

Seán Garland 7th March 1934—13th December 2018

Socialist, Republican, Revolutionary—90th Birthday



Unlike the other people who have kindly taken the time to contribute to this newsletter to mark what would have been the 90th birthday of my father, I knew him first as a dad and not in a political context. It was only as I got older and began to take notice of him on TV and understand what his *'job'* was that I began to really understand all the factors that contributed towards making him the man he was and his absolute commitment to republican socialism and the Workers' Party.

He was never one to talk about himself or his past escapades. It was really through Cathal, and my dad's family, particularly my uncles Michael and Jimmy and my aunt Chrissie that I came to know about his role in the Armagh raid and in Brookborough. In fact it was Chrissie who always sang Seán South of Garryowen much to my father's dismay.

As I got older and became more interested in history and politics I found him to be a source of knowledge and rather than just answer questions with his opinion there was always book recommendations for any questions I had, followed by *'have you read that? What did you think?'* He always encouraged me to think for myself and to never accept anything unless I had done the necessary *research and investigation*.

He had a wonderful sense of humour, dark, dry and incredibly quick. I like to think I have inherited this from him but the truth is I'm probably nowhere near as quick or as funny. I remember one time not long before he died I asked him how he had managed to survive the attack on his life in 1975 when so many bullets had been fired and yet Jim Flynn and Billy McMillen for example had died with less bullets fired, his reply was simply '*bad aim, Caoimhe, bad aim.*'

It was in his last years that I really got the opportunity to speak to him about his earlier life in the movement when we sat down to write some of what we hoped would become a biography. It was clear to me that even after the passing of so many years he felt the loss of all his comrades very deeply and this was something that he carried with him throughout his life. I believe that he felt part of the importance of ensuring the future of the movement and the party was for their memory. That so many comrades and their families had suffered and sacrificed so much, we that were still alive should and must continue to build a mass party of and for the working class.

I recall when his extradition began I was living in London and came home to be with him. He was out on bail and was eternally grateful to all his comrades and friends who were supporting him and who had gone to great lengths to ensure he made his bail. We went for a walk and we talked about the situation and what was to come. In one sentence he summed up his ferocious optimism and willingness to continue fighting when he said "*Caoimhe, if they hate me this much it means they fear me and if they fear me then I know I'm doing something right.*"

He fundamentally understood the need and the importance of reaching the working class and engaging with them on a day to day basis. He firmly believed that finance was key to ensuring the success of our movement and he never stopped beating this drum and reminding members of the necessity for finance in our struggle. I know at the end of his life he sometimes felt that he hadn't achieved very much but I would disagree. He leaves behind a legacy that myself and my children can be proud of and I hope in some way we can contribute to ensuring that the Party continues to fight for the working class and build a better society and a better future for us all. He also leaves us with an enduring legacy of humour, of the importance of friendship and comradeship, and of generosity.

There is so much I could say about him, as a father, a comrade, a mentor and a friend. So many funny stories, how much I learned from him and how much I still had to learn. What's most remarkable for me is how a boy from a tenement in north inner city Dublin with no formal education could teach himself about economics, politics, history, literature and always encourage people to do the same, in fact I remember how some of the lads he was in prison with during the extradition would come to see him after they were released and he would give them books, advice and just spend time talking to them about life and the world, how he always remained optimistic but realistic about the struggle ahead. He remains greatly missed.

**Caoimhe Garland, March 2024**

Seán Garland was the antithesis of the cute Irishman, of flamboyant freedom fighter; there was a near Presbyterian austerity coupled with a sardonic wit that went against the grain of the stereotypical Irish rebel. Unlike other republican leaders of every tendency, including the Officials, he did not die a multi-millionaire.

His more well known escapades — the Brookeborough Raid; gaining intelligence on the British Army — no doubt obscure other untold adventures; no one, even his political opponents seems to have doubted his personal courage. But if he made his reputation in militant nationalism, his most significant contribution was the creation of an alternative to it, namely a mass working class party.

The move to socialism that begun in the 1960s in the aftermath of the Border Campaign is well known, and the role of Cathal Goulding and others in pushing it through the Wolfe Tone Societies is likewise widely acknowledged. Seán was, of course, involved in this process but it was the more specific role of constructing a party of the working class that was his singular contribution. Socialism on its own is just an idea, however attractive. In order to be realised there must be *organisations that can achieve it*.

There is nothing easier than talking about socialism and how, in a perfect world, all the ills produced by capitalism would be absent. While beautiful, it doesn't advance the transformation of society at all. Capitalist society isn't going to fade into a democratic egalitarian society; it requires superior strength - economic, political, military, cultural — to overcome it. These require organisations, large organisations spread across the country with roots in every parish. The trade unions comprise the first line of mass economic organisation of the working class but on their own they are not enough; a mass political party that can use state power to push towards socialism is also necessary. While there were and are lots of small socialist parties, Seán helped build the first Irish working class party that explicitly aimed towards socialism.

No strategy is without cost — a mass party cannot be built in western political conditions while conducting a guerrilla armed campaign; thus the Official Republicans moved to a ceasefire and the continual downgrading of its armed wing. The IRSP split — who rejected (at that stage) that a choice had to be made between an armed campaign and a mass socialist party cemented the trajectory towards a mass party.

As General Secretary, Seán was the driving force behind its development, not least the building of newspapers and magazines. To the end, he remained convinced of the power of literacy and the need for a political movement to be able to disseminate its own message in the face of capitalist propaganda.

Despite the shift towards mass politics Seán didn't adopt pacifism, even implicitly, as many colleagues did. He was sober enough to understand the power of force in the world and ruthlessly realistic regarding the importance of finance in enabling long-term organising; hence the special fundraising activities.

I only met Seán in later years. He was cautious at first but he got on quite well with the influx of Dublin members; he liked that we were engaging in ordinary political activity and making contact with the working class. He also liked that we paid our printing bills!

By 2014, he was perhaps the only senior figure whose interests straddled theory and day-to-day practice. As such, he was, to the consternation of some, open about the failure of the Workers' Party to rebuild after 1992; it was easier to plod along after all. And, while an admirer of Lenin, he had a contempt for those who invoked Marxist-Leninism as a ritual affirmation of their purity but whose engagement with the working class was minimal. Lenin, for him, was a guide to engagement with the working class, not a means to hide from it.

Seán inhabited a dual world of Irish republicanism and working class socialism. The congruence of their base and philosophy meant he was by no means the first to do so but he was perhaps the most consequential.

RIP Seán Garland

**James O'Brien, Cork, March 2024**



I believe my first encounter with Seán would have been in the mid 1960s, a veteran of the 1950s IRA campaign, Seán's part in that campaign among the young people in the Republican Movement was well known. He was looked upon as a bit of a hero among us. Severely wounded along with Fergal O'Hanlon and Seán South in the attack on Brookborough, the arms raid on Armagh army camp and many other attacks on the six county sectarian state. On his release from prison he immediately threw himself into the reorganisation of the IRA. In this period, in the early 1960s Seán was still wedded to the idea of a purely physical force republican movement, this was to change.

On an operation to raise money for the IRA Seán's part in the operation was compromised, as a result Seán had to go on the run. First to Belfast then to Glasgow where he stayed with a steadfast Republican family who to this day remain steadfast to Seán's memory and the socialist republican cause. He then moved to London where he was looked after by Dominic Behan. Encouraged by Dominic he began a course in economics at the London School of Economics where he got a degree in economics. I would say during this time Seán's thinking broadened and it became evident to him that the six counties were run by British imperialism, the 26 counties were run by American imperialism as was the rest of the so-called free world. A given today but not 60 years ago for a young man raised in the tradition of 'get rid of the Brits' in the six counties and Ireland would suddenly become a paradise for the Irish people.

Seán returned to Dublin on many occasions in this period. He gave the oration in 1968 at Bodenstown. During that address he summed up the problems of the republican movement when he said in part of that address that the IRA '*must become the army of the people*'. In those few words you see that Seán had moved from the idea the republican movement's only reason for existing was the removal of the Brits from the north.

Returning to Ireland at the beginning of the violence Seán understood what was developing in the Six counties was not a war of liberation but a civil war situation. This may seem at odds with the IRAs decision to take military action in the north and from 1970 to May 1972 the IRA took action against, by and large British military targets. By May 1972 when the IRA ceasefire was called to most people in the IRA and movement in general we were only adding to that slide into civil war. For Seán and others in the leadership it was the unity of Catholic, Protestant and dissenter and the building of a class party that was the only future for republicanism and socialism and history was to prove that leadership right.

Over the next 20 years Seán threw himself into achieving these goals. Over those years the Workers' Party as it became known had great success in the 26 counties but things proved harder going into the north. The difficulties in the north never dented Seán's optimism even when in 1975 Seán was again severely wounded by the Ultraleft because of his stand against adventurism and sectarianism.

The betrayal of the early nineties it has to be said affected everyone who remained in the Workers' Party, in many ways it was 20 years down the drain. But for Seán this was not the case his attitude was that lessons had been learned. It was time to move on and again rebuild. From those days of rebuilding Seán was again to the forefront ever the optimist and the realist. He knew the Workers' Party's future lay in the unity of Catholic, Protestant and dissenter not the puerile attempts from some in the party who believed the future lay in attracting the protestant and catholic middle classes and removing the Starry Plough as our logo avoiding the very word republicanism. Seán stood by the ideas of the United Irishmen, the Fenians and the Republican Congress.

Seán made many friends over the years he also, given his strong republican socialist beliefs made many political enemies but friend or political foe I would say they would all agree, with Seán what you seen was what you got.

Slán go foil Seán. Onwards and upwards. **Uachtarán Michael McCorry, West Belfast,**



What is Success?

To laugh often and much;  
To win the respect of intelligent people  
and the affection of children;  
To earn the appreciation of honest critics  
and endure the betrayal of false friends;  
To appreciate beauty;  
To find the best in others;  
To leave the world a bit better, whether by  
a healthy child, a garden patch  
or a redeemed social condition;  
To know even one life has breathed  
easier because you have lived;  
This is to have succeeded.

- Ralph Waldo Emerson

You have no enemies, you say? Alas, my friend, the boast is poor. He who has mingled in the fray of duty that the brave endure, must have made foes. If you have none, small is the work that you have done. You've hit no traitor on the hip. You've dashed no cup from perjured lip. You've never turned the wrong to right. You've been a coward in the fight.

- Charles Mackay, Chartist Poet



**TO A FOIL'D EUROPEAN REVOLUTIONAIRE.**

COURAGE yet, my brother or my sister!  
Keep on—Liberty is to be subserv'd whatever occurs;  
That is nothing that is quell'd by one or two failures, or any  
number of failures,  
Or by the indifference or ingratitude of the people, or by any  
unfaithfulness,  
Or the show of the tushes of power, soldiers, cannon, penal  
statutes.

What we believe in waits latent forever through all the conti-  
nents,  
Invites no one, promises nothing, sits in calmness and light, is  
positive and composed, knows no discouragement,  
Waiting patiently, waiting its time.

- Walt Whitman



I remember Seán Garland with the utmost comradely regard and even admiration, but also with the fondest affection.

I had known him vaguely since the late 1970's, when I had considered applying to join Sinn Fein – The Workers Party. We became better acquainted after I became Vice President of SIPTU in May 2000, as our paths crossed at various protests, rallies, campaigns, picket lines and political events.

Seán often visited my office in Liberty Hall, sometimes accompanied by Mary in latter years, to discuss potential campaigns, book launches or other political activities. However, it was only after the global economic collapse of 2008 that we became friendly. We both understood it for what it was, - the collapse of Capitalism as perfectly predicted, analysed, and described by Karl Marx in his monumental work 'Capital'. (A conclusion subsequently endorsed by no less an authority than the Financial Times, - terming it as 'A collapse of the economic system').

After the fall of Lemans, (15th September 2008), and into the Spring of 2009, we both saw it as a moment of immense potential for the possible emergence of a new international economic order. It would be one which was no longer driven by the imperatives of greed, and which offered the possibility of ending exploitation, poverty, and human misery forever.

However, global capital had regrouped by the Summer of 2009 and regained the initiative. Thereafter, I opted for a 'rearguard strategy' entailing the construction of such 'fortifications' as we could, in the form of very difficult and deeply unpopular concessionary agreements across the private and public sectors and in the political arena as well. It was about holding as much ground as possible with a view to organising and ultimately retaking it when objective conditions improved. Seán, steeped as he was in the tradition of the Republican Movement and a lifetime of endless, relentless struggle against overwhelming odds, didn't necessarily agree. Apart from the slimness of the possibility of success, on which he did agree, he argued the value of 'resistance' as an end in itself. More particularly, correctly I now concede, he warned against the disastrous consequences of a strategy which would be perceived as one of 'acquiescence' on the morale of the working-class movement.

Notwithstanding our differences in this regard, I found all our engagements immensely helpful. This was because our disagreement was framed on the common platform of a Marxist interpretation of history and the gigantic events unfolding as the tectonic plates wobbled. Seán was the only person I ever met who demonstrated a clear understanding of the awesome alternatives which faced Lenin and the Bolshevik Party at Brest-Litovsk. While we both agreed on the correctness of the decision they made, he did not concede that it was an appropriate comparator. Nevertheless, our difference was conducted in the context of a joint understanding of real alternatives available, as distinct from the populist opinion surfing of some who saw themselves as being on the Left.

Seán was a superbly self-educated dialectical Marxist, whose pursuit of history was thoroughly reinforced by a lifetime of selfless struggle and sacrifice entailing immense personal courage, both as a guerilla fighter and a political leader. He was motivated by a clear understanding and indelible hatred of capitalism as the reflection of our primal greed as a species and the essential cause of all the avoidable injustice, poverty, and misery in the world. Believing passionately in Socialism and in the working class as the social force which could ultimately bring it about, he dedicated his whole life to its realisation in an independent 32 County Irish Workers Republic as envisaged by Connolly.

Neither naïve nor blind to the mistakes of the International Communist Movement, he was of course deeply saddened by the moral deterioration and the ultimate collapse of the Soviet Union. Nevertheless, he remained undaunted, understanding it all in terms of the dialectical evolution of history, contradictorily correcting as it unfolds.



Again, Seán was the only person I've known who was fully familiar with the exchange between Rosa Luxemburg and Lenin on what she correctly, saw as the fundamental undoing fault line of the democratic deficit. "In the One-Party State who will tell us when we are wrong?"

Similarly, although undoubtedly severely affected by the setbacks experienced by his beloved Workers Party, he remained indefatigable, and to me at least, - admirably

so. In many respects ours was a most unlikely, indeed an extraordinary, friendship, forged as often in principled disagreement as acquiescence. However, we always shared common ground in the method we employed when approaching issues through the perspective of historical materialism, and in our working-class backgrounds. Moreover, I think it was also sustained by the firm belief that we were both acting in the interests of the working class and towards the ultimate attainment of egalitarian socialism as informed by our respective viewpoints. I know I believe firmly and beyond a scintilla of doubt that Seán's every thought and action was determined by it and selflessly so. I admired him for it and I have no difficulty in admitting that I remain inspired by it. I deeply miss our conversations, principled mutually respectful disagreements, and the comradely friendship of this 'real' revolutionary.

Sincere condolences again to Mary, Caoimhe and all the family and to his comrades in the Workers Party.

In Solidarity

**Jack O'Connor, former General President of SIPTU, March 2024.**



What can I say about Seán Garland that hasn't already been said? The truth is, nothing, everything I know of him is in the public domain and I only met him a handful of times. As always though things are never that simple and there are of course a few things I can say.

Firstly I know he was a father. These past few years I have gotten to know his daughter Caoimhe quite well and have the privilege to call her my friend and I know he would be proud of her for standing up for what is right just as he had done so many times himself.

Second from my own experience, I first heard of Seán Garland from my father, John. When I was a child my dad was a full on Seán Garland fanboy. He was always telling me *"we have to do this, we have to do that, because Seán Garland said so"*. I never understood what any of it meant but I always pictured Seán to be this big massive man that everyone listened to because he was always right, like a head school master.

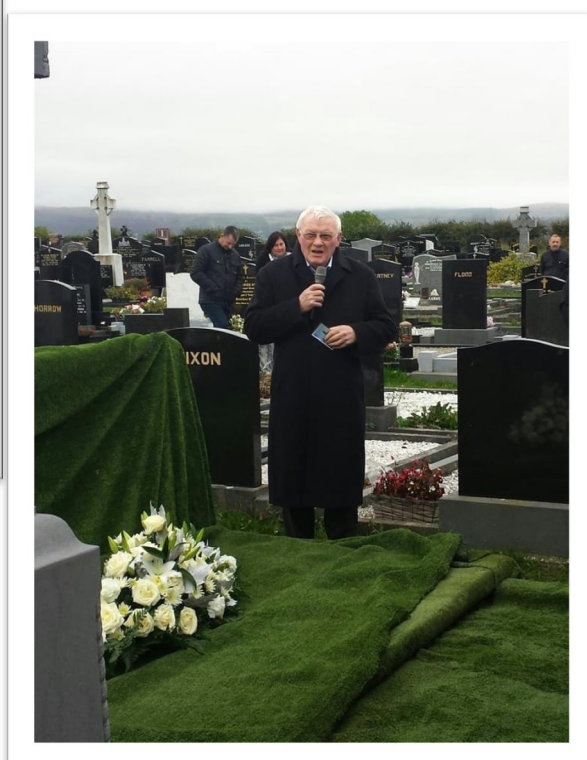
As a young adult I started to read more about Seán myself, I came to realise of course, my dad was right and Seán Garland was always right. Years later when I joined the party I remember meeting Seán for the first time, one member said to me *"the chief of staff is coming here and he wants to meet you"*.

I knew straight away who he meant and I do recall being star struck when he got out of the car that day. As he marched towards me I was lost for words (which is not like me) and I couldn't think what to say. I needn't have worried though because as great of a man as he was, a more humble down to earth and gentler human being you could never have wished to have met. My only regret is I didn't get to know Seán Garland, the man more.

To be fair though I did sort of live my dads dream for him, and if he could have seen me that day and the few other times after talking and joking with Seán Garland like two normal guys without a care in the world he would have been super proud.

Thank you Seán for all the memories and rest easy comrade.

**Conor Campbell, Turf Lodge, March 2024**



It was the end of the summer holidays in the 70ies and we were staying in Rush Co. Dublin about 30km from the centre of Dublin .It was time to leave but my father couldn't drive us so he sent his friend Seán Garland instead .My Aunt was an actress and there was a play she was playing in being broadcast on RTE radio that same night .For some reason that only my Aunt knew the broadcast had to be listened to in a house in Dublin. We left late and my Aunt pleaded with Seán that we had to be back in Dublin for her to hear the broadcast. My Aunt had no previous knowledge of Seán's expertise and history of fast cars. This was before the motorway to Dublin was built and generally took about one hour and twenty minutes. Seán did it in about 30min. As we screeched to a halt outside the house in Anglesea Rd. us kids were elated, my mother was in a state of shock and my hysterical Aunt jumped out of the car with the radio clutched like a rugby ball as she dashed up the path to the house and as she tried to unlock the front door she dropped the radio. It lay in pieces on the ground.



Many years later I was working on a movie playing an assassin and I believe in research. I met Seán and explained to him the scenario and Seán nodded thoughtfully throughout my pitching of the story. I explained I had no wish to intrude or stir up painful memories and if my Father was still alive I would have asked him. Seán then told me some details and facts which were of great help to me in the role .He ended by saying:

*“Now ya see those two fucken idiots that came to kill me with the Uzi machine guns that night, when I opened the door and they started shooting they went to pieces and lost their heads, they shot over 40 bullets and hit me 15 times and all they had to do was shoot me twice in the head, fucken amateurs, ya know”.*

There were so many times spent in pubs in my early life listening to people singing ballads. One I always liked was “Seán South of Garryowen“ it was years later I learnt that Seán Garland was involved in that raid on Brookeborough British army barracks and had carried a dying Seán South on his shoulders in the midst of the battle. Seán had also joined the British army and had masqueraded as a soldier for a while to gain intelligence for the raid on the barracks as he said *“Intelligence is everything”*. I would have asked him for some acting tips as well at the time if I'd only known .

It seems to me the world badly needs more Seán Garlands especially at this time. I feel honoured to have known such a man.

I still remember Seán's last post on social media.  
*“We are nothing without each other “*

**Paudge Behan, Paris 27th February 2024**

I can't exactly recall the first time I met Seán Garland, but I remember how I got to know him.

Growing up in and around the Workers' Party, I was always familiar with Seán as a major figure in our history, as well as in Irish political life more broadly. I viewed him in large part as the "*man of steel*" that he was thought to be. It was when I got to know Seán, mostly while I was a teenager doing busy work in the old office on Hill Street, that I realised there was much more to him than that.

I got active with the party of my own volition around 2016. I say of my own volition because some of my childhood memories are at commemorations or doing leaflets. The party had undergone a bit of a revival around this time and Seán was a welcoming figure. I had been asked to read the proclamation at that year's Easter commemoration, which I was excited enough about. However, being introduced as "*comrade Eoghan Gardiner*" by Seán, who was chairing the event, filled me with pride. To some, the word comrade is just something we say out of courtesy or to identify ourselves politically, but Seán Garland was a man who did not mince his words and who did not suffer fools gladly. I believe he knew the word to signify that we are in this fight together, and that we owe loyalty to that cause and to each other as we carry it forward. To have been called a comrade by a man of his political pedigree will forever mean a lot to me.

On another occasion, I found myself working alone in the office until Seán and Mary came in. They were asking for Richard O'Hara who was out at the time. I was a bit taken aback to be alone with them. These were two people who had given their blood, sweat and tears to the party, who had played a pivotal role in the advancement in the cause of the Irish working class, and there was me; a teenager putting posters together as busy work when I probably should have been in school.

I offered to make tea and then it was Seán and Mary who appeared taken aback. I think they could sense I was somewhat in awe. "We'll make it ourselves if we want tea, thanks very much!" was what I read from Mary's face, though in actuality she rebuffed my offer with much kinder words. Due to my own ignorance, I was surprised to learn that there were no notions of grandeur from these two. We made small talk about the weather and how comrades were keeping, and we spoke about the political issues of the day. Though I was only a teenager, I felt respected and I think this is something that our people have always done well. Seán had a hospital appointment and so the two could wait around no longer, and I was asked to tell Richard they had called in. We said our goodbyes and thus ended one of the more memorable encounters of my early days in the party.

It is all well and good to explain the respect that I have for Seán through personal anecdotes, but what is more important is to understand why he is so well respected. It should not be mistaken as some romanticism of Seán's involvement in the IRA, nor as a blind allegiance to senior party members. It is because of who Seán was and what he stood for. He, a working class boy from a Dublin tenement, played a crucial role in bringing class politics to the mainstream of Irish political life. In his political career, he did not seek fame, riches, nor to rise above where he came from while forsaking his class. He sought to build a party that could lead the Irish working class to our rightful place in society as the masters of our own destiny. For this, he faced soldiers, spies, assassins and quislings, yet stayed true to his cause right up until his death. Never before have I had, and in all likelihood never again shall I have, the privilege of knowing such a principled and upstanding man. It is an honour to carry on his legacy through the Workers' Party, and so long as we do that, Seán Garland will never die.

*"Men perish, but principles live."* - James Connolly

**Eoghan Gardiner, Palmerstown, March 2024**

I first got to know Seán properly when I became a member of the Party Secretariat some time in 2015 or 2016.

Having presumably proved myself to be of some use on the Secretariat, I would get a frequent, almost daily, phone call from Seán asking me to call down to Hill Street during my lunch break from the civil service to discuss various practical political and organisational matters, at one point building up what might have been a record 90 hour flexitime deficit in the process.

What became clear to me quite quickly as I got to know Seán was his grasp of the basic elements of party building. He understood the basis of party growth was through constant engagement and campaigning in working class communities, a connection with the trade union movement, and getting your message out via your own media. He had an aversion to ultra-leftism, and understood the need for finance, paid organisers, and day to day leadership of the Party - a professional organisation.

Seán's grasp of the bread and butter of socialist political organisation was a refreshing alternative to a considerable minority of other voices within the then leadership of the Party, whose path to glory was through a banal mixture of purity of (an esoteric) ideology and pure laziness; Seán was head and shoulders above these people in every possible way and his drive and energy for rebuilding the Party even at such a relatively late stage of his life was remarkable, and relentless.

No doubt Seán was a tough man who did not suffer fools - as those who crossed him may be (or perhaps may not be) in a position to confirm. To come through, mentally and physically fairly unscathed, the poverty of a 1930s Dublin slum, a couple of stints in prison (which Seán did not recall with great fondness), an unhealthy amount of bullets from the British Army and the INLA, (sometimes violent) betrayal from former friends and comrades, and sharing a Party with Eoghan Harris for two decades, is testament to that.

But both personally and politically there is much more to Seán than the hard man of the Republican Movement that he is sometimes portrayed as.

He was a thinker and an avid reader - an organic intellectual - and as has been pointed out by Comrade James O'Brien, Seán was the driving force towards the Republican Movement, not simply embracing class politics, but adopting the mass party as its organisational form in the 1970s. This might seem like a strikingly obvious step to anyone familiar with Marxism but it is a concept that had evaded the Republican Left and Communists in Ireland until that point and one which many of them happily avoid to this day.

Amongst Seán's Bodenstown speeches and United Irishmen articles in the late 60s and early 70s are excellent summaries of the developing ideological position and the strategic approach of the Republican Movement at the time. Seán's understanding of the need to combine the international and national radical traditions is something that resonated with myself and his promotion and publication of Connolly, Gilmore, the Republican Congress, and Jemmy Hope reintroduced me to Ireland's radical republicanism.

While I did get to know Seán fairly well in the years I shared an office with him, I won't exaggerate the closeness of our personal friendship - there are others who struggled with him, and continue the struggle to this day, who knew him far better and who shared with him the many victories and defeats along the way.

Nevertheless, I can say for certain that behind the sometimes gruff exterior and the supposed 'hard man' was a person of genuine warmth and generosity, with a very dry and sharp sense of humour - someone who I am happy and privileged to have known for the short time that I did.

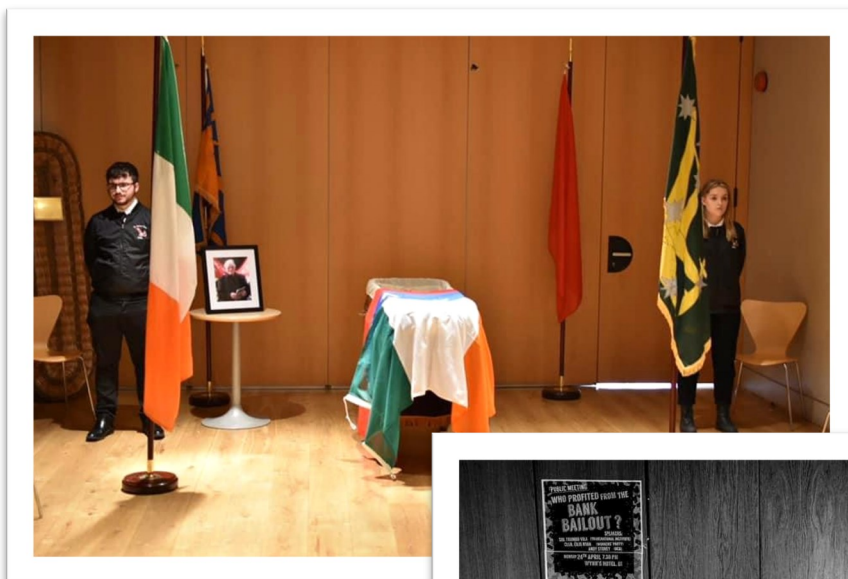
For many, if not all of us, our drive to build socialism is fuelled by the bigger picture of our ideological commitment - to Marxism or Republicanism - but at base most of us share a common human concern for the plight of the oppressed that is articulated through our particular ideological outlook.

The same was true of Seán - a Leninist and a Socialist Republican to the end - but one should not underestimate the extent to which his commitment to socialism, and by extension the Party, was driven by his humanity and his sense of disgust and anger at the poverty, oppression, greed, and war that blights our world, and the capitalist system that perpetuates this misery upon so much of humanity. No doubt this was partly formed by his having been witness to the poverty of Dublin of the middle of the last century.

There is much more to be said of Seán, and it is hard to avoid hagiography in writing a piece such as this but Seán's life and work should stand as an example and an inspiration to any of us serious about building a class party in this country - and, if we applied ourselves to our cause in the manner that Seán did, our Party would be in significantly better shape.

So, on what would be Seán's 90th birthday, we should remind ourselves to do his efforts the justice they deserve by playing our part in his cause - the workers' cause.

**Richard O'Hara, Dublin, March 2024**



What words can be used to describe such a man? On his early life I couldn't comment as I didn't know him then, but I knew of him which always makes it more to assess.

Getting things second hand as it were can lead to fantasy - all that this man wasn't.

But what I can talk of and about is my views of him based on the many meetings I had with him.

He was a man that wasn't easily fooled and he could read right through you. So it was wise not to go to a meeting ill prepared.

He expected commitment of all Party members and his yard stick was measured by his own example.

He lived in a time where he witnessed many changes and he was conscious that we would be required to be a part of those changes and all that entailed, leading not lagging in today's world and that's what he sat about doing, building a Party that was fit to represent the working class - this is what he committed his life too.

He was never put off by the nay sayers and if anything it spurred him into action with renewed energy in defence of those working people with neither food nor fire, victims of today's capitalist entrepreneurs to abuse as they please.

Seán Garland developed peoples thinking based on his background, on Irish history, enlightenment, the landowners, congress, tenant farmers, the Spanish civil war, Europe, the League of Nations, the absentee big house owners, equality of rights for women, for catholic, protestant and dissenter, it was a privilege to have known such a man.

**Joe Dowds, North Belfast, March 2024.**



