cruel occupation of the territories where the Palestinians have the right to live? We accuse U.S. imperialism. Against whom did the nonaligned countries protest over the intervention in and blockade of Cuba and the intervention in the Dominican Republic and for maintaining bases at Guantanamo, in Panama and in Puerto Rico against the will

## TWO IMPERIALISMS?

of their peoples? Who was behind the murder of Lumumba? Who supports the killers of Amilcar Cabral? Who helps to maintain in Zimbabwe a white racist state and turn South Africa into a reserve of black men and women in conditions of semislavery? In all these cases, the culprit is the same: U.S. imperialism, which also backs Portuguese colonialism against the peoples of Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde, Angola and Mozambique.

When our resolutions list the millions of dollars, pounds, francs or marks that leave the developing neocolonialized or colonialized countries as a consequence of plundering investments and onerous loans, they condemn imperialism and not any other social system. It is not possible to change reality with equivocal expressions.

Any attempt to pit the nonaligned countries against the socialist camp is profoundly counterrevolutionary and benefits only imperialist interests. Inventing a false enemy can have only one aim, to evade the real enemy.

The success and the future of the nonaligned movement will depend on its refusal to allow itself to be penetrated, confused or deceived by imperialist ideology. Only the closest alliance among all the progressive forces of the world will provide us with the strength needed to overcome the still-powerful forces of imperialism, colonialism, neocolonialism and racism and to wage a successful fight for the aspirations to peace and justice of all the peoples of the world. With the preoccupying, increasing needs for sources of energy and raw materials on the part of the developed capitalist countries in order to maintain the absurd consumer societies they have created, were it not for the extraordinary containing power of the socialist camp, imperialism would carve up the world all over again, new wars would plague the human race, and many of the independent countries that today belong to this movement would not even exist. Right now there are leading circles in the United States that are pushing for military intervention in the Middle East if fuel requirements warrant it.

Any estrangement from the socialist camp means weakening and exposing ourselves to the mercy of the still-powered forces of imperialism. It would be a stupid strategy, a case of severe political shortsightedness.

Mr. Chairman, Latin America notes with concern the way that Brazil, under U.S. sponsorship, is building up a military might that goes way beyond the needs of its rulers to employ armed brutality, murder, torture and imprisonment against its people. Brazil is visibly growing into a military enclave in the heart of Latin America at the service of imperialism. The Government of Brazil — which, along with that of the United States, took part in the invasion of the Dominican Republic and then with the same partner worked to overthrow the progressive Government of Bolivia and recently helped to implant a reactionary dictatorship in



## FIDEL CASTRO

Uruguay — is not only a tool of the United States but is gradually becoming an imperialist state. Today it has an observer status at this Conference, as has Bolivia. We hope that such governments, under which some peoples of our hemisphere still suffer, are never admitted to the nonaligned movement.

There has been considerable talk here of the situation prevailing in Southeast Asia and in the Near East; of the peoples oppressed and bled by Portuguese colonialism; of the brutal racist repression in South Africa, Zimbabwe and Namibia.

U.S. imperialism continues to back the neocolonial regime in South Vietnam, which refuses to comply with the Paris Agreements, and the puppet government of Lon Nol in Cambodia; Israel mocks the United Nations resolutions and refuses to return the territories it occupied by force; Portugal, with the backing of the United States and NATO, scorns world opinion and the resolutions against it adopted by international bodies. The racist governments not only step up repression but threaten other African states.

These are bitter, outrageous truths that put the strength, unity and will to struggle of the nonaligned countries to the test. We who are meeting here are the leaders and representatives of more than 70 states. Let us enact concrete measures and agreements to isolate and defeat the aggressors. Let us support in a determined, steadfast manner, the Arab peoples under attack and the heroic people of Palestine; the fighters for the independence of Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde, Angola and Mozambique; the oppressed peoples of South Africa, Zimbabwe and Namibia! Let us fight consistently against the imperialist countries that aid and abet these crimes! Let all of us nonaligned countries recognise the Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam, and let us give our full support to it in the struggle for compliance with the Paris Agreements! Let us back the patriots of Laos and Cambodia, and no force in the world will be able to prevent the solution of these problems that affect our peoples in the Near East, Africa and Southeast Asia!

The true strength and profundity of the movement of nonaligned nations will be measured by the firmness of our actions regarding these problems. Cuba will back with the greatest determination the agreements adopted to that effect, even if to do so calls for contribution of our blood.

We cannot ignore the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. That people, a thousand times heroic, has undergone the most devastating war of aggression. Millions of tons of bombs were dropped on their economic facilities, cities, towns, schools and hospitals. Their self-sacrificing and victorious struggle against imperialist aggression has served the interests of the entire human race. We must not settle for expressions of sympathy. Right now, that admirable country is confronting the difficult work of reconstruction. We propose to the nonaligned countries that

## TWO IMPERIALISMS?

we take part in the rebuilding of North Vietnam, with each of us making a contribution to the extent of our possibilities. This would provide a new and revolutionary dimension to the nonaligned nations in the field of international solidarity.

The nonaligned countries must express their solidarity with Zambia and Tanzania against South African and Rhodesian aggression. We must also support the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in its efforts to attain the peaceful reunification of the Korean people. We must offer the Panamanian people full support in their just struggle for sovereignty in the Canal Zone. We must provide solidarity with the people of Chile in the face of imperialist plotting. We must join with Argentina in its just demand for the return of the usurped Malvina (Falkland) Islands. And we must defend the right of the people of Puerto Rico to their full sovereignty.

Our country must put up with the humiliating presence of a U.S. base on a part of our territory, maintained by force completely against the will of our people, who confront a rigorous and criminal economic blockade by the United States. Despite that, the Cuban people stand firm and are successfully building socialism right at the gateway to the United States. Our country has been able to resist because it has carried out a genuine revolution that radically wiped out all forms of exploitation of man by man, building upon that base a lofty fighting morale and a solid, indestructible unity.

When there is a real desire to free the country from imperialist exploitation, then the people must also be freed from the plunder of the fruits of their labor by the feudal lords, the landholders, the oligarchs and the social parasites of all kinds.

We also ask for your solidarity with the Cuban people.

If an understanding with the socialist countries is a vital factor for our victory, unity among the nations fighting for independence and development is its indispensable condition. We support all pronouncements in favour of greater unity of the nonaligned in regard to the principal problems of international life that are included in the different motions presented to the Conference. But we are concerned — more than concerned, we become indignant — when we see that a leader of the stature of Sekou Toure must defend himself not only against the Portuguese colonialists but also against conspiracies promoted right inside his own underdeveloped Africa.

Our faith in certain unity declarations and postulates wanes when we see that the People's Republic of the Congo and the Republic of Somalia are not free from threats by other African forces and we note the difficulties of the Revolutionary Government of the Democratic and People's Republic of Yemen in overcoming



FIDEL CASTRO

hostilities that may well stem from Washington but which are carried out from other areas closer at hand.

All of this shows that our true unity depends not on circumstantial nonalignment but on a deeper, more lasting identity, an identity stemming from revolutionary principles, a common anti-imperialist program and an aspiration to substantial, conclusive social transformations.

This is Cuba's position. The point of view that I have just outlined will surely not be shared by all the leaders meeting here, but I have complied with my duty to express them with respect and with loyalty toward all of you.

Thank you very much.

*Granma, Weekly Review (English), September 16, 1973.*

# Notes on Art in Irish Society

Patrick Gillan

*The following paper was first read at the National College of Art and Design, Dublin on April 29th 1976 during a seminar "Art Education-for what?"*

To the uncritical eye, art in Ireland fares no better or no worse than in most countries where free enterprise prevails. True, Dublin lacks the glamour and excitement of Paris, London or New York. But the capital city boasts both national and municipal galleries of art. Commercial galleries and fine-art salesrooms in Dublin and elsewhere find the buying and selling of art-objects a pleasant — and profitable — business. The State — in the form of the Arts Council — is ready to venture, however timidly, where private enterprise fears to tread. Several of the major annual group exhibitions faithfully reflect current trends in international art. Through the offices of concerns like Johnson's Wax or Gulf Oil we occasionally get a glimpse of real international art; through the offices of Charles Haughey we occasionally get a glimpse of a real international artist. And Ireland, of course, boasts a number of schools and colleges of art where tranquility — if nothing else — flourishes.

A closer look however shows that there is little ground for complacency. Irish art in general mirrors what supposedly happened centuries ago in Florence and what did happen yesterday in New York. There is little rest, as the late Jonathan Wade noted, "from the embarrassment of witnessing the puerile imitations of European and American Finance painting which has recruited so many starry-eyed art students and which is being maintained by an Irish Ascendancy Art Clique officially appointed to look after the aesthetic affairs of this country."<sup>1</sup>

Why should this be so? And why is the reality of Irish life so rarely expressed

1. Jonathan Wade *Letters to the Editor The Irish Times* 19/10/1971



## PATRICK GILLAN

on canvas, in stone or metal? Let us look at how Irish art as we know it was shaped.

From the 18th Century to the first half of this century, the Royal Academy in London guided the content, direction and development of the visual arts in the British Empire. Its Annual Exhibition was the focus of every artist in these islands. The local branch of the Royal Academy was incorporated by Charter in 1823 as the Royal Hibernian Academy.

Neither the Royal Academy or its Irish branch could ever be accused of promoting great art. They served a market drawn from the landed aristocracy, the bankers, the merchants and the brash, self-made men of the Industrial Revolution. The art-objects which serviced this market were mostly vulgar imitations of the better known works of the Renaissance. The form was firmly rooted in an earlier age and the content was inspired by nostalgia. The art of the Academies stood frozen in a permanent salute to the past.

As such, it was particularly apt for the Ascendancy class in Ireland. They were lords of all they surveyed in a land where time itself — never mind art — seemed to stand still. The Irish landscape, one quarter of which was uncultivated, was un sullied by any factory chimneys belching clouds of black smoke. The pastoral quiet was uninterrupted by the clamour and din of industry. Dublin — the 'second city of the Empire' — was a model of good taste and elegance, its' wide streets and beautiful squares more suited to leisurely strolls than to the traffic of industry.

For the Ascendancy class then, Ireland was a paradise.

But for the vast majority of the people it was more like Purgatory — 'a state or place of punishment'. John C Cobden, an English writer, in 1860 outlined the misery and deprivation of those who lived in the shadows of the 'Big House': "The condition of the Irish peasantry has long been most miserable. Untiring toil for the lords of the soil gives the labourers only such a living as an American slave would despise. hovels fit for pig-styes — rags for clothing — potatoes for food — are the fruits of the labour of these poor wretches." The Irish peasant literally scratched a living from the soil, consumed only the coarsest quality potatoes he grew and rested in the squalor and darkness of his mud cabin. "The pig which is seen in most Irish cabins," wrote Cobden, "and the cow and the fowls kept by the small farmers, go to market to pay the rent; even the eggs are sold."<sup>2</sup>

The world of books, art and science was out of reach to the Irish peasant. Through bitter experience, he learnt to keep his distance from it: "The landlord

2. John C Cobden *The White Slaves of England* Dublin 1971 (Reprint)

## NOTES ON ART IN IRISH SOCIETY

system in Ireland ensured that, whatever the improvement the tenant attempted, indoors or outdoors, he was in danger of being made to pay for it in an increase of rent. The simple visual additions to, and adornment of, his immediate environment which were available not only to his continental counterparts but even to gypsies, barge-people and other itinerants in his own land, were denied to the Irish peasant."<sup>3</sup>

The miseries of Irish peasant life in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were never recorded on canvas. The artists of the Academy studiously ignored them, thus establishing in Ireland the tradition of artistic 'detachment'. The vision of Ireland they recorded is incomplete in one vital aspect: the truth is missing. Their representational style represented everything but reality.

To complete the picture of Irish art in the nineteenth century, mention must be made of the role of the Church. Both the Church of Ireland and the Roman Catholic Church were financed from the same source. The Church of Ireland was supported by compulsory tithes imposed on the population of every parish. It is probable that this imposition augmented the Catholic Church's ability to collect voluntary monies by bringing a symbolic and political quality to support for the indigenous church and its officers.<sup>4</sup>

The scale of Catholic Church spending was vast. Between 1800 and 1863 no fewer than 1,805 churches, 217 convents and 40 colleges and seminaries were built in Ireland. The total cost of this building was £4,428,800. It would be reasonable to expect that such an extensive building programme would produce some good examples of Church architecture and art. But the Irish peasant, giving financial support to two religions and professing only one, found his church as visually uninspiring as his mud cabin. In terms of architecture, mock-Romanesque mixed uncomfortably with Victorian drabness. The interior adornments were selected for their religious symbolism rather than their aesthetic merit. Mostly manufactured in Italy, they reflected little of the artistic genius of that country.

At the dawn of the twentieth century then, art in Ireland was the preserve of a small minority. The majority rarely, if ever, came in contact with it. Even if they had, they wouldn't have recognised the Ireland it depicted — a country of rural charm, security and prosperity.

But time was no longer standing still. For the Ascendancy class it was in fact running out. The campaign of the Land League, led by Davitt and Parnell, the growing demands for Home Rule and the emerging national consciousness were signal that the old order was no longer acceptable. The power and privilege of the Ascendancy class was further threatened by an expanding class of merchants and

3. Liam de Paor *An Ignorant Middle Class* *The Irish Times* 13/1/1976

4. Hugh Brody *Inishkillane* London 1973



traders jostling for a place at the top of the social ladder. And from the lower rungs of the same ladder the small but growing trade union movement was making its presence felt.

The Ascendancy class had contributed little to art; the class which was replacing it was to contribute even less. The attitude of the Irish business class to art was made clear when the proposal to establish the Municipal Gallery in Dublin was first made. "What do the people want with this art gallery," asked their spokesman, William Martin Murphy, "when they can look at the sunsets over the Liffey?" James Larkin, who strongly supported the gallery project, suggested that Murphy be appointed "keeper of an art gallery in hell".

Whether Larkin's suggestion was ever adopted is not known. What is known is that in making his ignorant remark, Murphy was being true to his class and his kind. They constituted a poor substitute for a national bourgeoisie - the 'Captains of Industry' in a country without any significant manufacturing industry. As capitalists, they were a poor joke - incompetent, unenterprising and cowardly. They traded, ran sweatshops and made beer and biscuits in the cheapest labour market in the British Isles but shrank away from the task of industrialising Ireland. Masquerading as Merchant Princes they nevertheless acted in the true traditions of the 'small man' by cautiously investing abroad. By doing so, they effectively passed a vote of 'no confidence' in themselves as capitalists. They didn't really believe in themselves: how could they be expected to believe in art?

So, they ignored it and energetically devoted themselves to strengthening their class position. In 1913, they launched a savage attack on organised labour in an attempt to smash trade unionism in Ireland. In 1916, they led the chorus of condemnation of the Easter Rising. Yet, at the close of the War of Independence this class was parading itself in green-flag nationalism. The erstwhile champions of the Crown were now enthusiastic advocates of the Harp. De Valera's declaration in 1919 that "Labour must wait" no doubt reassured them that their change of allegiance wouldn't cost them anything.

After a decade of momentous upheaval, unrecorded by any painter or sculptor, the business class sat back to enjoy the fruits of wars fought by others. The birth of the Irish Free State, unlike that of many nations and states, was unmarked by any flowering of creative activity. Instead, as one observer noted, "as a result of veto, ban and boycott the whole social atmosphere tends not only to thwart but atrophy the creative impulse ... and reduce the rising generation to one of cultural frustrates..."<sup>5</sup>

Under the aegis of Church and State the term Sinn Fein was "squinted into

5. Leslie H Daiken *Goodbye Twilight* London 1936

## NOTES ON ART IN IRISH SOCIETY

meaning Ourselves All Alone”<sup>6</sup>. Those Irish people who were not forced to emigrate became the most protected people in the world. They were protected on the one hand from ‘foreign’ books, newspapers, films – even dances – and, on the other, from foreign goods.

Typical of that grim era was a newspaper headline of 1936: “Red Poison for Ireland. Subtle Manoeuvres Exposed”. The headline referred to the showing in Dublin of the famous film, *Battleship Potemkin*. After one showing, the film was banned by the Government.

Clearly, art could not flourish in such a climate. What did flourish was paintings of the West of Ireland. Romantic and sentimental, they reflected none of the despair and demoralisation of rural communities with no future. The only human being to stray into these paintings was the rugged individual locked in combat with nature. There is no trace on canvas of the typical scene of the man and his family waiting to catch the boat-train.

One purpose the ‘West of Ireland’ paintings served was that they reflected the image of Ireland the business class wanted to see. It was furthermore the image they wanted the world to see. Of equal importance was the fact that such paintings were reckoned to be a good investment.

So, apart from a thriving ‘West of Ireland’ painting industry, the visual arts barely survived. Recognising this, the Government in 1951 introduced the Arts Bill. Outlining the reasons for its introduction, the then Taoiseach John A Costello said: “The fact that there are so few who unselfishly and disinterestedly do patronise the arts with financial encouragement or gifts emphasises the extent of the work that remains to be done if the arts generally are to be cultivated..” The financial provisions amounted, in Mr. Costello’s words, to a “...modest, not to say meagre, contribution...” This was matched by a note of defensiveness and apology in further words of Mr. Costello: “I think no one can accuse me of being a levotee of State interference in the life of the community or in the effectiveness of State action; but in a matter of this kind... I am afraid it is the duty of the State to step in and give the necessary encouragement and financial support.”<sup>7</sup>

Thus, the State stepped in, reluctantly and apologetically, to compensate for the failure of the business class to promote art. But it was a half-hearted intervention. The Arts Council established under the Arts Act was given State money to spend yet was not given a State policy to follow. Given such a situation, it is not surprising that the Arts Council drifted into the role of a private patronage collective in the manner of the Art Unions which operated throughout England and Ger-

6. Sean O Faolain *The Bell* March 1943

7. Dail Eireann *Tuairisc Oifigiul* Vol.125 No.9



many in the 19th Century. The only difference was that the Art Unions financed their patronage themselves; the Arts Council's private patronage was financed from public funds.

It quickly became clear that the Arts Council liked 'modern' art — although the masters of the banal landscape were by no means ignored. Good, clean abstract art was the priority whenever the Arts Council went shopping. This inspired a number of artists to put the latest glossy art-magazine at the top of their shopping lists. One generation of rip-off artists was being replaced by another.

The new generation could trace its origins to the Living Art Exhibition which began flying the flag of modernism in Ireland in the Forties. But in many cases it was merely a flag of convenience for the fashion conscious and unthinking. The Living Art never rose above being a reaction to the Academy. And like the RHA it accepted the facts of Irish life without question or comment.

At the time the Living Art was growing up, the Irish people were growing accustomed to recurring economic crises. The Fifties was a dreary and deadening decade marked by massive emigration. Men and women in their hundreds of thousands faced with the impossibility of getting a job at home, packed their bags and left for the industrial cities of England. In an economic and cultural wastland, the only thing that flourished was censorship.

Towards the end of a disastrous decade, the Irish business class threw in the towel and surrendered to international capital. In November 1958, the First Programme for Economic Expansion was adopted. Its adoption was a tacit admission that the efforts to build up native capitalism had failed. The old philosophy of self-sufficiency and industrial protection, the programme warned, "can no longer be relied upon as the automatic weapon of defence."

The results of the programme soon became evident. From a position of no growth at all national output increased between 1958 and 1963 by a quarter and the purchasing power of wages rose by a fifth. Unemployment fell dramatically and emigration was reduced to a comparative trickle. The 1966 census showed a population increase of 62,000. Even more significant was the increase of the younger age groups.

With the new era of relative prosperity, came new patrons of art. Having sold out to Anglo-American capital, it was only natural that the business class should sample some Anglo-American art. The office-blocks which mushroomed in the cities were adorned with tasteful, bland works which, like the Esso sign or a John Wayne film, were signals to American bankers that they hadn't strayed outside their cultural or economic sphere of influence.

The once-thriving 'West of Ireland' painting industry gave way to the finance-

house decorating business. The 'hard-edge' and spray gun paintings of the Living Art blended beautifully with the oak-veneered panelling in the new cathedrals of commerce. For art-dealers, business boomed. As stock-brokers selling investment portfolios to the newly-ordained 'whizz-kids' of the economic miracle, they promoted the 'old reliables' of academicism and the 'rising stars' of modernism.

Two other significant developments in the Sixties were the founding of the Independent Artists and the establishment of the Project Arts Centre. The former was an attempt to break free from the strait-jacket of indifference and to provide "a lively response to the age in which we live". Project sought to establish a system of distribution favouring the artist rather than the dealer. Both the Independent Artists and Project went some way to proving that not all Irish artists are necessarily blind, deaf and dumb.

And so the present. Ireland is in the process of being transformed from a rural into an urban society. Industry is the fastest growing sector of the economy. Compare this to 1926 when there were as many domestic servants — 85,000 — as there were industrial workers. Another dramatic departure from the past is the fact that Ireland now has one of the youngest populations in Europe.

The question is, can Irish society as it is structured cope with the changes taking place within it? In particular, can private enterprise provide the 40,000 new jobs every year which are necessary to create full employment?

And what of art in Ireland? Its growth and development have been stunted under the retarding influence of both the Ascendancy and business classes. Is that situation unalterable? Or is it possible that the State through the agency of the Arts Council might play a more dynamic and creative role? There are those who argue that State bureaucracy and art don't mix - that State involvement would impinge on the 'freedom' of the artist. But State bureaucracy in Ireland has many achievements to its credit. Among those are the achievements of Bord na Mona which replaced the 'Old Bog Road' with modern highways and brought new hope and life to dying communities. A similar approach to art could do nothing but good.

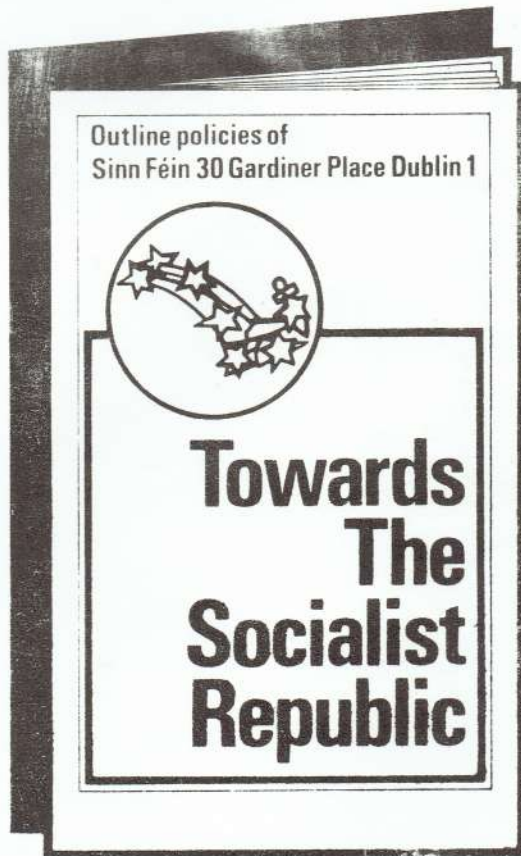
And finally, what of Irish artists? Must they remain forever prisoners of the cult of the individual or will they free themselves from the myths of the past and play a positive role in Irish life? Let us listen to what two great German artists, George Grosz and John Heartfield had to say in 1919: "There are still artists who deliberately and consciously attempt to avoid all tendentiousness, remaining silent in the face of social events, not taking part, not accepting responsibility. As far as art is practised for its own sake, it propagates a blase indifference and irresponsible individualism. The artist today cannot withdraw himself from the laws of social development — today, the class struggle. A detached stance, above, or on the side-



PATRICK GILLAN

lines, still means taking sides. Such indifference and otherworldliness supports automatically the class in power – in Germany its bourgeoisie... The artist today can only choose between technical construction and propaganda in the class struggle. In either case, he will have to give up pure art.”

**NOW  
ON  
SALE**



A REPSOL PUBLICATION

Price: 15p

