

Forward Issue 6

It's a Question of Tactics

The recent events on the streets of Dublin – the provocative ‘Love Ulster’ parade and its accompanying ‘republican’ demonstration – have sparked this activist and writer to consider tactics, republicanism and militancy. The young make up of the demonstrators and/or rioters makes it a pertinent question for *Forward* to tackle.

The first misconception I have encountered on numerous chat rooms and internet forums is the equation of militancy with what is presented as the most aggressively confrontational and violent tactic. Lenin identified this phenomenon around a century ago as a product of young, immature, ignorant and hot-headed politics. This I believe holds true for today. Militancy is not about the most violent or military orientated tactic. Militancy is about well thought out tactics that impart the most crushing blow upon the desired target. Sometimes this is military action, sometimes this is strike action, sometimes this is recognizing ones weakness accepting a defeat and regrouping to fight another day. All of these in the right situation are a militant tactic. The point, however, about militancy is that it is not necessarily the action that decides whether one is militant or not it is the desired and resulting effect upon the target. It is the situation, the level of analysis, the tactic decided upon and the outcome that determines one's militancy. Not, I repeat, who is more aggressive or openly confrontational.

Republicanism in this country, through centuries of struggle and education, has by and large recognized its social character and come to accept, to differing degrees, that it is the ‘men of no property’ who must lead the struggle for freedom. This is an historic achievement one which we must fight to keep to the fore. It is Tone, Hope, Lalor, Parnell, Davit, Connolly, and Mellows who represent the most progressive tradition of Irish nationalism. It is the lessons from their lives that we must use to help form our analysis today. The historian Desmond Greaves in his book ‘Liam Mellows and the Irish Revolution’ notes the basis of the failure of the Republican side in the civil war and the failure of the Irish Revolution in these comments on Mellows:

The men marched out on to the quays [after the defeat in the Four Courts]. It was at this point that Mellows became conscious of the demeanor of the ordinary citizens. They were not sympathetic. Nor were they markedly hostile. They tripped on pieces of rubble and cursed the nuisance, interfering with lunch, making them late home from work. ‘The workers weren't with us,’ he confided to Peadar O'Donnell afterwards.

Bearing in mind the lessons learned from history there are two basic factors which should always be the centre of any and all political analysis and the basis for tactics adopted. They are: does the action strengthen or weaken the working class? ; does the action strengthen or weaken imperialism? These should be the corner stone of all republican and socialist tactics. In simple terms if an action strengthens the working class and weakens imperialism it should be carried out, if it does the opposite it should not be carried out under ANY circumstances or ANY provocation.

Our job as republican and socialist activists is to apply lessons learned to form tactics to achieve our goals of a united, democratic Ireland and a peaceful world. To do this for the ‘Love Ulster’ parade we must ask ourselves what did unionism, as imperialism's bankrupt ideology, want to achieve in this march? If they wanted to celebrate their ‘heritage and culture’ as they argued they could have done it peacefully in other areas of this island. They chose Dublin, like they do in marching season every year, to provoke a reaction. They wanted either not to be allowed by the southern establishment or they wanted to be allowed but cause a reaction against them. Ultimately they wanted to prove they are not welcome in a united Ireland, they are different to ‘Irish’ Catholics, and further divide the working class upon religious and sectarian lines. This was an action designed by pro-imperialist forces in crises to hang onto their position and wealth on this island.

The counter-demonstration and ensuing violence allowed unionism to achieve all its aims and drive away content that division and 'partition' had been further cemented. Both states can now happily continue their crack down on civil liberties, on working class organizations and associations, and ultimately upon democracy, hand in hand of course with the EU and its attacks upon communists.

So when we apply the lessons learned from centuries of struggle to the provocation and accompanying 'riot' in Dublin we come to the conclusion that the 'republicans' played right into the hands of unionism, strengthening imperialism and its two corresponding states on this island. Thus the counter-demonstration was NOT militant republicanism; indeed in outcome it favoured imperialism. I am not calling the demonstrators pro-imperialists I am arguing their actions were misguided, immature and stemmed from a lack of political education and working class political analysis. I also note the important difference between the misguided republicans and their tactics, and the very much apolitical rioters who took advantage of the situation and served to further tar and taint republicanism.

If we want to weaken unionism on this island we must understand its roots as an ideology. Like all other ideologies its roots are in very real material conditions. Unionism serves as an ideological force for imperialism in this country. It developed to justify and serve the narrow interests of those on this island who depended upon the connection with Britain for their wealth, privilege and status. Needless to say these were and still are an overwhelming minority of the people. Unionism was fostered and still is fostered to maintain working class division, as imperialism correctly understands working class unity to be the major threat to their wealth and the major democratic force on this island.

The Connolly Youth Movement works to foster unity among republican, democratic and socialist forces to better understand Ireland's continuing struggle for freedom, peace and democracy. Behind great revolutionary moments in history are mass social forces and educated thought out tactics. Ireland right now needs both.

Editors Note

Past issues of *Forward* have dealt with the real economic and material attacks being led by capital upon ordinary working people, a stagnating minimum wage, an increasing retirement age, out-sourcing of jobs and a general decline in working conditions often seen in vicious exploitation. This issue of *Forward*, however, deals with the ideological attack that capital is mounting upon the same ordinary people and their accompanying ideology, culture and history.

The European Union is leading this attack upon communism and upon workers rights and victories. The Council of Europe recently passed legislation condemning communist crimes and equating them to the fascist crimes of the European elite's past. There is NO equation of these two ideologies. Fascism stands for war, barbarism, and degradation while communism represents the opportunity for peace, humanity and equality. Fascism profits off war while communism wishes to destroy war. Also more important to note in the same breath there was no mention of the many barbaric crimes of Europe's colonial past which far outweigh any other crimes humanity has ever been forced to witness.

This attack is very clearly politically motivated and designed to weaken the growing opposition to the neo-liberal agenda being put forward by Europe's capitalist elite. Communism and working class confidence is the biggest threat to capital's anti-democratic agenda, and they know it!

While the EU is leading capitals ideological offensive it finds willing partners and administrators in its nation-states. In Hungary it is a crime to wear any red stars or communist insignia, and in Czech Republic the government is attempting to ban the Communist Youth, KSM, a carefully designed action to cripple the very popular Communist Party of Bohemia

and Moravia. In Ireland we recently witnessed the sacking of a young Dunnes Stores worker for wearing her union pin. We also constantly witness the attacks upon republicans and socialists by the FF/PD government and its so-called opposition FG and Labour.

This year of the 90th anniversary of 1916 we can see the extent of the state-led ideological attacks as they attempt to paint the 1916 leaders and rebels as anti-democratic terrorists or at best as the founders of the free-state and its institutions. Both couldn't be further from the truth.

It is a two-pronged offensive we are now suffering under and that capital is waging. One, upon our hard won conditions of employment and two, upon our history and culture that teaches us to be proud and confident. They are seeking to destroy both our humanity and our dignity. But we will not be beaten. By recognizing the defensive position we are in and the offensive being waged against us we can start to regroup and tackle the most pressing material and ideological issues and needs.

This past month also saw the passing of one of Ireland's greatest working class leaders Michael O'Riordan, a man who dedicated his life to fighting capitalism in all its gruesome forms. Mick was both an intellectual and activist and fought and struggled for working class freedom on both these plains. The team behind *Forward* wishes to express their greatest sympathy to all his family, friends, and comrades. Our tribute is included in this edition.

A CYM Tribute to Mick O'Riordan.

At the passing of a great man, it is hard to find the right words for a fitting tribute without resorting to then usual trite clichés. Michael "The Red" O' Riordan who died aged 88 on Thursday 18th of May was one such great man.

For those who did not know of him, he was among other things a trade unionist, communist leader, Spanish civil war veteran, Marxist thinker, historian, author and above all else a working class internationalist by word and by deed.

Mick as his comrades knew him, was born in Cork City in November 1917 and attended North Monastery Christian Brothers School. On leaving school he was to join the republican youth organisation Fianna h'Eireann and later progressed to the Irish Republican Army.

In 1936, Mick was among the thousands of brave men from across the world who, in the immortal words of folk singer Christy Moore "came to stand beside the Spanish people and try and steam the rising fascist tide". He was just 19 years of age.

He was wounded in action during the infamous battle of the Ebro and returned to Ireland in 1938 after the republican government called for the withdrawal of the International Brigades.

The following year saw the outbreak of the Second World War and Mick was imprisoned for his communist views without trial in a political prisoners camp in the Curragh, county Kildare.

He was to spend another four years there and on his release in 1943, he returned to his native Cork where he secured work as a bus Conductor.

In 1947 Mick was to move to Dublin and was among the founding members of the Irish Workers Party (as the Communist Party in the south of Ireland was then known).

In those years it was a dangerous thing to be a communist not least for someone who was as prominent in the movement as Mick was.

The forces of reaction would resort to anything including genocide and breaking there on laws in order to fight the communist threat. And as lesser men flinched under those pressures it never seems to faze Mick and if anything only served to strengthen his resolve.

Elements of the establishment will dismiss Mick as a principled but ultimately naive figure. Mick was anything but naïve but rather a truly profound intellectual and in his day a living nightmare to every capitalist and reactionary in the country.

As Lenin put it the opening paragraph of the “State and Revolution”, *“During the lifetime of great revolutionaries, the oppressing classes meted out to them the most savage malice, the most furious hatred and the most unscrupulous campaigns of lies and slander. After their deaths, attempts are made to canonize them, so to say, and to surround their name with a certain Halo for the “consolation” of the oppressed classes and in order to dupe the latter, while emasculating the content of the revolutionary teaching, blunting its revolutionary edge and vulgarising it.”*

During the general election of 1961, while Mick was running as a candidate for Dublin South West, the arch reactionary Bishop of Dublin John Charles McQuaid charged that it was no less than a “mortal sin” to vote communist. Not surprisingly Mick was not successful in getting elected.

Mick recalled how the following week author and playwright Brendan Behan had wittily congratulated him on his *“one hundred and fifty ‘mortals’”*.

Throughout the 60’s Mick was at the forefront of that radical decade, being a leading light in the Dublin Housing Action committee, an organiser of the very first protest against the Vietnam War, and active on the World Peace Council.

In 1970, Mick became the General Secretary of the new Communist Party of Ireland at the unity congress, which brought together southern comrades of the Irish Workers Party and northern comrades of the Communist Party of Northern Ireland and united them in one single party for the first time since the 1940’s.

Throughout that decade Mick continued his post as General Secretary of Party and worked tirelessly in solidarity with the Chilean and Vietnamese people.

Mick retired as the CPI General Secretary in 1984 becoming the new national chairman instead. Over the next two decades Mick work in solidarity with Cuba, travelling to the island in 1998 with the “Pastors for Peace”.

He was to remain on the NEC (National Executive Committee) of the party until his death and was politically active until poor health prevented his work in last few months of his life.

On a personal level Mick was an extremely warm likable man. He a typical working class Cork city man, had a cool dry Witt and irreverence which always brought a smile to our faces.

He had great time for young people and was both a mentor and grandfather to the Connolly Youth Movement. In the declining few months of Mick's life, the progresses of the CYM brought him great comfort.

Mick lived to a great age and led a full life. This will offer little comfort to those who loved him. Although today our hearts ache in time our grief will pass. His legacy however will inspire revolutionaries for generations to come.

No Pasarán!

Rónán Harte

Communist Party of Germany, Essen.

“Good Night and Good Luck” Review

The Oscar winning film “Good Night and Good luck” is an extraordinarily timely film at the moment. This is for two reasons, the persecution and paranoia by US imperialism of the Arab and Muslim worlds. The second reason is more obvious, the re-growth of anti-communism with in the European Union and the former socialist countries of the east.

The film shot entirely in Black and white marks the directorial debut from George Clooney, who himself has earned a reputation as an outspoken critic of conservative reaction in the US.

The film tells true-life story of the infamous CBS television journalist Ed Munroe who courageously challenged the anti-communist witch hunts of senator Joe McCarthy.

The film offers no defence of socialist ideals, as it is chiefly a liberal film aimed at a liberal audience. Never the less the film has much to offer socialists such as ourselves as it perfectly demonstrates the wider democratic implications of anti-communism.

Ideology aside, Clooney exhibits undeniable talent as a director. Throughout the film it is seamlessly cut, interspersed with original news archival footage with Clooney's own studio material provide a rather authentic experience for the audience.

There are also some outstanding performances not least by the actor who plays Ed Monroe himself. Robert Downey Jr. and George Clooney also give solid performances as supporting actors.

“Good Night and Good Luck” is arguable one of the best political films to come out of Hollywood for some years. Further more it has come under heavy criticism by the forces of reaction in America and I couldn't think of a better recommendation then that.

Stop Israeli aggression against Lebanese and Palestinian youth and people!

WORLD DAY OF ACTION SOLIDARITY
27th JULY

The Connolly Youth Movement and the World Federation of Democratic Youth (WFDY) expresses their strong disgust and concern about the Israeli ongoing attacks on Lebanon and Palestine in recent days, causing hundreds of deaths and injuries among the Lebanese and Palestinian people. The war machinery of Israel—supported by the United States and its allies—has been killing and committing massacres against the innocent Lebanese and Palestinian people, destroying their society and economy and devastating their territories.

These recent military actions are part of the continued attempts to impose a solution upon the Palestinian and Lebanese people and to provoke instability in the region, under the guise of the “war against terrorism,” “dismantling weapons of mass destruction,” and “democratising regimes.” In the long struggle facing the people of the Middle East in getting real democracy, we believe the only way is to have the democratisation process coming from the free will of the people and their daily struggle and not by any imperialist intervention that aims only to exploit the people and the natural resources of the region.

Israeli troops have been massively destroying infrastructure, such as airports, bridges, power stations, and public buildings. Israel has been violating once again the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Lebanon, has been bombing civilian targets and terrorising the people of Beirut and other places in the south of the country. The destruction is huge, as is the number of the victims, especially children. At the same time Israel has imposed a blockade by air, sea, and land, with all the harmful effects of this for the Lebanese people. But the truth is that the Israeli attacks have gone far beyond this, and the civilian population have been the main victims. Israel has been holding more than ten thousand Palestinian, Lebanese and other Arab political prisoners in its jails for many years.

The Connolly Youth Movement and WFDY expresses their solidarity with patriotic forces in Lebanon, as before, they will resist the aggression and will defend and preserve the independence, sovereignty and territorial unity of their country. Years of Israeli occupation and aggression carried out against the Palestinian people, the apartheid wall and settlements has not brought any lasting solution but rather further crimes against humanity committed by the state terrorism of Israeli occupation against the Palestinian people, in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, with the destruction of the civilian infrastructure and the imprisonment of Palestinian leaders and representatives, including members of the government.

We call upon all young people to support the struggle of the Palestine people against the Israeli occupation, for an independent Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital, for the right of return of Palestinian refugees, and the immediate dismantling of the apartheid wall that Israel is constructing in the occupied territories of Palestine. The Connolly Youth Movement and WFDY believe that the only lasting solution is will be found in when the rights of the Palestinian people, on the basis of the various UN resolutions.

It is necessary to put an end to this criminal assault that is causing untold suffering and driving the whole region towards a conflict of even greater and more dangerous proportions. It is necessary to condemn the brutal actions of retaliation and the punishment of entire populations with the cynical smashing of the most elementary human rights and a clear violation of international law and the Charter of the United Nations.

The silence and complicity of the United States and the European Union in the face of these crimes is unacceptable but predictable. The Connolly Youth Movement along with other progressive youth organisations across the world are engaged in a world day of action the struggle against this criminal crusade and to develop a range of actions to raise the awareness of young people and compel Israel to withdraw its forces and halt all military operations in Lebanon and Palestine.

We call on Israel to stop immediately the aggression against the Lebanese and Palestinian youth and people. The Irish Government has been silent for far to long on this conflict.

- Boycott Israeli Goods
- Solidarity with Palestinian and Lebanese People's
- Contact Dept Foreign Affairs about their silence.
- Write to Israeli Ambassador demand the immediate withdrawal of Israeli Army from Lebanon.

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF ACTION
THURSDAY 27TH JULY

7-45AM – 9-00AM
PICKET ISREALI EMBASSY,
122 PEMBROOKE ROAD,
DUBLIN 2;

World Federaton of Democratic Youth Connolly Youth Movement
Frangepán utca 16 • 1139 Budapest XIII 7 Bloom Lane • Dublin 1

By Candlelight We Remember.

Ireland's population is changing greatly with increasing numbers of foreign nationals in the country. Republicans and Socialists have an obligation to bring to these people our history, our lessons learned from struggle, our culture and our traditions. We also must learn from the vast resource of experience they bring to us and use to advance the cause of freedom, democracy and socialism.

History, and its teaching, has a very important role to play in educating the newly arriving workers in this country and also in combating the rise in racism and fascist like groups, caused by the realities of imperialism and Ireland's position within it. Familiarity with the major events, with the names and faces, and more importantly with the aims goals and contexts of our struggles must be made a reality in the ever changing make up of the Irish Working Class.

It is in this climate Rising Youth held a candle lit vigil outside the GPO on Wednesday the 27th at 9pm. The event aimed to mark the beginning of the execution of the leaders of 1916 as part of Rising Youth's campaign of commemoration and invigoration of the ideals of democracy, sovereignty, and independence, that 1916 stands for.

A good number of people gathered and held up large posters of the executed leaders by candle light in what was a very respectful and solemn evening. The weather couldn't have been better and played an important role in creating the atmosphere. The event attracted great attention from the Dublin population and importantly from many immigrants. Questions were asked and answered, and photos were taken. This event without doubt played an important role in conscious raising and education and the CYM would like to thank all the effort put in by the activists within Rising Youth.

Again in great contrast to the propaganda spectacle the state put on this is the way the men and women of 1916 would like themselves to be remembered, by ordinary people for ordinary people with the purpose of creating a better Ireland and a better future.

For 1916 and Today!

Rising Youth Walks With History!

Easter Monday at 2.30 Rising Youth in association with independent republicans held a walking tour of Glasnevin Cemetery to remember and commemorate the ordinary heroes of 1916.

First and most important to note is that these men do not have great statues or streets, stations or bridges named after them, nor do they have a fantastic place of rest where republicans make pilgrimage every year. Their graves would be completely unrecognizable from Joe Soap but for the tremendous work done by the National Graves Association in the 30's and later to locate and mark the resting places of these men. At each grave is a beautiful but simple small stone structure commemorating each man and the cause he died for. It is the marked simplicity that is so moving when

compared to the grandiose statues of such traitorous Irishmen as Daniel O’Connell. Each stone represents the ordinary working and struggling men of this country and their cause of freedom and liberty.

The tour was conducted by 4 men, each one a fountain of knowledge and history and each one with a unique way of telling the story of not just the fallen of 1916 but of the graveyard itself and of its numerous famous and infamous inhabitants. From Sean Connolly to James Fintan Lalor, and from Brendan Beahan to Ernst Blyth we walked in sometimes sun but more often showers!

Despite the rain the attendance was impressive with around 40 comrades making the event. In contrast to the military recruitment parade of the ‘Republics’ army we saw on the Sunday this was a more respectful affair yet impressive in ways Bertie could only have dreamed of. All 40 were there not for a show but to pay respect to the people who made 1916 happen, the ordinary soldiers of the Irish Citizen Army and the Irish Volunteers.

The event was a great success and thoroughly enjoyed by all spoken to afterwards. This is the kind of history that brings you to where Ireland is today and reminds you of your duty and obligation to continue the struggle not just for an abstract freedom of an abstract nation but for working class freedom for a working class nation. The freedom of the ordinary people.

“Ireland as distinct from her people, is nothing to me.” J. Connolly.

List of Rebel Dead

Adams, John Frances	25-04-1916	ICA
Allen, Thomas	28-04-1916	IVF
Burke, William F	25-04-1916	IVF
Byrne, Andrew Joseph	01-05-1916	IVF
Byrne, James	27-04-1916	IVF
Byrne, Louis	24-04-1916	ICA
Carrigan, Charles	28-04-1916	IVF
Clarke, Philip	25-04-1916	ICA
Connolly, Sean	24-04-1916	ICA
Corcoran, James	25-04-1916	ICA
Cosgrave, Edward	25-04-1916	ICA
Costello, Edward Joseph	25-04-1916	N/A
Costello, John	26-04-1916	IVF
Coyle, Henry	28-04-1916	IVF
Crenigan, John	28-04-1916	IVF
Cromien, John	25-04-1916	IVF
Darcy, Charles	24-04-1916	ICA
Donolan, Brendan	24-04-1916	IVF
Doyle, Patrick	27-04-1916	IVF
Dwan, John	27-04-1916	IVF
Ennis, Edward	29-04-1916	IVF
Farrell, Patrick	29-04-1916	IVF
Fox, James Joseph	25-04-1916	ICA
Geoghegan, George	26-04-1916	ICA

Healy, John	27-04-1916	Fianna Eireann
Howard, Sean B	29-04-1916	Fianna Eireann
Hurley, Sean	27-04-1916	IVF
Keating, Con	21-04-1916	IVF
Keely, John	25-04-1916	IVF
Kent, Richard	04-05-1916	IVF
Keogh, Gerald	25-04-1916	IVF
McCormack, James	26-04-1916	IVF
McDowell, William	24-04-1916	IVF
Macken, Francis	28-04-1916	IVF
Macken, Peadar	27-04-1916	IVF
Malone, Michael	26-04-1916	IVF
Manning, Peter Paul	29-04-1916	IVF
Monaghan, Charles	21-04-1916	IVF
Mulvahill, Michael	28-04-1916	IVF
Murphy, Richard	26-04-1916	IVF
Murray, Daniel	13-05-1916	ICA
O'Carroll, Richard	05-05-1916	IVF
O'Connor, Patrick	27-04-1916	IVF
O'Flanagan, Patrick	29-04-1916	IVF
O'Grady, John J	29-04-1916	IVF
The O'Rahilly	28-04-1916	ICA
O'Reilly, John	24-04-1916	IVF
O'Reilly, Richard	24-04-1916	IVF
O'Reilly, Thomas	27-04-1916	ICA
Rafferty, Thomas	29-04-1916	IVF
Reynolds, George	27-04-1916	IVF
Ryan, Frederick	27-04-1916	ICA
Sheehan, Donald	21-04-1916	IVF
Shortis, Patrick	28-04-1916	IVF
Traynor, John	24-04-1916	IVF
Walsh, Edward	25-04-1916	IVF
Walsh, Philip	29-04-1916	IVF
Weafer, Thomas Joseph	26-04-1916	IVF
Whelan, Patrick	27-04-1916	IVF
Wilson, Peter	29-04-1916	IVF

List of Rebel Executed

Casement, Roger	03-08-1916
Ceannt, Eamon	08-05-1916
Clarke, Thomas J	03-05-1916
Colbert, Con	08-05-1916
Connolly, James	12-05-1916
Daly, Edward	04-05-1916

Heuston, Sean	08-05-1916
Kent, Thomas	09-05-1916
MacBride, John	05-05-1916
MacDiarmada, Sean	12-05-1916
MacDonagh, Thomas	03-05-1916
Mallin, Michael	08-05-1916
O'Hanrahan, Michael	04-05-1916
Pearse, Patrick H	03-05-1916
Pearse, Willie	04-05-1916
Plunkett, Joseph	04-05-1916

The Connolly Youth Movement remembers the ultimate sacrifice made by the men and women of 1916.

Many gave their lives for a united democratic Ireland of equals. It is our goal to continue that struggle today. The violence of liberation cannot be equated to the violence of oppression, we reject the recent statements of the Irish Labour Party with regards remembering the British troops killed in the same space of the democratic freedom fighters above. Extraordinary circumstances often require extraordinary means. These men died in a European and indeed global imperialist conflict, fighting on the side of ALL ordinary people against plunderers and exploiters. The anti-imperialist struggle continues today.